

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"To be under instead of within discipline is a mistake as fatal as that of getting under water instead of within water."

—JOSIAH WARREN.

Don't Live Above the Clouds with Ikeniks and Summits

Come Down to Earth, Buddies!

THE space-travel-dream-come-true wonder with which the Russian announcement of its successful launching of an earth satellite was received by the world, could not be equated for last week's American launching of its smaller, dogless Explorer satellite. In the first place there is the sad fact that in a scientific age everything is taken for granted. That Western civilisation is saturated and conditions by the achievements of science that what wonderment is left is a negative one: wondering (or even of indignant questions to the President or the Prime Minister) why science has not done this or found an answer or solution to that! It almost appears that science, in uncovering some of the dark regions of human knowledge, has, in the process, robbed mankind of its imagination, its visions and its poets.

In the second place, the wonders-science reception given to the Russian sputniks was short-lived, being very soon replaced by the damning voices of the politicians and brass-hats of the West who saw in the Russian achievement a new threat to the military and economic balance of power. Sputnik not only placed Russia in the lead in the military field, they said, but also clearly demonstrated that America could no longer even be sure of maintaining her technological lead over Russia for long. The idea that science could only progress in the "free" half of the world received such a setback in the United States that within a week of sputnik hitting the headlines Eisenhower had appointed a "missile Czar" to produce results and so rehabilitate America in the "eyes of the free world"!

BODY POLITIC

I WAS discussing the other day with a very agreeable back-bench Conservative M.P. the high incidence of mental instability, if not lunacy, among those set in authority over us. We agreed that nowadays the exercise of power involves such pressures and publicity that the most stable mind can easily become disordered thereby. In this connection, my friend put forward what I thought was a quite promising proposal. If sane men are driven mad by occupying positions of supreme authority, he said, why not try out someone who is already mad in the hope that he may be driven sane? King Otto of Greece, according to a biography I once read, had rather this attitude. It appears that one of his ministers at a Cabinet meeting got under the table and started biting his colleagues' calves, whereupon King Otto said: "Leave him alone! He will do good work at the Ministry of Finance."

—MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE,
(New Statesman 1/2/58).

Note from New York

SPEAKING of chaos, the universe is too much with us these days. Thanks to our press we are getting pretty sick of outer space. Rockets are coming out of our ears and satellites are spots before our eyes. We have nose cones for breakfast and missiles for dinner, and as the cosmos expands the appetite shrinks. As we are more and more crowded in our glass-and-aluminium ghetto we yearn increasingly for a sense of direction, not pointed, like the Vanguard and the Jupiter, towards space but towards a destiny which we once had but now seem to have lost. Perhaps now as Americans we need the kind of I.C.B.M. which spells 'I can be myself'. We have not been ourselves for some years.

MARYA MANNES (Listener 9/1/58).

(Freedom, for the politicians of the "free" world is a commodity not a principle or end. So long as it produces the results in the power struggle they are prepared to use it and proclaim to the world their respect for it; but none of them believes in it as the very last thing to give up: indeed, in a crisis it is always the first dead-weight to be jettisoned!)

★

DURING these past months, then, the sputnik has ceased to be the great scientific wonder, it undoubtedly is, and for the American public in particular it has been made to symbolise not only the Russian "threat" to the West but also a kind of national humiliation. But last Friday "the ordinary patriots who have been bowed low since the beginning of September with the affliction known as Sputnik-trauma . . . [had] their heads up again and are retrieving at a furious rate their native cockiness", thus does Alistair Cooke describe the psychological effect of Jupiter-C's rise into outer space.

Press commentators in this country politely raise their hats to scientific achievement, but quickly get down to the so-called reality of the whole business. The *News Chroni-*

cle refers to the "positive value in themselves of the great feats of science"

But it would be foolish to suppose that it is this which is uppermost in the minds either of Washington or Moscow. It is the political effect of Explorer which will be interesting the White House and the Kremlin.

The *Sunday Times* likewise, tempers its congratulations with a "But".

But of course the sputniks were symbols and means of much more than disinterested scientific advance. They were launched, as has been the American satellite, only as the fruits of a colossal programme of weapon research.

It is with relief and thankfulness, therefore, as well as detached praise, that we welcome this proof that the balance of ultimate weapon power is not calamitously loaded against the West. The spectacular prestige, too, which the sputnik's success had won for the Soviet has been comfortingly countered.

And the *Manchester Guardian*, dispensing with the congratulations, gets down to brass tacks—and "brass":

Two postscripts must be added. First let us not forget too soon the lesson of the last few months—that the Russians, with their educational system and their resources, can now draw level in any

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Fireworks and Facts

Not All Arabs United

AT least President Nasser has a sense of the dramatic. After the generally acknowledged failure of the Bagdad Pact meeting—which has been likened to the uninspired spectacle of a damp squib—the announcement of a federal union between Egypt and Syria, to be called the "United Arab Republic", must of necessity be compared to that supreme pyrotechnic device, the rocket. It nevertheless remains to be seen whether it is of the variety which gives off a dazzling display of coloured lights, or merely shoots straight up only to disappear without trace.

On Saturday, 1st February, President Nasser of Egypt and President Kuwatly of Syria signed documents which formally (and theoretically) merge the two countries into a new United Arab State. The gist of the declaration which followed is that the new Republic will have a "presidential democratic" regime with one President, one Army and one flag. Nasser will make a statement of "fundamental principles" on 5th February before the "Council of the Nation" and a plebiscite is to be arranged in both Syria and Egypt "within 30 days". It is thought that a "popular plebiscite" will take place on 20th February the result and purpose of which is to install Nasser as the first President.

A joint Cabinet will then be formed, along with joint committees designed to formulate plans for the unification of the two States. Each committee is to "supervise the merger in one field of activity". During the "transition period", which it is hoped will be about six months, each state will remain more or less autonomous, but as of January 31st Cairo is the capital of the Union and the base for diplomatic affairs; there is to be only one Foreign Office.

A new constitution is to be drawn up by a "Union council", with members appointed by the President, and yet another "popular plebiscite" will be expected to result in overwhelming approval for the new constitution. President Nasser will also appoint a Governor-General for Syria.

The joint Cabinet is expected to be in the proportion of two-thirds Egyptian and one-third Syrian. The population of Egypt is 24 million and of Syria 4 million. (The combined total of 28 million gives the "United Arab Republic" a greater population than all other Arab nations put together).

Who Will Join the Union?

So much for the intentions as proclaimed by a triumphant President Nasser in his latest *coup* of the series which started with the deposing of King Farouk and continued with anti-British nationalism and the Aswan Dam (not lately in the news), Russian arms and the defeat by Israel in battle, followed by closure

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From Militant to Moderate

Professional Negotiators

LAST December the London Passenger Board rejected outright a claim by London's bus drivers and conductors for a wage increase of twenty-five shillings a week. This was a sizeable increase to ask for, and we don't suppose that the busmen's leaders thought they had any real chance of getting it in view of prevailing circumstances.

However, in all classes of bargaining, from summit conferences to market-stall haggling, the technique is roughly the same: start with demands at least twice what you are prepared to settle for so that a magnanimous 'meet-you-halfway' agreement gives you approximately what you want and satisfies the other fellow that he has beaten you down.

[Incidentally, an exactly similar technique is practised by all smart business men when offering discounts for prompt payment. They simply add the discount percentage (plus a fraction more) on to their net price in order to make a generous offer to their customer with no loss to themselves. Similar fiddles, with suitable variations, are worked by some stores at sale-time.]

Living Standards at Stake

This kind of one-upmanship can be amusing for the onlooker. And if only commodity goods are changing hands, no great harm is done—only the customer. When the result of the little game affects the standards of living of thousands of men, women and children, however, we feel that it is not the best way to run human affairs. What in effect are being bargained for in all wage demands and rejections are the lives, the dreams, the leisure, pleasures and necessities of people with no say in the over-all organisation of society and very little control over the circumstances of their own lives. We often feel that the individuals

whose function it is to conduct wage-bargaining forget this. On the employers' side this is to be expected, since their interest is in their profits, and workers are simply a means to that end. Trade union officials, on the other hand, are fond of referring to 'our people' (in much the same proprietary fashion as employers refer to 'our workers') and how they are determined to guard the interests and welfare of their members.

Original Demands Based on Needs

When it comes to the carrying out of their functions, however, T.U. officials are subject to the same techniques as barrow-boys and Foreign Secretaries; they haggle and strike bargains. The rank-and-file, at an annual conference, or their delegates at a delegate conference, may arrive at democratic decisions, based on argument and assessment of their needs, to demand a certain increase from the bosses. But it is the permanent officials at top level who have to sit around a table and talk turkey with those bosses, and they know perfectly well, even while the conference is agreeing on a figure, that in the event, a settlement will be arrived at much lower than their members' demands. But they let the farce continue.

Trade union officials cannot afford to alienate the employers' representatives. They would rather alienate their own rank-and-file who, in many cases, have to belong to the union in order to get work and have to be pushed to inordinate lengths to consider quitting the union. But the bosses have to be met and placated over dozens of issues in the course of a T.U. official's career. Every issue of welfare and conditions of work bring the official and the company man together. The official learns to see the point of view of the

employer. He respects the viewpoint of those who live on the backs of his members; he could not be a good negotiator otherwise.

The Function More Important

And this is the point that is so often forgotten by those who expect certain attitudes from their trade union leaders. These leaders are men with a function, and their function is negotiation. And just like atomic scientists, prison officers and statesmen, the function assumes for them greater importance than its human implications. It is a job and they are ambitious men who seek to do their job well and get to the top of their profession.

The very creativity of men can express itself in fascination in and devotion to the job itself, the simple mechanics of a function, as distinct from its social use. In view, for example, of the colossal odds against getting a winning line on a football pool coupon, we are convinced that most punters engage in the gamble more from the fascination of the gamble itself and the mathematics involved in permutations than from any conviction of their chance of winning.

So it is with T.U. officials. They are professional negotiators whose function it is to negotiate and go on negotiating, win, lose or draw. And however they may—repeat may—have entered a career of union activity inspired by ideas of representing and serving their fellow workers (as distinct from seeing it as a career almost as safe and prestigious as insurance, and easier for a working chap to enter), after years of the patient, niggling, bureaucratic work involved, as they climb to the top their techniques of class collaboration pre-occupy them much more than the true purpose behind trade-unionism—the organisation of the

strength of the working class against the employing class.

Easily Change Sides

This, and of course the corruption of power, explains the facility with which T.U. bosses can ease their backsides into seats on the boards of nationalised industries, effectively changing sides form worker-representation to management, and why Ernest Bevin, for example, could step from leadership of the country's largest union to Minister of Labour under Winston Churchill, and then to Foreign Secretary—top-level national negotiator, operating inhuman policies.

Ernest Bevin's present successor in control of the Transport & General Workers' Union, Mr. Frank Cousins, is clearly running true to type. When he succeeded the late, unlamented Arthur Deakin, his first Trade Union Congress found him hailed as a left-of-centre militant. Two years in the top job, however, have mellowed him considerably, so that last Sunday's *Observer* headed its article on the present busmen's dispute 'Cousins Faces Blow to Moderation'.

Our militant Mr. Cousins is now a moderate—something which the Covent Garden porters had reason to suspect last year when he sent them back to work on the bosses' terms. And which London's busmen now see confirmed. For they, just before Christmas, rejected the idea of their wage claim going to arbitration, saying that the dice would be loaded against them. Last Monday Mr. Cousins, their leader, persuaded their delegates to go to arbitration, and kept the peace in the bus industry.

He, after all, is a professional negotiator. He must justify his job.

Written in Sand

LIEUTENANT IN ALGERIA
by Jean-Jaques Servan-Schreiber.
Hutchinson 16s.

FROM the point of view of the liberal, the modern-style patriot, and the man who wants to see the "honour" of France dragged out of Algeria as much intact as possible, this is a good book. It shows that there are articulate people in France who, although they are in favour of militarism, think that it should be carried out in a gentlemanly way; although they advocate colonialism, think that it should be organised so that the natives get a fair deal; although in particular they want France to rule in Algeria, despise the methods which the French government and the settlers have been using to achieve this aim.

To such liberals (if there are any in France) the opinions of Servan-Schreiber are a challenge to political action, to think out a programme and have it adopted by the appropriate ministries.

To an anarchist they can only cause amazement. The writer is obviously most concerned with human values. He is highly and painfully aware that the conscripts brought from France are degenerating as men at a period of their lives when they should be developing. He is aware that the political structure of France is rotten, and that the Algerian war is a wonderful opportunity for all its worst elements, power-seeking bureaucrats, despicable capitalist exploiters and opportunist Fascist politicians to strengthen their hold. He can see that the Algerians are being driven to a unanimous hatred of his people and country.

And yet what has he to offer as a solution to all this? He implicitly calls for rational political decisions to be made in Paris, without giving any indication of what they should be. Furthermore, these decisions should be imposed, and power taken out of the hands of the local business men, generals in the field, etc., who invariably make sure that their ideas are actually put into practice. But how can this be done, since the structure of a democracy gives power to precisely those people? He denounces the generally used methods of "pacification" and points out as examples to be followed the efforts of isolated commanders who here

and there tried "experiments" which involved at least efforts to understand the problem and to treat the Arabs as human people.

Nowhere however, does it seem to be considered that the French army, whatever else it might do, simply should not be in Algeria, maintaining a state of violent repression of the people for the sake of a minority of settlers and their business associates in France.

This story then, has no significant political message of its own. Its form is that of a series of anecdotes, bringing into focus a set of men, who don't seem quite real, each representing a possible attitude of a French soldier in Algeria: the trigger-happy private who wants to "teach the wogs a lesson", the major who tried the "kind but firm" approach, the extreme right-wing volunteer, the proud soldier who resents the way the politicians handle such affairs, the former Communists who become the most reactionary of the "pacifiers", the ordinary criminals who are sent to assassinate liberal-minded Frenchmen, and of course the countless legions who hate what they are doing but who go on dutifully obeying orders.

I am not, fortunately, qualified to say to what extent these stories are true reflexions of life in a colonial army, or to what extent there is similarity between the French army of Algeria and the English armies of Palestine, Egypt, Kenya and Cyprus.

It is clear however, that the worst elements of each individual's make-up are brought out by this situation, and the worst individuals of each social group come to the top. The majority are so stupid as not to realise that it is not the "wogs" or Communists who are responsible for their sufferings, but their own governments.

Colonial armies have rebelled in the past. The only possible solution to the problem of France in Algeria can come about when men such as the author of this book get beyond honesty, objectivity and book-writing, and find the courage to advocate a positive approach of humanism, freedom and direct action; when they scorn to serve "France" and stay at home and live creatively and not destructively. P.H.

History Against Spirit

"ONE of the most striking features of contemporary British life," Richard Wollheim recently remarked in reviewing Karl R. Popper's "The Poverty of Historicism" for the *New Statesman*, "is the tepid interest shown-towards the various portentous theories which, starting from certain ascertained tendencies in past or present societies, go on to make prophetic assertions about the future of civilization and to issue stern exhortations about the historical duties of man". Unfortunately, this tepid interest extends also to books which, without propounding anything portentous, and only venturing a few tentative guesses as regards the future, ambitiously cover long stretches of history, and single out certain facts, traits and connections as specially relevant to the solution of those problems which more acutely or more vastly confront us as reflective children of the twentieth century. A book of this kind is *Man's Western Quest* by Denis de Rougemont.*

Though warned from many quarters not to trust generalizations, and some of us taking delight in pricking them, at first sight we cannot help groping for some all-embracing key conceptions, daily informed as we are about events all over the world by which sooner or later our lives may be deeply affected. We thus speak currently of East and West, and although we shall never be able to say with any precision where the one ends and the other begins, we know the two to be terms of a conflict or dialogue which is taking place, if nowhere else, in our mind. In trying to define the Western Quest as contrasted with the Eastern Way, Denis de Rougemont supplies us with useful clues to the understanding of our cultural heritage, and calls our attention to aspects and links in the contemporary scene which we may have overlooked or never suspected to be there. As space is too limited for a fair discussion of the thoughtful surmises in which the book abounds, I shall limit myself to emphasizing his contrast between two world-views which, whether or not we agree with the

*Published by George Allen and Unwin (pp. 197, 15s. net).

author to label Eastern and Western, we must recognize as being dramatically operative and crushingly perplexing.

"In the medieval popular consciousness, even as to-day among the peasant masses, the idea of an unforeseeable and progressive development is generally discarded in favour of archetypal and mythical representations of the course of human affairs, felt to be akin to that of the seasons, of vegetation, and of the stars" (pp. 89-90).

For the popular consciousness of the Middle Ages, which de Rougemont calls the "Eastern period of Europe", there is no history, no historical man. History is a Western invention; it is rooted in Christianity, and particularly in Saint Paul's Epistle, but it becomes an absolute only after the impact of the French Revolution and Hegelian philosophy. That is historical which is connected with the immediate becoming and with leaving scars on the face of the earth, cutting off time from all transcendence, and requiring that the whole of man should be solely of this world. This world, historically conceived, is a place of strife. The choice before every man, every class and nation, is between being ground down anonymously to manure the earth or to lie embalmed in some colossal monument for the admiration and inconvenience of future generations. Man is the more spiritually impoverished the more he feels and thinks historically. Spirit is what is beside, above, beyond or against temporality; it is the ground values, while history is the subjection of all values to what temporarily obtains. If spirit is freedom, history is enslavement. History and the making of history, are tended towards the future. Their motto is "the past is dead, and life is to-morrow". But Death is not behind us; Death is there in that future where history would like us to put all our faith. Dread and anxiety are typical phenomena of our age to the extent that it is history-wor-

shipping and history-obsessed. The *quod erat demonstrandum* ceases to count, becomes a nothingness. So all energies are devoted to fighting hard not to be pushed into it oneself, and ruthlessly push others into it in the process. History is the kingdom of force, and the kingdom is insolently called the kingdom of man. It is in reality his slaughter-house and grave-yard, the kingdom of nothingness. History is the devourer of values, a broom relentlessly and indiscriminately sweeping all things into a gaping pit of the past. As I know whatever I do, I will finally be thrown into this pit, it does not matter what I do; all things are equally hollowed by the suction Nothingness exerts from the bottomless pit. In the language of Heidegger: *das Nichts nichtet* (Nothingness nothingness).

It is, on the other hand, by the preservation and worship of the past that the present acquires meaning, and the future is not total death. If the tale of Hector and Andromaca draws tears from my eyes, if Plato's speculations keep me enraptured, if Aristophanes makes me laugh, if an old folk song moves me, if a fairy tale sets me dreaming, if I find tenderness in handling a Chinese vase, and a movement of love at the sight of a Cromonian skull or an Egyptian mummy, then my own sufferings and joys, my efforts to understand my own nature and destiny, my ventures and delights in expression, my loves, my cares, even my death, insert themselves into a system of relationships which time hardly affects. In the kingdom of the spirit, men are contemporaries, the dead, the living, and the unborn. As I grow old I find comfort in the company of those who grew old before me, and I hope that the serenity they give me will also be found by those who are so offensive to young to-day. I am never alone when

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Darkest Africa

AFRICA IN TRANSITION
Edited by Prudence Smith.
BBC Talks on changing conditions in Southern Africa. Reinhardt, 15s.

THIS is a worthy though by now slightly dated collection of Third Programme lectures on such subjects as Malnutrition, Migrant Labour, The Role of African Women, the Natal Indians, Apartheid and the status of different non-white groups in the white-dominated areas of Southern Africa. Considering the brevity of the talks they contain a great deal of information, and are all concise and to the point.

I must confess not to have read them all, and not to be in any sense an expert on most of the topics dealt with. Where I have knowledge or direct experience I could not fault the lecturers on facts. On the prevailing tone of the volume, however, I have more emphatic views.

There is about the whole collection an air of unreality, despite the academic awareness that Africa is changing and doing so quickly. One gets the feeling, especially in the debate between Dr. Ellen Hellman and Professor Olivier on the issue of apartheid or integration, that one is listening to a mediaeval disputation on the number of angels who could dance on the point of a needle, or how many Africans in the towns constitute an Industrial Revolution. This detachment, this civilized attempt to understand the cultural conflict in Africa, is admirable and enlightening; it fails, however, to translate Africa into flesh and blood. One lacks a sense of the bitterness, futility and frustration which the colour bar engenders, and one cannot find any word about the forms of political expression which this bitterness, futility and frustration are making manifest. In other words, apart from the three concluding lectures on what it feels like to be a non-white in colour-bar South Africa, the African problem is presented bloodlessly. The African body politic is neatly, informatively dissected by surgeons who cannot quite grasp that the corpse is alive.

Perhaps what worries me is not what is contained in this book but what was never put into it; the pattern of African resistance to oppression, the dynamic of

African nationalism, the role and record of European opponents of the colour bar, the consequences of repressive legislation. One can think of many vital aspects of Africa not touched upon. But since the discussion of such topics might have been unpopular in South Africa (whose Broadcasting Corporation assisted the BBC in recording many of the lectures) and controversial even in Britain, and since the BBC is seldom guilty of controversy of any practical political kind, we can only regret their absence and be grateful that what is there is as good as it is.

One point ought, in conclusion to be made in relation to the Hellman-Olivier debate. Olivier, a Nationalist, argues that the blunt alternatives face South Africa: separation or mixture. I think he is right. I also think Dr. Hellman as a liberal is unable to accept this formulation because it would frighten away the white liberals who stand for concessions to African pressure but avoid even contemplating the complete removal of the colour bar because with it would go the economic and political supremacy of the whites, if not, ultimately, their very identity and liberty. I am sorry that this issue is so consistently avoided in debate. Granted the apartheid experiment is doomed and damned, what practical proposals can be made to ensure justice for blacks and for whites? Must one or the other suffer? Is there not, in the libertarian tradition of political thinking and acting, a way out which both encourages revolutionary self-liberation without involving the creation of a black power-machine to crush the whites?

Probably the black politicians are too westernized and corrupted by the mixture of Marx and parliamentarianism in their ideology to work out such a strategy; but their unspontaneous fellow-Africans who spontaneously boycotted the Alexandria buses for 10 weeks may yet make a grass-roots revolution which, by being local, decentralized and genuinely popular, creates liberty for all and does not threaten the essential liberties of the whites. If they do, I believe white South Africans would recognize it just as the Johannesburg motorists did who gave the Alexandria walkers lifts in their cars and so enraged the South African police and government. O.C.

OPERA

The Carmelites

(From a Correspondent)

FRANCOIS POULENC's opera "The Carmelites" has excited much comment in the London press, not the least, one suspects, because it has been built up, elaborately and massively, as a counterblast by "The Establishment" against that progressive section of the musical profession now universally known as "The Twelve-tone Boys". It is a political and religious tract, in fact, and such is the nature of our times that the politics are unanimously voted more important than the religion; in fact, one might say, a subtle displacement has taken place in which the ancient and pure mythos of religion, with its deep and subtle hold on the human heart has, by psychological sleight-of-hand, been whisked away before the eyes of the worshippers, and the smug and smiling effigy of the cannibal State put in its place. This is actually the religious history of the Christian era in a nutshell. The musical politics, as well as the other kind, are also involved, as I have stated but it is the psychological implications of Bernanos' nasty story that I think concerns anarchists more. A community of Carmelite nuns is being persecuted by the French revolutionaries, who have ordered them to disband. While these events are proceeding, the Mother Superior of the convent dies, crying out her fear of death; a young novice has recently joined the convent, forswearing the world because she fears it; it turns out in the end that the Mother Superior has taken upon herself the novice's fear, thus enabling this young person, in an admittedly moving scene, to rejoin her sisters (from whom she has fled in fear, this time, of the other world) just in time for their mass immolation.

It has gradually been dawning on me that as long as there are people who are prepared to be martyrs, there will be people who will be only too glad to oblige them; it is not only the perpetrators of violence who have a vested interest in its continuance, it is the victims thereof; for they too, see something sacramental in insensate killing, and such a means to grace in the destroying of delight that they are willing to do anything rather than see cruelty and tyranny pass from the earth. They who deny themselves deny others. It is an unfortunate truism that a monumental death-wish would appear to be the main characteristic of mass psychology in the twentieth century, but I feel that seldom before on the London stage has such a naked statement of the unholy alliance

between the Last Enemy and the Roman Catholic Church been so shamelessly made. Here death is glorified, not with the mystic comprehension of the East, who can say in nature's good time "Welcome master"; but a Gaderene swine scramble for the charnel house. As E. Arnot Robertson said so movingly in "The Critics" on Sunday afternoon, so many people just lately who wanted passionately to live have been brutally killed, that the spectacle of eighteen women needlessly choosing death remains merely nauseating. It is a point worth making that these women first refused sexual experience, and then, ultimately, life itself. Life is sexual experience; only through sexual experience can life come (*pace* Archbishops and to hell with A.I.D.) and any community of the future that is to live must be based squarely on sexual experience.

The sub plot, that of the novice who is afraid, is admittedly moving, as I have said; let us see if we can profit by it, even in this context. I hold no brief for the brave. A physical coward myself, I know how much fear is bound up with our mental and physical health; yet, if the world could be freed from fear, all the things we reject, governments, prisons, armies, laws, restrictions on life and love, would vanish in the night; fear of insecurity is the enemy; we have to learn the Taoist lesson that only in maximum insecurity are we finally safe. In the last scene of the play on which the opera is based the nuns go to their deaths singing "Laudate Dominum", and as one after another is despatched the sound dwindles until it is silent; then with a shout the voice of the novice, triumphant over her fear, rings out over the theatre in her song of glory to God. It is, I fear, the god of death she celebrates; but (spare the mark) Anarchism is nearer, in its triumphant assertion of human values, to man's religious instinct than to his political follies; it is Life, the God, that we proclaim.

This ringing triumph and gay assertion has passed from the western world; cowards all, we dare not rejoice; we seek in death, ultimate death for all mankind at the hands of the ultimate blasphemy, the H-bomb, the false security of ultimate law, ultimate refusal of love, sexual and brotherly, ultimate failure of curiosity in the fixation of conformity—to dead matter. Let us make Anarchists! Let us add voice after voice to the ringing shout of OUR "Laudate Dominum" until all the earth is filled with our triumph, the triumph of Life!

Sing me a Song of Social Significance

"The English music-hall, everybody says, is dead, although its unshrouded corpse is still with us. The 'little theatres' function only spasmodically and for a very limited public. Tin Pan Alley seems as remote from true folk art as artificial insemination is from love. But in France, where traditionally tout finit par des chansons, popular song is still to some extent a living vehicle of political criticism and social commentary."

THUS J. G. Weightman begins an article on the Parisian *chanteurs* and *chansonniers*. The present vogue for such singers began with Juliette Gréco and has been continued by "a dozen or so composer-singers who, like *prévert*, ring the changes on left-wing anarchism, poetic fantasy and witty or sentimental amorosness", and of them, Mr. Weightman considers the best to be Léo Ferré and Georges Brassens. Brassens is an anarchist whom you may have seen in René Clair's film *Porte des Lilas*, and he gets a rebuke from Mr. Weightman for being no longer anarchistic enough, his recent songs having been disappointingly sentimental. "How satisfactory it would be if Brassens went back to his astringency, deepened his poetry, and turned the popular song into a real work of art."

Certainly we have no singers of this kind in this country (except when Philip Sansom entertains the Malatesta Club with his songs like "Wiretapping" or "H-Bomb Blues"). Even revues on the London stage, with their shabby-genteel topicality never seem to present songs with any bite to them. This is partly, I suppose, because of the censorship. J. B. Priestley reminds us that a song about Anthony Eden had to be cut out of the revue *Light Fantastic* by order of the Lord Chamberlain.

"Thirty odd years of frustrated desire

Waiting for senior men to retire . . ." it remarked, but, as Mr. Priestley says, "the time has arrived when we must not poke fun at politicians. They can be rough with us but we must not be rough with them". Happily, the arm of the Lord Chamberlain does not reach as far as the Malatesta Club, or you would never have heard Philip's lament for Sir Anthony with its acid closing lines:

"But have no fear that Sir Anthony Has made his mark on history. There is one thing to keep his name alive:

He was the Best-Dressed Man of Nineteen-thirty-five."

YET there is a certain demand in this country for songs which are different. The number of people who have pestered American friends to get them the record made by Tom Lehrer, or who have got tape recordings of it, is one indication of this. The "gimmick" used by this singer, a teacher of mathematics in private life, is to turn the conventions of the popular sentimental song inside-out. Some of his numbers—the one that tells the truth about his dear old home town, the ones about The West and The South, and the one singing the praises of The Old Dope Peddler, are very good. Others are just shockers—see how unsqueamish I can be, Mr. Lehrer seems to be saying.

Another indication of a different kind is the success of the show *At the Drop of a Hat*, at the Fortune Theatre, which consists entirely of songs written and sung by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann. Most of these are simply clever, gently satirical revue lyrics, with a South Kensington appeal (the London stage, as

Ken Tynan would say, is dying of well-bred whimsey), but among them is one priceless number, "Don't Eat People", about the young cannibal who scandalised his parents and the neighbourhood by declaring that "eatin' people is wrong".

But the quarter in which one would have hoped to find a new birth of songs which were both topical and popular, but at the same time less inane than the usual round of commercial "pop numbers", is of course among the skiffle groups, which are still very much with us, despite all prophecies to the contrary. Unhappily, even though one wing of the skiffers has blown a lot of new life into the folk-song movement, in time for this year's diamond jubilee of the Folk Song Society, few of the skiffle groups seem to have got beyond their chain-gang-railroad complex, except as far as American union and gospel songs.

There may be something rather appealing about these coca-cola boys in the skiffle-cellars, shouting those tough and desperate lyrics in Leadbelly voices that do not quite conceal the accents of the London suburbs, but they are at a dead end so far as a living song tradition is concerned. Some of the groups, the City Ramblers for instance, do try to extend the repertoire and to introduce more subtlety into the accompaniments, and some alternate with solo straight folk songs.

John Hasted sees a hopeful future in this tendency: "When skiffle dies down we shall have a legacy of serious singer-guitarists to develop," he says. Perhaps it is from these that an equivalent to the French *chansonniers* will emerge.

THERE is no shortage of themes for such singers, and even if they haven't the versifying talent to write their own lyrics, there are plenty of poets at the moment writing metrical verse with a sharp to it. (Perhaps Kingsley Amis's real *metier* is as a lyric-writer). Has anyone thought by the way, of putting tunes to some of Reg Reynolds' political verses? Or think what could be made, in the hands of a good composer-singer, of Christopher Logue's recently broadcast poem about Cyprus, the one beginning:

"At seventeen the postman brought
Into the room—my place of birth—
Some correspondence from the Crown,
Demanding that with guns I earn
The modern shilling I was worth.

Lucky for me that I could read,
Lucky for the Captain said,
You'll see the world for free, my son,
You're posted to an island, John,
Where the Queen of Love was
born . . ."

When you remember the impact made by Billie Holiday's singing of Lewis Allan's *Strange Fruit*, the tension in her voice dying away on the last line "Here is a strange and bitter crop", you can see what a weapon of social criticism we lack, with the loss of a tradition of topical comment and content in song.

C.W.

Down with the Deficit!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

WEEK 5

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*Indicates regular contributor.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

History Against Spirit

Continued from p. 2

partaking of the life of the spirit, and my supreme hope is that I be not alone in the hour of death. The kingdom of the spirit is the communion of all men, whatever their location in space and time. Indeed, it is only through this communion that one is really a man.

Expression, communication, memory. Destroy these three, and spirit is no more. Destroy their material means, and it is mangled and mutilated. Now historical man is revolutionary. Whether relying on some popular outburst or on the machinery of State power, whether his revolution be from below or above, his aim is to make a clean slate of the society in which he operates, of all its memories and attachments, so that on its naked body he could inscribe his own. That is why I choose to call myself a conservative, and not a revolutionary, anarchist.

"Southern Asia," writes Denis de Rougemont, "has lasted down to the present in the living continuity of its pasts, not one of which has been abolished or deprived of its temples. It is comparable with a Continent of Europe in which we should still see alive around us, in town and countryside, with their rites and their idols and their worshippers, Zeus, Aphrodite, and Diana, the Eleusinian mysteries, the Great Goddess, the initiatory cults, Scandinavian Odin and Celtic Dispat, currents of Judaic and Arab, Persian and Manichaean ideas and twenty simultaneous schools of metaphysics, with none supreme, with no succession and no exclusion" (pp. 69-70).

Such is, if I try to visualize it in concrete terms the image of a continent of Europe devoted to the kingdom of the spirit and inspired by the spirit of freedom; something very much like it also

may dawn on the people that what they are paying for is *defence of the dollar, the pound and the rouble*, defence of a system (and we include Russia in that system) which demands that the many shall go short and in fear of insecurity to maintain a privileged hierarchy in power and plenty.

The cold-war economy as we have ventured to suggest in these columns on many occasions during the past years, *is the health of capitalism*. As to whether it can indefinitely go on patching up recessions is another matter and a vital one to which the public could give some of the time it now spends belly-aching for Summit Meetings which are nothing but hot air and hypocrisy!

there is no misunderstanding between nations, least of all among the political leaders.

There was a time when wars were means to profitable ends. The liquidation of old-style colonialism has less to do with enlightenment among civil servants than the realisation that wars are no longer profitable. (Algeria, we think, will prove no exception to the rule in spite of French dreams of unlimited oil from the Sahara).

War as the only solution to the contradictions in capitalism was hardly a satisfactory solution in 1914-18 (not to mention the fact that a bye-product of the war were revolutions which could have rocked capitalism to its foundations). In 1939-45 it obviously created new "problems" even if the industrial nations have since enjoyed boom conditions and a sellers' market. (But would these boom conditions have lasted so long without a cold-war economy?). Now, as never before, war as a means to power, political or financial, is, literally, suicidal. On the other hand, the contradictions of capitalism are still there. It remains to be seen how it deals with the trade recession ahead.

IN S. Wales the unemployed have already started marching as Richard Thomas & Baldwins announce the closing of their Llanely steelworks next month. In the United States steel production is down to 69 per cent. of capacity, and industrial production decreased by six per cent. last year compared with 1956. Unemployment stands at 3,500,000, and according to the *New Leader's* correspondent Tris Coffin, most Washington economists he interviewed predict that by March the figure will have risen to 5 million. A quarter of workers in N. Ireland are unemployed, and even in Holland there are more than 110,000 workers on the dole. And we are only at the beginning of the recession. Some idea of where it may lead is given in an article in last Sunday's *New York Times*:

Ultimately, of course, the rising unemployment would lead to a significant reduction in incomes, and thus of consumer buying. And then this major sector of demand would add to the continued downward pressure of exports and business investment, inventories would drop even further, and the spiral of depression would be under way.

In between rounds of golf, President Eisenhower has expressed confidence in the future, but, writes the *N.Y. Times*:

The key to confidence for the future, as the President's advisers see it, is in the sector of defence orders with, again, their secondary impact on inventories—but this time on the upside.

New orders for defence began turning upward in the fourth quarter of last year—from \$2,100,000,000 in major procurement orders in the third quarter to \$3,600,000,000 in the fourth. Under present plans they will average \$4,900,000,000 in the first and second quarters of this year.

It is legitimate to infer from the foregoing that if increased expenditure on "defence" will halt recession, substantial cuts in this expenditure would be disastrous to the American economy!

What attitude can we expect Eisenhower to adopt at a Summit Meeting on the question of disarmament when we know beforehand that the economic depression in the United States can only be halted by increased defense spending? He will naturally say all the right things, and make generous offers to ensure peace and prosperity for all time which may impress the newspaper-reading public of the world, but will leave Mr. K. quite unmoved. Mr. K. too will make generous gestures to peace, but we suspect that with all its planning, the Russian economy is as subject to the recession blues as American capitalism.

Neither power will in fact do more than appease the public with fine words and prepare them for more dissipation of manpower, skill and materials on "defence". One day it

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

19, No. 6. February 8, 1958

Come down to earth, Buddies!

Continued from p. 1

of technology on which they choose concentrate (even if there are mud in Outer Mongolia). Secondly, any Britain who says that for prestige country must be the next to launch satellite ought to have his head examined. We are not in the race to produce technically expensive long-range rockets. Far better value.

Of course the *Manchester Guardian* has "got something" in those scripts. But for all they know Britain is at this moment well advanced with its own earth satellite. After all, it may be recalled that Mr. Churchill made his announcement about Britain's intention to produce the H-bomb when work on it was well advanced. And the arguments he used to justify its development here as a "deterrent" so far as Russia was concerned as well as a means of "influencing" American policy—if valid then, must be equally valid as and when new weapons emerge from the laboratories of

It is as the *News Chronicle's* Washington correspondent reports, "the launching of the satellite greatly strengthens the chances of an early summit meeting"—a view already widely circulated—it would mean that the H-bomb has been superceded and only the possessors of satellites will be in a position to talk as equals. In this connection it would be of interest to have Mr. Aneurin Bevan's considered opinion, since it is he who argued for the retention of the H-bomb by this country so long as the others held on to theirs, on the grounds that no British foreign secretary should be sent "naked to the conference chamber". Will this not be the case now that the satellite has entered the orbit of summit politics?

FREEDOM readers, we hope, appreciate the intended irony of the foregoing. But it is even more ironical that there are highly intelligent people who could take those lines in deadly earnest. Already one of Germany's leading scientists, Professor Saenger, has declared that there are enough scientists left in Germany to produce a German satellite *made in Germany*—and not in Russia or America!—within the next three years if the Bonn government backed them. "Germany—he said—would then be in a bargaining position to offer her foreign partners an exchange of secrets". If the Professor means what he says, then it would obviously be much cheaper to export all German scientists to America, which would then have all the secrets. But obviously the professor means something else. Might he be dreaming of a Greater Reich, of a Big Five, a Big Four or even Three in which Germany occupies the seats vacated by France and/or Britain?

★

IF now the launching of an American satellite has opened the road for the Eisenhower Administration to accede to Russia's request for a Summit meeting this year, what are the chances that these talks will succeed in reducing the existing "tensions", the cold-war and the risks of annihilation always present so long as stocks of H-bombs exist anywhere in the world? We put this, for us purely rhetorical, question because there are millions of people who still believe that the "tensions" in the world arise from some kind of misunderstanding between nations and that wars begin when discussion stops. Hence the almost pathetic hope that war will be averted so long as the political leaders can be induced to meet and talk! In fact

Business is Business East and West

THE fact that Britain and America are partners in the cold war, while the Soviet Union contributes her share to international tension from the other side, does not deter them from carrying on trade or seeking new channels which will make trade possible.

We are told that trade between countries is a sign of friendship and goodwill, a view which would be more convincing if political propaganda from East and West was not designed to persuade the peoples of the world that H-bombs are necessary to defend East and West from each other.

Britain and America thunder against the evils of Communism; Russia's press and radio are active in attacking the horrors of capitalism. But Britain and America are prepared to come to terms with evil for financial gain, and the Soviet Union is happy to unite with horror as long as some of the benefits from the union flow in her direction.

If the friendship arguments are genuine why do they not all abandon their re-armament drives, war threats and slanging propaganda and concentrate on peaceful co-existence? The truth is that all capitalist nations need to expand if they are to survive as 'great' powers. This is usually done by actual war or the ability to wage war.

The struggle between Britain and Germany was a typical example of two powerful industrial nations coming into conflict as a result of their economic and political ambitions. This did not prevent these two countries trading with each other up to 1939 at which time Britain was still sending vital war materials to Germany. Yet propaganda against the Nazis was having the desired effect. Britons were preparing to kill Germans and Germans Britons while the two Governments prepared for war, the 'friendly' exchange of goods making their jobs easier.

The relationship which exists between the USSR, Britain and the United States is in principle the same. East and West keep their citizens up to date on the defects of the other side. The money and energy put into the production of armaments is justified on the grounds of defence (few govern-

ments are ever prepared to admit that they are making preparations actually to wage war). Thus instead of concentrating on the failures of indigenous governments the eyes of people in all these countries are turned towards the threat from without.

Russia differs from pre-war Germany in relation to Britain in many respects. Economically she is not an immediate threat in terms of world markets. In fact, she holds promise for the future as a lucrative market for consumer and capital goods. Many countries are keen to trade across the Iron Curtain, not least Britain and her ally America.

That brotherly love which is supposed to bind them in the common struggle against materialistic communism does not prevent them competing with each other when material benefits are to be gained from materialism.

British business men are being told to go ahead with trade deals before America 'gets in', for although the Americans are being very cagey they are obviously paving the way for the future.

The first commercial office opened in the Soviet Union by any Western country has been set up by *America Abroad Associates* in Moscow to be followed this Summer by the first U.S. trade fair ever held in Russia. The Soviet government is more than anxious to ensure its success; the fair has already been given publicity in the press and T.V. and Radio have been promised as additional advertising mediums. It is reported from America that: The U.S. Government is far from happy about this adventure into areas long tightly closed to Americans. *The reason is that private U.S. enterprises moved in ahead of the U.S. Government* and snagged the contract for the fair. Last week Manhattan Businessman Gottfried Neuburger, 50, the man who wooed the Russians and

won, flew to Washington to try to soothe the Government's feelings and persuade it to enter the fair alongside private enterprise.

A written agreement had already been given by Russian trade officials to the U.S. Government to stage the fair last summer but was cancelled at the request of the U.S. after the Hungarian uprising. Now that that little episode has been forgotten the practical men can go ahead with more important matters. Last August, *Time* writes, "Heartened by such assurances that the Russians would welcome a U.S. trade fair, Congress appropriated \$2.2 million to finance a U.S. exhibit in Moscow, and a group of Commerce Department officials went to Russia to negotiate. But the Government ended up without an invitation and with Neuburger in control of the property it wanted to use. Government officials grumped that the U.S. could run a better fair than private enterprise, with its interest in profit, expressed fear that Neuburger would stock the fair with industrial machines and fertilizers instead of U.S. consumer goods that would really

Have you renewed your Subscription?

The Syria-Egypt 'Union'

Not All Arabs United

Continued from p. 1

of the Suez Canal (with mixed results), and a relentless search for yet another epic stroke with which to bolster up just another flagging military dictatorship.

The continuous thread which has run through all of Nasser's policy is that of Arab nationalism; this is his popular creed, and it is one which makes an enormous appeal to the Arabs themselves. Thus a United Republic, of which membership is open to all Arab states, represents Nasser's bid for leadership of an Empire—an Empire which could contain within its boundaries the enormous mineral wealth which is the key to the power and prestige so ardently sought after by the Egyptian President.

But what are the chances of success in the immediate future? The Kings of Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are patently unimpressed with the idea of joining a United

Republic. Whatever their peoples may think, the Kings themselves cannot be expected to subscribe to a plan which would take away their present sovereignty and personal power, added to which their ties are with the West, and although Nasser cannot be regarded as pro-USSR he is certainly anti-West. Should the Arab Kings make any move towards Nasser's proposed Republic the West (U.S. and Britain) would unquestionably bring "considerable pressure" to bear upon them not to do so.

It is in fact reported that a proposal put forward by King Hussein of Jordan for a meeting with King Feisal of Iraq and King Saud of Saudi Arabia is likely to be taken up. It is further rumoured that the purpose of Hussein's counter-move is to discuss the setting up of a rival "union of monarchies". This not only confirms the existence of a definite rift between Arab Governments, but brings forth the possibility of two opposing blocs of Arab nations. On the one side the "Republican dictatorships" without oil but with economic assistance from the USSR, on the other the "feudal dictatorship" with oil and the backing of the Western powers.

Of the three remaining Arab states, Lebanon, Yemen and the Sudan, none is likely to be enthralled at the prospect of union with either Syria or Egypt, and certainly not both at once. The Sudan has already refused union with Egypt alone and there is no reason to anticipate any change of heart. Lebanon has been on bad terms with both countries for some time, and has every reason for not wishing to give up her independence or her relatively stable economic position. Yemen has nothing to gain by joining the Arab Union, despite the reported interest shown by the Crown Prince; but perhaps the Prince does not realise that he stands to lose the friendship of the West.

Meanwhile what is to become of Israel? She is obviously quite accustomed to being surrounded by hostile nations, but if the Egyptian-Syrian union becomes anything more than a paper agreement, she faces the prospect of having a united Army to the South and North, the sea to the West and no hope from the East. If the Arabs could successfully build up a potentially dangerous force on her borders she would no doubt be tempted to attack in one or both directions before such a force could become superior to the Israeli army. There is therefore the very real possibility of a continuance of the Arab-Israel

war at some time in the not too-distant future.

The Emotional Appeal

It is only too easy to forget in discussing the possibilities of a certain political situation, the fact that what is really being discussed is simply the interests of the various ruling groups of the countries concerned. In this instance it is particularly the case, for there can be little doubt that the *idea* of Arab Union has a very considerable impact on and emotional appeal for the majority of the peoples of the Arab nations.

The message which is being broadcast from Cairo Radio's "Voice of the Arabs" is a powerful call to a nationalism built up by promises of wealth and democratic freedom after centuries of poverty, hunger and despotic rule. "Join", says Nasser's radio "the stronghold for all Arab peoples." As the Arab peoples listen they are able to conjure up an illusion of freedom from the domination of the West and their own puppet Kings, and in their imaginations discover a new Arab Republic flowing with milk and honey distilled from the bowels of the earth, a sovereign, democratic Republic under a strong, benign leader—President Nasser.

But the Arab peoples do not rule their own countries. Their interests will be taken as of little account, and the political leaders, whilst they remain in power, will arrange the destinies of their countries as suits them best. Nasser's appeal is to the Arab peoples, and to what they think is their interests, but it is an appeal in direct contradiction to the very existence of the rulers of Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. And it is also an appeal which can meet with no approval from the "benefactors" of these countries—USA and Britain.

The Reality

Whether or not the Egyptian-Syrian Union is successful it is unlikely to gain much further support from other Arab Governments. Whether or not an opposing bloc is formed the basic pattern of Arab division will not be altered. The differences are clear cut; the balance of power may be temporarily altered—for Nasser will perhaps control four pipe-lines as well as the Suez Canal—but, for as long as Middle East oil remains important to the West, and Arab monarchies are supported in power as a consequence, the two Arab camps will remain. Nasser's dream of ruling a new Empire-of-all-Arabs will have to wait upon the new all-atomic age.

bedazzle the Russians. So far, the Government has declined to rent Moscow space from Neuburger on the ground that it can negotiate on a government-to-government basis."

Last week Dulles was saying one of the weaknesses of communism was the restless demand of subject peoples for freedom of thought and, he listed with this noble sentiment, the freedom to *buy more consumer goods*. What he was saying in between the drivel of the rich, dynamic values which so important to the U.S. way of life was that the U.S. needs market for her goods.

If any ordinary shopkeeper spent his time publicly attacking his potential customers and then tried to make a profit out of them he would be considered a very immoral indeed—or a lunatic. When politicians do it, they are called statesmen.

The tragedy is that millions of people really believe that the struggle being waged in our time is for freedom, justice and equality against totalitarianism. It is difficult for them to think otherwise, unless they are to accept what the public utterances of political leaders of all parties and nationalities.

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