

NOW — A GENERAL STRIKE!

THE WIDESPREAD opposition to the Government's wage freeze was underlined last week by the strikes of several groups of workers not known for their militancy: gas workers, civil servants, railwaymen, hospital ancillary staff and teachers in London. In one week some 60,000 workers showed that they are not prepared to be fooled by the Government's prices and incomes swindle.

As was expected the Government has announced that under Phase 2 of its policy pay increases will be limited to £1 plus 4% which means under £2-a-week for the most deserving, lower-paid workers. This has been more than eaten away by the price rises, rent and rate rises, etc., which have taken place since the last pay increases. As usual the Government has tried to coat the arsenic pill with sugar but it is still unpalatable. The "tighter controls on food prices" conveniently do not cover fresh foods such as meat, fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables. Fortunately, more and more workers are realising that the Government's real intention is to force down wages in order to maintain the profits of the wealthy.

The success of the Labour Party's amorous advances to the TUC has convinced Harold Wilson that the union leaders can be relied upon to do his dirty work for him by keeping down wages when he gets back to power. Recently he gave a "categorical pledge" that the next Labour Government would not introduce statutory controls on wages. In fact, it is unlikely that the TUC bureaucrats can be relied upon to effectively keep down wages for any length of time and, sooner or later, a future Labour Government will resort to statutory wage controls. A change of government will not change the necessities of a capitalist economy and authoritarian control of our working lives by the State and union leaders is certain to grow if it is not resisted now.

As usual the hacks of Fleet Street have done their best to exploit the divisions between different groups of workers, and they have tried to isolate those who have the courage to challenge the authority of the State. The gas workers, in particular, despite the concern they have shown for the safety of the public have faced a Press campaign of hate and misrepresentation. The journalists have waited with glee for the inevitable accidental gas explosion which happens with statistical certainty fairly frequently, ready to place the blame on the gas workers' action. The hypocritical concern shown by the Press and Government for the welfare of old people "threatened by a strike" does not extend to ensuring that thousands of them do not die every winter through lack of food and heating. Similarly, the hospital "ancillary" workers because of the social importance of their work face the same kind of emotional blackmail which suggests that they should never take strike action to rise above the pittance with which the employers value their worth. Obviously, the blame belongs to a society where the most important work is often the most poorly paid, and where others are happy to see this state of affairs continue.

All over Britain the workers are in revolt but each group of workers is isolated from the struggles of others and inhibited by their union leaders. However, there have already been calls for a General Strike from rank-and-file militants. The members of the TUC General Council have hastily rejected such notions and have shown their fear of a "political" strike which challenges the right of the rulers to control our lives. The May Day strike against the last Labour Government's anti-union legislation showed the power of workers to act for themselves and to resist any Government. A General Strike must not be used to allow politicians to ride to power on

our backs but rather to get them all off our backs for good.

For too long trade unionists have concerned themselves merely with struggling for increases in wages with all the divisive differentials between one group of workers and another. The time is long overdue to raise our sights above the drudgery of a life as wage-slaves. The freedom to organise our own lives is ours for the taking. NOW.

Terry Phillips

STOP PRESS

Monday: The TUC Emergency Conference passed a resolution 'inviting' unions to join a one-day protest stoppage. Mr. Feather, TUC General Secretary, explained that being 'invited' to join is not the same as actually being 'instructed'. Eds.



SOUTH AFRICA

STUDENT LEADERS BANNED

ON FRIDAY, 2nd March, a demonstration took place outside South Africa House against the attacks that have been made on student leaders in S. Africa (English-speaking only!)

The previous Tuesday seven leaders of the National Union of South African Students and a lecturer were served with banning orders. Bannings last five years and prohibit meeting with more than one other person, prevent participation in the Union's affairs and restrict the leaders to the districts where they are living. There is no charge or trial.

The purpose is to break white English-speaking student organisation and silence one of the few remaining voices of white opposition. Coupled with the recent police intimidation of the black student organisation SASO, and the strike by over 100,000 African workers, it is clear that opposition to the apartheid regime is growing. The demonstration was organised by the Anti Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W.1 (580-5311) and the National Union of Students, 3 Endsleigh Street, London W.C.1 (387-1277)

M.H.

STUDENTS' OCCUPATION

About two-thirds of Thames Polytechnic students attended a meeting which decided on a three-day occupation of the college last week. As we go to press (Monday) a smaller number are in favour of continuing this week.

The demonstration, while being part of the general campaign for better student grants, has the wider motivation of hoping to galvanize the N.U.S. into more intense activity in that campaign and of making Thames Poly administration aware of the hardship caused by the failure to provide accommodation for students. Some students have been sleeping rough - e.g. in railway stations - since the beginning of this term. This in turn has made the students aware of the bad housing situation in the area altogether, and they are concerning themselves with this. They seem to have made good contacts with local people - some wished to organize a picket during the occupation.

During last week the academic staff was given a holiday. The students formed committees for catering, cleaning, security, and one for "alternative education". Ideas on this latter are not yet precise, but they had various speakers from outside, including the local tenants' association, a representative from the local Labour Party, "Time Out", Medical Aid for Vietnam, and Michael Duane. In fact, there is a dissatisfaction with the content and purpose of Polytechnic education.

These students seem to be possessed of more forethought than their mentors. One of the sitting-in students pointed out that in two years' time the Poly will move to Thamesmead, with expansion of the student population to 6,000 and living accommodation for 1,000, in an area composed almost entirely of council housing.

A Correspondent

those who dare transgress it. This is called Justice.

Whatever crime any of us may be called to account for it can never equal the crime of first condemning a man to poverty, forcing him into desperate measures and then punishing him because he revolts against his condition. There is no crime like justice.

Harry Harmer

NO CRIME LIKE JUSTICE

DAVID CROWLEY, the 30-year-old Morecambe man who knocked off a judge's wig at the Appeal Court and brought a touch of reality to the rarified obscenity of "justice" must be claimed as a hero by all those who despise the State.

He had originally been sentenced to four years for burglary at Leeds Crown Court but his lawyer appealed that such a sentence was wrong in view of the trivial nature of the offence and Mr. Crowley's known epilepsy.

The appeal judges upheld the sentence and Mr. Justice Brabin said that they believed burglary was a serious offence - particularly if you have, as they do, something worth burgling - and they could see nothing wrong with the sentence "in principle".

Equally, should it be on the statute books, there is nothing wrong "in principle" with cutting off a man's right hand for picking pockets, disembowelling a heretic or even sending a Jew to the gas chamber.

But, the point is, what principle? In this case it is the protection of property, the defence of the class interest of the tiny proportion of mankind that owns the very ground we walk upon. As members of that class the judges know their principles and why they are so highly paid to defend them.

Mr. Crowley, acting like a man rather than the tamed kitten the court and the system would like him to be, reacted to the sentence by protesting in the only way open to him - not with high-flown legal mumbo-jumbo, not with a humble

"plea": but with his own body. He leapt at the judges from the box, pushing aside the legal books that mark off our crimes, and went for Mr. Justice Brabin - knocking off his wig and glasses and leaving a red mark on his face as a reminder that the worm can turn, that he won't always be called "My Lord".

For this Mr. Crowley was given an extra nine months. The judge - now talking to a man who was handcuffed and surrounded - said that assault was a serious thing. "This matter is the more serious because it was an attempt to interfere with the administration of justice."

Think about that phrase. How was it interfering "with the administration of justice"? The heavy retribution had already been confirmed. The three judges, representing the State rather than society, had begun the process of slow torture their "principles" demanded.

What the judge meant was that the seriousness of the offence derived from the fact that the victim - rather than being working class - was a judge, one of the Untouchables, one of the men whose role is to punish while we accept their verdicts mildly.

A few days before a woman, squatting with her family because the judges' system will not and cannot provide homes for all of us, was assaulted by a law officer and the terror and strain of this brought on a miscarriage. Not content with undermining the foundations of one life the State has to destroy another.

About the same time a 12-year-old boy was murdered in Northern Ireland by the British Army - not shot down in the course of a gun battle, not even "accidentally" in the line of fire, but shot in the street by a drunken mercenary whose only trade is killing. This isn't simply our gloss on the event - there is evidence.

But a judge, one of the drag artists of the Bench, must not be touched, not a hair on his head must be pushed out of place. Why not? Is he more likely to bleed than the rest of us? Are his bones softer and more prone to damage? Will he burst into tears because of his weak nerves? No, none of these things.

The judge mustn't be touched, or even approached, or even spoken to without consent, because with one blow the whole inhuman mystique of the Law could be smashed. The Emperor has no clothes and everyone is laughing at their new-found knowledge.

In the same way as riot police dress as black machines to heighten the power of their inhumanity so the Law must hide behind its robes, its buckled shoes, its scented wigs and archaic turns of phrase. It must not only punish but must mystify us into acquiescence.

If David Crowley has been imprisoned for contempt of court then let the judges know that he was only expressing the contempt we all feel. The same class writes the Law, owns the property that Law exists to protect, and carries out that Law, punishing.

Riff-Raff

THE CLAIMANTS UNION Guidebook is an essential pamphlet to have in your grasp. It tells how to form a group/how not to set up your own tedious bureaucracy/how to claim on behalf of members and some entitlements. 10p from Nat. Fed. C. U. at Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, London E.1 (01-790-3867). *Supplementary Benefits has just been published by Penguin as a "Special". A useful 40p worth.

Sitting playing chess and thinking about people in prison is a luxury and a fortunate position to be in. But one thing each person could do, concerned to help or inform others, is to join RAP - Radical Alternatives to Prison - and get copies of their pamphlet to sell locally. Another is to write to anyone you know that might be inside. Or from PROP get a list of those needing friends on the outside. It is a small human gesture, meaning much if you have ever experienced the nick. The current issue of Inside Story is about and by prisoners and is now only 20p from 3 Belmont Road, London SW4. A magazine every anarchist should sell locally alongside his own outpourings of poetry and political direct action.

Anarchism is spreading almost despite itself. Libertarian ideas long fermenting within the mind are now exploding verbally and physically within society. Escaping from the rigid labels but true to the anarchist tradition are many influential writers and thinkers whose contribution is vital if anarchists are to become more than a sect. These people are to be found in every walk of life. Truly a subversive influence because they actually believe in the ideas they are talking about. This is precisely why anarchism is becoming a force to be reckoned with intellectually.

Perhaps nowhere is this more true than in the business, the business, of education. This multi-million publishing; media; property; manpower industry is of all established institutions the most vulnerable precisely because it is based on concepts of 'good citizenship' and 'obedience' which encourage two faces. The staffroom image and the out-of-school cynicism; which of course infects the children likewise. From the earliest days of A. S. Neill, to the present day opening of Free Schools within cities like Liverpool and Manchester, there has been a definite libertarian philosophy for those truly concerned about the education of free individuals; but as Bertrand Russell has often pointed out, few people want to be concerned about freedom, because freedom is a terrifying prospect to the unfree, the vast majority, whose time is spent working for others and thinking other

people's thoughts as communicated in daily newspaper-nonsense.

In Homage To Catalonia, George Orwell's firsthand accounts of the Spanish Civil War, he was able to refute the lies of nine tenths of the press when he explained what really did happen in Barcelona when the Telephone Exchange was besieged by Civil Guards on the orders of the Chief of Police. The communist press and propaganda put out that the anarchists had 'seized and attempted to hold the Telephone Exchange' when in fact the anarchist CNT was already in control of the building as it was in control of most important buildings within the workers' areas of the city. Their efforts to convince people that the anarchists were responsible was part of the campaign to get the 'Popular Army' accepted as the only force capable of defeating Franco; whilst at the same time weakening the support for the anarchist groups which up until then held massive support among the people. A typical communist use of language gave rise to the 'Popular Front', which was organized by communists for communists, when the truly popular front - The Militia - had done the real fighting from the first day of uprisings against Franco. The Militia may have been badly armed and poorly trained but they fought and held and eventually became a good fighting force without modern weapons or an officer-class structure supported by Russia and armed by Russia.

For an eye-witness understanding of some of the complexities of the Spanish Civil War it is essential to read Homage To Catalonia. For an understanding of how 'The Party' fights the revolutionaries and adopts a policy of 'Now the War; then the Revolution' it is even more necessary to read Homage To Catalonia. For in the name of winning the war the Communist Party uses every means possible to gain complete control of the army and the police force and the import and trade union, press and other media groups. And in doing so removes to jail or burial ground its own allies whose politics are libertarian, anarchist, or just simply liberal - if they cause enough opposition to the party! Noah Chomsky in his American Power and the New Mandarins continues this analysis of the role of the communists in the Spanish Civil War, on pages 62-129. He shows also the role of intellectuals who did not want to be aware of the anarchist revolution or who simply did not bother to find out if such things went on (from the time of Franco's rising to the gradual clamp-down of the Party). This is a brilliant book. It is dedicated to 'The brave young men who refuse to serve in a criminal war' (i.e. Vietnam).

Of course it cannot be assumed that most students of the Spanish Civil War have these books on their course or that they are seen as relevant to education 'as such' whatever that might be!

Penguin Books have just published Adrian Mitchell's poems alongside those of Fuller and Levi in their Penguin Modern Poets series. If you have not read his work now is the time. His wonder and anger come through in a collection of poems in the tradition of Brecht and Eluard. Songs and ballads of a nuclear, chemical and biological world where weapons are but the best science and scientists can develop.... for national defence of course. These poems are international and subversive. Alive and living creative words too real for school!! Adrian Mitchell is in Penguin Modern Poets No. 22, expensive at 35p but worth the getting of one way or the other.

The Libertarian Teacher has become Libertarian Education. It is absolutely vital in reaching out to new students and working teachers. Inside issue no. 10 is an article by Colin Ward on Anarchy and Education; if we are to lay the seeds of anarchic thought and action here is yet another pod full of ripeness! As editor of Anarchy magazine he has left enough classical essays to fill several books of the Best Of Anarchy but meanwhile take a dozen copies of Libertarian Education and make sure your fellow stick-in-the-mud teachers at least glimpse the cover... Twelve copies for a pound note from 180 Melbourne Road, Leicester.

For the sake of a few pounds you can publish your own local magazine. You can print your own writings; you can duplicate your own leaflets. Never wait for better facilities make do with what you have and then as you publish something by some cheap method ask for help, to improve printing, within your pages. Remember that it is not the number printed that counts but the importance of what is written about - the issues - the imagination of the editors. Larger circulation will follow on from relevance and philosophy.

Dennis Gould

many people, who prefer security and being looked after by some kind of authority. Logically enough, he opposes a National Health Service.

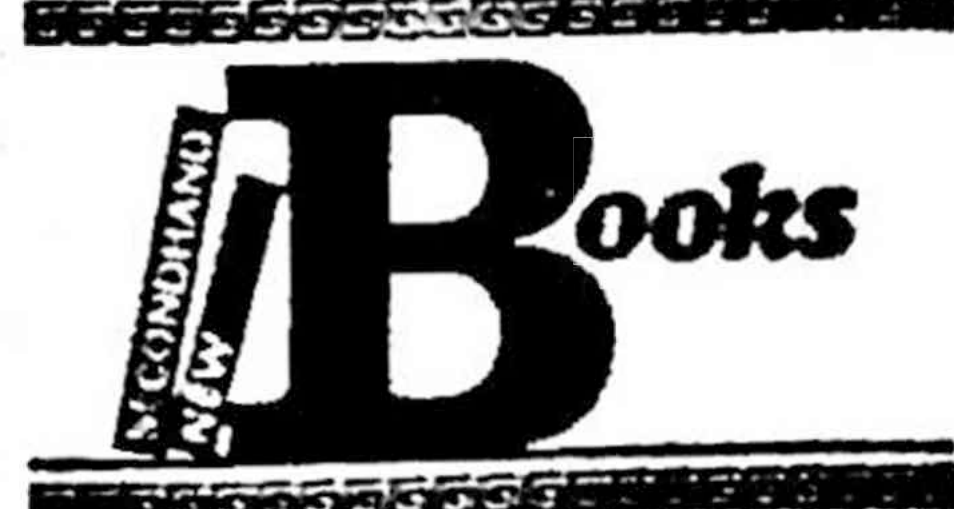
What ties these two writers together? Eugen Loeb with his "socialism with a human face" and Felix Morley with his traditional Americanism, no two thinkers could be further apart, surely? The common ground they share is that they are both thinking in terms of small units. Eugen Loeb comes from a country which is still small, and has no empire. The framers of the American Constitution, whom Felix Morley admires, were men who lived in a country potentially vast, but still relatively small, or perhaps one should say they were citizens of a series of small, loosely-linked countries. Morley is aware of the fact. He still feels that the ideas of the eighteenth century pioneers have relevance to our time for all that.

Both these writers are really liberals. In countries the size of, say, Massachusetts, Czechoslovakia or Switzerland (Morley's book ends with a paean to Switzerland, small, proud and still independent), their ideas seem to have more relevance. The students who think only in slogans and warcries are the products of vast, disorderly, sprawling empires. Their ideas - or the lack of them - are the appropriate response to the situation prevailing in America and many other countries today. The more insecure life becomes the less leisure people have for thinking. Consequently they rely on slogans, heroes and the supernatural.

Morley is well aware that the American Dream began to turn into a nightmare as the country grew bigger and began to industrialise. I am amused to read on the back cover, "To those business executives who have assumed leadership in the battle to preserve American liberty, this will come as one of the most important and thrilling books of the last two decades." - NAM News. Whoever wrote that seems to me to have completely misunderstood what the book is about. Although the writer is bitterly anti-Communist the book is not a handbook for the cold-war warrior, and

would (one would have thought) hardly have appealed to business executives. Big Business and Communism are seen by its author as various forms of absolutism, along with the absolutism of the Stuarts, the Tsars and George III.

In the period immediately following the War of Independence, for several years, there were large areas of Britain's former



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WRITE FOR LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

colonies which had no government. People conducted their businesses, grew their crops, sailed their ships, repaired each other's shoes and took in each other's washing without intervention from the state, and without paying taxes. When the various states began to assert their authority they met with some hostility, and when the federal government began to assert itself the states in their turn resisted it. In the end there was a civil war to settle the matter.

An early president, for some years, abolished the United States Navy, as being no longer of any use and an expense for the tax-payer. But this anarchy was doomed by "progress", by the very qualities of pragmatism and enterprise that had been the basis of the national life-style from the beginning. The more successful people were in business, in opening up the country and so on, the more wealth accumulated, and the more dangers of tyranny there were. Today America is a colossus, a monster which has attempted to dominate the world, while its people find themselves enslaved by a sort of half-muddled, half-efficient totalitarian state.

I doubt that "socialism with a human face" or a return to the ideals of the founders of the American state will be much of a help in the USA, or any of the other super-states of the world. Or anarchism either, alas. They will have to swell till they burst, and perhaps something good can be created out of the fragments.

John Brent

Review

THINGS ARE TOO BIG

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BEWILDERED. By Eugen Loeb, Schenk Publishing Co. Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, no price given. THE POWER IN THE PEOPLE. By Felix Morley, Nash (USA), \$10.

EUGEN LOEBL was forced to leave Czechoslovakia following the events of 1968. Formerly one of the leading Marxists of the country, he had served Slansky trials. Coming to the United States, he made a tour of American campuses and spoke to the students there. To his dismay he discovered that the young people were putting forward the same ideas he had put forward when he was young, ideas which had led to dictatorship and mass-murder.

He had no doubt at all of the sincerity of the students, and in fact he found himself admiring them, but (with the exception of some anarchists and pacifists) they seemed to be admirers of Che Guevara and Mao Tse Tung, or perhaps Trotsky. He argued with them, trying to persuade them that violence and authoritarianism only lead to more misery, but he does not seem to have had much success.

He believes that one of the basic mistakes that his generation made was to see in the proletariat the revolutionary class. Really, he believes, it is the intelligentsia,

the people who work with their brains. He tried to persuade the young people he talked to, citing the Czech experiment so tragically ended, that what was needed was an intellectual revolution, the application of man's mind to the solution of his social problems rather than the resort to force.

He was answered with slogans, and came to the conclusion that these young Marxists did not read much of Marx's writings, but rather abridgements and extracts made by Mao Tse Tung and others. Although his experience was discouraging in some ways he remains convinced that the forward march of "man's unconquerable mind" will continue, and parts of this book read like H.G. Wells or the Thinker's Library.

Felix Morley is at first sight a completely different type of man, a conservative and a puritan, a believer in getting back to the ideas laid down in the American Constitution, but he also has a qualified optimism, believing (when all is said and done) in the common sense of the pragmatic, hard-headed American ordinary man and woman.

The Power in the People was written in the early days of the cold war, and first published in 1949. The writer is opposed to Big Government, Big Business, the New Deal and American involvement in European wars. He believes that the ideal type of person is the individual who struggles always forward, upwards and onwards, but thinks that this ideal does not appeal to

ELECT NEW VOTERS!

BERTHOLD BRECHT, that controversial figure of the left - a true 'politician' if there ever was one - once wrote in a cynical moment that owing to Government disappointments with the attitude of its citizens it might be necessary to elect new voters. With the perpetual tendency that real life has to catch up with - and outstrip - satire the ever-reliable Peregrine Worsthorne (of the Sunday Telegraph) complained bitterly last Sunday - after the by-elections - of 'doubletalk from the voters'. The election results show, he says, "the extent to which politicians are justified in despising the public". "On the great and historic issues of the battle against inflation," says Worsthorne, "they [the voters] have said nothing more constructive than 'a plague on both your houses'."

Worsthorne then goes on to posit that the battle against inflation places before the electors a clear choice of supporting or opposing the statutory incomes policy or rejecting it; "But neither was vouchsafed in last week's results". Later he shoots himself down in flames (a not-infrequent act) by writing, "It would seem to me that the politicians today are seeking, for the first time since the war, to clarify the fundamental alternative (sic) before British society, which is not between free enterprise and State Socialism but between two versions of the Corporatist State, one in which big busi-

ness bosses would be predominant and the other in which the big trade unions' bureaucrats would be on top."

One cannot quarrel with this interpretation of the Tweedledum-Tweedledee conflict, for Peregrine Worsthorne is not without some perspicience. However, he goes on to admonish the electorate and praise the politicians for their 'courage'. He finishes his sermon with, "It is not only the politicians who like to play at politics. So, with a vengeance, do the electors themselves."

But what else, given the circumstances of present-day elections, throughout the world, can the voter do but play? After all, Thoreau said, "All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right is doing nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail." (Civil Disobedience 1849). Since Thoreau's day affairs have been removed further and further from the elected and electors. Control of affairs has become more and more tenuous and the growth of

direct action in industry, housing and education are eloquent testimony to the need for an alternative to the futile game of the ballot box.

If one wishes to see politics reduced to its ultimate and true absurdity one must look to France, which is in the throes of an election. It brings up to a height the French mad logic and degrading search for glory which has accomplished her invasion, near-defeat and defeat in three European wars and her pioneer defeat in Indo-China plus an insane resolve to let off her own glorious bomb (with its glorious pollution) logically, in order that she may take her rightful place at the disarmament talks.

In the absurdity of its electoral politics France is possibly no crazier than anyone else but France provides real clinical specimens of the dementia electorises.

The date of the elections clashed with the opening of the trout-fishing season; to forestall this disaster the French government advanced the date of the season. The trout-fishermen of France indignantly and collectively resented this slur upon the civic conscience of trout-fishers, also the new date made it possible that immature trout would be caught. This is not the only fishy thing about the election!

The Communists and Socialists have an electoral pact, which does

not prevent them contesting seats separately in the first ballot, but they will co-operate on the second ballot, which now seems necessary in the majority of seats. However; this electoral pact appears to have some flaws - France's membership of the Atlantic Pact is not being discussed. Meanwhile Red Mole has sent the word forth that their affiliated groups will vote Socialist-Communist in the second ballot and then criticize if the Socialists are elected. I.S. occupies a rather similar position. The Communist-Socialist front is committed to the support of the Concorde project in support of its 'right to work' programme.

President Pompidou has thrown a spanner among the pigeons by stating that should the Socialist-Communist front be elected, he will not let them take office. So much for the democratic vote!

There was at one time a possibility that Marshal Petain would be put up as a candidate, however a certain rigidity in his attitude made it unlikely. Now he has been returned to his exile tomb, and the French electors were deprived of the game of 'Hunt the Marshal'.

The absurdity of the French election results will become more and more apparent. Let us return to the sanity of Thoreau: "There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men."

Jack Robinson

RESISTING THE REDEVELOPERS

BRAG MEETING

The Battersea Redevelopment Action Group's meeting was very well attended. But if those attending thought they were going to hear anything new or get any satisfaction from Mr. Holmes, chairman of the Wandsworth Planning Committee, they were mistaken. All he would say was that his committee would be deciding on the property speculators' plans for the riverfront at their meeting on March 13th. The floor gave the councillor a rough ride and showed their dislike for the proposed plans.

A demonstration is being organised for the 13th and BRAG will be packing the public gallery at the Planning Committee's meeting.

If you want to help ring 622-1753 or write to BRAG, 6 Cyril Mansions, Prince of Wales Drive, Battersea, S.W.11.

P.T.

DON'T GO TO CUBA

Granma, the Official Organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, 25th February, contains an article, Bourgeois Morality and Proletarian Morality, which concludes:

"If we were to choose just one of our fallen fighters to symbolize this priceless heritage [the new proletarian morality], who better than our Heroic Guerilla, the unforgettable Major Ernesto Che Guevara, outstanding for his exceptional human feeling and revolutionary qualities and for the exemplary nature of his life and death."

On the very next page are the texts of two agreements Cuba has entered into with the, presumably, highly proletarian and moral governments of Canada and the United States to return hijackers who have arrived in Cuba, and vice versa.

Che Guevara did not hijack an aircraft. He tried to hijack an entire country in order to create a new Vietnam. The whirring sound is coming from his grave.

Arthur Wardo

CAPITALISM TODAY - BOLSHEVISM TOMORROW

ONE OF THE most interesting disputes in Britain recently has been the strike of the SOGAT employees against their union executive at the union Head-Quarters in Balham.

The dispute began when the clerks and typists in the head office asked for a pay rise. Although they are white collar workers they belong to SOGAT (the union of graphic and print design workers) because of the principle of closed shop control within the union structure. This is despite the almost polemic distinction in the different work and trade experiences of the print workers, clerical workers and trade union bureaucrats respectively.

Accepting the dubious premise of union cohesion for a moment, extended discussion between the clerks and the officials was then refused in exactly the same curt manner as the most strident bourgeoisie or their managers would use in reply to a claim by an aggrieved proletarian. This is despite the fact that the union officials in question were supposed to represent the expectation of the strikers and not add to their frustration.

With repeated demands for consultation turned down the General Secretary of SOGAT, Vincent Flynn, then decided that since the conscience of his officials had been disturbed by their frequent crossing of the picket line, although they had been prepared to cross over it for a week, then he would close the Head-Quarters down pending a settlement. In other words, a lock-out!

What is important to us here, notwithstanding our sympathy and support with the strikers, are the political implications that are raised, for in the actions of the SOGAT executive we are seeing the creation of an organization which is embodying the same bureaucratic structure and characteristics of yet another repressive and authoritarian regime.

As anarchists we are seeing the birth of an intransigent reactionary force and it is all the more disturbing because it exists in the very vanguard of the so-called class struggle. We can see how an organization and an institution can dissipate its revolutionary vigour and it is all the more contemptible especially when we consider that Trade Unions once existed upon an egalitarian base of brotherhood to fight the very spectre of tyrannical employment control that it now exhibits and practises under its own name.

It is in the lesson of this SOGAT reaction that we get an insight into the real nature of how a workers' utopia will look as conceptualized by these so-called socialists. We can also see what the true implications of a dictatorship of the proletariat will look like if these manipulators ever rise to fulfil their dialectic

ascendancy.

Therefore during this and the coming weeks of union aggression we should reflect on the predicament of those 13 men who play picket to SOGAT and we should ponder on the fact that we or others like us may one day end up in their unenviable position.

Therefore we should be as alive to the possibility of the phenomena of bolshevism tomorrow as we are of the phenomena of capitalism today. State authoritarianism exists both on the left as on the right and, as we can judge from the proceedings at SOGAT last week, the influences and consequences of it are as identical in their hardships from whichever ideological standpoint they might stem.

David X.

THREATS TRIAL VERDICT

THE TRIAL of Bob Davis, accused of sending a bullet to the Prime Minister through the post, began on February 26th and ended on March 3rd with a suspended 18 months' sentence and an admonition from the judge to "Go away to support the woman you have just married and the children..." The Defence Group had sent out an urgent appeal for Marcia Davis, who has five children. The release of Bob Davis will not bring her financial difficulties to an immediate end, and donations to meet pressing debts (cheques or postal orders preferably uncrossed) can be sent to Marcia Davis, 54 Tweedy Road, Bromley, Kent.

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 (2½p)

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.

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Strike Me Pink!

THREE HUNDRED cosmetic production line managers have called a strike for April 1st. Sixty trainee newspaper reporters, ten industrial correspondents and eighty gossip columnists belonging to Fleet Street's N.U.J. have downed typewriters. Six hundred furniture salesmen have walked out of the stores. Forty chauffeurs employed by Chairmen and Managing directors of lavatory cleanser firms have gone on strike. Two hundred credit control clerks for a television hire purchase firm have ceased work. Fifty managers and fifty managers-designate (involved in a differential dispute) employed by property companies have quite pending negotiations.

Thirty Estate and Trust Administrators employed by financial trust companies have struck. Sixty advances managers for British and ex-colonial banks have gone on strike. Six thousand solicitors engaged in litigation have quit for higher fees. Ten thousand advertising agency executives and commercial artists have walked out to call attention to their grievances.

Eight thousand sales representatives have failed to persuade their employers of the increased value of their services; therefore they have gone on strike. Five thousand work study clerks, time and motion study engineers and motivation engineers after considering their work have decided to quit work. Two thousand accountants have gone on strike.

And nobody has noticed!

Jack Spratt.

WHO BREAKS THE LAW: SQUATTERS OR COUNCILS?



THE LONDON BOROUGH of Tower Hamlets has about 6,400 families waiting on its housing list. Since the war, extensive slum clearance has been achieved and a considerable amount of new council dwellings building has been done but the borough still has an appalling housing problem. Many areas like Spitalfields should be cleared and rebuilt. It is also possible to acquire land for housing, but both the G.L.C. and Tower Hamlets have refused an offer from British Railways of the derelict site of Bishopsgate goods station.

This Labour-controlled council might have achieved great things in the past but its present councillors are resting on the laurels of their predecessors. For in Myrtle and Parfett streets a number of private properties have been left empty, awaiting redevelopment of the area in about three years time. A number of these houses has been successfully squatted. In the past few weeks attempts have been made by bailiffs to evict the people living in 42 Parfett Street. The first time the agents, Wilmots, obtained a court order and bailiffs assisted by the police were successful. However the house was re-squatted by two families and a single person.

Last Tuesday the police once again escorted the bailiffs to evict the new families from 42. The police first cordoned off the road and allowed no one past. The bailiffs forced an entry and smashed down a bedroom door. Mrs. Scott was struck in the face by a bailiff. She later suffered a miscarriage. The police entered the house and questioned the families before turning them out. But the whole eviction was carried out without a proper court order. When the bailiffs finally produced a piece of paper looking like a court order it was found that it named the previous squatters and had been used for the other eviction. In fact the bailiffs did not even have this at first and some of them went off to get it from the registrar.

Although the families have returned to 42, the squatters are claiming the eviction was illegal and that the police aided and abetted this illegal act. The squatters are trying to prosecute the police and the bailiffs under the Forcible Entry Act and common law of riot and affray.

There are plenty of precedents of courts refusing possession orders against squatters because the owners had not named the occupants, but this puts the police on the spot. Legally they should not have allowed the bailiffs to carry out the eviction. Also they have been seen actively assisting the bailiffs evicting people who were only occupying houses which would otherwise have been left empty and derelict.

The squatters have already been refused a summons against the police and bailiffs at a magistrates' court. However, the NCC, the Child Poverty Action Group and the Family Squatting Advisory Service are giving assistance.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott finally decided to squat in Parfett Street out of sheer desperation. Previously they had tried to get a place in West Ham. The borough there did not find them a place so they finally moved in with Mrs. Scott's aunt. When the council heard of this, they threatened to evict their aunt. The tragic irony is that Mr. Scott is a building worker employed on the new development alongside Tower Bridge. Yet while he builds luxury accommodation (one of the buyers is rumoured to be Mr. Heath) his wife is evicted from a house which Shelter pronounced as unfit to live in.

The other family, Mr. and Mrs. Silvario, tried to get a council house in Maidstone. For a period they slept out with their two-year-old child on the river bank. The child was later taken into care and Mr. and Mrs. Silvario started squatting. Because they moved out of Maidstone the council said it was no longer their responsibility to house them. They

were split up and put into hostels. But Mr. Silvario claims that the Maidstone council turned empty flats into factories while he, his wife and child were parted.

Another family has joined the squat and come from Nottingham. They, with their two children, have moved into 52 Parfett Street. They first tried to get a flat in Camden. All they were offered was bed and breakfast and railway warrants back to Nottingham.

But there is a simple answer to the problems facing these families. The Tower Hamlets Labour Council can make a Closing Order on these properties before making a Compulsory Purchase Order. They can, under Section 91 of the 1957 Housing Act make a C.P.O. on empty houses. Such a case has been upheld in Croydon when the owners took the council to court and lost.

Tower Hamlets social workers have sent a letter to the leader of the council, Alderman J. Orwell, urging the council to make such an Order. The local Trades Council has called for the same action, but so far the council has not responded.

The council's refusal to act against the private owner who leaves properties empty shows how little they practise the socialism they profess. Alderman Orwell is also a union organiser for the building section of the Transport and General Workers Union. He and his council should take over these empty properties and use them to house the homeless. Private owners and developers are making millions from the sufferings of these families who through no fault of their own find themselves without a roof over their heads. The borough councils do little or nothing to stop this, even though they have the powers to act. Every support should be given to squatters to force councils to act.

P.T.

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

FREESPACE ALTERNATE U is an anarchist-sponsored free alternate school in New York City. You may visit us any weekday evening or on Saturday or Sunday afternoons at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012. tel. no. 228-0322

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

LONDON ASA meets every Sunday 3 p.m. at 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, N.5. Black & Red Outlook always available; by post 5p + 2p

NOTTINGHAM: Trent Polytechnic new anarchist group forming. Contact Shirley Moreno & John Hinsley 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

New Earth Group, 112 Thomas Street, Dublin 8. Publishers, bookshop & meetings.

MICHAEL TOBIN DEFENCE COMMITTEE 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent

Anarchist woman having deserted capitalist husband desires maintenance from him. Serious suggestions and advice about getting this gratefully received Box 102

STOP THE FRENCH TESTS. Contact Greenpeace, c/o 176 Finchley Rd. London, N.W.3.

How We Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road, a dramatized version of the Briant Colour Print workers' saga. Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays at 7.45 p.m. until March 24. Tickets 40p, Assoc. Membership 50p. Bar. UNITY THEATRE, 1 Goldington Street, London NW1

You as a Product, booklet on the family as key link between individual and social reality. 40pp. 10p + postage from Soc. Society Bookstall, Univ. of Newcastle u. Tyne, or from Freedom Press.

MEETINGS

ASPECTS OF ANARCHISM: S. E. Parker, Jack Robinson, Nicolas Walter, at the Sunday Humanist Forum, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W.C.1, Sunday March 11th at 3.00 (Three) p.m.

PSYCHIATRY IS CLASS REPRESSION, the case for a Mental Patients' Union. A meeting of patients and ex-patients at: Paddington Day Hospital, 217 Harrow Road, W.2 Wednesday March 21st at 7.30 p.m. Pamphlet on the same subject 10p + postage from Flat 1, 13 Christchurch Road, London N.8

FINE TUBES STRIKE is still going on. National Day of Picketing at Fine Tubes, Estover, Plymouth on Monday 19th March at 6.30 a.m. Overnight accommodation available. Contact Greg, 17 Gascoyne Place, St. Jude's, Plymouth PL48DF

FORMING A LONDON FEDERATION, groups and individuals invited. 'Three Tuns Bar': Basement of St. Clement's Building, London School of Economics, Houghton St., Aldwych. March 14th, 7 p.m. Crash pads available.

MANCHESTER ASA area meeting at 100 Oxford Road, Business 5 p.m. followed by a "brains trust" at 7 p.m. and a drink afterwards. Mar 11 "Technology, Science & Anarchism" chaired by Dave & Ramsey. Mar 18 "Crime" chaired by Pete & Don.

ORA EASTER CONFERENCE, Glasgow, 21-23 April. Details from Moira Young, 91 Burghead Drive, Linthouse, Glasgow G51 4QJ

Conf. to discuss formation of SEVERNSIDE LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION shortly. Contact Alex Bird, 28 Heol Don, Whitchurch, CARDIFF.

STOKE-ON-TRENT DWARFS now meet on Thursdays 8 p.m. at 112 Liverpool Road, Stoke.

COLCHESTER SQUAT

Colchester squatters' establishment of a community centre, reported in last week's FREEDOM, seems to have got off to a joyful start. The empty sports building has ready-provided rooms for gymnasium, dance hall, and meetings. In its first week the centre has been used by hundreds of Colchester's children, who like "not having people to tell you what to do". Two community dances have been held and collections made for money to run a free coffee bar in the dance hall.

The local press has given favourable coverage. The East Anglian Daily Times (2/3/73) reported that so far one window has been smashed, and quoted an organiser as saying, "We are running on the principle of no authority. Of course, we will not let the kids run over the roof or anything obviously dangerous but they can paint on the walls and generally do anything they want."

The reaction of the Home Office and Essex County Council is "the matter is being investigated". The building is due to be demolished in two years' time to make way for a new police station.

SQUATTERS are Workers too

"Twelve workmen who barricaded themselves in a council house yesterday have said they will stay there until a family of five is rehoused. They began their protest after their colleague at a factory, Mr. Eric Ames, his wife, and three children were evicted from their £2 a week home in Suffield, Norfolk, because they were £3 behind with their rent."

Guardian 6/3/73

Can any comrades in Norfolk find out if help is needed for these men's families?

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Thank You

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AVERAGE WEEKLY EXPEND.	£63.02½
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Our subscriptions are paid in advance covering the whole or part of a year. The present income will obviously not pay for the rest of the 44 weeks. We need additional subscribers, and prompt renewals. The Press Fund appears to have done very well, but we still need more contributions as we hope to continue to include extra pages.

LETTER

WHAT IS COMMUNIST ANARCHISM?

Dear Comrades,

Referring to the review on Berkman's "What is communist anarchism" in Freedom No. 5 I cannot agree with some arguments presented by Nicolas Walter. I only know the book issued by Freedom Press in 1971 and not the American paperback mentioned.

I do not consider Berkman's method of discussing with an imaginary reader to be a trick. On the contrary I think, this makes it easier for a non-anarchist reader to understand the book. The crucial problems of anarchism are well covered, especially violence and the problem of counterrevolution. In connection with violence I bear in my mind chapter 9 about preparation for revolution.

Sure, many topics are oversimplified, others are out of date. But: I have never read a book, written by an anarchist, which gives such a good and understandable introduction into anarchist problems to a non-anarchist reader as this book does. You do not have to be an intellectual to understand the contents. Therefore it will have much appeal for non-anarchists, especially workers.

Fraternally yours,
Jürgen Lohstötter
Hamburg

NEW YORK LIBERTARIAN BOOK CLUB
Lectures, fortnightly on Thursdays 7 p.m. at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Ave., corner 29 Street, admission free.
Mar 22 Sylvia Barnes: Women's Liberation Movement Examined.
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WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY
LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF
MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES
IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK
OF PUBLICATION.

Belfast in London?

3 p.m. Thursday 8th March. While we are quietly folding your FREEDOM for despatch an eye witness has telephoned that a car bomb - a big one "much bigger than any of the 'Angry Brigade' kind" has exploded outside the Old Bailey. Some people have been hurt. All windwos in range were smashed and the new building of the Old Bailey damaged. The whole Blackfriars-Fleet Street area shook.

/This morning two cars containing gelignite were found in London - one outside Scotland Yard and the other in the Embassies area of Kensington Palace Gardens. Early editions of the evening papers say Scotland Yard chiefs are certain these are the work of the IRA.]

"Freedom" 10.3.73