

I live on the top floor of my building. There is a landing with stairs going down in case the elevator does not work. There is a 4 inch padlock on the stairs going up to the roof. Why is there a 4 inch padlock on the stairs to the roof? To keep the bums out. See my story on the door code.

The padlock was off last week as repairman came to fix the roof. The first indication that they were here was a ring on my doorbell. They wanted some water to drink. I gave them some of the water I use, tap water. They pointed to a bottle of water and asked for that instead -- everybody here believes the tap water is unsanitary. I gave them the bottle, which incidentally contain tap water, and they were content.

They monopolized the elevator bringing load after load of heavy corrugated roofing material. It is some sort of a fiberglass impregnated concrete substance. As I look out my window now I can see it lying on top of the previous roof. After laying the roofing down, they brought up sheets of galvanized steel to flash the new roof.

They did not lock the door as they left for the evening. It has no handle, only a rectangular shaft where the doorknob goes. I of course have my tools with me, and still have my boyish curiosity, so I opened the door with a crescent wrench and went up to take a look at how my dwelling is constructed.

The roof is steeply pitched -- maybe 40°. It is about 20 feet up to the ridge. There are several windows looking out, variably glazed and not, giving a great view of the city. There is a system of 2 x 10 catwalks probably 5 feet above the ceilings of my apartment. There is the expected litter on the ceilings of my rooms. They are plaster; do not know how strong they are.

There is a large wooden house like structure within the attic. The bottom is at catwalk level, 5 feet up, and the structure itself is probably close to 10 feet tall and maybe 30 feet square. The door is locked; I have no idea what is in it.

The timbers throughout the whole building are very substantial. The kind of timbers you find in century-old buildings in the United States, when they did not know too much about engineering calculations, wood was cheap, and they did what it took to make sure that the building would not fall down. I have a comfortable feeling that this building will be here for quite a while.

The roofers worked long hours. They would go as late as 7 or 8 o'clock at night, at a time of year when it gets dark about 4:30. And oh, by the way, they did not bring their own droplight. When it got dark there was a knock on my door. Could I turn on my outside light in the hallway? I had never given a thought to that light; it required changing the bulb. I noticed that they never turned it off. I got to do that each morning.

The crew was 4 or 5, and they seem more energetic than people do in the United States. You did not see them loafing much. On the other hand, they were not terribly well-equipped. The crew that came to clean up over this last weekend rang my door again. The

first thing that they needed was to get into the stairwell. They had a key to the lock, but they could not open the door. I produced a crescent wrench, wondering later if they would wonder that it was adjusted perfectly to that particular door. Anyhow they got upstairs. An hour later they came down looking for water. They had a 30 liter Jerrycan and a couple of 20 liter tubs to fill. I took the shower head off of the telephone style shower hose and put it into the Jerrycan, wondering to myself if the average homeowner would have been as helpful to them. They came back again a couple of hours later with the same request. I heard them outside my door at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning and once again the doorbell rang. This time I did not answer it -- I do not know what they did, but by the time I was up and out the lock was back on the door.

It is interesting that the officials would so overbuild this apartment building, with such a large amount of wasted space, back in the 1950s when living space was extraordinarily scarce and people were literally living on top of one another. I will offer themes I repeat elsewhere among these documents. First, this building was built for members of the party, important people, and cost may not have been a primary consideration. Secondly, everything here is overengineered. An architect could be shot if his building fell down, but was in no danger whatsoever if it was simply too expensive to build. They were careless in the use of material and in designing for energy efficiency. Lastly, all of that empty space could be quite attractive to a homeless person. That is why they keep it locked up.