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# Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Ill fares the land, to hasten-  
ing ills a prey,

Where wealth accumulates,  
and men decay."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

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Threepence

## There is no Freedom without Responsibility! This Demands Knowledge of True Facts RAISE THE PRESS CURTAIN!

IN the last issue of *Freedom* we discussed the realities of the world situation underlying the superficial news of the day—Attlee's talks with Truman. But if we dwell on the subject of the coming war it is not from predilection. Anarchists are internationalists and see mankind as a whole; for us the intricate struggles carried on under banners of delusion can only be immensely tragic; the more so because we know that they are futile, achieving no valuable end. It may be said that we are a mere handful, that our paper is without perceptible influence, that our views can have no possible effect upon the course of events. Doubtless all this is true, and doubtless, from a "practical" standpoint, our continual preoccupation with, and discussion of, these questions is merely academic, a pointless exercise. An exercise moreover which lacerates our feelings. Nevertheless, these matters must be discussed.

The history of wars and misery shows that men are very far from controlling their destinies. Anarchists look to an era when we shall not only turn natural forces to our use and benefit, but shall also know how to control those much more important social and economic currents which now overwhelm our lives. Freedom demands that everyone make his own decisions and be responsible for them; hence it also requires that those decisions are based upon knowledge, unclouded by prejudice or by deliberate distortion of truth.

### The Press Curtain

To all appearances the function of the press is to distribute news, to give us knowledge of the world we live in. In fact, it achieves the exact opposite—it presents a picture instead of the reality, and a picture, moreover, which is often entirely false. It is a commonplace nowadays for events in which many of us took part or experienced to be seen later in the light of subsequent historical research. The judgments which were made in view of newspaper presentations of events are then seen to be absolutely superficial. Nor is it difficult to see that the

distortions of the press served certain purposes; but they are not our purposes, and they do not serve any ends conducive to the good of mankind as a whole.

The Munich crisis of 1938 serves as a case in point, and is recent enough for most of us to remember. There can be no doubt that the great majority of those who thought about it at all were sympathetic to the interests of the Czechs rather than to the claims of Nazi imperialism, and the press paid due deference to such an opinion. The publication of documents of this time however now show that the

British government were absolutely hostile to any show of independence on the part of the Czechs, and their attitude makes perfectly clear the inevitability of the subsequent total annexation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler six months later. Yet this *coup d'état* seemed absolutely sudden and unexpected at the time. In short, the newspapers had succeeded in putting up an effective smoke screen behind which the discreditable scheming of politicians could be successfully carried on.

The same considerations apply to current news. It seems certain that we shall not know until present events become "history" just what was the sequence of events which led up to the Korean war. But "history" consists in the making generally available to scholars, documents and reports which were in the hands of governments at the time of the historical scene. In short, we shall know then what they know now. Can we doubt, in the light of past revelations of history, that our opinions will then be very different from those fostered by the newspapers today?

It may be said that these strictures only apply to the gutter press. But the sickness in our news service is much deeper seated, because it is ingrained in the philosophy of government, of those who make decisions and those who obey. It is not difficult to see that the rôle of the press is to make this obedience seem to be exacted voluntarily; sometimes it goes so far as to make pre-arranged government decisions seem actually to arise from a graceful acceding to "popular opinion".

Before ever we receive the news, it has been selected—"edited" as we say, and the term has the suggestion of distortion in it. It used to be actually a boast of the *Times*, the most celebrated newspaper in the world, that its foreign corres-

pondents were not much less responsible and influential than officials of the foreign office itself. The publication of news was for them subject to the needs of policy as a matter of journalistic responsibility; it had to be presented in a way which would not embarrass the intricate manoeuvres of diplomacy. Such a "responsible" attitude was the boast of the *Times*, and it reflects at the highest level the philosophy of the press. They are not concerned to present to us the facts, the truth, so that we can reach responsible decisions; they are only concerned to make easier the decisions of the government. It is indeed a commonplace that

the press "moulds" public opinion, and at press conferences politicians admonish the assembled journalists to remember their responsibilities in this matter. From such a point of view there are many occasions when it is "inexpedient", "not in the national interest", etc., etc., to reveal—the truth.

Now we have reached an age when we think it wrong to tell lies to children. The fairy tales about the "facts of life" with which the Victorians thought it right ("responsible", "expedient") to distort their children's view of reality now seem to us outrageous. Even official educational policy to-day deems

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### ITALIAN ANARCHIST CONGRESS REAFFIRMS

## Anti-War Stand

ONE of the most important results, to our mind, of the Italian Anarchist Congress held in Ancona on December 8th—10th was the anti-war manifesto which was approved by the many local Federations and individual comrades from all parts of the country who took part in the preliminary discussions. The manifesto has been printed as a poster on the back page of *Umanità Nova* and will undoubtedly be read by many thousands of workers throughout Italy.

The position taken up by our comrades is the classical anarchist one of opposition to both sides. And they rightly point out that only from such a standpoint can one speak the truth to the people. "There is no hope of any good" resulting from "a war of armies or of a resistance movement directed by the Military High Command" declares the manifesto. "Future wars will be destructive of persons and things, and will poison the spirit of people to such an extent as to create profound horror just at the thought of it. . . . War will intensify all problems without solving any." In bolder type the Italian

anarchists declare "Let every worker take for himself decisions which he considers most suitable for preserving the people's future." In other words, what our comrades feel is that the responsibility in the coming war is an individual one. We may not feel able to influence the mad rush to war, but that is no reason for each individual not taking up his stand for what he considers right, at whatever cost. This affirmation of the dignity of the individual is the only position for that minority throughout the world to-day which refuses to be made a tool of either of the rival imperialisms. It is not a counsel of despair, a hopeless gesture or an unrealistic position. To our mind, only by starting from individual responsibility can we hope to ever build a world which will not be periodically plunged into self-destruction at the behest of a handful of men, representatives of systems which will always lead to disaster.

Our Italian comrades' manifesto will be, we hope, only the first of a growing conscious opposition to war by free men throughout the world.

(More Foreign Commentary on p. 3)

## Singapore Riots

THE riots in Singapore occasioned by the Court decision in the case of Bertha Hertogh are an indication of the intense hatred towards the foreign population felt by the Malays, and they are likely to be a grim foretaste of the future. For the resentment against the Europeans and Chinese will not be abated by the new regulations of the Malayan Government, which include collective fining of villages; nor will the British authorities be willing to accept the situation and withdraw, as they have had to in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. For Malaya and Singapore are of great strategic importance in the undeclared war, and, as the *Manchester Guardian* emphasises, "it is Malaya's dollar earnings which keep the sterling area afloat."

As a result of the Colombo Six-Year Plan, £44 million is to be spent in Malaya and a further £53 million in Singapore, of which two-thirds are to be invested in social services, especially in education, health and housing. But the days of paternal imperialism are over and the politically conscious Malays will not see this belated expenditure as anything but an insurance against Communism. Nor will they regard their fellow-countrymen engaged in administering it as anything but British "stooges". Under such slogans as "We don't want British social services—we want Freedom," they will fight for the illusory "freedom" of national self-determination, with the usual destruction, misery for non-participants, and the loss of life. There could be an alternative to the British authorities, the Malayan nationalists and the Communists, and the violence to which they are all committed, but there are no signs of its emergence.

THE Court case which acted as a spark to set off the present rioting in Singapore is yet another of the distressing examples of the way in which the rights of children are sacrificed to the possessiveness of parents. Bertha Hertogh was separated from her mother in 1942 during the Japanese invasion, was brought up as a Malay and a Moslem by her nurse, and was recently married at the age of thirteen to a Malay school-teacher. The Singapore High Court ruled that she could stay with her Malayan foster-mother. But as a result of her parents' suit for her possession, the Supreme Court has decided that she must return to Holland with them. Although she claims to be a Moslem, she was taken to a Catholic convent and then returned to her parents. The girl has made her own preferences quite clear. "I know you are my mother, but I have not seen you since I was six years old. If you are a real mother why do you drag me through the courts? Maybe next year I shall go to Holland—with my husband." (Illustrated, 16/12/50)

We can recall three widely-publicised cases in recent months alone of the kidnapping of children by one parent from another (there was one example a short while ago, when the wrong child was taken). In another case where the possession of a child was involved, a man spent almost two years in prison for failing to surrender his child who was in the care of his Catholic mother, to his Protestant wife.

One is continually amazed by the apparent callousness of the parents to the damage their wrangling must do to the emotional stability of their children and the lengths to which their possessiveness, or their national or religious prejudices will take them; while the indefinite imprisonment by the State of an unwilling parent reaches a new level of absurdity.

## Railmen's Claims for Arbitration

WITH sections of the workers' unions rejecting the Railway Executive's offers, and the Executive refusing to budge, the Minister of Labour has now agreed to arbitration.

We mentioned last issue how discontent is growing among railway workers on various issues, and the real trouble from the workers' point of view is that their forces are divided.

There are three unions which represent different classes of railway workers: the N.U.R., largest, industrially-organised; the A.S.L.E.F., footplate men; and the Clerks' Association. These are all asking for increases—but all on different scales! Obviously confusion can be created, solidarity rendered unlikely and one organisation played off against another in these circumstances.

Let's have one organisation for railway workers of all trades, porters, clerks, train teams, technicians, maintenance men—all of them, united because they keep the railways going; let it be an industrial union, a syndicate. Then we could expect some practical action.

### RAILMEN'S IDEAS SOUGHT FOR IMPROVING THE SERVICE

THE "Suggestion Box" idea has reached the railways. And, through using a slightly different arrangement from the usual one, the Rail Board are going to kill two birds with one stone.

Chief regional officer of the London Midland Region, Mr. John Elliot, called a meeting of railmen in London the other day to discuss ways and means of improving the service. Two hundred and fifty workers turned up, and since, as we have always maintained, the men who do the work are likely to have the best ideas on how it should be done, many suggestions were put forward. Any of these, if adopted, may earn the proposer up to £50, and they included proposals for relieving the congestion of parcels at Euston Station and for giving passengers quicker information about fares.

So far, so good. What's called "a step in the right direction". But note that these suggestions from the workers have to be O.K.'d from the top before being put into practice—and if they are not acceptable to the top, they won't be put into practice, no matter how good the

workers think they are.

But the other function of the meeting was betrayed in a remark of Elliot's afterwards. He said, "The men were shrewd and able to get a lot off their chests." In other words, it was a very useful safety valve for the men to relieve some of the frustration which bureaucratic control creates. It gives an illusion of a measure of responsibility which in fact does not exist, for the men's ideas are sold to the management, just as their labour is sold week after week, and all the decisions that matter are made by the management and by the management alone.

If it is possible for the regional boss to call a meeting of 250 railmen, it's possible for the railmen to call meetings themselves, there to make the decisions which affect their working conditions. The syndicalist way is for this to happen as often as necessary so that all the workers are in control all the time. If any function needs the full-time attention of any worker, let him be paid the same as at his productive job, no more, so that he has no financial incentive to make work for himself as an organiser.

When the workers are controlling their own industries, their limitless fund of common sense and ideas will truly be at the service of the community—but not while they are sieved by officials.



# The Utopian Mentality

JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA, by Marie Louise Berneri. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 16s.)\*

It is not necessary, in *Freedom*, to write a conventional review of this book. But even our readers, once so familiar with the journalism of Marie Louise, may allow themselves to be a little dazzled by the brilliance of this posthumous work—it is so calm and coherent, so well organised and well written, and so disinterestedly readable. Though not specifically libertarian in its subject-matter, it is a great contribution to the growing body of sociological literature written by libertarian authors—literature that is very necessary as a definition of the libertarian concept of reality. Anarchists in the past have been too inclined to confine their writings to anarchism. What we require, now that anarchist principles have been adequately defined, is a general orientation towards the sociology of knowledge. Kropotkin was very conscious of this need, and *Mutual Aid and Ethics* were his own contribution to it—books which belong to the general categories of science and philosophy, rather than specifically to anarchist propaganda.

Marie Louise's book is of this kind. She makes no attempt to disguise her sympathies, but she writes dispassionately and is as fair to Plato as to Winston, to Bellamy as to Morris. Her scope is universal—she begins with Plato and ends with Orwell (unfortunately she did not live to include 1984 in her survey, for that, for the present is the last of the utopias). It is true that by extending the scope of her definitions she might have included many marginal works, from the Hebrew prophets to Giraudoux (whose *Suzanne and the Pacific* is a very agreeable utopia). But she has kept to a strictly political conception of the term, and that limitation gives her book its logical unity.

Utopia is the principal of all progress, said Anatole France; Oscar Wilde said the same thing ("progress is the realisation of utopias"). With Utopias, said Kautsky, modern socialism begins. And so on—all recent political philosophies have been aware of the significance of the utopianising faculty. The greatest of modern sociologists, Karl Mannheim, devoted a whole book to a discussion of this signi-

ficance (*Ideology and Utopia*), and it is a book which can be usefully read in conjunction with Marie Louise's historical survey. Mannheim defined the utopian state of mind as one "that is incongruous with the state of reality in which it occurs", and he pointed out that this state of mind becomes revolutionary and dangerous to the existing order of society as soon as the utopia ceases to be part of the cosmic ideology of a period. For example, so long as the utopian wish is satisfied by a belief in an other-worldly paradise, it is not likely to take the form of an idea that is politically realisable. The serious "utopias" therefore belong either to the classical period (Plato) or to the humanistic period (More onwards, with increasing political significance). The really dangerous people were those Christians (Hussites and Anabaptists) who had the temerity to suggest that the kingdom of Heaven could be and should be realised here on earth. Such utopians have always been treated as criminals.

Utopianism is for this reason closely linked with the history of the freedom of thought. But, as Marie Louise makes clear, it by no means follows that all utopians are libertarians. On the contrary, left to itself to imagine an ideal state of existence, the human mind betrays a distressing tendency towards authoritarianism. One sees here the dangers of rationality. There exists in the human mind an itch for tidiness, for symmetry and formality. This leads to good results in purely mental categories, and to it we owe the achievements of logic and science. But life itself is not tidy and cannot be made tidy so long as it is life—"we murder to dissect," as Wordsworth said. Most utopians have forgotten this distinction, and as a result their ideal commonwealths can never be, or ought never to become, real. I have a suspicion that Plato realised this, for his *Republic* is based on an ideal human type (the Guardian) about as remote from actuality as Nietzsche's Superman. The *Republic* is a fairy-tale full of beautiful fancies, and intended to teach a moral (that morality and beauty are identical), but it is only in his later Utopia, *The Laws*, that Plato begins to plan society with realism—and in that sense in his old-age he was reconciled, as Marie Louise says, to the idea of "a second-best state". But the totalitarianism is still there, as it is in most of the utopias of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. For totalitarianism is precisely the imposition of a rational framework on the organic freedom of life. It is only in those writers who retain a sense of organic freedom—Rabelais, Diderot and Morris—that the utopia is in any sense libertarian. It is no strange coincidence that these are the only inspiring utopias. As we approach the era of socialism utopias, indeed, become increasingly depressing.

"There are few utopias of the nineteenth century," writes Marie Louise, "which can be read to-day without a feeling of utter boredom, unless they succeed in amusing us by the obvious conceit of their authors in thinking themselves the saviours of mankind. The utopias of the Renaissance contained many unattractive features yet they had a breadth of vision which commanded respect; those of the seventeenth century presented many extravagant ideas, yet they revealed searching, dissatisfied minds with which one sympathises; but though we are in many ways familiar with the thought of the

utopias of the nineteenth century, they are nevertheless more foreign to us than those of a more distant past. In spite of the fact that these utopian writers were no doubt inspired by the highest motives, one cannot help feeling bitter about the nineteenth century, like the old man in *News from Nowhere*, bitter even about the love these utopian writers lavished on humanity, for they seem like so many over-affectionate and over-anxious mothers who would kill their sons with attention and kindness rather than let them enjoy one moment of freedom."

It is well said. The most terrible utopias are the scientific utopias of the marxist socialist and the monopoly capitalist. With the same rational instruments of thought that have perfected science and technology, they now advance on the spontaneous sources of life itself. They presume to plan what can only germinate, to legislate for the forms of growth and to mould into infrangible dogmas the sensitive graces of the mind. They are doomed to failure, for the threatened sources of life are always driven underground, to emerge in some new wilderness. But the process is long and painful, and mankind must suffer in terms of war and tyranny for the satisfaction of a spurious logic.

The realisation of a rational utopia leads to the death of society (that, I



mention in passing, was the theme of *The Green Child*). This does not mean that the utopian mentality itself is necessarily evil. On the contrary, we must repeat with Anatole France, the Utopia is the principle of all progress.

Society exists to transcend itself, and the progressive force of its evolution is the poetic imagination that moves with the organic principle of all evolution, to take possession of new forms of life, new fields of consciousness.

FRANCISCO FERRER 1859-1909

## A PIONEER OF EDUCATION

THE anarchist pioneer of the progressive school was Francisco Ferrer, whose Modern Schools were established at the beginning of the century in Catalonia. At that time they were the most revolutionary schools in existence and to-day they still have much to teach us with regard to both the theory and practice of education.

The first of the Modern Schools, the original Escuela Moderna, was opened at Barcelona in 1901 and was attended by twelve girls and eighteen boys. By the end of the first year, in spite of the opposition of the priests, the numbers had increased to seventy and demands had started coming from other parts of Catalonia for similar schools. Eventually, by the year 1906, more than fifty schools had been founded on the model of the original Modern School.

### Co-education

It is worth considering in some detail the actual teaching given by Ferrer and the type of education provided by the Modern Schools. The work began with mixed classes, a policy which was, of course, deliberate. Ferrer believed, however, not only in co-education of the sexes but in co-education of the social classes. With this end in view, he secured pupils from every social rank and included them in a common class. A system of payment was adopted which was accommodated to the circumstances of the parent. Instead of a fixed fee, there was a sliding scale with free lessons for some pupils and varying charges for others.

As Ferrer was an anarchist it is hardly necessary to say that in his schools there was no compulsion and no punishment of any kind either physical or moral. "Scolding, impatience and anger ought to disappear with the ancient title of master. In free schools all should be peace, gladness and fraternity. Hence in the Modern Schools there will be no rewards, and no punishments: there will be no examinations to puff up some children with the flattering title of *excellent*, to give others the vulgar title *good*, and to make others unhappy with a consciousness of incapacity and failure."

### Scientific Basis

The real basis of the teaching was to be scientific and rational. Before opening the school, he had already invited the co-operation of the most distinguished scientists of Spain, and several of them wrote textbooks for him with the result that these schools had a series of scientific textbooks which at the time had no parallel anywhere. The revolutionary nature of the education provided by Ferrer can only be fully appreciated when we remember the education which it was superseding. Provided by a corrupt State and a reactionary Church, it was an education which, when it taught children to read, prescribed what they should read, which deliberately kept children in ignorance of scientific truths and which enshrouded them in a mist of superstition and doctrinal mumbo jumbo.

The Modern Schools were to make a complete break from all this. As Ferrer said, "An emphatic rejection of the ancient type of school which still survives and a careful experiment in the direction of imbuing the children of the future with the substantial truths of science." The

emphasis, then, was overwhelmingly scientific and of course it was anti-religious. Ferrer was an atheist and his schools were thoroughly rationalistic. They opposed not merely the Roman Catholic Church and all that it stood for but the very idea of religion itself.

More revolutionary still, Ferrer, in his bitter resentment of the poverty and ignorance of the Spanish workers, explicitly taught children that the capitalist system and the unequal distribution of wealth were evil, that political government was the root of all evil and that militarism was a crime against humanity. Needless to say, there were no school textbooks written along these lines! So Ferrer had to arrange for books to be specially written in every subject. Jean Grave and Elisée Reclus were two of the anarchists who wrote books for the school. Before long, a first-rate and highly successful publishing house had been developed which distributed cheap literature far outside the Modern Schools.

Perhaps even more of a difficulty than the lack of suitable books was the lack of suitable teachers able to carry out his methods. Ferrer, however, was nothing if not thorough and he had soon established the Rationalist Normal School to train teachers in the methods he wanted. This was attached to the Modern School in Barcelona and worked in co-operation with its existing teachers. It eventually grew into what was virtually a popular university. From the very beginning, the Modern School avoided confining itself to the children; it undertook the instruction of the people. Every Sunday there were classes specially for the adults and there were also discussion lectures to which both pupils and parents could come much like the socialist and anarchist Sunday schools in this country.

### Relevance of Ferrer's Ideas

The astonishing fact about Ferrer's educational ideas is that so many of them are still relevant at the present time. *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, unfortunately his only book, remains an excellent handbook for the contemporary teacher and should be read by all who are interested in the freedom schools. Perhaps more astonishing still is that so many of his criticisms of existing educational institutions are still valid to-day, which is a terrible indictment of our educational progress. On the other hand, some aspects of his work have become irrelevant and there are features of his system which we should have approved at the time but as anarchists interested in the schools of the future we may wish to avoid.

One of these might be the prominence he gave in his curriculum to science. Actually this is not so much a criticism of Ferrer as a criticism of the age in which he lived, when so many of the progressive and advanced thinkers held the belief that one had only to get the people to grasp scientific truths and they would act upon them to build the brave new world. We, who live in an age in which scientific knowledge predominates and yet which seems further away than ever from the free society, may find such a belief a little naive.

Certainly Ferrer concentrated too much on the intellectual side of education. There was far too much emphasis on book learning and head knowledge and far too little on the creative arts and the

emotional side of education generally. Again, however, Ferrer cannot be entirely blamed for this because there has been such a tremendous advance in psychological knowledge since his time.

### Not the Ideal School

Perhaps the chief criticism of Ferrer's teaching is that it was too dogmatic. As already stated, he explicitly taught that the capitalist system was evil, that political government was the root of all evil and that militarism was a crime against humanity. Admirable sentiments! The question, however, which advocates of the free school may ask is whether such direct teaching was either psychologically sound or educationally justifiable. Certainly he succeeded in instilling these beliefs as thoroughly as ever his Jesuit predecessors had instilled their doctrines. This becomes manifestly obvious when one turns to the actual writings of the children. In his little book, Ferrer devotes a whole chapter to extracts from essays which the children had written themselves. It is an amazing document. Some of these essays are almost incredible and it is difficult not to agree with McCabe's verdict on them: "One can recognise the echo of the teacher's words. These children were repeating their catechism." At any rate, children in a completely free school would not write like this.

Of course, Ferrer did not claim that he had founded the ideal school nor that he had said the last word on education. On the contrary, he said, "The Modern School is not the perfect type of the future school, but a precursor of it, the best possible adaptation of our means." It was certainly that. Ferrer is unquestionably one of the pioneers of revolutionary education. It is not only Spain which owes him a great debt. The way he faced overwhelming odds in the most uncongenial environment and against the hostility of both the Church and the State will always be an inspiration to educationists everywhere. And finally he gave his life for the cause.

### Ferrer's Message

This is not the place to tell the story of the persecution which Ferrer had to suffer and of his judicial murder by the reactionary powers. It has been told in all its tragic detail, with considerable understanding and sympathy, by Joseph McCabe in *The Martyrdom of Ferrer*, and by William Archer in *The Life, Trial and Death of Francisco Ferrer*. In October, 1909, as Ferrer faced his executors outside the grim fortress of Montjuich, he cried, "Look well, my children, it is not your fault. I am innocent. Long live the school!"

"Long live the school." Those words were stifled by rifle shots; but the spirit behind those words cannot be stifled. It could not be destroyed by a reactionary Church nor by corrupt politicians. Neither Fascism nor Communism can destroy it ultimately. The life and work of Francisco Ferrer will inspire others to build the sort of schools of which he dreamed and which he helped to create: the schools of the future where children will grow up in freedom to be creatively happy and capable of building the peaceful and libertarian society which we all desire.

TOM EARLEY.

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

### Recommended Books . . .

The Anarchist Prince  
Woodcock & Avakumovic 21/-  
Ethics  
P. Kropotkin 12/6

### Pamphlets by Kropotkin :

The State, Its Historic Role, 1/-; Revolutionary Government, 3d.; The Wage System, 3d.; An Appeal to the Young, 6d.; Organised Vengeance Called Justice, 2d.; Law & Authority, 3d.; War, 3d.; The Place of Anarchism in Socialist Evolution, 2d.

The Face of Spain Gerald Brennan 15/-  
Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell 10/-  
Max Nettlau (biography in Spanish)

Character Analysis Rudolf Rocker 35/-  
Three Plays Wilhelm Reich 2/6  
All This and That Henrik Ibsen 2/6  
Babbitt Damon Runyon 12/6  
T. S. Eliot Sinclair Lewis 6/-  
Bernard Shaw M. C. Bradbrook 1/6  
E. M. Forster A. C. Ward 1/-  
Rex Warner 1/-

### Selected Second-hand Books :

Memoirs of a Revolutionist Peter Kropotkin 15/-  
Fields, Factories & Workshops Peter Kropotkin 5/-  
Living My Life (2 vols.) Emma Goldman 25/-  
News from Nowhere William Morris 4/6  
Revolutionary Syndicalism J. A. Estey 10/6  
The Russian Peasantry Stepanik 6/-  
Do. (Orig. Ed., 2 Vols.) 10/-  
The Russian Stormcloud Stepanik 6/-

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★ THE MARIE LOUISE BERNERI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE have arranged with Routledge & Kegan Paul for a special edition of "Journey Through Utopia" for readers of "Freedom" and subscribers to the Memorial Committee's funds. This edition can be obtained only from the M.L.B. Memorial Committee, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1, price 10/6 (U.S.A. \$1.75) post free. Only 150 copies of this special edition are left and readers intending to purchase a copy are therefore advised to do so soon.

★ The photograph of Marie Louise Berneri printed on this page is one of fourteen included in the Memorial Committee's volume, "Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949—A Tribute", which also contains appreciations of her work by friends and comrades. Copies are obtainable from the Committee at 5/3 (U.S.A. \$1.00) post free.



# Sweden's People's Theatres

(From a Swedish Correspondent)

AN interesting and fascinating feature in Swedish cultural life are the "People's Houses" and "People's Parks", which are to be found in almost every part of the country. One need only mention that the greatest theatrical enterprise of Sweden is the "People's Parks Theatre" (*Folkparkteatern*) to understand their great importance.

The story of the growth and development of these enterprises sounds like a modern fairy-tale of people who were capable of enormous sacrifices, of solidarity and co-operation in order to attain a goal of social importance. Millions of unpaid working hours have been given by workers, and crown after crown has been saved out of their modest wages in order to finance the buildings of People's Houses and for planning People's Parks. During the pioneer years of the Labour movement, these places often served as protecting strongholds for the right of public assembly and for the freedom of speech.

The various People's Houses and People's Parks are owned by the local Labour organisations. The assessed value is 60-70 million crowns (£4½ million) for the 1,000 People's Houses; the corresponding figure for the 250 People's Parks is 24 millions (£1½ millions), or altogether 84-94 millions (£6 million).

These enterprises are united in two nation-wide organisations: the National Federation of the People's House unions (*Folkets Husföreningarnas Riksförbund* or "FHR"), and the Central Committee of the People's Parks (*Folkets Parkers Centralstyrelse* or "FPC"). In this article we will principally deal with the People's House movement. The importance of unity is reflected by the affiliation of the People's House unions to the National Federation and the splendid development achieved in other respects also. In 1939 about 120 People's House unions were affiliated. On January 1st, 1949, 910 unions had joined the FHR.

But what are the tasks of the energetic National Federation of the People's House unions? It organises new unions, it prepares building plans and lends its assistance to build suitable theatres, cinemas, meeting-halls and union offices, as well as libraries, study-circle rooms, recreation for the youth, and archives for organisations. Furthermore, it arranges—through the "Program Company" of the popular movements—first-class theatre, music, art and film entertainments and co-operates in transforming the People's Houses into the cultural centres.

In order to perform its tasks in the right way, the FHR carries out a comprehensive agitation, organisation and education activity. Exhibitions demonstrating the activity of the People's House movement and its different sections have also been organised in co-operation with other associations, as for instance, the Swedish Guild of Arts and Crafts (or the Sloyd Union). Training courses for

the operation of cinematographic equipment, on questions of construction, administration, finances, and taxation have been organised.

Within the "FHR" there is a special building department, which is very very important. In cases of construction, reconstruction and renovation the already existing unions or unions in the making can apply with confidence to the FHR, which then orders its building department to elaborate programs and financial plans and also lends its assistance in negotiations with different authorities. There is also an architect's office that prepares sketches and drawings, as well as projects for decoration and fittings or equipment, etc.

It is especially fortunate that the FHR is also concerned with the artistic adornment of the meeting-halls and for their greater comfort. We have seen dirty, cold and draughty halls with horrible pictures on neglected walls; we have also seen rats, dirt and mould fungi. The old-time agitators of the Labour movement can tell us how disagreeable it was to speak in such halls. Now the FHR has an art fund, whose scope is to purchase pictures, sculptures and other works of art, which are then deposited in the meeting-halls affiliated to the National Federation. The Art Fund assists the unions in their purchases. The FHR is a member of "Folkrorelsernas Konstfrämjande" (furtherance of Art by the popular movements) and has—in co-operation with the National Museum, the periodicals *VI* and *Folket i Bild*—also organised the exhibition "God konst i hem och samlingslokaler" (Fine art in homes and meeting-halls), which was a resounding success.

It is a great and serious defect that most of the meeting-halls have no theatrical stages suitable for plays. In order to remedy this fault and to bring about a revival of the "histrionic art" the FHR has created the Theatre Fund, which has granted subsidies of 200-300 crowns to hundreds of unions in order to enable them to build new stages and repair old ones. The money is raised through a People's Houses lottery.

In order to counteract any deterioration of the cultural standards and to offer valuable entertainment, a "Program Com-

pany" (*Programbolaget*) was created. Its task is to organise everywhere theatrical performances, musical comedies, revues and orchestras alone or in co-operation with the local organisation.

A section of the Program Company is the "Folkreklam" (the People's Publicity Service), which attends to the publicity of the popular movements, placarding and bill-sticking all over the country—as well as the so-called factory publicity.

"The publicity centre of the popular movements" (*Folkrorelsernas Reklamateljé*) is another section of the Program Company; it provides artistic stage fittings, exhibitions, show-cases, placards, etc. It also supplies printed publicity material.

How vital, active and enthusiastic is the People's House movement! It is easy to understand the reason. Collective life plays a great part—and the movement does important work with remarkable success in this field. The need for suitable meeting-halls is badly felt. They are quite as important as public baths, schools and libraries. To prevent the workers and employees from building or rebuilding their own meeting-halls so that everybody will have an opportunity to enjoy the theatre and cinema and to listen to music, is inhuman and brings fatal consequences to society. Certain enterprises as well as the Government have understood this. But the practical action does not always follow upon their good intentions. And even when they do something, it is always insufficient. In "Statens nämnd för samlingslokaler" (The National Board for assembly-halls) the FHR is also represented. The Board has in the budget-years 1942 and 1943, and up to Jan. 1st, 1949, granted loans totalling £700,000. But there are still a great number of applications for such loans which have so far not been considered by the Board.

The People's House movement is, however, an independent movement and has been responsible for a great cultural achievement. It will certainly know how to maintain its independence also in the future. The self-administration, practised so far as the meeting-halls and parks of the popular movements are concerned, has stood the test.

C. J. BJÖRKLUND.

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## MUZZLING THE PRESS IN ARGENTINA

THE vicissitudes of the independent press in Argentina has frequently been reported in these columns. Dictator Peron's tactic in controlling the press is to starve it of newsprint. A U.P. report from Buenos Aires (15/11/50) states that the independent paper *La Prensa* had run out of newsprint and would have to suspend publication unless supplies were immediately forthcoming. As it was, that issue of *La Prensa* was printed on special paper which was to have been used for Sunday's rotogravure section. An accompanying story said the paper had not been able to get additional newsprint despite repeated appeals to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce which controls all of Argentina's newsprint.

Large reserves were taken from *La Prensa* some time ago, ostensibly to help create a national newsprint pool.

## READERS' COMMENTS ON ALEX COMFORT'S ARTICLE "SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY OF COMMUNISM"

# Neurosis in Russia

THE terminological difficulties of "fascism"—a word that has progressively lost what precise meaning it possessed in 1922—are clearly complicated. Dr. Comfort rightly calls the term "Red Fascism" to question, not so much because the Communist regimes of East Europe do not exhibit the understood authoritarian tendencies of "fascism"—they undoubtedly do—but because those tendencies are not peculiar either to the overtly fascist regimes of the 1930's or to their communist counterparts. Wilhelm Reich is at pains to emphasise the universality of "fascism".

"Fascism is only the politically organised expression of the average human character structure. . . . One cannot make the Fascist harmless if one does not look for him in oneself." (*The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.)

Another work dealing with this particular problem is the book sponsored by the American-Jewish Committee, *The Authoritarian Personality*. The defects in method and scope of this volume—it does not, for example, face the problem of "Jewish fascism" and rather arbitrarily finds its ideal in the "genuine liberal"—do not detract from its value as an alternative approach to that of Reich. In particular, the chapter by T. Adorno on types and syndromes deserves attention. The typological approach possesses one great merit—also its great danger—that it is more comprehensible to the layman than the elaborate individual case-work of the trained psychiatrist. Adorno also justifies the typological approach on the grounds that modern Western society tends to the production of definite types more strongly than in the past. Dr. Comfort would probably agree.

Adorno initially separates the two main groupings of "high fascist potential" and "low fascist potential" subjects, determined mainly by tests for anti-semitism and ethnocentrism. "Authoritarian" characteristics in their purest form (*i.e.*, the search for social adjustment through a hierarchy of discipline) appear among only a section of the "high fascist potential" subjects. More significant, perhaps, are the three other "high" syndromes of "psychopathic rebel", "crank" and "manipulative". The "psychopathic rebel" presents the authoritarian in anti-authoritarian clothing; the overt opponent of all authority who fundamentally desires to identify himself with strong authority, whose sadomasochistic tendencies are kept wholly on the unconscious level. The type was not uncommon among the Italian syndicalists who flocked to Mussolini in the early 1920's, and has certainly appeared from time to time in an anarchist guise. The mental sickness of the "crank" is usually incipient paranoia, and of the "manipulative" inclinations to schizophrenia. Both types are familiar in everyday life, one in sectarian movements, the other in bureaucratic organisation.

Contrasting with these four main types of high-potential fascists, Adorno enumerates four main low-potential syndromes, the "protestant", the "impulsive", the "easy-going" and the "genuine liberal".

who attains the maximum functional harmony of the ego, id and super-ego.

The typology of this system is by no means free from objections, especially when drastically simplified as here, but it affords one possible starting place for an examination of the social psychiatry of communism. Neurosis may or may not be uncommon in the U.S.S.R. The "psychopathic rebel" would seem a rarity, though the "manipulative" type undoubtedly flourishes in the bureaucracy, and the "crank" may also have his openings, since some official Soviet propaganda appears paranoiac. The fondness for dismissing opponents as "beasts" of various kinds has a paranoiac flavour and obvious sexual undertones.

Nevertheless, Dr. Comfort makes the valid point that communism is probably more socially integrative than Western democracy. The reduction of political parties to a single People's Front represents one of the major objectives of all political attempts to create the conditions for social integration, witness the Italian Fascists, the Nazis, the Austrian Fatherland Front, etc., before the 1939 war.

Social integration, however, does not indicate the qualitative value of the cultural pattern it upholds; and insofar as it successfully eliminates the protestant, the impulsive and the libertarian, it condemns that culture pattern to relative stagnation; a condition demanding isolation from rival culture patterns to endure. It seems likely, therefore, that a pre-requisite for a stable communist culture must be the elimination, in Eurasia at least, of the more nervous (more neurotic, if you wish) Western culture we at present experience and maintain.

Against the admitted appearance of social integration in the U.S.S.R., however, must be placed the fact that the reality of integration is probably true of the peasant rather than of the industrial communities. The great stagnant empires of history have been predominantly agricultural; Egypt, Rome, the Holy Empire. Where commerce and industry have flourished the tempo of life has perceptibly quickened, as in Athens, Venice, modern Europe in its industrial nations, and the resultant cultural patterns have been more splendid, if less stable. Modern industry, moreover, is a recognised breeding ground for neurosis, and the Eastern European industries (who have not lagged behind in minute specialisation of function and have probably developed the shock-worker system more fully than any Western trades union would permit) appear to have no reasonable claim to exemption from this infection.

It has been possible for the government of the U.S.S.R. to minimise this problem of industrial neurosis by creating a succession of heroic endeavours—the building up of a "socialist economy", followed by successive Five-Year Plans, a war of national defence and a national recovery programme. How long these artificial stimuli can postpone certain reactions among Russian industrial workers remain a question where Dr. Comfort's views would be welcome.

P.J.H.

# Stalin the Nerve Soother

THE Soviet regime has been credited with many things, good and bad, but it has taken one of the ablest young English intellectuals and an anarchist, too, to inform us in 1950 of the absence of neurosis in the U.S.S.R. and of Lenin securing socialism there. Since the absence of the former in most cases goes hand in hand with the latter, these two important statements can be discussed jointly when examining the behaviour of the three main sections of Russian society: (1) the ruling class (the Communist Party, the upper layers of bureaucracy, the officer corps and the managers), (2) the ruled (peasants and workers), and (3) the slaves (forced labour).

The vast purges in the thirties and the liquidation of Stalin's rivals within the party which took place after the destruction of the non-Bolshevik opposition in the twenties displayed, as many found out too late, few signs of "social cohesion", even among the rulers. The mass deportations carried out in Eastern Europe since 1939 further show that the regime cannot rely upon or assimilate the various nationalities there.

It is doubtful, to say the least, whether the millions of workers and peasants who changed their place of living and their occupations during the Five-Year Plans with their forced collectivizations and speed-up methods of factory production, and who suffered so much during the Second World War, are immune from nervous disorder. Nor can the feeling of sociality be strong in the overcrowded towns where the mass of the population depends for its jobs, supplies of consumer goods, and the education of its children, on a small privileged minority bent on

remaining in full control at any price.

When, in 1941 to 1945, the "social cohesion" of both the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships was put to a severe test, it was found that a higher percentage of Soviet citizens could be found fighting under Hitler's command than of Germans under the banners of both "democracy" and "international socialism". Also, in 1941 to 1945, the behaviour of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe was such that few will be found to agree there with Dr. Comfort's discoveries.

Lastly, does a stay in the numerous Soviet "re-education camps" effect a soothing of the nerves of the inmates? And can there be much "sociality" or friendly intercourse between the prisoner who works under abominable conditions and the guard who keeps an eye on him with a tommy-gun?

I.A.

## UGH!

A protest over the banning of the 5-year-old song "Old Man Atom" on the grounds that its anti A-bomb lyrics follow the Communist Party line, was made in a letter by Jim Peck, which was printed in the *N.Y. Times*. Peck wrote that the ban marked "a new extreme of absurdity". However, a still further extreme was reached a few days later when Monogram Films halted production of "Hiawatha" on the grounds that the Indian chief was a peacemaker and that the film might therefore be interpreted as Communist propaganda.

W.F.L. News (U.S.A.), Oct., 1950.

## GERHARD RIJNDERS

We are sorry to report the death at the end of last month of Gerhard Rijnders, editor of the Dutch paper *De Vrije Socialist*.

## FOREIGN COMMENTARY (cont. from p. 1)

# Vandalia's Emissary

AMERICA is a country of paradoxes, and one occasionally come across oases of tolerance and humanity in the midst of the vast deserts of hysteria and nationalistic intolerance. In the small Missouri town of Vandalia, which has a population of 2,600, heated debates have been taking place in the Business and Professional Men's Club about conditions in Labour Britain. Apparently the citizens of this small town have little faith in the Press, for they have decided to send a representative of their community on a two months' tour of this country to see for himself. The money, £428, was raised by members of the club and their representative was selected. He is Mr. Lincoln Kilby, a rural postman, who gives a weekly news summary at the club meetings. Good for Vandalia, Missouri!

same delegates who in June denounced the aggression of North Korea against South Korea to-day take care to speak of Chinese "intervention".

Aggressor: The other fellow.

Intervention: Name given to aggression when it is sought not to have diplomatic complications with the aggressor.

Non-intervention: Name generally given to intervention.

Liberation: Name generally given to the conquest or reconquest of a territory.—Example: The inhabitants of Seoul are now waiting to be liberated for the third time in a year.

Volunteers: Troops fighting in regular formations on a foreign territory. The remarkable thing about volunteers is that they are raised, uniformed, armed, paid, and commanded by their Government, but nobody is responsible for their action but themselves.

## A DICTIONARY OF DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE

IN the past few years we have been supplied with Dictionaries of Slang, of technical terms and so on, as well as standard dictionaries. The evening paper *Paris-Press* makes a further suggestion for one of these dictionaries, which in an age of specialisation, we agree would be most valuable. It calls the proposed work a *Dictionary of the New Diplomatic Language*, and suggests that the "meditation room" recently set aside in United Nations headquarters is the most suitable place for copies of this dictionary to be placed. Here are some samples from the proposed dictionary:—

Aggression: Diplomatic expression denoting an attack on the liberty or sovereignty of a people, but only when this attack may bring about a police action by the United Nations.—Example: The

## RIGHT THINGS FOR WRONG REASONS

WHEN states advocate the right things, almost inevitably it is for the wrong reasons. And the Americans, unlike the more hypocritical British, seem never to have any qualms about exposing the base motives for their actions. For instance, the Population Reference Bureau in its magazine *Population Bulletin*, puts forward the need for more birth control in Japan in the light of its "tremendous birth rates since World War II." The reasons given are not that at bottom most people would like to have children by design and not by accident but in order to raise living standards and erase the threat of famine as well as "save United States money"!

LIBERTARIAN.



THERE is an 'unanswerable' anti-anarchist case that I propose to answer. This case is frequently made in various forms to prove that anarchists are deluding themselves and wasting time and breath over an unattainable and even undesirable ideal. The basic fact on which this case is built is the undeniable existence of evil. Some maintain that good and evil are forces outside the natural world, existing independently and eternally, in the shape of God and Devil expressing themselves through the actions of men. Others believe that man's nature is self-contradictory—that good and evil

## ANARCHIST MEETINGS IN CENTRAL LONDON

PUBLIC Meetings, organised by the London Anarchist Group have been held at the Trade Union Club every Sunday evening during this autumn. These meetings have been well attended, and have brought an increasing number of people to be more closely interested in the work of the group. In addition to various members of the group speaking on aspects of anarchism, we have had occasional guest-speakers: F. A. Ridley spoke on "Korea—the 'Spain of the 3rd World War,'" and Dr. Norman Haire on "Sex and the Law." We hope to follow up this lecture soon by Dr. John Hewetson speaking on "Sexual Life considered as a Problem of the Working Class."

There was one debate, the L.A.G. versus the Crusade for World Government, on a motion condemning the 'Crusaders' lack of any solution for the problems of world peace. This debate brought out the fundamental and irreconcilable differences between the internationalism of anarchists and the bourgeois ideas of international control through governments.

The last meeting in the series was devoted to a discussion of the problems of South Africa. The meeting started with the showing of Michael Scott's film "Civilisation on Trial in South Africa," and our limited accommodation was packed out with an audience who put forward a variety of viewpoints in the lively discussion which followed—a visitor even brought out the banner of Marx and Lenin, a somewhat exotic plant at our meetings.

These meetings seem to be well worth while, for although we get a nucleus of regular attenders, we are by no means 'preaching to the converted' as the controversy in discussion shows. There is also a steady sale of anarchist literature from the bookstall, which indicates that serious consideration of anarchist theory is being provoked the whole time.

It may not be possible to use the Trade Union Club in future, for reasons of space, but full details concerning the meetings, which recommence in January, will be published in the next issue of *Freedom*.

# The Anti-Anarchist Case

are human attributes, and every person is a battle-ground of good and evil passions, a living civil war. They point out that having dispensed with God and Devil, the super-human powers that enrol men under their banners to fight their eternal battle, human society is entirely the work of man. The things that cause suffering and unnecessary misery are inflicted on man by man. They are evil, and being expressions of man, they prove that man is partly evil. Therefore, the argument continues, since selfishness, sadism, and the impulse to destroy his own species are human nature, which cannot be changed, organise and disorganise society how you will, you cannot lessen the miseries of man. Should an anarchist society be established, it could only be local and temporary, for it would soon be engulfed by the true, i.e., selfish, unjust, foolish, nature of man.

The first answer to this is that whatever man's nature may be, a society that was a true expression of this nature would seem good enough to him. The society in which we dwell to-day does not seem good enough to us. It does not fit the human animal; it does not allow him to develop in his own way. For in our society the idle are overcome by their own futility while the industrious are worn out by overwork; strong young men are marched away to be slaughtered by machines, while the sick, lame and old stay behind; women, who are sociable creatures are cooped up in little boxes of houses to become trivial-minded naggers while their husbands perform degrading mechanical tasks in order that they may continue their worthless existences; sexually mature adolescents have their development checked by segregation and over-emphasis on academic studies. And, of course, innumerable other things are obviously wrong, for the standard by which societies should be judged is the amount of human satisfaction they afford. This society does not satisfy us, and since it has been made and is maintained by us, it must be analysed and unmade by us.

The anti-anarchists say that the faults of the social structure are proof of the evil nature of man. Anarchists insist that though evil is an active force, it is not beyond the control of man, it is not an outside force, but a diseased aspect of humanity. Evil flourishes where natural functioning is frustrated, but it can only be us who have frustrated ourselves. So how did this anti-man movement begin?

It may be that the consciousness of our transience has led to the mistakes we have made. Human beings are almost over-conscious to the extent that they can consider themselves in detachment, and consider that their behaviour might be other than instinctive. Wild animals, who appear to be less intelligent than we, lead satisfactory lives and never doubt their purpose in the universe. Human beings, with their different consciousness are aware of their own transience, and this

is the source of our unhappiness. Because we know we cannot have it, we crave for eternity. A cat, who does not think about time but lives continuously in the present, enjoys eternity because not remembering its origin and being unaware of its end, its life is timeless. Cats do not consider that they spend their lives precariously balancing along the razor edge of life while the void drops away on either side.

## READER'S OPINION

They avoid physical hurt because they avoid pain, not because they fear death. A human being leaps out of the way of danger, and having escaped is filled with horror to think how near he was to non-entity. He suffers anguish when he considers his fragility. So, as we cannot help but notice the death of the body, we hope for the eternal life of the soul. We pretend that the healthy animal feeling of immortality is proof of eternal life, and we have invented eternal God and eternal heaven to support our self-delusion. We offer up our human sacrifices on earth as sacrifices to God, hoping to buy in exchange super-human happiness in the life to come.

Surely if our lives are not worth living for seventy years, or a little more or less, they are not worth living for eternity.

## RAISE PRESS CURTAIN

FROM PAGE ONE

it right to tell them the truth. It is time we demanded the same truthfulness of the press and of our rulers.

### We Need the Truth

The purpose of this long digression is to show how feelings and opinion are manipulated to serve ends which, in the light of history, most people would (and will) repudiate. But it is also to try and inculcate an attitude towards the truth, towards facts, without which responsible decisions are impossible. For it is not true that a black hearted yellow press corrupts a lily white public. Unfortunately, the public being afraid of responsibility, prefers its opinions ready-made. And this philosophy has also on occasion manifested itself even in the anarchist movement. During the Spanish Revolution there were those who held that to discuss and criticize the actions of our comrades in the forefront of

the revolution was to "do a disservice" to the revolutionary cause; the business of the anarchist press, it was said, was to present the achievements of the revolution, and to criticize was to stab them in the back. Such an attitude was vigorously attacked by the French and British anarchist press, and it shows how the corrupt rôle of the press can to some extent be taken over even by propagandists of noble causes.

We have also seen recently that the dishonesty which infects the press is found at all levels of public expression—for example, the discovery by many intellectuals that there are concentration camps in Russia, when for years they overlooked them, and never mentioned them when Russia was our ally in the last war ("inexpedient..."). It is for such reasons that we distrust these ideologists of the cold war operating under the banner of "freedom". But the same habit of choosing suitable aspects of fact, and disregarding others is also to be found among the population at large, and makes them easy game for the newspapers. No doubt such an attitude reflects the irresponsibility of the ruled, who do not have to make decisions anyway; but it is clearly an attitude which will have to be wholly abandoned by a free society, or indeed any society which seriously aspires to be free and to secure responsibility for its own affairs in the grasp of the individuals who comprise it.

### The Present Situation

All this is highly relevant to the present situation. We see a new war threatening, and we can observe the ideological cover ("preservation of Freedom", "protecting the free world from the menace of Communism", and so on), being built up for it. There can be no doubt that the substance of such an ideological cover is important; for men would not fight if the alleged reasons for fighting were trifles. But that does not mean that they bear any relation to the real causes of conflict. And sooner or later men will have to take a more active hand in the social problem than merely go on hoping that war can be averted until it is upon them.

As has been said in these columns before, the causes of conflict lie in the social and economic systems which eternally seek expansion, but can now achieve it only at the expense of each other. War will be avoided neither by "being strong" nor by appeasement, but by a radical change in the bases of society.

Authoritarian education, too, assumes that the individual is negative. The teachers' ideas are imprinted on children's minds. Children carry out the teachers' instructions. They work to please teacher. All animals are hedonistic and that which they do, they do to please themselves. A healthy animal is pleased by that which is good for himself and his species. Pleasure is functional and should be sought, not ascetically avoided. An environment of commands and punishments for disobedience leads to people pleasing themselves by pleasing authorities, for self-suppression becomes preferable to punishment. And the suppressed self, which can live only in action turns to the unnatural or "evil" action. When authority commands killing and destruction, the perverted creative instincts willingly respond.

So the problem of anarchists is not that of dealing with abstract forces of evil, but of breaking the vicious circle of authority, punishment, self-suppression and perversion. This cannot be done by violence, for violence is the weapon of authority and of revenge against authority. It could be done by education, but many other things are infiltrating into education besides anarchist ideas. Nobody asks for a perfect society, of perfect, entirely virtuous men and women, bringing up their children perfectly, so that the perfect society is self-perpetuating. Nobody wishes to realise an insipid ideal resembling the old-fashioned heaven of white-winged angels and harps.

We only ask for a human society, where people may fulfil themselves, for fighting their own battle, not other peoples.

A. T. BUTT.

## Through the Press

### PARADOX

It seems that Garry Davis will remain the first citizen of the world until 1952, when he will be able to get his American citizenship back, not in his own right but largely because he has married an American girl. Thus perish a number of high and universal hopes. Comments *The New Yorker*: "It is perhaps symptomatic of these cockeyed times that an individual who forswears his allegiance to his native land in an attempt to become one with all mankind should find himself dependent, ultimately, on being related to somebody with the right connections."

Public Opinion, 1/12/50.

### LANDLORDS' CRY OF DESPAIR

After 80 years of universal education the country appears to be swarming with people who don't know a leasehold from a freehold. A population which can apply the higher mathematics to football pools and juggle with treble chances, penny points, ten homes, easy sixes and no perms has no conception of the meaning of ground rent. It pops into an auction and buys the fag-end of the lease of a property, and is astounded and aggrieved to discover that possession does not extend to Judgment Day.

Sunday Times, 9/12/50.

### WASTE PAPER

For publicity, a manufacturer to-day threw nearly £300 worth of dollar notes out of the window of a Broadway hotel. Traffic was blocked for half a mile by the shoving mob, trying to get hold of the notes.

Police summoned the man. The charge—littering the streets.

Daily Express, 3/11/50.

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## No Right of Appeal in Army

READERS will remember the article in *Freedom* (16/9/50), on "Military justice", which commented on the recent case of three soldiers who were hanged in Egypt for the murder of a garage watchman. The case has brought into the public notice the fact that there was no Right of Appeal against the decisions of the Court Martial.

Our old reader, H.T.D., who, as a result of his experiences in the First World War, has been campaigning on this issue for many years, writes:

"As you probably remember, I took up this matter away back in 1933, in the case of the 'Officer in the Tower' (Baillie-Stewart). My concern then was not that officer's guilt or innocence, but to have the paragraph in the *Manual of*

*Military Law* expunged, which lays down in these exact words that: 'The Accused Has No Avenue Of Appeal.' Ramsey MacDonald was Prime Minister at the time and I got John McGovern to press for the deletion, but of course, it went flat, MacDonald not wanting to foul his comfortable nest by upsetting the bone-head Blimps.

"From my own war experience (1914-1918), I am convinced that many a poor devil faced the firing squad who ought to have been sent to hospital, but they 'had no avenue of appeal'. What compels me to take up my pen again is that on one occasion I had to hand over just such a case to an Asst. Provost Marshal in the back area village of Sailly Labourse. The poor chap did not belong to my battalion. He had been brought down the line by our returning transport party. He had evidently been in some local raid to the right or left of my regiment, was covered in wet mud and in a state of exhaustion bordering on complete collapse, was minus his arms and equipment, tin hat, respirator and without pay-book or other clues as to his identity, and quite incapable of intelligible speech—a shell-shock case. My orders were to hand him over to the A.P.M., though the officer giving the order was a kindly man, and neither he nor I anticipated that the poor object on our hands would, after investigation, meet with anything other than humane treatment—taken to hospital, perhaps. Well, this Military Police swine in his office dressed me down with a volley of furious abuse. 'Why was my escort without his bayonet? Where was my own revolver, whilst in charge of a prisoner? He would consider reporting my negligence, etc.' Then he turned to a couple of N.C.O. redcaps in attendance—'Search him!' he bellowed, and the two ruffians sprang at 'the prisoner', pushed him against a wall of the cottage, grabbed him by the throat and carried out the search. The escort and I had seen too much. 'Get out!' yelled the top-ranking bully. We did! But remaining in the street for a minute or two to recover our wind, the two redcaps came out before we moved off, hauling 'the

prisoner' with them, and heaved him into a barn under guard across the road. Not having 'the prisoner's' name or unit I was unable to discover by a reference to General Routine Orders whether he had later been court-martialled and shot or what befell him.

"I have never forgotten this incident. Remembering it—after Baillie-Stewart's case was over, I decided to address the Secretary of State for War on the whole subject of 'No Avenue Of Appeal'. And now in the *Daily Record* of 19/9/50, I find that after about 18 years something is actually stirring. Someone has dug the case out of its pigeon-hole, blown the dust off it, probably looking on it as an opportunity to popularise the army and kindred services. But I question very much whether 'Right of Appeal' in the Serviceman's case will be conducted along the lines observed by the Civil Code of procedure. Blimp's tusks are strong, and his stone-age brain works along peculiar and tedious routes. The military mind by its very training is not fitted to act in a judicial capacity.

"The Secretary of State for War in the Labour Government of 1924, declared that 'the death penalty was never carried out in war-time'. (His actual words). I have one death penalty order in my possession where three N.C.O.'s were shot at one time (18/1/17). One young lad of my own company was shot in 1915. I had access to General Routine Orders for purposes connected with my duties and I say from accurate recollection of the fact that frequently these G.R.O.'s held similar records of death sentences by shooting."

"All this may seem now like whipping the wind, but as a bit of old salvaged cannon-fodder myself, I feel it somehow incumbent upon me as far as possible to see fair play extended to the cannon-fodder of to-day being herded to the shambles by a shower of ex-conchy 'Socialists'. In 1924 this crew, or their contemptible forerunners, voted for the retention of the death penalty for soldiers in the field."

\* Readers may recall the poem by Herbert Read, *The Execution of Cornelius Vane*.

## Meetings and Announcements

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Lecture-Discussion Meetings  
DEC. 17th, 24th, 31st, NO MEETINGS  
The Meetings will resume in January  
See this column for particulars

### GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS  
EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m.  
at the  
CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street.  
with  
Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw,  
J. Raeside

### NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

Discussion Meetings Fortnightly  
7.30 p.m.  
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press  
DEC. 26th NO MEETING  
JAN. 9th Ted Mann  
"FREEDOM & THE CHILD"