

WHY?

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ANOTHER LINK IN THE CHAIN

In his recent report to Congress and the nation, President Roosevelt has declared himself in favor of a national labor draft. This, presumably, will include the drafting of women. Immediately following this announcement, the "liberals" in the press and on the radio have attempted to show the practicability and inherent justice of such an act. Their argument is that women are entitled to the same rights as men, and should, therefore, carry an equal share of the responsibilities. We, too, believe that all individuals regardless of sex should be entitled to the rights, privileges and responsibilities of society. Nevertheless, we cannot share the enthusiasm of these "liberals" for the labor draft. This proposed law will merely increase the degree of human enslavement. To us the labor draft seems but another step in the direction of a more complete and vicious centralization of power in the hands of the state.

Today the democracies are supposedly engaged in a war unto death against fascism, the acme of state centralization. Within these same democracies the trend toward centralization has manifested itself repeatedly during the last twenty-five years. The war has accelerated this trend. This latest step in the direction of fascism, the proposed labor draft, is not really surprising. It is no secret that fascism, nazism and allied totalitarian systems were encouraged and supported by the democracies as an antidote to the revolts and uprisings that followed the end of the first world war. Only when the fascist governments had grown so powerful that they threatened the very existence of Allied imperialism and commerce did the democracies declare war. The present war does not have, nor did it ever have, an ideological basis as far as the ruling classes and governments are concerned. As soon as victory is assured the Allied governments will forget the glories of democracy, for the ruling classes know that once the war has ended unrest and revolts will begin all over again. People believe what they hear, and they will attempt to realize the rights of democracy. The governments now preparing to win the war are also preparing to uphold the continued existence of their privileges, power and wealth.

The big problem is how to find a method by which the status quo can be maintained, and the hopes of the workers destroyed. Apparently the ruling classes feel that centralization of power within the state is the answer. Of course, there are shades of opinion even among the capitalists. Some would like to return to the classic system of capitalism—the capitalism of laissez-faire and "rugged individualism," which in reality was nothing but unrestricted privilege to form cartels and monopolies for economic plunder. It seems, however, that many capitalists and politicians are now placing their hopes for the continuation of capitalist inequalities on a centralized society, or as the prostituted economists say on "planned economy."

If we had the time to investigate the multitude of post-war plans, we would find that all of them are in favor of handing over to the state complete authority over the destinies of the workers. Planned economy would decide who is to work, where one is to work, and who is to serve in the army etc. While all of this is presented under the guise of benefits for the "common man," it is in truth a plan to save the whole panoply of social and economic inequalities.

Many features of these "plans" have become law. The chains have been tightening slowly but surely for the enslavement of the workers. Old age pensions, unemployment insurance and perhaps social security "from the cradle to the grave" will give the people a measure of security, but at the same time, compulsory military training in peace time, anti-strike laws, and labor drafts will complete the enslavement of mankind. Thus do political schemers hope to develop a subservient, obedient mass and eliminate all danger of social revolution and emancipation.

Do the capitalists, the politicians, the rulers believe that when the lives of the workers will be controlled from the "cradle to the grave," the progress of social evolution will cease? Do they really believe that only hungry bellies will revolt? There is more to life than food and shelter. Of course these basic physical needs must be satisfied, but men have other needs, perhaps even more important than food and shelter, for men have died

There are no delinquent children, it is society that is delinquent. The problem of juvenile delinquency about which the capitalist press is raising much ado these days is not new. Although the press seems to have just discovered the extent of the inroads of juvenile delinquency into our society, countless young people, having gone through the mill of American misjustice, are a living testament to the fact that this crime-spawning society has engendered criminal tendencies in the youth of the land.

Truly, the trends toward emotional turmoil and maladjustment are accentuated by war. This is nothing new. During the last world war the problem of juvenile delinquency reached such a scope as to create a state of emergency in countries like Russia and Germany. As was to be expected, the technocratic improvement that the world has undergone also brought about a greater degree of ingenuity in the performance of anti-social acts by juveniles. The war has, as a matter of course, extended great influence in the direction and force of these youths' actions.

The newspapers today carry, in ironical contrast, ecstatic eulogies of legalized carnage side by side with reports of penal sentences meted out to some impressionable youth who became too enthusiastic in the emulation of his seniors. After all, what can be expected of the young, when every force of the vast propaganda system is dedicated to the glorification of killing and the romanticism of the weapons of death. An outstanding example of this propaganda technique is the recent series of movies that have glorified the armed forces, such as "Sahara," "Bombadier," "Bataan" et al. In these movies they have taken the most horrible forms of modern murder and attempted to make of them something noble and gallant.

in defense of their ideals. Men need freedom; the complete freedom to grow and develop. The freedom to exercise all of their many abilities. Men need freedom of thought and action. These are such basic needs that not even the twenty five years of sadistic fascism has succeeded in destroying them; nor will the high-sounding phrases of the "paternalistic" dictatorships succeed.

The complexity of laws, rules and regulations being forced upon us by the democratic governments under the guise of wartime emergencies and social benefits are striking against the basic concept of freedom. They wish to make of mankind a vast conglomeration of obedient robots who will not think or act so long as they receive a dole. We defend the right of mankind to fight for the

"Suffer Little

In a recent report the O. W. I. had this to say about the growth of juvenile delinquency. "The number of delinquency cases among boys has jumped 11.3% from 1940 through 1942, and 38% among girls. The number of pick up girls is high. A survey of 878 cities showed such girls were increasing in number and decreasing in age. These girls frequently have 'uniform hysteria,' and are often infected with venereal disease. Girls as young as 12 or 13 are infected. The nationwide increase in delinquency is 16.6% and in one community studied the increase was 77%. The percentage of increase was 2.5 times as great among white children as among Negroes.

Boys have always belonged to gangs, but in recent years the average number in a gang has grown from 2 or 3 to 15 or 20; in one instance, 32 boys were listed in one gang. Commando gangs, often the result of misdirected war enthusiasm, try to imitate the older brothers in service, and sometimes begin by stealing real guns to replace their wooden ones."

Although the war has brought about an increase in juvenile delinquency, its basic causes are not of war-time origin. There are many facets to the problem, and the main factors lie deep in the structure of the present society. It is the inequalities and moral decadence of capitalism that act as an irritant, and convert the instability of youth into anti-social activity.

Poverty, slums and social inequalities stand high in the causes of juvenile delinquency. Anyone who grew up in a slum neighborhood can easily visualize the great impetus that poverty and

satisfaction of all his needs, physical, social and moral; **but this will not be accomplished by surrendering our freedom.** We defend our right to fight for justice and equality. We defend our right to fight for a society rid of economic and social inequalities. We defend the right of mankind to satisfy his many needs. We will fight for these rights against all forces which seek to destroy them, be they fascist, democratic or bolshevist.

The labor draft, following on the heels of the Smith-Connally anti-strike bill is a force which seeks to destroy these rights. It is but another link in the chain with which capitalism hopes to strangle the realization of Social Revolution.

Vida

Children"

poor housing give to crime. It is difficult for a young person who grows into a heritage of want and frustration to understand the inequalities set upon him by this pernicious system; stealing comes easily and without conscience qualms. Just as filth, ignorance and intolerance are spawned by poverty, so too is juvenile delinquency.

In a report entitled "Children's Court Busy in War Days," the New York Times of December 26, states as follows: "Children from New York's streets, gutters, and playgrounds walk unwillingly up one flight of steps to the courtroom. There they are tried for every crime known to adults—burglary, grand larceny, rape, sodomy, highway robbery and murder... In the eyes of most experts delinquency stems from neglect, and neglect from poverty."

Perhaps the greatest single factor in causing juvenile delinquency is the broken or unhappy home. The conditions in the United States, which has the greatest divorce rate in the world, bear out this thought. There can be no doubt that the broken home has its roots in this society. In a free society the broken home would virtually disappear. Remove the lack of individual freedom, the biased educational system, the chauvinism toward women, the preposterous codes or moral ethics, the unintelligent attitude toward sex, the utter lack of a useful intelligent outlet for the constructive tendencies and energies of people, the bigotry and narrowness of certain self-appointed minority pressure groups, and the broken home will no longer be a force that creates juvenile delinquency.

Hooray for me, and the devil take the hindmost. This foremost precept of capitalism stands high as one of the indirect causes of juvenile delinquency. All of the propaganda turned out stresses the self importance and selfishness of the individual. The manifestation of this attitude is found in the actions of individuals who ruthlessly strive for their own aggrandizement at the expense and sacrifice of their neighbor, and fellow worker. You see them everywhere: the fellow who rushes recklessly ahead to grab a seat in the subway, heedless of other persons; the bootlicker in the shop who goes running to the boss everytime something is said. There are many petty manifestations of this attitude in action. Moreover, the very basis of capitalism is built on the same principle. The boss subjugates his workers. The big banker and the

investor speculate at the expense of the small investor and stockholder. The ruthless striving for power and special privilege makes up the entire life of the nation. Undoubtedly this pernicious code of behavior influences the youth of the land who attempt to apply it in their own way. It really is no fault of theirs if the form of their endeavor is often extra-legal. After all, they are acting no differently from the heads of society; the difference lies in the fact that the capitalists are protected by laws of their own making.

The press today is much perturbed about the rise of juvenile delinquency. However, all their protests are like the flapping of a sheet in the wind, noisy and attracting attention, yes, but that is all. Juvenile delinquency, together with all the other problems of present society, will continue to thrive until the foundations of this society are made to crumble. When the individual is no longer interested in profit for the few, when personal liberty enables people to forge ahead in the paths of individual expression, when men work together for the benefit of the whole society, and people progress as an understanding, educated force dedicated to the idea of respect for the individual in his personal development, then will juvenile delinquency disappear from the earth, accompanied by the host of other ills of society.

D. K.

From:

THE MASQUE OF ANARCHY

*"And these worlds shall then become
Like Oppression's thundered doom,
Ringing through each heart and brain
Heard again — again — again —*

*"Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable NUMBER!
Shake your chains to earth, like dew
Which in sleep had fall'n on you:
YE ARE MANY—THEY ARE FEW."*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

WHAT ARE WE WORTH?

What are we worth? Man's biological being has been valued at some eighty-odd cents. Now, with a war boom economy in full swing, we are awaiting the latest ceiling price edict from O.P.A. Seriously, though, a chemical analysis is possible in a laboratory and a definite market value may be ascertained; but to determine what a man's labor is worth is something for which we have no measuring paraphernalia. Who is the better guardian of public health, the street cleaner, or the doctor?

Sociologically, one cannot place more economic importance on any one segment of the working class than on another. Although our present capitalist society has a market value for everything based on some misconceived law of supply and demand, it really could not choose between one dress designer and all the dressmakers, for example. The fact that there are more available workers for a specific trade, skilled or unskilled, does not make the work any less necessary to society.

In fact, there is no method whatsoever to the system by which people are paid for their daily work. An organized worker may get more than an unorganized one; a person with seniority may earn more than a newcomer even though the newer man may be more capable; a quicker man will produce more if paid by piece than the slower man, not that the latter's family needs any less to live on. Even on the surface, there appear to be so many gross inequalities and injustices committed against those who get paid for their work, be it of brain or brawn, it makes us question and wonder why?

Assuming, with all modern biologists and psychologists, that what we are is a composite of all that has gone before us both in ancestry and environment, we cannot justifiably place any claim on our talents. Nor can we say that anything we do is strictly of our own making. Today, every member of society is dependent, directly or indirectly, on the rest of the world. The man who claims that he can build his home from scratch knows not the intricacies of modern building. Where does he

get the raw materials, the tools and the various implements that go into housebuilding? How about the architectural plans and the plumbing system? Are not the past generations responsible for all progress along these lines?

How about our very existence? The chromosomes and genes that go into our physical and mental make-up were combined in accordance with the laws of chance. This concept of the interdependence of the members of society is not new. Most analysts will agree that mankind is not hermitically inclined, that people must cooperate in order to live; in other words, that man is a social being. But the average economist and sociologist is merely a spokesman for the status quo and so cannot carry his analysis to the logical conclusion that all the needs of the members of society should be guaranteed by society. Yes, the old slogan of all radicals, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" is still true.

To establish such a distribution of consumer goods would mean, of course, a departure from the mercenary economic system in existence today. It would mean the general recognition that monetary payment for work done is one of the unfair forms of the distribution of wealth or goods. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of forgetting about the structure of present day society when thinking of this new approach to man's worth. Just as old parts cannot fit new machinery, so the structure of today's world will have to be changed before we can apply these new proposed techniques of living. Old ideas and old institutions will have to be replaced by new ones. The belief that a competitive society spurs people on to more activity is false. Furthermore, comparative adjectives applied to men in terms of dollars and cents must be eliminated.

We must remember that it is impossible to evaluate man's worth to society, nor is there anything in a libertarian's ethical code that requires such evaluation. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," should be the fundamental doctrine of the radical world.

G. A.

THE NECESSITY OF COMMUNITY

By **GEORGE G. AUSDEN**

Condensed from *The Community Broadsheet* of London, England

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It is symptomatic of our present age that the generality of men regard the robotization of the human race with indifference—an indifference which is naturally created in the prison house of western civilization. Only a minority are seriously perturbed by the continuous sacrifice of the human mind and soul on the altar of "progress"; probably because we have been blessed by the inheritance of a finer valuation of freedom and a loftier conception of personality. Upon us there rests the tremendous responsibility for the salvation of man from an era of totalitarian slavery.

Man has reached that crisis in his development foretold by such prophets as Samuel Butler and William Morris. The issues before him are so profound as to render irrelevant and ridiculous the boosted social insurance scheme of Beveridge and the periodical parliamentary discussions on post-war reconstruction. The spiritual values of our forefathers and the intellectual brilliance of our fathers are being pounded to destruction beneath the pitiless wheels of industrialization. The finest gifts of man—art, poetry, and literary genius—are being prostituted in the service of modern state propaganda.

The person called man is slowly disappearing, to be replaced by a thing; an impersonal cog in the vast machinery of a centralized economy; a number only in so far as it contributes to the sum of the total state.

Community and History

It is not enough to interpret Community in terms of the early Christian experiment, or to regard it merely as a means whereby the few who are called to its service can free their personalities from the paralysis of modern civilization. Still less satisfactory is the horrible notion rampant in some quarters that Community is justified if only because it provides conscientious objectors with a

favourable environment wherein they can fulfill their condition of registration! However incomplete may be its present witness, however limited its existing sphere of influence, Community is an essential element in world revolution, or it is devoid of purpose and unrelated to history.

The Realistic Basis

Community is revolutionary, not only because it has brought a new technique into social activity, but because it contains within itself the germ of a new mode of civilization that will enable the creative potentialities of every man to find true, free and full expression. Thus it stands athwart the course of political history in sharp contrast to an industrial civilization that is destructive of all human personality. Where the Marxian is content to redecorate the old, decayed ruin, Community strives to build anew.

To understand both the nature of that mode of civilization and the future development of Community it is necessary to look to the numerous cell groups that have already endeavoured to establish microscopic examples of the new society. It is not an accident that the majority of these groups are developing in a rural environment, wrestling with the soil and seeking to master the skilled crafts. For their rejection of monopoly, industrialization has forced them back to the only realistic basis of a good society.

Decentralization

The day will dawn when these microscopic cooperative societies will inevitably overflow into the wider realm of social activity. There will evolve a chain of autonomous village communities, linked together by the mutual recognition of their common humanity, which will be practically expressed in a system of just exchange of essential commodities.

ANARCHISM

ANARCHISM, the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being. In a society developed along these lines the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the State in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international—temporary or more or less permanent—for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defense of the territory, and so on; and on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and social needs. Moreover, such a society would represent nothing immutable. On the contrary—as is seen in organic life at large—harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and re-adjustment of equilibrium between the multitude of forces and influences, and this adjustment would be the easier to obtain as none of the forces would enjoy special protection from the State.

If, it is contended, society were organized on these principles, man would not be limited in the free exercise of his powers in productive work by a capitalist monopoly, maintained by the State; nor would he be limited in the exercise of his will by a fear of punishment, or by obedience towards individuals or metaphysical entities, which both lead to depression of initiative and servility of mind. He would be guided in his actions by his own understanding, which necessarily would bear the impression of a free action and reaction between his own self and the ethical conception of his surroundings. Man would thus be enabled to obtain the full development of all his faculties, intellectual, artistic and moral, without being hampered by overwork for the monopolists, or by the servility and inertia of mind of the great number. He would thus be able to reach a full "individualization," which is not possible either under the present system of "individualism," or under any system of State Socialism in the so-called "Volkstaat" (popular State).

The Anarchist writers consider, moreover, that this conception is not a Utopia, constructed on a priori method, after a few disordered have been taken as postulates. It is derived, they maintain, from an "analysis of tendencies" that are at work already, even though State Socialism may find a temporary favor with the reformers. The progress of modern technics, which wonderfully simplifies the production of all the necessities of life; the growing spirit of independence, and the rapid spread of free initiative and free understanding in all branches of activity—including those

which formerly were considered as the proper attribution of Church and State—are steadily reinforcing the no-government tendency.

ANARCHISTS AND THE STATE. As to economical conceptions, the Anarchists, in common with all Socialists, of whom they constitute the left wing, maintain that the now prevailing system of private ownership in land, and our capitalist production for the sake of profits, represent a monopoly which runs against both the principles of justice and the dictates of utility. They are the main obstacle which prevents the successes of modern technics from being brought into the service of all, so as to produce general well-being. The Anarchists consider the wage-system and capitalist production altogether as an obstacle to progress. But they point out also that the State was, and continues to be, the chief instrument for permitting the few to monopolize the land, and the capitalists to appropriate for themselves a quite disproportionate share of the yearly accumulated surplus of production. Consequently, while combating the present monopolization of land, and capitalism altogether, the anarchists combat with the same energy the State, as the main support of that system, not this or that special form, but the State altogether, whether it be a monarchy or even a republic governed by means of the "referendum."

The State organization, having always been, both in ancient and modern history (Macedonian empire, Roman empire, modern European States grown up on the ruins of the autonomous cities), the instrument of establishing monopolies in favor of the ruling minorities, cannot be made to work for the destruction of these monopolies. The Anarchists consider, therefore, that to hand over to the State all the main sources of economical life—the land, the mines, the railways, banking, insurances, and so on—as also the management of all the main branches of industry, in addition to all the functions already accumulated in its hands (education, State-supported religions, defense of the territory, etc.), would mean to create a new instrument of tyranny. State capitalism would only increase the powers of bureaucracy and capitalism. True progress lies in the direction of decentralization, both "territorial and functional," in the development of the spirit of local and personal initiative, and of the free federation, from the simple to the compound, in lieu of the present hierarchy from the center to the periphery.

In common with most Socialists, the Anarchists recognize that, like all evolution in nature, the slow evolution of society is followed from time to time by periods of accelerated evolution which are called revolutions; and they think that the era of revolutions is not yet closed. Periods of rapid changes will follow periods of slow evolution, and these periods must be taken advantage of—not for increasing and widening the powers of the State, but for reducing them, through the organization in every township or commune of the local groups of producers and consumers, as also the regional, and eventually the international, federations of these groups.

In virtue of the above principles the anarchists refuse to be party to the present State organization

By Peter Kropotkin

from Encyclopedia Britannica

and to support it by infusing fresh blood into it. They do not seek to constitute, and invite workmen not to constitute, political parties in the parliaments. Accordingly, since the foundation of the first International Working Men's Association in 1864, they have endeavored to promote their ideas amongst the labor organizations and to induce those unions to a direct struggle against capital, distrusting parliamentary legislation.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ANARCHISM.

The conception of society just sketched, and the tendency which is its dynamic expression, have always existed in mankind, in opposition to the governing hierarchic conception and tendency—now the one and now the other taking the upper hand at different periods of history. To the former tendency we owe the evolution, by the masses themselves, of those institutions—the clan, the village community, the guild, the free medieval city—by means of which the masses resisted the encroachments of the conquerors and the power-seeking minorities. The same tendency asserted itself with great energy in the great religious movements of medieval times, especially in the early movements of the reform and its forerunners. At the same time it evidently found its expression in the writings of some thinkers, since the times of Lao-tsze, although, owing to its non-scholastic and popular origin, it obviously found less sympathy among the scholars than the opposed tendency.

As has been pointed out by Prof. Adler in his "Geschichte des Sozialismus und Kommunismus, Aristippus (b. c. 430 B. C.), one of the founders of the Cyrenaic school, already taught that the wise must not give up their liberty to the State, and in reply to a question by Socrates he said that he did not desire to belong either to the governing or the governed class. Such an attitude, however, seems to have been dictated merely by an Epicurean attitude towards the life of the masses.

The best exponent of Anarchist philosophy in ancient Greece was Zeno (342-270 B. C.), from Crete, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, who distinctly opposed his conception of a free community without government to the State of Utopia of Plato. He repudiated the omnipotence of the State, its intervention and regimentation, and proclaimed the sovereignty of the moral law of the individual—remarking already that, while the necessary instinct of self-preservation leads man to egotism, nature has supplied a corrective to it by providing man with another instinct—that of sociability. When men are reasonable enough to follow their natural instincts, they will unite across the frontiers and constitute the Cosmos. They will have no need of law-courts or police, will have no temples and no public worship, and use no money—free gifts taking the place of the exchanges. Unfortunately, the writings of Zeno have not reached us and are only known through fragmentary quotations. However, the fact that his very wording is similar to the wording now in use, shows how deeply is laid the tendency of human nature of which he was the mouthpiece.

In medieval times we find the same views on the

State expressed by the illustrious bishop of Alba, Marco Girolamo Vida, in his first dialogue, *De dignitate reipublicae* (Ford. Cavalli, in *Mem. dell'Istituto Veneto*, XIII.; Dr. E. Nys, *Researches in the History of Economics*). But it is especially in several early Christian movements, beginning in the 9th. century in Armenia and in the preachings of the early Husites, particularly Chojecki, and the early Anabaptists, especially Hans Denk (cf. Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*), that one finds the same ideas expressed—special stress being laid of course on their moral aspects.

Babalais and Fénelon, in their Utopias, have also expressed similar ideas, and they were also current in the 18th. century amongst the French Encyclopaedists, as may be concluded from separate expressions occasionally met with in the writings of Rousseau, from Diderot's "Preface" to the "Voyage" of Bougainville, and so on. However, in all probability, such ideas could not be developed then, owing to the rigorous censorship of the Roman Catholic Church.

These ideas found their expression later during the great French Revolution. While the Jacobins did all in their power to centralize everything in the hands of the Government, it appears now, from recently published documents, that the masses of the people, in their municipalities and "sections", accomplished a considerable constructive work. They appropriated for themselves the election of the judges, the organization of supplies and equipments for the army, as also for the large cities, work for the unemployed, the management of charities, and so on. They even tried to establish a direct correspondence between the 36,000 communes of France through the intermediary of a special board outside the National Assembly (cf. Sigismund Lacroix, "Actes de la Commune de Paris").

It was W. Godwin in his "Enquiry concerning Political Justice" (2 vols. 1793) who was first to formulate the political and economical conceptions of anarchism, even though he did not give that name to the ideas developed in his remarkable work. Laws, he wrote, are not a product of the wisdom of our ancestors; they are the product of their passions, their timidity, their jealousies, and their ambition. The remedy they offer is worse than the evils they pretend to cure. If and only if all laws and courts were abolished, and the decisions in the arising contests were left to reasonable men chosen for that purpose, real justice would gradually be evolved. As to the State, Godwin frankly claimed its abolition. A society, he wrote, can perfectly well exist without any government: only the communities should be small and perfectly autonomous. Speaking of property, he stated that the rights of everyone "to every substance capable of contributing to the benefit of a human being" must be regulated by justice alone: the substance must go "to him who most wants it". His conclusion was communism. Godwin, however, had not the courage to maintain his opinions. He entirely rewrote later on his chapter on property and mitigated his Communist views in the second edition of *Political Justice* (8 vols. 1796).

(To be continued).

EDUCATION: Tool of a Free Society

Most of us have discarded the archaic conception of education as the acquisition of skills and knowledge alone. However, many of us still think of it as the process of becoming something or other. Yet it might prove more thought-provoking to consider education a state of being . . . or, more properly, of living as fully and as freely and creatively as is humanly possible. Froebel's saying, "Come, let us with our children live," is no mere pretty sentiment. It is a statement of what education is in its deepest, most significant sense: not for the child alone, but for everybody. For education should begin with the first breath and end only with death. Unfortunately, however, far too many die long before they are ready to be buried. They seem never to have felt life at all—just an existence more or less in a wholly vegetable state. And though we are not concerned here with Victory Gardens, one may guess that if men were more fully alive, there would be no occasion for fertilizing the earth with human blood.

No two individuals are alike. Yet all over the world, powerful State-controlled school systems are trying to form everyone into the same mold. They take the human being in his most formative period. They repress all free development, all inner growth, and graft upon him a jumble of technics, his mind is coated with a veneer of more or less useful information. And in this way the State system of education has created an inert and subservient mass—fit soil for the seeds of totalitarianism.

Many otherwise sensible people have imagined that by teaching a man to read and write they were helping him to think. Well, the world has never been so literate as it is today,—and look at it. Is it possible we have reached our present stage of confusion through the process of reasoned thought? And yet we prattle of teaching our children to think when no one can be taught to think. For the habit of thought grows only through use, all the educator can do is to allow the child to try to think through his own problems, and what's even more important, to refuse to protect him from the need to think. That takes more time and patience than the average parent or teacher cares to give. Consequently we early form the habit of letting our elders tell us what to think.

Many radicals have tried the experiment of setting up schools of their own. Quite properly they

were disgusted with State-regimentation of the youthful mind. But so many of them made the mistake of substituting one form of regimentation for another. These radicals expected children to swallow whole their own particular set of beliefs, forgetting that no matter how admirable ideas may be, they cannot be effectively transplanted. A child who is conditioned to accept ideas without appraisal and criticism will just as easily turn to other, perhaps less desirable but more socially acceptable ideas from beyond the parent's world. Anyone who knows the radical movement, at all, has seen the paradox of the individual whose set of thought patterns are idealistic in the extreme, but whose life is at complete variance with his ideals. Usually, his way of life is as commonplace and materialistic as the rest of mankind's. Yes . . . and there are still too many libertarians, with freedom as their highest ideal, who are afraid to trust their own children with the freedom to grow, to think, or to live their own lives.

To be free one must learn to be a responsible human being; responsible to others as well as to one's self. A child must learn that he can be free only in so far as he allows others to be free. He must realize that he cannot always look to others for protection, but must learn to stand on his own feet. This education in living can only come through intimate association with a group—a group which ranges from the very smallest child to the grey-haired adult. Creative education can be learned through experience alone . . . our own and not another's.

At the Modern School we have been criticised for not stepping in immediately to protect one child from another's bullying. When the two children are fairly equal in size and strength we do not actively interfere; sometimes not even when there is a noticeable difference in age or size. Who can protect the youngster when we are not around, unless he himself learns to resist. Sometimes he may appeal for assistance. If he is in the right, we say so, with emphasis, if not, we are equally candid. The bullying may be by a group; and then our encouragement is thrown to the bullied, granting that he has the right of it, wants it and has not provoked the attack. This lesson of learning to withstand the whole group is a hard one, but as

(Continued on page 12)

BRONSON ALCOTT: Pioneer of Progressive Education

Bronson Alcott merits a place in this series on early American libertarians on the grounds of his efforts to undermine the conventional ideas of education. He put his theories into practice and suffered the inevitable persecution which falls upon any being daring enough to challenge the existing order.

Bronson Alcott's theme and goal was the education of children. His whole life was evolved about the destruction of the conventional ideas held by his predecessors in the field of educating the young.

He declared his independence of all books, reminding himself that books must always be held subservient to the main purpose in working out his own thoughts and destiny.

"Adherence to them," he said, "has been the cause, and still continues, of perpetuating error among men, and that to an alarming extent. They often impose the most irrational and absurd conclusion on the fearful understanding. It dares not doubt. Fear keeps it ignorant. Authority lifts her head and commands instant belief."

Alcott was starting to think for himself. And to complete his anticipation of Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance" he goes on in the passage just quoted to ask himself how one can escape from the tyrannical grip of "conventional public opinion."

To this he answers, "that free men must rebel, think for themselves; let others grumble. Dare to be singular, let others direct. Follow reason; let others dwell in the Land of Enchantment. Be men; let others prattle. Practice; let others profess. Do good, let others define goodness. Act; let others sleep."

Born in the backwoods district of Wolcott in Connecticut and into a poor family, Bronson Alcott at the age of fifteen had to decide whether to continue school and become a minister like his Uncle, or to work on the land and help his father. Neither of the two ideas appealed to him and he took to the road and peddled trinkets.

From these beginnings he became a distinguished reformer in the field of Education and a philosopher of Transcendentalism.

Being convinced that there was something radically wrong with America's primary education, he asserted that education is "inextricably enmeshed and interwoven with the entire social, economical and political scheme of things." He believed that

children had minds of their own and should be encouraged to use them. Good education should be spontaneous, social and rational. He claims that the purpose of education "is to form mind, heart and character; to make its subjects wise and happy, and to make them so by a simple, natural and rational process."

"Infant education is founded on the great principle that every infant is already in possession of faculties and apparatus required for his instruction and by the Law of his constitution he uses these to a great extent himself; that the office of instruction is chiefly to facilitate this process and to accompany the child in his progress rather than to drive or even to lead him."

Alcott went to Boston to practice his principles of education as he was told it would give him a better opportunity to expound his theories. There he opened a school for boys, and Frances Wright, a well known Scottish reformer and lecturer, visited the school and was much pleased with Alcott's progress.

Emerson writes the following in his Journal after visiting Alcott's school. "I felt strongly, as I watched the gradual dawn of thought upon the minds of all, that to truth there is no age or season. It appears, or it does not appear; and when the child perceives it he is no more a child. Age, sex, are nothing. We are alike before the great whole. Mr. Alcott has been here with his Olympian dreams. He is a world-builder. Evermore he toils to solve the problems,"

In 1839, he inaugurated the Temple School which was open to both sexes. Alcott also admitted a Negro, Robinson. He knew what the result of such an action would be, but wasn't frightened by the anticipated financial catastrophe. The parents of the six children took them out of Temple and the remaining pupils consisted of his own daughters, William Russel and Robinson. This incident was the end for Alcott at Temple.

Giving up his teaching, Alcott was once again to take to the road. Only this time it wasn't to peddle trinkets, but to lecture about education and the philosophy of Transcendentalism.

Alcott had great talent as a speaker. It is asserted that he had a pleasing voice and enunciation, "with a large and varied vocabulary that came to his tongue easier than it came to his pen." His mind was stored with many vivid images,

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analogies, and correspondence which he had drawn from books, society and nature.

Alcott was a firm believer in nature and thought that man's life should follow the simple paths that nature walks upon. He never tired of the pleasures derived from nature. In fact, even his children were to follow his emotion and instinct concerning nature. In his journal he writes:—

"My children are so much more interested in the Book of Nature, whose pages are ever fresh and fair and teeming with new meanings that they care little about the mere literature of the same. They are unwilling to pass their time within doors, or fix their thoughts on formal lessons. I spend an hour or more in the morning, daily, with them, but to small profit. Their thoughts are on the distant hill, the winding rivers, the orchard, meadow, or grove; and so I let them have the benefit of these. I would have them fill their fancy with moral images and their hearts with high associations. The country is much to every young soul... It was discipline and culture to me. I dwelt amongst the hill; I looked out upon rural images. I was enshrined in Nature. Nature was my parent and from her, in the still communings of my solitudes, I learned divine wisdom even when a child."

At the time that Alcott was teaching at Temple he wrote his first volume of the "Record of Conversations on the Gospels" whereby he unfolded the doctrine and discipline of human culture. The contents antagonized three strong bodies of public opinion; that of the clergy, the educators and all those who guard the "purity of the home." The book, in the first place, was intensely religious "from beginning to end, but in a direct, unmediated and untheological way that was likely to seem more detestable, because it was more insidious and undercutting, than downright atheism." In this book, Alcott condemned the theories and practices of teaching that were based upon the "limb of Satan" or "young viper" school of thought. Though the book was given good criticism by Emerson and his friends—Alcott was attacked by the Mammons, the bigots and the parents. It seemed that they were determined to defeat his noblest aspirations.

Having lived to a ripe old age, Alcott saw all his friends buried one by one. His wife, May, had died, and two of his children were already beneath

DOUBLE MEANING? MR. SHERWOOD?

Robert E. Sherwood was at the Women's Press Club in Washington, where mention was made of his "Idiot's Delight" and "There Shall Be No Night" . . . "Mr. Sherwood," said one speaker, "is a man who wrote anti-war plays" . . . "If I did," replied Sherwood, "then I had them produced in the wrong country."

N. Y. Post, January, 1944.

QUOTE

UNDER COVER ACTIVITY?

The British Board of Trade, baffled for a while by a heavy run on coupon-free material for making blackout curtains, has found that women are buying it to make panties, which are rationed.

Officials don't know what to do about it, for, as one said: "We can hardly make inspections."

P. M., Nov. 26, 1943.

the cold earth. He was lonely, and missed intensely the cultural contact with his former friends. But this did not stop Alcott from wandering in the West, giving lectures. He was not the man to stop fighting because of old age. He refused to wait supinely for the day when his life would be ended. He could still hold his public and give them more as his experiences broadened. He was still the man who encouraged those about him to give voice to their opinions. He never sneered at anyone, for the power of ridicule never possessed him. He refused to frequent the homes of highly respected citizens, as he cared little for such company. Hotels and taverns were distasteful to him; he didn't like the smell of them nor the talk he heard in them, nor the absence of women, and after becoming a vegetarian, he loathed these places even more. During his sojourns to the South as a "peddler of trinkets" he always preferred to sleep in the slave quarters rather than at Inns or Taverns.

But this man's energy and talent was taken away from him when at the age of 78 he suffered a stroke and was confined to bed until his 80th birthday-1888, when he died. As it was requested by him, Alcott was buried next to his favored friend Ralph Waldo Emerson.

C. B.

"STUDENT POLITICAL MEETINGS ENDED BY A.M.G. AT NAPLES"

The Allied Military Government cracked down hard today on Italian political parties and on student groups from the Naples University who clashed with Italian Police Saturday.

Formally banning all political meetings at the University, Lieutenant Colonel Carl Kraege, of A. M.G., reprimanded Dr. Rodolfo Omodeo for Saturday's incidents and warned him not to use his position as head of the university nor the university premises for political campaigning.

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Doherty, head of A. M.G.'s public security section, reminded Neapolitans of the Allied proclamation which provides for a forty-eight hour notification of political meetings along with the names of speakers and subjects of their addresses. Doherty said the police were instructed to break up and disperse any unauthorized gatherings.

N. Y. Herald Tribune, Dec. 15, 1943.

(Can the Italian people distinguish between the A.M.G. and their erstwhile fascist rulers?)

-UNQUOTE

POLITICS SIMPLIFIED

This is a story from Teheran which may throw some light on the question of whether the President will be a candidate again this year: When Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin started their conference and discussed the plans which they would follow, Stalin asked a blunt, direct question. "Both of you," he said, "are dependent for your power upon the elections of your people. How do I know that you, elected officials, will be able to carry out the things which we are now deciding?"

Lyons Den, N. Y. Post, Jan. 19, 1944.

* * *

PLUG FOR FASCISM?

You can't get rubber pants around here for baby. But Ensign Maurice Bugbee bought four pairs in war-devastated Italy and mailed them to his wife, Mildred.

N. Y. Post, Nov. 26, 1943.

PLANNING FOR CONTROL

Sir Stafford Cripps, Minister of Aircraft Production in Great Britain warned the country today against reverting to the old idea that the State should merely provide employment by means of public works and declared there should be post-war Government controls very much like those presently existing if there were to be a "New Britain."

"No principles of capitalism, socialism or any other 'ism' need or must interfere with the complete liberty of action of the Government in making certain there is full employment. It is no use of having a plan unless there is the power to see that it is implemented in its main points."

N. Y. Times, Nov. 20, 1943.

* * *

Here is an answer to that big question now in the minds of most war workers and service men: Am I going to have a job when the war is over?

The Brookings Institution, a big-moneyed research organization, says there can be jobs for all but 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 Americans not counting the too young, the too old, or the women who have gone into war work.

P. M., Dec. 13, 1943.

* * *

"Soldiers and sailors should be kept in uniform until jobs are waiting for them. In demobilization it will not be the part of wisdom to send home thousands to areas in which there is employment for hundreds."

Selective Service Director Hershey, in N. Y. Post, Jan. 11, 1944.

* * *

"Five hundred prison officials and correction workers from all parts of the country were told yesterday at the annual convention of the American Prison Association that they had better start thinking about the type of prisons to be built when the war ends, because of an expected large increase in the prison population, especially if there are economic dislocations.

Mr. Bennett, director of the United States Bureau of Prisons, said that the prison population had fallen from 170,000 to 130,000 since this country entered the war, but that it was sure to increase beyond the higher figure after the armed forces were demobilized and war industries ceased."

N. Y. Times, Nov. 21, 1943.

EDUCATION *(Continued from page 8)*

many have learned, today it is a very necessary one. It is better to learn it in childhood than to fail later on when one most needs strength. On the other hand a common complaint often heard is: "Sammy has all the blocks and won't let me have any." The answer is, "Sammy has no right to all of them. Take some of them for yourself." If the complainant is smaller than Sammy he may look dubious, but he makes the attempt. Sammy will resist, but half-heartedly, for he senses that the weight of public opinion is against him. It may take several repetitions of this experience before Sammy gets the idea that monopoly is unsocial, but he gets it in the end. The balance between the individual and the group needs constant adjustment. Youngsters should learn, early, the meaning of words like responsibility, co-operation and unsocial; if they learn them through experience they become living words.

Adult emotions are exceedingly rare. Many are concerned because the average mind stops developing at the twelve year level, but I find even more alarming the corresponding fact that the average adult is emotionally an infant and that the possessor of one of the most highly cultivated minds may be an emotional moron. Educators are beginning to realize the positive value to emotional growth of creative living. We do not care so much that our children produce beautiful handicraft, but that while they are doing so they are developing in emotional capacity, depth and self-control.

The same attitude is carried over into academic work. We do not expect each child to be an intellectual giant, but to take from his life in the class-room whatever he needs for intellectual growth, just as in other activities he satisfies his emotional needs, or his need for harmonious relationships. The greatest cruelty adults can practice upon children is to measure them all by the same intellectual standards. Of all our fallacies concerning education this is the most pernicious. A knowledge of the classics may be important to one individual, to another it is so much useless lumber. Who is to say which of these human beings is more important, more worthy of respect, more socially desirable than the other?

There can be no real freedom in the world until we grant to each individual the right to be himself. There can be no such freedom until the individual insists upon his right to be himself and is willing to assume the responsibility for his life and actions.

J. A. W.

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NOTICE

Due to an accident in which he broke his leg, Hipolyte Havel is confined to St. Peter's Hospital, New Brunswick, N. J. Comrades and friends wishing to communicate with him should write to him care of Miss R. Hertzberg, R.F.D. 2 Box 455, New Brunswick, N. J.