

POVERTY

Bill Jamieson / The Castaways

Alistair Rattray & Alex Simpson / Child Poverty

James W. Cain / Kropotkin House, Duluth

Charlie Gillett / A Change is gonns come

Reg O'Lucian / The Fake Revolt

ANARCHY 84

TWO SHILLINGS OR THIRTY CENTS

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Notes on poverty

1: The castaways

BILL JAMIESON

IT WAS 11 P.M. The bolts were eased back and the doors opened. I stood, near the back of this dimly lit cafe, leaning against a pillar, and feeling very, very scared. There was a rush to the entrance. From the melee of arms, bodies and legs that prised themselves through the doorway, people shot forward into the room like pips squeezed from an orange.

Outside, there was a downpour. Through the sudden burst of noise, I could hear the sound of rain hissing on the pavement; and I could smell its rich, wet smell oozing from those struggling to get in. They had been queueing now for almost an hour.

Impressions tumbled so thick and fast after that instant, it is difficult to piece them together. But I remember vividly the way these men and women clutched onto their grubby, sodden coats as if they were stark naked underneath. I would say most of them were drunk. The first ones half tottered, half stumbled to various positions round the walls of the room, lying down on the floor or flopping into huge, dilapidated armchairs. Others followed, singly or in groups, as if to previously agreed positions, sitting down round tables and gradually filling the entire room until the smell and the noise and the crush became unbearable. I think what struck me most was the apparent joviality with which this molten lava of humanity accepted its fate. There was a great uproar of shouting, singing and laughter, and a small, grey-haired woman, drunk beyond her wildest dreams, stretched out her arms and

danced to the general dementium of noise. She came bearing down, knocking over chairs and pushing past people, towards me.

"Ah'm no like the ithers," she exclaimed loudly, "Ah wis brought up proper. Ah'm elegant. Do ye no think ah'm elegend?" She lifted up her coat with a grand, imperial gesture, revealing a pair of horribly deformed legs. She came closer.

"Son, you're a guid lookin' fella. Can ye gie us a fag?"

I lied, terribly.

"Can ye no even gie me a sixpence?"

I lied even worse.

"Then ye're a cunt," she belched, and pirouetted on behind me.

For a while I did not move, but let my eyes flit over the chaotic morass of bodies. I could see faces blurred with drink, faces loose, faces marble with sobriety. Behind me, a man from the Highlands, with great bushy eyebrows, put a chanter to his lips and piped a half-remembered lyric. It rose, quietly over the sound of laughter and voices, beginning to replace them with a stillness that comes of respect. Not for the first time I was to hear the slow, sad music of the destitute.

Philip O'Connor, in his Penguin book on Vagrancy, quoted a striking remark made once by a social worker. "Archaeologists," she wrote, "interpret past civilizations by what they threw away. What contemporary society rejects can be equally revealing to the sociologist."

About destitution and vagrancy, very little sociologically, is known. It is a terrain into which few social scientists have ventured, and out of which even fewer truths have come. Even quantitatively, the problem has eluded accurate estimation. The numbers of people sleeping rough in Britain each night has been put at 30,000 by a National Assistance Board survey conducted on two nights in November and December 1965; and as high as 90,000 by Anton Wallich Clifford, a Probation Officer who has been setting up shelters for the destitute up and down the country. Twenty thousand, he argues, probably sleep rough in the Home Counties alone. In addition to this figure, hundreds of thousands of men and women are accommodated in lodging houses, church hostels and rehabilitation centres. The problem of destitution may not be as formidable as it once was, but it is still eyebrow-raising, particularly by modern welfare standards.

Edinburgh is a city not exactly renowned for its destitute population. It is a deceptive city, presenting to those who do not know it well a culture and a people for whom the problems of life seem to have been well considered and resolved long since. It is a flattering facade. Over 1,000 people, ex-mental patients, epileptics, chronic alcoholics, criminals and pensioners—"down-and-outs" for want of a better description—are concentrated in one small square, the Grassmarket, overshadowed by the Castle rock, almost in the dead centre of the city. When one

approaches it from the east end, it is like being led down into a grim, sinister amphitheatre. It used to be exactly that, in fact, two centuries ago, when Covenanters in their hundreds were taken down and strung up in the Gallows. Their place of execution is now marked—ironically if not conveniently—by a gentleman's lavatory.

As the terrain of the destitute and the dispossessed, the Grassmarket has been notorious for over a hundred years, but even in the face of this, the area has attracted more historical than sociological interest. History, here, however, provides the crucial, determining factor. The influence of psychiatry on social work is not always a clarifying one, since it has an inherent tendency to treat men as individuals with the minimal reference to history. No man can claim such independence, least of all one who is destitute. In studying the meths drinker or the vagrant in depth, we find in the majority of cases that general social disruption—the effects of economic changes and two world wars—generate profound and often tragic disorganization of individual norms and life-styles. The industrial revolution is a particular example, and the main men's hostel in the Grassmarket was established in 1888 to cater specifically for the thousands who flocked to the city for work and who were driven off the land by the Acts of Enclosure. Even before urbanization, when the Grassmarket was a bustling market centre, its proximity to the city gates at the West Port acted as a magnet for tramps, tinkers, prostitutes and thieves.

About the destitute, it is difficult to generalize, but the problem, if it is anything, is a class one. Of the fifty or so hostel occupants I talked to, all were from working class or poor farming backgrounds. For the middle class alcoholic or mentally disturbed, the situation is much different, and he remains insulated to a surprising degree from falling down the class ladder. Societies like Alcoholics and Neurotics Anonymous act as a buffer, and often friends and relatives, too, can break the fall. In short, it is possible for many professional people to come to pieces without having to stoop to a doss house in a vain attempt to pick them up again.

Around the square, and in the streets leading into it, can be found no less than seven lodging houses, some of them church and Salvation Army hostels some Corporation aided, others private companies, run on a profit and loss basis. They tend, in fact, to be as varied as those who make use of them. The largest men's hostel, providing accommodation for an average of 280 men per night, brings in a net profit averaging between £500 and £1,000 per year. I checked its shareholders and accounts at the City Companies Office. In their annual statement for 1963, for example, its Directors had "pleasure in reporting that the average number—321—of lodgers per night was the highest for a considerable number of years".

Institutions like these, not surprisingly, have been condemned by

social workers since they were first built. Listen to this Report, made in 1911: "The 'models' do not improve men physically or morally. They are destructive of family life. Once a man is in a 'model', no woman can visit him . . . all sorts of lads who have broken away from home moorings find a haven in these places, where the sights and sounds are destructive of moral tone."

Even for its small proportion of meths drinkers, chronic alcoholic and mentally disturbed, the hostel made no attempt at rehabilitation. It provides cubicle and dormitory accommodation at 3/9d. per night, a large sitting room open all day (the most forbidding place I've seen, despite fairly new furniture), a "television lounge" (i.e. a small black unlit space at the back of the hall, screened off by a curtain) and canteen facilities—at your own peril. No visitors are allowed; no alcohol on the premises; no smoking in the dormitories. The majority of lodgers are labourers, night watchmen, casual workers and pensioners. Considering the effects of hostel life on family relationships, social behaviour, and particularly leisure activity (not to mention the utter degradation), one would be happier to report less people having to stay there, not more.

The Salvation Army Women's Hostel is the most expensive in Edinburgh, with private cubicles at 5/6d. per night, not including meals. Sixty per cent. of the lodgers are over 70; some of them have been staying there for 15 years or more. I talked to the Matron. "They've made this their home really . . . when their husbands died or left home, where else is there to go?"

Where else is there to go? An estimated 200 sleep rough in Edinburgh each night. Most of them have been evicted from the hostels—for bedwetting, an all too common effect of prolonged and heavy drinking, "creating a disturbance", or simply unable to afford the price of a bed. Others are migrants who will pass through the city and move on somewhere else—vagrants, ex-prisoners, castaways.

Until last February, they had no shelter to go to other than old derelict buildings or benches in graveyards and gardens. Then, with a little publicity, and even less money, the Simon Community opened up a shelter 200 yards from the Grassmarket. An old soup kitchen, renovated and donated by the Church of Scotland, became an open house for the destitute. The regulations were minimal, and no one was refused admittance, not even if he was tottering drunk or plagued with lice. The word spread. Within three weeks, over 70—men and women, young and old—were queuing each night at the door.

The Simon Community was first set up in 1965 by Anton Wallich Clifford, a one-time Probation Officer, now working full time on the problem. The Community first pioneered a new form of residential care in Stepney, East London, catering for the crude spirit drinker. Since then, it has opened up shelters in eight major cities up and down the

country, including Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

To the problem of destitution, the Simon Community has applied unorthodox, radical policies. The basic idea is to give help on a level at which the meths drinker and the mentally handicapped can appreciate and respond—their own.

What was taking place in this little shelter, while the rain drummed loudly on the roof, was a form of very simple—and effective—group therapy. Everything that the cafe provided—a bowl of soup, a blanket, and some old clothes occasionally, was free. No one was thrown out. No one came round with Bibles or ready to hand morals; no one bothered you if all you wanted was to be left alone.

Sociologically, the shelter subculture is a fascinating network of ties and alliances, of gradations and hierarchies of dispossession, of fission-fusion relationships. What initially appears to outsiders as a closely knit community, unified by a common class and social status position is, in fact, a highly nebulous constellation of individuals, sharply stratified and set against itself. Workers, Irish migrants, pensioners, vagrants, alcoholics, tend to form more or less distinct social categories, which militate against the formation of any strong collective consciousness.

What is perhaps more striking is the atomization of individuals, even within these groupings, that further prevent a conception of themselves as members of a larger unit. It is precisely because of their economic condition, rather than in spite of it, that this should be so. Imagine a society in which hundreds live on a Social Security benefit of £5 per week or less, sprinkled with more than its fair share of alcoholics, small time crooks and mentally disturbed. You have a society set at odds not only with the outside world, which regards it with contempt, but set also against itself. Everywhere there is tightness; the tightness of lips, of hands round glass; of fingers on coins. If the dispossessed have any philosophy, then it is surely that of Lear's Fool:

*"Have more than thou showst,
Speak less than thou knowst,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score."*

This, in short, is the atmosphere that breeds chronic alcoholism; the substance, then the shadow of normalcy is steadily eroded. What is left can be a mere human shell. Listen to one of them: "The only outlet I've got is to get drunk. . . . I get drunk heavily and drunk often. I've got nothing else to look forward to. Life means absolutely nothing to me. You know what I'm worth?" He opened up his arms and brought his hands together with a resounding smack. "A balloon."

Jo was only 40—young by destitute standards. He went to approved school when he was 11. Ever since, he has been living like a yo-yo—roped in for drunkenness, breach of the peace, theft and assault. He was married—once. Tonight, in between the meths, workers at the shelter give him a bowl of hot soup. It is probably the only form of nourishment he has had since last night.

For the 70-odd others like him at the cafe, the story is much the same—army, prison, lodging house—and now this. For the women, perhaps, it is even more humiliating. Jennie was born in a hostel. Her education lasted three years, and at 16 she was a prostitute. Four years later she was inside for shoplifting. Her husband was blown to pieces in the war. You can have her—or what's left—for 15/-, any night. Others are not so articulate—not that they didn't try, but one soon gets lost in labyrinths of half-remembered experience.

In the spare evenings I had, I would help out at the cafe the little I could, from 11 p.m. to 2 or 3 in the morning. The first traumatic impression was that of utter and all-enveloping helplessness, and the inadequacy of these people seemed only to reflect one's own. Each face seemed so heavy, so burdened with its own individual melancholy, one felt that nothing, no matter how much, could ever lighten them.

An hour after the doors opened, at midnight, soup was given out. Some came round to the kitchen for a second helping, but it is difficult enough to see that everyone gets a first. Later, the blankets are given out. How do you divide 30 amongst 70? The old, the disabled, the women are given one anyway. The rest wrap themselves in newspapers, old coats, anything that comes to hand. They sleep on the floor. In the back room, where the Simon workers stay up all night, conversation flits between one destitute case and another. Most of them are students, three or four of whom live and work full time on the premises. Their total earnings are £1 per week and a half ounce of tobacco. Like the destitute, they formed something of a heterogeneous and constantly changing population; an anarchist from Hemel Hempstead; a student minister; a young Maoist; a chemical engineer. Each night they go out amongst a galaxy of damaged and inadequate personalities, schizophrenics and physically disabled, meths drinkers, pill pushers and prostitutes. They talk and listen to as many as possible, develop a personal relationship and share their multitude of problems. Gradually, the destitute can begin to grow some roots, however frail. The Edinburgh experiment is not sufficiently equipped to reveal any encouraging results, but the London shelter can certainly do so. It works on a three tier system; the bottom tier provides shelter and a bare minimum of sustenance; the second comprises those who are attempting to stay off alcohol over a set period of time—the “soaking out” stage, where they enjoy the comfort of a bed and three meals a day. The third tier is the stepping stone to normalcy, providing jobs and lodging accommoda-

tion for those who have “dried out” and broken free from the vicious circle of alcoholism and poverty. Of 15 men and women who were taken into care from the most overpublicized bomb site, six are left. Three are in lodgings in another area, one of whom has been working for three months; three went to a nearby rehabilitation hostel for alcoholics, two of whom are working; two are in hospital; one is missing. Not spectacular, admittedly, but as one Simon worker put it: “It's a beginning—a blue candle in the night.”

The “blue candle”, however, certainly has more than its fair share of critics, as I was soon to find out. For several days after an article of mine had appeared in the *Scotsman*, I received a cascade of letters, falling into more or less three distinct groups. The largest number came from people wanting to help out at the Community and enclosing money. No problem there. The second group came from the Ministry of Social Security and their numerous but conveniently anonymous allies who argued (in a rather generous sense of the word) that only bums and hobos use the cafe to spend the rest of their money on drink, and that the cafe was giving Cause For Concern. The third group, the most predictable and hair-raising, came from God, armed with every fantasy other than the proverbial flash of lightning. I must admit, however, in laying myself open to attack from this quarter, since I had described some of Grassmarket Missionaries as irrelevant and simplistic Bible-punchers. For four days, God's vengeance wreaked havoc in the correspondence columns of the *Scotsman*. If the word of the Gospel doesn't succeed, argued one letter, then none of this newfangled rehabilitation will. When people are in need, wrote another, they turn more and more to the Gospel. I wrote back. And on the sixth day, God rested.

I remember very vividly one incident which occurred recently at the shelter. The cafe had been visited on several occasions by members of a Roman Catholic organization from Ireland, and since the shelter was trying to maintain a strictly non-denominational policy, several workers were naturally apprehensive. Nigel, the young Maoist, determined to make his point with the minimum of ill feeling and a touch of humour, countered the words of the Gospel with readings from the Thoughts of Chairman Mao. It brought the house down. “We Communists are like seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go, we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them.” The rosaries must have been clicking like geiger-counters.

Undaunted, the Legion of Mary remained. On the whole, I found them a friendly and sympathetic lot, but one absolutely farcical incident made me refuse to take them seriously. It was a particularly wild Saturday night, and the Legion had walked in slightly startled as we were breaking up a minor, but nonetheless bloody fight. One of them soon got inveigled with a meths drinker called Hughie White. Hughie

was a particular favourite of mine, since he was more articulate than most, and could tell the most fantastic stories—such as, for example, the day he was knighted by King George V—with such intricate and imaginative detail that one really began to wonder if there was something to them. They had obviously found a great deal to say to each other, for the conversation appeared to be getting more and more animated and intense. Eventually the Irishman left Hughie and came running up to the leader of the party, whom I had been talking to.

“Father,” he gasped eagerly, putting his hands on his shoulders, “I’ve just met Hughie White. I know he’s a little bitty drunk Father, but he’s one of us, and I’ll tell you, Father . . .”, his voiced dropped to a confidential whisper, “He’s just right for a confession.”

More than once the accusation was made that the cafe attracted those from other, more respectable hostels, who make use of the free food and shelter so that all their assistance money can be spent on drink. There were a few individual cases of people who stayed at the cafe the night before they received their money, since it had run out, but the fact that the cafe is crowded out on particularly cold and wet nights tends to suggest that it is the real “down-and-out” sleeping rough, rather than those who could afford to stay in hostels, who are attracted. There are cases also of destitute people who have been found reasonably priced accommodation and have soon abandoned them. This again would appear to be a symptom, rather than a cause, of acute alcoholism or mental instability. If we do not readily accuse cripples of being unable to do their own shopping, then equally we have no right to accuse those who are addicted to meths of being unable to look after themselves or make use of the facilities available. Alcoholism is a disease, calling like all others for long-term treatment and cure. Calvinists see alcoholism as a sin, calling for long-term temperance and chastisement. In Edinburgh, they are many; we are few.

For anarchists, however, the Simon experiment raises more questions than it in fact answers. Like all voluntary organizations set up to deal with a problem such as this, it is difficult to offer criticism without seeming insensitively pedantic or callous. For those of us concerned with creating an altogether new society, rather than patching up the defects of an old one, then voluntary social work of this type can be anathema. Many libertarians, for example, would balk at the thought of reintegrating people into a society from which they are so ostentatiously opting out; others would focus criticism on the short-term and palliative nature of voluntary assistance and level the accusation of reformism at those dealing with the problem in this way. Even more, perhaps, would object to the Simon Community’s connection with the Church, regardless of the negligible influence these have. It would be easy, in short, to write off the organization altogether as yet another ill-conceived and inadequate attempt to cope with a problem manufactured by the very society in which we live.

Even more facile it would be, however, if we were to imagine under a social order totally different from the one we know today, chronic alcoholism and destitution would automatically cease to exist, or in fact, to assume that the phenomena would never arise in the first place. Certainly, the problem would not be intensified as it is now by the prevailing ethos of a competitive, consumer-orientated society which regards the accumulation of property as a passport to social acceptance and destitution as a symptom of individual decadence and inadequacy. Much of the so-called “charity” which militant church and evangelical organizations administer at present is not charity at all, but chastisement, given with the express intent of making the recipient feel totally responsible and guilty for their condition. This attitude is shared, to a lesser degree, by many others who argue that failure deserves its own reward; that in our free enterprise society people who “do not make the grade” are malingerers, layabouts, and parasites. What voluntary organizations like the Simon Community come up against continually in an environment and an ideology which perpetually condemn the “down-and-out” to a condition of total dispossession, poverty and squalor—a condition regarded more as an accepted “slot” in society than the hideous and subhuman form of existence which it is.

In the face of this, “rehabilitation” has become the sociological password, the magic key which will unlock the doors of society to the destitute. The term is one which lends itself to a variety of interpretations and those concerned with social change rather than social patchwork should be rightly sceptical of it. A lot of social work is wasted on the effort of reintegrating people into a social rat race which alienates and dislocates human beings in the first place; Tony Parker’s book *The Man Outside* provides a pointed and disturbing example of this, and one begins to realize just how hard we have to think about rehabilitating our whole society rather than tinkering with its deviant individuals.

The type of rehabilitation with which the Simon Community is primarily concerned, however, is of a somewhat different character and comes into play at the destitute level itself, by bringing the castaways together and creating a community in which they can orientate themselves and begin to communicate with others in a similar position. As a form of spontaneous group therapy, it goes a long way to breaking down the social barriers inherited and sustained by outside pressures, and forms an indispensable first step before long-term medical treatment can be embarked upon and expected to yield successful results.

All this is only possible in an environment where an “open door” policy prevails and restrictions are cut to a minimum. Other organizations have a lot to learn from the Simon experiment; but unless the conventional attempts at rehabilitation are exposed for the hopelessly misdirected efforts that they are, then we are likely to see chronic alcoholism and destitution accepted as an unavoidable and incurable condition, and not as an acute social problem calling for radical and creative solutions.

2: Child poverty, with a look at a Lancashire town

**ALISTAIR RATTRAY and
ALEX SIMPSON**

On Sunday she wore blue stockings, a yellow skirt and a bright red blouse;

On Monday she wore the same.

On Tuesday she wore a bright red blouse, blue stockings and a yellow skirt;

On Wednesday she dressed the same;

On Thursday again the red, the yellow and the blue;

On Friday again the same.

On Saturday she didn't come out.

On Sunday she wore blue stockings, a yellow skirt and a bright red blouse.

KATHLEEN IS 9 AND IS ONE of a, too large, minority living in poverty. She lives in the old Lancashire town of Blackmills, with its population of 33,000. The declining cotton industry of Blackmills has been supplemented by a large nearby engineering industry and arms factory, together with entry into textiles. Unlike many of the surrounding towns, Blackmills cannot be described as a depressed area where unemployment is disturbingly acute. The housing is predominantly old and the red brick terraced rows of houses, 2 up, 2 down, built for the cotton workers towards the end of the 19th century, were not erected with an eye to

ALISTAIR RATTRAY, 26 from London and ALEX SIMPSON, 29 from Wigan (who wrote the poems "Kathleen" and "Some Morning") are students at Chorley College of Education.

design. The majority were built without bathrooms and are still without them where no Local Authority grant has been obtained for installation. Most still have the lavatory outside in the back yard (no gardens). The main road, one of Lancashire's main highways, is full of flashy, newly-built supermarkets which compete with the two market places which open three times a week. A view of Blackmills from the hills on the edge of the Pennines is generally unpleasant. Dozens of factory chimneys incessantly belch out palls of black smoke which mingle with the smoke of the smaller coal fires which everyone burns throughout the year. The view is always hazy, summer and winter, and the houses, even the post-war council houses, are blackened and dirty. Compared to many of the surrounding towns Blackmills is good and clean, as any of the older citizens will tell you.

There are few facilities for the children and teenagers in Blackmills. The children play in the small parks and on the streets, going up the hill on fine days. Only one primary school has its own football pitch attached to the school. There is one poorly-attended youth centre. The most popular beat-club-coffee-bar recently closed down when the lease expired and the rent went up. There are two cinemas struggling for survival. For the adults there is Bingo, the cinema, and one pub per 150 head of population.

Although there is no definitive slum area in Blackmills and one cannot walk through the streets seeing overt poverty, there is poverty here—hidden behind the skirts of the Welfare State—as indeed there is throughout the country.

The work of Professors Townsend, Abel Smith and Titmus have shown us that poverty exists on a vast scale in this country and hits hardest those who are most helpless—the children. Peter Townsend points out (letter, *Guardian*, 8.7.67) that the Ministry of Social Security (MSS) drew a very severe poverty line when it arrived at its, already high, poverty figure. He accuses the Ministry of not asking the right questions and comments “. . . instead of 280,000 families (with 910,000 children) having been found in the summer of 1966 to have resources less than requirements, there would probably have been, judging from the report (MSS) and other sources, at least 450,000 (with over 1,400,000 children). These revelations about the level of poverty become more alarming when one realises that in this age of affluence where the standard of living is rising (for some) and the cost of living rising (for all), the amount of real poverty has risen sharply, e.g. since 1954. Poverty can rise while standards rise and now (not a new phenomenon), many families, whose breadwinner is in full-time employment, are living in poverty, well below the MSS basic subsistence level. Poverty cannot be seen solely as the result of unemployment and sickness (physical, mental or social) but also as a result of a hopelessly inadequate Welfare State and straight capitalist profiteering and exploitation. The majority of families

living in poverty have at least one person in employment which means that their poverty is hidden from the bureaucrats at the Labour Exchange and Social Security as they may never have recourse to draw benefits that the Welfare State has to offer.

In Blackmills the wages for unskilled workers are low. Unskilled labourers in textiles only earn between £8 to £11 per week. Women workers in textiles earn the same. Building labourers can earn up to £25 to £30 per week by breaking their backs seven days every week, weather permitting, but this is very uncertain money and all too frequently they receive an insulting wage. There is very little construction work in Blackmills and building workers go far afield to find the well-paid jobs. Where these low paid workers are the "honest poor" always trying to make the best of it, budgeting their money as wisely as possible, never wasting a farthing, and just managing week by week, they will rarely see the man at the Dole office and no one will officially hear of their plight. It is easy to discover that unemployment has risen in Blackmills from 318 to 479 in one year (how many children are dependant on these 479 breadwinners we are not told) and that about 125 of these unemployed are receiving supplementary benefit, but it is almost impossible to discover the families in need who are on very low incomes, often supporting large families. These families would once have been called "the deserving poor" who are often too proud or ignorant to admit their poverty.

The proposals made by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) would help these families where they have numerous children (and poor families are usually large families). One of the ways CPAG propose to alleviate family poverty is by greatly increasing family allowances and abolishing income tax relief for children. "This would leave the net income of well-to-do families unchanged, except for those in the surtax class; the whole of the increased expenditure would be concentrated on the poorer families, without the need for a means test" (*Poverty*, No. 3, Summer '67). There is no indication that the Labour Government have any intention of carrying out these proposals or any others which would make even their own alleged concept of the Welfare State a reality.

The Welfare State allegedly exists so that people do not fall into poverty. Not only do successive Governments shield themselves from knowing the full extent of poverty amongst children, but this Government deliberately and callously makes sure that those families who are already poor, stay poor. The wage stop is one of their more insidious weapons. "This is the rule which enables the Ministry of Social Security to pay less than the basic supplementary benefit rate when a man is sick or unemployed, thus deliberately keeping the family in poverty. Some 30,000 families suffer under this vicious rule, including over 100,000 children (*Poverty*, No. 3). In effect, the wage stop means that a man can get no more from Social Security than his potential earnings

would be if he were in employment. The figure for potential future earnings seems to be arrived at in a rather random way. "The outcome of this combination of guesswork and rule of thumb is that normal earnings are assessed at astonishingly low levels—mostly between £9 10s. and £11 10s. in the 52 cases investigated"* (*New Society*, 14.12.67).

The Government are under tremendous pressure to change the wage-stop rule, largely thanks to the CPAG and social workers dealing with poverty. Child Care Officers automatically assist wage-stopped families in getting their benefits increased. They have used their influence at all levels to exert tremendous pressure on the managers of the MSS to implement the wage stop in a liberal way. In Blackmills they have been largely instrumental in getting the number of wage-stop cases down to about 12 from many times that number.

The children's department are in a particularly good position to exert their influence as they, more than any other agency, deal first-hand with poverty and its effect on children.

One of the special difficulties of the children's department has had to overcome is general lack of sympathy for the people who they try to help. These are more often than not "the undeserving poor"; problem families, perhaps better described as families with problems, which are often so insurmountable that the family breaks down. The breakdown of a family cannot be attributed to one single cause. There may be matrimonial difficulties; the parents may have unstable, inadequate personalities, or may be mental illness. Large families, sickness and unemployment, and particularly poverty, where the children are suffering, will all bring the family to the attention of the children's department. The family is usually referred to the department for some form of "anti-social" behaviour like non-payment of rent, juvenile delinquency, mental illness, mistreatment of children, and such like, but it is generally found that central to the problem of the family is inadequate personality, large families and poverty. It is easy to imagine how mothers of large families can be driven to distraction by the sheer physical effort of looking after large, perhaps unruly, families, let alone the mental anxiety of living on impossibly low wages. The children's parents are often under-educated and inadequate. They have no idea how to help themselves and feel that their environment controls them as they have no apparent control over their environment. Why does a man go on having child after child when he is earning a mere £10 a week? It would seem that children are just part of the things which happen to him.

When pressure becomes too great for people they break down and display a variety of anti-social behaviour. In Blackmills the young lorry driver, earning £12 a week, already with six children aged 1 to 8, tried to escape through gambling which became compulsive. He prob-

*Investigated by the Supplementary Benefits Commission.

ably gambled no more than many other families could tolerate but because he couldn't pay his council house subsidised rent of 25/- per week his family was investigated. It was found that the children lacked many bare essentials, but the family, now at least, is receiving some help.

The woman of 30, husband left, who, as often as possible, gets out to the smart-set pub, looking pretty, leaves behind three children sleeping in the same bed with only one blanket and no sheets. They are poorly clothed and usually grubby. There is no furniture in the front room and the house is dirty. When she became ill and very weak she still had to cope with the children. So far, she gets no direct help from any source.

There are the fathers who drink most of the money away, perhaps because they cannot face the thought that even if they didn't drink there still wouldn't be enough money to feed the children properly. Child care officers are very pragmatic in such situations. There is no question of moralizing. The children need help and as far as possible they give it, realising that to split a family up is usually worse for the child than living with inadequate parents whose major crime, more often than not, is poverty. They tend to have a liberal—if not at times a libertarian—approach to their work.

In Blackmills there are various other organisations which work on the fringes of the problem of poverty. The NSPCC (who have also come to realize that prosecution is no answer to cruelty) work in close liaison with the children's department. Many of their cases are caused by poverty and their help tends to be practical. The WVS gives clothes to the poor but only when they "bring a note from someone in authority, like a doctor or a vicar" (WVS worker). The church-run Moral Welfare Association tends to help unmarried mothers.

In effect, it is only the child welfare officers who really come to grips with the children in poverty in Blackmills, and attempt to nurse the problem families back into some kind of stability. Gone are the days when they saw their function as keeping the poor "happy in their misery". They now see themselves as a professional body exerting influence on the Government to take real steps to alleviate poverty.

But has taken a group like the CPAG to come up with a definite practical plan which could reform the present situation immediately in a way which would reduce some of the worst effects of poverty. They have really hit upon the crux of the problem. Whilst social workers and others see the problem families and offer what help they can, there are countless others involving over 1,000,000 children who are living in poverty with no one to help.

Perhaps the parents are not anti-social enough!

*Some morning, after a star
Has hung over our house all night,
We might walk forth and recognise things:
This would be one miracle worth seeing—
Energy working on our values
To create something out of nothing.
And what might we see?
That boy with the twelve-month running nose,
is not just a pillar of snot
Trying to annoy us,
But a person of flesh and blood
With other things to see besides a nose—
No shoes, no fruit, no underwear—
These are the things his presence screams at us.
The feeling that a surplus of food
Gives us a well-earned condescension
Over the ones whose children
Sit and wait, and who, finally,
Are destroyed by the great bitch, hope,
Would be seen as our greatest shame.
I'm not setting out a catalogue
To gratify complacency:
A star did shine over our house last night,
But we, the strong, the good, the beautiful,
Remained impregnable.*

THERE ARE EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE living in conditions of poverty in Britain today. Fourteen per cent of the population are living below the national assistance minimum. Two million of these are children. Poverty is on the increase in a society where in 1960 the richest 5% of the population owned 75% of the total personal wealth. This has risen by 4% since 1954. For the first time in the twentieth century a European nation is showing an increase in personal wealth among the top 5%. The latest national income statistics reveal how the number of incomes over £2,000 has risen from 300,000 in 1959 to 640,000 in 1960; the number of incomes over £4,000 has increased from 30,000 in 1959 to 100,000 in 1966.

The rich and the poor are inexorably pulling away from each other on the income scale. Thus another popular myth of the fifties hits the dust. The fashionable wisdom of the *Economist* and its supporters is seen to be phony. They predicted that social growth would inevitably accompany economic growth; that a radical redistribution of wealth would be brought about by progressive taxation and the effects of the social services.

—JANE MCKERRON in *Peace News*

WRITING ON POVERTY IN THE *Christian Science Monitor* for October 13, Joseph C. Harsch starts out with the undeniable fact that the United States is the wealthiest country in the world. Then, after discussing the countries where extreme poverty exists—India and other Asian countries, Africa, and Latin America—he says:

“But if my own personal observations as a reporter over some 38 years of roaming around the world are valid then the United States is unique in having serious massive poverty in the midst of affluence. Not in the whole of Western Europe together would it be possible to find 30 million persons who live in the prospect of wasted lives.

“It would be fascinating to know whether there is in the Soviet Union a segment of the whole which could be said to live in relative poverty. Poverty is, after all, relative. A person could have a wasted life in the United States at 10 times the annual wage of a successful person in India.”

While Mr. Harsch found “pockets of underprivileged” in Britain, France, and Italy, a slum in Poland, and unpleasant areas in Denmark and Germany, the numbers so afflicted are not numerous, by comparison with those in the United States. He adds this important distinction:

“Nor does the squalor of even a Sicilian slum debase the self-respect of its dwellers as does the rotting centre of many an industrial city in the United States. And the dividing line, surely, is drawn not by money income but by whether one is needed, or unwanted.”

During his eight years in London Mr. Harsch was often asked by American visitors to see some slums. He would take them to “the poorest, shabbiest, most neglected, most race-tension-ridden parts of London,” and the reaction was always the same: “But this isn’t a real slum!” The person who has seen Detroit or Harlem, Chicago’s skid row, or the poor of Washington, D.C., can’t find what he thinks of as “poverty” in London, Paris, Rome, Naples—“or Moscow (?)” Mr. Harsch adds. Every European city has its sordid spots, every country its neglected poor—

“But the cold fact is that the United States has tolerated within its midst a degree and quantity of poverty which other advanced societies do not tolerate. On this scale of values the United States is the most backward of modern Western countries.”

—MANAS (Los Angeles) 15/11/1967

3: Kropotkin House, Duluth

JAMES W. GAIN

I REMEMBER THAT MONDAY NIGHT when first I stumbled up the grey, oversized steps of the old house. (Controversy was fresh and flagrant: it was not long after we had distributed over a thousand copies of a broadside—entitled “Blast!”—throughout the city of Duluth on May Day of last year; because of the confusion and excitement, I was invited into the University and several high schools to speak on Anarchism.) I had rented the house from Slumlord Overman without even seeing it. It was the cheapest ghetto-dwelling he had available. It was dirty, disintegrating, Victorian, red-brown brick building; it leaned unassumingly on another building which was exactly like it (which in turn unassumingly leaned on another just like it: the three gave the impression of being one huge rock mound).

When I tried the key, it jammed in the lock and I cursed quite assumingly. On the sidewalk below, a small child in a blue dress was prattling in French-Canadian and an old man with one leg (known locally as “the Polish Fascist”) was surrounded by three barking, leaping dogs. Finally, I opened the door and bundled my few pieces of furniture and baggage into the house. The smell was piercing and pungent: cheap paint, rotting wood, and broken toilet. I felt lonely, apprehensive, tired, and stunned.

A weird, unverbilized, and distorted collage leaped through my mind: I thought of the Diggers in San Francisco (I had been there in February when the police tried to destroy them); I thought of Dorothy Day’s Chrystie Street House of Hospitality in New York and her farm at Tivoli (I had been there in the bitter weeks of early January and the Christmas season); I thought of Emmaus House and Ammon Hennacy’s Joe Hill House; and I thought of a suggestion by Herbert Read: “The General Strike of the future must be organized as a strike of the community against the State. The result of that strike will not be in doubt. The State is just as vulnerable as a human being, and can be killed by the cutting of a single artery. But the event must be catastrophic. Tyranny, whether of a person or a class, can never be destroyed in any other way.” I sighed. I opened a window and, without further ritual, named the house: Peter Kropotkin House of Hospitality.

Since the early part of April, when I had returned to Duluth from the West, I had discussed with friends and activists the idea of someone opening a house in Central Hillside, the ghetto of Duluth, and using it as a place to inject a libertarian perspective of social problems into the area (I was particularly enthusiastic about Herbert Read’s conception). Now, it seemed, my desire was to be actualized (because I had suddenly decided to actualize it myself). I had taken a job as a laundryman at a local hospital in order to provide a financial basis; and, without further promise of aid or assistance, proceeded to open the house.

During the first week of my residency, the nights were spent in cleaning the house. Gary Moland, a pacifist friend, swept and mopped the floors. Kelene Koval (an Anarchist), Bob Pokorney, and Jim McCaffrey exuberantly scrubbed the walls and ceilings. Neighbours, timidly at first, but with growing confidence, provided mutual aid (even “the Polish Fascist”). Propaganda was not needed; their curiosity (and their loneliness) brought them. A great crowd of students (most of whom had heard me speak on Anarchism at their respective schools) came, barefooted and wearing cut-offs, eager to talk and work but mostly to talk (about God mostly and the State—and sometimes Capitalism). I provoked one young fellow into reading Kropotkin’s *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*; and a University student read Maximoff’s anthology of Bakunin’s writings.

Most of the old people who came from the neighbourhood to work at the house were extremely aggravated by the young people. One wrinkled woman, an alcoholic, told me that she was afraid of a Red Guard riot. I told her that she had no reason to worry: the students are quite conventional and mostly middle-class; they would be more

likely to riot for Hubert Humphrey than for Mao. In either case (said I) it would be definitely reactionary. (I was perhaps too brutal; many young minds were just awakening to a commitment against segregation and the war in Vietnam.) The poor woman said she couldn't understand and decided to go out and get something to drink.

By this time, about half a dozen people were staying more or less regularly at the house. Someone had given us a bed; someone had given us a sleeping-cot. We began to make preparations for a series of "gatherings" in Cascade Park (on the edge of the ghetto).

I do not wish to give the impression that life at Kropotkin House was all gentle, beautiful, sensitive, serene, and unruffled. I had to stay up all night once with a raving "druggie" who couldn't find enough money to pay for his particular escape. All that this friendless creature of paranoia wanted was to find someone who would talk with him. (I actually fell asleep on my feet in the laundry the next day; but, ever since, I have had little patience for crude Calvinists who call for more laws and stricter punishment against drug-addicts.)

About a month after the house was opened, Kai Johnson, an Anarchist and pacifist, bought some paints and proceeded to paint murals on the walls of two of the upstairs rooms. I painted the door of my room black with brilliant red panels. The Benedictine Sisters of the Sacred Heart (a local convent in the ghetto) discovered the house and, even though they did not approve of me, were quite impressed with the idea and donated two desks, seven chairs, an old French writing-table and a Bible. Nina Garber, an Anarchist, baked bread for the always hungry people of the house; and, one night, Esme Evans, a folk-singer of some renown in the Upper Midwest, arrived with a massive meal of beef stroganoff, salads, and wine (by this time, and until its closing, there were usually over fifty people in the house every night). Many of us became sick from the good food.

A few days after our "gathering" on July 19 in Cascade Park in honour of the Anarchists in Spanish prisons, a Mexican-American homosexual, a manic-depressive of sorts, decided he wanted to commit suicide in the house; although the attempt failed, there was still a considerable amount of chaos, confusion, and angry people.

Some of the teenage boys in the neighbourhood saw Kai painting one day and they patiently waited until no one was in the house and then climbed through the second-storey window (even though the door was always open, they always showed a preference to enter through the second-storey window) and painted a hideous mural that covered all of the walls and ceiling of the "Mrs. Murphy". They were quite proud of their work. Their own parents objected. The boys were confident; they merely quoted one of the regulations of Kropotkin House: "This house is dedicated to providing the possibility for anyone to initiate creative activity."

One night, a prostitute was beaten bloody and thrown out of a moving car in front of the house. She refused to go to the hospital; she wanted to stay at the house until her wounds were healed: she stayed at the house until her wounds were healed: she stayed until the house

was closed. Several people of the house were continually denouncing her as a thief; she would quietly respond: "It will all come out in the end." Last week, the police found her bloodied body. She had been mauled and abandoned in a gutter again.

The hippies came in procession one evening and presented me with great bunches of red roses and lilacs and named me: "the Digger".

When I finally lost my job (I was most imprudent: they caught me disseminating information about workers' control and the war in Vietnam) and we needed money for the house, we sent an appeal for support to over 500 people (humanists, as it were) in the area. I quote from it to give some idea of the simple and basic principles we tried to activate:

"Central Hillside, Duluth, Minnesota, is a community facing enormous human problems: poor housing and high rents, social and emotional isolation and anguish, insufficient income and inflating prices, deteriorating family life, violence, loneliness, fragmented educational and cultural attempts, and racial injustice. Central Hillside is a symbol of urban man's suffering and desperation—and of his hopes.

"Now the terrifying paradox of the whole thing is this: Central Hillside, and every person in it, is a living condemnation and exhortation of the city of Duluth. For it is here, in Central Hillside, that we find a new situation of urban man, with its environment of isolation and dehumanization, which is beginning to shape the desire for new structures, new patterns, new forms of renewed and activated life. There is talk now of 'turning Central Hillside inside out', of a burst of new energy and life as the community discovers ideas and forms that are relevant to the vast shapes of need and strength, of hope and despair. Both the world of Central Hillside and the power of love and joy are forcing the city of Duluth to face the need for radical and creative renewal and reformation. Peter Kropotkin House of Hospitality is a sign of new shapes and values in the community of Central Hillside and in the city of Duluth.

"Peter Kropotkin House of Hospitality is a gathering place for those people who are concerned about the problems of Central Hillside and desire to contribute to its social and emotional growth and reformation. The house is named in honour of Peter Kropotkin, the great writer and activist of the anarchist movement, who taught the necessity of personalized and functional communities as means of enjoying life and resisting blatant totalitarianism (as in China and the Soviet Union) and creeping centralization (as in England and the United States). We are a group of neighbours and friends who seek to be available in their community day after day, day in and day out. Our gathering of friends and neighbours is flexible, pluralistic, ad hoc, and dispensable. We do not desire to establish the same old formalized structures and programmes. We do not receive money from any institution. We do not receive money from the Government. We do not receive money from any corporation. We believe that the people of Central Hillside must solve their own problems through direct action.

"Peter Kropotkin House of Hospitality is always open and ready to welcome anyone. It is a place where individuals and families in need

come to stay for a while; it is a place where persons interested in this kind of action may come and see and talk for a time. Here, the mutilated, the addicted, and the healthy, the affluent and the poor, black, red, and white, unpolitical and radical come together and realize that they must link themselves in mutual aid, and together in friendship seek out a pattern of living which is more just, more creative, more personalistic, and more realistic for our community of Central Hillside in the modern world."

One young girl (who, like other black people I have met in the ghetto, was passionately committed to working for human rights and equally convinced that American troops should be withdrawn from Vietnam immediately) spent two hours one afternoon trying to persuade me that I should organize riots in Duluth during the summer; she did not succeed.

In the latter part of July and the beginning of August, I was in Canada and Minneapolis to fulfil several speaking engagements. When I got back to Duluth, there were rumours of impending riots. (Duluth is the only city in the Midwest that allows "the Job Corps boys"—who mostly represent the minority races—to enter and walk upon its sacred ground.) The SNCC agitators were agitating the riots, said the rumours. Bilge water, said I. A meeting was called of all "Humanitarians" to discuss what should be done. At the meeting, I expressed doubt that there had been any agitation (not that I wouldn't put it past SNCC, which has a rather perverse view of revolution: there just weren't any SNCC agitators; and the black people in the ghetto, although angry, were organizing for possibility and not futility. The Revolution is the Revolution: It is the attempt to use mutual aid institutions, labour syndicates, and revolutionary co-operatives to create a new society while destroying the old; it is not an adolescent spree for loot and booty that places the responsibility for the reorganization of society on the greasy finger-tips of the leaders—whether they be politicians of "black power" or politicians of "great society"). They were a little late (said I) in worrying about the black people now; they could have done something constructive and fraternal about the segregation situation before the summer, but now—basically—they were only worried about the threat to their "private property". I said that it would be barbarous to call out the military. Someone denounced me as an obstructionist. She wanted a "firm" policy. I have since wondered whether she was disappointed: there weren't any riots in Duluth during the summer. Later, however, there was a new rumour: "the Anarchists were the ones who had agitated for a riot".

Kropotkin House was closed in September. We had gone into a considerable amount of debt (our appeal failed: the Chamber of Commerce had formally and uninvitedly opposed us; we were not worthy of aid), we had no support (moral or otherwise) from other Anarchists in America, and there were difficulties (sanitation, sedition, etc.) with the Department of Water, Gas, and Sewage Treatment—and other governmental bureaus. Our accomplishments are rather intangible (all that I could definitely describe would be some small assistance in the campaign

of the residents of the ghetto to resist City Hall by building an illegal playground for their children). Our failures are many: lack of understanding, lack of solidarity, lack of propaganda (there are still a few people that refer to Kropotkin House as "the Communist Whorehouse"), lack of endurance, etc., etc. I am convinced, however, that there is definite need and a necessity for Anarchists in America to develop similar or contrasting (and, hopefully, better organized and more cohesive) "programmes of thoughtful action" (rent strikes, etc.) in the ghetto and twilight areas of this continent (especially making use of the community-concepts of Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Alexander Berkman); these seeds of community could act as a means of providing hope and presenting the possibility of direct action to "the people of anguish". They could also present the possibility of a substantial, positive alternative (Anarchism) to the horrors of Capitalism and the ponderous, unworkable bureaucracy of "the Great Society" (i.e., the Government). It is Capitalism and the State that victimize the militant and awakening underclasses in American life today—and they know it.

A change is gonna come

CHARLIE GILLET

*All I want
Is a little respect
When I come home.*

AND WHAT HE GOT WAS RESPECT, in the form of headlines in the evening papers—POP STAR DIES IN AIR CRASH. True, this recognition of importance was tempered by the anonymity of "pop star" (although later editions did substitute "OTIS REDDING . . ."), but even so it was interesting that the evening paper editors should have considered the singer's death worthy of front page attention.

By the next day, the event had been reduced to incident; neither *The Times* nor the *Mirror* mentioned the accident, and the *Guardian* confined itself to a smug comment anticipating the commercial success of the ironically titled LP, "History of Otis Redding", 5,000 copies of which have been imported to Britain by Polydor. A few weeks

earlier, Ida Cox's death was observed in an obituary in *The Times*, although she had been a much less creative and culturally significant singer in her time than Redding was in his. The difference, perhaps, was that Ida Cox was a blues singer, with strong connections to the jazz tradition; whereas Otis Redding was a soul singer, with strong connections to pop music (which is not yet recognised as having a tradition).

As the *Guardian's* Miscellany columnist predicted, Otis Redding's name will undoubtedly be added to the macabre Hall of Fame which lists these heroes of popular culture who died young. The implication always is that the artist died before he could realise his full potential; but the harsher truth is usually that the artist was already in decline at the time of his death. Bessie Smith, Chuck Willis, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, Jesse Belvin, and Nat "King" Cole had all made much better records earlier in their careers than they made just before their deaths; and this was true for Otis Redding. Only Sam Cooke can be said to have been singing more interesting songs late in his career: his best record, *A Change is Gonna Come*, which became a kind of anthem for the civil rights movement during the summer of 1965, was released posthumously.

Cooke was one of a number of Negro singers who abandoned the blues heritage which was the basis of Negro popular music for the first four decades of this century, and drew instead from the gospel music of the South. From 1955 to 1965 the character of Negro popular music changed drastically, from the direct expressiveness of the rock and roll singers, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, and Little Richard, to the more sophisticated style of the soul singers, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, and Joe Tex. In between, the distinctive characteristics of the Negro cultural style were almost smothered by the attempts of record producers to assimilate Negro singers into the white culture. Full scale string and woodwind orchestras, choirs, and Tin Pan Alley songs were used to smooth the styles of Lloyd Price, Brook Benton, and Sam Cooke, or characterless dance songs and monotonous rhythms were provided for Chubby Checker and Bobby Lewis.

The re-emergence of a Negro cultural style after these years testifies to the strength of the American Negro culture, which is too often characterised as "delinquent", "pathological", and "self-destructive". The singer most responsible for ensuring the continued existence of a Negro style was Ray Charles, whose first records show him to have been a blues singer (1949), but who anticipated the shift away from the blues as early as 1954, when he recorded *I Got a Woman* in a gospel style. Although he later suffered accompaniments by the slushiest orchestras and soupiest choirs that the ABC-Paramount studios could muster, Ray Charles always managed to project an integrity which became the main inspiration of the soul singers who followed him.

Charles (born in Georgia), Little Richard (also born in Georgia), James Brown and Bobby Bland (born in Tennessee), and Sam Cooke (born in Chicago) became the major models for imitation during the period 1958-63 when recording supervisors generally showed little

concern for the way singers preferred to sing. All except Cooke came from the South, where they had learned to sing in churches which gave them experience of singing in front of audiences, and with accompaniment from instruments and other singers. Their success at transposing the style learned in churches to recording studios, theatres and television broadcasts inspired many younger Southern Negroes to seek a career in popular music.

Little Richard, whose *Tutti Frutti* was one of the first Negro rock and roll records in 1955, was a major inspiration to several singers, including Joe Tex and Otis Redding, whose first records are open attempts at reproducing Little Richard's style. Tex later developed a style which used not only the vocal techniques of gospel singers, but the mode and form of their material, with a number of records which counselled lovers on how to treat each other, and even included breaks for "preaching"—spoken verses.

Otis Redding did not stay so close to the church tradition, but developed an intense, harsh singing style, using both material specially written for him and songs made famous by other people. Perhaps his outstanding recorded performance is his version of Sam Cooke's *A Change is Gonna Come*, available only on the LP, *Otis Blues*. Taken at a slow, almost lazy, tempo, the song's mood is established from the moment Redding begins to sing, as he almost cries, "Well I was born by a river . . .". All the emphasis is on "born" as he begins the word on one note, moves easily up to another, holds that, and then goes on to the rest of the phrase. Throughout the performance, Redding displays his instinct for pausing at surprising yet appropriate places, and thereby altering the emphasis and meaning of a phrase. His ability to do this is revealed on several of the songs on the *History of Otis Redding* LP, which is a collection of his most popular records.

These Arms of Mine, *Pain in My Heart*, and *I've Been Loving You Too Long* are all slow ballads, love songs which could easily become sentimental if performed by a singer who allowed the words to determine how he should sing them. But Redding brought himself to the material, and used the songs as means of communicating deeply felt emotions to a particular person. Even on the fast songs, which most singers take simply as dance songs whose words are of secondary importance to the rhythm, Otis Redding still emphasised the emotional expression, as in *Respect*, *I Can't Turn You Loose*, and *Mr. Pitiful*. The speed at which the song is taken becomes an extra device to build up the intensity of feeling; the strident riffs played by the saxophonists and trumpeters emphasise the urgency of the singer's message, while the bass line which runs throughout all these up-tempo soul records helps to give the song a coherent form. A common failing of the records produced in Memphis and neighbouring Southern cities is a lack of resolution in the construction of the songs, which tend to begin with the mood which is sustained throughout the performance and forces the unsatisfactory "fade-out" ending. The style has become the content; if we have one record by Otis Redding at a fast tempo, and one at a slow tempo, these two in a sense constitute the "history of

Otis Redding”.

Although he made his best records during the first four years he was with the Memphis company, Stax (1962-65), Redding did not achieve the ultimate in pop music respectability until 1967, when his duet with Carla Thomas, *Tramp*, sold over a million copies. A hastily released live-recording of *Shake* (recorded at the Finsbury Park Astoria, of all places) was also very popular, and Redding seemed poised for the breakthrough into the mass market. It is conceivable that this breakthrough will come anyway, through re-release of his earlier records; if that happens, the public will get better records than anything Redding could have recorded specifically for the mass market. His premature death, at the age of 26, will undoubtedly ensure his reputation as the greatest soul singer; but this was Otis Redding's due anyway.

Further observations on students

I FIND ELIZABETH SMITH'S ASSESSMENT of the revolutionary potential of university students much more convincing than the more fashionable and optimistic assessment of people like Dr. Edmund Leach. It doesn't require a very sophisticated Marxist (but it does usually seem to require a Marxist of one sort or another) to see that intelligence, youth and a radical outlook guarantee very little in the way of worthwhile political innovation when these qualities are strongly associated with social and educational privilege.

In Miss Smith's eyes students identification with left causes is suspect. Students either cannot see, or else nervously try to distract attention from, the deep contradiction of interests between themselves as the heirs of privilege and others who are the victims of it. Miss Smith's picture is a pretty sweeping one, but I am sure it shows us the rough shape of the truth. She explains the militancy of so many university students (Technical and Further Education students are a different kettle of fish) by saying that they are impatient for the benefits that they have been brought up to expect as their due. Fair enough, but there is no hint of what her view would be on these much more central questions: Why does student unrest ally itself so habitually with *liberal* and *radical*

causes specifically? Why, if they are the heirs of privilege, do they choose to attack the establishment from the left rather than from the right? Why, if they really only want to cash the cheque of privilege, do they waste so much time and energy championing the underprivileged? A bleary old Labour politician would no doubt make incantations about the vast fund of altruism and idealism in the young; but Miss Smith is clearly not a bleary old Labour politician, and she shows no sign of offering such a non-explanatory (and non-Marxist) thought. Instead she leaves a big gap in her argument.

I believe it is important to try to formulate a satisfactory answer to this problem because only when we are clear about the answer will it be possible to understand the nature of the political attitudes and activities of militant university students and the liberal-radical intellectuals whose ranks they will shortly be joining. My own view is that the politics of these groups can be seen as a kind of drama-therapy which offers comfort to the individual who as a result of education has become politically conscious at a point in society where that consciousness is particularly difficult to realise in action: the individual rehearses postures of benevolence and giving-gestures in the direction of those he recognises as the oppressed and the exploited. And these postures and gestures can be repeated indefinitely because he is not really giving of his substance. Nothing is given, nothing received; but he feels a better, less guilty, person.

It is a matter for sorrow, not scorn, that even the relatively privileged are under the curse of alienation. But it is also a matter of truth that the privileged since they are compromised and rendered useless in this way—no matter how liberal or left—should not be hailed as potential saviours of the situation. Miss Smith, with a very nicely-judged measure of defeatism, keeps them (i.e. us) in their (i.e. our) proper places.

London

EDMUND P. CLARK

I TOO FELT THAT SOMETHING SHOULD HAVE BEEN SAID about the relevance of Carl Davidson's article on Student Syndicalism to the situation in which British students find themselves. I thought, though, that Elizabeth Smith was far too harsh in her judgements on this relevance.

Mrs. Shirley Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, told a UNESCO conference recently that the proportion of working class students (26%) at British universities compared favourably with any other country in Europe. So it is not the factor of working class composition which automatically makes for political activism among students—the sort of activism for example which makes the bourgeois anarcho-UncleTomCobleyites of Berlin 5,000 strong, the sort of activism which is endemic at the bourgeois Sorbonne or in bourgeois Amsterdam. Elizabeth said that British students are “overwhelmingly and irredeemably bourgeois in origins and outlook”. Well you can't do much about your

origins but why are they *irredeemably* bourgeois in outlook? The students at the LSE almost had their sit-in by accident—had not the authorities been so stupid Adelstein could have sent his letter to *The Times* and that would have been the end of that. But the experience that students there gained from the sit-in, coupled with involvement in the Grosvenor Square bit, has hardened the ones I've met no end. Students, like every other section of the population, can float along without commitment or interest until the balloon goes up: it is the involvement in and the reactions of the authorities to direct action which makes for consciousness. There can be no revolutionary consciousness without revolutionary action.

And this is the crux of the matter. Until recently students have been apathetic both because action has seemed impossible against the imperturbable monolith and because there seemed to be no questions they wanted to ask. LSE has shown that action is possible and I for one can think of a lot of questions—our function as student anarchists should largely be to shout them as loudly as we can. But note when I say “students have been apathetic” I mean towards their university environment—CND in Leeds had a membership (as active as any) of 10% of our student body at one time (about 600). This shows, whatever one's doubts about CND as a movement, that with an obvious demonstrable cause a pretty sizeable “dissenting minority” can develop. This is where Carl Davidson's ideas are relevant. They place students in society (though N.B. in American society) thus giving perspectives for action and he gives good tactical hints which are particularly relevant to, say, Teacher Training Colleges and Techs where the position of students is often almost the position of feudal serfs. (Here I am thinking of the “free student union” demands.)

Can we honestly say that we see our position in British society as clearly as Carl Davidson sees his in America? Elizabeth calls universities and colleges “government training centres for apprentice exploiters” but what do students *do* when they leave college? Teach? Can one properly call a teacher an exploiter? The State attempts to exploit the education system but this is another matter. This exploitation must be resisted and it seems essential that teachers should be doing the resisting. The same arguments apply to those students who go into research and development in technology and the sciences. Their position seems to be at a knight's move from the corporative hierarchy. If we can merely show scientists and engineers what the consequences of their actions can be we will do nothing but good. Liberalism? All right but it's what Paul Goodman has been doing for years and his influence is significant in America. As far as the potential for these careers goes, then, propaganda must be as strong as possible and Carl Davidson's point about the effect that this *could* have, stands. The only people who fit clearly in the “exploiter” niche are those who go into management and the Civil Service. But how many, what percentage of students go into this sphere? We don't know (though we can try and find out). What effect could propaganda have as discouragement? We don't know (and here I admit to optimism: we can try and find out). The point is that it is no way

clear that the student's position in society is objectively that of a ruling class or part of one in Marxist terms nor is it clear that students objectively consider themselves to be of such a class. Any identification is subjective and is thus susceptible to propaganda. In terms of the ownership or control of the means of production, distribution and exchange students are in a classless limbo. The “bourgeois potential” is there, the teaching is bourgeois value laden but the only way to stop this is by organised opposition from within. Anarchists used to say that with an encyclopedia and a revolver they were free men. We still need that metaphorical encyclopedia (we'll leave arguments about the revolver till later)—we must use the university (as Elizabeth says) while it is attempting to use us but we must attack its assumptions and its basis publicly. We must go towards the revolution on all fronts; we cannot afford to ignore the education process or the demands of sane human beings within it. The reason is that the categories of inside and outside the university are not mutually exclusive: in the end one cannot say that the political consciousness that helped LSE students through the sit-in was different from the consciousness which led some of them to go on the Barbican strike picket. Civil Rights workers were the moving force in the “campus insurrection” which now finds its expression in the anti-Vietnam war movement. The categories are not exclusive because in the final analysis the answers to the question “what is wrong with the university?” are the same as the answers to the question “what is wrong with society?”.

Members of the working class join the army and the police, some of them even have “authoritarian personalities”, but does this mean that as a whole the working class no longer counts in the movement towards socialism? Of course not. Some students become managers, civil servants and army officers allying themselves firmly with that dung-beetle (who'll take any old shit), the State. I should guess that the majority of students eventually find themselves in the camp of the manipulated rather than the manipulators but because of the aforementioned shits do we give up students altogether? Surely not. Oh I know that some manifestations of student life can be pretty disheartening—but so can some workers (e.g. the recent example of the racist trades unionists in Lancashire). But you can't expect the struggle to be easy in a bourgeois world. The slogan remains “Find where you're at and organise”.
Leeds University Union
PETER REDAN BLACK

P.S. I suppose I ought to add that perhaps the reason I write so vehemently defending the student bit is that political life in Leeds is largely nowhere—except in the university. In the town we have some young libs, a small YCL, a decimated YCND, and that's it. One of our members wrote to FREEDOM asking if anyone was interested in forming a town Anarchist Group and had no answers. You see, Elizabeth, we haven't an outside to go to. If anyone *is* interested please write to above address.

Fake revolt and mystic double-think

REG O'LUCIAN

THE FAKE REVOLT by G. Legman (New York, Breaking Point, 1967)

THIS MOST SARCASTIC BUT OVERDUE tract rips apart phoney youth revolt in psychopathic America, and by extension, "her cheap imitators". *The Fake Revolt* was published this year. The author, G. Legman, is not of the age group he says has had it. I detect nostalgia for the simplicities of socialist revolutionaries in the 30's and rationalisation of rite at missing out. Under the flash vicious style lies a pessimist and a puritan, sometimes underestimating, always stimulating. He takes the Bomb as the supreme fact hanging over the world, fact making nonsense of all revolts stopping short of tearing down State and capitalism.

REVOLT DIVERTED

Legman picks on three blind alleys down which the rebellious have been led; gestures that merely raise the ante, e.g. sloganising, hitting cops; the cult of cool; and "perversion", sexual and chemical, e.g. sadism ("The Atom Bomb is nothing but the Marquis de Sade on a government grant") and LSD culture. He reserves his harshest tirades for youth's misleaders—the camp controllers of fashion, the psychedelic businessmen, media-men and academics; these last, the potential critics of the system, silenced by their share in the national lolly.

SELLING OUT

Increasingly big business makes equally meaningless the idealist's desire to improve the world and the disillusioned's desire to escape its decay. Money and Power between them buy up most threats to the status quo. Sell out is the way out. Legman cites girls leaving their lovers for money bags, boys shedding communist skins when McCarthy turned on the heat, and worse still those who are waiting in the wings with ready made excuses for their tardiness in promoting revolution. "Everybody wants to be your bedfellow, the whole scene trembles continuously on the paranoid edge of violence." Revolt is meaningless when consumer-oriented; revolutionary, no, deliciously revolting, yes.

CAMP

Camp is apolitical, concerned with style not content. The daring pose or "revolution in dress" tends to disguise the reactionary vacuum in the mod psyche. Camp pleases the eye when you are out of your mind. Where else can one be when analysis of society's dynamics reveal no easy *political* "way out"? So let's be beautiful people.

CIVIL RIGHTS

After the sell out what's left of revolt? Legman dismisses the civil rights workers for a start. "Getting bashed by the cops or by Southern sheriffs makes them feel involved." Violence is implicit in revolt. He accuses the non-violent of shying from the guilt that attends the use of violence, settling for gestures instead of revolt leading to revolution.

PROVOS AND DIGGERS

He dismisses provocation likewise, without granting that to provoke is a way of trying out one's strength by setting authority against people until people take sides or suffer. The Diggers he writes off as mock-pious fake Utopians. He ignores their entirely voluntary base: "How exactly is it a revolt against muddled middle class parents to try and crowd the government into becoming a parental welfare state composed of nothing but a mammoth Food and Drug connection."

DRUGS

He points out that a drug scene is nothing new—the poet Theophile Gautier was turning Paris on to pot and long hair in the 1830's, and nothing revolutionary—your parents booze themselves silly. He prefers to ignore that some drugs are more illuminating than others. Use these if you will. But don't pretend to being revolutionary while laid up in your pad out of your skull, unfit for misleading even the thickest of fuzz, now battering your door down.

DATED?

Curiously, with its tone of comprehending everything, *The Fake Revolt* omits mention of the ghetto riots, the Vietnam War and "The Resistance". Events have overtaken the author, words like these no longer stand. "It cannot come out for anything radical without going to gaol so it has come out for nothing." Other judgements are still sharp. "A hippie or a beatnik is a frantically self-advertising coward and parasite, all tired and beaten by a struggle in which he somehow never engaged" and "The revolt against punctuation, art anatomy and sexual normality replaces any revolt against the Atom Bomb and the profit system whose swansong it is".

COOL NAILED

The best part of *The Fake Revolt* is the analysis of "Cool" as leading to total affectlessness or the inability to feel and the fear of touch. Time will show whether Love-Ins and Flower Power have in the least checked the "new venereal disease". Legman rightly diagnoses cool's survival value or more than a matter of fashionable acceptance by Madison Avenue. "Keep Cool", common injunctive among the hip, has two disjunctive senses; don't lose your head and/or stay out of trouble. In the latter and prevalent sense, cool smoothes over the widespread

failure of nerve outsiders complain of. Cool is then "a let-out for every affectless person to do any and every rotten thing he or she is called upon to do by the Job". Affectless persons deny to themselves that they are responsible for anything or can even touch anything and that anything can touch them. Cool destroys the individual's inner world of feelings and sexual potency just as surely as it subsidises global world destruction. *Save Earth Now.*

POLITICS OF APOCALYPSE

Some hippies speak truer than they realise when referring to their "brothers" in advertising and the military; common to both sides is this affectlessness *which does not preclude hate*. Love-ins are the in-turned confirmation of excluded ones, those excluded from real overall control of their lives. Try loving adverts off the billboards, warheads off missiles; we can only *tear* them down. The cool types resist the loving types like conservatives resist change, afraid to take risks. As Legman suggests, what other release can cool people share but apocalyptic belief in the end of the world; quite feasible with the Pentagon and Kremlin planning planetary suicide. There is an alarming similarity between the contemporary revolté and the organization man when both crave a moral blowout, consciously or otherwise.

POLITICS OF SEX

The sexual byways he deplores so self-indulgently I don't know about, not having been to the States. Every man to his own taste, provided he destroys himself only. Legman's anxiety for good clean fun is rather tasteless (would he be more at home with a marriage canonised by the State in Moscow's Hall of Weddings than with Californian rites by surf and moonlight?) and a trifle paranoid (he waxes quite hysterical over kinks and orgiasts). But he's right in this, the newsy interest in freaked out orgies and cool sex points back to widespread dissatisfaction—failure in more normal terms; that disappointment having its roots in authoritarian suppression (the family as prototype of the State) and commercial exploitation. Genuine sexual freedom depends not on exploring sidelines in sensation but on a social revolution.

HELL'S ANGELS AND TRIPPIES

The Fake Revolt relates the Hell's Angels celebrated cool to the cool of the so-called transcendentalists. Both are en route to an identical nothingness. One through body smashing violence, usually indiscriminate, the other via mind-blowing drugs, again with few redeeming exceptions. Modern experience is chaotic, everyone being subject to a constant flood of stimuli, nearly impossible to evaluate it all for the purpose of action. Hell's Angels and transcendentalists react identically to this chaos. In trying to shortcut the route to salvation they abdicate their chances of freedom. They decline the long and hard road of self-discipline only to be disciplined by the machinery of the state or the vagaries of their machines; or be dissolved in an impersonal Nirvana, perhaps finally a personless mushroom cloud.

The flirtation with Nazi gear and the fascination of the Hell's Angels betray the hippies' repressed dream of violence. If they live such symbols, only to provoke, as some will say, why isn't provocation more

the mode of these new quietists? No, the average hippy is in a double bind. If hippies really understood the violent society against which they have reacted they would have the grace to admit that their professed non-violence can only be skin deep unless violence be exorcised by a serious discipline.

A NEW HITLER

What worries Legman most, to quote him at length, is "the attempted gathering of this proudly self-styled 'underground' brew of lumpen elements, under the riotously phoney leadership of lunatic promoters and publishers, and the penthouse direction of the wilier New Left waiting for the day it can sell out its noisily Fake Revolt". Who to? "It is precisely this angry grumbling wildcat hostility to everything that will make the Fake Revolt the chosen vehicle of the next Hitler" . . . "the New Left is essentially a front operation or Social Democratic Trojan horse intended to set up cadres to welcome the new Hitler when he comes". Who's plotting what? I feel Legman's extreme suggestibility, which has yielded this explosive tract, has here got the better of him; and that there is no such total conspiracy because there is no one with the necessary world view to launch and maintain it.

THE TOTAL REVOLT

The lash of all his whipwords leaves one smarting. Cleverly Legman never reveals from what superior standpoint he judges the Fake Revolt. Is he a lone figure crying out for a movement to share his attitude with? Is he trying to tell people how to make a revolution? If so, then take this; "the new revolt nowadays consists therefore of a bunch of inarticulate long-haired adolescents without leadership and without a programme". Never mind the authoritarian tone, he is trying to say why we all cheat ourselves of revolution. Total revolt is needed. Partial revolt is easily recuperated by establishments and contained as a profitable sideshow or safety valve.

DESTRUCTION

Legman, I repeat, is not of the generation he writes of, broadly those now between 15 and 25. Thus his detached fury and total lack of sympathy. Previous generations have bequeathed this one a fouled-up world. The best of the present generation, Legman warns, are now destroying themselves in search of kicks, rather than get down to destroying that lousy world of their parents. I would add we will not destroy that world until one and all have working knowledge of the power structures that daily divert and suppress our rightful rage; meanwhile conscious people cannot *live* such knowledge without diversion.

MYSTICISMS

Revolution in your own soul is the hippy recipe to save the world. Forget the dead and dying elsewhere on whom your economic freedom is predicated. Such a revolution does not touch the modern state and its supporters. To believe otherwise is gross bad faith or mere transcendental naivety. Why underestimate the enemy or deny him existence? This hippy half revolt is inherently élitist, unsympathetic in practice to the wage slaved proletariat, bourgeois in its economic base, and

riddled with mystical initiations. All the wishful clap about turning on straight people one by one cannot disguise the hippies' basic treason to their fellow men (sorry, beings), their otherworldly denial of the glaring social and economic problems beyond those that affect them individually this week or next. Cool it baby, what bag are you in, I'm an individual.

When it suits them the totalitarians of business, politics and culture can trade in such a movement for a new one more along *their* lines. The German State changed the far-out "Wandervogel" of the 20's into the "Hitler Jugend" of the 30's. From 2 Balfour Place, here in London, "The Process" (symbol), in true élitist style, calls the young and confused to renounce the difficulties of living-in-the-world in favour of joining their spiritual stormtroopers of Mayfair, Greece and Xtul, Mexico.

Innocent mystics capitulate to diabolic mysticisms. Like "the national interest". The missing element—social perspective.

May I leave you with the expensive doublethink of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, speaking to students at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Is it true that you told the Beatles that the Ban the Bomb movement was silly?"

"Yes, I told them that. We must concern ourselves with meditation. Besides if one country bans the bomb, it will then be helpless and defenceless."

"Maharishi, there is a great deal of opposition to the Vietnam War, many students are under the threat of the draft. Should we resist?"

"We should obey the elected leaders of this country. They are representatives of the people. . . ."

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