

In this Issue
**Reforms and
 Emancipation - p. 2**
**The Limits of
 Control - p. 3**
**More about
 Rationalism - p. 4**

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Liberty means responsibility.
 That is why most men fear it."
 —BERNARD SHAW

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Threepence

Before the Russians Walked Out 'Disarmament' Deadlock

LAST week (FREEDOM 25th June, "Flexibility and Deadlock") we drew attention to the changing reports on the Disarmament Conference at Geneva exemplified by newspaper headlines.

Having reached the point where they could neither go forward nor backward, the British and United States delegates left Geneva to consult their Governments, after which, we suggested, they would return to continue the farce.

Last week-end Mr. Ormsby Gore, the British delegate, returned to Geneva. His parting words were that any suggestion that the disarmament talks have been breaking down are unfounded, they have only been delayed! He added that the Soviet Union proposals needed more careful study, but it would not be long before the West submitted an "important and constructive reply" to Russia. Time will reveal the truth of this, but cynics who have followed these conferences should be forgiven their sceptical snort.

The latest reports from Geneva (June 27th) find the Western delegates back in committee "an effort to prepare a common Western position on the basis of the new American disarmament plan which was transmitted on (the previous) Friday".

Apparently it was assumed that the chief American delegate, Mr. Frederick Eaton, would return to Geneva with support for the

Franco-British priority in the disarmament process for a gradual and safeguarded elimination of the strategic means of delivering nuclear weapons.

But America is intent upon giving priority to the prevention of surprise attack under the supervision of an international control organisation. This would necessitate:

Aerial photography and ground control, the freezing of conventional forces and a controlled cessation of fissile production for weapons, notification and auditing of missile launchings and an exchange of observers in declared launching sites and other bases.

If the Western delegates cannot agree on the order of importance of their disarmament plans it is not a very hopeful beginning for Mr. Ormsby Gore's promised "important and constructive" reply to Russia.

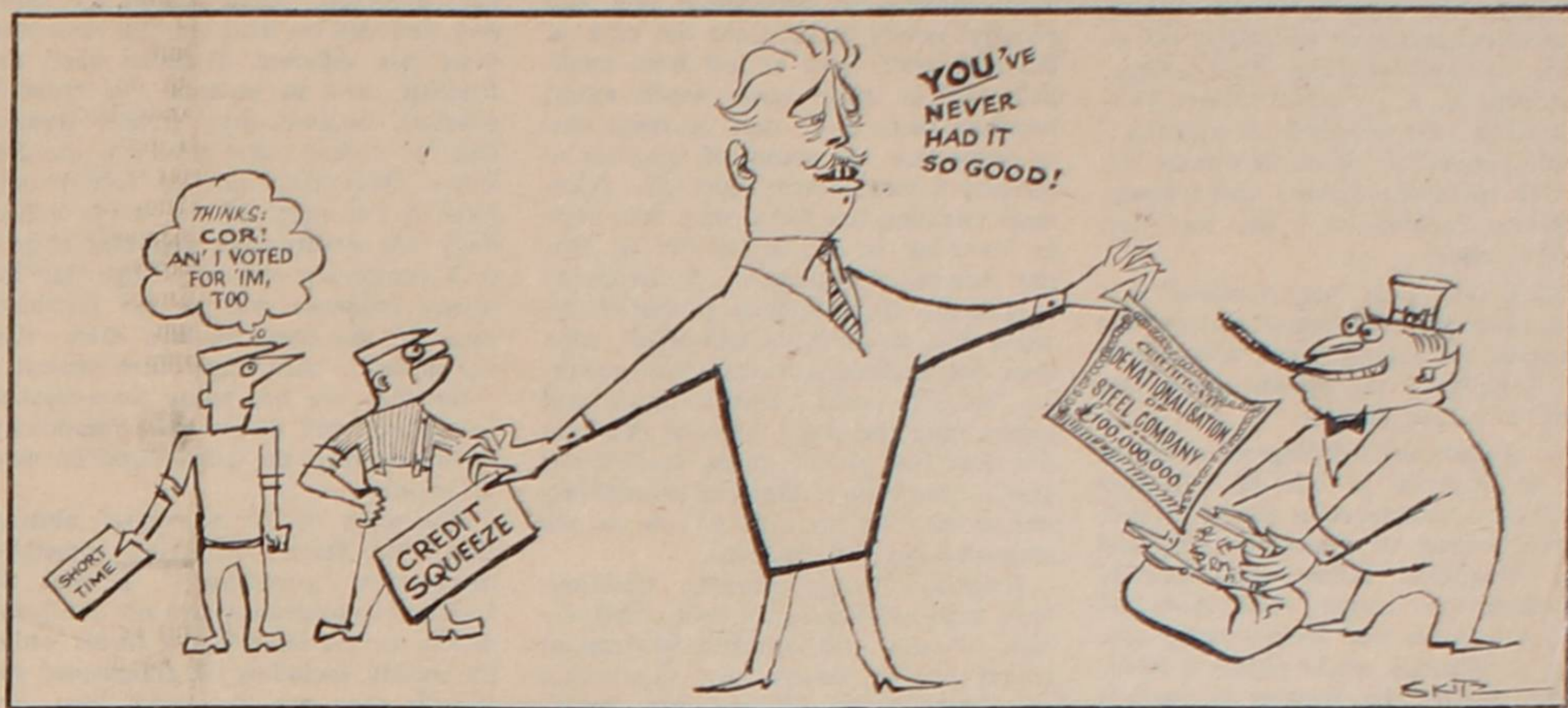
On the principle that prevention is always the best policy, of the two proposals the Franco-British suggestion—the elimination of the strategic means of delivering nuclear weapons—would appear to be the best. The American proposal, however, is more realistic since it is unlikely that Russia would agree to abandoning her means of delivering nuclear weapons. But, assuming she would, America obviously has no intentions of eliminating her equipment otherwise she would be prepared to give first consideration to the plans put forward by Britain and France.

It is probable that the Western delegates will eventually agree to the new American proposals with the promise that discussions will be continued on the other plan at a later date.

This then is the latest stage arrived at in the "peaceful negotiations" at Geneva.

Our only comment is that if East and West genuinely wanted to eliminate the means of waging war they would not waste time discussing the abandonment of the means of delivering nuclear weapons or the prevention of surprise attack, they would agree to the *limination of the actual weapons*.

Scientists in trying to locate disease will look for the *cause* as well as the symptoms before a cure can hope to be successful. This method is accepted in other fields of research into causes, yet no attempt is ever made by political leaders to discuss objectively the reasons for war. If they did they would have to admit that the society we are asked to defend is diseased and indefensible.



The Finances of Nuclear Power—or the POWER OF FINANCE

THE government's decision to slow-down the Nuclear Power programme has been determined by considerations which have little to do with the problem of producing electrical energy or with the interests of the community. According to the *Guardian's* Scientific Correspondent, writing before the publication of the White Paper on the subject, the reasons for the slow-down were given by government officials as follows:

The goal of 5 to 6 million kilowatts by 1956-66 had been established in 1957 after the Suez incident, when the future of Britain's oil supply in the Middle East and the extent of its coal resources at home were in doubt. Since then the Middle Eastern situation has eased and the country has become glutted by an over-production of coal.

The rising cost of money has also made nuclear power appear less attractive. Since atomic plants require higher capital outlays and lower operating expenditures than conventional coal and oil-fired plants, the increase in the interest rate has worked against nuclear power.

The reduction in the cost of conventional power plants that has been brought on by new technological developments has further reduced the attrac-

tiveness of nuclear power at the present time.

In other words political and financial considerations were responsible both for the initial nuclear power programme as well as for the present decision to cut down on it. And in arriving at their decision the government has not in any way been concerned with the social and human aspects of the problem.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that the nuclear power programme was fixed on the assumption that as a result of the Suez "incident" the smooth flow of oil from the Middle East and through the Nasser canal might well be threatened, and that the "extent of coal resources" in this country "were in doubt". Now, as to the former it is quite fantastic that a government should either be so incompetent or badly informed, as to have assumed at the time, that the nationalisation of the Suez Canal would have jeopardised Britain's oil supplies in the long run, whatever may have been the immediate effects (and the nuclear power programme of 1957 was long term, in that it was planning for 1965-66).

To the most politically naive layman it was surely clear that Nasser's nationalisation of the canal was for the purpose of "earning" money for the Egyptian Exchequer, and it was in his interest to encourage the flow of shipping through the canal. FREEDOM was pointing this out in 1956* and to say that since the Suez "incident" the flow of shipping has been as smooth as at any time before, is not a case of being wise after the event. We were also sure that the oil interests would not allow Nasser to take steps which would queer their pitch. And as we now know, not only has the supply of oil been sufficient to meet world "demand" but there is today, in fact, a glut of oil on the world markets! Not only was shipping tonnage able to cope with the crisis period, but there are at present more oil-tankers than demand, and indeed, some have even been converted to carry grain!

As to the official argument that "coal resources at home were in doubt", in that year 1956, the government had already decided to

close down a number of so-called "uneconomic" pits. Would they have done so if they were concerned that coal production could not meet the demand?†

THE second argument is that capital outlay on nuclear power stations is higher than for conventional power plants, and since the latter can now be built more cheaply than in the past, the gap between the capital cost of nuclear and power plants has noticeably increased. This coupled with the "rising cost of money" (which doesn't mean that pound notes cost more to print, but that the money-lenders are demanding a higher rate of interest!) has "further reduced the attractiveness of nuclear power at the present time". The financial tit-bit offered by the government is a saving of some £90 millions on the nuclear power programme during the next seven years. Against that the over-abundance of uranium will result in "carrying charges" on the unused stockpile amounting to a loss of "some millions" of pounds. The White Paper also "predicts" that power stations would be consuming about 125 million tons of coal a year by 1957, well over double the present rate, and 200 million tons by the 1980's.

IT may well be, as the *Guardian* maintains, that the Government's nuclear power programme will "bring cheer to the coal miners". But in spite of the miners, we continue to maintain that a society which has the technical know-how

Continued on p. 3

INDUSTRIAL NOTES UNOFFICIAL STRIKE IN SWEDEN

THE viciousness of the capitalist welfare state was shown last week when a Swedish court condemned 360 oil workers at Göteborg of unofficial strike action and ordered them to pay damages of £14 each. The employers also made a claim against the local branch of the union, but this was dismissed, on the grounds that the union had opposed the strike.

Workers at the oil installations in Göteborg are among the lowest paid in the country getting about £12 per week (the cost of living in Sweden is much higher than in England). Further, it is the practice in Göteborg, that unemployed workers are forced to work in these installations or lose their unemployment benefit.

The strike was a short-lived and heroic act on the part of these workers, who had to fight not only the employers, national trade union, local union, press, etc., but were overshadowed and finally defeated by the legal machinery of the state.

It has been suggested from time to time in reactionary circles in Britain, that legal sanctions should be used against unofficial strikers. These suggestions are made just as often by Labour and official T.U. leaders as by Tories, and

the fate of unofficial movements in the Scandinavian countries is a warning as to what could happen in England. The best way of fighting against this is to strengthen all the unofficial movements and committees which exist among workers, and to ensure their independence from all political organisations. This can of course only happen when more people understand that the welfare state, and all political parties, are just as oppressive in their own way as the order they have superceded.

Redundancy at Hoovers

THE Hoover firm recently laid off 800 workers on the grounds that the government's threats of hire purchase restrictions made it necessary to reduce production. The economics of credit are undoubtedly very complicated, it is the same kind of thing that is typical of crises in capitalism; workers are producing and consuming too much for the system to keep its equilibrium, so they have to suffer the consequences. At a union conference, Frank Foulkes of the ETU compared hire purchase to the pawn shop in the first half of the century. This is not a very good comparison, as the two systems work in different

ways, under different levels of prosperity and under different degrees of state economic control. Hire purchase graciously allows the worker to get his hands on the products of his labour without waiting so long, and then charges him an enormous rate of interest. The companies would not sell goods on H.P. unless they were forced to, and the fact that they do shows what a gap there is between the amount of wealth produced, and the value returned to the producers in wages. What a brilliant scheme it is, to release the goods instead of having them stacked up in warehouses, and let another set of moneylenders cash in at the same time!

The majority of Conservative critics of the high rate of buying by this method seem to think that it is enabling people to enjoy too much in the way of consumer goods. However, when one compares the profits made all round, it is clear that a much smaller proportion of the value of their work is being returned to those who have done it. After all, if you have made a washing machine or its equivalent, why should you have to pay monthly instalments for the next two years? Any system of wages and prices operates, not to give people access to goods, but to withhold it. P.H.

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*Indicates regular contributor.

*See *Freedom Selections*, Vol. 6, 1956, pp. 189-190.

†Ditto pp. 129-130 (Welsh Pits Reviewed).

REFORMS AND EMANCIPATION

(During the controversy on 'revisionism' which took place in these columns earlier this year the question of anarchism and reforms was prominent. This question has concerned anarchists for many years and its repercussions are still felt, as that controversy showed. The following essay, which first appeared in the New York anarchist review "Resistance" for August-October, 1954, presents a possible solution to the apparent

THE supreme evil of the colour-caste system is the hideously self-distorting mirror which blights the lives of the millions of men, women and children who must live with it constantly before their eyes: the crushing image of oneself as less-than-human which the society imposes and no Negro can wholly escape. More even than a "justice" which railroads black men to prison, or an economic discrimination which frustrates the effort to rise from squalor, this violence to human personality is the true barbarity of caste.

This is why each "step forward" is a battle necessary to ultimate victory, but an impossible resting place, and why a new freezing of the present *status quo* would be a total disaster.

The attitude toward Negroes emerging now in America is one of toleration rather than acceptance as equals; of suffering because of democratic duty and legal obligation rather than genuine unconcern for colour. For American Jews, the status now slowly being conceded to Negroes would signify a return to the ghetto; the freezing of such a *status quo* would be a disaster. And many tomorrows will pass before Southern courts will (even) begin to dispense equal justice, before the spirit of mob will follow the lynch-mob to oblivion, before the tabu on "intermarriage" will fall and with it the possibility of a new descent to servility.

But these reservations, these looks

behind the front pages of progress, do not alter the fact that finally the time can be anticipated when the insult of caste will not be added to the injuries we suffer in common. In the last decade, patterns of persecution that had endured nearly intact since the days of Reconstruction have at last been modified and in some cases wiped away; certainly there is no need to make lists to show that the status of Negroes in industry is more nearly equal, that extralegal lynching has faded out, that there is fraternity in the armed forces, that the pattern of segregation in education is gradually being broken up, that Hollywood has changed its stereotype. One does not applaud heartily when, centuries belated, justice finally limps and totters onto the stage; but one does not boo and hiss either, unless one of the public connivers of the long procrastination comes out to take a bow as the stage-manager of progress.

America's feeble idealistic traditions have withered nearly all away, and the men of the post-idealistic generations would like to believe that the system can gradually be tinkered into reasonable perfection, as men of their modest horizons measure it. Their own shame, and the Communists' exploitive focus on American racism, have led them to believe that this is the "test" of America—as if the empire, and the common status of Americans, did not matter! The nation—the comforting story goes—has outgrown the follies of its youth, the steady increment of wisdom and self-awareness has burst the shell, the interests vested in the old order resignedly give way to the national wisdom incarnate in the State. The Emancipation Proclamation is fulfilled.

The "men of good will" are pleased to find apparent confirmation of their faith that the State is, in the long run, a repository of justice where their troubles may be carried and their cares laid down. There is much self-congratulation. . . .

There is no question that the influence of the federal government has been—in these last years we must not forget to add—preponderantly on the side of "racial progress". To all appearances, this is primarily a reform by law, by judicial-legislative-executive process: the suppression of racist mores by governmental coercion.

Are we to conclude that the role of the State in society is a benevolent one? Should libertarians co-operate with the State in what is manifestly a good "reform"? Can we work effectively on behalf of this reform, if we do not? Are there alternatives to propose to those who are using government and domestic power-politics to defeat racism?

* * *

contradiction between the 'revolutionary' and 'reformist' attitudes. By taking as his main theme the extremely thorny problem of racial discrimination, David Wieck has demonstrated very clearly how anarchists can make their own contribution to the struggle against such particular evils, without either departing from their principles, or renouncing their identities.

We may appear to caricature the believers in the "welfare State" in ascribing to them an absolute trust in the State, for certainly they are aware that the State (in Russia) can be synonymous with terrorism. Their actions are, however, founded on trust that the American State has different dynamics than the Russian; and in practice the trust is absolute because they frankly assume that the urgent social problems are collective, that they can be solved only through the agent of the whole collectivity, the government, and that citizens of a democracy can only hope that the liberal influence will be the dominant one. If the State betrays them, they are undone: they might turn against it—for they are not really State-idealists—but they will do so quite impotently, having scorned the anti-collectivist ways of action.

The point of the anarchists' abstraction "the State", signifying something more than "government", is that the actions of government are not the result merely of the interplay of forces within the society, including the enlightened and liberal; they are the result also, and especially, of the independent, objective necessities of the institution as a power-entity and as the nation's self-appointed agent in dealing with the rest of the world. As the government acquires a greater role in society, and as its war-making function becomes more prominent, these objective laws, independent

of the will of particular groups, come more and more to determine its actions.

Applying the anarchist theory to the present case, the facts to note are the following: that the first significant intervention of government in race relations (FEPC) coincided with the total mobilization of the American economy, for the first time in history, in the war of 1941-1945; that in a society where all manpower may be needed at any moment to carry on a war, race riots are a menace to the government; that the projection of racist patterns into a mass conscript army is wasteful of manpower and destructive of morale; that in the struggle for the allegiance of the populations on the borders of the empire, American racism has been an asset to Russia.

In emphasizing these facts, these interests of government, we do not mean to write off the idealism and domestic-political "empiricism" of the New Deal-Fair Dealers; or the influence in shifts in population and the economy, the Negro migration to the cities, the rise of a Negro middle class, and such factors; or the militant action of Negroes; or the myriad educational and community actions that have affected people's thinking; by no means. We mean merely to point to the definite stake, as a world power and warring power, that the American government has in modifying the racist institutions—to suggest that benevolence is not what

FREEDOM

characterizes its role, and that what we should expect from the State more and more is what its war-making role dictates, which is not likely to be very often of a beneficial nature. (The argument must be left in this theoretical form, because proof of it would require close examination of the public utterances of the powerful individuals who have influenced the government's actions, which we cannot do here, but which would be interesting for someone to attempt).

Although fortuitously or self-interestedly, the government is in fact one of the prime instruments of racial reform: perhaps no other events have been so significant as the abolition of segregation in the armed forces and the Supreme Court's preliminary decision on public school segregation. Should we, therefore, as persons deeply concerned, throw our energies into pressure upon the government to extend its attacks upon the Jim Crow system? Should we have supported FEPC, the legal and lobbying efforts of the Negro organizations, the campaign against armed forces' segregation—and should we support the continuing and analogous moves?

The reason why anarchists object to legal-political methods, and point to and propose alternatives, is that we refuse to isolate the colour-caste question from the rest of our problems. We want *this* emancipation, but we also want a *general* emancipation, and the means by which the emancipation of Negroes is fought for will affect the fate of the general struggle, just as does the way we address any problem, day by day, in society.

To Negroes, the status of white Americans may look glorious, but we need only ask the obvious questions:

Racial segregation in the schools may end, but when will compulsory educa-

Continued on p. 3

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POLITICAL FICTION

The Muzzled Horse

POLITICAL or philosophical fiction, like science fiction, falls roughly into three classes—the *authentic*, in which a documentary background is used to reveal character or simply to tell a story (Trollope, Joyce Cary, C. P. Snow); the *didactic*, in which a similar background is used in conjunction with personal or satirical intrusions to send a message or perhaps to gratify wish-fulfilment (Disraeli, Baron Corvo, Graham Greene); and the *fantastic*, in which the personal or satirical intrusion has taken over completely, and both background and story are subordinated to the author's whims, usually appearing as some sort of allegory (Huxley, Warner, Orwell). These classes are not absolute—even the most realistic novel has some spark of imagination and even the most fantastic one has some basis of fact—and a writer may easily work in more than one of them (Wells, Waugh), but nearly every political novel does fall into one. Alan Sillitoe's new book* is a fantastic poli-

tical novel—a fable, in fact.

A symphony orchestra sent to entertain the soldiers of a liberal and artistic "East" (during a conventional war fought in what sounds like the Ukraine) is captured by the soldiers of a totalitarian and philistine "West". The General in command is at first unsure what to do with his unusual prisoners, and in the meantime makes them give him a concert. After hearing the *Pathétique Symphony*, he ignores the order he receives from High Command to shoot them and lets them go free; the story ends with his journey into a quasi-Siberian exile.

Unfortunately there is no more to the book than that. We are told nothing about the dreamlike "East" and "West" and little about the General (who might perhaps be acted by Yul Brynner) or the musicians (who might have come from Vienna). There is no characterisation and not much action, and the suggestions of psychological insight do not approach the standard set by Kafka. In such an abstract composition, references to Tchaikovsky and some European cities seem quite incongruous. And the idea of the humanising influence of music is really far too thin to sustain a whole novel (apart from being false—Hitler played Wagner to himself interminably without any noticeable curative effect).

Still more unfortunately, the author makes efforts to strengthen the novel that are thoroughly misguided. Sillitoe is a good writer, but here his inclination towards *fine* writing has led him straight into the trap of *over-writing*:

"Evert, all though (*sic*) this duorocketing, felt uneasily as if his words were subordinated harmonics of some higher meaning; but this higher meaning was so remote above the twin-reaching of each opposite soul that he had to be content with what form the proof of its existence took, to be satisfied that it was possible for him to simply perceive it at all."

I wouldn't have put it quite like that, but I know how Evert feels.

The General is disappointing because a good idea has not come off; what makes it doubly disappointing is that Sillitoe's previous books were so exciting. His magnificent first novel, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), which has something in common with *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and *Room at the Top*, was distinguished by being a genuine working-class story without being patronising or romantic, and by combining an authentic atmosphere with

**The General* (W. H. Allen, 13/6d.).

an unashamedly anarchist outlook.

Not that the anarchism of its boozing, wenching young hero is an academic philosophy—it is an instinctive class-conscious and bloody-minded reaction against governments and bosses and "the snot-gobbling gett that teks my income tax, the swivel-eyed swine that collects our rent, the big-headed bastard that gets my goat when he asks me to go to union meetings or sign a paper against what's happening in Kenya." Few of us escape the contempt and hatred of this brave spokesman for the alienated proletariat of our affluent society. And yet, "it's a good life and a good world, all said and done, if you don't weaken . . ."

The title story of *The Loneliness of the Long-distance Runner* (1959) more than fulfilled the promise Sillitoe had shown; it is indeed one of the finest English stories since the War, comparable with the best of H. E. Bates and Angus Wilson, with Salinger himself. If he had written nothing else, Sillitoe would have been remembered for these fifty pages. But it must be admitted that some of the other eight stories in the same volume were less impressive by a long way; and their defects are worryingly similar to those of *The General*.

If Sillitoe's work was written in the order it has been published, the best thing he could do would be to re-read his earlier books and begin a concentrated course in plain English from Swift and Defoe to Russell and Waugh. If on the other hand (as I suspect) his earlier work has been published later, after the growth of his reputation—if, that is, the failure of *The General* is actually due to immaturity rather than to development—then he should forget it and get on with the sort of stuff his first novel and his brilliant story suggest he is uniquely qualified to write. We haven't got so many angry and talented young writers that we can afford to lose one as gifted as he is. Already we have been disappointed by Amis, Wain, Osborne and Braine. Let us hope we will hear more about outsiders and outcasts from the horse's mouth, and will not have to plough through allegory to find remarks like "No army ever fought for anybody's freedom." Let us hope also that we will hear more about Sillitoe's own background; observers like Colin MacInnes and Clancy Sigal are all very well, but there is no substitute for the authenticity of experience. Above all, let us wish Alan Sillitoe good luck for having said in his books what we have often thought but have never expressed so well. We look forward to his fourth one. N.W.

CINEMA

A GENERATION

THIS is a difficult film to review honestly. Not only were the first two films of this trilogy to be seen over here undoubted masterpieces, but this one, the first in order of chronology, the last to be seen here, contains vividly composed scenes that stick in the mind and tend to make one gloss over the amateurish bungling in other parts of the film.

Vajda evokes superbly the bleak, sordid misery of Poland under the German occupation. The slow panoramic sweep of the cameras behind the credit titles sets a grim mood right at the beginning which is only dispelled half way through the pictures when the persistent dark photography becomes unbearably irritating and some fantastic clumsiness in the direction tends to make the film farcical.

Most reviewers, probably (and understandably) under the spell of "Kanal", and "Ashes and Diamonds", have tended to ignore this, or maybe they were the ones who left early, but it is just not good enough, at this period in cinema history, to have people falling over from rifle bullets that are fired after they fall. And how the love interest is hammered home, even to photographing the lead actors through a street photographer's cardboard heart, after a wedding to which they were accidental spectators.

The last half hour of the film is bad, not only because the noble talk of "helping our Jewish comrades in the Ghetto", tends to stick in the throat when one remembers the behaviour of the Russian army during the Warsaw Rising; but because the lunatic behaviour of the "Youth Resistance", and the even more improbable behaviour of the German infantry seem at times to turn the whole thing into a Laurel and Hardy farce.

Most of the characters are two dimensional. The communist resistance are noble, the nationalist resistance are nasty. The Germans hardly exist, except as vague uniformed figures in the background.

Those who do not want to make another Bergman out of Vajda, who do not want to turn his name into a symbol for adulation, will probably like this film as showing the budding of what we know has become a major talent. It is a collector's piece, in that it is interesting in the context of his later work. Shown on its own it would not excite much comment.

"Edward et Caroline", showing at the Academy with "A Generation", is a film that no one should have missed the first time. If anyone did, then see it now. A superb example of cinema, with no 'ifs' or 'buts'. J. M. PILGRIM.

Power of Finance

Continued from p. 1

to do without such hazardous and unhealthy industries as coal-mining should not be influenced by financial considerations. We have that know-how and the means to implement it in man-power and materials. These, and not finance, are the *real* considerations which matter. The fact that they do not, does not justify the "practical" approach, or condemn the anarchist approach as utopian. It simply underlines the anarchist criticism of the capitalist society; that it is based on values which either ignore, or run counter to, the needs and interests of the majority of humanity.

No miner in his senses would, offered a choice, choose to work underground, unless, of course, the alternative was even more grim, physically or financially than mining. That today, in the "affluent society", miners are demanding that alternative fuels such as oil should be taxed off the coal market, is surely a reflection on the *insecurity* that workers feel in spite of the welfare state and government protestations about full-employment. But then under a money system there can be no security for the simple reason that government policy is never determined by the needs of the community. In the last ten years the government's attitude to the miners has fluctuated between security, redundancy and now more security. There is no reason to suppose that in the next ten years official policy will not change more than once.

★

IN a society in which policy is determined by needs, all kinds of jobs will become redundant *etoo*, but with this difference: that whereas in the existing capitalist society redundancy means unemployment, a possible reduction in wages (and therefore, in standards of living), in a non-capitalist society the elimination of jobs will mean more leisure *without* a lowering of living standards. In other words the development of technology will aim at the elimination of dangerous and unhealthy occupations, and increased productivity with a consequent reduction in the hours of work needed to provide the basic necessities of life.

When the miners protest at the "very serious threat" to their industry represented by fuel oil (which means that they are prepared to go on burrowing in the bowels of the earth while millions of tons of oil burn to waste somewhere in a Middle East desert), their approach is defeatist, not militant. Oil and nuclear energy have made mining—though not the human being hitherto engaged in that industry—redundant. And the miners should be the first to welcome these fruits of technology and insist that they should be the first to benefit by them! Instead of which they look upon them as rival enterprises, seeking to push them onto the slag heap of unemployment.

Which of course they are *if* you accept the capitalist system as the one and only, *the* practical, realistic form of economic organisation in the "complex", "civilized" "technological" world in which we live today.

To our minds there is no evidence to prove that the capitalist system is either practical or efficient . . . except in perpetuating the society based on class, and privilege for a minority. The miners approach, as that of all organised labour, seeks security and status within the capitalist system. They apparently have still not realised that there can be no security so long as they continue to believe in the values of the capitalist system!

PEOPLE AND IDEAS

THE LIMITS OF CONTROL

THE data collected by Seymour Melman in his book *Decision-Making and Productivity* (discussed in the last two issues of FREEDOM) about the existence of two "decision-making" processes in the Standard Motor Company, can be interpreted in different ways according to your point of view. The advocate of industrial conciliation will see the successful reconciliation of the interests of workers and management resulting in high productivity and high wages; the advocate of industrial militancy will see the result of aggressive and vigorous bargaining by the workers' representatives; the advocate of workers' control will see the growth of a parallel system of decision-making by the workers as an "educational" exercise in the development of more radical demands by the workers.

Professor Melman's study ends in 1956, a crucial year in the history of the Standard factories, and he does not throw any light on what has happened there since then, though it is evident that things have been rather different since. In 1956 the management announced its intention of closing the tractor factory for the introduction of new machinery, while at the same time there was a sharp decline in the demand for motor-cars, because of the credit squeeze. The workers struck against the decision to discharge 3,500 men from the plant. (At that time it was making Ferguson tractors under contract; it has since been sold by the Standard Company to the Massey-Ferguson Company.)

"The explicit issue in this strike action was management's right to order redundancy, which meant the discharge of workers on grounds that there was no work for them to do. Underlying this explicit issue in the strike, there was a clash of policy lines among both the management and the workers . . . The management indicated that it had no alternative to ordering the discharge. The sharp fall in the car market, it held, made it too costly to transfer the tractor

workers to the car plant, thus placing all workers on a three-day week (or less). The workers' representatives, however, demanded short-time working as an alternative to any discharge; 'no redundancy' was their slogan.

"From 1954 to 1956 the issue of redundancy had already been discussed in many collective bargaining meetings. In 1955 when a contract for jet engines had terminated, the management arranged for the transfer of about 1,000 workers to the car and tractor plants. This was regarded by many as a victory over redundancy and they looked forward to further successes of the 'no redundancy' policy. The fact is that in this issue the management could agree to the worker transfer owing to the prosperous state of the car and tractor markets."

There had been earlier discussions on plans for incorporating agreements on "lay-off" procedures into the general contract but "this suggestion was never adopted by the majority of workers or shop stewards . . . They held that jobs must be protected at all costs, and that to make an agreement with the employer with regard to redundancy procedure meant the recognition of the employer's right to discharge." Melman goes on to say that this "no redundancy" policy was explicitly an attempt to place complete responsibility for continuity of employment upon the individual employer.

"However, this policy also permitted no negotiation with respect to ways of handling situations that were outside the control of any particular management. Proposals to negotiate on such matters as seniority rules for handling lay-offs or discharges were denounced as traitorous. Neither were there serious attempts to arrange for ways of guaranteed wages or job security through methods that could be initiated and implemented by unions (guaranteed wage agreements; insurance funds; detailed agreements on consultation prior to job changes, etc.) . . . At a crucial meeting between the management and worker representatives, the decision of the management to discharge about 3,500 workers was set forth.

At the same time, the management asked the worker representatives what recommendations they had for carrying out the discharge action. In reply, the worker representatives said that the matter of redundancy was management's responsibility. The management proceeded to carry out the redundancy action. About 3,500 workers were designated as redundant and were paid £15 severance pay when they were discharged."

He then criticises the workers' attitude on the following grounds:

"From the standpoint of maintaining or extending a worker decision process, this move was highly destructive, for it relinquished rights to decision making over hiring and discharge. By the shop stewards' act of relinquishing these decision rights, the workers' decision system was 'sold' in favour of the requirements of Communist-inspired competition for managerial control. This was the effect on the workers' decision system, independently of the varied explicit political allegiances of these men.

"The discharge action caused hardship and inequalities such as the discharge of workers soon to be eligible for pensions. Such effects, as well as the stimulation of destructive competitiveness among the workers, could have been easily avoided in the presence of agreements which used seniority and similar criteria for discharge decisions."

★

BUT his comments fail to tell the whole story. The use of the Communist bogey ignores the fact that many quite orthodox Labour Party supporters and M.P.'s were calling for nationalisation of the industry or part of it, and even wider circles were demanding a national policy for the industry. Secondly, whether or not it was feasible to absorb the redundant employees in the motor factory, it is certain that they were deliberately kept in the dark about future employment prospects in the tractor factory (even *The Economist* criticised Standards for their hush-hush policy on

Reforms and Emancipation

Continued from p. 2

tion, with its compulsory indoctrination and caricature of education come to an end? The army is no longer segregated, but when will the government abolish conscription? Negroes have access to jobs from which they were excluded, but when will our industries pass from the hands of corporations to the hands of the workers?

One could go on asking these questions, which to ask is to answer. These are the type of change which cannot be the subject of reform, only of revolution, and the fate of this revolution is decided in our handling of every problem today. To put it sharply: Negroes are not, by the present "race revolution", becoming human, they are merely becoming Americans like the rest of us, and for them to rise to humanity it is necessary for all of us to rise to humanity, beginning now.

The central equation of the anarchist idea of integral emancipation is this: power expressed in government, corporations, bureaucracy, tends to isolate the individual, to render him powerless and deprive him of the opportunity for growth, while the magnification of the collectivity and the depletion of the individual are expressed in imperialism and wars. To the complex of power and social atomization and war, we see as the only alternative the development among individuals of habits of freedom and sociality, and the ultimate expression of these in a free society.

The tendency of present-day liberal and so-called radical thinking is to abandon all hope for such a way of life, and to pray that the State and the social institutions founded upon its model can be domesticated and harnessed. Extrapolated to its ideal, this is man-protected and not man-alive; extrapolated in its present tendencies, it is man-soldier.

Since reform movements are generally dominated by State-hopeful persons, the criticisms of anarchists often make us appear to be enemies of *all* reform: we are enemies of reform which strengthens the State, of *methods* of reform which strengthen the State, and advocates of methods which will give habits of sociality and freedom a rooting in our society.

Now, such liberating, libertarian methods are available.

It may appear extreme to see evil in the use of government to secure racial reform. Let us specify the evil. The characteristic of all governmental action

against racism is to employ the threat of punishment against individuals, corporations, etc., who "discriminate", segregate and the like. In addition to its role in individual's cases, the government appears as *total* defender of "civil rights", as placing its prestige against racial persecution. In short, the persecution yields because of the habit of docility to government. (To be more exact: the interest in continuing the patterns of persecution has lessened enough for the habit of docility to be effective: as the Supreme Court decision on the schools wouldn't have been taken seriously in the South 20 years ago). Similarly, the methods by which governmental intervention is petitioned—lobbying, offers of votes, appeals to police and courts—have the effect of re-inforcing trust in the ultimate righteousness of government, and often of committing oneself to support it. (This was true even of the militant campaign for draft-refusal against Jim Crow in 1948, as well as of the polite campaign that had preceded it: it implied a willingness to support army and government if the demand was granted, and must have had the effect of popularizing the reformed army).

We do not insist that the "re-inforcement" provided by this type of reform is fatal: we are happier to see people engage in almost any effective action, on an issue like this, than do nothing. But the point is that a choice exists, and by contrast to what could be done in a liberating way, the legalistic choices are lamentable.

The alternative course of action—that is both reforming and liberating—consists of methods like civil disobedience, defiance of laws, initiation of raceless institutions, parallel to Jim Crow, boycott of all-white and all-black institutions and organizations; picketing, boycott and strikes to force equality in employment (which certain unions have conspicuously done); defence of the individual's right to hold and exercise his "prejudices" when they are not harmful to others.

To put it in a more general way: to choose those actions which (1) create patterns of social living in which race is ignored; (2) change people's perception of each other and lead them to produce solutions; (3) resist persecution with the *fait accompli* of free acts; (4) coerce monopolies (corporate employers, etc.) to allow free access.

These are methods, within everyone's reach, of attacking racism now. They are, in this one area, to the extent that they are employed, the libertarian current in American society, so far as there is one. There was an old way of thinking among radicals, which regarded every reform won as a step towards the future emancipation. There have been enough reforms won for us to know better now. What matters is *how* they are won—the habits of freedom and sociality which people acquire in the course of these immediate struggles, or the habits of docility re-inforced. Even in the case of caste persecution—a reform in itself far more liberating than most—the choice of methods is relevant and critical.

These are methods by which the small number of anarchists and unconscious anarchists make their contribution to the movement against racism, the main bearers of which naturally follow methods appropriate to their vision—or lack of vision—of society. In the future, vastly extended, they are the methods by which evolution-by-free-action can be completed in social revolution.

DAVID WIECK.

FREEDOM PRESS

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 - Vol. 2, 1952, *Postscript to Posterity*
 - Vol. 3, 1953, *Colonialism on Trial*
 - Vol. 4, 1954, *Living on a Volcano*
 - Vol. 5, 1955, *The Immoral Moralists* Waters
 - Vol. 6, 1956, *Oil and Troubled*
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More about Rationalism

IN commenting on my article "Anarchism and the Flat Earth Mentality", a correspondent to FREEDOM asks, "What greater irrationality can there be than to pronounce judgment on topics not studied?"

I will tell him. It is to assume that someone is ignorant of the topics on which he writes, because it suits one's book to make such an assumption.

I really feel that I owe an explanation, if not an apology, to the great majority of the readers of FREEDOM, and to its long-suffering Editors, for boring them by stirring up the bees from bonnets and bats from belfries which have hummed and flapped around the paper in the form of letters to the Editors in the last few weeks. It may well be that many people are saying "We take FREEDOM as an intelligent paper about Anarchism—not as a manual to the psychopathology of wierdies". Worse, I may be accused of discouraging newcomers to the movement by stirring up this buzz, and thereby leading them to suppose that Anarchism is nothing but a great big joke. By publishing an honest article about David Pratt, the Editors of this paper were accused of contributing to the old stereotype of the anarchist as a dotty bombthrower, and now I am open to the charge of contributing to the stereotype of the anarchist as an astrologer-cum-flying-sorcerer. I note that now someone is going to speak from an anarchist platform on "Why I believe in the Flat-Earth Theorists." This profession of faith will no doubt produce a belly-laugh from many a casual FREEDOM reader.

But really my article had a quite different intention. It was directed mainly to convinced and serious anarchists and posed a question of very serious import:

"Is anarchism just an irrational dynamic belief which anarchists hold because of the emotional need for such a belief?"

To judge from what response there has

been to the article (and I gather from P.H. that all have not been printed!) the answer would seem to be an unequivocal Yes! But I hope that this superficial verdict will not be made. Let us remember Pinderello's profound thesis that by seeing a man in his sillier, nastier and more shameful actions only, you do not see the whole man. Let us apply this to the anarchist movement as a whole, both now and historically. Such gossip writers as E. H. Carr will always pick upon the more ludicrous aspects of the anarchist movement and present them to the world with the implication that this is anarchism for you! But there is a great deal more to anarchism than that. Those who are not deterred by the more ludicrous fantasies which are aired from time to time in anarchist papers and at anarchist meetings, can see the hard kernel of rationalism in anarchism. And as rationalists, anarchists are more atheist than agnostic.

The Unicorn in the Garden

The atheist declares "There is no God"; the agnostic declares "I don't know whether there is or is not a God." Whereas the atheist expresses an opinion, the agnostic expresses a muddled mind. A great number of people will prefer to call themselves agnostics, because they fear the aggression of the deists who declare "Of course there is a God! No right-minded man has ever questioned it! Only a dogmatic, old-fashioned, stiff-necked fool of an atheist would presume to question such a thing—and surely you are not one of those?" So one avoids trouble by calling oneself an agnostic, trouble both from deists and from the difficulties of thinking things out in one's own mind.

The agnostics are those who, although they would not go so far as to say that the Earth is flat, or that astrologers were always right, or that Wilhelm Reich could always control hurricanes, or that Christ really did walk on the water—aver that there is probably a great deal of truth in it all and that they are not

prepared to be dogmatic and disbelieving. The atheists on the other hand are prepared to come right out in the open and express frank and utter disbelief in what they hold to be baloney.

Let us consider what is meant by the simple statement "There is no God". Some people, in order to explain the phenomena of the universe have created a hypothetical construct called "God". All the atheist is saying is that such a hypothetical construct is unnecessary in light of the evidence. The phenomena are more efficiently explained in terms of alternative hypothetical constructs. Why more efficiently! Because in terms of these alternative constructs we can predict and control phenomena in a way which cannot be done if we simply rely on the hypothetical construct of "God". The atheist is therefore justified in saying "There is no God"; the statement may otherwise be expressed as "The God hypothesis is unnecessary."

Let me take a simple example to illustrate this point. Suppose a man has a garden, and he notices that the flowers are frequently chewed off in the early morning when no-one is around. This man tells his friends that he has come to the conclusion that a Unicorn walks in his garden at dawn and eats the flowers. While his atheistic friends will tell him that such an explanation is surely untrue because it is wholly unnecessary to explain the observed facts thus, perhaps his agnostic friends might admit that it may be true, for a flower-eating unicorn would certainly explain the whole business, and who are they to be dogmatic and disbelieving?

The Task of Further Enquiry

What devolves on the atheist and the anarchist, is the immensely harder task of explaining the existence of the alternative hypothesis which we deny. It is one thing to bring forward the evidence that the Earth is not flat but roughly spherical, but quite another to explain the existence of Flat-Earthers in con-

temporary society. For a Flat-Earther is not just someone who has never come across all the abundant evidence that convinces most people that the Earth is round; he is someone who has very special reasons for clinging to his belief. Thus Frazer in his *Golden Bough* did little more than catalogue all the many ways in which mankind have ascribed natural phenomena to the agency of gods and demons; but Freud in his *The Future of an Illusion* tackled the task of trying to investigate why men elaborated and clung to illusions which were at variance with their capacity for rational thought. Freud's effort was by no means complete, but it was a step in the right direction.

To some extent modern anarchism has advanced beyond the stage of simply denying the truth of our opponents' statements and giving over-simplified interpretations of socio-political phenomena (e.g. that Capitalists are just "greedy"). It is necessary to explore why people cling to the beliefs they do, because we find in practice that publishing evidence contrary to these beliefs does not rob the belief of its power. I have proposed that anarchists should consider quite seriously the degree to which their own beliefs, their anarchism in fact, is part of a system more rewarding to the emotions than the intellect. I find that the fundamental postulates of anarchism are rational, and that the majority of writers in FREEDOM are developing a rational body of theory. They are good "atheists" in that they do not tolerate unnecessary hypothetical dishonest "agnosticism". They are prepared to come out in the open and declare that they disbelieve in the existence of the Unicorn in the Garden, even if such disbelief lays them open to the charge of "authoritarianism". Because we have, in fact, reached a stage of knowledge where we can largely distinguish between myth and fact, the rejection of Unicorns is what is commonly known as horse-sense, a term which puzzled some readers a little while ago.

I am aware that to press for a consideration of the dynamics of belief causes emotional distress to certain people. One writer to FREEDOM refers to his own set of beliefs as his "crutches" (a truly apt simile), and he inveighs against the attempt to rob people of their crutches. Such a line of reasoning has always been used against the whole movement to replace superstition by reason. Yet I do not think it is cruel to rob people of their crutches when they have a perfectly good pair of legs which may atrophy from disuse. Religion, nationalism, and the whole gamut of baloney which I wrote about in my previous article, are all the sort of crutches which keep people as cripples. If they were happy cripples one might have some compunction in forthrightly atheism and anarchism, but we see how their crutches make them the victims and the agents of misery.

Yes, I am familiar with Ibsen's *Wild*

LETTER

Welfare State

I didn't think Sid Parker would miss my approval of Kenneth Alexander's assertion that "the welfare services are an outstanding example of working-class values being imposed within and against capitalism"; nor did I doubt he would take the Marxist view that these services are simply palliatives designed to save capitalism from an otherwise revolutionary proletariat. I notice, however, that the remarks he quotes refer to the Beveridge Report (and in particular to attempts made to sell that Report to the Coalition Government) and not to the legislation of the 1945 Labour Government (legislation that was bitterly opposed by every Conservative and nearly every Liberal in the country).

It is true that state socialism has turned out to be more statist than socialist. It is also true that the welfare state has been accepted after the event by most Conservatives, just as the 1832 Reform Bill was, because they have been able to stop it getting too dangerous. But however disappointing its practical effect, I still think that the theoretical idea of social welfare (as of political equality) is quite alien to capitalism; and however much it is tamed by bureaucrats, I think it will remain a standing threat to those capitalists who realise what it means. It is hardly coincidental that the strongest opponents of capitalism in England are also the strongest advocates of extended welfare services. A state whose citizens are truly "members of one another" would still be authoritarian, no doubt, but it would no longer be capitalist.

H.W.H.

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Duck, and agree that revolutionary iconoclasm should be tempered with decent restraint on the personal level. I would not pain a Catholic mother by rudely telling her what I thought of her Church as she was taking her baby to baptism. Nor would I brusquely enlighten some deluded old dear who felt that her rheumatism was benefiting from a faith healer, Reichian or otherwise. But FREEDOM is another matter, and anyone who reads it must be prepared to feel his crutches creak. I am sure that the great majority of the readers of this paper are perfectly ready to stand on their own feet, and not to look around for the different merits of alternative pairs of crutches. G.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP and MALATESTA DEBATING SOCIETY

IMPORTANT

MEETINGS are now held at
CAMBRIDGE CIRCUS
"The Marquis of Granby" Public House,
London, W.C.2.
(corner Charing Cross Road and
Shaftesbury Avenue)
at 7.30 p.m.
ALL WELCOME

JULY 3.—Jeremy Westall on
BEATS, BLUES AND BLACKS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

IMPORTANT

MEETINGS WILL BE HELD
in basement, 5, Caledonian Road, N.1.
(near King's Cross Station)
during repairs at "Marquis of Granby"
in July.

London Anarchist Group AN EXPERIMENT IN OFF-CENTRE DISCUSSION MEETINGS

1st Thursday of each month at 8 p.m.
At Jack and Mary Stevenson's,
6 Stainton Road, Enfield, Middx.

Last Wednesday of each month at
8 p.m.
At Dorothy Barasi's,
45 Twyford Avenue, Fortis Green, N.2.

1st Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.
At Colin Ward's,
33 Ellerby Street, Fulham, S.W.6.

2nd Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m.
(International Libertarian Group)
At David Bell's,
39 Bernard Street, W.C.1.
(Local Readers Welcome)

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP SUMMER SCHOOL AND CAMP

SATURDAY, JULY 30th to
MONDAY, AUGUST 1st at
Alan Albon's, Little Marshfoot Farm,
Hailsham, Sussex.

The main theme this year will be
"Youth and Anarchism in the Present
Day", speakers will include Geoffrey
Ostergaard and Tony Gibson. Lectures
4 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. Sunday and
11 a.m. Monday.

Inclusive cost 35/-.
Children (welcomed) pro rata.

Please state whether you have your
own tent as accommodation is strictly
limited. Those staying for a week will
be expected to cater for themselves after
the School.

CLOSING DATE: Booking must reach M.
Stevenson, c/o 27 Red Lion Street,
W.C.1, by July 15th.

Details of Transport, etc., will be supplied on booking.

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'Freedom' Readership Survey

More Criticisms and Suggestions

"More time and space should be devoted to anarchist solutions to present-day problems."

"Nearly all that I read in FREEDOM seems obvious sense, but what the hell can one do?"

"More exposition of anarchist rationales. Means of implementing libertarian goals."

"FREEDOM could go into more detail on the social and financial obstacles to setting up libertarian communities. Direct interest and sponsorship (financial or moral) or some scheme for a soundly based anarchist settlement would, I suggest, give an added direction to the paper."

"I agree that we should be more concerned with 'society here and now' than in a nebulous future."

TOO CRITICAL?

"Stop scraping the bottom of the barrel in order to find trivialities to grumble about. It only weakens the anarchist case and makes the movement a laughing-stock among people who might otherwise give support."

"Some comment and criticism is unfair and just silly—but these are a minority."

"Sometimes too unsophisticated—libertarian ideas are by no means confined to anarchists."

"I think at times you over-criticise and overlook the good points."

"For every criticism try to have a constructive answer."

"Be less provincial."

"Many of the people who are slated often have an important contribution to make."

"My usual criticism of anarchist journals: they have complete freedom except freedom to allow belief in any form of religion. This negation makes nonsense of a lot of anarchist teaching."

"Publication loaded with tedious criticism."

"Criticisms in FREEDOM are often destructive and not constructive."

"Offer a more constructive attitude towards current events."

"A little more charity might help, and a more coherent editorial policy (but these may both be impossible!)"

"Try to understand the other person's point of view."

"The paper needs more constructive

criticism from its contributors. I find FREEDOM refreshing on the whole but occasionally revolt against the lack of constructive and positive opinion."

"To self-righteous."

"FREEDOM seems quite unprepared to give credit to those who seem to move some way in the right direction."

"Give plenty of space to other movements' best points, who are going some of the way to freedom."

"A less negative attitude to reformism. Less deification of human nature."

"It is lacking in positiveness rather than clear policy (which implies restriction to one type of anarchism). Its failure to deal in a realistic way with the problems of industrial society (one would hardly know we lived in one from most issues) is a major aspect of this lack of positiveness."

CRITICISMS OF ANARCHISM

"I read FREEDOM for its anti-authoritarianism and general attacking of political crookedness. I am not much attracted by anarchist political theory. I think the general level of articles very high."

"Anarchism represents for me the way in which man should behave socially if he were a more intelligent social being. As he is not, I do not believe anarchism will ever triumph. I read FREEDOM because it reflects my ideals, however unattainable."

"How can you run a world of two billion people or more on anarchist principles? Maybe it can be done, but it seems impossible."

"Answers, please, to the awkward questions which objectors raise: What would happen to the government? To the various Ministries? To the police?"

"Certainly anarchism gave me some foundation for belief after my disillusionment with communism. Yet I still consider the doctrine idealistic in concept. I find it impossible to believe in a permanent social paradise, although I agree with Spencer that progress is a 'beneficent necessity'. A belief in philosophic anarchism simply means that I can disassociate myself from political parties in which I have no faith."

"You're not doing so bad. I read FREEDOM and help to keep it alive not because it is specifically an anarchist paper, but because I know that, nomen-

clature apart, you and I and most other readers have a great deal in common."

"I regard anarchism as quite 'hopeless' in the present, but it's a nice ideal and FREEDOM is a bright paper."

"I might say that I hardly ever disagree with FREEDOM though my orientation is marxist-humanist and I see no practical organisational manifestation of your ideas. Count me in."

"An ideal is impossible: anarchy is an ideal. But only impossible things are worth attempting: until the ideal is realised it must remain as a 'measure' of truth. This is the job of FREEDOM."

"Should have more on constructive theories as to how anarchy can be achieved. Anarchy cannot be achieved overnight by suddenly abolishing all law and blowing up all police stations. Some definite political steps must be taken to evolve society towards it. Read Lenin."

"Cannot answer opponents re running of country (or world) without governments."

LETTER

First Reactions

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

A copy of FREEDOM has just come into my hands, and I am so intrigued by the irrational arguments for "rationality"—particularly the one over the initial "G"—that I cannot resist subscribing for six months.

The argument for the abortive nature of organisation to-day and the need for greater personal responsibility is absolutely valid. But to decry beliefs while arguing from the point of view of another belief is neither logical nor fair. And to deny the unknown simply because it is outside the experience of the individual concerned is certainly not rational. If "G" had lived five thousand years ago it would have been quite "rational" for him to believe that eating the meat of a lion would make him strong and fierce in battle.

Anyway, the fact that you are all cranks, is inspiring. Because it is the cranks of to-day that build the society of tomorrow.

Good luck!

Notts, June 3.

H.W.H.