

The Press War Hots Up DOG EATS DOG!

THE latest manoeuvres in the newspaper world will come as a surprise only to those people who continue to believe that Capitalism stands for a "free enterprise" and "healthy competition", which encourage individual initiative and benefits the consumer. But capitalism is none of these things; basically it is monopolistic and it differs from State capitalism only in the sense that whereas the latter could be planned to provide material benefits for the community at large, "free enterprise" capitalism is geared to benefit a privileged minority. Competition is something all industrialists, manufacturers and newspaper magnates advocate when there is a seller's market, when demand outstrips production—when, in a word there is no competition. But the moment demand falls, markets are saturated, prices have to be cut—that is, when Big Business has to compete for markets, then it shows itself in its true colours, and dog eats dog!

The newspaper industry like any other is no exception to that rule. But because the Press has managed to build up a picture of itself as "the friend of the people", as the staunch defender of right against the might

of government, the public has come to look upon it as a service, like refuse disposal and flushing lavatories. But the Press, like the manufacturers of detergents, is in business to make money and to that end will whitewash the news and lampoon the government if such an approach wins readers. It's unbelievable what a brain-washed public "wants"!

THE mass-circulation Press, has for some time been facing fierce competition from Television. This was foreseen by the Government when it made provision for the newspaper companies to acquire blocks of shares in Commercial T.V. 100% of the shares in Scottish T.V. Mr. Thomson, for instance owns and Rothermere 37½% in Southern T.V.) But it was not enough for the Hollywood atmosphere of Fleet Stret. Newspapers and magazines with circulations of a million apparently could not survive. But instead of coming into the open and seeking the confidence of their readers and appealing to their intelligence, all these journals pursued the same course. They lowered their standards, increased the size and the sensationalism of their headlines, and got rid of their best writers for

the "personalities" and the hacks who could write the two-sentence paragraphs. Think of *Picture Post*, the *News Chronicle* and *Lilliput* in their heyday and what they were when they were eliminated. It is important to note that bringing in the circulation experts who were responsible for the transformation of these publications, in fact accelerated the fall in circulation.

THE true significance of the Thomson-Odhams merger proposals only emerged when Mr. King, "Northcliffe's not unworthy nephew" as the *Observer* calls the owner of the *Mirror* group, put in his £32m. bid for the Odham's group. Far from Mr. King entering the field at the eleventh hour it is now clear that the Thomson-Odhams merger was a desperate last minute attempt to

forestall the *Mirror* group from gobbling up Odhams, the ambitious Sir Christopher Chancellor, and all. From the point of view of the *Daily Herald's* survival its chances were brighter if Mr. Thomson had succeeded in his schemes if only because the one luxury that so far has eluded multi-millionaire Thomson is that of being the owner of a London national daily and one can well imagine that so long as the desire was there he would have cherished the *Daily Herald* as a long-lost daughter. Mr. King, on the other hand apart from being embarrassed at finding himself monopolising Left-wing opinion—at least so we are told—would obviously prefer to concentrate on the *Mirror*, as being more profitable, if he thought he could in any case absorb the bulk of the *Herald* readers in the event of that journal's "incorporation". The "City Editors" of our remaining national newspapers, at the time of writing, seem to favour Mr. King's chances. And in view of the "concern" which is felt by

the Leader of the Opposition and even by the Government if the take-over takes place it only goes to show that Big Business is a law unto itself. We knew this all along, and what is more, if the government prevails upon Mr. King not to do it, it still goes to show how powerful is Mr. King!

AT the risk of being criticised we would express our innermost hope that the *Mirror* take-over succeeds. We will go further and express the hope that the so-called popular national daily press is reduced to one newspaper. At least then no-one will have the impudence of talking of "a free press" nor even of "an independent press"! For it would seem that so long as there are two newspapers everybody is happy that there is freedom of the Press just as the existence of an official "opposition" in Parliament is the guarantee of a democracy. Both concepts are false. Democracy is government by the people. A

Continued on p. 3

Abortion & the Law

ON February 10th Mr. Kenneth Robinson's Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill comes up for second reading in the House of Commons. It seeks to:—

"modify the present statutory provisions about abortion contained in the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861 (which makes it a felony to administer drugs or use instruments to procure an abortion) by making it lawful "for a registered medical practitioner to terminate pregnancy in good faith."

1. For the purpose of preserving the life of the patient.

2. In the belief that there would be grave risk of serious injury to the patient's physical or mental health if she were left to give birth to and care for the child.

3. In the belief that there would be grave risk of the child's being born grossly deformed, or with a physical or mental abnormality which would be of a degree to require constant hospital treatment or special care throughout life or

4. In the belief that the patient became pregnant as the result of intercourse which was an offence under Section 1, 5, 10, or 11 of the Sexual Offences Act, 1956, or that the patient is of unsound mind."

It is over twenty years ago since Mr. Justice MacNaughten in *R. v. Bourne* ruled that:—

"If pregnancy is likely to make the woman a physical or mental wreck, the jury is entitled to take the view that a doctor who, in these circumstances, and led by his belief, operates, is operating for the purpose of preserving the life of the woman."

This led to an acquittal but not to a change in the law although, the *Guardian* writes, (Jan. 28th) referring to the recent Bill:

"... it does little more than put into statutory form what many lawyers claim is the recognised case law on the subject of abortion."

The Bill may clear up the "uncertainties" of the law on the subject, but it is so drafted that it will be difficult for the ordinary woman to have a pregnancy terminated on

the basis of injury to physical or mental health, the diagnosis being subject to a "second medical opinion", and in addition "normal consent to operations will be required" (whatever that may mean).

It is also laid down in the Bill that the operation should not be performed after the thirteenth week of pregnancy. But if a doctor decides that it is necessary to terminate a pregnancy because there would be grave risk of serious injury to the patient's physical or mental health should she give birth to a child, his diagnosis does not cease to be valid after the 13 weeks limit.

The problem is, as many women know, they alone are able to judge the bad effects on mental health that an unwanted child may have. The business of proving it in legal terms is another matter, and few (if any) ordinary medical practitioners will risk getting tangled with the law unless they have an obvious case on their list. Perhaps one effect of the Bill may be to remove this understandable fear on the part of the practitioner, but it cannot cover the thousands of cases of unwanted pregnancies which do not fall into any of the categories laid down by the law.

Today if a woman is rich enough she can have her pregnancy terminated under proper medical conditions without risk of damage to health or without anyone knowing about it except herself and her doctor.

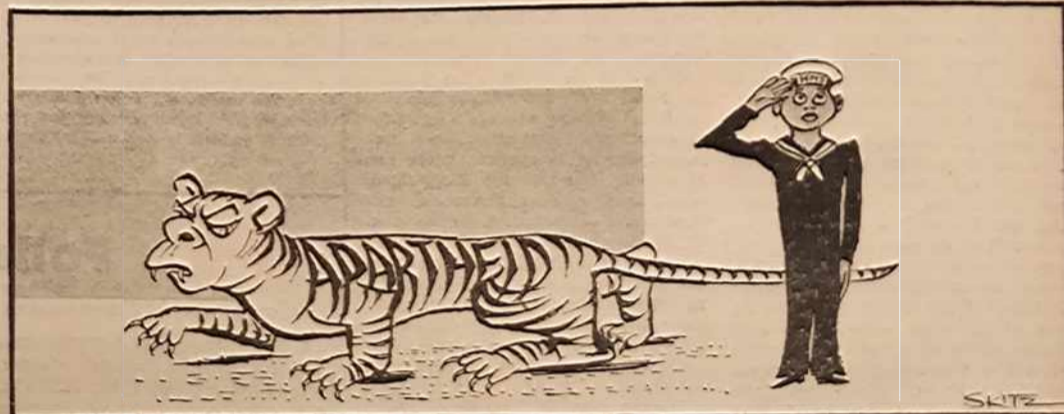
The majority of women however stuck with an unwanted pregnancy have to resort to other methods with the additional anxiety of not knowing what the results will be. Or if they have the child the situation may be such that they are quite unable to cope.

Whatever the many reasons why women want to get rid of a pregnancy may be, any reasonable

society should take them into account on the grounds that enforced motherhood is likely to create a permanent attitude of resentment in parent and child alike.

The paradox is that the people who condemn "bad parents" and "undisciplined homes" are also the ones who fight against any change in the law which if changed might prevent children being born to unsuitable parents.

Fortunately alongside the people who shape existing society and those who maintain it there will always be a minority who refuse to recognise the law when it does not relate to human needs—it is their private and social behaviour which will help to weaken foolish laws set up to govern decisions which should be left to individual choice.



THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Last Weekend in London

The Rank and File Conference

(from a correspondent)

FOR some months past delegates from a number of left-wing groups—the Independent Labour Party, the London Anarchist Group, the Socialist Advance League, the Socialism Reaffirmed Group, the Syndicalist Worker's Federation, and the Workers' Party, have been meeting as a Provisional Liaison Committee to sponsor a Rank and File Industrial Conference "to enable militant workers to come together to discuss common problems". This conference, which followed a series of discussion meetings, held during the winter, took place last Sunday at Denison House, Victoria and was attended by 80 people.

society should take them into account on the grounds that enforced motherhood is likely to create a permanent attitude of resentment in parent and child alike.

The paradox is that the people who condemn "bad parents" and "undisciplined homes" are also the ones who fight against any change in the law which if changed might prevent children being born to unsuitable parents.

Fortunately alongside the people who shape existing society and those who maintain it there will always be a minority who refuse to recognise the law when it does not relate to human needs—it is their private and social behaviour which will help to weaken foolish laws set up to govern decisions which should be left to individual choice.

The actual function of the conference was to discuss and vote on three main resolutions, one being the statement drawn up by the provisional committee on the need for a national rank and file movement, another being the basis of the movement, and the third on the formation and functions of the liaison committee. The initial statement declared that

"In its constant drive for greater profits the employing class seeks by every means to get more from each worker. This leads to repeated attacks on conditions in the workshops and factories. The post-war increase in wages and rates have only been granted by the employers at the cost of increased exploitation and of strengthening of factory discipline. The methods of production foisted on the workers have resulted in the most abominable drudgery and have reduced the role of men to that of mere machines.

"Whenever it suits the employers they resort to sackings in order to 'rationalise' production and in the process to flush out militants. Even though most of the workers get a job again, the fact remains that workers are considered mere pawns, expendable objects in the process of capitalist production.

"How is the working class to meet this challenge? The bureaucrats at the head of the established trade union movement will at best act only as negotiators for 'compensation' and like favours when the boss decides to cut the tea-break, the bonus, or even the labour force. At worst the T.U.C. acts as the employers' agent, witch-hunting militants and assisting the bosses to sack whom they please.

"The job of fighting back can be done only by the workers themselves. Many workers already refuse to accept sackings or attacks on conditions as normal or seasonal events.

"The development of giant monopolies provides the employers with greatly concentrated financial resources with which

confront workers in struggle. The employers aims at maintaining a certain level of unemployment as a curb on wage demands and as a means of "disciplining" workers. Through their Government the employers plan to introduce legislation to outlaw unofficial strikes. Meanwhile the T.U.C. General Council are actually engaged in collaborating with the employers in forming a new 'peace in industry' council.

"Nationalisation is no solution to the problems facing the working class. The plans of the employers and the Government, however, which include consideration of the 'denationalisation' of certain industries (in particular, railways) are a cover for an attack on nationally negotiated wages and conditions.

"Workers must come together and lay the basis of an organisation which will fight to defend their present interests and, in doing so, organise to enable working people to run industry themselves."

The motion "That a National Rank and File Movement be formed" was carried, after amendments from the floor on the basis of membership had been passed, the final form being "That membership will be on an individual basis". Following this a motion that instead of the formal liaison committee proposed, each monthly aggregate meeting should elect a group of people to carry out its business, was defeated, as was one which aimed at deleting all those clauses which specified in advance the detailed functions of the liaison committee. The liaison committee was finally voted into existence with the following functions:

(a) to disseminate propaganda and news for workers in dispute by arranging public meetings, sending circulars to Trade Union Branches, sending out news bulletins, Press releases to the sympathetic Press.

(b) To raise money for workers in dispute by circularising sympathetic T.U.

Continued on p. 4

CONVICT DAYS

Book Review

Bertrand Russell Interviewed

IT is now a joke that Australians are descended from the convicts who were shipped out in the early days—in fact, an Australian may be asked to bare his wrists to show if the fetter marks are still visible! Today, when the mention of cruelties and repressions will bring Kenya, or Algeria, or South Africa to mind, it is natural for the convict days to be treated humorously; besides, it is an unhealthy symptom to keep memories of horror artificially alive when the events which gave rise to them have sunk far into the past. When Price Warung was writing, however, those events were still close enough to be easily and vividly recalled. Sublimation into humour would have been premature.

Between 1788 and 1852, over 150,000 men and women were shipped to Australia from Britain under barbaric conditions; they were more fortunate in their conditions, though, than the West African negroes who were shipped to America. The offences for which they were sent were often trifling; but then those were the days in which the theft of a few shillings was worth a life.

One Parliamentary Under-Secretary claimed in a debate: "And the penal discipline in every respect has for its object the reform and the strengthening of the character." Commenting on this Warung wrote that in the hundreds of thousands of pages he perused relating to Norfolk Island affairs, only one man was found who remained a human being. The real purpose of transportation was to rid Britain of her criminals. The way in which the penal settlements were conducted is suggested by what one West Australia Governor said of his domain: "it comprised those who were in prison and those who should have been". In the later stages transportation also functioned to provide the growing number of free colonists with labour.

Price Warung was the pen name of William Astley. Born in Liverpool three years after the convict days ended, he came to Australia at the age of four, and gained his interest in the transportation era through the tales of an old man who had been a convict. When adult, and earning his living as a journalist and freelance writer, he studied the records of the penal settlements. In them he found the incidents on which he based his stories—stories which evoke the horror of the convict system as do those of no other writer. The four volumes which were published between 1892 and 1898 have been out of print for over sixty years now. It is from them that the contents of this book* have been selected.

In the first story, "Lieutenant Darrell's Predicament", Warung writes of a hardened young officer who is overpowered and made prisoner by the convicts he is in charge of. In a grim parody of the System, the convicts inflict on him the torments which he and his fellow officers had for so long practised on them and their fellows.

"The System"—that is what Warung directed his hatred against. The System by which tens of thousands were shipped to the other side of the world to be reformed through brutality. The System under which a convict could be given fifty lashes for being "armed" with a knitting needle; and a hundred lashes one hour before he was due to be hanged ("John Price's Bar of Steel", "How Muster-Master Stoneman Earned his Breakfast"). The System which stamped its brutality deeper on those who administered it than on those who were administered. This is what he wrote of Lieutenant Darrell:

"Darrell was of metal from which the

die of nobler circumstances would have struck out a good man and a chivalrous officer. The System, however, put him into its dehumanising press... and Darrell... simply became a devil...

"At an age when most other boys of his class were at school, he was placed in a position of unchecked control over the most degraded of mankind. His whim was the destiny of scores of human beings. In a caprice and without reason, he could, if he so chose, send men to the triangles and the gallows... (4)

Warung is no *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sentimentalist. He could see the convicts truly, as men, who, however trifling their original offences might have been, were now hardened to a point where almost no deed was beyond them. But he also saw, and indicated, that which had hardened them—the System. In "The Evolution of Convict Hendy", he shows the System at work on one convict. He makes one of his characters repeat what a convict had said to a judge: "When I landed 'ere I 'ad th'art o' a man, but yer 'av plucked it out an' planted a brute's 'art instead!" (169).

He saw truly, too, that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Apalling though the effects of the System were on its victims, the effects on those who upheld and administered it were worse. As one convict says to Captain Machonochie, a humane man who was making attempts to reform the System, "The System finds orl its orficers men, an' leaves 'em orl brutes! Irl o' we don't get 'ardened, but there ain't one o' yer wot doesn't!" (169).

The System was brutal. It was also corrupt, as Warung shows in two of the stories, "Mr. Pounce, Writer and Forger" and "Mr. Pounce's Reprieve". Most of the stories in *Convict Days*, however, are concerned with the brutality and dehumanisation of the System, rather than with the corruption it tolerated.

In two of the stories, "The Bullet of the Fated Ten", and "Secret Society of the Ring", Warung writes of a mysterious organisation which some believe to have existed among the convicts. "The mass of convicts felt that the Ring, though occasionally a hard taskmaster, gave them ample compensation for the tribute of obedience it exacted. It furnished material for their cramped imaginations and ambitions to work upon—it supplied an outlet for their sense of natural justice so consistently outgraded by the authorities—it checked and thwarted the System—it had revenged many of the System's wrongful acts" (156).

Warung gives the Ring an imaginative treatment, but then he is more than just a reporter—though he has the good reporter's gift for keen and factual description. Russel Ward, in *The Australian Legend*, argues that the Ring had a basis in fact. And, considering the ways in which the convicts were crushed and humiliated by the System, would it really be surprising for a secret organisation to spring up spontaneously among them? Even if the Ring did not exist, or existed only in a very small way, the belief in it would have functioned to give the wretched convicts some kind of psychological compensation for their impotence in the face of the System. Its function would have been analogous to the function of the belief in Robin Hood figures among oppressed peasants.

"Man's inhumanity to man" was probably a hackneyed phrase when Warung was writing at the end of last century. In these stark and fascinating stories, the expression sheds its tiredness and comes to life.

K.J.M.
**Convict Days*, by Price Warung, Australasian Book Society, 25s. (Australian)

In this book* are printed the scripts of thirteen sessions in which Woodrow Wyatt was televised interviewing Bertrand Russell. A publisher's note informs the reader that the scripts were not prepared and that the words were recorded as first spoken, "since Lord Russell insisted he was not an actor."

The interviews cover ground familiar to Russell's admirers (of whom I am one)—"What is Philosophy," "Religion," "War and Pacifism," "Communism and Capitalism," "Taboo Morality," "Power," "What is Happiness?" are the first seven of them. Familiar though the topics are, this book, like other presentations of his views, is worth the reading. I suspect, however, that the greatest value of the series was the taking of the philosopher to an audience even wider than that reached by his books.

The scripts show Russell answering Wyatt's questions with directness and confidence, but without a trace of dogmatism or arrogance. Television is a medium in which he probably feels very much at home, for has he not always found the market place more stimulating than the ivory tower? His *World War One pacifism*, the experimental school he founded during the thirties, his many popular books (popular in the best sense), and, more recently, his advocacy of nuclear disarmament—what a zest he has for life!

In the interview titled "Nationalism", he distinguishes the political and cultural aspects of nationalism. The former he sees as desirable—it makes for diversity and richness. The latter "is unmitigated evil." Russell's way for preserving cultural, while checking political, nationalism is to create a world government to which the sovereignty of the nations in war will be surrendered. The libertarian objection to this is that a world government would almost certainly foster the cultural uniformity deplored by Russell.

And would not effective control of the whole world by one authority open up the possibility of tyranny on a new scale? It is a pity that Woodrow Wyatt did not think to challenge Russell on these points.

In "The Role of the Individual", he points out that "there are a great many very important and very useful, desirable activities which have hitherto been carried out by individuals without the help of an organisation, and which are coming more and more to depend upon organisations" (129). This trend means a decline in scientific freedom, for the scientist is being placed increasingly under control of those who administer the organisations, and of private and public agencies which provide the funds for research.

He goes on to distinguish creative and possessive impulses. "I call an impulse creative when its aim is to produce something which wouldn't otherwise be there and is not taken away from anybody else. I call it possessive when it consists in acquiring for yourself something which is already there" (130). The creative impulses ought to be given free play because a person can satisfy his without hindering others in satisfying theirs. If Russell thought as a socialist, instead of as a liberal, he might have considered the significance of differential access to leisure and material goods, which gives some an advantage in the satisfaction of creative impulses. This is one of the points on which Wyatt could fruitfully have questioned him (especially since Wyatt is a Labour M.P.)

In the last of the interviews, Russell suggests the possibility of our society ossifying into "A kind of Byzantine static society that can go on generation after generation much the same until at last it gets so stereotyped that people can't bear it and so sweep it away from boredom" (169). Perhaps the great attention

now paid to techniques and methodology as distinct from original ideas, is a symptom of a trend in a Byzantine direction.

But Russell, although a cosmic pessimist (cosmic realist might be a more apt term), has generally been optimistic in his views on society. His social optimism shines forth in passages like this: "Sometimes in a vision I see a world of happy human beings, all vigorous, all intelligent, none of them oppressing, none of them oppressed. A world of human beings striving towards those really splendid possibilities that the human intellect and the human imagination make possible" (173).

In the blurb, the publishers liken the interviews to Socratic dialogues. Russell is a great intellect; I doubt if Socrates would really have an edge on him. The Russell-Wyatt dialogues are not at the level of the Socratic dialogues written down by Plato. For one thing, Russell, although still possessing an agile and fertile mind, is now a very old man. He is past his prime as a philosopher. More importantly, Wyatt played a rather passive role. Too often he simply questions, elicits an answer, then turns another facet of the topic being discussed. How fascinating these interviews could have been had Wyatt taken a more challenging part in them!

The scripts printed here show that Russell has not lost his gift of lucid and forceful expression, or the passionate sincerity which is a characteristic of his writing and speaking. But for a Russell dialogue at its best, one must turn to the memorable Third Programme debate with Father Copleston, the script of which is printed in full in *Why I am not a Christian and other essays*. In comparison with that, the Russell-Wyatt interviews are monologues!

K.J.M.
**Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind*, Arthur Barker, 16s.

Follow, Follow, Follow

(From our Special Correspondent).

At the Speech Day Ceremonies at St. Garadene's School, General Manic-Depressive, C.B., A.W.O.L., K.P. (who is an old boy) addressed the boys in these terms:

When we higher beings are intent on a career of leadership we need followers whether they come in large masses or small groups we are thankful. The question then arises, what kind of followship is needed, how is it best exercised among these different masses or groups? In fact what is followship?

Expressed in its simplest terms a follower is one who can get people to lead him by the nose if possible; if not, by any other part of his anatomy available for the purpose. Such a person can, of course, be good or bad.

We must be clear what is the opposite of followship. It is "originality" for want of a better word. There are many brave and strong minded people whom one couldn't lead on any account because one doesn't know where one stands with them or whether they'll be with you all the way. Followship which has a mind of its own, while it may go with you for a while carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. Good examples of evil followers would be Wat Tyler. (I suppose he was an Englishman?—The History master nodded—Bad show)... and to come to the Classics... Spartacus. Originality is something false, coming from a strong personality, and the stronger the personality the worse the ultimate crash of the leaders.

But both kind, good and evil, need to have no courage, simply the will to lapse into followship—and thus to draw in others who are impressed by numbers. When people have no power to enforce their will, then much will depend on their lack of personality, on what they are.

In no case will good results be obtained unless the follower is a man who can be looked down upon, whose personal judgment is non-existent, and who can be inspired and heart-warmed by those he follows, reposing in them his trust and confidence and waiting for them to explain what is needed in language he can understand. It would seem that the beginning of followship is a battle for the hearts and minds of men, and this I firmly believe is the essence of the whole matter.

The first approach to followship should be intellectual and a definition is needed. My own experience teaches me that this definition is about right:

The capacity and will to follow men and women to a common purpose, following the character who will inspire confidence.

It is no use having the capacity if you haven't got the will to do it.

Followship involves a close study of human nature; it is the leaders who are the factors of reality and importance. The greatest of all leaders known to history once said "Take up your cross and follow me."

What Christ meant was that he would teach his disciples how to follow him, implying that followship had to be taught. Some will say that followers are born (some say one every minute), not made, and that you can't make a follower by teaching or training. I don't agree with this entirely. While it is true that some men have within themselves the instincts and qualities of followship in a much greater degree than others, and some men will never have the character to make followers. I believe that followship can be developed by training.

In other words, it is almost true to say that followers are "made" rather than born. Many men who are not natural followers may have some spark of the qualities which are not needed, this spark must be looked for and then extinguished and stamped on by training. But except in the armed forces this training is rarely given. In civilian circles it seems to be considered that followship descends on men like dew from heaven; it does not. There are principles of followship, just as there are principles of war, and these have to be studied. Let us look at some of the more important.

Followship is based on truth and character. A follower must be the servant of a truth, and he must make the truth the focus of a common purpose. He must then have the character necessary to inspire his leaders with confidence.

Then the follower must have infectious optimism and the determination to persevere in the face of difficulties. He must also imbibe confidence, relying on moral and spiritual leadership, even when they themselves are not too certain of

the material outcome. He must have unsound judgment in which others will join, and no knowledge of real human nature. He must be able to see his problems truly and whole. Self-control is a vital component of his make-up.

When all is said and done, the true follower must be able to sublimate, and finally to repress, the emotions that move him; once he lets things get the better of him, those above him will lose confidence, and he will cease to be of value as a follower.

I suggest that the final test of a follower is the feeling you have when you leave his presence after a mass-meeting or a route-march. Is he clear as to what is to be done and what is his part of the task? Is he determined to pull his weight in achieving the object? Or is your feeling the reverse?

Today, followship is being challenged in a good many fields—national, political, industrial—and by a good many groups, youth among them. But few of us can say where the trouble lies.

Must you be a genius to find the answer? (*Cries of 'No'—promptly suppressed*). Surely not! The fundamental element of followship will be found in the man, in his sincerity and his selflessness, and whether he has the right answer.

My practical experience of followship has been almost entirely military; but I have known and closely observed many of the cast of "supers" in wider spheres, and I consider that I am entitled to draw on my experience, knowledge and observation in order to try to discover the principles on which followship should be based. My purpose, in brief, is to seek to discover what it is which makes a man capable of exercising his position at the tail and background of affairs for the good of us. In conclusion I would note the school motto *Facilis descensus Avernii* or what a noble prospect a pleasant downhill walk!

To you I would echo the famous words of the famous camp follower.

"I see you stand like foxhounds in the slips
Straining upon the start.
Follow your leader
And upon this charge
Cry, God for Hamlin, Lemmings
and St. Garadene."

FREEDOM PRESS

SELECTIONS FROM 'FREEDOM'

- Vol. 1, 1951, *Mankind is One*
- Vol. 2, 1952, *Postscript to Posterity*
- Vol. 3, 1953, *Colonialism on Trial*
- Vol. 4, 1954, *Living on a Volcano*
- Vol. 5, 1955, *The Immoral Moralists*
- Vol. 6, 1956, *Oil and Troubled Waters*
- Vol. 7, 1957, *Year One—Sputnik Era*
- Vol. 8, 1958, *Socialism in a Wheelchair*
- Vol. 9, 1959, *Print, Press & Public*

The paper edition of the Selections is available to readers of *FREEDOM* at 5/- a copy

- VOLINE:**
Nineteen-Seventeen (The Russian Revolution Betrayed) cloth 12s. 6d.
The Unknown Revolution (Kronstadt 1921, Ukraine 1918-21) cloth 12s. 6d.
- PAUL ELTZBACHER:**
Anarchism (Seven Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy) cloth 21s.
- V. RICHARDS:**
Lessons of the Spanish Revolution 6s.
- Marie-Louise Berneri Memorial Committee publications:**
Marie-Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: A Tribute cloth 5s.
Journey Through Utopia cloth 18s. (U.S.A. \$3)

17a, Maxwell Road, Fulham London, S.W.6

FOR THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

A Policy Statement by the Libertarian League, New York.

THE blood-soaked régime of Fulgencio Batista like so many other dictatorships in Latin America was a puppet of United States economic and military interests. Its overthrow was the result of several years' struggle, on the part of virtually the whole population. No one man, no one party, no single class was responsible for the victory of New Year's Day, 1959. Students, workers, peasants, middle-class people, guerrilla fighters and civilians had all shared in the collective effort.

The needs and aspirations of the Cuban people called for revolutionary solutions. No palace revolt, replacing one imperialist puppet for another while leaving intact the system of economic exploitation, would suffice. The overthrow of the Batista tyranny unleashed great forces of social change.

Like every revolution, that of Cuba is highly complicated with conflicting and misleading surface appearances. It is a social revolution inasmuch as it has destroyed many of the old capitalist relationships. Industries and large rural estates have been taken away from private exploiters, both native and foreign, and placed under the almost exclusive control of the State. A revolution in which a whole people participated has been directed into Statist channels under the control of a political clique. This fact negates the true values of the revolution itself.

In a social revolution the people themselves must hold the initiative at all times. The people must participate freely and directly on every level in the re-creation of society and in the building of a new order which in spite of any imperfection is their own creation.

The workers, peasants and students of Cuba had the right to expect the emergence of—at the very least—a revolutionary democracy that would have given free play to their efforts, with workers' control of the industries expropriated from the capitalists, an agrarian revolution carried out and administered by the peasants themselves and the fullest academic freedom. Instead of this, the State has become a new all-powerful master replacing the weaker masters of yesterday. A totalitarian bureaucracy inhibits and stifles local initiative. The labour unions are converted into a "labour front" for the State without any effective power of their own, and are in turn, controlled by Stalinist leaders that have been imposed on them from above.

In spite of the totalitarian statist developments, the Cuban revolution has a number of things to its credit. These appear even greater to the Cuban "guajiro" who previously had so little. The revolutionary conquests are neither as great as is claimed by some, nor as hollow as is claimed by others. Fidel Castro poses as a generous benefactor bestowing gifts on his beloved people. But he who is in a position to "give" can also make conditions or take away.

Industry, agriculture, finance, the press, radio, television, the University, the labour unions, the schools and the much over-rated Militias are all under the rigid and direct control of the clique that runs the totalitarian state. Many of the most strategic posts of control and responsibility are in the hands of Communist Party people, most of whom are Cubans, but with Russian, Chinese and Czech "experts" and "technicians" in assistance. Cuba is following the same general, tragic pattern that became so familiar in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. Once again as in Russia, Hungary and China, the revolution is being distorted and ruined by the statification of the economy and the suppression of human liberties. Unless the people participate willingly, actively, spontaneously and freely, without State supervision and control, every revolution is destined to the same fate. This can hardly be said to be the case in Cuba today where there are more political prisoners by far than under Batista.

Fidel Castro can be said not to have gone far enough in the things that really matter, but to have gone too far in the wrong direction. Regardless of his subjective wishes or his possible honesty or sincerity (which are, really, immaterial), it must be recognised that Fidel Castro has castrated the Cuban revolution. He has come to personify the counter-revolution within the revolution.

Every social upheaval has its ideological groupings which play—or try to play—vanguard roles in the given situation. The 26th of July Movement was

at the outset a political hodge-podge held together by its opposition to Batista, the personality of its maximum leader, and the general anti-imperialist verbiage common to most opposition political movements in Latin America. It was strictly authoritarian in structure. Its membership was based largely on Catholic Action and the Communist Party members who had infiltrated its ranks. With the fall of Batista, the 26th of July promptly pushed aside its allies in the common struggle and seized full political and military control. This was possible because Fidel Castro had caught the popular imagination, was hailed as the country's saviour and unblushingly assumed the mantle of "beloved leader".

Within the 26th of July a power struggle developed that resulted in the anti-communist elements withdrawing from the Movement one by one. Those whose sole interest had been the ousting of Batista were opposed to the revolutionary steps taken by Castro. Some reacted against the ultra-authoritarian character of the new régime. Some favoured an understanding with Yankee interests. Others seeing the drift towards the Muscovite orbit, simply objected to changing one imperialist master for another.

Many of Castro's former associates fled into exile, others quietly withdrew into obscurity. Hundreds have been imprisoned and a few have mysteriously vanished. The 26th of July Movement as it existed during the heroic days of the Sierra Maestra no longer exists. It is now little more than a front organisation for the Communist Party.

Those familiar with Bolshevik machiavellianism, having observed it in practice before, should not be too surprised. The party that had supported Batista in its leaner days now waxes fat in a situation made to order for its purposes. To the Cuban comrades, the important thing is their leaner days now waxes fat in a situation. For the present they are satisfied to pull the strings and direct from the wings.

U.S. economic sanctions and the campaign of propaganda in the American press have played into the hands of the

Russians and their Cuban agents, since they have had the effect of pushing Castro closer to Moscow. These same factors have also increased his popularity in Latin America. Incidentally, Russian support for Castro has under these circumstances, increased the prestige of Communists throughout the area.

For a Latin American politician there is no more direct road to popularity than to actively oppose U.S. imperialism as was seen with Calles in Mexico, Peron in Argentina and now with Fidel Castro in Cuba. The peoples of the continent and especially the Cubans have had enough of Yankee arrogance and exploitation. To most of them, Russia is as yet an unknown quantity, but is in the position of being the current opponent of their major exploiter, hence is thought of as a potential ally.

Considerable masses of the Cuban people still identify Castro with the revolution that he has usurped and feel that his régime favours their economic interests, but there is a rising resentment against its dictatorial and arbitrary aspects. There are several organised opposition movements of which the Revolutionary Democratic Front is the most important. This is a bloc of five or six political groups composed mostly of elements that were formerly "Autenticos" and 26th of July people. These are predominantly liberals but without any positive or unified ideology of their own, agreeing only on the need to oust Castro. Ignoring the basic problems raised by the revolution, they see the overthrow of Fidel Castro as primarily a military problem rather than a social and revolutionary one. The Revolutionary Democratic Front already has armed forces fighting at several points in the island and is actively recruiting and seeking armament at home and abroad.

In our opinion Fidel Castro and his Stalinist gang cannot be defeated without a policy advocating the extension of the revolution and giving its control to the people. The only alternative is to appeal for United States support. A fight against Castro on this basis would be interpreted by the Cuban people as counter-

revolution and they would be correct. American imperialism would only give its support on the basis of guarantees for American investments. Since social revolutionists aim at deepening and extending the revolution, they can have little in common with non-revolutionary opponents of Castro and must also disassociate themselves from the manoeuvres of the hierarchy of the Church. They must resist any and all efforts to re-establish the old capitalist forms that have been destroyed.

United States intervention would be tenaciously fought by the Cuban people. They would see it not as an aspect of the "cold war", but as an imperialist aggression against their revolution. The American radical movement and American labour and liberals generally, should oppose such intervention regardless of their evaluation of, or attitude towards, Fidel Castro.

A correct revolutionary policy for Cuba requires opposition to all economic, political or military intervention by either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. It must base itself on the right of the Cuban people to administer their own affairs free from the dictates of anyone . . . and without any "condescending saviours", Cuban or otherwise.

Revolutions must reflect the will of the people and while the "vanguard" groupings have the right and duty to propagate their ideas and work effectively for them, they must not be permitted to impose their will as the sole custodians of truth and virtue.

In the struggle to overthrow Castro, our Cuban comrades will find it necessary to work together with other groups with whom agreement is reached at certain stages of the struggle. But the identity and the principles of the revolutionary vanguard must be jealously maintained at all times. It must never give up its right of independent action. Revolutionary principles can only have meaning if they are carried into practice by a responsible movement with its own identity, fighting under its own banner for the objectives of the social revolution. We want to reiterate to our Cuban comrades, in the struggle for the ideals we hold in common, the expression of our complete solidarity in these difficult days of decision and of struggle.

Ye Are Many—They Are Few—5

'Propaganda of the Deed'

THE *attentat*—or "propaganda of the deed" has been the concept of the anarchist over the years. Disregarding the fact that the overwhelming majority of recent political assassinations—where not governmentally inspired, were of nationalist origin, the stock image of the anarchist is a cloaked figure with a dagger and a bomb. Where the anarchists killed their scores of rulers, tyrants—and unfortunately, innocent bystanders—the nationalists have killed their thousands, and governments with their professional bombs have killed their million and are seeking to notch up an even higher score.

Assassination as a method of social change is imprecise. The *attentat* is a broader definition including many of the non-violent methods. What they all have in common is the "propaganda"—the focusing of public opinion on some tyranny, foolishness or injustice by means of some deed or action. The seizure of a Portuguese liner; the dumping of an ostrich on to a housing estate; the squat in a cement-mixer, the wounding of Frick, the acid on the golf-green, the unemployed at the Ritz, all are *attentats*. The violent nature of early *attentats* was probably a symptom of a different social background. Humanity has grown sick of violence, the shooting of Dr. Verwoerd is just another incident in a world full of shooting policemen, lynching mobs, marching armies and nations arming for destruction.

The *attentat* that seizes public imagination is likely to seize public sympathy. In a world full of dogs biting men, the dog that non-violently resists is news.

Examples of the campaigns that have been waged and, in many cases, won by such methods are numerous and have been well-documented and authenticated elsewhere. A few examples will suffice.

The Suffragettes fought a well-planned campaign. The achievement of what seemed a rather pointless goal was, it is said, made possible only by the war proving the equal status of women. Nevertheless the probability is that the climate for concessions was prepared by the suffragettes. In a world conspiring to deny publicity for what was thought

a "crank" movement, chaining to railings, setting fire to pillar-boxes, destroying golf-greens at St. Andrews (sacrilege!) and spoiling the Derby all gained headlines where humble petitions and Parliamentary manoeuvres would have passed unnoticed.

The unemployed demonstrations of 1938 in which members lay across Oxford Street, blocking the traffic, to call attention to their plight. This was followed by an invasion of the Ritz—to buy a twopenny cup of tea; a singing of rather unorthodox carols outside the U.A.B. chairman's home; the flying of a banner from the Monument; the carrying of a coffin from Trafalgar Square New Year celebrations to Downing Street; chaining themselves to the Ministry of Labour's railings; picketing the Food and Wine Society, Cruft's Dog Show, the Health Exhibition and so on. The unemployment problem was solved by the war of 1939-45 which started shortly after and the whole N.U.W.M. was Communist-inspired so it is impossible to gauge what its success would have been.

To come nearer to our own day the actions of the Reverend Martin Luther (significant name!) King in Montgomery in organising a bus boycott gave a new impetus to the movement against racial discrimination, exposed the Klu Klux Klan, and inspired the lunch-counter sit-ins. These movements are avowedly Christian-inspired but commentators have hinted that the so-called Christian beliefs of the segregationists are being used against them. Victory against segregation seems far off but it is obvious that all the legislation from Washington is powerless to help people who will not help themselves.

The Direct Action Campaign against Nuclear Weapons seems to have lost its original impulse but its projects for blocking lorries, immobilising cement-mixers and entering forbidden premises had the directness of appeal which captured public imagination. The reclaiming of Imber has a rather folksy symbolism about it that makes it a little esoteric. The development of the technique of "going limp" succeeded in

making the British police not only look foolish but also to look brutal without their usual effort.

A rather charming exercise in Direct Action was the awakening of the Air Minister at six a.m. to receive a deputation of complaint on noisy aeroplane take-offs. The matching of "punishment" and "crime" has a poetic justice about it which has a great effect.

The propaganda of the deed on a purely individual scale can be seen in the stand of thousands of conscientious objectors. The value of their objection lay in the affirmation that ultimate decisions on war, conscription and militarism lay in the hands of the individual concerned. We have not the power to guard against being victims, but we can guard against being executioners to the extent in which this lies in our power. On another level lies the decision of the deserter to "sit it out". The purity of his motives may be questioned but fortunately, the whole of mankind are not heroes or we should have joined the angels long ago.

Much of what goes on as "direct action" is merely the prelude to such. The gaining of the channels of mass communication, as the jargon has it, seems to be sufficient satisfaction for some and the basis for an approach to the real channels of political power. The gaining of public sympathy is merely brought forward as a sop to the politician's power rather than as evidence of the public's power.

Are you doing your bit of Propaganda for FREEDOM by introducing new Readers?

Freedom
THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

22, No. 5 February 4, 1961

Dog Eats Dog!

Continued from p. 1

The press is one that is free from pressure groups, from government "inspiration" from advertisers' revenue and political blackmail, from (political) party inspiration and from ecclesiastical morality. Quite simply, a free press is possible where there are free people, that is, people who value the truth more than their prejudices (which they recognize, even assuming they can neither overcome them, nor find it expedient to relinquish, them). A Free Press is one which reports the facts accurately and factually as human observation can record them, and which gives opinion, conclusions, and the measure of a free press is the choice, the feeling of freedom that it gives to its readers *draw their own conclusions*.

Every national newspaper is priced whether it is the mouthpiece of government of party or no party, every newspaper today reflects Establishment ideas. The Labour or Liberal or Communist Parties are in opposition does not reflect their basic approach to the social and economic problems of society. They may differ in the way they propose to manipulate the economic or financial machine; their approach to penal, industrial and educational reforms may vary, but the social set-up must remain unchanged and unchallenged: we have power, others obey; some are talking, others do the listening, some take the decisions, others do the work.

The *Daily Herald* when in the interests of circulation and "survival" sold itself from the 49 per cent. U.C. share control advertised itself as "Independent and Free". At the most we would concede that the change of editorship would have allowed it to describe itself as "improved"! But the take-over bid has made us notice that the slogan has been changed (when, we don't know) to "Fair and Free". Well "fair" is an elastic terms and we will go as far as saying that the recent *Daily Herald* is not grossly unfair. But free! Since the days of Lansbury's *Herald* the paper has been tossed from the heights of the 3 million circulation to the unreadability of the million and a half, and as it celebrates its half-centenary it is a pawn in the tussle between Messrs. Thomson and King, both of whom have as much feeling about the freedom of the press as the writer of these lines has for the R.C. Church.

Today the ironical fact is that Odhams Press which is publicly owned, by a relatively large number of shareholders, is more liable to absorption by take-over bids than either Thomson, Beaverbrook, Rothermere or Kemsey who, by comparison, are small "empires" but are, nevertheless, largely owned by their millionaire namesakes! Are we to conclude that the freedom of the press is in the hands of the millionaire tycoons after all?

The answer rests with the discriminating public. It is clear that either the *Times* nor the *Guardian* in spite of their small circulations can be said to represent the free press. Good as much of their reporting is, they openly support the Establishment. A Press which is both "adventurous" in the realm of ideas, and free from circulation problems (which exist only for newspapers which look to the advertisers to balance their budgets) must inevitably depend for its continued existence on the goodwill of its readers. This can only mean that those of us who want a free press must take the initiative to establish such a Press. It is as simple—and yet, apparently, as difficult—as that. But this is a subject all to itself to which we shall return on another occasion.

Branches, Trades Councils, etc. Organising Factory Gate collections and arranging collecting lists in factories. Sending appeals for financial aid abroad.

(c) Supporting strikes. In cases where strikes have already started—by spreading them. Organising sympathetic action, i.e., action at factories making materials for—and firms transporting materials to—firms where men are involved in a dispute.

(d) Organising, where possible, Boycotts; this is a powerful weapon which is little used in this country. Appealing for International Boycotts where necessary.

(e) Studying strikes with the aim of perfecting the strike weapon. Perfection and development of Stay-in-Strike and other Strike action.

(f) The Liaison Committee should act as a T.U. Reference and Information Centre.

Thirteen nominees from the floor were then elected to the Liaison Committee and the conference closed. The address of the Liaison Committee is Room 12, Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1.

Impressions of the Conference

As is probably inevitable, given the decision to set up an organisation on a formal basis and using formal methods of procedure and voting, the whole day was spent getting the three basic resolutions dealt with, and since the conference was open to anyone it is difficult to say to what extent the opinions voiced from the floor were anything other than individual voices. Nevertheless very different currents of opinion were observable in the discussion. For instance, on the basic question of whether a "rank and file movement" is necessary. Taking as his text the failure of the London power station dispute last year, the speaker in the morning session declared that the time was not ripe for such a movement, and that it was wrong for active workers to spend their time in seeking to build up such an organisation outside the trade union movement and outside the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Allied Workers. This point of view was vehemently attacked on several

grounds—the bureaucratisation of the unions, the fact that the unions are geared to capitalist methods of organisations, the fact that successful strikes had always been ones in which workers had broken out of their isolation, the fact that, "Those who uphold the principles had no machine, those who have the machine have no principles. We have therefore got to try to provide a machine". From the opposite point of view, it was objected during the afternoon session that, lacking a clear statement of aims and principles, the movement, in designating itself "rank and file" implied that it accepted the position of being the bottom of the T.U. pyramid, yet another would-be "ginger group" in a trade union movement so useless that it was pointed out "You can only have a liaison committee between bodies that already exist".

On the question of the participation of political bodies, Peter Cadogan said that the conference should frankly accept that various left-wing political bodies were represented in the hall (these did not, in spite of allegations in the daily press, include the Communist Party or the Trotskyists), and that the liaison committee should include the representatives of left-wing political organisations. He drew the conference's attention to his article in last week's *Socialist Leader* calling for a new revolutionary party. Brian Behan however, (who seems to have left his "Workers' Party" behind him) called for a movement free from the tribal warfare of factional politics, and the resolution from the floor which excluded the membership of representative of organisations as such from the movement was passed with a large majority.

Two speakers sought to draw attention to the inappropriateness of traditional ways of thinking about industry and industrial organisation. One was Eric Morse, who, speaking of the impact of automation, the increasing monopolisation of capital, the use of state capital direct, and the decreasing numbers of workers in basic industries, and the great increase in the number of white collar

workers, in occupations which did not exist before the war, and which in some cases were still unorganised, said that the increasing responsibilities and technical "know-how" of this new kind of worker, was one of the factors which made workers' control more, and not less feasible. It is time, he said for workers themselves to organise industry for themselves. Another speaker, after a breathless recital of O.K. names from Malatesta, Kropotkin and Geddes to Mazzini, and of neotechnic words like ergonomics and cybernetics, said that he agreed with everything everybody said, but that it would all be in vain unless we grasped the new possibilities and called for a new Worker's Charter, Co-ownership and the abolition of the wage system. To which a building worker replied: "The wage system may be bad, but I have to draw my wages at the end of the week. In fact the wage system is bloody awful, but I still have to feed my wife and kids".

Almost all the points of dispute in the discussion could have formed the subject of a conference by themselves. Is it more important to emphasise long-term or short-term aims? Obviously the trade unions have their achievements and their uses; the point of the demand for a new rank and file movement is that they are not useful enough, and that in some circumstances and cases, their structure is antipathetic to workers' actual needs. A study of militancy in the current issue of *Trade Union Affairs* (a journal for trade union officials) concludes that

"The machinery of conciliation and arbitration had not safeguarded the earnings of the lower-paid men; the NUM is already moving to restore the official strike to its armoury. It is not entirely irrelevant, therefore that in the 1950's local and unofficial strike action wrested improved earnings that the machinery of conciliation and arbitration was unlikely to have conceded without such pressure."

Here is the justification, if any were needed, for the attempt to build and strengthen a rank and file movement.

The Church and Psychology

To the Editors of FREEDOM.

Your correspondent Mr. Leech alleges that, "traditional Christian orthodoxy has found the techniques of the psychological revolution to be its allies and that argument about such issues as it and other contemporary scientific movements raise for faith has been carried on for years within orthodoxy at a level of intelligence and intellectual honesty compared with which FREEDOM is like a children's comic. I say all this not in scorn but in sorrow..."

Either Mr. Leech is ignorant of what is in fact going on, or he is seeking to pull the wool over the eyes of readers of FREEDOM. Because the movement for mental health has made some progress in the last century and a half, often in the teeth of opposition from the Church, and that this half-century has seen considerable advances in psychology, churchmen have had to face the very real possibility that one day they would be considered redundant in a sphere where once they were prominent. They are now flapping round seeking to bolster up their influence in fields of psychiatry where for some time now it has become plain that the great majority of workers regard their interference as a damned nuisance. A few psychiatrists wish to keep a foot in both camps. (A notable example of this is a certain T.V. personality who has the bad taste to show psychiatrically ill patients parading their delusions on the T.V. screen for the entertainment of viewers. He is both an active Christian and a psychiatrist. The report of the Archbishop's Commission on the Church's Ministry of Healing (1958) lists 10 medically qualified members among their 28 Commissioners. I think I am right in saying that only two of these are members of the British Psychological Society.

Any comparison between the matter appearing in FREEDOM and children's comics should be reserved until one has had a look at this Report on the Church's Ministry of Healing. As I have quoted from it at length in FREEDOM before

(FREEDOM, 27/6/59) I will not repeat their nonsense here. For triteness, banality, childish self-conceit and contempt for the glimmerings of psychological understanding, it would be hard to beat religious mediocracies. Needless to say they upheld their Master in maintaining that mental illness could be caused by the literal presence of unclean demons in the sick person, and that exorcism was the appropriate treatment. I would rather people read the original document (published by the Church Information Board, Church House, Westminster, S.W.1, price 2/6) than that they took word for this, for the 84 pages of it will do more to enlighten them on the alleged contribution which religion has to make towards mental health than any rationalist pamphlet.

Mr. Leech ends his letter with stock phrase begging me not to "betray the Christian faith before..." etc. I assure him that he can look forward to the pleasure of sitting among the Bibles and looking upon me when I am in a lake of everlasting fire which has so graphically described and promised his Redeemer. For surely his God will not go to the trouble of designing a place of torture if he was to be tried in it. It would be building a concentration camp and not arresting anybody to put there.

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
MEETING WILL BE HELD in basement, 5, Caledonian Road, (near King's Cross Station) Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
Feb. 5th.—Arthur Uloth on SPARTACUS
All Welcome.

IMPORTANT
On and after February 12th—Meeting at "The Swan", Cosmo Place, Southampton Row, W.C.1. (Holborn Station)
Feb. 12.—Martin Grainger on LESSONS OF THE BELGIAN STRIKE
All Welcome.
Refreshment available after meeting.

London Anarchist Group
AN EXPERIMENT IN OFF-CENTRE DISCUSSION MEETINGS
1st Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. At Jack and Mary Stevenson's, 6 Stainton Road, Enfield, Middx.
Last Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. At Dorothy Barasi's, 45 Twyford Avenue, Fortis Green, N.2.
1st Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. At Colin Ward's, 33 Ellerby Street, Fulham, S.W.6.

JAZZ GROUP
Friday, 10th February
Ian Celnik on COLEMAN HAWKINS at 37, Old Compton Street, W.1.

Saturday, February 11th—City Literary Institute, Stukeley Street, W.C.2, 7 p.m. Debate:
"That the Classless Society is an impossibility".
Opposed by Jack Robinson (L.A.G.) and Arthur Uloth (L.A.G.)
Admission 1/-
Refreshments obtainable.

FREEDOM
The Anarchist Weekly
Postal Subscription Rates:
12 months 19/- (U.S.A. \$3.00)
6 months 9/6 (U.S.A. \$1.50)
3 months 5/- (U.S.A. \$0.75)
Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies:
12 months 29/- (U.S.A. \$4.50)
6 months 14/6 (U.S.A. \$2.25)
Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed a/c Payne, and addressed to the publishers
FREEDOM PRESS
17a Maxwell Road
London, S.W.6. England
Tel: Renown 3736

Hull Students' Protest

(From a Hull Correspondent)

A MEMORANDUM from the Student's Union of Hull University to the University Grants Committee has caused quite a stir in the Press. It was sent to the "Times", the "Guardian", the "Yorkshire Post" and the "Hull Daily Mail" and reports appeared in all these except the "Times" which covered the memorandum in the "Times Educational Supplement" and offered an editorial opinion on the important issues brought out in the memorandum.

On Monday, 16th of January, the "Guardian" carried a headline: "Students mark down teachers". It emphasised that Hull Students were complaining about poor teaching facilities and wanted an overhaul of the teaching/lecturing system. It brought out the fact that students were complaining about the standard of teaching. In a letter to the "Guardian" sent by the President and Secretary of Hull Students' Union the following comment was made: "In your report of the Hull Students' Union memorandum to the University Grants Committee you said that the Union had complained to them about the standard of teaching in the University. This is much less than fair to the academic staff, and

gives the item in question (which in the memorandum occupies three short lines) a meaning it does not have." A much longer and fairer report appeared in the "Hull Daily Mail". Two apt quotes were taken from the memorandum which it termed "blunt" in character. Concerning expansion of the University the memorandum says: "We believe that the University cannot be organised as a business, with its efficiency measured in terms of greatest economy of expenditure." Concerning staff-student relationships the memorandum comments:

"We are doubtful if any improvements can be made in staff-student relationships until a much larger Union building is made available. After a day of overcrowded lecture rooms—we know of one poorly ventilated hut built to house 3, but which is used for a class of 70 students—ill-balanced time-tables, a very short lunch-break and long refectory queues, it is not surprising that students faced with only floor space to sit on in the common room, have little inclination to learn the arts of conversation and sociability only possible in more congenial conditions".

The "Yorkshire Post" reported an interview with the Vice-Chancellor of Hull University on Wednesday, the 18th of January, in which he referred to the publication of the report as "foolish and untimely". "Reynolds News" represented by Sarah Jenkins in her "New Notebook for Women" commented: "I sympathise with the Students' Union of Hull University." She actually came up to Hull after reading a poem by Brian Higgins called "The North" in which he refers to Hull as a "Cold, clean city full of new pubs, with the worst university in England". She comments: After reading the memorandum and talking to the officials of the union, I was impressed by their thorough and responsible approach to the subject. I am with them all the way, and she ends: "The fact that Hull's students spoke out fearlessly and publicly and that they want to improve standards seems to me an excellent thing and to be encouraged."

The more august columns of the "Times Educational Supplement" were also full of more reserved praise: "A memorandum from the Students' Union of Hull University claims that the present emphasis on lectures in the curriculum is too heavy. There should be fewer of them, it says, and they should not be compulsory; tutorials and semi-

nars should be the principle means of instruction. This would place more responsibility on the students themselves, which seems to be what they want. The memorandum also complains of bad teaching. Clearly they want to be able to decide for themselves whether particular courses are worthwhile, and also play a much greater part in seminars than they can in lectures.

"This sounds admirable. Ideally speaking it is far better for a university student to pursue knowledge in his own way, helped only by the advice of the teaching staff, than that he should be forced through a process by someone else. But many students lack the dedication and maturity that they must have if they are to make the most of their freedom. They cannot make a valuable contribution in a seminar, and there are distractions of all sorts at a university. The relative importance of lectures and seminars, both of which serve valuable purposes, should certainly be examined.

"But with more and more students coming from homes with no experience of universities there should surely be some control over their academic career. The basic issue must be, as the memorandum says, the need for good university teaching." (My italics).

The Students' Union paper "Torchlight" reports that the Union President would not have agreed to the sending of the memorandum if he had realised the consequences. "He thought it unfortunate that the University reputation should have suffered as a consequence. "However the student who suggested sending the publication to the press had this to say:—"I feel I was right to send the report to the press". He was the Press Officer, Stewart Main. The editorial of the paper, traditionally conservative, had this to say:

"That Hull University and in particular Hull students, should receive 'bad press' is fast becoming an annual event. Last year there was the rumpus over the Queen Mother's visit [Two Councillors of Students' Union asked not to be included in a list of people to meet her], and the year before, the closure of the Bar made headlines. This year it is the 'foolish and untimely' publication of the University memorandum... Within the Union, controversy has centred about two main points: whether the memorandum should have been published when it was—if at all, and secondly whether the memorandum is in fact a true reflection of the ideas of Union as a whole."

Holding your own!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!
WEEK 4

Deficit on Freedom	£80
Contributions received	£79
DEFICIT	£1
January 23 to January 29	
Miami: Part proceeds Picnic, 15th Jan., per P.S. £17/10/-	Isleworth: L.K.W. 2/6
Israel, Vaacov: D.M. 1/-	Wolverhampton: J.G.L. 4/6
Weinfleet: J.U. 1/6	Middlesborough: P.E. 8/3
County Down: J.O.H. 11/-	Bangor: J.T. £1
Falmouth: R.W. 6/-	
Total	20 4 3
Previously acknowledged	59 2 6
1961 TOTAL TO DATE	£79 6 9

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: H.M.
*Indicates regular contributor.