

Christmas Carols - Cape Canaveral - Colour Prejudice . . . etc.

THE SEASON OF GOODWILL

You walk around the West End of London any evening during the two weeks before Christmas you are likely to be somewhat taken aback now and then by suddenly coming upon little groups in shop doorways or other sheltered acoustic spots, singing at the tops of their voices.

You can't hear them until you are close upon them, for the din of the traffic and the new cries of London from the bus stands and the sellers of monster tins is an effective sound barrier to anything beyond a radius of ten yards. As you draw level with the group, however, your ears are suddenly assailed with the very different notes of these voices singing Christmas

carols. Nicely they sang, too, the groups of young men and girls kept themselves warm, no doubt, with the enthusiasm they felt for the good causes which they sang—for the blind in one year for a new home for old people in another.

It seemed a pity that they came out only at Christmas time and not all the year round. And then the surprise came to be that they came at all, for around them society was organised for the biggest orgy of commercialism ever. The dazzling windows of the shops, the elaborate, corny, tawdry, tasteless or disgusting vied for the attention of the passers-by for the sole purpose of extracting every possible penny from their pockets before 6 p.m. on Christmas

And the meaning of Christmas eve, the significance of Christmas for a Christian country, appeared, if at all, in a shoddy little tableau in a shop window as a gimmick to catch the eye and lead it to the article for sale.

Swamped

High on the façades of the large stores hideous figures nodded their monstrous heads and Father Christmas in the plural beckoned, cajoled and solicited as no prostitute would ever dare. Three yards past those earnest young students and the hullabaloo of the crawling buses and the shuffling crowds had obliterated their voices. Symbolically their attempt to remind the public of the goodwill which is said to be the essence of Christianity was swamped under the thunder of the money makers.

Or, after all, was their attempt just one more to cash in—albeit not for themselves but for a 'good cause'—on the spending spree which is all that Christmas is today?

Why aren't they singing on the streets

CHRISTMAS FARE, 1984.

Dehydrated food was on show at the Royal Navy Supply School at Chatham yesterday. Captain Kenneth Farnhill, in charge of the school, where 200 naval cooks are being trained, said he believed this would be the food of the future.

Captain Farnhill said the food, which was not yet on sale to the public, was prepared at the Ministry of Agriculture experimental station at Aberdeen.

"We had a dehydrated experimental meal recently, first for V.I.P.s from the Admiralty and the Ministry, and it was excellent. I would defy anybody to tell it was not fresh. We had soup, cod steaks, pork chops, cabbage, and peas.

"The pork chops, for instance, are featherweight when dried. They are soaked in water for a few minutes and become exactly like the real thing.

"It is a vast improvement on the wartime type of dried food, like dried potato. It saves an enormous amount of space and weight in a ship, as well as refrigeration, and the nutritional value is far superior to the canned stuff."

Manchester Guardian.

during their Easter and Summer vacations also?

Business as Usual

For the tradesmen and manufacturers, the selling of everything that can be called a 'seasonal gift', from clothing and furniture to the stupidest gew-gaw, is at its annual peak. If it was business only as usual they would be bitterly disappointed.

In many spheres, however, for business to go on as usual seems to be a rank contradiction of the festive spirit. But the soldiers who in the Christmas of 1914 left their German and British trenches to fraternise and sing carols in no-man's land soon found that in all that pertains to government business—like war—things must be as usual at all times.

The High Commands of both sides soon put a stop to that bit of internationalism and, helped by the socialists and communists, have managed to prevent any recurrence of any such recession from the successful prosecution of their business.

In the activity which pre-occupies the governments of the leading powers, business is very much as usual during the festive season. Only twelve days before Their Lord's birthday, the American scientists at Cape Canaveral shot a Jupiter rocket into space containing a squirrel monkey, nicknamed Gordo, after a Mexican comic strip character.

Waiting for Gordo turned out to be a fruitless endeavour, for this small, bush-tailed, tuft-eared monkey—the closest animal physiologically and emotionally

for its size (less than 1 lb.) to man—was still in the nose-cone of Jupiter when it disintegrated 1,500 miles out over the Atlantic.

No Impairment

I will spare you all the details of Gordo's equipment but we may be sure that his contribution to science has been invaluable. Indeed, we now know that the instruments strapped to Gordo's tiny chest informed us that:

"The acceleration of take-off produced mild physiological change but no impairment.

"The pulse rate was increased slightly during acceleration.

"The most significant finding so far is that the prolonged gravity-free state does not produce significant adverse physiological change."

This information, the American Department of Defence states, is an invaluable step in preparing for man's first venture into space.

This tremendous advance may not be as divorced from Christmas as you may think. With the spread of industrialism into all the underdeveloped countries of the world, Father Christmas has to cover greater distances than ever before and passenger- and goods-carrying rockets will come in very useful. In any case his supply of reindeers may be running out soon if, as I suspect, reindeers are liable to the same kind of reaction to H-bomb fall out as elks.

For Professor Rolf Sievert, the Swedish expert on radiation hazards, has told the United Nations that after the

last Soviet H-bomb tests, radioactivity in the upper atmosphere above Sweden was five times higher than normal, and the particles showing extremely high radioactivity had been measured on the ground.

He said that his research teams had found that elks grazing on land near Stockholm showed an increase of 200 per cent. in the amount of radioactivity in their bones during the past year, most of it due to a mixture of these short-lived fission products picked up from their pastures.

Slaughter Season

For the animal kingdom, of course, Christmas is a particularly sad time, fraught with danger. A point made by a letter which appeared in the *Observer* (14/12/58):

Sir—I feel sure I am not alone in regretting that Christmas should be the occasion for the slaughter of an exceptionally large number of birds and beasts. The sight of rows of carcasses in the shops always seems to me painfully at variance with the original spirit of the festival—for Christians at least.

Isle of Man. KENNETH R. HEMMINGS.

I wonder if there is something particularly humane about people on the Isle of Man, for one of our favourite com-

45 Rocket Site Demonstrators Arrested

LAST Saturday and Sunday the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear Nuclear Disarmament organised another demonstration at the rocket-launching site under construction near Swaffham, Norfolk.

The protestors marched from Swaffham to the base, as last time, (see FREEDOM 13/12/58) but instead of attempting to penetrate the barbed wire fence, they marched up to the main gate—already on Air Ministry property—and proceeded to obstruct the trucks entering and leaving the site.

They were all ejected by police and warned that if they continued they would be arrested. They did of course all return, and 36 were bundled off to the police station and charged with wilfully obstructing the police.

Brought before an emergency court in Swaffham, they were given the opportunity of having bail if they gave an undertaking not to return to the base. 22 of them refused this and were remanded in custody, where it is likely they will remain over the Christmas holiday, appearing in court again on the 29th December.

The following day, Sunday, more demonstrators appeared at the site and nine more were arrested. It has been stated that the Director of Public Prosecutions has been provided with all information about the incidents and there is a likelihood that the demonstrators and organisers may be charged with conspiracy.

The threat of such charges was already used to intimidate the owners of coaches which had been hired to take the demonstrators to Swaffham. They got there just the same, however, although the owners of cars borrowed to get there were warned that they were laying themselves open to charges of aiding and abetting a conspiracy.

One of the arrested, David Bell, is a member of the London Anarchist Group. He has already refused medical examination for military service and appeared before a C.O. tribunal. Others among

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Reflections on Dangerous Ideas

THE following letter appeared in the correspondence columns of the *Observer* a few Sundays ago.

Sir,—According to your Economic Editor, Mr. Shonfield, "the familiar problem of recent years is that wages have gone up faster than the output of the individual wage-earner."

Surely, this "problem" exists only for those who prefer to believe that the wage-earner has a moral obligation to continue to accept the present distribution of the national income.

Hayes

J. HENDY.

Alas, this heretical sentence was drowned in 24 pages of conformism and advertisements, yet to our prejudiced minds, it was the only thought-provoking sentence in that Sunday's *Observer*! Neither Mr. Shonfield nor the Editor have since examined Mr. Hendy's suggestion that perhaps the premises on which the social and economic system is based may be all wrong and whilst they may have decided that it's Mr. Hendy who has got the "problem" all wrong, it would have been most interesting to see their arguments in print!

Perhaps, like good Catholics, they are able to chase heretical and wicked thoughts from their minds before they have time to corrode their faith in the system and lead them from the paths of conformist thinking. Perhaps like so many "practical" men today they are less interested in ideas than in "influencing" governments and "events" or "trends". It is the tragedy of our times that so many intelligent and well-meaning people should be wasting their gifts seeking to influence governments and the political parties, for in so doing they cannot but speak the language of governments and of the established order of society.

FREEDOM is one of the few journals which speaks to its readers and not to our rulers! Far from wishing to influence governments or offer suggestions as to how capitalism can be cured of its periodic bouts of wind and deflation, we want to see them abolished! For

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rades comes from there and she won't eat meat at all.

Apart from the ethics, there would appear to be growing medical—or rather, chemical—reasons for steering clear of meat and bones in our diet. Not many of us eat elk meat, I suppose, but who knows what those turkeys have picked up in their brief span of acquaintance with *homo sapiens*?

Not that *homo sap* is any kinder to his own kind. Published just ten days before Christmas, *Jane's Fighting Ships* is a fascinating volume about the forces of destruction at sea. It advises us (and the Russians) that by 1967 the US Navy will have 75 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines. 380 ft. long, with a beam of 33 ft., each one will carry 16 Polaris guided missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads to a target 1,200 miles away, fired from under water.

Down to Earth

But let's get away from the massive horrors of potential war and actual radiation. Let's see how the Christmas spirit invades our every-day life. John Gordon of the *Sunday Express* told us last week:

A short time ago the staff of 60 which handles business at Rank's Southampton

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the arrested who are known to us are Chris Farley, assistant editor of *Peace News* (who often sat in with his trumpet at Malatesta Jazz Club sessions), David Graham, Laurens Ottier and Ian Dixon. Also included are April Carter and Michael Randle, of the Committee for Direct Action.

Before the protest began the Committee issued a statement in which they said: "We continue to believe we have a moral obligation. Words are not enough; we must act to prevent mass murder."

An interesting little poll was taken by the *Observer's* reporter, who found that of 35 demonstrators asked before the march began, 24 said they had no religion and 22 supported no particular political party.

Once again we offer our congratulations to the organisers and our solidarity to the demonstrators who have faced arrest at this time for their ideas. Practical solidarity will be necessary to meet the costs of a defence—especially if conspiracy charges are brought—and for a Relief Fund.

Further details will be published as soon as available, but all offers of support can be sent to the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear Disarmament, 344, Seven Sisters Road, London, N.4.

11th Hour Appeal!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!
WEEK 51

Deficit on Freedom £1020
Contributions received £788
DEFICIT £232

December 12 to December 18

London: J.S.* 3/-; London: W.H.T. 2/6;
London: D.O. £1/0/6; Denver: A.J. £2/10/0;
London: Anon. 7/6; Merriott: M.W. 7/-;
London: P.F.* £3; Glendower: H.D. 11/-;
London: A.U. £1; Manchester: P.H. £1;
Sydney: T.McM. 5/4; Marton, N.Z.: W.G.R.
10/-; Frankfurt: H.B. 13/9; Houshous:
W.M.E. 4/-; Monton: P.H. 2/-; London:
D.H.B. 2/4; Detroit: J.C. 14/-.

Total ... 12 12 11
Previously acknowledged ... 775 10 6

1958 TOTAL TO DATE ... £788 3 5

*Indicates regular contributor.

Third Degree Methods in England

THERE are about half-a-million grown men in England who are freemasons. Probably most of them think they belong to a secret society. People who are not freemasons are from time to time curious about freemasons and what they get up to, so for readers of this paper who are interested in submerged pressure groups in the elephantine social body of England, here is an introduction to one of them.

The direct approach is amusing. Ask any freemason you come across for the lowdown and see the barricades go up, the change of conversation and the elusiveness of any concrete information. You may be lucky in coming across one or two who don't give a damn any more, and are behind in their dues anyway (I remember I left the Wolf Cubs for the same reason) and they will be a bit more helpful, but generally facts got this way are pretty sparse. The best you will do is justification by good works and that there is something in it for you, if you should die your widow will be looked after and your children sent to school, not the pension and state but something more cheerily middle-class to look forward to.

But besides this do-goodery and insurance what else, what about all these vile rumours of nasty rites and terrible oaths (goats and compasses and initiation), where do they come? Here is the barrier, the mystery, the so-called secret. The only explanation I can think of is that the whole edifice is supported by fear of ridicule (the illustration somewhat supports me there) and a peculiar combination of bluff and double bluff. Freemasons are bound by oath grim and gruesome not to confirm or deny questions concerning the workings of freemasonry and it is this that makes them peculiarly and freakishly uncommunicative on their own subject. The first bluff being that there is no well-kept secret and the second being when asked to confirm the truth they won't.

Faced with such resistance to the gathering of information I am driven to books published about it. In the past 150 years there have been two sorts of publishing about freemasonry, broadly for it and against it, one side trying to keep the secret, bumming it up and supporting the old corpse with doubtful mystic crutches, the other really lets the side down.

The exposure side is sluggish and a trifle dull, the most recent book* was published in 1952. It is written by a vicar, a devout Christian theologian. The axe he grinds is the incompatibility of freemasonry and Christianity. He is horrified at some of the near heathen pagan things his bishops get up to. He is

terribly dour and long-winded at his task but sprinkles his argument with masonic detail to keep one's enthusiasm from flagging. He manages to produce a painless and polite exposure. The last half of the book gives a complete record of the initiations and ceremonies of the three degrees of freemasonry (hence the catchpenny title) and the Royal Arch. Here is recorded the signs, grips and words of each stage and the most fearsome oaths that preserve the secrecy of the goings on, a long description of the layout of the temples, the trappings or the rituals and the fancy dress worn. The book finishes with chapters on deviant movements and national and regional variations and includes a useful bibliography.

Here it is described in every detail but the situation is so incredible. Consider for a moment the delicious position of the beginner. Here is an initiate, a candidate for the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry, humbly seeking admission to a Lodge:

He is stripped of all worldly wealth, hood-winked and noosed, his left breast bare and his left trouser-leg cut above his knee, he is led into the Lodge. He is met with the point of a sword that would stab him if he rushes forward and he is strangled by the noose if he retreats, he goes on to obligate himself to death by having his throat cut across if he betrays the secrets given him. The irony of his position is that he doesn't know what he is letting himself in for at each stage and curiosity completes the course.

The hocus pocus of the movement is obscure symbolism, a hotch potch of architecture, Egyptian and Roman, and has similarities with the mystery religions current at the beginning of Christianity and in effect is a lowest common denominator religious group.

Criticism must spring from definition; a freemason is a man, who is over 21, who is upright, free and strictly moral (a rather ideal image), he believes in a god of some sort, but as some bodies proscribe freemasonry he cannot be a catholic, a presbyterian, a member of the Salvation Army or the Greek Orthodox Church.

He supports the state and the *status quo*. He tends to be better off than his fellows, the dues are five guineas a year and upwards and as many masonic functions as he can afford to attend, and as he gets on he has to stand a dinner for his Lodge. He is charitable but as noted above the charity smells queerly

of insurance: five years dues and then you qualify for benefit of your would-be widow and orphans, the rest of the money goes on banquets and booze and the deserving poor.

He is probably an aspiring member of the middle classes, a wee bit of a snob and a social climber, a preserver of the



past and a defender of the faith. He is a liker of ritual and a seeker of chumminess and given to sugary bonhomie and is rather glad that he has the key to the friendship of a world-wide club of good sorts and decent chaps. He might even like the odd evening away from his wife and meanest of all he may have become one to get on in the world. Perhaps you can dismiss the six thousand lodges in England as drinking and dining clubs for the middle class with a bit of religion and apron-wearing thrown in. After all, boys will be boys.

But still the imagination boggles. I thought that old beast Alistair Crowley was out on a limb and a trifle crazy with his incantations and magic circles and mumbo jumbo but here are half a million innocents still carrying on the good work. It slides so easily into that grand amorphous mass of societies such as the Oddfellows, Toc-H, M.R., Boys' Brigade, Rotary and Boy Scouts, all squirt over with the milk of human kindness and this one being just another, a hypocritical mutual admiration and flatterulent society.

RUFUS SEGAR.

A Xmas Dirge Continued from p. 3

There was a rustling sound like a million paper parcels being opened, and in the midst of it all Mrs. Cratchit's voice could be heard saying, "Well, I've given the plastic candle-sticks to Mrs. Fezziwig that I had from Mrs. Wardle last year, so if I give Mrs. Wardle the nylon iron holder that I had from Mrs. Pickwick I can give Mr. Pickwick the cast aluminium novelty sputnik that I had from Mrs. Nickleby, and that means that if Mrs. Pickwick gives me herb cigarettes I can give them to Mrs. Dombey who gave me some last year, but on the other hand if I give Mrs. Dombey a bottle of Australian champagne-type wine I might get a bottle of whiskey from her which I could give to Mr. Scrooge who always gives me a cheque."

Then Christmas Present transported Scrooge from this interior monologue to that of Bob Cratchit in the other half of the double bed. He was soliloquising thus:

"If I send the one with robins on to the Quilns that will avoid the reference to 'olden times' and the one with the stage coach can go to the Peggottys although their father was a bus conductor. The one with the turkeys can go to the Wardles, or was that the one they sent us last year . . . ?"

Mr. Scrooge clutched the ghost by the arm and urged him to change the scene, and obligingly the ghost tapped the floor. The scene changed to a vast cornucopia pouring out a stream of objects amongst

which he recognised a pair of ancient gold coin cuff links, a brass plated ice bucket, mother of pearl plate mats, gold identification bracelets, Imperial Leather after-shave lotion, cocktail aprons, forever rings, envelope wallets with addresses, Scots clan maps in inlaid morocco, individual melted butter pans, roller chimes, coffee tables of plastic glazed theatre posters, midget tape recorders, crystal chandeliers, gold cocktail tie tacks, conversation piece ashtrays, spaghetti servers, horn jewellery, driveway catseye markers, ebony hand-carved swallows, 'mood' pillow cases with yes on one side and no on the other. As the electronic heavenly choir boomed louder and louder, Mr. Scrooge turned to his guide. "Is there no end to this?" he asked. "No," said the Ghost laconically, and as the flow of bizarre objects and of verbal treacle died away, they overtook a star in the east which turned out to be a metal cylinder with antennae. Inside could be heard a whimpering and scratching, then a mournful howl and then silence, which was only broken as they neared home by the wailing of a mother and her baby, standing in the chairless and unpainted reception room of the LCC's Newtoning Lodge.

HE sank fitfully back into sleep. But again he was awakened by knocking. "I am . . ." said Scrooge, peering through the door. "Yes, I know," said the snap-

The Happy Warriors

THE HAPPY WARRIORS, by Halldor Laxness. Methuen, 18/-.

HALLDOR LAXNESS has written a sustained parody of the Norse heroic saga. It satirises the usual concept of the Vikings as fine and splendid heroes, showing them rather as braggarts and bullies, a curse to the peasants and fisher-folk in their own countries and in the rest of Western Europe.

The story concerns Thorgerd and Thormod, who have entered into the relationship of sworn brothers. Inspired by tales of derring-do, like Don Quixote, they prepare to go out and seek adventures. But the Viking Age is coming to an end. Europe is becoming too well organised and defended. They perform no great deeds, fight with tramps and peasants who wish to be left in peace, burn and sack ill-defended cities but are repulsed from London when the common citizens turn out to drive them back, and die futile deaths having accomplished nothing, without even having gained booty.

The book should be read, if only for the sake of the description of the way of life of the Eskimo, as it was in the tenth century. Here was a nation that knew neither kings nor wars. Who performed no great deeds, who did not even avenge a slaying. To the Norsemen the Eskimos were abnormal and horrible, precisely because they were happy and kind. Whenever an Eskimo encampment was found the Scandinavians fell upon it with fire and sword. The Eskimos fled if they could. Yet, when a ship's crew was cast away on their coast, after having perpetrated a massacre just before, the Eskimos succoured the one survivor, and gave the bodies washed ashore the Eskimo idea of a "decent burial".

Thormod, this one survivor, is eventually accepted into their community, and given a wife. Yet he cannot feel grateful. Moreover he abuses the freedom of the Eskimo society, which he does not understand, and is "sent to Coventry".

And when they gathered round in a circle to sing their lays, and every child of man gave his mite, the skald shut his ears to that song, as close as he could; he thought all was pettiness in the songs of these folk that had never, to the knowledge of any, done famous deeds; but yet this seemed to him the very crown of depravity, that it never came into these

men's heads what glory there is in allegiance to magnificent rulers and other chiefs, that attain their victories in the field or notable quests, or because they have chased and skalds in their train; he thought a singular commonwealth that the great folk to make use of the small; he has himself said, that in the old sojourning among them he had had thought night and day, that it was a great pity freeborn heroes and skalds their kings should lack the strength to wipe out such a stupid and ignorant nation."

They do not lack the strength and in our own day the desire of freedom the Skald is being fulfilled surely the whole point of the book is that, though these old ruffians have long in their graves, we still admire things they admired. Even if in a different form. Do we not consider that the hunting grounds must give place to bases? Did not recently a prominent representative of Labour say that the Bomb must not be given up but then the British Foreign Minister (whoever it was) would have to go into the conference chamber? Do we not cling to our bombs and do we not because it would not be "manly" to them up and defend ourselves the violent way, or any other way?

The Eskimo called themselves which meant something like "real" as opposed to the abnormal man who came from the South. They did not regard themselves as "uncivilized" because they did not fight, and preferred themselves by fleeing.

We need a new attitude. We still taught to admire "heroes". We not taught to admire the Eskimos. In films, the television, the books of the West and Western adventure all tell the tale. It is noble to fight and kill long as you are on the side of "law and order", the stronger side that is. "heroic" to prefer annihilation to "mission". People who spend their time hunting, lovemaking and singing are contemptible to us as they were to the Norsemen.

Such people are incapable of making "progress", they have no sense of "history", of "history". Their lives are "limited". Thus our society judges. Our "heroism" has brought us to the edge of the Pit.

ARTHUR W. ULOTT.

Child in a Revolution

JACKO is a boy of eight years or so whose father is a leader of a Hungary-like revolt somewhere in Europe; this novel* is the story, told by Jacko, of his experiences during the rising.

His father leaves Jacko and his little sister in their mother's care when the fighting starts. Jacko's mother is killed

No Bedtime Story, by Mary Crawford. Putnam, 12s. 6d.

pily, "The Ghost of Christmas Future."

They drifted into a clinical-looking place where there was a queue of people with sleeves rolled up, waiting for injections. "What's this for?" he asked his ghostly companion. "These people have failed as consumers, and some have been diagnosed as deficient in togetherness. Every 25th of December consumption has to be boosted for the National Stock-taking on January 1st. An extract of holly and mistletoe is injected to increase their intake sufficiently to clear accumulated stocks. It is accompanied by group therapy to raise their T.Q."

"Their what?" asked Mr. Scrooge. "Their Togetherness-Quotient," said the Future. "Come and see."

A ring of adults were sitting in a circle, and as they chanted what sounded to Mr. Scrooge like "Merely Grist Must" they passed from hand to hand a parcel from which, when the music stopped, one layer of paper was unwrapped, before it was passed to the next patient. As this went on the parcel got smaller and smaller.

"What's in the parcel?" asked Ernest Scrooge.

"Nothing," answered the Ghost . . . Back in bed, he plunged into a deep sleep, and was awakened by the clutch of sticky fingers, and the poke of a plastic space-gun in his ribs. "Merry Crif-fins Untle Scrooge," said Tiny Tim Cratchit.

"Bha, Humbug," said Scrooge taking a swipe at him.

R. CRUSOE.

soon afterwards, and at the cemetery, where the bodies of the victims of the street fighting are laid out—

"I found the green coat at last, and the face, which was not bloody at all. But it was white and glossy like a candle, and though it looked like my mother, it was also quite wrong. I might not have been certain it was her, except that she still had her string bag, half-full of fading spinach, twisted round her wrist."

The children are looked after by Christina and her neurotic admirer, Banger. Banger, who in many things is amoral, steals food for them and fights for the rebels without rest until he realises that defeat is certain. When he decides he must escape to America, Christina and Jacko accuse him of running away. Later, Jacko finds a wounded airman trying to drink from a river; under the mistaken belief that he is an enemy, Jacko pushes him in and the airman drowns. Afterwards he discovers his terrible mistake—the airman was fighting on the side of the rebels. Finally the rising is crushed and Jacko sees his father being taken away to prison.

It is a moving story and is made the more so by the flat, unemotional style in which it is written, effectively simulating the manner in which an intelligent boy might have recorded such events. Apart from the tiresome and amateurish re-told Bible story on pages 116-22 which readers (agnostic and otherwise) should skip and the unnecessarily agonising incident of the airman which does not fit easily into the narrative, the novel is well worth reading.

M.G.W.

CORRECTION

In my review of John Townsend's book *The Young Devils* in FREEDOM 6/12/58 I referred to a previous book of teachers' experiences. Unfortunately, faulty memory led me to quote the title *Chalk in my Hair*. I was actually thinking of Michael Croft's book *Spare the Rod*, and wish to apologise for any confusion caused by the mistake. P.H.

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19, No. 52, December 27, 1958

Reflections on Dangerous Ideas

Continued from p. 1

For the reason we address ourselves to victims and not their persecutors. However dismal and remote is the immediate prospect of a radical change in the structure of society, one thing we are certain: that any worthwhile changes can only be made by the people themselves, never by governments or politicians. However hopeless the prospect of people taking action in their own interests may appear, it is still less hopeless than expecting politicians ever to do it for them!

IF FREEDOM has a *raison d'être* it is to help in the process of liberating man from the shackles of authoritarianism, of unquestioning acceptance of slogans and prejudices which are passed off as fundamental truths.

A free society cannot be built on authoritarian foundations any more than the desire for freedom can spring from minds conditioned and conditioned by an authoritarian education and background.

We seek not to replace one form of conditioning by another. Anarchist "propaganda" to be successful should, to our minds, only sow the seeds of *doubt* in the minds of those who read us. We must leave the germination and growth to the individual.

We have no doubt then that the simple words contained in the second paragraph of Mr. Hendy's brief communication to the Editor of the *Observer* will be more dangerous to the status quo than all the arm-waving and tub-thumping of the demagogues of the Left during these past fifty years! Read that second paragraph again and we think you will see what we mean. But don't forget also that to millions of people today it "says" nothing!

PERSONAL!

TO millions of people FREEDOM talks nonsense. To millions of other people FREEDOM lives in the clouds. To a few thousand in this country and dotted over the world we have something to say. One of our readers (on page 4) "would rather miss a meal than his weekly copy of FREEDOM" though sometimes finds our logic hard to understand. We are deeply touched by his generous words, and do not doubt that our logic is quite often at fault. What is more important is that he should have the independence of mind to read us critically!

But we were saying that only a few thousand people read FREEDOM, not enough to cover the cost of producing the paper each week, in spite of the fact that there are no wage packets to fill each week or cheques for the contributors to our columns.

The continued publication of FREEDOM depends on our being able to bridge the gap between printing costs and income from sales and subscriptions. At the time of writing the "gap" is over £200 (\$600) and by the time readers in this country receive their copies of this issue there will only be six days to the end of the year.

As we have no intention of appealing to the *Daily Mirror* or the manufacturers of patent medicines to buy space in FREEDOM to cover our deficit, we earnestly appeal to all readers who want us to continue publication to send their contributions for the Deficit Fund without delay... to reach us before the end of 1958. As much as you can, as soon as you can! Thanks!

BOOK REVIEW

PEOPLE & VIOLENCE IN A STRANGE LAND

LAND WITHOUT JUSTICE by Milovan Djilas. Methuen, 25s.

FROM his prison cell in Yugoslavia, Djilas has sent us this time not another treatise on political theory or practice, like "The New Class", but a book about people, the inhabitants of the land of Montenegro, which was an independent state until 1918, after which it became a province of Yugoslavia.

It is his own autobiography, but is not written exclusively in the first person singular. Djilas is a far better portrayer of his life than that; and he draws short sketches of dozens of the men and women who either influenced him personally, or who were typical of the tradition and climate in which he grew up. One is left with a very vivid picture, of who the man is, who has lived in such a milieu.

A hard land, poor agriculture, no industry, no enlightenment, and every man's rifle pointed against every other. The life of men in nineteenth century Montenegro (and one can assume, throughout the Balkans) is perfectly summed up in the famous phrase by Hobbes, written centuries earlier. Individual killing of one leading family chief by another was common, and families were wiped out in a single evening. Aleksa Djilas, the grandfather of Milovan, was invited to a feast by his murderers, and hit on the head with a wooden mallet. They then visited his home and killed all the males except one baby.

That was in 1875, and such occurrences seemed to be accepted as a part of life, with the provision of course that the family of the victim was in honour bound to carry out an equally blood-thirsty reprisal against the family of the assailants. When there was nothing else to do, the Slavs massacred the Moslems.

In 1912 came the first Balkan War, in 1913 the second, and in 1914 the Great War, and Austrian occupation. The war saw the end of the State of Montenegro, dealt the final blow to the old feuding ways, but could not change the character which lay behind them. In fact it provided a channel into which the lust for blood could flow, in the underground movement against the Austrians. When, defeated elsewhere, these withdrew, the guerillas had nothing better to do than carry on their violent attacks against the police and the authorities of the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats

and Slovenes. The father of Djilas became an official, and directed the gendarmerie in some of its raids, while the family were personally friendly with some of the leading guerillas. Thus, in a changed form, the life in which death was always so near at hand, continued, the only one known by the men who were growing up in it.

The post-war years saw the old people unsettled, by the passing of the world into which they had fitted. The old men died, the guerillas were killed or taken one by one. Links with the past were only guarded by the poets. A chapter is devoted to describing the village poets of Djilas' home town. They were strange men, cut off from their immediate neighbours by their attachment to the past. Nevertheless, they had their treasure within them, while for most of the people, their poor ideals of honour and self esteem were but the reflection of what others, equally enslaved by the environment, thought of them. Such "beauty" as is claimed for the life, and its rugged, tough course, is shallow and pitiful, but exasperatingly noisy.

Embedded in it, there were the few who found a way to avoid its most crushing burdens, either by ignoring the tradition as best they could, and discovering the purer happiness of personal love, or by managing to rise to the heights where they envisaged, and in a sense possessed, something better, and could despise heartily the ways of life and modes of thought which enchained their fellows. Such a one was Miras, of whom Djilas writes:

"He belonged neither to the old nor to the new generation... He belonged to himself. Nor was he neutral, since the tenacity of his convictions might be considered somewhat comparable to the local guerillas...."

He was an atheist, a tireless free-thinker who mocked at religion and the church at every step. Nobody followed him in this... He was a socialist... In this he was even more isolated, without a single follower.

He was not swayed by the idea of national liberation, and even less so by the chiefs. He sought and saw something else....

After all, everything was against him. He had nothing but a bare idea and an invincible faith in which he believed... He believed that his idea was the truth, and that it would triumph sooner or later, even if he never saw the day and was forgotten.

He played no important part whatever

in the lively and sharp political struggles around him. He stood above them all, cynically denying them all any right to speak in the name of the people. As for the people themselves, he saw them as something brutish and steeped in ignorance. He held that it would take decades and decades to lift them out of their raw savagery.

The dictatorship of King Alexander... never touched this man. He never concealed his opposition and continued to remain what he was. He appeared hardly to notice any change. Such a man was incomprehensible in Kolasin and in Montenegro. He seemed to come from somewhere else, though he had been born there: he was not Miras the Montenegrin, but some incarnation of an alien idea, which somehow had survived."

Is he not then the real hero of the book? Even in such unfavourable conditions, some people can see through the dark glass of pretence held up by political and religious charlatans, revolutionary or reformist.

This schoolteacher attracts attention for his views, but all the portraits of the men known to the author during his youth are drawn with feeling and insight, although for the youths' schoolteachers, there is certainly no sympathy wasted!

As time passed, the outward conditions changed, and the traditional vendettas were forgotten. While that was happening, hints are being dropped as to the political quarrels which are to come. "Emancipation", "liberation" and "democracy" are on their way. Without intending irony, the author writes of the buildings in Berane between the wars:

"The seats of authority and the jails are always solidly built, for people knew they had to exist. On the upper storey were the officers, and on the ground floor was the jail. The jail became too small after the liberation, and another stone house was taken for this purpose. After this most recent war of liberation, this

jail too, has become too small. They have probably erected a new one, solid and larger."

The story breaks off as the young student is on the verge of entering the University of Belgrade. We are not, perhaps fortunately, led through the twists and turns of his own political career.

The dust jacket blurb claims that this story will help to "explain, even if it doesn't excuse, some of the odd things that happen in Marshal Tito's part of the world". What a thin way to comment on such a narrative! True enough, one can regard the struggles between factions of the Communist Party, leading to disappearances and imprisonments as a development of the old clan feuds, and Djilas himself, one of those who helped to lead the country from feudalism to modern statehood, has come off on the tragic side of this. The progress has not eliminated violence and hate from life, it has merely centralised it. But in the same way, the tendencies in America which cause corruption and witch-hunting can be traced through the Puritan tradition, the Salem affair, the violence of the West, attacks on unionism and so on. Cruel though life in Montenegro was, the more civilised Western Europe cannot claim superiority. It is only that in the Balkans men killed with the sword while in the West they use words, judgments and prisons. Now that Yugoslavia has reached that level of civilisation, the big states have H-bombs.

In either case, the tragedy lies in the millions of lives that pass uselessly and miserably, the perplexity in those like Djilas who strive so valiantly for ideals as bad as the ones they are trying to replace, and whose work takes volumes to explain, and the hope lies with the lonely old schoolteacher Milas, who is described in a page. P.H.

Obscenity in the Commons

Continued from p. 4

vades the whole of our culture. Another aspect of this is that in order to repress their natural desires, people need the constant stimulation of being able to attack others for not doing so. It is perhaps a sign of our progress in one direction, that they themselves are forced to choose the battle over the least favourable causes.

One of the interventions in the debate illustrates the attitude of a respectable person to a book thought by some to be obscene. Mr. R. Jenkins mentioned the book *Lolita*, which has sold 240,000 copies in the U.S.A. and has been well reviewed in most other countries.

SIR GODFREY NICHOLSON: "It is thoroughly obscene."

MR. JENKINS: "I would not say that. It has been treated as a major work of art."

Sir Godfrey said he had only read an account in a newspaper....

Later on in the debate Mr. N. Nicholson spilled some of the beans on *Lolita*. He described it as dealing with the love of a middle-aged man for a twelve-year-old girl, and said that, if this perversion were described in such a way as suggesting that the practices were pleasant ones and could lead to happiness, he would have advised against publishing. Artistic merit is not good enough, nor a concern to describe the truth, but whether the truth fits in with the accepted ideas of morality.

The fact which has to be kept under cover is the great amount of unhappiness caused by repression of normal sex life, caused by attempts to stifle it before marriage and keep it in the channels of marriage in cases when this has become unsatisfactory. If 34% of adult men have homosexual experiences, or if a relaxation of the law against obscene publications would lead to a mad rush to make up for missed and lacking love experiences, then keep it dark! Nothing must disturb the conviction of the respectable citizens that they are living in the best of possible worlds.

The one refreshing speech in the whole debate came from a Conservative member, Mr. R. M. Bell, who said that he believed the right course to be to wipe out the whole law of obscenity in relation to books.

Unfortunately, in summing up for the opposition Mr. K. G. Younger announced that there was certainly sufficient agreement in the House on some aspects of the report, namely those designed to strengthen the law against pornography.

So the law, like that against prostitution will be strengthened, with the approval of the country and the basic issues which cause the problem will be ignored.

The socially important contribution to the solution depends on seeing through the smoke screen put up by the liberals and reformers, and realising that all unpleasant manifestations of sexual energy are not inherent in people, but are caused by the perverting tendencies in society. After that, to the task of getting rid of them! P.H.

A Xmas Dirge

God Help Us, Everyone!

ERNEST SCROOGE, O.B.E., chairman of Scrooge Investments, was not well. It was either the whisky, the cigars or the dinner. An interior monologue on the subject had passed away the hours between one and two a.m., but this was not really fruitful as a Christmas Eve meditation.

He thought as he always did at Christmas of his great-grandfather Ebenezer, one of those diligent Victorians whose enduring monuments lie heavily about us, founder of the Scrooge Institution for the Indigent Poor (now nationalised), the Scrooge Almshouses (now pulled down to make room for a glass-and-aluminium office tower for Scrooge Investments), the Scrooge Foundation (aims rather vague, but Ernest was the Hon. Sec.), and the Ebenezer Scrooge Refuge for Climbing Boys (it had proved impossible to wind this up, but profitably converted it had provided a good site for his present flat).

He thought of Christmas and the family legend of the visit of the three spirits to his ancestor, which had been so unfailing a source of income for Charles Dickens, and he wondered vaguely what it would be like to receive such a visitation. Not that he had any need for any such ghosts. He was a firm believer in the usefulness of the institution of Christmas. His factory in a garden was a showplace for welfare work. He was a member of the Liberal Party and a chapel-goer, not having, like so many, gone over to the Tories and the C. of E. That afternoon he had been Father Christmas at the works party and had personally distributed the bonuses in the office.

Turning restlessly on the pillow, he was aroused by a bang on the door. The big brass knocker, affectionately called Marley, was merely there for decoration. Somebody must have banged it from sheer Christmas high spirits. It must be the Cratchits from upstairs. A moment that: living amongst one's enemies. Wearily he got out of bed

his Paisley dressing gown to exchange a friendly word with Bob. He opened the door without switching on the light: there was a figure standing in the dark hall.

It wasn't one of the Cratchits. In fact it was just as C.D. had described it. "A strange figure—like a child; yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions...."

"Name of Scrooge?" enquired the Spirit. "Mr. Dickens sent me," he said, "to take you on one of our surprise tours."

"I'm not surprised," replied Ernest, "I was expecting you."

"Rise! and walk with me," said the Spirit adopting a more formal tone, "I am the Ghost of Christmas Past." He reached out a hand which Ernest grasped. The pastel pink walls of the flat and the blackened brickwork of the Refuge for Climbing Boys melted away and Mr. Scrooge and his visitor floated out into the air.

DRAMATICALLY the ghost pointed down to a low flat plain spread out beneath them deep in the grip of winter. A figure clad only in a sheepskin was lifting a heavy flat stone into a precarious position on top of two upright stones. At the foot of this altar he placed a lamb with tied feet. As the rays of a winter dawn slid over the horizon onto the lamb, the savage gave a cry and cut its throat with a knife of flint. The blood trickled onto the altar and reverently lifting the animal's body the savage carried it to a small cultivated patch which he irrigated with the rest of the blood.

Ernest Scrooge, a vegetarian at heart, turned away from this scene. The Ghost of Christmas Past tapped the ground with his holly stick like a missionary at a lantern-slide lecture, and, like a Bible

scene the landscape changed to the scene of the Bible. There was the old familiar road to Jerusalem, the inn at Bethlehem and behind it the stable. They were now at the manger and Mr. Scrooge felt a certain *ennui* at this corny approach in which only the voice of Harry Belafonte was missing. But to his surprise there was no babe, only a Roman soldier and a plump Jewish girl giggling on the straw.

"Oh... you are awful!" said the girl. "Aw, come on honey," said the soldier, taking off his breast-plate.

"What will Joseph say?"

"Tell him you found it in the bull-rushes. Anyhow you're coming back home with me. I've got the cutest little villa on the Appian Way."

"You promise?"

"Sure thing, Mary. You're coming back with the legion just as soon as I get permission from the Procurator. That marriage of yours is invalid under Roman law."

As Ernest and the Ghost floated away they caught a glimpse through space of another woman with a brown baby in the folds of her *sari* saying to a turbaned man, "I found him in a lotus bud."

Then they were once again near the little town of Bethlehem where long lines of human sheep were being herded through a village. A wailing cry went up from the refugees, but the herdsmen hardened their hearts. An old man staggered with his bundle and the soldier behind him elbowed him forward with an arm that bore a blue tattooed number near the wrist. "Get into line you Arab scum," he said, as Ernest Scrooge was wafted back to his own bedroom.

"NOW," said the Ghost of Christmas Past, "I am handing you over to Christmas Present," and in Scrooge's doorway appeared another figure dressed according to Dickens' specification. He raised a finger and said "Listen!"

Continued on p. 2

Obscenity in the Commons

ON Tuesday, December 16, the House of Commons discussed one of its favourite subjects—sex. It shares this interest with a vast majority of its fellow humans, and like most of them, in Western Europe at least, it prefers to discuss the subject not openly, but under one of a number of thin guises.

This time it was the report of the Select Committee on Obscene Publications, 1957-8, published this Summer, and discussed in FREEDOM 23/8/58, which provided the background for the debate.

The Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, introduced the debate with a definition of obscenity:

"For the purposes of this act any matter shall be obscene if its effect in its context is such as to tend to deprave or corrupt, or further to deprave or corrupt, those persons who are likely to read, hear, or see it."

The only innovation is the mention of "in its context". The definition suggested by the Society of Authors had the phrase "as a whole". These attempts to limit the chances of a successful prosecution against a book published without any intention to "deprave or corrupt" are all that is left of the wave of revolt set in motion after several reputable publishers had been fined for publishing books deemed to be obscene, in 1954.

However, as Mr. Bonham-Carter pointed out, the question of depravity and corruption does not stand up to very close examination. In the course of his contribution he remarked that

"... the English law appears to work curiously. Anything to do with sex is automatically dangerous, while anything which describes brutality, violence or pain is, for some reason, outside the scope of the law altogether."

It is not clear from a written report whether Mr. Bonham-Carter was appear-

ing naive in order to make a point, or whether he really felt that he had found an inconsistency in the law, or whether he would have advocated imposing a censorship on brutality, or lifting that on sex! Far from being an anomaly in the law, its picking on sex as being, above all, the influence most likely to deprave and corrupt people, while turning a blind eye on the literature of violence and brutality, springs from the very basis and ideals which lead to the imposition of the law.

Incidentally, Mr. Butler shied away from the word "censorship", although it is difficult to see how else one can describe the suppression of certain publications.

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* Alex Comfort wrote that legislation based on the Report could have a bad effect on the whole, because while it would smooth out the anomalies which brought ridicule on the existing law, it would be giving legal and intellectual approval to the idea of censorship. He added the point that struggles for civil liberties must necessarily take place over the least favourable cases.

But all this does not make it clear what people are fighting for or against in this particular matter.

Generally, a government, or institution with coercive powers only exerts them to achieve definite objects, or when its interests are threatened. The history of censorship throughout the ages, is one in which governments have proscribed books because they felt that the possession of them would jeopardize the security of the régime. To quote a topical example, the Russian state feels that open publication of *Dr. Zhivago* would detract from its security.

To mention the latter book in the same breath as obscene publications may seem absurd, but while they are poles apart when evaluated in terms of artistic merit, a red-herring frequently drawn across this particular argument, they have in common the fact of being aimed at something on which the society of which they form a part is based. If most of the writings usually described as obscene are not of great artistic merit, nor do they suggest anything positive to replace the emotional chaos which produces the need for them, then we are indeed fighting on the merits of the least favourable cases.

A realistic approach to any of the "problems" arising from repressed sex must take into account the fact that the perversion of sexual energies is a prime necessity in an authoritarian society. The Commons, having settled this particular debate to the satisfaction of its members is likely to pass on to unemployment, or recruiting for the armed forces. Its attitude to both of these being based on an assumption of human servility; that in the one case men quietly accept the idea that being thrown out of their livelihood is a natural thing and in the other that thousands of men will value their lives and freedom so lightly as to volunteer for military service.

Now it has been shown by psychologists, social psychologists, anthropologists and the whole run of mind-scientists that in order to repress any set of feelings effectively you have to make a complete sweep. If freedom to publish sexual literature of whatever degree of salacity, and however badly produced it were, became general, it would be so much more difficult to hold on to the repression of erotic feelings which per-

Continued on p. 3

Free Buses and Monopolies

I would rather miss a meal, which I have involuntarily been doing for several days through a cold, than my weekly copy of FREEDOM, but occasionally I find the logic in the columns hard to understand.

You praise, for example, "A Free Bus Service" (FREEDOM Nov. 29) operated by Finchley Liberals, and say "If unofficial bus services start springing up all over London—where will London Transport's monopoly be?"

I keep trying to follow the anarchist-syndicalist line of thought, but this doesn't seem to make sense.

Is this tactic not rather a form of strike-breaking? I have read Orwell and other writers on the operation of syndicalism during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930's, and I fail to see how *everyone* can combine in the way Mr. Frank Davis and his associates have done to run their two 35-seater coaches.

I think, from Malatesta, Kropotkin, Goldman and a number of other anarchist writers I have a fair idea of how greatly abused "authority" is to be sent, but I should be most interested to know what you propose to substitute for organisations like the London Transport. Would you have publicised a similar scheme by Conservatives, Communists or the Labour Party?

Is this not liable finally to lead to some "private operator" stepping in to operate a fleet of buses, naturally, in the profit-making system, and setting in opposition to the London Transport if this were legally possible—and the another "monopoly" being eventually being established?

I do not suggest Mr. Davis has this in mind, and, being against racialism, would like to congratulate him on his success in getting the "No Jews" golf club rule revoked.

Glasgow, Dec. 14. ROBERT CUMMING

Irish Labour and Swaffham

DEAR SIR,

I wish to comment on a portion of the article on the Swaffham incident which appeared in FREEDOM, Dec. 13th. The writer attaches undue blame to the behaviour of the Irish labourers who man-handled the Anti-H-Bomb demonstrators, although it is to his credit that he does not mention the Irish in the usual sneering or patronising manner of the Press.

Irish people find great difficulty in crediting the sincerity of any group of English. As the writer says they respect Priests but not priests of the C. of E. who have had foremost places among traducers of their race and country (e.g. Dean Inge). Thanks to their Priestly education in Ireland, however, the Irish regard English priests as the highest representatives of English virtue and sincerity. What then must they think of English civilians? Within living memory English civilians with every possible show of righteous indignation against 'terrorists and ruffians' have supported the sending of savagely repressive forces to Ireland who murdered Irish people by the thousand and destroyed even the little property left to the Irish after centuries of looting. The Irish then cannot be brought to believe in English sincerity, for even now they behold various unsavoury British activities in the North of their country.

Besides, the Irish are subject to many open and brutal and many scarcely veiled sleights when they must work in this country to earn a living. The chill malice of many of the English—the malice of patronising insolence which wears an aspect of superficial good nature tends to rankle in the Irish victims who are as sensitive as other Celts. Thus when they get an opportunity of hitting back at the English it must not be wondered if they take it. The Irish labourers at Swaffham must especially have been pleased when they thought they were maltreating English goody-goodies.

'Derby police-sergeant Joseph Short-house hurriedly corrected himself after swearing to tell "... anything but the truth ...'" as he was taking the oath in court. Later he was commended by the magistrate—for his part in the arrest of two men.'

A 'Freudian' slip we may well imagine.

It Will Soon be O.K.

However, do not think that all is black under the surface glitter of Xmas. Our government after all has our welfare at heart and is always ready to change the law to make things easier for us (if we are not prostitutes—and we aren't, are we?)

It is most appropriate (in view of how most of us feel on Boxing Day that the following should have just appeared in the *News Chronicle*):

Action may be taken to remove suicide from the list of criminal offences. The Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, told the Commons yesterday that the problem was being actively considered by the Government.

There has been strong pressure from many M.P.s on both sides of the House to change the law.

★
And a Happy New Year to you, too.
P.S.

From this intimate revelation of the attitudes you will Sir, have guessed your own nationality.

London, Dec. 16. J. O'HIGGINS

[What our correspondent does not see whether he approves or disapproves the reactions of the workers to the demonstrators. If he disapproves do gather that he is defending the view that two wrongs make a right?—EDITORS]

GREETINGS—TO JOHNNIE RAMENSKY (FREE AGAIN)

JOHNNIE RAMENSKY, the Government's wartime safe-blower, escaped from Peterhead Prison on again—his fifth break. (See FREEDOM 1/11/58).

Compliments of the Season, Johnnie and no unhappy returns!

—TO A NOTTING HILL PARTY

Greetings also to the organisers and to the 200 coloured and white children at their communal Christmas Party at Notting Hill.

A first move 'to show that Notting Hill is no Little Rock' is being taken by West Indian and other immigrants as a gesture of goodwill to their white neighbours.

And may the white neighbours reciprocate!

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Sunday meetings now held at "Marquis of Granby" Public House, Rathbone Street (corner of Percy Street, Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street), 7.30 p.m.

JAN. 4.—To be announced.

JAN. 11.—Tony Gibson on

ANARCHISM—A NON-CONFORMIST SECT

JAN. 18.—Vic Mayes on WHO ARE THE ANARCHISTS?

JAN. 25.—Charles Humana Subject to be announced.

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The Season of Goodwill

Continued from p. 1

Sanctity of the Family

flour mill were asked to contribute to a birthday present to their multi-millionaire chairman. But as I reported, just after they did so two-thirds of them were informed that they would lose their jobs as redundant.

I have more news. It has been decided on the advice of Lady Rank to expend the money on a pair of pearl dress-studs, a pair of gold cuff-links with the initial "R" in rose diamonds, and two gold studs.

The presentation is to be made to Lord Rank at a "quite informal meeting" on December 22. It should be a happy party.

This of course should not be taken as typical. Although it's surprising how unaffected by goodwill our authorities are. In Harpenden, Herts, for example, the Christmas gift from the local council to a family of caravan dwellers was to attempt to take one of their children away from them.

Ten days before Christmas the Harpenden Council gave seven days' notice to Mr. & Mrs. William Ennis that one of their three children would have to go as their living in a caravan constituted overcrowding. Three years ago the Ennis family was promised a council

house within 18 months. Now they are told they must live in the area for five years before qualifying, but overcrowding cannot be tolerated so one child must go and live with an aunt. The council allowed Mr. Ennis the right to choose which child should go.

This story however did not end so grimly. A private individual has lent Ennis another caravan.

Sanctity of Family

A few thousand miles away, two more kids are in trouble and an eviction threatened. While playing together in Monroe, North Carolina, two little negro boys committed the crime of kissing a little white girl. The boys are ten and nine years old and have been sent to a reformatory for an indefinite period although it is illegal for children under 12 years of age to go there. The governor claims the right, however, to change that in the case of an emergency.

The mother of the older boy, ten-year-old Hanover Thompson, has been given notice to quit her tumbledown shack, with her four other children, by its white

owner, whose white rent collector presented Mrs. Thompson with the following note:

"We have orders from the boss man for you to vacate the house you now live in."

She has also been threatened with a shotgun by the father of the little white girl—who is alleged to have asked Hanover for a kiss.

All that sentimental stuff about the Holy Family; all those tatty little models of the stable complete with plaster figures of Joseph and Mary around a manger with a celluloid baby Jesus nestling among real hay; all that boloney may sell electric shavers but we gotta be realistic about real things!

★
Like economy on the railways, for instance. Last week when Prince Philip visited normally gloomy gaslit Chesterfield Station, a bright new electric light system was installed so that he could make a one-minute walk to his train in comfort.

Passengers, porters, and ticket collectors cheered the innovation for which they have been pressing for years.

But, alas, next day the electric lights were removed and the dim gaslight put back.

And the reality of the cinema—the front of the house. A headline in the *News Chronicle* thirteen days before Christmas told us:

WAR BEATS HORROR AT THE FILM BOX OFFICES

★
However, it is not only from the establishment side that a lack of goodwill is apparent. Teddy boys and lunatics have been busy making this a bad Christmas for policemen. This Yuletide has been distinguished for a sudden outburst of violence against the cops. One police chief in Blackburn was shot for his pains in interfering with a man murdering his wife (i.e. the man's, not the police chief's wife), two constables have been killed—one with an axe, one stabbed—and another shot, during a scuffle with rival gangs, who always (even at Notting Hill) join forces against the police.

Why are our wonderful police so disliked by a certain element in our society? Perhaps a hint is given by a slip of the tongue made by a sergeant in the witness box in Derby last week. The press reported said 'Nothing Lost' when reporting:

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