

MAY DAY UP THE POLE

THERE IS a curious nostalgia about May-Day and the Labour movement. Whitechapel Art Gallery (near our publishing offices and bookshop) is staging a display of Trade Union banners which have been elevated to a folk-art like ikons, and like ikons seem to be the souvenirs of a dead and departed age or the banners of an army not bloodied and torn in battle but laid up from a dissolved and pensioned regiment who rarely saw a shot fired in anger.

The same nostalgia pervades reproductions of May Day illustrations of which Walter Crane was the chief British artist (as on this page), and the American Industrial Worker provides samples. But this is not merely a dead and departed occasion with routine ceremonials but a symbol and a lesson which, given understanding, can be revived.



WHEN ONE COMES to examine the few-remaining holidays of Britain one finds layer after layer of dead custom, pagan festivities, religious take-overs and commercial convenience. So it is with May Day, which pathetic ceremonial of the Labour Movement has gained a shot in the arm from the half-hearted invitation of Vic Feather, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, to register in some fashion a protest against the present (Tory) government's industrial policy and wage-freeze.

May Day is more correctly called Labour Day. FREEDOM, our precursor in the 1880's, always called it Labor day in deference to its American origin, and American it was, since it was the Knights of Labo(u)r at the 1889 Workers' Congress in Paris who passed the proposition on of one day when all the workers take a holiday so that they can demonstrate their power. It was an idea first mooted in Chicago in 1886 in a utopian campaign for an eight-hour day. The idea of a one-day or even longer General Strike itself was common in the working-class movement. Bronterre O'Brien the Chartist was often quoted as saying that if the workers took a fortnight's holiday it would bring the exploiters to their knees.

But why May 1st? Robert Owen with his grandiose plans chose May 1st as the commencement of his Millenium. Without going back to Sir James Frazer's Golden Bough which goes down deeper, stays under longer and comes up more confused than anybody before Freud, we can say that May 1st was descended from the Feast of Beltane, a fertility rite, and as such its sexual overtones hardly escaped the attentions of the Puritans. In fact they banned the Maypole and the observance of May Day in 1664.

And no wonder! Stubbes the Puritan, in Anatomic of Abuses wrote with a pen worthy of Mary Whitehouse:

"AGAINST MAY, Whitsunday, or some other time of the year, every parish, town and village assemble themselves together, both men, women and children, old and young, even all indifferently; and either going all together or dividing themselves into companies, they go some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place and some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes; and in morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withal. And no marvel, for there is a great lord present among them, as super-

intendant and lord over their pastimes and sports, namely Satan, prince of hell. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their may pole which they bring home with great veneration. . . . After setting it up, Stubbes writes, "they fall to banquet and feast, to leap and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself."

The Maypole was obviously a phallic symbol as befits a fertility rite and what went on in the woods and hills during the night and what the 'pleasant pastimes' that so scandalized the Puritans can only be guessed, but the May-eve festivities were known as 'Mischief Night' in some parts of the country up to quite recently. The number of days when no work was done were more frequent in a non-industrial society and the smug taking over of feasts by the Christian Church as holy-days (i.e. holidays) deceived very few except the Church itself. The Reformation itself took over the task of cutting down Saints' Days.

The festivities of May Day were extensive including, besides the Maypole, the Morris dancers (a current survival -- in one Northern town a leading Morris dancer is a former syndicalist militant), an attendant hobby horse, and the latter-day accretion of Robin Hood.

THE LIBERATORY, mutinous and rebellious tendencies of all the festivals prior to the advent of Christianity were sublimated into the Lords of Misrule, the reversal of the roles of servants and masters, the licensed delinquencies of May-eve and other festivals and the frankly revolutionary activities of the mythical Robin Hood "robbing the rich to feed the poor".

When the chill hand of commercialism spread over England its agency, the Puritans, issued in April 1644, orders to take down all maypoles. This was rescinded with the Restoration in 1660 but

like all revivals it was never quite the same. Although Maypoles persisted in the villages, for example in Aldermaston (of all places!) there was one 75 feet high until 1861, and a hundred-foot pole was standing in the Strand until 1717. Eventually the public holiday of May Day merged into the frankly commercial Bank Holiday of Whitsun - which has recently been rationalized.

Vestigial remains of May Day lingered in tourist-trap villages and grimly joyous school entertainments and when the horse was a method of transport it appeared self-consciously on May Day bedecked with garlands. When the horse ceased to be used in transport the ceremony of the horse parade lingered on.

From 1889 onwards the May Day-Labour Day was established with meetings, banners and rallies which developed into a holiday occasion, retaining some of the old picnic spirit but tending to lose some of its revolutionary fervour. FREEDOM reminded Eleanor Marx Aveling on one occasion that it was Labour Day, not Democratic Day as the S.D.F. had chosen the occasion, as so many have since, to use the May Day platform to put forward some reformist resolutions. About 1911 the rot set in. It was Coronation year and somebody seized the opportunity to establish May Day on the first Sunday in May. It would seem that since then the 'official' day has been fixed for the first Sunday.

For years, particularly recently, minority groups have tried to revive May Day as May 1st but have had little success. Ironically enough in pursuance of their mock-battle with the Tory Government, the Unions, recalling with nostalgia the brave banners, the Walter Crane pictures and William Morris fixed on May 1st for a rather exclusive, particularist "General" Strike to which all Unions were invited to partake in whatever manner they wished. Thus does the revolutionary tail seem to be wagging a reluctant dog.

Jack Robinson

INTERNATIONAL HYPOCRISY

"Every political power tries to subject all groups in social life to its supervision and, where it seems advisable, totally to suppress them; for it is one of its vital assumptions that all human relations should be regulated by the agencies of governmental power."*

THE RETALIATION raids by both the Israelies and the various Arab "liberation" groups are a political struggle about who will control an area of land and subject the people living there. It is a struggle seen by the Jews to maintain and strengthen their nation state of Israel. For the Arabs, they want to create another nation of their own.

Britain in fact promised Palestine to the Arabs for their support in the First World War. Under the Balfour Declaration of 1917 they also promised "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish People".

But, as Rudolf Rocker writes in the quote above, nation states wish to supervise, and if necessary suppress, people in order to serve national interests. Britain's involvement, with Israel and France, in their joint attack on Suez in 1956 was an example of this. These three nation states' interests coincided when they felt threatened by the decision of the

government of Egypt to nationalise the Suez Canal. With few exceptions all nation states are guilty at one time or another of such aggression. Similarly the Suez invasion could have been described, and probably was, in the same words as Sir Colin Crowe used at the Security Council meeting of the United Nations when, as the British government's delegate, he denounced the Israeli commando raid on Beirut as "an act of official violence which can under no circumstances be justified under the U.N. charter". This is the kind of hypocrisy one expects from political leaders who are only defending the interests of their nation, or rather the ruling minority within the nation. For Britain's interests were damaged, not because of the raid, but because three of the commandos used forged U.K. passports to get into Lebanon. Arabs have justified reasons to be suspicious of Britain's intentions in the Middle East. Allegations of collusion between Britain and Israel had been made by the Lebanese, and since we depend heavily on Arab oil at the moment the British government denounced the raid and the use of forged U.K. passports. Britain must show to the Arab

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*Nationalism and Culture by Rudolf Rocker. Published by Freedom Press. Page 90

EACH MAN TO HIS HUMOUR



PUERTO RICAN OBITUARY by Pedro Pietri, from Palente, copyright by Michael Abramson and the Young Lords Party (1971) reprinted with permission of the copyright owners and McGraw Hill Book Company. Reprinted by FRIENDS OF MALATESTA, Box 72 Bidwell Station, Buffalo, N.Y. 14222

RADICAL CHIC & MAU-MAUING THE FLAK CATCHERS by Tom Wolfe, published by Michael Joseph Ltd. £1.80 (Also in paperback)

EVELYN WAUGH DIARIES by the Late Evelyn Waugh, published by the Sunday Observer 8 pence

HER MAJESTY'S TAX RETURN DEMANDS for 1973-74 by D. W. Arkadie, published by H.M. Inspector of Taxes, c/o Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London. Free.

THEY FALL onto the reviewing desk, the small magazines, the sad little magazines and the bad little magazines, and the months spent in laboured thought on the bleeding phrase and the wounded line is banished from the critic's printed page with no more than a kindly touch on the typewriter. The old emotional clichés rise before the jaded eyes, and the stale songs of dreamers without talent form a mind-wearying pattern upon the unresponsive eardrums of the listener. Too many practise the art of poetry, and it is right that they should do so, but they are men and women without talent who believe that the tinted phrase and the tainted thought is the mirror of their age and that in their poor fashion they are the rhyming minstrels for their vocal but unmusical companions. And yet there is that moment that finds the man to match its anger and a minor poet finds a subject that raises his slight talent above the heads and pens of his fellow poetasters. They are not great poets but in their unique historical context they are given a subject matter that hallows their hesitant lines for they become the bright and chosen voice that we must listen to.

Misery and Beauty

I know nothing of Pedro Pietri and mine is the shame for his slight, twelve-page pamphlet of poetry distills all the misery, the stupidity, the beauty and the hopelessness of the people among whom he lives. Puerto Rican Obituary is but twenty short poems of the New York Puerto Ricans and they range from a brief two lines of "They were born dead/And they died dead" to the beautiful thirty-four lined "Is a long ride/From Spanish Harlem." Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga and Manuel are the five names that flower in changing patterns of Pedro Pietri's blank verse, and he writes of them with

love for their misery and their faults. They sweat, they gamble and they hate and in an alien society they seek to shape their lives and their bodies to the economic overlords. The black people have discovered their own identity and we must now wait for their understandable arrogance to come to terms with our humiliations but there are too few to cry "Burn, burn, burn!" for the Puerto Ricans, therefore they must learn to fight for their own place in our collective sun.

The meaning of poetry as an art and not an academic craft is demonstrated by Pedro Pietri's lines for his fellow Puerto Ricans, few of whom will read the beauty and the understanding of his heart's cry for their common sorrow. These poems are from Palante and the copyright of Michael Abramson and the Young Lords Party, and are reprinted by the American Friends of Malatesta and it is a worthy gesture.

One loves the names but must claim to know little of the background of the Young Lords Party beyond an occasional newspaper report, but Tom Wolfe who should know better claims to know more and his book Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers is another witless expose of what he holds to be the fashionable radical world of high society that wines and dines the Top Ten revolutionaries of the week.

Tom Wolfe "cool, ironic, nattily-dressed observer of the current scene", to quote his own hand-out, has a minor genius for creating good titles, but from then on his talent seems to leave him and we are left with pages of schoolgirl prose in which he catalogues all his hate groups and blows them printed raspberries. Within his fiction he has them all, from the Black Panther Party and striking grapeworkers to the Young Lords all being courted by New York's social elite but having set his scene he lacks the talent to put it into motion. That the rich may and probably do invite the leaders of the great unwashed to swill wine with them is only of interest in that they cannot be in fear of them, and it is pleasant to know that if Tom Wolfe hates these militants then he must fear them and in that they have won one small victory. For myself I believe that it is wrong for leaders or representatives of any working class organisation to meet on social terms with the enemy, and do not let us be afraid to use the word, for if one is invited to sit at the tables of the rich then one should have the honesty to ask oneself why one's company is sought, and I do not believe that any of the American militant leaders were invited for themselves alone but as no more than beasts to amuse.

Weep for Waugh

One can weep with Auberon Waugh, the son of Evelyn Waugh, as week by week the Sunday Observer publishes Daddy's diary and that sour and bemused man takes his revenge from the grave on his earth-bound associates.

It is a stupid form of revenge for Waugh had the ability and the opportunity to do his attacking while alive but he chose this method and it makes him the lesser man. He is without question the finest novelist of his generation as with his beautiful and clinical prose he spoke for a dying class within a brash and cruel society, but it was a class within a society that never came to accept him and now he gives us all his secrets of juvenile sodomy by those now in high office with the State. It is pleasant to lie in bed on a Sunday morning and read that some Leader of Christian Thought or some ghastly High Court judge touched his toes in his youth, but in our age it makes slight reading and Evelyn has laid an egg in his coffin and only his witless son now worries in case daddy tells all about the Greek Street hack of Private Eye.

Poetic Prose

Of D. W. Van Arkadie Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes one can do no more than to congratulate him on his consistently high standard of content and production. His Tax Returns 1973-74 are as usual printed on pale sky blue paper, an affectation that I think adds little to a printed work of art despite Rimbaud on the use of colours. But Arkadie has so chosen and one must still judge his work as poetic prose. His work is clear and full of social comment as line by line he opens the tired heart of our society. I find his use of blank verse, while fashionable, slightly dehumanising, but Eliot made good use of it so one must allow Arkadie his foibles. What I find interesting about Arkadie's art form is his use of reader participation in that he will throw out a question and then demand that the reader shall then make his own comment, and this is extraordinarily interesting for it means that the relationship of writer and reader changes back and forth as the poem passes from hand to hand. Arkadie questions our society, our lives, our means of living and who we live with and he leaves it to the reader to enter his own answers so that a mass-produced work of art can in the end become a personal statement. This has been done in the field of the visual arts when the audience have been invited to write their own comment onto a finished collage. Arkadie has now extended this art form into the field of poetry and one awaits the finished results.

Arthur Moyse

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Makhno and Durutti would tell you it is better to concentrate all your fire on a few targets.

I would suggest a conference (NO! Not that kind of pompous affair) or rather a common meeting for all libertarians where all our aims could be thrashed out and propaganda methods agreed on. A simple idea might be, for example, for each comrade to write down his pet hates and then the meeting to collate and agree to work on the most (un)popular targets for attack.

A divided army is a defeated army. Come on, fellers and lassies, pull together now. Let's take a leaf out of the capitalist book and have a grand anarchist merger!

Yours fraternally
ALBERT R. BRIMICOMBE
Lincoln

LETTER

A UNITED FRONT?

Dear Friends,

To me, as an almost Stirnerite hick from the sticks, the one thing that seems to be wrong with the anarchist/libertarian/syndicalists at the moment seems to be that a lot of sincere energy is being wasted by pulling in different directions and disagreeing over minor points of procedure and detail. So we are getting a proliferation of libertarian publications, a break between "Anarchy" magazine and its great old progenitor "Freedom", and so on. We are a long way from the Anarchist Federation of Britain with its brave panache in the days of the Committee of 100.

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Reprint of Freedom Press Edition with a new Introduction by Peter E. Newell, Biographical Notes and Historical Background

It is my belief that the day of real individual freedom is bound to come. We anarchists are not offering pie in the sky. We are pointing out the logical development of historical progress from feudal and industrial serfdom onwards.

But progress is sometimes erratic: it has sometimes been sidetracked or delayed. For instance, the 1926 General Strike which frightened the Government also frightened its own leaders and all we heard about was strikers playing football against the police. Religion is no longer the opiate of the people: that is football, bingo, tele and the pools. And when the great revolutionary moment faded the poor old miners had to stick it out alone for many a hungry month.

And then there was 1945. There was a time of great upheaval with revolutionary promise. Everyone was pig-sick of a stupid muddled war that was the result of years of capitalist rivalry and intrigue. What revolution did we get? We got a cosy social-democrat government with a public school prime minister supported by a lot of trade union ex-officials who had done very nicely for themselves. All it did was to relieve the coal-owners and railway share-holders of their financial troubles...at our expense. And the result: another set of mine and railway bosses... one a blasted army general of all people! Allas faceless and as unpopular as before. We, the common herd, got nothing except higher prices, poorer services and astronomical fares.

But perhaps it all did some good. There are many signs that the common man has had his bellyful of politicians. He is beginning to realise that Parliament is just a hot air factory and that all this old capitalist propaganda about democracy is just a tranquilliser to keep him in a happy state of euphoria...and what a grand job of doping us the telemen are doing, too!

The common man is beginning to ask questions. It is up to us anarchists to answer those questions; to show the common man that he doesn't need bosses and bureaucrats to organise him; to show him that he is now grown up and can run his own life, help to run his own factory, organise his own affairs, and to build up a just society of equals living in the personal dignity that is every man's birth-right.

Mind you, especially in the snobbish South, this is going to be hard. I gather that some of them down there still call their bosses "Sir". To me the word "Sir" is an obscenity, a three-letter word that should never be used by decent people.

We must present a united front to convince the common man of our sincerity of purpose. We must choose our immediate objectives very carefully, and not tilt at every windmill in sight. There are so many injustices in the world that anarchists are tempted to attack them all. But as Nestor

From here to Utopia

AS ANYONE who has distributed anarchist leaflets in the street or has spoken at a public meeting on anarchism will know, the response is almost always not of criticism of the ideal of an anarchist society but rather of the lack of practicality of proceeding to that ideal. Even anarchists themselves can be thrown into despair, inactivity and fatalism through the apparent gulf between their dreams and the practical action they can take to influence the course of events. The inevitable disappointments resulting from exaggerated hopes can lead to the futile position of inactivity and moral superiority which seeks a comfortable confirmation of the intellectual validity of philosophical anarchism in man's stupidity and inhumanity rather than through the faltering steps forward of the millions of people who have yet to encounter anarchist ideas, let alone embrace them. The only cure for futile despair is to make anarchism relevant to other people and to understand the relevance to anarchists of changes taking place in society.

In relation to trade unions there seems almost unlimited scope for misunderstanding to lead to an elitist view. From the Olympian heights of almost religious asceticism or from the blasé rejection of materialism flowing from jaded affluence it is easy to condemn or discount the relevance of the economic struggles of workers. However, that is not to say that anarchists should be content with a mere economic struggle and, in fact, we should always be trying to push such struggles further to the point where the right of the rulers to rule is challenged. Because the enormity of the task makes success difficult is certainly no excuse for abandoning the sphere where people have the greatest lever for social change, i.e. at work. Fortunately, we have long rejected the callous theory of increasing misery as a revolutionary stimulus and there is considerable reason to believe that when the minds of men and women are freed from the pressures of intense economic insecurity they are potentially much more fertile ground for anarchist ideas. The present writer takes the optimistic view that on balance relative affluence is probably more subversive than corrupting.

Trade unions are not revolutionary organisations but merely exist to defend the interests of workers which are always under attack in a capitalist (or "socialist") society. However, even this reformist action is provoking a response from the State which inevitably teaches workers about the realities of political power. It should also be remembered that the strike is still the major area of direct action in Britain and, as such, the sphere in which more people are gaining self-confidence and learning the lessons of solidarity and self-organisation than any other.

All the evidence suggests that the Government is intent on a confrontation with strikers in the coming months and this coincides with a widespread disillusionment with both the Conservative and Labour Parties. It appears that the Labour Party is not the beneficiary of workers' opposition to the Conservative Government as it was in the 1960's and to that extent we are in a significantly different situation. All of this makes vital the active participation of all anarchists in the industrial unrest and demonstrations of the coming months. Now more than ever it is important to proclaim in our papers, leaflets and meetings that workers can and should seize control of industry in the interests of the community. There really is something in the air but it would be naive to recognise the immense possibilities without recognising the dangers of power passing to the authoritarians of either the Right or the Left who are waiting in the wings. If the anarchist case goes by default it is clear who will be the beneficiaries.

Terry Phillips

I DO NOT EXPECT any help for a libertarian revolution from any government in the world. We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall... It is we the workers who built these palaces and cities, here in Spain and in America and everywhere... The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world, here, in our hearts. (Buenaventura Durruti)

GUILTY UNTIL FOUND INNOCENT

GUILTY UNTIL PROVED INNOCENT?
Published by the Release Lawyers Group
(40p), 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9
(654 0277)

A DISTINGUISHED group of radical lawyers have made an incisive assessment of the Criminal Law Revision Committee's Eleventh Report, which recommends among other things that the accused's right to silence should be ended and the police caution should be abolished. This Revision Committee was set up in 1959 and has produced a dozen reports and almost all their recommendations have been implemented by Parliament. They are, in fact, the State's judiciary decision-makers - mostly unknown to the general public, never voted into power and vested with more power than is healthy.

They have an average age of 65, are senior members of the judiciary and only one has had defence or Magistrate's Court experience. "A group of men with narrowly based legal and academic training" who "rely heavily upon the collective knowledge and experience of their members" is how the authors describe them. There are no criminologists, no sociologists, no practising criminal barristers, no probation officers, no human rights or civil liberties personnel among the Committee members. Five senior police officers attended their meetings.

This Committee think the odds in law are now heavily loaded in favour of the accused, they think that by altering the rules relating to police questioning and evidence in court the balance will be redressed. They believe the police act fairly and reasonably in obtaining evidence, are honest and accurate in the witness box, rarely distort evidence or use improper means to obtain incriminating statements from defendants.

The Release lawyers present evidence from a former police officer about the police in London. Extracts from this evidence tend to differ from the Committee's position. "My fellow police officers frequently admitted to me that they had changed a person's statement

to increase their chances of a conviction... officers together helped one another to construct a good story... There are total fabrications or false charges, it is quite common for a person to be arrested for 'loitering with intent to commit a felony' just because a police officer did not like the look of him or needed to keep his arrest record in shape. The officer would then describe in court behaviour which he maintained led to the accused being charged with the offence. Very often this description would bear no relation to what actually happened... There was planting of evidence... I saw a police officer hand a man a rope in the street and then charge him with being in possession of an offensive weapon. Many of the officers at my police station did not hesitate to use violence when the opportunity arose... The promotion in the police force depended to a certain extent on arrests and convictions... Most of the officers I knew were indulging in malpractices of one form or another. In my view the whole system is corrupt and violent and anyone who has to administer it either becomes part of it, or gets out... When I told the superintendent that I was leaving he asked me for my reasons and I replied I was not prepared to lie like the others. He then told me that I was not the right man for the job".

Another accurate statement from the police comes from Robert Mark, the top cop with whom the Release lawyers agree when he states that "the overwhelming majority of people who broke the law were weak, inadequate or otherwise defective". The Criminal Law Committee talk of the growing sophistication of criminals, but it is the weak and inadequate who need protection against the law for the professional criminal uses threats and corruption, intimidation of prosecution witnesses and bribery to win the day. The curtailment of legal rights will hit the weak even harder and not touch the professional criminal at all.

A basic criticism of the Committee is its ignorance of Magistrates' Courts, where 90% of criminal cases are dealt

with. Here the magistrate is judge and jury and nearly always believes everything the police say. The police have a 94% chance of securing a conviction (compared with 74% with judge and jury) and defendants often have to defend themselves. A study at Holloway found 69% had been unrepresented at the magistrates' court and 81% of those given custodial sentences had not been given legal aid. Another study of five urban centres shows 80% of non-motoring offenders on first appearance were unrepresented. Michael Zander has further found that in 16 courts (12 in London) 9% of those pleading guilty and 37% of those pleading not guilty were represented. Many defendants do not even apply for legal aid. In Holloway 90% of 335 unrepresented women made no attempt to get legal assistance. Despite all this evidence the Criminal Law Revision Committee wrongly assert: "Legal aid is now applied for, and granted, in a high proportion of the more serious cases tried summarily."

Another example of the Committee's ignorance of the subject they are supposed to be knowledgeable about is their statement: "in the absence of research among ex-jurors the effect of evidence of previous convictions must remain a matter of speculation". There is evidence in two studies by Cornish at the LSE and by McCabe and Purves, Oxford University. Oddly the Committee, despite speculation, are sure of their belief that education is the one important factor in juries' decision making, whereas the factual evidence suggests an inter-relation of social class, age, sex and experience are important. But what has the judiciary got to do with evidence anyway?

The Release lawyers' own recommendations seek to reform many aspects of the system by which the law attacks people and the critical demolition of the flimsy and inadequate report by the CLRC is their avenue for doing this. I find their views lack conviction for it is only when there are no prisons, no police and no punitive courts that we shall witness the knowledge of justice. J. W.

SHELTER'S SHELTERED LIFE

"What we are aiming for now is the production of sophisticated documents which will be taken into account by the government in forming housing policies."

Rev. Bartlett - Shelter's chairman of the Committee of Management

"I have got four children aged from 22 to 8, sleeping in one room. My mother has to go to the toilet in a bucket, the ceiling is falling in and we are having to wait our turn until the council can house us."

Mrs. Irene Frances, Marsden Street, Camden, London

WHILE AN unbelievable row was flaring up last week at the headquarters of Shelter, around the personality of the Director, Mr. Godfrey Martin ("The row centred around the activities of the American CIA in international politics at the time when Mr. Martin had been president of the National Union of Students" - "The Guardian" 19/4/73), squatters and badly housed council tenants of Marsden Street were threatening to slaughter each other in a more realistic, human row, caused by the appalling housing conditions of this country and by the housing bureaucrats of the London Borough of Camden.

An analysis of these two different types of rows tells us that:

1) To rely on the state, councils, churches and bureaucratic housing organisations to solve the human suffering of the homeless is asking for miracles, as it is quite clear that the persons involved in this type of work are using a specific and emotional cause - housing - to further their careers or eventually have their names quoted in the do-gooders' "Who's Who" of this society!

2) To rely on middle-class "experts" who are not prepared to learn with humility how to solve working-class housing problems is, as the statement of the Rev. Bartlett implies, to put emphasis on the state as controller of our housing needs.

3) Consequently any move by homeless people that upsets the housing plans endorsed by the government, councillors, voluntary housing organisations of the magnitude of Shelter, must be the right move, as they go against repressive au-

thority and at the same time develop people's militant emancipative attitudes of self reliance and diminish the power of the capitalist state.

In my opinion, squatting is the most immediate and effective answer to the problems of homeless families, who have been pushed, in the first place, into homelessness by this selfish society.

Every safe, empty house demands to be immediately occupied, repaired and protected by the squatters against the legal hooligans of the council and its eviction mobs.

If Mr. Godfrey Martin has or has not been evicted from office by his discontented staff is quite irrelevant in the field of housing. As far as Shelter is concerned, the only use I can see for this organisation is for it to be occupied by anyone in need of a place to sleep. If anyone is interested in this possibility, the address is: 86, The Strand, London, WC2.

C. P.

THE LONDON TO PARIS WALK

THE ORGANISERS of the Greenpeace London to Paris Walk met to discuss the organisation of this demonstration on Wednesday evening (10th April). It is intended to coincide with the French nuclear tests in the Pacific, and with the sending of a boat into the testing zone.

The organisation of such an event involves many difficulties. The idea is to pass through Belgium, where there is quite a lot of support, and where the new European parliament is situated. Contingents from other countries will be able to join the march en route.

Unfortunately, it may come as a surprise to some readers, Belgium is practically a police state. In passing through Belgian villages walkers must keep a number of yards apart, and prior permission must be obtained for each city for the march to pass through it.

Accommodation is a problem too. For foreigners to stay in private houses they must register with the police. They are not allowed to camp by the wayside.

There will be the Belgian-French frontier to be crossed, but whatever

THE PRODUCTION OF FORMS

I WORK in the Main Drainage and Sewage Section of a local authority. I and the Surveyor had to measure the levels of a number of sewers. Sewers are dark places, and we required a torch. Naturally, we were not prepared to use our own torches. And for some reason or another, my section did not have a torch.

In order to obtain a torch, I had to fill in a form in triplicate for the accounts department; they, in turn, had to fill in an order to a local wholesaler, again in triplicate. I went to the wholesalers, with one of my forms. However, before I could take the torch away, the wholesalers had to write out an invoice (four copies this time!), one of which they would send to my employer, the Borough Council. The VAT had to be worked out, as did the discount percentage.

The torch, after all that, cost 55p. Said the man behind the counter of the wholesalers: "All these forms for one bloody torch!"

That's capitalism for you.

P. N.

happens the marchers are prepared.

Plans for what to do on arrival in Paris are still somewhat vague. There is talk of a pop festival, a possible press conference and an interview with the French Prime Minister.

The march will last from the 14th May to the 3rd June, unless there are hold-ups. The British contingent will number about twelve. On the 13th May there will be a rally at 11.30 a.m. outside the French Embassy. For further information contact Greenpeace, Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

Arthur Stone

Among the books seized under an Obscene Publications Act warrant on April 11th from BOOKS of Leeds they list Wilhelm Reich Mysteries of the Organism, Henry Miller's Sexus and Quiet Days in Clichy, along with lesser known or more recent books on sexual subjects, an intriguing title Filipino Food, the re-issued Victorian My Secret Life (Walter) and Boswell's Life of Johnson. The usual run of comics - OZ, IT, Nasty Tales and Gay publications were also taken.

REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM ITS AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

THE ONLY REVOLUTION worth having is when ordinary people rid themselves of all those who live off them, and organise themselves in their own interests. Such a condition will be anarchy. And for that reason "anarchy" has become the alarm cry of Prime Ministers, City magnates and all officials, politicians, would-be politicians and the like. The word "anarchy" merely means "without rulers"; but today it is equated with chaos, disorganisation and violence - actually symptoms, not of an anarchist society, but of our present-day sick capitalist society. But our opponents believe, and want us to believe, that they are indispensable, and that an anarchist society is impossible. We know that they lie, or are misinformed.

There have been times when people have successfully organised whole societies, vast agricultural areas, large towns and cities and, on one occasion, a whole navy of modern ships on an anarchist basis; they have created anarchy and order - and it has worked! But the powers-that-be suppress, or ignore, these facts. Moreover, whenever the masses of the people attempt to "create anarchy", and reconstruct society on the basis of libertarian communism, the rich and powerful, the former bosses and employers, and the State, do all in their power to crush the people and their revolutionary achievements.

This they and successive governments did, for over ten years, when Emiliano Zapata, the Liberation Army of the South and the peons of central and southern Mexico took over the land of the great planters and hacendados, from 1909 to around 1920. This is what they did when the people of Russia and the Ukraine made their revolution, between 1917 and 1921, and were violently opposed, first by the Czarist White Guards, and then later by the so-called revolutionary (but actually counter-revolutionary) Bolsheviks. This is what they did when General Franco rose up against the Spanish Republic, and eventually crushed the Spanish workers and peasants in 1939. Again, when the workers and peasants of Hungary and Poland rose up against their "Soviet" rulers in 1956 and in 1970, they were crushed by the Russian Capitalist State. And so the story goes on. By such struggles libertarians learn their lessons, the most important being that, without proper preparation and organisation - as well as an idea of the kind of society they want - the workers will be doomed to failure almost from the start.

These events, however, and many others less well-known, are, in fact, part of a continuing process in man's long struggle for freedom and social equality. "Either the social revolution will terminate in the defeat of the workers, in which case we must start again to prepare the struggle for a new offensive against the capitalist

...continued from p. 1

world that their hands are clean of any involvement with Israel since it could have serious repercussions to the oil assets this country controls. £60 million of these were seized last year by Colonel Gadafy's regime in Libya and no compensation has so far been paid.

Sir Colin Crowe said that if such raids were accepted and tolerated we would be reverting to a "state of international anarchy". This misuse of anarchy is ironic since it is the governments of nation states who initiate aggression and cause the destruction, the killings and the chaos which follow. The glory of nations has long fed on these ingredients, devouring both the people that fight for them and those they fight against. Acts of aggression between nation states and even those who desire this status do not liberate the people involved. The real enemy is within each nation or group of nationalist politicians, who desire power. When the people of all nations unite against their national masters, whether Arab or Jew, and abolish the artificial frontiers between people, then we will have gone a long way in achieving the anarchy which all our leaders so readily attack.

P.T.

system; or it will lead to victory of the workers; and in this case, having seized the means which permit self-administration - the land, production, and social functions - the workers will commence the construction of a free society" (Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, by Archinov, Makhno and Mett).

The Spanish workers are still threatening the Franco dictatorship; the Hungarian and Polish workers are not cowed after nearly thirty years of repressive "communist" (i.e. State Capitalist) regimes; the peoples of Mexico and even the Soviet Union are, once again, beginning to stir; and the workers of France, Italy and many countries, including Britain, are still struggling against repression and the ever-increasing powers of Government and State.

(to be concluded)

Peter E. Newell.

LETTER

THE AGE OF UN-REST

Dear Editors,

I've just read K. Perlo's letter on the "Age of Un-Rest" (FREEDOM 7/4/73). She correctly points out that the all important question regarding production and distribution in any society is "who controls?" - a question Jack Spratt, both in his "science fiction" and in his "reply" to K. Perlo, completely evades. Instead, he talks vaguely of an utopia of absolute leisure and consumption. Let us be charitable and assume he means "excessive" consumption, since only a mystic could dream up the concept of "absolute" consumption. Now, "excessive" is a relative term, but the libertarian left in general can fairly be said to be against "excessive" consumption. Yet Jack Spratt assures us that his piece was a "satire", a reductio ad absurdum of ideas held by, amongst others, "some leftists and libertarians".

Since the satire failed to bite, would Jack Spratt please tell us whose ideas he was satirising. Perhaps he could also try to answer the very pertinent questions raised by K. Perlo.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Horner
University College
London Union

REPLY: Jack Horner should pull his thumb out!

The 'mystic' idea of 'absolute' consumption "seems to be" that of "the advertisers" and (I quote myself) "some leftists and libertarians".

Since the satire obviously failed to bite with two people at least ...have I failed or are they dim?

The question of who controls is important (although we might argue the implications of the term). What we propose to control is just as important. Do the workers want to control the bingo-halls, the moronic TV programmes and the plastic food?

Jack Horner should come out of his corner.

Jack Spratt
[alias Jack Robinson]

We hope this correspondence also can now close.--EDS.

GARTREE POWDER-KEG

A DOCUMENT which has been smuggled out of Gartree Prison warns that there is a serious danger of much more trouble than the riots last November if the Home Office does not agree to an independent inquiry into the running of the prison.

The document signed by 15 men in "B" wing claims that the prison is again in a high state of tension. A man recently released from Gartree told the present writer when leafletting in Corby about Gartree (see "Slave Labour on Prisons" in FREEDOM 14/4/73) that there was considerable unrest in the prison about the poor food and the repressive attitude of the prison officers.

T.P.

a life for a vote?

THE DEFEAT of the Commons motion seeking the partial reintroduction of capital punishment will doubtless be taken by the naive as evidence of the humanity of our political rulers. In fact, the MPs were given a free vote by their party machines -- with much cant about "individual conscience", etc. -- precisely because the issue did not have any potential for party advantage.

The sadistic hanging-and-flogging brigade is an important part of the Conservative Party as the ritual speeches at party conferences reveal every year, and the Commons vote reflected this by the 2-to-1 majority amongst Conservative MPs in favour of capital punishment. The fact that hanging is not a deterrent to potential murderers does not, of course, discourage those with a compulsive desire for revenge. It is indeed ironic that the hanging enthusiasts invariably couple their prejudices with advocacy of an authoritarian "family life" in view of the fact that the greatest proportion of murders occur within the family situation, involving wives, husbands, children, etc.!

The fact that the Labour Party, with the exception of 3 MPs, made a liberal stand against hanging should not induce in us any confidence in it as a guardian of liberal values. The most illiberal and inhumane of politicians are used to proclaiming how they are at great political risk to themselves holding back the floodgates of popular prejudice and inhumanity which is alleged to be clamouring for the chopping-off of hands of petty thieves, or some such lunacy. In fact, the way in which racialism has been made "respectable" by repressive immigration controls and talk of immigration "problems" shows that the politicians of all the major parties have bent their flexible principles in order to gain or retain power. Fortunately -- except to the inveterate elitist -- there is little reason to believe that a widespread desire for the barbarity of capital punishment exists in the minds of most men and women.

That brilliant barometer of popular prejudice, Enoch Powell, in a recent article in the Daily Telegraph argued that there was no case for capital punishment but concluded with the following statement which sums up the depths to which any seeker after power will descend: "I cannot therefore deny that in this context a settled and preponderant public demand ought to be taken into account or that at a certain point it would have to prevail. I do not believe that point has been reached; but it would be disingenuous for me to deny that it could exist."

If and when that day comes the political guardians of "liberal" opinion will pull the bed-clothes over their heads at the first sight of the shadows on the wall.

Terry Phillips

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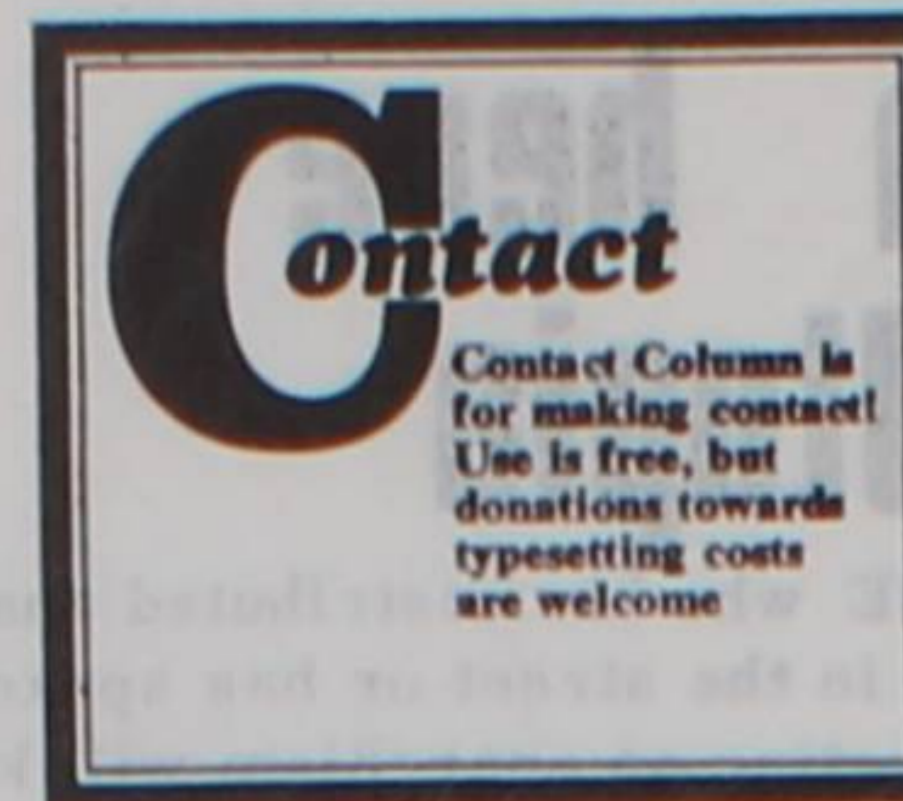
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CORBY ANARCHISTS. Discussion meetings first Friday in every month at 7 Cresswell Walk at 7.30 p.m. Phone Terry at Corby 66781 for details of other activities

KIRKDALE ALTERNATIVE DAYSCHOOL, Sydenham, has a few vacancies. 3½ to 13 years. Phone 874 6212 (evenings)

Peace Pledge Union's FESTIVAL OF PEACE from 6th to 13th October. Organisational meeting Monday 30th April 7.30 p.m. at Dick Sheppard House, 6 Ridsdale Street, W.C.1.

PICKET at Home Office each Sunday starting 29th April at 2p.m. "Belfast 10" Defence Committee, further information from Maureen Maguire, 88 Roslyn Road, London, N.15. (tel.01-800 9392)

STOP THE FRENCH TESTS. (Picket on first Monday in each month.) Other activities information from GREENPEACE, c/o 176 Finchley Road London, N.W.5.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD AREA - anarchists/libertarians interested in forming group please contact Roderick Parkes, 90 Queensway, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

CARDIFF DWARFS are starting an anti-pollution campaign against the local steelworks, planning a street theatre and other activities and need help. Contact Ian Matheson, 45 Corporation Road, Grangetown, Cardiff.

SPAIN - The Forgotten Resistance A filmshow and lecture by Miguel Garcia on May 10th in the Arts Theatre Centre, Coleg Harlech, Harlech, Merioneth, N. Wales. Further information from G. Briggs, c/o Coleg Harlech.

LIVERPOOL ASA, contact May Stone, C.32 Summerfield, Tower Hill, Kirkby, near Liverpool.

LONDON ASA meets every Wednesday 7.30 p.m. at 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, N.5. Black & Red Outlook always available, by post 5p + 2p

MENTAL PATIENTS UNION, S.E. London Meetings will be held at 170A Deptford High Street, S.E.8 each Tuesday at 8 p.m. Mental hospital patients and ex-patients welcome. Contact Andrew Dewar above address.

PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL - RENT STRIKE: The second free festival commences in Windsor Great Park on August 25. Work preparing for it now started. Details: Bill Dwyer, 26A Elmbourne Road, London, SW17 8JR

BARNESLEY DWARFS starting Adventure Playground. Any help on this & possible other projects appreciated. Contact Charlie Robinson at BAGINS (Info Service) 12 Regent Street South, Barnsley, Yorkshire

"Alternative Shop" opening this summer needs advice, suggestions: in particular legal help. Please write Box 103, Freedom Press.

MICHAEL TOBIN DEFENCE COMMITTEE
265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent

STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE SOLIDARITY
Committee, 54 Harcombe Road,
London, N. 16

New "Underground" paper being started in west of Holland, where none is published up to now. No defined political or ideological affiliations. Want advice and suggestions from groups publishing papers & would like specimens of mags. & papers. Send to Hans Van Veluwen, Marktplein 11, Appeldoorn (Gld) The Netherlands

Libertarian Struggle, monthly paper of ORA, 5p + 2p post, or sub £1 12 issues from 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds (also in Freedom Bookshop)

"Spies for Peace" the INSIDE STORY March/April issue (reviewed FREEDOM 21.4.73) 20p + 3p post from 3 Belmont Road, S.W.4 or from Freedom Bookshop

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