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GOOD DEMOCRATS ASK QUESTIONS:

"Progress Has Always Depended On Discontented Individuals Who Disregarded Opposition"

ERVINE, who is known throughout the English speaking world He here discusses some of the great historical movements of the past, and with them he associates the names of some great individuals. It is his argument that such movements, initiated as they were by individuals, would not have been possible in Totalitarian States. Do you agree?

FEW years before the beginning of the war I had an interesting and surprising talk with a distinguished oculist who was about to operate on my right eye. A well-known millionaire who was famous for his munificent gifts to the community had recently endowed a school of medical research. I took it for granted that my friend the surgeon would be delighted with this gift, but he wasn't in the least delighted. I won't say that he disapproved of the endowment, but he certainly was not enthusiastic about it, and as the reason he gave for his coldness has some bearing on the whole theory of Government, and the beliefs for which we are fighting in this war, I shall spend the next few minutes in relating them to you. But before I do so, let me remind you that this war, more perhaps than any other war in the history of mankind, is about beliefs.

If I were asked to state very simply and very shortly what I think this war is about, I should reply that it is a conflict between those who think that the community is more important than the individual, and those who think that the individual is more important than the

This talk from the BBC is one community. It is obvious that in a State, of a new series by ST. JOHN in a community where the State is regarded as supreme and the individual is treated as no more than a cog in the national wheel, no change of any kind as author, playwright and critic. can be proposed without the sanction of the people in power, and people in power do not like change, even though they themselves propose it. That is the chief fact which emerges from the history of human life.

The Experience of Galileo

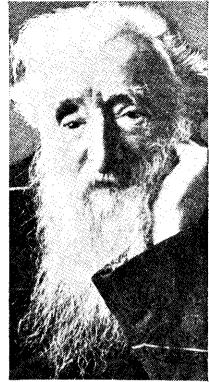
All men of authority tend to become very pleased with themselves and to resent not only change, but any suggestion that change is desirable. Yet we know beyond the shadow of a doubt. that every improvement and discovery that has benefited mankind has been made not by Cabinets or committees or unrestricted rulers, but by discontented individuals whose efforts to realise their thoughts were fiercely opposed by the people in power.

For nearly 2,000 years every learned man in Europe believed Aristotle's statement that if two bodies, one being heavier than the other, were simultaneously to be dropped from a height, the heavier body would hit the ground first. It was not until 1590 that a young mathematical professor named Galileo climbed to the top of the leaning Tower of Pisa, and in the presence of the sceptical and derisive faculty and the students of the University, he dropped two weights, one weighing 10 pounds and the other one pound, simultaneously. They both hit the ground at the same moment, but the University authorities were not convinced by the evidence of their own eyes. They returned to the library to re-read Aristotle. There it was in black and white. "A body weighing ten pounds must," said Aristotle, "reach the ground before a body weighing one pound." That was good enough for the Professors, and they ordered Galileo to stop wasting his time with silly experiments.

Steamships and 'Planes Derided

Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, was called a lunatic by his contemporaries. Lister's use of antiseptics earned him the dislike and enmity of the London Surgical Society. In the year 1797, the Lords of the Admiralty refused to make a grant to Lord Stafford on an experiment with a steamship because they were unanimously of the opinion that it would never be possible to move a vessel without the aid of wind and tide. In 1908 the Lords of the Admiralty, who had not learnt any lesson from that incident, rejected an offer of co-operation from the famous aviators, the Wright Brothers, because their experts—mark that word "experts" -were satisfied that aeroplanes could be of no practical use.

The Duke of Wellington resisted the proposal to build railways because he thought it was neither necessary nor possible to travel at a greater speed than 23 miles an hour. "Any person who moved in a train travelling at that speed



GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH Suffered persecution

would," he said, "die of it. His nose would become so congested with air rushing furiously through them that they would burst." Even H. G. Wells, whose capacity to look into the future is greater than that of most people, once wrote in a printed book that the submarine could never be more than an expensive and useless toy. Every person who has invented or discovered a means of improving the lot of mankind has had to fight the authorities for his very

Hardening of Intellectual Arteries

That brings me to my friend the oculist. "All schools, whatever their character," he said, "have a tendency to harden their intellectual arteries. The principal of such a school has the human habit of liking his own ideas better than other peoples, and he surrounds himself with congenial colleagues. He will, as far as he can, appoint to positions in his school only those who share his opinions and support his policy. A doctor who believed in open air treatment for consumptives had little or no hope of appointment in a hospital where every window was tightly closed and the tubercular patient was kept in a hot and stuffy atmosphere. There were medical men who believed in what they call the 'therapeutic value' of pain, and they declined to perform operations under anæsthetics. There were other people who were impious enough to say that the use of anæsthetics was a blasphemous interference with the will of God. They seemed never to have understood the meaning of the 21st verse of the 2nd chapter of the Book of Genesis, which is a summary of an account of an operation under anæsthetics that anyone who wishes to can read."

(Continued on next page)

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