

# LIVING WITH BOMBS

**THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR** has now entered its eleventh month. In *The Times* of April 24, William Norris sent a grim report of the bombing of civilians by what were claimed to be British bombs. He said, of his feelings, after seeing young girls cut in half by shrapnel and children mutilated beyond recognition, 'It is not a pleasant thing to be ashamed of one's own country. Today, I am very ashamed.'

I know how he feels. This article was the first, I believe, of a spate of articles concerning the civil war and speculations on the extent of the role being played by Britain in helping the Federal Government to overcome the Biafran resistance. A Foreign Office spokesman later commented that 'Britain has not supplied napalm or poison gas to Nigeria'. Jolly good show! The importance of this statement lies in what was *not* denied.

The obvious complicity of Britain in such a brutal and inhuman war places the mass-media in something of a quandary. Loyalties and principles become locked in a seemingly inextricable battle. One cannot be too critical of involvement in foreign affairs by oil companies who are a vital source of revenue to the papers themselves, of government policy because of political affiliations, or of the manufacturers and workers who produce the arms and ammunition, without whose sales the economy of the country would collapse.

The only vehicle to have resolved the conflict completely is the *Daily Express* which carried, on April 29 last, an article which was bitterly critical of Britain's involvement in the brutal murder of defenceless civilians, blamed the entire civil war on Harold Wilson and the Labour Government, and stated categorically that Britain should not get 'involved with foreign wars in

general, and with this war in particular'. Was this really the *Express* I was reading? What of the Arms Economy, the export drive, Britain's role in world affairs, The Communist Threat? What of the 'grey face of unemployment' that was going to strike us all down should we dare to reduce the sales of arms abroad? Had the sight of decimated babies in those photographs the *Express* never dares print sickened even those hardly souls in their glass cage?

On Wednesday, May 1, everything returned to normal. The Editorial Column faithfully reported—under the heading 'Export Triumph' the success of the British Society of Aerospace Companies, *dramatic success*, in fact, of our missile and aircraft industries. I had not realised until this moment that we had a *Missile Industry*. As the writer so clearly puts it: 'This wonderful achievement is the result of painstaking research, aggressive salesmanship—and vast investment.'

For those among us who feel we cannot resolve the problem in true *Express* tradition, and cannot find the slightest solace in gutter-catharsis, the conflict remains.

I refuse to lay the blame for the deaths of babes with the present Government because it is my firm belief that the same Government is virtually powerless to do anything about it. They are themselves controlled by forces that can bring pressure to bear upon them from many continents. We remain in the bloody hands of a few hundred businessmen whose commitment to the blind acquisition of wealth—nearly always the result of some personal inadequacy—necessitates their being unmoved as their triumphs of superb technical endeavour knock the shit out of humanity.

I.D.

# PRODUCTION FOR PROFIT

**THE MOST POPULAR** arguments against immigration are that there are not enough jobs, houses, schools or hospitals in the country for the people already here.

Why is there not enough work? Surely the point of work is to produce the needs of the people. If there are more people in the country (through immigration or a high birth-rate) more necessities of life will have to be produced.

To produce these extra needs surely more work will have to be done—and so there should be more jobs.

Why are there not enough houses, hospitals or schools? Surely these are basic necessities of life which should be produced by those who are working—or the half a million or so unemployed. Why are so many people at work producing Rolls Royce cars, luxury villas (to be occupied by rich people only during holidays), letter opening machines (for people who are too lazy to open them), electric socks (to keep the feet of rich golfers warm)—while we are so short of houses, hospitals and schools.

Is it not wrong that so much money should be spent and so many people employed in advertisements encouraging us to gorge ourselves sick with chocolate Smarties when people are starving?

People who blame shortage of necessities in this country on immigration must ask themselves why people are unemployed when they could be producing them, and why so many who are employed are producing unnecessary luxuries. It is because things are produced for profit and not necessarily for need. Under

the present system a firm has got to be able to make a profit out of what it produces otherwise it will go bankrupt. To be able to make a profit it has got to sell the product. And to sell the product people have got to be able to afford it.

So while millions of poor people in the world NEED food, and thousands in this country NEED houses, they cannot AFFORD them. So any firm which produced houses or food that were needed would go bankrupt because not enough people could afford to pay for them.

But rich people can afford to squander their money on things they do not really need. Therefore firms can produce these luxuries because they can sell them to rich people. You cannot blame firms for producing luxuries when poorer people lack necessities because, under the capitalist system, production for profit rather than need is the only way they can survive.

It is also more profitable for them to spend as little as possible in wages. This means the workers have less money to spend and cannot afford so much—so less is produced.

Lower production can also be more profitable by keeping the price up—as is demonstrated when farmers burn crops or dump tons of grain at sea while people are hungry.

Is it too idealistic to suggest production for profit be abolished, and instead that all the people in this country capable of working (including the unemployed and the immigrants) start producing things that are necessary—such as houses, hospitals and schools?

M.P.

# Vive les Etudiants !



PARIS after the battle: Overturned cars were used as barricades. Note the slogan on a shop shutters: Vive la Revolution.

**TEN MILLION WORKERS** were called out on strike in France in support of the student demands. This follows ten days of militant action by the students. Considering that the Communist hierarchy has previously denounced the students as Anarchists, Trotskyists and Maoists, this action is as much bowing to public sentiment as the sudden capitulation of the French Government. The Sorbonne is to be reopened and cleared of the hated combat police and the release of all students was promised for today (May 13).

The antecedents of this struggle go back to January 26 of this year. On that day 40 members of the Nanterre University anarchist group marched into the faculty hall with comical posters ridiculing the police. The porters attacked the anarchists but were defeated. The authorities called in the police; one thousand students fought back and attended a protest meeting. The movement thus launched has grown ever since. The students are determined to get rid of the uniformed and plain-clothed police that haunt the faculties.

On May 3 a great meeting was called at the Sorbonne by the extreme left. The rector appealed to the police to dislodge the students. As the student protest grew, the Government stepped in and closed down the Sorbonne and Nanterre University, which were occupied by the combat police. The students organised quickly and brilliantly to reoccupy the universities from the hated police. As many as 15,000 students and sympathisers fought in street battles until the capitulation of the Government.

One of the demands of the students was that Danny Cohn-Bendit of the Nanterre anarchist group should not be deported to Germany.

## ANARCHY 87

### The Penal System

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There has been many conflicting accounts in the British Press about our comrade. Although Nesta Roberts of the *Guardian* has accurately described him as an anarchist, Joseph Carroll, in the same paper, on the same day, imputed he was a Trotskyist. Margot Lyons in the *New Statesman* said he was a 'Maoist' ringleader, the *Observer* said he was the leader of the 'anarcho-Maoists'. More to the point was Mandrake in the *Sunday Telegraph* who said amongst the students were many tendencies — Marxists, two kinds of Trotskyists, Maoists, Anarchists, Castroists, situationists. On March 22, they invaded the administrative offices of Nanterre University and demanded the right to hold political meetings'. The subsequent 'Movement of March 22' was led by Danny Cohn-Bendit and no doubt attracted others than anarchists.

Tuesday, May 7. Ten thousand students had taken possession of a vast circle round the Arc de Triomphe, their red and black flags massed on either side of the unknown soldier's tomb, singing the 'International'. The police kept out of the way. General de Gaulle declared that he would not tolerate any further student violence.

The students declared that they were ready for a dialogue on three conditions: withdrawal of the police forces from the Latin Quarter; release and immediate amnesty for the imprisoned students; reopening the Sorbonne and Nanterre. Four hundred and thirty-four demonstrators were that day under arrest. The police that day restored D. Cohn-Bendit's residence permit (but only for a short period).

Wednesday, May 8. Strong police forces still occupied the Sorbonne and the student union delivered an ultimatum to the Government. If the demands were not met they would 'liberate' the Sorbonne. M. Monnerot changed his tune and said: 'The Government is ready to take the steps necessary for the adaptation of education to the modern world'. M. Pierre Sudreau, of the Party of Modern Democracy, said in the French Assembly that extremists had been trained in street fighting at two anarchist camps.

Thursday, May 9. The Ministry announced that until calm was restored the Sorbonne will remain closed. The students declared that as soon as they reoccupied the Sorbonne they 'would take over the premises and hold discussions day and night on the problems of the university'.

Friday, May 10. The industrial unions (Communist and Christian) have thrown their lot in with the

students and called for a general strike on Monday. Beyond Paris the movement is now supported all over France. Several thousand young pupils marched through Paris with placards: 'Tomorrow we shall have the same problem'.

Saturday, May 11, saw the decisive battle and the defeat of the Government. There was ferocious fighting, barricades were set up by the students and cars were upturned to form a barrier. It was a night of the barricades which the capital had not witnessed since the Commune days of 1870. After a hurried conference with General de Gaulle, M. Pompidou, the Prime Minister, announced the concessions. The student unions were not overawed. The union described the concessions as 'extremely interesting' but they would wait till Monday to see if their comrades were to be released.

From all reports the population of the Latin Quarter was solidly backing the students. They showered debris over the police and water over the students to minimise the effect of the chlorine gas grenades. The demonstrators were themselves issued with a leaflet on how to protect themselves against tear gas. They took an anti-flu pill before demonstrating and one when the grenades started flying; carried lemon-soaked handkerchiefs and smeared bicarbonate of soda around their eyes.

The brutality of the police horrified all reporters. Photographs seen in London, but unavailable to this paper, showed policemen clubbing students on the ground, blood streaming from their faces. But the students also fought back, kicked gas grenades back to the police, and the police had to protect their faces from thrown stones with what looked like fencing masks.

The French Government is desperately trying to cope with the revolutionary situation forced by the students and now supported by the working class. The general strike is called on the tenth anniversary of de Gaulle's assumption of power, on the day that the Vietnam 'peace talks' were to provide him with added glory. The adulation in Sunday's British Press was an indication of the treatment he was to be given and still got without a reference to the upheavals!

The students will also have to fight off the dubious embrace of the Communist Party and all those who are now climbing on the bandwagon. But their cool determination hitherto to force their just demands is an inspiration to us all!

JOHN RETY.





