

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"I think we should be men first and subjects afterwards. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right."

—H. D. THOREAU

## THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CIRCUS

THE British electorate, conditioned to the staidness of the five-yearly ballot whereby they select a political party which will govern them in the manner to which they are accustomed, may find the present Democratic campaign in the United States for their Presidential candidate slightly bewildering.

Others may be enchanted with the parades and the fiestas, the bands and the banners, the glamorous briefly clad young women who line the meeting halls and the streets, and, above all, the colourful candidates. And, there can be few more suitable settings for a climactic political rally than the circus type arena wherein the candidate learns of his success or failure.

In such an atmosphere the chosen hero is finally rewarded for the months of perspiring and persuading (or, as some vulgar people might describe it sweating and swindling).

Our hero of the moment is the bewitching Johnnie "Boy" Kennedy, who goes forward to the next fight as the Democratic Presidential Candidate for what has been described as the most important job in the world today.

What are the qualities of the man who may scoop this mammoth job? In order of importance these are (1) his wealth; as one of the richest men in America this was an important advantage in his campaign over his less endowed opponents. (2) His good looks, which although not to this writer's taste, have quickened the pulse of the American female beyond the hopes of any Hollywood publicity agent. (3) His youth; at 43 technically he is middle-aged, but since traditionally politicians reach the pinnacle of power in their dotage, anyone under sixty is considered a mere boy. But his youthful good looks have "caught the imagination of the American people" (we quote), perhaps weary of an ageing patched up General and, who knows, in the process of mass emancipation signified by the rejection of the father figure!

Kennedy's Catholicism, contrary to the prophecies of the pundits, was not such a weighty cross to bear. His support in predominately Protestant areas is perhaps explained by historical change. The emergence of a communist state, the discovery of Kremlin agents and the villifying of ex-party members within the United States has provided a necessary group to which blame may be placed for all ills. However, should Kennedy reach the White House and in time lose his popularity, the catholic spectre may take solid shape again.

If so, it is a problem for the Democrats in the future. At the moment Kennedy is basking in the warmth of mass support and if we have touched only on the superficialities of the man it is because we have found little else in him which warrants our enthusiasm. This is not unexpected since he is a politician and a patriot possessed of the prejudices and narrow partisanship necessary to his profession.

Liberals of all shades talk confidently about the "easing of international tension" which a change in the American administration would bring about. We cannot understand why, since the Democrats are com-



## The Exodus from the Belgian Congo - or THE NEW 'REFUGEES'

IN stressing the raping and looting that has accompanied the declaration of the Belgian Congo's independence, the popular Press was less concerned, we believe, with working up racial passions than with publishing sensational news that sells their papers. One has only to recall that a few weeks ago the banner headlines on the front page were for a racehorse that had broken a fetlock and had to be shot (picture of dead race-horse on course) to realise that it is not advisable to look to the popular Press for a sense of proportion or objectivity in reporting news! Such has been its treatment of the change-over in the Belgian Congo where the disgusting treatment of some white women by some Congolese has so dominated the reports that the real issues which have made the transfer of power from the Belgian to the Congolese government so eventful, have been completely overlooked.

day Times correspondent), and education in the equally safe hands of the Church the Congolese have been kept in their place: poverty stricken and ignorant.

The decision by the Belgian Government to pull out of the Congo was not a decision taken some time ago and for which careful plans were made and the necessary personnel trained to take over the administration. It seems clear that events in Algeria influenced the Government in what has been described as an "overnight capitulation". To wage a war on the Algerian scale would be impossible both from a military as well as an economic point of view. Even if it were, the lesson of Algeria is surely that in the end the Algerians will win their independence. It is possible that the Belgian government

had been informed of growing unrest in the Congo and rather than capitulate once violence had broken out on a large scale, it was thought that Belgian financial interests stood a better chance of maintaining their foothold in the Congo if independence were granted before popular pressure made itself felt. Certainly the motives for getting out of the Congo were not disinterested, as the following arguments quoted by a Sunday Times correspondent in Elizabethville, only too clearly show:

"We thought we would stay in the country economically," is the answer. Alternatively, "We thought that showing the Congolese how much they still needed us was our best guarantee of staying".

★

THE mass exodus of the white settlers since the declaration of

independence far from being a reflection on the insecurity of white men under African administration, is an admission by these very people that their behaviour and their treatment of the Africans when they were the *herrenvolk* was such as to bring down on their heads all the pent up feelings of frustration and humiliation to which generations of Africans have been subjected the moment the special protection enjoyed by the whites was removed. For these new "refugees" we feel no sympathy.

A photograph published in the Press last week carries the caption "A convoy of Belgian refugees heading for Northern Rhodesia pauses on the road from Elizabethville". Not the harrowing convoys of ill-shod, ill-fed people with babes in arms drawing hand carts loaded with all

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## The Two Faces of the Church

THE past 50 years has seen a marked decrease in anti-Roman Catholic feeling among many sections of people in Britain, and this has been acclaimed as a sign of increasing toleration and freedom. During the nineteenth century the Non-conformist denominations, each of them strong enough to stand on its own feet, regarded "Popery" as an offence to their religion and something to be denounced. Nowadays, forced by numerical weakness into an uneasy unity which they have been unable to achieve even though it was theologically desirable, they are fighting shy of even the mildest criticism of the fellow believers in other churches.

Similarly, one wing of the secularist movement has abandoned militant anti-religious propaganda to concentrate on more philosophical themes, and the other one, numerically diminished, is regarded as an anachronistic oddity even among circles which theoretically agree with its views.

Fifty years ago, when a proposal was made to provide for Catholic and Church schools out of taxes, it was defeated by a campaign of Liberals and Non-conformists, led by the *Manchester Guardian*. When a similar proposal was made a year ago, the *Guardian* supported it as a reasonable idea, which only a bigot would be opposed to.

The adoption of Senator Kennedy as candidate for the American presidency is said to be a sign of the same growth of tolerance in America.

Undoubtedly, one of the chief factors in this is the feeling that religion just is not important any more, and people are more ready to ignore it than to bother being against it. The Catholic population of Britain has increased, and possibly familiarity has removed some of

the fear that was attached to the unknown and foreign.

Certainly, it is four centuries since the days of Bloody Mary, and it is an unpleasant neurosis to keep the memories of the Spanish Inquisition alive artificially, as some of the sectarian Protestant organisations do. However, a glance at a recent copy of the *British Weekly* shows that the spirit still is kept alive by the Catholics themselves. Referring to religious persecution in Columbia it reports:

"In the past twelve years one hundred and sixteen Protestants have been killed because of their religion, sixty-two chapels or churches destroyed by fire or dynamite, and over two hundred Protestant schools closed.

"At a conference of Protestant pastors held in May in Medellin, a poll of pastors present showed sixty-two of them had been imprisoned because of their faith, twenty-six had been fired on at one time or another, twenty-eight came from churches destroyed or seriously damaged by mob or police action, and twenty-three had members of their congregation martyred.

Reports before us continue the story which has been told over the years of stonings, occasions of Catholic Actionist incitements to violence and extreme priestly actions (on May 1st, Father Gomez of Coello is reported to have told his parishioners to bring him all the protestant "propaganda" they could find, including Bibles . . . in front of the altar he made a pile of the Bibles and New Testaments and set fire to them . . . The priest said the children should be ready to stone the Protestants, etc., etc."

The same kind of situation exists in Spain, although the numbers of actual murders is probably less. A report in the same issue of the *British Weekly* (not regular reading for the writer!) shows

that 80 churches and 40 schools have been closed. The Spanish government obviously prefers no schools to the wrong ones. It is impossible to print or distribute literature, and Protestants in many areas are not allowed to marry in their own churches.

While this sort of thing is happening in countries where the Church is strong, the faithful in England and America speak in terms of tolerance, and co-operation. However, they do not denounce persecution. In fact the Catholic Truth Society has published a pamphlet justifying the church's action in Spain and Columbia. Meanwhile, a Catholic writer in California was quoted last week as having said that Catholics need not support anti-Birth Control laws, because to do so frightens people away from the church, and gives them the idea that it is a powerful political machine.

In other words, the Church uses whatever means are most appropriate to maintain its power and influence. Like any other organisation which needs to control the lives of men and women it spreads untold misery in its course. The individuals actually murdered are a small fraction of the masses for whom life is warped and destroyed by the grip which religion has on their minds and personalities. Insofar as religion is powerful it is deadly, both for those who voluntarily adhere and those who do not. Just because anarchists realise that suppression of such evil ideas as Catholicism will not cure them, it does not imply any toleration of them. The violence of the priests in Columbia and Spain, against their brother Christians should not lead anyone to draw too alarmist conclusions about "It could happen here" but to realise that the Church is as unscrupulous and power-hungry as any secular government in the world.

P.H.

## PEOPLE AND IDEAS

# NEWS FROM TIKOPIA

WHEN the first world war began, Bronislaw Malinowski, then a lecturer at the London School of Economics, was in Australia for a meeting of the British Association. He was a subject of the Austrian Empire and was consequently interned for the duration of the war, but the Australian government was persuaded by British anthropologists to intern him on the Trobriand Islands (a tiny group south of the Bismarck Archipelago, between southern New Guinea and the Solomon Islands—they do not even appear in my old *Times* atlas). Malinowski's enforced residence enabled him to make a more intensive study of the life of what were then called a "savage" people than any previous anthropologist had made, and in a series of books beginning in the nineteen-twenties his analysis of Trobriand society reached a very much wider audience than that of the usual anthropological monograph. Malinowski established the tradition of methodical field work as the indispensable basis of his subject, and together with a parallel trend in the United States, from Franz Boas through Ruth Benedict to Margaret Mead and to her pupils today, the work of Malinowski and his pupils has brought anthropological concepts into the daily thought of educated people in the Western World. Even so, it is curious that the most important British contributions to social anthropology have been made by scholars whose origins were in Poland, South African Jewry, or Australia (Malinowski, Gluckman, Fortes, Firth, Schapera). Professor Edward Shils puts this down to the "undeveloped heart, the inability to embrace the condition and state of mind of one's fellow man through contact and imagination", of the English upper classes.

The most distinguished of Malinowski's pupils was Raymond Firth who in 1929 went to live in Tikopia, a tiny and remote island between the Solomons and the New Hebrides, juridically part of the British Solomon Isles Protectorate. In 1936 he published *We, The Tikopia*, subtitled 'A sociological study of kinship in primitive Polynesia', a book which has become a classic of the Malin-

owskian method, and certainly the most exhaustive study of a community of less than fifteen hundred people ever published.

SINCE the war many anthropologists who had made intensive studies of South Pacific communities have returned to their islands to see how their inhabitants had fared in the long gap since the thirties, to study the impact of the war with, in many cases, successive occupations by the Japanese and the Americans, or simply to study the changes which had taken place, since a particular society had first been systematically studied. When Margaret Mead returned to the Manus people of New Guinea, she was able to record the impact upon them of a million United States servicemen stationed in their neighbourhood. There, and in the Admiralty and Solomon Islands there had developed those fascinating Messianic/nationalist movements known as Cargo Cults which appear as a veritable parable of the impact of the western world upon primitive cultures.

Raymond Firth revisited Tikopia in 1952 with a Canadian assistant James Spillius, and in a new book\* has reported the changes which have taken place in Tikopia society in the generation since his first visit. The war had left the island alone, the Cargo Cult had had no repercussions there. There was much greater contact with the outside world through the more frequent visits of ships, including the vessels of the Solomon Islands government, through the recruitment (which had been forbidden before 1948) of young men to work in neighbouring islands, and through the local demand for certain European goods, metal tools, clothes, cosmetics, cooking utensils, kerosene lighting, met by the earnings of immigrant workers and by barter. Melanesian Christian missionaries who had been in touch with the island since 1911 had been increasingly successful in gaining converts. (Half the population was Christian in 1929, six-sevenths in 1952, the whole population by 1956). The number of inhabitants had increased from 1,300 to 1,750 (Christianity forbidding the practice of abortion or infanticide), causing greater pressure on the resources of fertile land. During the period of study, famine developed, not because of this, but as a result of a hurricane which devastated the island shortly before Professor Firth's arrival. The incipient famine and its effect on the social structure were

\*SOCIAL CHANGE IN TIKOPIA, by Raymond Firth, (Allen and Unwin, 45s.).

closely observed, and the manner in which the Tikopia and their institutions were able to cope fairly successfully with the situation (with outside relief) is very interestingly described. By comparison with some other Pacific societies, Tikopia has changed little. Professor Firth examines minutely changes in economic resources, rights over land, patterns of marriage and residence, descent groups, the political system and methods of social control. The slight changes which he notes are all in the direction of individuation: more emphasis on individual ownership or rights of use of land (which can be predicted from the increasing pressure on it), slightly more emphasis on the individual and elementary family rather than on the clan and extended family, the acceptance of the concept of money as a medium of exchange. The most marked characteristic distinguishing the Tikopia today from the Tikopia at the beginning of the century, is however,

"the degree to which they have surrendered the ultimate responsibility for their values. From now on, both in the political and in the religious field, they have handed over the ultimate decision as to what values and course of action are good to authorities whom they themselves now recognise as legitimate in lands far afield. The implications of this have still to be worked out by them."

FROM the layman's point of view this is a slightly disappointing book, although he will find in it an unrivalled account of what life is like in a tiny South Sea island, rather different from that given to the visitors to this "Shangri-la of the Pacific" on the annual visit of the pleasure cruise schooner *Yankee*. If his interest is from the standpoint of 'action anthropology'—anthropological analysis as the prelude to a development project, he will find no such project envisaged. If he expects comparative studies, which produced such valuable results in Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* or Margaret Mead's *Co-operation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*, he will be disappointed, as indeed anthropologists may be, since comparisons with other societies in a state of change would have added much to the book's value, especially comparisons of the impact of the famine with that of other disasters which have been the subject of sociological study, or, for instance, with wartime black market situations. The reader is left in the dark about the variety of Christianity introduced—its teachings and ritual. The author mentions the phenomenon of a vague and 'struck dumb' state which developed among adolescent girls, which he was told was "a madness of the

Church alone", affecting only Christian girls. One would have liked some comparisons of this state with other curiosities of adolescent behaviour in societies where religious codes inhibit sexual behaviour.

The political system of Tikopia consists of chiefs and an aristocracy of *maru*, elders or executives. The acceptance of Christianity divorced the temporal authority of the chiefs from their ritual importance. In 1952 one clan had two chiefs, one Christian and one pagan, both accepted by the clan and the whole society. The growing interest of Government in Tikopia affairs, precipitated by the need to relieve the famine, involves the use of these chiefs through the classic technique of indirect rule. There is in Tikopia no overall representation of the opinion of the community at large. In this sense then there was no 'law' in Tikopia in 1952 any more than in 1929", although there was "social control which did not conform to any of the ordinary definitions of law". There was, even during the strain of the famine, hardly any physical violence in Tikopia life, tensions being expressed verbally and retribution being largely by shaming. "Much of the control was obtained by suasion, not force; the appeal was to sympathy, not strength, although such an appeal might have almost binding quality."

AN anthropologist, spending years in the study of a particular society, inevitably, however detached his role,

## Obsolescence is only in its Infancy

DESPITE the undisputed triumphs of Planned Obsolescence, some people evidently fear for the future. This fear, let me state at the outset, is not shared by myself.

It has been no small feat to show the consumer why he should buy a mammoth-screen TV designed to give him a feeling of being permanently ensconced in a loge at the Paramount, and why, in only a matter of months, he should trade in this Panoramic Giant for three or four Petit Portables to be toted from room to room; why the Petit Portables in turn should be discarded for a French Provincial model (carved cabriolet legs) equipped with remote-control-tuning so that the owner does not have to leave his chair and make the ten-step journey over to the set; why the remote-controller should yield to a Chippendale Console with automatic *pre-tuning* which permits the owner to leave not only his chair but even the state, and still have

his favourite programmes on schedule. It is true that if obsolescence-planning were permitted to remain at present levels, the day could come when your consumer cracked beneath the weight of continuous buying, trading in, storing and discarding of quantities of commodities. In this condition, he might only stare dumbly at a commercial in which a hundred hand-rubbed walnut TV sets, tied to one another by stout rope, were pulled up the slope of Mt. Shasta to demonstrate their usefulness in mountain chalets.

But I am confident that long before this melancholy day arrived, we would make essential improvements in the present planning of obsolescence. The road ahead may become clearer if we consider what already goes on today in the realm of weapons; between the obsolescence of weapons and the current obsolescence of consumer goods, there is a wealth of difference, let alone a wealth of wealth.

Unlike consumer-goods obsolescence, that of weapons is not even planned. Spontaneous, it closely follows the laws of Nature. Each new offensive weapon inevitably results in a new weapon of defence, which gives rise to a still newer offensive weapon in an uninterrupted upward-moving cycle akin to Darwin's natural selection. Production is not even slowed down by the realization on the part of scientists, engineers and technicians that their latest project will break all speed records on its maiden trip from assembly-line to junkyard. All this time, the manufacturer goes about his daily tasks serenely, knowing that the customer—in this instance, the government—never wearies of buying, pays promptly, and rarely complains. And unlike the production of consumer goods, the making of weapons requires no army of market research experts, advertising men and sales executives almost as large as the army which is to be equipped; it is enough for the manufacturer to organize an occasional refreshing junket for Pentagon officials and Congressmen, or to promise an Airforce general that when he reaches retirement age, a berth will be waiting for him with the company in line with its programme of bringing in young blood.

What makes weapon-obsolescence proceed so effortlessly is that here the customer is no creature of whim, mood or impulse. He is motivated solely by necessity, an element which, I submit, can easily be infused into the obsolescence of consumer goods as well. Let me illustrate. The walls of the apartment house where I live are much too thin. With my own TV loud enough to satisfy my wants, I have no need to listen to the TV in the next apartment, especially when it booms away on a different channel. Now, why shouldn't some far-sighted manufacturer market a

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### Around the Galleries

## PABLO RUIZ PICASSO

THE *Daily Worker* down to the *Sunday Times* have applied the sobriquet of genius to the 80-year-old Spanish painter Pablo Ruiz Picasso and the citizens of the town were treated to the odd spectacle of the King Street proletariat and the Mayfair brahmans marching shoulder to shoulder up the steps of the Tate Gallery to pay audible and visible homage to the Andalusian artist, at five guineas a head. But when you put the mark of genius upon a painter you must be prepared to place him in the company of Leonardo, of Michelangelo, of Rembrandt, of Botticelli or Raphael and for his credential be able to point to at least one canvas that will serve as his passport to immortality. Yet in all Picasso's vast output there is not one single painting that will weave its image into the conscience of mankind by virtue of its own inherent qualities. A brilliant and a facile painter he has raped the ages for styles and themes but never has he had the time to realize what he has stolen for always he has dashed on breathlessly to the next canvas leaving behind him only the sketch of an unfinished masterpiece. Picasso has said that "painting is not done to decorate apartments; it is an instrument of war against brutality and darkness" and by his own definition he fails, for never once has he been able to transmit his passion onto his canvas.

Painted in lush warm colours by a strong hand controlled by a brilliant mind they lack all feeling of humanity and these magnificent but sterile failures are prizes for top people of an affluent society. If you ask what of "Guernica",

then I will say that this was a cry of despair, for while the Spanish workers and the peasants fought and held the traitorous generals and their hired mercenaries the uncommitted were snivelling with fear at the phantoms of their own propaganda and Picasso recorded their rabbit horror. Pieter Bruegel could show more evil on six square inches of canvas, Rembrandt's "Rabbi" more compassion, Reymerswael's "Excisemen" more contempt for humanity, Leonardo's "Virgin" more understanding of the human heart than Picasso has been able to do in the whole of his output. Even the figures of his early Blue Period could not suggest the poverty they were supposed to illustrate for always they looked like ballet dancers posing as a part-time job and it was his Rose Period that showed the true Picasso.

It was then, in 1904 on, that Picasso began to shift his social sights and the lean-shanked ballet dancers posing for poverty gave way to plump and well-fed men and slack-mouthed, moon-faced, cow-eyed women and red superseded blue on his palette. In 1906 Picasso began to paint "Les Femmes d'Alger" and this painting that took its title from a Spanish brothel in the Carrer d'Avinyó will, if any painting can, give Picasso a claim to a minor immortality. Of the painting itself little can be said yet like Brunelleschi who pioneered the path for Piero della Francesca it may be recorded of Picasso that he in his turn has offered some future painter a new technique with which to record the passions of his fellows. Picasso had that rare opportunity given to few men of

shaping his own life and he chose to amuse.

He scribbled doves for his political hangers-on and clowned with swinging torches for the professional *avant garde*, debutants wore his coloured head-scarves and the wealthy sycophants honoured him with their friendship and while these gay and worthless people enjoyed his services they in their turn destroyed a fine artist.

But the choice was Picasso's and the loss is ours. We for our part can make a personal choice from amongst all the works that he has given us. Amusement at the comic post-card "Portrait of Sabartés", quiet pleasure from his "Seated Bather" painted ten years earlier, yet our choice is not important and we can afford to change it with our mood or our age for to misquote Picasso "these are painted to decorate an apartment". A few years ago the Tate threw open their doors to an exhibition of the works of Vincent van Gogh and there were no gay parties and no clownish newspaper stunts. When van Gogh painted the "Potato Eaters" he caught the degradation of their poverty and café society had no use for it. With his self-portrait he tore at our heart for he pleads, even now, from the canvas for our understanding. The sunflowers he painted have become hackneyed with constant reproduction but these were the lesser of his works for even the chair he painted cries of his tortured world but although no one will label van Gogh genius he is a greater artist than Picasso for he accepted the world's sorrow as his own. For to wear the cloak of greatness one must be prepared to kiss the leper's sores.

Picasso chose his cloak from Savile Row and settled for the soft hand-shake.  
ARTHUR MOYSE.

## THE NEW 'REFUGEES'

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their worldly belongings. The convoy in this case consists of only the latest models in cars, carefully groomed male "refugees" in shirt sleeves and ties, women "refugees" wearing sun glasses and high heeled shoes. There is no panic, no hurried masses of humanity seeking safety in numbers. It might well be a traffic hold-up on a busy, sunny week-end somewhere in the English countryside!

It is said that many of these "refugees" have been obliged to leave all their belongings behind. But how many of them have in fact waited until the last minute to settle their affairs? According to official reports, between January 1959 and March of this year an estimated £1,400 million was transferred from the Congo to Belgium. Indeed the Eyskens government, alarmed by the growing volume of such transfers took measures to stop them, and Belgians have been restricted to sending out £70 a month. One wonders how effective the measures have been.

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It is also clear that much of the trouble in the Congo stemmed from the declared wish of the African leaders of Katanga to secede from the new Congo State. There is strong rivalry among the Congolese political leaders—as one expects to find not only in the new African States but in every country of the world!—but the tension has been aggravated by the quite open support Mr. Tshombe, the Premier of Katanga, is receiving from Belgian financial interests. And for the very good reason that Katanga is the "economic keystone" of the Congo. In Katanga is located the principle mineral wealth on which Belgian fortunes have been made. (According to one report, five years ago the Belgians were receiving as much as £1,000m. a year from this territory and even now their share is something like £373 millions a year. On the other hand only £82m. were invested in the Congo.)

The Belgian settlers are watching anxiously the developments in Katanga. If Mr. Tshombe succeeds in his demands for independence from the new Congo State they feel there will still be a place for them at the top.

They believe, too, that by permitting a measure of African control in the great copper-mining complex of Union Minière, nationalisation of this major source of State revenue can be prevented and Katanga, relieved of her role of milch cow to the rest of the Congo, can develop into a highly prosperous independent country.

But for these very reasons, Mr. Lumumba will not agree to independence for Katanga. The whole economy of the Congo depends on the mining industry. For like so many colonial countries which have been exploited to bring large profits to the financiers and settlers, the day to day needs of the population have invariably been neglected. Thus in the Congo mining is a highly developed industry whereas agriculture is still very much undeveloped. Great wealth and abject poverty live side by side. Independence can only change this if it is not simply a change of personnel but a thoroughgoing economic and social revolution in which policies are geared to the urgent and basic needs of the people of the Congo. At

THE three articles by "C.W." in FREEDOM discussing Seymour Melman's book (*Decision-Making and Productivity*) on the industrial set-up at the Standard Motor Works, Coventry, concluded with a quotation from my notes on the occasion of the "automation" strike in 1956 in which I said, "the set-up (i.e. using workers' co-operation for the general good) has been wilfully and stupidly destroyed." This might give the impression that the workers were beaten into submission by a powerful managerial group. Such was not the case. At the resumption of work the managers were in a dominant mood, but, surprisingly, expected full co-operation—which was not forthcoming. Both sides therefore proceeded cautiously, like heavyweight boxers sizing each other up. They attempted to begin their rule by breaking up large gangs into smaller ones, using more automatic machines, re-organising the method of tractor production and generally behaving in a "stupid-conservative" fashion—much to the amusement of those of us who were informed on all aspects of production.

But without full co-operation from the shop floor the plant was not fully productive. No-one could say there was deliberate obstruction—all that was lacking was "worker-decision-making" (Melman's phrase)—the very thing that management sought to weaken or destroy. In the end they were appealing for co-operation. It was given—but only after real tough bargaining.

Bit by bit the workers rebuilt their own system, their own decision-making method, their own control of actual work. (Whether this is "recognised" or not is immaterial—it was so and is so. Melman of course was chiefly occupied with finding and recording published facts. To him agreements are the essential—the workers however, are completely indifferent to legalistic formulae—they have their own ideas and improvisatory methods, derived from work.)

Today the factory turns out a better tractor in greater numbers and earns more than ever. The Standard Company eventually sold out the tractor plant to Massey-Ferguson Ltd. for £15 million, thus making a handsome capital profit. It is still run on the same lines. At the moment there is a dispute over tea-breaks. Local leaders of the two dominant unions accepted a 40-hour week with no stoppage for tea—men to drink while they work. About 600 members of craft unions have now decided that this is unhygienic, and that as their union leaders were not consulted in the negotiations for the 40-hour week they feel they are not bound by it—so they stopped for tea—everyone else continuing to work! This exasperated the management who cancelled the 40-hour week (thus breaking agreed procedure!) and ordered a return to a 42½-hour week. All the men have answered by working 42 hours only (finishing half-an-hour early on one day—just to show 'em) which is the general practice. Maybe some idiot of a newspaperman will take it all seriously.

Melman, in his excellent study, was obliged to be circumspect. I never met him, but have read his book. It is very

present the Congolese people are the pawns in a political and financial struggle involving rival interests and ambitions none of which however is in the least concerned with the interests and needs of the people themselves. We read that Mr. Khrushchev is sending 10,000 tons of food to the Congo. We suspect the motives behind his generosity but whatever the motives, how much more useful will be the food than Dr. Nkrumah's armed Ghanaians who were dispatched with an alacrity which we find almost indecent in a man who professes to be searching for non-violent means to solve the world's problems!

Much more disgusting than the rapings and assaults of a few white people is the descent on the Congo of the political and financial vultures all anxious to get their share of the pickings while there is still time. And of these "atrocities" which are part and parcel of a system the popular press has nothing to say. It's not sensational news; it's happening every day of the year; it's normal!

difficult reading for anyone not familiar with industry, but will have served a useful purpose if it generates curiosity and discussion. My view of the same essential facts is that of an "insider" who has lived them.

★

THE gang system as operated in Coventry is modern and yet traditional. Its roots lie among the bloody-minded craftsmen who, centuries ago, sent the King to hell—and paid for it afterwards. They worked in groups—guilds. Later on in Coventry there was a prosperous ribbon-weaving industry. Semi-domestic groups by the thousand sent beautiful silk ribbons, flags and banners all over the world. My grandmother started work at 6 years of age, winding silk for the weavers. She told me: "We didn't look upon it as 'work'—we enjoyed it." She also carried tea (an expensive luxury) to the weavers. Ribbons were followed by watch manufacture. Again highly specialised family and neighbour groups made the various parts of the watches which were assembled by the master-watchmakers—who also worked in groups. It was all very informal and satisfying. The watchmakers always had a "Saint Monday"—boozing all day, taking Tuesday to get over it, and working Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Saturday morning they "cleaned up the shop". They grew most of their own food, kept pigs and fowl, grazed horses and cows on the commons (which were never enclosed—only built on in recent years), and nearly all married young—not because they had to, but because they liked it. Watchmaking died out from lack of standardisation—undersold by machine-made watches. The making of parts was highly specialised, but to make a cheap product an elaborate system of standards and gauging was necessary, as in engineering today. (Peter Kropotkin described a similar set-up among the Swiss watch-case makers of the Jura—how they sat around and worked and talked and were natural anarchists.)

Next came the manufacture of sewing

## Obsolescence

Continued from p. 2

simple home-model jamming instrument (perhaps in a aster-crafted cabinet with patterned grill cloth and brass trim) with which I turn my neighbour's reception into a series of piercing howls? If this prompts him to turn down the volume to civilized proportions, I turned off my jammer, of course—it takes only a flick of the wrist—and my neighbour has no intention of learning any such lesson; he is convinced that any yielding to my pressure would be taken as a sign of weakness. Instead, he purchases (in easy monthly payments according to any one of four plans) a new receiver with built-in filter, guaranteed to withstand my jamming. But he does not stop there. He makes a second purchase: an ingenious jamming mechanism (superb lowboy styling) which transforms all incoming programmes on my set into pig Latin. These measures are in invitation for me to make some gesture of appeasement—which is quite out of the question. I trade in my master-crafted, but fairly elementary, jammer for a newly designed Super-Jammer. And taking advantage of liberal trade-in savings, I replace my receiver with a *de luxe* model equipped with the latest Super-Antijammer Tube Guard.

Now there is no backing away from the fray. Both of us hurl ourselves into the contest with boundless energy and maintain a 24-hour-a-day communication with the finance company. Austerity is the word as we shear off the frills of daily existence and concentrate on buying the necessities of this battle for survival. Meanwhile, tens of millions of other citizens earnestly struggle for tens of millions of ways of life. They interfere with one another's TV and hi-fi sets, vacuum cleaners and telephone bells. By pre-control, they put out of commission any car that invades parking territory staked out for themselves; the car, in turn, defends itself with a device for de-controlling the pre-controls. In this criss-cross of attack, defence and counter-attack, each new gadget vanishes after a brief but exhilarating existence. Only obsolescence endures.

ELGIN LEWIS,  
(reprinted from Liberation,  
New York, May 1960).

## LETTER FROM COVENTRY

# The Gang System and Worker Decision-Making

machines, and then bicycles. Inventions by the thousand, mostly by unknown men, made bicycle-making into a precision manufacture, one of the bases of production engineering as we now know it. Again men formed groups around the job. Mechanics came from all over England and they learned that group work paid. As employers became capitalist, groups were broken up, but they always re-formed, and re-demonstrated their virtues.

And so it has continued to the present day: right through the making of cycles, motor-cycles, cars, aeroplanes and machine tools, there has been a continuous warfare between the group idea and the individualistic-minded employer and his officials. Those firms today which have the knack of the gang system have a huge advantage over the others. Wages are higher (which attracts better workers), they turn out a good product, make larger profits, and are very adaptable. Technical methods and tools used are the same as in the American type mass-production plant, but the human aspect is vastly different. Each worker contributes an effort, an idea, a pooling of knowledge and experience that is not readily forthcoming in the autocratically managed plant. Work is easier and people are happier. This is not a eulogy of capitalism—there are rows—fierce disputes that break the monotony of regular work. Disputes are often due to the clash of opposite mentalities—middle-class individualism in management versus working-class collectivism. Domestic disputes between gang members are settled on the spot—purely private scraps! Idle people are very severely dealt with by their mates—never from above. There is no "idealistic" talk about these things, but the benefits are obvious. Rough talk and aggressive attitudes are usually poses—the real man underneath is usually quite reasonable. People rarely leave and the labour turnover is very small indeed. There are no secrets about earnings or wage rates—everybody knows all about everyone else. The facts of output required and achieved are common knowledge. A car model will be in production for 5 years or more, a tractor for ten. Regular work, year in year out is thus essential—which can be horribly monotonous for certain temperaments.

★

ONE of the compensations can be the company of other people, with all the jokes and wisecracks from every part of the country being dished up daily—much of it making television, films and stage seem feeble by comparison. In addition to the firm's own social club activities most gangs organise their own—some of it surprising. I knew a uniformed-messenger (i.e. a gatekeeper's labourer) who ran a philosophy group in the works. He was lending Locke on Human Understanding to one of his students while coaching another in A. N. Whitehead. He and I worked together on Ouspensky and drifted towards Eastern philosophy. He probably had the best brain in the works—including management.

## The American Businessmen's TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE board of directors of the American National Association of Metal Finishers recently ratified the following code of ethics for the industry after two years of research and study.\*

As a member of the National Association of Metal Finishers, I hereby resolve that:

1. I am a Metal Finisher—one of the best, and that I will conduct my business truthfully and with justice to all.
2. I will respect my competitor.
3. I will always be honourable in my dealings with my customers by doing good work and giving good services without misleading advertising.
4. I will appreciate and keep inviolate all information and help given to me.
5. I will do all in my power to have a reputation which will earn me the respect of my business associates, my customers, and my competitors.
6. I will keep accurate cost and accounting records so that I may always compete on the basis of true cost and a fair profit.
7. I will endeavour at all times to make a new entrant into the metal finishing field a good competitor.

The firm's official sick-club reduces the amount of benefit paid to members as an illness is extended. To counter this each gang pays an increasing amount to the person as the period grows longer, on the basis that "the longer he is away from work the more his need grows." In another firm a man has been away in a mental hospital for over five years—he is still a gang member, recognised by the management and the trade union. The latter grants his wife periodic sums from surplus funds—the firm can provide for his rehabilitation should he be cured. He still belongs.

In another works sheet metal workers were making car wings by hand (for high-class sports cars) and one man spoiled fifty—a week's work—through misreading a drawing. The gang had a meeting, took the foreman out to a pub, fifty men made one wing apiece, the scrap ones were 'lost' and no-one was any the wiser. The middle-class works accountant would have had a baby had he known, but the gang saved him the inconvenience. And so on. There are thousands of such stories that could be told daily. This is the natural cohesion of workers when they are not stampeded by clever and cunning people. They don't profess to be good—just ordinary. Girls and boys enjoy ganging-up and so do men and women. And in Coventry the gang system has been forced upon employers who, at first reluctant, now concede it. But each new generation of clever young managers has to re-learn the same old lessons. They start off determined to "put the men in their place" and end by accepting the gang system—even boasting about it as though it were their own creation.

Such gang methods are used in civil engineering and large-scale building and other complicated jobs. Success depends upon the determination of the men, plus managers with understanding. The old gang system, where men are bullied along, still exists, and is of course, an abortion. The modern gang system is highly organised, with safeguards built in. A few men still treat it with indifference bordering on contempt, but they lack insight and understanding, and do not count.

Gangs are self-recruiting, nearly all new members being "recommended" to a trade union for the formalities. "Green" labour (i.e. people with no special skill) is put on simple repetitive jobs and when the stage of boredom is reached are moved to increasingly complex operations. In effect the man or woman serves an apprenticeship of sorts while earning full pay as a gang member. No distinction is made between them as people. They are all paid the same regardless of skill. The clever man will do the clever job—because he can, and because he likes it. The not-so-clever (or even stupid) man will do the job that is within his powers. It has been proved, long ago, that distinctions cause more trouble than they are worth. Both management and men are agreed on this. Such agreement is tacit. These things

Continued on p. 4

8. I will not entice the good worker of my competitor to join my firm.
9. I will not bear false witness against my competitor.
10. I will at no time be envious of my competitor's good fortune.

The NAMF ethical and standard practices committee recognises that "in the conduct of our business no individual or concern in any community can act without regard for his neighbours and competitors" and believes "there are methods of competition which are clean, honourable and legitimate". It lists 24 "duties", one of them being to welcome a new competitor and help him to any information and assistance he needs. It is a duty to "solidify the financial condition" of their workers. Truth, justice, honourableness, reputation, fair pricing, honest advertising and equality are also demanded.

There can be little doubt that the tenth commandment was composed with the 4 million American unemployed in mind.

E.F.C.

\*The Code was published in the April 1960 edition of *Metal Finishing*, with the congratulations of the editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Anarchism Requires no Christ

One of the basic beliefs of Christians is that Jesus Christ was the incarnation of God. The definition of God is, I remember from my early youth (when it was hammered into my unwilling brain), "the Supreme Spirit who alone exists of Himself and is infinite in all perfections".

Since I have grown older those words have begun to have some meaning. The complete statement is so immense and comprehensive that my mind is incapable of understanding its full implications let alone accepting it for the basis of a life's philosophy.

Mr. Hughes will realise that one implication of a belief in God is that God is the government to end all governments. H-bombs and Anti-matter particles (the weapons of more mundane authorities) are as children's fireworks to the Creator of Heaven and Earth whose only son is "Our Lord". Surely the Christian who claims to be an anarchist is guilty of the sin of Hubris? I cannot claim to be disinterested enough or to be sufficiently integrated in myself

to claim to be an anarchist, yet I tremble with fear that my few remaining grains of individuality are an illusion because of the awe-inspiring power of this tremendous (used in its full and proper sense), stupendous, horrendous father figure.

Now, if Mr. Hughes believes in that delightful and engaging type of primitive Christianity described in G. Rattray Taylor's book *Sex in History*, then his belief has much to recommend it to readers of FREEDOM. Innocent love and overflowing joyousness, sexual freedom, singing and dancing are admirable aims for any anarchist. Yet Professor Malinowski's Trobriand Island friends are even more admirable. Many of the Stone Age savages of New Guinea set out "civilization" a wonderful example. The brotherhood customs of the Kikuyu tribe, were primitive, simple and easy of acceptance to any anarchist. None of these required a Christ. Anarchism should not require a Christ except perhaps as a symbol of Man's suffering, not as the Son of God.

Manchester, July 17. G. N. MORGAN.

Save Us from 'G'!

DEAR EDITORS,

For the sake of FREEDOM's future, I write to complain of the unworthiness of such articles as, for instance, G.'s latest effort (Vol. 21, No. 27).

Maybe a "RATIONAL" person can state with absolute conviction "There is no God", but intelligent people will have no need to construct a defence against the unknown. Most of us call this "superstition" or thereabouts.

To proclaim doubt on any subject is not "muddled thinking" but surely nothing more than a humble profession of ignorance. My own prejudice takes the form of saying that "no man knows if there is a God, or not".

Dylan Thomas probably defined the HEALTHY person's views on God in *Under Milkwood*, when Nogood Boyo, lying in his boat out in the dab-filled bay says:

"I don't know who's up there,—and I don't care", to the Spring sky.

Best wishes,  
GRAHAM CAREY.  
London, Jy. 2.

The Scientific Approach

In reply to David Boadella's letter, I prefer to base my opinions on what is "probable" rather than on "scientific investigation of a specialist nature" simply because if I preferred the latter I would never be able to make up my mind about anything without studying it for several years. Every day we all form opinions by probability rather than by certainty; most of our knowledge in fact derives from hearsay—from parents and teachers and friends and books and magazines and newspapers and reports—and even when it is gained by personal observation we can never be quite sure of the reliability of our own senses.

Scientific knowledge is ultimately based on the possibility of prediction, demonstration and repetition. Thus wireless and hypnosis, though pioneered by quacks and at first apparently fraudulent, have become acceptable because people can construct wireless sets and practise hypnosis at will over and over again in control conditions. The same is true of things like anaesthesia, vaccination, X-rays and atomic fission, but not of organomy.

It is possible that one day organomy will also become rationally acceptable. But this is not yet the case, and until it is, one of the chief obstacles to such an event is the gnosticism of so many Reichians—that is, the claim that they have a special knowledge of the secrets of the universe, a short cut, as it were, to the truth. Why should we sceptics suspend judgment when they pronounce it so dogmatically?

Hampstead, July 9. N.W.

'A Thriller with Science Fiction Overtones' Subterfuge

CHARLES ERIC MAINE'S new book, *Subterfuge*, (Hodder and Stoughton, 15s.), is a step back in two respects: in time and a step back from the highly anti-authoritarian viewpoint he adopted in *The Tide Went Out*. In that book, a frighteningly realistic picture was presented of a world catastrophe and the methods by which the governments of the world utilise the public faith that "the government will do something" (plus the armed forces when the public begin to realise that the government won't), to save themselves at the expense of the world population. While Mr. Maine seemed to have no faith in the ability of mankind to act in any way but the most brutal when the question of humanity's survival is at stake; the attitude he adopts throughout the book is uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian and an excellent fictional bolster for some of the gloomier anarchist prognostications.

*Subterfuge* is set in the present time, instead of the near future and reintroduces Mr. Maine's journalistic version of Hank Janson, science writer Mike Delaney and his authority-hating editor, Alcott, who lives only for the moment when he can get a story that will wound the government, the civil service, and M.I.5 out of the country. Readers of the book in which they first appeared, *The Isotope Man*, will know what to expect. The book is a tautly written thriller, with science fiction overtones, and is, on balance, a considerable improvement on the overpraised *Isotope Man*.

In *Subterfuge*, by one of those strange chances that always befall fictional journalists-cum-detectives (they never hap-

pened to me when I worked for the gutter press), Mike Delaney gets himself involved in murder and violence centering around the figure of Dr. Werner, a psycho-neurological expert who, for some reason, is the centre of a gigantic security web. It is impossible to reveal the plot without spoiling the story for those who like a first-class thriller, but as in most books by science-fiction writers an ethical problem is posed, and in this case stated explicitly, thus:

"Does the State have the right to compel one of its citizens to work on a security project? Werner had stumbled on a revolutionary discovery that could shift the entire balance of military power in a world hovering on the brink of total war, but his pacifism would never have allowed him to participate in the development of a new and more precise kind of ultimate weapon. Where then, did individual liberty end and social duty begin? And so far as ethics were concerned, could the requisitioning of a man in the interests of defence and security be justified by any standards, particularly when it involved mental conditioning and indoctrination . . . Did Werner have the ultimate right to deny the State his services or, in the final analysis did the State have the right to enforce co-operation?"

Of course to anarchists there is no ethical dilemma in that quotation and perhaps from the point of view of the readers of this paper it is a pity that Charles Maine avoids the militant anti-authoritarianism of *The Tide Went Out*; he rather neatly leaves the reader to solve the moral problem. But the problem is stated, and that, today, in popular fiction is quite a step forward.

J.P.

good enough, to be able to wreck a process which has been going on for centuries. They think it is a post-war phenomenon, a flash in the pan due to a few Communist shop-stewards. Even Melman thought that the trade unions were ineffective before the war. Of course he is wrong there. All that exists now came from the past—from the struggles and ideas of the men who taught me and my generation. We today have similarly to help and teach and guide those who will succeed us.

REG WRIGHT.

(To be concluded)

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP and MALATESTA DEBATING SOCIETY

IMPORTANT

MEETINGS WILL BE HELD in basement, 5, Caledonian Road, N.1. (near King's Cross Station) during repairs at "Marquis of Granby" in July.

JULY 31.—No meeting (Summer School and Camp)

London Anarchist Group AN EXPERIMENT IN OFF-CENTRE DISCUSSION MEETINGS

1st Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. At Jack and Mary Stevenson's, 6 Stainton Road, Enfield, Middx.

Last Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. At Dorothy Barasi's, 45 Twyford Avenue, Fortis Green, N.2.

1st Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. At Colin Ward's, 33 Ellerby Street, Fulham, S.W.6.

2nd Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. (International Libertarian Group)

At David Bell's, 39 Bernard Street, W.C.1. (Local Readers Welcome)

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP SUMMER SCHOOL AND CAMP

SATURDAY, JULY 30th to MONDAY, AUGUST 1st at Alan Albon's, Little Marshfoot Farm, Hailsham, Sussex.

The main theme this year will be "Youth and Anarchism in the Present Day", speakers will include Geoffrey Ostergaard and Tony Gibson. Lectures 4 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. Sunday and 11 a.m. Monday.

Inclusive cost 35/-. Children (welcomed) pro rata.

Please state whether you have your own tent as accommodation is strictly limited. Those staying for a week will be expected to cater for themselves after the School.

CLOSING DATE: Booking must reach M. Stevenson, c/o 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1, by July 15th.

Details of Transport, etc., will be supplied on booking.

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- Vol. 3, 1953, *Colonialism on Trial*
- Vol. 4, 1954, *Living on a Volcano*
- Vol. 5, 1955, *The Immoral Moralists*
- Vol. 6, 1956, *Oil and Troubled Waters*
- Vol. 7, 1957, *Year One—Sputnik Era*
- Vol. 8, 1958, *Socialism in a Wheelchair*
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★ Marie-Louise Berneri Memorial Committee publications:

Marie-Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: *A Tribute* cloth 5s. *Journey Through Utopia* cloth 18s. (U.S.A. \$3)

27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

DISCUSSION A GENERATION

J. M. Pilgrim was not quite fair to *A Generation* (FREEDOM June 25) in several ways:

1. He criticises the "amateurish bungling" of parts of the film, in particular the dark photography, the "fantastic clumsiness" of letting a rifle shot kill a man before it is fired, and the plugging of the love story. But the dark photography is essential to the mood of the story and anyway is nothing to that in *Kanal* (=the Sewer, in which nearly all the action takes place); the faulty synchronisation of the sound of the pistol (not rifle) is the only really obtrusive slip in an otherwise well-made film, and surely the excessive number of loose ends in the plot is a worse defect (it is also possible that we have a rather mutilated version of the film, as of so many others from abroad); and I thought the love story was rather impressive compared to the equal if opposite banality we get from American and Russian propaganda films.

2. He objects to the handling of the political theme, but it is difficult to see what the aid the Polish Communist partisans gave to the Ghetto rising of Spring 1943 has to do with the aid the Russian Red Army so signally failed to give to the Warsaw rising of Summer 1944; in fact the nearly total absence of reference to the Russians throughout the whole Wajda trilogy may be politically the most significant thing about it. As for the orthodox Polish Communist attitude, this is hardly surprising in a film made under

virtual Russian occupation back in 1954. After all, Wajda is a Pole and, presumably, a Communist too.

3. He condemns the weakness of the characterisation, but of course this is not intended to be a film of character—it is a film of situation, dealing with the growth of a new generation introduced to politics in the violent terms of a cruel class-conflict overshadowed by Nazi occupation. In this sort of story there is little room for subtlety, though Wajda doesn't actually do so badly. To us, with our obsession for sophistication, *A Generation* does seem rather sketchy and crude, but we should remember that it was made in difficult circumstances by Poles for Poles. Any English film that dealt half so seriously and artistically with war and politics would be received with rapturous and incredulous acclaim.

4. He implies that it is simply a rather muddled curtain-raiser to the other two films in the trilogy (rather like *Chicken Soup with Barley* in the Wesker trilogy). It is true that it is not as good as them and that it does set the scene and provide the background to both of them, but despite some faults in montage and some clumsy treatment it can stand by itself as a very fine political and war film. We should not let the quite remarkable excellence of *Kanal* and *Ashes and Diamonds* blind us to what is certainly better than any film made about the "last War in Russia, America or England." It is far more than "a collector's piece". N.W.