

FREEDOM CONTACT PAGE

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Freedom Press

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'Gewaltfreie Aktion' (non-violent action) groups throughout FRG, associated WRI. For information write Karl-Heinz Sang, Methfesselstr. 69, 2000 Hamburg 19

Hamburg: Initiative Freie Arbeiter Union (Anarcho-syndicalists). FAU, Repsoldstr. 49, Hochpaterre links, 2000 Hamburg 1.

Ostwestfalen: Anarchistische Föderation Ostwestfalen-Lippe (Eastwest-falian anarchist federation). Wolfgang Fabisch, c/o Wohngemeinschaft Schwarzwurzel, Wöhrener Str. 138, 4970 Bad Oeynhausen 2.

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Revolutionära Anarkisters Organisation, Box 11075, S-100 61 STOCKHOLM.

NETHERLANDS

De Vrije Socialist, Postbus 411, Utrecht.

ANARCHIST-FEMINIST CONFERENCE

NEW YORK. 28 April 1979. The Association of Libertarian Feminists, in conjunction with the Gay Men's Alliance of Hunter College, will be sponsoring an anarchist feminist conference. The Saturday afternoon conference will be held at the Park Royal Hotel, 23 W. 73 St, New York City. Speakers will include Alix Kates Shulman, author of *To the Barricades: The Anarchist Life of Emma Goldman* and editor of *Red Emma Speaks*, and Paul Avrich, author of *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre*. Workshops on current aspects of anarchist feminism and gay anarchism will also be featured, and anarchist and anarchist feminist literature will be available.

Registration begins at 11 a.m., the conference at noon. Suggested contribution \$3. For further information, contact Sharon Presley, ALF National coordinator, 41 Union Square West, Suite 1428, New York, NY 10003, Tel: 212/361-0927.

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THE Cauldron Theatre Company is a group with a growing interest and involvement in anarchist and anarchist-feminist ideas and activity. From March to June they are performing "Letters from Exile", a piece on the letters of Emma Goldman, the anarchist and feminist, her life-long friend and comrade Alexander Berkman, and some of their friends and co-workers. The letters, written between 1920-36 are concerned with violence, revolution, anarchism and the rise of fascism, the Communists, sexual politics and their own personal relationships.

The dates and places of the performances are as follows:-

March 29, 30, 31, April 1, Oval House, upstairs. Time, 9.30 p.m., price 70p (50p members).

April 6, 7, Waterside Theatre, Rotherhithe. Time, 8.00 p.m.

June 19, 20, 21, Action Space, 16 Chenies St, W.C.1. Time, 1.10 p.m., price 75p (60p members).

Anyone wanting to contact the group for bookings, more information etc, can do so at 165a Upper Tooting Road, London S.W.17. Tel: (01) 767-0878

Desires

MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR PROPOSED ANARCHIST FESTIVAL. Plays, films, photographs etc. Contact Alan Albon at Freedom Press.

RADICAL HUMOUR

For a book entitled *Radical Humour: An Anthology*, Tuli Kupferberg and Michael Brown are soliciting suggestions and examples of radical (and anti-establishment) jokes, cartoons, aphorisms, 'quips', quotations, songs, poems, essays, stories, skits and plays etc. etc. of all countries and periods. Please send suggestions and materials to Tuli Kupferberg, 210 Spring St, NY, NY 10012, USA.

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AT LAST - TAFF!

ON Thursday, 1 March (St. David's Day!) two months after being granted bail, Dafydd Ladd, one of "the group of idealists who would take positive steps to overthrow society", was released from Brixton prison. Of the original six to be imprisoned, only Ronan Bennett and Stewart Carr remain under lock and key. Of the five who will stand trial together, only Ronan. (The fundamentally racist reasons for not allowing him bail have already been described).

Taff was granted bail at committals on 21 December. Among the reasons for opposing it, the Anti-Terrorist Squad said that Taff had grown up in West Germany, that he did not have any ties with the community and would abscond. Counter arguments included the fact that he was very ill with chronic enteritis, a medical report confirming that he should be treated and recommending his release.

Taff was granted bail on sureties of £17,500 and on condition that he live with his brother in Bristol. But then, with Taff still stranded in gaol, began ATS harassment of the sureties. One was told that she would not be accepted because she had previously stood bail for someone else who had absconded (even though the amount of surety in that case had been a few mites in comparison). Her house was visited by a couple of ATS officers who made it plain to her that "We're still friends" and generally repeated their threats and intimidating tactics.

The second surety was subjected to similar treatment. When she returned from holiday, report Persons Unknown, she 'was told by Det. Supt. Bradbury of the ATS that there were 'no objections' to her standing surety. However, on 7 January she was visited by the ATS who

PERSONS UNKNOWN have produced a new set of four badges and also T-shirts. Badges include 'Stop Crime - Get Rid of the Police', 'Free all Prisoners'. The T-shirts are in two designs: 'I am an Enemy of the State' and 'Create Anarchy in the UK', printed on a map of Britain. Both the badges (20p. each) and T-shirts (£1.50p) are available from Box 123, 182 Upper Street, Islington, N.1. (don't forget postage!) or direct from Rising Free Bookshop.

spent four hours at her home. They told her and her husband 'We have no intention of letting this man out on bail', but on being asked for legal grounds for refusal, they had none. They then directed their attention at her husband, telling him that Ladd and Bennett were the dangerous ones and were likely to jump bail. Ladd, if released, would continue his terrorist plans to bomb and shoot innocent citizens. They tried to paint Taff as a bomb-throwing monster who should be locked up for ever, insinuating that the man could not allow his wife to stand surety. They added, 'Don't you think it's significant that both the sureties are women? Why is your wife standing bail? - what is her relationship with Ladd Don't you have any control over your wife?'

During all this caffle the ATS were also trying hard to cut off Taff's contact with the outside world. PU reported that a couple of letters sent to him 'failed to arrive', that two people who arrived separately to see him on 19 January were both told that the other had already visited (and so he saw neither), and that one potential surety had been refused clearance to visit, and so on.

But their efforts proved eventually fruitless. When the surety standing £7,500 stood her ground and decided to apply to court for acceptance, the ATS resistance crumbled away. Another blow to them was the Home Office decision to de-categorise Taff and Ronan. But while this can only be good for the defence, it has amounted in practice to a considerable worsening of their conditions of detention which, for Ronan, remain. As a 'normal' remand prisoner he is locked up for 23 hours a day and must share a cell. It is hard, if not impossible, to work on the case papers and the visiting room has been compared to a swimming pool in high summer.

Taff was finally released when a third surety arranged to stand on £10,000. The old pattern of ATS harassment emerged, but it didn't work. Taff was freed the same day. He must live in London and report daily to the police between 7-9 p.m. There is, however, no curfew and this, in addition, has been lifted for Iris - again, despite recent ATS objections to her having bail at all!



NEGATIVE VOTING

WE have until autumn, so it is now reliably assumed, to prepare ourselves for the ballyhoo and boredom of a general election. Two by-elections have shown the usual predictable swing away from the Government party and the class war of the winter has made it clear even to smug old Jimbo that he's not exactly the most popular man in the country.

There is always - or nearly always - a swing away from the governing party at by-elections. If you are a supporter of the opposition, you work like hell to get your voters out to show how unpopular the Government is. If you actually voted for the winning party and now have to take responsibility for what it is doing, you can claim your democratic right to criticise, show your disappointment and your independence of spirit, all quite safely, in the majority of by-elections, without fear of 'bringing the Government down'.

Continued on page 2

THE NEGATIVE VOTE

Continued from page 1

The number of times that a Government is poised on a knife-edge in the House, as the present one is, and when a small swing in a marginal seat would destroy its precarious 'majority' is very small. Indeed, it is difficult to remember a time when a Labour Government has been maintained in office only by a semi-official alliance with the Liberals, as the Lib-Lab pact was, and the, albeit sullen, support of the Scots and Welsh Nats on one side and the Ulster Unionists - led by Enoch Powell! - on the other!

The precarious balance in the House of Commons has of course sprung from the steady erosion by 'consensus' politics into the so-called differences between Conservative and Labour. It is due to the pragmatic recognition by both of the main parties that elections are won by the 'floating voters' - the middle ground who swing one way or the other according to the price of baked beans or whether or not little John or Mary passed their 'O' levels.

When our democracy depends upon this slender minority to choose our government for us, then the parties are going to converge in the centre trying to grab their votes. The dead heat in the election is a reflection of the similarity between Labour and Conservative policies in effect - a similarity which, from time to time, makes both sides antagonise their own supporters. If there were real differences, the parties would be much more unbalanced and party loyalties much fiercer than they are now.

The similarities between this winter's struggles by the trades unions against the Government and those of 1974 against the Heath Government, cannot have been lost on many workers, especially since in both cases the organised workers beat the government. Unlike the more principled Ted Heath, Jim Callaghan was wily enough not to pin his colours too permanently to the mast of the good old ship of state, so the cry of 'Who governs the country?' was not raised again. Jim never made 5 per cent an issue of principle on which he was prepared to go to the country.

Undoubtedly, though, he has lost a lot of face and a lot of friends too. And that means a lot of votes. But then so did Ted, and not only because of his lost battle with the miners. Heath was responsible for the abolition of Retail Price Maintenance (RPM) which made it impossible for manufacturers or distributors to fix the selling price for their goods - heralding unbridled competition and poney cut-throat discounting which appears to be great for the shopper prepared to shop around - but has driven many a small shopkeeper (traditionally the backbone of the Tory party) to the wall. Disillusionment all round - and it remains to be seen whether Maggie Thatcher will stick

to any principles of free competition when she comes to pin her colours to the mast.

Does it matter? In a time of 'consensus politics' there are no principles to be taken into consideration anyway. Only tactics. And the best tactic of all for opposition parties is the simple use of the negative vote - calling on all those fed up with the Government to come out and vote against it.

Unfortunately, under our electoral system, there is no way you can vote 'No'. You can only vote 'Yes' for one of the consensus parties, with which we include the Liberals, or one of the fringe parties which vary only in their degree of helplessness... and repulsiveness. But it's still 'Yes' for someone.

The only way to make the negative vote meaningful is not to vote at all. More than one-third of the Scots eligible to vote in the recent referendum declined to bother. And that was on an issue which seemed to concern them much more than any election for a Westminster Government. Yet while the Government was asking for a 40 per cent vote for a Scottish Assembly - another tier of government in Edinburgh - nearly 40 per cent of Scots showed that they didn't give a damn one way or the other.

Nevertheless, perhaps the only real surprise the other week was the surprise expressed by the media at the extent of the abstentionism. When the Government proposals first emerged, after all, not one of the opposition parties at Westminster was exactly thrilled. The plans went either too far (for the Conservative right and Labour/Jacobin left) or not far enough (for the 'federalist' Liberals and Scottish and Welsh Nats.) And - to hell with what the opposition parties want anyway! - who in their right minds desires a recreation in this island of the so-called federal model of West Germany or regional governments of Italy? Who in their right minds wants yet another tier on the already monstrously hierarchic cake of the European Community?

At all events, this abstentionism confronts Jim Callaghan with a pretty problem. In order to secure the continued support of the few Scot Nat members of Parliament, he must go ahead with plans for a Scottish Assembly - which the majority of Scottish voters have shown they either don't want or to which they are sublimely indifferent.

The Scottish referendum result has therefore nonplussed the Government - and for anarchists this is a very creditable and praiseworthy achievement.

To vote negatively - i.e. simply to get somebody out - is always counter-productive, because you always put somebody else in. Not to vote at all, while it can be purely negative, has the saving grace that you don't help to put somebody else in, except by default.

The positive side of non-voting lies in your alternatives. And that is what anarchists have -- or should have.' Colin Mackay, in this issue's Review, reflects the feeling of many when he writes 'Devolution yes, but why to this thing called Scotland? What is Scotland any more than Ireland, England or Wales? Devolution to the regions would be more sensible; devolution to the districts better still...'

But because the evils of bureaucracy and authoritarianism can exist as well on a district as on a regional, national or European scale, our reply can be only: No to devolution from the top down, Yes to federalism from the bottom up. No to existing local councils with their inevitably party-political basis; Yes to attempts to build from street groups into informal but decision-making neighbourhood councils and communes. No to the hierarchical structures of trade unions, Yes to the alternatives of workers' councils.

Devolution and with it party politics - the politics of State entryism - are a boring irrelevance to modern life. The politics of the street and the workplace, the anarchist society of free and horizontal cooperation, must take their place. Anything more - or less - should indeed be treated with the apathy it deserves and, so far, has received.

EDITORS

PRE-REFERENDUM MESSAGE

From the Edinburgh Anarchists

WE aren't interested in choosing between a government in London and a government in Edinburgh.

Whichever we get, we won't get control of our own lives. The Labour and Tory parties, and the privileged few who decide their policies, will retain control.

Assembly or no assembly, as long as we are governed we will still be exploited by the patriarchal system governments enforce on us.

As long as we are governed, the oppression of women, the old, racial minorities, gays and our slaves in the Third World will be perpetuated.

As long as we are governed, big business, the police, and the military will have the law behind them as they grind us down.

Some of us don't want to vote at all - refusing to choose between oppressors. But the 40 per cent rule * makes abstentions into No votes. So all we can do is toss for it - heads Yes, tails No - so our votes cancel each other out.

In most elections, 30 per cent of the electorate doesn't think voting is worth the bother.

A THIRD OF THE COUNTRY IS ANARCHIST AT HEART!

* Amendment introduced to devolution bill, by which only a 40 per cent Yes vote would ensure the setting up of the Scottish assembly.

HASTINGS

HASTINGS Anarchist Group has now been in existence for something over a year and it is the experience of that year which has led me to write this. When we started out we were just a group of friends with anarchist ideas - we subscribed to various anarchist journals, but were at a loss to know what to do. I expect the same applies to small groups everywhere and that is one of the reasons for this article. The first act of course is simply to start calling yourself an anarchist group and holding regular meetings somewhere. Hopefully people will get to know of you and come along. They didn't! During a year's activity we have acquired a few new members. However, what we have got is a growing number of people who are interested and sympathetic and will come to meetings now and then and help in various ways.

A brief summary of our history: So there we were in the early days - 6 or 7 on good nights - sometimes only the two of us - wondering what to do. We involved ourselves in the claimants union which has been and still is successful as far as it goes. It's still only a few of us, all the while we have been doing it it has never really grown. In Hastings you always seem to see the same old faces, whether it be Friends of the Earth, Claimants Union or whatever. For us the high point of CU activity was the two sit-ins we carried out. An activity totally unheard of in Hastings!

Then there was an attempt to set up a community newspaper with other local groups - a dismal failure owing to personality clashes and political differences (apparently we are all sexists and elitists). The net product of this little adventure was two issues of a paper stuffed with journalese that no one read and a considerable amount of ill feeling.

We have also carried out a partially successful campaign against the loss of our local cinema, leading to chaotic scenes in the council chamber.

We now print a weekly newsletter called Poison Pen which you may have come across.

Anyway that was a very sketchy history of HAG up to the present moment. What I'd like to go on to discuss now are the lessons I have learned from this year's activity.

I don't think many people would argue with me if I said that the movement in this country at this time is very weak. Obviously we are weak in terms of numbers and resources, but we are also weak organisationally. Ah! Organisation - the unmentionable sin in anarchist circles. Obviously we don't want a kind of neo-party organisation with hierarchy and 'correct lines' and membership cards and central committees etc. etc. but the present situation just isn't good enough. The movement is very centralised - London based. Almost all the activities and

collectives producing papers are in London and this mirrors the centralisation of the state and we should oppose it.

Groups who are trying to organise outside London (where the vast majority of people live) feel isolated. The anarchist press only talks about national and international events and anarchist theory - which of course are very important, but local groups have a responsibility to talk

to people in their own area about things which are relevant to them. This is what we are trying to do with Poison Pen - we try to present local news from an anarchist point of view. We also try to make it readable by including humour and articles on non-political subjects. We don't fill it full of abstract political theorising which only turns people off and we only carry national news stories when they are of special relevance.

We have had a good response to Poison Pen and most people like it. It has drawn new people into our circle so that if we were to carry out an action such as a sit-in or demo we would have much better support. So, if you are a small anarchist group think about it - it's not that difficult. In our case it was a question of being very poor for a week or so and putting in £10 each to buy a duplicator.

Back to organisation. We suggest an informal network of contacts between groups to be carried on by post and by exchange visits between groups. We already send Poison Pen to a number of groups (we will expand this) and when we publish other things we will do the same. We don't get many replies! We would also welcome correspondence on such subjects as:- the amount of 'formal' organisation that other groups find necessary; what activities groups engage in; how or if political discussions are arranged, etc, etc.

We also have space to put up visiting comrades, so if you fancy a week by the seaside or a weekend, or a day, why not drop down or drop us a line. These visits could contain as much or as little politics and socialising as we want, and must be a good way of breaking down the isolation felt by people trying to organise in small groups in apathetic towns.

We also feel it would be a good idea if there were a kind of 'internal bulletin' for the movement. We see it working like this:- One group which has printing facilities acts as a centre to which other groups send stories, reports or whatever and then when there are enough to print (or at regular intervals) it is sent free of charge to anyone who wants one.

This is only a proposal. We are prepared to do the first one if people think it is a good idea. By sharing our experiences in our own localities we can only get stronger.

HASTINGS ANARCHIST GROUP/
POISON PEN COLLECTIVE.

REPORTS

DD vs LT ON ITV

WE are freedom fighters. We are concentrating for the moment on London Transport, who are harassing and victimising buskers, performers and street entertainers.

We believe these people constitute an important part of the culture of this city and should be encouraged and supported.

A couple of days ago (19 February) some of our group appeared on 'News at 6' (ITV) with Horace Cutler, head of the GLC. In The Evening News the next day Mr Cutler is quoted as saying, "I think they bring a touch of humanity to a somewhat dull area. I am encouraging London Transport to look seriously at the question of licensing these underground players."

Horace believes that if the buskers are allowed to play in certain 'well-defined areas' their 'numbers can be controlled'.

While we are pleased to have Horace agreeing that buskers are a good thing, Demolition Decorators totally reject the idea of licensing inspiration, or restricting performers to certain areas. This will turn street entertainment into just another commercial rip-off.

Does anyone really want a human zoo?

- D.D. Communiqué

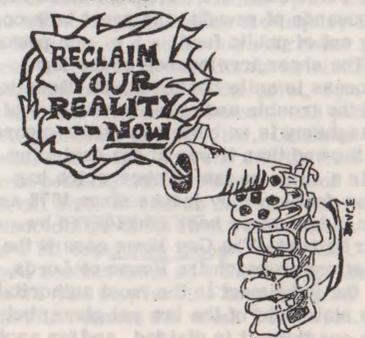
PPM

AS for 'nefarious and multifarious' activities (re Contacts page), it would take too many reams of polemic and behavioural theory to describe where we are at.

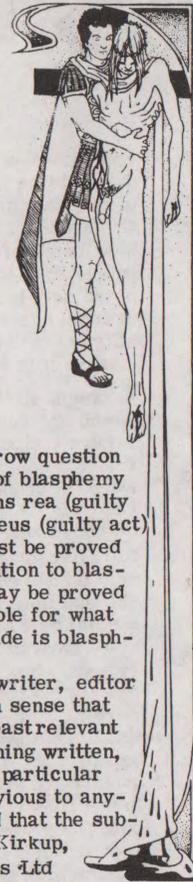
However, we are a loose but strong association of people living in Donegal, Belfast, Sheffield, Manchester and London, and have been in existence for over a year now.

Also we are preparing a document which will be a poster describing a new group called the Pansexual People's Militia. At this point it's probably best to leave the rest to your imagination...

Love, SNOWY



The Love That Dares
To Speak Its Name



GAY NEWS CASE ENDS—
BLASPHEMY
TO CONTINUE

THE first blasphemy case for more than half a century, which was begun in November 1976 by Mary Whitehouse's prosecution of the editor and publisher of *Gay News* for publishing James Kirkup's poem "The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name" in June 1976, has ended after more than two years.

The legal process has gone through three main stages. Denis Lemon and *Gay News Ltd* were tried at the Central Criminal Court in July 1977, and convicted and fined (Denis Lemon also received a suspended prison sentence); their appeals against conviction and sentence were heard by the Court of Appeal in February 1978 and dismissed in March 1978 (though Denis Lemon's prison sentence was quashed); their further appeals were heard by the House of Lords in November 1978, and dismissed in February 1979. A final appeal to the European Court is unlikely.

The sheer magnitude of the legal process is almost beyond belief. Two teams of lawyers have been working on the case for two years, and nine judges have listened to their arguments. There are hundreds of relevant documents going back through the legal cases for more than three centuries, and they have all been photocopied dozens of times. The trial hearing took six days, half the time being devoted to legal arguments; the Court of Appeal hearing took four days; the House of Lords hearing took five days. A complete transcript of the entire proceedings would fill several large volumes. The three Appeal judges gave a single judgement of about 10,000 words; the five Law Lords gave separate judgements amounting to about twice as much. In the end the whole case will have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds, the great bulk coming out of public funds - i.e. our pockets.

The sheer irrelevance of the legal process is quite beyond doubt. Despite all the trouble and expense, the law of blasphemy is no better and little clearer at the end than it was at the beginning. It is a common law offence which has been developed by judges since 1676 and which has never been considered by Parliament. The *Gay News* case is the first one to reach the House of Lords, so the judgement is the most authoritative statement of the law yet given; but for one thing it is divided, and for another

it is confined to the narrow question whether a person accused of blasphemy must be found guilty of mens rea (guilty mind) as well as of actus reus (guilty act) - that is, whether s/he must be proved to have the subjective intention to blaspheme, or whether s/he may be proved only to have been responsible for what ten members of a jury decide is blasphemous.

In the general case of a writer, editor or publisher, it is common sense that subjective intention is at least relevant in any discussion of something written, edited or published. In the particular case of this poem, it is obvious to anyone living in the real world that the subjective intention of James Kirkup, Denis Lemon and *Gay News Ltd* must be relevant to any discussion of whether it is blasphemous.

But this element was excluded in the trial, and this exclusion was upheld by the Court of Appeal and by a majority of the House of Lords judicial committee. As a result, in the last hour of the last hearing the lawyers and lords were reduced to considering what Denis Lemon's probable intentions were in the light of "what one has heard him say on television"! Meanwhile the crucial element of the tendency to cause a breach of the peace, which was emphasised at the trial and included at the first appeal, was excluded from the final appeal.

Of the five Law Lords, Lord Diplock and Lord Edmund-Davies, who are both interested in law reform, argued that subjective intention should be a necessary element of the offence of blasphemy. Diplock said that, although a publisher of James Kirkup's poem would be unlikely to convince a jury that he was justified by his good intentions, nevertheless he should be "entitled to his opportunity of sowing the seeds of doubt in the jury's mind". Edmund-Davies said that "to treat as irrelevant the state of mind of a person charged with blasphemy would be to take a backward step in the evolution of a humane code".

Viscount Dilhorne, who as Reginald Manningham-Buller was a reactionary Conservative politician, said, "I am unable to reach the conclusion that the ingredients of the offence of publishing a blasphemous libel have changed since 1792. Indeed, it would, I think, be sur-

prising if they had". Lord Russell of Killowen, who comes from a family of reactionary judges, said that he could "see no ground" for the suggestion that a person accused of publishing a blasphemy should be proved to have "recognised and intended it to be such or regarded it as immaterial whether it was": "It does not to my mind make sense; and I consider that sense should retain a function in our criminal law".

Lord Scarman, who is a well-known campaigner for law reform including a formal Constitution based on a Bill of Rights, agreed that the element of subjective intention was irrelevant, though he recognised the force of the opposing argument. The particular importance of his decision was that the House of Lords dismissed the appeals. But the general importance of his decision comes from what he said at the beginning and end of his speech. Scarman began:-

"I do not subscribe to the view that the common law offence of blasphemous libel serves no useful purpose in the modern law. On the contrary, I think there is a case for legislation extending it to protect the religious beliefs and feelings of non-Christians. The offence belongs to a group of criminal offences designed to safeguard the internal tranquillity of the kingdom. In an increasingly plural society such as that of modern Britain it is necessary not only to respect the differing religious beliefs, feelings and practices of all but also to protect them from scurrility, vilification, ridicule and contempt... I will not lend my voice to a view of the law relating to blasphemous libel which would render it a dead letter, or diminish its efficacy to protect religious feelings from outrage and insult. My criticism of the common law offence of blasphemy is not that it exists but that it is not sufficiently comprehensive..."

He said that "the history of the law affords little guidance" and that "the issue is, therefore, one of legal policy in the society of today". He said that the blasphemy law "may be said (as I believe to be true) to be moving towards a position in which people, who know what they are doing, will be criminally liable if the words they choose to publish are such as to cause grave offence to the religious feelings of some of their fellow citizens". He referred to the law of obscene publications and of race relations, under which one may be guilty without meaning to deprave or corrupt or to incite racial hatred. He referred to the European Convention article protecting freedom of religion, adding that "by necessary implication the Article imposes a duty on all of us to refrain from insulting or outraging the religious feelings of others".

There is a strong movement among leading political, legal and religious figures that the blasphemy law should be formally reformed in this direction, extending its protection from Christianity to all religions. The dangers are obvious, since religious fanatics of all kinds, instead of just the Christian evangelical Christian kind, could use the courts to impose their sectarian views on expression in religious matters. Opponents of the blasphemy law argue on the contrary that the law should be reformed in the

Continued opposite

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POLICE
SECRETS

Credit where it's due. Clement Freud's "Freedom of Information" Bill is having a good run for it's money. Private Member's Bills (sound obscene, don't they?) are doomed unless they get government backing. This one has not only gone a long way without that, it has actually survived government attempts to destroy it. The Labour government is, of course, committed to reforming the Official Secrets Act. They even produced a White Paper on the subject. Personally, I was somewhat overwhelmed by their proposals. I couldn't quite catch how they were going to revolutionise the ongoing situation at this moment in time. But there again, they were supposed to be reforms and there's nothing in the literal meaning of that word to suggest any actual change. The government have also tried amendments to Freud's Bill, which would have left it even less specific than their own White Paper. These have been defeated. Parliamentary manoeuvres aren't of much relevance to us, and no doubt the government will succeed in neutralising it before it can do any harm but I'll wish Freud and his supporters luck.

BLASPHEMY (CONT)

Continued

opposite direction, at least restricting its operation by stopping private prosecutions, and at best abolishing it altogether. The former reform would mean that prosecutions could be started only by the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions (who have in this case followed a tradition going back two centuries, by which the authorities have been very reluctant to get involved in blasphemy cases). The latter reform would mean that there would be the same freedom of expression in religious as in all other matters, subject to the general laws preventing private damage or public disorder.

Whatever the theoretical result and consequences of the *Gay News* case, the practical result has been that a lot of lawyers have made a lot of money, that a lot more people have given money to *Gay News* so that it has covered its costs and recovered from Mary Whitehouse's attack; and the practical consequence has been that James Kirkup's poem has been read by thousands and thousands of people who would not otherwise have seen or heard of it. Of all the defects of the law of blasphemy, surely the greatest is that it doesn't even prevent blasphemy. This anarchist lesson is the final moral of this whole case. M.H.



Meanwhile, top grade civil servants (the "First Division Association", smug bastards) are doing their bit of dabbling. They've issued a report, which carefully avoids outright opposition to Freud's Bill, but does point out vital areas of difficulty in implementing it. Well, there's staffing levels and, really, messages within the government have to be confidential, don't they Fair enough, I mean, how can these chaps get on with their jobs, running the country and that, if there's constant interference from all sorts of self appointed busy bodies?

The police have also done their bit towards an open society. They, in the form of a committee of senior officers and Home Office officials have decided against a 'national computerised police intelligence system'. I'll avoid cheap comments on that phrasing. There has been a pilot scheme in the Thames Valley with local policemen feeding any snippets of gossip into a computer. This 'intelligence' has been, according to leaks, on the level of 'fancies little boys' and 'well-known local druggie'. I'm afraid that this national decision is not on a basis of altruism and fair play; it is described as being for 'operational' reasons or, as a member of the committee put it 'if you feed rubbish in you get rubbish out'.

Police computers have cropped up elsewhere. Whatever happens to the 'national' one, that belonging to the Metropolitan Police is going full ahead. There was a TV programme ('Man Alive') on the matter last week and *The Guardian's* liberal hopes were raised, as the headline shows. Not so, of course, well only in the vaguest sense. Assistant Commissioner Wilson did reveal that they held five categories of information, on Fraud, Drugs, Illegal Immigrants, Serious Crime and Subversives. The last belongs to the Special Branch and is believed to take up over half the storage space. And, of course, Wilson refused to discuss it. 'National Interest' you know. He also produced a wonderful quote which sums it all up. One of the others in the discussion was pressing him on whether unsubstantiated suspicions were filed. Oh, of

course not, nothing but facts. And how does this square with the points above? 'It is a fact that an officer has these suspicions'.

The other policing story of the moment is to do with phones. James Malone has been seeking an injunction to prevent the police from tapping his. The High Court judge in the case has ruled that the practice is not illegal, but thinks that there should be legislation to prevent abuse. Similar calls were immediately made from several sources. Do these people really think that this would help? The police and Home Office have been lying about it for years. The usual pretence is that it only occurs in exceptional cases and has to have authorisation from On High. They won't actually say how many of these warrants are issued. There have been various estimates; in the Metropolitan area alone it seems to be over 10,000 per year. On a radio programme ('World at One') a former detective chief inspector from the West Country said that he had never been refused a tap by the Home Office. And this is just the police. It seems that the security forces such as M15 don't have to worry about these rules. And all this assumes that these people act in good faith, stick to the regulations and so on.

Still with the police, hands up all those who were surprised when the inquiry into the shooting of a supermarket robber produced a verdict of 'justifiable homicide'. And, just to emphasise the point, Sgt. Banks, the officer concerned, has just been promoted to Inspector. On these matters of police secrecy and the like it's worth pointing out that the excellent journal *State Research* has produced a bound volume of its first year's work. It's a bit expensive though (over £12), and if you contact them at 9 Poland St, London W1 you may be able to pick up the individual issues for about £3 the set. D.P.

GREEDY?

Dear FREEDOM

Concerning my article (vol. 39 no. 25) "Anarchists Make Lousy Film Stars".

You put in two notes, one stating "that warders raped and strangled Ulrike has never to our knowledge been proved".

I accept this point but I think you would have to agree that at the least the complicity of the warders is outstandingly obvious and there is some evidence to suggest they were the actual murderers. I've read several accounts which stated that the warders were Meinhof's murderers and this led me to write this as a definite fact.

On the film *La Cecilia* it has received no publicity and hasn't been shown here as far as I can ascertain. Australia gets shows much later than Britain, particularly documentaries and one-episode shows. Sometimes we miss them completely.

In reply to S.E. Parker's comments in issue vol. 40 no. 1.

It seems that S.E. Parker misunderstood my article and credits me with attitudes and activities that aren't anywhere but in his viewpoint.

For instance, I never said that there was any statistical evidence for proving that *The Iceman Cometh* was "a favourite piece of culture with all types of right wingers for years."

This statement was based on my own observations, audience reactions and comments at a recent performance, att-

itudes and comments by teachers and students in high school, comments by a right-wing workmate, the film review in *Time* magazine in mid-1973. All these comments were uniformly in favour of the play because of its political message. I've yet to come across any evidence that any right wingers dislike this play or its politics.

The *Iceman Cometh* was mentioned as one in a series of films that didn't deal fairly with anarchists and I think it deserves to be listed in that category. The references to anarchism as another faith and comments such as: "De anarchist he never works. He drinks but he never buys and if he do get a nickel he blows it on bombs and he wouldn't give you nothin'". "I know they're damn fools most of them as stupidly greedy for power as the worst capitalist they attack".

O'Neill chose to represent three of the most unlikeable people involved with the anarchist movement. Why not someone more representative?

How any anarchist can see this as a fair or a valid treatment is beyond me. Still, S.E. Parker's entitled to his opinions, but where he gets his view that my article was along the lines of 'agit-prop reductionism' isn't clear. I dealt deliberately with one facet of a play. I didn't claim to be making an in depth criticism involving other facets which may have more value than what I dealt with.

Incidentally, I dislike cultural propaganda from the left as much as from the right and Marxist dogma more than either.

GARRY HILL
S. Australia

Shaw I want to express my libertarianism and other views as widely and simply as possible.

At the age of 18 I took an interest in the demands for women's suffrage—not so much that I thought the vote was important but because I realised that behind the campaign was the demand for equal rights between the sexes. I was living in Reading at the time and at a bye-election the only parliamentary candidate who backed the suffrage for women was an Independent Socialist. How independent he was you will realise when I quote him as saying "Why nationalise industry? The worker will only exchange a small boss for a larger one." An echo of the syndicalist there, surely? I canvassed for him and with no party organisation he polled a little over two thousand votes, which was as much as could be expected. Yet I felt depressed. But I could not in my heart blame the people. They had not made the rules. Somewhere above them, out of reach, their rulers laid down standards, regulations, laws. The iron machine ground on, the pieces of paper were put in a box, the rules changed slightly but after the excitement, the celebrations things were the same. Perhaps there was light at the end of the tunnel, but the tunnel seemed so black and the light so far away.

This bye-election at Reading took place 67 years ago. Today the mass media has increased its range. Newspapers, radio and television bombard us with parliamentary politics morning, noon and

LETTERS

UNHINGED?

Dear editors and readers

Know anything about knees? If you're into medicine or art (or knees!) you'll know that you're standing on two intricate and complex bone-joints. However, by comparison, the thigh joint is simple. Now, if one were to make a humanoid robot, you don't need to know much about engineering to realise that the simplest of ordinary door hinges would suffice for a knee, whereas the thigh which has to be able to move in more directions would be more of a challenge.

All the above is self-evident, but now I am venturing to make a pronouncement. I declare that this shows that people are the opposite of machines. Machines thrive on law and order whereas law is anathema to people and never brings order. A knee is constrained by 'law' to only go backwards and forwards, no, only backwards. Easy on a machine, difficult on a person. Whereas the thigh, which has freedom to move every which way including twisting is natural to a person, difficult to arrange on a machine.

Now, is it a coincidence that in this respect bone (or hinge) joints are like the whole person (or machine)? Naturally I am not referring to those deficient specimens, either machines which "have minds of their own" or people who don't.

Interested to know what you think (or compute). Yours for thigh joints and freedom,

CHRIS ROPER
Covent Garden, London.
P.S. Same with bird's wings and aircraft propellers (constrained to only twist) which, by the way, is my metier.

ACT!

Comrades,

I completely agree with Paul Wilson in his letter on 'mass movement' that we must organise in a non-sectarian way (especially with non-party activists) on the basis of activities and not because of a common ideology.

The main obstacle in our path is not the army, the CBI or whatever, it is that politics has become a term of abuse because it is associated with endless talk and theory. The sort of thing which could only ever interest a small group of elitist intelligentsia (e.g. Lenin etc.)

The only way politics ever means something real is when an ideology is formed and expressed through action.

Valid activity may be hard to come by, but really there's no alternative, so stop wasting time in sectarian philosophy groups.

Theory needs action, action needs theory.

Mick
Sheffield 10.

night. With what result? In spite of this mass pressure 25% of those entitled to vote at the last general election did not do so. I leave readers of FREEDOM to draw their own conclusions.

—SIMPLEX

JAKE PRESCOTT RELEASED



JAKE Prescott has been released from prison. He was sentenced to 15 years in December 1971 on charges of conspiracy to cause explosions. This was later reduced to 10 years. He was acquitted of more specific charges relating to the Angry Brigade, such as the bombing of Robert Carr's kitchen. He was actually convicted for having addressed three Angry Brigade communique envelopes.

The other four who were convicted, in December 1972, have all been released over the last two years.

During his time in prison Jake has been an active campaigner for prisoner rights. He has repeatedly been victimised and

assaulted. After the Hull prison riot in 1976 he was 'awarded' (nice term) 700 days' loss of remission. That is, in effect, he had his sentence extended by over 2 years. Since then, 12 officers from Hull prison are facing charges for alleged offences committed against prisoners after the riot. Jake has given evidence at this trial. Following the riot he was shifted from one maximum security block to another. He spent 224 days of his loss of remission in solitary confinement. At the moment, along with other ex-prisoners who took part in the riot, he is suing the Home Office for a declaration that the Board of Visitors' disciplinary hearing was against natural justice.

LETHAL BYZANTISM, OR POWER AS A FUNCTION OF SEMANTIC TRIVIA IN THE CHINA/VIETNAM JEHAD

THE Vietnamese forces claim to have killed or disabled 42,000 Chinese soldiers, thus demonstrating the truth of the theory of the introjection of the oppressor, in this case the apparent adoption by the Vietnamese of the charming American idea of overkill. The Chinese, on the other hand, having made themselves literate in a most worthy way, have become logorrheic, drunk with words, the more pretentiously polysyllabic the better. My own Chinese is limited to wun tun char shui and dam sam, but loving han friends inform me that Chinese officialese is dense, oblique, allusive and elusive and is designed as an exercise in exegesis rather than as a means of coherent communication.

Vietnamese words, on the other hand, as distinct from the Vietnamese actions of the recent past, would seem to be direct transliterations of the crunzier Marxist uglifications: a difficult task, I should think, given the bell-like euphony of spoken Vietnamese.

And so the stage is set, with two confabulating power-drunk sociopaths pressing all the buttons to arouse the fratricidal impulses of two peoples, cousins if not brothers and sisters, who have been rendered vulnerable by age-long social bastardry and the past 30-odd years of unceasing bloodshed, suffering, exploitation and deprivation. Two dogs, or two chickens, or two human beings, can be led to fight each other to the death if they are previously and separately subjected to even small amounts of random coercion and deprivation: add to this two histories alike in every respect, down to a long-standing common habit of vilification, based on the myths, greed, stupidities and superstitions of their common past, and the present insanity is as tragically

predictable as it is heartbreakingly unnecessary.

As an anarchist, my first response to this bloody sickness is "Not again, oh no, not again", and it is 1937, and I am ten years old and sitting in the dust of my riverina backyard reading of Spanish peasants killing their peasant brothers and sisters, and my landscape is much like theirs and my sun is their sun and my father is on his way there, the light of the new Jerusalem in his eyes, his desertion of one small family justified by his concern for one large family: and since then it hasn't stopped for one minute. The poor go on dying in agony and in pieces, the peasants and the proletarians run to their deaths blinded by unreal visions and unexamined dreams, and the politicians and the priests get fatter, the pundits and the parasites and the profiteers speak openly of the glories of this or that war, and walk freely among their victims, not only unlynched but also, forgive us all, rewarded and praised.

As individuals, as society we suffer from flattened and inappropriate affect, we read and hear of thousands dead within days, we see the blood on the screens in our rooms, and we murmur vaguely, yawn, and turn to the football or the mindless tv serials and only then do we show any signs of life, albeit a spurious life. The disappearance of a character from Coronation Street will elicit hundreds or even thousands of letters from concerned viewers, all of whom, remember, are adult voters. The deaths of thousands or of millions in war or famine or disaster will produce some desultory smart-ass comments from the Jon Akass' (ache arse) of the press, and a bit of exhortative psychotherapy from some corpulent divine who needs the publicity. And still

POETS PICKET POETS

A picket and leafleting organised by Writers' Forum and some members of the Association of Little Presses at the Little Press Book Fair organised by and at the Poetry Society to celebrate their 70th anniversary, met with considerable hostility on the part of Poetry Society officials last Friday and Saturday (23 and 34 February).

The role of the Poetry Society and of its 'sun', the Arts Council - from whom all its monetary blessings have (until now) flowed - has - for a few years now been a thoroughly reactionary one as far as little presses, and indeed poetry itself, are concerned.

It should be remembered that the little presses publish between them 70 per cent of the new poetry published annually in the UK, and while all that poetry might be of an uneven quality the vast majority of it is superior to that appearing in the Arts Council's favourite organ, the currently tottering *New Review*.

Some poets and little press publishers therefore felt justified in taking to the streets and making their views known to visitors to the Book Fair and indeed were very sympathetically treated by both visitors and exhibitors alike. Not so the hosts however, who brought a tag-team nondynamic duo into fairly muscularly verbal play against any pickets unfortunate enough to be left on their tod for any length of time. Needless to say, these literary gangsters made themselves scarce when the picket line stretched, as it did during the day, to eight or ten people strong.

Still, useful points were made - and I can only feel that the anger generated by the picket might have been less had we not, in fact, touched a raw nerve somewhere.

J.H.

the poor are dying all around us: a boring truism, an awkward fact of life, something to be subsumed in the insipid jollifications of a jubilee or a cup-tie. And where is the left during all this Duffing each other up, as often as not, or indulging their own addiction to the byzantine crapulosity of a diseased and dying dialectic, brutalised and made paranoid by constant exposure to mindless consumerism, random repression, manipulated divisiveness and the creeping demotivation of age and failure and disappointment. So what the hell do we do? I suggest that first we reiterate our basic anarchist principles; killing people is wrong and counterproductive; killing people in defence of bullshit is wrong; taking sides is wrong; think again; and again, learn to love our brothers and sisters no matter how misguided we think them to be; do not be afraid to say that to be anarchist is to wish to be whole and one cannot be whole in pieces.

IAN SIME

FROM Pg. 15. **ROADS TO NOWHERE**

struggle for increasingly scarce resources (including energy) to maintain the profligate and wasteful society that they so create and so exemplify - and that way is a short cut to world nuclear conflict."

This passage from John Tyme's book has been quoted at length to absolve him of the reformist criticism which is usually levelled at such crusades. Mr. Tyme makes it perfectly clear in his book - and in his activities - that he disassociates himself from those who would have a motorway - but somewhere else. The Ministry's tactics seem to be directed on the usual "divide & conquer" lines.

In basing his opposition at enquiries to the basic flaw in the seemingly democratic set-up, John Tyme has exposed the underlying authoritarianism of governments, bureaucrats and technology.

There is little in Tyme's indictment of the motorways programme that anarchists could not agree with, indeed it squares with anarchist theories on the decentralisation of society, the maintenance of the balance between industry and agriculture and above all, the concept of individual responsibility and communal co-operation shown in the formation of local groups to fight government proposals.

The book also exposes, which is probably the greatest scandal of all, the lobbying and influence of the British Road Federation and other vested interests in pushing through road plans which despite protests, proven futilities and probable future obsolescence have been carried out with only a semblance of democratic procedure.

This book is probably too technical and detailed on specific points of law and procedure to appeal to the general reader but to the concerned and aware it is a tribute to what one man can do to buck the system.

Jack Robinson

FROM Pg. 15 **BOYCOTT EUROPE**

We should certainly boycott the elections, and organise active anti-election events. But we can also use this opportunity to establish contact with comrades elsewhere in Europe, and organise joint actions if possible. How about making 6 June - the day before the elections - a day of 'European Libertarian Action' against the EEC? Groups could organise whatever was relevant in their own situations - meetings, leafleting, street theatre - but in the knowledge that other anarchists and libertarians all over Europe were also getting the message across. In this way, we can use the spurious 'internationalism' of the EEC to help us create a real internationalism of the European movement.

MARTIN SPENCE
Black Jake

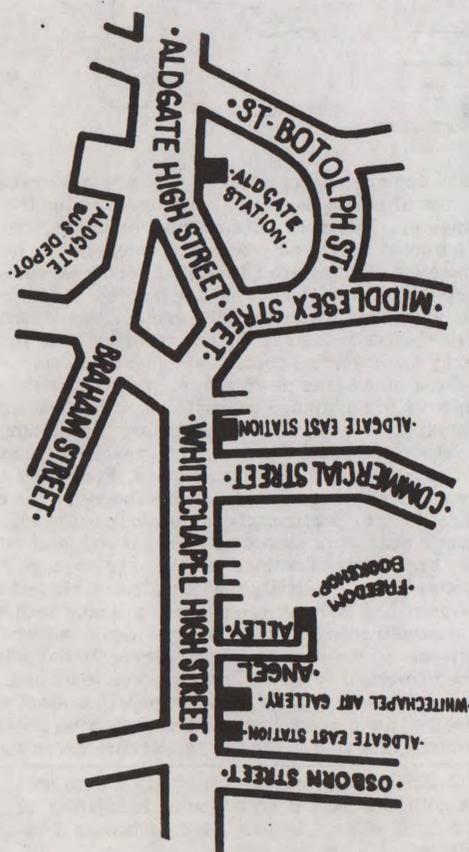
* When I use the terms 'progressive' and 'reactionary' I don't intend to suggest approval or disapproval. The EEC is 'progressive' in that it represents a form of capitalism which is emerging from the previous, competitive form. It is 'progressive' historically, not morally.

FREEDOM'S BOOKSHOP NOTES

In Angel Alley, 84B Whitechapel High St, London E1.
(Please add postage as in brackets).

- Tom Mann (ed): *The Industrial Syndicalist* nos. 1 - 11 incl. July 1910 - May 1911. Facsimile. £1.75p (29p)
- Tom Mann (ed): *The Syndicalist*. Vol. 1. no. 1 - Vol III no. 5 January 1912 - August 1914. Facsimile. £12.00 (86p)
- * Arthur C. Goddard (ed). Harry Elmer Barnes: *Learned Crusader. The New History in Action*. £5.95 (86p)
- Victor Serge: *Conquered City*. £1.50p (22p)
- Victor Serge: *Men in Prison* £1.25p (22p)
- Victor Serge: *Birth of our Power*. £1.25p (22p)
- The Pulp Press Annotated 1979 Calendar (with drawings by C.W. Carlsen). £1.50p (15p)
- Housmans World Peace Diary 1979. £1.45p (15p)
- Biciçleta: *Revista de Comunicaciones Libertarias: Anarquismo en el Mundo* (incl. contrbs. Paul Avrich, Noam Chomsky, Frank Mintz, J. Peirats, Stuart Christie, A. Telliez & many more) (In Spanish). Illustrated. £0.50p (19p)
- * Bakunin: *On Violence: A Letter to Sergei Nechaev*. £0.30p (10p)
- * Len Fulton & Ellen Ferber: *Small Press Record of Books in Print*. Seventh ed. 1978 £5.50p (66p)
- * Len Fulton & Ellen Ferber (eds): *Directory of Small Magazine/Press Editors & Publishers*. Ninth ed. 1978-1979. £3.95p (26p)
- * Len Fulton & Ellen Ferber (eds): *International Directory of Little Magazines & Small Presses*. 14th ed. 1978-1979. £5.50p (54p).

(Items marked * are published in the USA).



where to buy them

Anarchist Review Freedom

NINETEEN seventy nine is to be the year of elections and referenda. Referenda on devolution for Scotland and Wales are being held on 1 March, elections to the parliament of the European Economic Community on 7 June, the national election presumably some time after that. This Review looks at Scotland in referendum year. It also takes a look at the Common Market through a text being circulated by Black Jake of

Newcastle. This group wants to know what comrades think about the idea of a European day of action (in cooperation with groups abroad) against the EEC elections. In addition, the Review includes the text of a pamphlet for the national election prepared by libertarian socialist groups and individuals in the Greater Manchester area (mentioned in the last issue). Readers who wish to use this text for their own leaflets are welcome to do so.

EDINBURGH SPRING

RECENTLY in the new underground wing of the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh there was a display of Scottish paintings: not a display necessarily by Scottish painters, that is, but one in which the painters had all taken Scottish themes for their canvas. In date they ranged from the mid-seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, and included those landscapes of heather-clad highland mountains (the famous 'Monarch of the Glen' was there, original of a million reproductions hung above Edwardian mantlepieces) and all the paintings of statuesque ruins, country mansions, and pudding-faced gentlemen in periwigs by Allan Ramsay and others that you see being used as book illustrations and glossy jacket covers to decorate the coffee table, but can never put a name to. I wandered round it for a while with that feeling I always get in art galleries, as in museums and churches - that I should be impressed, that I should be experiencing something profoundly spiritual, but that somehow it has failed to come off. Then I left and climbed the stairs up to busy, commercial Princes Street with its row of glittering shop fronts and plastic signs smooth and shiny as new dentures, and there the thought struck me: - That it was below, in the hushed subterranean gallery where a bored caretaker sat owl-like in a corner and visiting feet whispered softly over carpeted floors, that the past glorious nationhood of Scotland was now enshrined, not here, not among these aspiring bourgeois shoppers, TV fed and hungry for yet more advertised consumer goods, not among the plastic signs and urban rush and pastel-painted Toyotas and Volkswagens churning up the sugary brown ice on the winter roadway. Nor (far less) was it in famous, beautiful, historical Edinburgh, which is as glazed over with cosmopolitan photography as any tourist attraction damned to living death as a quaint slab of frozen history is bound to be. Nor (though for a different reason) was it in that Edinburgh where most of the city's half million inhabitants actually live, having been tidied away to make room for the new office blocks and tourist shopping plazas - in the housing estates of Sighthill and Wester Hailes and a dozen other such bleak brick and concrete and coloured glass ghettos that the tourist never bothers to visit because they're not distinctively 'atmospheric' enough, being exactly like God knows how many thousands of other such ghettos from New York to Tokyo, from Moscow to Tehran. Yet it is my home city, I live in it, and, were I a nationalist, I would probably proclaim IT IS MINE, source of my historical roots, place where my heart beats faster, home of my ancestors. But none of that is true.

WHAT IS MY NATION?

asked Shakespeare's Captain Macmorris; 'ish a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal? What ish my nation Who talks of my nation?' Many people talk about my nation, my Scotland, but what is Scotland to them or to me other than so much earth between the Atlantic and the North Sea north of a line agreed upon between the houses of Stewart and Plantagenet more than six centuries ago?

So what is a nation? The word, to be used with any accuracy, must be a cultural one, one which a dictionary would probably define as 'a group of people sharing common origin, language, culture, and historical tradition', but trying to attach any one of these to Scotland is more difficult than trying to lasso a bullfrog, for the Scottish people have no more 'common origin' than the English people (or any other people, for that matter, who have not been petrified in isolation from their fellows for aeons of time or across the breaking up of continents; by which definition the semi-mythical white tribes of the Amazon and Tierra del Fuego may claim a common origin while all other peoples are nth generation immigrants from some other part of the globe). Equally, 'historical tradition' is an illusive thing, a matter demanding much faith and hope on the part of the believer, and requiring a good deal of charity from all non-believers if the world is to stay a peaceful place.

I don't know why, but History is a word used as a justification for so much pain. True, she has a rather out of date look about her now - having been progressively upstaged by sociology, psychology, ecology and doubtless some-other-sort-of-ology which I've forgotten to mention - but still the old lady can come charging in like Boadicea in her chariot to flatten the opposition with 'historical laws', 'historical compromises', and that famous 'iron will of historical necessity' the Leninists rave about when they're clearing the decks for a nice little massacre. I can remember when I was being indoctrinated at school that the history we were taught was the study, not of 'The People', not even of large numbers of people, but only of a few select people - who were all emperors and kings in any period from Palaeolithic Man down to Charles I. When the modern world appeared in the form of the axe that chopped off Charles's head, these select people were less and less emperors and kings, and more and more prime ministers and industrialists with the odd explorer tossed in. This notion of history as something made by the activities of the leadership, and then imposed on the led in the name of tradition, is one which goes much deeper than many may think. What after all is the historical tradition in Scotland? Answer: constant war. Constant war between the feudal clan chiefs of the highlands in which hundreds of press-ganged crofters died because the laird of Lochiel fancied that the laird of Inveray had insulted him. Constant war between the Gaelic-speaking north and the English-speaking south in which thousands of press-ganged townsmen and peasants went for each other with spears and axes because they had each been told that the other lot were barbarians out to rape their wives and daughters. Constant war between the Scottish kings in Edinburgh and the English kings in London in which thousands and thousands of loyally press-ganged subjects butchered each other over the centuries for reasons so obscure I question if they were more, eventually, than mere force of habit. As well say that the inhabitants of that bit of Chicago once ruled by Al Capone should feel a sense of historical tradition separating them from the inhabitants of the other bit once

ruled by Lucky Luciano or Legs Diamond; but one question at least was resolved in this thousand year hard -labour sentence called our national history - the English-speaking lowlands made such a good job of liberating the Gaelic-speaking highlands that the language in which I am writing now is that spoken by 99.9 infinity per cent of my fellow Scots: i.e. English.

So where is the Scottish nation? It is a thing to be searched for like El Dorado, and in pursuit of it nationalist intellectuals sail up long forgotten rivers on hopeless voyages from which their critical faculties will never return unimpaired. I will not condemn nationalism - the nationalism which does truly exist in the hearts of a people harried by some callously exploiting superpower, whose language is dying unrecognised, whose skin is despised, whose customs are forbidden exercise. Such a product of adversity is true nationalism, and in that it dismembers the ersatz monster of an imperial state a libertarian may support it, albeit with reservations. But such a nationalism does not exist in Scotland, simply because the popular cultural basis for it is no longer there. In no sense does the position of the Scottish people compare with the centuries-old linguistic isolation of the Quebecois; or the militant imperialism which oppresses the Ukrainians. What there is instead is a strange ghost-nationalism which has walked wailing from the graveyard of old ideologies, but whose nature is so unhorrific that it would be quite content to see "Buy Scottish" substituted for "Buy British" in the chic shop windows of Princes Street. A friendly ghost! A thing insubstantial: a "nationalism" which has no nation, an "awareness" of which nobody is aware, can be no more than a thinly-spread new varnish over an old and worm-eaten piece of furniture, capable of giving the pleasing (to some) appearance of uniformity and good order for a while at least, but ultimately (historically, dare I say?) incapable of hiding the brittle dryness that is within.



BAGPIPE MUSIC - ONE

Nothing is being debated with less heat in Scotland this February - indeed nothing is being debated less - than the issue of devolution. If there is a majority vote for devolution on 1 March then it will surely be the most emotionless major political change which our invisible constitution has ever undergone. Newspapers are fond of likening its importance to that of the original Act of Union of 1707 - an event which was accompanied by violent riots, a calling out of the army and down of the mercy of God, and a hasty raking in of negotiable capital by those afraid of imminent, if ultimately aborted, revolution. Even more imminent revolution was just as successfully aborted by shrewdly reforming conservatives in the events leading up to the First Reform Bill of 1832 and the presentation of the great People's Charter a decade later. Of course, it is a foolish and immature wind which equates importance with bloodshed, and refuses to ascribe any significance to an event which is not accompanied by barricades, guns and battle, and the vry of the dying martyrs; but where in Scotland today is there the sort of widespread understanding of the issues both for and against which would make the use of referenda into a genuine part of the British political system as it is in Switzerland? Where such understanding exists it does so in small pockets as welcome as shelters on a rainy night, but as isolated as foxholes on a First World War battlefield - and the storm of shot and shell which pounds it is that of the nationalism of the SNP.

Some people writing in the correspondence columns of the Scottish press (where alone, seemingly, in all the land the issue has been pounded out by a few enraged citizens for months and months and months) have erred on the side of overkill by farring the friendly ghost with the black and sticky brush of fascism. Now this, at first glance, is simply not true; or true only to the extent that the National Party, like the Conservative

and Labour Parties, is potentially a fascist organisation - which is probably to use the word in a sense so generalised as to be meaningless. But having said that, there is a sense in which the accusation can be seen to stick. Let me try and explain.

In one of their perceptions the SNP is right, glaringly, obviously so. The united kingdom is not a unity: the economy of Scotland lags behind that of England by at least twenty years.

Initially, following the dynastic union of the two countries under a single monarchy in 1603, there were a hundred years of economic uncertainty as one sector of the Scottish commercial class strove for foreign markets independently of (and consequently in competition with) the far wealthier English merchant companies, while another sector, less patriotic but economically more realistic, sought to encroach on small bits of the English market under the partnership of the union flag. Mercantile mismanagement and English hostility combined to wreck the dream of a continuing independent Scottish economy when the attempt to establish a colony on the Central American isthmus of Darien (modern Panama) collapsed in the 1690s; and after the second and more complete political union of 1707, Scotland began to produce for a market which, both internally and overseas, was emphatically British. England, as is well known, created an economy for empire, and consequently entered her post-industrial age with a mammoth imperial metropolis, an over-abundance of heavy industry, and a scarcity of food, fuel and raw materials with which to feed it. Scotland, mutated to the second degree, created her economy for England and via England for the empire. Consequently, her's is the more seriously imbalanced, with an overwhelming emphasis on heavy industry (coal and shipbuilding) and a population tightly concentrated inside a small proportion of the country's area around Edinburgh, Glasgow and the upper Clyde.

In England, the decade following the end of the war saw a new generation of the bourgeoisie that went neither into the officer corps, nor into the civil service, nor into trade, but into a steadily mushrooming crop of neo-capitalist enterprises that were not geared to production of any material commodity, but to serving and supporting those enterprises that so produced. This was the class of the red brick universities, of liberal Toryism and democratic Labour, of the affluence of the post-war boom and the easy tolerance which it bred. In Scotland this process is only now occurring.

I can remember a time, and not so very long ago, when Scotland, though still a country of virtually feudal landowners, had no bourgeoisie - or seemed to have none - because the Calvinist ideology which had been imposed on the land was one in which there was no more sacred a word than 'work'. White-collared people, of course, there were in plenty, but they did not form a hereditary caste. They were, as the Scottish phrase has it, "lads o' pairts". Traditionally, parents in a proletarian tenement anxious for the future of their sons had three favoured professions - the soldier, the minister and the schoolteacher, with the doctor and the lawyer tagging along close behind - and into those professions the lads would go with the smell of the Cowgate or the Gorbals slums still in their nostrils to form a clerical middle class which destroyed itself once a generation and recreated itself again, like the sun, in the wake of the explosion. At least that is the generalisation, and it is as partially accurate as any generalisation is likely to be.

Only recently, and very recently too, has the Scottish bourgeois appeared in large numbers with distinctively residential bourgeois suburbs (as opposed to suburbs resided in by retired ministers and shabby-genteel old ladies) and distinctively non-professional bourgeois jobs - non-professional in that they seek neither to educate, nor mould, nor lead people with whatever intention as the flesh and blood human beings of one's

daily contact but to move instead, as in England twenty years ago, into the field of finance rather than production, of accountancy firms rather than factory management, of the manipulation of already made capital rather than the creation of fresh capital through work. The audit has replaced the sermon, and the advertiser's copy the lawyer's brief, as the Word from on High, and when I saw it first I couldn't help an unwitting emigre nostalgia for the bad old days that were. Symbolising it all to my jaundiced eye, the Edinburgh to which I returned last year after five years of exile in the distant south had closed down its second-hand bookshops, its cinemas, its dives, and even health food shops, restaurants vegetarian to Japanese, psychiatrists neo-Freudian and psychiatrists post-Jungian, pedestrian precincts, conference centres and businessmen's hotels, and dozens and dozens (I exaggerate not) of those places that sell ye olde very expensive antique furniture to ye newe very well-lined colour supplement pseud.

At the head of this column of triumphant new-wave capitalism, playing the pipes of the Pied Piper if not those of the Road to the Isles, marches the SNP.

BAGPIPE MUSIC - TWO

Long ago when I was very young a school outing took me to the English border near Kelso. Just on the other side, no more than a few miles away, was Flodden Field. Our bus stopped on our side of the border, and the teacher, who was an ardent nationalist, told us about the "flowers o' the forest" and the brave lads who had died in battle. His jaw set grimly and tears came into the eyes of the girls, and mine as well - we really felt that strongly about the fate of the Scottish army 450 years ago! Some of the boys stood along the line of the border - no more than a change of colour in the road surface - and spat on England. The teacher smiled approvingly. It was the first time his nationalism had ever been taken seriously: before - and afterwards - it had just been a joke.

Scottish nationalism, as something other than a heathery myth, grew up in the ranks of a radically-minded literary intelligentsia in the 1920s whose writings, in Eliot's well-worn phrase, are now remembered in spite of, and not because of, their political leanings despite the feverish efforts of such as MacDiarmid to prove that their national socialism was not fascist by quoting Lenin on liberation and muttering about international solidarity, etc. Perhaps history was unkind to this romantic era of Scottish nationalism. After the thirties - more particularly after the revelations at Nürnberg - it was, and has consistently proved ever since, impossible for any European, or person of European colouring and origin, to lead nationalism and socialism hand in hand to the altar without the church organ breaking into the Horst Wessel Lied and a stained glass swastika appearing in the sky above. Hamstrung by popular suspicion and apathy, the National Party in the first forty years of its existence wandered in a limbo populated by gaunt-faced Lallans poets and mad little Tory ladies who wore tartan skirts and thought that if only Scotland were independent there would be no more nasty strikes and the servant problem would be at an end. O those bad old good old days!

Tellingly, it was only after these visionaries had died or gone to bed in spiritualism and nostalgia that the Party made its sudden great leap forward in the years bracketing 1970, and tellingly its leap was made under the impact of a magical vision such as the genie might have shown to Aladdin when he rubbed the lamp: OIL.

Written on the heart of every intelligent conservative is the sentence "Things must change in order that they may remain the same", and the SNP is Scotland's party of political, which is to say, superficial, change. Socially and economically it stands exultantly, triumphantly by the status quo - against the abolition of political power and the redistribution of economic wealth, for the continuation of human-face capitalism and the enlightened state. In consequence any comrade whose memory stretches far enough, or who has read up on his or her homework of statist ideologies, cannot but get a weary feeling of deja vu when the SNP comes clumping into sight, last of a long, long line.

Today's National Party is solidly capitalistic, but with a trendy liberal image. When Edinburgh's prospective candidates and nationalist dons gather for cocktails at each other's houses in select Mayfield Road or the Grange area, girls in blue jeans can be observed circulating among them chattering about ecology and exuding Chanel Number 5. It is Big Business, it is explained, that is soaking Scotland dry, stealing Our Oil, and

polluting Our Environment. It is the evil subversive strikers who are bringing Our Economy to a grinding halt, strikers who are greedy, who are not Nationally Minded. But, oh, who can blame them? So, strong, so deserving, yet so simple and so easily misled! Who can blame these trusting creatures if they fail to realise that the worker's role in the Ordered Nation is To Work and not to parrot alien ideas about class and internationalism? It is the fault of the Big Businessmen whose offices are all in London. It is the fault of the rule by foreigners in Westminster. Merely put Big Business and Political Rule into National Hands, and - bingo! - no more strikes, no more inflation, no more Common Market, no more NATO, just OIL, OIL, OIL, and the wind sighing in the palm trees by Lochnagar. Prolonged applause from the whole white-collared roomful.

Why all this should be so is never explained. It is just to be taken on trust. Rejuvenation from above in the name of increased productivity is what the Party preaches, verbal radicalism until political independence is achieved, and entrenching conservatism thereafter; and all its talk about "small is beautiful" and "democracy of the grass roots" is no more than empty bombast. Why, if there were aborigine tribes on the land needed for oil terminals, the SNP would napalm them out of the way to-



morrow without the slightest hesitation, so eager are its leaders for Scotland to become the Libya of northern Europe; and as to Norway, of which the party apparatchiks have claimed time without number Scotland will be the mirror image when she becomes independent, what is suddenly so wonderful about Norway that has turned it into a new-found heaven on earth? Other proud little independent little countries with their enshrined national traditions and hearty national unity are Albania, Chile, Cuba, Cambodia and the German Democratic (sic) Republic. Might not Scotland mirror one of these prison houses instead? No, of course not! scream the white-collars, waving their liberal credentials. But why not - And again, this is never explained.

EDINBURGH AUTUMN?

The point is that it is not the feasibility but the desirability of the thing called Scottish national independence that is at question. Even at the half-way stage of devolution the question must be asked - devolution where to? to the people? or to the state? And if the latter, what do the people gain by the Big State, the One State, dividing itself up into two, or three, or

more little states, the better to rule its subjects?

Scotland independent or Scotland autonomous is a Scotland on which the measure of power has passed to a newly created Scottish state on the argument that a state apparatus which dictates to six million people is both more efficient and morally commendable than one which dictates to sixty million. This is like arguing that the men who bombed Hiroshima were less guilty of mass murder than the men who operated Auschwitz since they killed fewer people and ended the war thereby. But six million is still too large a grouping. The Scot is not going to be any more democratically controlled (even ignoring the contradiction in terms) for having the seat of power within eye-shot on the Calton Hill than the Londoner for whom the pretentious architecture of parliament and palace has been part of the background for centuries. A 'nationalism' which is not of a people, a 'nationalism' which is of the economic greed of a few, merits the inverted commas with which I am chaining it because it is a narrow and purely hedonist class interest which has romanticised itself out of recognition. A 'community', a 'family', a 'brotherhood' of 6,000,000? Plato suggested five thousand, I believe, as the maximum number who could be so regarded, and even that was probably too many. In Europe at least nations are surely things that we can turn our backs on. Devolution, yes, but why to this thing called Scotland? What is Scotland any more than Ireland, England or Wales? Devolution to the regions would be more sensible; devolution to the districts better still; but what are these medieval names taken from old maps?

A prison does not cease to be a prison for having bright flowers put in its windows and fresh paint slapped on its walls,

VOTE NOBODY!

POLITICIANS AND PROMISES

In case you hadn't noticed it's election season and the smell of rosettes is in the air. MPs whom you haven't seen for years will be out and about hustling for votes. The top politicians will be on telly and in the papers even more often making big and better promises. Better times, they say, are just around the corner, if only we vote for their particular party.

But will it make much difference who we vote for? Ted Heath gave us income policies, cut-backs on immigration, more repressive laws, more bureaucracy and cut-backs in health, education and social services. 'Uncle' Jim has been much the same except that instead of the three-day week a lot of us don't have a job at all. Maggie Thatcher will certainly be no better.

All of them - Labour, Tory, Liberal and National Front - stand for the continuation of the same rotten system. Even those who sport 'socialist', 'communist' or Trotskyist badges only want the private bosses replaced by state ones.

DO-IT-YOURSELF POLITICS

A lot of people realise what's going on around them. Either they decide to make the best of a bad job and vote for the party they think will do the least damage, or they just sink into apathy and become cynical about things ever changing. But things do change. Not by putting a cross on a ballot paper but by people getting together to fight for what they want.

This is do-it-yourself politics. It means by-passing the bosses and bureaucrats that control the present system and creating our own organisations to run things for ourselves.

Every day people get together and refuse to be pushed around by those with wealth, power and privilege. Of course we don't always win, the government and employers use their laws and their power over us to get their own way. But after all they're only a minority and a small one at that.

Do-it-yourself politics means getting together and organising in industry, in the community and in the home for what we want. Of course it isn't easy. For a start most of us don't

nor is the badness of a system based on coercion changed by the nationality of the coercionists and the numbers of those coerced. Byron claimed the opposite in Don Juan when he has his Greek patriot sing 'our masters then were still, at least, our countrymen' - but then the liberal nationalists fighting in the Greece of the 1820s could feel the need for bully-boy heroes of their own in the extremity of Turkish oppression, and the sympathising poet (soon to die for the cause of freedom) could write these lines with perfect integrity:

"The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
O! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind".

He could not write so today. Too much blood has flown under the slaughterhouse door for such distinctions of nationhood to be made in other than a callous, foolis, or simply cynical way. What would we think of the person who praised the humanity of great Hitler because he fought Stalin? - or great Stalin because he fought Hitler? Or for that matter great A-bomb because it burned the Japs, or great napalm because it zapped the Cong?

Scotland means nothing to me; I'll say that freely to any nationalist within earshot - NOTHING. No more does England, no more does Germany, no more Japan. And it is precisely because the people of all these lands mean EVERYTHING that I say it. Long live Anarchy! It's the only thing worth fighting for.

COLIN MACKAY

have much time if we've been working all day in homes, factories, shops and offices and we don't really feel like doing much else. This is how they win. The bureaucrats and politicians, the bosses and trade union officials rely on this - they become the experts - just vote for them and they will look after you!

HOW IT COULD BE

But if we did it ourselves, every community could have its own neighbourhood council and every workplace its own workers' council. It could be directly elected at mass meetings of everyone living in an area or working on the job. We could decide what should be done, not the bosses. After all we are the people who have to live with these decisions, not the 'experts' who make decisions from afar. These councils could be linked at local, regional and world-wide levels.

Many people will agree with this but say it's too idealistic. That's because we're taught to be pessimistic and that the only way to survive in this society is to be ruthless. We disagree. We've got the technology and the resources to do it. All we need is the determination and the organisation to achieve what we want.

We CAN have a society where people's needs come first, not those of big business or the state. We could ensure that production is not useless or wasted, that work isn't boring and tedious. Communities could be planned by those who lived and worked in them. Housing, food, clothing, transport etc. could be provided on the basis of need and not profit or ability to pay.

We would no longer be the subject of other people's plans. We would work and make decisions together, on an equal basis. When we are all bosses, no one will be boss.

When it comes down to it - if you want something yourself - do-it-yourself. It's the only way.

NO MATTER WHO YOU VOTE FOR THE GOVERNMENT WILL GET IN.

BOYCOTT EUROPE

THE elections to the 'Parliament' of the European Economic Community are due to be held on 7 June. As good anarchists, of course, our gut response is to proclaim "Boycott them!" and to start organising a 'Don't Vote' campaign. But the EEC is different from the British state, the EEC parliament is different from the parliament at Westminster, and it would be as well to establish exactly what it is that we are refusing to vote for!

The EEC, as its name indicates, is an economic arrangement. It represents a response by European capital to the post-war situation, where Europe is no longer at the centre of world affairs. Two world wars, both of which originated as European civil wars, had led by 1945 to a situation where the locus of imperialist power had shifted predominantly to the USA, with the USSR also in a strong position. Europe itself, which had for centuries represented a natural centre of power, was suddenly embarrassingly divided up into 'spheres of influence' of the superpowers.

However, western European capital still wielded considerable influence. The old European empires - British, French, Belgian and Dutch - continued to provide contacts and markets across the world, and on the continent itself there was advanced industry and a highly-experienced workforce. Furthermore, in the new postwar conditions, the western European powers no longer had any reason to argue among themselves: any serious arguments now would take place on a geopolitical level, and Europeans would be involved only as junior partners of the superpowers.

The EEC is an attempt, by the representatives of progressive * western European capital, to get the best possible deal out of the new situation. It represents an attempt to resist the encroachments of US imperialism, and especially of the US-based multinationals, and to hold onto the important advantages inherited from Europe's imperialist past. But it is not a reactionary phenomenon, in the sense of trying to hang on to outmoded values or institutions. On the contrary, it is progressive: it aims to build a modern, strong, European corporate capitalism upon the basis of Europe's traditional economic advantages, a capitalism able to challenge American, Russian, Japanese or Chinese capitalism.

The EEC is not a great capitalist institution in the sense of disposing of vast resources, or launching massive industrial ventures. Its annual budget until recently has been around the £3,000m. mark: this compares with over £5,000m., which is the total capital employed by Britain's largest company, B. P., and with over £58,000m., which is British Government expenditure for 1976. The EEC is not intended to act as a major investor, however. Its role lies in the area of planning, co-ordination and exhortation. It is a supra-national institution, operating above the level of individual member states, dependent upon their goodwill and their funds. It is an open question as to whether the EEC is heading in the direction of a 'European State': there is a difference in the world between vague declarations of principle about 'political unity' and the actual achievement of such a unity, which would involve prodigious institutional and ideological upheavals.

For the foreseeable future, at any rate, capitalist planning and coordination is the keynote. Thus the Common Agricultural Policy, which absorbs about 70% of the EEC budget, is essentially concerned with planning European agricultural production so as to guarantee a stable supply. To this end, an 'ideal' market price for a given product is decided upon, and various mechanisms (subsidies, import levies, export levies, etc) are used to make sure that the product finally sells at, or near, this price. There are also plans to rationalise agricult-

ure and phase out the small farmers, though the general world recession is making this difficult to implement.

Planning is the keynote in the EEC's relations with the former colonial countries - economic dominance has replaced formal political control. In the 1975 Lome Convention, quota systems were established in trade between these countries and the EEC. The systems ensure that Third World products will not compete with European products, and as in the Common Agricultural Policy, the emphasis is upon establishing guaranteed prices for a guaranteed supply. Thus established relations of dominance and subordination are maintained and strengthened.

Planning is the keynote in industrial policy, where the EEC encourages the creation of 'European' companies, cooperation between existing companies, and gives special support to high technology industries.

Planning is the keynote in energy policy, where the EEC aims to reduce consumption while maintaining economic growth, and to reduce dependence on imported energy. Given these objectives, and given the EEC's built-in leaning towards advanced technologies, nuclear power forms a crucial part of the plans. By 2000, a 50 per cent reliance on nuclear-generated electricity is envisaged. The 1973 oil crisis put an extra urgency in energy planning, and in December 1974 the EEC decided that by 1985, 13-16 per cent of electricity should be nuclear-generated, rather than the 9 per cent of previous forecasts. The Community itself does not have the money to build power stations, however. Its role is to coordinate the programmes of national governments and companies. What is more, this role may turn out to be a highly significant one. Nuclear power is proving to be a loss-maker on a massive scale, to the point where individual governments or companies may have to abandon independent programmes and set up European-wide consortia. The EEC could perform a crucial job in arranging such joint projects. Its joint Torus project, researching into the possibilities for power from nuclear fusion, already points in this direction.

To sum up, the EEC is a force for capitalist rationalisation, modernisation and integration. It represents the emergent corporate form of capitalism: planned, bureaucratic and oligopolistic. And it represents the interests of the class associated with this corporate form of capitalism, the techno-bureaucracy, whose power base lies in its control over the technical and bureaucratic processes.

Institutionally, the EEC is a thoroughgoing bureaucracy. Effective power rests most of the time with the Commission, consisting of 13 Commissioners, their staffs and the 'Civil Service'. The Council of Ministers (consisting of ministers from the member states' governments) meets to discuss specific issues, and controls finances, but the Commission exercises everyday executive power. The 'Parliament' which we are being asked to elect is a purely advisory body. It doesn't even hold the degree of independent power enjoyed by the Westminster parliament.

In other words, the elections in June are purely and simply an exercise in legitimisation. We are being asked to confer the mantle of democratic respectability upon a power which is already established, and whose aims and objectives are already very clear. We are being asked to express retrospective approval for the emergence of the new western European techno-bureaucracy, and for the planning of production on a continental scale in the interests of growth, profit and capitalist stability.

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BOOK REVIEWS

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS/ SCOTTISH PRISONS

Children's Rights - Extinction or Rebirth. (Ed.) Lois Aitkenhead (Pub.) Scottish Council for Civil Liberties and Heatherbank Press. £1.00 plus post 54pp.
Scottish Prisons and the Special Unit. Dave MacDonald and Joe Sim (Pub.) SCCL, Unpriced; try 70p. incl. post 40pp.
(SCCL - 146 Holland St, Glasgow).

LAST year the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties (SCCL) brought out two important pamphlets - on prisons and on children's rights. Discussion of both these issues is vital to a country which believes in punishment for the child who disobeys (by the law) and adults who don't fit the mould (prison) - in quantities well in excess of most other places. There must be something uncoincidental that the Scotland which allows primary one and mentally handicapped kids to be physically attacked by authority, has also one of the highest ratios of people in jail.

The children's rights pamphlet comprises the papers of a conference organised last March by the SCCL. I wasn't able to get to the conference myself, but at the time was quite excited at it taking place at all. Those of my friends who went all came back with good reports but I must confess that I'm a bit disappointed in the conference papers. Half the pamphlet is devoted to reports of the workshops - compulsion, play, community based free schools and one or two others. The reports are brief, contain little that is new to me (with the exception of the section on children's panels) and, in transcript, seem to have lost the urgency and excitement you get in a good discussion.

The workshop on 'children are people' is oddly not mentioned anywhere in the pamphlet. This is particularly odd since I was told that particular workshop had a large proportion of the people the conference was about attending it. One nice exchange, reported in another review, bears repeating. An elderly person thought it was OK to hit children if they were 'misbehaving badly'. One of the younger participants replied that the whole idea of 'children misbehaving' was an adult concept forced on to children.

Two key contributions take up the rest of the pamphlet. R. F. Mackenzie on the 'nature of subjection' and Colin MacLean on the 'obstacle of compulsion'.

Mackenzie, who was sacked a few years back from his job as 'headie' at one of our local schools (by councillors as devoid of imagination as councillors can be) has written for a number of libertarian papers and is well known in education meetings. He's at his best when attacking 'belting'. Comparing modern school discipline to army discipline in 1750 and factory discipline in 1850, Mackenzie points out that at this turning point 'we could be going towards greater authoritarianism - and if the Scottish dominies (teachers) have their way that's what it will be - toward fascism and extinction. It could be a cultural revolution based on a new awareness of the abilities of our children ... and that could be a rebirth.'

Colin MacLean challenges the whole question of compulsion in education and rightly states that to question educational compulsion is to question the whole nature of the state. He compares the child who, at an early age, can choose to watch (say) Magpie on television, can learn something useful, be amused or simply switch off and do something else - effectively mastering self-education - to the child who must later sit for years on end in front of a teacher - it can switch off, but must still sit there ...

A major criticism - please, Colin MacLean, all children are not male so why use 'he' and 'his' all the time, and I fail to see how 'if we allow the liberation of children, we question the

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ROADS TO NOWHERE

Motorways versus Democracy, John Tyme, Mamillan Paperbacks, £2.95.

IT is difficult to pick up a newspaper or hear the news without encountering something about roads and road transport. The recent lorry drivers' strike and its repercussions; the wrangle with the EEC about tachographs in transport lorry cabs; the ever present threat of petrol shortage, signalled by price rises and allegedly furthered by Iran's difficulties; all bear witness to the frail structure upon which our vaunted technological civilisation is based.

Anyone who criticises this vested interest which has grown up around the internal combustion engine is denounced as a neo-Luddite, a Gandhian, who wants to put the clock back and return us all to the days of the horse or the spinning wheel. Regardless of the fact that the clock of progress is definitely out of order and showing the wrong time, it is necessary for individuals frequently to rise up and point out that the clock ought to be put back.

One of these individuals is John Tyme who has undertaken, almost by accident, the mission of obstructing and opposing the construction of motorways, which festoon and slash through our once green and pleasant land in the name of progress, and in obedience to the great god of the car and the juggernaut, John Tyme's method of obstruction up to now has been to utilize the Public Enquiries which are held, more as a public relations exercise than anything, before the worked out plans for the motorway are sanctioned.

John Tyme has appeared in person at many of these enquiries and in an early stage has drawn attention to irregularities in the setting-up of the enquiry, generally based upon the fact that it is a government-sanctioned enquiry into a government-sponsored scheme and it is not to be expected that the enquiry will investigate or allow to be discussed the necessity of having such a scheme at all. All that is usually permitted is that objectors have their alternative road schemes.

John Tyme's tactics are entirely legal and technically procedural but his supporters (by whom he is generally retained) have been known to stage a demonstration, the object of which was to prevent the enquiry proceeding until the proper democratic safeguards had been taken.

In an introduction to the book David Widdicombe writes that such enquiries are "thoroughly unsatisfactory". This is partly because the Government combines the roles of advocate for the scheme and judge of the objections to it, compounding this unfairness by appointing as inspectors at the enquiries persons such as ex-civil servants, who do not strike the public as independent. Far more important, though, is the embargo placed at the enquiry on all discussions on the main thing everyone wants to discuss, namely, whether the project should take place at all.

John Tyme's present book is concerned more with the events of six or seven public enquiries. His forthcoming book (Roads to Ruin) will present the case against the motorways/trunkroad programme which he describes as "posing a consummate evil and constitutes the greatest threat to the interests of the nation in all its history". Tyme goes on "None of our national enemies have so mutilated our cities, undermined the long-term economic movement of people and goods, destroyed our industrial base, diminished our ability to plan our community life, and reduced our capacity to feed ourselves. The more highways we build, the more we generate traffic to fill them, the greater the congestion and snarl-ups, and thus the more highways we require to build. The more we build, the more we confirm and perpetuate the horrendous accident level (approaching a million a century killed, to say nothing of the mutilated and injured) as motorway generated traffic makes its way onto crowded city

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liberation of women". I agree that "liberation from compulsory education simply cannot be disentangled from the question of the role of the mother and the home and the family". But what should the father be up to all this time? What about communal child care - indeed, do we need the nuclear family?

I hope this pamphlet will spark something off; perhaps next time there'll be a greater contribution from women and young people!

While R. F. Mackenzie says that "it is not the purpose of our educational system to nourish. Its purpose is to control ..." just so are prisons there not to rehabilitate, but to control. The desire to control rules all aspects of prison life - education, recreation, training, work, personal letters and so on. Little wonder that so many prisoners find their ability to control their own life so destroyed that they can no longer cope with the outside world when released (disregarding lack of job opportunity, finance, homes ...)

This other SCCL pamphlet on Scottish prisons and the Special Unit was a revelation to me. I'd previously had guided tours of Barlinnie and Craiginches prisons and a few hours in a small town jail but I didn't realise how little I knew about Scottish nicks till I read this. I'll just give a few statistics. In 1975, 43 per cent of those imprisoned in Scotland were imprisoned for non-payment of fines - not for their original crime but because of lack of money. A prisoner on remand spends on average 42 days (maximum 110) before sentence, this time not normally taken off the period they might be sentenced to. 23 hours a day of that are spent normally in their cells, and an average third of all remand prisoners are either found not guilty or get a non-prison sentence from the courts. Berlinnie (built 1882) has 756 single cells and an average of over 1000 prisoners - in 1975 some remand prisoners were six to a cell.

The pamphlet puts these and other facts about prison life and prison regulations in the context of the public discussion of the Special Unit at Berlinnie. This is a unit for certain long term prisoners, those who have managed to remain unrepressed by routine prison efforts. But in this case, rather than impose greater punishment, prisoners are allowed greater freedom. Their own clothes, cell decorations, food, unrestricted and uncensored mail, more visitors, the right to plan their own day. Decisions about the internal running of the unit are taken at weekly meetings of staff and prisoners, everybody having one vote each. Punishment takes place when either a member of staff or inmate is put the 'hot seat' and criticised by the others. What is in effect a therapeutic community is daily attacked by the 'popular' Scottish press and by always-ready-with-a-right-wing-quote MPs like Teddy Taylor. The special unit regime is compared with the 'cage' at Inverness. The 'cage' (Scottish equivalent of the control unit) is based on solitary confinement, dehumanising and sensory deprivation. Closed in 1972 after six years' operation the cage is back in the news again. Following industrial action by the Scottish Prison Officers' Association which demanded its reopening, a suitable victim has been found. (For a more vivid comparison of the cage and the special unit, read Jimmy Boyle's book A Sense of Freedom.)

The SCCL points out there is some likelihood of change; overcrowding and the cost of keeping someone inside is so great that circumstances may force more community based 'treatment'. However, the SCCL doubts the value of the new community service orders, greater use of bail etc, as the authors feel these new solutions will be used only to give the appearance of change, and will add to the punitive measures already available.

In 40 pages you can't be complete. I'd like to have read more about prisoners' resistance - the demonstrations at Peterhead in 1972 and 1976/7 and the Inverness riot of 1972 are only mentioned. Women prisoners aren't mentioned at all. However, in a short pamphlet, Dave MacDonald and Joe Sim, the authors, cover a lot of ground.

I hope more than a few Daily Record readers will get this pamphlet.

ROSS BRADSHAW

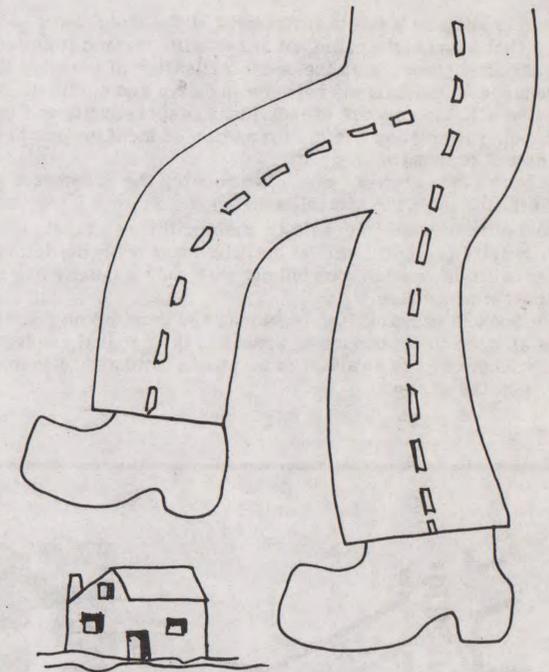
N.B.

Dear friends

1979 is the Year of the Child. Maybe some of our fellow comrades may get together to think, plan, act, produce, create something for children. Maybe a booklet entitled

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and suburban streets. The more roads and motorways built, the more inevitable is the decline of alternative transport modes. The more roads, the greater the housing loss and destruction of community and the less house-building and resources for hospitals, schools and other social services. The more highways, the more we are committed to the disaster known as dispersal planning, based upon the notion that distance between residence and work, shops and schools, recreation and medical services is no object; and the more dispersal planning, the greater the loss of land and agricultural production (now estimated at an average county area every ten years). The more resources we commit to road transport, the more we create social inequity (with all its imponderable political dangers) as the well over forty per cent of households who



do not own cars and are now never likely to, are left unable to pay the rising cost of public transport, simply watching the cars and juggernauts go by. The more we construct highways, the more we fuel the inflationary spiral as people are compelled to buy and maintain cars they cannot afford simply in order to get to work or get their children to school, to the dentist, the doctor or the hospital. The more motorways the greater is our national dependence on the car industry, the one industry that, for reasons of energy and material costs, can have no medium-term future; the more roads, the greater the threat of unemployment of nightmare proportions as that industry and all its associated industries collapse before a vanishing world market. The more roads planned, the greater the industrial as well as housing blight, as blue, orange, green and red routes lie across our city maps for decades. The more the concrete miles proliferate, particularly in development areas, the more economic decline proceeds as direct investment declines in industry and housing and those social services which together stimulate economic activity and create a contented work force. The proliferating highway programme can only lead to a transportation catastrophe for this country as rail, waterway and public transport levels decline in real terms to the point where, when the great energy spree finally comes to an end, we are left in this country without any viable transport system whatsoever. And finally, the more roads and motorways we build, the more we commit this country to the desperate international

'Anarchy for Children'. The booklet would attempt to bring anarchy to the child's mind and so lay some foundation for future anarchists. It will not be easy, but nor would it be too difficult, I believe.

Yours sincerely
Michael Habernoll

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