

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Without freedom of thought  
there can be no such thing as  
wisdom."

—P. L. GORDON

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Threepence

## Reflections on the Devlin Report & Government DEMOCRATS' DILEMMA

THE Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry (the Devlin Report) is a remarkable document which throughout bears the imprint of the legal mind concerned only with establishing the facts and leaving it to others to draw conclusions. During the five weeks they spent fact-finding in Nyasaland the Commission heard evidence of 455 individual witnesses, and about 1300 witnesses in groups, as well as receiving 585 memoranda. But in spite of the large number of witnesses they heard and the mass of documentary evidence—"much of this was secret information" to which they had access—the claims they make for their report are modest.

We have not written this Report in the form of findings for or against any individual; we have written it in narrative form as a statement of the facts for your use based on what we believe to be the balance of probabilities and not on a proof beyond reasonable doubt.

But the Commons debate last Tuesday week on the Report clearly showed that politicians are not interested in objectivity or facts. The Government which had in the first place appointed the Commission "to inquire into the recent disturbances in Nyasaland and the events leading up to them" accepted those parts of

the Report which appeared to justify its policy and rejected the rest. The Attorney General made it clear that whilst it was "the duty of every Government to give careful consideration to the report of any commission they appoint", no government

either pledge themselves to, or are bound to accept all its conclusions or criticisms or recommendations if any are made.

But this was a fact-finding Commission as the Report reminds the Colonial Secretary in the introduction:

The task with which you entrusted us was to report and not to make recommendations. We have aimed at setting out all the relevant facts as objectively as we can in order that those whose responsibility it is to approve or disapprove may be provided with a firm basis of fact for their deliberations. (Our italics).

What then the Government has rejected in the Report are not "conclusions, criticisms or recommendations", of which there are none, but the facts as they appeared to the Commission. If the Government appoint a Commission to piece together the facts it cannot then reject their findings except by declaring that it is better informed than the Commission! And in that case it is difficult to understand why the Commission was appointed in the first place. Alternatively the Government would have to explain why it withheld information from the Commission which would have materially affected its findings.

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TO our minds the explanation is a simple one. The government in appointing the Commission of four safe, respectable men, eminent in their respective fields and all reputedly Conservative in their political outlook, was confident that the Report they would produce would confirm its own assessment of the situation which it had used as the justification for the declaration of a State of Emergency in Nyasaland last March.

What it had not bargained for was the zealotry with which the Commission set about its task. In his opening speech for the Government the Attorney General expresses on one hand the Government's gratitude "to the Commission for voluntarily

devoting so much time and effort to its task" while on the other hand makes slighting references to their method of hearing witnesses in groups.

... they heard evidence from 455 individual witnesses and, they say, about 1,300 in groups. [What are the implications of that remark "they say"?] May I say, in passing that I am rather intrigued about how that was done. Hearing witnesses in groups strikes me as a somewhat novel procedure. It would certainly save time in the courts, but it sounds rather a noisy business, and questioning witnesses in groups must have been rather difficult. Still they did it, and they studied no less than 585 memoranda."

We suggest that the purpose of the Attorney General's gratuitous remarks was to cast doubt on the ability of the Commission to cover so much ground in the limited time, as well as to write-off as valueless the 1300 witnesses who gave their evidence in groups. For it must not be forgotten that the Government had the invidious task of rejecting a large part of the Commission's findings on the strength of its own knowledge of the facts as supplied by the Governor who, in his turn, depended on the reports of seven paid "informers"!

The Labour Opposition in its Amendment which read "that the House accepts the Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry" was as hypocritical and opportunist in its acceptance of the Report as the Government was dishonest and opportunist in accepting some and re-

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## Anarchist Summer Schools & Geneva Conference

### 'Getting Things Done'

VISITORS to the Anarchist Summer School last week-end who were worried about "anarchist organisation" ought to spend some time studying newspaper reports of highly organised institutions and see for themselves how chaotic organisation can be.

The Geneva Conference, now in its ninth week (second session) convened by teams of organisational geniuses, should teach the lesson that "getting things done" is primarily a question of co-operation, common interest and a genuine desire to work out policies which have some hope of success.

The breakdown in relations between groups which is of "public interest" is usually caused by lack of co-operation and conflicting interests. In these instances physical organisation merely provides for the smooth running of a battle which may take weeks, months or years.

In a relatively small issue like the printing dispute which has been going on for weeks the "peace terms" now accepted by both sides could have been settled in a couple of days, and certainly if agreement had only been dependent upon efficient organisation, settlement could have been reached in a couple of hours.

To-days' newspapers (Tuesday, 4th August) report that President Eisenhower and Mr. Krushchev have agreed to "tour each other's countries". Yet these two gents have been dithering over this plan for, as far as we know months, probably years.

What prevented them making up their minds long before this? They have fast planes at their disposal and a whole army of civil servants expert in the organisation of banquets and balls, private conferences and plenary assemblies. No lack of organisation here but also no genuine intentions to settle the worry of the world—fear of war and hunger—if it means that the two mighty powers have to concede any of their military and economic strength.

The issues which these two will discuss in their exchange visits were just as important (or unimportant) last year, or the year before, but the mysteries of diplomacy would not permit it even although the conditions have not changed. If there is a temporary "easing of tension" after the back-slapping and the belching "the people" will be grateful to their wise leaders who created the tension in the first place!

It cannot be stressed often enough that these diplomatic exchanges are momentary expedients containing little value in terms of co-operation and permanent stability, and that the task of the anarchist or "sympathiser" is in the first instance to awaken people to the realities of power politics.

The Anarchist Movement is already organised to this end, therefore, we do not need more organisation but more anarchists who can intelligently use and extend the machinery which at the moment is turning regularly even if only in a small circle.

R.

## PRINT DISPUTE

### A Disappointing Result

THE newspapers told us last Friday that there was stalemate in the negotiations between employers and unions in the printing dispute.

On Saturday however the glad tidings were that settlement had been reached, and it is difficult to see why an extra day's bargaining was necessary when in fact the unions appear to have yielded on all the points on which they were stubborn on Friday.

They have finally settled for a reduction of the working week from 43½ hours to 42 (instead of 40 as demanded) and a wage increase of 4½ per cent. (instead of 10 per cent.). These were the terms suggested by Lord Birkett, the retired judge who held a judicial enquiry into the dispute and originally rejected by the unions.

The employers, therefore, have got away with less than 50 per cent. of the union's original claim. Not only that, but the unions have agreed to many provisions for "increased productivity" and for a certain amount of work to be undertaken by semi-skilled labour rather than craftsmen as at present, for new arrangements for the intake of apprentices and the length of period of training, for full co-operation in the introduction of new processes and in "method study".

All these terms, and others agreed upon, work in the interests of employers. The workers' hopes for a 40-hour week are postponed till 1961, when, it is agreed, unions and employers will "consider whether there is justification" for another decrease in hours.

The printing workers may well be wondering whether their six-week struggle (with half the industry at work and the national press hardly affected) was really worth it.

## No Money!

### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| WEEK 31                |      |
| Deficit on Freedom     | £620 |
| Contributions received | £512 |
| DEFICIT                | £118 |

July 24 to July 30

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Withernsea: J.M.D. 1/-; London: H.L. £2/0/0; London: Anon.* 2/3; London: Anon.* 3/3; Minneapolis: C.C. 15/-; London: L.B. 7/-; London: P.F.* 10/-; London: J.S.* 3/-; Colluroy Beach: R.G. £1/1/0; London: M.W. £1/0/0; Huddersfield: J.D. 2/6; New Orleans: B.T. 14/-; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.* 2/6; Sudbury, Ontario: A.O. £1/16/8; Greenford: B.M.E. 7/-; London: J.O.H.* 5/-. |           |
| Total   | 9 10 2    |
| Previously acknowledged   | 503 4 10  |
| 1959 TOTAL TO DATE  | £512 15 0 |

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: P.H. London: C.W.  
\*Indicates regular contributor.

## Money, Lovely Money!

THE Mr. Roy Thomson who has recently bought up the Kemsley chain of newspapers (see FREEDOM, 25/7/59) is a man with a gift for producing the telling phrase.

He is of course in a position for making his slightest word heard throughout at least two continents, even though he maintains stoutly that he is not interested in the spreading of ideas, only in the accumulation of money.

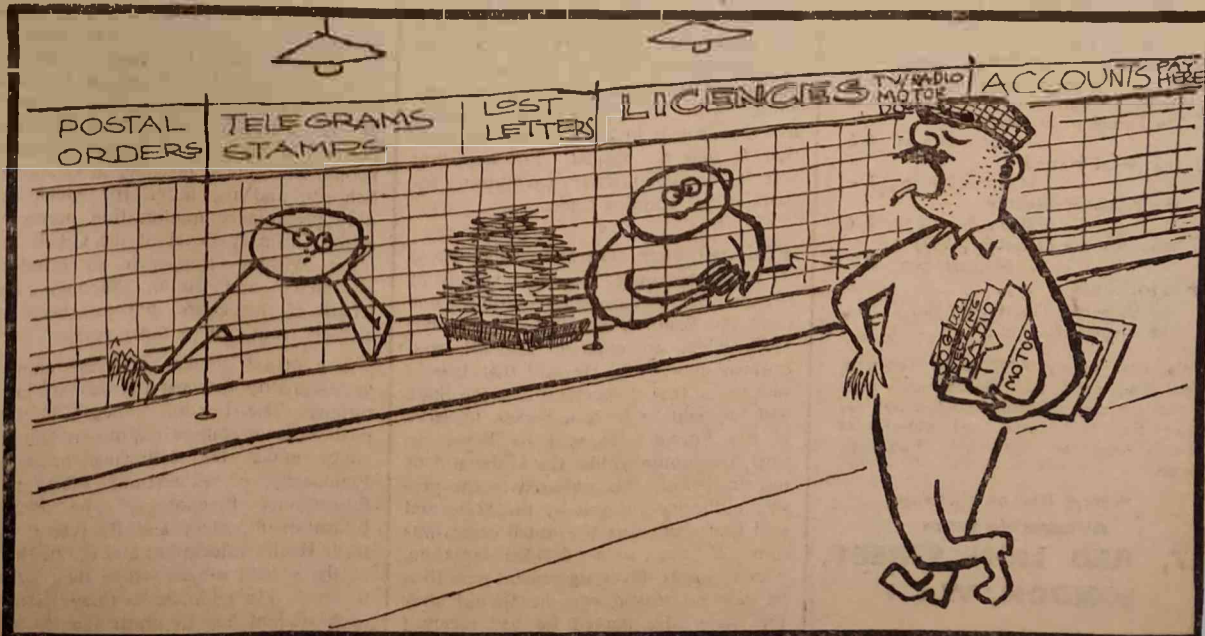
Perhaps this is just as well, for

Mr. Thomson has so far managed to collect 27 newspapers in Canada, seven in U.S.A. and nine in Scotland. His purchase of the Kemsley chain gives him control of 30 more publications, including 12 provincial dailies and three Sunday nationals. *Sunday Times*, with a combined circulation of 14 million.

But his interests extend also into television and music appreciation. As the happy owner of TV stations on both sides of the Atlantic, Mr.

Thomson is in a strong position to hear the kind of music he prefers. For as he has said: "The most beautiful music to me is a spot commercial at ten bucks a whack".

And to demonstrate once again that there's one law for the rich and another for the poor, Mr. Thomson has also made a wise-crack which just shows how you can get round the law against forgery: "Owning a commercial T.V. station is like having a license to print your own money."



\*And while you're at it, you might as well let me have one of those licences to print my own money!





