

Before dealing with the facts which we believe conclusively involve Desmond Fenwick, we think comrades should be acquainted with a little of the office routine concerning correspondence and remittances which are received at the office for the Freedom Press. When a letter is received it is entered in a numbered ~~book~~ letter book, and any money enclosed is noted, including the fact that it is a Postal Order, stamps etc.. The ~~letter~~ letter and the remittance are then stamped with the same number as that entered against the letter in the letter book. The letters are then placed in the trays provided and the money in ~~the drawer~~ a drawer in the desk. On Friday evenings the money in the drawer is checked against the entries in the letter book and the entries and then transferred to the Freedom Press, Cash Book. During the few weeks preceding the 6th. May, owing to pressure of work, and the fact that the money in the drawer had always been checked up with the entries in the book to the last postage stamp, V.R. dispensed with the actual checking and assumed that all the money entered in the book was actually in the drawer. However, on the 8th. May, a Friday, after having glanced through the letter book to see whether there was any particularly interesting mail, and having noticed that there was a contribution of two pounds cash on the 6th. May, V.R. took the money from the drawer, and noticed that the two pounds were missing. Comrades were asked if they had used the money for stamps or any other purpose connected with the office, but no one had removed the money. D.F. was also asked in view of the fact that he had received the letter and had entered it up in the book. (It should be noted that we had previously been advised by L.H. that this contribution was being sent, and D.F. ~~was~~ also knew about this. It was therefore impossible to make the letter "disappear" without entering it into the book without enquiries being made of the person who had promised the money) Nothing further was done in the matter except for a thorough search being made by MLB in the waste paper basket without result.

On the 26th. May D.F. was asked to cash a cheque for ten pounds which was a contribution to our Fund. D.F. stated that he took the money to the office, put it in an envelope which he sealed, wrote "ten pounds" on it and left it on the table. The next ~~day~~ morning when JH called at the office to collect the money to pay the printer, he found only eight notes in the envelope. When D.F. was questioned about the ~~money at the bank~~ ~~bank~~ matter he assured JH that he had counted the money at the bank and was sure that he had put the full amount into the envelope. @

On the 1st. June, MLB was at the office all day and the only person who had been at the office besides herself that day was Desmond Fenwick. When in the evening MLB opened her purse which had been lying on the table in the library all day, she discovered that a pound note which she had placed in her identity card had disappeared.

After the lecture on June 12th., PE, JH, and DF walked home to JH's flat. PE opened the door and left her keys, the office keys and her purse containing the collection at the meeting, amounting to 25/3 plus some money of her own, all on the table in the living room. That same evening all these articles disappeared, and the only person to leave the flat was DF. It should be noted that the previous evening an incident occurred which left PE ill at ease, particularly in view of the previous disappearance of money at the office. She had called at DF's room, and only when in the street did she notice that she had forgotten her purse. She rang the bell at DF's house and only after a long delay did he answer. She asked about her keys and purse, and after much searching DF found them down the side of the ~~chair~~ armchair. The important point here is that owing to the nature of the chair it was virtually impossible for the

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purse to find its way there unless deliberately pushed into the sides, as was shown by the fact that DF had to raise the seat in order to find the purse.

By this time we could not but suspect DF of being dishonest. We therefore decided to face him with our suspicions on Saturday June 20th. We invited him to VR's flat in the evening after the Empress Stadium ~~xxx~~ meeting. During the same afternoon however a further incident made our suspicions even stronger. VR was at the office during the afternoon and evening making parcels. DF arrived with MB (Mark Barad, a young boy who was interested in the movement at the time) in the early afternoon. VR left the office for lunch with JH whilst the two other comrades remained at the office. On their return they discovered that MB had cleared all the packing paper away from the library, and he even remarked on the way he had tidied up the office. VR then brought back all the ~~paper~~ packing paper and put it on the floor once more. DF in the meantime went to the Post Office and on his return showed considerable agitation because he was afraid he would be late for the Empress Stadium meeting. He threw a few unopened letters on the table which were the evening mail. These were opened and entered by V.R. Some time later, however, when VR was ~~at~~ clearing up, he discovered under the packing paper which was on the floor a number of letters which had all been opened. On going through these he noted that No. 1848 containing a P.O. for 3/- and 1854 with a 1/7 P.O. were all complete except for the P.O.s. The remaining letters were intact and the Postal Orders all crossed. When DF arrived at VR's flat that evening, the first thing he asked was whether VR had found the ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ 12 o'clock ~~mail~~ he had collected from the postman outside the door that morning, but had forgotten where he had put it. VR recounted the incident at the office, and pointed out that two P.O.s were missing. He thought the suggestion fantastic but after a while rather reluctantly removed papers from his pocket, and amongst these papers were the missing orders. It was noted that the two P.O.s were both uncrossed, and could therefore be cashed at any Post Office. From another pocket he withdrew a letter addressed to the Press, which contained an uncrossed order for 5/-, and was a contribution to the Press Fund (No. 1861). He dismissed the whole matter by saying that he was in such a hurry over the meeting that it was quite possible that these articles should have gone astray. He admitted, however, that at midday when he collected the mail, he went to a cafe in Swiss Cottage for lunch, where he opened the correspondence; at that time he was in no hurry. Nor could he explain to our satisfaction how it was that only uncrossed P.O.s went astray. Following ~~on~~ this, we put before DF all the grounds for our suspicions in the hope that the matter might be cleared up. He admitted that our frankness showed our comradely feelings towards him, as well as our wish to be proved mistaken. We admitted that apart from the P.O.s found on him, the rest of the evidence was only circumstantial, for there were no proofs regarding the money and the keys etc. Though the meeting adjourned at 3. a.m. no conclusion was reached. (We omitted one detail which we think connected with the case. On the 19th. June DF entered a letter No. 1830 which should have included a 10/- note, with a marginal note that the 10/- note was "not enclosed". The correspondent answered later enclosing another 10/- adding that he was positive that the 10/- had been sent the first time.) A further meeting took place on the Sunday 21st June before the AF meeting to decide what action should be taken. It was decided that until further

notice he, DF, should not deal with office matters or correspondence. Another meeting was held on the 24th of June without result though we were able to ascertain that someone was still visiting the office, for another 20 shillings disappeared from the office on the night of the 24th June.

No more money was left at the office after that date, though we were able to prove by means of tapes on the office door that someone with the missing keys was still entering the office. On Monday July 7th DF phoned MLB at the office at midday apologising for not having arrived at the appointed time as he had overslept and had just got up. On Tuesday morning MLB went to the office at about 11a.m. and found the office door unlocked, the tapes disturbed and the drawer where the money was kept had also been moved. When DF arrived MLB confronted him, telling him that someone had been at the office. DF remarked that it was very interesting as it showed that someone was still coming to the office. MLB retorted that it was not very interesting since she believed him to be the person responsible. If he were not the person, then presumably he would not object to emptying his pockets. He proceeded to remove a number of articles remarking (and thus confirming our opinion at the first meeting) that as he had so many odds and ends in his pockets, he had been reluctant to empty them the first time. MLB could hear a sound of keys in his pocket even after DF had said that he had emptied them, and in the end was obliged to search his pockets for herself, and withdrew from them the three missing keys to the office doors. He denied that these were the office keys, so MLB proceeded to lock DF in the office to convince him that they were the right keys. He made no further comment. MLB then demanded to visit his room. He readily agreed at the beginning but during the time they remained at the office (as MLB was expecting someone to call) he tried to be difficult. In the end he suggested that if he gave his keys to MLB she could visit his room when she liked and he would be unable to have access to his room without them. MLB refused, and later discovered that these keys were for the front door, and that the door of his room could be opened without a key. A hurried inspection of the contents of the room, revealed firstly a telegram from our Comrade FL (Glasgow) ordering literature, which we never saw at the office. DF explained when questioned that it was an old one, though actually it had been sent less than a week previously, and incidentally, had it not been for the fact that our comrade FL phoned us regarding this order which was urgently required for the weekend meeting, he would not have received the literature in time, if at all. A letter addressed to the tenant on the ground floor from a refugee in Switzerland, including photographs was also found. A number of subscription forms duly completed were also recovered. DF explained that this was all old stuff which he had probably carried around in his pocket. A number of letters addressed to Freedom Press, all less than a week old and containing money were found in drawers. It was noted that most of the POs were crossed. He offered no explanation, but suggested that the matter would be discussed later.

It should be noted that when MLB recovered the keys, DF explained that the previous Wednesday he had called at the office, found both the front doors open, went upstairs and found the keys in the door. A few minutes previously when MLB removed the keys from his pocket he said that they were not the office keys. He also said that once he had obtained the keys, he regularly visited the office in the hope of finding the intruder.

He added that he had been to the office on Monday morning at 9a.m. whereas on Monday morning he phoned MLB at midday saying he had just got up. These contradictions are important because, in our opinion, they strengthen our opinion that DF's explanations are pure fabrication.

It was decided that the whole matter should be discussed as soon as possible and on Wednesday July 8th a meeting was held at VR's flat, at which were present DF, MLB, AM, and VR. All the foregoing was repeated including the incidents dating back to May 8th. DF agreed before those present that the facts were correctly stated in so far as he was concerned. He said that he wished to offer an explanation which was as follows: a communist living in the same house as himself had seen a friend of a communist girl P. go into his (DF's) room, and that he did not know that DF entertained communists in his room. In other words DF wished us to believe that the letters had been "planted" on him (It should be noted however that when questioned regarding the telegram which arrived about the same time as the letters, he seemed to know of its existence). Following this information he alleged that he went to the CP headquarters in order to find out the address of this person P. to make further enquiries. When questioned by VR as to how he went to the CP headquarters, he said that he caught a bus on the Liverpool St. route and descended at New Books in Southampton Row, and then his description was very vague. Challenged further he drew a plan, locating the CP headquarters as being in the direction of Endsleigh Street, which is in actual fact just in the opposite direction, and over a mile from the CP headquarters. This story did not satisfy those present, and it was then agreed that the complete facts should be laid before the AF who were to decide whether DF were a fit person to belong to our movement.

#### NOTE TO PAGE 3.

Also found in his room were 4 packets containing orders for bookshops in the West End. DF said that these orders had been doubled, but though he has not yet returned them to the office, it is known that at least one packet was not doubled.