

## POLL TAX VOTED IN

READERS outside Britain may not be aware of the government's intention to change the basis of local taxation. Presently there is a property tax on dwellings, the Domestic Rate. This is to be replaced by a poll tax charged equally on all persons aged 18 years and over, the Community Charge. Mr and Mrs Thatcher, who own six properties in the wealthy South-East and currently pay over £10,000 a year in rates, may find themselves paying as little as £262 jointly in community charge, depending on which house they declare to be their main residence (the charge will vary from one local authority to another). Five adults (for instance mother, father, grandma and two teenagers) in a cramped leaky flat in Kentish Town, one of the poorer areas of London, now paying some £300 a year rates, will have to pay some £4,682.

It strikes the Thatcherites as unfair that the rich should pay more in local taxes than the poor, seeing that the poor consume as much of the local funds as the rich. It does not seem unfair to them, though, that there should be gross inequality of wealth, seeing needs are more-or-less equal. Many traditional-style Conservatives believe that taxation should be roughly related to ability to pay, but those in the House of Commons are more likely to speak against the poll tax than to vote against it. They would prefer the Bill to be toned down by their colleagues in the House of Lords, who do not have

elections to face (many conservative voters will benefit from the measure; the poor who are to be further impoverished would probably not have voted Tory anyway).

Poll tax was the main method of taxation used by the European conquerors in Africa, during the years of Empires. Besides getting wealth back to Europe it was held to benefit the natives in the long run, by forcing subsistence farmers into a cash economy.

The last time poll tax was charged in England was in the fourteenth century, when it was introduced as a one-off tax in 1369, then as an annual tax in 1377. The Black Death severely reduced the population but did not reduce government expenses such as the Hundred Years War, so to make ends meet Richard II tripled the poll tax in 1381, and precipitated the Peasants Revolt. In Scotland, where the new poll tax is already law (awaiting implementation), there has never been a poll tax before.

Thatcher's poll tax will not be cheap to administer. Buildings do not move about much, and it is fairly obvious how many there are in each local authority area. People often move from one area to another, and it is not always clear how many live in a particular house. A complex chasing system will be required; possibly this government, with its talk of 'getting government off people's backs', will be the one to introduce compulsory internal

passports. At the same time the District Valuers who determine the rateable value of properties will have to stay at work, because a local property tax will still be imposed on business premises.

Of course there will be exceptions. People in receipt of social security will pay one fifth of the going rate for their area. The queen will be exempt (as she is exempt from all taxes, because by the constitution all taxes are paid to her). So will members of the American Army of occupation and convicted prisoners. Prisoners on remand awaiting trial will have to pay even if, as sometimes happens, they are there for more than a year; but this detail will no doubt be revised.

No-one can say the poll tax is undemocratic. It was quite openly in the conservative election manifesto last September, and the conservatives were elected with a fair majority, including the votes of many whose local taxes will increase. The conservatives were, it is true, massively defeated in Scotland, but the number of members elected by the whole United Kingdom is what counts. The majority of voters are clearly impressed by Thatcher's sincerity and strength of purpose.

Let it be remembered that no-one had more sincerity and strength of purpose than Hitler, and that he owed his personal power, unparalleled this century, to a vote in a fairly elected parliament.

CA and DR

# FREEDOM

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December total = £127.50

1987 GRAND TOTAL = £939.75

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December total = £191.50

1987 GRAND TOTAL = £865.81

*Raven 3* was dispatched to all subscribers by mid-December. Will any subscriber who has not yet received his/her copy please contact us. *Raven 4* will be ready early February. *Act For Yourself!* is still awaiting editorial material before it can be printed. This has now been promised by the end of January.

In mid-December a Bookshop customer phoned us from Dumfries about an outstanding item from his order. Unfortunately he did not leave his name and we have been unable to trace the order. Would he please drop us a line with details.

At the beginning of December an envelope containing details of Bookshop orders which had still one or two items in each which were waiting for supplies, was lost in the post — and has still not turned up. Will readers who have items still outstanding on orders sent end of November and beginning of December which have not been completed please get in touch with details of original order and the outstanding items.

### ANARCHIST MENS WEEKEND

Friday, Saturday, Sunday 29, 30, 31 January 1988

We're anarchist men who are fed up with sexism. We're not interested in guilt. The sexism in ourselves/society needs to be smashed. Anti-sexism is inherently anarchist, but it seems most anarchist men are happy to remain sexist. *It's our problem* and we must confront ourselves/each other. There have been two national get togethers, they have given us a lot of strength and we've had a good laugh. Bring friends and food. Bar, kitchen available; don't forget a sleeping bag. If you want to bring kids let us know so we can organise a creche.

Come to Bolton Socialist Club, Wood Street, Bolton.

Let us know if you're coming, by writing to MASS, Box 25, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 6DT.

AUSTRALIA is experiencing another massive media hype over its bicentenary; 200 years of genocide and racial oppression. For years the aboriginal people were classed as flora and fauna, being killed at random as recently as the fifties. Even now they die in custody in Australian jails.

January 26 is Australia Day — an ideal opportunity for making a loud protest to places such as the Australian Embassy, Qantas airlines, Alan Bond's corporations — IXL, Fosters, Allied Lyons, TNT.

Please help oppose nationalism and racial exploitation. If you miss the 26th, the bicentenary will last *all* year and hopefully so will your actions.

Freedom Collective  
PO Box 203  
Freemantle, 6160  
Western Australia

### PORTSMOUTH

Saturday 20th February 1988  
Trafalgar Place Community Centre  
Public Meeting and Benefit, 7:00pm  
Freedom of Information / Children  
in Care Families'  
DR. BROWN in Concert, 9:00pm  
Details: 0705 839945

### CALLING KATE SNELLING

Kate Snelling, please contact Liam Bouch, 20 Rue Daguerre, 75014, Paris.

## London Anarchist Forum

Latest Forum prog-update: Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, WC1 (behind Southampton Row, opposite Russell Square). Meetings start 8.00pm. Forum people usually in ground floor cafe beforehand.

### January

- 15 Open discussion
- 22 S. E. Parker: Is there life after anarchism?
- 29 Open discussion

### February

- 5 Richard Hunt: A historical and economic analysis for anarchists
- 12 Open discussion
- 19 Felix Dodds (ex-chair, National League of Young Liberals): The alignment of the left
- 26 Open discussion

### March

- 4 Cliff Harper: Art and anarchism
- 11 Open discussion

Mary Ward Centre  
42 Queen Square, London WC1  
Fridays at 8pm

## London ACF

The Anarchist Communist Federation will be holding the following discussion meetings, open to all:

Urbanism	28 January 1988
Sexuality	11 February 1988
Technology	25 February 1988
Family	10 March 1988
Leisure	24 March 1988
Education	7 April 1988
Health	21 April 1988
Future Society	5 May 1988

Alternate Thursdays starting at 8.30pm  
Marchmont Street Community Centre  
Marchmont Street  
London WC1  
(Nearest tubes: Kings Cross, Euston, Russell Square.)

# Editorial

ANARCHISTS in Britain, as the latest issue of *Spectacular Times* says, 'interact not within a federated network, but as overlapping spiders webs, centred on the main propaganda and publishing groups'. This is not a failure of organisation. On 21 November some 2000 anarchists, plus 1000 sympathisers, attended the Anarchist Book Fair in London, while at the same time (owing to an accidental clash of dates) another 70 anarchists attended the History Workshop in Newcastle. Evidently, anarchists are capable of working together, despite the anarchic structure of the movement, when it is useful to do so.

The differences between the various propaganda 'spider webs' may be seen, without too much oversimplification, as differences in the target audiences for propaganda. *Freedom*, to quote one of our contemporaries, 'appeals mainly to those who like to think of themselves as intellectuals'. Our contemporaries appeal to those who like to think of themselves as sturdy working class, those who like to think of themselves as oppressed outcasts, and so on. With the possible exception of those who like to think of themselves as guardians of anarchist orthodoxy, and damage the movement by excommuni-

cating comrades, we are all working to the same end. The divisions are divisions of labour.

This is not to say there are no conflicts of opinion. Those around *Freedom* tend to think of insurrection as just one possible means of revolutionary change, no more useful and perhaps less useful than subversion and setting up counter-cultures. We know comrades who think violent insurrection is essential to revolution. This is a real difference of opinion, but what does it amount to in terms of practical activity?

Insurrections are made by discontented majorities, not by tiny anarchist groups. If an insurrection happens, we are all keen for people to be aware of the anarchist message, that government does not work for the benefit of most individuals, and the most efficient society imaginable is one with no government at all. We are all equally keen for people to get the same message in the absence of an insurrection. So we all put out the same message, insurrection or not.

*Freedom* is not restricted to those who share our views in every detail. For more than a century *Freedom* has been a forum for all shades of genuine anarchist opinion, and we are proud to continue the tradition. Please send us your notices, your news, your shortish articles (up to 1500 words, preferred length 1000

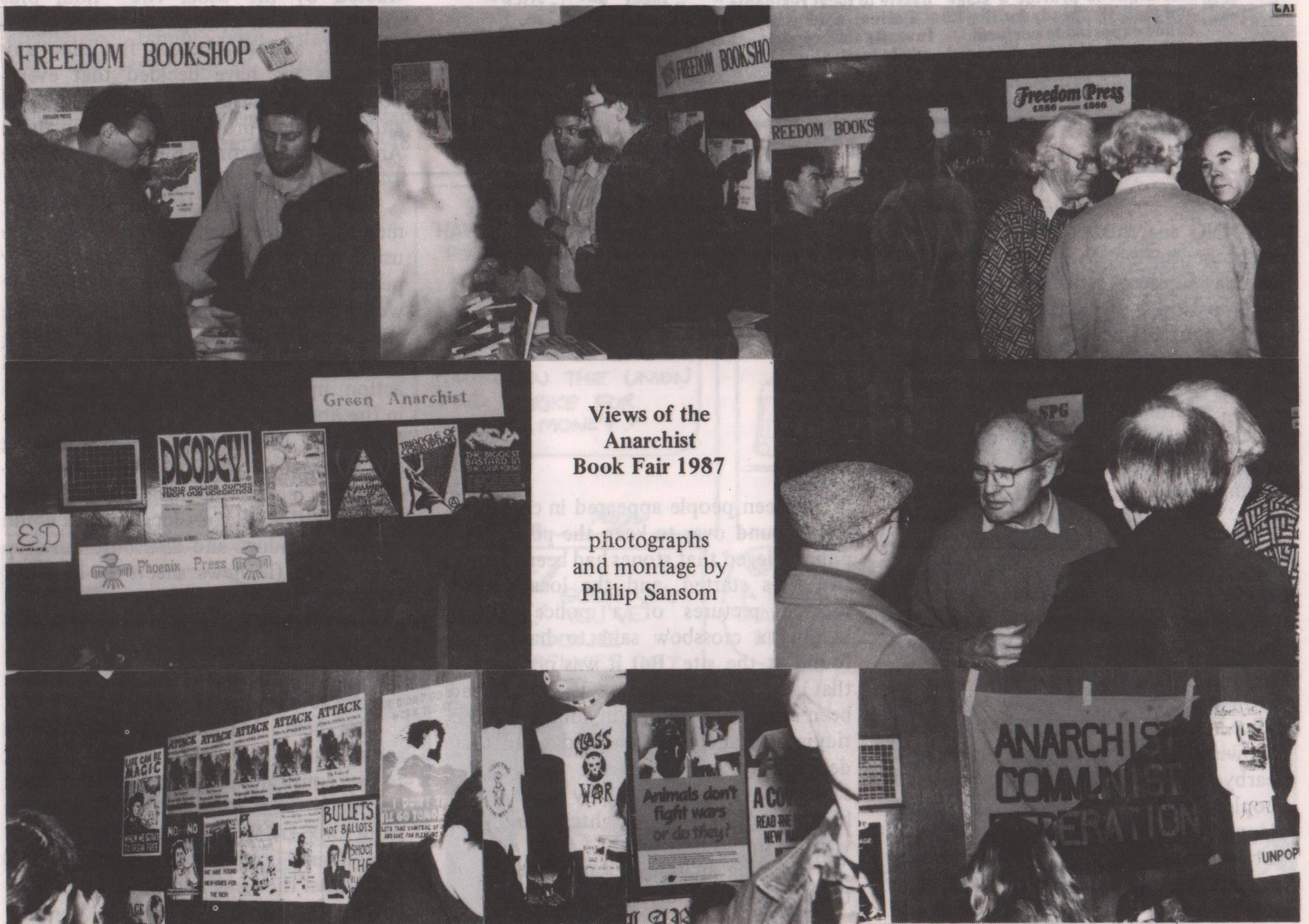
words). Make clear statements, use double spacing on your typewriter, or alternate lines (leaving blank lines between) on lined paper. We do not promise to publish everything we are sent, but we do consider it all.

If you are a regular reader, please take out a subscription. In Britain we pay postage (which is less than the discount to traders), and if you declare yourself poor you can have the 'claimants' sub which works out at 33½ a copy, post free.

At the beginning of December we sent out several hundred *Freedom* subscription notices. The response has been very good and we would like to thank all those readers who also make generous contribution to our Funds. However, at the end of December there were still some 250 readers who had not yet renewed their subs and we would urge them to do so as soon as possible. Prompt attention to this matter saves us a lot of extra office work which puts a strain on our limited resources.

Finally, we have to apologise for the lateness of this issue. Our old banger of a typesetting machine broke down twice. For the second year in succession, we will no doubt be coming out in mid-month until about May.

Charlie Crute, Donald Room,  
Francis Wright, editors



# Revellers bound over after music festival

# Northern Anarchists

JUST a brief note to tell people what happened at the last Northern Anarchist Network meeting.

People from a number of groups in the north met on 13 December at Bradford University. A number of issues were discussed. My own subjective opinion is that the three outstanding items were the discussions of the poll tax, future Anarchist coordination of anti-fascist activities and the idea of starting up bus stop newspapers.

The discussion of the poll tax was based upon the general feeling of those attending that a campaign had to be built along the lines of trying to create a mass refusal to pay. Suggestions were made that we should try and create a ward by ward analysis of who will be affected and how. What can be done with this analysis will depend largely upon the togetherness of various Anarchist groups over the next couple of years.

What was said about fascism was also particularly promising, not just because we began to develop some positive proposals on how to deal with it, but because (a) we were not distracted by the usual two hour plus discussion between pacifists and non-pacifists, and (b) before finalising any decisions we have decided that everybody should have time to think it over and send their proposals to the Northern Anarchist Network Bulletin (deadline 14 February).

What this means is that at the next meeting rather than working from the usual adhoc agenda put together by people who just turn up, we can start working from a democratic, accountable and constructive basis. Perhaps we are setting a precedent for discussion and action upon other issues by Anarchists in the north.

Finally, the problem of disseminating our ideas to a wide audience was considered. One of the ideas we came up with was that various local groups could begin to produce and distribute bus stop newspapers (ie news sheets to be stuck onto bus stops, train stations etc). The beauty of this is that it gives us a chance to point out to people the unnecessary shittiness of their lives at the times when they're actually experiencing it.

The next NAN meeting will be held some time in mid February. Where, is yet to be confirmed, but the present front runner is York University. More details from Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1. Please send proposals or articles to NAN Bulletin at the same address.

Veratsky

THIRTEEN people were bound over to keep the peace. He added that a substantial amount of damage had been done to the site there was...

**Police raid criticised by festival anarchist**

**Weapons found at music festival**

**Festival protest by squatting anarchists**

**SQUATTING** Reading anarchists are banding together to stage a three day musical jamboree.

They have taken over a disused warehouse in London Street and hope that hundreds of people will flock to the festival, which was due to start today and go on until Wednesday.

About 30 people moved onto the site over the weekend and worked through last night to provide a stage and facilities ready for the 18 bands expected to perform.

The festival is being staged

as a protest against developers who, the anarchists claim, are "tearing Reading apart in pursuit of profit".

Organiser Alistair Boom said: "Hundreds are homeless yet buildings lie empty at the whim of the speculators."

Another member of the movement stressed that there would be no trouble. He said: "It is the season of goodwill. We want a peaceful festival. We are not here to cause hassle to local residents."

Police said they would investigate reports that a music festival was planned.

Thirteen people were arrested on suspicion of drugs offences, public order and trespass offences. Supt David Eyles of the police said police moved off because the had finished.

"It would have been a substantial police operation if they had decided to leave of their own volition," said Supt Eyles.

"We must now ensure the festival is not repeated elsewhere in the area. If people want to have festivals, society has rules that allow them and we would like to see people stick to them," he added.

About 12 cars were parked nearby and noise were heard from the site.

**EVENING POST Monday, December 21, 1987**

Reading; Bradford Steer, of Firacre Road, Ash Vale; Aldershot; Robert Pritchard, Oxford Road, Reading; Paul Granstead-Grindrod, of Deveron Drive, Reading; Mark Wright, of London Road, Reading; and John Basten, of Basingstoke Road, Reading.

READING anarchists squatted a disused warehouse in the town and planned a three-day musical festival to celebrate the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. About 30 people moved onto the site to prepare for the hundreds expected to turn up and the eighteen bands expected to perform.

The festival was in protest against developers who, the anarchists said, were 'tearing Reading apart in pursuit of profit'. One of the organisers, quoted in the local press, said: 'Hundreds are homeless yet buildings lie empty at the whim of the speculators' and another said: 'It is the season of goodwill. We want a peaceful festival. We are not here to cause hassle to local residents.'

On the first night (21st December) police went to the warehouse at 11:30pm following ten complaints of noise from nearby residents, and found about 300 people listening to music. The police planned to disperse the crowd at dawn, but most of those present left of their own accord, some in coaches heading for other solstice celebrations at Stonehenge.

Thirteen people appeared in court and were bound over to keep the peace. The police alleged that stones had been thrown and fires started, and the local papers showed pictures of a police officer holding a crossbow said to have been found at the site. But it was not alleged that any of those before the court had been responsible. Those in court had been tidying up and were arrested when they declined to leave, and the trouble was said to have been caused by youths who had been drinking at a nightclub and then went to the scene.

[Reading anarchists sent us copies of the newspaper reports.]

# Bakunin

THIS is the second in a very occasional series on how anarchism is viewed by non-anarchists. It consists of two extracts from A. W. Palmer's *A Dictionary of Modern History*, a popular reference book produced as a mass market paperback. It is from books like this that most people will get their views (if any) of anarchism and the deficiencies of the accounts given by Palmer on both Bakunin and Syndicalism are therefore extremely important. Palmer's mistake concerning Bakunin's participation in an anarchistic revolt in Spain in 1873 doesn't really matter. (Bologna is in Italy, not Spain.) But to dismiss Bakunin's ideas as 'a personal emotional rebellion against society' without even mentioning what the ideas were is unacceptable. So is calling Sorel 'the most important syndicalist theorist'. (He had little influence on syndicalist movements and was a writer who never directly participated in syndicalist activity.)

To be fair to Palmer, he has a huge subject and instead of complaining about defects in his accounts of our ideas we should produce our own accounts which people like Palmer can use as guides.

Brian Moseley

**Bakunin, Mikhail (1814-76).** Russian anarchist. Bakunin was born into an aristocratic family with estates near Tver and served as an officer in the Imperial Guard, but he resigned his commission in revulsion at Russian treatment of Polish rebels. From 1848

until his death Bakunin was at the centre of revolutionary unrest in many parts of Europe. He took part in the February Revolution of 1848 in Paris, stirred up the Czech demonstrations in Prague in the same year, and encouraged a revolt in Saxony in 1849. Sentenced to death by both the Prussians and Austrians, he avoided execution but spent years of imprisonment before being handed over to the Russians, who sent him to Siberia. He escaped from Siberia after six years (1861) and spent the rest of his life encouraging anarchist revolt in western Europe. It was at this time that his friend Herzen, who supplied him with money, described him as possessing 'the latent power of a colossal activity for which there was no demand'. Bakunin clashed with Marx and Engels in the First International from 1869 to 1872, and participated in anarchistic revolts in Lyons (1870) and Spain (1873). His anarchism was essentially a personal emotional rebellion against society, and his impulsive character made him a dangerous colleague, but with his blend of merciless realism and naive optimism he was the archetype of Russian revolutionary in the pre-Bolshevik era. His famous claim that 'the passion for destruction is also a constructive passion' was echoed by many of the young Russian 'nihilists'.

**Syndicalism.** A movement to secure ownership of industry by workers through 'direct action' (i.e. strikes and, in particular, the general strike). The syndicalists would establish an administration based upon the control exercised by the workers in an industry. The most important syndicalist theorist was Georges Sorel

(1847-1923), who published his *Reflections on Violence* in 1908; some of his views were later modified by Mussolini to provide a basis of industrial organization for Fascist Italy. Genuine syndicalism was powerful in France before the First World War and had some following in Britain between 1911 and 1914. The syndicalists in the USA organized themselves as the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), established in 1905 as 'one great industrial union . . . founded on the class struggle', a violent movement that scared American public opinion and was suppressed in 1918. Syndicalism remained influential in Spain up to the end of the Civil War; elsewhere its power declined in the early 1920s.

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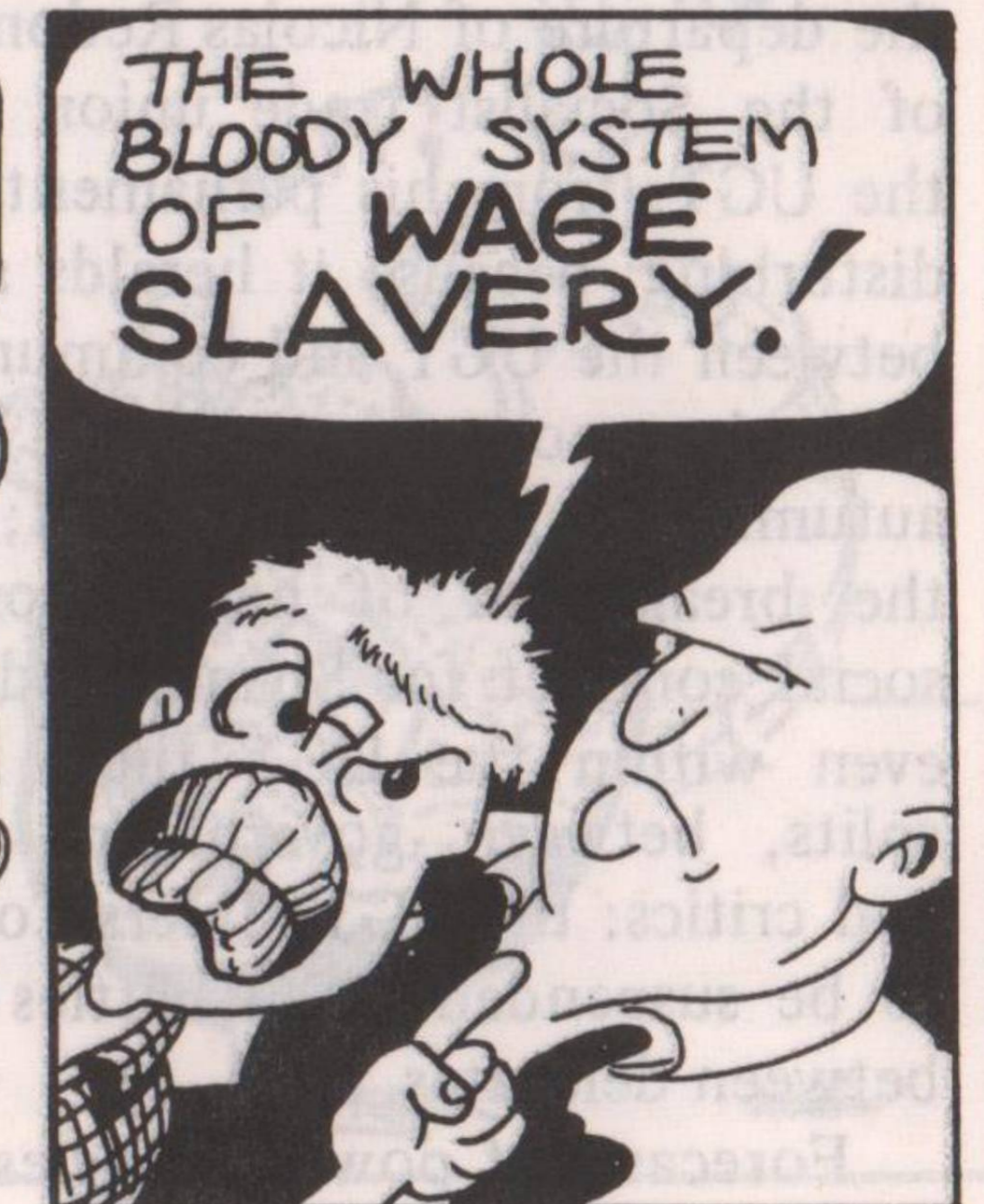
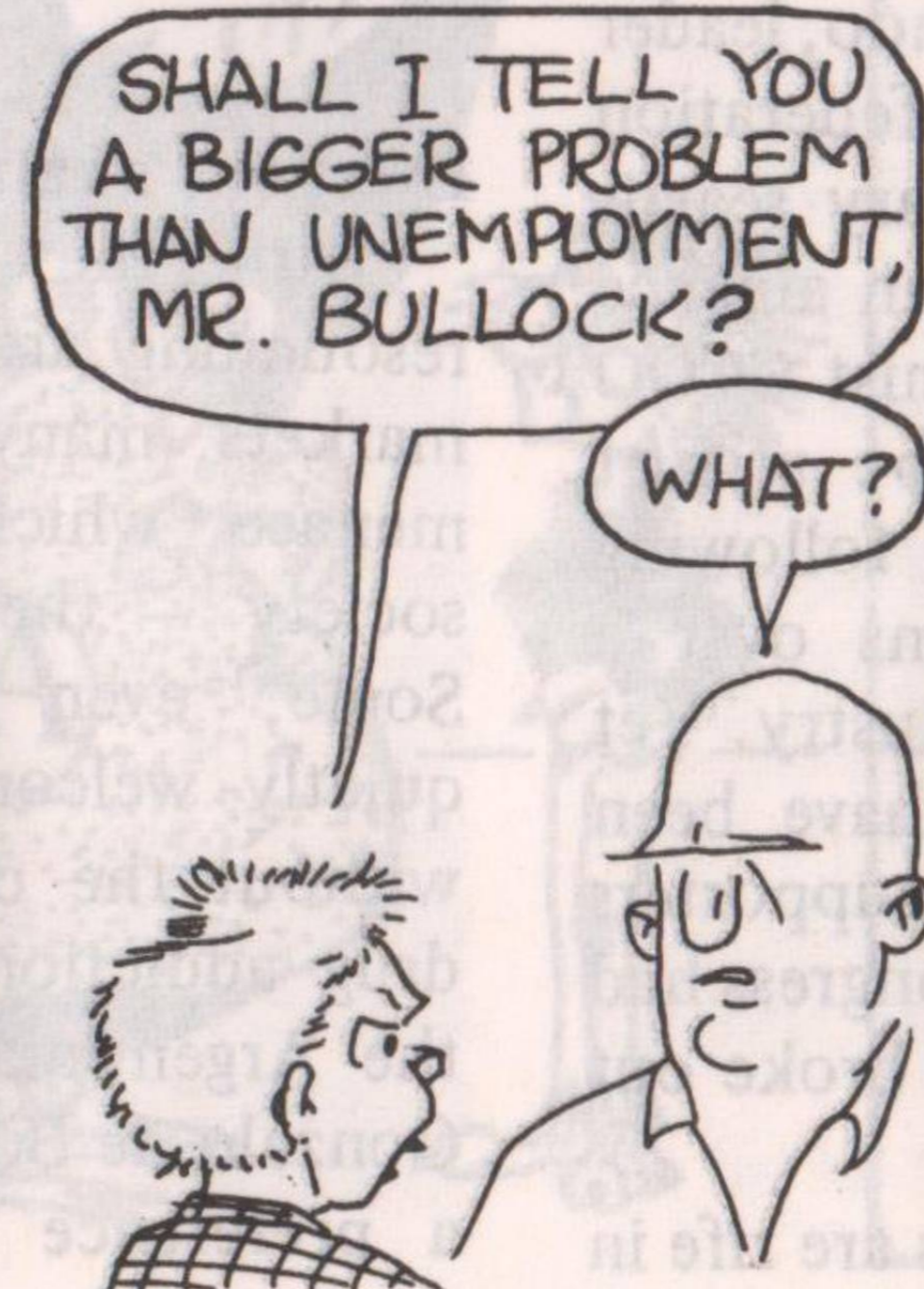
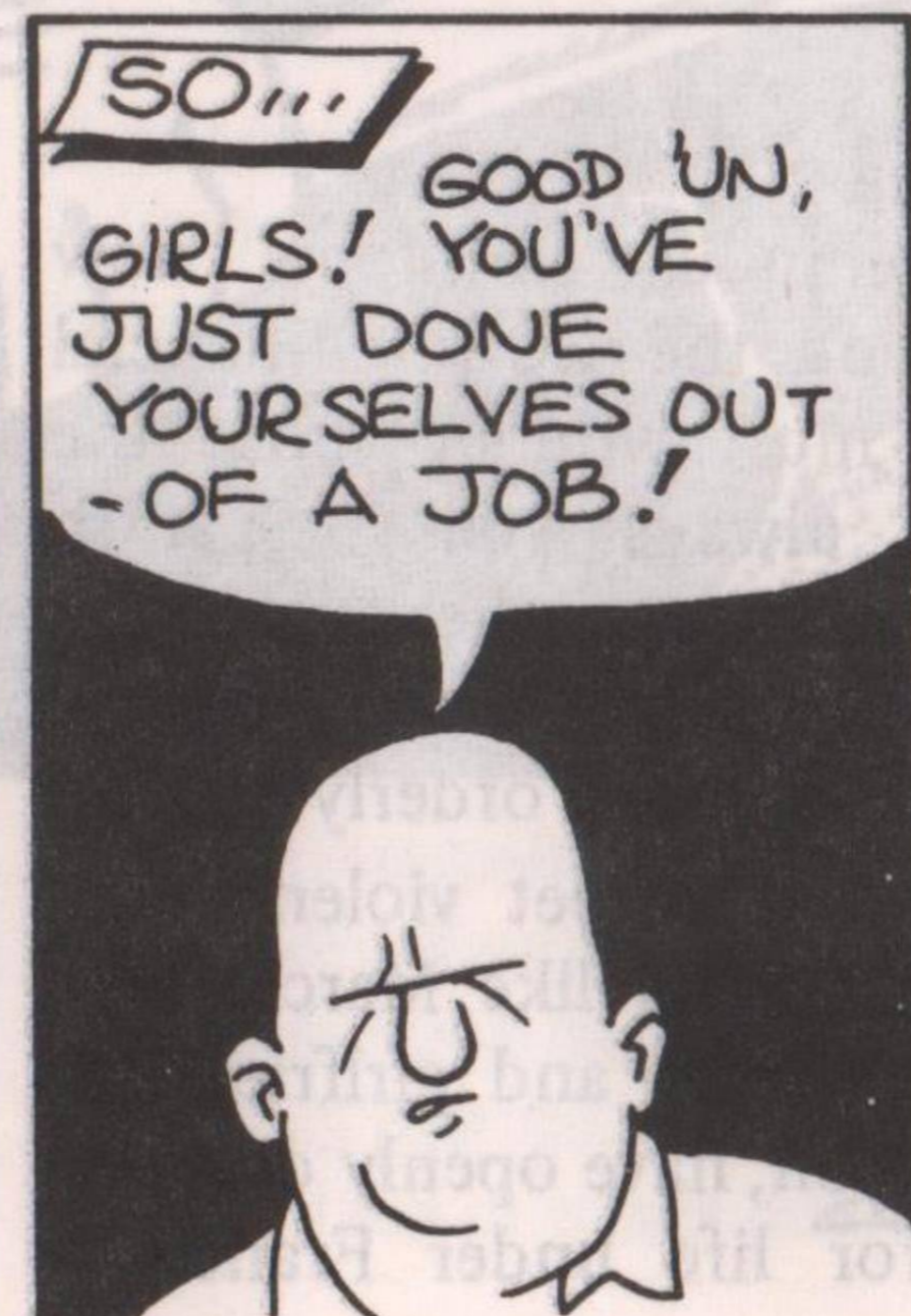
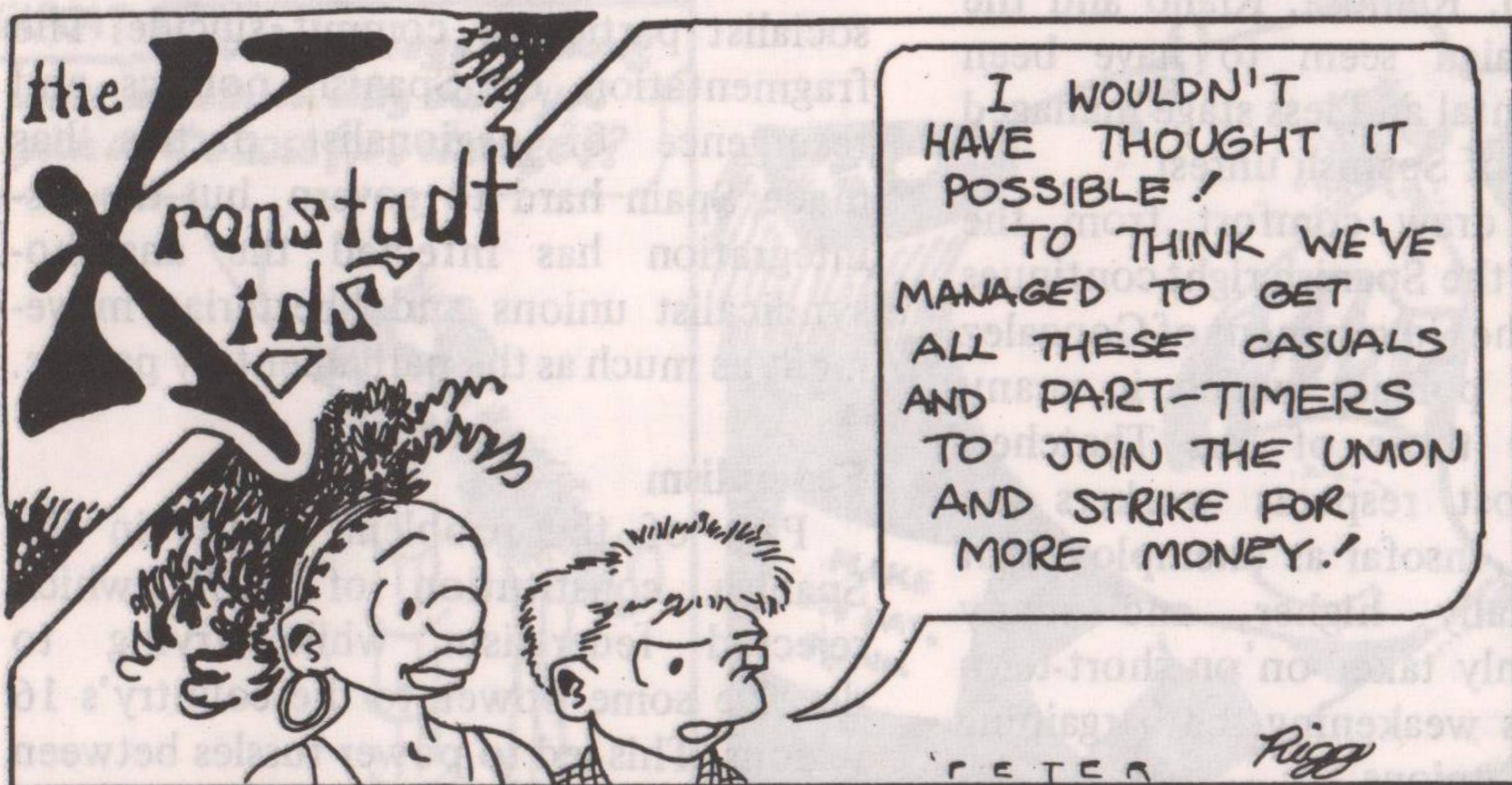
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## SPAIN

SPANISH political parties and trade unions seem to shatter with the ease of eggshells.

The Humpty Dumpty syndrome is a facet of Spanish political life, which has had widespread consequences for the development of the new democracy. When in the early 1980s the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist union federation) began to splinter, anarchists agonised throughout the world. Yet, serious though this was for the international libertarian movement, it was merely an expression of a national characteristic which affects all political organisations here.

Even as the CNT was shredding its membership, the centre-right coalition parties were crumbling, and the Communist PCE was about to fragment into several competing factions and personalities which, as is usually the case, later came to unite as separate parties viciously rivalling each other. The prevalence of nationalist parties in the regions complicates the picture further.

Consequently trying to keep tabs on all the political parties in the pulverised politics of Spain today is a nightmare for even the most sober political correspondent. In despair, earlier this year, the *Financial Times* ran an editorial entitled 'Too Many Parties in Spain', which declared that the 'array of political parties looks more fragmented with an upsurge of support for new and existing regional parties.'

### Hot autumn

True the Socialist PSOE still retains a strong grip on governmental power, but the indications are that they would lose their overall majority if elections were held now. More important their strength was weakened in the municipal authorities in the June elections. Now more damage has been done by the recent split inside the Socialist Party, caused by Pablo Castellano and his faction Izquierda Socialista (Left Socialists). And the industrial threat posed by the departure of Nicolas Redondo, leader of the Socialist trade union federation the UGT, from his parliamentary seat is disturbing; because it heralds an alliance between the UGT and communist CCOO for what some expect to be a 'hot autumn' of industrial unrest; following the breakdown of negotiations over a social contract for Spanish industry. Yet even within the UGT there have been splits, between government supporters and critics: the UGT Miners Congress had to be suspended when battles broke out between delegates.

Forecasts of power struggles are rife in

# Humpty Dumpty Land

the communist union federation, the CCOO. These are expected to surface at the Fourth Congress of the trade union federation this autumn. The clash here is based on contending personalities and their respective parties: allies of Gerardo Iglesia (current leader of the official [Russian backed] Communist Party — the PCE) versus the Carrillistas (cronies of the expelled ex-leader of the PCE — Santiago Carrillo).

### Government disappointment

The government had hoped to get the two-main union federations — the UGT and CCOO — to agree to a pact, which would have ensured individual peace; calm in the streets; the recovery of confidence by companies; and a more stable era. As the leader of the USO (yet another union federation) put it: the Government wanted window dressing for the General Elections of 1990. What it got was a truce which lasted through the summer, and has now broken down threatening to turn nasty.

Yet curiously this year the most damaging disputes for the Government have taken place outside the direct sphere of influence of the bureaucratic union federations — the UGT and the CCOO — who only embarked on a series of token strikes in the spring. The conflicts at Puerto Real (where the anarcho-syndicalist CNT is active), Reinosa, Riano and the student campaign seem to have been more fundamental and less stage managed manifestations of Spanish unrest.

Some will draw comfort from the disarray which the Spanish right continues to suffer. But the Government of Gonzalez has economic policies which in many ways resemble those of Mrs Thatcher. Indeed in most respects workers are worse off here, insofar as unemployment is proportionally higher, and many workers are only taken-on on short-term contracts; thus weakening the bargaining strength of the unions.

### Everyone's eating

With the ominous tom-toms now resounding around the world's financial markets, many must wonder about the menace which always stalks Spanish society — the return of the Dictadura. Some, even working people, would quietly welcome a more orderly system without the current street violence and drug addiction. Others like Marcia Bell, the Argentinian singer and girlfriend of Gonzalo de Borbon, have openly declared a preference for life under Franco —

'before there was only one government. Now there is one president, lots of deputies, councillors, mayors, etc. . . . I believe that we Latins need an iron hand!'

Why should we worry about the utterances of an aristocrat's Argentinian tart? Because Ms Bell reflects what many Spaniards are privately thinking.

The most common expression among Spaniards commenting on the political establishment is that 'everyone's eating', which means *they* are living off the fat of the land. Such a view is anarchist, but it does strike a sympathetic chord in fascism. The last Portuguese dictator Salazar expressed it when he said he 'detested politics from the bottom of his heart; all the noisy and incoherent promises, the impossible demands, the hotch-potch of unfounded ideas and impractical plans . . . opportunism that cares neither for truth or justice, the inglorious chase after unmerited fame, the exploitation of the lowest instincts, the distortion of facts . . . all the feverish and sterile fuss.'

Anarchists may welcome Spanish cynicism about politics, were it not for the fact that Spain's history lends itself as easily to the idea of the strong man set to clean up political corruption, as it does to the anarchist solution. Significantly the Italian writer Silone attributed the rise of fascism in Italy in the 1930s to the determination of the democratic and socialist parties to commit suicide. The fragmentation of Spanish politics and resurgence of regionalist parties has made Spain hard to govern, but the disintegration has infected the anarcho-syndicalist unions and libertarian movement as much as the parliamentary parties.

### Federalism

Part of the problem resides in the Spanish constitution of 1979 which rejected federalism while trying to devolve some power to the country's 16 regions. This led to power tussles between the central government and the regional authorities, and bureaucratic duplication on a grand scale in parallel institutions. The Humpty Dumpty syndrome in the political parties here reduces this clumsy and expensive system to a shambles.

Curiously a variation of the anarchist solution of federalism is now being advocated by the Catalan Socialist Party PSC-PSOE. No doubt it is a ploy by socialists to outflank the nationalists, and there is clearly a distinction between what Luis Edo in the paper *CNT* has called 'the federal state' and what libertarians define as an 'autonomous federa-

tion of Iberian regions.'

Federalism would have been a better system for Spain. It was probably not adopted in order to humour traditional elements in the military; so as not to offend Castillian sentiments for a united Spain dominated by Madrid; and out of a perennial desire for power by the Central Government to keep control of the regions. It represents a tougher option now the Governmental goose has laid so many golden eggs: creating vested interests among armies of functionaries and civil servants in the provinces.

The danger is that the current interest in federalism by the politicians will produce a form of fake federalism, which will discredit the concept itself as the politicians have harmed so many libertarian ideas in the past. A correspondent in *El Pais*, has argued that '... the right and the left belief in this type of solution (federalism) is pure demagogy', because, he says, '... the state is the anti-thesis of federalism'.

The good thing is that the debate has forced consideration of the thought of the so-called father of federalism, the French anarchist Proudhon. One writer in *El Pais* has gone so far as to say that 'today the CNT is the only organisation in Spain which has an authentic federalist policy.'

Genuine federalism will probably continue to be a fantasy, and Spain will almost certainly remain a centralist state, with more or less flexibility, whichever party governs in Madrid. The anarchist movement and the CNT seem unable to

present a plausible alternative policy which could convince the Spanish public today, as the democratic disintegration develops. The best bet would have been the military had they not already spent themselves in one failed rightist takeover earlier this decade.

In Spain at the moment no-one seems able to put Humpty Dumpty together again.  
**Brian Bamford**

## IN BRIEF

Startling Surveys — an occasional series. The victims in cases of sexual harassment at work are usually women. The culprits are often supervisors or managers. This aggravates the problem as the same men are often the official channels for complaints (Labour Research Department).

The Swedish government has announced that it shall sink foreign submarines violating its territorial waters instead of trying to force them to the surface.

West Germany's liberal Free Democratic Party has agreed to support a package of tougher laws for dealing with demonstrations. In particular, concealment of your identity will become a criminal offence. Demonstrators covering or masking their faces, wearing helmets or shields are threatened with imprisonment for up to one year. Even carrying potential disguises, such as false beards or handkerchiefs qualifies.

Thieves in Xianyang, North China, have stolen a precisely audited 2,249 manhole covers to sell back to government departments. Night time cyclists are menaced. The cost of replacement is estimated at about £17,800.

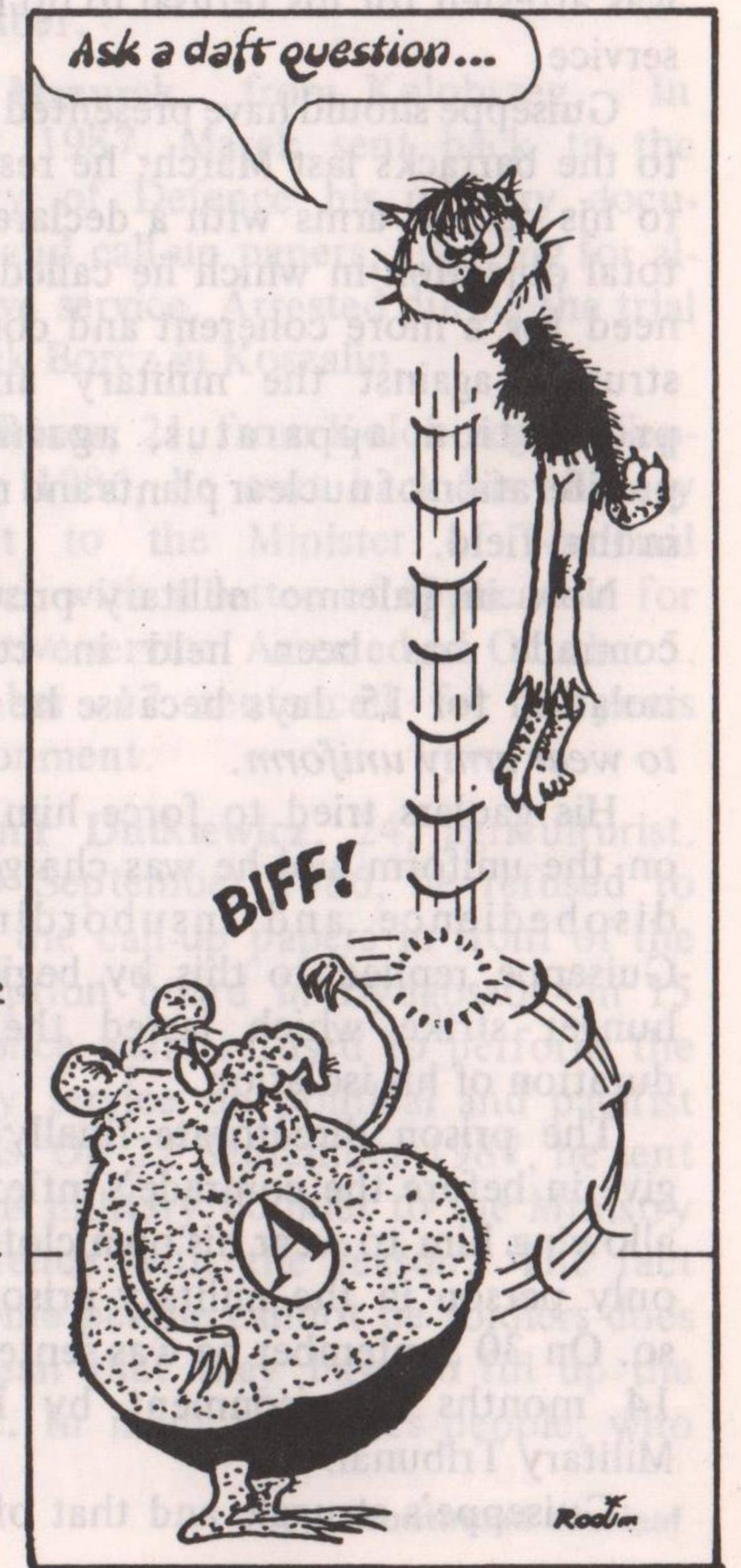
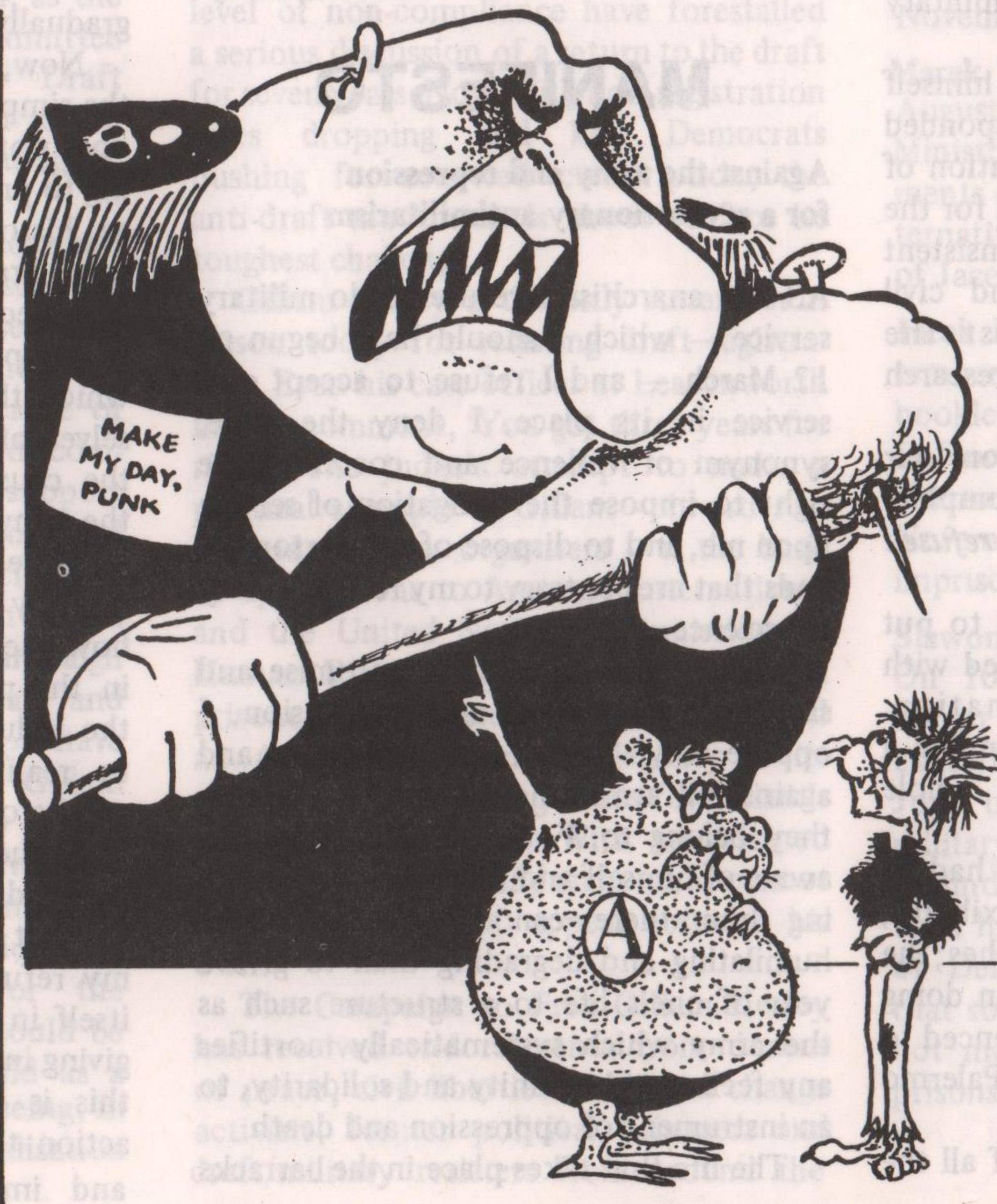
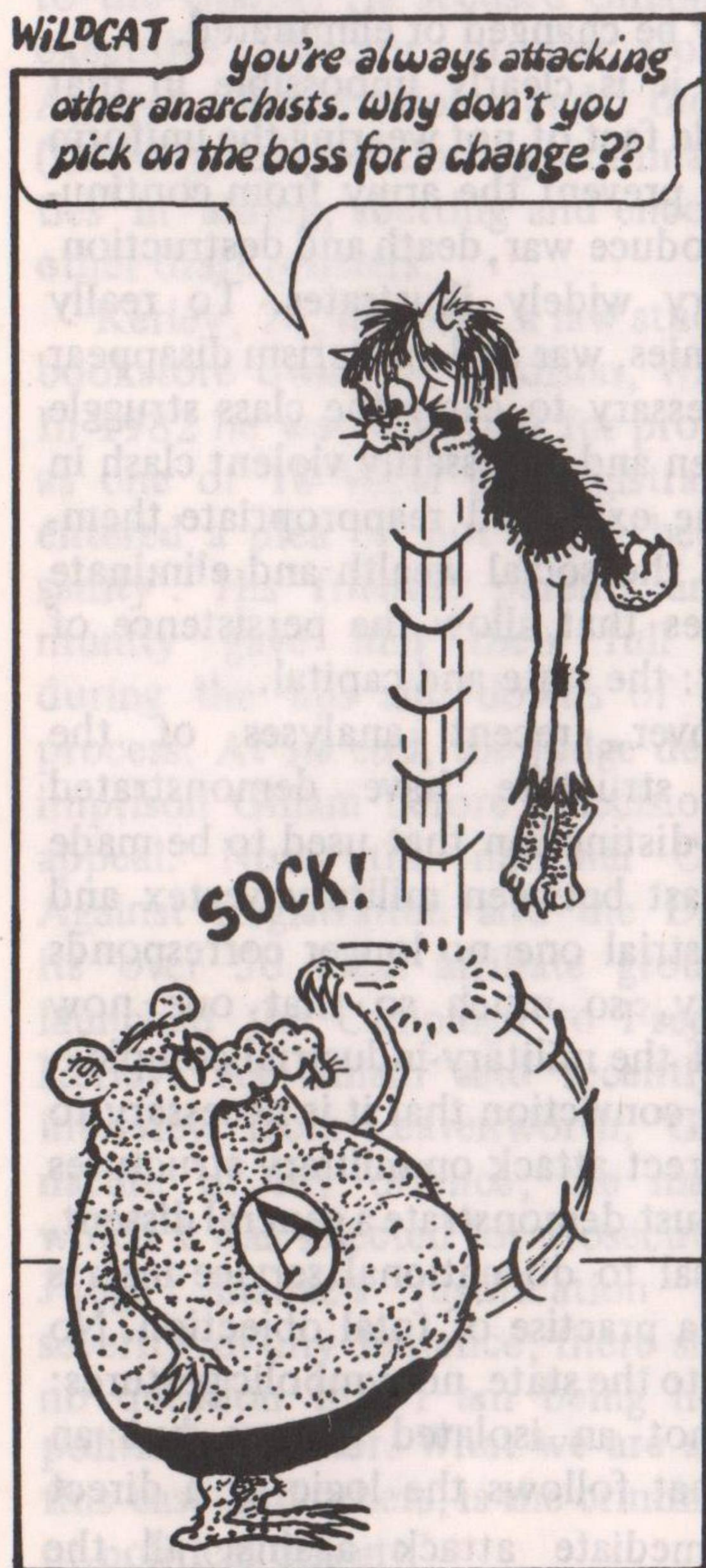
The American Citizens Group for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms has petitioned the pope to appoint a Patron Saint of Handgunners. They suggest Father Gabriel Possenti, a nineteenth century Italian priest who protected his town from bandits.

The Indian government has introduced legislation providing the death penalty for aiding or glorifying 'suttee' or the ritual burning of widows.

John Napoleon LaCorte has offered rewards of \$1,000 to local girls who remain virgins up to the age of 19. To qualify they must apply to him and submit to a medical test.

The Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church have issued a joint communique condemning the use of nuclear arms and 'all types of arms that can cause massive destruction'. Presumably these include divine lightning bolts and hellfire.

A dog in Russia has been reported as surviving engulfment by a giant pike. The fish was caught with the dog's tail sticking out from its jaws, and the dog struggled out unharmed... well, according to Radio Moscow.



# World Conscientious Objectors

## SICILY

**Orazio Valastro freed  
Giuseppe Coniglio sentenced**

ORAZIO Valastro, anarchist, deserter, sentenced in 1982 to five months' prison and to eight months in 1987, has been released before completing his sentence.

Under pressure of the demonstrations held in his support in many parts of Italy, as well as the struggles carried out by Orazio himself while he was in prison, the Italian army has seen itself obliged to release the comrade who risked being held in prison until he reached the age of 45.

Not being able to save face in any other way, those responsible for military so-called justice had recourse to rejecting Orazio, declaring him 'socially ill-adapted', i.e. unfit for military service.

Because our comrade has never accepted compromise of any kind, and because this initiative was taken autonomously by the Italian army, this does not touch him personally. However, if being 'socially ill-adapted' means to be against the army and the society of capital with their logic of exploitation and death, then it is to be hoped that deserters, anarchists and 'socially ill-adapted' will multiply.

Shortly after Orazio's release another anarchist comrade, Giuseppe Coniglio, was arrested for his refusal to do military service.

Giuseppe should have presented himself to the barracks last March: he responded to his call to arms with a declaration of total objection in which he called for the need for a more coherent and consistent struggle against the military and civil production apparatus, against the proliferation of nuclear plants and research in that field.

Now in Palermo military prison, our comrade has been held in complete isolation for 15 days because he *refused to wear army uniform*.

His gaolers tried to force him to put on the uniform and he was charged with disobedience and insubordination. Giuseppe replied to this by beginning a hunger strike which lasted the whole duration of his isolation.

The prison directorate finally had to give in before the comrade's inflexibility, allowing him to wear his own clothes; the only person in the military prison doing so. On 30 September he was sentenced to 14 months imprisonment by Palermo Military Tribunal.

Giuseppe's struggle and that of all the

antimilitarists inserts itself in a particular social and military context, where various facts show the will of national and international capitalism to have recourse to military force to resolve the most controversial questions, and to extinguish the hotbeds of anti-imperialist revolt everywhere.

We see the Italian navy in the Persian Gulf defending the interests of the petrol tankers; just as not a day passes without news of arms trafficking that is tacitly approved by the European and American governments towards racist South Africa, the belligerent countries and the most ruthless dictatorships.

Just as moreover the militarisation of our territory is becoming increasingly evident, especially in Sicily, and the spread of economic-military structures, the re-enforcing of the nuclear bases in Comiso and Sigonella, projects for new nuclear and military installations, even though masked by civil industries.

Therefore, to refuse military service as Giuseppe has done is only the first step of a struggle that must increasingly develop and undermine the vital ganglions of military and civil production.

Giuseppe's appeal trial is due in Naples soon. His present address is Carcere Militare di Palermo, Corso Pisane 201, Palermo, Italy.

**Catania Anarchist Group  
via S. Vito 24  
Catania, Sicily**

## MANIFESTO

**Against the army and repression  
for a revolutionary antimilitarism**

AS AN anarchist I refuse to do military service — which I should have begun on 12 March — and I refuse to accept civil service in its place. I deny the state, synonym of violence and coercion, the right to impose the obligation of service upon me, and to dispose of my person for ends that are contrary to my revolutionary conscience.

Against the logic of compromise and sacrifice, resignation and submission, I oppose my choice for freedom and against all armies no matter what nation they belong to. For an individual who is aware of himself and the reality surrounding him there can be nothing more humiliating and degrading than to give a year of one's life to a structure such as the army which systematically mortifies any feeling of humanity and solidarity, to an instrument of oppression and death.

The life that takes place in the barracks

is as senseless and absurd as can be imagined; all the orders that are in force within them are contrary to the most elementary human values and seem to be dictated by the sadistic desire to inflict frustration upon frustration.

Under such circumstances more and more young people are becoming indifferent to military service. The recent suicides and accidents in the barracks have merely accelerated a process that is heading towards removing legitimacy from state consensus.

Finding myself faced with this obligation imposed by the state: the alienating prospect of doing military service, I have decided to object totally. This is not due to motivations of a moral order, to ethical principles forbidding me to take up arms. What I refuse, as an anarchist revolutionary, is to use them against my own brothers, the oppressed and exploited, not against the class enemy, the state and capital.

Moreover, I do not approve of the choice of benefitting from the law 772 which regulates conscientious objection. I consider the use of this law to be ineffective in the struggle against militarism.

First of all, whoever practises conscientious objection is, in a contradictory way, serving the state against which they say they are fighting.

In the second place, the conscientious objector maintains that through this kind of struggle the military structures can gradually be changed or eliminated.

Now, it is clearly impossible in that the simple fact of not wearing the uniform does not prevent the army from continuing to produce war, death and destruction, as history widely illustrates. To really make armies, war and militarism disappear it is necessary to carry the class struggle to an open and necessarily violent clash in which the exploited reappropriate themselves of the social wealth and eliminate the causes that allow the persistence of the army: the state and capital.

Moreover, recent analyses of the military structure have demonstrated how the distinction that used to be made in the past between military vertex and the industrial one no longer corresponds to reality, so much so that one now speaks of the military-industrial complex.

In the conviction that it is necessary to lead a direct attack on military structures and not just demonstrate a general dissent, my refusal to do national service inserts itself in a practise of total objection. No giving in to the state, no symbolic gestures: this is not an isolated gesture but an action that follows the logic of a direct and immediate attack against all the



structures managed by power.

In a reality such as the present, the function of total objection is that of contributing to diffuse and generalise refusal and the struggle against the army as means that favour the awakening of a consciousness of oppression and exploitation. In a situation on the contrary in which social conflict is visible and extended, total objection and desertion assume a role of further embittering the struggles led by the exploited, causing them to make the class struggle more acute.

Total objection, therefore, with all the limits than an individual action certainly has, cannot be circumscribed within the dimension 'army' separate from the rest of society, but is a total struggle which directs itself against the state, capital and exploitation, for equality, freedom and anarchy.

**Giuseppe Coniglio**  
January 1987

## U.S.A.

### Draft-resister imprisoned for non-registration, activism

IN AUGUST 1987, anti-draft activist Gillam Kerley began serving a three-year prison term at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas. He was also fined \$10,000 for refusing to register for the draft. But in handing down the sentence — the harshest given a non-registrant since the Vietnam War — Judge John Shabaz gave an interesting justification unrelated to the charge. He accused Gillam, as the executive director of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD), of 'continuing criminal activities' in 'aiding, abetting and encouraging' other draft resisters.

Kerley, 26, has been a law student and bookstore owner in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1982 he was targeted for prosecution as one of 18 vocal non-registrants, and entered a plea of 'not guilty because of sanity'. His friends, parents and community gave him their full support during the ups and downs of the trial process. At its end, the judge decided to imprison Gillam before a decision on his appeal. Now, the national Campaign Against Registration and the Draft and its over 50 local affiliate groups have launched the Campaign to Free Gillam Kerley. As Gillam said recently in an interview from Leavenworth, 'Given the nature of my offence, the manner in which I was selected for prosecution, and Judge Shabaz's justification for the severity of my sentence, there should be no question that I am being held as a political prisoner. What we are seeing, in this case and others, is the criminalisation of political dissent.'

Since President Carter reinstated draft registration in 1980, CARD has fought the reinstatement of draft inductions. As a federally tax-exempt organisation (the American equivalent of a 'registered charity' in British law), it has carried out educational campaigns aimed at draft-age youth. These campaigns do not 'encourage' youths to break draft laws, but encourage them to *think* about their various options. CARD has distributed 'Un-registrants cards' which ask Selective Service to take the signers' names off its computer rolls, and is beginning to poster around high schools.

Gillam's imprisonment comes at a critical time. The government has cut the level of non-registration by over half — from one million to about 400,000 young men. This has been accomplished by sending warning letters to non-registrants, and cutting off their access to federal student aid and job training. While draft advocates point to racial and economic inequalities within existing volunteer forces, they have directed their stiffest enforcement penalties at minority and working-class non-registrants.

This apparent success has emboldened some politicians to call for a 'compulsory national service program' — a euphemism for a civilian-military conscription. Such prominent Democrats as Gary Hart, Bruce Babbitt, Charles Robb and Bill Bradley have jumped on the draft bandwagon to establish their 'pro-defence' credentials. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-GA) plans to hold hearings this autumn to support the draft's revival. As Gillam comments, 'Widespread anti-draft sentiment coupled with a high level of non-compliance have forestalled a serious discussion of a return to the draft for seven years. Now, with non-registration rates dropping and key Democrats pushing for renewed conscription, the anti-draft movement is about to face its toughest challenge.'

Gillam Kerley is the only American in prison today for resisting draft registration. Even his case officer at Leavenworth had to comment, 'You got three years for *that*?' The judge's attempt to make a political example of Gillam — in order to intimidate other organisers — is the basis of applications to Amnesty International and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, urging his adoption as a prisoner-of-conscience. CARD has filed an Amicus brief on the legality of its activities, and is raising funds for Gillam's political-legal defence. With an assigned prison typist job at 25¢ an hour, he cannot pay for the \$5,000 appeal costs on his own.

The Campaign to Free Gillam Kerley has received endorsements from dozens of peace, civil liberties and social change activists, former political prisoners and draft/military resisters from around the

nation and world. They see Gillam's release as a key to stopping the momentum toward a new draft, and in asserting the First Amendment rights of anti-draft organisers. They also recognise that if military manpower levels are further increased, it will make it that much easier for the President to intervene in Central America, the Middle East or elsewhere. Like Judge Shabaz, the anti-war movement can make an example of Gillam Kerley, but by winning his release from unjust imprisonment.

Further information from the CARD Midwest Office, 731 State Street, Madison, WI 53703, USA. American readers wishing to help, call CARD at (608) 257-7562.

**Zoltan Grossman**

## POLAND

A POLISH comrade has sent us from Poland the following details of nine Polish conscientious objectors in prison.

**Wieslaw Soliwodski**, 23, from Przasnysz. On 23 March 1987, he refused to perform military service on political and conscientious grounds and applied to the military headquarters in Ostroleka for alternative service. Arrested on 3 November, after reporting to the military prosecutor's office in Warsaw, on the call he had received from the police.

**Wojciech Niksinski**, 22, from Przasnysz. In January 1987 applied for alternative service. Arrested after having been called to the military prosecutor's office in Warsaw. Has been under arrest since 3 November.

**Marek Mazurek**, from Kolobrzeg. In August 1987, Marek sent back to the Ministry of Defence his military documents and call-up papers, applying for alternative service. Arrested during the trial of Jacek Borcz in Koszalin.

**Jacek Borcz**, 21, from Kolobrzeg. In September 1986, he sent back his military booklet to the Minister of National Defence, with a letter of application for alternative service. Arrested on October 5. November 17 sentenced for 3 years imprisonment.

**Slawomir Dutkiewicz**, 24, agriculturist. On 10 September 1986, he refused to accept the call-up papers in front of the conscription board in Bydgoszo. On 15 June once again refused to perform the military service on political and pacifist grounds. On 22 September 1987, he sent back his military booklet to the Ministry of Defence with the reason: 'The fact that some people cannot be soldiers does not mean that they have to fill up the prisons. In many countries people, who

continued overleaf

refuse to perform the military service, can take advantage of the alternative one – without military training, obligation to swear the oath and quartering in barracks... Therefore I apply to you, Mr Minister, with an appeal to release people imprisoned for conscientious objection and to undertake appropriate steps to legalize the status of conscientious objectors'. On 12 November; Slawek was arrested for 'permanent avoiding of conscription', for which the penalty may be up to 8 years in prison.

**Oskar Kasperek**, 27, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan. On 8 February 1987, he refused to swear the military oath during the compulsory 1 year training for graduates. Transferred penally to a unit for common soldiers in Krotoszyn, and there he refused to perform the orders and started hunger protest. Arrested on 27 April. On 7 August sentenced by the military court in Wroclaw to 2 years in prison.

**Marek Czachor**, 27, from Gdynia. Graduated from the Department of Science of Gdansk University, employed as a researcher at Politechnika Gdanska, married. In January 1982 arrested under the accusation of printing and distributing independent publications. Sentenced by the military court in Gdynia to 3 years. Released on 12 December 1982, as not proved guilty, following the intervention of the prosecutor from the Supreme Court. On April 27 1987, Marek sent back his military booklet to the Ministry of Defence, together with a letter in which he postulated that his 11 months' imprisonment be included in the 12 months' military training. He also declared he would be ready to work in the hospital as an alternative service. Objected on political grounds: 'I cannot serve in the army, which is commanded by the same men who directed the invasion against Czechoslovakia in 1968' and 'the army in Poland does not defend the border, its primary aim is to interfere in the matters of the country'. Arrested in 12 November, has been in arrest since then.

**Piotr Bednarz**, 22, from Gdynia. Applied for alternative service in September '86. His reason was pacifistic, still the request was refused. On 25 September 1987, fined 21000 zl for his refusal to sign the call-up papers. Arrested on October 21 under the accusation of 'permanent avoiding of conscription', has been remaining in prison since then.

**Piotr Rozycki**, 23, from Bydgoszcz, sent back his military booklet to the Ministry of Defence with a letter of application for alternative service. Arrested on 16 June, on 23 July sentenced for two and a half years of prison.

# The Police Personality

AFTER my article 'The Good Policeman' was published in the September 1986 *Freedom* a comrade said to me: 'Yes, I get your point, but I think that there are many coppers – older ones – who sincerely believe that what they are doing is for the good of the community.'

I agree, and I'm sure many Tory politicians, too, honestly believe that they are acting in the best interests of society. But this is a rationalisation; a pretext for unconscious motives. After all, there are a lot of ways someone can be of use to society: as a nurse, social worker, voluntary worker, for instance. What is special about the police?

There was a famous book in the sixties called *The Authoritarian Personality*. A survey found that people with rather right-wing views had certain traits in common: basically they were very intolerant, and sought to impose their views – by force if necessary – on others. It was clear that the subjects' attitudes were well established before they discovered any theoretical justification for their views.

The sadism, spite and power lust I talk about with reference to the police is often unconscious. Aggression is a basic instinct with everyone, it seems to me. The crucial questions are how much and what to do with it.

I'm not familiar with any psycho-analytical case studies of individual policemen, but it is easy to hazard a few guesses at the type of experience that goes to produce the 'police personality' (being aware of the childhood experiences that contributed towards my own anarchism). For example, a little boy (say two or three years old) severely potty

trained, taught to value rules more highly that his feelings, will grow up colder than a little boy whose parents are less obsessive about rules.

The first four years are a very important learning period when children pick up many ideas. Role models of emotionally repressed parents who use violence to make the child accept the letter of the law ('for his own good') set the child an example to follow.

When the young boy begins to identify with a hard, cold, unsympathetic father, who regards rules highly, he too may grow up to value law and order over feelings.

Such a harsh upbringing may make someone very bitter towards their parents. It may be very difficult for that person to recognise that these negative feelings are directed towards their parents and not somewhere else. Arbitrary aggression doesn't have a cathartic effect; it needs to be consciously channelled to be 'finished with'. The unconsciously angry policeman, with his piles and his stomach ulcers caused by aggression turned inwards, will go on being violent to others until he gets his anger where it belongs.

And here we arrive at the great paradox: the police break the law in order to uphold it. The police use assault, actual bodily harm, threatening behaviour, and manslaughter in order to prevent crime. This is almost fetishism; law is sacred, but the policeman's passion is directed towards something associated with the law (i.e. the means to uphold that law) rather than the law itself. The police value the law highly, and they abuse and scorn it.

A police force to uphold the law? That's a neurotic idea. **Johnny Yen**

## BOOKSHOP NOTES

IN response to many readers' requests, here is a list of anarchist and libertarian papers produced more or less regularly which are stocked in our Bookshop. We can supply the latest issue to reach us, but please note that we cannot handle subscriptions except for *Freedom* and *The Raven*.

*Black Flag* 30p; *Black Sheep* (Swansea) 25p; *Class War* 30p; *Direct Action* 25p; *The Egoist* 35p; *Freedom* 50p; *Green Anarchist* 50p; *The Raven* £2.50; *Virus* 25p.

The following are also distributed by our comrades of A Distribution, and you can get bundle rates on application:

*Fifth Estate* (Detroit) 75p; *Here and Now* (Glasgow) 50p; *Lib Ed* 50p; *Open Road* (Vancouver) £1.00; *Processed World* (San Francisco) £2.00; *Solidarity* 80p.

*Freedom Press* has undertaken to distribute *Our Generation* from Black Rose of Canada, a quarterly journal of 120 pages. The latest issue, Spring / Summer 1987, is £4.50 and trade terms are available.

Other periodicals regularly stocked: *Grapevine* (Northampton) 60p; *Industrial Worker* (IWW) 25p; *Kick It Over* (Toronto anarchy-feminist paper) 75p; *The Match* (USA) £1.25; *Scram* (Scottish anti-nuclear) 60p; *Workers' Solidarity* (Dublin) 20p.

Foreign language papers: *Le Monde Libertaire* 80p; *A-Revista Anarchica* £1.00; *Umanita Nova* 30p. We also receive copies of *Autogestione* (Milan); *Agora* (France); *A Batalha* (Portugal); *Anarchismo* (Sicily); *A Ideia* (Portugal); *Combat Syndicalist* (France); *De Vrije* and *De As* (Netherlands); *Solidaridad Obrera* (Barcelona) and *Tierra y Libertad* (Mexico).

# Tom o' Bedlam

DENNIS Gould ('Poetry and Anarchism', September) is correct in describing the Tom O'Bedlam Song as one of the finest ballads in the English language. I have long considered this to be so; it is my favourite poem in English and I regard it as a piece of good luck that a poem of this quality, which disappeared for between three and four hundred years, should be recovered in the second decade of this century. Conversely, it is sad that all the other work by its anonymous author is missing.

Bjarni (November) may want to know that other poets and critics hold this poem in the highest esteem. Robert Graves and Laura Riding published it in the twenties, together with a critical essay in which it was claimed that the poem was written by Shakespeare.

While Shakespeare almost certainly did not write it, I think he would have been pleased to accept the attribution on the grounds of quality. Sometime in the early 'fifties the poem appeared to its first wide audience in modern times in the *Saturday Review of Literature* . . . somewhat bowdlerised, because Graves had not been content to assign the work to Shakespeare. He claimed that the last stanza was missing and proceeded to assist the author by producing what he assured his readers was the way the poem should be concluded!

This was a silly and mutilating thing to do — although not outside the tradition of the composition of ballads, which often keep on being improved and expanded until some final form. What was wrong here was that it was as marvellous and finished a work for centuries as it was possible to make! I wrote at that time that owing to the vigour of the language, and its vocabulary, its fresh, original and rich imagery, its economy and musicality (ballad qualities) that it was probably Middle English, a hundred years or so earlier than Shakespeare. (I assume Graves lost his *chutzpah*, together with that invented stanza, for I've not seen it again in subsequent appearances of this poem.)

I'm sorry that Bjarni doesn't appreciate it. I don't know why Bjarni calls it a 'weird song' nor can I understand his reluctance to acknowledge it as a ballad. It is direct, vivid, written the way not only the best ballads are, but the best poetry of any kind. Bjarni makes a dichotomy between ballads and poetry when there is none. Ballads are poetry; either good poetry or bad poetry. Ballads were one of the two forms preferred by the great twentieth century poet, e.e. cummings. The other was the sonnet, and he was a master of both.

But about Tom O'Bedlam — it is written in the tradition of the personal often autobiographical, lyric, prevalent in the medieval period when minstrels, gleemen, minnesinger, troubadours, were travelling people in all the European countries, who begged and sang and lived on the margins of society — and were sometimes thought mad. This is where Tom belonged: to the difficult patterns attendant upon survival, particularly artistic survival outside the mainstream, and of course they had to contend with poverty and sometimes mental illness. It seems to me that nothing much has changed! So I am surprised to find that Bjarni describes the poem as being about 'fortunately long gone days when people went to stare at the mentally ill inmates'. Not at all! Tom is keen to describe his condition, his lifestyle out and in incarceration, in which persons outside his extreme situation are of no moment and do not figure.

'Fortunately long gone days'? Indeed, they are not gone at all! Any artist today who is poor and has no backing and who may become mentally ill is in as bad a plight. It is some progressive *fol de rol* that suggests otherwise.

I have just been staying at Annaghmakerrig, the Irish art institute. There was a painter there of immense talent, not quite forty years old, whose experiences for the past twenty years might have matched poor Tom's, blow for blow. He had been injured not merely by bad luck in his personal history, but severely so by establishment treatment of mental illness. It had impoverished him, stigmatised him, incarcerated him, tampered with his excellent, but now traumatised mind, wounded his body and spirit in ways technologically more sophisticated than poor Tom's shackles — and possibly more damaging. Nevertheless, he produces good art whenever he has an opportunity, like the bit of luck that brought him to Annaghmakerrig.

Tom O'Bedlam had some similar respite from the difficulties, terrors, torments of his existence in the composition of this great work. Anyone who wrote that beautifully must have written many more poems, in the process of learning how to get there! But there must have been times when he couldn't write at all, owing to the perfidious social structures of which man is capable. These alter, but not fundamentally.

Meanwhile, one is grateful for the interstices. I urge Bjarni to have another read. If Tom O'Bedlam is not a ballad, I cannot imagine what it is! And if it's not one of the greatest, I'm a monkey's uncle.

Dachine Rainer

# Colin Ward

COLIN WARD has won the first annual Charles Douglas-Home award, which will provide him with £15,000 for research into the revival of Britain's inner cities, resulting in a work for publication.

The award was set up to commemorate Charles Douglas-Home, editor of *The Times* from 1982 until his death in 1985, and one of the criteria is 'objectivity and an absence of political motive'.

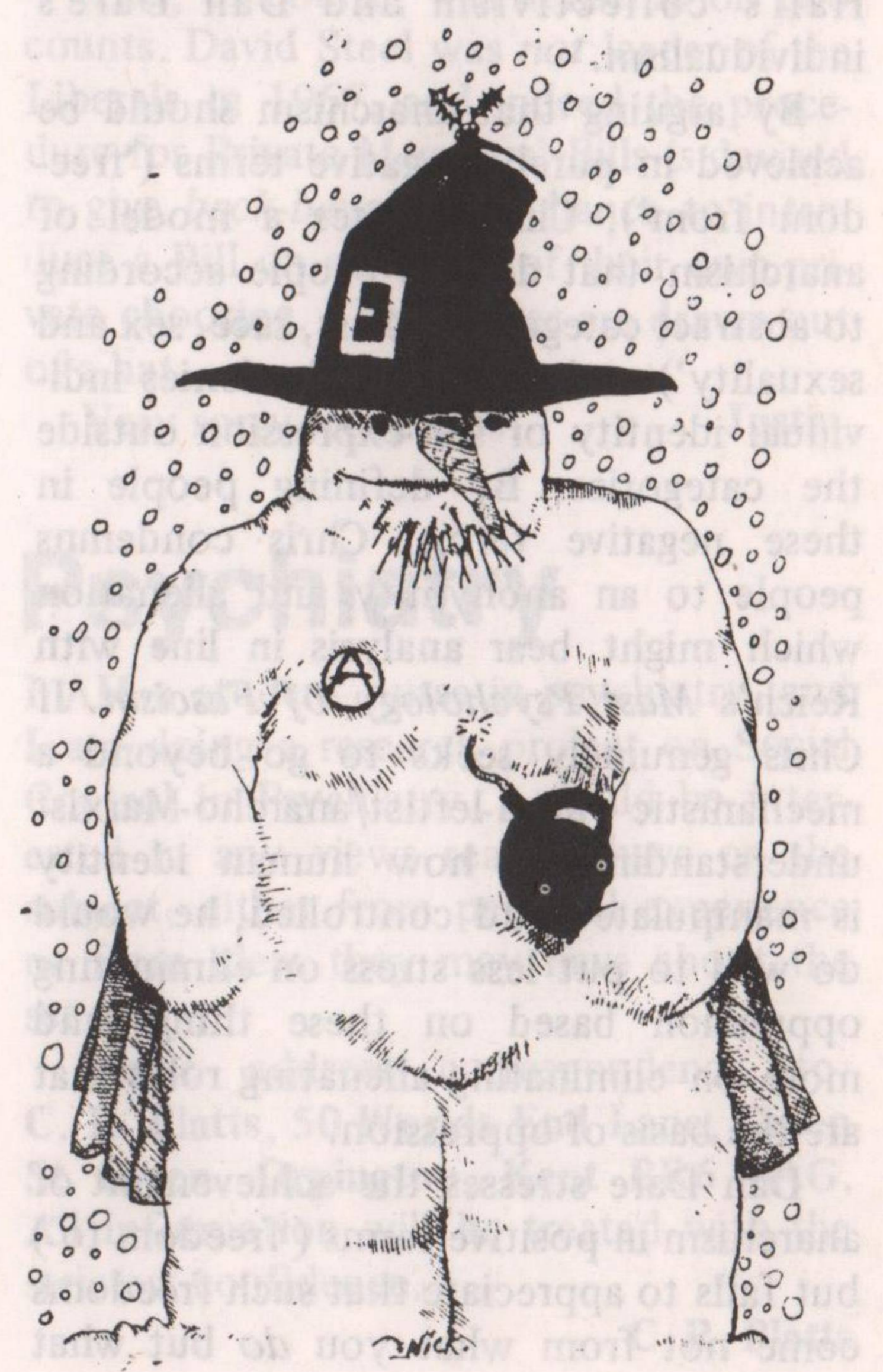
Colin intends to study British cities, then visit the US and Europe and is particularly interested in Bologna and Turin. Interviewed in *The Times* on 1st December 1987, he said:

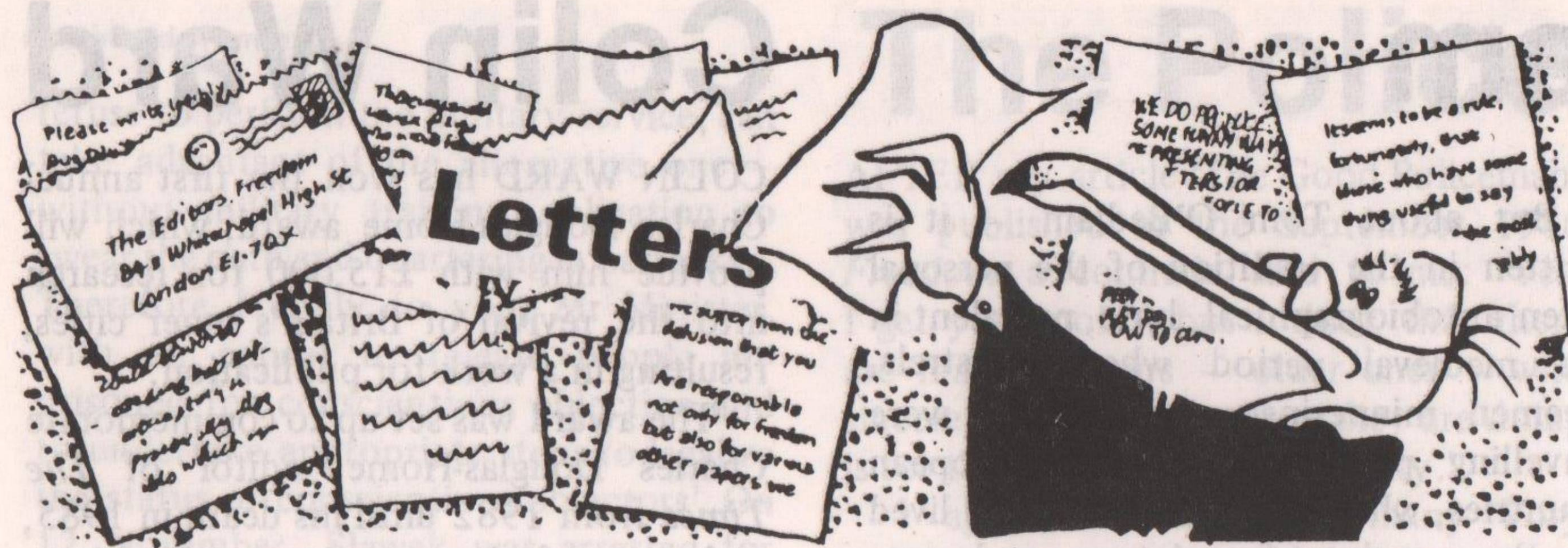
"They say that in Bologna they have rehabilitated the centre without draining the poor. In Turin the crisis in the motor industry seems to have resulted in large numbers of sub-contracting workshops. There could be lessons in that for Coventry and Birmingham.

"The very language we use about the inner city is misleading and certainly historically inaccurate.

"Our cities grew up like mushrooms in the nineteenth century, and at the very heyday of their prosperity, when heavy industry was loaded with orders and when the docks were full of ships, they were the bywords for slums, overcrowding, high juvenile mortality, crime, prostitution and destitution. The golden age of nostalgia has always been just before our own lifetime."

He intends studying the extent to which poor people who would like to move out of the cities are trapped by planning policies and lack of access to housing credit. He also intends looking at examples of self-help housing schemes in British cities.





## Not Fascist

I AM interested in Chris Hall's letter (November) as he was in replies to Dan Dare's article 'Anarchism Kills Communism' (August). What interested me was that the first three vitriolic paragraphs, with the predictable cry of 'no platform to fascists', demonstrated exactly the sort of ideological and psychological inadequacy that makes the anti-fascist movement weaker than it should be.

However, the sentiments expressed in Dan Dare's article are clearly *not* fascist. They do not argue for a 'super race' or some individual 'superman' to lead it. In fact they argue the opposite — that we can all, each one of us, seize control over our own lives. There are obvious limitations to this individualism in practice, and these have been well explored in the debate that arose from the article (demonstrating so-called 'intellectual masturbation' serves a more useful function than the 'brute masturbation' of Chris's first three paragraphs). It is Chris's fourth paragraph — the only one in his letter where I could discern any intellectually stimulating content — that he demonstrates that the true contention is between Hall's collectivism and Dan Dare's individualism.

By arguing that anarchism should be achieved in purely negative terms ('freedom from'), Chris creates a model of anarchism that defines people according to abstract categories ('class, race, sex and sexuality') and consequently denies individual identity or self-expression outside the categories. By defining people in these negative terms, Chris condemns people to an anonymity and alienation which might bear analysis in line with Reich's *Mass Psychology of Fascism*. If Chris genuinely seeks to go beyond a mechanistic ultra-leftist/anarcho-Marxist understanding of how human identity is manipulated and controlled, he would do well to put less stress on eliminating oppression based on these things and more on eliminating alienating roles that are the basis of oppression.

Dan Dare stresses the achievement of anarchism in positive terms ('freedom to') but fails to appreciate that such freedoms come not from what you *do* but what

you *are*. In this way he just falls into the same trap of superficiality as Chris. It is not enough to do certain things (e.g. work on a production line, or have sex with others of your gender) to *be* someone (e.g. proletarian or gay) because others can do the same things and yet disclaim such an identity (e.g. the boss showing clients how his machines work, or a prison rapist). Many fashion entrepreneurs make a tidy profit from this little mistake on the buyer's part. The act of believing you have a certain identity has to be divorced from the superficial 'act' accompanying such an identity. Because Chris believes that if we say and do the 'right (on)' things for oppression to end, he enters into the game of constructing rather than asserting human identity. May I recommend a good strong dose of self-consciousness and self-assertion as a cure for the propensity of those who would mass like a flock of sheep to hide from themselves and each other? This might do a good job in spiting the shepherd also.

P. N. Rogers

## Dogmatic

DG MILES (how different from Bernard), (*Freedom* letters, December) appears to have no clear idea what either anarchism or Liberalism is.

He states dogmatically that some governments are worse than others as if this were a total answer to anarchism; and is obviously unaware that few if any anarchists would deny this, though most would say the differences are of degree rather than of kind; and all would say that the delusion that you can cure the ills of government by the methods of government is bound to be self-defeating.

From this dogma he deduces that everyone should have subordinated all principles in order to vote against Thatcher. If that were true (and if one ignores the experience of history that rule by pragmatic-reformist government always results in disillusion and despair in the supporters of reform, and in consequence paves the way for a return to even more vigorous right wing governments) it would be an argument for voting Labour, not for voting for the Alliance, since the former had a chance of defeating Thatcher and the latter did not.

So your correspondent proves by his own past actions that he does not believe the logic of his own case. He should ask himself why, if he believes Thatcher to be the ultimate evil, and that all principles should be subordinated to her defeat, he and his friends did not throw all the weight they could behind the only force capable of defeating her. In fact while he expects anarchists to abandon our principles of libertarian socialism, he is not prepared to abandon the Alliance's of bureaucratic capitalism.

He is proud of the fact that he voted to end the Liberal Party (a party which twenty years ago campaigned on 'which twin is the Tory' and against the bureaucracy and conservatism of the Labour leadership), in favour of merging with a body formed by the most bureaucratic and conservative elements of that leadership, who were ousted from power in the Labour Party as a result of campaigns which twenty years ago the Liberals claimed to have initiated.

Too true mate you are not an anarchist, nor are you a radical liberal, you're just a small conservative, who feels threatened by Thatcher's threat to the status quo.

Laurens Otter

## Reflection

MY THANKS to MH for the reviews of Emma Goldman's *Introduction to My Disillusionment in Russia* and Alexander Berkman's *The Anti-Climax* in the December issue of *Freedom*. However, MH should enlarge on the assertion that 'some of the editorial decisions do seem a bit questionable'. Presumably this is a reference to the fact that each pamphlet omits material contained in the original. Goldman's *Introduction* omits her thoughts on some historical accounts of the French Revolution, and *The Anti-Climax* omits Berkman's preface which dealt with his publisher's refusal to print *The Anti-Climax* as the last chapter of *The Bolshevik Myth*. I do not think that either omission damages the pamphlets which are, after all, about the Russian Revolution and not the French Revolution or Berkman's original publisher. I see the usefulness from the historical point of view of producing complete texts, but propaganda must come first, particularly in view of the severely restricted funds available for anarchist publishing. Both Goldman's *Disillusionment* and Berkman's *Bolshevik Myth* should be in print in full, not just a chapter from each, and it is a reflection on the state of anarchist publishing in this country that they are not.

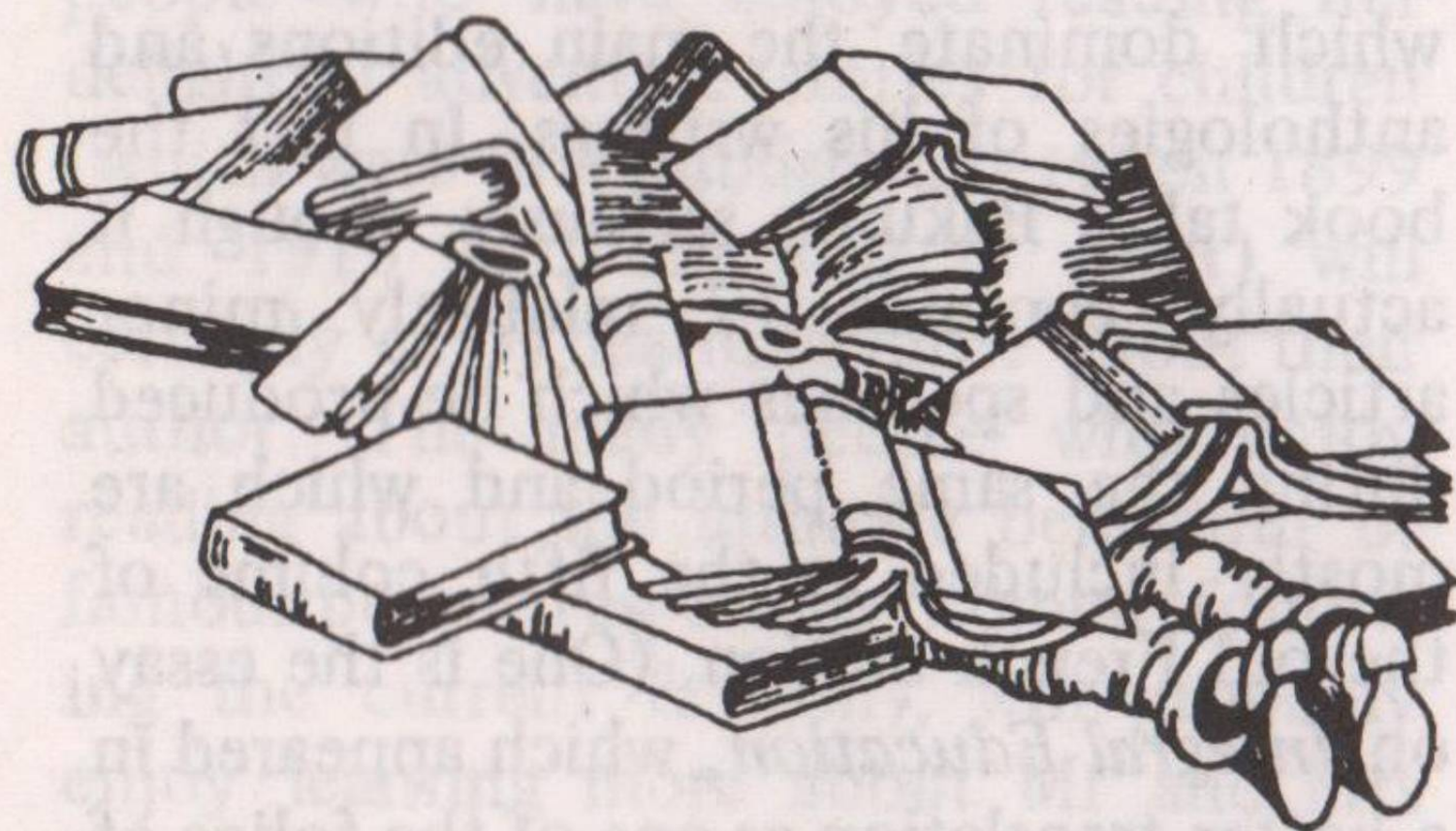
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# Anarchology

THERE isn't much point in replying to most of John Clark's letter (November 1987) replying to my review (September 1987) of his book *The Anarchist Moment*, since the dispute between us amounts to little more than a difference of opinion about the quality of his work. But it may be worth taking up one point – the definition of anarchology.

I said that the book concerns 'abstract anarchology rather than actual anarchism'. He says it 'is in the field of social theory', suggests that anarchology 'deals with questions like what public toilet in London did Kropotkin visit on 12 July 1897', and suspects that abstract anarchology 'speculates about what toilet he would have visited, had he been in London on that date'. If this is meant to be a joke, fair enough; but if it is meant to be a serious argument, there is a problem.

'Anarchology' is surely no more than the study of anarchism, and by 'abstract



anarchology' I mean the study of anarchism as an academic subject in books rather than as an actual phenomenon in the real world. Thus *The Anarchist Moment* includes an essay called 'What is Anarchism?' which discusses not so much how various anarchists have answered this question in practice but how various writers have done so in theory; and this is typical of the book. No doubt abstract anarchology is a branch of social theory, and no doubt this sort of thing appeals to some people, but all I was doing was warning readers of *Freedom* what sort of book it is. MH

# Agrotechnology

ALAN Albon (December) attacks the landowning system and sees a possible way out when 'the docile British public looks a little deeper into the unjust and (environmentally) damaging system we have inherited'.

Has Alan ever stopped to consider what Joe Public does desire? The number of people who want to try their hand at crofting or organic vegetable growing is tiny. The number who want to live in a consumerist life in villas in mock rural surroundings with adjacent access roads, filling stations, hypermarkets etc is enormous.

Aristocrats, agro-technology, the Forestry Commission etc today blight the land. But at least the land remains largely unbuilt on and could, with wise husbandry, become really green and fertile.

If the masses obtained real freedom of choice how long would it be before huge areas were built over? How long would the Green Belt around London last?

I'm not in favour of aristocrats or agro-technology and I realise that many people are homeless or badly-housed. Alan, as a green, argues for the countryside and as an anarchist he argues for free choice. Short of a mass conversion to Tolstoyan simplicity the two are incompatible.

H.I. Jones

# Opportunities

IN *Freedom* (December 1987) Donald Rooum speaks of the Thatcherites talking about increasing individual opportunities while really meaning to decrease the opportunities of most individuals.

It is seldom helpful to accuse an opponent of deceit; one of the troubles with politicians is that they usually *do* mean what they say. A lot that is puzzling about Thatcherism falls into place when we recognise that the opportunities they claim to be increasing are opportunities of economic action. (As distinct from political or intellectual action). They really do favour and support increased opportunities of economic action, of all sorts, for everybody. Opportunities to buy, to sell, to compete, to gain, and – unavoidably, as the other side of the same coin – opportunities also to lose. Opportunities to accumulate possessions and economic power; opportunities, also, to fail to obtain what you need to live a decent life.

Would Donald's point not be better expressed by recognising that these are real opportunities – but opportunities we are better without.

George Walford

# Peace News

OUR contemporary *Peace News* has gone into hibernation, ceasing publication after the 'bumper double issue' of December. There will be a promotional issue in April 1988, and it is intended to relaunch the paper as a regular publication in September.

The original proposal put forward by Peace News Ltd was for a two-year break in publication, 'but our readers insist that a relaunch cannot be delayed that long'. The idea is 'to end the isolation of the editorial collective'.

The April issue will be directed at the Easter Pilgrimage to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston,

revived by CND and going in that direction for the first time since CND took over the organisation of the march (in the 1960s they went from Aldermaston to London). Those readers who (we hope) will be selling *Freedom* on the march may like to consider selling the special issue *Peace News* at the same time. We look forward to seeing if it is worth it.

Dennis Gould

# Red and Black

IN RELATION to the letter by Chico (*Freedom*, December 1987) pointing out that the red and black flag is older than anarcho-syndicalism, it may be of some interest to draw attention to a reference in Franco Venturi's *Roots of Revolution*. On page 287 of the 1983 edition, discussing a speech by P. G. Zaichnevsky in 1861, Venturi writes: 'He asked them all to unite against the common enemy under "the common banner, red for socialism and black for proletariat".'

On page 232 Venturi also quotes a letter written by V. A. Dolgorukov, head of the Third Section, in which he refers to 'the so-called "black students" i.e. those who do not come from the upper classes.'

Stan Clark

# Abortion

A SILLY mistake which I made in the article entitled 'Abortion: the right to choose', (*Freedom* December '87) also slipped past our usually eagle-eyed proofreader.

I wrote that the 1967 Abortion Reform Bill 'was steered as a Private Members' Bill by David Steel – *then as now leader of the Liberals!*' (My italics)

This, of course, was nonsense on two counts. David Steel was *not* leader of the Liberals in 1967, and indeed the procedure for Private Members' Bills is devised to give *back-benchers* a chance to introduce a Bill on a subject of their own private choosing. Their names are drawn out of a hat.

Very sorry, comrades!

Justin

# Psychiatry

I AM a student nurse in psychiatry, and I am doing a research project on Social Control in Psychiatry. I would be interested in any views readers have on the subject, either from personal experience or from ideas they may have about the set up.

Please address correspondence to: C. R. Platts, 50 Worlds End Lane, Green St Green, Orpington, Kent BR6 6AG. All information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

C. R. Platts

# Breaking New Ground



## Break New Ground

Sue Brown and Mallen

Ploughshares, 2 Rosebery Road, Lipson,  
Plymouth PL4 8SS, £1.25

## Green Anarchist no 17

19 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RP,  
50p

Both obtainable from Freedom Bookshop

*BREAK New Ground* is an interesting account of how a different approach was made to introduce new people into ideas of peacemaking. The authors take the view that most peace propaganda is governed by media concepts of news, etc. South West Ploughshares collect vast quantities of old tools. In a Tools for Eritrea campaign they collected tools requested by the Eritreans. The collection depended on person to person contact.

As Sue says, 'If you say: "We're campaigning against nuclear weapons", straight away you get a proportion of the general public against you. But if you start off by saying: "We're here to draw the links between poverty in the Third World and . . ." they can at least agree with you on that half. Everyone thinks that famine is bad, so it cuts down the feeling of them and us.'

I tend to think that there is something in this approach for when I lived in a conservative part of the country where my opinions were outrageous, the fact that I was capable of building my own house and cultivated an acre of ground did much to enable my views to receive consideration together with active participation in the correspondence columns of the local press.

The value of some of Colin Ward's work is the way it has connected anarchist thought with real activities.

*Green Anarchist* began as an attempt by the original three editors to break new ground with the growing concern with what has happened to the environment. How far it has departed from those ideas since two of the original editors left is shown in the latest issue, no 17. The paper's goals, analysis, strategy and tactics have become romantic in the

extreme. The editorial to no 17 says, in full:

Revolutions are won by guns, not shovels. The Russian Revolution succeeded because it had the support of the soldiers and sailors. The Spanish Revolution got off the ground because Russia was supplying guns to the socialists. It was lost because Germany and others were supplying even more guns to Franco. So if we wanted a revolution in the cities, we would need to get support not from the workers but from the soldiers.

The workers in western industrial societies are among the richest 10 or 20% of the world's population.

Most of the workers within Britain are the richest 50%. Are the rich going to spearhead the revolution? Are they fuck.

In the Philippines the New Peoples Army have got their guns from the army, buying them from the soldiers, taking them from dead soldiers, raiding armouries. They've got no guns from abroad. The New Peoples Army are fighting in the hills. And that's the way it's going to have to be.

The workers are rich and irrelevant. Theoretically, strategically and tactically, supporting the workers is daft. Just trendy.

Richard Hunt

It may be deduced that our comrade has little experience of either shovels or guns. 'Revolutions' made by guns are revolutions only in the sense that they revolve and land up in the same place as they started. Any military structure must have a hierarchical organisation, a 'chain of command' with means of enforcement.

*Green Anarchist* was founded to make contact with the growing number of people out there who are becoming more and more concerned about environmental hazards. I cannot see this latest issue making contact with any such people.

Alan Albon

## From out of the Dustbin

by Mikhail Bakunin

Edited by Robert M. Cutler

Ardis, Ann Arbor

THIS contribution to Bakunin studies, which was published by an American company specialising in Russian literature in 1985 and became available in some places outside the United States at reduced prices during 1987, is an odd book.

The title, *From out of the Dustbin*, is most unfortunate; apart from hardly being in English, it implies that Bakunin needs to be retrieved from the rubbish of history. The subtitle, 'Bakunin's Basic Writings, 1869-1871', is misleading; it suggests that the book contains major works which he wrote during that crucial period, when he was exerting growing influence in the International and was developing the anarchist ideology, and which dominate the main editions and anthologies of his writings. In fact the book takes Bakunin seriously, though it actually contains 17 relatively minor articles and speeches which he produced during the same period and which are mostly included in the fifth volume of the old French edition. (One is the essay on *Integral Education*, which appeared in a better translation as one of the folios of *The Anarchist Encyclopaedia* in 1986.) Most of them have previously been translated into English, at least in part, but they have all been freshly translated in full for this book; this is its main value.

The book contains some other curious features — a careless chronology of 'Milestones in Bakunin's Life' which omits most of the writings for which he is still significant; a pompous 'Comment on Translating Bakunin' which only draws attention to the particular imperfections of this example; and a detailed 'Biographical Glossary' of all the mostly unimportant people mentioned by Bakunin.

But it also contains some more valuable features — a well-informed and well-argued 15-page introduction to Bakunin's ideas (though this repeats the popular fallacy that the dialectic of Hegel and Marx involved the triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis); and a detailed and accurate bibliography of writings by and about Bakunin (though this is weak on foreign works, especially the pioneering studies by Max Nettlau). The introduction includes some acute comments on the works mentioned.

So it is an odd book; but it is good in parts, and is a worthwhile addition to the Bakunin canon in English.

NW

## A Woman of Passion

Julia Briggs

Hutchinson, £16.95

IN SOME countries it is common and almost normal for intellectuals to be sympathetic to and even involved in the anarchist movement; in this country it is rare and almost dangerous. In fact quite a few writers and artists have been at least temporarily attracted to anarchism, though this is often ignored or obscured. One of them was Edith Nesbit, the wife of Hubert Bland, an unsuccessful poet, a successful novelist, later a very successful children's writer, a leading member of the Fabian Society, the subject of this new biography — and an occasional contributor to *Freedom*.

Julia Briggs, who teaches English at Oxford, has produced a detailed and sympathetic book largely based on original sources (though based on Doris Langley Moore's 55-year-old biography) and mainly concerned with E. Nesbit's creative work and personal life. The many people who have enjoyed reading her delightful adventure stories for children (which were first published between 1899 and 1913 and are still in print) will certainly enjoy learning more about their author. The many people who enjoy reading about the intimate behaviour of famous people (especially women, following the current fashion), will probably enjoy learning more about Mr and Mrs Bland and their lovers and his illegitimate children and so on. And all this is done very well.

The fewer people who are interested in the history of the British left are not so well served. Briggs knows much less about politics than about literature, and her account of E. Nesbit's socialist career is superficial and unreliable. Both the Blands were active members of the Fabian Society from its foundation in 1884 until his death and the beginning of the First World War in 1914, and were important members of what could be called its right wing; but they were friendly with more libertarian figures such as Charlotte Wilson among fellow Fabians and Peter Kropotkin among foreign exiles, both of whom appeared as characters in novels written by the Blands — Wilson in *Something Wrong* (1886) and Kropotkin in *The Prophet's Mantle* (1885).

Briggs describes the Blands' activities and writings, but muddles the anarchist connections. She is rather ignorant about the anarchist movement (referring to the 'gentle anarchy' of the Freedom group) and about the papers Wilson was involved in (*The Anarchist* and *Freedom*), and quite ignorant about Nesbit's involvement in the latter. She refers to Nesbit's correspondence with Wilson, but misses the fact that she contributed half-a-dozen items to *Freedom* between 1888 and

1892; similarly, she mentions that Wilson was one of the dedicatees of Nesbit's second book of *Lays and Legends* (1892), but not that it included some poems first published in *Freedom*. The problem seems to be that she has read little about the subject apart from Hermia Oliver's study in *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London* (1983). But this is generally an interesting and informative book.

NW



## The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers in The Idiots Abroad

Gilbert Shelton and Paul Mavrides

Knockabout, 96 colour pages, A4, £6.95

IN AMERICA there are two comic book traditions — Superhero and Underground. Superhero comics date from the 1930s beginning with Superman, and feature apparently ordinary people who can turn at will into supernatural beings and save the world from evil single-handed. Underground comics began with the hippy culture of the 1960s, and originally set out to flout convention but now have a convention of their own.

Gilbert Shelton's Freak Brothers have been appearing, not regularly (Gilbert does not work to deadlines much) but frequently, for about fifteen years. They introduce, into the 'underground' style, the venerable theme of easily identifiable characters in a domestic comedy. The Freak Brothers are three drug-oriented men, not necessarily blood relatives, who share an apartment.

This particular book is not a domestic comedy but a political satire. The Brothers set out for Colombia in search of 'weed', but have to travel separately, and separately travel in wrong directions, encountering among other phenomena military dictatorship, international terrorism, slavery in Arab countries, money-making religion, and an anarchistic community hidden in the Central American jungle. Franklin is unhappy in the commune, because when he asks where they keep the beer he is told 'Nobody does drugs up here'. In any case, it turns out they are a bunch of wealthy elitists, not on good terms with the local Indian tribe.

Paul Mavrides, Shelton's co-author, contributed to all the *Anarchy Comics* and is editor of the most recent, *Anarchy Comics 4*. His meticulous architectural drawing complements Shelton's humourous line, and delightful colour is added by a specialist called Guy Colwell.

The standpoint of the satire is distinctly anarchist. Fat Freddy disrupts the May Day military parade in Moscow by running through it with an anarchist flag, and Phineas makes a speech (entirely out of character) about 'a ranting religious demagogue who takes advantage of the stupidity of ordinary, nice people in order to make a lot of money and further . . . the aims of a bunch of power-hungry fascists and high-tech terrorists who want to impose their totalitarian tyranny and hold people in slavery even if it is for the slave's own benefit'. I wonder who he is getting at.

I recommend this book, however, not because it is clever or because it makes anarchist propaganda, but for the best reason for recommending a book: it is fun to read. The price of books is high these days, and this one is no exception. But it could be the one that helps your local librarian to overcome the snobbish British prejudice against the use of pictures in adult literature.

DR

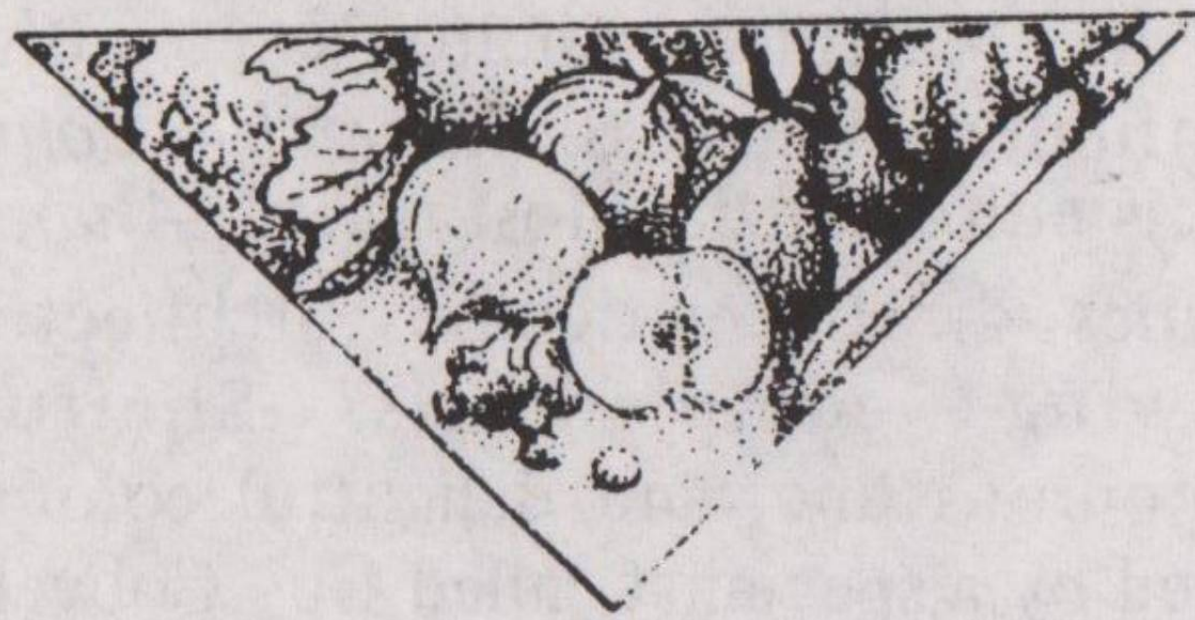
Also by Gilbert Shelton and in stock at Freedom Bookshop

*The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers collections* one and two, £4.95 each.

*The Best of Fat Freddy's Cat* one and two, £3.95 each.

## YIPPY PRISONER NEEDS HELP

Michael X. Campbell is currently doing life in the third worst prison in the States, Farmington. His crime was not political, but the severity of his sentence was increased in view of his record as a long-standing member of the Yippie movement and a veteran of the 1960s campaigns. Inside he has had to endure death threats and acts of violence directed against him by the neo-Nazi Aryan Brotherhood because he is not prepared to compromise his anarchist beliefs. He is kept in permanent solitary confinement and his letters to the outside have been stopped or lists of anarchist presses on the outside held by him seized. The circumstances of his conviction are dubious, and it looks as if the prison authorities and the Aryan Brotherhood are in collusion, trying to cut off his contacts with the outside world so that he can be murdered without too much fuss, thereby forestalling an enquiry into his conviction and the subsequent scandal. We can demonstrate continued outside interest in him by sending mail to Michael X. Campbell (048294), FCC 1012 W. Columbia, Farmington, Missouri 03640, USA.



## LAND NOTES

GOVERNMENTS of course allege that they act in the interests of all the people; and political parties spend vast sums of money to perpetuate this myth. When they act in so-called unison as in the Common Market, pulled and pushed by the vested interests in their countries, the result is an unprecedented cock-up like the Common Agricultural Policy, which results in the consumer paying far more for food than the world price. Realising they have a cock-up on their hands, they try to solve it but in fact compound it, by proceeding to compensate the participants of the gravy train with a scheme that multiplies the problems of the previous scheme.

What is happening with the quota system for milk is this. The smaller farmer, unable to make a living with the reduced quota (having probably overcapitalised) gets out and sells his farm and his quota to a bigger farmer, you get larger farms with more inputs, larger tractors and machinery, larger slurry and silage effluent problems.

There was a recent incident when a load of slurry was tipped into the River Exe so that the water of Exeter had to be

cut off for four hours while it was cleaned up. The farmer responsible was fined £200. The cost of the clean up will not be covered by the £200, which will in any case go into the legal system. The whole case must be met by the Water Authority who will pass it on to the consumers of water.

We are also blessed with the farming skinheads (not hassled by the police) who scalp the few remaining hedges that they have deigned to leave. Apart from the fact that the hedges slow down the wind and provide shelter for wild life (and they scalp them in the winter when shelter is essential), snow in the winter instead of piling up by the hedge fills up the roads. In blizzard conditions snow is driven across vast unhedged fields, so there is plenty to be deposited in the road ways.

Urban populations cannot escape blame as they mostly elect the politicians who are the architects of the schemes that allow these things to happen. The unfortunate thing is that the education system fails to encourage observation and understanding of the natural world, so you get town based organisations like The League Against Cruel Sports buying unsuitable land to provide unsuitable refuge for deer, and then clean felling 100 year oaks, in a year when we have been deprived of many oaks which provide a habitat for many thousands of species.

The tunnel vision that most people appear to suffer from is reflected in the antics of the politicians they elect.

Alan Albon

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