

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Treason doth never prosper, what's the reason?  
Why if it prospers, none dare call it treason."  
—JOHN HARRINGTON.

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Threepence

## Mr. K's Proposals and the West's Reactions WHO'S BLUFFING?

JUST as many political observers are of the opinion that the Macmillan Mission to Moscow and the subsequent Eisenhower Mission to Macmillan—at least their timing—were calculated to enhance the Tories' chances at the General Election, so it is reasonable to suppose that Krushchev's recent speech, which Michael Foot describes in *Tribune* as "full of hope and consolation", may well be motivated by reasons quite alien to the cause of peace. Similarly, Eisenhower's willingness, and de Gaulle's reluctance, to have an early Summit meeting should not tempt us into describing the former as a peace lover or the latter a warmonger! After all, if at present Mr. Krushchev poses as a man of peace and the champion of complete disarmament, one can only assume that he does so because he believes that such a policy at this stage is more effective, so far as his government's political objectives are concerned, than the threatening, sabre-waving speeches he has also been known to make on other occasions.

and who are desperately hungry as well as desperate.

**O**BVIOUSLY the Western Powers cannot afford to ignore Mr. K's proposals. If he is bluffing then they must call his bluff but they can only do this effectively by accepting the challenge and demonstrating that they are willing to take the first steps. Krushchev's proposals are all-embracing: total disarmament!

But for those who accuse the Soviet Union of taking up a position of all or nothing, "that is, that we, in proposing universal and total disarmament, are not willing to agree to anything else", the cunning Mr. K. points out that in his proposals it is written "in black and white" that should the Western powers "not be prepared to embark on universal and total disarmament, we regard it possible and necessary to reach agreement even on partial steps in the sphere of disarmament". And he then gave a general outline

of Soviet policy on the subject:

"The Soviet Union is of the opinion that such steps include the banning of nuclear weapons, and, first of all, the termination of their tests, the creation of a zone of control and inspection, the reduction of foreign forces on the territories of relevant European countries, the creation of an atom-less zone in Central Europe, the liquidation of foreign military bases on foreign territory, the conclusion of a nonaggression pact between the NATO member states, and the member states of the Warsaw Treaty."

For those who argue that by scrapping the "ultimate deterrent"—the H-bomb—Russia would have the advantage of larger conventional forces, they should propose first abolishing conventional weapons and armies. In his present mood we are sure Mr. K. would agree! The only trouble is, that the three Western Powers cannot agree among themselves.

France is busy using her conventional weapons in Algeria (half a million men and the latest in con-

ventional weapons of destruction) and is also on the point of testing her first atom bomb which de Gaulle (like Bevan two years earlier), considers a weighty argument at any Summit meeting that may be arranged. Britain, according to last Monday's *News Chronicle* is now busily engaged, in the person of the new Defence Minister, in working out

"far-reaching plans to rebuild Britain's dwindling forces to defend the country against conventional attack. They are first priority in view of the forthcoming Summit meeting."

If the big Powers agree to ban nuclear weapons, Mr. Watkinson will be faced with a defence reorganisation even more sweeping than the one carried out by his predecessor, Mr. Duncan Sandys.

A big increase in Fighter Command—both fighters and anti-aircraft missiles—will be the most urgent need.

Other probable changes are:  
1.—A bigger Coastal Command to fight the submarine menace;  
2.—A rethinking of the Navy's role;  
3.—An increase in the standing Army above the present target of 170,000, with a possible return to conscription.

In the United States the disarmament question has, according to Max Freedman in the *Guardian* (9/11/59), "begun to divide both

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## Success Story

The Forty-first Ordinary General Meeting of the Great Universal Stores Ltd. was held in London on the 27th October, 1959. The report and accounts for the year ended 31st March, 1959, were adopted.

Mr. Isaac Wolfson, the Chairman and Managing Director, said that during the year under review record sales were again achieved. They were 11 per cent. up on the previous year. There was an increase in trading profit of £1,375,438. The year had been one of consolidation and development of existing interests at home and abroad.

The total dividend paid and recommended on the Ordinary and "A" Ordinary Stock was 35 per cent. This was an effective increase of 2½ per cent. on the previous year.

### TRADING PROFITS—1950-1959

1950	£5,896,913
1951	£8,161,150
1952	£10,007,555
1953	£11,443,390
1954	£15,541,292
1955	£18,923,479
1956	£20,273,185
1957	£21,630,137
1958	£23,193,764
1959	£24,569,202

Mr. Wolfson concluded: "I personally look to the future with confidence."

Perhaps his disarmament "line" at the moment when Russian "achievement" in outer-space has captured the world's imagination (and we suggest that the world is more impressed with Russia's missile development than with her exclusive photographs of the Moon's backside), has been put forward in the knowledge that the Summit talks will come to nothing, but also in the belief that from the point of view of propaganda, of undermining the West and its satellites, of impressing the uncommitted peoples and the struggling colonial nations, such a line can do nothing but good . . . for Russia. And in the game of power politics one cannot altogether discount the value of this kind of propaganda particularly among the peoples of the "underdeveloped" nations who, one sometimes tends to forget in viewing the political game with the bleary eyes of the well-fed Western nations, represent more than half the world's people

**A**BOUT a year ago *Time* magazine had a cover story about young Mr. Charles Van Doren. He is (was?) a clever young man who had just won \$129,000 on a TV quiz programme called 'Twenty-One' and America was proud of him.

In this Sputnik era, the popular view of egg-heads has mellowed somewhat. The rugged lumber-jack, pioneer oil-man and tough gunslinger were all fine in their way—even if rail-roading means something else these days—but in order to keep up with the Joneski's a pale, soft-handed and perhaps even lily-livered egg-head could be more useful.

This, and the fact that TV quiz personalities are built up out of people apparently learned, with accumulations of information, has led to an increased respect for the knowledgeable, the educated—or those apparently so.

For now the poor old American public, still swaying slightly from the bleeps of the Russian sputniks and moon rocket, have had to take another blow—this time a mean in-swinging right below the belt. The Quiz Shows were fixed! The Quiz-kids knew the answers in advance! Van Doren was a phoney!

These startling revelations of skulduggery behind the screens have come out during investigations carried out by the House Sub-Committee on Legislative Oversight. This beautifully named committee (described by Patrick O'Donovan as 'a rag-bag committee that can take on any subject not already covered') was brought into operation by the complaint of a quiz contestant that he had been 'scripted' to lose a contest in advance.

Now the gaff has been well and truly blown. A whole procession of witnesses, in and out of the TV 'industry', have piled up a testimony that stinks with corruption, bribery, hand-outs, kick-backs, jobs for the boys and deception of the public.

Employers have paid for their employees to get on to a quiz programme in order to get the subsequent publicity. Little irregularities

## The American TV. 'Scandal' Truth is not always . . .

like plugging somebody's article or store on a programme paid for by somebody else have paid off handsomely, but amount to small fry compared to the highly organised sham of the quizzes themselves.

The most successful contestants apparently went through agonies 'recalling' information from their reluctant memories when 64,000 dollars hung upon the answer. The mass audiences fell for them: despaired and wept with the losers, cheered and loved the winners.

The mass audiences were suckers. Gullible and goggle-eyed they were taken for a long and beautiful ride and have now been let down with a bump. But whose fault is it? What do they think the TV programmes are put on for? *Their* benefit?

Not on your life. TV programmes in the States are *all* paid for by

advertisers whose interest is in making money. They make money by attracting the largest audiences and they attract the largest audiences by providing the brightest entertainment. And everybody knows that the brightest entertainment has to be rehearsed.

The bandleader Xavier Cugat (even his name is entertaining) said in his evidence before the Committee: 'I know as an entertainer I must all the time help to make believe.' And that just about sums it up.

It's all make-believe. And tumbling down from the top of a make-believe pinnacle comes Charlie Van Doren who, on the strength of his quiz fame got a post as English instructor at Columbia University. Van Doren's contribution to the English language is a telling little phrase spoken before the Com-

mittee: 'Truth is not always what it appeared to be.'

One humble little truth that we can remember is that, where money is involved, *nothing* is what it appears to be.

Mind you, it couldn't happen here. One notorious Englishman took part in an American quiz programme and was clearly incorruptible. Mr. Randolph Churchill couldn't answer the first question fired at him, and has since complained 'They didn't treat me so handsomely as Van Doren . . . I won no money at all.' But Randolph should remember that it needs intelligence even to be rehearsed at all.

Anyway we, with our national traditions of incorruptibility, know that it couldn't happen here. Could it? P.S.

## Algeria: The Price of a War

PARIS, SUNDAY.

Heavy rain halted military operations in Algeria as the war today entered its sixth year.

Hit-and-run terrorism continued, however. At least two people died and 33 were injured in bomb and machine-gun attacks in Algiers, Mascara and Bone.

In the past five years 120,000 rebels are estimated to have been killed and 60,000 captured. The French have lost 10,000 killed and 22,000 men have been wounded.

Civilian casualties include 1,700 Europeans killed and 12,000 Moslem dead.

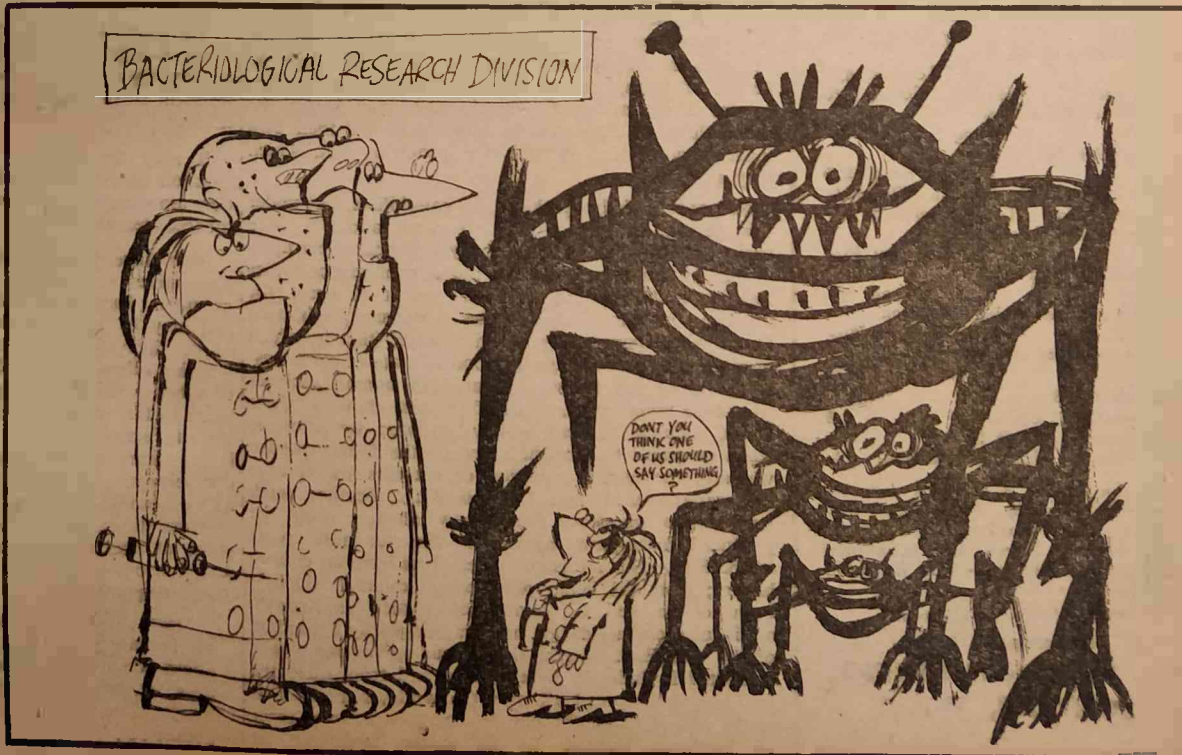
A conservative estimate by the newspaper *Le Monde* has put the cost of the war to France as £2,700,000,000.

It has caused the downfall of the Fourth Republic.

Morally it has considerably damaged France's position with the newly independent Asian and African States.

On September 16 General de Gaulle promised the Algerians the right of self-determination, and hopes for peace immediately rose. But in a speech today President Bourguiba of Tunisia said: "Clouds have gathered again and hopes for an early cease-fire have faded."

(*News Chronicle* 2/11/59)



## Obituary of a Child of Our Time

GUENTHER FRITZ PODOLA is dead. If he is lucky and Mr. Allen's calculations were correct he died of a broken neck at 9.45 a.m. on November 5th, in the year of our Lord, 1959, at Wandsworth Prison. He was born in 1929 and educated in the Hitler Youth 'to die for Germany' . . . it turned out differently. His father died fighting in Russia. Podola at 16 was rushed to the Eastern front just before the fall of Berlin. Podola eventually managed to get back to Germany but was unable to make a living in the war-shattered economy of East Berlin. Eventually by establishing an address in West Berlin he was enabled to emigrate to Canada. The mother of his child was to join him there but later she married an American.

Podola was unable to settle down in Canada and drifted from job to job. Eventually he became a small-time crook and was detected and sent to prison. In prison he was a model prisoner, he went further and informed of a pending jailbreak so he got full marks for remission. He was deported to West Germany on discharge but after further aimless drifting he made his way to England. Here he plunged into petty thievery and tried in Soho to make the right connections for a big job. He started blackmailing (so it is said) a Kensington "model" who informed the police. Cornered by two plain-clothes policemen he shot and killed one, and made his escape.

After two or three days he was traced to a Kensington hotel, there 30 police surrounded the building and 10 more with a police-dog made their way to his room. Of what happened we have only police evidence, but twenty minutes later Podola was taken out to the police car with a coat over his head and was taken to Chelsea police station and thence to St. Stephen's Hospital where a lumbar puncture was per-

formed (indicating that he had sustained a fractured skull). He was not charged until four days later (after a solicitor engaged for him by a group of concerned business-men had been refused admission).

On the day he was charged, questions were being asked about him in Parliament. Mr. Paget, M.P., asked if it was not true that Podola had been beaten up. The Home Secretary, Mr. Butler (the white-haired boy of the progressive Conservatives) replied with Jesuitical precision "that he had not been beaten up in the police-station". The Speaker defended the Home Secretary from further attack by claiming that the matter was *sub judice* as, by then, it was. Guenther Fritz Podola appeared in the police-court dock supported by two warders, he had a black eye and bruises on his face and his counsel had to ask for a remand "as there were certain difficulties in his case". Podola was charged with capital murder.

Butler was quick to point out that what happened prior to Podola's arrest was *sub judice* but he had no explanation for the three-day detention before the arrest except that on such a serious charge bail could not be allowed. A writ of *habeas corpus* is normally possible after twenty-four hours' detention at a police-station. Legal aid is also available to even penniless prisoners who are to be charged.

The police explanation of what happened to Podola in Room 15 was that the door was slammed open into Podola's face by a detective, he staggered across the room and fell into the fireplace, then the detective landed upon him. There were three reasons for the pitiable state of Podola. A door was not enough, a fireplace fall was not enough, a well-nourished detective had to land upon him.

"And what", as Sherlock Holmes said upon another occasion, "what about the curious incident of the dog?" There was, according to some early reports, a dog which caused these injuries to Podola. It is common practice for trained dogs to be used in such cases by the police. One was, in fact, among those present. The usual procedure is for the dog, trained for the purpose, to go for the gun hand of the

suspect. The curious incident of the dog was that "there was no dog". In later evidence the dog disappeared.

After all this, Podola's defence, legal, and probably psychological, was loss of memory or 'hysterical amnesia'. The Homicide Act has determined that twelve good men and true are fit to determine whether the accused on a capital charge is insane or not. After hearing conflicting evidence from experts from both sides, the jury in their omniscience decided that Podola's loss of memory was a fraud.

He was accordingly tried for the

crime (a procedure which failed to restore his memory) and in a record short time he was found guilty and sentenced to death. By some inscrutable process of the legislature no appeal against the findings in the 'sanity' trial was possible until by the grace of Butler it was allowed, and dismissed.

So Guenther Podola was hanged. What of it? you may say. He was an undesirable citizen. But the validity of any society is how it deals with its 'undesirables'. Even a totalitarian society treats its undesirable citizens well (they sometimes become heads of labour camps, or rocket-designers or bomber-pilots), but it is in how it treats the juvenile delinquent Bentley, the teddy-boy

Marwood, the illiterate Evans, the good-time girl Ruth Ellis, the chopath Christie. For them specific was the rope. The one sure cure! Nobody hanged for murder has ever committed one again. The only 100% reliable statistic.

But what of the promise of the democratic way of life, offered salvation to those liberated from Hitler? All it had to offer to Podola was room 15 and the 9.45 a.m. walk!

Podola is a child of our time. He may have given way to his anger of frustration and defeat, but even detectives sometimes get angry. What had life given Guenther Podola? Now even that has been taken from him. J.R.

## What Happened to 'Lolita'?

SO at last *Lolita* is with us, after adventures rivaling those of its heroine. A great deal has been and will be said about the book itself, but it is perhaps worth giving some account of the events that have delayed its publication in England for so long.\*

Vladimir Nabokov, its Russian author who now lives in America, finished copying the novel out in the spring of 1954. After four American publishers had turned it down for various reasons (the only honest and intelligent one being fear of prison; one publisher suggested that *Lolita* should be turned into a boy!), he sent it to his old home, Paris, where it was brought out in September 1955 by the Olympia Press (which is also responsible for books by de Sade, Henry Miller, Lawrence Durrell, Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett, and the Casement Diaries). There was virtual silence until Graham Greene named it in the *Sunday Times* as

one of the best books of the year.

In 1956 John Gordon read it at this recommendation, and was shocked (since when Graham Greene has disappeared from the columns of the *Sunday Times*); and a Soho bookseller offered the two neat little green volumes for sale, and was fined. Later that year the French Government, already allied with our own at Suez (or as near to Suez as they could jointly get), extended the *entente cordiale* by banning *Lolita* and 24 other English-language books from the Olympia Press.

Early in 1957, however, an abridged and expurgated version of the book (with a very entertaining Note by the author) was published in the *Anchor Review* (edited by Melvin Lasky, who now helps Stephen Spender with *Encounter*; the latter, which has devoted much space to *Lolita*, is sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, whose Secretary is Nicolas Nabokov, Vladimir's brother). This, and a favourable reply from the U.S. Customs, encouraged Putnam to publish the complete novel there in August 1958; since when there has been an enormous sale and, so far no trouble (except that some inhabitants of Lolita, Texas, want to change the town's name). It has also been banned in New Zealand.

In Europe things were different. The Olympia Press had successfully appealed against the French ban, but in July 1958 a new one was imposed on *Lolita* and 15 stable-companions, and in December the appeal against the old one was reversed (still in English only—Gallimard brought out a French translation in April 1959). In the meantime the English rights had been acquired by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, and in January 1959 they announced that they would

publish *Lolita* here. But uncertain about the legal position led over to printers to turn it down and allowed Beaverbrook Press to launch vicious and unfair attacks on the novel, the author, and the publishers (this was when Nigel Nicolson was being squeezed out of Bournemouth). As late as May 1959 a copy of the Olympia Press edition was seized by the Customs at London Airport. It began to look as if *Lolita* would never appear in England, though most responsible papers and critics supported its publication.

But last August the new Obscene Publications Act (making it necessary to consider a book as a whole and to take literary merit into account) became law, and at about the same time the French authorities agreed to drop their bans. If the Olympia Press would withdraw their claim for enormous damages (the sum demanded was variously reported as fifteen or twenty million francs—certainly over £10,000). The result is that *Lolita* can now be freely sold in France, America and England—unless it runs into more trouble. It is even to be made into a film. Altogether the censors haven't done too well. It has taken *Lolita* five and a half years to get from the author to the English reading public; *Ulysses* took seventeen, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is still on the way. But the censorship does seem to be fighting a losing battle. They might find it easier to deal with the first of the pornographic imitators instead; *Lolita in Soho* was announced in October, and no doubt more will follow. *Vive la nympholepsie!* N.W.

\**Lolita*, by Vladimir Nabokov (Olympia Press, 2400 f.; Putnam's \$5; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 21s.). Reprinted December.

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## Narcotics: Their Use and Social Development

A LECTURE about narcotics may seem somewhat out of place in this series, but the social significance of narcotics is such that the topic cannot be ignored by those who are interested in the forces which make society tick. I would refer you to Charles Kingsley's statement, afterwards borrowed by Marx, that religion is often the opiate of the people. I believe Kingsley was quoting some bishop, who was probably quoting somebody else. But indeed a bishop, clergyman and a sociologist like Marx, should know all about opiates for the people. Nowadays we might adapt the statement to run, "Politics is the opiate of the people", and retain its kernel of truth, for the opiate of religion or politics creates a dream world wherein men may forget the sad realities of their own everyday lives, and their own inadequacy in dealing with the problems with which they are faced.

Narcotics, strictly speaking, are pain-killers, but under this general heading I wish to speak about a wide variety of drugs which have a psychological effect upon people. I am therefore using the term narcotics rather loosely, much in the same way as it is used, for instance, in the United States repressive legislation. Drugs which have a psychological effect (that is, which produce a marked change in mood or state of consciousness), have been known and used by human societies from time immemorial. One of the best known of these drugs, alcohol, is very simply prepared by allowing fruits or grains to ferment. Around the Mediterranean we have the ancient tradition of societies which used the grape as their source of this drug. Further north our remote ancestors found how alcohol could be produced from grain, as also in the rice-eating parts of the East. But numerous other drugs have an ancient history; from the hemp plant comes cannabis which is eaten or smoked in various forms such as hashish, marihuana, charas, dagga, and was originally a product of the near East. Again, the famous opium poppy was cultivated in India in ancient times and from there the use of opium spread all over the world, sometimes as in the case of China through the energy and armed force of European traders. In the barren mountains of

Mexico the Indians found the peyotl cactus, which contains the drug mescaline, and this contributed to their way of life. In South America the Indians found the coca leaf and adopted the practice of chewing it; its active principle is the drug cocaine. In Africa there is the kola nut which has somewhat similar stimulating properties. Whether that horrible American drink Coca-Cola actually has any pharmacological affinities with the coca leaf and kola nut I do not know.

There are thousands of other plants which contain drugs having some psychological effect on those who eat or smoke them. Indeed many powerful poisons taken in small quantities, have interesting psychological effects.

It may be significant that I have remembered to mention three other drug-plants rather belatedly, for they are drug plants commonly used in my own culture, tobacco, tea and coffee.

Now these drugs are used in their various ways as alternatives to religion or politics. Human society generates institutions which become self-perpetuating, and may in fact become as oppressive and frustrating to the individual lives of men as famine or sickness. Religion offers the consolation that there is, somewhere or other, a pie in the sky which will reward us for our pains in this world. Politics, generates the illusion that we will actually succeed in building the New Society, in the future, in this world. Narcotics act by changing our perception of the world as we customarily experience it; we become indifferent to its pains, contemptuous of its frustrations, and there opens out an altered, grander plane of existence which is normally closed to us. I would quote to you De Quincey's impressions on first discovering opium:

"Here was a panacea, a *pharmakin nipinthes* for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket . . ."

Every form of human society has the narcotics of its choice. Christian civilization adopted alcohol, and in fact the Monasteries were the pioneers in developing stronger and stronger alcoholic brews. Mohammedan civilization despised and prohibited the use of alcohol. To them the booziness of the Christians was contemptible. Hashish was the drug of their choice; for hashish stimulates and energizes its users, making them feel that they have immensely increased their power and clarity of perception. To the peasants of India, and later China, living in grinding poverty and subject to a variety of endemic diseases, opium was the favoured drug. Opium is a true narcotic, numbing the sense of pain and producing pleasant drowsiness. Although it is an addicting drug (that is, once you are accustomed to it, you cannot do without it), it is not a harmful drug and people can be lifelong addicts and preserve their health.

Again, with the Mexican Indians the eating of the peyotl cactus became interwoven with a mystical religion in which the mescaline-induced hallucinations gave them a glimpse of the beauties of paradise. The warlike Vikings on the other hand, who greatly admired a man if he behaved like an aggressive psychopath, were not content with alcoholic brews, but in their orgies they laced their drink with the juice of a poisonous toadstool, the fly agaric. In small quantities this poison will produce a sort of raving madness in a man, in larger quantities it will kill him. To protect themselves against a fatally large dosage of the drug, the Vikings, once they were properly intoxicated, would keep the orgy going by drinking their own urine. The drug is excreted by the kidneys and thus a man could keep his drug dosage at a fairly constant level.

I have mentioned a great variety of drugs all of which have the property of altering the psychological state of whoever absorbs them, but these drugs are very different in their effect, and it is this difference in effect which commends them to use in different types of society. We may as well try and classify them in some sort of orderly form. G.

(To be continued)

# THE MOTIVES OF FREE EDUCATION

**Freedom**  
THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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## WHO'S BLUFFING?

*Continued from p. 1*

tical parties". Eisenhower is seeking an agreement with Russia "but reserves the right to have the United States resume underground tests of nuclear weapons if an adequate treaty can be negotiated with the Soviet Union. Mr. Nixon supports this position with "adequate qualification". Governor Rockefeller, who hopes to be chosen for Presidential nominations, has shared publicly that underground tests should continue in order to maintain "adequate defensive strength for American forces". And it appears that among the Democrats the division is even more acute. Senator Kennedy, another candidate for the presidential nomination, has challenged Rockefeller's position to come out for the continued suspension of tests, but former President Truman not only declares, in a newspaper article this week, that the U.S. should "immediately end the self-imposed ban on underground tests", but considers France's desire to become a nuclear power "all to the good". Mr. Dean Acheson continues to be opposed to disarmament negotiations with Russia.

Mr. George Kennan, former chairman of the policy planning staff for Mr. Acheson has once again, as Mr. Freedman, become the spokesman

for a large and important group in the Democratic party that chafes at the rigid approach of Mr. Truman and Mr. Acheson. Mr. Kennan has proposed that the United States should take the lead in trying to eliminate nuclear weapons of all sorts. He believes that the present American policy of basing the security of this country primarily on nuclear weapons has failed.

Among the points made by Mr. Kennan is that one that

under the sway of its preoccupation with nuclear weapons the United States has "grievously neglected" its conventional forces and allowed them to fall into a state where, in the absence of nuclear weapons, they would be inadequate to protect the nation's security.

Even the more "enlightened" members of the Establishment it would seem cannot think in terms of total disarmament, or even disarmament for that matter. The Kennan group are primarily interested in nuclear disarmament because the H-bomb is not the deterrent it was made out to be, and he and his friends don't cherish the idea of more countries possessing nuclear weapons. It is clear that only by abolishing these weapons will the small powers be put in their place and the proper balance of power re-established with conventional weapons. There is no talk of dispensing with force in the language of Western diplomacy. That old hypocrite Krushchev however did have something to say about power politics:

There are statesmen in the Western countries who do not wish to give up their old views, alleging it is essential to have strength and to dictate to the weak from a position of strength.

but will we believe he is different when he starts practising what he preaches with his own people and those in the satellite countries!

THE chances of a genuine disarmament are remote. Firstly because all governments rely on force, or the threat of force as the basis of their authority. Secondly because so long as nation states exist and the capitalist system of production and

A COUPLE of years before the war, a "Modern Schools Handbook" was published. It contained chapters written by the headmasters of about a dozen schools, all of which claimed to be in some way or other progressive and forward-looking. Apart from the use of such adjectives as "progressive" and "modern", it is interesting to observe that some of the contributors discuss these positions in terms borrowed from political jargon. One describes his school as being "to the right of the others discussed in this book", and another is "on the left wing of the progressive education movement".

Although people who were not present during the thirties cannot afford to be dogmatic about the attitudes prevailing then, it seems that such linking of educational freedom and political concepts was quite typical.

The progressive intellectuals had a good idea of the society towards which they wanted to move. It was a fairly benevolent welfare state in which the most oppressive material and psychological frustrations of capitalism had been removed. This society was to have been installed through the electoral success of the Labour Party, preferably modified by its boring left-wingers.

If one felt that this society was coming in the fairly close future, then the progressive schools of the 'thirties were just the right answer, because they were preparing children for the world into which they would probably grow up.

Now that idea is no longer so widely held. If anyone still is convinced that a Labour government will bring about a speedy advance to socialism, it is certainly not among those likely to be thinking intelligently about social problems. Six years of Labour rule have made such an impression that most people have no real concern to experience them again. Moreover, even if actual social changes have taken place, independently of the party political game, they imply no change whatsoever in personal values.

All this has taken away much of the motive power from the movement towards freedom in schools. Most of those described in the book mentioned have disappeared due to inability to pay their way, or have modified their ideas so much as to become indistinguishable from ordinary private schools.

The changes that have taken place in the state, and in particular in its educational system, have tended in the direction of what has been called the "Opportunity State" or the "Meritocracy" by people looking at it from different viewpoints. The chief ideas in this are that it preserves the values of capitalism such as cut through competition, the artificially created enmity between each man and his fellows, the concentration of power in the hands of a few, and the

distribution persist, the struggle between nation states for markets, sources of raw materials, social and material privileges will be at the root of international strife. Thirdly because divide and rule is still the technique of power politics it was in the past. The Communist bogey is as much a factor in the emasculating of political and social thinking and progress in the West as the bogey of capitalism which serves to hold back the Russian people from rising against their oppressors. The Communist bogey has been an invaluable asset to the ruling classes of America, the Christian Democrats of Italy or de Gaulle in France just as the Capitalist bogey is fundamental to the continued "Communist" dictatorships in Russia and the satellites (Tito relies on both bogies!). Fourthly because in power politics the balance of power is always changing. We may yet live to see the day when America, Russia and Japan join forces to protect civilisation from the Chinese menace! Nothing should surprise us. Isn't de Gaulle after all biting the hand that fed him during the last war and holding the hand that intended to wring his neck on that occasion?

There is no honour among thieves or politicians. Yet without honour in our relations there can be no peace.

dependence of the overwhelming majority of the people on selling their lives to a boss in order to maintain their livelihoods, but puts them on a much firmer basis. Today the barriers which used to stand in the way of people of working class parentage have been diminished. Almost anyone has a chance to rise to a position of domination over others. Boys winning scholarships to the military colleges have taken honours higher than their aristocratic fellows. An Arts degree at Oxford is just as likely to lead to the Personnel Manager's office in a technical factory as to a village parsonage. The opportunity state demands knowledge and ability from many of its subjects, and imagination and initiative from a few, but above everything else it demands belief. To make one's way successfully in it one has to accept its values. One has to believe that television is good for people, that the development of atomic energy will soon bring about widespread happiness, and that the only thing wrong with Britain is the lack of motorways.

Altogether, the basic essentials of education as conceived by the state, that is a certain level of academic knowledge and a certain level of acceptance of prevailing social values, seem more necessary than ever. Furthermore, the pill has been effectively sugared by the work of educational psychologists. Conformity in outlook is secured without the brutality which was common in the pioneering days of the Church's school system, and methods of teaching have been devel-

oped which make academic subjects seem interesting to all but the dullest of children.

Nevertheless, it is still true, that in the process of adapting children to the values of the opportunity state, educationists are destroying or perverting much of the natural potentiality for goodness that is present in everyone. It is being inculcated into them that it is admirable to be promoted above other people; that a man's worth can be measured in terms of his salary, plus superannuation and insurance of course; that it is a good thing to pursue a career which leads to promotion and high salaries rather than to do something of real use to people, and of satisfaction to the worker. The apparent omnipresence of these values presents a challenge to liberal educationists, in the face of which most of them have succumbed. Freedom and technical advance have for so long been regarded as being linked together, that it is easy to educate for technical advance in the belief that one is educating for freedom.

On the other hand, the best way in which intelligent people learn to cope with the problems posed by the differences between their values and those of the majority of other people is not by complete capitulation. They find out how to compromise in some places, stick out stubbornly in others, and employ deceit in others. Looked at in the light of this, it is not such a good idea to send a child into the environment of a state school. The educational system set up

by a state can do no other, by its very reason of existence, than inculcate the values of the authorities which set it up.

In opposition to this, the few progressive schools which are still carrying on are trying to diffuse a different set of values, those of life and happiness; the idea that emotions are more important than the intellect, and that someone who leaves school with confidence and freedom in love is better equipped in life, than one capable of earning a high salary, irrespective of the social situation. They are standing for the view that just a little restriction in freedom of emotions leads to even greater restriction, as against the fashionable doctrine of the necessity of repression; and maintaining that in society even "as it is now", the aware person who realises that the world is fashioned by people who are interested in denying his enjoyment of freedom, will fare better than the adjusted, conditioned product of the state's air-conditioned secondary schools.

As distinct from the attitude which was adopted before the war however, it seems necessary to make two important points. Firstly that freedom for children will not further, or be furthered by socialist or democratic ideals, but is definitely linked with an anarchist approach to social affairs, and secondly that however free and good state education may seem on paper and in theory, from the point of view of emotional freedom, it just doesn't work in practice.

P.H.

## PEOPLE AND IDEAS:

# MASTER OF AMBIGUITY

*After the rising of the 17th June  
The Secretary of the Writers' Union  
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee  
In which you could read that the People  
Had lost the Government's confidence  
Which it could only regain  
By redoubled efforts. Would it in that case  
Not be simple if the Government  
Dissolved the People  
And elected another?*

—BERTOLT BRECHT: "The Solution".

THIS poem, which came to light after Bertolt Brecht's death is one of many fragments of information which remind us of his equivocal relationship with the Communist régime in East Germany, where, in exchange for a theatre and a company of players, he circumspically made his home, having carefully taken out Austrian citizenship, settled his copyrights with a West German publisher, and, subsequently, deposited his Stalin Prize in a Swiss bank.

At the time of his death and of the visit to London of his company, the Berliner Ensemble, we published two articles on this extraordinary playwright (25/8/56 and 1/9/56, reprinted in *FREEDOM Selections*, Vol. 6). Now in two very good, thoroughly documented and expensive books, we have an opportunity of gaining a clearer insight into Brecht's ideas and methods. John Willett's *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (Methuen, 36s.) is primarily about Brecht as a dramatist, and the text is scattered with fascinating and evocative illustrations. Martin Esslin's *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 35s.) is described as a critical study of the man, his work and his opinions, and is a highly intelligent attempt to unravel the paradox of Brecht's character. If you are at all interested in Brecht, you will have to read both books in spite of their overlapping, since each has so many virtues. If you are mainly concerned with the experimental theatre, and with that strange hectic, doomed and dead period in Germany between the Kaiser and the Führer (there are many signs today of such an interest—the remake of *The Blue Angel*, the recent exhibition of Expressionist painting, the typography of *Architectural Design* and so on), then Mr. Willett's is your book. If you are more concerned with the problem of the writer and politics, the pitfalls and psychology of political commitment, you will be impressed by Mr. Esslin's lucid and perceptive account of Brecht's ambiguous and Schweik-like solution to the problem: how to stay alive and kicking without being a hero.

Mr. Esslin sees Brecht as the most significant member of that generation of German intellectuals who, recoiling from the horrors of the First World War and its aftermath, took refuge in attitudes which he describes as anarchistic and nihilistic. In Brecht's earliest works this took the form of a passive acceptance, yielding and drifting, abandoning one-

self, in the characteristic image from his early poems, like a swimmer floating downstream in a river. His discovery of Marxism, a self-contained explanation of history and human society which claimed to be scientific, came when feelings of guilt and distaste at the passive acceptance made him seek a discipline within which to build a rational framework for his life and work.

But, adopting Communism, he became, from the first, an embarrassment to the Party. His play *The Measure*, in which four Communist agitators "liquidate" a fifth with his own consent for disobeying Party discipline, was (and has been ever since) furiously condemned by the Party critics in both Germany and Russia, but as Mr. Esslin says:

"In the end Brecht, who always considered himself a better Marxist than the Party pundits, was vindicated by history itself. *Die Massnahme*, written in 1930, is an exact and horrifying anticipation of the great confession trials of the Stalinist era. Many years before Bukharin consented to his own execution in front of his judges, Brecht had given that act of self-sacrifice for the sake of the party its great, tragic expression. With the intuition of the poet he had grasped the real problem of communist discipline with all its far-reaching implications. To this day *Die Massnahme* remains the only great tragedy on the moral dilemma of Soviet Communism."

★  
WHEN the Nazis came to power and Brecht, like so many others became a refugee writer, denied an outlet and an audience, he chose, not Russia but America, as his eventual haven, and after the war needless to say, was summoned before the Committee of Un-American Activities where after a "typical exercise in Brechtian irony and Schweikian subservience" he was congratulated for his exemplary behaviour as a co-operative witness. One of his friends remarked that it was as though a zoologist had been cross-examined by apes.

After a wary and carefully prepared return to East Germany, where he was welcomed more for his value in gaining prestige in the West (where his plays and his company were well-received), than for his usefulness at home (where they were condemned as formalist and decadent by the Party hacks), Brecht scarcely wrote anything to add to the great plays of his exile. And just when the campaign against his theatre was at

its peak, when he could no longer bluff the authorities by going through the motions of subservience, Stalin died and the thaw began.

Then on June 17th, 1953, the people rose in revolt and Soviet tanks "restored order". Brecht sent his famous message of congratulation to the Party boss Walter Ulbricht. Brecht's admirers were outraged that he should go out of his way to demonstrate his support for the puppet régime that called out Soviet tanks to shoot down unarmed workers demonstrating against intolerable conditions. But it now turns out that the "telegram" was not what the Party press made it appear. Mr. Esslin provides evidence to show that it was in fact the final sentence of a long and critical letter, torn from its context. For once Brecht had been too clever. And a Swiss journalist, Gody Suter reports that

"of that whole clever piece of writing only the one sentence which had been of no importance to Brecht, remained. The red pencil of the party line had destroyed his cunning design and mercilessly exposed the poet, and turned him, in the eyes of the West, into a loyal henchman of the executioners. His independent position, the platform of a kind of 'inner opposition' was suddenly revealed as a grotesque illusion, a well-aimed blow by the party's paw had smashed the reputation Brecht had built up for himself in long patient efforts. It was the only time I saw him helpless, almost small: when he eagerly pulled out the tattered original of that letter, that he had obviously shown to many people, from his pocket."

And in another posthumously published poem of that period Brecht wrote:

*Last night I dreamed I saw fingers  
pointing at me  
As at a leper. They were work-  
gnarled and  
They were broken.  
'You don't know!' I cried  
Guiltyly.*

★

A FEW months after Brecht's death, a revolution broke out in Poland and Hungary. Wolfgang Harich, the German Marxist philosopher, sentenced to ten years penal servitude after the Hungarian events, declared in his polemic against Ulbricht: "Bertolt Brecht sympathised with our group up to the time of his death". And among the papers found after Brecht's death was his trans-

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