

TYRANNY ON TAP

IN THE LAST few weeks we have been 'treated', if that is the word, to a great deal of publicity about the thalidomide victims whose case against the Distillers' Company is dragging its weary way through the British Courts. The *Sunday Times* which has been printing the articles has been served with injunctions and threatened with proceedings for contempt of court. Similarly a television programme has been threatened.

It is ironic that such a statistically minor *accidental* occurrence should occupy the public mind when at least one major deliberate health hazard to children is allowed to go on relatively unpublicised and positively unpunished even to the mild extent that the Distillers are resolved to suffer. One of the newspapers pointed this up nicely (consciously or unconsciously) by printing a story of the thalidomide injunction next to a story of the French intentions

to hold a bomb-test next year in the Pacific.

The French test is to be held despite the known health hazards and with the connivance of revolutionary China in the councils of the United Nations.

It is well known that the plight of one small child (preferably with pictures) is a greater tear-jerker and circulation-puller for the press than the plight of hundreds from war, famine, and radio-activity. The *Sunday Times*, it seems, will modify its protests about the Distillers' Company's evasions in order that it will not suffer the penalties of the law.

It will be interesting to see if they will resist, which is unlikely.

If thalidomide is an illustration, it is an illustration of the apparent indifference of manufacturers of drugs to the side-effects of their products. This is not the first case, nor as long as capitalism continues will it be the last, of products being marketed and their effects being found out afterwards. By that time the product is so socially established and so financially profitable to the manufacturers, the advertising interests and the Inland Revenue that it is impossible to dislodge them.

Court proceedings are so slow and the legal costs, as Sir Gerald Nabarro indiscreetly pointed out, weight the proceedings in favour of the wealthier. Additionally, the law's delays weight the balance in favour of those whose wealth allows them to survive whilst waiting for justice to be done.

* * *

It will be remembered that cases have been brought against cigarette manufacturers (with little success) for deaths from cancer and a recent revelation that lead has been found in children's blood samples have caused the factory concerned to close their plant but who knows what other pollutants we breathe, drink and eat hourly?

In *The Listener* (November 9) John Wain, the novelist, has the text of a talk reprinted in which he cites the case against fluoride, not only as an example of the typical official pollutant (for the case is arguable) but as an example of the typical official attitude in such matters. He mentions the possibility of governments coping with the problem of children's teeth by some controls upon the confectionery trade, he finds that this, of course, would conflict with immensely profitable business interests. (He does not mention the case of tobacco. The Government's insistence on printing a 'health warning' on packets is a ludicrous piece of humbug—which would not deceive or impress a child.)

John Wain claims that 'fluoride is a poisonous substance prohibited by law from being added to food, but water, apparently isn't a "food"—though it's just about the only

substance we can't choose whether we take or not'. John Wain points out that we generally concentrate what is in the water when we use water for cooking, so the concentration of fluoride goes up. Nobody knows the effects of 20 years of swigging this stuff and by the time they do know it will be too late, like many other 'harmless' but untested substances (such as thalidomide). At least those were not being prescribed to entire populations compulsorily, says Wain.

Wain goes on to point out the advantage to the fluoridation lobby of the sheer inertia of the majority. The minority can be labelled as a 'vocal minority' and 'cranks', which will effectively silence them or cause them to be looked down upon. Then, the usual Government procedure is to rush legislation through the House of Commons (as was done with the Census Orders) or side-step the whole thing neatly by passing it on to local authorities (whose *real* powers are declining) and promising,

in the case of fluoride, to indemnify the local authorities against any actions brought against them, be the grounds legal or medical.

Fluoride is not the only example of Whitman's phrase 'the never-ending audacity of elected persons'. John Wain says that this 'is only a show-case example of the technique that is increasingly going to be employed to put things over on you... if open-cast mining for minerals is suddenly going to break out in all the beautiful upland reaches of the British Isles... this kind of technique has pushed it through'.

The only answer to this is resistance 'Resist much, obey little'. 'Man,' said Robert Ingersoll, 'was saved by disobedience. If we had done what the priests told us we should be idiots; if we had done what the kings told us we would be slaves; if we had done what the doctors told us we should be dead.'

There has been much talk lately of revolutionary anarchism, it is obviously tautology for much that anarchism has to teach is 'disobedience that is revolution enough'. What is constructive in society is here already. Disobedience is our defence of that little freedom we have.

JACK ROBINSON.

Hidden Unemployment

THE DISCREPANCIES between the registered number of unemployed and those who said they were out of work at the time of the census confirms that the Department of (Un)Employment methods of calculation are very inaccurate. Recent official unemployment figures are bad enough, but the census totals indicate that in some regions they are as much as 300 per cent higher. Overall comparisons at the time of the census show the Department's figure at 773,800, while the census shows 1,365,775.

What this means is that unemployment is not just confined to those claiming benefit. Many who are unemployed are not eligible for benefit and therefore have no incentive to register. These would include workers sacked for 'industrial misconduct' and those who left their jobs of their own accord. Married women not paying the full National Insurance contributions would also not be entitled to benefit.

The Department's records also hide those for whom unemployment has become a way of life. Many have been out of work for over a year and no longer qualify for unemployment benefit. Others, who were without work for more than six months in the preceding year, would also not qualify.

Behind these figures are people who, for no fault of their own, are made unemployed simply because a profit can no longer be made from the type of work they can perform. Figures hide the individual hardship and suffering that families go through when the breadwinners are sacked. The capitalist system has no real answer to this problem. The ever-increasing drive for profits means that goods are only profitable unless there is a market for them. The system is forever seeking new markets for expansion. More and more has to be produced but always at a profit. But improved technology not only produces more, it also requires less manpower.

Hardly a week passes without new announcements of impending redundancies. Last week the British Steel Corporation informed the unions that 9,000 jobs would disappear over the next eight years at the Ebbw Vale works.

In the same week Associated Biscuits said they would have to phase out production at Huntley and Palmers, Reading, with 700 jobs being lost.

Industry's vast productive means are not to be used to the full. Those with jobs work long hours, while others are without employment.

But the production of goods are unrelated to our real needs. Artificial needs

are created by the advertising agencies to make us buy what is unnecessary or more than we need. Useless rubbish we are told we cannot do without is produced to keep people at work but also to make a profit. Many workers spend their working lives bored to tears, producing useless goods, which nobody really needs.

Workers now only seek employment to enable them to pay the rent, buy food and clothing, leaving a little over for entertainment.

We should not struggle for the right to work and continuing wage slavery at boring, time-consuming drudgery. We should be demanding and taking necessities of life which workers have created.

There is no need for shortages or surpluses. There is both the means and the people necessary to produce sufficient, with fewer hours of labour, to satisfy everyone's needs.

In a free society people would make the decisions necessary to organise the production of enough for all. Wages and profits would disappear with the ending of economic exploitation. Governments will not end the exploitation of our labour for profit. We must consciously desire an end to it and strive to achieve freedom by the abolition of the state and the employers it supports.

P.T.

Courtaulds: When the Kidding had to Stop

IN SPITE of all the short-time in some Lancashire mills belonging to Courtaulds during the last year, and the recent Skelmersdale shutdown scare, which now appears to have been a false alarm, Courtaulds chalked up pre-tax profits of £21.3 million last week. Well above what had been expected.

The Courtaulds' threat to shut down their Skelmersdale mill can only now be seen as an attempt to bring their workers under control. No doubt, as the shop stewards there claim, the management had failed to take notice of the technical advice which their workers had offered and that this led to the problem of under production.

Managers don't like it when their workers have the initiative and are often reluctant to take advice. There is a labour problem of course, but this is inevitable until workers have genuine control of production and no amount of

opening the books, as Courtaulds did, or controls can get round the problem.

With the control of 30% of Lancashire's spinning capacity, and already making inroads into weaving at Carlisle, and Lillyhall in Cumberland, as well as Skelmersdale, the biggest weaving shed in Lancashire, Courtaulds has an interest in frightening their mill workers and the unions into accepting less favourable terms and conditions. The recent decision by Courtaulds to negotiate its own agreements separate from the central textile body, lends support to this view, more so since sources close to the textile unions suggest that Courtaulds is driving a hard bargain at the present time.

So it is that, at a time when it is being predicted that Courtaulds is on the up and that their shares are worth holding, the company are squeezing their labour costs down worse than usual.

Within days of their decision to keep the Skelmersdale mill open, Courtaulds last week announced further capital expansion of its weaving operations. A mill at Hyde is to be taken over and modernised over the next two years with 450 of the latest water jet looms costing several million pounds. In the same week Courtaulds declared its intention to spend £5 million on its weaving division at Preston.

It may be that Courtaulds, having decided to close down the Skelmersdale mill, found that they had bitten off more than they could chew and that they feared a sit-in or occupation of the mill by the workers. I still take the view that it was basically a manoeuvre to wring concessions, like the promise by shop stewards of six months of peace on the shop floor.

What we need in textiles is a strong movement of rank and file mill workers, with contacts in the different mill towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, to make it impossible for combines, like Courtaulds, to isolate groups of workers as they did at Skelmersdale. Here the industrial networks of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance could make some contribution to uniting mill workers throughout the north.

TRADE UNIONIST.

Have you sent
your Guarantee
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needed for next year?

THE ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISTS by Nestor Makhno, Piotr Archinov, Ida Mett and others (published and translated by ORA North London at 15p).

FOLLOWING THE liquidation of the anarchist and libertarian communist movement in Russia and the Ukraine, many anarchists who had managed to escape the clutches of the Bolshevik terror went abroad. They included such people as Archinov, Berkman, Makhno and Voline. They also included, quite naturally, representatives of various tendencies.

Some of them, particularly Archinov and Makhno, attributed their downfall largely to their disarray and lack of a nation-wide organisation in face of the well-organised Bolsheviks.

On reaching Berlin in 1922, Archinov founded a 'Group of Anarchist-Communists Abroad' which, three years later, moved to Paris and began to publish the journal, *Dielo Truda* — the Workers' Cause. On June 20, 1926, they brought out their now well-known *Organisational Platform*. This English translation by three North London ORA members is taken from the second French ORA edition of May, 1972.

CLASS STRUGGLE, REVOLUTION AND LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

The 'platformists', as they are now generally called, begin by emphasising that, within capitalist society, there is no 'one humanity'. Bourgeois society is divided into two very distinct camps, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, who are differentiated socially by their situations and their functions.

The social and political régime of all States, they say, is above all the product of a class struggle. They see this struggle as the primary factor which has, and still does, determine the form and structure of such societies. Capitalist society, therefore, rests on class violence. Furthermore, the so-called progress of modern society, the technical evolution of capital and the perfection of its political system all fortifies the power of the ruling class.

Such an analysis, argue the 'platformists', leads to the conclusion that the only way to transform bourgeois society into a free society is through 'violent social revolution'.

Anarchism, they continue, does not derive from abstract reflections of intellectuals or philosophers, but from the direct struggles of the workers. Outstanding anarchist thinkers like Bakunin and Kropotkin did not invent the ideas of anarchism, but discovered them from the masses, and simply helped, through their knowledge, to develop and spread them. Similarly, anarchism is not the product of abstract humanitarian aspirations. It is only humanitarian in the sense that the ideas, put into practice, tend to improve the lives of all men.

The birth, the blossoming, and the realisation of anarchist ideas have their roots in the life and the struggle of the working masses, and are inseparably bound to their fate,' says the *Organisational Platform*.

The aim of anarchists, therefore, is to transform bourgeois society. The new society, they contend, should be based upon the principle of equality where each would contribute according to his or her ability and would receive according to his or her needs. Such a society would be libertarian communism.

DEMOCRACY, THE STATE AND AUTHORITY

The 'platformists' are opposed to 'democracy'. Democracy is one of the forms of bourgeois society. Formally, democracy proclaims freedom of speech,

of the Press, of association and equality before the law; but in reality, all these liberties are of a very relative character. They are tolerated only as long as they do not contest the interests of the dominant class. 'Consequently,' they argue, 'democracy is but one of the aspects of bourgeois dictatorship, veiled behind deceptive formulae of political liberties and fictitious democratic guarantees.'

Archinov and his comrades, quite naturally, come out strongly against the State and authority. The State, they say, is both the organised violence of the bourgeoisie against the workers, and the system of its executive organs. 'Left socialists', and in particular, the Bolsheviks, also consider the bourgeois State and authority to be the servants of capital; but, unlike anarchists and libertarian communists, they want to conquer power and set up an alternative State and authority.

Anarchists consider this both wrong and disastrous in the struggle for emancipation. Authority is always dependent on exploitation; it also takes the initiative from the workers. 'Thus, the emancipation of labour is only possible in the direct revolutionary struggle of the vast working masses, and of their class organisations against the capitalist system.' The setting up of a so-called 'Proletarian State' only leads to the re-establishment of capitalist authority.

The State, therefore, must perish, not 'one day' in the future, but now. It must be destroyed by the workers 'on the first day of their victory'. And it must be replaced by a federalist system of workers' organisations of both production and consumption.

GENERAL UNION OF ANARCHISTS

The 'platformists' then mention their proposal for a General Union of Anarchists. This, they say, is the fundamental task in the pre-revolutionary period. What is necessary is a mass anarchist organisation, based on the principles of anarcho-communism. It is also necessary to have mass workers' and peasants' organisations, 'penetrated by revolutionary anarchist positions'.

The more these organisations are conscious and organised in an anarchist way, as from the present, the more they will manifest an intransigent and creative libertarian will at the moment of revolution. The role of anarchists in the revolutionary period cannot be restricted solely to the propagation of libertarian ideas. 'On all these questions (the activities of the Statist parties, Civil War, production following the revolution, etc.), the masses demand a clear and precise response from the anarchists. And from the moment when anarchists declare a conception of revolution and the structure of society, they are obliged to give all these questions a clear response, to relate the solution of these problems to the general conception of libertarian communism, and to devote all their forces to the realisation of these.' Only then do the General Union of Anarchists and the anarchist movement completely assure their function as a theoretical driving force in the social revolution.

Organisationally, the General Union of Anarchists should embrace all anarchist militants. Its common tactical line should be of decisive importance. It should concentrate all its forces on a fixed objective (libertarian communism) and provide a common direction. The

General Union should take a firm line against 'irresponsible individualism' and adhere to the principles of collective responsibility. It should be a federal organisation, but at the same time its activities should be co-ordinated by setting up an executive committee of the Union which would deal with the day-to-day questions of maintaining links with other organisations and the like. The 'platformists' see the Union of Anarchists as becoming 'the organised vanguard' of the emancipating process.

The *Organisational Platform* totally rejects the Marxist theory of a 'transition period'; they also reject the advocacy of political reforms and 'minimum programmes'. They advocate instead 'immediate social revolution'.

SYNDICALISM AND ANARCHISM

The 'platformists' consider the tendency to oppose libertarian communism to syndicalism, and vice-versa, to be artificial. The ideas of anarchism and syndicalism, they contend, belong to different planes. Communism is the goal of anarchist struggle; syndicalism is basically the movement of revolutionary workers in their occupations. It is, therefore, only one of the forms of revolutionary class struggle.

Anarcho-syndicalism, trying to introduce libertarian ideas into the left-wing of syndicalism, as a means of creating anarchist-type Unions, represents a step forward, but it does not go far enough. Without restricting themselves to the creation of anarcho-syndicalist Unions, anarchists should exercise their theoretical influence on all Trade Unions, and

in all their forms.

Revolutionary anarchists should concern themselves particularly with defence of the revolution. 'The social revolution, which threatens the privileges and the very existence of the non-working classes of society, will inevitably provoke a desperate resistance on behalf of these classes, which will take the form of a fierce civil war.' The writers instance the Russian Revolution. This civil war could last several years.

The working masses must be prepared for such a struggle. The workers may create their own spontaneous armed force which would only be valuable during the first days; before the civil war reaches its highest point, the workers should create their own forces, consistent with the principles of libertarian communism, and based on voluntary service. Their partisan army must, therefore, be a class army based on the principle of revolutionary self-discipline. It must be entirely under the jurisdiction of the workers' and peasants' own organisations.

AN ANARCHIST PARTY?

Following its publication, *The Organisational Platform* provoked considerable controversy among Russian and Ukrainian anarchist exiles. Voline broke with Archinov over it.

There have always been a number of people on the fringe of the anarchist movement who, in theory at least, are opposed to all forms of organisation. These are generally the individualists and spontaneists. However, some anarcho-syndicalists, and even a few who called themselves libertarian communists also

criticised *The Platform*, arguing that Archinov and Makhno had exaggerated the organisational defects of the Russian movement.

Another Russian anarchist in exile, Mollie Fleshin, said that in effect Archinov and his friends were attempting to form an Anarchist-Communist Workers' Party, where the workers would be politically led, and would inevitably lead to the creation of a spying system, prisons, judges and, consequently, an 'anarchist' Cheka. Later, other non-Russian anarchists, including Malatesta, also criticised *The Platform*. In 1930, Archinov's critics felt that their opposition to *The Platform* was justified. He returned to Russia, joined the Communist Party (as a young man, before becoming an anarchist, he had for a short while been a member of the Lenin faction of the Social Democratic Labour Party), but was soon purged and, presumably, shot.

All the same, the controversy over *The Platform* has continued; and, now that an English edition has been published by an ORA group, will probably rage for a while in this country. Personally, while I am prepared to criticise some of *The Platform's* arguments and, of course, much of its archaic language, I feel that some of its opponents have tended to exaggerate and distort it: its proposal for a co-ordinating executive committee may conflict with its federalist structure, and its suggestion that anarchists organised in the General Union would become an organised vanguard is perhaps an unfortunate phrase—even if this has, in fact, proved to be the case in Spain and elsewhere. I am, however, firmly convinced of the need of a strong, powerful, influential and well-organised anarchist and libertarian communist movement in this country. Whether it adopts all or some of *The Platform's* suggestions, can only be a matter for—reasoned—discussion and debate.

PETER E. NEWELL.

Ecology— an Anarchist View

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL SOLUTION, by Murray Bookchin (Gutter Press, 4p).

THERE HAVE BEEN two main points of view about ecology throughout this century. First there is the 'Progress! Progress!' school of thought, who believe that the world's resources are boundless, and if they run out we can always draw on the resources of other planets. Man's destiny is to explore the stars, and anyone who objects is a spoil-sport and a crank, and doomed to inevitable defeat, because 'you can't stop Progress'.

This is the religion of the managerial elite, or a large section of it. The carrot which it holds out to the people is welfare. Houses are destroyed to make space for motorways, but never mind. Thanks to the profits that the motorways make possible, the people are able to have better living conditions. Kingsley Amis, the novelist, is the spokesman for this point of view, when he makes his hero, Lucky Jim, say, 'Even living with the H-Bomb is not too high a price to pay for not having to live in the Middle Ages'.

There is some truth in this, and one would be foolish to ridicule this statement. Unfortunately it is based on a fallacy, namely that the world's resources are without limit. The present unrest, due to the destruction of people's homes in many cities, for purposes of redevelopment, shows that space itself is not unbounded. Two desperate needs are coming into conflict, the needs of the economy and the needs of people to have somewhere to live within reasonable distance of their work. It is no longer a question of a few unfortunates having to 'pay the price of Progress'. Everybody is threatened.

The second point of view is held by a harder, tougher and more reactionary type of person. Until recently those who held this point of view were probably in the minority in the Establishment. Until ecology became fashionable they were interested in 'population politics'. They believed that as people's welfare improves the birth-rate rises till it outstrips resources, and poverty and want reappear. They derive their ideas from Malthus. In the thirties and forties it looked as if they were going to be proved wrong. Welfare improved but people started having smaller and smaller

families. Then, after the Second World War, possibly as a psychological reaction against the war, the big family became fashionable, so that the Malthusians took heart.

Now the large family is again out of fashion, but people are living longer and longer, so that in some places in Britain, such as Folkestone in Kent, and other villages in that part of the world where people go to retire, the old easily outnumber the young. So the spectre is raised of 'an ageing population'. However this is not very satisfactory to the Malthusians, because many of them are ageing and they don't want to look on themselves as a social problem!

In the past they tended to blame the poor for their improvidence in having large families. Malthus himself preached

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'moral restraint', but even the most reactionary person has now lost faith in this, so they preach birth control, with a hint that if people will not control their births voluntarily they will be forced to do so.


However we are told that the large family is again giving way to the small one, and so the new target is pollution. Economic growth rather than population growth is the enemy. Again, one would be foolish to deny a great deal of truth exists in this belief. But it is urged by people who want to deny well-being to a large number of their fellow men on the grounds that there is not enough of the world's resources to go round.

It is in order to controvert both these points of view that Murray Bookchin, an American anarchist, has written this pamphlet. He believes that it is possible to use existing technology sanely, not in order to create a world of unbounded material abundance, but in order to provide everyone with enough for the good life, even though it may be a simple life by modern standards. A great deal of the stuff we surround ourselves with is rubbish, 'neither use nor ornament', it is part of our life-style, which should be changed.

It is a good pamphlet. What he says needed saying. But whether the present society can be overthrown or radically changed is another matter. It is destroying itself, but it is immensely strong for all that. My own feeling is the whole structure will topple to ruin, and that in a few generations the population of, let us say, Britain, will be down two or three million, or less, and the people will be savages. (If there is a nuclear war there may be a few hundred food-gatherers.)

I am pessimistic because I believe that the 'Progress!' people, and the Malthusians, are too deeply committed to their respective points of view, which have for them the force of religious faith. When the chips are down they would prefer to keep their opinions and reduce the world to ruin rather than admit they might be wrong. Nevertheless we must push on and do the best we can. *Towards an Ecological Solution* can be obtained from Flat 3, 26 Clifton Road, Brighton, Sussex, 7p, including postage, for single copies, 40p for bundles of ten, plus postage. Or from Freedom Books.

JOHN BRENT.



Secretary:
Peter Le Mare, 5 Hannaford Road,
Rotton Park, Birmingham 16

**ANARCHIST
FEDERATION
of BRITAIN**

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There are now anarchist groups in almost every part of the country. To find your nearest group write to:

N.E. England: Mick Renwick, 34 Durham Road, Gateshead, Co. Durham.
Essex & E. Herts.: P. Newell, 'Aegean', Spring Lane, Eight Ash Green, Colchester. (QM, FL.)
Yorkshire: Trevor Savage, Flat 3, 35 Richmond Road, Leeds, 6.
Manchester: Mat Cunningham, 9 Briar Hill Avenue, Little Hulton, Worsley, Lancs.
Scotland: Secretary, Mike Malet, 1 Lynwood Place, Maryfield, Dundee.
Wales: c/o P. L. Mare (address above).
N. Ireland: c/o Freedom Press.
The American Federation of Anarchists: P.O. Box 9885, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, USA.
S. Ireland: 20 College Lane, Dublin, 2.
University and Student Groups: c/o P. L. Mare.

AFTER NEARLY SIX MONTHS the Angry Brigade trial is at last coming to an end. The closing speeches, which began on November 3, will be finished this week, and then there is only the judge's summing-up to come before the jury has to decide whether to believe the police or the eight defendants.

John Matthew, the unimpressive barrister for the prosecution, said that the case against the eight, and particularly against the four from the Stoke Newington flat, was overwhelming and that their defence was pathetic. He stated that there was no doubt that at least one Angry Brigade communiqué was produced in the flat, and he claimed that some of the material found there in defendants' handwriting was too closely linked with some of the bombings to be coincidental. Matthew ridiculed the defence allegation that the explosives found at the flat had been planted there by the police, saying that this was the only possible reply to such damaging evidence. He didn't have much to say against the other four defendants, mainly because there hasn't been much evidence

The End is in Sight

against them.

The defence pointed out that the only reply to planted evidence is indeed to allege that it is planted! Ian Macdonald, James Greenfield's able and aggressive barrister, asked whether explosives were likely to be kept on open view in a flat and to have no fingerprints on them at all. He insisted that there were serious contradictions in the evidence of police and forensic witnesses, and in particular he questioned the truthfulness of John Chaffe, the Scotland Yard fingerprints expert, and Donald Lidstone, the Home Office explosives expert.

Very strong doubt in fact has been thrown by the defence on the prosecution evidence about both fingerprints and explosives, above all about the alleged 'set' of explosions which covered a period

of at least three years and in which all the defendants are accused of taking some part—so strong that Matthew ended by admitting that it may not exist at all and that the conspiracy may actually have consisted of a series of conspiracies. Macdonald pointed out that at one point Ernest Bond, the head of the police 'Bomb Squad', said that membership of the Angry Brigade was a matter of 'ideas and philosophy', and he commented that it is not yet a criminal offence to have any ideas or philosophy. Macdonald also emphasised the question of whether Greenfield has been beaten up at Albany Street police station—the police witnesses, including Bond, denying all knowledge of the incident, but Greenfield's solicitor, Benjamin Baker, saying his bruises were obvious to anyone who saw him.

The other three defendants from the flat said they had been in touch with two people who turned out to be members of the Angry Brigade, and had helped them produce a single communiqué which was not connected with a bombing incident, because they sympathised with their aims although they

disagreed with their methods. Anna Mendelson said: 'Our politics are certainly not the politics of bombing.' But no more than this was proved against Prescott a year ago, and he was convicted and given fifteen years, without any direct evidence about explosives against him.

John Barker tried to outline a scenario for the behaviour of the authorities throughout the case, but, though plausible enough, it suffered from the fact that the political underground knows as little about the political establishment as the other way round. The only chance, at least for the four defendants from the flat, is that the prosecution evidence has failed to convince at least three members of the jury. The other four seem to stand a fair chance of acquittal, but in this kind of case nothing is certain.

There has been more consistent coverage of the proceedings in the national press during the past few weeks, notably Jackie Leishman's reports in the *Guardian* of nearly all the closing speeches. *Time Out* has continued to print long stories every week. *Frenz* 34 contained an excellent description of the atmosphere in the court. The Defence Group, which earlier this year was trying to mobilise the left into some kind of blanket support of 'urban guerrilla' and 'armed struggle', seems to have relapsed into complete silence with the defendants' denial of any part in bombings.

CORRESPONDENT.

Liverpool Councillors are Innocent

READERS OF 'FREEDOM' will be familiar with the fight that the tenants of Tower Hill (Kirkby, Liverpool) are putting up against the Government's rents act. By the time this article is printed the Tower Hill rent and rates strike will be in its sixth week.

On Saturday, November 11, the secretary of the Tower Hill Un-fair Rents Action Group received an eviction notice from the Council telling him that if he didn't pay his rent plus the arrears by 4.30 p.m. Monday, 13th, he would be evicted as they had a warrant for his eviction. Seven other tenants received letters telling them that the Council was applying for eviction warrants if they didn't pay up by November 20.

Anyway, on Monday (November 13) at 4.30 p.m. 1,000 people sealed off all roads leading into Tower Hill thus causing traffic jams for a radius of seven miles and as you will know that from 4.30 p.m. in any town the roads are extremely busy. So you can imagine what the traffic jams were like. The encouraging thing about it is these 1,000 people were mobilised in less than two hours. This road block was a warning to the Council that if they attempt to send in the bailiffs the estate becomes once again a 'no-go area'.

Since the secretary of the action group has received his eviction notice there have been pickets in his house during the day and all through the night in case the authorities try and catch us unawares. This type of picketing will be used for anyone who receives an eviction notice.

On Tuesday, 14th, the Action Group

received phone calls from various industries pledging support. These were: Standard Triumph (Liverpool), the Docks, Unit-Camus building workers (Tower Hill estate), Otis Elevators (Kirkby) and workers at Birdseye Cold Store depot. All said if the Council attempt to evict anyone on Tower Hill they will withdraw their labour and help the tenants in blocking off the estate and evicting the bailiffs from the estate. The Salford dockers on the Monday sent a delegation to take part in the road block but ended up getting 'stuck in the traffic jam on the way to Kirkby'.

At our meeting on Tuesday night (November 14) we had a visit from one of our councillors who said that the Council and the housing committee knew nothing about the eviction notices that were sent out. He said that Winstanley, the housing officer, sent them out without telling the Council and he (the councillor) knew what would happen if they dared try and evict anyone. 'I know,' he said, 'that the whole of Merseyside would come to a standstill if any tenant was evicted.'

The tenants at the meeting told the councillor that they wanted Winstanley to withdraw the eviction notices and to make a public statement apologising for sending out the eviction notices and as the press are forever distorting things that he (Winstanley) sends out letters to the eight families apologising to them and telling them that the eviction notices have been withdrawn. He replied by saying that he couldn't do much by himself but he would put it to his colleagues.

It looks as though Kirkby Council is in a panic. The official figures from the Council concerning the number of people who are on a total rent and rate strike are, out of 2,100 tenants living on the estate, 1,191 who have not paid any rent since October 11. Not included in these figures are tenants who are on the rent strike but are paying for garages, and tenants on the rent strike who have paid rent arrears that were incurred before October 11. The tenants who are on partial rent strike have been ignored by the Council from the figures of non-payers. Councillors on the Housing and Finance Committee have said the Tower Hill tenants are 90% solid in their rent strike.

Three weeks ago the Council claimed that hundreds of tenants were getting cuts in their rents. This was a statement by Winstanley (housing officer) but the Housing Committee's figures were—472 are getting rent rebates (but the majority of them did not apply for a rebate, the Council did it for them). 330 of these tenants are receiving Social Security and therefore don't benefit from the rebate as the Social Security deducts any rebate they may receive. 140 tenants are left to receive any rebate at all and only 104 tenants are any better off after the Housing Finance Act has been implemented.

As I write this, the secretary of the group still hasn't been evicted.

ANDY MCGOWAN.

WE NEED YOUR GUARANTEE!

Gipsy Reservations

AT THE TIME when American Indians have come off their reservations to protest in Washington about the accumulated injustices that their people have suffered over the years at the hands of the American State, the gypsies in Britain have been forced to take protest action in the face of legislation which creates reservations for them. Recently, a number of gipsy families parked their caravans outside Buckingham Palace after being moved by a large body of police from near the House of Lords where 'designation orders' were presented the next day which makes camping by gypsies illegal in St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent and Plymouth, except on authorised sites. Eventually a number of the gypsies were arrested.

The Caravan Sites Act of 1968 required local authorities to provide permanent sites or to seek exemption if it had no gipsy 'problem'. A 1965 survey in England and Wales—which is obviously even more unreliable than surveys usually are—suggested that there were about 3,500 gipsy families, consisting of about 15,000 men, women and children, concentrated mainly in South-East England and the West Midlands. Local authorities who provide permanent sites with basic facilities for rent—which most gypsies do not seem to want—on the minimum scale laid down by the Act can become 'designated' as having fulfilled their obligations and thus use the Act to harass any 'surplus' itinerants over the border into the next administrative area. In Plymouth, a 15-caravan site is reported to be always overcrowded which is not surprising considering the fact that some 600 families camp in the area during the year. (Incidentally, no doubt to the delight of hotel-keepers and camping-site proprietors, the Act can be used against young people sleeping on beaches, or in a van in a lay-by, etc.) Not for the first time a piece of apparently liberal legislation is used to

repress rather than to protect.

Like everyone else the gypsies have been caught in the contradictions of trying to find some kind of personal freedom in an unfree society. As their traditional sources of income from casual fruit-picking, clothes-pegs, etc., have declined, they have been increasingly forced to live off the scrap of the consumer society with its built-in obsolescence. For those who attach great importance to such abstractions it must be said that there appears to be little remaining of the Romany culture: probably only a minority of travelling people are in fact Romany or have a very distinctive way of life except that imposed by their wandering instincts and their sources of income. My foolishly romantic dreams were shattered a few years ago when travelling along a country lane one summer evening I came across the smell of burning wood and the sight of several gipsy families seated around a camp fire. Alas, it was not Romany folk-lore or music which proved to be the centre of attraction but rather a portable television!

The hatred and fear which gypsies arouse in 'respectable' citizens with a 'proper' respect for the acquisition of wealth and power is really quite extraordinary and must in part be explained by jealousy of the gipsy's independent way of life free from the insane compulsion to work harder and harder to consume more and more. The litter left by some gypsies fleeing from constant police harassment creates hysteria amongst solid citizens who happily subject their children to the increasing pollution and neurosis of our technology-crazed society.

The increased harassment of gypsies is yet another symptom of the growing repression of anyone who dares to break out of the mould of obedient worker and subject. Support the gypsies!

TERRY PHILLIPS.

VALPREDA

TWO IMPORTANT developments in the Valpreda case took place coincidentally (?) on November 14. Firstly, the Italian supreme court of appeal reaffirmed its decision that the trial should take place in Catanzaro (in the very south of Italy, 800 miles from the Piazza Fontana in Milan), against the request of the Procurator of Catanzaro that it should be transferred elsewhere. This decision is absolutely final, and the judiciary of Catanzaro say that the trial will begin 'as soon as possible', which probably means at least three months' perusal of the mountain of paper involved in the case before anything happens. Valpreda's lawyer has vigorously criticised the supreme court decision, which does not, he says, take into account the severe logistic difficulties imposed on lawyers, injured parties and witnesses compelled to make long journeys the entire length of the peninsula. The official reason for holding the trial in Catanzaro is the threat of demonstrations, and interruption of court proceedings were it to be

held in Milan.

The second development, in the shape of new measures 'to speed up and simplify judicial proceedings' now approved by the Council of Ministers, does not involve Valpreda specifically, only implicitly. Whilst not including the anticipated reduction of the maximum period of preventive detention (in which Valpreda is held) from four to three years (which would have meant Valpreda's immediate release), the new measures do give examining magistrates discretionary powers to grant provisional liberty even to those accused in whose case (like Valpreda's) a mandatory arrest-warrant is operative. So we must await the slow deliberations of the Catanzaro magistracy before we know whether our comrade, unjustly held for three years in conditions deleterious to his already poor state of health, will be able to taste once again a little freedom. The face of bourgeois justice is everywhere the same. Valpreda libero subito!

D.L.M.



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This Rhodesia Again

“**T**HE GOVERNMENT had evidence to show that the infant and post-natal mortality in the urban African areas was now comparable with that of a developed country such as Great Britain,” said the Minister of Health, Mr. Ian McLean, at the eighth annual meeting of the Family Planning Association.

“This was not the case in the rural areas and it is in this field that efforts now have to be directed. “We have noticed that as soon as Africans become involved in the cash economy, they automatically reduce the numbers of their family,” he said. “The reason was [that] they were taking into account the practical problems in the field of housing and home economics.”

“The subsistence economy in the rural areas does not provide sufficient incentive to the African to space his family,” said Mr. McLean. (*Rhodesian Commentary*, October 1972.)

Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Proverbs 14:34. (‘Filler’ in same paper, same date.)

D.B.

Dunlop-Pirelli Crackdown

THERE WILL be no more redundancies at the Dunlop tyrestore, Rochdale, until the New Year. The men here, faced with a complete shutdown, have won a £2 mobility rise and stopped the firm wearing down their resistance with 'voluntary' redundancies.

Resistance to Dunlop's planned shutdown of the Rochdale plant has been building up over the last few weeks, since the proposed closure was announced over a month ago (see FREEDOM, 28.10.72). Ken Mercer, the local shop steward at Rochdale, has been conducting the campaign (to save the men's jobs) from a hospital bed where he's been confined these last two weeks, and expects full union support from the T&G.

A resolution has now been approved by the unofficial shop stewards' committee for the whole Dunlop Rubber Group, stating that workers elsewhere in the combine will black work transferred from the Rochdale plant.

Since it became known that Dunlop's intended to close their tyrestore at Rochdale, a few workers have left the firm. Now we have reports that the management are trying hard to squeeze more out of those remaining, so as to make up for the lost men.

DANGER, BUTCHER AT WORK

It seems strange that Dunlop should want to close the plant at all, for a survey of 1,000 companies in the Dunlop Holdings conducted by the union, puts the Rochdale plant as the sixteenth most profitable. The Dunlop Holding itself made a half-yearly profit before tax of £17.27 million. Not bad according to a financial pundit in the *Telegraph*.

It wouldn't surprise me if Dunlop's were pretending to shut the Rochdale plant, so as to cut the labour force and try to turn out as much work with less

staff. The kind of trick Courtaulds has just pulled at Skelmersdale.

One thing is certain though, the carve-up we are witnessing in Rochdale, is all part of the hatchet job now being forced through by the Dunlop-Pirelli Group here and in Italy. Pirelli have been tipped to lose £40 million this year, and are laying off large numbers of workers. The Italian unions, who put the blame for this on the Dunlop-Pirelli merger, are also worried that a further pact with another big combine in West Germany will lead to more sackings.

In anticipation of this situation, the shop stewards both here and in Italy, formed a joint organisation to combat this multi-national combine. On June 9, many thousands of workers in both countries struck in protest at the wave of sackings and short-time working, which had followed the merging of the two companies.

The Dunlop-Pirelli Notizie/News distributed in the two languages by the shop stewards at the time of the strikes called on the combine to:

STOP! The sackings and short-time working.

STOP! Making US pay for YOUR Rationalisation.

STOP! The investment strike in Britain and Italy.

STOP! Importing products into any country where workers of the group making the same product are for any reason not engaged in full production.

IN ADDITION

The British shop stewards call for a reduction of the full working week to 36 hours to encourage the creation of new jobs and employment prospects in the company and in the country as a whole. NORTH WEST WORKERS.

From Australia

HERE IN PERTH a young British anarchist was recently sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for refusing to be drafted into the Australian Army. He is only the second person so dealt with in Western Australia, and his treatment was met with almost total apathy. He is Mike Payne and we've been informed that the government may try to deport him.

Michael Matteson, one of the best known of the Australian draft resisters, surrendered to the Sydney police on November 9, after being on the run for 14 months.

LETTERS

At a special hearing of the federal court he refused to plead to a charge of having failed to comply with the National Service Act. For all that he was sentenced to 18 months in jail. He too is an anarchist, is aged 25, and had dropped out of university and been twice jailed, in 1969 and 1970, for failing to comply with the Act.

Several months ago he gave an interview on television, afterwards escaping the police by a hair's breadth. Later, at Sydney University, students freed him from police handcuffs with bolt cutters. He had been arrested there. Before surrendering to the police he gave a press conference.

In December a couple of guys are on trial for attempting to blow up the Department of Labour and National Service. This is a heavy charge, and they face 14 years each if convicted. Solidarity was shown in this case, and bail of A\$1,700 was raised in four weeks.

Over here in the West the mining millionaires Hancock and Wright have signed their third giant deal in the last three months to develop another iron-ore mine. Last year these two pigs were 'earning' (sic) A\$30,000 a day, and since then have signed deals with the state government to open two more iron-ore mines, a bauxite mine and an aluminium plant. Needless to say the state government is a Labour government, and the state has the highest unemployment figures of any in Australia.

Inglewood, T.B. & M.H.
Western Australia

Mutilation Reintroduced

Dear Comrades,

As a postscript to John Brent's item 'Mutilation Reintroduced' (FREEDOM, November 11), in order to set the Roll Call of Infamy straight, so to speak, I would point out that General Bokassa of the Central African Republic was the first to use bodily mutilation as a punishment, and, unlike Colonel Gaddafi's excesses, Bokassa's henchmen cut off people's ears in public, and without any type of anaesthetic whatsoever. His 'surgeons' for this special duty are volunteers from his army of thugs who on other occasions indulge their sadistic impulses by beating chained and helpless prisoners with truncheons. For the 'freedom under the law' brigade one would of course like to remind them that all this is perfectly 'legal' just as atrocities in olden times were. All great copy for papers like *Spearhead* of course, who

welcome the outrages of a few in order to feed their own festering racist fantasies, but more disturbingly perhaps, they can with some justification complain of the conspiracy of silence that 'liberals' in the media have put around these events. To anarchists the double-think standards of trendy lefties and parlour pinks should come as no surprise—too often have we seen them wilt and swoon when their woolly-headed thinking leads them into positions of ideological compromise—but on issues like this no person with a grain of humanity in him should remain silent. In doing so they merely show how much racism really is seething through their own subconscious minds, and in saying nothing about these affronts to human liberty they are really saying, 'Well, what more can you expect from these black people?' They really are savages under the thin veneer of civilisation we have given them.' May FREEDOM long continue to condemn and embarrass all tyrants, dictators, sadists and paranoids whatever the colour of their skin, their religion or nationality. The enemies of humanity (like its friends) come in all colours, shapes, and other permutations of existence.

Bromley DAVID GODIN.

Anarchist or Liberal?

A.W.U. is unjust to Herbert Read and his writings. Naturally, Read's life was not the consistent one he strove for (as with everyone else) yet it was a fine example of a courageous individual maintaining an inner core that represented an alternative vision of a society educated through art. Naturally Read was mistaken in accepting a knighthood but it was only a few British anarchists who had apoplexy over this matter which is minor and insignificant.

For a generation Herbert Read fought for and suffered for the anarchist vision as he interpreted it. Anarchists always seeking to demolish the supposed anarchist 'elite' might instead appreciate what Read and the others A.W.U. mentions have produced as evidence of their conviction and faith. I think Herbert Read deserves more than the fleeting superficiality A.W.U. demonstrates and I hope many young anarchists will be encouraged to read his writings which combine, very often, a sensitivity and objectivity many of us might well attempt to emulate.

London J.W.

The Politics of Transport

THE GLC HAVE AGREED to the institution next Spring, for a trial period, of a westbound, buses-only lane in Piccadilly. At present it is an eastbound, one-way street for all vehicles. To bring the buses back would be an advantage, as at present people have to search around to find the bus stops for buses going to the west. Other lanes are planned for introduction in the coming months. Along with the narrowing of Oxford Street on the eastbound side, with pavement-widening and greater space for pedestrians and the banning of private cars, this looks like a little victory for what one can loosely call the 'conservationists'. All the same there is a long way to go still.

J.B.

This Week in Ireland

ON SATURDAY, November 4, I went to Belfast on the 10.30 a.m. train to take part in a TV programme that evening. This was recorded at 8 o'clock to let the audience and the electricians go home in decent time, but was on the air between 11 and 12 so I was able to watch and hear it back in my hotel. As I had not changed I was recognised and spent till after 2 a.m. talking politics to four Unionists and an Alliance man, and I an emerald green southern papish libertarian.

I think it speaks well for ALL of us that we were able to discuss and disagree and argue without one spot of acrimony. I came home on the 9.30 a.m. train next morning and went out in the evening. Something had gone wrong with the heating on the train and I was frozen. I felt awful on Monday but went out again in the evening, and that is the last I remember until I woke in hospital recovering from an acute attack of pneumonia. This to explain why I did not write last week, and why for a solid week I neither read papers nor listened to the wireless. I am home now but, like the cow's tail, all behind.

I know Gusto Spence was recaptured by the infamous Lt-Col. Derek Wilfield of Bloody Sunday disface. I know Paddy Kennedy is being tried for 'promoting the aims of the IRA' but that Craig can promote the aims and the genocidal desires of the Vanguard and is not touched. I know Heath arrives in the six counties today and Craig *et al* are furious he is not seeing them. Actually practically no one is seeing him. Only the Faulkner Brigade as far as I can make out.

Every day there are more assassinations and tarring and featherings even to a child. I think she was thirteen and was accused of giving information to the troops. Craig and Co. are insisting Stormont MUST be restored with full security powers, which means 'Let's murder all the teags'. The UDA attacked and burned in Lenadoon and the troops stood idly by. I have been reading a lot about General Tuzo. He is dedicated to a complete military victory against the minority, was a great friend of the terrible General Massu and shares his belief in torture. He describes it as a legitimate way of keeping peace. His

Contact

Contact Column is for making contact! Use is free, but donations towards typesetting costs are welcome

Help Fold and Despatch 'FREEDOM' Thursdays from 2 p.m., followed by discussion at 7.30 p.m.

Work is starting on the production of a libertarian news sheet covering Wales, in particular the South. Any comrades interested in receiving the first issue of this, planned for January '73, please contact Jock and Eve Spence, 22 Cwmndonkin Terrace, Swansea.

NEW YORK GROUP
David Waters, Tower E, Box 1005, Hempstead, New York 11551. Phone: 516 560-4941.

Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists.
Contact Secretary for information, pamphlets, etc. 68A Chingford Road, London, E.17.

Red and Black Outlook (November issue) still available from Julian Turner, 21 Roundwood Way, Banstead, Surrey. December issue being produced by the Brighton group, under the Incredible Rotating Editorship System.

ORA North London. Meets every Tuesday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at 68A Chingford Road, E.17.

Libertarian Book Club Fall Lecture Series, Thursdays, 7 p.m., 369 8th Avenue at 29th Street, New York: November 23, Judith Malina and Julian Beck, 'Anarchism and Organisation'; December 14, Murray Bookchin, 'Ecology and Anarchism'.

Anarchism on TV. Comrades interested in participating in possible TV programme on contemporary anarchism please contact Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

Harlech ASA. A group of anarchist-syndicalist alliance is now forming in Harlech, Merioneth, N. Wales; anyone interested in helping and supporting from the N. Wales area, please contact G. & B. Briggs, c/o Coleg Harlech, Harlech, Merioneth, N. Wales.

The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists is now available plus other pamphlets from 68A Chingford Road, E.17.

Change of Address. Manchester Group: Matt Cunningham, 19A Meadowside Avenue, Walkden, Worsley, Lancs.

Anarchist Calendars 1973, 10p each, 24p post from Kropotkin Lighthouse Publications, c/o Freedom Press.

Translations wanted from Anarchist journals for FREEDOM. Languages needed are French, Italian, Spanish, German, Swedish, Japanese. Present translators please confirm. Get in touch with Eds.

PROP. Public Meeting at Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, Stepney Green, E.1, on November 24 at 7 p.m.

Anyone interested in forming a Cambridge Anarchist Group please contact Alan Ross and Louisa Martin, 24 Thomas Road, Fulbourn; phone 880147.

'Peace News' for theory and practice of non-violent revolution. £4.95 p.a. (students less 10%). Trial sub. 7 weeks for 50p with free M. Duane 'Biological Basis of Anarchism'. 5 Caledonian Road, N.1.

Michael Tobin Defence Committee, c/o 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent.

Libertarian Aid Committee for the Hyde Park '3'. Visiting: Phone 677 1526 (Mrs. Carty). Letters-gifts (must have Prison No.): 110305 M. Callinan, 110281 L. Marcantonio, 110280 Stan Quinn. Donations: Mrs. Callinan, 59 Brondesbury Villas, London, N.W.6.

Stoke Newington 8 Trial. Send all aid to '8' Fund, Compendium Bookshop, 240 Camden High Street. Meals, fruit, papers, books (new ones only), cigarettes and money needed.

hero is Rhodes. He is a complete disaster. Our latest nursery rhyme sung by our tots:

'99 sticks of dynamite
Standing on a wall.

If one stick should accidentally fall,
There'll be no bloody dynamite
and no bloody wall.'

Hope to be more awake and aware next week.

H.

STRIPPERS & CORPSES

Films

DYN AMO, director Steve Dwoskin, to be shown at the Electric Cinema Club, 191 Portobello Road, W.11, from Nov. 19. **CORPSES,** director Abdul Alhazred, the People's Cinema, Angel Alley, E.1.

DYN AMO is set in a strip club. We see, at great length, various girls stripping. Occasionally some rather sinister young men appear. Then a blindfolded girl is brought on to the stage and a sort of sadomasochistic ritual takes place. The final half hour or so of the film is devoted to a prolonged shot of this girl's face, with tears running down. Finally we see her in a position that recalls the Crucifixion. Then, after two hours or so, the film ends.

Steve Dwoskin believes that the human face is endlessly expressive. It can tell us all we need to know. So most of the film consists of close-ups of faces, expressing lust, resignation, violence, misery and so on. There is hardly any dialogue. A man shouts what sounded to me like 'Frigid bitch!' at one of the girls.

The message seemed to be, 'Look at the way men exploit women, treating them as sex objects.' Now we await a film about the way film-makers exploit their audiences by boring them to death.

The point of *Dyn Amo* could have been made, and more devastatingly, in five or ten minutes. The sort of men whose money supports strip clubs are

never likely to see it. The audience at the National Film Theatre preview were members of the intelligentsia who would never enter a strip club. This is preaching to the already converted with a vengeance.

More of the same thing from an unknown director, Abdul Alhazred. In *Corpses* the camera never moves. It is early morning in the public square of some city in the East, or in Africa, it is hard to tell. In the background is a line of palm trees. In the foreground there is a line of blood-covered corpses, lying on their backs with eyes staring and mouths open. It is just after dawn. The sky lightens. The people of the city come into the square and pass to and fro on their daily round. Flies buzz around the bodies, the blood congeals. There is no dialogue. Periodically one hears military orders shouted and volleys of gunfire, followed by screams and groans. Sometimes one hears priests chanting and a muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. The day wears on and finally evening comes, the screen goes dark and the film ends. The length of the film is the same as it would be in real life. The audience are encouraged to walk about during the course of the film, go in and out, eat sandwiches and discuss the film with its director. I am afraid that I am too old-fashioned to appreciate this sort of thing as it deserves.

JOHN BRENT.

CONTACT LOST

MADE, Carlton (Director: John Mackenzie).

THE BREAKDOWN of civilised life seems to be the theme of *Made*, not in a romantic, Wellsian way but simply by people losing contact with each other. The heroine, an unmarried mother, living in a small flat with her mother who is dying, has a dull, limited life from which she yearns to escape. She is very dutiful, looks after her baby and her mother until, on a trip to Brighton organised by the local Catholic priest, she meets a pop singer, a hippy who looks like Jesus Christ but is in fact a freethinker.

They have an affair, and then a series of disasters, rather contrived it seems to me, follow. If it were a moral story one would say that the girl is being punished by God, or the gods, for abandoning her mother for one night. She should have gone on being dutiful, and eschewed happiness, but I don't suppose that is what is meant.

The singer believes in peace and freedom, and hates the churches for persecuting people and mystifying them.

The priest, a young, progressive cleric, believes in responsibility and caring for people. It is possible to agree with both of them to some extent, but in practice the priest patronises the young girl and the singer is really a cold fish, who leaves her when he goes on tour to America, and uses her as material for a new song.

The girl also meets an Indian youth, who appears charming, but perpetrates poems almost as bad as John Betjeman's, and attempts to rape her. Her mother is a self-pitying bully, who uses her illness as a means of domination. In fact nobody is in contact with anyone else, and the background is an inhuman landscape of tall flat blocks, motorways and concrete.

In this Martian world each individual is on his or her own. Hopelessness and futility is the end of it all. It seemed appropriate that, although it was the weekend, the cinema should be practically empty, and the centre of London pretty nearly dead, although it was Guy Fawkes Night. A dying city on a dying planet!

ARTHUR WARD.