

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Let us all seek truth as if none of us had possession of it."

—VOLNEY, "Ruins of Empire"

Vol. 20, No. 21

May 23rd, 1959

Threepence

## The Fruits of Compromise KICK OUT THE HANGMAN!

THE passing of the Homicide Act of 1957 took the wind out of the sails of the impressive campaign which had been waged for the abolition of capital punishment.

Why it should have done so, and why the campaign should have died so quickly may appear to be a little puzzling in view of the very limited nature of the gains won by the campaign and represented by the 1957 Act, for the Act did nothing more than circumscribe the circumstances in which a judge could sentence a murderer to the death penalty.

It did not by any means abolish the death penalty, and in fact since the introduction of the Act a certain encouragement has been given to those in favour of hanging because they presumably think that the opponents of the rope are satisfied with the situation and agree that the execution penalty is permissible in the circumstances specified under the Act.

### Great Step Forward'

This impression is not without justification, in view of the fact that the Act was hailed as a great step forward and that its passing virtually saw the end of the campaign for abolition.

But this unsatisfactory compromise stemmed from one main factor: that the campaign was headed by Members of Parliament who always advise 'realism' and a 'practical compromise' in accordance with what they think they can win in Parliament—which may be a very different result from that demanded by the supporters or even original organisers of the campaign.

In 1956 Mr. Sidney Silverman's Bill for the total abolition of capital punishment was passed by the House of Commons on a 'free vote'—i.e., for once M.P.'s were allowed to vote according to what they thought was right instead of how they were directed by the Party Whips.

While there was public outcry and pressure (sufficient to press Parliament to a win on a free vote) the Home Secretary felt constrained to reprieve. But when that pressure eased off and the compromise was accepted in Parliament, he has felt justified in 'letting justice take its course' as the phrase quaintly goes.

Under the 1957 Act, capital punishment applies to two or more murders on different occasions, and to murders:—

### Flinging a Bone

Following this, the Government, then under Sir Anthony Eden, recognised that some bone must be flung to the abolitionists, or they would perhaps draw too much attention to the power of the Lords to over-rule the Commons. The new Homicide Act was then dreamed up and presented to a House of Commons which had meantime been shaken by several important events—Suez, Hungary, Russia's possession of the H-Bomb and the departure of Sir Anthony, for example—while outside the House the campaign for abolition had come to a standstill because its climax had been the passing of Mr. Silverman's Bill, and its supporters were resting on their laurels, waiting to see what the big boys in Parliament were going to do.

Well, they saw. They saw the realistic M.P.s accept a compromise which has enabled twenty people to be sentenced to death in the ensuing two years and over half of them—eleven—have in fact been hanged.

In view of the fact that while the campaign for abolition was being waged, with newspapers presenting the arguments for and against and enthusiastic meetings being held up and down the country, hangings had virtually ceased (due to the Home Secretary operating consistently his power of reprieve), the introduction of the Homicide Act of 1957, far from limiting executions in fact re-introduced them!

Under the 1957 Act, capital punishment applies to two or more murders on different occasions, and to murders:—

In the course of furtherance of theft.

By shooting or causing an explosion.

While resisting arrest or escaping from custody.

Of police officers in the execution of their duty.

Of prison officers by prisoners.

### Hanging Came Back

Now a little thought on the possible implications arising out of these circumstances shows just what a pathetic advance was in fact made by the 1957 Act. The whole trend of penological thought up to 1957 had tended to make courts (and juries) recognise that those who commit murder deliberately are to some extent mentally deranged.

Increased understanding of mental derangement had extended the grounds of the 'guilty but insane' plea (in fact, though not in law) and increased the possibility of a Home Secretary reprieving even those condemned if medical evidence could be persuasive enough. Thus even before 1957, actual practice was eliminating the death penalty for deliberate murders and allowing arguments for extenuating circumstances if there had

been no deliberate intention to kill before a homicide act had occurred.

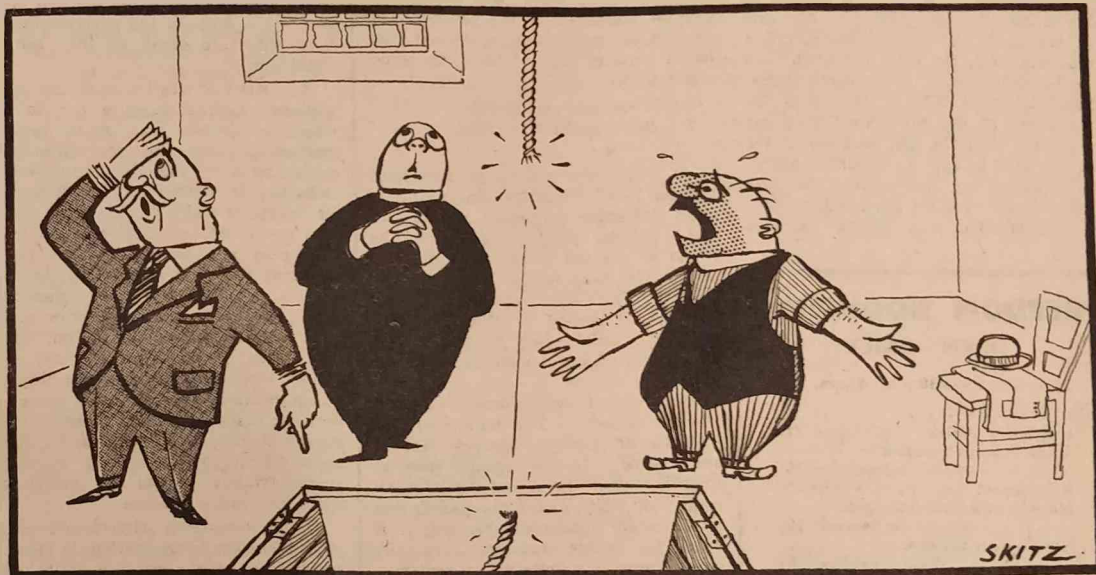
### Hanging for Accidental Killing

The Act of 1957 did nothing to clean up the situation. It actually further confused it. On July 27, 1957, we wrote:

"So the fantastic part of the Government's compromise on hanging is this: that the deliberate murderer will not hang, but the accidental one will. If a prisoner 'does his nut', which is not unusual in the claustrophobic conditions of prison life, and injures a warder so that he dies, the prisoner must be hanged. If in the course of his duty a policeman is assaulted by an escaping suspect and subsequently dies, the suspect, if caught, must be hanged.

"A poisoner who cold-bloodedly sets out to poison an old lady for her money will not hang. But a petty thief who knocks down an old lady on being surprised when robbing her home or shop, hurting her

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"IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR YOU, GUV'NOR, BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE TO BE 'UMANE IF I DON'T GET ENOUGH PRACTICE!"

## The Fruits of 'Technological Progress' CARS BUT NO ROADS!

IN the House of Commons last week, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Watkinson, stated that

"Traffic congestion is at least a sign of a lively and expanding economy. Do not let us regard it therefore in too tragic a manner. It is a by-product of an advanced technological way of life."

Mixed with the utter stupidity of this statement is a profound criticism of the social and economic system under which we live. But one imagines that both the stupidity and the profundity of the Minister's statement escaped him!

Big cities such as London suffered from traffic congestion in the depressed thirties no less than to-day and for the same reasons: that growing centralisation of business administration and control meant that the jobs of more and more people were concentrated in a limited area; accommodation within that area far from increasing, decreased, relatively as well as actually (because the development of what were residential sites for office blocks is a more profitable proposition than building new flats at rents within the reach of wage earners). And so every day an army of white-collared workers

descends on the big cities from the outlying dormitories which have sprung up to accommodate them.

But the roads are what they were fifty years ago, and apart from a few spectacular schemes which may temporarily relieve the congestion at some road intersections it seems clear from the pattern of new building in the large cities that nothing will be done to deal in a radical way with traffic problems created by both the growth of private and commercial road transport and the expansion of the working population in the commercial centres. It is much more likely that when traffic is virtually at a standstill, regulations will be imposed preventing private cars from entering the central areas of large cities, which will then be ringed by huge car parks where drivers will abandon their vehicles and proceed to their destinations by public transport!

THE motor car, symbol of modern man's freedom of movement as compared with public transport, has become in fact yet one more example of man's enslavement to advertising

and to "keeping up with the Jones'." He has reached the point financially (and by kind permission of the government and the finance companies) where he can include a car in his budget. But the trouble is that he hasn't the "freedom of the road" any longer! He will be told by any magistrate in London before whom he appears on a charge of "obstruction" that wherever he leaves his car, he is obstructing. So that as to whether his car is going to cost him an extra 40 shillings a week depends on whether the policemen in the districts where he wants to park it, have received instructions to round up cars (rather by the same logic as prostitutes are now "picked-up" for soliciting).

The fact that the majority of car owners are free to dispose of their lives only at week-ends and during public holidays means that most of them seek to enjoy the "freedom of the road" at the same time. Result: they cannot! Last Monday's *News Chronicle* reported that

the busiest Whit Monday ever known on the roads brought the worst traffic jams ever seen. That was the verdict of

the Automobile Association last night. Thousands who set off for the sea gave up before they got there. By Mid-afternoon there was a steady flow of home-bound cars (our italics).

Apparently the worst jams "came in the morning" and the R.A.C. reported that "in places there was continuous traffic at 7 a.m." The writer of these lines who, reluctantly, and as part of his job, had to be at Victoria at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, saw an almost deserted station, with trains leaving for the South Coast half empty! "Freedom of the road" is, perhaps, after all, something more than owning a motor-car and sitting in the driver's seat. For whereas the car provides people with the freedom to select the spot where they will spend their day, mass communications has so influenced their tastes that they invariably choose the same place as the Jones' as well as the same highways to reach it! In which case why not use public transport?

MR. Watkinson, it will be noted, thought that "Traffic congestion is at least a sign of a lively and expanding economy". Like all governments he was only interested in the health of the system. That the car industry should be flourishing was a matter of greater moment to him than that the owners of these cars

should be in a position to use their cars as they had hoped to do. One can well imagine the situation where every family in the country owned a car but never used it because they could not face the traffic jams. (Incidentally, we have often wondered what would happen if everybody applied to cash their savings in post-office deposits, banks, etc., at the same time and convert them into the goods to which they are entitled. Would they in fact get the same treatment as the man who buys a car, pays the road tax but cannot use it because of the road congestion?)

Is traffic congestion a barometer of a "lively and expanding economy"? As we have tried to point out, it is in the first place an indication of the inadequacy of the roads to cope with the age of the motor-bus and -car and not the horse-bus and -pony trap for which they were designed. Apart from that not unimportant consideration, how unrealistic it is to confuse what the politicians consider "a lively and expanding economy" with an assessment of the human situation, is demonstrated by the situation in the United States of America where there is a higher car "population" to human population than any country in the world yet there are still, in spite of a "spectacular" fall in unem-

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# IS WORK A CURSE?

[The following article is the substance of a talk given to the London Anarchist Group recently].

WE have recently witnessed that depressing survival, known as May Day in England, and Labour Day in the United States. Once upon a time May Day was a holiday of gaiety, of the full promise of Spring, indeed, if we are to believe the Puritans, who suppressed it, it was a sexual orgy, in the best sense of the word. It was one of the frequent reminders that work and obedience to government were not the sole purpose of mankind and for this there was chosen a Lord of Misrule who is a common figure in English folklore. The May day re-creation of him merged with the semi-mythical Robin Hood as a symbol of revolt, however temporary, against the workaday world of law and order. It was nearly 200 years later in the creation of 'King Lud' and 'Captain Swing' in the Luddite era that the working-classes of England again personalized their discontents.

But May Day as a holiday went, and in its place are left the platitudes and promises of Hyde Park, the ball-games and picnics of Brooklyn and the tank parades in the Red Square. It was said that the Reformation was a necessity in a capitalist country since a Catholic country had too many holy days (holidays) which interfered with business. Be that as it may, it is significant that the cash value of holidays is assessed by each one being called "Bank Holiday" not a works-, shops- or office- holiday.

IN PLACE of the values of 'Merry England' (which wasn't always so merry) the Protestant ethic erected the values of work, thrift and punctuality. The Puritans turned the screw still further and tapped new sources of energy from repression of the pleasure-seeking instincts.

Man's idea of work as his service to his fellow-man was pushed to one side in favour of the biblical interpretation that work was the curse put upon man for his sinfulness in the Garden of Eden. Such delightful Biblical phrases as "in the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat thy bread" and "he that does not labour neither shall he eat" were bandied about, in addition to the *double entendre* "Satan finds work for idle hands to do". The Elizabethan acts against "Rogues

and Vagabonds" started the bias in favour of regular work that the enclosure act furthered to make all ready for the Industrial Revolution and the Land of Samuel Smiles.

The result of all this insistence upon the virtue of labour produced its inevitable reaction. The Utopians went back to the Garden of Eden, the never-never land of Cockayne or the Big Rock Candy Mountain with the fountains of lemonade and dogs with rubber teeth and cots with wooden legs. It crystallized into the programme of a two-hour day and a three-day week. The Scientific Utopians pinned their faith in the virtues of the machine, of mass production and automation which would make the Leisure State realizable here on earth.

The Leisure State was set up as an ideal both by capitalist and anti-capitalist alike. So extremes, as they frequently do, met.

Such have been the blessings showered down upon us by the machine that the lack of physical exertion in labour is found to create such a guilt complex that our play and sports (especially amongst what are laughingly called the leisure class) take in an increasing masochistically energetic tendency (e.g. skiing, Rugby football, judo, mountaineering, pot-holing).

The positions of work and leisure are in danger of becoming reversed in content as they have in form. Most of us, increasingly do in our working time what we *have* to and in our leisure what we *want* to. The growth of hobbies, "moonlighting" and do-it-yourself are indications of the lack of job-satisfaction.

With increasing sub-division of labour and growth of automation the number of skilled jobs has lessened. Marx's critique of capitalism as alienating the worker from the *means* of production has been taken a step further by alienating the worker from the *methods* of production. This is alienation in the psychological as well as the physical sense and man has a sense of loss, of being, in Housman's words:

*A stranger and afraid  
In a world I never made.*

It is a favourite pastime to distinguish between words which are almost synonymous and attach perjorative meanings to one particular word. It can often be found in the end to be mere quibbling and playing with words. There are the good old pair "freedom and liberty" or "liberty and licence" or "force and violence" (it quite often boils down to "force is the kind of violence I approve of").

At the risk of inviting such a comment, Hannah Arendt in *The Burden of Our Time* has differentiated between "labour" and "work". In a language such as English with its Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots from which we can draw words that give delicate shades of meaning, it is usual for words that are practically synonymous to acquire usages and connotations which are unique to one synonym and one only.

Labour as Miss Arendt points out is associated with 'pain'. Birth itself is accompanied by labour pains. Labour is associated with heaviness (of which the machines have eliminated much). Labour is endless (the factory pre-occupation with clock-watching is testimony to this). Labour is routine, and consumability. (Housework is the best example of this. Truly it is said "a woman's work is never done"). But the chief result of labour-saving methods in the home has been to free women for outside jobs).

Labour leaves no trace; there is an urgency for consumption of the goods it produces which fits in with a 'consuming' society. There is too, about the products of labour, a necessary built-in obsolescence, a lack of durability which ensures a consumer market. Goods are shoddy, adulterated, or soon declared unfashionable, thus making labour—a

virtue in itself. The mass-production society is built up by advertisers into a society of gimmicks, gadgets and wants. A society of conspicuous consumption and production of goods which is accounted as a good thing in itself regardless of the nature of the goods which are expendable, temporary and ugly.

The labourer has no control over the product of his labour, the boot factory hand may go barefoot, or the provision warehouseman hungry.

The labourer has no control over the nature of his product. It may be "wealth" or "filth". The labourer had no control over the dark satanic mills of the Industrial Revolution nor over the Subtopias of the new Automatic Revolution. The products are ugly because production for profit is the only aim.

On the other hand "Work" is associated with products of the hand (and brain). The work of art is associated with the ideals of craftsmanship. "Work" needs skill, however menial it is felt to be.

## BOOK REVIEW

### The World Destroyed

NO ONE WILL ESCAPE by Hans Hellmut Kirst. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 18s.

HANS KIRST is well known in this country for his satirical books on the German army—the Gunner Asch trilogy. This book is his latest novel: its theme is the destruction of the great countries of the East and the West within seven days by means of atomic and hydrogen bombs. Set in the present, the author skilfully shows how the uneasy 'peace' between the two power blocs can dissolve and disappear in a few brief days—and this without deliberately planned aggression from either side. In fact, up to a few hours before the first atom bombs are dropped the governments on both sides are doing all they can to avoid war.

Herr Kirst divides his book into seven sections: each covering a day in the disastrous period that starts with a 'normal' political situation; within each section he shows the effect the gathering crisis has on various people. Reiners—an intelligent and politically high-principled agent, Beck—a high-powered business man and his wife whom he is divorcing and who is loved by Reiners, various political and military dignitaries, two young lovers, an American newspaper correspondent, and so on. It is all written most convincingly and one cannot doubt that this is one way in which nuclear weapons could come to be used; it should give all lovers of freedom something to think about for Kirst shows how, by supporting a revolt against tyranny, we can lose forever the chance to enjoy freedom.

The political crisis starts with a series of anti-Russian demonstrations in Poland, which leads to a resurgence of the nationalism that was evident when Gomulka came to power, and in turn to

the revolt of the army against the continued presence of Soviet troops in Poland. The revolt is rapidly crushed by the greatly superior Russian forces, but meanwhile the sparks have spread to East Germany and Berlin. There are strong movements among the East Germans to help 'our Polish brothers' and anti-Soviet feeling gains strength until there are revolts against the régime in several towns.

Groups of workers from these towns try to get through to the West German frontier to seek help from their fellow Germans; the authorities, of course, do all they can to prevent it but one group does get to the frontier. As it would almost certainly lead to retaliation by the West German frontier guards, the East German guards have orders not to shoot but a too well-indoctrinated East German soldier, filled with hatred against the workers whom he sees as traitors, opens fire. The West Germans cannot see their comrades being killed and remain idle—so they shoot back, and a full-scale 'incident' develops. There are requests to withdraw from both sides, which lead to ultimatums, a German general puts his loyalty to Germany before his loyalty to NATO, 'tactical' atomic weapons are used, then atom bombs, then hydrogen bombs.

As one reads this book one realises how possible such a course of events is, that we must, by the very nature of nuclear weapons, live permanently on the brink of disaster. It is doubly sad that such a disaster can be brought about by revolt against an authoritarian régime, that another uprising like that in Hungary in 1956 could start the third world war. One could draw the moral that, while nuclear weapons exist, a form of political quietism is the only way to avoid the holocaust—which would please greatly the rulers on both sides.

M.G.W.

"In a primitive society," said Coomaswamy, "an artist is a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist." The products of work have relative durability. A "workmanlike job" is high praise for it might seem tautological. "Work" under control if a machine is involved. It is usually a hand-powered tool when a capstan lathe or a spade. Work associated with a society of basic needs. Food, clothing and shelter have not satisfactorily been met in quantity or quality by a mass-production capitalist society. Farming is indeed impossible by factory methods. Control is also possible in work since the worker can take his time. Given that, a thing's beauty is often the product.

GRANTED THIS distinction between "work" and "labour" the apparently conciliable demands of the radical movement fall into place. "The right to work" and "the right to be lazy".

"The right to work", as well as the right to the necessities of life (to which labour is often only the means to the right to perform a task which, if pleasure, is useful and creates beauty).

"The right to be lazy" is the right to decline labour which is degrading and not to suffer materially for it. The right to be a thinker and a dreamer without which right inventions, discoveries and works of art would not have been made.

To echo Bonar Thompson, "I don't know why a man should go out to labour whilst he has the strength to stay in bed." Fundamentally there are few things people. The crooks and parasites of an enormous amount of mental and physical energy avoiding work. It is David Reisman says, "a reaction against the work people are forced to do the way they have to do it."

To sum up, it is "labour" in the meaning given above that must be eliminated in the free society, not "work" which is a necessary condition of a creative and healthy life.

## Watch that Surplus!

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## The Psychology of Community Relations

IT has been remarked that we all live in some sort of community anyway, whether we acknowledge it or not. I am going to talk about the psychological implications of our living in different sorts of communities. Also I am going to try to clarify some of the issues involved when people feel the need to go and live in, or to found, a Community with a capital C, whatever form it may take.

I would first of all refer you to the mythical race of the Cyclops, who, as Homer tells us—"Live in the caves of the mountains, each one ruling over his wife and children, and they give no aid to one another."

These were beings who apparently felt no need for community life. Yet you will remember that when Odysseus blinded one of them and was escaping in his ship, the neighbouring Cyclops answered the cry of the stricken one and hurled great rocks at the retreating ships, thus rendering a primitive sort of mutual aid after all. This sort of mutual aid is not quite what we mean by community relations however.

It is natural for the race of men to live in some sort of community, whether it be an extended family, a tribe, village, city state, monastery, army or any of the thousand and one types of social unit which have come into existence at some time. Tom Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, expresses it thus:

"[Nature] has not only forced men into society by a diversity of wants, which the reciprocal aid of each other can supply, but she has implanted in man a system of social affections, which, though not necessary to it [society's] existence, are essential to his happiness. There is no period in life when this love for society ceases to act. It begins and ends with our being."

The fact that nowadays we talk of "forming a community" indicates some of the peculiarities of the vastly

complex network of social relationships which makes up our modern civilization. Now people are often glad to get away from the communities in which they have grown up, like their native village or suburb, because they feel considerably un-free in such a community where everyone knows everyone else. Their personal life may be subject to rather close scrutiny and criticism by those with whom they are forced to associate rather closely. They may prefer to break such ties and go and live, say, in the anonymity of a city where they can live their own lives in much greater freedom.

A great city confers a certain freedom because the vast mass of people are strangers to one another. In London we see hundreds or thousands of people face to face every day, and most of them just don't register on us as individuals. We thank the bus-conductor for our ticket, agree with the shop assistant that it's a nasty wet day and carry on stereotyped polite conversation with many people, yet they are not real people to us. We don't care a damn for them and they don't care a damn for us. How can it be otherwise? They are just ciphers playing stereotyped roles, not individuals. As city dwellers we are pretty free from criticism, free to be almost as eccentric as we like, and free to be terribly lonely in a crowd. We can almost live like the Cyclops.

As a refuge from this loneliness people create various forms of community for themselves: clubs, Adult Evening Institutes, athletic societies, debating societies, political groups, church congregations. One can go on adding to the list of these forms of association which have some ostensible *raison d'être* like the worship of God, or banning the H-bomb, but their most important function is that they cut across the anonymity of modern life and supply the necessary elements of community whereby individuals can satisfy what Tom Paine called their "social affections".

The more intelligent and sophisticated people are, the

more able are they to get satisfaction from communities where expression is more or less limited to paper. Take some isolated reader of *FREEDOM* or *The New Statesman*; he is able to feel that he is one of a stimulating, argumentative gossipy community with their own loyalties, private jokes, scandals and disputes like any other close community. Letters to the Editors make it possible to enter the fray whenever we feel the urge. In the same way you get scientists or academicians who appear to live pretty isolated lives, but who are by no means lacking in community intercourse. They have their journals which take the place of face-to-face community life. These esoteric journals are full of the undercurrent of human passion; the writers attack one another's hypothesis, show loyalty to their buddies, show devotion, faith, magnanimity, envy, spleen. All this takes place in learned journals which would be quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

Take your isolated writer who may live in seclusion in the country, yet he is not intellectually isolated; he reads all the journals that matter, the book reviews. He may have a voluminous correspondence with people he has never met, and his pen is as busy as a washer-woman's tongue. He does not lack the satisfactions of community life, even though he spends most of his time alone in his study.

To some extent the radio provides an ersatz community life for those whose own lives are very isolated. The daily affairs of the Archers, Mrs. Dale's Diary, The Huggets, etc., assume great importance in the lives of some listeners. You may remember the extraordinary outcry there was a year or so ago when one of the characters in the Archers programme was killed off—Graco Archer, that was the character, I think. An enormous number of devoted listeners whose lives are a blend of fact and fantasy, were up in arms as though a real girl had been killed off.

(To be continued)

## The Fruits of Technological Progress\*

Continued from p. 1

Employment during the past month, nearly 4 million breadwinners without work; though we are officially told the recession is over, these four million, according to *Economic Trends and Outlook*, (published by the A.F. of L. and C.I.O.) will remain. And in spite of a greater congestion of cars on American roads than anywhere in the world, Reuter reports that 30,000 people in Ohio are on food relief.

CLEVELAND (OHIO), MAY 11.

The first free food distributed to the needy since the depression in the early 1930's will be handed out to 30,000 people to-day in Cuyahoga County in which Cleveland stands.

In spite of record production of steel (a large part of which is absorbed by the car industry) 50,000 American steel workers are out of a job, and one can well imagine that the 600,000 officially unemployed in Britain derive very little consolation, or hope for the future, from the fact that there is a traffic congestion on British roads (any more than miners are consoled by the 20 million ton "congestion" of surplus coal tips blotting the landscape).

Mr. Watkinson says that Traffic congestion—and by implication coal dumps and food surpluses\* are—"a by-product of an advanced technological way of life". That is true of the capitalist system of production and distribution. But technology in the service of mankind would produce quite different results. For in the first place it would be possible to provide the necessities of life (and even the motor cars!) on a considerably shorter working week than operates at present. (As it is, under capitalism, the American Steel Unions are pressing for a 4-day week every four weeks as a "necessity" in order to "create job opportunities" for the 50,000 workers who are still idle at a time when steel production is setting new records).

A shorter working week, and production according to needs would mean more elasticity in organising working hours and the abolition of the universal Saturday-Sunday weekend, which is now a matter of convenience for the bosses, not the workers. This would mean that instead of 50 million people all seeking to relax at the same time, every day of the week would be a day of relaxation for somebody.

If it's cars we need as part of our relaxation then cars which are idle 5 days of the week simply to serve their masters for the remaining two, could be in use seven days of the week for three or four "masters". By producing cars intended to have a long life as well as serving more than one master, the car industry could produce less cars and yet "satisfy" more people. By producing less cars the workers in that industry could work less hours and enjoy more leisure. Similarly in all other industries, apart from food production, which by attracting more

\*It will be pointed out to us, we are sure, that traffic congestion is the result of more people buying cars, and as such is a sign of prosperity, whereas the coal dumps exist because there are no buyers. It depends how you look at the problem. To our minds these coal dumps are wealth, no less than the cars (which only eighteen months ago were also being stored in quarries and open spaces because there were no buyers). The fact that cars are bought and sold to capacity at present is quite dishonestly used by the Minister as proof that the economy is expanding. He would equally use that argument if it were the coal that was being bought and the cars stored in the dumps! Coal is not being sold in the same quantities as a year ago because oil is being used to replace coal.

TO every Negro parent in the American South, comes the moment when he must explain to his children the facts of life—the facts of segregation. When Martin Luther King was puzzled because he could no longer play with the white boys across the street, his mother tried to explain to him the system of segregated schools, restaurants, theatres, housing, the white and coloured signs on drinking fountains, waiting rooms, and lavatories. But she explained it as a social condition rather than a natural order. "Then she said the words that almost every Negro hears before he can yet understand the injustice that makes them necessary: *You are as good as anyone.*" Twenty-one years later, emerging from college as a clergyman and a Ph.D., he was asked to become Minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He had been offered other jobs in places where his own children could grow up without the indignity of segregation, but after some discussion with his wife, accepted, with the hope of playing some part in the changes which were on the horizon, but with no notion that "in a little more than a year we would be involved in a movement that was to alter Montgomery for ever, and to have repercussions throughout the world."

Montgomery has a population of 70,000 white people and 50,000 Negroes. Dr. King found the Negro community the victims of a three-fold malady, "factionalism among the leaders, indifference in the educated group, and passivity in the uneducated". Montgomery could be described as a peaceful town, "but the peace was achieved at the cost of human servitude". There was, however, an undertone of discontent, voiced by such men as E. D. Nixon, a Pullman porter who was state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and a fearless worker for civil rights, and by Dr. King's predecessor, the Rev. Vernon Johns, who

"Considering it a tragedy that the Negro produced so little of what he consumed, consistently urged the Negroes of Montgomery to pool their economic resources. As a result, a few enterprising individuals came together in 1953, under John's influence, and organised

workers could nevertheless achieve the same conditions for the producers.

The sharing of tools and services and the staggering of working hours would make leisure hours not the hard-earned "free-time" of which one cannot "afford" to waste a single minute, but the bulk of one's day to be spent pleasurably not compulsively; which one need not organize weeks ahead, because on the same day 50 million other people will also be "organising" their "days off".

People to-day use the motor-ways because they are in a hurry, because their leisure hours are determined for them by the State and by the boss . . . who, between them, operate the capitalist system. To-morrow, only through their own efforts, however, technology offers them the alternative of enjoying their leisure hours without having to hurry! If they believe Mr. Watkinson (or for that matter, whoever will be the Minister of Transport in a *Labour Government*) the technological way of life means "congestion". What a pity! For, whatever the disadvantages of life in an age of technology, the one advantage which to our minds stands out a mile, is the possibility it offers of getting the machines to do the dreary work whilst we enjoy the leisure that would permit us to do just the things we dream of doing "if only we had the time" as we carry out our dreary jobs and scrape and save to buy that car which gets us nowhere anyhow!

If tomorrow people start buying helicopters at the expense of cars the yardstick of "economic prosperity" will be helicopters and not cars and congestion in the air will be a "sign" of etc. . . . It's all nonsense! Either we can consume what we produce or there is no point in producing. And a car which cannot use the highways because the road system cannot cope with the existing traffic is no different from a coal dump which cannot be used because there is no use for it . . . apart from the financial aspect of the matter: that on the one hand a "mug" has bought the car and can't use it (except at a price) whereas on the other no "mug" can be found to buy coal for which he has no use!

Farm and City Enterprises—a co-operative supermarket which has today developed into a thriving business. This was a *tour de force* in a community that had generally been abysmally slow to move." There was one place where the "peace" of Montgomery was precarious: the city buses, a daily reminder to the Negroes of the indignities of segregation. There were no Negro drivers, and it was not uncommon to hear the drivers referring to Negro passengers as "black cows" or "black apes".

"Frequently Negroes paid their fares at the front door, and then were forced to get off and re-board the bus at the rear. Often the bus pulled off with the Negro's dime in the box before he had had time to reach the rear door. An even more humiliating practice was the custom of forcing Negroes to stand over empty seats reserved for 'whites only'. Even if the bus had no white passengers, and Negroes were packed throughout, they were prohibited from sitting in the first four seats (which held ten persons). But the practice went further. If white passengers were already occupying all of their reserved seats and additional white people boarded the bus, Negroes sitting in the unreserved section immediately behind the whites were asked to stand so that the whites could be seated. If the Negroes refused to stand and move back, they were arrested. In most instances the Negroes submitted without protest."

At the end of 1955 came the incident that set off the year-long bus boycott that Dr. King has described in a book\* which also describes his own "pilgrimage to non-violence" through the influence of Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* and the life and teachings of Gandhi. Dr. King declares that "The Montgomery story would have taken place if the leaders of the protest had never been born", but one cannot help feeling that his moral effect owes very much to the fact that he was able to harness the religious faith of his people to the techniques of non-violent resistance and to the psychological insight which makes him able to declare that

"Since the white man's personality is greatly distorted by segregation and his soul is greatly scarred, he needs the love of the Negro. The Negro must love the white man, because the white man needs his love to remove his tensions, insecurities and fears."

\**STRIDE TOWARD FREEDOM*, by Martin Luther King Jr. (Gollancz 16s.)

## CINEMA No Cause for Concern

THE CASE OF DR. LAURENT. (Academy, Oxford Street).

A PEASANT girl with a baby on the way, the theory of natural childbirth, Jean Gabin as a rather lumpy country doctor, the cavalcade of village types, and a birth-scene taking up 15 minutes of film-time, is this instruction, romance, or entertainment? We are told to beware of didacticism in art, but if the preaching is all on the side of liberty and love, then we need not worry.

This is a tale of how a community accepts a new idea, reacting to it first with suspicion and mistrust, and finally with riotous enthusiasm. It is also an invitation to us, too, to accept the idea. Jean-Paul Le Chanois, who directed and wrote the script, was a doctor before he came to filming.

A doctor must see the best in all his patients, and that goes for film-doctors as well as the ordinary ones. I am not going to be churlish and say that he just does not know his village, but what has become of the tensions, the intractable neuroses, the anti-lifers? Everyone in St. Martin has a heart of gold, and the last scene shows even the Medical Council and the poker-faced midwife relaxed and smiling happily.

Also, motherhood is a peculiarly difficult theme to build upon, since treated intimately, it evokes virtually only one emotion, as James Joyce found when he tried to orchestrate it in *Ulysses*.

Nicole Courcel plays Francine, the farmer's daughter. And there is a *curé*; if you can fathom just how he dovetails into the plot, you know more than I do. The peasant women sing the Marseillaise as they drive to the hospital with their precious cargo, and the gradients have to be felt to be believed. So, not Ibsen or Bergman, but a good introduction to childbirth for those who don't know much about it; for those who do, an encouraging sign of the film industry's growing receptivity.

ARTHUR FOOTE.

# THE MONTGOMERY STORY

ON December 1st, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks, a seamstress in a department store sat down in a bus in the first seat behind the section reserved for whites. The driver ordered her and three other Negroes to get up in order to accommodate boarding white passengers. The other three complied but Mrs. Parks refused and was arrested. As the news of her arrest got around that evening, the idea of a boycott was suggested. After an *ad hoc* committee meeting the following night, leaflets were circulated with the message "Don't ride the bus to work, to town, to school, or any place Monday, Dec. 5th". The eighteen Negro taxi companies agreed to use their 210 taxis to transport people for the same price as they would pay on the buses. On the Monday morning, Dr. King watched the peak-hour traffic. "I saw no more than eight Negro passengers riding the buses. By this time I was jubilant. Instead of the 60 per cent, co-operation we had hoped for, it was becoming apparent that we had reached almost 100 per cent." The police were trailing the buses hoping to make arrests for "intimidating passengers". But "no one was threatened or intimidated for riding the buses; the only harassment anyone faced was that of his own conscience".

The resolution passed at a mass meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association, as it was named, did not call for an end to segregation. It merely called upon Negroes not to resume riding on buses until (1) courteous treatment by the bus operators was guaranteed; (2) passengers were seated on a first-come, first served basis—Negroes seating from the back of the bus toward the front while whites seated from the front to the back; (3) Negro bus operators to be employed on predominately Negro routes. On the following Friday the police commissioner declared that the taxi firms were committing a legal offence in not charging a minimum fare of 45 cents. The cheap taxi service was ended, but the car pool began. Three hundred volunteers were driving around the city picking up people, and a transportation committee sat for hours working out a network of dispatch and pick-up stations to make the system less haphazard and reduce the number of people who had to walk anything up to 12 miles to and from work.

"In a few days this system was working astonishingly well. The white opposition was so impressed at this miracle of quick organisation that they had to admit in a White Citizens Council meeting that the pool moved with 'military precision'. The MIA had worked out in a few nights a transportation problem that the bus company had grappled with for many years . . . Altogether the operation of the motor pool represented organisation and co-ordination at their best. Reporters and visitors from all over the country looked upon the system as a unique accomplishment. But the job took money. . . ."

Money—250,000 dollars of it poured in from all over the world although a public appeal for funds was never made.

Negotiations with the City Commissioners and the bus company broke down. Dr. King, at the start, had been optimistic about them:

"Feeling that our demands were moderate, I had assumed that they would be granted with little question; I had believed that the privileged would give up their privileges on request. This experience, however, taught me a lesson. I came to see that no one gives up his privileges without strong resistance. I saw further that the underlying purpose of segregation was to oppress and exploit the segregated, not simply to keep them apart. Even when we asked for justice within the segregation laws, the 'powers that be' were not willing to grant it. Justice and equality, I saw, would never come while segregation remained, because the basic purpose of segregation was to perpetuate injustice and inequality."

The failure of an attempt to hoodwink the Negroes into going back to the buses was followed by a "get tough" policy by the City Commissioners, with a series of arrests for minor or imaginary traffic violations, and Dr. King, among others was jailed for 'speeding'. Threatening letters or telephone calls rose to thirty or forty a day by the middle of January. On January 30th, when he was at a meeting a bomb went off in the porch of his house. His wife and child were unhurt. Dynamite blew up on the lawn of Mr. Nixon's house. When the opposition found that terrorism could not stop the protest, they resorted to mass arrests. The Montgomery County Grand Jury found the boycott illegal and indicted over a hundred people. In March Dr. King was found guilty and sentenced to a 500 dollar fine of 386 days hard labour.

THE Negro leaders then filed a suit in the U.S. Federal District Court asking for an end of bus segregation on the grounds that it was contrary to the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and asking the court to stop the city commission from violating the civil rights of Negro motorists and pedestrians. The Federal Court declared in June that the city bus segregation laws were unconstitutional. The city attorneys then announced that they would appeal to the Supreme Court. The boycott went on but in the autumn the insurance company cancelled the policies for the car pool. The committee replied by insuring with Lloyds of London. Then the City filed a petition to end the car pool, describing it as a 'public nuisance' and a 'private enterprise' operating without a licence, and demanding compensation for damages, claiming that the city (which receives 2 per cent. of the bus company's revenue) had lost more than 15,000 dollars as a result of the reduction in bus travel.

On Tuesday, November 13th, 1956, the Court at Montgomery granted an injunction to halt the motor pool, but while the court was in session, news came that the Supreme Court had affirmed the decision that the state laws

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## Discussion: Catholic Schools

THE article "Catholics & Votes" in last week's FREEDOM contained arguments which seemed rather strange on the front page of an anarchist weekly. It almost makes it seem a creditable libertarian action to provide the Roman Catholic church with money to build schools; but if that is so what grounds has the writer for implying political opportunism to M.P.s who support that point of view?

At the beginning of the century Free Church ministers practised civil disobedience, leading on occasions to prison, as a protest against being forced to contribute to the upkeep of Church of England schools. What they were fighting against was not the existence of Church schools, or the right of parents to set up such schools and send their children to them, but the fact of being themselves compelled to contribute to these institutions which were propagating a doctrine which they considered pernicious. Whether the Free Churchmen are so principled today is not quite as certain. However, despite the fact that anarchists are opposed to all taxation since it is one of the state's methods of ensuring that peoples working power is used in its interests and not in their own, and despite the fact that taxes are used for objects even more objectionable than religious schools, e.g. military expense, I think anarchists should definitely oppose, and campaign against increased public financial support for denominational schools. This does not in any way involve a coercive attack on religious believers. As an analogy, although anarchist propaganda is illegal in Spain, and legally prosecuted in Italy, no-one suggests banning the Catholic Truth Society in England; but how many of us would contribute financially to increase its freedom to spread its ideas.

The objection to Catholic schools is not of course that their products are devout believers in that faith, any more than children from libertarian schools become anarchists. They do however, inculcate the idea that the church is right in its attitude to human life and behaviour, and utilise their ten years control of a child to ensure as far as possible that in adult life he will be mentally and emotionally incapable of living a free and independent life. Whereas even in the State educational world there is official approval of co-education, sex education and the abolition of corporal punishment, the Catholic schools oppose all these.

The motives of the State schools are not libertarian, and in all the three matters mentioned above their approaches are hindered and hedged by authoritarian basic ideas, but they are in a sense responding to a demand on the part of young people for more enjoyment in life, and whatever the motives, the children have the chance to exploit the newly found opportunities in whatever way they like. On the other hand, Catholic schools insist with Papal doctrine to support them, on segregated schools. They regard corporal punishment, not as a regrettable necessity, as Go its remaining defenders in most places, but as a natural part of school life. A group of humanitarians in Ireland who are organising a campaign against it find the Church their greatest enemy, and

state that the most vicious schools are those run by the Christian Brothers, and for girls by the Sisters of Mercy.

Since however inadequate the provision of school places is, every child in Britain has at least a school to go to, the building of new religious schools will not be providing places for children who would otherwise be deprived of any school education. At most it will relieve overcrowding, but in its place will come the increased spiritual oppression. The money for them will either come from that which could be spent on State schools (although I do not support State schools, the denominational ones have all their evils and a lot more as well), or will come from our pockets, and therefore could alternatively have been donated to a libertarian school.

Lastly, the fourth paragraph of "Catho-

**MOST** writers for FREEDOM generally assume that its readers are more sophisticated than most and, therefore, do not always think it necessary to restate the obvious. In this instance our opposition to the suppression of "free" thought, either by Church or State, which inhibits intellectual inquiry, and also all manifestations of statism including taxation.

Part of our task is to expose contradictions between stated principles and practice, whether religious or political, and to attempt a critical analysis of things as they are and not necessarily always discuss how we would like them to be.

Often, some of us fall short of our intentions but, as we can see, there are always other writers to fill the gap, if not in our reasoning, at least in our inadequate handling of an issue we may have chosen for discussion.

I make these comments for the benefit of our readers, as well as our contributor P.H., who thinks that the article "Catholics and Votes" which appeared in last week's FREEDOM is a strange one to be on the front page of an anarchist paper. I would also state in passing that I have been described in the past in FREEDOM as a bigot because of my oft-stated opposition to the Roman Catholic Church and its teachings. It seems I cannot "win"!

The intention of the very brief comment "Catholics and Votes" was primarily to point to the lack of "Christian spirit" in the attitude of the Free Churches on this question and also to deplore the tactics of the Government in their attempt to win Catholic votes. In short, I was interested in *motives* which, on consideration, I found to be shoddy and, in reply to P.H.'s question, it was for these reasons that I accused M.P.s of political opportunism and Free Church Christians of lacking in Christian spirit. It is my view that these two points are irrefutable.

The view which I expressed, that all minorities are entitled to ask for State aid for schools, was based on the simple premise that non-catholics and catholics alike are tax-paying citizens who are expected to support the State in "peace and war". In my view the only valid answer, considered *within the framework of this society*, is that taxation does not cover the existing social services let alone new schools because of the other

lics & Votes" brings in the dreaded word "intolerance" and the sixth suggests that "the influence of the Catholic Church or any other authoritarian organisation cannot be undermined by using its own methods".

What is authoritarian in refusing to give financial aid to something one is opposed to? Of course we should be intolerant towards people who fill their children's minds with ideas of God, authority and sin, and since anarchists generally recognise the overriding importance of education and upbringing in deciding the future emotional life, and intellectual attitude of men and women, we should be more intolerant than anyone else. It is a different matter to agree that our aims cannot be achieved by coercion of our opponents.

P.H.

'commitments' deemed necessary by Governments.

There is nothing to stop Free Churches or other groups asking for State aid or, alternatively, if they do not want their own schools, refusing to pay taxes because they do not want to support state-aided Catholic Schools. It is not enough to fall back on the actions of Free Church Ministers in the eighteenth century who went to prison because they refused to support Church of England Schools. The official religious teaching in schools today is Church of England, why then Free Church silence? Have they accepted Canterbury while still rejecting Rome?

Both doctrines are pernicious from an anarchist standpoint, and it is not my intention to campaign for state-aided Catholic Schools, but my view of the Free Church 'outcry' remains, based on their own theoretical acceptance of scriptural teachings expressed in the tenet 'love thy neighbour', and on my own peculiar brand of logic.

As P.H. writes: "Anarchists are opposed to all taxation since it is one of the state's methods of ensuring that people's working power is used in its interests, and in spite of the fact that taxes are used for even more objectionable projects than religious schools..." If members of the Free Church denounced war and State as piously as they attack the authority of Rome, I would take their protestations more seriously, but these Church Trotskists aim at imprisoning the mind as do the Catholics and Anglicans.

Finally, the words "tolerant" and "intolerant" require definition; but each individual having, no doubt, personal interpretations, will oppose authoritarianism according to these and to the circumstances.

Temperamentally, I am not a patient

## The Montgomery Story

Continued from p. 3

requiring segregation on buses were unconstitutional. That night the Ku Klux Klan rode.

"When the Klan arrived—about forty carloads of robed and hooded members—porch lights were on and doors open. As the Klan drove by, the Negroes behaved as though they were watching a circus parade. Concealing the effort it cost them, many walked about as usual; some simply watched from their steps; a few waved at the passing cars. After a few blocks, the Klan, nonplussed, turned off into a sidestreet and disappeared into the night."

While waiting for the Supreme Court decision to reach the city, the MIA held meetings after meeting to prepare the people for integrated buses, stressing that "we must not take this as a victory over the white man, but as a victory for justice and democracy". They went into the schools urging non-violence, and issued a list of suggestions for avoiding conflict. "In spite of all our efforts to prepare the Negroes for integrated buses, not a single white group would take the responsibility of preparing the white community... Although the white ministers as a group had been appallingly silent throughout the protest, I had still maintained the hope that they would take a stand once the decision was rendered."

The Negroes went back to the buses on December 21st. After a few days of peaceful compliance a reign of terror began. Buses were fired on. Two more Negro ministers' houses and four churches were bombed. In January there were more bombings, and an unexploded bomb assembled from twelve sticks of dynamite was found smouldering in Dr. King's porch. Some white men were arrested, confessed, and were found not guilty. But in a few weeks transportation was back to normal, and "people of both races rode together wherever they pleased. The skies did not fall when integrated buses finally travelled the streets of Montgomery." It was not a change of heart, but the Supreme Court Ruling which integrated the buses. At the same time the Ruling would not have been put into effect but for the year-long boycott—for many other towns still have segregated buses. At the same time, Montgomery's racial problems are far from solved, and in

individual. In the course of my "career" as an anarchist propagandist there have been many occasions when the desire to persuade by means other than gentle reason has been overwhelming. (For practical purposes my size and sex preclude the form of attack I have in mind!) But in rare moments of wisdom it is the concept of "tolerance" and "love"—the basis of anarchism—which attracts me most.

R.M.

## Kick Out the Hangman

Continued from p. 1

so that she dies, that petty thief will hang for murder."\*

These circumstances have been demonstrated several times in the last two years, culminating in the hanging of Marwood this month—an event which led to scenes of near-riot outside Pentonville jail and once again focussing attention upon Britain's pathetic dependence upon the hangman's rope.

Eleven hangings in two years may not seem many. But for the two years before the passing of the 1957 Homicide Act there had been none!

### Absence of a Campaign

The compromise Act, therefore, far from being a step forward in practice, actually brought back the use of the rope after it had been demonstrated that 'order' could be maintained in our society without it.

The changed factors were the legal position and the absence of a vociferous campaign. It seems, therefore, that it is now necessary to mount the Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment all over again—and that this time it should live up to its name and not be satisfied with anything less than abolition.

Unfortunately many of the good workers for that campaign are now busy on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament! The active secretary of the CND is actually the same person who filled that office (efficiently)

\*See Selection from FREEDOM, Year One, Sputnik Era, 1957, p. 120. 'Return to the Rope'.

for the abolitionists. If the same people are concerned, we are justified in asking if they will be equally willing, in view of their experience, to compromise on the H-Bomb issue?

Will they, when their tame Labour M.P.s advise it, be politically 'realistic' on H-Bombs as they were on the rope—only to see nuclear weapons become acceptable on a compromise and be retained as the gallows has been?

### Counter-Attack

Already the counter-attack is coming on hanging. In this week's *Observer* Cyril Osborne, Conservative M.P. for Louth writes in a letter: "The cure [for the anomalies of the 1957 Act] is not to abolish hanging altogether, but to re-impose it for all kinds of murder."

The bloodhounds are baying, and the fact that they feel strong enough to make their reactionary demands shows again the dangers of accepting compromises and reforms from a government and then resting on one's laurels.

As we also wrote in 1957: "There is only one thing that can be done about the death penalty—it must be abolished completely. Political baits and sly compromises should not be allowed to bring back the hangman when for two years our society has managed to survive without him."

In the intervening two years the hangman has crept back. It is time he was kicked out altogether.

a long final chapter Dr. King looks towards the wider struggle.

"Many public officials are using power of their offices to defy the law of the land. Through their irresponsible actions, their inflammatory statements and their dissemination of distortions, half-truths, they have succeeded in arousing abnormal fears and morbid anxieties within the minds of underprivileged and uneducated whites, leaving them such a state of excitement and confusion that they are led to acts of megalomaniac violence that no normal person would commit."

The Supreme Court may declare, the President is silent and congress is silent. Dr. King sees hope in the union movement, for

"Both Negro and white workers are equally oppressed. For both, the living standards need to be raised to levels consistent with our national resources. Logic but a hollow social distinction separated the races. The economic depressed white accepts his poverty, telling himself that, if in no other respect at least socially he is above the Negro. For this empty pride in a racial myth has paid the crushing price of insecurity, hunger, ignorance, and hopelessness himself and his children."

In putting forward a programme of non-violence, which can "touch where the law cannot reach them" reminds us that the dignity and the suffering of the nine High School children of Little Rock will change the national conscience more than the federal troops walking the corridors of Central High School. He calls for the kind of courage minority that Thoreau had in mind when he said that "if one thousand, if a hundred, if ten men whom I could name—if ten honest men only—aye, if one honest man in the state of Massachusetts ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from the co-partnership, he would be locked up in the county jail therefore it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be, what once well done is done forever."

King recalls that Gandhi "never had more than one hundred persons absolutely committed to his philosophy. But with this small group of devoted followers, he galvanised the whole of India, and through a magnificent feat of non-violence challenged the might of the British Empire and won freedom for his people."

And finally, in words which have relevance far beyond the struggle against discrimination in America, he declares that, "If the moderates of the white South fail to act now, history will have to record that the greatest tragedy of the period of social transition was not the strident clamour of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people."

C.W.

## 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.

MAY 24.—"Frankly speaking": RITA MILTON interviewed by JACK ROBINSON

### CLEVELAND LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE GROUP

Monthly discussion meetings are held on the last Friday of each month at 8 o'clock at 3705 West Park Road, Cleveland (near Lorain-Triskett). Anyone interested is invited.

### THE YOUNGSTOWN LIBERTARIANS

A Picnic, July 4th, at 1 p.m. at Frank Marino's Farm, 3825 Lauterman Road, Youngstown, Ohio.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

### THE FREE SOCIETY

DIAR EDITORS,

Like S. E. Parker, I believe the "Sovereignty of the Individual" to be vital in a free society. It is because I believe this that I am an advocate of common ownership—anarchist communism—as the only form of society in which this sovereignty can be achieved.

Any form of ownership which is not common to all must inevitably give rise to divided interests, with consequent conflict and restrictive authority. Assuredly some individuals would be more "sovereign" than others.

The requisite condition for liberty is that all have the same interest in society. This can only be when everything is held in common, and I consequently believe that common ownership is a basic principle for anarchist society. For this I am rebuked as being exclusivist, but anyway, it is logical. I do not deny the right of other anarchists to have other opinions, but for myself, I am unable to see how liberty and any form of private ownership—with the inevitable clash of interests—can co-exist. Incidentally, if to advocate anarchist communism is to be exclusivist, some of the greatest intellects of our movement must be included in this scolding.

The common ownership of the religious sects referred to by Mr. Parker is wholly illusory. Such isolated groups are anti-social and have no significance to social development (which brings us near the Herbert Read controversy). As for the equality of barracks and prisons I can only say that I had not noticed this equality. Are these also to be regarded as examples of common ownership?

Small economic groupings to me do not appear to be realistic when applied to satisfying the needs of modern society, even after making due allowance for new techniques in production, but I agree that we cannot legislate for the future. Our concern should be I think with a reasonable alternative to present-day chaos, and as this demonstrably lies in the private holding of property, it appears rational to look to common ownership for the remedy. I do not look on this as presenting a "cut and dried image" for future society, but if it is so, and as Mr. Parker says, it makes it easier for propaganda—well, after all, that isn't really a bad thing. We do want anarchism as soon as we can have it, don't we?

Yours sincerely,  
Woldingham, May 4. F.B.