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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Laws . . . Good people need them, and bad people don't obey them, so what good are they?"

—AMMON HENNACY

Vol. 22, No. 6

February 11th, 1961

Threepence

Mr. Exchequer - Philanthropist

AT last the Government has given the Opposition something to get its dentures into. Announcing increased NHS contributions, the doubling of payments for prescriptions, increased charges for dentures and spectacles, the Government will thereby "save the Exchequer" £72 million in a full year. After all, Mr. Exchequer has been providing no less than £663 million out of the £867 million which was spent on the Health Service last year, and he would have had to find more this year since it appears that the Health bill will rise by a further 11 per cent.

Now who is this generous, philanthropic Mr. Exchequer who has been making it possible for us to get something for nothing, or almost? Where does he get his great wealth from? Last year just from those of us who smoke and drink he collected more than £700 million in Excise Duty, enough to pay for the whole Health Service. He is the super monopolist collecting from us in the course of the year more than £3,000 million one way or another, either by stealth or by the threat of force and then he alone decides how

he will spend our money, only informing us after he has spent it where it has gone. Mr. Exchequer considers for instance that £1,500 million spent on the Defence racket is money well spent. Why only the day after his spokesman the Minister of Health was telling us that we have got to buck up our ideas about "free" health services, his former boss, Mr. Peter Thornycroft (with whom he resigned from the government in 1958 in protest at the Cabinet's refusal to set a ceiling on social service estimates), was attending the 16-nation meeting at Strasbourg at which he declared that Britain was prepared "to increase her contribution to a European-British Commonwealth satellite launching project from £17 millions to £23 millions." A mere £6 millions which Mr. Exchequer feels is money well spent and which he can well afford by saving £1.6m. on spectacles, £1.5m. on welfare food charges, £1m. on dentures and the rest from the £12.5 million he is going to save on prescription

charges.

It's all a question of priorities, and the government knows best what is good for us. Did somebody say the trouble is that the wrong party is in power? Judging by the indignation of the Opposition when the announcement was made (we go to press before the debate in the Commons) it would seem that our heckler is right, except for one small detail which he has forgotten or was too young at the time to have noticed: that it was the *Labour government* which introduced the shilling charge on prescriptions, and over which the then Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevan, resigned from the government!

There is no such thing as a *free* health service. We all pay for it one way and another. And the poor pay more than anybody else, indirectly if one has one's gaze fixed only on the balance sheet, but directly if one pauses to ask oneself why it is that in our society some are poor while others are wealthy!



OUR SUGGESTION FOR THE CREW FOR THE FIRST MANNED EUROPEAN ROCKET

1500 Volunteers for Sit-Down

BY February 1st the Committee of 100 had received 1,200 pledges to participate in the non-violent sit-down demonstration outside the Ministry of Defence on February 18th. The sit-down will be led by Bertrand Russell and Michael Scott in protest against the Polaris agreement and all policies that depend on weapons of mass destruction. In the light of this dramatic response to its appeal for volunteers the Committee has firmly decided to go ahead with the demonstration. Meanwhile recruiting for further volunteers continues. As we go to Press we understand that a further 300 pledges have been received.

The sit-down is to be preceded by a march from Marble Arch to Trafalgar Square starting at 1 p.m. and a rally in the Square starting at 2 p.m. Speakers will include Bertrand Russell, Herbert Read, Michael Scott, and Hugh MacDiarmid. After the rally demonstrators will march down Whitehall to the Ministry of Defence where the sit-down will commence. A declaration signed by all demonstrators and posted up on the main door of the Defence Ministry will serve notice on the Government that the demonstration is the first in a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience against weapons of mass destruction.

A supporting march of those not intending to take part in the sit-down will follow the demonstrators down Whitehall and continue past Parliament Square into Victoria Street and Tothill Street.

Local branches of a number of Trade Unions have sent donations and messages of support for the demonstration. The Seven Sisters Lodge of the National Union of Mineworkers representing 650 miners in South Wales is sending two delegates to take part in the demonstration. Donations and messages of support have come from seven A.E.U. branches. Last week-end delegates to a meeting of A.S.S.E.T. (Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives & Technicians) voted to support the demonstration; at least eight of those present at the meeting are expected to take part in the sit-down.

Two playwrights who are members of the Committee have confirmed that they will be taking part in the demonstration. They are Arnold Wesker and Robert Bolt.

Who cares about the Pawns in ALGERIA

SINCE the Arab Nationalists have now declared themselves ready for a new attempt at negotiating the organization of free elections in Algeria; since everyone, including General de Gaulle, seems to hold that such election are the only way of achieving "self-determination" for Algerians; since it should not be technically impossible to provide some form of neutral supervision of the ballot; since everyone seems to agree with everyone else on the main point at issue, why is it, one may wonder, that they are not falling into one another's arms and organizing these elections at once? Why don't they stop the war and consult the people?

The answer, or part of it, is that the people never do have a say in such things. Although everyone is officially clamouring for self-determination, it is obvious to anyone knowing the rules of the political game that the next Algerian ballot will have no more significance than any other ballot: the outcome will be independence, and so the real issue is the organization of power in the future independent state; but it stands to reason that, on such serious matters, the people cannot possibly be left to decide for themselves. Elections will be called simply to approve of what will have been agreed upon by the political leaders of both sides. Such an agreement is not yet in sight, although negotiations are notoriously going on "in secret" between the French government and the Algerian rebels. The reason for that secrecy is that both sides are afraid of losing their prestige should the negotiations fail, and of letting it be known to the world at large, and to the Algerian victims in particular, that there is in fact little or not question of peace in these talks: the stake being power, the politicians prefer playing their game patiently and quietly, far from the

madding crowd and its cries for peace.

IN order to safeguard as many of their economic and political interests as possible, the French will only negotiate peace from a "position of strength"—which means waving the threat of an alternative French solution should the rebels prove intractable. Hence the setting up of a semi-autonomous administration, the increase of military pressure on, and control of, the Muslim population; hence also de Gaulle's insistence on a "peaceful confrontation of all tendencies", the function of which would simply be to reduce the importance of the FLN to that of a tendency among others, of an ineffectual minority. But the FLN will not accept being placed in such a position, and so the game goes on.

One must bear in mind that the rebel leaders are seasoned politicians too, and that their aim is not simply independence for Algeria, but power for the FLN. Ever since the beginning of the armed rebellion, the FLN leaders have ruthlessly pursued the physical elimination of all rival anti-French organisations. Their attitude towards the more socially conscious MNA (the Algerian National Movement, led by the famous syndicalist Messali Hadj) is a case in point: members of the FLN have fought full-scale battles against MNA rebels in Algeria over the past few years, and have apparently succeeded in almost totally suppressing them; in France, members of the MNA have always been accused by agents of the FLN of being the stooges of the French police, and executed as traitors, in the purest Bolshevik tradition. Having appointed themselves the sole representatives of the Algerian

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An Ambitious Experiment Concerning FREEDOM'S FUTURE

FOR many months past FREEDOM'S columns have included a number of letters and articles on the subject of how anarchist ideas can best be communicated to the public by the written word. We have in the main published contributions from those readers who had suggestions to make for changing the format, the frequency as well as the editors of FREEDOM. Similarly so far as the editors were concerned the floor was taken by those who favoured change. But to restore the balance, we should point out that very many readers when ordering books, or renewing their subscriptions have, in passing, put in their plea that FREEDOM should continue as a weekly publication. The editors of FREEDOM are not unanimous on the subject. Most of us have worked together on the paper for the past fifteen years, each with his or her particular way of approaching the problems of propaganda, of organisation; each with his individual interpretation of anarchism. We hope we will not appear immodest when we suggest that to have "put to bed"—as the print-in fraternity so quaintly describe the process of getting a paper ready for print—something like 650 issues of FREEDOM, is no mean achievement in the circumstances! But neither is it unreasonable that some of us, after watching so many millions of words emerge from the presses over the years, should feel less enthusiastic as to their efficacy, or question the method of approach, or even just feel tired! After all, the results have hardly been brilliant, and the enthusiastic young people prepared to take over for the

next decade while we graze, in our old age, on the green pastures reserved for us (on paper!) by our good friend S.F. have not, so far, materialised. The point is of course that we do not spend our time (and for the sake of new readers we should point out that no-one connected with the many activities of the FREEDOM PRESS is holding down a paid job) publishing a paper, simply for the sake of entertaining our readers; the measure of the success of our efforts is the extent to which anarchist ideas are accepted and acted upon by a growing number of people. Some of us think that the results of 15 years of propaganda have been a dismal failure, and among them some think that it has been because we have not succeeded in "putting over the idea" while others maintain that if the public won't respond there is nothing much that you can do about it. In the third group are those who think that we should intensify our propaganda whether the public is apathetic or enthusiastic. None of us, however, doubts the "rightness", the validity, of anarchism.

FOR as many years as we have been connected with the FREEDOM PRESS we have been stressing the need for the newspaper which makes its anarchist propaganda by underlining and commenting on day to day news at home and abroad and the review which is the vehicle for unrestricted (in terms of space) thought and research on basic social, economic and organisational problems which will loom as large

Continued

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CONGO TRAGEDY

HUMAN tragedy always seems to give us a morbid interest, we have made a mess of this world and so many people spend all their time carefully analysing and classifying one disaster after another. Maybe we just want to know where everything has gone wrong, we want to know what is wrong, for we feel so forcefully that life is only a tiny part of what it could be.

Two books have just been published* which deal with a tragedy in the middle of Africa, a tale of hatred and evil, of malice and spite. But there is another side to it, some people are trying to mop up the blood and build a State just like the one we have. Uncle UN is saving the African people from "anarchy and chaos". They are lucky indeed, soon these fortunate people will have a basis for a society just like the one we live in. In time their expectation of life may rise from thirty years to seventy, it is always possible if we organise and plan and have responsible institutions. Pity the Africans who have never had real Power before, now is their chance to show the world what they can do when they are civilised. What joy is Progress!

The first of these books deals with the political and historical side of the Congo and should be read prior to reading Calder's book, which is really a report of a very personal character on the United Nations' social services in the Congo. Both books are, for obvious reasons, hurried and thus contain a sense of urgency and drive.

Congo Disaster starts with an introduction, that should be read at the end of the book, and then deals briefly with 80 years of Belgian presence in the Congo. Legum tells us of Leopold's 'civilizing' mission begun in 1885 and completed by 1908 when his personal rule was replaced by the Belgian parliament. In Legum's words the white man's influence is re-

corded in all its glory: "The Congo was a pitiful land when he (Leopold) took it over; it was more pitiful when he had done with it. Although slavery had finally been put down, forced labour, autocracy, and harsher poverty were put in its place." But even the 'pitiful' state of the Congo prior to the Belgian rule had its gardens of paradise. At the turn of the century Leo Frobenius, a German explorer and humanist could write:

"In some villages, the main streets were lined on both sides with palm trees. Each hut was adorned in a different style, a clever delightful mingling of wood-carving and matting. The men carried chiselled weapons in bronze and brass. They were clad in multi-coloured stuffs of silk and fibre. Each object, pipe, spoon, or bowl was a work of art, comparable with its beauty to the creations of the Romanesque period in Europe. I have never heard of any northern people who could rival these primitive folk in their dignity, exquisite politeness, and grace."

Legum goes on to describe the period up until the Second World War in which the Congo was ruled by a "Trinity of Power", the administration (Belgian), Big Business, and the Roman Catholic Church. Following the War until 1958 the Belgians began to lose their position, the elite of Africans allowed to 'rise' in the social scale revolting against the Belgians to lead a Nationalist movement. In 1959 the Nationalists showed very great advances and early in 1960 independence was surprisingly granted for June of the same year. The reasons for the sudden Belgian capitulation are not certain but it seems likely that they could not really have done anything else as the complete African front showed its determination to win independence at once. This determination in turn coming from the various political rivals trying to outbid each other in winning the support of the populace.

The split between the federalists or tribalists such as Kasavubu and the unitarians wanting all power with a centralised State, represented by Lumumba, is at the heart of Congolese politics. Legum argues that a federal set-up, such as in Nigeria is more likely to work in

the Congo (eleven times the size of Britain), but that the smaller African countries such as Ghana are more suited to the more centralised system of Government. However all that is really being contended is whether centralism should be tribal or national.

I will not enter into the disaster that followed independence or to the UN intervention and subsequent political upheavals and tribal warfare. These are all thoroughly discussed in the book. In a final summing up Legum comes out with three major criticisms of the UN, these are: 1. Their failure to deal with Tsombe; 2. The failure to support the Lumumba government; 3. The failure to discipline and reorganize the Force Publique. But he ends: "Criticism of the UN operation becomes insignificant when set against the prophylactic role of the UN."

Ritchie Calder was asked by the UN and the WHO (World Health Organisation) to undertake his fact-finding mission, but no one at the UN has been asked to approve his book. However, it is very pro-UN and is not critical. Calder states that he is "on the side of the United Nations", and if the editors of FREEDOM think my attitude to the UN is starchy-eyed they should compare my views with Calder's.

After a very brief historical sketch of the history of the Congo, Calder plunges right into his adventurous journeys in the Congo. He takes us from province to province of the country and readably informs us what the UN is doing in the field of social services to help the Congolese. In his chapter on the Kasai province he predicts the famine now being borne by the Baluba people and paints a most distressing picture of the situation there. He reports that "throughout the Congo the WHO doctors were on the alert to the spread of plague but, as Dr. Dufour told me grimly, there was not much fear of plague in this province of Kasai. The rats were too well fed, because there were so many unburied corpses and, according to him, well fed rats did not contract plague." He tells of a European doctor who found it "rather discon-

cerning to undo an out-patient's plaster cast and find a nest of bed-bugs inside."

A revealing chapter on Orientale Province is which Calder makes an investigation of the judiciary confirms my feelings about white settlers in Africa. "In Orientale Province," he writes, "with two exceptions, all the magistrates bolted. Don't let's quibble about a word—they bolted." This was typical of the whole Congo except for Katanga Province. "Justice," we read, "had to be rehabilitated in the Congo." So just when respect for law and order was at its lowest, the UN set about restoring the illusion of "Justice".

In his final chapter Calder sums up the work of the UN in the Congo as a great experiment in State-Making and State-Management. And although I still hold that the emergency help given to the Congolese by way of expert technical and medical assistance is worthy of praise, I must say that I shudder at the thought of such a pernicious thing as a State actually being built.

In the editorial (The 'Political and Military Chicanery' goes on 28/1/61) the editors of FREEDOM state:

Not for the Boys

THE Young Fabians have projected their first pamphlet* into the coffee houses and bars which the New Leftists and other Labourite youth frequent. Its author Ray Gosling advocates an interesting semi-libertarian case for the organisation of individual youth clubs, which is conceded in his plea for more autonomy in the structure of youth syndicates.

In Leicester, Gosling has not been idle in applying his thesis, he is a member of the permanent staff of whom all are under 23, in a youth club which is now apparently commercially self-sufficient. He is however rather vague with regard to the relationship between the individual member and the committee, and in the introduction he unfortunately claims that the operation of the club is dictated by the committee, the fact that the committee is a collection of young people and originally compiled of—a character living off immoral earnings, plus a teenage

prostitute, plus the girl from the Approved School, plus a professional thief, plus a shop lifter, plus the mentally retarded and the unemployable—is not very consoling, and anarchists would be inclined to query to what extent the committee is controlled by the rank and file members.

On the question of youth leaders he diverges from the Albemarle Report, which failed to give any consideration to the relation between the youth leader and the young person, and goes on to reject the worker to boss, father to son, apprentice to master concept in favour of the more libertarian conception of the youth leader acting as a supplier and the young person taking the form of a consumer. Throughout the pamphlet Gosling directs a steady flow of contempt at the moralistic, semi-religious, semi-military type approach to youth work. He continues to assert, that young people will not be satisfied with a service for youth until they actually run the show, their own show. In the next sentence in suggesting the methods of attainment in this aim Gosling drifts from reality when he appeals to the Labour Party to realise that it could be a proud champion of such a cause. In view of the proscribing of the Young Socialist publication "Keep Left" and the fate of the old League of Youth, this suggestion seems to strike an ironic note.

It is unfortunate that the pamphlet was not written with the intention of embracing and prompting, the type person Gosling is writing about, to use his phrase the "Town conscious" be they honest, decent or crooks and tarts, to take a sense of communal responsibility in their own clubs. This first Young Fabian publication is too ostentatious and expensive to be very widely read by anyone other than the Labour politicians and intellectuals.

B.B.

*Lady Albemarle's Boys, by Ray Gosling (A Young Fabian Publication), 3s.

gallery to view his own work for the first time.

One does not wish to be harsh on such charming and unimportant work but the artist's self-appointed impressarios set the values and they must be judged by them for this exhibition would appear to be only a spearhead into the commercial Bond Street galleries, for tucked down in the hallway leading to the Tooth's gallery, like Faith, Hope and Charity, hang three geometrical abstractions by three English painters, Plumb, Turnbull and Shroud, all three late of the "Situations" exhibition at the R.B.A., and one can only assume that they are coyly waiting in the wings for the beckoning finger to send them trapesing up the stairs to the glossy catalogue and the vacant wall space and all this forty years after Kupa, Mondrian and Malevitch. But if anyone is fearful that Alloway has left the old-hat abstractionism they need have no fear for he has supplied the essay for the catalogue of the paintings of Haller and Hallegha at the ICA, 17 Dover Street, W.1. and Haller's abstractions have the deliberate charm of splintered rotting wood while Hallegha's slight drifting luminous brush wipings have been blown up to overpower the spectator with the sheer weight of his canvas.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

Around the Galleries

ON Sunday the 22nd of January the Woodstock Gallery at 16 Woodstock Street, W.1. succeeded in infiltrating a plug into the national press to the effect that Colin Wilson would open the exhibition of paintings by Lionel Miskin and that the said Miskin would cut and distribute his own life-size cake baked effigy and on the evening of the 23rd half the Town and its idiot brother crowded into the Woodstock Gallery to bear witness to this act of transubstantiation. It is never a pleasant sight to witness a painter, even a bad one, abasing himself before the very mob he professes to despise, for if Miskin had had the courage to spit in the faces of these collected clowns I should have been the first to applaud him but the man who claimed to protest "against the dealer, chosen intermediary between artist and community", "and a Public that prostrates itself at the LOUDEST SCREAM" turned the Woodstock into a third-rate variety theatre for the benefit of any passing free-loader, sensation-seeker or sniggering square and his own paintings merely served as a barren backcloth for his act.

At seven o'clock the arc lights were turned on and the TV camera men made ready and bubbles of silence bounced through the heated crowded room as it became known that Colin Wilson had arrived. Sporting a tiny orchid in his lapel and with a fixed grin upon his face Wilson swam like a spawning salmon through the gaping crowd to the white lights of the camera crew hidden by the mob at the rear of the gallery and a little stream of hangers-on crawled after him. We waited breathlessly for the "sensation" that we knew was to be ours. A false thrill was engendered when a visiting hearty gurgled "God here's Christopher Logue, now there'll be a fight".

We squeezed back among the peasantry at the wrong end of the gallery as Christopher Logue, followed by a smaller group of sycophants than the Wilson camp, eased its way by right of press benediction into the packed mass and waited eagerly for the sounds of promised battle should these two bantamweights attempt to flog each other to death with Miskin catalogues, but it was

not to be, and the evening was given over to the adoration of Colin Wilson.

From my place against the far wall of the gallery I could spy the wine glasses balanced precariously on the hanging frames of Miskin's paintings and to dull the time I listened to a whispered and acrimonious dispute between a dealer from one of the fashionable "little galleries" and a sad-faced Asiatic from the dealer's stud. Wilson droned on and the cameras turned and finally becoming embarrassed with Wilson's views on painting and bored by his small boy use of the words "shit" and "bloody", I drifted upstairs to the Small Room above the main drag where Paul Mann, the only artist in the house, looked slightly green around the gills, sucked aspirin tablets.

Mann's abstractions executed in cellulose paint are as beautiful and as gaudy as peacocks' tails. He has used drops of bright colours on white board lain flat down and with swift and flowing brush strokes he has created patterns that hint at the loveliness of orchids, Chinese kimonos or birds of paradise trapped in snow.

The very profusion of the work on display may lower their value in the aesthetic eye but like the dancing lights upon the wet road their inconsequential beauty is worthy of our attention.

I made my way back to the main drag and Wilson and most of the drifting mob had drifted off and the camera crews were putting their gear away while reporters checked notes, opinions and names with each other. Miskin's cake body was still being carved up and served to whosoever wanted it and a few lingering souls were still partaking of the eucharist but strictly from hunger.

It was now possible to view Miskin's paintings and these muddled landscapes that looked like bad parodies of anything from Blake or Turner or Van Gogh were frankly not worth the journey. With backgrounds resting lumpishly upon foregrounds and the whole merging into a brownish greyish daub they oppressed one with their wasted effort. If Miskin spent time and effort he could paint a decent landscape but he wants to play genius without offering any proof of native talent and as long as he plays this

silly game he will always find people with even less talent than himself willing to use him as a doorstep for their own advancement. But the choice is Miskin's and he will find that a month from now the same clowns that cheered him on will be fawning over some other sucker.

The Arthur Tooth's gallery at 31 Bruton Street, W.1. is playing host to six American Abstract Painters and this trivia is worth a visit merely to purchase a copy of Lawrence Alloway's two shilling catalogue for this is the second visit of the American Hard Edge Painters to these islands and if anyone is worried about the sobriquet Hard Edge then call it Geometrical Abstractionism and bravely face the taunt of being a graduate from Squaresville but should you wish to climb into the act then quote Roger Coleman's definition of Hard Edge at them to the effect that

"it is based on perceptual experience rather than on a measurable concept of hardness or clarity of definition. For example the specification for a model hard-edge painting would have to take account of a kind of instability within the framework of stability, like the majestically brooding instability of Ad Reinhardt's symmetry, or the finite insecurity of two forms which at the same time are components of a continuous flat surface..." etc.

It is fitting that Coleman should point out Reinhardt, one "d", for this forty-eight-year-old American cartoonist is the only one of the half dozen from Betty Parson's New York gallery who seems capable of carrying on beyond this pleasant but trivial play with forms and colours for these are the sort of exercises that one would expect any competent journeyman signwriter to perform as part of a normal day's stint and if you feel that I am being too harsh then I can only quote an aside from Alloway's excellent and partisan catalogue that "(Lieberman puts some of his paintings out to a craftsman to execute)". Their very simplicity makes them ideal for a new do-it-yourself game for if I read Alloway aright it should now be possible to phone the specifications to one's signwriter and then to sign the finished work on the first opportunity that the creator in abstracto has of visiting the

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Freedom's Future

Continued from p. 1

free society as they do in the authoritarian society in which we live. For years we have attempted to combine both activities in one journal, and have done neither as effectively as we should have wished. And within the FREEDOM PRESS group as readers will have gathered from the articles of one of our editors there are those who feel it is high time that some of us should have the time to pause and think, to write the kind of articles which the pressure of producing a weekly at present precludes. Others, the present writer included, agree (while hotly denying that no thought goes into the production of FREEDOM!) but we feel that it should not be at the expense of, but in addition to, the publication of FREEDOM "the anarchist weekly".

At our last group meeting we were not unanimous, but, of those who were prepared to accept the responsibility of ensuring continued publication, a compromise was reached which, so far as the present writer is concerned, is one which, given the collaboration of anarchist writers and journalists throughout the world; an intensification of effort on the distribution side; and the continued financial support of our comrades and sympathisers, represents a step forward in our propaganda. Unlike the capitalist press which aims at whittling down the printed word, we aim at increasing ours!

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THIS is what we are about to do as an experiment for this year. Our readers' reactions to it will largely determine what we will do next year. For this reason we ask them to co-operate with us at least for this year, and to reserve their judgment until the end of the year. For most of our readers all it means is that the subscription to FREEDOM will cost them 30/- (\$5 for U.S. and Canadian readers) instead of 19/- as at present. Why?

Firstly because with the first issue of FREEDOM in March the price will be increased to 4d., not because that is what in capitalist terms is the "economic" price of FREEDOM but because with the few pounds extra that we will receive each week we are proposing to (a) improve the quality of the paper used (b) buy new display type for headings and (c) include illustrations, which means paying reproduction fees for photographs and the cost of half-tone blocks.

Secondly because on February 25, instead of receiving FREEDOM we shall be sending you the first number of the anarchist review AUTONOMY, a thirty-two page publication which you will go on receiving the last week of each month for the rest of the year instead of FREEDOM which will not be published for that week.

In other words in 1961 we shall be publishing 42 issues of FREEDOM and 10 issues of AUTONOMY. For the casual reader the former will cost 4d. the latter 1/6 a copy. For our subscribers the price is 30/- including postage, which alone accounts for 10/4.

We repeat, this is an experiment we are making not for the sake of dividends for the shareholders, but to further the ideas of anarchism and freedom. Next year, if the necessary support is forthcoming during the next ten months we will publish FREEDOM weekly, that is 52 issues, and the monthly AUTONOMY monthly, that is 12 issues. But it depends on you our comrades and

Who cares for the Pawns in Algeria?

people, the rebel leaders want to make sure that they will also be the sole masters of the future independent state. If they succeed in securing that aim through negotiations with the French, there will be some hope of a cease-fire. If not, the game—that is: the war—will go on.

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IT is interesting to note that one possible incentive behind the FLN's recent peace-offer may have been the fear that, with the prolongation of the war, the national consciousness of the Algerian masses is bound to give way to a more radical class-consciousness and bring about the emergence of new revolutionary leaders, whose authority will be a challenge to the bourgeois ministers of the provisional Algerian government. The Muslim demonstrations that were staged during de Gaulle's visit to Algeria had not been ordered by the FLN and are still lingering on in spite of the FLN's orders to the contrary: thus the initiative of the Algerian population has both reinforced the Nationalist Government's prestige abroad and foreshadowed a real danger for its power in the future state. Under the significant title "Algérie FLN ou Algérie anarchisante?" a journalist goes as far as hinting, in the usually reliable daily *Le Monde* (18.1.61), that "the soldiers of the National Liberation Army garrisoned in Tunisia or Morocco constitute a sort of 'reserve' which might well be of some use to the members of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, should they encounter the resistance of the 'maquis'-fighters on their return to Algeria to take part in the referendum campaign. The 'external army' would thus be called in to support the authority of men who have long since ceased to take part in the actual fighting or had never done so in the first place." True enough, the seriousness of the FLN's misgivings should not be over-estimated. The rebel leaders are still considered as heroes by the

readers. Your task is clear.

(1) In the course of this month we will be sending out renewal notices to all subscribers. If your subscription is due for renewal then please attend to this important matter without delay.

(2) If you value the work that a paper such as FREEDOM is doing and are aware of the fact that the subscription rate bears no relation to the cost of production (which does not include administration, nor payment to contributors and editors) then you will be among those of our comrades and friends who send contributions to the Deficit Fund, which this year will need your solidarity more than ever.

(3) If you value FREEDOM for yourself, then you will not think we are expecting too much of you when we ask you to do all you can to introduce the paper to friends, or even to sell it at meetings in your locality.

(4) In many respects, inducing those people who can write and who have something to say, to write for FREEDOM or AUTONOMY will be the biggest problem to overcome this year. There is no shortage of capable writers among the anarchists, but few of them seem to feel a sufficiently strong link with the paper to induce them to undertake a regular collaboration. We are hoping that the new developments in our publishing activities will reverse this trend and give an opportunity to anarchists of all tendencies to express themselves in print. Next week we will discuss in more detail what we think the new-look FREEDOM should be as well as outlining the programme for AUTONOMY.

people and are in no immediate danger of losing their political hold on them. They can thus afford to pursue the war for quite a long time if it suits them. And the fact that Ferhat Abbas started on his Indonesian tour straight after his last peace-proposal shows that he did not expect an immediate positive answer from the French, but it also shows that he did not even hope for it. The point is precisely that, for the FLN, as for the French, the horrors of the war, the bloodshed, the tortures, the terror, the famine and the misery, do not really matter. The people don't matter, or only in so far as they are the pawns in the political chess-game which both governments are engaged in. The stake is power, and is therefore worth taking one's time before ending the game. Meanwhile, of course, the pawns are falling. But who cares about pawns anyway? De Gaulle has allowed the war to drag on, and the FLN leaders are prepared to sacrifice their own "brothers" in their pursuit of totalitarian power. But, from politicians, such attitudes are to be expected; that is not the sorest point.

★

THE sorest point about the Algerian war is surely that the French people don't care about it either. Sad to say: they don't really suffer from it enough, they can all too easily bear the burden of the war, both from the economic and the human points of view. The annual rate of casualties on the French side does not much exceed, as one cheerful minister once pointed out, "the number of deaths on the road", and the economic consequences are no doubt less to be felt in the field of consumer-goods than in those of long-term investments such as housing, health, education, electric power, etc. The bulk of the French, moreover, are much more chauvinistic at heart than is generally supposed, and are at present completely hypnotized by de Gaulle's nationalistic haughtiness. It is even possible to assume that, were de Gaulle to-morrow to decide that the interest and glory of France command her to launch upon a full-scale extermination war against the Algerian people, and were he then to consult the nation on this point, he would once more obtain a three-to-one majority in favour of his policy! So that the recent answer of the French to the referendum, though everyone agrees that it was a "yes to peace", means in fact that they hope for peace, not that they really want it: there are no tangible signs whatsoever that they do.

The present government is no doubt partly responsible for lulling the people into that blissful state of indifference, but the political parties of the left have dutifully helped in rocking the cot. Volumes of protests, petitions, manifestos have been issued by those parties in the course of the past six years—none of them insisted that something had to be done. "Sign this paper, and when the time comes, vote for us", was the slogan. At no time was any politician heard to say: "Don't bother to vote, but when the time comes, refuse to fight!" At no time were the people reminded that they had the power to stop the war at once, since they are relied upon to do the fighting and pay for it. Direct action is considered by our worthy political thinkers to be "limited in scope" and ineffective (the efficiency of political action for peace has been proved, of course, beyond all expectations!).

The implication, in any case, is that direct action is individual action and requires individual thinking; it is therefore highly unpolitical and ultimately dangerous for all political parties. The Communists and the

other left-wing groups may well be right in claiming that "the masses" would not at present follow a policy of active resistance to war, but the point is that the principles of such an action have not even been put forward. Here, as always, the parties are concerned with keeping their political "clientèle", not with upholding moral principles. Since the parties are both unable and unwilling to take a firm moral stand with regard to the Algerian war and to war in general, the people themselves have come to feel that the issue is but a political one, which in no way concerns them morally. Nobody, then, seems to care; nobody feels strongly enough about the war to take the personal risk of fighting it personally. That is why all political actions against the war have hitherto been doomed to failure: they had not seriously been meant to succeed in the first place.

★

IT is not quite true, however, that nobody cares. The encouraging sign is that the young, especially, are beginning to realize that the present inertia of public opinion is due precisely to the organic impotence of the political parties, and that they will have to rely upon themselves if they wish to obtain tangible results. It is thus the Students' Union which took the initiative of staging the mass protest meeting last October and then asked the left-wing parties to join them. (The Communists boycotted the meeting, according to their usual tactic of sabotaging such movements as they cannot control). It is, moreover, interesting to note that the chairman of the Students' Union gave as one of the reasons for staging the demonstration the fact that the pressure in favour of military disobedience was steadily increasing among the rank-and-file, and that some outlet had to be found for the young people's indignation before things got out of hand! That is already typical of a politician's attitude, but at least it reveals the existence of healthy reactions among the young.

It seems that, in spite of the heavy prison sentences, the number of conscientious objectors is still on the increase—though well-nigh all the

left-wing papers conspire in hushing it up. Non-violent action groups are still courageously trying to arouse public opinion, but they, too, have receded into the background: they have ceased to be "news", what with the UNO debate, the referendum, the peace-proposals—and the continuation of the war. There are some others who do care: the intellectuals who signed the Manifesto of the 121. Their case must not be confused (and Hem Day is guilty of such a confusion in his own counter-manifesto recently published in FREEDOM) with that of the Jeanson organization supporting the FLN. It is true that the text of the Manifesto is not a pacifist or an anarchist text. It is true that it does not condemn all wars. It is also true, by the way, that some 120 out of the 121 people who signed it (many of whom are known to hold libertarian ideas) have declared themselves to be not quite in accordance with the exact wording of the text. But it is not true that the Manifesto calls the young to enrol in the Algerian liberation army; the main tenet of the Manifesto, that on which the stress was brought to bear in the public's mind, is the sentence in which the 121 declare that they "respect the refusal to take arms against the Algerian people and consider such a refusal to be justified". The signatories were not irresponsible enough openly to recommend desertion while being themselves too old to bear the consequences of desertion; or conscientious objection are respectable and justified is, in this country and at this time, a gesture which entails a definite personal risk. That so many thinking and influential people (the total number of signatures exceed 200) should have cared enough about the moral issue of the war to run that risk is in itself encouraging. It is also significant that, with one or two exceptions, none of the signatories belonged to any of the big political parties. Their gesture may well have been "inefficient" from a political point of view; they have, like the conscientious objectors and the nonviolent groups, planted seeds of responsible thinking and courageous action that cannot all be lost.

C.D.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS MENTAL ILLNESS

GLYN HARRY HUGHES writes an interesting and provocative letter in the issue of 28th January, but it is difficult to suppose he is entirely serious.

Undoubtedly, there are people to whom delusions are necessary. We must accept Comrade Hughes's examples of the poor soul lifted from the slough of despond by believing: "I can do all things through Christ", and the wretch saved from suicide by repeating: "Jesus loves me." We may add many more examples, such as the woman saved from acute distress by supposing the doctors in the mental hospital are making her ill by means of telepathic machines, or the man saved from the burden of nonentity by thinking he is Julius Caesar.

We must also agree that all of us have props and crutches in the form of beliefs. Whenever we eat, for instance, we are sustained by the belief that what looks and smells like food is edible, and held in check by the belief that plates are not edible; beliefs which we share with such humble beings as rats, and for which we have a certain amount of *a priori* evidence, but beliefs which are incapable of logical proof and may on occasion be false. Those of us who are capable of abstract thought may also embrace "rational" beliefs, for which there is even less evidence. I, for instance, am unshakable in the faith that snails, when no one is observing them, remain snails. Yet it is quite within the bounds of logic that they turn into kangaroos, and

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there is no actual evidence either way. So delusion and rational belief are alike, in that neither can be proved by logic. Similarly, an elephant is like a biscuit tin, in that neither can ride a bicycle; but it does not follow that there are no important differences. Indeed, Comrade Hughes himself points to one very important difference between rational and irrational belief, when he says he recognises his props and crutches for what they are. The person who needs a delusion to keep him going could never do that.

And we need not be afraid that reasoned argument against faith will persuade those who really need it to give up. No-one gives up a belief unless he is quite capable of managing without it and finds it something of a burden. To "rob" someone of a belief, by speaking or writing against it, is not an act of wanton cruelty but an act of liberation. If Comrade Hughes honestly thinks I deserve "to have a millstone round my neck" because I help someone else to get rid of a millstone, that is up to him. But I think he is being damnably unjust. London. D.R.

"The Army of Today's Alright"

DEAR FRIENDS,

"The Army Council and the Air Council had been studying the question of punishments carefully. There appeared to be a gap . . . between detention and the restriction of privileges. . . . In each case the higher punishment was often too severe—particularly for officers. A new clause . . . would allow Commanding Officers to dock a man's pay, without having to be deprived of his services."

These extracts from the report on the second reading of the Army & Air Force Bill (*Guardian* 3/2/61) coming on top of the announcement of increased Health Service charges confirm my pre-election forecast of 1955 that the Tories will leave no stone unturned to run the country on the cheap—or to run it in such a manner that their precious tax-concessions shall be fully covered. (But, of course, the Liberal and Labour Parties would be equally ingenious in devising ways of financing favour to their supporters.)

Yours fraternally,
Southampton, Feb. 3. B. C. BEVIS.

PROMISCUITY

The Editor, FREEDOM.
DEAR SIR,
In his article on promiscuity, N.W. paints a doleful picture of unenlightened youth. Sex lives are to be lived for their

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own sakes and not used as instruments of rebellion. The people who live for kicks and intense pleasures on the sexual level will probably be sadder and wiser when they find they have survived to 30. Has no-one ever told them that we live in a permissive society? The need to signify one's disapproval of the world by making a mess of one's sex life just does not exist. You can do more or less what you like so long as you appear to be responsible and don't make people miserable. A progress of pox, promiscuity, abortion and illegitimacy will furnish the unenlightened masses with no sort of worth-while example. Rebellion through sex has always been self-defeating and a hindrance to change in sex behaviour. N.W.'s little lot are playing the moralist's game. We should note that the vicious aspect of the compulsive sexual moralist is that he still has the power to muddy the waters which he can no longer prevent us drinking. Millions can read on Sundays about the sordid junketings of film stars' sex parties; Dr. Chesser's remarks that a pre-marital sexual relationship can be decent and rewarding caused a booklet to be suppressed. Nevertheless, the moralist is a thing that will go away if you pretend it's not there—which is what you must do if you want to live according to your lights. Rebellion is useless.

Yours faithfully,
W. G. QUADDY (Mr.)
London, Jan. 29.

DEBATE

Saturday, February 11th—City Literary Institute, Stukeley Street, W.C.2, 7 p.m. Debate:

"That the Classless Society is an impossibility".

Opposed by Jack Robinson (L.A.G.) and Arthur Uloth (L.A.G.)

Admission 1/-

Refreshments obtainable.

AN ANARCHIST'S NOTEBOOK

Portugal: The Curtain of Silence is Raised

A WELCOME VOL. 1, NO. 1, WAS AMONG the papers, magazines, bulletins and leaflets we received at Freedom office this week. It is the *Portuguese and Colonial Bulletin* which is to be published monthly in London. If future issues are as informative as the first, then the curtain of silence behind which Dr. Salazar has been able to hide so successfully these many years, has indeed been raised at last!

It would seem that the publishers of the *Bulletin* were not in the secret of the seizure of the *Santa Maria* as their first issue had already gone to Press when Captain Galvao's daring action captured the news headlines of the world. Rather was their decision to inform the English-speaking world of the crimes of the Salazar regime prompted by the stirrings of the movements of "national liberation" in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and Cape Verde during the past months. Two articles on "Africans' Rights under Portugal's laws" and "Portugal's 'mission' in Angola" give a documented picture of a situation in which all the worse features of colonial rule in Africa have been applied to the people who live under Portuguese rule. At least 99 per cent. of the population of the five major colonies, that is 10,607,666 people, have no rights at all. The "assimilated" non-Europeans total less than 100,000. In Angola with a population of 4.1m. 135,000 or 3.25 per cent. were classified as "civilised". They included 70,000 whites (all the whites of course), 26,000 mulattos (all but 3,000 of the mulatto population), and 30,000 Negroes (that is all but 3,970,000 of the Negro population!). And this is the situation after 400 years of Portuguese rule.

In Portugal the people have rights, but only on paper. It is a commentary on the regime that after 33 years of Dr. Salazar there were, in 1959, according to the *Anuario Estatístico*, 3,811 trials in Portugal leading to convictions for "crimes" against religion, the security of the State and other political offences. The *Bulletin* also quotes from "Demographic Trends in Western Europe 1951-71. A Report by the Manpower Committee, OEEC (Paris 1956) showing that in the past few years the annual rate of emigration from Portugal exceeds the 30,000 mark, and that if present trends continue Portugal will lose 900,000 of her youth in the next twenty years.

"LIBERATION" THE MONTHLY PUBLISHED IN New York features in its December and January issues an article on Cuba "Americanisation" by one of its

editors, Dave Dellinger who spent three weeks there last November seeing things for himself. One would like to believe that what he saw was a complete picture of the Castro regime at work, for much of what he saw is encouraging. It is impossible to summarise these articles adequately here—interested readers should secure copies of *Liberation* for themselves. We will limit ourselves to quoting from Dave Dellinger's conclusions. He reassures us of his objectivity, for instance, when he writes:

The people may be getting what they want, but politically Cuba is under the control of a small group of idealists who formulate the laws and broad policy (after unusually imaginative and conscientious consultation with the people involved). The history of politics make it clear that it is dangerous for even "good" men to hold this kind of power for any length of time.

He also points to a unique feature of the present regime in Cuba. In all previous revolutions the first act of the new governments has been to force the people to surrender their arms. "Castro has reversed the traditional process"—writes Dellinger—"He has disbanded the centralized and hierarchical army and given more and more arms to the people through the informal and voluntary People's Militia". And assuming this to be a fact (incidentally we hope Dave Dellinger will at some later date give more details of the composition of this "voluntary people's militia") he rightly concludes:

If the people of Cuba were as regimented, deprived of civil liberties and ready to revolt as the United States claims, Castro would not answer the threat of invasion by widely distributing machine guns.

The writer however tempers his enthusiasm for the armed defence of the revolution with the reflection that

Cuba will have more chance of preserving her present idealism and avoiding the corruptions attendant upon her enforced involvement in the international power struggle if she takes one more giant step forward and begins to study and develop methods of non-violent resistance. (One aspect of this would be to stop the execution of counter-revolutionaries, a penalty which is reserved for those who have been convicted of murder and which would win overwhelming endorsement at the polls, but which, if continued, will inevitably lead to the devaluation of all human life.)

We would disagree with D.D.'s "one aspect" of non-violent resistance, in that we believe that in a revolution whilst it may be essential for the people in arms to remain armed for a considerable

time it is a fundamental mistake to execute the enemies of the revolution who fall into one's hands. One may have to kill in order not to be killed, but when one's would-be killer is disarmed and without power there is no valid argument to deprive him of his life. Perhaps his freedom of movement in the critical period of the revolution. But as soon as the people have power he should be given the choice of living among them or in another country. The threat which "liberation" movements in exile offer even when, as in the case of exiled Cubans who are being trained and armed by the United States for an eventual invasion of Cuba, is minimal, so long as, of course, an overwhelming majority of the people of the country to be invaded support the system, or the regime, or the government in power. After all, the success of Castro and his bands of *guerrilleros* cannot be accounted for on the grounds that he disposed of large numbers of men and armament, but that he, and not Battista, who nevertheless was the government, represented the hopes and aspirations of the Cuban peasants and workers.

RUMOUR HAS BEEN RIFE IN ANARCHIST circles in London that Castro has closed down the anarcho-syndicalist Press in Cuba. On our desk this week is a copy of *Solidaridad Gastronomica*, organ of the catering workers of Cuba. It is dated November 15, 1960, and on the front page is an article with the title "The Policy of One Class dominating another can lead to Dictatorship" in which the writer in forcible language puts forward the orthodox anarchist arguments about "dictatorship of the proletariat", "revolutionary government" and concludes that "revolutionary policy consists in a progressive abandonment of the powers of the State until its final elimination. The idea of dictatorship and the concentration of power in a few hands, represents just the opposite".

However, reading on another page "A Review of the Foreign Press" it is clear to us that though the Castro government may still allow the anarchist press to appear it is conditional on their making no comments on Cuban affairs. Or at least this is how we interpret the following opening sentences of the article:

It is possible that the comrades of Uruguay should not understand why *Solidaridad Gastronomica* does not deal with problems of major importance and topicality with reference to our country, and they may well be right in thinking thus. But it does not prevent the editors of *Soli* from expressing an opinion on the subject or dissenting from the point of view of *Lucha Libertaria* [an anarchist

monthly published in Uruguay] in regard to Cuba, at least as expressed in the issues 195—198 which we have just received.

We can only assume, as we haven't the copies of *Lucha Libertaria* at hand, that that paper extolled the Castro regime and that the Cuban anarchist paper had not the freedom to openly say why it does not. It can only be thus for if it were the other way round the Cuban press censor would be only too glad for our Cuban comrades to declare themselves supporters of the regime.

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN CUBA, IN the Congo and a dozen other countries which are in the "News" and where events might well be leading in more positive, libertarian directions? Is it possible to get at the truth without actually going oneself and staying there to see and hear and read enough to build up an objective picture of the situation? Dave Dellinger's *Liberation* article contains a couple of paragraphs which makes one aware how unreliable from the public's point of view are the highly paid, highly boosted professional news gatherers on whom the world press depends for its information.

He tells of how after a meeting at which Castro was the principal speaker he had a talk with a North American newspaperman who had told him earlier that he got the material for his articles "from the people whose business it is to know what is going on—the diplomats." The newsman said he was disgusted with the speech because Castro had made ridiculous promises which he could never keep. When the time came "he will have some good excuse instead." And Dellinger pointed out to him:

"But Joe," I said to him, "he promised some of the things for next week and others for a month or six weeks from now. He would be a fool to make such short-range assurances if he weren't able to carry through." The next day I went to Oriente Province, and for five days I kept seeing the realities that lay behind Castro's promises and the people's faith. I walked through fields in which the dried husks of last year's sugar cane were rotting on the ground while new crops were in various stages of healthy growth. I saw the suckling pigs, the new poultry farms, and the acres of hardwood saplings of which Castro had spoken. . . . Unfortunately, my newspaper friend, whom I met again in Oriente, spent only one day there, in the largest city, where he had a conference with a North American banker and another with a North American diplomat.

How many problems, apart from financial ones, will have to be solved before we shall be entitled to claim that we have a truly Free Press!

LIBERTARIAN.

The Congo Tragedy

Continued from p. 2

In ending this review I would like to leave this issue of the Congo with the words of Jayaprakash Narayan which lead in a direction that could be something of a solution to the argument between the editors of FREEDOM and two of its contributors. Speaking at the recent War Resisters' International, Narayan said (*Peace News* 13/1/61):

"We have at present no world organisation of non-violence. There are no doubt such bodies as the War Resisters' International; but none of these bodies is comprehensive enough to cover and represent all the diverse voluntary forces for a non-violent social order.

"The UN is no doubt there, but it is a body made up of the armed states of the world and itself relies for the enforcement of authority on arms. A few months ago Salvador de Madriaga and I made a joint statement at Berlin that the UN should have no armed forces at all at its command and it should deploy only unarmed force made up of peace-loving volunteers from all parts of the world.

"It would have been interesting to watch the action of such an unarmed UN force in the Congo. I have no doubt that the situation in that unfortunate land would have been quite different and the UN might have succeeded by now in its mission of peace.

"There seems to be no possibility in the near future, however, of the UN disarming itself. The necessity, therefore, is further emphasised for some international body that might bring together the voluntary forces and efforts being made in the world on behalf of peace."

This seems to me to be constructive and practical and it can possibly embrace the qualified goodwill of both the Ritchie Calder and the editors of FREEDOM.

R.J.W.

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

IMPORTANT

On and after February 12th—Meetings at "The Swan", Cosmo Place, Southampton Row, W.C.1. (Holborn Station).

Feb. 12.—Martin Grainger on LESSONS OF THE BELGIAN STRIKE

All Welcome.

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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 Eilerby Street, Fulham, S.W.6.

3rd Thursday of each month at 8 p.m.

At Donald Room's, 148A Fellows Road, Swiss Cottage, N.W.3.

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Friday, 10th February
Ian Celnik
on
COLEMAN HAWKINS
at
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