

Nottingham Voice

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Child Poverty Action Group
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Health Group
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National Council for Civil
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teers to decorate homes and
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Evening Post - the money is the message



"IT'S A SPECIAL EDITION - NO ADS!"

IT IS NOW OVER TWO YEARS since the Evening Post's sister paper the Guardian Journal was laid to rest amid the clatter of printers and journalists hitting the Forman Street scrap-heap. The strike which preceded the closure was an acrimonious affair and cries of ouch can still be heard. Since most of those made redundant were, logically enough, trade unionists, the proprietors, T. Bailey Forman Ltd, can face the future with some composure, knowing they have enough non-union staff to keep the paper running as usual even if there is another strike.

The death of the Guardian Journal, a drab little paper starved of the funds needed to compete in the tough morning market, completed a classic cycle of carnivorous take-over capitalism - buy your rivals and sink them. Of course, T. Bailey Forman pleaded

economic necessity: but their history suggests differently.

Neatly enough, the Guardian Journal was killed off in June 1973, twenty years to the month after T. Bailey Forman had acquired the Nottingham Journal and the Evening News - at that time the rivals to their own Guardian and Evening Post. By September 1953, the Guardian and the Journal were in forced wedlock under the cumbersome title of Guardian Journal, while another neat decade later, in June 1963 (June is evidently a dangerous month at Forman Street), the Post gobbled up the Evening News, the word "News" finally disappearing from the masthead in January 1971.

There was similar mayhem among the weeklies. The Football Post survived while the Football News

was chopped, and - showing that sentiment never interferes with business - there appeared on December 6th, 1969 the final issue of the Nottinghamshire Guardian, a weekly which in 1848 had been the first paper acquired by Thomas Forman, great grandfather of the present chairman of the company, Colonel T.E. Forman Hardy. This was replaced by the Weekly Post, a free paper paid (and more than paid) for by its advertising - and only marginally less boring than the similarly financed Nottingham Shopper, which it was obviously set up to compete with.

So two decades of slaughter on Forman Street were enough to see off the crowded rivalry of more than a century. Gorged on the advertising and circulation of its former competitors, the Post is now not only Nottingham's sole surviving daily paper, but also one of its largest businesses.

Sources of income

How this business is organised and controlled is obviously of some interest to the people of Nottingham because it influences the values sold to them in their newspaper. The purpose of this article is to look at these values as they appear not in the pages of the Post but in its behaviour as a business.

It is useful to start with a fairly detailed look at how the Post makes its money. With a few minor exceptions (sales of photographs, etc.), the Evening Post has two main sources of income: sales and advertising. How much and in what proportion? These are tricky questions but well worth trying to answer.

In terms of content, there is nearly twice as much advertising in the Post as anything else - 63% during a week selected at random in June this year, which is perilously close to the 66% maximum allowed by the Post Office for registration as a newspaper. Since this merely allows a newspaper to go by first-class mail under a second-class stamp, it may be an almost meaningless concession in the case of the Post - but it's a usefully objective guide to editorial/advertising balance. Interesting to note, then, that the Post only meets the Post Office's requirements if an average is taken over the whole week: on Friday of our random week, advertising reached 74% - nearly 27 of the 36 pages.

In the course of a week, the size of the Post varies enormously - a 36-page blow-out on Friday is usually followed by a 14-page hangover on Saturday. On particularly fat days the Post divides in two (the second half, nearly all ads, is the one that gets left behind on buses), but the reader gets the same value for his 5p (6p since November 24th) - the amount of editorial material stays almost the same. For example, on the Saturday of our random week, out of 16 pages, 8.8 were editorial and 7.2 advertising, while on the Friday, as we have seen, out of 36 pages, only 9.2 were editorial, with 26.8 advertising. (Incidentally, Friday is the day when the Post likes to trumpet its quality and its width on the front page under headings like "All in your 40-page Post!" On Friday, 21st November, to take a more recent example, out of these 40 pages, 29 (or 72%) were advertising.)

These figures are pretty impressive (how many readers were aware that on Fridays - officially - the Post isn't a newspaper at all but an advertising sheet?). Even more impressive is the money involved.

The Post charges £1,000 a page for display advertising: classified ads are charged by the line, and work out at rather less than £1,000 over a whole page. Calculating the income for a whole issue is complicated by concessions made to a number of

advertisers (regular clients, for example) which are obviously confidential to the Post, but, roughly speaking, the Post would receive something like £23,000 for its 74% Friday bonanza, and over the week as a whole around £90,000. Over the whole year this would work out at more than £4,000,000 - though the pattern over a whole year would not necessarily be the same as that of our random week in June.

£4,000,000 in advertising revenue is only significant, of course, when related to the paper's total turnover in advertising and sales. The company's financial year runs from January to December: in 1973, the latest year for which figures are available, the total turnover for the whole group, Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd, of which T. Bailey Forman Ltd is by far the largest part, was £4,244,058, and for T. Bailey Forman Ltd itself, whose sole function is to run the Evening Post, total turnover was £3,946,357. We don't know, of course, how much things had changed in the eighteen months between December 1973 and June this year, but it is clear enough that not only the Post but the whole Forman Hardy group is massively dependent on income from advertising. Income from sales of the Post is small by comparison - perhaps as little as one quarter of the whole (an advertising/sales ratio of about 3:1).

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn from this huge imbalance of advertising to sales revenue. Perhaps the most surprising is that, as long as circulation is high enough to keep the advertisers happy, the Post does not necessarily have to sell all that many copies to stay in business. In fact, if the Post sold more than a certain number of copies profits might actually fall. This is because no newspaper can make a profit from its sales revenue alone - neither 5p nor 6p is anywhere near the production cost of a copy of the Post. So, since advertising income for a particular issue does not rise with the number of copies sold (it was £23,000 on our jackpot Friday, whether the Post sold one or a million), there is a point at which it becomes financially illogical to sell any more copies - advertising rates could be increased if circulation went up, but probably not by enough to meet additional production costs. At its peak a few years ago, circulation was perhaps about 190,000, though this is partly guesswork, since at that time figures were never published. At the Audit Bureau of Circulation count for July-December, 1974, the Post's circulation was a healthy 146,001, but how close this is to the optimum profit figure only the management could say.

Most important

Looked at from a purely financial viewpoint, therefore, the Post is not in business to sell news at all - it is in business to sell advertising. (This was confirmed by the Post's Deputy Editor, Kenneth Macmillan, in a recent Radio Nottingham survey of the local media. Advertising, he commented, "is the most important part of the paper".) Given its monopoly position and its massive advertising revenue, therefore, the Post need really sell only as much news as it thinks it can get away with.

At the same time, the Post has a vested interest in the local business community, since it is not only a business itself, but is heavily dependent on the patronage of other businesses - an obvious danger to its journalistic independence in covering a very significant area of local life.

Appropriately, therefore, the Post is run not by journalists but by a businessman, Christopher Pole-Carew, who was appointed managing director in June

1968, having been assistant to the manager since 1966. Formerly with the Lancashire and Cheshire County Newspapers Group (owned by Thomson Newspapers), Pole-Carew is a 44-year-old ex-naval lieutenant with a vaguely aristocratic Cornish background and an aggressively military view of management. He is intensely hostile to trade unions, and his attitude to employees expresses itself in statements like, "We intend to manage, with or without your co-operation," and, "I am employed to win victories, not to fight battles."

His main brief was to modernise the old-fashioned Forman Street set-up, and he appears to have been given a free hand to do it. Certainly, there seems little doubt that both Forman Hardy Holdings and the Evening Post are largely the products of his business methods over the last seven years, and although these methods have created a great deal of bitterness among his work-force, Colonel Forman Hardy has apparently been content to retire into the background and leave him to ensure that this already wealthy firm becomes even wealthier in the future. Perhaps the most important development during his regime has been a complete reorganisation of the company's structure.

Dizzy whirl

The proprietors of the Evening Post are T. Bailey Forman Ltd, a private limited company. At the time of Pole-Carew's appointment, the company had three subsidiaries, F.W. Buck & Sons Ltd (proprietors of the Notts. Free Press, a weekly paper printed and published in Sutton-in-Ashfield), the Nottingham Evening News Ltd, and Palmers Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd. Of these, only the first was significant: the Evening News was already defunct, and the company dropped its interest in Palmers Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd early in 1970.

By the beginning of January 1973, however, a dizzy whirl of activity had overtaken the company. In particular, there was the new and presumably more efficient company structure. The controlling company was now Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd, which was created on 1st January, 1973 specifically to act as parent company for the whole group. T. Bailey Forman Ltd was now the chief subsidiary, publishing the Evening Post, while F.W. Buck & Sons Ltd remained as proprietors of the Notts. Free Press. The Nottingham Evening News Ltd was preserved as a dormant company to protect its name, the same fate later overtaking the Guardian Journal.

Much more interesting, however, was the cluster of new satellites which the group had acquired: Midland Direct Advertising Ltd, the Nottingham Garden Centre Ltd, FH Farms Ltd, TBF (Printers) Ltd, and TBF (Aviation) Ltd - since renamed TBF (Transport) Ltd. These have been followed more recently by TBF (Process) Ltd and the Huthwaite Printing Co. Ltd (printers of the Notts. Free Press), and by an interesting little purchase in September, 1973 of a 49% interest in Billogrove Ltd, a Bristol haulage firm whose value to Forman's lies in the fact that newsprint for the Post is shipped to Avonmouth: during the 1973 strike the usual supply route from Avonmouth to Nottingham via British Waterways was blocked.

These companies were obviously seen as a sensible diversification of interest: by the end of 1973 most of them were making a modest profit, and the parent company was expressing confidence in their future. But, however sensible this diversification may be in commercial terms, there is a danger that it could reduce even further the significance of journal-

ism in the priorities of the Forman Hardy group.

Another interesting aspect of the new company structure was its effect on payment to Colonel Forman Hardy (as chairman of the board) and Pole-Carew (as highest-paid director) of their directors' salaries (or "emoluments", as the company returns so felicitously term them - appropriately from a Latin word meaning "to grind out"). Since 1973, they receive salaries from Forman Hardy Holdings as well as from T. Bailey Forman - £13,363 plus £12,613 in the case of the Colonel, and £14,077 plus £13,577 in the case of Pole-Carew.

Inseparable from reorganisation and expansion was the modernisation of the company's plant and equipment. One of Fleet Street's major problems has been its inability to introduce new techniques in the face of opposition from the powerful printing unions. As a result, the printing technology of the national press has hardly changed since the turn of the century. The same applied to T. Bailey Forman until the mid-sixties when Colonel Forman Hardy began the modernisation later continued more belligerently by Pole-Carew. The extent to which new techniques have been introduced over the past few years is revealed by the amount authorised by the company for capital expenditure, averaging nearly a million pounds a year during 1972-74.

The sophistication of this new equipment is regarded by the local printing trade with some awe, and has won the Post a national reputation as a technological pace-setter. It is not confined to the group's newspapers - TBF (Printers) Ltd supplies a commercial printing service, for example - but as far as the Post is concerned, it has meant, among other things, a switch from the traditional "hot metal" technique to the more flexible method of photo-setting.

Final control

The way this switch was organised and the confrontations which it led to are crucial events in the recent history of the Post: the 1973 strike is a key to understanding the Post and the whole Forman Hardy group.

First, however, we should slot into place the most important piece in the group's financial structure - who actually owns it: because, for all his influence, Pole-Carew is not ultimately responsible for the policy of the company. As the managing director, he is still only an employee and final control lies with the shareholders, particularly those who are directors.

In September, 1974 (again the most recent date available) shares in Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd were distributed as in Table 1 (overleaf). All are £1 nominal shares and all receive dividends, but only Ordinary shares carry voting rights. With the exception of Paul Granger, all shareholders are relatives of Colonel Forman Hardy: Cynthia Forman Hardy and Marjorie Kell are his sisters, Marjorie Forman Hardy is his wife, Hugh Neville Hardy his uncle (as far as we can ascertain), and Delia, William and Nicholas Forman Hardy his children. Donald Tyzack is a local solicitor who may also be related to Colonel Forman Hardy, while Paul Granger is an accountant who is a long-standing adviser and business associate of the Colonel. He has a number of local directorships, including, like the Colonel, the very wealthy Hardy & Hanson's brewery.

These, then, are the owners of the Evening Post and of every company controlled by Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd. The group does not go in for partial ownership: in every case, with the exception (at the

TABLE 1. Shareholders of Forman Holdings Ltd at 24th September, 1974

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>"A" Ordinary</u>
FORMAN HARDY, Thomas Eben	57,847	43,541
FORMAN HARDY, Cynthia Joan	15,750	47,250
KELL, Marjorie Gwendoline Dorothea	15,750	47,250
FORMAN HARDY, Marjorie Senior		20,000
GRANGER, Paul Francis }		80,000
HARDY, Hugh Neville }		
TYZACK, Donald Stanley }	21,000	63,000
GRANGER, Paul Francis }		
FORMAN HARDY, Delia Mary		10,000
*FORMAN HARDY, William Edward Bailey		10,000
FORMAN HARDY, Nicholas John		10,000
	<hr/> 110,347	<hr/> 331,041

*Died 2.11.74

last returns) of Billogrove Ltd, Forman Hardy Holdings is the sole shareholder, apart from a single £1 share in each company held by Colonel Forman Hardy.

Directors

There is a certain monotony also in the directorships of these companies. Colonel Forman Hardy is always the chairman, Christopher Pole-Carew is always on the board, and the company secretary is always Alan Gale (who has since left somewhat abruptly, however). Sometimes this trio is joined by one or more of the managers of a particular company. The largest board is that of T. Bailey Forman Ltd, which includes members of the Post's senior management, as well as Paul Granger (but only one journalist, the Senior Editor, Bill Snaith). But the all-important board of Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd consists of only three people: Colonel Forman Hardy, Christopher Pole-Carew and Paul Granger, the company secretary (at the last returns) being Alan Gale.

Thus ultimate control of the firm remains firmly in the tight little circle of Forman Hardys and especially in the hands of the Colonel himself, holder of 52% of the Ordinary shares and universal chairman of the board. Whatever his employees feel about Christopher Pole-Carew, therefore, there can be no doubt where the real responsibility lies.

Not only the responsibility, but also the profit.

There has never been a time over the past few years when T. Bailey Forman and Forman Hardy Holdings have not made a handsome profit for their shareholders. It is essential to bear this in mind, because whenever the management has wanted to cut down on its workforce or close a newspaper it has always pleaded poverty.

It should also be borne in mind when considering the firm's recent history that, whatever the problems of the national press in Fleet Street, the last decade has been a boom period for the provincial press, largely because of an unprecedented increase in advertising, especially in the classifieds (at the beginning of 1974, in fact, the Post was actually turning away advertisers because of a paper shortage). Placed in this perspective, therefore, it would perhaps have been more remarkable if Mr Pole-Carew and his management, operating a monopoly in a wealthy industrial area, had not made a lot of money.

And make money they certainly did. How much is not easy to decide. Companies often make more money than they actually declare as profit - there are quite legitimate devices for reducing the apparent profitability of a company. But even allowing for this, the T. Bailey Forman figures since 1968 are impressive, as Table 2 shows.

By the end of 1973, in spite of vast expenditure on new plant and a healthy issue of dividends to shareholders each year, Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd had accumulated reserves of £2,104,994. In addition to

TABLE 2. T. Bailey Forman Ltd/Forman Hardy Holdings Ltd: turnover, profit, etc. 1969-73

Year	Turnover	Pre-tax Profit	After-tax Profit	Dividends	Retained Profit	Reserves
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1969	2,423,152	393,812	283,152	135,727	147,425	1,759,547
1970	2,764,770	337,716	236,589	123,588	110,797	1,870,344
1971	3,024,381	306,601	180,390	88,277	92,113	1,919,114
1972	3,715,048	752,593	458,929	154,486	304,443	2,002,863
1973	4,244,058	342,426	157,304	55,173	102,131	2,104,994

this, during the bumper year of 1972, on September 26th, the directors had authorised the issue of a bonus to shareholders of £220,684 worth of new shares transferred from the accumulated reserves - and there were still reserves of £2,002,863 at the end of the year.

Because accounts are not published until almost a year later, none of this information was available to the employees who went on strike in June 1973. In particular, they did not know that the firm had made record profits in the previous financial year - though this would be perfectly well known to the management, of course.

Generous

As we review the events of the strike, therefore, it is worth bearing in mind that Forman Hardy Holdings has been a most generous money-pot for those few people who hold shares, but that for the workforce - the people who actually produce the profits - it can be something quite different. At the end of 1972, for example, 10% of them (approximately 100 out of 950) were made redundant on the grounds - later proved false, as the figures show - that the company was in danger not so much of losing money as of losing profits.

(Worth noting, incidentally, that the dividends quoted above place at least some of the shareholders in the top 0.5% of the tax-paying population - i.e. those with incomes over £20,000 - according to figures given in the report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth published on July 30th, 1975. Some of them - Colonel Forman Hardy, for example - qualify several times over.)

The 1973 strike is important because it was the conclusive victory for the Pole-Carew view of the Evening Post and how it should be managed - confirmation that the newspaper was in no way to be a co-operative enterprise, and that it was to be primarily a commercial product. The literature produced by the strikers - their leaflets and their newspaper "The Press" - bristles with resentment at the despotism of the management and the sacrifice of journalism to commercial principles:

"Mr Pole-Carew has made it pretty clear that he wants to run the whole show without the irritation of consulting fully the people who make it possible. Systematically he has ignored or insulted the organised trade unions, setting one against the other, making promises and scrapping agreements . . .

"But the foolish 'money making' schemes have gone on. A garden centre, a branch to sell aerial photographs, a pie-in-the-sky plan to publish books . . . These seem to be at the expense of what the company is in business for - to produce good, efficient and worthwhile newspapers." (The Press, July 9th, 1973)

The cause of the strike is still a matter for controversy. As recently as 31st October this year, in a BBC television programme about the provincial press, Pole-Carew claimed that the 1973 strike was "an inter-union dispute, not a union versus management dispute". Perhaps, like many winners, he feels able to write his own history, but the evidence suggests that the strike in fact began as a direct result of his own action.

The installation of new Letterflex plate-making machinery at T. Bailey Forman affected two print unions, SLADE and the NGA, who were due to work out a manning agreement at national level on June 24th. Six days before this meeting (whose date had been known for some time), the T. Bailey Forman

management ordered members of SLADE to begin operating the new machinery, and when they refused (they could hardly do otherwise) told them to go home. It would seem inaccurate, therefore, to describe this as an inter-union dispute when it was actually caused by the refusal of one union to operate machinery without the agreement of another.

Inevitably, the other three unions at T. Bailey Forman, including the National Union of Journalists, were drawn into the dispute in support of basic trade union principles - the NUJ, for example, could hardly supply copy for a newspaper now produced in defiance of trade union agreements - and a Joint Liaison Committee of all five unions was formed to conduct the dispute (again, very far from the "inter-union dispute" of management propaganda).

As Pole-Carew was aware, it was a strike the unions couldn't avoid and couldn't win. It lasted for six weeks, during which the Evening Post never stopped publication, though it was reduced in size and circulation, while the Guardian Journal stopped immediately and never reappeared. When the strike ended in total defeat for the unions, the redundancies which followed naturally led to the weeding out of the militants - many of them from choice.

Looking at the events and the effects of these six weeks, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Pole-Carew deliberately provoked a strike at a time of his own choosing, called the tune at almost every stage, and got out of it precisely what he wanted - destruction of the unions and an excuse to get rid of the Guardian Journal.

In fact, the death of the Guardian Journal was almost as controversial as the strike itself. In the television programme quoted earlier, Pole-Carew stated that, "The strike caused the death of the Guardian Journal, of that there is no doubt." On the contrary, there seems considerable doubt that T. Bailey Forman had the slightest wish to preserve the Guardian Journal when they could concentrate on the much more profitable Evening Post. From the financial information already quoted, it seems probable that the Guardian Journal could have been saved if the management had been willing. It had obviously been deprived of the capital needed to make any sort of impact on the competitive morning market, and it seems likely that T. Bailey Forman were wealthy enough to subsidise a morning paper (as the Manchester Evening News subsidises the Guardian, for example) if they had a less commercial attitude to their newspapers and the community they serve.

Grave doubts

The whole episode raises grave doubts about control of the local press. As a monopoly newspaper, the Evening Post wields considerable influence in the Nottingham area, and it is in the interests of this area that those who control it should be more publicly responsible. There is little room in this article to discuss the Post as a newspaper, but it is worth giving a few examples of how the obscurantism of the management is reflected in its pages.

There is the virulent anti-unionism (always more muted when essentially conservative groups like doctors are on strike); the fawning on the local Tory party, who are criticised only for not opposing Labour more strongly (Forman Hardy Holdings makes an annual donation of £500 to the Conservative Party); the inflated coverage of small conservative pressure groups; like the Ratepayers' Association (revealed on the Post's own front page to have only 300 members and an attendance at meetings of 17); the

assiduous preaching of the gospel according to the Chamber of Commerce, whose repetitive pronouncements are extensively reported several times a week; the kindly treatment of local business, with a Business News section which is little more than a free puff for everyone mentioned; the censoring in the Post-bag column of criticism of the Post itself (see Voice 14 for an example, in which a correspondent's reference to the Post's "apparently unending spate of misinterpreted and frequently biased articles" was rewritten: "the expression of opinion in your Comment of November 20 is exaggerated!"); the "circulation-boosting" gimmicks, like "Post Scene", a monthly "magazine" supplement where a few threadbare comments on leisure activities are slipped into a fat wad of lucrative advertising; the appalling editorials with their sneering, obsessive hatred of unions and the

Labour government, their overripe fantasies of extremist subversion, and their flatulent logic which, when it expresses any coherent thought at all, is capable of praising Franco for his clemency in shooting people instead of garotting them.

All this is much more than the simple expression of a conservative editorial policy, however: it follows naturally from the Post's own interior organisation and labour relations. It is difficult to see how journalists can comment responsibly on the workings of a democratic society when their own working society is as repressive and undemocratic as this one; nor can it be in the interests of the local community that its only daily paper is also a reactionary, commercially orientated and secretive private business.

JOHN SHEFFIELD

Postscript

FORMAN HARDY HOLDINGS is not an easy firm to find out about (a neat irony in view of the Post's eagerness to criticise secretiveness in others - for example, the Labour County Council's Policy Subcommittee). We actually wrote twice to Mr Pole-Carew requesting an interview. Our letters were expressed with normal courtesy, but received no acknowledgement - an interesting contrast with Radio Nottingham, who gave us an interview quite

happily, and Radio Trent, who are still bitter because we didn't ask them for one! In finding out about the inner workings of Forman Street, therefore, we have been reduced to somewhat oblique methods. Our only chance to listen to the horse's mouth was in the BBC television programme quoted in the article, but we were also able to contact a journalist who applied for a job at the Evening Post. He supplied us with the following account of his experience.

THE STRANGE THING ABOUT GOING for an interview at the Nottingham Evening Post is the feeling one gets almost immediately one is in the building that one does NOT want the job.

Knowing their past record for industrial strife - and their dislike of it - I was uncommonly careful what I said about my union background. On the basis that I wouldn't say anything at all (they would find out soon enough if I got the job), I met the News Editor, Bill Ivory, a man in his mid-forties who seemed more concerned about telling me why he had left the NUJ than anything else. The interview was a strange affair. I had never had one like it. He seemed extremely worried that if I got the job I would leave immediately, having gained a comprehensive knowledge of Nottingham, and join one of the two radio stations in the area. And then came the union. Was I a member of the NUJ? Yes, Oh, I see.

Then, 'funnily enough', he seemed to know that I had been involved in a long dispute in London at a particular trouble-spot. I was the deputy FOC (i.e. shop steward) and obviously figured quite heavily in the dispute. Mr Ivory knew I was a union official and asked my opinion of strikes and other forms of industrial action. After I had told him I thought it irrelevant to the interview, he launched into a long tale of the trouble he had been involved in when they closed the morning paper. Um, yes, but what about the interview, I thought, having already decided not to take the job even if offered. A word now with the Senior Editor, Mr Snaith.

On the face of it a very pleasant, very small man with a very big title. Nice office. I wonder how many trouble-makers have been dismissed from this chair.

Well, Mr —, I see you work for the — group. There's been a bit of trouble there, hasn't there? Were you involved in it?

Knowing full well he damn' well knew I was

involved in it, I stuck it out. Yes, I was.

I see. Have you got any political views?

Yes, I have got views, but nothing serious . . .

Oh, you're not a member of any political parties, are you?

No . . . or at least nothing for you to worry about, ha, ha.

Well, I'll tell you how we like it here. (Here it comes.) We believe that journalists shouldn't have any political views at all. It means that they could become biased in their writing. We think that everyone here should have loyalty to the paper and that politics should not enter into it at all . . .

But a journalist with political views doesn't necessarily have to write about them or let them influence his writing, so why can't journalists here have their own views?

Oh, you misunderstand me. I'm not saying that. We just don't encourage political views.*

In other words, you are not particularly interested in employing me?

Well, we'll see. I'll see you again in a minute.

This time I was taken for a shorthand test by the News Editor. Of course, I didn't get the job.

Overall opinion: The firm are obviously not in the slightest bit interested in encouraging good management-union relationships. They had obviously checked up on my past employment background with a view to union matters, and there was never any chance they would employ me from the moment we discussed unions and politics.

* **Fact:** the Editor of the Weekly Post, Daphne Oxland, under her married name of Mrs D.J. Suthers, stood as Conservative candidate for Robin Hood Ward at the City Council elections in 1971 and 1972.

SNOTTY GUTTER PRESS

STEAL
THIS
PAPER!

approximately 1975 number i

we say...

The time has come for all groups engaged in the struggle to unite and sweep away the reactionary forces of bourgeois capitalism. The full might of the state has been brought to bear on the alternative society over recent months. Not only has the state completely ignored many of our activities (a typically oppressive way of undermining solidarity), but in many cases so has everyone else. This must lead us to look at our activities and ask if we have really been doing anything effective at all. Probably not.

What is needed now is a totally new look at how to effect change in society. In order to bring about change it is necessary to use the forces in society which are powerful enough to bring about change. This is in agreement with the Marxian concept of dialectics which predicts that change will arise out of forces inherent in the system.

The Gutter Press therefore announces a new basis for action. A united front - to be known as the Notional Front - will be formed. The declared aim of the Notional Front will be to bring together all alternative forms of action and organisation. By bringing together all these into one organisation the Notional Front will undoubtedly attract the interest of Special Branch who will infiltrate it. These infiltrators will be particularly keen and active members since a) they would not wish to be discovered by remaining inactive or opposing the organisation and b) they'd be out of a job otherwise. However the Front will be completely notional and not actually exist at all. Since Special Branch are probably much more efficient than we are it can be expected that they will achieve much more for alternative change than we ever could.

The Notional Front will have the additional advantage of leaving everyone free to do what they wish.

CAPITALISM

WHY WE'RE HERE

Basically, a group of people have got together who feel that a media is needed for ongoing communication between each other, which doesn't normally happen in the straight press, Radio Nottingham, etc. So instead of just talking to each other, which basically was the existing situation, we decided we could carry on the struggle more effectively by writing to each other instead. If you'd like to help, call in anytime at the SGP Collective for our monthly meeting - where it goes from here depends on you! Remember, it's vital to SMASH CAPITALISM NOW!! (or fairly soon, anyway).

THE WORST HOUSE IN NOTTINGHAM

THIS HOUSE IS THE WORST HOUSE IN NOTTINGHAM CLAIM THE SWINBOURNE TERRACE ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS AND INTERFERRING COMMUNITY WORKERS (STARICW). THE CHAIRMAN OF STARICW, JOE HORNE (SOCIAL SERVICES £4,325 p.a.) SAID 'US RESIDENTS IS FED UP WITH THE CONDITIONS ROUND HERE. THERE ARE RATS AS BIG AS HOUSES AND HOUSES AS SMALL AS RATS. WE WANT ACTION NOW. NUMBER 22 IS A DISGRACE. THE COUNCIL SHOULD KNOCK IT DOWN. AND IT'S NO USE THEM SAYING THEY ARE KNOCKING IT DOWN. WHERE IS ARTHUR BLOGGS (NO FIXED ABODE) GOING TO LIVE WHEN THEYVE KNOCKED DOWN EVERY HOUSE IN THE ROW?'

PUSSY CATS

Number 22 is an eyesore claim the residents. Yet it has been left empty for three weeks. And during that time it could have housed homeless pussy cats. The residents intend to march on the Housing Department a week on Saturday if it remains fine. They also intend to take the agents, Messrs Fleece, Proffit, & Bannister, of some houses in the next street to court under the Statute of Limitations to Outbuildings Pigstys and Fortified Dwellings 629 BC. Section 54 (1a) paragraph 5 specifically states that number 22 is a fortified dwelling within the meaning of the Act. As such the agents, Fleece, Proffit & Bannister, have no right to



knock it down.

HEELS

Mrs Smith, the legal brains behind the action, explained to the Gutter Press - 'We intend to pursue an action in the High Court for damages for Arthur whose health would have been affected had he been living there. It is quite possible that Arthur would have been living there had he not been living somewhere else. Section 54 (1a) paragraph 5 states that the owners have to do the repairs within 48 hours of any damage occurring through its use as a fortified dwelling. Did I read that write Joe?' Meanwhile the Council are dragging there heels.

policemen's liberation



Policemen's Liberation and our magazine Plod's Other Paper were set up to fight discrimination against this oppressed minority group. Policemen are easily identified by their funny helmets and flat feet, while their dark blue uniforms make it difficult for people to accept that they are ordinary members of the community who just happen to be policemen. Police-

men are permanent outsiders, continually experiencing hostile behaviour. This can take many forms - insulting nicknames, refusal to assist with inquiries, etc. - and there are even people who run away or hide when they see a policeman, not realising how hurtful this can be.

The Policemen's movement is working towards a better understanding of the role of policemen in society. At the moment we are trying to contact other minority groups to discuss our common problems. We have already got cells in many police stations and are eager to get members of alternative groups into them - in fact, we are really into subversive organisations at the moment and would like as many names and addresses as possible.

Through our magazine we are also seeking to raise public consciousness so that policemen feel less alienated. There are many simple things ordinary people could do to help - like smiling when arrested, refusing to see a lawyer, falling over in the police station and sustaining heavy bruises to the kidneys and face, and always pleading guilty. Trivial as these may seem, action like this is essential if policemen are ever to feel part of the wider community.

CONTACT: The Chief Constable, Central Police Station, North Church Street, Nottingham.

BOOK REVIEW

The Alternative Soldiers Handbook by A.W.O.L. Atkins, £5, Establishment Press.

In my mail this morning I found a useful little book so I thought I would write about it. The Alternative Soldiers Handbook is a mine of information for people wishing to join the army. The book includes sections on how to live off the land, how to construct your own bazooka out of corrugated iron and clothes pegs, and how to avoid being handed leaflets by lefties outside the barracks. This handy volume is specifically designed to slip in the top pocket of a combat jacket and is covered with high quality steel.

Some of you may be wondering whether it is a good thing for people to wish to join the army in the first place. But, as the little known Cornish theorist and unarmed combat expert Abaka Karame has pointed out, this is a problem which none of us can ignore. Abaka - a Marxist, Leninist, Stalinist, Pacifist - first propounded his theories as a young man when he demonstrated his disaffection with society by editing the little known journal 'If you don't stand up... where are you?' It was in this journal that Abaka first stated his theory of positive identification and eco-feedback systems. Briefly the theory propounds the theory that with the advent of mass industrial society in the late nineteenth century in St. Ives was it possible to put forward a valid proposition concerning the identification of the workers in a dialectical dialogue with the ongoing alienation syndrome which had first been noted by Marx as early as the coexistence of the proletariat and the peasantry in the West Country. In a phenomenological sense the theory leads to the adoption of the so called 'rationality programme' which Abaka put forward as the correct mode of behaviour in a pre-revolutionary system.

Abaka stated that the aim of all people should be to satisfy the greatest good of the greatest number. Since there is only one method of correctly assessing the good of an individual - and that is to articulate an enquiry to them and wait for feedback - then it follows that what they say is to be taken as an indication of the good of the individual. Since it is possible for a person to either satisfy himself or to attempt to satisfy other people then it also follows that the correct behaviour is to try and satisfy others (there's only one of you and lots of others so you are more likely to achieve the greatest good by satisfying them). It also follows that it is

continued on back page

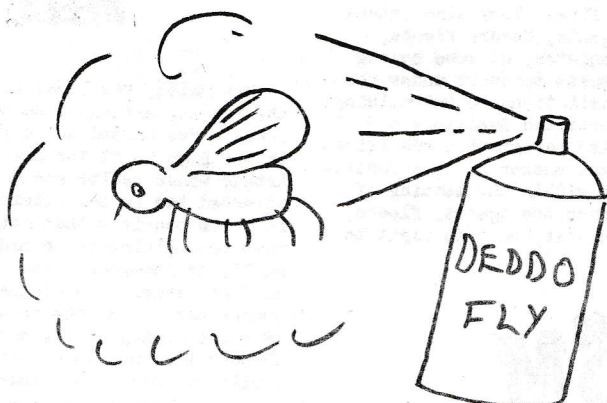
save the fly!

Few creatures have suffered more from human persecution than the common housefly (*musca domestica*). This small and beautiful insect has been ruthlessly slaughtered to the point where it is in real danger of extinction in the next two thousand years.

Flies are basically friendly little creatures who enjoy human company and have shared man's home since it was a cave. They like nothing better than to perch on the ceiling over the domestic hearth, or to circle contentedly for hours on end round the kitchen lightbulb. And often they lift man's weary spirit with their melodious buzzing on the window pane. But flies are

happiest of all when sharing the family meal - though they are all too rarely made welcome and are often forced to seek nourishment on the pavement outside.

Friends of Everything is organising a Save the Fly campaign to draw attention to the plight of the housefly. Highlight of the campaign will be the launching over the Victoria Centre of a gigantic inflatable housefly which will then be destroyed by a 100-foot aerosol spray. The aerosol spray will then be symbolically destroyed to draw attention to the harmful ecological effects of aerosol sprays.



Producing newspapers is basically very easy, but has been mystified by the capitalist press, etc. For example, we have done this paper completely by ourselves - all you have to do is to paste everything down on a piece of ~~paper~~ paper and take it along to a printer who then prints it. It doesn't matter if you can't draw - just cut drawings out of other alternative papers: everybody does it, and some drawings have been in almost every alternative paper in the country. To give you some idea, we have printed below some basic cartoons all cut out of other alternative papers. These give most of the basic concepts you're likely to need and can be used on their own or in various combinations with whatever captions suit your particular point.

RUN YOUR OWN ALTERNATIVE PAPER!



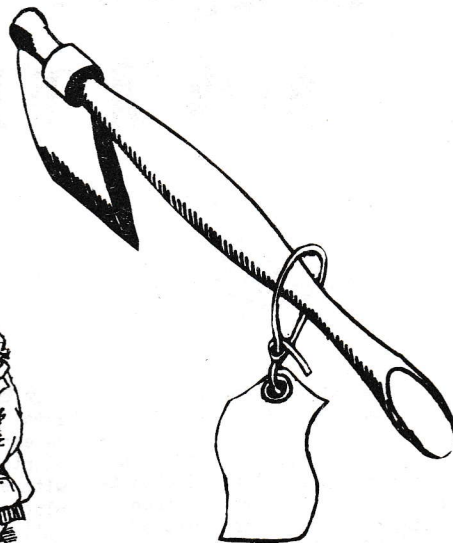
ordinary people



ordinary people



more ordinary people



threat to ordinary people
or their houses (label to
taste)



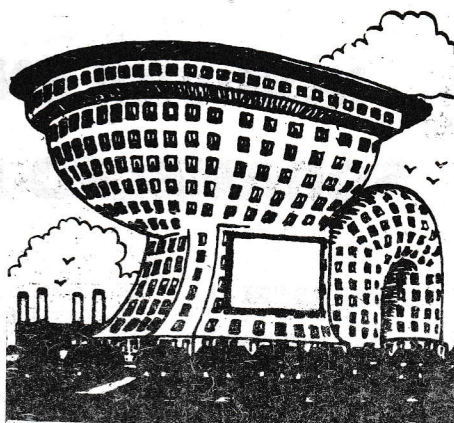
ordinary landlord,
property speculator,
businessman, indust-
rialist, etc.



ordinary people's houses



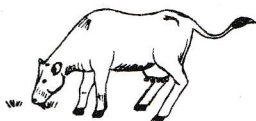
bureaucracy, red tape, etc.
(label to taste)



ordinary office block, flats,
gigantic lavatory bowl, etc.
(lable to taste)



HUMANE EATING



Members of the alternative society have to face the fact that even vegetarian eating is basically an aggressive activity destructive of life. This is true from the uprooting and chopping down of plants, through the cruelties of the cooking process (use of instruments of violence such as knives, mincers, etc.), and application of extreme heat through boiling water, oil, etc.), to the final savage act of destruction employing man's most powerful natural weapon of aggression, the teeth. (This is followed, of course, by the less conscious but equally destructive activities of the digestive system.)

It seems likely that the whole problem of human aggression derives from the sadistic tendencies instilled in the first place by the habit of eating, reinforced by the more overtly vicious activities of the cooking process. Fish and chips leads directly to Belsen and Hiroshima.

THIS APPLIES EQUALLY TO EATING PLANTS AND TO EATING ANIMALS!!! Slaughtering a cabbage and subjecting it to

slow boiling is no less inhumane than doing the same thing to a ham - recent research has proved conclusively that plants have feelings like animals, with electronic tests showing that plants scream when other plants are pulled up.

The problem for pacifists and vegetarians, then, is how to avoid committing constant acts of violence against the rest of nature without dying of starvation. What we need, in fact, is a philosophy and a strategy of non-violent eating.

Personally, I haven't come up with many ideas so far, apart from sucking everything instead of biting it. Perhaps new alternative chemical technology will find the answer, producing totally synthetic non-violent foods. At least having identified the problem we can now start working towards an answer. Write with ideas to the Friends of the Vegetable Collective, C/o the Gutter Press.

Meanwhile, here's a suggestion for a non-violent recipe.



NON-VIOLENT SCRAMBLED EGGS

OR EGG, SALT & WATER COLLECTIVE

First rescue some eggs from your local shop or supermarket. Liberate them gently from their shells into a basin and release the yolks from the restrictive membrane. Allow the yolk and the white to collectivise for a while with a little salt and a little water. Shake gently if necessary but

do not stir. Meanwhile heat a non-stick frying pan to roughly body temperature and when the ingredients have democratically spread themselves around the basin help them form a commune with the frying pan. Shake the pan non-violently from time to time. When the collective is warm but not solid, pour into a cup or dish and sip gently. Swallow but do not chew.

info.

TOADSTOOL BOOKSHOP for alternative books, leaflets, etc.

THE COMPROMISE GROUP is a group of radical social workers.

RADICAL ALTERNATIVES TO FOOD is a rapidly declining group. We constantly need new members. Meets every lunchtime.

GREATER NOTTINGHAM CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY Food Co-op, Parliament St. The following organisations can be contacted via the Gutter Press:

Prisoners' Liberation

Amnesiacs Anonymous

Dustmen's Collective

Underground Burial Service

GLUM LIBERATION MOVEMENT and counselling service for glums.

NAI GLUM (the NAI GLUM group)

letter

Ta for the mag! It's great to have our own alternative news instead of relying on the capitalist press. We've got to get it together alternative-wise if we're gonna get away from the rip-off merchants and be less dependant on the system. I've decided to grow my own on my own ecologically propelled bike. All you need is an old delivery bike, fill the basket with earth and sow your radishes. Spring is the best time by the way. Growing your own this way you can watch your radishes grow as you bike along. And if it rains you don't mind getting wet 'cos it's doing the radishes good.

Love and peace,
A. Burke,
The Merry Caravan,
Council Tip,
Nr. the Canal.

continued from somewhere else
easiest to do this in a situation where one is absolutely certain of the desires of others. This situation is to be found at its peak in the army.

The only valid objection to this that could be found by Abaka's opponents was that it was immoral to kill other people. But as Abaka pointed out that when a person is given an order to kill someone else by an officer one is bound to satisfy his desire by doing so. The person to be killed is unaware of his fate beforehand - and so is unaffected - and afterwards is even more unaware of anything and similarly unaffected. The person must therefore carry out the order in order to satisfy the desire of the person giving the order. Abaka was killed in the spirit of his theory when he allowed himself to be killed by enemy soldiers who clearly wanted to kill him, and - there being no officer present at the time to provide a countervailing desire - gave the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number.

This book is heartily recommended to all Abaka's followers in the army.

Voice Review

GOOD NEWS IS NO NEWS

FOURTEEN PEOPLE CHARGED under the conspiracy laws were acquitted on December 10th in a splendid decision by an Old Bailey jury. The fourteen were accused of conspiring to incite soldiers to "disaffect", the basis of the evidence being that they had distributed leaflets to soldiers outlining their rights, or had helped or encouraged soldiers to desert from their duty. The acquittal on all the conspiracy charges was important because it makes it much more difficult for the government to bring charges against people for conspiracy in future.

The conspiracy laws have recently been used more and more by the government against people engaged in "political" activities, their significance being that charges can be made without having to prove that an actual crime has taken place. It is enough to have "conspired" with someone else to break a law. And since the conspiracy charge carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, it leaves the question of sentencing completely open to the judge. In many cases the maximum sentence under the conspiracy laws is much longer than under the law governing the actual offence which might have been committed. And it also means that civil offences (either actual or contemplated) are turned into criminal charges.

For these reasons the decision taken by the Old Bailey jury was a very important one. After a trial lasting 51 days, and a summing up by the judge of three and a half days, the jury had no difficulty acquitting all the defendants of all the conspiracy charges in 90 minutes.

So how was the news greeted by the national press? The following day the Mirror and the Sun had no report at all. So much for the political aspirations of the Mirror - which, incidentally, had a much nicer nude that day than the Sun (hope you're winning the circulation war, Mirror). The Daily Mail managed a report of over seven column inches on page nine, but felt unable to give anything but the bare facts of the matter and spent nearly half the article on the names and addresses of the defendants. The Daily Express tried a similar trick and managed to give a mere 4½ inches to the item - the absolute minimum needed for the absolute minimum of information about the case.

The Morning Star, predictably (and accurately) enough, plastered the headline "Jury Deals Blow at Conspiracy Law" across the top of their front page. The Star dealt with the outcome of the case in about 50 column inches and included a call for the government to abolish the use of conspiracy charges. The Daily Telegraph managed a good 18 inches on page two, liberally scattered with quotations from defendants. The Telegraph did not go into detail on the significance of the case and the use of conspiracy charges in general.

Both the Times and the Guardian carried, as well as the main story, a feature article concerning the implications and the background to the case. The

Times was in good digging style with background information on two of the defendants - including the fact that one of them is now serving a prison sentence "for burning down an anti-vivisection laboratory" (the Times may well be first with the news that there are laboratories specifically set up to conduct anti-vivisection). The Times feature was mainly concerned with the details of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign and its almost complete ineffectiveness. Making the best of a bad acquittal, presumably.

The only real attempt to explore the significance of the case came from the Guardian, which tried to follow through its legal implications, but once again failed to tell us the real issues around the use of the conspiracy laws. The feature article included a plea for better social service provision in the army, but managed to rally slightly by ending with a comparison between the situation of British Army privates and the present troublesome "union" activity in the French Army.

Meanwhile, back in Nottingham, the Evening Post managed to miss the point completely by concentrating on the £50 and £100 fines given to two of the defendants (one of whom was a "local man") who had pleaded guilty to two of the minor charges, thus managing to make it look as though the trial had successfully brought two criminals to justice! Nice one, Post.

Despite this considerable victory for the anti-conspiracy law lobby, as we go to press there are still eleven people awaiting trial under similar charges though it seems likely that these will now be dropped. Their Defence Group can be contacted via the Voice.

IN HIS OWN WRIT

TO SOME BEMUSED LABOUR PARTY observers all may now appear sweetness and light in East Nottingham with the recent out-of-court settlement between City Council leader John Carroll and Lenton Ward party chairman Chris Richardson.

But evidently the big-timers' political machine rolls on. Stephen Evans stays out in the cold, although the party NEC's organisation sub-committee has now recommended that his appeal against expulsion should be upheld; ward boundary changes have robbed Chris Richardson of his Lenton party membership, and he failed in his bid to get on the panel for next year's city council elections; fellow left-wingers, and coincidentally Lenton ward councillors, Peter Price and Mairi Yuill, face excommunication through failure to be nominated for seats following the bound-

ary reorganisation.

And who pops up as Labour candidate for the new two-seat Lenton ward (now the safest Labour ward in the city)? You've guessed? John Carroll with Mohammed Aslam. Like the true gent he is, Mr Carroll has left the new two-seat St Ann's to comrade ringleaders Betty Higgins and Peter Burgess.

There will, I'm sure, be more hours of harmless amusement in the reshuffle game as the current 18 three-member wards reshape as 27 wards, all but one with only two representatives.

But enough of this digression. In their joint statement, Carroll and Richardson announced that Carroll's slander writ had been dropped and that both had agreed to withdraw certain remarks made about the other at a meeting of East Nottingham general management committee last year.

The last sentence would have done a Tommy Cooper script proud. "Both parties have taken this course in the interest of Labour Party unity and intend to continue to devote their own individual efforts to the furtherance of the aims of the Labour Party." Just like that . . .

Expensive game

Chris Richardson was nearer the mark when he told the Evening Post he hoped it would not be necessary to resort to law to settle future disputes within the party.

It's an expensive game which neither person wins, because they each have to foot their own legal bills. The only winners are the avaricious, overpaid legal profession.

The affair will probably have set Chris Richardson back several hundred pounds.

John Carroll's costs will be the larger. Some sources say over £500, because they will include an expensive High Court appearance in July for a preliminary hearing - a curtain raiser to what would surely have proved a fine entertainment before a judge in Nottingham in the New Year.

It would, however, be more interesting to know how Cllr Carroll, the city's leading politician, intends to foot his bill.

By Cllr Carroll's own admission, in correspondence with expelled party member Dieter Peetz, his financial position is such that "I cannot even afford a stamp for this letter and I have to stretch my finances to provide the necessary stationery."

The illustrious Mr Peetz had threatened to take legal action against Cllr Carroll, to which Cllr Carroll retorted, "When I find out what this is all about and I need legal advice, I shall have to defend myself and take some sort of correspondence course on the law."

Are the good citizens of Nottingham going to allow the poverty-stricken Cllr Carroll to continue to run this city? Perhaps they should rally round with a JC benevolent fund.

Cllr Carroll's action against Chris Richardson concerned alleged slander in the presence of 42 Labour Party delegates. Mr Richardson is said at a closed meeting to have accused Cllr Carroll as Jack Dunnett's general election agent of "rigging" the selection procedure under which Dunnett was re-elected.

Yet, according to Dieter Peetz, the self-same Cllr Carroll published defamatory statements about

the said Peetz during the second general election last year.

Again starring as Dunnett's election agent, Cllr Carroll published a hand-bill supporting his candidate which alleged that Peetz, who stood as Independent Labour candidate in the same constituency, "does not heed democratic decisions."

And, says Peetz, it went on, "Beside inciting trouble at properly constituted meetings, this academic on philosophy has conducted a vile campaign on a policy of threats, violence and personal smear tactics against long-standing members of the Labour Party."

The outcome of a protracted letter exchange with Cllr Carroll has not been revealed, although it is understood Mr Peetz would accept a "written apology and withdrawal of these allegations." Touché!

And just to keep everyone happy, the ebullient Mr Peetz has declared his intention of standing against Cllr Carroll in the forthcoming municipal elections.

Which brings me conveniently to Tory Party election gossip-rumour-horror-drama. Sheriff Gerry Elliott still seems likely to lose his chance to stand again - the two seats now available in his former three-man ward look certs for the other pair, the ineffectual young "whizz-kid" Bill Bradbury and the tiny group's bland leader Jack Green.

Watch carefully as the other ward parties turn their backs on him.

And in nearby Forest ward, the word is of a battle between the old-stagers Oscar Watkinson and former leader Fred Woodward. The third member of that trio, Rex Rolling, is apparently fairly well set for another term.

Still, with only ten members out of the present 54, the Tories are hardly too thick on the ground for comfort.

TAKING THE RISE

FOR PAY RISE, READ REGRADING, Notts. County Council's new beat-the-£6-limit philosophy. It's fun and it catches on like wildfire.

Admittedly there are always plenty of reasons given to justify fat pay increases - "material increased duties and responsibilities" is favourite.

Take a recent batch, approved by the county Policy Committee, to some of which - ever-mindful of the City Council scene on the other side of the Trent's polluted waters - John Carroll raised serious objection.

For a member of the County Architect's Department, pay is up £1,300 a year. For county playing field officers and their assistants, a rise of £700 a year; for youth service officers, up £400 a year; for education area supervisors, up £900 a year; for Planning and Transportation Director Brian Collins' delectable secretary, an increase from scale £2,853-£3,096 to £3,366-£3,702.

County Council leader Dick Wilson said the changes were not pay increases in the ordinary sense. Too right. They should only range up to £6 a week at present.

"Regrading is permitted under the terms of the pay policy," he says.

And by God that's been applied good and proper to male cleaning staff at County Hall. Their regrading

Voice Review

at the same meeting was worth . . . 40p a week increase.

You will not be surprised to know that was approved without opposition.

PLAIN WORDS

LAST MONTH THE Director of Social Services produced a report for the Social Services Committee entitled "The need to determine Priorities for Social Workers". It would be interesting to know what the Committee made of it - if they actually understood it, that is. Mr Culham may be making some good points in his report, but if he is they are difficult to find. The report has fallen into the trap of assuming that the more complicated a sentence, the more profound it is likely to be. Moreover, the use of meaningless jargon is almost overwhelming in places.

The real problem facing Social Services is, according to the report, that "In order to make responsible choices in a situation in which we can indeed make decisions as to our priorities, we need to define a philosophical base for the Department which we could use as a yardstick by which to judge further priority definition". I hope that social workers are suitably gratified that a philosophical base is being worked out for them. One of the proposals is to concentrate resources on preventive work and to pay more attention to the next generation. Admirable, until one reads, "Whilst acknowledging that, because I am talking in terms of the next generation, I am thinking in terms of this generation's children and young people who will be the next generation's parents, the priorities which I suggest out right (sic) across the client groupings identified in previous specialist departments, and expose all client groups, for Social Workers, to similar criteria". Well, yes!

The main object of the report is to define which priorities social workers are to undertake when they cannot effectively cover all the tasks given them. One recommendation is that field workers (or as the report calls them "Field Work operatives") should be given an average case load of not more than 35 - as opposed to the 30 to 100 that they may have at the moment. Unfortunately, no attempt has been made to assess the impact of these proposals on the average Social Services client.

It is important that people, particularly the councillors who have to make the decisions, should be able to understand such reports clearly. After all, this report is talking about a department that spends over £13 million and deals with some 30,000 referrals in Nottinghamshire every year. And, really, would it make any difference if, instead of saying "clients who received a low priority of ranking as far as social worker activity is concerned", Mr Culham had said "clients who had little help from social workers"?

The other sad thing about the report is the secrecy which surrounded its preparation. Both the social work association BASW and the local government union NALGO were consulted on the report only when they agreed not to circulate it or discuss it with their members. Surely there is nothing in the report which need be secret. There is no startling disclosure which is going to harm anyone. Why the passion for secrecy? It may be that the Social Services bosses are so unsure of what they are saying about the service that they don't want any public or departmental debate at all. If so it is a pity.

LETTER (1)

Dear Nottingham Voice,

"Obviously the Government can't tolerate the blowing up of innocent citizens, but have they done the right thing to prevent it? A number of organizations . . . say no." (Voice, November 1975).

I looked in vain for some guidance from the Voice on this issue, but there was none. So how would you prevent the blowing up of innocent citizens?

Yours sincerely,
Tony Barker,
Flat 4,
19a, Pelham Crescent,
The Park,
Nottingham.

(Editors' note. As the passage quoted by Mr Barker makes clear, the object of the article was to question the effectiveness of the government's anti-terrorist measures, not to suggest that we had the answer ourselves. The article also pointed out that similar measures in Northern Ireland have not only been ineffective but have actually made the situation worse. This seems a perfectly valid point to make without placing ourselves under any obligation to provide Mr Barker with the answer to the problem of Irish terrorism.)

LETTER (2)

Dear Sir,

Friends of the Earth are proud to announce the release of a new book which they have produced: The Battle for Planet Earth.

The book is something entirely new because:

1. It is the first book published in the UK to be printed entirely on 100% re-cycled paper.
2. It fills an important gap in books on environmental issues for children from six to twelve.
3. It is not a text book. It is an adventure story which shows the need to defend our environment, and the practical steps which can be taken.

It has been produced in response to demand from parents and teachers for material to interest children in the environment.

The book describes the adventures of Mr Willow and his friend Nudge-Nudge - a field mouse - who are shocked by what they see happening to the environment, and have a series of encounters with the people responsible.

The book also gives tips on Do-It-Yourself re-cycling and other conservation activities for children. Facts are presented in a lively, humorous and interesting way. The message is that the Battle for Planet Earth is going on now, and must be won.

The Battle for Planet Earth is available in bookshops now.

Yours faithfully,
Stephen Bentley,
Flat 5,
"The Chestnuts",
Kenilworth Road,
The Park Estate,
Nottingham.

HAPPY ENDING

AS READERS WILL HAVE SEEN on an earlier page, a settlement has been reached in the case of Carroll v. Richardson. We thought it might be of some interest to compare the original demands made by Cllr Carroll's solicitors, Messrs Randall, Rose & Co., with the joint statement which concluded the affair. We therefore publish both documents below.

1(a). Letter from Randall, Rose & Co. to Messrs Hawley & Rodgers, October, 1974.

Carroll and Richardson

THE TERMS UPON WHICH our client is prepared to withdraw the proceedings against your client are as follows:

1. A statement in the enclosed form to be agreed by your client and signed by him.
2. The statement to be approved by the Chris Richardson Defence Committee. The circulars which this committee have issued could be regarded as exacerbating the damages and we think your client would have difficulty in claiming that the circulars did not have his approval.
3. Your client to pay our client's legal costs of the action on a solicitor and own client basis to be taxed if not agreed.
4. Our client will not require a statement in open court pursuant to Order 82 Rule 5.
5. The agreed statement to be published in the Nottingham Evening Post at your client's expense and your client to approve that our client be at liberty to circulate copies of the statement to such organisations and persons as Mr Carroll shall decide.
6. A full list to be supplied of all persons and organisations to which circulars issued by the Chris Richardson Defence Committee have been addressed so that our client can send copies of the statement to all such addressees.
7. Your client to obtain a written undertaking from the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Chris Richardson Defence Committee that they will issue no further circulars or statements whatsoever in connection with this matter.
8. At your client's expense a one column advertisement to be inserted in New Statesman reading: "In an article by Jim Higgins which appeared in the issue of 30th August 1974 relating to the East Nottingham Constituency reference was made to the issue of a writ for slander. The defendant Chris Richardson has now apologised to John Carroll, the election agent, for the remarks complained of and the proceedings have accordingly been withdrawn."
9. The expenses of circulating the statement to be met by your client in addition to the costs of the publications in the Nottingham Evening Post and New Statesman and our client's legal costs. A sum of £500 to be deposited with us as security for these costs and expenses, such sum to be accounted for in full and any balance to be returned to you. Any donations which may have been made to the Chris Richardson Defence Committee may of course be applied towards payment of the sum of £500. As it is to be a term that any balance is to be donated to the East Nottingham Constituency Labour Party Election

Fund then we shall require a statement of the total sum which has been donated.

1(b). Statement to be agreed by Christopher Richardson.

AT A MEETING OF THE General Management Committee of the East Nottingham Labour Party held on 23rd April 1974 Mr Christopher Richardson made certain remarks concerning Councillor John Carroll to the effect that he as the election agent of the Labour Party candidate for the constituency of East Nottingham had been guilty of certain malpractices in relation to the adoption of Jack Dunnett as the Labour Party candidate for the February 1974 general election.

Mr Richardson was given an opportunity to withdraw these remarks and apologise to Councillor Carroll but failed to do so and in order to protect his reputation as the Secretary of the East Nottingham Labour Party and the election agent Councillor Carroll was forced to issue a writ against Mr Richardson in which he claimed damages for slander.

Mr Richardson now accepts unreservedly that his remarks had no basis in fact whatsoever and were completely unjustified and accordingly has offered to Councillor Carroll his complete withdrawal of the remarks and his unreserved apology for the damage to Councillor Carroll's reputation. Mr Richardson has also agreed to pay the legal costs which Councillor Carroll has incurred.

Mr Carroll is pleased to accept Mr Richardson's withdrawal and apology.

Criticism has also been levelled at Councillor Carroll for having taken the course of commencing legal proceedings at all. In particular "The Chris Richardson Defence Committee" has issued certain circulars to this effect and has invited contributions towards Mr Richardson's expenses of defending the proceedings. Mr Richardson now accepts that Councillor Carroll was fully justified in commencing legal proceedings and completely dissociates himself from any such criticism. Further The Chris Richardson Defence Committee have approved this statement and have agreed at Councillor Carroll's request to denote (sic) any excess of the funds which they have collected to the East Nottingham Constituency Labour Party election fund.

2. Joint statement by Mr John Carroll and Mr Christopher Richardson, November 1975.

AS MR JOHN CARROLL HAS AGREED to withdraw the action commenced by him against Mr Christopher Richardson concerning remarks which Mr Richardson made at a meeting of the General Management Committee of the East Nottingham Constituency Labour Party in relation to the meeting held on 10th February 1974 to adopt Jack Dunnett as the parliamentary candidate for East Nottingham, Mr Richardson has withdrawn those remarks and similarly Mr Carroll has withdrawn certain remarks which he made at the same meeting concerning Mr Richardson. Both parties have taken this course in the interest of Labour Party unity and intend to continue to devote their own individual efforts to the furtherance of the aims of the Labour Party.



CROSS WORDS

A FRIEND OF OURS was recently crossing the road at a Pelican crossing. On the far side was a workman on a ladder adjusting the lights. Our friend stopped and said lightheartedly to the workman, "Can't you give us a bit more time to get across while you're up there?" The workman climbed deliberately down the ladder and, screwdriver in hand, said, "Listen luv, it's an Act of Parliament. You've got 11 seconds on the green man, you've got 7 seconds on the green flashing man, and if 18 seconds isn't enough I suggest you write to your MP."

the meeting on January 20th.

The National Council for Civil Liberties is also asking people to support its campaign for Britain to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights before January 13th, 1976. The European Convention was originally signed in 1956 and led to the setting up of the European Commission on Human Rights. This is important because it allows any individual to take his case to it if he feels his basic human rights are at risk or have been ignored. However, unless the British Government re-ratifies the Convention by January 13th, this right will be withdrawn. The NCCL asks you to write to your MP and/or the Home Secretary asking them to support renewal of Britain's ratification of the Convention.

SUPPORT NCCL

THE MEMBERSHIP of Nottingham's NCCL group is small but hard-working - but in order to campaign more effectively we need more active local members. Nationally, the NCCL needs more members to help its severe financial situation. A public meeting will be held on January 20th at 7.15 p.m. at the International Centre, 61b Mansfield Road. The BBC film on the NCCL will be shown and there will be a speaker from NCCL national office. We shall also be discussing the proposed Criminal Trespass Bill. The Law Commission is presenting its final draft to the government in 1976. If this act became law, it would provide yet another restriction on people's freedom of speech and movement. Civil liberties are in danger. Come to

STRAY ARROW

STARTLED READERS of Nottingham Arrow in November learned that "A father of two children at school making £55 (gross) a week could not (sic) be eligible for rent and rate rebates if his weekly rent and rates . . . exceed £6.70". Wondering if a whole new world was now open to needy journalists ("The Prime Minister did not fall down the stairs and break his leg today"), we 'phoned the City Information Office, headquarters of City Publicity Officer John Hartland who is also joint editor of the Arrow. Yes, explained a rather weary female voice, it was an error and they did know about it. It should have read "could now be eligible." She added, "It's amazing what a difference one letter can make! It's Mr Hartland's own fault. He proof read it."

THE GREAT NEW YEAR'S EVE BAR

AT THE TIME OF WRITING we have still not got the result of the Evening Post Pub of the Year competition. However, we have got the final six. The "best six" pubs consist of three belonging to Home Brewery, two to Kimberley and one to Mansfield Brewery.

You may have noticed that there isn't a Shippo's pub in the final, which is quite ludicrous considering that their beer is about ten times better than Mansfield. It is also a very unfortunate coincidence that Shipstone's is the only local brewery that does not advertise!

The Evening Post would not divulge the names of the panel of judges. It consists of a representative of T. Bailey Forman, a retired member of the LVA, and a member of the public who was selected at random from the people sending in their entries for the competition. I look forward to examining their final choice!

There is one feature of the winning pub that you can be certain about if it is a pub within the city - and that is the time it closes. All the public houses in Nottingham close at 10.30 every night of the week. Practically all the licensing areas that adjoin Nottingham permit the pubs to stay open until 11.00 on at least Friday and Saturday - so why not in Nottingham?

Later hours

Answer: Because the Licensed Victuallers Association does not want it. Despite the fact that most people would approve of later hours at weekends, the local LVA insists on keeping the closing time at 10.30. This is presumably based on the belief that people will still spend the same amount of money whatever closing time is, and is obviously not based on a commitment to providing a better service.

Of course, if you happen to have plenty of money then there is no problem. Clubs and restaurants can serve drinks after pub closing time, but if you cannot afford to buy meals that you don't want, or to pay admission charges, then there is no way that you can drink after 10.30 except at home.

The local CAMRA branch are campaigning for 11.00 closing on Fridays and Saturdays in order to at least be consistent with neighbouring areas. Let us hope that they are successful.

Talking about later closing leads me on to the extension arrangements that we can enjoy this Christmas and New Year. The Licensing Magistrates have agreed to three extensions, but these are not automatic - public houses will still have to apply for them. The available extensions are 11.00 on Christmas Eve and Boxing Night, and 12.15 on New Year's Eve. It was explained to me at the Magistrates' Office that the 12.15 on New Year's Eve is experimental, and if there are problems it will be looked at again.

Some landlords have already applied for the 12.15 extension and have got it. The problem that a lot of Nottingham people will have is that their local will be closing at 11.00 on New Year's Eve. Let me explain why.

Although the Magistrates and Police have approved 12.15, our old friends the LVA have decided to close at 11.00. The way it works is that the LVA applies en bloc for all its members and the application for the city is 11.00. It is going to be interesting to see how many LVA members break ranks and apply individually for a 12.15 extension. Home Brewery has applied for 12.15 for all its managed houses, but is telling the central area pubs to close at 11.00, while allowing the outlying pubs to open till 12.15.

In other words, New Year's Eve is total chaos as far as extensions are concerned, and this is not because of the Magistrates or Police, both of which are being fairly reasonable. The chaos is due to certain parties deciding that they do not want the extra facility.

All I can recommend is that you make sure that the pub you expect to be in on New Year's Eve has applied for the 12.15 extension - otherwise you will be ejected at 11.10 and forced to find another pub that is open. Applications for New Year's Eve extensions have got to be in by December 19th.

All this nonsense - both the issue of weekend opening and special extensions - demonstrates the need for the recommendations of the Erroll Committee to be taken up. The point that this committee made was that landlords should be given a lot more individual freedom to open when they, and presumably their customers, think is best.

CHRIS HOLMES

HEALTH GROUP

THE HEALTH GROUP meets at the People's Centre at 8 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays. The next three meetings will be on 6th January, 20th January and 3rd February. The subjects for discussion will be Homeopathy, Acupuncture and Mental Health. There will be Health Advice Sessions at the People's Centre every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM VOICE is published from the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Road, Nottingham (Tel. Nottm 411676) by the Nottingham Voice Committee. Information, contributions, criticisms, letters, etc. received at the above address or telephone number by Fred Broad or John Sheffield.

NOTE: Nottingham Voice is affiliated to the People's Centre but should not be taken as representing the opinion of the Centre, or other affiliated organisations, or of any other organisation.

PHOTOS: Smile please, by Nigel Pert. Lioness, by Fred Broad.

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"Seems just the ticket! By the way, what does SGBH stand for?"

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SO, IF YOU REQUIRE A HELPING HAND, GIVE ME A RING NOW, OR SEND THIS ADVERTISEMENT WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO:

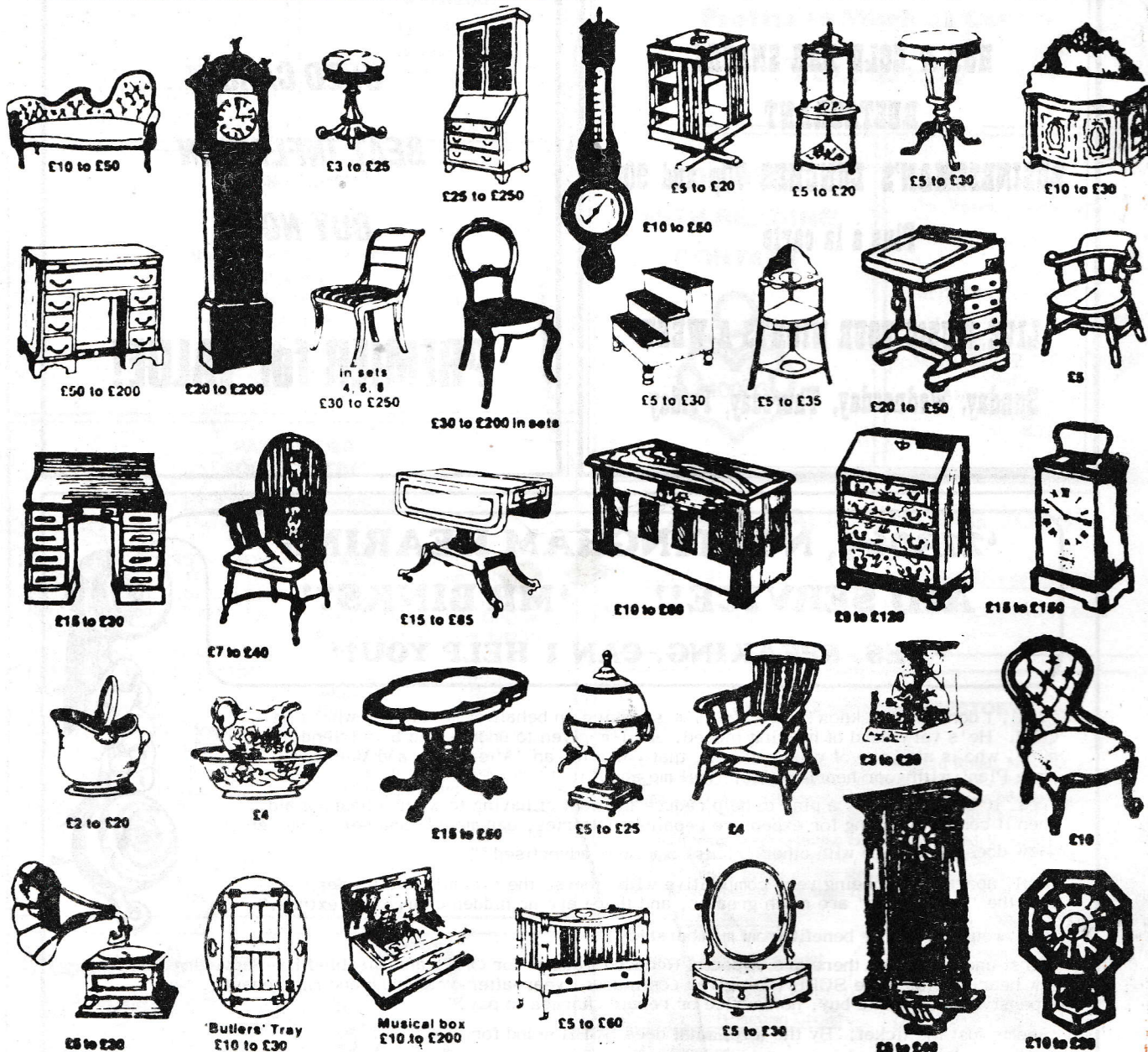
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