

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"I wish men to be free—as much from mobs as Kings—
—from you as me."

—BYRON

Vol. 12, No. 44

December 29th, 1951

Threepence

It used to be Blood, Sweat and Tears. Now it's

Austerity Churchill

ONE may perhaps speculate on why Churchill chose the Christmas party broadcast for uttering his words of foreboding? Why the Food Minister made his announcement that food would be dearer at the same season. It seems a likely answer that the Christmas spirit is to soften what may be some hard blows for the people of this country. Churchill himself said that "the differences between parties in this island are not so great as a foreigner might think by listening to our abuse of one another". FREEDOM has often declared that changes in party rule make very little difference to the people who are ruled. The austere mantle of Sir Stafford Cripps, which has fallen on Winston Churchill's shoulders is only the yoke of government itself.

Churchill's speech was nearly empty of content. He expanded much of his time alternating between declarations to the effect that this was no time for political brawling, that he wished to make no party capital, etc., etc., and complaints about the legacy of six years of Socialist misrule. The rest was a recital of difficulties and anxieties designed to prepare the way for austerity and the sense of crisis.

No Mention of Re-armament

Conspicuously absent from his speech was any reference to re-armament as an economic factor, or even as a direct mention. Yet it is obvious that the rise in the cost of living, as well as such measures as the Z-call up, are directly due to the increasing switch-over to arms production. On the other hand, the re-armament is itself a resort of capitalist economy faced with diminishing markets overseas. Dwindling economy leads to armaments production, which leads to increasing poverty in the form of rises in the cost of living inadequately offset (or not offset at all) by rises in wages. All this is nothing new.

Crisis Again

The other aspect of Churchill's Father Christmas speech is the reiterated sense of crisis. References to 1950, the Battle of Britain talk of "saving the world in peace as we did in war", and so on, serve to create that impression that we are living in a critical moment of history when only such and such measures (inevitably unpleasant and "strong") will serve to tide us—and the world—over.

In such a crisis atmosphere nothing of permanent value can flourish. Everything has to give way to the needs of the hour. The future has no existence beyond the immediate to-morrow. No long term endeavour can be envisaged, no careful laying of plans or a programme of work is possible.

The trouble is that the whole lifetime of most of us has been spent in these recurrent and jostling crises. After the 1918 peace there were widespread strikes in industry and poverty on the land culminating in the 1926 general strike. By 1929 the economic crisis of the capitalist world had set in with succeeding years of unemployment and poverty. Then the political crises abroad—Nazism, the Spanish War, the events leading to Munich and the recent war—all punctuated by re-armament, every few months a fresh crisis.

The Waste of Days, of Lifetimes

After all these decades of increased productivity, the worker still has to work

TO OUR READERS

TO ensure that this issue of FREEDOM should appear on the usual day of publication, a considerable proportion of the material had to be written by December 20th, as printing establishments closed from Dec. 21st to 26th. This by way of explanation for the omission of topical items which readers might have expected to find dealwith in this issue.—EDITORS.

worker also, "socialism" is always just round the corner, after the next crisis: meanwhile the belt still has to be tightened.

One may also remark that for politicians at the top, the policy-making level, crises and austerity are things to talk about and offer to the workers. For the Churchill's there is no austerity. Cuts in this or that, even voluntary salary cuts, mean nothing at all.

Churchill or Cripps, it is still the drab, meaningless world of government and nation states, of markets and politics. The real world of men and women and work and social warmth is increasingly squeezed out, becomes increasingly a "Utopian" vision.

harder, still remains poor. Neither for himself nor for his children is there the prospect of relaxation. In passing, one might remember that for the Russian

Coal Board Jubilant at Record Output, but this is The Price of Coal Production

The National Coal Board, officially jubilant, proudly announced to-day that more coal had been raised in the penultimate week before Christmas than in any one week since June, 1940, a period when the miners, stimulated by the evacuation of Dunkirk, established records which stand to this day. The Board's provisional figures for last week also show that the miners have to dig another 8,855,000 tons of coal by the end of the year to reach their target—224,000,000—tons for 1951. In 1950 they raised 216,311,900 tons. Last week's output was 4,909,300 tons (175,000 more than the week before and 142,000 more than in the same week last year), and deep-mined output accounted for 4,708,000 tons (184,000 up on the previous week and 136,000 up on a year ago). This made the total saleable output of coal for the first fifty weeks of this year 215,144,700 tons compared with 209,452,600 tons in the first fifty weeks of 1950.

—Manchester Guardian, 19/12/51.

THANKS to a combination of factors, which include the—so far—mild weather, Britain will not be faced with a fuel crisis this winter.

The most important factor was the effort and the grief of the mining communities—the huddled villages in black and grey, set in bleak landscapes dominated by slag-heaps—the essence and back-bone of industrial life.

Five and a half days and nights out of every seven, iron-shod men clatter out of their grey houses, down cobbled streets, clamber on to rattling trams and go down into the darkness.

Not all the time though. Every day of the year, in an average of 23,000 miners' homes, a man from the pit is resting after an accident. In other homes, the women are wearing black.

And from the Inquiry recently held on the Creswell disaster, we can see why they are wearing black. Because in Britain's mines in 1951, production is more important than safety.

The Creswell disaster need never have happened. Eighty miners need not have choked to death if men who knew their jobs had been listened to, if a conveyor-belt had been stopped for an hour or two, if non-inflammable belting had been used from the start, if—well, if production were not more important than safety.

The Creswell Inquiry proved to be a melancholy record of small defects; something was overlooked here, something else economised on there, a minor inefficiency somewhere else. Small things in themselves, but added together they spell disaster.

That disaster was caused by torn belting blocking up a chute. Within minutes the friction had started it smouldering, in another few minutes it had burst into flames. Because of the system of ventilation, a strong air current fanned the flames and blew the fumes from the burning rubber along the only escape route open to the miners—the "up" chimney through which used air escaped from the mine. But the miners trying to escape up the chimney were suffocated by the smoke

and fumes blowing past them at near-gale force.

When the fire first began, it was thought it could be easily controlled. But the terrific speed with which the cotton-backed belting burst into flames, fanned by the strength of the air-current, produced a major fire in next to no time. Because it was thought to be easily controllable, however, the men were not called to make their getaway as early as they should. They stayed at work until it was too late.

The fire was not discovered by the conveyor-belt attendant, and was therefore well under way before being spotted. The attendant was a casualty from a previous accident—a "compo" case, drawing compensation for partial disablement. He was not able to do much to fight the fire when it was discovered.

Water was not available for use against the flames owing to a defect in the surface pump—undetected until the pump was needed.

There were no respirators available for the trapped men. Had there been, they might have been able to pass safely through the fumes.

Creswell was still regarded as a model pit. Its fire-fighting equipment and safety devices were superior to the majority of other pits. It was a "happy" pit, with confidence and harmony between management and men. But its very efficiency was its undoing.

Its modern machinery created more dust. Its modern conveyor-belt was the cause of the fire. Its efficient ventilation system fed the flames with oxygen and the men with smoke. Its supposed safety made them over-confident and slow to try to escape.

Since the disaster, all the loopholes are being stopped, all the defects corrected. Fire-proof belting (until the disaster, considered an extravagant and impractical luxury!), thermostatic water sprays and automatic switch-off gear are now being installed. Regular patrolling of the long conveyors is now carried out; the telephone, which was at the foot of the return shaft (where the operator was overcome with fumes) has now been shifted to the intake shaft, and Klaxon horns and phone extensions have been fitted to reach every part of the pit immediately.

Thus, at Creswell, further precautions are being taken after the disaster. For eighty families, they are too late.

For nearly 50 years, far-sighted mining engineers have been advocating that each pit should have two air-intake shafts, so that if one is cut off, the other can be used as an escape route, feeding the escaping men with fresh air instead of foul. As a result of the Creswell disaster, the N.C.B. has issued a statutory order that, as from January 1, 1952, newly-opened seams, or further development of an existing one must have a second main air intake.

The Creswell disaster, however, was not merely a coincidence of small minor misfortunes. It was a result of production being more important than safety. Here is the most important point of all:

A tear was reported in the long conveyor belt the day before the fire. Maintenance men came to repair it, were called away and the belt continued to

FIREMEN LET OFF AFTER THREE MEN DIE

FOLLOWING the deaths of two firemen at a blaze in the City of London last Friday, all charges against London firemen arising from their recent boycott have been withdrawn. (See FREEDOM, 22/12/51.)

The fire, at a warehouse, was one of the biggest the City has seen since wartime, and the Fire Brigades from inner London had to be reinforced and rested by Brigades from the Home Counties. Casualties were caused when a huge wall collapsed, and besides the two who died on Friday, a third fireman died on Sunday, and several were very badly injured.

The three who were killed were all involved in the boycott and were on charges due to appear before a disciplinary committee.

On Saturday, the London County Council announced that the charges, which affected 1,500 firemen, would be withdrawn "in recognition of outstanding devotion to duty" by the men at the

fire. Stoppages of pay would be cancelled, and the indiscipline of the firemen in daring to boycott "spit-and-polish" in accord with their union's instructions, would be quietly forgotten.

But it should never be forgotten that during their demonstration, the men stood by to deal with just such emergencies as they had to face last Friday: that many of them were suspended and even ejected by the police, so that had the emergency arisen then, there would not have been sufficient men to deal with it, and that in at least one provincial station a suspended man who went out to deal with a fire was told by his chief officer that, since he was suspended, he was not considered as being insured.

What hypocrisy lies behind this withdrawal of charges after men have lost their lives! The fire authorities knew perfectly well that at every fire of any size, firemen risk their lives. Always have done, and were prepared to do it even while suffering under the grievances of broken promises, insufficient wage awards and high-handed disciplinary punishments.

Throughout the whole conduct of the dispute, the restraint and responsibility shown by the firemen has contrasted very much to their credit with the bumbling authority of their "superiors".

Undoubtedly the tragedy in the City was seized upon with a sense of relief by the L.C.C. to give them the excuse they needed not to press on with punishments which were obviously unpopular with the public and causing more and more bitterness within the Fire Service.

Provincial authorities have followed this lead. The deaths of three firemen have saved the face of Fire Committees and Fire Chiefs up and down the country. Authority, it seems, must have its sacrifices—one way or another.

P.S.

Vishinsky Accuses U.S. of using "SPIES AND ANARCHISTS"

THE disguises in which Anarchists have been discovered by press and politicians are too many to enumerate. They range from unwashed, bewhiskered, black haired and cloaked conspirators carrying smoking bombs, to pin-striped, trousered individuals who vote Conservative. To this unsolicited list of testimonials has been added yet another. Only last week at a meeting of the United Nations Political Committee in which the United States' allocation of \$100 million for encouraging subversive activities against Communist Europe was put forward by Russia as "an aggressive act and interference in the internal affairs of other States", Mr. Vishinsky said that spies and anarchists were being dropped in Bryansk Forest "in the hope that they will escape attention and be able to corrode the conscience of our people". We have confirmed by reference to many sources that Mr. Vishinsky spoke of "spies and anarchists". Imagine our surprise, therefore, to note that the Daily Worker report of the speech omits the word "anarchists". Now this is very serious and we strongly urge Mr. Pollitt to look into this matter. Obviously, there's an anarchist among the Daily Worker's sub-editors, and they are so clever these anarchists in disguising themselves that he will not be easy to find. However, we suggest Mr. Pollitt starts by sorting out all the pin-striped employees in the Daily Worker office and following this up with a really stiff loyalty test. If that doesn't reveal who is the saboteur in their midst, we suggest they re-read Mr. Vishinsky's speech for any further clues. We think we have found one so far. When he referred to "spies and anarchists", Mr. Vishinsky also said, "you think proper to employ turncoats and pigmies to seek to overthrow the Soviet Government." Can it be that the spies are the turncoats and the anarchists the pigmies? If our surmise is correct then Mr. Pollitt will have very little difficulty in rooting out the scoundrel. (He will, of course, remember that the anarchists are devilishly clever at disguising themselves, and the anarchist-pygmy in their midst will stop at nothing: suits, high heels, inflated egos, etc., to hide his real nature.)

WE must confess that we are intrigued by Mr. Vishinsky's reference to these "spies and anarchists" being drop-

ped into Russian territory. What induced him to make the distinction between "spies" and "anarchists"? Why not Trotskyites or Socialists? What was the rôle of the "anarchists" as opposed to that of the "spies"? The answer may be a very simple one. That Mr. Vishinsky was just using the term "anarchists" as all politicians do, to describe the lowest kind of vermin. But to our mind there is something more significant, and from our point of view, interesting, in this curious reference. After all, Mr. Vishinsky should know something about anarchism, and for this reason he knows very well that the only real alternative to totalitarianism is not "democracy" or even a fourth or fifth International, but "anarchism". What better way of blackening the good name of anarchists and anarchism than the suggestion that they have capitulated and are the agents of American Imperialism. It may be pointed out that if that were the case then surely the Daily Worker would have made a point of including "anarchists" with the parachuted "spies". We can answer this by suggesting that Mr. Vishinsky's remarks were especially meant for home consumption. [It will be interesting to see what prominence is given to the statement in the Russian Press.] Is it, in fact, possible that there is a revival of anarchist ideas in Russia to-day? It can hardly be said that FREEDOM has ever nurtured any illusions about the present régime in Russia. Yet we have always refused to identify the Russian people with their rulers (any more than we identify any peoples with their ruling classes). If we now express any slight optimism that in Russia there are people whose minds can still function independently and critically and humanistically, it is because we have seen that during the darkest ages of man's long history there have nevertheless always been a small number of men and women who kept alive those values which we call civilised and human. What reason have we for not believing this to be true in Russia to-day?

For the moment all we can or would say is that Mr. Vishinsky's attempt to implicate anarchists in the intrigues of American Imperialism may be a pointer to certain interesting political developments inside Russia.

LIBERTARIAN.

Communities in Relation to Society--3

I KNOW that it is only too easy to make theoretical and academic suggestions for any type of organisation, and only too difficult to work them out in practice; but I would like to end this paper by making some proposals of this sort. In making them, I am setting out what seems to me to be the ideal minimum for success. You may start a community without paying any attention to such proposals as these, and it may turn out to be moderately successful. On the other hand, it may become another dismal failure or a creeping invalid only kept alive by the contributions of friends. It seems to me that the community movement cannot afford these wrecks. They are not only unsatisfying to their members; they are bad propaganda; and it is far better that there should be one sound and efficient community which could serve as a model for others and an example to society in general, than twenty sickly and ill-conceived experiments.

Let us suppose, then, that a wealthy philanthropist has come forward with an offer to finance a community of, say, twenty people. Or, since such philanthropists are so rare, let us suppose that some penniless enthusiast wishes to start a community of the same size. How should he proceed? First of all, he must find the potential members. And this is not a matter that should be undertaken either in a hurry or sentimentally. The whole future of the community will depend upon the careful selection of these people. They are its foundations, and if they are unsuited to bear the strains, the community will fall whether it becomes prosperous or not. These founder-members must be chosen with the care one would use in choosing members for a polar or a mountaineering expedition. There will be no place for passengers and no room for dear old so-and-so who is such a good-hearted fellow—unless he also has other qualifications.

My own view is that a society should be formed for the purpose of discussing and planning the community, and that at least six months and preferably a year should pass before the final selection is made from the members of this society. This would have two advantages. It would ensure moral backing and a fund of lively interest and discussion; and it would enable the prospective members of the community to become fairly well-acquainted with one another before they began the difficult task of living together. They will have to be chosen as much for their ability to get on with one another as for their experience in the work to be undertaken—which I am presuming will be agricultural. Other matters will also have to be considered: in the case of married couples, it will be necessary to decide how many chil-

dren the community can afford to support in its early days—not that one or two children will cost a great deal in maintenance; but they will cost a considerable amount of time and patience if they are to be given a decent life.

During this preliminary period, the society must also decide what the financial basis of the community is going to be—whether each member is to put all he has into it on a communistic basis, or whether each shall contribute an equal share and retain any surplus, or whether the contribution shall be unequal shares on a co-operative basis. If the latter system is adopted it may lead to jealousies and dissensions, and may jeopardise the community if a member with a substantial number of shares should decide to withdraw; whereas the communistic basis is more or less a guarantee of good faith. Some decisions must also be made regarding withdrawal—whether those who may wish to leave shall be repaid their original contribution or whether they shall have no right to any money at all, or whether the community will give them whatever it can afford at the time. All these matters and many others will have to be discussed and worked out by the society as a whole.

In this preliminary period, also, it will probably be necessary to raise money. Five years ago it was estimated that £700 per head was essential to give a community a fair start; the sum would now presumably be about a thousand pounds. When the financial position of the proposed founders has been examined, it will probably also be found wanting; and somehow the extra money will have to be obtained. All that remains to be done after this is to buy good land—as the first consideration—and if possible, land with adequate accommodation. The question of accommodation is important. Small cottages or bungalows are to be recommended for reasons mentioned in the first part of this paper. They offer privacy and relaxation which cannot be found in a single large building. Privacy and relaxation are essential to the proper enjoyment of that leisure which must be provided as soon as possible in any community that hopes to survive. Without privacy and leisure members will inevitably get on one another's nerves; but with privacy and leisure they will come to their work refreshed and replenished.

I do not propose to go into all the intricacies of organisation. Some general idea of this organisation ought to exist before the community actually starts work, but the details will have to be designed on the spot to meet the conditions that are found to exist. As few rules and regulations as possible should be made, and until the community begins to grow and strangers are taken on, it

may not even be necessary to have any written rules, though many communities in the past have shown the advisability of a written contract concerning the original financial transaction between members, especially if they have come together on a share basis. If there is no written contract, difficulties may arise if members wish to leave, and if they have angry reasons for leaving, they may take the matter to court. For new members there should be a probationary period of at least three months; and some decision will have to be made with regard to the expulsion or exclusion of anyone who is later found to be undesirable, though such a decision need not necessarily be made in advance. If any other rules and regulations are made they should be designed to permit of as much individuality as is consistent with social cohesion and well-being.

In the organisation of work, one or more members should be set aside for whole-time domestic duties, so that those who are working on the land will not have to cook and clean as well; but there is no reason why these jobs should not be interchangeable. In fact, the greater the variety of work that can be provided in this manner, so long as it is consistent with efficiency, the better. It will help to prevent monotony, and it will give the members of the community a versatility that will be valuable in a crisis. The only person whom I would feel disinclined to move from one job to another unless he or she needed an occasional change, would be a good cook. (This, of course, is presuming

ACADEMIC psychology which denies the reality of will power is a fraud on the facts of life. Men of great will and humanity give their energies and resources to the building of great universities, and then small-minded theorists who probably couldn't even start a hand-laundry successfully by themselves, take up chairs of academic authority and proclaim that the will is a figment, and what is worse, get other people to believe them.

—Manas (Los Angeles).

that meals are eaten in common, which, in the case of many single men would be advisable; and even in the case of married couples might prove so economical in labour and money as to outweigh any disadvantages). Meals should, if possible, be served pleasantly, and even with a little ceremony if this comes naturally and is not affected. If meals—or at least the main meal of the day—are eaten in common, the place in which they are eaten will also provide a room for the community meetings at which everyone should be present. Such meetings should be held at least once a week in order that everything concerning the welfare of the community may be frankly discussed. I believe it would be worth trying the experiment of encouraging members to air their personal grievances, one against another, in this meeting. They might then be found to be much less burdensome than they might if they were suppressed. But unless such an interchange of feelings were delicately handled, it could become intolerable, and if, after a trial run of about a month, the meeting degenerated into a kind of Oxford Group, the experiment would have to be suspended. But quite apart from this tentative suggestion, the weekly meeting has been proved by past experience to be essential. It helps to knit the community together and takes the place, to a certain extent, of the religious or political rituals of societies founded upon such principles—though it is to be hoped that these meetings will not resemble in any other way either a church service or a party caucus. More frequent meetings for purely technical purposes—planning the next day's work or whatever it may be—could be arranged by the persons responsible, or might occur informally.

These, it seems to me, are the essentials; but it is also essential to have a just conception of relative values. Someone, in 1940, writing on communities, said that "community life needs men and women to whom food, dress and sex are secondary incidents in life, not primary preoccupations". This is a view with which I cannot agree. Food and sex, in particular, are two of the main driving forces and two of the greatest joys of mankind. While there is no reason why we should be constantly preoccupied with them, I would regard anyone who looked upon them in a Spartan manner as someone potentially

dangerous. Pleasure in food may have to be relinquished temporarily during the struggle for existence of a community; I do not see why the delights of love should ever be abandoned; certainly, neither of these pleasures should be looked upon as mere 'incidents', nor should they take second place as values; otherwise, when the opportunity occurs for enjoying them, as it should if a community is to justify its existence, there will be a tendency to look at them askance, or to regard them as sinful luxuries, when, in fact, they are the birthright of every human being. If communities are going to lead to a new puritanism, it would be better if they never came into existence at all. In this connection, I have frequently observed that one of the most difficult disciplines with which many people can be faced, is that of kindness—I mean kindness to themselves. Too many people flog themselves; too many people unconsciously wish to be regarded as martyrs or heroes. But unless we can learn to be kind to ourselves, we are unlikely, in the long run, to be kind to anyone else. The over-earnest, the self-righteous, the pious and solemn, the excitable evangelists, and those who insist on doing good to those who don't want good done to them—these are all familiar, and all dangerous in spite of their fundamental goodwill. In a community, an attitude of urbanity and detachment, of irony and good humour, combined with a willingness to co-operate and a sensitivity to the moods of others, is far more valuable than an overdose of brotherliness.

I have taken it for granted that the main object of this supposed community will have been achieved if it can run an agricultural enterprise that will be regarded with respect by its neighbours—and this not because it is merely more efficient than similar undertakings, but also because it will provide a more satisfying life than is led by most people. This is the soundest propaganda that a community could make on its own behalf; but in order that it may do even this, it must establish good relations with its neighbours. There is a large fund of goodwill amongst country people, and a long tradition of mutual aid among all who work on the land. There is nothing that such people appreciate more than skill and hard work provided that these qualities are not marred by a smart-alec or a stand-offish attitude; and if they can be shown that skill and hard work need not imply drudgery or the general

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON ANARCHISM MAJORITY RULE IN AN ANARCHIST SOCIETY?

THIS is not an uncommon question on the part of those individuals who have passed beyond asserting the inevitable chaos that the establishment of anarchy calls up in the mind still possessed of the cruder prejudices of governmentalism. Sometimes the implication is that anarchy is no more than a "free" democracy (see G. Bernard Shaw). Yet the question is a bad one, since an anarchist society is by definition a "non-rule" society, i.e., a society where there is no rule, neither by the majority nor by the minority. A society wherein the rule of man over man—that social relationship in which a group of men take, or have given to them, the power to compel others into obedience to their will—has been replaced by mutual agreement and voluntary co-operation between man and man, community and community, and their free association for the satisfaction of common needs.

If we bear this in mind, the question assumes a different aspect as it can now be taken as having reference, not to the methods of rule (obviously an absurdity under anarchy) but to the methods whereby decisions are taken.

During the early days of the anarchist movement in Britain this issue was the subject of quite extensive discussion and the general tendency was towards unanimity (the true alternative to majority decision—not minority decision, as was asserted by William Morris in his polemic with the anarchists of the Socialist League). Two examples which were often cited as proof of the workability of this method were the English Jury, and the Russian peasant's *mir* (common assembly). However, the issue seems to have fallen into obscurity, and, under the influence of syndicalism, majority decision seems to have been accepted, in fact, if not in theory, by quite a few anarchist groups and federations.

Still, to return to the anarchist society. The best answer to this question seems to be that, just as we refuse to lay down a detailed blueprint of a free society, so we cannot set up one unalterable principle for or against majority decisions. How the members of an anarch-

ist community in a free society will take decisions among themselves is a matter for them alone. If it is freely agreed that majority decision is to be the method and the minority will, in such cases, work with the majority, reserving their right to criticism, and, if necessary, secession, then since the element of compulsion has been eliminated and the minority, therefore, agrees of its own free will, no anarchist can object. In any case as a result of the flexibility of an anarchist society those who might be in a minority on one issue, might equally be among the majority on another.

However, the nature of an anarchist society would tend towards obviating the necessity of majority decisions. Since decisions would apply, not to erecting compulsive codes of behaviour for men, but to the most suitable methods of arranging the production and distribution of the means of life, the most suitable means of determining the appropriate manner in which this could be done would obviously be that of experimentation. As Malatesta remarks in his pamphlet, "A Talk Between Two Workers" it would, to say the least, be nonsensical to form a political party to campaign for a majority to decide whether a certain seed should be sown at such and such a time, when the only sure way of finding out is to sow it at what seems to be the most likely time, and then see what happens. The same principle applies to productive processes and so on.

A further point to be considered is that the realisation of anarchy necessitates a vastly increased social and individual consciousness than at present obtains, and that, as a consequence of this, the probability of unanimity would greatly increase, particularly where social units are based upon the free grouping of like affinities and are of such a size as to allow each member to participate directly in all decisions relating to him or her. The establishment of such units as the basis of an anarchist society is the prime requisite, in the present writer's opinion, for the success of the social revolution for freedom.

S. E. PARKER.

LITERARY NOTES IN THE FAR NORTH

WHEN I was wandering about the more remote parts of British Columbia a year ago, I became aware of certain ways in which the life of these semi-frontier areas still retained elements of spontaneous fraternity which have tended to disappear in more civilised and crowded places. Hospitality to the stranger was still an unquestioned duty among these scattered homesteaders, and in some parts we still came across that traditional North American mutual aid institution—the working bee, by which, when a man was in trouble or when he had some piece of work to do which was beyond his powers, his neighbours would gather together to help him and the event would become not merely a piece of co-operative work, but also a feast and a means for establishing friendship. These social virtues usually seemed to go with a good deal of independence of attitude, and produced an atmosphere which, for all the material crudities of life, was considerably more authentic and satisfying than that of most North American urban society.

I often wondered how much more these tendencies must have been developed in the days when communications were less with the outer, metropolitan world, or in places which are still isolated to a much greater extent than the areas I had seen. The other day I found one answer to these musings in a book called *Arctic Village*, by Robert Marshall, which was published as a Penguin ten years ago,* and which, to my mind, deserves to rank as an important sociological document for libertarians.

Robert Marshall lived for fifteen months during the 1930's in the Koyuk Valley in Northern Alaska, and his book is a description of the life of the hundred-odd white and Eskimo inhabitants of the area. The white people are the survivors of a gold rush which followed that of the Klondike, and the Eskimos are also recent arrivals who came over to the valley in search of game and who have been very largely Americanised in their material life, though, as I have also seen among the Indians of the Canadian coast, an almost complete assimilation of a foreign material life does not necessarily mean a complete abandonment of the tradition and inherited culture, a fact on which Marxist theoreticians might be well advised to dwell a little more than they do.

The inhabitants of this remote Arctic circle community live—or lived at least during the 1930's—a very self-contained existence, depending largely on the

natural products of the district. There are no very great disparities of prosperity, and a man who knows how to fish and hunt can always tide over a bad time and keep from starving. For this reason the economic stresses of ordinary western metropolitan life have very little force, and it is possible to see people living in a much more natural environment than most of their contemporaries.

The results of this life are studied by Marshall in great detail, and I cannot even attempt to enter at any length into his interesting discoveries. But perhaps the most important thread running through the book is the existence of a very much higher degree, not only of equality, but also of real liberty and fraternity than we on the Outside (as the Koyukers call it) are used to experiencing. Racial prejudice between whites and Eskimos seems completely absent, intolerance of opinion is rare, and there are few moral sanctions. About the general attitude of the people Marshall has the following conclusions which I make no apology for quoting at length:

"The notion of original sin has become so intrinsically rooted in the consciousness of the average citizen of the so-called civilised lands that a general feeling has developed that unless man's evil instincts are curbed by all manner of laws, the inevitable result will be chaos. The frontiersman, on the other hand, has usually resented such a belief, and the society which he has formed has generally been characterised by a minimum of hard and fast restrictions. The Eskimos in their natural environment were even more anarchistic than the frontiersman. They had neither chiefs nor tribal councils, and the only controls of their conduct were those wrought by personal contacts with their neighbours and by various ceremonial taboos which were voluntarily enforced. It is not surprising that the civilisation of the Koyuk, built by frontiersmen and Eskimos, should largely disregard the common notions of the fundamental necessity of laws, and substitute instead a strong suspicion of things legal . . .

"The citizens of the Arctic, whether white or Eskimo, are extreme individualists. Each man feels that his life is his own to lead as he will, and he resents any legal compulsions which infringe on its natural development. A few exceptionally anti-social crimes he believes should be curbed in a formal way. For the rest, he feels that right and wrong action can well enough be regulated by individual decency."

This attitude is, of course, significantly connected, signifi-

crime in the violent sense during the whole history of the settlement. During the ten years before Marshall wrote, only three cases had appeared in court, and where disputes arose which in ordinary society would result in lengthy litigation, the Koyukers preferred to ignore the law and depend on personal settlements. As Marshall concludes: "This voluntary settling has involved genuine self-control. I know one man who gave up half a share in a claim, simply because his partner alleged the right to all of it, and 'it wasn't worth picking a scrap with that son-of-a-bitch just for a half-share in a bum piece of ground. Some said I would have fought him on principle, but it's a pretty bum principle that makes a man fight'."

"People in the Koyuk realise that they are living together in an isolated world, sharing its work, its dangers, its joys and its responsibilities. They recollect countless personal associations of the most intimate character imaginable. Such factors seem to furnish them with an urge to act decently which in most cases is sufficient to obviate any necessity for the more usual compulsions of law."

Arctic Village certainly seems to point to the fact that, in a class with relatively slight class divisions, men live more peacefully and decently without the law than with it. It also demonstrates that a more genuinely moral and brotherly life is possible in a small decentralised community, where all the relationships are intimate without people being thrown too closely together, than in a world of metropolitan centralisation. Anarchists have often been accused of wishing to backtrack on civilisation and return to a more primitive society; it all depends on your conceptions of what civilisation means—whether it means washing-machines and war, or a sane and worthwhile life in voluntary frugality, and I do not propose to go into the matter at length, for the present at any rate. But read *Arctic Village*, and you will almost surely find that, despite the cold and the isolation, there is something enviable and worth recovering for man as a whole in the life it describes.

* Now out of print.

A comrade has pointed out an error in my last Literary Note. Rashly, I alleged that certain of Proudhon's most important works were both *untranslated* and *unpublished* in English. I should have been content with *unpublished* alone, for, as my friend has pointed out, Vanzetti worked during his time in prison on a translation of Proudhon's *Le Guerre et la Paix* which was never published.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

GAD, SIR, SCROOGE WAS RIGHT!

GAD, Sir, Scrooge was right! There can be no doubt about it, for those engaged in routine work, Christmas is just a damn nuisance, with everything having to be hurried and scamped through just in order that a lot of greedy folks can ruin their digestions and pretend they feel goodwill. And, of course (and to the Scrooges' satisfaction) is followed by retribution and alimentary remorse, softened by the routine messages of goodwill for the ensuing year.

Anthropologist Scrooge might be tempted to investigate the curious phenomenon of emigrant Scottish culture in England, following the Christmas orgy with a repetition at the New Year. It might be suggested that the goodwill of Christmas was an economically concentrated attempt to balance up the three hundred and sixty-four days of capitalist struggle and competition. Yet if this one orgiastic safety valve is adequate for English people, why do the Scots resident in England require another one? Are we to look for the answer to this problem in the character of the Caledonian race, or must we conclude that, with all its inconvenience, one festival of goodwill and excess is not enough, since there is still some energy left over to be discharged at Hogmanay?

These are difficult and dyspeptic problems, really beyond the wisdom of a post-orgiastic editor. Perhaps at this season the reader will spare a little indulgence for the rumblings of this usually correct and prosy column?

What a curious thing it is that the past two or three hundred years, which have seen our country transformed from an agricultural community to one living almost wholly in towns and engaged in industry, have nevertheless effected little change in the nature of Christmas! There is some fundamental function here at work, and one suspects that the dislocation of routine is only one aspect of it. That the dislocation is valuable could be deduced from what everybody feels about the restricting character of routine.

But there is also the goodwill and all that. The curious thing is that it isn't really false, for in the main people really do feel genial towards their fellows at this season. The extreme expression of this was that never-to-be-repeated Christmas of 1914, when the men in the trenches in France fraternized with their German enemies and shared their Christmas fare together with evident relief, only to resume the serious business of fighting again next day.

FREEDOM (in its sour way, as some would think) is apt to stress the disagreeable qualities of our society and to show how it encourages certain anti-social qualities. Perhaps Christmas shows how an institution can encourage cheerful and friendly feelings. To express "goodwill towards men, and on earth, peace" is perhaps not unexpected considering how little these things feature in other weeks of the year; but it shows that we do not altogether feel comfortable in the hatred, suspicion and competition which characterise daily life. What a sense of relief comes from feeling the warmth of general goodwill.

Viewed in this not altogether far-fetched way, one may perhaps expect that a more permanent breakdown of the routine of our present social life would not be completely unacceptable to men and women, and that institutions which encourage goodwill during 365 days,

Colliers' Magazine "The War We did not Want" Remarks on an Error of Taste

THE Greek poet, Homer, expressed the revolting enough thought that the battles and sufferings of men are the prime material of poems and consequently of poetic pleasure, supreme enjoyment of the gods. One may recognise in this assertion the first sign of that professional deformity which leads the journalist to gather a "beautiful" crime or international crisis, and the reader whose tastes he interprets, to desire a little blood.

One can also reflect upon the cathartic function of art, and confess that the rôle of a Homer is not without its nobility, even if he is a little too conscious of being the one who—afterwards—transfigures massacres into beauty, and human suffering into divine pleasure, a pleasure in which men have, thanks to him, a share. The attenuating circumstance in any case, is that the poetic treatment of human sufferings is limited to the past—to what has already happened; to the application of intelligence and sensibility upon blind and impetuous destiny, which is a closed book to the gods themselves. Homer never invited men to take pleasure in accounts of future wars. And this is why he remains in our eyes a citizen of our world, a civilised man. One of the essential tacit conventions of "civilisation" is in fact, that the future belongs to no-one, and that even the present is taboo. The cultivated expression of the passions and anguish of men is not through the cry, but through serene reminiscence and retrospective meditation, and for good reason their anticipation is debarred. Nero burning Rome to provide a literary theme appears to us as the very symbol of barbarism.

Thus the realistic portrayal of the future, inasmuch as it hinges upon our activities and struggles is, in a sense, excluded from civilised existence. It is only tolerated in the detached form of utopian or apocalyptic writings which are both distant and speculative; concerned with the limits of history whose unreality is evident in the eyes of the living. On the day when television is mounted in the gutter to give us the spectacle of a slater falling off the roof, something irreparable will be broken in the world. For from this point to that of provoking his fall is only an infinite psychological distance—that which separates the desire from the action. It is thus scandalous when an illustrated magazine, having exhausted the exploitation of the past, the present, and the imagination, turns to the terrors and slaughter of the future to make a sensational spectacle and extracts from to-morrow's carnage a sort of sinister entertainment.

I know well enough that this is not without precedent, and the the enterprising is dressed up in utilitarian pretexes (affirmation that war is not desirable, that the article is supposed to be a sort of warning addressed to friends and foes); and also that the general sentiment, according to which it is never what is foreseen that actually happens, constitutes one of the bases of the journalistic speculation undertaken by the editors of *Collier's Magazine*. Their feature is none the less, a revelation of the intrusion of barbarism into the ethical or aesthetic field where certain standards still prevail and, worse still, of the unconsciousness with which these standards could be violated by men belonging to the intellectual élite of the West—for there were illustrious signatures below this work of degradation.

It will serve no purpose to conceal the extent of these symptoms, nor to refrain from analysing them through a useless indignation. I heard around me balanced and liberal-minded men demanding the gallows, the whip, tar and feathers, and all the classical accessories of lynching for the directors and contributors of *Collier's*, and far from being systematic anti-Americans they were more concerned with the fact that a blunder had been made than that a crime had been committed. I could only remain silent. If I had been asked my opinion at that moment of shattered illusions which numbed the thinking faculties of a poet, a psychologist and one of our most cultivated journalists, I would have been unable to find any other phrase than the infinitely feeble one of "an assault on good taste". And it is a sign of the times that that is the aspect which the American critics and the anti-American propagandists have ignored. The *New Leader* has spoken, justly enough, of the "colossus with the head of clay", in underlining the national intellectual deficiency of which the *Collier's* feature is a witness, and its comments have been echoed no less energetically by the *Washington Post* and other important journals. The sensational press of all countries has taken possession of the most shrieking images, the most astounding passages of the offending issue, most often with a hypocritical reprobation which barely concealed a shameless pleasure. But I have sought in vain what I was waiting for: the condemnation of the articles in the name of the essential aesthetic bases of the civilised world.

These are the conventions which separate truth from fiction, art from nature, the thing from its representation, the subject from the object: these are the conventions which alone authorise

and regulate the game of being human, and which here appear to be systematically violated. When the irreducible limits of human values are abolished, nothing in life makes sense. Nothing makes sense in these pages where scenes of future carnage, victories and degradation depicted with the explanatory captions of comic strips, the motley of technicolor and the detail of Madame Tussauds, alternate with the better-than-life pin-ups advertising the fetishes of American culture: the automobile, the frigidaire, the scented soap, the towel and the insurance policy. . . .

On one page Philadelphia is atomised, from the next smiles the only dentifrice which strengthens the gums; the Siberian deportation camps revolt, the review "Guys and Dolls is played at the national theatre in Moscow in the midst of the general devastation.

It is not that this is improbable ("Business as Usual!"—discord is the true music of war), but what is unpardonable is to look into to-morrow, the modest ambitions or private dreams of men living to-day, and to offer them that (the hope of being happy or being loved, symbolised by the shampoos and electric cookers) in the middle of this (the killing of one half of the world by the other, and the unconditional surrender of mankind to history).

And what is absolutely insufferable is the veneer of reality given to the fiction of this hypothetical nightmare.

When Captain Danrit in the eighteenthies described in 32 illustrated volumes *The War of To-morrow*, the naive, utopian unreal optimism of his bayonet fights, cavalry charges and balloons put his book in the class of Jules Verne and the cloak-and-dagger romances. And care was taken not to give a single real name, not even that of the author. When the magazine *Vu* published its number anticipating a war of gas, the people in its pictures had, in their masks a robot anonymity, and the contents were nothing more than a statistical table of the quantity of

poison necessary to destroy in a square kilometre of a town. These two publications had, by their standards, a practical end—the one extolling the fresh and joyous virtues of war, the other tittering over the mechanics of obliteration. But *Collier's* in its objective account, had no aim. Neither sincerely bellicose nor authentically pacifist, it reveals the face of contemporary nihilism.

This is manifest in the way in which it plays about with the odds and ends, the rags and bones of the present to construct its chamber of horrors. It is on the level of a waxwork exhibition in which the effigies make use of the teeth, the hair and even the skin of men. Of a *tableau vivant* in which the puppets are, on the one hand, corpses, and on the other victims and, executioners condemned to perpetual immobility. One thinks of the spectacles of Roman decadence when slaves played the rôles of Hercules or Oedipus before being burnt on real funeral pyres or really having their eyes put out in the last act. One thinks of the documentary film on Africa where the desperate flight and death of a Negro chased by a lion were complacently filmed and projected on to the screen. The commentary announced a tragic accident in the big-game hunt, but the accident had all the appearance of being premeditated by the White director who, with the danger in sight sent the young Negro to fetch his rifle. In any case, the act of the cameraman passively recording the last struggle of the Negro is enough to make all the spectators accomplices of a murder. What is one man, more or less in a perilous expedition? And if he is killed, why not make him live again on the screen?

All civilised men know that this is not the point. Aesop is not played on the stage by a real hunchback, nor Philoctetes by a cripple. There are limits to human entertainments and they are the limits of civilised life itself.

Paris. A. PRUDHOMMEAUX.

In Brief . . .

Political Tests on Teachers
Mr. T. F. Peart (Lab., Workington) asked the Minister of Education if she was aware that Middlesex County Council imposes political tests for teachers desiring promotion, and what action she proposed to take to prevent political discrimination of the teaching profession.
Hansard, 29/11/51.

Cost of Explaining Away their Actions
Mr. John Boyd Carpenter, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, gave the information that Government departments employ 2,378 people on public relation staffs at an annual cost of £2,016,250. Home Departments employ 824 staff costing £543,800. And Overseas Departments employ 1,554 staff costing £1,472,450. These figures include neither ancillary staff such as messengers nor the Central Office of Information.

Recommendation?
"See a cast of thousands in the most magnificent screen spectacle ever made!"
"See hordes of victims led to their doom in the Colosseum . . . history's most agonizing moments of terror."
—Advertisement for the film *Fabiola*.

Even Cave Landlords in Italy
Police in jeeps forcibly ejected 21 persons from rock grotto dwellings on the Caelian hill near the Colosseum. They belong to four families who stated that they paid £30 to a "landlord" as key money, and were paying the same man 30s. a month rent. They went to a public dormitory.
Almost every "cave" in the tufa rock of Rome's hills is inhabited. There are ten families inside the Tarpeian Rock, and several hundreds live inside the Parioli Mount underneath new apartment houses whose rents are anything up to £100 a month. There are besides 117 "villages" in the suburbs of Rome made entirely from scraps and mostly unprovided with any main services.

Anti-Sex League in Roumania
In a recent issue of the daily paper *Scanteta Tineretului*, Bucharest high-school girls were severely criticised for the way they dressed and for giving "the impression of 'young ladies' from across the ocean whose sole preoccupation is to be as attractive and to have as much 'sex appeal' as possible."
"In their efforts to resemble trans-Atlantic misses as closely as possible, these pupils have banished all traces of decency from their behaviour, letting their hair fall loose over their eyes as though they were actresses in Western bourgeois films," the paper said.

Where the Paper goes
The *New York Herald Tribune* said its issue of December 9, which weighed three pounds, was the largest regular edition in its 110-year history. There were 114 pages in the main news section, 68 pages of supplements, a 48-page magazine, and a 24-page book review.
The Chicago *Sun-Times* announced that its Sunday edition of two hundred pages was the biggest published in ten years.

Communities in Relation to Society

Continued from p. 2
impoverishment of life which comes from a worker-master relationship, they will quite possibly begin to look upon their pay packets or their bank balances with less pride, and even grudgingly admit that there may be something in the community idea. But they will only reach this revolutionary conclusion if they are not offended by crankiness in community members. Country people are conservative and shrewd; they can respect independence of mind if it is coupled with integrity and reliability, but they quickly detect insincerity and affectation.

In their relations with these people, members of communities would be well advised never to assume a smug, a virtuous, or a superior attitude or to behave self-consciously, as though they were talking to members of an alien race. Relationships between a community and its neighbours are of the utmost importance; depending as they do upon subtleties of behaviour that can scarcely be analysed, they deserve careful consideration, and no community should allow its reputation to be jeopardised by the irresponsible behaviour of any of its members.

These relationships with neighbours will be governed to some extent by the ideals of the community. I have said that a community seems to me to justify its existence if it is successful in providing an enlightened and pleasant life for its members; and I also said, earlier, that I did not consider it advisable for a community to set out with the

instead of only one, might meet with social approval?

But many will shake their heads at this post-alcoholic fancy of an anarchist editor. After all, goodwill is not a staple food amongst men, but a luxury, and one cannot make such luxuries everyday fare without cloying the palate. Oh, no, above all, let us be realists, practical men. He was dead right, that Scrooge.

specific intention of changing society as a whole; but I also think that a community should not restrict itself solely to the cultivation of its own garden. Apart from taking its place in the activities of the neighbourhood, members of communities will probably wish to encourage other enterprises of the same kind, which need not be confined to agriculture, but may include any group activity. In France, since the war, there has been an interesting series of communities centred round small factories which are owned by the people who work them. The same principle might be applied with advantage elsewhere, and to other enterprises such as mills, retail businesses and transport. If these activities were located within reach of one another, they could combine on a syndicalist basis, to their mutual advantage; and in the course of time, given freedom from outside interference, there is no reason why federations of such independent but mutually co-operative organisations, should not spread over the country. This would help to a great extent towards the self-sufficiency of local neighbourhoods and would avoid the waste and impersonalisation of life which are characteristic of a centralised economy.

I think communities would do well to bear such possibilities in mind and should be ready to approve and encourage any form of decentralised and communally-owned enterprises. All communities are either openly or implicitly criticisms of society, and if the opportunity occurs of changing society they should be ready to seize it. Whether or not they should engage in active propaganda to this end is a matter of strategy and tactics on which I do not feel qualified to express an opinion; but as I have already said, the first step is to provide the best propaganda of all—a really satisfactory community. When a community exists in which the standard of living is higher than that to be found elsewhere, in which there is more leisure than is commonly known, and in which freedom, enlightenment and happiness prevail, it will be time enough to think of other matters. So far as I know, such a community has never existed: I wonder if it ever will?

MARK HOLLOWAY.

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A Catholic tells us to Grow Up

I WISH to make some few comments on a regrettable article in the November 10th, 1951, issue of FREEDOM. One would expect the writers contributing to FREEDOM would display some amount of maturity, that if, as is to be expected, they disagree with Catholic teaching they will state this disagreement in serious and dignified terms. Yet the heading of the article in question, "Crisis in the Vatican? 400 Mid-Wives Called In," and the first half of the article itself is something one would expect to find in a Klu Klux Klan publication. It is sheer and rank anti-Catholic bigotry. As such it is in the same category with other bigoted anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish and anti-Protestant publications. It is unworthy of an anarchist.

The second part of the article which goes into the matter of the papal address to the midwives, is quite simply inaccurate and therefore destroys its own effectiveness as a refutation of the papal arguments. I will point out a few of these inaccurate statements:

To quote from the article: "It is natural that the Pope as undisputed President of the Anti-Sex League should consider that sex as a provider of pleasure is a heretical view which must be stamped out." I will pass over the adolescent name-calling to point out that the Pope, in common with ordinary Catholic teaching, makes no such statement. What he does say is that pleasure is a secondary purpose whereas procreation is a primary purpose. Where it is impossible to realise the primary purpose of the sexual act, it is quite legitimate to realise its secondary purpose.

Your anonymous writer then states the rhythm method is "a hypocritical (and unsatisfactory) way of offering a 'natural' birth control method without openly advocating the use of contraceptives". Whether or not the rhythm method is unsatisfactory or not depends upon the scientific evidence. The papal statement deals with the morality of it, not with the fact as to its reliability or not. To call it hypocritical may be justified from the standpoint of one who does not accept an ethical distinction between the completed natural act (which rhythm does not interfere with) and the frustration of the completed act (by artificial methods). But, from the Catholic standpoint, this distinction seems quite reasonable.

The second to the last paragraph, which accuses the Pope of contradicting himself, results from the author's unfamiliarity with Catholic teaching and the terms used by the Pope. First, because the Pope did not state, nor does Catholic teaching state, that sexual relations are ordained for the "exclusive" purpose of reproduction. He states that that is the primary purpose. Therefore he is not contradicting himself when he states that, if the primary purpose cannot be realised, sexual relations may be enjoyed in the "safe period".

The whole point of the papal statement was to clear up some confusion that existed as regards the use of the

rhythm method. And what he said, briefly, is this: "That if the rhythm method is being used to permanently abstract from the primary purpose of marriage (procreation)—without sufficient cause and merely from a desire to enjoy the pleasures of sexual union without the responsibilities—such a use cannot be ethically justified. Indeed he declares invalid a "marriage" entered into by two Catholics who might agree beforehand, with no sufficient reason, to limit intercourse to the "safe period".

I do not expect the editor of FREEDOM or the anonymous writer of the article in question, to agree with the Catholic attitude on sex. I do not accuse them of bigotry because they do not agree—but I do accuse them of bigotry because of the manner in which they express this disagreement. I hope the day will come when FREEDOM will graduate above the level of a Klu Klux Klan publication.

ROBERT LUDLOW,
Associate Editor,
Catholic Worker.

New York, Nov. 20.

"Libertarian" replies:

Mr. Ludlow accuses me of "anti-Catholic bigotry". To make sure that my eyes were not deceiving me, I checked the dictionary definition of this word: "obstinate and intolerant attachment to a cause or creed". Surely a Catholic is the last person to accuse me of bigotry! It is true that Mr. Ludlow, in his previous contributions to FREEDOM, has pleaded the cause of "Catholic Anarchists", and might therefore refer to them to show that he is no ordinary kind of Catholic. But as Assistant Editor of the *Catholic Worker* he has written in that journal that whatever differences he may have with the Church on the question of pacifism, one must remain in the Church. And he goes on:

"We can never say that we are the good who must separate from the bad. We can only go on in union with our brethren and in complete submission to the dogmas of the faith for we know that the Church is the Bride of Christ, that she is our Mother and that through the anointed hands of her priests there is administered to us those ordinary channels of grace which are the Sacraments."—*Catholic Worker*, Nov., 1951.)

Complete submission to a Church which alone has the truth. "Truth is one and absolute; the Catholic Church and she only has all the truth of religion. All religions whatsoever have varying amounts of truth in them, but the Catholic Church alone has all."—(*Catholic Encyclopaedia*). A Church which for centuries condemned all scientific works supporting the Galilean doctrine of the motion of earth in these words: "All books forbidden which maintain that the earth moves and the sun does not."

"Anti-Catholic bigotry," indeed!

Mr. Ludlow to my mind only adds a further contradiction to the one I pointed out in the Pope's statement about sexual relations during the "safe

period". He says reproduction is not the "exclusive" but the "primary" purpose of sexual intercourse, and concludes that "if the primary purpose cannot be realised, sexual relations may be enjoyed (sic) in the 'safe period'." And by this same logic a Catholic woman who is sterile can enjoy sexual intercourse at all times. But the Pope does not to my mind say this at all. He is so unconcerned with the "pleasure" aspect that he condemns those women whose lives would be endangered by pregnancy to "abstinence from any complete actuation of the natural faculty". It is true this is suggested as the last resort if it is decided that the "safe period" is not safe. I shall return to this point. But now Mr. Ludlow says that the question of how safe is the safe period is a matter for the scientist, and indeed in the passages I quoted from the Pope's second thoughts on the birth control issue (FREEDOM, 8/12/51) he says, "the Church naturally leaves the judgment to medical science" and "one may even hope that science will succeed in providing this licit method with a sufficiently secure basis, etc. . . . But surely medical science in this field has already stated a hundred times (as if, in any case, the millions of accidental babies that must have resulted from trusting the "safe periods" is not sufficient evidence) that there are no safe periods with a 100% guarantee unless one limits that period to a matter of one or two days a month. But why does the Pope (and Mr. Ludlow) consider that medical science can only speak on the question of whether the "safe period" is safe, but that whether continuous pregnancies are natural or injurious for women, whether abstinence is ever to be recommended in certain cases, whether pleasure is not as important as procreation in sexual intercourse are moral questions on which medical science is allowed no say so far as Catholics are concerned?"

Mr. Ludlow wrote in FREEDOM (21/5/51): "I believe that no one's liberty should be curtailed, that if someone wants to practise birth control he should be allowed to do so." But this is the point which Mr. Ludlow will not see: that in fact in the predominantly Catholic countries the moral decisions of the Church extend far beyond the confines of the Church. In Italy, the Christian Democratic Government is composed of militant Catholics who are therefore bound by the Vatican's edicts: hence contraception is illegal in Italy—not just for practising Catholics but for everyone, including atheists, protestants and renegade Catholics. And the same applies to Divorce. Whilst there may be

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

BOTH Mr. Green and Mr. Casey had some truth in their arguments, I feel, but neither of them has succeeded in making the position really clear because they both started in the middle as it were. If we ignore fundamentals we run the grave risk of allowing glib escapism or euphemistic metaphors to usurp the place of reason.

It used to be the fashion amongst idealists to picture a wonderful existence where everything was ruled by Mother Nature: in order to solve all our problems we had only to throw over the cumbersome bonds of civilisation and go back to "natural lives".

Unfortunately, with the progress of historical study and the arrival of the cultural anthropologist upon the scene, it was found that things are not as simple as they seemed (are they ever!) It appears that almost every conceivable method of organising society has been, or is in existence on some part of the globe. Which, if any, of these is to be labelled "natural" remains an unanswerable question. All that we have succeeded in proving is that man is by nature essentially adaptive. All arguments about what life was or was not like in Paleolithic or any other times, are not only unreal but quite beside the point.

Further light is thrown on the matter by a consideration of the systematic destruction of McDougall's instinct theory of motivation, by modern experimental psychology. When the trimmings are stripped from his elaborate theory we can find only organic drives as innate, all else is but mental construct, a

product of nurture not nature. Thus, we are set free to organise the new society, the only criteria being practicability (which includes the satisfaction of basic drives) and the happiness of the individual. Under the second I include the freedom to develop and express his own personality unhampered, in so far as this does not conflict with the same activity on the part of his neighbour.

One of the most important ways of developing the personality arises from the establishment of intimate relations (in the broadest sense) with a stranger. The greater the number (within reason) and the more varied, the better for the individual concerned. I might add here that the chosen partner need not be of the opposite sex; but I think that the bi-sexual nature of both sexes is now sufficiently well known to obviate my enlarging on this point.

With a final memorandum to the effect that mere irrationality is insufficient grounds for radical change, we are ready to look at the question of marriage.

As I see it, marriage is wrong because the exclusive right to another's body with the associated patterns of accepted behaviour, such as jealousy and possessiveness, are in direct opposition to that full interaction of personalities which I claim as being essential to the individual's development.

I must emphasise that in no way do my views exclude the higher feelings. I do not aim at establishing simply an equilibrium upon the physiological (or any other) plane, living being essentially a dynamic process. I regard the higher feelings as mental constructs forming the framework essential to a healthily developing personality. What I want to do away with is the whole legal-social-economic paraphernalia which attempts to bind the individual like a strait-jacket, crushing him beneath its great weight into the mould it has prepared for him.

For Mr. Casey's benefit I might point out that there is absolutely no need to worry. If he feels happy spending the rest of his life with one partner, I should not dream of raising the slightest objection to his doing so.

I have to end on a note of pessimism, however, by observing that this is only one of the revolutions necessary before Man begins to obtain his full stature, by itself I fear it is doomed to failure.

Hull, Dec. 4.

ROBERT VINE.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN AIR MEETINGS
HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.
TOWER HILL
Every Friday at 12.45 p.m.
MANETTE STREET
(by Foyle's, Charing Cross Road)
Every Saturday at 4.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS

at the
PORCUPINE, Charing Cross Rd.
(next Leicester Sq. Underground Station)
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
DEC. 30—F. A. Ridley on
WHITHER MANKIND?
JAN. 6—Arthur Uloth on
ANARCHISM

NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS

IN EAST HAM
at 7.30
JAN. 9—SOCIAL EVENING
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

LIVERPOOL

DISCUSSION MEETINGS at
101 Upper Parliament Street,
Liverpool, 8
Every Sunday at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS at
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Every Sunday at 7 p.m.
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech,
Jimmy Raeside, Eddie Shaw

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The Welfare State

[CREFFT, the official Students' Newspaper of University College, Swansea, has published a series of articles on the "Welfare State" from the point of view of the various political parties. Our friend, Phil Lewis, however, drew the attention of the Editor of Crefft to the omission of the Anarchist point of view on this subject. And as a result, an article by Phil Lewis—which we reproduce below—appeared in Crefft for Dec. 4.]

IF by "Welfare State" we understand "a State which aims to promote the welfare of its subjects," then there is not, and never will be, a Welfare State. A Party, as in Britain since 1945, may give the public part of what it wants ("free" medicines and so on) in order to achieve or retain power, but always as a means to that end.

Let us then define "Welfare State" as "a State which claims to promote the welfare of the majority of its subjects." Historically speaking, this is a new development. 150 years ago there was no question of welfare. The workers were there to work, and the rulers to rule, and that was that.

But the development of industries needs trained men, and training necessitates some basic education, and education leads to the spreading of new ideas, and new ideas are revolutionary. So, along with European industrialisation, went revolution. The far-seeing among the ruling classes, and the power-seeking among the other classes, realised that in an industrial society the workers—if organised—were all-powerful, and that government by passive consent (for anything short of revolt is passive consent) must give way to government by active consent. The survival of the modern state was finally assured when the working-class leaders renounced direct action and syndicalism for Party organisation and State Socialism.

In one way, the new form of State is better than the old. The violent revolutionary can still be summarily dealt with, because public opinion consents; but the far more dangerous revolutionary who works to improve education (as opposed to the soul-destroying "training" of most schools and colleges), to promote mental and physical health (as opposed to State policy of forming a population mentally sick but capable of economic production), to destroy religious obscurantism, and to establish a healthy attitude to sexual and fraternal love, can no longer be attacked directly by the State, lest its subjects perceive the fraud of "State Protection". A Welfare State, then, is essentially a contradiction in terms, and the revolutionary can successfully exploit this contradiction.

It may be said that government-by-active-consent has led to the increase of State power, culminating in nationalisation and an immense Civil Service. This is true, but that very increase has made it more vulnerable. Earlier, the State was in effect one or more intelligent, ruthless men in command of a mobile armed striking force, who could appreciate and control events in a comparatively simple society. Now, it is a near-blind juggernaut with tremendous momentum, capable of obliterating orthodox opposition, but vulnerable to the keen minds of individuals and small, well-organised groups.

Once upon a time, there was a flock of sheep which had been treated harshly by an unintelligent farmer who held that sheep were inferior animals. He was succeeded by a much cleverer farmer who fed them well and reared them tenderly. Now they are grateful for being fleeced, and their wool is much more abundant. They make good mutton, too.

Whose "welfare", did you say?

PHIL LEWIS.

Food Production & Population

IN *Food Production and Population*, Tony Gibson in his excellent analysis has given us a prose epic and at the same time a stinging indictment of human folly, mounting in this era of disgrace, to stark lunacy. I have at this moment by my side, press reports covering more than a quarter of a century's searing record of hunger, destitution and famine in a world of not only potential but actual teeming and overflowing abundance, and which I had fished out to quote—but what's the use?—and your space is precious.

Pitiful and crowning imbecility is surely expressed in the following pathetic bleat wafted heavenward, whilst here,

Coal Production

Continued from p. 1

fraction of to-day's grinding toil. We have also shown how for reasons of capitalist economy and the armament programme, pressure on all workers and especially the miners, will not ease, but will intensify.

And while control of the mines is in other hands but those of the men who get the coal and run the risks, there will be other Creswells.

Sir Hubert Houldsworth, Chairman of the N.C.B., said the other day: "My colleagues and I are delighted with the magnificent response which has been made by both management and mine-workers since the summer holidays ended."

Sir Hubert also sent this message to General Holmes, the Chairman of the Board's North-Eastern division: "Heartiest congratulations to you all on your record-breaking output and on being the first division to raise a million tons of saleable coal in a week. It is a wonderful Christmas-box to the nation."

In Creswell, Christmas was not so wonderful this year.

P.S.

No report on the Creswell Inquiry has yet been officially published. We are grateful to the *New Statesman and Nation* (15/12/51) for a very good on-the-spot report of the Inquiry, from which our information was gathered. The national press made a splash on the story of the disaster at the time it occurred, but no mention has been noted of the Inquiry.

under our blinkered eyes and fumbling feet lies man's one and only certain but as yet untrodden pathway to terrestrial salvation.

"GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD."
O Lord, beholding from above
The sufferings of Thy stricken world,
Send us some token of Thy love
To keep the flag of faith unfurled.

So send Thy bounteous gentle rain
Where drought has burned the fields of
wheat,
That shrivelled crops may stronger grow
again—
And little children may not starve, but
eat.

And, if it please Thee, where the floods
have drowned
The maize and barley, send the good
warm sun;

And if this prayer should fall on barren
ground—
Give us the strength to say, "Thy will
be done."

B.F.J.

This, or something in the same strain, must have caught the discerning eye of "Yaffle", who obligingly furnishes us with "God's Reply" in the *New Leader* of 11/7/30, which runs:—

Your paper to hand,
I note that though
You praise me for the flowers that grow,
The bees that buzz, the trees that stand—
In short, the beauty of the land—
You blame me for the lack of food.
This seems to me a trifle crude.

A glance at your supply of wheat
Suggests more bread than you can eat,
A fact I hoped would please you, but
Your businessmen complain of "glut".
While as for butter, I note how
The progeny of Eden's cow

Is multiplying at a rate
Beyond my first computed estimate,
In short, I see on every hand
Supplies exceeding all demand,
And if men starve—I'm not the cause—
But man's quaint economic laws.

Argyll, Dec. 7. H. T. DERRETT.

★

TONY GIBSON'S articles were very much to the point and should be understood by the man-in-the-street. It was a difficult subject to simplify and yet get a World's viewpoint.

Orpington, Dec. 2. CLARA COLE.