

# Come In, Brother

A. HARRIS

THIS BOOK \* is anarchy in a bowler hat.

Perhaps it is fairer to describe it as one half of a debate. The reader is left to provide the comeback.

To give the book its true setting we must bear in mind its purpose. The authors describe themselves as "Community Activators". Their aim is to stir up what they consider to be mud. Their hope is that with the mud swirling round, those in the water will be better enabled to see. Their work in "Community Activation" consists of constant reappraisals. Lumps of the "Establishment" are taken down, dusted and eyed critically. "Nothing written," says the authors, "is either absolute or final, but must be read in a spirit of doubt and enquiry." (Preface, page 9).

They claim that the human race has reached a sufficiently developed stage of maturity to be able to discard established authority as we know it—the "Paternal Society" as it is termed. Instead of the "Paternal Society" there must be a "Fraternal Society". Order can be horizontal, but not vertical.

The "Paternal Society" is analysed and it is mainly in this half of the thesis that the argument limps. There are too many generalisations. The picture is too black and white; rather like a fairy tale where everybody is either very good or bad. This is all immature and, at times, inaccurate. The facts are squeezed into a theory.

One is reconciled to Church and State being denigrated. The fact that they have both survived the criticism of centuries rather proves that they have got something but this book accuses almost everything of "Paternalism"—even the Co-operative Movement.

Authority is linked with fear. This contains an element of truth, but, again, it is only part of the picture. Abuses of authority have been many, but, in general, it has provided order, security and freedom—the freedom in which a book such as this may be written. We mustn't throw the baby out with the bath water just because the bath water is off-white.

The second half of the book is more acceptable. I do not care for ugly terms like "Wholist",

"Wholistically" and "Wholism" but the ideas are sound enough. The dissection of human beings by the specialist must be healed by the humanitarian; the power of persuasion is more compelling than dictatorship. The "get-on-together-ness" of brotherly co-operation—who could deny it is desirable, even essential for survival?

Having said all the above, may I conclude by admitting that the authors have succeeded in their task? They aimed at stirring up the Establishment—they have already roused one member of it. They have kicked at the deadening narrowness of "Conformism"—I agree to kick with them,

but I refuse to kick it right out of the arena.

The "Paternal Society" must be constantly spring-cleaned, but not scrapped. In fact, the "Paternal Society" is essential if a "Fraternal Society" is to survive—or even be born. To continue the image—it is the parents alone who link the sons as brothers. Without their parent they would not be brothers.

To get rid of the parents would only make way for a far more formidable character—Big Brother.

*The Fraternal Society* \*

RICHARD AND HAPHZIBAH

HAUSER

Bodley Head. pp. 221. 21s. 0d.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

### *Persistent Criminals*

a Home Office Research Unit Report by W. H. HAMMOND and EDNA CHAYEN. H.M.S.O. 25s. 0d.

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### *The Short Term Prisoner*

ANDRY. A Study in Forensic Psychology. Stevens & Sons Ltd., 28s. 0d.

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### *Inside Story*

The Prison Reform Council.

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