

Aberfan and the Price of Coal

Remember Hungary

NEVER BEFORE HAS one week provided the peoples of the world with such object lessons as they had last week. Never before has the brutality of imperialism been demonstrated so clearly by supposedly opposite ideologies at the same time; never has the deceitfulness and criminal hypocrisy of governments of 'Right' and 'Left' been so exposed for the whole world to see.

(FREEDOM, 10.11.56)

The object lesson for the peoples of the world to which FREEDOM was then referring was contained in the simultaneous collusive military escapade by Britain, France and Israel for the control of the Suez Canal, and the Russian military power which crushed the Hungarian workers', students' and peasants' revolt. When the Governments of Britain and France issued their obviously unacceptable ultimatum to Egypt and five hours later launched their

bombers [continued FREEDOM] they tore to shreds the myth that democracies are governed by higher moral considerations than dictatorships.

Similarly the Russian Government led by the 'liberal' Khrushchev sent in an extra 12 Russian divisions to re-establish Russian military rule in Hungary.

The Anglo-French military escapade failed and Sir Anthony Eden was swept from power. The Russian military force succeeded but at the cost of losing them the support of thousands of idealist communists all over the world for whom the Hungarian revolution and its ruthless suppression by 'Soviet' troops was a real 'eye-opener'.

Amongst the many who left the Communist Party was Peter Fryer, the *Daily Worker's* correspondent in Hungary, who protested against the distortion and suppression of his reports by the paper. At an early stage, and ever since maintained by the party-liners, it was asserted by the Russian Government that the revolution was merely the work of fascist, reactionary elements. That this was not so was admitted by Imre Nagy, the Communist Prime Minister, who was put in power by the revolution. Furthermore, this is what *Szabad Nép* (the Hungarian Communist Party's paper) said on October 22, the day that the students meeting at the University of Economic Science sparked off the revolution:

'Hungary must map her own road to socialism. The Soviet, Polish, Yugoslav, or Chinese roads to socialism do not absolve us from mapping out a Hungarian road.' Were these the words of fascists?

This all happened ten years ago but the Hungarian Revolution is still alive in our memory. We remember the students, the children's army, the instinctive co-operation of peasants and workers and their idealism that was 'betrayed' by the West. The revolutionaries hoped for help from the 'democracies' who were, alas, putting out (or were they starting) a 'forest-fire' (Eden's phrase) in the Middle East.

Even the well-publicised anti-communism of the West stops short of helping the workers' cause. The CIA only want revolutions that it can control.

R.

FREE SCHOOL WANTED

BIRMINGHAM is facing a serious educational crisis. Schools in the area have a great shortage of teachers and classrooms. Teaching facilities for immigrant children are especially scandalous. According to the NCLC bulletin *Civil Liberty*, although this was brought to the notice of the Ministry of Education the situation, far from improving, has seriously deteriorated.

Birmingham is an area which, from its industrial nature, attracts and employs many immigrants without providing for them adequate housing or for their children adequate schooling. In one school of 343 children, over 90% are now immigrants. The playground is too small and there are not enough lavatories. Only 180 can be accommodated in the dining room in two sittings, the dining room is also used as a classroom and a passage way for children using the playground. Specialist teachers are also not available for teaching the children English, and presumably no one thought of bringing over teachers who are bi-lingual. A reading test showed in another school that of 220 boys, only nine had a reading standard average for their age. Many teachers are leaving the area, thus worsening the situation.

The cruel immigration laws are to be blamed for this crisis. Children over the age of 16 are not allowed in with their parents, therefore there is a desperate rush (understandable as families do not want to be separated) to get the children into Britain before they are 16 and before their education is completed.

The Midland group of the NCLC is meeting in Birmingham on January 23 and we urge our comrades to attend. In the meantime could they also examine the possibility of starting Free Schools for the children bereft of education. When the government and local authorities are so dilatory on such a vital matter anarchists should put their theories to the test.

R.

Broadmoor Special Security Hospital—Some Curious Facts and Figures. From a Correspondent.

THERE IS ALWAYS a great difference between those facts which the public is permitted—by gracious kindness of The Ministry—to learn, and the real issues and facts which lie hidden beneath the wise language of bureaucracy.

It is the same with Broadmoor Special Hospital. Here there are about 900 patients, 700 male, 200 female. The doctor/patient ratio is 1/100, which looks bad even as a mere statistic, but translated into practical terms means simply that the majority of patients in Broadmoor actually see a doctor about once a year, and this interview is almost always concerned with matters arising from that year.

Bearing this in mind, it is quite impossible to say of Broadmoor that it operates a personal and individual method of treatment for the inmates. What then is substituted for the more personal man-to-man approach? The answer of course is drugs, which are administered in vast quantities and keep the majority of patients half alive, but 'safe' within the meaning of security. Some of these drugs are scheduled poisons, such as Largactil, and have known side-effects, including massive skin reactions to sunlight, brain-damage and loss of ability in

THERE is a moment in the life of an individual or of a community when grief is naked and public, when a tragedy is so unexpected and overwhelming that it defies rationalisation, and one can only weep in a company of sorrow. Nature and the sophisticated mechanics of war have made us cynical with the vagrancies of death, for we have had for too long to live with the cause to feel more than a futile sense of shock when the effect is personal and not the blind or wilful destruction of others. The amoral machinery of communication long ago glazed the eye of metropolitan man and the trembling heart aches a little less with the next issue of each daily news sheet. But the death of innocence through blind and bureaucratic mismanagement screams to be heard and anger roars above the official valedictions.

At 9.15 a.m. on Friday, October 21, the children of Pantglas Junior School, within the Welsh mining village of Aberfan, sat at their desks. A grey morning made greyer by the huge black tip of drifting slime that had for many years overshadowed the small school. For 80 years this refuse of the local coal industry had grown inch by inch to finally take command of the village, and men and women lived out their lives within its rare shadow. But this was not the acceptance of an indifferent community, for year after year they had protested, through all those official channels, that death from a river of black slime would one day sweep down and destroy them but abstract authority brushed their untutored fears aside. At 9.10 in the morning the mountain of black slime began to flow and at 9.21 200 small children began to drown in its inescapable maw.

There is to be an inquiry and men, of their nature, will twist and distort the facts to serve their own particular ends and some unfortunate may or may not be held to be publicly responsible for the death of these 200 children. But let us not delude ourselves. Though minor figures in this masque of death will be pilloried before the community, those who are responsible for this unnecessary tragedy will never take their place within a public dock.

It is idle to catalogue the list of all those who gave private and public testament that this evil would take place. Tory and Labour councillors, ministers of the local churches, schoolteachers (one of whom died within the broken school), union officials, all (over the years) added their voices to the impotent cry of protest to those in authority and nothing was done. Even when the men who daily worked upon the tip gave their warning they were told to carry on for, in all honesty, what management at a local level could dispose of thousands of tons of ooze-sludge. So nothing was done.

When the men protested through their union that the telephone between the tip and the colliery was no longer in working order (the wire had been stolen) the union secretary had to inform them that it was not compulsory to have a telephone and so the phone that might have saved lives hung useless. Yet who among us can swear in true faith that, within his own place of employment, some item of safety equipment does not also hang useless and idle?

When mineable coal was discovered in Wales a nation dug its own grave for the landless peasants found themselves herded into the rat-runs of the earth to hack forth its wealth for a foreign market.

To the Welsh people the rich coal beneath their sweet soil became a black cancer and generation after generation of men lived out their miserable lives in the darkness of the contracted earth and they became another slum proletariat doomed to slave out their short lives within the drear valleys wherein grass refused to grow. For the mine owners were absentee owners and, were they Welsh or English, they took from the Welsh people their ill-paid labour and the coal beneath their feet and in return they robbed a people of their dignity to live as free men and to show their contempt they spewed forth the refuse of their rapacity onto the green fields of Wales and the gentle beds of its lush valleys.

Those who chose to rob the people of Wales had neither the legal obligation, the intention or the desire, to haul away the unmarketable leavings of these rich pickings from the earth and year by year these huge black monuments to the infamy of corporate greed fouled the fields and streams of a once fair country.

But the men and women of Wales were not work-animals content to eat their bitter bread in silence and without protest and the story of their industrial war became a magnificent roll call of those who fought, yea even to the very pit face, for what they held to be their heritage. When a Labour Government came into office and took the pits under State Ownership many believed that now at last the day had come when the men of Wales would at last control their own destinies, but all they found were new masters and the black tombstones of industrial refuse continued to flower like festering scabs upon the barren fields, where once the overseer for the absentee owner had first poured forth his profitless filth.

The dream of a Wales green and flowering again became once more the mocked fantasy of the romantic and the nationalist, the anarchist with his cry of the good society, and the dreaming child, while the belief that the socialist society had finally taken its stand and that now, not only would the rich coal be hauled away to feed the furnaces of that socialist society, but all the millions of tons of black filth would



be hauled away to fill the crevasses in some unclaimed sea bed and grass would once more grow within the valleys and sheep would graze again, became the dream of an unclaimed hour.

It was indeed an idle dream for an idle moment for the State offered the people of Wales the Old Capitalism dressed in the garb of the Man from the Ministry, and for the black and foul smelling tips Section 180 of the Coal Mines Act, that gave each colliery the legal right to leave its black spew where it lay. This is the story and the tragedy of the people of Wales and all the years of struggle appear to have been wasted, for the black slime that killed their children was laid 80 years ago in the evil days of private profit and it killed their children in the era of State Ownership.

If there is one man who deserves to be singled out for the finger of condemnation it is My Lord Robens, that vain and stupid man who has betrayed the trust, not of his political masters, but of the socialism nurtured over the long years within these dark valleys. Vain, because, while they still fought to dig the dead children from out of the still flowing black slime, he was grinning in his new robes as the first Chancellor of the University of Surrey and stupid, because this clerk in office refused to visit the valley of the dead because his own self-created protocol decreed that he should not until he had decided that the time was ripe and fitting.

Let My Lord Robens ponder these hours and this valley for this Welsh Gethsemane is My Lord Robens's Golgotha. These children died because those who claimed the allegiance of the Welsh political left betrayed that faith. As in the past they chose to exploit these mines within the framework of the orthodox profit system and within that system, as the old time mineowners would have told them, it was uneconomical to clear the land of these black and sterile hills of uneconomic filth and so these children died.

Yet the struggle must still be fought within these valleys for the right of men to live, to work and die in peace and dignity, and only when the grass once more grows green around the graves of these innocent dead will Wales be free.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

Therapeutic Community?

similar ways.

If drugs solve the short-time problem of keeping the patients happy, inasmuch as they become incapable of doing anything worthwhile, a quasi-military type discipline solves the other problem of organisation. Uniforms become progressively more and more decorated with pretty gold-leaf, a hierarchy exists as in the army, with one exception of course, the nurses are trained to save lives, not take them.

Trained nurses are at a premium, and this means that Broadmoor is now filling up with totally untrained nurses, amateur Florence Nightingales, with no knowledge of forensic medicine, no psychiatric training, and the burden of inheriting a system which is a dirty word in intelligent circles. These young arrivals are faced with a dual problem. They would like to see Broadmoor become more liberal and humanised, but their seniors are more concerned with personal safety and a code of brutality which is a leftover from the era of the Marquis de Sade. Similarly the League of Friends, devoted to helping the patients, finds its activities continually blocked by this hard core of antique personalities, so that plans for hostels and other beneficial projects are ruined by constant reference to old and near-forgotten incidents in the history of

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More on the Factory for Peace

Colin R. Johnson writes:

CAN WE DEAL with facts and real life as far as possible? John Rety has given me 800 words to put my part of the 'Factory for Peace Saga'. Without back reference let me just state that Walter Morrison was sacked under a sick pay proposal which was passed 12 for 5 against, 1 abstention. The 9.5-4 vote he refers to was the voting on an amendment to this proposal. Walter Morrison has appealed to the Factory Advisory Council, re his dismissal, and because of this, most people in the Factory have refrained from comment awaiting their decision. Extract from their statement:—

'With regard to the dismissal of Mr. Walter Morrison, the Advisory Council would stress that the Factory General Council has full and final authority here. Nevertheless, because of Mr. Morrison's appeal, the Council has looked into the case and heard Mr. Morrison and Mr. McAlpine and taken legal advice, and it was their opinion that the Articles of Association had not been contravened.'

They also condemned in the strongest terms the campaign of abuse directed against the Factory. Predictably this has led immediately to their inclusion among the targets for abuse. Under the heading 'Alan Parker Writes' (incessantly it seems), Alan says that he is curious to know why I have apparently supported those in the Factory with whom he disagrees. I should have thought it was obvious; Alan and his friends have left little room for anyone coming into the situation to make a reasoned assessment of the factors involved. Their tactics since August 1 when I joined the Factory, and possibly before, have amounted to nothing less than industrial, economic, and commercial sabotage. As anyone who has learned anything from the non-violent campaigns against the warfare state will realise, this sort of impersonal attack can only have the effect of hardening the resolve of those you are trying to convince or convert.

In fact, Alan's whole approach to the problem has been one which only gives credibility to the statement of someone whose opinion I would trust, who has said that Alan has stated in his presence, that he was 'out to get McAlpine even if it meant bringing the Factory down to do it'. It amazes me that no one has questioned publicly Alan Parker's motives throughout this episode. Most people in the Peace/Anarchist movement have formed their own opinion of Alan and judging by the reaction his campaign has received they are acting upon it.

In my opinion Walter Morrison should have been sacked a long time before he was, as should anyone who proves to be such an economic liability. We are a small firm, no other firm of our size, carrying the financial burden that we collectively have to, could possibly have afforded the luxury of paying a man about 20 weeks full sick pay in one year. The most obvious point that no one has mentioned, seems to me to be that the decision to sack Walter was allowed to hang out over a period of about a year. Most people in the Factory realised it was necessary, but lacked the courage to do it directly. Before you criticise this, try to put yourself in their place.

Heaters for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. This Ministry

deals with all Government civil engineering. We have supplied them with heaters in the past and will probably do so in the future unless a reasoned and principled argument to guide us emerges once the spate of puerile mental masturbation about this difficult subject dies down. Why not try to help us constructively instead of issuing directives and commands through the press?

The Advisory Council also considered this and stated that such a transaction would not contravene our Articles of Association. They asked us to give due consideration to the sensitivity and feelings of those who subscribe to the peace aims of the Factory.

Apparently workers' control is only acceptable if you agree with their decisions, an utter failure if you do not.

Alan Parker writes:

REGARDING the account of the stated reasons for sacking Walter. The credit squeeze, which equally affects every other night storage heater manufacturer, is said to make it impossible for them to pay for the 2½ people who are permanently off ill due to sickness and absenteeism (which includes lateness). Firstly they don't have to pay wages to the 2½ people as the majority of the lost 2½ days is in absenteeism and lateness and they do not pay you for that. They don't worry about loss to production either as they have a 'lockout' rule that if you are 15 mins. or more late you don't get in the factory till the afternoon.

So if we ask how much time was lost due to genuine illness it would not be as excessive as is implied, but something quite reasonable like ½ of a man permanently off before Walter's illness.

Secondly why sack a man while he is sick if you are not paying his wages anyway? As it saves virtually nothing moneywise, but makes a worker's family feel insecure, what is the real reason for confusing the two quite separate issues of paying a man sick pay and keeping his job open for him?

The sacking was a blatant disregard of

A simple question, if a company was in danger of bankruptcy through over-staffing why should they not sack people to improve their financial position? Do you believe that they should just allow outside economic pressures to crush them? Most of the people commenting on the Factory remind me of people who enjoy a good steak, with absolutely no knowledge of the bloody reality of the slaughter-house or the offensiveness and pain of the market.

In conclusion—we would welcome constructive help with our venture from anyone. Let me assure you that we have practical and theoretical problems arising from our unique set-up, the scope and complexity of which the Anarchist/Peace movement have utterly failed to grasp.

the spirit of the constitution which is not really concerned with short term sickness but a man's needs after a long period of illness. The Articles of Association of the Rowen Community clearly and unequivocally state: 1(g) To assist distressed and needy members of the Rowen Eng. Co. Ltd., including those who have ceased to be members and their dependants.

No one member of management visited him during his 12 week illness and now he should be going into hospital for an operation, but because of the money situation his surgeon has allowed him to look for work as he might last some time before the next physical breakdown.

PROPPING UP MILITARISM

Regarding the supply of heaters to the army, the best guide for anyone trying to draw a line about what helps the war effort, is to say, 'If there was no "warfare state" would I be getting this order'.

When the enquiry was first brought up at the Factory Meeting it was not known precisely where the Ministry of Supply was going to send them, but the meeting was led to believe that they were going to Army Billets. It was very lucky that they did not go to the Polaris training school on the 'submariners' quarters in-

stead of going to naval personnel's quarters in a non-military area.

We are quite aware of the economic and technical realities of trying to organise for efficient production on democratic lines, within the hazardous context of capitalist society. We are not attacking the Factory but merely doing what ought to be done with any social experiment. We are offering constructive criticism of what has gone wrong. Let us remember that we can learn as much from a social experiment's failures as their successes, just like experiments in the physical sciences. Fact finding now is an investment in the future and may prevent further catastrophes.

We know that the essential characteristic of modern industry is rapid technological change, which induces pressures on individuals both different in scale and kind to that of non-technology based on work environments, such as teaching, nursing, politics, etc.

When Industrial Democracy is talked about what is meant is not the relatively easy problem of the control of static organisations such as charities, trade unions and other social and political groups. There is often a subtle and coercive interaction between men and machines and economic pressures which bear down very heavily on those who perform the technical job of management on behalf of the workers. Conflict will not only be certain to occur but will occur frequently as a result.

Therefore Industrial Democracy is essentially about the RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT and the containment of the forces of ambition, pride, hatred and envy that are in every man and likely to be brought out by the conflicts. Without some common basis of belief on which real friendship and fellowship can be built, Industrial Democracy is a meaningless cover up over formal factory committee meetings. Democracy starts with people not with organisational structure and that is an end in itself.

There were plenty of people in the Peace Movement with both the technical skills and the commitment to Peace, no serious effort was made to attract them and it is significant that this crisis should come after most of the technically competent Peace Movement people have left. That is Walter Weir, Harry Smith, myself and the others are being pressurized out.

THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY?

Continued from page 1
Broadmoor, such as the escape of Straffen (with apologies to the man himself).

It is a common belief that Broadmoor is full of madmen, and the staff would like you to go on believing this—it makes their task that much easier, as well as giving them ammunition for pay-claims protests over working conditions, and so on. But this is simply not true at all. Many patients in Broadmoor have arrived from Magistrates' Courts, and some have been transferred from other County Hospitals. Only those found unfit to plead are really considered insane, and these do not constitute a majority in Broadmoor. Nor in fact are there many murderers in Broadmoor either.

The bitter truth in Broadmoor is that the younger staff have no faith in their superiors, who in turn have no faith in them nor the doctors they so rarely meet. Broadmoor is basically dishonest; by various tricks patients are led to hope where there is no hope, but this perpetual hope is the reason for its comparative calm and steady atmosphere. Trouble only means a few extra years to do.

Nurses are frequently guilty of provoking patients beyond limit, and these 'incidents' are gleefully quoted to the press as excuses for pending negotiations on pay or similar considerations. But the press reports you read are gross exaggerations, deliberately made to read in a bad light; nurses deliberately encourage a fear of the patients in Broadmoor in order to use them for their own selfish reasons.

Did you know that:

Seventy per cent of the patients discharged this year are now back in Broadmoor?

The discharge of patients is a hit-and-miss affair of guesswork and hope by the doctors?

The doctors spend as much time in private practices as they do in Broadmoor?

The Public is tricked too frequently with the words 'Criminal Lunatic', when no such phrase now exists in legal terms?

Forty per cent of the patients in Broadmoor will spend more than 25 years without hope of release—more than a life sentence in a prison?

There are more untrained nurses in Broadmoor than there are patients who have been in the profession? Patients are forbidden to carry on businesses, keep pets, enter HP agreements, wear their own clothes, carry lighters? Permission must be granted in Block 6 to go to the toilet? Women patients may only smoke at set times of the day? As in prison, patients are not segregated according to illness or condition, and madmen live side by side with ordinary criminals?

If public opinion could be swung over to the patients' side, Broadmoor would become a better place for everyone.

It is easy to think of the patients in Broadmoor as violent and dangerous, but not so easy to imagine that sometimes they are encouraged by the system rather than reformed by it, that without drugs, many more 'incidents' would take place owing to the careless attitude of the nurses. The building itself is now ready to fall down, though this is not so important as the lack of space. The hospital was built for 600 and now houses 900, and is thus overcrowded by a mere 50%. No slum in England would be permitted to rise to this level. Why isn't Broadmoor pulled down too?

Anarchist Federation of Britain

(As there is no national secretariat for enquiries, speakers, etc., please contact local groups.)

ANARCHISTS IN LONDON meet at the 'Lamb and Flag', Rose Street, off Garrick Street, London, W.C.2. (Leicester Square tube) 7.45 p.m. All welcome. Sundays.

Public Meetings every Sunday Hyde Park, 3 p.m.

OCT. 30 Arthur Uloth Communication

NOV. 6 Michael Duane Education—For What?

OFF-CENTRE LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS

3rd Wednesday of each month at Jack Robinson and Mary Campa's, 21 Rumbold Road, S.W.6 (off King's Road), 8 p.m.

3rd Friday of each month at 8 p.m. at Donald and Irene Rowan's, now at 13 Savernake Road, London, N.W.3.

REGIONAL FEDERATIONS AND GROUPS

ALTRINCHAM ANARCHIST YOUTH GROUP. Get in touch with Stephen Richards, 25 North Vale Road, Timperley, Cheshire.

ABERDEEN GROUP. Correspondence to M. Day, 29 Springwell Crescent, Aberdeen.

ARLESEY GROUP (N. Herts., S. Beds.). Meetings on first Friday of month. Correspondence to Peter and Maureen Ford, 102 Stotford Road, Arlesey, Beds.

BEXLEY ANARCHIST GROUP. Correspondence to Paul Wildish, 2 Cambrian Avenue, Barnsbury, Kent.

BIRMINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Dave Mansey, 138 Church Road, Erdington, Birmingham, 24.

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON GROUP. Contact: D. J. Austin, 5 Kingsbury Road, Erdington, Birmingham.

BREXIT FEDERATION. Enquiries to Ian Vine, 7 Richmond Dale, Bristol.

CARDIFF ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Mike Coopley, 36 Whitaker Road, Tremorfa, Cardiff.

DUNDEE GROUP. Contact Bob and Una Turnbull, c/o Doctors' Residence, Stracathro Hospital, by Brechin, Angus.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP ONE. Correspondence to Robert Lynn, 2b Saracen Head Lane, Glasgow, C.1.

HARLOW ANARCHIST GROUP. Enquiries to Keith Nathan, 12 Shawbridge, Harlow or John Barrick, 14 Centre Avenue, Epping.

HULL ANARCHIST GROUP. J. Tempest, 89 Fountain Road, Hull. Tel. 212526. Meetings 8 p.m. 1st and 3rd Fridays of month at above address.

IPSWICH ANARCHISTS. Contact Neil Dean, 74 Cemetery Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.

LEICESTER ANARCHISTS. Correspondence, Peter Gibbon, 13 Severn Street, Leicester.

LEWISHAM, LONDON, S.E.13. 2nd and 4th Thursdays. October meetings at Mike Malet's, 61 Granville Park, Lewisham, S.E.13.

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Gerry Bree, 16 Falkner Square, Liverpool, 8. Meetings Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at above address.

'Freedom' sitting at Pier Head every Sunday.

NEW HAM LIBERTARIANS. Contact Mick Sheaker, 122 Hampton Road, Forest Gate.

NOTTING HILL PROVS. Correspondence to Brian Joseph, 11st Floor, 27 Arundel Gardens, London, W.11. Meeting every first Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. Ground floor flat, 5 Colville House, London, W.11.

NORTH-WEST ESSEX. Meetings on the first Saturday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at Robert Barthrop's, The Old Vicarage, Radwinter, near

Saffron Walden.

ORFINGTON ANARCHIST GROUP. Knockholt, Nr. Sevenoaks, Kent. Every six weeks at Greenways, Knockholt. Phone: Knockholt 2316. Brian and Maureen Richardson.

OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact H. G. Mellor, Merton College, Oxford.

PLYMOUTH ANARCHIST FEDERATION. Contact J. Hill, 79 Underlane, Plymouth, Plymouth, Devon.

READING ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Alan Ross, 116 Belmont Road, Reading, Berks.

NORTH-WEST FEDERATION

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION. Regional Secretary: J. Bromley, 44 Doncaster Avenue, Manchester, 20. Buxton: Chris Berrisford, 10 Byron Street, Buxton, Chorley: Alistair Rattray, 35a Devonshire Road, Chorley, Manchester: Mike Mitchell, 3 Wakewell Road, Droytesden, Manchester. Brenda Mercer, 6 Breckside Park, Liverpool, 6. Rochdale: Ian Heywood, 16 Mansfield Road, Bamford, Rochdale. Stoke-on-Trent: Bob Blakeham, 52 Weldon Avenue, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent.

EAST LONDON FEDERATION

WALTHAM FOREST ANARCHISTS. Contact Lionel Donnelly, 322a Hoe Street, Walthamstow, E.17. Meetings every Thursday at above address.

WEST HAM ANARCHISTS. Contact Stephen Higgs, 8 Westbury Road, Forest Gate, E.7.

WEST LONDON FEDERATION

NORTHOLT ANARCHISTS. Contact: Jim Huggon, 173 Kingshill Avenue, Northolt, Middlesex. Meetings first and third Wednesday of the month at Jeannie's, 6 Epsom Close, Northolt Park, Middlesex, at 7.30 p.m.

EALING ANARCHIST GROUP. Get into touch with Adrian Derbyshire, 2 Oakley House, Oakley Avenue, London, W.5.

PROPOSED GROUPS

SOUTH-WEST MIDDLESEX. P. J. Goody, 36 Norman Avenue, Hanworth, Middlesex.

KINGSTON ON THAMES AND AREA. Activists especially. Please write only to: Brian P. Boreham, 2 Fullbrooks Cottages, Church Road, Worcester Park, Surrey.

MANCHESTER PROVS. All interested contact David Stringer and Dave Tugbush, 35 Granton Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, 8.

CAMBRIDGE. Contact Wallyjon Illingworth, c/o Richmond House, Devon Road, Cambridge.

MID-MIDDLESEX. (Harrow, Wembley, Edgware, Hendon.) Anyone interested in forming a libertarian group for discussion and possible action write to: Nicolas and Ruth Walter, 4 Vane Close, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex.

SHEFFIELD. Town and gown—anyone interested contact Robin Lovell, c/o Students' Union, University. Tel.: 24076.

SOUTH COAST, BRIGHTON, ETC. Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes area contact Alan Albon, The Stable, Glynhill Farm, Pevensey, Sussex. Phone Hailsham 338.

WATFORD. Anyone interested please contact Alan Pritchard, 8 Bedford Street, Watford, Herts.

ABROAD

U.S.A. NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. Federation of Anarchists, c/o Torch Bookshop, 641 East 9th Street, N.Y., 10009. Meets every Thursday evening.

AUSTRALIA. Anarchist Group, PO Box A 388, Sydney South. Public meetings every Sunday in the Domain, 2 p.m. and Mondays, 72 Oxford Street, Paddington, Sydney, 8 p.m.

DANISH ANARCHIST FEDERATION. 52 Mindevej, Soborg-Copenhagen, Denmark.

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA. Anyone interested in forming anarchist and/or direct action peace group contact Derek A. James, 1044 Grand Boulevard, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Tel.: 987-2683.

U.S.A. VERMONT/NEW HAMPSHIRE. Discussion/Action group anyone? Contact Ed Strauss, RFD 2 Woodstock, Vermont 05091, USA.

SWEDEN. Stockholm Anarchist Federation. Contact Nadir, Box 19104, Stockholm 19, Sweden.

CANADA: Winnipeg. Anybody interested in Direct action/anarchy contact G. J. Nasir, 608 Matheson Avenue, Winnipeg, 17, Manitoba.

The MRA Tapeworm

WE IN SCOTLAND have had some opportunities to observe the workings of the Moral Rearmament 'tapeworm' at fairly close quarters. Firstly we had the famous (or rather infamous) 'Edinburgh nude' and shortly after an unprecedented campaign of leaflets and theatrical productions by the MRA. MRA may not have gained what they expected from the court case after the nude incident at the Edinburgh festival, but recently, in Aberdeen, some of us have begun to think that MRA has raised its ugly head again.

MRA is very well entrenched North of the border, particularly in two facets of our lives: the Labour Party/Trade Unions and in the Church of Scotland. Prominent men who have espoused its cause include George Middleton, ex-secretary of the STUC. Liberal-minded ministers have testified to its power over delegates to the annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

At least two Scottish MPs can be publicly identified with MRA, Patrick Wolridge-Gordon (Tory, Aberdeenshire East) and Donald Dewar (Labour, South Aberdeen). Both these gentlemen have been peddling the MRA line for years. In addition at least one Scottish Lord Provost is a fervent supporter of MRA and the councillors it includes in its ranks are countless. The villain of this piece is one of them.

Earlier this year an Edinburgh company, Contemporary Coffee Bars Ltd., acquired some empty church premises in the corner of Carden Place and Rose Street in Aberdeen. Their intention was to convert the church into a beat club, coffee bar and boutique for the city managers. A harmless enough project you might think, but there are those in power who think differently. One of them is Ellen Williamson, Labour Councillor for the Torry Ward of the city.

But before I explain this lady's recent actions, let me give some idea of how this city looks to the teenager. Youth clubs in this town fall into two categories, the religious and the official. The official ones are by far the worst. They are so much like school that the kids have deserted them in droves and they have now become the playgrounds of 12-13 year olds. Any sign of dissent is carefully watched for by ham-handed leaders and any attempt at discussion of the issues of the day is firmly suppressed. CND has only succeeded in gaining admittance to one of the Council clubs once. An example can be given in the case of two young YCNDers who were picked up, questioned and searched by the police while whitewashing slogans, which it must be emphasised is a completely legal thing to do in Aberdeen. During the (illegal) search, the police found membership cards of the Council's '62 Club on the boys. The next day both boys were told not to come back to the club by the youth leader. That's what young people are up against in this town. An Aberdeen folksinger, a very good one, was abused by a member of the club management, after he had been invited by the club's folk section to appear, on the grounds that he was 'not the sort of person we want here'.

But the corporation is also making a good profit off these clubs and the army has poked around them recruiting too. So, naturally, our Labour Council has a vested interest in seeing that real competition to their pallid youth clubs is suppressed. The way they've gone about it stinks.

'THE PLACE', as the new club is known, is due to be opened shortly and last week our local press carried the headline 'Councillor Lashes Out at Drugs Danger'. Ellen had come down from her perch (the people of Torry were wondering just where she had gone to) to announce that the new club would

be a veritable den of iniquity where our offspring would be polluted with drugs. Now I've done a bit of research on drugs in Aberdeen and I know exactly one person who has ever taken any form, for instance, of cannabis and, after a long and wide search in the early months of 1965, found two young boys who had once taken purple hearts. The truth is that there are scarcely any drugs in Aberdeen. An American Evangelist was laughed down when he claimed that teenagers in Aberdeen are addicts.

But the way in which dear Ellen attacked was so underhand that, after long experience of the tactics of the Aberdeen Labour Party (sorry MRA), I can hardly credit it. The new club is placed across the road from our local grammar school and this she made the focal point of her frustrated little onslaught. In this she had the backing of one of the town's most reactionary headmasters, John Vass Skinner, known to his *Private Eye* reading pupils as 'Baillie Vass', who, among other things, keeps a little file, labelled 'Anarchists'. I wonder, does he have one labelled 'MRA'? The Baillie spoke his mind, 'I am disturbed' while his pupils showed how much they approved of the city's efforts in the club line by mucking in after school to help to get 'The Place' built.

Then Ellen found some fresh ammunition to throw at Contemporary Coffee Bars and their youthful supporters.

Ellen and her chums have been reading too much *Playboy* it seems, and the announcement that 'The Place' is taking on some schoolgirls as 'Go-Go Girls' brought the 'Bunny' image into her narrow little mind. The Go-Go girl, explained 'The Place' manager, was merely someone with a good knowledge of the Pop scene and who was good at demonstrating the latest dance crazes. But this reasonable explanation was drowned in the welter of rubbish from Ellen, the Baillie and assorted middle class nonentities.

Our local Press have reported this affair with the bias they usually reserve for people like YCND. 'The Place' manager's explanations, always calm, always reasonable, were printed, after a front page treatment of Ellen's rantings, printed where no one would read them, right at the bottom. We had the technique used on us after a statue daubing incident we weren't responsible for.

So once again the 'long faces' and the 'unco guid' have won again. Any chance of success for 'The Place' has been seriously undermined. But people are prodding into this one. It has been said that dear Ellen is in MRA, our Labour Party/Church fifth column will follow this one up and who knows what kind of things we may find? And if we find anything we'll use it and we'll blow the whole lot back on people like councillors, headmasters and other trappings of the system who try to stop the young living life and enjoying it.

P. PAINTER, JNR.

'Life Still Possible on Mars'—Guardian

GEORGE BLAKE (doing 42 years) made his getaway. Harry Roberts is still among the missing. The International Publishing Corporation decided that *Go*, the travel magazine, would have to. Mr. King, in the face of a million pound drop in profits decided to merge *Woman's Mirror* with *Woman* and *Everywoman* with *Woman and Home*. The British Medical Association decided to euthenize its magazine *Family Doctor*.

IN ITS QUEST for advertising the *Morning Star* having recommended coal and electricity for heating carried a half-page advert (with accompanying article by Rosemary Small) for gas-heating on Wednesday. On Tuesday, the Southern Gas Board announced: 'We are stopping the sale of gas fires until next spring. We cannot supply the gas to run them.' Of course this news was not printed by the *Morning Star* since their advertisement only referred to gas-stoves, and central heating. The same issue of the *Morning Star* carries a third of a page advertisement for Wartburg 100 Estate cars, built in the Thuringian Forest, East Germany. This issue gives coverage of the Vauxhall dispute and headlines 'No signs of hardship at the Motor Show'.

ON OCTOBER 15 the *Morning Star* reviewed *Us* at the Aldwych under the headline 'Anger without commitment' and says, 'Viewed as a whole the general effect is that of a humanitarian protest coupled with a desire to say by the uncommitted and others "A plague on both your houses".' Mr. Robert Pitman in the *Daily Express* writing of the same play (on Vietnam), 'The truth is that this play, which you are being taxed to support, might well have been written by Ho-Chi-Min himself'. Sounds like a good play.

THE DAILY EXPRESS, writing on the Evans case and pardon, says (quoting Major Gwilym Lloyd George), 'Pardoned in this sense does not mean forgiveness but the remission of the penal consequences of a conviction'. Major Lloyd George, Home Secretary at the time, was speaking of the case of three men pardoned

in the case of an attack upon a policeman. (The policeman was expected to die, which would have made it a capital offence as the law then stood. However he recovered, and stated that the men convicted were not his attackers.) Moves are still afoot to restore the death penalty for the murder of police and prison officers. The present Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, was booed and jeered by 1,000 policemen in London at a meeting of the Police Federation. He was unpopular because of the failure to reintroduce capital punishment, for the wage freeze, and for the Evans pardon. A policeman leaving the meeting said of the latter to a *Guardian* reporter, 'There is now pressure of a similar kind on behalf of James Hanratty, the A6 murderer. I should like to know where all this is going to end. They will be forming queues soon'.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS reached new depths in an article by Douglas Clark entitled, 'Is This Why Jenkins Acts So Softly?', in which it reveals that in 1926, the Home Secretary's father was involved in a colliery riot at Pontypool. Mr. Jenkins senior spoke and the police reacted to stone-throwing with a baton charge of which Arthur Jenkins said, 'I do not think it is possible to imagine anything so ferocious as this attack apparently without any thought at all on the part of the police.' Mr. Jenkins and seven others were charged with the usual riotous behaviour and unlawful assembly; and Mr. Jenkins was further charged with incitement and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. After widespread protest he was released after three months. The *Sunday Express* uses this piece of history to attack Mr. Roy Jenkins for 'softness' and more or less accuses him of bias against the police. Far be it from anarchists to defend the Home Secretary but it does make a change to have a Home Secretary who, from personal experience, knows what it's like to have somebody in prison, has probably heard at his father's knee what prison is like, and has an inborn

suspicion that policemen are not always the 'goodies'.

STRENUOUS ATTEMPTS were being made by the British authorities to discredit the Amnesty report on treatment of Aden prisoners (see this column 22.10.66). Mr. Walter Padley, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, writing to the secretary-general of Amnesty pointed out that none of the detainees was held because of his political opinions. The only persons detained were those whose activities were a danger to security. The Minister added that he naturally deplored the situation which made it necessary to detain these persons at all. The reason for refusing the request to interview detainees, Mr. Padley later repeated, was not because there was something to conceal but that Dr. Rastgeldi [Amnesty's investigator] had no *locus standi* since the British Government could not accept that the persons detained were not political detainees.

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1940, a Mr. Walter Padley, ILP Organizer for the London and Southern Counties, appeared before the Appellate Tribunal for Conscientious Objectors. Describing this, Denis Hayes in *Challenge of Conscience* (1949) writes 'Note this CO's insistence on historical background and his apparent shyness of the straight question as to how to deal with aggression. Lord Fleming (Chairman of the Tribunal): "Do you object to any war?" Padley: "No, my position is this: It is my conviction that the use of force is justified only if on balance it will save human life and prevent human suffering. That broad principle, based on the principle of humanity as a whole, is my guiding principle. I cannot say I would oppose all wars. Some may prevent human suffering. If the capitalist economic system continues we shall witness more and more sordid claims for raw materials, and I believe a socialist system would eradicate that evil and that the ILP would use force if it was essential to the better system"'. . . .

JON QUIXOTE.

Where do we Start ?

Dear Comrades,

I have just read Ian Sutherland's letter in this week's FREEDOM (15.10.66). I agree with him about resistance movements, but what bothers me is, where do we start? There was a time, of course, when I would have thought that to ask Peace Movement people a question like this would have meant my non-violent death, or the good lord striking me down in my tracks. Now, after many years experience with these good people, I feel that this question is justified. What makes me say that? You may ask. Just this! I am now of the opinion that if we, as a militant Peace Movement, and particularly those in Scottish C/100 and CND, can't persuade 12 blokes at the 'Factory for Peace' that building heaters for the Navy at Portsmouth 'non-military zone' is against our principles, then what the hell are we

LETTERS

doing at bases all over the country trying to persuade our fellow workers that what they are doing is wrong?

WALTER MORRISON.

P.S. If you gave money to this project or are a member of C/100 or CND you are just as responsible as those in the Labour Party who pay taxes and finance the Warfare State.

La Guerre commence

Dear Readers,

I take exception to much of Sebastian Scragg's review of Resnais' *The War is Over* (22.10.66).

Firstly, why does he describe young fanatics who aim to disrupt the Spanish tourist trade by blowing up trains as 'Stuart Christies'?

Secondly, if Scragg believes that 'left-wing Catholic priests are probably more right about the proper path to change (in Spain) than romantics still defending Madrid against fascist hordes' then why does he criticise Resnais for taking what he considers much the same line? Nor does the film say anything to condemn all extremism or to preach amelioration in all circumstances, it doesn't even make the points explicitly in regard to Spain. Nothing in the film shows that Resnais is 'politically naive' or for that matter politically anything. The film is a study in disillusionment not a political tract and because Scragg disagrees with incidental points of a political nature that Resnais makes, or which Scragg thinks he is making, that is no reason to call him naive.

Thirdly, I never saw Ingrid Thulin 'fucking' in the film but I did see her making love. Anyone with an ounce of feeling would never use the crude and ugly-sounding word 'fucking' to describe something as exquisite as love-making can be or was shown to be in the film. This is not a moral point but an aesthetic one. To hell with what fashionable, 'left-wing', snob trends say we ought to say, let's not descend to their depths.

London JEFF ROBINSON.

BRIGHTON

Further to your report of the case of Ernest McDonald (22.10.66), I should like to add that his friend Tom Carroll was also fined £20, and that donations to help him may be sent to Felicity Crump, Glynleigh Farm, Pevensey, Sussex.

NICOLAS WALTER.

Publicise Discrimination

Dear Comrades,

My apologies for raising this yet again but I am still surprised that FREEDOM has ignored so consistently both in news and comment the anti-racialist struggle in this country. I would have thought, for instance, that the Willesden campaign against tobaccoists displaying 'no coloured' accommodation advertisements, was worthy of coverage. So much is devoted to industrial matters, which do not directly touch all of us, that room, I feel, ought to be found for a cause which should engage us all. Could not FREEDOM's columns act as a clearing-house for ideas to combat racial discrimination in the field?

I would like to hear of university anarchist groups campaigning against the university authorities who keep the names of 'no coloured' landlords on their books, how far anarchists think they should involve themselves with CARD (it would be a change from CND!) or local anti-r.d. groups, and what contribution can be made from anarchist premises. The peace and industrial movements, important as they may be, are not the only ones deserving our attention. More needs to be done than to have one symposium with a catchy name in *Anarchy*.

London, N.W.8 D. C. ROSE.

Catching Up!

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:	
WEEK 42, OCTOBER 15, 1966:	
Expenses: 42 weeks at £80:	£3360
Income: Sales and Subs.:	£2415
DEFICIT:	£945

Kenya: E.G.M. 18/-; Wolverhampton: J.K.W.* 2/-; J.L.* 3/-; Oxford: Anon* 5/-; Peterborough: F.W. 3/6; London, S.E.3: M.W. £1/18/-; Northolt: Anarchist Group* 3/6; St. Cloud, Minn.: M.G.A. £5/2/6; London, N.W.8: D.C.R. 8/-; Cheltenham: L.G.W.* 10/-; Plymouth: D.L. 10/-; Colchester: S.T. 7/6; Edinburgh: L.S. 2/-; Bristol: G.W. 4/2; Winnipeg: G.J.N. 5/6; London, N.W.1: V.W. 8/-; Fresno, Calif. (Picnic 15/16 Oct.): per O.M. £35; Harlow: Anarchist Group 10/-; Melbourne: Ital. Anar. per BEF £11/19/-; Reading: A.R. 2/6.
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TOTAL:	£59 6 2
Previously Acknowledged:	£862 1 10

1966 Total to Date:	£921 8 0
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*Denotes Regular Contributor.

FREEDOM TOO CHEAP!

Dear Editors,

In January 1960, an article by Tristram Shandy appeared in FREEDOM discussing whether or not the price of the newspaper (then threepence), ought to be raised. It said:

'No one at all familiar with the problems of publishing would expect it to be possible to produce such a paper at a profit, but at double the price it ought to cover its costs, and donations from readers could then be used for sales promotion, extra pages, or the financing of

books and pamphlets. Editorial opinion is divided on this point.'

Well, it would appear that since the price of FREEDOM has only risen by one penny in the last six years, editorial opinion on this matter is still divided, and, in fact, I think Pete Turner verified this at the annual conference in Birmingham earlier this year. Surely, however, the time has come to increase the price again. Since 1960, printing costs, the price of paper, and postage have, I believe, increased to such an extent that it would not surprise me to learn that the extra penny levied on the price of FREEDOM in this time is not only insufficient to cover this rising cost of production, but actually tantamount to a reduction in price.

Regarded as part of a week's expenditure, fourpence is negligible. So is sixpence, so is ninepence, and so is a shilling. I am sure that raising the price of FREEDOM to, say, sixpence would not seriously inconvenience any of its readers, nor discourage potential new readers. It might, however, do something to reduce the annoying deficit which appears every week, and free, as Tristram Shandy suggests, donations from readers for other useful purposes.

I know it sounds strange to say it, but, please editors, reconsider raising the price of FREEDOM. In my opinion, if it's worth having, it's worth paying for. What do other readers think?

Yours fraternally,

Manchester, 21 'DAVEY JONES'.

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Attack on Union Organisation

THE MINISTRY of Labour's October survey shows that unemployment has increased by 97,027 since last month and has now risen to 437,229. This past month's increase is more than double the usual number for this time of year. The situation for the worker selling his only commodity, his labour, is that there is no longer a sellers' market for there are now more people wholly without work than there are vacancies.

The Ministry in its desperate efforts to minimise the cruel reality has asked managements to keep them informed of any unfilled vacancies. As the July measures begin to have their effect, these once unfilled vacancies are fast disappearing, not because they are being filled, but simply because of the squeeze.

Of all previous post-war attempts by governments to hold down wages, the most successful was that of Labour's Stafford Cripps. Although there was not any real increase in unemployment, wages did level out and were accompanied by greatly increased prices. Macmillan also had some success in 1956, but this was probably due, to a great extent, to the unwillingness of the Transport and General Workers' Union to carry on with the bus

strike. But the most interesting situation arose with Selwyn Lloyd's 'pay pause'. His measures, taken in 1961-62 gave rise to an increase in unemployment to about where it stands today, but this was still accompanied by a considerable increase in wages and prices. The 'pay pause' was defeated in spite of unemployment.

'WAGE DRIFT'

No doubt these facts were not lost to the present Government and it has brought in compulsory powers to make the 'voluntary' restraint work. Mass unemployment would no doubt do the trick in pegging wages, but as the capitalist system knows from the past, even on its own terms, this measure only ensures waste. One would have assumed by the amount of support from the trade union executives for the Government's 'voluntary' Prices and Incomes Policy, that this loyalty would have made compulsion unnecessary. So either these executives had their tongue in their cheek, and it must be admitted that some did, or there was another factor that caused wages to continue to rise. It was not so much the union executives' national wage agreements that made the Government bring in legislation, but what is known as 'wage drift'.

This takes place at the place of work and is negotiated by the shop stewards with or without the assistance of local union officials. These local level wage negotiations concern piece-work rates and other form of bonus and additional payments. The Government might have been able to avoid these types of payment in the nationalised sector of the economy, but it is a far different story in the private sector. These additional payments can give workers as much as 50% more on top of the national wage agreements. It is these payments that have worried both the employers and the Government. Not only have they made a mockery of the Government's policy, but at the same time it is very difficult to keep track of these shop floor agreements.

Mr. Aubrey Jones, Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Board, has been airing his views on the 'wage drift' this week. He said that the major economic problem was to get labour costs under control and that 'wage drift' problems called for a new attitude by the trade unions towards the shop stewards. This is tantamount to saying that we get along with the trade union leadership all right, but it is these shop stewards that cause the trouble, and, of course, on the whole, he is right.

Mr. Jones says: 'I am struck by the way shop stewards do not feature in the trade union hierarchy. We have the spectacle of the Prime Minister's productivity council without the presence of a shop steward. It requires a new assessment, in the world of the trade unions, of the role of the shop steward and the training that is given to him.' Realising what a major part the shop stewards and the shop floor organisations play in securing higher wages and better conditions, Mr. Jones would like to see them tamed. Once they become a part of the union hierarchy, they will be tied to procedure and will lose the independence and the freedom of action they now have. Mr. Jones says: 'Management has to reassert control of labour costs on the shop floor in such a way that the problem of prices is equally not dis-

regarded. I am increasingly aware of the view that there has to be some relationship between national and local bargaining.'

It is true that for a number of years now there has been a demand for labour, especially skilled. This has meant that not only have the employers been willing to pay above the national union wage rate, but also organised labour has been in a strong position to gain demands.

GETTING BACK CONTROL

This is the position that Mr. Jones wants to alter. He is not the reactionary who attacks shop stewards as such, but only wants them less effectual. He wants 'secondary management' to gain control. Now of course the Government's wage freeze is a heaven-sent opportunity to achieve this, for workers have both unemployment and compulsion facing them. The working-class of this country are in for a tough time during the coming months. Employers are realising that the situation is changing and that they now have the advantage and will use it to smash the union organisation that their employees have achieved.

The very nature of the Government's policies will ensure that all workers, to a greater or lesser extent, will be affected. This is a general attack on the working-class and effective opposition and resistance can only come if workers, as a class, involve themselves in a struggle against this attack.

The majority of trade union executives have shown that they put loyalty to the Labour Party before that to their members. The left-wing MPs have shown that they prefer to stay Labour MPs rather than rebel, and put party before principle. All the resolutions and all the talks with the Government have been of no avail. It is not even a case of the Labour Party betraying the workers, because they gave plenty of warning that they were prepared to bring in legislation to control the trade unions if they did not reform voluntarily. *While Socialists told workers to vote Labour in spite of its policies, Anarchists pointed out that a Labour Government would be in a far better position to bring in legislation against the trade unions.*

We all know where we stand now and these facts should not be forgotten. From this period of struggle against the Government's policies, trade unionists will realise that it is not in the Labour Party that they should put their hopes. In the first place the most important organisation is at the place of work. It is here that the main struggle will take place and it is here that the workers must ensure the utmost strength in organisation.

P.T.

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OCTOBER 29 1966 Vol 27 No 34

A GAP IN THE LINE

IT IS A sad commentary on the state of the labour movement in Britain that it should be left to an employer, Mr. de Vigier, of Acrows, to offer effective resistance to the wages freeze, after the assembled trade union conference, and its 'political arm' the Labour Party, had given assent to it; in the latter case, indeed, have enforced it compulsorily. Mr. de Vigier's case was a sound capitalist case. He could not get skilled workers in Stockport easily. If he got them, he knew he was lucky, and had to reward them accordingly in terms of the competition offered by other employers. He wanted them to go all out on an export production drive and promised them a bonus if they succeeded. They succeeded; but the 'Labour' Government had meanwhile enacted that nobody should receive wage increase or bonuses (but themselves). What had this to do with Mr. de Vigier? If he broke his word, as the Government wanted him to, he would not be able to spur his workers on next time with the promise of increased pay for increased productivity.

And the significant thing proves to be that as Mr. de Vigier is a capitalist of the old individualist school, he is not a member of the Confederation of British Industries or any other employers' association, and this is precisely what makes it difficult to discipline him. This is an old and somewhat curious aspect of the modern growth of associations. They charge high subscriptions to their members who keep them going, and negotiate with government bodies on their behalf—and then, it proves, only to be able to 'discipline' them, not to help them in any way. There is as yet no compulsory State pressure to force people into these associations (this being the difference with the 'vertical' syndicates of capital and labour, in Mussolini's fascism) though there is often trade pressure (many publishers, for instance, try to force booksellers into the Booksellers' Association, in order to uphold the Nett Book Agreement; though the legality of this is doubtful).

As an old-fashioned capitalist, still believing in private enterprise and profiting from same, a firm like Acrows is in a different category from many of the larger industrial firms which fit into the Government's pattern, and find it to their advantage to have the workers well disciplined; wages kept down (on the Wilsonian principle that it has operated on such a scale since the Black Death); and only require that the smaller employers be brought into line and do not 'leave a gap in the line'.

The significant point for the trade unions which they have totally overlooked is that if this principle is to be accepted

at all, for the first time since trade unions were recognised at all, they have become not merely useless, but hindrances. They, too, will be used to discipline their members, whose subscriptions pay the rent and the lighting of the office buildings, the salaries and the pensions of the officials, the political hand-outs and the training schemes, but who will have no benefit whatever to come. The most glaring instance was seen in the seamen's strike and nobody in the trade union movement has dared to comment on it, for it strikes at the fundamentals of trade unionism and economic solidarity. The men demanded increases that would have brought them a reduction in hours making roughly, for an 8 1/2 with five years' service, £15 for a 40 hour week. They had to fight the full force of the State, and the solid enmity of the Government, press and many other unions. The shipping companies, saying they could not pay this (which would have meant a 17% increase according to the Ministry of Labour), were paying up to £20 a week for a shorthand typist with six months' experience and throwing in extra inducements such as luncheon vouchers. Since that strike was settled seamen have had, through their union, not one further penny extra, not one further hour less; yet the unorganised office staffs in the shipping companies have increased their pay—if they have changed their jobs, as they are well entitled to do, and individual changing of a job is not 'strike action' nor illegal price increase—by a minimum of 20%. One need only consult the employment agencies supplying Fenchurch Street.

The fact is that unity is not strength now, so far as trade unionism is concerned, and the only people who are increasing their income by free negotiation are the unorganised workers, who have nobody to discipline them and can change their job four times a year if they wish to do so and find it simple to get another. The lesson will soon not be lost on the organised workers. Yet it would be a tragedy if this were the case, for unorganised labour cannot win through ultimately. Even the reformists in the Labour Movement should take note of what is happening. They have one sure weapon in their hands. They can chop off Political Labour at the pants' pocket. They are still collecting political levies that support the Labour Party. Why? What is the political levy for? Is there any nominal reason for it? At every trade union meeting it is necessary to raise not merely individual withdrawal from the political levy, but its total abolition. 'Labour' is not the political arm any longer (if it ever was); it is the political antagonist.

BERT.

UNITY IS STILL STRENGTH

P.T. writes—

'BERT' it seems is not a union member, or if he is, is not an active one, for he would know that trade union executives already discipline their members. This is nothing new and has been going on ever since the executives managed to obtain these powers. Many unions were founded with them written into the constitution.

If free collective bargaining is a casualty of the wage freeze then no doubt the trade union leadership will have to discipline its members even more, but the more this has to be done it will prove that the organisation is stronger at rank and file level.

It is all very well to pick out the unorganised office staff of shipping companies as an example of high pay, but this does not mean that all unorganised office workers fare as well. People might

increase their wages by changing jobs, but it is only possible if there is the demand for those workers.

Unity is still strength and although there might be unorganised workers gaining pay rises by free negotiations, these same workers still get increases gained for them by the union through national negotiations.

In my experience it is union organisation at the place of work that gains wage improvements. Packing it up and finding another job with higher wages often means that you are only moving in after someone else has done the organising. Stay on and have a go yourself.

If 'Bert' had read Bill Christopher's article last week, he would have seen that workers are in fact doing something about the political levy.

Contact Column

This column exists for mutual aid. Donations towards cost of typesetting will be welcome.

Employment Wanted. Girl (19) seeks employment, anything considered. Please write to Pam Hillier, 216 Wentworth Road, Southall, Middlesex.

March. Harlow and Bishop's Stortford YCND, October 29. Details from Jean Rogers, Kingsdon Hall, Kingsdon Lane, Potter Street, Harlow.

Accommodation. Twenty-year-old girl with five-month-old baby wants accommodation (with or without work) where she could take care of baby. Box 41.

Caravan Site Wanted. International Gypsy Movement workers with caravan seek accommodation. North London return rent/part-time work, babysitting, garden. Knockholt (Kent) 2316.

Accommodation. Young couple (with two small sons) urgently need 3-room s.c. flat at reasonable rent. Willing to decorate, baby mind, help in house, garden, etc. Box 42.

Alienation. J.B. please contact J.B. c/o Freedom Press.

Situation and Accommodation Wanted. Young man, returning from Brazil, needs cheap accommodation and job. Anything considered. Istvan Levy, c/o Freedom Press.

Firebird folk poetry happenings—every Wednesday, Castle Hotel, Oldham Street (off Piccadilly), Manchester, 8 p.m. 2/- entrance—all interested straying north who wish to join in or just enjoy it and who want a kip fixed up write to me beforehand, c/o International Centre, 64 George Street, Manchester, 1. Magazine of poems read there available at 1s. 6d. plus 6d. postage about once a month—also poem sheets at 3d. SAE for sample copies.

Situations Vacant Glasgow. Rowen Engineering Co. Ltd. — Factory for Peace, urgently requires a shorthand-typist for Glasgow office. Write or phone 78 Middlesex Street, Glasgow, S.1. South 1332.

National Council for Civil Liberties. Needs members, money and voluntary help to defend the freedom of individuals and minorities NOW. Open night first Tuesday of every month November 1, 6.30 p.m. onwards, 4 Camden High Street, N.W.1. EUS 2544.

If you wish to make contact let us know.