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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# THE SORROW & THE ANGER

IT HAS BEEN wisely said "We pay our taxes in anger and our rates in sorrow." So it was with sorrow that one discovered that the nearby town library had ceased to purchase six of the weekend reviews of politics and the arts. One is aware that local government is entirely at the mercy of centralised government which is, as everyone knows, in financial trouble and has passed on the buck to local government cutting down on rate support grants, education, roads etc., and insisting that local government makes economies.

The recent defeats of government party candidates in local elections (also of their allies the Liberals) are partly a manifestation of the see-saw nature of democratic politics, although it has very little effect upon the real anger against the government's failures. It is like sticking pins into a wax image.

"Local politics are real politics", said Herbert Read in 1945 - In a sense this is true but the infiltration of local government by political parties and the impingement of national affairs such as comprehensive (sic) schools and housing have

made this less true. The decline and weakening of local control (augmented by further centralisation) have led to apathy or a blind anger in local politics.

Local government is based shakily on a rating system which, in its illogicality, gives rise to far more indignation than the tax question, which is based (roughly) on income and expenditure. Rates arbitrarily - exempting rebates - base themselves upon the nature of the building rated and the available services. That the ostensible magnificence of the building and the excellence of the unused and unusable services have no relation to the real situation very little concerns local councils.

It has now been proposed that the rate system be included in the tax system in one big jumbo package of taxation. Even more sinisterly approving looks have been cast by big cities at the American system of city taxes which would relieve, as some put it, the burden of tourists on the rates.

There is no anarchist answer to questions that occur in non-anarchist systems.

Within the cash system the needs of people whether for library facilities, housing, roadways, schooling and social services of all kinds, cannot be satisfied either on local or national level without this elaborate charade of rates and taxes. The elaborate juggling act between local rates and national taxes would seem, at times, to be the act of an illusionist since one knows, at local level, that the demand and means of supply are equable only if given - or taken - an equable society.

The Liberals' concern for local transport was admirable - less admirable is the penny-pinching conciliation to the individual motorist, whose existence is, in many cases, responsible for transport chaos. The existence of known local housing needs plus availability of surplus building labour makes squatting and direct action - even in such minor keys as direct labour - a necessity. But the concept of direct action is becoming a stranger to local politics. The hackneyed technique is to pass the blame on to national politicians, sticking a pin in (or a cross against) the disfavoured or favoured party man.

As for local scandals of corruption and property deals one can now observe in action the harvesting of the megalopolitan schemes of town development whereby the town councils were sold (at a price) gigantic new road developments and car parks which included office-blocks for the sweet pickings of the developer. The weeds have (often literally) grown up in this stony stubble. Like Ozymandius one can gaze at deserted and never-tenanted office blocks, abandoned (after nightful) car parks and precincts; supermarkets to let; under-used and over-developed roadways and say "Look on my works ye mighty and despair!"

If there is a silver lining to the cloud of financial despair it is that local authorities are no longer sieged with the passion for the gigantic which too often accompanies illusive prosperity. The giant housing blocks erected where no factories or facilities were; the road-building mania, unchecked by prophecies of oil shortage, have all been postponed due to shortage of funds. If town councils can be given an opportunity to think, and the whizz-kids to realise that the easy

## TOWARDS THE SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE

THE SO-CALLED "general strike" by Loyalist workers in Northern Ireland has been by all accounts only half-hearted and consequently, to the British government, basically ineffectual.

The collapse of the strike has shown to a great extent the disillusionment of the loyalist workers towards the idea of a return to a Stormont-based Parliament, and also how deeply the present economic conditions have effected them. Whereas the strike organised in May 1974 by the Ulster Workers' Council (at that time consisting exclusively of paramilitary leaders) was wholeheartedly supported by the workers and was successful in destroying the political solution known as the Sunningdale agreement, offered to Northern Ireland by the British Government, it is also significant to note that

in 1974 the loyalist political leaders remained in the background until the strike was established. Ironically, despite manning essential power supplies and petrol stations, the British army offered no resistance to the loyalist workers. In the present dispute it appears that the decision of the workers at the Ballylumford power station not to give support to the strike has dealt it the final blow. Only the threat of violence and intimidation, it seems, will now prolong the strike.

The present strike organised by the United Unionist Action Council (a grouping which this time includes both paramilitary organisations and political leaders such as Rev. Ian Paisley and Ernst Baird) has been ignored because experience has shown the loyalist workers it makes no difference who rules





# APPELSCHA A LONG TRADITION

FRANCOIS EVERSON

APPELSCHA in the northern province of Friesland in the Netherlands was, at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, one of the many breeding grounds of revolutionary workers. In 1925 a big strike led to the first Pentecost mobilisation in Appelscha. This was a large gathering in the forest where politics was discussed, and music and other entertainment eased minds a little.

The idea caught on quickly and in following years similar gatherings took place in various parts of the country. As the workers' movement split into social-democratic, communist and anarchist factions, so "Appelscha" became an anarchist happening. The authorities didn't enjoy the thought of the annual descent of hundreds of anarchists into "their" forest and did everything they could to prevent it. In 1934 the anarchists brought a piece of ground on the edge of the forest and since that time "appelscha" has become a tradition. The war years interrupted things a little, of course, but not for long.

The first gathering on their own ground led to an amusing series of photos in the widely read anarchist weekly The Worker. The first picture shows a group of anarchists in discussion before a tent. The second is a view of the same tent from behind, showing a *marechausée* (sort of national guard) half hidden in the grass, taking notes of the proceedings.

In 1969 a big building was erected out of locally raised funds and voluntary help. The same year saw a change of character in the meetings. These are now arranged by theme, worked out by

## LOCAL GOVT

pickings are no longer there, perhaps there could be a realisation that the small-scale decentralisation of the local parish, urban or town council is more conducive to hope than the gigantic multi-conurbations dreamed up by the planners.

We are told that the big cities are dying off at the centre. The cure is supposed to be inner urban renewal. But one would suppose that since the idea was to draw people away from the big city the aim had been accomplished. Success has apparently frightened the originators. Why not them die. All that can be destroyed must be destroyed.

To quote Herbert Read again: "Real politics are local politics" and power and authority should be devolved and segmented to the utmost limit of practicability. Only in such a way can the person - every person in society - be assured of an adequate sense of responsibility and human dignity. These qualities for the average person only emerge in his actual sphere of work and in his regional environment."

J. ROBINSON.

a chosen group each year.

One of the important aspects of "Appelscha" is the strict teetotalism within the grounds. This is a vestige of the early years when teetotalism and non-smoking were part of the movement. In the sixties and seventies this led to some problems with the younger generation. Things are easier now, although drink is still taboo!

This year there is no theme as such, but a collection of small events. Some of the subjects to be discussed are nuclear energy, the practice of anarchism and the world language, Esperanto. A small play, a (libertarian) music group from Belgium and films are also included in the programme. Besides the planned events "Appelscha" provides an opportunity to get out of the urban areas and to establish contacts with older and younger comrades.

If anyone is interested in coming to Appelscha this year (28-30 May) please contact Tom Welschen, Quellynstraat 61, Amsterdam and we shall try to provide transport from Amsterdam to Appelscha. Prospective campers should bring their own tent and sleeping gear. Another thing: bread, tea, coffee, soup are available but no other eating arrangements have been made (it's possible to eat in the village though).

In recent years we have had an increasing number of foreign visitors. We hope that this will continue to be the case, as there is too little contact between comrades from different countries. Maybe this year a group from England?

## Leeds arrests

LAST month two people were arrested and sent before the magistrates in Leeds for giving out leaflets. The leaflet questioned some of the rules of the City of Leeds High School and pointed out the existence of the National Union of School Students. The two were held by police for over six hours and charged with distributing leaflets "of an abusive and insulting nature" that were "likely to cause a breach of the peace." Their homes were raided without a warrant. One of them was interrogated by the Special Branch. According to Leeds Other Paper "There is evidence that Leeds education officials, in conjunction with police, are determined to prevent leaflets being given out to school students. A Leeds teacher told LOP that schools have been instructed to inform the police, and specifically the Special Branch, whenever any leaflets are handed to pupils." Among the rules criticised was that of being caned for having top buttons undone, and not being allowed to eat, or wear woolly hats in the street. There was also a section on black schoolchildren in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Comrades inform us that the case was dismissed with the judge declaring that the leaflet might be deplorable but was not insulting'.

## MAAM

The Movement Against A Monarchy (MAAM for short) have announced the first three of a series of stickers to celebrate Jubilee Year. (Tastefully designed in red white and blue, the most appropriate one for anarchists must be the sticker showing the crown and sceptre stuffed into a dustbin with the caption ROT ALL RULERS) They are available for 1p a sticker including postage (minimum order of 25p, total; mixed orders accepted) from Box "M", c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. The stickers are a convenient tongue-sized width and mostly on high-quality impregnated gum-paper. "Once up they're extremely difficult to remove."

MAAM says it hopes to "encourage and catalyse activities by groups around the country." It is not a national organising group and will be concentrating its own activities on the London area, but hopes that similar groups in other parts of the country will get in touch and exchange ideas. (Incidentally, MAAM are also collecting material for a musical - to be entitled Corgi and Bess).

## Social Strike (cont.)

Northern Ireland - a Stormont-based government or direct rule from Westminster. Whilst the majority of the workers may still cling to the idea of a protestant-dominated parliament at Stormont they must surely realise that there will never be a return to it short of a break-away by the Six Counties from the United Kingdom. The long held prejudices of capitalism which have sought to play Protestant against Catholic worker and give the Protestants a privileged position are still prevalent in Northern Ireland and so long as they remain so the loyalist faction will want to remain part of the United Kingdom. Parallel to this the worsening economic situation and lowering of the standard of living plus high unemployment has shown that the problem of economic welfare has taken precedence over temporary political gain.

If we can find no other sign that the "sectarian" deadlock is ending we can take comfort in this preference; for far from being beaten by economic conditions it shows this experience at least might have taught the loyalist and catholic workers that the politicians need them. And that they don't need the politicians.

After seven long years of fighting in the present troubles, all talk of an end to the problem once the terrorist violence has been defeated has been shown to be a hollow sham. The loyalist leaders protesting for an end to the violence are quite prepared to accept the effect of the bully-boys' intimidation, despite bland statements denouncing it. Once the British Army (now standing at 17000) has gone from Northern Ireland, will the real violence, a corrupt capitalist system backed by military force, be challenged by both loyalist and Catholic worker. Then it is that we can look forward to a lasting social, general strike that will not need intimidation to motivate it.

FRANCIS A WRIGHT



# COMMUNITY ACTION IN N. IRELAND

ONE OF the most interesting by-products of the conflict in Northern Ireland has been the growth of community consciousness. Both urban and rural areas have been differentiated more acutely by their local brands of paramilitaries, and by the levels and varieties of violence they indulge in. People have become aware that the small area they live in - say, a housing estate or a homogeneous district - may have special problems. As a result, community action has become prevalent. Community workers generally agree that the scope of their activities is larger than in England.

Whether as a result of direct Westminster rule, or whether poor Protestants have realised that Britain and petit-bourgeois Unionist politics have as little to offer them as the Catholics, growing numbers of the working class are taking to extra-parliamentary means in the attempt to ameliorate their appalling conditions.

Paramilitaries on both sides have become involved in community politics, but Protestant organisations have generally been more successful in the shift from violent to non-violent agitation. Meetings about community work have led to contacts between Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries, and may have shown that they have many concerns in common.

Just about now, professional community workers are making plans for a programme of education designed to equip local people to deal better with their own problems. It may also nurture the political sophistication of grass roots activists, and perhaps also the

paramilitaries. (Another benefit would be that it might reduce the dependence of community workers on state money: really effective radicalism would of course never be financed by conventional politicians, and even now there is speculation that state finance for community work may be cut. Closer contacts between the groups may help make many less vulnerable to State reaction).

Although the (Protestant) Ulster Defence Association seem to be a bit more intelligent in these matters than the Provisional IRA, who tend to limit their thinking to fighting a war, the Protestant working class are political learners, whose decisions are mostly inspirational and not based on a clear body of ideas.

At this point in the development of radical action, there must be an opportunity for libertarian socialists to affect the thinking of those involved. Many working class Protestants have become disillusioned with conventional politics and politicians, and there are also many Republicans who realise that a united Ireland would not be the answer to all their discontents.

Despite the fascist aura of groups like the Provos and the UVF, there are many ex-paramilitaries who have taken up community action and might be ready to consider a system of political thought which is relevant to what they want to do. (Or, indeed, help them decide exactly what that might be). It would be a mistake to assume that past involvement in violence is in all cases a measure of bigotry or reactionary thinking.

A recent plea by the UVF that young Protestants charged with terrorism should be treated more leniently because "they didn't start it" and were led into violence in response to IRA violence, is not merely petulant pleading. It implicitly recognises the fact that many got caught up in the conflict simply because they didn't have the political knowledge to understand it fully. An awareness of anarchist philosophy and a greater use of anarchist critique in Northern Ireland would not only be beneficial, but would also fill a yawning gap. (At the moment "anarchism" is taken to mean directionless violence, as opposed to Republican or Loyalist violence).

The end to the shooting war will not come with the defeat of the IRA, as seems to be the simple hope of the British, local politicians and the Peace Movement. It will come when paramilitaries, as elements of their communities, sit down with others and talk, and when they have acquired the political wisdom to come to an arrangement. Whatever happens, it's extremely doubtful that Northern Ireland can remain the same capitalist parliamentary state it has been and which the British want it to continue being. To make it worth living in at all, anarchists must try to propagate their ideas and influence the outcome. In which case community "politics" could turn out to be a very different form of politics than we've been used to.

ROBERT JOHNSTONE

## THE MURRAYS

Marie's sentence was reduced because the re-trial judges decided she could not have known that Reynolds was a member of the Gardaí. (He was off duty and in civilian clothes at the time). Under Irish law this made the act one of non-capital murder. The death penalty is restricted to "crimes against the State" including the deliberate murder of State servants, and the prosecution had submitted that as the Murrays were involved in a bank robbery they must have been aware of the possible arrival of the police.

MARIE MURRAY has had her sentence reduced to penal servitude for life. Originally both she and her husband Noel

were sentenced to death for the capital murder of Garda Michael Reynolds, during a bank raid in September 1975. Noel's sentence was reduced to life imprisonment at a retrial last December on the grounds that Marie had admitted firing the gun. Another of the accused, Ronan Stenson, was held without coming to trial, tortured and then released.

The Murray Defence Committees intend to continue fighting for the release of both Marie and Noel. They point out

that the Irish Government has already backed down over the death sentences and will now have to give way entirely. A planning meeting of the London defence committee is taking place as we go to press to decide on further action.

## Squat 'em Out?

SOME TIME AGO the Department of the Environment commissioned a report on squatting and a survey was carried out in Bethnal Green in the East End of London. Many of the squatters involved refused to be interviewed, as they doubted that the report would ever be published. The work was completed last August. The

DOE got around to discussing it with the author in March. The Government is currently organising its Criminal Justice Bill, involving up to 6 months' imprisonment and a £1,000 fine for certain offences, including many concerned with squatting. The media presentation of this is that it is to deal with "super squats" - idle hippies living in luxury flats and the like. So, what does this report, which has not yet been allowed to get to the publishing stage, tell us about squatting

It found that only two out of 160 squats covered were in luxury flats, almost all the others being in rotting old houses (20 per cent had one room unfit for living in). Over half the squatters were families with children, whom the local councils had failed to help. 77 per cent of the houses surveyed had had restorative work carried out on them by the squatters. It is widely believed that squatters jump the queue and take property needed for more deserving cases. In fact the GLC has squatters in only 409 lettable properties, while another 1500 stand idle and available for re-letting.

Many neighbours organised petitions on behalf of the squatters, as they were tired of the sight of ugly tinned-up houses.

## Anarchy debate

The anarchist society at Lancaster University have infiltrated the Debating Society and cunningly arranged that on 2 June a motion will be presented to the effect that anarchy is the only true form of political and social order. Comrades interested in ensuring that the motion be won are welcome to participate. (Contact address: M. J. Rivett, Wydale Hall, Brompton-by-Sawdon, Scarborough).





AFTER having suffered over forty years of repression - first by Republican and Communist forces during the Civil War and then by Franco's regime in the years since - the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain is beginning, slowly and cautiously, to reorganise itself. During those years, repression of the CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) had been severe: as one of its current afiliados noted, members of 18 different national committees were jailed, exiled or simply "disappeared". Many cenetistas remain in prison - some for as many as 20 25 years - unable to gain their freedom because those outside do not even know their names, and thus cannot petition for their release under the existing amnesty programme.

Despite these handicaps the CNT is rebuilding. Having begun (officially) to reorganise only in January 1976 it now has an estimated 24,000 members throughout Spain - including approximately 5000 of these in Barcelona (its traditional stronghold) and 2000 organised in 15 different syndicates in Madrid. As part of its policy of liberalisation the Government allowed a CNT-sponsored meeting - the first public rally since the Civil War - to be held relatively unmolested at the Plaza de Toros de San Sebastián de los Reyes on March\*. Spanish newspapers and police estimated that

## A VISIT TO THE C.N.T

25,000-30,000 people were in attendance. While surely not all were members of the CNT the fact that so many came shows growing interest in and support for the organisation.

Historically the CNT in Spain was organised according to the federative principles of anarcho-syndicalist theory: from the bottom up. One of the strengths of the organisation during its years of struggle in the first few decades of this

century, in fact, apparently derived from its insistence that there be no paid leadership and that membership in its National (coordinating) Committee rotates around the regions. Both factors combined to prevent the bureaucratisation and tendency toward reformism which characterised other west European labour movements at the time.\* During the intervening years of repression these patterns obviously had to change somewhat; and apparently many national committees were formed more or less by "appointment" by the exile organisations. But the organisation which exists now has been developed, again, along the traditional pattern. In January 1976 groups began to form throughout the country (organised locally as well as in industrial syndicates) and to communicate with one another. In July 1976 the first elections were held within the new organisation and a national committee was chosen (based, at this time, in Madrid - but soon to rotate to another region) - again from the bottom up. This group is now trying to aid in coordinating the activities of the various syndicates and also to "represent" the CNT in its relations with other workers' associations.

Who then, are the current cenetistas and what is their programme? Most, apparently, are young. In Madrid, for



example, of the 2000 afiliados, probably only about 200-300 are viejos, survivors of the Civil War period, and these are concentrated in a few syndicates (e.g. construction). The rest are new afiliados, some young factory workers; but many, it appears, students and teachers in the University (although in Cataluna students may not actually join the union - it is reserved for workers and teachers) or white-collar technical workers in chemical, textile or printing industries. And, along with the formally-organised syndicates there are also many other groups which sympathise with the goals and methods of the CNT and which meet more informally, mostly in local barrios. It is worth noting, in this context, that while there are young people and old people, there are very few of middle age - of the generation which came to political consciousness (or lack of it!) and adulthood during the Franco era. As one cenetista suggested, to become an anarchist one needs a certain minimal amount of freedom.

In general, relations with veterans of the Civil War period - and especially with the CNT in exile - seem to be somewhat complex. The influences of the exiliados varies: in those syndicates which have a large percentage of viejos (e.g. construction), the influence of exiliados is greater. Where most of the members are new - e.g. among University teachers, chemical workers, etc., the influence is less. Relations between viejos and young members are, apparently, occasionally a source of some minor tensions; for the most part, however, all have been able to work together toward the common goal of reviving the CNT.

The major goals and programmes of the organisation seem to be two: first, the battle for complete freedom of syndical association and second a general amnesty for all prisoners, not only those designated "political". In the first of these, the CNT has recently come to have the support of the UGT (the Socialist trade union federation, allied with the PSOE, the Spanish Socialist Party). Before then, the UGT had cooperated with the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) recently legalised, which - since it apparently has considerable representation in the "vertical syndicates" of the Franco era - has not opposed the continuation of the vertical syndicates. Now, however, the UGT has joined the CNT (and various other left-wing syndical organisations, not yet legalised) in the CNT's demand for complete freedom of syndical association, the dismantling of the vertical unions and the right of all workers to pay dues to whatever union they wish to support. The Suarez government now appears to be ready to modify its programme of vertical syndicalism somewhat; but it is unclear at this time just how much freedom of association it will be willing to allow. (If the violent repression of the syndical-sponsored May Day demonstrations is any indication, the government is far from willing to allow for full freedom of association). Allied with this set of demands is a continuing concern for traditional goals of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement - e.g. direct action and worker control. The CNT, thus, has supported and continues to support all sorts of campaigns for workers' control (autogestion) in universities, fact-



The pictures were taken by an IWW delegate to the first post-civil war national CNT rally in San Sebastian de los Reyes on the weekend of 26-27 March 1977. Subsequent reports from participants have belied the original reported figure of 8,000 attending the meeting. The actual figure was between 25-30,000! The same IWW delegate has described the euphoria in Spain at the time and the intense activity now being conducted by the CNT with members active among the rank and file of many of the unions, helping prolong strikes which the recently legalised Communist Party does its best to break. . .

ories, offices etc.

The second major area of concern is freedom for prisoners. As noted above, many old cenetistas or members of other left organisations have been languishing in jails for years. (Apparently one of the most moving things which occurred at the CNT rally at San Sebastian de los Reyes was the meeting - after 30 or 40 years - of old cenetistas, recently released from jail, each of whom had thought the others long dead). Most organisations and parties have joined in a call for amnesty for political prisoners - and that is apparently being carried out on a case-by-case basis. But (see FREEDOM, April 2, 1977) as the CNT has argued (and thus far it has stood alone) many people classified as "common prisoners" are also in jail for crimes which were politically related. Thus, an amnesty for all prisoners is a necessity.

With respect to the elections in June (the first free elections in Spain since the Popular Front was voted into power in February 1936) the CNT is taking a hands-off position. The situation, as a number of cenetistas have argued - both publicly and privately - is totally unlike that of 1936. While the centre and left may have developed some support among the more liberal urban populations, the vast majority of the population of Spain - those who live in the small, isolated pueblos - receive all their political information from government-sponsored sources (television is apparently especially important - there is only one station in Spain and it is controlled by the government) and are still almost completely dominated by the politics and perspectives of the Franco era. There is, then, not much hope that these elections

will be able to accomplish a wholesale turnover in governmental personnel. In fact, as a West German elections expert visiting Spain on a consulting mission pointed out recently, the electoral law as it now stands is strongly biased in favour of the rural, relatively sparsely populated areas which are traditionally conservative strongholds (see Diario 16 22 April. Juan Linz, Professor of Political Sociology at Yale University, visiting in Salamanca, made a similar point in an interview in La Gaceta Regional, 22 April). In that case, for the CNT to abandon its traditional apolitical stance would be of no value whatsoever; and the organisation apparently has no intention of doing so.

From the superficial observations of a brief visitor, it does appear that anarcho-syndicalism is having a revival in Spain. Among the books displayed prominently in many book-stands at the recent festival del libro were new editions of anarchist classics (both Spanish and European) as well as many new books on anarchism, workers' control, etc. And in the stands I watched in Madrid and Salamanca (admittedly not necessarily representative sites) many people seemed interested enough to buy, or at least look seriously at them. In a recent evening at the CNT headquarters in central Madrid, at least 150-200 people both old and young, were present at one time or another during the evening, talking avidly and grouping themselves by syndicates: Construction, textiles, health workers, chemical workers, and Federación local, among others. In Catalonia (the traditional stronghold of the CNT), the numbers, of course, are larger and the organisation more extensive. Valencia, too, is apparently an area of some



# MUJERES LIBRES

The article below is translated by L. W. from the February 1977 issue of the Journal of the CNT. Readers may also wish to refer back to FREEDOM of March 19 1977.

MUCH HAS been said about the alienation to which human beings are subject in this society, due basically to the fact of having to undergo unpleasant mechanical labour which inhibits the processes of their self-fulfilment. We have to go much farther back into history to find the origin of the other kind of alienation which affects men and women in the same way and operates negatively on collective liberation, unbalancing the whole of society: the sheer differentiation between masculinity and femininity.

What is characteristic of the human personality is its mixed composition: the female as well as the male possesses feminine and masculine elements to a greater or lesser degree, with sex as the one essential difference. Our civilisation, however, has imposed completely defined roles on everyone. The man has to emphasise virile attributes and give up every trait characterised as feminine; the woman, by contrast, has to "expropriate" her masculine components and fulfil in her personality only what is characterised as feminine. To consciousness of social exploitation we have to add, and put first, consciousness of the psychic exploitation to which our society subjects us.

The movements for women's liberation have arisen precisely on the basis of this reflection; and the reasons why the articulation of the problem occurred in the feminine camp first are obvious: the "formal" discrimination existing in all areas of society between the rights of women and those of men. Nevertheless, it must be said in this connection that the differences of emphasis, aims

and methods of the various feminist organisations are in some cases radical. Ultimately, those groups are no more than the reflection of those existing generally in society, and their tactics for struggle and perspectives for change are a function of the ideologies around which they are formed. Within the feminist movement, we find a group—MUJERES LIBRES (Free Women)—which, in its ideological, organisational and functional characteristics, differs enormously from the others.

Mujeres Libres is an autonomous libertarian organisation. It originated in 1936 and developed its activities until 1939 as a grouping dedicated to the task of promoting the emancipation of women in the framework of the general struggle to attain an anarchist society "where men and women will be able to live as PEOPLE in perfect equality of rights and obligation". At present it is in the process of creating a federal structure on the peninsular level.

They define themselves as anti-authoritarian, socialist and autonomous. They understand that their emancipation will not be real "as long as that of society as a whole has not been achieved, but we believe that in the meantime our struggle should focus on the following aspects:

**FORMATION:** Creating a conscious and responsible feminine force, making all women aware of their present alienation in the perfectly assumed role of obvious dependence on men and of the social customs which determine an unjust class society". The right of a woman to enjoy and do what she wants with her own body also implies "full sexual information, free use and wide dissemination of contraception, and free abortion". They propose to combine the process of formation with information, "setting up lecture tours, schools, special courses, reviews, etc., tending to foster women's abilities and emancipate them from the triple slavery to which they have been and still are subjected: the slavery of ignorance, slavery as women, and slavery as pro-

ducers".

**WORK:** "Struggling against the economic and social inequality of women, as the primary cause of the sexual problem of which they are victims." They are opposed to wage labour and capital, "but the Mujeres Libres organisation was the first to demand equal pay for equal work for women as a means of denouncing capitalist injustice and exploitation of them".

**LEGISLATION:** "Modifying socio-legal, labour, educational and human-relations norm, this being just one way of moving towards our objective: changing people's approach, behaviour, habits and customs, social forms, standards and beliefs regarding men and women."

**POLITICS:** "Eliminating all types of leaders, political, cultural, economic, etc., even if they are women, considering that hierarchy has never been a means of emancipating individual, male as well as female." In relation to the political parties they think that "any women's section of a party or any feminist movement whose leaders are party figures, is condemned to serve the interests of that party before those of the women for whom they claim to be struggling. For this reasons," they say, "we do not accept any kind of direction or manipulation on their part nor any kind of compromise with them, apart from those of a tactical nature before a particular struggle, providing that our intervention takes place in conditions of full liberty."

**CULTURE:** "Refusing all types of partial culture, whether feminist, male-dominated, bourgeois, etc."

Finally, they consider their struggle for the liberation of people as a task for everyone, given that it affects us all in our fulfilment as whole human beings. They do not see man as an enemy, but the social structures which make possible the domination of one sex over the other and deform the personality of individuals by making them assume attitudes and roles which contradict their deepest and most basic tendencies.

## CNT (cont)

strength, as well as Andalucia and Zaragoza (again, traditional anarcho-syndicalist regions). In addition, the CNT is developing groups in the traditionally socialist regions of Asturias and Bilbao. We are seeing the beginnings of an anarchist press (still largely underground) and a growing CNT presence in factories and university campuses. It may well be, then, that a period of considerable growth—in the numbers and influence—is now underway.

MARTHA ADELBERG

Note See FREEDOM of 6 and 20-27 December 1975.

## FARE FIGHT APPEAL

FARE FIGHT say that their campaign to stop fare increases on the tubes and buses can only succeed with the active participation of thousands more passengers by the time of the next planned increases. These are expected for July when fares on the tubes and buses are to go up by 15 per cent (between 5p-10p on most tube tickets). Over the last three years fares have risen over twice as fast as wages (including those of London Transport workers).

Fare Fight say that "The SOS (Save Our Services) Campaign is trying to

preserve London Transport by lobbying MPs and the GLC. This is not enough. A cheap (or free) and efficient service will only be obtained as a result of mass direct action." For further information and advice, also for booklets of 24 "Travel Now - Pay Later" slips (for these send 2p and a stamped addressed envelope) and a booklet called "Dragging it Out" which "tells you how bloody-minded you can be once they get around to actually sending you a bill", contact Fare Fight, Flat 3, 76 Sidney Street, London E1 (790-9965).





## OUR MAY DAY

The South London Anarchist Group are to be congratulated on their very well attended May Day picnic on Clapham Common. Not quite the 20,000 turn-out of the CNT at Valencia but a good showing nonetheless. Many old comrades were present and the picnic provided an enjoyable reunion. After a robust and anarchic football match between North and South London a short meeting was held, addressed by comrades from Dublin and Warwick, by John Quail and Philip Sansom, giving us yet another proof of his superb rhetorical ability. The disco was unfortunately brought to a close by a heavy downpour of rain at about 6.30 p.m.

An advance warning: Sheffield are hoping to provide a refuge from the Jubilee weekend, for those who feel they must escape and would like to spend it in comradesly reunion.

## S. LONDON PLATFORM

The South London Anarchist Group, surging forward after their May Day picnic, are to start a regular public platform on Clapham Common on Saturday afternoons. It is hoped to hold the first meeting this week (May 14). Speakers, etc. welcome, but please contact 672-5681 first to confirm.

## JOHN OLDAY

WE are holding over our appreciation of John Olday, who died recently. Philip Sansom, who will be compiling a special review section on the subject, would like any comrades who knew John and who wish to make any comments, to contact him via FREEDOM.

## WARWICK UNIV. ANARCHIST WEEK

The group at the university has held a series of events in the week May 2 - 9.

The dates were decided some time ago and were perhaps unfortunate, being at exam time and with other activities interfering. However, the organisers report that the week has been a great success. Events included discos, concerts (those stalwarts Cockayne and Clapperclaw) and talks by Nicolas Walter (Anarchism, theory and practice) and David Peers (Russian anarchism).

## POTTY

A company manufacturing jubilee souvenirs has had its efforts rejected as being "in poor taste" by the authorities. However, free enterprise is not discouraged, and has stuck extra handles on their chamber pots to be sold as "flower planters." Sounds nice, but the crest, etc. will no doubt be on the outside ...

## NEW SHOP

A new bookshop is opening in Leicester, filling the gap left by the closure of Black Flag bookshop there. Called Blackthorn Books, at 74 Highcross Street, Leicester, it is being opened in mid May by Alan and Louise Ross and other comrades in Leicester.

## Music for Socialism

Music for Socialism is an organisation made up mainly of musicians 'ranging through most points left of 'moderate'' They feel the need to 'make a direct and public link between the musicians' craft and radical politics.' They put a series of questions:

- Can music itself, in the sense of organised sound, have a political content at all?
- How important is the accessibility of music - must the music that serves the people be music that most people can easily listen to, understand, dance to, play. Must revolutionary music be revolutionary in form and technique?
- Are particular styles or traditions in themselves reactionary or progressive - for instance, is 'folk' progressive and 'rock' reactionary?
- For a socialist movement, must music serve primarily as a propaganda instrument of some pre-defined politics. Can music help define a new revolutionary politics?
- What claims can be made for the political effectiveness of 'alternative' forms of organisation, such as co-operatives for making records, distributions, touring circuits, and so on?

On May 28 at Battersea Arts Centre the group will present a festival, with over a hundred musicians taking part, including Carol Grimes, Henry Cow and Leon Rosselson. It is said that this won't just be a series of musical performances, but a kind of conference on particular aspects of the relationship between socialism and music. For more information phone 01-888 1161 or write to 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8.



# FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

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## GROUPS

ABERYSTWYTH Mike Sheehan, 59 North Parade, Aberystwyth, Dyfed. Anarchists in other parts of Wales interested in federation please contact. BOLTON anarchists contact 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 367516) BRIXTON (London) Tel. 674 7402 CAMBRIDGE anarchists contact Ron Stephan, 41 York St. Cambridge CORBY anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants COVENTRY, Peter Corne, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry DURHAM—no contact at present EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex. LEEDS Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds 7 LEICESTER. Peter and Jean Miller, 41 Norman Road (tel. 549642) MANCHESTER contact Al on 061-224 3028 for information & meetings NEWCASTLE anarchists. Neil Jarman tel. Newcastle 20402 OXFORD contact Martin Harper, Keble College. PORTSMOUTH. Caroline Cahm, 2 Chadderton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth

ST. ALBANS contact John Morton, 21 St. Peter's Rd., St. Albans. SWANSEA. Keith Sowerby, House 35, Student Village, Landrefolian, Swansea

THAMES VALLEY contact Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Road, Maidenhead, SL6 3EE (tel. 062 2974)

SCOTTISH Libertarian Federation: Aberdeen: Blake c/o A P P 67 King St. Dundee: Mike Malet, 1 Lynnewood Pl. Edinburgh: Gibson, 7 Union Street (tel. 557 1522)

Glasgow: Baird, 122 Benneray St. Glasgow G22 (tel. 336 7895) Stirling: D. Tyme, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, Clacks

### AUSTRALIA:

Canberra. Alternative Canberra Group 10 Beltana Rd. Pialligo, ACT 2609 Victoria. La Trobe Libertarian Socialists c/o SRC, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic. 3083

Libertarian Soc. Fed. of Australia c/o 4 Reservoir St. Reservoir, Vic. 3073 (& branches in other areas)

New South Wales. P. Stones, P.O. Box 26, Warrawong, N.S.W.

Sydney Fed. of Australian Anarchists, Box 92, Broadway, 2007, Australia.

### NEW ZEALAND

Anarchists resident in or visiting New Zealand contact Christchurch Anarchists, P.O. Box 22, Christchurch 607.

### U.S.A.

NEW YORK. Libertarian Book Club Box 842 G.P.O., New York 10001 MISSOURI; Columbia Anarchist League P.O. Box 380, Columbia, Mo. 65201

## MEETINGS

FRIDAY 27 MAY London. National Secular Society public mtg. in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn WC1 7.45pm. "Blasphemy in 1977" (Brian Sedgemoor, Barbara Smoker, Nicolas Walter).

WEEKEND 17-19 June. Warwick Univ. Students Union. Libertarian Students Network national conference. All welcome.

18-19 JUNE London. BWNIC general mtg. at Pax Christi Centre, Blackfriars Hall, Southampton Rd., N.W.5. Starts 11.30 am with informal introductory mtg. for new supporters (Sat.) For further info. or sleeping place Fri. or Sat. write to BWNIC c/o 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9DX.

LAND for the PEOPLE. Mtgs, every Tuesday, 8A Leighton Crescent, London NW5 (Kentish Town) Upstairs at No.8. tel. 267-1184 or 485 3572

FARE FIGHT. Weekly mtgs. now held at Squatters Action Council office, 5 Huntley St. WC1 every Thurs. 8 pm HYDE PARK Speakers Corner (Marble Arch) Anarchist Forum alternate Sundays 1 pm. Speakers, listeners & hecklers welcomed.

BIRMINGHAM Libertarian Socialists group meets Sundays 8 pm at the Peace Centre, 18 Moor St. Queensway and afterwards in Fox & Grapes, Freeman St.

COVENTRY. All anarchists in Coventry wishing to meet regularly please contact John England, 48 Spencer Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry.

GLASGOW. Scottish Libertarian Fed. 'extraordinary' public mtgs, First & Third Monday in month at St. Bride's Centre, Rosevale St. Partick. 7.30 pm EAST LONDON Group holds regular fortnight mtgs at 123 Lathom Rd. E.6. Phone Ken on 552 3985

KINGSTON Libertarian group meets Weds. Ring Pauline 549 2564

NORTH WEST Anarchist Federation. For mtgs., activities & newsletter write 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton. (tel. Bolton 387516)

CAMPING INTERNATIONAL LIBERT-AIRE ECOLOGIQUE. At Ronse-Renaix Belgium. JULY 15 to AUGUST 15. Contact Eric Sobrie, Zonnerstraat 3 9792 Wortgen Potegem, Belgium.

## DESIRES

PADS ; LONDON

2 small rooms or one large, minimal amenities required. Geoff Armstrong, 294 Middleton Rd. Oldham, Lancs. SINGLE room, Central London. Willing to abstain from meat. Minimal amenities required. John O'Connor, 167 Worcester Rd. Bootle 20, Merseyside.

### RECORD

2 copies of Sex Pistols/EMI single Anarchy in the UK/I wanna be me. Contact Andrew 01-674 6402

## PRISONERS

Mike Murphy (C01039) HM Prison, Ashwell, Oakham, Leics.

John Nightingale, (338645) HM Prison, Parkhurst, nr. Newport, Isle of Wight.

DUBLIN Anarchists Bob Cullen, Des Keane, Columba Longmore, Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare. Eire.

Marie Murray and Noel Murray. (Life sentences) Protest letters to the Justice Minister, 72-76 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 and The Irish Ambassador, 17 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HR (or in your own country).

## LITERATURE

NEWSLETTER for Libertarian Library Workers. No.4 now out. Send S.A.E. to Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1AW

ANARCHO-FEMINISM. Reprint of a US pamphlet. 12p from Black Bear, 76 Peckham Rd. (Top Flat) London SE5.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Martin Spence has moved from Durham to 91 Beaconsfield Street, Arthur's Hill, Newcastle 4, Tyne & Wear.

## GROUPS(cont)

EXETER. New group forming. Contact Geoff Minshull, 129 Fore Street, Exeter (tel. 33084)



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# FREEDOM'S *Anarchist Review*

## DEPRESSED OR REPRESSED ?

### MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1959

THE CONCEPT of Mental Illness and its negative, Mental Health, is of comparatively recent origin. It received official sanction with the passing of the Mental Health Act in 1959, which repealed the old Lunacy Act of 1890 and the Mental Treatment Acts of 1930. One of the declared intentions of the Act was to remove the stigma of lunacy. The certification of lunatics was therefore abolished and what used to be called lunacy was to be regarded as an illness in the same category as say, Tuberculosis or Diabetes. A laudable intention one might think.

I suppose it might be claimed that the enormous increase in the number of people receiving treatment for Mental Illness is a sign that the stigma has been removed, for if nearly half the population is placed in a certain category, it can hardly be regarded as a stigma. Ten years after the Act was passed it was estimated that 20 per cent of the population received treatment at some time or other for Mental Illness. Today, with every General Hospital dishing out Largactil and every GP prescribing Valium, it would be impossible to arrive at an accurate figure, but it must have doubled. The consequent explosion in drug-taking has made the drug companies, with their astronomical profits, the undoubted beneficiaries of the Act. The intention of the legislators (as always with universal prescriptive laws) has been somewhat divorced from the operation of the legislation.

### TREATMENT UNDER THE ACT

Treatment is given either in a Mental Hospital, in an Out-Patients' Clinic or by a GP. The current emphasis is away from the former and towards the latter (it is cheaper). A hospital with which I am familiar has reduced the number of beds by 30 per cent in the last few years. (Since the average length of stay has also been reduced, the decrease in the number of admissions is not quite so great).

The majority of patients, at least ostensibly, seek treatment voluntarily, but the Act, while abolishing the category of certified lunatic, retains an element of compulsion. A person may be committed to hospital by Court Order, or may, under certain other sections of the Act, be retained in hospital for specified periods of time if a form is signed by two doctors. The fact that compulsory powers are available, of course, calls into question how voluntary other admissions are.

The principal form of treatment is, as we have seen, what is jargonistically known as chemotherapy. Not only the quantity of drugs consumed, but also their variety, has multiplied rapidly and I imagine that the average psychiatrist, let alone the average GP, is not familiar with the effects of all the drugs he prescribes. In fact, it seems fairly certain to me, that the long term effects of some drugs are unknown. Many have alarming side effects; skin rashes, loss of balance, thirst, lethargy and poor vision. In some cases, as a doctor once said to me, 'Ha, ha. The treatment is worse than the disease.' It would be impossible in an article of this nature to deal adequately with the question of chemotherapy, though it is a sub-

ject that needs airing. (1)

A common form of treatment, which has aroused controversy, is ECT or electro-convulsive-therapy. It was developed in Italy by some gentlemen who observed that after a convulsive fit an epileptic appeared to have a much improved mental state, so they concluded that an artificially induced fit might have the same effect on other patients. The early form of ECT was fairly crude. It consisted of applying electrodes to each temple and switching on the current. The shock to the brain caused violent muscular spasms, knocking the patient unconscious and sending him flying off the couch if he wasn't restrained by the nurses in attendance. I think there is little doubt that in some cases this treatment caused permanent brain damage. (2) The form of ECT now most in use is known as Modified Unilateral. The electrode is applied to one temple only and before the current is switched on, the patient is given both an anaesthetic and a muscle relaxant, consequently he doesn't feel the shock and there are no muscular spasms. It is claimed that this form has removed the risk of brain damage. I don't know how far this claim is justified, nor am I able to decide whether the treatment is beneficial. Certainly it causes temporary loss of memory, which might be considered to be a good thing for somebody who can't forget his troubles (real or imaginary), but whether this carries any permanent benefit is another matter.

A drastic form of treatment now, as far as I know comparatively rare in this country, is Leukotomy (in the US, Lobotomy, (3). This involves the destruction of certain brain cells. It has been described as partial euthanasia, since it results in a blunting of the emotions to an extent at which the person no longer seems fully human. A modified form of Leukotomy has been developed by, I think I am right in saying, the son of one anarchist and the father of another (4). The brain cells are at first only temporarily disabled, allowing the effect to be studied before a decision is reached as to whether the effect is such that it would be desirable to make it permanent. The use of this treatment is not widespread.

Finally I will mention briefly the group of therapies on which a patient spends such time as he is not glued to the goggle-box. These are known as Industrial, Occupational, Art and Social Therapies, the purpose of which is described as rehabilitation, that is, fitting the patient back into the general social context.

This account of treatment is not exhaustive of course, but I hope it is sufficient to give readers who have been fortunate enough to escape the net, some idea of what goes on behind those grey walls.

### USES OF PSYCHIATRY

This question has recently been the subject of a good deal of publicity because of the apparent habit of the Russians of confining political dissidents in mental hospitals. I have no knowledge of any overt use of psychiatry for political repression in this country. Indeed, even the Marxist trained psychiatrists in Russia might genuinely believe that anybody who is not appreciative of the delights of the Socialist Fatherland must be mentally ill.

However there is in this country an aspect of mental treatment which could be described as socially repressive, even though those who practise it are not consciously engaged in social repression. In a society which depends on coercive authority and has provision for compulsory medical treatment, this is inevitable. As I mentioned in the previous section, the emphasis in much of the treatment is on rehabilitation. What this means in effect is seeing that the patient conforms to a certain pattern of socially acceptable behaviour. What that pattern is, of course, is determined by what psychiatrists,

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The current review supplement is devoted to several articles on aspects of health.

We invite comments from readers which, together with several other similar articles on hand, we hope to form as another review section.



nurses and therapists think it is. Since they are by and large average products of our society, the tendency is to reinforce the status quo. Thus certain classes of persons are more liable to find themselves in mental hospitals than others. Those who live on social security for instance, since the "preservation and improvement of work habits" is an express part of rehabilitation. One thinks immediately of the young person, possibly a smoker of cannabis, formerly a successful product of the educational system with the possibility of a university degree, who rejects the role in which he has been cast and either doesn't work or works only in casual unskilled jobs. Such behaviour is very likely to be regarded as a symptom of Mental Illness.

## THE CONCEPT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Having described in a somewhat cursory fashion the operation of that vast bureaucratic organisation giving employment to thousands and fortunes to some, it is time to examine the concept on which the whole gargantuan edifice rests.

The concept we are concerned with is Mental Illness, since, as I indicated cryptically at the beginning, Mental Health is simply the absence of Mental Illness. Among that small minority who concern themselves with such things, the concept itself is a matter of heated controversy. I find it a little odd that this controversy seems to have by-passed most of those professionally involved. What I can only describe as uncritical acceptance seems to be the norm.

As far as the informed are concerned, opinions range from the proposition that there is no such thing as Mental Illness to the notion that it is in the same category as Influenza. As many readers will be familiar with the work of R.D. Laing, whose thesis seems to be that the so-called Mentally Ill are really acting as scape-goats for society, I will concentrate instead on a lesser known but equally interesting writer in the field, the American Thomas Szasz. He has written a number of books but the most apposite is called "The Myth of Mental Illness." Szasz's thesis is a philosophical one, based I suspect on the work of Ryle and Wittgenstein. When we say that a person is Mentally Ill, asserts Szasz, we are using a metaphor. If we take the metaphor literally we create a myth. This leads to some curious anomalies. When a person is ill we normally expect him to feel ill and voluntarily to seek treatment. When we say a person is Mentally Ill however, we often feel that he denies being ill and indeed frequently says he never felt better in his life; yet he is forcibly submitted to treatment. We also find that the symptoms which led to him being diagnosed as Mentally Ill often turn out to be behaviour which somebody else thinks is undesirable. The important point made by Szasz is that the question of undesirable behaviour is moral and political, not medical.

Actually the acceptance of a concept of Mental Illness distinct from physical illness, as anything other than a metaphor, depends upon the belief in that old philosophical chestnut - Dualism - the separation of mind and body.

At this stage it might be interesting to try to clear our minds of preconceptions and see how a concept of Mental Illness can be applied. As some readers may know, as well as being an amateur journalist, I am a potter. While I spend most of my time making pots, I have for some years also taught pottery, both in a Mental Hospital and in Adult Evening Classes. Over the past fifteen years or so I have had the opportunity of close contact with thousands of mental patients and have also been able to compare their behaviour with putatively normal adults in a similar situation. The first point to note is that the two groups are not mutually exclusive. Several individuals have appeared in both groups and one could not say that being in either group made a substantial difference to their behaviour. In the majority of cases, indeed, individuals could have changed groups without undue incongruity. I also have nurses in my Mental Hospital class as part of their training. In a situation where uniforms are not worn, visitors are unable to tell who are the patients and who are the staff. From this we can conclude that in the specific context of a pottery class, in most cases (though not in all) it is not possible to tell who is Mentally Ill without some other reference. In practice this reference turns out to be - knowing who is being treated for

Mental Illness - which makes for a certain circularity of definition.

What then are the reasons that cause people to be treated for Mental Illness, that is, to be defined as Mentally Ill? This subject needs a whole study to itself. Such a study would contain clues as to whether the concept of Mental Illness is justified, whether it is useful, or indeed whether it is harmful. It is my impression that these questions are not being asked within the Mental Health Service. I have only my own casual observances as a guide.

There are obviously a great variety of reasons why people seek or are submitted to treatment. Some are physically ill or injured (multiple sclerosis, strokes, car accidents etc) in a way which affects their behaviour; some get into trouble with the police and are sent by the courts; some attempt suicide (which seems to mean automatic admittance to Mental Hospital); but it is my impression that the majority have problems in their relationship with those with whom they are emotionally involved. Either they themselves, or parents, husband or wife, go to a GP and say, "Something has gone wrong, what can we do about it?" The GP sends them to a psychiatrist and the process is started.

## CONCLUSION

My own opinion, for what it is worth, is that whether one thinks a concept of Mental Illness is justified or not, the whole thing has got out of hand. A notion that seems to have tacit currency, that if one falls short of the stereotype of the successful happy extrovert, if one is subject to the miseries, inadequacies, self-doubts, failures, frustrations and fantasies that are the normal lot of human existence, then one is somehow Mentally Ill, is dangerous nonsense.

We live in a gullible age, an age in which the quack is King; quack politicians, quack economists, quack scientists and quack doctors.

"You don't like your next door neighbour, you are frightened when your son goes out on his motor-bike, you think it a tragedy that children die of starvation in Bangladesh? Take my pills and you will be cured of your disease."

Such an illusion leads to a monochrome existence, to dependence on psychiatrists and social workers, to loss of freedom. Take drugs by all means if it makes you happier, as you take alcohol and nicotine, but don't think you are being cured of an illness.

There is of course a small minority whose behaviour is so abnormal something must be done with them. Such people used to be described as mad. I think this remains the best description and the place where they seek refuge from the society in which they are unable to function is best described as an asylum. They need our tolerance and our help. Are we so bemused by labels that we need to call them ill before we can give it?

GEOFFREY BARFOOT

## NOTES

- (1) See "Can drugs affect Personality" from "Some Myths in Human Biology", BBC Publications 1972
- (2) At one time it was recommended that ECT should not be given to patients who were likely to return to socially important brain work.
- (3) See "Report to the US Congress on Lobotomy and Psychosurgery" by Peter Breggin.
- (4) Dr Gray Walter of the Burden Neurological Institute.





This article, written from inside the NHS, goes far beyond the treatment of sickness and we feel merits as wide a circulation as it can be helped to achieve. It is here reproduced from *New Humanist* (Nov/Dec 1976), the journal of the Rationalist Press Association. (Single copy 50p + 11p post. Annual subscription to non members £5. (\$10), from 88 Islington High St. London N1 8EW.)

## ECONOMIC POLICY AND HEALTH

### PETER DRAPER

AT A time of economic crisis it is all too easy to gloss over the uncomfortable fact that severe damage has *already* been inflicted on the National Health Service, and therefore on the public which it is there to serve, by *sudden and ill-thought-out* cuts in public expenditure. Astonishingly, further cuts in public expenditure which may well again affect the NHS are not only being publicly discussed with relative equanimity—they are actually being enthusiastically advocated by powerful sectors of the press and broadcasting and by certain other groups. And the real implications for health and the NHS do not appear to be even dimly recognised.

The role of the mass media in shaping the discussion not only of economic policy, but of health and other social policies, is *always* important—but in the period when negotiations with the IMF and other potential creditors are occurring, a failure to understand or to communicate the key issues can literally be lethal.

To raise the question of *health*, and the quite different but closely related issue of the wisdom of cutting back on the funding of the NHS is *not* to imply that health services in this or other industrialised countries do not need to change—and *change fundamentally* in a number of ways. No country in the world can afford to sustain the current financial trajectory of modern scientific medicine. *But major social changes should be preceded by thorough and informed public discussion—and the changes which will sometimes rightly involve less expenditure, should be planned rather than dictated by "economic imperatives"*. We need to examine these current economic imperatives which commonly lead to the following prescription:

The development of health services, including the development of highly technological and specialised medicine, is highly desirable, but the country is in a desperate economic situation and we must check and probably even reduce health and other social services in order to get the country back on its feet and create wealth; when we have got out of our economic crisis, *then* is the time to think of developing health and other social services.

This paper is an attempt to explain why this fashionable and plausible interpretation of the consequences of cutting public expenditure in order to try to "get the economy right" is, in fact, an interpretation that is highly damaging to *health—your health*. And the issues involved are much wider and deeper than those which stem from a controversial and short-sighted approach to budgeting in the public sector. Abrupt and ill-considered changes in the NHS budget are only part of the problem. The point is that *economic policy itself has indirect but profound and far-reaching effects on health*. The paper, while a personal view, is based on published<sup>1</sup> and current work of the Unit for the Study of Health Policy, Guy's Hospital Medical School.

Cuts already made to the NHS budget ever since the highly damaging decision as long ago as the Summer of 1973, which ruined the orderly development of Health Centres, have had direct effects on staffing, equipment and

building, and indirect, but all too real, effects on patient care. Sudden and ill-thought-out cuts also have severe effects on *morale*—the morale of staff such as family doctors, many of whose carefully made plans for moving into Health Centres were wrecked almost at a moment's notice in 1973. In too many cases, generous co-operation in the time-consuming process of careful planning has been replaced by anger, by despair, by cynicism. The fruits of years of persuading followed by years of planning have suddenly been lost.

Just how much have sudden financial changes for the NHS, which stemmed from treating the NHS budget as another means of regulating the economy, already cost us? How *costly* are the apparent savings? And how long will it take to repair the damage already inflicted—the kinds of damage that *can* be repaired?

However, whilst many would probably concede that significant and regrettable damage *has* already been inflicted on the NHS, and that further mutilating surgery seems imminent, they appear to accept this situation because they have also accepted the pervasive but wrong-headed economic prescription mentioned earlier. Why this prescription does not stand up to close examination is discussed below.

#### "Getting the economy right"

The fashionable economic prescription for health which was outlined above is wrong-headed, first because it totally ignores the many damaging effects on health that are all part and parcel of "getting the economy right". These damaging effects include not only the health hazards for all kinds of workers involved in speeding up (or trying to speed up) the economic machine, but also the deleterious effects of persuading people to consume damaging products and to over-consume beneficial or

#### Note

This is the first of a series of Discussion Papers by members of the Unit for the Study of Health Policy, which is an interdisciplinary team set up in 1975 with the aid of a grant from the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London. The Unit is part of the Department of Community Medicine, Guy's Hospital Medical School, and is assisted in its work by an Advisory Council drawn from academics and people who work in and use the National Health Service. However, the views expressed in Unit publications are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of its Advisory Council, the King Edward's Hospital Fund, or Guy's Hospital Medical School. Further copies of this Paper may be obtained from the Unit for the Study of Health Policy, 8 Newcomen Street, London SE1 1YR, price 40p including postage. Remittances must accompany orders and should be made payable to The Special Trustees of Guy's Hospital (Health Policy).



"neutral" products. The problem of over-consumption is considered first.

Some major nutritional problems in the UK—such as obesity—result from *over-consumption* and the wrong kinds of foodstuffs. As nutritionists, health visitors and many teachers are only too well aware, "getting the economy right" includes employing people with powerful psychological and sociological skills to persuade us to consume *more* food and to consume *damaging* foods. For example, sugar, chocolate bars, over-refined breakfast cereals and many biscuits are presented as "energy" foods for people who typically need *less* rather than *more* calories. As commonly consumed, such foods also cause other problems, including damage to teeth. The sane approach to doing something about our appalling dental health is not to provide more and more "salvaging dentistry" when we can afford it. A responsible and informed approach to dental health simply cannot avoid the sensitive issue of "anti-health advertising". For parents to try to teach children sound dental habits and yet ignore the professional persuasion directed at encouraging children to suck sweets and develop a taste for sugary soft drinks is at best frustrating. Can parents or children in any sense be said to be "choosing freely" when eating and drinking habits are expensively and professionally shaped?

But this particular group of nutritional problems is more serious than obesity and rampant dental caries, though these alone should give cause for thought and action. The problem of obesity is important not only in itself, but in relation to preventing or at least checking the "epidemic" of heart attacks and because of its relationship to one kind of diabetes and osteoarthritis. The last thing that many people need is skilled persuasion to consume even more food and drink. But to the conventional economists and their disciples, "getting the economy right" includes encouraging the food and drink industries to *increase* their sales indiscriminately. "Success" is more consumption, more economic activity—irrespective of the effects on health.

Our major nutritional problems go beyond those of excessive calories and obesity, we are also eating the *wrong kinds* of foods. An impressive amount of evidence has now been accumulated which shows that Western diets are typically lacking in fibre or "roughage". A number of important disorders would largely be preventable (or substantially reduced) by palatable and simple changes in eating and drinking; these conditions include cancer of the large bowel and diverticulitis.<sup>2</sup> An eloquent illustration of this problem is printed on the packets of a modern laxative (Fybogel): the description states that the laxative "acts by mixing with the contents of the lower alimentary tract to provide additional fibre and retain water, *thus overcoming some of the deficiencies associated with modern refined diets*" (emphasis added). Would anyone seriously suggest that it is in the public interest for people to be persuaded to consume more of our "modern refined diets" in order to help certain sectors of the food industry so that we are then wealthy enough to be able to afford more Fybogel?

Because of the interests involved in these issues it might be as well to make it crystal clear that the question is not whether doctors, or the Department of Health, or some other body, should force certain foods upon a reluctant and uninterested public. Nor should considerations of health necessarily be paramount. The point is that *skilled persuasion is currently employed which too often fosters unhealthy dietary patterns, that "economic progress" as currently perceived can be expected to increase such problems, and that public choice is constrained because the public has no control over which foods and drinks will be pushed or neglected.*

Nutritional problems constitute an important example of over-consumption and damaging consumption partly

because nutritional policy is too often neglected, and partly because at least one example of "expensively stimulated unhealthy consumption" is well known—cigarette smoking. However, despite the fact that cigarettes are *lethal*, the point to note is that they are *still* being advertised in the press and on the hoardings. Current attempts to hit the various targets of economic development clearly seem to be using a blunderbuss. It is relevant to note in passing that Dr David Owen, speaking recently as Health Minister, said that his major worry about banning cigarette advertising was the effect this might have on some newspapers because of the precarious financial state of the press. In this light, it is scarcely surprising that other problems of indiscriminate economic activity which do *not* reach the proportions of a catastrophe, such as the promotion from time to time of dangerous or unhealthy fashions (for instance, platform shoes and stiletto heels), seem to escape even thoughtful discussion. And though these examples involve injuries rather than deaths, accidents caused by platform shoes have included facial lacerations sustained by tripping and plunging into a window, as well as the predictable ankle injuries.

Leaving problems of consumption and turning to production, the hazards to workers from industrial accidents and poisoning are probably fairly well understood—at least in principle—though the recently discussed problems caused by asbestos, by diving accidents involved in racing for North Sea Oil, and by radiation hazards in nuclear energy, will give few the confidence that risks will be tackled vigorously enough if the relevant products are perceived as very important to "the economy".

Many of those who have been amongst the most enthusiastic advocates of the fashionable prescription for British economic recovery have been business executives and company directors. One wonders whether, given their high mortality from heart attacks, lung cancer, strokes, road accidents, suicide and so on, company directors and their wives are really sure that "getting the economy right" will allow them even to *survive* to enjoy the conventional economist's Utopia. Social and health goals are sometimes quite fundamental rather than "optional extras". And private medical insurance schemes, which are partly sold as "convenient care and visiting", are of no relevance if subscribers are not even alive to appreciate the unrestricted visiting and so on. Nor is "screening" an answer to the problem. Detecting established disease before it reaches the stage of producing attention-demanding symptoms is a far cry from preventing illnesses from ever becoming established in the first place.

This problem of "executive health" perhaps merits a clinical description—a case study—of what is involved for many of those who are usually held to be particularly responsible for "getting the economy right". A highly qualified graduate in his forties who was seen recently epitomises the ideal "Euro-executive". In addition to excellent technical qualifications and considerable sales experience, he is fluent in French and German and has lived on the Continent for several years. His export record is outstanding. What does this give him and his family? First, he is about four stones overweight, partly from under-exercising and partly from poor but typical dietary habits which include eating and drinking to excess—*food and drink are to some extent used as socially acceptable tranquillisers* for unreasonable stress. He can afford cigars rather than cigarettes—but he inhales. His "Euro-competence" does not allow him an informed and thoughtful appreciation of European culture—far from it. What his frequent journeys to Europe mean in practice are long and frenzied car journeys and an unenviable knowledge of the passenger lounges of European airports. He exists from one Hilton to another—attempting to be ready for the next change of plans at short notice. And, of course, whilst he is now



bent on working at an even more frenzied pace, his European competitors are learning English and also chasing round the UK, Continental Europe and North America, intent soon on learning Spanish in order to "hit Latin America".

Little wonder that our Euro-executive and his wife are again seriously contemplating the proper cultivation of their orchard and garden and "dropping out" into a more sane existence as small-holders. They can see no kind of "middle way". Their BUPA subscriptions and the prospect of "better rewards and incentives for executives" seem to be inadequate and somewhat irrelevant. What an honest and competent physician should advise about the consequences of each course of action is clear. "Unless you significantly change your life-style, you are killing yourself." How many executives are in fact getting such frank advice? And if they get it, what can they actually do to find a middle way until our basic economic goals are changed and reflect a sense of maturity and discrimination?

Thus "getting the economy right" involves major health costs for producers and consumers. It is quite unacceptable to those who are interested in *health* rather than the "busyness of health services" (with all the well-intentioned but essentially misdirected efforts aimed at salvaging and mopping up), to collude with these currently fashionable ideas of economic and social progress. But whilst the reality of these concerns may be admitted, ought we, reluctantly, to accept this massive toll of illness and death simply because we have no choice—because we face economic and social *imperatives* rather than *choices*?

### The economic facts of life

It will be seen from the previous discussion that one of the so-called "imperatives" often cited by economists and economic commentators is "We cannot consume more than we can produce". This assertion, however, overlooks two key points. First, *some of our consumption is not only unnecessary, it is actually damaging*. Secondly, *some of this consumption simply generates the need for the consumption of health and other salvaging services*.

One of the most forceful rationales for this "imperative" and one of the most pernicious recent influences on thinking about the British economy has come from the popularisation by the *Sunday Times* of the work of two Oxford economists, Bacon and Eltis. This popularisation perhaps reached its nadir in the cartoon which appeared with yet another homily from B and E in the issue of 14 November, 1976. The cartoonist depicted lemmings (British workers) plunging over the cliff of "productive work" into the sea of "non-productive work". According to the B and E hypothesis, warmly and uncritically backed by the *Sunday Times* editorials of 7 and 14 November (and by a recent editorial in the *Guardian*, 10 November), the nub of our problem is said to be that too many workers have gone into "non-productive" work instead of "wealth creation".

The essence of this classification is the distinction between those who are employed in the manufacture of "marketed" goods and services and those who are not. Thus NHS nurses and doctors, teachers in state schools, polytechnics and universities, social workers, architects and engineers in most of the public sector, and *many* others, are "non-productive". Marketed activities, whether they involve making sweets, hair dyes, underarm deodorants or unnecessary packaging or doing bureaucratic work such as most insurance and banking are "productive".

From this perspective, therefore, Britain's economic problems result from the fact that while both "productive"

and "non-productive" workers make demands on the output of the economy, only those engaged in "productive" work are providing the goods and services demanded. Thus, the idea that we must learn to consume only what we produce. Amongst other things, however, these popularisations tend to play down or overlook such scarcely unimportant issues as unemployment and the propensity for banks and insurance companies to invest our savings in office blocks instead of socially useful kinds of manufacturing industry—indeed to invest in so many *superfluous* office blocks. And so many of those extravagant and unwelcome monuments to private bureaucracy in prime sites are *still* unused—but to B and E, the builders were "productive".

The practical policy implications of this sort of reasoning are evident in our current preoccupation with the "Balance of Payments" problem. Our Euro-executive is dedicated to exporting and judges his activities to be unarguably in the national interest—after all, we all know that we have to export in order to import. But *how much and what* do we have to import? In supermarkets in the South of England—and probably elsewhere in the UK—there is beer from Malaga in Spain and butter from Germany. In what sense do we "need" such imports—for which our Euro-executive is killing himself? Beer and butter may seem trivial examples, but they illustrate a fundamental point—we have to export partly in order to pay for quite *unnecessary* imports. (It is worth remembering what driving beer from Malaga is doing to the Spanish truck-drivers concerned—and to the many people adversely affected in different ways by such transport.)

To suggest that the import/export game has some distinctly dubious components is not automatically to propose a "siege economy". Despite the highly significant rarity of an informed discussion of this subject in the press or on television, a saner trading pattern could be achieved in other ways. For instance, each of us could do what many ecologists recommend and buy *local* or at least British goods—where we can't make the products ourselves. Avoiding unnecessary imports and the unnecessary use of fuel oils may not square with conventional economic wisdom or please importers, but such actions *would* help balance of payments problems, protect the environment and safeguard non-renewable natural resources. However, whilst individual decisions could substantially reduce imports, a thoughtful and informed discussion of the place of *certain* import controls is long overdue. Equally, some investigative journalism directed at displaying the absurdity of much of our importing and revealing the various interests which generate such absurdities would also be useful. Could anyone reasonably argue that it is in the public interest to continue to treat the problem of imports as superficially as it has recently been treated by the mass media?

The fact that health and social services are heavily and rightly involved with the old, and that an aging population means an increased workload for these services, also seems to have escaped the notice of those who view economic recovery in the conventional way. Instead of prudent planning and development for these services, the latest panacea is, of course, to "cut public expenditure"—and to cut it savagely and hastily, anti-planning. Forgotten, too—as if they had never occurred—are all the discussions of management panaceas which only a little while ago were said to be the secret of industrial and economic recovery—productivity, automation, job enrichment, the computerisation of banking and insurance, flexitime, etc, etc, etc. Contrast the careful investment planning said to be vital for manufacturing industry—including all the firms making sweets, platform shoes, hair dyes and deodorants—with the anti-planning thought suitable for health, education and social services. The budgets for services can apparently be tinkered with—and slashed if need be—in



attempts to regulate the economy unless those budgets are concerned with training people to manufacture hair dyes, deodorants and so on. Such myopia defies even Anglo-Saxon description.

Thus, the constraints and "facts of life" about the economy which are currently fashionable tend to neglect obscenities—genuinely shocking things—which those with eyes which can still see find only too apparent: *massive unemployment*, squandered investment, the pervasive fiddling of tax, and inflationary speculation in commodities.

## Conclusion

Instead of indulging in any more of the economic commentator's sado-masochism, "Realise how much you will have to suffer before you even get back to where you were a few years ago", it is now urgent to examine the issues in a different light and ask whether the enormous health costs of the conventional wisdom are worth bearing and to consider the potential creativity of the human resources which we are *wasting*. We could clearly achieve much more than we are currently achieving—if only by giving serious and imaginative attention to tackling the problem of unemployment.

One way of looking at the issues discussed is to see much of the contemporary economic discussion and behaviour as a cult—the cult of economism—"forget the implications for *people*, we have to act in the interest of *the economy*". The rejection of this cult will occur only if those people who can recognise a new cult when they see one can make their voices heard—in whatever quarter is open to them. At some point, the controllers of the various communication channels through which we mainly talk to each other in groups may *have* to listen. The problem is that time is not on our side. The IMF and the Cabinet are shaping far-reaching decisions *now*.

The religious, and for that matter the consciously non-religious (people who are specially interested in values), will immediately recognise the ideology behind the current cult of economism—naïve materialism. This minority also knows only too well that the version of social progress which is being foisted on us will continue to contribute nothing significant to the Third World. Indeed, in many ways, for instance, by wasting cereals on producing animal protein for consumption by people and pets, and by fostering the idea that progress lies in rapid urbanisation and high technology, it will actually *generate* more problems and further destroy indigenous skills.

From another perspective, economists who are familiar with the writings of ecologically-informed practitioners of their trade (such as Boulding, Kapp, Mishan or Schumacher<sup>1</sup>), will recognise the school of economic thought hinted at here—as they will also have noted its virtual absence from the editorial and economics columns of the press. Occasional pieces by Harford Thomas, tucked away at the back of the *Guardian*, represent fig-leaves rather than responsibility and intellectual vitality. Broadly—and oversimplifying for the sake of brevity—"stable state" or "discriminating growth" economics certainly involves an awareness of the importance of "natural and non-renewable capital" such as fossil fuels, and a reluctance to treat side-effects or "externalities" of industry, such as poisoning and pollution, as unworthy of serious attention.

The social costs of the extraordinarily narrow public debate about economic goals and strategies have been and will continue to be massive—despite the fact that we can expect those costs to get little or no attention from the otherwise obsessional measurers. And the costs reach far beyond health and educational costs—they include, for example the criminal and racial problems fuelled by our blindness to the evils of unemployment *and our failure so far to mobilise creative talents to make a system serve*

*people rather than sacrifice people on the altar of economism.*

One can only hope that the narrowness and shallowness of the recent public debates will at least have been carefully and critically noted by those who are officially charged with commenting shortly on the structures and processes of the press and broadcasting institutions (the McGregor and Annan inquiries).

Meanwhile, those who value their health, and the health of their friends and relatives, and who can conceptualise "public health", need to make their voices heard. Individual efforts are needed—social reforms are needed—revolutions in thinking are needed.

The problem is essentially one of policy and politics—not only of creating a more meaningful relationship between economic and health policy, but amongst different sectors of social policy more generally. Instead of making politicians the scapegoats for *our* failure to conduct our public affairs in a civilized and creative way we need to start by recognizing our *collective* responsibilities. The core of the problem is neither incompetence in politicians nor evil conspiracies. We have subjected good men and women to intolerable pressures. The responsibility is ours. But to discuss the issues adequately and to have any chance of creating imaginative solutions which find a broad measure of agreement we need the help of the mass media. Essentially, the challenge is artistic and moral: how to make the debate of important social issues informative, lively—and healthy.

## Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to record my appreciation of the generous help I have received both in writing this statement and in doing the work on which it is based—from my colleagues in the Unit, Gordon Best, Pam Blake, Pat Bolton, John Dennis and Colin Thunhurst; from my head of department, Jock Anderson; and from many others who are genuinely too numerous to mention. Any errors and the personal interpretations are mine, the midwifery and paediatric skills of health policy are theirs.

## References

1. *Unit publications*. The first report of the Unit was a sixty-page booklet *Health, Money and the National Health Service* (April 1976) which contains much of the data on which the present statement is based, and it also gives some forty key references to relevant medical, statistical and economic research. *Health and Wealth* appeared in the national journal for Community Health Councils (*CHC News*, August 1976). The paper concentrates on what are seen as dangerous and quite unacceptable omissions from the Department of Health's Consultative Document on prevention *Prevention and Health: Everybody's business*. Attention is drawn to the health implications of economic, transport and other external-to-the-health-service policies. *The Unhealthy Economy* was a recent comment in the *Lancet* (30 October 1976, p 954), which suggested that the public discussion of UK economic problems was essentially hypochondriacal—that the "body economic" was suffering too much temperature-taking and advice, pills and potions from quacks and money-lenders. What a wise physician might have advised such a highly neurotic patient was outlined.
2. Some of the key references are given in *Health, Money and the NHS*. The paperback *Taking the Rough with the Smooth* (Pan 1976) by Dr Andrew Stanway is strongly recommended as an eminently readable, balanced, and positive-rather-than-puritanical introduction to the "high-fibre diet" story. If you think this story is simply "All Bran"—read it and catch up with some of this fascinating nutritional research.
3. Interview with Dr David Owen in the BBC "Inside Medicine" programme on prevention, 1976.
4. For a classic overview of the problems associated with indiscriminate economic growth see: *The Social Costs of Private Enterprise* by K. W. Kapp (Schocken 1971). For different but sympathetic perspectives on these same problems see *The Costs of Economic Growth* by E. J. Mishan (Pelican 1973); *Small is Beautiful* by E. F. Schumacher (Blond Briggs, 1973); *The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth* by K. E. Boulding in *Environmental Quality in a Growing Economy, Resources for the Future* (Johns Hopkins Press 1966). A book devoted to an anthology of writings by this school of economists is *Toward a Steady-State Economy* edited by H. E. Daly (Freeman 1973).



## NECESSARY EVIL?

"..... if one can be more or less sure that no scientist would dare to treat a man as a rabbit is treated, it is always to be feared that the scientific profession, if permitted, will subject living men to scientific experiments, perhaps less cruel, but which would not be less disastrous for its human victims. If scientists cannot carry out experiments on individual human bodies, they will demand no less than that they be carried out on the social body, and this is what at all costs must be prevented" - Bakunin

Scientific "freedom" is a sacred cow to the 20th century, just as economic "freedom" was to the nineteenth. Today few economists would either dare or think it practicable to advocate total economic "freedom". Its appallingly exploitative effects on the society of its time have long since been obvious. But though the social effects of full scientific "freedom" (the freedom of an elite equipped with esoteric knowledge to exercise total power) are by implication far greater still, still few people question it. On the contrary, it is often placed squarely among the classic human rights demands, on a par with full artistic freedom.

In his attitude to science Bakunin was ahead not only of most of the scientifically more cultured anarchists of his time, but of almost anyone. Already, in the then relatively very few experiments carried out on animals he saw the future dangers for human beings. These have only recently been described succinctly by John Berger in his *New Society* article "Vanishing Animals" (31 March 1977) when he writes: "This reduction of the animal, which has a theoretical as well as economic history, is part of the same process as that by which men have been reduced to isolated and consuming units. Indeed, during this period an approach to animals often prefigured an approach to man. The mechanical view of the animal's work capacity was later applied to that of workers. Nearly all modern techniques of social conditioning were first established with animal experiments. Today behaviourists like Skinner imprison the very concept of man within the limits of what they conclude from their artificial tests with animals."

This is the basis on which many politically aware people show concern for what is being done to animals today, just as it was Bakunin's when he thought of that rabbit. But others, for instance, Blake, Wollstonecraft, Shelley, Louise Michel, have gone yet further in opposing in itself the cruel treatment of other species. They saw the liberation of other species as an integral part of the liberation of the human being, which is also a liberation of the mind, and which implies the restoration of humankind from a position above the "state of nature" to one that is within it. Today anarchists have become increasingly aware of this particular and most pernicious form of oppression - one that is conducted in our name. Offhand I recall recent articles not only in *FREEDOM* but in the American *The Match*, the French *Le Monde Libertaire*, the Italian *Volontà*, and for that matter, in Durham's *Plant* (no 3½). The second issue of the Canadian *Open Road* takes up the subject again with the opening remark that "Animal liberation is standing up on its hind legs in Great Britain."

Groups like the Animal Liberation Front are presently carrying out direct action, sabotage and arson on a scale unsurpassed by any other groups, political or otherwise, in Britain. These "tough minded militants" as *Open Road* calls them have so far used admirably intelligent and resourceful tactics and gained a great deal of publicity for their struggle in the process. Their main targets are factory farming and vivisection. Here, because they stand before the hallowed gates of Science and Medicine, people who decry the use of animals for cosmetics on ethical grounds fall silent or even encourage vivisection without probing further into the manifold grey areas of medical research. Like the priest of old the scientist has but to lift his hand and say, Only have faith and ye shall be saved! Science is the true religion of today. It saves us both from our own weaknesses and from our fears of the unknown.

The elixir of eternal life might yet be found in a mouse's brain.

It is hard to argue against the use of armadillos in the search for a cure for leprosy. Indeed, it is hard to question the orthodox interpretation of the scriptures when one knows no Latin or Greek, but it takes little effort to realise that a massive part of the temple of Medicine, like the Church, is given over to the pursuit of mammon. For a picture of the size and influence of the pharmaceutical industry alone one can do little better than quote from the Counter Information Services Anti-report on the welfare services in this country.

"By far the biggest and most insidious cuckoo in the NHS nest is the private drug industry... Doctors are deluged with brochures, publicity material, apparently objective research papers, and free samples of the latest, would-be miracle drugs to try out on their patients. Millions are spent on advertising in the medical journals... The top drug firms such as Roche, Cyanamid, Ciba Geigy, Beechams, Glaxo, Boots, Wellcome etc. are powerful international corporations with worldwide markets. The UK market, and the number of NHS prescriptions, has been a constant growth area. In 1971 the overall UK market, which includes over the counter sales and animal pharmaceuticals, was worth £280m." Roche, Fisons and others make enormous profits out of the NHS. The emphasis on drug treatment in this country, leading to a "vast increase in drug dependency, in adverse drug effects, in hospitalization for over dosage and in accidental and suicidal deaths" (Alan Kass) has engendered a numbed dependency, especially among the 'harassed housewives' who are the industry's main target. But to achieve this miserable result in itself costs the lives and very often the intense suffering of millions of living beings with complicated nervous systems. This is perfectly well known to the 'animal technicians' (a speciesist term if ever there was one!) whose job is largely to decide how long the suffering may be prolonged before death, and who dare not complain too loudly when their jobs are at stake.

One of the many new militant pressure groups which have formed to combat this form and other forms of animal oppression is Ostrich which formed only recently in Liverpool. Ostrich have explained their attitude to vivisection to us as follows: "To some people the word vivisection conjures up the image of a band of dedicated doctors and technicians carrying out unpleasant but necessary experiments for the good of mankind, to others the word means millions of animals suffering severe and needless pain. The terms means experimentation on live animals with or without anaesthetic. Ever since the outcry raised over ICI's smoking beagles, many people have heard of vivisection but for most their knowledge goes little beyond this. Every year in Britain over 5 million experiments take place. 100,000 animals die each week in British laboratories and the animals include mice, rats, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, cats, dogs, pigs, monkeys, sheep and donkeys. The legislation to govern these experiments is the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act. This provides for only 14 inspectors who make approximately 5000 visits a year and arising from these there are virtually no prosecutions - no other single law in Britain appears to be so scrupulously kept! Of all these experiments, only 15 in every 100 are performed under anaesthetic and contrary to public opinion 2/3 of all experiments are for commercial purposes.

"Animals are used for the testing of many household goods, for cosmetics and also for weapons, for example the testing of water cannon on sheep by the Home Office. Even within the medical field there is much duplication. Many of these experiments are totally irrelevant to human beings. For example, in cosmetics, animals are made to eat large quantities of lipstick or some other product until 50% of the animals die. Similarly, in medicine, if you are going to give a dose of a few milligrams of a drug to a patient weighing 70 kilograms, why give hundreds of times that amount to a tiny rat or mouse. Testing on animals does not prevent harm to



human beings, there is the classic case of the drug thalidomide and every day side effects are discovered from some product or another. A much more reliable method of testing is that of tissue culture. This method using human cells is much more able to predict the effect on a human, a human being has little in common with a rat or cat physically. Tissue culture usually involves the use of computers and machinery generally, and whereas this may be expensive initially to set up, it does not have the high maintenance cost of continuously replacing expensive laboratory animals. Boots Ltd and Yardley Ltd have both publically stated that they do not test on animals, and if they can do so there is no reason why other firms cannot follow suit."

This does not mean that Boots and Yardley do not rely for their basic products on those other firms who have not yet followed suit; there are very few manufacturers indeed who can be relied on to have nothing to do with animal experiments or animal products.\*

Ostrich remind us that a bill is at present going through Parliament to ban completely the testing of cosmetics on animals and that the advisory committee set up under Lord Houghton has finally had some recognition from the government that a change in legislation is required.

We may have no faith in the law; nevertheless we should support by every means any move which leads towards the liberation of other species. In the words of Ostrich, "We must expand our moral horizons to beings capable of experiencing pleasure or pain. The idea of men as Lords of Creation dispensing pain and death according to their whim is outdated and must be changed".

It should be also remembered that the liberation of the animal from the tyranny of human weakness or greed (so often artificially induced) is part of the wider struggle against a profit motivated and all powerful industry on which the modern State depends.

\* One of these is Beauty Without Cruelty, which can be contacted via 53 Marloes Road, Kensington, London W8 6LD. Also at Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge, Kent.

The address of Ostrich is: 7 Borrowdale Rd, Liverpool L15 3LO.



The above drawing is by John Olday.  
See news/current affairs section.

## Slave Labour in Mental Hospitals

YOU'RE WOKEN at half-past seven and then you go to the wash-rooms to compete for a wash-bowl, as there exist five to the forty or so patients.

After waiting your turn you sit down for breakfast whilst the staff distribute medication.

Irrespective of whether you wish to consume these toxic drugs—you have no option as injections are given to those who maintain the drugs are having bad side effects and are worsening their condition.

Nine o' Clock is time for Industrial "Therapy". This consists of packing toilet rolls, sticking labels on boxes, putting string into carrier bags, etc. Oh yes! Big Brother is watching you. If you fail to attend by nine a.m. prompt, the ward is rung and you are first of all subject to verbal, and sometimes even physical bullying.

The wages for doing these menial, soul-degrading tasks vary from nothing to two pounds. Work finishes at 4 p.m. So if you get the maximum you are earning less than 6p an hour. If you visit the toilet "too often" you lose money. If you complain or persistently refuse to attend, the matter is referred to your consultant and more often than not you are ejected from the hospital and blacklisted (irrespective of your state of health).

After work comes tea. Then you are "free" to do anything at your disposal. Due to insufficient chairs you can't all watch television; the same applies to the radio. In fact I estimate that 80% of patients go to bed before 8 p.m.. Reasons: sheer boredom and despair.

Assaults aren't exactly rare: I once witnessed a staff nurse punch a wheelchair-confined woman in the face. She required stitches to her lips. This nurse was promoted to charge nurse within less than a year of this incident! (Now you know how to get on as a psychiatric nurse.) You are often subjected to abuse and if one is brave enough to answer back the possibility exists of your being confined to a locked room, consisting of a bed and nothing else.

Clothing is provided to long-term patients. Rarely do the clothes fit, consequently a lot of the patients look like clowns.

The doctors never listen to complaints and always side with the staff. You are lucky if you are interviewed for more than ten minutes a week! Naturally, the consultants would rather exploit illness through private medicine than spend half an hour with a N.H.S. patient.

If you are physically sick the duty doctor has to be called out, so if it's late at night, emergency or not you either wait till the morning, or you die.

E.C.T. (electro-convulsive therapy) is still used without anaesthetic—contrary to the 1959 Mental Health Act. Often it is given compulsorily. If you manage to evade it, again you can be ejected and blacklisted.

Not all nurses are the same—some are dedicated and willing to assist you with your amelioration of your condition, the rest are little Hitlers.

The answer is for patients to be elected to make all policy making decisions, e.g., promotion of staff, investigations into complaints of assault, etc., etc.

Unfortunately the majority of patients are long-term, and are conditioned to accept the status quo. They have never known anything different.

I call for:

- 1) an end to slave labour.
- 2) Decent clothing to be distributed.
- 3) More entertainment.
- 4) Constructive therapy.
- 5) The integration of patients with society. More hostels and outside living accommodation should be provided.
- 6) New hospitals well over 75 per cent of psychiatric institutions were built in the last century.

Finally, may I inform anyone who is compulsorily detained under the 1959 Mental Health Act that if you can go A.W.O.L. for a period of 28 days you are automatically discharged.

C. M. W.