

# Freedom

## Anarchist Weekly

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# THE SQUATTER WAR

AT A TIME when the press is full of the latest space flight, and headlines describe the 'fantastic ride' of spacemen on their way to the Moon, many people in London, one of the centres of civilisation, are still homeless. A society which can build spaceships is incapable of providing houses sufficient for its population. Nor is this mere incompetence. An element of deliberate viciousness enters into the matter. The struggle of the London squatters is beginning to escalate to the proportions of a minor civil war. Not only are squatting families viciously assaulted and thrown into the street, the houses they occupied are then wrecked and made uninhabitable. Human folly and malice could

hardly go further.

The action of Redbridge Borough Council may have repercussions that will extend much further than the members of the Council can possibly have imagined. In the early hours of April 21 a small army of bailiffs descended on three families of squatters in succession, smashed their way into the houses they had occupied, and threw them (literally) into the street, children as well as adults being manhandled. This attack was, by the way, illegal. Not that we anarchists have much to say in favour of law, which is generally made to protect the property owners (the strong) against the propertyless (the weak). But it is just as well to remember that this action was

illegal, if only for the sake of those who believe that anarchists are people who would like to tear down the very structure of civilisation. People who hold this belief about us are usually the same people who point to the institution of the Law as a safeguard and basis of civilised living. Well, here is authority itself breaking its own laws when it suits it. Perhaps it is tearing down more than a few houses in Ilford.

Mr. Nicholls, the Town Clerk, claims that he used his 'common law' rights in evicting the squatters. In fact he was breaking the law. According to the Statute of Forcible Entry, 1381, '... None from henceforth make any entry into any land and tenements, but in case where entry is given by law; and in such case not with strong hand nor with multitude of people, but only in peaceable or easy manner. And if any man from henceforth do to the contrary... he shall be punished by imprisonment.'

This means that no one may seize land by force, but must instead go through the courts. That the person who forcibly seizes the land has a rightful claim to it is no excuse. This statute was introduced to stop barons, returning from the Hundred Years War, from waging their own private wars over disputed estates. It was ineffective then, and seems to be equally so today. Victory still goes to those who are best organised, and who are prepared to strike ruthlessly, without what we nowadays regard as 'normal, humanitarian considerations'.

In order to achieve his evictions Mr. Nicholls employed a small feudal army. Readers may be surprised that in a modern city, in a quiet modern country, not in barbarous Chicago, or in volatile Paris, but in dear old England, it is possible to hire an army of mercenary warriors to commit acts of violence. Nonetheless it is so.

Mr. Nicholls hired the services of a Mr. Barrie Quatermaine, who runs a 'private detective agency' and appears to be a romantic of violence for its own sake, claiming to be of Norman descent. One hopes that his ancestors are looking down in pride upon him from whatever Valhalla they have flown to, as he unleashes his little horde upon helpless and defenceless people.

In doing this Mr. Nicholls may



have begun a process the end of which he himself would not desire. Society in Western Europe since the end of the Middle Ages has striven, in the main successfully, though with some shattering setbacks (such as two world wars and the Nazi regime), to create a situation of social peace. Daily life becomes more and more humane. Institutions like the death penalty, flogging, the press-gang, etc., are done away with, or reduced step by step. Civil war is eliminated. In medieval times it was a feature of normal life.

The strains and stresses of modern technological and social change are gravely threatening the structure of our culture however. The two world wars, and above all the appalling Hitler episode, show that our civilisation is not very deep-rooted. The settling of disputes by the hiring of private armies is not civilised behaviour. It is a sign of barbarism.

The logical consequences are obvious. What one group can do another can imitate. Karate chops may be answered with pickaxe handles, pickaxe handles may be answered with molotov cocktails. Before long firearms begin to make their appearance. The entire social structure begins to crumble, life becomes precarious, essential services run down. No one goes to work if he can avoid it. It is too dangerous

to go outside one's own district, and one is not very safe there from marauding bands. One cannot possibly run a big city on such a basis.

As the economic crisis deepens, and a sense of insecurity grows among all classes, including the ruling and possessing class, the temptation to resort to strong-arm tactics will probably increase. To do anything to encourage this tendency is to help to undermine the very structure that makes even the much-vaunted space flights possible. Dark Age tribes cannot send rockets to the Moon. The secure and comfortable life which today the bourgeois enjoy, and probably also the vast majority of the working class, in most of Western Europe and North America, is only possible because, on the whole, people do not settle their disputes by hiring assassins, or mercenary soldiers, or gunmen. The Kray gang are denounced, but Redbridge Borough Council, who used a gang on the squatters, are apparently acceptable in respectable society. This may be a sign that this same society is losing faith in itself, in its own 'law and order'.

A.W.U.

\*Q-Men, 25 Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, S.W.1. (The National Front has its office in the same block at 11 Palace Chambers!)

## Please May We Come In?

THE PRESSURES for Britain to enter the Common Market are about to be brought out of cold storage. The pro-marketeteers believe the stumbling block has gone with General de Gaulle in retirement. Many people forget that some drivers can drive a car from the rear seat and it is quite possible that de Gaulle can do just that. The Gaullist Foreign Minister has his eye on the forthcoming French elections and for any politician this is the be-all and end-all. French politicians are no exceptions, Debré sees no hurry for Britain's admission.

Other members of the Common Market are very eager for us to join, not because they love us, but because they have a problem. They find they are overproducing in the agricultural section and therefore they have to extend their market—and where better than in Britain. It is of no consequence to them if the price of our food rises. The situation is reaching

such a critical stage that the Vice-President of the EEC put forward proposals for curbing production in agriculture; needless to say, the idea was not received with acclamation by the European farmers. Therefore it is possible that the French will be forced to say 'oui' instead of 'non'.

Big Business, in the form of the Confederation of British Industry and their French equivalent, do not wait for Governments, they have plans to make. French and British employers had arranged to meet a few months ago but by mere chance their meeting was in fact just after de Gaulle's retirement.

German and British managers from leading companies met in London a couple of weeks ago. Although they have met about half a dozen times before, this latest meeting must have been in the atmosphere of Britain's potential entry into the Common Market. Included in the topics discussed was equal pay and participation.

Britain on her part was able to point

to the 12 part-time employee-directors of the British Steel Corporation. In the German coal and steel industry, the Supervisory Board contains many employee members. On equal pay it was agreed there were prejudices and difficulties.

And so the embryo of the Common Market picture (Britain in) can be seen to be forming. From Joe Soap's point of view it is a bigger financial and industrial power bloc intensifying the workers' problems. The ultimate goal is political union and labour mobility. Such mobility could make for workers' solidarity, but we can be sure that nationalism will be used as a wedge. It is up to us to prepare now. International solidarity of workers has always been overrated; we may have our various international union federations but the seamen's strike exposed that set-up for what it was worth—less than the paper it was written on. It all boils down in the final analysis to what 'Joe' is prepared to accept.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

ON THE NIGHT of May 9 the War Resisters League suddenly was cut off from all 10,000 of its members and friends across the country. This was accomplished by a group of unknown persons who broke into the office and stole ALL membership cards and stencils. In addition, they wrecked the premises, dumped all files, smashed office equipment.

Thus the War Resisters League has to reconstruct its mailing list from scratch. It is therefore urgent that every person who was on the list write to the League at its new headquarters, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012, giving their name and address (with zip code, please).

## Message to the Homeless

THE South East London Squatters have issued a leaflet, 'A Message to the Homeless'.

'Everyone pretends to care about the plight of the homeless', it begins, and goes on to say that the authorities claim to be doing 'all they can', but in fact it is all a pretence. The aim is to make the homeless, and those who have homes of a kind, content with their lot. '3,000,000 families in this country live in substandard conditions. 18,689 people exist in homeless hostels. In London alone, 170,000 people wait on the official housing lists. . . . Nobody ever tells you to

give up hope, because hope is the bribe that keeps you quiet. . . . We believe that the housing problem will only be solved when sufficient pressure is exerted from beneath, and the first and obvious step is to use the houses already available on the basis of need.'

There are plenty of these, houses which for one reason or another stand empty. Some for years at a time. The South East London Squatters offer to help anyone wishing to attempt a squat. Their address is: The South East London Squatters, 9 Guildford Grove, S.E.10, telephone 692 4704.

A.W.U.

## Powell and the Powellites

ENOCH POWELL was booked some time last year by the Harwich Division Conservative Association to speak at Clacton Town Hall, on Friday afternoon, March 21, though much of the information about the meeting was kept secret right up to March 10.

Despite this, however, various known racists and fascists in N.E. Essex had been, for some considerable time, writing 'anti-immigrant' and 'pro-Powell' letters to the local press; and members and supporters of the National Front in Colchester had been daubing walls (and the premises of the AEF and the Labour Party) with such slogans as 'Power To Powell' and 'Niggers Out!'

Prior to the Powell meeting, N.E. Essex anarchists decided that a 'quiet and dignified' demonstration against racism should be planned. This was organised by libertarians (including members of Peace Action) at St. Osyth Teachers' Training College in Clacton. It was quite successful. About 60 first stood silently outside with banners, then later sat down, and sang 'We Shall Overcome' as Powell left. A few students from the University of Essex, and an even smaller number of Victor Norris' pro-Powell group, were present. Our 'quiet and peaceful' demonstration got quite good publicity in *The Times*, the *East Essex Gazette* and the *East Anglian Daily Times*, all of which emphasised the 'non-violent' nature of the protest.

Following our articles on 'Racism In East Anglia' and 'The Facts About Race And Immigration' in *FREEDOM*, the

*Colchester Express* gave considerable publicity to our exposé of racism and the racists, quoting *FREEDOM* (the anarchist weekly newspaper) at length. Said the *Colchester Express* writer: '... it is here, in Colchester, that remnants of the Nazi Party still lurks, that Fascists openly proclaim racism. . . . With the upsurge of neo-Nazism in Germany this country is again coming alive to the threat of Fascism.' Moreover, a special supplement of the St. Osyth College magazine, *EMOT*, contained a statement on 'Local Racist Propaganda' by the secretary of the Essex Anarchist Federation; which was widely circulated in Clacton during Powell's visit. A condensed version (but with credits to *FREEDOM*) of 'The Facts About Race And Immigration' entitled 'Racism Is Evil', was also published in the latest issue of *CHURCH* (Peace Action).

At the time of writing, reaction from the racists has been: a leaflet from Colin Jordan's 'British Movement' proclaiming that 'Powell Was Right' and a copy of 'The Thunderbolt' from a Savanna, Georgia, both sent to the writer from 'the Essex Ku Klux Klan!'

Unlike Liberals (and Communists), we do not intend to report the racists to the Race Relations Board. But we are exposing their ideas and activities—and are beginning to get some support from people who, only a short while ago, were inclined to think that Enoch Powell (and his rather disreputable supporters) was right. Now, they are not so sure. P.





# Whose Finger on the Trigger?

FOR ANY WORKER who recognises that the trade union movement should be free and independent, the last few days of talks between the Government and the TUC must have made him turn away in horror. While deploring this spectacle, no one is surprised by it, for the very essence of bargaining is compromise and this is what the TUC and Government are seeking over the Industrial Relations Bill. However, any compromise arrived at must mean that workers have lost, if not in whole, at least a part of what has been achieved by years of struggle on the part of their forebears.

## Contact Column

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

**Help!** Can you help with the despatch of FREEDOM (Thursday p.m.) and also on Friday (May 29 & 30) because of extra work caused by Scots edition and increased circulation.

**Rectangular metal badges** (red/black or plain black) 2/6 each post free. Bulk rate (10 or more) 1/- each. Flags from 10/-. Cash with order please. Hazel McGee, 42 Pendarves Street, Beacon, Camborne, Cornwall.

**Anti-NATO weekend.** Planning meeting June 3, 7-10 p.m. Conway Hall. Action Committee against NATO.

**Jamaican girl** desperately seeks accommodation; small flat or bedsitter, or indeed almost anything habitable, the need is urgent. Box No. 36.

**Modern Jazz** at Loughborough University Union Building every Friday night. Birmingham discussions. Every Tuesday 8 p.m. at the Arts Lab, Summer Lane (Not the Crown).

**Spanish Libertarian Youth Festival.** June 7, 6.30 p.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Programme includes 'Fury Over Spain' (filmed during the Spanish Revolution). Tickets 6/-.

**International Anarchism.** First issue out now. 1/- from C. Beadle, c/o Oakwood Farm, Lund, near Selby, E. Yorkshire, England.

**Have you any** (do you know whereabouts of) unpublished material such as letters, diaries, notebooks relating to anarchist movement(s) or individuals of 19th and early 20th centuries? A student preparing a thesis on anarchist thought would be grateful for your help. Please write to Sam Wolf, 55 Harvey Court, West Road, Cambridge.

**Surrey Free Schools Campaign.** K. W. Bennett, 63 Hook Road, Epsom, Surrey.

**Manchester Squatters.** Meetings every Wed., 8 p.m. Manchester University Union, Oxford Road, Manchester.

**Wanted,** to buy or borrow, a large tent (up to 15 people) for the International Summer Camp. Offers to J.N., 25 North Villas, N.W.1.

**Read the Northern (Ireland) Informer,** 1/- from Janet Wilcox, 103 Balham Park Road, Wandsworth Common, London, S.W.12.

**Peace News.** Six weeks trial offer for 5/-, 5 Caledonian Road, N.1.

**Hyde Park Sunday meetings.** 3 p.m. Speakers and literature sellers required.

**Alan Barlow—Comrades** wishing to visit in Brixton please contact Defence Committee, c/o Freedom Press for roster.

**Glasgow Anarchists** meet socially at the Station Bar, London Road, every Tuesday evening. Folk-singing.

**International Summer Camp.** £1 booking fees to Ann Lindsay, 39 Upper Tulse Hill, London, S.W.2.

**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.

If you wish to make contact let us know.

The Government, for its part, is determined to stamp out what are called unofficial strikes. To do this, it sets out in its White Paper, 'In Place of Strife', a cooling off period for unofficial strikes and 'penal sanctions' against those who will not comply. The TUC has become so scared of the Government's proposals that it is putting forward its own proposals for doing the Government's dirty work. Of course this is so much the better for the Government, but it does not matter much to any victimised militant if he has been fined by law or disciplined and expelled by his union. In fact the latter could be worse, for it could mean the loss of livelihood.

Trade unionists should not be kidded by the proposals of the TUC, nor should they be fooled by the TUC resistance to Government interference. The General Council of the TUC wants to produce binding rulings on unofficial disputes which are 'protracted and have serious repercussions'—like the Girling strike. They want the unions concerned to accept their judgements and likewise the members involved. If these will not obey the TUC rulings, then union rules will be used to fine or expel strikers who refuse to abandon their action. However, if the union, with members in dispute, refuses to discipline them, then the General Council proposes to expel the union, itself, from the TUC.

## JUNE 5 CONFERENCE

It is ironic that the General Council's proposals for shackling trade unionists will be put at the recall conference of the TUC on June 5. This recall conference was demanded by the Communist Party and the 'left wing' of the Labour movement, who wanted it to condemn and reject the Government's Industrial Relations Bill. However, knowing the trade union leaders' capacity for compromise, I cannot share the optimism of Jack Jones, General Secretary-elect of the Transport and General Workers' Union and a member of the TUC General Council. He feels that the June 5 conference will not 'compete with the Government in the amount of fines or penalties that can be applied to workers. That is not the field in which we are looking.

'On June 5, we shall, in my view, unanimously and absolutely, oppose the application of penalties on workers or trade unionists in relation to industrial disputes. We shall do this in order to expand collective bargaining and not descend to collective begging.'

## POSTERS

**Freedom in Fascist Ulster**  
2s.6d. each

## BROADSHEETS

**The Anarchist Revolution**

4s.6d. a 100

30s. a 1000, postage 6s.

Cash with order—please!

FREEDOM PRESS

## NO COMPROMISE

There can be no bargaining or compromise on an issue of 'penal sanctions' on strikes for the only reply is outright rejection. I do not expect the General Council of the TUC or the trade union leaders to do this. To call upon these people to organise a 'one-day national stoppage', as the Communist Party's *Morning Star* does, is ridiculous. These people, our so-called representatives, have far more in common with the employers and the Government than they have with the rank and file. They all want to lead, to tell and order you what to do. They, the employers, the Government, the TUC and the Communist Party, all assume that they know what is best for workers and trade unionists. They all have one thing in common—they want power over you to push you around, to tax you, to expel you, to fine you, to jail you and, if that does not work, to shoot you down. If you continue the struggle for freedom, for human dignity, for anarchism, those leaders will do everything to prevent you from gaining these things.

As anarchists, we do not look to trade union leaders, not even the 'left wing' varieties, the Communist Party or any political party to defend our freedom to withdraw our labour when we deem it necessary. We look to ourselves and to the men and women who have to spend eight or more hours each day at work for a boss. We look to the vast majority of people who are blamed for not working hard enough by others with soft hands and the people who continually struggle to make ends meet while others live in luxury.

## WORSE COULD FOLLOW

Those who seek compromise are only laying the foundations for something worse, for once restrictions are accepted, worse could follow in the form of legal contracts. No matter what party is in power, they will seek to run a profit-motive system and, to ensure the return on the vast capital investments needed today, they have to provide the necessary restrictions on trade unionists and their practices so as to make these investments worthwhile.

The big international investing companies are looking for legislation against strikes and the only difference between a Labour or Tory government

## FREE SPEECH vs. VERBAL AGGRESSION

THERE HAS BEEN so much deliberate distortion in the mass media about the issue of 'Freedom of Speech' that L.O.'s article (May 17) merits following up. He says Digger's original article on the subject 'should not go unanswered' but does not really contradict anything he said. On the contrary, L.O. makes the important point that freedom of speech so far as we are concerned should be absolute, and this applies to fascists and the like as well. (Much as they disliked William Joyce, anarchists did protest at the legal swindle by which he was hanged.) However, as L.O. admits, sometimes 'freedom for a fascist to speak is itself an aggressive act'; that is, words can be just as deadly a weapon as arms, something which those ready to quote the cliché about the pen being mightier than the sword are apt to forget.

A deliberate tactic used by some fascists in pre-war days was to get on a tramcar somewhere in the East End, knowing a number of Jews to be on board, and carry on a loud anti-semitic discussion with each other. If interrupted, 'You see, these Jews won't even allow you to talk to each other nowadays' or 'Who was speaking to you?'; if not interrupted, it made for a climate in which they could insult Jews with impunity and establish a reign of terror over others ('If they didn't say anything, why should we?'). On one occasion to my knowledge in Hackney, three fascists were beaten up by some Jewish workers as a result; the magistrate, sentencing the latter, told them they had to 'respect freedom of speech'!

# Freedom For Workers' Control

MAY 24 1969 Vol 30 No 16

## Sacked, Suspended and Suppressed

A LABOUR-TRADE UNION-sponsored majority on Durham County Council is repaying its debt in a curious way. They are throwing their weight about in an attempt to enslave their schoolmaster employees and by suppressing official trade union action by teachers.

Durham County Council have—  
**suspended teachers for refusing to work with blacklegs; invited scab labour to work in Durham schools; sacked and suspended schoolmasters for refusing to disobey union instructions; refused to discuss the dispute with the union—the National Association of Schoolmasters.**

In a strongly worded leaflet the NAS protests against this vicious hostility. 'Where once miners led the struggle against the arrogance of owners, teachers are facing a similar despotic determina-

tion to impose industrial serfdom.'

The present struggle began in December of last year when a special delegate conference in London demanded militant protest action against the ineffective negotiating machinery and for an independent inquiry into pay and conditions. Since then NAS members in schools in many parts of England worked according to the rule book intending to show that schools could not function without voluntary co-operation from teachers doing unpaid tasks such as collecting dinner money.

The work-to-rule has been called off in many districts after councils have agreed in principle to the NAS demand. Incidentally by working to rule they still have to take classes of thirty pupils. You may be able to keep pupils in order above that number, but can you teach them?

M.H.

## Freedom Scottish Anarchist Issue

First issue out May 31

Sellers wanted  
contact: Ian S. Sutherland,  
8 Esslemont Avenue,  
Aberdeen.

Subscribers wanting to receive Scottish Anarchist Edition should inform Freedom Press

they are able to terrorise a majority. It is interesting to note, however, that in China where Maoists have been persistently howled down at factory meetings in the last two years, the official Press has always claimed this is 'fascist tendencies at work' (just as does the British Press when some official idiot with all the mass media at his disposal is shouted down when saying, 'I declare this building open', which they claim is a breach of free speech). Surely, the Chinese workers were taking one of their few opportunities for free speech as it affects public policy, as we would do when shouting down, say, Harold Wilson at an election meeting.

But this has nothing to do with the question of free speech and I would challenge anyone who says he believes in the censorship of fascists, for instance. I tried recently, for serious purposes, to get a copy of the original *Mein Kampf*, and some stupid 'liberal'-minded librarian objects to handling it, as if she were my moral guardian and feared it might corrupt me!

JOVEL.

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