

THE COMPTON REPORT

HALF TRUTHS—BUT NO LIES?

TONS OF INK and a few tears have been shed about the Compton Report. The prize for crass smugness must go to *The Economist* whose first sentence of its leading article reads, 'Only a liberal and civilized country like Britain would encourage the kind of inquiry conducted by Sir Edmund Compton'. We might echo 'no liberal and civilized country would need to have such an inquiry'. Or had such camps, such detainees, or such conditions of interrogation. But fear not, Sir Edmund Compton did his duty as an English chartered accountant would; he kept to the letter of his inquiry: interviewed one ex-detainee (who, it is stated, was a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment) and found the verdict in general. 'Complainants may have suffered hardship but we made no findings of deliberate ill-treatment or brutality' which Compton defined as 'inhuman or savage form of cruelty—coupled with indifference to or pleasure in victim's pain'.

Such was the success of the Compton Committee that Mr. Maudling decided to set up another committee of three, this time to investigate procedures authorized for investigation of suspects. Thus we proliferate the democratic semblances even in our most totalitarian moments. Among the vices of the English is the forming of committees, this is an effective block on the necessity for doing anything.

The Compton Report has the knack of reporting damning truths and proceeds to make lies of them. For example: 'The refusal of complainants to appear before us and give us their evidence has limited to some extent our ability to reach conclusions about the validity of their

allegations. The limitations we have experienced is that the absence of the complainants as witnesses has left us with an unbalanced body of evidence.' Nevertheless our chartered accountant proceeds to balance the books despite any debit side for the Army and the police and accepts the far-fetched explanations given by official witnesses. On one point occurs the amazing statement on *Lavatory facilities*, 'We draw attention to the evidence that these facilities were not denied and that Mr. McClean wetted his overalls, his mattress and his cell by his own choice.'

The Compton Committee passes over in alarming unconcern the incidence of noise, hooding and of forced leaning up against the wall, considering them as 'ill-treatment' but not 'brutality'. Humpty Dumpty in *Alice in Wonderland* said, 'Words

mean what I want them to mean—no more and no less.' Compton's language is that of Humpty Dumpty.

As to the incident with the helicopter, the Committee accepts the incredible explanation given by the Army and the RUC that it was a blind to baffle the IRA who were crouched ready for a jail-break. That a further psychological torture-trick was being used of threatening to throw suspects out of an apparently moving helicopter.

In fact the whole of the procedures adopted were psychological brutality. There was no evidence given (or accepted) of physical brutality. (If one wants evidence of this the ILP has done an excellent pamphlet, *Belfast, August 1971: a case to be answered*. 30p.)

The procedures against detainees were simple brainwashing as practised in Russia and China. Physical

torture has limitations, as 'Mad Mitch' testifies (and he should know!) and even Constantine Fitz-Gibbon (in the *Spectator*) deplores the physical torture even on grounds of usefulness.

The essence of brainwashing is to isolate the victim, which was done by blotting out sight and sound. He is made to feel physically uncomfortable by leaning with his arms against the wall, deprived of sleep and toilet facilities and his food is cut to the minimum. In such a state he is isolated and humiliated and ready to accept any suggestion and ultimately by clever questioning to answer any questions. (See *Darkness at Noon*, etcetera.)

The conditioning of prisoners (or detainees) in this manner is on the lines suggested by Pavlov, the Soviet physiologist.

It is manifestly insufficient for the

Compton Report to state there was no brutality, only ill-treatment. There was psychical brutality as proved by the evidence. Physical brutality and torture may conceivably be less harmful to the individual than 'brainwashing'. The body may resist physical torture—even to the point of death. There are individuals (I am not one) who would resist all physical torture. But the insidious invasion of the mind by such highly-refined and scientific methods is far more damning. One is thereby confused and induced to betray. The knowledge that one has betrayed one's friends by such methods will leave deeper scars than any Compton Committee or a succeeding committee on procedure for investigating suspects can probe—or heal.

JACK ROBINSON.

The Decline & Fall of the Liberal Ideal

THE COMPTON REPORT into the allegations of brutality by the troops stationed in Northern Ireland is surely not intended to be taken very seriously by anybody. It is an exercise of a purely mechanical nature, indulged in for the look of the thing. The report reproduces a note from the government on the rules governing so-called 'interrogation'. These rules which date back to 1965 (not as one might have expected 1665 or 1465, but in our own century!), allow the use of hoods over the heads of detainees, continuous noise, standing against a wall for prolonged periods and a bread and water diet. These are methods of torture of a simple kind, and

why shouldn't one call a thing by its proper name? The very expression 'interrogation' is a euphemism. Torture is what it is, no more, no less.

The committee certainly knows about torture. Its victim is the English language itself. 'Where we have concluded that physical ill-treatment took place, we are not making a finding of brutality. We consider that brutality is an inhuman or savage form of cruelty, and that cruelty implies a disposition to inflict suffering, coupled with indifference to, or pleasure in, the victim's pain. We do not think that happened here.'

'Ill-treatment' and 'brutality' of course mean the same thing, but 'brutality'

sounds worse because it calls up to the mind's eye the picture of a hulking apeman beating a defenceless victim with a club, whereas 'ill-treatment' is a neutral expression.

One would expect that in a civilised community of today torture would be unthinkable. If it was practised it would be by psychopathic individuals existing on the margin of society. If the government openly advocated the use of torture one would expect civilised and humane men, whatever their beliefs in other respects, to rally round and condemn the government in no uncertain voice.

Well, here is the voice of *The Observer*, which never fails to condemn torture in

Greece or South Africa, speaking out.

'Apart from the moral issue of whether methods involving ill-treatment and brutality can ever be justified, there is the political issue of whether their use, even if morally justified, may not be counter-productive. *The Observer* shares Mr. Callaghan's view that on the moral issue "we cannot yield upon the matter of physical ill-treatment as a means of

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CZECH FLAME FLICKERING

BY THE TIME that you read this there will probably have been an election in Czechoslovakia and we do not need a crystal ball to predict the outcome. In Czechoslovakia there is not even the choice of dictators which we have in the 'democracies' of the West. Each constituency has only one candidate whose every word is perfectly in accord with the Communist Party line.

Despite this the bureaucrats have not dared until now to call the election due in 1969 because of the 'uncertain' political climate. Considering the growth of working-class opposition to the dictates of the CP in Eastern Europe—particularly the food riots in Poland—this is not surprising! Gustav Husak, the CP leader, obviously wishes to use the election result to symbolize his absolute victory over the Dubcek line. To make sure, a reported 160,000 CP functionaries have been operating throughout the country visiting houses and 'inviting citizens to vote for Socialism, for our even better future'.

However, all the purges, imprisonments and political murders have not been able to extinguish entirely the flame of freedom. The desire of men and women to control their own lives and live free from the dictates of the State lives on. Underground groups in Czechoslovakia are reported to have circulated leaflets calling for a boycott of the elections or the spoiling of ballot papers. This may not seem much of a gesture to us, but in the context of Czechoslovakia it is a courageous and revolutionary act.

East and West the struggle is the same: against the State whether it calls itself 'democratic' or 'socialist', and for control of our own lives and environment.

TERRY PHILLIPS.

THE GOVERNMENT has gained the second reading of its Housing Finance Bill in the House of Commons by a majority of 27 votes. Even with the debating of amendments, this Bill will be on the Statute Book in April next year at the latest.

The central part of the Bill concerns what the Government calls 'fair rents', but in fact these will mean higher rents for council, trust and private tenants. Rents will be assessed on size, quality, location, state of repair and incomes. Increases averaging 50p per week to reach a 'fair rent level' will be made each year, commencing next year in the public sector and 1973 in the private. The maximum will be 75p per week for each year for any one dwelling.

Tenants, in effect, are going to be subjected to yearly rent increases of an inflationary nature while the Government attacks demands for such increases from other quarters. These assessments will be made every three years so that tenants will be continually scrutinised as to the value of the dwellings and the rent they can afford.

MEANS TEST

The Government proposes to transfer subsidies from 'bricks and mortar' to 'people'. To do this the Tories are to bring back the hated means test, used in the 1930's. This degrading and undignified practice will be used to assess the amount of rent rebate a family will receive on its 'fair rent'. In the case of the private tenant, a cash subsidy will be paid to him by the local authority. The amounts of rebates or direct subsidies will be arrived at on a national basis and local authority officials will assess on these guidelines, taking the

'Fair Rents' means Higher Rents

household's highest income as the basis even though this may be the son who has managed to obtain a better paid job than his father. In some cases rent rebates could be cancelled out if a family increases its earnings and so any increase in the weekly wage could automatically be cancelled out by the loss of the rebate.

It has been proved that many poor families who are entitled to State benefits do not claim them through pride, ignorance or the inability to find out to what exactly they are entitled. The means test will further increase this section of the population. Tenants who face this degrading prying by local town hall bureaucrats will have to do so every six months in order to assess any change in circumstances.

The scheme will bring about a huge increase in paperwork and the number of civil servants to deal with it. This and all the other overall benefits that the Tories are now supplying to the needy are increasing the size of our bureaucratic state. Each free school meal, free bottle of milk, exemption from the Health Service charges has to have its applicable document, all taking time, energy and manpower. We are fast

becoming a nation of form-fillers and form-filers. An awareness of this saved us from a scheme to relate prescription charges to actual costs for Sir Keith Joseph admitted that it was administratively impossible.

THREE-PRONGED ATTACK

The Government wants to bring the capitalist market-place into the realms of council housing and to stamp out, once and for all, any principle of housing as a social right for market values will be the yardstick. As was the case with the Immigration Bill and the Industrial Relations Bill, the 'Fair Rents' Bill is a piece of class legislation and should be seen, together with these other two Bills as a three-pronged attack on the working class. With annually rising rents, workers will be demanding higher wages and the Industrial Relations Bill is there to blunt any industrial attack to win such awards. It will bring about a further centralisation of power, taking it away from the local authorities, with accountability at borough level, and placing it in Whitehall.

With a similar attitude to that of the boroughs who are defying the Govern-

ment on school milk, including those in Scotland who are facing prosecution. St. Mary Cray, a small local authority, has already pledged that it will not support the 'fair rents' swindle. This is a step in the right direction, but the main struggle will have to come from the tenants themselves. This point was made at the recent meeting of the Association of London Housing Estates at Conway Hall in London. They have realised that this Bill can not be defeated in Parliament, but by organising in their tenants' associations.

The Bill is a vicious attack on working-class families and their living standards. In three to four years' time it will be bringing in an additional £500m. a year from the working class and this, no doubt, will be paid away in further subsidies to owner-occupiers, tax inducements for investors and further tax relief for the rich. Council housing will make huge profits for the benefit of the financiers and moneylenders from whom the local authorities borrow money at such high rates of interest. It is interesting to note that one of the sources of loans to some local authorities is the Greater London Council.

The Labour Party has said it will 'unhesitatingly' repeal the central provisions for the extensions of 'fair rents', but in the meantime the tenants themselves will have to fight the increases. Relying on politicians, both at local and national level, is a futile waste of time. Constitutional methods will not stop the Tories. Direct action, in the form of refusal to pay increases, is the only way.

P.T.

THERE ARE A LOT of people in Britain today who are perfectly fit to do a useful job of work, but who prefer to sponge off the taxpayers: they're called welfare officers, and one of them, having decided, or been told, to try some other graft, has left the service and written a booklet revealing all. When I first saw it, with its underground-style cover advertising the publisher's other offerings of poetry and of articles on hashish and the occult, I thought it must be either a joke or an attack on the whole welfare system, that sixteenth-century handmaiden of an exploitative economy. This latter hope was reinforced by the words 'and why it doesn't' in the title, and also by the author's prefatory disclaimer of any intention 'to worsen relations between the DHSS and the public'. Alas, this booklet is most unlikely to. The criticisms it makes of the DHSS are either trivial or too widely agreed upon to repeat, and the reforms it suggests are worthy of farce: in the absence (duly deplored) of public toilets in Ministry buildings, applicants kept waiting all day should be allowed to use staff toilets ('Provided that claimants were taken in and out in an emergency, there would be no chance of them discovering any confidential information'); civil servants should be allowed to stay with one department 'once they have settled down'; courses in sociology should be provided for the staff. 'The underlying problem of largely middle-class Officers dealing with largely working-class claimants can not be solved in this way; but at least it will be brought into the open.' Has the author ever met any sociologists? He or she goes on to say: 'The present "Us" and "Them" situation must not be allowed to continue.' How naive! Of course

BURDENS TO SOCIETY

it will continue as long as there are Us and Them, as defined by vulgar money.

The booklet contains descriptions of organisation and procedure, enlightening us with the distinctions between Visiting Officers, Executive Officers, and Clerical Officers; there are statements of rules on Deferred Wages, Exceptional Needs Grants, the Four Weeks Rule, Giro Orders, the Wage Stop, etc. Sometimes, in discussing things like the wage stop, the no-benefit-to-strikers rule, and the cohabitation rule, the booklet reaches the same pitch of indignation as might be found in any paper left of the *Telegraph*. Mostly its tone is one of Reason Overcoming Hysteria:

'[waiting in offices] . . . is one of the major problems of Supplementary Benefits and is recognised as such by those within the DHSS. . . . Waiting is rarely due to deliberate policy. . . . Nor is it what is frequently muttered in waiting-rooms. . . . "They're trying to make us give up and go away." Nine times out of ten it is due entirely to difficulties in locating the casepaper. In a large office there may be a dozen possible places to look . . . [more excuses follow]. If you think you've been forgotten—and it can happen—ask the Receptionist to check up for you.'

And in regard to waiting for visits: ' . . . the work-load is so heavy that visiting is getting further and further behind . . . it is not in any way the fault of anyone in the office. Civil

Servants don't (legend notwithstanding) spend all their time drinking tea. At least not in the DHSS.'

Neither did they in the Gestapo; the more I read the more I think there's something in David Cooper's much-criticised simile. One of the best ways of holding power is to persuade your victims that they deserve their lot, and the DHSS helps the upper class to accomplish this, by labelling poor people useless and giving them charity. They may become too demoralized not only to strike back politically, but even to try to improve their individual circumstances.

Like all those cheery little ads in the post office, Ex-Officer urges prospective and actual claimants to know their rights. Since the complexity of welfare law and administration can make this difficult, let me sum them up for you: nil. Suppose you plough through a document listing your rights, and confront a welfare officer with some clause in your favour, and he replies, 'Sorry, there's thus-and-such that you didn't realise'—what are you going to do about it? What difference does it make if he's 'mistaken' or 'lying', words which I put in quotes because the only relevant fact is that he has the money you need: so he's really telling the truth, whatever the documents may say.

Thus, towards the end of the booklet we read:

'If you are in urgent need late in the afternoon, especially on a Friday, ask if a counter payment can be made. If this is refused ask to see the Manager. Be insistent but do not get angry or violent if possible as this only puts everyone's back up and makes a discretionary payment less likely.'

(His emphasis.) Be good and you'll be fed—that's the kind of rights you have.

There follow appendices listing official forms and publications, and—something useful at last—Claimants' Unions.

Last year the *Sunday Times* printed a cartoon about claimants. It showed a woman saying, 'Five kids already and that way again! What's the welfare lady

going to do about us?' while a burly man carrying a racing paper says, 'I tell them we need more money and they say that I need insight.' This is the usual upper class view of the matter. Perhaps the members of that class don't admit even to themselves that they benefit from the dole and the conditions producing it. For example: (1) The unemployed who want jobs could easily be given them by means of a reduction in working hours. But it's cheaper to work one person 40 hours for £18, and put another person on the dole at £10 (there's no shame in underpaying a useless eater), than to work them each 20 hours for a total of £36. (2) The threat of the dole keeps workers intimidated. (3) The rules of the dole uphold the work-morality of the economy: you are expected to work until a certain age; to work at wages below the poverty line, rather than not work at all; to work, if unskilled, at any job going.

The dole is just the other side of the coin of employment. Claimants are employed as a pool of unemployment and as a warning to others against stepping or falling out of line; while employees have their raw materials, machines, wages, and hours of rest doled out to them by employers. No one can blame a person faced with this choice for choosing idleness, although he may suffer psychologically. Ex-Officer shows some sympathy with such people when he speaks of prejudice against claimants who are 'unwilling to work for forty or fifty hours a week at a boring, unpleasant job when they can obtain money from the Department'. But soon afterwards he says:

'The problem in many cases arises from a basic lack of understanding of the claimant's condition.

How did he get into a situation in which a claim was necessary?

Was it his fault, or was it inevitable given his background?

—implying that the claimant is in the wrong, however generously the Department ought to interpret and treat his actions.

The position of those unable to work is also a result of capitalism, rather than an inevitable, tragic misfortune. The rich aren't so anxious to send their own old and sick relatives into the jungle to die; it's just the dependents of the employee class who are considered expendable. (Here I should mention a separate problem: that of the large numbers of unsupported mothers who, neither infirm nor idle, are on assistance simply because society makes no provision for child-raising outside marriage.)

According to a recent *Sunday Times* article about the A-Code (alleging the existence of a written category of 'Work-Shy', and other nastinesses either unmentioned or glossed over by Ex-Officer), 'four million people in Britain—nearly one in ten in the population' are affected by the document, whose title is 'Department of Health and Social Security—Allowances and Pensions Instructions'. Nearly ten per cent of the country pauperized! Yet the DHSS and other members of the so-called helping professions go on perpetuating the lie that exclusion from the economy is merely a personal misfortune, or (the modern variant) a personal neurosis.

An aging dossier of my acquaintance had done three months on remand for unsuccessfully trying to cheat the welfare out of 17 shillings; he was then assigned to pay weekly visits to a probation officer, who did nothing for him economically or psychologically. The difference in social usefulness between the two was that the probation officer got twice as much money for upholding the system as the dossier got for constituting, however blindly and helplessly, a most valuable blot on it.

Who would be a welfare officer?—sending old derelicts to gaol over a pound; sitting behind a desk while someone else sits in front of it with a tin cup 'claiming rights'; accepting the power to decide whether a child shall have blankets; making sure that an unemployed person and family aren't cheating the wage-stop, but are living in the full degree of poverty to which they've become accustomed. It's true that everyone has to get a living somehow, and that only a hermit can avoid all contamination, but these people are really cupping their hands underneath it as it comes out. Some of them take the job with an idea of reforming the system from within, but it usually ends by corrupting them. The only way to reform a system like that is with guns.

K.S.

Poetry & Anarchism

TALKING OF POETRY the other day and its role in changing society—a number of ideas were thrown around.

Today so much is changing—perhaps the word is instability—permanent instability in the mind corresponding to the revolution in things—and within this state of flux there is a logos—the word is one—unity, unity of the human race—logos seeks unity and is faced with division—alienation.

Alienation is schizophrenia—the rents and splits and schisms between inner and outer, society and soul, body and body politic.

The revolution must come from below—from the lower classes, depths—and these lower depths are the depths of depth psychology—repression of the proletariat by the bourgeois ego—an explosive charge with the fuse burning low.

The ego constructs itself by drawing an imaginary boundary line between one's inner world and external reality—and this boundary line is the reality principle—go further than this line and you come to poetry and metaphors and madness.

When the line between inner and outer, self and other is smashed the ego is smashed (the ego of ego psychologists, the bourgeois ego or bourgeois individualism).

There is an inner castle to be captured or rather the inner and outer castle is the same castle—the false reality principle—the government of this false reality principle to be overthrown—a visionary breakthrough of poetry, madness.

Revolution is madness—the commune, 1917, ten days that shock the world, the cultural revolution—the madness of the repressed breaking out only to be chained to a new system, leaders, governments, states—there is a point where Marat and Sade are one.

The problem is madness—madness is oneness lost and oneness regained is madness also—we need permanent revolution and this cannot be political revolution.

Madness, poetry—uninterrupted poetry.

* * *

Poets, artists throw down your tools!

Art should be more than the 'reproduction of something according to the concepts of a given time.

Only when the artist's unconscious is in line with the universal unconscious does he genuinely create—when, say, a flower does not become a picture of a flower but a new flower.

But one must go on from here, go on from a time where artists have a monopoly of creation—every one of us must become an artist of life.

Everything that is attached to and is part of our bodies—hands, eyes, feet, cells, arms and nerves, legs, thoughts, feelings, senses—in fact every thing that's our personality is both the materials and the instrument with which we can mould our creative genius into conduct, behaviour—INTO LIFE.

* * *

None of this is new—it has all been said before—now we must learn what we already know—become what we are by conscious practice.

The Liberal Ideal

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securing information".

I take this to mean that *The Observer* and Mr. Callaghan support the torturing of prisoners, but it is just possible it means the opposite. The passage is so woolly that it could be taken in either sense. I have not heard the speech of Mr. Callaghan from which the quotation was borrowed.

The Observer then goes on to say that 'ill-treatment' is likely to antagonise the Catholic population (would you believe it?) and might therefore be 'politically indefensible'. My God how fearless! What a brave, upstanding spokesman for civilised values, liberalism and humanitarianism! Hitler's destruction of six million Jews must have been wrong because it antagonised the surviving Jews.

All one can say to torture, interrogation, ill-treatment, brutality, call it what you will, is that it is morally wrong, whatever the circumstances. There is no

case where it can be justified. If a cause can only triumph by the use of torture there must be something wrong with it to begin with. Torture is the ultimate evil. There is nothing lower. If government and liberal public opinion condone it, openly or tacitly, then such little, stumbling progress as we have made over the last couple of hundred years, has been lost labour. We are back in the Middle Ages now. We might as well surrender all pretence at being enlightened and civilised and appoint some tyrant, who will reduce Northern Ireland by wholesale slaughter in the Cromwellian manner. Why not? It would save British lives in the long run.

The torture is sad, but sadder still is the decay of the liberal conscience, that dare only speak out against its use in other countries, and waffles and shuffles its feet when it is our own brave boys who are doing the torturing, and not some disgusting Greek.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

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ANARCHIST FEDERATION of BRITAIN

AFBIB—To all Groups.

Next issue of AFBIB will be run off

in Brighton. Send material and contact:

Nick Heath, Flat 3, 26 Clifton Road,
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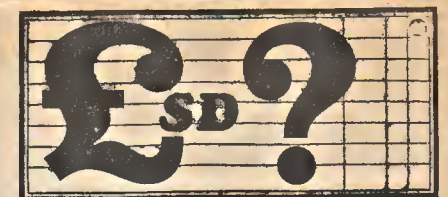
The Contact Column in 'Freedom' is
also available for urgent information.

Groups should send latest addresses
to Birmingham. New inquiries should
write direct to them or to the AFB
information office in Birmingham.

AFB REGIONAL GROUPS

There are now anarchist groups in almost every
part of the country. To find your nearest group
write to:

N.E. England: Mick Renwick, 34 Durham Road,
Gateshead, Co. Durham.
Essex & E. Herts.: P. Newell, 'Aegean', Spring
Lane, Eight Ash Green, Colchester. (QM, FL.)
Surrey: G. Wright, 47 College Road, Epsom.
Yorkshire: Martin Watkins, Flat D, 90 Clarendon
Road, Leeds, LS2 9L.
Manchester: Mat Cunningham, 9 Briar Hill
Avenue, Little Hulton, Worsley, Lancs.
Scotland: Secretary, Mike Malet, 1 Lynnewood
Place, Maryfield, Dundee.
Wales: c/o P. L. Mare (address above).
N. Ireland: c/o Freedom Press.
The American Federation of Anarchists: P.O.
Box 985, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, USA.
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Income (Sales and Subs.):	£70.16½
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Expenditure (1 week):	£150.00
Deficit bt./fwd.:	£763.25

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LETTER FROM SEATTLE

Dear Friends,

Anarchism and its version of organiza-
tion are becoming increasingly important
today. There is a growing disenchant-
ment with elitism in the movement, with
vanguards and their arrogant self-right-
eousness. Similarly, there is a criticism
of the usually tactical objectives of such
leadership, the demonstration, and its
varying degrees of militancy. The people
are tired of these political rituals, led by
the revolutionary priesthood.

The conservatives of the revolutionary
movement—and among those must be
included most of the Marxist sects—
hanker after the revolutions of the past
and those contemporary revolutions
which have occurred in underdeveloped
areas of the world. They look at the
revolutions of Russia, China, Cuba,
Algeria, the aborted revolution of Spain,
and the revolutionary movements of the
Third World uncritically, often removing
them from their historical and social
context, and accepting the speculations
of the theoreticians of these revolutionary
developments with the same adulation

that the convert to a religion accepts the
dogmas of his faith. They seek blue-
prints and iron doctrines, theology and
faith, not historical understanding. One
is at times tempted to think that religion
is revenging itself upon politics, and just
as during the Reformation, politics and
the interests of special classes masked
themselves as religious movements, so
today religion masquerades as politics.

These revolutionists, these Tories and
Conservatives of the revolutionary move-
ment, with their nostalgia for revolutions
in other places and other times, would
be amusing and possibly a little pathetic,
were it not that they have the power to
do what organized reaction cannot
achieve. They, through their backward-
ness and theoretical sluggishness, can
limit the revolutionary potential of in-
dustrially advanced countries. They are
to be admired for their zeal and daring.
As revolutionary thinkers they are
negligible. In their effort to find a
basis for revolution in the United States,
they have, in effect, made the trek from
New Left to Old Left—one step forward,

two steps back. Ridiculous formulas
are advanced, such as the blithering
nonsense that 'it is more important to
recruit one worker to the revolution
than a thousand students'. Once again
in revolutionary circles one hears the
old democratic-centralist bullshit. Marxist
formulas developed in other times and
in other countries are applied mechan-
istically to contemporary social condi-
tions. The dialectics of dialectical
materialists are fascinating, in that one
might think, were one not seriously
assured by these dialecticians of the
contrary, that they are simplistic and
mechanical.

We anarchists are simple people and
have simple likes and dislikes. We
dislike Big Brother—even when Big
Brother waves a red flag and calls
himself a revolutionist. We dislike spies,
informers, and cops, even when those
spies, informers, and cops profess to be
acting in the interests of the revolution.
If it takes block committees and brothers
spying upon brothers (as in urban China)
to eliminate crime, we prefer a little
crime. We identify with the most op-
pressed of all lands, whether this oppres-
sion stems from the arrogance of a
communist bureaucrat or the insolence
of a capitalist pig.

CHRISTIAN BOCKMAN.

Kropotkin: A Lecture on Prison (1888)

Peter Kropotkin was a political prisoner in Russia from March 1874 to June 1876, and then in France from December 1882 to January 1886. He wrote many articles about prison in both English and French during the 1880s, and also his first book in English—*In Russian and French Prisons* (1887; reprinted in 1971 by Schocken Books, New York, with a new introduction by Paul Avrich). And he often spoke on the subject as well: a lecture called 'L'Influence morale des prisons sur les prisonniers', which he gave in Paris on December 20, 1887, was printed in *La Révolte* from December 1887 to June 1888 and also reprinted as a pamphlet—*Les Prisons* (1888); a translation appears in Roger Baldwin's edition of *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets* (1927; reprinted in 1970 by Dover Publications, New York, with a new introduction by Roger Baldwin).

After Kropotkin settled permanently in Britain, in 1886, he spoke all over the country, especially during the time he lived in Harrow (1886-1892), and he often returned to the topic of prison—for example: 'Our comrade Kropotkin lectured last month on the moral influence of prisons, to large audiences at Walsall, Birmingham and Paris' (FREEDOM, January 1888). The Harrow Local History Librarian, R. W. Thomson, has drawn my attention to a report in the *Harrow Gazette* (February 4, 1888) of a lecture called 'The Moral Effects of Prisons on Prisoners' which Kropotkin gave in the Harrow Public Hall on January 30, 1888; this was only six weeks after his Paris lecture, and it is very similar, though apparently much shorter and with some fresh material (the report does not seem to be complete).

It is worth reprinting to show what he would say about a subject of this kind to a non-anarchist audience. It is interesting to note that the lecture was sponsored by the Harrow Liberal Club; Kropotkin didn't mind with whom he associated, so long as he got his message across—though the message doesn't sound all that radical today. It is also entertaining to find the chairman, H. P. Cobb, MP, introducing him by explaining at some length that though they might not agree with everything he said they should give him a proper hearing, and R. M. Ballantyne, the author of *Coral Island* (who also lived in Harrow), seconding the vote of thanks by explaining that 'he did not share all the views of the lecturer, but he did a great part, especially those drawn from the Great Book'. When Kropotkin replied to the vote of thanks, he said he had to thank them for the very cordial reception they had extended to him. He hoped that this question which he had brought forward would be discussed among them, and then perhaps something would be done in spreading better feelings towards those who were considered now as criminals. Liberalism indeed, rather than anarchism, one may conclude; but still better than nothing.

The report of Kropotkin's lecture is printed here exactly as it was by the *Harrow Gazette*, except that it has been broken up into paragraphs and that obvious mistakes have been corrected. No attempt has been made to alter the old style of reporting in indirect rather than direct speech, or to eliminate the interventions of the audience. 'Kropotkin' was a common spelling of his name (following the Russian pronunciation). The number of people in prison in 1888 seems to have been proportionately about the same as it is now—so far have we progressed. John Howard and Elizabeth Fry were pioneering English prison reformers. The French prison referred to was Clairvaux (where, by the way, there were riots last September). Michael Davitt was the Irish Republican leader who founded the Land League; he was imprisoned from 1870 to 1877 and again from 1881 to 1882, and his *Leaves of a Prison Diary* was published in 1885. Millbank was the first great convict prison in England, being opened in 1816, closed in 1890, and demolished in 1902 to make way for the Tate Gallery; the tariff there was described in a book called *Five Years Penal Servitude* 'by One who has endured it'. The St. Petersburg fortress referred to was the Peter-Paul fortress. I cannot identify the 'man in Edinburgh' who took care of discharged prisoners. The choice of the number 24B refers to 'B24', who wrote about Dartmoor in the *Daily News* in 1886. Kropotkin expanded the data on the physical causes of crime in an article called 'Prison Life' in FREEDOM in August 1887. The peasants who took care of lunatics were those of Gheel in Belgium. The end of the report seems to be badly garbled.

PRINCE KRAPOTKIN was heartily cheered on rising. He said the question which he proposed to discuss that night did not belong to the rank of those questions which were being continually discussed in the Press; notwithstanding this, he thought that it was one of the most important—he meant the influence which their prisons exercised on those who were imprisoned in them. Very few people were interested in the question, because society considered that the prisoners had plenty of bread, plenty of water, and plenty of work to do, and that they could do nothing more for them. They knew that in this country alone some 20,000 men and women were put in jails, and it took an immense sum of money to maintain these prisons.

What were the results? That was a question very little discussed. Some big man, like Howard, or woman like Elizabeth Fry, would produce an agitation, and then for weeks and months there would be excellent articles in the newspapers on the subject; but soon all would return to the old state of things, and very few reforms would be accomplished. The reforms were very small, because the fundamental question as to how far the present system was worth maintaining was never discussed. Having had an opportunity of making acquaintance with the French prisons of late, and formerly with Russian prisons, he had been able to think about this question, and he thought it was his duty to come forward and say what prisons were, and what were the results they were producing in society (hear).

The prison in which he was placed in France was surely one of the best prisons in that country—it was, compared with prisons all over Europe, a fair representative prison under modern system and modern organisation. He was there three years. There were 1,400 inmates, and it was like a big manufacturing town: there were immense workshops, giving occupation to the prisoners. Of course the State made an appeal to private enterprise, and there were plenty

of employers ready to come forward. The pay was very poor, the prisoners receiving something like 8d. or 1s. a day. He must say that in France there were no such philanthropic institution as the treadmill, and there was no oakum picking—the authorities tried to employ the prisoners in some productive work.

MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONIST, by Peter Kropotkin, with a New Introduction and Notes by Nicolas Walter, Constable, £2.

THIS IS THE BOOK which made me an anarchist, and I still think it is one of the best anarchist books ever written. I first encountered it in the Smith Elder edition, which I discovered on a shelf of secondhand books outside Collet's in Charing Cross Road. (It still bore a notice over the doorway saying 'Formerly The Bomb Shop' in those days.) I bought the book for 2/6. After reading it I came to the conclusion that I was an anarchist, although I imagined that anarchists had all died out years ago. That was in 1948.

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This foreword makes it clear that Kropotkin was a much more complex person than is generally supposed. The reason why people have imagined otherwise is that his books are all written in a very limp style. Proudhon is a maze in which one wanders, Stirner is Germanically philosophical, Bakunin rarely finished anything he began to write, and most of his work comes down to us in

The treatment, he must say, was not so bad as he expected to find it. He must make one exception, however—one prisoner was killed by the warders with their keys, and they reported afterwards that he had hanged himself.

The prisons in England had been described at length by Michael Davitt, in his 'Leaves of a Prison Diary'. From all the information he had been able to obtain he had come to the conclusion that the French prisons were no worse than the English prisons. There was more humanity shown in the French prisons. The German prisons were in a very poor state. Those of Russia were in such a condition, that the less spoken about them the better; they were something like the English prisons before the time of Howard.

What were the results achieved in such prisons? They might be quite sure that a man would return to prison if once he had been there. This fact was so general that they would find that nearly one-half of convicts in this country were men who had been in prison before. Three-fourths of those who were condemned in this country for theft were men who had received prison education before. This was not only true of this country—it was true of all countries in Europe. The results were always absolutely the same.

This was not strange to him after his experience of prison life. In the prison in which he was in France it was so customary for the prisoners to return that the warders would often make an exclamation of this sort—'It is very strange that so-and-so, liberated five or six weeks ago, has not yet returned. He must be in prison in another department' (laughter). Then it was not an uncommon thing for a prisoner to say before he left the prison, 'Be so good as to keep my place until I return' (laughter).

If they looked into the matter they could see that this was unavoidable. What was the example given to prisoners by the prison itself? In the prison that he referred to smoking was prohibited, but it was carried out nevertheless, and men chewed, smoked, and snuffed it afterwards (laughter). The warders supplied the tobacco, and a good thing they made out of it, for what cost them fifty centimes (5d.), they charged the prisoners five francs for. If a man was in prison he would have to write to his wife for fifty francs. Of these, the warder took twenty-five for himself, and for the remaining twenty-five he supplied tobacco at the price he had just quoted. He thought that was a custom peculiar to France, but imagine his surprise on finding that the same tariff was in force in Millbank Prison—it was quite an international institution. The German Government sent tobacco to the prison

canteens, for they found it absolutely impossible to stop smoking in prison, and spirits were supplied in the same way. That was the example given within the prison.

They all knew the moralising effect of manual work—to keep men without occupation was demoralization. There was work and work. There was free work, which was a pleasure to do, and then there was the work of the slave—that also was manual work, but it was work that could moralise nobody. Oakum picking was not moralising work. The work was done as it would be by serfs or slaves. The men soon began to lose their mental energy. The study of mathematics was impossible in prison, because the brain was worried by a want of impressions. They received in the world thousands of impressions through all the senses, but the prisoner received no impressions, except those which were in the regular line of prison discipline. Every day brought the same things as the day before, and in this monotony of life, the man lost his mental energy, and therefore his bodily energy.

In St. Petersburg, he was kept in a fortress, and knowing that it would be several years before he would be brought before a judge, he was resolved not to be depressed. He walked five miles every day in his little cell, and performed gymnastics with his oak chair (laughter). He was allowed to have pen and ink, but that was quite exceptional treatment.

Setting the prisoner at liberty, what would the man be worth with all his mental energy destroyed, and thousands of temptations surrounding him? Who would go to the doors of the prison and give him a brotherly hand as he came forth, and say, 'Come to my home' [?] What professedly Christian man would do it? He knew one man in Edinburgh who did a similar thing, and never regretted it.

The prisoners were necessarily compelled again and again to return to prison. He knew the results that had been realised by several Prisoners Aid Societies, and he admired those results, but allow him to say that these results were achieved by destroying all the effects of what the prisons had done. Do not wonder, therefore, that it was quite an established fact, that if a man had been put in prison for a small theft he would return for a much greater offence; or that if he had been condemned for a small act of violence he would return for a big act of violence, perhaps murder.

What were the relations between prisoners and warders? Of course it was quite natural that there grew among prisoners a kind of organization against warders. Warders abused their authority—that must be the case. If a prisoner

was not submissive the man would be rendered absolutely unhappy in the prison. He would be punished for the slightest offence, which in a more hypocritical prisoner would be passed over, and when once he had been sent to the punishment department he would be sent there again and again. Often a prisoner committed suicide, or lost his reason.

A man's self-respect was weakened in prison. Were they doing something to awaken his self-respect? No, they were doing everything they could to kill self-respect. What was the dress of prisoners? Any animal would be ashamed [of] it! Take a cat and stripe him in yellow and black, and that cat would consider himself quite unhappy among his comrade cats (laughter).

People who were humiliated could not respect society—a bad feeling would grow against society. Whatever good feelings a man had he must suppress them in prison. If he had pity on a fellow-prisoner, and would like to share his food with him, he could not do so. He must not walk like people outside the prison walls. He was simply a number, perhaps, 24B, and no feelings were allowed him. The treatment killed in him all feeling of self-respect. Woe to him if he revolted—if he became offended at being searched three or four times a day. Could they wonder that the results were so poor?

To prevent crime they must know the causes of it. He put the causes under three heads—1. Physical. 2. Physiological. 3. Social. With regard to the first head they would find, if they looked into the question, that there was a certain regularity with, say for instance, murders, which depended upon the seasons. During the winter the crimes against property were more numerous. During the summer months the crimes against persons were more numerous again. In India, the number of murders and suicides depended upon the temperature, and the amount of moisture in the atmosphere. A good many ladies there knew that the temper of their husbands was influenced by the weather (laughter).

Now for the physiological causes. If they took the list of prisoners in jails they would find that the mass of them suffered from some disease of the brain, or of the stomach, liver, or heart. A man did not become a criminal all at once. Upon former occasions he would have shown an irritability which would keep growing, and force him by-and-by to commit some act of violence. What was missing?—the brotherly hand and the kind word. Under a better organised humanity the man would never surely have been brought to prison (hear). This showed

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One of the best Anarchist books—

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THIS IS THE BOOK which made me an anarchist, and I still think it is one of the best anarchist books ever written. I first encountered it in the Smith Elder edition, which I discovered on a shelf of secondhand books outside Collet's in Charing Cross Road. (It still bore a notice over the doorway saying 'Formerly The Bomb Shop' in those days.) I bought the book for 2/6. After reading it I came to the conclusion that I was an anarchist, although I imagined that anarchists had all died out years ago. That was in 1948.

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the form of anthologies or extracts. Kropotkin is clear and simple and straightforward. Anyone can understand him. I have read George Woodcock's biography, but even so until I read Nicolas Walter's introduction I had not realised just how far from what is generally understood as anarchism Kropotkin wandered during the years of his exile in England, years which began where his autobiography ends.

I would probably have been horrified in 1948, but now I find his inconsistencies consoling, since one is so often inconsistent oneself. Kropotkin's *Memoirs* in fact conceal a great deal. No doubt this was unconscious. He was a nineteenth century puritan and tells us nothing of his sex life, and hardly even mentions his marriage. But there is more to it than that. When he describes the Chaikovsky Circle, a group of Russian revolutionaries to which he belonged, he makes it appear that all was sweetness and light. In fact there were violent quarrels, in some of which he was the central figure, because he tended to be domineering and dogmatic.

He was in fact a fiery little man. He was never a pacifist, and saw the future revolution in terms of armed struggle, yet he was (most of the time) opposed to assassination and conspiracy. And yet not always. 'He was during the 1870s a leading conspirator and advocate of propaganda by deed. In 1877 he attended the last meeting of the International

Social Democratic Alliance, which Bakunin had secretly formed in 1868 to infiltrate the First International, and at the London Congress in 1881 he spoke privately in favour of having secret alongside open organisations. Also in 1877 he helped to write an article calling for action not only "by speech, by writing" and so on, but also "by dagger, gun and dynamite".

His support for the First World War is well known. It was not a sudden aberration. He had been working up to it for years. In his book on the French Revolution he speaks favourably of Marat, who wanted to set up a revolutionary dictatorship, and in the early days of the Russian Revolution he was on good terms with the Russian liberals, though he refused a place in Kerensky's Cabinet. Indeed this looks like the old, old story of the fiery rebel who becomes a conservative as he gets on in life. However the rise to power of the Bolsheviks revived Kropotkin's anarchism, and he may be said to have 'died in the faith'.

In short, as Nicolas Walter says, at times the man seems too good to be true, certainly this is so if one judges him from his books, as I did when I first read him.

His memoirs begin with his childhood in an aristocratic household, waited on by serfs. His mother he adored, but she died when he was still very young. His education was not unlike that of an

upper class English boy. He went to the Corps of Pages, which was much like an English public school. A little of the Victorian reticence slips at this point, and he does mention that there was some 'Oriental' vice there, but he seems to have coped with the horrible place—as it must indeed have been—quite well. Anyway no one has described any ill-effects noticeable in after life which could be thought to date from this period. The man was tough, make no mistake about it.

The military life did not attract him. He managed to do his service in Siberia, where he could be more of an explorer than a soldier, and in the end he did become an explorer altogether.

His increasing dissatisfaction with the regime led him to revolutionary circles, ultimately to imprisonment, escape, exile and the ranks of the anarchists in Western Europe. Finally we leave him in England, gaining his bread by writing scientific articles.

It is a beautiful book. The fact that it is as selective as most other autobiographies are bound to be should not deter the potential reader. It describes the life of a man, a rebel, an explorer, a scientist and a revolutionary. That the man is not quite the real Kropotkin, but something of an idealised figure, does not diminish the value of it. One would not guess (or would one?) that the author of *Walden* was a difficult man to get on with, just from reading his book. The writer of autobiography is a novelist really, whose principal character is based closely on a real one.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

100 Million Guinea-Pigs

RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN a concentration in the press and elsewhere on the subject of consumers' interests. There has been a reiteration of the theme of the quality of life as reflected in the problems of built-in obsolescence, of food additives, of preservatives, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, factory farming, pollution of land, sea, air and silence. The work of Ralph Nader, of the Consumers' Association, of *Ecology* magazine and the various direct-action conservation groups (including the Young Liberals) have focussed attention upon these problems.

As is inevitable with such preoccupations space is given in the popular press for the major scandals of such a world-view. Whilst the more unpopular press regularly unmasks the minor scandals which are the continuous consequences of a world based on a consumer-orientated market economy.

The news breaks that Campbell's cold soup follows a brand named 'Bon Vivant' in discovering botulism in a batch of their produce. A man died after consuming *vichyssoise* soup from Bon Vivant. Campbell's had received no reports of deaths from their brand of condensed chicken and vegetable soup (packed in Paris-Texas) but that all purchasers in the South and Mid-West US States should destroy any tins of such soup and return labels for a refund.

Recently it was reported that cans of tuna-fish were polluted with traces of mercury poisoning. Official assurances were given that the amount of mercury in any one tin of fish was so minute as to be harmless. No note was taken of the cumulative effect and indeed, in Japan, recently there was an outbreak of death and disablement from such a source and the *New Yorker* investigated a case of an outbreak in an American family.

On September 14 of this year, the Mobil Oil Corporation took a half-page advertisement in *The Times* to deny that a confidential report that even went so far as to recommend an immediate effort to reduce the lead content of petrol 'cannot even be remotely considered as an expression of Mobil's position'. They claim that the report was prepared by a trainee, but not from Mobil's own research, neither was the paper distributed outside his own work unit (somehow it fell into the hands of a lawyer representing Ralph Nader's Center for Study of Responsive Law) and, says Mobil, 'it obviously cannot even remotely be considered as an expression of Mobil's position on lead in gasoline'. Their own position is summed up in *The Times* advertisement as '... should automobiles be manufactured or government regulations instituted which require the limitation or elimination of lead, it has been and will always be Mobil's policy to comply fully with such requirements'.

On August 26 the Home Office suggested that people using an Italian-made portable hair-dryer face a 'serious hazard of electrocution'. The dryer has only a thin, incomplete tube of asbestos paper separating the nozzle from the live heater element. If the element sagged or broke the nozzle would almost inevitably become live and the dryer has no earthing provisions. About a thousand of the dryers marked 'Gift Pack Hair Dryer Ref MC 901 Matie' are believed to have been distributed, said *The Times*.

Casually picking from a file a copy of the Consumers' Association journal *Which?* (this proved to be December 1964), one finds a report on a pram-rocker called 'Rockabye'. It cost £3.15 and—in the words of *Which?*—'Two samples were unreliable and all were electrically potentially dangerous'. A bare wire (on one sample) was touching a metal container, which would have become live as soon as the device was switched on.

The Purex Corporation of America (reports the *Guardian*, 13.8.71), one of the four major American producers of detergents, announced that it is abandoning the use of phosphates in its detergents. 'Phosphates if not checked,' said the company scientists, 'could destroy all the fresh water lakes in the US and many streams and tidal waters used for fishing and recreation in only a few years.' Purex accused its competitors of spreading myths to counter the anti-phosphate campaign. The Soap and Detergent Association in New York backed Dr. Daniel Okun, professor of environmental engineering (University of North Carolina), who said that 'the alternatives to phosphates pose unknown dangers directly to man that may be far more serious than the problems of phosphates.'

The August issue of the *British Medical Journal* (according to the *Guardian*, 9.8.71) identifies enzyme detergent as the cause of contact dermatitis involving the loss of fingernails from a case in Cardiff Royal Infirmary. This follows the publication of a major survey by Procter and Gamble (US cleanser manufacturers) exonerating enzyme detergents as a cause of skin complaints. Procter and Gamble's survey showed that 45% of those whose hand condition was 'good' at the outset ended trial of the detergent with their hands in poorer condition. 'Normal' detergents showed, according to Procter and Gamble, slightly worse results. [In 1927 according to Stuart Chase, *Your Money's Worth*, P & G were marketing White Naphtha Soap Chips, these were advertised as especially effective because of the naphtha content. The Federal Trade Commission investigated and found that the product contained a petroleum distillate (improperly called 'naphtha') to the amount of .045%. The Supreme Court held that P & G should stop using the word 'naphtha'. P & G also wrote (according to Chase)

and stated that their slogan 99.44% pure 'is a slogan and not a guarantee'. 99.44% was based on analyses made in the 1880s!]

Finally, from this limited selection of illustrative newspaper cuttings, the *Observer* for September 26 carries a story headed 'US admen find that honesty is the best policy' which tells that the Federal Trade Commission (active in 1927!) can force producers to insert 'corrective advertising'. Profile (diet) bread had to advertise that it had about the same number of calories as other breads. It took the Commission 15 years to stop Carter's Little Liver Pills calling themselves 'Liver Pills'. The *Observer*, apparently ignoring at least forty years of FTC's weary struggle against tricky advertisers, lists FTC's gunning for 'Wonderbread' ('builds strong bodies 12 ways'); Continental Hostess Cupcakes, 'lacking', says FTC, 'nutritional value claimed and contain 50% sugar'; FTC have also attacked endorsements of products and the phoney TV demonstrations of American Home Products. If the FTC was capable or, indeed, intended to enforce a standard of truth in advertising surely forty years would have shown some progress.

As anarchists we can view with calm detachment the failures of the nets of law to catch these poisoners, polluters, killers, swindlers and cripples. As consumers we view with alarm, suffer and occasionally boycott. What else can we do?

Many of us have been impressed by the work of Ralph Nader and the Consumers' Association but Nader has admitted that one of his aims is for more laws to protect the consumer and more lawyers to see to the enforcement of these laws. Nader has been described by the *Sunday Times* as a reasonable rebel and could be described by anarchists as a reformer—he himself claims to be a persuader.

Nader says he aims: 1. To make people aware; 2. To learn and understand how the system is motivated; and 3. To forge a professionally committed citizenry. He is aware of the presence of 'microtyrannies'. His conflicts, even during his short stay here, with the Minister of Transport and Mobiloil, have sustained his anti-bureaucratic outlook, but is that enough?

We have known many anti-bureaucrats who, by setting up an organization have become mini-bureaucrats themselves. Nader has said, 'Suppose I wanted to foul up an organization like this [Center for Study of Responsive Law] and was allowed to design the way it was run; here's what I'd do. First, I'd give everyone two secretaries. Then I'd quadruple the salaries. Then I'd give them all a dictaphone—latest model. Then I'd encourage them to call and attend as many conferences and discussions as possible. I'd have them all completely muscle-bound.'

Despite all this Nader displays a certain naïveté regarding the capitalist set-up and a tendency to slip into sociological gobbledegook such as 'a person is needed who is people-orientated'. He talks of the necessity to prevent abuses of power and of arousing the citizenry to form a countervailing force to the power of the big bureaucracies and the big corporations. Nader does not recognise that the accumulation of power is, in itself, corrupting and the concept of countervailing powers does not solve the problem of those subjected to and victimised by those powers, whether they be big distribution chains, manufacturers, advertisers, trade-union tyrannies or government departments.

Nader recognizes the lack of competition in private enterprise. He, unlike the anarcho-capitalists, sees that the aim of private enterprise is not the 'healthy competition of rugged individualism' but simple acquisition.

Judging by the Mobiloil episode, Nader has moved towards the implications of the Lincoln motto displayed on his wall, 'To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men.' He has spoken of 'blowing the whistle' that is, for people in positions where they know how the customer is being lied to, robbed, injured or ultimately killed, to inform interested groups and publications just what is happening and who does what to whom.

It is obvious that, owing to the more restrictive English libel laws and the desperate desire of the British press for advertising, it is unlikely that the British press would co-operate to any great extent. In 1924 the *Daily Mail* denounced as a fraud (and was issued with a writ for libel) Yadil, a patent medicine. It appears that the *Daily Mail* had previously quarrelled with Yadil over advertising but ultimately after the *Mail's* exposure chemists refused to stock Yadil, and the firm went bankrupt. No newspaper today could afford to jeopardize advertising. We cannot rely on the press to 'blow the whistle'.

A new departure of limited value is for protesters to buy single shares in companies and create a stir at the company meeting. These neo-capitalist activities seem to have only a limited value, and 'blowing the whistle' in such company may fall on deaf ears especially where dividends are concerned.

The Industrial Workers of the World had their own ideas for benefiting the consumer. During strikes they switched labels on the lower grade salmon to the higher grades. It is not all producers who are in such a favourable position but the artificial distinction between consumers and producers is one of the myths that keeps the system going. It helps to sustain the joint conspiracies between capitalist and producer to exploit the consumer.

The truth is that the power of the workers is in their hands but not in their heads. The workers can 'blow the whistle' on the bosses any day. They can sabotage. Even with the embryonic abortion of work-ins there still exists the possibility of workers' control. Given the will and a concept of what the purpose of the industry is, workers' control for the benefit of society is possible.

But much of our industry is too large for anyone to grasp what the

society are concerned. Their only benefit is only applicable to this crazy society, they enable the workers to draw money, which enables the worker to live and consume his portion of the product. The majority of us (when not actually non-producers or destroyers) are producers of 'illth'. The purpose of Mr. Nader's laws and consumers' watchdogs is to lessen the amount of this 'illth'. In that one may wish him well.

It was said that 'the best is the enemy of the good' and the anarchist vision of a free society with control by the producer-consumer for the benefit of the consumer-producer may clash with Nader's vision of a society cleansed of all the imperfections of capitalist-production. However, in order to achieve even Nader's limited 'reforms', an unlimited revolution is necessary.

JACK ROBINSON.

KROPOTKIN

Continued from page 3

purpose is, many of our industries are purposeless as far as the benefits to them that they could not consider these men altogether responsible for their actions. If everybody took an interest in the life of his neighbour, it would prevent thousands and thousands of crimes (hear).

Then there were the social causes. Thousands of boys were running about the streets of their great cities without receiving any education, without learning any handicraft, and so long as such conditions existed they must not wonder if they had 20,000 men in their jails—the wonder was that there were not more criminals. The time was not far distant when there would be much more equality, the time was not far distant when every mother would want her son to learn some handicraft, when humanity would consider it a shame to live in idleness. Without these reforms they would have criminals in their midst. When this wall was broken down they would see people giving freely the hand one to another, and taking an interest in everyone's life.

What should they do with the men who would still be driven to crime by some organic disease? Why[,] treat them in somewhat the same manner as lunatics were being treated in some parts. Formerly lunatics were chained like wild beasts, but a poor peasant, in one instance, loosened the chains of some and kept them in his own family, and with such good results that the method was being adopted elsewhere. When the barriers of society were thrown down, and when the state of things was realised, there would be no need of jails, no need of prisons; there would be one family, and in this family would be all (cheers).

From 'Harrow Gazette', 1888.

Another 4-page leaflet.

Two articles from **FREE-DOM**: *The relevance of Anarchism today* and *Anarchism and Nationalism*. Available from Freedom Bookshop for 30p a hundred including postage.

An Open Letter to Young Liberals

SCARBOROUGH PERSPECTIVES (25p from National League of Young Liberals, 69 Blackfriars Road, S.E.1).

Dear Friends,

I have read *Scarborough Perspectives*, a selection of diverse essays by your leading theorists and have also seen the interesting 'Harle Syke Declaration'—a personal statement by the officers of the Young Liberal Movement.

For myself I found the essays by Peter Hain, 'The Alternative Movement' and by Simon Hebditch, 'Liberals in the Anarchist Camp' the most worthwhile. The article by Bernard Greaves, 'A New Perspective' is somewhat tedious—if you need a new perspective the reader is required to be awake at the conclusion of the article! Also Lawry Freedman's 'Liberalism and Capitalism' is a bit of a bore—he incorrectly believes that 'Marxists alone' are responsible for critiques of capitalism. But it is refreshing that Jeremy Thorpe is criticised for his support for private enterprise.

'Community Politics' by Gordon Witman has some thoughtful things to say. He calls Mill a libertarian socialist, which I'd question but I liked the courage of 'It is in our very tentativeness that the roots of our ideological style are to be found'.

Victor Anderson's 'Democracy—a and How to Get There' is reasonable enough. The concept that 'If people don't enjoy being revolutionaries, there won't be a revolution' is attractive, as is the idea of promoting 'revolution as festival'—it comes near to the politics of fun and

play as announced by Richard Neville in *Play Power* (now in paperback)—it also stems from Alex Comfort's attitudes.

My own view is that Peter Hain is one of the few contributors who really knows what he is writing about; this is shown by, 'A priority for us must be to establish an effective industrial base, particularly amongst young workers and apprentices—in fact this alone may be programme enough if as Peter states 'we need to turn more to specific and to some extent winnable targets' (his italics).

Naturally, I liked Simon Hebditch's 'Liberal in the Anarchist Camp' (couldn't he tell Lawry Freedman about anarchist critiques of capitalism?). For myself I can't recall the 'aristocratic anarchism' he refers to in the 18th century, I'd always thought the two words meaning 'rule of an hereditary clique' and 'society without a State' pretty contradictory.

However, that apart, why quarrel? Simon thinks 'The Young Liberals should be part of a broader libertarian movement' and 'help to construct a new society based on co-operation and mutual aid'. So do I.

He states that 'Liberals belong in the anarchist camp—we should not deny it.' Right then young friends, you've got to get straight that you're involved in a criticism of fundamental importance, you are not the only people to have recognised us and no doubt you'll find more than you bargained for.

You see, I liked your Harle Syke Declaration beginning 'Our primary political value is love'. It is good and

there are many good things about you which encourage and stir the anarchist consciousness. I enjoyed seeing Simon Hebditch hoping that Liberals would lose support by attacking the Immigration Bill and being proud of fewer votes rather than remaining quiet. There is an honesty here that is dynamite politically—after all love makes the world go round and politics is the business of hate. If your primary political value is love, you've got a right old hullabaloo coming up.

If your extended hand to the anarchists is clasped and a libertarian movement is conceived, there will come a time when you will have to break with the Liberal Party because we will give you a tug! What will then be needed is funding to operate a co-ordinated movement and I think it's about time wealthy libertarians got together to work out the basis for such a fund to replace the establishment bread which is on hand at the moment.

On your own score I suggest several areas of anarchism where you can usefully delve: 1. Wilhelm Reich and the function of the orgasm; 2. The collectives in Spain during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War; 3. Anarchist theorists such as Malatesta, Emma Goldman, Kropotkin, Bakunin; 4. Modern anarchists such as Herbert Read, Alex Comfort and Paul Goodman.

OK, on my side I'll try and read Mill again but... on second thoughts I won't.

Fraternally,

J.W.

WOLS

WOLS, APHORISMS AND PICTURES, translated by Peter Inch and Annie Fatet—produced by ARC of 11 Byron Road, Gillingham, Kent, at 45p (a non-profit-making publication this).

THIS BOOK is a beautiful collection of aphorisms and prints which bear the mark of pain inflicted by the world upon this tormented man—turn to the back cover where you will find two pictures of him—look into his eyes, they tell all.

'Seeing is shutting one's eyes.'

Wols was born Alfred Schülze in Berlin during 1913. In 1930 he worked with the photographer Sunja Janus and in 1932 he left for Paris where he met many of the surrealists after which he set off for Ibiza where he became more and more involved with painting. 1940 brought internment by the French—whilst in prison he painted many water colours only to abandon them for a bay of pebbles. After the war he had two

exhibitions in Paris and two in Milan and New York. He kept working in great poverty and misery with his wife—drinking—the only help coming from Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Wols died in 1951—poisoned by horse meat—he had gone to the country to try and cure his drinking habits.

'To fear the abyss is to fear eternity; to fear death is to fear birth.'

This book is full of life and truth. Aphorism—dismembered words, reality in brokenness. This form has political implications 'cause politics is systems and when you put words into systems, refined permanent forms, you create an elite (academy, political party) who possess the truth (or think they do).

Infinity in a grain, in an instant—'the truth is in the whole' and the whole is in any part not a system.

With Aphorisms we have an instant, easy form of intellect—easy enough for a child to understand—and it is perishable and can't be hoarded by an elite or institution.

A form on the side of freedom.

'Not to do but to be and believe.'

Read this—dream in its beauty and then live it. As Arthur Moysé said—Wols signed it with his death.

R.G.

THE CENSUS RESISTERS

OUR COMRADE DENNIS GOULD has received a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court at Redruth, Cornwall, on account of his refusal to fill in a census form. He has sent us a copy of the form, on which he has typed the following statement:

'I am opposed to the 1971 Census on the grounds of gross abuse of the individual's civil liberty in Common Law and common right. There should be right of conscientious objection; just as there is where the individual is unable to kill Strangers from afar; in any cause, i.e. conscientious objection to military service.

"Census" originally meant a simple counting of heads. Today it is an offence against privacy.

DENNIS GOULD.'

This statement has been issued to the press. In a covering letter to us he says, 'Unfortunately I have been prosecuted . . . never mind it must be fought by each person in his own way.'

Another comrade in Surrey refused to fill in his form, and has been sent two

more forms in succession. He has refused to fill them in either, and will continue to refuse, no matter what happens. Yet another correspondent tells us that he still has his form and has heard nothing from the authorities.

Another resister, living in Brighton, organised a 'census party'.

'I had a "census party" at the house I was living in at the time, I thought that 30 or 40 people censused at one house would cause an interesting blip in the Statistics. (Even our enumerator turned up with some home-made lager!) We talked at length to the enumerator, who—for his part—said he was "just doing his job", and had some sympathies with us.

'Anyway, a number of the people censused on our forms refused to answer various questions for various reasons. I think six or seven people besides myself refused to answer at least some of the questions, sometimes quite a lot of them. We did this openly, and pointed it out to the enumerator who tried to persuade us to complete the forms, which

we all refused to do.

'To date, none of us have been followed up. Incidentally, just to be helpful (since I knew a friend of mine was spending the night under a hedge and avoiding being censused at all) I invented a completely fictitious person, complete with life history, and put him down on my form too.'

From Oxford comes the following letter:

'Dear Comrades,

'Re "census recount", a friend and I both destroyed our forms and have since heard nothing. Furthermore, I know of at least six anarchist friends, who were at Aberystwyth University, who either destroyed their forms or put slogans all over them, none of whom had heard anything further when I last saw them.'

Not only anarchists are resisting. According to *The Sun* (19.11.71) Elsie Gibbs, 71, of Zeal Monachorum, Dartmoor, is refusing not only to fill in the form but also to pay the £20 fine imposed on her or to let the police

into her cottage to distrain on her goods in lieu of the fine.

'I told them I wasn't going to let them in nor was I prepared to pay the fine,' she said. 'I am prepared to go to prison. I even have my toilet bag packed ready to go. I am not frightened. It should be an interesting experience. Britain stands for freedom and I am not going to let any bureaucrat trample over me.'

The writer, Alan Sillitoe, was fined £25 at Ashford, Kent. He gave his age as 101. He said, 'Anyone who has the money to pay a fine, and still goes ahead and fills in a census form is no better than a slave.'

Meanwhile two of the FREEDOM editorial board face prosecution. We shall continue to report the anti-census campaign as it goes on.

M.H.

wealth for all men and women.

In the GLC elections of 1970 a group of independent candidates fought on a 'Homes Before Roads' platform and a major plank of that platform was a free transport system for the people of London. It was a popular line to take with inflation and punitive cuts in public transport services and following on the GLC election the matter of free public transport was still a live issue. So much so that the GLC finally published a document on *The Future of London Transport* in which it was accepted that moneyless public transportation was a workable policy. Moneyless transport within a capitalist society is simplicity itself for it operates on the same workable principle of any public library in that anyone who so wishes uses the service and running costs are paid for out of the local rates or, preferably, the national taxation. It is a cheaper, more efficient and more socially worthwhile way of operating a public transport system and already one major city, Stockholm, has begun to play with the idea in that for £4 a month one can buy a ticket that will give unlimited travel, free of additional charge, on any form of their public transport. And the logic of the thing is to abolish the £4 monthly payment and in doing so open the service to all Swedish men, women and children.

It should always be borne in mind, however, that London's transport was from the very beginning a service for the middle classes and it was only the use of a mass mobile labour force in the First World War that made it accessible to the London working class. As the middle class turned to their own private means of transport in the last ten years, the public transport sector has deliberately been allowed to run down. Let there be no mistake about this, that Tory policy is no longer a Goldwater joke but a harsh and brutal attack on every phase of working-class living from milk for their children to travelling to and from work, and when Marples, the one-time wonder boy of the Tory transport ministry, advocated putting meters into houses to make each householder pay a meter charge for whatever tap water he used, he was speaking for the Tory Party front bench and not its lunatic fringe.

I find the Tribe Publication paper sadly pessimistic in many of its conclusions and too ready to accept the concept of free public transport as a romantic lost cause. I know that within the industry most of those men in charge accept their brief to destroy their own transport system, for they are willing to act as the paid hatchet men of a political dogma. In every state-owned industry

Continued on page 6

Prophets without Honour

THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT must share that dichotomy that is the bane of every minority revolutionary social or political movement that, without political power, whatever solutions they formulate for solving social ills can only be put into effect by the very political organisations they wish to destroy. In, rightly, rejecting political power we shall always be ineffectual for, no matter how well reasoned and necessary our social solutions in relation to the evils of the hour, it is the corrupt administration of our particular society that must be forced to accept our answers to their problems and to put them into operation. We are the secular priests explaining a lay heaven to men and women who will seek other means to attain it. We can propagate, provide examples and, as with the housing squatters' take-overs, win small and important concessions by small group activities, but in the matter of mass social reforms we can only pioneer ideas and actions for the political militants to accept until the political bureaucracy decides to use them in their own interest.

Over half a century ago the gentle bearded loon on the anarchist platform was accepted as a figure of fun but everything that he advocated is now part of the social conscience of our age. And still we advocate and still we propagate, for every change in the human condition creates fresh problems and exposes fresh evils, and our shrill small voice will always demand to be heard.

Ten years ago a small minority of anarchists were demanding that Somerset House should be returned to the people. We went into detail in expounding that small cause of how the front of that huge building in the Strand should be swept clean of the small and tatty shops that hang like a fungus on its facade. How the TWO main rooms within the entrance should be handed over to a commercial caterer and operated as a cheap restaurant for the clerks and shop workers in the Strand area and how all the other rooms of Somerset House should be used as a cultural and social centre. And our voice was ignored until in 1971 it became a fashionable cause for a national newspaper to amuse its millions of readers.

A quarter of a century ago, little comrade, we pleaded that the area around St. Paul's church should be laid out as a public garden from the church down to the river and that St. Paul's should rise within a square given over to book-shops, art galleries, cafés, two or three small theatres and two or three small cinemas, and that Shakespeare's noisy, living London should become a new reality in our age, but despite promises the big monied boys won and the people of London lost and all that open bomb-cleared land became a weed garden for huge office blocks.

We now argue, and what politician will steal our cause, that Canada House, that rots like a boulder in Trafalgar Square between Pall Mall and Cockspur Street, should be pulled down and the whole of Trafalgar Square opened out as a public and social centre. Gentle lunacy, little comrade? Not so, for Piccadilly is already marked for a complete commercial revamping job. The National Gallery on the north side of Trafalgar Square is now lined up for a major re-

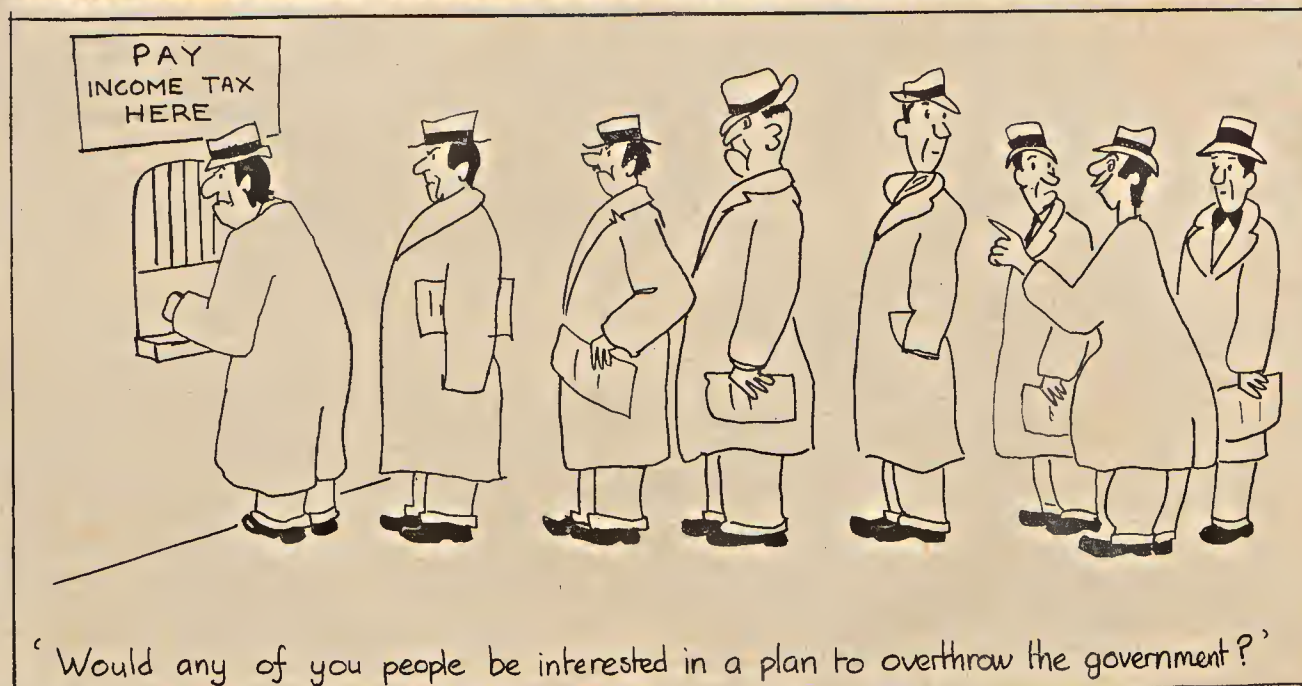
building as extra galleries are added on, therefore the time is ripe to open out Trafalgar Square into a huge partly covered traffic-free area that could act as a congress for anything from public meetings to international folk dancing conventions and open air theatre and music performances. It can be done and, as with Somerset House, others can claim the glory, but we shall have won at the first sounds of free laughter or spontaneous applause for our victories as anarchists can only be measured by the increased universal happiness of our fellow men and women.

We have been the advocates of many causes and the conservative- and liberal-minded citizens have blanched at what they believe its implications and applications would involve. When John Rety stated, on television, that prisons should be opened and all prisoners released he was simply stating what every social reformer would most devoutly wish to happen in some far-off future. Yet in the brief years since John Rety made his public statement there is a solid liberal conservative demand that debtors, women and a host of small offenders should not be imprisoned by the State. John Rety by-passed history and demanded a current solution to a social evil. How it could be achieved is the problem, not should it be achieved, for if a society without imprisoned men and women is a desirable way of life then we must face up to that problem now and not leave other generations to leave it to other generations to solve.

'Is it in the public interest as a whole?' should be the only test, and when the fool who is in charge of our national postal service justifies its quickening destruction by stating that a small group of unknown public citizens have told him that they favour higher postal charges, slower mail deliveries and only one postal delivery a day instead of a morning, midday and evening delivery, then here sounds the voice of the clown in office, for what the community need

in all social services is a swift, frequent and trustworthy service, and for that they must ensure that their fellow WORKERS within those particular social services are not penalised in their interests. But how, when and at what cost you get your football coupons must be left for other columns, little comrade, for what concerns us now is the pamphlet produced by Tribe Publications of Top Flat, 25 Ducie Street, London, S.W.4. It is called *Free Transport or Free Access* and is 'an examination of the implications of the proposal for free public transport in London'.

For many years the anarchist press have argued the case for a moneyless society and in many forgotten columns have made the point that it is a workable way of life. As speed of communication, with the exception of the British postal service, becomes swifter, as our technical societies become more complex, though not more efficient, as the industrial nations begin to form vast international work camps, it is simply a matter of time before money as a medium of exchange will no longer be used. As we move into the society of huge industrial social groupings then the internal economy of the factory will finally become the economy of a proposed future society and as it is easier for an individual employer to hand out food vouchers for meals, free transport tickets for travel, free housing and free clothing (using the word free in its most prostituted sense) in the employer's own interest, then it can only be a matter of time before the State accepts the same social economy in the interest of the State. But a moneyless society does not solve any problems unless there is free access, for no matter how much free food is on the table if a policeman stands guard over it who shall eat then, little comrade? We are all back to square one, for what we need, nay demand, is truly free social services, a surplus of wealth by our own labours and free and open access to that material



With acknowledgements to 'The Match', US anarchist paper

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The Revolution is Where You Find It

REVOLUTION. The word has been much thrown about over the last five years, so much so, that it's probably become the most overworked word in the English vocabulary, not to say worn out. Why it's even been used as a pop song title. Ever since the heydays of the October 1967 Grosvenor Square demonstrations and the glorious May Days of 1968 in Paris, it seemed to many of us that, at last, the revolution was just around the corner. But alas, it was not to be. The tide went out and the forces of reaction swept once more in. Never has the revolution seemed so far away as it does now. Yet conditions would appear to be ripe for such an event. Unemployment nearing the million mark, the UCS work-in, factory take-over at Plesseys, complete breakdown of law and order in Ulster, yet the mass of the British people are no nearer serious thought of revolution than at any time in their history. From the political point of view, all very true, in spite of those on the Left who still delude themselves in the back rooms of pubs.

In actual fact the revolution began some time ago and is still continuing. Certain elements of the community, the vast majority of the post-war generation, began to live their own lives, sometimes with blatant displays of exhibitionism,

sometimes in more sedate ways, but, nevertheless, shaping events and situations that are very real and becoming more widespread, gradually culminating in that strange netherworld known collectively as the 'underground'.

The most essential fact to grasp about this movement and those within it, whether phoneys or of serious intent, is that they are products of a society which has shaped their philosophies and ideas into a sub-world which has no real previous parallel. They have grown up in a world which is in very real danger of disintegrating around their very ears either through nuclear war, pollution, the unbalancing of nature, or mass starvation, none of which threats they have any control over whatsoever. The whole situation reveals all so-called respectable and proper society to be ridiculous. The whole point to the material way of life of the past is now completely irrelevant. It might all be wiped out at the snap of some politician's fingers or in the slime of ICI's detergent waste. Why bother to support such a system that is, on the whole, self-destructive? It is as if the governments of the world have a collective death wish.

The 'underground', by creating its own culture, becomes at one stroke subversive, yet free in the total sense of

the word. It is beholden to no one but itself. The culture spreads through small mags, pop groups, free theatre groups, art labs, communes until eventually it is forming a society within a society, but a society that bears no relationship to the society which surrounds it. Its most central structure and connecting sphere is based on what would once have been called art, but is now a way of life. Art has become art only in that 'I say it is art', not some college professor, critic or academic theorist. This is perhaps the whole reality of the sub-culture. Art is in everything, everything is art and everyone is an artist. The sub-culture has no similarity, nor wishes to, with straight culture. Indeed, the more ridiculous the attitudes the sub-culture takes the better. Once it begins to take itself seriously it becomes pretentious and is in danger of becoming nothing more than a mere replacement to straight culture and society

with the same attitudes and distinctions. The very sanity of the 'underground' is rooted in the ridiculous and the extremes of its attitudes. Those seriously working within it are forming their own world. But their world is not based on hypocrisy, the double-think, profit-making, materialism, coercion. It is concerned with the 'now', there might be no tomorrow. This is an accepted fact on the part of the 'underground'. Unlike straight society they no longer try to delude themselves that the values of the past still matter and thus refuse to act out a meaningless charade of what passes for normal living.

There is much similarity between the present day 'underground' and the original Dadaists, with one important difference, today's generation is trying to live out the philosophies and bring about a real alternative society that can be seen to work. It remains to be seen

whether this revolution is successful. It is spreading. Everyone who contributes consciously to the 'underground' is one of the new revolutionaries. The previous generations saw the revolution in political terms, the violent overthrow of the government by revolutionary parties leading the working class to freedom, and we all know what happened. The revolutionary parties of the world are no nearer establishing free societies than they were 100 years ago. But the underground wherever it exists has succeeded in establishing free sub-societies which do not bow to conformity, believe in mutual aid, spurn material success. They spread and with them the revolution. Whether they will eventually submerge straight society beneath the weight of their numbers remains to be seen. Meanwhile, in the words of Jeff Nuttall from Bomb Culture: 'Let's not wait for those cripples in the administration to hand out money or land, and let's not wait for them to grant us the future that they owe us. They won't. They can't. Let's start thinking in terms of permanence now and build our own damn future.'

GEORGE CAIRNGROSS.

This Week in Ireland

WE HAVE A NEW expression. It is called 'Doing a Compton', i.e. if your little Seannie throws his ball into next door's garden, and then dashes in and plunges through the tulips smashing them all, you say, 'He is such a good thoughtful lad. He had to collect his ball. It wasn't his fault you lost £50 you were expecting from selling them. He was completely innocent of any wrongdoing.'

We are absolutely sick to the heart at the hypocrisy of England over their torturing of INNOCENT men. Lord Carrington may call them 'murderers' but they have never been charged with anything let alone tried, and many did not even belong to the Civil Rights but merely were guilty of being Catholics or of not liking Unionism. Our hospitals here have many patients who definitely HAVE been tortured. Call it ill-treatment if you like. When you are having electrodes applied to your genitalia, being starved, submitted to a buzzing noise for hours on end, not allowed to sleep, kept in an impossible position against a wall and kicked if you collapse, made to run barefoot over broken glass, etc., etc., *ad nauseam*, it does not matter to you whether it is called 'ill-treatment' or 'torture'. It feels as awful and breaks you as much.

How dare Lord Carrington say 'after

all the soldiers were dealing with murderers'. Many of those tortured proved so innocent that even Faulkner had to release them. It is the worst slander to call them murderers. I hope he can be sued for his vile words.

Then all that sanctimonious praise of the Army. I vomit. The latest is now that the pro-Unionists are saying that the IRA have a master torturer who tortures people who disagree with the IRA. Funny he was never heard of before the Army torture storm broke. *Tu quoque* was always the poorest of defences.

Wilson is over here but nothing will come of it. England is determined to back Stormont to the bitter end, and it will be a very bitter end indeed. Jack Lynch still does nothing but burble, and his wife says how marvellous it is that a Derry girl has married a British soldier, 'A step in the right direction'. I doubt it.

Here there are 10,000 more redundancies. Strikes all day and every day. The latest threatened one is gas. All our Government care a damn about is that rich man's club, the EEC, with the pickings they will get while our people lose their small family farms and have to emigrate to work for a pittance at the dirtiest and lowest-paid jobs in Belgium and Germany.

Meanwhile our awful Archbishop

goes on preaching about how anyone who practises birth control is acting against God and will go to Hell. Unfortunately he does frighten the working class women into having the 16 children they cannot house or feed, which ends with the mothers in the mental hospital.

Outside it is snowing and I cannot see one glimmer of hope anywhere. Freedom is dead. England and Ireland have become copies of Nazi Germany only worse because of the hypocrisy.

Perhaps some of your other writers can see the light at the end of the tunnel. At the moment I cannot. H.

PROPHETS

Continued from page 5

these very same type of men have willingly, for there were no resignations, destroyed a public service that was built up over the years. It is a fundamental tenet of socialism that from each man according to his ability to each man according to his need should form the basis of a just society and to achieve that we must make every sector of public service a battle to be fought and won for a just society, a free society.

A good society will not arrive in full flower some Thursday afternoon in some mythical future but bit by bit within our lifetime. We are now on the defensive as we see the hard-won fruits of dead men's labour eaten away by Tory politicians and social democratic politicians fearful to cry halt. We are a small island and I will state that in the foreseeable future air travel will no longer be used to serve the travelling needs of our close community. With a national underground system forming a network under the whole of our island, with trains already in use that can reach speeds of over 150 miles and more in perfect safety and comfort, that matter of free transport AND free access is a major battle to be fought for now, or like the Concorde plane we will be a working class producing a new era of public transport yet too poor to travel in it.

Already, little comrade, you stand by the hour in the cold grey winter rains waiting for a bus on a service that has been slashed to a minimum. Already bus crews stand around garages because there are, literally, no buses for them to take out on the road. Once more there is talk (talk?) of transport fares being increased 100% in the coming year and on December 6, 1971 at Caxton Hall all the top brass of the Tory Party, the unions, and the transport executives are to 'meet the public' to explain away another betrayal and in the end it will be no more valid than pissing in the ocean, for the plans for route closures, garage closings and fare increases are signed and sealed.

This battle has been fought in Sweden and one small victory has been won. We are Londoners and this is our city. We can have and operate whatever social services we desire for it is only by our labour that it can succeed or fail. Just as certain honourable councils defied the central government and continued to give milk to small children so too we must force the politicians to make a stand on your right, by your labour, to a free and worthwhile public transport system that will carry every man, woman and child who so desires, for we are the people and this is our city so let us place our seal on it.

IAN A. MAYFIELD.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

Contact
Contact Column is for making contact! Use is free, but donations towards typesetting costs are welcome

Help Fold and Despatch 'Freedom', Thursdays from 2 p.m.

Southern Anarchist Groups Conference, Reading, December 11 & 12. Main topic for agenda: Community Action. Further suggestions and details contact Reading Group, 9 London Road, Reading, Berks.

Any Spare Furniture? Falls Road family squatting in Burrell House, London, E., now have electric stove and some bedding but still need items of furniture. Please write George Foulser, c/o Freedom Press.

Black and Red Outlook No. 4. Paper of Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance 5p plus postage. Subscription: £1 per 10 issues. In bulk 10 at 40p a time. Orders and monies to T. Anthony, 29 Eskridge Street, Salford.

International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, 11 & 12. World-Wide Protest over Russian Political Prisoners. Soviet Embassy, Notting Hill. Hunger Strike, 24-hour Picket starting noon Friday 10, and Rally. Information phone Miss Pinhas, day 01-254 1626, evening 01-254 8071.

Walnut Cottage, Moorland, Bridgwater, Somerset, houses young people attempting withdrawal from drug dependence and with other problems. High expenditure and low income may cause closure unless funds are forthcoming. Cash donations, trading stamps and/or cigarette coupons (any brands) will be welcomed by Drug Dependence Care Group at above address.

P. D. Roberts. Ghost writer required for libertarian assessment of anarchist possibilities in the Falklands. Contact: 112A Clifton Road, E16 4PS.

Conference of Northern Ireland anarchist groups in Manchester, December 4/5. Any groups and individuals wishing to attend please contact Bob Lees, 6 Coniston Avenue, Werneth, Oldham, Lancs.

Happy Birthday Jesus! Happy Deathday Turkey! Do you practice animal sacrifice? Would Christ have wrung the neck of a turkey? Give vegetarianism a try. 'Vegan Recipe Diet Sheets', compiled by Tina Morris, free for S.A.E.; 'Fleshmeat Means Murder' stickers with Vegan Action symbol, 25p per 100; 'Lord of Carnage', Human crimes against other animals. Illustrated, 25p and 2½p postage; Vegan Action and Global Tapestry. BB Bks., 1 Spring Bank, Salesbury, Blackburn, Lancs., BBL 9EU. Telephone: Blackburn 49128.

Centre International de Recherches sur

'Anarchisme. CIRA membership covers use of lending library in Lausanne and biannual bulletin (annual subscription £1). First CIRA publication in English: Michael Bakunin's 'The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State' (15p post free, £1 for 10 copies). British representative: Nicolas Walter, 134 Northumberland Road, North Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 7RG (telephone: 01-866 9777).

Will K. McFaul again contact FREEDOM — if he ever sees this.

Bangla Desh — Operation Omega. On October 11 two members of Operation Omega, the non-violent action mission, were sentenced to two years' imprisonment for taking relief supplies to the people inside Bangla Desh. Eleven Omega workers have been arrested since August. Four other missions have been carried out in areas threatened by starvation, but not controlled by the Pakistan army. Food, medicines and clothing were successfully distributed to people from a hundred villages and hamlets. We need more volunteers and money to carry on. Operation Omega, 3 Caledonian Road, London, N.1. Phone 01-837 3860 or 01-837 9794.

Wols: 'Aphorisms and Pictures' of a profound natural anarchist. Copies 45p, post free (one-third discount on 5). ARC, 11 Byron Road, Gillingham, Kent.

Help! Stoke Newington 6 Fund. Comrades now on remand in Brixton and Holloway need financial aid urgently for meals, fruit, papers, books (which must be new) and cigarettes. Please send donations to the Stoke Newington 6 Fund, c/o Compendium Books, 240 Camden High Street, London, N.W.1, a.s.a.p.

'And this may just be heaven' (poems and collage) by jeff cloves. 32 pp. Litho prints, card covers. 20p including postage from 5 Manor Road, St. Albans, Herts.

Eco-Action Group being formed in S.W. London. Contact R. Alexander, Flat 7, 202 Worple Road, London, SW20 8PN.

Proposed Group: Celia & Laurens Otter, 13 Albert Road, Wellington Telford, Salop.

Proposed Group—Exeter Area. John and Jill Driver, 21 Dukes Orchard, Bradninch, Exeter, EX5 4RA.

Anyone interested in forming a Cambridge Anarchist Group contact John Jenkins, 75 York Street, Cambridge.

Croydon Group meets first Tuesday of each month, 7.30 p.m. December 7. Speaker: Keith Nathan at Jacquetta Benjamin's, Top Flat, 4 Warminster Road, South Norwood, S.E.25 (near Norwood Junction Station and 68 and 12 buses).

Politics of Psychology Conference, November 26-27, London School of Economics. Of interest to Mental Nurses and 'Patients', School Kids and Teachers, Student Psychologists, Social Workers and everyone in industry. Articles, ideas and help and SAE to 'Politics of Psychology', c/o Three Mills (Psychology), Abbey Lane, London, E.15.

Leaflets: The Tolpuddle Martyrs, Six Men of Dorset, 15p a 100, plus postage, from Freedom Press. Old Leaflet but still relevant.

The Freedom not to Compete

Dear Comrades,

As all readers of FREEDOM know only too well, society brings to bear a great number of pressures on the individual. Society clamps a straitjacket of conformity on every child that's born, so that, in the words of R. D. Laing in his book *The Politics of Experience*, 'What we call a "normal" man is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience.'

Perhaps one of the most odious of these forces working through society is the pressure to compete. Modern society is based on the philosophy that man must be motivated by competition with his fellows, that one man must prove himself better than the next. In this country, the education system (especially the public school system) encourages competition in every aspect of life; and even at university level, it is extremely difficult to study whatever suits the individual, at that individual's own pace—the system is geared to competition with other undergraduates for a certain class of degree. This is part of the 'educational' preparation for the world of business and employment which lies beyond full-time education. The capitalist system is based on, and revolves around, the concept of competition. (How often have we heard the cliché 'the fiercely competitive world of big business'?) The aim is to make profits; the trouble is that as long as profit is being made, someone is losing out in material terms—and this is traceable to the worst off in social and economic terms. All profit, or loss, as it can equally well be called,

is transferred to the next person down the economic scale; and the ones who lose in the end are those who are worst off to begin with. And in this country, especially under a Conservative government, these worst off, the losers in the economic contest, receive little help indeed. They are branded as 'lame ducks' and told to 'stand on their own two feet'.

Yet every man wants to succeed. And how, you may say, is it possible to succeed in life without entering into competition with those who are aiming for the same 'successful' end? The problem is that the basic aim is wrong; success is narrowly defined as material wealth and high social standing. The successful man is rather the man who is happy, who finds security in himself in spite of, and regardless of, other people. The successful man is the one who sees through the thin fibre of the socially-inflicted competition. Those who refuse to compete may be branded as 'weak', or 'lacking in gumption or initiative', but in reality they display the courage and strength of character of all true dissenters.

So come on, Comrades! Resist all attempts on the part of society to force you into competitive situations. Save your competitive instincts for the playing fields, where they belong, live for an absolute success in terms of yourself rather than a relative one in comparison to your neighbours. And bring the day nearer when anarchist society will obviate the need for life to be a contest against those who are equal to yourself.

IAN A. MAYFIELD.