

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Politicians do not serve ideals; they make use of ideals."
 —A. J. P. TAYLOR
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Threepence

You're Living too Long for the Economists

RAISING RETIREMENT AGE?

OPONENTS of the Welfare State proudly point to the longer expectation of life for those who receive its benefits. A hundred years ago the workers' life was described as 'nasty, brutish and short'. Today it is at least not so short. Unfortunately the Welfare State is doing nothing more than a sauce to cover the otherwise stinking meat of capitalism, the operation of which is still essentially nasty and brutish. The underlying nature of the economic system is demonstrated by the way in which every attempt at reform brings with it new problems, most of which can be solved only by backing down on the reforms. The health service, for example, set off with a great fanfare as a service for all, it has led to a continual increase in the contributions by the worker and his employer (who gets it out of the labourer) and by direct charges for prescriptions and for some dental and oculists' services and

You're Living too Long

Even more ironic is the revelation of the very fact that people are living longer today is an embarrassment to our economy! As the gap between retirement and death gets longer, more and more old age pensioners take more and more out of the common pool; the careful balance of old, retired, people with young, working (and therefore contributing) people gets disturbed. These matters were discussed by our representatives in the House of Commons on Friday afternoon of last week, when a notion calling for recognition of the importance of making full use of the working capacity of older persons was debated.

When we say 'our representatives', incidentally, we mean some of 'our representatives', for the *Manchester Guardian's* reporter was able to comment:

There were seldom as many as ten members in the Chamber together. For whole stretches of this day-long debate on an important subject there was a single figure on the Opposition benches, looking like a man on a raft in a calm green ocean. Sometimes it was the Chief Whip, sometimes Mr. Robens, sometimes Mr. Bottomley; the cast changed as the day wore on. They relieved each other like sentries and

KRUPP FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM

Now I have seen everything. Krupps, the old cannon kings, were today formally received into the peace-loving Socialist camp. The benediction was spoken by the master of the Communist world himself—chubby Nikita Khrushchev.

Doggedly plodding around the Leipzig Industrial Fair for the second day the Russian Premier spent 10 minutes on the Krupps stand to inspect a model of a £4 million synthetic fibre plant being built by Krupp for Russia.

He was offered a brandy in a beaker made from the world-famous Krupps Stainless steel. With the greatest cordiality he raised it and proposed a toast to the health of Alfred Krupp.

Otto Grotewohl, East German Communist Premier whose controlled press has been blackguarding Krupps for years past, somewhat sheepishly joined in the toast.

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occasionally sat together for a little as though for company.

As may be expected under these conditions, the debate was dull, and we will not bore our readers with any close references to what was said. The gist of the matter, however, is that both the Government side and what there was of the Opposition were agreed that work should be provided for old people.

Raising Retirement Age?

Now this is all rather ominous. The awakening of the Government to the 'problem' which longer life for the workers poses in our economy means only one thing: that sooner or later the age of retirement will be raised.

After all, the age of 65, when pensions become payable, was not arrived at by guesswork, but by statistical and economic calculation. At the time that age was accepted, the average expectation of life was well under sixty. As late as the nineteen-thirties (and possibly aggravated by depression conditions) the average life span in Britain was 52!

By the time you were due for a pension, therefore, you were expected to be dead—and the State had made a profit on you. This made you a good citizen in a sense—but you were such a poor specimen physically that you had to be helped to remain in good health in case the State needed you. Now—awkward customer that you are—you repay the Government's generosity in providing you with orange juice and tranquilisers (paid for by your own money) by living longer and tending to put them in the red on the pension scheme!

It was pointed out, in the course of the debate in the House, that the Government White Paper on pensions mentioned that for many years to come the number of people over pensionable age would increase much more rapidly than the number of contributors. If everybody who reached pensionable age retired immediately they would place an insupportable burden on the working population.

Now isn't it fantastic that the more there are of us, the less able we are to enjoy the fruits of our labours!

What is Welfare Work?

Most workers work for about 40 years before becoming due for a pension; they contribute mightily to society during that time, and get back only a fraction of that contribution in wages. Now what is progress worth, what is 'welfare' worth, if the time can never come when we have to go on working because the can sit back and relax?

As it is now, many pensioners niggardly pension due at 65 is inadequate to live on. Mark our words it will not be very long before the suggestion comes that retiring age should be increased.

The very opposite should in fact be happening. As our technical know-how improves and productivity increases it should be possible for shorter working weeks and shorter working lives to be enough to provide abundance for all plus the opportunity for leisure and the education to enjoy it.

But it won't be done under the Workhouse State.

IN CENTRAL AFRICA

'PLOTS' GALORE

IN a statement on Nyasaland during question-time in the House of Commons, last Tuesday week (March 3), the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lennox Boyd declared that

"Some days ago information came to the notice of the Government of Nyasaland which was of a very serious nature. I have seen this information. I am not in a position to disclose it or its source—(Labour cries of 'Oh')—nor would any responsible Minister do so, nor would any member opposite who has held high office do so.

"That information made it clear that plans had been made by Congress to carry out widespread violence and the murder of Europeans, Asians, and moderate African leaders and, in fact, that a massacre was being planned."

It was essential that the Governor at the earliest possible moment should strengthen the security forces. "He is responsible for the Africans, the vast majority of them loyal to the Administration in Nyasaland and who wished to live in peace.

So he asked the Federal Government for troops. Northern and Southern Rhodesia Governments for police reinforcements, and the Tanganyika Government for assistance at Fort Hill. It became increasingly clear that the disturbances would make a declaration of a state of emergency inevitable.

Every government, French, British or Russian, Labour Tory, Communist or Fascist, white or black, has used similar arguments time and again to justify repressive actions or

arbitrary measures. No thinking person any longer believes these justifications—last Monday's *Manchester Guardian* page one headline "The 'Plot' Thickens", and its earlier editorial "Gresham's Law" in which it concludes that "the cost is accruing. Gresham's law [that bad money drives out good] takes its toll in the currency of belief", are cases in point—but nobody can do anything about it so well entrenched is the machinery of government, "democratic" no less than totalitarian!

ON February 27, Sir Edgar Whitehead, at a press conference in Salisbury (S. Rhodesia) following the declaration of an Emergency in Southern Rhodesia stated that "preparations for the present move had begun before Christmas" though the final decision to go ahead with them had been taken "a week ago at the same time as the troubles in Nyasaland had begun". On the same day the governments of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were repeating their already expressed view that "they see no necessity for declaring a state of emergency in their countries". Whitehead, on the other hand said that "he personally would be much happier if action of [the kind taken in S. Rhodesia] could be taken on Federal-wide basis, but

The BMA'S Best-Seller

THE British Medical Association has a best-seller on its hands—and is too embarrassed to do anything about it.

It is the new shilling booklet "Getting Married", which is the fourth in an official B.M.A. series. The first three, however, were published without the benefit of clergymen's protests and so got no publicity.

First printing of the present booklet was of 250,000 copies and 200,000 of them were distributed when protests began to flood into the B.M.A. from church leaders and from doctors who were 'shocked' by some of its contents, chapters of which were entitled 'Getting Married with a Baby on the Way' and 'Is Chastity Outmoded?'

Faced with moralistic protest the B.M.A. cravenly caved in and blocked further distribution until a full B.M.A. Council meeting can discuss the matter. First result of this was the resignation from the Council of Dr. Winifred de Kok, who edits the whole series, and Dr. Eustace Chesser, who contributed

the chastity article.

Second result was a burst of publicity for the booklet, which has of course boosted its sales tremendously. The day after the announcement of the B.M.A. ban on its own publication queues were forming at all bookstalls and shops with stocks, which were soon cleared.

A Soho bookseller said: "All my copies of the book went in a few hours this morning. Teen-agers were my biggest customers, some of them buying as many as half a dozen copies."

At a bookstall in one of London's biggest stations the manager said: "People coming off the morning trains were queuing to buy the few dozen copies I had."

So Doctors de Kok and Chesser should be highly delighted. More young people will read their booklet than would ever have heard of it but for the moralists' protest!

The B.M.A. Council will consider on March 25 what to do with its remaining stocks of 50,000 "Getting Married". Its embarrassment will be amusing to watch.



this was impossible under the terms of the Federal Constitution".

The declaration of a state of Emergency in Southern Rhodesia was, on Whitehead's admission, not intended for the purpose of "taking action against unruly elements, but in order to enable the government to "deal with" the African National Congress. He "justified" his action on the grounds that

he had felt for some time that his Government's aim of building a multi-racial state in Southern Rhodesia was being threatened by the Congress leaders who believed in extreme nationalism and were not interested in racial partnership.

(It is surely a question of defining words as well as substantiating their use. It's all very well talking about "aiming" at a "multi-racial state", and "racial partnership", but when were steps going to be taken to realise these "aims" and what value is there in a "partnership" in which the African majority will be treated as "sleeping" partners?)

In spite of Whitehead's regret that Federal action could not be taken in Nyasaland the *Observers'* correspondent reported (March 1) that

Strong pressure is being exerted on the Nyasaland Government from Southern Rhodesia, too, for it to follow the

Rhodesian Government's example. White opinion throughout the Federation is strongly critical of what the newspapers have called the Nyasaland Government's "weakness," "dithering," and "typical Colonial Office vacillation." It is doubtful whether the Nyasaland Government can long resist this pressure.

And the same correspondent pointed out that

It is generally accepted that it was the Federal Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, who really took the decision to send troops from other parts of the Federation into Nyasaland—although technically this could be done only in response to a request from the Governor of Nyasaland, Sir Robert Armitage.

On the following Tuesday (March 3) the Governor of Nyasaland, Sir Robert Armitage, declared a state of Emergency

because of actions by leaders of the African National Congress which had day by day become increasingly violent. The Congress had become a threat to law-abiding people and to the prosperity of the country.

(Which law-abiding people? Whose prosperity?)

Under the Emergency, all sections of the Congress movement are declared illegal and people who continue to hold office are liable to

Continued on p. 3

THE BRUDERHOF

QUITE recently I visited the Bruderhof Community at Gerrards Cross. Many significant changes appeared to have taken place since 1940 when I visited the original Community in the Cotswolds.

In the Spring of 1940 I visited the Cotswold Bruderhof looking like so many of the conchies on the run who were looking for a haven at that time. They gave me accommodation for five days and I worked with their other labourers on the land, getting a very good worm's-eye-view of the place.

The atmosphere of the community was almost Medieval, and in fact efforts were being made to revive the traditions of the Hutterian Movement of the 16th century. Most of the men wore clothes of a peculiar cut, and the women wore long blue shapeless gowns. Men who had joined the community in England were dressed in more nondescript clothes, but concessions were made to the Hutterian manner of dress. At the communal meals in the dining room the women were segregated from the men, and the children ate elsewhere. Hymn-singing preceded meals, and no conversation took place during meals. Instead of conversation, certain of the elder Brothers held forth on matters of general interest to the community.

Breakfast was not eaten in the communal dining room. The married couples ate in their own quarters, and we unattached labourers breakfasted in a smaller room where an elder Brother entertained us with readings from Kierkegaard as we ate. It was explained to me that we labourers would have no time to read for ourselves.

The food was wretched. The diet was quite inadequate both in content and quantity for young men doing agricultural labour, although it would have been sufficient for those doing administrative work and lighter jobs in the printing house and other enterprises of the community. I found out later that a true egalitarianism in food was not adhered to; these young labourers were about the worst fed. Those of the inner circle of the community were supplementing the meagre food served in the communal dining room by better stuff served in their own quarters. A comparatively wealthy acquaintance of mine visited the Bruderhof and they made great efforts to persuade him to join them, entertaining him quite handsomely as far as food went.

The labourers worked long hours, but somewhat listlessly, partly perhaps from continual underfeeding, partly from the apathetic nature of their lives. A sort of foreman endeavoured to enspire them by declaring after the 10 minute mid-morning break, "Come brothers, we must earn our bread!" which meant back to the hoeing. This phrase "Come brothers, we must earn our bread!" was used rather frequently, like a factory hooter punctuating the day.

I did not get very far in my enquiries as to what my fellow-workers believed on religious or social matters. They seemed to think very little anyway, and simply parroted out the stock phrases that the elder brothers used. They were either unwilling to tell me, or genuinely ignorant of how the community was actually organized and administered. Questions to elder brothers met with evasiveness, and I who first went there prepared to have a good deal of faith in their sincerity and good intentions (even if I did not share their religious outlook) began to feel that they had something discreditable to hide. Apart from their constant bland references to the will of God and their own humility, their conversation was strangely reminiscent of that of the Stalinists. They dwelt at length on their statistics of production and their economic plans for the future. Their policy appeared to be a mixture of extreme economic self-sufficiency combined with undercutting all competitors in the producers market.

Some five years later George Orwell's *Animal Farm* was published, and on reading it I was powerfully reminded of my short stay at the Cotswold Bruderhof. It was a satire on Communism, yes—but it embraced all the mock-brotherhood that was so much in evidence at the Bruderhof. I felt that I had worked on that farm alongside the silly, bleating sheep and had been harangued by Squealer in the person of an elder Brother.

On the morning of my departure I was escorted by an elder Brother to a room where I was to sign the visitors' book. He called my attention to a large money-box beside the visitors' book above which was a notice saying that they knew that

visitors "would not want to take the bread from their children's mouths" and invited visitors to contribute. As I had sweated on their fields in return for my bread and Kierkegaard, I felt that this solicitation was uncalled for, and I told this elder Brother that "the labourer is worthy of his hire".

After this brief visit to the Cotswold Bruderhof, I came across other people who had had some contact with them. It appeared to be possible to join the community and donate all one's worldly possessions to them without properly understanding or agreeing with the basis of the community. Then, when these enthusiastic proselytes cooled off and wanted to leave the community, they found that their goods would remain. The theory was, I believe, that the goods belonged to God, and only the elder Brothers knew what God wanted to be done about the furniture, etc., of those who wished to opt out of the Community. I was fortunate that in my complete poverty I had been afforded a worm's-eye-view of the place.

My recent visit to the Bruderhof Community at Gerrard's Cross was only a day and a night in duration, and I can only retail my superficial impressions. From my point of view the manifest changes which have taken place are entirely favourable. Few of the present members at Gerrard's Cross were at the old Cotswold Bruderhof, although they try to maintain an unbroken tradition.

The first thing that struck me on going into their dining hall was that the men and women were no longer segregated but mingled quite naturally at the tables, and some of the older children were sitting with them. They no longer wear the peculiar Hutterian clothes, which is a great improvement as far as the women were concerned. One girl was even wearing slacks, and I am pretty sure that this would have been impossible in the earlier era of the community.

At this midday meal one or two of the elder Brothers held forth for the general edification throughout the meal, but there was a certain amount of quiet conversation going on in various parts of the hall. The singing which preceded the meal was quite lighthearted, and the food

was a very great improvement on that which was served at the old Cotswold Bruderhof. At the evening meal, one of the elder Brothers spoke the whole time giving extracts of news from the *Manchester Guardian*, with his own commentary. It struck me that his choice of news-items was a little odd; he was largely concerned with various sensational accidents and disasters which the paper reported, to the exclusion of many other topics. Afterwards, I asked him why it was necessary to read the paper to the community throughout supper, when they might reasonably be expected to look at the paper for themselves, and engage in ordinary conversation at meal-times. The answer given was that people had not the leisure to read it for themselves. I do not think that this is in fact the true reason. Enquiry of various people showed that they had a fair amount of leisure—enough certainly to look at those parts of the *Manchester Guardian* which interested them. Possibly it is felt that at all communal gatherings such as mealtimes somebody should be holding forth about something or other to encourage corporate thinking and discourage individual thought. If there are really no public notices that need to be given out and expatiated upon, the newspaper is a useful stop-gap. It was certainly preferable to Kierkegaard.

The economic basis of the community is not agricultural but industrial. They make iron gates and similar agricultural equipment from welded steel tubes. This has an important repercussion on what is required of the young men. They can no longer be left to vegetate, good enough for long hours of monotonous agricultural labour in the fields; they now have to attain technical proficiency in their craft, and this brings them more in touch with the outer world. I talked with one young man who was attending classes in welding at Slough, and he seemed to be impressed with the high wages he could earn as a skilled welder. Such workers as he are less likely to truckle under to a bleak life of subservience to a ruling oligarchy, as were the stupider labourers at the Cotswold Bruderhof.

Whereas the old Cotswold Bruderhof was somewhat Medieval in atmosphere, this present Community is rather Victorian. They have large families, and relations between adults and children

are on a somewhat Victorian level. Children are hard-worked, plain and "kept in their place". As could gather, it is taken for granted at least some of the parents that discipline should be maintained by the children. It appeared to me I spoke to on the subject that they never questioned their principle of intimidating children by physical force even though they claimed to be pacifists in their relations with the world nor had they got round to wondering whether or not such methods of rearing would lead their children to accept or reject the conventional that the threat of "a good hiding" is only realistic basis for many social organization in the adult world.

Their schoolmaster had done teacher's training practice at a progressive school, and visited other progressive and near-progressive schools. Their "lack of discipline" was the one feature he commented upon.

This Community at Gerrard's Cross treated me hospitably and I do not to carp at them for being so fundamentally different in spirit from the liberal ideas which I respect. I think it is tant that it should be realized fundamental is their difference anarchism. They are authoritarian, obscurantist and probably quite unused of the anarchist concept of the good and human dignity. Our apparent ment with them is that we both reject State, they because they have their form of theocratic State, but the little similarity beyond that. A state of contemporary society is at moment, anarchists do not order form themselves into communal ments, whereas the Bruderhof administration can exist only in such communities. I have seen how changes in a liberal direction have taken place within the Bruderhof movement in the last decades, and it is to be hoped in interest of their own happiness that changes will proceed further. But if emancipation of *habits* from cramped Hutterian tradition were to proceed very much further, it would necessarily bring them any nearer anarchism. As Huxley has shown in *Brave New World*, the individual still be a slave to the group in the sensual of paradises, if there is no freedom of thought from the official theocratic.

THE DISSENTERS' BURYING GROUND

"Probably the most persistent and penetrating permanent division in English history has been between Church of England man and Protestant Dissenter, causing a contrast in traditions which leaves its mark on the aesthetic, social and ethical preoccupations of many even of those who would be profoundly shocked to find that they had derived anything at all from any professedly Christian sect."

—G. KITSON CLARK: "The English Inheritance".

THE illuminating analogies drawn in G.'s lecture *The Anarchists: A Non-Conformist Sect* make one wish to pursue the discussion further. In one respect the very nomenclature of the dissident Christian sects confirms his analysis: protestant, dissenter, non-conformist, Free Church; although in order to sustain it we have to ignore many other attributes of Protestantism: the connection with the ethic of capitalism, the insistence on the sinfulness of worldly pleasure (as G. points out there is no necessary connection, but there is certainly a historical one, even though Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* indicates that disapproval of sexual pleasure was not always a characteristic of English puritanism). Above all we have to make it clear that we are not talking of what happens when non-conformism becomes conformism, when the sects get secular power—Calvin's Geneva, heresy-hunting Holland, witch-burning New England. The factory of the 16th and 17th centuries, with Catholics and Protestants cheerfully roasting each other with Christian charity on their lips, makes one chary of identifying oneself with either tradition, just as similar acts in our day in the name of nationalism and ideology have successfully insulated us from these contemporary religions.

The reason why there is a connection between the political Left in general and Christian dissent is fairly obvious. The early Christians were a primitive communal sect, and the successive movements in the Church protesting against the degeneration of its teachings and its incorporation into the *Status quo* have almost all implied a return to the 'pure' fundamentals of the Gospels. Wycliffe and the Lollards, Jan Hus and the Hussites, Munzer and the Anabaptists, were revolutionaries against Church and State, though this cannot be said of the official fathers of Protestantism, Luther and Calvin who were hierarchically and monarchically minded. In the English Civil War and the Commonwealth, as the older dissenting sects moved into political ascendancy, a host of new radical sects arose—Ranters, Diggers, Levellers and Quakers, and modern scholars like Petegorsky and Christopher Hill have reminded us of the communistic and anarchistic implications of Lilburne and Gerard Winstanley.

With the Restoration and the legal penalization of non-conformists, even the right-wing of dissenters were driven into radicalism in the long struggle for 'civil and

religious liberty' (the words are always coupled in this way in the histories of non-conformity and in the biographies and epitaphs of its martyrs).

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YOU can see as you go up the City Road in London the old Dissenters' Burying Ground, known as Bunhill Fields. Decay, neglect, and war damage have made it a wilderness of crumbling stones and open tombs. Here, among forgotten thousands, are buried George Fox, who founded the Quakers, John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe and William Blake. A friend of mine, a landscape architect, was commissioned to prepare plans for rehabilitating the dissenters' burying ground as a public garden, preserving the graves of some of these luminaries of the non-conformist tradition. In the course of his investigations he came across a curious old book (*Bunhill Memorials*) cataloguing the graves of several hundred dissenting ministers buried there and giving an account of their lives. The striking thing is the tendency, towards the end of the 18th century, for many of these dissenting divines to move towards Deism (the search for a 'rational' religion) and Socinianism (Unitarianism) and to the rejection of the divinity of Jesus. Of one we read "he first preached with great ardour among the Methodists; he then joined the 'rational' Dissenters; at length he renounced the ministry, and perhaps religion altogether", and of another: "As to the sacred doctrines of revelation, they most of them afforded him subject of ridicule; and he was determined to believe no more than his reason could fathom". The editor of the volume comments on the evolution of Dr. Joseph Priestley who "passed through all the changes, from Calvinism to Arrianism, then to Socinianism and finally to an Unitarian system perhaps, if possible, even lower than Socinianism". He calls it "Dr. Priestley's sliding-scale system".

This is interesting because it was also the evolution of William Godwin, the 'father of anarchism'. Godwin was the son and grandson of dissenting ministers (his grandfather, and his tutors at the Dissenting Academy, Hoxton, are buried at Bunhill), and he himself became a dissenting minister until 1782 when he left his ministry at Stowmarket after a dispute with his congregation. "My faith in Christianity had been shaken by the books (the French philosophers) which Mr. Norman had put into my hands, and I was therefore pleased in some respects with the breach which dismissed me." Godwin became more and more radical in religion and politics. His own account of his movement along Priestley's sliding scale was this:

"Till 1782 I believed in the doctrine of Calvin . . . The *Systeme de la Nature* (of Holbach), read about the beginning of that year, changed my opinion and made me a Deist. I afterwards veered to Socinianism, in

which I was confirmed by Priestley's *Institutes*, in the beginning of 1783. I remember the having entertained doubts in 1785, when I corresponded with Dr. Priestley. But I was not a complete unbeliever till 1787."

No wonder the Catholic faith regards the slightest gesture towards Protestantism as the first step down the slippery slope!

In 1789 the celebrated Unitarian minister Dr. Price preached his sermon at the meeting house in Old Jewry welcoming the French Revolution. Burke's *Reflections* were written as a reply to him, and in reply to Burke, Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* was published in 1791, and Godwin's *Political Justice* in 1793. The links between rationalist non-conformity and political radicalism were growing stronger. In his *Church & People in an Industrial Society*, E. R. Wickham quotes a contemporary Sheffield witness that,

"to many, even professed ministers of the Gospel, it (Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*) appeared to become dearer than their Bible, and their visits to their flocks were made with the *Rights of Man* in their pockets to induce them to read it."

No doubt it is idle, Canon Wickham comments, "but it is also fascinating to speculate what the future might have held had this particular axis been maintained". Why indeed was it not? Why did the dynamic of increasing dissent lose its impetus?

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JACOB BRONOWSKI, in discussing William Blake's heretical opinions sees two strains of non-conformity, "in blunt opposition, spiritually and politically", with John Wesley's evangelical Methodism on one side and the radical Unitarianism of Joseph Priestley on the other. Unitarianism "first flowered and then withered in Blake's lifetime" and Methodism gained the ascendancy. In this opposition we can see two very different tendencies to which G.'s analogy can be applied in different ways. The first was of vigorous, rational and independent thinkers, the intellectual and scientific elite of their day with whom we may be proud to compare the radical dissent of the anarchists.

"The mining engineers, the textile inventors, the potters, the instrument makers, the ironmasters, were nearly all dissenters. Most of Blake's fellow artists were dissenters . . . The dissenting academies were the best scientific schools of the century, and stood above the universities . . . The dissenting tradition proved its firmness of thought in the American war, and held it beyond the French Revolution. The Friendly Societies and the craft unions of dissenting workmen made the core of the Corresponding Societies."

Priestley, who had to flee to America in 1794, the year of the great treason trials, was the most eminent chemist of his day, and was a member of Erasmus Darwin's Lunar Society, the vanguard of scientific thought for a quarter of a century. When Francis Horner visited Birmingham in 1809, he wrote:

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Plots Galore

Continued from p. 1

...sonment for fourteen years and ... who continue as members are ... to seven years.

... Roy Welensky, Federal Prime ... was able to declare with ... satisfaction that the Nyasaland ... government's action in following the ... of S. Rhodesia

... enables us to lay bare the evil nature ... the African National Congress organ- ... ion. Threats and intimidation have ... ed a major part of A.N.C. policy.

... that the aim of the Emergency was ... to destroy the African National ... gress rather than to restore law- ... order or prevent the carrying ... of a "plot" to "massacre white ... has been clear all along.

... disturbances in Nyasaland ... op Sir Edgar Whitehead's own ... sion, "the excuse to "go ahead" ... plans for outlawing the A.N.C. ... hese Rhodesia, so the reper- ... ons in Nyasaland of that action ... the dispatch of troops were an ... e for similar action against the ... C. in Nyasaland. (Perhaps the ... that Northern Rhodesia is due ... old elections in a few days' time, ... that according to the Governor, ... Arthur Benson, the A.N.C. in ... territory was co-operating in ... ing the new Constitution work, ... gains why an Emergency has not ... declared there too. After the ... tions, who knows what will ... open, for though the A.N.C. in ... Rhodesia is "loyal" the break- ... ay organisation, the Zambia ... tional Congress is not, and "a ... asacre plot" may well be dis- ... vered there at some convenient ... e!)

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... THE discovery of the "plot", and ... the arrest of Dr. Banda and more ... than a hundred Nyasas under the ... Emergency regulations, have only ... succeeded in increasing the unrest, ... and as we go to Press, new distur- ... bances are reported from various ... parts of the country. But one thing ... is certain that if a plot existed to ... "massacre the white settlers" it ... existed only in the minds of those ... white political leaders who needed ... an excuse to wage all-out war ... against the growing political danger ... to their power which A.N.C. un- ... doubtedly represents. For so far ... not a single white settler has been ... killed by the Nyasas though the ... opportunities to do so are not ... lacking.

... Reuter, B.U.P. and A.P. reports ... from Blantyre last Monday describe ... some of the demonstrations, and ... "disturbances" that have taken place ... in the past few days, and though ... settlers were involved none was ... harmed. In one incident, for in- ... stance,

... about three hundred Africans gathered ... round the home of a Mr. and Mrs. ... Shearer, on Luger tea estate, the largest ... in Nyasaland. Security forces rushed ... to the house and found the unarmed Mr. ... Shearer calmly taking photographs of the ... crowd.

... In incidents at Mlanje, a tea ... district, two Africans were killed ... and four injured but in spite of this ... there was no massacre of European ... tea planters. Indeed, the Agency ... reports, make it clear that the "plot" ... story* is now doubted in some

*According to the news Agencies: "There are reports in Blantyre that it was at a meeting of about 150 member of the African National Congress in a wood near Blantyre on January 26 that it was decided to kill prominent Nyasaland Europeans and others. Dr. Banda, the Congress leader, was not at the meeting, but a number of his lieutenants were. It was the meeting that led to the arrest of Dr. Banda and other Congress leaders."

Mathematics Against Neurosis?

THE following is translated from an article in a recent issue of the French paper *L'Express*, which is entitled "Les Mathématiques contre L'Angoisse".

"Mathematicians are rarely neurotics, or, in any case, mathematics generally make up for a latent neurosis very well."

Struck by this fact, Professor Molaret finds the reason in the very nature of this science. Mathematics, he explains in a recent study, provide a complete certainty and permit one to cut oneself off from everyday life. These are exactly the defence mechanisms of the human organism faced with the anguish resulting from a badly adjusted contact with the environment: to separate oneself from it and to cling to an absolute truth, or one which is held to be absolute.

That is perhaps less true of mathematical research than of the practice of the mathematical language, but one can only take account of it in psychological teaching. A society in which the exact sciences and mathematical instruments occupy a larger and larger place would thus have found at the same time a remedy to the distress which results from the very applications of science: a people of technicians would alone be capable of living at ease in a world invaded by technology. Art does not permit the same escape, for, though it permits one to cut oneself off from the world, it does not bring any personal certainty, still less in the social sphere."

I wonder why this appears to me a terrible prospect. Is it because I was bad at mathematics at school? I think there are profounder reasons. The world of mathematics and exact science is a world cut off from human feelings. It has its place, an important one, but to use it as an escape from human problems seems to me disastrous. Do we really want to live in a world from which the only escape lies in abstraction? Do

quarters "because of the fact that not a single European has been killed since the state of emergency was declared, although many have been vulnerable".

On the other hand there is growing evidence to show that considerable violence is being used against the demonstrators by the security forces. As the *Manchester Guardian* points out, not only have the throwing of stones and other uses of violence by Africans been resorted to more often than not after the intervention of police or troops but the killing of thirty-seven Africans suggests "either that excessive force is being used by the police and troops to restrain demonstrators or that the demonstrations are so extensive that they can only be restrained by shooting".

What happens in the weeks ahead is another matter and the responsibility for outbreaks of violence by the Nyasas will not rest with the imprisoned A.N.C. leaders but with the Welenskys, the Whiteheads and the Armitages who have openly declared war on African political and economic advancement.

we want to live in a world from which an escape is necessary at all?

It is ironic, after all the expectations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when so much was hoped from science, that one can now write in the style of the above extract. Anyone would think that science was not something man-created but an arbitrary and ruthless deity, like Yahweh or Moloch. Surely, since man makes science, it is up to him to ensure that its applications do not cause distress? Surely he is the master?

Sometimes it is really almost as if he were in the grip of some superior power. One of the catch-phrases one hears most often is, "You can't stop progress." Why not, in heaven's name? Surely, if progress is man-made, man can stop it, start it, slow it up, reverse it, turn it round or drive up it another road? Can't he do anything he likes with it?

Yes, of course it is possible for a machine, a thing made by man, to get out of control. But such events are rare if the man is careful. And he, or others, can modify the machine so that it does not happen again, or less likely to. The thing can be given up altogether if it is too risky. In any case the thing is not out of control the whole time, as technical progress is implied to be by the statement that it cannot be stopped.

What would we say to a motorist, or, since Man is an abstraction and there are in reality many men, a large number of motorists, who drove into a town at ninety miles an hour, sweeping away men, women and children? We would regard them as enemies of society. They could not defend themselves by saying, "Well, I wasn't the only one. All the other drivers were doing it, and anyway you can't stop the motor car." We should regard such a statement as in the highest degree irresponsible. The same irresponsibility is displayed by those who say, "You can't stop progress."

In the feudal age rank and degree were the important things.

"God bless the squire and his relations,
And keep us in our proper stations."

This corresponds to "You can't stop progress." Progress, as an ideal and an end in itself, to which human desires must be ruthlessly sacrificed, belongs to the bourgeois age. It would have been out of place in the feudal period, but it is eminently suitable to a society of manufacturers and merchants. It is also appropriate to a rising technocracy, but it need not be a permanent feature of human society in the future, as its supporters appear to think.

The ideal of feudal society, of degree, hierarchy and order is, for the time being, quite dead. I know it will be pointed out to me that "top people take *The Times*", but the whole point of this advertisement is that if you take *The Times* you too may become a "top person". This is the bourgeois attitude, "careers open to talent". The same applies to this precious drivel about U and non-U. In a feudal society those who were U knew it, and so did everyone else, consequently they could talk as they liked. In a bourgeois society, where social divisions are always in flux to a

certain extent, people are unsure of their status, and so have to concern themselves with the way they talk.

Human creations never last forever, and as the feudal ideal has died so may the bourgeois-technocratic ideal also, in fact it almost certainly will. No doubt people in the Middle Ages thought their way of life was eternal, or would last at any rate till the end of the world. But there is no reason to suppose that discovery and invention will continue at their present rate indefinitely. The age of rapid progress dates only from the sixteenth century. It is quite a recent thing.

It is not too much to hope that, since every tendency produces some counter-current, that there may not arise some people with sufficient spirit of independence to condemn the idolatry of progress, without falling victim to some new idol?

A society of technicians, a society in which only technicians would be able to be at their case, would almost certainly be a completely authoritarian one. A society whose members habitually took refuge in abstract mathematical thinking

would be a society of abstractions. Authoritarians love abstractions. Hitherto they have mainly been of a meta-physical nature; the state, the national interest, duty, sin and so forth. Like pure mathematics, they represent the quest for certainty, but how can one achieve absolute certainty in an uncertain world such as ours? And why try? Is it not better to accept the uncertainty and learn to live with it? It is the quest for certainty that in the past has led men to persecute those who disagreed with them. They could not accept uncertainty, so they could not feel secure till everyone agreed with them.

Law is another example of abstract thinking. It is an attempt to lay down hard and fast rules for human conduct, to be changed as little as possible. The misery this causes is boundless.

The libertarian is concerned with concrete realities. He is concerned with human beings as they are, each individual being different.

A society run according to mathematical formulae would be little different from an ant-heap, and it certainly looks at the moment as if that is where we are heading.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

Religious Behaviour

IT is interesting to note that many who believe that conversions are effected by God unaided should arrange that potential converts shall be exposed to the utmost social pressure, persuasion and emotional arousal" gives promise of the exceptional in what turns out to be a rather honest look at the churches and their occupants. Michael Argyle, lecturer in Social Psychology at Oxford, is writing on "Religious Behaviour" which forms part of the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction series, published by Routledge & Kegan Paul. But can this book be more than rather honest when, almost in the same breath, he tells us that psychological research can tell us nothing about the truth, validity or usefulness of religious phenomena? Should we ask the Bishop?

What is sauce for the Psychologist is not always sauce for the Anarchist (the last psychologist I spoke of equated delinquency with contravention of King's Regs.) and so the statistics and conclusions which abound in these 200 pages, whilst being capable of shocking a Modern Churchman, will not, like I.T.V. fags, be found so deeply satisfying.

The knowledge that "In the U.S.A. . . some churches concealed increases of membership before 1936 in order to evade taxes" and "An incentive to striking off . . . members was provided in some Non-conformist churches . . . when contributions to central funds began to be assessed on (membership)" would hardly suggest a mere likelihood that social surveys obtain a considerably higher rate of reported attendance than actually takes place: if the clergy are so dishonest one might as well conclude that questionnaires to lay members are worthless and the churches are empty.

We do find that the full house is a thing of yesterday. Even in the R.C. church, the only major denomination to have increased membership, attendance has not improved. This general falling away is apparently due to less harsh disciplining of children, lessening of guilt feelings over sex, the rise of science, etc.

One of the most doubtful criteria for assessing religious activity is the saying of private prayers. Whilst 46% of Britishers claim to perform this trick a mere 15% go to church weekly (if we can imagine such fervour). Beliefs, another assessment index, are examined at length: one investigator found that they were little more than passively accepted, not appearing to influence conduct nor encouraging "believers" to go to the parson in times of stress.

Various investigators unearthed various things: the subject of fear in hymns has been replaced by love and gratitude; women are more religious than men; religious people are generally more conservative, tend to have more race prejudice, are more authoritarian (especially R.C.s) and are less intelligent than others. Catholics have a particularly higher rate for crimes of violence; Protestants are slightly ahead on sexual offences—and Jews a short head in front for fraud.

Billy Graham gets a dusting. Snake-worshippers too—it is reported that certain young men attend snake cult meetings in order to "seduce girls who have just been saved—they are just as easily seduced as saved at this juncture".

A pretty good book which is bound to be stolen from some Public Library shelves—but not by Quakers, Unitarians or Freethinkers it would seem.

ERNIE CROSSWELL.

Continued from p. 1

"The impression which they made is not yet worn out, but shows itself, to the second and third generation, in a spirit of scientific curiosity and free enquiry, which even yet makes some stand against the combined forces of Methodism, Toryism, and the love of gain."

For the other wing of dissent was an ally of the powers that be. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, was a member of the established church and a Tory, and the Wesleyan statutes of 1792 laid down that

"None of us shall either in writing or in conversation speak lightly or irreverently of the Government. We are to observe that the oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers; and that honour to the King is there connected with the fear of God."

Thus the revivalist religion of those crucial years of the Bleak Age played the role of "the opium of the people", diverting social discontent into religious aspiration. As the 19th century drew on the tendency to schism in the Methodist movement itself, led Methodism back into the radical tradition and English non-conformity tended to become first a mainstay of Liberalism and then (with the close alliance of dissenting chapels with Trade Union chapels in industrial areas) of the Labour movement. Hence Morgan Phillips' celebrated remark that the Labour Party owed more to Methodism than to Marxism.

The duality of the non-conformist tradition is rather amusingly illustrated when you think of the few present-day non-conformist ministers whose names are household words. You will probably think of Donald Soper and Billy Graham. Dr. Soper is a Methodist of radical opinions. Billy Graham is a revivalist Baptist of the

"Get right with God and social problems will solve themselves" kind. When Billy Graham had his crusade the sects stop on the way and harden into orthodoxies, in this country, Dr. Soper referred to it as "sentimental capitalist drivel".

★

WHEN you survey the history of Protestantism you can see it as a continuing process in which most of denominations, churches, while others go further along Joseph Priestley's sliding scale into the religious rationalism of the Quakers and Unitarians, and others out of religion altogether towards anarchism—the dissenters burying ground! Luther and Calvin sought to ally the new Protestantism to States, Kings and Princes, precisely for fear of the spirit of continuing protest which they had unleashed. Dr. J. S. Whale writes in his *The Protestant Tradition* of the years 1530-40:

"... there was an increasing proliferation of new doctrines, sects, brotherhoods, mysticisms, apocalyptic dreamings; most of them pathetically quiet and innocuous, though not all. For with much feverish innovation there went also an occasionally orgy of fanatical iconoclasm. Along with sectarian anarchy there went a dangerous intellectual anarchy. Some spiritual libertines in Holland and Germany were proclaiming the indifference of all outward forms and institutions in religion. Nor was this all. As the crypto-paganism of the Renaissance spread like a subtle poison among certain 'advanced' humanist circles, open paganism made its appearance, denying religion and its sanctions altogether, in the name of an explicit materialism. It is not surprising, therefore, that intellectual and spiritual anarchy occasionally led to downright moral anarchy."

You can see from this Lutheran interpretation why anarchism can be regarded as the ultimate non-conformism. For non-conformity, in accepting the burden of responsibility on the individual conscience, is, except for those who get stuck in some dissenting orthodoxy on the way, dynamic. It does not stand still. Martin Buber catches this in a remark on Proudhon and Landauer:

"In the revolutionary epoch of 1848 Proudhon had told the revolutionaries: 'You revolutionaries, if you do that you will make a change indeed.' Disappointed, he had other things to do afterwards than repeat the catch-words of the revolution. 'Everything comes in time', says Landauer, 'and every time after the revolution is a time before the revolution for all those whose lives have not got bogged down in some great moment of the past'. Proudhon went on living, although he bled from more than one wound; he now asked himself: 'If you do that—I said—but why have you not done it?' He found the answer and laid it down in all his later works. The answer which in our language runs: 'Because the spirit was not in you.'"

In this cryptic comment by a Jewish theologian on two great anarchist thinkers, we grasp not only the continual self-questioning of the non-conformist conscience, the typically non-conformist notion of the indwelling spirit or inward light, but also the dynamism, the notion of the continuing revolution, the search for radical rather than superficial solutions, for going to the root of things, which is the final link between the tradition of radical dissent and anarchism.

C.W.

Impeccable Apathy

FIVE trade union officials who carried out the wishes of their members have been rewarded—by being fired from their union posts.

The five called last month's unofficial four-day strike at the Steel Company of Wales, Port Talbot and they have been barred from holding any office in the union, the British Iron Steel and Kindred Trades Association.

The deposed men are: Mr. Lindon Evans, chairman, and Mr. R. Sullivan, secretary of the joint group of 24 local union branches; Mr. D. L. Evans, chairman, and Mr. Leslie Richards, secretary, of the Avon staff branch; and Mr. T. Jones, branch representative.

The strike they led began through the management's dismissal of a 32-year-old clerk and eventually involved 13,000 workers. The charge against the five local leaders was that their action in calling the men out had been taken 'without the constitutional machinery of negotiation and the rules of the union', and they were called to head office in London to account for their sins.

Afterwards Leslie Richards told a reporter: 'The executive discussed only one aspect of this matter and that was the action we took. But they did not think about David Jones, the sacked clerk. He was our main concern—and he is still on the dole.'

The Important Matters

But nobody who has studied trade unionism need be surprised at that. The positions of the union bosses

and the sanctity of the rules—which are more concerned with discipline, structure, finance and good, legal, relations with the employers, are the important matters in the unions today. The positions of the workers and their defence are only excuses for the justification of all the rest.

The action taken by the steelworkers' union bosses is one of the heaviest and swiftest actions against unofficial strike leaders ever made by any key union in Britain, and is regarded as an indication of the leaders' determination to stamp on any sign of militancy among the rank and file.

What the workers at Port Talbot will do now remains to be seen. Lindon Evans, local union chairman, said: "We were just doing what our members told us to do. The men were dissatisfied with the way the divisional office was handling the situation. I cannot answer for what the men will do when they hear our report."

The Executive Council had found that the union's divisional officer, Mr. A. E. Vincent, accused by the strike leaders of 'apathy', had 'carried out his duties impeccably'.

It is now up to the rank-and-file members to demonstrate what they think about the way they were represented and who represented them better. They should at least give the union leaders in London reason to understand that there can be issues arising locally of more importance than the constitutional machinery and the rules. The livelihood of David Jones, for example.

Punishment Without Crime

THIS week in the local paper there was an account of a man who had been on a four-day drinking bout who gave himself up on his own confession for breaking open a gas-meter at his own home. He was remanded in custody for seven days and at the hearing a plea of 'Guilty' was entered. It then developed that no-one had broken open the gas-meter and the magistrate asked for his plea of 'guilty' to be changed to 'not guilty' and thereupon discharged the man. The man in his drunken state had convinced himself that he had broken open the meter.

A nurse recently won an appeal against a conviction for theft, the evidence against her being that traces of a dyestuff were found upon her hands. Notes marked with dyestuff were planted at the scene of the robbery but no notes were found upon her.

A London magistrate recently brought in a verdict of guilty in a case before he was pulled up by counsel who pointed out that by an oversight the magistrate had not heard the case for the defence!

These three random instances are all fairly trivial it would seem, but viewed from the point of view of the accused they could all be the means of wrecking a life by unjust accusation, false evidence and wrongful punishment. Even if the accused has been cleared there will always be the wisecracks who say "They must have done something to get into court."

When one reaches the realms of more serious offences, one would think that the very severity of the crimes and punishments involved would make such miscarriages and abortions impossible, this is not so. Two recent books on the subject, *Not Guilty* (Jerome and Barbara Frank, Gollancz, 18s.) and *Personal Identity* (C. H. Rolph, Michael Joseph, 15s.) have recounted several cases of miscarriages of justice. Frank dealing with no fewer than thirty-five well-substantiated cases in the USA, Rolph is merely concerned with the issue of personal identity and the cases he mentions are concerned with mistaken identity.

There is the anecdote of a public official who asked his valet when awakening him each morning to murmur to him the name of a person to whom he had done an irremediable injustice, this would serve to remind him of his fallibility. If the roster was called from these two books, and more were added that spring to mind of anyone with any acquaintance with the history of the law, it would occupy the whole time of a valet for a thousand-and-one days and the officials of the law would never sleep.

These cases recounted by Frank and Rolph are those in which a miscarriage has been found out and righted (if ever such a thing can be done for a blighted life), but three recent cases, those of Evans (hanged for a murder most probably done by Christie), Bentley (hanged for a murder of which he was only technically guilty) and Rowlands (hanged despite another's confession), reveal the possibility that many innocent men have

been hanged because there is no way of compensating or reprieving the dead.

Rolph mentions the case of Emery, Thompson and Powers who were picked up in 1953 for attacking a P.C. at Marlow. They were accordingly sentenced, partly because they had a record and their alibi was the dangerous one that they were probably 'casing' another job at the time. The case was taken up by the National Council for Civil Liberties and eventually the men were found innocent and released. It has been pointed out that if the constable had died, the men would have been hanged and the possibility of their innocence could not have been investigated.

This case has two of the factors that can be spotlighted in an examination of the causes of injustice. The first is prejudice, that is, that the men were known to have a record and that the victim was a policeman (that is the most heinous crime in the calendar), secondly human error, a failure in identification.

It has long been known (except apparently in police courts) that the human eye, ear and memory are the most unreliable of witnesses. Psychologists have tested their students for memory of a recent controlled staged event, and the witnesses' accounts have varied widely and substantially. In these cases no prejudices were involved and no lapse of time. Blurred by time and distorted by prejudice witnesses have been known to literally swear away a man's life.

When there is a great incentive to find the accused guilty due to political prejudice even the flimsy rules of evidence are of no use to the accused. The examples of the Reichstag Fire trial, the Moscow trials, the Dreyfus case, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Joe Hill and Tom Mooney cases spring to mind.

If the individual charged is of good character, his offence is not too highly charged with moral or political iniquity, highly intelligent, financially independent, his witnesses are intelligent and unshakable, the prosecution's witnesses are unbiased and truthful, the defence counsel is skilled and the prosecuting counsel is only concerned with justice, the jury is intelligent, unbiased and unemotional, and the judge is not too old, too psychopathic, too ill, too stupid or too biased, there exists the hope that justice may be done.

But men have died or suffered wrongful imprisonment because one of these factors was not in his favour. Can it be good enough that the instrument of the law should be wielded with such conspicuous clumsiness?

Apart from the question of the very existence of the law and the power and property relationships which this normally reflects, the enormous number of miscarriages of justice, both known and surmised, throw into doubt whether any man has the right to judge any other man. There has also been published in the United States a book giving scores of cases where the guilty have gone free; if this is intended as a rebuttal to Frank's book, it is not so, for the fact is, that a miscarriage of justice has still taken

place. Paley, the theologian of the century, once said: "He who falls mistaken sentence may be considered falling for his country [since he] is under the operation of those rules, the general effect, and tendency of which the welfare of the community is maintained", but it is precisely the possibility of error which undermines the welfare of the community, when power of action concentrated into the hands of those who have an interest in seeing that a conviction is secured rather than in seeing a lofty abstraction such as justice maintained.

When inefficiency, if not downright corruptness, in administration covers such miscarriages of justice, what is there for the individual? The Kafkaesque tortuosities of the Dreyfus case where evidence was manufactured; Sacco-Vanzetti case where eye-witness identified the wrong man. The Beck case, where 'John Smith' (the criminal) had served a prison sentence and was identified as the same person. The Oscar Slater case where Slater pawned jewellery which had nothing to do with the Glasgow murder. The American bank-robbery where the real criminal had to repeat the crime so that the witnesses could identify him and release the innocent man—which he didn't!

The sole hope for many has been the pure operation of the only laws which are unbiased—the laws of chance. As the confession of the real criminal, with one eye on a good behaviour mark and the other on the decency of not letting the innocent suffer, or the obsessional pattern of the revisit, repeating the same offence for which an innocent man has already been sentenced.

But beyond all this the struggle of the individual to prove his innocence. Sacco-Vanzetti Defence Committee worked in vain; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who fought three cases to a successful conclusion; the Chicago charwoman saved from her earnings to advertise and reward someone who knew about a crime for which her son had been wrongfully sentenced; the National Council for Civil Liberties—to all these must go credit for avenging the punishment without crime—the greatest crime of all. It is committed daily, somewhere in the world—in the name of law and order.

It is a fitting epilogue to this sorry story that Dreyfus, after the hubbub of his case and re-instatement had died down was told that a fellow-officer was suspected of espionage. Dreyfus after some consideration said, "Ah well, there's no smoke without fire." J.R.



BERLIN AND BUST!

Meanwhile Berlin with three months to go before Mr. Krushchev's deadline, goes its own way.

The day after tomorrow the city is to see at least one event of world-wide significance, and already the public relations outfit in charge has sent out its fiery cross.

There in Crisis City the crossroads of Europe is presenting the International Show of Bras and Girdles.

Let the boys in Moscow keep their fur hats: Berlin keeps its mind on the Foundations.

JAMES CAMERON in News Chronicle 24/2/59.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

Deficit on Freedom	£200
Contributions received	£253
SURPLUS	£53

February 29 to March 5

Chicago: P.C. di G. £3/16/0; Sydney: R.C. £4/1/0; Slough: E.C. 9d; Mecclesfield: B.W. 16/6; London: Anon. 2/3; London: H. 10/-; London: J.S.* 3/-; London: L.W. 7/-; S. Milwaukee: C.C. £1/15/0; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.* 2/6; Sheffield: H.W. 6/-; Hong Kong: M.S. 11/-.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

NON-CONFORMITY

DEAR FRIENDS,

"Below the belt all men are equal". The articles by G. on Non-conformity illustrate the fact that above the neck equality ceases.

To "hate a man's guts", one has first to hate his ideas. I appreciate G.'s honesty when he says—"I must acknowledge that I cannot help feeling a sort of irritable contempt for those of the opposing tradition."

I suppose this is the dangerous thing in all reforming non-conformity. The conception that the reformer, the revolutionary has gained possession of "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Like the Unitarian who once said our motto should be "One God, no Devil, and 20/- in the £1", the non-conformist attempts to be a rational "scientific" man. He begins with the process of grinding the common consciousness of man to atoms accepting out of the mixture nothing which seems to him irrational.

Having sieved away the dross the non-conformist can now act by the dictates of "pure reason".

After this self-purification his "reason" becomes the sole arbiter of all things. The mind, the intellect, has become a sacred thing raised above all doubts,

To act according to the dictates of his "reason" becomes for the non-conformist a matter of conscience, a sacred duty.

One can appreciate G.'s reasoning in stressing the importance of the non-conformist conscience, because just as this conscience has been created by the individual himself and not by outside sources, so his servitude to his conscience becomes a more inward servitude, and more binding upon him.

The Catholic, the man of the "opposing tradition" accepts outside command in these matters. The non-conformist on the other hand acts according to his best judgment and conscience. He is in the position of being his own priest.

Repudiating conception of human fallibility and imperfection, all thought and action is for the non-conformist a matter of conscience. He creates a sort of 'police state'.

He sits not only in judgment upon himself, but also on his fellows, for them there is no Catholic redemption, they must "toe the line" and on no account be included in the Birthday Honours List. As I once overheard at a Summer School—"What on earth are some of these people doing here? They look so damned respectable!"

In following this train of thought one can realise how "Purity belongs to the Devil" and that in some way conscience

and sincerity are not enough to improve the world. Who could have been more sincere than Hitler in his relations with the Jews, or "Jack the Ripper" in his "crusade" against women?

Yours,
H. WARDLE.
Sheffield, 6.

FLYING SAUCERS AND SUN SPOTS

DEAR FRIENDS,

With reference to your remarks on giraffes and spacemen in this week's FREEDOM, I regret that I am unable to arrange meetings with the occupants of flying saucers. I should like to meet them myself.

Nevertheless, I consider that the evidence for the existence of flying saucers is at least as strong as that for, say, super novae, sun spots and other astronomical phenomena which I understand are also unpredictable and uncontrollable.

As regards your enquiry 'do you believe in God' I can only answer as the spaco man is said to have answered Adamski, 'Yes, but such matters are very complicated'.

Best wishes,
J. W. SHAW.
[May we now leave flying saucers, novae and sun spots to their "unpredictable and uncontrollable" habits and return to giraffes and . . . mankind?—Eds.]

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Sunday meetings now held at "Marquis of Granby" Public House, Rathbone Street (corner of Percy Street, Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street), 7.30 p.m.

MAR. 15.—Speaker from the Bruderhof speaking on THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY

MAR. 22.—Philip Holgate on SOME COMMUNITIES OF THE PAST

MAR. 29.—No meeting

APRIL 5.—Speaker to be announced

APRIL 12.—H. B. Gibson on THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMMUNAL LIVING

FREEDOM

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