

ABSTAIN !

IN 1971 (July 17), one of the editors of *Freedom*, writing a signed article, said "We are for letting people control their own lives. We are against government but we are not against organization. We are for more organization. We are for direct democracy not 'representative' democracy. We think the only representative worth talking about is one who is mandated and subject to immediate recall by those who elected him. We should, in my opinion, be clearly in favour of a people's referendum as a step in the right direction."

The editorial "we" may have led some into thinking it was a collective editorial but since it bore the signature of John Lawrence it should have been obvious, even from a close reading, that it was a personal point of view, and qualified in any case. However, one of our readers (himself an editor) commented that such an attitude was a betrayal of anarchism unequalled except by Kropotkin's support for the war.

J. L.'s viewpoint on referenda was repeated once or twice subsequently and supported by Brian Behan; a meeting was held (with an assorted platform) at Conway Hall to promulgate this demand for a referendum but there was little other support in *Freedom* for the idea. Bill Dwyer in his highly idiosyncratic column 'This World' supported the Common Market as a step towards internationalism.

These old ashes are raked up in order to make it quite clear that support for a referendum is not entirely un-anarchis-

tic in intent. In practice, personally speaking, one feels that the effect will be very different.

Now we are faced with the situation that Mr. Wilson, for reasons best known to himself, and not for democratic motives, is organizing a referendum on the Common Market. If one believes that the democratic process is sensible, efficient and morally acceptable then the referendum is the logical end of such a process. (The logical extension of the idea of the referendum is an obvious absurdity.) But anarchists are not democrats and we do not believe that the commonsense answer to any problem is arrived at by counting heads. The majority (especially when at the mercy of the mass media) is often quite wrong.

If a referendum were held on the subject "Do you wish for 365 sunny days a year" the obvious answer would be yes except from farmers and umbrella manufacturers, but the referendum would have no validity although the majority were in favour. The issue of the Common Market is similar insofar as we can do little to stop the growth of international cartels and monopolies whether in the form of the European Economic Community or something else.

On some topics the man-in-the-street's opinion is useless. The question of capital punishment is a purely technical penological and sociological one, the question of divorce an individual and personal, not a religious or political one, so not a matter to be decided by referenda.

On opportunist grounds the call for a referendum may have had some validity in exposing the government's lack of democracy but once the bluff is called one cannot even rely on the government's framing an unambiguous question on the common market or keeping the wish-fulfilment bargain of the electorate.

A Japanese trade union official negotiated with a camera firm at Kanagawa (near Tokyo) about the proposed dismissal of 900 workers in a sale of the plant. The union official negotiated for the transfer or redundancy payment of the 900 workers. It was later learned that the company was dismissing another 900 workers; the trade union official attempted to commit hara-kiri and is now in hospital. How different from the home life of our own trade union officials!

The US Dept. of Defence is spending \$14 million a year to maintain 300 golf courses on military bases around the world.

There is some confusion still, since Britain proposes to continue renegotiation for terms of entry, at the same time as giving a promise to abide by the findings of the referendum. Mr. Wilson is also experiencing some difficulty with a cabinet, government and party split on the issue of the Common Market; perhaps he is hopeful that a referendum will rally the party round the people.

Whatever happens or whichever way one votes, governments, whether united in the E.C. or separate as before, are still no choice for a free man.

Jack Robinson.

BLOOD IN THE STREET

Death is the common coin of all men and there is anger among the living when a human life is destroyed by evil or incompetent men. That age and sickness reap their foul harvest is accepted as part of the human tragedy. That the soldier and the sailor choose a path to early death, that the miner daily risks his life or that the machinist will be mauled and maimed by his machine is accepted as part of the brute realities of this existence in time. The broken and bloody bodies daily scooped off our motorways become within hours no more than the accepted statistics of an era of mechanical transport and every time a plane becomes a flying coffin and plunges earthwards with its cargo of screaming victims it becomes no more than a write-off in a single headline and a percentage for the aerodynamics experts to play with for it is accepted that all these men, women and children had some element, larger or smaller, of choice in the timing and manner of their death. But when a child is murdered, when workers die from the asbestos dust, when an international drug cartel manufactures and markets a drug that destroys an unborn child there is a righteous anger that there has been a denial of a universal justice in the ending of a particular life. Ronald Jones, a London bus conductor, was beaten to death a week ago from the time of writing. The reason and the men responsible for Ronald Jones Jones's death fill the stage of another theatre and for those concerned with Ronald Jones's death this is held not to be the moment for an academic debate on the ethics of the Law and its bastard offsprings.

What has angered the 20,000 bus men and women of London is the knowledge that Ronald Jones's death is the culmination of a deliberate policy of evasion by the employers in relation to the matter of violence against their public employees. The faceless, nameless authorities for whom we labour would, nay, do argue that they have explored every

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Grassroot Tories want vote in leadership poll



"As a working class tory trade union cardholder I demand a secret ballot."

PEACE, IMPERFECT PEACE

THE PRESENCE of some twenty thousand-odd people sheltering under umbrellas in the pouring rain in the centre of Belfast on a Sunday afternoon, and listening to speeches by leading churchmen and others, may have surprised those who witnessed the scene on TV. For the huge assembly was comprised of Catholics and Protestants and yet not a shot was fired, not one head was bloodied throughout the afternoon. Needless to say, Ian Paisley was not present nor were any of his counterparts from the Catholic camp, but the annual conference of the SDLP which was taking place in Belfast at the time sent delegates to the meeting.

The attendance would probably have been larger but for the adverse weather conditions, yet it can be taken as an adequate expression of the desire of the overwhelming majority of Irish people who want to see an end to violence. They are rarely seen on the TV screens because the representatives of paramilitary groupings are deemed to be more newsworthy and their existence may only have been guessed at

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means available to protect the workers against individual and mob violence even to the extent of fixing, at some future date, a blaring bleater on every bus to notify any casual passer-by that a neurotic drunk has just kicked a conductor in the genitals before staggering off into the night and that, and this I can swear to, lectures were given in every garage on how to deal with human violence, the sum total of which seemed to be that diplomacy and a phoney cockney mateyness was the answer to the homicidal maniac.

But when as a result of physical violence the London bus workers refused to work their buses in the areas of weekend violence the employers condemned their action. In this year of 1975 there is no flip answer to the violence of the schools, the streets, the football crowds and the public transport, and what the bus workers are demanding to know from their employers and their union top brass is must they, through economic necessity, be forced to face it as part of the weekly wage. Ronald Jones is to be buried this coming Wednesday and I shall take my place among the ranks of the mourners. And on that day the busworkers have ordered that the citizens of the proud city of London shall stand to attention for the workers are honouring, in death, one of their own; and on that day no public transport will move on the streets of London. London has paid homage to many men of note and the great corteges have flowed through the London streets in the wake of the muted trumpets while the crowds stood in silence. Now for the first time the workers of London demand and extract the same token of respect for one of their own, that the people of London shall witness that a mean and squalid murder of an inoffensive working man is a matter of high tragedy.

14.23, Sunday 26/1/1975
Bus Conductor No. 23752

by those on the other side of the channel who take their ideas from some of the sensation mongering newsmen who contribute to TV and the Press. And while on the subject of sensation mongering and distortion of facts it is worthwhile mentioning the left-wing press in England, which is not without blemish.

All who read George Orwell's book, *Homage to Catalonia*, will recall his able exposure of the *Daily Worker*, and its massive campaign of falsification during the Spanish war. It has just not been possible for the Communists and Trotskyists to emulate that campaign exactly (Ireland is closer to England and there are no language difficulties), but it would appear that it has not been for want of trying. Basically, the assumptions underlying left-wing reportage of events in Ulster are utterly at variance with the truth. What is taking place is not an anti-imperialist struggle, not a national liberation of an oppressed people trying to free themselves from foreign rule. In fact, the vast majority of northern Catholics have no desire whatever to become citizens of the papal state over the border nor, for that matter, is the papal state in a position to welcome them with open arms - the influx of about half a million new citizens would bankrupt the economy of the Irish Republic which could provide neither homes or jobs for them. The Republic's traditional method of solving its chronic unemployment problem has always been to send off the surplus to England.

What the Catholics in Ulster have long desired is an end to discrimination in jobs and housing, and before the present troubles erupted it looked as though things were beginning to move at last. New industries from Europe and elsewhere did not recruit employees on the basis of their religious persuasions and since many of them employed skills that were new to Ulster the Protestant monopoly of some of the older crafts began to lose its importance. In housing too, the situation in Belfast had improved to the extent that many districts in Belfast had a mixed population living in harmony. There was the problem of bad housing, of course, but this was common to Catholic and Protestant areas. Only the other week the Ulster Folk Museum decided to dismantle a row of houses still inhabited by Protestant workers and rebuild it, brick by brick, in the museum because of its historical interest - in some of the houses only one room is habitable.

Under such conditions it might have been expected that a civil rights movement would have been supported by Catholics and Protestants alike, but enter the IRA, Ian Paisley and the UVF. Following the failure of its border campaign in the 1950s the IRA went out of business, but 1966 saw the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 and the rebirth of the IRA in different guises. This time it had been infiltrated by communists (its socialism owes little to the socialism of Connolly) and its activities were centred in the universities where the republican clubs recruited their "Marxist intellectuals". They became heavily involved in the civil rights movement, though their activities were of a non-violent kind, and consequently Paisley was able to scream with some justification that civil rights was nothing more than a republican/communist plot.

From then on, once the passions of Protestant extremists had been aroused, the progression of events was inevitable. The UVF, which was a comparatively tiny group at that time,

began by forming a murder gang that soon went into action. But the IRA being guided by the "party with the larger theoretical competence" had disarmed itself and had no means of defending the Catholic ghettos when they were attacked; the birth of the Provisional IRA was the spontaneous reaction to events.

The reaction of Protestant extremists to what they regarded as an attempt at a republican takeover of the north was entirely predictable and if the activities of the IRA were not carried out with Machiavellian intent then they provide an excellent example of what can happen when communist dupes attempt to apply mechanically the rigid formulas they adhere to. Objectively, and "objectively" is the keyword here, Ulster could be shown to be an area under imperialist domination and Ireland a country where "national liberation" was not yet completed but no one bothered to consult the people themselves and ask if they wanted to be "liberated".

After more than five years of violence the Catholics are in a worse state than when it all began and the Official IRA/CPI have made a fresh analysis and decided that a Bill of Rights enacted at Westminster will solve the problem of civil rights but the other problem of the Protestant paramilitary organisations remains and whatever the future holds for Ulster they will have an important say in the shaping of it. They have been influenced to some degree by the National Front which is now well established in Ulster and part of a statement issued by the Front is worth considering:

"The National Front is dedicated to opposing the very real subversive communist influence both in Ulster and the UK as a whole. We do not seek sectarian confrontation but invite the law-abiding section of the Catholic population to reject the IRA and repudiate their propaganda."

The Front represents itself as "a truly democratic party opposing communism and the fascist tactics of revolutionary republicanism." The significance of those words does not lie in the depth of political analysis revealed but in their implications. Once an anti-communist campaign is launched, and there are signs that it is already under way, where does it end? Not happily for the communists we may be sure but then how many times and in how many countries has communism paved the way for fascism? Another of the declared aims of the Front and of the Protestant groups like the UDA and the UVF is to "clean up the trade-union movement", a feat they ought to find not hard to accomplish. And they can quite easily torpedo any ceasefire negotiations between the Provisionals and the Northern Ireland Office; a few bombs in the night are all that is needed to do the trick. Anti-imperialism? Socialism? National Liberation? Freedom struggle? Or quite simply a war between political gangsters with devil take the hindmost and to hell with what the mass of the people want?

H.B.

Francis Caprino who, as reported last week, was awaiting deportation, has been reprieved by the Home Secretary. If, as is possible, he loses his job, he may still face deportation.

LORDING IT OVER US

Every rank-&-file trade unionist always has a particular story about a trade union leader who has gone 'bent'. Some of the many I've heard mentioned people whom they had worked alongside, been on strike with, and got the sack with. One colourful old boy's definition of a 'bent' official was the ownership of two suits.

But the latest news about trade union leaders concerns a gentleman who owns more than two suits. He also at one time ranked as one of England's ten best men. I'm referring of Lord Greene, formerly Sir Sidney Greene, who is shortly due for retirement as general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen. Last week he was appointed a director of Rio Tinto-Zinc, the international mining company.

It seems that Lord Greene's contact was first made with the company when he worked on a report with their chairman, Sir Val Duncan. Their report was on worker participation in industry. Now Lord Greene is really participating at the top level.

Lord Greene, even when he was plain mister, could not be called a militant. His utterances were always gladly seized upon by the press for his expressions of moderation. He, as general secretary of a supposedly industrial union, held office during the Beeching axe period. This stupid attempt to make the railways pay for themselves meant not only a loss of jobs but the removal of many lines which were important and provided a service to the community.

However, we should not be surprised at Lord Greene's 'elevation' or his acceptance of a directorship. He was already with Sir Val Duncan a director of the Bank of England and so he was a credible candidate for directorship. But years of talking and negotiating with the different state bosses of British Rail had long ago eased Lord Greene into the establishment. Having once tasted the good comfortable life and enjoyed the power his position as general secretary gave, he was unlikely to go back to working on the railways. Lord Greene is not the first and will not be the last trade union leader to climb onto the backs of his members and join the bosses.

But Lord Greene isn't a bad or evil man for doing this. The whole structure and the reliance on leaders and leaderships in the trade unions makes for such betrayals. The unions are only reformist organisations seeking economic and social improvements for their members. They support from their funds the Labour Party which as the government is doing its best to assist the very system to survive which exploits the rank-&-file trade unionists.

The methods of direct action used by

the trade unions might have revolutionary potential but they have never had revolutionary aims. They have been reformist, concerned with wages and conditions and getting themselves legally accepted. As such they have remained a part of the capitalist system. At no time has the organised strength and solidarity which exists among trade unionists been called upon by their leadership to abolish capitalism.

Rather than aiming at the abolition of capitalism the trade unions have helped the system by keeping industrial peace. The trade unions have on numerous occasions acted the policeman for the boss against members who take a militant or revolutionary line.

From being a boss of a trade union it is but an easy step to being a boss in a

company. Both have power and authority over others. It is this power and authority of some over others that anarchists reject. We are against anyone having power over our lives and we reject the system that allows and encourages the social and economic climbing of a Lord Greene.

We want no 'top people' but ordinary people making the decisions affecting their lives, for themselves. This is not just participation but full and direct control of what is made, grown, -- in fact, of our total environment. The ex-railwayman turned Lord has no divine right to make such decisions; they can and should be made alone by us the people. We want no one lording it over us, not even ex-trade union leaders.

P. T.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR G.M.

In the USA it has recently come to light that the motor corporation, General Motors, has, since 1925, deliberately pursued a policy of the destruction of electric tramway and railway systems in order to sell its own products. In American Ground Transport: a proposal for restructuring the Automobile, Truck, Bus and Rail Industries, a paper presented to the sub-committee on anti-trust and monopoly of the committee of the judiciary (United States Senate), Bradford C. Snell shows how General Motors has, by means of standard business techniques, virtually wiped out public transport in the USA. As one bus does the same job as 35 cars, it is to the motor manufacturer's advantage that public transport is destroyed. This is exactly what GM did. After GM had acquired, in 1925, the largest manufacturer of buses in the US, in 1926 it helped to set up the Motor Transit Corporation (Greyhound buses), which agreed to buy its vehicles from GM. In turn, GM refused to sell inter-urban buses to any other operator, and bought up all possible competitors. There are now only two bus manufacturers in the US, one of them GM. In 1932, GM set up a holding company, United Cities Motor Transit (UCMT), a subsidiary of the bus division, with the sole aim of buying up urban tramway systems and converting them to bus operation, then selling them to local companies, who undertook to buy only GM buses. In 1935, this ploy was exposed by the American Transit Association, and UCMT was liquidated. GM then indirectly set up a similar operation, National City Lines, to which GM and other car and oil companies contributed considerable funds. The procedure was the same as the UCMT, with the even more pernicious proviso that the local undertakings to which NCL sold out the motor transport systems were prohibited from using power other than oil.

The results of these machinations were the decline of hitherto excellent electric public transport, and replacement with less efficient buses which soon declined in the face of car competition. In Los Angeles, GM was responsible in destroy

ing completely the Pacific Electric Railway, a rapid-transit system with over 700 miles of route. According to Snell: "Nowhere was the ruin from GM's motorization program more apparent than in Southern California. Thirty-five years ago, Los Angeles was a beautiful city of lush palm trees, fragrant orange groves and ocean-clean air... [It] is today an ecological wasteland".

Snell asserts that through the partial funding of electoral campaigns and the political influence open to every large employer, the motor manufacturers have diverted vast funds from urban transport to motorization, and the devastation of cities which this brings. 85% of Los Angeles' central area is now roads and car parks. The Watts uprising was partially caused by nearly non-existent public transport. Thus, by the unscrupulous methods of business, the cities of the US have been torn apart, fuel which would have lasted for centuries has been squandered in a few decades, thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been mutilated whilst capitalist industries have grown wealthier by the hour. These vast businesses benefit only themselves, they set up economic and political structures accountable to nobody, totally antipathetic to the interests of society, forcing their victims to pay tribute equally as effectively as the forcible extortion of taxes by the state. They can, and do, have it both ways. General Motors supplied vehicles to Hitler's Wehrmacht, and their Chief Executive (Overseas) was awarded the Order of the German Eagle by Adolf Hitler for his services. After 1945, GM demanded reparations from the US government for wartime damage to its factories by allied bombing. These it received.

Naturally, Snell's work has not received vast coverage by the British media. There are similar parallels which can be drawn from the Beeching/Marples era on the railways or the conversion of London Underground power stations to burn oil instead of coal.

Nigel Pennick.

François Villon's poetry is as valid today in the world of Krays and Richardsons as it was 500 years ago, for this pirst killer, thief and street brawler spoke for the companions of the left hand of God. Of the Ballad of the Old Prostitute, "You'll serve poor priests who are elderly", wherein each verse ends with the same beautiful dying fall of words "Like an old coin whose value's gone." Those magnificent final lines to seal a verse, as with the Ballad to Fat Margot: "Within this brothel where we keep our state I" Or quote me "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" only to find its echo in Dowson's heart-cry that gives his quietus to each verse of his Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynara, "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion." It is this agonising heart-cry that lifts this light verse into world literature for the poet becomes

They say he was a spy of the German political police, he was a sexual pervert, he was a sponger, he loved good food and wine, he welshed on his debts, he was an 18b detainee, he claims he knew Rasputin, he tried to slip into Ireland garbed as a nun, he lived, he was honoured by being on the Gestapo Black List come the German victory and he died in a single furnished room above the Chinese take-away restaurant "The Good Earth" in the King's Road, Chelsea on the 9th June 1970 leaving a £ 100 gift to his friends, a gift greater than the sum he possessed. He 'did' nine months for debt and a year in San Vittore prison for swindling the jeweller Perelli and he does not appear in Hamburger's smart index. Why does this matter? Because in John Symonds' Conversations with Gerald he records Hamilton in 1960 in the following: 'On the way to the Strand, I mentioned the name of my friend Michael Hamburger, the poet. "Michael Hamburger doesn't like me," said Gerald. "Don't you remember when I was at your place, and he was in the kitchen? You asked him if he would like to come and meet

The Second International (1889-1914), James Joll (2nd edn.) Routledge & Kegan Paul. £3.75

One of the great disadvantages anarchists have to overcome when arguing with Marxists is that a number of bourgeois liberal writers, in order to attack Marxism for their own purposes, tend to quote anarchists out of context and approvingly in their attacks on Marxism. Generally speaking the Marxists only hear of anarchist ideas through the medium of such liberals and therefore interpret anarchist ideas in the same distorted fashion. This is all the more tragic in that many of the liberals in question tend to resort to *ad hominem* arguments and gossip chat in order to besmirch the Marxist enemy - academics using emotive purple phrasing they would never permit in a student essay on a non-political topic - and leave themselves wide open to scornful replies, which by association touch us.

I say this at the beginning of a review of Mr. Joll's revised history of the Second International because the book is full of attacks on Marxists which are totally devoid of any real political analysis, because there are occasional approving nods made at anarchist figures (and more especially to ex-anarchists who embraced reformism) and because one of Mr. Joll's more famous other books was entitled "The Anarchists"; in such circumstances I feel it necessary to make it clear from the start that anarchists as well as Marxists view this book as a work of polemic rather than of history, and that the polemic is not made from an anarchist viewpoint.

Actually much that we would dislike in Marxism we find - *a fortiori* - in the bourgeois academic. Those who read Mr. Joll's book on the anarchists will recall that he gave us a feeling of a succession of big names (whether activists or theorists) totally divorced from all contact with a living movement; whether a movement of people propagating anarchist ideas, or whether the wider movement of the exploited classes struggling for freedom. Similarly the concept here of an history of the International is one of a record of conferences (debates, decisions & events), with little feeling of the living debate amongst the mass membership of the parties.

Intellectual Pride. . .

Readers will have noted that though he may not - as did Lenin - explicitly

THE GOSSIPY CLICHÉS

state that the working class is incapable of reaching a socialist consciousness unless that is brought to them from outside their class; nevertheless the whole tone of his work implies that he assumes this. So they will not be unduly surprised that the first sentence of this work is:

"There are moments in history when ideas long discussed by intellectuals begin to acquire political reality. . ."

There is however a distinction between his concept and Lenin's here, for he accepts as normal that at the moment of acquisition the ideas become watered down, while Lenin, to do him justice, held that the working class in adopting ideas made them more profound and more revolutionary.

. . . and Prejudice

Let me give a few quotes. Some are quoted in the first place by the author, but torn out of context to fit into an whole devoid of political analysis.

"typically ill-tempered criticism by the Master in London (Marx is meant) p. 7.

"he was never so much at home, as in managing a congress, drafting agenda, expelling dissidents, and hammering his points home in three-hour speeches which have been the pattern for later Marxist oratory." (Bebel. p. 9)

"benefit of the continuous (if not always consistent) advice of Engels" p. 11

"and Marxist historians were already moulding the facts of that rising" (They may have been, but a little evidence ought to accompany such a remark.) p. 12

"...the Marxists, and his party was eventually to unite with theirs, although Vaillant himself continued to play an independent and courageous role..." p. 17

"Engels, perhaps more interested in theory than practice, and reluctant to become too involved in actual politics, while criticising any action taken by

anybody else. . ."

p. 28

"were rejected by the possibilists, presumably (and justifiably) as an attempt to flood the congress with Marxists" p. 31 ff

"Guesde uttered a number of dull Marxist platitudes, on behalf. . ." p. 41

But the line goes on too long to repeat them all.

Brousse is quoted favourably and sympathetic mention is made that he was once an anarchist, but no mention is made of the fact that he had ceased to be. Mention is made of anarchists attempting - generally unsuccessfully - to make contributions to both the reformist and the Marxist assemblies from which the Second International took its beginnings, and that anarchists "themselves claimed that they were at least accorded a 'courteous and patient hearing' at the Possibilists' meeting", but while the author mentions the fact that Hyndman attended the Possibilist meeting and Morris the Marxist, and even remarks about the oddity of such a rigid Marxist as Hyndman being at the Possibilists' he fails to make any mention of the fact that the Socialist League had - to say the least - marked anarchist characteristics. Right through one is conscious of an attempt to pretend to enlist the anarchists into the ranks of the reformists.

There is discussion of syndicalism - inevitably - with relation to the General Strike slogan, but again it is treated as the brainchild of a few figited theorists, Pelloutier and Sorel, not as the product of a mass upsurge of activity. It is limited to France - there is no mention throughout of the IWW or even such prominent American Second International members as Debs; there is no mention of our own shop stewards' movement (nor when it comes to wartime resistance, to the Clyde Workers' or the South Wales Miners); and within the French limitation and the confines of a thought process that cannot get beyond a few leaders, Pelloutier appears as only another Robert Owen organizing the workers for their own good. Sorel and Bergson are of course mentioned, but it;

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the spokesman for the silent and the damned. A half-century before Christ Catullus at the randy age of twenty-two made it with Clodia, the wife of Metellus Celer, only to find that his friend Caelius was also on the short list. The magistrates' and divorce courts are bureaucratically constipated with these same sad stories according to one's class, but Catullus spoke for every cuckold in or out of office when he wrote

"O, Caelius, my Clodia that Clodia Clodia whom alone Catullus loved more than himself and all his own, now in the cross-roads and alleys serves the filthy lusts of the descendants of lordly-minded Remus." No betrayed lover took a sweeter revenge O my comrades, and did Catullus speak in your name? "Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa."

me, and he replied, 'No, I wouldn't'. We both laughed". Hamilton was one of those marvellous bar-room companions, a failed rogue who always knew the greater rogues and who dipped into what till. His actual circle of colourful rejects of respectable society was limited and his conversation seemed to revolve around Aleister Crowley the Soho Devil worshipper. Hamilton made the free lunches because Isherwood made him the central debased debauched figure in *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* (that surfaced in a non-Norris antiseptic version in the film *Cabaret*). Between the wars was the time of the Black Coffins and the 1939 Communist sit-ins in the smart restaurants, and one watched the militants as they dashed into the Ritz and only today I learn that Gerald was the host at that 14-course banquet and that on Good Friday of 1958 at the beginning of the first Aldermaston march from Trafalgar Square, the man standing with Michael Foot and Canon Collins on the plinth was "Mr. Norris of Isherwood's novel". The circle turns. Hamilton was a failure and a fraud whose company was sought because the intelligentsia held him up to public ridicule but he failed himself because he clowned for the fashionable mob for the good meal. He was an hedonist and most tragically a moral nihilist while the salvation of so many a good drinking companion cast in the same mould is that they have a social conscience, but if I had to share a table or a bar with the Hamburgers, the Isherwoods or Gerald I would choose that drinking eternity with him for in that final analysis he was the honest man.

CLICHES. . . cont'd from P. 5

is obvious that the author has failed to grasp the distinction between a Bergsonian myth and the more conventional kind.

The same unconcern is found when it comes to considering opposition to the war; we are always told what leading men said at conferences, and we hear vaguely of a few French mutinies; but only the very top of the iceberg is drawn. Again within the author's own limits, of dealing only with conference figures, one might have thought that at pre-war discussion of resistance to war preparations De Leon and Connolly deserved a mention, that the latter and John McLean deserved a mention during the war; but of them - as of Larkin or any of the Clyde Committee - there is no mention. Monatte it is true is mentioned - but only the fact that he resigned from the national committee of the CGT because it refused to send a delegate to a peace conference and we are assured that "these [Monatte's and others'] were protests which aimed at an end to the war rather than social revolution".

There, of course, lies the rub. The author is incapable of realising that at the time any active opposition to one's country's military actions inevitably posed a revolutionary challenge to the state and capitalism and there was no distinction between working for peace and social revolution. No doubt there were differing emphases, no doubt there were policies advanced that were opportunist, but when Dr. Joll brands every bread and butter struggle which said anything else but "general strike to end the war" as being mere reformism he merely demonstrates his isolation from any socialist movement.

Thus in describing the distinction between the "Centrists" - the Zimmerwald-Kienthal majority - and the revolutionary internationalists, Joll repeats in

A Labour M.P. complained about Army recruiting commercials which denounce industrial jobs as 'dull and routine'.

Mineworkers in Fiji have applied for an extension of their lunch hours in order that work does not interfere with their sex-life, claiming that at the end of their working day they are too tired.

G.A.R.I.

One of the three (not two as printed in last week's *Freedom*) alleged militants of the GARI, arrested in early December, has been freed. Floreal Cuadrado, a 28-year old draughtsman, was released on January 22. The other two people who were arrested in Paris, in a car containing weapons, ammunition and explosives, on the evening of 4 December, Jean-Marc Rouillan and Raymond Delgado, are still being detained. M. Cuadrado has constantly maintained that he knew nothing of what the car contained or of the activities of his companions.

mechanistic terms the view that this was between "most of the delegates [who] however, were concerned above all to find ways of putting an end to the slaughter. . ." and Lenin's allies. In a movement, wherein even the right wing (which had opposed any revolutionary action to prevent war) had always justified its position by saying that the only way to abolish war was to abolish capitalism and that therefore no distinct anti-militarist action was necessary this is a meaningless distinction.

There were lines of division:-

- i. some held that as one should relate all demands to the immediate aspirations of the working class, one should pose only what have since become called "transitional" demands, a generalised desire for peace and specific bread and butter objections to the sacrifices workers were expected to make for the sake of the war effort;
- ii. some held that while particular leaders of the main parties of the socialist international had sold out, that there was still an hope that rank and file sections of their parties would move in a revolutionary direction;

Recent writers - of whom two of the latest were Nan Milton McLean and Walter Kendall - have appeared to suggest that the division between John McLean and the Clyde Workers' Committee was on the first of these. With all due respect to the memory of a wonderful Scots revolutionary, it is nonsense to argue that the CWC did not oppose the war merely because it did not make its opposition explicit in its economic struggles - it did nevertheless make it plain that war conditions were worsening the lot of the workers and that war was an inevitable product of capitalism. It may be that this was not a time for merely implying one's message, it may be that McLean's outspoken approach was right and their's wrong, but only an utopian would fail to realise that the CWC's approach sprang from a sincere - even if misguided - effort to ensure that they were speaking to "the condition" of the masses.

One has only to note that very soon after the foundation of the Third International Lenin was imposing on its national sections a policy of united action with the Second International parties, of parliamentarianism, and of posing a series of partial demands, and denouncing "Infantillist" Left-Wing Communists (including members of the Clyde Workers' Committee) for posing policies that did not compromise on these points, to see that the celebrated divide at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, pace both Lenin and his liberal-bourgeois critics, was not as wide as it is popularly made out to be.

L. O.

*Were one to use the author's mode of reasoning, one might make more than he did of Engel's words:- "The idea of leading the European working class movement from Oxford - the last bit of the real middle ages that still exists in Europe - is incredible and I shall make a sharp protest in Paris against this intermediary." L. O.

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SPAIN: THE POLITICAL SITUATION

Part Two of the interview with two young Spanish Anarchosyndicalists, first published in *Frente Libertario*

Frente Libertario: Nevertheless, it mustn't be forgotten that the activity of these groups [i.e. GARI, MIL] aroused some sympathy for libertarian militants in general?

Martin: Right. It can't be denied that libertarians, particularly Spanish libertarians, are predisposed to "activism". This can be explained by the particular situation in which we are developing our movement: one of repression and total clandestinity. The spectacular side of the actions we've mentioned couldn't fail to attract many comrades. Remember when Carrero Blanco was blown up, we all said, "Right on, E.T.A.!"

Miguel: Well yes, but there's no real comparison... The Carrero bombing was really important...

Martin: Of course, but we're not talking about the importance of such and such an act, but about the power of attraction exerted by every spectacular action carried through by the groups exclusively dedicated to armed struggle. Since the assassination of Puig Antich a lot of young comrades have been inclining towards this kind of struggle, but their immediate motivation was the desire to avenge the death of our fallen comrade.

F.L.: What is your position, then, towards "activism" and the Libertarian Movement, in general?

Miguel: At the present time the Libertarian Movement embraces all the groups that call themselves anti-authoritarian. There's no point in saying that it lacks coherence, because that's normal, since the Libertarian Movement is an open structure. Nevertheless, whilst admitting the existence of various tendencies, we define ourselves as militants oriented toward anarcho-syndicalism, and we are trying above all to accelerate the reconstruction of the class organization: the CNT.

Martin: Things are getting clearer slowly. Suffice it to say, without exaggeration, that we are reaching a certain degree of coherence. As for the "activist" wave, our analysis, whilst understanding its motivations, reaches the following conclusions: this type of struggle, which is marginal to the general process of the

class struggle, represents an obstacle to the development of the Libertarian Movement as a whole, and consequently is irrelevant to us. As Miguel said, we consider ourselves anarcho-syndicalists and we give priority to the reconstruction of the CNT. The task of re-implantation in workplaces is not only necessary but vital. There are comrades who think, contrary to us, that the most urgent thing is to co-ordinate and set up specific groups. We're on good relations with them, but we think their idea is mistaken, because working in specific groups reduces the possibilities of intervening in the workers' struggles, which is the best recruiting ground for libertarians.

F.L.: Why do you speak of re-construction of the CNT rather than of construction?

Miguel: Potentially, the CNT is in existence. There are as well various committees, but we mustn't deceive ourselves into thinking that militant activities are a possibility as yet. We don't intend membership of the CNT to be treated as just another kind of trade-unionism. We want it to develop into an organization of workers which uses direct action against capitalism, and whose goal must coincide with what our older comrades call libertarian communism, what is called today generalised self-management, not only of the means of production but of all aspects of life.

Martin: It's our job to bring about a co-ordination of anarcho-syndicalists which is not only effective but really efficient. It's not an easy task but I think we can say, without falling into the triumphalism that characterises other people, that in what concerns us, that is Catalonia, we are getting good results. For instance, the series of strikes in Bajo Llobregat last June gave us the opportunity to make contact with various anarcho-syndicalist groups working in different factories.

Miguel: The strike movement also revealed to us the existence of a great number of militants, who whilst not definitely libertarian, were using authentic forms of anarcho-syndicalist struggle. Now we intend to set up relations with both these sets of militants to bring about the indispensable co-ordination of workplaces. You must understand the importance we attach to the idea of organization; we consider the anti-organizationalism that has been inculcated in certain anarchist groups both negative and atavistic. Naturally any organization can become bureaucratic, but both our past and the reality of our daily lives show us that without some structural links we are never going to get anywhere.

F.L.: There are various schools of thought about organization. How do you see it?

Martin: It's difficult to answer your question. I could say that our concept of anarcho-syndicalism is based on the resolutions adopted at the Zaragoza Congress, adapted to the present-day Spanish situation. But that wouldn't be very interesting...

F.L.: Why not?

Martin: Simply because the important thing is the collective working-out of organization. Many groups hold to this point of view, and there is no question, in the present situation, of holding a national Congress, which would say: the CNT is this and no more... We could do that straightaway, as so many other organizations do, but it would lead to nothing. The

Congress will be convened when the base groups think it is necessary and not before. If we hold it with the necessary preparation, a really representative Commission or National Committee will arise from it. The important thing now is to get the groups to co-ordinate themselves on all levels (workplace, local, regional) in a horizontal way. We are still in the first phase of the reconstruction of the CNT.

Miguel: Whilst criticizing the defects and the bureaucratization of the "historic" CNT, we are linking up with the spirit of traditional anarcho-syndicalism. Nevertheless, conditions are now radically different. I'm not just referring to the prevailing political situation, but also to the present-day socio-economic infrastructure and capitalist industrial management. These have nothing, absolutely nothing, in common with the conditions that the militants of the CNT had to face, up to 1939. Various methods of organization and different forms of struggle correspond to each situation, and the strength of CNT syndicalism over the years was substantiated by the ability of its militants to find the appropriate method of struggle for each situation. The development of anarchism in the future will depend on the CNT... and the CNT will be what we make it.

F.L.: In conclusion, what are your objectives today?

Miguel: To create anarcho-syndicalist nuclei in workplaces, to demonstrate our ability to intervene in the process of the class struggle, to co-ordinate the activities of militants in the centres of production and in the cities, are our immediate objectives... We are also well aware of the vital importance of the development of ideological propaganda, and of permanent criticism of the instrumentalities of power...

Martin: I agree with Miguel... Farewell.

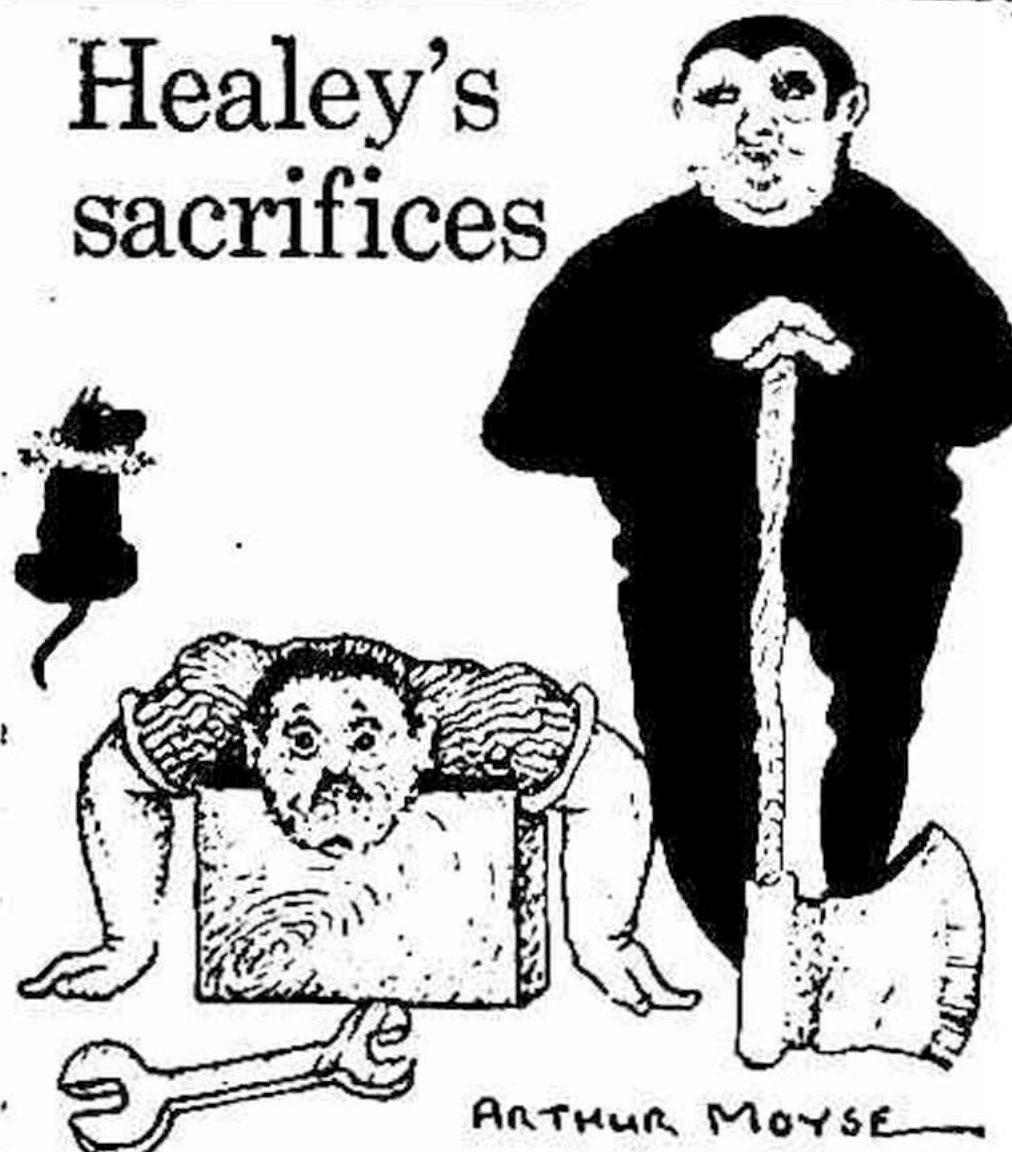
Judy Hillman in *The Guardian* wrote "The squatter today is less discriminating and thoughtful in the selection of temporary homes, less often acting through official associations, more prepared to use the law to his benefit, and less considerate of the cost - social and financial - to the community at large." Two squatter-spokesmen state that the Greater London Council (chief complainant) is still evicting squatters merely in order to demolish homes not to be used for living purposes.

A Schools Council report on travelling people blames envy of the gipsies' way of life for the hostility, fear and contempt often shown them. The Council said that many gipsy children showed considerable powers of concentration and willingness to learn at first but when they could read and write their attendance tended to decline rapidly.

The *Guardian's* headline (23.1.75) read 'Bishop Dead in Brothel'; the *Sun* story for the same day was headed 'Bishop Dies in House of Ill-Repute'.

Spanish potash miners broke their sit-in at the pit. It is estimated that 100 miners had participated, in protest against the suspension of 1,000 miners without pay. Police baton-charged 100 students who demonstrated in Bilbao.

Healey's sacrifices



"Just one tiny cut, comrade. . ."

LETTER

New Zealand

Comrades,

I first extend my apologies for not having renewed my subscription yet, it is following in about two weeks with an order for about 30 assorted books and pamphlets...

The day after I received the first lot of books in the mail I was going through town to see a fellow anarchist. I had a copy of each pamphlet I ordered with me and I was stopped by a girl selling the "People's Voice", which is the local commie (maoist) weekly. I bought a copy and asked her if she would be interested in one of my pamphlets. She said O.K. but what were they. So I showed her and after a lively and enjoyable discussion in the middle of Christchurch, three shopping nights before Christmas we parted, me with my "People's Voice" and smug grin, her with a copy of Nicolas Walter's "About Anarchism". I wonder what the party boss says when she shows him that!

I did enjoy your bumper "cakes and ale" issue and even managed to do most of the crossword.

So far we have drafted a rough copy of our first newsletter; we intend to have it done by mid-March.

My new years greetings to all and wish you (and us) the best for this year.

Fraternally,

Stephen Hay.

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HELP fold and despatch FREEDOM on Thursdays from 2pm. at Freedom Press, followed by get-together with refreshments.

MEETINGS:

Feb. 8-9. Librarians for Social Change Weekend Conference at North London Poly for caring librarians, users, & info-freaks. Discussion groups. Radical bookstalls. Social evening, creche, refreshments, new issue of LFSC magazine. More details from, and payment in advance (£1) to, Lesley, 4 Lingards Road, London SE13.

NEW YORK: Libertarian Book Club 1975 Lectures, every second Thursday at 7pm. (note new time) at Workman's Circle Center, 369 Eighth Ave. (SW corner 29th St.) Feb. 13. Sam Dolgoff: Anarchism in Cuba. Feb. 27. Frank Brand: Individualist Anarchism.

Mar. 13. Franz Fleigler: Recollections of a Wobbly.

Every Saturday & Sunday, from 7.30 at International Libertarian Centre/Centro Iberico, 83a Haverstock Hill, London NW3 (entrance Steele's Rd, 2nd door; tube: Chalk Farm/Belsize Park) discussions, meetings, refreshments.

Alternate Sundays, Hyde Park Anarchist Forum at Speakers Corner, 1 pm. Speakers, listeners and hecklers welcome.

CONTACT

From Sunday 9th February there will be regular Wildcat readers' meetings on the second Sunday of the month. All welcome. Main subject for discussion 9 Feb. Transport. The group who produced the supplement on transport in No.5 will expand on their ideas & answer questions. 7 pm at Museum Tavern. 49 Gt. Russell St. WC1.

Urgent pre-trial meeting:

British Withdrawal from N. Ireland Campaign defence group holds open meetings every Friday 8 pm at 6, Endsleigh St., London WC1. Special large meeting Friday February 14 at 7 p.m. to discuss defence campaign leading up to the committal proceedings of the 14 charged under Incitement to Disaffection Act.

GROUPS:

CORBY Anarchists. For activities write to 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby Northants. COVENTRY, Peter Come, c/o Union of Students, Warwick Univ., Coventry CV4 7AL.

GLASGOW Anarchist Association, new group forming. Contact Gerry at 21 Bute Gardens.

MANCHESTER SWF weekly meetings. Secretary c/o Grass Roots, 178 Oxford Road, Manchester 13.

PORTSMOUTH. Write to Rob Atkinson, 29 Havelock Road, Southsea, Portsmouth.

PEOPLE/ORGANIZATIONS:

Would Bolton Anarchists please contact "A L" (address below) as baby has eaten their letter!

Please note that the new address for CIRA (International Centre for Research on Anarchism) is now: C.I.R.A., Case Postale 51, CH - 1211 Geneva 13, Switzerland and NOT the rue Necker address previously advertised.

Will John Quail collect or tell us where to send his mail

PUBLICATIONS:

Direct Action No. 5 out now, 5p + 3p postage. Paper of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation, c/o Grass Roots, 178 Oxford Road, Manchester 13 or Freedom Bookshop, Catonsville Roadrunner No. 56 now out.

New address for subscriptions: 128 Bethnal Green Road, London E2, or single copy from Freedom Bookshop, 10p + 3p postage. Anarchism Lancastrium for anarchist in the North West. Send stamp to "A L", 16 Kingsmill Avenue, Whalley, Lancs.

Alex Comfort's Authority & Delinquency in the Modern State - copy sought for a comrade in Sweden. Please offer to Pat Thorne Garden Flat, 22 Hampton Rd., Redland, Bristol BS6 6HL.

Pamphlet wanted: Authors take sides on the Spanish Civil War. Cash paid. Please contact Box 001, Freedom Press.

Rudolf Rocker's London Years and E.P. Thompson's book on William Morris: Romantic to Renegade (1955) - one copy of each sought by Haia Shpayer, 112 Green-croft Gardens, London NW6. Tel: 627 1333. Hardy Perennial Walt Whitman Anarchist Calendar 1975. 13 p incl. post. from Kropotkin's Lighthouse Pubns c/o Freedom.

PRISONERS:

PAUL PAWLOWSKI, 219089 HM Prison, Heathfield Rd., London SW18 3HS. G.A.R.I. (International Revolutionary Action Group). Committee in Support of G.A.R.I. is raising funds for support and legal expenses of 25 anti-Francoists awaiting trial in France on charges of arson & bombing 'demonstrations' claimed by GARI (+ kidnapping of Spanish banker), and has published a folder of 15 drawings by well-known French caricaturists. £2 from Ali Touati, 45D Anerley Park, London SE20; all funds to defence committee. Names and prison addresses from same address.

SPANISH BANKER kidnapping - Jean Weir & Ariane Gransac released on provisional liberty awaiting trial. Postcards still to Octavio Alberola Sunilach, Prison de Fresnes, 1 Av. de la Division Leclerc, Fresnes, France.

DUBLIN ANARCHISTS, Bob Cullen (7yrs) Des Keane (5 yrs), Columba Longmore (4 yrs). Letters, papers to Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp., Co. Kildare, Eire.

STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE Welfare Committee, Box 359, 240 Camden High St., London NW1. Needs donations to supply books for these long-term prisoners.

TRIAL DEFENCE: BWNIC Defence Group Box 69, c/o 197 Kings Cross Rd., London WC1 (01-837-9795 afternoons only) needs money to help 14 charged under Incitement to Disaffection Act.

GIOVANNI MARINI Defence Committee Paolo Braschi, C.P. 4263, 2100 Milano, Italy.

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