

ALL AT SEA

ONCE again we are faced with the prospect of a once-strong trade union being humiliated by the bosses. Just as the miners were forced into their strike, so the crews of P&O's European ferries have been forced into a confrontation whose nature and timing is of the bosses' choosing, in order to defend their jobs, pay and conditions of work against the company's productivity plans. The ostensible reason for the plans is P&O's desire to save over £8 million in the face of the feared competition from the Channel Tunnel. The Tunnel threat is almost certainly exaggerated. A better indication of where pressure for change is coming from is P&O's traditionally close links with, and annual donations to, the Conservative Party (£30,000 in 1986). Not to mention the Chairman Sir Geoffrey Sterling's reported cosy relationship with the Prime Minister or his seat on the Cabinet's Privatisation Committee.

The fact is that now is an ideal time for Sterling and his lackey Graeme Dunlop, European Ferries' Managing Director, to impose their plans. The British merchant fleet has shrunk drastically in the last twenty years and with it the National Union of Seamen, which now has only 20,000 members. More and more British-owned ships are sailing under 'flags of convenience' — a device whereby operators can escape UK laws and union agreements on safety, pay and crewing levels. This is part of a broad policy by the owners to undercut the effectiveness of the NUS. They now use the threat of cheaper Third World crews — many of whom only take the jobs to escape unemployment or starvation at home — to force the union to accept reverses in pay and conditions. Now P&O is going in for the kill. It has withdrawn recognition of the NUS and is using out-of-work deep-sea crews and non-union workers to try to break the strike. The other main ferry operator, Sealink, has obligingly had the NUS' assets sequestered (stolen) by the courts for encouraging Sealink crews to join the strike. NUMAST, the officers' union, supports the ratings but has already



signed a productivity deal and fears sackings and legal action if it takes any action.

NUS General Secretary Sam McCluskie has called for a national, leading to international strike, and this must be a better bet than appealing to the wet blanket of the TUC or the opportunists of the Labour Party. The union is right to concentrate on Dover, where 60% of European Ferries' profits are made, but if it is to salvage anything more than its pride from this struggle it might as well go for broke and at least go down fighting.

Solidarity in the community around Dover has helped keep the strike going for three months, and in the absence of any real solidarity from other unions we can all help by sending donations, food, etc., to The Womens' Support Group at Deal (tel: 0304 367840 for address).

There are obvious parallels with the miners' strike: bosses determined to impose new working practices; hostility between strikers and strike-breakers; little help from other unions; legal action against the union, etc. But there are

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London Anarchist Forum

Last meetings at Mary Ward Centre?

Mary Ward Centre, which is an Adult Education Institute, will not be open in the evenings after the end of May.

London Anarchist Forum meetings will be discontinued then, and it is not certain that they will ever recommence at the same venue. We are welcome there, but with the new education cuts the Centre may not reopen at all after summer.

Meetings start at 8.00 pm or a little after, if informal conversations in the ground floor refectory, where we foregather, are especially interesting. 42 Queen Square, London WC1. Nearest tube stations Holborn (walk up Old Gloucester Street from Theobald's Road) and Russell Square (along Cosmo Place from Southampton Row).

13 May : Peter Neville, **The anarchist game plan**

20 May : Judy Greenway, **Invisible women: problems in anarchist-feminist history**

27 May : Peter Lumsden, **Anarchism and Christianity**

Centre closes for summer
Mary Ward Centre

42 Queen Square, London WC1
(nearest tubes Holborn / Russell Square)
Fridays at 8.00pm

London ACF

The Anarchist Communist Federation holds discussion meetings, open to all, on alternate Thursdays at 8.30 pm.

Next meetings 19 May and 2 June 1988.
Marchmont Street Community Centre
Marchmont Street London WC1
(Kings X, Euston, Russell Square tubes).



See you at Olympia!

Freedom Press will be on display at Olympia, the London exhibition centre, on 27, 28, 29, and 30 May. *Time Out*, the London listings mag, have hired the building and we have hired a stand from them (it works out cheaper than an advertisement in *New Society*, and may be more useful). Complimentary tickets (we do not know how many) will be supplied to us. If you want to visit the show, write to Freedom Press or ask at the Bookshop.



'Europe Against the Current' international fair in Amsterdam has been postponed until the spring of 1989. Those interested in participating in this event should contact the organisers: Erik Nieuwendijk and Eef Vermeij, **Foundation Europe Against the Current, Jodenbreestraat 24, 1011 NK - Amsterdam.**

This year there will be a less ambitious **International Anarchist Congress in Ruigoord** (north of Amsterdam), from 23 to 27 June 1988. For information write Postbox 1610, Nijmegen, Netherland.

Toronto

SURVIVAL GATHERING

The 1988 Anarchist Unconvention
PO Box 435 STN P, Toronto, Ont.
M5S 2S9 Canada

The conference will take place from
1 July to 4 July 1988

THE location for the gathering has been set for the 519 Church Street Community Centre. Workshops would be held here, and space for the banquet is being looked into a couple of blocks away. High Park, which covers a large area, will be used as a location for Sunday's activities.

A tentative agenda has been set for the weekend. Thursday 30 June will be a welcoming party in the evening at 519 Church Street, and a check-in point for those coming into town and getting their bearings. Friday will be a day for workshops, followed by a vegetarian banquet. Saturday will be a day for more workshops, followed by a concert — the Layabouts and MDC have expressed interest in playing. Sunday will be set aside for a day of networking, the details of which were discussed in Atlanta. Projects such as co-publishing, computer, prison and gay networks would be followed up on this day, as well as any other groups that were interested in forming networks. Plans are also afoot to hold an outdoor music festival in the same park on Sunday. This event would begin mid afternoon so as not to detract from time intended for those with a more serious purpose. Monday will be the Day of Action, a day set aside to provide an opportunity to put theory into practice.

Due to the great variety in the types of actions planned, we will try to be as prepared as possible for any situation, hoping to avoid arrests but providing for jail support, etc., if necessary. To quote from last year's Minneapolis mailout: 'We feel confident that if intelligence is used this action can be a very strong one. Since many people will not know each other it is vital that everybody understand that the consequences of any of our actions will come down on everybody.' We ask people to bring bail money if possible, and any vehicles, bicycles or skateboard you might have. More information, with maps and legal information, will be available at the gathering.

Many people have asked about accommodation for the weekend. If there are people you know or relatives in town we encourage you to inconvenience them. Crash space will be plentiful, beds will be scarce but nobody will be turned away. Although Toronto is a large city it is safe enough to allow for backyard camping. More details will be available in the next mailout.

ALL AT SEA 'Vitoria Six' acquitted

continued from front page

major differences too: the miners were all here in the UK, as are their workplaces, whereas at any given moment the majority of seafarers are at sea, often thousands of miles away; secondly, to strike you must, of course, stop work which all the miners were able to do when they chose but which seafarers cannot. Striking at sea amounts to mutiny, still punishable by hanging, and anyway, strikers on one ship could not picket ports or other ships. And this is the card P&O has up its grubby little sleeve: it can prevent most crews from joining the strike by keeping all its deep-sea vessels at sea for months on end, resupplied by sea and out of contact with events ashore, anchoring outside ports and transshipping cargo 'til the jellyfish come home. The ferry crews need the support of the deep-sea crews to win. All the latter can do is hope to make port quickly and strike as soon as they tie-up. Of course, it has been known for ships to experience mysterious mechanical or instrument failures whilst in port, making them unseaworthy . . .

As Mr 'Justice' Michael Davies said in his scarcely-disguised enthusiasm for the attack on the strikers, if the rule of law was not upheld we would have anarchy. Quite bright these judges sometimes, aren't they? Go for it, me hearties!

Old Salt

Joan Quigley, President Reagan's astrologer, says she is 'appalled' that her advice has been leaked to the press.

AS WE went to press with the December 1987 *Freedom*, at the end of November, the trial was due to start in Spain of six members of the CNT, charged with the attempted murder of Sr Casanova Salazar, personnel manager of the Michelin tyre factory in Vitoria, in 1979.

Some of our mail apparently went astray, and we did not hear the result of the trial until March. We are pleased to report that all six — Guerrero Guerror, Santiago Abad, Jose Collado, Guillermo Argos, Andres Sanchez and Jose Merino — were acquitted, after a twenty-day trial.

Jose Merino is not one of the 'six'. He is serving a 53-year sentence for the murder of a senator, and was represented by the prosecution as the professional 'hard man' conspiring with the CNT

militants. Vicente Alvarado, the other member of the 'six', was not charged with this particular crime. He was found guilty on 28 October of robbing a bank in the company of Jose Merino, sometime between 1980 and 1982, and sentenced to four years. It is expected that this conviction will be quashed on appeal (the two were charged with three bank robberies and acquitted of two of them).

The final judgement of the December trial, a longish document, includes the finding that when the six were taken before the examining magistrate a few days after their arrest in 1983, Jose Collado was 'not in a fit state to answer before his interrogation'. The CNT-U is taking out a prosecution against the police.

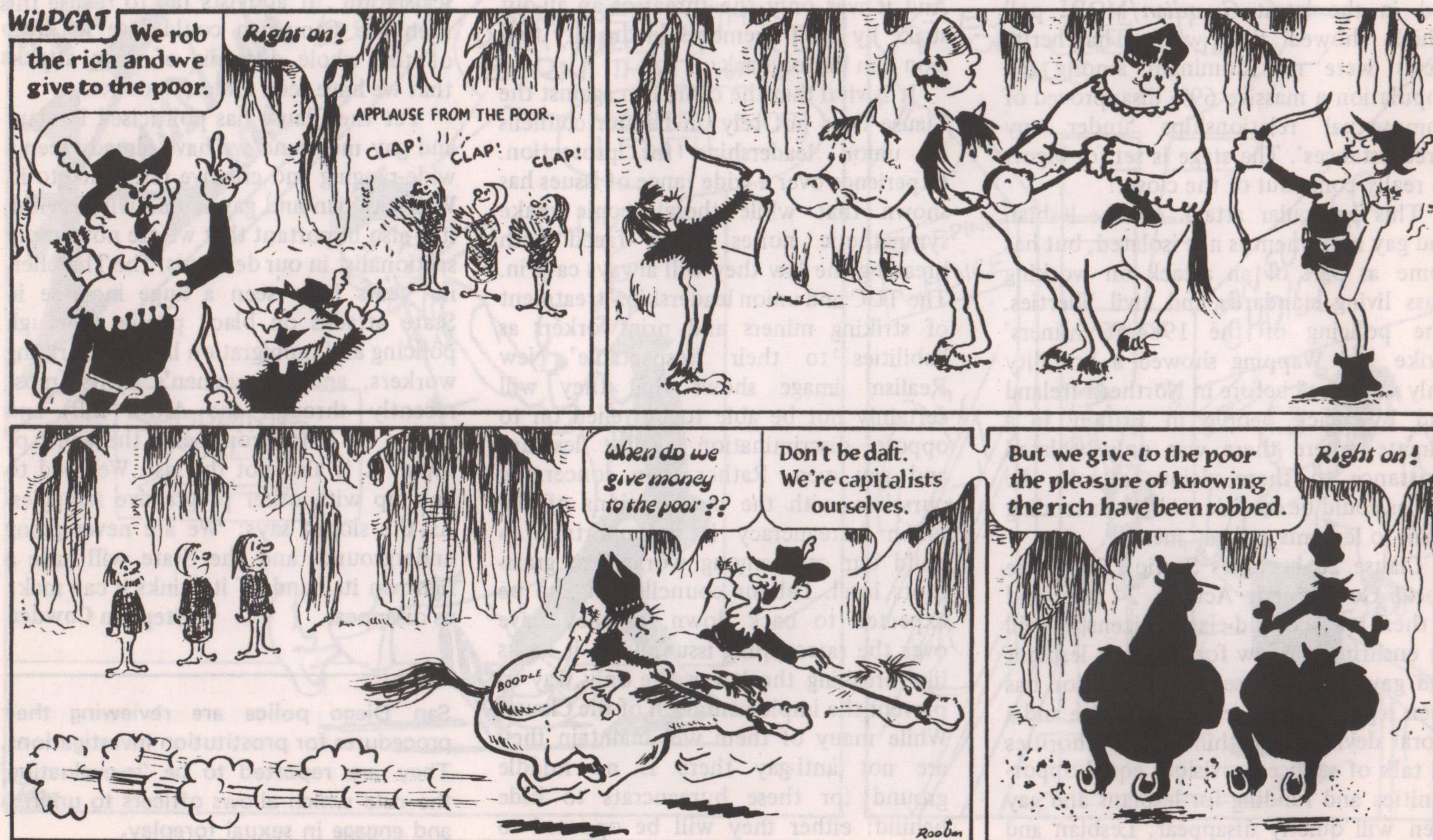
information from
Spanish Information Network

In response to threats (of voting against) from backbench Tory MPs, the government modified the new social security rules, restoring Housing Benefit to those who had lost more than £2.50 a week. Money restored amounted to £70 million, and the cost of restoring it came to £28 million — 40p in clerks' wages for every £1 paid out.

The latest published figures estimate that over ten million peasants were 'repressed' under the Stalinist forced farm collectivisation in the USSR in the early 1930s.

Latest statistics (for 1986) show a 6% drop in divorces. The number of marriages is rising.

Civil liberal opinion is distressed by the implications of the impending Poll Tax. The problem is monitoring students and ensuring that they make their contribution. Universities and colleges are to be required 'correctly and readily' to identify students to the appropriate authorities. And they haven't been consulted. Labour Party spokespeople see it ending in identity cards.



Bigots come out of the closet

IN December 1987 a Clause was added to the Local Government Bill which constituted the most far reaching attack on lesbian and gay rights in Britain for several decades. Clause 28 states: 'A local authority shall not — a) intentionally promote homosexuality . . . or, b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'.

This attack has not come out of the blue. The Moral Right has been intent on undoing the gains made by women's liberation and gay liberation in the 1960s and 1970s. The Labour leadership has similarly been attempting to distance itself from the very minimal stances in favour of lesbian and gay rights from its own left wing. When the Clause was first tabled in Parliament it was supported by the entire Labour front bench.

The background to this renewed hostility has been the health crisis around AIDS/HIV infection. This has been a god-send to bigots and religious fundamentalists, allowing them once more to link homosexuality with disease. Gay men and lesbians have been held to blame for the virus. Manchester's Police Chief, James 'Prophet of God' Anderton, views 'homosexuals and prostitutes swirling around in a cesspit of their own making' and the screaming 'Gay Plague' headline of *The Sun* and other tabloids set the tone and level of public discussion of the AIDS issue. The success of this campaign of homophobia was dramatically demonstrated in the latest *Guardian*/MORI poll which showed that while Thatcherite views were not dominant among the population a massive 69% disapproved of homosexual relationships 'under any circumstances'. The stage is set for bigots to really come out of the closet!

This particular attack on the lesbian and gay movement is not isolated, but has come as part of an attack on working class living standards and civil liberties. The policing of the 1984-85 miners' strike and Wapping showed a brutality only witnessed before in Northern Ireland and by black people in Britain. In a climate where there was only isolated resistance to these vicious attacks the Tories could be confident about extending them to lesbians and gay men.

Clause 28 becomes Section 28 of the Local Government Act on 24 May and is then law. Second-class citizenship will be enshrined in law for Britain's lesbians and gay men. Our sexual orientation has been legally circumscribed as a vice and a moral deviation. Within local authorities all talk of service provision, equal opportunities and funding for lesbians and gay men will quietly disappear. Lesbian and

gay groups will be increasingly denied very basic council facilities such as meeting rooms and this will particularly affect those groups with the least access to the commercial gay scene — disabled, black, lesbian and youth groups. Gay pubs and clubs will be threatened with closure, since their licences are issued by local authorities. When the Clause comes into effect this will be the first time lesbians have been brought within the law. The reference to 'pretended family relationships' will particularly affect lesbians involved in child custody cases and increase discrimination against lesbian mothers in particular.

While the Clause is targetted at local authorities it will have a definite knock-on effect. The police will become even more arrogant and brutal towards lesbians and gay men. Street attacks have multiplied threefold in the past four months and this can be expected to worsen. Queer-bashing plumbed new depths recently when a group of men fired shots into a gay pub in East London. The Clause is also a green light to employers to discriminate against lesbian and gay workers. A Trades Unionists Against Clause 28 group has been established to build support among rank and file workers for lesbian and gay rights at work. Given the references to schools in the wording of the Clause lesbian and gay teachers will be in the front line. Already one gay teacher in Bradford has been removed from the classroom by the local education authority. And it was only the threat of an all-out strike by NUT members in the city that won him his job back.

It is vital that the campaign against the Clause does not rely on Labour councils or union leaderships for protection. Experience over a wide range of issues has shown that while these people make sympathetic noises, when faced with breaking the law they will always cave in. The TUC and union leaderships' treatment of striking miners and printworkers as liabilities to their 'respectable' New Realism image shows that they will certainly not be able to be relied on to oppose discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Rather than concerning ourselves with the machinations of the union bureaucracy it is important to build our case among workers at grass-roots level. Labour councils can also be expected to back down, as they have over the ratecapping issue, when it looks like breaking the law is the only way to prevent the implementation of the Clause. While many of them will maintain they are not anti-gay there is no middle ground for these bureaucrats to hide behind: either they will be opposed to

the Clause or they will be policing it.

The Campaign against the Clause got off to a good start in terms of mobilising support, and the largest lesbian and gay demonstration seen to date in the UK spontaneously stopped at Whitehall opposite Downing Street and chanted: 'Burn it down'. That was on 9 January this year. However, the Campaign organisation has been dominated by those employed as lesbian and gay in the town halls and funded voluntary sector and has reproduced all the turgid bureaucracy of these organisations. This is not the way to run an activist campaign. These people have been more concerned with trying to salvage their own careers than with the wider attack on the lesbian and gay movement.

With the Clause about to become law there are a number of challenges facing the Campaign. It is arguable whether a concerted campaign for non-implementation can be quickly built among council employees. This will be in the face of opposition from both the councils themselves and the town hall union leaders. At the same time, a series of successful local campaigns would really throw a spanner in the Tory works. Also it is crucial to realise that once law the Clause will not affect all lesbians and gays uniformly. Those victimised first will be the most vulnerable sections of our community. As Janis and Anne pointed out in *Outwrite* (no. 63) we need to understand how the Clause will 'intersect with existing racist and sexist legislation'. If activists fail to realise this then the Campaign could lose its grasp of the whole dynamic of state attacks that we have seen under Thatcher.

Yet the Clause has politicised lesbians and gay men, and we have already seen a wide-ranging and creative resistance to it. While lesbian and gay self-activity is vital, it is also important that we are not simply sectionalists in our demands. The Thatcherite years have seen a huge increase in State attacks on black people (through policing and immigration laws), on striking workers, and on women's rights (most recently through the Alton Bill) and Clause 28 is far from being the worst of these. It is also not the last. We need to link up with other progressive struggles. As the slogan says: 'We are never going underground' and the State will have a fight on its hands if it thinks it can make us disappear.

Stephen Cowden

San Diego police are reviewing their procedures for prostitution investigations. They are reported to be 're-evaluating' the rule which allows officers to undress and engage in sexual foreplay.

Victims and Economic Dinosaurs

ALBERT Camus, after being a prominent resistance member during the Second World War, observed that the victims rapidly became the executioners. The observation has a parallel in the recent events in Northern Ireland. What the security forces of the State will never tell us is the truth. This may leak out subsequently, and it will undoubtedly be a different story from that our politicians tell us, as they make full use of the celebration of death for political purposes.

All participants in the struggle for power in that unfortunate province, celebrate death by firing guns. The similarity of their celebrations is symptomatic of the hypocrisy surrounding the whole grim business.

The hypocrisy of politicians of East and West, when they deprecate other people's violence, is shown up by the readiness of their various arms industries to supply all and sundry with various weapons of war. No doubt the manufacturers of weapons make a handsome profit, and the need for ammunition to feed the weapons makes sure that these nasty little wars continue to enhance their evil profits. The politicians who legitimise their trade throw up their hands in indignation when such weapons end up in the hands of some nutter, or in the hands of organisations not having the stamp of legality, who are after all only trying to secure such legality by the same means that the State secures its legality. The present prime example, to illustrate

the proposition that the State consists of successful terrorists, is of course the State of Israel, where the European States dumped their guilt and left the indigenous population to pay.

The sad fact of all these goings on is that the people at the bottom end of the social scale generally end up at both ends of the weapons, killing and being killed (though with sophisticated modern weapons the one at the firing end often needs technical training). The facility with which people allow themselves to continue to be pawns in the game of power, goaded on by sects of various religions against each other and often in the name of Almighty God, continues to amaze me.

This brings me to the other sort of mysticism that people are fooled by, that of high finance. Finance, of course, has little to do with economics. Finance is the means by which people are able to live off the people who create real wealth by the application of labour power to materials.

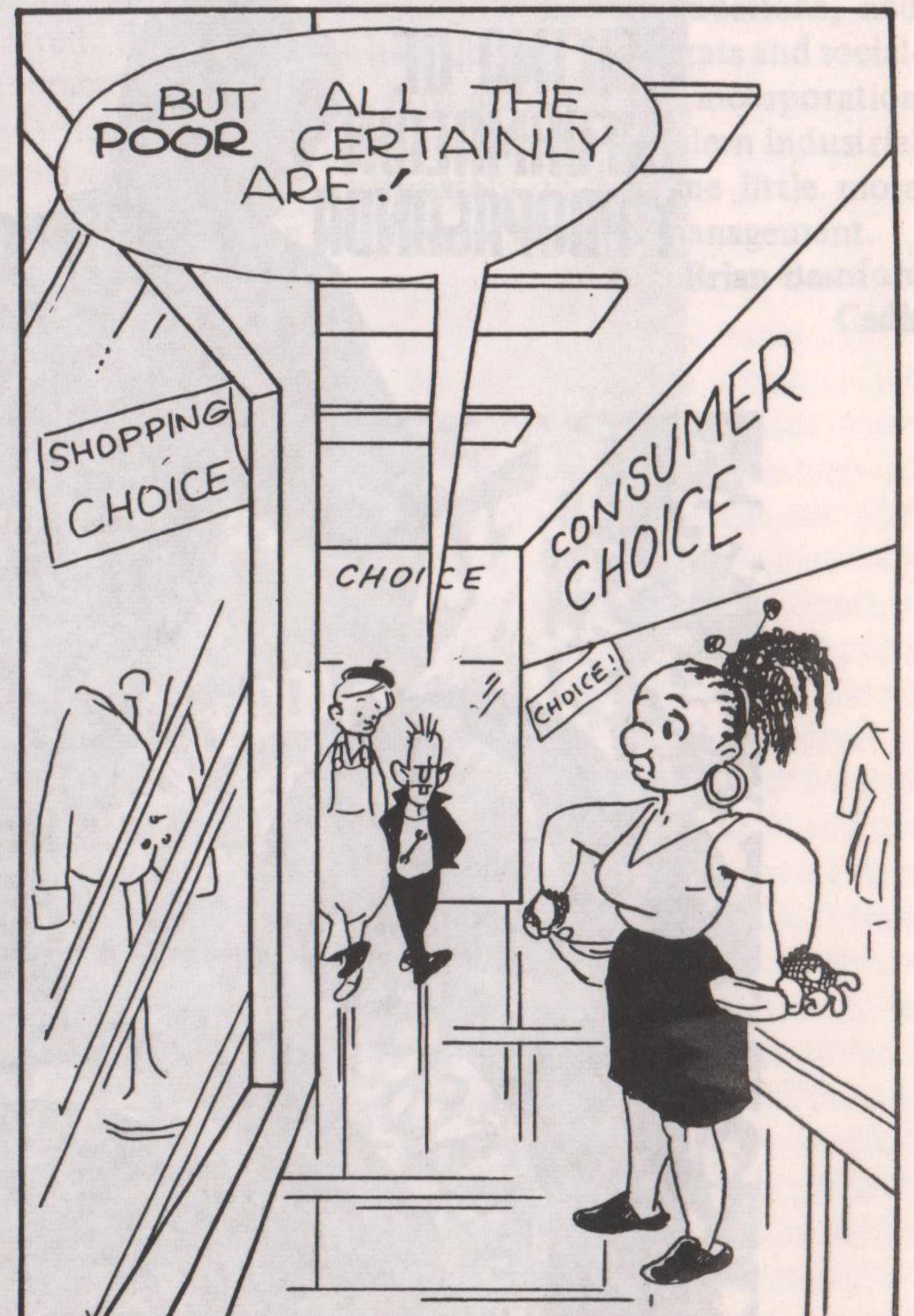
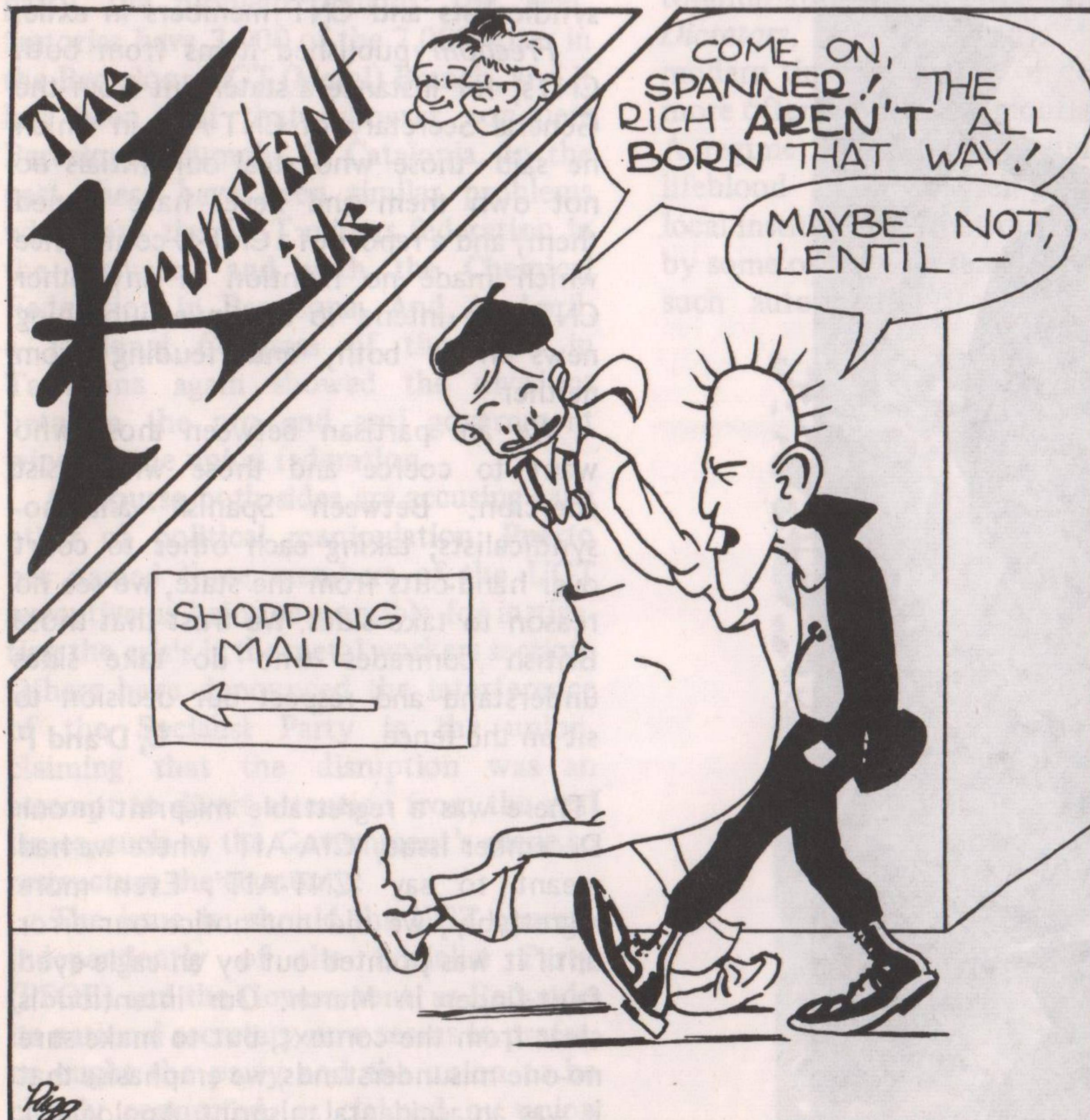
Economics should be the management of common resources and the application of said labour power to those resources. Finance creates unreasonable demands which are generated by the 'advertising industry'. There are so many activities that are described by the misnomer 'industry'. The arms industry, I suppose, could be described as the death industry, except that it is the dealers of death that pay and finance the activity not the

recipients or consumers. The arms trade seems to contradict the law of supply and demand, since the consumers once dead cease to be consumers, but the various establishments (and aspirants to the status of establishment) appear to be able to supply a never ending supply. The only exception to this is of course the nuclear arms industry, which once consumed will make an end to all consumers, of both these products and any other products the consumer society produces.

Finance has largely put an end to useful activity satisfying the social needs of the majority of people. Finance actually destroys capital, i.e. rain forests, fuel, soils, resources of minerals; destroys by pollution and destroys people. It is an irrational force like religion. It is dishonest and is organised theft of resources that belong to everybody. The so-called opposition parties are part of the fraud, because once they are married to it and get their feet under the table and noses in the trough they become extremely anxious when it is proposed that people take action independent of the so-called democratic process.

Society is run by dinosaurs of every party who cannot see that every human system should enable all the people to benefit from the fruits of human ingenuity. It is run irrationally in ways which are costly in real capital terms and threaten human existence.

Alan Albon



Freedom and the two CNTs

IN FEBRUARY, a comrade from the Blackberry anarchist group in Sheffield visited the *Freedom* office, and urged us to investigate the facts concerning the claims of two Spanish organisations, CNT-AIT and CNT-U, to be the authentic CNT. Here is what we have learned so far. We welcome additional information *citing primary sources* (we are well supplied with dogmatic reiteration from both sides, and do not require any more, thank you).

Some historical facts

CNT, a Spanish anarcho-syndicalist trade union, was founded in 1910. It affiliated to the IWMA, now called IWA (International Workers' Association), whose Spanish initials are AIT.

When Franco took power the trade unions (CNT and the socialist UGT) were banned, their property (office buildings) confiscated and their organisations forced to flee the country or go underground. Those parts of CNT which went underground were fragmented by persecution, and had more contact with CNT in exile than with each other.

Rifts developed between CNT in exile and the underground CNT. We do not know why. UGT was similarly divided but did not develop similar rifts.

After the restoration of electoral

democracy in Spain, trade unions were again permitted, and five separate CNTs emerged. The one which included most of the returned exiles, and so had most international contacts, immediately set about regenerating the IWA, and was therefore called CNT-AIT. The others were called CNT-V, CNT-PPCC, CCT-CNT and CNT-O. At a 'unification conference' in 1983 these latter four amalgamated as the CNT-U.

The elected socialist government announced that it would pay for the property confiscated by Franco. UGT, the government's political ally, was immediately in funds. The money due to the CNT has not yet been paid, as the identity of the 'historic' CNT is in dispute.

In August 1984, the General Secretary of CNT-AIT applied to the courts on behalf of his organisation for a judicial ruling: (a) that only one organisation has a legal right to the initials CNT and the 'historic patrimony' (i.e. the money); and (b) that the CNT-AIT is the said organisation. The other CNTs objected. Lawyers were hired to put the case for and against.

The court published its decision on 24 June 1986. Point (a) of the application was granted. As to point (b), however, the court found from the documentary evidence that the sole owner of the

initials CNT was not the CNT-AIT, but CNT-V, now part of CNT-U.

CNT-AIT appealed against the court finding. The appeal court ruled in December 1987 that the decision of the lower court was correct. The CNT-AIT has appealed against the judgement, and the CNT-U against a secondary finding, that the Congress of Valencia (1936) was 'unofficial'. The decision of the Third Instance Court is now pending. We do not know whether this will be the final outcome, or whether the Spanish judicial system allows still further appeals.

During the state-sponsored works committee elections of 1987, CNT-AIT campaigned for a boycott (though at least on CNT-AIT member stood as an Independent), and CNT-U put up candidates. Results were disappointing for both.

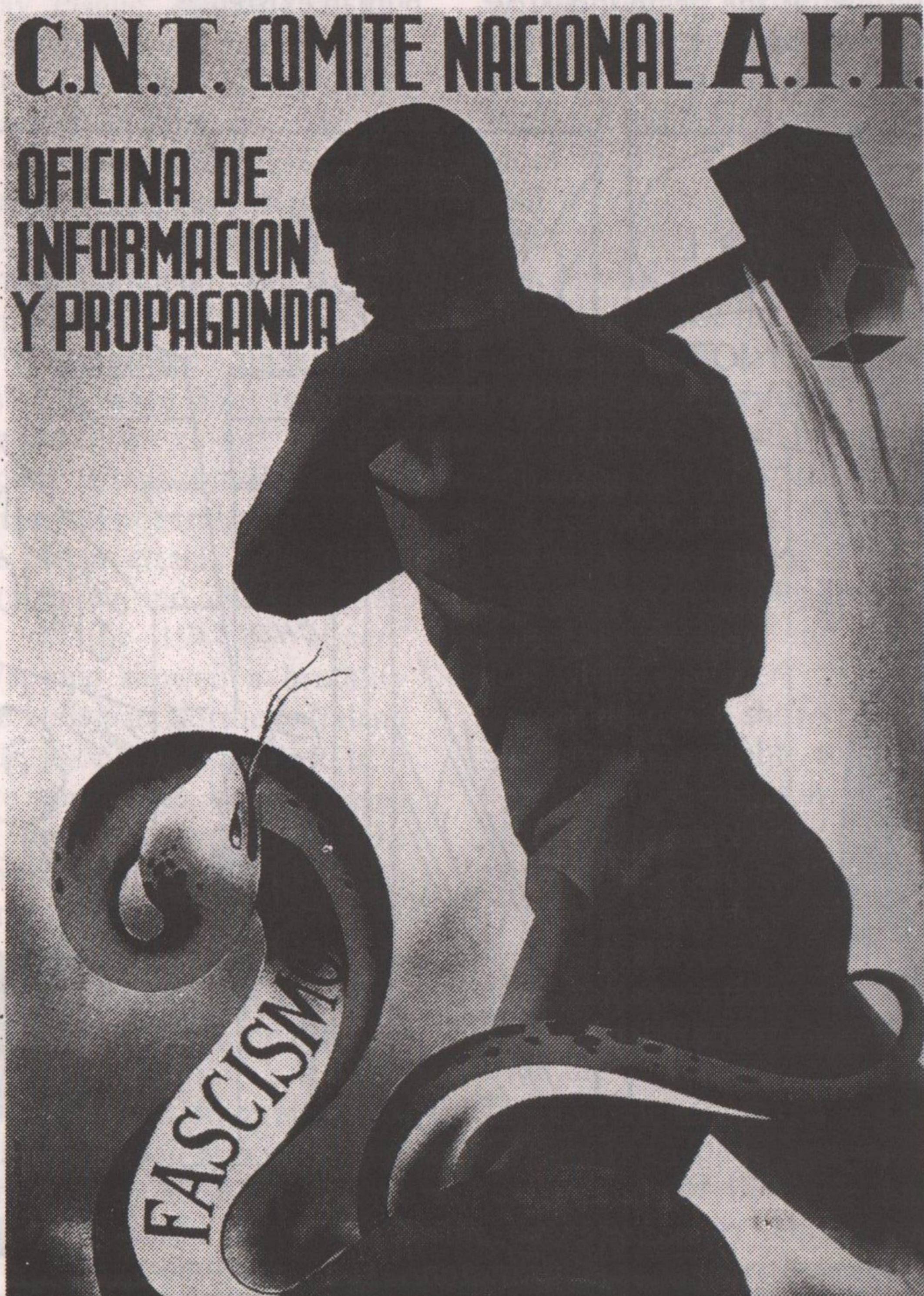
Freedom's attitude

The prominent CNT-AIT militant Pepe Gomez told our correspondent in Spain, 'I find it odd that a movement such as the DAM should develop internal problems over matters which are internal issues of policy in the Spanish movement' (*Freedom* September 1987; DAM is the British affiliate of IWA). We do not know of problems within DAM, but there are fierce quarrels in Britain among other anarcho-syndicalists, and we certainly find these odd, though of course we understand how personal friendships developed between British anarcho-syndicalists and CNT members in exile.

Freedom published items from both CNTs, for instance a statement from the General Secretary of CNT-AIT in which he said 'those who steal our initials do not own them and never have owned them', and a report of a CNT-U conference which made no mention of any other CNT. We intend to continue publishing news from both, and feuding from neither.

We are partisan between those who want to coerce and those who resist coercion. Between Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, taking each other to court over hand-outs from the state, we see no reason to take sides. We trust that those British comrades who do take sides understand and respect our decision to sit on the fence. **C, D and F**

[There was a regrettable misprint in our December issue, 'CIA-AIT' where we had meant to say 'CNT-AIT'. Even more regrettably, we did not notice our error until it was pointed out by an eagle-eyed fault-finder in March. Our intention is clear from the context, but to make sure no-one misunderstands, we emphasise that it was an accidental misprint. Apologies.]



Political connection and the UGT

HOW close ought a trade union to get to a political party or government?

Not a controversial question for anarchists, yet one which constantly plagues the socialists and their unions. Indeed it has become the basis of the most serious split yet in the ranks of Spain's most important union — the socialist UGT metalworkers syndicate.

For months the UGT and its national leader, Nicolas Redondo, have been trying to distance the union from the policies of the socialist government of the PSOE. In March this approach suffered a setback at the UGT Metalworkers Congress, when a pro-government 'seat' delegation led by Antonio Puerta (Sec. of UGT Metal) tried to hold an alternative Congress in the same building.

Serious disturbances followed: when public order stewards intervened to close the dissident Congress they were faced with the froth from fire extinguishers, and were beaten back by pro-government trade unionists, armed with wooden poles and other objects. About forty people were involved in the punch-up, a number of injuries were reported and the Policia Nacional called in by the UGT executive to restore order.

Now the UGT Commission for Conflicts has reviewed the matter, and Puerta has been dismissed from his post, and several other union leaders suspended.

Yet for the UGT, and Redondo's line on the UGT's independence from the party, the problem remains: the 'seat' factories have 3,000 of the 7,000 votes in the Barcelona UGT (Metal) Branch, and it has been said that whoever conquers Barcelona triumphs in Catalonia. In the past there have been similar problems with both the UGT miners federation in the Asturias, and with the Chemical Federation in Barcelona. And, in April, a Regional Congress of the UGT in Tarragona again showed the divisions between the pro and anti government wings of the union federation.

Of course both sides are accusing each other of political manipulation. Puerta has named three members of the UGT executive as being responsible for instigating the crisis in the metal workers section. Others have denounced the interference of the Socialist Party in the union, claiming that the disruption was an attempt to divert attention from the real issues, such as the Government's plans to restructure the economy.

The issue is: should the UGT operate independently of the Socialist Party (PSOE) and the Government, as Redondo its national secretary now seems to prefer, or ought the party and the union to be closely connected, as claimed by union

leaders like Puerta (UGT Metal) and Matilde Fernandez (UGT Chemical).

Industrial syndicalism

This dilemma is steeped in the bones of the state socialist concept of trade union participation in party politics. Only last month two left-wing journalists, Geoffrey Goodman and Richard Clements, argued in *The Financial Times* that the 'organic relationship between them (in this case the British Labour Party and the unions) is inescapable.' Inescapable for them, '... because industrial syndicalism has never had a future and never will in a democratic society.'

While 'industrial syndicalism' may or may not have a future, it has clearly got a presence, if only in a half-baked form, in the shopfloor organisations of both Britain and Spain. Paradoxically the deadliest danger to democratic society, in the West, often comes from the democrats and their State institutions, which suffocate local initiative and independence.

When British trade union bosses like Eric Hammond (*The Independent*, April 1988), General Secretary of the electrician's EETPU, urge the unions to become 'part of the modern state', they are eagerly echoed in the editorials of the liberal and democratic press.

Of course, the observation of a democratic suicidal streak is not new: Ignazio Silone in his republished study of totalitarian degeneration (*School for Dictators*, 1962 edition), declared 'In modern times the death of democracy is, more often than not, camouflaged suicide. A regime of freedom should receive its lifeblood from the self-government of local institutions. When democracy, driven by some of its baser tendencies, suppresses such autonomies, it is only devouring

itself.' Once the party bureaucracy takes over the union, and the independence of the workers' organisation is destroyed, it becomes harder to speak of democracy.

This is what has happened to the Spanish UGT, which has undermined the independence of the Spanish workers' movement through its attachment to the Socialist Party and the government. Meanwhile, vested interests have built up which make the struggle for greater trade union independence from the Party a painful exercise.

And yet the UGT needs to distance itself from the government, because Redondo and his union executive know that they compete for members and influence with the communist trade union federation, the CCOO, and to a lesser extent the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. Recently Alain Touraine, Director of the School of Social Science (Advanced Studies) in Paris, commenting on Spanish trade unionism (interview in *Diario 16* 3rd April 1988) said: 'I have the impression that Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) has more strength among the working class. And this explains the spirit which now exists within the UGT to establish their autonomy with regard to the Socialist Party.' He insists that trade unions are of their nature organisations committed to the articulation of social conflict, and as such cannot properly function as agencies of the State.

A view which vividly contrasts with Eric Hammond's recommendations, and those British liberals, democrats and socialists who now advocate the incorporation of the unions into the 'modern industrial state', ultimately to become little more than a branch of business management.

Brian Bamford
Cadiz



Co-ops Anarchist or Bourgeois (or a bit of both)

ALAN ALBON's article on the Food Conference (March) was much appreciated and gave an idea of some of the activities that parts of the retail Co-op Movement are engaged in.

In order to enlighten *Freedom* readers further, I am giving here a brief outline of the history and structure of the Co-op Movement in this country with occasional reference to other movements.

The Co-op Movement in Britain grew out of a number of strands of popular activity in the years leading up to the early 19th century: peasant revolts, crafts guilds, the Diggers, Levellers, etc. Around the turn of the 18/19th century there were attempts in many places to set up self help groups, societies, unions and communities, based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Indeed, the French Revolution was a major influence on these activities — one reason why it scared the British ruling class witless!

Most of these 'co-operative societies' collapsed for one reason or another, usually linked to their lack of resources: land or capital. Occasionally those societies that existed for mutual trading collapsed in hard times due to the extensive granting of credit — which was never redeemed.

These societies covered many different activities: manufacturing, farming, housing and retail. What they all had in common was the purpose of moving towards the *Co-operative Commonwealth* which was defined in very general terms but had equality as a primary value.

In 1844 a group, mostly of unemployed weavers, in Rochdale hit upon a formula, or set of standing orders, which enabled their retail society to survive and flourish. These rules (see box) were both adopted by existing societies, once their merits were appreciated, and used to set up new co-operative societies. The original group, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, existed as an autonomous society until only a few years ago when it merged with a large neighbouring Co-op Society. Its name has now been taken by a society set up to run the Pioneers' original shop in Rochdale as a museum.

The 'Co-op' idea grew rapidly during the succeeding century, until there were over 1,400 individual, autonomous, local, co-op societies. At first, societies undertook many activities, though gradually concentrating upon retail trading, and eventually formed several specialist federations: the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS), which was set up to produce, manufacture and supply goods to the retail Co-ops; and the Co-operative Union, which was set up to act as the

'parliament' of the Movement, are the largest of these.

In the early years of this century the movement was heavily influenced by 'democratic centralist' ideas from people like the Webbs, who had set their faces firmly against syndicalism or any form of workers control. These ideas still guide the retail movement today.

Another debate has also run through the movement for the whole of its existence: the question of political neutrality was one of the original 'Rochdale Principles' (see box), but this reflected a social context where voting was confined to the privileged few and no party represented the working classes. The political activists won out and the Co-op Party (a department of the Co-operative Union) was formed in 1917. This has the purposes of protecting and advancing the interests and aims of the movement. The debate is still continuing, though with a certain tension between 'traders' (management and their supporters) and 'activists', lay members who are regarded with great suspicion and blamed for all the ills of the movement.

Since the Second World War the Co-op Movement has suffered severe setbacks: changing society, increased competition and inefficient management (both lay and professional) have resulted in the Co-op's retail market share slipping to a third of its peak. The decline seems to have bottomed out, however, and the movement survives, with less than a hundred Societies due to mergers and with a drastically reduced number of shops, especially in the South.

What has survived, also, is the movement's idealism: the Co-op, for instance, has always supported the peace movement and a Co-op van has just led the Aldermaston March. Many other

social benefits have flowed from activities of Co-op members and the support of individual societies.

The recent burgeoning of worker and housing co-ops, and of credit unions, community businesses and other forms of direct action, has owed much to the support of sections of the Co-op Movement. You have to remember that, in a movement with around ten million members, a multitude of opinions and attitudes will be found, as well as a great deal of apathy!

In many other countries, the Rochdale ideas linked with varying indigenous currents of mutual aid, and co-operative movements exist in over 70 states representing nearly 500 million co-operators. The International Co-operative Alliance which represents them is the largest non-governmental, non-commercial organisation in the world.

With the rise of the 'new' co-ops (housing, worker and credit) since the mid-1970s the movement is once more beginning to rediscover its roots. The tensions still exist in the movement, between the activists and the traders but more often than previously these are creative rather than destructive.

Kropotkin (in *Mutual Aid*) regarded the British Co-op Movement as bourgeois: it certainly has members and factions with bourgeois aspirations, but similarly there are sections with socialist and — yes — anarchist tendencies as well. It is certainly not a movement to be ignored by any on the 'left' — whichever 'left' you are part of!

The concept of the Co-operative Commonwealth survives, though dismissed as 'utopian' by many marxists. With marxism's feet of clay becoming more and more exposed, however, the validity of the idea is becoming more attractive and, more importantly, practicable. Co-operation could be transformed into anarchy in action!

Tim Pearce

ROCHDALE PRINCIPLES

Originally these were:

1. Open Membership
2. Democratic Control
3. Dividend on Purchases
4. Limited Interest on Capital
5. Political and Religious Neutrality
6. Cash Trading
7. Promotion of Education

Some of these have been dropped as the Society has changed, but time has reaffirmed and strengthened the validity of the remainder.

For more information about worker co-operatives please contact:

ICOM (the Industrial Common Ownership Movement)

Vassalli House
20 Central Road
Leeds LS1 6DE

or

London ICOM
8 Bradbury Street
London N16 8JN

For other information, the Member Relations Officer of your local co-op.

National Front News

THERE is a division among fascists (as there is among anarchists) between those who hope to achieve their aims by convincing people, and those who prefer to express their personal commitment by actions which antagonise people.

When success looks possible, the two sides amalgamate. The urbane Jean-Marie Le Pen is cheered on by all the racist thugs of France. Hitler achieved power with the aid of the vicious Sturm-Abteilung intimidating the opposition (with characteristic decisiveness he had them murdered wholesale when they later became a political embarrassment).

A couple of decades ago, when fascism in Britain was on the up-and-up, and John Bean of the then British National Party achieved the biggest vote ever achieved by a fascist party parliamentary candidate (surpassing even Moseley in the 1930s), arguing fascists and thug fascists joined together in the National Front. Now that fascism is in decline, supplanted by Thatcherism in the affections of reactionary voters, the National Front has split.

Freedom has been sent some recent issues of *National Front News*, the paper of the argumentative faction, which includes the statement:

The National Directorate wish to make it clear that *The Flag* and *Vanguard* are not National Front publications . . . They are produced by a small clique of reactionaries, crooks and drunks expelled from the movement last year.

I have never seen *Vanguard* or *The Flag*, but I am told *The Flag* issued a statement to the effect that:

National Front News is no longer a National Front publication. Its Publishers, the self-styled 'National Directorate of the National Front', are a small, middle class clique who have been expelled, following the failure of their conspiracy to take over the organisation.

Fascists may choose who expelled whom.

Most people will be disgusted with both alternatives.

The difference of theory appears to be that the *Flag/Vanguard* faction detest blacks and will have nothing to do with them, while the 'National Directorate' faction is happy to co-operate with black racists who want to set up a black homeland in Africa. The January issue of *NF News* has a front page photograph of Patrick Harrington of the Directorate with Osiris Akkebala, 'Chief Elder of the Pan-African Inter-National Movement'.

Akkebala thinks the NF plan for 'repatriation' of black people to Africa is 'not racist and very humane'. The whites, he says, carried the blacks into slavery out of Africa, and it is very proper that they should take financial responsibility for sending them back. Black racists and white racists agree that race mixing is 'racial genocide', and that they should co-operate against 'multi-racial tyranny'. Their attitude to people of mixed ancestry is not stated, but the implication is that such people would be isolated, or if necessary eliminated, so that racial purity could be restored.

A leaflet sent out with one issue has 'Proud to be black?' on one side, with a quotation from the American racist Louis Farrakhan, and 'Proud to be white?' on the other side, with appalling stuff about racialists being motivated not by hatred of others but by love of their own kind.

No, I am not proud to be white. I am childishly proud of my accomplishments, but being 'white' (actually I am pink) is pure accident. I find no compensation for my individual failures in the fact that I have physical characteristics in common with more successful individuals.

One obvious reason why *NF News* is sent to *Freedom* is the hope that we would mention them. All right, they've got it. Another reason may be that they think anarchists and fascists have something in common. Their statement of

principles includes 'Parliamentary representation is a fraud', and 'Power must be devolved to the lowest possible level', and 'These changes cannot be brought about by tinkering within the system . . . they can only spring from a national revolution'.

But the changes envisaged include 'well equipped national defence forces involving the entire population', and a right to self-determination for 'peoples' as distinct from persons. Their talk of 'freedom' and 'revolution' and 'opposing the system' does not mean they wish to widen the scope of individuals. They intend the reverse.

I would not insult my anus by using *National Front News* as toilet paper. DR

LETTER

Cultural Identity

IN his (or her) article, 'The Horrors of Cultural Identity' (April), DR is confusing the concept of cultural identity with the abuse of it. It is just not true that 'people who are into cultural identity think their own culture superior and others inferior or even worthless,' and that 'they are willing to oppress or eradicate people of other cultures'. The examples given by DR are quite exceptional cases, resulting from religious and political fanaticism. The vast majority of people belonging to countries with strong cultural identities such as — to mention only some in Europe — Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, France and Spain, have no desire whatsoever to eliminate the cultures of one another. As a Scot, I am very proud of Scotland's cultural heritage, but I do not consider it in any way superior to that of any other country. A spectacular land in grave danger at present of having its distinctive cultural identity destroyed is Tibet. Does DR really think that this would be a good thing?

The logic of DR's position is that people should stop thinking of themselves as Jews, Arabs, Palestinians, Irish, or whatever, and become an amorphous, undifferentiated mass. This is both impossible and undesirable. The sense of cultural identity and tradition is a fine and precious one, which adds colour and variety to our life on this planet. And that it is not incompatible with anarchism is shown by the letter you published in the same issue from 'A Jewish Anarchist', in which the writer proclaims (my italics) 'We are Jewish anarchists because we identify with Jewish history and culture.'

John L. Broom



Kathe Kollwitz

THE tragedy of liberalism is that while it doth protest the disease, it fears the cure. As with the vicar's daughters, they weep for the hungry and distribute food among the deserving poor, but they can not contemplate any solution. And in fairness to them there was no solution but the voice of liberalism in the pages of English literature which was Dickens. An honest and a worthy social observer of his cruel age, he sought out and recorded the human misery and exploitation that was the keystone and the foundation stone of his society. In that world of literary comic grotesqueness, good people were good and evil people were evil, and Dickens' only solution, for which he must be faulted, against the evils of his hour was a free Christmas goose and a kindly rich man playing 'Arts Council Grant' to the infinitely tiny minority who have won the warmth of the rich man's smile. Rather Pickwick than Himmler, but the hot goose and the golden sovereign can only act as balm for the liberal conscience. As for the liberal so too for the artist, for in the piggy bank of human suffering there are good pickings and many a third rate reputation has been custom built into the major arts league by recording their tears in bad verse, literature or the visual arts.

We richly mock the sad sacks of the stalinist and western establishment culture committees as they publicly eat shit for their place in authorities' rat races, but they are but one side of the coin, for many an artist of brush and pen has played bleeding heart with their good eye on their pop ratings in the best selling cause of the day. Emotion gives the palm but time provides oblivion. Germany in the nineteen twenties provided that social cess pool of human misery that offered a fruitful feeding ground for those who wished to sup, and according to your sexual inclinations, your politics, your greed, your humanity, your cruelty or your artistic talents, one could find a cause or a cult to pacify one's appetite or ambition. In that traumatic period in Germany, nihilism or despair became the order of the day and the culture that produced Dadaism in the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916 marched by easy steps into the art of protest as an end in itself. German art has always been physical and it followed that the emaciated sixteenth century Christ of Grünewald should evolve into the 1920 hungry German working class, while the brutish, grotesque sixteenth century peasants become the twentieth century German wealthy, but as in the sixteenth century only despair.

In the age of Dix and Grosz, of Heartfield, Rottluff and of Arntz, Kathe Kollwitz made her mark, but as the

caring liberal. She recorded the stark misery of the German working class and particularly the women and children, and in the 1930s her reputation was world wide among the cultural left, but in the 1950s when McCarthyism was persecuting the American liberal middle class, her reputation lost favour, for the left, then as now, was on the defensive and angrily dismissed her as a worthy 'illustrator' and an uncommitted emotional spectator. That there is a measure of truth in this must be accepted. She drew for years for *Simplicissimus* and allowed the editors to coin their own captions. Because of Nazi pressure, she resigned from the Prussian Academy of Arts, but as the old pals act went into action she was pressured to rejoin the Academy, but she chose to stay among the 'censored'. Hitler came into power in 1933, and in that period her work was exhibited in the Berlin Academy. She had her sorrows, for her son died in the 1914 war and her grandson died on the Russian front in 1942. She was a supporter of worthy causes from the CP to the Salvation Army, and let no one dare fault her for that.

Like the art of William Blake, her sad stylised black and white drawings were used by any one with a cause, be it left or right, for as with Goya it was a brilliant but personal uninvolved of men's and women's savagery to each other. But women owe Kathe Kollwitz a debt, for at this hour of the day, when the British Parliament debates the question of abortion, Kathe Kollwitz fought that fight in visual black and white and with her support for the Erfurt State Clinic for Women. That her work was sentimental and that she idealised the strikers, the workers and the women broken with drudgery is no crime, for here her talent lay and she used it for what she believed to be the good fight, and in the fullness of time maybe she was right, but only mindless time holds that answer and, comrades, we will never know. Those for whom she protested rejected her, and those she protested against ignored her, for she was a caring liberal in a brutal society, as in 1988, and in those brutal societies, or your version of the 'just society' that men and women create in the name of the public good, the naive liberal and the free ranging lone anarchist voice is forever needed to save us from the wrath of the righteous, and Kathe died on 22 April 1945. Salute.

Arthur Moyses

And for those who are interested in Kathe, there is *Kathe Kollwitz*, translated from the German 1981, from Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 25 Nassington Road, London NW3.

Southern Community

SOUTHERN Community (*Comunidad del Sur*) was founded in Montevideo (Uruguay) in 1955. Its aim was to become an alternative micro-society inspired by libertarian principles. Members worked and lived in the community.

For many years this community developed very successfully, having set up a printing workshop, a publishing house, a pottery workshop, a farm, a carpentry workshop, a study centre and a small housing estate. They worked, lived, ate, talked, enjoyed themselves and brought up their children together. All property belonged to the community and everyone shared what they had. They nursed their sick and elderly regardless of how much each one ever had or was able to contribute. They had a stable population of about fifty members. All decisions were taken by consensus and there was no authority.

In 1976, when a newly arrived military dictatorship signalled Uruguay's bleakest period, the community was subject to repression and had to leave the country. Complex circumstances in the exile provoked a fragmentation of the group. Some members were imprisoned and tortured in Uruguay and Argentina. A surviving core stayed in precarious conditions in Peru for a year. Finally, in 1977, the community was able to reconstitute itself in Stockholm and some Swedish comrades joined in.

The existing group in Sweden, now called 'Norden Community', has a publishing house, a printing workshop and a small block of flats where they live. In October 1987, having improved the political situation in Uruguay, some members of the Stockholm community returned to Montevideo and managed to recreate the Southern Community with new latin-american members. They bought a house and established a coffee-bar, a bookshop, a library, a study centre, a printing workshop, a pottery workshop, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms. They intend to purchase a piece of land to set up an ecological farm and a housing estate.

This group needs international help. Donations will be appreciated. Libertarian voluntary workers of any nationality will be welcome to stay and help either in Stockholm or in Montevideo. Applications for permanent membership will also be considered. If you are interested please write to:

Comunidad
Box 15 128
S-104 65 Stockholm
Sweden

or phone John Hill on 01-554 0179.

Anarchism as part of Modernism

'MODERNISM' is a popular word in the arts, especially for those who believe that we are now in a post-modernist era. It is used to refer to those 'great' authors, poets, architects, painters, sculptors, composers, etc., who revolutionised their art during the last hundred years. If we consider the threads that connect such diverse people as James Joyce, T. S. Elliot, Corbusier, Chagal, Moore and Bartok, we may find the basis for recognising 'modernism' within the art of politics. If we examine the reasons for saying that 'modernism' starts in the 1870s or in 1912, and ends in 1939 or '45; we may find that anarchism is caught up in a time warp, although there may be a way out.

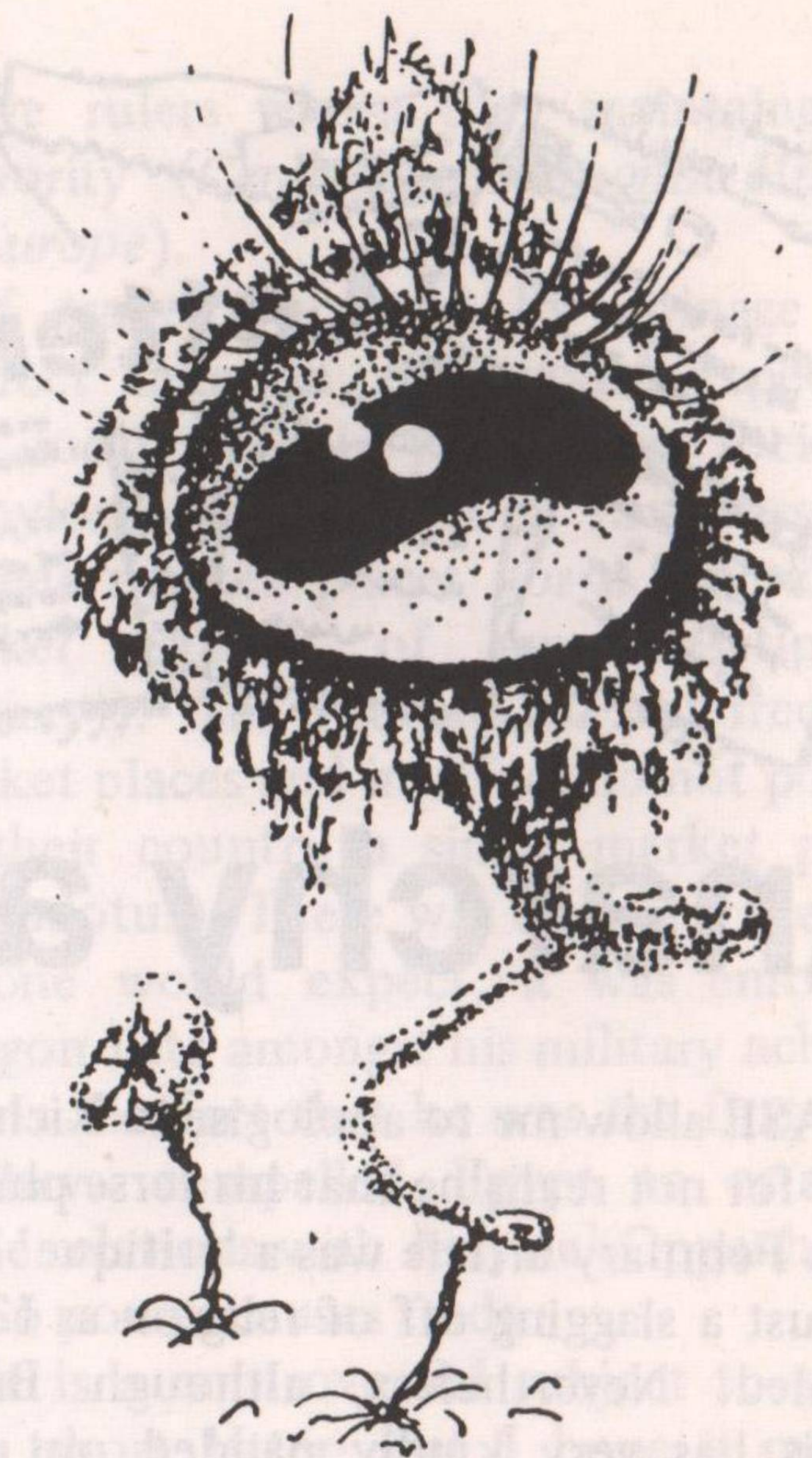
Modernism struggles with silence. Like the great Eastern mystics, it is what cannot be said, represented, played or built that is most important. The limits of the imagination, negative, capability, the god of the gaps, emptiness; must be exposed to human view. In literature, Modernism pushes language to its asymptote, attempting to express the unsayable. Musical pieces have been written using a single note, or a set length of silence. Group psychotherapy makes much of silence, and our fear of it. Amongst anarchists, there is always a tension between those who do, and keep very quiet about it, and those who communicate, but rarely about what they do. In the pages of *Freedom*, I always look for what is *not* being written about. Anarchist papers rarely imitate the style of the *Mirror* or even the *Guardian*, for most of the writers are consciously seeking to find their own style. Finding one's own voice necessitates throwing aside the deadweight of history and culture.

Modernism is said to have ended with the Second World War: concentration camps and nuclear war were too huge for the arts to enclose them in its representation of life. These events were the absolute in silence; which only the naive or insensitive would attempt to use as the subject for creative production. It is as if civilisation lost its nerve, and took a step back from the abyss. Painters retreated back to realism, novelists concentrated on telling a story and architecture ceased to see function as a source of beauty. Of course there were exceptions, but generally it became acceptable to produce work for a market, borrow styles from any period of history, as long as the sale was made. Anarchists, however, have seen the holocausts in terms of State oppression: horrific as they are, they are only a symptom of that universal disease which

gives the individual's natural powers to Government. The death of a friend through the underfunding of the National Health Service is more serious to me than the possible destruction of life on earth. We must fight the State where it affects us most.

Modernism made sexuality the legitimate centre of the arts. The subconscious depths of Virginia Woolfe, the physicality of Lawrence's prose, the sensuality of Barbara Hepworth's sculptures, the passion of the 'Rites of Spring': all make sex as central to modern communication as it was peripheral to the Victorians. Anarchists of course have been in the forefront of discussing the politics of sex: from A. S. Neil to articles in *Spare Rib*. The actual balance between political action and sexual politics is perhaps best captured in Litvinov's exciting trilogy.

It is not by highlighting sex that Modernists have excited the censor's ban. Modernism is essentially shocking. It probes the future, where it sees only cataclysm and barbarism: accurate predictions of the Second World War, and of present British politics. This prophetic vision is the key to Modernism. The Post-Modernist arts cannot risk pessimistic futurism: it does not sell. The past is more comfortable, in style and subject matter. Nostalgia is

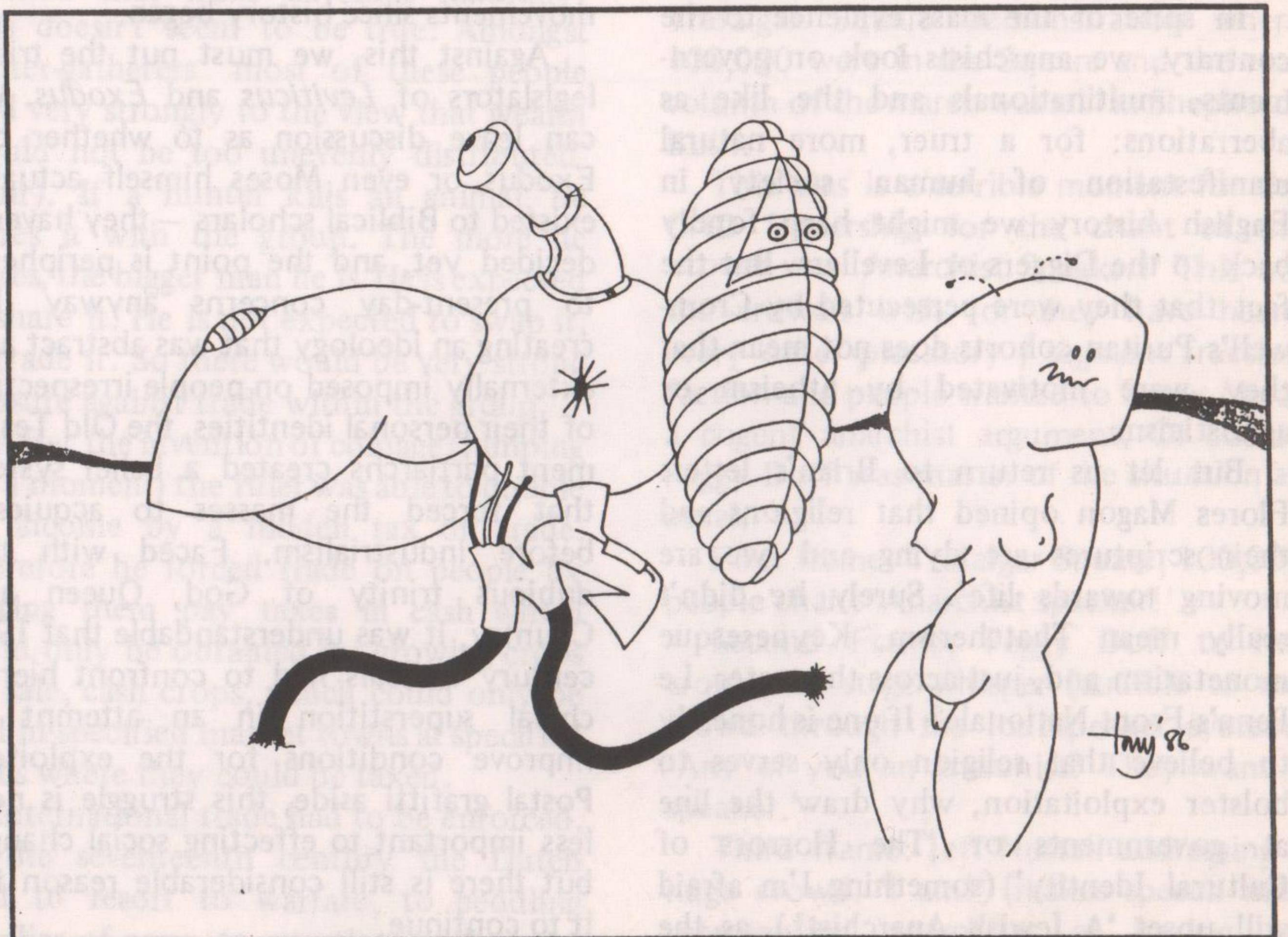


here to stay: Heritage rules OK. *Freedom* indulged in its own nostalgia with its centenary mag., though I feel that such an accurate understanding of history is necessary if we are to go forward. As anarchists aim to liberate the individual from the power of money, they will continue to provide employment for censors.

I fear I have provided a rather blunt offensive weapon for the task of art criticism. Perhaps readers will assist me to sharpen it.

John Myhill

The decorations on this page are taken from *Trafik 27*
They are not intended as illustrations to the article





Anarchy and Religion

PLEASE allow me to apologise to Richard Hunt for not realising that his terse phrase in his February article was a 'critique' and not just a slugging off of religion as I had assumed. Nevertheless, although Brian Morris has very kindly padded out the anti-religion argument with a few prominent and not so prominent names, and despite 'A Jewish Anarchist's' rejection of religion (April), I remain to be convinced.

I mentioned in my earlier letter that religion is open to abuse and in doing so likened it to guns, etc. What I should rather have said was that it is like society itself. As anarchists we believe that human society is capable of breaking out of its hierarchical mould and of allowing individuals to live a free, full and enriching life; we believe that most individuals have everything to gain from such a change. However, we cannot deny that at times our own experience might lead us to doubt that. So, just as the people Brian named may have been capable of looking 'objectively' at religion and pronouncing rotten, we can imagine an objective observer condemning all human society as naturally hierarchical, because that's the situation in which most of us are living today.

In spite of the mass evidence to the contrary, we anarchists look on governments, multinationals and the like as aberrations: for a truer, more natural manifestation of human society in English history we might harp fondly back to the Diggers or Levellers. But the fact that they were persecuted by Cromwell's Puritan cohorts does not mean that they were motivated by atheism or agnosticism.

But let us return to Brian's letter: Flores Magon opined that religions and their scriptures are dying and 'we are moving towards life'. Surely he didn't really mean Thatcherism, Keynesesque monetarism and, just across the water, Le Penn's Front Nationale? If one is honestly to believe that religion only serves to bolster exploitation, why draw the line at governments or 'The Horrors of Cultural Identity' (something I'm afraid will upset 'A Jewish Anarchist'), as the

sole hierarchies worthy of destruction? Why not include the family? Let's go the whole hog! After all, who was it who used to force us to go to school? Feel free, stick chewing gum on the seat of dad's favourite chair or scratch a 10p bit down the side of mum's car next time you go round.

That's more than enough from me.

Roderic

IS RODERICK Vassey's advocacy of religious anarchism perhaps over-zealous? I agree with Roderick that 'religion... is open to misuse' but feel that in his enthusiasm, the way this misuse of ideas occurs is not adequately explored. The religion of Tolstoy and that of Moses are instructively different.

Tolstoy argued that 'God lay between people' and by conceptualising the Divine as intrinsic to the individual and the relationship between individuals, Tolstoy's Christianity shares a common ground with anarchism in its emphasis on personal identity and responsibility, community and co-operation. Anarchists without a taste for mysticism and metaphysics might find Tolstoy's 'God' surplus to requirements, but should at least appreciate that such ideas have motivated radical social movements since history began.

Against this, we must put the tribal legislators of *Leviticus* and *Exodus*. We can leave discussion as to whether the Exodus or even Moses himself actually existed to Biblical scholars — they haven't decided yet, and the point is peripheral to present-day concerns anyway. By creating an ideology that was abstract and externally imposed on people irrespective of their personal identities, the Old Testament patriarchs created a belief system that forced the masses to acquiesce before industrialism. Faced with the dubious trinity of God, Queen and Country, it was understandable that 19th century radicals had to confront hierarchical superstition in an attempt to improve conditions for the exploited. Postal graffiti aside, this struggle is now less important to effecting social change, but there is still considerable reason for it to continue.

Perhaps Richard Hunt was over specific in arguing 'religion is the root of all poverty' — all ideology impoverishes personal identity. However, should Roderick care to re-read his 'Historic and Economic Analysis for Anarchists' he will appreciate that it provides an alternative model to the marxist economic dogma too many anarchists borrow from at second hand, and that the issue of religion is peripheral both to contemporary marxist and anarchist concerns.

P. N. Rogers

PERHAPS THE decision to print 'Jesus is a myth' on your envelopes was taken as a protest, perhaps even to try to convince people of your point of view. Whatever the reason, I would like to point out several other reasons why I consider it to have been an unwise move.

Firstly, you may not realise it but a number, albeit a small one, of your readership are in fact christian, as I am, and the others are doubtless convinced atheists anyway. So what's the point?

Secondly, for I think about the first time an editorial line has been taken, where previously you got on with the job called for — editing. In the past you have rightly respected and admitted differing opinions on anarchism, but now you seek to openly attack an idea many anarchists hold.

Thirdly, the statement happens to be historically inaccurate. You may not be aware of it but a great deal of non-Biblical evidence for the existence of the man exists. You may disagree with his status or beliefs but to deny his existence is more than a little childish.

Fourthly, any disagreement should be carried out by contributors within the pages, not in cheap slogans. In future let's leave sloganeering politics to the marxists, eh!

Lastly, what's to be gained? Surely no more people are going to become atheists as a result of your message than will become christian as a result of the PO stamp. Surely we should oppose the whole principle of people being allowed to stamp their views on our mail because they have the money. It is an unfair imposition of views, however petty, and must be opposed in principle and not because we dislike the views in question.

Murray Simpson

HOW curious that Brian Morris should cite the use of religion by those in power as a demonstration of the detrimental nature of religion throughout history. In an age where the Right sings long and loud every day about how it stands for 'the freedom of the individual' would he also suggest, by extension, that the concept of the freedom of the individual is also a 'sham and a hypocrisy, a chimera to bolster hierarchies'?

The use and abuse of political and religious ideologies by those in power to bolster hierarchies and mask exploitation does not reflect, necessarily, on the ideologies being manipulated and misrepresented; it reflects on those in power. For example, it is well known that both Left and Right use the word 'anarchy' to mean chaos; would Brian suggest that this use of the word 'anarchy' defines its meaning and, by extension again, anarchist ideology?

To show that religious ideology has been used by those in power (whether in government or religious institutions) to oppress those not in power is to demonstrate the need to limit one person or group's power over another; it tells us nothing about the ideologies of religion. For example, the Crusades, the terrors of The Inquisition, the fighting in Northern Ireland, the Zionist/Palestinian conflict, the Iran/Iraq war, and so on, have all used religion as a justification for the atrocities that have been committed. This does not detract from the relevance to anarchists of a saying attributed to Jesus: 'Love your neighbour as yourself', in fact the philosophy behind this saying is completely at odds with the actions listed above and is, rather, the embodiment of the philosophy at the heart of much anarchist thought, namely, the concept of Mutual Aid and the notion that everyone is of equal worth, and equally deserving of respect and freedom of choice, opportunity and action.

Furthermore, showing that aspects of a given religion's ideology are reactionary or oppressive does not make it useful or intelligent to throw out the baby with the bath water. For example, it would be childish to suggest that because the Old Testament recommends the burning of witches or the stoning of prostitutes that the whole Christian ideology be dropped as worthless. As a free thinking anarchist I feel quite at liberty to search for truth amongst the writings of Christianity and other religions, to learn from and absorb parts of the ideologies and philosophies I find, and to take responsibility to myself for the choices I have made.

It is a good thing, as Brian quotes, that 'the Koran, the Vedas and the Bible no longer dazzle us', because being dazzled is not a thinking response to anything but I hope that there are alternatives to being dazzled, beyond being blinkered.

Christian Vassie

Poverty

IT IS disappointing that for one that adopts such a patronising and school-masterly tone, Howard Moss seems unable to distinguish between general principles and specific examples used to illustrate them.

To restate what Richard Hunt wrote, the three 'disparate' causes of poverty have one thing in common – the increasingly specialised division of labour that accompanies industrialisation and so-called 'technological advance'. Industry (or the capitalist-proletariat nexus, if you will) is not self-sustaining. It relies on raw materials which have to be expropriated by 'trade' from the less specialised agrariat now centred in the Third World.

In contrast to the 'procentric' orthodoxy presumably espoused by Howard Moss, the economic model advanced by Richard Hunt suggests that control of *resources* is more important in social change than control of the means of production. Industrial growth, and the increasingly specialised and alienating labour practices which accompany it, actually *increase* exploitation rather than offering the prospect of liberation into some 'technological dreamworld'.

P. N. Rogers

HOWARD Moss in his letter in *Freedom* (April 1988) suggests that my 'religion', 'trade' and 'technological advance' are three quite different and disparate causes of poverty.

I suggest that they are not disparate but cause and effect. Religion causes power, power causes trade and trade causes technological advance.

The most difficult step is probably that power causes trade. It is conventionally assumed that trade develops naturally. This doesn't seem to be true. Amongst hunter-gatherers 'most of these people hold very strongly to the view that wealth should not be too unevenly distributed' (Mair). If a hunter kills an animal, he shares it with the group. The more he shares, the bigger man he is. He is expected to share it. He is not expected to swap it, to trade it. So there would be very strong pressure against trade within the group.

After the invention of coinage (jumping for a moment) the ruler was able to double his income by a hidden tax on trade. Therefore he forced trade on people by making them pay taxes in cash which could only be obtained by growing crops for sale, cash crops, which could only be sold in specified market towns at specified times where they could be taxed.

International trade had to be enforced. In the seventeenth century the Dutch 'had to resort to warfare, to peddling supplies of arms, to exactions of "contingencies" and forced deliveries from the

native rulers whom they maintained in authority' (*Cambridge Economic History of Europe*).

If trade is caused by coinage and indirect taxation, one would expect to find local trade in pre-coinage societies. 'Babylonia as a matter of fact possessed neither market places nor a functioning market system of any description' (Polanyi). 'The Persians do not frequent market places and in effect do not possess in their country a single market place' (Herodotus). There was a royal trade but, as one would expect, it was enforced. 'Sargon lists amongst his military achievements the fact that he was the first King to have compelled Egypt to establish trade relations with Assyria' (Oppenheim).

So power causes trade.

It is a controversial subject to tackle in a short letter, but I hope it may at least raise questions about the naturalness of trade, and that Howard Moss finds this less mediocre, presumptuous and self-indulgent.

Richard Hunt

Sources:

L. Mair, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, OUP, 1965, page 192.

Cambridge Economic History of Europe, vol. IV, page XXIV.

Polanyi (editor), *Trade and Market in Early Empires*, Free Press, 1975.

Herodotus I, 153.

Oppenheim, see Polanyi.

Nuttall joke

I'M SUGGESTING a strip cartoon for *Freedom*. It should have three frames. The idea is suggested by a recent BBC Radio 4 documentary / retrospection on CND marches we have lived / suffered through. It mentioned the famous 1963 Trafalgar Square demonstration where 100,000 were in the Square and the rear column of the march was still in Shepherds Bush.

This was is a terrible moment for the CND leadership for the chant of the crowd was 'Anarchist Speaker!' This was the crowd's wish for they have heard every other placatory / segment fraction faction and people wanted to know / hear a cogent anarchist argument. Of course Peggy Duff was master of the situation as usual.

First frame: Trafalgar Square, 100,000 people chant 'Anarchist speaker!'

Second Frame: Peggy Duff to her cronies in stage whisper (audible to the crowd through the loudspeaker system) 'Any of you an anarchist? They want a speaker.'

Third frame: Jeff Nuttall addressing a huge crowd. 'I am!' (makes speech misrepresenting anarchists as having no philosophy).

One who was there!

Notes from Freedom Bookshop

NEW readers may not be aware that the reason Freedom Books are cheaper in price than other book publishers' is because all labour is voluntary. Writers give their books to Freedom Press, editors and designers their time and skills, the publisher his long experience. *Freedom* magazine's editors are volunteers. Freedom Bookshop workers give their time and experience. Underneath the bookshop Aldgate Press printers, although paid, also contribute their skills and involvement in other magazines and voluntary movements, as I'm sure do *Freedom* readers.

New Freedom Press titles include Marie Louise Berneri's *Neither East Nor West* (£4.50). John Zerzan and Alice Carnes have edited *Questioning Technology*, which has two chapters at least which should be read by everyone who picks up the book — 'We all live in Bhopal' and 'Industrialism and domestication'.

The bookshop has been given a real facelift over the past two years, and now has sections on Surrealism, Poetry, Ecology, Feminism, as well as a far larger selection of pamphlets. Pamphlets are an important part of any bookshop, never mind bookstall, because they are

cheap, easily understood and easier to publish for voluntary or poor organisations. Currently *The Poll Tax* (£1.25) pamphlet from CPAG is most important. Not far behind is *The Arrogance of Power* (30p) about Hilda Murrell's mysterious death, the finest polemic work by Laurens Otter. *Paris 1968* (£1.50) is an eyewitness account of the uprising by students and workers. *What is Situationism* (£1) is a helpful introduction to this subject. Classics include Thoreau's *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* (50p), Tolstoy's *The Inevitable Revolution* (50p) and Bakunin's *God and The State* (80p).

Perhaps the most interesting introduction is Cliff Harper's *Anarchy: A Graphic Guide* (£5.95), his illustrations aiding the text, making it both a visual and historical guide to the various traditions of anarchist politics and philosophy. George Woodcock's *Anarchism* (£6.95) published by Pelican, is now supported by his *Anarchist Reader* and a new edition of *Proudhon* (£8.95), published by Black Rose, Woodcock's biography with Corbet's beautiful painting of Proudhon on the cover.

Murray Bookchin is a difficult writer,

(i.e. he writes complex 'American-style' English) but books like *Post Scarcity Anarchism*; *Towards an Ecological Society*; *The Modern Crisis* and *The Limits of the City* (all at £7.95 each) are well worth the effort. Order them via your library if you can't afford them.

Readers of *Freedom* can help by taking round to their local bookseller a copy of the Freedom Press Distributors trade list. You may from time to time want a speaker and a bookstall — come and see what's available or ask us to bring a bookstall if it is a large public event. If you want to support the spread of libertarian and anarchist ideas, this is one simple but essential way. Should you be thinking in the long term of setting up a local bookshop, come and pick our brains. Several of us have been involved in running bookshops or bookstalls for a very long time. Meanwhile, if anyone out there has a van/car they could donate to Freedom Press, that can make us much more mobile (bicycles only have panniers). Also details of events/fairs/demonstrations/festivals, please let us know by telephone (01-247 9249) or call in to the bookshop (nearest tube Aldgate East). **Dennis Gould**

Education given half a chance

I WAS interested in A. K. Brown's article, 'Class and Education', and I felt vaguely moved to write by it, but it was reading Joe Kelly's 'Ego, Bloody Ego' that really made me do it. The point he makes is such a clear one — it is no good whingeing on about anarchism, you really

need to do something, even if it seems fairly trivial and indirect.

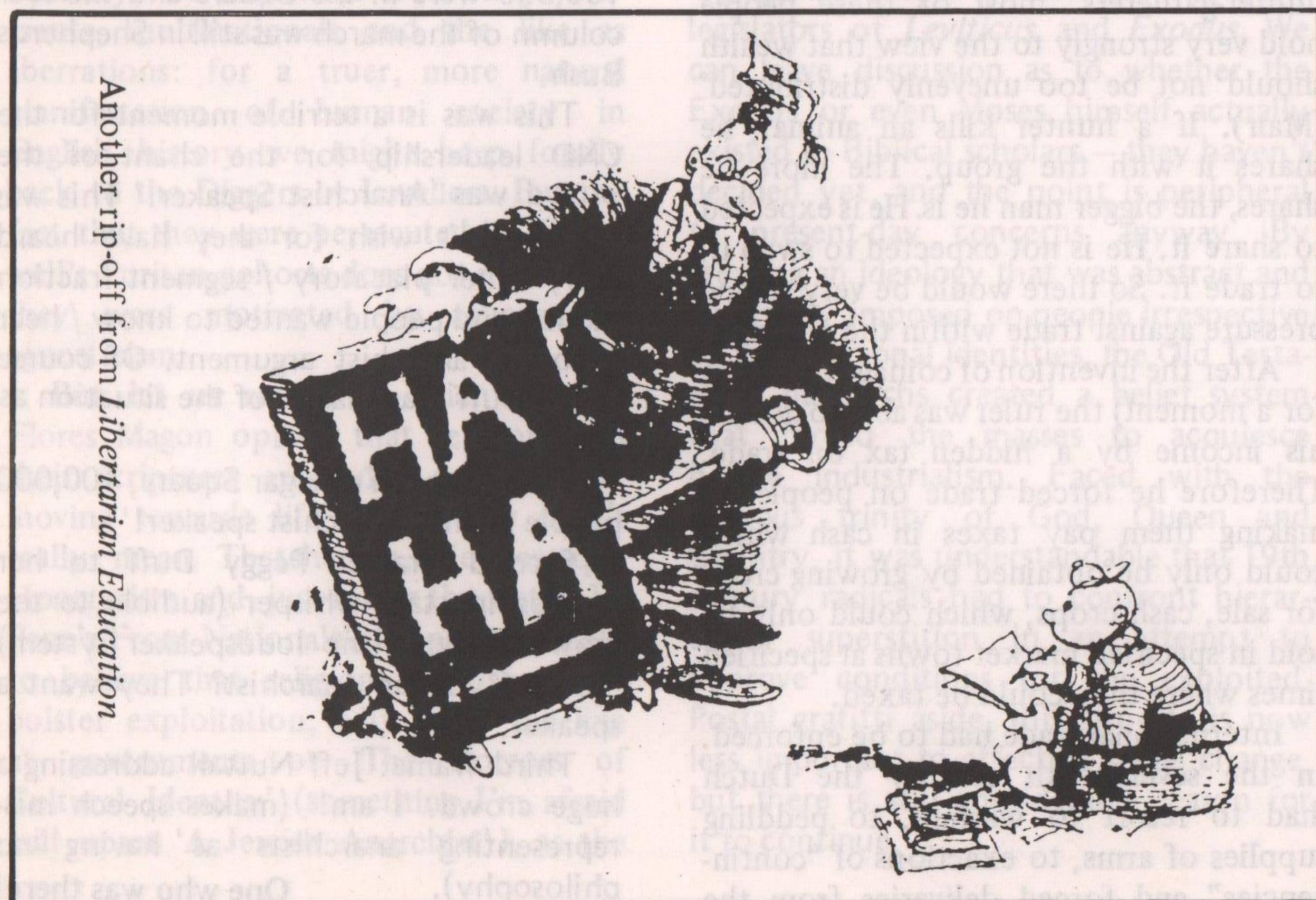
I'm involved in education, in that my two children learn at home — I reckon that's the only way they will have the freedom to learn how to question, and to find out what they really want to know

or work out what they don't understand, rather than what some book decides they should know.

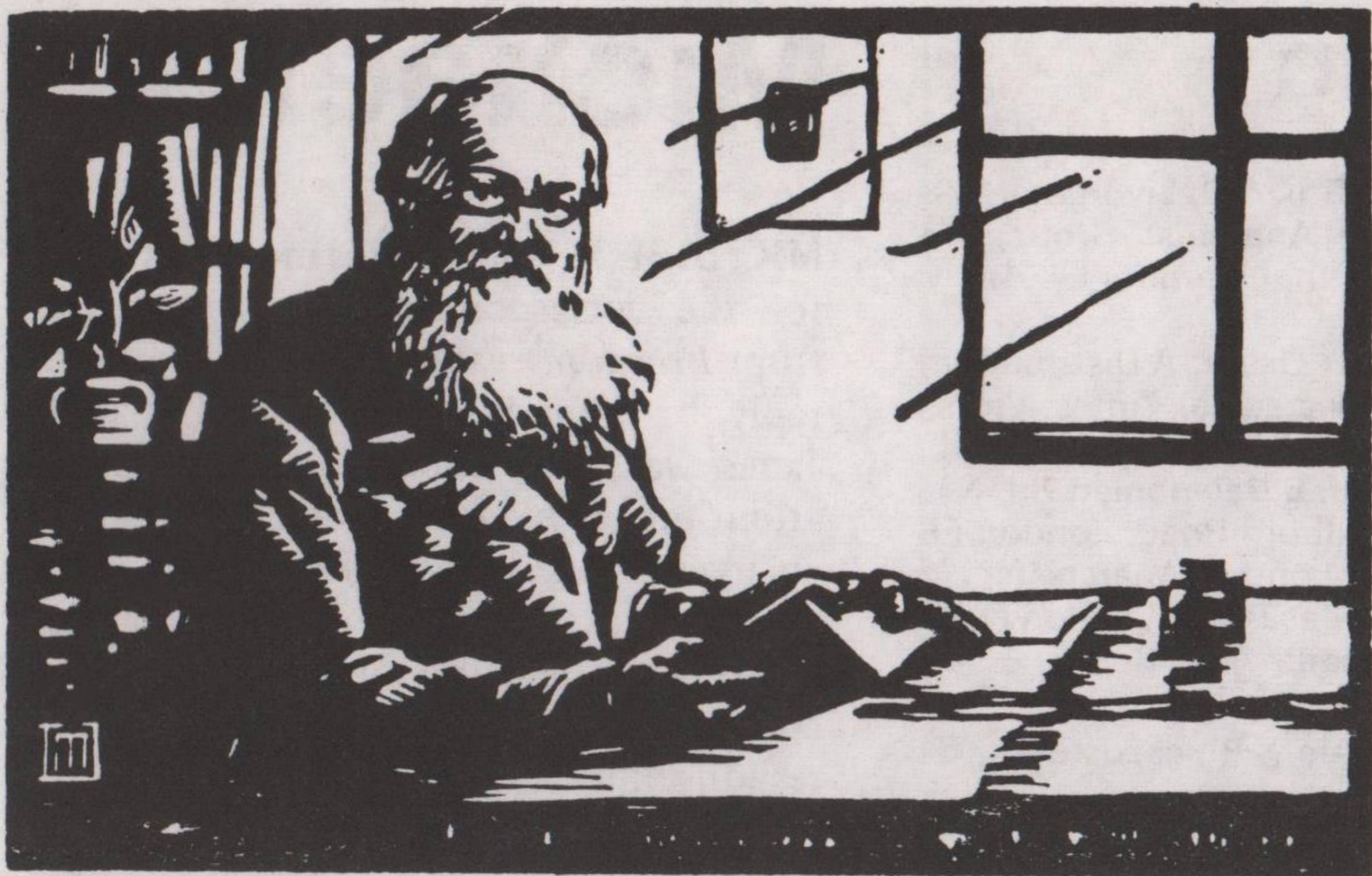
So-called compulsory education was introduced around 1870, so for just over a century children have been shunted off to school to be 'educated'. The trouble is, this has become totally accepted. So most children go to school, and are often taught by people who went to school, to teacher training colleges, then to school again. Is this a healthy state of affairs?

Home education does not have to be a privileged middle class choice; most children are inquisitive, and want very much to find out how the system works. Given half the chance they learn very well, and because the motivation comes from within, what they learn stays learnt — compare that to anything you may have studied for exams.

What about their future, and how will they get a JOB? Well, maybe they won't want one — or will there be any to be had? One thing's for sure, they stand a far better chance of being sure of themselves and of knowing what they really want, by being allowed to learn at home, than if they were indoctrinated by state education. **Zeb Korycinska**



Another rip-off from *Libertarian Education*



Act For Yourselfes

Peter Kropotkin (edited by Nicolas Walter and Heiner Becker)
Freedom Press, £2.50

THIS book consists of a score of articles which Peter Kropotkin contributed to *Freedom* during the first twenty-one years of its existence, from 1886 to 1907. During the same period he was writing the articles in the French anarchist press which were later collated as the well-known book, *The Conquest of Bread*. He intended these articles from the British anarchist press to be collected as a book in the same way, but for various reasons

this didn't happen at the time. It is only after a century that they are at last published as he wanted, with the general title *Act For Yourselfes* taken from one of them to express the message of the whole series.

Act For Yourselfes is not one of Kropotkin's great works, but it is a valuable lost work, written when he was at the height of his powers and well worth reading as a minor classic of anarchist journalism which remains both interesting and important after a century.

The editors have provided a scholarly introduction and detailed notes.



Churchill, Roosevelt, and Franco
a detail from a John Olday cartoon in
Neither East nor West

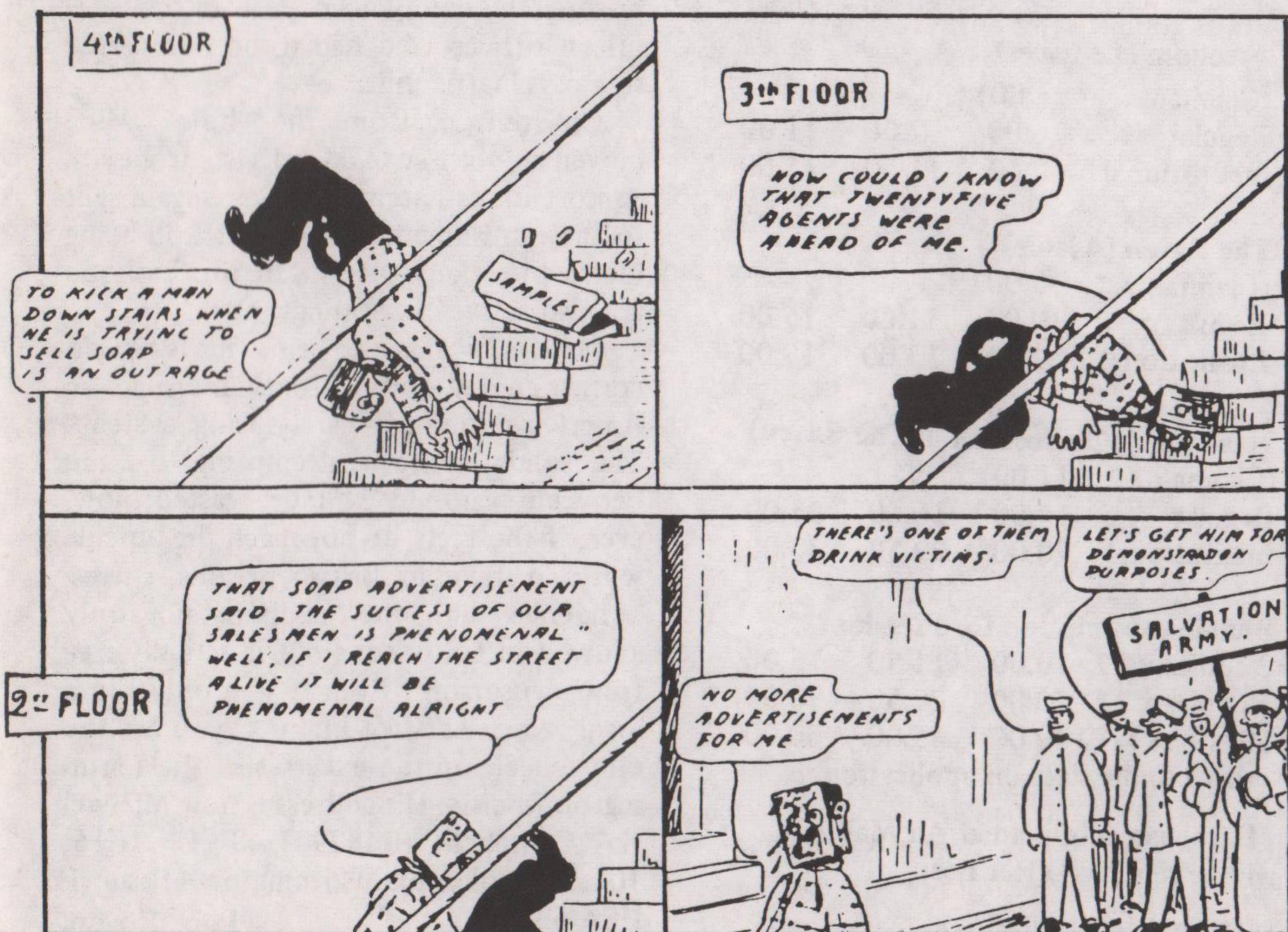
Mr Block: twenty-four IWW cartoons

Ernest Riebe

Charles M. Kerr, 36 pages, £3.50

JOE Hill's 'Oh Mr Block' was the first comic song inspired by a strip cartoon character. Mr Block was the earliest strip cartoon in any radical paper. The

central character, whose head is shaped like a block of wood, is a worker who believes what the bosses tell him, and consequently loses in every episode. This is a facsimile of a collection published in 1913, with an added introduction by Franklin Rosemont. Historically interesting, and very funny. DR



TEN books for springtime subversion

- 1 *Proudhon* (£8.95), Woodcock's latest, Black Rose Press, biography of the author of *What is Property*.
- 2 *The Dispossessed* (£2.50), Ursula Le Guin's classic 'sci-fi' novel of anarchist travelling to another world.
- 3 *Anarchy: Graphic Guide* (£5.95), illustrated and written by Cliff Harper.
- 4 *Neither East nor West* (£4.50), selected writings of Marie Louise Berneri, with John Olday cartoons.
- 5 *Questioning Technology* (£5.00), 31 challenging essays by different authors.
- 6 *Mr Block* (£3.50), historic cartoon strip from the IWW.
- 7 *The Little School* (£3.95), Alice Partnoy, tales of disappearing ones in Argentina.
- 8 *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (£1.25), Rudolf Rocker, published by Freedom Press. Pocketbook 'bible' by newcomer to East End of London at turn of the century, who inspired Jewish East Enders and all who come into contact with him, organising for wages and conditions, and self-education!
- 9 *Anarchy in Action* (£3.00), Colin Ward's ideas and imagination, published by Freedom Press.
- 10 *Post Scarcity Anarchism* (£8.95), Murray Bookchin's essays, including '1968 events in Paris', plus 'Listen Marxist!' and 'Ecology and revolutionary thought', published by Black Rose. Brilliant if heavy! DG

Freedom Contacts Column

ACF Anarchist Communist Federation Nat Sec, PO Box 125, Coventry CV3 5QT
BANGOR A Collective, c/o UNCW SU, Deiniol Road, Bangor, Gwynedd
BRACKNELL A's, Box 21, 17 Chatham St, Reading RG1 7JF
BRIGHTON Brighton Bomber, c/o Priory House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton
BRISTOL Drowned Rat, Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol
BURNLEY A's, 2 Quarrybank, Burnley
CAMBRIDGE Box A, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
CLASS WAR, PO Box 467, London E5 8BE
COVENTRY Group, PO Box 125, CV3 5QT (don't mention anarchist on envelope)
DAM National Sec, Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
DURHAM A's, c/o DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham
EDINBURGH Counter-Information, 11 Forth St
ESSEX Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex
FAP Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists, c/o John Hill 28b Clifton Road, Ilford, Essex
GLASGOW A's, Box PH30, c/o Changes, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow G4 9HE
HASTINGS A's, c/o Hastings Free Press, 14 Lower Park Road, Hastings, E. Sussex
JERSEY Jon Godfrey, Les Frontières, Rue de Franc Fief, St Brelades, Jersey
JEWISH A's, Box JAG, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1
KEELE Resist Group, Students Union, University of Keele, ST5 5BG
LEAMINGTON A Group, 21 Tachbrook Road, Leamington Spa, Warks.
LEEDS A's, Box JAG, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1
LEICESTER A Group, c/o Blackthorn Books, 70 High Street, Leicester
LOS Libertarian Organisation & Structure, c/o 85a New Elvet, Durham
LIB ED Libertarian Education Collective, The Cottage, The Green, Leire LE17 5HL

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 Liverpool University Anarchist Group, c/o SU, 2 Bedford St North, Liverpool L7 7BD
LONDON
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 Solidarity, c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6
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MANCHESTER Militant A's, Room 6, 75 Piccadilly, M1 2BU
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NOTTINGHAM A's, Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham
OXFORD A's, Box A, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford
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STIRLING A Group, c/o CSA, University of Stirling, Scotland
SWANSEA Black Sheep, c/o Box A, Emma's Community Book Shop, 19 Bryn-y-Mor Rd, Brynmill SA1 4JH
TONBRIDGE Black Adder, c/o WKAR, PO Box 75, Tonbridge, Kent
WORCESTER College of HE Anarchists, c/o SU, WCHE, Henwick Grove, Worcester

Michael X

MICHAEL X. Campbell is most grateful for the correspondence he is receiving from *Freedom* readers. In response to the reply by Superintendent Dowd that A. Janes was good enough to bring to our attention (*Freedom*, March), may I enlarge on Mike's own allegations?

Mike was committed to Jefferson City Penitentiary in 1982 for an act of murder committed in a state of diminished responsibility. He was not allowed to plead diminished responsibility because, in the words of his State-appointed lawyer, 'we don't like hippies from out of state.'

In Jefferson City Penitentiary, the Aryan Brotherhood presented Mike with a choice between being killed by them or killing another black prisoner (which would mean his own execution). When he discussed this with his case worker, Mike was told that 'that's the way we do things here.'

As a consequence of Aryan Brotherhood threats and the passive support of the prison authorities for them, Mike 'requested' solitary confinement and remained there until transferred to Farmington Correctional Center late last year. Correspondence which I have posted Mike during this period was seized by the authorities.

On arrival at Farmington, Mike asked that seized property be recorded, but the authorities would not agree. He was then put in a cell with another prisoner 'who no other prisoners will share with' according to the screws. When Mike complained about having to share a cell with a potentially dangerous cellie, he was sent to the punishment cells. A week later the prisoner he complained about attacked a prison officer, and had to be transferred to a psychiatric unit.

On release from the 'hole', Mike moved in with an AIM activist, Ironeyes. Almost immediately both were again sent to the punishment cells. Mail is still being intercepted and the Aryan Brotherhood are also active in Farmington.

Mike is organising a prison news service, corresponding with others interned in America's 'human warehousing system'. The solidarity he is attempting to build between prisoners will be wasted, however, if the facts do not reach the outside world. Unlike in British prisons, correspondence with the media is not only allowed in US prisons but is actually free from censorship. Even if you only run a local 'zine, let Mike know - you are the only check on the excesses of the Farmington fascists. His address is now Michael X. Campbell (048294), FCC 1C15, 1012 W. Columbia, Farmington, Missouri, USA 63640.

P. N. Rogers

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