anarchist monthly



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Occupy the Pits!

Just for a change, let's try looking at the miners strike form the revolutionaries, both authoritarian and libertarian, that we are so busy selling the 'inevitable' victory of the masses that we forget to watch what the enemy is actually up to this time. The enemy, of course, watch the proles like hawks.

There are only three reasons why the government would settle this strike on favourable terms to the miners. First: a desperate need for coal, which can only be satisfied by getting the miners back to work. Second: a fear of losing an election (not applicable to this strike). Third:, and most important to us, is fear of general unrest, insurrection and possible revolution . . . to which the British ruling class have always shown a remarkable sensitivity and, regretably, a keen sense of who to intimidate and who to buy off.

In the General Strike of 1926, it was enough to invite the TUC round Downing Street. There Churchill informed the leaders of the working class that they must either call off the strike or form the next government . . . panic-stricken, they cancelled the left the miners to go it alone. This writer, for one, has no doubts that fear of revolution is stronger in today's TUC General Council than in the Thatcher Cabinet.

So back to the first reason, the need for coal. The government started this strike with 56 million tons, 28 million at the power stations and 28 million stock-

piled at the mines. In 33 weeks they have only used 16 million tons government's point of view. It is, (approx) thanks to God (the long after all, a traditional weakness of hot summer, as we predicted in the May issue, God is still a Tory); extensive imports from South Africa, Poland and the USA, courtesy of the Transport and General Workers Union; flat-out use of oil and nuclear power, and last but not least, widespread scabbing in the key areas of Notts, South Yorkshire and Derby where, surprise, surprise, the largest concentration of coalfired power stations are to be found.

There never were any special geological reasons why the Notts area received such favourable levels of investment or high wages, but there were always pressing political motives. Divide and rule just where it hurts the miners most!

The uncomfortable truth is that strategic stocks of coal wipe out any strategic role in the macroeconomy the miners had. All they are left with is their internal solidarity and the solidarity they inspire in other workers.

The problem is that the leftists have been so busy running the unions they have entirely forgotten to explain the basic principles of During the recent dock 'strike', the T&G Union couldn't even prevent one section of its members (the truck drivers) from threatening to beat the shit out of another section (the dockers) unless they went back to work. Just as anarchists have always predicted, the stronger the attempt to impose unity from above, the less solidarity



TU Bureaucrats unleash the proletarian masses at the TUC Conference

we see below.

Given the lack of solidarity, the grand canyon sized gulf between the leftist bureaucrats and their various memberships, plus huge coal stocks, why should Thatcher settle for anything less than victory?

This brings us back again to the only viable means of securing government . . . reason number three, the fear of possible insurrection, etc. There is only one way of preventing this government from availing itself of the 28 million tons of coal stock-piled at the mines, and that is for the miners to occupy the mines and defend these stocks. Orgreave has proved that pickets, even mass pickets, outside on the

streets, fail to do the job against the massed police,

Occupation strikes not only prevent blacklegging and management wind-ups about coal face collapses, but they encourage more local support from the less militant workers. They also have more appeal to those people not directly

In order to win the miners must up-the-stakes. In reactionary times it takes near revolutionary means to secure even purely reformist aims. Occupations do have enough of a revolutionary air about them to encourage a re-think in the cabinet. They even have enough insurrectionary wiff about them to encourage a re-think

amongst the miners.

A temporary miners siezure of the mines naturally leads to thoughts of a permanent one. Who needs the Coal Board anyway? The mines belong to the miners! As anarchists, that is the direction we should encourage.

The real issue in this strike is not the mines - the bosses or the miners.

Stu Stuart



It was difficult to dredge up much sympathy for the elite members of the Conservative Party as they emerged from the shattered remains of their comfortable hotel recently. After all, some of these people were among the War Cabinet which pushed model boats about with little sticks while calmly deciding to take the lives of several hundred Argentinians on the Belgrano. It was therefore tempting to conclude that they deserved everything they got and to look on the bombing as an achievement.

The problem is that things are never as simple as that. Revenge

killings may do wonders for the emotional well-being of those who get their revenge, but they only actually achieve anything when they have the support of a major section of the population behind them as was the case with say, the French resistance. It is far more common for bomb attacks to bolster the popularity of those who are attacked and weaken support for the attackers.

Imagine, for instance, the results if Thatcher had been killed in the Brighton bomb attack and if the explosion had been set off by a group using the word 'anarchist' to describe their activities. What would the result have been? Would Thatcherism die with Thatcher? Or would it be strengthened and re-enforced? Surely the press would

have immediately created a legend around her as the determined honest woman who by her personal courage had won a great victory for 'Us' in the South Atlantic and then been taken from us before she could do her best work. Such a legend would take years to demolish - you only have to think of the contrast between the reality of Kennedy (Vietnam, Bay of Pigs, Cuban missiles Crisis) and his afterglow, to realise that assasination is not the way to kill of a politician, it is the surest way to prolong her shelf life.

It is surely far better to have someone like Thatcher around for long enough for the message to be driven home to everyone that she has no intention whatsoever of defending British democracy,

nothing ment. absolutely achieved because, in direct contradiction of the masses' it resulted in a fear of anarchism and anarchist ideas which has significantly contributed to our current impotence.

In a sense all individualistic their myths. acts of violence are a cop out. They are the actions of people who don't

than to provide her with first class have sufficinet stamina to withstad opportunities to prattle on about a prolonged struggle and so try to being the defender of democracy. get it all over with in one quick Even the bombing campaign carried attention-seeking act. They have out by the Angry Brigade which more to say about the emotional was technically brilliant (they blew needs of the participants and the up the secret telecommunications nature of machismo than they have centre at the Post Office tower) about the strivings of a real move-

For a successful anarchist with their spoken ideals they were movement what is required is that trying to act as an elite vanguard ordinary people get rid of their leaving ordinary people as passive oppressors of their own accord spectators of their actions. Far because they know that they want from this resulting in an 'awakening something better. If that consciousness doesn't exist then no bomb will create it. Anarchist machos please note: - you cannot explode politicians until you have exploded

A K Brown

A bomb has exploded at the Conservative Party conference in Brighton and has been claimed by the Provisional IRA. This is a notable propaganda blow, the core of the government is shown to be vulnerable. What would have happened if personalities rather than nonenties had been killed?

Michael Havers, the Attorney

General, has been sounded out by the Sunday Times and has given a sketch of how the British Constitution and political system could have coped with this crisis. Generally speaking, he ia confident that they would cope alright. He is reassuring. Well, he would be, wouldn't he? However, he's right. The establishment would rally round in best Jeevesian fashion and once we have faced the awful possibility of Willie Whitelaw as acting Prime Minister, things would almost get back to normal, allowing for a tightening of the Prevention

of Terrorism Act and a general clamp down. Incidentally, Havers also reassures us that the police would ensure that there was no retaliation against the Irish

community. Part of the establishment that has already rallied round is the media. We have been lectured at length about how all 'decent' people are 'shocked and outraged'. This just shows the nature of the media. I've met nobody who was either shocked or outraged. A straw poll in the pub shows most people to be resigned, these things happen, and perhaps a little gleeful, well, it's a bit of excitement. This is in marked contrast to the mood after the Birmingham pub bombings, when Irish people did feel threatened. Ordinary people are better at recognising fair targets than are media pundits.

The Conservative Party has taken the chance to sound off, with Public Relations Agency discretion, about the threat of 'extremism'. It's almost laughable, this from the group of people who ahve done more to undermine 'democracy' than any other 'extremist' I've

ever come across. Actually, central office must be quite pleased with the outcome.

And what is the reasoned, ideological analysis of the incident. Well, I'd rather they bombed party conferences than pubs and department stores.



DP

STRIKE COMMENTARY

Eight months into their dispute holding out. It is creaking under the pressure from many directions, but showing no obvious signs of cracking.

Some novel tactics have emerged; do they offer any scope for anarchy?

A propaganda exercise was Surely a sign of desperation that

perhaps 'under certain circumstances' not over estimated. the miners should be allowed to run the mines. (He has probably been reading Freedom.) This foolhardy move was egged on by working politician Mad as a Hattersley, who would never have thought of it on his own.

We have also seen two kamikaze raids - one from the right and one from the left. The latter involved an ingenious plot of miners trying to martyr their own leaders (possibly a form of ritual sacrifice?). It failed because their chosen weapon, the High Court Judges, turned out to duty.

Issue 10 is certainly tending towards

a more readable rag than heretofore.

with King Arthur's miners, the be in secret (??) league with the strike by HM Government is still strikers. They refused to commit King Arthur to nick, no matter how contemptuous he became.

This high drama was played out agaisnt the background of the Labourers' Party Conference. Naturally various of The Brothers and their Labourers could not announced, involving a TV campaign resist publically associating themdesigned to blame it all on Magpies. selves with Big A's impending doom. This timely attack of heroism was will not go down too well with spurred by the almost certain Animal Lib (or the RSPCA). Don't knowledge that the Judges, in their let them get away with it, comrades! wisdom, would only treat them A break-away return to work with the contempt they deserved. attempt by Frankly Dim Francis Nevertheless, this glimmer of sanity Pym failed. He suggested that should be welcomed, comrades, but

Meanwhile, the seriousness of the strike spread its effects to ar wider community. Archbishops were moved to pass among the people, and argue publicly in an effort to force the government back to work.

This did produce one form of apparently divine intervention. An Angel of the Pits, in the form of Nacods McNestry, came abroad and called upon his hosts not to deputise, oversee or fire a shot until Thatcher and her strikers returned to their

This unexpected manifestation caused some disarray among the strikers. Peter the Sleep Walker, Minister without energy, briefly awoke to claim that the strike was refused to do anything; it is not in nodding off again. Fortunately his exemplary, he has refused to move leader, totally above divine or on more things (notably 31/2 million other intervention, was adamant unemployed) than any other in her proclamation. There would be 'No Surrender' - a cry long positive approach we should familier with the Northern Irish.

The IRA were credited with the

Cynics have expressed the view that the explosion was not due to the IRA. After four days of snorenon-event conference, desperate measures were clearly required. Is it not surprising that casualties were mercifully so few? (Super-cynics noted that the organiser of the dreary conference only survived by a miracle apparently by private arrangement.) It was obviously an expert job — an inside job?

The international exchange rats were not impressed; they continued to force the £ down. To his credit, Nigel 'I shall not be moved' Lawson 'a total misunderstanding' before his nature. Hos record is this Chancellor. This is the sort of welcome, comrades!

So the strike rumbles on. second kamikaze raid, the bombing Munchkin MacGregor has been of the Grand Hotel in Brighton. invalided out of the front line, (an Uninjured members of HM's dust- uncontrollable hole was discovered covered government were to be in his head). He revealed in his seen giving shocked TV interviews passing the unbelievably low immediately after the event. Who standard of cretin that masquerades were these 'innocent people' they as 'management' in the NCB. Take claimed the bomb was aimed at? heart miners, and take control! You Surely not them? They were could not do worse than this quietly firm, however, the bomb incompetant gang of lame brained would not change their minds. In time-servers. Munchkin has been this respect the device was obviously replaced by Undertaker Eaton, dug far too large and the target far too up somewhere in Leicestershire; will he stop King Arthur from forcing the government back to work?

> Stop Press - In a surprise move on 22nd October, both working and striking politicians occupied their rumoured place of work. This is unlekely to affect the national situation, as it is believed that the move was aimed only at ensuring that they would continue to receive their social security and other state benefits.

> > Colin Johnson

But pray don't fall into the trap of replacing disorganisation with overorganisation. The aim in all humanitarian movements is to be effective, and efficiency frequently cuts across effectiveness. The distinction between these concepts and their pondered upon.

Thus, Stu Stuart's comments on institutions ('Sociology and Freedom') I found interesting but contentious. No one seriously disputes that not only is society structured, it tends towards strucpenalty', is to create avenues for any structure, any time, no matter how politically beguiling. I resent bitterly, for instance, having either to drink myself senseless or be the odd man out in a pub due to the (capitalist inspired?) round-buying structure. More seriously, if 99 comrades vote yes on an issue and I am the only one to vote no I expect the toleration and the respect for the individual he mentions to work for me, allowing me to walk away — without penalty!

Trevor M Artingstoll

We are a relatively new and fairly small anarchist group in south Manchester. We are giving our address as a contact and would be delighted to hear from anyone, especially anarchists, in our area.

I would just like to make a few comments concerning the anarchist scene, particularly in London.

Firstly, considering that there are so few of us, and in view of the fact that in recent times the State appears to be increasingly pestering and attempting to silence us, don't you think it's about time we stopped these petty squabbles and unified once and for all. Certain anarchist At first I thought 'oh no they've scholars' intellectual wanking can at times be just as alienating as Class War's aggressive inverted snobbery.

Secondly, at a time when the various 'rebellious' groups in society without Freedom.

(ie miners, animal libbers, etc), typified by the recent idea to send STC mailouts to striking miners groups, why is it that we never see people selling papers like Freedom and Black Flag on all the various marches in London, and around the country.

I have noticed, however, on respective degrees of relevance to many of these demonstrations the our movement may be profitably paper Class War has been on sale; Class War might at times be unnecessarily crude and insulting, but when it comes to reaching persons who've never come across anarchism before, they beat Freedom and Black Flag hands down. Class War is also popular with the people ture. What I expect anarchism to mentioned above because it's cheap do for me, defined as I define it - and funny. If members of the 'the right to say "No" without Freedom collective are so pissed off with Class War 'ruining' the me, and others, to walk away from anarchist movement, why don't they make a greater effort to reach these people who don't frequent, or have access to, an 'alternative' bookshop? The trouble with Freedom and Black Flag (and to some extent the anarcho-punk bands) is that they only seem to preach to the converted.

Before anyone starts to ask us what we're doing, we've recently started working on a paper and have been leafletting and flyposting

for STC. Finally, I would like to say that bit by bit Freedom does appear to be improving. I totally agreed with your response to the calls for a rotated editorship, groups who complain about this should, in my opinion, make greater efforts to produce and improve their own papers and leaflets and concentrate more on converting neighbours and on local direct action.

> Walter Westphal (TVA Militia) Box TVAM, 8-10 Great Ancoats Street, Manchester M4 5AD

We're not pissed off with Class War!

given up on me' and I thought that maybe you had cut me off because I hadn't sent you any money in a long time. It was a real pleasure anarchist media needs to be doing when I received the first issue after more to forge a unity between the the break. I can't imagine a world

Anyway, each and every subsequent issue has, as always, been a pleasure. Nice to see the changes, the evolution! Don't be bound by the heritage but do try to keep coming out. You serve us all very well and if we don't like it we're always free to offer our ideas in your paper — it's our paper too.

Certainly don't feel bound to on any other bourgeois time line. Come out when you are ready. Even an intermittent Freedom is better than no Freedom at all.

Freedom was one of the first anarchist papers I was ever exposed to. When I saw the contacts page it excited me to no end to know that there were so many other people who called themselves anarchists and that I was a part of this. Thank you very much.

Hope you are all happy, healthy and having fun.

> Philip Ontario

Congratulations on keeping Freedom going, even as a monthly. I, like you, believe that there is still a place for the paper within the movement. I would be sad to see it disappear because it does give space to all shades of opinion. I hope that the new collective will create good relations with the other groups such as the Black Cross and the DAM. The personality conflicts of the past between members of these groups has led to a waste of energy in mudslinging between the papers.

Anyway, if you succeed in returning to being a fortnightly I will be pleased. If you continue as a monthly, however, I think a return to the old format (A4 with a review section) might not be a bad idea. And if you can manage a weekly again . . . WOW!

> Salute Frank Richardson

Just a quick note to ask if you would include our contact address in your list. We've only recently got together and there aren't many of us, but there is a lot of enthusiasm, anger, love and commitment within our group. The Luton Anarchists/Direct Action Group can be contacted c/o Box A, 33 Guildford Street, Luton, Beds.

My sympathies with your current inner group problems. For what its worth, I look upon Freedom as an old, old friend. I expect changes in approach, in 'line' if you will, and I expect to disagree sometimes with them - but I don't walk away from old friends when they change.

For what it's worth from a veteran Jimmy Higgins, I'd strongly come out fortnightly, monthly, or advise against rotating editorship from group to group. I've seen it tried several times and it's always ended up a great bloody disaster.

One disagreement: I can't see much difference between a) the government pouncing on gay bookstores, b) religious zealots burning sex education books, and c) movement heavies thrashing porno shops. All comes out censorship to me and there we are muttering 'Quis custodiet?'. Just one opinion.

Good luck companeros and hang in there.

Dick Ellington California

The Autumn Party Conferences: Observations of Political Animals a special report.

Democratic Party The Social Conference

Hiss. Hiss-hiss-hiss. Hiss, hiss! Hiss? Hiss, hiss, hi Baaa, baaa. Baaa, baaa, baaa.

The Liberal Party Conference Roar, roar. Roar? Roar! Roar, roar. Roar, roar. Ro Baaa. Baaa, baaa. Baaa, baaa.

Union Trades Council Conference Squeak squeak squeak squeak Squeak squeak sque Baaa baaa baaa baaa baaa.

The Labour Party Conference Grrr Woof! Woof woof, woof woof. woof woof. Woo Baa-baaa, baaa, baaa. Baaa.

The Conservative Party Conference Hee-haw hee-haw hee-haw hee-haw hee-ha Baaa, baaa, BANG! heee-haw heee-haw.

Anon

While the new Freedom collective has not and is not going to censor or seriously alter/sub-edit letters we do feel that our open-door policy should not be abused by the merely cranky, hysterical or abusive 'critics', particularly of articles sent in from outside. Critics should confine themselves to criticising what was actually written, since you could fill a library with things they didn't say. Don't pretend that you can read the authors mind about things they haven't mentioned.

FREEDOM

London E1

Editorial Collective

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open forum for the international

FREEDOM is run as an

Articles give the individual

opinions of their authors.

'the Collective' reflect the

shared view of the

Only articles specifically signed

Freedom Editorial Collective.

anarchist movement.

On 30th April this year, the West German anarchist publisher and journalist Horst Stowasser was found guilty of 'insulting an officer of the Federal German Army'. Three years earlier, the officer in question, a Lieutenant-Colonel called Breidsprecher, had hauled Horst before the courts for describing soldiers as 'professionally trained murderers', but the case was thrown out.

This time, Breidsprecher and the right-wing Defence(?) Minister Worner had another go after Horst wrote an article criticising comments made by Breidsprecher and other army officers in an interview in proudly Breidsprecher which proclaimed that he would have been prepared to drop the atom bomb on the people of Hiroshima in 1945. At the same time he said that peace protestors should stick to should have told him that even nonviolent protest is violent according to Interior Minister Zimmermann.) Horst pointed out the hypocrisy of these comments and went on to describe armies as 'organised violence', the 'art of soldiering'

simply being to kill other people. For these comments, Horst found himself once again in court.

At the trial the judge did not deny the truth of the alleged 'insult' but said that it was nevertheless libellous. According to the judge, 'self-criticism' should have been applied to the article. What he really menat, of course, was selfcensorship. The defence claimed that the charge of libel was being used to silence the free expression of a personal opinion in political debate, and was part of a general manipulation of language so as to make it impossible to criticise the military without risking prosecution. This has serious implications for those Germans who resist conscription and who have to give helps us. their reasons for doing so.

Horst has appealed against his sentence (£220 or 35 days inside non-violent methods. (Somebody and increasing with each day) and pick each other up on lapses. the case continues. He will not pay any fine for 'insulting' those who are preparing for mass genocide and is prepared to go to prison.

Letters of support can be sent to: Horst Stowasser, Postfach 2602, 6330 Wetzlar-Lahn, West Germany. Mike McKrell FROM ANGEL ALLEY

Freedom is produced by Arabella Melville, Colin Johnson, David Peers, John Anderson and Stu Stuart. The collective is seriously in need of more people. We would welcome new members who are cheerful, tolerant and easy going, and able to take seeing a lot of stuff go in that they don't agree with. We are not looking for anyone with a strong personal commitment to any single issue politics. You'd also need to be an anarchist and available to do the boring bits as well as the glamorous stuff.

If you want to help out without getting seriously involved, then come along to the Freedom mail-out sessions from 5:00pm til at least 9:30pm. Next ones are on Thursday November 22nd and Friday November 23rd.

We have given odd bits of advice about the way we would like submitted material to be presented. It seems useful to draw these together. We are not inflexible. However; we find that this approach

The most basic point is that we like conversational English. We all use jargon sometimes, so we try to Whole pages of it make us shudder and your deathless insights may be damned by our prejudices. Even without Inspeak it is possible to daze with comvoluted prose. Again you run the risk that, in a good week for material, we just don't bother.

We can cope with erratic spelling (and perhaps introduce some of our own) and we are not fanatical grammarians. Occasionally we'll

have a purist frenzy, so we reserve get an acknowledgement of receiving the right to subedit.

of ourselves. You must know if advise you to keep a copy. We you'll have been bullied about it at school. So, if you're sending us a sample, please make an effort.

As a guide, a full page is about 2,000 words. We see letters as up to 300 words and up to 500 words for most other things. Anything over have a look'. 1,000 words will be looked at arrangement has little hope.

weren't very good at responding to running campaigns from friends. mail. We are trying to do better. We hope that these comments are Would you assume that you won't useful.

your piece, due to postal costs as We prefer submissions to be much as anything. If you want your typed, double spaced. This is simply material returned, please send a for the sake of the typesetter and stamped addressed envelope. We your handwriting is not ideal, welcome unsolicited material, especially letters and reports of activity. If you have a longer piece, please note the suggestions above. We have an idea of the sorts of It might be an idea to contact us lengths different items should be. before you spend a lot of time writing. However, in the way of things, the only answer we can usually give is, 'send it in and we'll

Let it be known that we have critically, 2,000 without prior little use for novels and academic dissertations. We have a blind spot The old collective, including me, about poetry, even after long

ANARCHIST NEWS

Coal not Bombs

On Tuesday 18th September ten members of the Northern Non violent Direct Action group occupied two offices of the North Eastern Electricity Board (NEEB) headquarters in Newcastle. The action was planned to draw attention to and to oppose the siting of a nuclear power station at Druvidge Bay on the Northumberland coast.

They occupied the offices at 1.15pm and barricaded themselves in with filing cabinets, tables etc. dows and the protestors spoke to passers-by with a loudhailer. Outside supporters leafletted and spoke with passers-by.

After about 45 minutes the filth arrived. A struggle was made to retain the offices but only as a gesture because the TV and press had already been there. The protestors were led away to the police station past supporters and pressmen. They were held for three and a half hours, questioned and photographed. Charges have not yet been pressed.

I hope very much that you print at least part of this letter. Freedom is getting better, as has the whole of the anarchist press since the start of the miners' strike. Keep up the good work, much appreciated.

Michael

A note to let you know what is happening around Clydeside in the last month. The thirteen Clydeside anarchists charged after the workers sequestration of the Price Waterhouse offices in Glasgow (4/9/84), are still preparing for their case on 12th December. However two of the people involved were re-arrested on Saturday 6th October on an anti-Broiler House demo organised by Glasgow Animal Activists. This resulted in one of them having to plead guilty to avoid being re-Banners were hung from the win- manded whereas the other refused and was therefore locked up until the trial on 1st November!

> We have recently held a small march in Glasgow to draw people's attention to the situation in South Africa where there are Wildcat strikes in defiance of an even more oppressive government and its permitted Trade Union. About 30 people (forgot to inform the police) marched from the Council Chambers past the South African Consulate, Barclays and finally South African Airways, leafletting all the time. The march went slowly, due to the nine coffins we carried and the piper in front. Even though the police didn't know what to do, it was quite effective as the public certainly noticed us.

Clydeside Anarchists

A prisoner in Arbour Hill Prison, Dublin, Patrick Fagan, is going through a rough time because of his political activities. Patrick has in the past been a good friend and comrade to Irish anarchists in prison and has every indication, as a result, to believe that he will not be allowed any parole on his eight year sentence.

Recently Patrick took out legal action against the prison authorities but this only led to further intimidation. The latest incident - and a typical example of prison pettiness - has been a ban on his continuing with his leather work (a traditional 'hobby' allowed for with most prisoners in Ireland).

Donations to Patrick's legal costs can be sent to the Anarchist Black Cross and we will see it is forwarded on. Also you can write to Patrick (why not place orders for his leather work? - Postal Orders/Cheques should be made payable to P Fagin and be sent by recorded delivery): Patrick Fagin, no 3683, Arbour Hill Prison, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7, Ireland.

Anarchist Black Cross

doubt as a result of the decision to Spanish section of the anarchosyndicalist International, of which DAM is the British section.

As a result of these criticisms the AIT-IWA International Secretariat in Madrid complained together with Rolf Larsen, of the Northern Sub-Secretariat to the International Secretary of DAM.

Now it must be said that DAM and the International is not like a Multinational Conglomerate or the Catholic Church. We don't have an hierarchy. We don't have bosses or priests. But we do, it seems, have bootlickers and creeps.

Unfortunately, some members of DAM are as yet unaware that bootlicking and arselicking are not anarchist criteria.

Where have I seen such deference before?

I have seen it at English trade union meetings, where members at branches are often overawed at the sight of an official in collar and tie. Union bosses also frequently glibly a 'pest'.

It is as 'pests' and 'militants' that 5 f). many of us have fought within the official unions against exclusions and for justice.

That is why some of us from the start opposed the exclusion and convinced that those who would aims and principles of DAM, which they claim to be upholding.

In the first place the orchestrated London-South East Region of DAM

The soul of DAM stands on trial. then went on to compound their Any claims DAM (Direct Action error by jumping the gun and Movement) may have to be an archist, unilaterally disassociating themor even syndicalist, must now be in selves from Larkin, a member of DAM. In so doing they attempted suspend Mick Larkin at the Glasgow to dictate terms to the National Conference in October. Larkin has Conference. A reflection of the low been suspended for writing in regard London DAM seems to have Freedom and publishing in Sinews, for the other sections, and undercriticisms of the CNT-AIT, the mining the concept of equality of membership in the movement.

Thus the rights of an individual member were undermined. Proper procedures were not followed; giving Larkin notice of the case against him, the rule under which his membership was at risk, or ample opportunity to prepare an answer.

Nor were matters improved at the Glasgow Conference. Despite the knowledge that Rochdale DAM had tabled a motion (to be discussed at the next conference in Doncaster) designed to prevent such frivolous exclusions, London insisted on pressing for the exclusion. Rochdale then made their motion retrospective in its application to the membership at the time of it being tabled - which was before the discussion of the Larkin case. This should have the effect of reinstating him if passed at Doncaster in February.

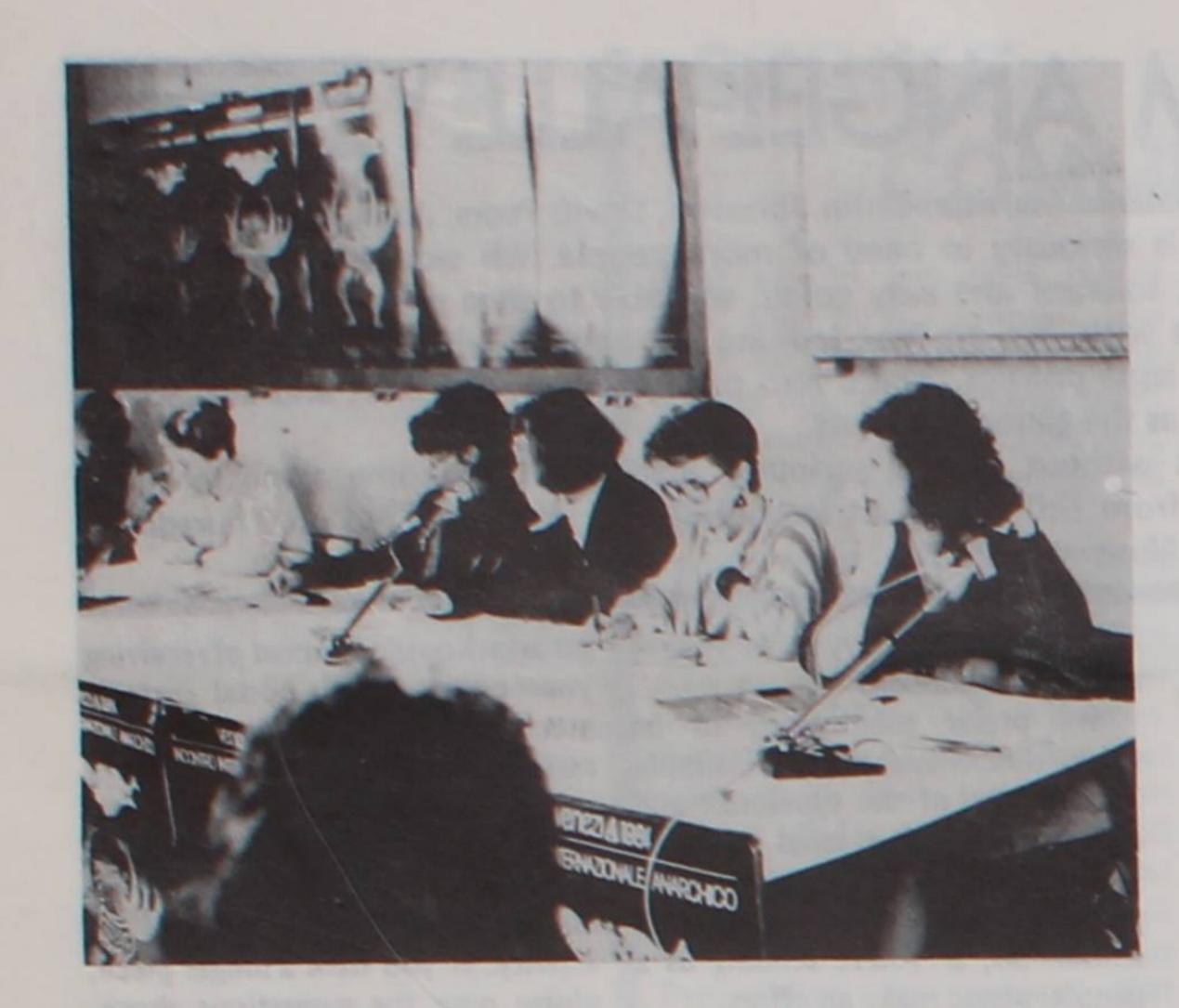
The decision to suspend Larkin was carried on a vote of just over ignore natural justice and union half the members present (9 votes rules to get rid of militants. out of 17). One would have thought Significantly, one DAM officer told a serious decision like a proposed me Larkin ought to go because he's exclusion would need the 66% majority required under DAM rule

> If Larkin has broken the Aims and Principles of DAM, then it must clearly be shown which principle he has breached.

For my part I am not convinced suspension of Mick Larkin. Since there has been any breach of then I have become even more principle by Larkin. At bottom the case against him seems to be excommunicate him are wrong, and against his freedom to criticise. may themselves be flouting the With Orwell, I incline to the view that all the arguments against freedom are bad ones.

Consequently, I call on the campaign of lobbying London membership of DAM to redress the DAM against Mick Larkin, following wrong done to Mick Larkin by the foreign complaints, was voting against his exclusion. For to uncomradely and unjust. Mick betray our collective conscience, Larkin was not given a fair hearing as Castello said; "... is worse than (or any hearing) nor was the case cruelly to kill a man. For to deny against him fully explained. The one's conviction destroys the soul". Brian Bamford





The women's panel at the session on Anarchism and Feminism.

From September 26th to 29th, a 'Gathering' of Anarchists came together in Venice to find out what we all thought about the 'Authoritarian tendencies and libertarian tensions in contemporary societies'. An impressive collection of speakers, known and unknown, from all over the world, from North and South America to Hong Kong and China, from Scandanavia to Australia, followed by about 2,000 more anarchists of all ages and hyphenations, descended on the beautiful city.

There we found two huge squares occupied by structures mounted by over 100 Italian comrades, some of whom had been working for months on the organisation - and some for days on the ! ard work, made harder by the Communist majority on the Venice Commune resisting the anarchist invasion until the very last minute. The socialist mayor persuaded them to see sense three days before opening time - and the comrades did the rest, building two covered eating areas, a kitchen, a wine bar, a bookshop, a stage for shows and music, and information stall (and of course staffing them all) in the large Campo Santa Margherita and in Campo San Polo, putting up a huge marquee for a permanent art show and film shows and presentations - while in the college of architecture, simultaneous translation equipment and PA equipment stood ready for audiences of hundreds each day for the discussions. All done by voluntary anarchist labour, comrades!

We send our congratulations and best thanks to our Italian friends of the Centro Studi Libertari in Milan who set it all up with help from the Anarchos Institute in Montreal and the Centre International de Recherches to note that John Clark, from New By this, of course, I mean that sur l'Anarchisme of Geneva. A truly international gathering!

anarchists, do. But they were proved tionary ideas.

conform or those who don't?" and realising that, wherever we whatever.

venezian 1984

There was no conforming at this nated all subjects, even those - like destroyed more workplaces than it tone was set by the chairwoman, 'militant' activity; it is to call for 'gathering' - so called because it 'Anarchism and Psychoanalysis', for has created, it was claimed - a Marsha Hewitt, who opened the a deeper understanding of all that could not legitimately be called a example - which are not issues I'm consideration that trade unionists proceedings with a plea for 'congress' in the old sense. There going to get into at my time of life. calling for more capitalist invest- discussion on ways of men and a deeper realisation of were no set debates, no resolutions But I am prepared to believe that ments in British industries might women working together: for passing and no conclusions understanding interaction between ponder upon. drawn at the end. Which left me, mind, emotion and body and what- The session on 'Libertarian away with anything. One Italian human society; as I see it, only for one, feeling a little uneasy at ever makes up the entire personality Syndicalism' was of special interest speaker, Rosanna Ambrogetti, anarchism can point us in the the end of the week. But against is of primary importance to liber- to me since I was for many years roundly declared that the position direction of repairing it. that, I had to set the positive tarian competence in making Freedom's regular contributor on of women in the Italian movement warmth of being in a gathering of propaganda, getting involved in industrial affairs and anarcho- was one of defeat, while a Spanish anarchists from all over the world actions, education, relationships or syndicalist propagandist (Hull man told us that internal criticism

in Argentina. subjects packed into only four and have a look at our Maggie.)

eloquent speaker. to crop up in various discussions printing and publishing enterprise (!). were feminism and ecology and I One could go on and on. A total was very heartened by the positive of 18 sessions were packed into four and clear anarchist approach on the days, with, I believe, follow-ups on part of all the women speakers and the Sunday, which I missed. contributors to the discussions on Saturday closed with a bang for our feminism.

Orleans, was expressing and they all agreed with my own attitude expanding ideas that had occurred (whatever some of my women to me some time ago - that friends may think) that women's Who says anarchists can't organise? activity and new opportunities to capitalism in 1984 is finding ways liberation and men's liberation are Well - most people, and even most apply out libertarian and revolu- of exploiting us more as consumers inextricably linked. There was no truly libertarian and truly in tune than as producers. This line also hint of separatism - although the with the times. wrong in Venice in September It would be wrong to say that found an echo in a paper read by Greenham Women, of course, were 1984, in our year of Big Brother, there was no rhetoric, no passionate Wolfgang Haug on behalf of a praised and the general feeling was I caught a glimpse of new directions when authoritarianism seems the affirmation of fundamental belief German group - the Forum of that if they wanted to go it alone, for constructive anarchism, with norm and libertarian determination nor any jargon. Of course there was Libertarian Information—describing that was their prerogative, an the emphasis upon 'building the the aberration. But then, as some- and in view of the wide range of what they called 'The Liquidation attitude with which I entirely one asked in a discussion: "Who subjects this was to be expected. In and the Ruination of Work'. Every agree, but, as one Spanish woman are the crazy people - those who fact it was the passionate affirmation Deutschmark invested in German (Martita Camillo?) said; "Freedom is better than anything the world of fundamental belief which illumi- industry since the middle '60s has must apply to everybody". The

Not that anarchist men got Capitalism and the State have ruined readers please note). Two examples in the Spanish anarchist movement came from, there was a great degree So what was the range of subjects of workers' movements influenced is that "men are anarchic outside, of common thought and under- under discussion? The programme by syndicalism were presented and but authoritarian in the home". standing - and above all a realisation began with the title 'The 1984 both of great interest. One, by Which is not unknown in Britain! that anarchism is not a static creed Connection', as might have been Yvon le Bot, was on the occupation Power-seeking women, however, but an ever-growing philosophy expected, and speakers compared of mines and treatment plants by were also denounced by Rosanna, with, on the whole, an openminded George Orwell's warnings with the miners in Bolivia and the second who said there are sections of the readiness to embrace new areas of realities we now face. I was gratified was a first hand description of the women's movement in Italy who Polish Solidarity movement by wanted to see more women in Zbigniew Kowalewski, now living positions of power in society. (Well, that's not unknown in Britain One drawback in having so many either. Perhaps they should come

> days was that it was impossible to A most interesting contribution attend all the sessions. I therefore came from Sylvia Ribero, from the missed 'Cultural Imperialism' and Comunidad del Sur, a community most of 'War and Peace' on the driven out of Uruguay by the Wednesday and others on Thursday military regime, the nucleus of in favour of 'Feminism and which found safety in Stockholm. Anarchism' which rightly had a top Based on the principle of 'To each table full of women speakers with according to his needs, from each men chirping up from the floor. On according to his abilities', the Friday I missed 'Psychoanalysis and community described itself as a Society' by Murray Bookchin, who social matrix in which all may turned out to be a forceful and develop freely and responsibly - the children as well as the women and The two subjects which seemed men. They now run a communal

> > small party, with my old friend



The Wine Bar, next to the Kitchen in the Campo Santa Margherita.

David Koven of San Francisco getting a very warm response to his autobiographical talk on being a war-resistor, militant worker and founder of a free school in America. In the final session, Colin Ward read a paper on 'Anarchism and the Crisis of Socialism' which will appear in the next issue of Freedom. Indeed, an effort must be made

to find some means to print the texts of the material presented at Venice - or at least some of it. Someone, somewhere spoke of 'Many anarchists, but no movements' and I came away rather saddened by the disparity between the level of thought and the level of activity in most countries. I am sure that what we saw and heard at Venice is only the tip of an iceberg of a great wealth of anarchist thought and that is must result sooner or later in the coming together of a coherent world-wide movement, truly internationalist,

At Venice last month I thought new in the shell of the old' demonstrating that our way of life has yet seen. This is not to rule out our revolutionary changes will how we might achieve our desires.

Philip Sansom

The 'Venezia 1984' event consisted of two sections: the International Anarchist Gathering and the International Study Conference. The sites of the International Anarchist Gathering were two public squares: campo San Polo and campo Santa Margherita. Campo San Polo was the main meeting place for informal discussions, where there was an information desk, bookshops, a large canteen and an open-air stage for music and theatre.

In campo San Polo there was a circus tent, housing an exhibition on the meeting points between anarchism and art movements or individual artists and a display of historical photographs of the anarchist movement in many countries. Three lectures were given Canada, Japan, South Korea, Malay- who spontaneously contributed in in the tent: Arturo Schwarz talked sia, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, one way or another gives an example 'Art and Social Commitment'.

'Cultural Imperialism', 'War and favourable account of the discussions more organic and less spontaneity-Peace', 'Feminism and Anarchism', 'Education and Freedom', 'Eurosocialism', 'The Practice of Self-Management', 'Which Revolution?' 'Psychoanalysis and Society', 'Social Ecology' and 'State and Anarchy'.

It is difficult to estimate how many people attended both sections of the event, but it is possible that between three and four thousand participants from all continents were present. A large number of academics joined in, including Mikhail Agursky, former lecturer

The huge Art and Exhibition marquees in Campo San Polo.



Murray Bookchin, director of the for instance, that speeches were Institute of Social Ecology of the thoughtful and not rhetorical. How-University of Vermont, USA; John ever, the local paper, Il Gazzettino New Orleans, USA; Tomas Ibanez, alist account, protesting for the lecturer in Social Psychology at noise and lack of hygiene at the Barcelona University, and many public square with a subtitle that ecologists, psychoanalysts, researchers and lecturers in political sciences, philosophy, etc. compiles non less than forty names.

Many students, anarchistactivists, on formed the majority of the campo Santa Marherita apicturesque crowd image of a Bruegel's style. The Italian newspaper La Repubpost-industrial anarchy; they come from the USA, from South America,



David Koven on 'Living Anarchy'.

about 'Anarchy, Surrealism, Portugul, France, Belgium, of effective libertarian organisation. Tantrism and Alchemy'; Benito Germany, Sweden, Greece, Yugo- Of course there were some

in Cybernetics in the Soviet Union; and trends of the meeting, saying, of Political (29th September 1984) gave a at the University of distorted, poisonous and sensationreads: "They get naked and copulate in public!", something that maybe happened at 3:00am among some of the people who slept in sleeping bags in the square and concerned

Meanwhile, Il Corriere della Sera September 1984) said: "Somebody doubted that they were still alive. Nevertheless, the anarchists wanted to show and say that, indeed, they are still there."

Umanita Nova, the weekly anarchist newspaper (7th October 1984) celebrates the success of the to decide how to construct the 1984: International Congress of the Anarchist People" and says; "Something like this helps us to voercome our minority complex". It also, complains about the public image of folklore given by certain comrades in the public square and says "An Italian proverb concerning the family attitude towards deviant children recognises that because we cannot kill them we have to maintain

The Venezia 1984 was very good in many respects. It brought together people from many different parts of the world, from different orientations within anarchism and from different age groups. It was a week of encounters, formal and informal meetings, exhibitions, friendship, hard thinking, coordination, etc. The movement showed its own resourcefulness: there were intellectuals presenting papers, voluntary interpreters translating into different languages, cooks preparing meals, actors and actresses performing on the stage, pairs of hands happily doing all sorts of big and small jobs, the list of people

Recchilongo on 'Pisarro and slavia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria. problems. The split between Anarchism' and Pietro Ferrua on They are mostly young but you can different sections of the Spanish also see grey-haired old men. Many anarchists became more than The International Study of them speak correctly two or apparent and people from other Conference met at the Faculty of three languages. There is also a countries were urged to take sides. Architecture and the main topics punk area and some drop-outs." Some participants complained that were: 'Libertarian Syndicalism', Some Italian newspapers gave a there was little space allowed for a

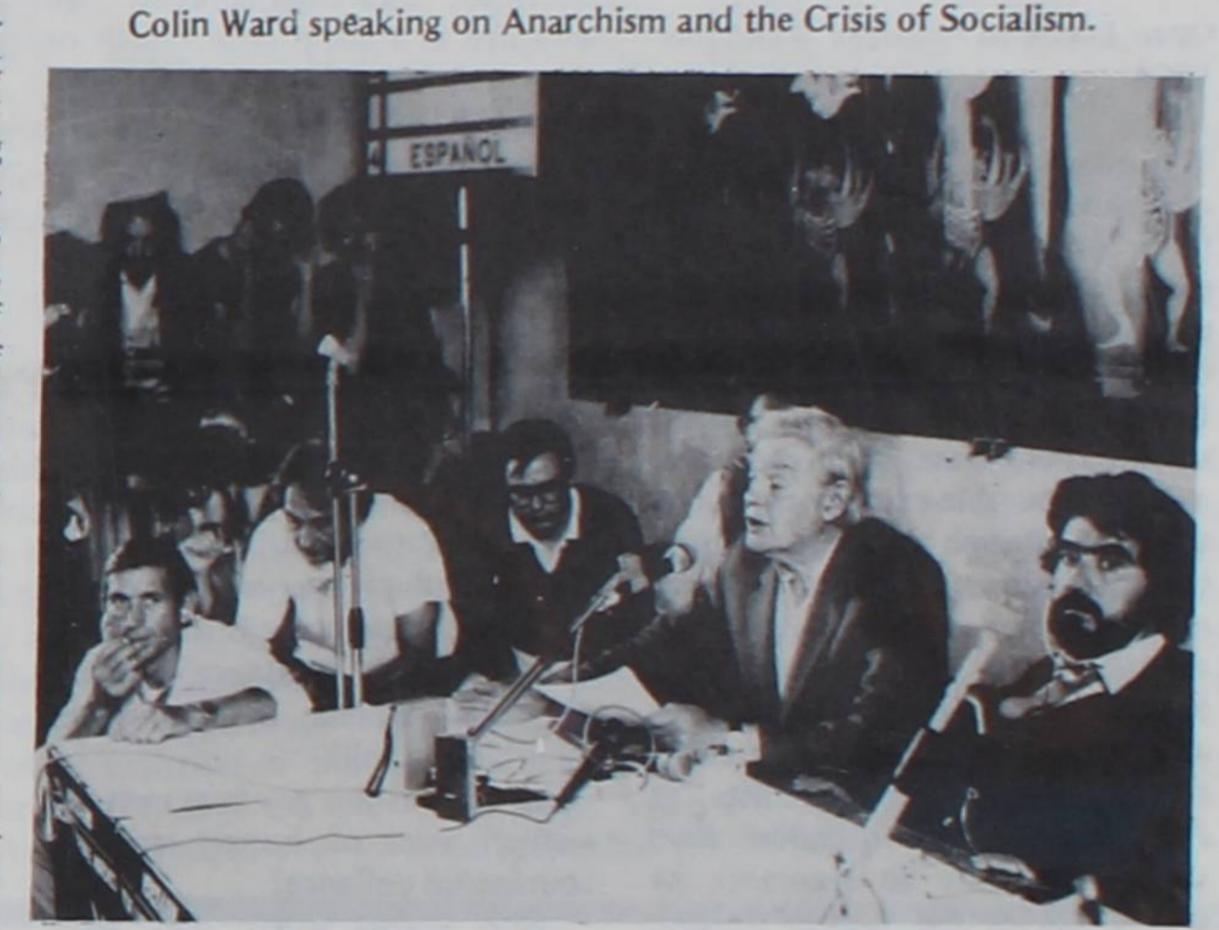


ridden type of group discussions, and sharpen our instruments of besides the rigid format of the militancy. It may be that they have seminars. Surprisingly there were shown us the road to the survival not as many Italians as one would and development of the international have expected. Many punks refused anarchist movement and given us to participate in intellectual activities grounds and motivation for further and seminars and one wonders if theoretical work. Venezia 1984 was they think we should dispense an important appointment for all

sense of efficiency and professional- exploitation. ism, they tend to create an area of No doubt this was an event to ised knowledge, to think about

of these activities in a new society. those who are interested in injecting On the whole, Venezia 1984 life and thought into the only was an accomplished enterprise political and ethical movement that organised by a group of comrades proposes a radical alternative to whose attitude and way of working both the authoritarian barbarism of is quite clear. They have a great the State and the capitalist

anarchist thinking based on the remember. The small libertarian acceptance of the need to revise group from Milan that organised deological principles, to update our with great care and skill this complex theoretical position, to use special- conference deserves our indebtness.



'Latin America', 'State Communism', DEBATE - ANARCHY AND INSANITY

the title 'Anarchy and Insanity'. have. sure JS didn't choose the title.

stress the rights of mentally handi- actual handicap. capped people to 'normality'. This And how is mental handicap sending bills for room and board to Sexist, racist, class based, authori- pretty suspect or what?! Art and Drama) for/with handi- cell (whoops, I mean classroom). 20% fine, monthly interest of 4.5% if they talked about an Aboriginal capped children, which was attempt- Oh, the mental health professions (worse than Barclaycard!) and family who strayed into the area ing to be truly libertarian, I faced love a label, don't they! Remember confiscation of property. Torture is and were contaminated.

I was pleased and interested to read to do when the children wanted when psychology students got Chinese peasants killed 590 million Firstly, I was shocked to see an sion. Mentally handicapped people staff 'compulsive writing'! article on the subject of mentally have a right to reject 'normality', I definitely think that we need typed jokes. As far as we know he handicapped persons coming under 'ordinary' values. After all, we to get away from our imprisonment does not intend to develop an export

This must be one of the commonest Next, I see language itself as 'subnormal' and 'client'. It isn't a official estimates, Barcelona's rat misconceptions ever - ie that the very important when discussing one-way process. We can all learn population exceeds the human one, handicapped are insane - and I'm care of handicapped people. Paul from each other. Williams of the Campaign for the Secondly, I am dubious as to Mentally Handicapped has written whether the core and cluster trend a brilliant pamphlet about this really is a libertarian one. It seems called Our Mutual Handicap which to me to be part of the 'normalization' idea which has become so Public's ignorance of handicaps is In Brief popular with liberals over the last at least as fundamental to the fifteen years. Advocates of this idea 'handicapped' individual as his/her

should not be accepted uncritically. defined anyway? By IQ largely - recently released political prisoners.

tarian roles and conformist life- And what about our knowledge infaltion, the value of the peso styles can and have been imposed of what labelling people does . . .? and the institution in question. It An Australian ex-serviceman has said on handicapped people in the name Our education system can 'produce' is currently about \$2.50 per day. that soldiers at a British atomic test of 'normality'. Whilst recently work- its own 'subnormal' people by If the bills are not paid within site in the 1950's were threatened ing on a project (Equal Play through labelling them as 'subnormal' in the 60 days, the government imposes a with execution or 30 years in jail

this dilemma many times - what that classic experiment 10 years ago thrown in free.

Jonathan Simcock's article 'Anarchy to enact, say, a 'mummies and themselves diagnosed as schizo- rats last year, saving, according to and Insanity' in October's Freedom. daddies' play which portrayed phrenic and were committed to a the government, 5 million tons of It's good to see the pages of Free- mummy at the sink 231/2 hours a mental hospital. Once inside every- grain. The campaign has brought dom being used to explore anarchist day and daddy as the all-powerful thing they did was interpreted in prosperity for the country's first approaches to diverse issues. I'd like provider? My answer was to (make terms of their 'disorder' - eg cat farmer. In a year he has sold to add/question a few points, them) question it all. So I disagree taking notes about hospital con- 2,400 animals. As well as ratting with Jonathan Simcock's conclu- ditions became to the psychiatric they are used as pets and for food.

in language - especially terms like business. Meanwhile, according to

Ros Gill

The Uruguayan armed forces are The rate varies according to

Scientists in Utrecht have followed up the experiments of Stanley Milgram on obedience. Those tests, in the 1960's, indicated that 65% of people were prepared to inflict severe pain on subjects, if they were ordered to do so by an authority figure. The new experiments used mental rather than physical torture. This time, 90% would obey.

at 1,9000,000.

We are sorry if this raises old stereo-

BELFAST ... one

The history of Ireland is the history of oppression. British colonialism in one form or another has been there since the days of the Angevin conquest and continues to perpetrate and reperpetrate daily, fresh horrors against the Irish population. Of course this is common knowledge, at least among the more politically conscious elements of the British public. Unfortunately what is well known often can be, and is, taken for granted, swept away under the carpet, ignored, or at least gives rise to complacent tut-tuts wherever Ireland or the Irish situation is mentioned.

from a visit to Belfast as a member State are aware of the early morning of the 'Troops Out' movement police call (re 121 Bookshop, and delegation. I came back visibly shaken from my first experience of brutal oppression and naked colonialism. I have been a classstruggle Anarchist (Anarchosyndicalist) now for fifteen years (the same number of years since the recent British occupation of Ulster). During that time the media has consistently played down the full horrors of the British Government's occupation, constantly reiterating that British troops are

there purely as a peace-keeping force serving the interests of the Irish people as a whole, to keep them from cutting each others throats.

The reality is somewhat different. Belfast at first sight (at least the areas occupied by the British) bears much resemblance to pictures have seen of Nagasaki and Hiroshima after the bombs of 1946. Ruined buildings, burnt out cars, and the ever present road-blocks and troops hurtling by, gives the ordinary visitor a brief glimpse of the tragedy that is a daily reality for the Irish population of Belfast.

Most anarchists who are involved I have just returned recently in revolutionary struggle against the the Brixton squats), but for the Republican population of Belfast and Derry this is commonplace. The brutal house searches, the whisking away of political activists to the military detention barracks for what is euphamistically called 'interrogation' (read torture). All this is part and parcel of the daily life of Republican Belfast.

> I was privileged to saty in the homes and visit the clubs of Republican activists during my all too

short four day visit. What impressed me as an Anarchist and a revolutionary was the openness, the warmhearted hospitality, the lack of racism towards me (despite my rather unusual delight in wearing jewellery and displaying innumerable badges), towards one who after all is a member (however reluctant) of the oppressing culture. I kept repeating to myself after the coldblooded murder of Sean Downes (to which I was a witness) and the incredibly violent behaviour of the British troops and the RUC, "They will never conquer this people". If ever I saw a politically conscious, tremendously brave working class population it was there on the streets of Belfast. Despite the desperate poverty, the unemployment, the degrading brutality of the oppression, the Belfast Republican working class is not only ready and willing to listen to alternative political ideas, they do so with an open eagerness and a sense of immediate urgency.

The Republican movement that spent my time with bore little resemblance to the stories of bigoted Catholic nationalism to which I had been led to expect, both from other accounts and the media. I found people intensely alive and open to new ideas, aware of the social problems and intent on solving them as soon as the oppressive British presence is withdrawn. They expressed interestingly

diverse opinions about racism, gay rights, sexism and socialist alternatives. I met activists who spoke with the Anarchist vision of society as I did. I spoke to Republican organisers who espoused decentralism, federalism and community and workers control (in the Anarchist sense). I remember talking to one rank and file activist who claimed he was neither a Republican nor a Nationalist but a reactionary (amid the laughter of himself and his wife). He went on to explain to my shocked and horrified face that he was only reacting against British oppression by meeting violence with violence. In this sense he was a reactionary.

The Republican movement is indeed diverse. I will not try to disguise the fact that I had very real differences of opinion with certain members of the Sinn Fein organisation who espoused beliefs, for example, about 'revolutionary' Cuba and who saw socialism in statist and nationalist terms, and I made it quite clear that I saw loyalty to class as more important than national differences. The rank and file, however, were much more open and ready to express ideas more in keeping with my own Anarcho-syndicalism.

The one disappointment that I felt keenly during the whole of my visit was that I was unable to communicate with, or even meet at any level, the ordinary Loyalist

working class people. Mainly this was due to the fact that my own life would have been endangered if I had gone anywhere near the Loyalist areas. Loyalist para-military groups exist to prevent the two sides from holding any meaningful dialogue. If only the barricades could be brought down and communication exist between the two groups, I am persuaded that the British built divisions would disappear. Not overnight, of course, but a step would have been taken along the road to working class unity. The physical barricades themselves serve as a pitiful and terrible reminder of the continuing success of Britain's divide and rule policy, keeping both oppressed groups apart on a political and economic level. Anarchists must become aware of the terrible reality of British oppression and struggle against it wherever and whenever possible by demanding on every possible occasion an end to the British military and political presence in Ulster. They should tell their friends that British troops are in Ireland as a prop to the present sectarian divisions and left alone the Irish working class would be well on the way to finding their own solutions.

Pete Ridley

Open Letter to Freeaom - October 1984

The question of the reality of the occupation of Ireland by British force (as I write this, an armed patrol of British troops looks in the window), has for a long time camped under the tender noses of British anarchists like a putrid smell. There have been, and are, a few honourable exceptions, but in the main, British anarchist response to this encampment has been no more than the occasional curling of tender noses in irritation, with little attempt to understand, or analyse, the real cause. In particular, the collection of anarchists at Freedom in East London have shown not only an ignorance of the reality of the war in Ireland, but have also indicated that they don't basically give a damn. It's hard to decide which is the most shocking.

In the September issue of the Freedom paper, an unsigned 'review' of No Statist Solution by Michael Ziesing, makes disgusting references to Nicky Kelly, to the ten prisoners who died on the hunger strike of 1981, and to those men (they forget about the women - did Freedom ever know??) who took part in the no-wash and blanket protests. Under the cover of 'reviewing' Michael Ziesing's excellent booklet, the author(s?) takes the opportunity of commenting on these subjects showing, in the process, not an Answer:

The point the reviewer was making was that Mrs Thatcher did not pop over to Northern Ireland, whip out her beretta and plug the hunger strikers. What actually happened was they said, "give us political status or we will starve ourselves to death", and she rather callously

said, "No I won't, go ahead ". The point we would like to make is that by bullshitting that Maggie literally murdered the hunger strikers, you are robbing them of their true status as defiant revolutionaries (of a sort), who were prepared to commit suicide rather than tamely accept the conditions of imprisonment imposed upon them by the State.

By bullshitting that they were 'helpless murder victims' in order

ounce of humanity or sympathy, were left naked in their cells. and, which may be worse, not even When the prison regime stopped the beginnings of an intelligent, sending the trolleys to collect the informed, researched approach. We chamber pots, prisoners smeared who live in Ireland (from birth or their shit on the walls after a while. from choice) have long been They tried throwing their waste saddened and angered by the out of the cell windows, and the ignorance (as typified by this screws threw it back. When prisoners 'review') of the Freedom group left their cells to go to the toilet, on the subject of the war here. Not their blankets were taken away only that, we have been angered by from them and, naked, they had to the continuing lack of human run the gauntlet of beatings by the solidarity from that quarter.

Diplock courts, criminalisation policy, torture, shoot-to-kill tactics, in protest? Who supported the 'supergrass' trials, strip-searching in Armagh, the never-ending covert and overt actions by British forces to smash Irish resistance, and use of rubber bullets, have all taken their bloody toll?

Where was this group as men and women went on hunger strike in courageous defiance?

We can only guess.

reasonable communication with torture) was used as 'evidence' with Freedom have failed. In 1981 at the which to convict. What anarchist height of the last hunger strike, worthy of the name can members of the (then) Freedom a) uphold a system of 'justice' editorial group were invited here to and Belfast with goodwill and with b) not support an innocent person much generosity, in the hope that tortured and imprisoned by the an understanding would emerge and overt oppressive forces of such a grow. Who responded to that class? invitation? Answer: not the (then) editorial group but a small 'fringe' group of concerned anarchists at Freedom - one of whose subsequent completely. The other possibility reports was deemed not suitable for publication by the editor. This report, please note, was sympathetic to those elements here who resist

to 'improve' their public image and gain more support, you in fact spread the message of 'helplessness before the State' rather than the spirit of defiance, courage and self-esteem required amongst the people for a self-managed libertarian revolution. By telling obvious (from England) lies and distortions the IRA reduces its sympathy and credibility here to near zero.

As for the absence of Irish reports in Freedom, who's fault is that? Surely those comrades who call themselves anarchists in Northern Ireland are the ones qualified to write these for Freedom. If you think we should have them, then why haven't you sent them in? Stop being bloody pompous and put pen (preferably

screws. Screws pissed in the Where was this group as the prisoners' food - a sadistic regime prevailed. Who raised their voices prisoners in their cold, filthy and brutal conditions?

On the subject of Nicky Kelly the 'review' is further ignorant and arrogant. To put the record straight: Nicky Kelly was not only an innocent man (even the Minister for 'Justice' in the 26 counties admitted this!), he was thrown into Portlaoise Who knows where they were. Jail after a farce of a trial during which a 'confession' (which had Repeated efforts to establish been wrung from him by systematic

It is time that one or two things happened now. One possibility is that Freedom shut up about Ireland is that they salvage what humanity they have left and proceed to wise up. The present situation is appalling and nauseating.

typewriter) to paper.

Like most people who adopt a hysterical critical tone to Freedom you have not given the matter ten seconds of rational comradely thought.

Freedom is an Anarchist paper. Anarchist ao not support purely nationalist struggles. If people in Northern Ireland are under the illusion that rute from Dublin will be one inch less authoritarian and repressive than rule from London, that is their problem, not

The link between authoritarian attitudes and terrorist tactics is well established in human history. Anyone who tries to justify kneecapping or the Birmingham pub bomb is simply not yet an anarchist.

The content of this 'review' of British force and was critical of the British anarchist record on Ireland. When Nicky Kelly was fighting for release from Portlaoise Jail, this same individual sent information from his support group, hoping for a response. None was forthcoming. Other contacts have been ignored.

The publication of this latest 'review', plus the continuing lack of priority and ignorance on all urgent matters pertaining to the war in Ireland, has now prompted this Open Letter to Freedom in the hope that it will:

a) register our strong protest at the content of this 'review'; and b) be read by anarchists further afield who may be encouraged to inform themselves fully, and not rely on the Freedom group to provide them with information or up-to-date commentary on the situation here in Ireland.

The 'review' quotes from Michael Ziesing's booklet in this manner: 'And the Maze hunger strikers, he informs us, were "slowly murdered by Margaret Thatcher and her cronies" - presumably during the dirty protest it was Margaret Thatcher who smeared shit on the walls.' What is one supposed to infer from the comment there of the author of this 'review'? One can only guess at the disgusting answer. one could at least respect them.

The facts are: the ten hunger strikers were murdered by British policy in Ireland. Who personifies this policy? Margaret Thatcher, for one. As for the blanket and nowash protests, one wonders if the author(s?) of this 'review' has

Terrorism is essentially the basis of State power. Trying to terrorise the State is like asking the Mafia for protection money. If you're strong enough they let you join.

The suggestion that 'the (then) editorial group' did not respond to invitations is simply untrue. The people who went, about half the group, were not a small 'fringe', they were full members, 'editors' if you like. (One did maintain a 'marginalised' existence, but was quite happy to be involved in decisions.)

Most of their subsequent copy was printed. The report 'deemed not suitable' by 'the editor' (in fact the group, including others who had made the journey) was an impressionistic, even poetic, account.

ever visited Long Kesh (only the Brits call it 'the Maze') or spoken to any of the men and women who were on protest there and in Armagh. Michael Ziesing did the first; I have done both. Judge for yourselves then, who is more qualified to apss comment on the nature of these protests. The socalled 'dirty protest' began in Long Kesh when prisoners refused to accept the British criminalisation conditions, a refusal any anarchist worthy of the name would have been proud to make or be associated with. When the prisoners refused to wear the prison uniform, their own clothes were taken away and they Michael Ziesing's book has angered and saddened anarchists in Belfast, anarcho-syndicalists, anarchofeminists and others here. We see it as typifying so much of British anarchist ignorance on, and lack of priority and urgency regarding, the war here. We do, at least, speak from experience and first-hand knowledge. The Freedom group in East London, it would seem, do just the opposite. 'So, what's new' you might well ask? What one would hope could be new is that the people at Freedom determine now to rectify and improve their shocking and casual disregard of the pertinent facts and begin to show some real solidarity. Then, perhaps,

A Belfast Anarchist



It was thought that the readership had no great interest in the colour and depths of Belfast anarchist's eyes or their ability to make bean soup. It was also nationalist or, as we used to say, republican. The writer said 'all or nothing'. So it was.

REVIEWS

The Haymarket Tragedy by Paul Avrich; Princeton University Press £29.40

For nearly two decades Paul Avrich has been the leading historian in the English-speaking world of the anarchist movement in Russia and the United States. For the first half of this period he concentrated on Russia - producing the standard history of The Russian Anarchists (1967), an authoritative monograph on Kronstadt 1921 (1970), a pioneering history of Russian Rebels 1600-1800 (1972), and an illuminating anthology of The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution (1973), as well as new editions of works by Bakunin, Kropotkin and Berkman, and many articles. For the second half he has concentrated on the United States - producing a definitive biography of Voltairine de Cleyre, An American Anarchist (1978), and a biographical study of The Modern School Movement (1980), as well as many more articles. Now he has produced what will become the standard history of The Haymarket Tragedy.

This key episode in the history of the American anarchist movement is fairly well known. In 1886 the labour movement attempted to impose the eight-hour day by direct action. On May 1st a wave of strikes and demonstrations began, especially in Chicago, where the English-speaking and Germanspeaking sections of the labour movement were led by militant anarchists. On 3rd May a battle between strikers and scabs at the McCormick Reaper Works in Chicago ended with police firing revolvers into the crowd, killing at least two workers and wounding many more. On 4th May a peaceful demonstration near the Haymarket was attacked by police; a dynamite bomb was thrown into the police, who fired revolvers into the crowd; seven policemen were killed and about sixty wounded, mostly by their bullets rather than the bomb, and about the same numbers of civilians were killed and wounded by the police.

The result was the first great Red Scare in American history. Hundreds of people were arrested, especially in Chicago, the victims

largely being anarchists and/or foreigners. On 27th May ten anarchists were indicted for murder, all but two being of German origin. From June to August eight of them were tried, and although there was no evidence that any of them and anything to do with the bomb or with anyone's death, on 20th August seven were sentenced to death and one (Oscar Neebe) was imprisoned. After the failure of appeals, two (Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab) were reprieved, and one (Louis Lingg) managed to" kill himself in prison with a dynamite cartridge. After the failure of attempts to get pardons, on 11th November 1887 four (George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Albert Parsons and August Spies) were hanged in the Cook County jail.

Then the tide of public opinion began to turn, and the Chicago anarchists became martyrs, widely compared with John Brown. Their funeral procession was joined by 20,000 people and watched by 200,000. They were honoured not only by anarchists and in the United States, but by the whole Left all over the world. The anniversary of their deaths was widely commemorated for many years, being ultimatley and ironically superseced by Armistice Day after. 1918. The story of their life and death became part of the consciousness of the entire revolutionary movement. In 1893 a monument with a bronze sculpture was put over their graves in the Waldheim Cemetary, becoming a place of pilgrimage ever since. (By contrast, a memorial to the killed policemen, also with a bronze sculpture, put in the Haymarket in 1889, became the subject of different attentions, being repeatedly vandalised until in 1972 it finally had to be moved into the Chicago police headquarters!) Above all, also in 1893, a new Governor of Illinois, John Altgeld, pardoned the three surviving prisoners and issued a powerful statement condemning the conduct of the police and the trial, describing the whole case as a miscarriage of justice, and vindicating the total innocence of all eight anarchists.

The same sort of thing happened all over again half a century later, in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, two

foreign anarchists framed for murder and themselves judicially murdered - the only real difference being that they had to wait five years longer to be killed and forty-four years longer to be pardoned. But the Haymarket affair remains one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of anarchism.

The only previous full-length treatment, Henry David's History of the Haymarket Affairs, which was published for the fiftieth anniversary in 1936 (and republished in 1958 and 1963), was mainly a political account based on published sources. Paul Avrich's book, which is published in advance of the hundredth anniversary in 1986, has a rather different approach. As in the previous volumes of his work on American anarchism, "the emphasis in the present volume is biographical", concentrating on the figures of Albert Parsons and August Spies, the most impressive English-speaking and Germanspeaking anarchists in Chicago. But there is rich material on the other protagonosts, not only the martyrs but also those associated with them, and there is good coverage of the organisations and events which provide the context of the case. Avrich also makes more use of the manuscript material which has become available in various collections, and the result is a very full account of the whole episode.

The book is as well written and well produced as usual with this author and publisher. Unfortunately it is even more prohibitively expensive than usual, and the only hope for the ordinary readers is that they can persuade their libraries to buy it or that a paperback edition appears to meet the demand which the book deserves.

Only specialists will be able to find serious errors or omissons in the meticulous analysis and synthesis of all the evidence Avrich has used. The only mistakes I have been able to detect are a couple of minor points. Kropotkin was never an editor of Freedom. Fielden's birthplace, Todmorden, is described as being in Lancashire, but as Fielden says in his autobiography, it was divided between Lancashire" and Yorkshire (now it is all in Yorkshire), and although he was born at

THE DEATH WATCH. AND THE PRINCIPLES RECEIVING VISITORS.

the Lancashire end, most of the the impact of the affair not only in which dominated Todmorden, or pursue the connection - if any - impact. between this leading American anarchist and that leading capitalist family of northern England.)

Avrich omits some of the details given by David, but this is inevitable when one long book is superseded by another. The only serious could do it better. omission is the lack of a proper account of the mythology of Haymarket. Avrich briefly describes

town, including the cotton mill the United States but elsewhere in where he first worked, was in America, in Europe and even in Yorkshire; it is therefore rather Asia, and he mentions the memorial misleading to describe either the meetings and the establishment of man or the town as typical of May Day as a permanent festival of Lancashire. (Incidentally, Avrich the international socialist movement. doesn't mention that Fielden But he doesn't mention this aspect worked for the Fielden family of the episode nearly enough - it is after all what gave it lasting

Apart from such small drawbacks, this is an outstandingly satisfying book. We must hope that Avrich is now working on the Sacco-Vanzetti case, which similarly needs a new standard history, for no one

There is a healthy range of local papers/magazines being produced. These are the ones which have come in recently. The producers will no doubt be happy to send you a copy, from their address not ours! Remember to send postage. If it says 'free', no doubt a contribution would be appreciated.

The Sheffield Anarchist 'Pay what you like'. PO Box 217, Sheffield. Traces its tradition back to 1891. The Autumn issue includes local and wider matters, It also has a travel programme, a local walk around sites of anarchist interest. Disturbing to hear that the Raven is not what it was, there again it's nearly 15 years since I was there!

School Stoppers Handbook The Sheffield group have produced a new edition. It was first published in America in 1968, since when it has been translated into seventeen languages. Resolutely anti-copyright,

it has 91 suggestions for creative chaos. The group could afford 1,100 copies, which are mainly for local distribution (free). They will send single copies to any comrade for an SAE and are prepared to swallow their pride and accept any donations towards more printing.

The Slab Free. 360 Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex. A mixed bag of local news and wider comment. Again, there's some local history. Resolutely libertarian, they are prepared to print non-anarchist material and addresses, as long as the people are usefully active locally, then they say why they disagree.

Diatribe Free. 'Books Upstairs', above the Grainstore, Parchment Street, Winchester. Larger (I make it 42 pages) and clearer printed (they have their own facilities) than most locals. Their space allows a wider range than usual to be

covered, including in this issue a personal history of a determined attempt to withhold the proportion of income tax used for military spending.

Revolt and Untitled Free. 33 Crossfell Walk, Fareham, Hants. Two small format collections of polemics and poems. Subjective. Revolt is more general, the other mainly on animals.

Me Myself I 25p single, subscriptions available, Box WIG, 38 Bradshaw Street, Lancaster, LA1 3AE. First issue for two years. Yobbism and heresy. A successor for Anacism Lancastrium? Next one is promised for Christmas. Credulous comrades please note.

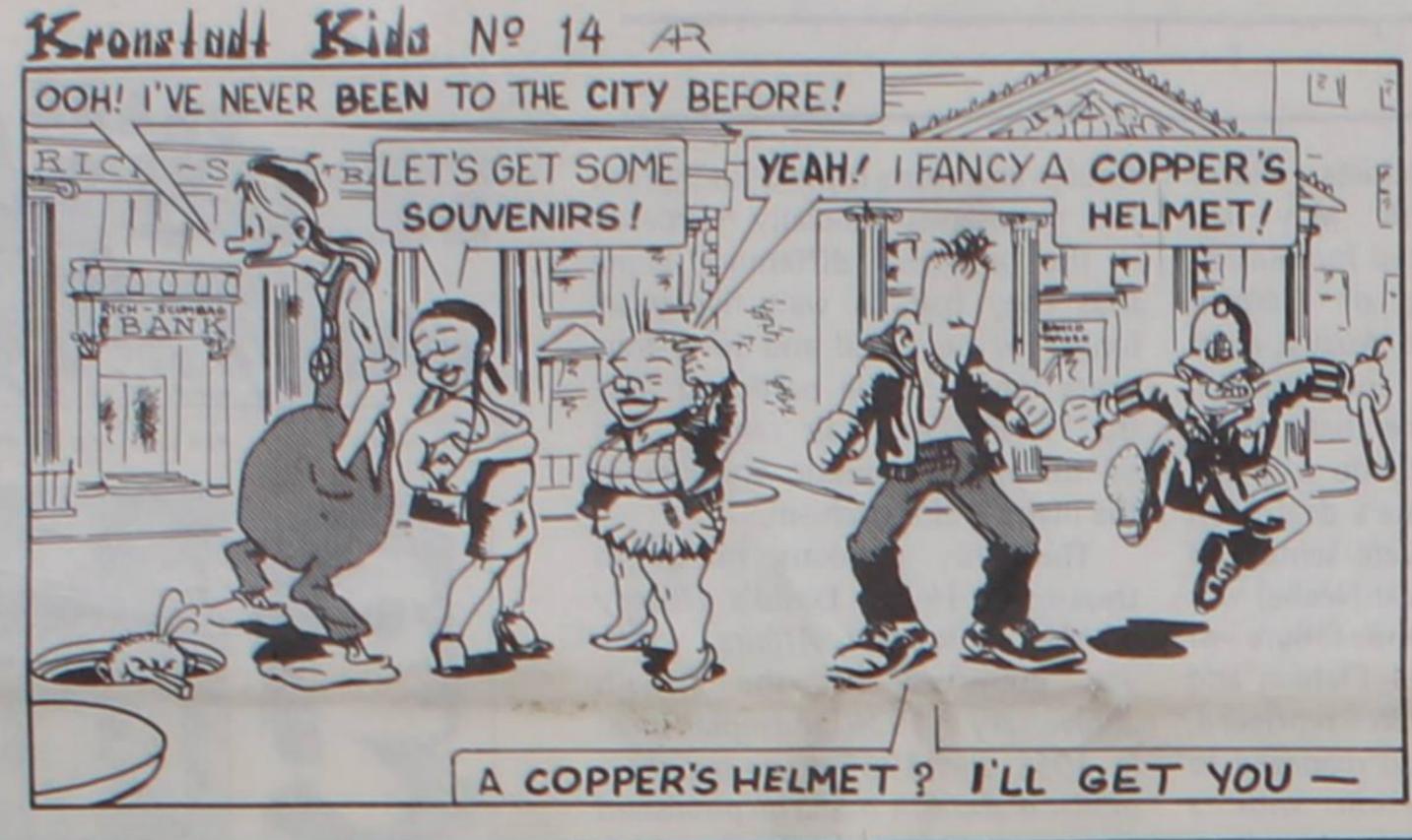
Other papers which arrive regularly are from Clydeside, Bristol, Hastings and Southampton. More to follow.



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THE MINERS...

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Dear Brother/Sister,

As you are no doubt aware, we have been on strike for 27 weeks and we find that our families are now suffering extreme hardship.

We as a branch are paying over £3,000 per week in hardship payments to our members and our funds are now almost depleted. We have been forced to come to London to try to raise cash so that we can continue to help our members in this way.

We would like to appeal to your branch for help in this matter and would be grateful for any donation you feel you can make. If you can help us in this way or by purchasing or raffling such items as mining history books or miners' lamps, please contact our number.

We are also available to attend meetings if required. We thank you for your support during this struggle and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Fraternally, Whiteman Financial Secretary, Bates NUM

WITH YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WE CAN AND WILL WIN

miners for the duration of the strike. They came down of their own initiative; which is probably how come they found us. We should stress that they have official approval, in view of the 'Scottish Event'. Obviously they want your money, which you should sent to:

Bates NUM, Bates Pit, Blyth,

or Blyth Miners Wives Support Group,

Ms Lynn Camsell, 17 Cowper Hall Road, Northumberland Cowper Estate,

> Blyth, Northumberland

A Bates miners support group with people from East London DAM, Freedom, Queen Mary College, etc., is running regular street collections for the miners. Meet at Angel Alley every Thursday and Friday, 3.45 - 4pm, and Saturday 10.30am, till the end of the strike. On Thursdays they are at Old Street tube, 4.30 - 6pm, Friday and Saturdays vary.

Anybody willing to help out would be very welcome.

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