

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; he that dares not reason is a slave."

—Sir William Drummond

## NOT TOO MUCH FALL-OUT—YET

ON a small Danish island this week, the water supply of the 100 islanders was declared unsafe for drinking owing to contamination by radio-activity. The water supply on this island came direct from rain-water.

This news item was given by the BBC, and by the third or fourth time it was broadcast, the news-reader was adding the re-assuring comment 'Not many people get their drinking water from rain water.'

But don't they? Is there any source of water for any purpose other than rain? The seas are fed by rivers, which are but drains for the water which has fallen as rain, condensed from clouds which were formed by evaporation from the seas, lakes and rivers themselves.

The water goes round and around, and it will circulate innocently enough as long as there are no malign materials for it to pick up on the way down. Evaporation is, as far as water is concerned, a cleansing process, but when water vapour condenses in the atmosphere and comes down as rain it brings down with it the junk which, thanks to our bomb-testers, is hanging about in the atmosphere.

This would appear to be the simple reason why radio-active fall-out is coming down to earth quicker than was expected. It is not merely a matter of gravity.

### Reassurance—Plus Filters

As far as drinking water is concerned, of course, a great many processes of filtering—natural, through the earth, and contrived, through water-works' filtering plants—and of 'purification' and fluorination, take place before it comes sparkling and splashing through our chromium-plated taps.

As usual, the innocent—the humble dwellers on a small Danish island—are having to suffer for the misdeeds of the clever, the advanced, the guilty. Hence the BBC's humorous little reassurance to its British listeners. But the first filter through which rain-water passes is the soil. It is on to the soil also that gravity deposits radio-active material—which is indestructible and carries its deadly qualities for an unknown number of years.

The clever British, Americans and Russians may have their water supplies well protected—may have, for do we know?—but so far their twisted technological geniuses have not devised means of producing their food other than through the soil. Thus it is that worried men are constantly checking the level of radio-activity in our food.

### Sanguine Supermac

Our Prime Minister, however, is, as we well know, unflappable. He never gets worried. He doesn't get his drinking water (does he drink

water?) direct from the rain-barrel, and his favourite stretches of the good earth are the grouse-moors of Scotland.

Indeed, there are those who are of the opinion that our Premier is really out of this world anyway and is able to soar, like Superman, above the radio-active rubbish clattering about the heads of us mere mortals into realms where his astral policies find the appreciation they deserve.

The situation with Supermac might in fact even be that in his

concern to ensure his place in posterity, he is neglecting to ensure that there will be a posterity to give him a place!

Certainly the statement on radio-activity which he circulated is characterised more by bland self-satisfaction than by concern for the results of his policies.

Supermac's statement maintains that the available evidence shows that:

'the concentration in human bone of strontium 90 attributable to what has

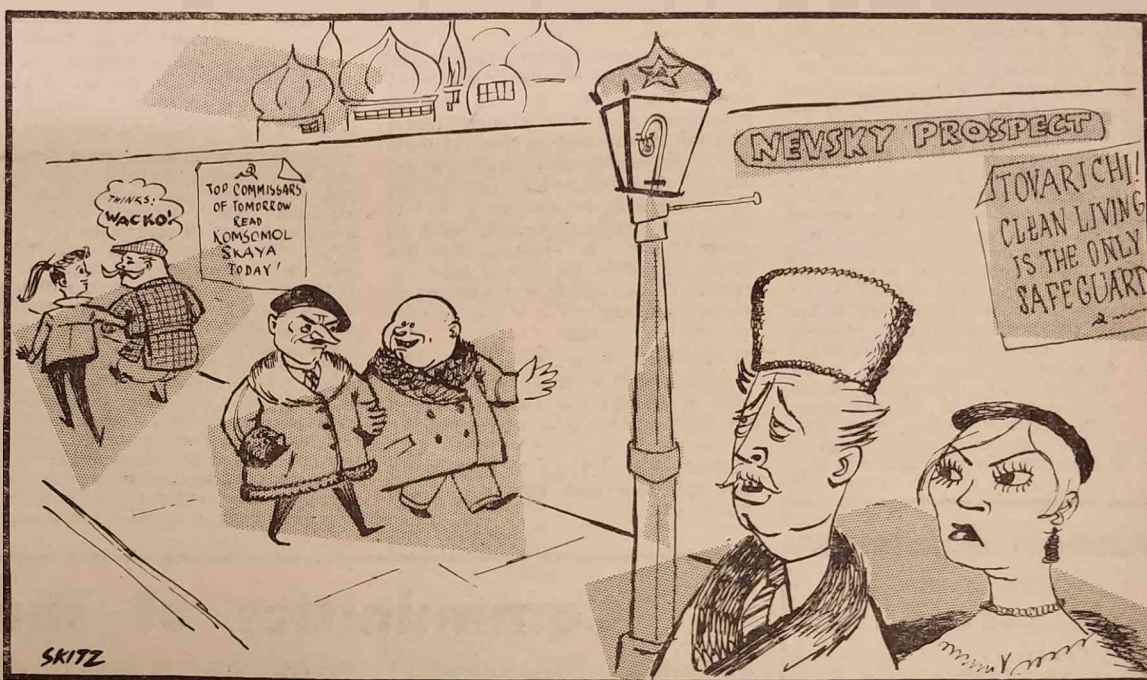
already been injected into the stratosphere is likely to remain below that at which immediate consideration would be necessary.'

And it concludes that the concentration of strontium 90 in bone is unlikely to approach the danger level, but the statement also draws attention to the fact that no precise indication of the future situation can be made 'because the contamination of food is dependent on the rate of deposition in the immediate past.' (Our italics.)

### Russian & American Gifts

The heavy rainfall of last summer, it is thought, may have played some part in the greater fall-out rate which

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"YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT M'DEAR. THESE AMATEURS WILL KILL THE GAME!"

## Suggestion for Candidates

WHILE following the pre-election antics of our leading politicians we have been speculating on the possible benefits of a new electoral system which would force each candidate, on penalty of being relieved of his office, his £1,000 a year and £750 tax-free expenses, to carry out or, at least, show promising signs of having started whichever projects or fulfilling any promises to which he committed himself before the election, in a given time. This could be set at a year for obvious constructive projects such as house building and less for policy changes leading to constructive plans. This is normal business practice, goods in exchange for the price! An order is placed with a firm, a price accepted and the promise of a delivery date made which, if unsatisfactory, means that the customer takes his order elsewhere; should the quoted date be satisfactory but not kept there is invariably a penalty clause expressed in cash terms. If you think of our politicians as dedicated servants of the community these suggestions will appear sacrilegious, but if you have seen through the political racket the analogy will not be entirely meaningless.

The electorate is the customer who has relegated his power in exchange for some pretty shoddy goods and being a naive character he has not taken the precaution of obtaining the usual business guarantees. As a confirmed voter and being slow to learn a lesson he has no choice but the one offered to him every five years, and that as some of us have realised, is no choice at all, therefore, he is stuck with useless goods and services, and no means by which he can return them except, of course, the one fashioned by anarchists

which our voter, being only partly awake, does not think is tenable.

We are aware that the time factor involved in our new electoral scheme has inherent dangers. It may lead to even more chaos than is created by the present system which, at least, gives the elected politicians five years between each election. During this time the voter has usually forgotten the pious promises elicited from him in return for his loyalties, or his mind is taken up with more pressing problems. If, however, only a year passed between one farce and another, instead of five, politicians would be continuously replaced for not fulfilling their promises and disorder on the national front would ensue, but it would be a more honest mode of conduct (measured by the standards of our society) comparable to business practice which states the case unequivocally—a job for a given price in a specified time.

We assure our readers that we are not considering putting up FREEDOM's editors for election, nor we hasten to say, are we defending business and the profit principle. Our fantasy is the result of the nauseating spectacle of men of reputed integrity who are theoretically our moral superiors exploiting the hopes and fears, the needs and greediness, the stupidity and sincerity of ordinary people.

The examples of vote-catching slogans and dishonest reasoning used by all parties are too numerous for hasty selection. The latest Tory 'winner' is over grants for Catholic Schools which we hope to deal with next week. The Labour Party has dropped its bomb which, whether it explodes or not, is going to cause them embarrassment if they get into office. R.

## 'Mutiny' at Shepton Mallet Military Prison

NINE of the 13 former soldiers charged with mutiny with violence in Shepton Mallet military prison, were found guilty by a military court-martial last week. Four of them were sentenced each to five years' imprisonment, and five to three years. A total of thirty-five years imprisonment were awarded to these unfortunate young men (whose ages, with the exception of one prisoner who was 26, range from 19 to 22) and for what? From the point of view of the Establishment, as a warning to others who might, even for only six and a half hours (the duration of this "mutiny") challenge the authority of their jailers. Certainly it would be difficult to justify the savage sentences by what actually happened. According to the prosecution they were said to have taken part in a riot in which dinner tables were overturned, diet tins thrown, a flight-sergeant butted and another N.C.O. attacked.

The trouble started when after dinner on March 10 a staff-sergeant gave an order concerning the return of books which prisoners had in their "rooms" over and above the two allowed under the rules. According to the prosecution "somebody" said: "We are not standing for that lads, are we?" Immediately all the tables were overturned, forms upturned and diet tins thrown. "This happened spontaneously and at once all over the dining room" admitted the prosecution. It sounds fairly obvious that the order over

books was just one provocation too many for young men already under enough strain by the very fact of suffering imprisonment, and they let fly. Once such troubles start those concerned realise the hopelessness of their protest, but awareness of the reprisals to which they will be subjected, and the disciplinary action that will be taken against them by the authorities spur them on to acts of violence, to the smashing up of the contents of their cells and sometimes, as happened recently in the United States, to loss of life.

Staff-Sergeant McAndrew — to whom one prisoner shouted "You, you bastard, you caused all this!" — said in evidence that some of the soldiers under sentence were "running around wild". Soldiers' boxes and bedding were being thrown on to the protective netting between the ground floor and No. 2 landing. Later a number of the prisoners barricaded themselves in their rooms. Only in the evening when the commandant told the men to come out and gave them assurances "no one would be assaulted unless he started attacking or causing further trouble", did they emerge, "peacefully".

The complaints voiced by a number of the men were that they were not getting their share of television viewing time, nor sufficient indoor games. They complained of the spit and polish demanded of them which was not expected of prisoners in another part of the prison. One witness for the prosecution had

stated that the meat on the previous day was "bad" and that "we had an extra slice of bread at tea-time to replace it". As to the television viewing time, Capt. Hughes said that

The rules regarding watching television were that men of good behaviour were privileged to watch it once a week, although selected men might also watch televised sporting events on Saturday afternoons. At any one time about forty men in his company could watch television provided that their conduct had been good, but the number also depended on the availability of N.C.O.s for security and on the accommodation. The last time soldiers under sentence had seen television had been on February 17.

The date of the "mutiny" was March 10 so that there had been no television for these men for more than three weeks in spite of the rules. One of the men sentenced to five years is alleged to have shouted at the R.S.M. "We were told we had no T.V. because of shortage of staff. There is plenty of bloody staff here now". How right he was, and how pointed his comment. The authorities are allowed to ignore the rules blaming force majeure, such as shortage of staff. But the prisoner who breaks the rules is invariably punished; for him there is no force majeure, yet who but an unimaginative bureaucrat can deny that the prison system is the greatest of provocations to any normal human being, and a military prison run by active military men (civil prisons are run by ex-military men!) is that much worse?

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