

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Man has no right to kill his brother: it is no excuse that he does so in uniform. He only adds the infamy of servitude to the crime of murder."
—P. B. SHELLEY.

19, No. 33

August 16th, 1958

Threepence

THE UNKNOWN HAZARDS

THIRTY-THREE leading scientists from fifteen countries have spent two-and-a-half-years as a United Nations committee studying the effects of radiation hazards throughout the world.

The result of their deliberations points to a great big question over the future of hundreds of thousands of men, women, children and babes unborn throughout the world. For the fact of the matter is these experts do not know what the effects of radio-active fall-out from nuclear weapons already exploded are going to do. They do not know; nobody knows.

In a 250-page report the scientists have made certain assumptions based on certain evidence, but they are largely assumptions only, since the effects of radio-activity from nuclear explosions are long-term and slow to develop. For example, the amount of strontium already hanging in the stratosphere may take eight years to seep down to earth, but every new test of a 'nuclear device' adds to the build-up of strontium so that in ten years time radio-active fall-out will have passed the danger limits set by British medical experts. But of the consequences of this the committee report says:

Present knowledge concerning long-term effects and their co-relations with the amounts of radiation received does not permit us to evaluate with any precision the possible consequences to man of exposure to low radiation levels.

Many effects of irradiation are delayed; often they cannot be distinguished from effects of other agents; many will only develop once a threshold dose has been exceeded; some may be cumulative and others not; and individuals in large populations or particular groups such as children or fetuses may have special sensitivity.

'Any present attempt to evaluate the effects of sources of radiation to which the world population is exposed can produce only tentative estimates with wide margins of uncertainty.'

Can You Pay?

Should a Catholic girl refuse to be sold in marriage, even if the price is right? This question, which is significant in bride-buying Africa, was one of many debated last week by 300 Roman Catholic women from ten African countries who met under UNESCO sponsorship in Lomé, steamy capital of the French West African autonomous Republic of Togoland. Balancing the imperatives of religion against the demands of custom, they found bride-buying acceptable—if rising prices do not shut out Christian suitors.

An African woman's position in society may be hard to equate with Catholicism, the delegates felt, but for one thing she can be thankful. "She is regarded by her society not only as fertile in producing children," summed up one delegate, "but as being bestowed with supernatural powers that make seeds and all work that passes through her hands germinate and prosper." Nevertheless, the delegates were gravely concerned about the African family system. "It is beautiful," said one woman. "But no Christian life is possible without equality in the home."

Polygamy. Though diminishing, it still too often makes a wife "no more than the mother of her husband's children." But while polygamy is un-Christian, one delegate warned, "Catholic women should not leave husbands who take another wife. Under the sacrament of marriage, there can be no second wife. She must be considered a concubine."

Time 4/8/58.

This uncertainty expresses itself in these guesses:

LEUKÆMIA.—Assuming that this blood disease will be produced in proportion to the radiation received, then fall-out from H-bombs already exploded will cause from 400 to 2,000 new cases every year.

BONE CANCERS.—On the same assumption the tests will cause an estimated 70 to 900 extra cases.

GENETIC EFFECTS.—Between 2,500 and 100,000 cases of genetic damage may be expected from the bomb tests already carried out.

These genetic effects may result in split-hands, blindness or deafness, or, of course, much more monstrous deformities and brain injuries.

The Deadly Band

There is a certain irony in the area of the earth's surface most affected by fall-out. In spite of the fact that Britain explodes her bombs at Christmas Island and the U.S.A. at the Marshall Islands, both near the Equator in the Pacific, the U.N. experts have discovered that fall-out extends mainly in a band 1,200 miles wide north of the Equator between latitudes 30 and 50.

This area covers some of South-East Asia, most of Southern Russia,

the whole of Europe and the British Isles and the entire United States. The bomb-testing countries therefore are right in line to receive the effects of their own misdeeds. Although it was tested such a long way away, fall-out from the British bomb could, over the years, float down to British soil, pass into British food and bring bone cancer to a British child. Similarly can the American and Russian tests bring tragedy to American and Russian families.

There is one other point which the report has made: that people who get their calcium (the bone-building chemical) from rice are in greater danger of absorbing strontium than those who get their calcium from milk. This means that the peoples of Asia stand to be the victims once again of the irresponsible pollution of the atmosphere by the bomb-happy Great Powers.

The U.N. committee's report is tentative and vague. It will take many years of patient observation before the exact effects of bomb-tests may be known. During that time thousands of human beings will suffer agonising deaths and many thousands more will know misery and tragedy—to satisfy the demands of power-hungry statesmen to 'negotiate from strength'.

THE CYPRUS IMPASSE

No Solutions Through Governments

IF further proof were needed of the lunatic irresponsibility of leaders, on all sides, events in Cyprus provide it. In the grip of emotions which they do not even understand, ordinary people are killing each other daily to further the ambitions of the various political groups.

When the British authorities put their gestapo tactics into operation two weeks ago with the stated intention of avoiding 'further violence' the result, as we expected, was an increase of terror. After the island had been reduced once again to chaos, the British Prime Minister performs one of his "statesmanlike" acts in an apparent attempt to undo the damage largely created by his Government.

The result of his flying visits to the Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers to discuss Cyprus is as yet unknown, but it has meant that a breathing space has been given to Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike while they wait in fear of the new orders to kill.

Since the middle of last week the curfew has been lifted and people are circulating a little more freely in cafés and shops. An order from EOKA and the Turkish movement instructed all their 'village leaders' to cease both armed and unarmed activities immediately.

A report from Nicosia which states that Greeks and Turks are patronising each other's shops again provides some indication that the people would like to return to the friendly relationship between Greek and Turk of the past, but fear of reprisal prevents them doing so. The fact, however, that new EOKA

leaflets now circulating throughout Cyprus pointing to the many years of harmonious living together until the advent of Britain's divide and rule policy, may mark the beginnings of an attempt to bring the two communities together. The EOKA leaders undoubtedly will be interested only in tactics, but the Greek and Turkish Cypriots might regard unity in a different light, at least the fear of each other would be removed from their daily lives.

Meanwhile, the usual vague, meaningless statement issued on these occasions was made by Macmillan on the results of his meeting with the Greek Prime Minister. Undeterred by an earlier report which quoted the Greek Foreign Minister as saying that no progress had been made during the two-day discussions, although the exchange of views had been "useful" (to whom?) Macmillan said: "We had a useful and serious discussion. I am grateful to the Greek Prime Minister for the understanding he has shown, and the clarity with which he explained the position of the Greek Government. I have confidence that the talks we had fully justified my journey."

A communique from Ankara after Macmillan's visit is equally vague, and speaks of a "frank and friendly exchange of views on Cyprus". Views, we might add, which have been exchanged monotonously between the three Governments for years. But we don't expect Governments to be constructive since one of their chief functions is to destroy unity not to create it.

Another report from Turkey

TO the relief of all Governments concerned there is to be no Summit Conference after all; it is almost as if the Great Powers had really believed that such a conference would do some good, despite the well-established fact that these high-level discussions are merely an additional and popular means of pulling wool over the eyes of the public.

Since the West was especially not looking forward to the Summit prospects, it is regarded by them as a major victory because it was Krushchev who finally decided against the project. Some of the more opportunistic politicians would have us believe that Krushchev was forced to change his mind as a consequence of extreme cunning by Messrs. Dulles and Macmillan; the quick answer to this suggestions must surely be that on this occasion (as on so many others), Messrs. D. & M. had nothing to be cunning about.

The fact should be faced, unless the long arm of coincidence is to be stretched irretrievably; Krushchev visited Peking for conversations with his opposite number, Mao Tse-Tung, and returned with the new line. An interesting reminder that the Iron Curtain also contains China, which with a population of 600 million can hardly be overlooked. Certainly the Kremlin cannot afford to forget the Chinese, for they have been independent in the past, with an ever-

increasing industrial and military potential, and a very considerable common frontier with Russia.

Mao obviously did not like the idea of a Summit Conference without his being present, for he remains to this day unable to join the Security Council or U.N. So all the nations, big and small, will attend a meeting of the General Assembly. It will make no difference, except that the West will have gained extra time, in the vague hope of improving the position in that time. The only improvement likely is simply that the Middle East cauldron will have the opportunity to go off the boil to some extent.

Now that China is taking a more direct interest in world affairs (or perhaps it is fairer to say, becoming a more obvious influence), it must be reckoned that the chances of a Summit Conference in the near future have receded even further. What is not so clear however is how much longer the U.S. will be able to keep China out of the United Nations. The absurdity of pretending that Chiang Kai-shek, sitting on Formosa with a questionable army and no other support but U.S. obstinacy, must eventually be dispensed with; the prelude to this may be in sight and "Red China" may yet get into the Middle East General Assembly meeting, for it may be faintly discerned that the U.S. is easing away from her non-recognition policy.

But even supposing that a future Security Council were to include China and India, it could not be expected that this would achieve any relaxation of world tension; if anything the situation might be worse, for instead of having two factions at variance with one another, there would be three or four.

However, the constitution of the General Assembly is not likely to prove of much importance so far as Middle East problems are concerned, for none of the Powers which attend have the slightest intention of solving any problems but their own.

Certainly none of the Great Powers is interested in the standard of living of the Arabs, or the difficulties involved in irrigating more of the desert for agricultural purposes, or the education of Arabs so that they may learn techniques by which they may help themselves. Of much more interest to the Great Powers are the questions of how best to retain the support of the governments of the Middle East, and having retained their support how best to support those governments. It is of no consequence to the Great Powers whether they support governments which are dictatorships (republican or royal), or by what means these governments hold their peoples in subjection. How then are the problems of the Middle East to be solved?

Continued on p. 4

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 32

Deficit on Freedom £640
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1958 TOTAL TO DATE £409 5 3

*Indicates regular contributor.

BIOLOGY & ANARCHISM

J. ROSTAND, the son of the author of "Cyrano de Bergerac", is a distinguished biologist who has acquired a high reputation as a well-informed and lucid teacher of scientific knowledge, and as an alert selector and perspicacious exponent of its bearing upon sociological and philosophical problems.

The title essay in his latest book "Science fausse et fausses sciences" deals with such pseudosciences as spiritualism and radio-aesthesia, with science running mad under political pressure or going astray for an all-too-human reason. A case of the latter was Rene Blondot's discovery in 1903 of N rays whose properties were soon observed and carefully measured by several other physicists, and declared non-existent a couple of years later. The all-too-human reason in question is the wish to find something new that will justify one's work, and make one's talents socially recognized. According to Lucien Guenet this weakness is specially to be found in lesser scientists who are in a subordinate position to a scientist of renown. Following his hint we discover that scientific honesty, respect for truth and other ethical assets are closely dependent on social status, educational opportunities, and sharing in the benefits of publicity and praise. As the comfortable man has no need to steal, and he who is well loved has no urge to hate and kill, so he who is given adequate means to deploy his talents, and whose efforts are duly appreciated, is only moderately ambitious, and is not too easily tempted to satisfy his ambitions by unorthodox means. He, on the other hand, who has not been so fortunate in his birth, who is repeatedly frustrated in his efforts to emerge from obscurity and to join some circle of experts or enthusiasts, cannot but feel that life and society are treating him unfairly. If he may be led to believe that foul means will obtain for him what fair means cannot, foul means he will use, and he will feel that they are fair in giving him his due.

Failure to gain social recognition probably creates as much resentment among the underdogs as does exclusion from the privileges of wealth and leisure. Resentment produces obstacles to the attainment of the object by whose inaccessibility it was produced, and thus traces a vicious circle of social inadaptation.

Other causes of social inadaptation are examined by J. Rostand, who wishes to distinguish it from approval of, and con-

sent to, the established order. "Because a man," he says, "is adapted to the fundamental requirements of life with others, and of life pure and simple; because he can accept effort and suffering, and bend to the discipline which various kinds of work severally demand; because he can face reality, and does not take refuge in myth and dream each time he suffers a setback; because a man, in fine, has an enlightened, honest and manly attitude towards himself, his group, and life in general; he will not of necessity endorse the ferocious and hypocritical practices of his society, I would rather say that he is the least likely to do so. But his indignation, his refusal, his 'rebellion', will be genuine and good quality. They will bear the stamp of an adult, and not a childish, mind; they will be the token of a healthy, not a neurotic, man."

These words could be used in answer to that common description of anarchism which confuses non-conformism with anti-socialness and abnormality. But it must be admitted that anarchist groups do offer refuge to all sorts of socially inadapted people, and that the neurotic and psychologically immature often gain the upper hand. This deplorable fact is more likely to be vehemently deplored by the neurotic and the immature rather than by the adult and sound. The latter, even without being tempted to extrapolate conclusions from J. Rostand's statement that "in the evolution of species, a very specialized form is one that has been brought to completion and has received its finishing touches, so that there is nothing, or practically nothing, further to hope or to expect from it, while undifferentiated forms preserve within them the stuff for future realizations", cannot help making the sad reflection that the most enlightened, the most healthy and manly specimens of our race are made the target of such a concentrated fire of inducements and threats that conformity is for them an indisputable matter of common sense. Looking round for possible recruits to the anarchist viewpoint, it has occurred to more than one person that its best hopes may lie with the growing numbers of young people who live on the margin of society and constitute

its living condemnation. But it is an uncomfortable position to be on the margin of society, especially as the general trend is to make it thinner and thinner; and it would be the death of anarchism if that should be admitted to be its proper and permanent place.

On the subject of social inadaptations J. Rostand makes the point that all of them have a biological aspect, and some of them have pre-eminently biological causes. The anarchist view, according to which social harmony is compatible with very great diversity finds good support in the genetical general sameness of all men and the equally genetical uniqueness of each. In giving support to diversity against uniformity, while stating the possibility of pacific living against those who see war as a kind of vitamin without which a social body is doomed to senescence and death, anarchists feel themselves both attuned to the lustiness and adventurousness of nature, and protecting the finest and most delicate flower of civilization, the ethical ideal. Cultural homogeneity is not an indispensable condition to the establishment of a society with peaceful convivence as its primary concern. Nor is perhaps biological homogeneity. But the possibilities opened by science through such processes as grafting of important organs, ectogenesis (development of the embryo outside its mother womb), transfer of the fecundated ovum from one womb to another, gynogenesis (in which the spermatozoon acts as a stimulant to fecundation without contributing any of its chromosomes), triploidy (method of cell division in which the mother's genes are double those of the father's), androgenesis (whereby all the chromosomes come from the father), parthenogenesis (where no father is necessary), post-humous insemination, hormonal treatment applied to retard puberty or to change the sex of an individual, mutagenetic methods capable of creating new races of men, and chemical hybridization by means of the chromosomic substance called D.N.A., are all bound drastically to change and blur our present conception of what defines an individual and what makes him human.

The imparting of scientific education,

the means and establishments of research, and the authority to experiment on human beings, are all increasingly dependent upon the State. There lies one of the greatest threats to humanity as we know it, and to the sacredness and inviolability of the individual, without which anarchism is left with no cause or support. "Some biologists have already worked out that, with a proper system of artificial insemination, a male 'donor' could fecundate 20,000 women a year without straining himself. Why then should not some dictatorship, imbued with faith in biology, organise the selection of these chosen donors by the sterilization of other males?"

These words are by Savatier, a French jurist among the staunchest defenders of individuals' rights against the overweening claims of the collective. His also is the following indictment of the seemingly harmless biologists, cutting, piercing, grafting, and killing away in their sanctums for the greater name of Science and the greater tyranny of Progress: "Are not these seekers in biological laboratories, who shape animal life, secretly possessed by drunken daring? Is it not man, the apex of evolution, whom they think they discover in the animal? On the verge of conquering the secrets of life, it is the whole human species which the most daring of them are eager to re-shape one day."

J. Rostand, reflecting a widespread attitude of spineless resignation, asks: "What can one do to stop Science marching on?" In a more sanguine vein P. Teilhard de Chardin tells us: "Whether we like it or not, let us understand at last that nothing, absolutely nothing will ever stop Man from advancing in every direction—most specially matters of biology—up to the very limits of his power or research invention."

But is there anything in man that cannot be resisted by man? Is it within his power of research and invention to find methods and means to his advance in this or that direction? After all, the modern unprecedented expansion in the accumulation and cations of scientific knowledge in form of imperialism, of which we know various political, religious, financial varieties. They also are irresistible at the peak of their development, and some of them still do to people. Specialization, as J. Rostand has warned us, leads to a dead-end science is, not only a colony of making specialties, but in itself a splicing of human faculties and activities the same way as exploitation of resources in certain ways renders unavailable for exploitation of a kind; and as with any man that a great number of genetic possibilities come to an end: so to the extent any new scientific discovery, invention and technique establishes its biases man's activities and though certain directions, and makes other less probable and possible. The holders and would-be holders of political power know this very well, who want to be centrally organized, directed and controlled. Science is far from independent from financial and political power. So it behoves anarchists to stand firm and not kneel in awe, before H.M. Science, knowing the powers that be behind her, and the types and classmen to whom she gives power.

GIOVANNI BALDI

Conversation Piece

IT was almost time for the teashops to close. I did not really want a cup of coffee, but even the twenty minutes on the Northern Line seemed too much to face just at that hour, and my legs protested against any further time-killing wandering, so in I went, feeling another nail driven into the coffin of my "look after the pennies" resolution.

What psychology there is in the design of a cafeteria! The thrifty customer emerges from the assembly, or is it distribution, line with his hands spread wide and defencelessly outward, bent apologetically forward, with his tiny cup of coffee and minute sausage roll screaming to the eight corners of the floor (none of them are quite rectangular) "Look! This is all I can afford!"

The shop was not full. I half observed that the number of empty tables was just equal to the number of customers passing along the line, a condition which would allow each of us to occupy a table for four. I sat down, unloaded my tray and took it guiltily to the structure appointed for that purpose. But what a shock greeted me on my return. An old gentleman, the one behind me in the queue, was going to sit at my table, and he even looked as if he was going to speak to me. There were other tables quite empty, it was not rush hour, he had quite a free choice... "Excuse me, do you mind if I share your table?" A gentle smile and a kind-hearted voice, but it showed that he was English. My mind raced trying to fathom his behaviour; was he a concealed —, or a distributor of religious literature, a Jehovah's Witness or a fundamentalist? Perhaps he just liked talking to people—did he do it often? The kindness of his face assured me he was harmless, but if either of my first two ideas were correct, that would make it all the more embarrassing, as one felt one had to be kind in return.

"It looks as if I shall have to eat my eggs without salt—waiter, waiter (what a name for the workers in cafeterias), bring me some salt please—I find these eggs very well cooked. Many people don't like the way they're done here, but I find them most enjoyable." Quite innocent so far and only requiring a mumbled yes or no.

"The news in the papers to-day is most disturbing." Ah, now it was coming. I had noticed headlines announcing that British troops were being flown into Jordan. "These newspapers are making it seem that Nuri es Said, the old Prime Minister of Iraq was a fine, noble fellow; but really he is hated by the entire people." Well, that was not quite what one expected from such an English-looking old gentleman, who would have been a clergyman if only his collar were the other way round. "People seem to think that if they see something in all the newspapers it must be true, but really it

is quite misleading. That is what always go around explaining the truth to every intelligent person I meet. The mystery was explained at last, I only had to sit there and listen to him for ten minutes or so, which if a bit of an inconvenience, would not be a serious trial. It would be a kindness to him to listen and not refute him with the patriotic arguments to which he must have got accustomed, since as he explained "I always find the young people much more intelligent than the old."

The subject changed gradually. My intention, planned with too much precision to be successful was to make a few statements to show that I was no more deluded by the pretences of Western capitalism than he was, and then to follow them up by contesting his assumptions about the other side. I began with the press, since that seemed to be in the line of conversation. However that was not enough. The missionary, true to his calling, must make converts, and if the person to whom he preaches agrees with the first things he says, it is only natural for him to press on to the next group of ideas. No doubt years in the mission field, which to this particular dedicated individual meant Central London's teashops, had taught him more about leading conversations than the rougher environment of the Malatesta Club. "Another thing one notices about the papers is the way in which they hide material. For instance the Chinese government is doing wonderful things for the people. It has just been announced that the corn crop this year was 38 million tons, whereas last year it was only 27 million. The farmers to whom I've spoken (poor farmers!) think it's incredible. A wonderful achievement. And our papers don't tell us anything about it. The same thing is happening in Czechoslovakia. The standard of living is being raised by the government. All intelligent people should know about that." It was impossible to remain silent longer. I vainly mustered a few pointed phrases to the effect that all governments were the same, that none of them had any interest in their people except to maintain power over them, and that I doubted whether there was any important newspaper with a dedicated interest in the truth. But all in vain. What is the answer to a string of figures relating to the cost of living in Czechoslovakia? And above all he had the answer: "Well of course, it's not surprising, since the newspapers don't tell the truth, that even intelligent young people, and I can see that you are intelligent, don't know these facts."

So ended the encounter with the pleasant old clerical-looking communist. Did he ever convert anyone by his methods? Are there many people going round doing that sort of thing? Have they an organisation? Is there any anarchist equivalent, and do we need one?

Words and Music Continued from p. 3

singing of Isla Cameron, A. L. Lloyd, Stan Kelly and Ewan MacColl brought together some of the most talented performers of this kind of music from the borderlands of folksong, ballad, skiffle and blues.

It was certainly a triumph of radio technique and of clever blending of tape recordings, but it had rarer virtues, in particular that of fidelity—the evocation of the atmosphere of Edgeley loco shed that winter morning, the feeling for locality, for the circle of family and friends, for remembered and anticipated pleasures, for pride of occupation and for the routine of railway operation.

And if you have followed at all the previous work of the people responsible for the programme—Ewan MacColl's perfection of the ballad-narrative in the radio biography of George Hudson the railway king a few years ago, his evocative use of place names and shop talk in the lorry-driving feature earlier still, A. L. Lloyd's work on industrial songs, the "Ballads and Blues" evenings at the "Princess Louise" in High Holborn, Stan Kelly's resolute efforts to keep the song tradition going even in the electronics industry, Peggy Seeger's inventive 'country-style' instrumentation from America, you can see how their work in hammering out a technique in this strangely neglected idiom has come to fruition when allied to a story in which, as Charles Parker says, there was "heroism and humanity enough to fire a hundred songs".

A QUITE different attempt at 'operatic documentary' was made recently on BBC television. Caryl Brahms and Ned Sherrin wrote what they called a "tuppenny-halfpenny opera" *The Little Beggars* which was yet another variant on Gay's *Beggars' Opera* with the same names—MacHeath, Polly Peachum and the rest. Their method was the same as Gay's in 1728: they wrote a work to traditional tunes picturing low life in contemporary London. And in this case it was overcrowded slums, neglected children, juvenile delinquency on a bomb-site in the blitz belt. Its impact depended on its effectiveness in setting bitter and ironic words to very simple and familiar tunes. It would be quite unfair to compare it with *John Axon*,

but if you are tackling so real a subject you must get your facts right, and the authors packed in so many possible explanations of the origins of delinquency in dramatic form that we had that fatal feeling of being got at. Our hearts were meant to be wrung by a song about hunger from a chorus of tenement dwellers when the facts relate to an altogether different kind of deprivation.

Another opera with a difference, linking with a very old folk drama indeed was Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* presented at the parish church of Orford in Suffolk as part of the Aldeburgh Festival a couple of months ago. This is a setting of the Chester mystery play *The Deluge* produced annually in mediaeval times by the craft guilds of that city. (The mystery plays were not 'mysterious'—the word meant that they were performed by men belonging to the same *mystery* or craft, as in the French *metier*), and tells the legend of Noah's Ark. Britten's great virtue in this kind of occasional piece is that he is an intensely local and ingenious composer. He gathered together all the talent he could muster from the village schools of East Suffolk—whether buglers, recorder-players, handbell ringers or performers on teacups on a string, and produced for them a dramatic and impressive score. Not since Purcell wrote *Dido and Aeneas* for a girls' school in Chelsea, has so brilliant a composer written for children and amateurs music which is neither amateurish nor childish.

Mr. Michael Kullman once got a class of fourteen-year-olds in a secondary modern school to write about the kind of music they disliked. "The entire class rose to the occasion" in a blistering chorus of contempt and disdain for everything their music master had taught them. Fourteen out of thirty-two singled out opera as the object of their special hatred. "Mozart," one essayist wrote, "ought to take a long jump off a short pier." Mr. Kullman comments that the violence and unanimity of the answers points to something more seriously wrong than the teaching of music in secondary schools. But, keeping to the field of music itself, it points to the dreadful gap between music and ordinary life, a gap which, from quite different standpoints, MacColl and Britten are seeking to close. C.W.

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WORDS AND MUSIC

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Reflections on RESPONSIBILITY & OBEDIENCE

WRITING in last week's *Peace News*, Reginald Reynolds suggests that the public's active or passive acceptance of the politics of universal suicide and its general unacceptiveness to the efforts of those who seek to influence opinion to a "blockage" in the minds of most people. It is, he writes, only by understanding what this blockage is about and then, with the aid of psychologists, setting about discovering "the art of making Mrs. Brown [i.e. the public] 'vulnerable'," that we shall stop running up yet another *cul de sac*, and really start getting results.

We are the first to welcome any research which helps us to understand more clearly the motivation of behaviour patterns and thought processes in ourselves and in others, but somehow we find the idea of a kind of "psychological warfare" for peace almost as distasteful as psychological warfare proper, brain washing and the rest, which governments resort to in an attempt to undermine the potential "enemy" as well as to mould their own people into responding automatically in the "right way" to any particular situation that might arise. We also doubt that mass-responsibility can be achieved by the same methods, and simply by reversing the formula, which has produced our present unthinking, escapist, and irresponsible mass-man. Firstly because social responsibility is a matter for the individual conscience and can exist only when the individual frees himself from the mass-mind. Which is not to say that we believe responsibility possible for an élite only, but that it is a development which must needs stem from each individual. The Mass-mind is the enemy of responsibility. It is the creature of governments, ruling classes and authoritarians who talk of responsibility when in fact all they seek is obedience.

In view of the fact that all governments depend on obedience to maintain the *status quo* and the economically privileged minority depend on it to maintain their privileges and their power, it seems most unlikely that they will use the mass-communications, Press, Radio, Television and the schools, which they control absolutely, to undo the work of generations, and liberate the people from the mental shackles of their creation. Indeed the trend of government in the modern world is, if anything, in the other direction. More and more does government assume the responsibilities that rightly belong to the community. The Welfare State, good as are some of the results it has achieved in terms of the better general health of the nation, is nevertheless impersonalising the idea of mutual aid and substituting for individual responsibility a compulsory system of contributions which it implements by laws threatening with punishment those who do not "co-operate". Again the objective of keeping clean our streets is an excellent one, but the State has only one method of putting it into practice: by threatening those who throw litter in the street with a fine.

In other words it can only think in terms of obedience through fear. It is always unwilling to achieve its ends by education in responsibility—and anarchists would add, naturally so, since if governments fostered self responsibility they would cease to have a *raison d'être* and it is ask-

ing too much of just the people whose profession is power to consciously abdicate it! The possibility of "mass conversion" to a sense of individual responsibility which only those who possess the means of mass communications would be in a position to implement is, therefore, out of the question. Responsibility, as distinct from obedience, can become more widespread only through the efforts of and the example set by, that minority which seeks solutions to the problems of society not through the State machines and political parties but through libertarian, that is anti-authoritarian, forms of organization which presuppose that initiative and responsibility must stem from the people themselves.

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HOWEVER unequal the struggle may be in terms of material resources the anti-authoritarians cannot, it seems to us, use either the same channels, or the methods, of approach used by those who now daily and hourly feed the mass-mind. To believe that one can, as it were, shock people into a sense of responsibility is clearly to ignore facts. The world is so saturated with horror, or the threats of more horror that when even the most eminent scientists announce that the next stage is literally extinction of the human race the majority accepts it as yet another of the many horrors that make up life. Life is a chancy business in any case, and it would be unbearable if we were on the *qui vive* every time we breathed or at every heartbeat, in fact those unfortunate people who are, also lose their reason. Similarly the political crises and the terrible prospects of the future of the human race which we are told by the politicians will result from their inability "to reach agreement among the nations, etc.", if we view them emotionally only, get us nowhere, for we then invariably direct our attention to seeking to eliminate the effect and blithely ignore the root causes. Wars have never been prevented by an emotional attack on the horrors and the consequences of war, yet the present national campaign against nuclear warfare is just such an approach and is doomed to failure.

We know that some readers will react unfavourably to what we have just said, accusing us of always remaining aloof when some people attempt to "do something instead of talking", as if "doing something" (even when it is the wrong thing?) was in itself positive. Maybe it is for those who take part in an initiative, but from the point of view of the problems it aims at solving, the effects may be even more negative than from doing nothing!

Nuclear warfare stems from the same roots as poverty in the midst of plenty, and just as no reformist has succeeded so far in curing this problem of maldistribution by appealing to the emotions of the industrialists and the financiers so not even the most eminent anti-H-bomb opponent will get The Bomb banned by meetings and petitions which are intended to persuade the political leaders and heads of State. We believe this strongly, and equally, that every "action" which by implication or directly, perpetuates the idea that these problems can be solved by the men at the top, is not only wasted effort but also harmful.

It is only when politicians and governments are discredited, distrusted and disobeyed (in a positive way—after all there is a difference between say the Poujadiste movement and civil disobedience in British India!) that there can be hope for a solution to the problems of man's folly, of man's inhumanity to man.

Our "action" must be directed to the encouragement of responsibility. And it will be effective if we realise that you cannot attack people for being apathetic and irresponsible and in the same breath express hopes in Summit conferences and

FEW English poets have sung of the pride of occupation, and still fewer (the only one I can think of is Kipling) of those occupations which grew up with the machine age, the private community of technique, the responsibility of the operator to the machine and for it. Kipling's hymn of a Scottish second engineer bridged the gap between the poet and the music hall, and in that tradition the ballads of occupation died out with the embarrassing monologues of Nosome King. Ironically, in the music hall's last bid for an audience in its faded plush seats what will you find but 'Personal Appearance of Lonnie Donegan, Top Pop Recording Star'. And the songs he sings? American railroad ballads. Songs of occupation, of the steam engine and the iron way, the railway as symbol of the expanding frontier and of the personal prowess of its servants: man attacking his environment.

In the left wing of the folk song movement in this country a small group of people have for a long time been collecting and attempting to stimulate industrial and occupational ballads. The collection *Come All Ye Bold Miners* assembled as part of the mining industry's contribution to the Festival of Britain in 1951 was one of the results of their labours. Its compiler, A. L. Lloyd, in a note on the sleeve of Ewan MacColl's record *Shuttle and Cage* declares that "The folklore of the industrial worker is still a largely unexplored field. A comprehensive survey of our industrial folk-song requires the full collaboration of the trade union movement. Such a survey would, undoubtedly, enrich our traditional music."

But the enthusiasts of British folksong are also realising that to rescue old songs before the verbal tradition dies out, though it is a fascinating pursuit, is, unless folksong is to be regarded as merely an interesting byway of musical history, less important than the effort to encourage a continuing song tradition. At one stage the job was to rescue songs from the 'arrangers' who polished them

up for concert performance, smoothing out all their vitality. This led to a pedantic insistence on 'authentic' performance in the style of the unaccompanied ballad singer, but now that the battle against gentility has been won, and under the stimulus of the American folk song revival, there is more freedom to develop the tradition in a more popular and less antiquarian fashion.

The radio programme *The Ballad of John Axon* (BBC Home Service, July 2 and Aug. 5) has been quite widely discussed as a piece of 'experimental radio' or 'aural montage', but it was much more the fruit of the work of the little group who have tried to relate songs more closely to life and work. Charles Parker, who, together with Ewan MacColl, put this programme together, reminds us that there was once a would-be popular song called 'We've got something to sing about now'. How ironic this is, he says, for "the one thing we in England seem unable to find is just that—something to sing about."

Their search for something to sing about led them to this incident: "John Axon was the driver of a British Railways Class 8 locomotive pulling a heavy freight train out of Buxton, in the Derbyshire Peak District; a hard uphill pull that needed everything his engine had, as well as a bank engine pushing mightily behind, for the train to reach the summit above Buxton and begin the long, steep descent which runs almost into Manchester itself. To check the train on this descent, a pre-arranged number of wagon brakes are pinned down hard by the guard as the train moves slowly over the summit, and these, together with the powerful steam brake on the locomotive itself, give the driver control. One morning, however—February 9, 1957—just before the train reached the summit, the steam pipe to the brake valve burst, filling the cab with scalding steam and forcing driver and fireman back to the tender. "With his regulator wide open, and unable to tell the bank engine of his dilemma, Axon stood helpless while his train, moving at little more than a walking pace, was pushed inexorably over the

top. He ordered his fireman, Ron Scanlon, to jump, but he himself stayed on the footplate as his train began a nightmare run at ever-increasing speed down the gradient. His hope must have been that he could regain control at a point many miles down the line where there is a momentary check in the precipitous descent.

"As Axon stuck to his footplate, so did his guard, Alfred Ball, stick to the brake wheel in his guard's-van, until at Chapel-en-le-Frith, moving at a terrifying speed, Axon's train drove helplessly into a preceding freight train, killing its guard and laying waste its trucks and wagons until, after demolishing Chapel signal box, the engine reared up and fell on its side. In the crash Axon himself was killed."

★
AROUND this story they have made an operatic documentary, of a kind only possible with radio. A narration in ballad form links the gentle Northern voices of Mrs. Axon and Mr. Scanlon, the reminiscences of other railwaymen, the lore of the engine-shed and the footplate. The fragments of dialogue lead into songs commenting on and reflecting their content. Thus the railwaymen's remarks about the long years of service before you become a driver are followed by a song on the theme, the comments on West Indian firemen by Fitzroy Coleman's locomotive calypso, Mrs. Axon's reminiscences of rambling in the Derbyshire dales by one of MacColl's hiking songs.

The authors do not even shirk the task of turning a technical description of the function of the brake valve steam pipe into a strident and dramatic recitative, and build up a shattering climax in sound. There is no formal narrative or acted dialogue at all, apart from the rather intrusive BBC voice at the beginning and end announcing the accident and the posthumous award to Driver Axon. Peggy Seeger's unorthodox orchestration—harmonica, guitars, trombone, clarinet, trumpet and drums, and the

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SOUTH AMERICA

The Anarchist Movement

FROM the reports given to the International Anarchist Congress in London, we publish the following on the movement in South America.

ARGENTINA

THE Anarchist movement in Argentina had a brilliant tradition of direct action at the turn of the century, and inspired a very militant trade union movement composed exclusively of Anarchists (The Federation of Workers of the Argentine Region). The F.O.R.A. which made a point of ignoring the law, and acted according to its own ethics, was crushed by the bloody dictatorship of General Uriburu, then by the mixture of terror, paternalism and corruption of Colonel Juan Peron. While losing a part of its influence over the masses, the libertarian groups have established a high standard of consciousness and of international culture, expressed in the publication of many valuable books, pamphlets and papers, and a wide-spread influence in the Universities.

La Protesta, the anarchist publication which was once a daily also published a very good weekly supplement, and has recently celebrated its sixtieth year of publication.

The Committee of International Anarchist Relations (R.I.A.) of Buenos Aires sent its greetings to the International Anarchist Conference held in London through one of the most active delegates from abroad.

politicians! Reginald Reynolds has put the cart before the horse. It's not so much the "blockage" in Mrs. Brown's make-up that renders her impervious to the voices of reason and responsibility that are trying to soften her up, but the double-talk of these do-gooders which has created more confusion than enlightenment. As to the anarchists: we think our approach is the right one; what we lack are the people and the means to give it wide expression. Can something not be done about that?

The movement has just recovered after 25 years of illegality in Argentina.

There is now a Libertarian Federation of Argentina (F.L.A.) and quite a number of publications in addition to *La Protesta*, including *Organisation Obrera*, *La Obra*, *La Accion Libertaria*, *Reconstruccion*.

URUGUAY

IS one of the very few countries in the world which has preserved a relatively liberal régime, notwithstanding the short interlude of the dictatorship of Terra. The Libertarian movement here consists of a workers' organisation similar to the FORA, whose organ is *Solidaridad*, an Anarchist Federation (F.A.U.) publishing *La Lucha Libertaria*, and an independent group of old militants issuing the traditional organ of the movement, *Voluntad*. The number of students interested is greater than ever, and they find at the B.A.I.A. (the library and archives of the Libertarian International Movement in Montevideo) an appreciable means of culture and information.

BRAZIL

THE workers' movement in Brazil was once, as a whole, under the influence of anarchists, but the brutal and clever dictatorship of Vargas reduced it to servility and conformism. The Communist Party has played the same rôle here as in other Latin American countries, by betraying, for the usual political purposes, the cause of the exploited.

While there are a number of old militants in Rio, Sao Paulo, Niterol, Rio Grande da Sol and anarchism has some prestige in the universities, the libertarian school of thought has still to adapt itself to new conditions, and to re-establish its relations with the masses on the new issues before them.

One of the best ways to demonstrate the validity of anarchism has been found in the building of new communities in the open land where peasants can co-operate in a voluntary capacity and so avoid exploitation. Such communities are conspicuous in Bolivia and are also developing in Brazil. This has not meant losing sight of traditional propaganda or interfering with the building of a special library in the Portuguese language.

MEXICO

THE Mexican Revolution of forty-seven years ago had its libertarian fighters like Emiliano Zapata and Ricardo Flores Magon. But they have been replaced by demagogues and politicians of all kinds who have been successful because of the poverty and illiteracy of the people, composed of impoverished Indians and Metisses. Anarchist propaganda has had to experiment with new methods of a more pacific and constructive type. One of these is the creation of actor troupes performing in the remote villages; another is the publishing of elementary text books for both children and adults.

The Anarchist Mexican Federation (F.A.M.) has its own organ *Regeneracion*, and the exiled Spanish Movement publish two papers: *Tierra y Libertad* and *Solidaridad Obrero de Mexico*.

BOLIVIA

IN this little land of extreme poverty there is only a small group of comrades active in the midst of a mass of Indian "peons", politically and economically exploited by their military and labour leaders, and subjected to imperialism.

We hope to present some time in the future a special study of their efforts to combat illiteracy and to develop agrarian communities.

CHILE

THE Anarchist Federation of Chile calls itself the International Anarchist Federation (F.A.I., section Chile) because of the international origin of the movement there and in protests against the national demagoguery of the Ibanez type actually prevalent in the country.

Founded by the I.W.W. the workers' movement of Chile has moved from the methods of direct action towards statism and labour laws with an extraordinary speed.

At the same time libertarian elements have been restricted to a mere tradition of symbols and ideologies among the building, leather and printing trades, while political parties prey on the new industrial masses.

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The More Violence, the Less Revolution

We publish below the first part of Jack Robinson's lecture at this year's Anarchist Summer School.

WHEN discussing the problem of peace, one is perpetually bogged by moral issues.

In the anarchist movement on the other hand, one is perpetually discussing the problem of violence.

However, pacifism as a policy for Anarchists seems to place itself outside consideration because of the strong moral taint of pacifism.

But I will endeavour to show that the question of violent or non-violence is outside the realm of morals in the ordinary sense and requires a new assessment of the idea of personal courage.

Sorel has written a book called Reflections on Violence which puts forward the theory of the 'myth', the necessity for an act or the concept of an act to fire the imagination and to herald the inauguration of a new social order.

Anatole France at the funeral of Emile

Zola spoke of him as 'a moment in the conscience of mankind' and there was a time when mankind had a collective conscience.

After two wars mankind has no collective conscience. Whole populations could be exterminated in a small patch of ground on the back page and X could divorce Y on the front page and who would get the sympathy?—X or probably Y.

Modern security methods have made assassination not impossible, that is never the case judging by the modern nationalist killings, but directly and only accomplished by military units with army complicity at all stages.

The licensing of weapons, the plethora of security necessitating the use of long-range weapons difficult to obtain privately has discouraged the amateur in assassination.

The rate of replacement in the ruling classes is very high. Competition for a place in the power elite is extreme. The democratic fetish has reduced the utility of the confusions created by the elimination of a hereditary aristocrat and the subsequent slow replacement rate which had to obey biological law in a rather infertile soil.

On the other hand one has the endorsement of violence for a social prophylactic as a theory of society; given by Marx as "Violence is the midwife of a new order of society" and Trotsky's "In Defence of Terrorism" which defends violence as a state monopoly.

It is obvious that social change cannot take place without an upheaval, one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs but one has seen many eggs broken and the production of an omelette. But the forces that make for revolutionary change have already been at work and it is the attempt to resist the change which makes the revolution. Violence is merely the expression of the change that was inevitable. This is not

a case for the inevitability of gradualness, the small pressure and revolutions are just as necessary and should be as radical and outrageous. Violence may have been the midwife of many societies, but this Sairey Gamp has produced many abortions and left her forces behind in her victims. Violence has a method of institutionalising itself, the power elite based upon militarism pervades the whole of human life.

Parasitical too, in the psychological sense, the seizure of power by violence tends to set up a conviction that unless one maintains the show of force, one will be overwhelmed by a superior show of force which will manifest itself some day somewhere. Absolute security is never arrived at: there is always another nation, another class-enemy, another bomb which is to be feared so we must add to the army, the population, the secret police, the armament manufacturers.

These institutions secure themselves the control by a terrible Parkinson's law which will ensure their perpetuation. On a lesser scale one sees this phenomena in the small conspiratorial group which is very often infiltrated by agents provocateurs who are the most violent of the conspirators. These have a vested interest in violence for only by such evidence being produced can they keep their position.

In a violence-orientated society the psychotic types set the model of the society and receive the social acclaim accorded to generals, prize fighters and the like. Vicarious violence has pervaded popular culture from Hemingway and Faulkner to Chase and Spillane; the cult of violence has its influence in keeping in being the dynamics of violence.

(To be continued)

LETTER TO THE EDITORS Tyranny & Violence in Society

THE EDITOR, FREEDOM.

In the article "The Hyde Park Meetings" (FREEDOM Vol. 19, No. 21) the following anarchist view is offered:

"... protest by the individual against tyranny and inequality is essential however small the voice. If we do not protest when we can the sufferings of people become less important until the time is reached when we no longer care. From here it is not a far step to accepting the view that tyranny and violence will always be a part of human society."

The part I have emphasised is introduced in a completely ex cathedra way, with an air of assured dogmatism, as though it were the least questionable truth of anarchist social theory. In nonchalantly assuming that tyranny and violence will not always be a part of society the author fails to give supporting evidence; he merely reminds us for taking the first step towards abandoning hope of final victory by abandoning small-time protest.

It is this supposed connection between the absence of utopian beliefs and the paralysis of small-time protest which calls for criticism in the article, especially since it is an attitude frequently assumed by many contributors to FREEDOM. Since I cannot here argue out fully the case for the truth that tyranny is permanent, I say, you to suppose it, for an argument's sake, to be true. What follows for small-time protest? It follows that it is no longer essential for the establishment of a libertarian society, but it

does not follow that it is not essential for the continuous and spontaneous upholding of opposition to authority. It most assuredly does not follow that those who are interested in protesting against tyranny and inequality will not find it essential to express their views in acts and words of small-time protest, irrespective of their uninterestedness in future free societies.

The emphasis on small-time protest for its own sake implies that libertarian attitudes, realistically treated, are self-sufficient; liking the work we do is not just another reason but a sufficient reason for doing it. The opposite view, expressed by R. and echoed sometimes by other articles in FREEDOM, takes an impoverished view of anarchist opposition to tyranny. Far from making it depend on the anti-authoritarian interests of individuals and the revolutionary character of the movement it makes anarchism conditional on utopian aspirations which by their very impossibility demoralise those who think that their belief in the eventual establishment of the free society is essential to their being anarchists now.

Finally, the criticism of protest based on fancy does not imply that a small-time protest is just a waste of time. Without treating protest in an inferior way, the anarchist for whom protest against authority is fully justified by the fact that the authority is there, by attributing permanence to his protest and to the struggle against authority, shows that he has attained to a realistic appreciation of society almost wholly denied to others.

King regards, GEORGE MOLNAR, Strathfield, N.S.W., July 16.

Political Circus

Continued from p. 1

The purpose of a meeting of the General Assembly (if there is one), is to find a way of decreasing the possibility of an all-out war in which one of the Great Powers will let off a hydrogen bomb and thus destroy all imperialist aggressors and Marxist-Leninists alike.

The best which may be expected is a recognition by both East and West that Arab Nationalism can no longer be suppressed or of existence or be treated as if it were a Communist faction, but must be accepted as a political force as legitimate for the Arabs as such patriotism for the nation states. Such an acceptance, whilst it would not solve any of the actual problems which face the people of the Middle East, would at least have the merit of being a realistic attitude.

There are signs that a change of thinking is taking place in the West, that it is no longer worthwhile treating the United Arab Republic as if it were an illegal organisation taking orders from Moscow, that although Nasser is a power-hungry dictator there is little point in ignoring his claim that Arabs are Arabs whether they are in Jordan, Syria or Iraq, and that it is necessary to come

to terms with the U.A.R., unless by not doing so Russia should step into the Middle East and 'scoop the pool'.

This is not to say that Messrs. Dulles and Macmillan are prepared at a moment's notice to reverse the policy which has put British and American forces into uncomfortable and embarrassing positions in Jordan and Lebanon, but that the results of these and similar actions are gradually being seen to be as dangerous as they are futile in the long run. Even the myopic Mr. Dulles may eventually come to see the anomaly of the ill-conceived Baghdad Pact, supposedly designed for the defence of Arabs but regarded by them as an instrument for their subjugation.

Perhaps in time the Great Powers will realise that the Middle East is too explosive an area for a continuation of the present kind of struggle for influence and control. If this proves to be the case we may even see the development of a different method of achieving the same end—a method already attempted in a half-hearted way—that of economic aid. It is just as effective as force, but safer.

South America

Continued from p. 3 With the destruction of the Syndical Central of Labour (C.U.T.) a dictatorship lives side by side with student or worker. Have the legal unions to be accepted as an established, platonically rejected or sabotaged. The same question arises wherever a dictatorship lives side by side with the movement and new ways of action, present task of the F.A.I. (Chile) and its organ El Libertario is to find constructive solutions for the libertarians active (and influential) in the work movement.

CUBA, COLUMBIA, HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, PANAMA and EQUADOR

In these countries, contacts are so close and Spanish emigrés carry on the gauda work under tremendous difficulties. In these countries extreme wealth and dictatorship lives side by side with ghastly poverty. Revolutions merely place one dictator by another, often done and influenced by the U.S. States.

The Libertarian Association of C. (L.A.C.) has a very hard job indeed to follow in the footsteps of the pioneers of Cuban emancipation who falling into the arms of their enemies, the 'revolutionary' political situation is similar in the countries mentioned and calls for methods and fresh thinking from libertarian groups. From all these countries contributions have been sent to International Anarchist Conference in order to meet the present world problems with more clarity and in a more effective manner.

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