

AMERICA'S TAPE-WORM

THE 'WATERGATE' inquiry creeps on its way with a possible adjournment for the summer; as if to give time for President Nixon to re-consider his refusal to make available the tapes, or to wipe out the tapes (the work of a minute) or to edit, censor or re-tape the tapes. The complex legal jargon of impeachment, of presidential privilege is taking over from names, dates and places. The vice-chairman of the committee, Senator Howard Baker, has said "it is important we stop [for the summer]; the committee is tired, the staff is tired and I venture to suggest the country is tired... Everyone would like now to think about it a little."

It would seem that the committee is willing to wound but afraid to strike. One of the symptoms of this failure is the apparent boredom of the public and the failure (with few exceptions) of the committee hearings to produce much good journalism. Mencken thou shouldst be living at this hour! There is not even an I. F. Stone as there was during the dark days of McCarthyism when Richard Nixon and the Ken-

edy brothers were winning their anti-communist spurs.

Even the Bernard Levins can only cry "unfairness to Nixon!" - as if Nixon hadn't got substantial power on his side. The sanctimonious goodness of the investigating committee with Senator Ervin (South Carolina) and his Biblical quotations dulls the edge of conflict and even the all-too human problems of Anthony Ulasewicz, ex-detective turned under-cover paying agent, raised unearned laughs.

The one exception in reportage (in the inexplicable absence of Norman Mailer) is Mary McCarthy, the American novelist whose "Watergate Diary" in the Observer is much the best coverage.

In her section for July 29th covering the evidence of John D. Ehrlichmann she writes:

"One arrives, then, at a mystery. Who approved Watergate, what could have been the object, if not 'intelligence' of which there was so little to be gathered? Perhaps Watergate responded to a felt need on the part of the Nixon circle, rather than to an immediate utili-

tarian goal? A need for total control of the environment. The model may be found in the Eastern bloc countries. Listening devices installed in offices, hotels, homes, embassies there serve no directly profitable purpose but simply go on recording, like an endlessly playing phonograph, furnishing employment to a vast labour force of translators and file clerks. The very purposelessness is part of the point, since the citizen can find no graspable, identifiable reason for a bug to be in his house; he just guesses it is there and feels apprehensive. We have now discovered this same seeming purposelessness in the White House bugging system. The Nixon crowd, whenever they approached the President, have been under constant surveillance."

These tapes are like a worm in the body politic of America. The tape-worm is a parasite which enters the body from infected meat and lives in the intestine. The worm may reach a length of from six to twenty feet and its presence causes

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LIBERAL SOFT CENTRE?

THE LIBERAL PARTY has announced, following their bye-election victories at Ely and Ripon, that they will field 500 or more candidates at the next general election. The Liberals see this as an all out bid to capture the balance of power. People have become discontented with both of the two main political parties and the Liberals have managed to exploit this discontent.

The discontent centres around the increasing cost of living. Wages are buying less and less and people can see no end to the continuing inflation. It is nothing unusual for governments to lose bye-elections, but it isn't so usual for the main opposition to lose out so badly. The Liberal Party are very jubilant and now see their opportunity of seeking political power. Their use of household names might have assisted them, but the mind boggles at what

could happen if all the parties started to exploit national images on any great scale.

Both Ely and Ripon were traditional rural Tory strongholds. However, Labour did not manage to make gains from the government's unpopularity. The government's majority of 29 at the general election is now down to 18. Mr. Heath has already given his party a pep talk in an effort to raise morale: "We must as a government and as a party meet the anxieties which have been expressed and we must act more energetically to put our message across not just at elections but all the time. We must redouble our efforts to deal effectively with the problems which worry people in their daily lives."

Political parties are always "redoubling their efforts" but people's lives remain much the same. Ordinary people are

seeking more control over their lives and the decisions that affect them. The State and the powerful companies lie outside the influence of the electorate. We have very little say or control over policies because these policies are implemented not for the benefit of people but for the continuance of the capitalist system. Voting-in a Liberal government would not change anything. The domination of the State would remain and companies would still make profits from those who earn wages. The whole money system would remain and the cost of living would always be too high for most people to secure their real needs. People should have free access to the means of life which they have created. Anarchists want people to reject authority and build a society where we can live harmoniously. To refuse to vote is a small step in that direction.

anaemia and intestinal disorders.

* * *

The American body-politic is as different from the British body-politic as the British is from the rest of the world but all are afflicted with the same parasites. The American system has a proliferation of committees, of which the Senate Committee on 'Watergate' is one. It has no executive power and can only make recommendations but it has power to institute proceedings, through the Department of Justice, for contempt or perjury which carry with them the risk of imprisonment.

President Nixon made his name in one such committee, The House Committee on Un-American Activities which was graced at one time by the notorious Joseph McCarthy and continued its red-baiting sessions well into the Sixties and for all one knows, may still be in existence if not in session. Nixon, then a mere congressman for California, was a member of the Committee and was more than zealous in unmasking Alger Hiss as a perjurer and (by implication) a Communist and a spy who had abused his position in the Department of State to pass on secrets to the Russians.

At the time (1948 - it was even before Joseph McCarthy over-reached himself) it was as popular to be anti-Russian - the cold war had started - as it had been popular to be pro-Russian in 1942-45. Nixon had used the red bogey as an election platform and the Hiss case gave him a chance to make his mark, which he took with that same reckless disregard for ethics or scruples which distinguishes his career to this day. In 1950 he became a senator and in 1952 was vice-President to Eisenhower.

The House Committee was revelling in the disclosures of ex-Communists who were using the Committee as a penitential form and a publicity-laden confession. Among the souls dredged up was one Whitaker Chambers, a senior editor (although once he claimed 'senior editor') on Time magazine who wished the Committee to look into a list of ex-Communists in government service which he had supplied nine years before (1939) to the Assistant Secretary of State. Chambers alleged that these 'New Dealers' including Alger Hiss (then of the State Department) were of Communist tendencies and that Hiss was Chambers' best friend in the party. Hiss denied it and said he had never known the man as Chambers, and that 'Chambers' was never more than a deadbeat acquaintance.

Hiss denied he had ever been a Communist or anything like one. Chambers later produced a wad of documents which he said were stolen state papers. They were said by the F.B.I's experts to have been done on an old typewriter that once belonged to Hiss. Hiss admitted to the typewriter. Hiss served 44 months of a 5-year sentence for perjury - after two trials. There was no trial for espionage.

Whitaker Chambers died naturally. Hiss was granted his government pension back-dated to 1966; J. Parnell Thomas, the chairman of the Committee, was sentenced and jailed in 1949 for 'padding' his Congressional payroll; and President Richard Nixon has refused to co-operate with a Senate Committee.

The whole H.U.A.C. hearing on the Hiss-Chambers confrontation was a melee of lies and half-truths, of unfounded rumours and hearsay evidence, of sensational evidence of microfilms hidden in pumpkins, of typewriters which may have been manufactured to commit forgery, and of dull details about house-leases and car-sales. At one time it seemed possible that Chambers and not Hiss would be indicted for perjury. But it seems that Nixon had a long session with Chambers in August and in November the 'spy' papers were in the hands of the Department of Justice. A microfilm was turned over to the H.U.A.C., Nixon came rushing back from a holiday cruise when the papers were released by Chambers 'who had hidden them away as insurance'. We have never been told what they contained although Hiss always claims they were merely not-very-important notes and memoranda which may have been extracted from his office, but the American official secrets act has taken care we never shall know. In any case three years later America was sharing a great number of official secrets with Russia her ally - and Alger Hiss was being officially pro-Communist...at Yalta where he was part of Roosevelt's staff.

Much of the gall of the H.U.A.C. Committee and the brutal arrogance of Richard Nixon was due to the American post-war conviction that the Russians had out-smarted them in the war and in the peace, and the strengthening of Communism in Europe and Asia and the down-grading of Chiang-Kai-Shek was not to America's advantage. Representative Mundt of the Committee apparently thought Alger Hiss personally responsible for influencing Roosevelt's policy at Yalta and on China. What would he think of Congressman Nixon's

present views on Russia, China and Chiang-Kai-Shek?

Chambers in his emetic biography Witness, reflecting on some maliciously introduced rumour naively comments, "There was nothing improbable about the allegation in the climate of that time." Allegations about Hiss's influence at Yalta were nothing to the suicide of W. Marvin Smith, a minor witness but an important link in the chain that sent Alger Hiss to jail, and the death of Harry Dexter White who was harassed to death by pro-Communist allegations.

Nor was Nixon free of bad temper in his conduct of the case. He was a self-elected prosecuting attorney and a bad loser. When the important micro-films were revealed to possible be of 1945 make - which if Chambers got them in 1938 was peculiar - Nixon told Chambers, "You'd better be here". Fortunately (for Chambers) Eastman-Kodak settled for a pre-1938 date.

Nixon is reported (by Chambers whose words should always be read with caution, a precaution Nixon never took): "If the American people understood the real character of Alger Hiss, they would boil him in oil." Fine Quaker sentiments! One wonders how Nixon will fare with the Committee of 1973?

Jack Robinson.

Apologies to P.T. and our readers for two typing errors in the article Cloth Cap in Hand last week. In the second para the words "and Jones" were omitted in the sentence: 'We've had recently both Scanlon and Jones, that left wing double act...'

The third sentence in column 3 should have read 'If the leadership of the unions refused to talk it would release an initiative from the rank and file.' (Not 'irritation' as typed.)

M.C.

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THE GENTLE ART

EVERY MAN whose actions have altered the course of human affairs leaves behind him a small and dedicated following of friends and enemies. Those who believe that their present cause is being betrayed seek justification and a claim to the true faith in the living acts of their dead apostle and those who wish for a return to the old faith, be it religion or politics, dig among the yellow bones for freshly stinking facts to fit a new thesis. One doubts if Marat, Cromwell or Richard the Third will ever become universal favourites with the romantic super-market A Level stream for it is better, in imagination, to mount the scaffold in full Gay Liberation gear and to toss a curling lip and a tear-wet rose to the Howling Rent-a-Mob than to have to win worthy battles against the enemies of Parliament, be assassinated by a good looking chick or to be believed to have buried two innocent bodies as a member of the Royal Lump. The Establishment will always protect its own to justify its own errors and within our lifetime we shall see Stalin and Hitler rehabilitated as messy, over-violent leaders of their nations in a time of great historical struggles and the dead will not protest. Richard III is the fourth of the great biographical exhibitions mounted by the National Portrait Gallery, London WC2H OHE, and while the exhibition is no more than a three dimensional version of the coffee table/art history book the excellent illustrated catalogue by Dr. Pamela Tudor-Craig is a valuable and permanent addition to the scholarship of that period. Our view of Richard III is, and always will be, conditioned by Shakespear's portrait of the man deformed and evil and whether Richard murdered his two nephews we shall never know but the sponge mind and easy tongue of folk legend will always fasten the crime onto him. Richard reigned for no more than 25 months and in the battle for kingly power that culminated in his defeat at Bosworth, T. B. Pugh has argued that Richard's inability to get hired military fighting men was because Richard failed to tie the newly risen money magnates to his banner, and by tie them Pugh means that Richard should have held them by overwhelming debt and for the love of money they would have supported him with paid arms and history would have been rewritten. But Richard III powders to dust in disgraceful death and we take wine under the beautiful eyes of Mary Cotterell while 15th Century music is piped through the galleries and with one hand holding the refilled sherry glass we

pick up a 15th Century helmet worn by the English rank and file. Of beaten iron, it was standard issue and it is heavy in the hand yet the scholars who compiled the 120 page catalogue give its size in height, length and width (6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10" x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ") and not its weight. This is a fundamental error on the part of the academics for of first consideration to the fighting man is the weight of his arms and his equipment, and this example is the universal gulf that divides the academics from the worker and the soldier. Visual information versus the amount of sweat.

THE DEATH OF LORCA by Ian Gibson (W. H. Allen, £3.50)

THREE TRAGEDIES by Garcia Lorca (Secker & Warburg £1.25)

RICHARD III intro. by Pamela Tudor-Craig (National Portrait Gallery. 30p)

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LAVENTRY PAVLOVICH BERIA, COMMISSAR by Thaddeus Wittlin. (Angus & Robertson £3.95)

THE GREAT TERROR by Robert Conquest (Macmillan, out of print, published at £4.20)

THE NIGHT OF LONG KNIVES by Max Gallo (Souvenir Press £2.75)

Political Murder

Pamela Tudor-Craig writes that "murder in the interests of political expediency was accepted in the 15th Century" and here writes a wench who has led a sheltered life, for the gentle art of political murder is as valid and as rewarding today as at any time in our inglorious political past. So common in fact that only the romantic, the exotic or the bizarre are worthy of a commentary and Ian Gibson's book on the murder of the Spanish poet Garcia Lorca can be catalogued under all three headings. Lorca is accepted as one of the finest poets and dramatists of our century and he was murdered and his body slung into an unmarked grave when at the age of 38 he was captured in Granada by Franco's Nationalist rebels. I, think, myself, that Lorca as a poet and dramatist has been greatly over-rated and a re-reading of Blood Wedding, Yerma and Bernada Alba with its shallow mysticism, its mildly decadent and erotic poesy as a framework for its rather turgid dramatics makes me regard Lorca as a popular poeticule rather than a major poet but it is a small matter. Like Oscar Wilde, Lorca had a willing audience

ready to applaud his talent and he bent and bowed to the Spanish intelligentsia who had found a singer for their songs of revolt, but Gibson makes his documented point that Lorca had little understanding or feeling for politics and it was the romanticism of theatrical revolution that drew him into the Popular Front of 1936. Unlike Sean O'Casey, a finer poet and a greater dramatist, Lorca chose the right cause for the wrong reason and his popular success marked him for death.

On the 17th July 1936 the Right-wing revolt began in Melilla and by the 23rd July Granada had fallen to the Nationalists. Little is known of the death of Lorca and one dreamed up a sympathetic image of the death of the murdered poet for too many living politicians in Spain wish to deny their role in the murder, but like all great tragedy it contained its share of black comedy for on the 16th July Lorca left the safety of Madrid for his appointment with death in Granada and on the same train there travelled Ramon Ruiz Alonso, his murderer. There within the house of Luis Rosales, all Falangists, Lorca believed he was safe and in the bureaucracy of political murder there was much telephoning and much high-level office special pleading. Lorca's arrest and death was ugly and brutal in that Juan Luis Trecaastro boasted that "We've just killed Lorca. We left him in a ditch and I fired two bullets into his arse for being a queer" and this is the gentle art of political murder. Lorca was too well known for his murder to pass unheeded and the Falange were eager, then and now, to deny any part in it and the crime has been fastened onto the black backs of the Accion Popular and the Confederacion Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA), both Catholic Church spawn organisations. In remembering and paying homage to Federico Garcia Lorca the world must pay homage to the thousands of unnamed men and women of Granada who died the common death and shared the common grave for by the manner of his death Lorca forced the world to honour their memory.

The Long Knives

And remember the unfortunate Wilhelm Eduard Schmidt, the music critic of the Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, for on June 30th 1934 in Hitler's purge of his revolutionary left the Gestapo murdered him in mistake for Ludwig Schmitt but they sent

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...from Page 3

The Bild Zeitung of 21.7.73 carried a report of a "little joke" during a boring manoeuvre.

"A medical officer of the Bundeswehr sewed trouser buttons onto the bare skin of 3 soldiers during a manoeuvre. One soldier had the dark blue button in the palm, the second one on the back of the hand, and the third one had it sewn onto the upper arm.

"It happened during the NATO Manoeuvres "Bandage Barter" in a forest near Rendsburg. The medical orderlies of the anti-aircraft-rocket battalion 37 of the Luftwaffe had to exercise for an emergency as well. Young soldiers were covered with blood-red colour and hurriedly carried to the operating tent.

"There stood the strong and blond medical officer, Dr. Jorg L (29). He had only a very short period of national service left. Dr. L. said to Bild: 'When the injured were laid on the table, I arranged a cloth in a way that prevented them from observing my actions. Then, with a bent pair of tweezers I carefully lifted their skin and threaded a thin needle with germ-free cotton through skin and button. My patients were not anaesthetised. Whatever I did it does not hurt, it just stings a little.'

"But a private with button lodged a complaint. The medical officer was called before his superior and severely reprimanded. Dr. Jorg L. said 'All this was just a joke. I neither wanted to nor did I hurt the men. Even students in the duelling clubs are still sewing buttons onto their skin these days.'

"The young doctor, for whom the Ministry of Defence has nothing but praise, is presently engaged in a hospital in Bremen, as an assistant doctor."

This little front-page snippet is interesting insofar as it indicates the servile and slave-like nature required to be a soldier for the state.

The 'little joke' attitude of superiors and the one and only complaint lodged, as well as the rather late publication of this incident, indicate very distinctly how well-entrenched obedience to the state can be, and is. Medical experimentation on inmates is probably a big joke with bigger operations as well as less co-operation by the "patients". A soldier virtually volunteers for it when he can be operated on without consent or consultation, let alone any reason.

K. Zimmer

Dusseldorf

Wilhelm Schmidt's coffin back from Dachau with an offer, that his widow refused, of a small pension for one of the syndromes of the Right in right- or left-wing politics is a pornographic obsession with legality. In 1934 Hitler had to make the choice between destroying his revolutionary street fighting army of SA troops commanded by Ernst Roehm in exchange for the promised support of the army and the middle class, or moving on to a class revolution. If he destroyed the SA he would destroy his fighting arm and the German generals might rat on their deal, but as Max Gallo shows in his book, The Night of the Long Knives, Hitler chose wisely and there was a night of political mass murder and the German generals ate shit. This is surely the art of politics that there can be neither honour, friendship or loyalty and its conclusion is the gentle art of murder with the winner claiming to have purged the sexual and political mores of the tribe and the losers being lightly buried in view of post-humous rehabilitation. Gallo's book is solid on fact, easy on the eye and is worth the attention of those interested in the lives of murderers who still walk among us.

This is Your Death

Robert Conquest always makes delightful reading for the committed and the plain barmy and his book is a marvellous tonic for those who believe that Heath is a communist in the pay of Chairman Mao, for Robert tots up every cadaver with a Slav name and snow on its boots and as the 1,000,000s ring up cries "Joe Stalin - This is Your Life" but it makes merry reading as long as one keeps in mind that Robert is strictly a Czar man and has little use for the visiting team, while for Thaddaus Wittlin's life of Beria the Stalinist commissar a sad shake of the head for it is full on fact and information but short on credibility. Wittlin is a Polish-born historian and was imprisoned in a forced labour camp but has lived the last twenty years in America. His book is full of inside lavatory information that one is forced to doubt and he attributes, not too much evil, but the doing of too much evil to Beria without realising that the liberty of the servant is dictated by the

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length of the master's chain, and the low level of the book must surely be summed up by this quotation: "Now came the most thrilling sensual joy to Beria when, as he entered the young and innocent body and raped it as if he would tear it apart, the small, helpless, adolescent girl suddenly gave a mad shriek from being deflowered etc." I do not believe that the villains of history perform before a writing audience and I too gave a mad shriek but only as a compulsive reader coming across the unreadable.

Arthur Moyses.

LETTERS

ANGRY BRIGADE

T V Echoes

This letter was sent to Time Out and has not yet been published.--Eds.

Dear Time Out,

On Friday night BBC police inspectors Barlow, Habershon and Bond finally proved that Jack the Ripper was one of a gang of funloving bombthrowing Spanish anarchists holiday-making in Belgium, who were in cahoots with the hippies of Haight-Ashbury the situationists the Baader-Meinhoff group Claimants Unions communes Essex and Cambridge University dropouts drug addicts Socialist Worker IT Time Out squatters Notting Hill agitators womens liberation pop music demonstrations and double beds to overthrow British society. The producer Gordon Carr (no relation) was probably intending to show how their early toilet training was inadequate too, but he couldn't fit it in.

If real victims suffering in gaols were not involved, it would be tempting to treat the whole programme on the Angry Brigade as a glossy sick joke. Your article of last week was good but not critical enough by half. We expect you to carry another critique or two of this appalling film, so here are only a few points out of many which struck us.

1. The film was a sustained attack on the old bogey of the 'youth culture' which hurled everything the producer could think of that is vaguely connected with youth into the causes of explosions.
2. The film was intended to give the clear impression that the 5 were convicted of setting off bombs. But there was never any proof of this, and they were of course convicted of nothing of the sort. They were convicted of conspiracy under our horrifyingly all-embracing conspiracy laws. This is a clear example of totally dishonest film-making.
3. Why do Spaniards leave Spain in the first place? The film never hinted why. Let's spell it out. Because Spain is a fascist country where free speech, strikes, and workers organisations of any kind are rewarded with gaol, beatings, and murder. Since nobody in his right mind can

possibly deny this, this was simply the opening example of many in a film which consistently refused to examine the real causes of anything.

4. Ian Purdy was displayed as a university-trained middle class intellectual who perverted the mind of the poor working class lad Prescott from an unfortunate background. Thus is the way with all revolutionaries, eh? The obvious meaning is that middle class students abuse their privileged education instead of going into the Stock Exchange like good boys and girls.

5. The rehash with extras purported to show Hilary Creek's feet meeting up with other feet in the customs yard. We were told that there were several completely different accounts of these events from Prosecution and Defence; at the same time, we saw only one account - the police version, naturally - on film.

6. The film, like the police, made much of friendship groups and address books. Now kinship, friendship and interest groups are a large part of the informal and formal links which bind capitalists together. Far more important than Anna Mendelson's address book is Angus Ogilvie's - or Tiny Rowland's - or Reginald Maudling's - or John Poulson's. This is one of the messages of the pamphlet Who Is In Control? To realise this, is to begin to understand what the Angry Brigade were on about.

7. The film was a deliberate polarisation: it said, without any examination whatsoever of the social, economic and political reasons for revolt, either you're for the Angry Brigade bombthrowing youth culture and the whole shebang, or you're against them, i.e. in favour of the Establishment. Gordon Carr sees the world in black and white.

Many people still remember the disgraceful Gus McDonald "World in Action" film on the Angry Brigade as well as their good film about political prisoners in Spain. Let this be the last lesson. Several people like Angela Weir must have been approached but refused to take part. She got tarred with the same brush anyway. We must know how many and what their reasons, which were obviously correct, as well as the inducements which persuaded Chris Bott, Stuart Christie and the others to take part in this travesty. Did they ask Gordon Carr, what are your credentials? Are they happy with having no editorial influence whatever, with seeing

most of what they said to the camera struck out in blue pencil or a transcript? We can't believe that. Why and for how much did Time Out deliver up the film of the pointless police raid on their offices?

To hell with personable pseudo-sympathetic reporters appearing at the door. They make a dirty living as yellow press journalists always have. It is time that more people refused to subsidize journalists to produce articles or films which exploit their lives in such a nasty way.

J.

LETTER

Dear Comrades,

If I, being closely involved in the production of FREEDOM, am sometimes bewildered by some of its content, I think there must be readers who find it confusing. I did not see the television programme on the "Angry Brigade" reviewed by J.W. in FREEDOM of 28th July, but the review left me, in J.W.'s phrase, not knowing what on earth's going on. Yes I know the BBC producer was linking if not identifying the Stoke Newington Five with the "Angry Brigade", the various bomb and bullet attacks on various buildings over a number of years with the "Angry Brigade" and all of them with anarchists - I read the lucid and likeable interview with Stuart Christie in Radio Times. But my memory of all that FREEDOM has published about the Stoke Newington Eight (or Nine) reported that they denied being "The Angry Brigade" (and did not claim to be propagating anarchism) and that FREEDOM accepted their word for it. If any of the participants in the programme made any statement on this, J.W. gives no indication in his review of the enjoyable (!) programme, nor mention of the five young people eking out 10-year sentences for what they claim to be innocent of.

Fraternally,

M.Canipa

We welcome news, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of MSS & Notices is Monday of the week of publication. Earlier receipt is helpful

LETTERS

CHRYSLERS AND AFTER

Dear Friends,

Pete Roberts may not strike moral attitudes but his letter is replete with the messianic quasi-Second Coming theology that characterises so much anarchist debate. Apparently car workers cannot be expected to comprehend the pernicious nature of their product until, pursuing the Damascus path of their day-to-day struggle, they are confronted with the blinding vision of Workers-Control-cum-Revolution and will thereby hasten to convert their factories to other uses. This curiously patronising approach to a body of, presumably, normal sentient human beings not only condemns us to a perpetual "jam tomorrow" existence but ignores the social effects of what has been ACHIEVED ALREADY. Stay-out strikes of many weeks' duration have been quite a feature of the car factory scene in recent years and, with the baleful production stilled at last, life has gone on much as before with the added stimulus of time for heartsearching and, who knows, occasional repentance, even to the extent of becoming a bus-worker instead. Admittedly and shamefully, bus workers are damnably exploited by a Capitalist society with its grotesque car-aeroplane fixation, but in this "very real and material world" let's demand of the State (by no means an impossible demand) that the day-to-day struggle of bus workers is accorded rather more sympathy than the claims of those whose militancy has underlined their basic superfluity in ANY society.

Yours in anarchy,

David Sedley

RESPONSIBILITIES TO FAMILIES OF RESISTERS

- American Conscientious Objectors still imprisoned.

Several of the fellows in federal prison for conscientious disobedience to draft laws are married and have children. The Sharing Fund of Peacemakers has been supplying funds to these families monthly in the amount needed, this being from \$50 to \$225. The reason Peacemakers has been doing this is that in the mid-60's, when the movement of draft resistance was rapidly growing, the only group with experience in this field was Peacemakers which had maintained a "Sharing Fund" for several years for use among Peacemaker people. When the larger need arose, Peacemakers was asked by

The Good Woman of Stepney

THE AREA of East London where Freedom Press abides, a busy commercial area on the fringe of the City, is one of the remaining pockets of nineteenth century poverty, dirt and dereliction in London, where the homeless find a hostel bed and the drinkers of methylated spirits sleep their few hours of unconsciousness of their misery on the occasional green patch or in abandoned buildings.

Recently an elderly widow was here murdered. The press naturally included the ingredient in their menu of sensation, the national papers with an unconcerned paragraph, the local press with the lurid full page of identity and detail of the naked body found strangled with a black fishnet stocking on a

various peace groups to take on the "sharing responsibilities" for the whole movement. Peacemakers has been carrying out these responsibilities faithfully.

In the beginning, peace groups and their journals often made mention of the availability of funds for families in need (where the wage-earner had been imprisoned for nonviolent acts of war resistance) and they asked people to send contributions for such purpose to the Peacemaker Sharing Fund. Through the years there has been no financial problem, even though as many as 10 to 15 families have constantly been recipients... Recently two things have occurred: there are no larger allotments available, and the peace movement has, through preoccupation or unawareness, stopped giving attention to this matter.

We all know that although the dramatic phase of the Vietnam War is over, the shooting and bombing war does go on, and that men are being imprisoned constantly under the unchanged draft laws.

Consequently the Sharing Fund finds itself with a continuing need and a lack of necessary funds. Up to now the Fund has not turned down any family which has applied and which comes within its purpose and guidelines. Money is now, however, running out.

Will you carry this story and this appeal to people you meet, and to those with whom you are in communication?

From those working in the
Peacemaker Sharing Fund
10208 Sylvan Avenue
CINCINNATI, Ohio, 45241. USA

mattress in a derelict house, and police statements that while the dead woman "had no record of prostitution" she had lived a jekyll and hyde existence, working by day but resorting to the lowest company afterwards. And as far as they are concerned all that remains is to find urgently the particularly brutal murderer.

But that is not all for people who knew her. Some local people, stallholders, shopkeepers and workmates are as grieved at the savagery inflicted on her name as at the brutal ending of her life. One lady who had known and worked with her for thirty years speaks of her life of hard work ("when did she have time to be a prostitute?"), her spotlessly kept home, her care for an alcoholic husband until his death despite urges from friends to leave him, her generosity to anyone in need, her fellowship, and the conviction that if she talked to meths drinkers she would be urging them to try to get out of it.

So some decided to put their names to a 'petition' to counteract the picture presented by press and police, and defend her good name. It won't get the circulation of the story of the gruesome murder, but it makes a reality of a dignity and human goodness that outlasts the paper currency of the squalid, callous values we would think were those of our society if we believed all and only what we read in the papers. M.C.

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SQUATTING

I have read Father Fuck's articles with interest. We are both squatters in Somers Town and our paths have frequently crossed in the past year. I was pleased to be asked to contribute an article on squatters, if only to refute some of his statements.

There are some apparent contradictions. In Part 3 he cites a survey conducted in our area which shows that we do not live off the state - most of us living off earnings if not actually working. Then in Part 4 he states that we "have all the time - but I don't know of any works of art or literature produced by us".

So I thought I'd write a little about our life-style, or, as GLC man Alec Kazantis puts it, our "deviant behaviour".

Firstly our music. Loud, electric, subtle, soft -- but above all emotive.

All urban dwellers need an anaesthetic. Tenants - the working, producing classes with a rent book, provided with H & C, mod cons and amenities laid on - have the telly. Us, self-helpers, make our own music. (I'm listening to Tubular Bells whilst writing this - recorded proof of my premise.) The street band has just earned itself a prestige recording contract worth £1,000 advance. (Try practising in a bed-sit!)

There are many professional people in our community, teachers and people working in educational or social science fields forming a significant proportion.

Newspaper headlines tell with alarming and ever-increasing frequency of the drop in applications for teacher jobs and link this with high mortgage, or rental costs. And yet the fact that I am squatting was a big factor in my not getting a teaching post a couple of weeks back. If I were not squatting I could not afford even to apply!

But enough of sour-grapes. I can rationalize.

Through the direct action, self-help nature of squatting the realization sinks in that we don't need society's aid and therefore does it need ours?

As a teacher, I would find it hard to direct and opinionate kids (because it's my job) and then go and live my life without outside interferences or direction. Contradictory and immoral.

When the masses and the bosses come to accept individuals and eccentrics for WHO they are rather than WHAT they

are then I will be ready. Till then, fuck you Jack (Margaret Thatcher, Heath, Wilson or your favourite bogey man) I'm alright. I'm the only one in step.

Paul [F.P.] talks about most of us having "well to do parents who would be happy to have us back". Mine wouldn't. I have an unresearched theory that most of us are squatting to escape from the family unit. Why is it that so many of us read R. D. Laing? Why is it that soft drugs play a part in the lives of most of us?

We try and expand our minds, play around (sometimes seriously) with lost cultures and study anthropology as much as mysticism. We yearn to escape from the social mores which tell us we must, or should, and look for rational ideas that tell us we could. In a community or commune with diverse talents and backgrounds we are free of being told what is good for you. We ignore consumerisation. "Guinness (or skol greens) is good for you" -- it must be so because the newspapers tell us.

Forget about living in a technological age and the wonders of modern science. Crap. We are surrounded by the Pack Age. But I've taken a squat for myself. I can cover my surroundings to suit myself. I've even got flying ducks painted on my front wall. Why? Because no-one else has.

Mind you, squatters and all others who profess to have dropped out from the material world are also prey to commercial interests. Look at the wealth of CBS records, India-craft and the proliferation of underground magazines. But by continually telling ourselves that we are free to choose what we buy and how we live -- perhaps we are.

Unfortunately (and I use this word reservedly) squatting is selfish. There is a joke current in squatting circles which runs thus: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SQUATTER -- Got up at 2. Rolled a joint. Put on some records. Went back to bed. Smoked the joint. Worke up at 7. Cooked some brown rice and veg. Smoked another joint and generally had a good day. (Some neighbour trouble at 2 a.m. -- seems he doesn't appreciate my music.)

* * *

Squatting in a council redevelopment area is easy. I am squatting in a GLC house because I'd faced considerable hassles and paranoia squatting in a property company's property. I didn't like their bailiffs, court actions or

police raids. Politically we achieved a great deal (and got co-opted to the Residents' Committee). But it was a period of sacrifice. Now I am free to follow personal pursuits.

Personally I regret that there are so few political activists in the street.

Squatters are a force to be feared when sufficiently aroused. Look at the headlines we occasionally get. We are looked at with suspicion and scorn by tenants and landlords alike. Yet we are permanently heading a rent-strike. Tenants should realize that we have escaped their frustrations (although their abuse to us, naturally focused on our eccentricities and electric music, is hardly rational).

The basic question in any situation is "Why should I?" If the only answer is because someone tells us to, then do what is thought to be right. If an action contemplated harms no-one physically, then how can it be wrong? Any action that stirs the brain-cells must be partly right. APATHY KILLS.

So, finally, to the oft-heard accusation that we are idle good-for-nothings.

Possibly true for some of us. But we are treading a path showing signs of wear. Squatters in Herne Hill have got the local council to place a Compulsory Purchase Order on some of Freshwater's holdings. The squat in 220 Camden High Street seems to be mobilising the silent majority against Joe Levy and perhaps spear-heading a united drive of tenants and squatters alike to force Camden council to be more open and sensible in its housing policies. No-one wants to live in an architects' dream.

All we squatters ask is that we be left free to live as we wish. And if, in our houses, we disturb no-one, why shouldn't we?

Terry Collins

SQUATTERS CAN STAY

-- for the present

SHOREDITCH County Court (Justice Willis) on 27th July granted stay of execution to the Council's application for immediate possession of a house in Queensland Road, Dalston. He said the four squatters can remain until such time as the Council requires the house for renovation.

A similar judgement was given by the same judge in respect of two other houses in the same borough of Hackney.

J.N.

KIRKBY TENANTS

STILL ON STRIKE

ON MONDAY, July 23rd Kirkby Council's Housing and Health committee held one of their meetings in the council chambers and one of the items on the agenda was the rent strike. Winstanley (housing officer) informed the meeting that rent arrears for Tower Hill now stand at over £116,000 and are rising at a rate of £2,300 per week. He also stated that there are only 200 tenants on rent strike. If this be the case, then it means that the rents of these 200 tenants are between £11 and £12 per week. The rents would have to be in that region if 200 tenants were making the arrears go up by £2,300 per week. To be more realistic, there are between 400 and 500 tenants still on rent strike and the average rent on the estate is about £6 per week. After nine months of rent strike (it started on 11th October 1972) it is fantastic that 400 or 500 tenants out of 2,100 on the estate are still holding out.

Other things to come out of this meeting were such as, a supplementary rate of as much as 6p in the pound may be levied on the rest of Kirkby if the losses caused by the Tower Hill rent strike are not recouped. (The old con trick once again, divide and conquer.) The other thing that came out of the meeting was that the council go for an attachment of earnings. There were seven councillors at this committee meeting, five voted in favour of an earnings attachment order and two voted against it.

This decision will now be put forward to the next full council meeting in the near future. I can't see Kirkby Council getting any loans in the near future as money can only be borrowed on the strength of future revenue, and if no future revenue is forthcoming then they don't get any loans.

Kirkby Council are still getting the County Court to send out court orders to rent strikers on Tower Hill. But these will be ignored as usual. It is the Tower Hill 'Un-Fair Rent' Action Group's policy over earnings attachment orders to completely ignore them and to ignore any request to appear at court. All court orders will be sent back to court with one thing on them: 'On rent strike'.

Correspondent

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Paul Goodman: J.G. Lergessner
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