

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Force is as pitiless to the man who possesses it, or thinks he does, as it is to its victims; the second it crushes, the first it intoxicates."

—SIMONE WEIL

Vol. 12, No. 21

July 21st, 1951

Threepence

IS IT REALLY THE ONLY WAY?

## Bevanite Manifesto

THE publication last week of the pamphlet, *One Way Only*, was met with howls of outrage from the Conservative and Liberal press, and the "fundamental unity" from the *Daily Herald*, an embarrassing note from the *Daily Worker*, and approval from the *New*

(3) To this end, the military rearmament of the Atlantic Powers should be subordinated to a World Plan for Mutual Aid. Britain should urge the use for this over-riding purpose of a considerable part of labour and resources at present allocated to the combined rearmament programme; and we should give a lead by announcing our determination to do this with our own rearmament programme in the coming year.

(4) The degree of rearmament necessary to deter the Russians from military adventures should be financed not by inflation but under a system of Socialist controls designed to steady the cost of living, maintain the social services and prevent excessive profits and luxury spending.

(5) It is not only possible, but both desirable and necessary, to embark upon a fresh series of measures designed to carry us forward towards the establishment of a Socialist society in Britain.

It can be seen that here is a programme designed to appeal to the large number of Labour Party supporters who have with growing uneasiness witnessed the triumph of "realism" in the party's policy since the days of opposition and tub-thumping; in fact, like most of such documents, *One Way Only* has something for everybody. At the same time it has carefully avoided laying open its authors to the sort of criticism they are bound to meet, charges of disruption, fellow-travelling, pacifism and anti-Americanism.

The destructive criticism which the authors make is good. Their strongest point is in contrasting economic development in the West with the plight of the "underdeveloped areas" of the world, which, excluding those under Communist governments, comprise 750 million people, about a third of the world's population. "Almost all these peoples live on a diet twenty per cent. below what is considered necessary for health and efficiency. The fight for a bare minimum of food is unending and often unendurable. Over a large part of these areas one-half of the children born do not live past their sixth year; the expectation of life is one-half that now established in the developed areas." All Asia will receive this year from America one cent in economic aid for every \$300 spent on armaments.

But the very moderation of the pamphlet and the assumptions upon which it is based, should, it is to be hoped, prevent it from becoming the rallying point of the disillusioned Labour Party supporters

whose faith in the validity of political action has been shaken by experience. There has been a tendency among them to look back on the history of the movement asking the question "What went wrong?" and to see the answer in the adoption of the principal of political struggle and the rejection of the aim of workers' control. They thus concern themselves with fundamental issues which *One Way Only* ignores. If they let themselves become an instrument in Mr. Bevan's long-term campaign for power, they will only have their own shortsightedness to blame for the inevitable disillusionment.

*One Way Only* demands that Britain's three-year rearmament programme be reduced from £4,700 millions to £3,600 millions, the difference being spent on social services and aid to backward countries. Is this modest proposal the only alternative to what Messrs. Bevan, Wilson and Freeman describe as "mass suicide or mass-surrender"?

### 'Charm of the English Countryside'

"W.D. PROPERTY. Consecrated Ground. Keep Out", said a characteristically tacit notice; and an eight-foot-high barbed wire fence surrounded the little churchyard. Imber Church appeared to be undamaged, but the rest of the village is in a shocking state. The gaping cottages bear the scars of street-fighting; cartridge-cases and expended thunder-flashes litter the filthy floor of what was once the drawing-room of Imber Court.

On the rolling uplands round the village the guns have reduced the belts of trees to sparse, bare, splintered palisades, which look, because they suggest 1914-18, old-fashioned and which seem, because they are on the wrong side of the Channel, out of place. Tank-tracks make wayward, criss-cross patterns on what must be one of the biggest areas of ungrazed pastureland this side of Mongolia. The village is a sad sight, but it is the rabbits who lent it a touch of the macabre. Gross thistles, man-high nettles and elm-suckers swamp the gardens, mask the ground-floor windows and do their best to engulf all Imber (population, until it was evacuated in 1943, about 200); and under cover of this jungle growth the rabbits have taken the place over.

—Peter Fleming in *The Sunday Times*, 15/7/51.

## Warships in the Red Sea

THE British Empire faces trouble both in the Red Sea and in the Persian Gulf—right across trade and defence communications with India and the Far East. As a result, warships are sent to the troubled waters.

This kind of news seems simple enough and natural enough to-day, and it excites little comment. But to a Labour Party supporter of forty years ago it would have been a cause for indignation. And if such a man knew that his own party formed the government that sent the warships, he would have been completely dismayed.

Pacifism and Anti-Imperialism For in those days the Labour Party was affiliated to the Second International, and as such was committed to opposition to war and to armaments, and against Imperialism. Socialism was then represented as something radically different from capitalism—a way of life, a mode of brotherhood and equality between nations and races, an abjuring of methods of sabre-rattling and the big stick, as well as providing a different method of economy.

This older view of socialism persisted even between the wars with such figures as Lansbury, and there is something of it in some of the adherents of Bevan, though they are less naive. It was the remnants of this tradition which attacked Ernest Bevin and demanded a "socialist foreign policy". Behind this rather incoherent attack, lay something of the outlook of the older socialists, who were disturbed by the post-war events in Greece and by Bevin's acceptance of the dictum that "there must be continuity in foreign policy".

Victory of Practical Men Significantly, all this opposition has died down, easily defeated by practical reasons for meeting foreign exigencies in the normal way. There is something almost absurd in such demands to-day, and if a Labour member were to attack the sending of warships to the Red Sea and the

Persian Gulf, he would receive little support, or even attention from his own party.

However, there must be elderly members of the Labour Party who remember the bitter analyses which used to be made for propaganda purposes of "the politics of oil", and the manoeuvres and machinations of the oil barons. Such long memories may have twinges when they see Herbert Morrison advising the Anglo-Iranian Company, and insisting that the Government have a proper interest in promoting its welfare.

We doubt if they would to-day be more than passing twinges, however, and more recent adherents of the Labour Party are probably quite unconscious of anything amiss, so completely have they accepted the rôle of the party in power. For the government which administers the British Empire must carry out certain safeguards, must protect British interests . . . must therefore make full use of the Navy and the other Services in their traditional work in "maintaining the life-lines of the Empire".

### Fulfilment of Anarchist Criticism

Fifty and sixty years ago, the anarchists attacked the reformist and parliamentary socialists for their insistence that the important thing was to seize the State power. As anarchists foresaw, the result could only be that the wielders of power would change, not that they would wield it to bring about socialism as a new way of life. The present day Tsarism of the Russian Social Democratic Party illustrates the same general trend.

To-day we see the fulfilment of those anarchist criticisms. True, they have not come as "betrayals of the ideas and ideals of socialism", though that is how a pre-1914 Labour Party member would view them. Such critics have, however, moved with the times and what would have seemed a betrayal forty years ago, is to-day seen only as practical politics.

Yet the anarchists and the socialists of forty years ago are right. All the century's agitation for socialism was not so that Morrison could send warships to the Red Sea. It is not socialism that should change, but the illusion of the socialists that the desirable society can be brought into being gradually and piecemeal by using the machinery of government. That illusion should give place to the recognition that the world cannot be changed without completely changing its basic structure—its economic foundations in money and markets, and profit and banking, and their social reflections in wage-work and administration from above with material gain as the incentive to work.

Such a concept may seem vague, impractical. Yet it is in harmony with the natural social aspirations of man. Sending warships to troubled waters is not.

### ANARCHIST EDITOR JAILED

Amedeo Vannucci, editor of an Anarchist newspaper at Leghorn, Italy, has been sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for printing a libellous statement about the Rev. Gustavo Scagliotti, director of a Catholic Institute. *Evening Standard*, 5/7/51.

## Atomic Spying in Perspective

THE atmosphere of panic and suspicion engendered by treason trials in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries has often been commented upon in *Freedom*. In the West a similar phenomenon has been observable only in the trials for atomic espionage of such scientists as Nunn May and Klaus Fuchs (and the untried Bruno Pontecorvo) and such agents as Greenglass, Gold and the Rosenbergs. At the time of these trials, *Freedom* noted the atmosphere of hysteria which surrounded them: the trials are commented upon in the May issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, in an article entitled "Atomic Spy Trials: Heretical Afterthoughts", and the comments are of such interest that this article aims at presenting a summary of them.

The writer, Eugene Rabinowitch, is the editor of the *Bulletin*. He sets out to examine three widely-held propositions: (1) that without their spies the Soviet Union could never have challenged American atomic bomb supremacy, or hence threaten American cities with atomic bombs; (2) security measures for guarding atomic secrets have in the past been insufficient, more and better secrecy is needed in the future; (3) in view of the extreme damage inflicted by atomic spies, no penalty was too harsh for them and the death penalty inflicted on the Rosenbergs was fully deserved.

What Russia Has Gained Rabinowitch points out that the public is led to believe that without spies the Russians would never have had the atomic bomb at all. The perfidy of those who passed on information therefore becomes

limitless. This hysterical view has overwhelmed the educational campaign initiated by American scientists in 1945 under the slogan "There is no secret of the atomic bomb." "Those who always 'knew' that the Soviet scientists could not build an atomic bomb by themselves, but only 'steal' it from America, felt themselves vindicated."

In contrast to this hysteria, the recently published report of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy more soberly estimates that atomic spying has advanced the Soviet Union by "at least eighteen months". Rabinowitch points out that this figure is necessarily a guess: "Nobody can say with certainty whether the speed-up was by one year and a half, rather than by one year or two years." But his main point is that there is all the difference between saying that without the activity of spies the Russians would have no bomb (as the public are led to believe) and advancing their project by one or two years.

### Real Factors in Atomic Progress

He goes on to point out that "one must not forget that the development from scratch, of the supposedly most important secret of the American project—the mechanisms of the atomic bombs employed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki—was the result of less than a year of intensive work at Los Alamos. According to the Senate testimony of Admiral Parsons, the principles of these mechanisms were clearly established within a very short time after the beginning of this

work . . ." And he points out that in this field of internal ballistics the Russians have more experience than America and possessed a number of first-class specialists.

The bottlenecks in atomic bomb production have not in fact been "in the establishment of basic facts or the blue-printing of technical solutions, but in the actual construction of the large production plants. There is no reason to assume that the same was not true of the Soviet progress as well. This means that the speed of this progress probably was determined by factors on which spying had but little, if any influence—except possibly, by inducing their earlier initiation." On this last point, he points out that the important factor is not whether the U.S.A. had so many years start, or whether that start has been reduced by spies, or even on the ingenuity of Soviet engineers:

"The most important (factor) may well be whether convenient supplies of raw material for the production of nuclear explosive in the area dominated by the Soviet Union equal those available to American and British projects. From this point of view, the most fateful step, which has permitted the Soviet Union to achieve its present atomic strength, was not the betrayal of our secrets by May, Fuchs and Greenglass, but the decision of American political and military leaders in 1945 to give to the Soviet Union control over the parts of Czechoslovakia and Germany in which important uranium ore deposits were known to exist. These

regions had been reached by American troops first and abandoned to the Soviet Union in accordance with demarcation agreement. Perhaps, if the atomic bomb development in the United States had not been surrounded with such extreme secrecy, those responsible for the drawing of the demarcation line would have known better what they were giving away—or at least, would have been exposed to the advice of those who knew."

### Too Little, or Too Much Secrecy?

On the second question, Rabinowitch suggests that it would be impossible to conceal a project involving two billion dollars and two hundred thousand men, and that security checks can never cover so large a project. Indeed, the attempt to screen enormous numbers of people may so stretch the capacities of the checking authority as to reduce its efficiency in checking the really important questions, so that even from the standpoint of the F.B.I. (Federal Bureau of Investigation—equivalent to the C.I.D.) more secrecy is impracticable. He concedes that such checks might be possible in a totalitarian state in which "one-third of the population (including minors) spy on the other two-thirds, and the secret police can easily follow every step of a citizen". But obviously such a concession to totalitarianism would defeat the ideological aims proclaimed by the West. Whether they ensue or not will be seen.

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# The American Communal Settlements

In America from the 17th century to the 19th there were numerous ideal communities. Nearly all were formed by Europeans; some of them wanted to see the will of God done as it is in heaven; others hoped to disengage the true goodness of man from false institutions; most had suffered from religious intolerance and revolutionary defection at home, and all agreed that by their own direct action Utopia could be realised.

Mark Holloway has written an entertaining and thoroughly instructive history of these experiments, giving full accounts of fifteen communal settlements and describing many more in less detail. He surveys their economy, their inner administration and contact with the surrounding world, their art and provisions for education, and he takes a very lively interest in their sexual vagaries and reforms. Though he is often amusing about the large hopes and religious excesses of some of the settlers, his scepticism does no more than sharpen his sympathy for their achievements. He demonstrates that they "produced a high standard of living and workmanship, were pioneers in Negro and feminine emancipation, in democratic government, in eugenics, in the primitive psycho-analysis of mutual criticism, and in education and social reform. They were a benefit to

\*HEAVENS ON EARTH, by Mark Holloway. (Turnstile Press, 16/-).

their neighbours and also to the nation; and they showed by example that associative effort of this type can be highly satisfactory."

The longest-lived of all these communities was founded in 1735 by a German Baptist named Johann Beissel. He called it Ephrata, meaning Bethlehem. It was a small settlement at first, having about forty members, with men and women living in celibacy under monastic conditions. Their diet was meagre, their dress and custom ascetic, their religious beliefs peculiar: they used no iron in building and their mystical principles required them to adopt a curious set of measurements for their houses—so that the passages, for example, were only twenty inches wide. Nevertheless, they published many beautiful books and were celebrated for their choir and educational work—they gave something to the world other than an architectural image of sexual suppression. The men were war-resisters and the settlement was communist until 1786—so successfully that the members decided that they were too prosperous for their spiritual health. Accordingly they refused a gift of 5,000 acres of land from William Penn, and subsequently they let some of their workshops become idle. The community grew in numbers and threw

out branches elsewhere in America, and was not finally dissolved until 1934.

Somewhat less restrictive was the communist system introduced in 1842 by the German Inspirationists, who still prosper to-day in seven federated villages at Amana, Iowa. Each of their villages was economically self-subsistent, with its own school, store, factories and tavern; there were separate dwellings for families and communal dining and meeting houses. All subscribed to a central government invested in thirteen trustees who were elected annually; through this organisation a loss or lack in one village would be made up from the surplus of another. Daily councils, in consultation with smaller groups of experienced elders, discussed and planned the working arrangements. Though there was a method of religious and moral supervision which discouraged worldly frivolity, the members did not work hard, they ate well, drank beer and wine and smoked tobacco, and they admitted marriage. (The successful and progressive Shakers, who once had a membership of more than five thousand in eighteen communities, unfortunately believed in celibacy and so condemned themselves to virtual extinction after a hundred and fifty years.) In 1932, the Amanites abandoned communism for a

joint-stock co-operative system, but this seems to have made little difference to their communal spirit, and their numbers have not declined.

These and other religious settlers, notably the Rappites, proved that common ownership and distribution of goods according to need was a satisfactory basis for group life over long periods of time. Their art and craftsmanship suggested that despite their renunciation of worldly behaviour, they suffered no grave depletion or disorder of their emotional resources. But success was achieved at the cost of individual liberty in most cases, and was often attended by a degree of erotic suppression which few would consider wise or desirable to-day. A more democratic communism was a disastrous failure at New Harmony, and the history of Icaria makes rather painful reading however admirable the grim courage of Cabet's followers. Perhaps in some cases the religious believers had in part put their ideals into daily practice before they arrived, whereas the Owenites, Fourierists and others were attempting to do so for the first time. The evidence is scanty, and Mr. Holloway is unable to tell us how far failure was due to the influence of the old life on the new.

The Brook Farm co-operative, which maintained an adequate balance of manual labour and intellectual exercise, and which added to this variety a comparatively broad margin of personal liberty in action and thought (the members held religious beliefs of an undogmatic nature), might have lasted a long time if it had not succumbed to a heavy loss by fire, following upon an unhappy substitution of the Fourierist letter for the original spirit of mutual aid and tolerance. Accident also overtook the community of Modern Times (Long Island, 1850/7), founded by the Proudhonian anarchist, Josiah Warren—in this case a trade depression and the Civil War, which destroyed a manufacturing business on which the hundred or so participants depended. Warren, a printer and something of an inventive genius, founded three villages in all. The first, Equity, was practically stillborn; the second, Utopia, reached a vigorous infancy. Here, "Each family owned its own house and its own plot of land, exchanging labour on equitable terms by means of labour notes, which were used in every transaction and provided for all necessities." Of the third Mr. Holloway says: "It is a remarkable testimony to the individualist form of association that Modern Times held together without any central government. While its inhabitants were completely independent of one another, they were always ready to co-operate for any purpose that required combined action; and in their attractive little village, with its broad avenues, tree-shaded streets, and well-cultivated gardens, they might have continued to live happily for many years . . . Modern Times endured long enough to prove that Warren's theories were capable of practical application."

Communism combined with a widely diffused administration (resting on the sanction of all the members, expressed at a weekly general meeting) was the basis of the Perfectionist community of Oneida,

founded by the ingenious and capable J. H. Noyes. Noyes believed in sin but was unconvinced of his own culpability, so in a moment of illumination discerned that the Second Advent had already taken place and that he in his innocence must be one of the saved, whereas all self-confessed sinners must surely be damned; thus he found himself living by that heavenly ordinance which dispenses with marriage—"The marriage supper of the Lamb," he insisted firmly, "is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest." Hence it came about that the most prominent feature of Oneida was the system of Complex Marriage practised there, according to which any member might cohabit with any other within the limits of the community.—Disapproving of contraception, Noyes advocated Male Continence (which appeared to have meant *coitus interruptus*), to set a possible rise in population and spare women the pains of childbirth; to prevent random procreation, which was considered eugenically unsound. Another ingenious device, which incidentally helped to break up "selfish and idolatrous monogamous attachments, was the institution of Mutual Criticism, which was a sort of group analysis of individual delinquents—and even on occasions physically sick—as well as those in need of communal advice on their problems. Sometimes the sick were and certainly the system kept the body healthy; but one cannot help being sorry for those lovers who happened to be quite satisfied with each other and were parted by their more unselfish

The Perfectionists at Oneida and Wallingford, a sister community, engaged in agriculture and industry. They employed 250 labourers from outside, partly because of this, were able to live in considerable comfort. The main building at Oneida in its palmy days was centrally heated throughout, and supplied with baths and labour-saving kitchens. It contained several large parlours, a visitors' parlour, a reading and reference library of 5,000 volumes, with an abundance of newspapers and journals on two 'family' or recreation rooms, and a large number of bedrooms. (The members had separate bedrooms, the younger usually slept two in a room.) Their factories had the latest machinery; they ran a well-equipped school and a communal creche; they had an orchestra and engaged in every form of amusement and decorative embellishment that might bring them culture and happiness; these including hunting and fishing at their summer resorts by Oneida Lake . . . they survived for nearly forty years, until internal dissension and external attack brought their interesting and questionable heaven of 300-odd people to an end.

In the 19th century more than a hundred thousand persons lived in Utopia; few remain there to-day, of the original groups described by Mr. Holloway. Yet, as he points out, Utopia may at any moment become a necessity for us, too; all those anxious to survive the next post-war period will find his book a valuable prospectus.

L.A.

## The Principle of Autonomy

### 1. Even Dogs proclaim it.

THE tendency towards autonomy is one of considerable importance in biological and historical evolution.

The actual repugnance (of the normal adult, at least) to accept any direct subjection of his activity to the whims and wills of another individual, seems to be one of the permanent features of mankind at large. It may easily lead men of character to desperate deeds and to death; on the other hand, it may be pointed at as the main source of great human achievements; it appears therefore to be quite fundamental both in its negative and positive aspects—the will of resistance and the will of creative liberty. Perhaps we should recognize it to be of nearly the same physiological range as the avoidance of pain, the craving for food or the sexual desire.

It seems not to be confused with destructive aggression, the Instinct of Death, or the will of power and authority on other beings. The latter, however, may be a derived product, an attempt to compensate the lack of power on oneself and to make up the frustration of individual freedom.

We feel that under presently prevailing conditions, the autonomous impulse may suffer a great deal of deteriorations (repression into resentful neurotic attitudes, reversion to the sado-masochist type of relationship, or fall into primitive herd-like behaviour). The struggle for the autonomy of the Ego can be perverted into crime, but it can also be sublimated into Promethean generosity, protective of the feeble and oppressed, and aggressive only against the injustice of the powerful. (Even pan-militarism and world-wars have made appeal to the sense of personal liberty!) Something, after all, must have prevented man from falling to the condition of dogs, whose "reflex of freedom" was styled by Pavlov as a basic reaction, of the same level as fear, hunger and sex.

But the autonomistic factor seems, so to speak, of a more gratuitous character; its consideration opens a breach through the traditional notions of mechanised determinism. Therefore it is not absurd to refer to a Principle of Autonomy, in

handling psychological matters, just in the same way that Freud refers to the Principle of Pleasure.

The Principle of Autonomy can also be negatively and more abstractly described as the Anti-authoritarian Principle. It has been accepted by the Anarchists as the conscious expression of their attitude: they affirm that liberty is the only way to liberty, and that Autonomy demands equal liberty for all.

### 2. Autonomy is Mutual Liberty.

AS a philosophical principle, and as a criterion applicable to ethics, anti-authority involves the intellectual recognition of the autonomy of other individuals; practically it supposes a certain feeling of respect and even of sympathy towards the others and their individual tendencies—different, or competitive, or hostile as they can be. It supposes also an enlightened and passionate critical position in front of oppressive and servile behaviours, whatever guises they may ideologically assume in ourselves, in our neighbours, or in the society at large. It denounces all authority as evil.

Proudhon, in his *Confession of a Revolutionary*, professes and postulates Anarchy in the following terms: "All men are free and equal: therefore society, in accordance with its nature and destiny, is autonomic and ungovernable. True order springs from the free activity of all, without any government! Who lays a hand upon me to govern me is an usurper and a tyrant. I declare him my enemy."

"Society is perpetual motion. It does not require to be wound up, and it is unnecessary to beat time for it. It has in itself its pendulum, and its spring is always wound up. An organized society need laws as little as law-givers. Laws are in society as a spider's web in a beehive, they only serve to catch the bees."

Bakunin, in *God and the State*, emphasizes permanent revolt: "We are the systematic and principled enemies of every authority, of every governing force: we shall ever combat the authoritarian state idea and we will never recognise any social organisation which is not founded on the freedom of mankind."

Even without the hope of a complete abolition of authority, any objection to it (instead of subjection) asserts the autonomous value of life, and is a challenge to state power.<sup>(1)</sup>

### 3. Who Shall Win?

THE case for the Unique individual against cosmic Unity seems to be a desperate case. It is the case of life against death, of each evanescent and ephemeral tenuous accident of organicity, struggling and merging for ever into an Ocean of homogeneity and eternal repose.

Not an easy downhill leads towards individualization and autonomy, in a universe where the degradation of energy and the dispersion of matter are at the same time the natural law, our personal destiny, and the global result of all our records of struggle.

The Autonomistic Revolt may have to know itself as the only exception against the Economic law of Nature, as something absurd that breaks impiously the great rule of "the least effort possible" with its mysterious opposition to that "law of gravitation" of the quantitative world. Anarchism may be styled the revenge of inefficiency. The true Anarchist would follow the golden rule of "the greatest effort possible" to obtain some previsible effect. He feels that, out of the voluntary character of human effort, rather than out of the recordable result, a world

of values would emerge: a qualitative world of instantaneity, the rare and precious world of things that cannot be twice.

The victory of the Autonomist revolt against the levelling and lethal future of the common Nirvana can only be the victory of the lightning in the night. Individual progress is anti-historical and anti-physical, contradictory with the march of the Cosmos, and the progress of Unity, with the great Pilgrim's progress to the Grave.

Life of course is tragical, and the more conscious it is of its isolation, the more tragical it is.

But life is also a gay triumph of Time on Eternity, a wonderful equilibrium of forces and forms controlled together in the most perfect organism that exists: the human being. Life is not to be feared, and our allies in the duty or play of living are proven ones: a sound vocation, love, friendship, and the sense of humour.

So we shall carry many a day . . . not the last day.

ANDRÉ PRUNIER.

### What an Incredible Folly

"I feel sure that the time will come when people will find it difficult to believe that a rich community, such as ours, having such command over external nature could have submitted to live such a mean, shabby life as we do. And, once for all, there is nothing in our circumstances save the hunting of profit that drives us into it. It is profit which draws men into enormous unmanageable aggregations called towns, for instance; profit which crowds them up when they are there in quarters without gardens or open spaces; profit which won't take the most ordinary precautions against wrapping the whole district in a cloud of sulphurous smoke; which condemns so many to live in houses idiotically cramped and confined at best, and at worst, in houses for whose wretchedness there is no name.

I say it is almost incredible that we should bear such gross stupidity as this; nor should we if we could help it. We shall not bear it when the workers get out of their heads that they are but an appendage to profit grinding; that the more profits that are made the more work at higher wages there will be for them, and therefore, all the incredible filth, disorder, and degradation of modern civilisation are signs of their prosperity. So far from that, they are signs of their slavery. When they are no longer slaves they will, as a matter of course, claim that every man and every family should be generously lodged; that every child should be able to play in a garden; that the houses should be by their obvious decency and order be ornaments to nature, not disfigurements of it.

All this, of course, would mean the people—that is, all society—duly organised, having in its own hands the means of production, to be owned by no individual, but used by all as occasion called for its use; and only on those terms."

—WILLIAM MORRIS.

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(1) . . . . . If Caesar  
Can hide the Sun with a blanket,  
Or put the Moon in his Pocket—  
We will pay him tribute for light!  
(Shakespeare—*Cymbeline*)

## COMMENT

### PADDLING YOUR OWN CANOE

WALKING along the towpath recently, I was arguing with a young chap who did not agree with me that revolutionary experiments had any value. Later on, he told me of how he got to work. He worked at the sawmills on the river (one of the small tributaries of the Thames in London) and lived several miles lower down the river. It was a long distance by road, the buses were always crowded, and he had found a very pleasant way of getting to work. He was a canoe enthusiast and he simply got out his pleasure canoe, paddled down the river, tied up his boat at the boathouse nearby, and was there in a short time. "Why," I said, "you're simply a genius at revolutionary experiments and you imagine you don't believe in them. You're pioneering a profound change in the whole social and economic conditions in which this district is working and you imagine you're not a revolutionary . . ."

"Are you trying to take a rise out of me?" he asked.

"Nonsense! You think of the first man who took his bicycle to work. Somebody began that move and it has changed our whole social outlook. What has been the result? The bicycle before that was beyond the reach of the pocket of the ordinary man. He went to picnics on a horse-bus, held rather decorous parties at a few spots, and returned home still in his stiff collar. But when the bicycle became popular—because if you took it to work it finally became yours, as the bus never did—habits were revolutionised. Look at the crowds of young people going out on bikes to-day. They can go out far beyond the reach of the pre-bicycle era, they have cast out prudery and dress sensibly, they have destroyed as much of the Gloomy English Sunday as they could . . . And now you're taking to the river. Imagine canoe after canoe along the Thames and its tributaries, speeding to work—and learning that the river can be a place for enjoyment and pleasure. Well, they're already learning

that—you can see them at Richmond every week-end in the summer—but your revolutionary experiment is going to transform our waterways and bring pleasure into work. That's just what we need—to get away from the tradition that work has to be something behind long gloomy walls to which you're herded and driven. And somehow I have a feeling that a boss is going to find it tough to be up against the race of hardy watermen whom you're creating . . . I have a feeling that if he comes it too too much in the future they will take to their canoes and leave him high and dry on his wharf while they move down to pleasant fields for an afternoon's sun-bathing . . . Of course, you can be sure that all the newspapers who proudly believe themselves to be in the tradition of Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher will look on you as a lot of water-robbers. But in days to come when the Thames and the Clyde and the Severn and the Humber are alive with little craft taking people from their riverside homes to their places of work dotted about the banks you may be sure the newspapers will look back and probably give full credit to whatever politician first gets hold of the idea of taxing you, and they'll say he thought of the idea. Never mind. The advent of the motorbus drove Society out of Hyde Park. You may at least drive the millionaires' yachts off the river. At most you may bring the independent spirit of the waterways into industry and be the direct cause of workers' control being seized at last."

He eyed the canoe thoughtfully. "In the meantime I'm saving three bob a week on fares," he said. "Still . . . I bet the gaffer'd soon fork it out if he heard you spout."

He got in his boat.

"Off to work?" I asked.

"I don't know . . . it's a fine day, I might take it off . . . what can the so-and-sos do to you, anyway?"

INTERNATIONALIST.

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 12, No. 21 July 21, 1951

## FLOODS IN KANSAS

WHILE the newspapers of the world are mainly concerned with the cease-fire negotiations in Korea, or the American intervention in the Anglo-Persian oil dispute, disaster of another kind hangs over an enormous area of the United States.

The flooding of the Missouri shows that even in the most industrially advanced nation of the world, control of natural disasters is not yet attained. The bursting of oil stores and their conflagration adds yet more to the situation.

Natural disasters have always been a part of man's relationship with nature. The eruption of a volcano, a large-scale earthquake, illustrate aspects of nature which are uncontrollable for man to control. Wide-spread famines or floods on the face of the earth are similar disasters, and are mentioned by the newspapers in the same breath as "acts of God".

In reality, famines to-day are God-sent. They are products of poverty. Not only rains and crop failures contribute to them, but disturbance of markets, failure of marketing mechanisms, and peasant idleness and poor equipment all are involved.

It is with floods in America. Geologists have long known that the causes are the other side of the dust-bowl. Their causes are known and have been known for twenty or more years. Attempts, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority undertakings, have been made to undo their effects. There has been no widespread attack on their main cause, which is the method of economy in soil exploitation used for nearly a century in the Middle West of America.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, enormous total crops of grain were grown at very low cost by ploughing and sowing the vast virgin prairies. The export of such American grain to Europe undercut the European farmers' market and ruined English farming and the Russian export trade.

But the disastrous effects were not felt merely in Europe. When the crop-yields began to fall in America because of exhaustion of the soil, it was cheaper to move on to further virgin territory, than to keep the land in good heart by proper husbandry. Over the decades, therefore, enormous tracts of America were exhausted. The soil was too impoverished to maintain a protective covering of vegetation and it blew away in the dust bowls.

It is this soil erosion which lies behind the periodic regular floods which take an enormous toll in American life and property. Everyone who has studied the problem knows that its cause lies in the "economic need" to produce as cheaply as possible without regard for good husbandry. It had its effect on destroying British agriculture seventy years ago. It no doubt had its contribution to make to the causes of the collapse of Russian Tsarism. Only later did the Americans themselves feel the long-term results in the production of dust-bowls and annual floods.

Such disasters are man-made. They are just as much a result of market economy as are poverty and war. Sympathy for the victims becomes meaningless if it does not produce a determination to attack this basic economic foundation for such disasters.

*"All the regulations of mankind are turned to the end that the intense feeling of life may be lost in continual distractions."*  
—NIETZSCHE

TWO interesting disputes are being argued over in educational circles, both of which stem from the Education Act of 1944. One is the row over the closing of village schools, the other is the question of "Comprehensive Schools"—that is the uniting of "grammar", "technical", and "modern" schools into one, which has come to the fore again with the announcement on July 12th of the L.C.C.'s plans for five of such schools and the publication of the Labour Party's pamphlet *A Policy for Secondary Education*.

The case against the "tripartite" system of dividing children by aptitude at eleven years of age and "educating" them accordingly, was ably put by Mr. Ben Morris in a recent broadcast in the B.B.C. series "Studies in Social Change", which is very well worth quoting. Mr. Morris says:

"In Britain as a whole, however, we have only recently replied to the question, 'Who is to be educated?' with the answer, 'All the children of all the people.' We are now forced to ask ourselves, 'What kind of education have we in mind?' Some suppose that, after the English Education Act of 1944, the era of equality of educational opportunity has already arrived. But it seems to me that the educational system now finds itself the victim of its own two major traditions, the one of a liberal culture originally intended for a professional and governing class, the other of an essentially utilitarian training designed for the masses engaged in the production and distribution of goods and services. The official solution of course is to stress the need for what is called 'diversity of educational provision' and for 'parity of esteem' as between different types of school. The urbanity of such phrases, however, serves only to conceal a social conflict; it does nothing to solve it.

"Such a conflict exists. It is revealed in the bitter struggle to obtain entry to the grammar school, which is regarded primarily as the road to the most desirable occupations. Indeed, the demand for equality of educational opportunity seems to have produced a widespread phantasy that professional jobs can be found for all. But behind these catchwords, 'equality', 'diversity', 'parity', lurks a genuine problem, for which the English secondary school system will have to provide a solution. How? My own view is that we shall have to create alternatives to the present form of grammar schools. We need to balance technical competence with liberal insight, critical judgment, and humane exercise of authority. That is clear enough, but how to achieve this end is not. The most dangerous solution to my mind appears to be the one at present in greatest favour, the tripartite system of

## War and Raw Materials

UNTIL quite recently wars were strictly private affairs with hired mercenaries fighting each other, not for patriotism, loyalty or honour but for hard cash and harder loot.

The raw materials for these business-like brawls were a certain amount of courage, a taste for murder, some good horseflesh, a sense of aim and a little well-sharpened steel.

That was the sensible way to have a war.

But in the last hundred years trends have changed. Wars are no longer private disputes, they are public quarrels in which anybody can (and nearly always has to) join in. Unbalanced crackpots who don't care much for wiping out their fellow men are swiftly led either to gaol or to the puzzled ignominy of the Tribunal for Conscientious Objectors.

The raw materials, too, are different. The courage and sticking power are there, it is true, but things like vast quantities of coal, steel, oil, copper, molybdenum, aluminium, bauxite, uranium and so on are needed. And when these things get scarce you can bet your old Army boots that they are not being grabbed to make olive branches.

Oil, metaphorically speaking, is one of the best straws in the martial wind in this matter. The Minister of Fuel and Power's reply to Mr. Astor revealing that petrol coupons have already been printed "as an insurance against any emergency that might arise" is a significant and grim indication of what the Government is really thinking about in these matters.

—Public Opinion, 8/6/51.

## CONDITIONING OUR REFLEXES

Mr. Nicholas said that social advertising must now be mastered as thoroughly as the art of selling goods. First, there was the great task of effecting, if possible, reconciliation between employers and employed in the labour market. Advertising could be used to educate everyone concerned in the factors which governed prosperity, irrespective of political creeds. Another task was the social and psychological unification of popular attitudes, thought, and feelings among the countries opposed to the Communist ideology.

—Report of International Advertising Conference, Manchester Guardian, 12/7/51.

# IT'S THE SIZE OF THE CLASS THAT MATTERS MORE THAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

grammar, technical, and modern schools—the latter a euphemism for a school designed for the pupils of average and sub-average intelligence. Such a policy favours the increase of social segregation. It separates from each other in early puberty, and more or less permanently, those who will later become administrators, technicians, and skilled and semi-skilled and unskilled workers. This solution seems to me to misconceive the needs of the type of society we are at present building up by other means, and it appears to be based on a grossly over-simplified psychological theory of development.

"The present administrative practice of 'allocating' children—a dreadful inhuman term—at the age of eleven to a variety of secondary schools or courses is perhaps the best which local education authorities can do with a complex and disturbing problem. The choice of the age of eleven, however, has no sound psychological foundation and the whole matter is a cause of anxiety in many homes, which is not greatly relieved by the opportunity for re-examination at thirteen. Moreover, what is eventually discovered about the differentiation of abilities is irrelevant—administrative convenience apart—to the question of the provision of distinctive types of school. The present rôle of research in education in this field should in fact be as much concerned with the teasing out of issues and the asking of the right questions as with finding answers to them."

How well he exposes the class educational system of a class-divided society. The system of—to revert to pre-war terminology—public (i.e., private), secondary and elementary schools, was an exact mirror of the administrative, executive, and operative grades of industry, or

## A Religious Problem

The Bloemfontein Ring of the Dutch Reformed Church has been greatly upset by the case of two parishioners who have two white children and one "not so white".

The chairman said the church laws made a distinction between Europeans and non-Europeans. It was obvious that in this case one of the parishioners was not of pure European stock.

The Rev. S. van Schalkwyk, however, felt the matter should be handled "very carefully". It could not be said definitely one of the partners was Coloured. The child might be a throwback to a third or fourth generation.

It was not fair, he said, to punish the parents for something for which they were not directly responsible. Apparently none of the delegates, however, felt it unreasonable to punish the child if it could be established one of the parents was Coloured.

The Guardian (Cape Town).

## FREEDOM PRESS

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★  
27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

officers, N.C.O.'s and 'other ranks' in the military hierarchy. The first to provide leaders, the people who will say what has to be done; the second to provide technicians and 'supervisory grades', the people who say how to do it and see that it is done; and the third to provide people with sufficient knowledge to do what they are told. It has often been said that what W. R. Lethaby called the "organised ignorance of the Education Act of 1870", was provided because the complexity of modern industry demanded a certain minimum knowledge of arithmetic and the ability to read and write. Elementary education had gone far beyond that minimum before the war but it remained the system for the "lower ranks" of society, i.e., the people who get their hands dirty at work. And though the Act of 1944 changed the name of the senior elementary school to the secondary modern school, many parents recognise this as a change in name only and, as Mr. Morris says, regard what used to be called secondary schools and are now grammar schools, as the road to the most desirable occupations.

Incidentally, those people who are furious at the thought that many manual workers earn more than some "professional people", should learn from this, that what people hanker after for their children is not the most lucrative jobs but those jobs which carry with them social prestige.

The Labour Party pamphlet declares, quite correctly, that the threefold division of schools is "bound to inherit the old tradition of class segregation", and its central argument is epitomised in a rather unpleasantly expressed sentence, "If this is to be the 'century of the common man', it must be made the century of the common child." Of the arguments which can be used against the idea of 'comprehensive' education, while accepting the framework of our educational system, many are based purely upon a desire for the continuance of a class-divided society, and some on the fear that the proposals would imply a leveling-down of academic standards, but the most important objection is that the school would have to be an enormous impersonal institution. An editorial in the *Times* says: "If a grammar school should have at least 500 pupils to allow it to carry enough staff to offer a good range of sixth form courses, then a comprehensive school, taking all the non-academic children in the area as well, would have to have about 2,500 pupils."

The authors of the pamphlet do not take this view, indeed they emphasise that "the comprehensive school is not necessarily a large school, nor does it set out to provide mass education", and to prove their point they outline plans for schools of 600 and 900 pupils. On the other hand they say, "The arrangements of numbers of classes catering for the specialised bents of children should not be such as to make unreal demands on staffing and accommodation." As a Conservative critic of the proposals remarks, "The meaning of this is that parents will be compelled to send their children to the 'comprehensive' school, and then will be told that the courses suitable to their children's aptitudes are not available, because to provide them would involve 'unreal demands on staffing and accommodation.'"

The difference between principle and practice is shown in the London County Council's announcement. Its Education committee has recently approved proposals for building five comprehensive secondary schools, the first three of which, at Woolwich, Lambeth and Wandsworth, will each house 2,210 children, two of them mixed and one for boys only. Mr. R. M. Wood, chairman of the committee said that comprehensive schools would produce a population which would

be more understanding and would show more mutual respect. "We shall get a society in which all walks of life may wear the same old school tie," he added. A full system of comprehensive schools would do away with the need for testing and assessment of abilities and aptitudes of children at an early age and obviate any nervous strain and distortion of teaching in the primary school. One of the merits of the comprehensive system was that a child's potentialities could be assessed and the "late developer" could be given opportunities which might otherwise be denied him.

He explained that there was no question of bright children being held back in the new schools, and the dull children would not be discouraged by teachers trying to force them along too quickly. Mr. Wood urged, further, that the school would mean a richer life for the staff as it would bring together, for example, the sixth-form master and one who was teaching backward children. The London child was used to living in a large community, but he must not feel that he was lost in it, and special provision would be made by a type of house system for breaking down the numbers of children into small units.

It will be seen that the organisers are not unaware of the difficulties they will have to overcome and perhaps one should postpone judgment until the schools are open and the scheme can be seen in operation but it does seem that, in London, with its dense population giving opportunities for interchange of specialist staff, there would have been an opportunity for trying out a comprehensive school on the scale of a more reasonable school population. It seems to me that the one real advantage that the privately-run schools have over the schools to which the overwhelming majority of people go, is their bigger ratio of staff to pupils, in other words their small classes. When it is claimed that the comprehensive school is only feasible when the number of pupils runs into thousands, it simply means the present over-large classes are accepted as a standard. So the real issue in the discussion is the urgent need to reduce the size of the individual class.

## NEWSPAPER PROTEST IN INDIA

The majority of newspapers in India observed a *hartal*—day of mourning on Thursday, 12th July, as a protest against the Indian Government's amendment to the article in the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression. Out of 140 English-language and vernacular newspapers, 100 did not appear.

## UNESCO SALARIES

We recently commented on the fantastic percentage of the budget of Unesco devoted to its own administration. A Sunday paper quoted last week the salaries of some British members of the staff. The first gets £3,900, the second £3,640, the third £3,460, the fourth and fifth £2,950, the sixth £2,800—tax free in all cases!

## SOCIAL NOTE

A throbbing blast of hot jazz swept over boiled shirts and taffeta at the Royal Festival Hall in London last night. Songs were cleaned up, and King Jazz was on best behaviour for entry into high society. Protested singer George Melly, who had to change some lines: "No one can understand me anyway when I sing." Reynolds News, 14/7/51.

## ANARCHISM IN BRAZIL

IN Rio, since 1946, the anarchists have resumed their place in the everyday struggle for freedom and against official and clerical reaction, by grouping and putting forth a journal. Our activities had been banned for fifteen years, under the Vargas dictatorship, when the whole of the press was under severe official censorship.

However active it may have been in the foregoing years—particularly in the early twenties, when the trade unions were mostly under the influence of anarchism—our movement, after the long darkness is now what could be called an infant one.

Several groups and scattered individuals act in an interwoven network throughout Brazil. The mass of the movement however is concentrated in the two major cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Two periodicals are published: *Acao Direta* in the former and *A Plebe* in the latter. Books and pamphlets are being published as well.

Now the shadow of reaction is visible again. Vargas is back in the presidential chair. In fact, such had been the tacit submission of the people during his pre-

vious reign that when he was pushed out everybody cried, and five years later at the next election he was chosen again by an overwhelming majority. He who had torn into pieces the Constitution, had shut out the Parliament and proclaimed the Fascist *Estado Novo* and cried "Voto nao enche barriga," was brought back to power by the very means he had utterly despised.

It is notorious that his demagogical gifts were supported by the very effective help of the Communists who in 1933/34 induced the workers to enter the official trade unions (yes, they exist in Brazil, too) which are controlled by the Labour Ministry. By these means the workers' resistance was shattered into pieces, the free labour organisations having been prohibited and the resisting ones persecuted, their adherents being arrested, or, if foreigners, expelled from the country.

Having thus cleared the way, Vargas calmly advanced his programme of "protecting" the workers, i.e., raising wages, and, with the other hand, raising the prices of commodities. For this he is known as "pai dos pobres e mao dos ricos"—father of the poor... but mother of the rich.

# HOUSING: THE CINDERELLA - 2

At one time the requirements of the English gentry were such that they needed to take possession of large areas of farm land for sheep rearing. To do this they evicted by force. This took a violent form in Scotland where the crofters, driven off their meagre lands in order that the laird could spend his free week-ends massacring wild-life, were evicted by fire and sword and driven out of their country into every corner of the world. This, however, is not the modern English "way of life". In order to permit the expansion of commerce and finance, which has centred on London, it has become necessary to take over practically all the houses of any comfort built prior to the present century, as well as erect massive new edifices. The new lords do not use fire and sword, they work through corporations and solicitors and banks. It is none the less effective and there has been no resistance whatever. If you care to-day to walk through what was once fashionable London, you may see the result. The elegant houses of Park Lane, Mayfair, Grosvenor Square, Piccadilly, which were not quite so desirable for the Upper Income Brackets when the advent of the motor brought the populace on their doorstep, are no longer dwelling places but offices. The whole of West and West Central London is inhabited by office buildings, and Commerce and Finance finds itself more at home there than in its traditional home in the City. At the same time, however, we are told that it is impossible to house people in this part of London for there is no room to build. [The Borough Council of Holborn, where office buildings are being built by finance corporations for long lease to government departments, has declared that no sites for housing remain in the borough.—Eds.] They are condemned to live far from their work, for the most part in the areas of London built for the prosperous middle-class who attended the 1851 Exhibition (basement for the skivvies now a self-contained flat, two guineas, no conveniences, no children). The middle-

class has grabbed the rich agricultural land that once fed half the country and built themselves little suburban garden cities. The upper-class has gone farther out still, hogging the countryside in which one might otherwise be disposed to wander. There are many excuses for the housing famine of to-day. Would it not be reasonable to say that there would certainly be none in London if the needs of commerce and finance so far as their own administration was concerned, came second to the problem of giving people somewhere to live? It may not be very convenient for two businesses to share one office (although it would presumably reduce the costs which they pass on to the public) but it would be far less inconvenient (particularly if, in a competitive economy, they were not similar businesses) than expecting two or three women to share one kitchen. The fact that any question of taking away housing space from business cannot be considered is a root cause of the present crisis. It would come hard on the Government to be expected to take a lead. It is itself a serious offender. During the war the Ministries went out grabbing as much space as they could. It will never be clear to me what an organisation like the Ministry of Labour (in a time of full employment, with exchanges all over the country providing office space) can possibly find to do in all the luxury flats which it managed to commandeer. Once during the war, as a result of an argument with the Ministry I got access to one of their sumptuous blocks in a fashionable London square, where every self-contained flat was made into an office for an executive (complete with bathroom). The whole lot could have been put together in one large hall (of which there are several available) if the desks were close together (as in a bank or insurance office). But these were executives, if you please... One desk per office for them. I may say they are still there.

If they eventually come out (having got offices specially built for them) is there any chance that the people who need houses will get them? Very faint. The film magnates and stockbrokers will then move in (if they do not become office blocks). But at least some housing will be released for someone somewhere down the line. It is evident that there is no lack of houses, the lack is one of social organisation; how to get into them. In a free society the problem will be how to build sufficient comfortable houses. This is something architects are even now tackling and no conscientious architect likes to have to build jerrybuilt houses—when he is free to enter into frank discussion with the building workers and with the people who will live in the houses, unhampered by the restrictions of capitalist and State society, advances will be on a rapid scale. In the meantime, let us understand well where the trouble lies: not with the building workers who are always accused (so that the reader of the Press might well imagine it was not the "lazy Irish" labourers but Herbert Morrison and Richard Stokes who built the Pleasure Gardens at Battersea) nor with the architect who is forced to work according to the financier. It lies with faulty social organisation, and we should brook no excuse for the complacent town councillor whose love of power brings him to a position of authority where he inscribes his name on a stone to show that he is the person who built the bridge or the hospital—but who in reality is the person who stood between society and the bridge or the hospital for so long. This is important because in trying to press for homes fit to live in at the present time, the perpetual excuse is the arms programme. It is an example of using words to cloak meanings. In point of fact, rearmament does not really prevent better conditions both in the wage packet or in social amenities. Actually there is no better opportunity for the

workers to demand more. Under this mad economy it is far harder to get a reasonable amount out of the authorities or the employer in time of unemployment than it is in time of war-employment. It becomes necessary for labour to be mobile, and if people are going to agree to go from Plymouth to Birmingham and live in hostels they have only themselves to blame. The steel employers would soon build houses if it were essential to getting a supply of labour, nor would there be any hesitation by the authorities to grant licences.

There is a lot of grumbling by people who imagine a home is a sort of a reward for an ex-soldier. If they choose to listen to propaganda (which in point of fact belongs to the first world war and was not used in the second because it sounded so corny) naturally they may look for the homes for heroes. In point of fact flats in London in particular are a reward for not joining the army. The people living with the in-laws are people who spent the war years abroad, in the Forces. Those who managed to stay in civilian life and also in town during the blitz were able to get rooms at reasonable rentals in which they still live at the same rents. It is ridiculous to contradict the plain facts merely because a few patriots would prefer it otherwise. The lesson for the future need hardly be rubbed in. The whole point is what people consider more essential? To be off in the army or to have a place which to live? The two things are always reconcilable. It may well be there are reasons for supporting war after all, there are also reasons for being somewhere to live afterwards. What is the next generation going to know of the homes, one asks? The price of flat rises as the dwelling places become scarce. It is all very well one generation with the family of the next, but how long can this go on?

FROM PAGE ONE

## Atomic Spying in Perspective

### Legality of the Sentences

The last part of his article is devoted to a matter of first-class interest—the legality of the sentences—especially the death sentences on the Rosenbergs. He begins by pointing to fundamental differences in the conception of law. "One of the fundamental differences between the totalitarian states, as evolved in Russia by Lenin (and initiated in Germany and Italy by Hitler and Mussolini), and the democratic society is their attitude toward law. The totalitarian concept of law is that of a handy and flexible instrument, to be used in the interest of the State and not binding on the State itself. Crime in the Soviet Union and other totalitarian systems, is whatever runs contrary to the interests of the State, as interpreted by its rulers. The judiciary, in these systems, is an organ of the political administration."

By contrast, "in the democratic concept, laws are norms which apply to all citizens equally and at all times and are binding on the State... history proves that the nearest approach to freedom and justice in a society is achieved when objective and stable laws are maintained supreme and inviolate in conflict with momentary passions of the people and necessities of the State."

Anarchists have criticisms of democratic law in a society of unequal prosperity, but in general the distinction drawn above may be taken as valid. Rabinowitch draws attention to the growth of totalitarian procedures in the administration of "free countries", but also to the yet more disturbing approval of the death penalty for peace-time spying on the part of the public and the press. He points to Dorothy Thompson as being one of the very few critical voices.

The death penalty for spying is provided "in time of war" only, and by implication only if carried on behalf of an enemy country. To argue that the Soviet Union "has never been a true ally" is to make private individuals wiser than propagandists of the Roosevelt administration like Ambassador Davies. He concludes that the death penalty was applied to the Rosenbergs as a sop to public opinion (inflamed by false views about the importance of atomic spying) and in breach of the dispassionate needs of law.

But he also points to something else: "The other aspect of the sentence that makes one uneasy is the comparison of the relatively mild sentences imposed on the actual betrayers of atomic secrets—May, Fuchs, Greenglass—with the harsher sentences given to the 'middlemen' through whose hands this information passed on its way to the Soviet officials. Not only Fuchs under the British law, but Greenglass under the American law got away, the first with fourteen, the second with fifteen years of imprisonment. Gold, the second link through which the information passed, has been sentenced to thirty years, while the two Rosenbergs received the penalty of death. The general impression is that the penalty has been in inverse relation to the readiness with which the members of the spy ring, once apprehended, have assisted the investigating authorities in the search for further members of the organisation. The Rosenbergs were the only ones who refused to admit their guilt even in the face of overwhelming evidence, and it was this stubbornness that has brought them the extreme penalty.

"Now it is common practice—at least in the American courts—that members of crime gangs who agree to turn State's evidence are promised and actually get a lighter punishment than their crimes would have brought upon them otherwise. As stated before, courts usually have the freedom to reduce the penalty below the normal level, in consideration of extenuating circumstances among which frank confession and readiness to assist the State is counted as one. It is something different, however, to see stubbornness in denying guilt and refusal to lead the investigation to further accomplices punished by an unusually severe sentence."

No comment is required.

Altogether, Rabinowitch has provided valuable material for a re-assessment of atomic spying. The rôle of secrecy and investigation in the maintenance of public hysteria in the totalitarian manner emerges

(To be concluded)

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS at HYDE PARK  
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.  
INDOOR MEETINGS  
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.  
at the PORCUPINE (corner of Cross Road at St. Newport Street next Leicester Sq. Underground)

These Meetings are suspended for the Summer months. They will re-commence in SEPTEMBER.  
Watch this column for future Announcements.

### NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM at 7.30  
JULY 24—Discussion on FUTURE GROUP ACTIVITY.  
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

### SOUTH LONDON

Fortnightly meetings, sponsored by the S. London Anarchist Group, are held on alternate Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. at the KENTISH DROVERS Public House, Peckham (corner of High Street and Rye Lane)

### GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS at MAXWELL STREET  
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.  
With John Gaffney, Frank Leach, Jimmy Raeside, Eddie Shaw

### KINGSTON

Any Comrades interested in forming a Group in the KINGSTON area, are invited to write to Freedom Press.

## 1951 SUMMER SCHOOL

This year's Summer School will be held in GLASGOW, 25th & 26th AUGUST  
To be followed by a week's camping at the Gare Loch.  
Applications to: John Gaffney, 18, Finnieston Street, Glasgow, C-1, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

## SYNDICALISM — THE WORKERS' NEXT STEP — 10

# The Commune and the Syndicates

JUST as the Syndicates are the organisations of the producers, the Communes express the needs of the consumers. Workers, of course, are consumers as well as producers, but even in a society where useless toil had been eliminated and the millions who to-day work but produce nothing can turn to productive activity, there will be plenty of people who are not producers in the ordinary sense.

Housewives, children and old people are the three most obvious categories in this field. (Perhaps it is not correct to describe housewives as unproductive, for motherhood is surely creative enough! But in the ordinary sense they are so only indirectly.) And it is to assess the needs of these sections of society, as well as the general needs of society as a whole that the commune will exist. The function of the Syndicates will be to produce what is necessary, that of the commune to assess what is necessary.

The commune is simply a council of the people—or in very small communities, the whole people—who come together to organise those affairs which are the special concern of the locality. There again, the smaller the units can be, the more easily can everyone's voice be heard, and in the case of the village it is easily seen how a council could be established. In large towns, however, the problem is more difficult, but even here if the principle of decentralisation is followed, small units can be established.

Even to-day every big city consists of many districts, often quite clearly defined, under the authority of Borough Councils. These, however, are controlled more and more from the central Government and in any case dominated by middle-class tradesmen aspiring to civic honour, a political career or just the municipal contracts. But big cities are the products of centralised economies. London is the biggest city in the world, not only because it is the capital of England, but because it is the administrative centre of a huge empire. Following a social revolution, the decentralisation of control would lead to a decentralisation of the physical environment. The monstrous cities of the 20th century, which create more problems of administration alone than they can ever hope to solve, would serve no useful purpose in a free, moneyless society. They are expressions in stone of the centralised power of capitalism and the State.

Anarchists and Syndicalists are not ashamed to pronounce their Regionalism. While others look to the centralised State to plan their economics, we look to the ordinary people, in their places of work and where they live, to organise all that is necessary. And we wish to see each region as nearly self-supporting as possible, so as to ease the problems of supply and demand and of distribution.

Like the Syndicates, the Communes are federal in their co-ordination, but I can see no reason for the establishment of regional or national councils on the same lines as the Syndicates. Where several communes are affected by a particular circumstance, as for example, the planning of a hydro-electric system, it would be perfectly easy for regional discussion to take place, but once the plan has been settled, in conjunction with the relevant Syndicates, of course, those Syndicates could be left to get on with the job.

The Communes and the Syndicates are interdependent. For the fullest possible discussion and satisfaction of municipal needs, the saving of waste and of unnecessary work, producer-consumer co-ordination must be effected. In the planning of a building scheme, for instance, not only the architects and the builders should be consulted, but also the people who are going

to live in the new buildings. Their cultural activities—the planning of their theatre, their schools, their social centres—what amenities they look for, what local habits have to be taken into account—through the Commune all this can be settled. As things are to-day, the product of the architect and the builder—has too often been found to be lacking some quite easily provided amenity—for want of discussions with the prospective tenants.

Child welfare would become the responsibility of the Commune. While the organisation of the schools could be safely left to the Teachers' Syndicate, a system of education is inadequate which does not provide for co-operation with the parents, and, by no means least, with the children themselves—and an integration of adult and child life.

The old folk, too, must be provided for. The abolition of the money system and its inevitable rationing by the purse would itself lift a tremendous burden from those who exist on tiny pensions, and in a society which recognised the right of all to the satisfaction of all their needs, the fact that someone is too old to continue working would not be a reason for condemning him to a miserable pittance. Old people should have equal access to the products of society with everybody else, and in fact should not receive less attention, but more. Help in the home should be provided where necessary and indeed any special services which may be called for.

The Commune, in a free society, in short, would be the basis of that society outside of industry. Anarchists to-day are rather chary of using the word "Communism" because of its unpleasant political association with the Stalinists and Trotskyists. In point of fact, the political Communist parties have nothing in common with the free communism which only the Anarchists advocate. Political parties look to the State, the commune must be an expression of social feeling among the people.

Distribution in a free society seems to present a problem in the minds of many just coming into contact with Anarchist or Syndicalist ideas. I hope I have shown how the Commune would be the organ through which the needs of society could be measured and that the industrial Syndicates would be the means through which the necessary goods were produced and distributed to where they were wanted.

As far as the actual presentation of the goods to the public is concerned, it is obvious that retail shops as we know them to-day would disappear with the money and profit systems. In their place could simply be established distribution centres where all would be given freely all they wanted. Perhaps some communities would have different distribution centres for different goods; perhaps under one large roof would be gathered all the products available. The important thing is that they will be there—for who can doubt the capacity of 20th century man to produce an abundance of all he needs if he would only stop wasting his time on things he does not need?

The answer to the old question "What will you do with the greedy man?" is simply—satisfy his greed! For greed is so much a product of insecurity and fear that only in a society in which we are all secure, because free, and thus unafraid, can the greedy man cease to be a problem.

In the free society that will follow the social revolution, the Commune will be the means by which municipal needs find expression, and public services are provided. The Commune is an essential counterpart to the Syndicate.

PHILIP SANSOM.

Next Week: Conclusion: THE CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE