

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

War is not a catastrophe,
it is an instrument of policy
JEAN GIONO

After the people have 'chosen' their Rulers

POST MORTEM

WHITHER LABOUR? asked Aneurin Bevan in the *News of the World* last Sunday. Whither indeed! But it's a bit late in the day for that question to be asked, even by Nye, who admits that Socialism had no part in Labour's election platform ('with the exception of steel and road haulage' re-nationalisation proposals).

But Bevan will not be the only one indulging in a little heart-searching in an attempt to find out just what went wrong. Presumably throughout the Labour Party the great argument will rage and ironically enough it will rage around the question 'Did we have too much socialism or not enough?'

Around the answer that the party decides upon to that one will be built the future pattern of social democracy in this country, and there isn't much doubt as to what it will be.

Already the grave-diggers are busy, the ring of their picks and shovels echoing through the columns of the newspapers. The haste with which journalists are preparing the Labour Party for its last rites is almost indecent, and readers of FREEDOM might be excused for getting the creepy feeling that they have been here before.

For we, in these columns, have written off the Labour Party many times as far as it being a vehicle for socialism is concerned. The point is that its present undertakers in the capitalist Press are concerned to bury socialism as well, and look forward with glee towards the disappearance of the Labour Party, maintaining that its defeat in the election is a massive rejection of socialism by the British public.

But of course these clever correspondents are seeing in the result what they want to see. Not even nationalisation was an issue in the election, let alone socialism, but even if it were, what are the factors by which state control of industry would be judged by the electorate? The journalists who prophesy the demise of Labour are the very same types who estimate the rival virtues of nationalisation and free enterprise by the criterions: 'Does it make a profit? Does it deliver the goods?'

And it so happens that three days after the election Britain's nationalised airways announced that they had made a profit so far this year of £4,500,000! While the ability of the nationalised coal industry to supply the nation's (and its export trade's) need for coal is so high that miners are becoming redundant, pits closed, and coal stocks greater than ever before! What more could they want?

But in fact, nationalisation and socialism very much apart—has the British public decisively rejected the Labour Party? It is difficult to see that from the figures, for no less than 12,216,000 votes were cast for Labour candidates against 13,750,000 for Tories and 1,640,000 for the Liberals.

These figures show that, as usual, we now have a Government for which a minority of the electorate voted, for more people voted for the Opposition parties than for the Tories. Yet the Tories have, in the House of Commons, a clear majority

of 100 seats more than the Liberals and Labour combined! Such is democracy!

There are, however, several possible results to stem from this election. Already the Liberals are ogling the Labour Party with proposals of amalgamation into a 'Radical' Party (Note also Bevan's description of Labour's election policies as 'pre-1914 Liberalism brought up to date'), while there are hints of the Trade Unions moving away from the Labour Party and even stronger hints that 'action' will be taken to put a stop to unofficial strikes.

The Tory victory is certainly going to be taken by the bosses as a green light to go ahead and bring out the big stick more than ever before. If Labour does team up with the Liberals, then much of the confusion about its nature and purpose will be removed and the workers can no longer delude themselves that someone up there likes them. They will have to rely on their own strength at the point of production. This is why proposals to curb strikes are coming forward, but we know where the real strength in society exists, and the working class will be much better off without its misleaders in the House of Commons.

Who knows, we might then see a real social consciousness emerge in Britain!

THE FARCE GOES ON

THE result of the General Election sowed its seeds of disappointment several hours before the polling booths closed. An acquaintance who voted early reported such a queue that she had to wait for twenty minutes, while the headlines of the evening papers screamed their vulgar jubilation over VOTERS GALORE; THEY'VE NEVER HAD IT SO BUSY, etc. One of the papers even threatened a record poll, but the sober statistics show a mere 2% rise over the election of just over four years ago.

It was the high poll, and not the division, of the crosses, which constituted the disappointment. The anarchist campaign, with the best leaflet that has been published by any movement at any post-war election, could hardly have been expected to influence the numerical totals. Nor was this its intention. Although a high abstention rate in Holborn would have been most gratifying, the British Anarchist movement addressed its appeal to individuals, and within the short compass of a leaflet, tried to urge them to consider a different attitude to politics and social change. If some of the seed does fall on fertile ground, its fruit will be seen not in a single act on an appointed day, or even necessarily in abstention from that act, but in a long-term increase of suspicion and despicement of political trickery,

and its respectable cover, government.

Nevertheless, the anarchist movement with its limited resources was not the only agency which might have induced people to stay away from the polling booths.

During the 1955 election a spirit of political mistrust seemed to be abroad; the anarchist leaflet VOTE FOR JOE SOAP was mentioned and even praised in several unexpected quarters. Since then other signs of a-politicism have made their appearance. Although specifically rejecting direct action as a prime method, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has at least used 'The Deed' as a form of propaganda designed to secure widespread publicity, with its marches to and from Aldermaston, and on various other routes. Its more anarchical sections have carried out their stirring campaigns of obstruction at North Pickenham, and appeals to workers on rocket sites to leave their jobs. The Bus Boycott in Montgomery received publicity in England, which because it was led by Christians in America, was greeted with sympathy in circles which would hardly have listened had such words as anarchism and 'Direct Action' been mentioned. In a parallel direction, the more recent boycott of South African goods designed to hit the

apartheid politics of the rulers there has been supported among active Labour Party organisations.

In a slightly different field, several novelists, playwrights and journalists have expressed libertarian tendencies in their work. To quote a few examples at the risk of missing out some important ones: John Osborne specifically declined to support the Labour Party, on the grounds that the function of a writer was to inquire into the relations between people; not to legislate as to how people should fit into the external forms connected with their lives but to find out how they really live underneath the surface open to legislation.

Wolf Mankovitch has expressed his anarchism openly, even to the length of getting it quoted in an interview in *Woman*, and Orson Welles has done the same thing on television. The widely publicised coffee-bar strata is generally thought to be anti-political, and at a more intelligent and sensitive level the rapidly growing movement interested in contemporary folk music shows encouraging signs of despising right and left wing politicians equally.

Despite all these, when the election call went out, four out of every five people qualified to vote did in fact carry out this patriotic duty, thereby ensuring that whichever party captured the majority of seats, the government would be powerful and stable, confident of the support of the people who had elected it, who in turn would place their confidence in the abilities of the bevy of M.P.s, industrialists, generals and financiers to run their lives for them.

It is perhaps pointless to write in an anarchist paper appealing to the great unthinking throng who are solidly convinced that in casting their vote they are exercising a real choice over the organisation into which their lives are fitted. They never read such propaganda anyway, but they can be reached by personal conversation. Probably every one of us knows dozens of such people. There is more point in a written discussion with that other group, who support the Marches and perhaps the Rocket Base demonstrations, who boycott South African food or simply decline to devote their own lives to unworthy professions like the army or police force and their supports. For the most part, they want to have their cake and dispose of it. They are prepared to give power into the hands of a government, and then expect the government to allow them a say in how the power is wielded; to live in an authoritarian society yet hope that it will work in a libertarian manner on the specific occasions when it produces its worst horrors.

There are two ways of trying to analyse the problem. The first is to regard voting as a choice between two evils. Now it has been pointed out that it is never quite clear which of the alternative administrations will be the lesser evil. No doubt a few people who voted Labour in 1955 were overjoyed at the drop in the price of beer at the last budget, that the evil nature of the Conservative régime was dissolved in the alcohol. The pamphlet 'How Labour Governed', reviewed a fortnight ago in FREEDOM was specific-

Continued on p. 3

City Gents and Jewel Thieves

SINCE in the uninformed public mind the Labour Party is associated with the workers and the Tories with the City, the unofficial strike at the British Oxygen Company's works was thought to be harmful to Labour and the Jasper affair to be an embarrassment to the Conservatives, during the Election.

In the event, nothing seems to have harmed the Government after all, and the revelations that City gents were using the small savings of investors in the State Building Society to provide the cash for takeover bids seems not to have lost the Tories a single vote.

Indeed, why should it? Everybody knows that City gents are

smart operators and most probably the general attitude is one of 'Good luck to them!' if they get away with their shenanigans. If they come unstuck—that also is the luck of the game.

Similarly public concern about unofficial strikes exists almost entirely in the columns of the Press. Even during the very inconvenient bus strike last summer in London, the public put up with the most shocking discomfort on the Underground trains without any real feeling against the busmen being expressed.

The same attitude as that towards gamblers in the City also exists towards robbery. The feeling among

people on the whole towards the theft last week of £250,000 worth of jewellery and gold from four London branches of the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Association was one of admiration for the nerve of the thieves more than any moral condemnation.

Life in competitive society is a gamble, and there's really no difference between going on the crook on the right side or the wrong side of the law. Most people remain on the 'right' side only because they haven't got the courage to take the gamble on not being caught. Which just goes to show how the moral fibre of our society is something or other, etc.



'Hey, Alf! I think we're in the wrong racket, mate!'

New Towns - Utopia and Anti-Climax

2

IT is something of a jolt to turn from the discussion of Ideal Cities to the British New Towns, but the connection is obvious and direct. The whole importance of utopian thinking and theory is that sooner or later private aspirations or public policy come along and put it into practice. The result may be a watered-down, half-hearted institutionalised version of the original conception, unforeseen disadvantages may appear, the large claims prove unrealised, the utopian may be dismayed by his progeny, but their paternity is undeniable.

The exhibition *New Towns 1959* at the Royal Academy Galleries, London, exemplifies this. It has been organised to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Town and Country Planning Association, founded in 1899 as the Garden City Association, a year after the publication of Ebenezer Howard's *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* to implement his proposals. Howard was the father of the New Towns and the real credit for their inception must go to his association rather than to the various governments which tardily appointed Royal Commissions or introduced legislation, by the time that town planning thought had moved on from the garden city idea. (The Prime Minister, in a foreword to the exhibition catalogue remarks that "I was myself for three years responsible for twelve out of the fifteen New Towns in Great Britain", without mentioning that they had all been started before he took office, and that it was his decision that no more should be built in England and Wales).

Of the fifteen New Towns, eight form the 'London Ring' and were intended to house people and industries from London. Corby in Northamptonshire has been built in connection with the expanding steelworks there, Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe are in mining and industrial districts in County Durham, Cwmbran is the only new town in Wales, Glenrothes is in the East Fifeshire coalmining area in Scotland, East Kilbride and Cumbernauld (the only New Town to be designated since 1950) are being developed to relieve congestion in Glasgow. The original population of the fifteen towns was 134,000, by March, 1959, it had risen to 410,000; their ultimate population is to be 691,000.

A long article in *FREEDOM* recently (*New Town Story: From Silkingrad to Missileville*, 11/7/59) described the history of Stevenage, which in most respects

may be taken as typical of the New Towns, and it quoted some of the possible answers to the question: Are the New Towns a Success? In one fundamental respect, of course the New Towns are a success. The physical environment, houses, schools, factories and shops of East Kilbride are a hundred years away from those of central Glasgow, and reflect a quite different conception of how life should be lived. There can be few New Town dwellers who do not rejoice in the changed surroundings in which their children are growing up. But this is, after all, one of the things we are entitled to take for granted about new housing wherever it is.

In terms of the objective of diverting the growth of population from the great cities—"decanting the population overspill" in the jargon of town planning, the New Towns have not been able to absorb more than a fraction of the families needing accommodation. The Manchester and Birmingham conurbations have no New Towns, and the ring of New Towns around greater London has not kept pace with London's own population growth. The Town and Country Planning Association consequently demand a second series of New Towns further beyond the Green Belt than the present London ring.

THE New Towns were talked of as an experiment and even as an adventure when they were initiated, but the succession of financial restrictions imposed upon them in the succeeding years have taken away whatever spirit of experiment and adventure their original planners have. The problem of finding methods of housing layout which are not standardised from Land's End to John o' Groats has not been tackled. New technical approaches like district heating or local composting of sewage have not been attempted. Since the very existence of the New Town of Stevenage actually revolved around questions of sewage disposal it is worth digressing on this point.

When the proposal to build Stevenage was taken through the High Court and to the Court of Appeal, the issue over which it was fought was, of all things, sewage disposal. (Both Courts, says Mr. Orlans, in his book on Stevenage, held it "to be a crucial factor in the Stevenage case"). In the end several million pounds and miles of main sewer from the new town site to the Lea valley have been expended on this by-product of utopia. If an experimental approach had been applied to the opportunities arising in new town building, we might have expected *somewhere* an application of local composting methods of sewage and refuse disposal, successful work of this kind having been done in Denmark and in East Berlin. But the matter does not even seem to have been thought about by any of the New Town Development Corporations, or by the local authorities working with them, while the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has refused loan sanction to all but

three small schemes for municipal composting (using the Danish process) in this country. This year a Working Party of representatives of the Association of Public Cleansing and of Sewage Purification, and the Soil Association, has issued a report favouring the municipal composting of refuse and sewage "into a valuable source of humus, to the benefit alike of soil fertility, public health, amenity and municipal economy". The report notes specifically that,

"When an entirely new urban development takes place, of such a nature and size that it transcends the capacity of existing sewage and refuse collection and disposal systems . . . consideration of composting as a method of solving two problems by one scheme seems almost obligatory. . . ."

Sooner or later this method of dealing with town wastes will become standard practice, and the sewage and refuse disposal provisions of all the New Towns will be regarded as obsolete and wasteful.

If you are looking for new ideas in housing layout, ideas that get away from the dreariness engendered by small houses in bulk, however well designed individually, you will find few in the New Towns. Some local authorities and one speculative developer have done better. The biggest disappointment is that so few attempts have been made to get away from the street. As Mr. Furneaux Jordan comments on the present exhibition: "even by the most objective standards, these concrete by-roads (the milk cart and a few children's bicycles the peak traffic) with their wide verges and excessive lamp-posts are worse than bad; they are silly". The need to try to cut down excessive expenditure on roads and services should have made the Radburn type of housing layout (described in the review of the Ritters' book *The Free Family* in *FREEDOM* 27/6/59) immensely attractive to the planners of the New Towns, but there has been hardly any attempt to use it. The newest of them however, Cumbernauld, hardly begun at present, does promise compact grouping of houses with separate pedestrian and vehicle access, in an effort to achieve that 'urban' feeling (which all architects talk about, but few are able to achieve) while retaining privacy for the individual family.

ONLY in one respect can the New Towns claim to have undertaken experiments in urban planning. I refer to the pedestrian town centres of which the most complete is that of Stevenage. Basildon, Harlow and Crawley also have partially vehicle-free shopping centres. To anyone who thinks about the implications of the impact of the motor car on the design of towns, this is a most elementary point. The original plan for Stevenage provided for a vehicle-free town centre. At the end of 1953 the Development Corporation changed to the idea of a road right through the centre. A meeting of New Town residents was held in January 1954 was held to protest

and the Chairman of the Development Corporation explained why the change of plan was made. He said:

"It is largely a financial problem. We have taken the advice of experts on the question of shopping values and what we have been advised is that to have a pedestrian centre is an experiment, and an experiment which will have to be paid for in the sense that we are told that the shopkeepers and people who come there will not be prepared to pay the same rents as they would if you had vehicles going through the main street."

He went on to point out that all the buildings in the New Town were financed by loans from the Public Works Loan Board on which interest had to be paid. The income from the productive items had to pay for the loss on the unproductive ones, and consequently he felt "that we were not justified in having a centre laid out which would mean a substantial sacrifice of income as we were advised unless we felt that the traffic through that centre would be such that it would make shopping inconvenient and dangerous. Rightly or wrongly, we think that it is not likely to happen". (*Architects' Journal* 4/2/54). As a result of the public protest, criticising the "cold-feet finance" of the Corporation, the original idea of a pedestrian centre was withdrawn, so that this spring the Corporation's journal in an issue entirely devoted to self-congratulation, could say that,

"fortified by the clamour from many organisations and individuals in the town, the Corporation decided to adopt a pedestrian scheme, and their confidence has been justified by the immediate success of the Centre. . . ."

While we may be amused by this later praise of the policy which the Corporation was proposing to abandon a few years ago, the point which the chairman raised about the financial position of the Development Corporations is certainly one which has made them think twice about every amenity which could not show a profit. The entire capital cost of a New Town, plus the interest repayable over sixty years (at rates which fluctuate with the Bank Rate), must be met by the domestic, industrial and shop-keeping tenants.

"No such condition is laid upon local authorities undertaking housing schemes, nor would a private housing developer have to reckon in his overheads many of the items for which a Development Corporation must pay."

Consequently New Town domestic rents are generally higher than those of local authority houses, and the more recently built houses, often less generous in space and construction, in an effort to keep down costs, are more highly rented than the earlier ones. (Some New Town houses have been pared down to an extent which makes them fall below the mean standards of the 1952 Housing Manual).

The same financial provisions have had a destructive effect on community buildings. In his Fabian pamphlet on *The New Towns*, Norman Mackenzie tells the story of the hall built in the Adeyfield neighbourhood of Hemel Hempstead. Permission to build was only

obtained from the Ministry on condition that it covered its own cost.

"The hall cost £23,000. The money was borrowed by the Corporation at 4½%, or at an annual rate of 4.66% if allowance is made for capital repayment over 60 years. (The annual charge is £1,071, or £64,000 over 60 years!). It thus requires a weekly income of £20 merely to cover interest and capital charges, while maintenance costs run to about the same figure. Under the Act, the Corporation is obliged to find £40 a week in rental from this hall, or about £7 for every week-night. This would have meant that charges for the large hall would have been prohibitive for many of the local organisations for whose use it was built, and that even the small rooms would have cost up to a pound for a few hours in the evening. This policy, in fact, would have meant that the hall and rooms would have gone unlet many nights in the year, and that the project would have been failing in its purpose."

The solution adopted by the Corporation was to turn dance promoter and to run dances itself on Saturdays and alternate Fridays in order to be able to let the rooms and hall below their economic rent to other organisations on the other nights.

IT will be seen that the New Town Corporations have in fact the disadvantage of private enterprise—the necessity of thinking about every question in terms of profit and loss, and the disadvantage of public enterprise—bureaucracy and paternalism. The most depressing thing of all is how little advance, except in the scale of their operations, they have made on the pioneer private ventures of the disciples of Ebenezer Howard, Letchworth, begun on a shoestring by Howard and his friends in 1903, and Welwyn Garden City which he started in 1919 when it became clear that no public body was going to embark on new building after the first world war. Housing standards are in most cases higher in the new New Towns, the architectural trimmings are of the Festival of Britain vintage instead of neo-Georgian, the social disaster of building on either side of the railway with a 'right' and 'wrong' side of the tracks has been avoided, the New Town centres are better than the pre-motor-age centre of Letchworth, housing densities are lower (though whether this is an advantage depends on where you stand in the great debate over density). But that is all the difference. The Garden City idea, a natural result of the reaction of sensitive people to the squalour of the industrial revolution, has been debased by speculative builders into the universal suburbia of private enterprise, and hardened into by-laws by local authorities, but one would have expected some advance on it in the building of 15 new towns at an anticipated cost of three hundred million pounds by the nation which, besides 19th century slums and twentieth century Subtopia, produced the traditional English village and the Georgian town square.

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP OPEN DAILY

(Open 10 a.m.—6.30 p.m., 5 p.m. Sat.)

New Books . . .

Wisdom of the West

Bertrand Russell 63/-

Sigmund Freud's Mission

Erich Fromm 12/6

Gangrene (ed. Peter Benenson) 7/6

Second-Hand . . .

The Revolution in Eastern

Europe (1950) Doreen Warriner 4/-

Prophecy of Famine

H. J. Massingham and

Edward Hyams 5/-

TVA

Julian Huxley 3/-

Programma for Victory (1941)

Laski, Read, Cole, etc. 3/6

Prince Hagen

Upton Sinclair 3/6

Ape and Essence

Aldous Huxley 3/6

Living Thoughts of Karl Marx

Leon Trotsky 4/6

Living Thoughts of Tolstoy

Stefan Zweig 3/-

Guilty Men (1940)

"Cato" 2/6

Lucifer and the Child

Ethel Mannin 3/-

Under Western Eyes

Joseph Conrad 2/6

Anton Simeonovitch Makarenko

W. L. Goodmen 3/-

A Village by the Jordan

Joseph Baratz 4/-

Cast the First Stone

John M. Murtagh & Sara Harris 10/-

Ideals and Illusions

Susan Stebbing 5/6

The Religion of Socialism

E. Belfort Box 7/6

Requiem for a Nun

William Faulkner 4/6

Are Workers Human?

Gordon Rattray Taylor 6/-

The Brunt of the War and Where

it Fell (1902) Emily Hobhouse 6/6

Pamphlets . . .

How Labour Governed (S.W.F.) 6d.

Periodicals . . .

Liberation, September 1/9

Africa South, Oct.-Dec. 4/-

We can supply ANY book required,

including text-books. Please supply

publisher's name if possible, but if not,

we can find it. Scarce and out-of-print

books searched for—and frequently found!

Postage free on all items

Obtainable from

27, RED LION STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1

Workers' Fatherland Favours Tories

THE reaction to the election from official Soviet sources will only astonish the political naive who still expect some consistency in politics, or the fat-heads who think that socialism is synonymous with the system in the USSR.

Wise readers of *FREEDOM* know better (we hope) and will remember Mr. Krushchev's statement when visiting this country that—"If I were an Englishman I would be a Conservative".

Following last week's elections Moscow Radio in answering the question—"What does the British voter want?" said:

"He wants peace, he wants tranquillity, he wants no war" and,

"The Conservative party succeeded in responding to this mood and made effective use of it. Thus it can be said without exaggeration that the visit of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to the Soviet Union, which led to an improvement in British-Soviet relations was a most significant asset in the Conservatives' election campaign.

"It was driven home to the British voters that the Conservatives had the greatest desire and a special knack for dealing with the Soviets.

"Irrespective of the result, this British election is characterised by a special and very important feature: the British voter cast his vote for peace and peaceful co-existence. This fact imposes very great obligations on the new Parliament and on the Government emerging from this election."

The fact that most people in this country who support the Tories think in terms of "strongmen" capable of "dealing" with the Soviet leader or any other leader who disagrees with us is not really consistent with this tranquil tension-free picture.

The implication behind the remark—"the Conservatives had the greatest desire and a special knack for dealing with the Soviets"—that the Labour leaders have not got the desire ignores the flight to Moscow on the heels of Macmillan made by Gaitskell and Bevan.

The British voter too seems to have forgotten that the Labour Party is just as well "clothed" as the Conservatives since both parties are in agreement about the need for "H-bombs for Peace".

The voters who think they had a real choice in the election have obviously not thought very deeply except perhaps the rich minority who hope for greater concessions under the Tories.

To us it seems obvious that a change in Government would only have involved a ritualistic move in Parliament and of course the Queen would have had to shorten her Balmoral holiday!

Now that the election nonsense is over the five year rope given to the Tories will no doubt frequently tighten in that time but since they are adept at escaping the final death swing we have faith in their ability to wriggle free once again before the next election.

Where we came in

VATICAN CITY, SEPTEMBER 23.

An article in a Vatican newspaper today said if human life was in some way possible on the moon, the inhabitants might be perfect human beings in a state of grace like Adam and Eve in paradise.

Writing in the *Osservatore della Domenica*, a prominent Dominican priest, Father Raimondo Spiazzi, listed the possible conditions in which the first space men might find beings like themselves on the moon.

They might be descendants of Adam and Eve who reached the moon in some unknown way in prehistoric times stained with our first parents' original sin; or they might be beings like ourselves but descended from other first parents created separately by God.

In this case, they might be either (1) in a state of pure nature, not elevated to grace as Adam and Eve were before their fall; (2) perfect human beings in a state of grace; (3) fallen men like Adam's descendants before Christ; or (4) redeemed men.—*Reuter*.

The Election

Continued from p. 1

ally written to point out over the lapse of seven years, that Labour government was just as evil as Tory. In FREEDOM last week the anarchist point of view was put that:

"Nevertheless we believe that until the individual can free himself from the temptation of choosing between the lesser and greater evils, no radical change can be effected either in his life, as an individual, or collectively, in the life of the community."

With a slightly different emphasis, *Peace News* expressed in its leading article the sorrow that the pacifist movement had not seen its way to at least a voting boycott of the major parties. It claimed that

"Pacifism must owe a lot of its strength to the power of non-co-operation. With the development throughout the century of militarism and totalitarianism, the power of non-violent co-operation has become of vital significance. But if the peace movement is not prepared to trust in it and experiment with it, the world is that much less likely to face seriously the challenge of this 'new' power."

There is something missing from that otherwise commendable pacifist statement. It is not clear against what the non-violence is to be directed, or with what the pacifists are going to refuse to co-operate. Our answer is that government is always the enemy. That is not to say that social pressure and action by determined individuals and groups cannot obtain worthwhile results until we achieve the disappearance of government. It does mean that socially liberative action is sterile and directionless, confused and ineffective, unless it is conceived in a framework of fundamental opposition to coercion in social relationships, and in particular to the supreme form of this coercion, embodied in comprehensive government.

The second approach to electoral abstention is not perturbed whether there is or is not a difference between the parties. The anarchist *Election Guyed* drew attention to the real point of the election:

"Even if there were real differences between the parties it would not matter so very much which won, as long as we had all given our votes for our way of life. The Russian voter who writes X in favour of his or her single candidate is voting for Russian communism. The British voter who writes X in favour of any candidate is voting for British Democracy."

The progressive people who flocked to the polls last week to help bolster up the fading fortunes of the Labour Party, tried the Liberal alternative, or if they had a chance, voted for the small party candidates were not helping to choose which government. The Labour radicals, Liberals and small party men had no chance of being elected anyway. They were affirming their readiness to go on being governed. It is the unique aim of anarchists to try to sabotage that willingness.

P.H.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 41

Deficit on Freedom	£820
Contributions received	£718
DEFICIT	£102

October 2 to October 8

St. Louis: N.M. £1/17/0; Glasgow: J.M. 2/-; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.* 3/-; Wechankens: M.S. 14/-; Sheffield: B.M.P. 19/-; Greenford: B.M.E. 2/6; New York: G.C., Per D.L. 7/-; Brooklyn: T.M. 7/-; Pittston: D.L. £5/5/0.

Total ... 9 16 6
Previously acknowledged ... 709 2 2

1959 TOTAL TO DATE ... £718 18 8

GIFT OF BOOKS: Croydon: S.E.P.

*Indicates regular contributor.

LIBERTARIAN ASSOCIATION OF CUBA REPORTS ON THE CUBAN REVOLT

(Continued from previous issue)

THE composition of the Revolutionary government was characterised by the large proportion of young people taking part in it. This gave the impression of a lack of experience in the ways of administration, and stemmed its development during the first few months.

The presidency was assumed by Dr. Manuel Urrutia Lleó, a man who was assigned to that post by the 26th July Movement at the famous conference of Caracas, in opposition to the other revolutionary organisations. His activities while discharging that function are insignificant, and gave an impression of great inhibition in the government's decisions.

Dr. Miró Cardona took on the position of Prime Minister, but was replaced by Commandant Fidel Castro soon after being designated, and elevated to another position in the government.

From the moment when Dr. Fidel Castro took over the position of Prime Minister it began to appear from what took place in the Revolutionary Government, that wherever he did not personally intervene, affairs went badly.

After the government had been in existence for a few months, a ministerial crisis occurred, and a number of ministers fell. No public explanation of this crisis has been given, carrying enough weight to convince those who know a little about the goings-on of high politics. It has been guessed that the lack of determination on the part of some, or discrepancies over some of the methods of the revolution, or both these things together, were the cause of their downfall, although it is clear that this is no more than a deduction.

Fidel Castro undertook a tour of the American continent, which was called in Cuba "Operation Truth". The tour was undertaken to make matters clear to the American people about the execution of war criminals, and the campaign of communist infiltration in the government, of which they had heard mainly from the foreign press and various reactionary individuals. After that tour, we wish to make it perfectly clear, the executions, which had been a source of alarm throughout the continent, diminished to the point of ceasing altogether.

Despite Castro's tour of the American countries, which brought with it much sympathy, and the complete acceptance of the justification of the shootings, the situation was not at all clarified on the subject of communist infiltration. The attack on the Revolutionary Government

was maintained by the press of several countries.

Several controversies developed between journalists such as Sergio Carbó, the editor of the periodical *Prensa Libre*, and Guillermo Martínez Márquez, an administrative official of the daily *El Paiz*, having great prestige in the Inter-American Press Society, "S.I.P.", and Fidel Castro himself, and other representatives of the government. These journalists criticised and disagreed with some of the government's methods, and published manifestos expressing their views. All this led up to a climax which embittered the lovers of Freedom of Expression of Ideas. As a result of this controversy the liberty of the press was re-established.

The resignation of the Head of Aviation and the desertion of several members of the Revolutionary Army, together with the declarations of the former denouncing the supposed communist infiltration in the government, took away the attention of the Cuban public, to the extent of castigating him as a "traitor". This led to a climax of tension, which was sharpened by the declarations of the President of the Nation, Dr. Manuel Urrutia Lleó, in which he violently attacked the communists, accusing them of being highly prejudicial to the Cuban revolution, and adding that their anti-imperialism followed the orders of Russia.

On the 17th July, the morning press of the nation announced in large type headlines, that Fidel Castro had resigned as Prime Minister. That was a day of expectation. The most diverse rumours were current. The people and all the Revolutionary Organisations lived through hours of great tension awaiting the consequences which would arise from such a situation.

At 8 o'clock in the evening of the same day, Dr. Castro explained over the radio and television, the details which had led to his resignation (differences with President Urrutia Lleó), and accused him of "betraying the revolution". He explained that he had taken the step of resigning in keeping with the principles of democracy. The confidence of the people was restored, and to an even greater degree when, a few minutes before 12 midnight, the resignation of the President of the Republic was announced, and later the designation to the vacant presidential seat of Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado.

Although the members of the government constantly made declarations to the

contrary, in other sectors of the population it is felt that elements belonging or sympathetic to communism do occupy positions in various departments of the government, and exercise a marked influence in the decisions which are made through these departments. Our considered view is that those communists who hold several posts, do not occupy them as members of the Popular Socialist Party (as the communist party is called in Cuba), but as men who took an equal part, alongside those of other political and religious tendencies, having played some part or other in the insurrectionary struggle under the banner of the 26th July Movement. When the government was formed they were sufficiently clever to join in and form part of it, taking every opportunity to serve their own sectarian interests which they do in a very subtle way.

At the moment therefore, the possibility is not great that the communists will play a big role in determining the course of the revolution, although it is possible that they may do it some damage. No one understands better than the libertarians what a danger these elements are to liberty.

The Legislation of the Revolution

The men of the revolution, in their desire to give it a truly revolutionary content, have tried to bring about social changes through laws and similar methods. Thus various laws have been passed such as that of RENT; AGRICULTURAL REFORM; URBAN REFORM, TAXATION REFORM, and others of equal interest to the majority of the population.

The Rent Law, which reduced the rents by 50% in some cases, by less in others, and by nothing at all in some, has undoubtedly been beneficial to a considerable part of the population. It has however at the same time produced a contraction of investment in building, which in turn has thrown more than 80 thousand building workers out of work.

The old style of the National Lottery has been modified. This has been converted into an "Association for Savings and Housing". To begin with, this plan was not accepted very warmly by the people, which led to economic difficulties for the vendors of tickets. Under this plan the intention is to construct cheap homes for the people, and more than 4,000 of these have already been built throughout the nation.

The Law of Urban Reform, established a method of drastically reducing

the values of urban property, and put an end to the criminal abuses perpetrated by their owners. A metre of ground in the central areas of the capital, rose to the price of 50 dollars, and at times more. This law establishes a maximum for a metre of ground at 4 pesos. At the same time it makes it obligatory to use the land within a year, or sell it.

The Law of Agricultural Reform is the most important of all, because it concerns the distribution of land among the peasants. Oppression and exploitation on the part of landowners and speculators had kept the Cuban peasant permanently at the lowest economic level in the nation. Undernourishment and general poverty were rife, which makes it a first necessity to raise the general standard of the peasants and the population in general. This can be done, in a short time.

The Law of Agricultural Reform is being put into operation under the guidance and responsibility of the National Institute for Agricultural Reform (I.N.R.A.), an organ set up by the State and having ample facilities.

At the same time as these small proprietors are created, it is intended to establish agricultural co-operatives, which will be controlled by the I.N.R.A. The control of the State land, and of that confiscated from the vicious politicians and war criminals, together with those affected by the Law of Agricultural Reform, will pass to the National Institute for Agricultural Reform. The land affected by the provisions of the law, will be paid for by the State by means of bonds redeemable in 20 years, which earn a small rate of interest.

The Laws regulating the armed forces are said to have been reformed, but up to the present only unimportant changes have been made. Almost all the officers of these forces connected with the former régime have been displaced, and the positions taken over by the Rebel Army. In these bodies a general cleansing was necessary, and it took place. All armed forces are negative, but in these the criminality and moral degeneracy reached such a degree that it annihilated the principles of humanity in all their aspects, even those sustained by State-Capitalist Society.

However, almost the complete range of repressive institutions of the former régime are still maintained, under different names. It is important to state that, at least for the present, the methods of terror that made the Batista régime so detestable, have disappeared. It should also be noted that respect for and consideration of the individual are preached within these bodies.

(To be concluded)

Anarchist Propaganda and Organisation—3

THE Anarchist alternative to voting is direct action. On the social level this implies organised rebellion against any and every form of exploitation, suppression or domination. It means refusal by, say, industrial workers, to be organised and manipulated by union leaders in cohorts with employers, whether private companies or state boards; it means some form of local initiative to cope with communal problems.

On the personal level—and with the movement, the working class, society in general, as it is today, anarchists can only operate on the personal level or in very small groups—direct action means that the expression of anarchism is a matter almost entirely of personal endeavour.

Now for those who think in terms of mass votes garnered by huge party machines, this sort of talk appears the very essence of ineffectuality. But the anarchist is interested in social activity, not political. Therefore he must begin at the social level—as one in society. And he becomes effective as he spreads his influence in society, in company with like-minded persons.

This is strictly in line with the anarchist rejection of action at government level and his desire to work in society and not above it.

To those who reject this as an argument and as a method of working for social change we can only say that they are thinking in such authoritarian terms that we are not concerning ourselves with the same things. They remain concerned with the administration of the state; the anarchist is concerned with the fulfilment of individuals in society.

Those who reject individual action as ineffective are refuting the importance of the individual, which is a broad enough

hint of the type of régime they would introduce if in power. It goes further: they are also refuting the importance of the one individual who should be the most important of all: themselves. And this essentially servile attitude is the most dangerous of all, both in those with power and those without it.

The authoritarian attitude, revolving around control of people, does start with the individual just as the libertarian attitude does. But it starts with the individual's acceptance of authority, with his self-abnegation in favour of the authority which he accepts, either willingly and knowingly, or through such conditioning or circumstance that no thought is given to it at all. He accepts authority for himself and thus is convinced that it must be good for everybody else too, whereas the libertarian, in finding authority irksome and unnecessary for himself takes it to be the same for others, and explains their apparent acceptance of it by the enforced conditioning to which we are all subject. (He is usually at a loss to explain how he escaped the conditioning!)

Now the acceptance of the libertarian attitude or, more specifically, the anarchist label, brings with it certain implications, which fall broadly into two channels: for one's self and for society. They each bring with them certain responsibilities, involving in the first case all the relationships of one's personal life.

This is in many ways the testing ground for the anarchist, for here, as in little else, responsibility rests directly upon the individual. Indeed this is practically the only field where the individual can exercise his responsibility to-day, which is no doubt why anarchists spend so much time in the discussion of sex, education and the upbringing of

children—vital aspects of relationships between men and women, and adults and children. It is almost only in our own homes (and not even there!) that we can establish a libertarian environment, creating for ourselves a cell of sanity in the larger lunacy.

The implications of anarchism for the individual in relation to society are in many ways easier than this, because they consist much more in the expounding or propagation of ideas than of actually trying to live them out in a more or less hostile environment.

Halfway between the two directions of responsibility lies a third, vital, one. It is the relationship of the anarchist to his work.

Work is made so distasteful for most people in our society; it is so bound up with exploitation, lack of dignity and unsatisfactory human relationships in general, that the usual attitude of revolt lies in the avoidance of work rather than the discovery of means to enjoy it. Organised and disciplined as society is, it is usually easier to find means of living without working than to find work which is congenial and satisfying out of which it is possible to earn a reasonable living.

Yet for the anarchist, as for everyone else, work should, I think, be pleasurable. It is after all the channel through which we, first, express our creativity and, second, make our contribution to Society. Both important prerequisites for the achievement of a healthy personality and healthy social relationships.

With an anarchist movement on the small scale of ours in this country, the opportunities for social impact are small also. Yet acceptance of the label 'anarchist' does bring with it responsibilities in the direction of attempts to make an

impact on society. There is propaganda to be made, there are protests to be voiced, there are causes and struggles to be supported.

And this is not something that should be thought necessarily as 'for the movement'. If we hold a body of ideas which we feel to be valid in society we should do our best to spread those ideas so that we may benefit from them. If we find ourselves in a minority and thus insecure and open to attack, we should seek to gain support and thus strength from others, who can hardly come to our way of thinking if our thoughts are never placed before them. And if we hold our ideas to be right and good, what have we to fear from propagating them?

The assertion of personal responsibility, therefore, which is anarchism, ideally expresses itself in this threefold manner: in our personal relationships, in our work (and, of course, our relationships with our fellow-workers), and in our overt expression of our ideas through propaganda of some kind or another.

P.S.

(To be continued)

CORRECTION

The penultimate paragraph of the Part 2 of this article (Oct. 3) seems to have got through the proof-reading stage in a rather pathetic state. It should have contained the following sentences:

... He can decide that he prefers that the taxes he is forced to pay be used in one direction rather than another. He can believe that one party may make his life a little more comfortable under capitalism. He may think that one candidate is a particular menace and the easiest (and laziest) way to keep him out of power may be to put his opponent in ...

Shadow Boxing

DIAMAT AS PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE, by P. Spratt, The Libertarian Social Institute, 5s.

"DIAMAT" is a portmanteau word meaning "dialectical materialism", a fact of which I was unaware when I first opened this book. Because it was published in India I expected it to concern some new Eastern philosophy or cult, and was surprised to find myself back in the "materialistic West".

Dialectical materialism has taken a lot of beating in the last few years. As the theoretical basis of Communism, regarded in Western countries as the enemy, it is profitable and safe to attack it. Some writers have made their reputations and their livelihoods out of doing this, though it is best for this profession to have been yourself a Communist once. Professional ex- and anti-Communists are so numerous that they could form a party of their own. Probably it would be difficult to tell it from a Communist party.

So I do not feel favourable to works which seek to pick holes in Marx's theories. It is too easy. Any philosophical system is bound to have weaknesses. No system of thought is wholly satisfactory.

Diamat as a Philosophy of Nature is an analysis of the weaknesses, inconsistencies and contradictions of Marxism. It covers the ideas of Marx and Engels and of their disciples. It is also to some extent a criticism of materialism as a whole from the point of view of idealism, or at any rate from the point of view that spirit is primary.

Although I am not a materialist myself, whenever I read a work of this nature I feel a most unphilosophical desire to rush to the defence of materialism. The author of this book himself explains this tendency in many people who think of themselves as being of the Left.

... There is more truth in the argument that materialism is a revolutionary doctrine. Materialism, whether mechanical or dialectical, has no logical implication for or against revolution, but materialism has some tendency to encourage revolutionary feelings. We tend to picture matter as below and mind above; evolution and emergence are imagined as a process of pushing up from below; a theory which glorifies matter and scorns mind tends to glorify the lower and scorn the upper classes in society. These are psychological realities: Haldane points out that the same association is found in Plato and John Bunyan.

"It is probable that ruling classes have noticed this association, and have therefore favoured philosophies which lay emphasis on mind or spirit, and that to this, in part, is due the disrepute which has attached to materialism in most periods of history. The same association seems to have been felt in ancient India, as is suggested by the reputed teaching of the Charvakas and the orthodox response to it. But though these considerations should make us more sympathetic towards materialists, they have no tendency whatever to imply that materialism is true."

Anti-materialist philosophies always seem to be held by ascetics, reactionaries, supporters of taboo and tradition. Plato ended by advocating, in "The Laws", prison camps and secret police. On the other hand Marx's disciples ended by putting these things into practice. The only possible conclusion seems to be that once in power materialists are as bad as idealists.

Is it not possible that materialists and idealists are really on the same side, and their furious fights but shadow-boxing?

(The situation is still further complicated by the fact that adherents of mechanistic materialism regard dialectical materialism as a form of mysticism).

The whole thing is a bit like a British general election. One has a certain instinctive pull towards the Left, as represented by Labour, because Toryism is too blatant to be considered, but really both parties are the same. If "diamat" corresponds to Labour, idealism to Tory and mechanism to Liberal, the analogy is complete.

I used to favour materialism, though I was never an adherent of "diamat", because I thought it was the philosophy of freedom, releasing mankind from superstitious terrors of gods and devils. It also seemed to me the most convincing philosophy from the intellectual point of view, but this was, frankly, a

secondary consideration, and in any case I had never read books on any other philosophy.

Now I feel less and less in need of any philosophical system. All of them are vulnerable. None of them completely satisfy the heart. The sun will shine as brightly whether Plato or Marx be right. Marx himself said something to the effect that philosophy had interpreted the world in various ways, the problem however was to change it. With this dictum I heartily concur.

The author states in his introduction, "I do not profess any theory, and do not try to establish one. The aim of my argument is entirely negative". Actually however there at times emerges a rather sour conservatism, and some of his remarks appear to be downright unjust.

"Engels argues that in the classless society of the future the injunction 'thou shalt not steal' will cease to have application, and seems to imply that the same will be true of other obligations."

Surely Mr. Spratt, having been a Communist himself, knows that in a society where property is held in common, theft will be by the very nature of things be impossible, or else the word "communism" is meaningless? One is entitled to doubt if such a society would be workable, but one is not entitled to imply that Engels approved of theft.

Mr. Spratt's arguments do not as a rule fall to this level. He is a bit above the *Daily Telegraph* or *Daily Mail* style of anti-Marxist. In dealing with the question of sex he points out that the Marxists opposed sex taboos in theory, but in practice had little use for "bohemianism", which term, I take it, covers genuine sexual freedom and prostitution, licence, drunken orgies, etc. (This convenient blanket word makes it possible to confuse healthy and unhealthy sex, and make it appear that the only alternative to the miseries of conventional marriage is a squalid "pornographic" kind of sexuality). On this issue Marxist theory and practice do not harmonise. The situation in modern Russia is the same as in any bourgeois country. Orthodox morality is strict, but "immorality" is winked at.

So in fact the Marxists are as restricted and unfree in their attitude as are their opponents. The resemblance to the election fight, where both sides are really the same, appears again.

I suppose one has to give one's own views. The author's "negative" approach is not really as negative as he would wish. From it emerges a life view which is distinctly authoritarian. So one must put one's own view forward, rather than evade the issue.

To me it appears that life is a process. The ultimate reality is neither spiritual nor material. These terms are merely artificialities, produced by a false splitting up of life into its components. An animal is seen in a distorted and unreal way when on the dissector's table. With its bowels spread all over the place one may get a rough idea of how the creature works, but to really understand it one has to watch it alive.

Man sees himself cut off from his environment, the not-man. From this comes the wholesale destruction of natural life, by weed-killers, by soil erosion and by other methods. Nature is an object to be exploited, man does not realise he is himself a part of it.

Worse still is the division between "body" and "soul", or "body" and "mind" even. This leads to sexual suppression, the subduing of natural desires of all kinds and a hate of the body, or at least a desire to be "master" of it.

Let us hope at any rate that in their fury with each other idealists and materialists do not blow us all up, for I cannot share the opinion of a recent contributor to FREEDOM that political, religious or philosophical ideas are just epiphenomena. They may take their rise in certain material conditions, but once launched, ideas acquire a (usually sinister) life of their own, and a quarrel about wealth and power can be greatly envenomed by doctrinal disputes.

One thing is certain. Idealists are as bad as materialists when it comes to atrocities.

"Nevertheless the supposed obligation to promote progress is a principal pillar of the diamat ethical doctrine. 'Our morality is wholly subordinate to the class-struggle of the proletariat', said Lenin. In fact Marx made the same point in his criticism of 'True Socialism' in 'The Holy Family' and 'The Communist Manifesto'. What this principle means in practice is that all ordinary moral restraints can be set aside if politics requires it. All politicians of course are tempted to act on this principle, but few are reckless enough to proclaim it.

It is the principle, if such it can be called, of fanaticism, of the contempt for truth which the communists show, the principle of the Stalin terror."

Fair enough. Only give the Marxists the credit for being frank at least. This frankness is not so common with their opponents, who love to talk about justice, freedom, democracy and so forth, but whose cruelties match the Marxists' own. And these idealists (the mechanists have never so far as I know ever exercised power) have been in the game far longer than the Marxists. They have been at it for countless thousands of years.

It was not Marxists who made the first H-Bomb, dropped the A-Bomb, created Auschwitz and Belsen, burned nine million witches, exterminated the Arawaks and the Tasmanians, massacred the Gauls, made Socrates drink the hemlock. These things were all done by men who would have considered themselves as much the enemies of materialism as Mr. Spratt. Many of them indeed were quite consciously and deliberately out to combat it, the Nazis for example. The people who did these things were all of them believers in the primacy of spirit. They acted as they did no doubt in obedience to material considerations also, but they believed, sincerely so far as one can judge, that the people they were hurting were enemies in different ways, of the spirit.

"Materialism has no tendency to imply the original goodness of man, nor the intellectual equality of men and if materialists teach these things they are mistaken", asserts Mr. Spratt dogmatically. If he is going to make an assertion of that sort he should at least give some reason for it. It seems almost certain that men are not born with intellectual equality, but such inequality is often increased by social divisions, or it often happens that a man of talent never has a chance to fulfil himself because he is born too low in the social scale, while a less gifted man has all the opportunities. As for original goodness, it is the source of our morality, the instinctive feeling in man for mutual aid. Our author however sweeps on his stately way, leaving a number of dubious or unfounded assertions bobbing in his wake.

There is nothing I loathe more than the sort of Congress of Vienna atmosphere in which we live today. Our age is a most reactionary one. It resembles the period which followed the fall of Napoleon. Anti-Jacobinism was as fashionable then as anti-Communism is now, and any sort of progressive, libertarian or humanitarian idea is bound to find plenty of opponents. We must, I suppose, endure it in patience till better times come.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

At the Theatre

COCK-A-DOODLE DANDY by Sean O'Casey, at the Royal Court.

THERE are two kinds of entertainment for me. Both leave me completely satisfied. The purely lyrical which reiterate high aspirations as in ballet or music, and drama which carries me on the crest of a wave and doesn't throw me on the rocks at the end, through the machinations of the censor.

Sean O'Casey carries me on the crest of his wave. His symbolism is direct and clear-cut. The cock—a massive bird in the play symbolises the thrust of life—of resurrection—courage, resolution.

This bird struts and bounds and dances through the play making spectacular appearances at the right moment. It represents the youth of Ireland, priest-ridden and browbeaten, but still bursting with life because life is like that and they like the feel of it. One realises that the Irish don't come to England only for employment.

The picture Sean O'Casey paints is a frightening caricature of our own anti-life attitude to the thrust of life in the young. We had our own Archbishop in 1945 who when asked on the Radio which virtue he thought the greatest, claimed chastity. If you should think perhaps there was some mistake in the order in which he puts this, he was given a chance to rectify it when he was asked what he considered the greatest vice. You're right—he claimed lust as the greatest vice.

There is a delightful moment in the play when the old man sitting in the back yard looks up sharp-like and affronted and says, "Dear me, what's that I smell?"

HOUSEHOLDER'S COMPLAINT

DEAR SIR,

I am writing to demand Justice for us suburban day-trippers.

I have been working in a bank for twenty-three years, and am due for even more promotion when the manager passes over. But what have I got to show for it? When my wife and I were married, we wanted two things from our marriage: a house and a car. Now I find that the semi-detached villa which was on the very outer suburbs when I took it on, has twelve miles of suburbs outside it now that the mortgage is paid off. As for the car, which we achieved after eighteen years, we have never got more than twenty miles along the Brighton road of a Sunday morning. The pleasant English countryside which we were taught to love and sing about in school, and which we fought two world wars to defend, seems completely out of reach. And yet I saw on the telly last night (Don Oxford's History Quiz I think the show was called), that Hampstead was once a pleasant village.

The solution, Sir, is obvious! We need to build more blocks of flats out in the country, so that we can go and live there! Of course, it would need a courageous government, prepared to spend millions on better roads to make our flats in the county accessible, and the tubes would have to be extended out

there so that the juniors could get into their offices too. Provided development capital was forthcoming for chain stores and supermarkets, we could leave the horrors of city and suburb right behind.

Then perhaps, I would get the value out of the glossy illustrated book "Know the Beauty Spots of YOUR England" for which I paid 57/6d. at a genuine arty crafty bookshop.

In view of my position and respectability may I beg leave to sign myself

Yours, etc.,
AN EXASPERATED GUY.

(Name, address and bank supplied)

Editors' Note :

It would seem that our correspondent has just missed his opportunity to GET SOMETHING DONE. He should have enquired of the election candidates in his own constituency what they were prepared to do to solve his problem—and then voted for the one who appeared to be most satisfactory. After all, everybody from drapers to pigeon fanciers had some special axe to grind which made them vote this way or that. Our "exasperated" correspondent must remember that under our way of life—which he fought to defend—everyone has the opportunity to vote for what he wants at a general election!

Lesser Evil ?

DEAR FRIENDS,

I think you are less than fair to your correspondent who told you he would vote Labour "without illusion". Your arguments against the Labour Party are more or less just, but they apply with much greater force to the Conservative Party; and it really isn't enough to dismiss the idea of voting for the lesser evil as no more than a "temptation"—all through our lives we have to choose between various unpleasant alternatives, and it is surely better to choose the least unpleasant rather than to refuse to make any choice at all.

By voting Labour your correspondent (and I, for I too voted Labour "without illusion") will not transform the world, nor even our little bit of it. But we are stating a preference for a Party which, for all its defects, has in the past made an attempt to improve the world (not entirely without success) and would do so again if it had the chance. Of course Indian and Ghanaian people are not necessarily better off for being ruled by their own countrymen, nor are working people necessarily happier for having a bigger slice of the national cake (to coin a phrase); but most colonial people want national independence, and most poor people want more food and fun, and I would rather see them given these things by an imperfect Government than told to wait until capitalism is abolished.

This is not to say that I favour an unqualified Labour vote; it is possible to vote Labour and at the same time try to improve the Labour Party itself, and it is also possible to choose the most libertarian candidate—Labour, Liberal or what you will—in one's constituency. As it happens, the Labour Party includes a number of radical and libertarian members whose return to Parliament I happen to favour; and by voting for one of them (unsuccessfully) I don't think I betrayed the principles in which I believe.

The real point is that if we care (and, to quote Arnold Wesker, if we don't

Robin Adair, sitting on the wall is looking over the fields and playing his harmonica. "I do but smell the new-mown hay," he says pleasantly.

The play is beautifully acted and gathers a momentum I never expected. It pulls no punches—either concerning life or anti-life. It's all clear as a bell (thank God). The method of presentation is exciting and vivid. The point of it all is as true for us here as for the Irish, but dressed in the oblique garb of moderation, hypocrisy and our old friend the half-truth, is equally as damaging and about as useful to the thrust of life as downright brow-beating.

The play was written ten years ago and is as true of Ireland today as then. Sean O'Casey writes in England, and is not likely to go back. His plays are banned.

A play to see and enjoy. J.J.

care we'll die), we should do everything we can to stop the things we think evil and bring about the things we think good. The quinquennial vote is a clumsy way of doing this, but it is better than none. After all, the political programmes of the parties are not just "bread and tinsel" and the Labour Party is composed of fewer "guilty men" than the Tory Party. No, I will imitate Cassandra and call you mugs for not voting. It just happens to be a form of political action I think it is better to use than ignore: we haven't got so many that we can afford to be choosy.

Yours,
NICHOLAS WALTER.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP and MALATESTA DEBATING SOCIETY

Meetings now held at
The White Bear (Lounge Bar)
Lisle Street, W.C.2. (Leicester Square)
Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.

OCT. 18.—Albert Meltzer on
INTERNATIONALIST'S
PROGRESS

DAVID BELL FUND

LIST No 8

Total (after expenditure)	
of £23 3s. 2d.	16 14 8
Sydney Anarchist Group	
(Keith, Maria, Nestor, Jean,	
Don, Edna, Bob, Kris,	
George and Group)	2 10 0
R.C. (South Australia)	15 0

TOTAL TO DATE £19 19 8

PETER FEAK & MAX PATRICK.

FREEDOM

The Anarchist Weekly

Postal Subscription Rates :
12 months 19/- (U.S.A. \$3.00)
6 months 9/6 (U.S.A. \$1.50)
3 months 5/- (U.S.A. \$0.75)

Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies
12 months 29/- (U.S.A. \$4.50)
6 months 14/6 (U.S.A. \$2.25)

Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed a/c Payee, and addressed to the publishers

FREEDOM PRESS

27 Red Lion Street

London, W.C.1. England

Tel.: Chancery 8364