

11 August, 1973

MAPLIN AND THE GRAVEL-PIT

GREAT CONTROVERSY has been produced in Britain by the decision to go on with the complex plan for a new town, a road network and a new airport at Maplin (formerly Foulness Island) in Essex. In a small village in Suffolk a great controversy has been produced by the decision to open up a gravel-pit which necessitates heavier usage by lorries of picturesque country lanes.

The two problems are the macrocosm and microcosm of the apparent dilemma facing man in society today. For anarchists the problem is particularly acute since it involves concepts of progress and (in opposition) alliances with strange bed-fellows for very mixed motives.

* * *

One of the chief recommendations of Maplin and of the gravel pit is that they are marks of progress and will help to solve economic problems, partly by providing work and additionally providing an economic superstructure.

On the national plane we have been promised the development of the long-debated, long delayed Channel Tunnel and the omnipresent moribund Concorde. Economically, Government, Opposition and much of the population have been entrapped (Tony Benn notably) in the dangling bait of provision of employment.

These operations have taken their place beside Hitler's autobahns and the Tennessee Valley Authority as examples of economic 'pump-priming'. On a world scale, war, the preparations for war, and space travel perform the same functions of providing employment and putting money into circulation.

At the same time, on a sordid level, such vast projects provide dividends for party sponsors (for Trade Unionists in the shape of work) and opportunities of graft for bureaucrats and on a higher level 'kick-backs' and moral support for political functionaries, and promises of votes all round. It is obvious that Mr. Heath

and his Government are moved by the same springs as Gravelham Parish Council.

In Gravelham (not its real name) the same growls are heard as centre round Maplin. "You can't stand in the way of progress". Gravelham must be dragged kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century. It's later than we think.) The old argument is produced (which sounds startlingly new) that our forefathers objected to railways hence they were built well outside towns with the consequent inconvenience to town-dwellers; many a feudal landowner defied the railways and consequent detours played havoc with timetables; must we lag behind in gravel pits and airport facilities?

The concept of progress is a Victorian heritage based upon the development of technology and sustained by an optimistic conviction that 'more' means 'better'. 'Progress' is in truth an indication of motion

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IF THE MUGGERS DON'T GET YOU

THE 'OVAL FOUR' want a Home Office inquiry into their case now that they have been released from prison (one from borstal) following the Appeal Court's decision. The four black youths, Winston Trew, Constantine 'Omar' Boucher, Sterling Christie and George Griffiths were convicted last November of assault on police officers and attempting to steal.

The trial took place during a time when a 'mugging' hysteria had been created by the popular press' lurid tales of people being waylaid and beaten up. They received sentences of two years after a five weeks' trial. They had been arrested by plain clothes police officers belonging to a London Transport anti-'mugging' squad. The four said they had been set upon without the police officers identifying them-

selves. Not unnaturally a fight started and they were arrested and taken to Kennington Road police station. There they signed statements admitting to picking pockets on the Underground.

During their trial they maintained that they had signed these statements because they were beaten up in the police station. Although these statements were discounted, all four were found guilty of assault on police officers, despite that they had been unaware of this fact.

The senior officer of this anti-'mugging' squad, Det.-Sgt. Ridgewell, has been involved in similar arrests. (A calypso sung in South London pubs runs 'If the muggers don't get you Sgt. Ridgewell will'.) At another trial at the Old Bailey the two black defendants were

acquitted. It appears that the plain clothes men once again failed to identify themselves. In that case Judge Gwyn Morris said: 'I find it terrible that here in London people using public transport should be set upon by police officers without so much as a word by anyone that they are police officers'.

The appeal judges were well aware of the cases that Det.-Sgt. Ridgewell had been involved in. The judge at the trial of the 'Four' had not allowed evidence about his involvement in these other cases and the Appeal judges considered this wrong.

The 'Oval Four' were members of a black political organisation, the Fasimbas, and as such had the backing and support of a defence committee. The exploits of Det.-Sgt. Ridgewell and his squad have created an impression among sections of the black community that they deliberately go out to 'get' young blacks. The whole hysteria built up by the press created young people,

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rather than direction. If one has taken a wrong turning, further 'progress' however fast or athletically admirable will only serve to confound us further and will never indicate the right route.

We need a new concept of 'progress'. A concept based upon values other than those of acquisition and a ruthless conquest of nature.

We, and the Victorians, became absorbed in progress regardless of direction. Modern technology has an equally disastrous concept: that if a thing can be done, it must be done and hence progress has become a lop-sided progression in the wrong direction, like a crippled crab.

In Gravelham, as elsewhere, concern has grown up recently for the state of the environment and the amenities. As the small Suffolk village grew, became more accessible to commuters and as its financial potentialities became more obvious to avid speculators so its beauty, calm and remoteness became wasting assets. The village green that fed the goose that laid the golden eggs was turned over to development, or the sheer necessity of housing the indigenous population to whom the tied cottage or thatched house were no longer available or attractive.

The environment is an easily wasted asset in this cash-nexus consumer world and the scooped-out farmland, sawn-down copse and ravaged hedgerow pay dividends in gravel, beet and barley and the genius who can make two houses grow where one grew before is respected of men.

The production of ready accessibility to beauty and rural calm destroys that beauty and calm in the process. There are sentimentalists and conservatives who would conserve, that is, preserve untouched and inaccessible to all others, preserves of natural beauty as the sole property of a class (i.e. themselves). Such a process entails restriction upon development of desires for betterment and even upon the necessity for a livelihood. At the same time the wanton destruction and neglect of agriculture have been and are a deliberate programme to make Britain a manufacturing, exporting country and the encouragement of the moloch of the motor vehicle is part of that programme.

The sentimentality of the conservative conservators consists in a ready acceptance of much of this technology plus a refusal to face up to the consequences. The commuter mentality which regards the village as a quiet dormitory or a logi-

cal extension of the bus-ride from the office with the constant need for the improvement of facilities to get from A to B as quickly as possible, but also the inevitability of A becoming more and more like B as time goes on.

At its worst this point of view expresses itself as "Somebody else - not us!" and the airport like a gypsy wanders from rejecting village to rejecting village. Whilst the new slick villagers fly by jet to New York on pleasurable business and to Benidorm (or somewhere more fashionable) on the sad business of pleasure. Like gypsies, everybody admits the airports' necessity to exist but makes it clear that they must exist somewhere else.

* * *

As a member of society it can be observed that the individual is prepared to concede some part of his own personal feeling or convenience for the sake of the community in which he lives. For the anarchist it is probable that the limit of that society's impingement is at a minimum - for the individualist it probably does not exist! For the conformist the demands to which he concurs are made by society; for the conservative by profitability; for the patriot and the totalitarian by the State.

The anarchist would limit those demands by questioning their practicability. Before Gravelham is ravaged by gravel pits one should ask if the gravel cannot be got from somewhere else of less natural beauty, whether it is really a fact that it will bring employment to the village (gravel pits are not all that labour intensive - unless it is to be excavated with shovels); what happens when the gravel is gone? Is it not just a question of private profit and did not Councillor X show his interest after the election?

The arguments used are fallacious; the permanent myth that these projects make work - which is thought of as a necessity - rather than the simple fact that it is the economic results of work (viz., wages) which are a necessity and given the wages we could well do without some of this work, which at best is boondoggling and at worst harmful.

The gravel pit at Gravelham most likely will go to make the concrete that builds the building that nobody lives in or to build the roads that attract the motorists to drive for pleasure and lorries for one-way business which they would not think of if the road were not there.

Motorists are like pigeons, the more you give 'em the more they come. If they can go fast from A to B they don't see why they can't go fast from B to C and so on until they wearily realize they are travelling fast from Z to A. We are also told that Maplin is necessary to take the pressure off Heathrow and we are condemning the residents of Heathrow to continuous noise if we don't sanction Maplin. If Heathrow is overloaded (during tourist season only) are we intended to believe that the whole of the traffic will be withdrawn from Heathrow and everybody will be able to sleep o' nights? A plane is a plane is a plane. Even in Gravelham there are rightful complaints when the local farmer-airman takes off on mysterious business or engages a crop-sprayer.

The pigeon-principle applies to the air, too. The more airports there are the more services there will be. Big business abhors a vacuum and even a three-quarters empty off-season tourist plane makes a lot of noise. What happens when Maplin gets full up? The aeroplane, like all expensive pieces of capital equipment, must have the absolute maximum usage (consistent with safety or not) in order that the capital return be made as speedy as possible. That's what advertising's for and consumerism's all about. Our gravel pit is not going to stop operating until every last speck of sand is excavated.

The Maplin project is another sign of the South-East syndrome, the conviction that England must huddle together in the South-Eastern corner and that anyone who comes to Britain naturally wants to get to London as soon as possible. This is an illusion fostered by Londoners who have cornered the administration in the capital. The accompanying illusion that Britain is overcrowded is fostered by this situation. It is as if, living in a forty-roomed mansion most of us huddled in the cellar and complained of the overcrowding, the noise and the expense. Maplin will not help.

Jack Robinson

ANGRY BRIGADE

The five members of a group alleged to have conspired to cause explosions have been refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords. The three Lords deciding whether an appeal can go to the Law Lords held that no point of law of general public importance was raised by the case. (What shit!)

J.W.

LETTER

Demonstrations or Counter-Demonstrations

Dear Comrades,

It is a rare thing for me to write in support of Jack and Mary, we profess rather different kinds of anarchy, however I feel moved to write in support of their article on the "Liverpool 13" (FREEDOM 28.7.73).

As a Scouse, and feeling that I may know some of those involved, I can only say they made a mistake in smashing up the Jordan meeting. Freedom of speech must be for all, even fascists. I am not sure that all those involved would give this right to our movement, any more than the fascists would, however must we use fascist tactics also?

Fascism can only be defeated by a united and revolutionary working class, however that becomes only a slogan if we as a movement adopt reactionary methods, though at the moment the workers don't seem ready to organise for revolution of

MUGGERS...Cont'd from P. 1

and especially young black people, as scapegoats for the increase in crimes of larceny. Both are visible and very distinctive and people are quick to accuse such a minority. For some, it is practically a crime for someone to be young, let alone black as well.

This country suffers from a built-in institutional racism. Young minorities suffer discrimination in housing and employment. But increases in larceny have been growing throughout the 60s and 70s and have been the same in other urban areas both here and abroad and are linked with consumerism. This has brought about what has been described as a 'panic reaction'. Much of this is a racist hysteria and has been used by the popular press and fascist groups to frighten the so-called ordinary law-abiding citizen.

By Law Protected?

The National Council for Civil Liberties initiated the inquiry into the West End Central police station and Sgt. Challoner of brick-planting fame, and believes that an inquiry into Det.-Sgt. Ridgewell's anti-'mugging' is a 'matter of equal urgency'.

They list a number of disturbing facts which have emerged from cases:

1. All the defendants were black.

an anarchist type. The alliance seems to have many strange people in it, Upper Duke Street is the HQ and bookshop of the local CP, they have on many occasions in the past refused to stock FREEDOM and other papers which knock the party line. Stalin killed many anarchists and signed a pact with Hitler. At the risk of being laughed at, I ask must we as a movement forget Spain, when the CNT/FAI almost alone fought fascist armies and Stalinist treachery. The Trots also fought well then, but must we forget Trotsky and his killing of thousands of our comrades?

Big Flame, the Merseyside paper which claims to be socialist and libertarian, says that "Fascists are driven off Merseyside..." What utter balls, Jordan is small fry, but some of our local fascist leaders are not, and come in different clothes. However as Big Flame are willing to exclude anarchists and other libertarians (Solidarity) from their meetings we can only conclude that they would also deny freedom to others than fascists. I am sad to see their involvement, however, as they produce

2. Of 16 defendants 7 were acquitted.
3. In two of the four cases the magistrate not only acquitted the accused but cast serious doubts on the propriety of the police behaviour.
4. Sgt. Ridgewell was involved in all four cases. A number of other officers were also involved in every case.
5. In no case was any independent witness called in spite of the fact that the essence of a "mugging" charge is that whoever is "mugged" is obviously aware of the fact - and no independent complainant came forward.
6. The only evidence in the two cases which resulted in conviction was the accused's own statements. In both cases the accused said these were given after physical assault by the police and under duress. (Recently a number of cases have come to light in which the police have secured "confessions" of offences which were subsequently proved to be non-existent.)
7. In the case of the 'Oval Four', a conviction was obtained on only 11 of the 17 counts and then by a majority verdict of the jury. The appeal court ruled, on a point of law, that it was unable to hear new evidence, evidence which we believe would have conclusively established the innocence of the accused. but nevertheless reduced the

a bloody good paper, one which could teach many anarchists a thing or two.

The left should be proud they took on and defeated six silly little fascists and fifty police, they only had 500. Of course we have yet to have riots in Liverpool over the fascism of Ulster, fascism in action!

I do not knock street fighting, I have done my share, and have scars to prove it. I am not soft on fascism, I just plead, comrades, before you play "cowboys and indians", remember, history can, and does, repeat itself.

Best wishes,

Vincent Johnson

Oxford.

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accused's sentences with the effect of securing their immediate release.

8. In every case there is evidence that the police failed to identify themselves when making the arrest and used an excessive amount of violence.

In another case 5 were convicted, two of whom, Courtney Harriot and Tesco Johnson, are still imprisoned. The NCCL is preparing a full report on these and other cases to submit to the Home Secretary.

* * *

The authorities have a huge arsenal of legal weapons to oppose any who question the present social and economic system or those who, because they find themselves without a job, take goods from shops and 'steal' money from other people. At the same time we all know that the police are forever seeking advantages within the legal system and trying to undermine the few safeguards defendants still have. The over-zealous are not beyond going further, as we saw in the Challoner cases.

However, laws are made to protect the interest of those who own and control the wealth of this country. They want to maintain their power, position and privilege and governments will pass all the necessary laws to assist this ruling class.

P.T.

HEATH AND ENERGY

ACCORDING TO Anthony Tucker, writing in the Guardian (27 July), the Prime Minister "seems to have taken energy problems to his own bosom" (rumour has it Heath's energy problems are lower on his anatomy) and the future of Britain as regards energy "depends on the nerve and vision of Mr. Heath". At the end of a week in which Maplin proposals for a huge new city in Essex with rail and road links to London from the airport-seaport have been published, when the Government has been attacked by the Public Accounts Committee in its censored report for the escalating costs of Concorde (from £160m to £1065m in a decade) and furthermore when the Channel tunnel has been described reportedly by Heath as being with Maplin "vital to Britain's industrial future" - at the end of a week like this to read that energy questions depends on the "wisdom and nerve of Heath" is enough to precipitate total panic!

For in Anthony Tucker's article it becomes quite clear that energy consumption has to be reduced not increased. Tucker describes the findings of "an expert working party set up by the Institute of Fuel at the request of the Government" and which has produced a confidential document with "radical recommendations" such as "reducing fuel wastage by private cars, utilising 'waste' heat from power stations and the establishment of a powerful Energy Commission to oversee and coordinate the efficient use of energy". A key to Tucker's piece is the paragraph: "Anyone who has any doubt about the reality of the problems likely to arise during the next two decades if energy demand continues to rise at its present state, needs only to examine the enormous role at present assigned to oil in the eighties by the major users". This brings us to our major area of interest, along with Sir Gerald Nabarro, it seems, who said in the House of Commons on July 23rd: "Reports reaching me and others, say that there are many thousands of retail establishments which are likely to run short of petrol and associated fuels at a very early date." Although the inevitable Government denial was forthcoming it is clear that there is an energy crisis demonstrated both by the attitude of the

Banks in setting up the International Energy Bank to concentrate on financing international and fuel projects and by the attitude of the main oil-producing countries.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Colonel Gaddafi's Libya together with Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian guerrilla command are all making noises and rattling oily sabres for jittery Western Governments (and Japan) to hear. The fact that the EEC is showing such concern confirms the growing sense of power felt by the oil producing Arab world.

Suppression and subterfuge

The extraordinary thing is that despite all this we read of an amazing political subterfuge by Heath (in the Sunday Times of 22 July) which was designed to make the Government's Maplin plans seem more acceptable. Roger Eglin of the "Insight" team writes of a report by Government research scientists on reducing the noise levels of aircraft by one-quarter in the next twenty years. "The conclusions," Elgin tells us, "were apparently circulated to Government ministers nearly four months ago. They came at an embarrassing time, because in the Maplin debate the Government is arguing against the precise claim that, if the objective is to relieve noise around Heathrow and Gatwick, research into noise reduction looks a better and vastly cheaper investment than Maplin. Ministers therefore decided not to publish the forecasts". Yet this suppression was not enough. Heath set up a committee "to devise ways of recalculating noise figures so as to improve the case for Maplin" and the Aerospace Minister, Heseltine, "effectively stymied efforts to quieten present aircraft noise". In addition the Sunday Times "Business News" has an article from Keith Richardson claiming "the massive weight of expert opinion" against Maplin and "an almost unprecedented revolt of Civil Service advisers" in accord with the experts. And Heath is supposed to be the man whose "nerve and vision" we depend on for solving energy problems!

* * *

A correspondent in FREEDOM (28.7.73) writes about my earlier article on the Petrol Crisis and points to Nixon's "multi-million dollar investment campaign to find alternative sources of energy"; he adds to this the investment of major motor companies in "secret" research on steam and electric cars. Yet investment does not of itself produce

energy! Only discoveries of oil or advances in alternative (to oil) energy production can satisfy the increasing demand for energy. On this score it is worthy of note that an oil company chairman referred to the North Sea oil discoveries as "a puddle in the ocean" when set against the Middle East.

FREEDOM's correspondent, Julius, continues that it is not "the benign influence of ecologists, but economic obstacles, in this case the oil-producing countries" which have shaken capitalism. However it is facts made known by ecologists which demonstrated that there was an approaching critical shortage of finite resources, such as oil. These facts have produced "economic obstacles".

Certainly we don't want to underestimate the capacity of capitalism for innovation to preserve the profit system and growth economies but no amount of investment finds things that don't exist and if resources of raw materials are finite then investment, at a certain measurable stage, will be pouring money away.

As growing scarcity of oil has helped to produce the energy crisis so bikes will be produced in greater numbers when the demand increases. The sooner we talk about bikeways instead of motorways, Maplin, Concorde and the Chunnel the wiser for us all. What politician would have the nerve to do that?

J.W.

NICARAGUAN DICTATORSHIP

Anastasio Somoza Debayle, that well known philanthropist and ruling dictator of Nicaragua, is sending his eldest son to Sandhurst for a good sound British military education.

The dynasty of Somoza has been the ruling political, economic, and military power in Nicaragua for 33 years. The Somoza regime means oppression, exploitation, censorship, corruption and harassment of trade unionists and rival political parties. Somoza has the full blessing and support of the U.S. government, in fact that is how he maintains power. But Britain is not blameless; how much longer will Britain actively support oppressors by training their heirs to inherit and maintain the status quo?

Tachito (the heir in question) is arriving in the U.K. sometime in September. Will someone please go to the airport and give him the welcome he deserves.

Yours hoping for freedom and social change,

J.R.
Nicaragua.

IN BRIEF

U.S. Anarchist Black Cross states that criminal proceedings are being taken against the Cologne Anarcho-Syndicalist paper Befreiung. Willy Huppertz, one of the two comrades charged, is an ex-prisoner of the Nazis and a veteran of the Workers' Council movement of the Ruhr. Financial aid welcome to Luise Huppertz, 433 MULHEIM/RUHR, Winkhauserweg 64 (West Germany). Previously a charge of 'inciting hatred against a minority' viz. the police! was tried and dropped.

Pat Arrowsmith and two other demonstrators were arrested under the Public Order Act at Colchester Military Tattoo on Saturday 4th August. Leaflets had been given out advocating the withdrawal of troops from Ulster. Colchester is a garrison town which regularly supplies troops for Northern Ireland. Previously, during the march-past before the Mayor, interlopers from the withdrawal campaign, dressed as wounded soldiers and a nurse, walked along the parade route, a banner urging withdrawal was displayed. Posters flyposted in the town depicted a soldier saying 'I'm in a dead-end job. This is killing me' and giving statistics of dead soldiers in Ireland. (The three arrested demonstrators are remanded on bail until August 28.)

Mags Received.

Taunton People's Press. 10p from Fons George House, Wilton, Taunton. A comrade sending this notes that "things have certainly changed here in the last few years as far as social awareness is concerned". Just part of the growing evidence that no matter how fragile the national Press is getting, the provinces are quite healthy. On to a decentralized society!

Anarchist Black Cross, 713 Armitage, Chicago, Ill. 60614, U.S.A. News from Spain, Germany, Japan and a report on the prison movement. No price given.

Peace News carries a headline "Otter hunt foiled". Not, alas, in its letters column. Right on, Laurens!

Herr Walter Ulbricht died. He'd better have his pass. It's a High Wall. Sancho Panza

LIBRARIES AS CENSORS

JACK ROBINSON at the end of his review of Colin Ward's book Anarchy in Action (July 7) suggests that readers might obtain the book at their local public library. However many readers might find some difficulty in this. Many libraries have a small collection of what they consider equivocal or dubious books. These books are usually of a salacious type or else are technical books with a limited appeal (Gynaecology, Anatomy Manuals) and also books dealing with topical emotional issues - e.g. drugs and their uses. There are a few dealing with extreme political views (Nazism, etc.).

I know of one Central Library (this is a library which buys and distributes all the books to the branch libraries within a borough) which intends buying copies of Colin Ward's book for its branches with the expressed intention that these are not to go on the shelves but must be stored in an office and can only be obtained by the members of the public if asked for. If you want the book you must ask one of the library assistants to get it for you. If you do not know of the book then you will remain in ignorance. This may seem a small thing but it is in contradiction to the open access system that has now been in operation for about three-quarters of a century.

These books are kept in the offices* of libraries not out of any contrived effort to dupe and censor the reading matter of the public but usually through a reluctance to challenge the dictates of the head offices who decide on the suitability of the books. Libraries, generally, hold their readers in high esteem. Duplicity on the part of librarians to censor books is almost unknown. However, libraries are dependent and subject as much as any other civil service institution on their communities. Pressure can be brought to bear on libraries to censor or remove books that may offend and antagonise members of the community.

A recent example of this type of action occurred in Brent. At the trial of the mass poisoner Grahame Young last year, it was established by the prosecution that Young had obtained much of his detailed knowledge of poisons from books in various libraries throughout Brent. These books were on the open shelves for anyone to see and use. Since the poison case, however, pressure was brought to bear and now all books on toxicology have been

removed from all the shelves of the Brent libraries.

One way that library users could overcome this problem would be to insist on seeing these books which although not on the shelves must still be catalogued. No library has the right to prevent any reader from browsing through or borrowing any book that is on the catalogues. This would require a library assistant to accompany you into a backroom or, if the books are stored in the Branch Librarian's office it would mean inconveniencing him so that if enough readers were to do this he would be forced to bring the books out into a place where they are less likely to cause either him or his staff trouble - on the shelves.

As anarchists we find it hard enough to put over our ideas without having what few books and articles there are around being made less accessible to the public. It takes little imagination to see that from accepting the removal of books with limited appeal and extreme views (whether sexual, pornographic or political) from the shelves of our libraries into the backrooms to accepting the removal of these books from the libraries altogether is but a small step.

P.R.

*Many libraries overcome this problem by 'dumping' or relegating their dubious books all on to one library within a Borough and anyone wanting one of these books has to fill in a request form (which can be off-putting) and may take some considerable time to obtain it.

In Brief

The Bank of England has decided to dispense with the Brigade of Guards sentries, seventeen of whom were on duty there every night since the Gordon Riots (1778). It is thought to be safer now.

Supporters of CND laid a wreath at the Cenotaph on Hiroshima Day but the accompanying card which usually referred to 'victims of other nuclear tests' was left blank since the Department of the Environment (which controls the Cenotaph, if not the environment) refused to allow any reference to deaths outside the two world wars.

Jesus Christ Superstar grossed \$100million in tickets, records and tapes, according to the Sunday Times Business News.

Friends in Croydon, Surrey, have started a Croydon Conservation Camp. One Saturday in July they closed Church Street, Croydon to traffic and gave away about 1,800 leaflets deploing the council's placing of traffic before people and homes.

Angry Brigade

Some FREEDOM readers in this country will have read the letter from Nicolas Walter in THE LISTENER of 2 August. We print the full text below for other readers, and to indicate the portions omitted (underlined) by the Listener.

Sir: Gordon Carr's version of the history of the Angry Brigade, as given in his BBC television programme of 20 July, and supplemented by his Listener article of 12 July, should not be taken as authoritative or even accurate. Grace Wyndham Goldie was quite wrong to describe it as 'a factual account of the group of British Anarchists which has been responsible for a number of violent acts' (Listener, 26 July) -- just as Peter Fiddick was quite wrong to describe it as 'the best piece of factual reporting on the subject' (Guardian, 21 July).

It is precisely the factual test that Carr fails. His minor errors -- such as calling the FIJL the 'International' rather than the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth, or the organisation formed by Stuart Christie the 'International' rather than the Anarchist Black Cross -- may not be so serious in themselves, though they do suggest his possibly unconscious obsession with the international aspects of the case. His not so minor omissions -- such as the blatantly illegal behaviour of the police in the hunt for the Angry Brigade during 1971, or the glaring contradictions in the prosecution evidence and in the jury verdicts at the two trials of 1971 and 1972 -- may not seem serious to those who are unfamiliar with the case. But Carr should surely have at least mentioned the crucial fact that no one has yet been proved responsible for any Angry Brigade bomb: Prescott was convicted of conspiracy because he addressed envelopes for a single Angry Brigade communiqué, and the Stoke Newington Four were convicted of conspiracy because they possessed (or were planted with) incriminating arms -- but all the charges of actually causing explosions have been dismissed, and the inhumanly vicious ten-year prison sentences are based entirely on notoriously vague charges of conspiracy.

But leaving such things aside, it is important to expose Carr's major mistakes. The first is to take the Angry Brigade as the culmination of 'the development of anarchism, once the sole concern of a few Spanish expatriates, to a move-

ment that introduced a new form of urban guerrilla activity'; every point in this thesis is wrong. Far from being the sole concern of a few Spanish expatriates, anarchism was reviving in this and many other countries well before the death of Sabate and the coming of Alberola and long before the formation of the First of May Group. When I discussed the subject in the Listener more than five years ago (22 February 1968), I noted that the anarchist revival was already ten years old and that there were probably more anarchists in Britain than ever before; and I also suggested that violence and revolution had lost some of their appeal and that propaganda by deed now tended to be non-violent rather than violent. Whatever links there may have been between the First of May Group of 1966-70 and the Angry Brigade of 1970-71 were clearly technical rather than ideological; there is in fact no evidence to suggest that any members of the Angry Brigade were anarchists -- indeed those of the five in prison who have mentioned the issue have said they are not.

Carr is on firmer ground when he describes the Angry Brigade as part of the growing revolutionary libertarian movement, but undermines his own point by failing to recognise the difference between this and true anarchism. No doubt libertarian ideas have influenced the underground movement (crudely symbolised for Carr by the hippies of Haight-Ashbury), the student movement (symbolised by the 1968 'events' in France), and the commune movement (symbolised by the communards of West Germany); but neither of these movements is specifically anarchist. And even if the Angry Brigade did derive from such movements, its closest foreign analogues are far from anarchist -- the Red Army Fraction of West Germany (which Carr includes) and the Weathermen of the United States and the Tupamaros of Uruguay (which he excludes) are all libertarian Marxist rather than anarchist; the Provisional IRA of Northern Ireland, the analogue closest in time and space to the Angry Brigade, is not even remotely libertarian; as for France and Italy, there have been more bombs against anarchists than by them.

It is possible that the Angry Brigade was influenced by an-

archist ideas, but its communiques suggest rather a combination of situationism and syndicalism. Carr mentions the former but misses the latter. His second major mistake is to deny the Angry Brigade its political position and to pretend that it wished 'to declare war on society itself'. Its methods may have implicitly tended towards nihilism, but its policies were explicitly derived from the class struggle. It considered its violence to be 'class violence' (Communique 3), and said after the bombing of Robert Carr's house: 'We have started the fight back and the war will be won by the organised working class' (Communique 5). Later it explained: 'Organised militant struggle and organised terrorism go side by side. These are the tactics of the revolutionary class movement' (Communique 6); and again: 'We believe in the autonomous working class. We are part of it' (Communique 7). This position could be general: 'Power to the people' (Communique 9 and 10); or it could be specific: 'Bogside, Clydeside, join the angry side' (Communique 10 and 11). In either case, the Angry Brigade was clearly waging war on the ruling class, not on society. It is not surprising that the response it won in the anarchist movement was mainly from members of syndicalist groups, and that the response it won in the wider revolutionary left was mainly from people involved in such populist activity as squatting, claimants' unions, women's liberation, and the underground press.

Predictably, Carr constructed a melodramatic scenario in which the Angry Brigade was not so much explained as explained away, being made both foreign and anarchist, and therefore doubly alien. Grace Wyndham Goldie complains that 'little light was shed upon the important matter of motivation'; but the point is rather that this particular matter was deliberately left in the dark so that the Angry Brigade could be reified as a spectacle. The third major mistake was to suggest that its activity was both alien and new, when the fact is that revolutionary violence is a normal rather than a deviant phenomenon. Carr remarks that there were 145 political explosions in Italy during 1969, but not that there were 123 in Britain during 1969-71 -- not counting Northern Ireland -- of which the Angry Brigade was responsible for only a dozen. Typically, Carr established a spurious balance by giving both sides

RADICAL CHIC REVOLUTION

STATE OF SIEGE (France/Italy/
W.Germany, 1973 Directed by
Costa-Gavras)

IT IS an ironic reflection of our present society that this avowedly left-wing film should be playing at London's most luxurious cinema in the heart of Mayfair, and one's first reaction to this radical-chic paradox is further deepened whilst watching it, for all it is really saying is 'the old hoary platitude that violence is dreadful and terrible, but necessary when justified. Thus it pretends to pose a question, but it is really a non-interrogative cliché with a meaningless question mark posed on the end. Like Costa-Gavras' other film (the futile and naive Z), STATE OF SIEGE is not an intellectual film, for it proceeds from a series of assumptions which are almost as arrogant in their own way as the Divine Right of Kings was in its way. To the average viewer this is probably meant to come across as "committed cinema", but I found myself wanted to stop the film and go back to reel one and explore a few of the points raised and question some of the motivations and reasons for the action being undertaken.

The story, set in a Latin American country, is based on the kidnapping (and subsequent murder) of an American AID representative who was in reality instructing the local police at the International Police Academy where the curriculum includes electrical torture. When negotiations with the government fail to secure the release of political prisoners, he is duly shot, and then left for the authorities to find and bury with full pomp and ceremony. That these subversive activities of the American government should be exposed at all in a film is to be welcomed, together with the barbaric use of torture around the world, but when one ponders the duplicity of the "masters of war" who, I am quite sure, would resort to collective suicide, rather than yield to defeat, by unleashing a nuclear war (with all the Divine over-

tones that this implies), one can not quite free oneself from the lurking wondering that suggests perhaps the whole film was financed by the CIA as a collective warning to all discontents that, world-wide, the Authorities mean business!

The problem of violence as I have often reminded myself in my writing, is the most pressing one that the world faces, and it is one that worries and distresses all thinking people. One concedes that in making a film one has to make some concessions to "entertainment" but I am very dubious about the manner in which the activities of the urban guerillas in STATE OF SIEGE are shown to be exciting and thrilling. Perhaps in some ways they are, but then in some ways so is cruelty, but this in no way justifies indulging this dark area of our subconscious minds, and the "game" element, that is in my personal opinion, at the base of so much pseudo-radical thinking, is ultimately destructive and false. We all know of the victorious General Detective-Inspector/Returning Warrior of fiction who admits grim admiration for his defeated foe, but this subconscious clue that reveals a much more sobering truth about "the beloved enemy" is the one that is constantly ignored and overlooked.

STATE OF SIEGE is additionally disappointing because it was written in the main by Franco Solinas who also wrote KAPO (1960), THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS (1964) and QUEIMADA! (1970) - three of the best films I have ever seen, but in this film there is no examination of the motivations that exist in the minds of both protagonists, and because of the film's lack of intellectual involvement, one also became aware of a lack of emotional involvement, which is a dreadful admission to make when one is seeing human beings subjected to horrible tortures. But if I am also expected to spare no compassion either for a father and husband who is shot in cold blood (no matter what his guilt or crimes), then I can not be that intellectually dishonest and see any merit in a presentation that reduces all of us ultimately to "goodies" and "baddies". Whatever else violence does, it certainly brings about the strangest metamorphosis amongst its advocates until the one side becomes indistinguishable from the other, and its disciples forget that pain and death are non-partisan.

David Godin



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ANGRY BRIGADE...con'd from P.6

of the case a hearing; but the spokesmen of the First of May Group, the Anarchist Black Cross, and the Stoke Newington Five Solidarity Committee all agreed, more or less, with the policy of the Angry Brigade, and the spokesmen for the police agreed with Carr's simplistic interpretation of the case. A more genuine balance would have also given a hearing to some of those anarchists, syndicalists, situationists, hippies, communards, and other libertarians who are familiar with the milieu from which the Angry Brigade emerged but who are opposed to the technique of terrorism and who are convinced that the development of a libertarian consciousness has been retarded rather than advanced by this tragic episode. ●

LONDON READERS-----STOP PRESS

PEOPLE OF IRELAND

ON SATURDAY, 11th August, at the Centro Iberico (see Contact Column) the film, People of Ireland made by Cinema Action is being screened. According to a leaflet 'The film is an analysis and chronicle of instance of dual power in the north of Ireland: we see the barricaded resistance zone of Free Derry in August 1969, the contradiction between labour and capital, the struggle against imperialism, the demands: a socialist workers' republic. Within Free Derry ensues the struggle for democracy, for the right to assemble and for free expression of opinion against the petty-bourgeois elements who succumb to the British Government's "new deal". The barricades are taken down temporarily but the struggle continues.' (From a leaflet issued by Cinema Action.)

After the film members of Cinema Action will discuss the film, the events in Ireland and other topics arising from the showing of People of Ireland.

From the anarchist point of view a socialist workers' republic is at best unclear and at worst a contradiction of how we would like to see society organised. The film and discussion will give comrades a good opportunity to argue out these points of disagreement with Cinema Action. It is a pity that we as a movement cannot produce films about events affecting us politically and socially.

Refreshments will be available and a collection will be taken to recover the cost of hiring the film and projector.

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