

TWO NIGHTS OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

An eye-witness account of the fighting which took place in Paris on the nights of June 10 and 11, 1968.

WHAT FOLLOWS is an account of my own personal experience in the 5th, 6th and 14th Arrondissements on the two nights when Paris experienced more bitter fighting in the civil war than she had previously experienced.

What I refuse to attempt to do is to deliberately simplify an extremely complex situation, to select certain incidents which illustrate some preconceived notions I may have had about the state of affairs in existence. A knowledge of colloquial French is no help to unravelling the complexities. The *Sunday Times* of 16.6.68 proudly claims to have been 'the first to report the alarming rumours'—so leaving aside the wild guesses at foresight, the gutter journalism which reduces the revolutionaries into terms of drug-addicts and VD cases we move into Boulevard St. Michel at 11.30 on Monday night.

At the junction with St. Germain Boulevard the students are directing traffic as the massive demonstration approaches from the north.

At the head of the procession are a group of anarchists flying the black flag. The marchers are chanting De Gaulle, L'assassin, and singing the *Internationale*. The mood is electric. The crowd swirls around, the banners jog up and down. A student, Gilles Tautin, has died from drowning at Flins. He either was thrown into the river by police swooping down on a group of students or jumped in to avoid a beating-up with truncheons. This march is to avenge his death.

Every hundred yards or so the march halts, and *L'Internationale* is sung. Now we move past the Sorbonne, and on, down to Rue Soufflot where the march is left-wheeled. The girl carrying the anarchist banner still heads the procession, with two other girls carrying red flags, and one girl with a flag that is red on one side, black on the other.

The flags jog through the darkness. Ahead of us looms the massive dome of the Pantheon.

Now, suddenly the atmosphere becomes charged with fervour. The crowd cry hup hup hup, and then they are running, running, hundred after hundred, sprinting forward towards the Pantheon. Immediately there comes two sharp explosions—the first riot-gas grenades are fired into the crowd. I jump up on a car and see the black shapes of police buses on the Pantheon forecourt, and the CRS.

But the object of the march is not to reach the Pantheon but to reach the large police station situated opposite. More riot-gas grenades are fired, and

then, for the first time, a new sound fills the night sky. Louder, more menacing, a hollow detonation stills the vast crowd who pause, uncertain as to what it is. A second detonation shivers through the night, followed by a barrage of explosions from gas guns.

A few minutes later, the word passes through the crowd. The first Molotov cocktails have set two police vehicles ablaze. The battle begins in earnest. There is none of the polite acceptance of totalitarian authority such as we see in this country. The people have got their backs to the wall, and they are fighting with everything they've got.

The crowd enter street-fighting with bravery and intelligence. All of them do not flee before the grenades. Two thin lines of determined people stream past the sides of the Pantheon, opening up two more fronts of confrontation, to split up the police forces. Two more fronts open up in Rue St. Jacques, on either side of the Rue Soufflot. The CRS are now occupied on five fronts at once.

Passers-by in cars drive at high speed to get away from the fighting, driving through red lights, hands on car-horns and knocking pedestrians to one side in their desperation to get away fast. The news of the petrol bombs has got around.

The night is punctuated with many explosions of petrol bombs being thrown in quick succession. Riot-gas is fired almost monotonously, with seemingly little effect on the determination of the fighters.

My eyes are streaming, the effect of the gas is rather like sea-sickness, but it passes, and I have no respect for the gas from that moment on.

The 5th and 6th Arrondissements are a battlefield. Barricades are quickly set up, but tonight the CRS are no longer the unstoppable forces of a totalitarian state. The new weapon has terrified them. They do not charge, but huddle together in hundreds for safety, firing gas grenades into crowds that sometimes surge forward to attack them.

It is a miracle no one is killed. This is civil war.

Convoys of CRS reserves roll up the boulevards, cutting off the retreat of demonstrators, and I decide that it is time to move, or be taken. I run down streets I do not even know the names of and miraculously do not find a cul-de-sac. I run out into the Boulevard St. Michel again, at its southernmost end to face a further convoy of CRS reserves—twelve vehicles in all, standing by to go into action. I walk past studying a map of Paris, and am not challenged.

The fighting goes on through the night, the CRS cannot dislodge the students from their barricades. The new weapon has evened somewhat the relative armed strength of both sides.

It is not until 7 to 8 in the morning that the last barricades are cleared—by bulldozers backed up by CRS, which charge and break down the barriers, and charge the students.

Continued on page 4

ANARCHY 89

on
THE MAY DAYS
IN FRANCE

ANARCHY is Published by
FREEDOM PRESS at 2s,
on first Saturday of every month

REVOLT!

Demonstration against the ban on the five revolutionary student and worker organisations by the Gaullists
Organised by London ILP and the Defense d'Interdire Group

SATURDAY, JUNE 22
Assemble 2.45
Speakers' Corner
Hyde Park
MARCH TO FRENCH
EMBASSY

Control—Not Participation!

IF THERE IS one theme that seems to be common to all the student protesters found the world, it is 'workers' control'. Applied to their own place of work—the university—this is translated into 'student power'.

But fundamentally this means no more than that the workers in an enterprise, be it a university or a steel works, shall be in control of policy-making and day-to-day decision-making as well as doing the work.

For anarchists this is a basic tenet. The rejection of the domination of man by man; the rejection of exploitation, means precisely that nobody shall be forced to work, and thus to live, on someone else's terms. The idea of freedom for all, the true concept of the dignity of labour, must mean nothing less than that the worker at the point of production, or the student at the desk, shall have responsibility for what he does.

To any extent that this responsibility is whittled down, to that extent is freedom and dignity reduced; to that extent is the worker, or the student, simply a means to someone else's ends.

GENOCIDE IN NIGERIA?

IN THE LIGHT of the forthcoming demonstrations concerning the Biafran situation, some facts about the war and British involvement in it may be relevant. (See also FREEDOM, 12.8.67.)

Biafra, as is well known, is the richest region in Nigeria, and the federal government says that it cannot afford to lose such wealth. Subsequent to the Biafran breakaway, this is the federal government's justification for creating two million Ibo refugees and imposing a total naval and economic blockade of Biafra, aided by British naval personnel, with the intention of starving the Biafrans into submission. Partly because of this, three thousand Biafrans are dying every day from malnutrition.

Nigeria is also obtaining a seemingly endless supply of arms from Britain in order to hold this crumbling federation together. The war is not entirely economic however, as it is also the result of a long-standing tribal conflict between the Ibos and the Hausa tribe. The latter dominating as they do the federal government seem intent upon finally wiping out the Ibos altogether, involving the systematic starvation or slaughter of some twelve million civilians.

We must surely act now to stop the supply of arms to Nigeria by both Britain and Russia, this will almost certainly render the prosecution of the war so difficult as to make it impossible.

In order to try and create a greater awareness in this country of the position of Biafra, the 'Save Biafra Committee' is organising two demonstrations.

JUNE 23. MARCH TO DOWNING STREET. (Why, I cannot imagine.)
ASSEMBLE AT RUSSIAN EMBASSY—VICTORIA GATE, KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, W.8, at 2.30 p.m.
JULY 7. RALLY IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE at 3.00 p.m.

We hope that as many people as possible will be able to give their support to show their solidarity with the Biafrans.

PADDY FIELDS.

This, anarchists reject: but it must be a prime necessity in any exploitative set-up. In industry, the motivation of authority—whether the private capitalist or the nationalised Board—is to work the workers for profit and/or the needs of the State. In the university this motivation is somewhat obscured, but is in fact exactly the same.

Academics may deceive themselves with the illusion that they are serving objective truth, that their allegiance is to abstract truth and learning, but while there is an authority which decides what they teach and why they teach it, and certainly while the expansion of further education has as its prime interest the production of technocrats for the advancement of the modern State—then all the functions of the university are geared to the needs of the State.

THREE LEVELS

The education system of Britain has for many years been channelled into three levels: elementary for the workers, secondary for the managers, public school and university for the masters. The more recent demands of technology however, and the needs of the competitive industrial society, have created the necessity for more technicians, and the upper classes did not have the talent in sufficient quantities. So the cream of the working class has been skimmed off into 'grammar schools' and thence groomed for university when their talents warranted it.

But this was not for their benefit, it was for the sake of Britain's competitive position in the world rat-race. And it has all back-fired, as the perversion of science, the misuse of knowledge, has become sickeningly clear.

Hence the increasing demands of the students that they do not be regarded simply as manpower for the State's economic or military struggles. Hence the rejection of 'sausage-machine' education. Hence the demand for more responsibility in deciding what they learn and why.

The force with which these demands have been put forward have frightened authority. Instead of gratitude from students the State is

getting a kick in the teeth. Even De Gaulle's first reaction to the Paris rising was to concede that reforms would be granted—because every Government faced with a revolutionary situation will hurriedly offer reform, for reforms can be handled without fundamental loss of authority—and can always be whittled down once the heat is off anyway.

The same is applying here. The relatively peaceful sit-ins and occupations and demonstrations have sounded a clear enough warning to the Government, and they are smart enough to try to act quickly and head off a real confrontation.

THE OK WORD

So now the code word is 'participation'. Even the older universities where no great trouble has yet emerged have come out with plans for 'participation', while in the real action-centres like Essex and Sussex, the authorities are trying to get out of it by granting as little 'participation' as will satisfy the 'moderate' majority—but participation nevertheless.

These concessions will lead to student representation on councils dominated by university authorities, in exactly the same way as worker participation on Joint Industrial Councils have meant workers co-operating with the bosses in their own exploitation. This is all 'participation' will mean, and no wonder it is now an OK word with politicians like the Liberals (who threw out 'Anarcho-Syndicalism' as an aim) because such reform can be assimilated by a developing capitalism without affecting its real nature one bit.

Now it is true that in the university it is not only the students who are workers. Lecturers and professors also work there, and in assessing whose views should be taken into account the criterion should be the same as in industry: all those who are concerned in an organic way with the productive work of the collective enterprise should co-operate in the running of it. But those who are concerned with the power or profit structure should be expropriated! (Here, Hornsey School of Art have set the right example. Students and (some) staff have taken over the College, they are running it themselves—and they have declared the Board of Governors redundant!)

This then is the issue. Workers' control means responsible freedom, participation means no more than a modification of subjection.

The line is clear. Reject participation—take control!

P.S.

LETTER FROM URUGUAY

REVOLT IS FOR US!

Dear Comrades,

Some minutes ago I had a meeting with all the Anarchists at the University and the Comunidad del Sur boys, and the subject was: The European students' movement and our immediate response.

For the first time in many years we were all agreed on immediate direct action.

We think that this is the occasion to blow up the structures of our proper students' union and also the rest of Latin American unions.

We think that the European anti-authoritarian students' revolt is for us, and that our next revolt is for them.

We think the French comrades are alone and the German comrades are alone and the Scandinavians are alone, and so on. We are also alone. Alone, all of us, without the Right and without the Left.

But all of us are together in the strongest sense, and we must fight as never before, to break down stupid structures and build up a libertarian society.

We will act now. We are not afraid of consequences.

In this moment we have proofs of the treason of the Communist Party to the struggle of European students, in all South America. There is a great silence from Cuba to Argentina in all Communist-oriented organisations. But tomorrow we will break that quietness, in our own FEUU and we are sure of our success. Yesterday we sent a

cable to UNEF, Nanterre, signed by the Belles Artes Students Association, not only expressing solidarity but trying to create a clear way of exchanging information. Now we know that the two official world students' organisations are against these last European movements. So, as always before, they will lie, they will betray us.

Also we are collecting all information and documents. We need URGENTLY manifestos of the Polish, Belgian, French, German, English, Scandinavian, Italian, Spanish, and Japanese students.

We need URGENTLY addresses of students' organisations around Europe.

Three of us are now translating documents from FREEDOM, Anarchy, Noir et Rouge and Le Monde Libertaire. But it is not sufficient; we need German SDS manifestos, English LSE, French Nanterre programmes, and so on. Of course we will send you all about the Latin American struggle in the same direction.

The difference is that there, in Europe, the struggle is on its way, and here it is going to begin.

But we will begin with your background this time.

Yours in Anarchy,

CARLOS RODRIGUEZ.

Camino Maldonado 10176,
Montevideo, Uruguay

(If anybody is able and willing to collate this information, for FREEDOM as well, we would be glad to receive it.—EDITORS.)

International Student Power

LAST THURSDAY, British students heard the views of a large number of foreign student activists who were in London, by courtesy of the BBC, for the television programme 'Students In Revolt'. It was perhaps a symptom of what was to follow that when the foreign student representatives filed into a packed Old Theatre at LSE, they were singing the 'Internationale'. The atmosphere, although electric, was immediately broken and became one of polite, and somewhat embarrassed, amusement. A few stalwart souls attempted to join in but the majority just sat and listened.

It seemed to me the British students did not understand and draw lessons from the experiences and ideas put across to them. In contrast to the sophisticated level of arguments put across by the German SDS, the French 22nd March and Italian student movement groups, the British students' reactions seemed factional and naive. However, this is probably unjust, because people speaking were obviously theoreticians of fairly high standing within their own movements.

CLEAR THINKING

The foreign students attempted not only to give an account of what has occurred in their own movements, but also to create an idea of the way they thought student movements in particular and revolutionary movements generally should carry out activities.

Perhaps the most explicit of these was Krippendorf of the German SDS who emphasised certain problems existing in all revolutionary organisations which had to a large degree been ignored by the British student movement. The two main dangers, as far as he could see, were the personalisation of conflicts and the bourgeois attempt to fit their ideas of argument on you, i.e. the question of violence, blueprints for Utopia, etc.

The first question could only be dealt with by regular rotation of leadership. This served two functions, as well as avoiding the build-up of personality. It avoided the problem created by people being in the midst of activity continuously, having no time to stop and think and analyse the direction which their activity is taking. Secondly, the rotation of leadership destroys the myth that only personalities are involved and demonstrates fundamentally the broad base of the movement.

LINKING HANDS

Lewis Cole, from the Columbia SDS (New York), made some very important points about the nature of activities and the selection of specific points of agitation or direct action which illustrate in microcosm the nature of society in general. He was referring to the recent revolt at Columbia University over the University's attempt to build on parkland in Harlem. This issue, because of the fantastically large-scale nature of

Columbia University (they own large chunks of property all over New York), was seized upon and aroused the active interest not only of groups such as Black Power, but also the liberal elements in the University, and later the City itself.

PARIS PROBLEMS

The problem of violence and having no defined attitude to what happens when a University is occupied, was dealt with by Cohn-Bendit. He pointed out the dangers implicit in continuous street-fighting which sometimes cannot be avoided; the violence became a reason in itself and assumed paramount importance in the struggle. He doubted that given the peculiar conditions of France, and particularly of the Sorbonne, the attitude of the Paris students could have been anything other than it was; but this is not to say that other student movements could not learn from these dangers.

These points were brought out by the Italian comrades as well. One had the uncomfortable impression that the students from Czechoslovakia had either one eye over their shoulder or one eye on the main chance. It was interesting in a way that these students (who had in fact revolted in the most difficult circumstances of all) were the most interested in affecting the attitude of a party. In

the case of the Yugoslav girl, it seemed that Tito could do no wrong; a disappointing analysis from somebody representing the Yugoslav movement, but then, of course, we cannot determine how these students were picked.

A CASE IN POINT

During the discussion, some of the external students, taking their final sociology examination, came to appeal for support on the issue of the re-sitting of the examinations (University authorities alleged an examination paper leak, and ordered a re-sitting). The foreign students quite rightly did not want to comment on this, as it was an internal British matter; however, Krippendorf was prevailed upon to give an opinion. It was interesting to see reactions to what he said. He thought it highly irresponsible for someone to come into a hall with no planned action and only a vague assessment of the situation, and ask for mass action from a meeting of 800.

The difference in methods between the Continental students and the British was very apparent; although the British students supported in theory Krippendorf's ideas that small planning groups should come out with a concrete plan and present it basically for modification, they simply did not appear to carry it out.

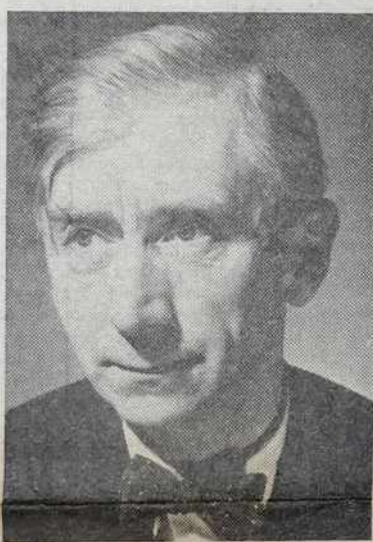
However, it did seem in the two days following, that the lesson (although not acted upon) was beginning to be learned, and the methods of discussion, it was realised, would have to be radically changed if the revolutionary student movement was to become a reality and not a paper organisation.

It was a unique occasion and like many anarchists, I was grateful to be there. However, it was not a case of listening to a rally or a political platform, but in a real sense the meeting was a dialogue which the whole libertarian movement must not only listen to but act upon.

Our movement is now wielding an influence out of proportion to its size, within the student movement; that is not surprising, as we have a valid contribution to make to it. But I feel that if the libertarian students take the ideas so clearly expressed at this meeting and act upon them, encouraging others to do the same, the result will create a really healthy student movement devoid of factionalism.

DIGGER,

NOTE: On the Friday and Saturday following the meeting at LSE, there was a conference to create a revolutionary student federation. The conference set up a provisional co-ordination committee until October. It was very well attended by delegates from all over Great Britain and Ireland, and the whole attitude of students and their organisation was discussed. A more detailed report and comment will appear next week in FREEDOM.



'A Man Born Free' ★

merely poetic nonsense. For myself it is not only a return to Proudhon, Tolstoy and Kropotkin, who were the predilections of my youth but a mature realization, moreover, of the necessity, or the probability, of an intellectual confining himself to essentials.

He went on to point out that so long as Lenin and Stalin had 'promised a definitive "withering away of the State" I was prepared to stifle my doubts and prolong my faith'. But when the years went by and the liberty of the individual receded at every stage 'a break became inevitable'. And it was the struggle of 1936-39 that made it 'possible to transfer our hopes to Spain where anarchism, so long oppressed and obscured, has at last emerged as a predominant force in constructive socialism'.

In that beautiful autobiographical volume *Annals of Innocence and Experience* he makes reference to his Marxist and Anarchist readings in his youth and dates them at not later than the summer of 1914. By 1916, when he was an officer in His Majesty's Army, he read and was influenced by T. E. Hulme's translation of Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*, and in his autobiography he declares 'that few books have impressed me so deeply and so permanently'.

After the war of 1914-18 he entered the Civil Service where he remained until 1931. They were years in which he was, he writes, under a much stricter censorship than in the army 'and though I never "dropped" politics, I ceased to write about them'. And so when he found himself at liberty to take part in the public discussion of political issues, 'many people assumed that I had "just discovered" Marx, that the turn of political events had forced me from the seclusion of an ivory tower, that I had adopted anarchism as a logical counterpart to my views on art. Actually there was an unflinching continuity in my political interests and political opinions. I would not like to claim that they show an unflinching consistency, but the general principles which I found congenial twenty-five years ago are still the basic principles of such political philosophy as I now accept.'

I am not proposing to unravel this personal and intellectual knot here, though I would suggest that no serious appraisal of Herbert Read's political ideas and writings can ignore these significant autobiographical references. I think also that one must take into account that a writer is primarily a writer—concerned with the art of writing, just as a painter is concerned with paint, and a politician with power. Where Herbert Read distinguishes himself from so many writers of our time is in remaining to the end shy but secure; aware of his achievements and failures and never depending on the arc light of the ignorant mass-communicators.

I am sure that Herbert Read would have been the first to recognise that he had not contributed to the elaboration of anarchist ideas that was in his power as a thinker and writer to do. And I would suggest that this stems from an inability to translate his thoughts into language and issues that could capture

the imagination of politically conscious workers. Alas, not having been in touch with him personally since 1953, I never put these questions to him. But I think the answers, anyway, will be found in his writings because after all he was essentially a communicator by the written word and not by the odd remark he might make at a party.

My recollections of Herbert are that he not only reluctantly agreed to speak at meetings but that having agreed to he wrote out his speech and delivered it with all the revolutionary fervour he could summon up for the occasion. Which meant that more often than not some of the public were so disappointed by his delivery that they failed to take into account the important things he had to say!

As well as writing for the anarchist press (his first contribution was in *Spain and the World*, May, 1938, and *Freedom Press* published most of his political writings), Herbert took part in many of our activities, and not only lent his name but was also most helpful in the work of organising meetings, of getting other well-known people to sign protests, or appeals, or to raise funds. And of course everybody 'got' at him to help either with publishing their masterpieces or to get their paintings accepted and so on. It reached a point, when he was still living in Beaconsfield, that he had a card printed which read:

Herbert Read begs to thank you for your letter, but has to inform you that he has retired from all unsolicited correspondence, from lecturing, attending meetings and conferences, joining committees, writing prefaces and introductions, visiting studios and opening exhibitions, reading unsolicited manuscripts and books, offering his opinion on drawings and paintings submitted to him through the post, and generally from all those activities which render his present existence fragmentary and futile.

Poor Herbert; the card saved him from not more than a tiny fraction of this unsolicited correspondence. For it was his essential modesty which made him the victim of all kinds of determined phobias but also the sponsor of so many young people who needed just the kind of help that he could and would give. Henry Moore has written of him that he had never met anyone 'more generous with his time, or more self-sacrificing in the way that he would put aside his own concerns to help others'.

Our disappointment when he accepted a knighthood in 1953 was openly expressed in the columns of *FREEDOM*, and there is no point in reviving the issue, except by way of explaining why some of us were no longer in touch with Herbert during the last fifteen years of his life.

But the silence of these years never extinguished, at least for me, the friendship and work in common of the preceding fifteen years.

V.R.

*From *Song for the Spanish Anarchist* by Herbert Read.

FIFTH COLUMN

Once You Begin . . .

ONE of the objections to streetfighting—as Daniel Cohn-Bendit suggested at the LSE last week—is that if undertaken seriously against determined opposition it may not leave much time for the real work of social revolution.

While the revolutionary students of Paris were having their heads beaten in by the CRS they were not in a position to carry on the university under student control.

Another objection to streetfighting is that once you begin you have to continue—until the regime falls or you are crushed. An exhilarating victory must be followed by others: no strategic withdrawal is possible. And if successfully holding the Quartier Latin is a triumph, losing it to the police is a defeat.

The most significant element in the French rebellion was not the raising of the barricades, but the occupation by students and workers of the universities and factories. As has been said so often, it is by taking control at work that the exploited classes have the capacity to achieve a revolution.

The physical occupation of places of work demonstrates the power of the masses. How many policemen do you need to expel from their factories all the workers of France? The State has no answer to the determined action of a united working class.

But it has a very simple answer to a minority of revolutionaries fighting in the streets. If the tear gas fails there are always tanks.

If the masses fought in the streets they would win against the tanks. But they do not need to fight: this is the essential point.

To achieve a revolution the workers have to go beyond physical occupation of the factories and begin to run them for themselves. By taking over the functions of the ruling class they make it irrelevant and powerless.

Thus the most radical action open to students is to show the way forward by taking over their university. If a university can be run by its workers—students and junior teachers—why not factories, offices, transport services?

Unfortunately the takeover of a university is more exciting than the running of it. And streetfighting is the most romantic method of confronting authority that can be found in a history book.

Typical State Treatment for Faithful Old Retainers

THOSE who think that police horses deserve a better fate than a policeman's arse will sympathise with Mrs. M. F. Turney of Park Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire, who wrote recently in a letter to the *Daily Express*:

I read with horror that police horses are destroyed when their valuable services have come to an end. Surely, after so many years of training and devoted service, a place could be found for them in a rest home for horses.

WYNFORD HICKS.

LETTER

Chinese Anarchists

Dear Comrades,

In a recent issue, P. Billingsley queries the usage of 'wu jengfu zhe' as 'anarchist' in Bob Blakeman's informative article on Chinese Anarchists. According to the authorities I have consulted, this word means 'anarchism' in exactly the same sense as we use it. It is interesting to note that while the word is used by the Chinese authorities in connection with 'criminality', most of the 'crime' is in regard to taking over factories, etc.

In *Pa Chin and His Writings* (Harvard UP 1967) this is the word (transliterated as 'wu cheng fu chui') used by Pa Chin when writing on anarchism and translating from Bakunin, Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Malatesta, etc. It is also used by the Chinese Anarchists invariably. While it may be associated with 'criminality' when used by the Chinese government or State propagandists, 'I fear 'tis so with us in Denmark'.

Incidentally, this subject is treated with great force of language in Lui-Shih's *They are not the patriots, we are not the bandits* (published in 1928, in translation, by the London Freedom Group). Dealing with Makhno, Zapata and the Chinese movement, he pours scorn on the pretensions of the Kuo Min Tang to be the 'patriots' and on those who, having outlawed movements demanding social justice, then describe them as criminal.

MOVING FUND

Target is £500.
Received to Date—£403 16s. 2d.

PREMISES FUND

Target is £1,000 per year.
Pledges honoured to date and donations: £403 16s. 2d.

Keep It Up!

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Estimated Expenses:
24 weeks at £90: £2,160
Income: Sales and Subs.: £1,941
DEFICIT: £219

PRESS FUND

Anon 1/5; London, N.W.10: P.M. 10/-;
Cardiff: An. Gp. 13/-; Wolverhampton:
J.K.W.* 2/-; J.L.* 3/-; London, N.10:
P.J.B. £2/10/-; Norwich: C.A.L. £1;
Coventry: L.E.H. 10/-; London, E.7: P.C.
3/-; Bromley: W.D.W. 8/-; Strauer:
T.H.N. 5/-; Whitby: P.R. 10/-; Aberdeen:
Y.C.N.D. £1; London: Anon 1/6; London,
N.W.1: D.C.R. 10/-.

TOTAL: £8 6 11
Previously Acknowledged: £408 2 1
1968 Total to Date: £416 9 0
Deficit B/F: £219 0 0
SURPLUS: £197 9 0

*Donor's Regular Contributor.

Anarcho-Syndicalism in Czechoslovakia

SOMEWHAT belatedly the Central Trade Union Council of Czechoslovakia has decided that the country's Trade Unions must protect the rights of their members, and that they should not be dependent on any political party.

In the 1950s, reports *Czechoslovak Life* (Prague, June), the Unions came to be considered a kind of transmission belt between the Communist Party and the Government; an organization to mobilize the workers to fulfil the economic plan. Frequently they backed the management rather than their own members. Any independent activity which threatened this conception was labelled 'anarcho-syndicalism'.

The idea that Unions were independent organisations with their own point of view, based on absolutely voluntary membership in which Communists were obviously in the minority and therefore did not automatically have a right to hold important offices, was lost from view.

P.N.

More State Intervention

Freedom For Workers' Control

JUNE 22 1968 Vol 29 No 19

THE LONG-AWAITED report by the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations has been published. From the employers' point of view, it has been very disappointing, while for the trade unionist, it will mean further state intervention.

The *Financial Times* has said the Commission 'has taken three years and a huge volume of evidence to produce a report that many people will be inclined to dismiss as a mouse'. The *Economist* echoes this when it says 'In general, this is a report to forget'. These two publications and employers' associations wanted a much harder line taken. They wanted fines on unofficial strikers to be deducted from their wage packets and legal enforcement of collective contracts.

The Commission felt that these legal sanctions would harm industrial relations, although some members disagreed with this recommendation. The report, however, does make concessions to the advocates of legal sanctions, for it proposes that the present legal protection be withdrawn from persons who persuade workers to strike unconstitutionally. This recommendation was carried by a 7-5 majority and it seems that the Commission was split on this and other matters, this could now mean that employers would be in a position

to take legal action against militants and sue them for breach of contract, for conspiracy and cause them to be served with injunctions restraining them from continuing their activities.

This legal weapon could be used, but on the whole it does not have much importance, for if employers sue one or two men, this would only cause them more trouble. However, it could affect a work place where union organisation is in the early stages. Then the employers might try it on and get away with it. However, individual victimisation of this sort usually gives the employer more trouble than it's worth.

THE TWO-TIER SYSTEM

The main emphasis of the report is on changing the pattern of collective bargaining. The report goes over, in some detail, well-known facts about the two systems of industrial bargaining. One they call the formal system 'embodied in the official institutions', while the other is the 'informal system, created by the actual behaviour of trade unions and employers' associations, of managers, shop stewards and worker'.

This is the two-tier system of bargaining which is carried on in most industries, where the national agreements only form a base from which the local and factory agreements arise. It is this informal system of wage bargaining, called 'wage drift', which has mainly come about since the war. It reflects the changed power relations which have taken place in this period.

With post-war full employment, shop floor organisation has been in a strong bargaining position to push up bonus rates. Bargaining on this shop floor organisation has been in autonomous and has covered aspects of job control like the manning of machinery.

To most workers, their shop floor organisation is the most important aspect of trade unionism. It is at this level that the wage packet is made up to a reasonable one and where inhuman conditions are made bearable. This shop floor bargaining has, of course, strengthened the shop stewards. Power has filtered back down to the rank and file and through their own efforts they have managed to secure agreements and wage rates that national officials would never have dreamed of demanding. What has happened and is recognised is that militancy pays off.

This, they say, has brought about 'the tendency of extreme decentralisation and self-government to degenerate into indecision and anarchy; the propensity to breed inefficiency; and the reluctance to change—all of them characteristics which become more damaging as they develop, as the rate of technical progress increases, and as the need for economic growth becomes more urgent'.

They use the word 'anarchy' here as a synonym for chaos, while the tendency they describe as 'decentralisation and self-government' is also one of anarchy. But this tendency is one that is preventing 'technical progress' and 'economic growth' because the workshop organisation realises that these things are against their

interests, unless they secure the benefits from them.

REGISTRATION OF AGREEMENTS
This is why the Commission wants to see the formalisation of plant and company bargaining so that the benefits are retained in productivity deals by the employers. These new collective labour factory agreements, made by major companies (those with over 5,000 workers) should be obliged to register their agreements with the Ministry of Employment and Productivity, or if they have none, to explain why. The proposed act would also set up an Industrial Relations Commission which could be instructed by the Ministry to 'investigate and report on cases and problems arising out of registration of agreement'.

This proposed IRC would, of course, supplement and assist the work of the present Prices and Incomes Board. It is, furthermore, if carried out, yet another encroachment of the State in collective bargaining. The proposal represents an attempt to come to terms with the power which the shop floor committee of stewards have built up.

These types of plant productivity agreements have, of course, been going on for a long time now and have Government blessing and encouragement, but the recommendation which formalises these types of agreements will mean an even closer watch and examination of the agreements, to make certain that workers are really paying for any wage increases they may obtain with productivity deals. The suggestion that large companies register their agreements is only a start and the report recommends that after the scheme has got going, smaller companies will have to register their agreements.

WAGE CONTROL
This is the main recommendation of the Commission (some of the others being one union for an industry, protection

for individual employees), and is an attempt to come to terms with the shift in power in the trade union movement. As such, it gives the State further power in the regulation of wages and conditions to assist the employers to make increased profits. These factory and company agreements would, in the words of the report, 'enable companies to exercise effective control over their own wage-salary-bills'.

This type of agreement will strengthen the executive of the unions. If present agreements, drawn up in accordance with the Commission's recommendations are anything to go by, then we will get agreements made by union executives and employers, without consultation with the rank and file, which will tie down union organisations to wage agreements and give no provision for future bargaining by shop stewards.

Companies obviously see the advantages of these agreements and are far more willing to deal with executive members than shop stewards. The Commission probably see this recommendation as a substitute for legal sanctions on unofficial strikes. These recommendations should be resisted by all trade unionists. It might only be the beginning, in that if the economic position of British capitalism does not improve in competitiveness in the next two years, then there could be further State intervention into trade union affairs.

The trade unions are mostly seen as willing allies to capitalism. They are rather slow in changing to meet present day situations, but they form an essential part of modern western capitalism. But at the shop floor, the conflicts still exist, opposing interests confront one another. Here the class struggle is a fact and it is here that the strength of the working class is based. The Commission's recommendations propose to undermine that strength.

P.T.

Contact Column

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

Fringe Festival, Bath. Thursday, June 27. Contact Absalom Gallery, Bath 63761.

Work wanted. German student (Eng. and German Lit.), male, 26, wants to escape fascist surroundings and stay in London. To do so he seeks job. Has done driving (including vans) and translating. Peter Muender, 49 Rivington Street, London, E.C.2.

Conference. 'The Free School in the Unfree Society' Day Conference organized by the Libertarian Teachers' Association, Saturday, July 20, from 10.30 a.m. at 36 Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7. Send 5/- P.O. before July 14 to P. Ford at above address.

Communal Farm. Am now doing research into aspects. Any ideas? Write Dava, 137A Burnt Ash Hill, Lee, London, S.E.12.

Work wanted. Woman teacher, refugee from State school rat race seeks work. Near Greenford preferred. Box 12.

Arthur Moyse. Anarchistic folio of drawings, cartoons and collages. 22 prints (10 1/2 x 8 1/2) and index. 6s. or \$1.50 post paid from BB Books, 11 Clematis Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

Planned decentralisation via the anarchist commune. 6d. stamps to Selene Community (F), Rhydcymerau, Llanddeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin.

Voluntary Work Team. Present address: Formby Hall, Formby, Lancs.

Manchester Arts Lab. Needs £300 for rent, and cash donations, books, furniture, equipment. Premises provisionally taken for June 22. Details Doug Holton, 54 Egerton Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, 14.

Flat wanted for two girls and two kids. Tired of being discriminated against by rotten landowners because of kids. Prefer Islington/Canonbury/Highbury area. Contact Barbara or Julie at 'Peace News', 5 Caledonian Road, N.1. Phone: 837 4473.

Loving foster home is wanted for boy (3 1/2 years), pacifist family. Box No. 9. Family with four children urgently seeks unfurnished house out of London. Write 655 Fulham Road, S.W.6.

Two Nights of Guerilla Warfare

Continued from page 1

But the night represents a turning-point in the civil war. For the first time, the CRS have been shown to be vulnerable, human, capable of being defeated. The new weapon, and the techniques of guerrilla warfare that were displayed throughout the night mark a new development of the battle, and things will never be the same again.

Afternoon, the second day.

Gutted police vehicles still lie wrecked opposite the Pantheon. Windows of police buildings are gutted, news-kiosks are burned out.

It is 2 p.m., and the air, despite a moderate breeze all morning, is still heavy with riot-gas. In restaurants along the Boulevard St. Michel, the diners eat with tears streaming down their faces.

From the dome of the Sorbonne flies the black flag of anarchy. The flag also flies at strategic points on the building, in company with the red. The quadrangle of the Sorbonne is crowded with people looking at the improvised bookstalls. The anarchist stall seems to be doing good business, but the movement is overshadowed by the Communist Party machine, that dominates the stalls, the slogans on the walls, the banners that fly from windows of the building.

The opposition to Gaullist totalitarianism may be united at the moment, but it is hopelessly split into half-a-dozen differing ideologies that cannot surely provide a harmonious alternative.

A demonstration is called at the Gare de l'Est at 7 p.m.

I decide to jump in with both feet and travel direct there by Metro. As I walk out of the exit I am pounced on by CRS who are filling the station forecourt in their hundreds.

'Papier!' I have to give them my passport. They scrutinize, hand it back. They want me to go back down the Metro. I refuse. I notice a curious re-

action. None of the CRS surrounding me will look me straight in the eye. Whenever I look at one of them and ask to walk out of the station, he turns away, and will not take the decision as to my destiny upon himself. Faced with an open space, and the turned back of the CRS, I push past, thanking them, and walk out of the station.

The massed forces of the Gaullist regime are here assembled on this warm summer evening. Hundreds of armed police and CRS completely block the Boulevard de Strasbourg, rifles slung over shoulders, bus-loads of reinforcements, also armed, waiting in side streets. There must be nearly a hundred vehicles parked around the station, maybe more. It is a shattering sight. But this is what a police state has to do to preserve its power, to continue its exploitation of the many.

Apart from the rifles, boxes of gas-grenades lie handy, steel shields are carried by police (everyone is helmeted naturally) and the wooden truncheons are swinging openly, even though there isn't a single demonstrator in sight, or sound.

A quarter of a mile away I encounter three more complete lines of armed police blocking the boulevard.

The demonstration, as should have been realised after last night, is at last obsolete. A few skirmishes develop, but the students, workers and others, filter away into the side streets. The police are delayed in their positions for some time, however, fearing a regrouping, and this enables a lot to happen in other parts of town.

The night of the 11th

At 9.30 the first Molotov cocktails shatter the stillness of the evening. It is going to be a long night.

Barricades are being erected in many parts of the 5th, 6th and 14th Arrondissements. Election boards, erected in the centre of boulevards for party notices,

are broken down and set alight with the cry of 'Elections are treason'.

So many incidents are taking place that the police, massed though they are, just haven't got the men or vehicles to deal with them. They do a great deal in the way of making arrests, but there are streets into which they never go, throughout the entire night.

Fire engines which arrive to put out fires are unhampered by demonstrators, who shrug, wait until they are gone, then relight the fires.

Molotov cocktails explode in the distance, answered by peppering gas-grenades.

I walk up Boulevard St. Michel. CRS block the way at Rue Gay Lussac. They want us out of the street. CRS vans come dashing out of side streets, catching the crowds unexpectedly, and firing gas-grenades to drive us back, a hundred yards at a time. A CRS van skids to a stop about twenty yards away and they fire grenades into us. I turn and run with the others. I see on the pavement in front of me three gas-grenades spewing out gas. I take a breath, leap over the grenades and run as far as I can before sucking in more air. Our eyes are full of tears now, but the mood is anger, not apathy.

As we run down the Boulevard St. Michel I see ahead a convoy of CRS vehicles rolling into sight. They block our escape.

I jump the fence into the Jardin du Luxembourg and flit among the trees. A score of others are with me. We wait until an exit presents itself, then run down it and away into the night.

The night is now a scene of utter violence.

As a convoy of CRS roll towards Montparnasse, the road ahead of them is suddenly lit with half a dozen violent flashes, followed by deafening detonations, followed by flames from fired vehicles leaping into the air.

Restaurants along Boulevard du Montparnasse empty quickly as waiters present clients with bills and hurry them out into the night. Small groups of people listen gravely to the news coming in over transistor radios.

A bulldozer rolls into a square in Montparnasse to clear blazing vehicles on to waste ground. It turns and charges the gathered crowd. Scores of CRS stand around, but do not charge. They stick to the only weapon they can use without murdering their own people—the gas-grenade. I find myself in with a defiant crowd gathered in a side street. The police cannot get into a position whereby they can fire grenades directly into the street, because of its narrowness and height of the buildings.

The marksman fires instead high into the air, hoping to lob the grenades among us. He is a poor shot. All the grenades clatter onto the tiles of rooftops and disappear into some unfortunate residents' back-gardens. Like comets the grenades and cartridges fly through the air. The bulldozer appears at the end of the street, belching defiance, and charges. But the street is too narrow for the scoop to enter. The driver has to brake rapidly to avoid colliding with the shops on either side.

The three surrounding Arrondissements are in civil war. Fires burn in almost every square, petrol bombs puncture the night, gas-grenades plop around us, barricades block streets at strategic points, crowds gather only to melt away into the darkness on the approach of the police, and re-group when the threat is gone. Students on mopeds tear up and down the boulevards keeping track of CRS movements, and giving advance warning of their impending approach to friends along their route.

The fighting and the explosions go on long into the night.

This is what I saw on the two nights of rioting in Paris which directly led to the repressive measures of de Gaulle on Wednesday, June 12—the only answer he could find to combat the discontent of the French people. I.D.