

FREEDOM

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Tough Times

The miners' strike has entered the crucial period in which the strength and determination of the participants is being genuinely tested. The government quite clearly provoked this strike with the intention of splitting and weakening the NUM. What it will do if it wins is haunting the dreams of many of us. This is not a government which believes in mercy or in compromise. It is a government which believes in driving home its advantages to the utmost degree. Thus when offered the possibility of a compromise deal over the Falklands the War Cabinet preferred to take the option of murdering the occupants of the Belgrano so that the election could be won.

Such people don't compromise they have to. Yet throughout the past months there has been a steady stream of advice to the miners asking them to remain calm, to be 'reasonable', to 'negotiate' seriously and to picket peacefully while the coal keeps coming.

The members of the government have been waiting calmly since 1974 for the circumstances to arise in which they could get their own back on the miners. The Conservatives began their recent period in office by picking off the weakest groups of workers and paying off the strongest. In 1980 when the miners looked like striking over a proposal to shut down 20 pits and axe 10,000

jobs the government swallowed its pride and withdrew the proposals. In the same year the miners got a 13% pay rise, when a quite clear limit of 6% had been set for public sector pay rises, because the government respected their strength.

Civil servants and steelworkers were not so strong and paid the price as a systematic attempt was made to provoke weak unions into industrial action in circumstances where they were likely to lose.

By 1984 the government felt confident enough to re-introduce pit closures and to see whether it couldn't provoke the miners into a serious defeat. In other words the government actually wanted the miners to strike because it wanted to defeat them and yet the TUC and the Labour Party are steadily hinting that if only the miners were a bit more reasonable the whole dispute would be over.

In a sense they are right. If the miners were to be more reasonable they would be beaten in weeks. Is it reasonable to sustain a strike for eight months? Is it reasonable to get up a four in the morning to go and face trained riot police at the risk of serious injury or months in jail? Is it reasonable to stay out when the press tell you that you are bound to lose and the television shows pictures of coal stocks gleaming in the summer sunlight? Is

it reasonable to build up thousands of pounds worth of debts because you could go on. The right?

I believe to be obvious. The only reason the miners have created for themselves a real chance of victory is because they have not been reasonable. Instead they have been bloody magnificent and as a result the government has been seriously worried on several occasions (though it is doing everything it can not to show the concern.)

The way to increase those worries is now the prime question for all of us. For those outside the pit industry one answer is very simple. Most miners who are going back now are going back under the pressure of dire financial need. Money donations must be stepped up in order to stave off the damaging psychological effects of a Christmas without presents for the kids. Now is the time for all of us to be sending off Christmas donations to the miners and an address for them is printed on the back page of this issue.

For those who work in industries which affect the pits the answer must also be clear. The government will shortly be forced into moving coal stocks from strikebound pits to the power stations. This will probably be a violent operation which will involve much larger convoys of lorries than have been used up to now. Any actions which can delay or prevent the movement of coal will in such circumstances alarm the government

and give heart to the miners.

We cannot expect one group of workers to fight all our battles for us. In the end workers in the docks, on the railways, in the power stations and above all lorry drivers need to decide which side their bread is buttered on and need to realise the power that this government will have if it wins. The closing down of unprofitable ferries, ports, and railway lines and the widespread 'rationalisation' of work practices in the power industry would all be very difficult to resist if the miners went down to defeat as would any measures to tighten up on the ability of tachographs to spy.

As for the miners themselves there can be no doubt that those actually involved in the strike are best placed to judge the effectiveness and the desirability of any action. However, a number of interesting possibilities do seem to be emerging. Firstly there is evidence that more and more miners are learning the lessons of Toxteth. Several members of the government wavered and panicked in the face of the riots and the government would appear to be highly unwilling to risk violence which goes beyond controllable limits.

They would, for instance, probably be highly concerned if coal stocks were to be set alight and they would also be deeply disturbed by any moves to occupy pits and thus make coal production impossible. Basically any government takes the attitude that the more civil disorder it has to handle the more

insecure it will get and the more it will try to reach a compromise and this government is no exception.

The Thatcher Cabinet is very good at giving the impression of being an immovable object. They have been very careful to put over the idea that they can sit there doing nothing for month whilst the miners' debts mount. In the last analysis this is a con. Winter is here now and the miners haven't yet cracked.

There is a definite limit to how long the government can hold on before it becomes necessary to take measures which either alarm or inconvenience the public (eg, power cuts, long delays on the motorways caused by convoys of lorries, troops using weapons on miners). Already the miners have shown far more determination than the government expected. If nerves are held and the current small scale stopped then it is the government which will start to sweat and waver as their public support falls away.

The Conservatives have always had a strong yearning for a leader who would 'stand up to the unions', but they also have a long history of getting the knives out when their leaders start looking like losers. Just at the moment the determination of the miners is being cruelly put to the test as is the support of their families. Another month or so and we may well begin to see what the government is made of.

AK Brown

The Great Subscription Saga

For about twenty years, Freedom's subs list was run by the amazing Mary Campa (Merry Xmas, Mary). Then about four years ago she handed over to she-who-shall-be-nameless, who rather let the whole thing slide. Indeed it slid to a complete halt sometime around August/September 1983, just when the bulk of our subs became due. Unfortunately she did not inform either the old or the new collective of either the work stoppage or the existing near-terminal crisis.

To cut a fascinating story off at the best bit, let us just say that, what we were actually given just before issue no 9 was . . . a file index with only 182 cards in it and a plastic carrier bag stuffed full of nprocessed subs letters . . . and this was supposed to 'explain' a subs list of over 700!

Now I know why none of the old collective wished to return when we asked them. They knew they'd left crap on the carpet when

they crept off! They may in future save themselves considerable embarrassment by not offering any opinions on how to run the world economy whilst in my presence.

And so, having carefully read over 1,000 letters, and filled in armfuls of cards, I can now inform you that we have a fully cross-indexed twin-file card index system with full computer back-up. If you haven't paid in years, we do know about it. Beware, the day of reckoning is at hand!

Despite the hopes of our enemies and the fears of our friends, Freedom has not gone bust nor are sales plummeting. We have, much to our amazement, ended this year in-the-black to the tune of £350, instead of £500 in the red as we expected! We have even reduced the large piles of Freedom left unsold each issue during the ancient regime, down to a mere 27 copies on the last issue. Somewhat cautiously, we have added a couple of hundred to the print-run we inherited.

Since Colin, Bella, Dave, Mo and

I originally thought of ourselves as a temporary salvage team, we can proudly say that the major leaks have been stopped, the pumps are gaining on the water in the bilges and the good ship Freedom is riding high enough to carefully set some prudent sail and steer a purposeful course.

Where to? Well for strictly commercial and cost reasons we are being pressured into a price rise up to 45p for 1985. For contents reasons (limited supply thereof) and collective reasons (small size thereof) we wish to remain monthly, (actually every four weeks).

So, at the last minute we've decided to go-with-the-flow and change our present eight page A3 format to 16 page A4, stick on a cover, have it stapled-and-bound and call it a 'news and views' magazine. The wisdom being that a cheap magazine is a better deal than an expensive 'newspaper'. The details aren't settled yet so we might be two weeks late with the January



Dear
Your subscription ran out way back in 1983 (Over 12 issues ago). This was partially Freedom's fault so we'll settle for £10 - 1985 sub + debts. Freedom is regrettably short of money these days and our ability to carry unpaid subs is very limited. Speedy payment and/or a donation would be very welcome. The computer is set to do a mass electronic execution on no 3 1985! If you are broke, send us a plea-bargain and we'll let you off. It's the Freedoms disappearing into unpaid black holes of indifference we wish to eliminate. So send us £10 (plus whatever) or a letter or face a life without Freedom.

Dear Freedom I enclose
for UK or Ireland/Surface Mail/Air Mail and a donation of
to the Freedom Deficit Fund and
to the Building Fund.

If you are unemployed or on social security we have a reduced rate of £4
or perhaps

Dear Freedom, your records are wrong. What happened was
P.T.O.

issue, so don't panic.

Meanwhile, for the vast majority of you it's subscription renewal time again. We're not really in a position to be as easy-going as Freedom was in the past about this, so no pay, no get. The next lot of reminders sent out will be priced at the new higher 1985 rate, you have been warned! Those of you whose reminder says 'your sub ran out in 1983 . . .' you will not necessarily

receive further notice before you are cut off!

Finally I would like to thank all those who have helped out with the work (hard work it is, too) of producing Freedom, both directly and through generous donations. The collective does its stuff for free; touch wood it hasn't all been for nothing.

Merry Xmas . . . Stu

Blyth Miners - An open letter to Freedom's readers . . .

We would like to thank everyone who has sent and are still sending donations to our Group. May I also stress that donations no matter how small are still welcome. People who tell us their addresses do get a thank-you letter. Thanks to all those who didn't include their addresses.

Blyth Miners' Wives
Support Group,
Ms Lynn Camsell,
17, Cowpen Hall Road
Cowpen Estate,
Blyth
Northumberland

Since the letter from JW in your last issue was kind enough to refer to me as a condescending liberal and to imply that I was a scab who had no solidarity with the miners I would be grateful if you would allow me to draw JW's attention to what I actually wrote.

My article specifically states:

We did in fact receive this letter from Albert Meltzer in time for the last issue but we thought it was one of those jolly folks down at Class War pulling our legs and trying to drop us deeply in the turd. Regrettably it turns out to be the real thing. Actually, almost everybody in the London Anarchist movement has got one (or more) very like it. Round here they're regarded as a sort of anarchist MBE, a reward for services to the cause or having a higher circulation than Blag Flack. Here it is, exactly as writ.

Dear Conrats,

The new gang in Freedom (sic) is rapidly becoming as discredited as the old gang - but they took 30 years at it. Only a year ago, when I first met 'Stu Stuart' he was saying how easy it was for anyone to take over when Richards packed it in - now it seems he's done so and is lecturing the miners on ballots. How about putting his money where his mouth is and having one himself? Anarchists, he says - in reversal of what Jim Huggon, Jack Robinson et al were always saying ("we aren't democrats, we're anarchists" they simpered) - "are doing it all the time".

I don't mind being attacked in my own name several times in an issue, but why must it always be by people who give pseudonyms or stay anonymous?

Yours,
A Meltzer

We invite you into our living room and you piss on the carpet . . . come off it 'Albert'. The Collective

Dear 'Albert',

I was born in September 1945 and christened Stuart. In 1950 when I first went to school the kids shortened that to Stu. My mother's surname was Stuart. If you think I should not be allowed to use it then I'm sure that Spare Rib will be most interested in the story.

In your job in the copy room of the Daily Telegraph, Albert, you must surely have become aware that the use of pen-names is very common and totally unremarkable. As a supposed anarchist you should be aware of a thousand-and-one reasons why an anarchist might use a pen-name, Voline, Sam Weiner, etc, etc.

Meanwhile, let us all note that yours is the only real name that appears in Black Flag. Most articles are unsigned, especially the slag-offs of other anarchists. As usual with Black Flag, your complaint amounts to 'don't do as we do . . . do as we say'.

Stu Stuart

1) 'Obviously the miners need maximum backing from other groups of workers especially in terms of cash donations.' 2) 'the actions which have most disturbed the government so far have been the blocking of motorways and bridges by slow moving miners' cars . . . and the burning of buses by unknown individuals taking matters into their own hands and doing what most of the other strikers have been longing to do for weeks'.

Without landing the Freedom editors with an unnecessary court case I could hardly have been clearer. So why am I accused of being a condescending liberal? Perhaps because JW's own attitude that miners are so gullible that they can be manipulated into voting whichever way the government wants and so shouldn't be allowed to vote is itself deeply condescending.

Yours
Andy Brown
London

I was glad to see Philip Sansom's report from Venice in issue No 11. His voice has been missing from Freedom, his voice and other voices such as Nicholas Walters'. I think it imperative that a rapprochement be effected between the present editorial group, and those individuals like Philip and Nicholas, who felt the need to withdraw. The experience and abilities that went with them are too necessary to allow them to lie fallow. The english speaking anarchists are too few to allow voices such as theirs to get lost. I hope that the present editorial group isn't so egotistical as to think that they can go it alone, or that the 'older' comrades don't have anything cogent to say about the present state of anarchy.

It seems to me that at this time there seems to be some confusion about what role Freedom should play. A conflict between activism and theoretical examination of our ideas. I don't think that the role of Freedom is to be a street broadsheet. This type of propaganda is necessary, but it should result from activities of people directly involved in particular struggles. Thus, I don't think that pronouncements about the conditions in the mine fields by individuals not directly involved are much more than vacuous and unrealistic. It isn't enough to 'repeat the old saws about the necessity for the miners to seize the mines and operate them for themselves. This message if given should originate from anarchist miners and be a message that grows from the reality of the struggle. But, sadly, there seems to be a dearth of anarchist miners. There seems, from the reports, to be more marxist types working the pit faces than anarchist. If so, this will lead inevitably to the miners being sold down the road by their marxist leadership if a shift in party line mandates it. The history of the Communist Party's involvement with the Harlan County, Kentucky miners just before WW2, should serve as a clear warning to the miner rank and file.

Another area where I find myself disturbed by material that appears in Freedom is what seems to be a general attitude on the part of the editorial group to approve of the use of violence in response to oppression. This attitude is most apparent in the graphics that are used. I find repugnant the images that are projected in the 'Kronstadt Kids'. The gratuitous violence expressed in this strip projects, at least to me, an un-anarchistic dis-

regard for a common humanity and morality. As for 'Wildcat', I find myself bemused by the fact that the violence in it seems always turned against the anarchist cat. This in fact may be true to life; an old trotskyite friend once told me that although he 'basically sympathised with our viewpoint', he 'would never consider joining with us, for The Anarchists Are The Clay Pigeons of History'. I think that 'Wildcat' is at its best when, as in issue 11, it is non-violent, sardonic and satirical. An approach more in keeping with our general attitudes. Let us have more satire and sardonic comment, these tools when used tend to create energy and response.

But there is also the need for anarchists to have an avenue for the exploration of anarchist ideas in the light of the rapid changes taking place in late 20th century society. Perhaps the format of Freedom doesn't allow for it, but we must develop a means of exploring in depth, such questions as: a re-evaluation of the increased jingoism and nationalism so prevalent in the world today; the effects of the electronic 'revolution' with its potential for mind control; the growing experiments with 'Workers Control', not from a theoretical viewpoint, but rather from an examination of experiments that are now going on in Mondragon, Espana and in the United States and other countries in the western world. George Benello read an extremely informative paper on this phenomenon at the Venice meeting. And of course greater emphasis on anarchism as a major anti-militarist and anti-nuclear philosophy, with I hope encouragement to our comrades to join with others already involved in these activities and by so doing inform those activists of the essentially anti-statist nature of that struggle. The list of ideas that need re-examination of course are endless, but alas, there doesn't seem to be an avenue (at least in english) for such exploration. Well comrades, as the Italians say, 'Non Indebolire'.

David Koven
California

Dey bin asked. They have writ.
Nick dun lots. How about you?



The Miners: Solidarity and Criticism

Are those of us involved in the miners strike really doing enough to distance ourselves from the attitudes of the authoritarian left? For example, several comrades have expressed the opinion that if we print an article which is critical of Scargill it would make the paper impossible to sell to miners. Isn't this a classical case of paper seller's mentality, something we've always condemned in the SWP? Are we willing to argue out our ideas when they don't agree with accepted wisdom? If not we might as well give up now.

Are we really setting our own definitions or falling into the pre-set ideas of who is 'them' and who is 'us'? The Tories have already scored a major victory by identifying the call for more consultation with union membership as a right-wing demand. For anarchists this is a major calamity. Shouldn't it be a central aim of ours to challenge this idea, rather than backing off from the whole subject for fear of being associated with the scab ballot mongers? Obviously a passive ballot is not the highest form of democracy, though I think it can have its place, but are we doing enough to put forward our own alternatives?

Some people take the attitude that 'the time isn't right' to criticise the miners, when they have got their backs against the wall. Fair enough, you have to do it with a bit of sensitivity, but when will the time be right? If the strike does escalate the pressure will only increase and the time will never be right till Scargill is celebrating his revolution by locking us all away.

Speaking of Scargill, all right he's one of the few genuinely militant union leaders this country has ever produced, but what about his failings? Are we going to let him get away with twisting words like 'consult' so they come to mean 'inform' and thus make it impossible for people to even think about the ideas we want to put forward because the language they would use has been totally corrupted? The leadership cult which surrounds him is a total obscenity and we should be doing more to condemn it.

Personally, I'm behind the miner's cause 100% and I therefore get involved in helping them. On that basis, and not as a moralising bystander, we can and must offer fellow workers our constructive criticism.

Mick Larkin

From Poland

Message from the Emmanuel Goldstein Group

We send our kind regards and greetings to Western libertarians, especially those well-disposed to us.

Thank you very much for your great help — we are trying to use it as profitably as possible. Last year we were probably too optimistic, especially in thinking about ways we could put our plans into practice. However, we have dealt with some problems. Soon we shall start publishing two books. The first is *Black Polonaise* by Kazimierz Wierzanski, anti-totalitarian poetry by a famous Polish poet. The other is *Moscow-Petushki* by V Yerofeev, a satirical story by a Soviet dissident. We have also translated *Kronstadt* by Ida Mett. The translation of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* has been started. *Kronstadt* has now been typed on to stencils.

On June 17, the authorities held

so-called 'elections' in Poland. Our group declared a total boycott. We stood by the decision of TKK. We helped also with *Salad* (a dissident magazine) to print 16,000 boycott leaflets. They were distributed mainly in Warsaw. A special demonstration of opposition to Communist 'parliamentarism' was organised the day before the 'elections'. Some members of our group pissed on the monument of Dzierzynski in the centre of Warsaw. Dzierzynski was the founder of the Cheka — the Soviet secret police — in the 1920s.

As regards a theoretical journal, we have not the resources to publish it yet. There are not enough members of the group and not all of us are interested in pure politics. So we have helped the underground Solidarity weekly *Robotnik* (The Worker). Some weeks ago we published an open letter to Scargill, the leader of the British miners.

There was some disagreement in the group because of this. Scargill has taken the side of the Communist trade unions in Poland. Members of the group have also carried on 'fun guerrilla' telephone terror, provocative correspondence — and some official papers have published reports about it.

As regards the Polish underground movement, there are different groups and trends, and the EGG is only a small element of it. We must seize the opportunities the underground Solidarity offers. There are rightist groups among it, but they too have good ideas about fighting Communism. And sympathy or its lack can only be verbal. The most important thing is to fight the common enemy, not to quarrel amongst ourselves. Under the terms of Oriental Despotism we have a common enemy — the Soviet Leviathan — and it unites all fighters. As for our attitude towards East European movements, everything that weakens Communist totalitarianism is positive and creative here. We follow the ideas of *The Message to the Workers of*

East Europe from the first congress of Solidarity. We are all for Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, Lithuanian Catholics, Estonian dissidents, Afghan partisans and independent trade unions in Cuba. We admire the underground trade unions in Russia, the SMOT, and the movement of Tatars in the Soviet Union. It is very difficult for us to judge the Western European anti nuclear movement. Communist propaganda uses it for its purposes. And we think that, as in the West, the SS 20s are as dangerous as the Pershings, and maybe more dangerous.

And these are the latest news and views from the EGG. Best wishes to all Western libertarians! Let us keep together! Let freedom win the battle against totalitarianism! Down with Leviathan, O'Brien, Chernenko, Jaruzelski, and their lackeys!

Message from the EGG to the Venice Conference

Dear Comrades gathered in Venice. Best wishes from the EGG from behind the Iron Curtain!

We want to mention one

important subject. At present there are two main fronts in the fight against totalitarianism — one in Eastern Europe; the other, more important, in Afghanistan. Afghans are different, they have other traditions and culture, sometimes difficult for us to understand. But there is one common ground for us and them — the fight for freedom. And in the West, so far as we know, there is more clamour about Reagan, Scargill, also about Poland, than about Afghanistan. Here we have no opportunity to influence Western public opinion. And we remember that big noise about Vietnam in the 1960s. So if you want to help us, the Polish movement and other East European movements, do it by helping Afghanistan's anti-Soviet partisans! We need this help! And you have the opportunity. Give the best wishes to Afghan libertarians, to Massud and his boys. Down with the Soviet bandits!

Emmanuel Goldstein Group
Warsaw, August 1984

Brian Bamford in licking the boots of Mick Larkin in public via the Letters page of *Freedom* has proved himself a creep . . . The Direct Action Movement is an anarcho-syndicalist organisation, we have no 'officers' as Mr Bamford suggests, nor do we have time to ponder at length on 'the soul' nor would I pretend to portray 'our collective conscience' as he does. I have been a member of the DAM since it began and have gone from despair to great excitement at various times over the antics of some members, but warts and all I remain in my commitment to the organisation. Mr Larkin like other petulant performers is a case of the irresponsible individual playing up to an imagined audience at large. Most members within the DAM have tired of his show. It is a shame that Mr Bamford has decided to act as Grand Lawyer and take Mr Larkin's case to the Higher [sic] Court of *Freedom*, instead of through the DAM Internal Bulletin or its national paper *Direct Action*.

When a DAM member, Mr Larkin, in our Internal Bulletin, said he did not have time to put his case to our National Secretary, even after being told that many members of the DAM as well as our confederates in the International Workers Association were pissed off with his ideas and practice. He also advocated DAM members should vote Labour when in Sheffield, which is like advocating voting for the CP in Russia! The Sheffield DAM group dissolved itself, another member resigned in protest at the continued membership of Mr Larkin!

In past issues of *Freedom* you carried statements by Mr Larkin and our replies to his defence of the so-called 'CNT-U/R/Vetc' where he denounced CNT-AIT 'mafiosa' etc. Mr Larkin did not put these statements through the DAM IB or national paper but instead used your paper which is hardly sympathetic to the anarcho-syndicalist movement in this or any other country.

(Eds. Simply not true)

After comradesly and just warnings fell flat, we undertook to bring up the case of Mr Larkin to all DAM members via the meeting in Manchester of our Publications Commission and at our National Summer School in Burnley. Further from this here in the South East Region we decided to no longer co-operate with Mr Larkin, answer letters or distribute his publications. At Glasgow our region was well represented with four delegates from South London and Medway DAM groups present. Mr Larkin

was also present at the Glasgow meeting and along with Mr Bamford spoke at length, which is all members' right; he was in my opinion quite properly excluded. The decision was not 'frivolous' as Mr Bamford suggests. Through the Internal Bulletin the case for Mr Larkin's exclusion has been put and he has a final reply following, along with a ballot of the membership. Finally at the South Yorkshire site of the conference next year we will complete this saga and the procedure for exclusions be confirmed or reassessed.

As your paper is called *Freedom* and the 'Freedom Association' is another use of the word, it is clear that one must ask freedom for whom? The arguments against freedom: to exploit, freedom of the press, freedom to do your own thing etc are not bad and clearly it is good to ask whose freedom. Freedom for the boss and cop, free presses for those who own one, hippy laissez faire exploitation? ?? Freedom, like, liberty, without socialism is privilege and injustice.

Each DAM member is held responsible for their actions, surely the basic solidarity of being in an organisation and federating with other individuals and groups is mutual aid, yet Mr Larkin does not co-operate, this is clear.

For organisation
Peter Yeril
S London DAM

PS While not wishing to trivialise the matter of Mr Larkin's exclusion do your readers really want this exchange to continue? Some of us feel the discussion is now at an end and more interesting subjects should be pursued.

Sneer and Smear tactics. Tut! You must be worried. Eds)

Not much has been happening in Aberdeen since subversive graffiti collapsed; people moving away, growing old, getting pissed off etc. However of late a few of us have been more interested in getting it together and a simple broadsheet is to be compiled on 13th November. Aberdeen, city of granite affluence is in sore need of something to shake its indifference and we hope to be the catalyst in at least disturbing these giant oil mega business men.

Anyway, contact address is:

Aberdeen Anarchists
c/o Boomtown Books
163 King Str
Aberdeen
Yours, love
Chris

PS Welcome all contact

Core Members Only

Some news from Durham: At last we've managed to get an anarchist group of sorts going here, and there are various projects beginning to creak into motion. The problem is that Durham is so small, such a (right) Labour stronghold and commitments are widely spread (eg Durham Miners Family Aid, Peace Action Durham etc) that the group has often ended up comprising of a few core members only. (EDS . . . sounds familiar) Nevertheless, I think we've got some people thinking about anarchism's relevance to the numerous aspects of their lives.

I think *Freedom* has greatly improved since the editorial shuffle. Particularly impressive is the willingness to open up its pages to a critical assessment/formulation of what anarchism is about, both theoretically and practically. (Something which needs to be constantly done if we are not to stagnate, become irrelevant etc. This requires looking beyond anarchism itself to some of the 'new marxism' — even if the latter in practice turns out to be nothing more than a disguised excuse for elitism and political passivity.)

We hope to be able to contribute something in the not too distant future. In the meantime, good luck and keep up the good play-work.

Mike
Durham

Ta, very much but 'new marxism' (ugh!) . . . meet the new boss, same as the old boss! Like Proud-hon, Bakunin and Voline, I feel that the anarchist/libertarian socialist movement has no need of an ideology, since we do not intend to become a new ruling class in need of an excuse/justification. We need the same as the rest of the people. . . the truth, or at least the best approach to the truth available to us.

What I was hoping for was a critical look at some of the 'hidden' anarchist assumptions about human nature/behaviour, in the light of over one hundred years of serious scientific study, particularly in the fields of anthropology and social psychology. I was also hoping for a reasonable/rational discussion about the application of libertarian socialist principles to everyday life, lots and lots of good cartoons, a circulation of 110,000, an expense account, a small yacht and no silly rows with Albert Meltzer.

Stu

ANARCHIST NEWS

A picket and occupation of Price Waterhouse was mounted by the Direct Action Movement, in Manchester, on November 5th. The action was launched to draw attention to the strike breaking activities of this firm of accountants in the Miners strike, and in support of the Glasgow anarchists, arrested during their occupation of the company's office.

During the Manchester occupation Mr Godwin, one of the partners, told us that Price Waterhouse had to carry out the sequestration of the NUM funds, otherwise the company could be held in contempt. Thus he evaded moral responsibility for snatching miners' hardship funds by saying 'we are only obeying the law'. The parrot cry of all state criminals.

Mr Godwin was disturbed to discover that his 'blind obedience to the law was repugnant to us. In his anxiety to reassure us as a businessman he, perhaps less than the prostitute, is not too choosy about his clients (so long as they can pay), he informed us that the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers is one of their clients.

Our subsequent investigations with the AUEW have not yet confirmed this, but nothing would surprise us when it comes to some of these official unions.

One pleasing point, which seems to have been borne out by later events is that the company, according to Godwin, is having trouble collecting the NUM funds — most of which was believed to be outside the country. Ironically most of the money they are getting their hands on is that of the working miners, who are continuing to pay their union subs.

While the occupation went on we pressed the case of the Glasgow anarchists, who come up for trial in December. Contact was made with Alex Campbell, a partner at the Glasgow office of Price Waterhouse. We were told that the company had not broken their promise not to press charges, but that the police had charged the anarchists in defiance of the company's wishes. He told us this had been hushed up in the press, and internally within the company.

Because our occupation had been more of a symbolic gesture than a serious attempt to take over the five-storey offices of the firm, we agreed to leave after the building had been infiltrated by about 20 odd

policemen. But not before we got Mr Godwin to guarantee that there would be no arrests.

Brian Bamford



MOLESWORTH This disused military base is the proposed second Cruise-missile base in Britain, but it hasn't yet been taken over by the military authorities for conversion, and the anti-nuclear movement is hoping to make this impossible. As well as a permanent Peace Camp, there has been a series of demonstrations, especially the Green Gathering in August. Now, under the pressure of Action 84 (the group which initiated the illegal demonstrations during the London Economic Summit in June), the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has agreed to sponsor sustained illegal activity at Molesworth during the next few months, culminating in a mass demonstration at Easter. This will be a two-pronged march starting at Coventry and Watford on Good Friday and ending with an occupation on Easter Monday.

ALCONBURY This military base is the main centre for American spy-planes in Britain, and is to be the control centre for the Cruise missile base at Molesworth. Last June nine members of the Peace Camp were charged with conspiracy to commit criminal damage — the first use of conspiracy charges against the peace movement for more than 20 years. Since then, as well as a conventional campaign against the charges, there has been an intensification of activity in the Peace Camp and a series of demonstrations, especially a mass blockade in August. The next major action is an attempt to reclaim the base with a mass occupation on Saturday afternoon, December 2nd. For information: 01-388 1628; 0226-766310; 021-643 4617.

The Crisis of Socialism



From Venice '84

Whenever anarchists from different parts of the world meet it is inevitable that they should discuss the failure of anarchism, as a political movement, to win the support of more than almost invisible minorities in most of the populations of the world. The assumption has usually been that one day, somewhere, this situation will change, not in our lifetimes perhaps, but in that of our children or grandchildren. Maybe, with their dying breath they will be able to say, "Comrades, I can see on the horizon, the light of the dawn of the social revolution! Why not? Revolution is not impossible. We have seen dozens, all through this century, but each has been followed by counter-revolution, with the anarchists among the victims."

The belief in a *lutte finale*, a final struggle, is of course an inheritance from the nineteenth century and was common to most socialist movements of all kinds, whether Marxist, Christian, democratic, syndicalist or anarchist. They all looked for that revolutionary dawn, and of course, in the event, it was not their particular revolutionary dawn. The most disappointed of all must be the Marxists — those scientific socialists who knew that history was on their side — for by now the greater part of the earth's surface is ruled by governments which declare themselves to be Marxists, and we all know exactly what Marxism is like as a ruling ideology. Even the most credulous believer must see that the ruling elite in the Soviet Union has much more in common with the ruling elite of the United States, than it has with its own poor citizens. We are all familiar with the old Polish joke that under capitalism man exploits man, while under socialism it's the other way round.

So while we admit the failure of anarchism, considered as a political movement, how much more remarkable has been the failure of the world's socialist movements to achieve socialist aims, whether we are considering the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the East, or the constitutional electoral versions in the West, or the various parodies of both in the Third World. And if

in exporting weapons to the minor ones, so that throughout the poor half of the world, governments of military bandits with starving populations, are equipped with incredibly sophisticated and lethal weapons, together with the necessary advisers from the USA or the USSR. If anything should convince anyone of the truths of the anarchist critique of government, it is the slightest observation of the actual behaviour of the governments of the world.

I am always amazed that now that we have a whole academic industry analysing the history of anarchism and explaining the errors of the anarchists of the past, the scholars somehow fail to notice that alone among the ideologists of the last century, the anarchists were right about the nature of the modern state.

Recently the editor of an American newsletter, *Peacework*, asked several hundred people their answers to the question 'What will it take to prevent nuclear war?' The truest answer, for me, came from Karl Hess. (He is an American advocate of decentralised politics and community technology).

To the question 'What will it take?' he replied:

A sharp diminution of the power of those who have the power to divert resources to weapons. Nuclear weapons are the result of state power. They are the very affirmation of such power in this century. Even the most impoverished state drives relentlessly toward possessing them. It is to the state what a big car is to status-seeking person. No modern state claims power on any other basis than the possession of such great weapons. None claim to be respected. None boast of the happiness of the people. All boast of their weapons or complain of their lack of them.

Thus, I believe, nuclear war is simply another function of state power. The two are intimately related.

To use state power to curb such weapons would be to ask the state to surrender its own power. What state would do that? Norway, maybe. Switzerland assuredly. But not the great ones. Nor would the new pretenders to state power, the major terrorist groups, want to step down their power by renouncing the Big Bang. Hardly. They probably just after it.

Nuclear war will be avoided if, and only if, state power itself diminishes...'

It is precisely because the socialist movements of the world have committed themselves to the enlargement of state power, rather than to its diminution, that socialism is in crisis. But why do I address myself to the crisis of socialism, rather than to that of anarchism? Because the anarchist movement is not in crisis. It remains just what it always was: a tiny network of propagandists around the world, whose bitterest disputes are internal, but whose general conclusions are far more relevant today than when they were first formulated in the last century.

The anarchists claimed that it was necessary to destroy the power of the state. The socialists claimed that it was necessary to take control of that power. By 1984, as we have seen, the whole world feels threatened by nuclear weapons which are the ultimate expression of state power. States, whether capitalist or socialist have achieved what every megalomaniac dictator in history has vainly sought: the power to destroy every citizen of every state.

The anarchists claimed that for the liberation of work, it was necessary for industrial production to be in the hands of the producers. The socialists claimed that it should be in the hands of the state. The result is, as we can all see, looking

around the world today, that the more the control of industry is concentrated in the hands of the state, the more powerless are the industrial workers. Compare the situation of the industrial worker in the Soviet Union, 67 years after the Bolshevik revolution, with that of the industrial worker in the capitalist West. (This is not to praise capitalism, but to acknowledge that its power has been curbed in ways that were not envisaged by either Marxists or anarchists). The common factor that links the struggle of Solidarity in Poland with that of the coal-miners in Britain is not that they are confrontations with capitalism, but that they are confrontations with the State. (In Britain the mining industry has been owned by the State for 38 years and controlled by it for 45 years).

How long are the socialists prepared to wait for socialism? In the last century the anarchist faction was pushed out of history by the believers in state socialism, whether by Marxism in the First International or by Fabianism in Britain. Ordinary citizens outside were, of course, unaffected, but when large-scale socialist movements emerged as contenders for political power, it was state socialism which represented the socialist ideology to the ordinary non-political population. In both East and West it has utterly discredited itself, because in the East it implies the continuance of a police state and the growth of a new class structure with the workers at the bottom of the pyramid, just as they always were, and in the West it implies a similar, if rather more flexible, managerial hierarchy with a new sub-proletariat of superfluous people for whom modern high-technology industries have no function, not even as Marx's 'reserve army of labour'. The cost of maintaining the system of welfare capitalism explains why grotesque political figures like Reagan in America or Thatcher in Britain are actually popular among the electorate. (I need hardly emphasise that their belief in 'small government' does not extend to the key instruments of the state: the armed services, the law and the police.)

I take no pleasure in the crisis of socialism. I do not believe that disillusionment necessarily leads people to anarchism. The socialist movement arose from generous social impulses which are a valuable asset in any society. I think in fact that our habit of describing human societies as capitalist or socialist is a misleading legacy from Marxist economic determinism. The character of a society is not determined by its dominant economic system. Every human society is in fact a plural society in which large areas of activity are not in conformity with the officially imposed or declared values. Just as there are many aspects of capitalist societies which are not operated on capitalist principles so many aspects of societies alleged to be socialist are not dominated by socialist economic systems.

The ordinary citizen has every reason to be glad of this pluralism as the one thing that makes life tolerable in either kind of society. If socialist movements recover their impetus and their popular support it seems to me that it will be through their becoming more pluralist, more tolerant of divergence and dissent. If they become less so it will imply regimes like that of Pol Pot in Kampuchea or like that of the Cultural Revolution period in China which all Chinese now look back upon as a national disaster.

Anarchism has always been the unheeded conscience of the political left. If socialist movements recover their integrity through a new libertarian impulse, what will the function of the anarchists be? I



believe it will be what it always was. There is a well-known passage in Kropotkin's *Modern Science and Anarchism* where he declares that, 'Throughout the history of our civilisation, two traditions, two opposed tendencies, have been in conflict: the Roman tradition and the popular tradition, the imperial tradition and the federalist tradition, the authoritarian tradition and the libertarian tradition. Between these two currents, always alive, struggling in humanity — the current of the people and the current of the authorities which thirst for political and religious domination — our choice is made.'

Commenting on this remark twenty-three years ago in the journal *Anarchy*, an Australian anarchist, George Molnar, reminded us that this is a different conception of freedom and of the role of anarchism, from that which postpones all solutions until the advent of a hypothetical 'free society'. It is a conception of freedom as 'one thing along with other causes that can be supported or opposed', while the coming or not coming of the social revolution recedes in importance, since freedom and authority are always struggling. Along this line of thought, he remarks, 'we can take freedom as a characteristic not of societies as a whole but of certain groups, institutions and people's ways of life within any society, and even then not as their exclusive character'. Molnar concludes that 'the conflict between freedom and authority is the permanent order of the day. Doing politics, advancing freedom as a programme for the entire human race, cannot change this; it can only foster illusions about the way society runs.'

In this continual struggle between the authoritarian tradition and the libertarian tradition, the task of the anarchists for the rest of this century could be that of rescuing socialism from its disastrous liaison with the state.

Colin Ward

*Pat Farren (ed): What Will It Take to Prevent Nuclear War? (*Schenkman*, 331 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass 02138, USA, 1984 \$6.95)

DEBATE

Our Venice '84 coverage put back all these replies to the anarcho-capitalist horrors in *Right Turn* (issue no 10). We had to leave a few out, too. Mind you, these were the best.

I hope you will allow me space for a brief reply to some of your comments on Brian Micklethwait's presentation of libertarian ideas.

1. It is not true that we wish to "crush the unions". Trade Unions are quite legitimate exercises of free association. They should have, no more or no less rights than any other individual or association. (Incidentally, historically classical liberals have usually looked very favourably upon trade unions — see our forthcoming pamphlet *Trade Unions and Freedom: An Historical Perspective*.)
2. It is not "entirely fair to say that [we] only want to abolish those bits of the state that interfere with a ruthless bourgeois lifestyle". Even if our economic ideas were fallacious (which they aren't) our support for total abolition of all immigration controls, the decriminalisation of all consenting sexual practices, the abolition of all laws regarding drugs, the right of women to have abortions (a consequence of their property right in their own bodies), our total support of free speech, are hardly consistent with your characterisation.
3. "Capital" is people.
4. It is not historically or existentially true that working as an employee has to be imposed by force.
5. Keynesian economics have been utterly demolished. Free market economics (in both in its 'Chicago' and 'Austrian' school variants) does accurately explain the real world.
6. If the British and American governments were indeed employing Keynesian models to "run" their economies it would certainly explain a lot! Fortunately they aren't (or things would be a lot worse than they are).
7. Do you really think it appropriate to advocate violence against others simply because you don't like their linguistic usages? Your comments on this point alone underlines the bankruptcy of socialist anarchism. You would perhaps be better employed in purging the Freedom Bookshop of the works of Benjamin Tucker, Lysander Spooner, Max Stirner and James J Martin, amongst others.

Chris R Tame
Libertarian Alliance, London

1. Changing your tune?
2. Yes it is — they are.
3. No it isn't.
4. Yes it is.
5. No it hasn't. No they don't.
6. They are and it does.
7. Got to draw the line somewhere and anarcho-capitalism is it.



I just had to write to congratulate you on the wonderful piece of satire you published in your last issue under the title 'Right Turn'. The author really hit off the capitalist ideologies so acutely, I thought it must be a hitherto undiscovered Monty Python script. I especially liked the skill with which neither historical evidence or common sense was allowed to break the mood of fantasy, and the way in which 'Brian Micklethwait' (it was really those *Logo* chaps again, wasn't it?) insisted to the last that he was serious added the finishing touches to the joke. Laugh? I nearly joined Class War!

To be serious, there was so much I found just plain daft that to answer everything would need a pamphlet, and not being Lenin I don't regard writing one as a useful way to spend my time. However, there was one fundamental point I would like to take up.

Humankind originally started as a hunter/gatherer species, and until the development of agriculture it was difficult to develop a specialisation of functions. Only when people had learned to grow more food than they needed for their own survival was it possible to support some members of the community who did not have to toil at getting enough food to eat, but could learn other skills, healing, metal-working, and so on. In return for their abilities in these crafts (which of course took time to acquire), the remaining 'ordinary' members of the community were prepared to feed them.

Mr Micklethwait suggested that modern society could and should be arranged on the basis of a similar trading of skills (using money as an intermediary).

But suppose a person's talent is uneconomical to support? For example, let us suppose that I am a potter, but because a computer can do my job and control the production of pottery better than I can, my skill is not required. And suppose that this is the same all over the country. "Well", Mr Micklethwait might say, "You can always go somewhere else or lower the cost of your labour (ie, take a lower wage), or learn another skill".

The trouble is, as a human being I have certain minimum physical needs. I need a minimum amount of food and water, sleep, shelter, and so on, in order to survive at all, and a rather higher amount to function efficiently. It may take me some time to learn a new skill which someone is prepared to trade me for, and in the meantime I have nothing to offer in exchange for the food I need, or the air fare to wherever there is a job for me.

If I don't get the amount I need to function properly, my ability to learn new skills deteriorates, and I become less likely to be able to obtain even my minimum requirements. I may be unable to reduce my wage demands to "the economic level" — I may be unable to get "any job" that I am competent to perform at "any wages" which will buy me enough to stay alive.

What then? Presumably I am just

to crawl away and die, an unavoidable casualty of the quest for total freedom of property. Socialists of all kinds have always declared this philosophy to be immoral, that a human being should be worth no more than the price at which s/he can sell his or her talents.

No doubt Mr Micklethwait has a perfectly good answer to this problem, and is even now laughing at my stupidity in not seeing it. Perhaps he simply doesn't think that it is immoral for one person to starve while another controls his or her access to the means of life. In that case we are clearly so far from sharing basic premises that we cannot have any rational discussion and must simply agree to differ. If that isn't his position, then he must take up his own challenge and let me have his explanation.

S K French



As someone who occasionally calls himself a libertarian, I would like to object to the abduction of this term by the Libertarian Alliance. It worships the market and property as safeguards of liberty, when history shows that they have always been used to enslave people and have brought the earth to the brink of ecological crisis.

Mr Micklethwait calls money, property and hierarchy 'ineradicable', but surely these are, like the state, human creations. And if, as he suggests, the state can be eradicated, they why not other aberrations of our existence? Property is not the solution to scarcity. The market system distributes resources unfairly — not according to need but according to purchasing power. This explains why millions are dying from starvation in underdeveloped countries (they can't afford to buy enough food!) while there is a surfeit of food in the affluent nations.

Unemployment is not caused by the payment of benefit or taxation, but on the contrary is a prerequisite of the market economy. Charles Booth's *Life and Labour in London*, published in the 1880s, proves that there was huge unemployment before widespread state intervention in the economy. A large pool of unemployed labour is necessary to capitalism to keep wages down and maximise profits (which is what the present government intends to do).

There has always existed and always will exist an irreconcilable conflict between capital and labour. The former wanting to increase their wealth at the expense of the latter who have to work to survive. On this point at least Marx was correct.

Mr Micklethwait's definition of freedom is not one to which most true libertarians would subscribe. It seems to consist in being either boss or bossed. To explain this sad situation we resort to the perennial alibi of human nature. For me, freedom is the ability of people to express their own potential as human beings, their inner creativity. A society built around the profit motive and narrow consumerism — the more you have, the more you

deny this?) which goes side by side with action, dare I say a truly dialectic relation of theory and practice, and it is much more than tradition upon which conservatives seem to base their whole view of reality as well as all their policies.

While it may be true to say that there are 'logical' connections between radical conservative and anarchist principles they are not 'sufficient' to make them identical. As I understand it the notion of the 'free association of individuals' upon which Kropotkin built his theory of Mutual Aid and which Mr Friedman (hero of monetarism) plagiarises to justify minimal government and free competition principles implies cooperation for the good of all mankind, not profits for the few and a chance at survival for the vast majority. The weakness of the LA's argument and its idealism is their basic assumption that most will equate the idea of 'free association' with voluntary servitude in work and worse, starvation and suffering such as we are witnessing in Ethiopia.

Paul Gravett

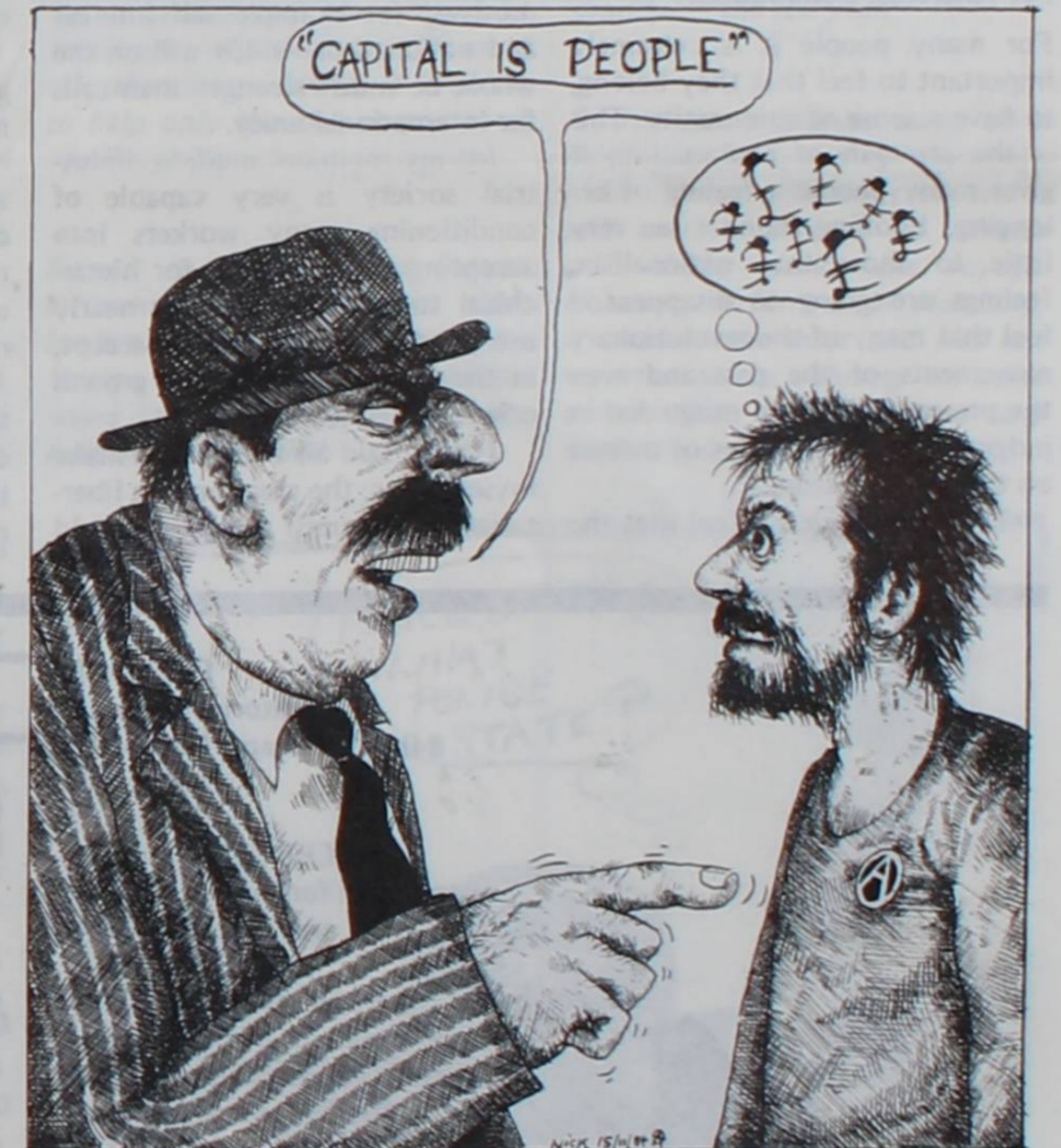


Just a few points about your last issue [actually no 10]. About the debate with the Libertarian Alliance, I find it rather strange to be labelled a 'freedom type' anarchist by 'radical type' conservatives who then go on to define their position as anarcho-capitalists; the word 'anarcho' does derive from Greek 'anarchos' meaning without a head or leader which I think would include managing directors of multinational corporations, managers and all those who take a supervisory or leading/organising role in the productive process of capitalism and implicit in anarchism is the notion

they assume, rather threateningly, that if they do not receive any criticism of their argument from us that there are no alternative arguments and they have no opposition. Well let the history of class struggle be the judge of that, not them!

It's good to see some debate back in *Freedom* and you have got over your recent problems, perhaps it shows that theory is not quite dead and buried? But what is 'inspeak' and aren't you simply creating your own 'Newspeak'? Aren't there enough rules in this world without you inventing more?

Venceremos
Filo



of workers or peasants control of the means of production be that factories, land or technology.

So, to put the argument in terms they might even be able to understand the formulation 'anarcho-capitalist' is a logical contradiction in terms. More to the point, the LA argue that anarchists 'like conservatives' have no ideology but base their actions and words on pragmatic criteria or practice. Well, (again), I think there is a considerable body of knowledge and theoretical writing which defines and explains anarchist principles, ideals and beliefs which comprises a theory of anarchism for those interested in it from Proudhon and earlier through to the modern writers such as Bookchin and *Freedom* itself. This theory is not an ideology since these writers don't construct laws of action like for example marxism, but it represents a coherent, consistent explanation of anarchism (although it seems trendy amongst some to

Inspeak? A language that can only be understood by other revolutionaries (see the works of Alfredo M Bonanno, especially as translated by Jean Weir — sorry Jean). Meanwhile there's one more reply on the next page.



DEBATE

Can I too contribute some thoughts to Debate prompted by Brian Micklethwaite's amusing piece, 'Right Turn' in October's *Freedom*? His article is similar to the *Political Notes* series published by the Libertarian Alliance. It has immediate appeal. Who after all could seriously reject the opening propositions? The right to life, liberty and property; the voluntary exchange of goods and services; personal liberty (specifically freedom from coercion); and the elimination of coercive intervention by the State.

Not full blooded anarchism, true, but where is that to be found today? Comrades who totally reject property in theory are, in my experience, strangely reluctant to let go of whatever they have. Such pure commitments to the cause being traditionally required of 'others'. And should the State cease to coercively intervene it would, *de facto*, cease to exist.

Yet the appeal is not sustained. It is something like finding an over-ripe apple; it looks good, smells good, and the first bite might be all

right. But the nearer you get to the core the more rotten it becomes.

The picture the Libertarian Alliance holds of the reality of the world is quaintly two dimensional, a series of cardboard cut-outs. It relies upon illusions and tricks of the light to give an impression of substance.

The central and most hopeless illusion is that a free market exists. Any freedom requires equality — not in terms of identicality, but in the range of options within the relationship. Without options their concept of voluntary exchange disappears. If I do not want to buy the CEBG's electricity I can go without — a very limited and unequal option.

Whether or not a monopoly exists, all suppliers to the market strive to behave as if it did. The value of goods and services are whatever the market will stand, and the market is manipulated to maintain prices, not to give choice of freedom. Within the possibility of post-scarcity technology, capitalism has little option but to behave in this way.

The market does not consist of freely interacting individuals, that is medieval folklore. In urban society every need and most wants are supplied by institutions; individuals confront monolithic anonymous corporations across a totally unequal divide.

Brian Micklethwaite casually acknowledges this reality, 'all human institutions should be rooted in voluntary rather than coercive relationships', before breathlessly passing on. It is the behaviour of these institutions that continually rips the canvas of his cosy picture of the world.

At the wholesome core of anarchism (as an analytical philosophy) is the understanding that institutions are not human, are not capable of benevolent existence, and diverge wildly from essentially human interests. Once anything becomes institutionalised it is lost, beyond hope. Coercion to conformity is the life-blood of institutions, they form the matrix of oppression in our society.

The only advantage (if it can be

considered as such) that institutional forms confer upon people is to allow more of them to exist. The existence of ever more people is bought at enormous cost to both the biosphere and the individual. Ecologists and Greens impotently record the destructive progress towards ill-defined 'more'.

I would like BM to expand his rationalisation that scarce resources must be controlled (by what or who, and does he not mean exploited?) 'if anything useful is to be done with them'. What does he mean by useful?

Finally, it seems feeble at best to blame the failure of his view of 'freedom' on excessive State control. To do so is to basically misunderstand the fundamental nature of the State. A non-excessive State is a contradiction in terms, and the failure to

appreciate this may be where anarchists and the LA part company.

The State is the prime modern institution; it must and will intervene where ever subsidiary structures are threatened. In a speech to bloated capitalists gathered at the Guildhall (12 November) Bang-bang Thatcher made the reality very clear, 'HMG will strenuously defend the institutions that are the foundation of (our version of) a free society'. In this instance she will allow the police to be more violent with the miners.

Your cosy dreams are a mixture of fairy stories and folklore, BM, you are not in a position to exchange goods and services with equals. Our survival is underwritten by a vast web of exploitative multinational and national institutions. It may be very cold outside in the real world, in the gaps between the monoliths, but your version of liberty and mine of anarchy will only be possible when we learn how to live independently of institutional provision, and then learn how to de-structure these entities.

Colin Johnson



For Anarchist Communism

For many people it is extremely important to feel that they belong, to have a sense of community. This is the strength of Nationalism, it gives many people a feeling of belonging. Looking round I see very little to show that nationalistic feelings are going to disappear. I feel that many of the revolutionary movements of the past and even the present have been misguided in judging their possibilities of success on the wrong factors.

To be more clear I feel that the

idea inherits from marxism, and anarchosyndicalism has this belief as well, that the proletariat (workers in the work environment) will be the class that makes the social revolution. I think that the problem in making appeals to a hypothetical 'International Proletariat' to make amends to cure the ills of society is that workers in a capitalist society will be guided in their actions by a mixture of other motives, for example self interest and nationalism, which will on the whole be much stronger than calls for international unity.

In my opinion modern industrial society is very capable of conditioning many workers into accepting the necessity for hierarchical structures. Also, like nearly everybody else, workers accept, in the main, the ideas of a growth orientated consumer society.

Having said all that let me make myself clear; the creation of a libertarian communist society would

obviously include the main direct action of the overwhelming majority of the population. As can be seen that would have to involve the mass participation of the working class taking over the workplaces and forming community organisations.

I feel that ideas based on unionism/syndicalism are too limited. Even 'workers control' without community control will only lead back to another form of hierarchical and dominating society.

It seems to me that many of the groups challenging the system do not fit into the traditional class viewpoint. These groups consist of a whole range of different concerns; animal rights, activists, anti-racist groups, claimants groups, ecologists, feminists, gays, peace movement groups and squatters. An apparent exception might be the miners' struggle, but I think the difference is only apparent as in this struggle the feeling of community plays a very important part.

All these groups are involved in challenging the system about a form of oppression.

People need to develop groups based on face to face democracy. Opportunities for this will continue as the state system fails to be able to cope with such things as ecological devastation and urban neglect, to name just two examples. In this sort of area people will create their own organisations, committees, civic organisations based on direct democracy. These sort of groups will provide a challenge to the traditional, hierarchical mode of organisation. Workers' struggles should be seen as part of the sort of movement I have mentioned rather than something that is inherently better.

Another important part of creating an anarchist communist society is the need to develop and use the right type of technology for the creation of ecological decentralised communities. At this point in

time it does not seem possible that a Social Revolution could win by direct armed struggle against the state. Ideas like that belong to the past. If it came to a confrontation the forces of the state would be much stronger. A possible way forward is by a process of weakening the strength of hierarchical society.

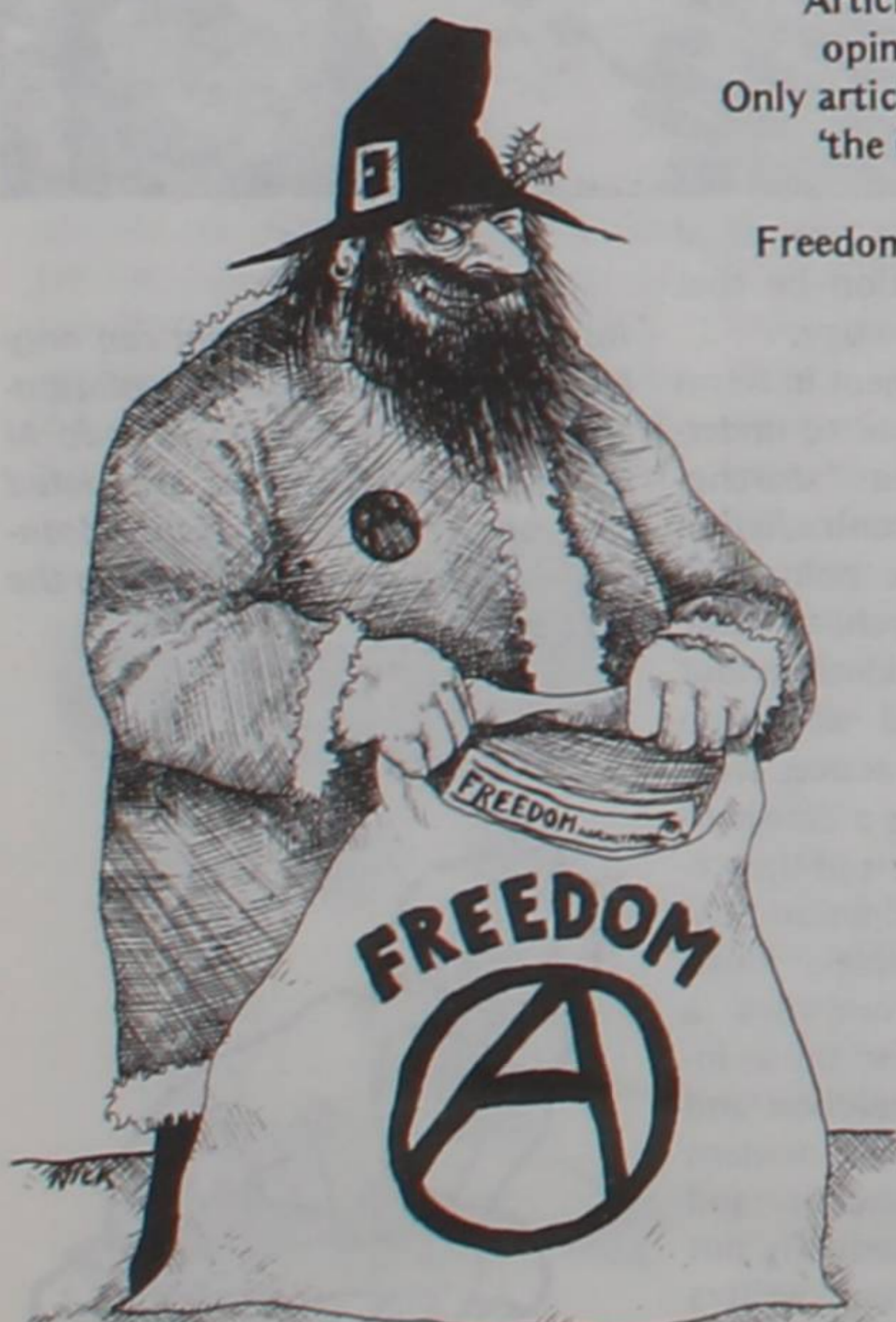
There is a definite need to create a form of libertarian culture which is essential to enable people to transfer feelings of loyalty to new social groupings. This would mean that the strength of the state would be weakened from within. If this was to continue finally there would be a struggle that would cause it to disintegrate. People would then have the new libertarian organisations of a society based on communism.

D Dane

FREEDOM
Editorial Collective
84b Whitechapel High Street
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FREEDOM is run as an open forum for the international anarchist movement.

Articles give the individual opinions of their authors. Only articles specifically signed 'the Collective' reflect the shared view of the Freedom Editorial Collective.



You are cordially invited to the traditional Freedom Xmas office party. Starts at noon until about 5:30pm. Bring a bottle. Early birds meet in the White Hart twenty yards away. It's early this year, on Saturday 15th December.

6

FROM ANGEL ALLEY

(Don't worry folks. Bella's just feeling guilty I gave her and Colin an 'issue-off' holiday. New people are offering help and a new cartoonist . . . Stu)

Our collective is too small for the work it has to do. Even a monthly Freedom can be too much when it necessitates devoting the best part of a week (even more for Stuart, who is working through chaotic subscription lists) to publishing each issue. Those of us who have other commitments, other deadlines and other pressures, find it difficult to give enough time to Freedom to ensure its continuation.

Briefly, this is what we do. First, the collective meets to read through contributions, to discuss and select material. This is when we panic about empty pages, and share out any urgent writing between ourselves.

The typesetting is mainly done for us by Aldgate Press. I'll usually do some too, because there are always bits and pieces that got forgotten, gaps to fill in, odd lines to change. If there's been a problem with typesetting, we may have to do quite a lot.

Once we have the typeset galleys paste-up begins. This is a messy business but it can be enjoyable if you don't have to do too much in a hurry. Super scalpel Johnson works incredibly fast, but less confident individuals like Stuart and me toil slowly and painstakingly to produce

something that tends to come out looking distinctly tatty. Still, we improve with practice.

Headlines have to be created with Letraset. It's a fiddly job and I normally do most of it.

When the artwork is all ready for printing, Aldgate Press takes over again. At the end of a day they give us back great piles of flat sheets which then have to be folded and collated, to end up as the familiar papers.

Even then the job is not complete. We help A Distribution to pack bundles of papers for shops, then wrap, label and stamp over 700 subscription copies. Finally, around midnight, we take our sacks of papers to post at St Pauls.

If there were many hands making for light work and varied conversation, then we should all enjoy it. Unfortunately, there are usually just two or three of us, and by the time we're folding and wrapping, we're already knackered from writing, typesetting, designing and pasting. So it hasn't been a lot of fun for us.

One of Colin's aphorisms is, "When it stops being fun, stop doing it". Colin is already becoming erratic; if things don't change he'll drop out.

Then the burden will fall even more heavily on Stuart. This issue is more than ever Stuart's responsibility because Colin and I have a book deadline looming and we can't make the 110-mile trip to London to do Freedom. But Stuart can't do everything — he'll have a breakdown. And why should we expect him to do it all anyway?

Other members of the collective have been more erratic. Those who have full-time jobs can't join in during the day, and don't want to spend a week of evenings working on Freedom.

So what is going to happen? Will Freedom sink beneath a grey ocean of lethargy, never to reappear? We hope not — but I begin to fear the possibility.

We need practical help. We need a few more people to work on the production of the paper, a lot more helping with folding and wrapping. If you can get to Angel Alley, why not come and meet us on the dates given in each month's issue?

Meanwhile, thanks to Andy, Carol and Philip, who did help last month.

We look forward to meeting more of you!

Arabella Melville



Has Black Flag now anything to do with the anarchist movement? Let us consider the 13.11.84 issue, as the latest to come our way.

BEST OF THE SUMMER WHINE

Has Freedom now anything to do with the anarchist movement? Let us consider the November issue as the latest to come our way.

Having mysteriously taken over from Vernon Richard's hand-picked old collective, without any attempt at a 'ballot' by anyone or any semblance of agreement by readers (if any) the new collective proceeded to damn the miners' union for not providing a ball - and damned Black Flag for supporting the miners, with gross personal insinuations. However some miners moved in asking for support and personal contact: suddenly Freedom switched - for the first time it supported the miners' case in an article 'Occupy the Pits', cribbed from an earlier issue of Black Flag.

This however was the only anarchist article, the rest was the same old crap: on the front page AK Brown repeated the tired old pacifist arguments against the Angry Brigade, all of which have been refuted many times; while on page two, one Walter Westphal slugs Black Flag together with Freedom because we 'never see people selling it on the various marches'. Note, Mr Westphal, we are not in the business for business. The marches we are interested in are not for selling papers - that's for the trots. Class War, he says, though 'unnecessarily crude and insulting', beats us hands down - because it sells well. Obviously if we 'Fuck the Queen' or something similar on the front page we would sell better, especially by cashing in on demonstrations. But is Class War anarchist or anti-anarchist? At the crunch it is council-communist and opposes organised anarchism.

On page three of the November issue of Freedom Brian Bamford touches a real low even for the degenerated Freedom by attacking 'DAM Bootlickers and Creeps'

- bootlicking according to him means selling one's soul by expelling a member who disagreed with them! How the lad gets worked up about nothing! Ain't bootlickers and creeps people who disclaim actions and rush to repeat pacifist clichés? What's that but selling souls?

Despite the assurance of the previous Freedom that the old gang had terminally parted, page three finds Philip Sansom back again, and page five devoted to two huge articles on Ireland in the real old Freedom style. Forget about the context, listen to the exhortation. 'Most anarchists' know of the raids on 121 and the Brixton squats but they have to realise in Belfast this is commonplace...and so on: the old story of the writer in Freedom trying to pose as the lone heroic understanding voice against the brutally ignorant anarchist masses who must learn to understand...The other article, more racist in tone, suggests that 'British anarchists' have a poor response to the Irish question since the writer (obviously English) regards Freedom as their organ.

People who write and ask us what objection we have to Freedom may be assured that it used to be because it was milk-and-water liberalistic pseudo-anarchism; now it is anti-anarchist.



Join...
DIRECT ACTION
MOVEMENT

BLACK FLAG PAGE THREE



While I can understand that Black Flag should be lost in admiration of my work, but to go so far as to claim it as their own...?

AK Brown has helped produce close on 100,000 pamphlets over the years, all of which vigorously supported 'people's right to armed insurrection'. Walter and Brian will know what to make of your comments, neither is a Freedom person. Neither is Pete Ridley who wrote Belfast One, he is an active member of DAM (he's got a vote in the ballot, Albert, bad move to insult him!) Belfast Two was silly and inaccurate (as we said) but 'more racist'...? Oh! I see, more racist than Pete's one... tut, tut, tut.

As for out Philip, well we're not going to apologise for liking him. Interestingly enough, back in the '40s there was an election in the Anarchist Federation for the editorial board of Freedom (then War Commentary). One Albert Meltzer was voted off and one Philip Sansom was voted on! (Did this small fact, like many others, slip Albert's 'encyclopaedic mind' or does he let you lot write this stuff all by yourselves?)



BEWARE THE THIRD POSITIONISTS

The English fascist groups are now, far from being useful to the ruling class in attacking workers (as still in Spain, Italy, etc), an embarrassment. They served a fringe purpose in anti-immigration campaigns, but since the skins and yobbos prefer to attack Asian shopkeepers with a classic capitalist mentality, rather than 'black rioters', the financial backers have backed off. The job they wanted done is well done by a Conservative Government, which has now a leader who does not need right-wing pressure groups.

What, however, are the punters to do who started their careers on being professional Nordic Heroes and find themselves stranded like faded Valykyries and Brunnhildes of touring opera companies out of an engagement and without even the train fare back?

Martin Webster is going out in a blaze of litigation against his former NF comrades-in-arms; Colin Jordan hasn't lived down stealing cami-knickers from Marks and Sparks; and John Tyndall mingles with the continental nazis in cosmopolitan Brighton.

The only way to get back to the more secure politics of the Mosley era is by chucking Mosleyism overboard and resurrecting the Strasserite myth, as pioneered by William Joyce (whom they don't like to talk about too much). Hitlerism is disowned by the 'trots' of fascism. This entails attacking Capitalism and

Bolshevism - but as they have not too much experience from doing it from a working class point of view the Front are all out to hijack as many 'fringe' issue groups as they can: hence their sudden interest in ecological stuff, animal lib, anti-nuclear politics, etc.

They have failed to have any impact on the trade union movement and they are gradually creating for themselves a wilderness within their own nationalist ghetto. Many of them work closely with the police; for this reason we wish to caution comrades to be specially vigilant of likely fascist candidates, especially provocateurs. Loose-knit groups, open to all-comers, are particularly attractive to subversion from counter-revolutionaries.

This campaign is necessarily directed against the anarchist movement - to divide it and to destroy it, but to steal from it too. Seemingly patronising articles, cartoons and views are lifted from Black Flag into National Front and National Action Party (whatever that is) propaganda, though the attempts at infiltration are directed at the squatters, 'pop groups', and skin/punk scene, using 'peep, man' and aggro types alike for divisive attacks on organised anarchism.

Ignore this warning at your peril.
ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS.

This is all extremely interesting in view of the fact that when the National (racist) Front did actually set up a pseudo-anarchist group several years ago, Black Flag was the only paper to print their 'contributions'. They did in fact have to be 'told by a friend' before they stopped doing so. Readers may wish to draw their own conclusions about the admission that these same fascists are now reprinting Black Flag articles with favourable comments.

REVIEWS

Significant Sisters by Margaret Forster, Secker & Warburg, £12.50

Margaret Forster is a moderate feminist journalist, biographer and novelist. *Significant Sisters*, subtitled 'The Grassroots of Active Feminism, 1839-1939', is an old-fashioned book containing eight essays on important figures during a critical century in the Anglo-American struggle for women's liberation, emphasising the personal aspects of their careers. The first seven essays cover Caroline Norton (the campaigner for women's property rights), Elizabeth Blackwell (the pioneer woman doctor), Florence Nightingale (the founder of the modern nursing profession), Emily Davies (one of the pioneers of women's higher education), Josephine Butler (the campaigner for prostitutes' civil liberties), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (the campaigner for women's suffrage), and Margaret Sanger (the campaigner for birth control - a phrase she invented). They are all interesting and often fascinating, using much original source material, but they have been strongly criticised by radical feminists for stressing middle-class individuals at the expense of the broader movement and for ignoring fashionable leftist and sexist prejudices. This can be left to feminists to discuss; what makes the book relevant to readers of *Freedom* is that the eighth essay is a 40-page study of Emma Goldman.

Forster presents Goldman as the necessary corrective to all her predecessors, because she saw that legal, professional, political, economic, social and sexual emancipation are not enough - that women also need a personal liberation which will, as it were, emancipate them from emancipation, allow them to become whole people to themselves and each other, to their parents and their children, and alongside men, who must also become whole people. Thus Forster rightly emphasises the personal and feminist aspects of Goldman's career, but doesn't play down her anarchism. The result is not only a stimulating essay in this context, but also a vivid summary of the life and work of one of the greatest of all woman anarchists.

Forster has mainly used Emma Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life* (1931) and Richard Drinnon's biography, *Rebel in Paradise* (1961) without acknowledging the latter. She has also used the letters in the International Institute for Social History at

Amsterdam, including some which are included in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon's collection *Nowhere at Home* (1975), but also a few which have not been published. This adds some value to her contribution, though it adds nothing significant to previous knowledge of Goldman. One odd omission is a proper account of Goldman's work for birth control, which was very important to her and got her into a lot of trouble (there are also important errors and omissions in her other references to the history of the birth control movement). And there are far too many unimportant but unnecessary errors in such things as names, dates and titles; thus the list of five of Goldman's six books contains five errors! Provided that such defects are taken into account, this chapter does provide a useful libertarian dimension to a very readable book, which will no doubt appear in a paperback edition fairly soon.

NW

In Brief

A determined and systematic programme to indoctrinate young people politically is under way in youth clubs and schools, according to James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester. Significant numbers of those involved in youth work, especially in big cities, are involved. He pledges to resist it as firmly as possible.

Dr David Bach of Harvard Medical School has suggested that the poor could help make ends meet by

selling their organs to the rich. A father could save his children from starvation by selling a single organ. He recognises that there might be an element of unfairness, "We must ask, therefore, whether it is better to help only the rich or no one at all. The utilitarian answer is clear".

Kuwait is worried about foreign influences. The government plans to ban local men from marrying foreign women. All licences already issues for this unpatriotic activity have been suspended.

Soviet shoppers have returned over six million pairs of shoes and 250,000 overcoats for being 'shoddy' in the last year.

A chimpanzee stowed away on a Danish freighter at an African port, made friends with the crew and is said to have 'thrived' on babanas and whisky during the voyage. However, on arrival in Hamburg, it climbed the mast and was last reported to be refusing to come down. Did anyone notice any further news?

Double Thinker of the Year Award

"In the real world one cannot attach too much importance to the concept of sovereignty." Julian Amory MP talking to Robin Day on the World at One about the possibility of America invading Nicaragua.

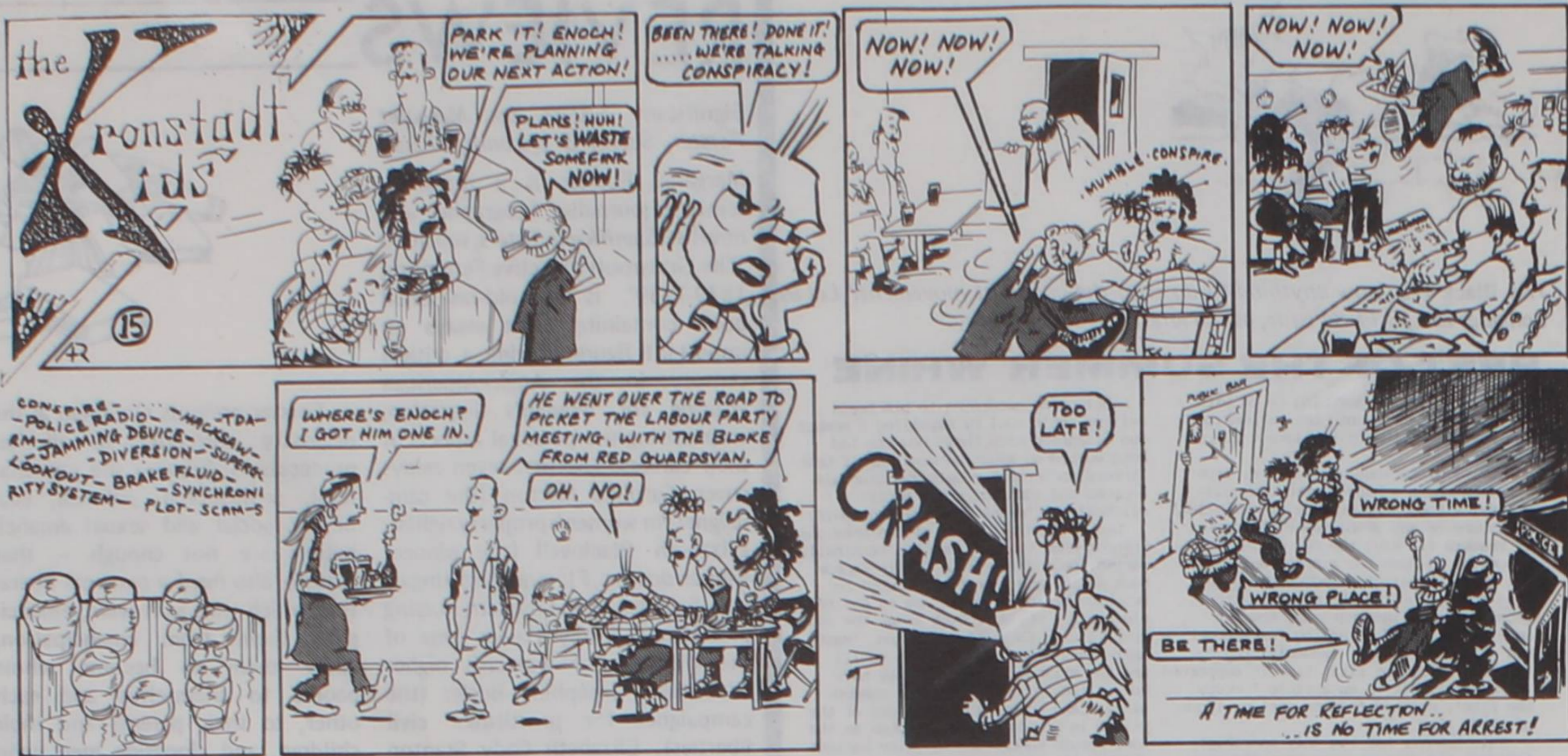
Not quite what he said about the Falklands, Grenada or Afghanistan as we recall.

Questions and Answers on Anarchy

Question: What's the Third Position?
Answer: That's when you both get on top.

POISON GIRLS - a new 12" single. Four tracks, including Vi Subversa's 'TAKE THE TOYS FROM THE BOYS' and 'REAL WOMAN'. Out now on Xntrix records at all good record shops or £2.75 from PO Box 299, London E11.





contacts

Dear Freedom,
John of the Bedfordshire Isolated and Independent Anarchists has moved recently. He asked me to amend the local contact address to Bedford Anarchist Society, Box A, Bedford College of Higher Education, Polhill Avenue, Bedford. Thanx.
Paul, Bedford Anarchists

Just a short note to let you know that a new libertarian group has been set up in Birmingham and the Black Country. Its called Central Lib and can be contacted by writing to: Box 4, The Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Ringway, Birmingham.
Nick Normal

Haringey Anarcha-Feminists
We're a newly formed group of active anarcha-feminists who're meeting at Haringey Wimmin's Centre, 40 Turnpike Lane, N8, Every Thursday at 7:30pm. If you want to find out more, come along. We'd also like to make contact with other similar groups, write c/o Wimmin's Centre.

Libertarian Communist Discussion Group - forthcoming talks on the Organisational Platform, Friends of Durruti, French libertarian communism. Contact: Box 5, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX. If Rik, ex of Holberry Close, Sheffield, sends me his new address, he can receive his Me Myself sub. MMi, Box WIG, 38 Bradshaw St., Lancaster.

East London DAM meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Freedom. Next meeting is on Wednesday 29th November.

THE MINERS....

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,
J Whiteman
Financial Secretary, Bates NUM

The Freedom Office has been handed over to a group of Geordie 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,
Northumberland

or Blyth Miners Wives Support Group,
Ms Lynn Camsell,
17 Cowper Hall Road,
Cowper Estate,
Blyth,
Northumberland

WITH YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WE CAN AND WILL WIN

DAM opt for POSTAL BALLOT

A Very Personal Report

Those regular readers who may have been lying awake at nights worrying about the 'soul of DAM' being in mortal danger may now rest easy in their beds. The proposed expulsion of Mick Larkin is to be made the subject of a postal ballot amongst the 120 members of DAM.

Each 'side' is to put its case in successive issues of the *DAM Internal Bulletin*, and then they will proceed to the vote. This news has been warmly greeted here at *Freedom*. The fact that, in an organisation of 120 anarchists, only nine votes seemed to be required to get someone thrown out, struck us as being a classic case of the abuse and misuse to which delegate democracy can be put.

This decision has been as welcome to South London DAM as a pork chop at a Barmitzvah. When their legs were subjected to some mild, good-natured pulling about it they crumpled like patients informed that they had terminal acne.

Of course, this blow from reality

only serves them right for thinking (and acting) as if going for drinks with Albert Meltzer transformed them into expert 'influential militants', whose word was law to all 'real' anarchists.

Unfortunately they have attempted to raise their spirits in the only way they know how, by mounting yet another attack on *Freedom* (and a few other people) in *Black Flag*. Previously they've devoted a third of a page to a slag-off of the new collective as nobodies, mere 'shadows of the quietists'. Then there's been a steady campaign to link the name of this paper with the Tory Freedom Association. Now, to get their own back for their hurt pride over postal ballots, they have declared *Freedom* to be 'anti-anarchist'.

Why is it that these people, who have poured forth a torrent of Stalinist-style abuse on other anarchists over the years, why do they get so hysterical about the slightest word of criticism about themselves? They may be able to dish it out but they sure can't

take it. Isn't that a very authoritarian trait? People who talk like Stalinists do eventually begin to act like them.

In this very much one-off break with the usual *Freedom* tradition of ignoring their crap, the offending/offensive article (anonymous as usual) has been reproduced complete with headline from *Black Flag* and 'reviewed' on the reviews page. There is also a very silly letter from Albert Meltzer claiming that anarchists never, ever vote under any circumstances on page two. We will not be burdening *Freedom* readers with this again. Meanwhile, back at the DAM ballot.....

I should now admit that the question of votes and ballots for both miners and anarchists was a carefully placed copy-catching banana skin. The idea was to catch out the knee-jerk re-actionaries and make them look silly. What has surprised me was the queue that formed for the privilege of winding up flat on their backs in public. Perhaps more of you will read the constitutions of organisations you

intend joining, as I did.

The lesson you will learn from this, I hope, is the need to think more deeply about issues and not to be content with shallow cliches to guide your actions.

By the by, the same people behind the 'expel Larkin' move had a go at getting A Distribution groups to exile the editors of *Logo* from the entire British anarchist movement earlier this year! This was totally rejected as the trotskyite proposal that it was, (check your facts first, *Sheffield Anarchist*). Perhaps the London witch-finder-generals think you provincial members of DAM will be more slow-witted and deferential. We do hope not.

Stu Stuart

PS *Logo*, where's your apology to R you promised, or don't you honour your agreements? That was a victory for principle, not for you personally.

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