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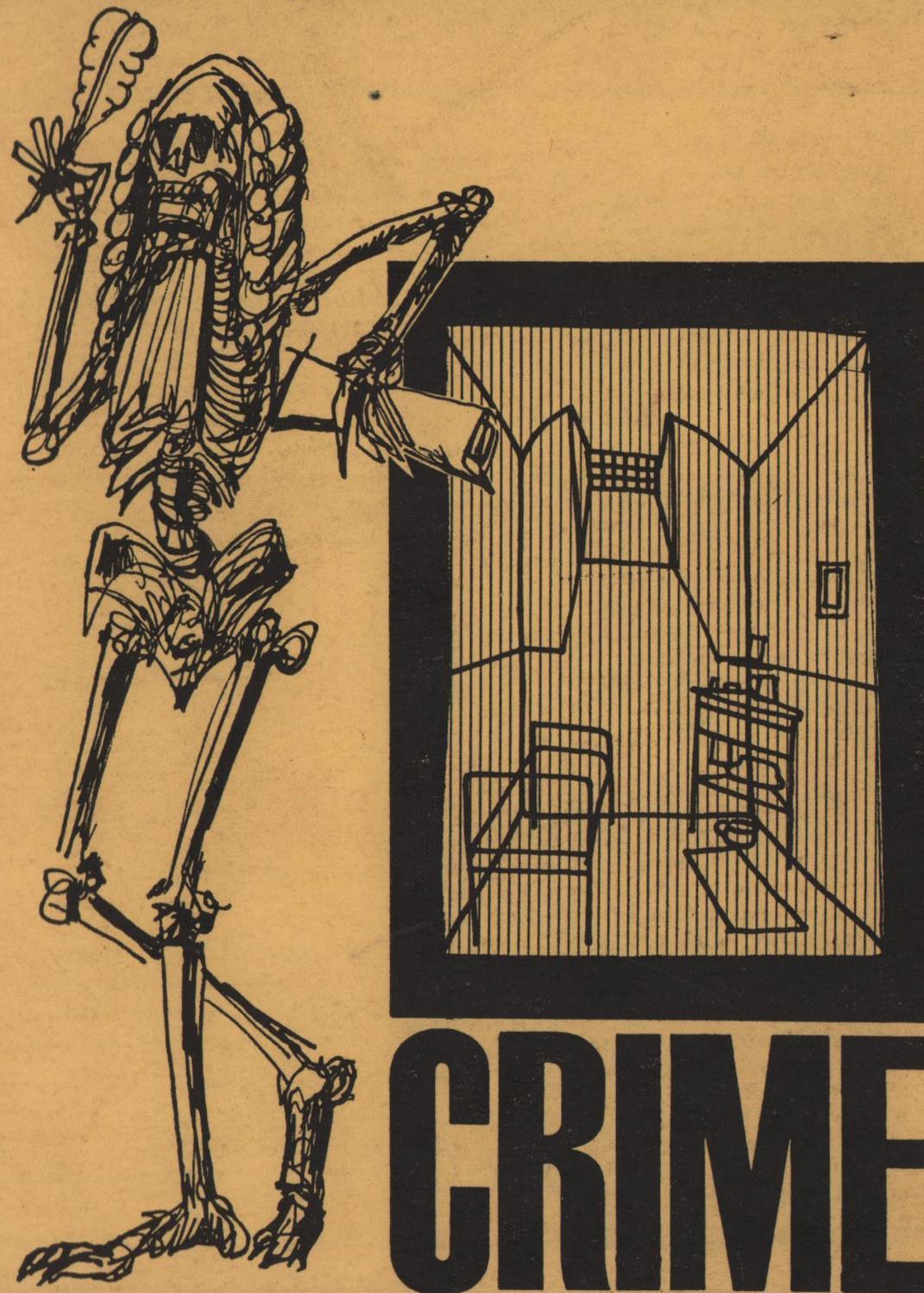
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# ANARCHY 32

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## Anarchism and crime

IAN STUART

*"You were convicted of aggravated bronchitis last year; and I find that although you are now only twenty-three years old, you have been imprisoned for no less than fourteen occasions for illness of a more or less hateful character; in fact, it is not too much to say that you have spent the greater part of your life in jail. . . .*

*"You may say that it is not your fault. The answer is ready enough to hand and it amounts to this—that if you had been born of healthy and well-to-do parents, and had been well taken care of when you were a child, you would never have offended against the laws of your country, nor found yourself in your present disgraceful position. If you tell me that you had no hand in your parentage and education, and that it is therefore unjust to lay these things to your charge, I answer that whether your being in a consumption is your fault or no, it is a fault in you, and it is my duty to see that against such faults as this the commonwealth shall be protected. You may say that it is your misfortune to be criminal; I answer that it is your crime to be unfortunate."*

—The Judge's Speech in EREWHON.

DISCUSSIONS OF ANARCHIST THEORY with those to whom it is new, and those who are irreconcilably hostile, always stir up the question of criminal behaviour. Thus Colin Ward's discussion of anarchism on the BBC<sup>1</sup> elicited from one of his interrogators the objection that a social condition of anarchism would be impossible because it would have no machinery for preventing robbery. This objection was met by the observation that in our present society the existing machinery does not prevent robbery, and that penal methods may sometimes increase the severity of crimes which are committed later. The various social philosophies which stand in opposition to anarchism are remarkably unenlightening on the question of crime. Most of them have to fall back on a secular version of original sin—that some men are criminals by nature, and that every social system must have an institution for their repression. Such a view is essentially religious, and accords ill with otherwise secular social philosophy. Marxism maintains that crime as we know it, is a result of the tensions entailed in capitalist society. Unfortunately, the practical experiment along Marxist lines which has been conducted in Russia over the last 40 years has shown that the age-old patterns of crime persist, and they are manifest quite as strongly in each new rising generation which has had no experience of capitalist society. Communist apologists have been driven to take refuge to an increasing degree, with each new decade, in a sort of social Lamarkianism—that the criminality bred by centuries of pre-socialist society still impels Russians to criminal acts even when the present system produces no such tendencies. Purist Marxists will of course reject the claim

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that the Russian system is in any way a socialist one, and so they can retain their simple theoretical model of crime being an economic by-product of capitalism.

Anarchists will agree with Marxists in regarding crime as a result of the current social system, rather than attributing it to any personal and accidental quality of "wickedness" with which some individuals are born. They do not, however, see the problem simply in terms of economic forces as the Marxists do; indeed the post-war era with its rising standard of living for the working-class, and in particular for teenagers, has seen an extraordinary rise in the crime rates for those sections of the population who have experienced the greatest degree of economic betterment. A simple economic theory of criminality is becoming increasingly outmoded. Where unemployment is high and workers are feeling the economic squeeze, the result is *not* an increased rate of stealing. We must look elsewhere for the roots of crime, and such a search involves an examination of the whole social structure of our society.

It may be objected by some anarchists that the whole matter is self-evident. Crime consists in breaking the laws which the State enacts and that crime will be abolished when the State is abolished. But the problem is not so simple: if we work for the day on which "the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest", however literally or metaphorically we view such an event, we find ourselves compelled to be social scientists tackling problems which the reformist social scientists are both unwilling and incapable of tackling. This article begins with a satirical quotation from Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, but no orthodox criminologist can fully appreciate that his own views about crime are just as ridiculous as the Erewhonian view. To work for the abolition of crime means to work for social revolution. This was ably expressed by Alex Comfort, speaking at an anarchist Summer School over ten years ago:<sup>2</sup>

There are two points I want to make. First of all, modern work in this field (criminology) seems to me to give us extremely strong ground for encouragement. The political field, and the type of revolution by *levée-en-masse*, which earlier radicals looked for, have never been bleaker in prospect: the new knowledge and study of the machinery of human societies and if individual character formation gives us, I think, not only a field in which to work with every hope of success, but also an assurance that the ideas which we have espoused, for various reasons, conscious and unconscious, since the time of William Godwin, are becoming increasingly the currency of scientific thought . . . Personally I would like to see more of us, those who can, take training in social sciences or engaging in research in this field. I do not want to turn anarchism into a sociological Fabian Society, from which non-scientists are excluded. I want to see something done which has not been done before—a concerted, unbiassed and properly documented attempt to disseminate accurate teaching of the results of modern child psychiatry, social psychology and political psychology to the general public on the same scale as we have in the past tried to disseminate revolutionary propaganda."

It should be noted that Alex Comfort also published a study<sup>3</sup> of the extent to which executive and political power are *in themselves*

manifestations of the acting out of delinquent tendencies. As a tribute to the excellence of this book, the present writer has heard an orthodox criminologist declare with much heat that Dr. Comfort should be imprisoned himself for publishing such monstrous ideas!

#### Who are the delinquents?

If we ask someone to think of what the average housebreaker looks like he will probably think of a man of sturdy physique and and rough features, dressed in the clothes in which *Punch* and other comic papers depict him. The housebreaker is in fact a stock character in our national mythology, and has his origins largely in fiction. We all know what Bill Sykes looked like. No doubt a certain amount of robbery is carried out by professional thieves of this type, but this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that in present day society *about half* of the total amount of housebreaking is carried out by boys who are still at school, or have only just left it.

The table which follows (Table 1) represents a breakdown of the figures by age, for an urban district in Britain in a recent year.

TABLE 1. Arrests for three categories of offences, given as percentages in different age ranges.

Age range in years	8-13	14-16	17-20	21-30	31-40	41 & over
Housebreaking	21.3	27.5	21.1	22.0	5.9	2.2
Shop and Warehousebreaking	23.1	22.8	21.6	23.5	6.6	2.4
Crimes of Violence	3.0	8.2	19.8	39.1	16.9	13.0

A glance at the figures in Table 1 may be misleading because the size of the age ranges is very different. Thus the 14-16 year range represents only 3 years, but the 21-30 year range represents 10 years. To get over this difficulty, a separate table has been calculated which shows the percentage *per year of age* (Table 2). Here the youngest and the oldest age range have been omitted because there is a sharp rise and fall in these ranges and the average would not be meaningful.

TABLE 2. Data of Table 1 shown as approximate average percentage figures per year of age in the separate age ranges.

Age range in years	14-16	17-20	21-30	31-40
Housebreaking	9.1	5.2	2.2	0.6
Shop and Warehousebreaking	7.6	5.4	2.4	0.7
Crimes of violence	2.7	4.9	3.9	1.7

It may be seen in Table 2 that the figures for housebreaking and shopbreaking are very similar. Arrest for breaking in and robbing premises is about four times more frequent among boys who are still at school, or recent leavers, than among men in their twenties, and after the age of 30 such activity seems to be rather uncommon. With the crimes of violence, however, the peak of the frequency is delayed until after the age of 17 and men in their twenties are more often arrested than the boys in their early teens. As this category includes rape, indecent assault and causing death by dangerous driving, it is natural that the older adolescents are most prone to such activity.

All these figures represent arrests, and say nothing of the amount

of crime committed. The figures given in Table 3, for the same area, clarify this relationship.

TABLE 3.

	Crimes	Arrests
Housebreaking ... ..	14,500	1,900
Shop and warehousebreaking ... ..	16,300	3,400
Crimes of violence ... ..	4,200	2,900

One boy may, of course, commit a number of jobs before he is arrested for his series of escapades, but the greater part of such crime is never detected. Can it be, one wonders, that the younger boys are more often arrested because they are more easily detected? Do they grow more wily with age?

With crimes of violence the position is different. Report and arrest is more immediate and it is more difficult to get away with it.

These statistics indicate why the authorities are worried about the phenomenon of "Juvenile Delinquency". But the popular conception of the J.D. is somewhat erroneous. He is generally portrayed as a hulking lad of about 18 who wears a leather jacket, carries a bicycle chain, and delights to assault innocent passers-by on the pavement. This stereotype is largely nonsense. It had been plugged by the popular press, TV, etc., so that many boys, insecure as to their identity and rôle in society, have bought themselves black leather jackets—to the huge profit and delight of the leather industry. ("These young mugs have the money to spend, so let's get it off them!"). The surest way of keeping the noses of teenagers to the grindstone of steady work is to enmesh them in debt (as is found in many primitive acquisitive societies), and if lads are compelled by their conformity to convention to pay weekly H.P. instalments on noisy, dangerous and uncomfortable motorcycles, they are going to be good, steady workers in factories, fields and workshops, and give little real trouble to their masters. It is not so easy to depend on stealing for a regular income.

By and large then, the stereotype of the J.D. is a synthetic myth which is sold both to the teenagers and to the adult public, who have different reasons for accepting it. Even the executive officers of the law are more influenced by the myth than by the reality. Ask the average Glasgow policeman to describe a typical J.D. to you and he will give you the stereotype that the Telly gives him, rather than what he actually comes into contact with in his job. Yet the police statistics are clear and unambiguous. Table 4 gives a breakdown of figures for juveniles arrested in a certain Scottish urban area over a period of some months, which gives a more detailed picture regarding age than was conveyed by the statistics given earlier.

TABLE 4. Age distribution of 1,484 juveniles arrested in an urban area.

Age ... ..	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16 years
No. of arrests	18	43	72	140	146	240	350	257	218

Thus we see that the peak age is 14 years, and that thereafter there is a steady decline. By the age of 16 the figures are already lower than at the 13-year-old level. The vast bulk of this criminality is the theft

of property, and it remains rather a mystery as to why there is a steady drop after the age of 14. One simple-minded explanation might be that when children leave school then they can earn money instead of having to steal, but such an interpretation of the facts is rather inadequate. The spending of teenagers is rather in proportion to the lures which are set before them by society. The need for money and goods is very much greater as the boy grows older after leaving school—yet boys appear to get progressively honester. It was suggested above that part of the explanation might be in the fact that boys get more wily and difficult to detect as they get older. We simply do not know.

One of the strange facts about juvenile delinquency is that it is largely a male phenomenon. Much of what is called "delinquency" among young girls is due simply to the fact that they like a sex life when they are ready for it, and this is considered wrong both by the law, the usual social agencies and often by their own parents. When parents are unable or unwilling to condone and shield their daughter's sex life, then she may possibly become the victim of predatory fornicators, pimps and "moral welfare" agents. In general, however, girls are remarkably law-abiding. What we know of boys is that about 12% of them living in urban areas are actually convicted of criminal offences by the age of 14 years. What we can deduce from this is that a large amount of criminality is commonplace, and that the police are active enough to ensure that a certain amount of it comes before the courts.

Here we have a paradox; were the size of the police force to be increased or were the force to be more active, the statistics for juvenile delinquency would undoubtedly *increase*. Some categories of the habitual behaviour of boys are labelled "criminal", and it is up to the police to justify their existence by bringing a certain amount of it before the courts. An example of this was when the newspapers wrote up the doings of some boys arrested for fighting in a well-known open space, where such combats of the young have probably been going on ever since we drove out the Neanderthalers. This disgraceful publicity resulted in a "rocket" going to the local police stations. The coppers then went out night after night and pulled in as many boys as they could conveniently handle. The statistics for hooliganism on that common shot up temporarily as though the lads of the district had suddenly gone on the warpath! The police produced an apparent upsurge of violence simply by being too active in response to orders from above.

The reality of juvenile delinquency appears to be much as follows. Boys are born into a culture which treats them thus and thus, and makes certain demands upon them. The result of such an educational process is that by about the age of 14 they do a considerable amount of stealing, wanton destruction and fighting. I say an *educational process* advisedly, for that is what it is. They have been *taught* to act in a way that similar young thieves and hooligans were acting when they were mere toddlers, and those who are toddlers now will soon be educa-

ted to act in precisely the same way a few years hence. And who *teaches* them to act in such an anti-social way? I suggest it is the whole caboodle, what we call our "culture". And here we play them a dirty trick, for we take these infants whom we prize so highly and pump them full of Welfare until they are four years old, and then in ten years or much less we have turned them into little Calibans. *We*—who are we? All who have to do directly with the children? Their parents, their school-teachers, their telly producers, the writers of their comics? Perhaps we are looking at the problem the wrong way round.

### *The cause of delinquency*

To ask what is the *cause* of juvenile delinquency is to pose the wrong question. More realistically one might ask why such behaviour is refrained from so often by so many people.

A boy wanders through a department store and sees many objects which he covets and which he could steal without much chance of detection, yet he refrains. What is the cause of the inhibition of his action? One cause is certainly a realistic fear of detection, but this cautiousness alone does not fully account for the widespread practice of honesty. Everyone will agree that there is also an inhibiting factor, an internal restraint, which we call the conscience. Many boys will refrain from gratifying their cupidity even when they are absolutely sure that they would not get caught. But to label an inhibiting factor "conscience" is not to explain it. Freud approached the phenomenon in terms of the "super ego", but one does not have to assume all the complexities of his system to study the workings of this form of built-in restraint which governs so many of our actions, sometimes in an arbitrary and ludicrous fashion.

We have pictured a boy going through a department store and coveting certain objects, but refraining from stealing them even though he cannot afford to buy them. The situation is viewed by some psychologists<sup>4</sup> in terms of behaviouristic conditioning. In an ordinarily conditioned boy the temptation to steal, that is the *idea* that he might steal here and now, triggers off a feeling of unpleasurable anxiety. The nearer he comes to implementing the idea, the stronger are the feelings of anxiety, and he refrains, not because of any obvious menace from external authority but because of this menace from within. The normally honest boy is perfectly familiar with this mechanism and does in fact take it for granted that he will act honestly *in most circumstances*. His self-image is that of an "honest boy". The interesting point is that "honesty" is often highly specific to the situation. A boy may pilfer repeatedly and lightheartedly from Woolworths, yet may be completely honest in small back-street shops. In the same way, men may have a strong conscience about killing, hence the remarkably low murder rate of this country, but in war-time certain men and women and children are designated "the enemy" and many people feel no pangs of conscience about killing them.

The degree to which the contemplation of an act arouses anxiety has little direct relation to the moral implications of the act. Anxiety, and hence conscience, is aroused according to the peculiar setting in which the act must be performed. Many people would have little scruple about defrauding the Railway of a pound if they could do so with safety, but if they had paid the fare they would be far less likely to help themselves to a pound from the till in the booking office, even if they could do so with safety. The latter act would be perceived by them as "stealing" and its contemplation would arouse the anxiety reaction which inhibits such overt acts. Many people have commented on the puzzling fact that motorists appear to feel a disproportionate lack of guilt about the death and injury they inflict. Somehow the moral, diffident and well-controlled citizen takes on a sort of fiendish and conscienceless personality when he drives a car, so that he will menace with death any pedestrian, cyclist or fellow-motorist who frustrates him in certain ways. Apparently, the guilt reaction does not work in the normal way for the motorist. There is a feeling that there is less moral turpitude attached to a manslaughter charge than to a petty larceny. If little children were brought up to feel shame and disgrace attached to speeding and bad conduct on the roads (although this is hardly possible!) just as they are conditioned in respect of stealing and sexual "misconduct", then the problem of death and injury on the roads would be very different.

The suggestion that habitual honesty is maintained by a potential anxiety reaction has much to commend it. It goes a long way in explaining the atypical acts of dishonesty, violence, rape, etc., which are sometimes committed by people of otherwise exemplary character. Examination of these cases often shows that the atypical act has been committed when the person has suffered some personal misfortune which has brought on an attack of general anxiety and depression. Where the general level of anxiety is high the normal anxiety-reaction by which the conscience operates is disorganised, indeed behaviour which is regarded as taboo may be indulged in deliberately as a counter-irritant to the individual's personal misery. A well recognised and comparatively frequent example of this is the respectable housewife who is thrown into an anxiety state by personal troubles, and then goes out shoplifting, taking articles which she could easily afford to buy. Another illustration of the breakdown of the conscience is to be observed in the operation of drugs. Many people behave in a manner which is normally taboo to them when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The effect of such drugs is to reduce anxiety, and so the intoxicated man can defy the internal prohibitions which normally restrain him.

The mechanism by which people normally refrain from forbidden acts has been discussed, and it now remains to consider why this mechanism breaks down with a certain frequency, particularly in boys of about the age of 14. One reason is that the training they have received has not been very effective. Many working class parents allow

a degree of latitude to their children which is very different from that allowed in middle-class families. The boy will learn that he may get clouted if Mum catches him filching money from her bag, but this is not the sort of treatment which builds up a conditioned anxiety attached to stealing. Most studies of methods of upbringing have indicated that what produces a "strong moral sense" in children is training by the threat of "withdrawal of love". If the child grows up in a condition of affectionate emotional dependence on his parents, withdrawal of parental approval is a very strong sanction. The child who is merely clouted when he is naughty learns to avoid getting caught, or indeed to weigh up the pain of a thick ear against the unlawful pleasure. The child who is made to feel moral disapproval from adults who normally treat him tenderly, is less able to shrug off the penalty for wrongdoing; in order to put himself back in a state of grace he has to strive actively to be a good boy, and hence to introject the moral standards of his parents.

What has been described above is of course the extremes of two different types of child management. Generally the regime is mixed. If, however, the parental figures are unloving, indifferent or absent, they cannot train the child by "withdrawal of love", and the child is liable to grow up with very little conscience. Again, if the parents are particularly inconsistent in their behaviour, sometimes blaming and punishing the child for wrongdoing and sometimes condoning such behaviour, the training process will not work, and the child will not develop any consistent moral standards.

Environmental influences during the child's early years do not entirely determine his habitual patterns of behaviour. There is considerable evidence that there are innate differences between individuals with regard to the way in which they respond to training. Such differences do not relate to intelligence, but to general personality. Some personality types react very readily to training procedures and develop a severe conscience, with concomitant anxiety reactions, only too easily. Contrasting personality types are remarkably resistant to training, with a corresponding laxity of internal restraint. At present the study of innate differences in personality is in its infancy, but enough is known to make it obvious that identical methods of upbringing will certainly not produce children identical in behaviour and outlook—a curious hope which was expressed by the early behaviourists.

Much of the above is open to misinterpretation by the careless reader. It may be assumed erroneously that the present writer is advancing a programme of strict moral training for the young by the effective sanction of "withdrawal of love". This has certainly *not* been advocated here. Again it might be assumed, equally erroneously, that the present writer argues that the only reason we refrain from robbery and violence is that we get a nasty kick from the rising tide of anxiety every time we contemplate such actions. Such a model is altogether too crude. What is really suggested here is that ordinary moral behaviour becomes completely habitual with most people. How-

ever, a code of decent social behaviour is not implanted in us by a God-given conscience, but is the result of our social experiences from early childhood. The mechanism by which taboo behaviour is defined is the conditional anxiety reaction, and it must be clearly understood that there is no reason to presuppose a deliberate plan of campaign on the part of the parents who effect this conditioning.

If parents act entirely naturally they will normally show affection for their child, but their pattern of responses to him will be partly determined by the norms of the culture of which they are members. Thus if any form of behaviour is considered taboo in their culture, when their little boy manifests such behaviour their normal attitude of affectionate approval changes to one of active disapproval as long as he persists in the taboo behaviour. Whether the disapproval is accompanied by scolding, walloping or pained embarrassment, the operative fact is that the child feels the temporary withdrawal of parental love and learns to be anxious in such a situation. Of course, if there is *not* a good parent-child relationship anyway, the taboo behaviour may become a weapon in the child's hands and he may delight in, say, shitting on the carpet rather than in the pot just to score a little victory in the cold war.

If parents have a good relationship with their child, it is obvious that they will be an efficient channel by which the moral norms of their culture are passed on without their bothering to consider the matter. They certainly produce conditioned anxiety in their children, but so does a cat when she brings up her kittens. Unfortunately in a complex, divided and competitive society such as ours, the social taboos are by no means clear; they vary between social classes, and parents are often confused themselves. The ordinary individual does arrive at a workable standard of social morality for himself, but he has difficulty in passing it on to his children without conflict and confusion.

In a society based upon mutual aid, there would be little problem of morality. But our society is one based upon aggressive competition and unfairness. The *status quo* is maintained by a combination of sheer intimidation and ludicrously cockeyed moral training. One of the most sacred institutions in our society is property. If a lad were to steal my car, I would be annoyed and call upon the police to recover it for me. Yet I would feel no satisfaction if they caught the lad and put him in the lock-up. Nor do I believe that his act of theft is "immoral". As I drive through the wet, cold streets of Glasgow in my warm and comfortably empty car, and see the wretched mums of such lads queueing at bus stops, I might wonder if *my* position is not immoral—far more immoral than that of the underprivileged boys who occasionally steal a car. I am comparatively clever and have been well educated, therefore I am well paid for interesting and varied work, whereas they are comparatively stupid and have been appallingly mis-educated, and so they are poorly paid for dull routine work. That is why I ride in the car while they queue in the wet. This is a social fact, and makes nonsense of the moralists' attempts to confuse crime with "immorality".

Society gets the delinquency rate it deserves, yet this simple fact is not recognised by many people whose profession it is to study criminology. The do-gooders vaguely hope that they will somehow reduce the delinquency rate by preventive methods of a social nature, or even by "therapy" applied to those under lock and key—and all without altering the essential structure of our society. In 1962 the criminological division of the Council of Europe circulated countries asking them what programmes of crime prevention had been inaugurated in them. The resulting document reveals the utter poverty of imagination of the majority of those who have contributed to it. In general the response could be summed up in the honest reply "nothing", but all too often a good lead of humbug is resorted to as a cover for the fact that no-one has any clear and practicable idea of how delinquency *could* be prevented.

Regarding "therapy" applied to prisoners in order to reform their "criminal tendencies", most of it is a bad joke which reveals the stupidity of the psychologists who confuse criminality with mental illness. Now although certain men land up in prison because of psychiatric disorders, e.g. the exposeur, the compulsive incendiary, and the child rapist, the great majority of prisoners are not "sick" in any psychiatric sense. It is indeed a huge impertinence for any psychologist to think that he can give them "therapy". Against the do-gooders stand the hardened screws; the last thing they want to do is to do the prisoners *good*—they want to do them evil, to humiliate, crush and punish them. There is something terribly twisted in the character of any man who freely elects to spend his working life in prison when any other occupation, even the humblest, is open to him. Yet I have read of a self-publicist called Hauser, who claims to be showing prison screws how to become "therapists": I do not know if the Nazi movement produced any quacks who claimed to show SS men who to ameliorate the Jewishness of Jews, rather than give them the standard treatment.

#### *And in the free society?*

"What do you do in your free, anarchist society when villains rob you in the street?" The only answer to that one is to enquire of your interrogator what he does in his own happy family when his wife spits in his face by way of greeting, and his son kicks him in the groin when demanding pocket money. Such conduct would imply that the family was not a happy one, just as being robbed in the street by villains would demonstrate that no free society had been achieved. We aspire to a society where we can walk unmolested in the street not because villains are afraid to rob us on account of the penal law, but because no one wants to molest us.

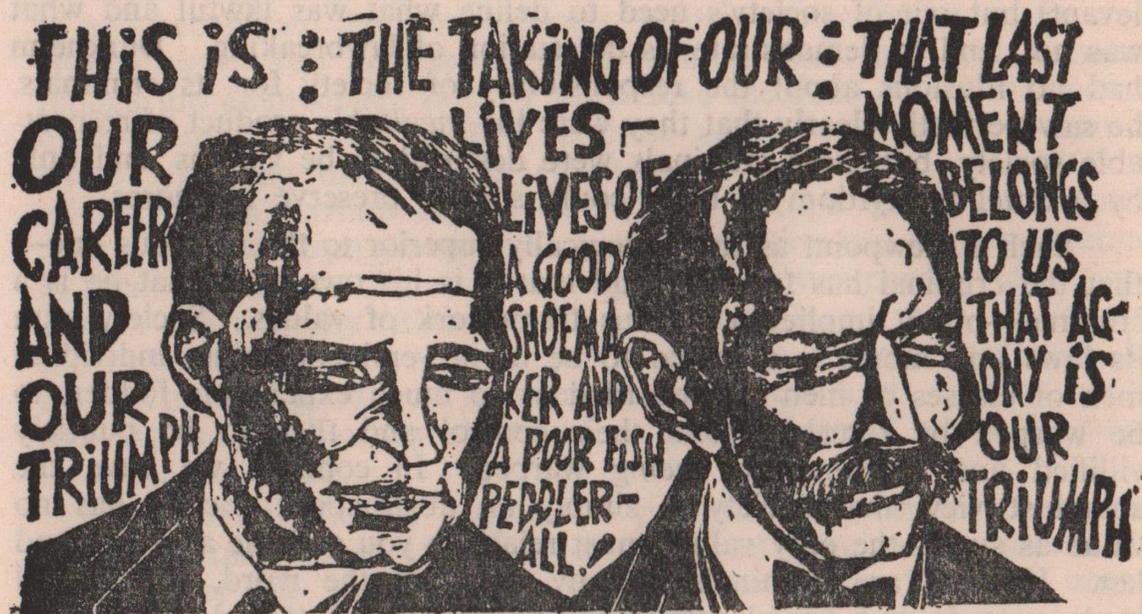
Against this view of a possible free society, is that put forward by Durkheim.<sup>5</sup> In a muddled way this view is held by many supporters of the *status quo*, but no one has stated it so plausibly and clearly as Durkheim. He saw the "criminals" as being of positive benefit to society. They were criminals because they broke the law and were detected; having been detected they were punished, and punished

severely not out of any attempt to reform them (which was largely irrelevant) but out of society's need to define what was lawful and what was not, and to demonstrate its detestation of lawbreaking. Durkheim had no illusions about the responsibility of society for its criminals, he saw perfectly clearly that they were the *inevitable* product of respectable society, but these criminals were destined to be victims, and only by a cruel martyrdom of them could society preserve its mores.

Such a viewpoint as this is logically superior to the religious one—that the criminal has free will and that it is his own *fault* that he is a criminal—but it implies a curious framework of values. Society with its laws and mores is assumed to be of pre-eminent value; individual men or classes of men are regarded as so much expendible fodder, to be warped by forces beyond their control and then to be publicly villified and punished for being warped. In contrast we have the anarchist view that society is simply an abstraction; society has no value as such—the only values must relate to you and me and him and her. If there are criminals, in any sense of the word, we are all inadequate in our social relations, and we had better do something about it.

I have tried to demonstrate that conscience, and hence ordinary social decency, stems naturally from an affectionate relationship between adults and children in their earliest years. A high rate of juvenile delinquency seems to be a very natural outcome of the way in which children are catered for, and the sort of social system into which they are expected to fit later on. And what do we do about this population of young lags? Again I would refer you to *Erewhon* where they kept the sufferers from tuberculosis and fevers in prisons and reviled them for their wickedness! Do we do much better? The answer does not lie in the direction of a sentimental do-gooders line of approach to the "poor criminals". On the contrary, a very tough line indeed is called for, and some very tough-minded thinking about the causes of crime. But to be tough with those who are convicted of crime is utterly irrelevant—as irrelevant as was the Erewhonian's harsh treatment of physical disease. As social medicine has attacked the causes of disease, so we must attack the causes of crime.

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1. See the report in FREEDOM, 12th May, 1962.
  2. Alex Comfort: *Delinquency* (Freedom Press, 1951).
  3. Alex Comfort: *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State* (Routledge, 1950).
  4. e.g., Gordon Trasher: *The Explanation of Criminality* (Routledge & Kegan Paul).
  5. Emile Durkheim: *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) (University of Chicago Press, 1938).



## Tragedy in Dedham

WARD JACKSON

IT IS THIRTY-SIX YEARS SINCE NICOLA SACCO AND BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI died in the electric chair in Charleston Jail, Massachusetts, USA, and another book on Sacco and Vanzetti\* provides what may seem to some to be an excuse to revive old memories. But the Sacco-Vanzetti case still has its lessons which the disenchanted liberals, tired radicals or scared progressives seem to have missed.

The two crimes at Bridgewater and Braintree in December 1919 and April 1920 were run-of-the-mill crimes no different from all the wave of crime which inevitably follows the great sea of crime—war. As a routine crime, the police should have followed the *modus operandi* of asking Who? How? What? Mr. Russell attaches very little importance to the answers given to the question Who? The Bridgewater hold-up, which was a failure, was attributed to Frank Silva and his gang. The Braintree job (in which two guards were shot and fifteen thousand dollars taken) was ascribed to the Morelli gang of which Celestino Madieros (executed with a fine irony of justice at the same time as Sacco and Vanzetti) was a member. Confessions were made to this effect and to no avail†. Russell in his piece-meal examination of the case attaches very little importance to these confessions. It is improbable that both robberies were carried out by the same gang. Each bears a different signature. The Bridgewater job was a failure by a small-time unsuccessful gang who had no passion for using fire-

\*TRAGEDY IN DEDHAM, by Francis Russell (Longmans, Green 42s.)

†See *The Untried Case*, by Herbert B. Ehrman (1933).

arms or for killing. The Braintree shooting was well-planned and carried out with a cold-blooded killer.

There seems to have been very little concentration by the police on four of their well-known ploys. Police are not supermen or magicians, as much detective fiction may lead us to imagine. They have their well-known stand-byes which, plus luck, cunning, or even, in some cases plain brutality, produce a percentage of the results needed. In the Sacco-Vanzetti case none of these techniques were used; they lost themselves in the razzle-dazzle of a witch-hunt, the wild confusions of ballistics experts, and the wilder confoundings of identification amateurs.

The first usual procedure is *modus operandi*, or who does this kind of a job—and then let *him* prove he didn't. The Silva and Madeiros gang were well known to the police, they had been associated with robberies at shoe companies for some time, but the police went for a fish peddler and a shoemaker with no knowledge of criminality, firearms, motorcars or the English language. The second approach of the police which was not used, was the use of accomplices. Throughout the cases no one was interested in the other man in the gangs committing the robberies. There were four men in the Bridgewater crime, and four in the Braintree crime. Sacco was acquitted (by an alibi) of the Bridgewater crime but no one seems to have been interested in identifying the other three men, even supposing, as is unlikely, that the gangs were the same. No pressure was put upon Sacco or Vanzetti to divulge who the others were. Boda and Coacci, in spite of all suspicion (they were friends of Sacco and Vanzetti, and Boda was a bootlegger) were never arrested. The police's usual techniques of informers, working off one man against another, bribes and threats, of turning "States," of promises to give lighter sentences were apparently never used, or if so, unsuccessfully. An informer was planted near Vanzetti but no confession was wheedled out of him.

The police and—what is even more strange—the insurance company seem to have been uninterested in what happened to the money. Neither Sacco nor Vanzetti seem to have spent it in riotous living. Indeed they stayed on in Massachusetts selling fish and making shoes as if they had not killed two men and stolen fifteen thousand dollars. The final standby of the police, the fingerprint, was never brought into evidence. Not a single fragment of fingerprint was found in the whole of these investigations, in itself an indication of the professional nature of the criminals.

A final professional word deposed by Fred Weyand, a Boston agent of the Department of Justice shows neither Sacco nor Vanzetti to be the criminals at least in the eyes of the Department of Justice:

From my investigation, combined with the investigation made by the other agents of the Department in Boston, I am convinced not only that these men had violated the Selective Service rules and regulations and evaded the draft, but that they were anarchists, and that they ought to have been deported. By calling these men anarchists I do not mean

necessarily that they were inclined to violence, nor do I understand all the different meanings that different people would attach to the word 'anarchist'. What I mean is that I think they did not believe in organized government or in private property. But I am also thoroughly convinced and always have been, and I believe that it is and always has been the opinion of such Boston agents of the Department of Justice as had any knowledge on the subject, that these men had nothing whatever to do with the South Braintree murders, and that their conviction was the result of co-operation between the Boston agents of the Department of Justice and the District Attorney. It was the general opinion of the Boston agents of the Department of Justice having knowledge of the affair that the South Braintree crime was committed by a gang of professional highwaymen.

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Francis Russell writes his book with the artful device of chopping his time-order so as to deprive us of the background of the case. He starts with his own call to jury service to Dedham in 1953 and his resolve to write about the case. He interviews some survivors, then like a Hollywood movie, he flashes back to the Braintree crime (the second in time); then to Bridgewater; then the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti (three weeks after Braintree); then the flash-back to the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, some account of the background events between 1919 and 1920; from then on Russell's narrative is the account of the trials and the numberless hearings which marked the path to the death-house. A chapter 'Aftermath' contains Russell's afterthoughts which, unexpectedly, seem to be that Sacco was guilty of the Braintree crime but Vanzetti was innocent. A thoroughly liberal conclusion, one might add: not conservative enough to execute both, and not radical enough to free both.

What does Russell say about the Bridgewater crime of which Vanzetti was found guilty and sentenced and Sacco was acquitted because of an alibi? Nothing significant, despite the fact that the Braintree charge would never have been brought without the Bridgewater proceedings. Mr. Russell's too-clever chronology obscures this fact from the reader and even, it seems, from Mr. Russell himself.

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The whole case seems Kafka-esque, another study in twentieth century obscurity unless one has the clues as to what was Sacco and Vanzetti's real crime, what were the false clues, what were the crimes that were committed upon Sacco and Vanzetti and how these crimes masqueraded as justice.

Sacco and Vanzetti's first crime was to be foreigners, emigrés, Latins, in the Anglo-Saxon stronghold of Boston. Like West Indians in England today their lot was the suspicion of criminality, the poor housing conditions, and the degrading work which is the lot of the 'foreigner' anywhere. The 'melting-pot' of America had not completely melted and 'foreigners' were always looked upon with suspicion. The war of 1914-18 (which America had entered in 1917), was fought with a ballyhoo and rashness of promise which, even by *liberals* now, it seen to be excessive. Its effect upon America was to make her more

xenophobic than usual. Big business had had its taste of power and profit. The Russian Revolution had scared the pants off the rulers of the world.

Seeng Reds under every bed (a phenomenon frequently observed by Americans), the fighting Quaker Attorney General, Mitchell Palmer pushed through in 1920 his raids which preceded what Louis F. Post called 'the Deportations Delirium of the Twenties'. "Lilies that fester smell worse than weeds" and Mitchell Palmer, like ex-Quakers Herbert Hoover and Richard Nixon, was particularly odoriferous. He had presidential ambitions, and Woodrow Wilson had been ill and incapacitated for some months so even his mild liberal influence was lacking. In January 1920, 800 aliens were rounded up in New England, half of whom were taken *in chains* through Boston to Deer Island for deportation. In a subsequent investigation of the 'illegal practices of the United States Department of Justice', US Circuit Judge Anderson said, "A mob is a mob, whether made up of Government officials acting under instructions from the Department of Justice, or of criminals and loafers and the vicious classes." The mob violence of the Palmer raids exercised a decisive influence on the actions of Sacco and Vanzetti.

As if the heady intoxication of war and an anti-Red crusade were enough, the United States had embarked upon the noble experiment of prohibition, and as Andrew Sinclair terms it, the era of excess had begun. The Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted in January 1919 and the Volstead Act screwed (as it thought) down the lid on the demon liquor's coffin in October 1919. This atmosphere made for mystery about Mr. Boda's profession and led to a certain amount of 'covering-up' on the part of Sacco and Vanzetti, not to mention its alleged effects upon the Boston police strike.

It must have seemed like the end of the world in September 1919, when the Boston police, dissatisfied with their pay sought affiliation to the American Federation of Labour. It was said that the Volstead Act had considerably reduced their incomes from bootleggers, but whatever the cause, the day the Cossacks became Bolsheviks seemed the end for the Boston Brahmins. The police went on strike for two days, and Calvin Coolidge, then Governor of Massachusetts made his blow for President by the oratorical profundity which characterised his career when he said, "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anyone, anywhere, any time." Of the City's 1,544 police, 1,117 left their posts on September the 8th, and what might be called 'anarchy' ensued. A citizen-volunteer police force was called out, and 5,000 soldiers of the State Guard were put on patrolling the streets. The result of this was increased disorder. Riots broke out and three men were killed and several were wounded. The cost to the city of this outbreak of 'Bolshevism' was estimated at \$34,000. The Commissioner of Police announced that the striking police would not be reinstated and that a whole new police force would be recruited. The majority of this new force was composed of ex-service men who patrolled for

their first few weeks of duty in old army coats and breeches.

On May 1st, 1919, there was a parade in Boston sponsored by the Lettish Workmen's Association in which 1,500 persons participated. As the parade had no permit it was ordered to stop. The parade, as parades will, said, "To hell with the permit" and marched on. A riot ensued, centering round possession of the flags. Three policemen and one civilian were wounded whilst another policeman was killed. News of the riot spread and anti-socialist mobs demolished the Boston socialist headquarters. Others formed vigilante posses to round up Socialists. As a result of these events 116 paraders were arrested, charged with rioting and resisting the police. Fourteen were found guilty and sentenced to terms ranging from six to eighteen months.

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The other crime of Sacco and Vanzetti was literally a crime, the only crime they seem to have committed, and perhaps, when all is sifted down, the crime for which they were executed, that of being anarchists. Congress in 1903 passed an Act with the provision

... That no person who disbelieves in or who is opposed to all organised government, or who is a member of or affiliated with any organization entertaining and teaching such disbelief or in opposition to all organised government, or who advocates or teaches the duty, necessity or propriety of the unlawful assault or killing of any officer or officers, either of specific individuals or officers generally, of the government of the United States, or of any other organized government, because of his or their official character, shall be permitted to enter the United States . . . also provided that polygamists, anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocated the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States or of all government or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials, shall be excluded from the United States.

This was the aftermath of the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 by Leon Czolgosz, a self-declared anarchist, but the first to be caught in its net and deported, was John Turner, a union organizer and one-time writer for FREEDOM. The net of this act was wide enough to cover Bertrand Russell, Maxim Gorki, the late John Strachey, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, but such an erstwhile revolutionary as Ricardo Flores Magon slipped through its meshes. It doubtless would have deported Sacco and Vanzetti but an especial fate was reserved for them.

The United States has always run a particularly vindictive campaign against anarchists. The Chicago anarchists' fate springs to mind, and Pinkerton wrote in the *North American Review* in 1909 on 'Detective Surveillance of Anarchists':

there are certain conditions that cannot be dealt with from the ordinary point of view, and anarchy is one of them. These people should all be marked and kept under constant surveillance and on the slightest excuse be made harmless.

Violations of the civil liberties of anarchists were common. *The Story of Civil Liberties in the United States* lists five major incidents between 1906 and 1913 involving anarchists.

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These great events, emigration, war, political persecution, police violence and repression were the backcloth against which the tragedy of prejudice was played out. Sacco and Vanzetti knew of the fate of deportees, they or their friends had seen those who were labelled 'anarchist' marched in chains through Boston, separated from their families and their homes on the slightest pretext. They knew of the mysterious death of Vanzetti's friend Andrea Salsedo, a typesetter who was denounced by a spy and arrested for subsequent deportation. He was transferred for some mysterious reason to the Department of Justice who kept him and his friend Robert Elia *incommunicado* for two months. One day Salsedo's body was found on the pavement, fourteen floors beneath the window of his room. Russell writes, "It was believed by anarchists at the time, and afterwards by many liberals, that Salsedo had been tortured by Bureau agents and then thrown from the window. Actually, Salsedo was a suicide." Whatever clear evidence Francis Russell has on this point now, it was not available to Vanzetti or Sacco in 1920.

Sacco and Vanzetti knew that their departure for Mexico in 1917 was frowned upon by the respectable citizens of Boston. They did not know possibly or did not care, but then neither did Mr. Katzmann, that, being aliens, they were not liable to the draft which they were accused of dodging. Russell in his books gives two clues to prejudice which he apparently overlooks. He says that Thayer's "greatest regret . . . was that he had not been young enough to join the army in 1917" and of Katzmann: "Katzmann was sensitive about his name. His mother's maiden name—his own middle one—was Gunn, and he tried to emphasise its Anglican propriety in his signature." A judge who had military ambitions exhorts a jury to behave like soldiers and a hyphenated American preaches on "love of country." Not that Thayer may not have been brave, and Katzmann was undoubtedly loyal but they seemed to cherish too much the virtues of which they had been denied full expression.

Throughout the case the witnesses seemed to be dividing themselves into the Latin *versus* the Anglo-Saxons. The barriers were not only of race, but of language. The Italians were all for the defence, and the usual viewpoint was that "all these foreigners stick together." This tendency to lump all Latins together made identification difficult even if goodwill was present; where prejudice was in play identification was impossible; in the words of a popular song quoted by Felix Frankfurter "All coons look alike to me."

The only genuine evidence and albeit false clues of Sacco and Vanzetti's involvement in a crime were what Judge Thayer called "consciousness of guilt" and what was known by all policemen, the jury and general public as "the propaganda of the deed". Sacco and Vanzetti were conscious of their guilt in 'draft-dodging', their guilt of being anarchists and their liability to deportation, they were conscious of their guilt in trying to help other comrades in danger of

being deported. They were conscious of the implacable enmity between what they believed and what was believed by the forces of 'justice' and law and order ranged against them. The propaganda of the deed was the idea that associated firmly in the public mind the concept that men who held to an idea that was also held by people who believed in acts of individual terrorism, were capable of violent acts no matter how tenuous their connection with such a deed was. A man who read Malatesta was obviously capable of two payroll robberies and two murders. In the words of Thayer, "the defendants' ideals are cognate with the crime."

The crimes that were committed against Sacco and Vanzetti were the crimes that are committed in the name of 'law and order' every day in every land; the crime of prejudice, the crime of justice, the crime of evidence (expert and otherwise), the crime of identification. The victims of these crimes have little redress and no avengers. Their assailants are above the law for they *are* the law; the brutalized policeman, the self-righteous judge, the super-patriotic jurymen, the frightened official, the inefficient expert, the corrupted witness, the deceitful counsel, the stupid and vainglorious witness, the honestly mistaken and deliberately muddled witness, the politically ambitious public men and the office-seeking attorneys, were all accomplices, willing or unwilling, in the crime of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti *versus* the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. . . .

As the bodies of Sacco and Vanzetti were lying to public view at the undertaker's, Mary Donovan, one of the Defence Committee workers stood at the head of the coffins with a sign: "*Did You See What I Did to Those Anarchistic Bastards?*—Judge Webster Thayer". The police, as is their wont tore up the poster. In the report of the incident in the *Daily Herald*, the wording of the poster was altered to "*Did You See What I Did to Those Anarchists?*". The original remark was too strong for the *Daily Herald* to print, but it has never been denied that the remark was made by the Judge (outside the Court of course). It was never denied either, that the foreman of the jury (who was involved in some amazing jiggery-pokery with bullets in evidence), said "Damn them they ought to hang anyhow". The foreman, Walter Ripley, described as "slightly deaf and slightly senile" was elected, guesses Russell, because he was the oldest.

In Vanzetti's trial for the Bridgewater crime, his defence counsel was John Vahey, who by the time the Braintree case came up, was law-partner to Katzmman who had, by then, become District Attorney. John Vahey's brother James, was the legal representative of James Mede, who knew of Silva's responsibility for the Bridgewater crime. It was said by Mede that James Vahey didn't wish Mede to intervene in the Sacco-Vanzetti case because it would make things very difficult for Vahey's brother's partner (Katzmann). The interpreter, Joseph Ross, in the Bridgewater case was personal chauffeur to Judge Thayer and was incompetent as an interpreter. In 1926 he was sentenced for attempting to bribe a judge.

Witnesses who gave evidence that they failed to identify Sacco and/or Vanzetti were victimized. Lewis Wade was called by the police on leaving court 'a piker' and told "We're not through with you yet." They weren't; he was dismissed a few weeks later from his job at Slater and Morrill, where the robbery took place. The same thing happened to Brenner and McCullum who were among the few Anglo-Saxons testifying for the defence. The Italians and Spaniards were more simply dealt with. They were not believed.

The Red menace had reached such proportions that witnesses and police were incapable of thinking straight. A police chief swore that a newspaper headline had been printed in red (it was black). The original interpretation of the Braintree crime was that it was committed by Russians. \* \* \*

The whole glorious maze of evidence became detached from reality. Experts swore contradictory facts. Items of evidence were not capable of interpretations made, were unimportant, were irrelevant, or if true, important or relevant, made no difference to the final verdict. Judge Webster Thayer sitting in judgment on Judge Webster Thayer's judgments found them basically impossible. The gun used to shoot the guard was the guard's own gun, yet the robbery was highly organized. A cap found on the scene didn't fit Sacco but it was his since it had a nail hole in it caused presumably by a nail at Sacco's workplace, but in reality the hole was made by a policeman looking for evidence. The bandits spoke good English, but court proceedings needed an interpreter. The cartridges found on the scene were 'consistent with' having been fired from Vanzetti's gun, this is *proof* that they were fired from that gun. Vanzetti had always a drooping moustache, the bandit at Bridgewater identified as Vanzetti had a toothbrush moustache, obviously it was Vanzetti . . . "Damn them, they ought to hang anyway."

One of the most consistent crimes in law courts is the **unfailing identification**. Dr. Morton Prince, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard described one of the Sacco-Vanzetti witnesses' testimony thus:

I do not hesitate to say that the star witness for the government testified, honestly enough, no doubt, to what was psychologically impossible. Miss Splaine testified, though she had only seen Sacco at the time of the shooting from a distance of about 60 feet for 1½ to 3 seconds in a motor car going at an increasing rate of speed at about 15 to 18 miles an hour, that she saw and at the end of a year, she remembered and described 16 different details of his person, even to the size of his hand, the length of his hair as being between 2 and 2½ inches long and the shade of his eyebrows! Such perception and memory under such conditions can easily be proved to be psychologically impossible.

To be fair to Miss Splaine, and damning to Mr. Katzmman, it is probable that all these details were elicited in cross-examination. What is certain is that the identification of Sacco and Vanzetti was carried out under conditions which even English law would not regard as fool-proof. Sacco and Vanzetti were alone in prison cages and 'witnesses' were conducted into the prison room and asked to identify them. Photographs had previously appeared in the press together with a

statement of their suspected connection with the Braintree crime and hints of the Bridgewater crime. Even with this highly suspect method of identification, the human mind is apt to err, as witness the cases of Adolf Beck and Oscar Slater in this country.

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One could write for hours on this case; one sympathises with Russell's friend the corporation lawyer who said the preliminary reading on the case would take two years. This lawyer believed Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty and thought that no publisher would accept a book with such a thesis. His manuscript was in a two foot pile! Felicani, the printer friend of Sacco and Vanzetti said to Russell, "If your lawyer's wrong at the start, it doesn't matter how many files he has."

An explanation of why this crime was committed against Sacco and Vanzetti is the conventional left-wing one that they were framed. It is not possible to subscribe to this theory. Sacco and Vanzetti were listed for deportation. Had the Bridgewater and Braintree crimes never happened they would have been deported anyhow, but the fact that they were hesitant and confused about their movements made it possible to involve them in the Bridgewater charge. The Boston police saw an opportunity of putting another case off their books and incidentally wiping off the terrible pro-radical stain of the Boston police strike. A self-righteous judge, and over-zealous prosecutor, a senile jury foreman, mistaken and muddled witnesses were sufficient to send Sacco and Vanzetti to the chair. They were not martyrs, they fought by every legal trick for six years to keep alive. Even their minds and bodies fought against the circumstances which had involved them. They both went insane on three of four occasions, they fasted and went defiantly to their deaths.

Among the factors that seemed to have contributed to the inevitability of the final verdict was the unfortunate method of their defence counsel, Fred Moore, who was too inclined to do a 'Perry Mason' and go to work on witnesses in the same way that the prosecution did. Many of his tricks were such as would justify the prosecution (in the eyes of judge and jury), in using similar tricks. It may be that Fred Moore, as many lawyers do, looked on the law as a game, and enjoyed playing even though the stakes were men's lives. their own funds is admitted *now* by James P. Cannon. (He was expelled from the Party and became a Trotskyite). The more important factor is that the case was politically exploited by the Communists. Sacco and Vanzetti knew that the Communists were their political enemies and that anarchists were being imprisoned in Russia at the same time that they were imprisoned in Boston. The struggle for control in the Defence Committee went on, and Sacco and Vanzetti were approached to switch their defence to another Committee which would get Clarence Darrow to fight the case. Both Sacco and Vanzetti rejected this. Sacco quarrelled with Fred Moore and refused to have anything to do with him while he was on the case. The insistence on 'frame-ups' and

'martyrdom' is the hall-mark of Communist agitation, a technique taken over into the Mooney, Scottsborough, Reichstag fire-trials and Rosenberg case. Regardless of the guilt or innocence of the accused, they made their propaganda, regardless of the fact that the Party was supporting trials which were equally 'frame-ups' and injustice. It is interesting in retrospect to find that James P. Cannon and Fred Moore both believed that Sacco was guilty.

The crimes of Communism are many, but their crime against Sacco and Vanzetti, and indeed against all politically conscious idealists of the twenties and thirties, was the cynical and systematic destruction by exploitation of their faith and beliefs. Any stick is found good enough to beat the capitalist dog and the Sacco and Vanzetti case was used as just an incident in the class war which is a ludicrous simplification of the issues in the case which, upon analysis, throw light upon the whole apparatus of law and justice which the Communist State, like any other state, has manipulated to its own purpose.

The final crime committed against Sacco and Vanzetti is evidenced in this book. It is the crime of the scared progressive, of the liberal who has lost his nerve. The second-generation American is a curious phenomenon, no one is more American in his insistence. Vance Packard writes of a newly-rich Italian-American who had the family graves moved to a better-class cemetery. For some tired radicals Sacco and Vanzetti have gone down the memory hole. The absolute rejection of all radical ideals is the common attitude, a withdrawal into private life is very usual, the rebound into utter reaction is frequent. A more complex attitude was pointed out by Dachine Rainer who said that ex-Communists very often maintained an anti-Anarchist and anti-Trotskyist attitude when their conscious minds had forgotten the Leninist-Trotskyist-Stalinist attitudes to which their subconsciouses had been conditioned.

Francis Russell's final 'evidence' of the guilt of Sacco turns out to be the statement of Cannon that he believed Sacco to be guilty. Of Eugene Lyons that he believed this too and he was diverted by anarchists from following some vague line of enquiry. Fred Moore believed Sacco to be involved in the payroll robbery since anarchists believed in "direct action". Upton Sinclair heard this from Fred Moore and Russell adds that Carlo Tresca believed it (this from an interview with Max Eastman). He is reported to have said "Sacco was guilty but Vanzetti was not."

Two things stick out about Sacco. Firstly that he was acquitted of the Bridgewater crime because of an alibi. His alibi for the Braintree crime was almost as watertight, but unfortunately all his witnesses were Italian. On grounds of opportunity, Vanzetti, a free-lance fish-peddler was more likely to be guilty than a shoe-maker-night-watchman with a family, who was planning to return to Italy.

The second thing about Sacco is that he was more emotional, more violently anti-authoritarian, hence anti-Communist, and more likely to make enemies of whom Fred Moore was one. Cannon, Lyons and

Eastman all worshipped at the shrine of the god that failed and have been busy for years proving what fools they were to believe in Stalinism, and/or Communism. But what it can't kill it cripples, and the ghost of anti-anarchism returns to haunt their 1963-type American dreams.

Russell describes Carlo Tresca as "the acknowledged and admired leader of the anarchists in the United States, to whom they turned as a matter of course when they were in trouble". In one sentence Russell packs all his accumulated ignorance of anarchism. Not much more need be said, except that Tresca was an anarcho-syndicalist with distinctly more emphasis on 'syndicalist' whilst Sacco and Vanzetti belonged to the Galleani group which had very little contact with Tresca.

Upton Sinclair's judgment in this matter is *quite* unreliable. His record shows him to be the most consistently and sincerely mistaken man of his type on all possible subjects.

Finally we come to an intellectual crime which was at the root of all this complex tree of tragedy which shaded the years 1919-27.

It will be remembered that the mysterious comings and goings of Sacco and Vanzetti were motivated by the numerous deportations taking place, and particularly by the death under mysterious circumstances of Andrea Salsedo. Louis F. Post was the Assistant Secretary of Labour at the time. As such, he was the author of the administrative decisions to deport which made so much havoc with so many lives. Writing in 1923 in *The Deportations Delirium*, Post says, whilst writing of Emma Goldman's deportation:

But I did not have to decide officially what kind of anarchist Emma Goldman was, for all differences between the widely divergent varieties of anarchism, from terroristic to pacific, had been ignored by Acts of Congress by which I was bound. The sole question before me was whether or not she believed that no government would be better for human society than any kind of government. If she did, she was an anarchist. And if she were an anarchist, her deportation (she being an alien) was mandatorily required by the law. As the record of her hearing showed her to be an anarchist, even though she did not disclose her kind of anarchism definitely, I made an administrative decision on behalf of the Secretary of Labour, whose official *alter ego* I happened at the moment to be, which ordered the Commissioner General of Immigration to deport her.

No question of sympathy on the one hand nor of antipathy on the other was involved. Whether or not I liked the law did not enter in. I was not a maker of laws but an administrator of a law already constitutionally made. To administer it fairly and effectively, though humanely was my only function. And this law was mandatory. I had no choice but to measure by it the facts presented in the record of hearing. In any case in which the recorded facts brought the alien within the manifest intent of the law, my refusal to execute its requirements would have been in violation of my oath of office, treacherous to the Government which I administratively represented, and essentially repugnant to the developing democratic principles of our Republic. Similarly perjured, equally treacherous and quite as undemocratic should I have been had I in any case decided to order deportation without evidence reasonably convincing that the alien was lawfully deportable."

Louis F. Post regarded himself as a radical, but his statement sounds like the defence at Nuremberg or the pleas of an Eichmann.

Sacco and Vanzetti were not martyrs, they were the victims of the machine of which Post, Thayer and Katzmann were equally victims, but they were not in love with the machine which devoured them.

## Anarchism and social control

JOHN ELLERBY

EVERY ANARCHIST PROPAGANDIST WOULD AGREE that the aspect of anarchist ideas which his audiences find it hardest to swallow is the anarchist rejection of the law, the legal system and the agencies of law-enforcement. They may ruefully agree with our criticism of the methods of the police, the fallibility of the courts, lawyers and judges, the barbarity of the penal system and the fatuity of the legislature. But they go away unable to conceive a society in which the protection offered by the law is absent, and unconceived that there are alternatives more desirable than "the rule of law", which, with all its admitted failings and imperfections and abuses, is regarded as a precious achievement of civilised society and the best guarantee of the liberty of the individual citizen.

Maybe we are not worried by the mingled incredulity and bewilderment which meets our bland declaration that society should do away with the police and the law; perhaps we are perfectly satisfied to contemplate our own feeling that we can do without them, or perhaps we just enjoy a feeling of revolutionary rectitude and superiority by deriding them. But it is our fellow-citizens that we have to convince if we are really concerned with gaining acceptance for the anarchist point of view.

The characteristic anarchist answer to the question of how an anarchist society would cope with criminal acts runs something like this: (a) most crimes are of theft in one form or another, and in a society in which real property and productive property was communally held and personal property shared out on a more equitable basis, the incentive for theft would disappear; (b) crimes of violence not originating in theft, would dwindle away, since a permissive and non-competitive society would not produce psychopathic personality types; (c) motoring offences would not present the problem that they do now, because people would be more socially conscious and responsible, would tend to use public transport when the private car had lost its status, and in a more leisured society would lose the pathological love of speed and aggressiveness which you see on the roads today; (d) in a decentralised society, vast urban agglomerations would cease to exist and people would be more considerate and concerned for their neighbours.

But the difficulty with this kind of argument is that it brings the obvious response that it calls for a new kind of human being, a social

paragon of a kind which we do not often meet. No, replies the anarchist, it calls for a different kind of human environment, the kind that we are seeking to build. But the trouble is, as an American criminologist Paul Tappan put it, that as a society we prefer the social problems which surround us "to the consequences of deliberate and heroic efforts so drastically to change the culture that man could live in uncomplicated adjustment to an uncomplicated world."

Are there no other ways in which we can present constructive anarchist approach to the question of crime, not as a utopian panacea which is meaningless to our audiences, conscious though they may be of the validity of our criticism of present institutions? Since anarchism is, by definition, a social theory which repudiates the idea of authority, we can scarcely modify our attitude to the concepts of law, crime, and law-enforcement. You have only to define these concepts to see that they are incompatible with the idea of anarchy:

**Law:** The expressed will of the state. A command or a prohibition emanating from the authorized agencies of the state, and backed up by the authority and the capacity to exercise force which is characteristic of the state . . .

**Crime:** A violation of the criminal law, i.e., a breach of the conduct code specifically sanctioned by the state, which through its legislative agencies defines crimes and their penalties, and through its administrative agencies prosecutes offenders and imposes and administers punishments.

**Police:** Agents of the law charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order among the citizens.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible of course, to re-define the concept of law in a non-legalist sense; in the sense that is, of common law, law which is merely the embodiment of pre-existing social custom, or in a looser sociological sense, as the whole body of rules of all sorts that exist in a society; and it is possible to re-define the concept of crimes simply as anti-social acts—whether or not they are illegal acts. The 19th century criminologist Garofalo enlarged the definition of crime to "any action which goes against the prevalent norms of probity and compassion", and his modern successor E. H. Sutherland in his study of white-collar crime insisted that "legal classification should not confine the work of the criminologist and he should be completely free to push across the barriers of definition when he sees non-criminal behaviour which resembles criminal behaviour." (Thus by his standard the anarchists are correct in castigating politicians as criminals).

On the other hand it is scarcely possible for us to re-define the police, the agents of law-enforcement, in a way which is shorn of authoritarian connotations. Obviously in our society the police fulfil certain *social* functions, but everyone will agree that their primary purpose is to fulfil *governmental* functions. John Coatman's volume *The Police* in the Home University Library, for instance, declares that our police system is "the pith and marrow of the English conduct of government" and that the policemen themselves are the "guardians of the established system of government."

No, there is no non-authoritarian equivalent for the policeman, except for the concept which we would now call "social control", as the means by which individuals and communities may protect themselves from anti-social acts. This concept first appeared in anarchist thought in Godwin's *Political Justice*, where, adopting the decentralist approach to the question he declared: "If communities . . . were contented with a small district, with a proviso of confederation in cases of necessity, every individual would then live in the public eye; and the disapprobation of his neighbours, a species of coercion, not derived from the caprice of men, but from the system of the universe, would inevitably oblige him either to reform or to emigrate."<sup>2</sup> Many people, I fear, especially those who have experience of living under the censorious eyes of neighbours in a village would find this a rather unattractive way of inhibiting anti-social behaviour, and because it also inhibits many varieties of non-conforming behaviour as well, prefer the anonymous city life.

This insistence on a more closely-knit community as the means by which society can "contain" anti-social acts recurs time and again in the writings of Kropotkin, who of all the classical anarchist thinkers, devoted most consideration to the question of crime, the law and the penal system:

Of course in every society, no matter how well organized, people will be found with easily aroused passions, who may, from time to time, commit anti-social deeds. But what is necessary to prevent this is to give their passions a healthy direction, another outlet.

Today we live too isolated. Private property has led us to an egoistic individualism in all our mutual relations. We know one another only slightly; our points of contact are too rare. But we have seen in history examples of a communal life which is more intimately bound together—the 'composite family' in China, the agrarian communes, for example. These people really know one another. By force of circumstances they must aid one another materially and morally.

Family life, based on the original community, has disappeared. A new family, based on community of aspirations, will take its place. In this family people will be obliged to know one another, to aid one another and to lean on one another for moral support on every occasion. And this mutual prop will prevent the great number of anti-social acts which we see today.<sup>3</sup>

The concept was first given the name *social control* by Edward Allsworth Ross, in a book of that name published in 1901, in which he cited instances of "frontier" societies, where through unorganised or informal measures, order is effectively maintained without benefit of constituted authority: "Sympathy, sociability, the sense of justice and resentment are competent, under favourable circumstances." wrote Ross, "to work out by themselves a true, natural order, that is to say, an order without design or art." Today the term social control is extended to refer to

the aggregate of values and norms by means of which tensions and conflicts between individuals and groups are resolved or mitigated in order to maintain the solidarity of some more inclusive group, and also to the arrangements through which these values and norms are communicated and instilled . . .

Social control as the regulation of behaviour by values and norms is to be contrasted with regulation by force. These two modes are not of course, entirely separable in actual social life . . . But the distinction is valuable and important.<sup>4</sup>

George C. Homans in *The Human Group* puts the distinction thus: "The process by which conformity is achieved we call *social control* if we are thinking of compliance with norms, or *authority* if we are thinking of obedience to orders." It is the size and scale of the community which, in the opinion of the sociologists diminishes the effectiveness of social control: "It is only as groups grow large, and come to be composed of individuals with conflicting moral standards, that informal controls yield priority to those that are formal, such as laws and codes."<sup>5</sup>

One of the few modern observers to think about the way social control operates in the contemporary urban environment is Jane Jacobs,<sup>6</sup> who writing primarily about good and bad theories of town-planning discusses the functions of streets and their pavements or sidewalks in these terms:

To keep the city safe is a fundamental task of a city's streets and its sidewalks . . . Great cities . . . differ from towns and suburbs in basic ways, and one of these is that cities are, by definition, full of strangers . . .

The bedrock attitude of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all these strangers. He must not feel automatically menaced by them . . .

The first thing to understand is that the public peace—the sidewalk and street peace—of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as the police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves. In some city areas—older public housing projects and streets with a very high population turnover are often conspicuous examples—the keeping of public sidewalk law and order is left almost entirely to the police and special guards. Such places are jungles. No amount of police can enforce civilisation where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down.

Her point is that the populous street has an unconscious "do-it-yourself surveillance" system of eyes in the street, the eyes of the residents and users of shops, cafés, news-stands and so on:

Safety on the streets by surveillance and mutual policing of one another sounds grim, but in real life it is not grim. The safety of the streets works best, most casually, and with least frequent taint of suspicion or hostility precisely where people are using and most enjoying the city streets voluntarily and are least conscious, normally, that they are policing . . .

In settlements that are smaller and simpler than big cities, controls on acceptable public behaviour, if not on crime, seem to operate with greater or lesser success through a web of reputation, gossip, approval, disapproval and sanctions, all of which are powerful if people know each other and word travels. But a city's streets, which must control not only the behaviour of the people of the city but also of visitors from suburbs and towns who want to have a big time away from the gossip and sanctions at home, have to operate by more direct, straightforward methods. It is a wonder cities have solved such an inherently difficult problem at all. And yet in many streets they do it magnificently.

The English reader of Mrs. Jacobs' book may well be horrified by her assumption of the insecurity of the American citizen in public places from "rape, muggings, beatings, hold-ups and the like". Today, she declares "barbarism has taken over many city streets, or people fear it has, which comes to much the same thing in the end." In spite of her advocacy of social control, nothing is going to destroy her faith in the necessity of the police. Several recent correspondents in *FREEDOM* make the same point:

The questions I have to ask are about the hypocrisy of some anarchists about what is usually called public order. In a small community people can mobilise themselves extremely quickly to deal with emergency: they have no need of anyone outside, or anyone specially selected to take this responsibility from them. But the sheer size and complexity of the modern city prevents this. No-one who has lived in a city where the public order has completely broken down—I am thinking of several German cities in the twenties, Russian ones a little earlier than that, and Berlin in 1945—ever says they want to go on living that way. (Michael Shayer, 20/7/63).

If anarchism is the advocacy of the abolition of the state it is the road to freedom, but if it is the suggestion that society should make no attempt to defend itself against anti-social elements it is the road to slavery and misery. (Chris Rose, 16/8/63).

The most straightforward and unequivocal attempt to grasp this particular nettle from the anarchist point of view that I have found, comes from articles written by Errico Malatesta in *Umanita Nova* in the early nineteen-twenties, which I am quoting from the forthcoming volume of English translations of his writings:

This necessary defence against those who violate, not the *status quo*, but the deepest feelings which distinguish man from the beasts, is one of the pretexts by which governments justify their existence. We must eliminate all the social causes of crime, we must develop in man brotherly feelings, and mutual respect; we must, as Fourier put it, seek useful alternatives to crime. But if, and so long as, there are criminals, either people will find the means, and have the energy, to defend themselves directly against them, or the police and the magistrature will reappear, and with them, government.

We do not solve a problem by denying its existence. . . .

We can, with justification, fear that this necessary defence against crime could be the beginning of and the pretext for, a new system of oppression and privilege. It is the mission of the anarchists to see that this does not happen. By seeking the causes of each crime and making every effort to eliminate them; by making it impossible for anyone to derive personal advantage out of the detection of crime, and by leaving it to the interested groups themselves to take whatever steps they deem necessary for their defence; by accustoming ourselves to consider criminals as brothers who have strayed, as sick people needing loving treatment, as one would for any victim of hydrophobia or dangerous lunatic—it will be possible to reconcile the complete freedom of all with defence against those who obviously and dangerously threaten it. . . .

For us the carrying out of social duties must be a voluntary act, and we only have the right to intervene with material force against those who offend against others *violently* and prevent them from living in peace. Force, physical restraint, must only be used against attacks of violence and for no other reason than that of self-defence. But who will judge? Who will provide the necessary defence? Who will establish what measures of restraint are to be used? We do not see any other way than that of leaving it to the interested parties, to the people, that is the mass of citizens, who will act

differently according to the circumstances and according to their different degrees of social development. We must, above all, avoid the creation of bodies specialising in police work; perhaps something will be lost in repressive efficiency but we will avoid the creation of the instrument of every tyranny. In every respect the injustice, and transitory violence of the people is better than the leaden rule, the legalised state violence of the judiciary and police. We are, in any case, only one of the forces acting in society, and history will advance as always, in the direction of the resultant of all the forces.

Three things stand out from Malatesta's observations. Firstly he recognised that any and every do-it-yourself justice system would have a tendency to harden into an institution. The difficulty is that this might very well be for very good reasons: the attempt to give the accused a "fair" trial (for I take it that the restraint of offenders would include some procedure to find out whether the accused committed the offence). If the offender is to be more fairly treated than under existing systems of jurisprudence, certain safeguards which exist in the present system must survive in any *ad hoc* arrangement. There must be recognition of the principle of *habeus corpus*, the accused must be told what he is accused of, he must be given facilities to defend himself, there must be generally accepted rules of evidence, and so on. The history of revolutionary regimes is littered with committees of public safety, people's courts and similar "revolutionary" bodies, which have turned out to be just as dubious a proposition from the point of view of the accused, as the bourgeois institutions they replaced. The more fortunate of the East European Communist regimes today are in the middle of a slow reintroduction of "western" juridical principles and safeguards—to everybody's relief. The problem in Malatesta's terms is how to build these principles of "natural justice" into popular bodies which nevertheless retain an impermanent non-institutional character.

The second thing that stands out in the passages from Malatesta is his faith in "the people"; another point which our adversaries would gleefully take up, drawing attention to the fact that he is presupposing a different kind of people. It has already been mentioned in the Prison issue of ANARCHY that our "people" as as vindictive as our judges. Three-quarters of the population of this country if we accept opinion poll figures, are said to favour the retention of capital punishment, and 83% favour the reintroduction of flogging and birching. We are here, I think, at the crux of the difficulty which anarchists have in getting their ideas on the subject taken seriously. There seems to be an immense anxiety and fear floating around in society which is out of proportion to actual dangers. People are afraid of defencelessness. (In another field this explains why people cannot accept the idea of disarmament—they believe, poor things, that they are actually being defended). Observation of people's intense preoccupation and fascination with crime certainly seems to bear out the view that society not only makes its criminals, but that it *needs* them, and consequently seduces its deviant individuals into the "acting-out" of criminal roles. "Society" wrote Paul Reiwald, "opposed the innovators with determined

resistance . . . Society did not wish to abandon the principle of an eye for an eye; it did not wish to be deprived of its long observed relations to the criminal and it did not wish to have the 'contrary ones' taken from it."<sup>7</sup> Ruth Eissler expresses it even more dramatically: "Society by using its criminals as scapegoats and by trying to destroy them, because it is unable to bear the reflection of its own guilt, actually stabs at its own heart."<sup>8</sup>

Obviously some people are conspicuously lacking in this pent-up anxiety and guilt: the kind of people whose work with delinquents or deviant personalities is often described in ANARCHY, people who are sufficiently at ease with themselves to cope with the mental strain, the irritation and time-consuming tedium which our deviants frequently impose on us. As anarchists, as people who want to change society, we need to find out how more people can become like them.

This is important for the whole idea of the social control of anti-social behaviour. What is anti-social? If this question is decided by a bunch of censorious busybodies, people might be forgiven for saying "No thanks. I'd rather have The Law." There must be room for deviance in society. This, I suppose, is at the base of Durkheim's celebrated observation that crime is itself a social norm, "a factor in public health, an integral part of all healthy societies" since a crimeless society would be an ossified society with an unimaginable degree of social conformity, and that "crime implies not only that the way remains open to necessary changes but that in certain cases its precipitates these changes." As anarchists—criminals ourselves in some people's view—we should be the first to appreciate this.

And this brings us to Malatesta's final point, his observation that "we are, in any case, only one of the forces acting in society." It is not a matter of a hypothetical anarchist society, but of any society now or in the future where different social philosophies and attitudes co-exist and conflict. There will always be anti-social acts, and there will always be people with an urge to punish, to maintain a whole punitive machinery with everything that it entails. If we do not discover and make use of methods of *containing* such acts within society or of evolving a form of society capable of containing them, we shall certainly continue to be the victims of those authoritarian solutions which others are so ready and eager to apply.

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#### Notes :

1. H. P. Fairchild: *Dictionary of Sociology* (1959).
2. William Godwin: *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1792).
3. Peter Kropotkin: *Prisons and their Moral Influence on Prisoners* (1877). See also his *Organised Vengeance Called Justice* (Freedom Press, 2d.)
4. T. B. Bottomore: *Sociology* (1962).
5. Ogburn & Nimkoff: *A Handbook of Sociology* (1953).
6. Jane Jacobs: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961).
7. Paul Reinwald: *Society and its Criminals* (1949). See the passages from this work in ANARCHY 9.
8. Ruth S. Eissler (ed.) *Searchlights on Delinquency* (1949).

## His own man

### JIM BURNS

ONE OF THOSE WHO HAS HAD HIS NAME LINKED with the "beats", without exactly welcoming it, is the American poet Gary Snyder. Published in many of the magazines which this movement has made their own, he is a friend of most of its leading members and was—under the name, Japhy Ryder—the hero of Jack Kerouac's novel "The Dharma Bums". Yet he remains his own man, content to lead his life as he wants to and, during the height of the interest in the group, spending his time quietly in a Zen Buddhist monastery in Japan. A closer look at him, however, reveals a fascinating personality, and a splendid poet.

Snyder was born in San Francisco in 1930 but, due to the depression, his family moved north to the Seattle area. Here they obtained a couple of acres of land and he grew up, as he says, "a farm boy"; his mother, though, was interested in literature and started him reading at an early age. Growing up, as he did, with the woods and mountains within easy reach, he became fascinated by nature and by the folk-lore of the American Indians. His readings further enhanced these interests and when he got the chance to go to Reed College on a scholarship, he took it and studied anthropology and literature getting "much involved with primitive religions, mythology, and primitive literature".

In the vacations from college he worked at various jobs—logger, seaman, and labourer—and continued his readings in Chinese poetry and history. In 1951 he came across some of the writings of D. T. Suzuki. Snyder, at that time, was supposed to be on a graduate fellowship at Indiana State University but after one term he decided that he was through with the academic world, and headed back for California. For the next five years he worked in the lumber camps in the mountains for a living, and in his spare time he wrote poetry and studied the Chinese language. In 1956 he made his first visit to Japan, staying for a year and then signing on in the merchant navy to get back to the U.S.A. where he spent some time in San Francisco (the period covered by "The Dharma Bums"). In 1959 he went back to Japan and, since then, he has spent most of his time there at the Zen Buddhist monastery in Kyoto. For a short time in 1962 he was in India with his friends Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky but returned to Japan soon after. There is, incidentally, an interesting article by Snyder about his visit to India in the first issue of "City Lights Journal".

As a poet, Snyder can hardly be called prolific—his two published books are "RipRap" (Origin Press, distributed by City Lights Books), and "Myths And Texts" (Totem Press, distributed by Corinth Books)—

yet he is one of the best to come out of the U.S.A. in the last few years. "RipRap" contains much of his early work, dealing with his experiences in the logging camps, at sea, and in Kyoto, whilst "Myths And Texts", described by critic Bernard Bergonzi as being written "in a tough Poundian verse, laced with Zen", is a more ambitious effort which is mainly concerned with singing the virtues of an open air life, bringing in most of Snyder's interests as it does. It is full of references to Indian folk-lore, animals, the North-West and its people and history with, behind it all, Snyder's Zen leanings pushing the philosophical points home.

A small selection of Snyder's work was included in the Penguin anthology "Contemporary American Poetry" and, of course, there are poems in various magazines. He did some excellent translations, from the Chinese, of the poems of the 7th or 8th century Zen hermit, Han Shan, which are worth reading not only for their qualities as poetry but because of the insight they give into Snyder's attitudes. They were published in "Evergreen Review No. 6".

Possibly the best description of Snyder's philosophy was made by the poet himself in an article called "Buddhist Anarchism" which he wrote for the "Journal For The Protection Of All Beings"\*. In it he spoke of "a kind of committed disaffiliation" which would mean "resisting the lies and violence of the governments and their irresponsible employees. Fighting back with civil disobedience, pacifism, poetry, poverty—and violence, if it comes to a matter of clobbering some rampaging redneck or shoving a scab off the pier. Defending the right to smoke pot, eat peyote, be polygamous, polyandrous, or queer—and learning from the hip fallahen peoples of Asia and Africa, attitudes and techniques banned by the Judaeo-Christian West. Respecting intelligence and learning, but not as greed or means to personal power. Working on one's own responsibility, no dualism of ends or means—never the agent of an ideology—but willing to join in group action. Forming the new society within the shell of the old". The last phrase is—as readers will know—an old Wobbly slogan.

Snyder once said "I don't mind hard work and being poor never bothered me. I guess that's what makes it possible to carry on like I do". A modest statement and one which is an illustration of his quiet integrity. It was the late e. e. cummings who said "To be nobody but yourself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you somebody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight". It is to Gary Snyder's credit that he is fighting this battle.

\*It is to be reproduced in a forthcoming ANARCHY—Ed.

## In the bottom stream

**SKYVERS, reviewed by Robert Ferguson**

Readers of the Comprehensive Schools issue of ANARCHY should find Barry Reckord's play *Skyvers* which had a brief season this summer at the Royal Court Theatre, doubly interesting: it not only absorbs but disturbs. It is the story of five boys in their last few days in the bottom stream of a large comprehensive school in London. The central character, Cragge, brilliantly played by David Hemmings, is the misfit, the boy who thinks, in a group condemned by their education and society to be unthinking. The class forms a natural gang led by another boy, Brook, who instills in them all his disgust for a system which has destined him to a life of comparative meanness in an affluent society.

Cragge, in many respects is different from the others; like them he is bored and wants a girl, but his hatred for authority makes him reject even the leadership of Brook. He would like to succeed, to be a football star, yet even the opportunity to play for the school is denied him because he is a rebel, so the feeling of failure already engendered in him by his lack of success at school is further aggravated.

It is a new teacher, Mr. Freeman, who understands his impotent rage and tries to help by encouraging him to write a report of the soccer match for the school newspaper. But these good intentions are shattered when the report of a sixth former is printed in preference.

The climax of the play comes when Cragge is given a public caning for a misdemeanour of which he was not guilty, and the audience is left with the truth slowly dawning on them that to be given a chance to succeed in school or in life you have to knuckle under to authority. It is unfortunate from an anarchist point of view that we are left unaware of

Cragge's final decision, and I feel that many people must leave the theatre hoping that Cragge gets to hell out of there and keeps kicking.

*Skyvers* was well-produced (by Anne Jellicoe) and well-acted, except for some over-playing by Dallas Cavell as the headmaster and the over-consciousness of the cast on some occasions of the implications of their words.

Mr. Reckord, by his choice of a comprehensive school as a setting, has selected what *should* be a microcosm of a libertarian and classless society, but the injustices of authority are shown to penetrate even there. From the headmaster, a scholastic bigot, to the cynical Webster and the humane but gutless Freeman, the staff are involved in a machine which, whatever they think about it personally, they are unable to combat.

It is interesting to note that the reactions of some 150 teachers, invited by the NUT to see the play, was almost unanimously one of outraged innocence. Mr. Reckord explained that he had not set out to write a documentary but rather to show how a group of people would react to a given situation.

The opinion voiced at the meeting that "Mr. Reckord has done a positive dis-service to education in this country" can only be consistent with the conclusion that many teachers live in a state of idealism which in no way reflects the actual state of our schools. This play may well be a dramatic exaggeration, but from my own experience of school, it is pretty near the mark. I would like to see it produced in a comprehensive school, by the bottom stream of the fourth form. Is there one English master in London imaginative enough to sponsor it? I would gladly pay the performing fee!

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### You can still order ANARCHY 9 : PRISON

This issue contained an account of "The Captive Society", the sociology of the prison community, a discussion of penal reform from an anarchist point of view, a description of two kinds of therapeutic community (the work of Merfyn Turner at Norman House and of Maxwell Jones at the Henderson Hospital), and the impressions of recent inmates of Holloway and of Wasrington D.C. Jail. We doubt if anyone could read ANARCHY 9 and retain any faith in the penal system.

### Readers said about ANARCHY 9

"One of the best things I have read for a long time."—*Tony Parker*

"Really very fine."—*Paul Goodman*

"Most interested in the very well-informed articles on prisons."  
—*Member of Howard League Executive.*

"Your prison number was most stimulating."—*Richard Findlater*

"The prison number develops this theme in one sensationally particular instance. It was Kropotkin who called prisons 'universities of crime', and any direct experience of their effects on criminals, warders, police officers and society at large must confirm that their danger is not, as is pathetically supposed, to the miserable prisoner, but to us all. To know prisons is to realise it is as if, with diabolical ingenuity, we had devised places where the criminal disease of our society is cultivated with such skilful effect that they assure the growth of criminality among us. When anarchists say about prisons—as they do—that the best thing to do with them is to tear them down, this is not a frivolous quip, but reason based on experience. And insofar as I have any knowledge and judgment, I have no doubt at all that the existence of prisons, and the corruption they spread in our society, are far more dangerous than criminals themselves."—*Colin MacInnes*

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