

# Freedom

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Threepence

## VIRTUOUS UNPOPULARITY

PRESUMABLY one can understand a government which has forced itself upon its subjects without so much as a by-your-leave caring nothing for popularity. A dictatorship, by virtue of the simple fact of being a dictatorship, admits to the world that whatever its subjects think it intends to maintain itself in power. A totalitarian state takes total power over its subjects and renders them totally powerless to dispose of it should they find it unsatisfactory.

It is, surely, the supposed difference between a dictatorship and a democracy that whereas the former cares not at all for the approval of its citizens, the democracy is a popular government. A democratically elected government is, after all, the people's choice. At an election the electorate—which in this country means all good citizens of both sexes over 21 and still not certified insane—is presented with alternatives (so the story goes) and they choose the party which they think is going to do right by them.

The very word democracy means people governing themselves and it is patently ridiculous to think of people governing themselves in a way they don't like when the people are sovereign, and not certified insane. Surely when people govern themselves the policies of their elected representatives, who take power only to serve them in the way they desire (or deserve), must be popular.

Or something is wrong somewhere.

Perhaps it is in our reasoning that something is wrong, in which case

we are sure some democrat who understands the system better than we do will write in to explain and put us right and make us realise, perhaps, that a sovereign people in a democracy are in fact as right as the chap we once heard of who liked banging his head against a wall because it was so nice when he stopped.

### Self-Praise

Failing this, however, we must admit to being somewhat puzzled by the self-praise currently being indulged in by spokesmen of the Government for their own courage in introducing so many unpopular measures. The function of a democratic government is to do things the people want done—in a word popular things. Yet all we get are Ministers dashing around the country patting themselves on the back and saying what splendid fellows they are because they are making themselves so thoroughly unpopular.

And they clearly recognise that in doing so they are increasing the feeling among the electorate that there ought to be an election, so that we might have a chance to throw out this unpopular lot. But the Government is determined to hang on and make itself even more unpopular, thereby, we assume, proving its tenacious, bulldog spirit, stern sense of duty, and insistence upon serving the people right whether they like it or not. As Mr. Harold Macmillan, our brilliant Prime Minister (to quote a friend of his), said, 'We are not going to run away'. He is going to stand and dish it out.

Rubbing it in a little further, Dr. Charles Hill said at Derby last week

of the Government's anti-inflation policy: 'However uncomfortable these measures may be, we intend to retain them over the next two years.'

### Courage

Our present Government seems set on showing the world that although it may be afraid of an election it is not afraid of making us thoroughly uncomfortable for the next two years. There's courage for you!

This brave dedication to duty is not to be thought of as a monopoly of the Tories, however. Many others in power have found the courage to do all sorts of unpleasant things to people for their own good. If you read carefully Comrade Khrushchev's courageous repudiation of Stalin, presented to an admiring world three years after the old dictator was safely dead, you will see that there was no denunciation of the unpopular measures which Uncle Joe forced upon the Russian people.

It was, and still is in Communist eyes, a gauge of Stalin's greatness that he was able to make the Russians thoroughly uncomfortable for nearly three decades and maintain himself in power, though unpopular (to put it mildly) even among his own comrades and at a cost of a mere—what?—twenty million lives? This is the stuff of greatness, and even the denunciation of it denotes courage of a high order.

### Devotion to Duty

And after Hungary, no-one can doubt that a Communist Government is the equal of a Conservative

Government in its firm recognition of its duty and its refusal to run away from its responsibilities just because the people hate its guts.

Nor should we imagine for one moment that the more homespun British parties like the Liberals or Labour would be any more cowardly in the face of their duty and historic destiny. Mr. Bevan's courage in clothing himself in the H-Bomb for the sake of humanity has already been highly praised both in these columns and those of the *Daily Express*. Who can doubt after their brave reversals of policy at Brighton that neither Mr. Bevan nor Mr. Cousins would ever flinch from taking unpopular decisions if they conceived them to be in the interests of the nation?

We are, quite clearly, living in stirring times. Not for us the enervating, degenerating atmosphere of appeasement between government and people. Thank goodness we are not to be insulted with the spectacle of a decadent ruling class currying favour with its subjects, of a degenerate senate trying to give its people what they want.

No, none of that perversion of democracy for us. Instead, we have stern righteousness. And as the Government introduces measure after measure which it knows we shall not like, we know, deep down, that it is all for our own good. We can almost hear an echo from days gone by, when father used to get busy with his slipper: 'This hurts me more than it hurts you.'

We didn't believe it then and we don't believe it now.

"Politics are now nothing more than means of rising in the world."

—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

## All at Sea

THE Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, Mr. Christopher Soames recalled only too vividly in a speech to the R.N.V.R. Officers' Association in London recently, a speech which was made during the last war by Churchill—at one time First Lord of the Admiralty. The then Prime Minister had stated that if the worst came to the worst the Fleet would be taken to Canada to continue the fight from there. Mr. Soames, in a burst of enthusiasm, said that in the event of a "global war" as many ships as possible would be got out of the ports and away to sea so that they might survive the nuclear attack.

At a first glance this might appear to be an excellent reason for joining up in the Navy in the hope of being lucky enough to be aboard one of the ones that gets away, but second thoughts do not support this escapist view, for it is all very well to get to sea but where does one go from there? The assumption is that a nuclear war will remain sufficiently local to allow the Fleet to go somewhere worth going to; that is to say to a part of the world free from radio-activity and other nuclear explosions—there to continue the fight...

Mr. Soames appears to be quite unconscious of the absurdity of his views, which are as follows:

"It is true that preparations to fight what is commonly termed a 'broken-back' war, which may or may not follow a nuclear assault which would inevitably be the first phase of a total war, comes low down in the order of priorities for military expenditure. . . . But priorities do not govern events, and if we are faced with a global war we would of course defend ourselves with all that we have got."

So far as seems likely the time lag between a nuclear assault—"the first phase"—and the onset of a total war would be a matter of hours, not days or weeks—but hours. From then on survival becomes almost an academic question, whether on land or sea, the problem of "defending ourselves" hardly arises, except in terms of destroying the attacker as quickly and efficiently as he is destroying you. In any event everyone is effectively destroyed.

For politicians to talk in terms of nuclear warfare other than as the quickest way to world suicide is to say the least, misleading and irresponsible. Most scientists and some politicians are by now fully aware that there is no defence against nuclear attack. It has been admitted, and it is insane to suppose that once such an attack has been made it will not cause retaliation and therefore ultimate destruction for the whole human race.

## Hints to Thorneycroft

For the first time since the 1948 Soviet blockade, the Communists this week shut off German traffic on the *Autobahn* linking West Berlin and West Germany. Armed Red Police forbade anyone to leave East Berlin and searched anyone trying to enter it. With his state thus sealed off, East German Premier Grotewohl went on the air at 8 a.m. Sunday to jolt his people out of bed. Grotewohl gave East Germans just 14 hours to hand in all their currency. Sleepy-eyed, they rushed to special conversion centres to get one new mark for each old one. No one was allowed to carry away more than 300 of the new marks (about £5 15s. 0d.); the rest was payable after a six-day wait. Unable to cross the border, businessmen and bankers in West Berlin found themselves in helpless possession of millions of East German marks that by nightfall had become worthless.

Time, 21/10/57.

## More Political Instinct, Please!

DURING the election campaign in West Germany, Economic Minister Ludwig Erhard, after making 86 speeches promising no price increases if voters stuck with Adenauer has been badly let down by the large Ruhr coalmine managers association who four days after the election campaign announced a price rise of 7/4 a ton.

Attacking them for having the political instinct of horses, Erhard told 250 of them at an emergency meeting in Essen: "This has hit like a bomb. You have abused the government. Your price increase is out of the question. I will shoot at you with all my guns."

It is reported that the coalmen's price break threatened other rises from steel to bread; trade unions broke into a chorus of wage demands, topped by the 1,600,000-member Metal Workers' Union's cry for a 10% boost.

Last week Erhard appealed to the six-nation European Coal and Steel Community at Luxembourg to withhold approval of the Ruhr coal-price increase. To back up the appeal, Erhard wheeled up his biggest price-stabilising weapon—his power to let more competing imports into the country. As a starter, he ordered his ministry to prepare schemes to slash rail freights on foreign oil and American coal. At week's end the mine managers were still holding their prices up, and Erhard was stubbornly getting ready to fire the gun of low-priced imports that always in the past has knocked them down.

If only the mine managers had the political instincts of politicians instead of horses they would find the patience to hang on a bit before raising their prices. After all, it is never long before the public forget what was said during election time. In a few months' time the coalmen could have quietly raised their prices and nobody would have thought any more about it.

## SPUTNIKITIS

THE full implications of Sputnik's arrival off the scene are as yet unknown. On the one hand it is stated that the ability to place a satellite in a stable orbit round the earth is conclusive proof of the possession of a reliable inter-continental ballistic weapon, but alternatively it is stated with equal force that such an assumption is very far from being an established fact.

Some would have us believe that a little thing like a satellite is merely elementary stuff compared with the complications involved in directing an explosive missile from say, Washington or its environs to, say, Moscow or thereabouts. Others are most anxious to impress upon us that if you can achieve a Sputnik, then it almost goes without saying that to direct an explosive missile from, say, Moscow to, say, Washington is simplicity itself.

Whichever argument is correct, though in all probability both are quite inaccurate, the point is somewhat superfluous. What is perhaps of greater moment is the actual effect which Sputnik is having upon world opinion and world thinking. However it is necessary to state why the point is of such little importance; it is for this reason. If the USSR does not possess an ICBM then they cannot use it, if the USSR does possess such a contrivance its existence is virtually cancelled out either because the USA also possesses one (which seems unlikely at this particular time), or for the reason that the USA by virtue of its alliances and pacts with countries which surround

the USSR is in a position to unleash a counter-offensive (in the event of being attacked) against the USSR, which will at least be sufficient to deter that country as much as the USA is itself deterred, from making an attack in the first place.

In other words Russian technological achievement is roughly equal, expressed in terms of aggression, to American technological achievement plus geographical position.

Hitherto the USA has considered itself in a superior position to the USSR—it was reckoned that both countries would have to use the old-fashioned aeroplane to make a successful attack. This left the USA in a better position mainly on geographical grounds. Now it may well be that this state of superiority no longer exists, and has been replaced by one of equality. This, in a sense, could be regarded as a balance of power devoutly to be wished, for if neither side is convinced of its own ability to win then neither side will risk an attack.

From all of which it may be deduced that the important thing is the international game of consequences—or what the world thinks.

Sputnik is reported as having made a tremendous impact upon the nations of Afro-Asia; this is understandable, and from an American point of view a deafening blow. The hundreds of millions of Afro-Asians have no doubt regarded the battle of the giants of East and West as an ideological hostility based on differences in economic and political structure, with the "up-and-coming"

Communist system as roughly equal in strength to the existing materialist-capitalist Western system. But where Communism might have an edge over Capitalism so far as a rational type of society was concerned, Capitalism had achieved a greater measure of success in terms of a better standard of living due in the main to a higher state of technological progress. Sputnik may have a startling effect upon these general attitudes, for it apparently represents the point at which Eastern technology has overtaken the West.

This is very far from being the truth on all levels except the one in question, but for many people it is the thin end of the wedge, for them the Russians are no longer a backward people, they have lifted themselves out of the mire by their boot-laces and Communism can therefore be said to work.

It would be idle to suggest that it is all quite as simple as that, but it may well be the kind of thinking which is going on in the minds of uncommitted peoples throughout the world, particularly where those peoples have no reason to be sympathetic towards the West which has done so little for them.

It is all very dangerous, and a terrible expression of a world in which it appears to be obligatory to take sides, despite the obvious fact that neither side is worth supporting.

That the grounds for supporting either side should be its greater ability to destroy the other is not only frightening in its irrationality but is also a horrifying indication of a completely false set of values.

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THE NINETEEN DAYS by  
George Urban. Heinemann,  
30s.

THE significance of an event is not always measured by its size or its success and it would therefore be hasty to dismiss Hungary's abortive October Revolution as something buried in history. Defeat for a revolting nation, and the restoration of Soviet domination, might seem to be indisputable facts—but only if we see human destiny as something conducted and decided by men in power manipulating the apparatus of their authority.

What happened last year in Hungary, as with the effects of plague or the coming of literacy to backward people, will be carried indefinitely into the future, and most obviously in the following three ways. The Hungarian people themselves, in the short period when there was no effective central authority, spontaneously and without experience, turned naturally to what seemed a fundamental way of organising their society—through workers' councils and individual responsibility. Secondly, the tens of thousands of disaffected Russian soldiers, withdrawn from Hungary because they refused to kill those whom they could not possibly regard as the enemy, carried home their horror and revulsion. Finally, there comes proof that the indoctrination of youth can never lead to absolute or predictable results.

In *Ten Days that Shook the World*, John Reed wrote: "Just as historians search the records for the minutest details of the Paris Commune, so they will want to know what happened in Petrograd in November, 1917, the spirit that animated the people, and how the leaders

# Nineteen Days That Shook the Communists

looked, talked and acted." *The Nineteen Days* by George Urban is a record of how the Revolution, exactly thirty-nine years later, had progressed to the point of shooting down the workers of Budapest. As in the earlier book, the naked drama of events is successfully captured, the numerous manifestoes carefully documented, the personalities revealed, the feeling conveyed of a possibly momentous figure. Although there is no Lenin or Trotsky, as at Petrograd, to add the significance of famous leaders, a truer perspective of a revolutionary situation is created by the legion of minor heroes thrown up by the spontaneous forces of the moment.

The Nineteen Days are now familiar history and rather than repeat what is already widely known, it might be useful to reflect on events after the space of a year. At the time, for example, there was some optimism among anar-

chists that the setting up of workers' councils and the peasants' spontaneous responsibility for supplying the towns with food might be the beginning of more far-reaching social changes. Particularly with the breakdown of the central authorities and the movement for regional autonomy. This regional autonomy, however, to quote *The Nineteen Days*, quickly became the nucleus of a rival government:—"Early in the morning of Wednesday, 31 October, the whole of Transdanubia came under the central authority of the Transdanubian National Council with its seat at Győr. It was a properly formed regional parliament, each of the National Councils of the affiliated countries being represented by four, and the affiliated cities by two, deputies. The outstanding feature of this rival authority was its working-class character, for it comprised, over and above the West Hungarian counties, the

National Council of Miskolc and the Workers' Council of Csepel Island in Budapest."

There was never any doubt, really, that had the revolution succeeded it would quickly have come under the influence of the Catholic church, a parliamentary system dominated by a coalition of Smallholders and Social Democrats, and perhaps a strong Socialist trade union movement. Internationally, the country's status might have been that of another neutral Finland. This is not to suggest that the revolution did not deserve the support and sympathy of all those who hoped for something more libertarian. What has happened since, the shootings and deportations, the forced confessions and the intimidation of intellectuals, are a grim reminder of the consequences of a rigid black-or-white interpretation of events.

There is, however, the question of violence and the degree to which even the most highly-principled pacifist could remain aloof from a struggle which was as much subjective as objective. Violence is the most extreme way of imposing authority or purpose, no matter the reasons, irrespective of issues of justice or injustice, and, like governments themselves, creates its own limitations and the certainty of ultimate defeat. To shoot at AVO Security Guards and Russian soldiers for various social and intellectual freedoms, better clothes and more food, means a willingness to buy them for the price of killing. If there is any truth in the inevitability of an anarchist society, if there is any hope of men, at some time, becoming sufficiently responsible to recognise certain fundamental truths, then whatever is achieved to-day by shooting will some day come about without shooting. For those, however, who have never known the personal strain and suffering of living under conditions of the most inhibiting kind, it is only honest to recognise that one cannot predict, in similar circumstances, one's own reaction.

Looking back at Budapest, the devices and treachery of the Gero Communist government and the Soviet authorities, and the gullibility of the revolutionary forces, stand out in all their tragedy. On the day before the Russians launched their second attack, after they had brought a further 250,000 men into the country, the Soviet High Command began discussions with the Hungarians about the promised evacuation of their troops. They made only three conditions: "The restoration of destroyed Red Army memorials and desecrated Russian cemeteries, a guaran-

tee that the resting place of Soviet soldiers would in future be respected by the Hungarians, and finally that the Soviet Army, when leaving Hungary, should be accorded full military honours." The following day, the troop dispositions satisfactorily completed, the attack began and the Hungarian representatives, like the Polish government that went to Moscow after the Second World War, were simply arrested.

Earlier, to illustrate how out of touch was the Gero government, a famous sports commentator made the following radio broadcast during the first days of the demonstrations:—"Our sports life stands on the threshold of gigantic tests (the Olympic Games). Would it not be a happy moment if the Hungarian flag were again hoisted on the Olympic mast at Melbourne?" He also asked that order be restored in case the international football match with Sweden on the following Sunday was affected.

The Nineteen Days proves satisfactorily that whether or not the attack on Egypt had been carried out by the British and the French, the Soviet High Command were already moving reinforcements into Hungary and had made all preparations for a second attack. When Nye Bevan, as he did after his recent talks with Khrushchev, maintains that the Russians reacted only when they felt that Suez meant the beginning of a third world war, he is simply denying the facts and showing that kind of readiness to be deceived that also afflicted the Hungarians.

At the end of *The Nineteen Days* is a section entitled *Oldspeak-Newspeak* in which there is a day-by-day comparison of radio broadcasts from both sides of the Iron Curtain. As eloquently as anything in this very valuable book, it illustrates the underlying lessons. For example, Radio Moscow, 5th November: "Initial reports from Hungary show that Kadar's programme has met with full support from the patriots of People's Hungary. At factories and mills, or just in the street, people are ardently discussing and approving it. . . . Working-people everywhere are showing their sympathy and moral support for the Hungarian working-people who are upholding their just cause, their freedom and independence." While, on the same day, the Hungarian radio was crying: "Comrades, our place is on the barricades, where our Hungarian brothers are continuing the almost (hopeless?) struggle against brutal imperialism. . . . Those who co-operate in any way and in the name of any party with the occupying colonial Power are traitors. . . ." C.H.

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## PEOPLE AND IDEAS A Million Private Dreams - I

"The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country . . ."

GEORGE ORWELL.

"There is in everyone a mental and spiritual country which is their own, a sort of ideal environment which they make for themselves as children. They seek, as adults, a 'real' scenery as much like it as possible; that is, of course, that tiny minority which is able to seek anything but a bare survival at a decent level of perception."

—EDWARD HYAMS.

BEHIND all our purposive activities, our domestic and social arrangements, our positive commitments to the outside world, our ideologies, is the ideal landscape, the 'world-view' or 'life-style', which we have acquired in childhood. It sifts through our selective and self-censored memory as a myth and idyll of the way things ought to be, the lost paradise to be regained.

In his essay *On Memory and Childhood Amnesia*, Ernest Schachtel writes: "Mankind's belief in a lost paradise is repeated in the belief held by most people in the individual myth of their happy childhood. Like most myths this one contains elements of both truth and illusion, is woven out of wishes, hopes, remembrance and sorrow, and hence has more than one meaning. . . ."

The myth, he thinks, takes the place of the lost memory of the "actual riches, spontaneity, freshness of childhood experience." And he declares that "each genuine recovery of forgotten experience and, with it, something of the person that one was when having the experience carries with it an element of enrichment, adds to the light of consciousness, and thus widens the conscious scope of one's life". For childhood amnesia, Schachtel claims, covers those aspects and experiences of the former and forgotten personality which are incompatible with the culture in which we live.

"If they were remembered, man would demand that society affirm and accept the total personality with all its potentialities. In a society based on partial suppression of the personality such a demand, even the mere existence of a really free personality, would constitute a threat to the society."

PERHAPS it is this demand, strong and insistent in some, shrunken to vague wishes in others, which constitutes the 'ideal environment', the private dream behind our public acts, compounded as it is of myth and 'genuine recovery of forgotten experience'. The particular intensity with which people recall their childhood, even when their evocation bears little relation to reality, is one of the reasons why the first pages of autobiographies are more interesting than the last. Another is the relation of their picture of the home and family, with their view of society and all the human institutions which grow from the basic social unit. The American critic Lionel Trilling writes of the "great modern theme" of "the child's elemental emotions and familial trust being violated by the ideas and institutions of modern life", and he notes that:

"Haunted as we all are by quiet dreams of peace and wholeness, we are eager and quick to find them embodied in another people. Other peoples may have for us the same beautiful integrity that, from childhood on, we are taught to find in some period of our national or ethnic pasts. Truth, we feel, must somewhere be embodied in man. Ever

since the nineteenth century, we have been fixing on one kind of person or another, one group of people or another, to satisfy our yearning . . . everyone searching for innocence, for simplicity and integrity of life."

You can scarcely open a conversation or a book, without running into somebody's private dream. Here, for instance in Orwell's glimpse-through-a-window at the 'perfect symmetry' of family life:

"Especially on winter evenings—after tea, when the fire glows in the open range and dances mirrored in the steel fender, when Father, in shirtsleeves, sits in the rocking chair at one side of the fire, reading the racing finals, and Mother sits on the other with her sewing, and the children are happy with a penorth of mint humbugs, and the dog lolls roasting himself on the rag mat."

Or here, from the much discussed *Not By Bread Alone*, is Dudintsev's private dream:

"In Galitski's home and family, everything was permeated by a particular kind of lovable simplicity which cannot be imitated or faked and therefore is not often met with. It was a family where there were many children, where everything was clean but lying about untidily, where the furniture was simple and inexpensive, and where generous helpings are served at table."

Often, of course, in the hierarchy of private dreams, domestic bliss is simply what you fall back on when all else fails. This dialogue with a leaving-age school-girl comes from the book *Crestwood Heights*:

Me: What do you want in life?  
Jane: A million dollars.  
Me: Is that all?  
Jane: Oh, well, to be famous, to make a contribution. . . .  
Me: What do you think you will get?  
Jane: Marriage—children—an average family—an average amount of money.

★

A GOOD society, we may suppose, is one which makes possible, not necessarily the realisation of people's private dreams, for they are too various and mutually incompatible, but one which at least makes possible their formulation and some degree of approach towards them. When Edward Hyams speaks of the 'tiny minority' of people who are able to seek in adult life that ideal environment they have dreamed up for themselves as children, he is thinking of course, of the impossibility of thinking about the way you want to live when all your energy and ingenuity have to be devoted to keeping alive at all. "What have you got in your sandwich?" the Maresciallo in the film *Bread, Love and Dreams* asks one of the old men chewing a crust by the fountain. "Fantasies," he replies. For how many of the two and a half thousand million people in the world are private dreams possible?

But in a society like our own, with its 'expanding economy' and rising incomes, are we any nearer to our fifty million personal landscapes? Is our environment, our family life, the way we live, determined by anything more than sheer necessity, by social habits which may not reflect what we really want, by a paucity of available choices, or by accident? Sociologists of every description were never busier in analysing, tabulating and cataloguing our society. What can they tell us of the relation between the way we live and the way we would like to live?

In the next few weeks I would like to examine some of their recent studies from the point of view of these questions. C.W.

## Anarchists on Television

IT was with very mixed feelings that anarchists watched the television programme last week present anarchism to the viewing public.

We had an advance hint of the line the programme was going to take when the announcement appeared in *TV Times* and asked the question 'Or do they mean chaos?' and our fears were confirmed when the telecast began with a close-up of a smoking bomb.

We felt better during the interview with Rita Milton, who had surprised the interviewer—so he said—by being young and attractive, and she presented clearly and convincingly those points which were not cut out. But this was a brief interlude, for we were soon shown old pictures (lurid, artists' reconstructions) of bomb outrages against Kings and Presidents of the 1890's.

Then over to an interview with a Mr. William Pickles, a product of the London School of Economics, who damned anarchism with faint praise when he was not being plainly stupid—as, for example, when he maintained that Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* demonstrated that he (Kropotkin) had never seen a thrush devour a worm.

This piece of academic enlightenment was followed by a very brief interview with our comrade Alan Albon who spoke of his experience in *Communitas*, the anarchist community in the Cotswolds. Unfortunately Alan had to admit that it had not been a large community and in any case was no longer in existence. For the interviewer this was a clear demonstration of the failure of anarchism.

Then back to a rather jumbled scene at Hyde Park and interviews with members of the crowd, none of whom were sympathetic in spite of the fact that Rita Milton was told at the time of the filming and recording that two of those interviewed said they were anarchists!

Then a few final, antagonistic words from the interviewer and that was that. Of the fifteen minutes the programme lasted not more than five could have been allotted to our comrades' presen-

tation of their ideas. The rest of the time was either superficial criticism—with no opportunity allowed for answering—or irrelevancies thrown in presumably to keep the programme well down to the mental level of the dullest viewer.

We had been assured by comrades that previous programmes in the 'Out of Step' series had been dealt with more or less sympathetically. This was certainly not the case with anarchism. Could it be that the producers of the programme saw nothing to be afraid of in nudism, scientology and flying saucers, and did not understand the social dynamite of A. S. Neill's work in education—but were scared of anarchism?

## So Much Was Cut

AFTER seeing the finished result of ITV's programme (October 16th, 'Out of Step'), which we had reason to believe would be treated more seriously, one doubts the wisdom of having collaborated on a broadcast which could have added very little to the knowledge of viewers on anarchism.\*

A statement on anarchism made from our platform was entirely cut except for a discordant jumble of sounds largely contributed by a Conservative speaker who was theoretically conducting a discussion with me.

The interview which took place off the platform, which included statements on war, the international aspect of anarchism, Sacco & Vanzetti (specifically asked for), Communism and Christianity, was drastically cut.

The commentator's prejudiced remarks and the smoking bomb which introduced the programme indicated the impression it was hoped would be conveyed to the viewers.

As our milkman voluntarily remarked next morning: "That man was against you from the start" and gallantly he added: "tell me who he is and I'll do him". One viewer who obviously was not taken in.

RITA MILTON.  
\* And Alan Albon now has similar doubts on this also

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 18, No. 43. October 26, 1957

## ENSURING HUNGER

“ONE part of the World has so much wheat that it does not know what to do with it while another has not as much food as would be good for it”. This is not a quotation from an anarchist criticism of the capitalist system, but the opening sentence from an editorial in the *Manchester Guardian* last week, commenting on the Canadian-American conference on economic matters at which, so far as we can see, agreements reached between the two governments over the disposal of surplus food products, will make it even more difficult for the hungry nations of the world to enjoy a few rotting scraps (it is said that much of the wheat surplus in the U.S. is unfit for human consumption; hungry people, however, are not fussy) from the bulging American larders.

Canada's objections to American methods for disposing of surplus wheat stocks was directed not so much to those transactions in which payment was made in local currencies, but to the large barter deals with England and Western Europe, the traditional and most important markets for Canadian wheat. The American government, which has repeatedly given a pledge that all surplus disposal activities would be conducted as far as possible without interfering with “normal commercial marketing” discovered, in examining Canadian objections, that the barter programme had in fact “got out of hand” and was interfering with normal commercial sales, that is American as well as Canadian! And some months ago the Department of Agriculture decided that each barter contract must result in a “net increase in exports of the agricultural commodity involved and that interest must be paid instead of relying on a simple letter of credit”.

“Until this conference”—writes Max Freedman, *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in New York—“this new rule, which has reduced trade under barter to marginal proportions, was no more than a rule sanctioned by Mr. Benson as Secretary of Agriculture. Now it is an assurance given publicly by the American Government as a whole to the Government in Ottawa.”

And he adds that

“American officials welcomed Canada's protests against barter, since it strengthened their hand against any repeal or revision of the new rule. Three American groups wanted an enlarged barter programme: the grain companies which had found the old system very profitable; the American Farm Bureau which had reversed its earlier policy and now sought a return to barter but on a smaller scale; and the mineral people, with their interests in a large strategic stockpile.

Presumably the Government is against a repeal of the new rule because other, politically and financially more powerful, interests are opposed to the barter scheme.

Max Freedman concludes that “after this conference it will be much more difficult for barter operations to be resumed in their old form”, and this he considers “a victory which may properly be regarded as valuable, timely, and encouraging” though he does not explain on what grounds it can be thus considered, and the more so since he declares that not only does no one pretend “that all anxiety about American farm policy has been removed” but that so far as Canada is concerned not much progress has in fact been made “in solving her own huge surplus problem”.

Obviously the surplus problems are not solved by settling squabbles over existing markets. The Cana-

dian-American conference simply ironed out financial differences between the wheat marketing organisations of these two countries: what wheat the United States will not barter with England and Western Europe this coming year, Canada will presumably sell at market prices. And what will be knocked off Canada's surplus stocks will be correspondingly added to America's, while Asia's hungry millions will go on being hungry.

★

TO this problem of surpluses in a hungry world, the *Manchester Guardian* has little to offer, for

there is no early prospect of the heavily populated Asian countries having sufficient foreign currency available to buy much more wheat except when they are threatened with famine as a result of crop failures at home.

except to suggest that

From the producing countries' point of view, at least in the dollar area, there should be a much greater reduction in the acreage put down to wheat than the Canadian and American Governments have achieved so far.

What a blunt admission of personal failure as well as of a system, when intelligent and allegedly liberal men can be so blinded as to view a financial problem as more important to society than a human one! In other words, that it is more important to safeguard “normal commercial marketing”, (*which means maintaining prices by restricting production to what can be sold for cash plus a reserve to be held available in the event of crop failure in any of the wheat growing regions of the world—not on humanitarian grounds, but on the good business grounds that countries threatened with famine will pawn their future for a few sacks of wheat*) than to encourage more food production and to use the *Guardian's* influential editorial columns to launch an all-out attack on a system which possesses all the scientific knowledge and techniques for unlimited production but is incapable of organising distribution to satisfy real, human needs!

★

IF what the *Manchester Guardian* offers—and after all, it is only echoing what others advocate and what has been done in country after country—as a solution to the surplus problems of the wheat producing regions is the *practical* solution then the charge that anarchists are *impractical* is the highest compliment we can be paid by our critics!

What we impractical anarchists declare is that to-day, more than ever before in Man's long history, the growth of scientific knowledge, and its application to production techniques, to the development of communications; the ever-growing inter-dependability between peoples for the raw materials of our material—as well as cultural—civilisation, make the maintenance of geographical, political and economic frontiers not only a ridiculous anachronism but a tragedy which in the present century alone has cost hundreds of millions of lives, untold misery, frustration and wasted human energy.

Whereas on the one hand scientific knowledge has been instrumental in prolonging life, in expanding Man's potentialities for a richer material and cultural life—by contracting the distances which separated man from man and from the natural sources of potential wealth—on the other, a minority of men have contrived to turn to their personal advantage that which obviously belongs to all mankind. But we are expected to accept this latter state of affairs as normal. By some, as a kind of pre-ordained law of human nature, by others, the “successful” cynics, politicians and business men, as the price we have to pay for a tooth-and-claw, rough-and-tumble “Darwinian struggle of the fittest” pattern of society.

This kind of argument seems to be generally accepted without question, in spite of the fact that even

DEAR SOMEBODY,

Maybe you have picked up a copy of this paper for the first time and are no doubt wondering what it is all about. How can these people advocate the abolition of government? Why is it that they disagree with all political parties? Is it sheer contrariness? Or are they mad?—irresponsible?—neurotics with chips on their shoulders? These, and similar questions are perhaps troubling your mind. As one who has been possessed by this ‘madness’ for over ten years let me try to show you a few of the reasons why we anarchists see things the way we do.

Ever since the beginnings of civilisation man has been faced with two fundamentally different ways of ordering his life: the way of power and the way of freedom. In most cases he has chosen the first way, the way of power. The results are written plainly across the face of the earth. In every country there exists a division of people into two classes: the rulers and the ruled. From this division has sprung systems of society in which a small minority have dominated and exploited the majority. It does not matter which of the existing social systems you examine, in each of them you will find this division. Whether the government in question is democratic or autocratic, republican or monarchical, there is always a power-wielding élite on the one hand and a power-less mass on the other. Whether the economic structure is labelled - capitalist, feudalist or socialist, there is a privileged group that obtains its wealth and pre-eminence out of the labour of others. Everywhere we see that the principle of power, the domination of man by man, is triumphant and has, in the shape of the modern totalitarian state, reached its logical and lunatic culmination. War, inequality, irresponsibility, increasing mental disease, are part of the warp and woof of our existence, are woven into the very texture of our lives.

“But hold on,” you may say, “surely you are being too dogmatic and one-sided? Is there not a great

the worst things that Man does against himself would not be possible without a feeling of co-operation and loyalty among men (wars are fought between men, yes; but wars would be unthinkable without a deep feeling of solidarity among large groups of men, and loyalty to values, however misplaced, on both sides of no-man's land). It is equally an indisputable fact that the giants, the human élite if you will, who have most contributed to Man's knowledge of himself, to his cultural development, as well as over his physical environment, have rarely been at the same time the oppressors of their fellow-beings, the advocates of special privileges and Power by reason of their exceptional intellectual gifts. And what of the toiling millions who have actually produced the material wealth which has maintained life (more or less) for the world's growing millions? Why have they, in spite of their vital rôle as producers, always been the under-privileged of our society?

★

EXPLOITATION and the oppression of man by man has, it is true, gone on for a long time. It is no reason, however, for assuming that this is the “natural order of things” or an inevitable aspect of human society. Any more than in the question of food surpluses considerations of Finance should override the needs of a thousand million hungry fellow humans. But these artificial, minority, interests obviously will decide for us until enough people have the courage and the sense of responsibility necessary to be not *practical* (which has in any case been deformed to mean *expedient* or simply *dishonest*) but *human*. When this happens there will be no food surpluses rotting in warehouses and Liberty ships, nor will one half of mankind be wasting away through hunger and neglect.

## A LETTER TO SOMEBODY

difference between a democratic system, such as we have in Britain, and a dictatorship, such as they have in Russia? Do we not have a say in the running of our lives? Certainly, there are many things wrong with our system, but it is quite a different way of life to that of the undemocratic East.”

There are differences between the system of power in this country and that which exists in Russia, but the differences are those of the ‘accidents’ of power, not of its ‘essence’. It is true in this country, for example, that we are allowed to choose the government, or, rather, we are allowed to choose the government from among those who offer themselves as candidates for political office. Yet, is this really having a ‘say’ in how our lives are run? Do we, the electorate, declare the wars, compel the collection of taxes, order military conscription? Most certainly not. We have to fight the wars, pay the taxes, be the conscripts, but we do not decide who will be fought, taxed or conscripted. Although we are supposed to have ‘government by consent’, our consent is not asked regarding how the money we pay in taxes is spent, whether we should go to war, or allow ourselves or our sons and daughters to be conscripted. The right to vote simply means that we can select those who will govern us—it does not mean that we govern ourselves. We can choose our masters; we can dispense with them. The relationship of the voter to ‘his’ government does not basically differ from that of him who is voteless: one delegates his responsibility to others; the other has his responsibility taken away from him.

Power and freedom are incompatible. The free man is neither governed nor the governor. He determines his own life and makes his own choices. The freedom which the anarchist advocates is not a war of each against all, an orgy of rape, pillage and bloodshed which our opponents often say it is. Freedom is the voluntary co-operation of sovereign individuals to satisfy the basic human needs of love, work and knowledge. It is not a gift from some higher power, nor is it the inevitable result of some historical process. Freedom has to be won from the depths of our souls and created in our relations with our fellows. We do not have to wait for a Second Coming or the Day of the Revolution in order to begin to become free; we can start the change from being a boss-man or a mass-man to being a free man here and now. Each time we think for ourselves, act directly to solve a problem which confronts us, seek to co-operate freely with our fellows instead of trying to coerce them or allowing them to coerce us, we are making ourselves into free persons and contributing to the freedom of all.

Dear Somebody, I do not expect that what I have written has con-

vinced you of the truth of our case. Indeed, I would be very surprised if it had, since the change from power-thinking to freedom-thinking is not an easy one. But at least I hope I have written enough to show you that our ‘madness’ is not that of the mental hospital. I will finish my letter with one final remark. It is this: In the course of his history man has tried every conceivable form of government. He has tried Christian governments, atheist governments, Mohammedan governments, conservative governments, socialist governments, communist governments, liberal governments, social credit governments, prohibition governments and, for all I know, flat-earth governments. Whatever type of government he has tried, however, the tragic circle of violence, exploitation, and frustration has continued. Whatever love and knowledge he has achieved has been *in spite* of governments, not *because* of them. Is it not time to consider that the failure of governments to end this tragic circle is not due to their personnel or their ideology, but to their *very nature*, to the fact that they are power institutions? We anarchists believe that all persons are potentially capable of living together without power; that, in fact, we can only live in a fully dignified, creative, *human* way, when the pattern of domination and submission which is power has been replaced by the pattern of freedom and responsibility which is anarchy. Why not think it over and see if you agree with us?

S. E. PARKER.

## Nudism Banned in Arkansas

THE State of Arkansas appears to be determined to make its name synonymous with reaction. While worldwide attention is riveted upon the desegregation struggle at Little Rock High School, Governor Faubus is not idle in other directions.

The British Sun-Bathing Association provides us with the following information:

“From Arkansas—already too much in the sun—there comes news of a piece of intolerance which, if less harsh, is even more sinister and capable of exploitation.

“A Bill to prohibit nudism has been passed by both Houses of the Legislature and signed by the much-discussed Governor Faubus. It is understood to have been inspired by the Rev. Mr. Baxton Sawyer, who has been foiled in recent years in his attempt to outlaw nudity in Kansas, Oklahoma, Michigan and Missouri.

“The effect of the Act is completely to prohibit social nudity as a danger to “the public peace, health, welfare, safety and morals”. But what is more extraordinary and far-reaching is that it is now unlawful “to advocate, demonstrate or promote nudism”.

“Not only is action prohibited; opinion itself is stifled.”

HAROLD COLLINS,

Press Relations Officer, BSBA.

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★

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27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

## The Tender Trap

C. is a communitarian. He wants to put his anarchism into practice in community experiments which are to be both his personal answer to the question How Shall I Live? and a beacon light to others.

D. is an empirical toughie. He doesn't have a conscience about all those compromises; he asserts his right to pick and choose which he shall make. At the same time he hasn't any illusions about existing institutions. They're none of them any good.

E. is an empirical softie. He makes every possible compromise with the society around us, but since anarchism seeks to replace government and authority as a means of social organisation, by a network of voluntary non-coercive association, he looks for examples of this principle of organisation in existing society and tries to strengthen them and enlarge their scope.

These five types do not exhaust the range of anarchist attitudes, and anarchists being as inconsistent and changeable as anybody else, many of us vacillate between several of them. Who can

say that A. is wrong. The more you look at the world to-day, the more you feel the need for revolution, however quaint or apocalyptic it sounds in British or American ears. Is B. wrong, or 'unrealistic' as the clever-dicks would have it? It seems to me that Danilo Dolci or Vinoba Bhave are a good deal more realistic than those who dismiss them with a smile. Is C. wrong? Criticism of him seems to be a matter of sour grapes if he succeeds, or 'I told you so' if he fails. Is D. wrong? Who has the right to expect him to be a saint? Is E. wrong? I am too close to him to say. Certainly he runs the risk of whittling down his anarchism to a kind of National Council of Social Service attitude, but at the same time he is affirming precisely that difference between anarchism and "non-anarchist progressive attitudes" that P.H. mentioned in his letter.

The point is well-made by Geoffrey Ostergaard in the new issue of the *University Libertarian*, when he declares that:

"The task of the anarchist is not however, to dream about the future society; rather it is to act as anarchistically as he can within the present society; to avoid

as far as possible situations in which he is commanded or is impelled to command; and to endeavour to foster relations of mutual and voluntary co-operation between his fellow-men . . . To achieve anarchy, the State must be dispensed with; and it will be dispensed with to the extent that men become capable of living without it".

The progressive puts his faith in political action, the anarchist seeks to by-pass it, the progressive sees the value of voluntary associations as an indispensable adjunct to the machinery of government, the anarchist wants them to grow out of that role into one of responsibility and autonomy. The difference in attitude was illustrated in a radio programme to-night (Oct. 21st), on the very subject that started this discussion—parent-teacher associations. Sir Basil Henriques, in explaining the purpose of such associations, declared that it was no part of their business to take over the functions of the school's governors or managers. The anarchist on the other hand must affirm that this is precisely what these associations should do, and that it is exactly in this direction that anarchists should try to influence them. *London.* C.W.

## Independent Schools

THE recent remarks by C.W. (*People and Ideas* 12/10/57) about the impudence of the Ministry of Education's machinery for closing down "objectionable" independent schools, are given added point by a letter published in the *Times Educational Supplement* from the headmaster of an independent school, with experience of a wide variety of local education authority schools, who writes:

"The school of which I have the privilege to be the headmaster exists because of the profound dissatisfaction of the parents of my pupils with the schools provided by the Minister, often on all of these very grounds, and as often on much more serious grounds, which boils down to the fact that the Minister, through his educational system, accepts and condones patterns of treatment of children to which these parents, thoughtful citizens of this country, are very-unwilling indeed to subject their own well-loved and cared-for children. As a result, while continuing to pay taxes to finance these State schools which they regard as seriously unsatisfactory, they also spend considerable sums of hard-earned money each year on paying for the existence of a school of their own which, although it struggles permanently against financial difficulties and suffers from many inadequacies of which we are all too acutely aware, they yet regard as more nearly fulfilling their concept of the kind of education they desire for their children.

"Much of what the Minister appears to regard as 'efficient and suitable instruction'—to judge by our own not inconsiderable experience of his schools—we regard with horror, and wish to protect our children from it and to provide them with what we regard as much better fare; so our educational patterns and methods are, of deliberate choice, considerably different from those which he endorses. Some of my teaching staff, hand-picked for the work here, possess no paper qualifications at all. But they do possess other qualifications which we prize very highly and which are all too often sadly lacking in the staff-rooms of the State's schools. There are hundreds upon hundreds of teachers in the Minister's employment whom I would never dream of allowing near my pupils and who could never achieve the standards we set ourselves—yet they are regarded as 'efficient and suitable' by the Minister.

"Nor would we expect his inspectors—people who have proved themselves so thoroughly 'efficient and suitable' inside the Minister's educational system that they have been given posts of special responsibility for its maintenance—to understand or approve of our ways. "May we have an assurance from the Minister that until such time as his own

schools come much nearer to satisfying us, he will not dare to describe as 'objectionable' the school we have created at sore cost to ourselves, however much it may fail to conform to his regulations and standards? Especially as there are very many ways in which we hope it will never conform to his regulations and standards!"

Another question which might be asked of the Minister and his inspectors is how many of the State's schools meet the Ministry's own statutory requirements. How many of the school buildings condemned in the famous 1925 Black List of the Board of Education are still in use? How many classes in both primary and secondary schools are larger than the Ministry's regulations allow. Does he propose to close down what a recent writer described as the "shabby educational slums" which exist in many rural districts?

The Minister of Education, who draws a salary of £5,500 a year for doing less than nothing, ought to find time to answer some of these questions before

## 'A Subtle Sense of the Wacky'

DEAR SIR,  
Reviews of art exhibitions in *FREEDOM* are usually so much more stimulating and expressive of a different viewpoint from other papers—why so few? A pity really for it means some important shows get passed over and a few second-rate ones get a decent write-up. Thinking over last week's article I am not at all sure that D.R. would agree with this statement. A few remarks in the opening paragraphs on the "usefulness" of pictures have me a little worried. The purpose of painting as I see it is to communicate, or express oneself, through plastic means to others, as is done with words or music—if this is so, then surely we should expect more than a decorative wall panel from manipulators of paint. Is honesty such a prerogative of the decorative painter? If he tries

## SKIFFLE AT THE MALATESTA

WE have discussed Skiffle in these columns on various occasions in the past, and from now on Saturday evenings at the Malatesta Club are likely to be enlivened by the presence of skiffle groups.

This is being done purely in order for its members to study the anthropological and revolutionary implications of the emergence of this social phenomenon in the post-war period (oh yeah?) and in order that serious students shall be encouraged to make use of this facility, the entrance charge on skiffle nights will be only one shilling and sixpence.

## MALATESTA CLUB

Saturday Night is Skiffle Night  
Saturday, November 21

THE ATLANTA SKIFFLE GROUP  
from 8 p.m. till you drop.  
Admission and Coffee: 1/6

## 'The Awkward Question'

THE reprint of the article by Colin Ward with the above title has been circulated to those readers who ordered quantities. (As a result of the suggestion for a reprint in *FREEDOM* 24/8/57).

There are a few hundred of these leaflets still available. They may be obtained from Freedom Press for 2s. per 100.

IN his letter last week, P.H. raises "the question of the relation between anarchism and non-anarchist progressive attitudes", and the value of "trying to become really clear about what we want, what we are prepared to accept, and how we can get it". What does one do, he asks, when faced with well-meaning people, who are verbally enthusiastic about all the things that interest us, who use all the O.K. phrases, but who "when brought down to specific issues have the same attitudes to the vital matters of power, authority and freedom as have generals and public school headmasters"? His question and his examples touch very closely upon my own dilemma which is, I think the dilemma of every anarchist who wants to relate his view of life to the world he lives in.

What does it mean to be an anarchist? Let us take five anarchists, A, B, C, D, and E, to represent five types of answer to this question.

A. is steeped in the teachings of the classical anarchist and socialist thinkers. He calls his associates 'comrade' and his language and exhortations are those current in the revolutionary movements of fifty years ago. For him there are no compromises and no short cuts.

B. is an out-and-out of a different sort, rather like our friend Ammon Hennacy in America. He pays no taxes and arranges his life to avoid any compromises with the state. He is a tireless propagandist who 'lives out' his anarchism.

## Briefs from the Press

## Anarchism Defined

Libertarian Socialism had its origin in anarchism, and the anarchist way is "Do it yourself if you can." The advantage of anarchism is that who wants can practise it if left alone. There is no compulsion; if there were it would not be anarchism.

—Lord Amwell in a letter to "Daily Telegraph" (9/10/57).

## Agent Provocateur

In the *News of the World* the other day there was a report of two alleged cases of indecent assault. The assaults were alleged to have taken place on succeeding days, at the same place, and upon the same man, who was, I need hardly add, a policeman. It is, of course, possible that the policeman was just very unlucky, but it is much more likely that his job was to act as an agent provocateur and that he was successful—except that both men were acquitted.

—The Spectator (18/10/57).

## How He Got It

All this week press and radio have been telling us that Lord Nuffield has, in the course of his life, donated twenty-odd millions to charity. Is this not wrongly put? Surely the money has been donated by Lord Nuffield's employees and customers, from whom it was extracted by wages evidently lower, or prices higher, than necessary.

—Letter to "New Statesman" (19/10/57).

## City Life

Here is a world not specifically Italian. All Western Europe and most of the United States now have big numbers of such human parasites in their cities.

From these books it would be easy to surmise that there is something badly wrong with the whole of Italian society. But the material in these books will be used by more detached students, as time goes on, for a more general study of how sections of big city populations in our day, not only in Rome, appear to be the prey of overwhelming social, political, and artistic frustration.

—Review of two books on the Montesi Case in "Manchester Guardian" (18/10/57).

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Volume 6, 1956

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## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Every Sunday at 7.30 at  
THE MALATESTA CLUB,  
32 Percy Street,  
Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

## LECTURE - DISCUSSIONS

OCT. 27—Alan Albon on  
HUMBUGGERY

NOV. 3—Giovanni Baldelli on  
ANARCHIST ACTION.

NOV. 10—F. A. Ridley on  
THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF  
SOCIETY

NOV. 17—Francis Tonks on  
VOLUNTARY WORK CAMPS

NOV. 24—Arthur Uloth on  
THE ANARCHIST UTOPIA

DEC. 1—Axel Hoch on  
AM I MY BROTHER'S EATER?

DEC. 8—Bob Green on  
SOME SHIBBOLETHS OF  
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Questions, Discussion and Admission  
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SWARAJ HOUSE,  
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## ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

London Anarchist Group Meetings  
(see Announcements Column)

Every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

BONAR THOMPSON speaks

OCT. 23—Subject to be announced.

OCT. 30—Some interesting people.

NOV. 6—By request—a dramatic  
recital.

NOV. 13—The glories of Socialism, etc.

NOV. 20—"THE WORK OF BONAR  
THOMPSON" ON TAPE RECORD-  
INGS. A new selection from D.C.'s  
collection of Thompson records.  
Guaranteed brilliant.

## INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CENTRE MEETINGS

Discussion Meetings  
every Thursday at 8 p.m.

OCT. 31—Discussion led by  
S. E. Parker on  
ANARCHISM AS I SEE IT.

Every Friday and Saturday:

SOCIAL EVENINGS

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