

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it."

—TOM PAINE

NATO, BERLIN, BOMBS & ELECTIONS — COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL CIRCUS

WHEN the political experts and commentators express impatience at the deadlock in the Geneva talks and shake their pens more in sorrow than in anger over the lack of unity among the member nations of N.A.T.O. we believe that their impatience and their concern should be taken with a grain of salt. Are they so politically green as to believe that anything "positive" could emerge from the Foreign Ministers' talks, or that unity among the nations of the West has ever been more than a mere marriage of convenience? We think not, for, as we often, but cannot too often, point out, the importance that attaches nowadays to the political game and the comings and goings of political personalities is the result of mass communications, which not only creates the personalities but also magnifies their most pedestrian utterances to make them sound either as profound words of wisdom and great statesmanship, or as portents of terrible things to come!

It is surely naive to suppose that discussion at a conference of nations could be dispassionate and objective when even within the nation, in our most "democratic of parliaments," though the Opposition proposes it is always the Government in power which disposes. However reasonable and sensible are the arguments of the Opposition everyone knows before the debate has started that Labour members will vote one way and Conservatives the other, and that so long as one party enjoys a majority no arguments from the other side will affect the governments policies. How then can one even assume that when politicians of different nations meet to discuss political problems of mutual interest that any of them will think in terms other than of the particular power interests which they represent? The exaggerated publicity given by the press to their deliberations if anything makes agreement more difficult for, apart from the diametrically opposed national and power interests, there is the personal vanity of the participants to be taken into account.

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ONE can only put politics and government in proper perspective if one considers them as an industry, in the same way as advertising is an industry and motor car production is an industry. For every politician under the Press spotlight there are

thousands of anonymous functionaries whose livelihood depends on government in the most direct way: office workers, scientists, economists, historians, chauffeurs, door-keepers and house-keepers, tax-collectors, policemen, judges and prison warders. Government has its own cultural attachés as well as its military attachés.

At any minute of any day thousands of government representatives are travelling on "missions", entertaining or being entertained on behalf of, or by, some government department. But besides these full-time employees of government, these people whose status as well as their bread and butter, depends on government and the political struggle between national governments, is an army of people not directly employed by government, but whose jobs are dependent on the continued "tensions" between nations. From existence of government and the political journalist and a host of other publicists to the unskilled worker in war factories, or workshops turning out such innocuous articles as uniforms or brass buttons for the armed forces; from building workers building barracks or prisons to the printers printing income-tax forms by the million or election propaganda by the thousand—all derive some profit from, have a stake in, the Establishment and in its continued functioning. Their numbers in the past twenty years have assumed vast

proportions, and consciously or unconsciously they supplement the duties of the forces of "law and order" in maintaining the *status quo*.

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FOR us what is happening in Geneva is a tragic farce only because the "problems" the politicians are apparently seeking to solve are as unreal as were the Emperor's Clothes to the young child who, not being involved in the game of make-believe in which the Emperor's entourage of sycophants and crooks were engaged, could declare that the old gentleman was in fact naked! But the millions of people throughout the world whose jobs stem from politics and government must believe that "tensions" do exist, that society cannot function without authority and the custodians of "law and authority"; that in the last analysis bombs are more important than bread, policies more important than people.

Only by thinking in these terms can they believe in the social value of their jobs, can they justify the many unpleasant and useless things they have to do as part of their jobs. For today status, approval, is as important as the scale of remuneration. Both, in our society, play a profound role. But we think it important to note that wealth without status is growingly viewed as ostentation, and this is a relatively new trend. In part it is the only tangible legacy from the 19th century socialists, in part the result of the development of capitalism and industrialisation, which has unwittingly removed the

monopoly of wealth and status from the aristocracy and made it possible for any Tom, Dick or Morris with enough cunning and "business enterprise" to build an industrial empire from the most humble cycle-workshop beginnings. But it is interesting to observe the way these *nouveaux riches* have personally

concentrated their efforts in using their millions to acquire status, leaving it to the technicians and managers—who have status (technical) but who want to make money out of it!—to use the remaining millions to make more millions! Indeed it can be safely assumed that these *nouveaux riches* have spent more money

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Violence - with Social Approval

DURING the week the House of Lords discussed the level of road accidents. It is a grim topic, but one which should be exercising the minds of all believers in law and order, and its effectiveness in protecting the safety of the individual. One speaker revealed the results of a survey which he had conducted among forty of his friends, asking them how many people they thought had been killed or injured in accidents during the past year. A very few put the number above fifty thousand, and replies went down to two thousand. The correct answer is three hundred thousand.

The fact that this state of affairs persists after years of campaigning by road safety organisations, government assisted bodies, and even the police shows that either they have been missing the point completely, or that their work has been nullified by counter effects.

The main arguments advanced by members of the House deserve attention. They were that Magistrates are not sufficiently severe with motorists who break the law. One contributor declared them to be culpably negligent in permitting dangerous and drunken drivers to go unchecked. However, a rather more fundamental reason was touched upon and linked up with the first, namely the fact that among certain sections of the community dangerous motoring is not regarded as a very serious form of delinquency. Since magistrates and as later mentioned, juries are drawn on the whole from these sections, they are unlikely to be very severe, and perhaps even

share the view quoted, that someone who kills a pedestrian has been jolly unlucky, rather than guilty of an anti-social act.

While it is possible that a more strict application of the law would reduce the number of accidents temporarily, the problem as a whole throws considerable light on the application of various types of sanction. Since dangerous driving is tolerated by the large community to which its operators belong, it can be carried on with impunity, just as gang fights and knife assaults can be carried on among the depressed youths in certain areas of large cities. The great difference lies in the operation of the law, and in England the law is on the side of the upper middle class. In correspondence with newspapers, the chairman of the Pedestrians' Association has made the point, which he backed up with figures from a survey conducted by a body concerned with road safety, that an overwhelmingly high proportion of road accidents can be put down to a single factor, excessive speed. If a permanent reduction in the number of accidents is to be achieved, it will have to be brought about by an attack on this factor. What are the influences in society which make getting from one place to another at high speed seem so necessary? What are the psychological factors which make it seem desirable and in a sense worth the damage it causes?

The people who would ask "How could you control the traffic in an anarchist society?" are not making a very good job of it in this one. P.H.

Florida 'Justice' True to Form

UNLUCKY is the Negro found guilty of raping a white woman in Florida, for he will surely be sentenced to death. That is the tradition in that sunny state.

Equally traditional is the practice of *not* sentencing to death any white man found guilty of raping a Negress. And the tradition was lived up to last week when a court at Tallahassee, Florida, found four young white men, aged from 16 to 23, guilty of abducting a Negro girl of 19 and raping her a total of seven times.

Although the circumstances were particularly horrible—the men had a shotgun and a knife at her throat—and the State Attorney in his prosecution strongly suggested the death penalty, the jury nevertheless recommended mercy, which automatically reduces the maximum penalty from death to life imprisonment. The actual sentence remains the discretion of the judge, who instructed the jury to reach their verdict 'without regard to race, colour or creed.'

In his closing remarks, the State Attorney Mr. William Hopkins, said 'This law enforcement proposition has got to be consistent if it is going to be successful.'

Well, the Florida jury was consistent . . . with Florida practice. But if he wants consistency, why doesn't the State Attorney start an agitation to alter his law, so that it is not left to prejudiced juries to decide whether a defendant shall hang or not. Remove the death penalty and legal lynching—for that is what it is—will be impossible.

The Hola Camp Massacre Government Whitewash a Loyal Servant

THE slimy necessity for an imperial government to stand by and justify the misdeeds of its hirelings in its colonial territories was fully demonstrated in the House of Commons last Tuesday.

The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lennox-Boyd, while admitting that things went tragically wrong at Hola Camp, Kenya, where eleven Mau-Mau detainees were beaten to death, nevertheless refused to accept that Mr. J. B. T. Cowan, Senior Superintendent of Prisons in Kenya, was in any way responsible for the massacre.

For massacre it was. Whether the 'Cowan Plan' for dealing with recalcitrant detainees was followed closely by the African guards or not, the fact remains that it did give *carte blanche* for violence, and when the detainees were marched to the irrigation trench where they were to be forced to work, the guards apparently went berserk, presumably feeling that they did so in accord with their instructions.

Charnel House

And in the measured words of Sir Frank Soskice—ex-Labour Attorney General, in the House on Tuesday: 'In a short time the place was turned into a charnel house' with ten men clubbed to death, another dying, and over twenty more so injured that they had to be rushed to the camp hospital.

The object of the Cowan plan was

to 'control and secure absolute obedience' from 66 detainees in Hola camp described as 'able-bodied men who had refused to work and from whom trouble was considered likely.'

The plan aimed at mixing the 'hard core' of unco-operative detainees with batches of those willing to work and then march them all down to the work site in these batches. But the Cowan Plan states that if the men refused to work 'They would be man-handled . . . and forced to carry out the task.'

In the event, things did not go according to plan—except for the manhandling—and at the inquest on the eleven dead, the Coroner said: 'In my opinion there were defects, ambiguities, and omissions in the Cowan plan; the plan was not executed as it had been intended and there was a grave lack of European supervision of the African warders in the main charged with the execution of the plan.'

Reading between these lines, and knowing the kind of European who is likely to become a prison guard in Kenya, we guess that the truth of the matter is in fact that the white guards simply told the African guards to go ahead, careless of the consequences and confident that they could cover up any undue violence.

Direct Advocation

Unluckily for them, the violence went so far that it was impossible to cover it up, and in spite of Mr.

Lennox-Boyd's loyal attempts in the Commons, the stink from Hola is blowing up into a major scandal for the Government.

The Cowan Plan was fairly clearly a direct provocation to violence. The results have shocked public opinion in Britain about as far as public opinion is capable of being shocked. And yet on Saturday, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, Mr. J. B. T. Cowan, Senior Superintendent of Prisons in Kenya, was awarded the Medal of the British Empire!

Now it's most probably true that this 'honour' has been on the way for months. (Two people awarded the B.E.M. in Saturday's Honours list were found for example to have been dead for six months!). But it is, in any case, a minor medal given for meritorious, but routine services.

The contempt in which the Government holds African—and indeed British—opinion is to be seen in the fact that nobody thought it wise to withdraw this award at this particular juncture.

Whatever embarrassment Mr. Cowan, M.B.E. may have caused the Government, therefore, his award—and, indeed, Lennox-Boyd's 'defence' in the Commons—can only be seen as an endorsement of his policy and practice.

Mr. Cowan's conduct of Kenya's prisons is meritorious. The murder of eleven Africans is routine.

ENLIGHTENMENT . . .

The U.S. Postmaster-General, Mr. Arthur Summerfield, last week called the unpurgated version of D. H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover" an "obscene and filthy work". He ruled that it was unsuitable for mailing in the United States.

The unpurgated version had been banned since 1928. The Post Office held a hearing recently because a New York book club had arranged to send it to its members throughout the country.

. . . KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

Siamese medical and legal authorities are studying a proposal that hooligans should be castrated to prevent them producing delinquent children. Mr. Sarit Tanarat, the Prime Minister, said on June 12 that this had been proposed by the Director-General of the Science Department, and added: "I agree with him."

A World Survey on Mental Health ROUND THE BEND

(The Unesco Courier, whose May, 1959 issue is devoted to the question of mental health includes the following observations.)

THE greatest public health problem in the world today is mental ill health. It fills more hospital beds than cancer, heart disease and tuberculosis combined. For every patient in a mental hospital at least two others are living outside, neither sick enough to be hospitalized nor well enough to live a healthy, happy life.

Figures are not available on the total amount of mental disorder in the world, but in countries with well-developed health services about half the number of hospital beds are occupied by psychiatric cases, and one third or more of the out-patients at large general hospitals attend for complaints traceable to psychological causes.

In Europe nearly two million people are in hospital with mental illness. In the U.S.A. 600,000 are hospitalized, and one person in sixteen suffers from some form of personality disturbance. In the Netherlands roughly 35 university students in 1,000 need some kind of psychological or psychiatric attention. Japan, Denmark, Austria and Switzerland lead the world in the number of suicides, while France consumes 10 times more alcohol proportionately than the U.S. or Sweden and 5 times more than Great Britain.

"If the amount of bodily disease in the world reached the proportions of many of the existing social ills with mental and emotional causes (delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, suicide, etc.) not to mention classical mental disease, an epidemic state would be declared and strong measures taken to combat it." This striking statement made at a WHO seminar a few years ago is equally true today.

After centuries when mentally sick people were regarded simply as "lunatics" who had to be locked up in institutions or even chained in prisons, society is slowly losing its terror of mental disease and is coming to regard it as curable like other sicknesses. If treatment is

India early enough about 80% of mental patients can now look forward to being cured and can take their place once again in society.

In the more culturally and economically developed countries, it is recognized that there is an insanity rate of about 1 per cent. amongst the people of these countries, and a rate of neurosis—defined at the level of partially disabling illness—of approximately 10 per cent.

Two per Thousand

India: "About 2 per thousand of our population is likely to be afflicted with a mental disorder which sooner or later requires hospitalization. We have also to take into account the mental defectives who average at least 8 to 10 per thousand of our population, and epileptics who perhaps number 0.5 per cent. of the population. Further we must include in this category various types of physical illnesses like high blood pressure, skin disorders of various types, cardiovascular conditions and others in which chronic emotional stresses do contribute a major share. Added to this formidable list we have problems of social pathology. In our country, about 1,750,000 crimes are committed every year; between 15,000 and 17,000 people commit suicide in a year; and, at the lowest estimate, about 15 to 20 per cent. of our teenagers are juvenile delinquents."

One in Sixteen

United States of America: It is estimated that there are about 9 million people in the United States of America suffering from mental illness (1.5 million) and other personality disturbances (7.5 million)—all in all about 1 in every 16 people. In addition, there are about 1.5 million mentally deficient people—conservatively about 1 per cent. of the population.

One out of every 12 children born in the United States of America each year will sometimes during his life suffer a mental illness severe enough to require hospitalization. The number who will develop less severe mental illness is much greater.

The patients in mental hospitals make up on any day almost half of all the patients in all the hospitals in the United States of America. Taken together, the patients in mental hospitals and in institutions for the mentally deficient and epileptic make up about 55 per cent. of all the patients in all hospitals.

In addition to the people who go to mental hospitals, clinics or private psychiatrists for treatment of mental illness or other personality disturbances, it is estimated that about 30 per cent. of all the patients who go to general hospitals, and about 50 per cent. of all the patients who go to general practitioners are suffering from mental illness and other personality disturbances or physical illness associated with mental illness.

One in Ten

Among French children: It is estimated that in France 4.3 per cent. of all children between 4 and 17 years old have some degree of mental deficiency and need special schooling and attention; but the proportion of children or adolescents who will need some psychological care and guidance at one time during their school or post-school years is at least 5 to 10 per cent.

In the armed forces: Other evidence of the extent of mental illness in the United States of America comes from the armed forces. During World War II, about 900,000 men between the ages of 18 and 37, or about 5 per cent. of the 18 million examined, were rejected for military service because of mental disorder.

Possessed by Devils

Among primitive peoples, mental disease has generally been looked upon either as a punishment by a good spirit, or, more often, as the result of malevolent action by the devil, or even as demoniacal possession. This conception, which still survives among certain African and East Indian peoples, was very prevalent throughout the Middle Ages and even later.

During the Middle Ages a few monasteries harboured lunatics, but it appears

that the first asylums for their care were built by the Moslems, whose ideas on the treatment of mental patients were derived from the Eastern physicians. In Europe, the Bethlem hospital in London was first used as an asylum in 1403; the second was opened in 1408 at Valencia in Spain.

Asylums like Prisons

The purpose of these early asylums was not the care and treatment of the mentally ill, but the incarceration and, if possible, subjugation of the violently insane. Most of these asylums resembled prisons, and the inmates were regarded as criminals. Very gradually a more humane attitude towards the mentally afflicted began to develop. In 1792 more than 50 insane inmates of the Bicetre hospital in Paris were liberated from their chains, which had been worn for over 30 years. Even pessimists had to agree that these patients became less rather than more violent. In Italy, Vincenzo Chiarugi struck off chains from the insane at about the same time.

Reform in England was initiated by the Quakers who founded the York Retreat in 1813, purposely avoiding the name "asylum" or "madhouse". The use of chains was abolished, and therapy was introduced, consisting in work and exercise and the cultivation of a moral atmosphere. The fame of the English Quaker reforms spread to America, and in 1817 the Friends Asylum was opened in Pennsylvania, where the mentally ill were treated as human beings instead of beasts.

Modern Man's Mental Health

"Psychotropic agents! The "tranquillizer" in one pocket; the "pep" pill in the other. Drugs to dispel nightmares; drugs to invoke dreams; drugs to

escape from reality into fantasy or from fantasy into reality. Even Alice-in-Wonderland drugs by means of which adults can shrink back into childhood."

That is the caricature of one type of modern man, harassed by headlines; tortured by the ticker-tape; tormented by the telephone; as "manic-depressive" as his sales-charts; wakeful when he should be asleep and drowsy when he should be awake; worrying about his blood pressure and nursing his duodenal ulcer; driving himself like a highspeed car through dense traffic, braking or accelerating in turn, running away from himself and taking himself with him. He has 2,500 million neighbours in the wider world; he is alone in that private world—himself.

There are still other types—those whose tensions become intolerable through being chained to piece-work machines, white-collar workers dogged by economic worries and "wife trouble", hungry and miserable peasants driven to take hashish for solace.

Don't keep up with the Joneses!

In America social climbing is a national exercise, and many athletes in this kind of competition for respect pay heavily in mental health. In a society like ours, in which money income is distributed in shares of graduated size, the demand for respect takes many forms; striving to obtain all the respect that a new wealth position makes possible; seeking to save enough respect to compensate for economic limitations; trying to discover means of scoring prestige points in order to get ahead of competitors having about the same income... Those who keep up with the Joneses must often go all the way to the mental hospital.

CINEMA

Ashes and Diamonds

CERTAIN wasps, in order to lay eggs, will paralyse a caterpillar and bury it in a hollow. The caterpillar survives in a coma; when the wasp grubs are mature, they use it as food.

The injection of coma-inducing liquid is evident in *Ashes and Diamonds*, directed by Andrzej Wajda. The victims are young Poles, whose lives have embraced partition, German occupation, and finally, this overthrow, the strife between Communist and traditionalist parties.

Wajda was the author of *Kanal*, that grim, unpalatable story of the Warsaw rising, when in eight weeks' street fighting the Resistance lost 240,000 dead. The present film is set in May, 1945. The young man Maciek, homeless and rootless, leads a roving life with the Home Army, an organisation of armed resistance, which from killing Germans, is now turning to the killing of pro-Communist Poles. At the moment we first see him, Maciek is detailed to kill Szczuka, the local Workers' Party Secretary. After a first attempt has failed, he lays his own plans to run his quarry to earth. But in the hotel where he has booked a room next to Szczuka, he meets Christine, a young barmaid. Can he forsake his role of assassin and make a life with her? As the hour fixed for the killing draws on (it is the day of liberation), the building echoes with the tasteless maffickings of *soi-disant* patriots. These are the aristocrats and *ancien régime* Socialists, whose initiative is insufficient to grapple with the real problems of Poland and who are marked for nothing but further corruption. Solidarity with his dead comrades in the Partisan army, and the influence of the aristocratic clique who

have sold the partisans, is too strong for Maciek, and he goes out to kill and be killed. The caterpillars will never become butterflies.

The most unpleasant aspect of *Ashes and Diamonds*, apart from its hopelessness, is its lack of a human centre. Maciek is the victim of the interests which have enrolled him in their struggle, but he never realises that he is. This minimum of tragic dignity, which might have been granted to him in a different realisation, is denied him. Instead his fidelity and pathetic compliance is represented (despite everything) as a virtue.

It is part of the authoritarian-submissive personality that power should be implicitly glorified, and any criticism directed merely against its misapplication. If we go with Wajda's glamorising of that 'heroism' which consists in naive obedience, we shall leave this film thinking that some kind of new economic or political policy will save the Macieks and Christines from further suffering. The *Hymn to the Fatherland*, played at the end of this film, is still a hypnotic drug, as deceptive as any of the other idols. What we need to realise is the truth of Macneice, that: every country stands by the sanctity of the individual will.

The seeds of this attitude are present in Poland: indeed, the degree to which Communism is criticised by Wajda would have been unthinkable five years ago. But for their germination, we shall have to wait a while yet. A.D.F.

The University Libertarian

DUE to financial and administrative difficulties, the future of *The University Libertarian* is still uncertain. The ninth number, however, has just appeared, containing 'Soviet Science & Sadness' by W. Grey Walter, 'More about Dirty Books', by Nicolas Walter, and articles by E. Rob, Bernard Raymond, George Molnar, Terence Chivers, Arthur Uloth, and George Woodcock (on Tolstoy), and a review 'Sex and Censorship' which would appear to be the reason for the warning on the cover: 'This issue should not be sold to students or other candidates for the Establishment under 18, but will be found quite harmless to factory lads and other workaday folk.'

Even without that, this is a good issue of the *University Libertarian* and the magazine is worthy of your support. It would be a great pity if it were to cease publication. A more complete review will appear later.

SAM WALSH.

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Theatre

Lock Up Your Daughter at the Mermaid

Lock Up Your Daughters, a musical play, adapted by Bernard Miles from Henry Fieldings comedy, *Rape Upon Rape*.

I BELIEVE it was Socrates who declared that mankind's three essentials are thought, food and sex.

While the new Mermaid Theatre, which has risen from Puddle Dock, at Blackfriars, London, may not exemplify Socratic dictum exactly, a great deal of thought has gone into its building; it offers food at a fully licensed Thames-side restaurant, and sex is there set to song, straight rather than subtle, but meeting propriety's demand of its being presented ostentatiously and performed discreetly—though decidedly—off-stage.

Since that day in May when the Mermaid's patron, booking his seat in advance at a builders-type hut, was assailed by a cacophony of concrete mixers, hammers and saws, this site of a blitzed warehouse opposite the sedate *Times* offices has been transformed into a perfect home for melodrama—and more.

As dusk descended on a warm June evening, this intimate theatre's big, lavish foyer seethed with a happily anticipatory crowd of men and women all chattering like magpies as they quenched thirsts with alcohol or coffee and satisfied one human hunger with snacks.

The whole width of the busiest bar in Christendom (which in this daring establishment separates the "cloak" rooms in which patrons sit or hang out respectively, as distinctly as the Lutheran Church divides its congregations), clinked merrily until the third clanging of a bell of which Lord Hailsham might be proud sent folks hurrying up the two side staircases to a thronged balcony leading to the auditorium.

With due respect to both Fielding and Miles, the finest rake of all at the Mermaid Theatre is its sweeping tier of 499 seats from near the twinkle-lighted ceiling down to the stage-level front row, the seats at the sides of this rough brick-walled auditorium sloping inwards for perfect viewing.

The wide stage has neither wings nor footlights and, lacking the customary

proscenium opening curtain, is entirely open. Above board in another sense there is an upper story to the stage set well back, from which the orchestra is dimly seen and clearly heard.

The ingeniously constructed set for the Mermaid's first production of *Lock Up Your Daughters* consists of a series of small stages upon which too many artists are figuratively as well as literally shelved for prolonged periods until the spotlights shine on these players' cues. The central section of the stage revolves from time to time to change the scene, and is neatly contrived to bring into view the whole company, and coyly hide it away again, turn by turn, in a series of revolutionary curtains at the close of this delightful entertainment.

These mechanics are employed to render even more smooth a piece which offers no strain to the intellect, anyway. A sardonic night-watchman of ye olden days sings out slow variations of assurance that "All's well", even as the first victim of a law which seeks to establish rape, even where rape is not, exhibits the self-handshake of the successful sportsman to an appreciative audience.

The fun is joyous and the applause rapturous as the plot thickens and happy rogues glory in conforming to the convention of villainous males violently importuning of female virtue. The sauciest character is that of the bewitchingly naughty but innocent heroine of Stephanie Voss, who turns the tables on a rascally justice (played with unflagging zeal by Richard Wordsworth) and meantime squeals delightfully as with true Christian charity she turns the other cheek of a soundly smacked rump.

A more sophisticated aspect is provided by Hy Hazell's sprightly singing of "When Does The Ravishing Begin?" and Frederick Jaeger's prompt response of bundling the forward lady into bed and whipping the four-poster's curtains around the pair of them.

This episode would appear to provide a sequel to a scene in an otherwise forgotten London Casino revue in which a sweet Phyllis Robins pensively sang that if only the girls would do immediately what they always do eventually, how pleased the men would be—and if

Comments on the Political Circus

Continued from p. 1

acquiring status than they have spent on "enjoying" the material luxuries their wealth could provide.

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WE have stressed this question of status because today status and not wealth is the passport to power. (Millionaire Dawson is languishing in jail, labelled a confidence trickster by society, but Mr. Day a household name to millions of viewers on ITV for his comments on the news, has left this ephemeral medium to devote himself to Liberalism and the cleaning-up of party politics. Once a week purse-lipped Mr. Day looking at humanity through his impressive horn-rimmed glasses pontificates from the feature page of the *News Chronicle* on matters of moment, and prepares the way for the day when the British public will be allowed to reshuffle the political pack of Jokers and Knaves disguised as Kings and Queens of Hearts.

These new-look politicians are seeking to rehabilitate politics by the argument that good government (that is the government which will legislate for the well-being of the people) will come about if the people vote for the right men, these being professional men (with status), materially successful but not garish in their way of life; scholarship boys themselves even if they pay to send their children to the "best schools"; republicans and socialists at heart even if they are flattered and accept "honours" offered by the Queen (generally they blame their wives for accepting these honours!).

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POLITICS cannot be rehabilitated because all government, whatever its colour, is the rule of a majority by a minority. It matters little that the government has been elected by a majority if the alternatives offered to the public are between government and government and not between government and no-government. In other words short of revolution there is no alternative to government.

At election time what is offered is a Hobson's choice, a take-it-or-leave-it, but no opportunity within the law of changing IT. And IT being a well-greased machine, whose smooth running is in the bread and butter interests of millions of wage (or salary) earners and rentiers to safeguard from the incursions of new ideas (by legislation directed against sedition, or arbitrary, so-called Defence Regulations), the incursions of well-meaning do-gooders who may (and we stress the *may* because we don't believe them!) imagine that given power they can by-pass the machine, is doomed to failure.

Not only for the reasons we have already given, but because do-goodism by legislation still depends on the *threat*, even if its *use* were found unnecessary, of force for its implementation. And this, in its turn, makes recourse to the instruments of force and coercion already in being indispensable. Government by the people, is self-government, is organisation from below, and has nothing in common with authority, organisation from above, which is government as understood and practised to-day.

★

WHEN then, we read in our newspapers that the Labour Party leadership is seriously considering modifying its attitude to what we would call H-bomb diplomacy, we are unconvinced by last week's *New Statesman* leading article which implied that this change of heart is both the result of public opinion as expressed through the CND (Cam-

paign for Nuclear Disarmament) and some sections of the Trades Unions, as well as a political necessity if the Labour movement "is to avoid a split on the eve of an election".

We are unconvinced because we do not believe that elections are won or lost on questions of principles, but by the votes of the "floating minority". Both the Labour and Conservative Managers take for granted that a majority of the votes cast at elections are predetermined, unshaken by persuasive argument or tempting promises. Only the Liberals may succeed in swaying some of the votes of the "solid majority". The preoccupation of the parties is to correctly assess what are the issues which will influence the floating voters to support them, and the apathetic to record a vote. It is clear that the Tories will concentrate on issues which will commend them to working class voters (hence the government's decision this week to increase the amount of *your* money that is spent on assisting the destitute, and recent measures taken to inject some of *your* money into the shrivelled veins of the Lancashire Cotton industry). And Labour will in its turn plug those issues which may spark the imagination of middle class voters. The managers of the "Labour Machine", as the *New Statesman* so irreverently called it last week, will probably concentrate their effort on the substantial non-voting minority (which we suspect includes a large number of supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) rather than attempt to win-over Tory votes. And in this respect the H-Bomb issue will appeal to middle-class voters who find both Tory and Labour policies, and their leaders, equally distasteful, without having any illusions so far as the politically bleary-eyed—self labelled blue-eyed—boys of Liberalism.

De Gaulle's protest which is directed against this country rather than against the United States (and by which he hopes to impress the French with his own nationalist fervour as well as his power over them!) provides the Labour leadership with an excellent excuse for proposing to reverse its H-bomb policy, without losing face. For with France knocking at the door of the hitherto exclusive Nuclear Powers Club the rot has set in. Before long Germany, Italy, the Benelux countries and any third-rate power will be in a position to argue at the conference tables with an H-bomb to reinforce their claims. The only hope for Britain is to lead the *ex-Nuclear* Powers club, thus combining *moral* leadership with an astute summing-up of the inefficacy of the H-bomb as a weapon of diplomacy once it ceases to be the exclusive possession of the Big Three.

For when the button which will seal the fate of humanity is within reach of every minor political upstart the Bigness of the Big powers will have been neutralised and even endangered. Since Britain's policy is to be a Big Power and not that of being eliminated by the H-bombs of a minor power, we shall not be surprised if she takes the step of leading a campaign for Nuclear Disarmament though it will be more difficult for the Tories to do this unilaterally than for Labour if returned to Power. But if either party does it, let no one misunderstand their reasons for taking such a step. It will be to strengthen not to weaken their position in the game of world politics. Even the *Observer*, the self-proclaimed blue-eyed boys of Liberalism, declared last Sunday that

[By giving up her independent deterrent and stopping the manufacture of nuclear weapons which add nothing to the real strength of the West against Russia and which we could never use in any independent operation, Britain] should in fact be much stronger militarily if we could devote the money now spent on manufacturing these weapons and the incredibly expensive missiles and bombers required to carry them, to building up an effective strategic reserve force such as we utterly lack. We should still

LAND NOTES

FOOD PRODUCTION & FERTILITY

IN the editorial in FREEDOM of the 30th May, "Workers, Wake Up!" it was claimed that "the development of technology and the potentialities of automation make it possible to expand industrial and agricultural production by an almost unlimited amount". While this is to a large extent true of industrial production it is not necessarily true of agriculture. Even in industrial production where the manipulation and production of raw materials is easier the colossal consumption make it imperative that a continual search for new materials is carried out.

While it is undoubtedly true that agricultural production is below its potential the raw material upon which this activity is based has certain well defined limits. The history of mankind has shown that cultivable soil is very expendable even in the most favourable of climates. Food hydroponically cultivated, owing to the infertility of plants so cultivated depends on conventional agriculture for supplies of seed. In the June issue of *Agriculture* the Ministry of Agriculture Journal, J. R. Keyworth, N.D.A., M.R.A.C., County Advisory Officer for Lincolnshire, which contains some of the most fertile soil in the country says, "How long can continuous cash cropping go on? It may well be spoiling our soils. The problem can be tackled in two ways." He suggests that this can be tackled by introducing a three-year grass ley into the rotation restricting the number of root crops over a period, which demand a great deal of soil movement which deplete the organic matter by exposure to oxidation. He goes on to say that the silt soils of Lincolnshire are becoming increasingly difficult to manage as the organic matter is depleted. The writer says "that the problems of the silts may well be a foretaste of what could happen to other soils of the east of England on which cash cropping is practised." Mr. Keyworth goes on to say that "We know that after a hundred years of grass, arable land can maintain its structure for perhaps another hundred years but no one can really say just what propor-

tion of leys is needed in the rotation to maintain our present soil conditions."

Nothing adds to the organic content of the soil as much as grass and to grow the root system necessary to perform this function the grass has to be down at least three years.

"Morally," the article continues, "one should farm for one's sons and grandsons. That approach will always maintain fertility, which cannot be considered in terms of a few years, but only in terms of a quarter of a century or more."

Significantly he adds that "As the average size of a holding in Holland (being the name of that part of Lincolnshire) is only 45 acres, this means that the great majority of farms in the country must continue with intensive cash cropping to provide an adequate living, but with the constant worry that perhaps it cannot always be so." To do what is desirable in terms of food production and maintenance of fertility conflicts with the requirement of a crazy economic system. The study of soil is a very indefinite science as the writer points out, moreover the vast differences that occur in a country of this size in soils make and imposed economic pattern create infertility or hardship on those working soils difficult to work.

At one time of course artificials were regarded as an easy way to secure large crops and produce cheap food with the minimum of labour, using by-products of various industrial processes, this completely ignored the complexity of plant nutrition and the necessity of maintaining an adequate organic basis. Various articles appearing from time to time in the agricultural press now tacitly admit the limitations of artificial manuring. One writer says that organic manures and humus is essential to all but the best soils which he says could be cultivated with artificials alone if necessary. Presumably he would leave it for coming generations (if there are any) to reap the benefit of this policy as the occupants of our best land are in Lincolnshire. A healthy agriculture is undoubtedly the

basis of a healthy society and a healthy agriculture is based on the conservation of organic material and moisture.

Providing every bit of manure and plant debris is returned to the soil it is possible to maintain a friable and spongy crust that resists corrosion and controls the moisture content.

In tropical areas this as a great problem as apart from poorest areas where the soil is protected from the sun, any cultivation is likely to result in a rapid oxidation of the organic matter.

In the interesting review in FREEDOM of George Woodcock's travels in S. America it is clear that the stability of many ancient cultures depended on quite an efficient agricultural system and many of the poverty-stricken peoples of the world are the residue of cultures where for some reason this system was destroyed. In Israel where tremendous efforts are being made to overcome the water shortage, ingenious systems have been discovered that supplied water in ancient times to support small towns which were able to grow grapes on land that has not been in cultivation for a long time. In Israel any increase in cultivable land has to be won and they appear to be aware that there is some correlation between a successful agriculture and real cultural progress.

Here where we take the high fertility of our land so much for granted it is as well to remember that this fertility was the result of generations of balanced agricultural activity and preserved paradoxically in periods of agricultural depression by the grain by which means the fertility of the Americas was shipped here. If the vast masses of the underfed peoples of the world secure a fair share and the people of this country had to depend on resources here for food one wonders to what level the real standard would fall to while the country continues to discharge its fertility into the sea and incinerate vast quantities of organic matter.

ALAN ALBON.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Guide to Logical Thinking

GUIDES TO STRAIGHT THINKING, Stuart Chase. Phoenix House, 1959, 25s.

"KNOWLEDGE is power". But does one's knowledge of logical fallacies confer the power to avoid them? The assumption behind the present work is that a systematic course of lectures on logic will raise the level of layman's thinking from confusion to clarification.

To the extent that it is desirable for college students to have some acquaintance with the subject, this book will serve. But for students of *Homo sapiens* it must remain decidedly unsatisfactory.

The emotions are surely the governing factors in any specifically human situation. Logic, as a technique for conveying ideas, will always remain at their command—to be used or abused for particular ends, but powerless in itself to touch the springs of conduct.

have the same access to American nuclear weapons as France, Italy and Holland have now.

★

THE game of power politics may have real prizes for those directly engaged in it or for their influential and powerful backers. But we think there is no evidence to show that the people, who pay the pipers, both in socially useless toil and often with their lives, ever call the tunes. If nuclear disarmament occurs it will be for the wrong reasons; if a settlement of the German question takes place it will be at the expense of some people somewhere, pawns on the chess-board of power politics.

Only when the peoples of the world call the political bluff, expose the politicians and their satraps for what they are, and refuse to acquiesce in this stupid but dangerous game, will it be possible to do something about solving the real problems, the first of which is that half the world today is desperately hungry, and needs food not slogans about freedom, bread and not bombs.

MacCarthyism in America was not overcome by analysis of the Senator's illogical investigation techniques. It was overcome by a live sense of injustice and by a hatred of him stronger than his hate of suspected Communists.

It may be respectable to argue correctly according to the schoolbook, but the truth and value of one's viewpoint must be determined in other ways. Being an American and a public man, Chase is, somewhat naturally, not unaware of this! Despite which he persists in his touching faith that the naturalness of straight thinking can be attained—and maintained by all and sundry.

For an example of how Chase, too, is quite as human as any of his readers, see him fall for Fallacy Number Seven—the appeal to Authority over the facts (p. 211).

"Sir George Thomson, physicist and Nobel Prize winner, in the *Foreseeable Future*, 1955, Cambridge University Press, says that maybe only geniuses think freely and naturally . . . (!)"

Thinking Machines

WHAT IS CYBERNETICS? by Professor G. T. Guilbaud. Heinemann Contemporary Science Series.

THIS is a very pleasantly written and well produced book. The topic with which it deals is, as is continually pointed out, of increasing importance in many branches of science, from industrial production to psychology, and has been applied to studies such as linguistics.

In developing his subject, Professor Guilbaud brings in a very wide range of illustrations which if not of everyday occurrence, are likely to maintain the attention of interested readers. He also devotes some time to deflating the false notions spread by over-enthusiastic cyberneticians, who concentrate on the "thinking machine" aspect.

The question mark in the reviewer's mind concerned the general aspect of the value of popular science manuals, treating subjects of topical importance. If someone is in such a position that cybernetics really is of importance to him, he would probably be capable of tackling

In spite of (and *not* because of!) the Sir, the scientist, the Prize, and the University, this statement looks like being true! Basically, the clear and independent thinker does not need courses in logic. And, we might add, the confused thinkers succeed only in confusing the best teaching efforts of the logicians also.

But do not let these strictures put you off reading this book. At least it may help you to understand your make-up, as also its author's. In fact, in understanding that the author is himself no infallible logician, and can beg questions as well as the next man, the reader will have got maximum benefit from his 215 pages at 25/-.

Faced with today's particular bureaucracies, monopolies and totalitarisms, it is perhaps only human to imagine that a little clear thinking will lead us out of darkness into light. But such a hope, admirable though it may be, was never a logical one!

LINCOLN A. GRIBBLE.

something on a much higher level; and if not, then it seems of little point to develop the illusion of knowing what the scientific Jones' are up to. It is of far greater importance to develop a critical attitude towards the rôle of science in modern society, and its tendency to concentrate the power of knowledge into the hands of a minority. The first two books in the present series, *The Commonsense of Science* by Bronowski, and *Social Surveys and Social Action* by Abrams, were more relevant to this object. P.H.

And did you Remember to Renew your Subscription to FREEDOM ?

Anarchist in Court

9 Months for David Bell

A PARTICULARLY heavy sentence for a conscientious objector in peace-time was given to our comrade David Bell at Lambeth Court last week, when he was sentenced to nine months for refusing to accept conditions of exemption from national service.

David was active in the Malatesta Club (and, we gather, has recently been helping in the preparation of new premises for our contemporary, *Peace News*) and was one of the demonstrators at the North Pickenham missile base in the direct action project there last Christmas. He spent Christmas in jail.

At his tribunal, David was granted exemption from military service on condition he undertook hospital work, and this he did for some time. But eventually he rejected the State's right to claim his services at all and decided not to accept the conditions any longer.

In taking part in the obstructions at North Pickenham, David attracted the attention of the authorities, which led to his arrest, and it may well be that his present sentence is higher than usual because of his militant activities.

Ever since January David's position has been difficult since he has been under the shadow of arrest all the time. Now that the State has claimed its pound of flesh it may at least settle the matter and David will afterwards be able to make his contribution to society in the work of

his own choice. We extend to him our solidarity in the struggle against conscription and war.

Literature Seller Discharged

EVERY now and again the police take it into their heads to arrest the literature sellers at the gates of Hyde Park on charges of obstruction. And oddly enough they usually pick on the anarchists.

This happened last Sunday, when our literature seller, Peter Turner, was arrested and hauled off to Marylebone police Station. In the course of checking on his address, his wife was notified and she dashed down to the station by taxi to bail him out, only to find that he was already bailed out (on his own recognisances) and was on his way home.

This is just one small example of the ways in which the police, by their high-handed methods and by not explaining the situation at any stage, make things awkward for those they arrest and for their families. It's all part of the deterrent.

And the gravity of the charge can be gauged from the fact that in court the next morning, the magistrate did no more than solemnly explain to our comrade the situation regarding obstruction (that it is an offence simply to stand still on a pavement!) and then gave him an absolute discharge.

NAPLES

Peasants Fire Town Hall

A DEMONSTRATION that peasant revolts in Europe are not completely things of the past has been rudely presented to the local authorities around Naples, where peasants demonstrating over the price of their potatoes stormed the town hall at Marigliano and set it on fire, wrecked the telephone exchange, and hurled pitchforks at the police.

A Reuter report last week said that:

Tear gas bombs quelled this sector of the "peasants' revolt" and police made a hundred arrests. But another column of demonstrators formed in the suburbs and marched to Naples, joined on the way by peasants marching in from Afragora, Casoria, and other villages of the region. Outside the Prefecture in Naples they shouted demands for better prices for their produce. The Prefect received a deputation and promised to look into their grievances.

Shots were fired at the windows of police barracks on the second floor of the town hall during the Marigliano riot, and vegetables were used as missiles. According to police the peasants came to town before dawn, hoping to prevent the weekly vegetable market from being held until potato prices were raised. They ignored police warnings to disperse and by 9 a.m. were two thousand strong, armed with sticks, stones, and farm implements.

'Incinerate the Documents'

The rioters got into the town hall by seizing a police truck and driving it

at full speed into the great door of the building, giving access to a courtyard surrounded by municipal offices. Some of them broke into the post office on the ground floor and set papers on fire. Others cut all telephone lines and threw up road blocks.

Police reinforcements were rushed in from neighbouring Nola, and fire engines called from Naples and Nola helped put out the fire at the town hall before serious damage was done. Many police and rioters were treated for cuts and bruises but no more serious injuries were reported. After questioning, many of the arrested men were charged and taken to prison at Nola.

DEFICIT GROWING

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MARIE-LOUISE BERNERI: *Neither East nor West* paper 7s. 6d.; cloth 10s. 6d.

★ Marie-Louise Berneri Memorial Committee publications: *Marie-Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: A Tribute* cloth 5s. *Journey Through Utopia* cloth 18s. (U.S.A. \$3)

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

An Israeli Satirist

OVER the last decade the idea of the poet as expressing national aspirations and group experience has given way to a realisation that the artist and his society do not necessarily have the same set of values.

The first stage in this development came with the cynicism produced by prosaic post-war realities in those who had expected the Millennium to follow victory. This disillusionment found its most savage expression in the satire of Amos Kenan, a master of *sabra* invective and slang. His attacks were aimed on the surface at the bureaucracy and philistinism of post-war Israel, but basically his position was anarchistic in the extreme. Aiming at the very heart of the national ideology, the hallowed word Zionism came to signify in his writings not a struggle against the powers of darkness, but mere cant. One of the most important innovations introduced by Kenan was complete adaptation of the blunt, somewhat vulgar and ungrammatical Hebrew of *sabra* speech to his satirical ends. One target of his attack was the *melitza*—the elaborate and over-literary prose style of previous writers. This particular virtue of his writing cannot, alas, appear in translation, but here nevertheless is one of his gentler pieces, a 'political program' he published during 1949 elections.

- a. I demand total Liberty: Liberty for the worker and Liberty for the businessman, socialist Liberty and capitalist Liberty, Liberty of religion, and Liberty of religious coercion. Long live Liberty!
- b. I demand Justice. Everybody's right and that's that. Anyone who isn't right is an S.O.B.
- c. I demand War: War on the External Enemy and War on the Internal Enemy, War for Liberty (see a.). War for Justice (see b.). War, War, War—and you can all go to the devil.
- d. I demand that England apologise publicly and start behaving herself.
- e. I demand to know what's wrong with my program. I can always add.

—ARIEH SACHS:

Avante-Garde Poetry in Israel. (Cambridge Opinion, No. 14).

McGovern the Crusader

JOHN MCGOVERN, erst-while ILP'er and now Labour M.P. for Shettleston, Glasgow, is carrying on a one-man crusade against what he calls 'under-cover Communists' in the Labour Party.

In Berlin recently he made statements that 26 Labour M.P.s must be considered Communists or under-cover Communists and about 70 more were fellow-travellers.

This has, naturally, upset the Labour leadership, and Morgan Phillips wrote to McGovern asking for a withdrawal or for names. McGovern is a bit too canny to supply names, however, for naturally to call someone a Communist is highly libellous.

In a letter to Morgan Phillips, McGovern writes:

"Your demand for names is intended to silence me or attempt to cast doubts on my statement. It seems to be in some way related to the fear of the effect during election year. The weakness of your letter is that it shows no desire to effect a cure, but rather to continue the cancer.

"I recognise that out of 286 Labour M.P.s there are about two hundred who are sound and sincere on democratic principles, but they must be prepared to stand firm and assert themselves against the sell-out tactics of those who have the democratic mask and the totalitarian ideology.

"When I entered the Parliamentary Labour party meetings in 1947 to 1957 I had the greatest shock of my life. I had never seen such an exhibition of bitter hatred of the leaders towards one another. Many would have tramped on the faces of their best friends to get power and position. If you could have condensed that bitterness and hatred into atomic power it would have blown everybody off the British Isles."

The amusing part of McGovern's crusade, however, lies in the fact that he is a Catholic (what was that about

'the democratic mask and the totalitarian ideology?') and depends upon the working class Catholic vote in his constituency. He is therefore running his little campaign with his eye on the good effect it will have on his votes in the election and with supreme unconcern for the effect his remarks may have on the votes of other Labour Party members.

John McGovern is clearly a good comrade and well equipped to write about those who 'would have tramped on the faces of their best friends to get power and position' . . .

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Sunday meetings now held at "Marquis of Granby" Public House, Rathbone Street (corner of Percy Street, Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street), 7.30 p.m.

JUNE 21.—Jack Robinson on "IS SPORT THE OPIATE OF THE PEOPLE?"

JUNE 28.—Philip Holgate Subject to be announced.

CROYDON LIBERTARIAN GROUP

A Picnic will be held on Sunday, June 28th, at Friday Street, near Dorking, Surrey.

Meet at Dorking North Station (S.R.) at 12 mid-day. All Comrades Welcome.

CLEVELAND LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE GROUP

Monthly discussion meetings are held on the last Friday of each month at 8 o'clock at 3705 West Park Road, Cleveland (near Lorain-Triskett). Anyone interested is invited.

THE YOUNGSTOWN LIBERTARIANS

A Picnic, July 4th, at 1 p.m. at Frank Marino's Farm, 3825 Lauterman Road, Youngstown, Ohio.

SUMMERHILL SOCIETY MEETING

At a meeting organised by the Summerhill Society on Friday, 26th June, at 7.45 p.m. at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1., Paul Ritter will be speaking on "The Free Family". A later meeting, on Friday, 10th July (same time, same place), will be addressed by John Aitkenhead, founder and headmaster of Kilquhanity House School.

Admission to these meetings is 2s. at the door.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBERTARIAN

Number Nine now available Price One Shilling from Freedom Bookshop or by subscription (6 copies 7/-) from John Upton, 228 Holmesdale Road, London, S.E.25. Back numbers 2-8 still available.

Hyde Park Corner

THE American reformer and sonofagun said the other day—but everybody knows what he said. About London Parks resembling bedrooms. Jolly, sorry, sordid cuddling and kissing on the grass, no mention of park policemen with torches and Alsations licking your ear, and so terribly embarrassing, what will my father the Brigadier General say, but that's another story. Oh, yessir, regular Sodom and Gonorrhoea, I beg your pardon.

But what about, I say what about, Mr. Speaker, will somebody lend an ear. THANK YOU, I'll return it later, I say, what about that girl, that lovely girl I used to know, who would have loved to kiss and more than cuddle on the grass, is somebody shocked, then please leave the room, can't you see the sign NO SHOCKING HERE, because it always brought tears to her eyes.

Mind you, that's Welsh for playing for time, I've long forgotten her, except for that, and I don't mean that or even that or that. So let's do her again, every sentence an orgy of creation. Let us say that she was tall and dark, eyes of coal, buy in the summer, immediate delivery. Shapely as the military headquarters in Paris, a regular girl, like any other girl with red hair and blue eyes. Her name was Alma or stations thereabouts. I met her on the white chalked floor of the local dancing school where we glided and collided to the tunes of old Victor and his orchestra. She was about a head taller, a thigh taller would be more accurate. A reminder to give up all vertical contacts and concentrate on the horizontal. STOP BREATHING DOWN MY NECK. But where could I have taken her? My landlady, sparing no expense, had installed a private television circuit in the house so that no woman could pass through the door undetected. Alma lived at home. The usual recipe. Two portions mother love, one portion father hatred stirred up with the spoon of respectability.

So I walked her towards the park. To hell with John Braine's hero who hates fumbling with zips and buttons on the grass. Under the elm tree you lie on the soft grass, you smell the earth, your girl's arm is under your head as a pillow and life is beautiful, says Lin Yutang. But as we reached the entrance of the

park, Alma stopped and would not go a step farther. "I don't think I should," she said. "Should what?" I asked. "Go in the park." I answered with a tirade of angry abuse, that I could not possibly repeat, could not possibly remember. I expected her to turn on her heel and go, but she stayed, as if she were used to abuse and grew to enjoy it like the acquired taste of olives. "I'm worried about the consequences," she said at last. Holy smoke, where have I heard that before. "Alright, be like that," I said, "it's your loss not mine." A complete week wasted. The usual type of girl, so far but no further. The dream of marriage. A semi-detached, with washing machine, vacuum cleaner and a television set. Two girls and two boys. A cup of tea. The dog has swallowed the pin-cushion. Phone up the local M.P. "You don't understand," she said. "Don't I?" "You don't. It's not that. I'll tell you if you promise not to laugh." And she paused dramatically with the amber light of the lamps shining on her.

At last she said, "I suffer from hay-fever. You see, you are laughing. As soon as I go near the grass, my eyes start to stream and I sneeze until I have a terrible headache. I am drugged up as it is. My doctor thinks I'm the worst case he ever encountered. So you see, I would love to go in the park with you but I daren't." Was she fibbing? No, I could see she was telling the truth. She leaned down and kissed me, then I took her to a station and I have never seen her since.

As the Queen and the Duke entertained the religious reformer and his wife for tea the other day, they may have had a fine view of the kissing and cuddling couples in St. James's Park. But there is at least one English girl who would never cause them displeasure, poor Alma, that lovely pathetic girl, sneezing her way to sainthood.

"Another cup of tea?" "Yes, please." "Sugar?" "Two lumps . . . and as I was saying, my remarks on London's Parks need amplifying before they are fully understood and I would appreciate it if they were amplified. I have no objection . . ."

And so to Moscow.

JOHN RETY.

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