

People Not Psychiatry. By MICHAEL BARNETT.
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A cartoon in the *New Yorker* last October depicted bands of demonstrators each bearing a banner with the following strange devices: Loyal and Benevolent Order of C. J. Jung; R. D. Laing Club of Lower Westchester County; Esalen Institute Sensitivity Brigade; National Federation of Zen Encounter Groups; Ida Rolf Battalion; Brotherhood of Neo-Freudians (CPW Division); Sons and Daughters of the Primal Scream; Associated Gestalt Groups of Greater New York. The cartoonist naturally did not include a reference to a similar sort of group that is indigenous to this country and apparently restricted to it, and which is the subject of this book.

Mr. Barnett started PNP (People Not Psychiatry, not long after he had had some kind of breakdown, and he gives us a very personal account of his state of mind before he did so and afterwards. He has been clearly influenced by R. D. Laing, whom he consulted professionally and by the other so-called 'radical alternatives to psychiatry' that feature in the *New Yorker* cartoon. But unlike Laing's, his writing is gushing and overblown to the point of setting his readers' teeth on edge and making their

toes curl—unless they happen to agree with him. Nor is he helped by such errors as 'coalite' when he means 'coalesce'. In so far as one can gather the purpose of PNP, it is a movement to help neurotic rather than psychotic people. The author says that it contained few diagnosed schizophrenics because they are mostly inaccessible: 'in hospitals, clinics and impenetrable family systems'. There was one florid manic member, but the movement could not accept him and he subsequently died from burns after squatting in a derelict house. So far as neurosis is concerned, the movement, from this account, is oddly reminiscent of the Oxford group movement (now Moral Rearmament) of the 1930s, with its confessions and insistence on absolute honesty. Perhaps Dr. Frank Buchman was the daddy of them all. Mr. Barnett himself appears now to have left PNP and to be concentrating on encounter groups.

Nevertheless, orthodox psychiatrists should not dismiss this book and others like it out of hand. The anti-psychiatry movement has taken root, whatever form it assumes, and one should try to understand its mainspring and aims. Not much of an answer can be got from Mr. Barnett's book but it may prompt psychiatrists to ask themselves the right questions.

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