

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Under no form of government is it so dangerous to erect a political idol as in a democratic republic, for once erected, it is a political sin against the holy ghost to lay hands upon it."  
—VON HOLST.

## DE GAULLE MISFIRES ?

### Pflimlin Government's Algerian Policy Unchanged

COUPS D'ETAT, though in some cases they may seek to exploit popular feeling, never are risings of the people, for never are they, nor can they by their very nature be, spontaneous, unpremeditated, unplanned actions. Like wars, their launching needs a justification, an event which will rally maximum popular support to the "cause". But their success depends on the element of surprise, on catching the adversary unprepared or politically embarrassed; it depends on the first blow being decisive. Hesitation is fatal, hence the need for perfect timing and co-ordination of all the strategic elements so that when the blow is delivered it will be at maximum strength.

"Democratic" governments claim that they govern with the powers conferred on them by the electorate through the voice of parliament. With this power they make the laws, but it is their control of the armed military and civilian forces which in fact ensures that the laws will be obeyed and their Executive power respected. Believers in government will deny this, yet it seems self evident to us. Which coup d'etat within living memory has not been led by the military or by former military men as figure-heads for a politico-military conspiracy?

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LAST week's events in Algiers and Paris were not the spontaneous manifestation of the people which the successful generals and politicians in Algeria are making them out to be. They have all the imprints of the carefully prepared *coup d'etat*, the first step in the realisation of which, was the overthrow of the Gaillard government by the Rightists withholding their votes and accusing him of getting ready to sell-out Algeria. Then there was

the execution by the F.L.N. of three French parachutists who were found guilty of committing atrocities. And finally there was the meeting of the Assembly at which M. Pflimlin was seeking a vote to enable him to form a government. But we insist these are not the *causes* of the "rebellion" but in the eyes of the rebels were seen as propitious issues for playing their hand.

It may also be, however, that the rebels felt obliged as a result of new political developments to come into the open before they had completed their plans, or fully explored the chances of success in France itself. The fact of the matter is that whilst the *coup* in Algiers was bound to succeed—after all the military leaders were already doing as they liked and could count on support from the millions of white *colons* in anything they did to flout the wishes of the administration acting under orders from Paris—at no time have the chances of a corresponding success in Paris seemed even remotely possible, except perhaps in the eyes of journalists with too vivid imaginations. General de Gaulle's brief announcement of last Thursday week—in which he reiterated his belief that the "régime of the parties" could not deal with France's major problems, and reminded the country that once before, when it was at "its lowest ebb", it had given him its confidence to lead it and felt that "it [the country] should know that I hold myself in readiness to assume the powers of the Republic."—de Gaulle's statement was a clear admission of General Massu's failure to establish a bridgehead of revolt among what are left of the armed forces, and in the security forces, in metropolitan France.

It was also perhaps an attempt to sound the potential forces of a

right-wing revolt, in which case, the ambiguity in the General's statement was intentional. However, it not only failed to rouse much enthusiasm, let alone spark off a *coup d'etat*, but actually succeeded in awakening some sections of the hitherto apathetic left-wing movements, to the realisation that the General's statement smelled strongly of dictatorship!

Last Monday afternoon he made another statement and answered questions at a crowded Press conference. He confirmed his willingness to take over the leadership of the government "if the people want it", and explained that when he had said in his first statement that he was prepared "to assume the powers of the Republic" he meant that

the powers of the Republic can only be those which the Republic delegates. I shall make no attempt to violate the Republic, but to obtain by legal means the changes in the political system that seem necessary."

On the other hand de Gaulle expressed his support for the Algerian generals whom he refused to call rebellious since, he said, amidst laughter, not even the government had described them as such.\* Is he suggesting that there has been no change in the set-up in Algeria in the past fortnight or is he saying that what changes have taken place were not a "violation of the Republic"? By not condemning Massu

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\*In fact M. Pflimlin in his speech in the Assembly last Tuesday week referred to those military leaders "who have taken up a position which—I say it with regret—is a position of insurrection against the republican law."

## Patriotic Socialism

THE 'respectability' of the Labour Party, if any further proof was needed, has been confirmed by the increase in the middle-class vote—the kind of people who cannot stomach the idea of a free equalitarian society, but who want nevertheless to benefit from a system which offers no threat to their privileged positions. The 'welfare' state gives their offspring the same welfare as working class kids, and since the Labour Party is generally thought of as being more committed to securing the social services than the Tories, nowadays it is the obvious choice for the middle class.

No more embarrassing outbursts from the one-time rebellious leader who, right in the forefront of fashion has proved what a dandy he is by clothing himself in the H-bomb. That 'statesman-like' action of Bevan's at Brighton clinched the middle-class vote.

Loyalties, however, are easily switched, and after the Labour Party assumes power once more we will await, with patience born out of our cynicism, the recriminations and accusations indicating that the marriage has been soured by closer association.

Another respectable pair of Labour Party members, Messrs. Gaitskell and Driberg, visited the German Social Democrats last week in a bid to help them secure the German middle-class vote.

The Anglo-Catholic Socialist Driberg will no doubt have an appeal for the morbid, and Gaitskell is hardly distinguishable from any other middle-class business man. It has been whispered that at one meeting he wore a *red tie* but when greeting the members of the audience he gave a casual "American-

style big-hand". The reply from the crowd was some old-fashioned clenched fists, which could mean anything—a comradely greeting or a threat?

The 'socialists' who abandoned their concept of internationalism for the patriotic period of the war now return to Germany to meet German socialists who did the same thing. Relations between them have never been better, simpered Gaitskell. Is it to be wondered at that the 'idealistic' anarchists vomit when the 'realistic' politicians publicly proclaim their hypocrisy and think that everyone believes their claptrap!

Cliché followed cliché, and every second one concealed a lie. Dear German brother, our "policies are very close", mouthed Gaitskell; "we both recognise that in the conditions of the world to-day the Western Democracies must take the appropriate means of defence of the West to deter the Soviets from attacking us".

How close are the 'defence' policies of British and German socialists? The Social Democrats are opposed to having nuclear weapons or bases in Germany. No doubt they have their political reasons, and many Germans, in remembering the results of the last war may not want to risk another holocaust and will support a party opposed to nuclear arms. But the British Labour Party carrying on the policies of the Conservatives will insist that Germany, as well as Britain, be turned into targets, and attackers.

And what of fellow socialists in the Soviet Union? Well, dear Russian brother, you may not like your Government or what it is doing, but we have to do as we are told, don't we? Long live patriotic socialism!  
M.

## Reflections on the Bus Strike

### The Uncoordinated Struggle

PEOPLE who interpret events in terms of historical processes, taking the broad view and professing to be scientifically objective about the fate of human beings—such people comfort themselves, and attempt to comfort others, by the 'progress' they read into the events they interpret.

If you see things big enough, and think in the mechanical terms which explain historical processes, progress can certainly be discerned over the centuries and justification is thus provided for the human misery involved. The world was a cleaner place in 1946, after the disappearance of Hitler, than it was in 1939, and all that mixed bag of idealists and opportunists, socialists and capitalists who supported the war thought that the millions of lives were well spent and the appalling destruction worth while.

The fact that the war did nothing to change the world so that wars could not happen again, that nothing emerged from the holocaust which prevents the continuance of tyranny (indeed one of the immediate results of the war was the establishment of Stalin's tyranny over a greater area than Hitler ever ruled), that all the ingredients for the emergence of fascism still remain—as France's present crisis shows—and the Franco régime in Spain was untouched by the Nazi defeat; all this is overlooked in the satisfaction for the main result of the war.

#### Sputnik the Justification

Similarly do the Communists justify the terrible sufferings of the

Russian peoples as a result of Stalin's policies. The massive deportations, the physical deprivations, every result of Russia's industrial revolution, which crammed into thirty years as much misery as was spread over 150 years during the slower industrial revolution in Britain, and finally the culmination of the old tyrant's lunatic policies in the war—these have all been justified by the Sputnik, the symbol of the Soviet technological triumph.

Material progress is all. If human beings are ground under in the historical process, that is unavoidable. A pity, but unavoidable.

One finds the same sort of attitude in those who see the class struggle in every strike, the onward march of the workers in every wage increase. These people see what they want to see in an event and are thus diverted from the reality in favour of their theory.

We wrote last week that, in order for the London busmen to win their strike, they must have the support of the railwaymen. Particularly the Underground workers, but those on the suburban lines as well. We claim no special genius for analysis in having made this point. It seems crystal clear and must actually have been plain to everybody.

#### A Government Lead

It was obviously plain to the Government and to Sir Brian Robertson, boss of British Railways, for the Minister of Labour intervened (which he has to date refused to do in the bus strike) in the dispute between the railwaymen and Sir Brian

and the latter yielded from his previously determined refusal to offer any hope for the railmen before the Autumn, and has settled with the workers—who have accepted a pitiful increase of three per cent.—as from the end of June!

This follows the unions' professed determination to have a decent rise right away—or else. At delegates' meetings up and down the country the rank and file expressed its determination to strike by May 18 if no satisfactory settlement was forthcoming. Whether that rank and file considers the settlement that has in fact been made as worth while, nobody knows and presumably nobody cares. The leaders of the three railway unions have accepted the conditions and we hear nothing of any revolt from the rank and file.

Their militancy has petered out—bought off by a three per cent. raise! And the most important result is that the London busmen now stand very little chance of winning their strike. They have been left roasting by the railwaymen.

Other strikes are going on—but none which effect the busmen. At Smithfield meat market the porters have joined the drivers who have been on strike for three weeks, and in turn they have been supported by cold storage workers in the docks.

#### All Unconnected

What we see going on at the moment, in fact, is the typical pattern of industrial struggle in this country—reformist and sectional. The workers involved in the strikes

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## Radiation Victims

### THE UNLUCKY FISHERMAN

THE *Observer* is currently serialising "The Voyage of the *Lucky Dragon*" which is being published this month by Frederick Muller, and which describes the fate of twenty-three Japanese fishermen who were the victims of radiation from the first operational hydrogen bomb exploded on Bikini Atoll by the United States on March 1st, 1954.

Only one of the fishermen died in hospital. After over a year the others were released "lucky" to be only bald and sterile to face the future uncertain of what sicknesses they may still develop as a result of their unfortunate chance encounter with a peace-time H-bomb explosion dropped by the people who had devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the same experimental purposes—after the Japanese had asked for a cessation of hostilities.

The *Lucky Dragon* was over a hundred miles east of Bikini and outside the prescribed dangerous area when the bomb exploded. But the "unexpected" happened and the result is described by the author, Ralph E. Lapp, formerly Scientific Adviser to the United States War Department:

The high-altitude winds pulled and tugged the bomb cloud in the "wrong direction," that is to say, opposite to that expected by the test experts. The northern edge of the cloud veered downwind,

passed over the island of Enyu in the Bikini group, and drifted eastwards. It took time for the cloud to travel downwind to where the *Lucky Dragon* lay low in the water, and it took additional time for the tiny particles to swirl down from the high altitude.

Why fuss about so few when so many are being killed every day somewhere in the world, the realists will argue. And the patriots will say what do a handful of Japanese fishermen matter if by experimenting with H-bombs we are saving the world from Communism?

What can one reply to such statements except to protest that it is because we do not care about the fate of ordinary individuals everywhere that brutality is accepted (with barely a thought for the victims) as a necessary part of human society? If we cannot do more than merely shrug away the Japanese victims, whose tragedy seems closer because they have been given names; men with faces, personalities and families and whose simple, day-to-day job of fishing was to end so drastically, with a resigned "too bad", we have little hope of feeling for the un-named mass of people who die in their millions, or of encouraging an attitude of mind which might lead people to refuse to slaughter each other in the interests of—what? Patriotism, politics and economic gain.

## REPORT ON THE CO-OPS - 2

(Continued from previous issue)

IF, as I suggested last week, anarchists have shown little interest in the Co-op. Movement, the same cannot be said of socialists. It is true of course that most socialists are convinced that the Co-ops. are very much a junior partner in the broad Labour alliance. The Co-ops. may be a 'wing' of the working class movement but it is definitely the third wing. The Labour Movement, like most feathered vertebrates, could manage quite successfully with only two wings but it is useful to carry a spare as well. For most of the 19th century, it should be remembered, the position in Britain was very different. Then, the Co-operative Movement was the social movement—the only movement which had as its object the supersession of the capitalist order. The Labour Party did not exist and the trade unions were mainly organisations of skilled workers which sought to improve their position within the capitalist framework. In the last decade of the century, however, things began to change. The ubiquitous Webbs initiated a policy of Fabian permeation of the Co-ops., which at that time were largely controlled by men who were Liberal in political allegiance. This Fabian policy was a great success, although it took a generation to carry through. The young Co-operators were converted to State Socialism and when, as middle-aged men, they reached positions of authority in the movement, they led the Co-ops. into the socialist camp. A Co-op. Party was formed which, almost from the beginning, has been in effect an adjunct of the Labour Party—notwithstanding the differences between the two organisations which have manifested themselves from time to time. Ideologically, the effect of the socialist 'take-over' of the Co-ops. meant that Co-operation from being a movement to achieve by voluntary means the Co-operative Commonwealth became merely one form of social ownership, alongside municipal ownership and nationalisation. Co-operation was incorporated in

the vision of the Socialist Commonwealth.

This incorporation inevitably raised the question of the area to be assigned to the Co-ops. in the future socialist society. Disagreement on precise boundary lines was inevitable and still exists but, broadly, the area to be assigned was obvious—the retail sector and those industries producing basic individual consumer goods. Unfortunately for those who drew up the blue-print of the pink future this plan presupposed the ability of the Co-ops. to capture for themselves the area of the economy assigned to them. Social ownership in the forms of nationalisation and municipalisation could be extended when the socialists succeeded in gaining control of the organs of government but not so the co-operative form of social ownership. Even socialist majorities on the management committees of Co-ops. could not legislate co-operation into existence.

When the socialist blue-print was first drawn up at the beginning of the century, the prospects for the Co-op. Movement looked quite good. Since 1844, when the movement 'was born again and born different', membership had increased steadily. By 1900 there were 1¼ million Co-operators organised in some 1,400 local societies which between them did about 7% of the total retail trade of the country. This latter figure was small compared with the objective of 100% but several factors appeared to favour the view that future expansion would be at a more rapid rate. For one thing the Co-ops. had an advantage over their private competitors. They catered for a known market—their members—and could rely to a large extent on member 'loyalty'. This meant that the Co-ops. could afford to effect various economies. For example, they could place their stores in the back streets,

secure in the knowledge that their customers, stimulated by the prospect of a fairly substantial dividend on purchases—then an average of 2s. 6d. in the £—would take the trouble to seek them out. The same factor allowed the Co-ops. to make do with fewer shops: members were willing to travel longer distances just to shop at the Co-op. Another important factor was that the Co-ops. were the most efficient type of retailer. They had been first in the field to develop relatively large-scale retailing—the larger societies having scores of shops compared with the normal 'one man, one shop' in the private trade. Moreover, the Co-ops. were not merely retailers. They had shown what could be done by way of achieving economies of vertical integration. They had cut out many of the parasitic middle-men by establishing their own productive units. In some instances, complete integration had been achieved when the Co-ops. gained control of sources of raw materials e.g. by buying tea plantations in Ceylon. And, finally, the edifice had been completed by the C.W.S. setting up its own banking department and insurance society, thus freeing the movement from capitalist financial control. Little wonder, then, that in 1900 Co-operators liked to talk of their movement as 'a State within a State'. All that remained for the following generations of Co-operators was to continue the good work until they had completely socialised the retail sector of the economy.

Alas, the plans of Co-operators, like those of mice and men, 'gang aft agly'. The private shopkeepers obstinately refused to be competed out of existence by their co-operative rivals. Instead, the more intelligent private traders began to take a leaf out of the co-op. copy book and even to improve on the lessons they learned. They saw that the era of

the small shopkeeper was over and that the future belonged to the large-scale retailer. Private multiple concerns began to develop rapidly in the first decades of the 20th century and the largest of them set their sights at covering the whole country. They were not prevented, like the local Co-ops. from opening branches wherever they thought it profitable. They were not contained within any local boundary; one national organisation would suffice and, by centralised control, they could switch goods from one branch to another with comparative ease. Moreover, these new private multiples applied more systematically than the Co-ops. one of the first lessons of large-scale organisation—specialisation. The Co-ops. set themselves up as general dealers or 'universal providers', aiming to cater in one organisation for all the consumer needs of their members, from Co-op. cradle to Co-op. coffin. Not so, the multiples. The most successful private multiples restricted themselves to a limited range of commodities and thereby achieved the advantages of specialisation—more competent management and larger turnovers. This organisation gave them a greater flexibility than the Co-ops. possessed and enabled them to adapt more easily to the changes in retailing that occurred between the wars—the new emphasis on advertising and branded goods, the sale of mass-produced goods at highly competitive prices and the changes in shopping habits consequent on developments in transport. The Co-ops. had demonstrated the advantage of combining retailing and wholesaling in one organisation. Some of the private multiples went one stage further: they cut out wholesaling altogether and bought direct from manufacturers whose factories they didn't bother to own but whose policies they could effectively control simply by guaranteeing them large orders.

The result has been very different from the optimistic visions cherish-

ed by Co-operators in 1900. True, the membership of the Co-operative Movement has continued to expand so that it now embraces one adult in every three. There are now over 12 million members of Co-ops. organised in some 950 societies. But this vast increase in membership has not brought with it a comparable increase in trade. In the 58 years of the 20th century the Co-ops. have only increased their share of total retail trade from 7% to 11%. Contrast this with the increase achieved by multiple organisations with more than 10 shops apiece. Collectively, such multiples did a mere 3–4% of the total retail trade in 1900—half that of the Co-ops.; to-day, they do 20–25%—more

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### BOOK REVIEW

**SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE** by Jeanette M. Foster. Muller, 25s.

WITH admirable detachment touched lightly by sympathetic understanding of her subject, Dr. Foster has compiled a volume of great value to anyone interested in, or involved in the study of, female variance.

Though her subject matter is obviously mainly concerned with fictional synopses, there is a good deal of psychological insight in the text, and her approach to each work, good, bad or indifferent as it may be, spotlights the salient facts useful to the student.

Wherever the variant note is so slight as to have little bearing on the remainder of the novel, Dr. Foster has lifted it intact into her text.

From Sappho and Ruth to the present day naturally covers a vast field and a good deal of relevant material is inaccessible, in German, etc. Nevertheless the author appears to have dealt with almost everything of importance written on her subject.

The book is, I consider, a great asset to the library of any student of psychology, comprising as it does such excellent bibliographical material.

FRANCESCA GORDON.

### VIEWPOINT

## The H-Bomb Dilemma

AS a matter of fact, atom and hydrogen bombs exist in considerable quantities, and are constantly added to; tests proceed unabated to make them more deadly, to deliver them more rapidly and farther, and more accurately to achieve specific aims; nations which do not possess them are working for the day when they also will have them, when also the ignition points and chances of a general conflagration will be increased.

As a matter of ethics, the use of bombs is wicked because killing is so. Their manufacture is also wicked because they can hardly be used for purposes other than killing. To pay taxes which the State may use for the manufacture of bombs, or to co-operate in any way with a State who manufactures and will eventually use them, is also, strictly speaking, unethical. But a strict ethical life can only be demanded from a free man, and, what is not often realized, the great majority of people in this or any other country are not born free. To achieve perfect ethical life is to achieve perfect freedom. But to do this one must be prepared to suffer great discomforts and privations, even to lose one's life in the attempt. The weakness of the principle of ethical perfection, as of him who is born a slave, is that no sufficient reasons can be found making it imperative to sacrifice one's life to what is right.

As a matter of power, there is practically nothing that anybody can do to stop bombs from being made, tested and stored to-day, and from being dropped to-morrow. Too many power organizations are involved, and to make them desist from their pursuits a power is needed as strong as theirs. Ideas and tacit assumptions are also difficult to find, by which to rally a sufficient number of people who will strike the evil of nuclear bombs at all its roots. Among these are the existence of separate States and the unresisted momentum acquired by technological development.

War is incurred, on one side at least, through refusal to submit to a foreign power. The dilemma, as put to-day to

the British people, is between the horrors of nuclear warfare and life under the Communist yoke. Those who opt for the first show that they put reasons to live before life itself. According to the principle of freedom, they are as entitled to fight in order to avoid a servitude which they do not want as those who do not mind exchanging one kind of servitude for another are not to be dragged into fight. Those who want to fight may cause the death of those who do not want to, but so may those who do not want to fight bring a hated kind of servitude upon those who do. Such are the painful situations arising from bringing the principle of freedom into a context of servitude.

He who, lacking fighting spirit, or for any other reason does not want to fight, is inclined to see all the worst aspects of a threatening war. He who is ready for it, on the other hand, may take enormous risks, but will also do his best under every circumstance to prevent the worst from happening to him. The non-fighter takes the victims' or the spectators' point of view, and thus sees history as a series of recurrences and laws, of inevitabilities, futilities and disasters. The fighter, who sees it from the point of view of a participant, knows it to be a material susceptible of receiving many imprints, including his own.

Because each man is capable of freedom, and there are millions of men whom desperation or exaltation may cause to take the greatest risks, the future scorns all prophecies and baffles all wisdom. As the saying goes, it may never happen. This element of unpredictability is humanity's greatest hope in the present juncture. The bombs may never be dropped disastrously to affect our country, they may never be dropped at all.

Only he who lives in a fool's paradise may expect people to surrender without a fight the things they cherish most. Only he who believes in a paradise after death, or in an order of things eternal, may say that they ought so to surrender them. To bring this point home, let us imagine that an anarchist society has

been established in Great Britain, and that there is no external balance of powers to allow us to sit on the fence unconcerned. Would we be well-advised to scrap the H-bomb when a foreign State is in a position to tell us: "Give up your anarchist ways or we drop it on you"? If an anarchist society is worth building, and if H-bombs or other murderous weapons are the only effective means of fending off attack, should they not be kept handy, and used if need be?

It is, of course, impossible to foresee when, and under what circumstances, an anarchist society will be built in Great Britain or anywhere else, but the question of defending it by means commensurate to those that may be used against it is very important for anyone who wishes it to be built, because how it will be built and what it will be like depends in no small measure on how this question is solved.

In the present situation, where anarchist influence is infinitesimal, it is impossible realistically to see how the H-bomb could be scrapped, unless the whole world were politically unified. The tendency towards world unification has been underlined by Djilas as now the most actively and irresistibly at work. Unfortunately, world unification is more likely to come about through a third world war than without. Armaments, at any rate, would not be constantly increased and perfected if a pacific solution were envisaged by those from whom the unleashing of a nuclear war is to be feared.

The possibility of the leaders of the most important modern states seeing where their best interest lies is not to be excluded altogether. Present leaders, however, are too far committed to positions of mutual hostility and mistrust to achieve unity of oppression and exploitation. The present co-existence of different blocks of exploiters and oppressors is very precarious. Yet the hope of solving their differences without resorting to war is fondly nursed by them both. Each relies on a change of personnel in the policy-making body of the other. The Communists count on fellow-travellers

taking over in the West, and the Western leaders on more liberal-minded teams gaining the upper hand in the East. Both being aware of this state of affairs, liberal tendencies are stifled and persecuted in Krushchev's and Mao's empires, while communists and pro-communists are kept off every position of responsibility wherever American power holds sway.

What way is there out of the H-bomb dilemma? There is none, once we have allowed ourselves to be gored and lifted upon its horns. Once we have accepted the alternative "H-bomb or world-communism", our cause is lost. Full freedom consists in choosing the things we shall choose from, not in making a choice which someone else imposes. To elect choices is the true mark of freedom, as to impose them is the true mark of power. Our chance of conquering freedom and power depends then on our ability to work for what we want, not in using up all our energies in opposing something we do not want, only to find out that we have strengthened something else which we want even less.

The H-bomb dangers are very real, and so are those of Communism. The more we stare at them, however, the more we are paralyzed in our faith, in our will, in our hopes. We must rely on the unpredictability of history. After all, Communism and the H-bomb are not the only forces at work in our midst, and competing for our future. Other forces there are, to which we may lend our support, capable of diverting into other channels energies and interests which are now dammed by preoccupation with communism and the bomb or working for their development.

Our aim should be to clarify, strengthen and propagate the anarchist ideology, to mark the contours of anarchist man, of the anarchist way of life, to understand, and to give form and substance to, anarchist power. We must make anarchism a presence, and to the extent we succeed in these tasks, we shall make our society, even our enemies, take notice of us. Instead of having anarchism now being modified and distorted because of Communism and the H-bomb holders, we might then have Communists and H-bomb holders to modify their creed and their intentions because of us.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI.

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**De Gaulle Misfires?**

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and his friends de Gaulle has surely made clear that the assurances he has given cannot be taken seriously; that if he proposes to act within the framework of the law it is only because at present, at any rate, there is no chance of a *coup d'etat* succeeding in France.

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**THE Evening Standard's** Paris correspondent, Sam White, declared after the de Gaulle Press conference that in so far as the "central problem" which is "to reunite the legal power of the government in Paris with a usurped power in Algiers" is concerned.

"the only man capable of doing this, it is almost unanimously felt among French M.P.s is de Gaulle."

Mr. White may well have his hand on the political pulse at the Quai d'Orsay but somehow it seems curious that M.P.s should feel this way about de Gaulle when at the same time the overwhelming "vote of confidence" given to Pflimlin was a protest against the result of the militarists' actions in Algeria, which de Gaulle supports!

The rebellious generals in Algeria are far from being in a strong position if the Paris government chooses to withhold money and arms until their authority is restored. But they are banking on French "nationalism" and pride (after all one cannot humiliate one's own people in front of 8 million lesser breeds) preventing any French government from taking such steps. M. Soustelle has already written in the *Algerian Journal du Parlement* of the rumours that the Government may cut off supplies to the army until it comes to heel.

"This would be sheer folly. Even in the midst of such serious and confused events as we are witnessing these days, the army remains our army, that of the Republic, that of France. To treat it as an enemy is inconceivable."

The average Frenchmen's touchiness where the army is concerned increases with each military disaster—and there have been nothing but retreats since the end of the first world war—so that no politician with an eye to holding his parliamentary seat will risk advocating any action which will humiliate the Army.

There is no solution to the Algerian problem short of independence and the withdrawal of the army of occupation. So far no political party (possibly with the exception of the Communists) has declared as its policy that Algeria should be anything but a part of France. Pflimlin, the new Prime Minister in a broadcast talk last Wednesday week declared that present strong feelings among "our compatriots in Algiers"

will be appeased once they will have been enlightened on the will of the government, as approved last night by a parliamentary majority, to re-establish peace in Algeria, a just and human peace based on a French victory.

★

**THE** events of the past fortnight have not, in our opinion, necessarily strengthened whatever "unity" may have existed either in France or Algeria to carry on the armed struggle to the bitter end. General Massu has certainly added more glory to his name in the eyes of some, but there must be many Frenchmen who as a result of the *coup d'etat* are beginning to distrust Massu, his right-wing political friends and the whole Algerian set-up. And this would be a good thing. As we pointed out in these columns last year†

**PEOPLE AND IDEAS**

**ORGANISATION MAN**

ONE of the characteristics of the self-conscious and self-examining nineteen-fifties has been the flow of studies of manners, habits and motivation— heavyweight in the United States, from Riesman's *Lonely Crowd* to William H. Whyte's *Organisation Man*, and rather more frivolous in this country—Stephen Potter and Lifemanship, and Kenneth Hudson's radio study of Occupational Voices, and now Parkinson's *Law*.\*

No doubt the phrase will enter the language like Boyle's Law or Gresham's Law, and for this reason it is a pity that Professor Parkinson's little book is not as good as people have made out. It consists of eleven essays reprinted from *The Economist* and other magazines where they appeared as 'light relief'. Some are better than others, there is too much of that dreadful Inner Circle *Punch*-type whimsicality which, together with the book's brevity and Osbert Lancaster's illustrations, will make it the ideal Christmas present for the enlightened departmental head or ICI director from his perfect secretary.

Allowing for this kind of limitation, and for the tediousness of Top Level humour in bulk, Parkinson has a few very good moments. Parkinson's Law in all its simplicity is enunciated in the very first line: *Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.* He illustrates this from the personnel statistics of the Admiralty and the Colonial Office. As the number of battleships and colonies steadily declined, so the number of Admiralty and Colonial Office officials steadily rose. The author singles out two axioms to explain this tendency: Factor 1, "An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals" and Factor 2, "Officials make work for each other". (Had he been looking at the subject from below instead of from above, he might have discerned two more, "Nobody likes to work themselves out of a job" and "In a competitive society people work not for the pleasure of it, nor for the sake of the result to be accomplished, but in order to ensure their bread and butter.")

The chapters 'The Short List' about interviews for jobs, 'Personality Screen' about cocktail parties, 'Palm Thatch to Packard' about Chinese millionaires, and 'Pension Point' about persuading people to retire, are mildly funny; the one on 'Injunctis or Palsied Paralysis' about moribund institutions is more sharply so, but the best of the collection is the essay 'Plans and Plants'. Every student of human institutions,

"is familiar with the standard test by which the importance of the individual may be assessed. The number of doors to be passed, the number of his personal assistants, the number of his telephone receivers—these three figures, taken with the depth of his carpet in centimetres, have given us a simple formula that is reliable for most parts of the world. It is less widely known that the same sort

**\*PARKINSON'S LAW by C Northcote Parkinson. (Murray, 16s.)**

Perhaps the only hope that it [the violence] will be stopped before the bloodbath reaches huge proportions is that as the struggle drags on so both sides become more and more divided among themselves and demoralisation sets in.

And we added that, to our minds, the French feared this more than the "rebels", citing as an example, the stern measures taken by the government against the "growing criticism of the Algerian venture". The criticism has continued to grow and it may well be that the conspiracy of Right elements which culminated in the *putsch* in Algiers and the re-emergence of de Gaulle was a desperate last attempt to silence those voices of reason, common sense and humanity which, in the last analysis, are the only "weapons" that can bring peace and freedom to the peoples of Algeria.

These are the voices that to-day must be encouraged and strengthened. De Gaulle, who ended last Monday's Press conference with "I am now going back to my village and there I shall remain at the disposition of the country" must be kept waiting by the French people!

†Algeria: the Point of No Return? (August 1957) included in *Freedom Selections*, Vol 7 (to be published shortly).

of measurement is applicable, but in reverse, to the institution itself."

Perfection of planning, he says, is a symptom of decay. "During a period of exciting discovery or progress there is no time to plan the perfect headquarters. The time for that comes later, when all the important work has been done, Perfection, we know, is finality; and finality is death". He illustrates this from the buildings of a number of celebrated institutions. To the tourist, St. Peter's, Rome, the Basilica and the Vatican "must seem the ideal setting for the Papal Monarchy at the very height of its prestige and power", but in fact "The great days of the Papacy were over before the perfect setting was even planned. They were almost forgotten by the date of its completion". The same was true of Versailles: "The whole thing was completed just when the decline of Louis' power had begun", and the same is true of the British monarchy; Buckingham Palace was built when the power of the monarchy had been destroyed, "the really powerful monarchs all lived somewhere else, in buildings long since vanished". The League of Nations Palace at Geneva was opened when the League itself had practically ceased to exist. Perhaps the most striking example is that of New Delhi the capital of British India. The Viceroy moved into his grandiose palace in the year in which the Indian Congress demanded independence. "It would be possible, though tedious to trace the whose story down to the day when the British finally withdrew, showing how each phase of the retreat was exactly paralleled with the completion of another triumph in civic design. What was finally achieved was no more and no less than a mausoleum".

Small wonder that Parkinson finds something symbolic in the siting of the Pentagon alongside the National Cemetery, and shakes his head sadly when confronted by the United Nations building in New York. He might also draw conclusions from the TUC's new premises in Great Russell Street: certainly our affection for UNESCO has diminished since it started building its palace in Paris—a sign that the really valuable work of that institution is coming to an end.

In his essay on the Coefficient of Inefficiency of committees and cabinets, he introduces us to the science of comitology. 'The Will of the People' explains

**Report on the Co-ops**

Continued from p. 2

than double that of the Co-ops. Relatively, the Co-ops. have fallen behind in the race of the giants— despite their initiative since the war in opening self-service stores. More significant still, the Co-ops. have failed to make any serious advance in the dry goods (non-grocery) trades. It is in these trades—footwear, furnishing, and fashion clothing—that the multiples have achieved their most spectacular successes. And it is on this type of goods that the working class, with its increased standard of living, spends a relatively greater proportion than ever before of its income.

It was in the light of facts such as these that the Co-ops. two years ago made the novel decision to set up a commission to investigate and to report on the trading problems facing the Movement. The novelty, lay not in the idea of a commission—of which there have been several in Co-op. history—but in the fact that it was to be an independent commission—a group of experts not involved in responsible positions in the movement. The group included both dons and businessmen. As chairman, they made a scoop by selecting the redoubtable Hughie Gaitskell, before he had beaten Bevan to the post in the Labour leadership stakes. And as secretary of the commission, they selected one of the brightest of the younger economists, the 'new socialist', Tony Crosland. In a 100,000-word document this commission has now published its report, the proposals of which I shall discuss in my next article.

GASTON GERARD.

(To be continued)

how to rig votes in parliaments and annual general meetings, and 'High Finance, or the point of vanishing interest' explains the phenomenon which he terms the Law of Triviality which, briefly stated, means that the time spent on any item of the agenda will be in inverse proportion to the sum involved.

★

**FROM** an anarchist point of view one may welcome Professor Parkinson's book for its deflation of the pretensions of the public and private bureaucracies which rule us and its cynicism about the processes of 'democratic' rule. The trouble is that it is not quite funny enough and not deadly enough. The claim on the jacket that it is "bound to be devoured with morbid relish by the very people it ridicules" is true. But it shouldn't be. The book should hit them harder. True, its author disclaims any responsibility for drawing conclusions from his observations. "It is not the business of the botanist to eradicate the weeds," he writes, "Enough for him if he can tell us just how fast they grow." And the reader will close his book reflecting ruefully on the truth of its absurd revelations, and saying philosophically "That's life".

William H. Whyte, on the other hand, at the close of *The Organisation Man*, (just before his appendix on "How to Cheat on Personality Tests", which out-Parkinsons anything that Parkinson can do), challenges the reader directly,

"The organisation man is not in the grip of vast social forces about which it is impossible for him to do anything; the options are there, and with wisdom and foresight he can turn the future away from the dehumanised collective that so haunts our thoughts. He may not. But he can.

"He must fight The Organisation. Not stupidly, or selfishly, for the defects of individual self-regard are no more to be venerated than the defects of co-operation. But fight he must, for the demands for his surrender are constant and powerful, and the more he has come to like the life of organisation the more difficult does he find it to resist these demands, or even to recognise them . . ."

Parkinson does not challenge, he titillates. And in doing so he conceals the fact that there are alternatives for the organisational jungles he describes. How many of those who laugh over Parkinson's Law are ready to agree with Ward's Principle, which states that "All human institutions should be (a) functional, (b) temporary, (c) voluntary, and (d) small? Parkinson is always on the verge of these simple truths, but keeps shying off them to bring in some mock mathematical formula. What is Parkinson's Law itself, but a restatement, from the wrong end, of the Law of Diminishing Productivity and the Law of Diminishing Utility, brilliantly set out in Leopold Kohr's *The Breakdown of Nations* which claims that the bigger any human organisation gets, the more useless and unproductive it becomes.

Everything is too damn big. Even Professor G. D. H. Cole (who has spent a lifetime getting back to the point he started from) writes in the *New Statesman* (22/3/58) that

"to stake the future on larger and larger aggregates of routine operatives does not hold out, to me at least, the prospect of a Socialism under which men would be happy or making the best use of their creative qualities.

. . . The most notable writers who have stood out against the acceptance of this trend have been not Socialists, but Anarchists such as Kropotkin and

original thinkers such as Gandhi. These, I know, are unpopular authorities to quote to present-day Socialists; but may they not prove to have been prophetic?" They would be unpopular too with Parkinsonians, who have wit enough to observe the symptoms, but not the disease itself.

Parkinson recognises that by the time any organisation gets to the Palatial-Headquarters stage, it is dead, its work has been done, but he will not relish and welcome this impermanence, he even proposes cures (is he an organisation man too?). Far wiser the attitude of Herzen asking "Who will blame nature because flowers that bloom in the morning fade in the evening, because she has not bestowed on the rose or the lily the hardness of flint? And yet it is this mean and prosy attitude that we want to carry over into the world of history".

★

**AGAIN** Parkinson lets us into the secret of stage-managing committees and manipulating votes. Here at least, he recognises the biological approach. A committee, he declares, "is not a structure but a plant. It takes root and grows, it flowers, wilts, and dies, scattering the seed from which other committees will bloom in their turn". Good. But it is said with appalled resignation, rather than with approval, and the reader, instead of asking himself whether committees are necessary and why, or whether voting is an intelligent way of making decisions, simply sighs and goes on pretending to believe in democracy. How many of those who will be delighted by his exposure of democratic organisation will ask themselves how formal democracy can be replaced by functional democracy, or even what a functional democracy would be? The functional approach was thus described, in terms of his own experience, by Wilhelm Reich:

"On what principle was our organisation based, if there were no votes, no directives and commands, no secretaries, presidents, vice-presidents, etc.?"

"What kept us together was our work, our mutual interdependencies in this work, our factual interest . . . I had not solicited co-workers. They had come of themselves. They remained, or they left when the work no longer held them. We had not formed a political group or worked out a program of action . . . Each one made his according to his interest . . . There are, then, objective biological work interests and work functions capable of regulating human co-operation."

In a formal-democratic organisation, says Reich:

"there are so and so many directors, vice directors, secretaries, and maybe hundreds of non-working members, while the secretary does all the work. Formal democracy, which works with votes without obligation, has always tried to draw the members into the work, but with very little success. For a work interest cannot be taken over like a position, it must grow organically."

Poor old Reich had a bit of Parkinson in his day, and declares:

"If personal enmities, intrigues and political manoeuvres make their appearance in an organisation, one can be sure that its members no longer have a factual meeting-ground in common, that they are no longer held together by a common work-interest."

And here, he puts his finger on the core of all the social and institutional absurdities which Parkinson exposes:

"A working individual can take responsibility only for processes which he himself takes loving care of, the growth of which means a piece of himself. One cannot vote on work functions, one cannot 'delegate' work. This is inherent in genuine work."

In this functional attitude is the only remedy for the various Parkinson's diseases of organisational life.

C.W.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

## Anti-War Films

"The (Slow) Emergence of Anti-War Films" by P.S. (May 3rd) emphasizes a little-noticed trend in films but there are some surprising omissions. Or perhaps England hasn't yet seen some of the others. I refer specifically to the Japanese production of *Hiroshima*, a damning indictment of the A-bomb and, more subtly, of war itself. Then there is a Hollywoodized but still highly-enjoyable *Bridge on the River Kwai* with its ice-cold, iron-hard delineation of the military mind in all its stupidity.

But the most evidently missing was the German film *The Last Bridge*, which, far more than any of the others, states a bland theme of love versus war. In case you haven't seen it over there I can't recommend it too highly. Maria Schell is a convincingly human German army doctor who is captured by Yugoslav partisans and, after crossing three bridges, comes to the inescapable conclusion that patriotism and nationality are petty stupidities compared to the essential fact that—trite though it may be—all men are brothers. The ending is a shocking, bitter scene worth half-a-dozen Hollywood monstrosities by itself. *New York*, May 15. DICK ELLINGTON.

★

IN an article in FREEDOM (May 3), P.S. gave a survey of some recent English and American films with anti-war tendencies. The German film organization has also dealt with this topic (at one time with the support of the Allied governments!), and I would like to add a few remarks about some of their recent productions.

German directors have, generally speaking, been more honest in their discussions of the implications of war than their Anglo-American counterparts, and this may be due to the fact that they had experience on the losing side, and that until recently, Germany was not officially committed to partisan participation in a future war. A fact which seems to emerge, and for which one can't really be surprised, is that the Germans didn't really fight against the British! At least the action of most of the films is on the Russian front.

Of those from Western Germany, the

best is *Children, Mothers and a General*. The situation is that towards the end of the war, Hitler took the desperate step of ordering even school children to report to the front for military service. A group of mothers arrive at a station near the front to rescue their children from a boarding school, and find to their horror that they have already left. They make their way to the battlefield, and after pleading, seeing their sons in action, and a love affair between one of the mothers and the officer, he orders his company to retreat, contrary to orders. The general arrests the commander, but when a company is needed to make an expedition in the battle, he agrees to lead it, and is released. The company leaves, the mother and the officer looking into each other's eyes full of guilt and mistrust.

After seeing the patriotic gestures of the children, the anguish of the mothers, and the concern for military expediency of the officers, then seeing how this is softened by the relieving love, we are left knowing that when the need becomes great enough, he will be ready to answer its call. Depressing but true.

The best East German film on the other hand is not concerned with the fighting at all. *Duped till Doomsday* is a study of the reactions of three soldiers who, as a reward for their expert marksmanship, are praised by their officer and given three days holiday. On the first day they accidentally shoot his daughter, who is having a rendezvous with a lover. The allegorical method is very difficult to accomplish in a film, and in this case it succeeds very strikingly in describing the emotions of fear, lasciviousness and confusion induced in three very different men who have destroyed something beautiful. This film too ends with their problems submerged in the excitement of an attack.

Both of these are what might be described as "conscientious objector" films, rather than "anti-war". They point to dilemmas and issues in which soldiers may find themselves, and perhaps even suggest that since these are insoluble, it might have been better not to be a soldier, but they don't go to the length of pointing out the identity of interest between the soldiers on the two sides. P.H.

## The Uncoordinated Struggle

Continued from p. 1

have no thought for others of their class involved in identical struggles elsewhere any more than they give thought to the basic issues which face them as workers in a capitalist society. They are not concerned with the fundamentals of that society or of any other, they are concerned, above all with keeping up the payments on the telly, with the result that when their class brothers are engaged in a dispute which is not their immediate concern, they 'don't want to know'.

In these circumstances the broad view is as depressing as the narrow one. In fact we can of course find individuals with some concern for the fundamental issues, but they are submerged under the insular mass.

When this is so it seems to us to be dishonest to talk about the class struggle which, if it means anything, means the conscious effort of one class to overthrow the class above in order to emancipate itself from domination. And to see such a struggle in 'historical' terms, giving to its participants an unconscious role which they play willy-nilly seems to us to reduce humanity to the playthings of destiny.

## Different Interests

Either people—and strangely enough workers are people—are conscious of what they are doing or they are not. If they are not then there is little use in looking to them for conscious progress. If they are, then patently their interests are not those of the socialist analysts of historic progress.

We have to think in other terms if we are to tune in to the wavelength

of the worker of to-day. And in fact we cannot blame them for one minute if they don't want to play ball when the lessons of history show that they are precisely the ones who get ground to powder under the unrolling historical process.

The industrialisation of Russia cost the lives, liberty, happiness and well-being of millions of workers. Ridding the world of the Nazis (or pretending to) cost the lives of millions more. Fighting a class struggle in Britain will be a harsh and painful process, while a more-or-less comfortable, if anxious, existence can be sat out if one can shut one's eyes to the outside world.

The thing is that a struggle is forced upon workers by that outside world. They are forced to struggle even to keep their more-or-less comfortable existence. But that doesn't make them interested in the struggle; it's just part of the job and their position in life.

This is why it is unco-ordinated. This is why they never win. This is why the leaders can always sell them out. This is why the busmen are left roasting. This is why the railmen did not join issue with them in their common interest.

A pity, because they will both suffer—separately.

Where are those  
New Readers  
of FREEDOM?

## ANARCHIST ACTIVITIES

## The Hyde Park Meetings

THE London Anarchist Group has started its irregular Sunday afternoon meetings at Hyde Park.

Two years ago we had six speakers, to-day we have two and an uncertain third who for health reasons cannot always guarantee to be there. This depletion of our numbers, which is not due to senility, has created, among others, a 'platform problem'.

The platform, a beautiful if weighty object, lives quite a distance from the Park from where it has to be lugged each Sunday to and from the required place, but this job takes only about ten minutes each way. The time factor can be resolved by starting out earlier, but since it is not always possible for the two speakers to turn up at the same time (one works part of Sunday) and the female half cannot carry the platform alone the meetings sometimes do not get under way until after 5 o'clock. This is not the best

time to start because we have discovered it interferes with the Hyde Park "tea break" which means that unless we get started well before five the meetings are badly attended since the afternoon audience by this time is beginning to feel the strain of having been pummelled by too many speakers.

What we really need are platform carriers, which we think should be easy to find, particularly after visiting the *Malatesta Club* on a Saturday night where there is much evidence of youthful energy expended on the concrete floor. We know that few of the jivers are committed to the anarchist 'cause', but perhaps it would be possible for the anarchists who are there regularly to rally a few people at Hyde Park every Sunday.

## Are Outdoor Meetings Worth While?

The function of out-door meetings may be a subject worthy of discussion. It is sometimes felt that these meetings are a "waste of time", but this view is not valid unless it applies to all other forms of organised anarchist propaganda, if we relate the time and energy spent to the results.

The truth is that many of our contacts are made through meetings at Hyde Park, and our paper sellers tell us that sales are often improved at the gate of the Park if we have had a successful meeting. True we do not make large numbers of 'converts', but we do not expect to. If this is the accepted function of the movement then we are heading for disillusionment. It is obviously desirable to convince as many people as possible that the philosophy of anarchism could be made into a feasible way of life, but it would be foolish to think that our ideas will be accepted readily by any but a minority of thinking people who have 'rumbled the political racket'.

The question is if we are unable to convince the majority is it worth while carrying on, and if so, why? Those of us who care for ideas think it is necessary to print those ideas or carry them by word of mouth to the public for a variety of reasons. This writer considers as many anarchists do, that protest by the individual against tyranny and inequality is essential however small the voice. If we do not protest when we can the sufferings of people become less important until a time is reached when we no longer care.

## Ill Fares the Land

When nominations closed for Wayland Rural Council, in Norfolk, yesterday, there was none for the Tottington parish—because there are no parishioners. But Lord Walsingham remains the member because, by law, if there are no nominees and the retiring member is eligible, he can resume his seat.

Lord Walsingham was the member before he and all other villages were evacuated during the war so that the land could be used as a battle-training area. He said yesterday: "If you are not opposed you are deemed re-elected. I enjoy sitting on the council and I still think I have something I can give to Wayland Council."

Manchester Guardian 19/4/58.

## Ill Fares the Press!

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WEEK 20

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From here it is not a far step to accepting the view that tyranny and violence will always be a part of human society, and the belief that people are fundamentally evil anyway. Because so many people are indifferent to the fate of their Fellows it is important that anarchists, however few, do not allow themselves to be persuaded to the view that protest against injustice is "a waste of time".

One of the few things we can do as individuals is to keep alive the basic feelings of sociability and try to encourage the same feelings in others. Where we can do this by writing, speaking, selling papers or by example in the way we live, we should not forego the opportunity.

Finally, we freely admit that we like the work we do which is another sound reason for doing it. R.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Every Sunday at 7.30 at  
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LECTURE - DISCUSSIONS  
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