

THE POLITICS OF DESPAIR

VIEWERS OF TV recently were treated—if that is the word—to a film showing the head-shaving of French *collaboratrice*; in the cinema a remake of Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* was filmed in the setting of US Black Power activities. Even without these ironic commentaries it all seems like a bad motion picture which we have sat through before but we are powerless to walk out, to return the ticket.

Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it and Ireland, that country with too much history, is repeating the old mistakes and clichés. Collaborators are punished, prisoners are tortured, people are accidentally shot by both sides, 'the ceremony of innocence is

drowned. The best lack all conviction whilst the worst are full of passionate intensity', to quote Yeats, who for a spell was involved in the despair of Irish politics.

Political groupings of the Left have failed to make the Irish events fit their Marxist or humanist formulas so what is changed is the formula. Uneasy alliances are made, popular fronts are founded and founder. The clichés are trotted out. 'Acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder' is valid. The deaths of deaf-mutes, of priests, of women 'dressed in men's clothes' (as if that makes it okay!), of Dutch sailors visiting a dentist, of Peter Graham (an IMG organizer), are explicable in the context of law and

order, the survival of Protestantism, the survival of Catholicism, the survival of Northern Ireland, the survival of the Irish Free State, the preservation of capitalism, the maintenance of imperialism—you take your choice!

Edward Kennedy in his vote-coaxing role uttered a cliché highly acceptable to the Left. 'Ulster is Britain's Vietnam'. This can also be interpreted as a justification of the Vietnam war for which the Kennedys have much responsibility. He might just as well have said 'Ulster is Britain's Czechoslovakia' or 'Ulster is Britain's Hungary'. Semantically he could have made just as much sense by saying 'Britain is Britain's Britain'. The existence of Ulsters is

inevitable in the maintenance of great power.

The politicians of all parties have in this issue become role-playing pygmies foredoomed to repeat a pattern of stock responses. Even the internal struggles in the Labour Party are reflected in Wilson and Callaghan making separate visits. (The Welshman Callaghan's strong card in Ireland is his name!)

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The conventional extreme-Left view of Ulster—and the Ulster situation is extreme—is the romantic-authoritarian Maoist-Guevarist view of confrontation and polarization. The British troops are looked on as an imperialist army persecuting the peasants (Ulster is Britain's Vietnam). That a considerable proportion of the 'peasants' support their supposed 'persecutors' is ignored as it was—to his cost—by Che Guevara. That the British troops were welcomed (originally), indeed asked for, by the Catholics, and are now egged on by the Protestants, nullifies the requisite guerilla situation that the 'native population must be won over'. This 'confrontation' between the hit-and-run gunmen with their casual slaughters and the random bombing of significant and insignificant targets is presumably to go on until the Protestants (who are scarcely touched) and/or the British Army say 'uncle' or Fidel Lynch comes down from the Mountains of Mourne and joins up with the group who have just bombed the Bally Jamesduff sub-post office and all is ready for the March into Belfast.

Meanwhile Ulster bleeds. It is no concern of these shamrock Guevaras for this too is part of the grand strategy of 'polarization' or of 'sharpening the class conflict'. By some vague process of the dialectic things must get worse before they get better and the more people are killed (accidentally or deliberately) the more it strips naked the evil face of British imperialism/Protestant sectarianism (strike out the words inapplicable). If the whole conflict escalates into a full scale civil war

or a war of the North versus the South, this will illustrate the conflict much better. This pipe-dream of a New Vietnam in the bogs of Ireland or a Bay of Pigs in the Irish Sea is pure romanticism of political despair. The hard-line realists of the Provisional IRA go on with their terrorism, they are 'liberating' Northern Ireland for their own Catholic puritanism and any left-wing do-gooder who thinks of anything different will receive short shrift.

The theory of increasing misery pays no heed to human welfare—human suffering is useful for propaganda if it's on the right side and for terrorizing if it's on the other. Any socially constructive schemes of bridging the gap between Catholic and Protestant workers are hindering the advancing of the phantom revolution. This is why fraternising between Catholic girls and soldiers (Protestant or Catholic) is discouraged. But not marriage. Cases of tarring and feathering for 'anti-social' behaviour (e.g. homosexuality) have been known and the Catholic church, of which the IRA are at least 'fellow-travellers', is not well known for liberal views.

In its long and chequered history the IRA has not been over-scrupulous in its association. The maxim 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity' justified Michael Davitt's espousal of the Boers, Casement's overtures to the Kaiser, and Frank Ryan's trip to the Third Reich.

The most bitter fighting in the history of Ireland was fought after the Easter Rising when who was to have the newly-granted power was fought out between de Valera's boys and Michael Collins' boys with the British Black and Tans intervening.

In fact Ulster itself was 'revolutionary' in origin. Because a small group of Ulster 'unionists' thought that the decision to grant Home Rule in 1913 was wrong and were prepared to back it up

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Prescott and Purdie in Court

THE TRIAL HAS at last begun of the two men accused of being involved in the bombing of the house of Robert Carr, Minister of Employment, on January 12. Jake Prescott was arrested on January 20, and Ian Purdie was arrested on March 6, as part of a huge hunt marked by hundreds of police raids, searches, seizures, detentions, interrogations, and threats—a hunt which is indeed still going on—and they have spent between eight and ten months remanded in custody. Their trial at the Old Bailey opened on November 10, and is expected to last for a month. The judge is Melford Stevenson, who showed at the Cambridge Garden House trial last year that left-wing political defendants may expect nothing but unfair trials and savage sentences from him; it is rather like putting Michael Argyle in charge of the Oz trial. There have been a lot of difficulties with defence lawyers, especially with Prescott's counsel; and there has been constant harassment of the two defendants and of their friends outside.

At the time of writing, the trial has repeated the same old rubbish as the committal proceedings from April 22 to May 27, with the addition of some new rubbish following the arrest of six other people on August 20-22 (incidentally, these six—who include Stuart Christie—are still in prison on remand and have not yet been committed for trial). In particular the prosecution has drawn up a remarkable dossier of what is alleged to be a single campaign including 27 political shootings and bombings of property over the period from August 1967 to August 1971, those after November 1970 being claimed by the Angry Brigade. (It is worth noting that a police witness at the committal hearing mentioned a total of no less than 106 political bombings of property between March 1968 and January 1971, and of course there have been several since August, without counting those in Northern Ireland; it is also worth noting that both the police and the press tried to suppress the news of this phenomenon until the Carr bombing made it impossible to do so any longer.)

The trouble with this impressive dossier is that the prosecution itself has stated that Prescott and Purdie first met in Albany Prison last year (it is suggested that 'Purdie, already at that time a believer in the downfall of authority by violence, corrupted and influenced Prescott in the same belief'), and that Purdie was in prison until July 1970 and Prescott until September 1970—so they could have been involved in the alleged campaign for at most four or eight months out of the whole four years. In fact the prosecution is trying to pin only four incidents on them; the other 23 are presumably being brought

in for purposes of mystification and prejudice. In September the prosecution attempted to have Prescott and Purdie tried with the other six next January, but this was too much for British justice; however, if enough confusing evidence is brought into the present trial the effect will presumably be much the same, and if not it won't be through lack of trying.

It appears so far that no fresh direct evidence is actually going to be introduced, so the evidence against Prescott will still consist of the unreliable hearsay testimony of one of the two prisoners he shared a cell with last January (the other has disappeared), and of the fallible testimony of a handwriting expert; the evidence against Purdie will consist of his friendship with Prescott, and of quotations from his intercepted letters and overheard conversations. But conspiracy is a notorious elastic charge, and anything may happen with a desperate unscrupulous prosecution, an orthodox legalistic defence, a skilful hostile judge, and an ordinary property-owning jury.

Not to forget the capitalist press, which has already begun its meal on the prosecution dossier and some sensational details about the flat of four

of the people arrested several months after Prescott and Purdie. Thus the *Evening Standard*, which led the hunt for a 'Scottish anarchist' in January, ran a typical front-page headline on November 10: 'Anarchists behind 27 bomb and gun outrages'; the *Evening News* competed with 'Anarchists' arsenal'. On November 11 the daily papers followed—*Daily Mirror*: 'The bomb factory'; *Sun*: 'Bomb factory found'; *Daily Mail*: 'Anarchists' bomb factory'; right up (or down) to *The Times*: 'Revolutionaries and anarchists used bombs against political enemies, prosecution says'. By November 15, the evening papers were calling it 'the anarchist trial'.

Of course neither the prosecution nor the press will say anything about the political and social background to the shootings and bombings, or about the people who are by far the most common perpetrators of shootings and bombings—the governments. And what they are saying now is nothing to what they will be saying after the trial—or after the trial of the six next year. Then they wonder why more and more people are getting angry!

But by that time we must have our reply ready. N.W.

Rhodesia: Here we go again!

EVERYONE GETS DOWN all the clichés on Rhodesia and dusts them off as Sir Alec Douglas-Home flies to talk with the Rhodesian whites' leader Ian Smith about achieving a settlement which will leave neither with an impossible position to maintain with their own supporters.

The Left-wing talks of betrayal as if that hadn't been committed many years ago by their own Labour Party, the Right talks of achieving an honourable settlement which will mean the end of sanctions on the Smith regime by Britain. The Commonwealth is 'on the verge of breaking up', the sanctions are 'beginning to bite', should be 'tightened up', etc., etc. Above all are the five principles, 'the most important of which is unimpeded progress to majority rule', which have to be maintained at all costs.

There is much to be said for the argument that Sir Alec is flying to

Rhodesia in order to avert a Right-wing revolt over voting for a continuation of sanctions on the Smith regime, it isn't very likely that an agreement will be made to settle the UDI issue but it isn't impossible.

Miss Judith Todd, daughter of the former Rhodesian Prime Minister Garfield Todd, who is in England giving the views of the African nationalist leaders, as she interprets them, makes the valid point that no one seems to be consulting the African leaders in Rhodesia which augurs badly for a settlement which will satisfy the Afro-Asian world.

The white/black issue in Rhodesia is a lesser form of the pathology of South Africa and Smith has to thank the South African Government for maintaining his position. It is unlikely that any agreement affecting the true power balance in Southern Africa will be agreed to.

African freedom fighters from Zambia

have singularly failed to make anything approaching the impact of their brothers in the Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique. In fact one senses that South African and Rhodesian whites have seldom felt so secure in power as they are now. Expansion of South African influence into Black Africa must, by any standards, be regarded as a major diplomatic feat and it is only in the nagging area of international sport that the white supremacists are not winning the struggle.

For the anarchist the Rhodesian talks amount to a rather boring power game that plays around with a tragic problem that cannot be easily solved by the usual political formulae of the word-twisters. We must point to the underlying economic interests the capitalist world has in their trade with white Southern Africa whilst not being fooled by the African nationalists who are often as separated from their people as were the white colour they have replaced.

Whether a settlement is achieved with Smith or not, we may be sure that the underlying strategy of capitalism will be of paramount importance to all the participants in the talks. One only wishes that more people realised the economic involvement the British ruling class has with white supremacy in Africa. The knot they have to untie in Rhodesia involves not allowing the truth to be known whilst protecting that same truth from any dangers. FRANCIS DRAKE.

The IRA and Private Property

STORMONT'S REACTION to the civil disobedience campaign has been to pass legislation making it possible for the State to deduct rent and rates from unemployment pay and social security benefits—thus reducing many people to even worse poverty than they normally suffer. If they steal food and clothes it would be a natural reaction and one which a revolutionary organisation would applaud and encourage.

Two young lads from Bogside, aged 16 and 20, did steal some clothes from a big store in Derry. The IRA put them on trial and sentenced the older one to be tarred and feathered. The sentence was carried out in the middle of the night.

This tells us a lot about the IRA. It is not out to abolish private property and will defend that institution of capitalism as ruthlessly as the RUC—its 'main enemy'. All of which means that any united Ireland which the IRA hopes to create will be Catholic and capitalist—just like it is in the South. The IRA are nationalists and make no class appeal. A Belfast Protestant worker might well feel sympathy for a Catholic worker who helped himself to the goods in a big capitalist store. He can have no sympathy at all for the nationalist IRA. J.L.

THE INIQUITIES of the Tory Government's demand for payment to enter our public museums and art galleries is never more apparent than when one single publicised item is on display. A well-scrubbed Titian canvas or a Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* can be the reason for a specific visit and that small luxury will be denied to the great mass of the people, who rightly use the museums and the galleries in their lunch break, when a brief glimpse of our national culture becomes by payment only.

One is made aware of this as one strolls through the quiet rooms of the British Museum to the King Edward VII Gallery to inspect the newly-constructed helmet whose fragments were found in the Anglo-Saxon royal ship burial thirteen centuries ago. The British Museum can rightly be proud of the reconstruction of this helmet from Sutton Hoo for they have completely dismantled the 1945 assembly and from a few fragile pieces of oxide that was once iron and the bronze of the eyebrows, nose and mouth-piece they have given us a physical contact stretching back over a thousand years. We anarchists are the last of the romantics and it ill behoves any man to stand before this fragile creation of an age of myth and legend and not to feel an affinity with the heroic past. Deny the pedants, little comrade, and within the silent halls of the British Museum choose to be dictated to by the heart and for once leave foul reason to the clerks. Let Edward Heath, that creeping Judas of middle-class philistine shopkeeper morality, bar the doors of our heritage with his cash registers and it becomes one more barricade to storm, one more battle to win, to claim back that cultural heritage that is being denied to the people.

With Doctor Johnson I truly cry that he that is tired of London is tired of life for here within our parish the world dances for our delight. From Parliament to the Old Bailey, from the singer in the subway to prancing mummies of the National Theatre, we are the favoured few. And there for our amusement and our judgement is a surfeit of major exhibitions of the works of near genius and the inspired second rate.

THE HELMET OF ILLUSION

The Royal Academy of Arts in Piccadilly are showing the works of nine Flemish painters ranging from Ensor to Permeke. The paintings do not live up to the high promise of the title and one feels that this particular exhibition is no more than a tugging of the forelock in the direction of the Belgian government for without the works of Ensor and Permeke it could never have made the London scene. It is provincial bourgeois art at its lowest yet most fashionable ebb and only Permeke's brutish peasants and monumental nudes make this exhibition valid. Ensor had a rough ride with the critics who loyally played up his Mickey Mouse period when, with crude brush work and raw colours, he peopled his canvases with masked grotesques but as an artist he rose from the third rate to the second rate and sank back into the third rate within his own lifetime.

It was the Hayward Gallery by Waterloo Bridge that drew the Town and his panting frau, for the exhibition of *Los Angeles Artists* are a sop for the mood of the hour. There, among the plastic and the acrylic paint, the eleven Los Angeles artists offered us their wares and there was nothing to buy. The bright, flat colours that turn our world of reality into flat abstractions, the portentous and mind-consuming solemn statements and the pretty colours are toys that have been lying around too long and now fail to amuse. Only John Altoon's tinted drawings raise the level of the exhibition for they have a rare and lovely delicacy.

One loves the London scene if for no other reason than the inspired lunacy of our aesthetic middle class. After the shambles of the DIAS exhibition that landed John Sharkey and Gustav Metzger in the dock at the Old Bailey, one would have believed that the boys and girls would have left fish, flesh and fowl strictly for the supermarkets but here it was in the Hayward Gallery, one huge and ugly fish tank and within

it swam a number of uglier catfish waiting to be electrocuted and eaten by the flower of London's society at so much a bash and all for art.

Minutes' walk within the same building was a major exhibition of Tantra art. Philip Rawson in his brilliant essay has written that 'all the different manifestations of Tantra' (can be strung on one thread) and 'this thread is the idea that Tantra is a cult of ecstasy, focused on a vision of cosmic sexuality'. Within the last few years we have played around with too many mystic games from zen to flower power and in the end they were no more than words and all that we are left with is the broken bodies and minds of men and women who believed that they had been given an authority to destroy themselves. Here was to be a new eastern religion to whet the jaded appetites of our weekend mystics. One can brutalise and vulgarise every religious philosophy and I approve of this for, if this cannot be done, then it is no more than an esoteric game for an elitist few and by my standards I find the practice if not the belief in Tantra no more than a pseudo-spiritual excuse for the wealthy to lead their hedonistic way of life. A spiritual guide that sanctions the abuse of the most basic appetites from the prick to the belly. One can fuck one's way to glory be one's partner living or dead, male or female, as painting after painting, model after model shows. The Fetkarini Tantra states that 'He who does Japa many times on a corpse in a cremation ground attains all kind of success' and one feels that this new ancient philosophy arrived too late to give a cachet to the Manson murders for in its emphasis on human weaknesses as a path to the godhead it becomes, to me, no more than an eastern version of the Manichaean heresy with its belief that everything springs from two chief principles, light and darkness, good or evil. It is this rationalisation of human greed that I find disturbing about this Tantra ex-

hibition and certain well-wishers were quick to point to the bearded and bearded few jotting down their notes on this newest fashionable trip to the cosmic godhead via the brothel and the kitchen but the times are too harsh for all the beautiful people, the zen mystics and the flower power squads with lilies at the ready vanished in the acrid stench of the first militant bomb and the first authoritarian bullet.

The shallowness of this type of spiritual philosophy in relation to ourselves was never more apparent than when viewed in the context of the Hayward Gallery for the very same aesthetics who were killing trapped fish for their own stupid pleasure were the same people who walked through the Tantra gallery seeking a new spiritual meaning to their meaningless lives. And so it was back to the National Portrait Gallery in St. Martin's Place, W.C.2, to view the work of Sir Godfrey Kneller, dead these 248 years.

A court painter to four monarchs and a painter whose brush was always in demand, Kneller has missed his place in history. He is a magnificent draughtsman and his handling of hair and clothing is beyond faulting but for all that he failed to put his imprimatur on a work of art for always he was too derivative and given to the facile clichés of his craft. One has only to place his *Philosopher* alongside a work by Rembrandt to understand Kneller's fail-

ure. Whereas Rembrandt's raw colours and fluid brushstrokes made every canvas a personal statement and a living record of his fellow men and women, Kneller's work is good, solid, academic craftsmanship. Sir Godfrey Kneller chose to learn from art instead of life and for that he must be accepted as no more than a brilliant and competent illustrator of history.

For those who demand no intellectual content in their paintings there is the work of Felix Kelly at Arthur Tooth at 31 Bruton Street, W.1. His paintings of Russia are, like his paintings of the southern states of America, backcloths for fairy tales. Forgotten ruins as a foreground to a world of tinted mists, they offer a lovely child's world of dreaming coloured skies and leafless trees and fragile bridges that lead nowhere. No Joe Stalin, no secret trials, no cold war, just an empty world that never hears the falling leaf or knows a moving shadow.

But there, roosting in the loft of Angela Flowers Gallery among the stars of 3 Portland Mews, W.1, is Patrick Hughes. Patrick belongs to that world of English surrealism in that the literary pun and the verbal joke is the means and the end of his work of art. The only genuine pop artist to emerge from that period of shock art, he used the current working class comics for his material while the art school hacks were still digging the figures of their teacher's youth. Patrick Hughes can rightly be compared to Magritte in that both possess the same naive style and the same literary imagination. One hopes that the race can find a place for two runners.

ARTHUR MOYSE

Politics of Despair

Continued from page 1

with an officers' mutiny, the government of the day (Liberal) climbed down and Ulster was born. It may be claimed that this was 'counter-revolutionary' — but what's so revolutionary about the Free State?

Although Ireland's early struggles for freedom from Britain were marked with great Protestant figures—Emmett, Wolfe Tone, Michael Davitt (even James Connolly's Catholicism was almost a death-bed repentance), there are hardly any Protestant 'progressives' in Ireland today.

Connolly said in wild optimism, 'the Irish Socialists are wiser today. In their movement the North and South will again clasp hands, again it will be demonstrated as in '98, that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working-class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united social democracy'. Unluckily, or luckily, for he did not live to be disillusioned, Connolly died in 1916.

We cannot deny the validity of the claims of nationalism. As John Stuart Mill put it, 'A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nationality, if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others—which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves, or a portion of themselves exclusively.' If this is the criterion of nationality — Northern and Southern Ireland are two separate states, in the same way, and in the same circumstances that Cyprus, Greece and Turkey are separate states.

The Irish have had their Utopias, their co-operatives and colonies. The peasantry fought a long rent strike and the Boycott takes its name from the Irish struggle. Such methods and aims are not unknown in Ireland. The futile path in Northern Ireland will lead to nothing but the grave. Indeed

the end will not be the bang of revolution but the whimper of shoddy compromise when the guerrillas are all dead or in jail and the politicians take over.

One of the hopes for the Irish is that the decline of religion has made it doubly necessary for Catholic and Protestant to work harder peddling their gospels of hate. Another hope is that the spread of birth-control ideas among both Catholic and Protestant will calm their fears of being swamped with overpopulation.

It is manifestly impossible for the British to 'govern' any part of Ireland. Davitt in one of his books lists forty penal laws passed by 'The Castle' between 1830 and 1882 which all obviously failed to suppress Irish nationalism.

We must conclude with more words from James Connolly, 'We are out to free Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting slum-owning landlord; not the sweating profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute Press-man—the hired liars of the enemy. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared. The cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be deservered. Ireland seeks freedom. Labour seeks that Ireland free should be the sole mistress of her own destiny, supreme owner of all material things upon her soil.'

And later, 'The Irish working class, as a class, can only hope to rise with Ireland.' These are the politics of hope.

JACK ROBINSON.

Another 4-page leaflet.

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

VOLINE

The Unknown Revolution

(Kronstadt 1921: Ukraine 1918-21)

We have had a great many enquiries for this title since it went out of print. We recently made the find of some of the sheets which we have completed and bound (hardcover, rexine).

A few pages have damp-stained margins.

This makes a very limited edition, and with a view to helping our own finances and making sure that people who have been asking for it get first chance, we are offering it at the price of £2.00 plus postage (inland 10p, abroad 15p), ONLY TO READERS OF 'FREEDOM'

All profits from these sales will be put into the Press Fund.

J.H.

Who do we think they are?

MORBID CURIOSITY took me to the Annual Convention of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association in Birmingham on Saturday, October 23.

My notes will not compare with the tape recording made by one of their own members, but they are a reasonably accurate account of proceedings and my reaction to them.

Before this date I had laughed at VALA and at Mary 'Who do I think I am' Whitehouse. I am laughing no more.

Chairman Mrs. James Dance set the tone by stating the need 'to protect our national characteristics of cleanliness of mind and health'. Evelyn King, MP, accused the BBC of committing the errors of 'bias' and 'neutrality' (!) and stated that they should not accord 'parity of esteem' to 'responsible citizens' and 'criminal elements'. Although much of his other criticism made good sense, his conclusions and the underlying philosophy were clearly authoritarian.

Dr. Siegfried Ernst, a disciple of Bachmann who had resisted Hitler, called upon us to combat the 'sexual revolution caused by the Pill' and founded upon

the ideology of 'biological materialism'. Quote of the day: 'the roots of Auschwitz and of pornography are the same'.

His was a marvellous deception—on the one hand an anti-Nazi resister and on the other a visionary of a 'New Europe' with a 'symbol of twelve golden stars', divinely backed to stamp out the conspiracy to degrade European civilisation and to take the steam out of the colonial revolution.

Hughie Green, ears cocked for the loud knocking of opportunity created by the advent of commercial local radio, stated that he was not ashamed to make a 'bit of money' in providing the kind of programmes 'Mary would like to hear'.

Mary herself roused us to the need for moral re-arming, assured us of success so far, and, most significantly, of the need for new people to do the organizing of VALA while she 'took advantage of the opportunities for foreign travel coming her way'.

The significance of what I heard and saw is still sinking in, but my conclusions so far could be regarded as libellous. I therefore record them not as

facts, but as impressions personal to myself and beyond my ability to prove.

It seems to me that National VALA is not what it says. It has two functions. The first is that of a respectable, neutral-sounding, front organization for MRA, whose purpose is to raise finances for the aims of the latter organization. Its second and most important aim is to act as a vehicle for the training of cadres for MRA. Both of these functions should be seen as part of an international conspiracy to bring about a right-wing takeover of European governments in order to set up neo-fascist régimes.

This conspiracy has its national front organizations, its European organization (European Association Against Moral Pollution), its funds and its leaders. It is at the stage of consolidating its international links prior to the expansion of the Common Market, hence the significance of Mary Whitehouse's speech. She is no innocent and likeable housewife, but a tried and trusted cadre of this movement.

I can prove none of these allegations, and my weakness is I believe relevant to the future of FREEDOM and the anarchist movement. The disparate nature of our activities, our lack of effective self-direction means above all a lack of valuable information and research. FREEDOM has become an opinion sheet, often uninformative, sterile and formal at that. It needs, the movement needs, the backing of members in providing:—

- (1) an information bank on the activities of big business, the mass media, governments and authoritarian movements;
- (2) an information bank of material produced by researchers giving scientific backing to our principles and ideology.

Only thus can we produce a literature of the same standard as that set by Kropotkin, Malatesta and Emma Goldman. Only thus can we produce a weekly paper whose contents reflect informed criticism and opinion. Only thus, above all, can our movement match the capacity of authoritarian movements in the field of 'propaganda by the word'.

If other anarchists feel this way and believe they may be able to contribute to the revitalisation of this side of our movement, they may contact me (c/o Freedom Press) and we can work out how to achieve these concrete aims.

M.B.



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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, Brighton, Sussex.

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.
Kens & E. Herts: P. Newell, 'Aegaeus', Spring Lane, Eight Ash Green, Colchester. (QM, FL.)
Sussex: 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 Lynwood 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 9885, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, USA.
S. Ireland: 20 College Lane, Dublin 2.
University and Student Groups: c/o P. L. Mare.

This Week in Ireland

I HAVE NOTHING but heartbreak and horror to tell. An ex-British officer has written of the tortures in Palace Barracks by the SAS. One cannot read them if one is of normal susceptibilities. They are beyond belief and make Belsen sound like a Sunday school picnic. When the men tortured have been reduced almost to madness animals are brought in and petted in front of them to show them they are lower than animals. A hearing aid is put into a man's ear and then revolvers fired at close range, while all the time a humming noise never stops. Other things are too vile for me to be able to bring myself to write them.

Over the weekend I sat up all night talking to Belfast people. Christina, aged 20, was in Unity Flats one evening with her 17-year-old brother and two friends of his, aged 17 and 16 respectively, and her two baby sisters of 5 and 6. The parents had gone to see the grandmother was all right. In, smashing the door, came the soldiers and they shot Christina's brother. He bled to death before her eyes. She had not sufficient first aid things to cope with such a wound. At first aid class they had been told to stuff the wounds with newspaper. I am now organising

every child in Ireland to collect sphagnum moss from the bogs, to wash and dry it and pack it in plastic laundry bags. The soldiers would not allow anyone out of their flats to phone a doctor. After the boy was dead they got a military ambulance, and they took away not only the murdered boy but the two others. These were returned some eight hours later. Both had been brutally beaten up, and one had many stitches in his head. Neither belonged to the IRA or even the Civil Rights. They were just schoolchildren.

I talked with an ex-internee who was so innocent that even Faulkner had to free him. He had been tortured and now has such a stammer I could not understand the half of what he said. He shook repeatedly. Who was loudest in condemning torture by the Germans? ENGLAND J'ACCUSE. I have little hope that anything at all will emerge from the visits of Callaghan and Wilson.

I did not mention our own parliamentary troubles because I jolly well knew Lynch, that Green Tory, would hang on come hell or high water, and he has, Haughey of course voting for the Government. Careers and money are far more important than people. Over all that

happens in the six counties all Lynch does is bleat.

Meanwhile we have a strike of our psychiatric nurses. They most truly have a very real grievance, BUT meanwhile helpless geriatric patients are lying UNCHANGED IN THEIR OWN EXCREMENTS AND DEVELOPING BED-SORES. One woman, discharged to get rid of her, has committed suicide and a lot of others in the hospitals have tried

to do so. They are not getting proper food or warmth. I feel somehow some better form of protest could have been staged than hitting at the helpless.

In my old age I am learning at last to HATE.

Peter Graham, the 'Trot' and friend of Tariq Ali, was murdered and no guilty person has yet been found. I was stopped and questioned by the gardai but beyond drinking with him occasionally I did not know him well. Bank robberies are hourly happenings, and I am getting fed up with everyone blaming 'the Anarchists'. It used to be the Communists but now it is the Anarchists.

H.



Any book not in stock, but in print can be promptly supplied.

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The Census and after

MANY ANARCHISTS, at the time of the Census, seemed to feel that the Census issue was unimportant or irrelevant. I think many did not feel that to refuse to fill in their census form was either revolutionary or militant enough to be of much use; but most of those who did fill in their forms must have felt at least a small 'twinge' of conscience at complying with the State yet again. However, to many people, and also to many who do not call themselves anarchists, it was the epitome of State prying and coerciveness.

First it threatened everyone with the dire consequence of a fine, and of course, ultimately, with a prison sentence. Then it went on to ask personal questions which one would not normally answer to friends or neighbours. The Registrar General and thus your own 'friendly' enumerators tried to convince us that these questions were innocent, even to the extent of unimportant. Many of us saw through the politico-diplomatic fraud for simple reasons, such as that had they been innocent, or unimportant, the State would not have wasted considerable money to ask them, nor bothered to threaten us all if it thought that we would answer them voluntarily.

Even if they had been such innocuous questions, and, for many people, the questions that applied to them did seem innocuous enough, what was more important was the principle that the State

had no right to this amount of coerciveness. Thus, there were many, including some who had probably never stood up to the State in any way before, who said 'No'—The buck stops here.

I should like to ask those who read this, who did fill in their form, but felt that it was not quite correct, and also those who have been lucky enough to escape the penalties of not complying with the Census, to show a little mutual aid towards those who were prepared to go so far but may, for various personal reasons, go no further, and need help in paying their fines, costs, etc. Also to help financially in other ways, if there is anyone who will suffer under a distraint warrant, or even a prison sentence. Yes, it will cost you money in this capitalist world. I have so far received only one request for financial help. One man in Derbyshire has been fined £40 for saying 'No', and, to quote, 'the State walks on crooked legs'. If you know of anyone who needs help in this way, please let me know. If you need help, do please ask.

I know there are other causes that need paying for, but everyone who reads this, please give something, and send to me:—

Census Objectors' Fund,
c/o Peter M. Le Mare,
5 Hannaford Road,
Birmingham, 16
Tel. 021-454 6871

Is there a Speaker in the House?

FROM TIME to time we at Freedom Press receive requests for speakers on anarchism. In the old days we had a team of speakers. They were used to public speaking, either outdoor or indoor, the two styles are totally different. Whenever an organisation, a club, a debating society, a university or any other kind of group wanted a speaker there was always at least one or two who were free to go, even if it meant travelling a long distance.

This situation no longer exists. The movement seems to have split up very much, and there is little contact between individuals and groups. Some of our speakers have retired from the social struggle or decided to pursue it in other ways. Anyway they have left the scene. Now there is practically no one. Occasionally the present writer will speak but he does not like it much, being a shy person, and does not perhaps do anarchism justice by his efforts. One needs to be fairly thick-skinned and self-confident to be a good speaker, quickness of wit and an ability to give a quick

repartee are also useful.

Surely among the readers of FREEDOM there must be some people who feel an urge to mount the public platform, fortified by a strong and simple faith and a good bit of ego! If anybody feels he is the man for this kind of thing (or the woman, one of our best public speakers in the past was a woman, she spoke both outdoor—at Hyde Park—and indoor, but it is a thing women generally dislike to do), would he (or she) get in touch with us, and let us know when they will be free.

Fares, food and (when necessary) accommodation are always provided by those who invite the speaker, and the experience is usually interesting. One meets new people and has pleasant discussions. Occasionally you find yourself addressing a meeting of three people in a freezing parish hall on a dark winter's night in Stoke-on-Trent, but this is rare. In any case it is always a bit of an adventure, and it's all for the cause.

Anyone interested? Please contact Arthur Uloth c/o Freedom Press.

MISS WORLD CROWNED

A BEAUTIFUL BROWN COW was crowned Miss World outside the Albert Hall on November 10 as inside the auditorium another moo-cow was ogled at by millions of viewers throughout the world. The Angry Brigade, Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation and the Young Liberals clashed with the Hanging Liberation Brigade outside the Hall. The police were certainly there in force, modern Sir Galahads protecting the tit and arse show as the Street Theatre produced a mockery of the spectacle.

'Stop Sexploitation'. 'Wits not Tits' and 'Liberation In' were some of the slogans but the cattle market proceeded nonetheless. Their majesties—the contestants—looked into the throng of demonstrators with scorn as they left after the competition and the public

leaving the show made ugly remarks whilst a few were noticed to be rather concerned about their involvement with the show.

Michael Aspel's only reference to the demo during the show was that one had to be brave to take part in a Miss World show nowadays. In fact, none of the contestants were arrested but four people outside the hall were dragged away.

Although nothing happened within the Hall this year many more people showed their abhorrence for the exploitation of the body of woman. Next year's show will have a hard time if the currents flowing in the liberation world continue to run the way they are. A plan is afoot to spray Michael Aspel's trousers with white paint at an appropriate moment!

FRANCIS DRAKE AND BOADICEA.

SAVE JULIO MILLAN!

THE LIFE of JULIO MILLAN HER- NANDEZ, a young anarchist militant, is in danger.

Arrested in October 1967 in the train from Port Bon to Barcelona, he was tortured in the cells of Barcelona Police Headquarters where he was forced to confess to crimes that he had not committed.

When he appeared before the military Judge of the First Region, Millan retracted these confessions which he made under the pressure of being tortured by the police of the fascist Spanish state.

All this to no avail; after three years of imprisonment, he must now appear before a military tribunal.

Franco and his henchmen want him. Millan may now be executed.

Let us act quickly in a spirit of international solidarity, to snatch him from the claws of Franco's executioners. We must demonstrate and campaign to save this life in peril.

SAVE JULIO MILLAN.

SPANISH C.N.T. IN EXILE,
Intercontinental Secretariat.

The Bluebeard of Berks

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT Harold Wilson, Civil Defence Officer for Berkshire, has brought out a pamphlet entitled *Notes for the guidance of parish councils in a National Emergency*, in which he advocates flogging, the stocks and the death penalty for people who break the law after a nuclear strike or during a National Emergency in Britain. This latter contingency could be a revolution

or civil war presumably, not a nuclear holocaust at all.

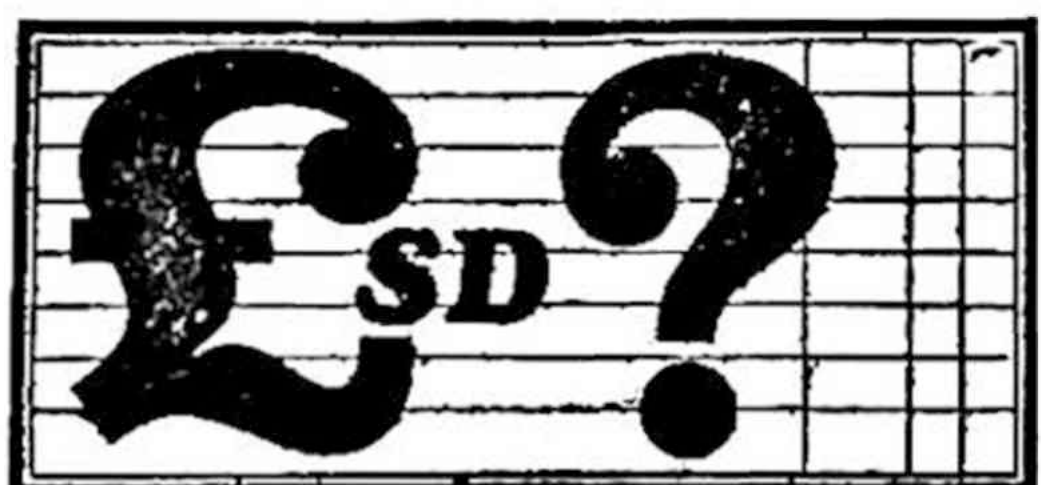
The booklet has been put before the Berkshire County Council's general purposes committee, with what results we do not yet know. But the present spirit of reactionary brutality which is now so widespread in this country will probably ensure that it receives a favourable reception. The Flight Lieutenant gives as his reasons for reviving these archaic practices that 'unless some stability were achieved, any surviving community could revert to barbarism'.

However the good lieutenant is left well behind by Edinburgh Councillor, John D. Kidd, who in an article in the *Scottish Daily Express* makes the following statement:

'You know, some of the things that go on today are quite shocking. Take this homosexuality business. I'm determined to try to stop it. It must be stamped out. I'd get them out of the way because they are no use to anybody. I'd burn them. Of course I'm all in favour of the birch and hanging and I have a motion before Edinburgh Corporation asking the government to do so.' The last sentence seems a little obscure, but there is no doubt as to the general sense.

No one has been burned in Britain since the eighteenth century, when the penalty was abolished owing to public indignation.

These two cases, picked from *Peace News* and the *International Times* are but two examples of the spirit of today. Here we have two men who in time of peace, it's not even as if there was a war on, are publicly prepared to advocate policies of total barbarism, in order to prevent barbarism! The tradition of humanitarianism, and the attempt to solve problems by reason, which, however much people failed to live up to their ideals in practice, were a part of European civilisation during the last couple of centuries or so, are being openly given up. I suppose one could applaud this honesty, as preferable to nineteenth century hypocrisy. But still the hypocrite does at least know what



Down again!

PRESS FUND

October 21-November 10 inc.

Wolverhampton: J.K.W. 10p; J.L. 40p; Hartfield: D.M. £1.06; Ontario, Canada: D.B. £10.30; Wolverhampton: J.L. 40p; J.K.W. 10p; Corby: T.P. £1; Denver, US: Anon 40p; Wolverhampton: J.L. 40p; J.K.W. 10p; Newcastle: C.B. 35p; Hamburg, Germany: J.L. £5; Dublin: J.R. 25p; Wolverhampton: K.F. 50p; Alto Cadare, Italy: V.d.M. 25p; Wells: G.B. 75p; London: Anon 22p; L.M. (in Shop) 10p; S.E. (in Shop) 10p; T.U. (in Shop) 50p; Wolverhampton: J.L. 10p; J.K.W. 40p.

Total: £22.78

Income (Voline Sales): £21.10

Income (Sales and Subs.): £380.15

£424.03

Expenditure (3 weeks): £450.00

Deficit bt./fwd.: £737.28

£1,187.28

Less Income: £424.03

DEFICIT: £763.25

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is right. Wilson and Kidd have lost all sense of right and wrong, and are drifting back into a kind of atavistic darkness. I fear that there are many others like them. Not all of them will be on the Right.

A.W.U.

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.

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.

Agitprop Bookshop, 248 Bethnal Green Road, London, E2. Open Mon-Sat. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Mail order service for books, pamphlets, posters, papers and info. 'The Black Liberator', 20p; 'The Bust Book', 25p; 'The Politics of Housework', 5p; 'A Gay Manifesto', 5p; 'The Enemy—Notes on Imperialism', Felix Greene, £2.40; 'Alternative London', 30p. Add p. & p. Send s.a.e. for full list (quoting FREEDOM).

Family, now in Burrell House (eight children), formerly living in Falls Road, Belfast, desperately need cooker. Please contact George Foulser, c/o Freedom Press.

Centre International de Recherches sur l'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.

Wanted: Help, equipment and ideas about making a film about Anarchism. Please write to: Stephen Bowers, 28 Nectarine Way, Lewisham, London.

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

Proposed Group in Oldham. Contact Bob Lees, 6 Coniston Avenue, Werneth, Oldham, Lancs.

Help! Stoke Newington 6 Fund. Comrades now on remand in Brixton and Holloway need financial aid urgently for meals, fruit, papers, books

The Rent Question

ALL COUNCIL TENANTS are now faced with huge rent increases deliberately engineered by the Government. There is bound to be a reaction—but what kind? Council tenants in Staffordshire have some good ideas and have put them into a leaflet which we reproduce below.

BEWARE: NEW IDEAS!

COUNCIL RENTS ARE GOING TO SOAR. It will take out-and-out rent strikes to stop them. But more important than how much we pay, is the question WHO do we pay and for what?

Ownership and control of estates by the Council means high rents, inefficient repairs, paternalistic attitudes about how the likes of us can't run our own lives without an army of officials to watch over us. This creates grievances which the Tories are trying to cash in on: they suggest buying of Council houses by individuals. This appeals to status snobs and it splits up our solidarity. What we want is a new way of organising things which gets the best of both ways.

At work wage rises are soon whittled away by inflation. In the long run the only thing that will make any REAL difference is workers' control or workers' self-management of production. Likewise with battles every now and then over rent rises. What actually matters most in the long run is tenants' control and collective ownership of their estates—TENANTS' SELF-MANAGEMENT.

How would it actually work?

(1) POLICY DECISIONS.

These would be taken by mass meetings three or four times a year. They would appoint different working groups of delegates to organise the different things that need looking after. So as to prevent corruption and the development of bureaucracy, (a) all delegates would be recallable; (b) working groups would be open and advertise their meetings; (c) no tenant would be allowed to sit on more than one committee.

(2) DECIDING WHO LIVES WHERE.

A committee of actual council tenants would be quite as capable as the Housing Manager of judging the claims of different families as the houses round about became vacant. Members of the committee would get to know of people's needs by word of mouth; everyone would know who to approach about getting a house, either for themselves or for relatives in older parts of the city. Swaps would be easy to arrange. When it comes down to it, we ordinary people have just as much sense of fair play as the Housing Manager who lives in a posh area.

(3) UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE.

We all know builders, plumbers, electricians and decorators who live near us, including which of them are unemployed. Repairs could be fixed up dead simply by nipping along the street. We can arrange foreigners and fiddles and other jobs among ourselves already. Why can't we arrange our own repairs? This would be ten times more efficient than getting your repairs noted by a clerk who writes with invisible ink, then waiting six months, and then having the work done by an outside tradesman who's got no interest in it because it's just a job for the bloody office, not Alfie's missus's sister's roof as it would be to someone local. The tenants' association wouldn't include repairs and maintenance in its rent so you wouldn't be paying twice over even if you did arrange to pay for it with your mate. However—the tenants' association would insure you against major repairs. It might also establish a communal depot or workshop on the estate for anyone to use for repairs; ordering materials at bulk rates; borrowing of power tools, ladders, etc., from a workshop 'library'.

(4) RENT AND FINANCE.

The tenants' co-operative would be responsible for levying rent depending on its obligations. Whether or not it continued to send well over half of people's rent money to the banks in interest repayments would be up to everyone voting at mass meetings. Rents would be handed in to nearby houses and once a week the cash involved would be collected centrally from the street treasurers. Tenants whose work involves handling money and keeping accounts would volunteer to keep the books. Ordinary people can budget for working men's clubs. OK—why can't we also budget for our estate? Pakistanis and Indians have shown us the way: they operate big housing finance pools of up to 900 people contributing £10 or £20 a month. There is nothing magical about finance.

(5) COMMUNAL SERVICES.

Teams of volunteers or paid tenants (including the young, elderly and the unemployed (non-exploited)) could be responsible for community services like running the Community Workshop, running playgroups and adventure playgrounds, clinics and baby-sitting, bulk ordering of groceries, non-fancy funerals, keeping the estate tidy, rubbish collections, building and manning community centres, parks and allotments and even education and welfare. The tenants' association would bargain with the Council over a collective rate, and the more the area organised its own services, the less rates it would pay. Or else the Council could be abolished and a federation of tenants' and residents' associations would be responsible for maintaining the city centres and facilities that people use from all over the city (for example a large hospital or a free bus service). The different associations might also have to band together over defence, if as is likely, the banks were getting a bit annoyed about their bleeding repayments!

(6) GOOD ORDER.

If the Council plant trees our kids vandalise them because they have picked up our grievances about the Council and they don't see that the trees are for their benefit. With tenants' self-management it would be our kids who had responsibility for planting and caring for them. Telephone boxes wouldn't get smashed if people were the joint OWNERS, not the GPO. If anti-social behaviour did occur, local people would be quite capable of checking it because they would feel a sense of responsibility for their own estate. Once they could see the benefits

EDS.

from paying rent, people wouldn't mind contributing to all the activities of the estate. Rents would be far lower if bankers and bureaucrats didn't have to be supported, but many people wouldn't mind rises even if they felt they were getting their money's worth and had a full say in the decision. We would all know if someone fell behind in his rent, and whether his reasons were good or bad, so rent arrears for all these reasons wouldn't be a problem.

(7) BUILDING PROGRAMMES.

The tenants' associations could even take on future building programmes. It could club together with other estates to organise studies of housing needs in the region. Estates would then agree on how to share the responsibility for future housing needs. Young couples living with parents might want to team up in building clubs, like a group in Talke Pits who have built lovely houses for each other in turn. There's nothing so special about drains and bricks and wood that would stop ordinary people learning for themselves and teaching each other. Even if they hadn't got skilled men in the initial work team, they could still get skilled mates to advise them and inspect the work for them.

(8) BUILDING SOCIAL CENTRES.

We could also build youth and community centres and places for keeping shared household equipment (a cross between borrowing your neighbour's washing machine and a laundrette in the street, only free and not just confined to washers and with everyone in the group paying for repairs). Often such buildings could be managed voluntarily—like some religious folk collect money for materials and do the building of their new chapels themselves. People would back these projects because they would have seen through the lie that only being exploited in a factory for the benefit of a boss counted as real work. After all housework is just as much work even though women don't get paid for it—why not? Community activities and social goods would be valued more. People would get away from measuring their status individually by the amount of status symbols and gadgets they had worked overtime to amass. 'We've got a better swimming pool on our estate,' would replace 'I've got a better washing machine than you in my house'.

What this country needs is for ordinary people to get control of their lives instead of always having THEM controlling us. In fact what's needed is a Revolution. But don't let the 'revolutionaries' muscle in on your struggle, to wangle members into their little parties. Keep control of your own struggle. Nobody can represent you or 'lead' you or tell you what to think. ONLY YOU CAN FIGHT FOR CHANGE OR START SELF-HELP OR MUTUAL AID GROUPS, ONLY YOU and your mates. If you are interested in these ideas why not talk them over with your neighbours. Also you can buy two pamphlets about tenants' associations and rent strikes and tenants' control from the address below. You could also arrange to get more copies of this leaflet to leaflet house-to-house round your estate.

Write to: 102 Newcastle Street, Silverdale, Newcastle-u-Lyme, Staffs. (Tel. Silverdale 256)

Kronstadt—repeat

THE KRONSTADT UPRISING by Ida Mett. Montreal, Black Rose Books, \$3.45, paperback \$1.45 (75p from Freedom Bookshop).

IN 1967 the Solidarity Group celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution by publishing the first English translation of Ida Mett's thirty-year-old book, *The Kronstadt Commune* (Solidarity Pamphlet 27). This was a useful contribution to the libertarian documentation of the Russian Revolution in English (though the edition had its defects—an eccentric preface on the sectarian points involved, an erratic transliteration of Russian names, a large cut in the original text, and an incomplete bibliography), and it was cheap: only 2s. 6d.

The Solidarity edition of Ida Mett's work has now been published as a book with a different title by the group which produces the New Left quarterly *Our Generation* in Canada. The Solidarity Group was not asked about this, or even told until afterwards; and the Canadian publishers have actually had the impertinence to claim copyright, which the Solidarity Group deliberately did not do! As it happens, the new edition is unsatisfactory in almost every way. It is ambitiously but badly printed, instead of being simply and well duplicated. The footnotes have been moved from their pages to the ends of the various sections. The Solidarity text has not been changed, except by the addition of misprints. The preface is still eccentric, and the transliteration erratic. The cut has not been restored. The bibliography has not been expanded, even to take account of developments since 1967—thus there is no mention of the paperback reprints of Emma Goldman's *Living My Life* (Dover, 1970) or Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (Oxford, 1967), or of the French edition of Voline's *La Révolution inconnue* (Belfond, 1969), or above all of the publication of the first full-length English-language study of the whole episode: Paul Avrich's *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton University Press, 1970—reviewed in *Anarchy* 2, March 1971). The price is much higher.

The only good thing about this edition is a new introduction by Murray Bookchin, of the *Anarchos* magazine in New York, who is well known as the author of *Listen, Marxist!* and—through his pseudonym, Lewis Herber—of several essays on ecology and technology (which have been collected in his recent book,

Post-Scarcity Anarchism). His introduction—which is reprinted (without its misprints) in the current issue of the new American quarterly, *Libertarian Analysis* (Volume 1, Number 3, September 1971)—is not as original and stimulating as many of the essays in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, but it is a valuable reiteration of the fundamental libertarian view of what happened in Russia fifty years ago. It is in fact more valuable than the preface to the Solidarity edition, or indeed than anything Ida Mett said in 1938. This is partly because Bookchin no longer has to waste time defending the Kronstadt rebels against the Bolsheviks and their various successors—on the contrary, it is now the Marxists who are on the defensive about the rising and its suppression.

The outcome is that Bookchin has avoided the tangles of sectarian polemic, and instead has managed in only 3,500 words to carry out one of the best demolition-jobs ever done on the whole Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist-Trotskyist myth of the Russian Revolution. This essay almost makes the book worth while, and it should be made easily available on its own. Perhaps the Solidarity Group will return the compliment, and include Bookchin's introduction in their own edition of Ida Mett, which still costs only 20p. N.W.

Just off the Press!

Anarchist Classics Series

ABC OF ANARCHISM—Alexander Berkman

20p (2½p)

Reprint of Freedom Press Edition with a new Introduction by Peter E. Newell, Biographical Notes and Historical Background

(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.

Anyone interested in forming an Anarchist group in Gateshead, Co. Durham, please contact: B. Stokoe, 1 Ely Street, Gateshead.

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

Nurses, Social Workers and Medical Students in London area wishing to form discussion and action group write: Thomas Layden, 37 Grand Avenue, Muswell Hill, London, N.10.

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., 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.