

# MONSTROUS REGIMENT

presents **SCUM**

death, destruction and dirty washing

by C G Bond, Claire Luckham and The Monstrous Regiment

— a musical celebration of the women of the Paris Commune —

## SCUM



"... traces the political and emotional development of women laundry workers and two young men in the People's Militia through the struggles of the Paris Commune. . . fighting, celebrating, touching the stars. Each scene is beautifully constructed. . . very funny. . . with superb music. This vivid production is political theatre at its very best."

Rosalind Asquith Time Out.

"... a company of unqualified excellence."

Catherine Itzin. Tribune.

"... immenseley skillful craft."

Beatrix Campbell. Morning Star.

"... a brave story, movingly narrated."

Shyam Bhatia. Western Mail.

"... vigorous, funny and hard hitting."

Micheline Wandor. Spare Rib.

The Monstrous Regiment Theatre company is supported by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. For further information contact Sue Beardon at 59 Camden Square, London NW1; phone 01-485 3860.

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# MONSTROUS REGIMENT

Presents:

## SCUM: DEATH, DESTRUCTION and DIRTY WASHING

A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF THE WOMEN OF THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871.

See Bismarck do the can-can; watch a man wind himself through a mangle; savour the aroma of grilled elephant's trunk; thrill to the sound of Cherry Time and a dozen more show-stopping songs; and tremble before the final spectacle of Paris burning amidst a sea of blood.

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On September 3rd 1870 a French army of 104,000 men under Napoleon III surrendered to the Prussians at Sedan. This humiliation threw Paris into an uproar: Revolution, Civil War and the eventual establishment of the Commune followed. It lasted only fifty-eight days, and ended with Paris ablaze, and an estimated 25,000 Communards dead. But although the Commune was destroyed its example has always been important to Socialists: when Lenin died his body was draped in a red Communard flag... for a brief two months Paris celebrated the Festival of the Oppressed. The sun shone as the scum of the earth sang and danced in the streets. Those who had been reduced to eating rats seized power and took the government of their lives into their own hands. In the very forefront of this revolution marched the Parisian women: exhorting, organising and demanding everything from creches to guns, defending the barricades to the last.

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"Of late, the social democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good. Do you want to know what this Dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Freidrich Engels, March 18th 1891.

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"Men are cowardly bastards. They call themselves the masters of creation and are a set of dolts. They complain of being made to fight and they are always moaning... let them go and join the craven band at Versailles and we will defend the city ourselves. We have petroleum and we have hatchets and strong hearts. We will man the barricades and show them we will no longer be trodden down by them. Such as still wish to fight may do so side by side with us. Women of Paris - to the barricades!!"

Citizeness Marianne, May 4th 1871.

The MONSTROUS REGIMENT presents SCUM a musical history of the women of the Paris

Commune of 1871. Death, destruction and dirty washing.

On September 2nd 1870, a French army of 104,000 men led by Napoleon III, surrendered to the Prussians at Sedan. This set in motion a chain of events which ended in revolution in Paris, the establishment of the Commune Civil War and the eventual destruction of the Commune by the forces of reaction. Though the Commune was destroyed, its example has always been important to Socialists: when Lenin died his body was draped in a red Communard flag. Forty years later, the first three man team of Soviet Cosmonauts carried three relics with them into space: a picture of Lenin, a picture of Marx and the red ribbon from a Communard flag.

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"Who can describe the wild tumultuous spectacle of a nation determined to perish or to save itself by an enormous effort, by one of those impossible feats of revolutionary times?"

Edmond de Goncourt. (3rd September 1870)

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"Evenings are awfully dreary" ..Edward Blount - banker. (25th September 1870)

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"Men are cowardly bastards. They call themselves the masters of creation and are a set of dolts. They complain of being made to fight, and they're always moaning. - Let them go and join the craven band at Versailles, and we will defend the city ourselves. We have petroleum and we have hatchets and strong beards, we will man the barricades and show them we will no longer be trodden down by them. Such as still wish to fight may do so side by side with us. Women of Paris, to the barricades!! ...Citizeness Marianne (4th May 1871)

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"The cause of justice, order, humanity and civilisation has triumphed. The generals who conducted the entry into Paris are great men of war. Now the struggle is ended; the streets are paved with corpses. Let this terrible spectacle be a lesson to workers everywhere" ..Thiers (22nd May)

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"Laws of war! They are mild and Christian compared with the inhuman laws of revenge under which the troops have been shooting, bayonetting, ripping up prisoners, women and children during the last six days. So far as we can recollect, there has been nothing like it in history".....The Times. (29th May 1871)

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"The proletariat stopped halfway...it was carried away by dreams of establishing supreme justice in the country...instead of annihilating its enemies it endeavoured to exercise moral influence on them. It did not attach the right value to the importance of purely military activity in civil war" Lenin "The Paris Commune" (1908)

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"Eat your cornflakes"....Mrs. Lenin ( ? )

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