

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Those who reject the false dilemma between 'free enterprise' and the bureaucratic collectivism of Russia are alone capable of preparing the road for the true science of social affairs of the future..."

—CZESLAW MILOSZ.

'OPPORTUNITY YEAR'

ACCORDING to at least one national daily, 1956 is going to be 'Opportunity Year'. Most people tend to take that sort of prophecy for what it is worth. They know just how many opportunities have come their way in previous years, and since there is rarely any radical change in their circumstances during the night of Dec. 31/Jan. 1, there rarely seems to be any reason for assuming there will be any great developments.

The majority of the world's population live from year to year with an almost total absence of opportunity to do anything but work hard, and those opportunities which do appear at significant moments in their lives usually present alternatives worse than the current existence. Such as going to war or to prison, for example.

In a world organised as this one is, opportunity for significant betterment is limited to a relatively tiny minority. Only at very rare moments in history do the right combinations of circumstances coincide for action by majorities to be a feasible possibility. And, alas, so far in history, we have sadly to admit that the people in action have failed to hold on to the gains they have shown themselves capable of achieving.

Either through circumstances beyond their control, or through insufficient knowledge or experience, when the humble folk of the world have seized their opportunity to get up off their knees, some new master (or perhaps even the old one) has managed to get on their backs and force them down again.

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BUT this is not to say that it will always be so. For brief periods even in recent history (and it is always the fashion to be gloomy about one's own time), the world has been presented with the opportunity to see what can be achieved by the under-privileged when they rise to the occasion.

The social revolutions of Russia and Spain, to mention only two examples, gave to the world and in

particular to all those for whom the phrase 'Opportunity Year' is a bad joke, many inspiring lessons. If only for a short time, they demonstrated that the ordinary people can, if they have the vision and the courage, so affect their circumstances as to be able to make their own opportunities, to direct their own destinies instead of being the passive tools of their masters, their institutions or of blind historical processes.

Opportunities have to be worked for. Chiefly, in terms of social movements, in preparation for the suitable moment, but also in hastening that moment. The phoney science which has been built upon one man's study of historical processes has done more harm to the revolutionary minorities of this century than their traditional enemies have ever done. By linking the social revolution to an historical inevitability, the stature of man has been reduced to that of a puppet of time, beguiled, misled and betrayed in the interests of the inevitable. And, god-like at the helm of history, have stood a handful of ruthless men even more careless of human life than Mother Nature herself. In the service of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, individuals have been sacrificed by the

million, and such confusion has been sown among potentially revolutionary people that despair is more acceptable than social responsibility.

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ALMOST alone stand the anarchists in their assertion of the necessity for social responsibility on the part of all individuals. Opportunities for self-advancement at the expense of others have always presented themselves where society is divided into haves and have-nots, and 1956 will be no exception. But even as these have to be worked for—though usually by those who cannot benefit from them—so do the opportunities for social advancement have to be worked for.

The development of anarchist ideas; the growth of the movement and its influence, will not be presented to us on a plate by an historical process in 1956 any more than in 1856. Neither will they be carried forward for us by anyone else but ourselves. Everyone who calls himself an anarchist will be presented with many opportunities during 1956 for doing or saying or writing something to further his ideas. Are we all ready to seize those opportunities? Better still, are we ready to make them?

The Politicians' New Year

HIGHEST marks for "peace advertising" in the last six months must unquestionably go to Russia for her epoch-making decision to reduce defence expenditure by ten per cent. One might think that this was indeed in the true "spirit of Geneva", and would lead the Western Powers to make similar incredible moves towards the attainment of that well known cliché *World Peace*.

Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that much can be made of the reduction, for two reasons. Last year U.S.S.R. defence expenditure was raised by ten per cent. so that effectively all that has been achieved is a cancellation of a previous measure. Secondly, it is almost impossible to tell what the real expenditure is, because there are so many items which come under other headings but are in reality items for defence.

Marshal Bulganin has excelled himself this year also. His new year message was a mixture of comradely good wishes, timely warnings and helpful suggestions. Briefly, he reminded the World of the dangers of supposing that the possession of hydrogen weapons by both East and West excluded the possibility of war, and the fact that the arms drive increased the threat of war.

He thought that a further "conference at the summit" might prove fruitful if all participants were prepared to remember the importance of other participant's interests, and he ended on a warm and seasonal note by conveying to the American people his "cordial greetings and best New Year wishes." In order that no platitude should be missed, he added: "The development and strengthening of the friendly mutual understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a major contribution to the cause of consolidating general peace."

The U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, was not quite so seasonal in his New Year remarks, but produced an optimistic tone both in retrospect and for the future. He said: "the year 1955 has done much for peace" (and referred to N.A.T.O., S.E.A.T.O. and the Bagdad Pact); he continued: "the free world has done much . . . to deter open war . . . Now the Soviet Communist rulers turn to other devices. We can be confident that these, too, will fail . . ."

Despite the fact that at a Kremlin party, western diplomats refrained from drinking a toast to the Soviet Communist Party, proposed by Bulganin; and that the Russians are reported to have "not mixed as freely as at previous Kremlin functions", the two Russian leaders performed solo dances for the benefit of their guests. Presumably they had very little difficulty in doing so after their recent experiences in India.

Another interesting message was delivered by the Spanish Foreign Minister who stated that "little by little the time for the return of Gibraltar to Spain is approaching", as it was considered as a factor in joint Anglo-Spanish defence against "Soviet imperialism". It is indeed a fascinating thought that Fascist Spain, should be so enthusiastic about her great British allies.

All in all it has been a delightful start to the New Year, for its always brings joy to the hearts of anarchists when there is such a welter of evidence to suggest that all the Governments are getting on so well together. It is all the more interesting for the anarchist student of foreign affairs, who is able to spend hours of absorbing meditation upon the question of who will stab who in the back, first. H.F.W.

Feeble Hypocrites

Preaching in St. Paul's last Sunday, the Precentor, Canon L. J. Collins, said that no argument about the value as deterrents of napalm and hydrogen bombs could justify support for their manufacture. That was so whatever the Archbishop or any other leading churchman might say to the contrary. There were certain things a Christian just could not stand for, and the manufacture or use of napalm and hydrogen bombs, the retention of capital punishment, and racial distinction were some of them.

Yet, led by the majority of their church authorities, he said, Christians were so feeble that they found themselves accepting such things as consistent with their convictions. "And the world looks on and wonders at our hypocrisy." Canon Collins added that the late Archbishop of York was one of a small number among the hierarchy of the Church of England with the moral courage to make a strong protest against the use of the napalm bomb.

Manchester Guardian 2/1/56

It seems a pity that the late lamented Archbishop did not extend his moral courage to the total condemnation of the H-Bomb.

Letter from America

The Spending Spree & the P.R. Man

CHRISTMAS is over and manufacturers and retailers are congratulating themselves and the American public on the new all-time record just established for Christmas. Figures are not out yet and will add no significant meaning when they appear, for there has been an unmistakable jubilation, not of a religious nature, in this wintry air for several weeks. Spending is still going up. Now if you were an economic Malthus you might suppose that the output of goods would long since have outstripped the capacity of the more slowly growing population to absorb them. That this gloomy view of capitalism is not being fulfilled is due to three factors, one, long known to operate in every State, the expenditure of people's working hours

on the manufacture of armaments and other goods which they are unable to buy and take home with them; the second, operative more in the U.S. than elsewhere, the more efficient use of working hours, in theory and in some instances in practice to have more consumer goods produced with less effort in less time, leaving a sort of credit at the disposal of the spender; and a third which seems to be at least as important as each of the other two, the activities of the advertising men who compel Americans to spend every penny they've got and often some that they haven't on articles that graduate yearly from the class of luxuries to the class of necessities. A high standard of living implies that a large array of goods and services have become indispensable, not that there

are fewer goods and services still outstanding in the Ph.D.'s in psychology besides creating your necessities create also your mountains of unattainables.

The observer whose only contact with business is through newspapers and the streets of New York City and television programmes is forced to the conclusion that it requires as much effort to sell goods as it does to make them, and is not surprised that the manufacturer is now partnered by the advertising man and employs him to solve his most exacting problems; further that as automatically controlled machinery is more frequently used the advertising man will take over the initiative from the manufacturer, leaving the latter to make to specification the objects he has managed to create a need for.

Something of the flavour of this process of reversing the traditional order of events can be sniffed at in the *Readers Digest*, a magazine which "plants" long articles in other magazines expanded from a digested version that was written for publication in the first place. Or in movie studio script writers who engineer a novel for the market to precede a film "from the novel".

But the usual (and what may soon be old-fashioned) techniques are those that make use of suggestion (the transferring of a belief to your customer without any rational cause for his acceptance of it), and the creation of anxiety that can be dispelled only by buying some particular product. Both these delicate psychological tricks are handled by experts and the suitably anti-social person needs to exercise a good deal of reason to see through the deceptively stupid advertising he is exposed to.

Politicians make full use of the advertising men, or rather of their next door neighbours, the Public Relations Men, whose more precise title is Engineers of Consent, and "engineering consent" is a phrase ever more frequently heard nowadays. This profession is in its infancy, for it was reported a few months ago that a convention of members of the four or five hundred (or was it thousand?) Public Relations firms that have appeared in the last ten years were shortly to be held to devise some professional ethics that could be adopted along the lines of those agreed to by architects,

Continued on p. 4

HEALTH SERVICE CUTS

IT has been rightly said that the test of a real civilization is the attitude to those who are apparently worthless in terms of economics and usefulness to society. Into this category come mental defectives who, through no fault of their own, have to depend upon others for sustenance without being able to give much in return. Their feebleness demands from us extra care and attention instead of the "extermination through starvation policy" (reminiscent of Hitler Germany), revealed in the Stationery office report, *Hospital Costing Returns*. Would it not be more humane to divert some of the millions spent on destructive weapons to hospitals in general? The Minister of Health does not think so. He has sent copies of the figures to all hospital authorities in England and Wales in an effort to make more cuts!

According to the *News Chronicle*:—The "fair shares" foundation of the Health Service shows some grim cracks. These are the facts, revealed this morning by the Ministry of Health.*

IT COSTS 35s. 5d. a week to feed a patient in Bart's, the big London teaching hospital, last year.

IT COST only 11s. 7d. to feed a mentally defective patient at the Riverside Home, St. Neots; only a penny more at Sheffield's St. Peter's, Bourne.

The 12 hospitals in the Bart's, group spent an average of 29s. 11d. a week on food for each patient.

But the national average spent on food for mentally defectives was only 16s. 1d.

Mentally ill patients fared little better. The national average for their food bills: 16s. 11d. At St. Martin's, Canterbury and St. Edward's, Cheadleton, Birmingham, only 13s. 6d. a head was spent a week.

The grocery bills looked more encouraging for the mentally ill at Cardiff's Whitchurch Hospital—25s. 1d. a week for each patient.

Some part of the difference between the cost of feeding the physically ill and the mentally weak may be accounted for by the farms which many mental hospitals run. But cheap farm produce could not account for all the gap.

Nor could it bridge the gap between the total cost of keeping a mentally sick patient in Birmingham—£4 7s. 9d.—and the average in the 2,500 hospitals of England and Wales, £16 9s.

In a group of London teaching hospitals the weekly cost per patient was £36 12s. 10d.

News Chronicle 30/12/55.

*Hospital Costing Returns, 1954-5. H.M. Stationery Office, 17s. 6d.

£129 Down!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 53

Deficit on Freedom £795
Contributions received £666
DEFICIT £129

December 16 to December 31

Ipswich: Anon. 3/-; Preston: W.A.LeM. 3/-; London: W.F. 2/6; London: D.S. 10/-; Lakewood: S.M. £1/15/0; Merriatt: M.W. 12/-; Liverpool: H.H.J. £6/4/6; Farnham: D.M.B. 3/-; Esher: J.S.* 5/-; Kenton: R.S. 10/-; London: J.S.* 4/-; Hailsham: L.S. 1/-; Horwich: W.H.B. 5/-; Leeds: P.L. £1; London: V.B. 5/-; Birmingham: H.D. 13/-; London: P.C.O. 5/-; Weston-super-Mare: K.D.C. 1/9; "Man" Group per A.R. £3/17; Esher: J.C.S.* 5/-; Mevagissey: L.A. 1/6; Falmouth: R.W. 11/6; London: L.W. 6/-; Preston: W.A.LeM. 8/-; London: J.W.A. 4/6; London: J.S.* 4/6; Abcarn: H.R.L. 10/-; London: S.H. 5/6; Glasgow: R.T. 2/9; Brentwood: N.B. £1; Boston, Mass: M.R. £3/10/5; Swansea: W.G.G. 4/-; Gateshead: G.D. £1; Billingham: J.G. 15/-; London: W.F. 2/6; London: I.P. 5/-; London: C.B. 2/6; Offley: H.E.H. 14/-; London: V.R. £1; Stroud: L.G.W. £1; New York: S.G. £3/10; London: C.F.* 3/-; London: J.S.* 4/-.

Total 33 9 5
Previously acknowledged 633 3 7
1955 TOTAL TO DATE £666 13 0

GIFTS OF BOOKS: Brighton: F.T.; London: J.W.H.; Stroud: S.L.R.; Moline: E.R.J.

VIEWPOINT

ATTRACTIVE WORK

THE tendency of modern socialist ideology is to take over the consumer-centred economic thought of capitalism and to consider the individual as consumer rather than as producer. William Morris's insistence that production should be so organised as to give dignity and pleasure to our lives as producers as well as that we should enjoy the product of our labour, has been ignored by his socialist successors and has been kept alive by non-socialist thinkers like Eric Gill who declared that our industrial system reduced the worker to a "subhuman conditions of intellectual responsibility".

Anarchists, from the days of Proudhon have thought of industry in terms of the producer, since workers' control of industry is the

only tenable, anarchist, solution to the question of industrial organisation. (Thus the anarchist realises that it is useless to pontificate about such matters as the good or bad effects of assembly-line production, automation and so on, without recognising that the only people entitled to decide on these questions are the workers whose work is affected.)

The means of making work enjoyable were discussed by Camillo Berneri in a pamphlet called *Attractive Work*, a translation of which was published in *FREEDOM* some years ago. His title was echoed by that of a recent broadcast on the same subject by Bertrand de Jouvenel, extracts from which we print below.

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WHAT is currently called the increase in the standard of living in fact boils down to an increase in shopping power. Last year John Smith exhausted his income in buying a certain collection of goods and services; this year he can buy the identical collection and then finds himself with some more income enabling him to buy something more. If that occurs, we say that John Smith's standard of living has increased. This view implies that we consider John Smith only as a consumer; we dismember the man John Smith and attend to him as a consumer, or, rather, leader of a small consuming group. Now let us call him John in that capacity, and Smith in his capacity as a producer.

We have found that John the buyer is better off; but we must also consider Smith the worker, the earner; that we must consider the man under this aspect is easily proved. Let us assume that the increase in John's shopping power has been accomplished while Smith increased his hours of work. We shall need to take this into account, nor can we simply ask whether his shopping power has increased more than proportionately to the increase in his working hours. I submit that we shall doubt whether John Smith's over-all position has been improved if his hours of work have increased from forty-five to sixty, even if his earnings have increased by more than one-third, while we shall not doubt that his position has improved if his hours of work have risen from thirty to forty, even if

his earnings have increased by somewhat less than one-third. In short we refer to a normal pattern of living.

My case is a very simple one: we must consider our fellow men as integrated human beings, we may not merely think of them as consumers who should be gratified to get more, we must also think of the commodities inflicted upon them in the process of achieving greater production. These commodities do not in fact take the form of a longer working week, but they may well take the form of unpleasant changes in the mode, place, or nature of their activity. Commuting to a more distant place of work is a cost to the workers in terms of hours and fatigue; passing from independent into salaried employment is a loss of status and freedom. It may be argued that in a free country, the very fact that Smith has shifted is in itself proof that he regards his position as, on the whole, preferable to the old one; but that is true only if he had the choice of retaining his previous mode of activity on the same conditions as before. And it is well known that economic progress works not only by creating new and more attractive positions but also by making the older position untenable.

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IT is something of a mystery that the chronic resentment of workers has not been perceptibly allayed by the superb achievement of our times, in terms of the increase of goods and services accruing per worker, in terms of the decrease in the duration and painfulness of work. Add to these benefits the great edifice of guarantees against the hazards of life, and any observer must grant that the conditions of workers has immensely improved and continues to do so. Yet the resentment is there, and although it now takes the form of anti-capitalism I would wager that the complete extinction of capitalists would not dispel it. It may well be owing to the fact that concentration upon the satisfaction of the consumers leads us, whatever the form of society, whether its institutions be capitalist or socialist, to place too little emphasis upon the happiness of workers in their capacity of workers.

The Johns, the consumers, are to be satisfied as fully as possible; and the Smiths, the producers, are regarded as their servants. This stands in stark contrast to the views of the earlier socialists: they pictured a society of workers, happy and contented as workers, not, as we do, a society of consumers, increasingly provided for as consumers but discontented with their work. The latter and later view owes much to the drawing-room philosophy of the eighteenth century which regarded leisure as aristocratic, work as menial. Undoubtedly this view has well served the science of economics; it provides its very foundation: hours of work are means to an end, the flow of goods, and we can therefore apply the principle of least action: the more goods we obtain from a given input of work the better, the less hours we must put in to obtain a given production the better. We cannot in economics do without this mode of thought.

But it cannot serve us equally well in our sociological preoccupations. There is no doubt that man needs and enjoys activity just as he needs and enjoys goods. While the supply of goods is small and the attendant labour great, there is no question but that it is desirable to get more goods and to give less labour. But it is commonly granted that the greater the supply of goods to an individual, the less the satisfaction he derives from the subsequent addition. And also one might well admit that the shorter the working week, the less the desirability of shortening it further. An-

other preoccupation may then loom: that man should be happy in his work.

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I REGARD it as desirable that men should enjoy an ever-increasing flow of goods; I am far more doubtful about the successive reduction in hours of work. When prophets of the future speak of a thirty-two hour week, to be followed in time by a twenty-four hour week, I wonder whether they are not missing the main point. No man can desire the reduction of his working week to thirty-two and then to twenty-four hours unless he dislikes his work. No scientist will take kindly to the suggestion that he may spend only thirty-two and then twenty-four hours in his laboratory. This then points out to us what I regard as the real problem of the future: to make work enjoyable. Would that not be a greater contribution to man's happiness than to whittle down the hours? In fact this whittling down is called for only because work is not enjoyed, and no man can be called happy who is not happy in his work.

Man is the most active of all creatures: consider the explosive activity of children; also man enjoys purposeful activity, and the games of children as well as of adults are goal-directed. A normal adult is active for about 100 hours per week. It is for him a vital necessity that a great deal of this activity should be unharnessed, let off in many forms. We think of this as relaxation but in fact it is a desirable dispersion of activity, conducive to health and balance, I feel convinced, however, that it is equally necessary for health and balance that an individual should have a main activity to which a reasonable portion of his time is devoted: as I do not believe in the happiness of human drones, I do not believe that it is to our advantage to be placed in that position for three-fourths of even two-thirds of our available time. There is no doubt, however, that this is at present desired: and this we should take as a sign that the nature of the work demanded of most of us is not what it should be to make our life an integrated and satisfying whole.

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I CALL upon all those who, like me, have the privilege of doing work to which they are devoted. Do we not cherish this boon? Do we not regard the goods accruing to us as means of fitting ourselves and our children for work of this kind? Do we not then, in fact, reverse the accepted relationship between goods and work, making the goods means and the activity the end which they serve? As this is a cardinal element in our contentment, should we not desire it also for an ever-increasing number of our fellow men?

Let me give no occasion for misunderstanding. I think we should, as now, concentrate upon increasing the

flow of goods and therefore concentrate upon increasing the adequate equipment. But I think we should have in mind that as our capacity to turn out goods increases, interest in further increases of goods should progressively give way to interest in offering to our fellows tasks which they may enjoy. Such enjoyment is not solely a function of the nature of the task but also of the attitude of the man. This is a great subject which I cannot dwell upon. Let me merely say that our problem is not solely economic, that we are faced also with the dismemberment, the disintegration of man, and that we must increasingly concern ourselves with his reintegration.

BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL.

William Morris Continued from p. 2

intelligence of his readers. Indeed, there is much in the book which makes essential reading for those interested in Morris's organisation — the Socialist League—a body whose influence has been persistently underestimated by our Fabian-inspired historians for whom the only significant events in socialist history are those leading up to the 1945 General Election.

Thompson's account of the League is, it is true, a Marxist account—which means that its activities are interpreted in the light of the latest party dogmas. The Anarchists, like Frank Kitz and Joseph Lane, who participated in it are dismissed as misguided leftists or as sterile destructivists and no clear picture of their policy emerges. On Anarchism Mr. Thompson is Stalin's Little Sir Echo and the reader is left wondering how a man of Morris's stature could have associated with the Anarchists for so long. Nevertheless, Mr. Thompson has ferreted out the basic facts about the League and has provided material for a more objective appraisal of its work.

In seeking to dispel the current myths about Morris, the author has succeeded only in fostering a new one. The book may however serve a useful purpose if it stimulates the reader to look for the real William Morris himself. Morris was never more than a 'semi-anarchist'

(to use his own description), just as he was, for all Mr. Thompson's special pleading, never more than a semi-Marxist. He never fully appreciated the force of the anarchist case nor did he attempt a serious rebuttal of it. His conception of anarchism was coloured by its manifestation in some of the more lunatic members of the League who were obsessed by the then current tactic of 'propaganda by the deed'. Nevertheless, Morris's socialism, or, as he preferred, his communism, has obvious affinities to the ideals of anarchist-communists and anarcho-syndicalists.

He was not, it may be said, a great or original thinker. His genius was not that of the intellect but of the imagination. He possessed above all the gift of creative vision. Appalled by the squalidness and greed of the capitalist society of his day, he set before his generation a vision of what society might and could be like if the evils of the property and profit system were abolished. To-day, when the vision of the socialists is limited, on the one hand, to the paltry ideal of Welfare Statism and, on the other, to the more horrifying ideal of proletarian party dictatorship, there is greater need than ever before to recapture something of the warmth and humanity that inspired Morris's vision.

G.N.O.

THEATRE

A New Production of Ibsen's "The Wild Duck"

AT the Saville Theatre there is an excellent performance of *The Wild Duck*, Ibsen's monumental attack on the destructiveness of idealism, a theme which is ever potent. There is no play in which he shows himself a more complete master of stagecraft, but here Ibsen, the reformer, seems to go back on his own philosophy, that one should destroy everything that is sham and smacks of compromise. *The Wild Duck* is a huge assault on this very dictum. For truth, he says is uncomfortable and disquieting and few of us can face up to it. It is illusion which serves to keep up our morale. Here he exposes a fundamental weakness in human nature which applies to half the world.

The only sort of pity in the play comes from the mouth of Dr. Relling, a man gone to seed, but still retaining a sort of cynical tenderness for his fellow creatures. He keeps alive their self-respect by fostering their illusions and even creating new ones for them to build upon. "Life would be quite tolerable if only we could get rid of the confounded duns that keep on pestering us in our poverty with the claims of the ideal."

The lessons of this great play are many and varied and may be applied by each individual for himself. To me the contrast of the child's simple faith with the human wreckage around her is the most poignant. How many idealists in their painstaking search for truth and their insistence on denuding it of all mystery have destroyed this faith? How often do unthinking egotistical parents forget the promises made to their children thus inflicting the small wounds that add at last to a large and puzzling vacuum? The pure vulnerable fortress of the child is destroyed by degrees and the void becomes immeasurable. Above all the sham and mockery, the sloth and the broken lives, this simple world of the child cries out to be spared.

The company at the Saville is an extremely good one, though it is sadly unbalanced by Mr. Emyln Williams, who has for so long been a solo virtuoso performer that he cannot resist the temptation of tackling Hjalmar Ekdal as a comedy turn, taking every opportunity to play to the audience. As a consequence he is right outside the character

and does not so much play him as expose him to our eyes deliberately and with relish. It is plain that Mr. Williams, who used to be a supreme actor, has grown too much in stature as a solo performer to fit into the pattern of a play. It is a natural development and a mistake in casting. As far as Mr. Williams is concerned I would wish nothing better than for him to continue on his lonely path and leave the field of drama to other less amply gifted actors. It is too much to expect Mr. Williams to merge at this stage of his development and particularly in the part of Hjalmar where the temptation to play for laughs is always a strong one. It was not resisted by Anton Walbrook some years ago, and I have yet to see a Hjalmar who takes himself seriously and keeps inside the frame as Ibsen saw him.

Mr. Michael Gough, as Gregers, brought out well the lonely neurosis of the man whose grossly mistaken good intentions cause havoc wherever he goes. "The Thirteenth at table!" Miss Dorothy Tutin is deeply moving as the child. She brings us the little girl's tragedy raw and real without any embellishment of her own. Miss Angela Baddeley is a sound Gina, modest and ripe, and Mr. Laurence Hardy as Dr. Relling gives the only good performance I have so far seen from him. Only George Relph as Old Ekdal disappoints slightly. He does not impress himself on the play with the same unobtrusive magic that made Miles Malleeson's performance so memorable. In Malleeson's hands the part was one of major importance as it should be. In Mr. Relph's it becomes a supporting rôle of a slighter significance.

We should be grateful to John Clements for putting on a gigantic masterpiece at a time when the theatre is more than ever given over to inane tinsel and trash, and I hope everyone interested in the drama will hurry to the Saville Theatre before the limited run of eight weeks comes to an end.

AT the newly decorated Comedy Theatre there is a new play from America, *Mornings at Seven*, by Paul Osborn. From Odets onwards a great many of the younger American dramatists seem to be largely occupied with failure and frustration and Mr. Osborn belongs to this school. His is a bitter

little comedy though its pathos is laced with gentle laughter and the laughter with great compassion. It is a little gem of a play, a perfect example of its kind, and not so specifically American that we fail to catch an echo of familiarity.

The plot deals with the lives of four sisters, all of them over sixty and living in close proximity, three of them on each other's doorstep so to speak, as their backporches adjoin. The language is that of humdrum everyday existence full of repetitions and awkward silences, and brilliant in its economy. The characters are neatly interrelated and though their lives may appear to be dull at first sight there is plenty of volcanic eruption underneath the surface.

A mother's boy of forty, who has been walking out for twelve years with his girl-friend of the same age cannot bring himself to marry her in case the change might be too drastic for him. For the first time in all these years he brings her home to meet his relations. The girl is determined to make a good impression on them. This character is brilliantly brought to life by Miss Tucker McGuire. The boy's father, a dear old dodderer is given to "spells" due to his failure to achieve an early ambition to become a dentist. Across the way is his spinster aunt, living with her married sister, having once had a brief, but for her all-important love affair with her brother-in-law she cannot bring herself to leave his house and embark upon a life of her own. To the outside world she has built up an elaborate façade of her own dreams which crumbles pathetically when faced with reality. Another sister lives a few streets away with a husband who considers himself an intellectual and his wife's relatives morons. He refuses to let her mix with them and when she fails to conform he decides to divide up the house so that they can live separate lives. He almost persuades his brother-in-law, the would-be dentist, to leave his family in the lurch and join forces with him in the search for fundamental truth.

The denouement of the play has been criticized in other quarters but seemed to me to be absolutely natural and in keeping with the rest. I cannot bring myself to give away more of the delicate plot and would only add that the entire company act superbly.

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Prospects and Objectives

THE objective of advertising on the national scale is not so much to convince as to condition the public. The methods of advertising have vitiated every aspect of our political, social and cultural life and have reduced it to either dull uniformity or outright apathy. For let us not be dazzled by the astronomical production figures of the book publishers (some 15,000 new titles in a year), or the public's avidity for the periodical and daily press. Nor should we draw hasty and optimistic conclusions from the animated debates on the Radio and on T.V. or from the "outspoken" criticism of the government by members of the Opposition, or in the Leaders of the influential Press. For, whilst it is true that where there is discussion the reader or listener is not being convinced but is free to be convinced by arguments, the fact remains that the vast majority of the public, as well as the speakers and writers who address them, take for granted, as outside the realm of discussion, as if they were absolute truths, certain beliefs, and forms of social organisations, thereby rendering their discussions pointless and sterile.

We are not saying, as some do, that nothing is valid because our knowledge of the Universe is limited and always being modified as science makes new discoveries and uncovers more and more of the unknown. Indeed, we accept as being true those conclusions which are based on the accumulated knowledge available at the time in which we live, ready to act in accordance with them though fully aware of the fact that with time and increasing knowledge such truths may have to be modified. That, surely, is the basis of life and of progress. Or should our ancestors in the dim past have postponed seeking ways of illuminating the darkness with their oil lamps for fear that their methods might become obsolete and ridiculous in some atomic power-stationed future?

It is doubtful whether an intellectual, politician, business-man or Churchman would disagree with us thus far. But when we come to the social sciences what do we find? That Man's knowledge is in the atomic age while his ideas are still in the era of the oil lamp!

THIS is no exaggeration, and if we only pause to reflect for one moment on the paramount preoccupations of our time; the exhortations of our leaders and our Press; the pattern of our system of education and the organisation of our lives (and we are talking of society as a whole and not of the individual exceptions—which prove the rule but on whom our hopes are based!), we find that to every one reference to happiness, hundreds, or thousands, are made to the balancing of budgets, the need to produce more, the dangers from this or that enemy, to ideologies "foreign to our way of life", to slackers, to mis-management, to taxes, to welfare-States, to new weapons of destruction, new dangers and new bogies.

The reasons, to our minds, are not far to seek. The organisation of human society—the State, government, the economics of production and distribution, the dissemination of knowledge and information, and, last but not least, the organisation of life—still presupposes that some are born to govern, the rest to be governed; that freedom is for an élite in a world of intellectual and economic slaves.

Yes, it is true that in the "advanced" industrial nations the slaves have T.V. (and the cream of our intellectuals performing in their subsidised living rooms—not a slum but a modern dwelling designed in the latest contemporary style by the cream of our progressive architects), as well as all the other "amenities" and "services" that go with them in this Welfare State and the Hire-purchase age. We have also maintained, in these columns, that, with the aid of a magnifying glass, one can detect in the Welfare State, in the methods of taxation, certain equalitarian trends. But we have also expressed concern with the motives which underlie the actions of the ruling classes. Equalitarianism, as applied to the necessities of life is, when advocated by the ruling class a means to an end, and there are no signs that they have any intention that it should become the ends, the direction social organisation should take. How much more this applies in the field of knowledge!

Education is still a dangerous weapon in the hands of the masses. The emphasis placed by governments on education is in turning out (a) "good citizens" by which is meant people with just sufficient knowledge of the three Rs to operate the Machine of administration; (b) skilled workers to operate the complicated machines of modern industry; (c) the scientists and technicians who will ensure that the nation's industrial and scientific development shall not lag behind that of "foreign" competition in the world's markets or in the struggle for world power. (Note: Churchill's much publicised speech to the Young Conservatives regarding Britain's shortage of scientists never once mentioned their potential contribution to human happiness. The whole gist of his speech was the strength of Russia—that is, in terms of power politics—as a result of her large scale training of scientists!) In other words, education so long as it does not aim at developing character, or non-specialised curiosity, is encouraged by governments, irrespective of the class background of the student, as a means . . . to keep the wheels of modern industrial development turning (and as a consequence, the competition for markets).

WE too believe in the school and the University as a means, not for the purpose of imprisoning the mind in the bonds of specialisation or conformity, but for its development and liberation. We believe in the Press as a means for providing factual information and drawing the peoples of the world closer to one another by the knowledge they gain of each others thoughts and problems, not for the purpose of creating national frontiers but to break them down!

To-day education and the channels of information and ideas are in the hands of the State and businessmen respectively. Both have a vested interest (apart from their culture as individuals), in conditioning the people in a blind acceptance, without discussion, of the existing patterns of social organisation. (The threat from Russia is not so much her real strength as a powerful nation in the struggle for world domination, as the myth—pure lip-service by her propagandists—that she stands for a new way of life, compared with the capitalist nations, in which all men will be free and equal, etc. The politicians of the West fear, above all, that their people may start thinking that they should question the system as the real source of their unhappiness and permanent state of inferiority).

IT is the awareness of these realities that provides the anarchist propagandist with the argument for persisting in his work of disseminating literature which aims not at regimenting thought, of building "strong" "united" organisations, but simply of liberating thought from

William Morris, *Romantic to Revolutionary*, by E. P. Thompson. Lawrence & Wishart. 50s.

IN the history of British socialism there has been no genius comparable to William Morris. Artist, poet, craftsman and revolutionary, he was the embodiment of the socialist conception of the complete man. Among the small but distinguished band of men and women who contributed to the revival of socialism in the 1880s, he stood out as the prophet of a full-blooded, warm-hearted socialist future, of a society in which, as he put it, there would be 'no master high or low'. Even those who disagreed most strongly with his views could not deny his genius.

It is not surprising, therefore, that his life and work should now be surrounded by legend and that each of the several warring sects which call themselves 'socialist' should lay claim to his mantle. One of the most active propagators of 'the Morris myth' was the self-appointed disciple, Bruce Glasier, who sought to show that Morris's socialism was fully in accord with the mushy sentimentalism of the old I.L.P. Later, J. S. Middleton, former secretary of the Labour Party, found himself 'able to suppose' that those of Transport House were 'the historical heirs to his activities'. More recently, a Mr. Clement Attlee, the former M.P. for Walthamstow, Morris's birthplace, has

found it convenient to invoke the name of Morris on many public occasions. The Labour Party, his audiences were told, owes more to Morris than to Marx.

The Communist Party too has not been idle. Twenty years ago Page Arnot published a brief *Vindication* of Morris the revolutionary and now comes Mr. Thompson's 900-page, amply-documented life which seeks to show that Morris was a proto-Stalinist. Naturally, not having had the advantage of being guided by the principles of Comrades Lenin and Stalin, Morris was guilty of certain deviations. He committed the error of 'purism' which led to a divorce between the socialist movement and the masses and, almost to the end of his career, he persisted in the infantile policy of anti-parliamentarianism. But—so Mr. Thompson would have us believe—Morris was continually anticipating the theories of the Bolsheviks in other respects. "Were William Morris alive to-day," he concludes, "he would not look far to find the party of his choice."

There is this much to be said for Mr. Thompson's novel thesis. Unlike the one fostered by the latest addition to the Labour Peerage, it is at least ostensibly based on a wide reading of Morris's own work. Unfortunately for Mr. Thompson—but fortunately for those who honour the memory of the real William Morris—the base doesn't support the puerile conclusion. Only the most fana-

tical adherent of 'the party line' will, for example, see in Morris's innocent, if earnest, plea for individual sacrifice to 'the Cause' what Mr. Thompson sees—an anticipation of the Bolshevik doctrine of the subordination of 'individual whims' to the collective decisions of the party. Nor is it easy for those whose minds are not encompassed by the strait-jacket of Stalinist categories to read into Morris's passionate plea for socialist education of the workers a tendency to think in terms of a Bolshevik party of working class cadres which in the revolutionary period would assume the leadership of the wider organisations of the working class.

Mr. Thompson's search for Bill Morris, the party card-carrier, is in fact both pathetic and bathetic. The near ultimate in bathos, however, is reached when we are informed that 'Twenty years ago even among Socialists and Communists, many must have regarded Morris's picture of "A Factory as It Might Be" as an unpractical poet's dream: to-day visitors return from the Soviet Union with stories of the poet's dream already fulfilled'. No doubt, after this, we can look forward to the serialisation of 'News from Nowhere' in *Soviet News* as a prophetic description of life in the Workers' Paradise!

Fortunately, it is impossible even for so crass a writer as Mr. Thompson to fill 900 pages with such insults to the

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COMMENT

The Anatomy of Aloneness

Aloneness, n.: state of being quite by one's self; apart from, or exclusive of, others; single, solitary.

Loneliness, n.: dejection, depression or sadness resulting from the consciousness of being alone; single, solitary (italics mine).

ALONG with other urgent enigmas of the day, such as war and peace, heart attacks, and a new site for the home field of the Brooklyn Dodgers, the vacation-minded high priests of beaudeadness are confronted with the problems arising from the ever-increasing longevity of their liegemen. For here in America—here in this haphazard hotbed of "free" enterprise, it is sacrilege, betrayal and self-incrimination to grow old without having accreted a bulging portfolio of stocks, bonds and shares—insignia, like luggage stickers, of respectable prosperous journey through the capitalistic catacombs. To lack resources is failure in an intricate hospice that encourages—nay, demands success of its inmates; anything less is to some extent debatable, at least by the unbelievers, to the Holy of Holies, and execrable; and like all millenarianistic mythologies, this one has an operable trigger, and ready recoil: every day in every way things cannot but get better and better, and it is with God's grace that one is to the American manor born.

Of course things must get better and better! Dare they otherwise in a system

blue-printed by an ideology of utilitarianism corrupted beyond recognition by the green acids of materialism? For if this is to continue a smoothly-functioning machine contrived to paradise us all, the least we beneficiaries can do is to contribute without stint that which lies within our power to contribute. Fair is fair, and surely it would be something less than fair to receive and not give. And when a dogface gives a gangrenous leg, a benchman interminable sawwork, a miner a humped back and a pair of dust-ridden lungs, a surgeon a spate of sleepless nights, and a bedecked dowager a dandy donary, there is unanimous participation with neither lampreys nor parasites to blemish the percentile record. Who does not contribute, accordingly, is a ne'er-do-well, a knave, an ingrate or a Red.

All of which leaves the poor ones and the pensioners in a position at best pitiable, at worst contemptible, but in any case insufferable, for, contributing nothing, they "deserve" nothing. The best of things automatically accrue to the paradigms of the community as their seigniorage; the undeserving ones get the worst of things, which is to say the least of things.

These are among the thoughts evoked by *Umberto D.* Italian motion picture on view here in New York at last after several years of official equivocation over whether or not it should have an

American showing at all. This very equivocation is in itself significant, for in extenuation of the temporary "black-out" it was claimed that the theme of the film lacked "popular appeal", which in the commercial lingo of these demagogic times is but a charitable euphemism for "this-thing-may-be-a-little-too-hot-to-handle boys." And as a matter of fact, in its inexorable pressures, its stark and selfless realism, its incisiveness and candour, *Umberto D.* does call into question the very marrow of the *Weltanschauung* that lends an ethical tint of sorts to the American ethos, viz. that materialism is blessed with an occult built-in ameliorative mechanism of some kind that must improve the lot of all men who "play the game". Strip the happiness-boys in America of this dogma, however, and they would be sore bereft, what with naught remaining them save fraudulent politicizing and colour TV. For if the lot of men were not improving, how then to justify the American demology? Their lot is surely improving; and besides, in a climate where political panaceas luxuriate everywhere and where all things are presumed to have a political solution (non-partisan, of course), the plight of old men, worn and dreggy, certainly can be politicized out-of-mind, if hardly out-of-sight.

Umberto D. begins mildly enough. An agglomeration of Roman pensioners, in want of mere survival, not prosperity, is marching upon the municipal authorities in an uneven willy-nilly "demand" for a boost in their stipends; it is an episode the subtle irony of which sets the tone for what is to follow. I say irony because from the very outset it is abundantly evident that this "demonstration" is doomed to failure inasmuch as it is directed neither against those bureaucrats who can do something about it, nor yet against any of those whose office is vulnerable to mob pressures. Instead of countenancing the pensioners' position, accordingly, a city understrapper bids them disperse because they have neglected to obtain a permit to assemble. Whereupon a small battalion of police in jeep-like machines (America's most noteworthy contribution to twentieth-century mob control) in all good nature motors in among the demonstrators and prods them back into their several private impoverishments. Nor do I say "in good nature" advisedly. There was not the barest hint of malignity in the police work, let alone that dedicated club-flailing and virulent evangelism with which the uniformed civic crusaders of New York, for instance, have been known to go about spreading the charitable gospel of law and order.

Becalmed, if not particularly assuaged, a handful of routed pensioners, *Umberto D.* included, review the debacle. "Scoundrels! blackguards! scum! villains!" one of them spits out. "Sh-h-h," hushes another, "they'll hear you." "I'm not talking about them (the police)," retorts the first, "I'm talking about our leaders. They should have got a permit. If no permit, no demonstration." It was not the first time that "leadership" was

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the fetters of conformity. Our aim is not of trying to prove that only we have the secret of "absolute truth" but that of penetrating the armour of conformity: the unquestioning acceptance of the authority of the State, of Government, of God and the Church, no less than breaking down the idea that money is the measure of success and the gateway to happiness or that love-making is controlled by Papal bulls or government legislation.

Compared with the "authoritative" conformist regurgitations of the intellectuals sold to the B.B.C. and to the detergent manufacturers sponsoring Commercial T.V. (not to mention those who, in the interests of mankind, of course, have abandoned the minority periodicals so that their words of conformist-wisdom may be read at every breakfast-table in the land), FREEDOM is a voice in the desert. But, apart from the fact that in any case so many deserts are man-made, if in the course of publishing our paper we succeed in arousing curiosity for ideas in some of our readers; if in the minds of others we introduce doubt; if, again, in others we help to start them off onto interests which enrich their lives; or if with others we contribute some idea which assists them in understanding or in

"realising" themselves . . . well, then we shall consider our work worthwhile.

For really we anarchists have no pretensions of changing the world if only people will follow us. Put very simply, what we believe is that, when a majority of the people will start thinking for themselves, the existing system will no longer be able to operate. It functions only because the majority have been conditioned—by a cunning and strong élite—into believing that they have not the wisdom to run their own lives. We believe that the guarantee of the free society is free men and women, for only those imbued with ideas of freedom will both defend and advocate it. (The phoney freedom of the publicist intellectuals of to-day is exposed by the fact that every other word they utter is "freedom" yet have only authority and coercion to offer as the means of achieving it!)

The task of a journal such as FREEDOM therefore is a simple, yet difficult one, for we seek to free people's minds from the conformity and the conditioning to which they have been subjected at all stages in their development: from the sweet helplessness at their mother's breast to the potted vulgarity of the gutter Press!

Questioning the Foundations

LAST week at the cinema we saw a newsreel review of the past year which reminded me of how much we had forgotten. The snow-bound winter, the newspaper strike, the rail strike, the retirement of Churchill and Attlee, the Geneva Conference, the death of 128 people in a motor race at Le Mans, the General Election, important people going here and there, they all flashed past on the screen and we reflected that so far as public events were concerned it had not in fact been a memorable or significant year.

isation or private enterprise, not *laissez-faire* or the welfare state, but the very fabric of our society. The complex framework of laws, customs and traditions which constitute, for want of a better word, the British "way of life," is under increasing pressure. Ordinary people, products of mass-prosperity, mass-education and mass-communications, are beginning to resent the restraints of a social mould which is the work of an earlier age. And its guardians, preoccupied with 'the public interest', are unaware that they no longer know what is in the public interest."

THIS is a refreshingly apposite description of the British political climate of the 1950's. The revolt against it, according to Mr. Johnson, though incoherent, unpolitical and imprecise, "springs from a profound feeling that the circus at Westminster is a sham", and "it is concentrated not so much on political issues themselves as on the cool insolence with which they are lifted from the realm of public debate and quietly buried out of sight". He gives five instances) the "barbarous ritual of judicial murder", the 14-day rule, the affair of Princess Margaret, the McLean-Burgess scandal, the newspaper exposure of police corruption), in which ordinary people "profoundly and bitterly resent the way in which the hydra" (his word for the Establishment), "not only flouted their wishes on each and all of these issues, but went to grotesque lengths to prevent any of them even being discussed". And he sees the public finding its spokesmen, since "the potential zombies dragging their leaden feet in and out of Westminster have proved useless", in "a heterogeneous group of ruthless jour-

nalists"—the bellowing Cassandra, the choleric Randolph Churchill, a newly rebellious Priestley, and anarchistic Muggeridge, an iconoclastic Henry Fairlie (the adjectives are Mr. Johnson's) and "Messrs. Foot, Taylor and Boothby shouting their way through the IV bear-garden". These latter-day radicals, he says, haven't a single policy in common, they are like an unruly crew of mutinous pirates, but they

"know and express what ordinary people are thinking, saying and feeling. Outrageous they may be, but everyone knows they are not part of the circus. And, despite everything, they have one object in common: the transformation of British society into something which corresponds to the needs of the mid-20th century."

BUT this is pitching it rather high. For how many of his list of dissident journalists has given any constructive thought to the needs of the mid-20th century? And the instances he quotes of public disagreement with official attitudes are all purely negative—the only ultimately important one being the question of the death penalty.

If the first stirrings of the public consciousness that Mr. Johnson notes are to be more than the impotent resentment of those who find themselves outside the political circus, they must cover a wider area—this country's rôle in the struggle of the super-states, its punitive colonial expeditions, its conscription, its economic unbalance, and beyond these they must question as Mr. Johnson declares they do, the very framework of our society.

C.W.

The Anatomy of Aloneness

Continued from p. 3

proved unworthy of its exaltedness. Nor is it necessary to dilate upon a pass which requires the procurement of official sanction from the very functionaries against whom one proposes to demonstrate?

From this opening aura of frustration the film progresses through a series of episodes—vignettes, really—a series vivid and unrelenting in its dissection of one old man's aloneness. With his dog at his side he returns to his rooming-house and tries to thwart eviction by proffering at least partial payment on his rental arrears. His landlady spurns anything less than the entire amount; after all, it would be more profitable for her to reserve his room for letting to "lovers" by-the-hour. The adolescent slavey to the landlady alone shows Umberto D any kindness—a simple kindness as yet undefiled by that total parochial self-involvement which befalls most adults to the exclusion not only of other humans, but of humanism itself—simple kindness, despite the slavey's private straits.

"Do I show yet?" she asks Umberto D. He looks at her unapprehending.

"I'm three months' pregnant," she continues without emotion. He is stunned. "And you say it like that?" "How else is there to say it?" she replies ingenuously. Umberto D is at a loss for a rejoinder. How else, indeed! When a complex artificial code collapses, when a gossamer morality is faulted and the very heavens convulse with helpless shame, how else to say it than to say it directly: "Yesterday is dead; this is another day, with other gods and creeds." And the slavey's matter-of-factness is but a reflection of youth's carefree sense of time as to-day. Her predicament notwithstanding, she burdens herself with no concerns of the morrow; only age is taxed with such things.

The disparate pair—disparate in all save in susceptibility to impending disaster—furtively peer out the window at a group of soldiers. "The tall one's from Naples, the short one's from Florence," she tells him. "Which one's yours?" asks Umberto D. "Both." "I mean," Umberto D, flustered, hastens to add, "which one's the—the father." The slavey shrugs. "I don't know. They both deny it, but I have a feeling it's

The Boycott as a Social Weapon

AN important weapon in the struggle to establish rights is the boycott, and if organised properly can render the opposition impotent. Its non-violent method lessens the excuse for the use of armed reprisal, and when used against those wielding economic power concessions can be forced by reducing monetary returns.

Two years ago the Spanish workers of Barcelona, protesting against the rise in transport fares, successfully forced the owners to rescind a decision to raise fares, by refusing to use public transport and instead walking to work. In a country where free expression is limited and any members of an organisation expressing even the mildest reforms are likely to end up in goal, or in front of the firing squad, the usual methods of conveying decisions to strike are barred. Reports from foreign journalists in Spain at the time expressed surprise at the absence of posters, handbills or newspapers carrying organisational information, which are often the features of strikes and boycotts in this country. Nevertheless, the participants managed to pass on information by word of mouth, and in this way also safeguarded themselves against being caught carrying incriminating documents.

Reports from Alabama of a similar boycott of public transport by the Negro population is encouraging in as much as it shows a determined effort on the part of the negroes to establish their elementary rights, and indicates a consciousness of their economic strength. The boycott has lasted for five weeks, and started when a Negro woman refused to give up her seat to a white passenger; she was arrested and fined five pounds on the spot. Her action was a courageous one because Negroes in the Southern States, particularly at this time, take their lives in their hands if they dare to question the supremacy of the white man.

After her arrest, 40,000 Negroes from a population of 112,000 people stopped travelling by bus, and it is reported that the boycott is 95% effective since the bus company is dependent upon Negroes for three-quarters of its passengers. The National City Lines Bus Company,

a Chicago corporation, has been forced to garage 80% of its buses and has laid off three-quarters of its white drivers.

The few Negro taxi companies are carrying passengers for next to nothing, and other Negroes have organised car pools. The Montgomery White Citizens Council are publishing advertisements aimed at the white population: "Make this bus week. Ride the buses. Show the Company you appreciate their service". Bruce Rothwell, writing in the *News Chronicle* says: "there was not much response".

This boycott is easier for the Negroes to carry out successfully because they are not wholly dependent upon the transport. Where they are directly employed by whites they have little recourse to action because the white employer can lay down his conditions or sack the employee who is known to be active in any Negro movement, thus by economic pressure the Negro is rendered powerless. In this boycott, the pressure is from the other side and if it lasts long enough it may be a pointer to the future position of the Southern Negro.

This is an important method in a material way of bringing home to the whites the strength they are up against, because it appears to have escaped them how morally untenable is their position when their economic solvency is dependent upon the people they repress.

M.

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the one from Naples—" Not only has the code collapsed at his feet, but now the slavey is kicking it round for all she is worth. "Have you been studying the lessons I've been setting out for you?" he goes on after an awkward pause. "No." "No time?" "Yes," she agrees elusively, "no time." "Well," he sighs as he takes leave of her, "you should try to find the time. Strange things happen to people who don't know grammar. People take advantage of ignorance."

All of which has scant chance to mitigate her crisis—and none at all to mitigate his. His landlady, like all landladies suffering from hardening of the sympathies, continues obdurate: she insists on either all the rent money or his prompt departure. Umberto D peddles his watch and his two books—all the worldly goods remaining him except for his dog and his neat little hoard of clean clothing the retention of which constitutes his last link with an abused dignity in a world that continually abrades dignity. Still, the money realized by these last-ditch sales falls short of enabling him to ante up for his landlady, by whose fast dwindling grace he yet continues to occupy his lodgings—his place, his home. Under no circumstances would he voluntarily depart the room: it's the only place he feels at home, the only place he belongs, the only place he can get any privacy away from the grind and glare of creatures no less wretched than himself—it's the only place he can be alone. "If only I didn't eat for a month I'd be okay," he observes wryly, "but even a dog couldn't live on the meagre pension I get."

But a dog can, and does. Umberto D and Flick—it is their mutual friendship and affection that sustain them; together, they are not entirely unwanted after all.

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(To be continued)