

Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Wherever there is centralisation there is stupidity."

OSCAR WILDE

May 13th, 1950

Threepence

'Democracy' Fights Totalitarianism with—Totalitarianism!

CAPITALISM, COMMUNISM, or—LIBERTY?

Iron Curtain countries have for long now been conducting constitutional propaganda trials of highly-placed administrative agencies accused (and, in these well-run States, of course, convicted) of being agents of Western Imperialism. A similar drive is gaining momentum in the western world—against the Russian Imperialism. We have had many occasions commenting on the witch hunt antics of patriotic American Congresses, and the more genteel civil service purge in Britain. Recently we drew attention to the advantages a government draws from such fulminations against the "enemy within," and his agents within, in the silencing of criticism and the building up of a besieged mentality. We shall see that the Social Right derive advantage from the confusion in progressive Communist councils when it is proposed legally to ban the Communist Party. It is time to think through one's conceptions of freedom once again, and to arrive at a wider, more profound point.

Opening the Cold War
Measures against the Communist Party are being considered on a wide scale. The Conservative government of Australia proposes to ban and expropriate the Communist Party. Dr. Menzies has similar plans in South Africa. MacArthur and the Truman administration in Japan are on the same lines. The British government has asked for other governments to co-operate in preventing the entry of known Communists. The French Government has sacked Communist Joliot-Curie from the head of the Atomic Energy Commission. Lord Salisbury and his Labour Party colleagues, Arthur Deakin, are on the warpath against infiltrators.

Similar proposals have gone forward in Australia in the Menzies Bill to make illegal the Communist Party and its affiliated outfits, and to appropriate their funds. Introducing the Bill, Prime Minister Menzies declared that "we are not at peace with the Soviet, except in a technical sense." During the last year, anti-militarist anarchists tried to point out that the "war to safeguard freedom" had obliterated many hard-won political and civil liberties; in the cold war against Russia it is clear that the democracies are moving closer to the totalitarian concepts of Communism.

The Menzies Bill has caused a split in the political and Trade Union sections of the Australian Labour Party, the former being mainly in favour, the latter against it. But the Labour Party is also in a dilemma over its standing with public opinion—now very anti-Communist in Australia. It is torn between its theoretical adhesion to principles of political freedom, its desire to damage political rivals like the Communists, and its standing with the electorate. The astute Australian Tories have neatly sown the dragon's teeth in the ranks of their political adversaries, and will gain political capital from their anti-Communist move.

Claims of Justice

But the Tribune points to another aspect, which is really the most important one. "Thinking Australians," their leader writers declare, "have noticed with alarm that on both sides of the political arena the funda-

mental issue of British justice, that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty, has been ignored. . . ."

This gets nearer to the central issue. The real challenge of Communist infiltration is not that of meeting it on what are basically its own terms; but the challenge it makes to the western conceptions of freedom. Anti-Communist legal measures may or may not be effective in the political sphere, but the fact that they are put forward in these forms exposes the limitations of democratic liberty and its illusory nature.

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FACTS ON THE RECENT DOCK STRIKE

Dirty Work by Deakin

SOME very interesting facts have come to light following their circulation by the London Portworkers' Committee. They are facts which could, presumably, have been discovered by any competent reporter of the daily press, but which have been no more than hinted at, to our knowledge, in all the thousands of words which have been published on the dock strikes, its causes and effects.

First of all it becomes perfectly clear that if there is any one man on whom the blame for the dispute can be fairly placed, it is Arthur Deakin, secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union.

Secondly, the General Executive Council of that union is shown to be completely dishonest in that it caused a decision to apply in retrospect to cover an "offence" after it had happened.

Echo of Last Year's Strike

The Committee point out briefly that this year's strike goes back in its origins to last year's dispute when London

dockers refused to blackleg on the Canadian Seamen's Union (*Freedom*, 23/7/49), whereon they were locked out by the employers. That dispute ended and the men went back to work on the usual conditions of no-victimisation, and shortly afterwards a London Docks Delegate Conference was held, where the whole dispute was discussed.

Deakin's Threat

The Committee's circular continues: "In the course of the Conference discussion, Bro. A. Deakin, General Secretary, T.G. & W.U. said to Bro. E. Dickens: 'I will have you put out of the Branches, off the Committees, and of the industry.'"

"Six months later, on the 26th Jan.,

1950, 8 dockers were summoned to an enquiry at Transport House regarding their actions as members of the Portworkers Lock Out Committee and contributors to the Portworkers' rank-and-file newspaper, *Portworkers' News*.

"The Committee at the enquiry recommended that 3 brothers, Dickens, Constable and Saunders, be expelled from the Union; 4 brothers, Kirby, Dash, Marney and Bloomberg be not allowed to hold any office in the Union; and I brother, T. Cronin, be warned as to his future conduct.

"The Committee recommended to the General Executive Council of the Union that that body should declare the Portworkers' Committee to be a subversive body as the basis for their upholding of the decisions of the Committee in respect of the eight men.

"On March 7th, 1950, the G.E.C. declared that they viewed the Portworkers' Committee as being a subversive body, and on those grounds endorsed the decision of the enquiry.

"In other words, therefore, the Portworkers' Committee was not held to be a subversive body until March 7th, according to the Union, but nevertheless, the 8 Brothers had been expelled and victimised as from January 26th, which was two months before the G.E.C. had declared that in their opinion the Portworkers' Committee was a subversive body.

"On examination of such facts, it is clear that those Brothers should never have been charged on January 26th with being members of a subversive body which, up until then, had not been declared such by the G.E.C. of the Union, and therefore no grounds existed then for such an enquiry, let alone sentences."

Union Methods

All this may be an eye-opener to many not engaged in trade union activity. It is an example of the amount of intrigue and misuse of influence possible within a union, against which the workers have no redress but to strike, then finding themselves faced with the use of troops by the government, highly moral indignation from their union officials, and threats of the sack from the Dock Labour Board.

What a set-up! Small wonder, then, that there is a swing away from the Transport & General Workers' Union on the part of the dockers, and that some are already joining the smaller Stevedores', a Dockers' Union, apparently in the hope that, being smaller, it will represent them more faithfully.

Build a Syndicate

There is a certain advantage in the dockers joining the smaller union. At least it is a union consisting entirely of Portworkers. The Transport & General is simply a huge amalgam of any class of workers from grave-diggers to sewing machine mechanics—and many classes cannot even have a representative on the Executive Council.

BUT the Stevedores' and Dockers' is still an ordinary trade union in structure, and there seems nothing to prevent it going the same way as any other union, should it grow large and the officials become powerful and "well in" with the employers and the Government.

Why cannot the dockers now create a new organisation, learning from their experiences and keeping all control safely in the hands of the rank-and-file? Let them realise that in syndicalism lies the key to real "industrial democracy" and that only an organisation on syndicalist lines gives the workers the strength, flexibility of action and possibility of realising the dignity of labour.

And—oh yes, I nearly forgot—as an interim measure, Deakin must go! P.S.

WOMEN'S BOYCOTT KEEPS DOWN PRICES

WE once heard it claimed during a debate, by a spokesman of the Smallest Party in Great Britain, that the boycott is a useless weapon. He said the same about every other form of direct action, as a matter of fact, but after all, when the party line demands that you ignore fact in favour of the fictions of your theory, a certain amount of mental aberration becomes inevitable.

Briefly, the argument he used was: "Why should people go without the things they want? They have to do without quite enough already!"

Now this argument is so transparent and short-sighted that we fancy we are wasting space in dealing with it, for very obviously the economic boycott is put into operation precisely so that people shall not go without the things they need.

If, by the boycott, prices are kept down to a level all can afford, plainly the action has resulted in more people getting the things they need. The argument continued: "The capitalist class can afford to sit back and wait for the people to get tired of going without. The poor workers cannot hope to bring economic pressure to bear on the rich capitalists."

Capitalists are Competitive

This is a typical Marxist argument in that it looks on society as consisting of classes and not of individuals, and regards those classes as being much more united than they really are. By their very nature, capitalists are competitive, and are divided among themselves by their various functions as buyers or sellers as well as by their different levels of wealth—and therefore, different powers of resistance to economic pressure.

While it is true that the large manufacturer may be able to sit back and force the public to come to him on his own terms, even sacking his employees to reduce his over-

heads during the period of boycott, this does not apply to the small shopkeeper, who may run his shop on his own or with only his family to help him, or if he has a small staff, is on personal terms with his workers. The vast majority of retail shops are still small family businesses, and the continual turnover of trade and public custom is of vital importance—a week's takings mean a lot in a small capital. And even in the big distributive combines the situation is not dissimilar. Every branch manager in the Home and Colonial, Lipton's, Peark's, International, Sainburv's or the Co-op has to make his branch pay every week, probably works on commission, and, though he can sack his staff more cold-bloodedly, is just as concerned as the private tradesman to see the public coming through his door.

Thus the threat of a boycott is a very real and much feared one to the distributive trades.

Success in Practice

In two trades recently we have had examples of successful boycott. When price control was taken off fish last month (subsidies were removed as a Government economy measure) the immediate and predictable result was a considerable increase in price, 50 per cent. and even 100 per cent. more was promptly asked for all grades, but the fish stayed on the slab. Housewives, to their credit, just would not buy, and within a week prices had fallen to below their pre-

viously controlled level. And, in some peculiar way which we have not yet seen properly explained, the quality of fish available became much better, too.

Suddenly realising their strength, housewives have now turned their attention to vegetables. Beginning in Shrewsbury, and rapidly spreading to Yorkshires, Merseyside, Nottingham and other areas, Housewives' Associations are supporting a determined boycott of high-priced vegetables—with the blessing of the Minister of Food, who is desperately trying to reduce the unpopularity of his Ministry. Retail trade associations have accused him of making political capital out of a shortage of vegetables caused by last summer's drought, but the fact is that if the wives keep it up, the distributors have "had it".

Vegetable prices are obviously a racket, anyway. In London, three markets, the Borough, Spitalfields and Covent Garden, supply the whole metropolis with fruit, flowers and vegetables. Prices are bound to be fairly standard throughout the three on any given day. Yet in middle-class areas of London, for goods of equal quality, prices are invariably 25—30 per cent. above those in working-class districts. In middle-class Hampstead, for instance, tomatoes are now 2/- per lb., while in neighbouring Camden Town or Kilburn, they are 1/6 or 1/4.

Which simply means that the retailer charges what he thinks he can get, and shows that retail prices are quite artificial and have no connection with production costs. Let's hope the housewives show that there is nothing artificial in their resistance, and that when our political masters for their own purposes remove subsidies, the direct action of the people can keep down the cost of living.

Free Unions and Free Love

THERE exists some confusion about the terms "free union" and "free love". The anarchist movement has always been opposed to the idea that men and women should make their sexual partnerships dependent on the sanction of Church and State, and that they should submit to legal interference in their relationships. There has been, however, a fairly wide divergence of opinion as to what forms of sexual relationships are practicable and desirable both now and in a freer form of social organization.

Some advocates of "free union" simply mean that marriages should be contracted without any religious ceremony or legal registration. Such illegitimate marriages have met with the hostility of the moralists and have been dubbed as "living in sin" and "immoral liaison"; in the face of this hostility some of the united couples have gone on the defensive and have tried to justify their unhallowed union by having recourse to the moral stock-in-trade of their detractors. They have declared that their "free union" is more moral, more strictly monogamous, more dutiful to family ideals, more permanent than the average legitimate marriage. It is as though, having defied the Church and State in one particular, they hasten to save their good name by embracing the respectable virtues of bourgeois sexual morality. To them sex remains a dubious thing, only to be indulged in when sanctified by many ifs and buts; *permanency* must be stressed, monogamy affirmed, and *duty* to the family unquestioned—then they can have each another's bodies without the reproach of lust.

Free Love

The term "free love" must mean what it says. It implies love free not only from the strictures of Church and State, but free also from the bonds of adult prerogative, of monogamy, of heterosexual conformity, and all the traditional taboos of a love-hating society. The fact that religious taboos are no longer very effective, has made it necessary for those who hate sexuality to look around for other weapons. The first and most reasonably effective weapon is the argument that the stability of the State is founded on the monogamous family pattern and that therefore "free love" is an activity which is dangerous to the safety of the State. This is, of course, perfectly true and it must logically force the monogamous family pattern on all who hold the future welfare of the institution of the State dear to their hearts.

But for those people who have no tender regard for the future of that institution, other repressive arguments have to be used.

The moralists' next plank is the welfare of children. What will become of children if people indulge in promiscuous relationships? Will they not grow up as poor wails lacking the steady love and care of settled families? Now anyone who knows anything about children in a practical way, and who has an honest regard for their happiness (as distinct from their moral training), knows that this think-of-the-children argument is the most specious in the anti-sexual armoury. The adults who habitually thwart, thrash and browbeat the joy of life out of children, are precisely those adults whose lives are warped by unsatisfied sexual yearnings. Children's happiness and therefore their general well-being, is largely dependent on the adults who have charge of them, for adults cannot really love and care for children out of duty as the moralists pretend. Thwarted adults may conscientiously try to do their duty by children, but such ministrations are poisoned at their source, and result in a repressive treatment which is aimed at inhibiting the sexuality of the children.

If it were a case of planning adult behaviour entirely in the interests of child welfare, the cardinal essential would be the removal of the monogamous taboo. It is obvious that adults who lack the variety of sexual experience that they would like to have (even if in their secret hearts), in the supposed interests of children, are going to exact some compensatory repayment from the children. Too much of childhood is spent in paying the price which adults demand for the abstinence they have embraced.

Of all the weapons which are used in the campaign against "free love", the most emotionally effective is that of sheer mud-slinging. Such time-honoured and juicy epithets as tart, dirty old man, whoremonger, nancyboy, nymphomaniac, pervert and many less printable epithets are freely rattled off with a fine disregard for accuracy, to describe those people who do not conform to the sexual code of the moralists. Against such a barrage of hate and fear there is no useful argument. Such purity crusaders are the victims of the grim and dreary repression of love under which our society labours, and which only social revolution will eradicate.

Such a concept as the monogamous "free union" certainly differs from the concept of "free love". Some moralists

who have little respect for the legality of marriage, are still deeply impressed by the bourgeois ideal of the family. Such a one is Alex Comfort, who even lends support to the idea that jealousy has some salutary function in protecting the sanctity of the family. Malatesta was less definite on the subject; jealousy seemed to him to be the necessary concomitant of love, and this he regretted as it rendered love liable to give rise to tragic situations, but he pursued the subject to no great depths.

Jealousy and Freedom

Jealousy we know, is a powerful factor in the crushing of love. To talk of it as having a salutary effect in love relationships, as Alex Comfort does, is surely to beg the question. Can the monogamous relationship tied together by the bonds of jealousy promote health or preserve mutual love? On the contrary, the jealous person lessens his partner's sexual freedom knowing perfectly well that he sours the love directed towards himself. In insisting on the exclusiveness of his "rights", he makes what was a free gift into a levied tribute, and the outside objects of his partner's roving fancy begin to assume an exaggerated importance. He knows the bitter love-killing effect of his jealousy, yet willfully destroys his own happiness in this morbid passion.

Sexual jealousy is not the necessary concomitant of love which Malatesta assumed it to be. It is essentially an unnatural and morbid phenomenon in a species like Man, which is highly social and perpetually on heat. Possibly it may have some biological justification in animals like deer who only come on heat once a year and whose sexuality is entirely reproductive. In our society sexual jealousy is largely the reflection of property relationships—and those who own less property tend to guard their sexual property the more jealously. Practically every individual grows up to accept the tradition of jealous possession before he or she has any actual experience outside the family. The young husband fears the derisive epithet "cuckold" which anguishing society confers on him if his wife strays. The young wife fears the pitying patronage with which the neighbours will treat her if they can discover that her man strays. Marital infidelity is a delicious event for a sex-

starved community to revel in, and the torture of jealousy is considered a right and proper emotion to add spice to the affair. Respectable people feel cheated and resentful when a couple do not feel jealous of one another's attachments: they deem this to be very shocking.

It is still a fact that variety in sexual attachments is held to be more morally reprehensible in women than in men. Centuries of masculine economic dominance still make it possible for the natural roving sexuality of women to be condemned out of hand. Any attempt to discuss the matter can be effectively checked in the manner of Dr. Johnson who stated the fixed moralist case very concisely:

"My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore and there's an end on't."

Men still attempt to justify their own variety of attachments, but fear the cuckold's horns. Seldom will a man face up to the fact that if he loves a woman who is attractive, unprejudiced and

truly free, as the years go by the woman will acquire an antlered crown, ever-growing in size, like that of a noble stag—that is, if he thinks of his beloved's horns in terms of his own cuckoldry. Let him take comfort in Shakespeare's advice:

"Take thou no scorn to wear the horns. It was a crest ere thou wast born. Thy father's father wore it, And thy father bore it."

Those who look forward to a better society and know that they must do it themselves, know how little they trust the accepted morality of the present. This is true of all aspects of human affairs, and in sexual matters moralists are the most perversely reasonable. The morbid jealousy of others' love-lives which the moralist would like us to feel, has no bearing on healthy living. There are no grounds for supposing that the negation of sexual taboo would be necessary for a better society, because it has been one of the props of the old repressive system. The putting of theory into practice is the most effective means of social revolutionary change on the face of the earth. Anarchists are not sentimentalists and idle dreamers about the future of humanity; what we have reason to believe is good for us we put into practice. We can in our own lives, and we can build up the foundations of a new revolution.

Socialist Malthusians

Though there was little spectacular progress made in the next fifty years but this period was to see the slow diffusion of birth control methods mainly as a result of the work of certain social reformers who regarded overpopulation as the main cause of poverty. Of these, Dr. George Drysdale may be mentioned. His influential though wordy book *Elements of Social Science* (it contains 600 pages of small print) ran into 35 English editions between 1854 and 1904, besides being translated into 10 European languages. Mainly concerned with making out the case against overpopulation, it devoted some space to outlining practical methods of birth control. Drysdale was far ahead of his time in condemning *coitus interruptus*, the practice of withdrawal, for the same reasons which condemn it to-day. "It is," he wrote, "apt to produce nervous disorder and sexual enfeeblement and congestion from the sudden interruption it gives to the venereal act, whose pleasure, moreover, it interferes with."

Still more remarkable is the attack he made on sexual abstinence as harmful and dangerous. "As regards the moral side of the question of preventive sexual intercourse [this is his term for birth control practice] many people have an objection to it because, they say, it is unnatural. But sexual abstinence is infinitely more unnatural, and therefore sinful, that it is totally incompatible with health and happiness, and produces the most widespread and desolating diseases." Though many people have obscurely felt that abstinence is harmful, few have had the courage to say so, so forcefully and openly, and there have not been wanting sex-denying clerics and doctors who have dogmatically declared the contrary. Only in recent years has the connection between defective sexual gratification to be certain disorders of health begun to be investigated, chiefly by the followers of Wilhelm Reich.

The Bradlaugh-Besant Trial

But in 1877, the quiet stream of birth control diffusion suddenly increased to a torrent as a result of the trial of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. In this case the London publisher, Charles Watts, was prosecuted as the publisher of a pamphlet on birth control by an American follower of Place and Robert Dale Owen, Dr. Charles Knowlton. His book, *The Fruits of Philosophy*, had been issued in an English edition by Watts.

Charles Bradlaugh, who had then been active in the movement for birth control for twenty-five years, determined together with Annie Besant, to make a test case on the legality of issuing Knowlton's book. They therefore prepared an edition of it, and informed the police of the date of publication and the place of intended distribution. They were duly arrested and first tried at the Guildhall, then at the Old Bailey, and finally at the High Court of Justice—before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, who demolished the prosecution's case. Annie Besant had presented a clear case for the desirability of disseminating contraceptive knowledge among the poor, while Bradlaugh argued the legal issues. It is interesting to reflect that the Royal Commission on Population made the same plea nearly three-quarters of a century later.

The Bradlaugh-Besant trial was attended by huge publicity and excited widespread public discussion. This parallel development of birth control diffusion in America, the initial work of the Socialist, Robert Owen's son, Robert Dale Owen, and provides another example of the link between the Socialist and Malthusian movements.

publicity was assisted by the presence of this time successful—by the author of old Edward Truelove, the publisher of Dr. Drysdale's book. In this instance, he was tried for publishing Robert Dale Owen's birth control pamphlet entitled *Moral Physiology*, the first trial the jury disagreed standing out for acquittal. A second was therefore ordered and the Truelove was found guilty and sentenced to prison for four months with hard labour. He was also fined £50.

This decision, coming on top of Bradlaugh-Besant trial, created a tremendous outcry in liberal and radical circles and an unsuccessful attempt was made to get the Home Secretary to review the case. There must have been generally unpopularity when Truelove was released on bail. He was met by a large crowd of rejoicing and celebrations following his triumph for radicalism in the cause of birth control.

Indeed, although "guilty" he played his part in what was a triumph for radicalism in the cause of birth control. The effect was enormous. It accelerated the diffusion of birth control publications and some writers believe that the Bradlaugh-Besant trial was a point in the emancipation of Italy and that the downward trend of population is directly due to increased dissemination of contraceptive information.

The Berneri-Zaccaria Trial of 1950

The England of 1877 was ready for the crystallization of opinion effected by the Bradlaugh-Besant trial. Italy at the present moment is similarly ripe for the public discussion of contraception, and the acquittal of our comrades, Giovanna Berneri and Cesare Zaccaria, on a charge of publishing a birth control pamphlet, may well have as powerful an effect. From a social viewpoint, however, this recent trial is even more significant. The status of women in mid-twentieth century Italy is perhaps even more backward than in this country seventy-five years ago. But the enslavement of the population—especially women—to the Roman Catholic Church is an even more formidable element of reaction. To have thus challenged and defeated the anti-sexual forces ranged against birth control is a tremendous, as well as a most courageous, achievement. It creates the opportunity for the social diffusion of contraception for the workers and peasants of Italy among the workers and peasants last seventy-five years has seen in this country. It may mark the emancipation of a people from clerical thralldom, and lay the foundation for sexual gratification on a mass scale. This in itself makes possible the development of an individual character structure of a self-governing type which may do more to make anarchism a reality than any other possibility and a reality than any other single factor.

But it will be up to the intellectual liberal radical movement, and the anarchist movement (in a former article we have shown how little can be expected of the political movements) to make use of the opportunity created by the courage of Giovanna Berneri and Cesare Zaccaria, and press the spread of contraceptive knowledge.

In a final article I shall discuss the widening aspects of the ability to divorce sexual intercourse from procreation which the social diffusion of contraception makes possible.

The Dilemma of FREEDOM and AUTHORITY

MEN OF STONES by Rex Warner. (Bodley Head, 9/-)

IN an age of social anxiety, it is to be expected that the novel of ideas should flourish and that a whole chorus of fiction should echo the doubts and premonitions that obsess the thinking man. Among these recorders of crisis and dismay, none had been more constant in his discussion of the central problem of our time, the dilemma of freedom and authority, than Rex Warner, and his latest novel, *Men of Stones*, is an extension of this favourite theme.

The action of this novel lies in that allegorical half-world which Warner has already made his own. A country that has been crushed by Nazi occupation and tortured by civil war into an iron dictatorship is the setting of the story, and its formidable character is the governor of an island prison, who has been consumed by a mania for power so intense that he

aspires to divinity and dreams of conquering the world. To his prisoners he promises a liberation in furthering his will, and around his actions move the fates of the people who come into contact with him. A cultured and innocent young Englishman goes to the castle to stage a unique performance of *King Lear* on its battlements, and falls in love with the Governor's wife. The Governor's brother, who has spent the war years in a Nazi concentration camp, returns to seek in a remote village a miraculous picture which may assure him something beyond the inhumanity he has witnessed in the past years.

The Governor burns the image, and destroys his wife and her lover by giving a really deadly twist to the performance of *King Lear*. But his own megalomaniac vision is shattered on the verge of fulfillment by a more cunning and worldly competitor. Yet, as the land again lapses into civil war, the Governor's brother sees

even in the burnt picture a symbol of hope:

"What I saw in a moment was that though people who feel love and pity may be destroyed and though the emblems of these things may be burnt, the qualities themselves really do exist and, in themselves, cannot be touched at all. They are, in fact (and this was what I wanted to know) part of the real world."

Readers who are familiar with Warner's earlier book, *The Aerodrome*, will detect a close similarity not only of ideas but also of pattern between this novel and *Men of Stones*. The power maniac, possessed by the illusion that he can give freedom through authority, destroying those he has loved in the pursuit of his aims and dying on the eve of achievement; the blood relative who represents the opposing principle of love, passing through the trials of this underworld and still discovering that there is something beyond brutality and fear; the castle or aerodrome as symbol of power opposed to the village as the symbol of a natural and humane life; the final implicit vindication of love; all these features are repeated, and they seem to constitute the recurrent personal myth in which the author sees the crisis of our civilisation portrayed—a myth which owes much alike to Kafka and to psychoanalysis.

But with repetition the myth, though more forcibly expressed, seems to have become less convincing. The Governor himself is a terrifying figure whose justifications of his own conduct make a fascinating commentary on the central problem of authority, and the atmosphere of Gothic monstrosity is admirably evoked. But the level is not always maintained. The essential suspense of the narrative flags, particularly towards the end, the device of using the play to project the tragedy is too closely in the melodramatic detective story convention, and the death of the Governor, at the hands of a character not sufficiently integrated into the main pattern, has a too mechanical abruptness.

Yet, despite these criticisms, *Men of Stones*, remains, next to *1984* and *Apocalypse*, the best novel of ideas to come out of England in recent times, and it maintains, if it does not increase, Warner's stature as one of the best living masters of the allegorical form.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT ENGLISH FARMING

★ Out and About ★
DON'T BOX ME IN

THROUGHOUT recorded history, the inmates of prisons, and also the populations of all countries, have been devalued and rendered amenable to the control of those in power by a low standard of diet. This is the key to the truth about the condition of English agriculture during the last century and the present, and the obvious answer to the enigma of a half-nourished population in a country that is one of the most fertile in the world.

English farmers and countrymen in general are just beginning to seek for this truth and are finding it something of a "mystery". In most cases, their interest only begins from about 1939 onwards, but there are a few men here and there who have looked back through the years to the planned control which began with the Enclosure Act.

The period of social history which followed the Napoleonic Wars during the early years of the nineteenth century has a close parallel to its twentieth century counterpart. People lived in a state of semi-starvation during the Hungry Forties when England was overstocked with grain. I believe that although our own agricultural production has fallen, that of the Empire has recorded a surplus. The beef and mutton is there but it is not on show because it has mostly gone into tins; it does not reach us owing to the "dollar shortage". I should say the planned shortage, for I believe that this dollar business is simply a conjuring trick. Food production in England has become a matter of statistics and sub-committees; we are paper-farmers to-day—the old-time farmers were not "educated" but they had their feet firmly planted on the soil and never lost their grip on essentials. England has more waste land uncultivated and ungrazed than any other European country. As regards to grazing, we have downland and odd corners that would pasture animals ranging from the goat to the Highland steer. Germany is the criterion by which we shall eventually be judged—the story of the success of their farming policy since 1935, when they switched over to pig breeding has never been told, and their agricultural production since 1945 has been phenomenal in comparison to ours. I may be told that they import meat, or are given meat, but even then their production of bacon and beef has been greater than ours, and we must remember that their soil cannot grow feeding-stuffs as easily as England's. Perhaps it is only a question of the figures we have been given when we think in terms of our meat production, for did not English

farmers say, as far back as the early months of 1949, that they could give a weekly meat ration of nearly four pounds per head to our hungry population? These figures were published in the centre pages of *The Farmer and Stock-Breeder* and therefore passed through the hands of the editor or through the editorial office and were regarded by neither as incongruous. What is the truth about it all?

The truth is we have not only suffered a monetary devaluation but have also been "de-farmed" as a disciplinarian (or totalitarian) measure. The Germans had their butlerless period early in the Nazi regime, we are enjoying ours now, and the peak year of the Second Hungry Forties

was 1947. The Germans have preceded us in reaching a point in twentieth century planned economy and discipline that is desirable for the maintenance of national unity and, of course, unfrozen international profits, their reconstruction since 1945 proves this, and so they are fed or energised. We are just beginning to reach this point and food is slowly coming back to us. By 1952, the year of the Second Great Exhibition, when we ourselves must be a shining advertisement to foreign visitors, we shall have a ring in our voices again. If you accuse me of fantasy in this short examination of the truth about English farming; I refer you to that straight-seeing, straight-speaking English countryman, William Cobbett; he

revealed the political situation and its implication to agriculture to his generation, his "little magazine", his Journal, rang truth in contrast to the popular press of his day.

E. J. ROGERS.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

The publication of translations of the resolutions of the International Anarchist Congress will be resumed in our next issue.

READERS' OPINIONS

Violence, Ends and Means

DEAR FRIENDS,
I was very glad to read the report of the contribution of the delegate from German-speaking Switzerland to the discussion on violence at the International Conference. I should like to make a few observations on this.

How can violence fail in the course of a large-scale revolt to lead Anarchists and followers either to subordination or extinction? In view of the fact that Communists and like political revolutionaries would be only too quick to seize the opportunity of taking the lead, it would seem of first importance that Anarchists should be clearly distinguishable in their part in such a struggle. For in so far as they differ from Communists and others by disclaiming seizure of power as their ultimate aim, the whole character of their response to the revolutionary situation may be said in a sense to be sacrificial—that is to say, their acts are

committed on behalf of everyone (including in the final analysis even those whose frustrations have gone so deep as to turn them into opponents), like the acts of the Indian Satyagrahi demonstrating against the principle of untouchability.

The degree of opposition to be encountered cannot truly be measured in purely class and military terms, but one must take into account the psychological factors of sympathetic response or otherwise of all those sections of the community whose interests are not in extreme conflict with militant groups. Richard Gregg's *The Technique of Non-Violence* contains many striking examples of this response, even among police, to the behaviour of non-violent resistors in India, and indeed elsewhere. The majority of people may have thought their way through little more than the outer surface of social relations and political problems generally, but they have a more or less

instinctive appreciation of decency and have reasonable resources of their own in this respect. They can see the difference between conviction of truth, with its appropriate readiness to suffer the consequences without causing suffering to others on the one hand; and on the other, the determination to achieve political objectives at all cost. In the use of violence, both opponents and others are blinded to the justice that prompts it, thus creating more vigorous opposition. It is not so much a case of not turning people against an idea as making sure of drawing out all the latent sympathetic response there may be.

But this is easier said than done. It may be too much to ask of large masses of people acting spontaneously to think backwards through their future actions thus. While non-violence is often mistakenly regarded as something merely passive and therefore weak, the technique of positive, active and one may say creative non-violence is likely to require much more self-discipline and training, both individually and in groups, than the haphazard use of a revolver or a handful of stones. Yet the exercise of non-violence has proved itself in other circumstances to be a source of socially creative energies, self-generating; the chances of success for completely unorganised and uncontrolled revolutionary activities are not glowing, yet the type of politico-military organisation at which communist parties are adept must be repugnant to Anarchists. Non-violence as a technique surely deserves their most serious consideration as the only practical as well as morally acceptable alternative, where so many deep ethical problems are involved besides merely swapping fortunes in a class war. I should have thought non-violence was based upon just those principles of responsible freedom and cultivated spontaneity which are so intimately tied up with Anarchism as a way of life. Ultimately it is a question of relating means to ends.

DAVID S. BALLANTYNE.

ABC OF AUTHORITY

(Continued)

N is for Need for Work instead of Authority. Useful work is essential for happiness. Adlerian psychologists say this is because a worth-while job is the means to admiration in others and faith in oneself, and thus an objective sense of power, which is the natural compensation for a sense of inferiority in babyhood. Other psychologists say it is because a good job fulfils one's creative instinct. Quakers, Doukhobors and some other religious people think it has something to do with God. Whatever the true explanation, it is widely observed that happiness and self-confidence arise from a sense of being socially useful. But the Authoritarian educational and industrial system seeks to make workers docile, reducing them to a "sub-human condition of intellectual irresponsibility," like cows being milked.

O is for Organisation. The reader may be thinking that Knowledge, Leadership, Mutual Aid and the Need for Work are sufficient for primitive communities, but that Authority is necessary in highly-organised civilisations. Certainly highly-organised free societies must be different in structure from Authoritarian societies, just as buildings founded on granite must be different from buildings founded on mud. But there is no reason why a free society should not be as highly-organised into voluntary groups and federations as contemporary society is organised into different degrees of Authority.

(To be continued)

D.R.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON
INDOOR Lecture-Discussions every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. at the Trade Union Club, Great Newport St., W.C.2 (near Leicester Square Station).
May 14th Speaker: Jacob Osman "THE SUDAN AT THE CROSSROAD"
May 21st Speaker: Ethel Hall "HEREDITY, ENVIRONMENT AND THE INDIVIDUAL"
May 28th. Whitsun. No meeting

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP
OUTDOOR MEETINGS every Sunday at 7 p.m. at MAXWELL STREET with Frank Leach, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP
Open Air Meetings every Sunday, 7.30 p.m., on Lewis's blitzed site

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT
Discussion Group held fortnightly, Sunday, May 21st at 3.0 p.m. at Twisters and Drawers Club, Cambridge Street, Colne (Lancs.)

NORTH EAST LONDON GROUP
Discussion Meetings fortnightly, 7.30 p.m. May 16th Edgar Priddy "OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM"
May 30th Eric Maple "RANDOLPH BOURNE'S 'THE STATE'"
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

HAMPSTEAD
Discussion Meetings are held every Tuesday at 8 p.m. prompt. at 5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead, N.W.3
May 16th BRAINS TRUST
May 23rd Pip Walker ATTITUDES TO NEW IDEAS

CENTRAL LONDON P.P.U.
Friday, May 19th, at 7.30 p.m. "MARIE LOUISE BERNET" a talk by John Hewatson at 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.2.

FROM PAGE ONE

OVER THE PRISON WALL

That recent convert from Stalinism, Konni Zilliacus, describes as "really exciting" the "honest" admission of a high-up Yugoslav Communist that "We must frankly admit that in the Socialist States we have not yet solved the problem of freedom." But the anti-Communist measures of the democracies—to say nothing of their sedition Acts and 18B's and 39A's—show clearly enough that neither has the democratic state solved that problem.

Western citizens do not become free because they can point to grosser tyranny in Russia and its empire. The mirror of Russian conditions deludes the democracies into believing that freedom exists in their own countries, but the idea of freedom under democratic forms of government is a myth. In fact, we are asked to judge life in terms of more or less enslavement. The citizens of the west to-day are like long-term prisoners: there are worse prisons than the one we are serving our sentence in, but we have come to accept conditions in our own as the conditions of life itself. The Governor persuades us to accept our conditions and even to defend them against the more stringent prison behind the curtain. Thus in the battle of words between East and West we have come to assume that the "democratic way of life" is the same as "freedom."

A More Vigorous Idea of Freedom

It is time we began to look over the walls of our prison, began to think of our release, to re-define our ideas of freedom. Herbert Read has pointed out the difference in meaning between freedom and liberty. "A man is free if he is given his liberty. Freedom is a

personal attribute: liberty is a civil right." It is time we got away beyond the idea that freedom means just liberty to act within the more or less narrow limits laid down by this or that government. Such a conception, as Read points out, is really only a negative one. Freedom is also "a positive condition—specifically, freedom to create, freedom to become what one is. The word implies an obligation. Freedom is not a state of rest, of least resistance. It is a state of action, of projection, of self-realization."

The subject is obviously an enormous one and can only be glanced at here. But even a cursory glance is enough to point to the difference between self-reliant freedom to make one's decisions in common with one's fellows, and the liberty to follow a tortuous course between the multiple regulations and restrictions of central and local government, with most decisions taken out of one's hands anyway. Then there is the mockery which economic hardship, or simply the need to modify one's conduct in order to retain one's job, makes of the idea of responsible and sincere freedom of action.

The legalistic anti-Communist measures are only the latest of a whole series of inroads on personal liberty, and its political and philosophical safeguards. The failure of the liberals and the progressives is not that they have accepted these measures—often, enough they have done so with great reluctance. But their reluctance and their qualms have not been keen enough to make them reconsider the whole basis of their idea of liberty and freedom; has not made them reconsider their whole attitude towards the government of men by men, towards the tyranny of our economic modes.

Freedom from Government
Freedom can only be achieved through the emancipation of men from

centralised government and its instrument, the State. But governments do not abdicate, nor willingly consent to their own overthrow. The present drive against the Communists shows how deep—or how shallow—their principles go. Men may have freedom to hold whatever views they like—until they begin to threaten the security of the status quo. And this does not apply only to the Communists. Five years ago, when this paper printed purely historical articles on how soldiers, workers and peasants had in history formed councils to carry on their own affairs and economic matters, its editors were accused of sedition and imprisoned.

The Communists are simply seeking the substitution of one form of state for another, even more repressive. But the similarities between governmental methods all over the world are becoming just as clear as the differences they so vociferously underline. The struggle between the democratic state and the Communist fifth column is not an involving principle, and if one has looked over the prison wall and considers the possibilities of escape, one cannot feel very strongly about it.

The real question is: are we forever going to seek the mirage of freedom within the confines of the state, when we know that it is the state which is itself the denial of freedom? Are we forever going on thinking in terms of patriotism instead of in terms of human beings the world over? Or are we going to seek in good earnest to enlarge the terms of our lives so that we and our fellows can be free to create, to realize human aspirations? To do so requires that we throw off the mental shackles of the state as the necessary preliminary to throwing off the material and administrative restrictions that stand in the way of the idea of positive freedom.

I REMEMBER reading, as a newspaper advertisement, the "Saturday Bargain Page" which that *War, Pestilence, and Misery* increase until the Bishops open Southcott's Box. These phenomena claims recurred week after week at expense of the Panacea Society. Naturally mystified by this, I enquired the meaning of panacea, and found meant a remedy for all ills.

So it was like re-encountering an old friend when, in the pages of *Chaos*, Duff's book, *This Human Nature*, Joanna again. She was, I learned, a phlegm, born two hundred years ago, traded in passports to heaven, and died that, at the age of sixty, would give birth to the second world war.

"On hearing that age, she said, 'I'll self up, and when, on the day, women and doctors she was to be pregnant... the doubt... look solemnly at each other... was raised for this most... accident.' The girl... £200 and a silver cup... with the words *Hail, Mary, of Salem* engraved upon... no child came. Joanna's... mortem examination showed... had suffered merely from... wind."

There are to-day three centres, an American paper... one in England, and two, jointly, in Los Angeles. Joanna's box was once opened (without... clergy). The results were... but, we are assured, it was... box!

We pride ourselves on seeing the pretensions and the delusions of political Joannas, and on realising the panaceas locked up in their tricks are, when examined in the day, just as ineffective as those of English virgin. In fact, they are like the contents of *Pandora's* menace more easily released and eradicated. The credulous may that war, pestilence and misery ended by a combination of Welfare, Marshall Plan, Export Drive, Government and Western Union, evidence of common sense and... against them, and they will appear as foolish as the Panacea Society.

But, especially since we see the absurdity of other peoples' shut an earthly paradise, we should to avoid elevating our own beliefs to status of universal remedies, according to our temperament of view, regard the abolition of the system, or the attainment of freedom, or workers' control of the... libertarian education, or... living, or the end of religion, as particularly important in his... a free society but we would be... ourselves and others if we im... any of these things would be... miraculous effect that their more... giant advocates claim for them. E... central aim of anarchism, the abolition all authority, or more positively, affirmation of complete freedom, is not an end, but a beginning. The more I think about it the more sure I become that anarchism is not only the negation of authority, but the negation of *isms*. Life is so big and so complex that it can no more be confined in a *ism* than in Joanna Southcott's box. We must not let our sensible and positive ideas become so inflated that they end up in an excess of wind.

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