

Freedom

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60

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All Countries Use Horror Weapons

THE RECENT ACCOUNTS in FREEDOM of the use of horror weapons by the US in Vietnam did not mention that other nations have used and are using these weapons. This is something that tends to get overlooked in the radical press while the communist press, for reasons I will outline, is silent about many of the uses of these weapons by other nations. While undoubtedly the US is the most prolific user of these weapons this is not because America and Americans are especially satanic—only that they have the most advanced technology, the biggest air force and, due to their economic dominance, are involved in the most wars nowadays.

BRITAIN

It is not generally known that the first user of napalm was the Royal Air Force in the closing days of the war with Japan. But Japan was at that time an Axis power and the Soviet Union an ally of Britain, therefore napalm on Burmese cities was OK by the communists. Britain still retains napalm in its armory as was shown when Fleet Air Arm planes set fire to the *Torrey Canyon* last year. It was officially stated, to account for the sudden appearance of the weapon, that 'a little had been mixed up just for the occasion'. Presumably this was done in a spare moment behind the NAAFI at RAF Lossiemouth.

IRAQ

Iraq under the Dr. Arif regime is officially blessed as 'socialist' by the communist press, therefore the napalming of Kurdish villages by Iraqi planes is acceptable to communists. Also, any successes by the Kurdish nationalists in Iraq might give ideas to their fellow Kurds over the border in the Soviet Union and this would never do.

EGYPT

Egyptian planes made several gas attacks on villages held by the Yemeni Royalists last year, a fact attested to by Red Cross and other neutral observers. But Russia is wooing Nasser and the Yemeni Republicans are armed with Soviet weapons (Russia doubtless trying to get a foothold in that part of the

Middle East) and consequently communists are silent about these gas raids. Egyptian planes were ready to attack Israeli targets with napalm before the June war but were destroyed on the ground.

ISRAEL

Israeli planes used napalm and fragmentation bombs freely in the June War especially against the antiquated Jordanian army. Although much was made of this in the Russian and East European communist press, it was played down in the *Morning Star*, perhaps because Jewish communists already had enough on their plates being simultaneously pro- and anti-Israel politically.

VIETNAM

The Vietcong and NVA are armed with flame-throwers and last year carried out a retribution raid on a Montagnard village during which pro-Saigon villagers were executed with these weapons. Flame-throwers were used as freely by the Vietcong and NVA in the recent fighting in Vietnamese cities as the US used napalm. I doubt if a Vietnamese civilian being roasted alive appreciates the difference between fire-bombs bursting through the roof and jets of burning kerosene squirted through the doors and windows.

PORTUGUESE AFRICA

In their campaign against African nationalists in Angola and elsewhere in Portuguese Africa, Portuguese planes use napalm on nationalist-held villages.

NIGERIA

In the Nigerian civil war, Federal planes use napalm against Biafran targets, the pilots being South African, European, Egyptian and Israeli mercenaries.

ELSEWHERE

Chemical, biological and nuclear weapons have been and are being developed by nations of East and West which have the necessary financial and technological resources. This includes the 'socialist' states but doubtless communists believe that special weapons only are developed there which, when used, only affect persons in the higher income brackets.

JEFF ROBINSON.

Neither Washington Nor Hanoi —But Peace AND Freedom

IN VIETNAM 623,000 people have been robbed of their homes and livings by guerilla forces and regular troops since the beginning of January, 1968. 72,000 homes have been destroyed since the start of the New Year fighting. However not to worry, since both sides assure the victims it's for their own good.

The Americans are fighting there to abet a government whose support is by no means a majority one, whose corruption is well known, and which is essentially authoritarian and militaristic. Not even the Americans are able to suggest that the regime derives its authority from the people.

Looking at the North in an equally critical manner reveals that the support for the régime at the moment is derived less from an appreciation of its policies than from the fear of invasion. The power of Ho Chi Minh is derived from feelings of Nationalism amongst the masses of the people of both Vietnams. He became leader of this movement by eliminating other candidates—betraying the major figures to the French and using his 'fee' to build up his following and influence in the movement; and by the murder of all independent leftist groups, Pacifists, Trotskyists and Syndicalists. Pursuing a misplaced Marxism in a predominantly peasant society, he divided the population into rigid categories and classes and severely crushed opposition (such as the 1956 peasant insurrection in which reports give 10,000-15,000 killed and up to 12,000 sent to forced labour camps).

The National Liberation Front is a continued use of nationalism to the aims of a small guiding elite. The 'official' leadership covers the

real directors of the movement. It undoubtedly has much support among sections of the population. Its triumph, however, would mean the 'unification' of the country under the Hanoi régime.

The majority of the Vietnamese are not committed in the present struggle, but bow to whoever is the master. In the recent offensive the Southern régime showed its 'concern' for the people by indiscriminate bombing and artillery fire in heavily populated areas. Similarly the 'liberators' executed anyone at all involved in the administration of social life—there are reports from Hué of people being shot for listening to the BBC, which was forbidden ('Panorama', March 5 — interview with students in Hué). A measure

of the popular support for the two combatants is found in the reaction to the recent New Year offensive—the South Vietnam Government got no warning of NLF concentration of troops near the cities, and, equally revealing, there was no evidence of the spontaneous insurrection in the cities which the NLF expected and which the NLF units in the attack were promised. (In the 'Panorama' interview mentioned above, the student was asked whether the destruction of Hué had made it harder for him and his friends to choose between the Government and the NLF. He replied, 'We don't choose between them, we just hate the war.')

Support must be given to this attitude rather than to the hypocrites of both sides.

Vietnam is one of the points where rival systems clash—the 'Free' world that is not free, and the 'Communist' world that is not Communist. One, pseudo-freedom based on economic slavery; the other, pseudo-freedom based on political slavery. One is already authoritarian, the other is becoming so. (In the words of the US Libertarian League.)

'Peace in Vietnam' must not be a slogan to cover a continuance of the war until a military victory. There is a need for non-aligned demonstrations in sympathy with the people of Vietnam.

To oppose the war in Vietnam is not enough; it is necessary to work in our society, in every way possible, to end the military and economic systems which gives rise to Vietnams. NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR HANOI, BUT PEACE AND FREEDOM.

EDITORS.

CONGRATULATIONS ALL ROUND

THE RECENT OFFENSIVE resulted in a great victory in our just struggle to expel the communist-US imperialist aggressors. Great strides were made in winning over the non-committed to our national liberatory-free democratic cause. These new converts to our mighty and just struggle are burning with fierce anger at the communist aggressors-US imperialists and their lackeys who have destroyed their homes and killed their loved ones. Spurred on by their great achievement our tenacious fighting men are, even now, poised to deliver the final hammer-like blow that will scatter and destroy the communist terrorists-fascist hyenas.

FORWARD TO VICTORY.

(signed)

General Giap-Westmoreland,
The Deep Concrete Bunker,
Saigon-Hanoi.

US DOW and AUSCHWITZ

IT SHOULDN'T BE surprising that Dow Chemical Co., which is the major supplier of napalm for the US, is in partnership with the German firm that sold the poison gas to the Nazis to slaughter Jews in Auschwitz. Still somehow it is shocking that only 20 years after the war an American company could be so cynical and callous.

Consider the following facts:

On April 6, 1965, the Badische Anilin & Soda Fabrik—largest chemical company in West Germany—celebrated its 100th birthday. Its chairman is Carl Wurster, a former chairman of I. G. Farben—huge chemical trust that was a mainstay of the Third Reich, and which was supposedly broken after the war. Mr. Wurster was not only chairman of Badische, a member of I. G. Farben, but he also ran the I. G. Farben Division which included the slave labour synthetic rubber plant at Auschwitz.

Now it was the I. G. FARBEN researchers who developed the ZYKLON B gas used to slaughter Jews in the concentration camps. Moreover, I. G. FARBEN owned 42.5% of a retail and wholesale distributor called DEGESCH. This was the firm that sold the gas to the camp at Auschwitz. The ubiquitous Mr. Wurster was also on the administrative council of DEGESCH.

Today, Wurster's firm, the Badische Anilin, is in partnership with none other than Dow, for its American operations. They jointly own a chemical company in Freeport, Texas, called the Dow Badische Chemical Co.

JIM DANN
(UCLA Daily Bruin).

ALL HARROD'S publicity posters in London's 75 underground stations have been altered to read 'We clothe every child in napalm'. Only the first two words remain of the original slogan 'We clothe very late'.

How this took place is a remarkable story of brilliant organisation and spontaneous co-operation of many dozens of people assembled at a few days' notice.

Participants were informed of the time and place to meet and were told to bring

four items: A paper bag, a sponge, a dry rag, and a small bottle of water. They were issued with excellently printed gummed wide strips and were allotted two underground stations.

The fly-posters mainly worked in pairs and within hours all the posters

were superimposed. Once the strip was on, the printing was so accurate, that it naturally blended in with the rest of the advertisement.

The following morning I observed all amended posters still intact on the Piccadilly line from King's Cross to Fulham Broadway.

A similar campaign involves parking meters and the George Peppard film *New Face in Hell*, where President Johnson's face is superimposed by the same technique.

Fly-posters were not given any explanation as to why Harrods was chosen as the target to wake up the public to the use of napalm.

Nevertheless, the strategic choice of Harrods as a target was a brilliant one. It hit at a cosy, comfy upper middle-class, which has the least qualms about the use of napalm. Tactically, the choice was also perfect. All the posters occupied prominent positions at tunnel exits, where the greatest number could see them.

This is the type of organisation that anarchists advocate. This exercise, with its spontaneity made easy by meticulous planning, contains a lesson on how to prepare the revolution that everybody wants. Because the willing co-operation of all participants made this difficult operation very easy indeed.

MIKE LEIGH.

Dow Makes Napalm

A RECENT PUBLIC opinion poll shows that the majority of British people are opposed to American policies and actions in Vietnam. Yet at this moment the Dow Chemical Company (Head office, Midland, Michigan, USA), which manufactures napalm under a \$3.5 million contract with the US Air Force, is doing a brisk business in Britain.

Napalm is jellied petrol. Since 1945 the US has used it to kill more than 3 million people in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. In Vietnam 90% of those who are not burned alive immediately die a hideous death within weeks. The few survivors are permanently scarred and deformed. Unlike most modern weapons it can be delivered by 'simple' devices, and the 1,000 lb. napalm bomb has been described as 'the most popular bomb in Vietnam because it is both

cheap and deadly'. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9.2.66.)

Dow has offices in London and Manchester, a factory in King's Lynn, and has just acquired 100% ownership of Distrene, Britain's leading manufacturer of polystyrene. Among its other uses polystyrene is an ingredient of Napalm B, an 'improved' version which sticks to the victim's skin, thus making it impossible to escape incineration.

WE DEMAND THAT DOW IMMEDIATELY STOP MANUFACTURING NAPALM.

A group of British architects have organized a boycott of the Dow building materials Roofmate and Styrofoam.

DON'T BUY DOW.

THE STOP-IT COMMITTEE.
59 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

ANARCHY 85

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IN THE SPRING of 1966, when students and many lecturers together achieved what at the time looked like a major breakthrough unprecedented in university history, I was fortunate enough to be living in the university area, to be associated with a number of students and always on the spot to witness developments. I maintain that this momentous season was a new point of departure for the student movement, critical universities or 'anti-courses' as they are called in Italy, a point of no return in the struggle for student power.

Up until then it had been a regular feature of the University of Rome that during student elections many students who were enrolled at the university but were not following any courses suddenly appeared and provoked the left-wing students during their election campaigns, causing scuffles, etc. During the election campaign of 1966 a young socialist student in his first year at the university, 19-year-old Paolo Rossi, was beaten up because he was carrying some socialist posters across the campus, but what had not happened before, he fell and died. The Rector, who had always brushed aside requests to control the violence during the elections, tried to make out that Paolo Rossi had received treatment for epilepsy at the university clinic (this was printed by the Rome *Daily American*), but as he had just come back from a ski-ing holiday and frequently led scout parties on mountaineering expeditions, this explanation had to be withdrawn, particularly as Rossi's father, a professor of fine arts in Perugia, sued the rector for slander.

Paolo Rossi had not been a particularly militant student. Like Benno Ohnesorg, who was shot by the police in Berlin last June while he was running away from the first demonstration he had been in, Paolo Rossi was only on the verge of becoming absorbed by social and academic problems. Like Benno Ohnesorg, he was also one of the most promising students. The Italian universities closed for several days and thousands of students travelled to Rome to join the funeral procession just as students from east and west travelled to Hanover for the funeral of Benno Ohnesorg.

But speeches and tributes were not enough. Under the slogan 'I care' in opposition to the crude fascist slogan of Mussolini expressing the contrary, students of Rome University occupied the university day and night, refusing to move until the Rector Papi was replaced. There were clashes with neo-fascists, at first admitted by the police who turned away as if they did not see them enter (this changed when the Minister of the Interior transferred the police officer in charge to another area), but the students held out, the rector resigned and a few changes were made almost immediately relating to the enrolment of students who were not following courses.

But this was only a very small part of the general discontent. Students and lecturers formed discussion and pressure groups in which they not only showed

up corruption but questioned the validity of the authoritarian structure which allowed them no say in determining their course of study, in the administration of the university and emphasised the learning for brief oral examinations, perhaps the only time that many of them ever saw their professors at all.

Recommendations were made but little was done. Until today we have the situation in Italy as well as in Germany that the struggle for student power and the feeling of responsibility to society as a whole, i.e. the identification with oppressed peoples, is intrinsically linked. In Italy the struggle is no longer

localised on Rome but has spread all over Italy including Milan, Florence, Pisa, Turin, Trento, etc. New values are emerging. Instead of quaking in fear before the examination, students are prepared, if necessary, to lose the academic year, maybe their formal professional qualifications, in favour of sitting lasting for several weeks in which they are showing the courage of their convictions, convictions which are evolving in a continuous dialogue that uses the university structure as a microcosm of world society.

After some violent clashes with neo-fascists and police the lecture halls of the

University of Rome have been closed for the time being, and in Milan for one week. But thousands of students are attending discussion meetings elsewhere in public squares or in other halls. Some representative university councils have been formed. Parliament is finally getting round to considering a bill proposed by the Minister of Education, Gui, but this would have to be rushed through before the recess, and as it is only a partial reform it is unlikely that the left-wing opposition will agree to it.

HELEN MAYER.

To be continued.

Round the Galleries

THERE COME those moments in history when the armed hordes of the State or of the slogan pour, in a flood of death, across the mapped frontiers, when the smoke and flames of burning cities dim the sun and illuminate the dreadful night, and the hooves of the pale horses beat the corn into dust, and the faceless infantry shit in the abandoned temples.

This is the hour of exaltation when, from the field and the factory, the masses pour forth to mock, by sheer numbers, the regimented authority that melts before the passion of the streets. This is the hour when history must use whatever tools it can to record the transient glory of action as an end in itself.

The hack that in another age would have filled the dying days penning the dull deliberations of the council chambers must, by the very force of circumstances, write an epic, and the painter, whose gentle drafts once graced a friendly wall, must hold his penny mirror aloft to catch this sun of human glory, for the brute eruption of the human herd united by a common anger is a thing of terror, but sprinkle it with the confetti of ten thousand flags and banners, let the flames of the dying cities mate with the raging skies and let all dance to the wild, mad music of the pulsing drum and the chanted slogan, and terror wears the mask of beauty.

Who could fail to paint a canvas that, in the still and gentle times of peace, would not quicken the heart for when old men talk it is of the battles of the flag or the banner, the field of honour, or the angry street. The war that men forgot as the Second World War was ill-served by the poets and the writers. For them it was the emotional anti-climax for a generation born to the heroic myths of trench warfare and though they died as conscientiously as their fathers, they failed to record the travail of those years and the music turned without reward to the revolutionary east for sup.

Yet one man grabbed the military coat-tails of that epoch, and with un-

disciplined line and a sprawling wash of colours, caught the imagined mood of those years. Feliks Topolski, the son of a Polish actor, should have lived out a leisureed life according to his place within English society and his talent. To paint the sets for smart plays of the moment, the murals for chi-chi community walls, the one-man exhibitions within the fashionable gallery, and the illustrations for the novel of the week, should have been his candles to oblivion and the fashionable funeral. But modern war demands an audience and Topolski was commissioned as an official war artist and the moment had found its man.

While other painters diligently plied their craft as in the days of peace and painted the tense sad faces of the young balloons frying in the London skies with the same pedantic earnestness as they painted the 1930 mayors and the Town's heraldic shield, Topolski swept his wild brush across his canvas to catch, in a shamble of colours and staggering lines, the movement of the great armies. His untutored pen wove a web of lines to catch the majesty of the hour and his blurred and multi-coloured images turned individuals into heroes who rode with a raging sky as a cloak out of the confines of the small canvases. Within those paintings earth and heaven fought to share the field with mass-men who rode like gods to and from a battle that never would be fought, for the recording of universal movement was Topolski's contribution to the war effort.

But peace must come to all men, at least for a while, and the flight of trams and clerks were never meat for Topolski's appetite and his moment of glory was over. Did he lie for us in those war paintings? It matters not, for it filled the mood of the hour, but now the testing time has come when he must turn and record the individual and not the mood and he has failed.

The wild undisciplined lines and the whirlpools of colours are still there, but now we can check and we can challenge,

and in the plush calm of the Grosvenor Gallery at 30 Davies Street, W.1, we shake our heads and are slightly bored. True, there are 218 paintings and drawings and the list contains almost every name of international note from Bob Dylan down to H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, yet not one single figure stays in our mind after leaving the gallery. They are doodlings of the neo-famous and therein lies their fault, that we are impressed that Topolski has caught the image but we are not impressed by what Topolski has done with that captured image. Like a café cartoonist, we declare our approval of the fact that he has not failed but 218 performances of the same frail act is slightly heavy going.

Among the large paintings on view is the *Chinese icon* and, when one considers Patrick Proctor's work on the same theme at the Redfern Gallery some months ago, one realises how much Topolski is out of touch. In an age that has produced the savagery of Scarfe's contemptuous handling of the famous, Topolski's leader figures appear as harmless as an academic run-through for an Academy portrait, and even in this hour of windy violence Topolski's *Michael X is a talking man* turns what was meant to be a compliment into an insult for the apostle of tinted blood and sweat is portrayed as a confused and rather pathetic man overcome with the situation and the banal verse that Topolski has incorporated within the painting *Michael X is a talking man | Put away in jail as soon as he began | Establishment pounced when he forgot | That speech is free | But language is not must act as a self-explanatory counterpoint to the paintings.*

This is the exhibition for what it is worth, for peace betrayed Topolski as it betrayed so many men who, in those brief and bloody years found a place to ply a unique talent, for the silent drum and the unborn cities demand their own sacrifice.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

Anarchist Federation of Britain

General enquiries should be sent to the London Federation.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE RELEASE OF OCTAVIO ALBEROLA!

LONDON FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS. c/o Libra House, 256 Pentonville Road, London, N.1. Business meetings first Sunday of the month. For details apply to L.F.A.
LEWISHAM. Contact Mike Malet, 61B Grandville Park, Lewisham, London, S.E.13. Phone: 01-852 8679.

EALING ANARCHIST GROUP. Get into touch with Ken King, 54 Norwood Road, Southall.

KING'S CROSS GROUP. c/o Libra House, 256 Pentonville Road, London, N.1. S.W. LONDON LIBERTARIANS. Contact: 14 Clapton Court, King's Avenue (Acrc Lane) end, S.W.4.

OFF-CENTRE LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS

3rd Wednesday of each month at Jack Robinson and Mary Campa's, 21 Runhild Road, S.W.6 (off King's Road), 8 p.m.
1st Friday of each month at 8 p.m. at Donald and Irene Rowan's, now at 13 Saverne Road, London, N.W.3.

REGIONAL FEDERATIONS AND GROUPS

ABERDEEN ANARCHISTS meet 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of month at M. Day's, 142 Walker Road, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at J.A. Smith's, 3 Sinclair Road. Correspondence to either address.
ABERDEEN ANARCHIST FEDERATION (SWI) local group. Folk Song Workshop and Committee of 100, Collierie Climbing Club. Contact Iain MacDonaid, 15 Cotton Street, Aberdeen.
BIRMINGHAM LIBERTARIAN AND ANARCHIST GROUP. All anarchists, syndicalists, individualists, etc., please contact Geoff and Caroline Charlton, 32 Swinton Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham 17 (near Portland Road). Note new address.
BOLTON. Get in touch with Les Smith, 22 Grosvenor Street Bolton, Lancs.
Bournemouth and East Dorset ANARCHISTS. Please contact John McCall, 14 Milton Road, Bournemouth (RN) 018 2229 or John Deane, Jingo West Moors, Wimborne, Dorset (Ferdinand 1588).
BRIGHTON. Get in touch with Nick Heath, Flat 3, 26 Clifton Road, Brighton. Poetry read-

ings 8 to 10 Pool Coffee Bar, Pool Valley, Brighton.
Bristol Anarchists. Contact Susie Fisher and Alan Nicholson at 15 The Paragon, Bristol, 8.
FIFE LIBERTARIANS. Contact Bob and Una Turnbull, 39 Stratheden Park, Stratheden Hospital, by Inverary, Fife.

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

HERTS. Contact either Stuart Mitchell at South View, Potters Heath Lane, Potters Heath, Welwyn, Herts OR Jeff Clowes, 46 Hughenden Road, Stevenage, Herts.

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

LEICESTER. Contact Andrew Dewar, 16 Kilburn House, Malvern Place, London, N.W.6. Meetings 8 p.m. every Tuesday.

LEICESTER PROJECT. Peace/Libertarian action and debate. Every Wednesday at 8 p.m. at 1 The Crescent, King Street, Leicester.

NORTH SOMERSET ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Roy Emery, 3 Ashby Street, Bath, or Geoffrey Barfoot, 71 St. Thomas Street, Wells.

NOTTING HILL. Please get in touch with John Bennett and Marilyn Padley, Flat 4, 48 Clarendon Road, London, W.11. Tel: 727 9745. Meetings every Monday at 7 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP. Knockholt, Nr. Sevenoaks, Kent. Phone six weeks at Greenways, Knockholt. Friday Knockholt 2316. Meetings March 23, 7.30 p.m. The relevance of voluntary action in our society. Discussion.

OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Alan Ross, 116 Belmont Road, Reading, Berks. Group addresses.

BASILDON. M. Powell, 7 Lingcroft, Basildon, Essex.

BISHOPS STOREFOED. Vic Mount, 'Eastview', Castle Street, Bishop's Cleeve, Herts.

CHEPPING. (Mrs.) J. Eva Archer, Mill House, Putney, Chesham, Bucks.

EMPFING. John Barwick, 14 Centre Avenue, Epping, Essex.

HARLOW. John Deards, 184 Carter's Mead, Harlow, and/or Geoff Hardy, 6 Redicks Lane, Harlow, Essex. Monthly meetings in 'The Essex Skipper', The Stow, Harlow.

LOUGHTON. Group c/o Students' Union, Loughton College of Further Education, Borders Lane, Loughton, Essex.

MUCH BATHAM. Leslie Riordan, High Street, Much Batham, Herts.

NORTH EAST ESSEX. Peter Newell, 'Maybush', Maypole Road, Tiptree, Essex. Group meets first Monday in each month, 7.15 p.m. at 91 Brook Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Tiptree, Essex.

NORTH-WEST FEDERATION

Regional Secretary: Alastair Rattray, 35a Devonshire Road, Chorley.

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION. BUXTON ANARCHIST GROUP. Secretary: F. A. Gresty, Punschbow, Manchester Road, Buxton.

CHORLEY ANARCHIST GROUP. Secretary: Alastair T. Rattray, 35a Devonshire Road, Chorley.

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST PROPAGANDA GROUP AND 'HIPPI' MOVEMENT. Gerry Bruce, 16 Faulkner Square, Liverpool, 8. Meetings weekly. 'Freedom' Sales—Pier Head, Saturdays, Sunday Evenings.

MANCHESTER ANARCHIST GROUP. Secretary: Dave Paulson, 9 Boland Street, Fallowfield, Manchester, 14.

MERSEYDE ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Pete Sackey, 22 Sandon Street, Liverpool. Meetings: First Thursday of month, 8 p.m.

SOUTH WALES ANARCHIST FEDERATION

CARDIFF ANARCHIST GROUP, SWANSEA ANARCHIST GROUP. All correspondence to—Pete Raymond, 90 Albany Road, Rhoth, Weekly meetings. Freedom sales and action projects.

STUDENT GROUPS

EAST ANGLIA UNIVERSITY GROUP (Anarchists and Peace). Contact Dave King, 17 Havock Road, Norwich.

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP. c/o Student Union, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, W.C.2.

LIBERTARIAN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Meetings—discussions—activities. Contact Peter Ford, 36 Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7.

EDINBURGH anarchists contact Conrad Borowski, 13 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh 3. Tel. SA 90 7459.

TAUNTON LIBERTARIANS. Contact Jill and John Driver, 59 Beadon Road, Taunton, Somerset. Meetings alternate Friday evenings.

CROYDON, NORWOOD, BECKENHAM. Anarchists, Syndicalists, Libertarian or Pacifist Socialists (to form Alliance). Norwood, Beckenham Libertarian Group. Contact Jim Rafford or Laurena Oiler, 35 Naital Road, Thornton Heath.

ELTHAM (Libertarian/Peace Action). Contact Terry Liddle, 83 Gregory Crescent, S.E.9.

ABROAD

AUSTRALIA. Federation of Australian Anarchists, P.O. Box A 389, Sydney South, 2 p.m. meetings every Sunday in the Domain, 2 p.m. meetings 16/17, 27, 34, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

USA. VERMONT. New Hampshire Anarchist Group. Meets weekly—discussion, individual action. Contact Ed. Strauss at RFD 2, Woodstock, Vermont 05091, USA.

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

SWEDEN. Libertad, Alimnia Vagen 6, Goteborg 9, Sweden.

CANADA. Winnipeg. Anybody interested in Direct action/individual contact G. J. Nair, 606 Maitson Avenue, Winnipeg, 17, Manitoba.

BEIJING. LIJGE. Provos, c/o Jacques Charlier, 11 Avenue de la Perle, Sclaymon-Lige, Belgium.

EAST AFRICA. George Matthews would like to make contact. Secondary school teacher from UK. PO Box 90, Kakamega, Kenya.

USA. James W. Cain, secretary, Insurgency Anarchist Association, 323 Fourth Street, Clouet, Minnesota 55720, USA.

GROUPWARE COLLEGE (New Libertarian Front). Contact Dave Biggs, Room T/7.

SUSSEX UNIVERSITY ANARCHISTS. To launch

THE WILD CAT

BRIAN AND CELIA BEHAN'S play, *The Wildcat*, depicts the terrible conditions that building workers face every day on some building sites. We are pleased to publish it because it deserves to reach a far wider audience than it did when it was broadcast by the BBC on a Wednesday afternoon. An Irish bricklayer on my site, who listened to it, was full of it when he came to work the next day.

However, showing up these bad conditions is only part of the play. Anyone hearing or reading it will realise that it is based on a first-hand knowledge of what it is like to work with mud up to your knees. It is written in building site language and captures the badinage that is common to this type of work.

Many stewards reading this will recall conversations similar to that which John O'Brien has with the management. This 'let's just have a chat, man to man, you know. We're both reasonable men. Both got a job to do and should pull together' is exactly the sort of stuff that is dished out by the General Foreman and managers. It is this, 'Did you know that I'm a union man myself?' sort of rubbish. I certainly can remember conversations along these lines.

The approach of the Communist Party trade union officials to industrial disputes is put over in a concise way. How many times have we seen Communist officials trot out the old excuses. It is always their position, or rather the Party's position within the unions that must be preserved, even if it means the complete betrayal of the lads. This comes over very well. Sausage says: 'I worked hard to get you elected' and this must be the feeling of many militants who have seen newly elected officials take up their position, only to become an identical twin of the one they have replaced.

Building union officials are notorious for their speed and agility in reaching the site when requested by the management, but when you want them, they are full of excuses why they are unable to come.

Brian's experiences in the building industry have served him well in writing, with his wife, a play which gives a vivid picture, in concise language, of the problems facing building workers.

P. TURNER.

The Wild Cat

by Brian and Celia Behan

Full text of radio play as broadcast by the BBC (sounds of building site—a pile driver, a mixer, hammering and near to the sound of lorry backing on to site).

Sullivan: O.K. straighten up, right, right. Whoa! That's it. (Lorry engine switched off.) Right now Charlie, get that digger moving. I want these lorries turned round in double quick time.

Driver: Take it easy guv, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Sullivan: Maybe not but I wasn't the general on that job. (Digger starts up.) Right now what can I do for you.

John: I was looking for a start.

Sullivan: Come over here I can't hear you for the din. (Noise fading slightly.) Now then.

John: I'm looking for a start.

Sullivan: That's right. What class of animal are ye then—brickie, chippie?

John: Nabby.

Sullivan: Well I hope you're not like some of the ones we get coming here—start like lions in the morning, and end up like dandy lions be the tea break. I'll give ye the start but remember, I want a fair days' work all day, every day. Put your clothes in that hut over there and see me by the silo. Oh, c'mere, c'mere, can ye carry the hod . . . ye can. Well I've a man short on the boundary wall yonder. Get over there fast as ye can. Right? (Fade—Fade up sound of trowels tapping and somebody humming as he works. He breaks off and sucks in his breath in annoyance.)

Gerry: Look at that. No muck again. (Shouts.) Muck up for Christ's sake.

Sausage: What's all the shouting? Cut it out. You know we're an 'od short.

Gerry: Well how're we supposed to lay bricks without muck. I want some bonus offa this job before I'm ninety.

Sausage: Do leave off. You wouldn't

earn on this scheme if you sprouted two sets of arms, and stop wakin' everybody up.

Gerry: Well.

Sausage: Anyway it looks like they've found one, there's a new bloke coming up. Look who it is. Ere'yare John, over 'ere.

John: Sausage! It's great to see you. Any more of the lads on here.

Sausage: No, worse luck. We could do with a few stirrers.

John: It's rough here is it? I thought the caddy looked a bit of a villain.

Sausage: You're not kiddin' John. He's a right so and so. You're more tricks than a box of monkeys. He works the old overtime swindle—'only blue eyes and gorrillas need apply'. See the money's poor—they've introduced a so-called bonus scheme. Five bob! It came out last week. So, of course, the lads are all looking for the overtime. Still, how've been keeping John? Family alright.

John: Yeah, yeah, fine. But listen have you got no union organisation on the job?

Sausage: Oh, ticket stewards, but nobody does anything—they're all scared

thought I'd never come out alive.

Tipp: We were just saying, this industry is all muck and bullets—whatever job you go on.

Sausage: Oh, I dunno. Things were much worse before the war, y'know.

Dennis: Oh, 'ere we go.

Sausage: Straight up. I've seen the time when we had to follow a lorry load of bricks on the chance of a start. I'm telling you I've worked under some real animals. Ever heard of Darkie Finn? I'm not a kidding you he wanted nothing less than the skin off your back.

Tipp: Sure, he's famous up North. "Get out in the morning Stripped to the skin, And earn your bonus for Darkie Finn." Yes, but what about the Bull Sullivan. Isn't he bad enough surely?

John: He's a pure animal. What he can't bribe with overtime, he terrorises with those fists of his. Yes I think it's time we opened up on Master Sullivan. What do you think, Sos?

Sausage: Well, you know me John. I don't mind having a go, but . . . well, I've seen it all before. You get all the men into the union, set up your shop stewards' committee. You get the em-

ployer on his knees, and what happens? The Union stabs you in the back.

Tipp: Still, you must have a union, otherwise the working man has no protection at all.

Sausage: Of course, we need a union, but all this lot seem good for is collecting our contributions. They're all very good at rushing round the branches when they're up for re-election, or dunning up votes for the Labour Party, but once they're in sitting they don't want to know, and why? Because they've all got it too cushy. Look at the union rate—seven and five. It's pathetic. A little girl in an office gets more than that. But they don't care. Look at old Charlie Fanshawe in the House of Lords now. D'you think he's worried about us? Not on your nelly.

John: Look, there's no good in us just sitting here moaning. Just think of that job at McGill's last year. It was a horrible number just like this one until we got it straightened out, and then it was a lovely little Solomon.

Sausage: Yeah, and as soon as the men started earning the firm started picking the militants off one by one. They got you for being ten minutes late didn't they? And that was only two weeks after the strike ended. What did you get out of it.

John: That's not the point. Look at this job. The canteen is just a pigsty and no cooked dinners. There's nowhere to wash your hands; the lavatories are a disgrace, and the money is terrible. To get a decent pay-packet you've got to grovel round like a mangy dog. (The canteen has fallen silent and John begins to speak to them all.) There's a time limit on this job—they have to hand over these houses by June or pay penalties. If we stuck together we could have them by the short and curlies.

Dennis: They wouldn't stick together. The working man is his own worst enemy. Always stabbing each other in the back.

Sausage: What do you know about it big mouth. You're still wet behind the ears.

Dennis: O.K. Granpappy. Come on, George, bring the cards and we'll have a game outside.

Sausage: Stupid git.

John: No, he's right. We don't stick together, and that just what the employer counts on—us being divided. (Buzz of talk.) Did you ever hear the one about the old farmer who lay dying, and his sons already fighting over the land. He called them to his bedside and

out of here. (Fade—Fade up. Sounds of a mixer.)

Sullivan: (Shouts.) O'Brien, will you come over here a minute?

John: (Off.) Right, I'm coming. (Approaching.) What do you want?

Sullivan: Leave down the hod son, I've a special job for you. We'll pick up a shovel and a graft on the way over. (Scrunch of footsteps. They recede and re-approach.)

Sullivan: (Sucks in his breath.) Will you look at that? There's enough broken bricks here to build a bloody sky-scraper. (Roars.) Jack will you stack these bricks properly, they're three pound the hundred. (Scrunching footsteps again.)

Voice: Oh mister Sullivan, could I see you a minute?

Sullivan: Hang on, Charlie, I'll be right with you. (Scrunching footsteps continue.)

Sullivan: What's wrong with that dumper there?

Driver: It's stuck.

Sullivan: I can see that, I'm not blind, man. What are you hanging about for? **Driver:** I'm waiting for a J.C.B. to pull me out the mud.

Sullivan: (Growls.) Here John, give me that plank. Now shove it under the wheel and when I say heave we'll give her a lift. Right driver rev her up. Now! (Sound of heaving and motor spinning, then running on and stopping.)

Driver: Sorry about that.

Sullivan: Don't bother to be sorry. Be careful. (Fade—Fade up.)

Sullivan: Here we are now, John. Gerry I'm putting this fella down the hold. See if we can't move these foundations on a bit. I want them all cleaned out by Monday. Here's a shovel, away we go. There's a ladder round the far side. How's it going Gerry?

Gerry: Not so bad, but that hole's so deep we can't keep the water out of it. The men have got no footing you see. The water's just pouring in. That clay's a swine to dig when it's wet. Could you not get a pump in.

Sullivan: What and waste a fiver a day for hiring it? Never. A bit of hard slog will do none of them any harm. They're all mouthy men. That digging will leave them no breath for talking. By the way have you filled up your time sheets yet.

Gerry: No, not yet, I haven't had. . .

Sullivan: Well, you'd better get over to the office, and do it. (Shouts to men.) Come on now lads, dog it out, it's not your own country. (Fade—Fade up sound of wetdigging and grunting of men.)

Dennis: Aye, aye, they've both gone we can have a blow. (Sound of lighting up.) Watchya, mate. Welcome to the punishment gang. This is Duke.

John: How are you.

Duke: I thought we'd be seeing you down here today.

John: Why?

Duke: You must have scared the pants off old Sullivan in the canteen with what you said about sticking together.

Dennis: Yeah, you've had it now, mate. You might as well jack up tonight with us. If he don't like your face he'll keep on at you till you jack. He did his nut at me cause I was having a little bit of a laugh. Yeah, he said nobody's going to laugh on his time.

John: And what about you, Duke?

Duke: Well, I guess he just don't like to see a black man around his job.

Dennis: Quite right too. If I had my way I'd make every blackman swim back home with a paddy on each shoulder. (Laughs.)

John: (Good humouredly.) What! Anything I ever got here I earned ten times over.

Duke: Same here, what you really got against us Dennis.

Dennis: Well, for a start you're all over sexed and . . .

Duke: You're just jealous man.

Dennis: Yeah, you dirty, lucky swine.

Duke: (Laughing.) I see a girl with nothing on yesterday about this time. Oh man, sweet peaches.

Dennis: You was on the job with me you liar.

Duke: I saw her man and she was dressing right in front of the window,



of the bull—that's what they call Sullivan. Suits him dunnit? There's one or two good lads who'd have a go. Still you'd better get dug in before you start opening your mouth.

Sullivan: Come on now you men, this isn't a mother's meeting. Get them bricks down or get off my job.

Sausage: Git.

John: Hang on, Sos. As soon as we get this job organised we'll give him such a caning he won't know whether he's on his head or his heels. (Fade—Fade up sound of job canteen and loud burst of laughter.)

John: . . . Well, anyway he went back to the labour exchange and the clerk was tearing his hair out with rage. 'Look,' he said, 'When are you gonna go to work?' So he said, 'I'll go when the Duke goes, sure he's the biggest dosser in the land.' (Laughter.) Eh where's old Sausage? I've got his tea here.

Tipp: I think he's in the bog.

John: Begod it takes a brave man to venture in there. Would you ever think that in this day and age men would be expected to put up with a thing like that.

Dennis: Here's Sausage now. 'Ere you are Sos, over 'ere.

Sausage: Gawd what a carry on. I

held up a bundle of sticks, and he asked each son to try and break the bundle. They were fine strong young men, but they couldn't do it. Now watch says he. Then he took each stick in his old hands and broke them one by one. Says he, 'Let that be a lesson to you'. Well, we are like those sticks, as long as we're divided the bosses will go on treating us like pigs. But if we stick together . . . (Sound of hooter in background.) . . . if we stuck together there's nothing we couldn't have. (Silence. Then the door is suddenly kicked open.)

Sullivan: (Roars.) Come on out of it, out of it. (No one moves.) Well come on—what's this a bloody mother's meeting? (Slowly the men tramp out.) Eh, Gerry, come 'ere. What's going on here.

Gerry: It's that navvy, O'Brien, Mick, he's a red.

Sullivan: Now I knew somebody had been getting at these men. I could smell it the minute I walked in.

Gerry: What'll it be—the order of the boot.

Sullivan: I suppose so.

Gerry: Shall I go and tell him.

Sullivan: Hold on a minute. I've a better idea.

Gerry: You should get shut of him you know. He's dangerous.

Sullivan: By God! By the time I've finished with him, he'll be glad to run

John: That's not the point. Look at

showing all she got. She could be there now.

Dennis: Where!? Where!?

Duke: Oh, just in the flats by the back fence.

Dennis: (Running away.) Oh, I must have a shufti at that. I must have a peep. (John and Duke roar with laughter.)

Dennis: (Coming back.) Here, you are having me on. . . Rotten swine.

Gerry: Come on you lads, let's have some muck out here.

Dennis: Aw get stuffed, crawling git, you won't see me after Friday.

John: If you jack, you'll just be playing into their hands. We should stand and fight. We've got them over a bar here you know.

Dennis: Yeah, looks like it, doesn't it? (Fade—Fade up sounds of squelchy digging.)

John: Whew, this clay's cat altogether.

Duke: Look at this, I'm up to my knees in mud. I'm afraid of getting sick man.

Dennis: Go on it's good for you. People pay thousands for mud baths.

John: Serve Sullivan right if we did organise the job, and make him eat dirt for a bit.

Dennis: No, you couldn't do it. Eh, Dukey, who's going to win the Derby?

Duke: A horse man.

Dennis: Very funny. Eh Dukey. Who's the biggest queer on this job?

Duke: I don't know. Who?

Dennis: Give us a kiss and I'll tell you. Come here darling. (Laughter.)

Duke: Get away, go on get away. Guess you need cooling down.

Dennis: Oh Dukey! Oh Dukey! Oh! (There's a splash as Dennis sits down in the wet. They laugh even more.)

Sullivan: What the hell do you men think you're doing. Come on up out of that. No, not you O'Brien, you can stay down, and get on with it. Now you two I'll give you one last chance.

Dennis: Here you aren't expecting John to dig that out by himself, are you?

Sullivan: That's what he's paid for. Anyway I have a good mate for him here.

Dennis: The dummy? That man's a head case, he shouldn't be working on the job at all.

Sullivan: Ah sure it'll be alright. Come on now lads, I'm putting you where you'll get plenty of hours. Go over to Gerry there he'll fix you up. Hey O'Brien, I'm sending you down some company. Only I wouldn't go talking union to him. He don't like it. (Drops voice.) Do you, Dum Dum? These union bastards tried to stop you working, didn't they? You'd better watch this one boy, he's very hot for the union. Very hot. He'll have you off the job if he gets his way.

Dummy: (Makes angry squeal and growl.) (Fade—Fade up sound of digging.)

John: Well, Dummy, you're going along like a house on fire. (Dig, dig.) You know you don't want to mind that Sullivan. Sure he's only trying to stir it between us. (The Dummy merely grunts and makes strange thick noises nothing like speech.) Ah, you poor bastard. It must be terrible when you can't communicate with anyone. You know there's nothing wrong with the union. If we ran the job sure we'd look after you. (Dummy growls threateningly.) O.K., O.K., forget it. (Starts to dig again. Dummy growls more angrily still.) Now, now there's no need to get your rag out. Get back. Let go of me. Let go. Oh God, he's gone mad. (Strangling noises from John fade out. Fade up hum of talk.)

Dennis: It's alright, he's coming round. (Moan from John.) Look at you lying down on the job again.

John: I thought I'd had it. Everything went black.

Dennis: Yeah, it's a good job I came back for my shovel, else I reckon you would have. Dukey, did you get a drop of brandy from the office. That Sullivan ought to be arrested. He did that deliberately, set the dummy on to you, didn't he? How do you feel now, can you stand O.K.? Well, what are you going to do. Jack it in?

John: Not bloody likely. I'll get even with him, if it's the last thing I ever do. You leaving?

Dennis: Well . . . I don't want to miss any fun do I? What about you, Dukey? (Fade—Fade up an office, typewriter in background.)

Brown: . . . so I've arranged with the concrete people to hold off for a few days to give you time to get the footings out. Now look, Sullivan, I've worked out the schedules for the next month, and we must stick to them. If we get behind head office will be down on us like a ton of bricks, and I'm not taking the can back, Mick.

Sullivan: Nobody's ever had to take the can back for me, Mr. Brown.

Brown: No, you've been lucky, you've

never had O'Brien on a job before. He should never have been taken on in the first place.

Sullivan: O'Brien doesn't worry me. I can deal with that bucko.

Brown: That's just what you're not going to do. One more incident and we'll have the whole job out. (Knock at door.) Come in, O'Brien. Carry on then, Mick. I'll see you later.

Sullivan: Excuse me Mr. Brown but . . .

Brown: I said I'll see you later. (Door slams.) Now, O'Brien, do take a seat. Miss Slater do you think you could find us two cups of tea. Good girl. Now.

John: Well, I've just come from a site meeting, and there are a couple of things they asked me to put to you.

Brown: Ah yes, but before we get to that, O'Brien, let's just have a chat. Man to man, you know. We're both reasonable men. Both got a job to do and it's quite essential for the job that we two should pull together.

John: The men . . .

Brown: Did you know that I'm a union man myself?

John: No? What branch?

Brown: Oh, I'm only a card holder, but it does mean I can see both sides. Cigarette?

John: No thanks.

Brown: . . . So you see, I want you to know that if there's anyway at all that I can help you. Well, I'm always here. And between you and me if you play your cards right you could do yourself a lot of good here. This firm are always on the look out for live wires. That's how I came up myself.

John: Mr. Brown I represent the men, you represent the employer and that's that. Now the men have called for a twenty per cent standing bonus for the whole site.

Brown: (Laughs ruefully.) You mean they want a twenty per cent pay rise? I'm afraid that's out of the question. The bonus will have to be earned, every penny of it. I can assure you we'll pay a standing bonus. Anything else?

John: A full time safety officer appointed by us. In our opinion this site is unsafe. In many instances the safety regulations are being completely ignored.

Brown: Safety! Don't make me laugh. Since when were these people concerned with safety. There are safety helmets slung away all over this site. The men won't wear them. This is simply a device to interfere with production.

John: Production is your concern Mr. Brown. It's my job to look after the welfare of the men, and that includes safety, proper lavatories and a decent canteen.

Brown: For God's sake man. It's give, give, give from us all the time, and what are we to get in return? Nothing. Unless we get production we can't give anything. Look, to get this job we had to cut the price to the absolute bone. Here's the bill of quantities, look for yourself.

John: I'm not interested in that. It's the same old story. The poor builders always going broke; your profits for last year were over five million, and we've got no shares in this company. When this job is finished we'll walk away with nothing to show but blisters.

Brown: Blisters! Hah! Now look here. Take this bill of quantities and if you can see where we can afford concessions I'll be only too glad to listen. (John flings papers down.)

John: You can cut out that malarky. You know damned well I'm not a surveyor. I'm not concerned with your troubles.

Brown: No, of course you're not, because you're just a communist agitator, you don't want to see peace on the job.

John: These are the men's own demands.

Brown: Don't give me that; I know what goes on. We don't have this trouble on our other sites.

John: My politics have nothing to do with you. If I were a true blue Tory, the men's grievances would still be there. Anyway, I have to report back. What do I say?

Brown: (Sighs impatiently.) Look, I'll alter some of the targets and they'll have to give the scheme a fair trial. As to safety, you already have a safety officer.

John: Sullivan you mean! That's ridiculous. He's all out for production. The two things are opposite.

Brown: That's my last word.

John: Very well, but it won't rest there, you know that. (Fade—Fade up sound of bricks at work.)

Sausage: (Whistling to himself.) (Tap, tap.) (Stretches and sighs.) Well that's another bit done.

Brickie: Yep another lift and we're in money.

Sausage: God, you've got eyes like cash registers.

Brickie: It's alright for you, Sos. Your kids are out graft. I've got to make a bonus to live at all. God! Look at this! No bricks again. (Shouts angrily.) Come on with those bricks, can't you?

Tip: (Shouts from below.) Shut up!

What do you think I am. A bloody grey-hound?

Brickie: Layabout more like.

Sausage: You've had it now, he won't take that. (Sound of feet running up stairs.)

Tip: What did you call me?

Brickie: Never mind all that. Let's have some bricks up here, we're just standing about losing money.

Tip: I've just about had enough of this. I'm tearing about like a looney trying to keep the three of you going. You want to try a bit of it yourself. Loading up at the bottom and running up to unload. It was you who wanted to try and manage with one labourer to bump up the bonus.

Brickie: Listen, when you can put down a thousand a day you can do it, and I'll labour on you. Anyway why don't you send more up? If you doubled up the load you wouldn't have to run up and down so much.

Sausage: Now hold on. There's a limit to what that hoist'll carry.

Tip: I don't care. I will double load it if that's what you want. Why should I worry. If it breaks down I'll get a breather. (Hooter.) Anyway there's the tea break. (Fade—Fade up the canteen.)

John: How's it going Sos.

Sausage: (Sitting down with a sigh.) I'm getting a bit old for this bonus lark.

John: Well mind yourself. There's no sense killing yourself.

Sausage: Well I've got to make a show, haven't I, after speaking out against bonus, otherwise they'd think I was trying to sabotage it or something. Anyway we've got enough trouble—they're at each other's throats.

John: Ah well it won't go on much longer. I heard the bonus is down again this week.

Sausage: Well we told them it was a fiddle, they wouldn't listen. Here who's this. Looking for the office mate.

Rat Catcher: No, no, I'm alright. This is the canteen I gather?

Sausage: That's what they call it my old fruit.

Rat Catcher: Well I'm from the Council. We've had a complaint from the local residents about rats coming off this site. We usually find them round the canteen looking for grub. Seen any about?

Dennis: What. My friend they hold meetings in here.

Sausage: Do me a favour, no self respecting rat would eat in here. If you're looking for rats, you'd better start . . . If you're going to put down rat poison you'd better start in the office. We've got the biggest rat of all up there. (Laughter.)

Dennis: Here John, have you heard anything about the bonus.

John: Well I don't think you'll be needing any sack to carry it home in.

Sausage: What are you worried about bonus for. You've got more fiddles going than Mantovani. It's no wonder the country's in the red, with people like you about.

Dennis: People like me, that's a laugh. Why should the rich have all the fiddles. You've got to fiddle otherwise you've got no chance. They've got you all ways. If I work a weekend, they take it all in tax. If you want to run a car, and have a bit of life you've got to fiddle.

John: Yeah, but it's no solution. The only answer is for the working man to take over altogether.

Dennis: You must be joking.

John: Why?

Dennis: Well, in the first place it could never happen.

John: What about Russia?

Dennis: Come off it John. If you was in Russia, you'd be the first to be shot for agitating.

John: But if we had a proper socialist government I wouldn't need to be an agitator. We wouldn't need to fight for a fair whack.

Dennis: That'd be the day. Tell me this then. Does a Russian brickie get the same wages as a ballet dancer or a professor, or a member of Parliament?

John: That's not the point . . .

Dennis: It is to me. No, the only hope for a grafter is a good fiddle, and I don't care what name the bosses go under.

Tip: I agree with him John. It's all the one to us whose in power. You know there was an election one time in our place back home. Well this old man was breaking stones by the road, you know, the way they do back yonder, and he stops this rich man on a horse and he says, 'Could you tell me sir, who won the election?'. 'Why do you ask?', says the rich man, 'It's immaterial to you, because whoever won you will still be here breaking stones tomorrow'. (General agreement.)

Dennis: Aye, aye, who's this?

John: (Receding.) I think he's looking for me. (Approaching.) What the hell do you want coming in here like this? The lads are wondering who the hell you are.

Party man: Well introduce me, I've got nothing to hide.

John: Ah no, I don't think it'd go down too well at the moment. I wish you'd see me at home really. I'm in the middle of building up the union. I can't push myself as a communist yet.

Party man: This divorce between trade union and political activity is all wrong. It's . . . backward. You must show the face of the party. Look, I've brought you some leaflets and recruiting forms. See if you can get rid of them, and by the way, it's time you attended a local branch meeting.

John: Yes, I should have been along. I'll try to make it this week.

Party man: Good man. Make the effort and try to bring some of your mates. Cheerio.

Dennis: (Calling.) Who was that then John? Looking for a start, was he?

John: Ah no, no.

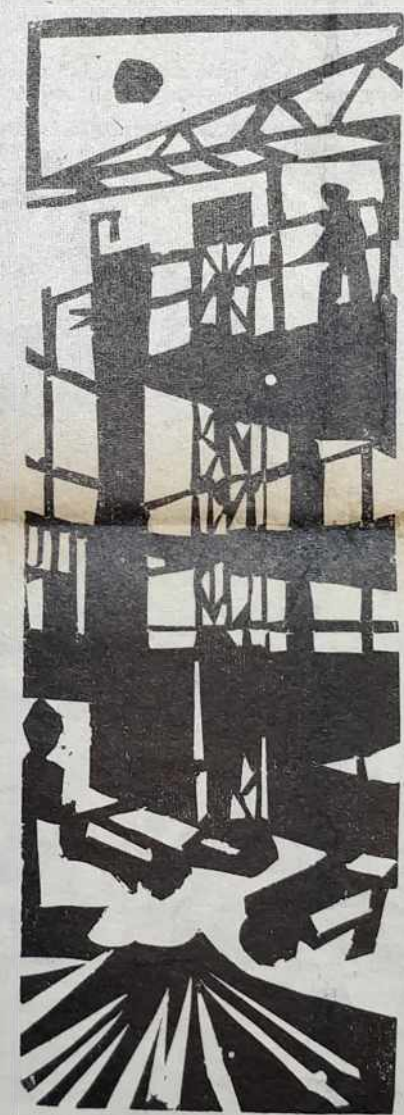
Dennis: Good job, looks like some of a snooper to me. I thought my wife had caught up with me for a minute. (Laughter. Hooter fade. Fade up on the scaffold.)

Brickie: Pick up that corner, Sausage, and I'll finish here.

Sausage: We'd better have a blow. Give Tipp a chance. We're running short on muck. (Buzz of hoist.)

Sausage: Here it comes. (Buzz gets louder. Then a crack and whine as platform slips back. Crash and cry. Hubbub of voices.) What happened Tipp.

Tip: I slipped, the hoist, and the barrow flew off and hit one of the chippies. Landed right across his back. (Sound of ambulance.) It was my fault, I had too much of a load on.



Sausage: Now, now . . .

Tip: (Shaken.) Do you think he is hurt bad. Oh God, I knew I was doing wrong when I did it.

Sausage: Yes, but if they'd had a proper safety gate round the hoist he wouldn't have been walking under it would he? You're not to blame, it's this bloody job. (Ambulance draws near and fades away.)

Sullivan: (Approach.) Come on now lads, break it up. Now come on. You won't do any good standing there. Get back to work.

John: Hold on lads. Back to work. Is that all you can think of? (Angry agreement from men.) Now who saw the hoist go? Jack? You, you and you. Right give me your names and addresses. We can't bring Harry back to life, nor give the boy back his fingers, but we must see to it that the union gets after this firm. We'll show them up for what they are.

Sullivan: O'Brien, you can get off this site, I've had enough of you. You're only using these men for your own game. Watch off.

Dennis: Clear it Sullivan, if he goes, we all go. (Shouts of yes from the men.)

Sullivan: Alright, clear off the lot of you. You're only a shower of dossiers. These bricks won't eat anything. I'll sack the lot of you. I'll have a new lot for Monday. (Men jeer and hoot.)

John: You won't have nothing, Sullivan. I'm going to tie this site up tighter than a mouse's earhole. The only thing you'll hear will be the sound of your own voice.

Sullivan: (Out of control.) Come on. (Shoves John.) Come on out of it. (Shoves John back.)

John: Get out of it, you great ape. Come on boys. (Men move off.)

Sullivan: Ape is it? I'll show you, you communist bastard. (Fade—Fade up sounds of woman humming as she lays the table. Key turns in lock. Door slams.)

Mary: Hello darling.

John: Hello love. Any post?

Mary: No, nothing today.

John: (Stretching and sitting down.) Kids asleep?

Mary: Mm. Here's your dinner. Cup of tea?

John: Lovely. Ahh. (Stretches contentedly.)

Mary: I took the kids over to Sheila's today.

John: Mm?

Mary: Yes, little Johnny was ever so good, he just sat and beamed all day. Oh, and Cindy recited 'Twinkle Twinkle' right to the end. She's growing up so fast, and you know what . . . (Fade—Fade up.) . . . and then we found her fast asleep behind the sofa with her arms round the cat. It's her birthday next week.

John: (Absently.) Mm?

Mary: (Exasperated grunt.)

John: Oh, her birthday, yes.

Mary: (Irritably.) Do try to curb your enthusiasm, dear.

John: Well, I've been at a strike meeting all day, I'm whacked.

Mary: (Sarcastically.) Oh well, you should have said. (She pours out a cup of tea and drinks.) (Sighs.) Their house does look lovely. They've had it done right through. New carpets, everything.

John: Who?

Mary: (Shrilly.) Sheila and Harry. Sheila had another new dress. I felt a terrible scruff.

John: Why?

Mary: (Really annoyed.) She said Harry can't understand why you don't make more of yourself, a man of your capabilities. Sheila said the union are looking for someone to send to Ruskin College on a scholarship. She said Harry had you in mind.

John: Ha, they needn't think they can get me off their backs that easy. We've got the union over a barrel in this dispute; they'll have to make it official. We had pickets from every big job in London down there today. I told that Sullivan nothing would move and it hasn't. We're having a meeting to hear the union officials Sunday, and they'd better come up with some help.

Mary: Oh, and you'll be on picket all day Saturday, I suppose?

John: I have to Mary, you know that.

Mary: John, I'm fed up. You're always at meetings—every blessed night of the week—Saturdays, Sundays.

John: Mary that's not true.

Mary: No? Well even when you are here, you're not actually with us. Your mind's always miles away.

John: Look, don't start that again. You knew what I was before you married me. You think I wouldn't like to relax, just shut the door and forget what goes on out there all day. The employers think we're dirt. If I've got to work in this industry the only way I can keep my dignity is to fight them. You know how it was in that factory, you felt it. Having to put your hand up to ask to go to the lavatory, getting locked out if you were ten minutes late in the morning. Remember when you were expecting and you were sick and they wouldn't let you go home?

Mary: I remember alright. It still make me burn.

John: Well there you are you see, and that's the kind of thing manual workers have to put up with all the time. People have no idea of the conditions we work in. Up to our knees in water, stacking freezing bricks till your hands are raw, working in a row of jack hammers for eight hours with your brains rattling in your head, and then they begrudge you a decent canteen. Remember that job where they tried to make us drink our tea out on the scaffold, in the middle of January? I'm tell you Mary, there's nothing to do but fight.

Mary: Oh, I suppose not, but . . .

John: You shouldn't keep visiting that pea-brained sister of yours, and that husband of hers is just using you to get at me. Would you like me to do what he's done? He's climbed his way up the union—a rebel and a fight—now look at him. Union house, union car, a regular wage twice the size of any building workers, and now the members can go and hang themselves. Sir Henry Grant. (Sings.) 'The working class can kiss my arse. I've got the foreman's job at last.'

Mary: But why does it have to be us going without all the time?

John: Mary, you can't be a part time

communist. It's got to be in or out. You know I'm surprised. Why don't you visit some of the party women instead of going round there letting them get you down. Why don't you go to Hetty's anymore? You used to enjoy that.

Mary: Listen, I'd rather be got at than patronised.

John: What?

Mary: Yes. Her house is all redecorated, too, you know, and they're going to Italy next summer. I met dear comrade Hetty this morning in the market. (She imitates a horsey upper class voice.) 'How's John, not on strike again, ha, ha, ha. Still I suppose it beats work.' Ha, ha. She sent me round some old clothes for the kids. No actual soup, just old cast offs. (Fade on her crying.) (Fade up sounds of a meeting in a crowded hall. A gavel bangs. Silence falls.)

John: Right now brothers. As you know, our local union official met with the site manager yesterday to settle for a return to work. Brother Walker.

Walker: Now lads, you know me, I'm one of yourselves. I know what it is to be struggling. A workers' life is a struggle from the day he is born to the day he dies. (Applause.) You know, and I know, there'll be no peace in this industry until it has been nationalised.

Brickie: Come on, what about the job?

Walker: Exactly, that's what we're here for. (Clears throat.) Now, I met Mr. Brown, the site agent yesterday, but I'm afraid I got very little change out of

me down to earth sooner or later. The management made it quite clear that if there is no sign of a return to work they'll shut the job down, and your cards and money will be in the post Monday morning. (Jeers and shouts.)

Brickie: We might as well pack it in then.

Dennis: Never! (Pandemonium reigns.)

John: (Sotto.) What the hell do you think you're up to, Walker? I told these men you were a party man. I promised them your support.

Walker: You had no right to.

John: We can't argue here. I'll see you in the cafe in five minutes. (Aloud.) Brothers! I propose we adjourn for a cup of tea, and meet back here to decide what to do. (Fade—Fade up a cafe.)

John: No sugar thanks.

Walker: Hey Johnny over here boy.

John: What the hell do you think you're up to.

Walker: What do you mean, boy?

John: What do I mean? You come down on the job, and tell the lads to get back to work when I'd told them you were a party member, and I'd promised them your support.

Walker: You had no right to do anything of the kind.

John: And you've got the cheek to call yourself a communist? I'm taking this up with the party. You should be thrown out on your ear.

Walker: Look here, boy.

John: Where's the boy? I don't see

another. And you had better watch out, because one of these days the workers are going to realise that they don't really need a load of parasites hanging round their necks, and when that day comes you're going to have to go out and work for a living. (Fade—Fade up.)

Mary: Goodnight Cindy. Light out now, darling. (Door bell rings. Door opens.) Oh hello Henry. Come in. John's not home yet.

Henry: Oh? What is it tonight then, area committee, branch meeting or the ginger group for the promotion of Chinese pig's bristles?

Mary: (Laughs.) No, it's something to do with the job, I think.

Henry: Oh, don't speak to me about that, Mary. He's riding for a fall you know.

Mary: But they went back to work didn't they? Don't tell me there's more trouble.

Henry: Afraid so. They went back to work, or I should say, they went back but not to work.

Mary: Mm?

Henry: They're on a go slow. You know John hasn't got a leg to stand on down there. As a matter of fact, I came here tonight to warn him—there's a lot of people think he should be slung out of the union.

Mary: And are you one of them?

Henry: Come off it Mary. He's only a tool of the Communist Party. They're not interested in winning strikes. It'd be bad news for them if the men ever

to here with strikes and trouble. I'd love to be an ordinary housewife, but as far as I can see John's got no alternative but to fight, he's stuck with it.

Henry: No, no, no. He's not stuck with it. He's cut out for better things than that. Look, there's men in this town who've been fighting like this for forty years. It doesn't do any good. You've just got to let things change gradually. Mary, can't you talk to him about this scholarship. I can't stall much longer—there's dozens of people would give their right arm for a chance to go to university. To get away from building and get three years free education. A second chance Mary... a new life. For God's sake neither of you are getting any younger. Think what it would mean for you and the kids.

Mary: He wouldn't do it... the party...

Henry: What about the party? You can be at university and still in the party, thousands do it. It's a damn sight easier for them, I can tell you. They can spout about the class struggle and the evils of capitalism till their chins drop off, and it doesn't cost them a penny. Why shouldn't you have a decent life. Do any of the party leaders put their kids to work in factories, not at all! Of course they won't want John to go because he's one of their contacts with the horny handed ones. Mary you'll find out some day, the class structure is as rigid in the party as it is anywhere else.

Mary: Don't worry I think I've been finding that out for myself already, only I couldn't put my finger on it. Still it's no use talking about it. He'll never change.

Henry: Believe me Mary, he will change, he'll fight and fight until he gets disillusioned like all the rest, only then he'll be too old to do anything, and he'll end up a sour old man afraid to face the truth, afraid to admit that he's wasted his life and yours too. Mary think of yourself. You've stood by him like a Trojan, but it's time you started thinking of yourself. You used to be such a light-hearted kid, always singing and larking...

Mary: Oh shut up. (Crying.) You don't understand... he's my husband, I've got to stand by him. He's got to fight for what he believes in.

Henry: Here now don't cry love, Mary, Mary. Here put your head on my shoulder. That's right. Go on have a good cry if you feel like it. I don't know, it's all very well to talk about barricades... if it came to that we'd all be there, even me... but to keep it up struggling and managing year in, year out, that's what really takes guts. (Door bangs open.)

John: What's this then?

There's a nice picture for a man to come home to.

Mary: Oh don't be stupid John. I was having a bit of a grizzle, and he was kind that's all. For goodness sake sit down and I'll get your dinner.

John: To hell with my dinner! What were you crying about?

Mary: I just felt fed up, that's all.

John: Oh did you? Well let me tell you—when you're fed up in future you come to me. Me, do you hear!

Mary: Do you mean to say you'd be interested. Do you mean to say you'd be able to drag your mind away from your strikes and your cronies, and their troubles, long enough to listen to mine. And what about the party? How would they get on.

John: I've left the party.

Mary: Say that again.

John: I've left the party.

Mary: Darling! Oh, I'll have to sit down. I can't believe it. Does it mean you'll go to Ruskin after all? Oh it'll be marvellous, no more scraping, no more strikes. I just can't believe it. Oh John!

John: Mary, you've got it all wrong. I didn't break with them over Ruskin.

Mary: I don't care. I don't care. I'll be able to start living again. (She hugs him.) Oh John, we've been drifting apart so long. I was beginning to think all the love was gone. You were bringing all the fights home with you, but now... You won't be fighting any more.

John: Mary, I'm not giving up the fight. I'm only just beginning. I've suddenly realised why the workers never seem to win. I can see it now. All the people who pretend to be leading us are crooks, cultures picking at our flesh. We haven't just got one set of exploiters, we've got dozens, only the workers don't see it yet.

Mary: And you are going to be the one to show them, I suppose. You're going to be the new Messiah. You're going to fight them all single handed. Who the hell do you think you are? Bloody David and Goliath? Why don't you face it, you've got visions of grandeur. You love fighting, love it. You never should have got married because you're incapable of love. Oh you kid yourself that your heart is dripping with love of humanity, you even convinced me till now, but the truth is you have to pretend to love humanity in general because you don't know how to love anyone in particular.

John: That's rubbish.

Mary: How do I know it's rubbish, it's obvious you don't love me or the kids, or you'd show a little concern for us now and again.

John: Mary, I do love you. You've never gone without. Anyway when we first met you were even more of a fighter



him. They refused point blank to negotiate on any issue until you chaps return to work. (Angry grumbling from floor.)

Brickie: So we're to go back with nothing. (Murmur. Murmur.)

Walker: I wouldn't exactly say that brothers. You've made your protest. The management know how you're feeling. Now the most realistic thing would be an orderly return to work, thus allowing negotiations to take place. (Shouts of no and grumbles from the crowd.)

Brickie: Brother Walker, you refer to our union, but why is it that we have to wait a month to get an organiser down on the job; but the management can get you down in five minutes. (Hear, hear from the men.) And furthermore, why wasn't the union in at the beginning of this job, securing proper conditions and safety measures, and thus avoiding all this trouble and loss of wages for the members. (Cheers.)

Walker: I resent that brothers. I have at least forty jobs to attend to besides this one. If the union doesn't give an adequate service, it's because there is too much apathy and too many non-union men in the industry. We're trying to do our job with one arm tied behind our back.

John: Brother Walker, with all due respect to your problem, our job is one hundred per cent Trade Union. This is your chance to show what you can do. To prove that it's worthwhile being trade unionists. We have struck for just demands—you don't deny this, so why in the name of God can you not declare this strike official?

Walker: That could well happen but according to the procedure in the rule book, the National Executive is the only body empowered to declare a strike official, and they don't meet again until March 31st, that is in two months time.

Voice: We'll all be skeletons by then.

Dennis: So, brother Walker, what you're really saying is that we can't possibly win. Would you mind telling me how you have the gall to stand there in our time, on our wages, and remember it is us that pay you—not the union executive, not the employers—but us, and tell us there's nothing the union can do when every man on this site knows that the bosses have only to pick up the phone to our union headquarters to arrange a meeting with our so-called leaders at an hour's notice. (Men shout and jeer.)

Walker: Now brothers, I appeal to you, you must allow...

Dennis: Brothers, I hereby propose that the union should sack all the officials and buy a dozen tape recorders saying—'Sorry lads, go back to work. Sorry lads go back to work, sorry lads go back to work'. (Roars of laughter.)

Walker: O.K., O.K. You'll have to

n: boy.

Walker: Alright, alright. Look I've done nothing out of line. I had a meeting with the industrial comrades last night, and they agreed with me that it would be foolish for me to jeopardise my official position by identifying myself with the strike. If I step out of line the union executive could have me out of it, and all our campaigning in the branches would be wasted.

John: You what! Listen, I didn't go speaking for you round all the branches so that you could sit on your backside in a union car when you were elected.

Walker: Well if you don't like it you'd better take it up with the party, but you'll find they back me. You've only been in the party five minutes, we don't undo years of steady work just for the sake of every hot-head that comes along. Look you can't win them all. Our main job is to show up the right wing. Winning or losing a strike, that's not the main issue.

John: No?

Walker: No. We've got to show the working class their so-called leadership is rotten, and to build up the party as a real leadership in the union.

John: And in the meantime we're all supposed to starve waiting for a bit of support while you pussy-foot around holding on to your little positions. Listen, I joined the party because I thought I could use it to fight for money and conditions. Not so it could use me. There are men out there with wives and kids, not puppets. All you care about is keeping your job.

Walker: I'm not afraid of losing this job, I can go back to the tools any day.

John: Back to the tools, you'd die first. It's well known none of you organisers ever go back to work, you always fix yourselves up with some cushy number, usually with the management, out of the cold, nice clean shirt, nice regular wage. It's easy seeing why you don't want to go out on a limb for us.

Walker: Now look here O'Brien I've had enough of this. I'm going to demand that the party give me some protection from this sort of thing from you. I'm not just anybody you know—the party only has three members in positions in the union. I shall ask for a disciplinary meeting to straighten you out.

John: Straighten me out? You make me sick, you and the party. Get away before I belt you. With friends like you and a union like this we don't need any enemies.

Walker: If you've got any sense, you'll get those men back to work before you cost them any more money.

John: You slimy little git. (Grabs Walker by collar.) You needn't think you can break my heart. If we can't win this fight one way we'll win it

could be contented; they're after power in the unions, just the same as the rest. This is a power struggle Mary. John and all the other men are just incidental, just so many pawns, but if he keeps on like this... Well, he's going to get hurt.

Mary: That sounds well coming from you Harry. You used to be a fighter yourself.



Henry: Yes, but things have changed since those days.

Mary: No Harry, it's you that's changed, things are hardly any different in the building industry. Although I dare say distance lends enchantment for you.

Henry: Oh now Mary...

Mary: Oh now nothing. I'm sick up

Henry: Nothing. Nothing at all. Mary was just feeling a bit low that's all.

John: And you just happened to be here I suppose. Well you can just get out of it. And if I catch you sneaking around here again, I'll swing for you.

Henry: Very well then. Goodnight Mary.

John: Get out of it! (Door bangs.)

than I was.

Mary: You're so blind! I'm a woman. I can't live on fighting, I need love. In any case how do I know you're not just out to use me and everybody else, just as the others are.

John: Why are you turning me into a monster all of a sudden. I can't wave a magic wand and make the world all

sweetness and light.
Mary: Yes you could, over my corner of it anyhow.
John: How?
Mary: By accepting that scholarship to Ruskin.
John: Never! Can't you see they're trying to buy me off. I'd be a traitor with no respect for myself, you'd despise me in the end as well as all the lads.
Mary: John, I'm serious now. If you don't take this chance, I'll...
John: You'll what?
Mary: I'll go, that's all. (Fade up building site.)

Sullivan: (Shouts.) Gerry! Come here!
Gerry: Mick?
Sullivan: Those men up there, they're scratching about like hens. It's bricks they're supposed to be laying, not eggs. I want that section finished this week.
Gerry: It won't be done next week, never mind this. I can't get them to move at all. (Sounds of men singing the death march getting nearer.)
Sullivan: What the hell's that? (Music gets louder.)
Gerry: See! That's how they've been acting all morning. Four men to carry each bag of cement, and your black hat on top of the bag. They're just taking the mickey. (Fade right up on singing. Let it recede.)

Sullivan: I'll give them the mickey.
Gerry: Hold on, hold on, you'd better leave it to Brown. Look here's a load of ready-mix coming. You'd better send it back, if they start sodding about they could waste the lot.
Sullivan: Send it back, indeed! I'll do no such thing, never! I'll spread it myself first. Come on. You men over there. I need you. (Fade—Fade up sound of lorry.)

Sullivan: Back a bit. Bit more— whoa! Right let her go driver. (Hiss of vacuum and slurp of cement.) Right you men. Let's get this spread before it goes off. Jack start the vibrator. Come on the rest of you start spreading. (Cement being laid.) Move can't you? (Grunting and panting, trying to do the work of four men.)

Dennis: Here, mind what you're doing. That's my foot.
Sullivan: If you can't work, don't be getting in my way. (Panting and gulping.) For God's sake, can't you see it's going off.

Dennis: Too bad.
John: See Sullivan, you may think we're dirt, but you can't get far without us.

Sullivan: Shut your mouth. Duke, bring me that float there. (Roars.) The float!

John: He can hear you.
Sullivan: Well, why doesn't he move?
John: He is moving, I can see quite clearly.

Sullivan: Is he in a trance or what. He looks like a man walking a tight rope.
Dennis: (Laughs.) That's what is known as the go slow walk.

Sullivan: This concrete is going hard while you're fooling about. (Sullivan is now beside himself.) Wait till I get at you. You mickey taking swine! (Sullivan wades across the concrete towards Duke.) I'll kill you. I'll kill you.
John: He's going off his head. Here hold on Sullivan. Dennis hold him, he's strong as a bull.

Sullivan: O'Brien, get out of my way. (Pause.) Alright, O'Brien, may be you can beat me with words, but man to man, you'll never get the better of me. Not seed, breed, nor ten generations of the likes of you.
John: Come on then.
Dennis: Don't John, he's got a shovel.
John: Well so what? I'm not afraid of him, the big ape. (Sound of fighting, clang of shovels, shoving and thuds. Sound of wood splintering.)

Sullivan: And now I'll finish you off with my bare hands. (Throws down shovel.) Now! (Sound of choking.) I'll bury you, you little Dublin Jackeen.
Duke: Drag him off, drag him off, he's mad.
Dennis: Let go Mick, oh God I can't shift him.
Duke: I'll get him round the throat. Come on man, that's it. (Sullivan let's go and stands by panting.)
Dennis: (Shakily.) You alright John? (John croaks and coughs.) Oh mate, I thought you'd had it.

Brown: What the hell's going on here Sullivan? I don't employ you to wallow about in concrete. Fighting's one thing I won't tolerate on my sites. It's too damn dangerous. I'm sacking the pair of you that's the fairest way out of it. Come to the office and collect your cards. Sullivan, do you hear me?
Sullivan: You can't sack me. The old man took me on before you were out of short pants.
Brown: I can sack you and I am sacking you. The old man's dead you fool. You've cost us too much with your ham-fisted idiocy.

Sullivan: I'll see the old man that's what I'll do, I'll go and see the old man.
Brown: Come back here you fool....
(Fade—Fade up a meeting.)

Henry: ... I'd be the last one to ask you to go back empty handed but the employers offer is very substantial...
Brickie: What about O'Brien?
Henry: ... a new canteen...
Brickie: What about O'Brien?
A voice: What about John?
Henry: ... new toilets and washing facilities. A standing bonus of three to four pounds on top of the basic rate. Now I'm sure that brother O'Brien himself would want you to think about this. After all, it's not long to Christmas when we all find an extra few bob comes in very handy.

Sausage: Come off it Harry. You and I have collared together before you went up in the world, and you know, and I know that this is all a load of cobblers. Never you mind about Christmas, and all that flannel. Every day should be Christmas for us, so come off it. I can go round to a shop and buy seven pounds of soft soap anytime I need it. This is just a blind to get rid of John here.

A voice: Brother Chairman! What's the good of us electing our leaders if we're not going to listen to them. I've a wife and children. It's alright for Sausage he's only got himself to keep. If the commission goes against brother O'Brien, we can come out again. In the meantime, as Brother Grant says, he will be on full pay.

Brickie: Scabby so-and-so.
A voice: Who said that? (Cries of

been doing it ever since. We need a union alright, but we haven't got one and we might as well stop kidding ourselves. If conditions are better on that site it's because of the men's own actions, and nothing to do with this ponce here...
Henry: Nonsense...
Sausage: ... all you've done is stepped in at the end, and sold O'Brien down the river.

Henry: That's up to the disputes commission. It's nothing to do with me.
Sausage: Don't give me that. You forget, I've seen more disputes commissions than you've had hot dinners. You'll have three employers' men and three union officials, sitting in the employers' federation office. Right? Coffee and cigars. Right? You'll gabble all day and then come to a 'No decision', which means that John's on the stones, or else they might offer him alternative employment in the Outer Hebrides. Either way he's had it because his name will be on the top of every blacklist in the country, and he'll never see the inside of another big site if he lives to be a hundred. (Fade—Fade up a pub.)

Mary: Hello John, sorry I'm late, the baby wouldn't go down.
John: That doesn't matter, as long as you came.
Mary: Well, how are you making out? I heard all about the job. They really did you dirt, didn't they?
John: That's the way it goes.
Mary: What are you going to do now?
John: What are you going to do is

Mary: Hello John, sorry I'm late, the baby wouldn't go down.

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John: That's the way it goes.

Mary: What are you going to do now?

John: What are you going to do is

down the road, and never a thought for their wives and children?

Sullivan: I never sacked anyone. I never hurt anyone. I've nothing on my conscience.

John: What? Hell's not hot enough to burn you.

Sullivan: (Weeps.) Oh son, oh missus, it's an awful thing when your luck's run out. I used to be lucky but now my luck is gone, all used up. (Speaks urgently.) Oh missus, this world is a tissue of lies. All a tissue of lies. It's beyond a simple man to know what's going on at all, and all the world is drowning and choking in lies. (Gets up and moves away.) Lies, lies.

Mary: John that was cruel!
John: I've no sympathy for him.

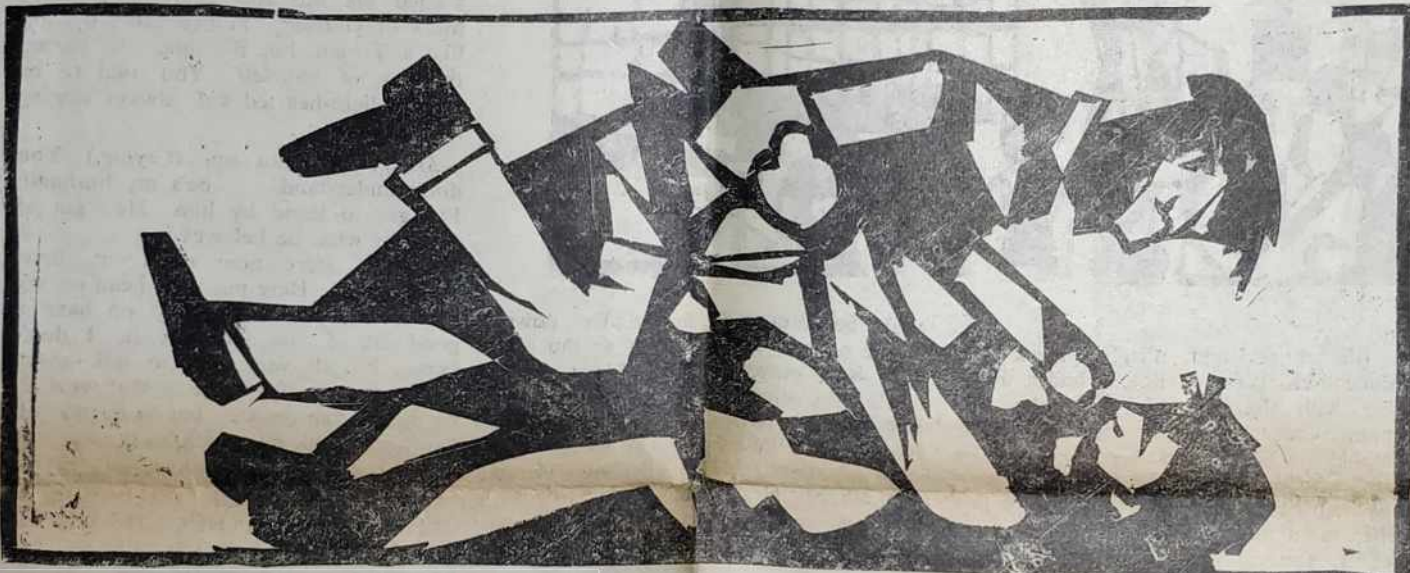
Mary: Ugh! It's not his fault, all that's happened to you. He's lost far more than you have. His life's shattered. You can't blame him because the union have chucked you out, and you're finished in building. It was inevitable.

John: Finished. Sure I'm not started yet. Mary, I'm going to start a new union.

Mary: (Laughs disbelievingly.) Oh for God's sake.

John: That's what this industry needs. A new union that's going to fight, go after money and conditions, and leave politics alone. I've thought it all out, this lot are like the dinosaur, they belong to another age. They were alright when we were looking for free soup with begging bowls, but those days are gone. There's big money being made and we need a union that's going to fight for a share of it. Fight power with power.

Mary: Power! I hope the day never comes when you do have any power.



sit down, get stuffed, shut up, we need the money—uproar.)

John: Now please brothers! We've been united all along. Let's keep it that way. (Hubbub dies away.) I think there should be a resumption of work. I can doss for three weeks. We don't want to lose all we've won so far. I move that we put it to the vote. (Fade—Fade up a pub.)

Gerry: Yes I must say Mr. Grant, you spoke very well indeed, really carried the meeting.

Henry: Please not Mr. Brother surely. Ah, here's O'Brien and some of the lads. Excuse me. (Fade up pub sounds.) What are you having lads?

John: Nothing for me, thanks.
Sausage: I'd rather buy my own if you don't mind Henry.

Henry: Don't be like that, Sausage.
Sausage: Well, I am like that. I've never taken the bosses' money yet, and I'm too old for the House of Lords now anyway.

Henry: What do you mean?
Sausage: You know what I mean Henry lad. Have a nice meal with Jacobs, did you?

Henry: What?
Sausage: I thought so. Written all over your face.

Henry: I can meet who I like, where I like, on union business.

Sausage: You're supposed to be our servant, not theirs. We pay your wages.
Henry: (Dry laugh.) Ha. You do, do you. Well there are two hundred thousand members in this union. I reckon your share of my wages is about a penny. So, if you're not satisfied, here's your money back. (Throws a penny on the table.)

Sausage: Very clever Henry. But then you were always clever. Too clever for your own boots. I worked hard to get you elected. You forget I toured every branch in the London area, night after night. Look here, my union card, fully paid up. I wouldn't like to think how many shillings I've paid up over the years, but no more. (He tears up his card.)
John: I'm sorry you did that Sausage. We must have a union. If it's wrong, it's up to us to change it.

Sausage: Now look here, John. I'm getting too old to stomach any more lies. You'll never change it. The leaders sold us out in the general strike, and they've

more to the point.

Mary: (Hopelessly.) Oh I don't know.
John: You can't be happy at your mother's...

Mary: But do you really want us.
John: I never wanted you to go. It... it's horrible in the flat without you. (Mary is crying quietly.)

John: Oh, come on now say you'll come. I do really want you, you know that.

Mary: (Blowing her nose.) Oh dear!
John: That's better. Dry your eyes and I'll get you a drink. (Recede through pub and approach.) Here you are, I got a double to celebrate. When will you come home? Tonight? We could go and get the kids now.

Mary: (Laughs.) Do you mind I'm not dragging them out now. I've only just got them down. Anyway I think I'll give you time to do a bit of clearing up, I dread to think what the flat looks...
John: (Cuts in.) By the Lord Harry will you look at that!

Mary: What?
John: It's Mick Sullivan.

Mary: But they said he was in the mad house.
John: He is supposed to be. He keeps forgetting who he is, perhaps they let him out just for the day. But the change in him. It's beyond belief. He hadn't a grey hair in his head before. He's turned into an old man.

Mary: Sssh. He's coming over.
Sullivan: (Sitting heavily.) Do you mind if I sit here, lady?
John: Hello there Mick.
Sullivan: Er er, I don't know you mister, do I?

John: Well you used to know me well enough. How's she cutting anyway.
Sullivan: Ah it's me legs. The doctors say there's nothing wrong with them, but I know better. It's the flames of hell reaching up round my poor legs. It's the devil has his hands on me and I'm burning, burning. Why does this happen to a man?

John: It must be something you've done; some crime you've committed.
Sullivan: (Break in his voice.) That's an awful thing to say to a man, and me with all these worries. I never did any harm to any man.

John: Oh no!
Mary: John! Leave the poor man alone.

John: Look here Sullivan, do you ever think of any of the men you sent

Not if your treatment of that poor man is anything to go by.

John: Mary?

Mary: I can see now it would be useless us trying to start again.

John: Why?

Mary: Because... Oh, I can't put it into words. You're so hard, with yourself and everybody else.

John: You've got to be hard, the employers are hard, life's hard.
Mary: Yes, but you won't make it any better. I mean, well if you don't care about sick people and little children and... weak people, like me, what's it all about—what are you fighting for?

John: Who says I don't care about little children.

Mary: But I can only go by what you do. Not what you say. I mean Hitler used to kiss the little children but it didn't stop him putting them into gas chambers.

John: So I'm like Hitler, am I?

Mary: No, of course not but... well you've turned into a politician somehow.
John: (Laughs bitterly.) Now you're really getting insulting. Anyway if you feel like this, if you're so sure I'm a monster in the making...

Mary: I'm not sure you are but are you sure you're not?
John: Ha, I married a monster by Mary O'Brien. Look here, if you've just come here to bring me down...

Mary: Oh John.
John: Go, get away from me.

Mary: (Weeping.) Oh John. (Fade—Fade up sounds of a pub at closing time. 'Time please', singing, etc.)

John: (Drunkenly.) Ah, give us another, Mack. Just one. Sure it can't be closing time yet.

Barman: Sorry John, time to go. Anyway you're well steamed up as it is.

John: No, I'm not. Look straight at a die. Ooops!
Barman: Come on, I'll see you to the corner. Ready?

John: Don't tell me you'd walk with a monster. Did you know I was a monster. Did you? (Door open. Sound of cars swishing by on wet road and John declaiming.)

John: Peace be onto you great monsters. Here, is that the gents? I'll have to go. Hee, hee, when you've got to go, you've got to go.
Barman: O.K. Mind how you go. See

you John. (Fade—Fade up sound of water and John singing to himself, sound of footsteps on metal stairs.)

Man: Got a light mate?
John: Surely. (Match struck. Then a fist blow.)

Man: Now what else have you got in your pocket?

John: Eh you louser! Looking for a fight? Well that suits me. (Hits the man.) I'll teach you.

Man: (Shouts.) Help us you two, he's cutting up. (Two men clatter down the stairs.)

Scott: Teach us as well, will you.
John: What's this? All the sewer rats coming out tonight?

Scott: Mouthy Mick! Get him boys. (Blows and fierce fighting.)

Scott: That's it. Hold him now, hold him.

Sullivan: (From top of stairs.) What's this. Leave that man alone. (Running down stairs.) (Steps running away up the stairs.) That's right, run you skunks. (Heavy breathing.) You alright John. Come here to the basin and I'll wash your face, it's an awful sight. Still we showed them, the dirty animals. That's it now. Can you make it up the stairs. (They struggle up.) Here sit a minute till you get your breath.

John: I declare to God, Sullivan, I never thought to see you helping me.

Sullivan: Sure if I was human at all I couldn't leave you to the likes of them.
John: But the things I said in the pub.

Sullivan: Were you in the pub then... I don't remember. Ah, but I don't remember anything half the time. I'm getting better though. No, the last I saw of you was on the job after the fight.

John: Ah well, it doesn't matter. It was still decent of you to pile in when you did. Especially after we cost you your good job and all. I'd have thought you'd hate me to the last.

Sullivan: Ach, that was all in the heat of the battle. Hate? What's the good of hate. Can you walk on a bit. Ah, you're right as rain now. (They walk.) Well now, how's the family John?

John: Alright I suppose. I've split up from my wife you know.

Sullivan: Lord, that's bad news alright.
John: She left me. Oh I don't blame her.

Sullivan: Ah the poor creature. All she wants is a bit of peace I suppose.

John: (Sighs.) Oh, I don't know.

Sullivan: You know John in many ways you remind me of myself as a young fellow. I had this terrible strength. I felt as if I could do everything single handed. Change things, move things. I wanted all the others to just clear out of the way, and let me at it. Only with me it was building sites, with you it's the world.

John: Well I have to fight. The working man's got no chance.

Sullivan: Of course you have to. Same as I have to shove my job son, pushing and shouting. If I had my time all over again I don't suppose I'd be any different, but still I wish I could have been gentler. After all, here I stand tonight with nothing, not chick nor child.

John: But the world is such a mess. Everything's so unfair.

Sullivan: There's no man could deny that but, well, it's been a long time in the making, and when you look back surely we're only like little hens scratching and pecking about. Is this where you live, I'll leave you here, I have to get back to the hospital.

John: The hospital. It must be very hard to go back to that place.

Sullivan: No. I might as well be there as any other place. What's the good of an empty house? Good night to you John.

John: Goodnight. (Fade—Fade up the sound of a ticking clock. A key turns in a lock. A cat meows and the door opens and shuts.) (Yawning.) What a night! (Shivers.) It's cold in here. Hey the light's on in the bedroom. It must be Mary. She came back. (Runs to bedroom and flings open door.) Mary! Ach I left the light on myself. Oh God! I thought... (Cat meows.) Ah kitty, I'd better set to work on this place. We can't bring them home to this mess, sure we can't. And home they're coming. I don't rightly know where I go from here, but wherever it is I'll not leave them behind. From now on it's got to be the four of us... together always.

THE END.

Further copies of 'The Wild Cat' available from Freedom Press 17a Maxwell Road London SW6 Price 6d. (plus postage)

Alberola and the Bomb Attacks

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous
fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them.

THIS QUOTATION from 'Hamlet' was appended to the letter the First of May Group sent to the Agence France Presse for transmission to the Pentagon and White House Killers. The letter itself claimed responsibility for the bomb attacks, on various embassies and on an American officers' club, that took place on March 2 and 3 in London, Turin and The Hague.

The letter accused the Pentagon and the White House of being the 'main supporters of the Greek, Spanish and Portuguese dictatorships'. It accused them of playing the same part as the Nazis did during the Spanish civil war, experimenting with modern military techniques upon the civil population in Vietnam. 'But be sure, free men will stay careless no longer in front of your crimes'.

The letter was eventually printed in *The Times* with an accompanying detailed article which sketched in the past activities of the Group. Although the letter does not mention Alberola, the article specifically does, making him the leader of the group.

Although the article is attributed to

and by 'the News Team' it was written and put together by one reporter, Steve Clarke, who had spent four months on the story.

I met him in the company of Stuart Christie and two other friends on the night the story appeared to find out who gave him the information about Octavio Alberola's status in the group. To our knowledge Alberola has never claimed to be a member of the First of May Group, but that of the FIJL. Mr. Clarke admitted that this was 'intelligent guess-work' on his part.

We told him that although the rest of his article was perceptive, and his references to Louis Edo were much appreciated by us, nevertheless, attributing leadership to Alberola, who was in prison, and by associating him with the present bomb attacks, was putting Alberola in grave danger.

Nevertheless Steve Clarke's article understood the operational strategy and tactics of the First of May Group with uncommon clarity.

We now know more as to the circumstances of Alberola's arrest. He entered Belgium illegally and was arrested. His mission to Belgium was to intercede with a Spanish High Official for the release of anarchist prisoners in Spain. He had planned also to have presented the Official from a Trade Delegation with a

document of conditions in Spanish prisons, which Alberola hoped the Official would sign.

The Times article assumed that the group was trying to show that Alberola's arrest did not affect their militancy. It is

symptomatic of the First of May Group, Revolutionary Solidarity Movement, that even if it campaigns for a limited objective, it tries not to lose sight of a wider area of battle.

FREEDOM REPORTER.

Anarchist Black Cross

NO FURTHER CHARGES have been brought against Octavio Alberola who is awaiting trial in the Forêt prison except those of using an assumed name and false documents. According to a Reuter report on Saturday evening it is expected by government officials that our Comrade will be deported. If this is so we must use every means possible to prevent the deportation of Alberola (probably to Mexico) as the agents of the American, Spanish and French governments have tried before, and no doubt will try once again, to rid themselves of one of the most militant and outstanding anarchists of this decade.

Money is urgently needed to bring Alberola's wife and children to Brussels from Mexico, as he is being held incommunicado by the Belgian Government. A lawyer has been appointed and has spoken to him and it is intended to fight the deportation order if sought.

Postal Orders and Cheques payable to

The Anarchist Black Cross, c/o Libra House, 256 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

EDO TRANSFERRED

Comrades Luis Andres Edo and Miguel Garcia Garcia have been taken to the prison hospital of Yeserias in Madrid for operations and immediate medical treatment. Was this the result of the article in the *Observer*? Postcards and food parcels should be sent to: Hospital Penitenciario de Yeserias, Madrid.

FOOD PARCELS

Parcels have been sent to Soria, Burgos, Jaen and Alcala de Henares.

We hope to send more parcels shortly to the comrades arrested in Japan three weeks ago, and to the prison of La Cabana, in Cuba, where a number of comrades are rotting away their lives for opposing Cuban State Capitalism and attempting to turn the 'revolution' into a social revolution.

SECRETARY.

Integrating Intellectuals

IN *Intellectuals Today* (Chatto & Windus, 30/-), T. R. Fyvel, a man describing himself as a European writer who is now in his late fifties, presents edited versions of conversations with intellectuals. Who are they?

By the narrow definition, which I rather like, an intellectual is a person who is fascinated by general ideas and wants them to be as interesting and influential as possible. Well and good, but broadly we are also beginning to have to use 'intellectuals' in the way the Communists do, as a professional term for the strata of the higher academics, the scientists and teachers, the researchers and top administrators, the writers, broadcasters and other communicators, who even in Britain are forming a definable intellectual class, and especially among the young emerging as a new technical 'intelligentsia'.

In his introduction to the interviews Mr. Fyvel suggests that intellectuals have developed from their social alienation in the twenties through a period of political opposition in the thirties to integration with society and the state in the fifties and sixties. The Second World War to Mr. Fyvel seems like an experiment in what could be called the 'socialization' of British intellectuals—a sort of rehearsal for their integrated role in the affluent society of today.

According to Mr. Fyvel this integration is shown by the increased numbers of academics and technically qualified men in Britain today and by the transformation of intellectual jobs:

Today 90 per cent of writers are essentially literary technicians, turning out a precisely requisitioned product for advertising, for magazine, film or television editors, taking their work and status as part of a technical team for granted.

It would be difficult to challenge Mr. Fyvel's claim that there are now more highly educated and trained people in Britain than ever before—and that they are working with the system. You do not have to be an intellectual to observe that in general the intellectuals do what they're told—whether they are doing research on germ warfare at Porton or making television commercials.

But *Intellectuals Today* is a massive over-simplification. Mr. Fyvel makes no mention of the New Left or *Private Eye*. He ignores the fact that the widespread employment of intellectuals by institutions like the BBC has led to the occasional dissemination of ideas which are clearly subversive.

He mentions the British *avant-garde* in the theatre, films and television, referring to its commercial success, but he seems not to appreciate that the work of writers like John Osborne has affected—and reflected—the thinking of an entire generation.

The questions Mr. Fyvel asks his intellectuals—and his editing of their replies—indicate his political views:

Then how do you explain the emotionalism which has turned the old Left-wing movements into movements of protest in which young people in this safe age—safe in the West—behave as though they were still looking for violence?

Mr. Fyvel dismisses or ignores tendencies which contradict his main thesis. His only reference to the Vietnam war which has alienated so many intellectuals is to be found in a footnote.

Mr. Fyvel has written a book which will probably be bought by many of the people it purports to describe. But they will be disappointed if they expect to be challenged, shocked or stimulated by the author's ideas.

PISSPOT?

An example of collaboration by intellectuals with the system was reported in *The Times* last week:

Home Office scientists have been puffing Indian Hemp to help police detect people who have been smoking it illegally.

Experiments at the Home Office Central Research Establishment laboratories here are aimed at finding a foolproof method of tracing cannabis in samples of urine.

WYNFORD HICKS.

stand this time, and they ask for as much outside support as possible. I hope many anarchists will be ready to defend this elementary right of human beings to live.

Phone Gratton Puxon at 01-349 9427 if you can help in this struggle for freedom and social justice.

M.M.

ORGANISATION & RESPONSIBILITY

ON MANY occasions the respectable press (to which must be added so-called left-wing papers) aim point-blank at the anarchist movement, having on hand a cliché, according to which anarchism is identified exclusively with the nihilist and individualist type, who is rooted in the position of a total break with all society, and deeply attached to romantic and messianic dreams of social regeneration.

We must recognize that international anarchism still drags along with it a minority who are deeply attached to romantic 19th century individualism (which, for that matter, was reasonable enough when society was still individualist, based on small-scale production, agriculture, etc.), but who are not at all disposed to face the processes of the technical and industrial transformation of present day society, where problems are posed at the communal level, and not on an individual scale.

In the present century, anarchism must honestly recognize these problems, from the time of the Russian revolution onwards, and also as a result of analysis of anarchist achievements during the Spanish revolution.

There is a widespread opinion among the 'bien pensants' that modern society, characterised by the race for profit and greater consumption, has made a *tabula rasa* of all social ideologies. This hope

has, however, already been contradicted by reality, for instance in view of the appearance of the international 'Provo' movement, largely inspired by anarchist tenets. This is very disappointing for the obituary writers of the anarchist movement.

Modern anarchism is fully cognizant of the profound social transformations at present taking place and, unlike other ideologies with a more or less dogmatic basis, faces up to contemporary developments with a praxis that is both nonconformist and undogmatic.

The task of the individual in the community is to elaborate new forms of organisation, of an anarchist nature, in which, as distinct from authoritarian structures in which the individual is treated as an object without personality, he will be able to fully develop his own personality in harmony with the vital needs of communal life.

I agree that present-day psychological and objective conditions, charged with a thousand years of authoritarian conditioning and suggestion make the penetration of revolutionary ideas difficult, but these do advance steadily whenever the anarchist movement shows liveliness and tenacity. Despite the 'bien pensants' who like to think of anarchism as a relic of the past, this movement is, on the contrary, more likely to make progress in an atmosphere of continually rising cultural levels and cultural expansion.

Therefore it seems that a fundamental need for anarchist organisation and structure is individual responsibility within the framework of the community, and anarchist efforts at self-regulation should have the adherence of all those intellectual sections of society who are sensitive to this problem and who are able, in some degree, to help the slow evolution of the people.

But, unfortunately, we see intellectuals of undoubted quality and integrity (such as Giorgio Bocca in a recent enquiry on 'the problem of youth' in *Il Giorno*) speak of the 'anarchist delinquency' of certain juvenile groups, using just the same catch-phrase as some illiterate police-officer.

It is evident that the profit-and-consumption society, which is at present in full swing, will be hostile to all those social forces which struggle to liberate mankind from an environment which, in contradiction with the needs of a technical-industrial society, is still based on individualism and not at all on communal foundations. This leads to grave moral degeneration as a result of the race after money, and to a widespread social irresponsibility on the part of the individual, who still sees all his problems on a purely individualist basis, and has not been educated to a mentality which should be, not only international, but cosmic.

From *Umanita Nova*
tr. j.w.s.

Exposing 'Social Security'

Dear Comrades,

An article published recently in the *Guardian* drew attention to the degrading rituals which attend the dispensation of so-called 'Social Security' in this country. This, and the letters which followed it, indicate that it is time the liberal bourgeoisie were told something of what it feels like to be at the receiving end of the 'Welfare' State.

Would anyone co-operate with me in an exposure project? I am not especially well qualified to do much of the work myself, and would like to hear from others who could help, in particular

anyone who works or has worked in one of these offices. (Strict confidence, in all cases, will of course be preserved.) And please, will anyone with any experience of the various State 'Welfare' Services write to me, whether what they know is good or bad. So much seems to depend on the local officers with their almost dictatorial powers over people who believe themselves to be defenceless.

For example, I know of a man in a high unemployment area who was threatened with prosecution by the local Ministry of Social Security for failure to maintain his wife and child, after a grand total of three weeks out of work. Yet many comrades have lived off national assistance for years with no difficulty. It is possible we will find that the attitude of the officials varies with

the awareness and articulateness of the victim.

This is in the nature of a 'feeler'; if there is any kind of response or interest, I'd like eventually to use the information collected as a starter for a wider campaign—against petti-fogging officialdom, cheeseparing bureaucrats, and indeed any part of the State apparatus (particularly the Welfare fraud) you care to suggest.

Fraternally,
PATRICK,
c/o Freedom Press.

'Front for the VSC'

Comrades,

The Northern Universities Vietnam Action Co-ordinating Committee is a front for the VSC; this is the only national organisation directly represented on it. Anyway, it doesn't really matter as NUVACC only represents itself, total rank and file being about twenty spread over half England (York Vietnam Group is merely holding a watching brief as we hold NUVACC in contempt).

YORK. NIGEL WILSON.

Continued Harassment of Gypsies

LAST FRIDAY MORNING at 7.30 a.m. the men of Redbridge Council and Police turned up to evict the Gypsies at Woodford Bridge Road, Redbridge, Outer London.

With no outside witnesses present, the Gypsies were reluctant, due to past experience, to take on these authorities, and agreed to move to a site 1 1/2 miles away (Forest Road, Fairlop, near Fairlop Tube and half a mile out into the country), on a verbal assurance from a Council official that they would be allowed to stay there, the duration of the stay being left rather vague. The Gypsies are determined to make a

JOHN RETY.

FACTORY FOR PEACE

FACTORY FOR PEACE (the Rowen Engineering Co. in Glasgow), which was founded with the support of anti-military organisations, has now accepted the backing of the Scottish Nationalist Party, regardless of the fact that the SNP 'accepts that Scotland will require defence forces which will have to be equipped'.

An appeal sponsored by the SNP for funds for a second Rowen factory in Scotland is now well under way. An article commending the appeal signed by William Wolfe, Home Secretary in the SNP 'Shadow Cabinet' appears in the February 17 issue of the *Scots Independent*.

Amongst the original sponsors of the 'Factory for Peace' were the Iona Community and the Scottish Committee of 100. These connections are now indignantly denied.

Eighteen months ago Walter Morrison was dismissed from the Factory for Peace, when he protested, that the factory was manufacturing heaters for a possible use for H.M. Forces.

Now with the peace movements'

MOVING FUND

Target is £500.
Received to Date—£369 8s. 4d.

PREMISES FUND

Target is £1,000 per year.
Pledges received to date—£395 18s. 0d.
Pledges honoured to date—£287 9s. 9d.

Slipping!

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Estimated Expenses:	
10 weeks at £90:	£900
Income: Sales and Subs.:	£720
DEFICIT:	£180

PRESS FUND

Oxford: Anon* 5/-; London: J.F.M. 11/6;	
Cambridge, Mass.: J.S. 7/-; Wolverhampton: J.K.W.* 2/-; J.L.* 3/-; London, S.W.7: J.L. £1; Detroit: S.C. 8/-; Cheltenham: L.G.W.* 10/-; Bristol: B.B. 10/-; Whitworth: D.C. £1; Woodstock: E.S. £5.	
TOTAL:	£9 16 6
Previously Acknowledged:	£126 1 2
1968 Total to Date:	£135 17 8
Balance B/F Deficit:	£180 0 0
TOTAL DEFICIT:	£44 2 4

*Denotes Regular Contributor.

The Shipyard Closures

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS, coming in the same week that two shipyards are to be closed down by the end of the year, has dealt a particularly hard blow to ship workers. These closures will mean that nearly 5,000 men will be made redundant in areas with already high unemployment.

The yards affected are Alexander Stephen on the upper reaches of the Clyde and Mr. Charles Clore's Furness shipyard on the Tees. Both closures stem directly from the re-organisation of shipbuilding which was recommended by the Geddes Report. This advocated the creation of a small number of large groupings of yards to make the industry competitive on an international scale and to be better placed to win orders for the large ships which

Geddes forecast would be built. The Government gave £50m. and £200m. in loans to help create these larger units.

Many thought that the industry was all set for a recovery and that devaluation would give them further advantages over foreign competitors. While this may be so for those who have amalgamated into the larger groupings, but this is by no means certain, those left out, like Stephens and Furness, are closing before they lose any more money.

When plans were worked out by the consultants for the new Upper Clyde Group, they recommended that as Stephens would not fit into the scheme, it should be closed. Redundant workers from Stephens will not be able to find work at the grouping's yards. The Charles Connell shipyard is also due for closure, according to the consultants' report, but will be kept going until the Upper Clyde Group has enough work (if it ever does) to absorb these workers.

The Furness shipyard was taken over by Sears Holdings, whose Chairman is Charles Clore, in 1951. In the last few years, £5m. have been spent in modernisation to make it one of the best equipped in the country. Last year, Mr. Clore warned that he would close the yard if it did not pay its way in the next year and he has now kept that promise. It seems that yard does not fit into any of the groupings for the Tees, and the Wear grouping has not yet progressed far enough to know its needs.

A BLEAK OUTLOOK

The Minister of Technology, speaking about Furness, has said that 'despite the re-equipment of the yard in recent years and a rise in steelwork productivity in the last few months, (it) has not been able to obtain profitable orders for the kind of vessel for whose construction the yard is best suited'. Any move for a government take-over is obviously a non-starter.

For the sacked men things look bleak. Both Clyde and Tees already have high unemployment. The Ministry of Labour has said it 'will do all it can to help redundant workers find suitable employment and to offer training facilities where appropriate'. But this sort of statement made in London bears very little relation to the situation on the Tees and Clyde. Many will, no doubt, find other jobs using the same skills, others will be forced to take semi- or unskilled jobs, but the rest will face a long period on the 'dole'.

In any sane society, waste of this sort would not be tolerated, but

where maximum profits are the aim, it becomes more profitable to sack men. No doubt the new equipment at the Furness yard will be sold off and used elsewhere, but isn't this also a waste of energy and time when men could be working there? If profits were not the criteria, then, if the yard had to close, the men could work nearby at other yards and so reduce the hours of labour. Obviously this is the sane and rational answer.

RATIONALISATION

If shipyards have to be bigger to be able to build the huge tankers and container ships, then it is only a matter of employing more men in these yards, but this is not how the Government of the employers see it. They want less men to turn out more tonnage at fewer but larger yards. Even the increasing size of vessels is part of the same rationalisation which is affecting not only shipbuilding, but seamen and other industries as well.

Will this be the end of closures now that the Geddes groupings are taking shape? This all depends on how competitive they are and how big is the demand for shipping. Geddes was very optimistic on the latter, but many did not agree with him. So even with the new set-up, it is still possible, very likely in fact, that sections of these groupings will be closed if they are not making the necessary profits. Obviously, if this came about, then those jobs should be defended by other workers in the group. Now is the time to carry out the necessary organisation and to forge the link-ups that are essential to make such a struggle effective.

These closures should also be seen in a wider context of the mergers and amalgamations that are taking place throughout British industry. The companies that take over are the ones that are more efficient at making a profit, of squeezing more out of the labour force. It is the trend of bigger and bigger companies, with monopoly control of the market, which, as such, are able to compete and gain a higher proportion of the profits in the international markets.

Many more workers will be facing this issue and it can be fought if others assist those threatened. Resistance to prevent the shipyard closures looks a non-starter, but this is not the end by any means. Isolation of struggle in the face of sackings is fatal. Assistance and sympathy action by other workers could defeat them.

P.T.

SUPPORT NO GOVERNMENT

SYNDICALISTS think the unions should run the country. Instead of party politicians dictating the government of the country on behalf of big business, we say we should manage our own affairs through democratic trade unions.

Most of the workers at Stockport are fighting for shopfloor syndicalism. That means they are disputing their bosses right to dictate and do as they want in the factories.

To unite at work, regardless of religion, politics, or race; this is shopfloor syndicalism. To back up your mates, to stand by the majority; all this is Stockport syndicalism.

But who can best manage the factories? Millionaires or Workmen?

Our grandfathers in the 1911 'triple alliance' (of Miners, Railwaymen and Transport Workers unions) felt the wor-

kers should control and elect their own managements. As did the syndicalists in the biggest French trade union the CGT, and so did the mighty anarchist/syndicalist trade union of Spain, the CNT, in 1936 when its members actually took over and ran the mills, factories, workshops and communication systems.

Since the war people have pinned their hopes on the 'Labour' politicians and nationalisation. But of late more people are turning to Workers' Control, as the big let-down of 'Labour' government sinks in.

Can we, asks one union leader, 'prevent the Labour Government from destroying the Labour Movement?' Our answer is: A trade union's job is to look after the workers' wellbeing, it should support no government.

NORTH WEST WORKERS.

Freedom

For Workers' Control

MARCH 16 1968 Vol 29 No 8

DOUBLE TROUBLE

IT'S BEEN 15 months of freezing feet and coughing chests for the 70-odd strikers who still stare at the broken windows of the Roberts-Arundel engineering firm.

Now another Stockport firm has done a double by forcing its workers to strike for the same things as Arundels did in 1966. The firm, Heywoods, a crane factory at Reddish, has not long been taken over by the Acrow group. The 156 strikers there are fighting for union rights and recognition, against a management who are banning breaks, restricting holidays, gagging Shop Stewards, and forcing workers to accept Work Study with Watches, and claiming the right to move workers when and where they want to. The firm's 20 draughtsmen have all decided they'll join the strike on Monday.

It's the same old tale again! The Acrow management will talk to the men, but it won't let the men have power to stop any bad acts of management.

This double dispute could turn serious and spread if other factories in the Acrow group come out too. Only last week 20-odd workers at Dan Foxwell & Son, Stockport, struck in protest over the firm taking on a scab draughtsman from Arundels.

It's just come out that to stop the North West strike of one million workers

in support of the Arundel strikers, the management has agreed to meet the unions.

One suggested solution is for the unions to carry out a series of surprise checks or inspections to find out if the firm has really closed. But most pickets and local trade unionists won't be satisfied until, either the firm packs up and sells out, or they take on all the strikers and accept trade unionism.

NEWSPAPER LIARS

These Stockport workers are fighting for our hard-won workshop freedoms and union rights.

It's the sort of syndicalist spirit, which the Stockport spinners had in January 1829, when they struck against the bosses' attempt to cut their pay. Six months later they were starved back to work, through lack of funds.

We want to see that this doesn't happen again! But papers like the *People*, are doing their best to cause bother by saying the strikers get '£28 a week' strike pay. 'We'd swop shops with anybody,' answer the pickets; nearly half who first came out have now found other jobs.

Meanwhile, out of the strike funds came £34 last week for militants Bamford and Byrne, fined for obstruction while on picket.

NORTH WEST WORKERS.

PIECE-WORK

PIECE-WORK ALWAYS has been a pain in the neck to the working man. On piece rates the weakest goes to the wall, and it causes more trouble than soft Mick.

Because of it the Hawker Siddeley workers at Stockport are working to rule. After offering to give a new management piece-work scheme a try, the blokes found they were losing out and the firm was cutting piece prices on the sly.

Working harder for less money is not on! So the lads, using their right to refuse the new scheme, tried to get the

firm to call it off. No such luck! The firm has its foot in the door, and has brought off a wage cut almost with the blokes' blessing.

Result, the lads are now on £11 or £12 a week, while they work at beneath the bonus rate, producing no more than enough to fetch them the basic union rate.

A meeting is going to be held this week when the lads hope to get the scheme thrown out. Let's hope so, since these lads have been leading supporters of the Roberts-Arundel strikers.

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

LETTER

'Blind Alleys' Exposed

Dear Editors,

I read P.T.'s article in the paper on the farce of the Liaison Committees rank and file meeting held at the Seymour Hall. Besides being bloody pathetic and disappointing it was virtually a repetition of what has been said before, year after year ad nauseum. I refer to conference not article which was good!

Here you have exposed all the 'blind alleys' and myths that invariably these so-called conferences spew up. The facts about how they (CP, SLL, etc.) manipulate and 'stage-manage' these gatherings are now becoming widely known. The rebuff of certain prospective delegates also happened in the CP (Etheridge) BMC conference held in the Midlands late last year. Having now gone through most of the experiences of disillusionment as the brothers mentioned in the article, I now look to more positive and relevant ways of liaising with other workers in my efforts to fight for a libertarian society.

Anyway I was glad to see that you pointed out the most important failures

of the meeting; this being the specific linking up of the scattered pockets of resistance and of course the emphasis on the absolute self-reliance of the people. Pity you did not have space to amplify these points—as this was badly needed, never mind. If it encourages you in any way, there are a number of us in industry who are highly conscious of this situation and are making every effort to help all genuine militants who day by day are opting out of the complete irrelevance of 'left' politics.

Yours fraternally,
Luton
GEORGE SHAW.

PLEASE NOTE

WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY. LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK OF PUBLICATION.

Contact Column

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

Social. Saturday evening, March 16 (Eve of Vietnam Demo). 'Roebuck', Tottenham Court Road. For Anarchist Black Cross. Folk singers, etc., welcome. 4/6d.

Vietnam Demo Film. If you want to help make a film with London Filmmakers Co-op go to Arts Laboratory, 2 p.m., Saturday, March 16, or 9 a.m. 17th, steps of St. Martin's.

Free Modern Jazz. Ladbroke Hotel, Notting Hill, Wednesday evenings.

'Resistance': Magazine of the Committee of 100, Birmingham Peace Action Centre, Factory Road, Birmingham 19, England. (1/3 post paid.)

Scattered in Yorkshire? Get in touch with P. Constable, 34 Durham Street, Hull. Weekly meetings now at Blue Belle, Longate!

Taunton Vigil on Vietnam, March 23, 2 p.m. Assemble Castle Green Car Park.

Van and driver if possible. Required Easter Weekend. For March, Anarchist Lit. sales team and public meetings, etc. Write J. Huggon, c/o Freedom Press.

Sweden's one and only libertarian library is grateful to receive both gifts and offers. Wants all books, pamphlets and other publications of interest for libertarian socialists. Contact: Boksamlingen, Frihetliga Arbetsgruppen, Nordenskjöldsg. 23, Gothenburg SV, Sweden.

Research Assistant wanted (f), full or part time. Some travel involved. Write for further details to Box 3.

R. A. Bird of Bath. Please contact Roy Emery, 3 Abbey Street, Bath.

Accommodation wanted. Couple desperately want 2 rooms fur./unfur. Rent £4-£6. Pref. North London. Contact Ann Kavanagh, 82 Cromwell Avenue, N.6.

Anyone here? Anarchists should contact Geoffrey Smith, 33 Alfred Street South, Nottingham.

Stickers. 'Danger: Dictatorship. Stay away from Greece in 1968!' Available from Diana Rowley, 13 Vincent Square, S.W.1, at 1/- for a sheet of 20.

Greece must be free! Rally—Trafalgar Square, April 21, 2.30 p.m. Speakers include Melina Mercouri.

US Draft Dodgers and Deserters. Sanctuary in remote parts of Scotland. Contact Aberdeen SWF, c/o Iain Macdonald, 15 Cotton Street, Aberdeen. Call in person—do not write.

Love and War Poems by Kenneth Patchen. Now available from Freedom Bookshop (2/6 or 1 dollar).

East Anglia. If you're near Ipswich, call on us. We stock all Freedom Press publications, and have FREEDOM and *Anarchy* regularly. Orwell Books, 44 Upper Orwell Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.

If you wish to make contact let us know.