

# Why NOT Abortion on Demand?

**THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR** over the question of a woman's rights of control over her own fertility is like many another war: the making of high policy and top-level discussions go on endlessly while the ordinary people suffer.

It is nearly three decades now since Dr. Alex Bourne was acquitted after a prosecution he himself provoked after he had aborted a girl of 14 who had been raped by soldiers. Dr. Bourne had performed the operation because in his view continued pregnancy in that case would have presented a threat to the girl's life. It was not done because she had been raped and wanted to be free from the biological consequences of that criminal assault.

From that date on however and because of his acquittal, the law has allowed abortion to be performed as long as proper medical evidence is available that the life, or mental or physical health of the mother is endangered. In practice this has meant that anybody with enough cash has been able to buy the necessary evidence and the services of a willing gynaecologist. A small minority of progressive-minded doctors have managed to push a few cases (about 2,000 a year) through the National Health Service, but in the main the medical profession has been chary of handling cases because although the law 'permitted' abortion under certain limited conditions, no operation for abortion could really be called 'legal'. The Offences against the Person Act of 1861 is the only statutory law relating to abortion and that makes no exception for any circumstances. It is 'case law' that 'permits' the exceptions and provides the loopholes through which millions of women have been expensively and anxiously making their way since 1938.

### CLOAK-AND-DAGGER

But for the vast majority of the estimated 100,000 women who experience abortion every year, even this 'case law' is denied because they cannot afford to buy the evidence to bend the law. For them there remains the anxiety and the cloak-and-dagger conspiracy of finding somebody to perform the operation illegally and undergoing an experience that might be clean or dirty, cheap or expensive, brutal or gentle, with a 'criminal' operator who may be pleasant or repulsive, skilled or unskilled, motivated by principle or avarice — all according to chance.

The present attempts to reform the law aim at removing abortion from the latter circumstances and making it legal 'under certain circumstances'.

In 1939 a government committee under Lord Birkett reported in favour of reform of the law, but since the massacre of millions of adults had to be organised over the following few years, the Birkett Report was forgotten. It was not until 1953 that our representatives again began

to give some attention to the problem. In the intervening 14 years something over a million women had undoubtedly procured abortions one way or another. In that year an unsuccessful attempt was made to get a private member's bill going in the Commons. In the intervening 14 years since then, three more attempts have been made to get private members' bills through the Commons (one, eight years ago, by the present Minister of Health, Kenneth Robinson), two attempts have been made to get bills through the Lords, and something like another one-and-a-half million women have procured abortions.

At the present time a bill is labouring its way through committee stage. It has not yet reached full term although it was introduced nine months ago by Scottish Liberal MP, David Steel. It got its second reading in July and got through with the whacking majority of 223 to 29. At the moment it is bogged down in committee, where it has been for nine weeks already, while 30 MPs ('for', 'against' and 'don't know') argue over every punctuation mark.

### VOCAL OPPOSITION

Meanwhile organisations supporting and opposing the bill are lobbying furiously. The Abortion Law Reform Association—the real sponsors of the bill—are supported by some medical opinion, several women's organisations and by secular and humanist societies, while the opposition is mainly from the Catholics, but they are backed up by other religious bodies and some medical opinion.

The proposers of the bill are now very concerned to get it through in some form or another, to the extent that they are bending over backwards to make clear that they are not in favour of *Abortion on demand*, while this dread phrase is used as a smear by their opponents.

Only a month ago, one of the bill's main supporters in the Commons, Leo Abse, said that it would have to be watered down if it were to have any chance of becoming law, while as late as November 8 last, David Steel, in a letter to the Catholic Doctors' Guild, agreed that one subclause created danger of the 'right to abortion' and promised 'amendments and improvements' worked out in conjunction with the Home Office and the British Medical Association.

Opposition becomes more vocal and more hysterical. An outfit called Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) was formed in January for the specific purpose of fighting the bill, but by no means does all official religious opinion support this. Indeed, a week after the formation of SPUC, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsay, said 'It is wrong to stir emotion by identifying abortion and infanticide' and while not supporting the bill's possible 'social' clause (which suggests doctors might take account of the mother's general environment in assessing the need for abortion), nevertheless rejected the 'absolutist position against abortion'.

### CONFUSION REIGNS

The one certainty in all this is that there is uncertainty and confusion everywhere. The Christians are divided. Even the Catholics are divided. The absolutist position against the bill is held by a dwindling minority who nevertheless make a hell of a noise. But the supporters of the bill are weakened by their very desire to see the bill get through somehow—even in so emasculated a form that it will be virtually useless. It is probably not too unkind to say that the MPs concerned with the pushing of the bill now look upon it as a matter of prestige to get something through. It

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# Power Struggle in Aden

**THE** policy of federating territories might make sound economic sense to civil servants and ministers in Whitehall but, like the Central African Federation, the South Arabian Federation is doomed to failure. The reasons for this are plain, plain that is if one is interested in finding a solution for territories emerging from colonial rule, but the plans of civil servants have not faced up to the reality of the situation.

British Governments have not given independence to countries unless they have either been forced to or in cases where that country will still be controlled economically by British interests. Solutions are not looked for, but rather they are imposed. This is what happened with the South Arabian Federation. The constitution was worked out by civil servants in the early 1950's and although they might have thought they were laying a basis for a unified Arab State, its purpose was to secure political support for a British base in Aden. The killing and bloodshed which is now going on in the Federation, and especially in Aden itself, is the result of trying to impose a political solution from outside.

### FORCED TO JOIN

The Federation is made up of seventeen emirates, sultanates and sheikhdoms and the colony of Aden. The larger Hadhramaut States refused to join and, at the outset, even the rulers of the seventeen states were reluctant to join and of course the people were never consulted. However the Tory Government was so determined that, according to Colin Legum of the *Observer*, they 'pushed through by example, coercion and economic enticement. Unwilling sheikhs were deposed; large sums of money went to enrich the rulers' personal treasuries; loads of guns were freely distributed.'

While the rulers of these states were either bought off or deposed, it was felt, by the Tory Government, that the country's interests (that is its supplies of oil) would be best safeguarded if the base at Aden was maintained. To secure this, the

Aden colony was forced, by Duncan Sandys, to join the Federation. Thinking that they could control the sheikhs and maintain the defence base, the Tories then announced that they would grant independence for the territory in 1968. The only deviation by the Labour Government from this policy is their intention, much to the annoyance of Duncan Sandys, to give up the base as well.

Much of the nationalist resentment stems from the colony of Aden being forced into the Federation. The nationalists had to look for help from the outside and got it from President Nasser, who was only too willing to assist in removing the remnants of British colonialism as seen in the feudal leadership of the Federation.

The two nationalist organisations who have taken up arms to speed Britain's departure are the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen, FLOSY, and the National Liberation Front, NLF. FLOSY gets its arms and political support from President Nasser and has a military base at Taiz in the Yemen. In theory they see Aden and the Federation as part of the Yemen, no doubt a scheme favoured by the imperialistic ambitions of the United Arab Republic. Active support for FLOSY comes solely from the population and trade unions in the Aden township.

Support for the NLF is less localised, having not only a following from the trade unions in Aden, but also from the population in the Federation as a whole. Richard John, writing in the *Financial Times* about the NLF said: 'Politically, it has Marxist undertones. NLF's shadowy existence since being proscribed by the British in 1965 and its breakaway last January from FLOSY, which was planned by the Egyptians to unite all the revolutionary forces, probably belies its lack of apparent leadership. At the moment its old leader, Qahtan As-Shaabi is in Cairo where he is believed to be under house detention.'

How much support these rival groupings actually have is hard to

say. One does not know if threats of violence played any part in bringing workers out on strike during the visit of the United Nations mission. Federal leaders say that both FLOSY and NLF get their support by intimidation and murder. However, support for the Federal leaders must also be suspect as they have been imposed by the British.

### BRITAIN'S 'CLIENT'

Britain is, in fact, building a Federal Army to maintain 'law and order' after their departure. Even some of the young, well-educated officers will not be willing to serve under such a reactionary and feudal set-up. The Federal Government of sheikhs has been described as Britain's 'client', a Government backed by an army supplied with British arms. If the British troops remain in Aden after 1968, as demanded by Duncan Sandys, only more bloodshed will follow. Even after the British troops leave, the fighting will continue between the Federal Army and the nationalists, unless some solution can be found.

On one hand there is the Egyptian arms, going mostly to FLOSY, and with this their influence or control. The Federal Government is backed by Britain, but behind this are the two major powers, Russia and America. Russia is a major supplier of economic aid and arms. Both want to acquire influence and the Aden struggle for power could be part of this competition.

The people of Aden have never been allowed to decide what system they want. Trade unions have been built up in the face of strong opposition, but it seems that they are now controlled by the nationalists. Whether some independent force exists or not, I do not know, but as anarchists we do believe that the people of Aden should have self-determination. The British troops should be withdrawn and the people should not be the victims of a power struggle between the major powers over their spheres of influence. Aden may not be another Vietnam, but it could still be pretty uncomfortable.

P. TURNER.

## FROZEN OUT

to a considerable extent.

The long-distance increases will operate on BR's much-vaunted Inter-City idea, while sleeper charges and luggage increases will affect the businessman and holiday-maker respectively. The former of course works on the principle that if you have to pay more money—or perhaps 'lose' it would be a better word—to the Government, then greater must be the chase to make up the unenviable losses. The businessman is probably the holiday-maker as well, and if only some men would take smaller jobs, since an expanding personal business only means a really big burden in taxation (few men unfortunately have given this idea—which would benefit health and cut their costs, since taxation simply soars above a certain figure — much thought) so that anarchy for the white-collar worker, with one foot in the boardroom, is as feasible in its way as it has long been for industrial wage-earners.

Transport Ministry officials explain away the severe restraint on the public, but not on themselves by adding curtly that an enterprise, when faced by increased costs and unable to restrain and absorb those costs, should resort to increased charges for services to the public, which means that British Railways, which to my knowledge have never restrained themselves, particularly when it comes to defective heaters and late trains, have babbled their woes to the Government, and Babs Castle has authorized yet another hold-up job, this time to the tune of £500,000!

Another startling piece of information came to light recently when Harold Wilson attended the postmen's union's executive meeting in London. Softened-up by the presentation of an inscribed cigarette case, he was also given a forceful reminder by delegates about the position of the lower-paid worker. It was revealed that a London postman with four children, and earning a basic wage of £15 per week, with only £1 8s. in allowances to be shared amongst six, has had most of the money he managed to save from the weekly expenses absorbed into price rises, or the Selective Employment Tax as the Government liked to call it, to make the thing more pretentious than it actually was. Out of his pay, £3 2s. 2d. goes on rent, gas and electricity is £2 10s., while £10 6s. 3d. is left for all the family essentials, and pleasures if they are lucky enough to have anything left over. When the freeze began in July it left the postman 10s. for

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## MAY DAY MEETING

Monday, May 1, 1967  
from 3.30 p.m. to sunset  
HYDE PARK,  
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Distribute leaflets, sell anarchist literature, sell 8-page 'FREEDOM' on 'official' May Day meetings all over the country!

## ANARCHY 74

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# Dignity of Labour?

THIS is the age of productivity agreements, rationalization, and the 'dignity of labour' and all that jazz.

Will Paynter, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, has warned the South Wales miners about their excessive absenteeism, and couldn't-care-less attitude. What exactly is there to care about? The job and pleasure of doing a full week's work—bull shit! When coal is urgently needed, the miners are the brave lads who risk their lives down the pits, but when they take a day off or want a wage increase they are irresponsible and hold the country to ransom.

The majority of workers don't go to their respective jobs because they like it; they go for the cash to enable them to live, they sell their labour power, and if that power is not available on a Monday or Friday—so what! This jungle that we live in is made up of buying and selling. The manufacture of goods is manipulated to keep the price up and ensure the profit. Many goods are urgently needed, houses, hospitals, etc., but they are not available Monday, Friday or any other day because other things must come first like armaments, rises for dukes and judges.

Come off it, Mr. Paynter, you

should know better than that, if one lives in a jungle the rules of the jungle must apply. Don't plead for one section to act responsibly, whilst another section actively cuts their throats.

I noticed that the daily pillar of honesty, the *Morning Star*, kept quiet. Maybe the editor felt too sick about it to comment but, what is more likely, certain people can say certain things but if other people say exactly the same, then all the wrath of the *Morning Star* will come down on their necks. Communists can do, or say, no wrong unless they are Chinese.

## TWO HEADS ARE AS GOOD AS NONE

THE TUC met the Confederation of British Industry for the third of their after-eight chats. They might not have had a bottomless coffee pot, but nevertheless they got on well together. Both sides agreed that higher pay must go with higher production, and wage restraint for the rest, which includes many of the lower-paid workers. This 'master and man' getting-together is really all the rage these days—you can't beat it, Mr. Wilson said so.

Comrade Wilson also said that he had doubts about the TUC wage-vetting machinery. He thought it might not be strong enough to withstand the barrage of accumulated pay claims. He spoke of the 'need for support that Government

action could provide'. This is the last thing they want to do, but...

Whilst on the subject of Wilson, urgh! It is interesting to note that he has been canonised at last. Wolverhampton Labour Party will no longer toast the Queen but Harold Wilson and the Labour Government, long live King 'Arold.

## SEAMEN'S WAGE CUT

FROM APRIL 21, reduced fares for seamen travelling off duty is to be stopped. This concession has been in operation since 1930. It was only recently that the concession had been re-established at three-quarters normal fare.

## DATA FIGHTS ON

THE SUPPORT for the draughtsmen locked out by the shipbuilding employers is growing daily. Financial support is rolling in at a fairly steady pace. One hundred thousand Clydeside shipbuilding and engineering workers are to be asked to stop work on April 19 in support of the draughtsmen. Recently Scottish draughtsmen struck for a half-day in support of their mates. The dispute is now in its fourth week. Shop stewards at the Yarrow shipyard of Clyde have blacked all drawings by non-union members not locked out and will continue to do so. Intensified industrial solidarity action must finally persuade the shipbuilding employers to see sense. This is one time when the copious skirts of the Government are not wide enough to protect their friends, the employers.

The proposed sackings of draughtsmen at Vauxhall's have either been suspended or put back. DATA has received assurance from the management that there will be no transfer of work to Opel in Germany. There was no intention of reducing technical functions; in fact, in the long run, there would be more technical work—not less.

Obviously this was a 'try on' by Vauxhall management to save a few bob at the draughtsmen's expense, until new plans came into operation, but DATA wasn't having any. The problem now is how many other so-called non-productive workers are still on the redundancy list. 'One for all and all for one.'

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

## NORTH-WEST LETTER

# ROBERTS-ARUNDEL SACKS ITS SCABS

THE MAIN ISSUE up here is still the Roberts-Arundel dispute, and with the news this week that machining work at the factory is to cease and a total of 112 scabs to be made redundant, the wheel seems to have turned full circle. The sackings, say the firm, are due to 'riots, blacking and constant harassment of production', which would seem to be something of a compliment to the campaign which has been carried out against this firm. One of the most spectacular successes of the 'blacking' campaign was just before Easter, when porters at Manchester Airport blacked a KLM airliner that was to take an Arundel's machine to Amsterdam, and threatened to black all KLM planes that landed at Manchester if the plane took off with the machine aboard; needless to say it was quickly unloaded.

Of the men who have been sacked there is nothing to say, they barely make the grade as men. They were quite prepared to take the jobs of men who were out in dispute, to literally take the bread and butter out of the mouths of the strikers' families, and now that they're out on the stones, no one's shedding tears. Contained in the announcement of the sackings was the news that the Managing Director, Mr. John Cox, has been appointed to a new post, and with his removal it would seem that a settlement could now be reached. Cox, more than anyone, has inflamed this dispute time and again, by his arrogant attitude towards the strikers and the firm certainly appears to be more conciliatory now without him.

What will happen at the talks between unions and management next week no one can say, but a settlement of some kind seems on the cards.

## THE REDUNDANCY STICK

At my own place of work, a steel-rolling mill, things seem to be developing. As we came in on the night shift after the Easter holidays we found a long list of new rules waiting for us. Most of us just laughed them off and went on as normal, until the next night when we went in and found another notice on the board saying that one of the mills was to go on one shift and that the extra gang would have to be dispersed throughout the works. This means that some men have had to be

moved out of the mills and into other less well-paid jobs. And, as far as we can see, this is just the beginning, in a few months time all five mills will probably be on one shift, meaning at least a hundred or so redundancies if it happens. Again, it's just guessing; no one can really be sure about it, but certainly the management wouldn't have started booting us about and trying to re-assert its authority if it didn't have some kind of stick to beat us with. In this case, the redundancy stick. At the moment the stewards are still negotiating over the dispersal of the extra gang, a defensive action, we'll just have to see whether we can get back on the offensive as quickly as possible after this.

NORTHERN WORKER.

# ANARCHISTS ON THE MARCH

THE BLACK and Red banners seem to increase year by year with an increased following at Easter. One sympathises with the feeling against being shepherded like a grey orderly mass in permitted protest, with the feeling of impotence, and the frustration of being unable to alter the direction of our society. The nihilistic impression one gets of this march is, I am sure, the result of all these feelings. Where do all the anarchist marchers go for the next 12 months? Where do they go when they give up marching altogether?

The plain fact is that, unless we can communicate with a larger section of the community than we have so far, we will continue to be a small ineffectual group. We fail even to communicate with a large number of our fellow marchers. Have the anarchist marchers themselves any clear ideas? Is it possible to make this something more than an annual jamboree? Not that I am against jamborees—we want more of them—but if it is possible to combine it with something more effective it would be great.

At the moment our case is relevant, the case against the existing establishment is unassailable yet we fail to make any significant impression among the majority of our fellow citizens. We either

# Freedom For Workers' Control

APRIL 15 1967 Vol 28 No 11

# Is Cousins Wriggling?

THERE has been considerable disagreement about whether the pay increase for the car delivery men was an award for extra productivity or just a straight increase. The Transport and General Workers' Union argues that the award is based on increased productivity and as such is within the scope of the Government's Incomes Policy. The employers say that it is a straight increase which they paid 'under duress'. The Government, by freezing the award, seems to agree with this interpretation.

I am inclined to agree with the employers, but would answer, 'So what!' Workers are faced with a continuing struggle and they should use all forms of 'restrictive practices' as a means to enforce a demand. The so-called 'restrictive practices' are created by workers, with individual variations, and are used for bargaining. They are sold for a wage increase and if it is possible to use them more than once, so much the better.

## LEGALISTIC WANGLES

Let's face it, the T&GWU's argument does not hold water. If it did, then before this pay award was made, car delivery workers would have done the return journey without a load. This is obviously not the case, but the union is claiming that they will not do this extra work while the increase is frozen. Their action in returning empty means that they are liable for prosecution under the wide provisions (to compel, induce or influence employers) of the Prices and Incomes Act. The T&GWU's argument on productivity and the reversion back to the old agreement, is just a legalistic wangle. It is avoiding a straight confrontation.

Progressive Deliveries, a firm in the Midlands, devised a plan whereby they sacked their 150 employees in the Birmingham area and re-engaged them on the higher rates of the Coventry agreement. This gives the men the same money as they were earning prior to the Government's step in freezing the increase. The T&GWU has agreed to this arrangement and the firm has justified it by

saying, 'We are not prepared to finance a battle between Wilson and Cousins'. Whether this sacking and re-engagement legally by-passes the Government order is not clear. It seems doubtful to me, because the increase is still being paid to the same men, but even if it is legal, the Government can easily bring out another order.

The *Economist* has described the car delivery employers as 'a group of rather feeble small companies'. Some of them are so small that the Government has not sent the orders through to them and so they are still paying the increase. They were quite willing to settle with the union and pass the costs on to the car firms.

## A LOT OF TALK

The action of the car delivery men is a challenge to the Government, but although Mr. Cousins has done a lot of talking about opposing the Government, he is doing his utmost, at the moment, to wriggle out of a direct confrontation. He prefers, like all leaders, to contain the struggle to a legalistic plane, the type of thing the Government is far better placed to win, instead of involving the membership in a mass struggle against the freeze order. While not wishing to see anyone prosecuted, just for its own sake, a stand has to be taken and for all his tough talk, Mr. Cousins does seem unwilling to make it. As it is, he is only playing into the Government's hands. They do not want to prosecute, but if a stand was made, then their bluff would be called.

It is a waste of time waiting for the union leadership to carry out this struggle against the Government's legislation. While the workers do this, their struggle will be contained and defeated. The car delivery men have nevertheless given a lead and it is to be hoped that they see through the legalistic manoeuvres of their General Secretary and challenge the Government directly. I am certain that they will get the support from other trade unionists if they do and that it will be our job to assist in this.

P.T.

for the human race of which this tanker is an example; a similar accident in the military sphere could be fatal. The pollution of atmosphere, water and soil is happening all the time, slowly and insidiously; resources are wasted, agriculture unbalanced, finance and commerce are king; what has happened dramatically to the giant tanker is happening all the time quietly and insidiously.

We must press home this lesson, for this tanker is the symbol of commerce, private property and authority that pollutes society. The blue mass that gushes from the police stations of London when the anarchists march defend and protect this polluting power. The political parties are united in defending and increasing that power.

The use of chemicals in Vietnam to destroy the foliage and crops could have a long term effect on all life there and is but another facet of the disregard there is of the human individual and his environment. The youth of today are not satisfied with the world, they see and feel the uncertainty of the future. The anarchists must reassert the importance of the individual to encourage resistance of man being just a cog in a vast machine, conditioned to consume and conditioned to produce. I feel we must be less nihilistic in our protest and more positive and bring all our imagination and ability on to this task of exposing this vast and complex commercial sham.

ALAN ALBON.

## Contact Column

This column exists for mutual aid. Donations towards cost of typesetting will be welcome.

**Unfurnished Accommodation Wanted.** Responsible gentleman, thirties, exemplary tenant, requires spacious self-contained flat/house, minimum three bedrooms, central London, quiet surroundings. Maximum seven guineas inclusive. No premium. Could decorate. Reciprocal references. Box 52.

**Patchen.** Wednesday, April 19, at Better Books, 9 p.m., readings from (as yet unpublished) 'Love and War'. Poems of Kenneth Patchen. Reading organized to raise money for printing costs.

**Open University.** At London School of Economics, Houghton St., Aldwych, W.C.2 until April 26. Twenty-four hours a day. Everyone interested is welcome.

**Badges.** 'Free Stuart Christie—Franco's Prisoner', 3/6 for six (including postage), minimum order. Proceeds to new campaign expenses. Orders to John Rety, c/o Freedom Press.

**House or Apartment wanted for July.** American comrades (4) need house or flat to rent for month of July. Box 50.

**Communism vs. Anarchy.** Chigwell YCL vs. Harlow Anarchists, 8 p.m., Tuesday, April 18, in Loughton Hall, Loughton, Essex. All invited.

**Accommodation Available — London.** Medium sized room in unfurnished s/c flat Camden Town, about £3 p.w. Whole flat (2 large/2 medium rooms, k. & b.) on three year lease from mid-May, £500 p.a. Box 53.

**Meeting.** Sunday, April 16. Lecture (in Spanish) by J. Delso de Miguel on 'The Problems of Anarchism', at The Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, W.C.1 (near Russell Square) at 3.30 p.m. SLM in exile. All welcome.

**Accommodation Wanted.** Cheap sleeping accommodation/dry floor. Anywhere in London for seven days June-September. No cooking. Write Alan Murgatroyd, 28 Sun Street, Haworth, Keighley, Yorks.

**Elizabeth Windsor.** Hull Anarchist Group require any anti-royalist information or literature. Particularly about the Queen. H.A.G., 89 Fountain Road, Hull.

**Unaligned in Vietnam?** Easter Pamphlet. 'Neither Washington nor Hanoi but Libertarian Socialism.' Duplicated pamphlet for sale, price 3d. Write Laurens Otter, Tolstoi, New Yatt Road, North Leigh, Witney, Oxon.

If you wish to make contact let us know.