

'Between the government which does evil and the people who accept it there is a certain shameful solidarity.'
VICTOR HUGO

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THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY - 4d.

THE LIEGE TRIAL

Humanity vs. the Law

WE would like to think that last week in the old city of Liège a small but significant blow was struck on behalf of human happiness and human responsibility. A twelve-man jury, supported by an almost unanimous—and vocal—public opinion acquitted a 25-year-old mother of killing her thalidomide baby, and three members of her family and the family doctor of aiding and abetting the killing against all the evidence and in spite of the Public Prosecutor's assurance to the jury that he would endorse an immediate appeal for a Royal Pardon in return for a symbolic conviction of the accused. "They will not remain in prison a moment longer" he promised.

THE charges, read to the Court by the clerk, stated that

"As soon as the baby was born and found to be armless and with deformed feet Mme. Fernande-Coipel asked Dr. Edouard Weerts, the doctor who had delivered the child, to kill it, but he refused. Mme. Monique Coipel also asked the doctor and the doctor's assistant, Sister Philomena, a Roman Catholic nun, who equally refused. Four days later, when the young mother was eventually shown the child, she also asked Dr. Weerts to kill it.

The same day, the four members of the family met in the clinic room where the mother was and decided to kill the baby. Two days later the mother and the baby went home and the child's grandmother asked Dr. Casters for poison. Dr. Casters gave a prescription and the grandmother bought the drugs. That evening Mme. Vandeput gave the baby the poison in its feeding bottle.

Dr. Casters told the court: 'I do not regret having acted out of conscience'. He added that there was nothing else for him to do. 'I thought of the child's future from the physical point of view, from the moral point of view, and I found it atrocious. I knew what I was risking.' Dr. Casters said it would have been impossible to fit the child with artificial limbs.

The baby's father, M. Vandeput, told the court president that he saw 'no other solution for the child.'

The examining magistrate, M. Rene Laurent, exhibited three photographs which showed that the baby had no arms at all but four fingers, two of them webbed, growing from one side of the body, and two from the other side.

Mr. Laurent said it was a frightening spectacle which he looked at 'with the eyes of a father of two children.' He said that apart from the serious malformations the baby was normal. At birth there had been two red patches on the face but these would have disappeared with time.

In his report M. Laurent said that three days after the birth Dr. Weerts told the mother that there was 'a little something' wrong with the baby. The next day when Sister Philomena showed the child to the mother she turned her face away horrified. The family council took place that afternoon.

Mr. Laurent said the mother herself administered the poison to the baby,

telling the others: 'Go away, I want to do it alone.' In reply to a question from one of the defence lawyers, Maitre Jean Perwael, M. Laurent said the mother wanted to take the full responsibility. He said the drug containing the thalidomide was not on trial. Nobody knew or remembered at the time of the charges that Mme. Coipel-Vandeput had taken it."

Here was a case where the facts were not in dispute. Here was a case where five people were in the prisoners' box; who had spent five months awaiting trial, and yet in the eyes of their fellow citizens were the accusers and not the defendants. It was the Law that was on trial. The issue was between individual responsibility and the vindication of the law at all costs.

In her statement to the examining magistrate, the mother, Madame Suzanne Vandeput, declared that when she saw the baby for the first time she did not think of ending its life.

But day and night I thought of all the possible solutions but all the time there

was the nagging thought that my child would reproach me all its life for the way I had brought it into the world. I am sure of that. It was the only solution.

When the clinic doctor (a good Catholic, who denounced her to the police), suggested that the child should stay alive and be looked after she "shouted in anguish 'That would solve my problem but not hers'."

The Public Prosecutor told the jury that an acquittal as well as being "judicially impossible" would have "irreparable consequences on society". "Are you going to create a terrible precedent? Thousands of thalidomide mothers have their eyes riveted on your verdict". A not-guilty verdict would open the door to all sorts of abuses.

If the family had lived on an island or in a jungle it would be different. "But they live in society, they live in the West, and if there is a supreme message the West can bring to the world it is that of respect for the life of the human person".

The judge in his instructions to the jury before they retired said

I have for your consideration 11 questions to which you must answer 'Yes' or 'No'. Of these the first two are capital to establish the fact whether a murder was committed on May 29 and how. The remaining questions concern the culpability of the five accused.

That the jury replied "No" to the first two questions—whether the child had been poisoned by barbiturates administered by her mother—a fact not denied by the defence, is explained by the *Guardian's* correspondent as ignorance of the fact that they could acknowledge the facts while denying culpability. ("They have no legal adviser available to guide them on points of law when they deliberate: nor in the Belgian Courts does the Judge make a final summing-up"). This may well be the explanation; but it may also have been that the jury refused to answer these "capital" questions with an unqualified "Yes", and with their "No"—"humanitarian but legally indefensible verdict" declares

the *Observer's* legal correspondent—expressed their feelings, and that of millions of ordinary, reasonable human beings throughout the world, that the trial should never have taken place.

ANOTHER aspect of the trial and the verdict, which should not be overlooked is the part played by the Catholic Church in instigating the trial and the healthy rebuff it received at the hands of the jury and the people of Liège (which with its socialist and anti-clerical tradition was perhaps the wrong place for the Church to seek confirmation for its obscurantist ideas). According to the *Sunday Telegraph's* Rome correspondent "the acquittal was received with dismay in the Vatican". He also mentions that three days previously "the Vatican radio strongly condemned the Vandeput family". The *Observer* on the other hand, reporting the Vatican radio commentary on the day of the verdict, but before it was announced, quotes passages which seemed less dogmatic (or perhaps more jesuitical?):

"to elude the moral law can sometimes appear as a more humane gesture. To keep it can seem cruel". "The drama of choice, the inner laceration it brings with it, can explain bewilderment and weakness more than sufficiently". "The moral law always points to the road of honour and human dignity. Man is not always a hero. It is the task of society, of the State, to facilitate observance of the moral law for all. It is the first guarantee of the common good"

"The tragedies unleashed by the marketing of some drugs, including the famous thalidomide, indicate a progress and a science that . . . instead of facilitating and encouraging respect for the law, provoke situations and create alternatives in the face of which, unfortunately, more than one person succumbs.

"He who falls is guilty. But one cannot consider innocent a person who has led him into temptation and pushed him. If only because of thoughtlessness or lack of conscience."

THERE is a further aspect of the Liège trial which should be mentioned because it appears to have played such an unusual role, at least in our times: *the public*. In this country, in theory the public does not take part except through its representatives: the jury. In fact however "public opinion" is more or less predisposed against the defendant for at least three reasons:

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PEOPLE, NOT POLITICIANS

IF there was any hope that progressive and libertarian ends could be achieved as a result of governmental or United Nations intervention, then despite the recent crisis over Cuba, last week must have been an encouraging one.

On Tuesday the United Nations passed, by the required two-thirds majority, a resolution demanding that its members should take sanctions against South Africa in an effort to force its government to abandon apartheid, while later in the week, on Thursday, the Home Secretary announced measures to be taken against racist meetings, a move which has been urged by many sections of the "left" during past months.

The United Nations resolution,

of course was opposed by the United States and Great Britain, and only supported by two States that were both white and Christian, to quote the *Sunday Times'* criteria of political respectability. Furthermore, the minority have for the most part declared that they intend to ignore it.

The anti-apartheid movement launched its campaigns for a boycott against South African goods in 1958, and was supported by the anarchist movement, because the boycott, used consciously with a definite objective in view, is a method by which an individual can effectively show his dislike of a social evil, and at the same time do something to bring about a change.

However, the anarchist insistence

on personal responsibility for social action is not based on soul-saving mysticism, as are some elements in the Christian pacifist doctrine for example, but on a conviction that it is the only way in which freedom can be won. It may be objected that activities built up by individual conviction and active participation are bound to be small and ineffective, while those backed up by the powerful machinery of politics and governments will have sufficient force behind them to achieve their object.

However, if that argument is to be sustained, its defenders would have to show some evidence either that the official "adoption" of the boycott movement by the Labour Party, Liberals and Trade Union movements achieved something practical in the political field, that it did force the South African government to modify its policies, or

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The Tait Case

Henry Bolte's Victorian Government has failed in its fourth attempt to hang Robert Peter Tait.

The execution was set in Melbourne for 8 a.m. Thursday, November 1st at less than 2 days' public notice. The High Court was forced to issue an order restraining the Government from proceeding with the hanging. So eager was the Bolte Government to dispose of Tait they announced the new execution time whilst attempts to prove Tait's legal insanity were still being made in the courts.

Robert Peter Tait, an unemployed alcoholic was sentenced to death on December 8th last for the murder of 82 years old Mrs. Ada Ethel Hall at a Melbourne vicarage where he is said to have called to beg for money.

Tait was on parole at the time from a 3 year prison sentence passed on him for an attack on a 72 year old woman in 1959 from whom he stole £2. At Tait's trial two psychiatrists (prosecution witnesses) admitted that Tait could be considered a psychopath, was sexually abnormal and an alcoholic. Evidence of vestimentism was also offered. (When arrested Tait was wearing female under-clothing). Many moves have been made to save Tait from the gallows. His would be the first execution in Victoria since 1951 when 2 men and a woman were hanged. Such was the disgust on that occasion—the woman Jean Lee is said to have been carried to the scaffold on a stretcher—the Govt has not since dared to allow an execution to proceed. All death sentences since that date have been commuted. The Government announcement in August that there was to be no reprieve resulted in the most impassioned anti-hanging campaign in this State's history.

In the courts the defence has so far been unable to prove Tait's legal sanity: the M'Naughten rules which originated in England over 100 years ago still apply in Victoria. A new Mental Health Act

THE HANGMAN CHEATED

said to allow for the removal of a prisoner under sentence of death to a mental home if he "appears to be mentally ill or intellectually defective" came into operation only 8 hours before the cancelled execution time. Asked about the chances of saving Tait under this clause, Attorney-General Raylah replied "No comment."

In Parliament the Labour opposition introduced a Bill to abolish Capital Punishment. A group of students, at their own expense, presented each member with a copy of the book *Hanged by the Neck* by Arthur Koestler and C. H. Rolph after it was rumoured that a so-called conscience vote was to be allowed. The following exchange between members, however, illustrates the atmosphere on this occasion:

Sir Ewan Cameron: "The Labour Party never had a conscience vote."

Mr. Galbally: "We never need one on hanging."

Sir Ewan Cameron: "You just talk about it."

Mr. Galbally: "Sanctimonious butchers."

Hon. L. H. S. Thompson: "Supporter of murderers."

The Bill was defeated on both occasions, 19-7, 23-9. During the debate a Government supporter offered to act as hangman.

The public anti-hanging committee formed after the Government's August announcement has already called dozens of meetings to put its case for the Abolition of Capital Punishment. A chair was kept vacant for any member of the Government—including Henry Bolte—to put his case for judicial killing. It remained vacant. The committee organised legal aid for the condemned man. 91 members of the Victorian Bar issued a statement that in their opinion "capital punishment is not justifiable."

The council in which the execution gaol is situated led a march on the gaol demanding the removal of the gallows. At Melbourne University a meeting was called to form a students' Anti-Hanging Committee. 350 attended. The meeting declared that hanging was "State sponsored vengeance". The Abolition of Capital Punishment before the peti-

[The following report reached us from Melbourne when it was announced (November 5) that the Victorian Government had commuted to life imprisonment the death sentence passed on Robert Tait—EDITORS.]

tioners were banned from the city streets. Over 100,000 leaflets explaining the case have been distributed. Marches have gained in strength with each Government refusal to reprieve Robert Peter Tait.

Last week the Bolte Cabinet cancelled its annual visit to the University after 2,000 students had demonstrated against the Tait hanging.

Students also placed at 24-hour picket on Parliament House with a symbolic lantern burning. They declared that as long as a man's life was in Government hands it would not be extinguished until he was either executed or reprieved.

The suspicion is growing that the Government is anxious to close the Tait case to conceal its own failures. They:

FAILED to ensure that a man on parole with a history of violence under alcohol was not protected from himself. (The parole officer responsible for Tait also had 172 other ex-prisoners under his care.

FAILED to supply a complete file on Robert Peter Tait to the psychiatrist who examined him the day before he committed murder.

FAILED to provide legal assistance to the condemned man after his Privy Council appeal was refused in London. Were able however a few days later to fly a Government psychiatrist from Sydney who declared after a 2-hour interview that Tait could be rehabilitated [and therefore hanged].

FAILED to give any rational explanation for the resumption of hanging after 11 years.

FAILED to appoint an independent inquiry into Tait's mental condition.

On October 31st, the *Melbourne Sun* commented "It seemed that they had to show they were strong men, unswayed by any pleas that were made. They had their own beliefs and they acted with great speed in talking about each new hanging date. They never changed. Perhaps they never will." Last minute legal moves may yet save Robert Peter Tait from the hangman. This case is a terrible warning to all of us who have allowed the death penalty to remain on the Statute Books and put our trust in political bosses.

FRANCIS WEBB.

A Saint-Imier Celebration

GENEVA.

At a pleasant roadhouse a few miles out of Geneva, a score of Anarchists from various countries, by invitation of the Réveil group of this city, met to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the crucial congress of Saint-Imier (15-16 September, 1872) at which representatives from half-a-dozen countries sought to define for the first time a line of development for the non-authoritarian remnants of the First Socialist International—these pioneers being Slavs, Swiss, Belgian, Italian, French and Spanish, including such memorable names as Bakunin, Cafiero, Covelli, Malatesta. I cannot give a full account of the celebration, which lasted over the two appropriate days, having been present as a chance visitor only at the session of the first day. Another chance participant, but as a very welcome member of the meeting, was Mario Mantovani, one of the most able and amiable of Italians.

An erudite funeral oration for the First International and an exposition of the subsequent vicissitudes of the refractory wing, was read by Comrade Ivan, a young Bulgarian. Mantovani read a paper by another prominent Italian, Armando Borghi, who had intended to be present, on the present situation. Out of the discussion that followed emerged a proposal to appoint

a commission to call an international congress, enthusiastically advocated by Ivan and other young members and more deliberately considered by the more experienced, including Doesiger of the Réveil group and Mantovani. Nobody likes to oppose enthusiasm, but the meeting generally did not seem to think that such action was within its scope. It was at this point that emerged the importance of the Centre for International Research on Anarchism, CIRA, about which I wrote on another occasion.

When the proposed terms of reference to a commission were reduced to making an inquiry as to whether there was a world-wide desire for a congress, Mantovani suggested that there already existed a body quite appropriate and competent for such international action. Pietro Ferrua, the active founder of CIRA, was present but did not take part in the discussion, thinking no doubt wisely that it was better to wait until CIRA is better known and definitely invited to take any initiative.

That was how the matter stood at the end of the first session when some of us regretfully had to return to the gay noisy city. I retain a grateful memory of the Réveil comrades, old and young, sitting in the upper room of that pleasant roadhouse on that hot September afternoon. K.W.

People, not Politicians

Continued from page 1

that if it failed to do this, it advanced the anti-apartheid movement in some other way. Similarly, supporters of the usefulness of the United Nations will have to point to practical results coming from last week's resolution.

Unfortunately, the South African government has carried on its path towards even more repression and dictatorship, despite the efforts of its opponents, despite anything that has been said at the United Nations, despite its expulsion from the Commonwealth, which was acclaimed by some of the socialist movement as a victory for morality and principles.

The anarchist contention is that effort devoted to the political and governmental aspects of social issues is not only wasted in that it does not achieve its aim, but that it detracts from the growth of a really important movement. The Boycott Campaign for instance needs to win the support of individuals who may be followers, or even members of the Labour, Liberal or Communist parties, but once the parties themselves become interested, it is the kiss of death.

Not only did the political parties insist that the official boycott should be limited to one month, but Gaitskell himself insisted, by a peculiar misuse of words, that it was to be a "personal" boycott in the sense that industrial action and trade boycotts by Co-ops. were to be ruled out. In other words whereas the anarchist emphasis on personal participation is based on the idea of individuals getting together in their own groups to make the action effective, and if they happen to be dockers, shopworkers or distributors, trying to attack the boycotted goods by whatever means are appropriate, the politicians' idea of "personal" boycott is that the people limit themselves to symbolic action, abstain from anything that might affect trade or industry, and above all leave the important things to the politicians.

Now it seems that the United Nations resolution on sanctions will not be effective, as far as governments are concerned, but it will have a negative value if socialist and libertarian movements either rest content with having forced an international body to vote in favour of their attitude to South Africa, or if they devote their energies to trying to make this or that government put the resolution into effect. What a government does one day it can undo the next, as a matter of political convenience. The boycott, like the industrial struggle, the anti-bomb campaign and the strike against war, needs to be carried on

at the points of production and distribution, not in the halls of politicians, either national or international.

As to Henry Brooke's no doubt delighted decision to take further powers against meetings which threaten "a breach of the peace", and the fact that he intends to make wider use of the common law offence of sedition, for which there is no limit to the penalties which the court may impose, we can derive little comfort from the fact that it will suppress a few fascist lunatics, or restrain the Communist Party from attacking them at the head of a united anti-fascist front. The anti-bomb protests, which we enthusiastically support, have caused far greater concern to the authorities than have those on the right, and no doubt Mr. Brooke and his supporters have that in mind when considering legislation.

When the government appears to be doing something the left wants to have done, beware!

P.H.

Crazy Values

A GROUP of British doctors has developed a new means of attacking cancer. It is too early to talk of a cure, but it is a promising line of research.

Do we back it with the full resources of the State? Not likely. Lack of money is holding up the work and an appeal has been launched for £50,000.

But we spend £1,200 million a year in betting shops, and betting shop shares are booming on the Stock Exchange while industry is in the doldrums.

On another page we report that a block of luxury flats in Manchester is almost empty while a few hundred yards away decent people fester in slums built 200 years ago and condemned 25 years ago.

On this page a young Scot pleads for a job, any job. But he's lucky. He has worked in the past. There are at least 12,000 school leavers who have never had a job.

Earlier in the week men from the North tramped in procession through London's West End. They weren't reds or revolutionaries of any other colour. All they asked was the right to work, a right now denied to more than half a million Britons.

A crazy world, crazy values. A Tory world, the raffish, wasteful values of a philosophy that puts money before people.

The foregoing appeared in the editorial column of the Co-operative Party's *Sunday Citizen*. We agree. But if you seek a philosophy that puts *people before money* you must be prepared to face the implications of revolution, for people will only count more than money when the power of money has been abolished. Is the *Sunday Citizen* prepared to go along that road?

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Enlightenment, please!

DEAR FRIENDS,

Having been grateful to your paper via the letter page for some of my views being proved wrong in the past, particularly the messianic view of the "working class" held by many socialists, I hope I may be permitted to hog your columns once more in the hope that rational enlightenment may ensue.

Over the past few months with the publicity over Sir Oswald Mosley (to give him his orthodox cognomen) and Colin Jordan, with the consequent back flashes to the days of the Nazi uprising in Germany, I'm inclined to be sceptical over FREEDOM's idea advocating such tolerance towards these would be genocides. It's all very well to my mind advocating workers militancy when the factories are silent (reference the recent Common Market controversy) and advocating the propagation of Anarchist ideas to compete with the Fascist's ideas but for the most part workers aren't interested in Anarchism, there are many who are completely and permanently deluded by the metaphysical theory that the State is sacrosanct, that "coloureds" are inferior and, apart from Coronation Street, the Pools and being "good Christians" progressive ideas don't interest them in the slightest, which is why in the past I recommended "pill sweetening" to win many more people over to Anarchism and so, in the light of these facts, I feel that our ideas are not enough to prevent the dangers of Fascist reactionaries becoming prominent because in the meantime a dangerous military organisation has been uncovered by the name of "Spearhead" which I feel (to say the least) is a cause of "reasonable apprehension".

The alternatives I feel (perhaps wrongly) in this situation are either to let the State intervene (as they have done), to tolerate the situation, which would have the inevitable result of disaster to all the lovers of freedom as it has in the past or, to advocate individual terror against Fascism as the Russian Nihilists did against Czarism but, being fully aware that this method

invariably produces secret brotherhoods, etc., I feel (again perhaps wrongly) that the law ought to be used for our own ends i.e., by working to rule over the suppression by the State of "Spearhead" and Fascism generally at the same time working to smash the law system viz., the State outside this rule (this probably being the reason some Anarchists fought in the last war) and encouraging Anarchist ideas among young people, this being of paramount importance in riding the coming generation from the poisons of Politician and Priest.

Yours fraternally,
Atrincham, Cheshire,

What happens to Neill's ex-pupils?

DEAR FREEDOM PRESS,

There has been some correspondence in your columns and articles in ANARCHY about Summerhill and other like institutions. Several have ceased for lack of support and even Summerhill itself is rocky—and it certainly won't outlive Neill.

Now Summerhill has been going for 40 years and must have had, let us say, from 1,000 to 1,500 pupils passing through—quite a large proportion of whom must by now be grandparents. You see what I'm getting at—Neill's ex-pupils cannot value "free-expression" very highly, or Neill would not lack for pupils now! His school could be full up if his pupils sent their descendants to him.

There are other aspects, of course. Perhaps the education received at Summerhill does not fit pupils for life in this very competitive world, and they cannot afford Neill's fees for their children.

The only other (not serious) alternative I can see is that pupils of Summerhill don't have children!

One more thought—their education has had the paradoxical effect of making them highly capitalistic and conventional, and the children go to Eton and Roedean.

Yours faithfully,
H. WRIGHT.

Potters Bar.

HUMANITY VS. THE LAW

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(1) The British, unlike the rest of humanity, have been brought up to believe in the incorruptibility of the police and the impartiality of those who dispense the law (illusions which, as more and more "respectable" citizens clash with the Law, are being rapidly modified to fit in with those of our prospective Common Market-in-laws). The result is that a summons or actual arrest presupposes guilt in the public mind; (2) British law demands that the arrested person should be charged and appear before magistrates within 24 hours of his arrest—such a procedure protects the citizen, theoretically at least from the abuses of preventative arrest.* Compared with the case of Madame Vandeput who spent more than five months in prison awaiting trial, the speed of British "justice" has its advantages—but also its disadvantages in that since the Crown, the prosecution, must state its case within 24 hours of your arrest, it is only when you are in the dock that you hear for the first time the charges and the weight of "evidence" against you. And because all you can do at that stage is to "reserve" your defence, the reports that inevitably get published by the organs of mass communications are based on the "evidence" as presented by the prosecution. The dice are loaded against the defendant. (3) The public is conservative and unimaginative; the individual who takes the law into his own hands upsets the humdrum, unthinking routine of everyday existence which should never question the Right of the State to conscript the individual to kill, or be killed by, the "enemy", but which is expected to shrink in horror, and call in the police, the Pope and Morality, when the individual considers himself or herself the arbiter in a matter of life-and-death of his own creation.

★
THIS writer has no hesitation in declaring that no society can claim, as of right, even less to being free, that women should not decide the fate or the future of the babes they bear. If one can discard the religious mumbo-jumbo, and look upon the birth of a child as a conscious creation of two individuals "in love", there is surely nothing more remote from social responsibility than their decision to have a child. "But the function of mankind is to perpetuate the species" it will be argued. But this is the Church's only argument to condone the delights of love-making; in fact the function of mankind is that which mankind chooses for itself and, fortunately, there is no evidence that it is the perpetuation of the species, nor the "seeking after the Kingdom of God" that occupy a major part of Man's thoughts and actions!

Because the birth rate has become a political consideration, a matter which affects the State, the balance of power, the interests of the ruling class, favourably or otherwise, official morality has sought to adjust itself to serve these interests with-

*The Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta spent months serving sentences imposed by the courts and years awaiting trial. But nearer home, it was surely obvious that the arrest of the leading members of the Committee of 100 before the Wethersfield demonstration last December was timed to prevent them from playing their part in the preparations for the demonstration, and to deter others from participating, than for the purpose of punishing them for a 'crime' which they did not commit except by intention—had they been allowed to commit it!

out undermining the Church's basic teachings that the purpose of sex is the reproduction of the species. It is not that the State is the jealous guardian of human life *per se*, or it would not have so lightly sacrificed the cream of society, the young people, in two senseless wars; nor would it have jeopardised the lives of five normal human beings to defend "life" in the abstract, the life of a child born mutilated. If it were why seek to limit the population growth in Japan and India?

The *Guardian* in its "After the Liège Verdict" editorial (Nov. 12), argues that since the law expresses the view of society (a curious interpretation of the public demonstrations in Liège) then (1) the decision that Mme. Vandeput took is one "she may not take" and (2) so long as society holds that view "it must accept some further responsibility".

In what purports to be an understanding comment, the *Guardian* overlooks what are to our minds, the major issues, and the ones which obviously concerned the, much less sophisticated jury in the Liège trial: should babes suffering from major deformities at birth be allowed to live, and should the decision be left to the parents? We would reply to the first question with an unqualified "yes" and to the second with a qualified "yes".

Because we start from the premise that life is *not* an end in itself but a means to an end which each normal individual should decide for himself; because we do not believe in the *Brave New World* or in 1984, the perpetuation of the human species is not a duty but incidental to the human choice of having children†: for this reason we believe in sex education and sex responsibility for children *plus* the best that science can provide to allow them to both enjoy the pleasures of sex and behave as responsible human beings.

The Vatican through its mouth-pieces, such as the organ of Catholic Action, *Il Quotidiano* suggests that it is "grave" to renounce "even for humane motives" that "God is the only Master of life". Yet it is for human motives that we say that a normal mother having conceived her child, alone has the right of life and death over it. When Suzanne Vandeput declared that death "was the only solution" for her baby, she was, echoing the feelings of thousands of mothers who realise that their mentally or physically deformed children, in spite of all the love showered on them can never hope to live normally happy lives. Mme. Vandeput acted and suffered for her actions but also defended them as a responsible human being should always do. (She did not even seek to blame "thalidomide" for her actions).

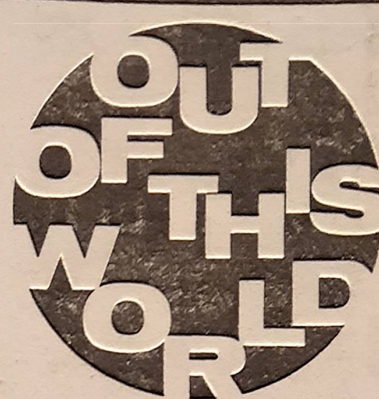
Who knows how many fellow beings will be spared a lifetime of suffering and unhappiness as a result of the courage of Suzanne Vandeput, the refusal of the 12-man jury to play the State's game and the humanity of Dr. Casters, the "poor man's doctor". And last, but not least, the militancy of the people of Liège.

After weeks of sordid exchanges between Washington and Moscow, Liège shines as a bright star on the horizon!—

†Unlike some of our philosophers we are not perturbed about the future of the human race. We do worry about the waste of man power and material resources in producing useless but profit-making gadgets and dangerous but profit-making weapons of destruction.

THE PLUG of the affluent society was pulled on Richard Nixon, defeated republican candidate for governor of California; Thomas Galbraith, formerly Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Under Secretary for Scotland and heir of Baron Strathclyde; Krishna Menon, formerly Defence Minister, and Defence Production Minister of India; Dr. Walter Strauss, State Secretary in the Bonn Defence Ministry; Aaron Yugov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria and four cabinet associates; millionaire Basil de Ferranti, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aviation. Richard Nixon was defeated (he says) by the press, Thomas Galbraith offered his resignation and Mr. Macmillan thought it right to accept, because he was too democratic in his letters to an employee. Krishna Menon failed to win wars and influence the right people. Dr. Strauss and Herr Hopf failed to let the Minister of Justice know what they were doing about *Der Spiegel*. Mr. Yugov was accused of "fractional activities" and of causing "serious difficulties". Mr. de Ferranti solved the "appalling dilemma" of choice between £3,250 per annum as a minister and the future of £3,000,000 shares in his family firm which he would have to sell if he accepted a Cabinet post involving contracts to his firm. His wife said, "It was great fun having a husband in the Government." . . .

ONE OF THE soldiers putting up for Parliament admitted it was a 'fiddle'. He said that if all five of the released soldiers fought the same by-election "it would be chaos". R. H. C. Crossman admitted "The truth is that in politics there come occasions when honourable men are bound to practise deception and tell lies, and only hypocrites will impugn their personal integrity when things go wrong and they are caught red-handed." An MP charged with driving a car under the influence of drink was described on the charge sheet as 'self-employed'. The Communist candidate in the Jersey (Channel Islands) election, said, if elected, "I would have to live on my wits but I should manage somehow." Mr. Kennedy's Democrats' election successes were the best by a Presidential Party in an off-year since 1934. In a campaign, which lasted a long time, the President claimed before an Italian-American audience that he was descended from the Geraldinis in Venice; a John F. Kennedy stood as a Republican Candidate in Rhode Island but, oddly enough, he was no relation; Mr. Kennedy promised if ever he was sick he would go to the Wheeling Hospital in West Virginia, the nurses of which presented him with a paper-weight shaped like a nurse's cap; a survey of 1,000 Chicago school-children showed that they thought President Kennedy works harder than most men, knows more, is more honest and likes everybody, but when they reached their teens they thought he was just like other men; Dr. Martin Luther King said he was disappointed with President Kennedy. "He has not carried out his election promises" (Presidential, that is); Americans followed President Kennedy into the sea at California when fully clothed he



went for a bathe. Edward Kennedy was returned as Senator for Massachusetts, during his campaign an Irish workman shook hands with him, and said, "Ted me boy, I understand you've never worked a day in your life. You haven't missed a thing." A New York man celebrated his 114th birthday. Governor Nelson Rockefeller gave him a birthday cake and a warm handshake, but the voter said, "I ain't gonna vote for him come November. Anyways, I'm too old to vote for anybodys to tell you the truth." Guy Aldred of the United Socialist Movement proposes to offer himself as candidate for Woodside, Glasgow. He writes in *The Word*, "I shall go forward expecting the workers of Glasgow to rally round me. My programme will define clearly my position and will be a guarantee against careerism. I will see that all political power is invested in them and that no careerist opportunity is taken by me. . . .

A GIRL who joined the Women's Royal Army Corps was shocked by bad language, incidence of pregnancy, sexual promiscuity, bad behaviour and incipient lesbianism, she purchased her discharge after six weeks. Authorities declared that she was merely homesick. Four men were arrested by the King's African Rifles, stripped, tied up, beaten, then laid out in the East African sun without food or water. They died. The enquiry in Kenya found that the offences were committed by 'persons unknown of No. 7 Platoon, C Company of the King's African Company' which was under African command. The K.A.R. denied the allegations. An American who gave up his passport to join the Grenadier Guards, bought himself out for £20 three months after enlisting for 22 years. Recruits in a French parachute regiment were made to lick the boots of their N.C.O.s and to pick up cigarette ends on the barrack square and eat them, men were also ill-treated on route marches. The Army said the C.O. had been sacked, four other officers were under close arrest and two corporals had lost their stripes. A hairdresser with a French father and an English mother has sworn a pledge of loyalty to the Queen to make sure he will not be called up for National Service in France. Soldiers on trial for a riot in the Rhine Army overturned cars, smashed street lights, tore down fences, overturned and broke benches, set upon German civilians and beat them up.

MORE ANARCHY, LESS GADGETS!

DEAR SIRS,

May I reply to Jacquetta Benjamin's attack (FREEDOM, 3/11/62) on my letter about the evils of high productivity and its incompatibility with anarchism (20/10/26)?

She says I yearn for "the good old days when the peasants were free to sweat their guts out 16 hours a day". Which peasants? Were they living in an anarchist society? If not, perhaps their hardship was largely due to exploitation by a ruling class. Besides, by "freedom" I don't mean the abolition of work. Work is essential for the physical and mental health of man. What turns work into slavery is an authoritarian social context. What turns it into drudgery is a grasping frame of mind which, in the words of the Bhagavad-Gita, strives for "the fruits of action" without valuing the action itself. The modern cult of productivity fosters this grasping mentality.

Comrade Benjamin sees beauty in mass-produced articles. Her taste differs from mine. Some of them are quite easy on the eye, but I would go no further. As for my point that mass-production has killed individual craftsmanship, she merely says that even an individual craftsman can produce poor work. True, but what of it? Do we condemn music because some musicians play badly?

Next, she says it is not *only* the drive for productivity that has formed the giant monopolies. I never said it was—but I regard it as a major contributory factor. She then argues that the largest

organizations are not necessarily the most efficient. This, even if true, is far from showing that the smallest necessarily are. And I can't believe that hard-headed businessmen would ever have begun to amalgamate had it not paid them, in terms of higher productive efficiency, to do so.

But "the advent of automation" will change everything," she continues. "A very few people can form an efficient production unit." She doesn't tell us who supplies these "few people" with the highly complex machinery involved in automation. A few other people in the next village, also using automation? If so, who supplies their machinery. . . ? Furthermore, automation is impossible in many industries.

Next, she says I can't blame high productivity for causing crime and mental illness "just because they exist in the same society". But sociologists have demonstrated that the higher the degree of technological development in a society, the higher is the incidence of neurosis.

Next, she says "machines are only advanced tools". Well, perhaps they have "advanced" too far for our health. "Besides they are here . . . and it is up to us to use them to our best advantage". This is a logical fallacy. Moral, or other, imperatives cannot be inferred from statements of fact.

"It is in this very desire to control the environment for his own ends that man differs from lesser animals," says Comrade B. This is true only of unenlightened men. Others—such as Taoists

The major said "like wild animals they set about the destruction which you see in the charge-sheet. They used bricks and cobbles. They used a bicycle and a bicycle stand. They caused wholesale destruction. A major cut-back in the number of Army tattoos and exhibitions held all over Britain is to be ordered by the War Office. They have been reinforced by KAPE exercises "Keep the Army in the Public Eye". The secretary-general of the Liberal International put forward a suggestion that all NATO governments should have an equal period of conscription. A British colonel in Moscow complained in the *Daily Telegraph* at the closing of the Royal United Services Institution Museum. "Our Government can afford £350,000 for the Leonardo Cartoon but they are unwilling to buy or find a home in London for such priceless treasures as Sir John Moore's sash still stained with his blood, the bugle that sounded the charge at Balaclava, Nelson's private possessions and other relics of our past" . . . A Mr. P. Griffiths of Burgess Hill (Sussex) complained of the Army's decision to change over to rubber-soled boots as leading to "shuffling out of step and out of line . . . and this move can only bring about a further deterioration in the general standard of appearance of the modern Army". . . .

MR. LEO ABES (Labour, Pontypool) asked the Home Secretary how many men in prisons and borstals during 1961 were placed in strait jackets, what was the maximum time they were so confined and why the practice was continued. Mr. Charles Fletcher-Cooke (Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office) replied for the Home Secretary that the number of occasions on which the inmates of a prison or borstal were placed in a loose canvas restraint jacket in 1961 was 86. The longest period for which restraint was used was 47½ hours, excluding the compulsory break of one hour after twenty-four and other short breaks. Standing orders expressly stated that every effort must be made to avoid recourse to mechanical restraint. The concurrence of the medical officer was required for its use. After three postponements of execution, the Victoria State Government reprieved Robtr Peter Tait, who was sentenced to death for the murder of an elderly woman in Melbourne last year. The Victorian Premier said that Tate's papers would be marked "Never to be released". He added that his government was reluctant to reprieve Tait but the frequent postponements of execution had affected Tait's mind and under the new Mental Hygiene Act he could not be hanged . . .

A COMMUNITY, planning to settle on an "away from it all" tropical island have whittled down their choice to two out of 32 offered to them. . . .

BOWS AND ARROWS are to be banned from the New Forest by the Forestry Commission, but nevertheless the Norwegian Nobel Committee has been unable to find a worthy candidate for the Peace Prize. . . .

JON QUIXOTE.

—realize that man is an *organic part* of his environment. They live in harmony with nature instead of striving to control it. Man cannot even control himself. For him to attempt to dominate the universe is madness, and can lead only to his own destruction.

Next, she illustrates her pathetic idea of "freedom". She pictures man, virtually workless, sitting back with a full belly in a mass-produced armchair, and listening to records on a hi-fi radiogram. I can't imagine an unhealthier mode of existence. Freedom, for me, largely consists in fulfilling oneself through joyful, creative work, in voluntary co-operation with ones fellows. Even the humblest tasks, if performed in that spirit, would be meaningful and satisfying. And freedom to THINK will come, not through high productivity, but through the abolition of the institutions of government and property—relieving man of an incalculable amount of unproductive toil—and through the disappearance of parasitic ruling classes. Put more faith in anarchy, Comrade B, and less in gadgets!

She ends by stressing her view that high productivity makes anarchy more, and not less, likely. For "we have the means to produce for the needs of all". Which needs? My view is that our spiritual needs, and even some physical ones, would go quite unsatisfied in her technological utopia. If high productivity ever leads to anarchy, it will be when people react against it, and against its attendant evils, and demand a more natural, and hence more anarchistic, basis for life.

Yours faithfully,
Bristol, Nov. 5. FRANCIS ELLINGHAM.

A New High?

To the Editor,

What do you people in London have to get high on that I can't get hold of in New York? Such monumental oblivion is not attainable from any drug I ever heard of. Where can I lay my hands on whatever the hell you took to make the whole Cuba crisis go away?

And incidentally, by what perverse logic does FREEDOM take sides in the Common Market squabble, but pooh-poo World War III? Does the annihilation of the human race occupy a position of lesser import in your minds than whether or not the British capitalists join the European? Let me point out, in passing, that the only feasible position for a radical to adopt on the Common Market is to hope that the stay-out exploiters and the get-in exploiters mutually bankrupt each other in the struggle.

Meanwhile that editorial on the Cuba crisis was easily the most Pollyanna thing I ever read in any radical paper in my life. That patronizing, I-know-better tone was sick. Half the time the word "crisis" was put in quotation marks, and there were phrases such as: "If we believe the utterances... it has not been proved that... after all, Cuban liberation from American tutelage has provoked one crisis after another..." As a matter of fact, that last one is a marvel of discernment—one crisis after another—you actually equate them!!!

On the other hand you're enjoying this one immensely: "... some of our friends in the pacifist movement... sought the shelter of a bog somewhere in the Irish Republic. And Bertrand Russell, bless him... appointed himself mediator..." Funniest damn thing since they electrocuted Sacco and Vanzetti. Then comes the rip-roaring climax: *it didn't happen at all.* You don't "believe that Kennedy would have plunged America into nuclear war if his bluff had been called by the Russians." Jeeeeee-sus!!!!

Do you deny that Kennedy imposed a blockade, and that a blockade is an act of war? Would you concede that this act of war was aimed directly at the Soviet Union, which might well have chosen to reply in kind? Do you honestly believe that it's a case of either

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

leader "plunging" his nation into war rather than a series of just such acts on both sides gradually (but rapidly) escalating into a holocaust? Do you think that either Kennedy or Khrushchev could have restrained the situation if it had once started to snowball? Do you realize that the US nuclear stockpile is about 30,000 megatons, and that that of the Soviet Union is comparable? Even though you don't seem to regard an all-out war between these two powers as a threat to the human race, wouldn't you concede that it might be somewhat of an inconvenience? But let's not dwell on trivialities—what's one planet more or less?

New York.

H. W. MORTON.

An Illusion?

DEAR COMRADES,

I don't think you are fair in your editorial "Propaganda by Fear". If one really thinks "annihilation-at-any-minute" is a definite likelihood it is downright dishonest to babble away about broadening horizons, when even the average moron can appreciate the fact that such long-term objectives are out of the question if we must have the Big Bang any minute.

I don't really believe all this stuff about politicians creating crises in order to solve them, it seems to be a case of seeing things which are not there. In a word, an ILLUSION. I mean, what is the sense in creating the very last crisis—when escalation can mean holocaust?

As for poor Pat Arrowsmith (who must finally have scotched all the gobble-de-gook about her being a martyr), she was logically consistent in travelling to Ireland at high speed. After all, there was hope in Ireland—and no one has said all mankind will inevitably be eradicated in the event of a nuclear war. I think it's about time Pat Arrowsmith was applauded for her good sense in leaving for Ireland, and for her courage in not keeping her actions quiet.

It is not our fault if the realities of the future create a feeling of fear in those who listen. Should we, on this basis, not tell a child about the dangers of a busy street where death is an ever-present possibility?

For myself, I don't know if accidental war is probable, nor whether annihilation is likely at any moment—but it does seem that many knowledgeable people think so and it seems quite within the realms of possibility. I will admit one thing however, it would be best if we could scare the bastards who landed us in this mess—strangely enough I think, in our small way, we have them scared to death.

Hull, Nov. 10. JEREMY WESTALL.

Quite Absurd?

GENTLEMEN,

FREEDOM is fully entitled in my view to take violent swipes at the establishment, indeed it would lose my support if ever it were to fawn to anyone, but I feel annoyed when the tone becomes petulant. The Cuban Crisis editorial is a case in point.

Undoubtedly the Cuban crisis was 'created' but to argue for a whole page that there was no real crisis but a real created crisis is somewhat stupid. The politicians who play their poker games can be the victims of their own propaganda; they may set the pot-boiling and by error of judgment it boils over; their created crises are real enough.

I wish I could share the editors' optimism that there was no real danger in the Cuban situation. The other vehicle for crises situations is Berlin and although the position is regulated hot and cold by both sides it's a very real point of danger.

The editors may be right in saying that we play the politicians' game by responding to their stimuli too readily but the logical process in this case would be to campaign when an issue was not news and to avoid all (created) situations—surely quite absurd.

London, Nov. 5. BASIL N. BUCKLAND.

Editors' Reply

[Every "crisis" should be an occasion for public protest, but to our minds nothing will be changed until there are enough people to protest against government, against capitalism—and all its evils—and against armaments, every day of the week. That may well sound absurd to our correspondent, but what changes for the better have taken place or have been attempted, in the world, have always been the result of the tenacity, determination and "self-sacrifice" of minorities.

The politicians' "crises" simply serve to distract attention from the permanent crises which haunt mankind. Does he imagine that the starving half of mankind have sleepless week-ends worrying whether there will be nuclear war when every moment of their conscious lives is spent thinking where their next meal will come from?

We have never denied that war is a danger that inevitably exists in the authoritarian society we live in. But what determines the issue of war is not the politician-made crises, the threats and the posturings of these political puppets, but the profound crises of the system, which result in depressions, and mass unemployment and which have always led to revolution or war. When Chamberlain returned from Munich with his "Peace in our time" promise we still maintained that there would be war (if the people did not revolt in time!). For the same reasons we have refused to fall for all the "crises" that have studied the post-war years. So far our political yardstick has not been found wanting. Or does our correspondent, and those who share his views, believe that war has been averted only by the "statesmanship" of the very politicians who have provoked the "crises"?—EDITORS.

Wars Deliberate?

DEAR EDITORS,

J.E. in your issue of 3/11/62 comes to the conclusion on some rather scanty evidence that—"the idea that wars are arranged deliberately seems almost inescapable".

However, I don't think governments have reached the depth YET, although certain small-scale wars of the past sug-

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	Sales & Sub. Renewals	£ 23
	Weeks 1-44	1,463
	Week 45	23
		1,486
	New Subscriptions:	
	Weeks 1-44 (357)	383
	Week 45 (6)	8
		391
		1,877
	DEFICIT	£1,273

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gest mutual agreement before they occurred.

The reason the British Government is preparing plans for large scale evacuation of population centres means quite simply that they are belatedly making some sort of an effort to reduce casualties SHOULD a war occur. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have had emergency plans drawn up for some years and have held mock alerts to test them out.

There is an element of truth in J.E.'s letter however and it is this. That Governments are agreed with each that the THREAT of war is desirable. The present Cold War for example is of great benefit to the economies of both East and West and enables the politicians and their teams of parasites to retain their privileged positions.

However, the way things are going we may yet end up in the situation described by Orwell in "1984", where each of the 3 super-states was perpetually at war in order to divert the public's attention from the swindle going on in each State by stirring up loyalty and hatred and thereby keeping peoples noses to the grindstone.

But to suggest that the bumbling British War Office of 1920 (by the way, shouldn't it have been the Government advising the War Office and not vice versa?) or Montgomery in 1954 (whose other predictions are usually wrong) proves fore-knowledge of wars, is to put a too sinister interpretation on events which are already vile enough.

Yours faithfully,
London, Nov. 8. J. ROBINSON.

Complex?

DEAR FRIENDS,

I see Bill Christopher in FREEDOM 3/11/62 has the makings of an inferiority complex on the way. He feels helpless while he is demonstrating, and suggests a more positive line of protest. He is, of course, right—we can learn from past examples, and if we take the Suffragettes, those dear old things who went to such trouble to get their perfectly reasonable demands, we should see that despite their violent protest against a so-called "Liberal" power, they had very little positive effect. Their unthinking contributions to the continuation of an evil war which they did not want or understand made their oppressors grateful, and for this reason they half-granted their requests. The trouble with so many of these violent demonstrators is that they do not excite any respect, on the one hand, and they do not constitute a positive enough rejection of present standards, on the other. They cannot hope to influence the Establishment, and they should not hope to. In the eyes of the Central Office, all demonstrators are naturally evil and irresponsible, and they cannot pander to the urgent demands of the people as well as their clients, the "Conservative" landed gentry.

Anarchy is not a form of government, which is imposed upon a nation, but a political state of mind. Arbitrary power in the hands of "statesmen" assumes a lack of responsibility in the people. Anarchy would dispense with this omnipotent dictatorship in the guise of democracy. An anarchic society has its individuals possessed of sufficiently responsible ideals to continue without a summary power imposed from above. The libertarian principle is an enlightened ideal, and calls for an enlightened civilisation. We cannot persuade a blunted and commercialised nation to accept such a perfected state by violent action, nor by doctrinaire and dogmatic propaganda.

The age of the bearded, bomb-throwing anarchist is past, but the idea is taking a long time to die. We have important and influential media at our disposal—the press and the printing-house. We must make ourselves known as calm and civilised thinkers, by these means so that the way to truth is well signposted, and so that the people know where to turn, when the inevitable happens, and the forms of present-day government begin to pall.

We must avoid the mistakes that forms of rule naturally make; anarchy cannot be established, but attained. Being opposed to imposed rule, we cannot think of imposing any form of power ourselves. There are many paths we can take—we must choose the right one. Let us not be uncivilised and violent in an attempt to influence the Establishment, nor let us be wheedling and persuasive, but we must tell the people that we are HERE with a vengeance.

Then perhaps they might see the light, and a libertarian society will arise. We can do this!

JAMES TURNER.

Brentwood, Essex, Nov. 10.

LONDON FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS CENTRAL MEETINGS

meetings to be held at The Two Brewers, 40 Monmouth Street, WC2 (Leicester Square Tube) Sundays at 7.30 p.m.

NOV 18 Alan Albon: From the Peckham Experiment to the Haughley Experiment

NOV 25 Ted Kavanagh. Catch 22

DEC 2 Philip Holgate: Some Notes on Anarchism

DEC 9 Arthur Uloth: The Origin of Christmas

DEC 16 Max Patrick: The Far East Situation

DEC 23 An Anarchist Anthology

DEC 30 Sid Parker: Emile Armand

Hyde Park Meetings

Sundays at 4 p.m. onwards (Anarchist time) (Weather permitting)

OFF-CENTRE DISCUSSION MEETINGS

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

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

3rd Tuesday at Brian and Doris Lelie's, 242 Amesbury Avenue, S.W.2 (Streatham Hill, Nr. Station).

Third Wednesday of the month, at 8 p.m. at Albert Portch's, 11 Courcy Road (off Wood Green High Road), N.8.

Last Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. Tom Barnes', Albion Cottage, Fortis Green, N.2. (3rd door past Tudor Hotel).

3rd Friday of each month at 8 p.m. at Donald & Irene Room's, 148a Fellows Road, Swiss Cottage, N.W.3.

Please note that the meetings at Fellows Road, N.W.3 are now on the third Friday, not the third Wednesday as hitherto.

Last Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. at George Hayes', 174 Mcleod Road, Abbey Wood, S.E.2.

Notting Hill Anarchist Group (Discussion Group)

Last Friday of the month, at Brian and Margaret Hart's, 57 Ladbroke Road, (near Notting Hill Station), W.11.

Cambridge Anarchist Group

Meetings on Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m., 13 New Court, St. John's College.

NOV 21 Adam Kuper: Organised Anarchies in Africa

NOV 28 Tim Oxtton: Socratic Thought and Anarchism

DEC 5 Mr. Harrison: Individualism

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