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Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Law was made for property
 alone."
 Thomas Babington
 MACAULAY.
 "Power always corrupts.
 Absolute power corrupts
 absolutely."
 LORD ACTON.

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Price Threepence

DON'T LET THEM GET YOU!

SAME OLD SOLUTION FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

IT seems fantastic that there should be any sort of unemployment problem in Britain to-day. At least, it *would* seem fantastic if one imagined that the capitalist system has any foundation in common sense or logical action. It has not, however, and those of us who realise it are no longer even mildly surprised at the heights of absurdity and crass idiocy to which the system can raise human behaviour.

What does seem incredible is that so many people continue to fall for the system and the colossal demands it makes upon us in return for so little. The pitiful position in which we find ourselves now is quite a logical and inescapable result from the development of world capitalism, backed up and strengthened by national States. This is plain for all to see, yet equally plain is the fact that the same old mistakes are going to be made in the same old way and will lead to the same old result—further destruction of our natural and created wealth, further depression of our living standards, further denial of our humanity.

To get back to unemployment. According to a Sunday *Observer* report (19/9/48), Mr. Emlyn Thomas, Labour M.P. for Aberdare, speaking at Abercynon, Glam., on the 40,000 unemployed of South Wales, said that he would not be surprised if many now unemployed found work under a new rearmament programme.

He would not be surprised! We should be surprised if they did not! We would be very surprised indeed if capitalism ever found any way of solving its unemployment problems other than by preparing for war. It is the classical method, the method Hitler used with such startling success

that Germany is now a monument of ruins. And the British "Socialists" find nothing incongruous in the fact that they are treading the same path.

Not that the unemployment problem throughout the country is at all acute—yet. A mere 280,000 insured workers are at this moment existing on the dole, and it must bring them quite a measure of comfort to realise that they represent only 1½ per cent. of the industrial population. But what is to happen when the full effects of the cuts in capital expenditure begin to be felt? Or when our production prices rise out of competitive levels in the export markets—as motor manufacturers have warned us might happen in their industry anyway.

Already the economic pinch is being felt. No longer do we get the warnings against inflation which were a feature of last year's existence. Instead we hear on all sides of the depressed nature of trade and the absence of money (not unknown to us last year!) and in fact the depression which was prophesied for America by 1950 may well hit Britain by 1949—unless we rediscover our prosperity by rearming!

Scotland Worst Hit

The area worst hit by unemployment so far is Scotland, with 51,000, which includes a figure for Clydeside which in proportion to population is three times per head more than anywhere else. This has been recently added to by the failure of the Richard Crittall factory at Hillington, throwing 400 workers out of work. And for nearly two years now, Glasgow's militant dockers have been waging a battle against redundancy—the polite 1948 word for unemployment.

And the constant struggle against conditions, the appalling housing shortage—now to be perpetuated through the Government's cut in "capital expenditure", which includes housing for the people—is having its result in the steady rise in the tuberculosis rate in Scotland. Tuberculosis is regarded by all students of social medicine as a reliable guide to social conditions; it flourishes in overcrowded dwellings, in under-nourished bodies, it goes hand-in-glove with capitalism.

Reasons for War

In America, President Truman recently admitted that a serious economic slump there might be a cause of war. Our point of view is that there is no "might be" about it. Wars are never fought for the high-sounding principles the politicians declaim for them—freedom, rights of the individual, and so forth. Even if they were, the result could only be described as abject failure, for every combatant nation comes out of a war with less freedom than it went in, every state flourishes during a war and is able to establish its power on the necks of its subjects more securely through the wave of fear and patriotism which floods the land. But wars are fought for economic reasons; they are the extensions into armed competition of the economic competition inseparable from capitalism; they are means of both securing overseas markets and solving the problems of production and unemployment at home.

For although the country cannot afford to house its people, there is no doubt whatever that it will be able to afford a war. Capital expenditure for peaceful needs may have to be cut, but we have the money to double the output of fighter planes, refit 100 warships, expand the fighting services, delay demobilisation, send troops to Malaya, Royalty to Australia, and to do all the things necessary for the preservation of our State and its particular form of capitalism. But not to reduce T.B. in the Gorbals.

Now this is all very fine for capitalists, but what of the others? What of the nine-tenths of the population who own nothing but their labour-power—if they can be said to own that to-day? Is it still true that we have "nothing to lose but our chains"? Oh yes, its true

Coal Board and the Check Off

IF we are ever accused of referring back to the past too much, we would reply that it is because the Labour Movement was originally based on principles which were sound and admirable. That is undoubtedly because the movement was born out of struggle against the savage exploitation of the nineteenth century and across the vast gulf which then existed between the employer and the employed, the issues involved in the class struggle could be clearly seen.

To-day, that gulf has been bridged by the trades unions with the result that workers have gradually developed (or had developed for them) a short-sightedness which apparently prevents them from seeing the issues of the class struggle at all.

Two of the principles of early, militant trade unionism were, non-collaboration with the boss and no tampering with the pay-pocket before the worker received it. And they are made to look pretty silly by current T.U. behaviour.

Of collaboration between employer and union official there is little left unsaid in

these columns. The latest example of tampering with the pay packet is the request from the National Union of Mineworkers to the N.C.B. to deduct union dues from members' pay packets before the miners receive them (known as the check-off).

At the moment of writing it is not announced that the N.C.B. have agreed to do this, but there seems little doubt that they will not refuse to assist the union in this matter. When the mines were nationalised the N.C.B. took over a number of such arrangements at collieries where the owners had agreed to the check-off—subject to their getting the consent of each miner involved. In a nationalised industry, however, there is no room for such democracy and it is obvious that the Coal Board will not go round getting permission from each individual miner before doing as the union asks. After all, the union represents the miners, doesn't it?

Be that as it may, the compulsory collection of T.U. subs has obvious advan-

tages for the T.U. officials—especially in these days of dissatisfaction with the unions, of tearing up union cards and so on. In the nationalised industries the completely closed shop will be established. Whether you like it or not, it will be necessary to belong to the union even to get a job or hold one, the political levy and T.U. sub will automatically be taken from you before you get your pay and there won't be much you can do about it.

Whether this is the final identification between the unions and the State is difficult to tell. There is certainly not much left on which they can collaborate—in the nationalised industries at least. For although this request for the check-off has so far only appeared in mining it is obvious that it will soon follow in the other State industries, especially those in which one big union is trying to freeze out smaller ones. And what union leader is going to quarrel with the employer who collects his wages for him?

The end of voluntary trade unionism could long be seen coming, and the pitiful part of it is that rank and file members can be relied upon to act—even to strike—in support of the closed shop against their fellow workers. The closed shop might be said to have some value if trade unionism were voluntary and militant, but what do wage-earners imagine can be of value to them in circumstances where the boss will sack a man (at the request of the union) because he doesn't belong to the union? Or does belong, but to the wrong union? What value is there to the wage slave in an organisation which is not only unorganised by the boss, but for which the boss is prepared to act as dues-collector? Can anybody believe that any employer, private or the State, would do that for an organisation which represented any threat to his privileged position?

Not on your life! This move by the N.U.M. has only one meaning, anyway. It is a move to secure the unions' membership and, more important than that, to secure the members' subscriptions, for, to the union official, more important than union militancy is the certainty of his fat salary. P.S.

PENALIZED FOR POVERTY

A GLARING example of the way in which the law penalises poverty is given by the following case. A couple were sent to prison for 3 months each at Penzance for neglect of their month old baby. According to the press reports, the baby was born in January and was unwanted. The family lived in one room in a derelict building, and the health visitor found the baby being washed in a saucpan. In evidence, the latter said that, "The furniture comprised a rusty bedstead, with a few dirty old coats on it, and an indescribably filthy table on which were some dirty mugs of half-drunk cocoa. There was some milk in a dirty jug . . . There was no lighting or water supply. The fire (February) was made of sticks."

The baby itself was five weeks premature, a fact which may itself be due to the poverty of the mother. The father, a tractor driver, had for ten weeks earned only 15/- a week from odd jobs. The magistrates, with an irony which can hardly have been unconscious, gave the couple the alternative to prison of a fine of £25 each—£50 in all.

We know no more of the circumstances of this particular case than these. It is obvious that the physical hardship and poverty which this family had to face was immense. Even if one assumes the worst and takes it that gross irresponsibility even within these appalling conditions was shown by the parents, it is still not possible humanely to condemn such a failure to achieve fully responsible parenthood on 15/- a week in a derelict room without lighting and water, after the miseries of an unwanted pregnancy. What is one to think of well-fed magistrates, whose own creature comforts, and no doubt their children's also are looked after by paid servants, condemning such parents to imprisonment and social shame? There are no words for one's contempt.

And what is one to think of a social system which permits economic misery to grind out all sense of responsibility, or even the possibility of it?

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

WHILE the fever for the Third World War grips America, business remains business, and sales of war potential go on to countries behind the Iron Curtain, just as to Germany and Japan in days of yore.

This was brought to the front some months ago by an incident in New York, when regular dockworkers refused to load the 10,000 ton Yugoslav ship *Radnik*, which displayed pictures of Stalin and Tito in the same way that German ships used to display pictures of Hitler and swastika flags. The dockers stopped loading "because this stuff will be used against our kids."

At the same time, while the Russian Press is loud in its denunciations of American imperialism, the exports from Russia to the U.S. increased sharply during April, May and June, as against the same period in 1947. The Commerce Department report on "U.S. Trade with U.S.S.R." during January-June 1948" showed that Russian exports of strategic materials increased considerably during that period.

Imports from Russia, including increased quantities of strategic chrome and manganese ore, used in hardening steel, jumped during April, May and June by 50 per cent. over imports during

January, February and March of this year.

Undressed furs continued to be the leading import from Russia, but there was a slight increase during the first half of 1947. However, the value of chrome ore imports nearly doubled over last year and became the leading metallic ore in imports from Russia. Manganese ore imports increased somewhat also.

What is the point of loading the gun that is going to be fired at you—irrespective of which imperialism anyone might mistakenly favour, the fact remains that everything that goes out comes back—in London we received from the skies for nothing what firms here sold the Nazis. Only a boycott not only of one set of imperialisms, but of all war material, will be a step on the road to peace.

Six Practical Suggestions

THOSE of our comrades who share our desire to see "Freedom" back to 8 pages soon will not be impatient with us if we briefly enumerate in this column a number of ways they can help us regain the financial stability, without which much of our publishing work, quite apart from "Freedom", is seriously affected.

1. We need as many comrades and sympathisers as possible to support the suggestion put forward in our last issue for regular monthly contributions to our Special Appeal Fund. Start this month!
2. We need new readers for "Freedom". Some groups have increased their regular orders and a number of friends have introduced new subscribers. But it is a task which must be carried on unceasingly for it to succeed.
3. Rudolph Rocker's book NATIONALISM & CULTURE (21/-) should be in every public library in the country. So should John Hewatson's ILL-HEALTH, POVERTY & THE STATE (2/6) and George Woodcock's ANARCHY OR CHAOS (4/6). And to this list must be now added Alex Comfort's BARBARISM & SEXUAL FREEDOM (3/6). If you have not already asked for these books at your local library do so now and ask your friends to do so as well. It will make F.P. literature better known and at the same time will release some money at present tied up as stock.
4. It has always been F.P. policy to produce our publications as attractively as possible while keeping the price within the reach of most pockets. This has now become a very

difficult task; firstly, costs have increased by leaps and bounds at every stage of production; secondly, because the size of our editions has decreased since the end of the war, and consequently the fixed charges (e.g., typesetting) have shown a proportionate increase. In an attempt to keep down prices we have produced cheap editions of a number of our publications such as ILL-HEALTH, POVERTY & THE STATE (80 pages 1/-), ANARCHY OR CHAOS (120 pages 2/6) and we are pleased to announce a paper bound edition of POETRY & ANARCHISM by Herbert Read at 2/6, half the price of the cloth edition. A limited 2/6 edition of Alex Comfort's BARBARISM & SEXUAL FREEDOM will be available by the middle of the month. These cheap editions are made available for comrades and readers of "Freedom" and can only be obtained from Freedom Press. We therefore look to you for support for disposing of these special editions.

5. The festive season may seem a long way off but so far as booksellers are concerned they are stocking up for Xmas already. FREEDOM BOOKSHOP cannot afford to carry large stocks of books, but it can obtain any book in print at short notice. Send your book orders to FREEDOM BOOKSHOP in good time so that we can make sure of obtaining copies from the publishers before they are sold out. The profit on every book you buy from FREEDOM BOOKSHOP goes to help our finances!

6. Have you any books on your shelves which you no longer require? Why not send them to FREEDOM PRESS and the proceeds from the sale of these books will go to our Funds?

Why not join us in the fight NOW?

The Freedom Press announce the publication of a new book by Alex Comfort, *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom: Lectures on the sociology of sex from the standpoint of anarchism*. The present article discusses the importance of the subject, and contains a brief review of the book itself.

THERE is a tendency among revolutionary groupings to regard movements for sexual enlightenment with a certain detachment, even hostility. It is suggested that one should be preoccupied with the problems of the class struggle to the exclusion of such "minor matters" as the "sex question"—that can be left for cranks and intellectuals. Those who recognize the bitterness of the class antagonisms in society appear to derive comfort from belittling the sexual problems of society, even from ridiculing those who concern themselves with such problems. Even in the anarchist movement, which in the past has devoted much thought to the problems of life in general and not merely to life within a social class, there has been a tendency to leave the sexual matters to certain "specialists" with a special interest in the subject, who have, so to speak, relieved the movement as a whole from facing these questions in a responsible way. And as these specialists have usually been individualist anarchists, their approach to the problems has not shown much appreciation of their social, as distinct from the individual, aspects.

The Spanish anarchists, during the revolution of 1936, provide an exception, perhaps because clerical obscurantism in sexual matters and the suppression of women in Spain

Social Factors in

were so glaring that they could not be pushed aside as of slight importance. The Spanish anarchists, through such movements as "Mujeres Libres"—"Free Women"—did a tremendous amount of work for sexual enlightenment and the propagation of a rational attitude towards venereal diseases.

Problems of Struggle and Problems of Life

Practical necessity compels us to take an active part in the struggles which the class divisions in society impose upon its members, and the terms of that struggle inevitably shape one's attitude and philosophy. But it is in the highest degree important that one should not let considerations of class struggle affect one's attitude to the exclusion of revolutionary conceptions about life itself. After all, the social revolution is the aim of the struggle, and to allow the latter to squeeze out primary considerations of the former is "to make the worship greater than the god."

Preoccupation with problems of life in a rational society requires no justification—but for the fact that revolutionary movements seem not to escape from the general sex-hostility of capitalist society. But another aspect is emerging with increasing clearness; that the apathy of the ruled, and the mass-psychology which paradoxically permits wars to be fought by the very people who suffer most and gain least from them, have more than a remote connection with the prevailing sexual misery and frustration which characterises urban society. As this connection comes to be grasped, the sexual problem emerges as one which is important not merely as a problem of life in a general sense, but as having an important bearing on the struggle for social justice itself. On the surface the practical problem of immediate importance may appear to be the economic struggles of the classes and the more obviously material problems of day to day existence; but the more one delves beneath the surface the sexual problems of our time become more and more clearly urgent practical problems, which must be on the way to solution before, not after, the revolution.

In other words, as Comfort insists, the social problem cannot be solved without reference to sexual questions, and the sexual problems of our time cannot be clearly envisaged or tackled except in a social context.

Sex and Social Health

Neglect of this latter point vitiates much of the thinking of sexual reformers. Writers like Marie Stopes are continually appalled that the "lower orders" have a higher birth rate than the "upper classes", and class determined attitudes of the most naked kinds are only too common. (Many doctors take their duty to the state so

over the working class, but vitiates the lives and happiness of the ruling class and the leisured and materially comfortable groups whom they protect as well. There is no class in society which leads a satisfactory sexual life.

A Penetrating Study

Dr. Comfort has made a penetrating and timely study of sexual problems in their social context in the booklet published by the Freedom Press this week. He presents these problems against their background and one has for the first time the impression of seeing them whole.

In the first half of his book he treats

Sexual Sickness

seriously that they refuse birth control information to married women until they have had one or more children and are even impertinent enough to harangue them about their duty to have children—just like the Hitler propaganda or the "Heroines of the Soviet Union" decorated for multiple confinements.) More insidious still is an influence unrevealed till the Kinsey Report (see *Freedom*, (1/5/48) appeared. Sexual attitudes are not uniform throughout a population; they differ widely from one education and income group to another. And each group has its own moral evaluations of varying sexual behaviour. Hence an investigator has to rid himself of the unconscious bias of his own class before he can approach such questions with anything like full objectivity. (Comfort shows in his book how the difference in class attitudes affects a working man charged with a sexual offence when he is before a judge or magistrate whose sexual mores have been determined by quite different class upbringing; and how such differences operate within the legislature itself in the different outlooks of upper class judges and working class policemen.)

These reservations apart, there is no doubt at all in the minds of those who have sought information about the sexual lives of their fellows that the prevailing social pressures upon sexual life make the most ghastly inroads on their mental health, and hence on their happiness and capacity for creative endeavour. And this sexual sickness extends not merely

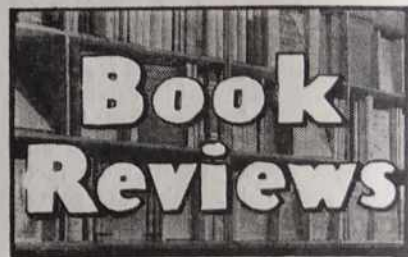
of the sexual problems in coercive societies, and shows how intimate is the connection between wars and military conscription and the sexually negative attitudes which produce the massive frustration and misery so prevalent to-day. He is able to give some statistics which dimly indicate the extent of this misery. In the course of his analysis he is able to shed considerable light on the vagaries of the censorship and of the emotionally infantile subject matter of films and popular literature, as well as on the very interesting subject of pornography.

The second half of the book is devoted to the question of marriage and sexual freedom—to the more speculative questions of what constitutes normal sexual behaviour when relieved of the irrelevant social pressures of a power-society. This section will find by no means general agreement among anarchists, many of whom will find some of the views put forward unpalatable. But the case is argued with considerable power and one's disagreement on various points is provoked just because Dr. Comfort takes up a definite standpoint and is not afraid to follow the logic of his premises and the facts he brings together. The prevailing impression is one of sincerity and courage, and one puts the book down with the feeling that one has received a challenge to face the manifold problems and reach one's own conclusions.

Terminology in such a subject presents difficulties indeed, but I do not feel that Dr. Comfort has always achieved a satis-

factory solution. He calls the responsible sexual association between two people with the rearing of children as its aim, "marriage", and he makes perfectly clear what he means by the term. Just the same it is tiring to have to bear constantly in mind a new definition for an old term, particularly when the justification for its retention derives from the author's belief that monogamous associations are a basic pattern for human being—a belief which may not be shared. His standpoint is that of knowledge of the disastrous effects which emotional insecurity brings to infants and children, and what he has to say about the responsibilities of parents needs saying. But I think the responsibilities of the community are under-estimated—even though Malatesta's impressively sane attitude is quoted in support of the author's view. The question is one which needs further discussion.

Again one cannot but agree that urban civilisation is barbarous, but to refer to it continuously as "barbarism" tends to produce a pedantic effect, as though one were listening to a private language. The book is further blemished by the use of many unusual words—for example, "megalopolitan", "erethism"—without definition, which will deter some readers. Then the argumentation, admirably clear in some of the later sections, is apt to be turgid and repetitive in the opening chapters—just where they are most likely to put readers off. Those who stay the pace, however, will find themselves richly rewarded. J.H.



THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION IN ENGLAND. F. A. Ridley. (N.L.P., 15/-)

"THE English are not a revolutionary people," we are often told. There is supposed to be some spirit of content and complacency among people in this island which is said to make them impervious to those insurgent impulses which stir their continental neighbours. And it is confidently asserted by the upholders of the *status quo*, and even by some others, that there never will be a real revolutionary movement here. The optimists assert that everything will be achieved gradually, by that well-known British genius for compromise and muddling through. The pessimistic claim that we shall decline apathetically and imperceptibly into a nation of slaves.

If there is no chance of revolution here, then the pessimists certainly have the best of the argument, for one thing is certain, that under the present system there is no chance for the kind of steady improvement of which the reformists dream; either the ruling classes, impelled by economic compulsions, will crush the people into complete serfdom, or there will be a revolutionary social change in which the insurgent people will emerge as victors. Whether that victory is maintained is another matter, and rather beyond the scope of the present review.

If it were only for the fact that he explodes the myth of the un-revolutionary Englishman, F. A. Ridley's latest book, *The Revolutionary Tradition in England*, would be a timely and useful book. But it is more than this, a work of historical scholarship which makes an important addition to Ridley's long list of valuable works in social history.

From the peasant risings of mediaeval England, the author traces the development of revolutionary movements in this

(Continued on page 3)

Anarchist Organised Vengeance Called 'Justice'

"While laying stress upon the hierarchical, centralised, Jacobin, anti-libertarian principles of the State," wrote Kropotkin in 1902, "we are, perhaps, apt to neglect our criticism of what has been called *Justice*. This report has been written with the special desire to draw attention to the origin of this institution and to invite a discussion which would throw light upon that subject."

A CAREFUL study of the development of society forces upon us the conviction that *State and Justice* are two institutions which not only co-exist in society down the stream of history, but are connected together by the bond of cause and effect. Whosoever admits the necessity of separate, chosen members of society for the special function of distributing punishments to those who have broken the law, needs a body which enacts these laws, codifies them, establishes standards of punishment—needs special schools for teaching the manufacture and interpretation of laws—needs gaols, gaolers, police, hangmen and army—needs the State.

The primitive tribe, always Communist, does not know of any judge: within the tribe theft, homicide, murder do not exist. Customs are sufficient to prevent them. But in the very rare cases in which a member would disregard the sacred rules of the tribe, he would be stoned or burned to death by the tribe as a whole. Each member of it would throw his stone or bring his bundle of wood, in order that it should not be this or that man who has put the culprit to death, but the tribe in its entirety.

When a member of another tribe has injured someone, then the *whole tribe* of the wronged one is responsible for the carrying out of an equal injury; and the *whole tribe* of the assailant is responsible, so that any of its members as opportunity arises may be chosen by any member of the wronged tribe for the retaliation—according to the principle of life for life, tooth for tooth, and so on; wounds to be inflicted exactly as they were received, the grain of corn being the standard of measurement of each wound.

That is the primeval conception of justice.

Later on, in the village life of the first centuries of our era, the conception changed. The idea of Vengeance is by and by left aside—very slowly, of course, chiefly among agricultural populations, still surviving among the warriors—and the idea of Compensation is developed; compensation to the wronged man, or to his family or to the tribe. As the patriarchal family appears, in possession of cattle and of slaves stolen from other tribes, Compensation takes more and more the character of *Evaluation* of the damage done—the value being different according to the rank of the wronged one: so much for a slave killed, so much for a peasant wounded, so much for a chief abused. The scales of *valuation* form the first barbarian codes. To fix the amount, the village community met, the bare facts of the case were ascertained by the enquiry of jurymen chosen in equal number (6 or 12) by both parties or their families. The old members of the village or, better still, the *bards*, to whose memory the tradition is entrusted, or perhaps outside judges invited by the community, decide the compensation (simple restitution for theft) and the fine to the commune or to the gods.

But gradually, during the immigration of different

tribes, many free communities are enslaved. On the same territory live, side by side, conquerors and conquered. Then come the priest and the bishop, feared sorcerers, and by and by the jurymen, the bards, the old men of the tribe are superseded in the valuation of Compensation by the delegates of the bishop or of the local lord. The fine becomes more and more important: the compensation to the wronged one less and less; the share of the community in the fine comes to naught; the whole payment is pocketed by the chief. The *Old Testament* provides these delegates with the necessary traditional example of judgment. Thus we see the modern judge evolving out of chosen jurymen at the same rate as the feudal system evolves out of the village community. The idea of *Punishment* is born, and soon drives away every other conception, especially under the action of the Church, which taking example by its Hebrew predecessors wants to reign by terror. An injury to a priest is no longer an injury to a man, it is an injury to the divinity, and no punishment is severe enough to chastise such a crime. The cruelty of the judgment increases as time goes on, and the secular power imitates the clerical power.

In the 10th and 11th centuries the mediaeval city appears. Revolution after revolution, city after city expel the judge of the bishop, of the lord, of the duke. The cities make their *Conjuración*. At first the citizens swear to drop all contests arising from the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) and, if new contests arise, never to appeal to external powers, but to settle everything among themselves. The Guild, the Parish, the Town community are the different degrees of jurisdiction. Bailies, chosen by the members of the guild, the street, the parish or the town, decide the compensation to be granted to the wronged party. In specially important cases, the guild, the street, the parish or the town, convoked to a general meeting, pronounce the sentence. Besides, *Arbitration* in all the stages between individuals, between guilds, between parishes and cities takes a very large extension.

But that organisation lasts only a few centuries. Christianity and a revival of the study of Roman law find their way into the ideas of the people at large. The priest harps incessantly upon the anger and wrath of God. His favourite argument—still the same in our day—is that eternal punishment will be inflicted for trespass against the law of the Church; applying the words of the Scripture concerning those possessed by evil spirits, the Church discerns a demon in every wrongdoer; she invents all sorts of tortures to drive the demon from the body, and then burns him that he may not relapse. From the very beginning, Priest and Lord act together; the priest is often himself a Lord; the Pope is a King; therefore the one who has broken the law of civil society is by and by treated as the one who has trespassed against the Church. The clerical and the civil powers go hand in hand, the clerical only slightly ahead, their laws and refined tortures increasing steadily in

ferocity. The Pope, himself supreme umpire, gathers round himself lawyers, experts in Roman and feudal laws. Common sense, knowledge of usage and customs, study of human nature, are left more and more in the background; they are said to foster bad passions, to be an invention of the devil. "Precedent" ranks as law, and, the older a judgment is, the more important, the more respectable it appears to be. "Precedents" are therefore sought for from imperial Rome and from Hebrew judges.

Arbitration disappears, slowly before the rising power of the bishop, the lord, the king, the pope. As the alliance of civil and religious powers becomes closer, amicable settlements of disputes are forbidden; compensation to the wronged party becomes a thing of the past;—vengeance in the name of a Christian God or of the Roman State being the main point. At the same time, the atrocious character of the penalties inflicted is such that it is almost impossible to read the description of the judicial scenes of that period.

The fundamental ideas of Justice, essential to every society, have thus totally changed between the 11th and 16th centuries. In our article* on *The State and its historic rôle* we have endeavoured to explain how the State took possession of the free cities; let it be sufficient for our present purpose to remark that, when the evolution took place which brought the cities under the sway of the State, the communities had already forsaken, even in ideal, the principles of arbitration and compensation which were the essence of popular justice in the 11th century. When the State laid its hand upon the cities the old conception had entirely gone. Christianity and Roman law had already made States out of free cities. The next step was simply this, that the State established its empire upon the now enslaved cities.

Certainly, it would be interesting to study how economic changes happening during that length of time (five centuries), how distant commerce, exportation, creation of banks and of commercial loans, how wars, colonisation, and capitalist production taking the place of communal production, consumption and commerce—to study how all these factors influenced the leading ideas during the same period and helped to that change in the conception of Justice. Some splendid researches are here and there to be found in the works of the historians of the free cities. A few original researches upon the influence of Christian and Roman ideas also exist (though such studies are of a much more difficult nature and always heterodox). But it would be wrong to trace everything back to economics; it would be just the same sort of mistake as if, studying botany, we should say that the amount of heat received by a plant determined its life and growth, forgetting humidity, light and other important factors.

* Published as a pamphlet by Freedom Press.

(The concluding section of this article will appear in the next issue.)

Freedom Bookshop

Lewis Mumford: *Technics and Civilisation* 21/-
The Culture of Cities 16/-
The Condition of Man 25/-

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Barbarism and Sexual Freedom

Alex Comfort

examines the problems of sexuality in the modern State, and gives a personal interpretation of sexual behaviour in the free society. No other discussion of this problem from the Anarchist viewpoint has appeared since the data of recent statistical surveys on sexual conduct have become available. Designed as a basis for discussion among social and political workers, his viewpoint represents that of an increasing section of social psychologists who reject concepts of normal and of moral conduct based on older religious codes, and attempt to find objective criteria by which to judge the social importance of sexual activity.

Dr. Comfort is a physiologist who was for some time engaged in child health and guidance work in a London borough.

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The Revolutionary Tradition

(Continued from page 2)

country, and shows how strong and fruitful that stream has been, including, as it did, the extremely significant trends of the Commonwealth and French Revolutionary periods.

Although Ridley writes from a Marxist standpoint, he recognises the value of revolutionaries of other traditions, paying a sound tribute to Winstanley and Godwin, and even making a friendly reference to the Anarchist wing of the First International, so often misrepresented by Marxist historians. But, although Ridley shows a remarkable fairness, his survey is naturally tinted by his views, and he takes a political view of revolutionary movements in this country which under-emphasises the revolutionary importance of movements of economic unrest like the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union of the 1830's and the syndicalist tendencies which appeared before 1914.

There is a very sound exposition of the capable counter-revolutionary tactic by which Disraeli contrived to reverse the revolutionary tendencies of the British working-class and turn them into junior partners in imperialist expansion, and a glimpse of the future in which Ridley sees a crisis in British imperialism, due to the rapid breakup of the empire, in which he thinks a resurgence of revolutionary tendencies in this country inevitable.

In this last section there is an optimism of the kind which has always marked the writings of Marxists, with their implicit trust in history to bring the goods. Personally, as an anarchist, I have little trust in historical processes; Marx, for instance, did not foresee either Fascism or the Stalinist perversion of Communism, and, though I agree that a resurgence of revolutionary action is extremely likely, I think the struggle is by no means assured of success in our own day, and that it all rests with men, and not history.

Nevertheless, though I think it unwise for us to fall into any kind of optimism that may rob us of the necessary vigilance, we should all welcome a book that decisively proves the fallacy of the hoary old myth that the English are not a revolutionary people. The story it presents is a fascinating one, and its lessons are immediate and urgent.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Assassination and Terror

THE assassination of Count Bernadotte has let loose a flood of hysteria and hypocritical outpourings—as is only to be expected from politicians and journalists. It is a distasteful and unfortunate business, the more so because of the personal qualities of the victim, for Count Bernadotte appears to have been well enough aware of the dangers of his position—indeed, his car had already been sniped at earlier on the day of his death—and he had refused to take special precautions. For it is evident that he and his convoy were substantially unarmed, and that the killing was an easy business quite different from the attempts made on the lives of dictators heavily protected by bodyguards and police clouds.

From almost any point of view this assassination appears most untimely. Bernadotte had no physical power; the politicians of the United Nations were aware that his was a dangerous assignment, but they, who do have power to shape the fortunes of the people living in Palestine, sit safe and unarmed, singing requiems for Bernadotte. It is practically certain that for many political interests the assassination will be regarded as a godsend, whatever they may say in telegrams of condolence to the widow. For obviously the wave of anti-Jewish sentiment can be exploited to the full. As always in the world of politics reactions of sincerity have no place, and practical considerations will ensure that capital be made out of any event however much of personal tragedy it contains.

Complexity of Motive and Effect

Assassination is a complex business and it is idiotic to take a "simple" view of it. We have said that Bernadotte had no power—he was merely there to administer the truce. But even this is only a half-truth, for as the representative of the United Nations there loomed behind him all the powers of the imperialist governments restrained only by the conflicts of their various interests. From a certain point of view Bernadotte's very qualities thus made him a more effective instrument in the hands of an imperialist international organisation. Such is always the fate of sincere and honest individuals who interfere in politics: their good qualities are used to cover up the sordid intrigues that are the soul of politics. They should resist the flattery which seeks to prostitute their honesty and good will. Inevitably the press as a whole has been

content to express "horror and indignation" (do journalists and press kings know the meaning of such feelings?) rather than to seek causes. An exception must be made of Arthur Koestler's dispatch to the *Manchester Guardian* on the morrow of the murder. While unreservedly condemning the act, Koestler is careful to point out that terrorism has its historical causes. "The terrorist underground struggle against the hostile mandatory power conformed," he wrote, "whatever one's opinion about the rights or wrongs of the case, to a classic historical pattern." He goes on to denounce the present case as different in kind from the use of violence against the occupying British Army in the past, but he retains a sense of historical proportion:

"After the first horror and indignation is past one further consideration is important. Even the worst outrage has its social causes. The only sincere way for the United Nations to honour the memory of Count Bernadotte is to abolish the evil which lies at the root of the tragedy. The disastrous and unnatural situation (in Palestine) must be brought to a speedy end." We do not share Koestler's political standpoint, nor his perpetual search for sincerity in politics, but we welcome his method and his levelheadedness. The roots of so-called terrorism (it is the name used by far more terroristic governments) make an intensely interesting study, only to be understood by a careful historical examination of past instances.

The Israeli State

Meanwhile, what of the Palestinian government? The present event shows it conforming to the familiar pattern of power institutions. In the past the militant political movement of Zionism had shown itself ready enough to profit from individual acts of violence which advanced its aims. Now that they are in power, the terrorists who helped them there have become an embarrassment—"They must be rooted out!" And immediately one sees that even this immature, newly-fledged state has all the attributes of such an instrument of ruling power—army, police, courts, prisons, judges, and a priesthood to utter the moral exhortations and "cover" suitable to the ruling sections—they are all there, like ugly cuckoos elbowing social justice out.

For the Jewish world also has its Bernadottes and General Councils. Behind the sincere fighters for the rights of

the Jews, those who have struggled against anti-Semitism and the oppression of minorities, stand the Nationalists, figures not without their attraction during their years of struggle, but showing all the familiar vices and insincerities of politics when they attain to power. The peoples of the world have the examples of Ireland and of India—to name only instances within the British Empire—and they now see the same thing happening in Israel. There is bitter truth in the cynical saying that the only lesson of history is that people do not learn from history.

American Interests in Palestine

American Palestine Trading Corp. has registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and plans to begin immediate distribution of a \$10,000,000 debenture issue for the development of the State of Israel. The issue is the first to be undertaken by the company since the establishment of Israel on May 15th.

Proceeds to the extent of \$5,000,000 will be made available for mortgage loans on low-cost housing construction. An additional \$2,500,000 will be made available for purchase of automotive vehicles, machinery and parts in the United States by transportation and industrial co-operatives. The balance is for public works and other construction.

The funds are invested through American organisations, and repayment of loans is made in dollars by such organisations through fund-raising activities, the company states.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 5/9/48.

AMERICAN REFUGEE

Edward Dmytryk, one of ten film directors and writers who have been "black-listed" by the Hollywood studios, has come here to try his luck in British pictures.

The ten men went before the Un-American Activities Committee, and refused on principle to say what were their politics. Charges of "contempt of Congress" followed. Test cases will probably reach the Supreme Court next spring.

"We are pretty confident", Dmytryk tells me.

Meanwhile Hollywood has refused to employ them. Most are writers and are making their living away from films. Dmytryk—he made the much-discussed picture "Crossfire"—is strictly a director. "I hope to be able to work in England," he says, "Already I have had offers to direct pictures in Italy."

Evening Standard, 18/9/48.

UNSAFE JOBS

About 40 per cent. of the key scientists in the U.S. atomic laboratories have resigned recently, it was announced at Oakridge, Tennessee, to-day.

An official said that only a few had been replaced. It was becoming increasingly difficult to secure research staff.

About 1,000 chemists and scientists normally work at the Oakridge atomic establishment.

Daily Herald, 14/9/48.

INSIDE PORTUGAL—2

THE present system in Portugal, while it oppresses and neglects the poor, is aimed at the protection of the rich. The old nobility and the new fascists gain all the high positions in the State services, and they are favoured both in education and in housing accommodation. The luxury enjoyed by these people and the business men, who made much money during the last war, is blatantly displayed in the principal streets of Lisbon, in sharp contrast to the obvious poverty of the working people. There is a clear division of the population into two classes, the Lords and the Slaves.

But, though the conditions of the poor are so bad within Portugal, the government refuses to allow the common people of Portugal to emigrate in order to earn their living abroad, as in the past. The nominal reason given by the authorities for this is that the Portuguese people cannot protect themselves abroad; in fact, they are in no way protected at home, since they are illiterate, unhealthy, miserably housed, and poorly paid, and the real reason why they are kept at home is so that they shall remain as slaves to the ruling class and shall not be able to see that working people in other countries have higher standards of living.

Press Censorship

Any manifestation of discontent in the press is prevented by a rigid censorship of both books and newspapers. The latter only print news which the government wish the people to learn, while books are in any case expensive, apart from the fact that nothing which shows any independence of thought can be published. There is no medium in which any independent man can express his thoughts freely.

The greater part of the money gained by the government in taxation is spent on the army and the church; most of the rest finds its way into propaganda, parades and the upkeep of the political police. Only an infinitesimal proportion is used for social services or to assist the poor.

So far as its general political attitude is concerned, the Portuguese government is completely reactionary. During the Spanish Civil War, it defended Franco and assisted Spanish nationalists. It has

given back to the church all that in previous years had been won by the secularists and liberals; once again the priests control education and teach their superstitions in the State schools, while civil marriages are openly discouraged.

Support of Franco

The Portuguese government's assistance was a material element in Franco's victory. Although enlistment in the Portuguese Legion which assisted the Spanish nationalists was nominally voluntary, in fact, much pressure was put on men to join, and all government clerks of the right age were required to enlist.

During the World War, the Portuguese authorities and press openly encouraged the Axis powers, particularly Italy, and it was only when the victory of the Anglo-American bloc became evident that they adroitly changed their attitude.

Only a minority of the Portuguese people supported the government in these questions, and it can safely be said that at least 70% are opposed to the present regime. The Portuguese people did not wish to support either Franco or the Axis powers. They hoped that the victory of the Allies would bring them some relief from their own troubles. But in vain.

Meanwhile, the most considerable forces that fight against the regime are equally ineffective. They are the M.U.D. (democratic movement), which leans towards the Western Powers, and the Portuguese Communist Party, which faithfully furthers the interests of the Kremlin.

The democrats hope to be able to overthrow the government by free elections and, after having placed General Norton de Matos, an old democrat, in the presidency, to initiate a programme of abolishing the censorship, broadening education, etc. But what chance is there of the present authorities allowing themselves to be displaced by a free election? With the support of the Church and particularly the Jesuits, they will do everything they can to remain in power.

As for the Communists, they have acted here as in other countries, regarding not the interests of the people, but those of their Russian masters.

This is the situation in Portugal, where the people are yet too weak to demand the freedom from the Jesuits and Fascists for which they long. They are awaiting a new life, but when and how this will come it is yet impossible to tell.

L.A.B.

THROUGH THE PRESS

OVERCROWDED SCHOOLS

Much of the failure to make progress found particularly in the modern schools was a direct result of the over-crowding in the infant and junior schools, said Alderman C. Barton, Labour M.P. for Wembley South, at Margate yesterday in his presidential address to the National Association of Divisional Executives for Education.

Expressing anxiety about the shortage of teachers, he said: "We have 3,227 infant classes with anything from 46 to 55 pupils on the roll; 8,066 junior classes also with 46 to 55 pupils while in all-age primary schools there are 3,620 classes containing between 41 and 45 pupils."

Manchester Guardian, 18/9/48.

SOUR GRAPES

Every number of the *Daily Worker* is the fruit of a political fight against capitalism, against the power of the Press monopoly, which aims to drive its smaller opponents out of business.

Newspapers can be sold at a penny today only because of the mass circulations and the huge advertising revenues. The income of the *Daily Express* from advertisements in 1947 was £1,794,439.

This is the main form of connection between the Press and the capitalist class in general and it guarantees the publication of the cheap mass circulation papers for the purposes of influencing the opinions of the people.

In order to meet its costs the *Daily Worker* has always been prepared to accept reputable advertisements, and it offers as good a medium as any other paper.

If certain advertisers now turn away from us on political grounds that is their affair. We shall meet the loss of income by other means.

Daily Worker, 18/9/48.

C.P. LINE Wavers

(1)

Great Britain should tighten her belt, work harder and restore empire free trade if she wants economic revival, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury said to-day.

Dr. Johnson told Rumanian and foreign reporters at a press conference sponsored by the Soviet-Rumanian Society for Promoting Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union that he is against Britain's taking money from the United States. "The empire can weather the economic storm on its own if allowed to do so," he said.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 14/9/48.

(2)

The Communist Party, in a statement issued to-day, calls for an "offensive" for higher wages, "defence of living standards", cutting of profits.

"Engineers and railwaymen have given a lead on wages. The duty of the trade unions is to take offensive action to raise wages all round."

News Chronicle, 20/9/48.

PATRIOTIC INCENTIVE

A bottle of beer will be given to every Naval Reserve rating who brings in an acceptable recruit, Admiral Sir Wilfred Rupert Patterson has instructed district R.N.R. officers.

News Chronicle, 23/9/48.

BALKAN POLITICS

A Rumanian who lives in a town near the frontier told an American: "This is the damndest clearing station you ever saw. Every night it's full of anti-Pauker Communists escaping into Yugoslavia and anti-Tito Communists running in the other direction into Rumania."

Time, 20/9/48.

THE LOAVES AND THE FISHES

After feeling around for months and doing some close bargaining, the British and Irish governments initialled the main points of a four-year trade agreement. The pact has not been long on paper before economists began to wonder what chance it had for actual accomplishment.

Poultry has been scarce and dear in Ireland for years, but the Irish have left England smiling over the prospect of 7,000 tons this twelvemonth, rising to 10,000 tons later on. Bacon is often unobtainable in Dublin shops, and none is now being exported; but Britain has agreed to take 27,000 tons a year or more. Butter is rationed in Ireland at six ounces a week, and there is none for export; but Britain will accept 20,000 tons annually. With the Irish cattle population falling, the Irish negotiators hope to increase their exports, and the British their imports, by 1000,000 a year—a gain of a third.

Worldover Press, 3/9/48.

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD IN JAIL

Garry Davis, "First Citizen of the World", quitted the realm of Unonia to-night—inside a French Black Maria.

Citizen Davis, ex-U.S. Army Air Force pilot, who, having renounced his nationality, was faced with a French Government expulsion order, sought sanctuary on the steps of the Palais de Chaillot, seat of the UNO Assembly.

By to-night the indulgence of the UNO authorities was exhausted and permission was given to the French police to enter UNO territory and remove the First Citizen.

News Chronicle, 18/9/48.

DEFINITION

Unofficial strikes? They're treason.—

Mr. Will Lawther.

Observer, 19/9/48.

For Internationalism ! Art Cannot be Tested

MANIFESTO OF THE ANARCHIST COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE events of the past fifteen years have proved to us the death of all internationalism in the so-called "working-class" parties and in the trade union organisations allied to them. That should not astonish us; however, the facts have, on this point, gone beyond our darkest forebodings.

We saw, in 1933, "Communism" in Germany rival Hitlerian "socialism" in its chauvinist fury. Then, when those to who the assistance of the Red Army had been promised were defeated without a struggle, the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. were hermetically sealed to the victims of the Nazis.

In democratic Europe we saw the high priests of the Comintern and the Second International say to the German and Austrian refugees: "Return to Hitler, your place is not here. We, the leaders, will write to you what to do."

Afterwards we saw, at the beginning of 1936, the terrible egoism of the "working-class" organisations which, for a moment masters of political power by their general staffs and of the factories by their trade union basis, did nothing to internationalise the Spanish revolution, to feed it or to preserve it from wreckage, but left it to be exterminated by Franco, under the guise of safeguarding peace or the sacrosanct interests of "Soviet" Russia.

Then there was the war and the general regimentation of the politicised proletariat, each under the flag of his own imperialism. We saw, it is true, some curious complications: "patriotic" French workers killed and were killed for the Germans or the Russians, and vice versa, but revolutionary internationalism remained a dead letter. The so-called "liberation" revolutions were nothing else than operations of military politics in the service of the big powers, camouflaged under a democratic appearance. To-day, once more the most bestial xenophobia is raging in the "red" press.

Everything demonstrates openly from

henceforward that neither the Cominform, nor Zurich Social-Democracy, nor the pitiful rags of the World Federation of Trade Unions, is in reality an International. The dissidence of Tito shows that the Stalinist parties only cease being vassals to Russian fascism in order to become national Fascist parties. The Italian socialist paper *Avanti* on its side has said cynically: "The rise of Socialist parties to power implies national responsibilities which make impossible the existence of a Socialist international."

Thus the "conquest of the State" by the proletariat "transformed into a nation", according to the formula of Marx, has ended only in the mutual destruction of proletarians in the service of national totalitarianism. This is what the anarchists and the revolutionary syndicalists have not ceased to stress since the days of the First International. Only the union of the workers for the destruction of the State—of all States—will create world peace. And whoever struggles against this or that government only to gain power, necessarily preserves the national foundations of the State: he cannot act as an internationalist.

All that is so true that militant socialists and communists anxious for cohesion are profoundly disturbed. They know that the next world war, more even than the first or the second, will take place between "socialised" governments, countries and peoples. The socialism of the 20th century, is above all the socialism of war. War in the 20th century is above all "socialism" in action.

This authoritarian socialism, which today has only one or two parties, but many fatherlands, from the China of Chiang-kai-shek to the Argentine of Peron, including Moscow, Warsaw, Vienna, Berlin, Prague, Paris, London and Madrid, is the enemy to us anarchists. All that is national belongs to it, but all that is international, is ours.

For if there is a corpse which will never rise again from the tomb, it is certainly the liberal internationalism of the 19th century, with its "laissez faire et laissez passer", and its bourgeois pacifism. For a long time high diplomacy and high finance have rallied to the national-totalitarian tendencies of the Fascists and the Imperio-Socialists. National-socialism or the social-nationalism, inheritor of centralised capitalism, has shown on a world scale its extraordinary power of social regression and destruction. It is henceforward the public enemy No. 1 of humanity.

Almost alone, we continue the struggle which we opened against it when it was

still in Utopian swaddling clothes. Our strength may appear derisory. But anarchist internationalism, which has not given way before any war, before any disaster, is in the process of drawing its bonds closer together for new struggles. And the I.W.M.A., world centre of revolutionary syndicalism, the only authentic heir of the first International Workingmen's Association, has not ceased to struggle against the state, with a membership which considerably exceeds a million.

Nothing, therefore, is desperate, provided each individual makes the necessary effort, an effort not merely theoretical, but practical, of militant internationalism. The International Anarchist Conference of Paris (May, 1948) has given the impetus for an activity which extends to two domains at once. On one side, it has charged our Commission of International Relations with gathering texts and propositions to be debated internationally and to serve as the basis for the work of a World Anarchist Congress. On the other hand, it has given us for our task the editorship of a bulletin in the principal European languages, the establishment of relationships between organisations, groups and individual militants in all countries, and the constitution of the international archives of the movement.

We ask everybody who is determined to help us to distribute this appeal and to contribute through our channels of information to the solidarity and world-wide documentation of our movement, as well as to the preparation of the material for the Paris Congress, which is planned for Easter, 1949.

C.R.I.A.

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

AT the recent Anarchist Summer School in Glasgow, discussion at one point ranged around the possibility of our putting forward constructive outlines of what a free society would be like, how it would work, and so forth. One of the most consistent criticisms of anarchist propaganda is that it is too destructive without putting forward concrete plans for society in the place of what we knock down.

It was pointed out that, since we are not a political party, we have no intention of telling people what to do. All that we can do is to lay down principles upon which action can be based, and in our opinion anarchist principles are the only ones on which a free society can hope to come about and to survive. But those principles—decentralisation, workers' control, abolition of money, etc., can only find expression through the initiative of the people actually engaged in the activity being adapted to those principles. In other words, if you work in industry, you cannot be told what to do to establish workers' control, but must work it out for yourself in accordance with anarchist teaching.

Now here's the point: we should be very interested to hear from readers what their ideas are on how their own industry or trade could be, in the first place, taken over by the workers, and secondly, established and run by workers' control.

This is something the editors and writers of *Freedom* can't tell you. You can tell us! You will be filling a gap in our teaching and at the same time will be encouraging other anarchists to get to grips with the practical problems of "what it will be like". It will be a long time before we can put them into practice, but why not let your imagination go on this most fascinating of speculations? Let's hear from you, readers!

Special Appeal

4th List

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Glasgow: M.T. 1/-; Wallington: L.G.M. 1/6; London: C.B. 11/6; Bristol: Group (per P.W.) 10/-; Cardiff: S.F. 5/6; Hull: P.C. 1/6; Selsdon: J.P.H. 5/6; St. Louis: E.S. 2/-; Wadebridge: F.E.R. 7/6; Glasgow: Group (per J.G.) 4/7/0; Llanelli: L.W. 4/9; London: J.S.B. 5/6; Horwich: W.H.B. 5/-; Toronto: R.B. (per O.M.) 11/5/0; S. Francisco: Group (per O.M.) 12/10/0; Youngstown: Group (per O.M.) 12/10/0; London: D.C.M. 1/-; London: C.F. 2/6; Bolton: R.S. 1/6; Glasgow: A. Mc.M. 8/6; Shanghai: L.P.K. 11/0/0; London: J.Y. 4/-; Harrow: K.N. 10/-; London: W.R. 3/-; Tamworth: V.E.R. 5/-; Bolton: R.S. 1/6; Newton Abbott: E.D. 4/6; Hebden Bridge: R.R. 1/6; London: A.E.H. 5/-.

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THERE is an unprecedented Exhibition of Children's Paintings at the Academy Hall, near Oxford Circus. (Organised by the Sunday Pictorial, open from 10—10 till October 8th.)

The paintings come from all types of schools in Britain—Primary, Independent Public and Progressive, Grammar, Technical and Modern—and from individuals at no school at all. Significantly, the largest of these categories is the Progressive schools: the smallest the Public, one of which is ironically a problem self-portrait.

It is noticeable that several pictures from any one school bear a stamp either of the teacher or of the school. In some cases the teacher has imposed a style (compare Nos. 1 and 12 from The Hall School, Somerset), and we may agree that an acquired style is better than none. But other paintings from one school, differing individually in technique and form, display a single quality which can only be described as happiness: exuberant and unalloyed. Here the teacher, acting as midwife, has helped to create the work, and we may agree that his superior skill, confining not necessarily in training or in ability to paint himself, is shown in his lack of influence. Such teachers are rare. The Exhibition is doing a service in drawing attention to the schools where it has been possible for them to work.

The selectors have been catholic in their choice and cannot be accused of having set up a tradition for next year's entrants. Herbert Read, in opening the Exhibition, said: "We did not set out to discover little geniuses. Our intention was to show that every child is his own genius—has within it a power of emotional expression which cries out for development and expansion. . . . We discover that there is not a subject in the curriculum which cannot be taught through art, and that teaching and learning thus become, instead of fearful drudgery, joyful playful activities in which the child indulges without compulsion or anxiety. Schools in which the artistic spirit penetrates every subject and every activity are vital and eager in quite a new sense."

But the rarity of such schools depends not only on lack of compulsion. In introducing a competitive element—of paintings commended or highly commended—the selectors have erred from the very path they have proclaimed. In too many schools mere marks are awarded for painting as they are for conduct. Already pupils are trained to think of their art in terms of what it will fetch.

Comprehensive Schools

THE extent to which competition is accepted as a necessary incentive at school and in after life is shown with remarkable clarity in the controversy over the three Comprehensive schools opened this month at Hayes, Hillingdon and Potters Bar, and more especially over the one not opened—owing to public protest—at Ashford.

At a meeting at Ashford the case against Comprehensive schools was carried, in the face of the Chairman and the Chief Education Officer of the Middlesex Education Committee, by 500—25, and a resolution sent to the Minister. Some of the points in the resolution are as follows (my italics):

"Disadvantage to Middlesex children.

The Comprehensive school is educationally unsound. Should this system be adopted in Middlesex our children would be at a disadvantage in competition with children from other counties retaining the tripartite system, particularly when seeking positions in professions, commerce or trade. The local comprehensive will not be esteemed as high in the eyes of the future employer.

"Inconveniences—compulsion. Because in each comprehensive school there would be only about 20% of the higher intellectual group, the brighter pupils would be inclined to feel their superiority and therefore rest on their oars, whereas in a grammar school or technical school they would be in continual competition with others of like ability. Similarly, the less bright child would be constantly discouraged by being in contact with more able children and would become apathetic and never attain even an average place.

"Sixth form pupils might be asked to transfer to another comprehensive school having a bias in some particular subjects. This would have grave drawbacks and disadvantages. At each form age many pupils have attained leadership and responsibility in their schools; they may be prefects, house captains, school captains, etc., and may have in fact reached a stage giving satisfaction to themselves and people and kinship to their schools. If asked at this stage to change to another school they may become discouraged and leave school or they may decide to continue year studies available within their own school but unattracted to their surroundings."

"Of what culture, one may well ask, is the sense of responsibility or the intellectual interest produced by a system of competitive schooling? The notion that transference and co-operation may be more valuable qualities than say the intelligence of Goethe—that so-called brighter children might help and stimulate the others—finds heavy going in this neighbourhood."

A "Forum" however voices another opinion in a letter to the *Times* Education Supplement of 23rd September: "Methods of selection are such that as they are perfected to select for the present three types of school, so they perfect the types, i.e., once you accept the fallacious belief that there is a grammar school type of mind, and try to isolate it, your methods of selection cease to be objective; and they are used to certain educational preconceptions and can only operate to prove these. And so Grammar School education, that is probably in most need of reform, is likely to become even more dedicated to the end of training selected minds according to preconceived notions. To suggest that the comprehensive school should be judged by its ability to repeat these faults seems little short of lunatic; surely we are looking for educated children, not merely trained minds."

Those in favour of "tripartition" are condemned by their very use of such a word.

The answer to the big household is neither more and more single beds, nor one larger and larger double bed—but more small double ones. Of course, a school of 1,000 is too big: there should be many small comprehensive schools.

ANTHONY WEAVER.

The English Vice

ABOUT twice a week in every newspaper it is possible to read something approximating in spirit to the following text: On hearing of the death of John Gumboil, sixty years old Socialist M.P. for Lousewood, none other than Mr. Churchill rose to pay tribute to his political opponent of many years standing. "Although I have never seen eye to eye with the late member politically," he said, "as a man I have always held him in the greatest respect. We must never forget his fine work as Minister for W.A.A.F.'s chamber pot production in the recent war, and I am sure I speak for you all in deploring the death of one of the best-loved members of the house." Listening to the applause which followed this moving tribute, who would have imagined that only forty years ago John Gumboil was imprisoned three times for Socialist activity, wounded in a police charge on an unemployed rally in Hyde Park, and nearly lynched for his pacifist views in the nineteen-fourteen war. Nowhere but in England could such a thing be possible, etc., etc.

It is obvious from the general tone of such articles that we are expected to give ourselves a pat on the back for being born into a country where such things happen. It never enters the hard working journalists' heads that one or two of us might find them disgusting.

Let us consider the ideological thought of the above imaginary, but by no means untypical, paragraph: A human being who, in his youth, believed so intensely in justice, freedom, and the rights of the individual, that he was prepared to go to prison for his views, has, by the time of his death, so changed, that he is claimed as a friend by the leader of the very

class which persecuted him when he was young. The newspaper would be justified if it condemned him for his earlier beliefs and praised him for his change of heart, but it does no such thing. It praises him for the act of compromise itself. There is even a phrase, "The English genius for compromise" which is seldom off the lips of successful politicians. In a manner of speaking they are right. The acceptance by the majority that compromise is an admirable thing has reduced the revolutionary to an ineffectuality beyond the wildest dreams of a Dictator. Against concrete oppression it is easy to fight, but who can swim for ever in a sea of porridge. The anarchist must be especially careful, or he may find himself at the Royal Garden party shaking hands with the Minister for War.

GEORGE MELLY.

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Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
At 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.
OCT. 3rd Tony Weaver
"Education and Non-violence"
OCT. 10th Marjorie Mitchell
"Mutual Aid in the light of modern theories of evolution"
OCT. 17th Sean Gannon
"Ireland since 1922"

NORTH EAST LONDON

OCT. 5th Freedom in Education
Comrades interested should ring WAN 2396

LIVERPOOL

Public Meeting at Cooper's Hall, Shaw Street, Sunday, October 10th at 7.30 p.m.
Speaker: Mat Kavanagh.

Open Discussion Meetings held every Tuesday at 7.30 in Central Liverpool.
Comrades interested ring Royal 4669.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Indoor Meetings,
CENTRAL HALLS, Bath Street,
every Sunday at 7 p.m.,
commencing Oct. 3rd
Frank Leech, Willy Carlyle, John Gaffney,
Eddie Shaw.

BRISTOL

Public Meeting
Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, 7 p.m.,
OCTOBER 5th Tom Carlisle
"The Wage System and the Worker"

BIRMINGHAM

Discussion-Lectures are held alternate Sundays at 7 p.m. in Dick Sheppard House, 36, Holloway Head.
OCT. 10th Conroy Maddox
"Myth and History"

YORKSHIRE

Will readers in the Catterick—Richmond Darlington area of Yorkshire interested in forming a Group communicate their names and addresses to Freedom Press.

HULL AND HOLDERNESS

Anyone interested in the formation of an Anarchist Group in the Hull area please communicate with Freedom Press.

STOCKPORT

Readers interested in forming a Group in Stockport please write to: James R. Howes, 43, Swithamley Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport.

HARROW AND DISTRICT

Will readers in above district interested in forming an Anarchist Group communicate their names and addresses to Freedom Press.

PREPOSTEROUS!

LEST any of you imagine that public ownership means what it sounds like, we advise you to acquaint yourself with the sad story of Reginald Saunders, who thought (foolish fellow!) that nationalisation of the railways meant that they had become the property of the people.

As one of the great British people (well he is a garage-owner, which puts him among the petty-bourgeoisie, we suppose, but "people" really means "tax-payers" doesn't it?) Reggie thought he had the right to a night's kip in one of his own hotels—a railway hotel in London. And since he hadn't booked a room in advance and the place was full up, Reggie, being a reasonable sort of chap, was quite prepared to sleep on a sofa in the lounge. In these days of social revolutions, he probably thought, we must all be prepared to rough it a bit until complete adaptation to a socialist society brings abundance for all.

But was he allowed to rough it? Certainly not! Reginald Saunders was fitted up with a more comfortable bed in a police cell (also owned by the people) from which he was gently awakened in the morning and taken for a short constitutional drive in a motor vehicle. And at his destination he was, much to his surprise, no doubt, charged with trespassing! On his own property!

Patiently Reggie explained. He had refused to leave the hotel the night before, when politely asked, because he thought that nationalisation meant that such hotels belonged to the people and were being run for the use of the people, just like the parks and the roads.

The magistrate had a word for it. "A preposterous theory," he said. And Reggie left the court a sadder and wiser man—and lighter in pocket by a fine of 20 shillings and 15 guineas costs.

So, dear readers, although you are undoubtedly part-owners of railways and their hotels, airways, coalmines, gasworks, power stations, pubs in Carlisle and all sorts of good things, learn from the sad experience of Reggie Saunders and don't ever try to get anything out of them, will you?