

# 'SO IT GOES!'

IT IS ONE of the ironies of history that ex-President Truman of the United States died (in bed) during the same week that President Nixon of the United States was bombing hell out of North Vietnam in an apparent attempt to get the them to agree to peace terms and save American lives.

President Truman in the act of dying ensured himself a place in popular history as the man who took the decision to drop the atom bomb which forced the Japanese to agree to peace terms, which saved American lives. Popular history has elevated a mediocrity with a slightly-soiled background to a statesman hero faced with an agonising choice. It will probably do the same for Nixon, if he can fix it.

The mediocre Truman, like the mediocre Attlee, was in office at the end of the war in Europe. Truman, a machine-politician, a failed draper, was jockeyed into the Vice-Presidential position to avert the danger (to American interests) of the starry-eyed idealist, former Vice-President Henry Wallace, taking office after the anticipated death of Roosevelt. The United States was riding high, she had come out of the war in Europe physically unscathed and her place in world power was almost unchallenged. No wonder Henry Luce (of "Time") spoke of the American Century and Henry Wallace rhetorically called for the Century of the Common Man. The odds were in Luce's favour.

By June 1945, Japan was militarily beaten. Her navy was decimated, her forces had been beaten in Okinawa, American raiders dropped 40,000 tons of bombs on Japan between May and June. On the 20th

June the Japanese sent a message (undoubtedly read by the Americans who had broken the Japanese code 'Magic' used by the Japanese) to Moscow (then neutral) that they would be prepared to discuss peace terms, known to be 'unconditional', with the United States and her allies. Stalin (and Truman perhaps) had other fish to fry, for no peace overtures were made by the U.S. Eventually, after Hiroshima, Russia declared war on Japan, invaded and seized Japanese island possessions ceded by Czarist Russia in 1905.

Before Japanese peace negotiations could be got under way, an atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima killing 71,379 people. This was justified by the Americans on the grounds that it shortened the war and eliminated the necessity for invasion which would have led to great loss of life. It has never really been satisfactorily explained why a second bomb on Nagasaki was necessary; however this was dropped on the following day. Shortly afterwards the Japanese sued for peace.

These stories, of the Japanese wanting peace before the bombs, were at one time regarded as part of the mythology of the pacifist-left. Now, a conventional library stocking Encyclopedia Britannica, Chambers Encyclopedia and the Cambridge Modern History (all standard works without leftist tendencies) tells the same story. The Cambridge Modern History adds a comment from a scientist involved in the atom-bomb project, "The bomb simply had to be a success."

Why, then, do the obituaries of Harry Truman persist in plugging the myth of Truman dropping the bomb or bombs to swiftly end the war? The

parallel with the Nixon bombings which either did or did not bring the North Vietnamese to the conference table are probably in the front of journalists' minds as a historical parallel.

An interesting sidelight is that an English authority, commenting on Truman's decision to drop the bomb, said that we couldn't really object since British planes had rubbed out the German town of Dresden in the spring of 1945 with the loss of 135,000 lives. Dresden, it was claimed by the Germans, was practically an open city. The Russians were advancing and the town was full of refugees. Many of the lives were lost in a fire-storm which followed the dropping of fire-bombs.

Whether a town is or is not a legitimate military target is a legal quibble. With war becoming total there is never a town which has no concern with military supplies or personnel and it is 'militarily legitimate', if one may use the words in conjunction, to bomb civilians just to shatter their morale and make them slow down on production or call for peace - whether their governments take any notice of them is another matter. The British were told during the last war that they could 'take it'. They had little choice. For their part the R.A.F. bombed civilian houses, dams and anything on which their blanket bombing would drop. The bomber, especially under anti-aircraft fire, is not a precision weapon.

As long ago as 1927 Lord Thomson, a former Secretary of State for Air, was speaking of those who tried to subordinate war to a legal system, "to limit its scope, to prevent its worst atrocities, in short,

to civilize it and bring it up to date". In so doing, said Lord Thomson, they have "helped to perpetuate an international crime... Homicide, arson, the destruction of property and trespass are criminal offences, and war is a combination of these illegalities... Instead of trying to control, restrain, mitigate or civilize modern warfare, the more logical course is to outlaw war itself and make aggression illegal". Certainly, certainly, but who is to judge the policemen?

A possible clue to the 'necessity' of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is in the remark in the Cambridge Modern History as to the necessity for the 'success' of the atom-bomb project. Perhaps, the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Dresden were the guinea pigs for some project of fire-power or peace-making in the same way that the people of Guernica were a practice target for the Luftwaffe.

Kurt Vonnegut in his book about Dresden (Slaughter-House Five) where he was a prisoner - sheltering from the raid in a slaughter-house - has an ironic refrain about human death which marks the progress of history and statesmanship: "So it Goes". After Guernica, Warsaw, Coventry, then Dresden, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Hanoi, and all bolstered up with sorry, shoddy excuses.

Harry Truman, that homespun philosopher, had a motto on his desk, "The Buck Stops Here". In fact, it didn't and it doesn't. The politicians of the world pass the buck back to the peoples of the world who must suffer, fight and die in the politicians' wars.

Jack Robinson

## THE CLOSED SHOP

THE "CLOSED SHOP" can be a double-edged weapon for trade unionists. For many it is the goal which they build their trade union organisation to achieve. It ensures that everyone will become a member of a trade union if they want to work in a particular shop or factory. There have been long and bitter struggles to establish the "closed shop". Trade unionists have seen it as a way of stopping the employer playing off the non-unionists against the union members and so preventing the boss from using his classic tactic of divide and rule.

These are good reasons for the establishment of a "closed

shop". But it can also be used by both the employer and the trade union as a method of rule over workers. Often it is the moderate unions in which the members have little or no control over their leaders, that enter into "closed shop" agreements. Many employers are only too willing to allow the unions to discipline and keep their labour force in line in return for such an agreement. Without it many unions would not survive unless they have the monopoly over the workers in an industry. The National Union of Seamen is an example, who without the "closed shop", now legalised by the Industrial Relations Act, would not be able to recruit members by persuasion.

The "closed shop" can also mean that militants can have both the employer and the union attacking them. Trade union militants can be a thorn in the flesh of both the union leaders and the employers. The "closed shop" can be used to tyrannize a militant out of his job. Having expelled a militant from the union his backing would, before the Industrial Relations Act, be automatic.

However, the Industrial Relations Act has virtually outlawed the "closed shop" although it has not prevented companies and unions from continuing to operate them. But

Continued on p.2

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# BUREAUCRATS REVOLT

THE RECENT THREAT by the Civil & Public Services Association of selective strike action and a campaign to disrupt the working of many government departments in protest at the pay freeze is a heartening sign of the unrest within the bureaucracy. The main initiative has come from the CPSA which is the largest union representing the lower grade (and lower-paid) clerks.

The Civil Service unions have traditionally been amongst the most conservative section of the trade union movement - perhaps not unconnected with the fact that, as a Government security report in the 1960's revealed, there was a greater concentration of Communist Party sympathisers in the Civil Service unions than anywhere else - but in the last few years a new militancy has emerged inspired by young militants. These young people dropping-out from the academic broiler-house and re-colling from the industrial rat-race have taken clerical jobs in the Civil Service where they have learnt to their cost that the life of a

professional bureaucrat is more mindless, more futile and more soul-destroying than anything on a factory production line. This intense alienation which the bureaucracy by its very nature induces in a minority of its workers is something which gives cause for optimism.

Within the CPSA a militant view has been spread by the loose alliance of left-wing members around the rank-and-file magazine "Redder Tape" (a pun on the official union journal title, "Red Tape") which hopefully is developing a revolutionary view. During the postal workers' strike militants in the CPSA and smaller associated unions tried unsuccessfully to link up their unions in a common struggle with the postal workers. The failure underlined the urgency of building rank and file links throughout the public sector unions.

However, the greatest need is for the militants to recognize the role they play - however unwillingly - in this authoritarian and exploitative society. From this flows the

awareness of the need for the destruction of the system which dooms them and their fellow-workers to a life of boring and futile work, and to aim at their re-deployment to socially-useful and individually-satisfying work which does not trample on man's innate creativity. As a first step there is scope for effective - and illegal - individual collaboration with community groups (e.g. SS clerks providing useful information to Claimants' Unions, etc.) but also for developing socially-aware industrial action as a strategy within the union: for instance, striking in those departments from which the Government finances itself whilst providing in those departments from which the public derives some small benefit (like Social Security) unprecedented assistance through the maze of bureaucratic regulations and unpublicized entitlements.

Governments be warned: the bureaucracy saboteurs are coming!

Terry Phillips



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less stupid. It does not  
create its own shepherd.  
Henry Maret

# BOND SLAVERY IN TEXTILES

"BOND SLAVES" is how the treatment of the Filipinos brought here by Alderglen Ltd. has been described in Rochdale.

£1 a week is being taken out of the wages of the girls imported from the Philippines (FREEDOM 23/12/72) to make sure they don't leave the company once they're here. For every girl who leaves, £200 is taken out of the joint fund to which all the girls are paying so that if a girl leaves before completing her two-year contract everyone suffers.

The scandal involving these girls, which was first brought to light by the "Rochdale Alternative Press" and researched by the Rochdale Women's Lib. Group, has now been taken up by the mass media. Alderglen, which has often imported foreign labour, has allowed the story to spread so that according to "Taliba", a newspaper published in the Philippines, the company pays wages for "top workers" of "as much as £43 to £45 a week".

An examination of the wage slips of many of the 100 girls at Alderglen showed that they really get more like £14 a week. In addition, the girls are having to live in grossly overcrowded conditions. In one case 18 girls were found to be living in one house, for which the company took a rent of £10. In another, 12 girls were living with no bathroom and one sink.

Rochdale's Fire Prevention Officer investigated conditions and found "gross overcrowding" in eleven houses in other parts of the town. The accommodation which Alderglen is providing for the girls is in sub-standard, back-to-back houses, with no back door.

The union involved, the National Union of Textile & Garment Workers, another weak textile union, has done nothing to help these girls, and has even collaborated with the firm, in some ways.

It is now reported that Bertex, a similar company to Alderglen in Plymouth, is also trying to get in on the act and import girls from the Philippines. We should see to it that we don't get another Alderglen in Plymouth.

North West Workers  
with help from  
Rochdale Women's  
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THREE VICTIMISED WORKERS at Whipp & Bourne Ltd., Rochdale, got their jobs back last week, after a three-week strike of 400 workers. The firm also agreed to pay to everyone Xmas holiday pay, which they held up during the strike.

This represents a major climb down for the company, which had hoped to get rid of the militant works convenor. The firm obviously hadn't expected their workers to strike the week before Xmas.

Trade Unionist

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# ROLE OF THE REVOLUTION

Revolution: Past and Present, by Tony Fleming, 31 pages, published by Leeds ORA (10p + 3p postage) from 72 Beechwood View, Leeds 4.

THIS PAMPHLET attempts to trace the varying characteristics of a number of modern revolutions and revolutionary movements from the anarchist-communist viewpoint.

The writer discusses first the Paris Commune of 1871, and then the Russian Revolution, followed by events in Turin in 1920, the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, Hungary in 1956 and France and Italy in 1968. In a fairly short work, the writer is not able to go into a detailed analysis of the events. But he does discuss, for example in respect to the Paris Commune, the views of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

The role of the anarcho-syndicalists, the Left Communists and the Workers' Opposition are all briefly discussed in the section on Russia. The problem of achieving a balance between centralisation and decentralisation within a revolutionary libertarian movement is mentioned by the author. He accepts that there is no easy answer to such a problem.

Indeed, this pamphlet sets itself the task of bringing out into the open a number of problems which have bedeviled libertarians for many decades: the above-mentioned problems of decentralisation and centralisation, the limitations of syndicalism and the reformist trends ever-present within anarcho-syndicalist organi-

sations like the Spanish CNT, spontaneity and/or organisation (should the revolution be prepared? as argued by Berkman) and, indeed, the form of organisation necessary to achieve a successful revolution.

Although the author does not pretend to know all the answers, he does argue that the time has come, in Britain and elsewhere, to spell out the role of the revolutionary - and by revolutionary he does not mean either "left" political parties or free-wheeling individualist "anarchists". He sums up his views on this as follows:

"We have already said spontaneity is not enough, and a close-knit revolutionary grouping with a clear perspective is essential if the revolution is to succeed. This revolutionary group has to see itself, not as the executive committee of the (working) class, but as a propagandist, and catalyst, for struggle. It has to maintain a collective viewpoint, but guarantee the right of opposition groups to seek a change of line. It cannot, however, allow open dissent. This merely makes for confusion and loss of credibility. Unless what a group says is consistent, then no one is going to listen to it."

Comrade Fleming accepts that, in such an organisation, Leninism could develop. That is, the group might see itself as becoming the organisation "which takes power for the workers". To stay libertarian, he says, it has to fight any such tendency to view it as anything but an organisation aiming to make possible the smashing of the State and the "creation of proletarian democracy through the

self-activity of the (working) class in the creation of self-managing Workers' Councils". Such a revolutionary organisation has to ensure that its militants do not become ennobled leaders - as many of them did in Spain and elsewhere. In conclusion, the writer remarks that "The role of the revolutionary is not to take power as a member of a vanguard group. It is to make the taking of power by the working class, as a class, through and in the Workers' Councils, more possible by pointing out lessons. It is this, and the conviction that we have to destroy all oppression if the revolution is to be genuinely liberatory, that marks us off decisively from the Leninists of whichever brand."

Following on from the recently-published "Organisational Platform" of Archinov, Makhno and Mett, Revolution: Past and Present must surely provide further fuel for the important discussions among anarchists as to the best form of organisation required for the all-important struggle of working-class emancipation, and the bringing about of a classless, governmentless and Stateless society in Britain and elsewhere. Indeed, it should be read in conjunction with the "Organisational Platform".\*

Peter E. Newell

\* Both the two (1972) French ORA editions have been sold out, as has the first (1972) British ORA edition; but I understand that a second English-language edition is presently being printed on the ORA printing presses, and should be out early in the New Year.

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the trouble starts when someone says: "I've got a right not to belong to a union." Mr. Goad has gone along to the National Industrial Relations Court and had the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers fined £55,000 because he has insisted on being a member when others have made it plain they don't want him. Mr. Langston has won the legal right not to belong to the AUEW and has been sent home by Chryslers on full pay because the workers at Ryton have threatened industrial action if he comes back to work.

These same workers have been called "bullies" and a "mob", after Mr. Langston got some rough treatment when he went to collect his wages. As with the 'scab', Mr. Langston can have and will no doubt have the protection of the police when he goes to the factory again. But there is justification for their anger (which might not have occurred had not the newspaper and television cameramen been present), because Mr. Langston does have a moral obligation to be a member of an organisation that negotiates his wages and conditions. Mr. Langston has enjoyed all the benefits of trade union organisation and now he shelters behind the law to opt out. He now threatens the Works Committee that he will take them to the NIRC.

But the Chrysler workers, like those at C.A.V. with Mr. Goad, have shown the contempt they feel for both Mr. Langston and the law. Some will say that the individual is under attack by the majority, but equally the will of the Mr. Goads and Mr. Langstons could rule against the wishes of the others if they tolerated their presence.

Mr. Langston has not just refused to join a union, he has opted out.

Most workers see the moral obligation for belonging to a trade union. They might disagree with the trade union leadership and the agreements they make but they see the need for the organisation that the trade unions provide. It is not so much the trade unions themselves but what can be built and achieved at the place of work, these are the reasons for joining the union. It is also for these reasons that the government has enacted the Industrial Relations Bill.

While I am against the "closed shop" as a condition for obtaining a job, I think workers do have a moral obligation to join. In my experience no non-unionist has given me a good reason for not doing so.

P.T.

FIVE YOUNG ANARCHIST comrades, Ange Casile, Jean Arico and his German companion, A. Borth, Louis Locelto and another comrade have been murdered by the fascists. These comrades had unmasked the fascists, authors of a number of attacks against the Reggio de Calabria - Turin train.

At the moment when the five comrades were passing the Castle of Ardena, property of the well-known fascist prince, Valerio Borghese, they were knocked down by a lorry belonging to Borghese, driven by another fascist, Aiello.

L'Anarchie, November

## KNOCKING AUNTIE

BROADCASTING, BRAINWASHING, CONDITIONING, by David Tribe, The National Secular Society, 25p

A SPRIGHTLY, and very welcome attack on the BBC and a number of other contemporary sacred cows from the pen of David Tribe, of the National Secular Society. Mainly it is about the religious (Christian) bias of broadcasting, but the author bangs away at some other targets as well, and never fails to score a direct hit. As this is something that touches me personally (I saw the decline and fall of the anarchist discussion groups, the cosy evenings spent in pubs, discussing ideas of all kinds), I cannot forbear to quote:

"The sinister potentialities of this scientific fact [that there are only a limited number of wave-bands] hardly need to be spelt out. Most governments have taken advantage of it to exert control not only on the manner but the matter of broadcasting. Even in ostensibly liberal countries dominated by Ibsen's 'compact liberal majority', which in all questions of radical or advanced thought must by definition be always

wrong, those with important new things to say must face a situation increasingly manipulated by radio and television with some misgiving. For while there is in the liberal democracies no prior control of the public platform, press, drama, cinema and other media, so that anyone who has a powerful enough voice or can amass sufficient capital may disseminate his views in these ways, however powerful his voice or abundant his means he cannot broadcast unless he obtains a licence for one of a limited number of frequencies or the goodwill of those who have been so blessed. When radio was just a toy for the mechanically minded or a luxury for the rich this may not have mattered. Now that it has become a cheap mass medium and been joined by television, which has above all largely emptied outdoor speaking sites, indoor public meetings and gatherings of trades unions and political parties save in times of crisis, which has driven out of business untold numbers of small, serious literary, political and humanist magazines, and which has, despite statistics to the contrary, subverted the reading habits of whole nations,

the phenomenon poses a grave threat to the survival of a literate, participatory democracy."

And he adds in a footnote to the above:

"I boldly assert that the statistics showing increasing publishing and library lending of books have come about through population growth and the expansion of textbooks, do-it-yourself manuals in every field, and coffee-table art and travel books, and not in works of general culture making intellectual demands on their readers."

I am delighted to find my prejudices confirmed in print. I had thought the same for a long time. Mr. Tribe however is no luddite, and has all sorts of plans for humanist programmes, which sound far more interesting than the religious and secular pap and violence which is broadcast so much of the time. But the power is still in the hands of the Establishment.

Arthur Stone



# This Week in Ireland

EVERY DAY the ghastly sectarian murders rise, not only in the North but this side of the border too. The young engaged couple who had been to a dance and were stabbed first while alive and then shot. Whitelaw when appealed to to do something to stop these said they rested mostly with the public who if they informed could stop them. Would you if you were a Catholic worker in an organisation that employed 100 Prods to every Teague and had a long lonely journey home to your ghetto every day inform? To do so would be certain death, perhaps for your wife and children as well as yourself. All Teagues go all the time in terror of their lives. A woman opens the door thinking it is the gas man and is shot there and then or at best beaten up. Craig is guarded day and night, but Anita Currie is told that that there are not enough troops or constables to guard her isolated house. The Prod militants have dossiers which detail the daily movements of scores of Catholics so they can be picked off. The army has admitted it has "no information" upon most Prods, but an extensive one on Catholics. Whitelaw refuses to call in Prod guns or raid their homes

daily as is done in all Catholic districts.

The operation of the Loyalists is to terrify England into giving in and restoring Stormont even stronger than before, with full security powers and to intimidate every Catholic. They are succeeding, being backed by Whitelaw and the army and police. It is so blatantly obvious that Heath and Whitelaw have a marked reluctance to confront militant Prods for several reasons. It would provoke a second front which could be more explosive than that put by the IRA. Whitelaw wants to get his White Paper out before any real fight. Neither side is going to be pleased with the White Paper as give-and-take compromises are dead in the six counties. A Mr. Philip Curran said yesterday that he believed there was a particular murder gang of extremists, and that they numbered 158 members. This he based on the murder of Thomas Maddeb who was stabbed 58 times. He believes this was an initiation ceremony, done to get these people used to killing and to inflame hatred of Catholics.

Well, down here we have retreated to 1916 (if we ever

left it) by opening Arbour Hill as a prison once more and Spike Island as a military prison. We have also arrested Rory Brady and all the Provos are screaming for his release. I do not like to think of anyone in prison, but I can't forget the little 18-months old toddler who was shot by the IRA and Rory's remark, "It was regrettable but these things happen in guerilla warfare."

Lynch has gone to America to get Americans to start factories over here (so that more of our wealth will go away, this time to America. It never occurred to him to start the factories with Irish work and brains). He is seeing his beloved Nixon. Never a word from him against the awful criminal bombing of Viet Nam.

One bright spot. We of the anti-apartheid movement managed to get the squash match scheduled for December 27 stopped and the South African team of all-whites did not come. Our fascists are very busy writing to the papers saying how wicked we are to drag politics into clean nice decent sport. They are the very same people who call enclosed coursing clean decent nice sport.

H.

# RENT STRIKE IN KIRKBY

ACCORDING to the latest official figures published by Kirkby (near Liverpool) Council, there are only 553 tenants on rent strike on the Tower Hill estate. Winstanley, the Housing Officer, claimed that these figures are true. If readers of FREEDOM will remember, the previous set of figures issued by the Council put the number of tenants on rent strike as 1,191 when in actual fact the true figure was 1,475 on total rent and rates strike. Almost 400 tenants were lost in the official figures. Although the Housing Department claims that only 553 tenants are on rent strike, yet in the past two months, up until 4th December 1972, the rent arrears for Tower Hill alone have shot up to £53,014. There are several glaring discrepancies in the Housing Department's report. For example, the Council claimed that a further 49 tenants had started paying their rent last week. Yet the total rent collected only went up by £38. So according to the Council's 'official' figures the rents of some houses on Tower Hill are about 80p per week.

There are other major discrepancies in this report. The Council did not state that this figure of non-payers did not include the tenants who are paying garage money only. Also, there are 300 tenants or more who are on Social Security and their rent is being withheld by the S.S. until the rent strike is over. Again, no mention was made of this in the official report. When the truth eventually comes out about the rent strike on Tower Hill it will show conclusively that the Housing Department have been manipulating statistics in order to demoralize the tenants on rent strike, make them feel isolated and break the strike in this way. The Tower Hill Unfair Rents Action Group is not trying to deceive anyone over the strength of the rent strike. We have in fact lost some support since the rent strike started and this is quite understandable. It takes a great deal of courage to defy the authorities and refuse to pay any rent at all for weeks on end; unfortunately many tenants do not have this sort of courage.

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**HARLECH (ASA):** G & B Briggs,  
c/o Coleg Harlech, Merioneth.  
**HASTINGS area:** Kevin McPaul,  
Tel. Bastings 7905

## Meetings:

**Harlech Libertarian Group**  
Thurs. Feb 8 at 8 p.m.  
The 'Courtyard Hut', Coleg  
Harlech. Keith Nathan (ORA):  
"The organization of revolutionary anarchists and libertarian action".  
**CRA N. London, Tues. 7 p.m.**  
Sun. 2 p.m. at 68A Chingford  
Road, London, E. 17  
**New York: Libertarian Book**  
Club Lectures, fortnightly on  
Thursdays at Workmen's Circle  
Center, 369 8th Ave., corner  
29 St. February 22 Judith  
Malina and Julian Beck:  
"Anarchism and Strategy for  
Change". Admission free.

## Appeals

**Michael Tobin Defence Committee** c/o 265 Dale Street,  
Chatham, Kent.

'Hyde Park 3' (on remand in  
Brixton Prison for over 6 mos)  
Visiting enquire Mrs. Carty,  
tel. 677 1526.  
Donations to Mrs. Callinan,  
59 Brondesbury Villas,  
London, N.W.6.

**Anarchist Library & Information Workers** - formation of a  
national organization.  
Contact Richard Alexander,  
35 Hardy Road, London, SW19 1JA

"Calling all nudist libertarians, initially in central London only. Strike a blow for progress and freedom, and withal peace, by working joyfully together...towards the abolition of the shameful nudity taboo..." All replies, if patently genuine, shall be gladly answered. Desmond Hunter. c/o Box 101 Freedom Press.

## VOLINE

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We have had a great many enquiries for this title since it went out of print. We recently made the find of some of the sheets which we have completed and bound (hardcover, redine).

A few pages have damp-stained margins.

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