

# **solidarity**

**FOR WORKERS' POWER**

**VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2**

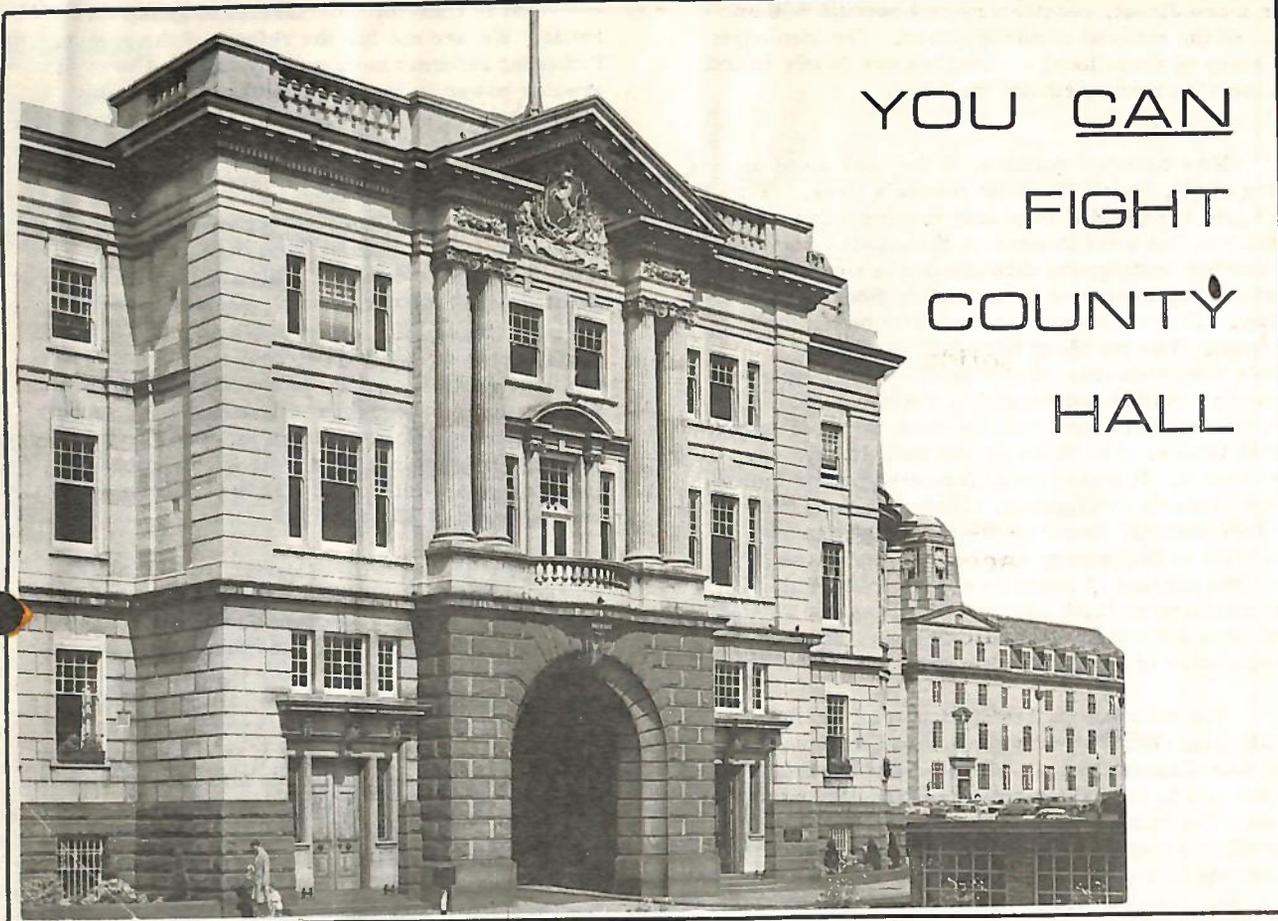
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YOU CAN  
FIGHT  
COUNTY  
HALL

The homeless families of King Hill Hostel in Kent are again in the news. Their struggle has become a national issue. We here wish to consider one or two of the broader aspects of this struggle and to draw some conclusions about the campaign which may not have been appreciated by the traditional 'revolutionaries'.

The marxist sects of the traditional left have either denigrated the King Hill dispute, or have tended to be patronizing or vaguely contemptuous about it. They regard it as a marginal issue, 'a little local issue' unworthy of the attention of 'serious' political people. Their gaze remains resolutely - and exclusively - fixed towards other horizons.

For them politics is 'up there'. For them, politics is about history and sociology and economics, all desiccated and drained of human content. Politics, for them, is synonymous with the goings on in the great arenas of national and international power. It is about who should manipulate the machinery of government. It is about 'our' experts

against 'their' experts. It is about the 'struggle' inside the Labour Party. It is about whom to support for this or that office in the Trade Union hierarchy. It is about what precise dosage of 'critical support' to allocate to this or that bureaucracy. Or it is about the eternal internal factional fluctuations in sects similar to their own. This is the content of their 'politics'. Nothing better illustrates their total isolation from the real lives of those very working people on whose behalf they claim to speak.

The greatest single way in which the State comes into contact with ordinary people is through local government. Local authorities control, directly or indirectly, numerous areas of people's lives. They control education, housing, planning, the police, welfare and social services. Even Justices of the Peace are usually appointed through the recommendation of the local establishment. There is here an intricate nexus of power which dominates the lives of ordinary people in a manner

far more direct, reactionary and corrupt \* than that of the national administration. The ideologies of many of these local authorities are firmly based in the 19th century (if not the 18th).

Now socialist politics, if they are about anything at all, should be about people's lives. The struggle at King Hill may only involve a few score families, but these represent thousands of others, in similar institutions throughout the country, institutions dominated by a similar Poor Law mentality. These places are often little better than prisons. The people at King Hill symbolize a whole forgotten area of struggle. More people are directly, visibly and tangibly affected by local government decisions than by most 'national' political issues. And there is just as little they can do about it. It makes no difference whether their local councils are Labour, Conservative, Liberal or Independent. Some of the most reactionary councils in the country are Labour-dominated. At best the attitude of councils varies from 'Fabian paternalism' to '19th century workhouse'. These attitudes are widely shared. They are not the prerogative of any particular party.

The situation in Kent is a glaring example of all this. For 14 years the Labour Group on the Kent County Council endorsed and participated to the full in the KCC's policy towards the homeless. The inhuman decision to throw the families out after 3 months, and the 'rule' not to allow husbands to live in were introduced unanimously in 1952. Labour representatives have sat on the Health and Welfare Committee, which is responsible for King Hill, throughout the whole of the recent rumpus without a single audible squeak of protest. They have not protested at the gaoling of husbands - and have even supported the rule restricting visiting to weekends. One of the leading members of the Labour Group runs a school to which children who are taken 'into care' from King Hill are sent. Only two councillors have protested at the whole policy: one was Labour, the other an independent Tory. This is the level to which traditional politics have become debased.

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\* Anyone who doubts that there is widespread corruption in local government should do a little basic research into the number of people with property interests who sit on councils (including the KCC). Why are they there? Is it because property men have an abnormally developed social sense? Or is it that there is material benefit to be gained by being councillors? We estimate that nearly a quarter of the 89 Kent County Councillors have property interests; quite a few undeclared.

It is time for libertarians to grasp this nettle. We are not for the reform of the system. Tinkering reforms have usually resulted in even greater power to local functionaries, now ably aided by an ever-growing army of 'social workers'. King Hill is run by 'social workers'. Mothers used to be visited by 'social workers' before being turned out. Children were taken into care by 'social workers'. The real activities of these people are very different from the theories or from the popular image. They are part of the apparatus which ensures compliance and smothers the rumblings of discontent. We are not for more social workers, with greater powers, to ensure the 'smoother' operation of the council's policy. We are for the people directly concerned, namely the homeless, taking matters into their own hands, thereby changing not only their environment but themselves as well. And this is precisely what has happened at King Hill.

We do not say that society can be altered piecemeal by actions of this sort. This would be ridiculous. But through grass roots activity of this sort, in industry and elsewhere, people themselves will change. They will grow in stature and their self-confidence will prove infectious. Those of us who have known the King Hill families since the beginning of this struggle, and who have helped them through thick and thin, were thrilled to see - during the Panorama interviews of May 9 - how articulate and confident they had become, how sure of their rights, how determined to preserve and extend their status as human beings. When sufficiently large numbers of people decide to take their lives in their own hands, and to act with the same mixture of self-discipline, responsibility and determination, laws or no laws, we will see a real change in society itself.

Of 89 members of the Kent County Council:

- 31 are Professional men
- 17 are retired officers and Knights
- 12 are farmers
- 10 (at least) are company directors
- 6 are housewives
- 2 are manual workers.

Scattered among this truly representative sample of the population are 19 Justices of the Peace.

Should be enough to keep law and order, what?

# COMMUNISTS GAOLED IN 'COMMUNIST' POLAND

In April 1965 about a dozen revolutionary socialists, many of them dissident members of the Polish Communist Party, were arrested. They had produced and distributed literature claiming that Polish Communism was a new form of class society. Some were tried later in 1965, others in January 1966. Most were condemned to prison sentences. Several are still in gaol.

A group of radicals in Berkeley, California, all of them active in the struggle for civil rights in the USA and opposed to their own government's policies in Vietnam, have initiated a world-wide campaign to obtain the release of these Polish comrades. They have constituted themselves into an ad-hoc Committee of 100 with staff and students representatives from many faculties. Officially or unofficially represented on the Committee are members of the Independent Socialist Club, Executive of the Berkeley W.E.B. DuBois Club, Vietnam Day Committee, Free Speech Movement, 'Studies on the Left', Congress of Racial Equality, American Committee for the 4th International, Students for a Democratic Society, Young Peoples Socialist League, 'Spartacist', SLATE, etc. The Committee has issued a Factual Memorandum (which we reproduce) and have also sent a letter to the Polish Embassy in Washington (also reproduced). It has circularised a number of individuals and organizations in France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Japan, India, Argentina and other countries, calling on them to protest at this gross infringement of civil liberties and human rights.

In a covering note, members of the Berkeley International Socialist Club point out that they know from talks with a friend of Hass that both he and his comrades 'differ from many previous dissident groups in that they are seriously committed to activist revolutionary work. The development of a highly conscious group of revolutionaries in Poland, however small they may be at the moment, is of great importance for the political point of view for which independent socialists stand'. It provides evidence 'that to oppose one of the Cold War blocs it is not necessary to rely upon the militarism of the other'.

The Berkeley comrades suggest the setting up, in each country, of a broad civil libertarian protest movement which might organize meetings and picketing of Polish Embassies, Consulates, Trade and Travel organizations, etc. They emphasize that 'the Polish Government is particularly sensitive to outside criticism and that our protest may be considerably more than an act of moral solidarity, especially if well publicised'.

SOLIDARITY calls on all its readers to give active support to the campaign initiated by the Berkeley Committee. A 'United Libertarian and Socialist Defence Committee' has been formed in Britain to conduct propaganda on behalf of the imprisoned men. Write to J. Edmunds, 120 Holland Road, London W.14 for further details.

## FACTUAL MEMORANDUM ON POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT IN POLAND.

Issued by the Ad-Hoc Committee of 100 on Protest  
for Polish Political Freedom (Berkeley, California).

We would like to bring to the attention of the Berkeley campus community and others across the nation and around the world the existence of a left-wing,

radical opposition movement in Poland, members of which have been recently brought to trial by the Polish government. We feel that the attempt by the Polish government to repress free political protest, as manifested by its imprisonment of these individual demands protest from Americans concerned with resisting authoritarianism everywhere. We feel also that our protest can have a practical effect in aiding the political prisoners and furthering the fight to broaden political freedom in Poland.

## THE FACTS

In April 1965 some twelve to fifteen individuals in Warsaw, most of them young members of the Communist Party, were arrested by the Polish Government for 'possessing and distributing pamphlets ... detrimental to the interests of the Polish state and dealing with political and social relations in Poland'. Their alleged offense was the preparation and distribution of a 128 page pamphlet.

Six of these individuals were tried in July 1965. Two of them received 3 and 3½ years imprisonment respectively. The fate of the other four is unclear in the news reports, although they may have been released. Three of the remaining defendants were tried on Jan. 12, 1966. All three received 3 years in prison.

The defendants were convicted under Section 23 of the so-called 'Small Penal Code' of the Polish Government, enacted on June 13, 1946. The law subjects to penalties those who distribute or those who 'prepare for the purpose of distribution' literature which 'contains false information that may bring essential harm to the interest of the Polish state or bring prejudice to the authority of its chief offices'. The law provides a minimum penalty of 3 years. This law aroused much discontent in Poland which erupted into open criticism during 1956 and for a short time afterwards.

One leader of the group is Ludwik Hass, sentenced to three years in the second trial. Hass, in his late forties, joined the Polish Trotskyist Party in 1938. For his Trotskyist activity he was imprisoned in the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1957, the first 8 years of which were spent in the Vorkuta slave labour camp. He returned to Poland in 1957 and participated actively in oppositional political activity. He worked in the history section of the central committee of the Polish trade unions until the present crisis.

The others are considerably younger than Hass. One, Karol Modzelewski, sentenced in the first trial to 3½ years, is a young Communist of 27 years whose father was a minister of foreign affairs in Communist Poland. Jacek Kuron, a young Communist intellectual, was sentenced to 3 years in the first trial. The historian Romuald Smiech and the economist Kasimierz Badowski were the others who, with Hass, were sentenced to three years in the second trial.

The pamphlet which caused their arrest was a manifesto of 128 pages. Its exact content is uncertain although the program it enunciated apparently

bore out Hass' definition of himself - asserted at the trials - as a Trotskyist and revolutionary socialist. The document was also apparently influenced by the theory of the Communist regime as a new ruling class. It characterized the Polish regime as a 'bureaucratic dictatorship' and called for a return to 'proletarian internationalism' and workers' democracy based upon workers' councils. According to Le Monde, the protestors accused the bureaucracy of having usurped the workers' property. The pamphlet also attacked the Polish clergy for playing what it termed a 'reactionary' role.

The strength of these oppositionists is believed to be limited, due in part to the repression of the manifesto before it attained wide circulation. It is reported however that a demonstration of protest occurred in the courtroom at the time of the first trial, in which spectators joined the defendants in the singing of the International and in giving the clenched fist salute. Some of the courtroom demonstrators are believed to have been subject to reprisals after the trials.

It should be noted that the defendants were brought in the courtroom handcuffed, the first time in memory since the 1956 events that political prisoners have been treated as common criminals in this fashion.

These facts have been compiled from the following sources: A.P. Jan. 13, 1966; Kultura (Polish emigre monthly), Oct. 1965; East Europe, Sept. 1965, Nov. 1965 and Feb. 1966; New York Times, July 29, 1965 and Nov. 5, 1965; Le Monde, May 26, 1965; The Militant, Feb. 14, 1966 (reprinted from World Outlook). Further corroborative reports have been received from a former associate of Hass', currently in the United States and from a letter from a Polish eyewitness.

Readers interested in the formation of a Libertarian Teachers' Association for the promotion of freedom in education, please contact

A.W. Taylor,  
Basement Flat 1a,  
10, St. Georges Terrace,  
London N. 1.

or

P.A. Ford,  
102, Stotfold Road,  
Arlesey, Beds.

## PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

On the Berkeley campus we propose to protest the denial of free speech and free political activity in Poland in general and the suppression of these defendants in particular. This would include publicity as to the facts of the case, a rally on Sprout Steps, and a telegram to be released to the press and sent to the Polish Government demanding the release of the defendants and the recognition of their political rights. The protest and telegram would focus upon the question of political freedom. It would not constitute an endorsement of the specific political views of the defendants. It is proposed that an ad-hoc committee be created to further this project.

In the rest of the country it is proposed that interested individuals and groups take similar action, but in addition that they set up protest picket lines in front of Polish consulates and trade and travel services, in cities where such exist.

It must be stressed that the Polish government is among the most sensitive of all the Communist nations to criticism. It is hoped that the criticism

of varied individuals, including among them prominent critics of American policy, will serve to underline the genuineness of the protest and make it therefore more compelling, as well as lending support to those who in Poland strive to create wider political freedom.

(Letter from Berkeley ad hoc Committee of 100 to Polish Government)

We the undersigned, who have protested and will continue to protest violations of freedom in our own country, and who are engaged even now in defending the civil liberties of American dissidents such as the W.E.B. DuBois Clubs and others who have come under government attack, are appalled that Polish citizens Hass, Modzelewski, Smiech, Badowski and Kuron have been sentenced to imprisonment for the exercise of political rights which we regard as elementary. We protest this repression of freedom. We demand that the defendants be released and that their political rights, including their right to distribute literature of protest and organize political opposition, be affirmed.

## nihilist song

tune: Gilbert & Sullivan's 'There is Beauty in Extreme Old Age'.

Destruction's a creative urge!  
Bakunin said it and it's just as true today.  
There's a fascination frantic,  
Ruin is romantic,  
There's a very pungent perfume to decay.

Destruction is a noble art!  
Did you ever see a wheat field burn?  
Like a most exquisite carving,  
Is the thought of bosses starving -  
Let them eat the fucking money that we earn!

Destruction is a manly sport!  
Bourgeois love's a sissy substitute for rape.  
Just as soon as we have caught her,  
We'll gangbang the boss's daughter,  
Then we'll twist the bitch completely out of shape.

Destruction is our battle cry!  
We're burning books and we've a bumper crop.  
And to Adam Smith and Godwin,  
Add Bakunin and Kropotkin -  
Once you start it's rather difficult to stop.

## talking stalin blues

Now in the Daily Worker and the New York Times  
You've all been reading about Stalin's crimes.  
But if you view it dialectically, you'll find  
That Uncle Joe's been much maligned.  
He was never a lout,  
Just a product of the Trotskyite  
McCarthy conspiracy - no doubt.

Uncle Joe was never a maniac,  
Or a child-molesting necrophiliac,  
And in party circles we should never speak  
Of his non-existent sadistic streak.  
He was just misunderstood.  
Loved children...  
Dogs...  
Kulaks too!

## ABOUT OURSELVES

The last issue has sold exceptionally well: 1500 copies within a month. There was a good response to our appeal for more dialogue with our readers. The article on 'Bourgeois Music' provoked some well orchestrated replies, two of which we print in this issue. The article on the workers' courts was criticized by some, enthusiastically received by others. We will return to this theme - airing all viewpoints - in our next issue. Our circulation is still slowly increasing but we must have more help from sympathizers if this trend is to continue.

We have just reprinted 500 copies of 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution' by Paul Cardan. When we first published 1000 copies of this 110 pages book a year ago, we expected our stock to last for several years. In fact, at the end of eight months, we were sold out. As anticipated, a number of 'reviews' of the book told us more about the reviewers than anything else. The 'revolutionary' heresy hunters had a field day. Other reviewers broke with this well-established tradition and actually discussed the author's ideas. Anyway, we can now accept orders again, and the more the merrier. The book costs 3/6 (4/3 post free).

We have also printed another 1000 copies of our pamphlet 'Vietnam' by Bob Potter. The responses from the traditional 'left' to this publication have been even more stereotyped. The pamphlet, one of our all-time best sellers, costs 6d. a copy (10d post free) and is guaranteed to antagonise everybody. We welcome bulk orders for sale at universities, factories, meetings, etc.

Our long awaited pamphlet 'Mt. Isa' is now out. (1/3d post free). It describes the bitter nine months long miners strike in Queensland, Australia. It documents the growth and weaknesses of rank and file organization, the use of vicious anti-strike legislation by the State government, and the direct participation of the leadership of the Australian Workers Union (the largest union in Australia) in concerted attacks on 'their' members when in struggle. We wish to see this important pamphlet achieve the widest possible circulation, especially among Australian workers. Will Australian readers please help? The copper industry

is highly integrated internationally. It is controlled by a small number of combines with interests in all the major producing areas. Only recently there have been long and vicious strikes by miners in Chile, Zambia, Peru and the United States. Yet the workers involved in these struggles are virtually isolated from each other. Until they begin to establish international contacts, it will be impossible for them really to put the squeeze on their employers. But to liaise you need information. This pamphlet provides some. Any reader who can get copies of this account of the Mt. Isa struggle into the hands of non-ferrous miners in any part of the world will not only be doing us a favour. He will also be helping to strengthen rank and file working class links.

In the near future (finances permitting) we will be printing a pamphlet on the struggle by ordinary busmen and women in Glasgow, against the Corporation and the T&GWU. Most of the pamphlet is written by rank and file busworkers, all of whom played an active role in the recent fight to build a job organization reflecting the wishes of the busworkers. It will cost 6d (10d. post free). Advance orders are invited.

Our finances are currently pretty rickety. A shortage of cash, due to delayed settlement of money owing to us, is badly slowing up our publication programme. Much of our stuff is out of print and badly needs reprinting (two obvious examples are 'Hungary '56' by Andy Anderson, and the 'Workers Opposition' by Alexandra Kollontai). This financial embarrassment is also one of the reasons for the irregular publication of Solidarity itself. So please settle up promptly. And, if you can afford it, let the sugar daddy in you get the upper hand: send us a few bob extra.

Do you get all copies of SOLIDARITY and Solidarity Pamphlets as soon as produced?

A 10/- crossed postal order, sent to Solidarity, 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, will ensure you get everything we produce, immediately.

Don't leave it to the chance encounter.  
Take out a sub. now.

# AFTER THE FORD DEFEAT



This article describes the deterioration of conditions in the Paint Trim and Assembly (PTA) plant at Dagenham following the defeat of April 1963.

It was written by an ordinary long service employee, aged 52, who is a member of the TGWU. His experience is a typical one - probably hundreds of men reaching middle age, workers who had given the best years of their lives to the Ford Motor Company, have been brutally eased out of Dagenham by the management. For from now on Dagenham is only for fit young men. The scrap heap is reserved for anyone unable to keep up. And the devil take the hind-most.

In many 'normal' factories throughout the country, niches have been created for these older and

disabled men, often making use of their greater experience in jobs such as inspectors, storemen or gatekeepers. Or older men are simply given the less arduous jobs. These 'unofficial' systems of looking after the older men don't show up in any agreement book. They don't show up in any scheme of organization. They have often been established by bitter struggle.

At Fords, today, this system works in reverse! Those unable to keep up are given more work. The aim is to drive them into the ground and eventually out of the factory and off the books. On paper, the problem will then be solved. Who will worry about a few elderly men when in 1964 the Ford Motor Co. declared a profit of £635 per employee (or over £12 per man, per week)?

I've been out of Ford's for more than a year now. I make as much money in my new job and what's more important, I feel like a human being again.

I was one of those who came out on strike in the PTA to get Bill Francis his job back. When we went back to work without winning the fight I knew that things would be worse for us. I never realised how bad though.

As I wasn't a steward, I can only say how I personally found it.

The factory became a place of desperation. Men studied the vacant job columns in the newspapers struggling to get out of the plant. Men were more or less afraid to talk to each other on the job. The fear was the sack and the prospect of years out of work along with the victimised lads.

I hated going to work. But I put up with it as I had been in the job for more than 10 years and couldn't see any immediate openings for myself elsewhere.

A year later, early in 1964, the company really did the dirty on me and another 200 blokes, most of them from Stock. We were told to go temporarily to Aveley plant to avoid the possibility of redundancy in the PTA. We were told that it would be only for a couple of months and then we would get our old jobs back. I might have known better than to trust the company.

When I came back from Aveley, I was told that the only job for me was on the assembly line. I could take it or get out. Lots of others were told the same.

The shop stewards knew what was going on. But they didn't do anything about it. They were as scared of the sack as anyone else. They didn't want to get on an employer's black list.

I knew what the company was up to in my case. They hoped to kill me off. The line had been so speeded up that even young men couldn't cope. And I was 52 at the time. I decided to sling the job in - but when it was convenient to me.

So I went on the line. It was terrible. I had a job where I was chasing conveyor belts up and down all the time without a moment for a breather. I used to work myself silly. When I got home, I was whacked out.

To be honest, the work was too much for any one man. The foreman kept having to come and help me out. The only reason he did it was because he also knew that the job needed two men.

After I had had my holidays and I had stuck the job for a few months, I asked for my cards. When I left, the foreman admitted that the job really needed two blokes on it.



I also knew why he didn't go into the office and ask for another man. He was as scared of the sack as anyone else. Yet he's still a company man.

There were some right goings on in the plant at the time. One worker, who was very short, was put on doing assembly work to cars on an overhead line. He could hardly reach. He couldn't stand on a box as he would have been unable to go along with the line. His arms must have ached like mad through stretching them all day. No doubt the only reason he stuck it was because a dwarf must have trouble finding work.

I know that my problem and the dwarf's problem should have been taken up by the workers and the stewards. But as far as anyone knew, there was no real shop organization. We never had shop meetings in or out of the plant and we didn't know what, if anything, was going on.

Stewards were still elected annually. All the men in a department were just given a list of the candidates and the vote was by ballot. I hardly knew who vote for in my department. With the turnover in labour and the lack of real contact with other men in the department, I didn't know some of the candidates.

To take part in the ballots, workers had to put their votes in boxes placed at the clocks. We never heard any of the candidates speak so we didn't really

know who we were getting as a steward. All we knew was going on was that conditions had gone from bad to worse.

When I left, I had no job to go to. You can imagine how my wife moaned about that. But I just wanted to get out of the place. If necessary, I told my wife, I would go on the labour or the N.A.B. Fortunately, I got fixed up alright.

I've known a lot of other long-serving workers who've left the PTA as well. When that happens, something is really wrong with a factory.

I heard recently that the workers are getting more and more like scared rabbits. Foremen are now driving fork lift trucks and none of the lads do anything about it.

What's needed is a return to the old Briggs days when the lads stuck together and the stewards negotiated wage rates, and we had decent conditions with night work optional. That was before the national officials took things over when Fords bought Briggs.

From then on our hard-won position just slipped away. But I'm sure the lads will fight back soon. Ford's are getting so desperate for labour that power will return to the lads. I hope they take it.

Ex - Ford worker.

## CHRONIC KERENSKYISM

'The period of triumphant reaction has drawn to a close. A new revolutionary epoch opens up in Britain. With many ebbs and flows, with a greater or lesser speed, the revolution in Britain is beginning. The Labour Government is a Kerensky Government. That does not mean that the tempo of development will match that of the events in Russia after March 1917, on the contrary, the revolution will probably assume a long-drawn-out character....'

'Revolutionary Communist Policy' (p. 23) Report of Second National Congress of RCP (August 4, 5, 6, 1945). Published in Workers International News, September 1945.

"The strength of Trotskyism resides in the power of our ideas which alone are shown to be capable of standing up to the test of events".

Ibid., p. 2.

## BABY BALL

Baby ball is a sport or rather a game, practiced on an increasing scale by certain local authorities, in particular the Kent County Council.

The game is played with several hundred children a year, preferably young ones. The rules are made up as one goes along. Basically the objective consists in removing children from their parents when these have had the misfortune of becoming homeless, and then bouncing them round from 'home' to 'home' and foster parent to foster parent. If the child is traumatised in the process it doesn't really matter. They'll later have time to quieten down in various kinds of residential accommodation, provided by our Health Services. These are adequately equipped with child psychiatrists, cold showers, tranquillizers and facilities for lobotomy.

The law's the law, what?

to american readers

'Solidarity' has now been appearing for nearly six years. During this time our circulation in the USA has slowly risen from a mere handful to several dozen. But we believe we can do still better.

We want to deepen our dialogue with libertarian socialists in the USA. We want to hear of events in the Civil Rights struggle, in the industrial struggle and in the anti-war and student movements. We think we have something to say to readers in America.

Our pamphlet on the war in Vietnam ('Vietnam' by Bob Potter, Solidarity Pamphlet No. 20) is a documented criticism of the US government, of its South Vietnamese puppets, and of Ho Chi Minh. We have produced a pamphlet on the Berkeley events ('Students in Revolt', Solidarity Pamphlet No. 18) which has sold very well and helped popularize this struggle among British students. Our books on 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution' and on 'Hungary '56' have each sold over 200 copies in the USA.

If you want to get our stuff regularly, why not subscribe? For \$1.50 we'll send you 12 issues. We publish a mass of material unavailable elsewhere. We are neither 'primitive' nor 'academic'. We try to be both rational and revolutionary.

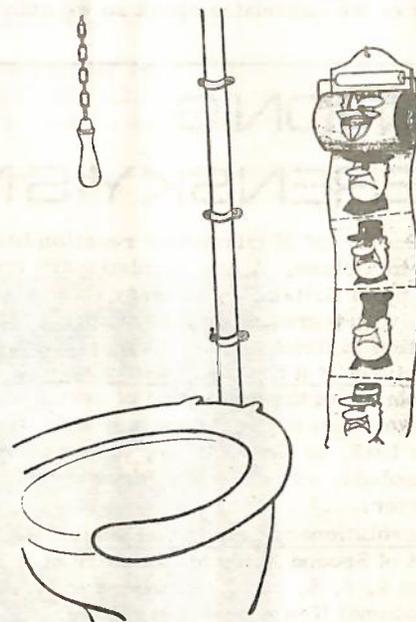
The squalid huts of King Hill Hostel have become a symbol of resistance to heartless bureaucracy. The example of this revolt provides encouragement for all opponents of official hypocrisy and double talk in the 'Welfare State'.

The rebellion of the Kent homeless has won the admiration of people throughout the country. A small group of working class families, in desperate circumstances, have pitted themselves against a powerful and reactionary local authority that treats them as second class citizens. They have refused to remain passive while their families are systematically destroyed for the sake of administrative convenience. Their tenacious struggle has focused public attention on the incredible workhouse mentality that still persists, not only in the Kent County Council, but in County Halls throughout Britain.

Have the facts at your finger tips. Inform your friends and workmates. Help mobilize support. Read the full details of this magnificent struggle in:

K.C.C. VERSUS THE HOMELESS

a 44-page illustrated pamphlet. 1/6d. (+ 5d. postage) from Heather Russell, 53 a Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent.



# I DON'T WANT TO BE AN ENGINE DRIVER



It is some time since we last published anything on the railways. This article, written by a young engine driver, a member of ASLEF, deals with an often forgotten aspect of railway rationalization. For a few extra shillings engine drivers will be cooped up in a driving cab only a few feet square, with virtually no human contact for the whole of the working day.

With greater 'efficiency' and automation the problem of the isolation of the worker at work is becoming a real and general one, in a wide variety of industries. For those without imagination, the new style engine driver in his secure job, sitting in his electrically heated compartment, might seem a cushy number. Others, more sensitive, might consider his plight as a mini-model of the society in which we live: the 'air conditioned nightmare'!

Despite all British Railways' boasting of the bonus money which diesel and steam engine drivers are going to get for accepting single-manning, I don't know any driver who is looking forward to being on his own.

I suppose we have had a better run than the electric train drivers who have had single-manning for years. But I know they hate it as well.

Quite often when I'm on my way to work I get into the cab of an electric train for a natter with the driver. The rules forbid anyone travelling with these drivers. But they are more than glad of a bit of company. They don't mind risking a ticking off to escape their boredom for a while.

They all say their job is a lonely one. Concentrating on their work is tough when they have little chance of breaking the monotony of staring at signals in the distance and stopping at seemingly endless suburban stations.

Drivers have told me of the trouble they have staying awake particularly on the early trains when few people are about. It's bad enough in the summer. But it's murder in the winter. They have to turn off the heaters and throw open their window to stop nodding off.

The wind whistles round their ears. Their feet start to freeze. It's hell. But there's nothing they can do. The choice is suffering the cold or falling asleep. Add the chances of a crash and that isn't much choice.

Their only slight bit of comfort is that the electric trains on the Eastern Region where I work don't have runs of much more than an hour.

But now that single-manning is soon coming to all of us, it will mean lots of drivers living in isolation for hours on end. As I said, I'm not looking forward to it at all. The executives who imposed the system on us are alright. They have their pretty secretaries to flirt with.

I'll miss my mate. It's not that I'm queer but there'll be no one to talk to. No one to row with. No one to joke with. No one to yap with about the wife and kids. No one with whom to exchange ideas about decoration or car repairs or any other problem.

I've had a bash at single-manning already shunting a diesel engine in goods yards. I don't know a driver who isn't cheesed off when he's on that sort of work.

Stuck up in the cab, moving the wagons on the shouted instructions from a distant shunter is terrible. Even reading newspapers doesn't help much. You get sick of them and yourself.

So now we've got to have it all the time. The railway bosses have won their way to turn us into unsociable bits of machinery. Really, no driver wanted single-manning. The newspapers made it look as if we were just trying to screw more money from the railways. In the end we were. But that was only after the railways trumped our opposition to giving up the firemen at all.

Their big weapon was that more than half of its 14,000 drivers retire in the next few years and there just aren't enough trained men about to provide replacements and more firemen. The shortage of trained men is the railways' fault. They should have made the job more attractive. Then more young lads would have taken up the work.

So we were left with just an issue over money. Personally, I think the bonus rates for single-manning are a bloody cheek. I'll be getting about another 25s. a week. Other drivers on long runs get an extra few pounds. But we'll be taking on the work of a fireman whose flat money is anything from £12 - £15.

The union signed away our claim for a pittance. The union should have stuck out for the full amount. It isn't their job to save money for the railways at our expense.

Now I'll have to manage on my own and talk to myself. As if it isn't bad enough for me to be stuck like an animal in a cage, I've got to see that all the heaters are on, develop eyes in the back of my head to watch what's going on behind as well as in front of me and work all the machinery on my own.

It's too bad for the passengers if the heating isn't working. They will just have to shiver. A fireman had the time to put any breakdown right. But I can't do that and drive a train.

There's another aspect which seriously concerns the drivers. It's safety. Our rule book gives lengthy sections on what to do in case of fire, derailment,



crashes or carriages and wagons breaking free from each other. All the safety regulations include specific instructions for drivers and firemen. Anyone who doesn't observe them is in real trouble. That's how important they are. Everyone agrees on that. Or so we thought.

Suddenly now, when single-manning starts, a driver will have to cope on his own. So much for the safety of the train and its passengers and cargo.

If a train catches fire, say the regulations, the crew have to isolate the blaze by moving the other parts of the train away from it. But a driver on his own could never uncouple the engine, free other parts of the train and run half a mile down the line

lighting flares to warn oncoming trains. The whole train would be ablaze before he had a chance to get started.

A rusted link between the engine and the first coach could take an unaided driver up to 15 minutes to free. It's easy with a mate. He stands by the link and tells you how far to move the engine to get the right position to undo the coupling. Unless I develop a rubber body, I don't see how I can be in two places at once.

No doubt the experts have it worked out. The cost of compensating the relatives of dead passengers or drivers is probably nothing compared with the saving in relegating the fireman to the museum. So much for progress.

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# PRAYDA

November 16, 1965 NEW YORK

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## why americans hate communism

Insofar as people can only hate what they fear, I have tried to analyze the current American hatred of Communism in terms of what Americans fear in it.

The problem is that to Americans, Communism is an unknown. Since people tend to populate the unknown with imaginative elements drawn from what they do know, it is entirely likely that Communism too is hated by Americans in terms of fears extrapolated from everyday life.

What does the average American man fear most? His boss, of course. His boss exercises control over what he does, where he goes, and how much he earns. More importantly, his boss has control over his comfort. The American man visualizes Communism as his boss not only watch-dogging his days, but coming home at night and telling him how to live, what to buy, how to discipline his children, and how to make love to his wife.

Most women fear that which is ugly, especially that which may be ugly on themselves. Since nine parts of ugliness is obesity, American women think Communism is fattening and conducive to thick ankles. Also, most American women would rather be dead than give up brassieres for babuskas.

Children (once they have organized and outvoted their parents) have only their teachers to fear, since they are the only people left in society with a threat to wield (i.e. boredom). Thus, they must think of Communism as living under the authority of super-teachers who (as teachers are a little wacky anyway) would inflict busy-work and nonsense on them not merely 6 hours a day but 24.

The juvenile delinquent, drop-out, and criminally inclined would undoubtedly visualize Communism as a society of dirty, rotten, vicious cops (i.e. not much different from what we have already, just more efficient).

The Capitalist looks upon Communism as that which would rob him of his riches; and even more, his right to the rightness of his riches (i.e. his self-righteous riches).

The Negro fears the white man's power and therefore fears the whiteness of Communism.

To summarize, the average American fears and therefore hates Communism because under Communism his boss - a fat, ugly, white teacher trained for police work - would rob the rich in order to part his hair on the wrong side and send him to Russia.



## BOURGEOIS MUSIC OPUS 2



**Jennifer dawson...**

From a seat at the Festival Hall, the orchestra looks just like a factory. The musicians all look browned off. The tympanist is furtively trying to read the evening paper. The conductor has only met the musicians once or twice before. He uses them as a company director uses 'hands'. They lift their instruments and lower them, as though they were on the assembly line. The conductor gets most of the applause and the profits. At the orchestral climaxes, the audience has a self-congratulatory look, as though it were singing 'I Vow to Thee my Country'. Everyone feels good except the musicians. But

- a) Is the modern symphony orchestra really typical of modern music?
- b) Is the division that Jim Evrard would like to make really between classical and jazz, or between two different kinds of music which include both classics and jazz?
- c) Finally, do we want to bring music into the Marxist view of society? Are't there some things that defy analysis of this kind?

a) I don't like the commercial symphony orchestra any more than Jim Evrard does. He gives it as an example of 'our capitalist outlook dominating more aspects of life than we may be aware of'. This would be OK if it still dominated the musical scene but in fact most modern composers, outside Russia, have abandoned huge orchestras in favour of the 4, 8, or 20 individual instruments. The quartet has never been so popular as it is today. And what about the small amateur orchestra, where playing, rather than commercial performance is the object? Surely that is as legitimate as the amateur jazz group?

Jim Evrard says no, and points to the fact of improvisation. But I do not think it is true to say, as he does, that the true origins of modern jazz are in the pre-industrial revolution era when musicians improvised. 'It was not until the nineteenth century that the modelling of the orchestra after the factory became complete, and the art of improvisation was lost in orchestral music'.

The fact is that before the age of Mozart, most music was written as though musical instruments were machines. The reason for the 'improvisation', the reason why composers did not write out the parts in full, but left them to the individual performers to fill in, was often that the supporting (orchestral) parts were harmonically so dull that they could be indicated by a figure. Even in Bach, there is a great deal that is merely mechanical and repetitive - where the tune is simply played over and over again by one instrument, or simply handed from instrument to instrument. There is certainly no 'specialisation' as in nineteenth century music, but equally, there is no improvisation or 'leeway' allowed except to the single virtuoso performer, in the cadenza where he takes his bow and the orchestra sits still. Go and hear Rosalyn Tureck interpret Bach if you doubt this. What was greatest in that period, i. e. counterpoint, has been taken up in the twentieth century.

If you look at a score by Britten or Schoenberg, you will see that the instructions to the performers are much more detailed and rigorous than say in Bach or Haydn. You would say that the performer has no freedom to interpret left. Yet in spite of this there is still a good case for saying that the instrumentalist has only just come into his own. Listen to Strauss' 'Four Last Songs', or Schoenberg's Second Quartet with soprano. It is as though the instruments had only just discovered, as in jazz, the art of speaking to each other (as opposed to grinding methodically at a theme like so many machines, as they often seem to do in earlier music).

Instead of this, they are individual voices, to be heard individually and yet held together by the set of notes. This seems to be a good model for a libertarian rather than a capitalist society. I would say 'Thank God' to the fact that no 'leeway is allowed to a trumpeter'. This, to my mind, would be an example of Tory individualism with a net to catch the casualties; or of a Freudian striving for inequality. But do we really want to look at music in this way?

b) Jim Evrard argues that jazz is nearer to reflecting the kind of society we want. But to my mind the division is not, as he sees it, between classical and jazz. It is between the kind of music that makes you feel 'good'... that soothes you, supports you, and feeds your fantasies, and the kind of music that you cannot turn to your own ends, whether it is

classical or jazz; the kind of music that offers you not consolation, but hope and striving. This, I think, should be the criterion of music for a libertarian society. Classics and jazz can both fall in both these categories.

c) Having said all this, I want to ask whether it is right to see in music a model for society, or to fit it into a Marxist scheme. When I read about the Vietnam war, or about defence, I get the feeling that words no longer have any value. They have no power to shock or change, or even to move us to indignation. Music seems to have preserved its power. It offers a reprieve. I think it is dangerous to fit it too closely into patterns, or make analogies, or models, because if you do, music will become as powerless and eroded as words have become.

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Allen Esterson...

Congratulations to Jim Evrard (Solidarity vol. IV, No. 1) for exposing the insidious influence of the capitalist organizational principle on all aspects of our society. Apart from the symphony orchestra, which he has analyzed in some detail, may I suggest a few more subtle examples of this influence.

Let's start with cricket. Here, as with the orchestra, we find one man management (the captain), hierarchy (a rigid batting order) and division of labour (batsmen, bowlers and wicket-keeper).

Or consider the director of a play. His position is virtually one of dictatorship. Time after time the most satisfying role are given to a limited number of privileged actors.

A surgeon enjoys a similar situation in an operating theatre. Nurses are expected rigidly to obey his orders and are given little opportunity to express their individuality.

Even the Welsh, despite their working class traditions (or perhaps because of them), have succumbed. The factory organization is inherent in a Welsh choir, which can be analyzed in almost identical terms to those used by Jim Evrard in relation to an orchestra.

Jim has indicated the alternative in the case of ensemble music. May I similarly suggest a non-capitalistic approach in relation to my own examples. To increase genuine player-participation in

cricket, the decisions now taken in an authoritarian manner by the captain (whether to bat first, when to declare, etc.) should be subject to a free vote of all the team. The individual members of a choir should be allowed to express themselves just as they want to, with complete freedom. An interesting result would be obtained if the same approach were followed in a play (I look forward to a Royal Court production of 'Hamlet' along these lines).

I'd now like to criticise Jim's article more directly. Firstly, I disagree with the introductory comment which contrasts the first article with the one from China. On the contrary, I believe it is precisely Jim's method of approach which leads (when applied in a less sophisticated way) to the sort of attitudes apparently so prevalent in China today (and elsewhere). The type of person who seeks the certainties of what may be called a totalitarian theory (in the sense that it attempts to encompass the totality of facts) is in danger - if ever in a position of power - of perpetrating or accepting totalitarian practices. After all a 'justification' would readily be available.

I wish to criticise Jim's method of analysis, using the article as an example. Put simply, his method consists of proposing a theory (that the capitalist factory principle of organization 'dominates the behaviour and consciousness of people throughout the world'), and then setting out to find examples to confirm it. (The significant word is 'dominates'. If a less strong term, such as 'influences', had been used, the implications of the theory would have been appreciably different).

In spite of the almost universal acceptance of the approach just outlined, I question its validity, despite its apparent successes. The main objections are as follows:

1. Facts may be interpreted in such a way that they satisfy the theory, and are then used to justify it.
2. Out of a large number of facts available conscious or unconscious selection may take place so that those which are difficult to explain are conveniently ignored.
3. More than one theory may satisfy the available evidence, and each of these may be 'confirmed' by that evidence. Practically any 'wide ranging theory' can be 'proved' using the devices mentioned above.

I could make my point much clearer with detailed examples from such fields as comparative religion, Freudian psycho-analysis, or Marxist theories, as well as from a variety of more limited, widely held beliefs. But I will restrict my examples to material taken from Jim's own article.

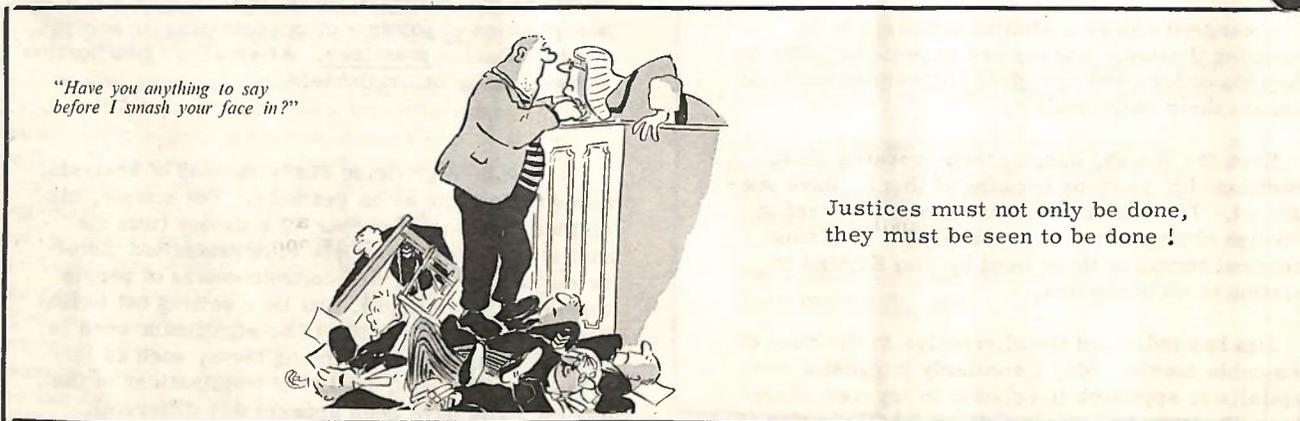
An alternative interpretation of the structure of the orchestra could be as follows: a group of musicians have voluntarily disciplined themselves, with due regard to their different abilities, to produce something of value both to themselves and to others. Here we have cooperation for the common good, a good libertarian principle. (Note that Jim ignores the voluntary aspect of the situation in order to emphasize the similarity with the factory situation, whereas I ignore the hierarchical structure in order to emphasize the group aspect. We both select information).

Another illustration is that for Jim the orchestral musicians are 'mere executors'. This enables him to emphasize their similarity with the skilled factory worker. But this ignores the fact that orches-

tral players can still to some degree express their own personalities or characteristics within the discipline inherent in their situation. Skilled listeners may recognize an orchestra by the characteristics of a horn player, of the first violonist, or by the tone of the string section.

My third objection is directly related to the first two and is perhaps the most important. One is frequently faced with more than one theory capable of explaining the facts (the choice is usually made on emotional grounds, but that's another story). To return to the original article, for example, it could be argued that the facts given illustrate the superiority of the 'capitalist principle'. Many people who have enjoyed both non-commercial jazz and 'classical' music might agree that the latter embraces a wider range and quality of emotional experience. Whether one accepts this or not does not alter the fact that someone who does accept it could argue a convincing case for the superiority of the capitalist principles! And it would be impossible the case any more than I can disprove the theory proposed by Jim Evrard. But then neither can I disprove the existence of God, which does not mean I must accept theological theories as necessarily true. All I can do, as far as Jim is concerned, is to point out that there are different ways of looking at the facts which lead to different conclusions, and that while any one viewpoint may have a certain degree of validity, none is likely to be wholly true. So while I accept that our environment has a great influence on all aspects of our activities, I would not attempt to categorize too rigidly.

We can only begin to be genuinely free, mentally and physically, when we are prepared both to examine, and to challenge, ideas from whatever source they may come (including, of course, our own ideas). But we can only achieve this degree of freedom if we are willing to understand ourselves, the nature of our own minds and emotions, as well as the society around us.



# BLACK OUT

by

h. w. morton



This article is an abridged version of a pamphlet, written by H. W. Morton for our friends in Chicago who publish 'Rebel Worker'. Alternative titles suggested were 'How black is Black Anarchy?' or 'Red and Black Out!'

On November 9, 1965, shortly after 5 pm, at the Sir Adam Beck No. 2 Distribution Plant at Queenston, Ontario, a little four-inch-square electric relay took it upon itself to illuminate a number of anarchist principles. In doing so it selected a method which in and of itself is anarchistic: direct action. Certainly it was far and away the all-time world's champion blown fuse, in that it blacked out 80,000 square miles of the US and Canada, leaving about 30,000,000 people in total darkness. This was an electronic attentat - and on a scale one is hard put to overlook. Yet thru the darkness, like a beacon, shone such anarchist truisms as decentralism, mutual aid, direct action, and the like.

On the individual level we found people acting so beautifully that even Kropotkin might have been impressed. Naturally there were instances of people acting like capitalists - selling candles at \$1.50 (11/-) each, charging up to \$50 (£18.0.0.) for a taxicab ride, gouging pounds of flesh for flashlights, etc. However, as Newsweek (Nov. 11, 1965) pointed out, the 'real keynote' was struck by a Negro cleaning woman who led a Manhattan career girl up ten flights of stairs to her apartment, gave her two candles, and then waved away a \$5 tip. 'It's OK, honey, tonight everyone helps everyone!'

Somehow it seemed as if the whole crazy city had read MUTUAL AID the night before. Remember, New York is notorious for being this planet's biggest cut-throat rat-race. Furthermore it was not only the town longest hit by the blackout, it was also by far the most vulnerable area. The blackout struck in the middle of the rush hour, hence there were probably 800,000 people stranded in subways and/or subway trains when the power failed. Another 100,000 were stranded waiting for commuter trains. Thousands more were trapped on the upper floors of skyscrapers. Undoubtedly the worst off were the hundreds upon hundreds who were trapped in elevators. Yet there was no panic! Everyone was calm and patient. Neither were there any crime waves or looting - of course for this we have to thank the fact that the police were kept too busy with rescue work and other emergency activities. It was estimated that \$100,000,000 (£36,000,000) was lost in revenue. Certainly one of the hardest hit business interests was the New York Police Force. Therefore I have to give them credit for coming through in the pinch, although several cops of the 24th Precinct failed to appreciate my concern when I walked by in the darkness explaining to my companions in stentorian tones of commiseration that the poor

guys were beating their brains out and 'all on straight salary for a change'. (The 24th Precinct specializes in shooting 14-year-old Puerto Ricans). All in all some 5,000 off-duty policemen were called up to join the 7,000 already on duty. The Fire Department brought in their off-duty personnel also.

Yet although these men all performed beautifully at tasks of supererogation, the real stars of the show were the people. Piecing together various contemporary reports (cf. Life, Time, Newsweek, US News and World Report, N.Y. Times, and N.Y. Post) many people actually enjoyed the situation. There was drinking, singing, and necking in the streets. Parties of Frenchmen and US Southerners stuck on the 86th floor observation roof of the Empire State Building chorused each other alternately with La Marseillaise and Dixie, though how many hours they kept this up was not reported. A church sexton handed out free votive candles - even God lost money - while a blind woman led passengers out of a subway station. One 19-year old girl said: 'They should do this more often; everyone is much more friendly. It's a big community again - people have time to stop and talk'.

Volunteers directed traffic with flashlights and handkerchiefs. Home transistor radio listeners pitched in to report on developments and incidents so that helpful information could be shared with everyone else. Drivers shared cars with pedestrians. People quietly queued up at pay telephones, restaurants and saloons. They gathered on street corners to listen together to portable radios. One shoeshine boy completed his task by his customer's matches.

There was incident upon incident: the whole situation was fantastic. Time later mentioned a 'crisis-born spirit of camaraderie and exhilaration' and a very prevalent view was that 'it brought out the best in people'. Of course the fact is that our authoritarian social system cannot help but bring out the worst in people, hence its removal - and bear in mind that the state had well-nigh disappeared - merely allowed them to act as free human beings. After the blackout various politicians, officials, and kindred parasites delivered encomia to the splendid behavior of their 'fellow citizens', never realizing how completely superfluous this splendid behavior proved their own functions to be. Somehow or other the ruling class is incredibly fortunate: people often see through individual leaders, but rarely through leadership per se. One woman said that she had received 'so many singular courtesies' during the power failure that her 'faith in mankind had been restored'. Tragically she didn't say she had received so many that her faith in authority based

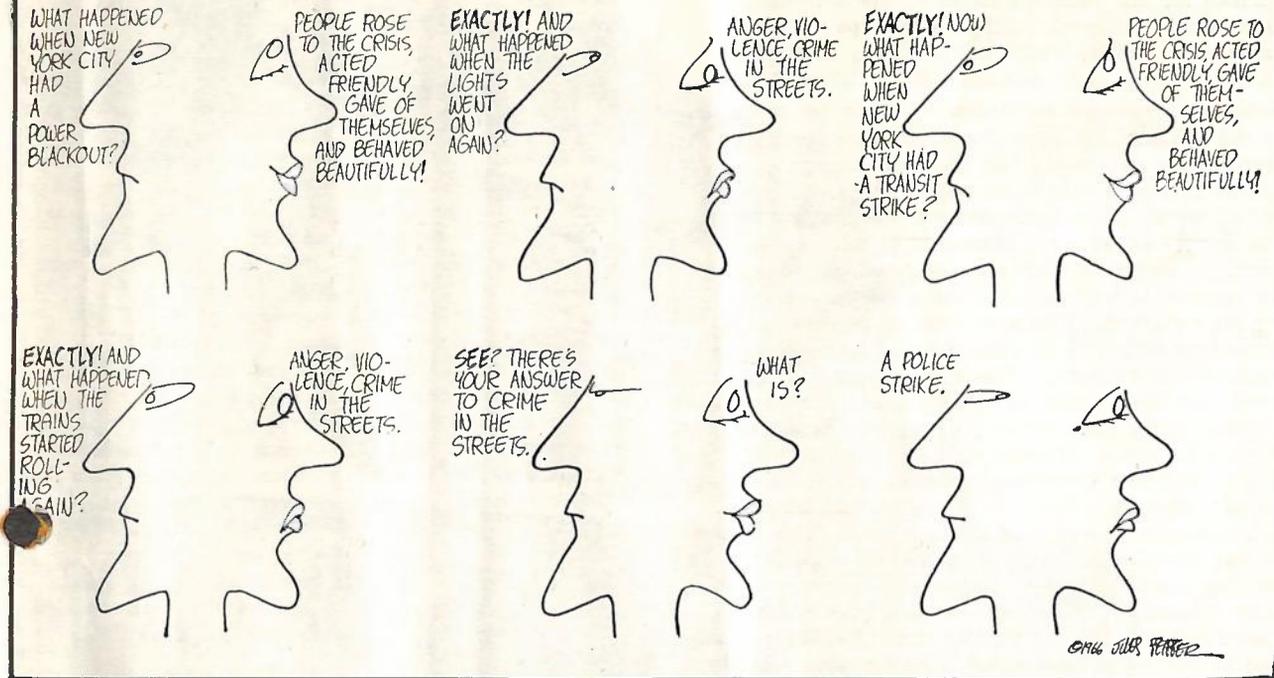
on force had been lost. Yet that power failure was nearly a power vacuum: we were closer to a true anarchy for those few hours than anything most of us will ever be lucky enough to see again. Incidentally, the Statue of Liberty, because it draws its current from New Jersey, remained lighted throughout the blackout. For the first time in her life 'that old bitch', as one of her would-be bombers described her, was almost telling the truth.

To some extent there was a Dionysian quality reminding one observer of VE or VJ Day 'when everybody loved everybody'. Another commented on 'the same air of revelry that often accompanies a heavy snowstorm'. A lawyer in his 32nd floor office said, 'first we just sat around having drinks. Now we're having a seance to communicate with the spirit that caused this bliss. We could have walked down, but it's about 600 steps, so we're staying, and we're all getting to know each other'. Someone else confessed: 'It's a big pain and all, but I sort of hate to see it over. Tomorrow will be just another working day'. But the following day and several thereafter, there was a continued elation as people exchanged anecdotes of courage, kindness and adventure. There was something to talk about and we were impressed by one another. Cab drivers, waitresses, secretaries, truck drivers, grandmothers, teenagers, lawyers and bellhops interviewed by the N.Y. Post all remarked on the 'calm, cheerful, considerate attitude the majority of people maintained'. Yet, by way of contrast, there were the inevitable exceptions: an elderly woman paused diffidently trying to cross Fifth Avenue and instantly acquired a four-man escort; meanwhile a panhandler continued to intercept passers-by, concentrating on his own version of mutual aid.

Naturally, the transportation hang-up, vertical as well as horizontal, posed the biggest problem. There were 600 stalled subway trains containing some 800,000 commuters, hundreds of whom were trapped for as long as 8 hours, and 60 of whom stayed on for over 14 hours. Furthermore in New York City there were hundreds of elevators stalled between floors in apartment and office buildings, which meant several thousand additional victims requiring rescue.

Nonetheless even in these untoward circumstances the leitmotif was solidarity. As one housewife put it after a six-hour stay in a subway car, 'I never thought New Yorkers could be that way. I mean everybody seemed to lose his anger'. In one car a passenger was leading people in Calypso songs and handclapping. Couples were dancing when the conductor arrived to lead them out an emergency stairwell to the surface. The universal report was that there was no panic. As one woman said, 'Our

# FEIFFER



conductor would pop in every once in a while and ask "How's everybody?", and everybody would say "Fine". We really weren't worried at all'. Some good samaritans left one train and walked along catwalks to find emergency exits. But then, instead of going safely home, they returned to lead their fellow passengers out. On other trains, talented victims entertained their fellows: in one car there was a tenor; in another, an harmonica player; but the piece de resistance was a bagpiper. Many cars featured communal singing. The most common thing, however, was light conversation interspersed with sardonic humor. Men gave up their seats to women who frequently offered them back. In one car a woman fainted but word was transmitted from person to person until someone was located with smelling salts. Thereupon these were passed back up hand to hand.

Those who had long waits on their hands exchanged whatever comestibles they had in pockets or pocket books: peanuts, wild cherry drops, assorted goodies, or even antacid tablets. One group shared a combination of doughnuts and salami which had been sliced with a nailfile. At midnight the Transit Authority sent in food to those who hadn't yet been extricated. The food-bearers were greeted with a tableau of people sleeping with their arms draped about other people who had been complete strangers five hours previously, and nary a cop in sight!!!

Meanwhile those unfortunates trapped in elevators - 96 in the Empire State Building alone - were enduring their plight with the same sort of equanimity exhibited in the subways. Here too the people entertained one another with improvised games, such as the unlikeliest partners for stalled elevators. This was readily won with the combination of Defense Secretary Macnamara and a draft card burner. In an elevator in the RCA Building one gentleman gave a course in Yoga positions. When firemen chopped their way into one immobilised car, they asked: 'Are there any pregnant women in here?'. They were answered: 'We've hardly met!'.

Surface transportation reflected the same sort of cooperation and solidarity. Even though the Transit Authority was running 3500 of its 4000 buses it could barely make a dent. Therefore countless thousands hiked home across the bridges or up the avenues. Others waited calmly in line at the bus stops, with no pushing or shoving. Nobody seemed to take advantage of the confusion to avoid paying fares, although some passengers couldn't have paid if they'd tried - they were riding on the rear bumpers. Bus drivers themselves were inordinately accommodating, calling out each stop as they approached. In New York this comes under the heading of *Mirabile Dictu*. At the same time, dozens of private automobiles were loading up at every intersection with absolute strangers.

On the other hand all was not sweetness and light during the darkness. Some people capitalized on others' vulnerability. About 100 windows were smashed in, and about 41 looters were arrested (none in blue uniform). All told perhaps a dozen stores were looted, which is absolutely negligible in a city of over eight million. Even Police Commissioner Broderick conceded that both the crime and the casualty rates for the night were far below normal. (So who needs him?). One enterprising gunman held up a rare-coin dealer by the flickering light of the shop's only candle - a touching vignette to be sure. There were a total of 65 persons arrested for burglary, larceny, or felonious assault - as opposed to a typical 380 for a comparable sixteen hour stretch. The sum total of arrests for all crimes was only 25% of what it would have been during an ordinary night. There were very few shoplifters reported, which is nothing short of miraculous considering the open house policy of the department stores (cf. infra). Moreover there were only 33 vehicle accidents involving injuries, and 44 involving property damage - and this in the world's largest city, completely devoid of traffic lights! There was one bus that ploughed into a crowd of people in Queens knocking down 38 persons, some of whom were seriously injured. The driver - evidently in complete consternation - jumped out and fled. Yet his actions must be viewed in context with the fact that his was only one out of 3500 buses operating under these weird conditions.

Somewhere along the line a subway motorman found himself facing charges of rape for flashing a badge and leading a young lady to the ostensible safety of his room. Yet later in court he contended that on any number of previous occasions he had led the same young lady to a similar lair to similarly lay her, so who knows... Progressing from debatably to unquestionably false alarms, we find that the Fire Department reported a much higher incidence than usual: 227 rather than the typical 50. This is totally irreconcilable with anarchist theory, so I've decided not to mention it at all.

Easily offsetting those relatively few human beings who acted like capitalists were the many capitalists who acted like human beings. For example many department stores flirted with free access for the evening. Macy's played host to an estimated 5000 customers and employees for the night - inviting one and all to make themselves comfortable, and serving them all coffee, sandwiches, cookies, and candy. Needless to say, the furniture department on the ninth floor was the best spot for somfort. Meanwhile, across the street, Gimbels was featuring a guitar-playing salesman for the entertainment

of its customer/guests. One of the songs they reportedly joined in on was the old wartime favorite, 'When the Lights Go on Again All Over the World'. Evidently no one was familiar with 'We shall Overcome'. Lord and Taylor's turned over its entire second floor to customers for the duration of the blackout, while B. Altman's turned over its first. Altman's, incidentally, has its own power generator, so there was some light by which to enjoy the caviar and specially blended coffee which were among the imported delicacies provided by the gourmet department and served to shoppers and employees. 500 stayed there overnight, evidently being unable to tear themselves away from all that caviar. Bloomingdales turned over its home furnishings department to strandeers - one woman slept on an \$800 (£287) sofa - and then capped it off by having its staff serve breakfast to everyone the next morning. Fina Company had a combination sales meeting and dinner scheduled for that evening, but they catered it to customers instead. Bonwit Teller chartered 2 buses to get its employees home, and suggested that they hold hands leaving the store so that none would get lost. Indicative of the prevailing mood was the fact that the employees danced out of the store together because 'someone thought it would be fun'. Meanwhile 40 people were bedded down for the night in the showroom of the Simmons Mattress Co.

The city's hotels came through in grand style. The Commodore set up 150 cots in a banquet room. Both the Roosevelt and the Algonquin switched elderly guests and those with heart conditions to the lower floors. At the Stanhope the manager gave up his own room, and an assistant manager carried a crippled woman up to the 16th floor. On arrival, she said, 'Now I'd like a glass of water', so he procured one. At the Statler Hilton two bellmen carried a crippled guest to the 7th floor, but it was not reported what his needs were on arrival. The Americana passed out blankets and pillows to the 200 occupants of its plush lobby - most of the other hotels merely provided their lobbies as free space. The Sheraton-Atlantic, whose lobby was occupied by some 2000 people, considered the evening somewhat less than a total loss, because as one manager pointed out, 'The bar is doing a land-office business'. That hotel's report seemed typical: 99% of the people were 'terrific' but a few guests tried to sublet their rooms at double the rate.

Unfortunately, utopian free access was much less prevalent in food than it was in shelter. Nevertheless one meat market in Brooklyn donated a whole pig to a neighbouring convent thereby providing roast pork snacks to everybody for blocks around. Two numerically named restaurants, 21 and Four Seasons, adopted a policy dangerously akin to 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his need'.

21 passed out steak sandwiches and free drinks without limit, while Four Seasons ladled out free soup. Fully to appreciate the enormity of this, reflect on the following: in 1960, when prices presumably were lower, an acquaintance of mine told me that two friends of his went to Four Seasons for luncheon. Including drinks and tip it cost them nearly \$60 (over £21) while the band played 'Nearer my Veblen to Thee'. My wife and I didn't happen to go there that night so we missed out on the free soup, but we did enjoy knishes by candlelight at our own expense in a nearby delicatessen. Many other restaurants, although they didn't give away food, stayed open all night to provide free shelter.

Most downtown offices close at 5.0 pm and were empty when the blackout struck. Those still occupied did whatever they could. Revlon, for example, gave its girls couches in the executive offices and then told them to take the next day off. One of their secretaries, stuck on the 27th floor, ate crabmeat and graham cracker sandwiches, and described her experience with a wistful: 'I had a great time'. Whether she was alluding to the crabmeat or the couches was not made clear.

All sorts of institutions opened their doors, or in some instances dropped their gangways, as a free public service during the emergency. Final estimates included well over 400 people who had been put up for the night in staterooms of ships in port when the lights went out. Armories were thrown open to all comers, while railroad stations, airlines terminals, and churches sheltered countless thousands.

The 34th St. Armory alone accommodated 1500 refugees, offering wooden chairs and what illumination could be furnished from the headlights of a few jeeps parked in the middle of the drill floor. For some unexplained reason no cots were available. Normally Rockefeller had immediately called out the National Guard, which is always a good safe ploy for masking gubernatorial inutility. According to the N.Y. Post the Guardsmen were armed with rifles 'unloaded but impressive'. To complete the farce they wore packs containing ponchos and gas masks, perhaps out of fear that someone would fart. The Guard's major contribution seems to have been scouring the area around 34th St. and Park Avenue until 1.30 am - a full eight hours after the attentat - at which point they finally came up with coffee and French bread for the besieged. Compare this forlorn, dilatory effort on the part of the military to the ingenuity of the prostitutes in their quest for bread. Life Magazine pointed out that these ladies 'were among the first to procure flashlights', indicating that the yen is still mightier than the sword.

### atomic alienation

Behold the mushroom clouds of Spring,  
And see the atom's fatal glow.  
Hear the mutant birdies sing,  
And watch the stunted children grow.

Feel the strontium-laden breeze  
Blow the hair from off your head,  
Feel the poisoned bloodstream freeze,  
Then shrug or sigh - and back to bed.

At the Central Commercial High School, a double session school, the second session runs from 12.30 to 5.50 pm. Thus there were 1000 students being subjected to obfuscation when the blackout struck. Some 400 of these left during the course of the evening as parents arrived to pick them up, but the school officials kept the other 600 in the classrooms all night. These joked, sang, and later put their heads on their desks and slept - readily taking the crisis in stride. Of course they were nowhere near as comfortable as the lucky ones who spent the night cradled in luxurious barber chairs, but they were infinitely better off than the hundreds who sought sanctuary in St. Patrick's Cathedral. These were huddled in the pews without even a hair shirt for warmth, and worst of all, no bogs. Msgr. McGovern later confessed, 'We've been sending people over to the New Western Hotel for 80 years', which tends to confirm something many of us have long suspected: God's up shit creek.

Of far more serious import was the situation in hospitals. Here too people improvised brilliantly in the emergency. At Bellevue a delicate cornea transplant was under way when the lights went out, but was successfully completed by battery-operated floodlights. At St. John's, under similar conditions, emergency surgery was performed on two people whose spleen had been ruptured in the previously mentioned bus accident. In another hospital a five-hour craniotomy was performed by makeshift light. Final reports indicated at least five dozen babies delivered by candle or otherwise. One man died tragically in the emergency room at Flushing Hospital. He had been in an automobile accident prior to the blackout and was already under surgery when the lights went out. Only two other deaths in New York City were attributed directly to the blackout:

one man suffered a heart attack from climbing ten flights of stairs, and a second fell down a stairway and struck his head. Injuries, of course, were much more common: at the emergency ward of Bellevue alone, 145 patients were treated for blackout injuries - broken arms or legs from falls, car accident victims, and some heart cases. Police, firemen, and volunteers rushed dry ice to the city's hospitals to keep stored blood from spoiling, whereas a distress call from St. Vincent's brought forth thirty volunteers from a Greenwich Village coffee house to hand-pump iron lungs.

Although New York offered perhaps the most spectacular, and in view of its well-deserved reputation for ruthless competition, the most unexpected examples of mutual aid, the same pattern was repeated everywhere throughout the blacked out area. It was solidarity, ingenuity, lack of hysteria, consideration, etc, and little or no government. In Toronto, Ontario, businessmen directed traffic, and in the process unsnarled the city's all-time record traffic jam. Among other things all the street-cars and trolley buses had stopped dead. In Albany, New York, teenagers with transistor radios went from house to house advising residents to turn off electric appliances. In Burlington, Vermont, 200 people hurried with flashlights to the local hospital in answer to a radio plea which later turned out to be a prank. In Springfield, Vermont, a barber finished trimming a customer's hair by the headlights a motorist aimed in his front window. All over the stricken territory civilians patrolled areas, directed traffic, and maintained order. Included among all these civilian volunteers would have to be the contingent of Boston gendarmes who rushed out of the Policemen's Ball dressed in tuxedos. Devoid of badge, uniform and gun these were on identical footing with the students from Boston University who also pitched in.

Incident after incident offered irrefutable proof that society can function without the implicit threats of force and violence which constitute the state. There was probably more freedom from law, however temporary, in that blacked-out 80,000 mile area than there has been at any time since it was originally stolen from murdered and/or defrauded Indians. And it yielded compelling evidence of anarchist theories. As Kropotkin once stated: 'We are not afraid to say, "Do what you will; act as you will"', because we are persuaded that the great majority of mankind, in proportion to their degree of enlightenment, and the completeness with which they free themselves from the existing fetters, will behave and act always in a direction useful to society'.

Such then might be the blackout's confirmation of Kropotkin. What reinforcement does it offer Bakunin? Actually a good deal, but I'll cite only one case - a frequently distorted quotation which Max Nettlau once described as 'a clarion call for revolution in the widest sense'. Written in 1842, some 20 years before Bakunin became an anarchist, in fact before he could even be considered a conscious revolutionary, it appeared at the conclusion of an article entitled 'Reaction in Germany', under the pseudonym Jules Elysard: 'The urge to destroy is a creative urge'. Bakunin's detractors, both in and out of the anarchist movement, invariably swoop down like vultures on that line. However Bakuninists might suffer less dismay (and, let's face it, embarrassment) if they viewed it in context with a heart-warming article which appeared in the Financial Section of the N.Y. Post the day after the blackout: 'Without power, Computers died and Wall Street Stopped'.

On the other hand, if the blackout provided all sorts of verification for decentralists, anarchists, Kropotniks and Bakuninists, what comfort did it offer to pacifists? The answer is, damn little. As both James Wechsler (N.Y. Post) and Brad Lyttle (Peace News) pointed out, the same sort of unfathomable but infallible electronic technology which blacked out 30 million of us temporarily is exactly what we're relying on to prevent an accidental World War III blacking out 3 billion of us permanently! Small solace to me is the fact that the whole god-damned Pentagon will come down as local fall-out: my urge to destroy is not quite that creative. What with the hot line konked out, and the blithe assurance' from the First Regional Army Air Defense Commander that despite the blackout 'all of the Army's missile sites on the Eastern Coast are operative', it was obviously a case of genocide continued as usual. Bring on the Dark Ages!

The final object lesson of the blackout? The predictable, virtually automatic, responses of various members of society when confronted by crisis: soldiers fall back on their weapons; clergymen fall back on their prayers; doctors fall back on their antibiotics; bureaucrats fall back on their desks; and politicians fall back on their asses. But people fall back on one another, and in that fact must remain all the hopes - however minimal - for the survival of the human race.

H. W. Morton