

BOYCOTT CHRISTMAS!



CHRISTMAS is coming and the goose isn't all that's getting fat. It's that time of the year again. Crass commercialism has its once a year orgy of selling kitsch revolting commodities using even kitschier more revolting advertising.

Everyone will go out and buy useless presents that they don't like, and that fall to bits overnight, for people they don't like, using money they haven't got. There will be loads and loads of exciting spectacular events all designed to lead up to the wonderfully exciting event itself when everyone will go to endless boring parties with endless boring friends or even more endless boring relatives. Everyone will go charging off getting drunk, stoned, ripped and bloated for several days and then wake up hungover, down and sick and either boast how drunk, stoned, ripped, bloated etcetera they were (oh you should have seen me on Christmas day - three turkeys, forty-eight bottles of vodka, three pounds of hash) or else vow never never never again - till next year.

In the meantime the kids are

wondering what the adults are playing at - they always are the best leveller there is because they see right through artificial social game playing and are only kept from ruining the whole affair by being given brightly coloured plastic bribes. A bit like family reformism. The right concessions at the right time keep the social fabric safe from revolution.

And then everyone goes back to work poorer but none the wiser to work harder than ever to have an even more miserable Christmas next year.

Of course crass commercialism will get the blame but there's more to it than that. For instance the suicide rate amongst single people leaps (excuse the pun) dramatically in December. And the death rate amongst old single people is much higher just after Christmas as well as after their birthdays.

Which brings us to the most important point of all about the whole pathetic affair. Existence has been reduced to such miserable impotent boredom that without organised excuses to pretend to be

happy there is no happiness and no community in this society.

Not that Christmas is the only offender, There are birthdays, weddings, rock festivals ... the list goes on. And Capitalist Christmas is merely a usurper on Christian Christmas which itself usurped the traditional Northern European festivals such as the Saxon Yule.

But Capitalistmas has taken alienation to a particularly advanced state of the art and anyone who had anything approaching a decent life on this muckball wouldn't be fooled by such a pathetic, degraded and degrading imitation of life. Life - real life - as always, consists in the positive and conscious creation of our own environments for ourselves, by ourselves, outside of and against all alienation, all constraints, all imitations.

Anyway, have a you know... thingummy..... er.... wosoname... and... er a whatsit...er.... you know....

Italians buried by bureaucracy

THE DEATHS and suffering of thousands of Italians is an extreme and painful way with which to be made aware, once more, of the uselessness and danger of governments. The earthquake that hit one of Italy's poorest areas destroyed entire villages and killed thousands of people, but left the machinery of government, its unshakable bureaucracy, still standing and funct-

ioning as inefficiently and ineptly as ever. The Italian government is directly responsible for many thousands of deaths. Civil defence programmes for the protection of citizens after natural disasters had been approved of nine years ago, however, in the slow moving Italian political arena, even now no-one knows how to implement them.

continued on page 2



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Even journalists and migrant workers returning from Germany and Switzerland to their home towns arrived before any organized aid. And as I write people are dying from lack of proper care and attention and many originally buried alive are being dug out dead as the necessary equipment for moving the debris finally arrives. In an attempt to make their failure seem less serious the governments official figures for the dead and missing are much lower than most observers estimates. The final death toll could reach 20,000. Even the president of the republic, Pertini, has condemned his government's actions, or non-actions, as an outrage. The minister of the Interior has tried to run for cover by submitting his resignation. This was refused by the Prime Minister and he now seems the most likely scapegoat. Meanwhile the Communist Party (PCI) is trying to make some political mileage out of the catastrophe, claiming that it should take over the government. At the same time its lorries covered in PCI emblems rush to the earthquake victims to buy votes with tinned meat and condensed milk.

To put the uselessness of government aid in perspective, Sicily, where there was a massive earthquake in 1968, has sent 3 milliards (lira ;c£1.5m) in aid. This leaves

them 347 milliards (lira ; c£200m in 1968) lining their pockets as they were given 400 milliards at the time to rebuild the devastated area. (The people of Valle di Belice, Sicily, still live in prefabs put there as temporary accommodation till the rebuilding work the aid was intended for was completed - it never started, the money disappeared.) There is a great fear that this state of affairs will be repeated and people sending money are distrustful of government agencies, preferring to send it via Red Cross or their political party.

The Italian government, arguably the most corrupt and inefficient in the western world, begins to face up to a scandal that even it cannot hide, but which in one way or another it will undoubtedly survive. The Italian people, made up of friends, families and communities, fights back against the disaster as best it can. These people, quite rightly berate a government that, like all governments, claims to be a panacea for all their ills. After all you are not supposed to be capable of organizing your own lives, so it is to the government you delegate your wishes, and it promises to look after you and make sure you don't hurt yourself. But governments are always corrupt, morally and financially, and when asked to perform one of their supposed functions, invariably collapse in a morass of inefficiency and make their people suff-

er. Having made the people believe that under its umbrella no rain would fall, the people are now drowning in a tidal wave of concrete, bricks and mortar, and left to die beneath them. How ironic that these same people, when this same government judiciously whips up feelings of patriotism, will merrily go to war. To die an unnatural death in an unnatural situation. And only complain if they lose, if more of them are killed than their 'enemies'. So conditioned to accept the control and authority of politicians and bureaucrats that they will find any excuse to live oppressed and refuse revolution. If thousands of people left to die after an earthquake will not shake the people's deep-rooted subservience and belief in the need to be led, and to follow, down the paths of destruction - what will?

STEFANO.

TORNESS TRIALS

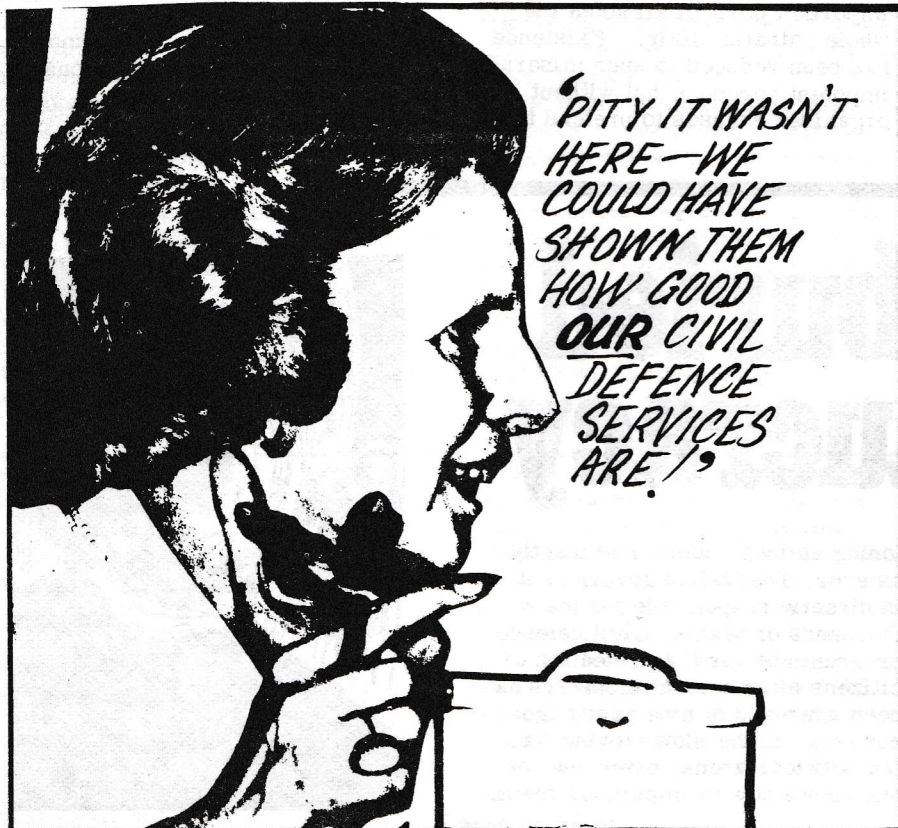
ON 20th November five people went on trial at Haddington following the state's big show of strength at the nearby Torness Power Station site last May.

About forty people came to picket the court and show solidarity with the defendants, and arriving in good time, started the day with a quick march round the town, not stopping to ask police permission. Several hundred leaflets were distributed, describing the circumstances of the prosecutions and advocating mass direct action to stop nuclear power and to take control of all society's resources.

In the trials the defendants tried to show how massive the states reaction to the attempted occupation of the site was, and the roughness of the arrests that inevitably came. (We were all charged with attempting to rescue.) The sherrif was unimpressed and imposed fines totalling £450.

To show our determination to continue with direct action against nuclear power despite the state's clampdown, we occupied the South of Scotland Electricity Board showrooms in nearby Dunbar that afternoon, causing them to stop business for a short time.

At the same time in Hackney, continued on page 3



continued from page 2

London, six drums of 'nuclear waste' were dumped outside a London Electricity Board show-room and about 15 people displayed banners and distributed leaflets to protest about the carrying of nuclear waste through London and to show solidarity with those appearing in court at Haddington.

The night before in Glasgow, the Direct Action for Radical Ecology group took 'direct action against SSEB stations and "locked out" the workforce to express solidarity with the accused and draw attention to the inherent dangers of the nuclear state.'

Another of those arrested in May goes on trial at Haddington, East Lothian on 9th January. There will be an anti-nuclear presence at the trial. All welcome, trial starts at 10 am.

Contact Torness Public Parks Dept., Box 23, c/o 163 King St., Aberdeen. Donations to help pay fines, now totalling £500, urgently needed. Cheques etc. to Torness Charges Fund.

**JOIN
THE
ANARCHISTS!**

A NEW PARTY!
(See page 7)

Open Letter from Belfast

The quotes are taken from an editorial reply to an article on the H-Blocks and Armagh in FREEDOM 8th November 1980.

Dear Editors

We are torn between anger and despair. We have written to you many times, and regularly sent Outa Control, our paper, so you can't plead ignorance of the facts. So why do you express such infuriating superficiality and ignorance?

'... the whole question of political status is meaningful only at the point where it becomes meaningless - when all prisoners are regarded as political.'

This is one of the smuggest and most self-righteous justifications we've heard from anarchists for not taking responsibility in responding to what the British government is doing, not only to sections of the working class in the north, but to people they should see as comrades. Noel Little and Miriam Daly spent much energy in the campaign to stop the hanging of anarchists Marie and Noel Murray. This summer Miriam was bound and gagged, then shot through the head. Noel was staying with the Buntings. Their door was broken down and Noel and Ronnie Bunting received fatal gunshot wounds. Suzanne Bunting is still recovering in hospital. The SAS were the killers on both occasions. The victims were guilty of support for the prisoners in H-block and Armagh.

If the anarchists were to only take up the humanitarian issues such as torture, juryless courts and legislation it would help. 'For wherever in the world we look we can find reasons for giving prisoners political status. In most countries...'

You don't have to look very far! The government exists and terror-

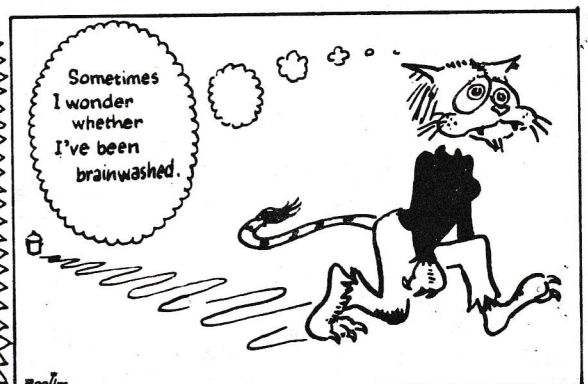
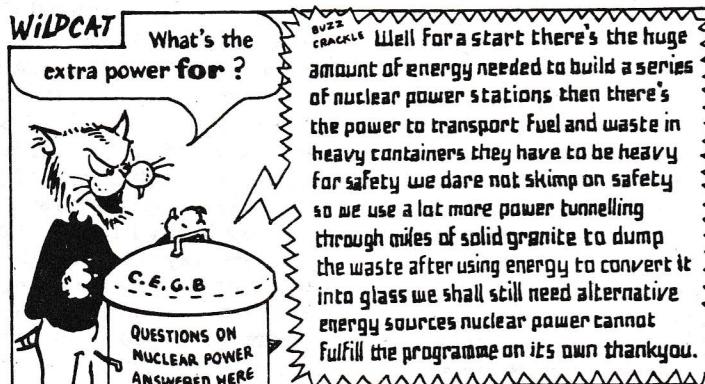
ises in the north here, partly because of your passivity. We are talking about your country - the government of the country where you are.

The relationship between Westminster and the north of Ireland is not just based on class relations, but on a policy of colonisation. The legacy of England's imperialism distorts our society and twists class alliances in manners different from the effects of its legacy on the English working class. On the one hand we are a people divided, exploited and repressed not only by class, sex, authority etc. relations but also by imperialist relations. On the other hand you are a people whose material existence and organising rights are to a large extent based on England's imperialism - on its exploitation of other countries. You in England have an opportunity which anarchist comrades in other countries have not, to help those who struggle against the repression and sectarianism of this state. We repeat ... you live in the country where the soldiers are recruited, where the government gains its support and justification, where media coverage is controlled and censored, etc.

'In the final analysis there is, we believe, not such a big difference between Diplock Courts and Magistrates Courts in England.'

This quote is beyond belief! Do you get held for seven days; do you self-inflict punches, kicks, wrist-bending, hair-pulling; do you get threats of shooting or being dumped in loyalist areas; do you fail to last the seven days and sign a 'confession'? Are the sentences 20 years for acting as a 'look out'? Who are you kidding? Are you blind? We want to open your eyes. We seriously invite you and any anarchist group to stay for a week (at least) in Belfast. Contact us and we'll arrange it.

BELFAST ANARCHIST COLLECTIVE



HUNGER STRIKE!

WILL YOU LEND SUPPORT?

This is taken from the text of a leaflet from Belfast Anarchists.

WE HOPE the information presented here will disprove the British government's propaganda that the conditions faced by the prisoners who are protesting in Armagh and the H-Blocks are 'self-inflicted'. The prisoners have not only been punished for non-cooperation in the form of lock-up, no clothing etc., but they have been beaten and degraded continuously.

The prisoners' protest must be broken for the British government to succeed at regaining control and 'normalising' society here in the north-east of Ireland. The legacy of a policy of colonisation, and the investment of capital both exert strong influence on the government's decision to 'win the war'. But probably most important of its priorities is the need to put down a challenge to its authority, by repression, assassination and imprisonment. That challenge could have repercussions within sections of the population it has so far managed to contain - the working class, women, young people, the black community, the Welsh and the Scottish.

Internment, which had been on the statute books for fifty years, came to an end in 1974. International and local protest became embarrassing for the world's oldest 'democracy'. The British government's Diplock commission introduced a system of trial for scheduled offences (the definition is vague but applies mostly to serious 'political' crime).

In a Diplock Court:-

1. there is one judge and no jury
2. the defendant has to prove himself innocent rather than the prosecution prove guilt
3. evidence can be based on hearsay
4. in signed confessions again the defendant has to prove torture if s/he wants to invalidate it
5. bail can only be got from a high court

So it is not surprising that 80 per cent of convictions are based on signed confessions. These are usually 'extracted' in the infamous RUC interrogation centres of

Castlereagh in Belfast, Strand in Derry, and Gough in Armagh.

That torture is used systematically is indisputable. Even the liberal Amnesty International and two local police doctors (who later resigned) detailed the mental and physical intimidations. For recent coverage, see 'Beating the Terrorists', a Penguin Special.

Under the legislation which covers these courts, the British army can hold you for four hours before handing you over to the RUC. They in turn can hold you for three days (two of which are without the right to a solicitor). Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, as in England, Scotland and Wales, you can be held for seven days. The mere thought of seven days in one of the above mentioned centres is enough to intimidate people into co-operating with the interrogators.

The Diplock Courts were the centre of the British governments attempt to present the violent social upheaval here as simply a question of 'law and order'. Two years later the political status granted after a hunger strike was removed as Roy Mason and the Labour government, intensified the 'criminalisation' and 'primacy of the police' policies. Previously those convicted in Diplock Courts were housed in compounds (the cages) and had a fairly high degree of association. They wear their own clothes and do no prison work.

It was in 1976 when the system changed. The newly convicted refused to accept the label criminal and began the 'blanket' protest whereby they refused prison clothing and prison work.

(...Here there is a description of the horrible conditions in the jails.)

More, much more, could be said about the diseases, malnutrition, degradation, mental disorientation-- about Pauline McLaughlin, whose weight has dropped from 10½ stone to 4½ stone, forced to quit the protest, and has just come out from hospital back to prison for the second time in two months. Her illness has not yet been diagnosed, but it is known that everything that she swallows, including vitamin tablets, she vomits up again.

After 4½ years we are now at the stage of deadlock. The Relatives Action Committees have organised

marches, pickets and occupations. The National H-Block Committee was formed a year ago and organised bigger marches. Recently dubious negotiations took place between leading Catholic Church figures and the Sec. of State, Atkins.

As you will have heard, seven of the blanket men have embarked on a hunger strike to the death. Given the conditions endured inside, the choice between another 20 years of this and a hunger strike is not a great one. (Protestors lose all their remission).

There has been a groundswell of support starting with a 30,000 strong march on Sunday 26th Oct. Local hunger strike groups have sprung up throughout the north and pickets, roadblocks, torchlight processions occur almost every day. The RUC and army have kept a low profile during these protests (apart from a few arrests). But we expect them to lay in after 2-3 weeks 'wait and see' period. An indication of what they are capable of was the double assassination of two IRSP members just over 2 weeks ago, when the SAS broke down their front door in the early hours of the morning.

This communication is sent out because we feel we must play some part in undermining the ability of the government to outlast the strikers. The Tory government appears determined and strong. It is especially strong in the north here where 12,000 troops, 10,000 RUC, and 7,600 UDR have contained the protest within the minority working class districts.

We have our own tasks here, but we also feel that elsewhere an opportunity exists for support. The containment of protest has its parallel in the containment of information. If basic information about the hunger strike's development were relayed to the population there, we feel that even this awareness will act as a lever against the government.

We propose that you, or your group, commit yourselves to co-operate with us for the duration of the strike. We are prepared to send you a consistent flow of the developments in the form of a video programme and poster and leaflet artwork.

Your involvement would be to arrange the showing of the video, the printing and distribution of the posters and leaflets, and of course the raising of money to pay for your side of the work. One way would be to make collections at the video showing. If groups find certain obstacles such as lack of print facilities or money, we will arrange something.

No Evictions, Yet!

KILNER HOUSE

AT THE TIME of writing (29th Nov), Kilner House is still occupied. Most people thought, given GLCs anger at the occupation, that they would press for eviction at the earliest opportunity - November 19th. But no-one reckoned with the new sherriff, Black, who, unlike his predecessor Harris, is not a 'smash the doors down and flood the place with cops' type sherriff. Black wants a quiet eviction 'at almost any cost', according to Snowshill, the head of the GLC Squatted Premises Department.

So we are still here and are still prepared. The latest gossip (unfortunately unverifiable at the moment) is that because the GLC have just stopped work on 200 projects, due to lack of money, they can't have the ready cash to clean up this place for the market once we are evicted. Hence this extended delay. Another point in our favour is that since the judge's decision against us there has been a considerable turnover of squatters here resulting in a lot more families now occupying flats. Would the GLC want to turf out a whole load of families just before Xmas and risk all the adverse publicity. We'll see.

Talking of families, Lambeth Council have given a commitment to re-housing the families from the squat which applied to them after the judges decision. It may mean a period of months in a reception centre first, but they will end up with some form of stable roof over their heads. This is a point well worth noting as it is a good inducement for more families to squat.

LEGAL POINTS

THE DECISION against us in court should be of interest to future mass squats. Our argument was against the GLCs application for one order with which to evict the whole block. We said that as one flat was empty we did not occupy the whole block, and therefore the case should be dropped and the GLC made to apply for 59 separate orders. (One of the 60 flats was kept empty in an attempt to breach this legal loophole.)

The GLC argued that Kilner House is surrounded by a high fence

with the only point of access being a large gate which we kept locked and guarded. Their officials and the police had to ask for 'permission' to enter and we 'allowed' them in and so on. (Which was the case.) Therefore they had lost control of the whole block and one application for possession of Kilner House was necessary. Lord Justice Park agreed.

So any future squat of a similar nature must heed this decision. It is always best to control the access point but this need not be done in such a way to make visiting officials, police etcetera ask for permission to enter. They have to have free access. But note, this only applies to the public areas such as the courtyard, stairs, passageways etcetera. They cannot enter individual flats etc. and never let them do this.

VIDEO

A VIDEO project is going on at Kilner and will shortly be available to all interested groups. Contact: Kilner Video, LSU, 48 William IV Street, Covent Garden, London WC2.

BARRY CADE



ISLINGTON

MEANWHILE in Islington, the first eviction order has gone through the courts to remove tenants of Islington Community Housing from houses owned by London Borough of Islington. The tenants should have been provided with replacement houses under the terms of the license agreement between ICH and LBI.

They aren't being offered these houses, in direct contradiction to a decision made at a Council Housing Committee meeting.

The court case turned out to be extremely interesting. Judge Leach granted possession to LBI - he has little option to do otherwise as the law stands, but he said some interesting things.

Firstly he referred to ICH as 'this admirable scheme' and recommended that the occupants of the houses under the order 'should be rehoused in accommodation which is admittedly available'. He then went on to comment on the £3 a week levy which he described as 'a tragedy... which spoils a very sensible scheme'. He said that if the council tried to sue ICH for levy arrears 'as I see it they wouldn't have a leg to stand on.'

ICH themselves seem to think - according to their press releases anyway - that all this augurs well for housing in Islington and they even talk about the council's 'irrational behaviour' and have arranged pickets etcetera. What they don't seem to realize is the way they have been manipulated and the way they act - whether consciously or not - as a barrier between homeless people and housing, in much the same way as the council does. Their role has been, whether deliberately or inadvertently, to make one sort of squatting 'respectable' and all others verging on the criminal. Their existence, and the existence of other similar short-life housing groups, has given the councils the excuse they need to clamp down on unrespectable squatters and make squatting much more difficult.

All these groups seem to be full of people of varied political colours (mostly shades of red) so there is much faction fighting and selling out. There are the blatant careerists serving their apprenticeships for a position on the council (all safely ensconced in cosy council flats) and there are the misguided idealists who don't realize their roles and think they are actually doing something about housing.

Is it too much to hope that the behaviour of the Council (and even ICH) will shake these people out of their complacency and out of the short life groups to unite with squatters and take up the slogan - and the action - Seize Housing!

DS

SW Co-op Fair

THE South West Region Co-ops Fair will be held in the Corn Exchange, Bristol on Saturday 21st February. The planning group is hoping to bring together all sides of the Co-op Movement - and not just from the South-West - at this event. Speakers, stalls, exhibitions, films, music are already on the programme although planning is at an early stage. Contributions from Anarchists in Co-ops will be very welcome - come along, stay the weekend, send your printed thoughts, argue with Tony Benn in person - anything! Contact Dave, 110 Greville Rd., Bristol 3.

Also support from people in the T&GWU for the motion encouraging workers co-ops, and currently going back to National Committee, would be welcome - motion reads:

'That the 3148 branch (construction) deplores the level of unemployment and the Tory policies which fuel it.

It therefore calls on the T&GWU to actively explore ways of creating jobs, and in particular to negotiate with the Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM), the Co-Operative Development Agency (CDA) and other bodies, as to how best Union finance and expertise can be used to assist the development of Workers Co-Operatives. Since construction workers have been one of the groups worst hit by cuts in capital spending, and essential building works are being neglected, this branch suggests that the National Committee (Construction) sponsor building co-operatives in the regions as pilot schemes.' This motion is going back up to National Committee in December.

Finally I'd like to say that it would be good to have more discussion of Anarchist involvement in co-ops and collectives in FREEDOM (Is it worthwhile? How can we set up better 'mutual aid networks'?) Also we need more thought on the practical organisation of a self-managed society. ('Anarchist economics').

DAVE DANN

CP and Nazis

Dear FREEDOM,

I was interested by your reference to the Hungarian CP opening its doors to ex-Nazis, reported in the Suppressed News Corner. However, the fact that ex-Nazis were in the Hungarian CP probably had no effect whatsoever on the murderous nature of the Party led by Rakosi, nor on the interrogation methods used by the AVO, the secret police. I mention this lest anyone should run away with the idea that the history of the Hungarian CP post 1945 would have been any different had Nazis not been recruited.

The nature of the CP guarantees that once in power people will, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, be imprisoned, tortured and/or shot. The severity of repression has varied from country to country. It's a dismaying fact that despite the death of millions of people in Communist regimes libertarian socialists and some anarchists still feel uneasy about publically criticising communists, and seem to feel that fascism is somehow worse. It is not.

The Undeafed by George Palocz-Horvath, Secker & Warburg 1959, which could probably be ordered from a library, contains a chilling and moving account of life in the

jails of post-war Hungary. Incidentally, anyone who thinks they can partly travel the same revolutionary road as the Trotskyists should read the Solidarity pamphlet Ceylon: the JVP Uprising of April 1971, besides Paul Avrich's book on Kronstadt.

Best wishes,

PETE GRAFTON
ISLE OF ARRAN

'Only' arrested

Dear People,

I was rather perplexed by part of your straight report of the October 26th CND demo. Even you (heavy accent on that 'even') report 'only a dozen arrests' on the day. Isn't this using Newspeak, four words which might as well be breezeblocks? It occurs in four other write-ups of the day....

A similar technique is used for road casualties - the neutrality of the words used hides the human reality. A road kills no-one, it is a stretch of flat tar which could not rise or attack. Accidents are caused by human mistakes, by persons in charge of fast-moving cars.

Back to the report. An arrest is surely not a blank noun. It is a person being removed to another (CONTINUED top of page 7)

International Notes

CHINESE anarchist and writer, Ba Jin (Pa Chin) is one of 64 Chinese writers who are forming a PEN centre in China. The PEN charter requires them, among other things, 'to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong, and throughout the world....'

EAST European anarchists now living in France have started producing a regular 'libertarian review about the countries of the East.' Entitled IZTOK it is written in French (a Bulgarian edition is also available). For all contacts write to IZTOK, c/o Les Amities Franco-Bulgares, 26 Rue Piat, 75020 Paris, France.

Suppressed News Corner



THE Common Market is to lift its embargo on supplying oats to the Soviet Union. The quantity is 300,000 tonnes, which was annually supplied before the embargo. Firms of the member nations that are involved in this deal have also been promised a substantial export subsidy. The shortages of cereals are attributed to 'unfavourable weather conditions'. Shortages of industrial goods were caused by 'the exhaustion of traditional sources of raw materials', and also that the raw material distribution centres had been transferred to the East and North of the country. (Source: Pravda.)

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place by other human beings. It is an activity, it has results. Try turning the sentence round ... 'arrests only a dozen'. Why the 'only' - if there were a thousand arrests, would that somehow change the meaning? The intensity of one is surely enough, for that person. These few breaks in the now-perfect structure of a national demo should be worth investigating. Why, from a Nelson's column view of it all, did these ants act in this particular way, when all the other ants in their thousands acted together?

Official reports will always be the same; yet they handle the accepted, eventual truth that gets into history books. It is time that demos issued a communal report on/ of themselves, contributed on the spot (or in letters, photos, later) so that the entirety of it, as actually experienced, is represented. Those twelve people do not necessarily hold the grain of truth we are searching for, but in noting our reaction to their arrests, a great deal of self-knowledge could be gained.

Watching our troublemakers being trundled away merely mirrors, in its turn, that same indifference which the major society shows as a barrier between itself and us.

Yours sincerely,

PAT JOURDAN

Norwich

PS.. this is not a personal attack on M.H!, but pointing out an extra idea which I thought you might be interested in....

A prison beating

Dear friends,

On Tuesday 4-11-80 at 9-10am I was violently attacked and beaten to the ground by four prison officers. This attack took place within the prison cell that I am confined in which is situated in the segregation unit at this prison. During the course of the attack I sustained facial, neck and back injuries. I do not yet know the extent of these injuries or what, possibly, the long term effects may be. I am not being given proper medical treatment but I have been X-rayed and there are no bones broken. I am mostly worried about two injuries which were inflicted on

my back and on my left eye. My back is under considerable discomfort and the left eye keeps offering blurred vision. I have had severe headaches since the attack took place and am constantly in fear of a second attack occurring. I am not being allowed to see the police or to write to my solicitor about the matter until I have made a complaint to the prison department which simply, as a means, is a method of frustrating and delaying any inquiry instituted by external bodies in response to my complaint. I am going through with their formalities but am totally dissatisfied with the situation as the prison authorities would have it and I am hoping that by writing to my solicitor (James Saunders, 97 Golbourne Road, London W.10 5NL), my MP (Dennis Healey), and the Home Office, you will be able to assist me by reporting to these people what I have reported to you. Since the attack took place there has been a great deal of pressure on me and I feel that it is a totally unhealthy situation that I now remain in this prison a day longer. The warders know that I am taking criminal action proceedings against them and, not to put too fine a point on it, I fear the reaction to this is already beginning to show. Will you please help me in any other way that you feel you can.

Thank you,
yours

Doug Wakefield

Fo-pas

Just that it is said,

there is a play on in the West-End, called and praised, 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' by the Italian, Dario Fo. Maybe some people are pleased with this farce, I want to warn everybody. It is a complete disaster, a real cheat. Dario Fo, were he to see the performance would withdraw the play for they have completely changed its character, not to mention whatever Fo might have wanted to say. So, if possible, avoid going to that bourgeois performance, tell your friends to read the script instead, it is well worth reading as are most of Fo's plays (especially: 'We can't pay, we won't pay'). Not to mention the prices for the tickets and the 'haute' atmosphere in the Wyndham theatre. The only thing 'red' is the light there.

with love,

GERHARD

FUNDS

DEFICIT FUND

Donations Received. November 13th 26th incl.

Wolverhampton. J.L. £1.50; J.K.W. £0.50; Geneva. S.J.R. £1.00; Proceeds from Collection at Italian Anarchist Picnic per P.S. Vallejo. USA. £40.00; Proceeds from Collection by Italian Comrades at Walden. Calif. USA per P.S. £17.45; Leeds. W.S. £1.50; Edmonton. Canada. H.B. £35.70; Cardiff. J.L.H. £3.00; Wolverhampton. J.L. £1.50; J.K.W. £0.50; Fort William. J.H. £12.00; Proceeds from Collection made at Dinner at Negri's on 15th November per A.G. Berkeley. Calif. USA. £31.00; Glasgow. S.M. £0.54; Stevenage. D. & K.H. £1.00;

TOTAL = £147.19

Previously acknowledged = £1456.53

TOTAL TO DATE = £1603.72

PREMISES FUND

Donations Received. November 13th - 26th incl.

Wolverhampton. J.L. £2.00; Geneva. S.J.R. £1.00; Leeds. W.S. £1.50; Wolverhampton. J.L. £2.00; Manchester. R.B. £2.20.

TOTAL = £8.70

Previously acknowledged = £607.97

TOTAL TO DATE = £616.67

FREEDOM PARTY

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Odds & Sods

An anarchist resource centre is being established in London to collect and index anarchist publications and provide an anarchist library for London. If you are interested write Resource Centre c/o Freedom. Please mark it plainly with Resource Centre so that it doesn't get confused with Anarchist Centre mail.

In Plymouth between January 30th and February 1st there will be a weekend of anarchist activities, starting on the Friday evening with an 'open meeting', followed on Saturday and Sunday by discussions, chats, perhaps some films and a disco. Please get in touch as soon as possible if you are interested so that the necessary arrangements can be made. Contact G. Short, 115 Saint Pancras Avenue, Penny-cross, Plymouth.

Public meeting, Solidarity Manches-
ter are having a meeting on the
theme 'The New Technology' at
the Star and Garter pub, Fairfield
Street, Manchester, on Friday 12th
December 7.45pm.

Public meeting 'Where is the Winter
of Our Discontent?', London Workers
Group, at 8.15pm Tuesday 9th Dec-
ember at the Metropolitan pub, Farring-
don Road, London EC1 (near Farring-
don tube).

C.N.T.

UNDERSTANDING THE SPANISH AMOEBA

REPORTS FROM SPAIN are confusing, but basically the CNT is now divided into two or more distinct camps which have been labelled 'historico' and 'renovardo'.

The Fifth Congress of the CNT last December was a victory for the 'historicos' or those who want the CNT to continue its development within the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism.

In March 1980, the 'renovardos' (renovators) had a national meeting of some regional sections of the CNT at Zaragoza, which rejected the outcome of the Fifth Congress and declared the General Secretary, Jose Buendia, to be unacceptable. The exile movement and the FAI (Anarchist Federation) were both accused of manipulating the Fifth Congress in Madrid.

It is worth mentioning that when I was at the Fifth Congress both the exiles and the FAI were occasionally referred to as if they were a branch of the mafia. However, a report in Black Flag (January 1980) disputes the existence of FAI and another, more recently, refers to Marxist mischief makers and some Catholic left politicians as provoking trouble in the CNT.

On the other hand, when one talks to the exiles it is often the reformists or pure syndicalists who are blamed for creating problems in their efforts to make the CNT into a domesticated trade union.

Yet others will accuse the 'globalists' who want to turn the CNT into a collection of minority groups - fighting for gays, greens, women and a series of social causes, or even the FIGA (Federation of Anarchist Groups) with their curious fund-raising activities combined with an odd legalistic passion for receipts which has already compromised one general secretary of the CNT.

The list of scapegoats is seemingly endless, as one CNT militant told me in Madrid last year: the FAI, the reformists, the pure syndicalists, the revolutionary syndicalists, the Marxists, the councillists, the globalists, the exiles, the FIGA. Take your pick or perm any three from four; your guess, as to the real culprits, is as good as mine or anybody else's.

Patio Politics

On the face of it the FAI exists and publishes tierra y libertad. At the Fifth Congress of the CNT, though the FAI was not invited officially, there were communications of support from the FAI Commission Relacionadara Peninsular; the FAI Andalucia, Regional Committee; the FAI of Levante and the FAI of Alicante. It also appeared that the FAI carried some influence at Congress, but I am not convinced that the Congress was stage managed by them as some are claiming.

Clearly neither the FAI nor the exiles have been as tactful in their operation as they might have been; but then again, if I may allow myself a racist lapse, the search for the modest Spaniard is never easy.

In a sense this explains the level bitterness which is contained in some of the hair raising accounts which have come out of Spain this year. Not long ago Suarez was accused of corruption in the Cortes; now it is the turn of Carneire on the Portuguese side of the peninsular. Equally, Enrici Marcos, who was CNT general secretary until last December, has now been criticised for spending more than a million pesetas of CNT money touring northern Spain and the Canaries, presumably to create support for the 'renovado' cause. One paper accused him of doing nothing to help build up the movement in the south - that is, Andalucia, the 'cradle of anarcho-syndicalism'.

What's going on in Spain is a kind of patio politics with all the viciousness of village life. It goes without saying that hardly any general secretary of the CNT has ever had a vote

of thanks. At meetings of the CNT, the general secretary and the chair are often addressed as coño. Nowadays coño (part of the female anatomy), rather than compañero is the most common style of address in the CNT; perhaps it always was. Even their language is that of the patio rather than the conference hall - something which alarms North American observers.

White collar vs. Blue collar

The March meeting of the 'renovados' in Zaragoza claimed substantial organisational support for opposing Buendia, and the decisions of the Fifth Congress. Last month, from the fishermen and workers at the CNT local in Denia, Alicante, I learnt that Carlo Martinez of the transport syndicate in Valencia has been elected new general secretary by the CNT 'renovardo' syndicates.

These 'renovardos' seem to have the support of all the syndicates in the Canaries (a region which joined the CNT two years ago) and several syndicates in the regions of Cantabria, Valencia, Zaragoza, Galicia and elsewhere mainly in northern Spain.

They appear to have almost no backing in Andalucia or Extremadura in the south.

The composition of the support for the 'renovados' seems to reflect a dominance of white collar workers. The fishermen of Denia reflected bitterly on this point. "It's always the

same" they said, with much of the venom that an English worker may show towards the staff.

The CNT ('renovardo') has insurance workers' syndicates in Valencia, Madrid and Barcelona. Bank employees' syndicates in Barcelona, Baracaldo and Madrid. Civil servants in Barcelona and Madrid. In each of the three biggest cities, Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia, the white collar seem over-represented.

An electrician who wrote to me from Madrid tells me that the difficulties are being created by the 'bureaucratic professions' and goes on to say that the 'genuine workers' in engineering, construction, fishing and on the land have ratified the traditional anarcho-syndicalist programme of the Fifth Congress.

Leaving aside the strain of shopfloor chauvinism in this account, the white collar attitudes must be of interest to us, if only because, I suspect, most British anarchists fall into this category. For workers in these jobs shuffling their papers cannot readily visualise the practical control of their own jobs.

In the world of the pen pusher, unlike that of the peasant, the factory worker or the fisherman, the 'next step' - the logical process and development from job control through encroaching control to workers' control - is ill-defined. Though in some cases - such as perhaps sections of the French union, the CFDT - there are signs of white collar workers being more concerned than traditional workers are with restructuring the whole society, they lack, even in France, the strong sense of identity and spirit of resistance of traditional workers (1).

Reformism offers one solution for the white collar workers and some critics claim the 'renovardos' are really reformists seeking to domesticate the CNT under the guise of modernisation. The pursuit of prestige and rewards under capitalism would no doubt characterise many white collar workers, in Spain as much as in England.

Two of the basic issues which divide the 'renovardos' from the 'historicos' concern reforms, or a compromise of principles. One problem is whether the CNT can enter into agreements with employers for specific periods of time. The 'historicos' argue that the CNT can't sell the workers' right to future freedom of action on the basis of the employers' promise to pay a few pesetas more in return for industrial peace. The 'renovardos' favour agreements for tactical reasons, in order to compete on equal terms with the socialist and communist trade unions.



This picture was taken by an IWW delegate to the first post-civil war national CNT rally in San Sebastian de los Reyes on the weekend of 26-27 March 1977. Some 30,000 people were in attendance. He reported great euphoria in Spain at the time and the intense activity now being conducted by the CNT with members active among the rank and file of many of the unions, helping prolong strikes which the recently legalised Communist Party does its best to break. (From FREEDOM Vol. 38 No. 9)

Another divisive issue is the 'renovardos' support for the election of permanent shop stewards. The 'historicos' believe that workers' delegates should be elected only to deal with a specific problem, and not for a period of time.

To see the 'renovardos' as pure reformists is too simple a view. Not all white collar workers are reformists either; one of the most revolutionary anarchists I knew in the 1960s was an athletic civil servant. Even Orwell has said the revolutionary is merely a climber with a bomb in his pocket.

In a sense this explains the superficially revolutionary stance of the 'globalists' who form part of the 'renovardo' CNT. The globalist case is for the CNT to become a movement of 'odds and sods' with the workers as one more or less equal element in a pluralistic mishmash. It would create a union of competing interests, social as well as political and economic, and there is no sign that such a movement could produce a convincing and concrete alternative programme to challenge the present system.

One suspects that globalism is more of a desperate and alienated response by white collar workers to the existing system than a programme for practical action.

Perhaps C. Wright Mills' assessment is right, especially when he says "... white collar people carry less rationality than illusion and less desire for freedom than misery of modern anxieties. Their socially bleak ways of life writ large would not mean freedom or rationality for the individual or for society" (2).

Spain: 'ONE FOOT IN THE THIRD WORLD'

A good way of dismissing Spanish anarcho-syndicalism is to argue that it is not appropriate to the modern world. One North American observer sneering at the outcome of the Fifth Congress told me "these people (the CNT and Spaniards generally) still have one foot in the Third World".

This needs looking at more closely, for underlying the 'renovardo' and globalist critique and the North American's mumblings is the belief that western advanced capitalist societies are about to enter a 'post-industrial' or 'post-capitalist' phase (Touraine, 1971(3)). It is a view inspired by the French events of May 1968, which are represented as a new form of conflict.

In this view the social struggle, if the globalists and 'new working class' have got it right, will be largely a confrontation between the new workers - the students and technical and scientific workers - on one hand, and the archaic elements who rule society on the other.

While I am sure the Marxist notion of class struggle arising at the point of production is over optimistic, and a gross simplification, I don't think the globalists have got it right.

Unlike the Marxists, we don't want a cooks' guide to revolution, but we do need to study form.

Undoubtedly conflicts spring from the social indigestion which goes with technological and structural change in society. But surely these relatively privileged groups, the 'new workers', have something to look forward to ultimately?

What of the traditional workers, the peasants etc., who may feel themselves threatened by modern social changes, and who still have a better track record in revolutionary terms?

The indications are that in Spain it has been the peasants and ex-peasants of Andalusia who, with each succeeding generation which moved to Catalonia, maintained the radicalism within the CNT (4).

Similarly in the Mexican Revolution it was the Indians of Morelles steeped in tradition, who, threatened with the loss of their lands on the open market, did produce a social revolution - "one of the three," says E. J. Hobsbawm, "which deserve the name in the history of Latin America". (5) The Indians of Morelles in the early 20th century were a people who had not quite lost their own life style to the big landowners, but who were on the point of doing so.

According to G. D. Cole, Britain's most socially radical trade union, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union of 1834, in general "found its strongest backing among Trade Clubs of skilled craftsmen in trades not yet greatly affected by the industrial revolution" (6). Naturally Marxists could use

these points to dismiss anarchism and syndicalism as a glorified social hangover of a past age.

Peasants yearning for feudal security in Mexico. Nineteenth century craftsmen seeking to hang onto the guild tradition in English society.

So far as I can see, what unites the nineteenth century craftsmen, the Indians of Morellos and the Andalucian peasants is that they were all in a position to perceive what for them was a new social and economic system from outside. Each of them had the chance to comprehend the new system before they had been absorbed by it.

Can we look forward to an equally radical perspective from the computer programmers today? Though they may be alienated and irritated with problems of promotion and career structure, it seems unlikely.

No doubt some would claim that if the programmer is homosexual then this social marginality will produce the possibilities for radical conflict and consciousness. The private life of individuals versus public responsibility in the economic and social sphere.

Social 'deviance' in modern society is on the list of possible runners of course. But the capacity to move from what Alfred Schutz calls the 'paramount reality' of everyday life to other spheres of meaning may be assumed to be anthropologically given (7). Plurality is basic to modernity.

In this sense 'shunting', like picking one's nose in private, merely becomes a 'vacation' from the world of work. These and other forms of private experience represent refuge from this 'world of work' rather than alternatives to it.

In general then the 'world of work' occupies the dominant position in any society. This has probably always been the case but, as Peter Berger et al point out, it is now more crucial than ever "because of the tremendous impact of modern technological production upon every facet of social life" (8). To take a 'vacation' the individual must make a deliberate effort to shake off precisely that reality which is foremost in the individual's work life.

For my money the 'globalists', the 'deviants' and the 'new workers' are all 'outsiders' and 'also rans', hardly worth an each way bet on current form.

In England the miners and in Spain the Andalucian peasants, represent a far better revolutionary bet.

It is because Spain still has one foot in the Third World that the possibility of anarchism flowering is greatest. The cultural clash between the two cognitive systems is still being negotiated and though this contact between different cognitive systems is likely, even in Spain, to lead to what

Berger et al call 'mutual contamination', with the traditionalist peasant ultimately compromising and incorporating elements of modernity into his or her own view, the evidence shows that during the process of contamination anarchism can offer an alternative to both modernity on the one hand and traditionalism on the other.

For their part the theorists of the 'new working class' and the 'renovardos' and globalists have failed to establish that the contradictions and opposition between the 'new workers' and 'archaic' social management is in itself sufficient even in France to produce a successful revolution. What seems more likely is that revolution is as Michael Mann says, "a product of uneven development in both the economic and the non-economic sectors, of multiple contradictions and social chaos, rather than the stark societal class confrontation envisaged by Marx".

All the cleverly concocted arguments of learned Marxists, globalists and North American fashionable addicts that it is outdated have failed to make Spanish anarcho-syndicalism go away. It is a recurring phenomenon in Spanish life and, like its less noble relative, British shopfloor syndicalism, it survives despite all the legislation, the rational arguments and employers' manoeuvres against it.

It survives because it offers a plausible alternative to capitalist structures. Anyone with a little imagination can think up alternative worlds, but those who would be continually relevant must continually ask themselves which of these worlds is possible.

B. B.

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- (5) E.J. Hobsbawm - Bandits
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- (8) Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hans Kellner - The Homeless Mind

Not the most of Most

THE VOICE OF TERROR: A Biography of Johann Most By Frederic Trautmann. Greenwood Press. (Available through Freedom Bookshop, £19.50.)

JOHANN MOST is at the same time one of the best-known and least-known figures in the history of the anarchist movement. During his lifetime he was a universal caricature of the mad anarchist bomber, an image which is reproduced in the title of this book. The basic facts of his career are clear enough, but they are derived almost entirely from what was written for effect by Most himself or his admirers on one side, or for the opposite effect by the bourgeois press and his opponents on the other side, and there is hardly any detailed corroboration or contradiction from contemporary documents or impartial witnesses. As a result there is still no satisfactory biography of him.

Early biographical treatments by Rudolf Rocker and Max Nettlau are uncritical and unreliable; later ones by Emma Goldman and Max Nomad are more detached but still highly prejudiced. The references to him in histories of the left in general or of anarchism in particular in Germany, Britain and the United States, where he successively devoted a half-century to the revolutionary cause, have been almost entirely derivative. There are very rare exceptions in the relevant



Johann Most.

sections of Ulrich Linse's German-language and Andrew R. Carlson's English-language histories of the German anarchist movement in the late nineteenth century. As a result any new biography of Most will be welcomed.

Unfortunately Frederic Trautmann hasn't produced anything like what is needed. He is an assistant professor of speech at Temple University in Philadelphia, but he doesn't seem to know much about the written word, or about politics or history. The publishers have charged an enormous price for a 300-page book which has only three illustrations; and they have managed to transpose pages 24 and 25. The style is that of a chatty newspaper article, which rapidly palls. The content is often interesting and sometimes informative, but superficial and confused.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first part describes Most's illegitimate birth in Bavaria in 1846, his unhappy upbringing, his entry into the socialist movement in 1868, his early activity in Switzerland, Austria and Germany, his first successes as a speaker and writer, his work as an editor of socialist papers and his election to the Reichstag as a socialist deputy, his frequent arrest and imprisonment, his exile to England in 1878, his publication of *Die Freiheit*, his quarrel with the moderates of the German Social Democratic Party, his move towards anarchism and terrorism, his imprisonment for praising the assassination of the Tsar in 1881, the suppression of *Die Freiheit* for praising the Phoenix Park murders in 1882, and his further exile to the United States.

The second part describes Most's early activity in the United States, his success as a popular lecturer and militant journalist, his revival of *Die Freiheit*, his leadership of the radical wing of the anarchists and social-revolutionaries as the founder of the International Working People's Association, his authorship of the Pittsburgh Proclamation of 1883 which was the main text of the movement for the next few years, his opposition to the Eight Hour Movement which culminated in the Chicago riots of 1886 and the execution of the framed

anarchists in 1887, his imprisonment for defending the martyrs, and his gradual turn against terrorism and loss of influence on the left.

The third part describes Most's later activity in the United States, his relationship with Emma Goldman and condemnation of Alexander Berkman for attempting to assassinate Frick in 1892, his marriage to Helen Minkin in 1893, his writing, his acting, his drinking, his further arrests and imprisonment, especially when Leon Czolgosz assassinated President McKinley in 1901, his decline as a person and as a leader, his continued lecturing, and his death on tour in Cincinnati in 1906, active right up to the end after sixty hard years.

Each part is arbitrarily divided into sections labelled "Personal & Private", "Positions & Persuasions", "Public & Polemical", "Penalty & Punishment", followed by a conclusion. This means that the sense of time is completely lost, and it has to be restored by several separate chronologies. There is throughout an extraordinary jumble of material, and it is often hard to work out what it comes from, if anything. There is no attempt to distinguish between the various kinds and qualities of source, and little attempt to discover new sources -- thus Trautmann didn't even take the trouble to interview Johann Most's son, who is still living in the United States. There is little attempt to describe or discuss Most's own writings, and then only in the form of exposition rather than criticism or explanation.

There is a case for a readable journalistic account of a man like Most, but this is not that. All that Trautmann has done is to put in one volume a great deal of variable information about one of the oddest people who led our movement, and all that can be said for it is that there is something new here for people who can't read German and can't be bothered with looking up the sources themselves. What a waste of an opportunity, and what a pity if the existence of this book prevents the publication of a proper biography of Johann Most.

NW

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melmoth

“Melmoth and Moncada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home.”





Melmoth is a surrealist magazine in the sense that its members term themselves "surrealist". We believe that surrealism is based upon a revolutionary conception of man and the world.

Melmoth is half a dozen or so individuals who, for the time being, have decided to act collectively. A group "direction" has yet to emerge; if one does evolve, it will be as a result of our collective activity and not because of a preference for one side or another in surrealism's age old gang warfares - old quarrels do not interest us. We are all tired of the sectarianism of the various surrealist groups, much of which seems to depend on purely formal definitions of what surrealism is. We hope that by writing, researching and playing without any a priori goal or definition in mind, it may be possible to bring about a coalescence of certain common ideas, views and modes of perceiving and appreciating the events and objects that surround us.

Melmoth does not claim to speak for surrealism. Melmoth is not dogmatic, nor is it sectarian. The members of Melmoth are active in 1980, not in 1924 and hence we feel that we cannot ignore other ideas, other tendencies (many of them deriving from surrealism itself) which now form part of our tradition, for example situationism or cobra. Melmoth is interested in polemic, though not in sterile internecine sniping, we are interested in what we find to be vital - much of this will exist in the various surrealist groups - but some may lie outside this domain, and as such Melmoth may publish groups or individuals who have for one reason or another moved "away" from surrealism, or those who do not claim to be surrealists, but with whom we feel an affinity. This may disqualify Melmoth from calling itself a surrealist review, if so, so be it, it remains a magazine by surrealists.

The members of Melmoth are convinced that the problems that surrealists attempted to solve in the past are among those that still face us today:- why do we write? What is the use of living, of functioning in the world? What hope do we put in love? In desire? Our provisional answer to these questions is that we seek to create new personal relations with the world, to undertake a personal adventure and to raise our own lives above the stinking sea of death. We are not defeatists, we have faith in our own abilities to formulate what is not contained in the language of our time. What we demand is not only man/woman's right to subsist, but also to dream, to love, to live as far away as possible from the politicians, their salesmen, their language and their lies. We aim, above all, at the resolution of contradictions, to experience surreality.

Melmoth does not wish to be blinded by the siren which is art - it is activist, it is revolutionary, though Melmoth is not aligned with any particular "revolutionary" group or tendency. We believe

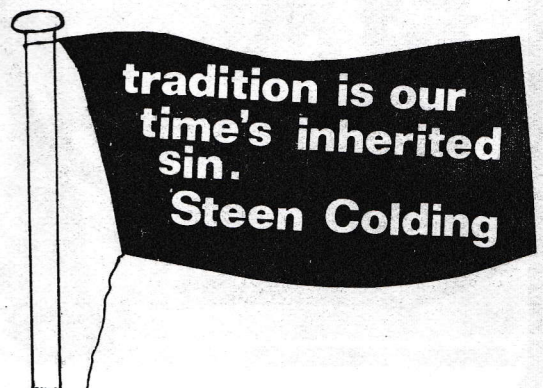


that orthodox "revolutionary" theory does not, of itself, confront in an adequate manner those questions which we believe are of fundamental importance.

Melmoth, then, tends to remain the same as in the book which bears his name and as he will be in centuries to come, the eternal traveller: MELMOTH THE WANDERER.

Tony Pusey

MELMOTH IS Salah Faiq
 Tony Pusey
 Rattus
 Francis Wright
 Ysine
 Haifa Zangana
 Our guest: Roger Cardinal



OBSERVATIONS

Drawing
Francis Wright

I chart the anguish of orphaned newspapers
I observe the eclipsed creatures of the streets
and allow a coffin to ring a door-bell

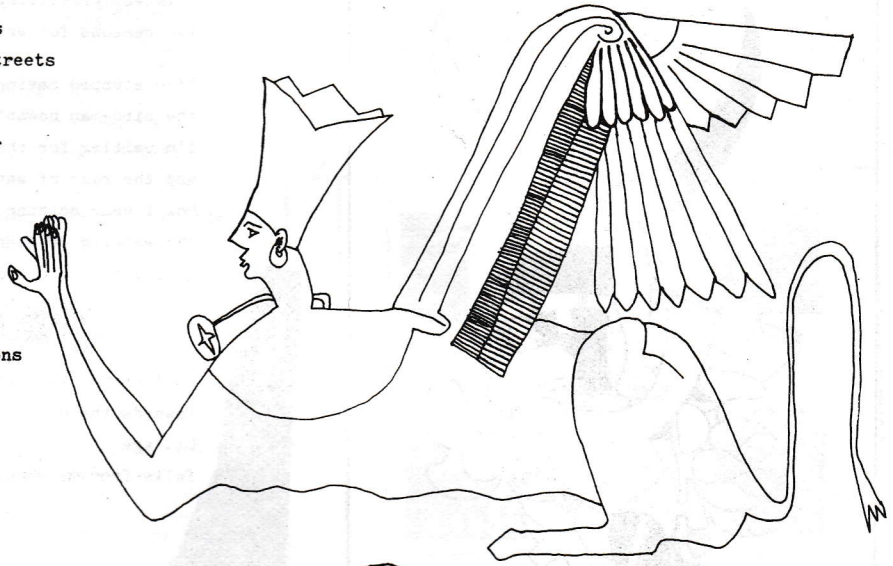
A small boy fishes for scars in the gutter
a cloud bursts into laughter
and catches his tongue

I return to the derelict factories
to the passports of phantasy
forged in foundries
to the murmur of the street lamps' equations

Words lie gasping at my feet
abandoned
like the woman who talks to the trees
and padlocks their leaves

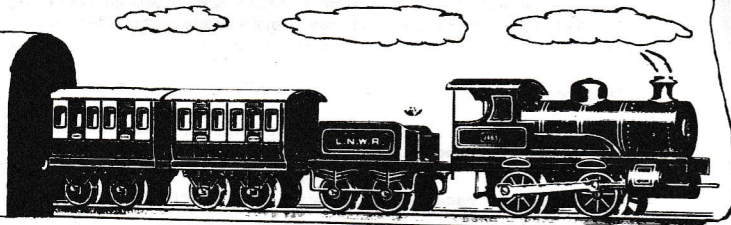
Lock up your sons and daughters
lock up your birds your beds your lovers
lock up your indifference your mothers your fathers
lock up your rosy suicides
lock up your words
before they whip you

The flames have risen
and now clutch the sky in their panic
I steal their blindness
to transcribe the implosion of migrating days



No light will help him in this lonely place.
Strange! Though he looks with eyes forever open,
He never sees at last his own true face.

Salah Faig



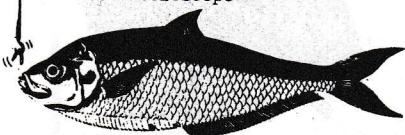
One by one the trains appear
shrouded in the echoes of coal mines
they have lost track of life
and hang in the air
like the dismembered bodies of former lovers
unforgiving nightmares animated by the wind
buildings steeped in scotomata descending to the depths
of horror at midnight
the Babels of a modern world buried beneath slag

The howl of night
has no memory
I drink its bitter liquid
flowing between the quicksilver of mind
and the dead lead of body
an astronomer paints his lips with the stars
to observe the day
as unknown woman plans the escape of my hands
from his telescope

In the drawers
in the wastelands
illustrated by the dream
there are the bones of burning stars
illuminating the idle wind. Passages in my head
where horses chew money
sunken islands rise
pleasures bloom
shoeless boys smash the dams
the city's guards cry as they
lean against the doors
I see the huge poem;
huts and dancers in the forest
departing on a new journey
and the spreading dark
has diminished

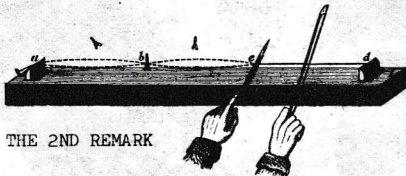
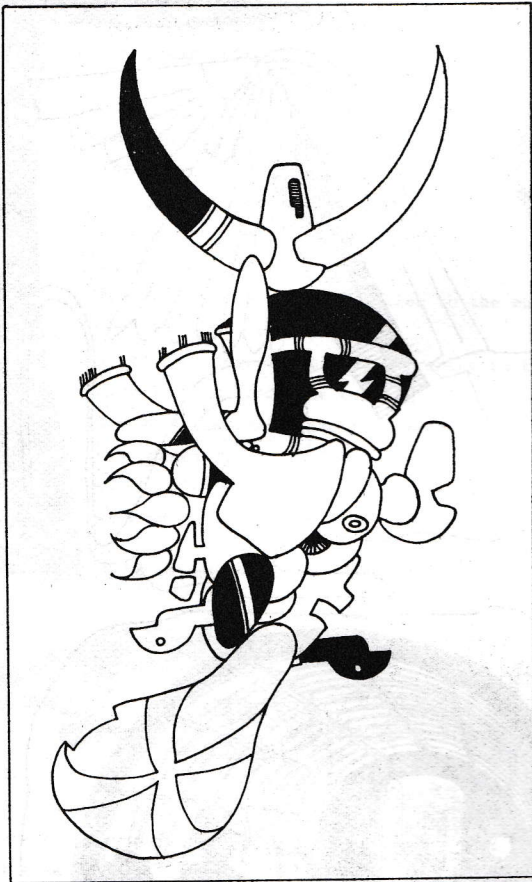


Salah Faig



Rattus
August 1980

Drawing Tony Pusey



LET US PASS TO THE 2ND REMARK

The machine has fragmented the world and it is like the battles of giant spiders. People are slowly committing suicide, they are forced for eight hours a day to spend their energy for purposes not their own, in ways not their own, but presented for them by the rhythm of the work. They do many things at once, they read, listen to the radio, watch television, talk, smoke, eat, drink. They are the consumer with open mouth, eager and ready to swallow everything. Human values have become determined by economic values. What is good for machines must be good for man - so goes the logic. Modern man thinks he loses something - time - when he does not do things quickly, yet he does not know what to do with the time he gains - except kill it.

The old protestant ethic of work is resurrected among people, defining labour as "the source of all wealth and all culture". In addition to that another threat hangs over the artist: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. Instead of draining rivers, society directs a human stream into a bed of trenches. Instead of dropping seeds from airplanes, it drops incendiary bombs over cities and through gas warfare the aura is abolished in a new way. Curiosity, love for jest and desire to astonish; I again raise my head.

Listen: do you know that blood flows in great waves across the world and reality has destroyed man's dreams. The war is on and men are being slaughtered one million, two million, ten, twenty, a hundred million and then a billion, everybody, man, woman and child, down to the last one.

The world is void: our minds have become dulled, our feet no longer run across open fields, the magic and wonder of life have burned away.

When I see the figures of men and women moving listlessly behind their prison walls, sheltered, secluded for a few brief hours, I wonder: are these men and women? And what about children?

Arch of images

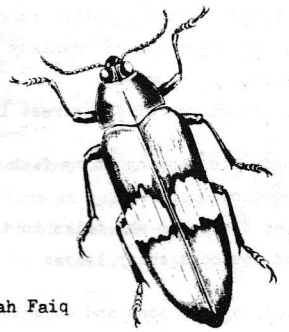
darkness prevailing in the world: these are
two reasons for writing

I've stopped saving my voice for the last hours of night
the bird-man doesn't fly
I'm waiting for the wolf's howl to fill the cities
and the roar of waves to emerge from escaping lovers
Now I hear nothing except
the weeping of guards
coming from the lanterns



As I travel away from the city
towards the countryside
Old age
falls from my shoulders

Salah Faiq



Time and again, in all schools, it seems to be the task of the teachers to spoil the seen and unseen world for the pupil. Time and again they want to make him copy and imitate. This copy will grow up to be a good member of the society.

Who that has a desperate, hungry eye can have the slightest regard for these existent governments, laws, codes, principles, ideals, ideas, totems and taboos?

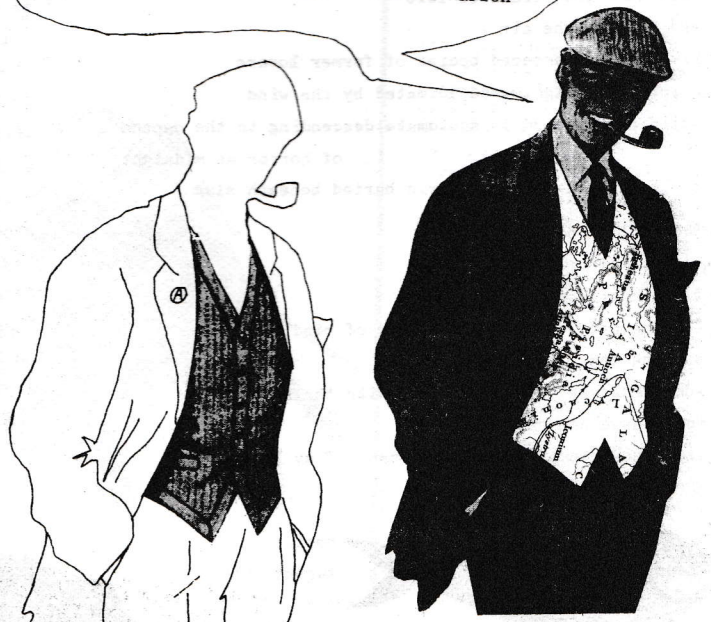
Everywhere in all times the same ovarian world announcing itself. Yet also, parallel and contemporaneous with them new totem poles, new taboos, new war dances.

Do you know what the fucking war means?

To say yes you have to first be a surrealist, because you have understood what it means to say NO.

No boundaries or races or climates. No religion no temple,

Have you ever been alive?
Curious sensation isn't it? - Marcel Mariën



No prison no guard and no police
 No laws
 No states



1. Do we act like a tiny, dying, closed community?
2. Are we looking perhaps for a road that no longer exists?
3. Are we merely going through the motions of a dead ritual?

It was a winter night while the icy wind whistled through the pines, we opened the door in the dead of dark and admitted surrealism. Our central image is that of a traveller and we turn against the world which denies the validity of living, which questions the existence of anything that cannot be quoted on the stock exchange in terms of pounds and pence.

Our intentions are to get rid of the absurdity of events and the stupidity of the official life that weighs heavy upon the future as well as the present.

The untiring quest for the marvellous takes on various aspects according to each imagination. It is a question of themes supplied by the unconscious, chance, madness, dream, hallucination, delirium or humour, states capable to deliver sensibility from the grip of the conventions that has governed men of all times.

We find ourselves in a magnetic field wherein by the attraction of one image to another the objects of reality are deviated from their traditional roles. Beyond that we must also have the ability to arouse in the others the curiosity to grasp our image. Those are the means we use to destroy traditional dogmas, laws, accepted formulas and the established order.

True we may wander around for a while rather aimlessly, like a wolf seeking a scent in the wilds, but we then need only to choose at random a street and a door, to climb any number of flights of stairs until we feel we have at last reached home, where we find the eternity of love and desire.

P.S. It is clear that surrealism doesn't regard the completed work as sacrosanct, an indestructible entity to be preserved intact for posterity, but rather as a temporary statement to be modified.

Haifa Zangana



"It was discovered on the 21st of December, 1831, after a heavy storm that had torn it from its native situation, which, from its rarity, we may suppose to be in deep water. In February, 1838, I obtained two other specimens, which had been thrown up by a tempest. The largest measured two inches and three-tenths in length, which enabled me to discern still more of the internal structure of this fish."

THE ECHIDNA.

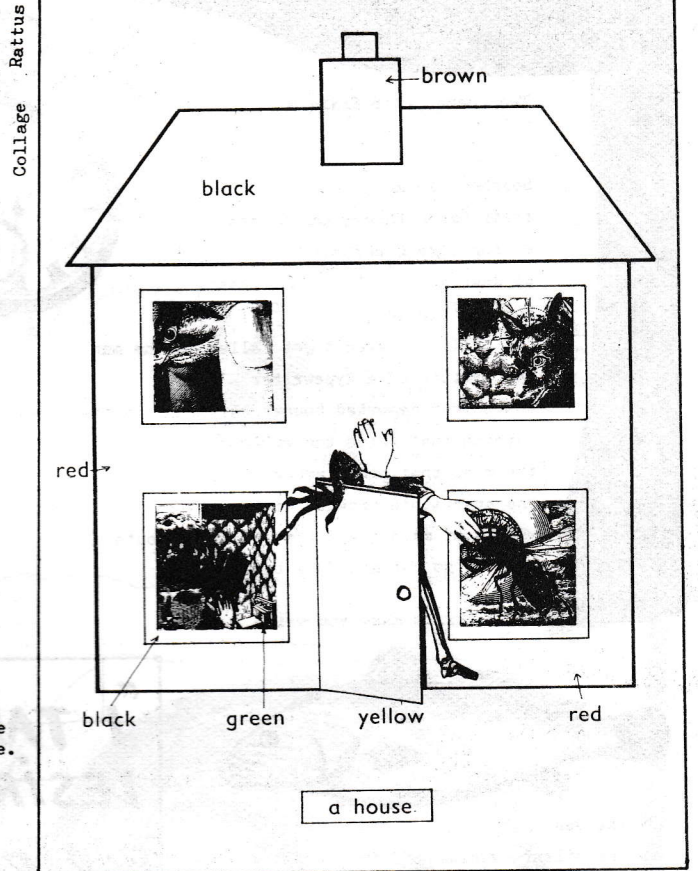
The food of the Echidna consists of ants and other insects, which it gathers into its mouth by means of the long extensile tongue. It is a burrowing animal, and is therefore furnished with limbs and claws of proportionate strength. Indeed, Lieutenant Breton, who kept one of these animals for some time, considers it as the strongest quadruped in existence in proportion to its size. On moderately soft ground it can hardly be captured, for it gathers all its legs under its body, and employs its digging claws with such extraordinary vigour that it sinks into the ground as if by magic. The Echidna is tolerably widely spread over the sandy wastes of Australia, but has not been seen in the more northern portions of that country.

The colour of this interesting little fish is light ashen brown, relieved with slight dashes of blue on different parts of the body, and in certain lights gleaming with beautiful iridescent hues that play over its body with a changeful lustre. About twenty species of Sea Horses are known, several of which have been exhibited alive in the aquarium at the Crystal Palace.

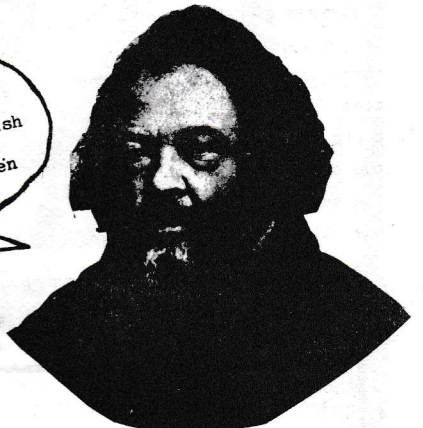
They present a very quaint appearance while thus engaged. An inexperienced observer would hardly take the black wriggling mass to be composed of fish, but rather to be a collection of decaying weeds, agitated by the ripple of the stream. Soon, however, these masses can be resolved into their constituent elements, and are gradually analysed into the labour of scooping the groove, his duty being to watch over his mate and to fight any other fish of his own sex and species who may intrude upon their home, and that the whole task devolves upon the female, who executes it by twirling her tail, and not by grubbing with her snout.

The whole process of depositing the numerous eggs occupies on the average about ten days, and, after it is accomplished, the parent fish leave the eggs to be hatched by surrounding influences, while they themselves quit the spot and remain in the river for a short period while they recover from the exhaustion caused by the process. During this period they are usually ravenous, and vast quantities of the young of their own kind, which are about that time abundant in the river, fall victims to their insatiable appetite. After a time, and about then a tiny and almost transparent creature, hardly to be recognized as a fish; and being too feeble to employ the mouth in obtaining subsistence, bears a portion of the egg still adhering to the abdomen like a transparent amber-coloured sac flecked with tiny blood-vessels; and by gradually absorbing this material into the system, preserves its life until its increased dimensions permit it to seize prey with the little mouth, afterwards to be so formidably arrayed with teeth.

F. WRIGHT.



Life is a butchers shop
 where they only sell fish
 - Marcel Mariën



AS IF THE LIGHTNING

And so it goes,
 on the track of some wild
 water, as yet unyielding spaces,
 set amid days of light and foliage:
 that blue spirit, attached
 or cast forth
 in richness or terror, joyful
 bar the taste of emptied air.
 As if the lightning
 over tomorrow were already struck
 with the new disquiet, you hear
 a dark train passing
 down the slope, beyond the forest,
 and then discern the smile of time
 rimmed by more tactile energies,
 your own sense of the task
 running into that echoing rock
 inscribed with the features of her face,
 distraught.

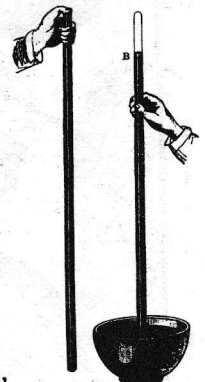


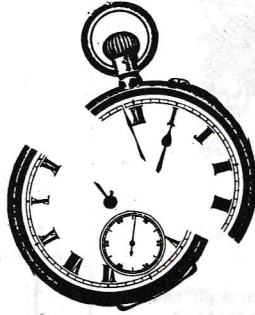
FIG. 15.
 Torricelli's Experiment (Ganot).

Roger Cardinal

Two poems (for Francis)

Smashed Clocks

their hands thrown in the road
moving like caged animals
at dawn you see the old teacher
burning his letters
the obelisks haven't yet fallen to the mud
the stutter of a typewriter
women from deserted houses shivering in the street
rubbish that feeds the gulls
the moss that grows among fingers
the apartments crowded with screams
whirls of memory and the quivering mouth
want to go out and face the bridges
these things make you write



HIGH SIERRA

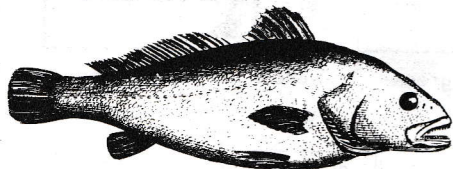
"I am the inhabitable one".

To gallop and to gallop further; the climb
was worth it, even without flowers. And dear
Aquitania lies up this high valley where
the wind squeezes by at midnight. Peasants
bring cheese, grappa, fruited wine:
their lesson is lackadaisical, grandiose.
Days drift by with bells and tinny music.
Remember what I told you last summer
about the keys and the tomatoes,
watering the cat and so forth. Well now,
the presentiment worked. That was a castle
we should have grasped
with both hands. That now leans
disconsolate, while from an upper window flutters
the last pink kerchief of a dazed princess,
ripped by thorns at the lattice. The image
exactly coincides with the promise of San
Francisco, outstretched like a brittle fan
in the morning light. And nothing
much more can intervene as the bandit's
life ebbs away, crimson under the rapids.
While you linger, dry-throated,
way below, at the fringe of the crowd,
hating it but not daring
to admit. This is your choice
in the unflinching dawn.

Roger Cardinal

"Good fortune consists in having many passions
and many means of satisfying them.
Attractions are proportional to destinies"

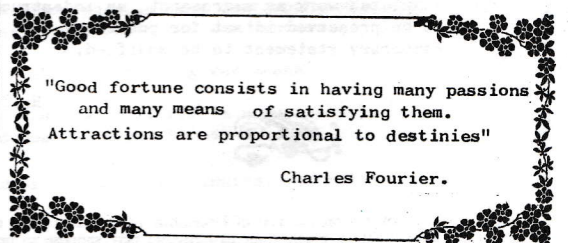
Charles Fourier.



By the sea
in the silent evening
thousands of crows are flying
in the sand
there are traps for the waves
then in the distance
a cry can be heard
the crows attack each other
the sea is disturbed
the silent evening withdraws

Salah Faiq

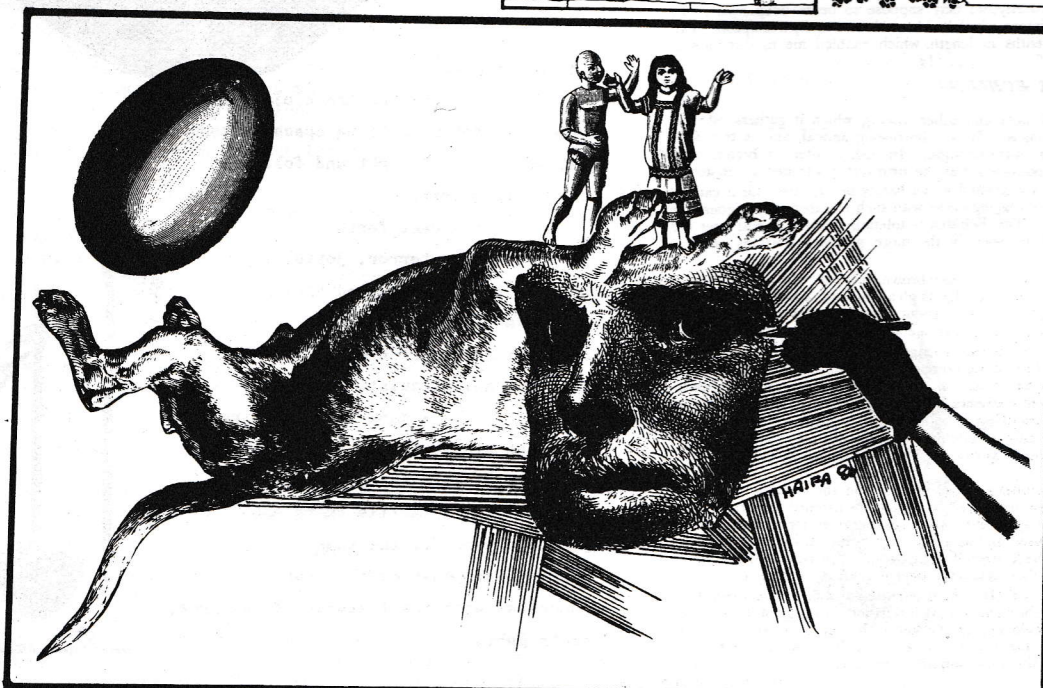
" I TAKE MY
DESIRES
FOR REALITY
BECAUSE I
BELIEVE IN
THE REALITY
OF MY
DESIRES "



SO NOW YOU KNOW!

"(The Surrealists)...stand
for violence and neurotic
unreason. They are truly
decadent. You catch a
glimpse behind them of the
deepening twilight of
barbarism that may soon
blot out the sky, until at
last humanity finds itself
in another long night.
There are about far too
many effeminate or epicene
young men, lipping and
undulating. Too many young
women without manners,
balance dignity - greedy
and globbering sensation-
seekers. Too many people
who are steadily lapsing
into shaved and powdered
barbarism.....
Frequently they have strong
sexual impulses that they
soon contrive to misuse or
pervert".

J.B.Priestly
on the Surrealists.



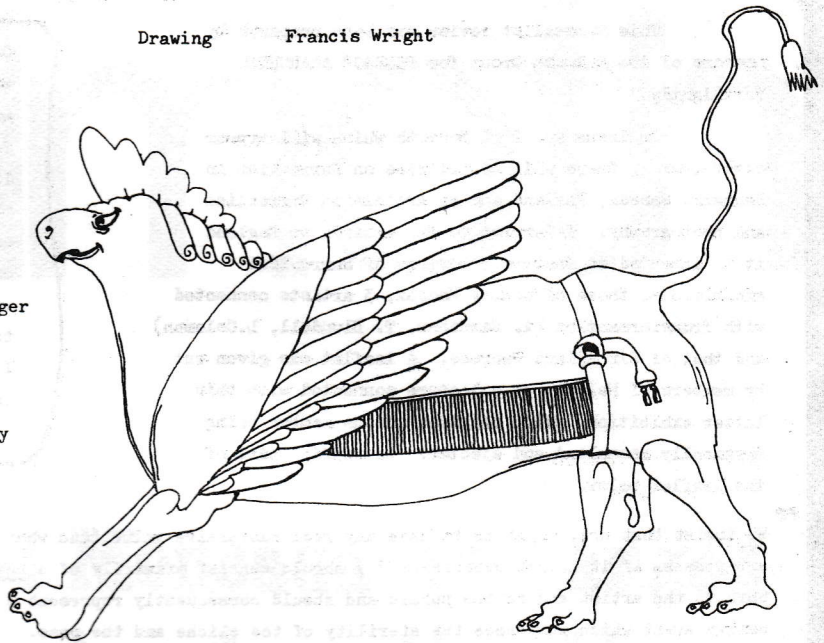
Haifa Zangana

Collage

AGITATION PASSING

The suspect in hiding settles
 into his journal of rain enclosed in doubts
 and suppositions leading through figures
 to a brusque reconstruction of the felt
 experience of senses abandoned
 throughout that long, uncanny absence.
 Yes, a fresh feeling of time, flaws
 and all, now signals keys of silver while we linger
 ill at ease in an after-reality
 soft with spasms still.
 Thinking of Brooklyn, then, the regular hand
 dispenses genuine advice and, seeing we are fully
 out of town, shakes her irrational hair
 over the solitude of streets
 to the root. Rich in gaps
 and confusions, we no longer see a point
 in forethought. Her precise position
 wavers upon feathers of water
 across the flagstones with all their associations
 of reading ourselves. Rapid space
 chatters in the black outside with actual
 speeches mirrored in the window, to cross
 the body as incandescent heartbeats:
 while on the lighter level the blue
 light of kisses endures the cold.
 Each of these four ways of love manifests
 the same presence like a flame,
 bright as an arrow breathing in the night.
 And you remember most clearly the odour

Drawing Francis Wright



of grass trackways prefigured
 in idly fingered definitions. All this
 grandeur after the flood releases
 fragrances free of hesitancy, a lop
 sided poignancy, bare shoulder to
 the glass, so our circle
 of shared signs is complete.
 The last album opens on an azure
 alchemy of influences where
 Ariadne's dreams are painted
 thick and sharp, sultry and blurred,
 all agitation past.

Roger Cardinal

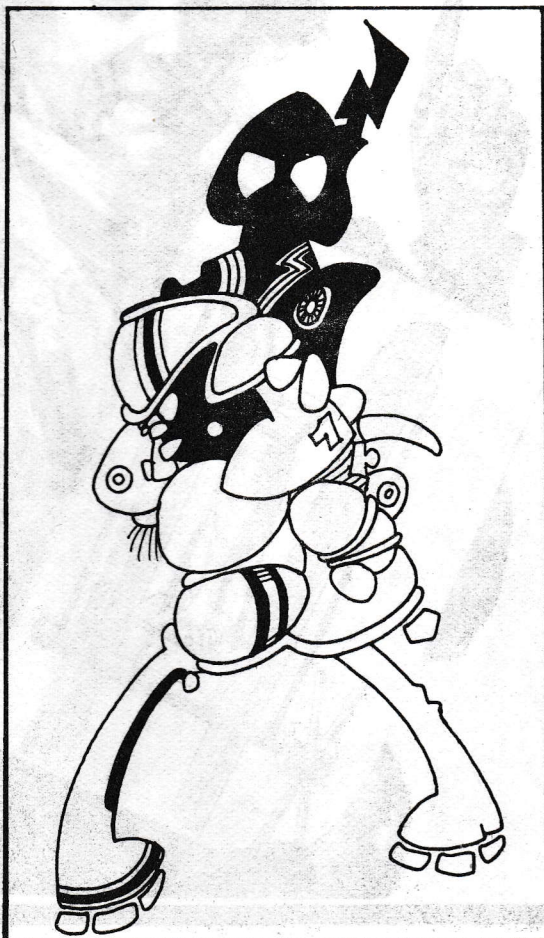
I have scalped the indifference of day
 I return to the cry of seven pillows
 strewn along a corridor of venom

I return to the night
 offering the heads of ancient dryads
 to the dreams I once constructed
 in a village in the sveldt
 there are no animals here
 only the violence of bleeding crysanthamums
 the hollow whining of ruined streets
 only numbers masquerading as stamen
 and a flight of heresies
 invading a factory of blind memories

Passing through his country
 are the skeletons of gloves
 on which the hieroglyphics of love
 are scrawled in blood
 a guillotine of kisses
 decapitates the silence of all words
 hovering unwanted between my lips

Rattus
1980

Drawing Tony Pusey



This Surrealist review has been prepared by members of the Melmoth Group for FREEDOM ANARCHIST fortnightly.

In issue No. 2 of Melmoth which will appear early-Jan. , there will be articles on Surrealism in Denmark, Canada, England and an article on Surrealism and photography. Referring to the article on England it is intended to feature 3 reviews of Surrealist exhibitions, those of Conroy Maddox, 3 artists connected with Transformation (A. Earmshaw, T. Blundell, L.Coleman) and that of Sir Roland Penrose. A leaflet was given out by members of Melmoth at a lecture connected with this latter exhibition, which resulted in one member being physically assaulted and ejected. We reprint part of the leaflet below.

" We insist that art, if it is to have any real subversive value (and what value can art possess if it is not subversive ?) should consist primarily of a revelation both to the artist and to the public and should consequently represent a communicative event which surpasses the sterility of the cliché and the pose. Bizarreness or weirdness of imagery cannot, as often happens, be mechanistically correlated with the intrusion of the surreal which manifests itself above all in terms of the explosive impact of its content. "

The largest selection of surrealist books, reviews and ephemera for sale in the world (over 2000 items) is available from John Lyle who also publishes the review Transformation from Harford, Sidmouth, Devon.

Also current in English is Arsenal - surrealist subversion, the journal of the Chicago group, available from 2257 North Jansen Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60614, USA.

Current reviews in other languages include:-

- In French: Flagrant Délit, 51 rue de Laxou, 5400
 Nancy, France
 Le La, BP 463, 1211 Geneve 3, Switzerland
- In Spanish: Luz Negra, c/o General Solchanga,
 No 2, 3c Madrid, Spain
- In Arabic: Le Desir Libertaire, 551 Caledonian
 Road, London N7
- Multi Lingual: Brumes Blondes, Ruysael Kade 23(1),
 Amsterdam 1008, Holland

WARNING

Not all magazines that claim to be surrealist are, whilst some that do not make this claim publish work by, and of interest to surrealists. Three such journals are:-

- Phases, 24 rue Remy-de-Gourmont, 75019,
Paris, France
Ellebore, 189 rue Ordener, 75018, Paris,
France
(reviews of the movement Phases)
La Crecelle Noire, BP 20, 75860, Paris,
Cedex, 18 France
(review of the "Melog" gang)

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Compassion is my real home
when I glorify the whistle of a train
write letters to persons unknown
fold curtains
laugh at the most contrary people
observe the moss growing on a rock
come upon an exhausted rabbit
caress its belly and shivering head
walk in the fields
touching the marks of old bites
I discover only a man seeing himself
in everything

Salah Faiq

All poems in this review by Salah Faiq are from two collections of poetry first published in Arabic "Hostages" (1975) and "That Country" (1978).

