

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"What can give a man liberty?
 Will, his own will, and it gives
 power, which is better than
 liberty."
 —TURGENEV

PRINT, PRESS AND PUBLIC

AS we go to Press (Monday) the National newspapers by scraping the bottoms of their ink tanks, and patriotically sharing out the proceeds among themselves (by permission of Natsopa) were assuring the public that its daily dose of sport, sex and sadism, was guaranteed until Wednesday.*On that day the ink-thirsty rotaries of Fleet Street would give up the ghost if agreement between the ink workers union (Natsopa) and the Ink Manufacturers had not been reached.

London's commuting millions deprived of the screen behind which they normally hide from their travelling companions would be obliged to see them and perhaps even get to know them through conversation; millions of newsprint-fed citizens suddenly thrown on their own resources might feel the urge to think for themselves; and whilst breakfast time in many households will be incredibly dull without the Fleet Street uncles, and may even result in an increase in the divorce-and-homicide rates, we would like to think that many more families will take advantage of the absence of their paid-lodger to talk about all kinds of subjects which his presence and domineering personality have prevented them discussing hitherto!

From the foregoing, readers will gather that we do not share the *Observer's* view that the printing industry though "in one sense an industry like any other"

is also a public service, the visible expression of free speech, the means of communication between government and governed, a necessary instrument of information and enlightenment. That a great deal of paper and ink is normally wasted on trivialities in no way alters these facts. It is absolutely false to imagine that a modern democracy can work properly without newspapers.

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WE hope we will not be misunderstood when we say this. For anarchists at all times have not only declared that the pen is

*By Tuesday the evil day had been put back until the week-end.

mightier than the sword but have paid dearly to defend and exercise the right of free speech (the "underground press" is not a phenomenon of World War II, or the American and Russian subsidised "free-radios" and propaganda balloons of the post-war years). In every country of the world at some time or other freedom of the press has been outlawed or "temporarily suspended in the national interest", and anarchists have always been among that minority of citizens who have fought for press freedom in defiance of the dictators and the fine-weather democrats in power. (In the circumstances is it not curious that in the eyes of our national, "freedom-loving" press, anarchists are "bomb-throwers" in spite of the fact that the tracts and periodicals, books and pamphlets they have distributed in every language can be counted by the million whereas their bombs are so personal and so carefully aimed that history can record both the authors and the victims of every anarchist "outrage". Indeed so few are they that anarchists are even blamed for "crimes" they never committed!)

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WHY we do not share the *Observer's* views then is not because we discount the fundamental, basic role that the printed word plays in society, but that like all other activities, it too can operate for anti-social as well as social ends, for what is bad as well as for what is good. To couple "the visible expression of free speech", "the necessary instrument of information and enlightenment" with "the means of communication between government and governed", as the *Observer* does in its editorial, is to equate Franco's press with say, a paper like the *Observer*. We do not, in spite of the *Observer's* logic, for it is clear that whereas the latter feels at liberty to criticise the government of the day the Spanish Press receives instructions from the government as to what it should say on every major national and international issue.

As to whether we should be worse off without the organs of mass communications, is, however, another matter. As to whether the national press of this country is "the visible expression of free speech" depends on one's interpretation of, and the limits one places on, "free speech". And here of course the gap between an *Observer* or *Manchester Guardian* (to quote two examples of British journalism at its best) and the government-controlled organs of the totalitarian countries, is considerably narrowed, at least for anarchists. Neither would ever question, or permit the expression of ideas advocating an alternative to, government. For both the democratic and totalitarian press, government, authority, is sacrosanct. And we submit that if the ideas contained in the anarchist philosophy have made no headway in the public imagination, it is not so much a reflection on the "impractical" aspects of the ideas of anarchism or proof of their rejection by the public, as it is evidence of the stranglehold on a press which, albeit free from direct governmental control, never veers from the established, orthodox, social and economic concepts.

Coupled with the impossibility of

penetrating the editorial columns of the established press with new ideas (which, of course, are as old as human imagination) is the fact that the national press is so well organised and entrenched that in the past thirty years though some newspapers have been absorbed its monopoly has remained unchallenged (Mr. Martell's folly, the short-lived *Recorder*, was never taken seriously and allowed to commit suicide by the national advertisers and press lords alike). Because the national press is an industry "like any other" it cannot at the same time be "a public service" in the real sense of the term. The latter serves primarily the public interest, the latter the financial interests of the proprietors or shareholders. (For example, *Picture Post* was bought by more than half a million people when Mr. Hulton decided to suppress it because it was losing money). Indeed in the society we live in it is possible to conceive of the elimination of the printed word, because its publication depends on financial not social considerations.

Today most newspapers are published because they have the support of advertisers, or because they are the mouthpieces of industrial

tycoons (as in Italy and France for instance), or because they are the official organs of government (as in Spain or the Iron Curtain countries). Remove the advertisers, the industrialists, the governments and there would be a void . . . to our minds a good thing because then the people themselves would clearly, be obliged to create their own organs of expression which could be free in the true sense because they would depend neither on subsidies nor mass circulation. But today, make no mistake about it, there is a national Press only because there is money in it. It is "an industry like any other" *tout court*.

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THE responsible press is horrified that 2,500 ink workers should have the power to silence the press. If the Press were not rotten to the core we would be inclined to agree. But none of the editorial writers ever mentions the fact that half a dozen newspaper proprietors have the power to close down the national press and a large part of the provincial weeklies, and, with the two newspaper proprietors (Odhams and the Daily Mirror Group) who control the magazine press, they could if they so wished virtually suppress the written word, put hundreds of

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Diary of the Dispute

THIS is the history of the general print dispute:

FEBRUARY: Employers (the British Federation of Master Printers and the Newspaper Society) reject union claims for a 10 per cent. pay rise and a 40-hour week. Most men are working 43½ hours, although provincial daily newspapers have had 40 hours since 1946.

MARCH: Negotiations between the two sides break down and the nine unions in the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation (P.K.T.F.) decide to ballot members on what action to take against employers.

MAY: P.K.T.F. announce that members have voted four to one for various possible lines of action suggested by the leaders. These include a ban on overtime, non-co-operation and strike as a last resort.

Employers offer 2½ per cent. rise and a one-hour reduction in the working week on condition that unions accept proposals to increase productivity.

Unions counter with proposal that 10 per cent. pay rise and 40-hour week be introduced in instalments spread over two years. Employers refuse and unions decide to employ sanctions against them from June 3.

The National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (Natsopa) begins an overtime ban against the ink manu-

facturers with whom it has a separate wage dispute.

JUNE 2: British Federation of Master Printers recommends its members to give their workers two weeks' notice that they are to be employed only on a day-to-day basis.

JUNE 17: Employers' notices expire, unions refuse to allow their men to work on day-to-day basis and stoppage begins.

Nearly all provincial Press is stopped. National newspapers, which have a separate wage agreement, are not involved, but their ink deliveries have become erratic because of Natsopa's overtime ban in the ink industry.

JUNE 26: Lorilleux and Bolton, a London printing ink firm, notifies its Natsopa men that they will be sacked unless they end their restrictions.

Men in other ink firms walk out or give strike notices as gesture of sympathy for Lorilleux and Bolton workers.

JUNE 29: Society of British Printing Ink Manufacturers announces that unless Natsopa men end their restrictive practices they will be given seven days' notice.

JUNE 30: Natsopa and ink employers meet Ministry of Labour officials for separate talks. Talks fail. Natsopa says all its 2,500 ink workers will walk out.

(News Chronicle, July 1).

The Legitimacy Bill

THE LORDS' VETO

MOST objective observers accept the evidence that legislation does not necessarily change or affect behaviour. In relation to marriage it is obvious that legal ties do not prevent adultery or desertion or stop men and women falling in love with persons other than those with whom it is legally permissible. It seems obvious to us, therefore, that a sane recognition in law and by society of this fact would prevent a great deal of misery, and help to educate people to accept that marriage to one partner may not happily last a lifetime.

The diehards have been slightly shaken in their insistence upon the necessity of monogamous marriage as a basis for a civilized society and the law now holds that the child born out of wedlock is at least human and subject to certain legal rights even if its parents are damned in the sight of God! But many attitudes have to be changed before

society, led in some instances, by a peculiar band of moralists, accepts that individuals must make decisions affecting their personal lives without suffering the punishment of legal or moral codes.

Many of us thought that the Legitimacy Bill, carried by forty-five votes to four in the Commons, was a "step forward" in a society which is so often retreating from sanity. The main clause of the Legitimacy Bill however, has been deleted by twenty-seven votes to nineteen in the Lords. This clause

"would have allowed an illegitimate child to be legitimated whenever its parents subsequently married. The existing law allows it only when the parents were free to marry at the time of the child's birth. That is, a child born of unmarried parents can be legitimated by its parents' subsequent marriage; the child born of an adulterous union cannot."

Lord Conesford, moving the amendment which sought to delete the clause said that:

"The implication of the change now proposed was deeply injurious to the whole institution of Christian marriage and, indeed, of monogamy. A departure from the conception that legitimacy was the status held by a lawful child of a marriage could be made only by ignoring the concept that a man could not, during his marriage, beget lawful children by another woman.

"If the innocence of the child is itself a ground for the legitimacy of that child, then all children are innocent and that is a ground not for this bill but for the abolition of illegitimacy."

There is little doubt that His Lordship is primarily concerned with maintaining Christian marriage and monogamy, and although his remarks on innocence are sound, coming from him they are dishonest. "Adulterous intercourse" by definition means that monogamy is not maintained without marriage and if

pregnancy occurs the problem of status for the child still remains.

We do not think that illegitimacy is a terrible affliction but many people who conceive their children "in adultery" are disturbed by the possible consequences, a fear which may be passed on to their offspring.

Suppose also that one of the "adulterous" partners cannot get a divorce either because the husband or wife may have disappeared or, as sometimes happens, one of the married partners refuses to grant the other a divorce, have a couple to wait until they are sure of being able to legalise their children before conceiving them, or give up the idea entirely?

Lord Conesford's morality does not cover the impelling need of some couples who feel that having children is the natural outcome of a love relationship. By any standards these feelings are not "wrong" even if it can be argued that they are unwise.

At the risk of the law being "abused" no just case can be argued against legitimating children "conceived in adultery" if the parents feel strongly enough to want this.

Man's Humanity to Man

Homeward-bound from the Far East, the troopship *Oxfordshire* changed course and put in at Falmouth yesterday to save the life of an expectant mother.

The ship was crossing the Bay of Biscay when Mrs. Anne Coles, 30-year-old wife of an R.A.S.C. captain, was taken ill.

Loudspeaker appeals for blood donors produced over 100 volunteers, said the commandant, Lt.-Colonel D. W. H. Browne, when the ship docked at Southampton last night.

Meanwhile, the *Oxfordshire* made for Falmouth, where Mrs. Coles, from High Seas, Bexhill-on-Sea, was landed by stretcher.

Where's Our Public?

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 27

Deficit on Freedom	£542
Contributions received	£474
DEFICIT	£68

June 26 to July 2

London: A.W. 2/-; London: Anon.* 2/3;	
Seattle: F.H. 14/-; Philadelphia: T.O. 13/9;	
Birmingham: H.N. 5/-; London: J.H. 3/-;	
London: P.F.* 5/-; Doncaster: B.S. 2/-;	
Bondville: E.L. 14/-; Wolverhampton J.G.L.*	
2/6; London: Anon. 9d.; Oxford: Anon.*	
5/-; St. Helier: K.J.M. 1/-.	
Total	3 10 3
Previously acknowledged	470 10 0

1959 TOTAL TO DATE ... £474 0 3

*Indicates regular contributor.

IN DEFENCE OF TEACHERS

HASNT Ernie Crosswell spoilt his argument by being just a little too clever at the expense of a body of men and women which, as he himself says, "harbours all types"? Of course, teachers are people, with a fair cross-section of the virtues and faults. (Whether a random specimen of "just people" ought to be put in a position of dictatorial authority over 40 assorted individuals 35 hours a week for a year of their life is another matter: it is just because the thought of this so horrifies me that at the cost of no little personal sacrifice I buy my kid out of such a system).

I'm not a teacher. 5/7/59 IAN LESLIE.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

'Newcomer' Beware

DEAR COMRADES, A perceptive newcomer might well be more confused than enlightened by P.G.F.'s article (FREEDOM, 4/7/59). I know from experience how difficult it is to write a brief outline of anarchism, but there are two obvious blunders P.G.F. makes which could lead to considerable misunderstanding of our ideas: 1. P.G.F. sets out to show how "anarchism is practical in an industrial society". He then proceeds to invite his hypothetical newcomer to "investigate anarcho-syndicalism", and finally ends up by giving a description of a "syndicalist" society. In other words, he confuses anarchism with anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism with syndicalism. It should be made clear that anarchism is not identical with syndicalism and that anarcho-syndicalism is only one among several schools of anarchist thought.

cracy. What else can be inferred from his statements that in a syndicalist society there would be "control by the majority" (over whom or what?) and that disputes would be settled by "a majority decision" if voluntary arbitration fails? As I see it, without the principle of individual sovereignty the libertarian conceptions we profess become meaningless—mere liberal chatter. And individual sovereignty only becomes fully possible when there is neither control by the majority nor by the minority. As for majority decisions, it has yet to be demonstrated that the truth of a dispute can be reached by counting noses. Any decision in such a situation that was not unanimous, and was not freely agreed to by the parties to the dispute, would result in the reconstitution of some form of coercive machinery to enforce any other decision made, whether or not it was by a majority.

Yours fraternally, LONDON, July 5. S. E. PARKER.

What to Do?

DEAR COMRADES,

Anarchistic activity in Britain today is at a low ebb. Apart from small propaganda groups such as the Freedom Press, University Libertarian and London Anarchist Group there is very little specific anarchist action.

There is confusion amongst anarchists concerning the meaning of anarchy. Interpretations range from vague ideas of unrestricted individual freedom or rejection of majority control to anarcho-syndicalism and the class struggle. The newcomer is bombarded by quotations from Stirner, Ammon Hennacy, Read, Molnar, Neill, Buber, Gandhi, Kropotkin and so on *ad infinitum*. If he ever succeeds in surviving such a bombardment it is more often by luck than judgment.

There seems to be a vague distrust of co-operation and "organisation" is rapidly becoming a dirty word. Comrades prefer to go their own ways and cultivate their own gardens or philosophy. Organised action is limited to such projects as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Direct Action Committee which are mainly non-anarchist.

Many reasons have been advanced for the present impasse but there is one factor which, in my opinion, tends to be overlooked. This is the effect of the state upon anarchism itself. In "The State, Its Historic Role", Kropotkin clearly demonstrates how government deliberately disrupts, destroys or incorporates in itself any associations that might seriously impede its activities. The state aims to be the corporate body having relations with individual subjects, not groups.

In present society the cancerous growth of the state has reached vast proportions. Would it not be surprising if we ourselves were not engulfed? In lacking direction, shying from organisation and over-emphasising philosophic anarchism or individualism we are playing the State's game. As individuals we present no danger to authority: as a corporate body we would.

The nineteenth century anarchists may have been wrong about the inevitability of progress and the class struggle but they had a definite idea of anarchism (*i.e.* society without government or bosses). Have we such a clear notion today? Although they didn't achieve the goal of anarchy, they played an active part in the emancipation of the worker. What is anarchism achieving in Britain today? Where are the anarchist co-operatives, trades unions or other mutual aid associations?

The pendulum has swung from militant struggle to philosophical *impasses*. When will it swing back again?

London, July 4. F.G.P.

The Self-Regulating Ritters

THE EDITORS, Dear Sirs, Please allow me to say in your paper how deeply touched we were by C.W.'s appreciative and kind review of our book *The Free Family*, and sundry other activities. How different from your review of the memorial volume to Wilhelm Reich!

I want to clarify a point made by C.W. He does not know whether we would be pleased or annoyed to be regarded as anarchists, thinks that an anarchist approach could have led to our attitude, and that we had a 'lapse' when we invoke the law to stop cruelty to children. These three points, made at different times, in the review form the basis of our reply:

1. We are only against being labelled, anarchist, Reichian or any other, because labels are not a good idea. They mean too many different things to too many different people. A study of any dozen people called by the same collective name will show the dangers of this unnecessary habit, peculiar to only some civilisations.

2. The anarchist approach could not lead to our attitude because the "counter-truth" as defined and described by Reich is not recognised by anarchism as we know the several versions of it. The anarchist is against the enforced law of the state on principle. Reich, we believe, and ourselves certainly, are opportunists in this matter, the only sensible thing: when the law is suitable, when the countertruth is applicable, then there is every reason why the law should be invoked, even if this is not very efficient and even if it is no good as a long term policy. The law can be a desirable expression of sensible public opinion, although it is rarely that.

3. Therefore, it is no lapse on our part to invoke a new law to protect children. It is only a lapse as far as Goodman and C.W. are concerned, not as far as our attitude is concerned, or indeed that of Reich. Just as it was not a lapse to lean out of my bedroom window at midnight and summon the police to a scene that sounded like child murder. I was scared myself to dive in with my own fists. What does the anarchist do if he is a coward like myself? Or are all anarchists heroes? No, no, he does the same but does not recognise the basis and the sense of such opportune actions. He ignores the countertruth half of the world even when it is relevant to his own actions.

Nottingham, June 29 PAUL RITTER.

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP OPEN DAILY

- (Open 10 a.m.—6.30 p.m., 5 p.m. Sat.) New Books . . . The Girl Outside A. Bestic 15/- The Politics of Despair R. Cantril 40/- Sex and the Adolescent Maxine Davis 15/- Jiving to Gyp (Poems) Royston Ellis 5/- The Offshore Island Marghanita Laski 10/6 The Ideal City Helen Roseneau 30/- Mass Culture G. B. Rosenberg & D. M. White 55/- Reprints and Cheap Editions . . . The Psychology of Thinking Robert Thomson 3/6 Winesburg, Ohio Sherwood Anderson 10/- Thin Ice Compton Mackenzie 2/6 Second-Hand . . . The Green Child Herbert Read (illus. Felix Kelly) 3/- English Social History (Imperfect) G. M. Trevelyan 7/- The Illusion of National Character Hamilton Fyfe 3/- The Catholic Crisis George Seldes 6/6 Robert Owen Margaret Cole 3/6 Essays in Freedom H. W. Nevinson 3/6 Means and Ends A. J. Pentz 3/- The Intelligentsia of Great Britain Dmitri Mirsky 6/- This Time a Better Earth Ted Allen 3/6 Facts of Life Paul Goodman 6/- The Idiot Fyodor Dostoevsky 4/6 William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement J. Bruce Glasier 6/- Thus and Thus Henri Barbuse 3/- British Liberty in Danger Ronald Kidd 3/- Incidents of Coercion (Ireland) 1888 G. Shaw Lefevre 3/6

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BOOK REVIEWS

COUNT-DOWN by Charles Eric Maine. (Hodder & Stoughton, 12s. 6d.).

"COUNT-DOWN" is a science-fiction novel about a group of scientists and a newsman preparing to launch a new type of negative-gravity rocket. The principle is new and revolutionary; it will out-date conventional rocketry and give Britain a head-start into space. Then the murders begin: one by one this isolated community start to kill each other until only two are left: a girl scientist and the newsman. By now it has become apparent that the group has individually become possessed by an alien mind dedicated to frustrating the plans for the count-down and preventing mankind from testing the negative gravity mechanism. And more, it seems likely that this alien mind is not from some distant star: it is from the future. The story ends with the successful launching of the rocket.

Although competently written, the book left me dissatisfied. "Count-Down" isn't plausible in the way that good sf should be. It has not got the compelling mystery of good fantasy nor the unputdownableness of a good thriller. The people are a little dull, the intervention of the future is given away rather too early and is rather matter-of-factly handled.

If science fiction is a subversive art—and in good hands it is subversive of political, moral or conceptual preconceptions—then this isn't top-flight sf. It is, however, better than average, and for addicts, well worth reading.

NATIVE GROUND by Philip Callow. (Heinemann, 15s.).

THIS volume consists of a number of fictional slices of Midland life. It is excellent in the way that many "Penguin New Writing" stories were: socially realistic, humane, mildly funny and extremely likeable. These stories generate no fire; they arouse no strong emotion; they are without anger or self-pity: yet they are shrewd, understanding and warm. If they lack a dimension it is that of rebellion—politics don't intrude (and the stories are probably the better for it) but one does feel the lack of radical fire.

All in all, though, this is a charming and unpretentious collection by a man who conveys his embarrassments (in love), boredom (in work), and agonies (in school), with a subtle and effective pen.

I shall long relish Mr. Callow's descriptions of his first kiss, of the randy landlady, of his room-mate George who "decided to be a man or art, since he was such a sensual devil, and art thrives on human weakness", of his first job—indeed, Mr. Callow's snapshots of people and places have sharp definition, and are exquisitely composed.

O.C.

WHAT ABOUT THAT NEW READER?

CINEMA THE FILM OF MY UNCLE

"MY UNCLE" opens with a shot of a band of dogs joyously roving about the deserted streets of a French suburb. They cock a leg against the symbols of municipal virtue and law and order, the lamppost and traffic signals, and sniff at delicious unmentionables in the gutter. The dachshund of this party makes his way back home and wriggles through a functional gate despite his checkered coat. Having paid his respects to the lintel he is greeted with some distaste by the mistress of the house who is an obsessional with a duster, the master of the house is departing for work, which is a ceremony, from the house which is an antiseptic machine for functioning in.

The house is contemporary, merging on the contemptuous. The gates are opened by a push-button and a push-button controls the fish-fountain, the garden has idiotic crazy paving with stepping stones for a path. Nothing is too *chi-chi* for the house.

We soon switch to the establishment of M. Hulot (Jacques Tati), who is the brother of the obsessive duster. We never see the inside of M. Hulot's apartment, it has an idiosyncratic approach through a succession of staircases and passages and when M. Hulot finally arrives he finds that by opening a window he can direct a beam of sunshine on to a caged canary which sings, so he wedges the window open.

This film like "M. Hulot's Holiday", has no plot and hardly any dialogue. It is a series of situational comedies. Unlike

Chaplin, defeated by the machine, or Buster Keaton unorthodoxly employing the machine; Hulot is a naïve saboteur, a sort of Magoo in spite of himself.

We could hazard what Jaques Tati's politics are. There was in "M. Hulot's Holiday" a Sydney-Parkerish intellectual reading "Le Libertaire" but there is an anarchistic streak which is common to other political beliefs (by the way whatever happened to Monsieur Poujade?) so we shall not, remembering Chaplin and his political pratfalls, hail Hulot the anarchist.

The brother-in-law has a factory for producing plastic hose-pipes, Tati is temporarily put in charge and succeeds in turning out to a series of belching hic-coughs from the machine a sausage-like chain of hose which has to be disposed of.

Many critics seem to think the film was too long but it is the sort of film that is going on all the time, the idiocies of mechanized living, the meal that is a surgical operation served to a boy who is full of the delights of the most unhygienic 'pancakes' served from a street-barrow, the practical jokes of small boys, the intractability of things opposed to the human flexibility of People, the pointless rush of city life opposed to the humanity of the local *bistro*; the thousand and one things that happen. "Mon Oncle" is a documentary of a new kind. The dialogue is delightful in its absence and the music is excellent.

J.R.

PRINT, PRESS & PUBLIC

Continued from p. 1

thousands of printers, journalists, newsagents and distributors out of work. This is the slender thread on which our much vaunted freedom of the press as well as the livelihood of thousands of persons, are suspended. Why then take exception when workers exploit their power to further their social and economic interests? Why complain about closed shops and restrictive practices in the printing industry when half a dozen men monopolise the national and periodical Press?

★

WE live in a financial and social jungle compared with which the "anarchy" of anarchy is paradise on earth! Apart from sharing their ink in a time of crisis when all are equally threatened, there is no love lost among the newspaper proprietors or among any employers for that matter. They co-operate only when they are agreed that it is in their individual interests to do so. Otherwise it's monopoly they dream of, with "competition" as the means, the weapon for eliminating or absorbing the weak among them, and no more clearly has this been shown than in the take-over bids for the periodical press during the past year. We have no objection to dog eating dog. What we find more alarming and disheartening are the rivalries and antagonisms among the millions who work for their daily bread. For another aspect of the social jungle are the classes existing within the working class. And few industries are more riddled by the class concept than the printing industry. It will have been observed that the printing workers are divided into ten unions, that those employed by the national Press enjoy better economic conditions than their counterparts on the provincial newspapers; that ink workers are less well paid than those who use that ink in printing. There can be little solidarity among workers when differentials exist to divide them. Note the reply given to Robin Day (*News Chronicle*) by Mr. Briginshaw, general secretary of Natsopa when he was asked: "Did you consult the other printing workers before authorising your ink workers to stop work?"

Briginshaw: So far as we are concerned with the ink workers, as with the paper workers and paper makers, there is a separate agreement with the service side of the industry, and it is always understood that consultations do not take place. It is a matter for the unions themselves.

★

THAT 2,500 ink workers can paralyse the print industry of 200,000 plus the thousands from packers to journalists, from clerks to advertising agents whose livelihood depends on the wheels of the printing industry turning, appears to take the editorial writers of the Press by surprise, and, we are told, causes resentment among those put out of work "without cause" besides destroying the "unity" of the Labour movement.

But why? After all you can't have your cake and eat it. Capitalism is not co-operation but the division of society. Just as the boss owes no-one a living by what token does a worker owe loyalty to the boss? Because he pays him a wage? But only so long as he finds it profitable to do so

NEW TOWN STORY

FROM SILKINGRAD TO MISSILEVILLE

THE idea of countering the overgrowth of great cities and "conurbations" by developing new towns and neighbourhoods with their own industries goes back a long way. "One might trace the germ of the idea back to the early, 19th century, writers—Buckingham, Henry George, Kropotkin and others",¹ but for practical purposes it begins with Ebenezer Howard, whose influential book *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, with its famous analysis of the disadvantages of both big city life and country life, was published in 1898. Howard's idea was that residents of overcrowded urban centres should be encouraged to move to relatively self-contained garden cities of about 32,000 population, built by voluntary associations. "He proposed a voluntary co-operative set-up: a limited-profit association that would own the site, confine its own part to a few specific aims, and leave full play for private, group, and municipal enterprise."² In 1903 he acquired a tract of land in Hertfordshire, 35 miles north of London and began the building of the first garden city, Letchworth, and in 1919 the second garden city was begun at Welwyn in southern Hertfordshire. By 1949 the population of Letchworth was just under 20,000 and of Welwyn 18,500. In spite of their physical and financial achievements the garden city enthusiasts had little immediate effect on public policy. F. J. Osborn describes how he spent years "lobbying, lecturing, and propagandizing" the garden city idea, only to be advised by Howard: "You are wasting your time. If you wait for the authorities to build new towns you will be older than Methuselah before they start. The only way to get anything done is to do it yourself."

Then in 1939 the Barlow Commission (on the distribution of the industrial population) made its report, concluding that "The continued drift of the industrial population to London and the Home Counties constitutes a social, economic and strategic problem which demands immediate attention" and recommending that "Decentralisation or dispersal should be encouraged and secured, in the form of garden cities or garden suburbs, satellite towns, trading estates, or by the development of existing small towns or regional centres." During the war Sir Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan proposed that about three-quarters of a million people should move out of London to new and existing towns within a fifty-mile radius, and that eight New Towns should be built in the London region, each to take 60,000 people. A New Towns Committee appointed in October, 1945 said that they should be developed as "self-contained and balanced communities for work and living" and that they must be the antithesis of the dormitory suburb. "Men" said the Committee "must live near their work".

In 1946 a New Towns Act was passed

Among workers it is said that "union is strength", but how can there be union without social and economic equality? Some workers may be more skilled, more enterprising than others. To demand that they should be rewarded accordingly overlooks the basic socialist concept of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" which apart from being a human and just concept recognises that every worker however humble his task contributes his bit to the sum total of human happiness and well-being. We need the dustman and the scientist, the farm labourer and the technologist. Why try to make social distinctions between them. Only business men and politicians can measure the "value" of a man. When workers indulge in the pastime too then it is perhaps possible that such a reminder as they have been given in the past week by the 2,500 ink workers can do nothing but good.

If the Trades Union leaders want real unity in their movement let them start by putting their house in order, and ensuring that when the workers protest they do so with one voice. And this they can do only when they are equals in a community of equals, in fact as well as in theory.

empowering the Minister of Town and Country Planning (we had one in those planning-conscious days), to appoint Development Corporations to build them. Stevenage, a Hertfordshire town on the Great North Road, thirty miles north of London, with a population of about 6,000 was the first town to be designated. The Minister, Lewis (now Lord) Silkin held a public enquiry where he heard loud objections from local residents. (The tyres of his car were let down, and sand was put in his petrol tank). He proceeded with his order, but the decision was contested in the High Court, where the order was quashed. This decision was reversed in the Court of Appeal, and one night in December, 1946, someone changed the name-plates on Stevenage railway station to Silkingrad. The Stevenage residents took the case to the House of Lords, who in July, 1947 upheld the Minister. As the *Herts Pictorial* puts it, although the project began in 1945,

"Stevenage set up such a howl and protested so volubly that although it was announced it was hoped to commence erecting houses on the New Town Site within 18 months, it was not until over five years later—in February, 1951—that the first London family moved into what was, at long last, becoming Stevenage New Town."

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FOR no sooner had the legal squabbles been settled, than the Treasury because of one of our recurring economic crises, forbade the Development Corporation to enter into any contracts. Continuing financial restrictions imposed by the government, apart from slowing down building to a snail's pace in the early nineteen-fifties, affected the quality of the houses. The decline from the standard of those built to the floor areas of the 1949 Housing Manual down to that of those built in accordance with the Houses 1952 Manual is all too obvious and its effect will last the life of the buildings. One type of house, the 'C9' is notorious among residents. More recent designs are better. The conditions of the capital loans from the Treasury have also greatly affected the scope of the Corporation's activities:

"The entire capital cost of a New Town, plus the interest on the borrowed money must be met by the domestic, industrial and shop-keeping tenants. No such condition is laid upon local authorities undertaking housing schemes . . ."

This means that everything spent on 'amenities' means more capital expenditure without any increased income to meet it. It is also the reason why house rents are higher in the new towns than for local authority housing.

"From the tenant's point of view, the level of rents has been the most pressing problem. Protest meetings and many resolutions from community organisations have claimed that rents are unduly high in relation to earnings; that sickness for any period of time makes the rent burden intolerable; and that both the method of financing New Towns and the increases in interest rates have meant that tenants have had to carry more than their fair share of the total cost. Part of this dissatisfaction has sprung from the fact that the more recent a house, the higher its rent, and/or the lower its construction standards are likely to be."³

Stevenage, like the other new towns has a very large proportion of young families. Domestic expenditure is at its highest, with the purchase of furniture and the birth of babies (which also prevents mothers from adding to the family's earnings). A survey in 1954 showed that more than a third of families in Stevenage were paying hire purchase instalments against a national average of a quarter. A new survey would probably show a higher proportion. Frequently only overtime can meet the claims on the family income, and this is why many employees of public utilities are reluctant to move into New Town houses.

The same financial parsimony has affected the provision of those community buildings which were going to make the new towns different from the dormitory estates of local authorities. In its annual report for 1953-4, the Stevenage Development Corporation complained that it had

"experienced much difficulty in obtaining the sanction of your Ministry for the erection of community buildings under the New Towns Act. Increasingly, in the result, has the rapidly growing population had to be content with unsatisfactory makeshifts. This is destructive to that spirit of voluntary enterprise upon which the organisation of communal activities so largely depends."

Similarly, it was years before government consent was given for work to start on the New Town Centre which only came into use at the end of last year.

The pace of the growth of the town has increased in the last three years, during which houses have been completed and occupied at a rate of about 1,200 a year. The population at the end of December was 33,500, most of whom are people who have moved from the inner London boroughs. The birthrate is among the highest in the country: twice the national average. The death-rate is less than half the national figure, for few immigrants are over 45. There will soon be as many teenagers as would normally be found in a town of 150,000 people. In 1945, Stevenage had four schools; it has now 19 more with two more being built. The factories in the town employ 14,000 people.

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THE railway and the Great North Road run north and south through the town. West of the railway line is the industrial area, and on the western boundary of that the future by-pass road which will take the trunk road out of the town altogether. The neighbourhoods of the new town are to the east and south of the old town with wedges of green, like the Fairlands Valley between them. The Town Centre, centrally placed between the industrial and residential areas, helps to tie the whole thing together. When complete it will be the biggest all-pedestrian shopping centre in Europe. In spite of forecasts from all the commercial interests that a pedestrian-access shopping-centre would fail, all the shops were immediately let, and it is evident on Saturdays that people come from miles away to shop there. The square, with its tall old trees, fountain, clock-tower and sculpture is, architecturally the most successful thing in Stevenage.

But when the shops have shut, the town centre empties, apart from the bus queues. The cinema is unlikely to be built, for the two cinemas in the old town do not get full houses nowadays. (But television came just in time for the housebound pioneers of Stevenage). A Mecca dance hall is to be built, and meanwhile the Mecca of teen-age Stevenage is one of the three coffee bars. Of these, the Highflyer closes at 6, the Coffee Cabin stays open till 12 and has a piano and a skiffle group, while the Planets, high up in the town centre (S.P.C.K. bookshop on the ground floor, dancing school known as Gordon's Sin-Bin on the first, and the Planets on the second), also stays open till 12, and has a juke box. The girls dance together, while the boys lean on the wall and watch. Conversations go on for hours and are, no doubt, more interesting than the sword-dancing group at the Longmead Youth Club.

From the Town Centre the buses start. (It is still within the long arm of London Transport). Complaints that the services are inadequate and that they stop too early in the evening are universal. The low density of the new town makes inter-neighbourhood journeys very long indeed. The southernmost neighbourhood is known as Indian Country, while another, to the North is nicknamed Mayfair.

The residential neighbourhoods, with their cul-de-sacs, crescents and squares of two-storey houses with grass verges are better in appearance than most municipal housing and almost all speculative building, but not much more than this can be said about them. There was once a great deal of talk about the New Towns as experiments or laboratories, but there is no advance here on Welwyn or Letchworth. (In terms of density they are less 'urban'). Treasury control and a safety-first policy has prevented this. As Peter Shephard ruefully remarks,

"I remember that when first working at Stevenage we felt it vital not only to get the new town corporation disconnected entirely from the Treasury, but from the whole network of local government, by-laws and so on. The idea was to build, in ten years, a new experimental town . . . One of the early technicians at Stevenage actually proposed that we should write our own by-laws. The idea was to have no by-laws at all."⁴

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THE way in which the idea of a real architectural and social experiment was submerged under layers and layers of bureaucracy, under bickering for status between rival authorities, has been fully and frighteningly documented in a 500-

page book, Mr. Harold Orlans' *Stevenage: A Sociological Study of a New Town*, written in 1951, before a single tenant had moved in. Right at the end of this book Mr. Orlans quotes an anarchist author and draws an anarchist conclusion:

"We have described, in preceding chapters, some of the struggle for power between different groups of planners—the urban and rural groups, the house and the flat addicts, the Development Corporation and the Stevenage Council, the Ministry and the Corporation, and so on. This predilection for power and the planning of other people's lives, implicit in utopian (as in ideological) thought and explicit in the political action to which it leads, gives an authoritarian colour to the most benign utopia. In addition, as the anarchist Marie Louise Berneri noted . . . 'The majority of utopias assumed that the interests of the individual coincided with those of the State and that a conflict between the two was unthinkable . . . The main trend of literature between the two wars has been one of extreme scepticism regarding the power of the State to transform society . . . (Today) intellectuals are dreaming of avoiding the realisation of utopias and of returning to a less 'perfect' but more free society' . . . and he goes on

"Likewise, it is strange how socialist and monopoly capitalist doctrine coincide in the New Town. For surely it is more a difference of name than substance that separates the social principles of, let us say, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Parkchester development in New York City and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning's Stevenage New Town. In both there is to be found the same monopolistic ownership of land by one agency, the same leasehold restrictions on the freedom of the individual, the same lack of democracy in the appointment of the governing body, the same bureaucratic rule by remote officials. This is what Bellamy's and Howard's utopias have come to."

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TODAY the town is there, half-built, but big enough for you to draw your own conclusions. Is it a success? It depends who you ask. As long ago as 1953 the *Architectural Review* had written the New Towns off as Prairie Planning:

"One of the essential qualities of a town is that it is a gathering together of people and utilities for the generation of civic warmth. However overcrowded, dingy, insanitary and airless the old towns may be most of them retain this quality, which is the essential quality without which a town is no town . . . We see no sign of it here. Instead we see the growth of a new ideal at work which might be described as ebbiness—the ebbtide: the cult of isolationism. It is as though the drive to the country has been undertaken by people all studiously avoiding each other and pretending that they are alone."

Its editor, Mr. J. M. Richards roundly declared that "the fact that must nevertheless be faced is that the new towns have failed on three separate counts: socially, economically and architecturally." Two years later, however, his stablemate Mr. Colin Boyne, editor of the *Architects Journal* said in a broadcast that

"The New Towns are successful socially. Judging from the replies of the inhabitants to whom I spoke, most people seem to like living in them . . . Shop-owners are delighted by their turnover, and factory managers by the energy and improved health of their employees. All the towns seem able to boast a large number of cultural, recreational and social organisations, and attendance figures at community centres may be as high as 20% of the population—which is I'm told, double the normal figure for the country."

This year (as a demonstration of how meaningless these generalisations can be), Mr. Geoffrey Gibson writes (*Socialist Commentary*, April 1959), under the title "New Town Ghettoes" that

"Not only is there a total lack of community spirit in terms of a sense of identification with the New Towns but also in terms of mixing together . . . Pubs, which I have always regarded as a fairly reliable barometer of community spirit, are, in the New Towns, unfriendly, chromium-plated and empty. Little use is made of Community Halls beyond the organised trade union activities and Corporation-arranged dances; certainly no evidence of spontaneous social activity on a community basis. One Public Relations Officer of a Development Corporation, with responsibilities for 'fostering' a community spirit complained to me that the only community spirit he had been able to detect or encourage was one of common hostility by the residents towards him."

Richard Hauser's *Institute for Group and Social Development* has done a cer-

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