

WILL WAR SAVE BANGLA DESH?

ACCORDING to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in its study *The Arms Trade with the Third World*, India and Pakistan were among the leading customers of the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France for armaments, orders on the sub-continent (India and Pakistan) increasing four and a half times between the first half of the fifties and the second half of the sixties.

In 1954 Pakistan was persuaded by the United States to join the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Baghdad Pact. This was accepted by Pakistan, not because she wished to defend South East Asia against Communism, but she wished to defend herself from her neighbour (on two sides), India. This was matched by British and French salesmen selling to India Hunters, Canberras and Ouragans to match Pakistan's Sabres and Canberras. Sales for AMX-13 tanks were good after Pakistan received M-41 Bulldogs from the US.

SIPRI reports that up to 1962 India's purchases were more for prestige than for strategic operations. They included jet combat

aircraft and an aircraft-carrier. In 1962 India was defeated in its war with China but its 'neutrality' towards the West failed to qualify it for US F104 Starfighters (known in West Germany as 'Widow-Makers').

In came the Soviet Union (who else?) to supply SAM missiles and MIGs (the latter also to be manufactured in India—under licence). Later India took Soviet frigates, submarines and ground attack fighters. Russia refused to operate an embargo during India's 1965 war with Pakistan.

This war itself was occasioned by the relative 'preparedness' of both sides. After 1965 Pakistan, the loser, was 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' for arms salesmen. The US lifted its embargo, Pakistan signed an arms agreement with the Soviet Union in 1968, possibly (says SIPRI) as an exchange for closing the US base at Peshawar. To augment their stocking-up Pakistan acquired US supplies indirectly from Europe. Mirage jets, and submarines from France. Later they got six Starfighters (Indian rejects?), seven B-57 and 200 armoured personnel carriers from the US.

Since then the Pakistanis have

arrived at an understanding with China, and the Indians an agreement with Russia. China now defends Pakistan at UNO whilst Russia, since at the time of writing India appears to be doing well, refuses to press for a cease-fire.

Now the chickens (or the Sabres, Canberras, Starfighters, MIGs, and Mirages) have come home to roost or rather to lay their deadly eggs on their neighbour's nest.

It is possible, indeed it may be compulsory and official in some

places, to see this war as arising from the need to 'Save Bangla Desh'. It is obvious that Bangla Desh is not the cause of the war; it is unlikely that Bangla Desh will benefit, or even survive the war. India's eyes are turned more towards Kashmir and her age-old feud with Pakistan.

Pakistan, in the same way, is concerned at settling her feud with India. Both in pursuance of their policies have contracted questionable alliances and built up their

armaments to the utter neglect of their hideously impoverished peoples. It could not even be claimed that conquest of I by P (or of P by I) could bring access to markets and raw materials since both nations are lacking in both.

This is a war more pointless than most. Which way the Left in this country, and elsewhere, will fall in line is predictable. The only attitude for anarchists, is, as with every imperialist war, a plague on both their houses. JACK ROBINSON.

Neither Green nor Orange

THE ROOT CAUSE of the communal strife in Northern Ireland is the social discontent generated by fifty years of chronic unemployment and poverty, and the failure of successive Governments to solve the economic problems which afflict this province. Misery generates hatred — and Northern Ireland has had her share of misery. Except for the war years, the unemployment rate has stayed around 10%. Transfer this to Britain and it would mean two to three millions without work and living on the dole and the NAB. Between the wars the unemployed rate in Northern Ireland was two-and-a-half times that of the rest of Britain. In 1937, for example, it was 26.2% of the working population—and this despite massive emigration. Here, surely, is the basis of the strife.

It affects the Protestant worker as much as the Catholic worker since the pool of unemployed can be used to hold down everyone's wages and depress working conditions. It makes the Orange man jump to it when three men are waiting for his job. It would be very unwise indeed to imagine that this situation is peculiar to Ireland. In Britain today the suicide rate in the North West has gone up three times since mass unemployment developed. If ever the situation reaches the position it has already reached in Northern Ireland there will

be plenty of fuel for the racialists and the Powellites to stoke into flames. So it seems to me that any solution to the problems of Northern Ireland is bound up with an economic and social policy that faces root causes.

The Orange worker is held loyal to Unionism by the prospect of being cast down to the level of people even more miserable than himself. But what on earth has he to gain from all this discrimination against Catholic workers? The privilege of working his balls off? The feeling of being tuppence halfpenny looking down on tuppence?

The IRA (provisionals and official) tell us that all will be well with a United Ireland. But if this were so why in the South is there an unemployed rate as high as in the North but with even lower insurance benefits? More than a million Irish have emigrated from the South since the national solution was achieved.

The only solution, as I see it, is that if workers through no fault of their own are thrown on the scrap-heap they must receive an equal share in the good things of life. Of course, it is useless asking a State for such a solution. People must organise to enforce it. One means of doing that is to demand in the North of Ireland (and here) direct rule from below in the form of referenda—for all the problems to be discussed by the people

themselves. The politicians have failed. Of course, it is hard in the midst of Nationalist and Orange rantings for the sane to be heard, but we would do well to remember Connolly's words: 'It matters little where the green or the orange flag flies over the slum—it's still a slum.'

The wisdom of ordinary people should not be underestimated. Only yesterday I had a good lady tell me that she wished there were sanctuaries for humans as well as for wildlife.

The people in the street fighting for their lives are fighting more against years of economic slavery than for the right to live under a different flag. It's a pity the IRA didn't aim their guns at the real oppressors of the Irish people—like the builders who employ men to slave their guts out, or the contractors who drive men like cattle. The bosses—both Green and Orange—are our enemies and it is against them that we need to organise. Politicians are no friend to the working man. An old man in Dublin heard that the green flag had been run up on the GPO building. He asked the rich man what difference it would make. 'Ah,' said the rich man, 'It's all the same to you what flag rises. You will be breaking stones tomorrow just the same.'

Direct rule in Northern Ireland? Yes—FROM BELOW.

BRIAN BEHAN.

Rhodesia—Victory for Apartheid

AGAINST THE ODDS, agreement was reached in Salisbury between Ian Smith and Douglas-Home which has concluded the Tories' triple act of Rhodesian sell-out, arms for South Africa and the Immigration Act. The message, so clear and simple, is that the British Government does not like black people and that they have chosen sides in the forthcoming racial war—along with the vast majority of the white British. Chosen sides, to mince no words, with apartheid—that inhuman, irrational doctrine espoused by the Nazi sympathisers in South Africa.

Sold down the Zambesi, the *Daily Mirror* sang across the tube from me, and that's just what has happened to the African people of Zimbabwe, who have no excuse but to take up their own struggle with a determination which can earn them respect. Not so many years ago the African nationalist Joshua Nkomo said that the declaration of UDI was a declaration of war on the African people by the Smith regime. But wars are not fought only with words and the freedom fighters of Southern Africa have not even dented the armour of racist oppression.

This is not to advocate an armed insurrection in Zimbabwe that would lose the lives of many brave and innocent Africans, nor is it in this writer to cast bricks at guerrillas in other lands who have demonstrated an individual courage that inspires many young people today. The African nationalists of Zimbabwe have, let us face it, an onerous task ahead of them; they have, in the past, spent the greater part of their passions in feuding between two rival groupings which has diverted attention from the real struggle with the Smith regime. To be quite clear, again, this is not the advocacy of authoritarian and imposed 'accord', it is rather an observation from a friendly—but not too friendly—sympathiser with the cause of

liberation in Africa.

One particularly nauseating aspect of the Rhodesian settlement is the position adopted by the Labour Party, who—as with the Common Market—must be internally jealous of the Tory diplomacy but have, for the sake of appearances in a play which gets a smaller and smaller audience, to mouth the predictable noises about principles and selling out. Wilson on two occasions came close to a successful sellout in Rhodesia and it is the tired old word 'hypocrisy' that must be delivered into the guts of Wilson's gang.

In terms of humanity the Rhodesian settlement is a small step backwards, a further line drawn in the plan of battle. The African people would reject the settlement if they were allowed to vote on it—which is the reason they are not being allowed to! On the credit side we can recognise that the reality behind the facade of British diplomacy has now been recognised for what it is: racism.

FRANCIS DRAKE

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Be an Industrial Outlaw

CONTRARY TO THE CURRENT opinion among both Tory supporters and their left-wing opposition (of all varieties), the Industrial Relations Act is not so much of a threat to trade unions as it is to the individual worker. If you are a member of a registered trade union you are protected and privileged. If you are not, you are at least potentially an industrial outlaw.

Take the right not to belong to a union so beloved of the right wing. It has an exception in the case of an agency shop agreement, however much that exception is hedged around by qualifications. Where a trade union is hand in glove with the State (i.e. registered) and has secured an agreement principally because it is of benefit to an employer (agency shop), in other words in one instance where it is an act of social and political rebellion to refuse to join a union or 'play the game', then one is outlawed for doing so.

If a union registers then, within defined limits, it gains most of the rights which have become customary, and will certainly be backed by the State if it chooses to grow at the expense of other unions which have not registered. In the following years many blue-collar unions are likely to follow the white-collar unions in accepting registration as the

best means to protect their narrow bureaucratic interests. Even their right, so little employed, to engage in strike action will be guaranteed. This of course does not apply to the non-registered union, and above all not to the non-union member.

If I, as a member of the teaching profession (FB), choose not to belong to the union which has sole bargaining rights for me (the ATU, a registered union), yet still choose to go out on strike when they do (since I could never cross a picket line) then I would be in breach of contract, although the union members would not be, providing they adhered to the proper procedure.

I of course would not have gone through the correct procedure—no ballot, no notice to my employer (except perhaps the day before so he knew why I was absent), not even the courtesy of presenting my grievances to the employer. Since, finally I would have issued my personal strike manifesto and distributed it to all and sundry, calling for sympathetic action, I would have broken rather a large number of rules into the bargain.

By comparison with the position of the individual worker, then, the unions are privileged. Even if they don't register—a protest which I feel will not last long—their size and potentially disruptive

influence will be quite a protection. Of course they won't necessarily protect individual members who engage in unapproved action and can disclaim responsibility for their activities. So even in the case of unregistered trade unions it is the bureaucracy who comes out on top.

Since my union is registered and pretty awful anyhow, since it cannot in any sense represent me or my views or complaints, since like Mr. Polly and Mathieu Delarue I have been looking for a jumping off point to begin my own break for freedom, since I'm just downright bloody fed up, the buck starts here, I have resigned from the union, the only way open for me to become an industrial outlaw.

Having just finished reading the *Great Train Robbery* (Moss Side Press) it is a great consolation to me that this one act of rebellion, should it result in a clash with the authorities, will be a far better education for the students who see it than I could give in forty years of teaching.

If others choose to follow suit, and that's their affair, the anarchist movement is going to be posed with problems of mutual aid for those rebels who fall foul of the system. Have our much vaunted trendy 'communards' got any suggestions? MARTIN BASIFORTH.

The Prescott-Purdie Trial—

THE BEST and worst events which have happened so far in the tragic saga of the Angry Brigade took place at the end of the three-week trial at the Old Bailey, when Ian Purdie was found not guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions on November 30, and when Jake Prescott was found guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions (though not guilty of actually causing explosions) on November 30 and then sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment on December 1 (and also to five years for cheque frauds, to run concurrently).

THE TRIAL

The trial opened on November 10 (as reported in *Freedom* on November 20), and continued much as it began. Police evidence about the 27 shootings and bombings of property over a period of four years, of which Prescott and Purdie were accused of being involved in only four over a period of a few months, was the main item in the prosecution case and suitably mystified everyone, as such evidence always does and is of course intended to.

The evidence actually against Prescott and Purdie was much less impressive. On November 18 there was the hearsay testimony of two prisoners. Prescott shared a cell with in Brixton last January (the one who had disappeared at the time of the committal proceedings, because he had jumped bail, reappeared to give a story identical to the other), alleging that Prescott had boasted of taking part in the bombing of Robert Carr's house together with a man called Ian and two women. The two prisoners—whose identities were disguised by being called Mr. A and Mr. B in court—admitted that they were themselves involved in charges connected with dishonesty, theft, or both; they both insisted that their stories were true and unprompted by the police. However, they were presumably disbelieved by the jury, since Prescott was acquitted of the Carr bombing charge.

Apart from that, the prosecution evidence consisted mainly of extracts from documents, the only ones implicating Prescott or Purdie being those actually written by them, and then only indirectly. One of the relatively amusing things in the trial was when a police handwriting expert agreed that neither Prescott nor Purdie had written any of the really incriminating documents found at the Amhurst Road commune on August 20—though these were introduced as evidence all the same, just to confuse the issue and provide dramatic stories for the press.

Other interesting things were when two girls who knew Prescott were called to give evidence for the prosecution. One mentioned violent remarks in one of Prescott's letters, but agreed with the defence cross-examination that in about a hundred letters to her he had mentioned violence only once, and that he had never said anything about bombs or explosives. The other also mentioned extreme remarks in Prescott's letters, and added that she had suspected his friends of being concerned in 'bombings and things', but also agreed with the defence cross-examination that Prescott himself had never said anything about bombs or explosives.

The evidence of six people who gave evidence for the defence, providing Prescott with alibis for the nights of the Ministry of Employment bombing on December 8 and the Carr bombing on January 12, was discredited both by the prosecution and by the judge because they had all refused to give interviews to the police. The exercise of one's legal rights is apparently to be treated as a suspicious act nowadays; no doubt the law will soon be changed to make things easier for the authorities. However, the alibis were presumably believed—or at least not disbelieved—by the jury, since Prescott was acquitted of the Ministry of Employment bombing charge as well as the Carr bombing charge.

One of the strangest things in the trial was the *Times* report of November 24, which falsely suggested in two places that Prescott had implicated Purdie in his evidence. Purdie's counsel had to raise the matter in court, and the *Times* had to devote a third of its report on

November 25 to a correction which ended by stating that 'The *Times* regrets the two inaccuracies which were due to mishearings by our reporter'. It would be interesting to know exactly what happened in Printing House Square to lead a so-called newspaper of record to perpetrate such gross errors.

The one completely inexplicable thing in the trial was Prescott's appearance in the witness-box on November 22 and 23, which must have been the result either of misinformed legal advice or of misguided personal bravado, or both. All of his testimony was courageous, much of it was impressive (his account of his past), some of it was useful (the exclusion of Purdie from complicity), but part of it was disastrous (the admission of addressing three envelopes for the Angry Brigade Communiqué No. 4 after the Carr bombing). While we appreciate some of his remarks—such as 'If the ruling classes were removed either by violence or by chasing them into the Thames with bananas, it would be a good thing for the people'—we remain convinced that there are only two valid reasons for going into the witness-box in a case like this: either to make a complete denial of everything, and back it with a good convincing story; or to make a complete admission of everything, and back it with a strong political defence.

But even after such a damaging admission, which may have been part of a quixotic plan to get Purdie off, it is difficult to see just how Prescott was proved to be part of the Angry Brigade—he was seen to be an accessory, perhaps, but hardly a conspirator. There was no evidence that he took part in any agreement to cause any explosions, or even that he knew about it. But Prescott's last-minute counsel showed himself to be incompetent throughout the trial, failing to make most of the points which could have been made against the prosecution case or the points which could have been made for the defence case.

On the other hand, Ian Purdie's counsel argued his case competently, and Purdie took the surely correct course of staying out of the witness-box and resting on the traditional principle of English law that it is up to the prosecution to prove guilt and not up to the defence to prove innocence. For once the principle worked, and Purdie was acquitted and discharged; but he is still charged with cheque frauds, and on December 1 he was refused bail on this minor charge, despite the fact that the other people also on it are all on bail—though, in view of Prescott's five-year sentence it can hardly be considered to be all that minor any more, and Purdie may be heavily punished not so much for the cheque frauds as for having the impertinence to get off the conspiracy.

The question remains why Purdie was ever arrested and charged for conspiracy, let alone committed for trial. The answer is no doubt that the authorities were so desperate to get someone for the Angry Brigade bombings that in the absence of anyone else for Prescott to conspire with they had to try and frame Purdie. Let us be grateful to the jury for seeing through (or taking no notice of) the trick—and also, in a way, to the police for not doing the job more efficiently, as they might so easily have done if there had been a Challenger or two around to plant some convenient evidence. But what would have happened if no one else had later been arrested for Prescott to be tried with? Would he have got

off, or would Purdie have gone down with him after all? Or would they have actually done him for conspiracy with a person or persons unknown—or just kept him inside until they could pick someone else up, as eventually they did? In the meantime, Ian Purdie spent nine months inside for a crime he did not commit—and they call it justice.

THE JUDGE

It is difficult to find words suitable to describe the judge, Melford Stevenson. His summing up of the case was so biased and—as in the Cambridge Garden House trial last year—so political (while pretending to exclude politics), that Prescott reasonably shouted 'Rubbish!' and walked out of the dock. In addition to that verdict, we can only confirm it. When Melford Stevenson pronounced his completely obscene sentence on Prescott, he made a speech which must be taken as evidence of sheer insanity, not of him alone but of the body of judges and magistrates in general, of the whole system of organised vengeance called justice.

Fortunately for you, the jury acquitted you of the second and third counts, dealing with the bombings at St. James's Square and at the home of Mr. Carr, and I must, of course, loyally abide by the jury's conclusions.

Meaning that he disagreed with the jury but could not quite say so; not that it mattered, since he could still do what he wanted with the first count.

But they have convicted you of complicity in the most evil conspiracy I have ever had to deal with in an experience that is now lengthy.

Had he forgotten the Kray gang, whom he sentenced to a total of 142 years' imprisonment only in 1969? Is he seriously suggesting that the Angry Brigade is worse than that—or worse than the conspiracy represented by the bench of judges, for that matter? We assume that 'evil' means no more than 'politically unacceptable'.

I do not doubt that you were chosen as a tool by people more sinister than you are, and I suspect, more intelligent. They are as yet unidentified, but I must equally face the fact that you knowingly embraced that conspiracy.

The only evidence about Prescott's part in the conspiracy which was established in court was that he did not in fact know what the conspirators were up to when they asked him to address some envelopes for them, and that if he had he would naturally have disguised his handwriting; but one must face the fact that he was to be punished not because he knowingly embraced anything but because he deliberately refused to identify those who used him 'as a tool'.

I bear in mind, as I have been asked to do, your unhappy background, which has undoubtedly contributed to the position in which you now find yourself. If I did not also regard you as a tool in the sense I have just said, the sentence would have been a heavier one.

Heavier than fifteen years? The maximum sentence for conspiracy to cause explosions is twenty years. Would even someone with Melford Stevenson's much more sinister background have given such a sentence for an offence involving the addressing of some envelopes if Prescott hadn't lived in institutions from the age of six and hadn't accumulated two convictions a year from the age of eleven? One must face the fact that he would, and that he or some other member of his

gang may soon have the opportunity to do so at the forthcoming trial of the other people charged with this offence. One is also forced to another conclusion which our predecessors came to in a similar situation eighty years ago.

At the beginning of 1892 there was the Walsall Anarchist Case, when a group of four men framed by the police (after being duped by an agent provocateur called Auguste Coulon), who had been arrested for making bombs not to use in this country but to send to Russia, were imprisoned, three for ten years and one for five. David Nicoll, the editor of *Commonweal*, the most militant anarchist paper at that time, wrote an article published on April 9, 1892, which described the actions of the police, the prosecution, and the judge, and concluded with the question: 'Are these men fit to live?' For this he in turn went to prison for eighteen months; but he was right.

We would not put it quite like that. But, however strongly we may be opposed to terrorist action as a political method, and however irrelevant we may find it to bomb government offices or police departments or the homes of government ministers and police officials, we must say that if Commander Bond and John Mathew, QC, and Melford Stevenson were bombed, even killed, we would find it difficult to feel the slightest twinge of regret after what they have done to Jake Prescott and tried to do to Ian Purdie. They are all playing straight into the hands of the Angry Brigade, since it is now becoming true that we are all angry and getting angrier, and are finding it more and more difficult to remain content with agitation and propaganda in the face of such events.

THE PRESS

The comments in the national press have generally been as ignorant and irrelevant as could have been expected. The *Evening Standard* printed in its later editions on December 1 a double-page feature about 'The violent ones who say it with bombs' (forgetting Her Majesty's Armed Forces), identifying the Angry Brigade with 'the anarchists' and then describing Agitprop as 'the best place to try to understand the Angry Brigade', referring to the 'urban guerrillas' who are 'the violent activists of a revolution comprising workers, students, teachers, trade unionists, homosexuals, unemployed—and women striving for liberation', stating that 'the basic philosophy of the Angry Brigade is supported wholeheartedly by the underground press', and trying to knock down the women who have been involved with the accused and to build up the policemen who have led the hunt. A stinging rejoinder came in Richard Neville's *Evening Standard* column the next day, when he wrote the best article on the case which has yet appeared in the straight press.

The other Beaverbrook paper, the *Daily Express*, printed on December 2 a leading article called 'Society's Guard' which expressed the attitude of the idiot Right and, one fears, of many other people as well—'Stern but just. That will be the view of all reasonable people... The Prescott verdict should send shockwaves through the anarchist groups... By emphasising the rule of law, Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson deserves the gratitude of every democrat'.

The *Daily Mirror* of December 2 had a whole page on the case, describing Prescott as 'the tool of the anarchists', and including a confused article by Richard Stott called 'The Angry Brigade's Plan for Power', of which the core was as follows:

... The Angry Brigade is part of a world-wide underground movement that was thrown up as a result of the hippie culture and women's liberation movements of the late sixties. A band of revolutionaries—intelligent, but misguided. Their aim is appallingly simple. To overthrow the government. Their strategy is equally simple. Create panic by terrorist acts. The authorities then react with repressive policies, and the workers rise in rebellion against this repression. Simple—but doomed to failure. For the Angry Brigade could not understand that the people it was trying to provoke into rebellion have a deep-seated hatred of political violence... The police feel they have not heard the last of the Angry Brigade, although the organisation is now fighting for survival. Fighting, ironically, against one of its own slogans—the Power of the People...

The *Guardian*, which one might have hoped would say something sensible or at least liberal, and which did in fact have some good little pieces by Nicholas de Jongh and others, printed on December 2 a leading article of almost unbelievable confusion:

It is a reasonable assumption that the 25 bomb incidents and two machine-gun attacks listed by the prosecution in the trial of Jack Prescott and Ian Purdie were the work of some form of anarchist organisation. They had a certain consistency about them and some were claimed by the Angry Brigade. A group of anarchists (or possibly more than one group) bitterly opposed to capitalist society turned to the bomb as a form of political argument. Anarchists will offer some show of intellectual justification for a resort to violence. It is not a philosophy that can ever be accepted in a democracy. Democracy is a preferable political system because reasonable argument is put to the test of the vote and is assumed to prevail. The anarchists may say that their bombs are directed only against property, but in practice they endanger life, and often the lives of entirely innocent bystanders. People could easily have been killed or maimed in the Angry Brigade bombings. Society has an absolute right to protect itself against terrorism.

That much being said, the Prescott and Purdie trial has been an unsatisfactory affair. The main charge, that Mr. Prescott had taken part in the bombing of Mr. Robert Carr's home, failed. Mr. Purdie was acquitted and Mr. Prescott convicted of the much vaguer charge of being concerned in a conspiracy to cause explosions by a jury which seems to have been much puzzled and took five and a half hours to reach its verdicts. Mr. Prescott is to appeal. The situation is left even more obscure than it might have been by the decision of the prosecution to proceed later against six other persons who are also said to have been in the conspiracy. So the main responsibility for the Angry Brigade bombings is still unproven, and the right occasion for exemplary deterrent sentences (if the prosecution succeeds in establishing its case) has yet to come.

Consequently the 15 years sentence on Mr. Prescott seems exceedingly severe. Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson said he was 'chosen as a tool by people more sinister...'. They are as yet unidentified. Whether he is the man to suffer an exemplary penalty is therefore questionable. His opinions (as distinct from his actions) are the understandable product of a wretched life; he was born of a poor mining family, going into an orphanage at the age of six, and then grew into a life of petty theft and drug addiction. Society sometimes has itself to blame for the violence of its rebels.

The only good thing about this wishy-washy rubbish was that it prompted some good letters, especially a devastating one from a Borstal governor on December 4, throwing doubt on the whole system of official institutions to which he belongs!

The *Daily Telegraph*, by contrast, which one would not have expected to say anything worth reading, printed on December 2 a leading article of relatively remarkable perceptive:

Against tyrants and dictators of any sort who cannot be lawfully or peacefully voted out, the use of the bomb or gun, however deplorable in parti-



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An Irish Jig

There is no truth in the rumour that when Heath conducted the London Symphony Orchestra Jack Lynch flew over to play second fiddle.

5 years—and more to come

cular cases, is understandable. Where democracy is imperfect, where the poor, for instance, or women or religious or racial groups are debarré from voting, violence may appear the only way to extend the franchise. The activities of Prescott and the Angry Brigade are one salutary reminder that perfect democracy, in the sense of one man (or woman), one vote, does not disarm all violent dissent: Ulster, of course, is another. We tend to regard the will of the majority as the general will, the will of all; we expect minorities peacefully to bid their time, in the hope of becoming majorities one day. It is not always so.

There are those who regard our democracy, however perfect, as a sham, a perfect sham if you like, hopelessly corrupted by the supposedly vicious social and economic framework within which it operates. To such people its workings are purely arbitrary, its mild and deferential Ministers no more to be spared than a Plehwe or Heydrich. Their eyes are fixed on a more perfect democracy still—in practice, alas, most probably on a perfect tyranny. And there are others (Dostoevsky called them 'The Possessed') so deeply disturbed as to rejoice in death and destruction for their own sake; others again so embittered by their own inadequacies and impotence that no conceivable society could claim their allegiance. And there are those who use drugs further to derange minds already unstable. Looking back over the Prescott trial evidence, we can see all these attitudes and aberrations mixed up and represented. They are not all that uncommon. We had best be on our guard.

This, on the other hand, prompted no letters at all, or at least none that were printed. The Sunday papers on December 5, for some reason, made no comment at all. Nor has the *Times*, at any time.

THE NEXT TRIAL

Meanwhile the authorities have been warming up for the really big trial of the other people in the case—the four arrested at the Amhurst Road commune (George Buchanan, Hilary Creek, James Greenfield, Anna Mendelson), and the five people arrested subsequently (Chris Bott, Stuart Christie, Angela Weir, Chris Allen, and Pauline Conroy). They are currently being remanded in custody from week to week at Clerkenwell Magistrates Court, where the committal proceedings are expected to begin next

month. On two occasions attempts have been made to get at least some of them out on bail, one of which was successful.

On November 24 a strong assault was mounted on behalf of Stuart Christie by an excellent non-political barrister. It failed, despite the offer of enormous sureties from Vanessa Redgrave and Stuart Hood and some of our comrades, because the magistrate had already made his mind up; but in the course of the failure the barrister managed to elicit a revealing amount of information—of which more later.

On December 1 a similar effort was made on behalf of Pauline Conroy, a polytechnic lecturer who was arrested on November 23, and this time it worked, because she has a baby, a respectable job, and some rich relatives—but on a total bail of £20,200 (her own surety of £200, and four of £5,000 each, three from relatives and one from a comrade of ours who has put up her house as security), and on stringent conditions (no political activity, no change of address, no passport, daily reporting to the police).

But there are still eight people in custody, liable to spend up to five or six months inside before they are committed for trial, and up to a year before they are actually tried. There isn't much we can do for them, but we can get in touch with the groups organising visits and letters, and we can at least send them Christmas cards or something—the men are in Brixton, and the women in Holloway.

The information about the case against Stuart Christie emerged from his barrister's questioning of Commander Bond about the reasons why the police opposed bail. Bond agreed that, during the four years since Stuart returned to this country from prison in Spain, he had been under constant surveillance, and that he has been frequently searched and his flat frequently raided; and that, although no scrap of evidence linking him with the Angry Brigade has been produced, he is regarded as 'the prime mover' in the conspiracy. Not much of a compliment to our gallant police, one would have thought.

Bond also made it clear that in making a case against him, the prosecution was going to bring in every detail of his political career over the past seven years, all the way from his arrest in Spain in August 1964 (when, it will be recalled, he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment not just for some vague complicity in some vague conspiracy but for actually carrying

explosives) to an interview he had with a *Times* reporter a few hours before his arrest in August 1971—even including the *People* libel case, which concerned a story in *Private Eye* 155 (November 24, 1967) and ended with *Private Eye* paying damages of £1,000 with costs; the point apparently being that since Stuart's evidence was not accepted by the court he must have perjured himself, which is somehow thought to be relevant to the present case! So we may expect a veritable mountain of irrelevance when the big trial eventually comes.

The one gleam of light in the whole tragedy—apart from Purdie's acquittal last week—was the announcement, also last week, that the National Council for Civil Liberties is taking civil proceedings for damages against the police on behalf of two of the seventy people detained at various times during the hunt for the Angry Brigade earlier this year. The NCCL managed to get legal aid because the people involved, who are from the Grosvenor Avenue commune, have no money; with this they got first counsel's then leading counsel's opinion, both of which confirmed that the police were good grounds for a test case.

It is expected that the police may well offer a settlement out of court, which will be accepted; but then the extremely forthright leading counsel's opinion would be publicised, and the NCCL would make it quite clear that in any future cases of this kind of police behaviour there will be no hesitation in going to court to protect the legal rights and civil liberties of people who have not been charged with any criminal offence. The only trouble is that the authorities may all too easily decide to change the law, giving the police the right of detention and interrogation before arrest.

THE TRAGEDY

But this does not make any difference to the tragedy of the Angry Brigade saga, which is that there has been no political gain of any kind, despite an enormous expense of time, energy, money, trust, hope, and—above all—

risk; that the often impressive Communiqués (those up to No. 9, by the way, were conveniently reprinted in Agitprop's *Red Notes* in July) have fallen almost completely flat; that one person is now condemned to fifteen years in prison (less remission and parole, and whatever is gained on appeal), and nine others are faced with the prospect of twenty years each; and that there is no way out of the mess except an ignominious retreat into more conventional politics or else a hazardous advance further into the morass of terrorism—a dilemma which has always faced every previous campaign of this kind and which cannot easily be evaded.

This is not the time, while there are still nine people awaiting trial, to undertake a critical discussion of the principles and practice of urban guerrilla warfare as exemplified in this country by the Angry Brigade—though it is perhaps worth drawing attention to one attempt to do so. This is David Widgery's Marxist article, 'Bomb Politics', in *Ink* 21 (November 16). Readers of Widgery's argument should know, however, that his belief that the Angry Brigade marks 'a return to an older anarchist tradition' of 'propaganda of the deed' is a historical misconception (quite apart from all the minor mistakes and misprints)—'propaganda by deed' meant something much wider than mere terrorism, and the anarchist terrorists from the 1880s to the 1930s were part of a much longer tradition which began before them and continued after them and is not in fact specifically anarchist at all (see Ireland a hundred years ago; and today)—and that his conclusion that the solution is a revolutionary vanguard party is the most simplistic kind of Leninist-Trotskyist dogma now on the market. But Widgery has at least discussed the problems interestingly—though less impressively than the recent *Women's Liberation Workshop* pamphlet *Why Miss World?* which follows an earlier critique of the Biba bomb of May 1 in the *Women's Newspaper*.

We hope to return to the subject after the trial of the nine, raising at

this stage only the crude point that anyone who has been even remotely connected with the milieu of the Angry Brigade is all too well aware that there has been far too much loose talk and careless behaviour. When it was found necessary in the nuclear disarmament movement ten years ago to engage in certain clandestine activities, careful precautions were taken to avoid leaks of important information and to eliminate physical evidence such as fingerprints, documents, etc.; and that was in a non-violent campaign. A violent campaign surely has much more need of proper security, and whatever our views may be about the Angry Brigade we must regret that so much incriminating material has been connected with so many people.

But at least we can all be glad that no one has been seriously injured, and that no one has turned traitor in an otherwise almost total tragedy.

N.W.

Books

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The Political Theory of Anarchism April Carter £1.50 (10p)
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A Majority of One—or Two

WHEN THE EXCITEMENT of the campaign is over, and the elation of standing together in comradeship with hundreds, or thousands, has subsided, you stand alone before the judges and then the only reason for having done it is because you had to, and would have done if you had been the only one.

Jack Robinson and Philip Sansom both appeared before Sudbury magistrates on November 30 to answer for having refused to fill in the census form. The penalty imposed on each, by decision of the bench to make it the same, totalled in the region of £20. Jack Robinson's fine being £10 and costs £10.46 and Philip Sansom's fine £15 and costs £4.30.

Jack Robinson pleaded 'technically guilty' which deprived him of the opportunity to question witnesses and none were called. He made a brief statement in which he made plain his attitude to 'the never-ending audacity of elected persons', his fear of man's being made computer fodder and the dangers of information in the hands of the central government—for example in situations such as occurred under Nazi occupation, would the registrar general, his civil servants, or the local census officer refuse to hand over? Asked for reasons why he should be exempted from the laws of this country, he replied that with other laws in this country which have directly affected the human personality, such as military service, vaccination, and some others, there was a conscience clause; no such provision was made in the Census Act.

Philip Sansom, in view of the brevity of that hearing, pleaded 'technically not guilty'. It made little difference as the Clerk kept on ruling all questions and statements not designed to establish whether or not he was a person required to fill in the form, and whether or not he had done so, irrelevant. He did, however, cover a lot of ground, running through the attack on personal freedom and invasion of privacy if his private life was sold to market research companies, the Dutch census of 1939 which was later made the most horrible use of, and people of certain nationality, race and religion ended up in the gas chambers; that conditions of the census had been departed from by the employment of local enumerators and census officers; that most of the information was already in the hands of one government department or another, and he had nothing to hide. He has not got a Pakistani mother or a West Indian father, and it is up to those who have nothing to hide and nothing to lose to stand up on behalf of the very large number of people in this country to whom the collation of all this information could matter a great deal. Finally, he thought it ought to be the part of the legal system of this country to defend the liberty of the individual as well as the interests of the State!

Jack Robinson told the magistrates he would not pay any fine, and Philip Sansom afterwards told a reporter he would not pay. So both expect the bailiffs at the turn of the year.

M.C.

A Great Victory

THE ROPE AND THE ROD. The Englishman's two traditional loves. He has been weaned (permanently?) from the rope, and now the rod is beginning to go. It is an encouraging sign in this intensely reactionary, viciously reactionary period. Now at last the Inner London Education Authority has banned it in primary schools.

Needless to say the teachers are up in arms. Stripped of their deterrent, their ultimate weapon, they must feel naked as they enter the classroom. But they also say they rarely use it and there are so many other ways of ill-treating children in order to subdue them that I think they will get by without the help of the stick.

I have always, like all good men and women I trust, loathed and detested the National Association of Schoolmasters. This body can always be relied to come out with some reactionary statement, and this time their general secretary has called the abolition of the cane at this juncture a 'monumental piece of mistiming'. This is mild for the NAS.

Mistimed or not, it appears that the Poles gave up the rod as long ago as 1790. The English have a low opinion

of themselves, believing it impossible for social order to survive if the gallows and corporal punishment were abolished in their country. Foreigners could give up these forms of punishment, but conditions are different here, they would say, which could only mean that Englishmen are more vicious than Poles or Danes. Possibly there was a perverted pride in it. 'We are such wild tribesmen that we need these penalties to keep us in order, whereas Continental peoples who can do without them are a bunch of softies,' was what English people who defended the death penalty, flogging and caning, really meant, but dared not say. Put baldly like that it would sound too absurd, most English people, like most other people in the world, being law-abiding and timid.

STOPP, the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, is to celebrate the decision with a party for East End children. The society hopes that other education authorities will follow the example of the IEA, and that this enlightenment will spread to the secondary schools as well.

And so say all of us!

JOHN BRENT.

Subscription (1972) Changes

The subscription rates are:

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For the past ten years we have published only 40 issues of FREEDOM a year, omitting the week each month when 'Anarchy' was published.

From the beginning of 1972 we are reverting to regular weekly publication and there will be 52 normal 4-page issues of FREEDOM next year.

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ROMANTIC ASSASSINS

JAN MICHEL'S volume of lino cuts at £1 a copy should find a place in the gift wrappings of the faithful, for there are only 500 copies of the signed first edition of *Orlog en Vrede in Grafiek*. An artist of great social awareness, his work is in the tradition of the German expressionists in the use of broad flat masses of black and white. Munch was the Nordic master of this art, and it is a style peculiar to those countries, as Herwarth Walden made plain in his *Der Sturm* in the 1920s, when it became fashionable to catalogue the art styles. Michels has exhibited in many countries, and his first major exhibition was in 1963 in Amsterdam. The art of the wood cut and the lino cut is important, when it is a poor man's art, in that it is a cheap form of reproduction, but when it is unnecessary then the carved block and cut lino is itself the work of art. In this, the English artists with their fine and well-controlled line are the supreme masters, but the German artists have used it to good effect, as Jan Michels does with his large book, to give the feel of a corrupt and doom-infested society. The books are on sale within Freedom Bookshop, and they are worthy of your time and money, for they offer a dark facet into our age that never knew the elegance of Hogarth's mocking brush.

It is the limited edition of the silk screen prints of Flavio Constantini, on

show at the Prodhoe Gallery at 79 Duke Street, W.1, that is the greatest find of the week, for Constantini has produced a magnificent and limited edition of silk screens at only £20 each. Run off in thirteen colours they are truly a collectors' item, not only for the brilliance of the drawing but for the use that the artist has made of the café and street lettering, for it is a magnificent example of the difficult art of incorporating typography into a drawing, without throwing the drawing off balance. The subject matter should have the faithful leaping in the aisles for it concerns the acts and the executions of a small group of anarchists. They range from Giovanni Passanante who stabbed King Umberto in the arm, to Ravachol who was strangely mixed up in his murders, between private gain and the public cause. From grave robbing to blowing up five inoffensive people, and a death on the scaffold, gives Ravachol three silk screens, while Emile Henry, who tossed a home-made bomb into a crowded café gets two. We can applaud a man such as Nestor Makhno, the anarchist guerrilla, for here is a man forced by his time to take a stand in an area of violence. In areas of physical repression men are called upon, against their will or desire, to make a stand, and we can admire or despise the stand that they or we might have taken, but to applaud some witless youth

for a stupid act of killing, simply because he parrots a particular slogan, is to use the death of innocence for unworthy ends. As works of art these silk screens are worthy to grace any wall by virtue of the talent of the artist, but never let us romanticise violence at a distance, and claim that it is done in the name of humanity, for in the wreckage lies the dead and bleeding humanity. This day 16 men, women and children lay dead in an Irish public house, and all arms of romantic militant violence hasten to publicly wash their hands of this mass murder. One killing is romantic, sixteen is carnage, and who draws the line, little comrade? When will some flag-waving nationalist Irish artist pick up his pencil to romanticise this bloody and evil act? Not in our lifetime, little comrade.

Here is Flavio Constantini's mixed bag of anarchists, and those who claimed the movement's protection for their own simple-minded acts of violence. Accept it as art, for this it truly is, but have the courage to reject its morality, not only in the romantic past, but on this day in 1971 when sixteen people were slaughtered, men, women and children, by a nameless fool for a cause that cannot reject his actions quick enough for the news media of the day.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

Puritanical Union Leaders

THE ADVICE given to young workers by the TUC Assistant General Secretary, Mr. Len Murray, at a recent Industrial Society conference in London, was that they should go back to their bosses and demand that 'one, two or three young people should be taken on now'.

Such a statement is meaningless and is typical of the sort of remarks one expects from trade union leaders. To suggest this to workers, aged between 17 and 22, is an insult. They should be asking what have the trade unionists, like Len Murray, done to prevent the present high level of unemployment at all age levels throughout industry. Precious little in fact!

Len Murray also said that it was time to ban incompetent governments which caused unemployment, but he forgets that he supported such a government when Harold Wilson was in power. It was that government which started the reorganisation of industry, pushed plans for rationalising production methods and 'shook our surplus labour requirements'. Our memories are not that short that we cannot remember the emphasis that was placed on the balance of payments crisis. To Wilson and his economic advisers, nothing else mattered. Once a healthy surplus was achieved all would be well, or so we were told.

Perhaps Len Murray and his ilk really

believed it, but in so doing, they did nothing to prevent growing unemployment during the Labour Party's term of office. That government strengthened the capitalist system and tried, through its own Industrial Relations Bill, to further weaken the resolve of the trade union movement to fight.

MORE OF THIS AND THAT

Even with a Tory government, we have witnessed a pitiful display of opposition to unemployment from the leaderships of the trade unions. The TUC leaders strut around making speeches which bear no relation to what is happening in industry. They visit Mr. Heath and call for a £1,000m. boost to the economy and increased growth. They always want more workers to do more work, to create more of this and more of that, no matter what it is as long as people are employed. There seems to be a puritanical streak running through trade unions which says that their members must work or rather be employed for at least forty hours a week. There is no suggestion of blowing the hooter after only four hours each day as the IWW did in America in order to achieve an eight-hour day. Trade union leaders want more work instead of sharing out what there is to do.

Len Murray should have given his advice to young workers at British Rail

workshops. BR plan to sack 5,500 men at rolling-stock workshops and want to completely close down three of them, at Barassie, near Glasgow, Swindon, Wilts. and Ashford, Kent. These three workshops, involving 2,300 men, are scheduled to close next year, while the rest of the sackings will be at the remaining workshops over the next five years.

SLAUGHTER OF AN INDUSTRY

In reply to this, the men's union, the National Union of Railwaymen, have asked for the sackings to be spread more evenly around the 14 workshops and for as many as possible of the lost jobs to be achieved by natural wastage, early retirement and voluntary redundancy. This is no answer for young unemployed workers, because these solutions only lessen the number of jobs available. It is no good Len Murray telling them to demand that their employers take on more young workers when Mr. Sidney Green, General Secretary of the NUR and another TUC leader, has done very little to stop the loss of thousands of jobs for his members through sackings and natural wastage.

Certainly railway services, both passenger and freight, should be expanded, but over the years, from Beeching to Marsh, Mr. Green and the Executive of the NUR have assisted the government of the day in slaughtering an industry, men's jobs and a public service.

There is a world of difference between useful work and useless toil. Today many men are employed in soul-destroying tedious work and yet the only answer of the trade union leaders is to ask for more of this, not considering why we have to make more of what is mostly useless junk. Isn't it about time that we, the producers, said that we want less work and that we want to produce what is necessary and useful, instead of what is profitable.

P.T.

anarchistes devant la Police Correctionnelle et le Cour d'Appel de Lyon, a pamphlet published in Lyon in 1883— which mentions the attribution of the article to Kropotkin, but then comments in a footnote: 'This article was by citizen Carlo Caffero, and not Kropotkin' (p. 132). That would explain the reference to an Italian writer, Pisacane, and the advocacy of extreme methods which were traditional in the Italian republican movement but which have always seemed surprising in Kropotkin even at his most passionate. Presumably he never

LETTERS

publicly denied writing the article because he did not want to cause trouble for Caffero (1846-1892)—an Italian revolutionary who became an anarchist under the influence of Bakunin in 1871, later took a leading part in practising propaganda by deed with Malatesta and in formulating anarchist communism with Kropotkin, but abandoned anarchism in 1882; he became a social democrat, but then went mad, and died in a lunatic

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.

Revolutionary Workers Forum meets at 170a Deptford High Street, S.E.8, 7.30 p.m. every Monday.

Anarchist and Nihilist Group is being formed in Derby and anyone interested should contact: Gavin P. Lawrence, 63 Uttomster New Road, Derby, DE3 3NP.

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 coupons (any brands) will be well-funds are forthcoming. Cash donations, trading stamps and/or cigarette come 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.

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).

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.

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 Clives. 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 4PN.

Proposed Group: Colin & 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).

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

They said it could never happen

ACCORDING TO THE *Evening News* (25.11.71). 'A major earthquake occurred today near the east coast of Amchitka in the Aleutian Islands. It is the third since the United States detonated a massive nuclear underground weapon on November 6.'

These earthquakes have received little publicity, even in the Left-wing press. So blasé have people become to the threat that nuclear weapons pose that they can no longer be stirred to any serious protest. I suppose nothing will

be done until the earthquakes spread further afield. The Aleutians are pretty remote and unreal to most people, except of course to those who live there. But wait a bit. The earthquake zone extends all the way down the western seaboard of the American continent, which includes some big cities, Los Angeles and San Francisco in particular. As Dr. Fu Manchu used to say, 'The world shall hear from me again.' I do not think we are finished with the Amchitka bomb.

A.W.U.

Anarchist Books

Dear Comrades,

In reviewing the Dover edition of Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (November 27), Arthur Uloth quotes a passage from my introduction about Kropotkin's violent and conspiratorial tendencies, but in the process a line seems to have got lost. The sentence in question should read:

'... in 1877 he helped to write an article calling for propaganda by deed, and in 1880 he published an article calling for action not only "by speech, by writing" and so on, but also "by dagger, gun and dynamite".'

The former article was 'La propagande par la fait', written with Paul Brousse and published in James Guillaume's *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* on August 5, 1877; and the latter was 'L'Action', written by Carlo Caffero and published in Kropotkin's *Le Révolté* on December 25, 1880.

This gives me a good opportunity to

correct a mistake I made more than four years ago. On July 29, 1967, *Freedom* published an article called 'Kropotkin on Action', a translation I had made of 'L'Action', which I attributed to Kropotkin, following many writers on the subject, especially Jean Maitron in his *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France, 1880-1914*. Since then, however, I have read more of the relevant literature. For a time I was more firmly convinced of Kropotkin's authorship because I found that the accusation that he had written the article was part of the case against him when he was expelled from Switzerland in 1881 and again when he was imprisoned in France in 1883. But then I came across what seems to be a conclusive argument that he did not write the article after all.

This is in the most important contemporary anarchist account of the Lyon trial of January 1883—*Le procès des*

asylum. The attribution of this article to Kropotkin was an important point in the campaign against him during the 1880s, and has been an important point in studies of his thought and of anarchism in general ever since. He certainly published it, but it seems clear from the testimony of people who must have known the truth that he did not write it, and the false attribution should be challenged whenever it is repeated.

NICOLAS WALTER.

BURDENS TO SOCIETY

Dear Friends,

Concerning the article 'Burdens to Society', the sentiments we do agree with, the booklet itself we have had for

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some time. It has been plugged and pushed by the author to all the Claimants' Unions. We in Birmingham are of the opinion that it is a simpering, pathetic excuse by one of its more liberal lackeys or ex-lackeys for a system which deliberately starves and freezes and causes misery to thousands of people every year. Also the lists of the Claimants' Unions in Birmingham which are listed in the back of that pamphlet are out of date and we would be grateful if you could publish the correct addresses for us. They are:

Moseley & Sparkhill Claimants' Union, 66 Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11 (Monday nights 7.30 p.m.)
Handsworth Claimants' Union, c/o 40 Hall Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 20 (Monday nights, 7 p.m.)
Newtown Claimants' Union, 19 Rea Towers, Mosborough Crescent, Birmingham 19 (Monday night meetings)

SUE AND TERRY COOPER.

Published by Freedom Press, London, E.