

CONCORDE: £970M. DOWN THE DRAIN

IT IS DOUBTFUL that, because Pan American, Trans World Airlines and now possibly Japan Airlines, have cancelled their options, manufacture of the Concorde will be halted. Such a decision, after having reached this advanced stage, would not only be demoralising but could also be politically damaging to both the British and French governments.

Many questioned at the outset the wisdom of building a supersonic airliner. Huge economic resources have been poured down an ever demanding drain into a project which has provided work and profits for the manufacturers, but whose social benefits are at their best rather dubious. To the politicians Concorde was an example of co-operation prior to this country's entry into the Common Market. For those with a vested interest in aircraft and their components, it was a blank cheque for profits.

The original estimate for the research and development costs was between £150m and £170m. It has already been estimated that the cost has reached £720m and that another £250m is still needed to complete this work.

Pan American's decision was taken for a number of reasons. Their financial position has deteriorated over the last few years and they do not think

of keeping with the most powerful industrial country in the world not to go ahead with the S.S.T. rather than leave the field open for Concorde and the Russians' TU 144.

HOWEVER as anarchists we are opposed to the waste of both materials and human labour which has gone into manufacturing a form of transport which will enable a minority to travel that much quicker from A to B. We see no advantage or indeed progress in such flights. In fact the continual expansion in aircraft travel is causing pollution to our own environment but could also have unforeseen effects on the earth's atmosphere. To those who say that Concorde has provided work, we would answer that we should not work for work's sake, and that it would have been far better to have paid out the millions spent on the Concorde as unemployment pay than to have built this monstrosity. This labour and the skills and raw materials could have been used on far more useful things than Concorde. The present headlong advance in technology could also lead to a world fuel shortage.

Now many of these workers face the sack. Shop stewards at Bristol, with the help of their M.P. Anthony Wedgwood-Benn are forming an action committee to safeguard the future of Concorde. They may

that Concorde's economic and technical performances are up to standard. Concorde being a supersonic aircraft has also not exactly been accepted by people living near airports or by those living under its flight paths. Although the noise and pollution protests might have been important factors in their rejection of Concorde, it is not unlikely that America's withdrawal from involvement in the Vietnam war might have been a major consideration and they might go ahead on their own aircraft, the S.S.T. It would be out well be successful, since other airlines operating the

Pacific routes might order Concorde. The mad desire to fly that much faster might mean that other airlines would have to follow and Pan American could find itself reversing its decision.

But this headlong rush to improve our so-called standard of living is destroying the quality of life. It is self-defeating flying around the world to places if everyone else does the same. Our money as taxes has been used to build a monster to provide profits and national prestige for governments and employers.

P.T.

ALARM SET FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

WHEN AN ALARM clock is set a tendency is sometimes for one to wake up shortly before the time the ringing occurs. In Southern Africa we could be at this particular stage, for things are hotting up. It has been a depressing decade for those who would wish to liberate Southern Africa from oppression, but a growing feeling is emerging that we are about to see a transformation with far-reaching consequences.

The answer has been direct action. By guerrillas in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, by strikes in Namibia and South Africa, and by demonstrators in all these countries and overseas against racial oppression and the systems of forced and cheap labour.

The strikes in South Africa which have been taking place in recent weeks should surely inspire British trade unionists. If Africans can strike illegally in an oppressive regime like South Africa, surely in Britain trade unionists can raise a struggle to defend a threatened standard of living. In saluting the great courage of those who strike in South Africa in what has been termed "gut anarchism", we acknowledge the struggle ahead is going to require actions both inside and outside Southern Africa to topple the apartheid system.

It is a time to redouble all activities outside South Africa designed to increase the strain on the minority rulers of that area.

The irony is that in Britain to-day racialism is having a hey-day with the Conservative government introducing immigration rules which break the State's own Race Relations Act and the Law Lords inviting contempt by ruling that a private club can exclude entrants on grounds of colour. We read of Rhodesia where Africans are excluded from drinking in bars in "white areas" after 7 p.m. and here in Britain a private club can now exclude people on grounds of ethnic origin at any time. Where does the difference exist? Surely, only in the hypocrisy of Britain that claims adherence to

the concept of multi-racialism and racial tolerance and good community relations! At least in Rhodesia and South Africa no leader pretends to believe in a multi-racial system.

One would hope that trade unions in Britain would examine all links between firms exploiting labour in Britain and South Africa. It is time these international capitalist links were not only exposed but also condemned. It remains for that small minority who see racialism in South Africa and capitalist exploitation here as part of the same enemy to work for the defeat of both capitalism and racialism in Britain and Southern Africa. We weaken both by weakening either; we strengthen both by strengthening either.

Southern Africa's struggle for liberation will certainly be a revolutionary one and libertarians have, at this time, to demonstrate how the methods adopted both in Southern Africa and Britain are most effective when extra-parliamentary. It is also our task to convince the Africans and others who wish to liberate Southern Africa that we have more than a nationalist struggle, but a chance to pursue the revolutionary objective of workers' control and social justice and equality.

J.W.

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TOO LATE!

SMITH'S ANNOUNCEMENT that the border between Rhodesia and Zambia is to be re-opened is surely the nadir of Rhodesia's international reputation. It reminds one of the naughty child (Zambia) who has been locked in his room as a punishment. When father (Rhodesia) opens the door, behold the child has got out through the window! Furthermore the window has been fixed so the door is no longer required for access to the room.

Smith originally stated, quite explicitly, that he would only re-open the border with Zambia if assurances were given by Zambia that the guerrillas operating from its territory in attacks on Rhodesia would be stopped by Zambian authorities. Nothing has been done by Zambia yet Smith has climbed down and Kaunda has announced he is seeking more reliable routes for his exports and imports than through Rhodesia.

Only in Rhodesia, where the great white chief can do no wrong (or do no right me-thinks!) could such humiliation not result in the leader's downfall. Let us be thankful for that. If we must have people in power let them be idiots!

J.W.

showdown at briant's

THE LIQUIDATOR HAS SERVED WRITS ON THE JOINT CHAPELS' COMMITTEE REQUIRING THEM TO HAND OVER THE FACTORY TO HIM BY MONDAY FEBRUARY 12 — OR APPEAR IN HIGH COURT WHEN A JUDGEMENT WILL BE MADE.

This print works has been occupied by 130 workers for the past seven months, ever since the previous owner went bankrupt. The committee has issued a statement that they will defy the law and remain in occupation. They have called for a mass demonstration outside the factory in the Old Kent Road, S.E. London at 12 noon on February 13. They are hoping that thousands will be there.

M.H.

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REVIEW

Communal Violence

THE TOWN has no sadder sight than the art critic who arrives ten minutes after the free buffet has been closed. After that all else is dross. If a Velasquez painting of Pope Innocent X spoke from the frame or a Maillol sculptured nude walked away it could not compensate for the triumphant smiles of the hired help as they wheel the re-bottled wine and whisky back to the locked vaults. After that one is left with room after room of the regurgitated leavings of the Italian Futurists.

Though conceived in Paris by Marinetti its brief and noisy life began on the 20 February 1909 until it collapsed like a well shot balloon in the ugly and romantic realities of 1915 on the Italian war front. The leaders of the Futurismo movement were young middle class men of the type who formed the intellectual leadership of Fascist and National Socialist movements that were, in a few short years, to spew their filth across Europe, for they were of a type whose well-groomed figures stare back at us from all the ancient photographs of Black and Tan officers, 1926 strike breakers from the universities, in the forefront of Mosley's uniformed fascist marches and in every situation when undisciplined violence is sanctioned in defence of the privileges of an established class. But their greatest crime, in retrospect, was that they were third rate artists. Marinetti, poet, crook and friend of Mussolini, prattled their death rattle when he wrote that "a roaring motor-car, which runs like a machine gun, is more beautiful than the 'Winged Victory of Samothrace'. We wish to glorify war", and I feel it is an unfortunate oversight on the part of the Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, that in their press handout for this exhibition they omitted that part of the Marinetti quotation that I have underlined. As young men they loved violence for its own sake, as members of an established middle class they found their outlet for it in the communal violence sanctioned by their society, and as third rate artists and pseudo-intellectuals they produced a parasitical art form that was no more than a rehash of the exciting work of the Paris Cubist painters.

PATHETIC REHASH

Carlo Carra's 1913 cubist painting is no more than a pathetic and bad imitation of Picasso's "Man with Violin" that Picasso painted in 1911. Boccioni's "Charge of the Lancers" painted in 1915 is no more than work based on Duchamp's 1912 "Nude descending a Staircase" while the paintings, on exhibition in this major exhibition of minor work, of Severini are amateur painting at its lowest level; crude brush work, sickly colour, sentimental daubs in subject matter that one feels, nay knows, would never be accepted by any art group on their own merits.

But for every painting the Futurists churned out a hundred exciting manifestoes extolling violence not only in art but in life. In art they rejected the quietus of the circle and sought to portray movement and violence in curves and arrowed lines streaking across the canvas, in music in rowdy discords, in literature in a broken type face, in the theatre in confusion to a banging drum and in architecture in huge mindless skyscrapers whose windows mocked the heavens as no more than columns of stencilled dots. Chiattonne, Sant'

Elia, Depero and the rest marked out on ruled paper their dreams of a mindless world that has become our nightmare. Of battery buildings for people, rigid as concrete corpses, pedestrian ways like the vision of a Kafka prison that is now the accepted way of death for the free and convicted, cathedrals like unto metropolitan power stations in the final rejection of Christ, and Power Stations built in the image and the agony of medieval prisons.

RUBBISH

They were young, they were foolish and they frightened the girls and they now stand condemned as third rate artists and two world wars, high rise buildings either empty by the years or breaking up complete with the tenants, motor ways bulldozing across homes and fields, 10,000,000 dead in State Concentration Camps means that their manifestoes are strictly for the bog and their art for the birds. Most of this rubbish will in the end disappear down the sewers of history or in the vaults of some American art museum, and we and time will be left with no more than Boccioni's exciting sculpture "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space" where he cloaked the human figure in waves of carved curves in an attempt to portray movement in a static object, yet other men before him tried their hand with greater success and less noise and the "Winged Victory of Samothrace" that they chose to mock will and must outlive this petty essay in sculptured movement.

NOTHING NEW

Over three thousand years ago unknown and unrecorded craftsmen carved the huge human headed stone lions that stood before the doorway of the throne room of Ashurnasirpal II at his palace at Nimrud, and those Assyrian craftsmen sought to portray movement in static stone, and as one approaches these huge stone lions we see them at rest with their two forelegs together but the watcher from the side sees four legs carved to show motion. 3,000 years ago the art of the potter and the carver in stone, in bone and wood had reached its climax in that the craftsman had reached the apex of his skill and the artist had explored all the means of expression. All we can do now is to admire the new craftsmen and cheer with the mob at the current avant garde hysteria but always and at all times be watchful and wary of the message, for with the Italian Futurists their message was the deification of the polished and well shod boot in the balls of the lower classes.

Arthur Moyses

DIARY OF TWO DAYS

IN MILAN

(This report has been edited owing to its original length. Being a foreign resident, our correspondent's name is withheld.)

I LAMENTED, earlier, the lack of action and organization here in Italy. Organization is still lacking but action has occurred and it's more lamentable than the lack of it.

On Tuesday 22nd January Milan witnessed yet another outburst of violence. In the vicinity of the Bocconi University students and police engaged in frontal battle. (There's no other word for it.)

The former employed the usual stones, bricks and petrol bombs, the latter the usual teargas and firearms.

What is certain is this: 1) the student Roberto Franceschi has been shot in the back of the head by a policeman: Gianni Gallo; 2) this cop has also shot the working man Roberto Piacentini in the chest; 3) the cop Nicola Pinto has been hit by stones, but not too seriously; 4) another cop, Vincenzo Addante has been hit in the eye (which is probably lost) by more stones.

As usual the official channels of information seem rather reticent. (Eye-witnesses, dozens probably, seem to have vanished into thin air. . .) The "real" violence - so they say - occurred when "unidentified students of extremist extraction" started throwing petrol bombs at the peaceful (armed) policemen. One of these landed on the canvas top of a jeep or Black Madonna (they're not sure!) driven by Gallo. Seeing flames around him he lost his head and started shooting. The police say they have recovered the cartridges ejected by Gallo's pistol. But it seems more were picked up by students. For all we know Gallo might not be the only one who fired.

On Thursday 24th a colossal demonstration-march through Milan was organized by the local Movimento Studentesco with Lotta Continua, Il Manifesto, Il Partito Marxista-Leninista, and it is believed a small contingency of anarchists took part. While marching through Corso di Porta Ticinese a few militants (according to the right-wing press, extreme-leftists; to the 'independent' papers, merely extremists) stepped out of line, attracted by the presence of a youth who was sitting on his motor-bike apparently minding his own business and waiting in all patience for the marchers to pass on. Anyway, someone in the crowd is reported to have shouted, "There's the fascist", at which point he was thrown down from his bike and attacked with iron bars, having his skull bashed in.

He is reported to be a 22-year old British student, Peter Walker. Today (25th January) the right-wing press is making a hero of him, the left-wing hasn't yet commented, and the daily papers make a point of saying that he had no particular views in regard to politics and belonged to no party or militant organization. A student in a foreign country has rather limited scope politically. Here the police "kindly advise" abstention from political activity with its risk of being extradited as an undesirable alien. What I want to stress is that even if Peter Walker actually was politically active, he still would have gone on minding his own business.

As for young people in general, I was out on the streets here in S. a few hours ago and heard discussions on whether the death of Franceschi would be more poetic, valid, significant than that of Walker, considering that the former was fighting for a cause and the latter was not, and on whether or not we should distinguish various forms of violence more or less justifiable. It seems as if nothing constructive is being said. Though lots of things are going on, young militants seem unable to draw any logical conclusions, owing probably to the extreme sectarianism which characterizes Italian extremist groups. Oh yes, here everybody is politically "aware" - what they're not aware of is that they're all being used as unpaid slaves and beasts of sacrifice by the Communist Party and the Movimento



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Sociale (Fascist Party)

And whatever sacrifice you offer, it's worthless if someone else is pulling the strings behind you.

*Readers will know that the student Roberto Franceschi was fatally wounded. The Guardian 7.2.73 reports that tens of thousands turned out in Milan for his funeral, "golemn and one of the most impressive Milan had seen". Late that night there was an exchange of bullets between left- and right-wing students in the centre of the city, and in nearby Brescia fascists blew up the Socialist Party headquarters.

WHO SAID SQUATTING WAS DEAD?

A CERTAIN NEEDLESS pessimism appears to have settled over the left-wing and libertarian scene. 'Peace' in Vietnam is not sufficient of a sell-out to make a campaign out of it. Ireland has settled down to the bloody monotony of assassinations. The Israel-Arab conflict has resumed its threatening mutterings. Trade unions seem to be coy, with good reason, about outright opposition, manifested in action, to the government's wages and prices policy.

Rage at the imagined 'sell-outs' of the past cannot be sustained for long. It is well known that it takes two to make a sell-out and many of the accusers must remember that they reposed trust in somebody or something.

'Squatting' is old history. It reached its peak in 1969, and it was generally thought that because of absorption of 'squatting' into the official structure of social welfare and the consequent disciplining of official 'squatters' the idea was dead. What is forgotten is that ideas, especially those hingeing on direct action, do not die. More than three years after the 'death' of squatting the Observer estimates that there are 2,500 legal squatters in London, and about the same number of illegal squatters.

Now, with the monstrous growth of development plans in the provinces and the attend-

ant evictions of tenants to make way for roads and civic planning, the same uneven development has left houses empty and homeless tenants crowding council waiting-lists. Many municipal schemes are quite frankly property deals disguised as improvements. Many councils and ratepayers must have burned their fingers judging, for example, by the vacant development buildings in Ipswich; also, several councils seem to have developed cold feet on surrendering so much housing to the motor-car moloch and its spaghetti garnish.

Many municipal plans have been abandoned, modified, or at least considerably slowed up because of financial difficulties. But consequently houses remain empty for longer periods.

According to the Observer (Feb. 4th) Jim Radford has said "The political theory of squatting, as far as I am concerned, is that we must reach a situation where solutions are reached and imposed from underneath." The reformist idea of Family Squatting welcomed by Councils, Jim Radford and others has, thanks partly to the present government's utter (and studied) neglect to build houses for rental, failed to hold back the tide, and the idea of squatting has grown.

In writing on London events, e.g. the Camden squat, one is discussing the familiar and well-publicized, owing to the

nearness of the media. Take for example instead, for a variety of reasons, Colchester. This town has been subjected to planning blight (see FREE-DOM: The Rape of Colchester 27.2.71) and as a consequence an estimated one hundred houses stand empty. Colchester, like every other town, has its housing waiting list, pressures of rent increases, a number of impoverished students, and the usual 'drop-outs' and dossers trying to live without interference by 'straight' society.

Their interests have coalesced in the joint occupation of successive empty council-owned houses in the town. They have been evicted with force and without legality by members of the Chelmsford Drugs Squad and a private detective agency -- Wynters. Houses have been wantonly and purposively vandalized by the council (as was done in Fulham and Ilford) to make them uninhabitable for the six months (at least) before they are demolished to make way for a road to convey further house-hunters into Colchester.

Last Saturday the local paper reported that the council workmen were beginning to board up 'derelict' houses to prevent occupation by squatters. The choice of the word 'derelict' is significant. As regards the houses at present squatted in, the Deputy Town Clerk said they were applying for an eviction order for the houses where nineteen squatters were living (that makes a change from eviction without an order

Furthermore the Highways Committee has decided to have it both ways by offering the house to the Christian Action housing charity - before or after the eviction order is put into effect!

Incidentally, a middle-aged couple who are squatting was passed on to the group on the recommendation of Bernard Brett of Christian Action and I.V.S., who is a wheelchair-bound worker for charity in the area - he was awarded the O.B.E. in the New Year Honours list. Perhaps he might tell the Queen there's a lot of empty rooms at the end of Pall Mall!

To prove that this rotten fabric of the State is all of a piece, two prospective squatters are Catholics who have moved from Northern Ireland fearing IRA vengeance because their sons are in the British Army - Colchester is a garrison town but there is no gratitude even for services rendered.

Interviewing one of the organizers of the squat conversation turned, as it must, on past squats. I happened to mention the author of a long-forthcoming book on squatting.

"Who's Ron Bailey?" said the squatter.

J.R.

UNFAIR RENT

UNDER THE Housing Finance Act local authorities in England and Wales are now supposed to draw up a list of 'fair rents' for each of their dwellings. These lists must be published before 10th February 1973. It is also the duty of local authorities to notify each tenant in writing of the provisional 'fair rent' which has been arrived at for his particular dwelling. The Tower Hill Action Group would like to know why Kirkby (near Liverpool) Council has not yet notified tenants of their new 'fair rent' yet; after all, the council is not too slow getting in touch when the rent is not forthcoming. Could it be due to the fact that there is a local election in May this year? Or could it be that if the council did publish these 'fair rents' the resistance to the Housing Finance Act would harden still further and give the council tenants even more unity or purpose? Two years ago Kirkby Council distributed a leaflet stating that an 'economical rent' on Tower Hill would be in the region of £9.50 per week if it were not for the subsidies that keep our rents at a 'reasonable level'. It must also be remembered that, even if Kirkby Council assessed our rents at a 'reasonable level' these rents would have to be approved by a rent scrutiny board which has the power to increase the rent still further if necessary.

Once again the Action Group has received complaints about intimidation by a particular rent collector. It appears that on a number of occasions the rent collector in the Moorfield and Highfield areas of Tower Hill has been threatening young housewives who are refusing to pay rent. The way that this despicable individual has been doing this is by telling them (the housewives) that if they didn't pay the rent he would personally make sure that

they would be taken to court. This rent collector has been noted for doing this sort of thing for some time now. Of course he only attempts these tactics when he evades the pickets and young housewives answer the door. This turd of a rent collector is known locally as "Dickie Bow" because of his ludicrous neck wear.

The rent collector for Heathfield area has been throwing hints to tenants that the Social Security now intend to start paying the council the rent money that they are withholding from claimants on rent strike. This is nothing but a pack of lies. Two representatives of the Action Group had an interview with the manager of Kirkby Social Security and he stated that "the rent money of claimants on rent strike was being withheld until the strike is over and it would not be paid into the council's account".

Many tenants of Tower Hill have been on total rent strike since 11th October 1972.

A Correspondent
Liverpool

Book Review

TIGERS OR LEACHES?

HUMANITY AND ANIMALITY, the 54th Conway Memorial Lecture. By Edmund Leach, introduction by Jonathan Miller. South Place Ethical Society, 10p

ALTHOUGH THEY support each other, state and church have always disputed the boundaries of their power. In ancient India the warrior caste were at odds with the brahmins and in medieval Europe the various kings were often at loggerheads with the papacy. In Spain today Franco is quarrelling with the Church. In

this pamphlet Edmund Leach, although a rationalist and an anthropologist, comes near to taking the clerical side in the dispute. Attacking the neo-Darwinian ideas of Ardrey (The Territorial Imperative), Morris (The Naked Ape), Robin Fox and Lionel Tiger (The Imperial Animal), he rightly points out that the gap between Man and his very closest relatives is enormously wide, and to argue from animal behaviour to human is therefore unconvincing at best.

Unfortunately he then goes on to some very shaky theorising about an innate sense of good and evil which he believes humans possess, and comes to the conclusion that the theologians were right after all to propound the doctrine of original sin, or an innate sense of evil. I remain unconvinced. Rejecting the brutality of the Ardrey picture of Man he accepts the theological. He seems to believe that a strong sense of guilt about sex and about homicide is universal in humanity. Although one can see how this ties up with current preoccupations with "sex and violence" I do not believe it to be true. Many parts of the world, Polynesia, Melanesia, Central Asia and some parts of Africa are (or until recently were) inhabited by people who have a very casual attitude to sex. In pagan Northern Europe homicide was not regarded so severely as it is today. A man who committed it was required to pay compensation to the family of the murdered man. If he failed to do so the injured family could kill him. There was no sense of sin involved. It was an economic matter. Killing one's "country's" enemies has nearly always and everywhere been deemed highly meritorious. And yet there are (or were in the last century) some peoples who knew no war.

My own guess, it is no more, is that homo sapiens is a species uniquely vulnerable, as a study of his bodily structure clearly shows us. His genitals are exposed and

his natural weaponry of claws and teeth are poor. Possibly he evolved in a warm and sheltered environment, with few natural enemies - the element of truth in the Garden of Eden legend. Originally he was not a particularly violent creature, but changing climatic conditions, or his own inventiveness, led to clothing and weapons, without which fighting would be impossible.

Beyond that our knowledge does not permit us to go. To spin out theories based on modern European practices and beliefs seems to me to be quite unjustified. However the reason why Ardrey, Tiger Tim et al. on the one hand, and Edmund Leach on the other, expound the ideas they do is that our culture is faced with a crisis, and the problem which is vexing many people today is how law and order is to be maintained. The "warriors" try to provide a philosophical justification for the use of force, force to keep down the blacks, the students and all who do not conform, and force to exploit the natural resources and the manpower of the Third World. This is what lies behind the theories of Ardrey, Morris, Fox and Tiger.

Edmund Leach also wants a philosophical basis for a society of exploitation, though whether he is really conscious of what he wants is questionable. There is no question at all about the "tiger-men". They are quite conscious of what they want. I would say that he is a liberal gentleman who wants people to feel guilty about sexual activities outside bourgeois marriage, and about being violent. He wants to control people through their minds rather than by brute force.

Arthur Stone

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CIVIL SERVICE OUT!

IRONICALLY, the Government's wage freeze is now challenged by a threat of strike action from 262,000 of its own workers in the Civil Service (see Bureaucrats Revolt, FREEDOM, Jan. 13). Last week both the Civil and Public Services Association and the Society of Civil Servants agreed to call an official one-day national strike for later this month. This will be the first ever national strike by Civil Service unions, although militants supported unofficial action during the General Strike of 1926.

This is a significant development in a trade union area with no tradition of militancy despite the fact that many members are low-paid workers. However, what has not been revealed is the story of the personal power struggles of the union leaders which resulted in their sudden and uncharacteristic support for militant action. Cynics have suggested that Bill Kendall, General Secretary of the CPSA, supported disruptive union meetings during working hours last month in order to persuade the influential Jones-Scanlon "left-wing" bloc within the TUC that he is just the man they need on the TUC General Council. Meanwhile, John Dryden, General Secretary of the Society of Civil Servants, was worried by an aggressive and highly successful recruiting campaign in his field by

Clive Jenkins' union, ASTMS, and therefore he also supported militant action in order to try and retain his members. However, the traditional lack of militancy was preserved by the other Civil Service union leaders.

Of course, the dubious motives of the union leaders do not surprise us, but what is significant is the reaction of the rank-and-file members. For so long every demand for militant action has been rejected by the union leaders, and the self-confidence of the members has been systematically drained away. However, last month's official call for disruptive meetings during working hours was enthusiastically received and many branches passed unanimous resolutions calling for strike action.

What remains to be seen is whether or not militants in other Civil Service unions - notably the 50,000-strong Inland Revenue Staff Federation and the 40,000-strong Civil Service Union* - can gain widespread support for co-ordinated action, official or unofficial, with the CPSA and the Society of Civil Servants. Many people are disillusioned with the IRSF but are unable to join the CPSA because of the Bridlington Agreement which ensures that dissidents cannot pass between unions affiliated to the TUC. Consequently, the struggle is

divided as militants fight in isolation in their separate unions. Also, the lack of militancy of some Civil Service unions is used as an argument against further industrial action by those within the CPSA and the Society who oppose strike action.

Nevertheless, civil servants are beginning to show that they are no longer the loyal automatons that they were assumed to be by politicians and their fellow-workers. Most grades are barred from participating in any kind of political activity or "publicly expressing views of a controversial nature", and there is a repressive machinery - ranging from loss of pay to dismissal - for disciplining offenders. In recent years most political activists have openly defied this intolerable attack on free expression and have escaped relatively unscathed. However, as the authority of the State is increasingly challenged by the Government's own workers then union militants can expect to be the victims of a political witch-hunt.

Clearly, things will never be quite the same again.

Terry Phillips

As we go to press the Civil Service Union has officially announced that it will not take part in the strike.

LETTERS

THE HYDE PARK THREE

Dear Comrades,

Kindly afford me the courtesy of your columns to express my gratitude to the many readers of "Freedom" and "Black and Red Outlook" who showed us solidarity during our imprisonment on remand at Brixton and Wandsworth.

A special vote of thanks is due to my old syndicalist comrade George Foulser, who formed the Hyde Park 3 Defence Committee on our behalf; to Albert Meltzer and Stuart Christie (Black Cross); to Keith Nathan and the ORA comrades, to the group of Anarcho-Syndicalists in Cologne and other libertarian socialists who befriended our families, visited us and wrote to us.

After being held in custody for more than eight months under top security, Category A classification, the blown-up, trumped-up, framed-up charges rapidly crumbled in the first five minutes of the Old Bailey trial. The treason-felony counts were quashed, and after legalistic jiggling and reeling, jurisprudential wheeling and dealing we decided to abide by our lawyer's advice and settle for suspended sentences (and the 90 per cent guarantee thereof), pleading guilty to sedition committed at Hyde Park and the lesser Public Order charges.

On Monday (Jan. 15) the Court adjourned until Friday (Jan. 19) and we were packed off to Wandsworth, Britain's own Lubianka, on Judge's Remand. Still on Cat. A, in maximum security cells, we got the full treatment of convicted, dangerous enemies of society. But I'm no Stakhanovite when it comes to sewing H.M. mail bags, and what must it have been like a few years ago in the days of 'Silent Labour' in the workshops!

Finally on Friday the prosecution dropped the charges of seditious conspiracy to which we had pleaded Not Guilty. And as the S. Times put it the following Sunday (Jan. 21) more cases like this would "bring the machine of public prosecution in the country into disrepute". It is my firm resolve, however, to help all political prisoners, from Belfast to Belgrade, from Mountjoy to Moscow, but especially those in Britain: Michael Tobin, Jake Prescott, Michael King, the Stoke Newington 4, John Jenkins and Alders (Welsh Republicans) and our own Irish rebels.

Yours fraternally,

MIKE CALLINAN.

WARHOL, THE McWHIRTER
AND LIBERTY

Dear Comrades,

I write as one who usually finds Arthur Moyses's articles stylistically absorbing and theoretically unexceptionable. However his piece on Warhol and McWhirter seems to me to have a very contentious closing sentence. Because freedom is indivisible he declares "In the defence of liberty and freedom we must not only defend the aesthetics of Miss Whiplash and Andy Warhol's work but the right of the McWhirter to hold the State and the Establishment to their bad bargain, while at the same time refusing to be bound by the dictates of this trinity of evil."

The only circumscription on freedom which I accept is that it should not be used to deny another's freedom. Arthur Moyses denies even this limit in defending McWhirter's right to deprive the public of its freedom vis a vis the Warhol programme. An ancillary point is that it seems strange to me to read an anarchist defence of the use of the legal system

as a means of suppression, even on the spurious grounds of individual freedom.

Far from denying McWhirter any rights to use odd codicils of the law and other obscure nonsense to further his aims of forbidding what he deems unsuitable, we are helpless to do anything one way or the other. Except that my preference would be to leave his defence to his natural allies among the high Tories and other medievalists.

Perhaps a more useful anarchist approach to the story would have been to present it in terms of the legal system, which we are daily assured is designed only to defend our rights and liberties, being blatantly used to destroy our rights and negate our liberties. Which was perhaps its real purpose all the time.

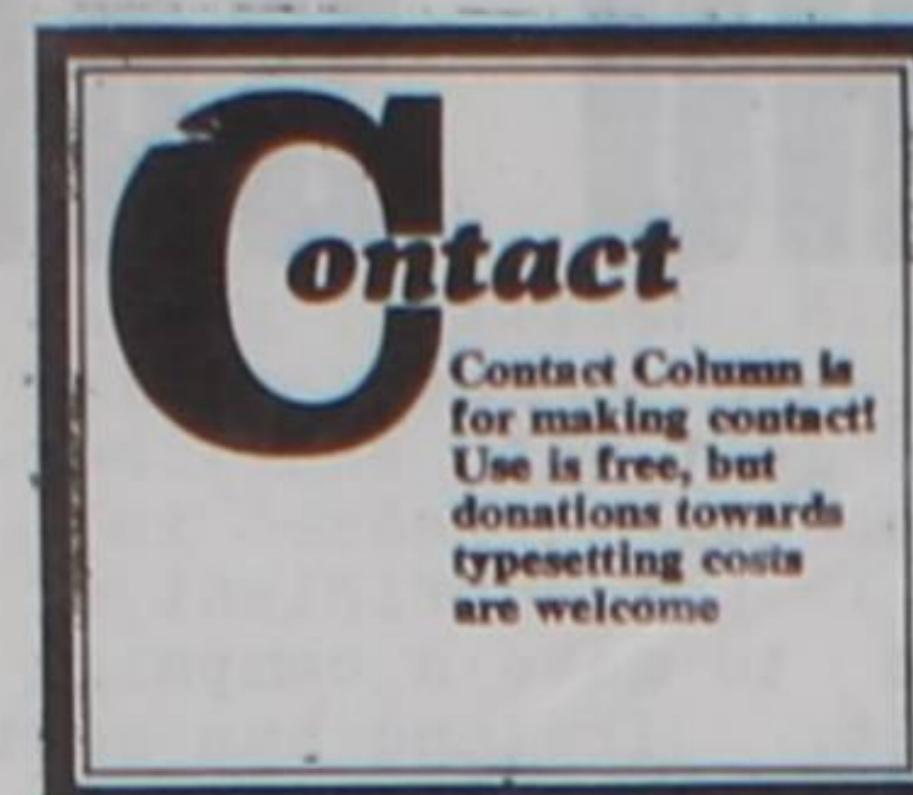
Fraternally,

PETER MILLER

Leicester.

V A L P R E D A T R I A L

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CATANZARO TRIBUNAL (Southern Italy) has stated that though officially the date has not been fixed, the trial will be held in all probability at the end of March, that is if no serious impediments occur. Work is still going on to enlarge the courtroom and prison (for "reasons of security"). What is strange is that an "impediment" has occurred. 'Important evidence' seems to have vanished: evidence consisting of an unspecified number of bits of string, fragments of leather, small perforated rubber tubes and other similarities picked up by the police in the Banca dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana shortly after the bombings. This stuff was sent from Catanzaro to Milan, where it seems it did actually arrive. The Milan police asked for it as it was needed in relation to other investigations.



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

Proposed Groups:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meetings:

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

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

Stoke-on-Trent Dwarfs, an alternative information service at 66 Beresford Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2EX. Open meetings Thursdays 8 p.m.

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

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

Now in its 10th year! MINUS ONE - an irregular review for individualists, anarchists and egoists. No.30 now out. 8p from Freedom Bookshop or S. E. Parker, 2 Orsett Terrace, London, W.2

Marked for Life, the well-known anarchist booklet against exams in univs & colleges, featured in 'Children's Rights', Times Higher Ed., D. Telegraph (sic) etc. 18p from M.F.L. 36a Fairfield Gardens, London, N. 8

SIX PAGES NEXT WEEK.

Discussion of "The Organisational Platform" of Archinov

and
Women's Liberation

(perhaps Freda-Ventura & Co - the Fascists belatedly arrested for the same bombings?)

Of course it might turn up safe and sound, but then it might not. . . If it doesn't turn up the trial might be yet again postponed.

Correspondent