

# RESIST THE REDEVELOPERS!

ON THURSDAY, 11th February, Counter-Information Services held a press conference in the heart of London's West End, amidst the ornate splendours of the Starlight Cinema Club, in the basement of the Mayfair Hotel. It was to launch their new publication, The Recurrent Crisis of London: CIS Anti-Report on the Property Developers. Each person attending was issued with a free copy of the report, which in fact really made the conference superfluous. As questions and answers succeeded each other I was able to read what the people were saying in my copy of the report, for in fact it is all there. Everything you need to know has already been dealt with in this extremely comprehensive and beautifully produced publication.

The conclusions are revolutionary. Counter-Information Services believe that there is no solution to the problem of redevelopment within the present economic system. There is no possibility of reforming it. As long as money is the ultimate authority the redevelopers will continue to buy up property, turn out the people living or conducting small businesses there and put up their dreary neo-barbaric blocks of offices.

The villain of the piece is J. Levy of Stock Conversion, though he is picked on not be-

cause he is the only one, but because he is typical of his kind, and one of the most successful. His greed is gilded over with a kind of Wellsian enthusiasm for clean outlines and uniformity on a massive scale. Euston Centre is his great achievement, of which he is extremely proud. That it has caused the removal of lots of small businesses, workshops and homes, though indeed some of them were very shabby, and has made the area curiously dead and deserted, far from distressing him seems to have pleased him. The muddle and confusion around Piccadilly he describes sweepingly as a 'sink of iniquity'. His ideal would doubtless be Necropolis, the City of the Dead, where all is clean and silent.

If there are to be any human beings in his Utopia they will all be working busily in offices, shut away in air-conditioned boxes, cut off from the outside world.

The fact that so much money is to be made by selling property for redevelopment into offices has the effect of sending up the price of all property, so that the poor cannot afford to live in the city centres, or conduct small businesses there. In the long run this will hamper redevelopment itself, for offices need cleaners and other service workers, and they cannot afford on their

miserable wages to travel in from the satellite towns.

The newspapermen and women present at the conference seemed rather lost. Their questions, about how to arrange mortgages and so forth, so that the lower wage earner could afford to buy a home, and suchlike schemes and plans were simply met by the panel of speakers with the blunt statement that the situation has now gone too far for reformist solutions. The example of Shelter was quoted. It has been going for six years, yet despite all its efforts the number of homeless has continued to rise.

"It is a democracy," said the chairman of the panel of speakers, "London is our city. We should decide how it is to be run." But the logic of the position of CIS is ultimately resistance, non-violent one hopes, but resistance anyway, on a mass basis. Nothing short of that will stop the redevelopers, who are completely ruthless. "Democracy" in a sense I suppose, but certainly not the parliamentary kind. The law is on the side of the property tycoons, and to resist them will ultimately involve breaking it. The non-violent anti-Bomb movement was defeated, perhaps because the Bomb was too distant a threat to arouse enough people. Will people

risk imprisonment, even death perhaps, to defend their homes against an immediate threat such as the redevelopment boys represent?

Office blocks are not the only threat. The "Motorway Box" scheme has just received government approval, quietly and without publicity. One would not know about it were it not for a report in the Sunday Times (11/2/73), which describes it as the motor car's 'biggest victory'. If people submit to this scheme some of the most pleasant residential areas in London will be destroyed. True, most of the victims will be middle class, but this should not deter us from protesting. If "they" can get away with it in one place "they" will be strengthened to get away with it elsewhere. The time is now fast approaching when resistance must begin, if necessary by blocking the bulldozers and by resorting to sabotage. If people are not ready to defend their homes they do not deserve to keep them.

CIS has so far produced three anti-reports, before The Recurrent Crisis of London: Rio Tinto Zinc, which is now out of print, The General Electric Company and Consolidated Gold Fields. The Recurrent Crisis can be obtained from Counter-Information Services, 52 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W.1., price 60p. (or from Freedom Bookshop - post 5p) John Brent

## UNITED WE STAND

ONE OF THE justifications for the government's present freeze on wages is that it will assist the lower paid worker. But now groups of these workers are in revolt against the policies that, if we are to believe Mr. Heath, would help them. Hospital workers and civil servants have already held protest stoppages but the real test comes with the gas workers' campaign of industrial action involving selected stoppages, overtime bans and withdrawal of co-operation. Some gas workers have already taken action, and there was considerable resentment when John Edwards, gas national officer for the General and Municipal Workers' Union, announcing this campaign said that it wasn't an all out national stoppage.

However things must be really bad for this is the first time that official strike action has been taken in the 54-year history of the industry's joint industrial council. As we know, the GMWU is not exactly "strike happy", but the amount of feeling shown by the members has forced the issue.

Those taking action to force pay claims above the limits set out by the government can be taken before the courts and fined.

We all know that despite the freeze prices are continuing to rise. The Grocer magazine has reported a 2.25 per cent rise in one week. Following the end of the freeze many workers will face increased rents under the government's "fair rents" scheme. At the same time we will be expected to pay higher rates. The government claims that it has to defeat inflation and yet many will face consi-

derable increases on what they pay for a basic need. Mr. Heath's advice to "shop around" isn't much good when councils demand higher rents and rates.

Soon, we will be treated to a whole series of scare stories and heartrending tales on the dangers and the suffering of OAPs when the gas men strike. But the only time the plight of these people is mentioned in the national papers is when it can be used as a weapon against a section of the working class on strike. The gas men have already pledged that they will take all possible safety precautions and supply hospitals, of any people in real need.

FORD'S REVOLT

WHILE WORKERS employed in the public sector have been the first to be affected by Mr. Heath's wage policies, Ford workers have made it clear that they intend to join the revolt on March 1st if management does not increase their offer above the government's norm. No one would claim that these workers are low-paid, but in actual terms of profit per man, Ford workers are among the most exploited. According to the Ford Workers Bulletin the company's "initial estimate is that in 1972 post-depreciation pre-tax profits may be in excess of £260million, or approaching £1,000 per Ford worker." Obviously if Ford can restrict increases in line with the government's policy, even higher profits and increased exploitation will result this year.

Continued on page 5

## The Continuing Dialogue

A young man was pierced in the bowels by six machine gun bullets and died in agony to prove the righteousness of the doctrine of individual salvation without priestly intercession.

A twenty-year old plumber was blown to bleeding charred fragments to prove the truth of the immaculate conception.

A girl was beaten up, her head shaved, and sprayed with paint to prove that the British Forces had no territorial rights by international law in an aspiring independent state.

An unemployed labourer was shot in the legs, permanently crippling him to prove the superior patriotism and loyalty to the conception of the commonwealth of the protestants.

An old lady returning from the betting shop (her horse lost) was shot through the chest proving the necessity of the presence of neutral forces to maintain law and order.

A shipyard worker had his house burned down around him to prove the necessity to maintain private property and to keep up the bourgeois standards of the neighbourhood.

A farmer watched his two sons being shot and his barns burned in order that the boundaries of the republic be more precisely defined in accordance with international law.

A soldier was sheared into two by an exploding rocket in order to prove that the concept of nationalism was compatible with the proletarian struggle.

Hundreds were jailed in order to prove that their gaolers believed in their own special kind of liberty.

Many were killed and maimed to prove that the killers and mutilators believed in the ultimate sanctity of human life.

Families were made fatherless, homeless and childless in order that a nation should live.

J.R.

### A NEW SQUAT

SEVENTEEN HOUSES in East London have been occupied, and at the time of writing the prospects seem good. The houses are council houses. Some were to be preserved and sold, others demolished, but at

present at any rate the squatters have them. An informal squatter group holds regular meetings.

The houses are in Stepney, just off the Commercial Road. For further information contact Chris Todd, 47 Belgrave Road, E.1.

M.H.

## Round the Galleries

One art's loss ---  
- is another's bane

WITHIN THE ROYAL ACADEMY there is an exhibition of the work and fantasy world of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. A founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, he painted his humourless camp world of medieval corn of draped women whose whose soulful faces masked their tiny minds in a painted world of endless and noble suffering. I am of that generation who owe a debt to Rossetti for his tuneful and lyrical verse but his attempts at 'great art' robbed us of a good illustrator, for this is where his talent lay. But he made his own choice and the Nation is lumbered with these painted horrors.

And within the same shack is the exhibition of the new wave of brush and thumb as this year's RA students show their work. It is their best exhibition for many a year in that there has been a needed return to basic principles and draftsmanship is pre-eminent with Joceline Wickham, David Edwards, Deirdre Daines outstanding among a number of good graphic works while, for what it is worth, Brian Douglas' nature study in oils is an exceptionally good painting within this exhibition. At the Hayward Gallery are the Impressionists and here we have bourgeois art at its best. Sweet sickly and insipid these painters viewed their emasculated world through a permanent tinted mist. It began as a school and has now become a dealers' cult along with the pastel printed cheques for student grants. For those who love the high art of the erotic as opposed to 'Nasty Tales' there is the brilliant draftsmanship of Francis Kelly's nudes at the Editions Graphiques at 3 Clifford Street W. 1.

But for myself it is back to that Valhalla of the militant left, the American Embassy. Outside a small group continues to march up and down with their banners protesting the terms of the Vietnam peace and the treatment of the Vietnamese people while inside, beyond the visa-seeking tourists, the American marine guard and the time-serving British door keepers, is the work of, and I quote, Two American Indian Painters Scholder & Cannon. Indian art, like so much primitive culture, is dead and now is no more than tourist bait, and the work of Scholder & Cannon is good solid painting of the mode that ranges from Bacon to Hockney and has little to do with the American Indian unless he can afford to rent a studio in New York's Greenwich Village. But for all that it is a pleasant exhibition. Meanwhile, outside the American Embassy the small, and middle aged, protestors continue to march up and down with their banners and their posters.

At 2 p.m. on the 15th February we assembled at the Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street, W.1 to pay our final tribute to Charles Gimpel. A kind and gentle man who loved the creative arts, he won the affection of those artists and critics with whom he made a common cause. Scottie Wilson, the tough little Glasgow artist, and Charles Gimpel shared a common gallery and now a common earth, but their memory will always be part of the living art of London.

Arthur Moyses

## JESUS FAREWELL

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY, from the Pagan and Jewish backgrounds. By G.A. Wells. Conway Papers Number 2, South Place Ethical Society, 20p

"PROFESSOR WELLS is Professor of German at Birbeck College, London. It was his German studies that led him into an enquiry much neglected in this country, i.e. a careful examination of the historical origins of Christianity without any of the assumptions of those committed to the faith. The result is startling and, in terms of contemporary English scholarship, unique", says the leaflet that accompanies this review copy. If the above is true, and I see no reason to doubt it, this is a terrible indictment of scholarship in this country.

The idea that Christ was a mythological being is an old one. Chapman Cohen, now many years dead, but once editor of The Freethinker, wrote a series called Pamphlets for the People, which began with a pamphlet which clearly showed Christ as mythological, and this point of view was taken by most of the contributors to The Freethinker as a matter of course. 'The idea however was not new then. It goes back to the nineteenth century at least.

Indeed it is a matter of common sense. A person whose doings are incredible, whose life is recorded for the first time nearly a century after the period he is supposed to have lived, is almost certain to be mythological. Supposing some hippies started going around preaching the gospel of a miracle-worker who died at the turn of the century, about whom nothing up till now had been known, who would take them seriously today? Yet in our present age perhaps a lot of people would.

St Paul's writings hardly suggest a flesh and blood Jesus, but rather a mystical figure. The stories in the gospels are inconsistent. The world of the Roman Empire was full of dying and resurrected gods. And so on, and so on.

And yet in spite of all this, thanks to its centuries of political power, the Church has been able to force its ideas even on its opponents, to such a degree that a pamphlet which really only states the obvious is hailed as a great revolutionary and scholastic achievement.

This is not intended to in any way diminish the worth of Professor Wells' work. The pamphlet is excellent, and is clearly greatly needed. He shows how religious/magical rites precede mythology, not the other way round, as most people think. The idea arose in prehistoric times that a god, in the form of a man, should die at a certain season, so that the crops should flourish. The god-man was killed, and his place taken by another, who became in his term a victim. As time went on this appalling idea, in its simplicity, was forgotten, or ceased to appeal, and in its place came the elaborate fairy stories of divine beings who died and rose again, Osiris, Adonis and many others. As big cities spread across the land (for nothing is new) and more and more people became urbanised, the story lost all connection with the life of nature, with crops and vegetation, and became a moral story, so that the dying god died to renew the world in a moral sense, to cleanse it of sin in short.

Christianity arose in a decaying civilisation, where large masses of people lived close to despair. The parallels today are horribly close, and the multiplicity of cults like scientology, Hare Krishna, the Jesus freaks, transcendental meditation and all the rest of them should be a fertile ground for growing some new, authoritarian religion. The traditional churches playing, in this scheme of things, the role played by the old cults of Jupiter and other classical divinities, that of being pushed aside as no longer relevant to the spirit of the age.

Arthur Wardo

### FILIPINO SLAVE LABOUR EXPOSED

NO WONDER the Filipino girls at Alderglen, Rochdale, are pig sick. Wouldn't you be sick if you'd been talked into travelling 7,000 miles by the promise of a wage you can never hope to get; forced into debt by having to repay the air fare plus 9% interest; pushed into houses where 13 share a bath, or where 11 share a kitchen, and having £1 a week taken out of your wages to make sure you stay with the firm.

Now the scandal has been brought out into the open, the firm has agreed to drop the £1 a week bond slavery and to find the girls better

accommodation. But the firm treats its workers so badly that it can't get anybody to stay long.

In the past they have had to import first Italians, then Maltese and few of these remain. Since the Spotland Mill opened 10 years ago, about 30 departmental managers have come and gone. Last month 21 of the Filipinos asked to go back home, though most of these have since been persuaded to wait 3 months.

It is almost a standing joke at the firm that the Union is so weak that no-one is at Alderglen long enough to be recruited. Certainly the Union did little to combat the goings on at Alderglen over the years and if it hadn't been for the Rochdale Alternative Paper and the Rochdale Women's Lib Group nothing would have been done.

A councillor who helped publicise the plight of the Filipino girls, after the story appeared in RAP, has since had a threat on his life.

Alderglen is, for the most part, controlled by Sid Rubin and his family. Rubin, a director of six other companies, is paid £9,250 a year as managing director, plus a divi on his 14,750 shares. With his wife Queenie, they control 25,800 shares altogether.

The major shareholders, however, are Miranda - a Jersey based company, and a mysterious Phyllis Weil. Between them this pair own a majority of the company, though they appear not to be represented on the Board of Directors.

North West Workers

## Help 'Freedom'

Buy two papers  
this week  
Give one to a Friend

Anarchist Classics Series  
**ABC OF ANARCHISM**  
—Alexander Berkman  
Biographical Notes and  
Reprint of Freedom Press  
Edition with a new Introduction  
by Peter E. Newell,  
20p (3½p)



Any book not in stock, but in print can be promptly supplied. Please add postage & cash with order helps.

### Bookshop

Open Afternoons  
Tuesday to Friday  
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday close at 8.30 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The One Man Revolution in America  
Ammon Hennacy £3.00 (15p)

The Book of Ammon  
Ammon Hennacy £3.00 (25p)

The Culture of Cities  
Lewis Mumford £2.50 (21p)

Quebec Labour  
Black Rose Collective  
£1.25 (10p)

Russian Rebels  
Paul Avrich £4.50 (15p)

What is Communist Anarchism?  
Alexander Berkman  
£1.50 (15p)

Hip Culture  
Times Change Press 50p (4p)

Listen Marxist  
Murray Bookchin 50p (4p)

Ecology and Revolutionary Thought  
Murray Bookchin 50p (4p)

The Traffic in Women and Other Essays  
Emma Goldman 50p (4p)

The Kronstadt Uprising  
Ida Mett 75p (7½p)

Survival Scrapbook No. 1 - Shelter  
Stefan A. Szczelkun  
£1.25 (15p)

Message of a Wise Kabouter  
Roel van Duyn 75p (5p)

Housmans World Peace Diary  
(with 64-page directory of world peace organisations)  
2pp. a week 45p (3½p)  
Page-a-day 70p (5½p)

Espagne Libertaire 36-39  
Gaston Leval £3.00 (15p)

Bakounine ou le Demon de la Revolte  
Fritz Brupbacher £2.00 (8p)



publish  
FREEDOM weekly  
and distribute  
ANARCHY monthly  
54b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 01-247 9249  
Entrance Angel Alley,  
Whitechapel Art Gallery exit  
Aldgate East Underground Sta

Write for  
Publications  
List

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

FREEDOM		
Inland, and Surface Mail abroad		
for one year	£3.00 (\$7.50)	
six months	£1.50 (\$3.75)	
three months	£0.80 (\$2.00)	
Airmail		
Europe & Middle East	1 year £4.00	
The Americas	6 months £2.00	
	1 year \$12.50	
	6 months \$6.25	
India, Africa, &c.	1 year £4.50	
	6 months £2.25	
Australasia & Far East	1 year £5.00	
	6 months £2.50	

# Controversy: WOMEN'S LIB.

I am surprised that Janet Alexander (Freedom 9/12/72) did not quite understand my remarks on birth control. There is little 'respect' for women in the Abortion Act - one must prove oneself 'unfit' to bear a child, and the actual decision rests with the doctor - and the private abortionists are making a fat living off the NHS's reluctance to implement the Act. Or what about the fact that a married woman is usually asked for her husband's signed permission before she has an IUD fitted (although this is not legally necessary), and similarly must have his permission for an abortion or sterilisation, even if he has proved himself a thoroughly irresponsible father. Sure, we can press for reform of this or that bad law - but Women's Liberation is trying to overthrow the basic attitude underlying them.

As a libertarian I am worried by a highly authoritarian trend in current utterances by conservationists, e.g. the Population Stabilisation Group, the Birth Control Campaign, and the Doctors' Overpopulation Group. These appear to think in terms of two children per orthodox two-parent family (every woman to produce a duly-licensed date-stamped husband before she may breed?); how do they really mean to enforce it? So far, they have talked of selected child taxes, and cessation of income tax concessions after the second child. They ignore the possibility that many women will freely choose not to have children, even though living in a stable sexual relationship, while others will choose to have children outside of such a relationship. We feel no woman should be forced to bear a child she does not want - neither should she be hindered by economic or other pressures from bearing a wanted child. I found very few want large families. But people who don't much want children often yield to current social pressure and have some. We in Women's Lib want to challenge the assumption that breeding is necessarily the central function of a woman's life.

The present relaxation of sexual restrictions stems largely from a technological advance - efficient contraception - which has somewhat outstripped moral attitudes; but the norm is still to bear children in wedlock. But the isolated nuclear family is the unhealthy basic unit of an unhealthy society. Hence I resent J.A.'s patronising prescription of what any 'sensible' single girl with a child wants. Most unsupported mothers (like myself) have in any case been married, and after one partnership has failed may be wary of entering another, either because we have become aware of the oppressive nature of marriage, or because, simply, it was hell. Women are not incapable of bringing up their children without a husband, but are crippled by society; not only by low wages, inadequate nursery facilities, poor housing, hassles with the Social Security, but also by the constant repetition that the child needs its two biological parents, and the mother to be ever-present; that the child of the single, divorced or working mother is bound for 'maladjustment' or 'delinquen-

cy'. So a woman will misguidedly strive to keep a dismally failed marriage together 'for the children's sake' - even to the extent of ignoring or concealing her husband's cruelty to the children. (And have our male comrades ever bothered to wonder why so many men today are unwilling to take any responsibility for their children?) More than the customary two persons can share in rearing a child, and the child can relate to a circle of friendly adults and older and younger children, better than to a lonely frustrated mother. We need to break down the barriers between us, live more communally. From the early simplistic demand for 24-hour day nurseries has arisen a lively debate on alternative patterns of child care; from examining sex-role conditioning, we inevitably challenge the whole educational process in home and school. At present the nuclear family shapes the young child for a life of conformity. Wilhelm Reich says, "Suppression of the natural sexuality in the child, particularly of its genital sexuality, makes the child apprehensive, shy, obedient, afraid of authority, 'good' and 'adjusted' in the authoritarian sense; it paralyzes the rebellious forces because any rebellion is laden with anxiety; it produces, by inhibiting sexual curiosity and sexual thinking in the child, a general inhibition of thinking and of critical faculties. In brief, the goal of sexual repression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation... The result is fear of freedom and a conservative, reactionary mentality. Sexual repression aids political reaction, not only through this process, which makes the mass individual passive and unpolitical, but also by creating in his structure an interest in actively supporting the authoritarian order." But the boy child is encouraged to divert his sexual energy into overt aggression or competitive activity; the little girl is not even given that option. Repression and her sex-role conditioning cripple her whole personality, producing the unspontaneous uncreative conservative 'typical' woman, her fixation on a non-functional neat-and-tidiness, her frigidity that leaves every initiative to the man. (We have not yet got very far with the sexual revolution.)

Women's Liberation is basically about freedom; freedom for people to grow, to fulfil their human potential, about ending the pattern of dominance and subservience at the very heart of our social life.

Our critics are so obsessed with the middle class. J.A. even suggests only educated women produce useless work in this society. Intellectuals, manual and white-collar workers, we're all in that bag; we take an 'honest job' (if we can get one), and are likely to find we're producing a useless - or harmful - commodity; performing a 'public service' that is inextricably involved in coercion and control. Here in Dundee, journalists, artists, print-workers, deliverymen, etc., combine their efforts to turn out daily and weekly newspapers that are right-wing, racist, that present the workers (to

themselves) as happy morons led astray occasionally by dangerous subversives like the Labour Party, and vilify social security claimants. But this is commonplace.

Inevitably we started off asking for equality in work, pay and opportunity, in a society where one is valued by one's work status and pay; this hasn't led us to ask for the boss's job, but to ask: is work for profit or for need; why is assembling cash registers - or selling them, or typing for the salesman's supervisor - all Good Honest (i.e. paid) Work, while cooking and washing for the worker, and rearing his children, isn't?

Back to your homework; much of the WL literature I've read (have our critics read any?) is overtly Marxist. (They've HEARD of the Class Struggle, you know; even claim they invented it.) But don't worry, we won't let any Party Hierarchy (of either sex) get on our backs, any more than we'll accept a woman boss. This time the rats are gnawing at the central authoritarian prop that holds up the rest.

We are essentially in the same struggle as the male anarchists, yet persistently they patronise, misrepresent and trivialise us. They will examine in microscopic detail any form of oppression but their own sexism. We still need a Women's Liberation movement.

Una Stephenson

\*W. Reich: "The Mass Psychology of Fascism" (quoted in "The Irrational in Politics" (Solidarity Pamphlet no. 33))

## LIBERTARIANISM BEGINS AT HOME

Letter

Dear Comrades,

WE HAVE HAD three people commenting on us - two male, supposedly revolutionary, saying we're too liberal; and one female, apparently liberal, seeing us as obviously too unnecessarily revolutionary!

The answer is, I think, that none of these correspondents is really answering us. They're answering their OWN IDEAS of what we are. And we aren't. Do you read the Sunday papers to find out what anarchist attitudes are? It's no use reading the Times-server's distorted version of Women's Liberation either. (The other papers are worse.)

We will NOT be called middle class, and we are not fighting on behalf of the middle class. We take this to mean a complex of attitudes, way of life and beliefs, all of which we are in opposition to. We have both been anarchists and libertarians for years and we're not interested in Moyse's corridors of power.

What are these Roedean red herrings supposed to be for? To distract the other readers of Freedom from what we are actually saying? Do your correspondents not see any revolutionary implications in reexamining every institution which affects us? We are not satisfied with our position and we mean to change it; and whether what we have set our hand to sounds reformist or not doesn't matter. Most disputes between reformist and revolutionary anarchists are meaningless - as Nicolas Walter says (in Anarchy 100) "Only the wildest revolutionary refuses to welcome reforms, and only the mildest

reformist refuses to welcome revolutions".

In this context and with relevance to both anarchism and the liberation of women, I will quote another anarchist in a leaflet 'The Relevance of Anarchism Today':

"Every victory in even a minor struggle encourages confidence: so the anarchist in an industrial struggle will throw in his effort to help win a dispute which perhaps in itself is irrelevant to anarchist ideals, but which will teach the people involved more about tactics, about the value of direct action, about their importance in society, the strength they gain through solidarity, their dignity as human beings". All of this can apply equally to the women's fight at home or at work.

\* \* \*

"The essence of anarchism, the one thing without which it is not anarchism, is the negation of authority over anyone by anyone". (Anarchy 100)

Look at your own personal relationships. One cannot restrict one's view of society to the authoritarian powers of the state, the boss, the police. Look again and see the teacher, the husband, the parent who have specific authoritarian powers over other people. ("There is a nice capitalist attitude, boss towards worker, which apparently is all right to have when it proves advantageous to him" - Linda Lewis about Ian Sutherland, recently in Freedom.) Each group of subordinates is supposed to be hardworking and obedient in their situation, and each group has a particular consciousness of oppression.

Having reacted against the situation the ordinary housewife finds herself in, Women's Liberation now is questioning the whole institution of the family. Anarchists can see the family circle as a small self-perpetuating authoritarian system - now women who are not necessarily anarchists are coming round to the same concept, and are questioning the whole setup! The subordination of women is one essential for the preservation of the complex interlocking relationships of this society, which is based on inequality; and power of one person over another cannot exist where there is equality.

Again, women's role in this society relates to the development and sustenance of people. Those who make people rather than things are not valued very highly in this society! Anarchists also have been against property, consumerism, the acquiring of things as an end in itself, and also against the manipulation of people as though they were things. Look at the use of women in advertisements.

Anarchism is concerned with individual freedom. Our view (as before) is that the female individual is always oppressed to some extent, whatever her particular situation may be. Most housewives whatever their class, and especially when they have children, find themselves isolated from other people, doing monotonous, drudging, repetitive work. We need freedom to be ourselves. Both mothers and children need other company than each other if they are to grow and develop in a whole way.

It is also one of the tenets of anarchism that action should come from the group immediately concerned with a situation, in

Continued on p.4

# Controversy:

# ANARCHIST ORGANISATION and the 'Platform'

PETER NEWELL'S review of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists in Freedom (vol 33 no 48) closed with a plea that the ideas in the Platform should be a matter for reasoned discussion and debate. So far the only response to this appeal has been two gratuitously insulting letters from Terry Phillips and Steve Ludlam which contained little in the way of meaningful debate of the Platform. So I will try belatedly to initiate such a discussion.

The introduction to the English translation, which is the work of ORA, North London group, contains smear tactics and confusion. The platformists, we are assured, sought a method of organisation which would solve the problems of the anarchist movement. This betrays what I believe to be a very mechanical approach, but never mind. The platformists 'forced a complete break with many of the traditionally disorganised anarchists'. The trouble with this sort of stalinist method of denigration is that these traditionally disorganised anarchists seem to include Voline, Malatesta, Berkman and Goldman.

And, a pedantic point only, they refer to 'The same desire, to organise an effective libertarian communist presence'. Surely to be effective a presence has only to be present?

The introduction to the French edition, which is the work of Organisation Revolutionnaire Anarchiste, presents what I consider to be a naive view of the Bolsheviks, referring to the 'setbacks of marxism-leninism in tackling the problems posed by the struggle against capitalism and in the attempts to build socialist regimes'. I do not believe that many anarchists would support the view that the ruling classes in the soviet countries have made a real attempt

to build the socialist regime, indeed I consider it foolish to suggest that a ruling class could do so anyway. And further, talking of the role of various anarchists in the 1905 revolution 'Nestor Makhno also distinguished himself by the systematic expropriation of the big landowners and bourgeois of Gulyai Polya, as well as by the execution of the most zealous gendarmes and spies'. Disregarding the matter of executions, the act is justified by the claim that the ones executed were zealous, and of course this is a deplorable trait in such people. I suggest that zeal is equally a trait one would deplore in an executioner.

## Who Decides?

The sentence 'The originality of the principal thesis of the Platform consists in pointing out the necessity of solidly structuring the militant practice of the libertarian communists' seems to me to be without meaning, but suggests certain questions. If my 'militant practice' is to be 'solidly structured' I would be anxious to know by whom. And if by myself, then who is to be the judge of the adequacy either of the militant practice or of the structural solidity. Can this sort of thing have any meaning in terms of what anarchists actually do? And further, 'creating a broad, specific organisation which unites the healthiest and most active elements of anarchism'. Not to repeat the thoughts as to who decides the qualifiers, a more serious factor intrudes here. Implicit in this conception is the right to exclude from the General Union of Anarchists (the title the platformists give to their organisation) such anarchists who are not among the blessed number of 'the healthiest and most active elements'. It is no more than an exercise in fatuousness to specify the type of organisation one wishes to form unless one proposes to exclude those who do not match the specifications. In the authors' introduction to the platform, referring to the 1917 Russian revolution, 'The absence of a general (anarchist) organisation led many active anarchist militants into the ranks of the bolsheviks'. Such militants evidently cease to regard themselves as anarchists when they join the bolshevik party. And for my part I would not lament the defection from the anarchist movement of anybody who felt able to join an authoritarian statist party.

And again 'We have an immense need for an organisation which, having gathered the majority of the participants of the anarchist movement, establishes in practice a general and tactical political line which would serve as a guide to the whole movement' (original emphasis). This is a clear statement of authoritarian intent, for there cannot be a programme of action which would elicit complete support from any group of anarchists who came together in theoretical agreement. And the line will either be supported with powers to make dissidents follow it, or there must be means of expelling the dissidents, or the whole process of elucidating the line was without purpose. No group of anarchists who have theoretical agreement will be able to concur on the advisability, in their respective areas, of all undertaking a similar type of political work, be it industrial work, community

oriented work, or work around printing and propaganda. And for me a political line is no more than an excuse for such a unification of activities.

## Working in 'Two Directions'

The general section of the platform contains a good deal of basic material on the distinctive characteristics of anarchism which seems to me largely unexceptional. In the section on organisation however we find '...but education alone is not sufficient. What is also necessary is a certain mass anarchist organisation. To realise this it is necessary to work in two directions: on the one hand towards the selection and grouping of revolutionary worker and peasant forces on a libertarian communist theoretical basis (a specifically libertarian communist organisation); on the other towards regrouping revolutionary workers and peasants on an economic base of production and consumption (revolutionary workers and peasants organised around production, workers and free peasants co-operatives)'.

'The worker and peasant class, organised on the basis of production and consumption, penetrated by revolutionary anarchist positions, will be the first strong point of the social revolution'.

What puzzles me here, apart from the fact that the whole section is confusing and one can easily lose oneself mid-sentence, is why we should imagine that the outcome postulated in the last paragraph will be in any way expedited by the formation of the organisation proposed in the first paragraph. Indeed, how can it be shown that any one form of anarchist organisation is ever any more effective or functional than any other form, or even than no organisation. Any anarchist movement can only comprise those who consider themselves to be part of it, and any anarchist organisation can only comprise more or fewer of these people. How can an anarchist organisation move these anarchists to undertake political activities they were not apparently prepared to undertake without it? And what sort of anarchists would they be if it could? The final section of the platform, which expounds the principles upon which the platformists wish to base their own organisation, presents some odd conceptions. 'The forces of all anarchist militants should be orientated towards the creation of this organisation'. I would prefer anarchists to concentrate on the work of propagating anarchist ideas and organising with the people against the state.

And 'the tactical methods employed by separate members and groups within the Union should be unitary, that is, be in rigorous concord both with each other and with the general theory and tactic of the Union'. So that if the form of activity one intended to pursue does not fall within this definition one can stay in bed.

Finally, for those who are still not convinced that the whole document is formalistic and authoritarian, 'Every organisation adhering to the Union represents a vital cell of the common organisation. Every cell should have its secretariat, executing and guiding theoretically the political and technical work of the organisation.'

'With a view to the coordination of the activity of all the Union's adherent organisations, a special organ will be created: the executive committee of the Union. (original emphasis) This committee will be in charge of the following functions: the execution of decisions taken by the Union with which it is entrusted; the theoretical and organisational orientation of the activity of isolated organisations consistent with the theoretical positions and the general tactical line of the Union; the monitoring of the general state of the movement; the maintenance of working and organisational links between all the organisations in the Union; and with other organisations'.

Such a statement seems to me to be foolish because of the nature of committees, which seem organically bound to seek to pass beyond their stated role and extend their areas of responsibility, influence, power, control and authority. The history of leninist organisations shows the impossibility of making organisations democratic by drawing up rules to ensure they conduct themselves in a democratic manner. I put it to those who support the platform that it is equally foolish to expect that a committee behave in an anarchist manner simply because they have been constituted so to do.

P.M.

Dear Comrades: If the 'resurrection' of the Platform has done nothing more than encourage discussion on anarchist organisation in Britain it has achieved something.

At least, it would appear that those anarchists who desire, and are prepared to work for, a free and classless society appreciate the necessity of some form of libertarian organisation.

No one would deny that the Platform contains a certain amount of rather archaic and confused language; that the writers were, in 1926, still strongly influenced by the traumatic events of the Russian Revolution, and that the document also contains a few obvious contradictions. But in criticising certain aspects of, and suggestions in, the Platform, we should not 'throw the baby out with the bath-water'. In fact, the Platformists themselves stated at the time that their proposals were only tentative.

We must admit, however, that nine-tenths of the Platform is good solid anarchist-communist propaganda. Moreover, Archinov and Makhno were more than correct when they argued that their 'downfall' was largely due to the disorganised nature of the Russian and Ukrainian anarchist movement. Furthermore, it is a fact that, in the main, Berkman, Goldman and Voline were 'disorganised anarchists who, in varying degrees, and for periods of time, gave critical - and not-so-critical - support to the Bolsheviks! So, comrades, there is still much we can learn from the Platform, however much we may criticise parts of it.

Peter E. Newell

See Malatesta on 'Organisation' in MALATESTA: Life & Ideas, Freedom Press 1965 (pp. 83-90); Anarchy and Organization by Murray Bookchin in "New Left Notes" 15.1.69 reprinted by Friends of Malatesta, New York; Anarchy in Action by Colin Ward to be published by Allen & Unwin, Spring 1973.

Continued from p.3  
this case, women themselves. It is notable that the women's movement as a whole has no party hierarchy and no authoritarian organisation. We meet in a loose network of regional groups. We have many articulate women but no leaders. There are many differences between the people in our group but that doesn't prevent us working together, with enthusiasm and commitment. Some have come through the higher education processing, some are self-educated - we can all see that there is something wrong with our position in society. There are extremists in the movement, of course, as there are in anarchist and most other groups - but in general, no, we don't want to take over power from the men. We don't want anyone to be in power; we want a new way of organising things.

Nicolas Walter says "Above all anarchism would mean the reorganisation of work without a managerial class". (A great improvement on the idea of the workers at one side of the barricades, the bosses the other, and everyone else nowhere.) Apply this to the home situation. "The exercise of authority is no better in the microcosm of the family than in the macrocosm of society".

LIBERTARIANISM BEGINS AT HOME.

Alison Malet

## Review

# MORE ON THE PARIS COMMUNE

THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL HISTORY, the scholarly periodical which is issued by the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam three times a year (annual subscription £5), marked the centenary of the Paris Commune with a special double number (Volume 17, 1972, Parts 1-2) edited by the great French historian of the Commune, Jacques Rougerie, under the title '1871: Guidelines for a History of the Paris Commune'. The result is a 630-page book containing 28 learned essays, mostly in French, but two in German and five in English.

The most important essay is undoubtedly Rougerie's own analysis of the part played by the Paris labour movement and the Paris section of the First International in the events of 1870-1871, but its appeal is mainly to specialists. Of interest to English social historians is Miklós Molnár's documentation of the Communist exiles in England, but it is very sketchy. Of interest to anarchist historians is Marc Vuilleumier's account of the reactions to the Commune among socialists in Switzerland, though he doesn't bring out the point that this was the background of the development of the anarchist communist movement; also interesting is David Stafford's account of the reactions of Paul Brousse, who was a prominent anarchist leader during the 1870s, but a much fuller version is given in Stafford's book on Brousse, *From Anarchism to Reformism* (1971).

But by far the most interesting essay from our point of view is Arthur Lehning's account of Bakunin's position, subtitled 'Theory and Practice of Anti-Statist Federalism in 1870-1871', which may be seen as a foretaste of a future volume in the *Archives Bakounine*. In the brief space of twenty pages Lehning shows that for several years Bakunin had seen the autonomous commune as the political basis of the federalist structure which would follow social revolution, and had also seen a popular rising in France as the detonator of social revolution which would spread throughout Europe. Early in 1870, before the Franco-Prussian War which destroyed the Second Empire and led to the Third Republic, Bakunin was arguing against the Jacobin, Blanquist and Marxist conceptions of the coming revolution as taking the form of a coup d'état and dictatorship in Paris, was insisting on the anarchist conception of the coming revolution as beginning with the destruction rather than the replacement of the centralised state, and on the likelihood that it would probably break out in the

provinces rather than in the capital - if necessary against the capital - and was adding that it must be a struggle against either the Bonapartist regime or any other regime that might follow it.

This position was strongly reinforced by the successive events of war, invasion, defeat, fall of Napoleon III, proclamation of the liberal republic, and general social and political chaos. As the revolutionary ferment intensified, Bakunin naturally redoubled his efforts to organise his friends all over France, especially in the South; and as the situation became critical, Bakunin moved to Lyon to join his friends in action. His part in the abortive rising of September 1870, which is generally described in terms of sheer farce, was in fact a completely consistent and realistic attempt to match theory with practice, words with deeds. He is virtually the only important figure of the period about whom this may be said.

The most interesting thing which emerges from Lehning's account is that Bakunin was not an isolated figure, and that anarchism was not separated from the mass movement which swept France and also Spain and Italy a century ago. He was only the best-known member of a vast network of militants which covered much of Southern Europe, and all that was most creative and fruitful in the Communist risings of the early 1870s may be identified with the ideas he expressed before, during and after the crisis. Marx's writings on the subject may be the most famous, but Bakunin's are the most honest and relevant to what happened and also to what could have happened - and could still happen.

Lehning's essay is valuable pending the appearance of the Paris Commune volume of the *Archives Bakounine*; but a longer version of it will be appearing in the book edited by Eugene Schulkind which contains the papers (including Lehning's) given two years ago at the Sussex University symposium on the Paris Commune, which should be published by Routledge this year. In the meantime, a very useful collection of Bakunin's writings during the period, edited and introduced by Fernand Rude, was published in France last year as *De la guerre à la Commune* (Editions Anthropos, 42 francs). And of course Bakunin's main single writing on the subject, *The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State*, is available from Freedom Books as a cheap pamphlet.

N.W.

## LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION by Vernon Richards

This is not a reprint of the work with the same title published by FREEDOM PRESS in 1953. It is a new and considerably expanded version which the author prepared for an Italian edition published in 1957, and recently published in Paris in a Spanish translation. Additional chapters deal with such important topics as the Militarization of the Militias, the Cult of the Organisation and of Personalities, the Rank and File's Responsibility. As well as a Select Bibliography, the author has contributed a 20-page Bibliographical Postscript in which he discusses the most important works that have appeared on the subject in the past twelve years. 240 pages 8½ x 5½ cloth edition £1.50 [p.p. 15p] paperboards £0.75 [p.p. 15p]

Order your copy now from Freedom Press

# STRIKE AGAINST APARTHEID

LAST WEEK the anger and frustration of black workers which the Opposition leader, Sir de Villiers Graaf, described as "a greater threat to the privileged position of the White man in South Africa than terrorism on the border".

After a ripple of isolated strikes for a month they suddenly spread like wildfire in Durban where 34,000 Africans defied the law by stopping work. Municipal labourers walked out demanding the equivalent of £5.50 increases on their weekly take-home pay of £6.10. Essential services like electricity, drainage and refuse collection were left in chaos, and the workers refused to return to work after Durban Corporation offered them a 15 per cent pay rise. This increase would still leave the workers below the £9 Rand (£10.50) a week which economists say is the minimum needed to keep a man with a family above the bread-line. Meanwhile, 30,000 other black workers in textiles, engineering and other industries continued their strikes.

As the strikes spread the authorities grew nervous and a strong force of police armed with batons and other weapons charged a crowd of strikers and arrested 200 men. Subsequently police reinforcements were brought in and hundreds of workers were arrested. However, the strikers have shown that they have no intention of being intimidated by police violence. Many commentators in South Africa have warned that the situation may be heading for another Sharpeville massacre, but it remains to be seen at the time of writing whether or not the Government will over-react to the present strikes. In such a situation it would be hypocrisy to deny the right of black workers to use any violence necessary to defend themselves and

to get their slave-masters off their backs. However, the criticism can be made that the African nationalist guerrillas have political objectives far from the complete liberation of the African worker, and that their sporadic clashes with security police are not sufficiently related to the struggles of African workers.

In contrast to the blind and suicidal racism of the South African Government, the apparently "liberal" Opposition of Sir de Villiers Graaf wishes to create a modern capitalist "democracy" in the country with the development of "respectable" black trade unions which will reduce the suffering of the black worker to a level where he is less likely to support a future African nationalist uprising, and thus become stable fodder for exploitation alongside the white worker who is presently cocooned in his fantasy of racial superiority. It is a measure of the stupidity of the country's white rulers that this advice will probably go unheeded. The Minister of Labour, Marais Viljoen, stated that the Government would not countenance the formation of African trade unions, and the Natal employers' association - acting on Government advice - advised employers not to negotiate until the strikers returned to work.

The African workers have shown in their courageous defiance of a brutal police state a political awareness far ahead of the backward, racist white workers. The admirable self-organisation and initiative shown by the strikers can give us hope that when they eventually get the white rulers off their backs it will not be to become the slaves of a new ruling group of black capitalists and politicians posing as "liberators".

Terry Phillips

## VIETNAM AND THE PHILIPPINES

ACCORDING to the Japanese newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun* (28/12/72), quoting US military police in Hue, villagers in the area have seen white men carrying radios and speaking English, travelling with the North Vietnamese army. They 'include every rank from E-2 to major, and number about 24'. It is believed that they are listening in on US air force radio transmissions so that people can escape from areas about to be bombed.

It has also been reported that US troops chased three men, two white and one black, who are suspected of calling in bombings on South Vietnamese troops, and so may be responsible for the bombing of Da Nang, thought hitherto to be accidental.

Meanwhile US airmen in Japan say that they 'know it for a fact' that US planes are flying bombing missions against the New People's Army in the Philippines.

The above information has not been reported in the British press, so as not to embarrass our American allies.

M.H.

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

United We Stand  
Continued from page 1  
These increased profits will not be shared with the lower paid as we are led to believe by Mr. Heath. One worker's wage stop isn't another's increase. But now that the Ford worker has joined the fight, he will be accused of greed and of destroying the chances of the lower paid of getting a decent rise.

Ford shop stewards are calling a meeting in Coventry on Sunday to discuss their proposed action and have invited the miners and hospital workers. They've said: "Our aim is to co-ordinate an overall campaign of confrontation over the government's policy." Such co-operation and mutual aid is needed if workers are to defeat the government. It can be done but the government is determined to make the working class pay for the cost of inflation and assist the employers to wring higher profits from their employees.

Little support can be expected from the TUC or the individual trade union leaders. Workers in struggle cannot and should not rely on these leaders for help. United action with stronger sections assisting the weaker could not only defeat the government but bring it down. Having done that, workers should not seek the Labour alternative but take over their work places and start to run things for themselves.

P.T.

# WHY SHOULD WE EARN ANYTHING?

THOSE BLESSED with short memories may find it hard to recall the strange neurosis that erupted towards the end of the 1960s and took on the name of 'I'm Backing Britain'.

It all started with six Surbiton typists who - apparently worked into a guilt-ridden delirium by the almost nightly appearance on TV of Wilson and his plaintive tones - pledged to work unpaid overtime to 'help the economy'.

No sooner had the idea sunk into their boss's mind than a whole boardroom of creeps and toadies began to knock a bandwagon together - among them Robert Maxwell (Labour MP and publishing racketeer) and David Frost (who climbed to fame kicking the Establishment's arse and ended up licking it).

Collectively it was known as the 'I'm Backing Britain Campaign' and its manifesto - designed to bring the country back to its feet (though whether it was at that moment on its head or its tail nobody could say) - was a list of, unmemorable both then and now, 'uncranky things to do'.

Nothing much came of it - old age pensioners sent in their 2/6 postal orders, schoolmistresses in Cheltenham died and left their savings to 'help pay off the National Debt', and the six typists were eventually made redundant without a whisper.

Now it seems to be back again, with a smooth 70s style face, as the 'Working Together Campaign'. All a bit like those bent estate agents who close down on Friday night when the creditors come knocking and re-open on Monday with a new nameplate on the door.

It began last year with a series of slimy adverts in the papers and

## The McWhirter strikes again

Dear Peter Miller,

You protest my defence of the right of the McWhirter to hold the State to its bad law. The McWhirter did this and the State won. I can do no more than eiterate my statement that we of the anarchist movement have on many occasions sought for flaws in the State's laws for our own purposes, therefore we cannot deny that same ploy to another because we dislike his opinions or his reasons for going to the courts. You write that "we are helpless to do anything one way or the other" in relation to the McWhirter using the law to limit our freedom and liberty. This is not so, Peter, for after the law has put its officers and its bully boys into action then it becomes a matter of individual action to fight the result of the McWhirter-type legal actions, and this is what the 30 members of the union shop at Granada Television did when they blacked out the television screens over the official banning of the World in Action film of "The Friends and Influence of John Poulson". This is what the printers did when they refused to print Jak's anti-strike cartoon and this is what the Daily Mail printers did in 1926 when they refused to print the Daily Mail attack on the organised and striking workers. In the end, Peter, power of censorship lies in the hands of the working class for they control the material means of communication. I do not applaud this I merely state it, for we are all ill served when any man or group seek to suppress the opinions of others or when any man or group is denied the opportunity to communicate his opinions. This, Peter, is the issue, not the sad McWhirter's law games.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR MOYSE

on the sides of buses, followed by a competition on how 'you' would sort out the 'industrial relations jungle'. (They seem to be taking their time with my prize.)

In one way it's all a bit of a joke, a cross between a works social and a Sunday school sermon. But in another you could see it as incipient fascism, ultimately as dangerous as the National Front beating its race hate drum.

The latest scheme has been a fraudulent plan on how 'we' should decide what 'they' (other workers) should be paid for doing their jobs. Apparently the problem is sharing out the cake among those who actually work - parasites won't be called before a committee to justify their crumbs.

The first stage was for the WTC to get a group of people - using the well-tried con of opinion polling - to agree that coal miners, nurses and ambulance drivers were more socially useful than dockers and car workers.

Logic isn't exactly their strong point. Trying to decide whether a nurse is more useful than a docker is a bit like being asked if a banana is more a fruit than an apple.

You can't shift goods through a port without a docker and you can't treat the sick without a nurse. Equally, an ambulance driver would be hard put to do his job unless a car worker had first produced a vehicle for him to drive.

It doesn't take much sense to fathom the game. If you can get people to say that a low paid nurse is more essential to society than a relatively higher paid docker, you are well on the way to getting

their agreement that a docker's wages should be cut to something like a nurse's.

The noble fraternity of intellectual whores - the men who write the Business Pages - seemed generally to agree that the idea was 'interesting' and 'worth considering' but rather 'difficult' to put into practice.

'Difficult' perhaps in terms of a liberal parliamentary democracy. Not so hard in a Corporate State. What a strange coincidence that 30 years after a war to destroy the 'menace of fascism' politicians are telling us it is the only thing that will save our bacon.

It seems almost unreasonable to undermine all the work they put into their schemes by telling them where to stick them. Why should we earn anything? If it's 'fairness' we're after what's wrong with - 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'?

Nothing could be fairer, simpler or more rational. The only obstacle to it is the system of buying and selling - of both people and goods - that plagues every corner of the world.

To make a reality of that slogan would involve dispossessing the employing class and its political errand boys. It would mean the working class taking total control of society and operating it in the interests of all of us.

Maybe it sounds a tall order? But surely no more ridiculous than making plans for 'fairness' in the midst of a system whose claim to fame is that it is not fair and never set out to be so.

Harry Harmer

## LETTERS

### Is Squatting Dead?

Dear Comrades,

In renewing my subscription to your invaluable paper, I feel I must, however, protest at your persistent smear against the family squatting movement, and in particular at your latest jibes in the article "Who Said Squatting Was Dead?" (10 February).

To suggest that those of us who support legal squatting as one way of helping families in dire housing need are therefore opposed to illegal squatting is like saying that dog-lovers are necessarily cat-haters. In fact, the very opposite is the case.

We started in the Lewisham borough in 1969 with squats, not with a cap-in-hand approach to the Council, and then we presented them with a fait accompli, so they were faced with the dilemma of either evictions (as in Redbridge) with all the bad publicity that that would entail or simply allowing the squatters to stay put until the houses were actually required for demolition. They chose the latter. Then we pointed out that, instead of leaving us to find suitable houses and guess the likely demolition dates, they might just as well give us the information and keys. This they agreed to do on condition we set up a bona fide organisation. We held a very successful public meeting at the town hall (at which I was in the chair), and the Lewisham Family Squatting Association was born. Its name was decided on at the next meeting, and some of the social workers opposed the use of the word

"squatting", for tactical reasons. I was one of those on the other side who insisted on retaining the word in our title, so as to show our solidarity with the illegal squatters in other boroughs, so as to give publicity to the idea of squatting, so as to act as a constant reminder to the local authority that if they don't play ball with us we are ready to change the rules. In order to get amicable agreement over the title, I suggested putting the nice emotive word "family" in front of "squatting", and this carried the day. But we have had to go on fighting for the word "squatting" ever since, and it is ironic that it should be opposed on both sides -- by anarchists on one side and by reformists on the other.

Our success, however, is to be measured in the hundreds of families that we have helped out of appallingly overcrowded rooms into houses which, though mostly old and always temporary, have made their lives worth living once more, have saved children from being put into institutions, and have staved off many a nervous breakdown. Moreover, through a further agreement we made with the Council early on, our families do not lose their place in the Council housing queue. And the houses we use would otherwise be completely wasted, for in official eyes they are not worth the trouble and expense of rehabilitation. From Lewisham, "family squatting" with Council co-operation has spread to eighteen London boroughs - the latest being, at long last, Redbridge! Is all this achievement, particularly in terms of human happiness, to be outweighed by the anarchist purity that forbids fraternisation with councillors and council officials on any terms? Do you actually prefer bloody noises and sobbing children?

Your article implies that the idea of illegal squatting has spread in spite of legal



THURSDAYS at Freedom Press from 2 p.m. Help fold and despatch FREEDOM

### Proposed Groups:

ANARCHO-COMMUNISTS interested in starting up a new anarchist movement in the U S A write Willard Petrie, Box 221 Pierpont, S.W. Res. College, U. of Mass., AMHERST, Mass., or David Waters, Tower E., Box 1005, HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. 11551

BARNESLEY, new Dwarf group, Charlie, Mick and Del, 12 Regent Street South, BARNESLEY, Yorks.

EXETER Dwarf group forming. Contact John Forward 22 Feltrim Avenue, Exeter.

HARLECH (ASA): G & B Briggs c/o Coleg Harlech, Merioneth

LEWISHAM anarchists can make contact via Vera Krishek, Tel. 852 8879

NOTTINGHAM: Trent Polytechnic new anarchist group forming. Contact Shirley Moreno & John Hineley through Fine Art Dept. Dryden Street, Nottingham

"Schools Anarchy Propagation Action Group" for non-collectivist school anarchy. Contact SAPAG c/o 1 Springbank, Salesbury, Blackburn, BB1 9EU

### Meetings:

Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance 3 p.m. every Sunday at 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, N.5

New York: Libertarian Book Club Lectures, fortnightly on Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Workman Circle Center, 369 8th Ave., corner 29 Street. Admission free. Mar 8 Ralph Fucetola: Individualist Anarchism. Mar 22 Sylvia Barnes: Women's Liberation Movement examined.

MICHAEL TOBIN DEFENCE COMMITTEE 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent.

Harmony Village, A Plan for a Libertarian Village Commune, pamphlet just published, 10p from 14a Hansard Mews, W14 8BJ

Black and Red Outlook (Feb.) 5p + 2p post from ASA (see meetings col) or Freedom Bks. Libertarian Struggle No. 1 (ORA) industrial news, interviews, polemic vs. Stoke Newington 8 Defence Committee. 5p + 2p post from Freedom Bks. or 29 Cardigan Rd. Leeds. £1. sub 12 issues.

S.Wales and Bristol Area Information Bulletin No. 1 discussion on anarchist & libertarian ideas with emphasis on regional affairs and contacts. Nominal sub 30p six months or bulk write to Jock & Eve Spence, 22 Cwmdonkin Terrace, Swansea.

squatting. Might it not be, as we predicted, that legal squatting has helped to spread the idea of squatting generally? After all, most of the people in housing need are not militant loners who can do without moral and social support.

Yours sincerely,

BARBARA SMOKER  
London, S.E.6

### Reply:

I am quite happy for legal and illegal squatting to co-exist. I merely commented on the necessity for and inevitability of illegal squatting continuing. I would also like the illegal squatters' point about non-payment of (or low) rents ventilated.

Jack Robinson

Published by Freedom Press, London, E. 1. Printed by Vineyard Press, Colchester.