

WE ARE THE PEOPLE!

WORKERS' CONTROL CONCLUSIONS

AS COHN-BENDIT SAID

'We are opposed to ALL attacks on ALL countries by ALL governments'

Czechmate

THERE IS LITTLE factual information we could usefully try to give our readers about the events in Czechoslovakia. For one thing, what information there is already widely available; and for another, it is already out of date by the time it reaches this country—let alone by the time it is printed in FREEDOM. But there are some comments we can give which may be useful because they do not seem to have been made elsewhere.

Above all, it is important to realise that one emotion which is really quite inappropriate is surprise. What has happened, far from being extraordinary, is in fact part of well known patterns of events in Czechoslovak history, Russian history, European history, and Communist history.

The history of Czechoslovakia from one aspect is little more than a story of government by and resistance to foreigners. The Slavs who speak Czech and Slovak have

lived under German, Hungarian or Russian rule for almost the whole of the thousand years that they have inhabited the area now called Czechoslovakia. Bohemia and Moravia were part of the German and Austrian empires for eleven centuries and Slovakia was part of Hungary for nine centuries before the First World War. The independent state of Czechoslovakia which appeared after the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918 was therefore a historical anomaly which was brought to an end by Hitler after twenty years, with the connivance of Britain and France and the consent of Russia; and, although it reappeared after the collapse of

Nazi Germany, it was brought to an end again by Stalin after only three years. So the movement towards national independence and liberal democracy which has been gathering speed during the last few months is an anomaly, and its failure—if it does fail—must be seen as the rule rather than an exception in Czechoslovak history.

Similarly, the history of Russia since the thirteenth century from one aspect is little more than the story of the conquest by the rulers of Moscow of the rest of Russia and then by the rulers of Russia of its neighbours on every side; thus Russia is now by far the largest imperial power in the world—nearly half the inhabitants of the Soviet Union are not Russian, to say nothing of the satellite countries. As part of this process, the Russian government has frequently taken violent action to make sure that its conquered neighbours remain conquered or that its unconquered neighbours are at least not hostile. The main examples are the suppression of the Polish rebellions of 1831 and 1863 and the Hungarian rebellion of 1849, the Bolshevik seizure of the Tsarist empire after the Revolution, the invasions of Poland in 1939 and Finland in 1940, the seizure of eastern Europe between 1940 and 1945, and the suppression of the East German rebellion in 1953 and the Hungarian rebellion in 1956. So the suppression of the Czechoslovak

rebellion must be seen as the rule rather than an exception in Russian history.

Similarly again, the history of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire from one aspect is little more than the story of the division of the continent among the great powers, not so much by gentlemen's agreement as by honour among thieves. Russia on one side and Germany and Austria on the other had shared out eastern Europe for several centuries up to the First World War, and the settlement made by the treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain, which tried to divide Europe according to the principle of self-determination, was an attempt to change the stream of history, and it was soon swept aside. At the end of the Second World

War, the United States and Britain carved up the whole world with Russia, and eastern Europe—including Czechoslovakia—was handed to Russia on a plate as part of its sphere of influence. The balance of power in Europe depends on the status quo being maintained, and the Western powers, however much noise they might make, will not go back on what was decided by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill twenty-five years ago. So the Russian action in Czechoslovakia and the Western inaction in reply must be seen as the rule rather than the exception in European history.

And in the same way the history of Communism from one aspect is little more than the story of the seizure of parties by cliques and of countries by parties. In this story the climax of chapter after chapter has been drastic and often violent action against rival or rebel cliques, parties and countries. The main examples are the elimination of imaginary as well as real opposition

Continued on page 2

Labour Party Hypocrisy

THE LABOUR PARTY rally in Hyde Park 'For Freedom in Czechoslovakia' was shown up for a piece of hypocrisy by anarchist and socialist comrades. The speakers, Jennie Lee, George Brown and Richard Crossman, were booed continuously, as they read their prepared speeches. A Biafran contingent was right in front of the platform, emphasising the hypocrisy of these Labour Party hacks.

Earlier a Socialist Labour League contingent had assembled, but they were carefully shepherded out of the park. A group of International Socialists also had a meeting in Hyde Park, but many of their comrades, and almost all anarchists, preferred to heckle Lee & Co. When the booing was greatest the Labour Party meeting quickly finished, to the strains of the Czech national anthem, a dirge that must paralyse the most ardent revolutionary.

At least 5,000 people then marched to the Soviet Embassy, where, on the top of Cadogan's van, speakers from the various groupings talked to a vast crowd that occupied the whole width of the road for about 300 yards.

An anarchist comrade spoke first, summarising the situation to the best of his ability. His demand for total freedom, and also his criticism of Castro and Ho Chi Minh (heroes of some sections of the crowd), and of Dubcek (hero of another section), annoyed many, if not at the same time.

After other speeches, including a near-anarchist one from Tariq Ali, an unfortunate incident finished the meeting. Peter Cadogan offered the microphone to a Conservative. This was resented by many in the crowd, and in particular by an Irish Trotskyist, who tore the flex out of the microphone. The vast crowd stood around, waiting for something to happen. Many went home. Others went into the park, trying to get near the Russian Embassy from the back, but foot and mounted police, assisted by the long fence, were able to keep the demonstrators away from the Embassy. There was sporadic fighting, in which both police and demonstrators were injured. After a while the demonstrators returned to Bayswater, their numbers depleted. A rumour circulated in the crowd that one of the demonstrators was either seriously injured or had died. A comrade, John Rety, then spoke from the bonnet of a car, asking for verification of this from any member of the press, TV or the police. A policeman finally emerged—and promptly arrested him, and later at

the police station he was charged with using 'threatening words whereby a breach of the peace may have been occasioned' (the usual fine is about £5). However, appearing with 24 others at West Kensington Magistrates' Court, he and they were all informed that all the cases were to be remanded until September 17, pending a decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions, whether to extend the charges for all or some of them, with the possibility of increased sentences. Witnesses are wanted to come forward if they saw any of the arrests taking place.

M.H.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

THE BRITISH reactions to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia provided yet another example of the distorted vision with which we view our own position in the universe. The law of public reaction can be summed up like this: the hysteria of the public reaction to an indignity varies inversely as the degree of collective responsibility.

This explains the wave of outrage which has swept these islands over events in Europe for which we can claim hardly any responsibility at all, and our treatment of the Biafran people and the Nigerian War. It also explains the suddenness with which the entire problem has all but disappeared from the pages of the national press.

I believe that every man's life is worth as much—no more, no less—than another's. Judged on this scale of values, how much worse is the Biafran war to the Czech take-over?—a thousand, two thousand?—and British action in Nigeria must be that much worse than the actions of Russia in Europe.

The law of reaction explains the failure of the demonstrations against Biafra, the lack of interest shown in protesting about British foreign policy, the sales of arms, the killing of foreign nationals to protect 'British interests'. It explains why massive demonstrations can always be organised to protest against Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, Greece, or, if the occasion ever demands it—Timbuctu.

The conscious only being a small part of our total awareness, however, means that in spite of all our attempts to pass the buck and create other centres of

attention, a small portion of truth nearly always manages to hide in a distant cavern of the mind. This results in the phenomenon known as 'war guilt'. There is evidence that the Biafran war is causing this to affect the behaviour of many people.

War guilt can be expiated in three ways. By catharsis, through watching 'commercial' war films (*The Green Beret* being the latest example); by donating to charity (the flood of Biafran appeals being a classic example of the hypocritical nature of the national character); and by transferring the objections of the conscience into the voluble objection to similar atrocities perpetrated by foreign powers, the more distantly-removed geographically, the better.

The Czech situation is important in illustrating to all people what the anarchist is already aware of—that communism and capitalism are merely two names for the same brand of totalitarianism, maintained in order to preserve the present balance of power. Some people are born anarchists, others arrive at anarchy by the process of elimination. Let us hope that the events in Europe of the past weeks will make more people, who would otherwise have plodded along quite happily under any regime that gave them a full belly and uninterrupted TV fodder to fill in their evenings, realise the dangers inherent in acquiescing to the modern industrial state in any of its self-styled alternative forms.

Meanwhile, Biafra dies.

PROMS PROTEST

ONE of the more unusual anti-Soviet protests to be staged as a result of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia was held at the Royal Albert Hall on Wednesday (21.8.68). This was the day the news of the invasion reached us, it was also the day of the opening prom concert by the State Orchestra of the USSR, and a further coincidence was that Rostropovitch was to be soloist in the Dvorak Cello Concerto, arguably the finest work of any Czech composer. It was an occasion that could not be allowed to pass without incident.

Leaflets were distributed outside the hall prior to the concert, stating the relevance of protest to this particular occasion. Many protesters, including myself, went inside and gave out leaflets there.

At the beginning of each work there were loud cries of protest from the gallery. Slogans were shouted for a few

It is not inconceivable that a future War Crimes Tribunal will bring to justice not only the politicians and civil servants concerned with the supply of arms to Nigeria, but also the executives of those oil companies who sanctioned the financing of private supplies of arms in order to defend 'their' property. The leaders of Nazi Germany did not suffer from insomnia worrying about retribution in the early thirties, either.

For the present, however, let us turn thankfully to the pages of the national press and read there fine words that demand freedom and justice for the Czech people.

For Fleet Street, as for Britain, the problem of what to do about Biafra is shelved with a sigh of relief. As news, it has ceased to exist.

Should the European situation, and Greece, and the American presidential elections ever lose their agitational contemporaneity, the British people may have to read the unpleasant fact that, in the meantime, Biafra and the Biafran people themselves have ceased to exist.

Ceased to exist because the British sent arms and ammunition into Nigeria. Because a group of people wanted to break from the regime and set up their own rule. And freedom. And independence.

But who the hell cares, anyway?

seconds before silence allowed the performers to be heard. The shouting during the final work (Shostakovich's 10th Symphony) was more prolonged and resulted in some evictions from the hall.

It was necessary, though perhaps unfortunate, that this protest had to be staged. Rostropovitch is the finest cellist in the world, and played the Dvorak as finely as one could ever wish to hear it performed. It was an occasion of great irony. Many reviewers the following morning expounded the incredible thesis that Rostropovitch was saying in music what could not be said with safety in words. It is true that during the unaccompanied Bach sarabande he played as an encore every mind in the hall must have had but a single thought. This was inevitable, whether it was Rostropovitch's intention or not.

It was an utter tragedy that no deference at all was shown to opinion in this country about the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Had Rostropovitch played another concerto at the last minute, not a difficult matter with an experienced orchestra and soloist, and BBC resources, or had the Albert Hall taken up the demonstrators' suggestion, contained in their leaflet, of a minute's silence after the Dvorak, things might have been much less rowdy, and the demonstration perhaps more meaningful.

This leaflet incidentally was printed in Russian also, and made available to the performers.

But all this was not to be, and therefore, as Neville Cardus pointed out in his review of the concert the following morning in the *Guardian*, the absence of any kind of protest during the performance would have been unthinkable. The Left in this country has at least showed that, as well as the anarchists, can be anti-Soviet, even if they have to be forced into it.

Many had suggested a boycott of the concerts. Had it been anywhere near possible this would have been the ideal thing to do. But all the Soviet concerts had been sold out for weeks, and one lives in Cloud Cuckoo Land if one expects the politically apathetic music lover to miss them. So the only thing for the handful of demonstrators to do in order to make a protest that would be heard by the Russians themselves, and by millions listening to the concert on the radio or watching on television, was to go inside and make one's point as best one could.

PADDY FIELDS.

'We are the People!'

BERKELEY—A police car pulled us over on Oxford Street, right next to the University of California campus. 'State your business,' said one officer while the other three covered us.

'I live on Hillegass Street and I'm going home,' said the driver, and proved it.

'What about the rest of you?'

'He's giving us a lift to Bancroft and Piedmont so we can pick up our car and go home to San Francisco.'

'Get out of the car,' said the cop. Then, when we did: 'Walk west.'

An hour later we were in a supermarket parking lot outside the original curfew zone, trying to make a phone call from a booth. Two squad cars pulled up and made a loudspeaker announcement: 'The entire city of Berkeley is now under curfew. You have two minutes to get off the street or you will be arrested.'

Earlier, before the curfew had spread to cover the whole city, I had stood in a crowd of about 30 niggers across the street from the checkpoint at Telegraph and Derby. Two auxiliary policemen yanked out of retirement, looking like telephone installers, checked cars at the barricade while we joked quietly among ourselves. We were students, and student-types, and black teenagers, and white working-class kids. A few of the white working-class kids were lobbing rocks lazily at the police across the street, who backed up nervously. It felt good. Three years ago those kids would have thrown rocks at our peace marches. Now they're niggers too.

The curfew came after two nights of street fighting in the heart of the South Campus student-hip ghetto. Police used tear gas and clubs but no guns; the natives built barricades and set them on fire, threw bricks through windows of banks and 'plastic' stores, hit a policeman with a molotov cocktail. There was no looting.

The trouble began on Friday night, June 28, when a moderate student group, the Young Socialist Alliance (Trotskyist), tried to hold a rally 'in solidarity with the French students and workers' on Telegraph Avenue. Telegraph is the ghetto's main thoroughfare. On a Friday night hip folk, radicals, Hell's Angels, students, black people, and runaways gather in the cafes and bookshops and on the sidewalks for no other purpose than free public encounter. They are the participants. The roadway is a grandstand packed with spectators encapsulated in bubbles of steel and glass. This is the Automobile Traffic, the free flow of which is, according to the city government, the purpose of Telegraph Avenue.

The police gave a permit for the Trotskyists' rally, but insisted it must not block traffic. The crowd was big—several thousand—and kept spilling into the street despite the best efforts of the Trotskyists to keep it under control. The police believed that the people really didn't want to hear a Trotskyist rally, that they just wanted an excuse to take over the street. The police were right. This was a Free Street Movement, not a Free Speech Movement.

The police ordered the crowd to disperse in the name of the people of California. 'We ARE the people,' the people of Telegraph Avenue roared back, and the battle was on.

On the street the Trots were not in the vanguard. Afterwards, in frantic little meetings, they tried to get other Marxist-minded groups to help share the leadership, but without much luck. Like the Trots, they were a bit afraid of the movement, unable to understand it, embarrassed by what seemed to be a 'non-political' tone. So the poor Trotskyists, who had only intended to get a little publicity linking their own organization with the French rebellion, had to ride herd all alone over thousands of rampaging niggers.

Their position was made no easier by the constant tumults and alarms deliberately provoked by anarchist-minded groups operating in semi-secrecy. Quotations from the anarchist theoretician Malatesta went up on Telegraph Avenue. Crude leaflets urged people to 'FORM FAMILIES OF 3 - 5 PEOPLE' and take care of business outside of mass meetings. Black flags. Street chants: 'Two Four Six Eight, Organize to Smash the State'. Wall posters: 'Anarchy Means Self-Control: Can You Do (Dig) It?' Groups with strange names: Delaware Affinity Group, Ecology Action Committee, Canyon Anarchist League, 'people from Port Chicago', 'people from New York', Parker Street Cell.

At mass meetings the enrages were boorish, childish; any Marxist with a microphone could make mincemeat of them. But on the street they seemed to know what they were doing.

Curiously, those most prone to violence tended to be the old-timers, people who had grown cynical about the old-fashioned New Left rhetoric of their youth. They told bitter jokes on the Trotskyists and practiced with their slingshots. (When a marble propelled from a silent Whammo slingshot smashes through a police car's windshield, it creates consternation.)

The Trotskyists were trying to follow the rules of Berkeley Standard Organization; you have a mass meeting open to all; you run the meeting according to Roberts' Rules of Order, modified somewhat; you pass resolutions; and you call for volunteers for various implementation committees. The thing holds together because there are plenty of experienced, leadership-type people around who can be counted on to come up with good procedural motion at the right time, or with a speech which sets forth opposing views fairly and clearly.

This was the first time I can remember when participants in a movement deliberately boycotted the mass meetings, or came only in order to mock. ('Generals to the front,' they heckled.)

They believed in a different form of organization, suggested by the strange phrase 'affinity group'. You get together with people you understand, whose heads

are in the same place as yours: a family of sorts; you become a tight-knit, functional working unit with a specialty of your own, something you do well; and then you go out and do it.

This theory of organization is especially attractive now because it inevitably gets credit for the series of successful and highly popular bombings which have occurred here recently: the steady bombing of the electric power system from mid-March when the lines leading to the Livermore Radiation Lab. were knocked down, to June 4, when on the morning of the California primary 300,000 homes in Oakland were cut off; the dynamiting of a bulldozer engaged in urban renewal destruction of Berkeley's funkier block; three separate bombings of the Berkeley draft board; and finally, last Tuesday night, the dynamiting of the checkpoint kiosk at the western entrance to the University campus, a symbol of the Board of Regents' property rights in the community of scholars.

After two nights of street fighting followed by two nights of curfew, calm had been restored, calm which deceived no one. Somehow it was obvious that thousands of people would come to Telegraph Avenue to celebrate their independence on July 4 by taking the street again. It was a fact proclaimed by none and known to all, a fact which everyone who was trying to keep control of the situation—mayor, city council, police force, Young Socialist Alliance—had to deal with.

If the police insisted on keeping the street open to automobile traffic, there would be tear gas and barricades again, a re-introduction of the curfew, dynamitings, sniping at police cars—an outbreak of guerilla warfare which

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

might require the National Guard to put down. Worse: calling in the Guard might be a very dangerous step, since it contains so many draft dodgers and pot smokers whose loyalty just might be questionable. If the Long Hot Summer was going to start off this way, how would it end?

The City Council meeting Tuesday called off the curfew for the next two nights but agonized over keeping the Avenue open to cars on Independence Day. All day long the Council, meeting in a public auditorium, listened to one citizen after another pleading, threatening, or demanding that the cars be kept off Telegraph on July 4. The vote was 5-4 in favour of the cars.

A mass meeting that night voted unanimously to take the street on Independence Day. It made little difference, because if the mass meeting had voted the other way all the enrages who were boycotting the meeting would have taken the street anyway.

The next day one councilwoman suffered a failure of nerve and changed her vote. July 4 was declared a holiday after all, 5 - 4. Telegraph Avenue would be closed until 10 p.m., then the traffic would move again.

But there had to be a permit (didn't there?) and it had to be issued to some person or organization. There was no organization—none with any officers, anyway. The City Council cast about among the people at hand, self-appointed negotiators who had come forward after the second night of street fighting, negotiators led by Pete Camejo of the Young Socialist Alliance. Camejo got a permit.

Now in theory the whole battle had been fought to allow Camejo and the other Trots to speak at a rally on Telegraph Avenue 'in solidarity with the French workers and students'. But if Camejo had used the permit for his rally, the people would have firebombed HIM, and he knew it. So it was a street fair all day, with rock bands and the works, the political rally being a small and not very significant sideshow.

At 10 p.m. when the permit expired, hundreds of people were still lingering in the street—militantly lingering. The monitors—clergymen and Trotskyists—begged, pleaded and whined to get onto the sidewalk. They even used bribery: 'The Grateful Dead are playing FREE in the Lower Plaza'.

No one wanted to fight the police for the street at that point, but a few hundred people were determined to wait until the police came. When ordered to disperse, they would do so; the point was to remind people that the street was still not free, that though we had won that round we were still playing by their rules. By midnight the police still hadn't come. They sent word that people could stay in the street all night if they wanted to—an additional victory, this one, without negotiators.

A policeman is in the hospital with serious burns from a molotov cocktail, and 41 other people have been injured; one demonstrator has been charged with attempted murder, and 117 others arrested on lesser charges; an awful lot of plate glass has had to be replaced; and was the point of it all to stop automobile traffic?

The simplest answer is 'Yes'. Those who were there know it to be true, instinctively. But it will require explanation for others.

We were fighting for a piece of turf from which no one would be excluded, yet which would be our own. We were challenging a whole theory of the street, of the city, of purposeful activity, of what is traffic and what is loitering. We were doing all that when we fought to stop the cars. And also, we fought the cops because they treat us like niggers.

Philosophy of the street can begin when a cop asks you: 'Where do you live?' If you give him the correct answer—'I live everywhere I am'—he will warn you that you're getting wise (which you are). If you want to avoid trouble, you had better give him your address, the number on the box that you sleep in.

You live in a box. (Homeowner!) You work in a box. (What do you do? Oh, I work over in Cutter Labs.) You buy in a box. (Buy, goddamn you, buy!) The purpose of the street is to take you from one box to another. The streets are for traffic: NOT for gathering, NOT for celebrating, NOT for spontaneous communicating.

A reactionary, narrow-minded city administration will enforce the loitering laws, refuse to give permits for public assemblies, violate your civil liberties. You get a lawyer, you go to court, your

First Amendment right of political expression has been abridged, a right which applies to the states through the 14th Amendment, and to the city because the city is a creature of the state. (The city is NOT a creature of the state.) If they are narrow-minded then you will be too.

A liberal, broad-minded city administration allows you your civil liberties—but not your CIVIC liberties. Certainly you may gather, certainly you may celebrate, certainly you may communicate: so long as you do not interfere with Traffic. Traffic comes first. Traffic is what streets are for. Get a permit from the Guardians of Traffic, make arrangements so that your gathering or celebration will not interfere with the people who are going on serious business from one box to another. If the city administration is a broad-minded one, your rebellion will be broad-minded too.

The City of Berkeley is liberal and broad-minded. Its motto: 'Berkeley, the Athens of the West'. But when they say Athens, they mean the Academy, not the Agora. They want to run cars through the middle of the Agora so that Traffic can get more easily to the campus, the Academy—a box.

What makes us so angry, so willing to fight for our vision of the city, is our desire for space—not the wide-open spaces of the Great Plains, which are depressing, but psychological space inside a city. That may seem strange to you in New York, who have so little of it. We have lots, but we are losing it and we want to keep it.

In Venice, California, the cops have picked up 'hippies' on the street and asked them to prove that they owned the clothes they were wearing. Park Rangers conduct roundups in Yosemite, where signs warn about the standards of 'good grooming' expected so that others will not be prevented from enjoying the park's beauties. In the Big Sur country, gas stations and cafes post signs saying 'No Hippies Allowed'. In Berkeley they are knocking down those wonderful old brown shingle houses with bare floors and space to spare, squeezing you into cheesebox apartments with wall-to-wall carpeting that look like motel rooms.

Everywhere in California it is a felony to smoke the herb marijuana, a felony to possess a single seed or flake of it. The

marijuana dealers, almost alone among businessmen in that they are genuinely respected and admired by the community they serve, are hounded by the police, sent to prison; the community fills up with police spies. Confiscations keep the supply from meeting the rapidly increasing demand from so many new users: result—a long, tedious drought, the \$10-a-lid price ceiling beginning to give way, unethical business practices taking hold, less easy sharing among friends.

The war was supposed to be over when Johnson dropped out. They started peace talks. We stopped worrying about it. And they are STILL drafting men, still hunting them down.

'It's all coming down on us.'

University Avenue is broad and empty, but has no space. Telegraph is narrow and crowded, honeycombed with space. University Avenue has a Ford showroom and that's a blank wall, they don't want you there and you don't want to be there. Telegraph has the Mediteranean, and the Forum, and Shakespeare's and Cody's and Moe's and so many other places all in one block. It makes you feel good to be there—except for the cars in the street and the cops, which break the rhythm of free public encounter. Let them live in boxes if they want—but they have NO RIGHT to box US in!

At first the curfew only covered OUR streets. We wandered around in packs down in THEIR streets, frustrated, furious, lost. I walked up Shattuck Avenue with some friends, looking for a cup of coffee. Everything was closed, at 7.30 on a Friday night. (Up on Telegraph, Moe's Bookstore was still open although the only possible customers were police and they weren't buying.)

Then we turned the corner on to University and heard music: a guitar, a voice singing, tinkling glass and burglar alarms. A hundred people had started at the Ford Showroom and were working their way up to the bank, smashing every window with a brick, not to get at the things inside but to get BACK at them.

If you box us in, well smash open your box.

MARVIN GARSON.

(Reprinted from the village VOICE.)

SABOTAGING THE JUDGE'S ORGASM

LOCAL QUARTER SESSIONS drag on day after day to fill the newspaper with weary gossip; and lives are altered/deformed by the workings of the judge's unconscious sexual bondage fantasies and the transference of countless guilt neuroses which must always be punished.

Two counsels exercise their minds by haggling over trivial legal points: a jurymen begins to nod and is nudged awake by his neighbour: the recorder dreams of golf on Saturday; plainclothes men nip outside for a quick cigarette in the bogs.

And who cares about the poor victim in the dock as they enact their resplendent parts? Not the judge who has never even been in touch with reality, let alone understood the rhythms of other people's lives. Not the jury who don't understand what's going on, nor even care beyond their first prejudiced impressions, and a man may be incarcerated for several years just because his nose is unfashionably long. Defence counsel sees his client in terms of fees and the goodwill and prosperity of his firm's reputation.

Justice? It's all a huge game, aimed at reaching a verdict of guilty or not—never at finding Truth, or asking the questions which lie beyond each particular case—the whys of the matter. Of course it's all a farce, but the trouble is it's other people's realities they are playing with: it's always other people's freedom which is stolen, or career ruined, or marriage/home wrecked—often shamed into sickness or even suicide before the case reaches local headlines.

Should the possibility of jury service occur, the anarchist is faced with a dilemma. Before the Majority Verdicts Act, the course of action was straight: one could join in the pantomime but sing a bum note in all the chorus's best songs—deliberately voting 'Not Guilty' whatever the case and the evidence. Alternatively one could simply refuse to Join

the Gang by informing the court that one would automatically vote 'Not Guilty', and warn that if then called for jury service one would inform the press of one's intentions.

The Majority Verdicts Act has made it simpler for the court to win the game, for it now requires three dissenting jurors to swing a verdict. Again one can opt out the easy way by warning the court of one's intention to sabotage the works. But is this the best for everybody—for those poor suckers trapped by the law? I think, considering the morality of the situation, that one should superficially join the antics and then exert one's influence on the jury to bring a verdict of 'Not Guilty'. Even if you cannot sway two other members of the jury, at least an effort has been made.

Minor motoring offences come and go; a case drags on towards tea-time; court cases make good television viewing but not much fun in real life, on a hard bench for six hours, while the sun thinly films the dirty skylights of the courthouse. Summing up, the recorder glances at his watch and asks the jury to reach a verdict as quickly as possible. (Before the abolition of hanging the jury of a murder case retired for over seven hours. Apparently they reached a verdict of 'Guilty' within ten minutes and spent the rest of the time arguing who should say the fatal words.) In the jury room a man says "Not Guilty" I'd say. . . . Two old girls disagree. He mutters, 'Well, if you say so then. . . . Everybody agreed?' 'Guilty', and six months in jail.

Gratefully the jurors stretch their legs in the corridors, lighting cigarettes and counting their day's pay. The two counsels continue a legal haggle as they stuff documents into brief cases.

Several jurymen find that an over-zealous traffic warden has stuck parking tickets on their cars.

TINA MORRIS.

CONFRONTATION

THURSDAY, JULY 18, JOAN LITTLEWOOD'S Fun Palace Trust Inc. put on, amidst its giant plastic balloons—and next door to the Punch and Judy show appropriately enough (for surely it was the LAW which eventually gets Punch, the prince among creatively vandalistic men—not the crocodile as shown on this occasion)—in a bare concrete shopfloor in the new Tower Hill shopping precinct which she hired or borrowed for her summer fun fair (July 8-July 20): a debate between Colin Ward and A Barrister—the disclosure of whose name the ethics of his profession forbade, but readers of FREEDOM'S Contact Column will already have found out that his name is Stephen Sedley. And a very nice obliging man too: at the end of the meeting he even good-naturedly bought a copy of *Anarchy* 89, The May Days in France.

The opening of the debate, the theme of which was that 'the law is an insult to free men', was somewhat meagre both in the audience and in the words addressed to them. Colin, speaking for the proposition, began I thought rather nervously with a string of unrelated and unargued aphorisms after humorously commenting that anarchists usually confront the law (in the person of Mr. Sedley) in less gentlemanly and less congenial surroundings. Gradually he cooled his pace and an audience began to gather meditatively out of the giant plastic balloons.

The law is an instrument which takes away responsibility for his actions from the individual: responsibility cannot be given to the individual, or organised for him by someone else: it is something which he must recognise, accept and develop for himself: it involves the perceptions—and the decisions and choices made upon the basis of such perceptions—by the individual. The law exists to make superfluous this power of choice: it destroys the natural aetiology of human decision and action—even when it commands something which the individual would choose anyway. Colin did not quote John Milton's *Areopagitica* but this 300-year-old tract contains what is still one of the most powerful statements of this part of the anarchist case. 'A man may be a heretic in the truth; if he believes any thing, merely because his pastor, or parliament, or the assembly [an assembly of divines and parliament men sitting at the time to try to organize a system of church government for England after the disestablishment of the episcopacy] tells him it is so, then even if that thing be true, the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.' Colin made it quite clear that he was talking in this disparaging way specifically about institutional law.

There is natural law: the law of equity, balance and symmetry which one sees in every natural form—but the law of the land has nothing to do with this. In fact the law of the land, when it does not seek merely to supersede the uncorrupted sense of this natural law, with a violence which is perhaps only equally offensive but is more obvious, endeavours to suppress the sense of equity. The object of the law of the land is not the recognition of the equal right of every man to the satisfaction of his needs: it is the protection of property—i.e. the protection of the privileged position of the few and the enforcement of the deprivation and dispossession of the many.

IF THE LAW WERE ABOLISHED . . .

Mr. Sedley admitted the truth that the object of the law is the protection of property and that in the pursuit of this object it can show a nasty face: he told us we can still go and see the simple brutality of the law in the county magistrates' courts where apoplectic faces would still willingly, if they could, transport or hang those miscreants found guilty of trespass in pursuit of game (poaching, that is). But law is not in itself a gratuitous imposition upon an individual: it is simply one of the many trammels upon his freedom of action with which he has to put up in order that social living may go on. Mr. Sedley seemed to misconceive the proposition for he seemed to think that the argument he had to refute was that if laws were abolished we would all immediately become free: whereas all anarchists well trained in the dialectical movement of revolution and counter-revolution are very aware that, whereas the efficacy of the Law as law (i.e. as productive of unconsidered obedience rather than of unprejudiced cognition and decision by the individual of what he is to do) is in inverse proportion to the consciousness

of freedom; merely to remove the material constraint of the law is not to create an adequate consciousness of freedom and responsible action.

Not only was his negative case (that to abolish the law would not make men free) irrelevant: his positive counter-proposition—that the law does 'to a certain extent' (this was the qualifying phrase he himself used) protect the weak against the strong—he admitted to be of very limited validity: it does nothing to restore the balance of power between those who are economically and socially weak and those who are strong in these things.

THE LAW VERSUS RESPONSIBILITY

Of course, to abolish the law would not make us free, Colin replied. But even such a crude demolition would have some value in thrusting us back on the real meaning—the responsibility to society and to ourselves—of our actions. Institutionalised law enables us to avoid the sense of responsibility: Colin cited the case of the woman who was murdered in New York within sight and hearing of the inhabitants of a block of flats who did nothing—as an example of the way in which a legal structure inhibits our sense of social responsibility.

Social responsibility becomes a specialised process under the law, controlled, organised and only understood by a small group of paid experts—plus a small group, criminals and anarchists and such-like, who have particular reasons for knowing how the process works. The law is betwixt and between: at one moment denouncing people for not taking responsibility for their actions—the next taking steps to prevent them taking any such responsibility. But the fact is that while to abolish law is not to create responsible action, there can be no truly responsible action within the shadow of

the law and without the shadow of the law people have shown themselves to be perfectly capable of responsible action: when people take their destiny into their own hands the result is not chaos: and, moreover, it is only when people take their destiny into their own hands that things begin to get done: the law has never made it its object to protect the weak against the strong—it is only when the weak have banded together to make some effective protest and action that the law has come in on the scene to rubber stamp the process.

From the floor the main argument of the anarchist contingent seemed to be that—however it might be true that the legal system was necessary as a crutch to a society that had forgotten how to walk on its own two feet, and that to throw away the crutch would not be to create the ability to walk—this was irrelevant to the anarchist case: that the process of the law is an humiliating interference in the proper organisation of men living with their fellows: it is an insult to the free man in that, even when he resorts to it for some material benefit, he will feel such a recourse to be an index of some failure in his social living, in his communication with his fellow men.

From the lawyers—whom I at least thought to be distinctly apologetic and on the defensive—there came some merely nibbling objections: that anarchists seem to concentrate on the purely repressive action of criminal law whereas law is concerned with the regulation of a much wider spectrum of human relationships—the protection of the consumer against the fraudulent manufacturer was instanced as part of its positive, beneficent, even socially responsible action: but this, Colin suggested, was far better done by such an organisation as the Consumers' Association—demanding standards of production enforced by simple refusal to consume—than by the legal imposition of sanctions which can be argued about and avoided.

Someone else argued that, while the law did concern itself mainly with the protection of property, with the wider distribution of property this had become a much more democratic activity: Colin pointed out that property still remained mostly in the hands of a privileged minority: no one actually got onto the intriguing metaphysical proposition that the possession of property (as distinct from the use of things) is an insult to the free man. And an earnest late questioner asked whether something was not needed to protect people, not only against others, but against themselves. Perhaps, an anarchist might have replied, what is needed is something to protect a man against his own desire for protection—his desire for a walled up space, rather than the expanding universe of human society, in which to live—and the only thing that will 'protect' a man against his own legalistic constipation is constant anarchy: the psychological disembowelling that effective human relationships produce. And when the law raises its ugly head as the most obvious agent and accomplice of our imprisonment within our fears and antagonisms, it is well to remember that to denounce simply the law is to make a scapegoat for a psychological condition of which legalism is merely one aspect: as Mr. Sedley said—although it was hardly an argument against the proposition—the nature of the legal system merely reflects the nature of the society: it does not create the competitive and predatory habits which its abolition alone will not remedy.

REVOLUTIONARY PUBLIC LIVING

The confrontation was what I went to Joan Littlewood's Festival to hear. She said afterwards that it was an experiment in public communication she hoped to follow up. The rest of the Festival was

quite fun to wander round through: and I found the new square tall concrete structures of the new Tower Hill Property Co. Ltd. as impressive—as comfortable—and perhaps even more satisfying—than the big plastic balloon-like structures set up for people to have fun in. It was nice to see the kids throwing themselves about on heaps of foam rubber (ironically, when I first visited the festival—on Sunday, the 14th—this anarchic free-for-all was disturbed by an organised display of gymnastics by some boy scouts or wolf-cubs or whatever . . .); and it was nice to see one's friends among the concrete blocks and tuberculous plastic, and Punch was there; and it was a magnificent bonus to have, as well, the Tower Place Art Exhibition organised by the Created Image Design Group (for further enquiries they have a telephone number 01-674 0811) and 'sponsored directly by the Tower Hill Property Co. Ltd. who provided the opportunity to use these empty shops as a splendid exhibition space'.

The programme sheet goes on: 'It is hoped that City Companies will find this exhibition a stimulus to begin a new wave of art patronage; especially in their new spacious offices and in their new pedestrian precincts'. Is there perhaps even a possibility here that in this way the great excretion of office building will become an organic part of a new revolutionary public living? It is a wild thought, but perhaps anarchists and revolutionaries ought to consider more seriously the possibility of the creative use of the truly city-like city by the free and essentially decentralised society: we should perhaps not contract out absolutely of such things as the plans for Piccadilly Tomorrow, but engage in them and see what is in them for the primarily decentralised and private—but neither remote nor withdrawn—individual who is the anarchist ideal.

The slightly whimsical model of the 'city of conspicuous consumption' of Paul Goodman's *Communitas*—as well as others of the book's many valuable suggestions—provide good starting points for the consideration of the role of the city. That an alternation between a jammed-up and spread-out way of living is what people need and enjoy was first suggested by Thomas More whose *Utopia* (1519) describes a society organised so that its members spent half the year in the country and half the year in the city. What our society wants is obviously no rigid enforcement of such a regulation; but something on these lines would provide the real social mobility which people and things require in order to break down the strangling mystique of absolute and inalienable possession from which both people and things suffer at the moment.

THE NEW ART

The Exhibition—of which there would not be much point now to make a detailed critique even if I had bothered to make notes on individual works—was an excellent display of shape and colour and material and also of the imitation of material: I do remember being particularly struck by the use of a big stretch of hessian right at the entrance to the exhibition, and beside it a beautiful evocation in black and white of wooden lattice work; but in general I was very gratified by the control and the absence of pretentiousness of the whole and found strangely what I hardly think was intended—the appropriateness of the works of art to the smell of the new brick against which they were set.

One of the contributors (Andrew Brighton) is quoted on the programme note as saying that, 'One interpretation of the radical change in art since 1900 is that no longer does the sculptor or painter investigate "nature" but rather investigates the nature of sculpture or painting itself.' If this is true—and I find

it confirmed by what marginal acquaintance I have both with the creative arts as such and with the critical disciplines which exist in symbiotic relationship with them—then perhaps the experimental consciousness of man really is taking shape in the modern world: the ugly and stultifying forms of modern life are but the chrysalis and the bud of the new life germinating—it is no accidental beauty which we see in our bright young things and their sweet-harsh sounds—a raucous harmony is coming through from underneath.

The old and tired platitude that criticism is parasitic upon art is still with us, but such remarks as that of Andrew Brighton I have just quoted suggest it is not reigning as unchallenged as it used to do: the real and creative concern for the total human experience and response to the world displayed in, for instance, L. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, F. R. Leavis' *The Common Pursuit* and (most recently) William Empson's *Milton's God* (to select a few from the field with which I am most familiar, the field of literary criticism)—suggests that the distinctive and valuable contribution to man's evolving humanity which our age is making is the reconsideration and re-interpretation—the creative criticism—of the ways in which men have experienced and interpreted their nature in earlier ages. Such experiences and interpretations were not, obviously, less in value because they were cruder: and on the other hand the life of modern man is not necessarily desensitized because he cannot directly but only vicariously recapture the more 'unmediated' experience of an earlier age (obviously all experience is in one sense equally mediated, even if one may dispute the purity or naturalness of the media involved; but I use the adjective 'unmediated' as a not unsympathetic concession to the feeling that some avenues of consciousness have been overlaid by perhaps safer and stronger but not necessarily more humanly rewarding highways)—the artistic work of modern primitives (a nice conjunction) shows that this activity of recapturing can be exciting and creative in its own way.

The inheritance of Marx, Freud and Einstein is an influence which is continually expanding in people's lives: even the most uncritical newspaper-pulp magazine reader—the most passive tele- film- or sport-spectator—is to some extent made aware in our highly self-conscious culture of the *pace of myth*, symbol and archetype in his and everyone's way of living, thinking, feeling: even the paranoiac ordinariness of the good citizen of the great benign power is an inverted awareness of the relativity of his existence—'contingency' was the word that the mediaeval theologians used and it is as good a concept as any to describe that sheer insubstantiality of the substance of being to which Einstein gave scientific expression.

A STATEMENT OF FAITH

The scientific demolition of absolute man—who was also paradoxically rigidly limited by his absolute completeness—has made the way clear for the reinstatement of the one absolute that can really be insisted upon—for that statement of faith which to continue to live is to make: the absoluteness of the unlimitedness of the capacity of human beings to move and to change and to meet the ever new challenge of the things and other beings among whom they live—the capacity and the desire for fearless living which absolute man fears to trust or to try and which anarchic man knows to be the tool of the universe: the capacity to discover and to recreate in each moment, not an old and rigid paralysis, but an immediate homeostatic ordering. And this is the fun and stuff of life which the experimental and critical consciousness of the modern age is beginning to discover.

MARTIN SMALL.

THE SOFT MACHINE

THE SOFT MACHINE by William Burroughs. Published by Calder and Boyars at 42s.

WILLIAM BURROUGHS, who has collaborated with a mathematician on some of his writing, specialises in cut-ups, fold-ins and other semi-mechanical prose construction methods. Burroughs incessantly warns his readers about that festering corrupt and suicidal cancer engendered, in complex contemporary societies, by the abuse and misuse of science and technology. Yet he chooses to communicate this admonition in a language fashioned by advanced literary machine techniques and this seems rather like working for anarchism within the Labour Party. That is presupposing, as I do, that the application of such techniques to literature is an abuse and misuse of them, an obstacle to genuine communication and a disservice to literature. The bulk of his work is thus

primarily of sociological and psychological interest or importance, albeit embraced and feared by various literary establishments as an avant-garde innovation. Stylistically it merits attention, having considerable curiosity value and displaying imaginative manipulation of material.

During the last decade Burroughs has become a reformed junkie and the drug content of his prose consequently shows a radical change of direction or emphasis. Ranging from pro-junk propaganda in 1953, 'When you stop growing you start dying. An addict never stops growing. . . . Most addicts look younger than they are' (*Junkie*, Ace Books), to anti-junk publicity in 1964, 'Junk is the mold of monopoly and possession. . . . the ideal product. . . . the ultimate merchandise. . . . you would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do anything. . . . Dope fiends are

sick people' (*Naked Lunch*, Calder and Boyars). Burroughs considers that 'The junk problem is public health problem number one in this world today'. As the National Health Service is perhaps the biggest legalised drug-pushing conspiracy in active operation, and as the policy of that medical organisation is determined by capitalist economics, this is a disturbing point if taken out of Burroughs' intended limitations. Of his work he affirms 'I am mapping an imaginary universe. A dark universe of wounded galaxies and nova conspiracies where obscenity is coldly used as a total weapon' (*Evergreen Review* 22, 1962).

We can therefore safely regard Burroughs as a technological mystic and creative journalist with liberal and reformist sympathies. He also appears obsessed by the knowledge that his early writing persuaded numerous young people to experiment with dangerous and destructive drugs and apparently intends to make whatever amends he can. Alternately Burroughs displays little, if any, regrets that he similarly helped induce much forced and contrived, and

thus harmful, teenage homosexual activity.

The *Soft Machine* does not explore or symbolise but rather is or becomes the essence of human degradation. It is a flowering of prehistoric consciousness, instinctive animalistic brutality and obscene carnage. Extremities of evil, wickedness and perversion dredged to the surface and transcribed into machine collage junk argot. Corrupt institutions and monstrous bureaucracy. A sewer of orgiastic genital sexuality, shuddering bestiality and loathsome sickness. The filth, slime, lust of masturbatory sado-masochistic fantasy. Terrible and unspeakable cruelty. Utterly repulsive rape. Greed, exploitation, hostility, conflict, war, Robbery, torture, murder, looting, slaughter, plunder, death. Hideous sodomy and hoodlum pushers. Vampires, vultures, ghouls, corpses; suicidal humiliation. A mystical trinity of semen, vomit and excrement; consecrated in agony, suffering and blood.

Burroughs attempts a multi-dimensional word-collage; a richly interwoven tapestry of news, imagination, fantasy and events. Space-age reporting, opera-

ting on countless levels of reality and unreality, simultaneously. Transcending all known limitations of traditional subjective one-dimensional journalism. Past, present and future suspended into a NOW moment in time and space. Undulating suns and exploding galaxies vibrating freely upon the totality type-writer.

Does he succeed in some part of this? *The Soft Machine* is undoubtedly technically accurate, controlled and precise. Yet upon the dust-jacket it is described as 'a novel' and by definition 'a novel' is a fictitious prose tale. It is an unusual and interesting, a brave and courageous, a vital and rewarding book but 'a novel' nevertheless. It has many of the qualities associated with, and which suggest it to have gone beyond, post-novel creative prose. Gone beyond because it seems to have formulated a new definition of reality. Failed to go beyond inasmuch as it has attempted to create a new reality with machine techniques and ended up burdened with many of the limitations implied by its dust-jacket description.

DAVE CUNLIFFE.

Workers' Control Conclusions

THE SAME IDEAS are expressed in different ways, without specifying important nuances, which is the cause of certain apparently idle disputes. For example, some are for workers' control, some for control of the economy by the workers, others for workers' power, councils and soviets. We will not use the commoner, but less clear, words such as collectivisation, socialisation or co-operativisation.

What we mean by workers' control is that the classes today who have no power, such as workers, peasants and employees, are qualified to run the economy (and therefore society) without the ruling class (which consists more and more of technicians whose political ideas are ignored in order to consolidate their class rule). This running of the economy, which is organised globally, is founded on a direct collective appropriation of the units of production or work.

According to preferences one can, if one is agreed on the content call this workers' control, councils, soviets, etc., that is to say in each case an economic unity freely formed and federated with others.

In each case we are not concerned with a utopia destined to come about in a later period of calm once the revolution is over, but a real movement, a material expression of the exploited classes in the period of the organisation of the revolution in full crisis; or to put it in another way, during the famous 'transitory period'.

We do not mean to say that workers' councils or workers' control be limited to the transitory period; but we wish to insist on the following remark: the materialist criticism of capitalist society is often common to all revolutionaries, and even the general lines of a future society (a communist one, using the term in its most general sense) are in theory common to all (even the Stalinists can say 'Basically we and the anarchists agree'), but between today's purgatory and tomorrow's paradise one must pass through hell. Here is the crisis: there is a so-called 'period of transition' with the reinforcement of the state 'in the service of the people' which results only in the rise of a new ruling class of former bourgeois and newly-arrived ex-workers. The withering away of the state has no historical or theoretical justification. When the exploited take society in hand, it is always expressed in a general movement for workers' control.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

The first movements for workers' control appeared in Russia in 1905. Then there was Ancona in Italy in 1914 (Anarchist presence) and numerous powerful movements which followed the First World War: Spartacists in Germany, Hungarian workers, Russian soviets (in 1917), workers in Italy and the 'ejidos' or agricultural communes in Mexico. All these lasted for several weeks at the most. (The 'ejidos' only really reached a full stage of development in 1936.) The period 1918-20 saw the theoretical elaboration of these movements which nobody had foreseen. With the exception of Lenin, who subordinated them to the party, the majority of thinkers expressed their true value: Voline in Russia, Fabbri, Malatesta and the (unorthodox at the moment) Marxist Gramsci in Italy, and in the Netherlands the Marxist founder of council communism Pannekoek.

The Second World War was preceded by the Spanish movement of 1936-39. The post-war period was marked by movements which were quickly suppressed in France (at the Berliet factories), Poland and Bulgaria. These efforts were also of a very limited duration except in Spain (July 1936 - March 1939, but effectively only from August 1936 - December 1938). In Mexico the 'ejidos' exist even today, but under the influence of the private sector. In Israel the kibbutzim have been taken over by officialdom.

More recently we have had Yugoslavia around 1950, Hungary in 1956 and Algeria in 1962.

Although this historical catalogue is not complete, it allows us to draw certain conclusions:

ACTION HAS PRECEDED THEORY

When capitalism no longer assumes the responsibility for production (during an economic or political crisis), the proletariat spontaneously takes over the running of the factories, without having come into contact with revolutionary propaganda.

The series of movements from 1917 - 1936 were a consequence of a spreading world crisis. In Israel, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Algeria they were a result of more limited crises.

Spontaneity does not pass certain limits of time and space and the elaboration of theory is its inevitable prolongation.

In effect the theory is primarily concerned with two plans: politically to defend the advantages acquired by the taking over of the means of production, and economically to assure exchanges between factories, supplying them and the population with goods and materials, etc. . . .

It seems to us that two conclusions can be drawn from this analysis: spontaneously the proletariat can create workers' control, just as they can make revolution and create organisations, but the long-term direction of the movement depends upon a plan or unified vision. There will therefore be countries where propaganda for workers' control will conjoin with the spontaneous appearance of this idea among the proletariat during a crisis.

FOUR SPECIAL EXAMPLES

After an economic crisis (a consequence of 1929), a political coup d'etat and several years of propaganda for collectivisation (mainly Anarchist, but also socialist) the Spanish workers and peasants in many regions took possession of land and the factories.

The masses were prepared, collectivisation was applied from below upwards

over the telephone building, which was under workers' control.

In Germany certain workers' councils did not attack the organs of the state as they were powerless (under revolutionary conditions). Some weeks later the latter had re-assembled their forces and were in an advantageous position for the most bloody repression.

In Algeria a state apparatus which was at first inefficient had accepted workers' control. But once strengthened it did not hesitate in certain cases to try to suppress it by force: at El-Achour in Mitidja, the army intervened, confiscated the property and sacked 3,000 agricultural workers.

Co-existence is a fraud. If we want to suppress the state apparatus, it must be done in the early days (of the revolution), violently and systematically. To wait until we are stronger before attacking is unrealistic, because time will not be on our side. To tolerate the state apparatus for 'democratic' reasons would be to tolerate oppression by some in the name of all. *The state isn't a political opinion, it's a system of repression.*

The same is true in limiting workers' control to specific economic sectors.

In Algeria the legal recognition of workers' control has had, as a consequence, the making of a well-limited

Sindicale Nella Trasformazione Sociale).

In Yugoslavia we noted that the state maintained the competition among enterprises under 'workers' control'. Workers' control, when limited to certain factories, is only a caricature which changes nothing in the system. The gigantic task of federalist planning will have to be undertaken to allow a socialist economy to develop; which necessitates the hard work of assembling statistics available to all.

To conclude on these three points: the more the initial shock (the armed struggle) destroys the state and the ruling class, the more the movement for workers' control will have time to expand and organise; which is essential for its maintenance and final success.

TECHNICAL LESSONS

As the experiences of workers' control have never existed longer than several years (in conditions of upheaval), the problems which we are going to examine now are somewhat hypothetical. However, we believe that these are the fundamental problems of workers' control.

1. THE ECONOMY

The departure and re-imburement of capital; the ownership of land and the means of production.

In Spain the well-being of the collectives and the sensible use of identical economic resources depended upon the presence or absence of capital.

The necessity for common credit funds becomes obvious when one thinks of certain villages in Aragon where the only thing collectivised was misery.

The problem of the constitution of capital, of investment, of the re-imburement of capital lent, has been the stumbling block in the experiences of workers' control that we have considered. Note also that 'Soviet' economists are also concerned with this problem. Must the units of production be concerned with the (excess) 'profits' that they make? In the affirmative there are two answers: either the enterprise re-invests its profits and becomes powerful and rich with better-paid workers, etc. . . . or it lends its excess money without interest and behaves like a collective capitalism. In the examples that we have studied the need for a bank (central or regional) is shown, to finance the investment of units under workers' control in a socialist regime. In a general regime of workers' control, it seems to us that it would be necessary to go further than Proudhon's mutual banking idea. Total collectivisation of the economy must entail the collective appropriation of all excess production and their use left to the decisions of the central organs; a use which can (without re-imburement) go not only to 'poor' enterprises, but also to production which brings in no returns and which is of local, regional or general interest outside the concern of the factory.

Our criticisms of the State do not mean that we are theoretically against all meddling of the collectivity in the running of a limited unit of production: let us underline therefore, concerning the problem of investment, with which we are particularly preoccupied in this respect, that we do not see the system of workers' control as a federation and confrontation of particular interests: a new industrial feudalism is not our model. Let us stress that 'institutional' measures won't solve the problem. The solution must also be found in the 'socialist reconstruction of man', of which W. Reich speaks: the liquidation of neuroticism as a preliminary to the emergence of a socialist, co-operative, libertarian ethic.

The suppression of the ownership of land and the means of production must be obtained rapidly in order to avoid a repeat of the period 1936-39, during which the former landowners drove out the collectivists from 'their lands'. This measure implies the suppression of the dual (collectivist and non-collectivist) economy, which is only possible by force.

In Israel, the Jewish monetary funds which bought the land also advanced money to the kibbutzim. In Algeria the same problem does not arise as only the modernised sector came under workers' control. It will arise if a movement for workers' control arises in the traditional (poor) sector, among the peasants. A harmonisation of the various sectors would have been necessary. In the weak sector of industry under workers' control mutual aid developed between strong and weak factories.

2. SOCIAL

(a) Planning, sanctions, closure and displacement of factories

All these measures were approved at the economic plenum at Valencia in January 1938: the CNT was then in a reformist delirium; the right of revokability and responsible free elections had been mocked and not provided for.

But if revokability failed, the other measures remained perfectly valuable: the problems of building dams and the discussions with the inhabitants of villages which would be flooded; the closure and concentration of factories; displacement of jobs and changes of skill will always be with us, as there will always be economic imperatives.

(b) Industrial Federations

The problem arose in Spain: with the arrival of collectivisation it was realised that the means of transport, for example, belonged to several different syndicates, but transport as an organ able to dispose of and provide vehicles did not exist: the syndicalist organisation modelled on the former capitalist organisation could no longer provide for new needs. It had to surpass these old forms.

(c) Disinterest and the top-heaviness of organisations

The development of a directive element brought about a top-heaviness which provoked an indifference at the bottom. In the kibbutzim it was noticed that 'the general assembly had a tendency to become passive as far as economic decisions were concerned, since the complexity of these problems has become such that, in order to be able to judge, it is necessary to have specialised knowledge'. (*Noir et Rouge*, No. 23). The same problem is found in a workers co-operative within a capitalist regime: 'the balance sheet at the end of the year was never questioned: it's very difficult because we haven't the necessary knowledge to question it'. But one cannot speak of workers' control without the transmission and development of technical knowledge for everyone. With this, one can envisage solutions to organisational problems such as rotation of working parties.

(d) Incitement to work and wage differentials

The Marxists in power have solved the problem: since 1918 they have allowed wage differentials as in the capitalist system, paying more to the (at times) indispensable technicians. The same thing happened in Algeria where accountants and mechanics were very scarce. In certain cases they left enterprises where there were equal salaries, for the private sector (evidently if the latter had been suppressed . . .). In Spain, the economic congress of which we have spoken maintained the differences, although it reduced them. As all skills are far from having the same value and interest, this poses a problem.

We'll leave aside the problem of superior technicians, scientific research, etc., which does not arise during the early revolutionary period. (It would be necessary here to go thoroughly into the question of education.)

Now we ask ourselves: is it necessary to 'do something' for workers' control? If we are concerned with an island of workers' control (in a capitalist society), to keep it going only makes sense if one is working in it. Thus recently the workers of the Pinno-Pax factory (sewing machines) in the suburbs of Liege, seeing their factory closing following a financial failure on the part of the management, ran it themselves. The example was immediately used by the reformist trade unions and progressive reviews; but at least the workers at the factory did what they wanted to do (*ICO*, March 1968).

But it would be stupid to think that propaganda for workers' control on its own will lead to revolution. Information about workers' control must be part of general propaganda about capitalism here and now, that is about the development of the system of exploitation and the way in which the ruling class has somehow or other controlled this development. It would be useful also to compare the points of view of a certain number of revolutionary minorities which are for workers' councils, workers' control, etc., and see if there really are any differences.

To inform and be informed, to clarify positions among certain people who are already revolutionary, as we all pretend to be; a task which, if we want good to come of it for the daily struggle, will be difficult but very important.



and ratified at the beginning by the governments of Madrid and Barcelona. The sectors collectivised were transport, heavy industry, agriculture and some tertiary industries.

In Palestine after an economic and political crisis and propaganda in favour of collectivisation, economic-military islands were set up. When Israel was created the kibbutzim, being composed of nationalists, put themselves entirely under the state whose creation they had never questioned. The collectivised sector was agriculture, together with some newly-established industries.

In Yugoslavia, after a political crisis (break with the Comintern and liquidation of internal opposition) and an economic crisis (no commerce with other so-called socialist countries), without any collectivist propaganda, the state instituted workers' control to be sure of a social base. Collectivisation is found in the modernised spheres of agriculture and industry.

In Algeria, after a political and economic crisis (war and departure of colonials) the peasants took possession of the land without there being any preliminary propaganda, and the government accepted the situation. The modernised sector of agriculture and some sectors of industry (8% of the workers) were collectivised.

Generally, there seem to be three points:

In Spain, in July 1936, the question whether Companys (president of the regional Catalanian government) would resign or remain in office depended upon the reaction of the workers and armed Anarchists, who had destroyed the fascists. The Anarchists accepted that the institution of the state continue to exist with their participation. In May 1937 the police and troops of the government attacked these same workers and Anarchists in an attempt to take

sector in a setting unchanged since colonisation. The co-existence of a powerful private sector and a nationalised sector, with the sector under workers' control, led to the gradual wasting away of the latter by force of the laws of the capitalist market.

On the great estates where the landowners are bourgeois Algerians nothing has changed. Neither has anything changed on the miserable plots of the peasants, but this is less serious in the short term. To permit workers' control on the estates of the colonials enables exploitation by the Algerians to pass unnoticed and detracts the attention from the profits made by the new Algerian ruling class (and permits decrees for the restitution of estates to their former Algerian owners).

Finally the persistence of market laws explains to a great extent how the isolated enterprises under workers' control became integrated into the capitalist system. This tendency is contrary to the principle of federalism, which is not concerned with that which, even if it acquires benefits, does so at the expense of other factory councils.

Here is the re-appearance of profit and the creation of capitalists, with the difference that where there was formerly one owner, now there are dozens.

In Barcelona and in almost all the towns, in the industrial centres of Catalonia, each factory was making and selling its own products, and each was searching for customers in competition with other factories. A workers neo-capitalism was born.

In trade the same neo-capitalism became manifest to an even greater extent. In the factories and enterprises which were in the hands of the syndicates, production increased, where there was no deficit, according to the resources available, making them stronger than the others' (G. Leval: *L'Attività*

The Rejection of Materialism

PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST pleasing or encouraging aspects of the continuing libertarian revolution is the growing rejection, particularly by young activists, of the reactionary theory of Materialism. Materialism is unproven because it is essentially unprovable as Jung showed so many years ago. It is a reactionary philosophy because it is basically superstitious and rigid. History has established this to be so. The notion that the object seen exists independently and is perfectly distinct from the object which perceives it is a dangerous hypothesis. Dangerous because it seeks to transform the infantile belief in a separate supernatural creator God, into something more rational, by providing an alternative dogma. In fact it does no more than change names. What the superstitious cleric terms God, the superstitious Materialist chooses to call matter or energy, and mistakenly assumes he has removed the blinkers and let in the light. An absolutely unscientific approach and because it is the root-theory which motivates most contemporary scientific technology, it is not surprising that such muddled impetus results in destructive and suicidal civilisations. Whilst the ignorance of popular Christianity manifests itself as intolerance and oppression in the name of faith, the ignorance of popular Materialism reveals itself as increasingly hostile to real human interests in the name of objective truth. The doctrine of Materialism is not objective truth but rather subjective theory. Our Twentieth Century Nightmare is therefore founded upon an unsound supposition which in effect leads to bondage and decay. Bondage because the Materialist is addicted to a fixity of position and a belief in absolutes which is or becomes sterile dogma and dogma is by nature regressive. Materialistic reasoning is not based upon true empirical observation or psycho-experimental

research. Not true observation because it isolates and takes that which is studied out of context and on this basis examines, evaluates, determines and classifies. It is obviously never psycho-experimental because depth psychology or deep interpenetration of the unconscious reveals that everything, in the last degree, is purely subjective. Materialism is therefore a simplistic and irrational, and thus perverted and anti-intellectual, branch of Western Metaphysics.

Having dispelled Materialism's all-pervading mysticism, and consequently its claims to objective truth, we can better understand the nature of the evil this philosophy has generated. Its greatest crime is undoubtedly Capitalism. Capitalism owes its continued existence to the widespread belief in, or religious conception of, matter. A society in which material things are given the significance of sacred objects, and generally regarded as possessing supernatural powers to the extent of being able to satisfy all craving, is the breeding ground of parasitical and cancerous organisms. A society which regards matter as the prima materia, the basic substance, is a society which needs to possess and is therefore competitive and acquisitive. Such societies, and this includes all known societies today, regard certain objects and things as having far more importance than human life. The realisation of full human potential and attainment of happiness are mistakenly equated with the creation and construction of machines, furthering of supposed technological advance and the accumulation and stockpiling of things imagined to be owned. All this is done at the sacrifice of many and the ultimate expense of all.

It is not mere idle speculation but rather proven fact that methods cannot be extracted and separated from the philosophies which shaped them, and still work properly. If a technique is

inseparable from, and an integral component part of, a unified system of ideas, then in isolation it becomes a dead and lifeless thing and ceases to function constructively. Such was and still is the failure of non-violent resistance in this country when isolated from the doctrine of Ahimsa (harmlessness) which sustains it. Non-violent revolution without the fluid essence of Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism or Taoism is a selective, partial and fragmentary thing. Non-violence is meaningless and unworkable in the necessarily limited confines of Materialism. Just as one cannot destroy Capitalism without discovering, understanding and demolishing the sources which uphold it and from which it sprang, so one cannot promote Anarchism without a correct recognition of the agencies which generate repression, exploitation and oppression. It must be fully understood, for it is an important root-cause, that Materialism is essential to the Capitalist system. Materialism is certainly directly responsible for many of the ills that beset the world today and is undoubtedly the biggest factor preventing or delaying the evolutionary libertarian advance. It would be shortsighted and foolhardy to deny that most scientists, technicians, researchers, teachers, specialists, experts and so on have sold out to the powers-that-be for the dubious rewards of money, position, power and fame. Conformity and stupidity are the marks of the unscientific scientist. Brainwashing, conditioning, distortion and lies formulate a crude systematic propaganda for the stupefied masses who conveniently resume their torpid slumber whilst the skilled and gifted prostitute their knowledge and talent for lucre with which to buy and heap up property and wealth.

This was not always so. European, Chinese and Indian alchemists rightly distrusted the ruling powers and chose

not to reveal their secrets and discoveries to those that might abuse and misuse them to the detriment of others. This conviction, insight, distrust and healthy cynicism, which has been truly validated, enabled Alchemy to survive as a pure science in the better meaning of that term. Alchemy was pure in that it operated, in the laboratory, without attempting to isolate and thus incorrectly define. It rather chose to examine parts with proper regard to the totality, the whole. It was also pure in that it remained relatively incorruptible; never selling out and consciously worked for the good of humanity and not for personal gain. To do this it operated in secret and used an esoteric language, a secret code. Those who would betray this brotherhood of trust, to debased political thugs, were disposed of. Assassination is not really the concern of this dialogue and must be discussed elsewhere. Nevertheless one can scarcely imagine the present scientific fraternity so punishing contemporary professional whores. It was the birth and growth of Materialism which helped bring about suitable conditions for a flourishing of the modern sciences and the depravity of their practitioners. These conditions alas hastened the decline of the older humane sciences and saw a change from a science of man based upon knowledge, humanity and life to a science based upon power, greed and death. Anarchism and the brotherhood of man will seemingly never be attained whilst such a discredited philosophy as Materialism remains to dominate our lives. Nevertheless the repudiation of property and wealth, and the assertion of human equality and interests, by many splendid young people is a promising sign. Especially as the young people concerned are relatively well endowed with the material things they have so convincingly rejected.

DAVE CUNLIFFE.

Memoirs of a Revolutionary

EVA BROIDO, who was born in Lithuania, 'the sullen peasant country shrouded in impenetrable virgin forest and sunk in swamps' as she describes it in the opening words of her memoirs, joined the Russian Social-Democratic Party in 1899 at the age of twenty-three. She was to end her life in a prison-camp in Siberia in 1941, murdered when Stalin sent out an order that all Mensheviks in prison should be shot. These memoirs cover her life up to 1917, and were published in Germany in 1929 and (abridged) in Russia in 1928.

Eva emerges from this book as a high-spirited, courageous and devoted revolutionary, suffering exile, deprivation and prison for her opposition to Tsarism, but always retaining an almost girlish enthusiasm—'How we laughed at ourselves!' she ends one chapter.

She became a revolutionary abruptly. In 1895 she describes her first contact with revolutionary ideas—an illegal leaflet is thrust into her hand. Next year on a visit to Germany, she becomes a social-democrat after visits to the 'Vorwärts' bookshop in Berlin. You get the impression that had she stumbled into an anarchist shop, she would have become an anarchist, or an ILP shop an ILP-er. There is little discussion of theory in the book, either of social-democracy or of broader philosophical issues, and it seems definitely chance that she became a social-democrat, as indeed it seems when she later joined the Menshevik wing of the social-democrats on the final rupture with the Bolsheviks. She comments herself 'it was pure accident—at least in my case—that we did join the Mensheviks. Personal contacts were the most decisive factor at the time' (pp. 64-5).

Generally the book is not good on the Bolshevik-Menshevik split, Broido ascribes it mainly to the Mensheviks 'more democratic' approach. It is also weak on the years 1911-17, which receive only 10 pages out of 150 in the book.

However, other parts of the book are very worthwhile reading; there are the exciting accounts of underground revolutionary life, with its dangers and hardships, and of the grim life of political exiles in Siberia in the years before 1905. There is also a fascinating account of Menshevik agitation in the oil-fields of Baku, where in a few years most of the workers in the region were won over from the Bolsheviks, successful campaigns waged and hopes rose high. All this was destroyed however by the massacre of the local Armenians by the Tartars, which the Mensheviks tried to avert by a general strike to force the employers to take police action against the Tartars (who were their spies and thugs). This failed, terrible carnage followed and the Mensheviks found their organizations smashed and themselves in despair, Eva Broido left Baku two weeks later.

One incident stuck in my mind, especially vis-a-vis Eva's belief in Menshevik democracy. She and a few others started a paper in 1907 in Petersburg, entirely written by and for workers. This was an enormous success among the Petersburg proletariat, but was stopped because of complaints from the Menshevik party centre about 'political waywardness'. Eva mentions this, says she thinks the party was wrong, and leaves it at that, it doesn't seem to loom too large in importance for her.

One final point of minor criticism, the book lacks an index; it has an introduction by Broido's daughter, who translated the book, which is memorable only for the amazing statement that 'The Soviets had originally been devised by the Mensheviks in 1905...' (p. x).

Although this book cannot stand beside the memoirs of those other Russian revolutionaries, Kropotkin, Trotsky and Serge, it is worth reading for its engrossing account of a thoroughly admirable revolutionary, whose death was yet further proof that the Bolsheviks were the most despicable set of murderers ever to disgrace the earth with their presence. I.R.M.

Art and Anarchy discussed in ANARCHY 91

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

Getting to know Snooks Eaglin

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. Xtra 5051. BLUES FROM NEW ORLEANS, Vol. 1. Storyville 670119.

WHEN I FIRST heard Snooks Eaglin singing *Alberta*, about five years ago, the blues became a different thing for me. Not until then did I recover from the damage done to my sensibilities by Lonnie Donegan, whose crafty raids on America's vernacular culture produced such compelling material. Donegan succeeded in convincing me that skiffle was in some way my music, and inspired me to terrorise the neighbourhood with my own grotesque versions of *Frankie and Johnny*, *St. Louis Blues*, and *Rock Island Line*.

What was it in skiffle that so affected those of us whose teenage years coincided with the period 1955-57? I remember the relief of songs which seemed to have no romantic content, which spared us the phoney passion of 'your eyes are the eyes of a woman in love'. It didn't seem odd—and certainly didn't seem romantic—for a young Scotsman to sing 'I'm Alabammy bound', or to start off a song 'well I gambled down in Washington, and I gambled up in Maine'.

Eventually, inevitably, Donegan's bluff was called. We began to discover that songs which were credited on his records as his own compositions (or as 'Trad., arr. Donegan') had been recorded before—by Leadbelly, Brownie McGhee, Big Bill Broonzy, Woodie Guthrie. As he saw his audience slip away to listen to the men who had inspired him, Donegan accepted that defeat and turned his attention to London's vernacular culture (*Does Your Cheeking Gum Lose Its Flavour? My Old Man's a Dustman*). Meanwhile, Broonzy and McGhee were imported and we got our first look at the real thing, the authentic blues singer.

Well, that's what we thought at the time. The blues we understood, was the Negro's way of expressing his social condition. The blues was the twentieth century's own folk music. Broonzy and McGhee, slick entertainers both, were quick to adjust their repertoire to meet our expectations. We heard Broonzy's 'Get Back' as the anthem of Negro protest:

This little song that I'm singing about, People you all know it's true; If you're black and got to work for a living,

This is what they'll say to you: If you're white, you're all right, And if you're brown, stick around, But as you're black, oh brother, Get back, get back, get back.

(We didn't know then that most Negroes at the time had never heard of Broonzy or his song, that if they listened to the blues at all, they listened to B. B. King and Muddy Waters. B. B. King? Until a year ago he was still almost unknown outside the Negro culture.)

While it remained the popular music of the Negro culture, the blues changed its form and styles in response to various changes in social and musical environments as its exponents and audiences moved from country to town, and from South to North. By the late fifties, it had virtually disappeared as a national popular music form, having been drastically altered in the process which brought rock and roll to the white audience. Earlier, in the forties, the blues had already changed from the acoustic guitar/singer music of prewar years to a band music, played in night clubs, bars and dance halls. But even while it changed, it retained its function as a means of expressing personal emotions, in whatever style and with whatever material suited the particular singer best. Invariably, these emotions concerned relations with women.

But it was songs about women which had annoyed us, and which had driven us to skiffle. So we discouraged Broonzy and McGhee from singing about them, and asked for the real blues songs, *Trouble in Mind* (which didn't seem to be about women, but about trouble!), *Down By The Riverside*, John Henry.

It has since become clear that these are folk songs, not blues. They have become identified with a particular group, and when they are performed the singer intends to evoke sympathies for the group—for convicts, chain gang men, 'Negroes', the oppressed, the working class, the poor. Songs are often constructed with chorus which encourage audience participation, to strengthen the group identification; the instrumental accompaniment is often 'clever', with effects which attract attention.

Few blues singers ever sang with this kind of intention. The best of the country blues singers recorded before the Second World War, and most of their best records have been compiled on LPs. A few men resolutely ignored the changes

of technology and taste since the war which have produced the various electrically-amplified guitar styles of the urban blues—notably Lightnin' Hopkins. All the signals given by the sleeve of Snooks Eaglin's LP, *That's All Right*, suggest that he is a similar figure to Hopkins. On the front of the cover is a picture of him apparently serenading three little girls on the stoop of a sunlit wooden house. The impression is of a street singer. The voice confirms the image, and belies his age, which was 25 when he made the record.

The most impressive feature of the record is the consistent picture of 'woman' which emerges from the songs. Eaglin shifts the position from which he describes her, like a painter moving his chair around a model as he searches for a different angle from which to see her. The consistency is particularly surprising because none of the songs are his own; they were all 'hits' in the Negro market over the previous twenty or thirty years—some of them prewar country blues songs, and others recent gospel-influenced songs like Ray Charles' 'I Got a Woman'.

In each of the songs, Eaglin adopts the same attitude—gently remonstrating with his woman for actions which might easily have aroused another man to anger. In *Alberta*, he sings sadly,

Alberta, Alberta, where d'you stay last night?

You come home this morning, Clothes ain't fitting you right.

The soft sorrow is somehow much more effective than criticism would have been. Eaglin's husky voice seems likely at any moment to be overcome by emotion and lapse into silence. In *Mama Don't You Tear My Clothes* this actually happens, and he completes an unfinished sentence with a guitar phrase, without losing either rhythm or meaning. On most of the tracks, Eaglin plays a 12-string guitar, which he uses to provide a very full accompaniment. Harry Oster, in the sleeve notes, compares the 'orchestral' sound with that of Fats Domino's piano style. The upper strings are continually strummed, while short bass phrases break up the rhythm and act to emphasise particular words.

The last track on side one *Don't You Lie To Me* is a little more self-confident than the previous songs were:

Don't you lie to me;

You know it make me mad,

I get evil as a man can be.

Side two starts off with the title track, *That's All Right*, the Arthur Crudup song which started Elvis Presley's re-

cording career. Eaglin follows a similar arrangement, with its impatient rhythm, and yet still imposes his own mood, in which he assures the woman that everything is fine while also implying that he still has his doubts about himself.

The rest of the side becomes increasingly despondent. He's still singing of women, but now drink is mentioned more often. In *Bottle Up And Go*, drink is used as a means of ensuring a good time; but in *One More Drink and Well I've Had My Fun*, it serves to dissolve depression.

As a whole, the LP established that Snooks Eaglin was a significant blues singer. He successfully adapted the blues so that modern material did not sound incongruous with an acoustic guitar. He made no attempt to generalise the relevance of the material, but used it to express his concerns.

In view of the excellence of *That's All Right*, the material on the Storyville LP is disappointing and confusing. Much of the 'folk' repertoire of Broonzy et al is resurrected, with similarly disastrous results. *Rock Island Line* (credited, even here, to Donegan!), *Careless Love*, *Trouble in Mind*. See *See Rider*, *St. James Infirmary*; the songs are too familiar, and the singer is unable to impose himself on them, and to use them to make an original statement. These songs seem like the debris from the session which produced *That's All Right*, and Snooks Eaglin's reputation would have been much better served if they had not been released.

Presumably the temptation to bring something out by him was strong; and recording producers were frustrated by the elusiveness of the singer, who is believed to be singing with a rhythm and blues/rock and roll group somewhere. Before he made these records, Eaglin was in such a group, and his style has the confidence of a mature professional musician. On the Storyville tracks, he indulged this confidence, with spurious guitar effects which intrude in the accompaniment.

For a long time Snooks Eaglin has been misrepresented in this country by the Storyville tracks, which have been available in various LPs for several years. The belated issue of *That's All Right* at last enables the British audience to hear the best of Eaglin collected in one place. If you have to sell your Brownie McGhee LPs to raise the 22s. 6d. which this one costs, go ahead and sell them. They'll never sound the same again, when you know what the blues can sound like.

CHARLIE GILLET.

SUBSCRIBE FOR A FRIEND

Ford machinists stamped on

THE COURT of inquiry into the Ford sewing machinists' strike will not bring much joy to the women who were on strike for three weeks last June.

Ford's Dagenham welcomed the report and the National Union of Vehicle Builders (NUVB) said it was 'by and large fairly satisfactory'. Both these remarks are understandable because the report does not at any stage support the women's claim on grading. Instead it recommends an ad hoc committee to investigate the grading dispute. Such an inquiry was turned down by the women prior to the dispute, because it could not be unbiased.

Here we have the situation of one committee recommending the setting up of another committee. I suppose it provides work for 'independent chairmen'. Ford's management and the unions are willing to talk for ever providing there is no trouble.

Quite frankly the inquiry report supports the management particu-

larly on job evaluation. It criticises the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers (AEF) for giving official support to the strike as a 'serious breach of its obligations under the agreed procedure for resolving grievances'. Any union has only ONE obligation and that is to its MEMBERS. Whilst it is appreciated that such a notion is thought old fashioned in 1968 it is still an undeniable fact.

The June dispute was carried out in the 'old fashioned' manner—'no back to work until an offer is made and accepted'. The practice in these modern times is 'back to work before talks', the employers taking advantage of the fact that once workers have returned to work if the offer is poor, rarely will they 'come out' again.

The report makes reference to the fact that Ford's made an offer of an increase from 85% to 92% whilst negotiating a return to work. It goes on to state rather significantly that it was open to question whether

its judgement (Ford's) was right.

The women machinists are to be congratulated on their victory in June and all support should be given for their fight for victory in August-September. Any concession gained from Ford's has to be 'kicked out of them' and the machinists at Ford's are the girls to do it. They may have 'tea and bickies' with Auntie Barbara but Barbara does not have to work at Ford's and that's where the 'crunch' comes.

Two hundred and twenty women at Rolls Royce in Glasgow struck work in support of a claim made 18 months ago for a wage structure nearer to that paid to men.

When, and only when, the women return to work will the company have further proposals to put to them. Unfortunately we have no information from the strike meeting which met on Thursday, August 22, one can only hope they adopted the policy of the machinists at Ford's.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

Freedom

For Workers' Control

AUGUST 31 1968 Vol 29 No 27

ELECTRICIANS JOINED BY PAINTERS

THE ELECTRICIANS' STRIKE goes on at Euston Station, but against overwhelming odds, for it seems certain now that the remaining pickets will be forced to seek a job elsewhere in the very near future.

This has come about in the last week because, with the help of the Electrical Trades Union, the employers, Electrical Installations, have managed to recruit men willing to 'scab' on their fellow workers. However, many disputes have ended in this manner and if and when the remaining pickets give up the struggle, their failure will not detract from the stand they made, for it was a worthwhile one, involving not only an issue of sackings, but the interpretation of the new Joint Industry Board's agreement, with its grading of operatives. If employers and the union agree to have labourers, then they should not expect craftsmen to do that type of work. The rights and wrongs, however, do not concern the unprincipled leaders of the ETU, while the employers put profit before principles.

Some people say that principles are a luxury that only the rich can afford. Those who say this are shortsighted and unless they recognise that 'an injury to one is an injury to all' they will not get very far. The greatest weapon of the employers is 'divide and rule' and the workers' answer to this is to stick together in solidarity. Although trade unionists are divided up in different unions, some even working to different agreements, first and foremost a united work force should confront the management.

NEEDED NO PRODDING

Many stewards on building sites strive for this, but one of their biggest stumbling blocks are the sub-contractors. Getting the 'subbies' organised is often a difficult task for a Works Committee. However, at Euston Station, the electrician 'subbies' needed no prodding and it was the other workers who failed to give the strikers their support. Even with the luxury of working seven days a week, they could not find it in their hearts to step outside the gate and say no more work until the electricians are back.

The history of the trade union movement is made up of such disappointments, but we should not despair, because there have been victories as well. There were times when the electricians were close to tasting it, for if the narrow vote of the EI electricians at London Airport had

gone the other way, this report might have been a different story.

PAINTERS COME OUT

This last week, Euston Station has been the scene of another dispute. The painters working for the sub-contractor, Bagnells, have come out on strike over the sacking of five painters. In the previous week, these painters had elected a steward and following this, Bagnells then decided that they did not have enough work for all the painters. The management agreed with the union organiser and the steward that on the basis of 'last in, first off', four men would be chosen by the operatives and this was accepted by the management on site. On Thursday, five other men were told that they are being sacked because there is not enough work, and these included the men who had got things organised. The painters are now outside the gate with the electricians.

Meanwhile, other painters are working for other sub-contractors, but a painter told me that Bagnells 'had a mile of work on the contract' and he felt that they were trying to smash the beginnings of organised efforts. No doubt Bagnells want to continue paying the miserable bonus of a shilling per hour and have moved early to prevent the painters extracting anything from the profitable pickings of this British Railways contract.

The painters' union has not had time to support or condemn the dispute yet. The future will tell if this union, like the ETU, will act as the employers' agent or whether other trade unionists will give their support. P.T.

LIBERTARIAN CONFERENCE

THE Ad Hoc Committee which has convened the conference of the Libertarian Left on September 8 at 11 a.m. at the Conway Hall, now has the support of Anarchists and the group Socialist Current and Workers Review. Many other organisations have been approached, including the SWF, the ILP and the East London Libertarian Federation.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss how best the Libertarian Left can mobilize its forces and resources on (a) international issues, and (b) domestic questions, particularly in aiding and assisting any section of workers who are on official or unofficial strike and in any other militant activity (like the tenants' struggle).

The current crisis in Czechoslovakia illustrates only too clearly the need to react quickly to events, to mobilize support in the way of demonstrations, meetings, etc.

In the case of workers' industrial struggles the major task is to render all possible assistance in the way of publicity in our various publications, the raising of funds, participating on the picket line and in every way to help all sections of workers to initiate their own independent activity.

The conference invites your active participation, your ideas and your concrete aid and assistance.

The first session is at 11 a.m. (doors open 10.30 a.m.) and Bill Christopher, a printworker and an editor of FREEDOM, will be chairman. The second session will be from 2.30 to 6 p.m. It is hoped that practical proposals for efficient co-ordination between organisation will come out of the conference.

This is an invitation to YOU to attend this important conference. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. September 8. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Contact Column

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

Anarchist doctor. Could anyone recommend one? Box 17.

Demonstration against Toll-bridge. Selby proposed. Help and ideas required. Contact C. Beadle, c/o 45 Gowthorpe, Selby.

Corporation Street. September 3: no meeting. September 10: 'The October Demonstration' Mike Sheridan.

N.W. Federation Anarchist Camp. August 31 to September 2. Camp will be at Lower Stretton near Church Stretton, Shropshire. Bus (route 435) from Shrewsbury to Lower Stretton; find the Ragleth Inn and go up the side road for 40 yards; turn right to the camp site 50 yards away.

Comrade fined £10 at Russian Exhibition. Can't pay. Donations please to Box 18.

Will any telecommunication and/or electronic experts who would like to see their skills used in a more constructive manner please write Box 19.

Nancekuke: Groups are urged to send a representative to St. Ives, Cornwall, on Sunday, September 1 (Bank Holiday). Planning meeting for ambitious autumn campaign against Nancekuke and CBW. Contact Graham Hewitt, 24 Back Road West, St. Ives, Cornwall.

Exhibition in support of Hornsey students. Battersea Gallery, 19 York Road, Battersea, from August 22. Artists taking part include David Hockney, Dereck Boshier, Christopher Logue, Joe Tilson and many others (plus local children who use attic as 'free' creative area).

Let's get out of the Wood! Discussion meeting on how to build a libertarian movement with a real basis. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, on Sunday, September 8 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.). Ad hoc Meeting Group, c/o Freedom Press.

Red Paper 'produced to evoke radical response in those parts of East Anglia not subject to that gravitational pull towards London which deprives an area of any identity of its own'. 6d.: from Tony Reeder, 44 Upper Orwell Street, Ipswich.

Birmingham Discussion Meetings: Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. at The Crown, Corporation Street. August 27: Peter Neville 'The Demonstration'. September 3: no meeting. September 10: 'The October Demonstration' Mike Sheridan.

Anarchist Black Cross Bulletin No. 1 now available. 6d. (plus postage) from 7 Coptic Street, London, W.C.1.

If you wish to make contact let us know.

The PMG's Curious Conception of Workers' Control

NOW WE are all clear on what the Postmaster-General curiously understands as 'workers' control'. Though whether the staunchest advocate of workers' control would accept his definition is open to some doubt. For the Postmaster-General conceives workers' control to be an arrangement under which workers will be able 'to hold the rest of the community to ransom'. A device, the prime function of which would become 'the achievement of improved working conditions, shorter hours and the maximisation of wages'. It would not, he has plainly told us, 'be consistent with the public good, nor would it necessarily provide a management seeking efficiency and the best use of a huge publicly provided capital'. For workers, he believes, would be inclined to take decisions not on the objective facts, but in terms of 'the subjective self-interest' they represent.

CONDEMNATION

Which is, of course, rather a sweeping condemnation of the manner in which the Postmaster-General believes working people would act up to their responsibilities, if ever they were allowed such responsibilities.

The assumption here, of course, is that all management decisions have an intrinsic 'quality' about them to which it is only necessary that we should add.

But what of the many management decisions which are manifestly unsound and which have no quality about them at all?

EQUAL PAY

ACCORDING to the final agenda for next month's Trade Union Congress, the question of 'equal pay' rates a mention. The Government, rallying to its usual speedy support for the workers, wishes to phase the introduction of equal pay over seven years. The Confederation of Health Service Employees is to urge the TUC to reduce the time limit to two years. The Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians Association calls upon the TUC to support any union taking industrial action on this issue. Both the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) are awaiting the report of a joint study group which is expected to report early next year. Arising from this mumbo jumbo the CBI estimates the cost of equal pay to be 6% on the nation's wages bill, the TUC estimates 3% and the Government estimates 5%. Taking any percentage you fancy it's **Cheap Labour** and if I, as an individual, am working alongside someone who is doing the same job, then I want the same money. Of

The Postmaster-General mentioned the many 'myths' which exist in the Labour Party—some of which were plainly of his own devising.

One of these myths he touched upon quite inadvertently when he referred to 'managerial expertise' as being a somewhat rare attribute which cannot be developed in 'any Tom, Dick, or Harry'. This is the myth within the Labour Party which would have us believe that the democratic socialist society of the 20th century is one where the experts and the technocrats should rule. The rest of us will be obliged to serve, as we were not born with the rare attributes the experts possess, and we must count ourselves thankful that they place their abilities at our disposal.

This is the society which judges its performance on pillar-graphs of production, the extent of its exports and the size of its balance of payment surplus, rather than the quality of life it offers to its citizens.

NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

The trouble about 'managerial expertise', of course, is that it is not always expert, neither is it always right. And when it is wrong, as often it is, it affects the happiness and well-being of large numbers of people, many of whom happen to be our members.

NORMAN STAGG,
Dep. Gen. Sec.

(Reprinted from the newspaper of the Union of Post Office Workers, 17.8.68).

SECOND THOUGHTS ALL ROUND

BOTH THE ASSOCIATED Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) and the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) are having second thoughts about their new package deal. They are going back to the Railways Board for clarification. If one starts from the premise that the railways must show a profit, or break even as, to all intents and purposes, the NUR and ASLEF have done, then, brother, this 'deal' has to be for you, but on the other hand if you think the railways are a social service then this 'deal' must go in the proverbial waste basket, because it is useless both to railwaymen and passengers alike.

FINALLY, IN PASSING

ONE OFTEN hears the phrase we must have foremen or chasers, etc., etc. Two Walthamstow firms have just introduced new bonus schemes. The workers watch each other to see that production is increased, and slackers get a verbal slashing from their mates if production drops. Foremen! who needs them, we can cut our own throats far more efficiently ourselves. B.C.