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BY ARTHUR MOYSE

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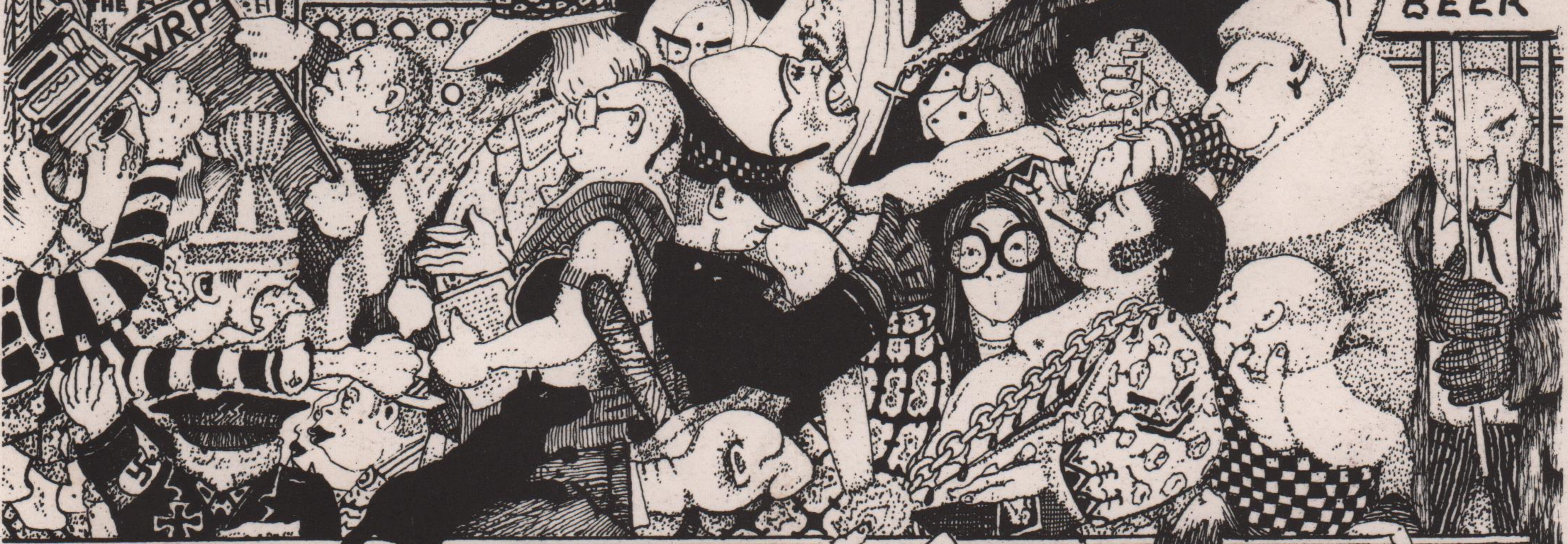
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ARTHUR MOYSE



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'Saucepan Vark Uncle Albert'

by Arthur Moyse

Whenever the police were making inquiries about me or the Man from the Ministry was beating on our door, my aunts would stand around my bed in their SS formation and tell me to pull myself together and to go to work for my uncles. "Uncles carbuncles," I would scream in my Scala Milan voice, "they never pay me wages," but my aunts would insist and the Man from the Ministry would breathe through the keyhole of the street door, so it was to my uncles that I would have to turn. "Sweet Mary Mother of Christ," I would cry in my passionate young Visconti voice, and my aunts would tell me to cut out the filthy language and to wash my dirty mouth out and to telephone Uncle Philip for work for my dainty lily white hands. And I would do my call girl act and do a peek-a-boo from under the sheets and say that I would go and work for my Uncle Albert and my aunts would roar at me in their rich baritone voices that they would rather see me lying dead at their collective feet than that I should ruin my life and I would look up at my David Hockney forgery that I had painted on the ceiling in homage to Dick and Ben and point out that to lay in bed at three in the afternoon was a final rejection of a false morality. Good solid existentialist stuff but wasted on the old bats. If called upon I would kneel and pray before every cafe in the Charing Cross Road to prove my point that the only times in my life that I have made a worthwhile contribution to Western culture has been when I went to work for my Uncle Albert. I love that man and may my life's blood run in an endless stream from the ends of my fingers if I speak falsely. In him I see the mirror of my own futilities and failures. In him I hear the echo of that distant drum that beats out the measure of romantic revolt and through him I could see vast commercial empires rising and corrupt civilisations crashing into ruins for, to quote my cousin Joe Thomas, "Albert's one of the best". Oh boy, I have worked for my Uncle Albert and there are scars on my psyche to prove it, but no matter how bitter the quarrel I would always return to him, for no matter how often we stray from the true path we must always return. We who have drunk of the wine know that in the end we must return to the true Church just as in the secret of the confessional I have sought to make amends and find true peace as I poured out my innermost secrets to Father Murphy who is a pig ignorant potato-chewing Irish git and a moron. Oh boy, I have knelt in that confessional box and tried to debate with that peat bashing peasant concerning the validity of certain basic catholic doctrines and all he would do would be to stick his head round my side of the box and scream that I was a disgrace to my family and give me the old two fingered curse. On the lovely and simple flowers that are part of our English heritage I swear that my Uncle Albert has had a formative influence on my life and all my aunts can do is to roar at me to go work for my Uncle Philip and Uncle Vero. I will agree, and with my hand on Christiaan Barnard's heart I

swear this, that Uncle Albert and I have had our disagreements. There was the time when he wrote and told me to meet him in Ward's Irish pub in Piccadilly and bring my battery operated razor. I who had visions of massive gang war met him there and he told me of his dream for carving out a new entertainment empire that would make our fortunes and I asked him "Why the battery operated razor?" and Uncle Albert smiled that sweet gentle smile and said "We are on our way as of now" and our future for that black week was a van in a yard in the Berwick market. On its sides Pat Noland had painted in a dream of multi-colours Universal World Wide Enterprises and the huge legend THE GRAPPLING GRANNIES. I peered inside that van and even to this day I wake up screaming in the night at what I saw. There were four of them and not one under eighty years of age. They glared at me like unto cornered rats, four ancient grey haired females wearing mini skirts, cavalier hats and first world war General Service medals. The mind reeled as the old grey jelly lapped against the sides of the ivory cathedral of the skull and with hands outstretched I whispered to Uncle Albert, "In God's name where did you get them and why?" and my Uncle Albert smiled that gentle smile and whispered "Our fortunes are made, Arthur, for in the wrestling game no one has ever come up with an idea like this." Oh boy, oh boy, Sweet Children of the Poor, the picture he painted for me of town halls decorated with the flags of all the nations and snack bar concessions and a mob of fight fans killing each other to buy tickets to see GRAPPLING GRANNIES throw each other around the ring with every agonised hammerlock a pound note in the till, and I pictured that ghastly and ancient quartet making our fortunes while the crowd roared its applause as someone's mum went flying through the ropes to crash land on the hall floor. I walked out into the Berwick market and screamed and screamed my approval and all the short change artists at the fruit stalls shouted abuse and the managers of the porn book shops demanded that we should go away as it was a decent neighbourhood. And Uncle Albert told me that I was to be the referee for the bouts and that I should have my name on the programme as such: Magnificat o Glory and I was sick as I wept for joy for of this hour out of all men I had been chosen and the civil servants and the vicars crawled out of the basement blue film clubs and cried "Leave the poor little sod alone", but on the Gates of the Rivers of the World I was happy, I was happy. And we headed North along the M1 to the wild barbaric lands beyond Birmingham while behind us in the van prowled the four GRAPPLING GRANNIES. Whose was the failure I shall never know and I swear on the fruits on the tables of the ancient kings of Egypt that I did my part for I fed those ghastly creatures night and morning, booked the halls and cut the cheese rolls for the snack bars but in the name of Bach and Harry Hopeful, a dear friend

of mine when I was young, we failed. THE GRAPPLING GRANNIES fought, by the good god above Battersea power station they fought, in every pub from here to Glasgow. They fought everybody but each other and the smashing of beer glasses shall be the Freudian trigger to explain my final descent into the world of mental oblivion as Father Murphy so happily said will be my lot if there is a God and him with the IRA rifles under the altar and most of the bingo takings ending up in a Camden Town knocking shop for sure now but isn't it meself that's after seeing him with the wet raincoat and the wild Fenian songs upon his lips and old Mother Carney flogging the empties and keeping the money instead of buying candles for my relations to light their way to hell. But in the ring THE GRAPPLING GRANNIES would fight no one. On due reflection I think that the mistake we made was to have too many Union Jacks around the halls for every time the four GRAPPLING GRANNIES climbed into the ring for me to introduce them and me in my black bow tie and my Irish accent their membership of the Conservative Party took over. Poor brain washed hags.

There they would stand with their skinny arms raised in the Hitler salute and the Churchill V sign as they screamed out verse after verse of *Jerusalem Jerusalem* with a *Knees up Mother Brown* for the finale and then they shouted anti-working class abuse at the audience of the evening. It had to end and the night that we saw Rothermine Town Hall going up in flames and the four GRAPPLING GRANNIES outlined against a wall of flame with half the audience to burn with them we knew that the time had come to cut our losses and as we wandered back to the van, Uncle Albert and I, to make our way back to the Big Smoke with the screams of *Jerusalem Jerusalem* mocking us down the M1 I knew that a dream had become dust. I who have lain my fingers on the grave of Marx and spoken to Tony Smythe cannot for these reasons lie, for it is not in our nature and with quiet and transparent honesty I told my aunts the true story and all they did was to stand around my bed and abuse me and call me liar as I played peek a boo from the the sheets and my aunts cried in their collective voice that I could not have been shanghaied by a Norwegian whaler sailing from the pool of London and sold back to Joe Lyons as slave labour for Joe Lyons is a union factory now. And they phoned oh boy they phoned my Uncle Philip and my Uncle Vero, each on her bended knee, and it was arranged dear Mother of Ten Thousand Tears that I should work for them. Of my innocence and of my strength I said "What was the pay?" and they looked at me with disgust and said in their collective voice "You filth". It was a good job I suppose but not for me, for there is within me that wild and wonderful gypsy strain that two pints of Guinness always brings out but I took my photograph of Brenda Mercer, who I love very much, my Nicolas Walter genuine signature and my New Statesman reproduction of Dali's *St. John the Cross* and marched head high to my uncles Cat Psychiatric Treatment Centre in Happy Hampstead. It was impressive with the white wood floors and the single tulip in the Swedish flower bowl and I had my reception desk and my pen and my empty ink-well and my life lay mapped before me. For the first hour I must admit that I liked the life as I sat there in my neat dark suit with my hair brushed back looking like a younger version of George Melly but one broods in solitude and on the shadow of the saints I brooded for no one consulted me.

My Uncle Vero is a quiet and gentle man whom, for that reason, I have always lived in fear of for my uncouthness becomes public property in his civilised presence for his charm and his intelligence has a sophistication that my proletariat mind shrinks from for I can never imagine him lying on a pavement in a drunken stupor or wasting the hours in raucous arguments with complete strangers. It was my Uncle Philip that we were all supposed to fear and I think he loved that public image of himself. Handsome, dignified, well dressed and with his neat sailor beard he was a man to be respected. Each word he spoke was clearly and cleanly spoken and the music of his voice has swayed many a meeting and many a rebel conference has carried a resolution and afterwards wondered in god's name what they accepted. In the name of the Roses of Rome I admired and feared those two uncles of mine but oh boy they were sitting on a gold mine with their Cat Psychiatric Treatment Centre. At five guineas a time they could not lose as the ancient bats from Hampstead, St John's Wood and Kensington Gore carried in their barmy cats to be psycho-analysed. By the hour and on the hour they sailed in through those double glazed doors with their crazy cooty cats leering through the velvet lined cat baskets. Obese slobbs of cats that had gone off their chicken giblets, black evil looking bastards that tried to have sexual relations with the neighbours' alsatian dogs, weary looking Persians that would not go out into the dank November fog but insisted on doing their oo ah on the Turkish carpets. And all patients in residence. No one consulted me at my desk, with my photograph of Brenda Mercer, and I would sit and listen to the voices of my uncles as they dug deep into the psyche of those crazy flea bags but at night I would return to that empty Centre and give those dim moggies my own variation of the old Condition Reflex treatment. Old Oo Ah never ooahed any more after I put my boot under his but and the character who would not eat his chicken giblets found that his daily diet of nourishing food disappeared as soon as my uncles grabbed their umbrellas and their brief-cases and legged it for their home fires and the arms of their loved ones. As for the black rapist of the canine tribe I did things to that cat that De Sade never dreamed up and believe me old Black Beauty finished his week nun pure in thought and deed and I never got one penny of the five guineas fees. There is that point in human affairs that the sensitive mind finally balks at and mine was a ginger tom in for long term observation as a suspected shit eater. He was a harmless character and would sit all day on his chair in the outer office with me and my photograph of Brenda Mercer. Come ten o'clock and my Uncle Philip would crash dive into the office without bothering to open or close the doors and that poor ginger mog would rear up on his hind legs and stand rigidly to attention. Each morning and each evening Ol' Ginger sprang to parade ground attention and by the Lilies of Christ my heart cried out for him for I knew that one day Ol' Ginger would try to salute my Uncle Philip as he tore past and come that day the fabric of my soul would be rent apart and all that I hold holy would go for a burton. That day came and I wept as I said goodbye to Ol' Ginger and I picked up my photograph of Brenda Mercer and my New Statesman reproduction of *St. John the Cross* and made for Freedom and the new life that only my Uncle Albert could promise me. My uncles said that they turfed me out because I used to piss out of the window instead of using the lavatory but on the shadows of the saints it is not true it is not true

Maybe once or twice I did stand at the high window and direct the flowing stream over Michael Horovitz and Jack Robinson as they staggered by loaded down with back numbers of *New Departures* one selling one buying but only in fun and if on occasions I tried to sign my name in water on the pavement below who could condemn me, but never instead of the bog Uncle Philip and Uncle Vero, never instead of the bog. So it was back to Ward's Irish pub in Piccadilly and my Uncle Albert. He was waiting for me and as we drank our Guinness he outlined his latest and greatest magnificent scheme for making his fortunes and my fame. "A travelling strip-tease show no less, Arthur, and my face shone with the light of pure joy at the thought of all that naked rhubarb waiting for the touch of my soft white hands. We drank deep of Ward's holy water until Uncle Albert led me to that same yard in the Berwick market. "Have you got your battery operated razor?" my Uncle Albert asked and I gave my simple peasant smile as he swung open the doors of the yard. There was the van repainted by good ol' Pat Noland proclaiming *the most exciting show on earth. All the mysteries of the harem. Paris by night. The show that London dare not show. GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS*. I was panting like a dog as Uncle Albert swung open the doors of the van for me and there they sat eating their fish and chips GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS. There was Durga Singh, fifty, short, fat and a pathological liar. Mrs Rivers, ex-shop steward, rat thin, over-painted and as bald as an egg and Molly. I shall never remember her other than as Molly with her misty fading blonde hair, her trembling little smile and her pale sky blue childlike eyes merging into that face of pure simple minded innocence. So infantile in her talk and her actions yet so sweet in everything she did, she was one of God's creatures doomed to be the unresisting toy of any foul hand that wished to play. And not one under fifty years of age. But there was excitement in the air that spring morning and dear God to be alive in that gallant company was paradise enough. We packed the tinned foods and the tinned beers and the prepared posters and with the GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS in the back of the van and Uncle Albert and I and my battery operated razor in the cab made for the M1, a brave new world and adventure such as the ancient conquistadors dreamed of. And it paid off as we went from hall to hall to town after town. The tape recorder would unwind the songs of the day and Durga Singh, Mrs Rivers and Molly would go into their acts of dropping their tatty costumes piece by piece until the great moment in that art when they would stand starkers on the drafty stage of the night. Durga with her huge gut and her massive breasts hamming her Indian love dances under a permanent film of sweat. Mrs Rivers, cold eyed and mechanical, jerking her tiny paps and her black wig to the beat of the tape recorded music as she counted the number in the audience and Molly so beautiful so white rose faded and so hopeless as she waved her little hands, like lost butterflies, out of time to the music's beat. At each performance I would stand at the back of the hall of the evening behind the gathering of local yobs and watch my Molly expose her small apple rounded breasts for these creatures yet knowing that she felt nothing for her pale blue eyes peered fixedly and short sightedly into the spot light above the brute stage. It was as if a child was being degraded and at those moments I knew shame. But one must live. At nights we slept in the van a mass of sweating snoring bodies and in the darkness I prayed that Molly did

not snore. In the cool mornings we would slouch out to empty our bladders and cook our food for constant familiarity had dulled our sensitivities. It was at night after the shows that I grew to love as we sat in the van drinking our beers and eating our fish and chips for I would hold Molly's unresisting hand as Uncle Albert told us of the fortunes to be made in the Welsh valleys and Durga Singh sat and wrote her anonymous poison pen letters to the various officials of the towns we had left and Mrs Rivers worked out her share of the evening's take at the box office. By the nails of the glorious dead I had grown to hate our calvary through those drear god rejected English industrial towns and for the first time in my life I had learned to hate a particular audience but Uncle Albert, and in the name of all that is faithful I love that man, breathed fresh life into our dying dream as he told us of the wealth and the wonders that waited for us in those puritanical Welsh valleys. So with youth at the wheel, beauty at the prow and a song on our tape recorder we shed the cold and heavy breathing audiences of the Five Towns as we jerked along the M50 to the land of mystery and song and over-sexed mountain goats. It was Uncle Albert who made us first conscious that we were now in Wales for to each passing stranger he would called out "Saucepan vark" and they would shrug their shoulders and answer "Sospan fach?" and stumble on into history. I asked Uncle Albert what "saucepan vark" meant and he smile his gentle smile and said "It is a native greeting Arthur and no matter what the question or the query just give them the saucepan vark and they know you come as a friend." I used it but once in a small general store and a huge primitive brute sold me a "little saucepan". I raised an eyebrow but the neanderthaloid druidical reject lowered his eyebrows over me and stated "You asked for a sospan fach man give me the money". I bought that tin sospan fach but pride would not let me tell Uncle Albert how I came to buy it and as we made our way into the primitive interior of Wales and I listened to Uncle Albert's constant cries of "Saucepan vark man" I wondered what he would do if and when he received his first little saucepan. It came to the night for our first show and we parked our van outside the centre of the small town, drank our beer and ate our tin food and Uncle Albert dressed in his black coat and hat and with myself, his umbrella and his brief case made our way to the Working Men's Club to book up our engagement for the Saturday night show. Uncle Albert had written to inform them that he could provide entertainmen for tthe Working Men's Clubs of the valley and this club was to be our blast off into the sack of Welsh fairy gold. There they sat as we took our seats at the committee table: ten men union strong and on each face a puritanical mask fashioned by centuries of hunger, work and a fear of God. My Uncle Albert went into his prepared spiel and told them of the beauty of our three dancing girls, of the educational value of their erotic dances and of the free front seats for all the members of the committee, watch committee, fire brigade and the Town Hall staff. And we were rejected. I swayed on my feet and Uncle Albert breathed "Saucepan vark" in unbelieving horror as these godly men politely, firmly and with a wealth of *bachs* told us, in effect, to go and get stuffed. They were a decent godly people, they said, and never as long as they formed the committee would they allow naked nude London women to parade in their entertainment room. What they did in London they hinted was not their concern but they remembered the nineteen thirties, "Ay man ay". I threw

my arms up in despair and appealed to the ceiling as a Court of Last Resort but it was of no avail but my Uncle Albert merely bowed his head and walked to the door. At the door he paused and asked "May we appeal to you one last time, say this time tomorrow gentlemen?" and the just ten nodded their heads. I am a creature of panic and emotion and for me we had lost but my Uncle Albert was unperturbed as the following day we drove up in the van with the three GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS. We filed into the hall and my uncle laid his black hat on the committee table and with a slight bow waved Durga Singh, Mrs Rivers and Molly to the wing of the entertainment room stage. "We are alone gentlemen" he whispered "and at least let us perform our act just once". Those godly men protested but they were honest and fair and without expressions on their stern yet kindly faces they sat and watched as the GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS went through their pathetic act. And when it came to the high point of the act and the final disrobing their spokesman rose and shook his grey head but Uncle Albert clicked his fingers and Durga Singh, Mrs Rivers and Molly dropped their tatty fans and in place of their G strings was their ENSA union cards. O sweet China sweet China my Uncle Albert was wonderful and his soft voice rang through that committee room as he spoke of the struggles and the battles of the unions. He told of scum employers and of the wicked blacklists of the long strikes and the sell out by union leaders through fear or greed. He spoke of what had been fought for and the small things that had been won and the battles that lay before us as union men. Then with one swift sweep of his

arm he pointed to Durga Singh, Mrs Rivers and Molly with their union cards hanging from their waists, and nothing else, and cried, "Would you deny your fellow workers the same right that you claim for yourself. Each one is a union member and holds a union card and must I go back to London and tell them that their fellow workers in Wales are victimising them and blacklisting them". Uncle Albert did not ask it as a question but made it as a statement and I knew from the agonised faces of the ten Welsh men that he had won. We did our show that night in polite silence and the next week another town and then another. And my love for Molly grew but that poor sweet fool could never understand and my soul wept each time I saw her naked on those stages. We stopped one night in the empty darkness of the Welsh hills so that I could piss when without warning the van drove off with Uncle Albert, Durga Singh, Mrs Rivers and Molly leaving me isolated and lost among those black hills. Hear me Jack and Mary Stevenson, John Rety, Mary Canipa, Peter and Gladys Turner, Graham Moss and all those at Better Books in God's name hear me for I am lost among these dark forsaken hills. Behind me lies my awful aunts and Ol' Ginger and the Cat Centre and before me the black and aching void of eternal nights in this Welsh hell. The black walls of these broken mountains turn even the star fled sky into my cage for I am as nothing in an eternity of night when the very silence hammers upon my bowed head and the only sound is the dying echo of my Uncle Albert's "Saucepan vark saucepan vark" fading fading fading fading fading fading fading fading.

Every revolutionary movement is dedicated to the destruction of the existing State and the social order of the day. How it will achieve this end is determined by the morality of the revolutionaries for if the means are evil then no matter how pure the revolutionary ideals the end will be evil for violence is a-moral and once one has sanctioned its use to gain one's own ends then one has given one's opponents the justification to include the bomb and the bullet in their dialogue. Despite the theologians and the politicians good does not triumph in the end and the permanent revolution of Milton and Trotsky against the forces of human fallibilities must always be fought that good for a brief while might make itself felt and seen and that in the eternal human struggle it will make the battles less bitter for within every human society lies the cancer of personal ambition and the desire to accumulate material wealth and personal power for oneself and one's seed through a newly created class structure and there was a knocking on the front door. They stood there against the facade of decaying houses as the browned skinned children shouted the hours away in the car packed gutters and my dog panted and sniffed around the feet upon the step. One listened to the flat statement that they were police officers and caught a brief and indifferent glimpse of their police warrant card as without invitation they walked into the house. All the myths of civil liberties, parliamentary rights, Magna Carta and the whole joke book of personal freedoms became so much shit house paper as the plain clothed police of the Special Branch walked in. One trailed behind them as they tread softly into one's private domain and without invitation or permission began to search one's two untidy book littered rooms. They opened drawers, turned out dusty cupboards, fingered old and faded photographs with the indifferent air of men hardened to human suffering for a well paid weekly wage. They flipped, without understanding, the pages of the mass ranks of art catalogues and asked in the flat indifferent voices of the universal police private and public questions. Who was in this photograph and the face of one's dead mother watched my mouth for the answer, did one know this man and did one know that man, did one know that a certain man was a maniac, what did one do in the war, where did one serve and how and all the while they pried behind the books and the cupboards, opened the cake tins counted the empty beer bottles and examined the spaces behind the tins of food of one's lonely existence. And all the time they jotted down their own answers on small pieces of paper for their Special Branch files. And there was nothing to find but one more flat had been turned over on the orders of the political party in government power. We drifted to the door and the street with the dark brown children and my dog panted among us out and onto the dirty pavement to cock an impatient leg. For the men of the Special Branch it was part of the morning's work, a long report and one more tiny piece of grist for the huge State files on social and political non conformists and for the moment their work was ended and we stood on the pavement watching the dog pissing and made with the small talk like relations at the funeral of one we all hated. We talked of official bureaucracy and they complained of the paper work that matters like mine entailed and that they now had to write magistrate's court instead of police court and I tried to explain to them that men and women should believe that there was this separation between the enforcers of the Law and its administration and interpretation and I talked of Orwell and of Kafka on that dirty pavement but the names and the

attitude were meaningless to them. They left with their jotted notes for their long report and one was conscious for the first time of the dryness of one's lips and of the little sickness within the stomach and in that moment of time one was conscious of one's vulnerability and the knowledge that one is a trapped animal within the economic and social framework of one's living made itself terribly felt. It is for that reason that we know that we must not only continue to protest but to publicly proclaim for, in our small, frightened and lonely way, we have chosen to stand up and be counted and on one particular and, in the world of political religious and social persecution, insignificant battle we have not failed ourself. No longer is the knocking on the door by the State Police a matter of fiction to be returned to some whey faced A Level hack of a public librarian, no longer are the political biographies and autobiographies matters of academic interest for in one's small and frightened way one has become part of the history of social protest that was old when Egypt was young and that men spoke of in the sun washed squares of Greek cities before Christ was born. We had been our own witness to the State in action and the knock on the door that woke the Catholic in Elizabeth's England, the Jew and the Gentile the trade unionist and the socialist in Hitler's Germany, the social democrat and the anarchist in Stalin's Russia, the negro in Africa, the Irishman in Holy Ireland and the editorial staff of OZ and the voices and the activists of the Left in England's green and tory land. And it is the knowledge that that knocking on our own street door meant that we shall not have lived our life in vain for our voice has been heard in the land and we have been heeded by the full and awful majesty and machinery of the State and to hell with them. In all things that are matters of concern to the heart and the mind there is always Ward's Irish pub beneath the ruins of Piccadilly Circus and within that basement I descended to shut out the world of history and the State. There was the framed photograph of Michael Collins in his place of honour and there was Desmond the manager, the Lady behind the Snack Counter and Kathleen voluptuous in her green overall padding through the gentle Irish with her plates of salt pork and potatoes. When the Guinness fills the troubled mind I ask nothing more of life than to be allowed to sit back and watch Kathleen padding past my hazed line of vision. So plump and jolly with her beautiful bum swinging to its own rhythm with each step and my moment is when she sees me and gives me her private and erotic smile and she is lost in the crowd of Irish labourers with her plate of salt pork and potatoes, her slippers and her beautiful green cloaked twitching bum. It was Roger Sandell who brought news of the tribunal into the crowded sub world of Ward's pub. His feet pounded down the narrow steps and as we all waited, glasses in hand, he quickly followed. I waved an empty glass and Roger waived his annotated copies of the weekly press and Desmond the manager cried out "Fill the gentleman's glass" and the voices of three loyal Irish barmen cried out "We will that sir god bless you sir". We waited until Roger found his breath and sipped his pint of Guinness in his bird like fashion. We all waited for the news from Roger even the Lady behind the Snack Counter and there was a terrible silence within Ward's Irish pub. We waited god in Holborn we waited for drinking a glass of beer with Roger is less of a pleasure than a planned career but as with all men he finally finished and inquired if we had read the day's editorial in the Times. There were cries of no no no and a Wexford boy smashed his glass upon the floor demanding to know what the British had done in their latest



ARTHUR MOYSE

SEARCH
WARRANT
SIGNED
18-1-1971 *

POLICE
WARRANT

historic and futile battle against the Irish people and Roger answered that it was nothing really just an interesting point about dollar devaluation. There was a hard and brutal silence within Ward's pub and Desmond the manager began to put the glasses under the counter and the Lady Behind the Snack Bar Counter quickly removed the knives but Roger quickly realised his geographical error to cry that "The trots are demanding that Digger Walsh shall be placed on trial before a revolutionary tribunal of the people". Kathleen halted with her plate of salt pork and potatoes and only her lovely bum swinging gently to and fro to ask "Who the hells the Trots?" and from the mass of the Irish workers came a cry of "Who the hells Digger Walsh?". I leaped to my feet with a cry of anger and climbing onto the beer wet bar told the story of Digger Walsh. I told of the story of this young Australian revolutionary and of his battle for the Irish people. I told of old battles, past battles and battles to be fought. Of demonstrations in the name of freedom, of mass protests and of the silent leaflets and I told of Digger Walsh and the Irish lads within Ward's pub swore vengeance against the Trots, the British government and the Church of England and swore to fight and die as one man in defence of Digger Walsh. And I led Sandell up the narrow steps into Piccadilly while from the basement came the sounds of the rebel songs and half a hundred voices swore to defend Digger Walsh come what may. Only the Greek Bishop cast a jeering note into the loyal scene for he leaned on the Piccadilly railings and in his high Welsh voice screamed Latin curses at us. He was a man outside the pale now for despite Desmond and his loyal barmen and the pleas of the catholic Fathers who bend the saintly elbow down in Ward's the Greek Bishop was definitely out in the cold. I do not know the truth of the matter and abler men than myself might know the true story but it is said that the Greek Bishop was seen to be diluting his Guinness with Holy Water and when the Lady in Charge of the Snack Counter was engaged in throwing out an English drunk of turning her pork pies into the consecrated bread of the Eucharist. True or false the world will never know but this I do know that the holy water I sold the Greek Bishop came straight from Ward's own lavatory tap but if one believes one believes and as for the pork pies they have lain there to many long years ever to be eaten by men so as objects of devotion they could at least share a place with all the other false relics of all the True Faiths. But the Greek Bishop would not have it and he leaned on the Piccadilly railings in the full glory of his Bishop's robes and screamed his petty insults at us as he scraped away at the stigmata wounds in the palms of his hands with his ancient penknife. But we were indifferent and only halting long enough for Roger Sandell to quote to him, in full, The Life and Teachings of St John o' the Cross by Jim Hugget Kropotkin Press we went to seek the help, aid and advice of my Uncle Albert. In moment of great stress and strain I have always turned to my Uncle Albert for his advice. True I have never followed it but in my heart I know that in the end, no matter what the score, that good and noble man will be vindicated. It was a time of great upheaval within the Left with the Tory government ready and willing for a show down and Police raids, house searchings, the arrest of editors of the underground press and all the miserable show of brute power by a political clique in office had thrown the Left in a mood of uncertainty and of defeatism. My Uncle Albert, and how I love that man, was more than a victim of police pressure as friends and acquaintances of his were arrested in the full glare of newspapers pre trial judgements and his ability to

communicate through the printed word became curtailed. In the great and honoured tradition of those persecuted by the State my Uncle Albert had moved from the public scene to a new and unknown address. Over the years how many men and women had had to flee from their known haunts to avoid or to seek relief from public pressures that was not of their making for there are no honoured religious retreats for the Left only a packed suitcase and a journey into the jungle of the city and an alien room in a stranger's house. But Roger and I knew that we had to find my Uncle Albert for without him we were lost so like lost children we made our way to Charing Cross Road and Better Books to buy our copy of Freedom. There within its public notice column was my Uncle Albert's new and secret underground address for our eye's only and casting a furtive glance in the direction of Lee Harwood poemwriting in Calder's time we hastily wrote down my Uncle Albert's new and secret underground address. Call them what you will but the people of London are quick to man the streets in defence of their freedoms and their own people and the duplicated leaflets carried our call to arms until the final telephone call and the final leaflet had been issued and we watched the men and women of London beginning to assemble in Trafalgar Square to seek aid and advice from my Uncle Albert. They were all there the old guard and the young and beardless boys from the universities and the colleagues clutching their copies of Mills on Liberty in one hand and their Westminster Bank Student Cheque Book in the other and with bands playing, banners flying and ten thousand loyal throats roaring out the marching version of Greensleeves we made our secret way to my Uncle Albert's new and secret underground address. The police the police ah god they were every where in drag and jeans and hippy hair wigs. They hid in doorway and peered from the tops of buses. They took our photographs as we marched and borrowed our ball point pens to make out their over time dockets but with bands playing our black and scarlet banners flying and ten thousand lips blowing raspberries we finally avoided them. My Uncle Albert was waiting for us as we eased our thousands into his new and secret underground flat and with tears streaming from our collective eyes we asked what we should do. My Uncle Albert is a revolutionary of the old school who refuses to come to terms with any form of revisionism or weakening of the revolutionary doctrine. He has often called for the expulsion from the anarchist movement of those who he feels are unworthy of its name and in those moments one comes to fear his eye and his pen for I believe that we must tolerate the frailties of our fellow men to be tolerated in our turn but my Uncle Albert is the true vessel of the wine of the revolution, the cold hard white and ever burning flame that cannot and will not accept that those who have chosen a certain path can be allowed to err. We told him that the Trotskyists were demanding that Digger Walsh should come before a revolutionary tribunal of the people to be examined by certain chosen judges of the revolutionary movement and that my Uncle Albert could be the only one to advice us. My Uncle Albert pursed his lips and asked where Digger Walsh was at this water shed of revolutionary history and ten thousand voices shouted out that Old Digger was at that moment banging on the door of Freedom Press in search of character witnesses. My Uncle Albert was lying in bed clad in his black and scarlet night-shirt and with his straw boater continental fashion over one eye and as we waited he answered that, "The revolutionary tribunal of the people must take its historic course". It was a sober and awe inspiring moment and even the Irish paused

to listen. Only the Greek Bishop continued to scream insults from the heartland of my Uncle Albert's crowded flat. There was work to be done and messengers flew in all directions seeking messages to deliver. There were halls to be hired, leaflets to be printed and attacks and defences to be fashioned for Digger to use in the great trial. Only Digger Walsh was now unmoved by it all. He is an extremely likeable person, intelligent but over emotional. His tongue can be to bitter yet one knows that it is his own internal uncertainties that makes him use insults and schoolboyish abuse that he must regret hours later. Of medium height, fair haired and casually yet neatly dressed his spectacles and the intensity of his voice with the most trivial utterances give him the air of a teacher feared yet respected by his pupils. He can dominate a crowded meeting with his passion yet his arguments on examination appear to be emotional and shallow and in time of stress and of active need his place is with the organising groups and not the militant activists indifferent to the polemics and the theories that seeks to direct their action. But my Uncle Albert had spoken and all London knew that Digger would accept the Trotskyists demand for a Revolutionary Tribunal of the People. It was impossible to find the charge against Old Digger for it was but one of those cheap and silly rumours that had been born through one man in London, picked up by a French Trotskyist paper in Paris and sad sad sad reprinted by an anarchist magazine back in London. It was a type of evil rumour that should have been allowed to die the death but it has been to freely circulated to be ignored and now there was the demand for a Revolutionary Tribunal and Digger was willing and able to meet it with a clear conscious and the knowledge that we supported him ten thousand strong and to hell with the trots.

Every revolutionary movement is created and exists with a justifiable fear for always within its ranks are those who offer other views and other paths to achieve victory. It is the saving grace of the anarchist movement that in rejecting power they cannot seek to destroy each other for the spoils of office. It is a dark bypass of revolutionary history that to many good and noble men and women have been destroyed by their fellow revolutionaries in the name of the revolution. Always there is the whisper of police spies, of revisionism, of sell outs, of personalities cults and all the other garbage language of those who seek to defy their society and in doing so fear first the stranger and then the friend. It is for that reason and that reason alone that we must not only tolerate each others failings but show a christian charity to those who cannot measure up to histories demands. The man that runs when the mounted police charge the demonstration, the man that dare not sign the article that others will distribute and that unfortunate man who in the public trial cannot accept the terror of the States machinery of punitive punishment. The trade union card holder who cannot face the long strike and a complaining family, the middle class comrade who sees his whole social world collapsing through his actions while less economically committed comrades can pack their sleeping bag and walk away, for him there must be a necessary understanding. The history of the revolution as an underground movement is a history of canards and of unrecorded sacrifices. It is a history of men who betrayed each other to prove a debating point and of men who have gone to their death with the knowledge that their particular sacrifice was no more than a sacrifice but if they failed to offer their own lives to the revolution then lesser comrades might fail when the need was greater. And so the Revolutionary Tribunal of the People was called into being. Hall by hall was

suggested and reject by either faction, with only old Digger remaining indifferent to its local, until the use of the Hayward Gallery was accepted. This huge, gaunt Art Council ruin of a gallery that had housed so many indifferent art exhibitions was a building meant to house a revolutionary tribunal in the twentieth century. Here was no Danton, only a revolutionary age dominated by Marats and Robespierres with a St Just waiting in the shadows for his moment to physically exterminate any opposition,

We are of that age when men can still say that they knew Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Radek, Tomshy, Tukhachevshy and so many a hundred dedicated revolutionaries and the revolution in power destroyed them with a bullet. The revolution feeds off its own children and for our own salvation we must reject the right to stand in judgement on each other. But the great tribunal for the delight of the mob was set in motion. The Arts Council cleared out all the dead fish from the Living Sculpture tanks and washed the priceless abstracts off the walls. I.T.V. and the B.B.C. 2 fixed the music hall seating and the lighting and signed the contracts for the television rights. The New Statesman gave their support to the mounting of the tribunal and the Guardian asked for a press ticket. The Poets for the Revolution acting under orders of Michael Horowitz stated that they intended to write a collective epic with alternate lines by Tom Phillips, Adrian Henri, Jeff Nuttall with a twenty thousand work introduction by Michael Horowitz and Lee Harwood and Adrian Mitchell wrote a protest to the Times Lit. Sup. On the day that the Revolutionary Tribunal of the People was to be held we of the London Federation of Anarchists assembled in the Whitechapel High Street. A band of mass lutes from the Squatters Commune assembled to lead us and with my Uncles Colin, Philip and Vero in the lead and with Digger Walsh marching head high between Peter Turner and Jack Robinson we began to march. Brenda Mercer sang sad highland laments and strewed our path with rose petals and Graham Moss, Alison and Morris tossed Kiki into the air all two years of her, to see us march by. John Rety read out messages of support from Stuart Christie and Mary Canipa wept. We marched over Waterloo Bridge head high and with lutes screaming and our black and scarlet banners mocking the grey sky. We assembled in the great bleak concrete hall of the Hayward Gallery a minority as ever among those who would seek to destroy us for political ends but we were not afraid. There among the mass of television wire and screaming television directors we stood made noble by our stand for our comrade. The notorious butch branch of the Gay Liberation Movement were there to act as stewards and chucker outs and these huge razor scarred men dressed in their usual nun's habits of Sisters of the Rose swung their rubber truncheons and blew tainted kisses to their friends in the press box.

It was a bad, and a sad day for the revolutionary movement when they publicly sought to destroy a fellow comrade for we and old Digger were not afraid. We of the elite stood with old Digger at his table while Jack Robinson and Laurens Otter prepared their notes. The butch squad of the Gay Liberation Movement swung their rubber truncheons. Keith Nathan rose to protest, John Rety was ejected, Brenda Mercer and George Melly sang the Song of Solomon, Ronald Sandell quoted The First Book of Moses called Genesis. Members of the Arts Council moved among the restive audience trying to sell full coloured catalogues and Mary Canipa began making tea.

Digger Walsh rose to his feet carefully ruffle his hair and opened his brief case and the Revolutionary Tribunal of the People was now in open session.

The day they burned down my Uncle Albert

by Arthur Moyse

There was a time when men for the most noble of motives and for the highest principles would stake out some open place on a public square and having, with the aid of willing friends, doused themselves in petrol, would apply the match. And the uncommitted applauded and the young girls wept and sang and the political opposition pledged a fresh allegiance to the current cause and to the flag. Oh boy oh boy how we of the philistine West loved it as we sat before our rented television sets and watched the Holy Joe of the hour curling like frying bacon in the heat o' that noon day sun. In an abstraction of static shadows and lined sunlight this act filled our screens and vied with Coronation Street, Twenty Four Hours and the soap powder advertisements for our divided attention and to the listening world we cried the nobility of the fresh fried mystics and in our hearts we murmured "You stupid bastards you stupid bastards." My evil aunt loved this demonstration of eastern morality at its crispest and purest for she has a political morality that adheres to that most basic of primitives solutions in that she believes and constantly advocates the physical destruction of all forms and manners of opposition, nay even voiced or suggested dissension, and when she speaks, as dear Christ she does so long and so often, she speaks with the voice of a God of the Old Testament demanding the destruction, man, woman and child yea even to the swaddling infant. King Herod and the Sunday Times she dismissed as nothing more than front men and organisations for fellow travelling liberalism and in her black and evil heart there burns a greasy candle in honour of Hitler that glows a little brighter as her black hatred for the human race gives her a cause to live for. It is a cheap and canting slogan of the progressive liberals that we all share the guilt of the world's evils and this I savagely reject. When every grave is reopened and the butchered dead mock their murderers, when every child that is beaten to death stands forth in its bloody misery, when every old woman who died in deliberately fostered misery and loneliness comes forward to ask why, the liberal spokesman for the uncaring waves a practiced hand of horror and concludes with the conscious saving clause that we are all guilty. And this I reject bitterly and angrily for oh my brothers I am not guilty of other's crimes and I accept no responsibility for them. I believe, most passionately, that there is a moral goodness that we are aware of and that many more than we would admit try to live by this morality. I would hold that if there is evil in the world and in the hearts of men then it must follow that there is good in the world and in the hearts of men and if of my weakness I cannot claim a share in that universal goodness then I can at least claim the right to reject any part of the deliberate and practiced evils of others. When I see an old woman tending a sick cat, when I see that continuing news photograph of a bending peasant within the universal flow of refugees carrying a sick and helpless fellow human on his thin starved back then my contempt for the well fed, well clothed liberal sharing the world's evil, at a distance, becomes manifest. It was at the Whitechapel conference of the Anarchist Federation that some bird brain voiced the suggestion that some one should emulate the mystics of the newsworthy east by setting a western example for a do-it-yourself

immolation. Who made the suggestion no one ever knew but on the fingers of the five virgins I have my silent suspicions. I also had a theory that the idea was born in a Guinness glass in Wards Irish pub beneath Piccadilly when the heart is lighter and the tongue easier. It may have been offered as a simple jest rather than a constructive solution to the political morality of the hour but for all that it floated in the beer-happy air. To burn for God and Country as a theoretical abstraction is the most pleasing of thoughts as one dreams of one's self flaming to glowing glory to a musical background of Hollywood choirs, a storm cloud of scarlet flags and the applause of Michael Collins, Sergei Nechayev and Queen Elizabeths One and Two. We sat in Wards pub and drank and drank the holy water and the brogues became thicker and the idea more worthwhile. Only the hero martyr of the hour was needed for a gallon of petrol and a match and the cause must have that human touch that goes with all good cooking to make it valid. We talked and we talked and all that wealth of wit, brilliant conversation and peasant cunning filled the Irish pub beneath London's Piccadilly Circus and while we talked the hours died outside in the crowded London streets. No one denied the magnificence of the idea and from the floor and the pub lavatory floated the slurred voices of gaelic volunteers eager and willing to burn themselves and London for Irish unity and freedom but it came to nothing for the beer would extinguish any man made petrol. I asked Roger Sandell if he would burn for the cause and he quoted me an editorial from the Guardian, in full and complete with full stops, and we asked Desmond, the Wards pub manager if he would burn in as the star role and he smiled and drank his Guinness and shook his head and the Greek Bishop that the lads had locked in the tiny pub lavatory screamed that he would take no part in a heretical ceremony and he stood on the lavatory seat and we watched his be-ringed fingers crawling like bejewelled mice over the edge of the lavatory door as he screamed out our excommunication and cursed us with water from the flush system to give authority to his religious rank. But all pleasures become stale and we tired of squirting petrol lighter fluid under the lavatory door for each time we ignited it the Greek Bishop pulled the flush system chain and flooded the small lavatory for this most cunning man of the Greek Church had plugged all overflow pipes with his gay and colourful vestments. Perfidy perfidy we cried in the gaelic and beat on the lavatory door and the Greek Bishop swore back at us in Welsh and Roger Sandell quoted the editorial from the day's Daily Telegraph and we could hear the man weeping into the lavatory basin. The mark of all good military strategy is to know when to withdraw and we made our way back to the Whitechapel conference prepared to fight for every clause and against every clause on the agenda that anarchist groups from outside the smoke might try to debate. Who made the suggestion that some comrade should emulate the mystics of the east by publicly soaking themselves in petrol and applying the match no one will ever know but one was immediately conscious of the newly awakened excitement within the conference room as it became a matter of unscheduled debate. Swiftly the planning of the action took shape as the action took over the attention of the conference and without

hesitation it was decided that the plynth of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square should be the historic choice. I pleaded for the Albert Memorial on such a night as there was a program of wrestling at the Albert Hall in that it would guarantee a helpful and co-operative audience but I was over ruled and I wept into the lap of Brenda Mercer. A day and a cause was chosen and the wording of the hand-bills and the design of the posters was roughed out. I was happy as I swayed to my feet and drew on air ideas for an all purpose poster and Roger Sandell quoted from the editorial of the New York Times. The representatives from the Gay Liberation Front and the Woman's Liberation Movement put aside their sewing to join in the discussion and made plans for the evening social following on the burning and it was felt that in deference to the unknown departed only salads should be served. It was Jack Robinson, rational as ever, who halted the excitement of the meeting when he looked up from his notes to ask who the burnee was to be. O heart's sickness o heart's delight that in the mad excitement of the hour we had again forgotten to mark in the main character for our play. There were to be many volunteers for the high office and Mary Canipa refused to take part in the discussion on matters of principle so the meeting was thrown open to the floor and the names of volunteer burnees was asked for. There were too many volunteers and it became depressingly obvious that one would have to be chosen. Sadly we told the young gentlemen of the Gay Liberation Front and the pipe smoking dollies of the Woman's Liberation Movement that as guests they were not eligible for toasting in the Town's Square and they wept and flounced their skirts at us. A suggestion came from the floor that my Uncle Philip, my Uncle Vero and my Uncle Colin should be burned as a group and my Uncle Philip delayed the meeting for an hour as he prowled among the terrified audience demanding to know who had made the suggestion. Donald Roome offered his service but the thought of taking care of all his large family brought cries of protest from the conference treasurers. Keith Nathan and Sid Parker decided on a private burning while Laurens Otter and Jeff Nuttall were already flaming in Red Lion Square in a private but public performance to the singing of Adrian Mitchell, Bob Cobbing, Lee Harwood and Michael Horovitz as John Calder pleaded with them to sign a contract while the flames and the singing was still fresh. I do not know, and this I will swear on the toes of the murdered saints, who it was that put forward the name of my Uncle Albert for burning but I will swear that in the name of the children of poverty that it was not I. In the confused shouting and accusations within the room as various groups and individuals pressed their claim to burn for the public good I heard my Uncle Albert's name called out. He sat at the head of the long conference table behind a mass of papers and printed documents and I saw his eyes switch to the shouting members of the meeting. Throughout the conference he had sat silent and impassive with only his moving fingers betraying his emotions. His face still remained passive but for the first time I saw genuine anger in his eyes as they searched the conference room for the one who had shouted his name. I half rose to cry my protest and my innocence and with my shoulders and my hands made silent film comic motions to disassociate myself from the unknown voice. But it was unnecessary for my Uncle Albert was equal to the hour and the mood of the meeting. He sat at the table silently drumming his fingers on the conference table with a face that betrayed no sign of emotion then laying aside his pencil he rose to his feet.

Sweet Mary Mother of Christ how I loved the man for I knew that the hour was now his and that he would command. He spoke quietly and with confidence and we listened to each phrased sentence. He turned to a can of petrol that had, somehow, appeared within the conference room and dismissed it with a single disdainful wave of his hand. He derided those comrades who found their only outlet for violence in the legalised violence of the State or that violence sanctioned by public approval. He spoke of those European anarchists who had given their lives for the cause when the sunshine comrades melted away before the frown of public disapproval. He spoke long and earnestly and I loved and disagreed with every paragraph of it. It was when he came to the matter of the public burning that my Uncle Albert was most scornful and he poured his contempt on those who would destroy themselves and their organisation to win a doubtful approval from the liberal fellow travellers. It was now that he made his great and magnificent gesture as he lifted his chair onto the conference table then picking up the can of petrol he splashed a stream of petrol around the conference room. We were all silent for we knew what was to happen yet no man dare protest. Slowly my Uncle Albert climbed onto the conference table and with a sad little smile lit a match and tossed it into the damp stream of petrol. For seconds there was a blaze of dancing flame that died into a small forest of individual flames and the conference hall began to take fire. It was this that released our tongues and comrade after comrade, group after group attempted to command the floor while my Uncle Albert sat enthroned upon the conference table as the room burned around us. We knew that we had to stay and burn with my Uncle Albert and though the Anarchist Federation of Britain demanded to be allowed to stay we of the London Federation of Anarchists as the hosts of the conference demanded that this was but a personal matter and must be left to the LFA. Digger Walsh was elected press spokesman and while he gave out 'phoned interviews to the various news agencies Mary Canipa made coffee for the members of the LFA while Jack Robinson and Graham Moss made final arrangements over the issues of Anarchy. One by one the members of the Anarchist Federation of Britain took their leave from the blazing room and we shook hands and promised to write. They waved to my Uncle Albert seated in splendour on his seat on the conference table and then left to demonstrate on our behalf. We were alone in the blazing conference room and except for a casual conversation of small talk there seemed little to say in these last minutes. Roger Sandell quoted in full an article in last weeks Freedom and John Rety made a speech but only my Uncles Philip, Vero and Colin occupied themselves with Peter Turner in checking the printing bills for the month's issue of Freedom. Mary Canipa eased her way through the rising flames to serve coffee and Patch tried to piss out an encroaching flame but it was obvious that an era was ending. It was Superintendent Rodney Freshwater Bellmaster of the Political Branch of the Special Branch who, as always, ruined the high drama of history as, dressed in his hot pants drag outfit and leading a squadron of the Whitechapel Fire Brigade he doused my Uncle Albert's fires. We left the conference room wet and angry to question Rodney's right to use public fire services for police ends but it was a futile argument. Only my Uncle Albert seated upon his chair on the conference table alone within the smoking ruins of the burnt out conference room continued to smile.

In which I, the good Father Dom Sebastian LeFonge, Rancid Fat, Ancient Tears, Mame Valery and the barman of the Irish pub in Piccadilly discuss as to whether it is possible for good to come from evil.

By the gods we were giants in those days and that was over a month ago give or take a day and I can still recall as if it were only a month ago the day we sat in the Irish pub in Piccadilly. It was of course a Wednesday for it was on that day that we spent the morning stealing books from the poetry basement of Better Books in the Charing Cross Road. It is a pleasant occupation for gentlemen of leisure and of letters for we enjoyed browsing among the loaded shelves of American avant garde blank verse and the English provincial home brewed mystical cobblers and we would go through those volumes page by page fingering the old and caressing the new. A single phrase, some simpering line or a clever chapter heading would catch our eye and we would pass it to each other eager to share in the joy of a new found facet of another man's mind, before throwing the book aside in disgust.

And yet much as we loved literature we could not steal these books for the stark necessity of the book whipping trade demand that we take only that for which there is a market and for that reason we were forced to stagger up the basement steps of Better Books with our coats pregnant with coffee table books on the oldest films and the latest philosophies. Not for us the screaming lines of Ginsberg or the architectural stutterings of Cobbings, the dialect of Anselm Hollo, the ravings of Horovitz or the passion of Cunliffe for our ministry lay among the erotic in the work of Donald Duck and belly laughs from Zen philosophies and all at five nicker a volume. There are those who decry our age as one of laziness and lax moralities but by god we worked at our trade and every grey hair in the head of the manager of Better Books spoke of our dedicated task. On the day of the Great Debate of which I write we had assembled as usual in the underground vaults of the Irish pub in Piccadilly and we laid out our loot on the surrounding tables while Dom Sebastian called for pints of draft Guinness for each of us. A gentle Irishman with a broken nose and a crippled cousin in Manchester brought us our jars of the sacred waters and Dom Sebastian joined his hands together and with bent head spoke a short prayer for we would never insult any man's religion in the good Father's company and every man in that pub be he Jew, protestant or unbeliever knelt down before Rancid Fat's open razor. In the good Father's company we would always genuflect when passing any named Irishman for one could always put the boot in to some late travelling nun to cleanse one's conscience but in the good Father's presence it was eyes down and Hail Mary while the head of the Guinness settled. There were eight of us at the table if one includes the barman and an elderly woman wearing a trilby hat and an Iron Cross but of our own dear circle there was myself tall, good looking, fantastically wealthy, doyen of Late Edwardian society, drummed out of the Household Cavalry for smoking during the Trooping of the Colours, winner by a straight flush of the M.C. and holder of a summons from the Bath County Court for using the late Lady Bellwater's maid for a local demonstration of black magic. Dom Sebastian man o' God and the only man ever to have installed a tape recorder in a confessional,

Ronson Playfair most handsome psychopathic diplomat of the slim grey ever blood stained fingers. We loved Ronson with his gentle wit and his mannered charm of a lost age and his newspaper cuttings of the broken body in the park or horror in Holborn Underground station were a constant source of pleasure to us.

And there was Rancid Fat. Roly poly Rancid of the shining razor and the slow speech. Concrete poet and drug pusher, one time Olympic disk thrower for the Danish women's team and now a black balled member of a Welsh all male choir our friend and our mascot forever to quote one of the old masters at our feet or some one else's throat. And little Mame Valery from the hell of Harlem and still bearing on his face the marks of police brutality.

Mame was as always wearing full drag and his own hair and his mini skirt rose and fell with each excited little panting whisper of delight as McAlpine's militant pick and shovel rank and file blew beer wafted kisses in his direction. We loved Mame with a special love for that boy had suffered. With hair dyed a baby blonde and a skin of African blue black he pointed with his silver tipped nails to the cuts and bruises on his soft cheeks where a savage policeman had beaten him as they lay in bed and then refused to pay for the room.

As Rancid whispered it was just like the police to claim legality regality for every one knows that the cost of the room is extra and only the whips are provided free but as Rancid whispered legality regality. And the good Father touched the bruised face with his fingers and every one in the Irish pub knelt down as a mark of respect while Rancid slashed at the air. Ancient Tears! What could one say of her? The bald and shining head and the red and white make up and inch thick on that thin face after the manner of Chaim Soutine. The baby blue eye lids and the inches long golden eye lashes hovering before that raddled face like chained birds and the gaunt and bony body forever on view beneath the transparent dress was Ancient Tears. It is said that she was the mother of one of our number and none dare challenge her on this for fear that it might be true and the questioner would have found a mother and have lost a disposable horror. Ah we were giants in those days and we held London in the palms of our hands. There was nothing that could be done that we had not feared to do. We had sold the Sunday Times on the Anti-American demonstrations and in the dying of the night flung wine red roses to the dawn as it crept over the black roofs and sang songs of love and death and of the love that dare not speak its name and all this on the pavement outside Joe Lyons all night corner house. I have fought Jack Robinson for the love of Brenda Mercer until all three of us have lain in a bloodied heap in the gutter of Angel Alley.

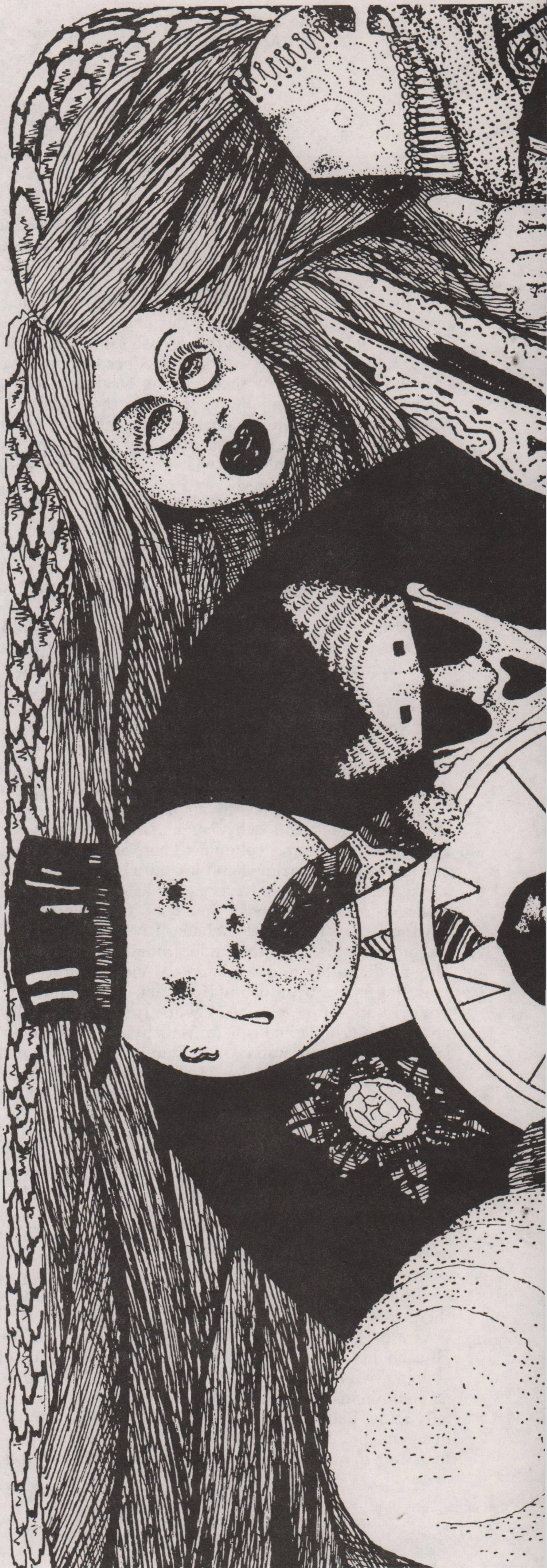
I know the truth about the matter of the £80 in relation to Roger Sandell for for a time we were blackmailing each other. True it was a financial loss for both of us but we both lived in terror of what the other might reveal. When a volunteer was called for to burn himself to death as a protest against the Battersea Council's policy in relation to rateable valuation I was the first one to refuse and in the editorial office of the anarchist paper I have challenged statements that my dog was in error in pissing over the back numbers of Anarchy. I have lived and I

have defied the great names of our time for I have known Vero Richards, Philip Sanson, Colin Ward and others whose names I cannot recall.

I have broken bread with Stummy Elphinstone and I have been a tragic witness to that man's love for a victorian over mantel. There are those who seek to dispute that terrible love of Stummy Elphinstone for that victorian over mantel but I have stood there with my face wet with tears as I watched Stummy seeking and finally satisfying his strange and awful passion. By god we were giants in those days when we hunted Horovitz and the rest of the London poetry clique from the safety of the Institute of Contemporary Arts and Indica bookshop into the jungle of Drury Lane and with Ted Kavanaugh and Jim Dukes have stood and laughed at their screams of animal terror when they realized that it was Monday and the Arts Lab was closed. By the gods we laughed at them as we threw our manifestoes in their white faces. They were days and a time that can never be recaptured and it is all there in the records of the London branch of the Coptic Church wherein we worshipped. I have dined within Peter Turner's Chelsea flat and eaten the simple fare of of the Royal Academy for my hand is for every man and like the good Father Dom Sebastian, no man comes unto us to be rejected. Of wine and roses when every alternate line rhymed and giants walked the streets of London. It was the good Father who broke my reverie as from under his robe he produced Kempe's Engineers Year Book, Celsus's De Medicina and a Pictorial History of Western Art. Dear and gentle Ronson laid Hollon's Popular Handbook of British Birds on the table while Rancid shyly and slyly laid the Antinoe Papyrus of Theocritus and Wilhelm's Dramatischer on the floor. I lay my copies of Meyerhold On Theatre and Blesh's Keaton on the table and added Genet's Funeral Rites, Rosenberg's Artwork & Packages, Baker's Hemingway, Lindgren's The Art of the Film and Iou Walpole's out of print edition on Rent Collection in Relationship to the Revolutionary Left. Dom Sebastian examined the produce of our collective toil and summed up our efforts with a gentle smile, "Better Books would never have sold this stuff". "Will we be able to sell it Father?" Ronson asked for our need for money was always urgent and the good Father answered, "For a price for a price so neither worry for the present or fear for the future for all things are ordained". And Mame laughed soft and silver notes while the Irish labourers hammered on the counter with their mugs and Ancient Tears threw back her painted mask and howled her joy up at the ceiling while the Irish barman screamed with horror.

Inwardly I thanked god for this good and holy man for his mercy and understanding for I knew that in his company our paths though always narrow would be always sure.

It was dear and gentle Rancid who raised the question that was ever on our lips for turning his face upwards to the good Father he asked "Is it evil for us to steal these books Father?" It was a question that we asked at every Wednesday meeting and always the good Father would soothe our fears for in this immoral world we were but children. Dom Sebastian placed his two hands together and in the silence of the Irish pub spake his oft repeated words of Confucius "True goodness springs from a man's own





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LIVERPOOL

POEM

heart. All men are born good" and Rancid cried the words of Carlyle, "Evil once manfully fronted ceases to be evil". Dear God the air was now electric with our brilliance as we flung quotation back and forth while the simple Irish workers children of a land of singers and poets stood around the walls with their hands held high and their mouths opened in speechless admiration for the sheer magic of our tongues. "Cervantes, welcome evil, if thou comest alone" I cried. "Chaucer, Evil shall have that evil well deserves" sang Mame and Ancient Tears crooned "Harrington Tate, be good if you can't be careful". Dom Sebastian threw "Bishop Thomas Wilson, he can never be good that is not obstinant" and followed it with "If you wish any good thing, get it from yourself, Epictetus" for our delight and wonderful Ronson not to be outwitted screamed "All evils are equal when they are extreme, Corneille". Dear heaven the brilliance of our wit filled our ears with delight as we frantically scribbled our conversation and our saying down for our memoirs and even the barman joined of our company with a soft spoken music hall singing of "Lucretius, the highest good at which we all aim". As always it was left to Dom Sebastian and myself to bring this historic afternoon to a close and I flung "Santayana, for by excess of evil evil dies" and "When evil is advantageous he errs who does rightly" and signified my submission by adding Phaedrus to the pile with "Submit to the present evil lest a greater one befall you". And Dom Sebastian smiled into our laughing faces and asked "With Juvenal I ask nay state, no evil man is happy" and we laughed and the sounds of our laughter filled Piccadilly Circus and the hippies threw aside their copies of Oz and International Times and beat their beads upon the ground in wonder. But we had to stop for the excitement of the hour was too much for sweet Rancid and the vomit dripped from his full wet lips. We bathed his face with Guinness and fanned him with the menu of the day Traveller's Lunch One pint, French bread, cheese and butter 4/- until his eyes opened again and he murmured "A parable Father a parable" and we all cried "A parable Father a parable" And the good Father raised his head and with a gentle smile began. "All morality is false for it is created by man for the self-discipline of the group and it must follow that good and evil are relative terms for what is evil to one is good to another and what is good to many can be an evil thing to one. To take a flower from a child to give to a dying woman is good and evil only at particular points in time. I remember I remember," said Dom Sebastian laying his hands out before him, "some many months ago standing in the Charing Cross Road watching the bints walk by. On the pavement stood a young child and her face was flower fair and her brown hair danced in the afternoon breeze. She was a thing of loveliness and of joy but obviously dead stupid and she stood ready and poised to dash across the busy road. A car came fast travelling down that busy road, a thing of wealth and power shining in the winter sun and there in the back seat sat a man of obvious power and influence.

But it was a sad and unhappy man for for all his wealth and power he had supped life to the full and it had nothing more to offer him. The child paused and then ran across the road into the shining car and lay a broken but lovely toy on the cruel roadway.

The man of wealth and power had risen from his seat and his eyes gleamed with this new delight and a smile seemed to sing on his lips for in this tragic act he had found a new and wonderful few moments of strange happiness. By the destruction of that flower child a man of mighty

influence had found a moments needed respite for a greater good had come from what many would call an evil thing." "Did she really die?" asked Rancid hopefully and the good Father shook his head saying regretfully "It is only a parable my child." It was left to an Irish lout to break that wonderful silence for without wit or warning he spat in the good Father's beer. We all sprang to our feet ready to defend, ay even to the death, our good Dom Sebastian and shouting our defiance we backed our way up and out of the Irish pub. We made history that day as we roared our contempt down at the two seated Irish labourers for they were unworthy of our company then arm in arm and with head high we marched down the Haymarket roaring out a defiance five verses and five choruses of Onward Christian Soldiers.

Arthur Moyse.

Hail and farewell Uncle Albert

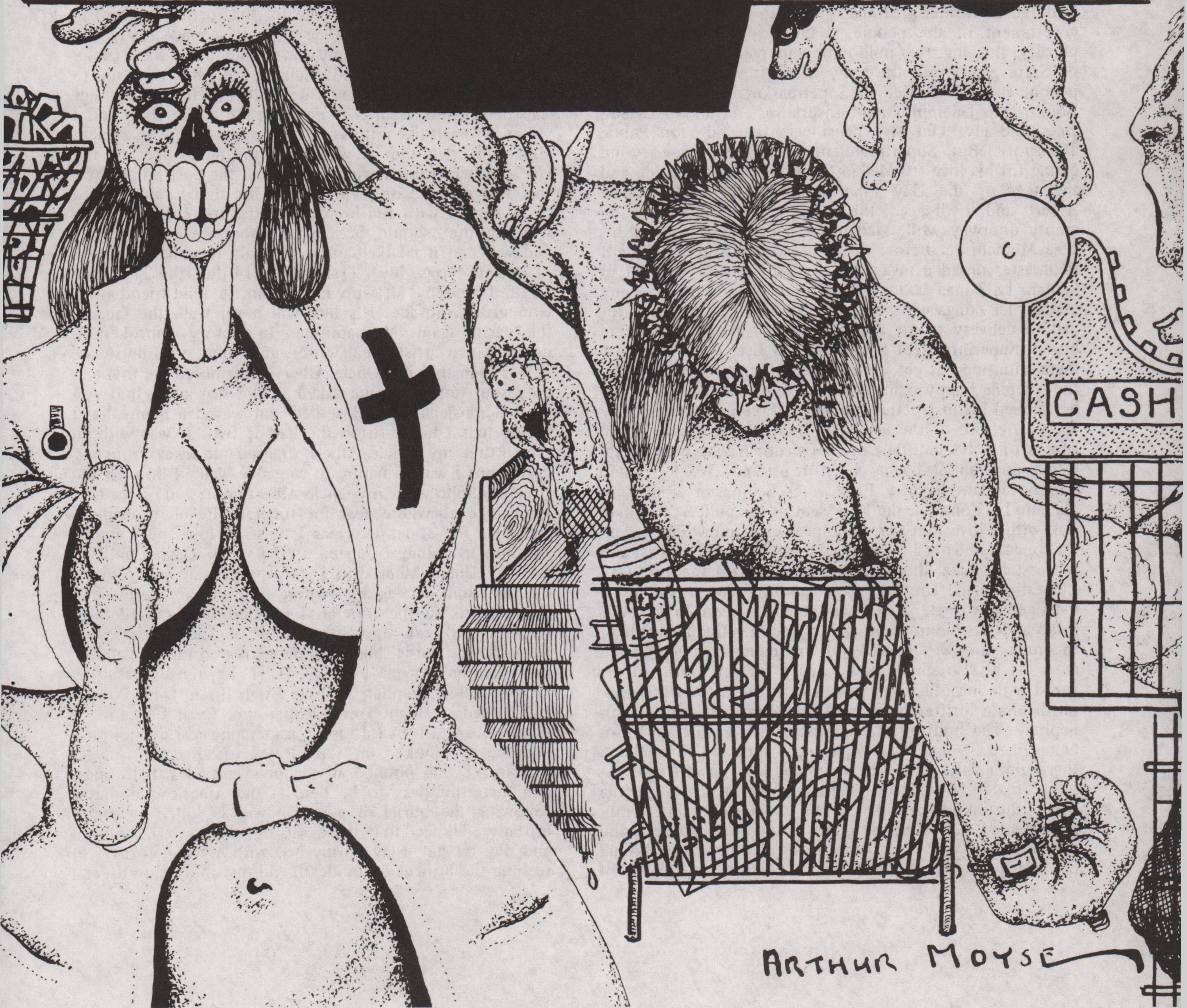
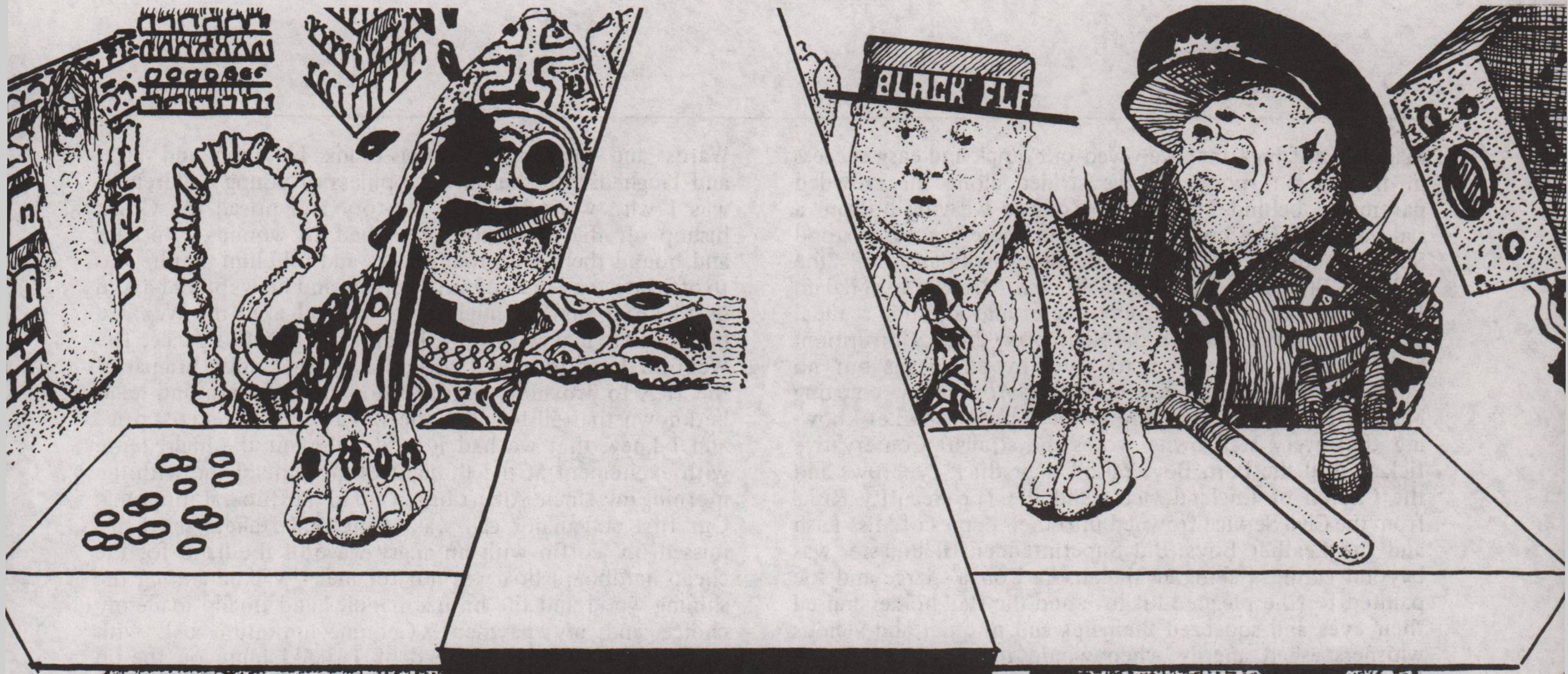
Arthur Moyse

My Uncle Albert was leaning on the bar of Ward's Irish pub celebrating the news of my death when I touched him on the shoulder. He turned and faced me with a face that long years of suffering had denied all emotion and in his quiet and gentle voice whispered "They told me you were dead" and the Irish barmen, Desmond the manager and Kitty of the beautiful bum chanted "They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead. They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed" and the Greek bishop crucified upon the door of the pub lavatory howled the Hymn to the Dead in O Level Celtic. I smiled and shrugged an apologetic shoulder while Desmond automatically filled a pint mug of Guinness for me. My Uncle Albert raised his glass of lime and lager up to the light and we stood in silence as though seeking some answer in the fractured bars of yellow that exploded in a silent rhythm within my Uncle Albert's trembling glass but despite the agony of futile rage that flooded my Uncle Albert's mind his face was still an ageless mask of a **blind acceptance** of a fate beyond the control of common men. So might the Greeks have bowed down their heads before the amoral verdict of the gods so might the humble pensioner bow to the post office clerk so might the traveller lost in infinite space watch his space craft leave without him and him with a return ticket authorised by both the Russian and American governments, printed in Peking, and tied with a blue ribbon to his wrist, Man for a few brief years is thrown into an infinity of time and space. Time and space so vast and so endless that it is literally beyond human comprehension for all things in this and beyond this universe are infinite with but one single exception and that is the mind of man for the human mind cannot conceive of infinity and in this infinity of time and space man's mind is the only finite thing. We enter this space time void in a terrible and beautiful isolation and despite police, priest or State our death is the single personal and isolated act that cannot be denied us. It is an existential world into which we are born. A world of competing moralities, mores, laws, religions and codes of conducts therefore it must follow that if one is true then all others must be false for all are based or demand a conformity to a social code of behaviour that in the end is no more than an individual sacrifice for the preservation of the society of the moment and as the society changes so does its moral teachings. All social moralities are pragmatic therefore no matter now knowingly false our moral social codes may be we must choose one for our own individual protection and with Jesus argue that our only salvation lies in accepting the responsibility of others. Poor frightened lonely man is the supreme and only glory spawned by blind chance into a void forever moving beyond time and space because he is the only material thing able to contemplate his own useless death therefore the individual can only find an excuse for his brief existence if in some small act or gesture he can add to the sum total of human happiness. I peered over the edge of my beer glass and saw that my Uncle Albert was still watching me but human frailty has coloured his face a grim and angry pink. "They told me you were dead you bastard" he shouted and Kitty, Desmond and the Ward barmen again began to chant "They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead" when my Uncle Albert silenced them by crushing his straw hat in a fist upon which the knuckles shone white. There was a silence within Ward's broken only by the weeping of the Greek bishop. I to was now angry for I had apologised and

while I could understand the pleasure that the news of my death would bring to my Uncle Albert one could not be expected to seek out physical destruction merely to please a beloved relative. It is true that I have done many things, ay many thoughtless things, to win the anger of my Uncle Albert but never with a desire or the intention to hurt only because the obverse of the king maker is the king breaker and I am neither therefore I can only mock the politics of the unpolitical and seek to make public my mockery of those who take their fratricidal wars as an end in themselves. It was I, and I now publicly admit it, who had leaflets printed and circulated stating that on a certain day and at a certain hour my Uncle Albert would walk upon the face of the water. With the whole of the underground press reporting the event and the London Federation of Anarchists flooding Camden Town with holy relics what could we do but to help my Uncle Albert walk upon the face of the waters. It is true that I and my Uncle Albert and a specially selected group of comrades organised the walking upon water on Hyde Park's Serpentine at three in the morning and that each and every one of us was prepared to sign a solemn declaration that my Uncle Albert had walked upon the face of the waters but bets were never paid and finally called off. It was I who put my Uncle Albert's name forward, in all good faith, for the vacant editorship of the New Statesman and who knows but he might have been accepted. Everything that man does he does in his own self interest be it Jack the Ripper or the saint seeking martyrdom and everlasting glory in the flames of the unbelievers fires and my ultimate happiness has been the happiness that I could bring to my Uncle Albert. It was I who helped my Uncle Albert organise the Anarchist Ball at the Fulham Town Hall and in east end cafes and west end clubs ancient members of the London Federation still talk with pride of that night. Women's Liberation may perform their bare knuckle fights in smoke filled basements stinking of stale cheap whisky and the Gay Liberation Movement may hold their huge and well publicised balls in London's Porchester Hall when those lovely creatures covered in Scotch tape and white satin sweep down under arches of red roses to curtsy to their partners from the Soho Vice Squad but the anarchist movement made history with their ball and my Uncle Albert organised it. It is true that the raging drunk won the bottle of whisky and my Uncle Albert won a signed copy of a magazine of mine in the raffle but George Melly sang and the halls filled with free loaders without tickets and the heart sang on that wonderful night. To bear witness to the mob of middle class liberals trying to fight their way into the cloak room as they screamed fascist at my Uncle Philip roaring his kingly rage at them. Because? Because my Uncle Philip had thrown all their coats in a heap on the ball room floor. It was an evening nay a night to remember as one watched the tattered hippies walking away with tailored coats and Saville Row cloaks torn jeans and bare feet for here was instant christianity with the rich unknowingly giving their wealth to the deserving poor and my Uncle Albert kept the box office cash for the London Federation of Anarchists and the Court Orders over the damage and the loss of expensive coats were delivered week by week to Freedom Press. These are times to remember and I feel that it is wrong of my Uncle Albert to constantly demand my death. He should remember the march to the German Embassy when with black and scarlet flags flying we spearheaded

the march only to come to the awful realisation that no one on the march knew where the German Embassy was. Remember that Uncle Albert how we marched along at the head of the protest vainly whispering questions up and down the ranks for the address of the German Embassy and no one knew. Surrounded on all sides by marching police and lost in Knightsbridge with a mass demonstration it was I Uncle Albert who thought of going to the Police Inspector marching ahead of our lost demonstration and suggesting that if the police would agree to a small group being allowed to hand in a petition in at the German Embassy we would halt some hundred yards or so from the Embassy with our main mass demonstration. Did not the Police Inspector agree to our terms Uncle Albert and did he not unknowingly and unwittingly place himself at the head of the small group leading the demonstration and in doing so lead the entire anarchist demonstration to the German Embassy. Bear with me Uncle for these things happened. True there was the time when Bob Cobbing the poet and I tried to kick in the door of the Wooden Shoe bookshop to rescue Jeff Nuttall's manuscripts but are these things really so important. We have grown old in the service of the Left and we have seen the bright boys and the balls of fire pass through the movement year by year. They come from the colleges and the universities and demonstrate their manhood for a few brief years and take their place within their own Establishments. We have seen those who we still think of as friends walk off with the money from the till and we have shared, over the long years, a curiosity as to who is the police spy within the ranks. We have seen comrades who we have admired and have been honoured to call friends waste out their years in the prisons of the State for alleged acts of violence against the State and we have shared a common sorrow when working men and women murder each other among the small mean streets of green Ireland. Yet here we stand at the bar of Ward's Irish pub in Piccadilly and you ask why I am not dead Uncle Albert. There was a time half a world away when we could sit under a grey English sky and share the pleasure of the mummings mouthing Shakespeare's lines or when we could eat at the same table yet all you ask for now is news of my death. Sweet Christ ten thousand tears will never wash away the agony that blinds my eyes and turns my heart into a single ball of raging fire. Ward's pub was silent as I declaimed my misery and only the soft padding of Kitty's shoes and the sobbing of the Greek bishop broke the silence. My Uncle Albert was the first to speak and placing his glass of lime and lager upon the bar he pointed one single quivering finger at me and demanded "Why are you not dead you bastard?" "In God's name" I cried "Why do you keep on demanding my death?" and the Wexford boys hammered on the bar crying "For Jesus sake give the man a chance" and from the lavatory the Greek bishop cursed us. With a quiet and natural dignity my Uncle Albert placed his broken straw hat upon his head and waving a weary arm in the direction of the Piccadilly exits said "Shall we leave?". I shrugged my shoulders once more and climbed the narrow stairs into the sleazy hub of Empire followed by my Uncle Albert. I leaned upon the street railing and tried to read my future in the muddy gutter until my Uncle Albert broke my escape into fantasy and oblivion by pulling at my arm. I turned and waited for his explanation knowing that whatever it was I must dread to hear it. "They told me you were dead" my Uncle Albert began and for the

first time all discipline left me and I screamed with rage and pounded my fists upon the Piccadilly railings while the American and German tourists clicked their cameras, the hippies placed dirty gentle fingers to their lips to pacify me and the Residential Drug Squad dashed out of Boot's the Chemist to turn over the Piccadilly Underground lavatory for an anticipated invasion of Jesus Freaks high on the stick. It was now my Uncle Albert's turn to seek my peace and I leaned upon the railings in a brooding silence while my Uncle Albert gripped my arm and whispered in my ear "They told me you were dead and I have purchased a grave for you in Highgate Cemetery drawn up a list of speakers, hired a hall for an evening concert and sent out telegrams to comrades and all the groups that your burial is to take place this coming Saturday followed by a mass demonstration to the American Embassy". I was no longer angry only curious and I asked my Uncle who had told him of my death and it was his turn to shrug the tired shoulder. "Some one, I forget who, mentioned that they found you yesterday morning dead in some Soho gutter so what could I do but arrange for your decent and honourable burial" I laughed and the gentle hippies laughed with me as I gripped my Uncle's hands. "I was only drunk" I cried "feel my arm" but my Uncle Albert gave a wan sad smile saying "Philip Sanson will murder me for he is billed as the main speaker with Vero Richards, Laurens Otter and Sid Parker to begin the service and Peter Neville and the Revolutionary Anarchists have already sent a wreath so there goes my reputation". I raised my hands above my head and my laughter filled the Circus and the gentle hippies gave us their blessings. "What shall we do?" said my Uncle Albert and there was a great joy in my heart that he and I were once more united in a common cause and a common action. Razor keen my brilliant mind explored a thousand plots and plans but before I could speak of one my Uncle Albert shook his head. O Sweet Mary Mother of Christ I was happy that once more my Uncle Albert and I were working for a common end and I wept and the gentle hippies shyly approached and laid dead flowers at my feet. "I cannot call off the funeral" said my Uncle Albert "so it must go ahead and Christ knows what Philip Sanson will do when he finds he is speaking over an empty grave". I was sick with happy fear as I asked my Uncle Albert "But can't we get a body for the burial" and my Uncle Albert once more gazed at me with loathing and disgust. I raised my hands in quick appeal before he could make an angry answer and said "Uncle Albert you know, I know, the police know that London is loaded with unclaimed bodies, they find the poor sods in doorways and in gutters and they are never claimed and simply given a paupers burial in the Town's Potter's Field so". For the first time in our meeting a great and wonderful peace came upon my Uncle Albert and I knew that I had made my point and won my case and that once more we were friends. When action is required my Uncle Albert does not hesitate and with myself in tow his straw hat at the continental angle and happiness the order of the hour we weaved our way through the gentle hippies to the taxi ranks to seek a free ride in Rancid Fats unlicensed taxi. We left Rancid Fat to walk to West End Central to be joined by Madam La Zonga looking as ever adorable in jeans and sweater. His hair fell in soft waves onto his shoulders and his small petit rubber breasts forced a way for us through the crowds filling the Soho pavement. It was to



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Madam La Zonga that we owed our quick and easy success in finding our body. As we strided along the crowded pavements behind Madam La Zonga's weaving bottom a sad and plaintive cry halted us and there before us stood Superintendent Rodney Freshwater Bellmaster of the Political Branch of the Special Branch. His love for Madam La Zonga was a long and open secret and a public scandal among the Boys who ran the Soho porn shops. Corruption, bribes, graft, filth, perversities yes by all means but no Public Servant should lower his high office by courting Madam La Zonga at midday in the Berwick Market knowing that every stall owner votes the straight Conservative ticket. And the Porn Boys raised their thick eyebrows and the Church of England vicars and the Top Security Risks from the Civil Service frowned into their copies of Miss Lash and the Leather Boys. But Superintendent Bellmaster was beyond caring. Falling at Madam La Zonga's large and toe painted feet he pleaded his love and the stall holders raised their eyes and squeezed their lips and in quiet and vicious whispers asked angrily when would the country find its soul and its former greatness and when would some honest government of the people finally bring back the death penalty, flogging, two million unemployed, put all students on State grants into the army, all Left wing traitors into prison, end self service in Supermarkets, drop the atom Bomb, stop Unemployment Insurance, end all Social Services and give Old Age Pensioners free rides on Public Transport. But Superintendent Bellmaster was beyond caring for his love for Madam La Zonga was the pride and the fear of the Gay Liberation Movement. My Uncle Albert and I dragged the weeping policeman into an empty doorway while Madam La Zonga stood and did his Liza Minnelli act before the broken man. Superintendent Bellmaster raised a ravaged face and a trembling hand to Madam La Zonga asking for no more than a single kiss and Madam La Zonga whispered his price. One body ready for instant delivery to me and my Uncle Albert for christian burial. Superintendent hammered his fists upon the pavement shouting yes yes yes and we half carried half dragged the weeping happy man to his police car and waited while he radioed his instructions to the station and the mortuary for the release of the last male body to be found in the streets of Soho natural cause of death having been established and burial having been registered. We left them Superintendent Rodney Freshwater Bellmaster alone with Madam La Zonga in the back seat of his police car a man sick with a love that dare not speak its name while Madam La Zonga rested his sleeping head upon his rubber breast and rehearsed his Liza Minnelli song numbers for the next Gay Liberation Ball. The body was waiting for us in the mortuary and my Uncle Albert lay immediate claim to it. It was a sad and terrible moment as I looked into the dead face of the man who was to act out my name in my prepared grave. It was so simple and so easy for my Uncle Albert gazed with manufactured sorrow into the face of the poor unfortunate drifter and publicly identified him as his nephew. The body now had a name and I watched forms being filled in, small bribes passing from hand to hand and there among the unnamed unknown Soho dead I saw myself recreated. We left the mortuary and I tried to forget the face of the unknown dead man who would lie for all eternity in a named yet nameless grave but man is resilient and we made our way back to Ward's pub once more bound by bonds of eternal friendship. We leaned on the bar of

Wards and my Uncle Albert drank his lime and lager and laughed with the pure happiness of young children. It was I who went into the lavatory and prised the Greek bishop off the door and we washed his wounds with beer and bound them with toilet paper and told him that he was to officiate at a genuine burial service and he wept and asked us to kneel that he might bless us and even the Wexford boys tried to make a sign of the cross as an act of peace. The Wexford boys promised to contact the London branch of the IRA to provide a guard of honour and Desmond let it be known that all beer for the wake would be at cost price and I knew that we had it made. I spent the night tense with excitement at the thought of my funeral and with the morning my Uncle Albert began to do our funeral shopping. Our first and major call was at the undertakers and I dismissed my coffin with an angry wave of the hand for the cheap hardboard box was not for me. I walked among the shining wood and the bronze handles and finally made my choice and my payment. Genuine imitation oak with bronze handles and the head of Tutankhamun on the lid I knew that it was mine I paid the bill for my new coffin and asked that a head stone should be made ready and mounted on the day of my burial and there were smiles and a waving of hands and a talk of costs but I was not to be halted in my wish. I saw it within the undertakers a huge slab of timeless granite dominating the entire shop and I stood before it like unto an ancient priest before an ancient altar and cried that it was to be my headstone and my Uncle Albert turned white as he read the cost but I knew that this was the only time in my life that I could afford to be buried with full honour and dignity. I spelt out the wording that should be carved upon the granite stone and watched it chalked upon the slab. Here lies the body of Arthur Moyse born 21st June 1914 died the 21st June 1972. Loved by all who knew him. A kind friend and a wonderful comrade. His like will never walk the face of the earth again. Magnanimous in victory unbroken in defeat. Great artist, great writer, great poet great musician. It was then that my Uncle Albert contributed the first and only sour note when he asked "I did not know that you were a musician" and I smiled and waved a happy hand crying that I had written the bar or two. It was with an effort that my Uncle Albert dragged me away from my coffin but I was too happy to care. We walked through the streets of Soho while my Uncle Albert impressed on me that I must be no where near the funeral when it took place and that for at least a year I must lie low and I agreed without troubling to listen. "Stay with Dave Cunliffe" said my Uncle Albert but I shook my head saying that I had sent him a telegram inviting him and his mother and Tina Morris to the funeral. I ordered flowers and huge wreaths and sat upon the floor of the flower shop filling in the cards. Malcolm Muggeridge, Frank Kermode, Cecil Beaton, Angela Flowers, D. H. Lawrence, Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Stephen Spender, Alan Brien, Dilys Powell, Jill Tweedie, Hugh Trevor-Roper and Cyril Connolly. I filled in card after card lost in a metaphysical mist of pure happiness. I booked the Cafe Royal for the piss up after the funeral and phoned all the press agencies that a mass demonstration was to be held at the American Embassy following the burial of a young worker killed by police brutality. I knew that there was nothing more I could do and day by day I lay on my bed with my dog at my feet reading the notices of my death and the time of my funeral

in the left wing and the Underground press. I loved it and for the first time in my life I was really happy and I blessed my Uncle Albert for creating the situation. My body within the coffin lay in state within the Freedom bookshop in the Whitechapel High Street and before the hour of the journey to Highgate cemetery I stood among the crowd of onlookers watching the mourners enter to pay their respects. My own wreaths and the wreaths and the flowers of others were delivered minute by minute. I had chosen a disguise that I should not be noticed and was wearing the hired dress uniform of a Colonel of the Black Watch and I watched those I knew come and go without being observed. The coffin was carried out by an honour guard of Philip Sanson, John Lawrence, Jack Robinson, Dick and Ben and laid on the roof of Peter Turner's car and slowly the mass tanks of mourners made their way to Highgate Cemetery. The London Federation of Anarchists played the drums and fifes and the IRA lined the route while Superintendent Rodney Freshwater Bellmaster and Madam La Zonga wearing the full drag of Sisters of Mercy walked behind the car with bowed and praying heads. But it must all end and as they passed by the statue of Karl Marx I knew that it was now the moment to find a final peace within the black earth. The grave lay open and the wind was cold and leaves and ice cream papers blew among the mourners feet. I stood among the onlookers that filled the cemetery to watch my coffin being lowered into my grave and a sick and unreasoning fear held me for a few brief moments. One by one the mourners laid their flowers upon the coffin within the grave. Mary Canipa, Gladys Turner, Francis, Mary Stevenson and Irene were weeping without shame and Brenda Mercer tried time and again to fling herself into the open grave. It was now that the great and mighty orations began and one by one the elder statesmen of the anarchist movement stood at the head of the grave and gave me a good write up. Jack Robinson, Sid Parker, Vero Richards, Peter Neville, John Rety, John Jacks cried aloud my virtues and I applauded each speaker. It was left to my Uncle Philip to give the final oration and he strode to the head of the grave and without script declaimed my virtues and my greatness. My Uncle Philip is a man of great dignity. Of medium height and stocky build, always neatly dressed his ginger grey, trimmed and jutting beard gives the impression of a man who has spent a good and happy life upon the deep seas. A magnificent speaker and a man of quick anger he commands any and every crowd that he chooses to address. I moved through the crowd of onlookers to hear his praise of me and for the first time saw my vile relations gloating around my grave. There was my vile and evil aunt a grey rat giggling with pleasure as she mumbled her hatred. Her neurotic daughter Nancy a cringing poisonous sex denied pathetic creature

and her daughter Florry a broken grey haired State Pensioner. My cousin Tommy a beer sponging wife dominated work hack, his poisonous tongued wife Nora ever ready to break a friendship or a marriage and their son the perennial State sponging eternal student and their own ancient mother and ancient and timeless evil pet of every woman dominated household. My cousin Albert the National Assistant Board Clerk of the semi detached house and the semi detached car and the two television with his wife Pauline. They stood around my grave gazing without pity, mercy or charity into my open grave. That my grandmother had gone to prison for trying to murder my grandfather, that my ghastly aunt was publicly abused by the women within the street the day she buried her unfortunate husband, that my mother was left lying unconscious on the floor and that I nursed her without help all the long months is a story common to many a slum peasant family but all the anger of the wasted years was too much for me to bear as I stood in my colonel's uniform among the onlookers at my own graveside. My Uncle Albert was beginning to speak and the slow and solemn phrases came easy to his tongue as I slowly pushed my way to my grave side. My Uncle Philip was the first to see me and he halted but for a brief second in mid sentence then with glazed eyes continued his praise of myself. I stood at my graveside and my Uncle Albert closed his eyes in an agony of despair. He opened his eyes for a brief second and closed them again and began to pray and the Greek bishop began to howl the service for the dead. Only Jack Robinson the eternal cynic was undisturbed and simply smiled while Brenda Mercer fell at my feet and Mary Canipa asked me in a dazed and unrelated voice if I would like a cup of coffee. I stood by my grave side with head and arms folded splendid in my uniform of a Colonel of the Black Watch. Everyone was now aware of my presence yet none dare state it. My Uncle Philip continued to speak my praise but his voice had an hollow echo while only Superintendent Bellmaster and Madam La Zonga in full nun's drag and doing odd things to each other in an ancient and empty grave were indifferent to history. My aunt grinned her evil smile at me and her brood grinned with her and I returned their hatred, only my Uncle Albert suffered as he thought of the explanations that he would have to make. From beyond the walls of the cemetery a trumpeter of the London Federation of Anarchists began to blow the Last Post and the Greek bishop now aware of the deception began to piss into my open grave but I was beyond caring until I felt a touch on my arm and turning saw Peter Turner. He had just rejoined my grave side and there was kindness, pleasure and wonder in his voice as he said, "They told me you were dead Arthur they told me you were dead".

by Arthur Moyse

UNCLE ALBERT—1,

Bishop of Rome

Vicar of Jesus Christ

Successor of St Peter Prince of the Apostles

Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church

Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy

Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman

Province

Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City

Member of the London Federation of

Anarchists

The Western World and Sir Douglas Hume were stunned and shocked when an inspired leak on the wall of the Piccadilly lavatory revealed that my Uncle Albert had been elected Pope by an overwhelming majority of votes. It cannot, and will not, be denied that it was the block vote of the London Federation of Anarchists under the taunt leadership of Martin Page that was in the main responsible for forcing their candidate's acceptance by a reluctant College of Cardinals but despite frantic demands for a recount by the Labour Party and other Conservative front organisations the election of my Uncle Albert must stand. One must record this with a heavy heart for but until a week before the election the London Federation of Anarchists appeared to have shown little interest in the affairs of the Roman Church for it had always been the London branch of the Coptic Church that had been the focus of much of their spiritual activities. Sources close to the CIA and the New Statesman are suggesting that the reason for the anarchist take over of the Holy Office is not political but purely material and plans are already being openly discussed by influential members of the anarchist movement for the reconstituting of the old Malatesta Club, that once formed a necessary part of the London political and social scene, in St Peter's while tentative plans are already being broached by Digger Walsh to offer the painting of the huge frescoes on the interior walls of St Peter's of the Siege of Sidney Street and the Storming of Peggy Duff to Pat Monks of Gilbert Place. It is doubtful if he will accept for personal reasons but one can but wait and see how he will react to the offer. That a number of members of the Royal Academy are openly touting for the commission is common gossip in Ward's Irish pub but the need for fresh winds to blow through the corridors of Rome demand new and more forceful styles in the art of the old brush. Already hints of nepotism are being heard in Camden Town and though this was indignantly denied in a press hand out issued through Graham Moss through Freedom Book shop what cannot be denied is the known fact that every member of the London Federation of Anarchists, both male and female, have already been given their red hats by my Uncle Albert and the spectacle of the London anarchists strolling, in full force, up and down the length of the Whitechapel High Street garbed in the scarlet and gold of their cardinal's robes has brought gay little whinnies of protest from Carnaby gear shops and Socialist Party of Great Britain members, who claim that they have the only true Pope under lock and key in a small room in Stockwell, plus the rumoured fact that the SPGB and Carnaby Street claim that they have interlocking contracts and contacts to supply gear to the Church Militant but my Uncle Albert merely gave his gentle smile. There has been much interviewing and John Rety, Jack Robinson and Albert Meltzer

refused to comment until they had first seen each other's interviews while a claim by Laurens Otter that he had already been elected Pope the year before in a secret and unpublished ballot was indignantly denied by George Clark, Pat Arrowsmith and Gerald Healy who each and individually claimed that they and they alone were the true Pope and only my Uncle Philip refused to comment being engaged in a frantic dispute with an enraged God. What my Uncle Albert will do with the wealth of the Church is open to question but there was a general air of despondency within Foyle's Bookshop at the thought of the thousands of magazines that must now pour from the See of Rome, each carrying the imprimatur of the Holy Office, and all at cost price or free for orders of ten thousand or more. The news was not well received in Camden Town for when the story broke in Dublin hundreds of dedicated young men donned their raincoats and queued for a one way ticket to London for it was obvious that the action of the London Federation of Anarchists had forced a final show down and the last battle was not to be fought on the blood stained pavements of Ireland but in the heart of the Empire. As they trooped, with mass bands replaying Danny Boy and Selections from the Rolling Stones Hits of the '60s, from the station in battle formation with the brims of their trilbies pulled low over the right eye, right eye lad, and their right hands dug deep in the pockets of their raincoats gripping the hard stuff the Italian café owners, their hard eyed wives, doe eyed children, sad eyed cats and glazed eyed customers sang their thanks to those who would die for their principles and they strew the ground with plastic roses and flamboyantly tore up the bills in the faces of the rioting television cameras. How my Uncle Albert was chosen as the London Federation's candidate for Pope cannot of course be revealed for fifty years and must lie with various cabinet papers but I have definite scuttle butt information from my maniac aunt that the final decision to take over the Catholic Church, by supporting the candidacy of my Uncle Albert, was taken in the luxurious Chelsea flat of Peter Turner. Peter Turner, man a'bout town' gourmet and pint bitter drinker, rumoured son of my Uncle Albert was held to be the master mind who planned this coup and it was in his flat that we of the inner circle of the outer circle of the London Federation of Anarchists arrived singularly at midnight to be admitted by a cloaked, masked and hooded figure who wore on her left breast a large plastic badge that read *Jon Witte, Editor of Zero One*. Mary Canipa the masked, cloaked and hooded figure motioned us in as we each exchanged some small and inconsequential personal gossip with her for the mask and hood was of see-through nylon and Mary's small and pleasant face smiled recognisably up at each one of us as we entered. Here within this magnificent flat within the heart of decadent Chelsea

we dedicated revolutionaries met to decide the fate of the West for the next thousand years give or take a week. There within this flat where yellow candles cast scarlet shadows on the black draped walls the inner circle of the London Federation of Anarchists drank strange and beautiful wines and ate darkly coloured and exotic foods and planned and I screamed and screamed with excitement while my Uncle Albert smiled his gentle smile and Mary tried desperately to find the opening to the figure length hood she was wearing. Strange and beautiful wines from black grapes picked from the vines veining the walls of charnel houses by blind virgins, crushed in presses made of gallows wood and left to mature in the damp dark crypts of defiled and abandoned churches and served in the skulls of late members of the Institute of Contemporary Arts followed by draft Guinness and cheese rolls as the ritual for the mass for my Uncle Albert as Pope was argued word by word, note by note and step by step while my Uncle Albert sat with closed eyes.

And as dawn crept over Bermondsey the men and the women of the London Federation left, one by one, in their sleek London Transport all night service buses for nothing remained but the enthronement of my Uncle Albert as the Church's first anarchist Pope. Yet, as my aunts screamed, it would be idle to pretend that this election was to be accepted by the forces of the Right without protest or battle and battalions of Israeli troops under the command of Mrs Golda Meir, armed with the latest American short arm weapons and packed lunches of gefilte fish, poured down the Haymarket behind a storm of indiscriminate fire power to occupy Ward's Irish pub in Piccadilly. The fighting was bloody and heavy and the beer soaked bodies of the London Irish told the story of men who had contested every inch of ground in defence of their faith but it was a vain and futile battle that ended with Mrs Meir unveiling a plaque to the unknown dead while her troops, with bowed heads, sang Danny Boy. For but less than an hour I joined in the keening as I searched among the dead for my Wexford relatives, kings of Ireland and bog peasants and we wept as we carried the body of Desmond the Ward's barman down into the cellars among the barrels of draft Guinness. It was in the Charing Road that the heaviest fighting took place and it was here that the fate of the West lay in the balance as members of the Young Catholic League and Bingo Association asserted their strength against a storm troop formation of Gerry Healy's Socialist League suicide squads. Beneath a forest of flags, crosses and blessed banners they fought shop by shop to take over Charing Cross Road and from the Science Fiction department of Foyles Bookshop they poured a withering fire of Catholic Truth leaflets and anointed bullets into the entrenched supporters of my Uncle Albert. But it was at Better Books that the bloodiest fighting of the day took place and the crucified body of the late manager of Better Books screamed his neutrality among the Christ hung crosses of the Old Guard while the ringing of cash registers could not drown the cries of the male and female staff of Better Books as below stairs in the poetry basement they suffered the ultimate indignities of their sex behind stacked copies of *The Story of O*. With Better Books but a mass of blazing books and the tortured crucified body of Ron Mathews its late manager demanding through blackened dying lips payment or a travellers cheque for stolen copies of *Floodgates of Anarchy* the Old Guard fought on. Collets loyal to the discipline of Communist Party directives waited for instructions from King Street and frantically phoned the switchboards of King Street CPHQ

but Murphy the Chinese switchboard operator claimed, in a later statement, that the Party had closed down for the summer holidays and suggested that the waiting Communist battalions contact the manager of the Chinese fish restaurant in the Berwick market but the manager, in a later statement, replied to all questions, "Winged or middle skate?". It was the Institute of Contemporary Arts that finally won the day for my Uncle Albert when they flung their mass regiments of poets into action in the cause of *avant-garde* popery. With their backs to the statue of Queen Victoria and urged on by the cheers of the members of the Royal Family crowded on the balcony of Buckingham Palace the hundred thousand young poets from Bradford forced the enemies of my Uncle Albert back along the Tottenham Court Road and into a mass surrender. The horror of that day will always be with us as we walked among the dead and dying bodies of those young Bradford poets who had made the supreme sacrifice. It was left to Bob Cobbings, acting on behalf of Auden, to dictate the terms of surrender and when every member of the Old Guard had handed in his arms and agreed to submit at least one poem, with stamped addressed envelope, to Michael Horovitz's *New Departures* they were informed of their fate. It was impossible not to be moved by the sight of these brave but foolish men as they prepared to be shipped to Brighton to live and swear allegiance to Ted Kavanagh and Jim Duke but war is an ugly business. Many of the Old Guard have found sanctuary in Foyles bookshop and now work in the Celtic department of the Foreign Book Department where the beauty of their singing and the smell of the hard stuff has the female Foyles weeping for the lost glories of the non union shop but Better Books will always be a lasting monument to the tragedy of war. Ron Mathews' the late manager, in every sense, is to be buried in Westminster Abbey if the Westminster Council can find the rest of the body for the Archbishop will not accept a single hand for burial but for the male and female staff of Better Books there is nothing but a lifetime of unbelievable explanations to their unbelieving relatives and bitter wrangles with the Income Tax authorities over Childrens Allowances. Collets still refuse to be committed beyond claiming credit for the success of the battle and claiming that the war aims were betrayed. It was the enthronement of my Uncle Albert as Pope that finally won the world's acceptance of his claim to the throne. To a public reading of poetry by Adrian Mitchell the huge and colourful concourse poured into Red Lion Square for the enthronement within Conway Hall. The anarchist movement to a man refused to take part and called a counter demonstration in Westminster Abbey that culminated in a demand for the mass expulsion of every one attending and a request that the next social and dance should once again be held in the Fulham Town Hall but this was over-ruled by my Uncle Philip as chairman and the entire abbey assembly demanded that my Uncle Philip be expelled from the movement. It was left to John Rety to bring a sense of purpose to the congregation and pausing only to expel my Uncle Vero and the Dean and Chapter of the Abbey the anarchists refused to form up outside the abbey to march onto Red Lion Square. Yet the enthronement of my Uncle Albert continued in Conway Hall and the riot of colours and swinging incense heightened the dramatic beauty of the occasion. Freshly castrated Young Conservatives sang the requiem with one hand on their party cards and the other on their blood soaked bandages and the shrill beauty of their voices drowned the

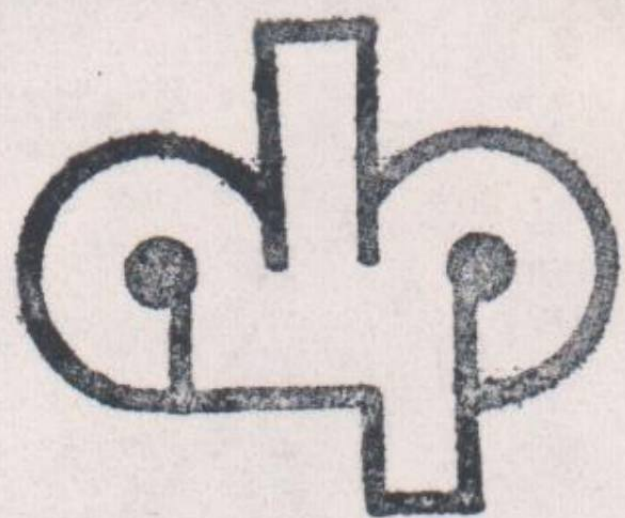
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ARTHUR MOYSES

demands for the payment of the hall. Ambassadors, Leaders of Great Nations, Men of Wealth, Dignitaries of the Various Faiths, Billy Graham. Members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, Nick Walters, Dick and Ben, Roger Sandell, Trusted Leaders of the Trade Union Movement, Arthur Uloth, Lester V. Strange of the Special Branch, Pat Monks, T. K. Metcalf, the administrators of Winchester College, Tony Hulse and Miguel Garcia Garcia all sent their apologies for attending and there was scandal in the cloak room when three Flower Children, though bearded and beaded, refused to explain their sex or their actions to the Hells Angels Vice Squad. O blood o blood. Only the protests of the massed ranks of the London Federation of Anarchists and Ian Paisley, outside the hall, marred this great and noble occasion. There was a moment of tension when my Uncle Albert lifted his skirt waist high and announced that as part of the general protest he would not be anointed in the Conway Hall and to the singing of George Melly, the broken hearted weeping of Robert Melville the art critic of the New Statesman who had already filed his copy the day before my Uncle Albert swept down the aisle of Conway Hall in a storm of Anarchist Black Cross Bulletins and by God I love the man for I knew that he was worthy of the hour. And my vile aunt in the balcony screamed down that I was no good and only mixed with filth and my ghastly relations flashed little sour grins to each other but I cried for joy that I should be a witness for this moment. But history cannot be halted and after a hurried meeting with Robin Day, Mary Whitehouse and certain nameless men of ITV television it was decided to hire Malcolm Muggeridge as the False Pope and we of the London Federation screamed and booooooed and shouted out "Selling out again Mugg" but public entertainment finally prevailed, after Malcolm's agent had agreed on the terms plus copyright for overseas showings, and it was announced on the blower that Malcolm Muggeridge was to be anointed as Pope Mugg I. It was Malcolm Muggeridge's physical ascension into Heaven that convinced BBC and ITV and the Fathers of the Church that they had finally made the true choice and despite a claim by Stuart Christie that Brenda Mercer, who I love very much, garbed in white and egg shell blue had descended from Heaven in a chariot of snow white clouds to reveal that

Stuart Christie should be the next Pope, Muggeridge's claim to the hot seat will not be contested. Only good old George Clark continued to contest the matter and Tony Smythe of Civil Liberties stated, in a handout via Freedom Press but protested by my Uncle Albert, that he Tony will keep George's claim to the throne of St Peter under constant surveillance meanwhile should they want a new Pope!. It is interesting in the context of this election of an anarchist Pope to question the roles of the London School of economics, Keele University, Vanbrugh College, Sid Parker, Winchester College and Jeff Nuttall for all these centres of theological learning were strangely silent during a period that was deciding the fate of western civilisation. Meanwhile the ball now lays firmly at the collective feet of the members of the Oxfam Committee regarding the fate of the sixty thousand Bradford poets refugees from the battle of the Royal Mall for these pathetic creatures are in dire straits through lack of food, ball point pens and paper for the Institute of Contemporary Arts has openly denounced them to the Arts Council as renegade Georgian poets and as such ineligible to use the Institute of Contemporary Art's staff canteen and coin operated lavatory. Jack and Mary Stevenson, Donald and Irene Room with Colin Ward and Frank Rowe did their best to help these poor creatures of man's inhumanity and all that jazz but they too collapsed and were smuggled to a secret address in Gilbert Place. Only the raw lettuces and the unfired cabbages of Dave Cunliffe and Tina Morris is sustaining these brave but foolish poets. That and Readings by Adrian Mitchell of his own works and excerpts from the personal letters of Michael Horovitz. Only I and my Uncle Albert are happy for he wanders glazed eyed through Tottenham in the full glory of his Pope's robes blessing, at two shillings a bash, any of the True Faith and I sit in my chair in the basement of Ward's Irish pub in Piccadilly and weep for the death of Desmond the barman, for he is beginning to smell now in the cellar among the barrels of Guinness, and think on my awful relatives and my evil aunt and as I spill Guinness onto the floor for my dog Patch to get drunk on I marvel that in this moment in time I should have been chosen to crown my Uncle Albert as Pope Uncle Albert 1. Meanwhile London stands at the ready.



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