

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Official history has always been the story of great murderers. But it is only today that Cain is killing Abel in the name of logic and then claiming the ribbon of the Legion of Honour."  
 —ALBERT CAMUS

## France mourns for Frejus and for Camus, but ignores the TORTURED MEN & STARVING CHILDREN OF ALGERIA

THE Paris newspaper *Le Monde* published in its Jan. 4th issue a summary of a confidential International Red Cross report on conditions in French detention camps in Algeria. That issue of the paper was confiscated in Algiers for its "grave indiscretion", and on the following day the Paris police seized the daily *Libération* and the Nice police seized a Communist paper, for their commentary on the text and on the statement by the French Prime Minister, M. Debré, in which he congratulated his government on having provided facilities for the Red Cross, and deplored the use of the text "for political ends", but stated that his government would "take full account" of it.

In that case, comments *Le Monde* unrepentently, the "grave indiscretions" will have been worth while. Most of the Paris papers on the following day contented themselves with reproducing the Prime Minister's statement. Only those few papers which have consistently been vigilant and critical of the "irregularities" by the French police and military authorities in Algeria commented on the summary of the Red Cross report. *La Croix*, a Catholic paper spoke of the use of torture by "people who are pretending to defend Christian civilisation", and the *Paris-Press* declared that "a single act of injustice condemns the system which claims to cover it legally".

The Central Committee of the League for the Rights of Man, examined both the analysis of the Red Cross report and the Prime Minister's statement, and, noting that the latter "could not contest either the contents or the value" of the former, continued:

"An examination of the two texts confirms the truth of the practice of torture and brutality which the League has unceasingly denounced since 1955, in spite of the denials, continually reaffirmed against all the evidence, by successive governments."

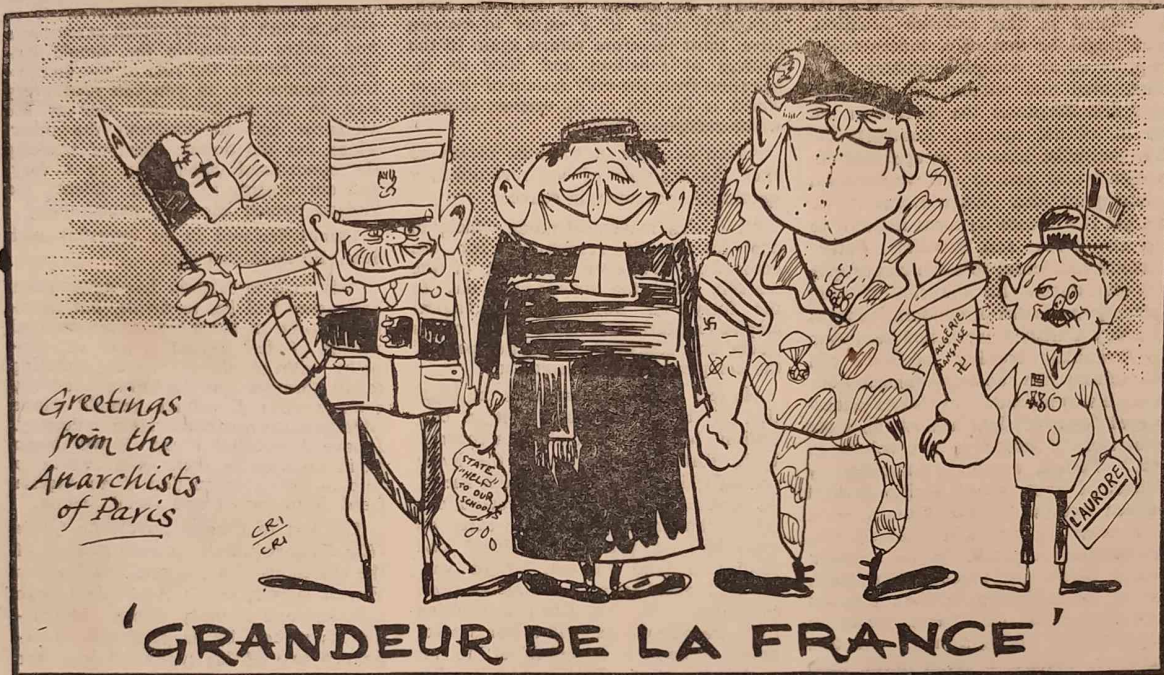
Only last month the weekly *Témoignage Chrétien* described the training of officers in "the conditions under which torture of prisoners can properly be practised" at the Joan of Arc camp at Philippeville in Algeria. The account was confirmed by *Le Monde* on December 20th. A reserve officer, a priest in civil life, said:

"Here are the notes I took during Capt. L.'s lectures in the second half of August 1958. Capt. L. laid down five conditions:

- (1) Torture must be clean. (2) It must not happen in the presence of young soldiers. (3) It must not happen in the presence of sadists. (4) It must be carried out in the presence of an officer or someone responsible. (5) It must be humane, that is to say, it must stop the moment the man has talked—and, above all, it must leave no trace.

"With these conditions satisfied you have a right to water and electricity. (These are the instruments of two well-known methods of torture which leave little trace). These are the notes I took while he was talking."

THE International Red Cross inspectors who toured 82 camps and prisons found conditions better than they were on the last visit in December 1958, but were told by prisoners that some improvement



were made only hours before the team arrived. One third of the camps were good, one third were average, and the rest "frankly bad". In the bad camps prisoners claimed of having been tortured by electricity or water when interrogated.

"Too often prisoners were reported killed while attempting to escape".

"In one cell in the Camp of the Five Palm Trees we found six prisoners of whom three bore recent bruises; in the midst of them was the corpse of a man who had died during the night, yet it was 11.30 a.m." In another camp prisoners "were chained throughout the night". In others living conditions are "disastrous". "Prisoners sleep on the ground, have no blankets or crockery and eat out of old jam tins, although the camps are three years old."

The Red Cross inspectors visited military internment camps, 'shelter' camps, which are internment camps under a theoretically civilian administration, but actually, like so much else in Algeria, under the control of

soldiers, 'sorting' and 'transit' camps. They discovered, by accident, the existence of other camps, which were not on the list provided them by the French authorities.

The International Red Cross in Geneva, in a statement, regretted the publication by *Le Monde*, of extracts from their confidential report, but confirmed their authenticity.

THE Red Cross report does not touch upon the "regroupment" camps, also under military control, where, according to *The Times* (28/12/59) children are "dying of hunger", children with malaria "for whom there was no quinine, were shivering with fever on the ground without blankets", while others "were only kept alive by lumps of sugar left over after coffee in military messes".

Funds have been opened in France by churches and a lay organisation, but they have been ignored by almost the whole French press and by the radio. The Ministry of the Interior reports that for the victims of the Fréjus disaster more than

four-and-a-half million pounds has been subscribed from within France and abroad. But for the far more numerous victims of the war in Algeria the popular press in France (and in this country for that matter) has not a word.

The Italian anarchist monthly *Volontà* devoted its entire 56-page October issue to an account by our friend Virgilio Galassi of a month spent working in Algerian refugee camps in Morocco. The publishers of *Volontà* have started an Italian fund for the children's home at Souk el Djemâa in Morocco. The Dutch pacifist paper *Vredesactie* also devoted an issue to the plight of Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia and are raising funds for money and clothes, and the Dutch Protestant radio started a campaign for "direct help to the 50,000 Algerian children dying along the Moroccan-Algerian border" and within a month sent £120,000 to the Moroccan Red Crescent. International Voluntary Service (72 Oakley Sq., N.W.1.) are raising funds for the home set up for orphans by their Swiss branch at La Marsa near

### Rocket Base Protesters Released

THE 82 demonstrators arrested at the Harrington missile base appeared in Court on January 6th, and pleaded guilty to obstructing the police. The magistrates discharged them all conditionally, without even attempting to extract from them undertakings that the offences would not be repeated.

This nicely illustrates the dilemma which these acts of civil disobedience imposes upon the law. If they are imprisoned they become martyrs and a focus for agitation. If they are discharged the demonstration is regarded as a victory, and others are encouraged for the future.

It also underlines the curious situation of the original members of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, organisers of the demonstration, who have been in

prison since the middle of December.

They had committed no offence whatever. They didn't go to Harrington. They didn't obstruct the police. They simply refused to give an undertaking not to do so. So we must draw the conclusion that to commit an offence can be far less serious than to refuse to promise not to commit one!

The law looks pretty foolish doesn't it?

### And Strike Threat Worked

THE threat to strike over bad conditions in schools at Rochford, Essex, has been withdrawn by the teachers because the Essex educa-

tion authority has speedily erected four pre-fabricated class rooms on which work started just before the Christmas holiday.

The pre-fabricated class-rooms are for temporary use while a new school is being built, and have replaced the Congregational Church Hall and British Legion hut which were totally unfit for use and conditions of which started off the threat of strike action. Some parents co-operated with the teachers by keeping their children away from school.

The conditions which existed in these two buildings at Rochford are not uncommon, as many surveys show; teachers who have to cope with children working under the strain of inadequate space and equipment, sanitation and cold, should learn a lesson from their colleagues at Rochford.

Tunis. IVS have joined with four other organisations (Friends Service Council, Christian Action, War on Want and the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) to form the U.K. Committee for Algerian Refugees (49 Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.) to collect money for immediate relief for these forgotten people, who will not even benefit from the British World Refugee Year.

IN France, with honourable exceptions, the organs of public opinion and publicity have ignored their existence. The war in Algeria, conducted with the utmost ruthlessness on both sides, shows not the slightest sign of ending. (Last week 60 French soldiers were killed and the French killed 344 Algerians and captured 150). The 1 million Europeans in Algeria are determined that no compromise solution shall be found with the 9 million Moslems, and the French, with the same pre-occupation with *la Glorie* which caused the disastrous war in Indo-China to drag on for so long are determined that Algeria shall remain part of the French Union.

The death of Albert Camus last week was treated in most of the French newspapers as yet another occasion for national self-congratulation. Camus' ideas can hardly have been in accord with those of the reactionary press, but two aspects of his career and character were grist to the patriotic mill. Firstly that he was a Nobel prize-winner, thus bringing the same mystical vicarious glory to France as the British were enjoined by the *Daily Express* to feel over the four-minute mile or the conquest of Everest. Secondly, the silence of Camus over the moral issues of the Algerian war (which is touched upon in the article in this issue of *FREEDOM*) was used as a means of suggesting that he was on the side of the French *colons* from whom he came. "Algeria weeps for the man who remained faithful to his native land" says the headline of one paper, while another, reminding its readers that Camus, when the Swedish Academy gave him the Nobel Prize, thanked them for the honour to a "French Algerian writer", interprets this as meaning that "he refused to betray the honour of French Algeria."

France has for several years been in the grip of that mood of resentment and intransigence which is characteristic of public opinion in declining imperial powers. In this country we have no reason for self-congratulation in this respect; Suez and the Hola Camp are aspects of the same thing.

"Official history, Camus once wrote, "has always been the story of great murderers. But it is only today that Cain is killing Abel in the name of logic and then claiming the ribbon of the Legion of Honour." France, where the cult of the paratrooper has not only mesmerised the public, but paid dividends to the politicians, needs today, more than ever, those who will rebel in the name of conscience and human dignity.



## People and Ideas

## CAMUS: The Struggle Against Absurdity

ALBERT CAMUS was born in Algeria in 1913. His father was a farm worker from Alsace, who was killed in the First World War, his mother was a Spanish immigrant, unable to read or write, who earned a meagre livelihood as a charwoman. Camus was brought up in great poverty, relieved only by the sunshine, the sea, and a passion for football. Winning a scholarship to the *lycée* in Algiers, he had intended to become a teacher, but fell ill with tuberculosis. Making a partial recovery, he worked at a variety of jobs in several countries and developed an interest in writing and the theatre. His first collection of essays was published in 1938. The Spanish Civil War affected him, as it did many of his generation, immensely. In 1939 he settled in France and in his play *Caligula* developed the idea of the "absurd" which we associate with his name.

After the French capitulation of 1940 he went back to North Africa, returning in 1942 to participate in, and later edit, the clandestine Resistance paper *Combat*. In that year his book *L'Étranger* (published in America as *The Stranger* and here as *The Outsider*) and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* were published. The narrator of *The Outsider*, Meursault, a clerk in an office in Algiers, a man incapable of affection, who commits a pointless and motiveless murder. The story is told with an extreme economy which, by the elimination of everything except the man and his transient immediate environment, emphasises the meaninglessness of his existence. In the essay *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* the theme is moved from fiction to philosophy with the opening words "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem: that of suicide." Sisyphus, the King of Corinth was condemned to roll a stone up the mountain and to see it roll down again when he reached the summit, the meaningless process being repeated forever. But suicide is merely acquiescence in absur-

dity. "Revolt, not suicide, is the one courageous protest against the absurd".

In 1945, at a time when the air was thick with cries for vengeance against alleged collaborators, in a frenzy of national self-righteousness, Camus published his calm and magnanimous *Letters to a German Friend*. Two years later he resigned from the editorship of *Combat* when, after a period of financial trouble the paper passed into new hands.

## The Plague

The allegorical novel which was to win Camus the Nobel Prize for literature, *La Peste* (*The Plague*) was published in 1947. The Algerian town of Oran is beset with an epidemic of bubonic plague, and is quarantined from the outside world. The characters of the novel are isolated in this extreme situation, which might be that of a concentration camp, or of an occupied country. Dr. Rieux, tired and without ambitions or ideals first diagnoses the disease in the face of official apathy. Rambert, the Paris journalist tries to escape back to his own world and to the woman who is waiting for him. When eventually he does get the chance he turns it down to help Dr. Rieux, and survives. Father Paneloux the Jesuit, sees the catastrophe as a punishment for the sins of man. Watching the deaths of children, he takes a harshly Christian view, and sees even this "criminal absurdity" as God's will and refuses the doctor's ministrations before his own death. In Camus' agnostic eyes "one will fight against evil more deliberately if one does not believe in God." Tarrou, a writer, tormented by feelings of guilt, seeing society divided between victims and executioners, must die because he must align himself with the victims. He seeks to be a "saint without God", an "innocent murderer", and he finds this easier than the less exalted role of Dr. Rieux, which is simply that of "being a man". Another character, Cottard, a social misfit, finds release in the moratorium on past misdeeds which the plague grants. He prospers, but fears the end of the plague, as unfulfilled characters might find release in war and fear its end. When it does end he goes mad. Finally Grand, a timid and eccentric clerk, is revealed in the plague as a fearless "innocent" who, working devotedly among the dead and dying, survives.

Dr. Rieux himself, revealed at the end of the book as its narrator, spurns words like heroism and charity, and will admit only honesty or sympathy. Against superstition and stupidity he opposes rationalism and technical skill, and when the city is free of the scourge, he seeks no spiritual and material reward; he is content to have watched, in Rambert, the discovery of human solidarity, the reward of "those for whom man and his humble yet formidable love suffice."

## The Rebel

In 1948 Camus joined with Jean-Paul Sartre in founding a "third force" political movement, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire*. But Sartre at this time was moving nearer and nearer to the position of the French Communist Party, while Camus was steadily moving away from any sympathy with Communism. They parted with a series of angry and acrimonious open letters in *Les Temps Modernes*. Camus' *L'Homme Revolté*, published here two years later as *The Rebel*, appeared in 1951. "What is a rebel?" begins this book, "A man who says no: but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation." Camus sees rebellion as one of the "essential dimensions" of man. Rebellion is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms. It is the affirmation of a nature common to all men, which eludes the world of power."

He discusses this theme in literary terms by way of de Sade, Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche, and historically by way of the French revolution, and of the "fastidious assassins", the Russian terrorists, whose moral problems form the theme of one of his plays. All modern revolutions, he says, have simply enlarged the power of the State:

"The strange and terrifying growth of the modern State can be considered as the logical conclusion of inordinate technical and philosophical ambitions, foreign to the true spirit of rebellion, but which nevertheless gave birth to the revolutionary spirit of our time. The prophetic dream of Marx and the over-inspired predictions of Hegel or of Nietzsche ended by conjuring up, after the City of God had been razed to the

ground, either a rational or an irrational State, but one which in both cases was founded on terror."

Nazism and Fascism are surveyed under the heading "State Terrorism, and Irrational Terror" and Soviet Communism as "State Terrorism and Rational Terror". Camus concludes, not by regarding counter-revolution as the inevitable end of rebellion, but by recommending, in a passage which recalls the ideas of Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber, the recognition of *limits* ("Human beings", says Tolain, "can only emancipate themselves on the basis of natural groups"):

"We know at the end of this long enquiry into rebellion and nihilism that rebellion with no other limits but historical expediency signifies unlimited slavery. To escape this fate, the revolutionary mind, if it wants to remain alive, must therefore return again to the sources of rebellion and draw its inspiration from the only system of thought which is faithful to its origins; thought which recognises limits."

As an example of what he means he cites the example of the revolutionary syndicalist movement in France:

"It is this movement alone which, in one century, is responsible for the enormously improved condition of the workers from the sixteen-hour day to the forty-hour week. The ideological empire has turned socialism back on its tracks and destroyed the greater part of the conquests of trade unionism."

He sees such a movement as the negation of "bureaucratic and abstract centralism" because it is built on a concrete basis, that of employment, "the living cell on which the organism builds itself". As opposed to the "Caesarian revolution" which, though it claims to be based on economics, is primarily political and ideological (and "cannot, by its very function, avoid terror and violence done to reality"), he sees rebellion working from the bottom up. "If it wants revolution, it wants it on behalf of life not in defiance of it. That is why it relies primarily on the most concrete realities—on occupation, on the country village, where the living hearts of things and of men are to be found." But the example goes further than this:

"On the very day when the Caesarian revolution triumphed over the syndicalist and libertarian spirit, revolutionary thought lost, in itself, a counterpoise of which it cannot, without decaying, deprive itself. . . . The history of the First International when German socialism ceaselessly fought against the libertarian thought of the French, the Spanish, and the Italian, is the history of the struggle of German ideology against the Mediterranean mind. The masses against the State, concrete society against absolutist society, deliberate freedom against rational tyranny, finally, altruistic individualism against the colonisation of the masses, are thus the contradictions which express, once again, the endless opposition of moderation to excess which has animated the history of the Occident since the time of the ancient world."

## Spain

He won the affection of the Spanish anarchist refugees and the other Spanish exiled groups in France, by his continued support of their cause. The other anti-Franco intellectuals of Western Europe might forget the events of 1936-9, but Camus did not. In 1952 he rejected an invitation to contribute to a UNESCO publication declaring that "I cannot consent to such collaboration as long as there is any question of bringing Franco Spain in", and in the second volume of his *Actuelles* are reprinted his speeches and articles in support of protests against the Franco régime. He was a sponsor of Spanish Refugee Aid and of other organisations for the assistance of the Spanish anti-fascists. Three months ago when a large meeting was held at the *Palais de la Mutualité* in Paris to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the execution of Francisco Ferrer, he sent a message declaring that

"Ferrer thought that no-one is voluntarily evil, and that all the evil in the world of men proceeds from ignorance. It was for this reason that the ignorant murdered him, and that in our own day ignorance is perpetuated through new and relentless persecutions."

## Algeria

Many of Camus' admirers regretted that he had declined to become *engagé* over the issue of Algeria, or to express publicly his private opinion of the Lacoste régime there. At Stockholm, after the presentation of the Nobel Prize, he was accosted by a young Arab supporter of the F.L.N. to whom he declared:

"I would assure you that some of your comrades are alive thanks to actions which you know nothing about. . . . I have always condemned terror. I must equally condemn the terror which is exercised indiscriminately in the streets of Algiers, which might one day strike down my own mother. I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother first."

And in the preface of his *chronique algérienne* (*Actuelles* 111, 1958) he wrote:

"The truth, alas, is that one part of our opinion thinks, in some obscure way that the Arabs have acquired the right to murder and mutilate, while at the same time another section accepts every excess as legitimate. Each, to justify itself, evokes the crimes of the other. There is here a casuistry of blood with which, it seems to me, an intellectual can have nothing to do, unless he takes up arms himself. When violence reacts to violence with a frenzy which exacerbates and makes impossible the simple language of reason, the role of the intellectuals cannot be, as you can read every day, to excuse from afar one of the violences and to condemn the other, which has the double effect of working the condemned violence up to a fury, and encouraging to further violence the violence which has been exonerated."

Camus declared in an interview with Jean Bloch-Michel that

"My role in Algeria has never been, and never will be, to divide, but to reunite, so far as the means at my disposal permit. I feel myself united in sympathy with all those who are suffering today through the misfortunes of my country. But I cannot rebuild alone what so many men are striving to destroy. I have done what I can. I will begin again as soon as there is a chance to help in the reconstruction of an Algeria freed from hatred and racial feeling."

The last of Camus' novels *Le Chute* (*The Fall*) published in 1956 consists of the reflections of a destitute and drunken French lawyer, set in Amsterdam, with a background of misty gloom. Dismaying his readers by its pessimism, it expounds two of his typical themes, the ambiguities of justice and the absurdity of the isolated individual. At the time of his death he was working on another novel, to be called *The Accident*.

Camus was an *homme de théâtre* and in several plays, *Caligula*, *Le Malentendu*,

*Les Justes* (about the Russian terrorists) and *L'État de Siège*, explored the same themes which occur in his prose works. He also adapted for the theatre Faulstich's *Requiem for a Nun* and Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*.

He played a notable part in the campaign against capital punishment in France, to which he contributed his *Réflexions sur la Guillotine*.

## Against the Absurd

Camus was one of the intellectual heroes of the post-war generation in France, where his austere agnostic humanism struck a responsive chord, and for this reason was pushed into rather naively optimistic political positions which contrasted curiously with his pessimistic philosophy. In this he reminds one of Orwell, the English writer whom he most resembled. Like Orwell he belonged to the non-Communist Left, and castigated his fellow intellectuals for the flirtations with Stalinism. Like Orwell, though not primarily a stylist, he cared immensely for language. His observation that "it is worth noting that the language peculiar to totalitarian doctrine is always a scholastic or administrative language" recalls Orwell's insistence that the debased language of politics is because it is devoted to the defence of the indefensible.

Camus once explained his political attitudes to Nicola Chiaromonte in the following terms:

"I have been called a sentimentalist. It's true. I was a journalist because when I got up in the morning and read the paper, there were pieces of news which it that made me mad. I wanted to express my anger as clearly as possible, but I was unable to do much more than that. I certainly didn't have a theory, much less a comprehensive ideology. I didn't want to go beyond the limits of what I was sure of. Hence, I was considered unconstructive, irresolute, and a paltry moderate. Still, I don't think I am ready to compromise on the matters that make me mad: nationalism, colonialism, social injustice, and the absurdity of the modern State. . . ."

His early death brings a tragic end to his struggle against the absurd. C.W.

## Theatre

## One-way Pendulum

THE B.B.C.'s Third Programme has been exploring the realms of "Anti-Art", and dredging up the remains of Breton, Tzara, Schwitters, Dali, Ernst from the sub-conscious sea of confusion of the post-war era. This movement gave birth to Dada-ism and surrealism and was translated politically into anarchism in some cases and finally ossified into the communism of Aragon and the shop window dressing of Dali.

With its avidity for seeing movements where there are only motions the critics have identified Beckett, Ionesco and now N. F. Simpson as a comparable movement. Although I liked *Waiting for Godot*, I have not seen any Ionesco or other Beckett so I can appreciate N. F. Simpson as an individual.

He is an amateur playwright, a schoolmaster by profession and won an *Observer* prize for his play *A Resounding Tinkle*.

To summarize the plot of the play would be absurd; to discuss the symbol-

ism would be presumptuous for as a programme note says: "A limited number of symbolic overtones is available free to those requiring them for personal consumption only. They are NOT for re-sale to the public".

There are, it can be said, "over-tones" but the specialist in choral-training of speak-your-weight machines, the woman who comes in to eat for the family, the parking-meter economy, and do-it-yourself Old Bailey, the motionless travelling aunt, the insane logic of the trial all strike a slightly resounding tinkle in a world of over-specialization, conspicuous consumption, affluent societies, bureaucracies and the whole sane rat-race of the sick, sick, sixties.

The programme underlines the play by reprinting a section from a London street directory with the remark: "There is no real need for confusion here." In *One Way Pendulum* there is confusion but it is necessary since we are dealing with individuals in a complex structure, mainly of their own making.

Two more quotations from the programme show the trend of N. F. Simpson's thoughts which may be obscure to those whose minds are confused by theatre-going.

"Friends and survivors. I should like, if I may for a brief moment, to speak up among the gamma rays here, for the traditional disciplines and age-old ways of thought but for which total extinction might have been no more than the pipe-dream of some mad visionary."

and  
". . . all this absurd, wasteful squabbling as to which side shall put the ball through which goal—and when and how often—as if this weren't a matter that could be settled in an adult and sensible manner round a table beforehand. . . ."

N. F. Simpson may be anti-theatre in his playwrighting but the production and acting are excellent. Truly an evening of high drug and slurrut as claimed by the programme. And no worries about what high drug and slurrut are! J.R.

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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## CAN THE LAW 'CURE' RAGE HATE?

THE virulent people, whose personal frustration finds an outlet in scribbling anti-Jewish slogans on public buildings and elsewhere, arouse anger in most responsible people.

No doubt most of the anti-semitic elements are the same ones who terrorised the coloured population in Notting Hill not so long ago, certainly it is the same irrational impulse which drives them into the streets with the intention of hurting and destroying, like hysterical children.

Many Jews, however, will not be disposed to regard them as children, and we can sympathise and understand why; but newspaper treatment of the swastika signs which have appeared on walls and buildings, seem to us to have encouraged rather than diminished the 'outbreak' for reasons which more than one psychiatrist has given over the last two weeks.

We expect newspapers to exploit situations in the interest of sales (there are of course exceptions), and since we cannot reform them we can only hope that people will not act in such a way as to provide meaty headlines for hungry newspaper editors.

This latest burst of venom reminds us that the problem of racial hatred is one which cannot be eliminated by making it illegal.

That is why the proposed bill which Sir Leslie Plummer intends introducing when Parliament re-assembles will, in our view, do little to change the attitude of the racist.

The Bill will make it an offence for any person: "insulting or conspiring to insult a person or persons on the grounds of race or religion", and a conviction would carry a maximum sentence of six months' imprisonment.

It is not denied that imprisoning all the people, assuming they could be caught, guilty of such an offence would shut their mouths for six months, but it will never convince them that they have been wrong. On the contrary, a prison sentence with all its frustrations can, in our view, only intensify hatred.

If the offenders are only having "a bit of fun" then they may consider that Jew and negro baiting is not worth six months in prison, but most people who go around viciously attacking one race or another are too irrational to care about or foresee the consequences.

We are convinced that only education towards the universal acceptance of the idea that no race is superior to another can hope to alter existing convictions and, more important perhaps, help to form the minds of the next generation.

That is all very well, it can be argued, but what can be done here and now. All we can say is that education can start 'here and now', and is the only hopeful, if slow, solution, to the sickness of racial hatred.

**Have YOU Sent back the questionnaire yet?**

## Time for Moral Disarmament?

ONE of the reasons why men have remained in a state of subjection for long ages, while reformers and revolutionaries have been crying to them to revolt and put an end to it, has been the distressing fact that the oppressed are usually the most conservative supporters of the system under which they are existing. The man or woman in the street is often quite indignant if it is suggested that they could free themselves from some social institution which is suffocating their potentialities for enjoying life, and claim that that very institution is absolutely essential to their survival.

Malatesta described this attitude as being like that of a man who has been brought up from birth with his legs bound with iron bands. When the man managed to learn to hobble about, he might easily imagine that the bands were helping him to get along, and that without them he would be unable to keep control of his legs. He would scorn anyone who suggested that he might be better off if his legs were free. Of course, the man would not be in such an impossible predicament, since he could be shown many people walking about taking big strides, albeit rather stiffly as Reich pointed out. For the individual suffering from apathy, repression, belief or conventionality, no such demonstrations are possible, for the ailments are so widespread.

As a remedy to this state of affairs, it might be a good idea to found a CAMPAIGN FOR MORAL DISARMAMENT (C.M.D.), or as an alternative title the MORAL DISARMAMENT ASSOCIATION (M.D.A.). The exact aims and lack of principles of the new movement would have to be thoroughly discussed by its foundation members, but a few suggestions are offered here to begin with.

The movement would exploit all the usual channels of propaganda as much as possible, and also some unusual ones. It would hold public meetings at which the case for Moral Disarmament would be argued reasonably and factually. We could point out that in the world of today, just as in the world of yesterday, the mad race to build up more taboos, inhibitions and repressions is leading straight to disaster. People cannot get

together and discuss their problems, let alone find a solution to them, when they are all hiding behind piles of "conventional" armaments. The great idea behind the movement would be to help people to learn to live together, and of course, being a revolutionary organisation much of its work might have to be done through secret meetings.

The official platforms and speakers for the movement should be drawn from as wide a range of society as possible. Since we are driving a quite carefree and unprincipled band wagon, the more people who jump on it the better. A typical meeting might be addressed by a notable clergyman who really believed in the saying "Love thy neighbour", provided he had no illusions about rendering anything to Caesar; a trade union official who had renounced his allegiance to the TUC and betrayed the cause to which all TU leaders owe loyalty, that of industrial peace and high productivity; and perhaps even a politician who had decided to accept corruption openly instead of being tossed uncomfortably on the sea of pressure groups, party whips and the like.

If the movement ever reached a position of financial security (a doubtful possibility), it could open a large international centre in a foreign country. Pictures of the Moral Disarmers happily sporting themselves in the beautiful gardens of this mansion would open the hearts of even its bitterest enemies. They would then be invited to go round the world saying "Sorry" to all the people who had suffered under them. The vision of a whole caravan of bishops apologising to their flocks, generals to their soldiers, kings and ministers to their subjects, and police chiefs to their captives could not fail to fill every heart with joy and concord. The path to M.D.A., or "The Way" as its members would come to call it in affection, leads to four absolutes, "Absolute Love", "Absolute Freedom", "Absolute Enjoyment" and "Absolutely no inhibitions".

It will be inevitable that controversy and dissent will occur in the movement. The moderates might concentrate on educating public opinion, influencing parliament, and waiting until the world is converted before practising their ideas. It has even been suggested that in the

## Review Reviewed The New Left

THE marriage between the *New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Wing Review* has now been consummated and has brought forth its first offspring: the *New Left Review*, No. 1\* Its 72 too-closely printed pages contain a mixture of political and 'cultural' essays, extracts from a new play by Arnold Wesker, cartoons by Abu, some lengthy book reviews, and a few odds and ends.

I found the 'cultural' contributions more interesting than the political ones. There is, for instance, an excellent analysis of John Arden's play "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" ("a plea for a certain kind of anarchist humanism"). And there is a useful survey of the cult of 'pop-singers', which includes an amazing description of the symbolic sexual intercourse with a microphone carried out by Billy Fury in his act.

Less worthwhile is a rather too self-conscious dialogue between Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams on their working class childhoods. This contains, among other things, an odd statement by Richard Hoggart that: "You can still find exploitation in England, especially in some of the hordes of small works. . . .". Of course, we all know that at the I.C.I. and Ford's the workers get the full value of their labour—don't they? In another article Mervyn Johns remarks on the need for "a consistent

critique of capitalism" in the Labour Party. It would seem that he would find a likely pupil in Mr. Hoggart.

The political articles are usually quite good on their analytical side, but their constructive proposals are woolly and vary between the view that the Labour Party has a limited value but is not the whole of socialism, to the view that the Labour Party must be revitalised and reformed. After the thorough wrecking job done by Ralph Miliband in his article it is a wonder that he and other contributors bother to waste their time with such a genuine dead horse. One is still left with the question: What is the New Left?

Of all the socialist journals I know, the *New Left Review* promises to be one of the most alive and human. Its editors' attempt to come to grips with the realities of our world today without abandoning their socialist principles is one which we anarchists could well emulate from our own particular standpoint (and by "come to grips with" I do not mean "come to terms with"). But their approach is still vitiated by their acceptance of the power principle and their beliefs in the need for political action. Whether their humanity will survive becoming an established organ of the political left remains to be seen. S.E.P.

\*Price 3s. 6d.

absence of complete unilateral Moral Disarmament, we should campaign for an agreed all-round percentage reduction in character armour. This would be quite a worthwhile idea. The maintenance of a high level of conventional armour requires a large expenditure of emotional energy, which would be put to better use in cultivating the hitherto undeveloped areas of our lives. The slogan of the Campaign addressed not only to politicians but to ordinary people could be something like "Take off your character armour and go into the chamber naked". Suggestions for an appropriate symbol will be welcomed.

However, the younger members will probably do best to concentrate on Direct Action to overcome their problems.

SEXTUS.

## IDEALIST TRIES HARD TO BE REALIST

Whether we are Communist or Methodist, religious or irreligious Khrushchev is our man.—Dr. Donald Soper, on disarmament.

★

## HOME FOR ONE

A 41-year-old Albanian refugee and his family are to be given a £2,500 house in East Grinstead, Sussex. An underground fighter against the Germans in Yugoslavia who was later imprisoned and tortured by the Communists, Mr. Ndoc Stajka escaped to Austria last year where he has since lived in a refugee camp.

Observer 10/1/60.

## Books

### HONOUR AMONG CADS

SIMON RAVEN is a very odd writer indeed. Since he left the Army in 1956 he has been contributing to the *Spectator* (and other magazines), and his journalism has the sort of tough, pungent flavour that has recently made it a better weekly than the *New Statesman*. His articles on military subjects are particularly impressive (his was the best contribution to *The Establishment*, a disappointing book). What distinguishes him in this field is that he knows what he writes about, writes very well and thinks for himself; plenty of people know a lot about the Army, and plenty of others know how to write well and think for themselves, but how many know both?

Simon Raven, however, is not just a journalist—he is also a novelist, and a highly individual one. So far he has published two novels—*The Feathers of Death* and *Brother Cain*—and a third is promised soon. It is very difficult to place him. He doesn't belong to Bloomsbury, or the Catholics, or the redbrick Angry Young Men (so-called), or the picaresque or documentary analysts; if anything, his affinities are with the militarists, moralists and thriller-writers—an odd combination. He seems to have something in common with Graham Greene (of the "entertainments") and Ian Fleming in his technique. He uses wit, satire, sex, locale, melodrama and suspense without reserve and with conviction. I think he is a true original.

*The Feathers of Death* (1958) is about an imaginary army unit in an imaginary British colony (both remarkable and both brilliantly brought to life). During some trouble with local nationalists an officer shoots one of his men and is subsequently court-martialled in the routine manner. But there are a lot of peculiar circumstances in the case. . . .

*Brother Cain* (1959) is about a disreputable though amiable young officer

who has to leave the army on account of enormous debts (he has previously had to leave school and Cambridge rather suddenly too). He joins a very shady organisation in Italy because it pays his bookmakers and also pays him £500 a month; only gradually does he learn about the organisation's function—to do the dirty work which is necessary to protect democracy but which democrats cannot do openly. He finds his job increasingly distasteful and when ordered to kill an old Cambridge friend he tries to circumvent his orders. But things are not quite what they seem; once more there are some very peculiar circumstances. . . .

I hope I have conveyed the oddness of Simon Raven's plots. I cannot hope to convey the oddness of his treatment—you must discover and relish this for yourself. His world seems familiar—the world of fashionable extravagant officers who are not quite gentlemen, not unlike Evelyn Waugh's. The activities of his characters include eating and drinking to excess, gambling, and so on. Sexual love and sexual chastity are equally rare; the leading male characters are cheerfully bisexual, and their tastes are reflected in the atmosphere of both books. In the first an officer shoots his boy-friend, but both of them are partial to brothels. In the second the two chief participants (former school "friends") want the same girl and—on occasion—each other; nor are the girl's tastes quite normal. No one seems to have family ties or religious ideas.

It might seem at first sight that this is a completely amoral world and that Simon Raven is simply concerned to tell exciting stories with entertaining backgrounds. But such a view would miss the whole point of both novels. In each of them the easy-going Tory hedonism (which would have been quite unremarkable at the court of Charles II) is not just the ruthless search for

kicks that you get in the books of, say, Jack Kerouac or John Braine; nor are the melodramatic events mere blood and thunder. Simon Raven is going much deeper than a casual reader might think. Without being pompous or transcendental (thank goodness!) he is concerned with something very real and, I think, very important. He is concerned above all with the problem of personal honour. In a way he is trying to say what Evelyn Waugh said in *Brideshead Revisited* and what Graham Greene said in *The Heart of the Matter*—though not, of course, in Catholic terms. I interpret his message as implying that it doesn't matter how depraved, debauched, crooked, wicked—in a word, 'immoral'—a man is; the only thing that matters is what he is to the people he loves.

Do you remember Sebastian Flyte, the more or less homosexual drunkard in *Brideshead Revisited*, who was all the same the best Catholic—and, more important for us, the best loved person—in the book? Or the adulterous and corrupt police officer in *The Heart of the Matter* who commits suicide—the unforgivable sin in his eyes—out of compassion for those he loves, and whose nickname is 'Scobie the Just'? The ideas in Waugh's and Greene's novels do not belong to the complicated field of Catholic ethics alone; they have relevance for us too, and Simon Raven's novels may help to show why.

Both his 'heroes' are cads and perverts by conventional standards and both come to sticky—and superbly written—ends. But the vital thing about them is that they have learnt the lesson summed up by the narrator of *Brideshead Revisited* as follows: 'To know and love one other human being is the root of all wisdom.' The hero of *The Feathers of Death* gets into trouble because he surrenders to his love for the soldier he later kills (and neither his commanding officer nor his creator presume to blame him); his unexpected death at the end of the book also arises from love. The

hero in *Brother Cain* is at the same time destroyed (physically) and saved (morally) for his loyalty to past friendship and his ultimate conviction of personal honour in a particularly dishonourable situation. In a magnificent scene at the end when all his various friends have proved false in one way or another he appeals to them in the name of his love for them; but he must die, and the point is that he dies because he has loved them: this is what the 'organisation' that exists to protect 'democracy' involves. His murderers are symbolically disguised as animals—Circe's swine—when they push him down a well (the well of life?) 'Whatever honour may or may not be this was honourable.'

It is the old problem of ends and means. It doesn't just concern Catholics or philosophers. The irony of the organisation is that it is British and anti-Communist, and yet of course it does exactly what our countrymen are meant to abhor and what the Communists do—it uses vile means for a fine end. To which the answer is that if all the honourable men in the world join in doing a dishonourable thing, one cad who will not let down an old friend (even if—o all the more because—the old friend let him down) is the best man in the world. In the end, Simon Raven is saying nothing matters except individual people and the personal relationships between them. He has taken Suckling's phrase—'I could not love thee, dear, so much loved I not honour more'—and turned it back to front; and he is surely right.

Politically-minded people often demand that writers should be 'committed' but the impact of conventional *littérature engagée* is nothing compared to the involvement in the human situation that one feels on reading such apparently uncommitted novels as these. I wonder what *Doctors Wear Scarlet* will be like. Meanwhile, *Brother Cain* could make a wonderful film. N.W.

*The Feathers of Death* and *Brother Cain* are published by Anthony Blond.



# Readership Survey: An Interim Report

## 144 ANSWERS TO QUESTION 24

THE number of replies received from Monday, 4th Jan. to Friday, 8th Jan. was 144. Of these, 131 were from men and 13 from women. Four of these readers were in their teens, 35 in their twenties, 53 in their thirties, 25 in their forties, 13 in their fifties, 7 in their sixties and 6 in their seventies. A great variety of occupations were represented.

It is too early for tabulation of the results to be worthwhile, but, it is obvious that they are going to be most useful, the criticisms revealing and valuable; the whole thing, so far as we are concerned, fascinating.

One thing that interested and encouraged us enormously, was the response to question 24: *If you think that the ideas expressed in FREEDOM have been a contributory factor in any changes which have taken place in your own life, can you indicate the sort of changes these have been?*

Of the 144 first replies, 29 left this question blank or put a stroke through it, 2 put a question mark, one put 'don't know', and 8 put 'No'. The rest are all included below.

Many answers indicate that the reader already has such ideas:

"On the contrary, in the main I find FREEDOM reflects my own ideas and opinions."

"No changes, but realise that I have had these ideas since childhood."

"They have merely confirmed my own ideas."

"FREEDOM has not had any effect on my life, I have lived in an anarchical circle all my life."

"I am afraid not, but FREEDOM gives me the other point of view—a view which I generally find coincides with my own."

"FREEDOM might have coloured my thinking, but I am unaware of any alteration to attitudes."

★

Many found that it had strengthened or 'crystallised' ideas they already held.

"No. Given moral support and articulated vague attitudes I've held for 15 years."

"Less a change than a corroboration, but probably the influence is stronger than may be apparent."

"Crystallisation of ideas already in my mind."

Reinforcement."

"Frequently it expresses the opinion of the minute sane fringe of our sick society and helped to formulate one's ideas clearer."

"FREEDOM certainly has helped to clarify my ideas that previously were lying confused and jumbled in my mind."

"It has justified my ideas upon society and enlarged and clarified my own semi-formed views. These ideas must have had their effect upon my mode of life."

"FREEDOM has influenced my attitudes—but I can't select any major change in my life that it has affected."

"It has made me more libertarian in general, but I would not say I was an anarchist... I think pacifism a more vital goal."

"More 'agin the government' with better foundation than before."

"Reading FREEDOM has helped to crystallise my anarcho-syndicalist views and has made it easier for me to justify these views."

"I was already disillusioned with politics before I ever saw FREEDOM. But it has modified my views on pacifism. Although my opposition to violence is unabated, I cannot condemn others e.g. Spanish anarchists, who have resorted to arms."

"No change effected but FREEDOM has helped me to keep my individuality and sense of values in life."

"Gives a certain theoretical authority to natural inclinations."

"Convinced me that leaders cannot be trusted and are unnecessary; but no actual change in my life."

"Increase in healthy scepticism."

"Ideas in FREEDOM have helped me to clarify and crystallise my own ideas."

"In some respects a clarifying of some thoughts, in others a further confusion, yet with stimulating."

"Very little change. Possibly more outspoken, more certain of my own viewpoint, less tolerant of society, less compromising."

"I had a similar vein of thought before I read FREEDOM but the paper has clarified everything so clearly to me. I find this very helpful."

"It has helped to intensify. (I came with my spiritual luggage from Paris in 1914 and learned to read English)."

"Merely to continue without halt the advocacy of a saner society."

"I have acquired a certain outlook which has banished a chronic sense of humiliation that formerly beset me because my views were so different from others."

"It has given me confidence to find other people who think like myself."

"Gives feeling that I'm not alone in my ideas and also lets me express them frequently and tolerantly."

"Aid to my re-orientation of ideas. (Always been anarchist in general. FREEDOM has helped me to crystallise and specify my feelings)."

"Have found it most valuable in crystallising ideas already held vaguely. Has helped to speed up logical conclusions which I would probably have reached eventually but much later."

"Change in my mental attitudes. I have more confidence in my beliefs now I learn that others feel the way I do."

"I can only say that I felt greatly heartened upon reading my first copy, my own ideas greatly strengthened by obvious mutual sympathy, but wouldn't say that any conditioned change has occurred."

"They have given me moral support in attacking Govt. Ministries."

"It has strengthened my individualism. It showed me I had always been an anarchist at heart. It gave me new hope after I had lost confidence in the governments of the world."

"More self-confidence in arguments due to pertinent facts being brought to my notice."

"Leavening my own ideas generally. Giving me a greater respect for the less obvious unity between theory and practice, through the good humoured way you consistently drive your points home."

"I am not reading FREEDOM for very long, but it has given me a clearer conception of libertarian communism. It is very deep and very much worth reading."

"Find FREEDOM a great support for one can be very lonely when all seem to be against one!"

★

Others had more mixed feelings:

"Since the inception of FREEDOM a gulf has developed in anarchist movement which has led to decreased activity in same—to some extent this has not been personally detrimental but this multiplied by others means stagnation of movement."

"Yes. I taught in a progressive school for a year."

"Less guilt at my adultery. More sympathy for practically everyone."

"Left my work in City company. Made 2 years' National Service unbearable."

"Have confirmed me in the belief that all forms of association or co-operation among anarchists are practically as well as logically absurd."

"Have derived considerable factual information. Learned something of the art of invective and sarcasm."

"They stopped me worrying because I am a wage slave."

"Have made me more disillusioned and defeatist."

"Hope."

"Greater mental conflict. Love and marriage are like fire and water. But of course I am too cowardly to leave my wife and bugger off."

"Made me aware that anarchism un-mixed is not a panacea. Impressed me with the potential of community projects."

"I agree with most of FREEDOM except its attitude to SPGB theory of government and how the working class would establish socialism which is very akin to anarchism. Also anarchist theory becomes confusing when a new reader realises that many different theories are all accepted within the confines of FREEDOM."

"Has added to my political awareness (but FREEDOM shows how conditioned we are to accept Capitalism, then does not accept any need to alter people's brain-washed views, though, say, the ideas of the SPGB, of which I am not a member)."

"I think the most important thing is that FREEDOM appears regularly—that it has introduced me to anarchists whom I would not have met and has made me aware that anarchism is not enough."

"I laugh a little more once a week (also I sometimes sits and thinks)."

"You are what the stars make you."

★

Some readers' personal lives had been much effected:

"Decision to avoid National Service."  
"I no longer think of becoming a politician when I return home (in the colonies)."

"Frequent changes of occupation in an endless effort to square theories and practice; marital upheavals; attitudes to my children."

"Articles have changed my views about Utopian towns and Town Planning control... My methods of bringing up the children have been much influenced by FREEDOM especially as regards 'morals'. FREEDOM has made me less materialistic and made me passionately anti-authoritarian."

"Yes. I taught in a progressive school for a year."

"Less guilt at my adultery. More sympathy for practically everyone."

"Left my work in City company. Made 2 years' National Service unbearable."

### CORRECTION 1959 DEFICIT

Chicago: M.D.	3	10	11
Chicago: M.D.	3	10	11
Previously acknowledged	925	3	4

1959 TOTAL ... £932 5 2

1959 DEFICIT ... £108

★

### TELLY LOLLY

THE commercial television programme contractors had gross receipts of £57,912,802 last year, the Television Press Agency said last night.

Associated-Rediffusion, the London weekday programme contractors, led with an income of £12,361,268. Granada, the weekday contractors for the North, took £11,646,818.

Associated Television, which provides London's weekend shows, grossed £5,780,415 and £6,200,844 for its Midland week-day programmes.

A.B.C. TV's income was £3,004,504 in the Midlands and £4,874,628 in the North. It provides the weekend shows in both areas.

All the other companies provide both weekend and weekday programmes in their areas. Their takings were:

Television West and Wales, £3,741,840; Scottish TV, £3,660,216; Southern TV, £3,362,752; Tyne-Tees TV, £2,755,387; East Anglia TV, £390,931; Ulster TV, £133,209.

In 1958 commercial TV takings—with three fewer companies—totalled £48,319,421. So in a year they have grown by over £9 million.

News Chronicle, 12/1/60.

## A good start for 1960 but still £108 down for 1959

### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 1

Deficit on Freedom	£20
Contributions received	£34
SURPLUS	£14

January 1 to January 7

Oshawa: J.G. 16/-; Chicago: P.C. di G. £7; Seattle: J.F.C. 14/-; London: W.H.T. 2/6; Graz: G.A. £1/10/0; London: J.W.A. 1/9; London: Anon. 1/-; London: J.C. 4/-; London: J.S.\* 3/-; Detroit: A.S. £1/18/6; New York: G.S. £1/15/0; Twickenham: D.F.P. £1; Sebastopol: L.B. £1/15/0; Liverpool: J.C.R. 7/-; London: A.A.L. 10/6; Sevenoaks: M.R. 10/-; Limer: J.H.D. 4/-; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.\* 10/-; Adelaide: R.T. 2/3; Falmouth: R.W. 8/-; Tonbridge: H.V.W. 8/4; Canterbury: Anon. £3/1/0; Woldingham: F.B.\* 5/-; London: Anon. 4/6; London: Anon. £1; Oxford: J.W.S. 7/6; Ipswich: W.D. 2/6; Solihull: K.P.D. 5/6; Neath Abbey: I.T. £4/1/0; Huddersfield: A.L. £1; Alton: G. & P.M. 6/6; London: Anon. 5/-; Worthing: R.G.A. 2/-; Reading: Q.K. 8/-; Edinburgh: A.D.W. £2/1/0; Warrington: J.H. 10/-.

1960 TOTAL TO DATE ... £34 0 4

\*Indicates regular contributor.

"The paper has given and continues to give me a serene and potent antidote to all the life-hating and life-denying dogmas and persons within and without the English church."

"Prevented me from voting in the election and caused me to withdraw my support (at least partially) from the Labour party."

"No political or religious superstitions. I am anti-war. I have never voted in any election."

"Kept me from believing in a political party at moment when I have actually supported it."

"Leaving Communist Party, after many years' active membership, was partly due to ideas received from FREEDOM."

"Away from a legalistic form of Freedom thought towards the abrogation of censorship."

"It's been an 'eye-opener' re. gov't. of the many by 'business politicians', international relations and the 'nation' thing social climbing and the business rat race. Influences: I have withdrawn from keeping up with the Joneses, become cynical of politics, hater of nationalism, lover of international understanding between peoples."

"Now I have no trust in any political party or leader. Now I realise that direct action, if enough support, would make the government sit up and take notice."

"Increase in healthy scepticism."  
"Made me wiser to the way our ruling classes are only parasites to the producers."

"Made me more doubtful of the political 'gas-bags'. Some are sincere but the party system is rotten."

"My attitudes to authority are now without trust, and with very little respect."

"Made me conscious of administrative and trade union hypocrisy."

"In CND, etc., and letter to press, no longer demand of the government but stress individual responsibility."

"Stopped me thinking I was a supporter of the English Socialist Party."

"Contributed slightly to my 'de-Stalinisation'. Contributed slightly to my general view of society and people."

"Indeed yes. I stand much firmer on the religious question and the same on pacifism."

★

What can we say except that we look forward to seeing the rest of the questionnaires and the analysis of the rest of the questions?

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP and MALATESTA DEBATING SOCIETY

#### IMPORTANT

CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE. THE LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

MEETINGS are now held at

51, CALEDONIAN ROAD, LONDON, N.1.

(near Kings Cross Station) at 7.15 p.m.

ALL WELCOME

1960

JAN. 17—Philip Holgate on PARADOX OF ANARCHISM

JAN. 24—Jack Robinson on ANARCHISM IN 1960?

JAN. 31—Charles Humana PERSONALLY SPEAKING

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