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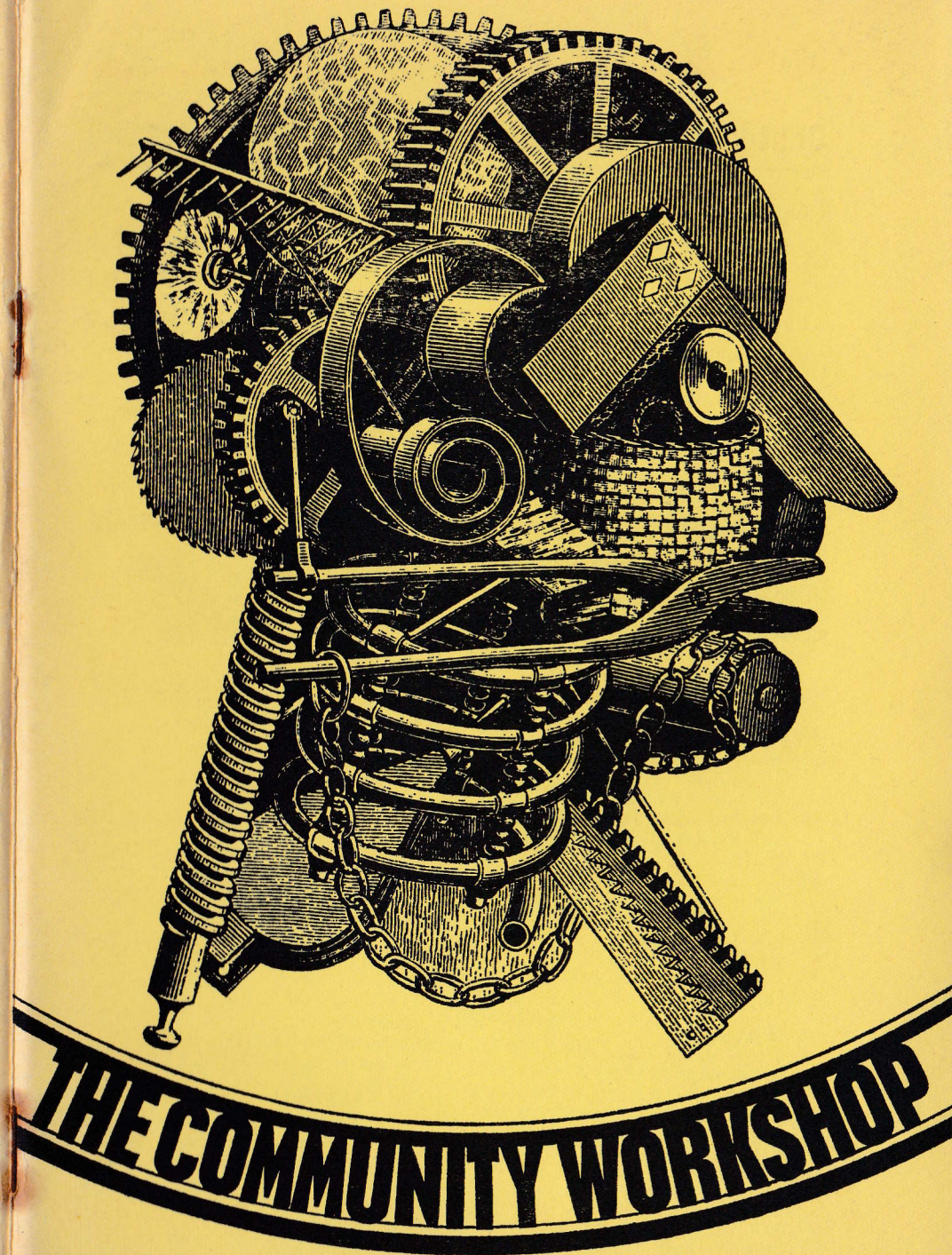
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**ANARCHY 30**

**1/6 25c**



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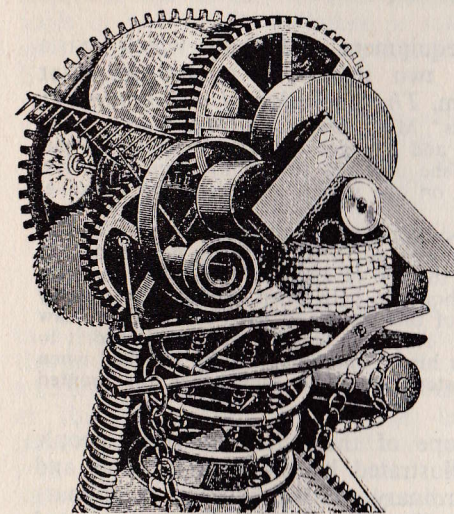
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## The Community Workshop

ONE OF THE ATTRactions OF THE IDEA OF THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, which is discussed in this issue of ANARCHY, is that it is universally and immediately applicable in one form or another, and can be applied at any level of sophistication. In one sense it is here already in the countless acts of neighbourly mutual aid that happen everywhere at all time. In another sense it can be regarded as an attempt to widen the range of choices, opportunities and initiatives open to the individual, so that we can take more advantage of the fact that we live in an advanced industrial society; and in yet another sense it can help to change the whole character of the relationship between work and leisure, while in the most ambitious sense of all, it can prefigure the kind of industrial organisation which as anarchists we would think appropriate to a society of autonomous individuals and groups.

This multiple nature of the Community Workshop idea, the fact that it can be read on different levels, the fact that anyone who feels impelled to put it into effect can fill out the framework with the details and the emphasis which suit his own locality, needs and predilections, the fact that it enhances life for the individual at any level, give it that character which Paul Goodman had in mind when he observed that "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life." It is also what Gustav Landauer meant when he wrote of the actualization and reconstitution of something that has always been present, which in fact exists alongside the State, albeit buried and laid waste: "One day it will be realised that socialism is not the invention of anything new but the discovery of something



actually present, of something that has grown."

### Starting From What Is

The spontaneous sharing of equipment and skills which exists everywhere can be illustrated by two interviews quoted in Peter Willmott's recent study of Dagenham, *The Evolution of a Community*:

'I've got two very good friends,' Mrs. Jarvis said 'Mrs. Barker, who lives opposite, has got a spin drier and I've got a sewing machine. I put my washing in her spin drier and she uses my sewing machine when she wants to. Then the lady next door on one side is another friend of mine. We always help each other out.'

Mr. Dover's great hobby is woodwork; at the time he was interviewed he was busy on a pelmet he was making for a friend living next door and he had just finished a toy train for the son of another. He relies on Fred, another friend who is also a neighbour, to help when needed. 'Just today I was sawing a log for the engine of this train and Fred sees that my saw is blunt and lends me a sharp one. Anything at all I want he'll lend it to me if he has it. I'm the same with him. The other day he knocked when I wasn't here and borrowed my steps—we take each other for granted that way.'

The continually increasing scope of the activities which people undertake in their spare time is illustrated by the kind of tools and equipment, beyond the range of ordinary sharing between neighbours which can be hired. A firm called The Hire Service Co., was started here a few years ago and now has well over a hundred agents in London, the suburbs and home counties. It hires by the day, week, "long week-end" and "short week-end" anything up to mechanical concrete mixers, Kango hammers, scaffolding, industrial spraying plant, welders and saw benches. This firm has already had over 100,000 users. This firm undoubtedly provides an invaluable service, and its organisational overheads must be high, but there is little doubt from a comparison of its hire charges with the market prices of the equipment, that for many of the hundreds of items which it lets out on hire, joint ownership by a group of neighbours would prove more economical to the individual user.

### A Little Homily on Power Tools

Take, for a different approach the instance of power tools, sales of which to domestic users have grown phenomenally in the last ten years. They have grown from the introduction in the nineteen-thirties of small portable electric drills in the joinery industry on work which was too large or unwieldy to be conveniently brought onto fixed machinery. The typical power drills for the amateur market have developed from these machines and from the principle of bringing the tool to the work instead of the work to the machine. They have enormously increased the capacity of the home handyman, not merely by the reduction of the physical work involved but by bringing much higher standards of fit and finish within his reach. The basic tool is always the drill and there is now a wide range of attachments like grinding wheels, sanding discs, circular saw blades, paint sprayers and

so on. (The writer uses his for mowing the grass). There is also the trend for the makers to offer bench fitments to convert the portable tools to bench drills or lathes or saw tables in which the tool is used as a fixed motor. Writing on this development in *Design*, J. Beresford-Evans commented:

At first sight this idea seems admirable, yet it is reactionary in that it denies most of the advantages that the portable tool offers. Most multi-purpose appliances pay for their versatility by a loss of efficiency in each individual job they perform—unless the machine is so designed that the over-all efficiency is great enough to compensate for this loss. But the degree of power, structural strength and precision of manufacture required for such a tool would immediately price it out of the very market at which the makers of amateurs' power tools are aiming.

The way out of this dilemma is again in the pooling of equipment in a neighbourhood group. One could envisage that each member of the group had a powerful and robust basic tool, while the group as a whole operated a library of the various accessories for different purposes, or that the group as a whole had for example a bench drill, lathes and a saw-bench, to relieve members from the attempt to cope with work which required these machines, with inadequate tools of their own. This in turn demands some building to house the machinery: the Community Workshop.

### Local Assembly

Although we tend to think of the motor industry as one in which iron ore comes in at one end and a complete car rolls out at the other; in fact "two thirds of the factory value of a car is represented by components bought by the actual manufacturers from *outside suppliers*." The motor industry, like many others is an assembly industry. The fact that this is so of most manufacturing industries, coupled with the modern facts of widely distributed industrial skill and motive power, means that, as the Goodman brothers put it in *Communitas*: "In large areas of our operation, we could go back to old-fashioned domestic industry with perhaps even a gain in efficiency, for small power is everywhere available, small machines are cheap and ingenious, and there are easy means to collect machined parts and centrally assemble them." But it also means that we could *locally* assemble them. It already happens on the individual level. Build-it-yourself radio, gramophone and television kits are a commonplace. Several assemble-it-yourself cars are on the market (quite apart from the improvisations of enthusiasts), and a firm in Surrey offers home-constructed refrigerators of all kinds.

If a Community Workshop movement were to grow up, groups of workshops could combine for bulk-buying of components, or for sharing according to their capacity the production of components for mutual exchange and for local assembly.

All the revolutions in industrial techniques and processes which are regarded as factors for industrial concentration can also be seen as giving opportunities for more dispersed, more local distribution of



industry. (See the article on *Industrial Decentralisation and Workers' Control* in ANARCHY 10.) Take the new industrial field of plastics which offers many unexploited possibilities for the Community Workshop. There are three main kinds of plastics today, thermosetting resins which are moulded under heat with very high pressures and consequently require plant which is at present expensive and complex, thermoplastics, which are shaped by extrusion and by injection moulding (there are already do-it-yourself electric thermoplastic injection machines on the market), and polyester resins, used in conjunction with reinforcing materials like glass fibre, which can be moulded at low pressures by simple contact moulding, and are thus eminently suited to the potentialities of the Community Workshop. At least one firm making plastics (Scott Bader & Co., Ltd.—a firm owned by its employees incidentally), offers cheap “experimental kits” which enable small groups and individuals to explore these potentialities.

### Work and Leisure

But is the Community Workshop idea no more than part of the “leisure” racket, a compensation for the tedium of work? Daniel Bell, in his essay on *Work and Its Discontents* notes that

Over the past decade there has been a fantastic mushrooming of arts-and-crafts hobbies, of photography, home woodwork shops with power-driven tools, ceramics, high fidelity, electronics, radio ‘hams’. America has seen the multiplication of the ‘amateur’ on a scale unknown in previous history. And while this is intrinsically commendable, it has been achieved at a high cost indeed—the loss of satisfaction in work.

Another American critic James J. Cox, writing in the symposium *Recreation Places* defines the role of work today thus:

Most people feel that the time spent working is lost time—at least lost from conscious enjoyment. But most people have to earn money in order to live. So work is seen as that time the individual must spend in order to achieve the end he seeks—enjoyment. The fact that people see their occupation in this light is largely the basis of its registering on the individual as a grind; and the more it grinds, the greater the need for compensatory relief; and the more super-colossal the leisure activities become, the greater the contrast with work and the greater the grind.

What is the relationship of this pattern to the promise of even more leisure? Work hours are crowded into a shorter space of time, becoming distillations of all that work stands for. The two worlds of work and leisure drift farther apart. The recreation world contains all the good, bright, pleasant things, and the work world becomes the dreariest place imaginable . . .

There are certain basic emotional needs that the individual worker must satisfy. To the degree that the ordinary events of the day are not meeting these needs, recreation serves as a sort of mixture of concentrates to supply these missing satisfactions. When the work experience satisfies virtually none of the requirements, the load on recreation becomes impossible!

He wants to increase the satisfactions of both work and leisure, and declares that

The split between work and play, between work and culture, should be minimized by creative pursuits both on and off the job, pursuits which in

technical form and psychological meaning are neither work nor play but both at once.

Industry through employee recreation should not advise hobbies and pastimes merely to fill up the emptiness of work—meaningful leisure to balance meaningless work. It is important that hobbies and work be integrated at the place of work and that the content of leisure and work should be intermixed . . .

Automation is taking over the routine jobs. The worker left in the plant is capable of value judgments—he is not going to be satisfied with today's passive recreation pill.

This is all very well, but what Mr. Cox leaves out of his argument is that the only conceivable way to integrate work and leisure at the place of work is for the worker to achieve the same autonomy at work as he has over his leisure, to demand *workers' control of industry* in fact. This in turn is a revolutionary demand which at the moment commands negligible support in this country and in America. Can the idea of the Community Workshop help to spread this almost non-existent demand for workers' control? Or is it merely a blind alley from the point of view of incipient social change? Certainly the contributors to this symposium see it as something more than a social service providing for “creative leisure”. Whether it would actually become anything more depends upon the initiative and imagination of the participants.

In his book *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, Ferdynand Zweig makes the entertaining observation that, “It is interesting to note that quite often the worker comes to work on Monday worn out from his weekend activities, especially from ‘Do-it-yourself’”. Quite a number said that the weekend is the most trying and exacting period of the whole week, and Monday work in the factory, in comparison, is relaxing.” This leads us to ask what *is* work and what *is* leisure if we work harder in our leisure than at our work? The fact that one of these jobs is paid and the other is not seems almost fortuitous. But this makes us ask a further question, would it be possible for people to earn their living at the Community Workshop? If it is conceived merely as a social service the answer is that it would probably be against the rules. Members might complain that so-and-so was abusing the facilities provided by using them “commercially”. But if the workshop were conceived on more imaginative lines, provision would be made for members to use its facilities as a source of income, with presumably, their subscription varied accordingly. No doubt it would then be possible for a certain number of self-employed people or small groups to earn their livings there. In several of the New Towns in this country for example it has been found necessary and desirable to build groups of small workshops for individuals or small firms engaged in such work as repairing electrical equipment or car bodies, woodworking and the manufacture of small components. The Community Workshop would certainly be enhanced by its cluster of lettable workshops, which might be used to finance its own expansion.

But it would again be disappointing if it ended there—merely with a few members able to realise their ambition of becoming independent craftsmen. Couldn't the workshop become the community factory,



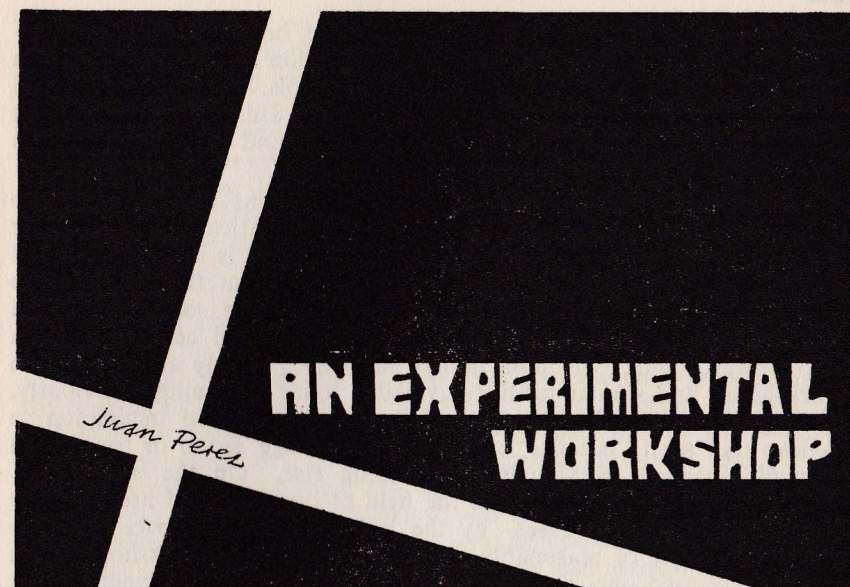
providing work for anyone in the locality who wanted to work that way? This is the question for which Bosco Nedelcovic seeks an answer in his article on a "Do-it-Yourself Economy." He sees the community workshop not as an "optional extra" to an affluent economy but as one of the prerequisites of the economy of the future.

*Some people say the great problem of the coming generation is the right use of leisure. I agree that there are problems in this, and that we need much more education and many more facilities to make the best use of our new opportunities. But most people live much better already than they are given credit for. I think the great problem is the right use of work, because that is where we are now being distorted. In throwing out the usual assertion of common interest, because it never seemed to include us, we may be losing sight of that true common interest without which none of us, on this exposed and crowded island can survive. To get this true feeling there will have to be real changes; exhortations will not do; we have heard them too often. We shall have to get rid of a system in which work is set by a minority which then employs the rest. The common interest can be our own interest, if from day to day, and in the long term, we are genuinely deciding what has to be done and the right conditions for it.*

*It is easy to give up and settle for what we call leisure. But freedom, in the end, can be more than part-time. It can be what we work at and live. Freedom need not be just this margin at the end of the day, this grace after the serious meal. All important work imposes its own real disciplines: if you watch a carpenter or a sculptor, a dancer or a signman, you realize this and admire it. But the discipline there is a condition of freedom because it comes out of the real situation. We accept it because we want the work to be right. Only when the discipline comes from outside, in what seem petty and arbitrary regulations; only when the decision about what we are to do is made, invariably, by other people, is there this sense of freedom gone. In a small enterprise it is easy to consult and get agreement if the conditions are right. In large enterprises it is obviously more difficult, but it is not impossible. It all comes back to a basic idea of what the work is for, and this in the end is an idea about people.*

*With the spread of automation, work is going to move steadily away from the production of things towards the service of people: that is the logic of current technology. This may be our great opportunity to re-cast our ideas, to do away with the labour market and start thinking of a working community, in which the best ideas of work and leisure can come together in practical terms.*

—RAYMOND WILLIAMS: "Work & Leisure",  
(The Listener, 25/5/1961).



THE IDEA IS TO SET UP AN "EXPERIMENTAL WORK CENTRE"—that is, a fairly large workshop divided in different sections and equipped with a suitable assortment of hand tools, machine tools and accessories for metalworking, woodworking and different manual arts in general. The centre would be open to the public and its premises and facilities could be used by interested parties against the payment of a reasonable fee—per hour, per day or through a monthly card, like a club or association—intended to cover the operating and amortization costs of the workshop.

Interested people would find in the centre, in addition to the tools and equipment mentioned above, also the materials and supplies—which could be purchased at cost—required to perform almost any kind of work they like, as well as drawings of standard articles and step-by-step instructions how to make them, which people could follow. Besides, one or more instructors would also be available throughout the working hours of the centre, in order to provide some guidance and practical training to whom may need it. Minor training courses would be organized periodically for the "users" of the centre, and visual aids, displays, leaflets and bulletins could at all times be consulted.

The services rendered by the centre could be expanded by loaning certain tools or machines to individual members for working at home or elsewhere. Group activities outside the centre would be fostered by providing equipment and materials for any given project to be

JUAN PEREZ is a Latin-American "man-in-the-street" who has been looking for new ways of bridging the gap between work and leisure.



developed by the group, such as boat-building, house-building and outdoor activities in general. Some transportation facilities—such as a cab, trailer or a small truck for carrying tools, supplies or finished articles to and from the homes of individual users and other places of work—would offer yet another advantage and increase the links between the centre and the community.

May I now clarify a couple of points in this connection. This project obviously does not represent anything basically “new” under the sun. The idea of providing workshop facilities is currently applied in many schools and educational centres throughout the world, while the practice of “do-it-yourself” has already become something like a trend in modern society. Yet the “centre” proposed herein implies a step forward, and I will immediately say why. Nearly all the “school workshops” and similar facilities available today are limited, obviously, to very young people only, and there is a widespread inclination to believe that such “hobbies” are for a certain age group or for certain manually-inclined individuals and nothing else. On the other hand, home activities of grown-ups in the field of do-it-yourself are seriously limited—in too many cases—by the lack of adequate space at home and by the cost of reasonably equipping a personal workshop, which is evidently used only part of the time by the individual owner. Lack of suitable premises and high cost of equipment tends to dissuade most people, even if they have a latent interest in manual arts, from cultivating it. As a consequence, do-it-yourself activities in general tend to be considered as nothing but minor home repairs and fixings, or as a mere assembly of already prefabricated gadgets, structures and the like—hence with little or no development at all of a true manual ability.

The centre proposed herein aims, instead, at a deeper transformation of our attitudes toward work. It starts from the premise that the principle of “do-it-yourself” is not necessarily a hobby, but may become a true philosophy of life. In accordance with this philosophy, the centre tries to develop the interest and the ability of individuals to manufacture by themselves, in an acceptable way, a large number of everyday articles for their personal use—from a piece of furniture to a TV set, a pleasure boat or any other gadget or appliance within the limits of individual ability. The benefits of this philosophy are twofold: in the first place, psychological, by offering the individual a different kind of satisfaction which can only be experienced through the intimate relationship with “doing”, “building” and “learning” in a spontaneous, creative fashion; and in the second place, material, by providing a new way for the individual to achieve substantial savings in the cost of any given article when manufactured “by himself” in the centre, as compared to the cost of the same article purchased in the trade.

Evidently, the term “cost” is used here with exclusion of the “time” which every individual has to spend making a given article by himself, which may in some cases require the same or even a larger number of hours than those he would be required to work in his ordinary employment to “earn” the same article. . . . However, it is

evident that the chief purpose of this experience is not the achievement of any greater mechanical efficiency, but the transformation of our intimate relationship with the work—and consequently the transformation of our whole scale of values in judging the “cost” and the “worthiness” of any given effort.

The reason why I propose to call this an “Experimental Work Centre” is because I believe that a serious attempt of this nature may contribute to highlight some of the basic problems and contradictions of modern economy. It is doubtless that many of these problems and contradictions are well known already, and yet no realistic alternative has so far been attempted to reconcile the opposite requirements of mechanical efficiency with the human values involved. It is obvious that, at this stage of industrialization, we cannot possibly dream of stepping back to pre-industrial schemes of production, at least not in the basic branches of economy; the rules of work division, specialization and mass-production, in all probability, are here to stay so far as the basic “basic needs” of a community are concerned—such as the production and processing of food, raw and semi-finished materials, technical services and capital goods in general, public services, health programmes and the like. And yet, it is equally obvious that there is a lot of other, so to say “secondary” activities which can and perhaps ought to be left to a more flexible, more individualistic or downright “artisan” system of production—for the sake of mental balance of modern man, if nothing else, of his adjustment to life and the preservation of his natural skills and abilities. It is this latter aim which the “experimental centre” tries to implement as a goal to be attained by a modern, highly mechanized and highly “automated” society like ours.

The type of work which interested parties would be encouraged to perform in the proposed centre will never substitute the fundamental principles of efficiency, mechanization and work division which are applied in the “basic” branches of economy; but it will certainly provide a new dimension of individual liberty and direct identification with the process of production in a large number of “secondary” activities, which are nonetheless vital as a counterpart to what nowadays threatens to become nothing but a psychosis of mass production. In a world increasingly concerned about the nonsense of overproduction, the necessity of running the economy on the bases of a large amount of waste and artificial needs, or the problem of an increasing amount of “leisure time” with no creative dedication to fill it—there is a definite need to redimension the whole economy according to a more humanistic criterion. It is such a criterion that the proposed centre will try to demonstrate and implement in a new scheme of “part-time” production.

From the practical standpoint, hence, the centre is intended to become a reasonably self-supporting, non-profit educational enterprise having the purpose to offer certain facilities which, it is hoped, will stimulate a growing number of individuals to use them in order to produce—by themselves—an increasing quantity and variety of goods instead of purchasing them in the trade.



From the theoretical standpoint, the centre is expected to provide a valuable pilot experience and a considerable amount of practical documentation as to the possibility of organizing and channelling any appreciable portion of human work under the principle of "do-it-yourself". The centre is expected to perform an important rôle in encouraging people to engage in manual activities and helping them to overcome their inhibitions or preconceived ideas about their "natural inability" to perform anything but a given skill or profession. The idea behind this effort is that the traditional structures of work division and specialization, stemming out of the early stages of the industrial revolution, are practically mutilating the living experience of everybody and spoiling the latest values and abilities of most individuals. The aim pursued by this centre is to bring these latent abilities back to life—by allowing people to practice them in an adequate, stimulating environment. To put it in other words, the aim of the centre is to build up a highly versatile, universal type of human personality, which would of course not ignore a deeper specialization in any given skill, profession or area of knowledge—but would always foster, at the same time, a balanced development of experiences in many other areas as well.

*Jobs vary, both in the needs which they generate for non-work activities, and also in the extent to which they penetrate into leisure time. In nine-to-five jobs, no obligations need encroach on leisure time. But other occupations, such as teaching or research, demand specialized reading, attending meetings, and after-work mixing with colleagues. An inquiry at present being carried out suggests that people in "service" as opposed to "business" occupations spend much more of their social life with co-workers off the job.*

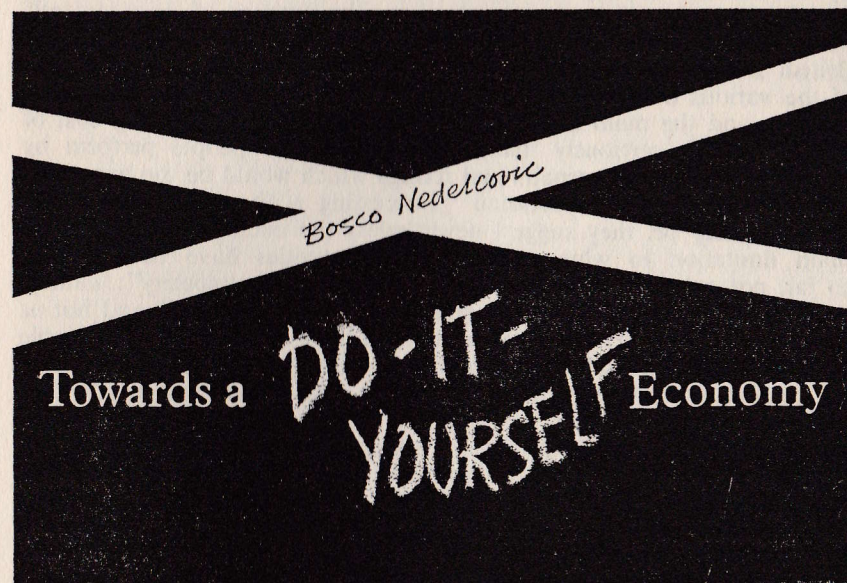
*Some, for whom work is not an area for free and meaningful action, turn to leisure as compensation. In the words of C. Wright Mills, "Each day, men sell little pieces of themselves in order to try to buy them back each night and weekend with the coin of fun." Leisure used in this way may be sought as an escape from work, given over to such feverish pleasures as speedway and jiving. Withdrawal to home-centredness offers compensations of a different kind. Here, a man is boss of his own small world, and can engage in meaningful tasks of his own choosing.*

—STEPHEN COTGROVE & STANLEY PARKER:  
"Work and Non-Work" (*New Society*, 11/7/63).



*"Industrial democracy is rather like religion", remarked a trade union official cynically. "You don't practise it very much but you feel you ought to."*

—THE TIMES, 15/7/63.



ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO I CAME TO LONDON with what I thought to be a rather "new" idea—namely the proposal to set up communal workshops in which people could find the tools and facilities required to make by themselves, in a completely free and spontaneous way, a variety of articles for their personal use. The idea behind this proposition was to explore how far this "do it yourself" effort could be pushed, or how far could we go in suggesting the possibility of a major transition in present-day economy from the established principles of mass-production to the more wholesome, although more "idealistic", independent producer-consumer relationship.

I must say that London taught me quite a few surprises and gave me a new outlook on this whole question. In the first place, I did find out that there was a large number of communal facilities already available in the arts and handicrafts field, throughout the country. The Evening Institutes and similar official organisations have an impressive programme of "leisure-time activities" and I was frankly pleased to see the quantity of tools, instructors and specialised facilities that are at the disposal of everybody wanting to expand his skills—at just nominal fees. Oddly enough, the universal complaint I heard everywhere was not about the lack of facilities, but the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the people to use them. It took me a long time to fully realise this situation and try to understand what cases it, which I will

*BOSCO NEDELCOVIC is a Yugoslav-Italian from Paraguay who has been collaborating with Juan Perez in the search for new forms of industrial organization.*



try to discuss in this report.

At first glance one is impressed by the amount of do-it-yourself work which is going on in England. A conservative estimate of the British Board of Trade gives an annual figure of £300,000,000 worth of the various do-it-yourself supplies and services that are sold in this country, and the main explanation of this trend is the "raising cost of labour", which obviously makes more and more people perform by themselves such home repairs and fixings which would be too expensive to be done by a hired craftsman. Interesting as the data of the Board of Trade may be, they suggest nevertheless the main handicap and the main limitation to which do-it-yourself activities have been subject so far, not only in England but all over the "affluent society": namely they have grown as a mere by-product of mass-production and not as a creative, independent production force of their own. As a rule, people engage in do-it-yourself activities only in their spare time and then only to make such absolutely inevitable things and repairs that would cost them too much to call in a specialised worker. Only seldom do they really desire and enjoy making something for the sake of doing it—or for the sake of their own independence from the usual patterns of mass-production and mass-distribution.

Now this brings us to the question of social organisation, for it is obvious that people's attitudes and tendencies are largely formed by the economic system they live under. It would be naive to expect everybody to go upstream for the sake of doing it, when the whole course of events suggests that it is so much easier to follow the trend and get a "perfect" article on those easy hire-purchase terms, instead of working many hours to produce some crude replica with our own hands. . . . And we must not be too sentimental in blaming people for having lost their "pride in craftsmanship" or their ability to use their hands (and their brains) at all, when the whole machinery of a mass-production system leads them to do without these abilities. In the end one cannot either blame the cheap entertainments like TV or cinema or modern dancing, which compete in attracting people and keeping them away from the evening institutes and taking what little time is left to them as genuine "leisure". . . . I mean, all this is part of a total scheme, the scheme of mass-production with all its mass-conditioning from which we cannot possibly escape, unless an equally "total" alternative is offered. And we must keep this well in mind before considering the alternative scheme of communal workshops, or rejecting it too soon as a failure.

From what I have seen visiting the various institutes and community centres in and around London, I would say that the main reason for the poor results reported lies in the lack of a broader vision of the rôle which the community workshop *might* be called to perform in that community. I have seen plenty of facilities and often remarkable organisation for training and teaching; but, essentially, I have seen none of the essential conviction to make people realise that they were really and truly being helped to develop a new pattern of living, and not merely to acquire some secondary abilities or just use

their "leisure time" in a way which might be considered more creative or profitable. It would be too much, of course, to expect the Evening Institutes or our present community centres to be consciously promoting a new pattern of living; and yet, I feel that this is precisely what is needed if the money and the effort invested in them is to be used in a worthwhile manner at all.

Basically our present "community centres" and workshops suffer from the same characteristics and handicaps inherent to the social system in which they develop—namely they are all more or less "regimented" and "specialised", although to a lesser extent than one would see in a factory or business premises. And yet, in the case of evening institutes, one still sees that there are separate and definite "courses", programmes and curricula, which must be attended with certain regularity on certain days and hours. No matter how liberal and broad-minded may be the aims of the people involved in programming the courses, the unescapable fact is that the "pupils" are still supposed to attend a school-type activity which is, over and over again, only "accessory" to their main specialised occupation in life. By definition our present leisure-time efforts and facilities are not in competition with, but merely complementary (in a mild and conformist fashion) to the leading and overwhelming idea of mass-production as the only worthwhile mechanism of society.

Then again you have the almost ridiculous discrimination of workshop facilities "for young people" or for "retired people" only. For example, I went with great excitement to Welwyn Garden City where I had heard of a community workshop project which seemed on paper to be exactly what Juan Perez and I had been seeking. This had been set up in 1961 and was backed by the local authorities, the youth service and local industry. It contained a machine shop, a woodworking room, an electrical workshop, a photographic room and a tea-bar, all fully equipped. The organisers emphasised that the workshop,

"is not a club. There is no membership and no subscription. You pay a fee of 2s. each time you go. You go there when you wish, as often as you wish. For this you get use of the workrooms and workbenches, use of the tools and machinery you need and advice from experts if you want it. You do the job yourself and nobody will interfere unless you ask for help."

And yet I left this workshop disappointed. The age restriction to people between 15 and 25 excluded many of those who could have made the most of the facilities, there seemed an unspoken assumption that the users would be devoted to old-style craftsmanship as though this were a good in itself, there seemed little stimulus to genuine experimentation.

Let me make it clear how much I appreciate all that is done to provide greater opportunities for both the very young and the very old people, by the way of workshop facilities where they could develop their creative interests and abilities. What I find so utterly disappointing is that, again in this case, the whole issue of "do-it-yourself" work is degraded and dissolved as a secondary, part-time activity which



is largely offered to young people before they reach the age of any "serious" (and hence "specialised") job—or to the old who have retired, due to their age, from any such "serious", "real" economic activity. It seems to me that in both cases the full significance of do-it-yourself activity is systematically neglected, perhaps because it is potentially capable of exploding the whole mass-production system such as we know it today.

Now the whole question really boils down to a matter of "status", which is again a part and an ingredient of the mass-production society. People may do a lot of do-it-yourself work in their spare time, and even be very fond of it; but, you see, they couldn't possibly take it more seriously than a "hobby": something that "adds" to the pleasure of living, eventually, but never really "makes" a living—or keeps the economy running. That is naturally left to the established, "accepted" patterns of mass-production, for which few people conditioned by such accepted views would ever dare to seek an alternative. No serious economist of our days, I am afraid, would venture to suggest anything like a "blueprint of a do-it-yourself economy", as the title of this short article boldly displays it, even if he were convinced that such a thing could work out in practice—without seeing his professional reputation greatly jeopardised, to say the least. . . . And of course; in the minds of most lay people any similar proposition would immediately be associated with the many Utopian dreams and schemes which have stirred up the imagination of wishful thinkers in the past—but have never really got down to the roots of any practical solution.

And yet I believe that mankind is closer today than it was ever before to the core of a "basic idea" that may finally transform the economy of mass-production into a more decent system from a humanistic point of view. Never before, and never on such a scale as today, have the contrasts and shortcomings of the "affluent conception" been more evident or more disturbing. The inevitable overproduction and waste, the compulsive drive toward excess consumption, the hopeless race between human employment and automation, and above all—the tragic incapacity of a whole system to discern between what is really "necessary" and what isn't, between the actual demands of life and the artificial appetites spurred by a particular type of civilisation: all this has already become a commonplace in much of today's literature as well as sociology. Why then should it seem so difficult, or so "Utopian", to propose a radical change in the whole system—to propose a different economic structure that would aim to assure the "basic" needs of life to everybody, while leaving at the same time plenty of liberty for the individual pursuit of those "extra" wants, as the do-it-yourself philosophy precisely aims to suggest?

In my opinion there are two major stumbling blocks which hinder the acceptance of the do-it-yourself principles as a full-time economic philosophy. One of them is the naive belief, perhaps inferred from the association with the word "workshop", that all activity under such a philosophy would or indeed ought to be performed in "small produc-

tive units" scattered all over a predominantly rural network of human settlements, as an equally naive and bucolic conception of the "future society" would lead us to imagine. . . . And it is quite natural for any sensible person to question what would become, under such conditions, of the impressive achievements of modern technology which, however reluctant we may feel to admit it, have so deeply affected the condition of man on earth that it would be unthinkable to do without them. It is this prejudice, the idea of the "small workshop" as the only "genuine" expression of do-it-yourself philosophy, that must be challenged most emphatically. In other words, I believe that the principle of do-it-yourself should by no means be limited to the small, individual, craft activity which it is usually associated with; on the contrary, I do not see why we should not have entire manufacturing plants being converted to suit the needs and demands of do-it-yourself operation—by redesigning and simplifying the articles to be produced in them, as well as by rearranging the whole manufacturing process in such a way as to allow practically any normal person, with a minimum of training, to fit in that process and work for the length of time required to actually "earn" the article being produced in a given factory.

Nothing of this kind has been proposed or attempted in modern times, as far as I know; and yet, technically at least, there is no reason why such a thing should not be feasible, and even more today than it has been in any other period of history. The extension of the do-it-yourself scheme to include not only "communal workshops" but entire industrial factories as well should make it possible to take advantage of all the modern engineering and scientific achievements of our time—and still keep a "flexible" system of production, geared to suit true human needs and not artificial market requirements. It naturally derives from the above proposition that people would still have to work, for a certain number of hours or days, in a certain place in a production line, not very different from what they use nowadays; and it also derives that many technical duties demanding higher skills would still be in the hands of a limited number of "skilled" individuals, who would in all probability acquire these skills out of a more genuine personal inclination than one could expect from just material incentivation. But the fundamental, revolutionary fact of a do-it-yourself economy would nevertheless hold true in all its extension—namely, that even if people would have to keep working on an "assembly line" to earn what they want, they would do so only during limited periods or strictly as long as needed to actually "produce"—in terms of man-hours—the article they desire . . . and would never be compelled to stay in that work for the rest of their life. What is even more important, a "do-it-yourself factory", and the do-it-yourself economy as a whole, would in no way be obliged to run all the time to keep people "employed": it could be stopped and restarted according to people's needs and nothing else, thereby establishing a genuine producer-consumer relationship as it could never be conceived under the present "constant" system of mass-production.

This brings us to the second "stumbling block"—or straight into the



question of how a transition from the present economy into a hypothetical do-it-yourself economy is to be operated. Here again we must beware of a number of very dear but very mistaken ideas and prejudices which are currently associated with any mention of a "change" in our social system. It is, I should say, a widespread belief that no fundamental change could possibly come along in a society without the aid of a "revolution" . . . whatever be the exact idea you may have of this word. In the case of "community workshops" and the whole question of the do-it-yourself philosophy as opposed to the very structure of an affluent society, I have naturally come across the same objections and suggestions—namely that the gradual building-up of do-it-yourself facilities, and the consequent slowing-down of established mass-production patterns, would eventually bring the whole system to an "explosive point" leading to either a "revolutionary transition" to a new way of life . . . or to a "counter-revolutionary" repression of do-it-yourself activities, to use the 'established' jargon on such technical matters. . . .

The question is obviously one of crucial importance, but I do not believe that it has been posed in the right terms. Perhaps this is due to the subjective fact that I have grown myself in an affluent society—and therefore do not regard things with the "revolutionary" outlook, in the traditional sense of the word, but would rather suggest the idea of an "accelerated evolution" which is after all becoming a must all over the world. I think, in fact, that the pressures inside the very structure of an affluent society are becoming such a burden to everybody, and that the nonsense of keeping "full-employment", overproduction and overconsumption at full speed is becoming so dramatically evident that no sensible person would, in time, oppose a *sensible* proposition for a sensible transformation, however radical it may be, in the structure of our society. I know that this may sound like empty idealistic talk to many . . . but just let me finish the idea please.

It seems to me that too many people have insisted upon the necessity—or the inevitability—of bringing the present economy to a "collapse", thereby creating the right atmosphere for a "social revolution", but very few indeed have really elaborated upon what would follow afterwards. If we are to look at things dispassionately, it seems to me that an essential preliminary step toward any deep social transformation would be to establish some sort of a "basic guarantee of subsistence"—a basic income or a minimum level of welfare which would provide to every individual, whether "employed" or not, his elementary needs such as food and shelter. Only in this way could any major transformation be carried out—especially like the one suggested, or led to, by the do-it-yourself philosophy which would be leaving an increasing number of workmen and entire industries "redundant", in the traditional sense of the word, as it gathers momentum. I believe that it is no good to promise a better social system or a better way of life in the future—if the present must be left helpless to starve to death in the process; and the opposition of the "employers" to any such scheme would certainly be no greater than that of the "employees" themselves, as long as they depend upon their present jobs for sheer

subsistence.

If, on the other hand, such a "guarantee" could be established, one could safely assume that almost any kind of social transformation could easily take place over a certain period of time. If a "basic economy" could be kept going in such a way as to provide for the "basic needs" of every individual—involving, in return, a minimum of "basic work" from everybody—it wouldn't matter if all other activities were gradually or temporarily brought to a standstill, so to speak. Nobody would feel disturbed if a factory had to be shut down after the needs of the community had been reasonably fulfilled—knowing that nobody would be deprived of his "subsistence level", and that the same factory could be brought back in operation as soon as the need arises again.

Of course, all the foregoing may be taken, at the time being, for just another wishful speculation and nothing else. I have thought it necessary, nevertheless, to tackle the question of an eventual transition to a do-it-yourself economy because I think it is not such a wild dream as it may seem today. If a serious effort were made to develop a number of simplified articles—from household appliances to cars or anything else normally manufactured by mass-production techniques—and if one or more "pilot plants" could be established where people could work a given number of hours, as suggested above, to "earn" a given article, I think that the whole scheme would catch the imagination of people without the need of hidden persuaders. . . . And if that happens, I do not see why the proposition should not eventually snowball to encompass the whole economic life of a nation—provided that the many critical aspects of the transition have been taken care of in advance. To my way of seeing, the technical problems of designing and redesigning the goods and the industrial facilities to suit the ideal of a flexible, stop-and-start-again, do-it-yourself production scheme are child's play to modern engineering; it is the underlying philosophy which has to be made clear, convincing and acceptable to everybody.

Acceptable it must become if the world at large is to cope with the mounting problems of automation, population, disarmament, underdevelopment and all else involved. If we accept the fact that both the Capitalist and the Socialist block are essentially pursuing the same goal—affluence—and that after this goal has been reached they both will be in the same jam, their ideological differences being of no use to transform the essence of the production-consumption relationship, then we must logically ask what lies beyond affluence.

Even assuming that disarmament takes place and that the huge material expenditures now wasted in war preparations are diverted to peaceful purposes—particularly to the development of the poorer nations—the prospects of such transition, within the industrialised nations to be affected by disarmament, are upsetting. And finally, even a peaceful economy is an economy of waste and nonsense—under the affluent conception. People can keep on being just slaves of their needs in the middle of unprecedented abundance—as they have been for centuries in the middle of poverty. It is not abundance which can provide the



freedom from want, but an intelligent system of production to produce such abundance—or just as much as is reasonable for a happy life. Under the present economic system, we are driven to produce and to create ever more abundance, whether we want it or not; we just have no alternative, and the one thing we understand is that we must keep producing—for our own job and security is at stake in every form of consumption and in every act of “necessary” waste. One may argue about a better distribution, more social justice, a shorter working week and a lot of other improvements in the constant-speed, mass-production affluent society; one may argue whether private initiative or state administration is more or less efficient; one may praise the workers’ collectives for their independent administration, or the co-operatives for their rightful share given to every individual. These are all worthy but limited amendments to a basically wrong scheme; the “basically wrong” part of it remains in that the “production” and the “consumption” aspects of an economy—whether it be Capitalist, Socialist, co-operative or else—are still dissociated from each other. Even the purest humanistic or co-operativistic ideals have not been able, so far, to make themselves really independent from the “market”, to bring “production” and “consumption” together in a way that would satisfy the genuine needs of every individual without imposing any artificial needs or drives upon him. Only the principle of “do-it-yourself” can fully integrate the two aspects—of course not at the level of the primitive man but of the truly “modern” man, one that has emerged from both the natural limitations of his primitive environment, as well as from the social limitations of his present economic structures.

## TEEN CANTEEN: END OR BEGINNING?

DAVID DOWNES IS QUITE RIGHT to point out in his article on the “Teen Canteen” (ANARCHY 27) that we haven’t really come to grips with the problem of providing places where working-class teenagers can gather and feel that their sense of freedom and dignity is respected. It is also only too true that the “Canteen” idea has not “caught on” all over the country in the way it was hoped.

All is not darkness, however. Can I draw your reader’s attention to what seems to me to be a remarkable development of the Canteen idea and from a most unexpected source? Anarchists may know of the quite spontaneous development, after the Second World War, on the growing number of council housing estates, of Tenants’ Associations. Contrary to the general opinion, the great number of these autonomous, self-formed organisations are not “grievance” bodies but non-political associations formed for the purpose of creating some sense of com-

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munity and neighbourliness amongst the uprooted in the often drab new areas of houses and flats that are often such a characteristic part of post-war Britain. (It should be mentioned that the Writer’s experience has been solely with housing estates in the Greater London Area).

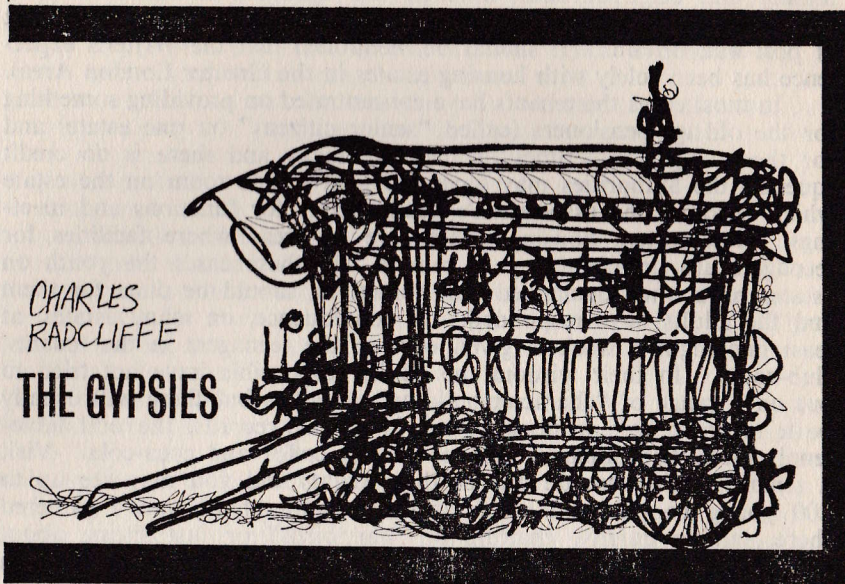
In most cases the tenants have concentrated on providing something for the old age-pensioners (called “senior citizens” on one estate) and for the young. Sometimes (if they are lucky and there is no credit squeeze) the authorities may have provided a club-room on the estate which becomes the association’s headquarters for functions and meetings. Now, often, housing estates are in areas where facilities for teenagers are unsatisfactory or remote. In these cases the youth on estates have often demanded that something should be done for them and the adults have responded. In consequence, on many estates, at least one night a week is given over to the teenagers in the tenants’ club-room. In their wisdom the adults responsible have not tried to put on a range of “character-building” activities but there will usually be a record-player, a stock of the latest pop-records, the odd table-tennis table, bar billiards, and, of course, coffee and coca-cola. Visit a tenants’ club-room on one of these nights and you may see up to 200 young people (and some of them really “hard nuts”) gathered there, talking quietly, chatting up “the birds” or just sitting about watching the passing parade. Many of these are young people you wouldn’t find within ten miles of the conventional youth club.

What is even more remarkable are the adults who make themselves responsible for these “clubs” and do so with a sympathy and a touch which many professional youth workers would envy. Particularly impressive is the way they are able to merge with the background so one is, at first, not even conscious of their presence. These adults are often drawn from the most unlikely walks of life—on one estate the youth “club” is run by a rag-and-bone-man (and part-time proprietor of a jellied eel stall), on another the two men responsible for the “club” are the estate boiler-stokers, on another, a railway lorry-driver. Here in a very real sense is the community taking responsibility for its youth and not completely leaving the responsibility to a remote organisation often employing an even more remote paid middle-class “leader”.

Of course these “clubs” run into trouble. Gangs arrive, sometimes destroying but sometimes remaining to become staunch supporters and protectors of the “club”. There is often opposition from unsympathetic tenants who feel that any large gathering of young people can only lead to disaster; and from the council authorities who find it hard to comprehend that any good can come out of self-organised groups run by “untrained” adults and, anyway, the whole idea is far too untidy to be fitted into a convenient administrative pigeon-hole.

And so every night all over London, these “clubs” continue in spite of immense difficulties, giving the lie to the idea that in the Welfare State there is no place for community self-help and group responsibility, and providing meeting places for the young where the adults present are not necessarily “them” or out to “improve” you. No, the Canteen idea is not dead!





THE GYPSIES HOLD A STRANGE ATTRACTION FOR SOME ANARCHISTS. One constantly hears them praised for their law-less way of life, for their roaming Stateless existence, for their contempt, which has now achieved an almost unique timelessness, towards our civilisation.

The picture of the gypsies as a romantic tribal people, with quaint customs and an impetuous love of freedom, has survived all the more serious attempts at analysis, just as has the contradictory image of them as rogues, charlatans and thieves. Both attitudes are superficial as this admirably objective, well-informed and highly readable book shows.\* Jean-Paul Clébert dispels most of the romantic myths and gives an excellent account of the customs, traditions and history of the various tribes and sub-tribes. The book, though expensive, is beautifully illustrated and produced, and is essential reading for anyone who has any views on the gypsies.

The gypsies, like the Jews, came to Europe as a result of a vast *diaspora* (racial dispersion). To start with they were treated with tolerance and respect. Documents as recent as a 1493 Letter of Protection from Sigismund, King of Hungary, bear witness to this. This letter enjoins non gypsy subjects to allow the gypsies the right to practise their own beliefs and customs, including their laws. This respect soon collapsed and the later history of the gypsies, like the Jews, is a long battle for freedom from persecution.

One of the first recorded appearances of gypsies occurs in "Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris" in 1427. Even at this period the

\*The Gypsies by Jean-Paul Clébert, translated by Charles Duff (Vista Books London, 42s.).

gypsies made themselves unpopular by telling fortunes. They created havoc by telling husbands and wives that their partners were being unfaithful! An account of the gypsies in Bologna (1422) puts on record the gypsies' accomplishments as thieves. A gypsy woman shattered local calm by giving birth to a child in a public square and the local Bishop threatened excommunication to anyone having commerce with gypsies. It is fair to point out that this chronicler (Muratori) wrote in the eighteenth century and when he said "these vagabonds are the cleverest thieves in the world" he was confirming a popular contemporary prejudice.

The 'official' persecution of gypsies began in France in the early sixteenth century and reached a peak with Louis XIV, the seventeenth-century precursor of Charles de Gaulle. His decree of 1682 ordered gypsy men to serve in the galleys in perpetuity, women to have their heads shaved, or, if persistent, gypsies to be flogged and banished, and children to be esconced in poor houses. Fortunately the decree was largely ineffective. In Rumania the gypsies suffered considerable persecution in the seventeenth century and many retreated into the mountains between Rumania and Hungary rather than live as slaves to local boyars. These gypsies (*netosi*) lived as an undercover resistance movement, supported by local woodcutters, healers and peasants hostile to the régime, and emerged from hiding only for provisions and resultant skirmishes with government troops. When slavery was abolished and amnesty given to outlaws, the *netosi* showed admirable scepticism towards the State's sense of honour, and most stayed in the mountains.

In Hungary they were treated less harshly, though in 1782 forty-one gypsies in one area were barbarically executed, on charges of cannibalism which there was no attempt to prove, and the remainder were driven into marshes where they perished. From 1761 Maria Theresa, then Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, a monarch renowned for her good intentions and appalling execution of them, attempted to make the gypsies respectable citizens. However the means of executing her integration policy were misguided, as an account left by one contemporary woman observer shows. This woman tells how simultaneously, all over Hungary, soldiers captured gypsy children and young couples and dragged them off, oblivious to the pleas of distraught parents, many of whom committed suicide in their despair. "The use of these vigorous measures was hardly calculated to convince the *Zigains* of the excellence of the morality preached to them and was not of a nature to inspire in them consciousness of the superiority of the institutions which the authorities wished to impose on them . . . But one may add that serious and truly religious measures have never been applied with good results to the education of this people."

It was left to the Germans under Adolf Hitler to attempt a serious solution of the gypsy 'problem'. No less than 400,000 of a race, calculated to be a mere four or five million strong, were slaughtered by the Nazis.

In Spain the gypsies also suffered persecution. Many were legally



murdered on ridiculous charges and, in the eighteenth century, even the sanctity of the church as a refuge was declared void in the case of gypsies.

The gypsy dispersion spread as far as Scandinavia, where they found remarkable similarity with the Finns. (The Lapps—the successors of the then-Finns—also show a surprising similarity with the gypsies though Clébert does not mention this).

Throughout their history gypsies have been metal-smiths, horse dealers, animal leaders, diviners and 'prophets'. Despite the fact that these are the occupational prohibitions contained in the Indian divine Laws of Manu, it must not be thought that the gypsies are of low caste or even more recalcitrant to external authority than their reputation already suggests. It is simply that these professions are those most suitable to a nomadic existence. It should also be noted that gypsies take no note of the predictions of gypsy palmists, not because they are un-superstitious but because they are too superstitious to put faith in such predictions.

It was the gypsies who introduced the skilled working of metal into Europe but the wanderers have been hard hit by the advent of centralised, industrial society. A modern gypsy, deprived of his metal working monopoly, often works in boiler-making, a trade where his physical hardiness is much appreciated. Others find jobs in garages and some are involved in making war material plating for the French government! Despite the gypsies' reputation as horse-handlers they are not particularly good horsemen; their skill consists in the care of horses. Using methods described by Clébert the gypsies can make a beaten-down nag appear to be a frisky young horse. Though their honesty is doubted, gypsies still make many sales to peasants who acknowledge their skill in horse care and recognise the gypsies' knowledge of the market. Many gypsies are now involved in the secondhand car trade—their faking ability is easily adapted to circumstances! Another animal which plays a large part in the gypsy life and mythology is the bear. Gypsy bear-leaders (ursari) are still to be seen in Europe.

It is as musicians that the gypsies' reputation stands highest. They have produced magnificent singers, dancers and players (among them the late Django Reinhardt, whose mother still lives as a gypsy). The originality of gypsy music has been defended by Franz Liszt and W. F. Bach (eldest son of J. S. Bach) among others. Bach actually lived with them for many years. Whether gypsy music is purely original is open to doubt but the fact remains that they have produced the most remarkable musical virtuosi. Their talents also lie in making instruments and many people who should have known better bought Stradivarius violins from gypsies only to discover that the faking ability extended to musical instruments. The gypsies play many instruments; the most magnificent is the cithara, a stringed instrument of pure Indian origin. When they play at their best they are obsessed with what the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca called *duende*, the spirit of life and imminent death, which comes through clearly in their music. Gypsy dancing has an erroneous reputation for eroticism, a sort of European belly dance. This is false and the dance has no direct sexual signifi-

cance, although it has ritual importance.

The gypsies are not anarchists. Should there be any doubt Clébert's excellent chapter on Tradition would soon dispel it. In this he traces the origins of many gypsy legends, including the famous one of Sara the Black Virgin. I do not propose to state the basis of gypsy belief here since it is adequately dealt with by Clébert and is relatively complicated. They gypsy religion, like the gypsies, has proved highly adaptable. They have managed to accept, superficially, the tenets of the dominant religion wherever they have been, avoiding at least one pitfall open to a minority group. The gypsy accepts, more or less, the Jewish/Christian idea of God who is known as *o Del*. They also believe in Christ (Cretchuno). *O Del* is everything: earth, sky, fire, wind, rain. (Water is not part of the gypsy deity and neither do they like it in any form but rain—Clébert deals very succinctly with water). It is interesting to note that the gypsies have preserved almost intact the Hebrew names of Biblical personalities—thus *Moi'shel* (Moses) is an exact transcription of Hebrew\*. In most cases the gypsy modifications of the biblical legends makes them more poetic!

A lot of rubbish has been written about tribal structure among the gypsies. We have been regaled with idiocies about Kings and Queens which are the result of gypsy secrecy, preconceptions and inadequate research. Gypsies refer to themselves as *Hom†* (men) and non gypsies as *gadje* (a derivative term meaning approximately 'peasant'). The contempt they have for the *gadje* is shown in many parts of Clébert's book and particularly in the gypsy legend about the Genesis of Man. This legend, which is similar to a Red Indian legend I was told as a child, tells that God made man by making clay models, baking them in a kiln and breathing life into them. First he underfired a model—the result was the white man. Next he overfired a model—the result was a black man. But the third time he fired the model perfectly and the result was the nut-brown man—the gypsy.

Many young men have set out to be adopted by the gypsies but it is doubtful whether the gypsies would consider an adoption ceremony as anything more than a symbolic act of friendship and there appear to be no recorded cases of a gadjo marrying a gypsy without both the couple and their progeny being banished from the tribe. Without marriage a gadjo could hardly enter the tribe as anything more than a symbolic *phral* (brother). (Prostitution incidentally is apparently unknown among the gypsies). Banishment is the most severe punishment the gypsy can suffer. No one may speak to the victim. Objects he touches, however valuable, are immediately destroyed and he will die and be buried unattended by the tribe (*vitcha*).

The gypsy has inherited a caste system (*casto*) from India. Caste is essentially a system for the preservation of undefiledness, membership is open only to those born members of the community and an inflexible law forbids marriage outside the group. Rigid authority is used to

\*My generalisations do not apply to those gypsies who are Mussulmans.

†A habit common among 'primitives'; the eskimoes refer to themselves as Inuit (men).



implement the system.

I have pointed out that there are no Kings or Queens. Neither is there any form of hereditary system. The chief of a vitcha is usually a man of some years, renowned for his fairness and knowledge. He presides over the council of elders and answers to no one. Each tribal chief, no matter the size of his tribe, is deemed an equal of the other, among the gypsies. The "queen" of the gypsies is in reality the *phuri dai*, who is a tribal wise woman, whose power is cloaked and unofficial but nonetheless real, particularly among the women and children. Gypsy society is still to a great extent matriarchal but it so 'close' that it is difficult to clarify the situation. Lineage still runs through the mother in many families. Granny Lee, the famous English gypsy, is, for example, a matriarchal figure, but not a queen.

Justice among the gypsies is relatively simple. It concerns itself with inter-tribal, inter-group and inter-family disputes (e.g. kidnapping), as well as with brawling, land rights, injury, insult and non-observance of gypsy law. No woman may be present at a 'hearing' of the *kriss* (the gypsy word for both Law and Law Court) except as a witness. (The *Phuri Dai* may be called for counsel, however).

Witnesses are allowed to speak freely, the elders may confer among themselves but the final decision on guilt and punishment is taken by the *krisinitori* (president of the court/chief) alone. The death penalty is becoming rarer and banishment and corporal punishment are taking its place. The corporal punishment is often of atrocious viciousness (the pulling out of eyes is an example). Duels with whips in the Ukraine, knives in central Europe and boxing gloves in England may be authorised between the rivals by the *kriss*. If the accused is found innocent there is an elaborate ritual of rehabilitation. If a gypsy offence is dealt with by a *gadjo* court it will still be dealt with by the *kriss* and no notice will be taken of the *gadjo* decision. It will be seen that there is a powerful system of authority among the gypsies, founded on law and tradition.

Clébert examines some of the gypsy myths and folklore but explains that a definitive work on this subject has yet to be produced. This section is quite adequate for the non specialist reader. Clébert explains many odd features of gypsy life in this section: for example why it is that gypsies do not travel at noon or sundown. He tells us that the squirrel (*romen morga* or gypsy cat) is a lucky mascot, particularly for love, and that the hedgehog (*niglo*) is the favourite animal. The gypsies would never kill the animal they most fear, the weasel, but they eat hedgehog and squirrel with relish! This chapter deals with love, sex, birth, puberty, virginity, marriage, pregnancy, baptism, magic and medicine. It would be impossible to attempt even the briefest synopsis of this very concentrated section. Clébert also examines the gypsy language, though he faces the difficulty of gypsies' not writing and having a purely oral tradition.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is that on the gypsy in modern society. It is in Spain that the gypsy has settled most peaceably and where he is recognised as a citizen on almost equal terms

with *gadje*. In England also the gypsies enjoy a large measure of freedom (I am now using Clébert's terms, which are non-anarchist), largely because there always seem to have been estimable cranks who support them. Augustus John, a renowned supporter of unpopular causes, was a man with a rare human understanding of, and sympathy with the gypsies. More recently a Labour MP, Mr. Norman Dodds, has given the gypsies support in one of their intermittent skirmishes with *gadje* authority. It is Belgium and Switzerland (both countries which have long since degenerated into a shabby gentility) which are most avoided by gypsies.

The situation in the 'communist' word is very difficult to assess. The only accurate figures for gypsies were those taken in Rumania (1939-40) which give a figure of 262,501. Hitler saw to the massacre of tens of thousands of Rumanian gypsies during the war, so the figures are no longer accurate. In the USSR, the Workers' State does not recognise the right of anyone, even a small minority totally unsuited to State collectivisation, to be nomadic. Whether the 'problem' has been solved in the USSR, and—what is rather more to the point—whether it has been solved humanely, or as a result of coercion, or because of a historical tendency for gypsies to cease the nomadic existence, is not known. Czechoslovakia seems to have found a 'solution' relatively painlessly, though Bulgaria has been harsher, with state decrees that those in irregular employment should work in state industry or agriculture. In Poland the gypsies still wander, despite all the efforts of the authorities.

In France the gypsies are still a 'bogey race', a situation little effected by education. In fact education appears to have little effect. It became compulsory for gypsies to be educated in England in 1908. For my part I feel certain that the gypsies will be better off if they remain ignorant of the ridiculous customs and traditions of our civilisation, and do without education.

It is hardly surprising that romantic anarchists in the Augustus John tradition should have felt drawn to the gypsies. They are a picturesque people whose existence is a romantic addition to a world which has set out with grim and unadventurous intent to destroy itself. The gypsies are a small, invincible group who have (I believe rightly) refused to be integrated into a society whose irresponsibility and divorce from natural reality would make it suspect in the eyes of any unprejudiced observer.

For these reasons I hope this book will be widely read. Whilst these people may not be anarchists or libertarians, this story nonetheless records much of what we have lost in terms of human dignity, affection and tradition. They are a noble people and simply to read Clébert and understand, is a small gesture of solidarity with a people, who, in the words of the author, "are united in the same love of freedom, in their eternal flight from the bonds of civilisation, in their vital need to live in accordance with nature's rhythm, in the desire to be their own masters, and in contempt for what we pompously call the 'consequences'."



## Observation on Anarchy 28: The Future of Anarchism

I would like to comment on George Molnar's article in ANARCHY 28. I refer in particular to his last paragraph which in my opinion, conveys a fundamental misconception about anarchism both as a historical movement, and as a present day reality.

Molnar quotes the well-known words of Vanzetti, who, doomed to die alongside Sacco, produced the moving pronouncement, "I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. . . ." Molnar goes on to put the point of view that the triumph of anarchism is its agony; its success is failure: that anarchists are holy fools rushing around with a jumble of philanthropic ideas in their heads and that it is their career to be defeated. Such romantic notions appeal to those who have a taste for martyrs, but it is arguable that any revolutionary martyrology detracts strongly from the positive achievements of anarchist thought.

The enemies of anarchism would like the most romantic ideas about anarchism propagated because then they can pose as the "practical" men, the politicians who are concerned with reality. We are indebted to Philip Holgate who, in the same issue of ANARCHY points out that, "... anarchists should consistently try to find answers to the problems that ordinary people are facing. The outlook that lead to debates on 'Which should the working class support: the Revolutionary Marxist Unity Party or the United Socialist Workers' Front?' has nothing to do with reality." My own experience leads me to conclude that the essential difference between the anarchists and the 101 varieties of socialist splinter groups and microscopic political parties which crowd the stage left of centre, is that it is only the anarchists who show a real interest in practical things. Going over the past 28 issues of ANARCHY

it is difficult to maintain that this is the work of holy fools whose career is to be defeated! Rather I would say it is mainly the work of quite level-headed men and women who are firstly, *interested* in real issues rather than political abstractions, and secondly, *aware* of practical possibilities in the modern world.

This view of mine does not appeal to the romantics who relish the blood of the martyrs, nor does it appeal to the little Lenins who would like to represent anarchism as a beautiful ideal—but obtainable only by following the Revolutionary Party of Libertarian Social Bureaucrats, who are practical politicians and understand . . . etc. I suggest that a distorted view of anarchism is carefully fostered by those who, like Lenin, see the value of an energizing myth but who stand to lose by the more mundane implications of anarchism which apply here and now.

I am not suggesting that Molnar is wilfully distorting anarchism, but that he is seeking to defend, and even praise, an Aunt Sally that has very little substance. He quotes Stirner on the granting of free speech to sheep he might have quoted Stirner more effectively on the question of "freedom" for it was Stirner who argued most trenchantly that it was useless for the revolutionary to strive after such an airy-fairy abstraction—rather he should concern himself with the means by which real things can be obtained. I well know that anarchists have no monopoly of striving for things which most readers of this journal would class as being personally and socially valuable; some of the things written up in ANARCHY are stated equally well, say, in *New Society*. But the general difference between anarchists and political groups is that whereas anarchists are really interested in certain positive matters, politicians are interested in them (or feign to be interested in them) *only* in so far that

such interest furthers their political ends. To suggest, as Molnar does, that it is the *metier* of anarchists to fail, seems absurd. In so far as certain anarchists have failed to accomplish this or that no particular credit reflects on them. In the same way, the colossal failure of communists to achieve communism in Russia by supporting the Communist Party, reflects no particular credit on them. Is it the *metier* of communists to fail?

As I see it, anarchists in general pursue real human ends and therefore do achieve some measure of success. In contrast, those who follow the declared aims of political parties, large or small, pursue a will o' the wisp and are doomed to failure. Perhaps the only party members who succeed are the individual politicians who emancipate themselves from the working class by their political efforts and achieve the satisfaction of seeing their own names in big print. The rest are stooges.

London.

★

Gosh! What a depressing ANARCHY this month. All the more surprising in that we are living in a period of resurgence of radical feeling, not in the reactionary fifties, the heyday of "apathy", "conformism" and all that.

George Molnar tells us that anarchists "succeed in only one thing: protest of a kind that is always defeated. That is their career, that is the substance of anarchism." Philip Holgate is content with a solution that will be a compromise, in which (he hopes) the anarchist influence "will be as big as possible". Ted Kavanagh will settle for a "freer society". Geoffrey Ostergaard seems at first sight to have more to offer, with his syndicalism. I believe that some sort of syndicalist organisation will be necessary if any sort of free society is to be developed in a modern industrial environment, but am decidedly put off by the following: "Bourgeois socialist intellectuals—students, professors, publicists and the like—had only a limited auxiliary role to play in the strategy of the revolution." I suppose this would apply to anarchists as well as socialists, and would certainly rule me out, as well as the writer of the article,

who is, we are told, a lecturer in political science. (Shame!) This sort of attitude to people of non-proletarian origin reminds me of the racialism of the Black Muslims.

A little piece by Alex Comfort, quoted from *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State*, repudiates revolutionary anarchism in favour of an anarchism based on "observational research". Colin Ward is all for "encroaching control" in industry and "de-institutionalisation". And all this is excellent. The Progressive League, and other reformist bodies have been working along these lines for years. More power to their elbows! But I thought anarchism went further. After all, anarchists have never been backward in works of social reform, but have usually regarded them as peripheral, not as occupying the centre of stage.

When I joined the anarchist movement I did not have much hope of seeing a social revolution in my time. However it seemed a reasonable thing to work towards. At least there was always hope, the future being unpredictable. I doubt whether I should have bothered with a movement which saw its function as one of "permanent protest". While for piecemeal social reform there are hundreds of movements and bodies which are more efficient for the purpose than the anarchists.

I joined the anarchists because they offered an alternative form of society to the authoritarian one that I found, and still do find, so intolerable. It is true that an anarchist society seemed remote, but at least one could feel one was helping to bring it nearer. And to a limited extent the anarchist movement is a free society already in being, though our small numbers limit very severely the amount of freedom and protection that it is able to afford to its members.

The sort of anarchism which ANARCHY is coming to offer seems to me to be of another kind from that which brought me into the movement. It appears to be a sort of managerial anarchism. It does not hope for a radically different form of human society, either now or in the future. It merely hopes to be able to soften the harshness of managerialism. It is quite agreeable to seizing other people's land to put airfields and



power stations and reservoirs there, and will resort to force if need be to gain its ends. (But I hope I am being unjust, and that this is not the general view). It does not deny the individual's right to protest. Indeed it commends protest. So long as you are aware that your protests will do no more than rub off the hard edges of the managerial-technocratic society.

This sounds 'realistic', but is it? In certain circumstances, though it is not the universal rule, if you demand a revolution, and struggle for it, you may well get some worth-while reforms, even if you don't get your revolution. Whereas, if you merely ask for some reforms you may not get anything very substantial. But what is more important to me, although others no doubt differ, is the terrible implications of "permanent protest" as a philosophy. The history of humanity is mostly the history of authoritarianism. It is ghastly. "Permanent protest" seems to imply that this Hell, which men have made on this earth, and will make on other planets I suppose, is to continue forever.

Let this sink in for a bit. I have recently been reading an account of the doings of some of the French in Algeria. Are we to suppose that for thousands of years, for millions perhaps, human beings are going to be atrociously tortured by their fellow humans in this manner? Protest saved a few. Or what about that living skeleton on the Oxfam posters? Is this to be the fate of large portions of humanity, forever?

To me this is a prospect not unlike that of the Christian conception of Hell. Nuclear annihilation seems desirable by comparison. The "free society" is merely a verbal shorthand. What surely we must desire, and work towards, is a multiplicity of free societies, changing, evolving and yet continuing free. Organised in a thousand different ways, and lasting for millenia.

George Molnar may be right, and anarchists may not be able to bring this about, for the reasons he gives. On the other hand, may not the an-

archist failures be due to the fact that the anarchists, for all their criticism of statist revolutionary movements, have not yet begun to emancipate themselves, or perhaps are just now beginning to emancipate themselves, from the traditional republican-revolutionism of the Left?

From their writings it is clear that neither Bakunin nor Kropotkin ever really succeeded in doing this, and for some reason the anarchists appear to have decided that the history of anarchist thought ends with Kropotkin. Of course, when the anarchists in Spain and the Ukraine tried to organise anarchist armies and so on, the more they succeeded (militarily) the more they failed to achieve a free society. But does this mean that we must always fail? Because the first submarine sank with all on board does this mean that submarines always sink?

I don't necessarily say that non-violence is The Answer, but I do think that it represents the way forward. This method of resistance does not of necessity involve the creation of a new authoritarian hierarchy, as violence appears to do. I see the anarchist movement as an evolving thing, and I hope that it will one day be strong enough to abolish authoritarianism, with its cruelty and want, forever.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

London, S.W.11.

EDITORIAL NOTE: *In fairness to Geoffrey Ostergaard we ought to point out that he was citing the views of the syndicalists, not his own; in fairness to Philip Holgate we should mention that his article was originally written for a different context (in FREEDOM in October 1960); and in fairness to the whole tendency of ANARCHY we should say that whoever really thinks we are propagating "managerial anarchism" has yet to meet a manager.*

## Still more observations on Anarchism and public schools

The attention of the public has recently been drawn to the expulsion of Jonathan Brittain, a public schoolboy who attended the demonstration at Marham air base. The expulsion coincided with an article in this month's *Sanity* (monthly newspaper of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) which proposed the establishment of a Public Schools CND. I am writing this letter as a warning to all those who intend to start up CND activities within such schools, and thereby hope they will be prepared for the consequences.

I came to public school in the summer of 1959, joined CND in early 1960, and in October of the same year, asked the Headmaster for permission to wear the CND badge on my Sunday jacket. After explaining to him that it was not the symbol of the Youth Hostel Association, but of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he gave me permission. This was the first, and only, success I had. In February 1961, I distributed CND leaflets in the school buildings. The Headmaster called me up, censured me, and made me apologize to those members of staff in whose rooms I had distributed literature. In May the following term, I asked the Headmaster permission to set up a CND group within the school. He refused. In September 1961, I wrote to the *Guardian*, and informed them

of the suppression of CND activities within the school. The editor wished to publish the letter, but wrote to the Headmaster seeking an assurance that the publication would 'in no way compromise its author'. Such an assurance was refused. In the same month, the school debating society proposed a motion that "In the opinion of this House, Britain should renounce nuclear weapons". I was asked by the master in charge of the society to propose this motion. I was then informed the Headmaster did not wish me to. The motion was lost by 28 votes to 17; only the Upper School was allowed to attend. On the evening before Remembrance Sunday three of us organized a two-minute silence under the auspices of CND, opposite the war memorial. It was virtually broken up; onlookers threw grit and played transistor radios. (In the glossy handbooks they call this Public School character and initiative). The Head of School informed me the following morning that the Headmaster had not approved; neither, in a way, did I. On December 9th, we decided to hold a meeting in one of the school buildings to inform people why the demonstration at the Wethersfield air base the same day, was being held. We were caught five minutes before the meeting started, given six 'maps', and told to get out of the classroom immediately.



Two days later my punishment was increased for not obtaining the Headmaster's permission.

In January, 1962, I handed in my resignation to the school cadet corps. (This is an organization for which it is compulsory to volunteer; we still use 1914 rifles!). I was told that if I did not turn up for the next parade, I would be expelled on the spot. I did not attend; the Headmaster called me up, my parents were brought down, and I agreed to go into the Mountain Rescue Section. In March, we again attempted to set up a CND group; we promised the Headmaster that we would not hold any demonstrations, or distribute literature. We had the support of one member of staff; permission was again refused. A few weeks later, a friend of mine had written to CND and placed his letter in the House posting box. The letter was seized by his Housemaster, opened, and found to contain a donation and a completed form for the Aldermaston March. The Housemaster refused to surrender the money or the form till parental permission had been received.

In May, I wrote a short story for the school literary magazine. The Headmaster refused to have it published. It concerned a schoolgirl who was so infuriated by the fact that nuclear radiation had caused four million stillbirths, she rushed up to the school buildings, and began to smash up four million chairs. The Governors of the school called her up, expelled her, and sent her to a mental institution, where she spent six months

basket-weaving. Perhaps the analogy was too close.

In February this year, I proposed—successfully—a motion in the Debating Society that Public Schools should be abolished. In March, the Headmaster called me up for suggesting modern jazz in the Record Library register (I was Record Librarian at the time). As well as being sacked, I was warned that if he had occasion to call me up again, he would expel me. If he saw anything that I wrote, or heard anything that I heard “which in any way would be detrimental to the interests of the school”, I would be in dire trouble. The muzzle was now officiously and effectively clamped on.

In April, I won the verse prize, but I was told by the editor of the school literary magazine that certain poems would have to be excluded because of their subject matter. We all laugh cynically when a Russian produces a well-documented, evenly balanced speech, that never for a moment wavers from the ‘party-line’. But is this not sheer hypocrisy? For are not nearly all the magazines produced at public schools nothing more than calmly expressed support for their own ‘party-line’?

We were successful, however, in publishing articles and poems in our house magazine, edited by the prefects themselves—incidentally the only magazine at school which is not censored by a superior authority. I did, however, sign my contributions “Anon”, in view of the expulsion threat that was still hanging over me. We had written articles des-

cribing the Aldermaston March, and a Committee of 100 sit-down from a favourable point of view—a unique event in the history of public school literature. We attacked the emptiness and futility of the fourteen religious services we attend every week; we attacked the Conservative Party (blasphemy!) and the public school so-called values, its apathetic society and political indifference, shielding it all behind an editorial which denounced censorship of school magazines, and demanded a more broad-minded approach on behalf of the authorities. Within hours of the publication on the last afternoon of term, the Headmaster contacted the Housemaster, who in turn summoned the Head of House to his room, and demanded an explanation. He was asked to apologize to those whom the magazine had offended, and was informed that it was very nearly banned—and would have been had the Headmaster seized the proofs. We hit record sales.

I do not wish to incite public schoolboys to rebel; it is up to them to take what action they wish. I hope this letter will prepare them for the consequences—and not only is authority quick to act, but the dayroom society also, which can turn life into a living hell for those who hold different views from the majority. I am sure I am not the only schoolboy who has been treated in such a manner. What I have written here is the truth, and truth does not need exaggeration. (Name supplied).

Being in the sixth form at a public school, I read with interest

the letter sent in by “J” in your July issue. I want first to make it clear that I entered the school *via* the Eleven-plus, and that there would have been no question of my having done so had I failed that exam.

While sympathising with “J”'s views, I feel pessimistic about the chances of public schools ever becoming anything more than they are at the moment, *i.e.* training grounds for the monied élite. Paradoxically, the reason for this lies not with the authorities, but with the type of boy (the overwhelming majority) for which these schools cater. Political apathy and an ingrained habit of ridiculing anything “out of the ordinary” are the characteristics of the public-school-type, whilst at my school at any rate, it is the masters who try to instil a vestige of originality into the unconscious mass. I can truthfully say that through my seven years at school there has been no attempt by the powers that be to curb my political or anti-religious activities. I have given lectures on CND, introduced *Freedom*, *Anarchy* and *Peace News* and have edited for the past four years a fifteen-page termly magazine with a decidedly pro-leftist, pro-CND, anti-religious slant, ninety copies of which are now produced. At no time has there been any talk of banning this. Also, on several occasions, I have been allowed to miss games to take part in CND marches.

“J” speaks of “the refusal to allow individuals to resign from the cadet corps”. When I was fourteen (the usual age for the Start of this type of indoctrina-



tion), I failed to turn up at recruitment. Since then, the only comments have been from boys themselves and there have been no attempts whatsoever to force me to participate. Indeed, the corps itself is described as voluntary in the school's regulations, yet as far as I know, I am the only person to have taken advantage of this for reasons other than health. With the rules as they are, it is clearly possible for the boys themselves to bring about the fall of this anachronistic, time-wasting and inhuman organisation. They are really asking for all they get if they fail to make use of the opportunity.

The fact that so large a number are members of the corps gives an outward display of solidarity, which is, in fact, non-existent. There is a great deal of grumbling and dissatisfaction on 'corps day'—but for the wrong reasons.

All this convinces me of the improbability of anything even slightly "dangerous" occurring now or at any time to change these schools. They will continue churning out rugby players, politicians and business men, each with his set of stereotyped "values", each lacking any real appreciation of non-material things.

Kent

SIXTH FORMER.

*For the great mass of industrial workers, and for many white collar workers too, work is not a significant area of life. R. Dubin found in his study of several hundred American industrial workers that work was a central life interest for only a small minority. Professor P. Lafitte interviewed 300 factory workers in Melbourne and came to the same conclusion; that the activities most valued are found chiefly outside work. The factory worker is seldom work centred. Work for him is not something on which he centres his interests, his hopes and aspirations, nor even his worries.*

*Not only do some kinds of work fail to involve the interest of the worker, they are positively damaging in their effects. Harvey Swados, an American writer who has worked in factories, emphasizes the differences between the manual worker and the middle class, despite their superficial similarities: "there is one thing that the worker doesn't do like the middle class: he works like a worker . . . The worker's attitude towards his work is generally compounded of hatred, shame, and resignation . . . It is not simply status-hunger that makes a man hate work that is mindless, endless, stupefying, sweaty, filthy, noisy, exhausting, insecure in its prospects, and practically without hope of advancement . . ."*

—STEPHEN COTGROVE & STANLEY PARKER:  
"Work & Non-Work" (*New Society*, 11/7/63).

## Letter to readers . . .

If you were excited by the potentialities of the Community Workshop idea explored in this issue of ANARCHY it was probably for one or more of three reasons, either because it seems to you a good idea to try out in your neighbourhood, or because you are interested in the principle of workers' control in industry and are looking for new approaches to it, or because you are interested in the ways in which new industrial techniques and methods of organising production can be used to enlarge the freedom and autonomy of the worker.

If the articles in this issue suggest to you ways of widening the scope and range of the things which you and your neighbours can undertake for yourselves, the next step is to spread the idea—and copies of this issue—among other interested people in your locality. You will probably also want ANARCHY 23 (on housing) which includes articles on housing societies, miners who run their own pit, and some reflections by Ian Nairn on the implications of the do-it-yourself principle.

If your interest is in workers' control of industry you will need ANARCHY 2 which was entirely devoted to the different approaches to the idea and its history, ANARCHY 5 which discussed its application in the Spanish revolution, ANARCHY 10 which included a paper on "Industrial Decentralisation and Workers' Control", and ANARCHY 28 which included Geoffrey Ostergaard's "The Relevance of Syndicalism".

If the ideas on industrial organisation in Bosco Nedelcovic's article excited your interest, you ought to read the article on Galbraith's economics in ANARCHY 1, Reg Wright's articles on the gang system in Coventry in ANARCHY 2 and 8, the paper on industrial decentralisation in ANARCHY 10, "Communitas Revisited" in ANARCHY 11, the discussion of Technology, Science and Anarchism in ANARCHY 25, and a forthcoming article by John D. McEwan: "Anarchism and the Cybernetics of Self-Organising Systems".

Our ideal reader of course is interested in all these aspects, gets ANARCHY every month and FREEDOM every week, orders extra copies and back numbers for his friends. Maybe you are he/him/her/them/us!

Single copies of ANARCHY cost 1s. 6d. plus 3d. postage, half-a-dozen assorted (say which ones you want) 9s. 0d. post free).