

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Only by making the ruling few uneasy can the oppressed many obtain relief."

—JEREMY BENTHAM

Reflections for the Labour Party's Post-Mortem

SELF-INTEREST AND VOTING

THE pattern of voting in the recent General Elections was, so the political analysts tell us, determined by what the electorate considered to be its self-interest. It's all very well for those, such as our correspondent whose letter we print elsewhere, who complains that it was the vote for self-interest that won the elections for the Tories, but do they imagine that a large proportion of the Labour Party's 12 million votes were not obtained for the same reasons? Indeed, Labour increased its representation in those areas where unemployment is above the national average, or where certain industries are on their way out and the livelihood of workers and shopkeepers is threatened.

The Labour Party were just unhappy in not being in a position to choose the date of the election. But what if as they would have made it coincide with the trade recession and rising unemployment, and a Suez-Nyasaland crisis for good measure, Mr. Macmillan who as leader of the government alone determines when the date shall be, naturally invited for the recession to temporarily recede, and the Suez stench to be smothered by the sweet smell of the Moscow Peace Mission, before dragging loose the quinquennial political free-for-all. And why not? It's playing the game according to the rules, and if the Labour Party consider them unfair, why didn't they say something about changing them in 1945 when they were in office with an overwhelming majority (almost double that of the present Government)?

Our correspondent asks: "When will you get it into your heads that apathy and self-interest in politics brings a de Gaulle nearer and anarchism yet further away?" Surely such a question is not meant for FREEDOM but for the leaders of the Labour Party! Self-interest as we understand it presupposes a very active interest in what is going on around us; how else can we know where our real self-interest lies? We don't get excited about "politics" for three weeks every five years; it is part of our daily lives, influencing our relationships and contacts and informing our attitudes and values.

Now He Finds Out

THE Midland Electricity Board sent a man to cut off the supply from Wolverhampton Labour Party's headquarters over a bill for 7s. 8d. which had been paid that morning. The party said yesterday.

Councillor Mordecai James, party secretary, said: "I went straight down to the Board office and I told the manager, 'This is subjecting us to a terrible indignity. Don't you make any inquiries before sending people to cut off the light?'"

The manager replied: "No."

Councillor James added: "This is bureaucracy gone mad. Whether people are old or infirm does not seem to matter. There seems to me to be a new social and political challenge to humanise these nationalised institutions and industrial combines. They can't go on riding roughshod over people."

The party is to make "the strongest possible complaint" to the Electricity Consumers' Council accusing the board of acting like a "soulless robot".

Apathy, superficial self-interest, nationalism, racialism, ruthlessness in human relations, envy and material insatiability, these are the products of party politics. Little wonder that most anarchists and honest socialists refuse to become embroiled in the party game even when one of the contestants for office offers such tit-bits as Nyasaland for the Nyasas, utopia for the old and playgrounds for the young!

THE basic fact still not realised in spite of our much-vaunted literacy, our mass-communications and our "political democracy" is that what shapes economic and social life today is not the political party in office but the system which they administer. That system is capitalism, and during the five years in which the Labour Party were in office with an absolute majority, they made no attempt (or if they did, then the fact that nothing was changed would indicate that they had no real power—a sobering reflection, surely, for those socialists who advocate the social revolution via the ballot box!) to change that system which was designed to perpetuate all

Anarchist Candidate Wins Sao Paulo Election?

ON October 10 the British Broadcasting Corporation broadcast a report from Washington, USA, that a female rhinoceros had polled more votes than any other candidate for the office of Mayor of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The number of votes for her was over fifty thousand, which gives her a substantial lead over the billy-goat who polled most votes in the 1954 election.

Unfortunately, both of these animals are disqualified from taking office, as their names did not appear on the official ballot papers. Those who voted for them had to write the names in, or, in the case of the rhino, to use unofficial ballot papers, which had been printed in large numbers but were not considered valid. The rhinoceros had the additional disqualification that she was not resident in Sao Paulo at the time of the election. (She had been transferred to another zoo, in Rio de Janeiro).

One may deduce that the rhino supporters, in their thousands, were dissatisfied with the Sao Paulo constitution. But the news comes by such a roundabout route that it is no longer clear who put forward the rhino as a candidate, or who printed the unofficial ballot papers. Perhaps our comrades in Sao Paulo can throw some light on this matter?

It is tempting to think of agitating for the spoiling of ballot papers by, say, inserting "Joe Soap X" at some future election in this country. But here, where attendance at the polls is not compulsory (as it is in Brazil), it is unlikely that many would attend for the sake of guying the election. Those who object to the whole disgusting set-up must remain indistinguishable, for statistical purposes, from the "Don't-knows" and don't-cares.

the economic and social injustices of a class-ridden society. They attempted to round-off a few rough edges of the unequal society, they nationalised a number of industries and public services, handsomely compensating former shareholders (how many of them now vote Labour?), and to convince everybody that no assault on the System was intended, declared that nationalised enterprises must "pay their way", a direct hint to the workers concerned that for them the change was one of masters. They were still employees, and as insecure in their dependence on the decisions of Boards as they were formerly under the Bosses. How ironical the object of the Labour Party (set out in 1918 and still standing, more or less) must sound to the miners in 1959 as they receive their "cards" from the Board:

To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

(Perhaps the fact that it is Sir Fred Bowman, ex-miner chairman of the Coal Board who gives them their cards and not some equally titled former-mine-owner makes all the difference... at least for the Labour Party).

WHEN the Labour Party was formed in 1906 its basis was a very simple one, and 11 years later it was still: "to organise and maintain in Parliament and the country a political Labour Party". Only in 1918 (in view of its 1945 electoral success it almost seems as if the Labour Party thrives on wars, unemployment and similar human disasters!) the Party, according to Mr. Attlee (now globe-trotting Lord Attlee) "adopted Socialism as its aim".

And since then, without wanting to be cynical, the aim of the Labour Party has been to taste the sweet fruits of office. It has supported two

*The Labour Party in Perspective by C. R. Attlee. (Left Book Club, 1937).

world wars—in spite of the fact that among its objectives was that of:

"co-operating with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries and assisting in organising a Federation of Nations for the maintenance of Freedom and Peace. . . ."

In 1929 as the largest Party in the House it took office under Ramsay MacDonald who, according to Mr. Attlee, "seemed to think that by a course of studious moderation he could conciliate opposition, while doing enough to retain the support of his own followers" Then in 1931, MacDonald who had

for some years been more and more attracted by the social environment of the well-to-do classes, [who] had got more and more out of touch with the rank and file of the Party, while the adulation which is almost inseparable from the necessary publicity given to the leader of a great movement had gone to his head and increased his natural vanity [and] the philosophy of gradualness which he had always maintained became almost indistinguishable from Conservatism.

Organised Vengeance in HUNGARY & SPAIN

TOTALITARIAN states on both sides of the iron curtain continue to wreak their vengeance on those who oppose them.

In Budapest a Hungarian Government spokesman has admitted that a number of people were executed recently for alleged crimes committed during the 1956 Hungarian rising. This is the first official confirmation that executions were in fact carried out following the trial of a group said to be large from the Budapest industrial suburb of Ujpest.

According to reliable reports (says Reuter), the Ujpest trial began in secret earlier this year and there was an appeal. Seven or eight accused, including a 63-year-old lawyer, were executed and others sentenced to prison terms ranging up to life.

The spokesman said that no confirmation had been published because the authorities considered it to be an 'internal affair'.

And who in the British Government can argue with that? Wasn't

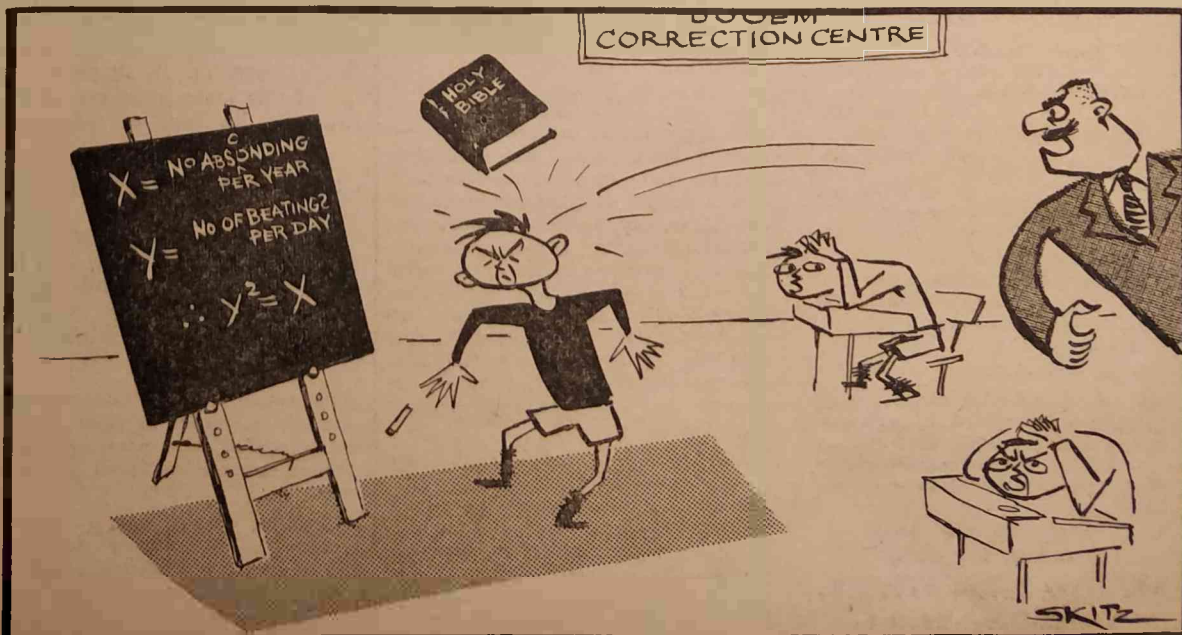
in 1931, MacDonald "betrayed those who had given him his trust" and formed the National Government. The Labour Party in the House was reduced to a "handful" under the "very able leadership of George Lansbury". In 1937 Mr. Attlee was writing that the Party was "the alternative force in politics to Capitalism", adding:

More than ever today there stands out the difference between the two systems, Socialism and Capitalism. Liberalism as a coherent philosophy of politics is dead. What was of value in it has been taken over by Labour, and some part of its spirit has even gone towards modifying Conservatism.

The fact that after the elections of 1959 there is talk either of an entente between Labour and Liberals or of the replacement of Labour by the Liberals as the second Party, only goes to show that plus ça change, etc. . . . or that those who are always taken for a political ride are the mugs, the public!

In view of Mr. Attlee's subsequent acceptance of office in a wartime Coalition Government, his unequivocal opposition to Popular Fronts in 1937 is interesting as well as revealing so far as his own achievements are concerned when

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and take that supercilious, scientific grin off your face, Higgins!

TOWN AND COUNTRY

REGULAR readers of FREEDOM know how difficult it is to say exactly what anarchists believe. It might even be suggested—and not entirely pejoratively—that anarchism is as devoid of positive ideas as it is of respect for established government. But there are certain vague notions which can be pinned down and more or less labelled "anarchist". One which is becoming increasingly linked with anarchism is what I shall call *pastoralism*. This is broadly the belief that town society (especially in its industrial or subtopian forms) is a bad thing, and that the ideal society will exist in small groups in the countryside, sacrificing the luxuries of urban life for the benefits of a return to simplicity, normality, nature, peace.

I think the operative words are "return" and "nature". Not many people who yearn for an unencumbered country life seem to be very willing in practice to give up the material delights of an industrial civilisation. They are, in effect looking at pastoralism from the outside. Thus when Herbert Read accuses C. P. Snow of neglecting higher things for mundane matters like food and shelter (*London Magazine*, August 1959), one suspects that he has never been very hungry or cold for long. It is usually difficult to see how unimportant material needs are until one's own are satisfied. Or more bluntly, as the Red Knight (Snow) said to the White Knight (Read): "Go and tell that to the Indians and Africans." (*ibid.*, October, 1959).

What I am getting at is that pastoralists tend to have a romantic view of the sort of life they advocate. Growing food is healthier but intrinsically no more elevating than working in an office or a factory, and is usually a lot lonelier. The idyllic environment envisaged by pastoralists is more likely in fact to resemble that of Arnold Wesker's play *Roots*. They are yearning for a lost paradise, just as country people often yearn for a town life of which they know nothing.

There is also the question of the emotive use of the term *nature*, which—like *freedom*, *patriotism*, *democracy*, etc.—is a "hurray word" and should be used only with extreme care and precision. There is nothing *a priori* more "natural" about village life than factory life; and if there were, it would be irrelevant. The point is first, in which sort of environment and occupation are people happier?

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and second, which form of life is necessary to produce the things people want?

Standard of Living

Now most pastoralism is deliberately utopian—that is, it involves the creation of an entirely new way of life and of looking at and feeling about things. If the most important thing to a man is that he should rely on the labour of no one else (or at least only of people personally known to him) for his needs—then pastoralism is not his cup of tea at all. And why should it be?

But make no mistake: leisure and comfort can only be gained at the expense of wealth, and the amount of wealth necessary to provide leisure and comfort for more than a tiny number of people can only be produced by slave-labour. In the ancient civilisations this was performed by chattel-slaves; in medieval Europe by serfs; after the scientific and industrial revolutions by wage-slaves. A century ago the only solutions to the problem of the Two Nations seemed to be acceptance or revolution. But even then the true solution was apparent to Oscar Wilde (a great, if unrecognised, anarchist): "On mechanical slavery, on the slavery of the machine, the future of the world depends."

Thus the two criteria of the good life are inseparable. Now that gross inequality is acceptable and the prospect of eliminating it throughout the world is at hand, we must recognise that the means of doing so will make a highly organised economic life inevitable. This is not to say that some sort of movement away from excessive centralisation and specialisation—along the lines suggested by Kropotkin sixty years ago—is impossible. But if we will the end of a decent standard of life for everyone in the world (and who doesn't?) we must will the means of extending the industrial revolution to all places where people live; and factories and mines need towns.

Here I must make it clear that I don't imagine for a moment that raising the standard of living is the only important political ideal; indeed, I think it might be a good thing if North Americans and West Europeans agreed to refrain from accumulating any more wealth at home, and concentrated instead on distributing what they have more equitably among themselves and on making available to other peoples the knowledge, techniques, labour and goods that we can easily spare. But I am sure that until all men can be fairly confident of not being hungry, thirsty, cold, wet or ill all our efforts to make the world better and happier will be fruitless.

This is why I am irritated when Herbert Read says that technology "destroys . . . the vital sources of our humanism"; when Edward Hyams fulminates against tinned food; when H. E. Bates goes on and on about the Larkins; when Diogenes of *Time and Tide* scoffs at popular education; when Arthur Uloth says (his tongue more or less in his cheek) that "in a hundred years the whole of Southern England will be one vast town"; when various people make all sorts of rude remarks about gramophone records, washing-machines, the Proms, tourists, Pelican books and so on.

The point is that they are opposing the wrong thing—the innovation, instead of the abuse of the innovation. Thus it is obviously better to eat fresh food and hear a real orchestra than to open a tin or put on a record; but the ersatz is better than nothing at all. Most certainly the abuses must be exposed, and people must be encouraged to have the real thing, the sharp taste, the genuine experience. But let us be clear what we are opposing.

Why Towns?

To apply this to the theory of pastoralism, I think people tend to dismiss town life out of hand because it has been (and is being!) so grievously abused in the last century or so. Of course the normal industrial centre, residential suburb or dormitory area is a blot upon the record of civilised humanity. Wigan, Wembley and Woking—like George III—ought never to have occurred. But to argue that all towns and cities and suburbs are therefore evil is to throw the baby out even before the dirty water has gurgled away.

After all, a town in its platonic sense is only a place where men live together. Just consider what human life would have been like without any towns at all: no Athens, Rome, Byzantium, Florence, Venice, Vienna, Paris, Cambridge—in Europe alone. It is not until men build towns that they really become men at all; this is what Aristotle meant when he called man the animal of the polis.

Country life does not become delightful and idyllic until it can be contrasted with town life. Horace at the Sabine farm depended on the city of Rome; Voltaire at Ferney, on Paris; Beethoven stamping across the heath, on Vienna; Lawrence at Taormina, on Ilkoston and London.

Town life has its own, essential qualities. Socrates, Cicero, Abelard, Johnson, the Woolfs, Sartre—leaders of cultural groups that could not have existed in the countryside. After all, there is nothing necessarily stifling about an urban atmosphere. It is only because our towns and cities—and (dare one say it?) villages—are too big or too dull, and either case too ugly, that we forget that a town can be stimulating and restful, bustling and beautiful, all at the same time. Even if we think only of the higher things that Herbert Read is so anxious about, how would small rural communities find room or time for real drama, books or papers in numbers of more than a few dozen, great music, fine architecture—or indeed for any art that rises above the level of a craft and aspires to do more than mull over past (urban) achievement?

Seen but not Heard

IT is said that in British courts, justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done. It would appear, from the following item that it should not only be seen to be done but heard as well. Or is somebody mixing up justice with law?

Sir Gerald Dodson's impending retirement from the position of Recorder of London removes from the Old Bailey bench one of the most feared criminal judges, somewhat in the tradition of Mr. Justice Avory. To many an accused who faced the Recorder from the dock the summing up to the jury appeared anything but impartial with its inflexions in the voice which would not be apparent to the reader of the transcript subsequently. But Sir Gerald rarely erred in dispensing justice. His is a record of sustained service to the administration of law.

Guardian, 19/10/59.

The odd thing is that even bad towns seem to have more personality and fascination than bad country areas—Brooklyn and the East End compared, for instance, to North Germany or the Middle West of America. This brings up a purely physical objection to abandoning the idea of the town: the towns are with us, and cannot be destroyed or just left to fall into ruins (unless we wish to see Wigan, Wembley or Woking preserved as a memorial to a past horror, as Auschwitz has been preserved). We can pursue an abstract utopia without the abstract present surviving except as a memory; but a physical utopia must take the physical environment of the present into account.

Conclusion

If we agree to accept the necessity of large towns and widespread industry and to reject a pastoralism derived from thinkers like William Morris and poets like Wordsworth (it is interesting that Ruskin and Kropotkin, for example, were not pastoralists), what must we nevertheless insist on to make such an environment and such a way of life not just tolerable, but fun?

I think a limitation on scale is essential. No single town should be too large, as London has been for fifty years.

It should be possible to live and work and shop and see friends in one town without living in a slum, rush-hour traffic is insane and unnecessary. Traffic should be minimal and cars superfluous for town travel. In the same way, it is essential to be able to get out of town easily. London is saved, despite its density, by its patches of green, planned or unplanned. The division between town and country should be as sharp as possible (this is where the Welsh mining towns score). A true sense of locality is essential. Again, London is saved by places like Hampstead and Whitechapel, the centre of Bloomsbury is a tragedy. Speaking which it wouldn't be a bad idea if some beautiful houses were built, no more the Nash Terraces are in danger of being pulled down—they put to shame almost everything put up since the First World War.

If we really got down to making present towns pleasant and happy places to live in (and perhaps the New Towns should be taken as warnings as well as examples), we would have gone a long way towards making England a better place. Anyway, for better or for ill, England is already a predominantly urban society: we should take advantage of the fact, not just deplore it.

NICHOLAS WALLING

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LAND NOTES

Arsenic & Old Potato Haulms

FOR more than forty years now some people have been alarmed at the growing volume of highly poisonous substances that are sprayed on the land for various purposes, but in spite of this the scope, variety and quantity has grown year by year. This is undoubtedly due partly to the vast changes in methods of cultivation, speed, changes in rotational practice and the commercialisation of an activity which cannot altogether be judged by the balance sheet.

It is not until something like sudden death occurs that people wake up and examine the practices and the fundamental concepts that guide a certain policy. In the *News Chronicle* of 8th October, it is reported that as a result of the death of a farmer's wife from arsenic poisoning from crop spray leaking into the farm water supply, a large firm is recalling all supplies. The use of this same spray last year resulted in the death of some cattle.

In a subsequent issue of the *News Chronicle* of Saturday, the 10th October we read the heading "Spray-Mad Farmers Worry Scientists". The following may well have been written in an organic farming journal some years ago with scant attention from the "scientific" farming enthusiasts:—

"Spray-mad farmers are devastating Britain's countryside in all-out chemical warfare against insect pests, and must be stopped, scientists are to tell the government.

Chemists, doctors, animal and plant breeders, and naturalists produced evidence at a series of conferences in the last fortnight to prove that the harm caused already by the indiscriminate use of chemical sprays may be irreparable. Stricter legislation is necessary to stop

farmers destroying all the useful wild life—the farmers' own best friends—in large areas of the country, in their constant efforts to conquer insect plagues. Birds and insects which prey on the insect pests, and bees which are vital to fruit and other crops are all being killed by indiscriminate spraying."

We have the usual spectacle of scientists and experts tied to a commercial system creating a situation which they now seek to remedy, too late they think maybe, by legislation.

This is one of the consequences of the dependency of agriculture on the vagaries of a capitalist industrial economy, but a stable society needs agriculture and a stable agriculture must have a steady policy if it is to perform its function. From a short term point of view it is possible to cut costs of production by using methods which enable mechanised agriculture to work smoothly. Here, however, we are not dealing with inert substances but as I have said before in these columns, with a vast conglomeration of living organisms whose inter-relations are perhaps not fully understood. Combine this with a commercial or completely materialistic outlook, and as in other fields of human activity you have an explosive situation. There is some recognition by existing society of these things in that agriculture is to some extent supported by the much maligned "feather bedding" (the farm workers by the way could do with a few more feathers!).

Returning to the problem of poisonous sprays, the item mentioned above goes on to suggest that hormones be used instead of chemical poisons which may well, in my view, be more pernicious ultimately than the chemical poisons. It has been suggested that insecticides are

put on the market before adequate long-term tests are carried out on the accumulative effects of the poisons on soil, animals, plants and human beings, and in many cases these poisons are not having the result for which they were manufactured and many are having unpredictable effects.

In the case of the codling moth whose maggot is sometimes found in the middle of an apple, there are twenty-six poisons designed for its destruction and yet it survives as fast as they are invented.

The experts complained at a recent conference on pest control that chemists are having too much to do with a matter which they contend is primarily ecological, and attention should be given much more to biological control of pests to avoid the dangers of unlimited chemical warfare.

The farmer cannot altogether be blamed for accepting the advice of experts or complying with the demands of the public who are beguiled by appearances and who still prefer an unblemished apple which is likely to be soaked in poison rather than buy apples with spots on them without this condiment.

The spray problem is vastly expensive to our fruit growers, and the more it is used the more it has to be used with the substance becoming more potent.

It is a pity that these problems are brought to the notice of the public by some tragedy, and that the propaganda effect of advertising by the companies who produce these poisons before proper consideration is given to all the effects is so tremendous.

ALAN ALRON.

Self-Interest and Voting

Continued from p. 1

he was leader of a Party with an absolute majority in the House immediately after the war and when radical change was acceptable not only in this country but throughout the war-exhausted world at large:

The Labour Party stands for such great changes in the economic and social structure that it cannot function successfully unless it obtains a majority which is prepared to put its principles into practice. Those principles are so far-reaching that they affect every department of the public services and every phase of policy. *The plain fact is that a Socialist Party cannot hope to make a success of administering the Capitalist system because it does not believe in it.* This is the fundamental objection to all the proposals that are put forward for the formation of a Popular Front in this country. (Our italics).

IN 1959 the Labour Party puts forward a programme which in effect tells the people that it can operate the Capitalist system more effectively than the Capitalists (that is, the Tories). The Public even without Lord Attlee's pre-war Left Book Club best-seller to guide them, intuitively feel that the Tories know more about how to run the capitalist system than the "socialist" dons and so vote for them—we are now talking of the "don't knows" the "floating voters", not the conservative-Conservatives and the conservative-labourites who will vote Tory or Labour respectively even if an H-Bomb explosion blows them into the moon (read Barbara Castle's sentimental opening paragraph in last week's *New Statesman* about the one-legged old lady of 79 who "had never missed voting Labour and didn't intend to now". Shame on the Party not on the loyal old lady!)

Socialism, as Mr. Attlee pointed out in 1937 has nothing in common, is the antithesis of capitalism. It is the advocacy of co-operation as opposed to cut-throat competition; it is equality not privilege; it is production for use and need and not for profit. (Incidentally whereas in Mr. Attlee's "socialist" paradise we were promised a 40-hour week, with paid holidays but "deprived of the right of living in idleness at the expense of the community", the anarchist Kropotkin, more than half a century earlier, not only showed with statistics that we could produce all we needed—and do we really need those gashly plaster ornaments in our "sitting-room" windows and that mock-competition between *Omo* and *Daz*?—by working a 4-hour day but that we could afford to overlook those of our fellow beings who were unaccountably so anti-social as to refuse to contribute their share to the common pool†.

THE Labour Party then, according to its Objects wants Socialism, but in practise wants power—with in the limits of the Constitution, of course. This means, quite simply, winning a majority of votes in the Constituencies.

Since the Tory Party (and now

†The anarchists are realists when they take for granted that in the free society the parasites will be such a small minority as to be ignored. The socialists in spite of what they believe—we quote Mr. Attlee: "The denial of the right to work is one of the great infringements of liberty imposed under Capitalism, for it deprives the individual of the right of expressing his personality and exercising his functions as a citizen."—consider it necessary to establish the machinery of coercion in order to oblige the work-shy individual to contribute his share to the commonweal. In so doing they re-create all the machinery of coercion, the law, the police, prisons . . . the State!

'FREEDOM' IN THE SIXTIES

AS the nineteen-fifties dwindle to an end, with nothing much on the way except a Royal Baby and the Summit, it is inevitable that we should look back at the last ten years of anarchist propaganda and wonder what we have to show for it, and forward to the nineteen-sixties wondering how we can best increase the circulation and influence of the paper in the coming decade.

Two possible changes that come to mind are an increase in price (the price has been 3d. a copy since January, 1948) and a change in format (the page-size has been the same since January, 1947). The argument for an increase in price to 4d. a copy is that it would help a little to reduce the loss incurred week by week in publishing the paper, the argument against it is that postal subscribers, who form the bulk of FREEDOM'S purchasers, would find it harder to rake up twenty-five shillings or so each year instead of the present nineteen shillings, and that anyway those readers who are in sympathy with the paper contribute to the deficit fund. The argument for a change in format to eight pages of something like 12" by 9" is that they offer more scope for the kind of paper that FREEDOM is, than newspaper-size pages which make long articles (which must be accommodated since there is no other vehicle for dealing with topics at length from an anarchist point of view) look grey and forbidding in a paper without illustrations or advertisements. Moreover a smaller format would make it easier to have an increased number of pages when the occasion demanded it, or when the quantity of material or money made it possible. The arguments against such a change are that not everyone is frightened off by solid reading matter, and that such a paper would be more difficult to produce because of additional folding and cutting.

There is of course, no accounting for people's tastes. Some-one said the other day that the typography of FREEDOM looked like something left over from the General Strike (which happened in fact before any of the types used in the paper

were even designed), only to receive the reply that the appearance of FREEDOM had been praised for its simplicity and restraint, by a well known typographer.

MORE important, it seems to me, than these questions, is the character of the paper. Every successful paper—and by successful I mean one which gains readers and keeps their interest and loyalty—has a character of its own. A famous editor has called it the oldest problem in journalism: "How, from the material available to me do I create a paper having the tang and characteristics of a distinctive personality?" And the problem is complicated by the fact that the personality which strikes a responsive chord among readers changes as the years go by. The phenomenon was touched upon in a letter last year (28/6/58) by Geoffrey Ostergaard, illustrating his argument by discussing why *Spectator* has become a livelier, more vigorous paper than the *New Statesman*.

But what is the distinctive personality which we should seek to give FREEDOM in the sixties? One of its characteristics should be the use of satire and irony, by which I do not mean the heavy-handed sarcasm which often serves as an inadequate and irritating substitute for it. Satire is a difficult art, and not a very popular one in the press to-day. The big circulation papers are dominated by their advertisers, and as Christopher Hollis has observed:

"The advertisers are the enemies of satire . . . if jokes there must be in a paper, those jokes should be as innocuous and provoke as little thought as possible. Their effect should be merely to produce an atmosphere of general jollity. They prefer the family joke which contains no fundamental criticism of the family. They do not like the satire which calls in question public policy or public institutions . . . Faced with gigantic threats that it can do nothing about, the modern age rejects satire because it is too serious and prefers a more unabashed triviality."

Anarchist Propaganda and Organisation—4

THE three channels of expression for the anarchist—in personal relationships, in work and in propaganda—do of course often overlap. But only in the most ideal circumstances can they all be equally satisfying.

It is in a living and working community so successful that it is its own advertisement for the libertarian way of life that our ideas would find highest expression. But in order to allow enough freedom for each individual such a community would have to be so large that it is quite beyond the possibilities of our movement here and now.

With one or two exceptions, anarchists tend to be the products of authoritarian families just like everybody else, and they are doing fairly well if they can fully satisfy any one of our suggested channels of expression. In fact the accent will vary according to the individual and to his circumstances.

Outside of the ideal community, the most effective anarchist will be the one who lives freely in his personal life, with satisfying relationships and bringing up

the Liberals) have the same objective and, apart from their control of, or influence on, sections of mass-communications, also depend on votes in order to be returned to "power", it is clear that all parties must concentrate their resources on winning votes rather than in educating the people politically.

To this end the Tories have perforce been obliged to share the cake of economic prosperity more widely and curb the 19th century ambitions of the *ultras* in their ranks, while the Labourites have removed the teeth of their Bevans in the name of unity. So the Tories are a shadow of the free-enterprise buccaneers they once were and the Labourites are a copy of their original selves, a mere party seeking "to maintain in Parliament and the country a political Labour Party" . . . by hook or by crook! —And the public voted accordingly!

The directors of *Krokodil* in Moscow complained of the difficulty of writing satire when they had to "maintain a circulation of a million and appeal to all types of reader." But FREEDOM, with no million readers and no advertisers can afford to use satire and ridicule, and the anarchists are, of all people, those best fitted to wield these weapons. And they do so very ably when they try. *Punch* in its issue for Oct. 7th, writes of the L.A.G.'s "Election Guyed":

"Easily the most stimulating piece of election literature that has come my way is that published by the London Anarchist Group; venom and gusto are its weapons, and anything on the horizon its target."

ANOTHER of the distinguishing characteristics of FREEDOM in the sixties is the attractive combination of levity and moral seriousness. By levity I do not mean a nervous titter, nor by moral seriousness do I mean a proneness to moralising, which is one of the things we must shake off. I mean the bawdy irreverence which other papers cannot afford to adopt, and the forthright consistency of attitude which they have thrown overboard because they are pre-occupied with playing politics.

But we have to earn the right to be taken seriously. In the last decade there has grown up a whole school of writers on social and economic affairs (I think of them, though I may be wrong, as disciples of Professor Richard Titmuss), who are making a careful and critical appraisal of this country's social institutions: Brian Abel-Smith, Peter Townsend, John Vaizey, J. P. Martin, and the people associated with the Institute of Community Studies. Unfortunately they seem for the most part to be supporters of the Labour Party, though Mr. Vaizey at least has remarked that:

"Being a radical in modern British politics now means having a certain de-

tachment about the fate of the Labour Party. For fifty years it has seemed important to get the 'movement' in; only now is it realised that the 'movement', when in office, consists of much the same sort of power-seekers as the other lot."

If we cannot wear these acute social analysts from their politics we must find their anarchist equivalents among contributors to this paper. The kind of anarchism which says, "Only in a free society, where exploitation has ceased, where governments no longer exist, will mankind ever . . . etc.", which postpones all solutions until the advent of a hypothetical free society, is an anarchism which does not need the criticism and analysis of contemporary social and economic phenomena, because it has so few points of contact with the real world. It is more akin to astrology. It is not the kind of anarchism which will have anything to say to the mood of the nineteen-sixties, and it cannot hope for any enlargement of its impact and influence in them.

But the kind of anarchism which is concerned with the day-to-day search for libertarian solutions, which asks which tendencies in our own society should be supported, which opposed, or which new ones set in motion, needs the kind of social analysis and investigation which should be a feature of FREEDOM in the sixties.

Something of the kind of character I am looking for is found in the accounts we read of the short-lived Polish paper *Po Prostu* in the early days of the Gomulka régime in Poland. Started by students, it rapidly attained a circulation of 150,000 before it was banned, and its formula was satire, ridicule, social reportage, the description of what things were actually like, as opposed to the official or public image of them, theoretical discussion of new paths—workers' control, decentralisation and so on, continual protest and struggle against authority. This was an explosive mixture in Poland, and in the more free, more comfortable and more stable social climate of this country it would still have an impact greater than we have been able to make in the last ten years. C.W.

BOOK REVIEW

Reformist Review of the Establishment

THE ESTABLISHMENT, edited by Hugh Thomas. Anthony Blond, 21s.

ONE of the most clear lessons to be learnt from history is the final futility of political reformism as a means of abolishing the causes of social evils. At best, political reformers have secured a temporary symptomatic relief for the victims of sick societies. At worst, they have merely replaced one evil by another equally, if not more, malignant. Those nineteenth century philanthropists, for example, who implored the state to alleviate the lot of the workers, have had their hopes fulfilled in many countries. But it is very probable that their liberal souls would have been saddened beyond measure had they lived to see the results of their efforts. Now that the state has added to its rôle of policeman for the propertied class that of universal provider to the masses, the little individual liberty that existed in their day has been further diminished and it has buried personal responsibility and free co-operation beneath a mountain of red-tape and restrictions. The unemployed worker can now draw his dole from the Ministry of Labour and obtain public assistance from the state instead of the parish, but he has no identity in the eyes of the ministries unless he possesses the appropriate documents and, whenever it deems fit, the government can direct him to work in a particular place and for a specified period of time. The oppression of hunger has been superseded, for the time being at least, by the oppression of the bureaux.

These reflections are occasioned by the publication of a symposium entitled *The Establishment*. This consists of seven essays: "The Establishment and Society" (Hugh Thomas); "The Civil Service" (Thomas Balogh); "Parliament" (Christopher Hollis); "The Army" (Simon Raven); "The B.B.C." (Henry Fairlie); "The City" (Victor Sandelson); and "The Public Schools" (John Vaizey). Their proclaimed purpose is to examine the nature of the Establishment, which is defined by the publishers as "the alliance of those institutions and social attitudes which defend each other against attack and enable the ruling class to maintain itself regardless of its present abilities;

power, in fact, without responsibility." It will be seen that this definition is only concerned with the abilities of the ruling class, not with the right of any class to rule. And it is in keeping with the spirit of this definition that the contributors have written their critiques. The key to their common theme is contained in the essay by Victor Sandelson in which he states: "There should be close scrutiny of the use of great power in any shape or form; and . . . aspirations should be open to talent from whatever class or education. The seats of power should not be the perquisite of a small, nepotistic patrician minority."

This emphasis upon the accidents rather than the essence of power is characteristic of every essay in the book. John Vaizey, for instance, makes a trenchant criticism of the authoritarian nature of the public school system and of the class snobbery which goes with it. He points out that the public school distorts the "free development of the boys and girls who are put through it", but he nowhere shows any awareness that this happens to children who are "put through" the general system of co-ercive education that exists in this and other countries. The proposals he puts forward for the reform of the public school merely amount to a plea for increasing their efficiency by breaking down their "social exclusiveness" and allowing access to children from every stratum in society. In other words, the circulation of élites is to be less impeded than it is at present.

What can be said of Vaizey can be said of his fellow contributors. However promising the opening words of their contributions they invariably end in an anti-climax. They may start as if they intended to advocate a fundamental change in the aspect of the Establishment they discuss, but they conclude with either an explicit or an implicit Fabian appeal for an ironing out of the wrinkles in the *status quo* which will not destroy its fabric. To those who believe in piecemeal tinkering with social problems such an approach will no doubt have its appeal. To the anarchist, however, it must appear to be yet one more example of the fallacy of chasing the shadows and ignoring the substance.

S. E. PARKER.

To Vote or Not to Vote

DEAR SIR,

I doubt if you have realised just how successful your "Vote for Joe Soap" campaign has been. Election results have shown that the British people followed your advice, in principle if not in detail. It is true that the total vote was no lower this time than in 1955, but there is plenty of evidence to show that the voting public have shown a greater regard for their own fundamental interests than ever before.

A detailed analysis of the constituency voting figures will demonstrate my point. In West Birmingham, the centre of the prosperous automobile industry which has provided its workers with such essentials as family cars and television sets, the workers have realised that they and their families will best be served by a privately owned British Motor Corporation rather than one that is half nationalised. As in the present U.S. steel strike, there is no illogicality in striving for higher money and at the same time voting Tory. This is the likely explanation of the considerable swing against Labour in the West Midlands.

On the other hand the Conservatives lost some ground in Central Scotland, where there is high unemployment. This is due to their failure to locate new industry in this area. Even a Conservative Government will probably introduce measures to bring this about; inevitably fuller employment and plenty of overtime will restore the workers' faith in the capitalist system.

Two more examples will be sufficient. The move to the right was no less pronounced in the steel-producing areas (Cleveland was lost by Labour). However much the Labour Party might campaign, workers in the steel industry expect a better deal from private enterprise than from nationalisation. And people in the fish ports have decided that when it is a choice of their wellbeing or that of the Icelanders, theirs comes first—and quite rightly.

There is yet another feature of the election figures which should give you some encouragement. On the front page of your election address you quote Ramsay MacDonald:

"What really matters is the babe at the breast."

The British voter has agreed with you. It is the home, the family and the pay packet which really matter, not the distant Egyptians, Cypriots and Africans. This is amply shown by the unmistakable swing against Lena Jeger, Ian Mikardo, John Stonehouse and Fenner Brockway.

The British people are quite aware of the smallness of the difference between the political parties, but they have chosen the party that on balance serves them best. Mr. Macmillan may be the nominal leader of the country, but it was really Joe Soap's election.

When will you get it into your heads that apathy and self interest in politics brings a de Gaulle nearer and anarchism yet further away? Whether you like it or not anarchism is vitally concerned with politics. You are correct when you say that all that Governments require of their people is their vote. This may indeed be the only expression of political consciousness, but take that away and acquiescence is complete. Like another correspondent to your paper I cannot accept that there is no difference between "either trust in Mr. Macmillan or Mr. Gaitskell" and "trust in Big Brother". The Africans in Nyasaland will appreciate that there was at least one important issue at the election which the British electorate did not consider worth bothering about. The Labour Party's programme, although only slightly different in many ways from that of the Tories, did at least apply in principle to something better than self interest. The British people, and that includes the workers, are more interested in their own personal affairs, and voted for themselves. Does this really please you?

Yours faithfully,
P. J. HITCH.
London, Oct. 13.

IMPROVING THE L.P.

DEAR EDITOR,

Has Nicolas Walter ever tried "improving the Labour Party himself"? Has he presented himself, duly pledged to democracy and the PARTY, at Ward and G.M.C. meetings? Has he appeared before Vetting Committees ("Comrade Walter" they would say, "do you promise to abide by the Party rules and accept the decision of the Whip?") as a prospective Councillor?

If he hasn't done these things let him try it before writing any more letters: if he has had that wonderful experience I would like to know why his faith remains where mine has disappeared. Two years of it demonstrated to me the truth in that old saying "power corrupts". I found that if the officers of the Party did not wish certain members to say or do things, they would find some "constitutional" trick to thwart them.

It is very doubtful whether a so-called "radical" or "libertarian" M.P. can do anything towards those ends if he is bound by the rules of his Party. What happens, I wonder, when Fenner Brockway, for example, is "vetted"? I can imagine the Party allowing him to get away with one or two slightly evasive answers in order to cash in on his vote-drawing (what am I saying! he only made it by 88 votes!) powers—but let him go too far in the House and he'll be out on his evasive neck.

Finally, I assume that Nicolas Walter

Anarchist Propaganda

Continued from p. 3

The fact is that the liberalisation of sexual behaviour runs counter to the general extension of state control and of authoritarianism in political matters. It is not a coincidence that at a recent Communist Party conference Harry Pollitt had to urge the faithful to be more human—even to fall in love. The fact is that the authoritarian socialist approach does suppress the humane, the affectionate, the loving, in favour of the pseudo-scientific, the phoney 'strong realism', the deliberate fostering of hate as political motivation.

For the freer attitude towards sex, as in the spreading ideas of more enlightened attitudes towards children at home and in the schools, I think it is legitimate for anarchists to take a share of the credit, for we have devoted more attention to these questions than the socialists have.

Here lies the pointer to anarchist propaganda. Because, as I said earlier, we are concerned with social progress, not with political activity, our efforts, if they bear fruit at all, will do so in social ways, expressed in attitudes permeating society rather than in spectacular changes from the top which, though announced with fanfares and rolls of drums, are in fact no changes at all.

It is a failure to understand this which leads to despair on the part of the 'anarchist' who wants to see change expressed in easily recognised forms—which in our government-dominated society means legislation.

Superficially, the anarchist appears ineffectual beside the supporters of politi-

cal parties which have had power. They can point to their party's achievements, and the anarchist's criticism appears no more than sour grapes. The fact remains however that what the anarchist is after cannot be achieved by political means, so he is not impressed by what can be done.

The most constructive results of government action have been no more than ham-listed perversions of attempts to answer social needs, but it is not that anarchists are against constructive solutions, they are against the way in which they are perverted. Government building programmes, welfare services and so forth, are organised by the government to the extent the government thinks they can be afforded and in such a manner that the government remains in full control.

Government assesses standards of housing, of health, of living, and the reforms which are forced upon government are always—but always introduced in such a way that the government emerges stronger than before. Certainly material standards are higher today than before—but then so is the government's control of every aspect of our lives.

Where anarchist attitudes spread they do so among people facing up to real problems themselves—among teachers, for example, who realise the problems which authoritarian education raises and set about solving them in the face of the educational authorities. It is in these kinds of circumstances and in these kinds of activities that anarchist propaganda can be most fruitful.

(To be concluded)

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

(Continued from previous issue)

The Working Class Movement

IN the working class movement, no substantial change has taken place with regard to methods or objectives. The organisational forms remain the same, and the objectives are unchanged. The only noteworthy changes consist of the removal of the former leaders, irrespective of whether they had a clean record or not. There were "good" and "bad" among them.

Elections have been held in the Unions and Federations, in an atmosphere of relative democracy. The former officials were prevented from taking part in them. This kept many sincere union officials, including militants who had been active in the struggle against the tyranny, and others with very clean records of conduct and who were therefore supported by the masses, from being returned to the leadership of the unions.

As in other social fields the communists never miss the opportunity, or lack the means to infiltrate into positions in the workers' movement. A very great number of them held positions in the provisional leadership of the unions, but this was reduced as a result of the elections mentioned above.

The general tendency in working class politics is that the organisations are passing into the hands of representatives of the 26th July Movement. The initial step towards this was the fact that the provisional leadership of the Confederation of Unions (C.T.C.) was held directly by militants of the 26th July Movement.

In its methods and organisation, nothing has happened to disperse the centralisation and iron discipline. To give a good example of this we quote a headline from the periodical *Prensa Libre* of mid July 1959:

"CRISIS IN THE CTC—Danid Salvador calls an Executive Committee meeting to reprimand the leaders who called the strike on Friday 17th, against union orders. Bankworker José María

would not expect people to vote unless they are astute members of the candidate's Party. Why, then does he say that Anarchists are mugs?"

ERNE CROSSWELL.

[*Sorry, but as E.C. will see from Nicolas Walter's letter in this issue, he didn't. It was a typographical error, for which we apologise.—EDITORS.]

NO CASSANDRA

DEAR FRIENDS,

In my letter to you last week the following sentence appeared: "No, I will imitate Cassandra and call you mugs for not voting." I may say that I will do nothing of the kind, and I wrote nothing of the kind either (unless my typewriter suffers from the same sort of aberrations as your printing press). What I said, as far as I can remember, was: "But I will not imitate Cassandra . . ." I would not think of having the impertinence to call you mugs for holding principles and acting by them, and I am sorry such a phrase suggested that I would. Incidentally, my name was misspelled too (for the second time).

I would also like to point out that both John Osborne and Wolf Mankowitz, whom you mention as sharing your views about voting Labour, openly declared their support for the Labour Party before the last election, so I think I can enlist them on my own side!

Yours,

NICOLAS WALTER.

London, N.W.3.

Ideal Cities

The Editors,
FREEDOM.

The articles on Ideal Cities published recently, together with the comments on the New Towns, have been magnificent material at the very highest standard, for which you are to be congratulated. Are they being collected and published in book form?

Further, to the Radburn type of housing lay-out, which you say was described in the review of our book, *The Free Family*, may I add that in the book itself there is even a diagram of it! Those interested might wish to know that the Housing Centre Trust, 13, Suffolk Place, Haymarket, London, has asked me to talk on that subject, with illustrations from slides gathered in my research, at 7.30 p.m. on November 17th.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL RITTER.

de la Aguilera and electrician Fidel Iglesias concerned. Possible expulsions."

The strike which occasioned this attitude was called by the leaders of the bankworkers' and electricians' federations in support of Dr. Fidel Castro, when he resigned as Prime Minister of the revolutionary government.

On various occasions, spokesmen of the revolutionary government have expressed its feeling that better employment should come before increases in wages. Despite this, they have risen in some industries. It is remarkable that there are great discrepancies between wage rates in Cuba. In certain industrial fields they are high, and in other fields they are extremely low, particularly among the inhabitants of the interior and the agricultural workers. The immediate policy in these cases, will be to secure an intelligent equalisation, without of course neglecting the better employment of the working population.

For practical reasons, and because of the possible infiltration of the workers' movement by elements of the former government who might systematically create conflicts, the Ministry of Labour promulgated laws against strike action. Finally, the leadership of the Confederation made the decision that no strike action should be taken for a period of six months. It is possible that these laws are justifiable, although there is the risk that they might be used viciously.

Education and Students

When the revolutionary government took over, the church made attempts to get into public education. However, the attitude of liberal opinion, and the acceptance of this by the Ministry of Education, prevented it, and thus established secular education.

Reform of the educational system is being studied just now. We hope that this will effect a great step forward.

The student organisations have brought about a wide clearing-up among the university staff, and at the same time have constituted a co-governing body of the universities, which means that the students form part of the University

governing body. This is an advance filled with importance for education, since the students can now discuss, and take part in deciding on the methods and standards to be adopted in education, and in other matters of general concern.

Other Aspects of the Revolution

There can be no possible doubt that the members of the present government are inspired with the highest honesty in administration. This has ensured that the financial measures taken have been of the greatest value and usefulness.

Full confiscation of the property of all the politicians of the former régime has been carried out, as a means of restitution for the emoluments which they received for their services to it.

The properties owned by companies composed of supporters of the previous régime have been taken over, and these include immense buildings to the value of many million dollars. The bank securities of these people were also confiscated. By these means hundreds of millions of pesos were affected, which for the most part passed, and will continue to pass, to the government.

The last trick of the counter-revolutionaries of the old régime, in co-operation with Trujillo of Santo Domingo, miscarried because it was penetrated by supporters of the revolutionary government. It was a dramatic case, since as a consequence more than 70 thousand pesos, given by Trujillo to finance the counter-revolution were passed on to be used in the Agricultural Reform.

General Conclusions

The Cuban revolution, despite its profound social character, does not go beyond the limits of a reform. The state and capitalism, with their traditional methods of the wage system, private property, supply and demand, prices, competition, and all the other means which make possible the exploitation of men and the authoritarian power of the state, are still in force.

This reform has succeeded in rectifying many vicious injustices, both political and economic. The free exercise of individual rights to express opinions has been re-conquered.

While the free exercise of liberty is being enjoyed, it is possible to strive by means of immediate realisations, to prepare the ground for more radical changes more in line with our desires, for true social justice and the full exercise of liberty.

The Libertarian Association of Cuba, taking account of the reality of today in Cuba, will assist the present revolution in everything that represents a step forward towards our objectives. It will educate and work towards making even greater realisations possible, and at the same time, try to correct mistakes and serve our libertarian cause to as great a degree as possible.

La Habana, August 1959.

The National Council.
(Trans. by P.H.)

Setting an Example . . .

An airman who won £6,633 on the pools said last night he will give most of it away to help refugees.

* * *

The millionaire's heir who swapped his job in the £3 million family business for an £8-a-week curacy in a Surrey village said:—"I have no regrets."

Handsome, quiet-spoken John Pilkington, 27, whose father is head of the glass firm was all set for a lucrative directorship after leaving Cambridge.

"I spent 15 months training in the business."

"During all that time I wasn't actually unhappy but felt more and more drawn to the Church."

"I felt there was a great need for more people to enter the Church full time. So that's why I gave up my job and went to theological college."

Instead of a business executive's life he will live in digs and pedal his way around his parish of Ashted on an old bicycle.

"But the most important thing is that I am doing what I want," he explained.

News Chronicle.

... Who will Set an Example here?

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WEEK 42

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