

IRELAND: Sham of Elections

I. IGNORE THE WHOLE THING

A YEAR AGO no FREEDOMS were being sent to Ireland. Now 400 a week are sent, divided equally between North and South. Undoubtedly the country is in a state of intellectual ferment, such as has not been known for a long time. Anarchists who have been over from London have been surprised to find how ready many people were to discuss all kinds of ideas. Religion was not by any means as dominating as had been expected.

The People's Democracy movement is a grass-roots organisation. Many of its ideals are shared by anarchists, but it is putting up candidates in the forthcoming election. Its demands are:

- Green and Orange Tories out;
- Direct state investment to give jobs for all;
- Workers' control;
- Break up of the large estates and the creation of co-operatives in order to end rural depopulation;

Comprehensive non-sectarian education;

Housing to be a basic right; and

Police special powers to be ended.

The members of People's Democracy do not really expect to get any of their candidates elected, and their programme is more in the nature of a statement of ultimate aims than a realistic assessment of what they hope to gain through an elected majority. The purpose of putting up candidates is to show the sham of elections.

However this may be a mistake all the same. Even to put up candidates purely for reasons of publicity, when you don't expect them to be elected, is playing the state's game. (It is a minor matter, but if the candidates lose their deposits they are making a small contribution to the funds of the state.) It is certainly true that in past years the London anarchists have held anti-election meetings, but these have not been particularly successful. On one occa-

sion, after a vigorous 'Don't vote!' campaign, there was the heaviest poll for years. On another occasion Fulham anarchists spent a great deal of time producing masses of leaflets and covering the whole constituency street by street, with the result that about half a dozen people came round to Freedom Press to make enquiries, and no other result was perceptible.

Perhaps a better method is to burlesque the whole thing, and put up a candidate who is obviously unsuitable, a donkey or a hippo from the zoo, as has been done in Brazil, I believe. In this case the point is well made, and everyone has a good time making it.

But it appears from the list of demands that a statist twist still affects the thought of People's Democracy. 'Tories out', well and good, but this suggests that some

other political grouping would be more acceptable. 'State investment' suggests confidence in a possible 'welfare state'. 'Workers' control' and farming co-operatives are better. Non-sectarian education is a very moderate demand in the twentieth century, when the whole system of authoritarian teaching is called in question. 'Housing a basic right' and special police powers to be ended are good as far as they go, but the second of the two is no more than a reformist measure.

However there is nothing wrong with reforms, so long as they consist of the limiting of the power of authority. One cannot, in all fairness, tell people who are enduring the heavy hand of oppression that they should not seize whatever opportunity presents itself to lighten the load. The danger lies in the acceptance of governmental ways of

doing things until the movement becomes assimilated into the machine of authority, as has happened with the trade unions.

Apparently all other activities have been stopped until the elections are over, and everything is concentrated on them. Far better it would be to ignore the whole thing, and continue with extra-parliamentary and non-governmental forms of activity.

It would probably be over-optimistic to claim that Ireland today is ripe for anarchy. But the People's Democracy, and the movement of the squatters and the unemployed in Dublin, are movements which have a libertarian, spontaneous and revolutionary quality, and may be able to achieve great things if they can avoid the governmental trap.

ARTHUR STONE.

II. ON THE STREETS AGAIN

Fascist Ulster, February 1969.

THE psephologists (or siphologists) meal ticket. The ponderous farce of so-called 'democracy' lumbers into action. The election has been called because the civil rights campaign has succeeded in exposing to the light the dissensions in the unionist party, between the out-and-out fascists like Adolf Craig, John Brooke, son of the senile former PM, and their illiterate toadies such as the incredible McQuade, and the 'sophisticated' right-wing Tories, who use their fake PRO methods, e.g. O'Neill. As usual the only part the people are expected to play is to rubber stamp the sectarian decisions of the politicians, but for a change some seats are being contested for the first time in 31 years. What makes the jamboree more amusing is the sight of the unionists tearing themselves apart—O'Neillites v 'the disloyalists'. Obviously O'Neill is merely attempting to discipline the rebels within his junta by having a snap election and strengthen his shaky position by frightening the bourgeoisie into pledging support. For the first time ever 45 out of the 52 seats are being 'contested' by 119 place-seekers.

Of course the result (inevitably an increased O'Neill clique) is immaterial—open or covert reaction. The PD with their eight 'candidates' are attempting to use the election to gain publicity for their manifesto and are only expecting to save their deposits.

As manifestos go it's not too bad. Workers' control. Integrated education. Expropriation of large estates and the land to be given to the small farmers to set up their own collectives. Tenant control of housing estates. An end of the Special Powers Act, the Public Order Acts and the end of the 'B' Specials. The cancellation of the NI housing trusts debt to the central banks. Direct government investment in local industry rather than the free grants to the European capitalists and one man, one vote. Naturally this is far too radical for the NI voter, brainwashed with 50 years of sectarianism, and no PD candidate has a hope of being elected. They're just using the farce to put across their ideas, with TV and the free post for manifestos. Nonetheless should they be in it at all? Of course not—don't paddle in contaminated water of the political cesspool. Still, from the satirical point of view it

has its interest—the spectacle of O'Neill v Paisley v Farrell of PD in Bannside and an unemployed man v a nationalist hack in S. Down. The green Tories are squealing too as McAtteer is opposed by McCann and 'I'm non-political' Hume, Derry's own sellout king.

Perhaps, too, it will prove a salutary lesson to those beguiled voters who rally to O'Neill, Paisley or Bunting—and maybe the people of Derry will again realize that it's all in the streets and at the barricades—not in the white grotesque elephant of Stormont, for make no mistake, as soon as this commercial break is over, it's on the streets again!

Meanwhile Wilson, determined to ensure the success of his loyal fellow-Tory O'Neill is furtively drafting 6,000 troops (none of them Irish) into the province to ensure that Terry isn't going to be unseated by his 'supporters', while I. G. Peacocke (cock by name and nature), has launched the usual pre-election IRA bogeymen scare campaign designed to frighten all the naive into Terry's welcoming arms. He is also fervently denying that there is an armed force of 'Protestant extremists'—they're called the 'B' Specials, sir! and trying to cover up the police discovery of arms dumps in Dee Street (traditional Protestant area) and Duncairn. — Naturally the press are ignoring it.

DR. BOB JONES.

Squatters Struggle Spreads

THE SQUATTERS are still holding firm in Ilford, morale is high and the campaign is gathering momentum. The score so far is two houses held in Oakfield Road, one house in Cleveland Road, and no doubt when you read this there will be another house occupied.

The McNallys and the Kings are still installed in Oakfield Road, and they have been joined by two more families, Mrs. Yvonne Parker and her three children and a family of three from Brixton. Both families heard of the Squatters from the press and both decided of their own accord, to contact us and come and squat. Mrs. Parker has been homeless for several years, staying with relations here and there and then moving on. Now the Parkers have a home of their own, the kiddies have somewhere to play and we hope, a chance to make some friends and have a permanent home.

The house in Cleveland Road has been held now for a week in readiness for the Beresford family, who had been forcibly evicted from the house in Oakfield Road on the Saturday prior to the demonstration. The Beresfords have seven children and they went into their new house last Sunday. Their cat, Kitty, arrived before them and once the children, 2 girls and 5 boys, found their cat and settled down before a blazing coal fire, their faces lit up with smiles, Mrs. Beresford got the tea going, father put his feet up, and the Beresfords have their first home in 14 years.

On Monday morning the Beresfords woke up to bright sunshine and the children went out into the garden. At

the hostel, Council Buildings, Mr. Beresford couldn't let the children out to play; a main road runs past the hostels and there are ponds and canals nearby. In the afternoon, the kids went out into the park, the first fresh air they have had in a long time, Council Buildings is full of damp, and water drips through ceilings. A so-called social worker called on Monday, said the house in Cleveland Road was worse than the conditions in Council Buildings and threatened to take the seven children into care. When asked whether she had seen Council Buildings, she replied in the negative (she was, no doubt, unaware that in the hostel you can sit on the toilet and wash your hands and cook your dinner at the same time). The house in Cleveland Road has two toilets, four bedrooms, a bathroom, lounge, kitchen and dining room. The house is literally a palace compared to Council Buildings; to the Beresfords it most certainly is a palace and they are determined to stay.

The previous week writs were issued against Ron Bailey, Alf Williams and Malcolm Conn and several others restraining them from entering the house in Cleveland Road. Most of them have never been in or near the house; the police took the names of squatters after the eviction on Saturday, other names were taken from press reports and from leaflets, one of these is a member of Ilford IS who merely carried a banner round all day Sunday. Ron Bailey appears in court on Tuesday, and no doubt you will hear the laughter in Scotland when the Council's case is thrown out.

The occupation in Ilford is a test case; already we have been contacted by homeless families wanting to squat, other groups are preparing occupations (three families installed themselves in empty property in Reading last weekend). The campaign is beginning to spread but if it is to explode nationally, there must be a success at Ilford. Success in Ilford will mean thousands of homeless families and slum dwellers and supporters occupying empty houses, flats and office blocks not just on the scale of the 1946 squatters' campaign, but on a revolutionary scale.

The squatters in Ilford need all the help they can get—furniture, food, money, guards, anything that will help them win this struggle.

FANTASTIC!

L'ADUNATA DEI REFRATTARI of January 18 contains a rather dry article informing its readers that the General Secretariat of CRIFA (Commissione per le Relazioni dell'Internazionale di Federazioni Anarchiche) which was created last September at Carrara have now accomplished their first task, and have, in fact, established an Anarchist International. They would now like

all anarchist organizations to declare themselves formally affiliated to this International.

The Secretariat has also produced a gramophone record on which is an 'expurgated reproduction' of the speeches delivered by delegates at Carrara.

The article goes on to review *Esfuerzo*, the Internal Bulletin of the Commission for Relations, Paris (whatever that

is). This 26 page, duplicated pamphlet—in Spanish—describes the 'fiasco of Carrara' and will, I suppose, be of some value to future anarchist historians. Copies obtainable from: *Esfuerzo*, 24, Rue St. Marthe, Paris (10). Price unknown.

CRIFA's publication, the *Bolletino del Segretario dell'Internazionale della strutturrazione*, and, presumably, the gramophone record can be bought from 3 Rue Ternaux, Paris (11).

To conclude, the article quotes Federica Montseny (of all people!) as saying in *Espoir* that the only possible reason d'etre of the Credentials Commission at Carrara was to eliminate all possible opposition.

'And this, in fact,' says *L'Adunata* solemnly, 'is the fundamental purpose of all organizers and of all structural organizations from the national state to the most insignificant political party.' Viva l'Anarchia!

NOT THIS WEEK

Owing to the illness of our printer the next issue of Freedom will have 8 pages



Rush all help YOU

can think of to

London Squatters

128 Hainault Road, E.11

LEY 8059

Home Rule for Yorkshire

DURING THE LAST few centuries there has been a tendency for the state to become more and more centralised, and we have often been told that the Anarchist idea failed, because, with its decentralist principles, it tried to alter the course of historical progress. But the tendency to centralise seems to have reached its peak in certain spheres; in Britain we are seeing a reaction in the shape of an appeal to Celtic nationalism and a call for regional government.

We have seen the rise of the Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Parties, the emergence of Mebyon Kernow (The Sons of Cornwall), and even an independent candidate standing at a general election under the slogan 'Home Rule for Cumberland'. The slogan 'Home Rule for Yorkshire', that was jokingly painted on an Aberystwyth wall some years ago, may soon be taken seriously.

Political groups in those areas that

claim to have a distinct culture intend to create nations; they call for political independence, or at least autonomy. (*Cornish Nation*, for example, states: 'Our aim should not be to pull down the Union Flag. Rather let us raise St. Piran's Cross proudly beside it, in a new and honourable partnership.')

But when one examines those areas in the British Isles that have gained political independence and autonomy, one wonders if the attainment of these has brought many advantages.

The political autonomy of Ulster does not solve its housing and unemployment problems, or reform the fascist nature of the state.

What has political independence done for the basic problems of the people of the Irish Republic? The population is still declining: people are forced to emigrate because of lack of jobs; in Dublin recently homeless families have rioted

and the country has been swept by strikes of workers demanding a decent living wage. The orange, white and green of the Irish flag flies proudly while the people are robbed by US, British and Irish capitalists.

Political independence does not prevent religious bigotry and the persecution of religious minorities (Ulster), or racial minorities (USA, Kenya, and the USSR [the Jews]), or prevent the rise of military dictatorship (Brazil, Spain and Greece); in effect political independence is no step forward or defence against tyranny.

Political independence is not progressive because it is not economic independence; production and trade, through those who control them, are interlocking on a world scale. Few states, if any, have the resources for economic self-sufficiency, and even if any did, they would be forced to expand because the existence of other states is always a threat: any such state

would turn to imperialism, like USA and Russia; an ever-increasing march towards greater centralisation. Political independence or national liberation contains the seeds of imperialism.

And the call for regional government in Britain, although it implies decentralisation, has no appeal for Anarchists. The English word 'tyrant' comes from the Greek: the ancient Greek tyrants ruled territories that one could walk across in an hour.

Because the governmental unit is smaller, freedom is not the greater. The political structure itself must be destroyed, and replaced by a society based on workers' councils, the representatives being subject to immediate recall by those who elect them. The councils federate industrially and geographically, each unit of industry and each neighbourhood retaining an independence in that which concerns itself only.

Political independence and regional government is a sham. Capitalism is everywhere: its sectors interconnect. It cannot be destroyed in part: the revolution must be total.

B.B.

FIFTH COLUMN

BBC

Censorship

WHEN GEOFFREY CANNON, ex-chairman of Oxford University CND and prophet of free communications, takes over the editorship of the *Radio Times* in June he will have a lot of work to do.

One feature of the magazine which urgently requires his attention is the correspondence page. It now concentrates on such topics as: Who does the Bishop's housework in *All Gas and Gaiters*? What are the names of the children in *The Magic Roundabout*? and—inevitably—Should *The Dales* come to an end?

But in the issue of February 13, from which I have taken these examples, most of the correspondence page is occupied by a letter attacking BBC censorship. The letter is written by a group of former members of the BBC's Wednesday Play team and answered by Paul Fox, the Controller of BBC 1.

On Monday, February 17, the *Guardian* quoted Tony Garnett, producer of *Cathy Come Home* and one of the letter's signatories, as saying that the letter was partly aimed at ensuring that the BBC did not cancel or postpone this week's 'Wednesday Play'.

'One of our intentions was to make it very difficult for the BBC to stop putting on *The Big Flame* on Wednesday and I think we've got them nicely boxed in now.'

By the time you read this *The Big Flame* will have been shown. It describes a workers' takeover of the Liverpool docks and is, according to Paul Fox, 'a remarkable film'.

The programmes suppressed by the BBC were *Hit*, *Suddenly*, *Hit*, a documentary about political violence including people like Marcuse, Erich Fromm and Stokeley Carmichael, and *Five Women*, a Wednesday Play about women ex-prisoners.

The BBC's objections to *Hit*, *Suddenly*, *Hit* were unconvincing. The programme, made before the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, naturally did not refer to it. According to Paul Fox this meant that it couldn't be shown after August. According to Tony Garnett *Hit*, *Suddenly*, *Hit* was suppressed before the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Secondly Paul Fox described the documentary as 'unbalanced'. He meant simply that the wrong points of view were given too much emphasis—the censor's traditional complaint.

The objection to *Five Women* was less crude. The programme was 'rejected as a play and turned down as a documentary because it is neither one thing nor the other'. Paul Fox added that after changes the programme would be shown—comment from Tony Garnett: the BBC had been telling him for 18 months that *Five Women* would be put on eventually.

Five Women—like *Cathy Come Home* and *The War Game*—is said to blur the limits between drama and documentary. Homeless Cathy and people dying in *The War Game* are more disturbing than Humphrey Bogart and *Dr. Who's* ice warriors. In the drama/documentary you can tell yourself that you are watching drama but the style forces you to see it as documentary—in other words real.

'Reality' which the viewer is not expecting—and which conflicts with his picture of the world—can be dangerous. A particular programme may convince some viewers that it is a pure documentary. Other people may have their faith in *The News* itself shaken, for if fiction is dressed up as fact then what passes for fact becomes suspect. The audience is forced to think, doubt and question. And the BBC doesn't want too much of that sort of subversive nonsense.

It is interesting that having suppressed the two programmes the BBC allowed this to be discussed in their own magazine. Possibly the Corporation wishes to claim the credit for liberalism while gaining the advantages of censorship.

The BBC's suppression of these programmes is a clear hint to those who work for the BBC and the Free Communications Group. Censors need either the acquiescence of workers in the communications industry or the direct intervention of the police. The function of the Group is obviously to encourage workers in communications to demand greater control over their own work and ultimately to take it for themselves. Immediately without waiting for any revolutionary situation those who work for the BBC can say to their bosses: show *Five Women* and *Hit*, *Suddenly*, *Hit* or we will take direct action to ensure that they are shown.

WYNFORD HICKS.

Producing Job Material

GENERALLY OVERLOOKED in these days of student revolt are the finest exam factories in the country—the Colleges of Further Education. One of the most highly praised is housed in a converted warehouse in Blackfriars Road, her wood-partitioned rooms crammed with part-time civil servants, aspirant salesmen and secretaries, ex-schoolchildren who didn't make the grade, and legions of eager Asian young scientists.

Here the Muse dare not step within the magic circle of forms, timetables, and text-books, and the purpose of education, according to Edward Heath's definition, is admirably fulfilled. The civil servants ache for promotion to sub-vice-form-stamper, the executives pant for a working knowledge of Spanish and that post in Costa Brava Holidays Ltd., the secretaries' fingers itch for those silver-lined keys, the schoolkids want to try again for that certificate proving their knowledge of our British Constitution, and their fellows from overseas knit brows and scribble for the hallowed ticket to a secure seat in the automated circus of Western society. Every one a scarab, glittering shell inscribed 'Student', never pausing to consider that it's straining to roll a ball of shit.

We're not without our grievances. The meals are organised by an outside catering firm and cost twice as much as those at a neighbouring college. The porters are employees of another firm, Cutex Ltd.—convenient for the governors, who are thereby unable to stop them tearing down our posters. And the portly female (prison?) visitor nodded understandingly when boss Dr. Gillanders explained why the student's common-room is so cold.

The moderate majority just want to study. And so continues the mass-production of Good Job material, brains numbed into acceptance of the British Constitution, proud to have been a student, blind to the hypocrisy of their teachers, unquestioning the value of their system of education.

NICHOLAS RAIMES.

LETTER

Marx & Bakunin

I DON'T want to criticise Geoff Charlton's English translation of Marianne Enckell's French translation of Franz Mehring's German account of the relations between Marx and Bakunin, which appeared in *FREEDOM* on January 25, but I think it's worth pointing out that Mehring's biography of Marx, which the account is taken from, has long been available in an excellent English translation by Edward Fitzgerald. It was first published in the United States in 1935 and in this country in 1936, and the fourth impression is still on sale (Allen and Unwin, £2 2s.); the passage in question appears on pages 403-409. A paperback edition was published in the United States in 1962, and it is certainly time there was one here as well.

Similarly, I don't want to criticise Marianne Enckell's annotations, but I also think it's worth pointing out that much detailed background information appears in two English books by E. H. Carr—*Karl Marx* (1934) and *Bakunin* (1937)—and that Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* was of course first published in English, in 1964.

Harrow

N.W.

WITH THE INCREASING amount of development in city centres, the question arises as to who is going to benefit from these projects. From a financial standpoint, it is obvious that the development company will gain, for vast profits have been and are still being made by these companies.

City centres are not just for offices and shops. They are places that should provide amenities, places of entertainment and recreational centres, where people can meet and enjoy themselves. However, many such centres do not fulfil these objects.

In many cases, city centre developments are separated from motor traffic, the new one at Wolverhampton being an example. This new centre, the biggest under construction in Britain, has three levels with escalators connecting each one. However, before this development started, the streets, which have now been demolished, were open to the public at all times. When the work is completed, the development company, Manders, want to exclude the public from the city centre at night. In other words, Manders want a purely commercial centre, where one can spend freely during the day, but after closing time, the whole area will be locked up. It follows that this development will not provide a social centre, which is so necessary and important to

People—Not Profits

liven up the town centre.

Wolverhampton Corporation did try to keep a provision in the bill which would have given public access. However, at a public meeting, Manders packed the hall with their own employees and the provision was lost. Mr. Tavendale, a director of Manders, said, 'No one will believe us, but there was no duress in this matter. We simply asked our employees to come as electors. . . . The other side only had about 57 people there. We won hands down.'

Of course no one is going to believe him. It is a pity that the 'other side' did not pack the meeting. The whole thing is before Parliament and now that residents have drawn up a petition demanding that the Corporation have powers to use the centre 'for the convenience and enjoyment of all citizens', it could take until April before a decision is reached on the bill.

Manders say that their reason for locking up the centre at night is to prevent vandalism and quote the Birmingham Bull Ring as an example where this has

occurred. But the Bull Ring is hardly a good example of a pleasant social environment. It is 'dead' and it is no wonder that windows get smashed and shops broken into. Mr. Tavendale did not think that political meetings would be allowed in the centre 'because they get violent and damage shop windows'.

Manders are only interested in raking in huge profits from the rents of the development. They, as a purely profit-making concern, are not interested in a social centre, even though this could provide profit. They want a simple shopping centre, where all the goods the advertisers have created a demand for are on display and can be bought in the supermarkets.

Our social environment should not be in the hands of these development companies who are only selling space by the foot to the highest bidders. Our towns and cities are for people and for their enjoyment. As such there should be no restrictions of access, for city centres are for people and not for profits.

P.T.

So much the Worse!

READERS OF *FREEDOM* will remember the King Hill campaign a few years ago, in which the Kent County Council was defeated by the homeless people in its King Hill hostel at West Malling, with the help of the Friends of King Hill (the full story is told in the *Solidarity* pamphlet *KCC versus the Homeless*).

One of the by-products of the campaign was an article in the *People* on January 2, 1966, which set out to discredit the campaign by defaming one of the families involved. The *People* was sued for libel, but—as it had calculated—the available funds ran out by the end of the year, and the case had to be dropped. The Friends of King Hill then resorted to direct action, as they had done in the main campaign, producing a leaflet exposing the *People's* libels and picketing the *People's* offices. In February 1967 they also sent a detailed complaint to the Press Council, not because they had any faith in it but because they thought it ought to be tried. In July 1968 the Press Council published its adjudication totally rejecting the complaint; in the meantime an extraordinary correspondence had passed between the Press Council and the Friends of King Hill, and this is the basis of a new pamphlet called *Damned!* in which Andy Anderson tells the story of the way the Press Council handled the case.*

The title is taken from a remark of Lord Devlin, chairman of the Press Council, in its annual report for 1968: 'If an editor publishes and is not damned, so much the better.' There is no room here to go through the pamphlet in detail—only to say that everyone who is interested should get hold of a copy and study it carefully. (It is, as it happens, the first publication of the recently-formed South London Solidarity Group, and a good sale will help them to produce further material.) The pamphlet shows generally that the Press Council's main function is to whitewash the press, as we knew all along. It shows, incidentally, that Patricia Elston, the author of the original article, and Robert Edwards, the editor of the *People*,

deliberately wrote and published false and malicious allegations against Roy and Mildred Mills, and refused to accept any of the points made against them, but also refused to sue the Friends of King Hill for libel when they were exposed. It shows particularly that Noel Paul, who handled the case for the Press Council and has subsequently become its secretary, was chiefly concerned to destroy most of the items in the complaint before it was ever considered by the Press Council and to discredit those that were eventually considered; no doubt he too will refuse to accept any of the points in this pamphlet but will also refuse to sue Andy Anderson for libel. We should be grateful to Andy for taking the trouble to tell the truth about these people, and we should be warned.

N.W.

**Damned!* may be obtained from Solidarity (South London), 40 Tudor Close, Dartford, Kent (3s. post free).

Prisoners' Protest

MADRID

FIFTY PERSONS DETAINED for 'trade union offences' have been on a hunger strike for eight days as a protest against their imprisonment and have been confined to their cells. Meanwhile, mothers and wives have been occupying a church in the centre of Madrid in support of their relatives' action.

The London *Times* for 14.12.68 says that in San Sebastian the Court Martial has passed the first lot of sentences under the new emergency regulations. The general opinion is that many of the accused confessed to their crimes after being tortured and subject to ill-treatment.

A whole series of witnesses says that the accused confessed after being tortured. The military prosecutor presented no witnesses, basing his case on the confessions extracted after eleven days of beatings and torture in a police station in San Sebastian. The accused later denied their confessions.

Nine witnesses had the courage to declare that they had visited the victims and had seen evidence of violence on their bodies and faces.

MADRID

General Segismundo Casao, one of the defenders of Madrid against the Fascist hordes, has just died. He returned to Spain in 1958.

—From *Le Combat Syndicaliste* 26.12.68 (Paris)

PREMISES FUND

Target is £1,000 per year.
1969 Pledges honoured and donations to date: £107 9s. 9d.

MOVING FUND

Target is £500.
Donations to date: £439 14s. 3d.

MAKE IT A £100 SURPLUS!

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Estimated Expenses:		
7 weeks at £90:		£630
Income: Sales and Subs.:		£548

DEFICIT:		£82

PRESS FUND

Altrincham: G.R. 5/8; Wolverhampton: J.K.W.* 2/-; J.L.* 3/-; Aberdeen: W.R. £1/5/8; Los Angeles: Italian Group Proceeds of January Entertainment £20; London, E.17: B.C. 4/6; Falmouth: R.W. 1/6; Brighton: R.M. 6/-; Hitchin: L.A. 10/8; Tunbridge Wells: R.W. 5/-; Arizona: A.T. £4; F.J. £2.		
TOTAL:	£29	4 0
Previously Acknowledged:	£124	5 11

1969 Total to Date:	£153	9 11
Deficit B/F:	£82	0 0
TOTAL SURPLUS:	£71	9 11

*Denotes Regular Contributor.

Crucial Time Dockers

FOR THE FIRST time in 20 years the solidarity of the dockers in the Royal group of docks in London is being directly challenged by the employers with the use of mass suspensions and the threat of dismissals.

The outcome of this battle could well decide how easily and cheaply the employers will be able to cut down the dock labour force under modern dock handling methods. (The main method is containerisation under which machines could do away with 90% of the present manning, according to a report commissioned by the British Transport Docks Board.)

The Regional No. 1 Docks Group

Contact Column

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

Isolated Public School: Offers for printing anti-authoritarian literature, for helping in any way, for contact from students, etc.; write to Tim Cousins, Peele B, Christ's Hospital, Horsham, Sussex.

Socialist Scientist Conference. March 1/2. Open to students, lecturers and workers (and/or?). UMIST Union, Sackville Street, Manchester.

Anarchist books in German. Can anyone supply to Austrian inquirer? C/o Freedom Press.

N. Ireland Support Conference. March 1, 10.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Comrades coming over. All welcome.

Anarchist May 2 Ball at Shoreditch Town Hall. Groups include 'The Deviants', 'Blonde on Blonde' and 'Dr. K's Blues Band'. Tickets now available. £1 double, 12/6 single. Licensed bar (extension applied for). Please get your tickets early from Philip Carver, c/o Freedom Press.

Winnersh Squatters. Comrades in Berkshire are asked to help squatters who just moved in 9 Goddards Close, Winnersh, Wokingham. Or contact Larry Law, 57 Kiln Ride, Wokingham, Berkshire.

Happening. March 1, p.m. To be held in and around the Gorsedd Circle, Cathays Park, Cardiff. Folk music, poetry, rites of spring, body painting, etc. Everybody come and do your thing. For latest info, phone Rob at Pencoed 730 or Judith at Cardiff 22031 after 6.30 p.m.

Community Research and Action Group meets every Monday at 8 p.m. at 58 High Lane, Manchester, 21. CHO 1788.

S.W. London Schools Action Group. Contact Max Hunt, 83 Kingsmead Road, S.W.2, 674 1556 for aims and activities.

Chelmsford Meeting. 'Anarchism Is Humanism'. Speaker: Philip Sansom. Tuesday, March 4, Civic Centre Lecture Room at 7.15 p.m.

Scottish Anarchist Conference in Aberdeen March 1 and 2. Details from Dave Coull, 3 Eskview Terrace, Ferryden.

Birmingham Discussion Meetings. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. At The Crown, Corporation Street.

Feb. 25: Godfrey Webster on 'Organisation, Anarchy and Anarchism'.

Poster Workshop, 61 Camden Road, N.W.1. Free silk screen facilities at the service of the class struggle.

Help Increase 'Freedom's' Circulation. Are you willing to take 'Freedom' and 'Anarchy' regularly to local newsagents and collect returns and cash? If so we'd like to hear from you. — CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT.

Badges and Banners. Rectangular metal black/red badges 2/6 each post free or bulk rate (10 or more) 1/- each—resell at 2/- or 2/6. Also flags and banners to order, from 7/6. McGee, 42 Pendarves Street, Beacon, Camberne, Cornwall.

If you wish to make contact let us know.

Committee of the Transport and General Workers' Union has at present got a ban on any such package deals 'that will result in loss of manning on any job whatsoever'.

But in March a container service run by Overseas Containers Limited is due to start at Tilbury—they hope on greatly reduced manning but for a basic wage of £37 6s. 8d. for a 34½-hour-week for the lucky few who get the job. This job—like most of the other such plum jobs—will go only to dockers employed by the Port of London Authority.

The great fear of the men in the Royals and men not employed by the PLA is that these deals will take work from them and leave them in a much worse position than PLA dockers and those on package deals.

So the men in the Royals decided to operate an unofficial overtime ban in support of a claim of £6 for an 8-hour day and £8 for a 10-hour day for all the men.

This lasted a week and was stopped because it was found that the tally clerks (who check and list cargoes), who were not in dispute, were having their wages cut by as much as £8 a week as they cannot work without dockers.

'ANARCHY IN THE ROYALS'

On Tuesday, February 4, the men decided to change their tactics. Instead of an overtime ban they would go on strike for half a day each week without warning. This would hardly affect the wages of the tally clerks and in fact often meant less hours would be lost than a ban on overtime of two hours a night.

On Thursday, February 6, the employers decided to suspend for two days the 3,074 men who took part in Tuesday's half-day strike. This was the first time such action had been taken for 20 years. Mr. John Kiernan (Chairman of the London Port Employers) said they could not allow 'anarchy in the Royals' to continue.

The men would not be allowed to work on February 24 and 25 unless they appealed to the London Dock Labour Board (so far about 2,000 have).

The men received their notices on the Saturday and held an unofficial meeting on Monday, February 10. It was the best attended meeting ever at the Royals which is considered the most militant section of London's docks.

About 4,000 attended the meeting and decided to defy the ban and stage a second half-day strike. Jack Dash pointed out the experience of 1967 showed that long strikes were not to the advantage of the men. Despite what some Tory MPs may think, it is not very easy living on national assistance for several months with a family to support and all the mass media against you.

The employers warned that a second stoppage could lead to the dismissal of those dockers involved in both. The way negotiations are progressing a docker can get up to £1,750 for resigning from the docks voluntarily. To get the sack would mean he would get nothing so the decision to stage a second strike took some courage.

Although the decision was taken by 4,000 dockers only 2,411 actually went on strike for half a day. This was considerably less than took part in the first strike so it looked as if the employers' threats were proving effective.

On Friday, February 14 (Valentine's Day), the employers decided to suspend those who took part in the second strike for three days (from March 3 to 5 if they did not first appeal). This time Mr. Kiernan

said that although he could not yet speak for all the employers he would recommend withdrawal of the suspensions 'provided the union are able to give concrete assurances of getting the men to continue working and stopping these wild-cat strikes'.

APPEAL DEADLOCK

The union has approached the employers to withdraw the suspensions and should support the men in their appeals. The appeals are made to the Dock Labour Board whose members are divided equally between the unions and employers. When Jack Dash appealed against his last suspension the employers all rejected his appeal and the unions all supported it. The chairman (Tom Cronin of the union) had no casting vote and there was no appeal to a higher body. Because of this deadlock Mr. Dash did not have to serve his suspension. Four test cases came before the Dock Labour Board today (Monday) and also ended in deadlock. The employers' attempts to suspend dockers has so far not come off!

But when thousands of cases are affected this constitution could well be changed to allow for a definite decision one way or the other.

CONTAINERISATION THREAT

Meanwhile a vitally important meeting of the PLA dockers which could completely split the dockers' unity was due to take place on Wednesday, February 19.

The PLA (Port of London Authority) dockers are in a better position—especially at Tilbury—than the other dockers because they get most of the jobs on containerisation and mechanised berths where the work is easy, the pay is high and the manning low.

Overseas Containers Limited, due to start in March, will pay £37 6s. 8d. for a 34½-hour week on three shifts, but to only 54 dockers. This is only a small fraction of the men that would have been employed on the equivalent work (nine ships will do the work of 60 conventional ships) and so the union will not allow the deal until all men are on a decent basic wage.

(At present dockers in London get an average of about £30 a week under piecework. The employers want to ban piecework and are offering a basic wage of £21 5s. plus a 50 per cent bonus in exchange. Dockers however are suspicious over the conditions attached to the bonus.)

On Friday, February 14, the PLA dockers at Tilbury expressed their annoyance at the union for 'holding them back' and not allowing them to accept the reduced manning deals. The PLA has told them that if the OCL agreement is worked, all PLA dockers at Tilbury will be guaranteed £29 a week.

This bribe is very attractive to the PLA dockers and they are tending to forget about the fate of the rest of the dockers. So on Friday they called a meeting of the 3,400 PLA dockers in the whole of London to take place on Wednesday (February 19).

It is suspected the Tilbury PLA dockers want the support of the rest of the PLA dockers to go ahead with the deal and defy the union ban.

No wonder Sir Andrew Crichton (chairman of Overseas Containers Limited) said: 'I am encouraged by the attitude of the men at Tilbury'.

More pressure was added on Saturday when OCL said that unless the deal was allowed to be worked they would take the job elsewhere—possibly to Rotterdam.

If the PLA men do go ahead with the deal it would lead to a tremendous split in the union and by allowing more work to be done by less men would undermine the case of other dockers (including those in the Royals) of getting better wages or even maintain their present earnings.

The employers demand extra productivity for a higher basic wage. Yet the *Financial Times* (February 14) said the OCL service 'should yield an estimated 12 to 15 per cent return on capital compared with a fraction of that from conventional carrying'.

Another threat to the dockers is contained in Barbara Castle's anti-union legislation—particularly the 28-day cooling off period before a strike can legally start. This would completely undermine their bargaining position over an individual ship (if they want extra for unsafe or unpleasant cargoes). If they are made to work for 28 days the ship will have sailed and there would be no chance of getting extra.

All in all a crucial period for dockers.

"PORTWORKER".

Freedom For Workers' Control

FEBRUARY 22 1969 Vol 30 No 6

FORD'S OFFER AGAIN REJECTED

IT WAS REPORTED in last week's FREEDOM that union officials were to meet Ford management to discuss the package deal. The object of the meeting was (a) to increase the original pay offer and (b) to discard the objectionable strings.

The pay offer was increased from 5% to between 7½% and 10% plus the deletion of the sick pay scheme from the penalty clause. Leaders of 15 unions agreed to these final proposals. It is reported that the T&GWU abstained and the AEF voted against. These two unions took this action because even with the increase Ford workers still earn less than Midlands car workers, and both AEF and T&GWU think there should be parity. The discrepancy is estimated at between 7% and 10%.

Some of the union leaders thought they should put the offer to their members before acceptance but they were outvoted. As will be seen later, those for immediate acceptance will reap the storm that they have aroused.

Reaction from the three meetings of the rank and file showed substantial majority opposition, not only to the pay increase, but to the penalty clauses.

The approaches toward equal pay for women were welcomed but it was felt

that women should not be asked to undertake night or shift work in return because of family commitments. This is up to the women themselves to decide. They must have the same freedom to accept or reject the job on the same terms as the men.

Today (Sunday, February 16) all Ford's shop stewards met to discuss the situation arising from their union leaders' acceptance of the package deal. The outcome of the meeting was 'Reopen negotiations for an improved offer or strike action in all Ford's plants as from Monday, February 24'.

It is reported that the negotiations will not be reopened because of the acceptance of the deal by the trade union leaders, plus the fact that Ford's management believe that the majority of the rank and file will accept the package deal.

February 24 will prove who is right, one hopes that there will not be a repetition of Longbridge, Birmingham, where a few years back workers were pleading with their mates not to cross the picket line.

If workers ever sell their right to determine when and where they shall withdraw their labour then they sell the only REAL weapon they have.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

5,000 Homeless in Sweden

SWEDEN IS SUPPOSED to have the

best welfare in the world, but she has in her capital about 5,000 homeless people. A great number of them appear in the alcoholics, narcotic and criminal registers. This unpleasant figure was publicly exposed recently when a group of arts and crafts students opened their schoolrooms to Sweden's lowest social group. (The social services here operate with three or four social groups.) The operation was called 'Alternative Christmas' (later changed to 'Alternative Society') and was meant to offer a completely open community atmosphere.

The young people succeeded, and, through several meetings and discussions with the sleepers-out, managed to raise the self-respect of members of this group. Both sides expressed their attitudes to the arrangement in a very positive way, and the word 'solidarity' was uttered by the homeless, who never normally use it, and rightly so.

A few hundred out of the 5,000 took part. When they could no longer stay at the arts and crafts school 15 people had a demonstration in front of the Town Hall, after which about 50 occupied a youth settlement. The leader of the settlement was taken by surprise, and had his plans disturbed for about 24 hours. During this time a secret meeting was held, and when the 50 people left they went straight to one of Stockholm's social welfare offices and occupied it, and had coffee and lunch there, while the social welfare workers told them that they could

not help them.

Some higher officials arrived and tried to persuade the men to go to the state's hostels for homeless people. It was suggested to the officials that they themselves should go there, and spend a week, after which they would realise why the men did not want to go to these places. One man said, 'I prefer to sleep in a corridor or a hallway of a building, where at least I shall have peace and quiet, and in the morning I shall still have my things with me.'

One of the high officials said to a girl student, 'Your activity at the arts and crafts school was pretty dangerous. It degraded these people, who have tried to gain some self-respect. They have now taken to methylated spirits drinking again. We had people there who recognised such cases.'

'No,' said the girl, 'I am of the opposite opinion. Their morale was raised.'

This dialogue shows how completely out of touch the welfare workers are with the values and wishes of the people they are supposed to help. By help they mean 'get them to accept society's norms and values'. They forget that they are dealing with the people least fit to live up to this society's demands. Society has failed to satisfy their needs, and this is the cause of these people not being able to fit in. Their only solution, in their attempt to achieve some sort of balance within the present system, is to take to drink or to narcotics. It is the only way they can stand their situation.

The officials called the police, who dispersed the crowd. The youths who started the action have dissolved 'Alternative Society', saying that the next step is up to the population as a whole. But there has been a marked lack of support from the public, not an uncommon phenomenon, and no more of the matter has been heard. The men still sleep out, and it's bloody cold here.

A.P., Stockholm.

WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY. LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK OF PUBLICATION.