

Ludwig Haas is Free

LUDWIG HASS, one of the five ex-communist Poles imprisoned after two separate trials during the last year for opposition by organisation and document to the Polish State and Communist Party, has been freed during the last week. This is partly due to the fear of embarrassment to the Government if he died in jail, since it is thought that he is in poor health. It is also partly due to the demonstrations in England and in America which singled out Haas as the main figure.

Haas is an old Trotskyist who in pre-war Poland associated with a group round Isaac Deutscher. Haas subsequently spent 18 years in Siberia at the concentration camp of Vorkuta, being released in 1957. (See *Solidarity*, Vol. 4, No. 3.)

Why should this interest take up space in an anarchist journal? Why indeed should it call for demonstrations by 'The United Libertarian and Socialist Defence Committee'? I must confess that libertarians, myself among them, were prevailed upon (more by an uneasy conscience than by knowledge) to demonstrate and sit-in at the Polish Embassy. On the one hand could we not say that this was an example of Communists falling out among themselves. 'More power to their elbow!', this is what some of the right-wing Polish emigres have said. Should we rather declare a liberal concern for all prisoners of conscience, for the five in Poland, for Sinyavsky and Daniel starving to death in Russia for lack of food parcels, the current crop in Yugoslavia, the prisoners in Mexico, jailed anarchists in Cuba, Stuart Christie in Spain, the possibility of someone here for the hoax on Heath, and many others in jail East, West and the third world war? Our involvement as libertarians must be neither the 'more blood' attitude of the right nor the quakerly 'concern' of the liberal.

Our reason is that we, with our revolt against this society, its bomb and its philosophers, are part of the same doubting and challenging as those imprisoned in Poland. As East and West draw ever closer together and become much the same society, we must support those who are the real revolutionaries as part of our witness.

Ludwig Haas is not the typical figure of these men. He is still hung up on the Trotskyism that kept him intellectually alive in the camps and is rather the intellectual mentor than ideologue. The two younger men, Kuron and Modzelewski, who wrote the group's important document 'Open Letter to the Party' came to their political consciousness in the years since 1956, during the period of the return of confidence, and therefore repression, of the Stalinoid apparatus, which coincided with Gomulka's old age. The year 1956 however was a point at which 'A threshold has been reached past which everything is easy'. The young Poles (sure they were careful) in some of their actions transcended that state of mind which feared the terrible accounting for every small thought and action, that was present in Poland from 1939 to 1953. These Poles no longer feared the knock in the night, no longer did the spectre of terrible consequences haunt their speech and action.

They have taken literally the themes implicit in communism, which have been dreamed and talked of but not acted on in Poland. Those themes have been discussed since the watershed of '56 and generally call for a greater humanitarianism, specifically workers' control in industry, freedom of speech and publication, and a release from the 'New Class' of bureaucrats and managers. Is this not us then in a Polish situation?

The conduct of the five men imprisoned, in the courtroom and during the interrogation, bears out their revolutionary position and its shocking surprise to their political 'elders and betters'.

The activities of the group are not known before they published their 'Open Letter to the Party'. It is known that they were a group of young communists at Warsaw University having contact with others elsewhere in Poland. While still in the Party, though their position was a little precarious, they wrote the document which analysed and criticised the state which society had reached in Poland. They saw the new class of bureaucrats in the administration and managers in industry robbing them of their communism. This is not however an article on that long and largely untranslated document which is now in our possession.

The police raided the homes of the group after they had sent it to the Party and seized their duplicator. They realised

Continued on page 2

PATRIOTISM, as all political demagogues know, is a highly exploitable emotion. In its name, violence is rewarded if one kills the right people at the right time; unpopular government measures are acceptable in the 'interests of the nation'; inconsequential men feel important when responding to the slogan 'your country needs you'.

Love of country which at its best means appreciation of the landscape or buildings and streets, when interwoven with the customs and habits of a lifetime, can harden into the concept 'my country right or wrong'. To anarchists the mystique which shrouds the idea of the nation is ridiculous and dangerous.

The fanatical nationalism of the thirties which inspired the Germans to fall in behind Hitler in support of his crusade and which gave the British and the Russians their impetus to fight, far from creating the promised peaceful world 21 years after that war which was to scourge tyranny from the face of the earth, finds the powerful nations snarling at each other from behind their mushroom clouds and bloody flags.

The little nations are aping the big ones. On the African continent the fight for 'national independence' is developing as we predicted. With certain notorious exceptions like South Africa, black rule has replaced white. From the point of view of the dispossessed African the difference is only one of colour (although like most irrational people it probably is an important difference—they are being ruled by one of their 'own kind'). In some areas of Africa, European educated black leaders are knocking each other off at a rate which must make the Western politicians quite envious, bound as they are by the ballot box. **White rule and Christianity** have left their marks on the African people, they are now just as aggressive and mercenary as the Europeans who exploited them.

But whatever the country, the colour or

Red Squares in China

HOW TO KEEP the revolutionary fervour of a nation after the revolution has been defeated is the second major test of a revolutionary leader. There is no doubt that when communism took over in China, a revolution took place that incorporated a great feeling of land-hunger and class aspiration of the Chinese people. Mao Tse-tung was able to rise to power by passing the first major test of the revolutionary politician; how to make it appear that he is granting the people what they are taking for themselves. Now he faces, in his old age, the second test, which comes in the 'post-Thermidor' period of the Chinese revolution—the period when reaction has established itself but still has need of popular support against the outside world.

The upsurge of the young 'guards' in the 'cultural revolt of 1966' is Mao's answer. He has fallen back on the oldest trick in the book of the politician: he has called on the young, clean-living, respectable, conforming elements to rout the 'rabble'. It is not even fascism in the Hitlerian sense; more the early English fascism of the 'Bulldog Drummond' type, the Imperial Fascism of 1926 strike-breaking, the fascism associated with castor-oil doses to liberal professors in Italy rather than the mass movements of Germany. The moves and slogans of these clean-limbed Chinese are depressingly familiar. Doctors who have treated foreigners (there is no doubt an ideogram for 'low swine, what?') are made to crawl in public humiliation. Chinese and foreigners who have passed slightly by the portrait of the Leader are made to bow before his

portrait. Most of all, the attack is directed against the decadent youths with long hair and fancy clothing whom everybody knows to be subversive of the ideals of the nation, in any nation, irrespective of its ideals. Shave their heads, rip their clothes—let them learn the folly of their ways at detention centres—if in the early days of the revolution they had got rid of the execution block (they did not) the Young Guards would now be petitioning to have it brought back.

The Decent Citizens in China are having it very much their own way, with Father Figure Mao beaming in the background, and the police standing by paternally in the manner of the Czarist police during a pogrom, ready to step in and arrest the victims if they resist, and shriek conspiracy and murder if at any moment the victims get the upper hand.

It is noticeable that at the moment the Chinese communists strike hard at their 'provo' (?) element, the Russian press beams for the first time at English youth fashions (which need not give too much hope to their own *stilyagi*). The Russians can, however, afford to relax a little—they answered the post-Thermidorian test of how to keep up the people's fervour, by falling back on patriotism—the fervent Russianism of the 'Great Patriotic War' and its subsequent reflection in space travel enthusiasm. The Chinese have no similar patriotic tradition (their attachment is traditionally to the soil itself, and to their ancestors in the land, but not to the mythical State). The Bulldog Drummond stage of Mao's

cultural revolution can be seen as his equivalent to Stalin's 'Patriotic War'.

In moving against all the anti-party elements and arousing the licensed hooliganism of the Young Guards against people suspected of anti-State activity, Mao has revealed for the first time the truth about the schisms in the Chinese political scene. For too long the farce of Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa has led the world to assume that opposition was confined to the offshore island that imagined itself to be China. On the contrary, although bourgeois politics have almost disappeared from China for want of support, there are many popular organisations standing in opposition to the totalitarian state, including the Anarchists. The harshness of measures taken against individuals suspected of supporting such underground movements is Mao's public testament to their effectiveness. In simultaneously hitting out at the rebellious section of the young generation, and exposing them to the attacks of the conformists, Mao has indicated which way he assumes they are heading. Of course he will get a lot of support as a result. The sight of a government getting tough with its rebels arouses a type of sadistic-masochistic joy in every country—heads on pikes were always a popular spectacle in this country and probably still would be if they did it. But if Mao has read half as much as he is reputed to have written, he will know that it is not a type of popularity that lasts, or upon which much reliance can be placed in time of social upheaval. INTERNATIONALIST.

Damn the Country!

the creed of the politician, the language he uses in his struggle for power is the same—sacrifice, surrender, kill, be killed—it's all for the good of the nation!

The pattern varies but not the principle—wherever we look, wherever there is government. In Vietnam American bombs are terrorising the people, in defence of 'National freedom'. If you happen to support the Vietcong or have to fight for them, the bullets being fired are in defence of what? 'National freedom' of course!

Supporters of the democratic system will argue that the ballot box ensures that people get the form of government they want and it is true that the mediocrities in government often reflect the notions of the majority, but ultimately real power lies with the minority who control the military, the police, communications and the 'rule of law'. Politicians are fond of the latter slogan but they rarely point out that all governments can change legislation by a simple act of parliament, or as in Nazi Germany by the simple act of writing new laws; so the farcical situation exists that an act which is legal one day may be illegal the next.

The question which has to be answered is this: if there were no governments, would the people act differently? The quick answer is—probably not. It is not part of this writer's case that the majority of people are basically universally-minded and are pressed into a nationalistic mould by villainous leaders. It is part of the case, however, that primitive feelings of group identity are cynically exploited for political purposes. Even the socialists and the communists, who claim to be internationalists, when in power are as jingoistic as the most rabid nationalists. The recent appearance of the British Prime Minister on television, with his appeal to the collective sense of patriotism and vanity (how strong are the British people when their backs are to the wall, etc.), is an example of the nauseating nonsense churned out by politicians when pushing policies which may be unpopular.

In spite of the talk about easier forms of travel breaking down national barriers, the trend seems to be towards a greater consciousness of nationhood. The slogan 'national independence' has become respectable to the left and right, and no doubt has its roots in fine principles but it has in no way furthered the cause of internationalism.

'PUT SCOTLAND FIRST'

Even Scotland, whose territory might reasonably be supposed to be part of Britain after all those years of union, is, judging by the Scottish Nationalists' propaganda, hoping to create more government, not less—and yet another frontier. Propaganda apart, the idea seems to be spreading that a Scottish Parliament would be better for Scotland than control by the English one.

The economic argument is founded on a different interpretation of treasury figures, namely that the contribution that Scotland makes to the English economy is excessive in relation to the returns for housing, education, social services and investment per head of the population that she receives compared to England and Wales. Therefore, Scotland helps to subsidise English industrial growth and development while her own economy stagnates.

How do they propose to get 'freedom' for Scotland and a bigger slice of the cake; by a wider view of men in relation to each other and their environment? Not at all, but by a return to Nationalism. There will be many Scots who justifiably do not want to be governed from England, but who will read real social change into the proposals for decentralisation; but this is no revolutionary movement as can be seen from a reading of the National Party's aims; they change nothing except the nationality of the government. For example:

'When a majority of the Scottish Parliamentary Seats (36 out of 71 is the minimum) is held by SNP MPs will ask the UK Parliament to set up a Scottish Legislature with full control over all the affairs

of Scotland. Failing such agreement in London, the SNP MPs and any other Scottish MPs who care to join them, will form a provisional Scottish government, loyal to the crown.

SNP policy is based on the rule of law; freedom of conscience, expression and worship; collective defence; and positive measures to remove the poverty and injustice which threaten the peace of the world.'

Loyalty to the Crown means loyalty to the Queen of England as well as Scotland and there is nothing to stop Her Majesty's Ministers from ordering 'Scotland's Sons' to defend the Crown against dissident Scots if necessary.

To be fair they claim:

'SNP Democrats are against Scotland possessing nuclear weapons, and against other countries having nuclear weapon bases or stores in Scotland. Scotland has no aspirations to be a great power.'

But 'the total cost to be raised by taxation for defence need not exceed £75m. compared with £190m. which is our present (1964) share of UK Defence taxation levied. (Scotland's estimated share of Defence taxation spent is only a quarter of the sum raised in Scotland. This results in a subsidy of England by Scotland of £142.5m. per year on defence alone.)'

Seventy-five million is still a sizeable sum for a country with no territorial ambitions to spend on destructive weapons—even uniquely Scottish weapons!

Anarchists have always advocated freedom of the individual to organise with his fellows at all levels and to have a meaningful say in making decisions which affect their lives. But the aim is to widen the scope of human activity and experience without interfering with healthy customs. We stand little chance of support against the chauvinistic outpourings of politicians and the rallying shouts of the mob. But we can resist individually by refusing to bolster up the national state and by encouraging people to get off their knees before their masters—the State, the Nation, the Government, the Crown and the race (not forgetting God and the church!).

When someone comes at us with a slogan like 'Put Scotland First'—we should reply: put humans first and damn Scotland. R.M.

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To all those comrades and friends, and especially V.R., who so generously made my holiday possible, my grateful thanks. I have had some splendid holidays, but this was the best of all. Not only so pleasurable, but educative too.

EVERYONE I met thought that the general public were now largely against the Vietnam war, but were afraid to say so.

I was really horrified at the police in New York. I think they are most provocative; enormous men with absolutely brutal faces and armed with pistols and thick batons. They filled me with hate, so what must the young comrades, working for a better world, feel at demonstrations, etc.?

In New York, my kind and charming host and hostess, Bob and Phyllis Calese, made sure that I should not only see New York, but should meet many interesting personalities, including comrades and friends of our movement. I was much encouraged to find that there also the young people are rallying round the Anarchists and the Peace Movement. There was much enthusiasm about Hiro-

My Holiday in USA

shima and Vietnam demonstrations. I marched in two demonstrations, one to Times Square, said to be 15,000 strong, and one to support a group who were 'sitting-in' outside Dow Chemical Society—they make napalm—on Nagasaki Day. The public seemed to me to be largely sympathetic—certainly not hostile, except one man with a banner 'The only good Communist is a dead Communist'. Not even original!

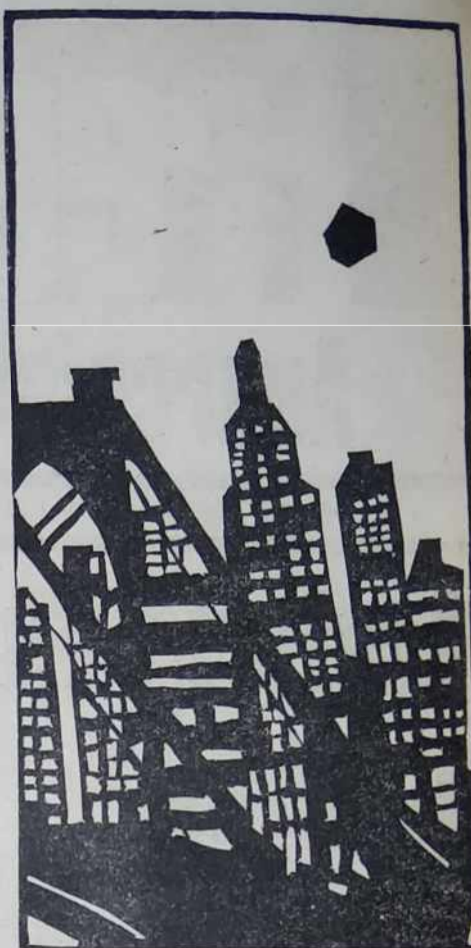
A party was also arranged by my friends on the Sunday evening at which everyone interested in anarchism they could think of was invited to their flat, all the people with whom we exchange orders for anarchist literature, as well as many others, 27 people in all. Rudolf Rocker's son, Firmin, came, Kropotkin's daughter was invited, but she had died a month earlier. I was told that her right eye was failing and she had said

that now she saw more clearly with her left. That too was heartening.

It is the same in USA as here—comrades are too scattered. I have great hopes that the new Torch Bookshop, New York, will succeed in uniting the movement there. And the Button Shop in Greenwich Village should help also. I was very pleased to meet at 5 Beekman Street, among other fine people, A. J. Muste, and very many young men and women in the various offices there, who all seemed busy working for peace. We went one day to New Jersey to see Dorothy Day at her farm on the Hudson where she works for people in need. She also has many young people working with her. I was also proud to meet on the march, and at the party, a man and a woman who, in spite of many beatings-up and imprisonments, continue their work at helping the Negroes and many of the young men who have burnt their draft papers too.

I was very pleased to find that our comrades in New York have such an interest—and even affection—for Freedom Press. All seemed to realise what a lot of hard work it means to bring out a weekly paper.

Here are the sights I saw in New York: A boat trip round the island when one sees the various buildings to better advantage; Torch Bookshop (still open at 1 a.m.); Empire State Building—wonderful views of the buildings, river, etc.; Metropolitan Museum—very fine paintings; Frick Museum—that horrible old man had a really exquisite collection of pictures, furniture and china, only spoiled by a painting of himself; Central Park on Sunday—families of Negroes enjoying themselves thoroughly; Coney Island; Chinatown; Bowery; Greenwich Village; German District; Spanish Harlem; Negro Harlem; Bronx; Guggenheim Museum; Museum of Modern Art with Picasso's 'Guernica 1937'; United Nations Building, etc.



Firmin Rocker put us in touch with a comrade who came to see us. I had not seen her for over 50 years. She had very much to tell us about her work in progressive schools.

But she was not the only old friend I met. Part of my holiday was spent in New Hampshire and our host took my son, his wife and me all over Boston, Mass., one day. We saw Harvard University and Tufts University. The mascot of the latter is the elephant Jumbo (stuffed) on whose back I rode about 80 years ago at the London Zoo. He was reckoned the largest elephant in the world, so of course, he had to be taken to America where he died.

L.G.W.

LUDWIG HAAS IS FREE

Continued from page 1 that arrest would be the next item on the agenda so in the next five days before the police came they wrote a shortened version of the document, with an introduction giving an account of the authorities' reaction, and an end section itemising the counter-arguments.

They remained in custody for varying times. The first trial was of Modzelewski and Kuron at which Hass appeared as a witness. During the months of the interrogation the prisoners were subjected to third degree methods of beatings and intimidation. These beatings, coupled with his Vorkuta experiences, would explain Hass's release after less than a year. These things in no way weakened the spirits of the five men.

As at the first trial, the prisoners in the second trial were also manacled; this second bunch of prisoners were Hass, Smiech and Badowski. This handcuffing was quite extraordinary, it had not been done even in Pilsudski's pre-war Poland, as the defence lawyer pointed out to the great annoyance of the Party. This unfavourable comparison is reported to have been the remark that incensed the authorities, even more than the idea put forward by the group to do away with the army and arm all the people.

Hass was called, in cuffs, as a witness in the first trial and spoke with great courage considering he was still in custody. Modzelewski and Kuron spoke vigorously in their own defence as well, turning the court into a forum almost. We still do not know what the actual proceedings were as the trial was held in secret. Each prisoner was allowed an observer of his own choice in court but the public had to remain outside the courtroom. As Hass passed into

the court, through the corridor crowded with friends, he raised his hand in a try at the old clenched fist salute. They gave this sign of solidarity in reply.

Accounts of the first trial differ, the fullest account is in Witold Jedlicki's article in the Polish emigre journal *Kultura* (Jedlicki, who is now in California, at Berkeley, knew Hass very well from 1957 to 1962 and he is greatly responsible for bringing to our knowledge these jailings). Hass, according to Jedlicki, wanted to emphasise the group's role and was apprehensive that they may be viewed as an isolated bunch of eccentrics, as certain academics here have thought. He took the opprobrium for contacts with the emigres abroad upon himself. This was to no avail; Kuron got three years and Modzelewski got three-and-a-half under the Small Penal Code of 1946. They were convicted of 'disseminating printed matter containing false information which result in harm to the State and which bring into contempt the leading organs of the State.

The second trial is even less known about except for the verdict—three years each for Hass, Badowski and Smiech. The government paper *Trybuna Ludu* was about as censorious as the *Daily Telegraph*. 'The court has confirmed (sic) the guilt of the accused. . . . In its verdict the court has underlined the seriousness of the damaging activities of the accused'—*Tybuna Ludu*, 12.1.66. There have been demonstrations against the Polish Government on this issue. Ludwig Hass is now out. Let's get Karol Modzelewski, Romuald Smiech, Kazimierz Badowski and Jacek Kuron out now. Some blithe spirits have noticed that the annual Anglo-Polish trade treaty is soon to be negotiated, but I must condemn this idea in print since it is legally actionable, I feel, for they have suggested that these talks be bugged up.

The campaign for these Poles has seen a most unusual alliance of Trotskyists, semi-Trots, and all shades of libertarian (quite apart from the SLL's own brand of unity) out in the street. Let's go again.

H.W. PRICE.

(While the article is my own, it could not have been started without the unstinting activity in translating by Paul Pawlowski in whose debt I am.)

H.W.

SCOTTISH DEMO

I am writing in order to publicise the demonstration called for September 24/25 in the area of the Polaris Weapons Complex of Faslane-Coullport-Glen Douglas in Western Scotland by the Scottish Campaign for Resistance Against Militarism (SCRAM).

The London Committee of 100 are hiring a 41-seater coach to go to the demonstration, which will probably be leaving London on the evening of Friday (23.9.66) and returning on the Sunday night. I would urge all who consider that Polaris is NOT a dead issue (see 'Sanity' for August and September) to do their utmost to come.

It is important that the existence of these places and their function is publicised as widely as possible, for this is, by and large, unknown outside the Ministry of Defence and the Scottish peace movement. On a lighter level, this weekend in the Scottish Highlands promises to be an enjoyable event socially, and I feel that the newly-emergent but small Scottish youth peace movement could be considerably strengthened by a large contingent from the south supporting this demonstration. Moreover, the emphasis on the social side as well as the more serious activity provides the ideal

atmosphere for like-minded people from different parts of the country to get to know each other (viz. Aldermaston).

A final reminder of the form the demonstration will take:

Saturday 24:
March leaves Helensburgh 12 noon.
Arrives Faslane 2.30 p.m.
Arrives Coullport 5.30 p.m.
Overnight camp at the base (Marquee provided—probably—but bring own tents if possible).

Ceilidh—folk singing—all night siege of base.

Sunday 25:
By car and foot to Glen Douglas weapons and bomb store. Walk through for those who wish to see the base; vigil for those who don't.

The maximum freedom of action of this demonstration is emphasised.

Further information about the action may be obtained from: Jim Livingstone, 64 Greenhill Road, Rutherglen, near Glasgow; and about the coach from: London Committee of 100, 13 Goodwin Street, London, N.4 (ARCHway 1239).

FORBES BROWNE.

P.S.—Donations from those unable to come would be most welcome!! Send to Jim Livingstone.

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Anarchist Federation of Britain

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

London Anarchist Group 1&2

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

Public Meetings every Sunday Hyde Park, 3 p.m. SEPT. 11. Albert Meltzer. Revolutionary Role of the Armed Forces

OFF-CENTRE LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS

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

3rd Friday of each month at 8 p.m. at Donald and Irene Room's, now at 13 Savernake Road, London, N.W.3. First meeting at this address: September 16.

REGIONAL FEDERATIONS AND GROUPS

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

ABERDEEN GROUP. Correspondence to M. Dey, 29 Springhill Crescent, Aberdeen.

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

BELFAST. Contact Peter Stringer, 7 Duffy Street, Belfast, 13.

BEXLEY ANARCHIST GROUP. Correspondence to Paul Wildish, 2 Cumbrian Avenue, Barnehurst,

Kent. BIRMINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP. Correspondence: Martin Bragg, 5 The Drive, Hutton Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, 23. Sales and Committee of 100: Gordon Causser, 27 Upper Gungate, Tamworth, Staffs. Peace Action Centre Project: Paul James, 50 Windermere Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, 21. University of ASTON GROUP. Dave Massey, 2 Station Road, Eltham, Sandbach, Cheshire.

BRISTOL FEDERATION. Enquiries to Ian Vine, 7 Richmond Dale, Bristol, 8.

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

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

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

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

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

H.FORD LIBERTARIANS. Fortnightly meetings and Action. Fred Ross, 212 Vicarage Road, Leyton, E.10.

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

LEICESTER ANARCHISTS. Correspondence, Peter Gibbon, 22 Fosse Road Central, West End, Leicester.

LEWISHAM, LONDON, S.E.13. September Meetings 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at Terry Liddle's, 83 Gregory Crescent, SE9.

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

'Freedom' selling at Pier Head every Sunday.

NEW HAM LIBERTARIANS. Contact Mick Shenker, 122 Hampton Road, Forest Gate, NOTTING HILL PROVOS. Correspondence to Brian Joseph, 1st Floor, 27 Arundel Gardens, London, W.11. Meeting every first Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. Ground floor flat, 5 Colville Houses, London, W.11

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

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

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

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

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

NORTH-WEST FEDERATION

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION. Regional Secretary: J. Bromley, 44 Doncaster Avenue, Manchester, 20. Buxton: Chris Berrisford, 10 Byron Street, Buxton. Chorley: Alistair Rattray, 35a Devonshire Road, Chorley. Manchester: Mike Mitchell, 3 Bakewell Road, Droylesden, Manchester. Merseyside: Barbara Renshaw, 4 Clarence Road, Devonshire Park, Birkenhead. Rochdale: Ian Heywood, 16 Mansfield Road, Bamford, Rochdale. Stoke-on-Trent: Bob Blakeman, 52 Weldon Avenue, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent.

EAST LONDON FEDERATION

WALTHAM FOREST ANARCHISTS. Contact Lionel Donnelly, 32a Hoe Street, Walthamstow, E.17. Meetings every Thursday at above address.

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

WEST LONDON FEDERATION

FULHAM ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact top

floor, 31 Ongar Road, S.W.6.

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

SOUTHALL ANARCHIST GROUP. Get in touch with Roger Sandell, 58 Burns Avenue, Southall, Middlesex.

WEST LONDON FEDERATION. Meeting September 12 (Monday) at 'Anchor', West Ealing. Speaker from SWF on Anarcho-Syndicalism.

PROPOSED GROUPS

LOUGHTON, ESSEX. Please get in touch with Althea Culpin, Golding's, Clays Lane, Loughton, Essex.

TYNESIDE SYNDICALISTS. Address c/o Michael Renwick, 122 Mowbray Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 6.

KEIGHLEY ANARCHIST GROUP. Contact Robert Halstead, 27 Woodlands Rise, Haworth, Keighley, Yorks.

WEST SUFFOLK. Anarchists, Libertarians and Syndicalists in West Suffolk area wishing to meet for discussions please write to Carl Pinel, c/o West Suffolk General Hospital, Hospital Road, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

ABROAD

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

AUSTRALIA. Anarchist Group, PO Box A 389, Sydney South. Public meetings every Sunday in the Domain, 2 p.m. and Mondays, 72 Oxford Street, Paddington, Sydney, 8 p.m.

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

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA. Anyone interested in forming anarchist and/or direct action peace group contact Derek A. James, 1844 Grand Boulevard, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Tel.: 987-2693.

U.S.A. VERMONT/NEW HAMPSHIRE. Discussion/Action Group, anyone? Contact T. R. Jackson, Corinth, Vermont.

Vietnam & Spain —a Reply

Dear Comrades,

Jack Robinson, in his interesting article 'Vietnam and Spain' (FREEDOM, 20.8.66), claims that there is no parallel between the two situations, and that the war in Vietnam has never been a revolution. I disagree strongly with this view, and without quoting too much at length from my article in *The Anarchist* 7, there are several points which have been ill-considered or merely overlooked by many anarchists.

Despite the escalation of the Vietnam war by the United States to the point of precipitating a major Asian conflict, the central issue remains the same: *the future of the Vietnamese people*. Is it to lie in foreign hands, or their own? The Americans have 'rationalized' this war, and justified the use of their massive military power by successfully twisting the real issue at stake into a direct frontal confrontation between Western Capitalist Democracy and Chinese type Communism. The invasion of North Vietnam, the manipulation of neighbouring Cambodia and Laos, are only logical developments of such a policy.

Since 1960, the Vietminh has enjoyed the mass support of ordinary Vietnamese people. Without this support and co-operation, resistance would never have grown to the scale and success that it now has. A coalition of some twenty organizations, religious and political, the Vietminh sought to oust the regime foisted on them and to create a popular democratic administration of their own. The terms Capitalism and Communism have largely remained abstractions for the illiterate peasants; the Liberation Front won their sympathy through actions rather than words, helping to cultivate thousands of acres of waste land, building schools, hospitals, and homes for the villagers throughout more than two-thirds of Vietnam. The Front has promised more land of their own, and a large degree of regional and tribal autonomy. Helen Lamb made this point clear in her article 'The Tragedy of Vietnam': 'Let us take for example the Montagnards tribesmen who live in the mountains of South Vietnam, and whose culture, language and economy are entirely different from those of the Vietnamese. They do not want rhetoric about the virtues of a two party system. They want concrete safeguards for their distinctive way of life—and these the Front has promised. . . . In all this they seek ethnic and cultural autonomy as it has already developed in North Vietnam where the government, unlike that of the South, allows cultural diversity.'

As yet, none of those who have been at pains to attack the 'pro-Vietcong' attitude in FREEDOM have made any reference to the four point programme of Hanoi or the five points of the National Liberation Front. These are, and I admit, crudely, paraphrased as follows: (1) recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people; withdrawal of US bases and military personnel in accordance with the Geneva Agreements . . . ; (2) the two zones must refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries; no foreign troops, personnel, bases in their respective territories; (3) the internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the Vietnamese people themselves, in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam NLF, without foreign interference; (4) the question of peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference. The question that we now face is this: Do we agree with these points? And if not, why not? Is it fair to accept them only on our terms, but not on theirs?

The failure to take into consideration what the Vietnamese are fighting for also underlies the confusion that exists over the question of military aid to the NLF. If the Chinese send in aid, they are

dubbed 'Imperialists!' If they don't, they are called 'Hypocrites!' who speak 'empty words'. Both these accusations have been levelled at the Chinese in FREEDOM over the past few months, and some clarification is long overdue.

'Peace'—and rightly so—has become the most popular slogan in the left-wing and pacifist press, but we must be more precise over what we mean. 'Peace' is the objective of United States policy. When the anarchists and other progressive elements united to prevent Franco from seizing power in Spain, did Freedom Press then cry 'Peace'? It is a pity that Jack Robinson did not state in his article that had there been no Russian aid to Spain, resistance to the Franco onslaught, backed up by German and Italian bombing, would have crumbled within months. Presume, for example, the likely possibility of the South Africans rising against Verwoerd and carrying out a guerilla war against the white regime; would we then say to them: 'Lay down your arms?' Retaliation may well infringe bourgeois morality (or 'anarchist' morality for that matter) but no less so than the savage subjugation of a people by poison gas, razor bombs, chemical terror and torture—all this to secure the upkeep and maintenance of a non-elected military regime intent only on the 'containment of communism'.

The demand for negotiations in the present context is one which anarchists would do well to consider. There is a major difference between full self-determination of the Vietnamese, and the imposition of a settlement concocted by governments round a conference table at which the NLF is not being allowed one independent representative! That readers of FREEDOM should be urged to support a solution amiable to foreign governments, but not to the Vietnamese people themselves, is utterly estranged from any anarchism I have ever heard of.

This is not to say that opposition to the Vietnam war in this country should openly adopt a pro-Vietcong position. This is to lose sympathy rather than gain it. But we should advance on the understanding that there will be no peace in South East Asia, let alone Vietnam, until the Americans and their puppet regimes are driven out. The Vietnamese persist against all odds because they recognize—as many anarchists fail to do—that there will be no lasting or meaningful peace while the US and its puppet governments continue to deny the Vietnamese their full right to self-determination. UNTIL THIS RIGHT IS GRANTED, VIETNAM WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN A STATE OF GUERRILLA WAR. It is precisely because there can be no effective end to the slaughter of human lives until the US is forced to leave that all of us have a certain degree of sympathy for the NLF. In the meantime however, the anarchist movement in general, and Freedom Press in particular, would do well to reconsider, calmly and without hysteria, its present attitude to the National Liberation Front.

BILL JAMIESON.

Vietnam

Dear Comrades,

The letter in the August 13 FREEDOM from Harlow Anarchists has drawn attention once again to the disturbing direction being taken by certain sections of the movement for peace in Vietnam. In the foreword to the NYCND circular they mention that Mervyn Rice condemns the divisiveness which led to the Communist Party and Youth for Peace in Vietnam demonstrating in London on July 3 while CND was demonstrating in the 'backwoods of Alconbury'. No mention is made of the Committee of 100, who organised the demonstration. Presumably the USAF base at Alconbury has nothing at all to do with Vietnam! And if we're getting upset about divisiveness one might ask who announced and planned their demonstration first—the Committee or the CP and Youth for Peace in Vietnam? If anyone was being divisive it was those who arranged

LETTERS

to demonstrate in London when it was well known that a major demo. at a US base was planned for the same day.

I am told by comrades from London that recent Vietnam demonstrations have been largely dominated by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the YCL. As has already been pointed out in FREEDOM this can do the peace movement no good, and it's time that something was done. Something can be.

Youth for Peace in Vietnam is organising a weekend of activities against the Vietnam war in London on October 14/15/16. They are also asking for support from movements in other countries. The first response to this request came from the World Federation of Democratic Youth (guess who?) who will be organising anti-American demonstrations in Eastern Europe. No doubt the more non-aligned movements will also be demonstrating that weekend, and it is up to us to see that the voice of the non-aligned peace movement is heard during the protests in London.

The weekend's activities in London are to culminate in a march on Sunday, October 16, through London's East End. Undoubtedly the pro-NLF groups in their various shapes and forms will be there. We must be too. I suggest that all those anarchists and members of the independent peace movement who refuse to take sides in this war, and who want to see peace in Vietnam, try to come on this demonstration with banners and placards emphasising that we are against all the bloodshed and all the atrocities in Vietnam, and that we are campaigning for peace and not military victory. It might also be an idea to wear saffron

sashes and carry saffron flags to symbolise our support of the Vietnamese Buddhists, as opposed to the forces engaged in the fighting. Other people can probably think of other things. The important thing, I think, is to see that the Peace in Vietnam Movement everywhere stays out of the hands of those whose slogan is 'Victory to the Vietcong' and those who line up dutifully with one of the sides in the Cold War of which the Vietnam situation is one of the results. However sincere and well-meaning they may be, their actions can do the peace movement no good, and only provide ammunition for the sporadic outpourings of Wilson and his ilk. If we don't get down to putting the non-aligned case on Vietnam we will be leaving this movement in their hands. In Harlow and elsewhere a start has been made. In London on October 16 we can carry on the job.

Yours sincerely,
Tanworth, Staffs. GORDON CAUSER.

No!

Dear Comrades,

NO! NO! NO! to Aberdeen Anarchists suggestion for a full-time editor of FREEDOM.

Yours against bureaucracy,
N.W.1 R. BEBB.

Snow-ball Rolling

Dear Comrades,

FREEDOM editorials, *Peace News* with 'creeping Fascism', and the commonsense of the politically aware, have been pointing out for months the dangers of Government attacks on trade union freedom, civil liberties and other steps towards totalitarianism: but, apart from shop floor resistance to the Prices and Incomes Policy which is, in a sense, an extension of the class struggle that goes on, Incomes Policy or none, there seems little sign of organized resistance to these subtle measures, i.e. of an anti-

YOUTH IS A NUISANCE

VISITORS TO FRANCE for the International Summer Camp will have noticed how every town has its own square with little cafes, market stalls, and seats dotted all over, with little groups of people, of all ages, sitting down or walking around, sunning themselves and talking. It is somehow homely and there is a sense of community in it all. When did we lose this in Britain? Did we ever have it? Is it a curiously French or Continental habit or is it universal?

It seems to me that the habit is universal, at least it is for the young. People just want to gather, and talk, and relate their life to their surroundings. They want a chance to be still, to move when they want, talk what they want, to randomise a little here and there, in talk, in walking, in sitting, in socialising. And in England, except for rare instances, the policeman appears to move them on, to tell them they should be at home, to inform them authoritatively that they should find something better to do, like kicking a ball between two posts or trying to knock down three little sticks or watch the idiot-box all night like good little consumers. In England even the sun must 'wipe its feet'.

In Birmingham recently they pulled down the market area, a maze of little streets and shops, of curios and bookshops. They had a good excuse—something about the German bombs. They needed to re-house it all in a super new marketing block, an indoor marketing paradise—The Bull Ring Centre. They did.

A vast building of concrete and glass, with several floors and escalators, with fountains and gardens and even an aviary, even an 'open-air' cafe (or coffee bar) on Continental style. The idea was to draw people so that they could come and gaze and relax and, oh yes, I almost forgot, shop. Shop? At all the little bookshops and curios? Well, not quite, you see these could not afford the rents. So all the shops are merely smaller editions of city department stores and so on, or tiny sweet and cigarette shops, exactly the same as the rest of the city centre. To all intents and circumstances merely an indoor shopping centre.

Well, even so, this isn't bad, is it? It's nice to be dry when it rains. Then they noticed people weren't buying enough, so they 'imported' piped music from Manchester and broadcast adverts over the 300-odd loudspeaker system. Soft cool music and the top twenty. So often when it rained people would come in to shop, or window shop and sales went up, and with the crowds so did shop-lifting. So they organised a security service in smart green uniforms with dozens of pips and stripes and this slowed things down for a while and it slowed down even more when the shop assistants started to watch the security

men (or so one told my mate). So, what do you have now? Shops, music, a coffee bar, seats, space, almost a Continental market place. So who came next?—the teenager.

The place became a beats' paradise, it was soft and dry with toilets and free samples around. Every teenager in the place concentrated there, the new mecca, Birmingham, Continental style. They sat and looked open-mouthed, they bought coffee and talked (after all, they were too young for the pubs and too old for school). It was fun. Of course they didn't buy anything—why should they? They had no money, they only followed their instincts for gregariousness, in the Continental (universal?) tradition. It was great. The security men gave orders, no reason, big thick in uniform, the kids said get lost, it's our market, it's where we meet (after all, comrades, wasn't it designed for this?). Apparently not, it was designed to make some capitalist (Laing Developments?) money.

The security men got the word. Drink up your coffee and go, don't come back. A few started being rough and landed up in hospital. Notices started to appear. The Management Reserves the right, etc. Go home. . . . Buy it and get out or else. The *Birmingham Evening Mail* did an article on it recently:—

'Young people gathering in groups in the Bull Ring Centre are being moved on in case they worry other shoppers.'

This was stated by a Centre spokesman after a complaint by two Hay Mills teenagers who said they were asked to move while sitting down reading a newspaper.

They said that other older people nearby were allowed to remain, but they—and a group of other girls—were asked to move.

The spokesman said: 'Obviously we have to try to be reasonable to old people.'

'We don't want young people gathering in

Don Quixote is Out of This World
—on Holiday.

As we go to Press we have heard from the Christie-Carballo Committee that Stuart has passed his GCE exams in the Carabenchal Jail. He got 'A' levels in English and Spanish and 'O' level in History. According to the *Daily Mail* the British Consul apparently thinks that he could be freed 'in a few years'. Can we wait that long?

fingerprinting/anti-conscription campaign that is trying to wake people from their apathy, and prove to the sceptical that it can act.

The Government has given the libertarian movement umpteen focal points for the broad spectrum of discontents it represents, as the Fascists in Spain gave the Spanish anarchists a battlefield on which to prove their militancy and valour in the 1930's by invading the republic, and we can only respond if we clear up such points as these—Should any such movement start locally and co-ordinate nationally later and not blow itself up to be more than it is, as so often happens when you publicize such a movement? How 'open' should its activities be—you never know what's been made illegal while we were ignorant or asleep, till you find out? Should it be more of an alliance open to, say, liberals, etc., who while opposing tyrannical legislation, would not go all the way with us, or definitely and outspokenly 'libertarian'—to us quite logical, but to many a rather drastic step to take?

It isn't enough to find out about, say, new methods of fingerprinting, and then decide we don't know what to do about it! Any correspondence to myself on this, also welcome, hoping this starts a (snow-)ball rolling.

Fraternally,
DAVID STRINGER.

groups. The centre of Birmingham is plagued with long-haired types and their girl friends. We try to remove these from the Centre.

'Occasionally a bona fide shopper is asked to move on which is unfortunate, but it is somewhat difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff.'

'The young people have brought it on themselves and I am afraid the few sometimes have to suffer for the sins of the many.'

In all this article not once was the real reason said, except for the comment 'bona fide shoppers'. The teenagers' only sin is that they entered without the intention of buying—in modern capitalist society a major sin. They followed their natural instincts instead of behaving like little consumers, and that makes them criminals because they, like teenagers throughout the world, gather in groups; they grow their hair long; they have girl friends (shades of Mrs. Grundy); and they sin by not paying the management for providing them with, what was, as it was being built, extolled as being a community service, a new marketing centre.

Some of us feel that the management should be a little more honest and charge an admission fee, or refuse to let anyone in between, say, the ages of 10 and 18, but that would cause a public outcry, wouldn't it? So they play it cool and wonder why vandalism is increasing. Could it be that the teenagers don't like what the management is trying to do to their town square and meeting place? Could it be that they want a bit more honesty from the capitalist?

But anyway, thank you capitalist for making another generation of Birmingham teenagers a little more politically aware of how the world of capitalism really ticks, we were beginning to think you had stolen a generation.

PETER NEVILLE.

PROJECT FOR YOUTH

A COMRADE in Glasgow, Alan Sinclair, has sent us a couple of press cuttings describing his plan to open a cafe for young people. Included in the building will be a nursery where parents can leave young children. He wants to distribute the profits from the cafe and nursery to old folk—buying them food and coal. He told the *Govan Press*, his local paper: 'I have mixed with local gangs for eight months, in cafes, dance halls, etc. I would like to see them (with this project) given a collective responsibility.'

Alan, who is a former secretary of the Committee of 100, feels that the youngsters who now hang around Govan street-corners will be only too willing to help.

What Alan emphasises is that youngsters who will use the intended centre will not be governed over or told what to do. He said: 'These youngsters despise authority—whether it's at home, in the "educational" system, or at work. And

if they feel like a "scrap"? Well, they'll have a boxing ring.'

In a letter to FREEDOM, Alan Sinclair gave the following background information. At the last municipal elections in Glasgow the Tories had their election on the sole issue of 'Bring back the Birch' and to flog teenage offenders. Although the Labour Party opposed this . . . the fact remains that no government or local official came up with an answer or even an idea. Alan thought that once again libertarians have to take County Hall by the hand and show them what to do. He already got verbal support from a councillor and also from John Rankin, MP.

He writes: 'I admit that what I intend to do is a gamble but the alternative is the re-introduction of the birch by the Tories in Glasgow and the rest of the country will follow.'

Those wanting to help Alan Sinclair should write to Flat 3a, 39 Malling Road, Glasgow, S.W.1

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The Brighton Follies

THE CONDITION OF George Woodcock, TUC General Secretary, was said, at King's College Hospital, to be 'satisfactory'. After reading the papers this weekend, the news from the TUC should be as good as the 'proverbial tonic'. If the situation is as reported, George Woodcock's whole attitude to the Wage Freeze has been vindicated. He is reluctantly in favour of the 'freeze' but opposed to Government legislation and interference in collective bargaining.

This is precisely the position the TUC could find itself in at the end of its conference. By a shrewd knowledge of union procedure in general, and conference procedure in particular, Clive Jenkins, ASSET General Secretary, was able to force the position. The Lancashire miners, having declared their support for the 'freeze', would not withdraw or composite their earlier resolution on 'opposition to legislation'. In normal circumstances such a resolution would fall; this was not to be. Master Clive spotted the opening, withdrew ASSET's motion, as did many other unions, thus making the miners' resolution a composite one, which cannot be withdrawn because it becomes the property of all the unions involved. That is how the honour of the 'left' was vindicated.

An interesting situation has occurred regarding the vote of the

NUGMW. The union's Burnley full-time secretary has taken out writs against Lord Cooper, General Secretary, the Union's chairman, and three other members of the General Council, to prevent them from supporting the Government's wage freeze. The writ alleges that the General Council flouted a resolution passed by its 1966 Annual Conference which, whilst supporting the Government's policy on prices and incomes, declared that any legislation to control wage and salary increases must be accompanied by similar controls of prices and distributive profits. Furthermore, standstill on rates of pay for lower-paid workers would not be tolerated.

The case comes up on Wednesday, the same day as the TUC debate the wage freeze. Lord Cooper is reported as saying that we will fight the case, but he will be at the TUC on Wednesday voting for the wage freeze. Lord Cooper's defence is quite simple; between Annual Conferences the General Council is custodian for the union, Annual Conference decision was taken a month before the economic crisis broke.

That, to me, sounds like a Japanese stranglehold on the Burnley secretary—what the legal boys will do with it is anyone's guess.

Next Wednesday's TUC Conference decision is awaited with baited breath. The industrial correspondents of the national press are drooling with anticipation—not since the question of German re-armament have they had the chance of such juicy copy.

Wednesday arrives—the vote is taken. What then? Whichever way it goes, it will not make an atom of difference to the Government's policy. George Woodcock, in a television interview, implied that the TUC decision didn't mean a thing, but what would mean something is what action the workers themselves would be prepared to take.

Monday is the day scheduled for the star turn, the great Wilson himself will address Congress. Why? Heaven only knows, he certainly isn't coming all the way to Blackpool just to persuade Les Cannon (ETU) which way to vote, or the

uncommitted ASW. Incidentally, it should be interesting to see how the ASW perform and I mean that literally. ASW was the union that switched votes at the last minute to get German re-armament accepted at the TUC Congress in the fifties.

Wilson believes that his Prices and Incomes Policy is working, no one will argue about the effectiveness, so far, of the wage freeze, but price and dividend restraint is a farce. James Dickens, Labour MP for Lewisham W., has sent a further list of 19 companies, which have recently announced dividend increases, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

He says this makes a total of 50—or two per working day—since the Prime Minister's 'standstill' announcement of July 20.

The *Financial Times* editorial (22.8.66) made interesting reading. It was headed 'Is there a price freeze?' and goes on to explain: 'The part of the economic squeeze which looks like giving the Government its earliest trouble is the supposed freeze on prices. The impression has been allowed to grow that a prices freeze has been introduced as a quid pro quo for the wage freeze. But in fact there is no price freeze.'

But in any case the housewife does not need the wizards of high finance to inform her of the rising cost of living, one look into her purse on

Freedom for Workers' Control

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Monday morning will do that.

The Labour Government's policy is working. Its object was to freeze wages and create unemployment up to a certain level, and in this way bring the Joe Soaps 'to heel'. The employers, on the other hand, are not doing too badly. The Selective Employment Tax can be recouped from increased prices, Joe Lyons and the ABC have already 'jumped in' on that one. Another way is to sack a few people, and with tears in their eyes and a lump in their throat mumble 'I would love to keep you on but it's the Government tax, it is crippling me'.

Unemployment figures are gradually creeping up, the traditionally high unemployment areas are not suffering any less than previous periods of deflation, whereas the Government claimed that unemployment was really re-deployment and therefore the overall figure would

be kept very low.

Since July 20 'hot air' and resolutions have been at a premium. The first escape valve for excess hot air will be opened at Blackpool, followed by the Labour Party Conference in October and when they are both over, it will be realised that the situation is exactly the same, except that the union leadership will claim that they have tried.

The only policy which can defeat the Wage Freeze is one of unofficial rank and file direct action. The employers are breaking agreements right, left and centre; it's about time the organised workers bent or broke a few, they were all compromises 'against' anyway.

There has always been a need for a rank and file movement, now more than ever—builders, engineers, printworkers, together accepting the challenge of the Labour menace.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

THE COLLECTIVE CONTRACT - 1

THIS IS NO NEW concept, it was preached by the Industrial Unionists at the tail end of the last century and the beginning of this, one of its most ardent advocates being Jim Connolly in Glasgow. In 1910 the call was taken up by the Syndicalists, principally under the influence of Tom Mann. Varying factors led to the rapid rise and equally rapid fall of Syndicalism in 1913, not least being its predominantly propagandist image.

More moderate in their demands than either of the Industrial Unionists or the Syndicalists were the Guild Socialists, who, emerging as a body in 1912, replaced the Syndicalists in 1913 and met with considerable successes, until economically smashed by the Government, Employers, and the trappings of both, during 1922-1923.

Unlike their predecessors, they attempted to evolve means and methods of making the theory of the classless society and workers' control of industry a practicable and viable reality, hence the necessity for the Establishment to smash them. It was they, who, under the guidance of such notables as G. D. H. Cole, S. G. Hobson, M. B. Reckitt and others coined the phrase 'encroaching control', one stage of which was to be the collective contract, which would eventually lead to complete workers' control.

MAKING A START

Before the Syndicalist and Industrial Unionist purists set out to crucify me, may I hasten to add that no one, least of all myself, is going to suggest reformist, watered-down versions of their pet theory. What is being discussed, is a method of starting in some practical and acceptable way, positive proof by deed, that our theories and propaganda over the past years are workable. SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE MUST MAKE A START.

The principle of the collective contract or group system is only an extension, at shop floor level, of the system already adopted by most managements of industrial concerns. To put it another way, it is a development of the individual piecework system, but, because it is collective has inherent safeguards and benefits both to the group as a whole and also (for the Stirnerites), for the individual.

THE CONTRACT SYSTEM

The three major industries in this country who contribute most to contracting work are the motor industry, the aircraft industry, and the constructional engineering and building industries. At the risk of boring or offending more knowledgeable readers, the following briefly explains the contract system as operated at management levels.

First, some reasons for contract work. It is a fact that many firms are unable to produce a complex product from

start to finish. This may be due to various specialist parts being required, e.g. fuel systems for cars and aircraft, or expensive and specialised plant (such as chromium plating). Some parts may need special skills, only attained after years of experience. In these circumstances it would be reasonable to expect the principal manufacturer to 'farm out' this work to more specialised firms.

Secondly there is the time factor. A company may well be capable of manufacturing all the component parts required, given sufficient time. However, as a deadline date has been fixed for delivery, the principal manufacturer makes the main parts and carries out any assembly and testing required while at the same time smaller and/or more specialised firms make the other parts.

A third reason, often attributable to the foregoing, but more especially with the economic structure in which we operate, is MONEY. The necessity to survive in the economic jungle of present day society, requires that the firms prices must be 'competitive'. Small parts are therefore sub-contracted out to companies whose overheads (operating costs) are not so high and as a consequence their unit cost per component is lower, e.g. some nuts and bolts used in aircraft can cost the main manufacturer 12s. 6d.-15s. each, but a small firm, acting as a factor to the industry, produces them for 1s. 6d.-2s.

A fourth reason (sometimes admitted) is labour relations. Operating the maxim of 'never putting all your eggs in one basket', parts may be manufactured by both the main manufacturer and the smaller one. In a situation such as this, an industrial dispute at one place is not always so serious, with the added benefit to the employers of dividing the workers among themselves.

To finish (although there are other reasons) there is the 'do-gooding' side when related to depressed areas. This is closely allied to items three and four above, for where unemployment exists and there is a struggle by workers for jobs, it is comparatively easy to keep labour costs to a minimum thereby killing several birds with one stone and salving your 'conscience' at the same time. Recent examples are where work normally carried out in the Midlands has been contracted out to Merseyside and Tyneside.

SHOP FLOOR LEVEL

Why, if this contracting system is so widespread, is it not introduced at shop floor level? The fact is, that in various forms it does already exist.

The pieceworker contracts to produce a certain number of articles or perform a certain operation a given number of times in a specified time for a given price. Hourly paid workers contract to do a specified (or unspecified) amount of work for so much per hour. In some

areas, groups of workers jointly contract to carry out a certain amount of work for a given price, the latter being the group or collective contract.

Before considering specific cases, let us consider the possible reasons for objection to this system by the management side.

First it challenges and partially destroys the existing hierarchical structure, and this strikes at the very foundations of the traditional master and servant organisation of industry.

Secondly, it destroys the 'divide and rule' weapon used against the workers by employers. This rule may be consciously applied or inherent in the system.

Third, it gives the workers a surprising amount of control over their work, with a corresponding loss of control by the employer over the worker, e.g. if a group rejects the price offered to them to carry out a particular job, it is more difficult to sack them than if it were one pieceworker.

Fourth is the psychological barrier. Although there is no essential difference between bargaining with the manager of the ten-man firm down the road and the spokesman for a gang or group within your own works, the concept of master and servant makes this a bitter pill to swallow. There is also the age-old misconception of the superiority of the brain worker over the manual worker and this dies very hard.

ELIMINATION OF EMPLOYERS

Finally, employers are not the fools some people seem to think. They can see in this system a step towards their own elimination as employers and the assumed power over 'their men' that goes with it.

There are however, built-in advantages to the employer, for it does not in one fell swoop, destroy the capitalist system (whatever its brand). Initially there is an enhancement of the existing economic system by reduced costs, increased productivity, and stabler labour relations, all of which seem to be elusive at present.

If the system is operated as a free group the supervision over men and the imposition of discipline is eliminated since the group imposes its own control from within. The almost impossible task of trying to get individual pieceworkers to make co-operative efforts is made possible under the group system because a team spirit already exists.

The morale of the workers is boosted and a sense of responsibility pervades the group. The division and allocation of work to individuals by the management ceases, this being carried out by the group among themselves. Each difficult work study on a particular operation is dispensed with, the whole job having been contracted at a fixed price by the group.

Up to now I have concentrated on the management side. Where, you may ask, do the workers stand? What have they to gain?

(To be continued)

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