

Sources and Seeds

THE disappearance of many old and tried varieties of vegetable seed has puzzled me particularly, as in recent years their disappearance seems to have been accelerated. This was until The Henry Doubleday Research Association attempted to set up a bank to try and preserve some of them. This is the sort of bank and others like it that the human race desperately needs, instead of the kind that steers access to resources into the wrong pockets.

I note that Lawrence D. Hills of HDRA contributes a foreword to Socialist Countryside Group's pamphlet *The Seed Scandal*, a pamphlet well worth buying at 75p. The pamphlet is very well researched and once again reveals one of the unacceptable heads of that many-headed Hydra of international finance. The old vegetable varieties are being taken over by F1 hybrids that, as Hills points out, do not compare with the old varieties in taste and hardiness. The other day I bought some plums — large, dark colour, perfect looking — but when I sunk my teeth into them they were completely tasteless. In the Vale of Evesham our native plums lie on the ground unharvested, unregarded, full of taste but not of the big, round, even shape which the great British public have been persuaded by that other head of the many-headed Hydra, the advertising (sic) industry, is what they want.

The EEC have passed Acts that enable the large seed companies to establish property rights over plant varieties. This is briefly how it works: it costs about £500 to prove that a variety exists and can be patented, two years before it can be sold; it costs another £800 to keep it there and an annual fee to the Minister of Agriculture. It was difficult for the smaller firms to play this farcical game so they were duly swallowed up by about seven large firms, among them our old friend Rank Hovis McDougal and Royal

Dutch Shell (of South African oil supplies fame). These firms have been given exclusive rights over germ plasm so they are able to breed new varieties that require their other chemical products to do commercially well. F1 hybrids cannot be bred from but must be replaced by new F1 hybrids from parents owned by the seed suppliers, so the growers are in the hands of these multinationals.

This brings us to the source of the genetic origin of most of our food crops — the rainforests of Central America and other areas. These areas must be recognised as a world resource to be preserved and the indigenous population recompensed for not selling the products for short term financial gain to a relatively small section of the population. How this is done requires careful consideration. In the past large sums of money in so-called Third World Aid have landed in the wrong pockets, including some back in the pockets of western suppliers of materials. The Green Revolution was a cruel hoax — the seeds supplied required large inputs of chemical products that the peasant farmers could not afford to buy, for the same firms that supplied the seeds also made the chemicals. Moreover plant breeders obtain material from plants growing wild with no recompense to the populations from which they were obtained and then use the patenting laws to claim exclusive rights over them.

The government is using the poll tax to put a tax on the right to breathe, a tax that bears no relationship to the resources that are demanded by a person. I suspect that the reaction will not be like that of our peasant forefathers in the 14th century. Must everything be owned?

I think it would be a good idea for anarchists to set up a group to study rural questions and land ownership changes, and build on our honourable past in this respect. Anyone interested?

Alan Albon

CONTACTS

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, and other addresses

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, Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemaker Row

ESSEX Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, 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

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

LIVERPOOL A's, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69
 Liverpool University Anarchist Group, c/o SU, 2 Bedford St North, Liverpool L7 7BD

LONDON
 Freedom Box Number Users: A Distribution, ACF, Rebel Press, Spectacular Times, Virus. 121 Books, 121 Raiton Road, London SE24

Greenpeace (London), 5 Caledonian Rd, N1
 Leslie's Bookshop, 17 Turners Road, E3
 Solidarity, c/o 123 Latham Road, London E6

MANCHESTER Militant A's, Room 6, 75 Piccadilly, M1 2BU

NORTHAMPTON A Collective, PO Box 161, Northampton

NOTTINGHAM A's, Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham

OXFORD A's, Box A, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford

PLYMOUTH A's, PO Box 105, Plymouth

PORTSMOUTH A's, Box A, 167 Fawcett Road, Southsea, Hants PO1 0DH

PRESTON A's, Jez Appleton, 34 Elgin Street, Preston, Lancs PR1 6BH

READING A's, Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham Street, Reading RG1 7JF

SALISBURY James Walsh, 14 Churchfield Road

SHEFFIELD A's, PO Box 217, Sheffield 1

Blackberry A's and B Books, c/o Palm Tree Box, 5 Exchange Place, Sheffield 1

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA A's, c/o Graham, 360 Victoria Avenue

SPANISH Information Network, 37 South Terrace, Esh Winning, Co Durham DH7 9PS

STIRLING A Group, c/o CSA, University of Stirling, Scotland

SWANSEA Black Sheep Collective, Box D, Mandela House, University College, Singleton Park, Swansea (term time only)

FREEDOM 50p

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

Vol 48 No 11 November 1987 50p

BUDDY CAN YOU SPARE A PORSCHE?

ON THE day the stock market first tumbled and the newsreader announced with concern that billions of pounds had been wiped off share values, I felt a terrible temptation to laugh. If there is a clichéd figure of the enemy lurking in my mind then it would have to be that of the stockbroker. Born to a good family, educated at the best schools, and then found a place with some respectable city institution, I picture him complaining about the lack of willpower of the working class as he sips the select wines of an expense account lunch. The thought of running across such people on street corners busking 'buddy can you spare a dime' has a certain attraction. If the crash sent a tremor through the stock broker classes and took the edge off their smug certainties, then all well and good. The trouble is that it could just be an early sign of an awful lot of misery on the way for ordinary people.

We have been in the midst of an artificial boom in business confidence. Before they crashed, world stock markets had risen regularly and it was starting to look as if the long drag of the recession might be coming to a close. Confidence that the worst was over had begun to cause businessmen to think of investing in the future and as a result new office blocks were going up causing a boom in the building trade and new computer systems were being unloaded from boxes in sunrise cities all over the world. The possibility was emerging (and indeed still exists) that the uncontrolled cycles of a chaotic capitalism were about to enter an upward phase. In the South East of England conversation had switched from "isn't all this unemployment dreadful" to "I just can't believe how far my house price has gone up" — hence the election result. More significantly there have been large parts of the Third World which have experienced rapid growth and which no longer belong to the category of poor nations. The people of those countries were starting to demand better wages and the right to decent conditions (e.g. events in South Korea) and these

richer workers had more money to spend.

Underlying it all, however, there remains a structural problem. If it is to avoid swinging wildly between boom and genuine crisis a capitalist economy requires regulation and control. This was absent in the 1920s and 30s and the results were disastrous. In Britain in 1932 unemployment stood at 23% and since the government fiddled the figures then too there should be no doubt that the situation was worse than it has been this time. The last decade has been a recession; when the pubs are empty you have a crisis. An uncontrolled downward spiral is a vicious phenomena which does nobody any good. First there is a slow-down in the economy, then workers are laid off so they spend less, as a result sales fall and more factories close with the result of more redundancies. As the cycle deepens firms go bankrupt, banks get into trouble and house prices fall. Ordinary people experience either wage cuts or redundancy or the loss of their savings — none of which are remotely pleasant.

Anxious to avoid a repetition of these experiences, and aware of how effective central planning had been in the war, the post-war generation of politicians had far more fear of unemployment than

they did of state control. As a result they were willing to drop one of the old philosophies of capitalism (opposition to state control) and to use Keynesian policies of state intervention to keep the national economies on an even keel. Between 1945 and 1970 unemployment in Britain never went above 4% and inflation was also low. This was achieved by the method of using government spending (unsecured by borrowing or taxes) to boost the economy when it looked like going into decline. In simple terms the idea was that if there is unemployment then the government should put the people to work to make the goods which they will spend their money on. In practice the system of state control was very complex and sophisticated.

What went wrong in the 70s and 80s was that the sophisticated state regulation systems which were worked out to control national economies were not adequate to deal with international problems. The way the stock markets around the world all moved in the same direction at the same time is in itself an illustration of the fact that capitalism is now genuinely international. We no longer live in a world of separate national economies where big monopolies have got their market under control, we live in a world where there is one very large market on which firms

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NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1987

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(Claimants 4.00)	—	—	—	2 copies x 12	10.00	11.50	15.00
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PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUB

WE SENT out with the September issue a number of subscription renewal forms. Many readers have renewed but some have still not done so. They may get the December issue but if no renewal reaches us by the end of the year we will have to remove their names from our lists. We don't like doing this but on the other hand when do we cut off readers who don't reply to subscription reminders?

Donations

Freedom Magazine Fund

Canterbury KS £1; Milton Keynes DB £3; Wolverhampton JL £2; Bournemouth MER £3; Abingdon MB £2.50; Harrison NY SU £3.50; Wolverhampton JL £6; Aberystwith PQ £1; Newport NMF £1; Reading JK £3; Swansea JB £1; San Francisco (per DS) GM £116, BP £29.

October Total = £172.00

1987 TOTAL TO DATE = £730.75

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October Total = £161.50

1987 TOTAL TO DATE = £613.11

Special Donations

London: Anon £200 for FP publications Fund
San Francisco: (per DS) GM £116 for The Raven publication Fund.

Calling friends of Kathy Sparrow-Ackerman

Cathy's copies of *Freedom* have recently been returned to us marked 'contrary to prison regulations'. Can somebody please find out what is wrong, and let us know?

Northern

Northern Anarchist Network

Developing communication and solidarity between anarchists in the North. Next meeting: **Saturday 12 December 1987 at 1pm, in Bradford**

For venue and further information contact **1 in 12 Club, 21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, W. Yorks.**

London ACF

London group of the Anarchist Communist Federation holds fortnightly discussion meetings on Thursdays at 8pm.

- 5 November: **Ecology**
- 19 November to be announced
- 3 December to be announced

Marchmont Street Community Centre

Marchmont Street, London WC1
(nearest tube station Russell Square)
Thursdays (fortnightly) at 8 pm

Capenhurst Demo 14 November

Capenhurst is the location of a BNFL factory which makes enriched uranium to power Trident submarines and fuel rods for nuclear power stations.

Marchers will assemble from 12.30pm at the Unemployed Centre, King Street, Ellesmere Port, Wirral. At 1.30pm the march will depart for the factory, a distance of about three miles. There will be stalls and a rally at Capenhurst. Organised by Merseyside CND, 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool L1 9AX. Phone 051-708 7764.

Anarcho Pacifists

Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists

Saturday afternoon meeting
28 November 2pm to 5pm
Quaker International Centre
1 Byng Place, London WC1
(nearest tube Russell Square)

New contact address:

Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists,
c/o John Hill, 28b Clifton Road,
Ilford, Essex.

(We hope to publish the FAB manifesto in the December *Freedom*.)

Act for Yourselves!

WE APOLOGIZE to readers who have ordered copies of *Kropotkin: Act for Yourselves* which has still not been printed. All the Kropotkin material is set. We are simply waiting for the Introduction and Notes by the editors who are such perfectionists that we cannot be sure when their final draft will be available. *The Raven-3* will be dispatched to subscribers in late November.

History Workshop

HISTORY WORKSHOP 21, Newcastle upon Tyne, 20/22 November 1987

The programme, so far confirmed, for the Anarchism stream is

Andrew Whitehead: Dan Chatterton and *His Atheistic, Communist Scorcher*

Phil Ruff: The Social-Democratic Outrages in London, 1909-1911

Nigel Todd: The Clousden Hill Free Communist and Co-operative Colony

Paul Salvesson: The Daisy Colony (Blackpool)

Richard Bircumshaw: Libertarian Communism in Pedralba, 1936

John Shotton: Children Against the State
Gareth Bellaby: Bakunin on Revolutionary Organizations

Malcolm Hornsby: Non-Elective Democracy in Early Labour and Self-Help Organizations

Andy Pratt: The Control of Space

Ros Gill: The Media, Ideology and Anarchism

Registration fees:

£8 waged, £1.50 unwaged.

All registrations and enquiries should be sent to: HW21, Tyneside History Workshop Centre, Newcastle Trades Council, 4 The Cloth Market, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Anarchist Forum

The London Anarchist Forum is a discussion group meeting every Friday during term time (it meets in a college) at 8pm. A speaker is invited to open the discussion on alternate Fridays. All are welcome.

6 November, Ken Weller, Hungary 1956 and all that

13 November, Open discussion

20 November, Andy Brown, **Whatever happened to communism?**

27 November, Open discussion

4 December, Colin Ward, **Anarchy - Picking and Choosing**

11 December, Open Discussion

18 December, nothing arranged. Centre probably closed for Xmas

25 December, no meeting

1 January, nothing arranged. Centre probably closed for New Year

8 January, George Walford, **The Source of Anarchism**

15 January, Open discussion

22 January, S E Parker, **Is There Life after Anarchism?**

29 January, Open discussion

5 February, Richard Hunt, **A Historical and Economic Analysis for Anarchists**

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

BUDDY CAN YOU SPARE A PORSCHE ?

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from all over the world compete to keep prices and wages low. This creates a potential for competition between national economies which can be alarming. There is, for example, no point in pumping money into the British economy if it causes a rise in demand for Japanese goods. It is far wiser for the individual nation to look to its own national interests and let others expand. Yet if every nation adopts this policy disaster results.

Another example of how damaging this kind of competition can be would be that of interest rates. If one country puts up interest rates it attracts money from around the world and that country may be able to use the money to invest or to keep up its currency. But if money flows into one country it must flow out of another, and this country too if forced to raise interest rates. Gradually the rates go higher until industry cannot afford to borrow and once again there is recession.

Aware of these difficulties, the various economics ministers have been groping towards a form of international state which will do for the world economy what the state did for the national economy. They have been trying to develop control and regulatory systems which work and have been taking some steps towards achieving joint expansion. Thus there was an important agreement at Louvre to control the value of currencies to prevent excessive and damaging fluctuations in their value. There were also broad agree-

ments to keep interest rates lower and there is every reason to suspect that international bankers agreed in advance their recent moves to write off bad foreign debts and leave themselves more secure. The question which is now being settled is whether such measures are adequate to the situation. It was fear that the agreement at Louvre was going to collapse which really set off the panic (*Guardian* 22 October, page 7) and far from being irrational that fear is very real.

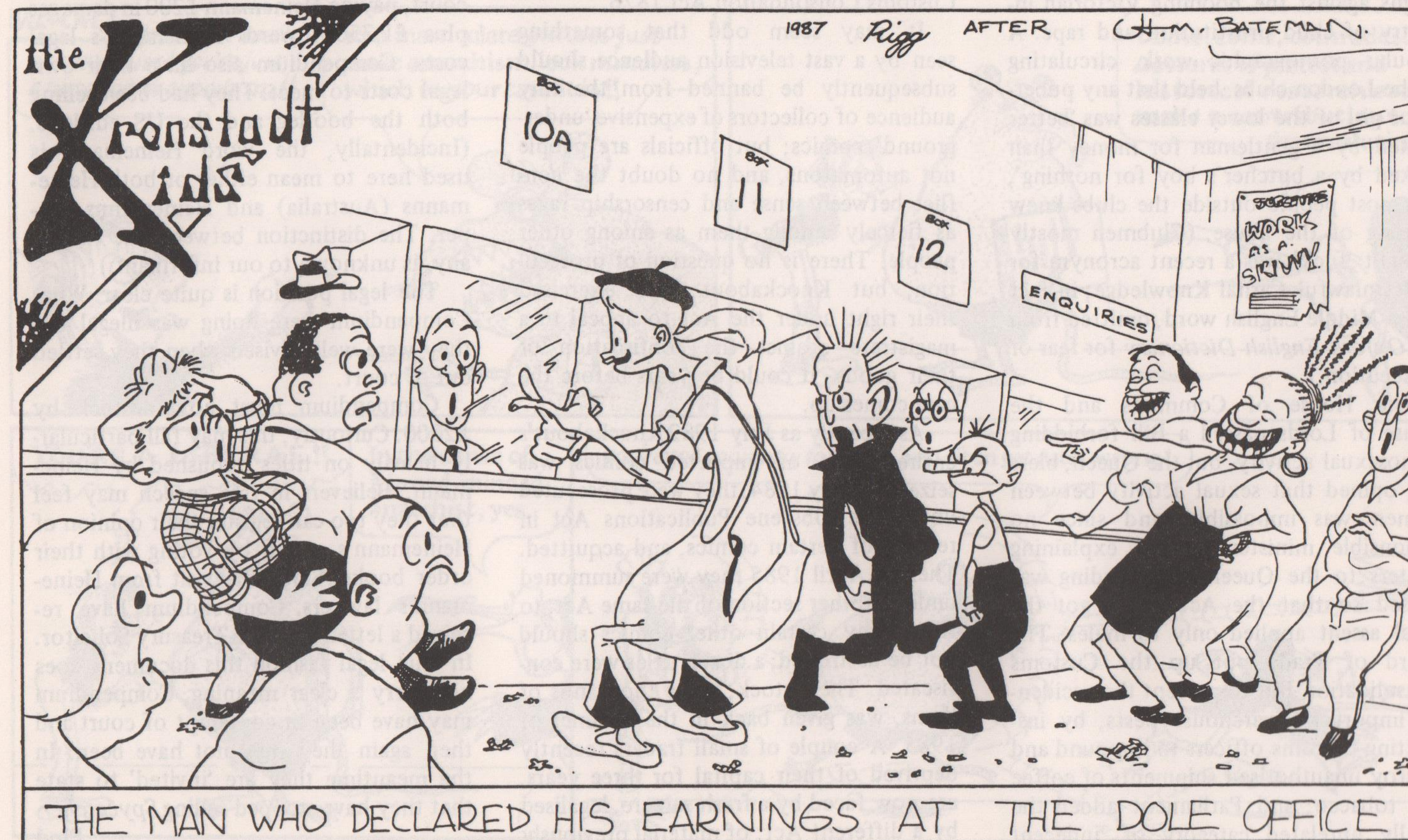
To make matters worse there are other grounds for nervousness. The American economy has an acute balance of payments crisis, a dollar crisis, and a budget deficit, and for the solution to these problems we are expected to look to the talents of an ageing man with a seriously ill wife. The classic way of dealing with these problems is to first cut government spending, and secondly raise interest rates (ignore the temporary drop in rates, this is a clumsy attempt to influence the markets and stop the panic - they'll go up later). Either of these measures would result in a major recession and a drop in orders for other countries. These countries in turn would have to cut back and raise interest rates and the Louvre agreement would go to the wall. If interest rates went up so that debtors had to pay more at the same time as sales were going down Third World countries might well be thrown back into a major debt crisis and would be unable to pay. This creates fears of a collapse of the banking system which would be enough to put half of us

on the street corners without dole.

So what are we looking at? Is this the final crisis of capitalism the Marxists predicted? The simple answer is no. Unlike their predictions of inevitability the solution to this crisis depends on political will. What we are looking at is not a 100 year decline in the rate of profit and a steady pauperisation of the masses leading to revolution. What we are looking at is a long and difficult struggle to force world governments to give up more of their state power to an inter-state government. They are of course reluctant to relinquish power - governments always are. Nevertheless every shock to the system increases the likelihood that they will see sense and act. If they do then we will find ourselves controlled in practice by remote collections of bankers and officials who will be completely out of touch with the desires and needs of ordinary people. If they look like failing you'd better stock up on food or take to the land!

The world economy is a delicately put together structure. The problem is that the more sophisticated the structure which has been put together the further it has to fall. Let us hope that when the system which controls us does finally fall it will be because people have seen through the hollow lifestyle created by a world where money runs people's lives and because they have consciously struggled for change.

A K Brown



Sense and Censorship

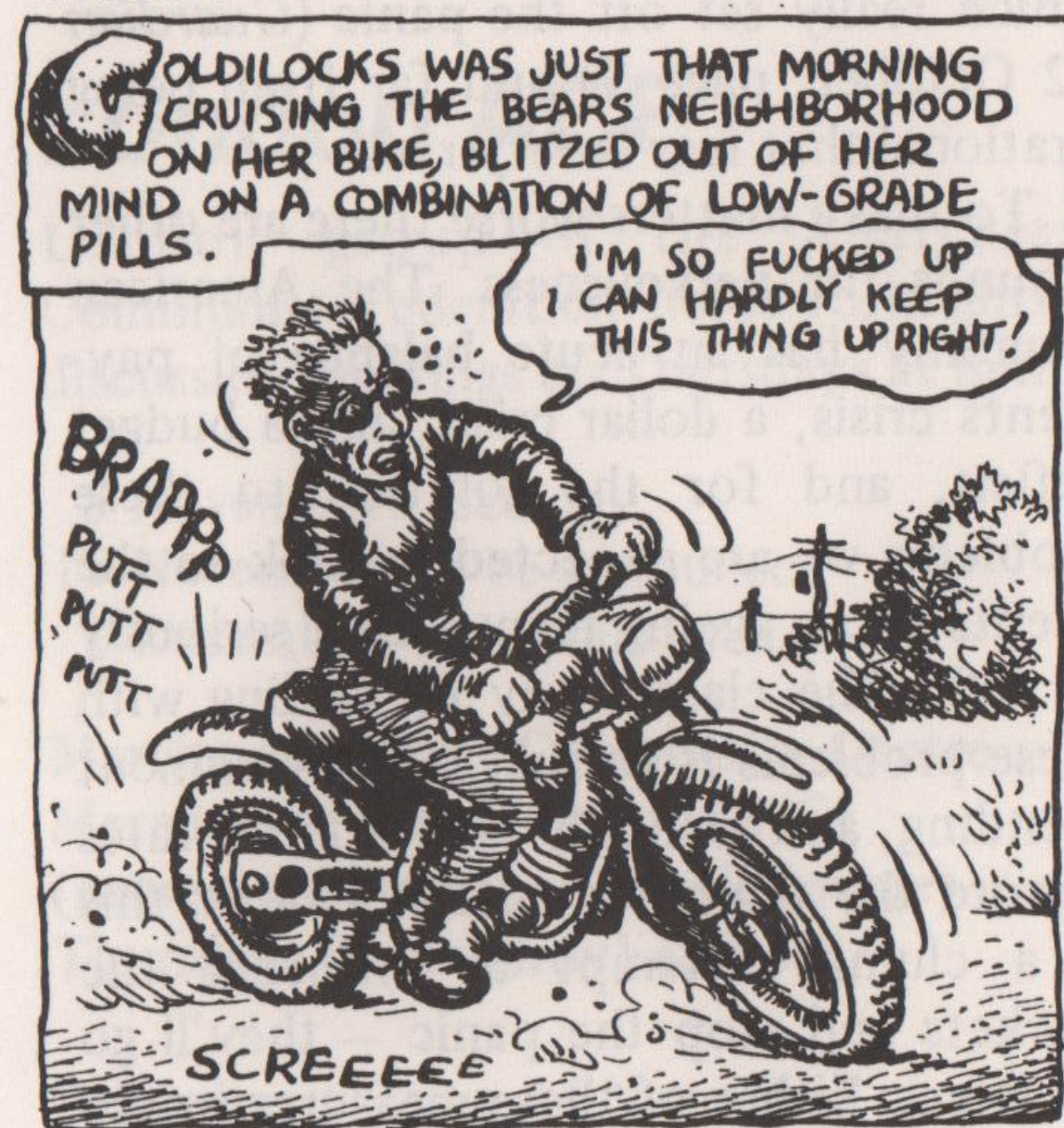
CENSORSHIP is rampant in Britain. Knockabout comics are contesting the seizure of eleven titles under the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876. Gay's the Word Books are contesting the seizure of six titles under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959. Compendium Books have lost over £2000 by selling copies of *Spycatcher*. And there are all the routine uncontested seizures, accepted by pornographers as a business expense like their anonymous contributions to anti-pornography campaigns, since the high profitability of pornography depends on its being illegal.

The basic framework of the censorship laws was erected during the reign of Queen Victoria, an era of unsurpassed prudery. One Freudian theory links Victorian prudery with the Victorian craze for decorative clutter on every surface, and has it that both were due to a subconscious urge to hide the awful cruelty of Victorian society. Whatever the cause, the result was to quieten agitation against the cruelty.

Boy chimney sweeps invariably died of cancer of the scrotum before the age of twelve; but campaigners could not say so openly because the scrotum was unmentionable in polite society. Members of Parliament and the Law Courts learned the facts in their clubs, but the anger of such reforming groups as the Nonconformist churches was tempered by ignorance. A similar coyness inhibited campaigns against the booming Victorian industry of child prostitution and rape. A popular pornographic work, circulating in the London clubs, held that any pubescent girl of the lower classes was 'better fucked by a gentleman for money than fucked by a butcher's boy for nothing', but most people outside the clubs knew nothing of the abuse. (Clubmen mostly thought 'fuck' was a recent acronym for Full Unlawful Carnal Knowledge; in fact it is a Middle English word, omitted from the *Oxford English Dictionary* for fear of prosecution.)

The House of Commons and the House of Lords passed a Bill forbidding homosexual activity, but the Queen, bless her, opined that sexual activity between women was impossible; and since no responsible minister fancied explaining matters to the Queen, the wording was revised so that the Act which got the royal assent applied only to males. The Board of Trade put up the Customs Consolidation Bill to prevent the accidental import of warehouse pests, by instructing customs officers to impound and destroy unauthorised shipments of coffee and tobacco; and Parliament added the totally unrelated category of 'indecent

material' to the list of prohibited imports. A judge laid down 'a tendency to deprave and corrupt' as a legal test of obscenity; and rightly assumed that Victorian magistrates and juries would take 'a tendency to deprave and corrupt' as a euphemism for 'a tendency to encourage masturbation'.



from Crumb's 'The Three Bears'

Knockabout titles seized

In February this year, an hour-long profile of the American strip artist Robert Crumb was broadcast on the BBC 2 'Arena' programme. It featured work sold in this country by Knockabout. Some of this same work was among the eleven titles, all imported by Knockabout for years, which were impounded between April and August this year under the Customs Consolidation Act 1876.

It may seem odd that something seen by a vast television audience should subsequently be banned from the tiny audience of collectors of expensive 'underground' comics; but officials are people not automatons, and no doubt the conflict between sense and censorship rages as fiercely among them as among other people. There is no question of prosecution, but Knockabout have exercised their right under the Act to appeal to a magistrate against the confiscation of their goods. It could be years before the case comes up.

As recently as July 1982 Knockabout's entire stock of imported comics was seized. In May 1984, they were prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act in respect of certain comics, and acquitted. Then in April 1985 they were summoned under another section of the same Act, to show why certain other comics should not be destroyed; a dozen titles were confiscated. Their stock, some thousands of items, was given back in the summer of 1985. A couple of small traders recently deprived of their capital for three years, are now faced by a fresh seizure, legalised by a different Act, of material previously

permitted. We might reasonably suspect a conspiracy to put them out of business.

Gay's the Word titles seized

The Customs Consolidation Act 1876 was never repealed, but it fell into disuse. Its main provisions were superseded by new laws to control the import of pests, and the bit about indecent material was well covered by the common law offence of uttering obscene articles (replaced by the Obscene Publications Act 1959), the Indecent Advertisements Act 1889, and the Vagrancy Act 1824. In 1984, following the failure of the prosecution of Knockabout, the Customs Consolidation Act was resurrected to justify the seizure of books from Gay's the Word. The Act does not itself provide for prosecutions, but it gave rise to a newly-invented common law offence, *conspiracy* to import indecent or obscene material; namely the 141 imported titles seized.

Shortly before the trial was due to start, in October 1986, the case was dropped and the imported material sent back to America. Evidently someone with more sense had intervened. Now six of the titles have been re-imported and re-seized, but this time, by arrangement with the defendants, under the Obscene Publications Act, where it is possible to enter a defence of literary merit. In late October there were discussions between lawyers about it, but the decision is not known as we go to press.

Compendium done for £2000

Compendium bookshop in North London have been done for over £2000 for selling copies of the bootleg edition of *Spycatcher*. They have settled out of court, paying Heinemann £200 in damages plus £1,750 towards Heinemann's legal costs. Compendium also have their own legal costs to meet. They had been selling both the bootleg and the US editions. (Incidentally, the word Heinemann is used here to mean either or both Heinemanns (Australia) and Heinemanns proper. The distinction between the two, if any, is unknown to our informant.)

The legal position is quite clear. What Compendium were doing was illegal and they were well advised when they settled out of court.

Compendium must now destock by £2000. Curiously, this may fall particularly heavily on titles published by Heinemann. Believers in free speech may feel that they too can register their opinion of Heinemann's action by voting with their order books. Since the visit from Heinemann's lawyers, Compendium have received a letter from the Treasury Solicitor. In true legal fashion this document does not carry a clear meaning. Compendium may have been in contempt of court and then again they may not have been. In the meantime they are 'invited' to state that they have stopped selling *Spycatcher*.

Plod

Ronan Bennett

RONAN Bennett's past continues to haunt him. Whilst attempting to live quietly and finish his PhD, he has become the centre of a security scandal. Ronan is a quiet, resilient person, he has had to be, but all this does become wearying.

Ronan was living in Belfast in 1976, he had finished his GCE 'A' levels and was waiting to go to university. He was picked up and accused of involvement in a politically inspired robbery in which a plain clothes policeman was killed. The 'evidence' was so evidently spurious that his conviction was quashed on appeal. He was later convicted of an attempt to escape, so understandable that the sentence was to be bound over for £10. Equally understandably, he wanted to leave Belfast.

He moved to Huddersfield, where a local Black Cross group had been in contact with him whilst in prison. The presence of an anarchist with Irish connections was too tempting for the police. In May, 1977, he was picked up under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and faced deportation back to Belfast. A swift campaign brought the intervention of the Home Secretary and he was released.

Ronan, together with Iris Mills, moved to London. Within a year, they were drawn into another unwelcome drama. They were the first two arrested (May 1978), in what became known as the 'Persons Unknown' case. Initially this was sweeping, with six arrests, and allegations of 'conspiracy' to commit explosions,

kidnap members of the royal family, and attack nuclear power stations. With time (too much of it) this farrago crumbled and one by one the accused were bailed. Ronan's Irish origins were held against him and he wasn't released until three weeks before the trial began in September 1979, after sixteen months on remand. He, together with Iris and their other two co-defendants, were acquitted. The trial had become notorious for the 'vetting' of the jury and the harangues of the judge, Alan King-Hamilton, later to become a television star.

Ronan finally managed to take a degree course and went on to research for a PhD, on justice in sixteenth century England. This is almost complete. He took a job as researcher for a Labour MP, looking into the Guildford bombings, widely known to be a frame-up. In this position he was given a security pass for Parliament. Then, someone noticed; hence the current fuss.

The issue has become a cause of liberal concern. This innocent person is being persecuted. You'll note that the privileges of an MP are involved. The *Guardian* even devoted a leader to it. Those of us with longer memories recall that there was no such indignation when Ronan and others were remanded in 1978. It is outrageous that he is now being hassled, for his past record of not being an easy target. There again I remember giving a propagandist spiel on the Persons Unknown case to a forum, with many Spanish veterans, whose response was, well, yes, but what

do you expect. This attitude is shared by the non-liberal press, Edward Pearce in the *Sunday Times* (25 October) for example. He spoils a realistic survey of Ronan's problem by his sneering tone. Throughout Ronan's tribulations over thirteen years, he has been described as soft-spoken (perhaps these people expect a Catholic to sound like Ian Paisley?). Pearce hears this as an 'intellectualised whine'.

We do have to be realistic about these things. If the security forces did not take an interest, they would be guilty of gross neglect and wasting the tax-payers' money. Never mind the technical distinctions of being acquitted by courts. Which is no consolation for Ronan. Sorry mate.

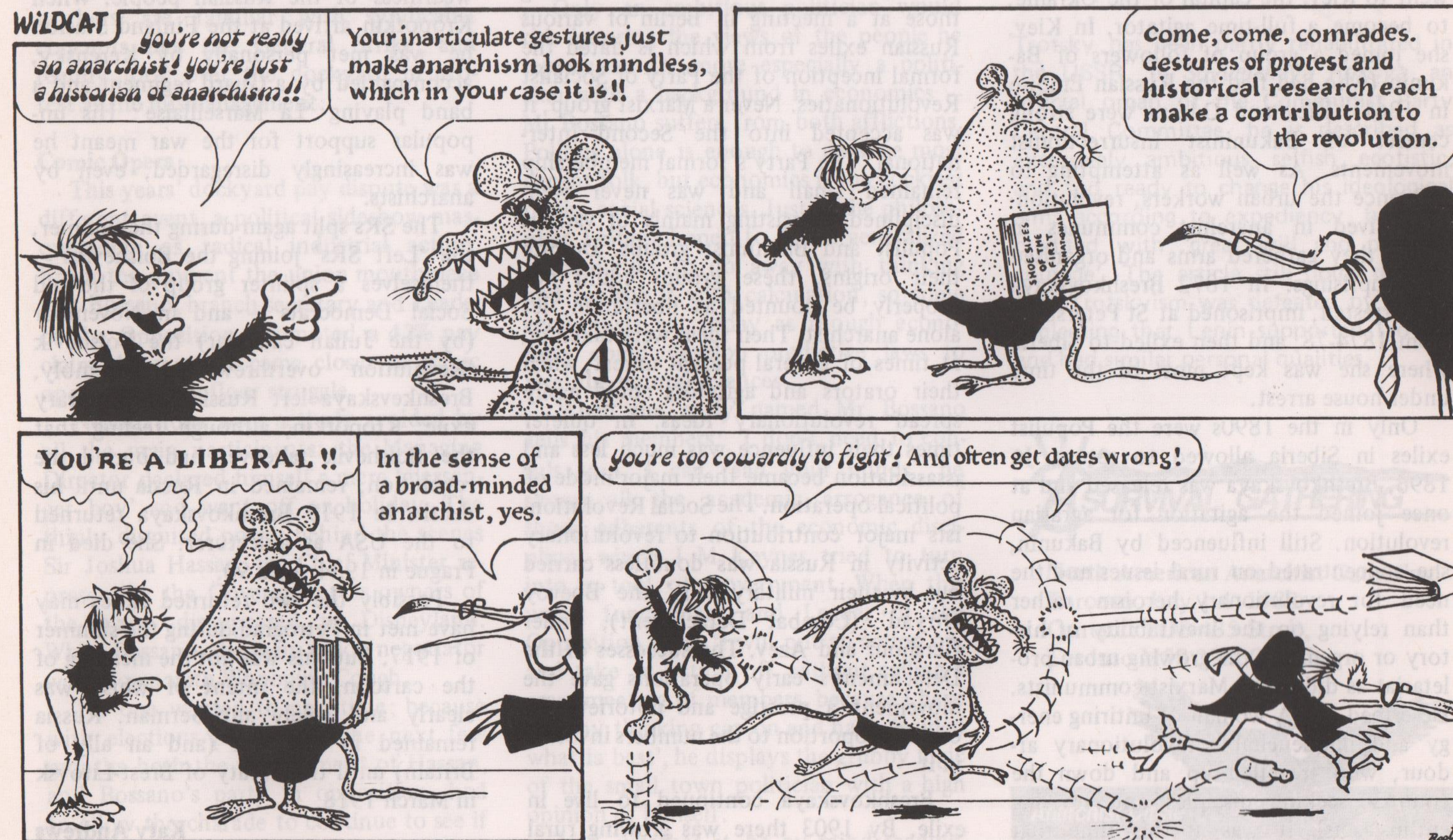
D P

Professional Irishpersons such as Wogan and Hunnicutt abound in the media. One such, Ronan Bennett, has a remarkable flair for free publicity.

Entering show-biz at the age of 18, he succeeded in getting arrested on charges which self-destructed, and by means of a cunning sub-plot secured a conviction for manipulation in the future.

He moved to the mainland for his next publicity coup, after which he was famous for being famous and could risk the move to London, where he had a West End triumph.

His return to show business after a few years' retirement has been another triumph, with news stories, TV appearances, liberal concern, and establishment indignation. How long can it last?



Arm in Arm



Kropotkin (grandfather of the Revolution): "You know, that grandson of ours is quite in the wrong style."
Breshkovskaya (grandmother of the Revolution): "Yes, he is too German in his style."
Cartoon from Novy Satirikon (Petrograd) reprinted in Manchester Guardian 11 Sept. 1917

[You may well have wondered, who was the apparently well-known lady strolling through the Winter Palace gardens on Kropotkin's arm in the 1917 cartoon on our October centre-spread. We wondered too. So we asked Katy Andrews.]

CATHERINE Breshkovskaya was born in 1844 near Vitebsk in Byelorussia, of a wealthy family of noble Polish origin. She became interested in the welfare of the peasantry, and her ideas became increasingly revolutionary. In 1870, aged 26, she went to Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, to become a full-time agitator. In Kiev, she joined a group of followers of Bakunin (who had fled the Russian Empire in 1861). Kiev and Odessa were strong centres of Bakuninist insurrectionist movements. As well as attempting to influence the urban workers, revolutionaries lived in anarchist communes in which they gathered arms and organised rural uprisings. In 1872 Breshkovskaya was arrested, imprisoned at St Petersburg from 1874-78, and then exiled to Siberia where she was kept most of the time under house arrest.

Only in the 1890s were the Populist exiles in Siberia allowed to return. In 1896, Breshkovskaya was released and at once joined the agitation for agrarian revolution. Still influenced by Bakunin, she concentrated on rural issues and the need for revolutionary heroism, rather than relying on the inevitability of history or organising the growing urban proletariat as did many Marxist communists. Described as: 'A woman of untiring energy and unquenchable revolutionary ardour, who travelled up and down the country seeking disciples and reviving enthusiasms', it was at this time that

Breshkovskaya earned the nickname 'Babushka (Grandmother) of the Revolution'.

Out of the political ferment of the 1890s arose a new movement, the Socialist Revolutionaries, by no means the wimps they are portrayed as by today's Marxist left-wing. The movement emerged from three main centres: 1) The Union of Socialist Revolutionaries, based on the Volga Valley, who called for 'A systematic terroristic struggle against the autocracy, together with other forms of mass struggle' (*Our Tasks* 1898); 2) Revolutionary Populist groups coming together in Kharkov and the south with a programme calling for agricultural workers' and small farmers' strikes, landlord boycotts, protests against unfair taxes, and resistance to arbitrary acts of government administrators; 3) A group established in Minsk in 1898 by Catherine Breshkovskaya and a Russian Jewish chemist called Gershoni.

The Minsk group, under Breshkovskaya and Gershoni, put its main emphasis on terror as a weapon of struggle. Gershoni, himself a notorious advocate and practitioner of terror and political assassination, soon made contact with another talented organiser, Evno Azev. In 1900 the group published its programme, *Liberty*. Breshkovskaya was forced to flee to Switzerland to avoid immediate arrest.

In 1901 Gershoni and Azev were among those at a meeting in Berlin of various Russian exiles from which is dated the formal inception of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries. Never a Marxist group, it was accepted into the Second International. The Party's formal membership remained small and was never well-disciplined, consisting mainly of various Populist and Bakuninist groups. Despite their origins, these groups could not properly be counted as libertarian, let alone anarchist. Their ideas were taken up at times of general peasant unrest, when their orators and agitators could easily spread revolutionary ideas. In quieter times their influence was much less and assassination became their major mode of political operation. The Socialist Revolutionaries' major contribution to revolutionary activity in Russia was doubtless carried out by their 'military wing', the 'Boevoy Otryad' (Combat Detachment), under Gershoni and Azev. The successes of the Detachment's early operations gave the movement a prestige and notoriety far out of proportion to the numbers involved in it.

Breshkovskaya continued to live in exile. By 1903 there was growing rural

and industrial unrest, with mutinies and student protests in major towns. Breshkovskaya went to the USA in 1904, but returned to Russia in October 1905 on the outbreak of the abortive revolution. The anarchists and Socialistic Revolutionaries gained from the Marxist Social Democrats' failure to take over its leadership. In January 1906 the SRs held their first full Party congress, in Finland (still a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire).

During 1906, a dissident group arose within the SRs on the issues of continuing the terror campaign and whether to stand candidates in the forthcoming Duma (People's Assembly) elections, a concession won after the 1905 uprising. Calling itself the People's Socialist Party, it split formally. Breshkovskaya remained with the SR mainstream, calling for a boycott of the elections. Another splinter group was the SR maximalists, extreme terrorists operating outside the Combat Detachment's command structure until they were broken up by the authorities. Once again the State moved against the SRs, and from 1907-10 Breshkovskaya was again imprisoned, and was again banished to Siberia on her release.

The Socialist Revolutionaries won a majority of deputies in the Constituent Assembly elected by the Soviets after the March 1917 Revolution. Kerensky released Breshkovskaya and she returned to Petrograd. Kropotkin, who supported the war against Germany, also returned to Russia during the summer of 1917. Most Russian anarchists opposed the war, and Kropotkin misjudged the weariness of the Russian people. When Kropotkin arrived at the Finland Station he was met personally by Kerensky, accompanied by a Guard regiment and a band playing 'La Marseillaise'. His unpopular support for the war meant he was increasingly disregarded, even by anarchists.

The SRs split again during the summer, the 'Left SRs' joining the Bolsheviks — themselves a splinter group of the old Social Democrats — and in November (by the Julian calendar) the Bolshevik 'Revolution' overthrew the Assembly. Breshkovskaya left Russia for voluntary exile; Kropotkin, although feeling that the Bolshevik takeover had buried the revolution, remained in Russia until his death. In 1919 Breshkovskaya returned to the USA as a lecturer. She died in Prague in 1934, aged 90.

Possibly the two returned exiles may have met in Petrograd during the summer of 1917. But this was not the meaning of the cartoon, the intent of which was clearly and solely anti-German. Russia remained in the War (and an ally of Britain) until the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918.

Katy Andrews

Political Ambition in Small States

SMALL states only outshine larger ones so long as they remain small, claimed Bakunin. Yet their minuteness in no way guarantees their morality; it only makes the Kaleidoscope of corruption more visible and less easily hidden from public opinion.

It came as no surprise then to learn that, faced with a Go-Slow in the Gibrepaire dockyard, Gibraltar's Chief Minister Sir Joshua Hassan had called upon the Home Office in the UK to send in the Riot Police. Quite how close we came to having our skulls cracked we will never know, but the *Sunday Mirror* reported in September that the British 'Territorial Support Group (riot police)' was put on "red alert" to deal with a potential "Wapping style" situation in Gibraltar?

All suitably melodramatic, and well it may be. Readers of *Freedom* may recall that during last year's pay dispute the dockyard managers of Gibrepaire had to flee not only their offices, but Gibraltar itself. The then Managing Director of YUPPIE pretensions, who had it seems been hired to break the union (the local Transport and General Workers' Union) by conducting a zookeeping style of management, fled to the UK and was replaced at Gibrepaire.

In Gibraltar trade unionism has had an underlying anarcho-syndicalist influence, at least since the 1960s, and the present District Secretary of the TGWU being an anarcho-syndicalist, so the workers are familiar with syndicalist concepts like the General Strike, and readily took over the dockyard in protest at the mismanagement.

Comic Opera

This year's dockyard pay dispute was a different event, a political sideshow masquerading as radical industrial action. From the moment the union mouthpiece Joe Bossano, branch secretary and Leader of the Opposition, promoted a 42% pay claim the scenario came closer to comic opera than shopfloor struggle.

Negotiations were actively avoided by all the main participants: the Managing Director declared himself a mere 'messenger boy' and went off on holiday. The thinly disguised power behind the scenes Sir Joshua Hassan, the Chief Minister representing the Government as owners of the Yard, disappeared to Disneyland. While Bossano, the main union negotiator went down with Whooping Cough.

No one wanted to negotiate; because with elections pending in the next few months both the Government of Hassan, and Bossano's party in opposition, had to allow the charade to continue to see if there was any political advantage to wring

out of the situation. The dispute was spun out for weeks at a cost of £1½ million, until a settlement of 8% was reached when the Yard was on the point of closure.

Cocksure Economist

One anarchist trade union militant described the outcome as a 'party political success' for Bossano, but a 'failure for the union'.

The problem with a political strike which seeks to promote a political cause, rather than the members' interests, is that the workers only get called in for the crowd scenes. Like so many bit part actors the rank and file are summoned to shout slogans and wave placards. Only their bodies are required, not their views.

This dispute was amazing for its stage managed manipulation, and lack of consultation of the membership. The 42% pay claim was never put to the members before it was submitted to management. Decisions for action were taken without reference to the members.

Accountability to the members, and consultation with the members, is the basis of all decent democratic organisations. But the grounds for consultation do not rest merely on moral decency; there are obvious prudential reasons for seeking the views of the rank and file members. Common sense tells us it's wise to find out what the membership thinks.

Only an ambitious politician would risk ignoring the views of the people he represents. Or more especially a politician with a background in economics — Mr Bossano suffers from both afflictions. Politics alone is enough to derange most decent folk, but economics is the cockiest of the social sciences. Just as the philosopher Leibniz hoped to find a generalized mathematics to do away with thinking and replace it with calculation, so some economists act today as though economics could develop predictive laws to rival the natural sciences.

When the aptly named Mr Bossano tells his members: 'I don't need to consult you, I can read your minds', he shows all the academic arrogance of those adherents of the economic discipline, which J M Keynes tried to turn into a tool of Government. When this union functionary and Leader of the Opposition says: 'I will put an action on, and take an action off without calling a mass meeting of members, because I have put my thinking cap on and have decided what is best', he displays the grubby logic of the small town politician with a high opinion of himself.

Yet, whether it be by mind reading,

economics or just a pally relationship with the Gibrepaire Assistant Personnel Manager (himself a recent overnight convert to trade unionism), Mr Bossano knows a thing or two. He knew there were going to be redundancies in the Dockyard well before his members. Redundancies are a Godsend to any ambitious politician in opposition.

With passions running high in Gibrepaire over the redundancy issue, skulls may yet be crushed. And with luck, and 800 jobs at stake, who knows perhaps the incoming Government, of whatever complexion, may confront a confused and distracted trade union movement in Gibraltar.

Dockyard Worker

IN BRIEF

Figures leak out for City salaries (before the current Historic Crisis of Capitalism). Top seems to be Christopher Heath of Baring Brothers bank with £2½ million a year (£6,883 per day). More common salaries are only about £500,000 a year. Fortunately there are expense accounts, cars, share options and the like, to help make ends meet.

The Swedish Women's Association hired two male strippers for its conference. The General Secretary said, 'It was merely pleasure, not politics'.

Trotsky has been partly rehabilitated in the USSR. In *Sov'yetskaya Rossiya*, an official organ of the Communist Party Central Committee, he is described as excessively ambitious, selfish, egotistic, and too ready to change his ideological aims according to expediency, but also credited with 'great will and personal courage'. The article still holds the line that Trotskyism was defeated by Lenin, neglecting that Lenin supported Trotsky and had similar personal qualities.



North American Anarchist Gathering
Toronto, July 14, 1988
Contact: POB 435 Stn P,
Toronto M5S 2S9, Canada.



Anarchist Circle

Flag, Torch and Fist

THE SYMBOLS OF ANARCHISM



EARLY anarchist symbolism confined itself to the borrowing of symbols from the international workers' movement, simply varying the colour for its own propaganda.

Black A common feature of the symbols used by anarcho-communists and anarcho-individualists is their pure black form. Black as a 'non-colour' expresses the rejection for everything which, according to the anarchist social ideal, prevents or constrains universal freedom.

Black and Red Only anarcho-syndicalists combine the anarchist black with the syndicalist red. Red, as an aggressive, active and energetic colour, symbolizes the determination of the syndicalist activist towards total social transformation.

Torch The flaming torch in symbolism-rich political journalism symbolizes the striving for freedom, or symbolizes already-achieved freedom given as an example to other peoples. It had some vogue among anarchists in the 1890s. As an anarchist symbol, it stands for enlightenment, realization, and ideas of free thought. Occasionally, the flaming torch is said to be both a light of freedom leading out of the dark oppression and exploitation, and also an illustration of the creative spirit, rising phoenix-like from the destruction of all forms of domination.

Black Rose Used by anarchists since early this century, often (but not exclusively) when associated with women.

A in a circle In terms of impact, the **A** is one of the most successful symbols in the whole field of political symbolism, comparable with the swastika, the death-rune-like Nuclear disarmament symbol designed by the English Gerald Holtom and the hammer and sickle. The widely-held view that it is an old anarchist symbol is mistaken. It was first suggested as an anarchist symbol in 1964, by the editorial collective of the French paper *Jeunesse Libertaire*. No other groups took it up at the time, but two years later it was used in Milan, then in 1968 re-exported to Paris whence it spread round the world in the wake of the revolutionary excitement. To some people it is simply a mark to indicate anarchist propaganda, to others it serves as a uniting symbol for all anarchist tendencies. No evidence has yet been found to support the common view that the **A** is actually a very old and only recently re-discovered anarchist symbol. In particular the letter A assisted the symbol's rapid world-wide spread. The word for anarchy in all the world's languages begins with A, so no problems of recognition or understanding stand in the way. The circle, furthermore, as a symbol of unity and determination, lends support to the oft-proclaimed idea of international anarchist solidarity. This incredible simplicity and directness led the **A** to become the accepted symbol of the restrengthened anarchist movement after the revolts of 1968. Now it and all its variations adorns not only the most varied pamphlets, but also many buildings and monuments. It is strong enough to stand incorporation into other symbols, combined with the biological symbol for female (ie the astrological symbol for Venus) for anarcho-feminism, and surrounded by flower petals for 'green anarchism'.

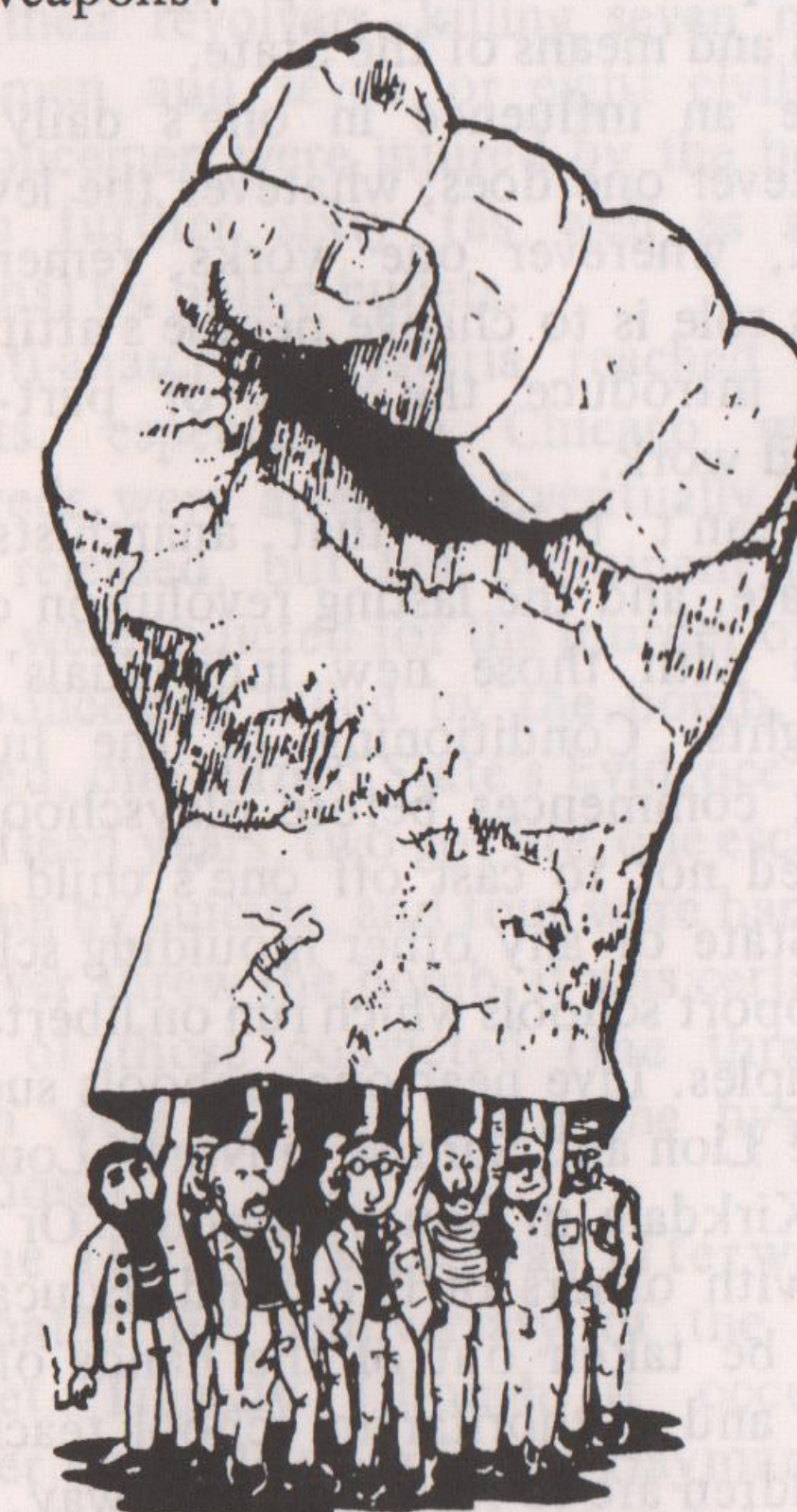
Wooden Shoe or Sabot Also from North America, but known only in the early days of the labour movement, was the wooden shoe. During strikes workers threw these shoes known as 'sabots' (read saboh) into machinery to bring it to a halt. In this way SABOTage was introduced as a means of struggle in the conflict between Labour and Capital. The sabot appeared in anarchist publications until into the 1930s as a symbol of the call to sabotage. Today it is not used, a fact probably due to the lack of anarchist strength in the revolutionary workers' movement.



Wobbly Wildcat from the 1920s

Wildcat The North American wildcat is a notoriously elusive animal, and 'harder to catch than a wildcat in the woods' is an American saying since the early nineteenth century. The wildcat symbol was used in the early stages of the North American workers' movement by the Wobblies (International Workers of the World). Subsequently it was used by anarchist (and Marxist) groups in America and other English-speaking countries. During the 1980s it has spread to other languages, thanks to the *Freedom* strip cartoon.

Fist The balled fist, which as a symbol of class struggle consciously emits aggression, is used only sparsely in anarchist iconography, and then clearly when aimed at intimidating the class enemy. So the fist is mainly found as a graphic representation of the call to smash all instruments of domination. A plain fist holding a black rose is sometimes used by anarchists as a symbol of solidarity. Two fists breaking a rifle are more commonly used in anti-militarist propaganda in order to lend more force to the slogan, 'Down with weapons'.



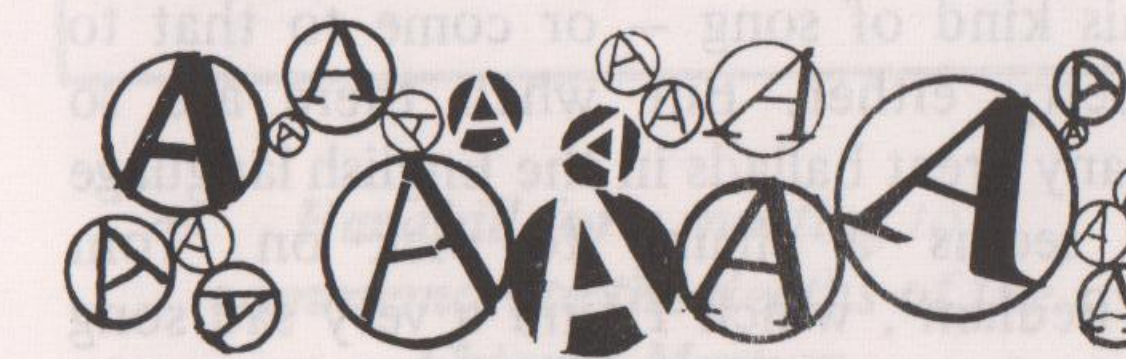
We don't know the origin of this drawing



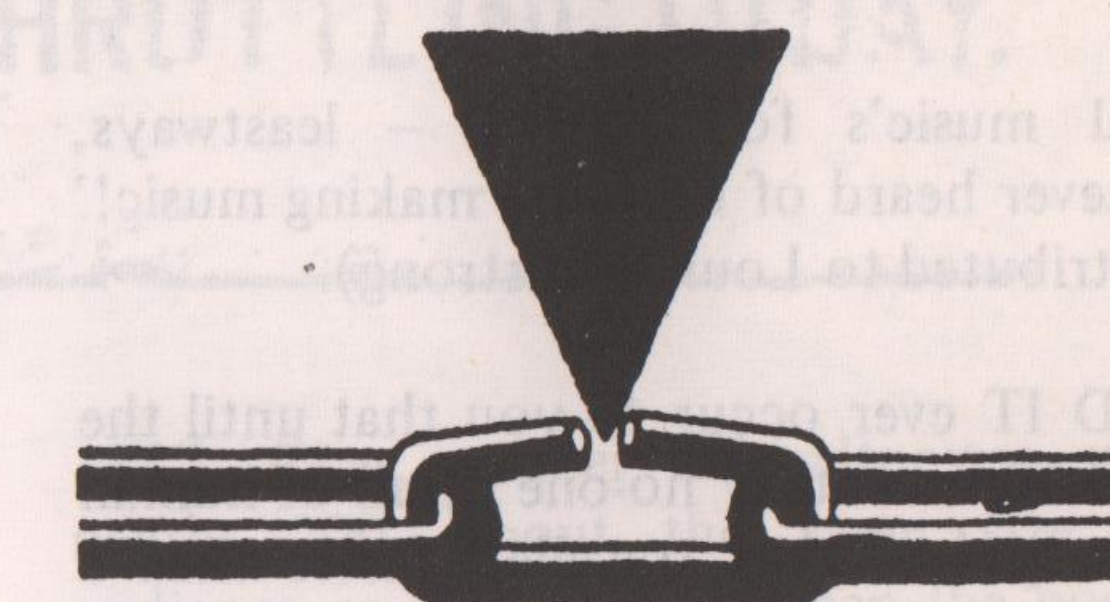
Roberto's Anarchik

The Man in Black With his wide-brimmed magician's hat, his cloak and his spherical bomb, this symbol originates from the time of the Italian independence struggle in the 1830s. It represents a fighter from the Secret Federation of the Carbonari (charcoal burners), which was then struggling for Italian unity against the various forces of occupation. In their uncounted uprisings and assassination attempts they used round bombs which were shot out from cannon-like devices. After the freeing of Italy from centuries of foreign rule the Carbonari continued their struggle against domination. The symbol of the bomb-throwing Anarcho found its greatest use in anarchist propaganda in the era of 'propaganda by deed' around the turn of the century, where sometimes simply a bomb with burning wick was represented. Now used in cartoons, self-mockingly by anarchists and derogatively by their opponents. The strip-cartoon character Anarchik, drawn in the 1970s for *Rivista A* by Roberto Ambrosoli, is still used in facsimile, internationally.

Flag and Star Probably the oldest anarchist symbols are the black flag and the black star. Through their lack of any colour they have widely expressed for many centuries the will to total overthrow of the dominant social conditions. The flag itself is a symbol uniting formal simplicity with high emotional appeal. But the black flag is not a party flag — as a banner of upheaval and of rebellions it signals the desired end of all authority. The star can have the most varied, but always positive meanings. The black star, used exclusively in five-pointed form, embodies the anarchist spirit and unconditional drive towards freedom.



The accepted symbol



Wedge splitting a chain

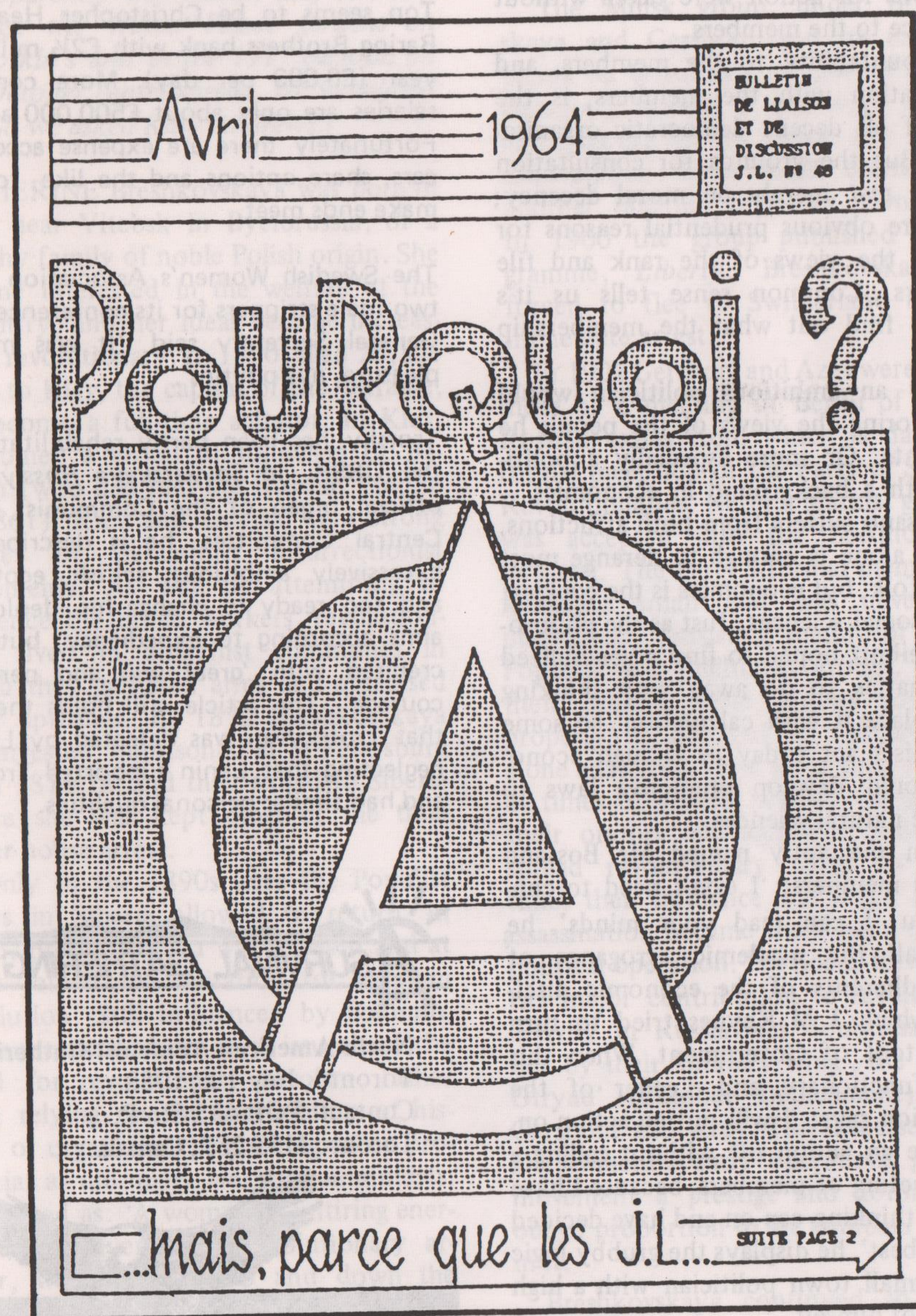
New Symbols More recently individual anarchist groups have tried creating new symbols. These reach back in their form at least to the cubism of the 1920s and 30s. The symbol of a wedge splitting a chain is seen as the only successful, strongly abstract design. Comrades from the Federation Anarchiste drew it in Paris, 1981, on the occasion of the anti-election festival '10 hours for anarchy'. In any case it is exceedingly doubtful that any new symbol will for any reason be able to catch on. The symbolism of the **A** cannot be beaten!

Peter Peterson

From *Trafik* (Mulheim), translated by *Red & Black* (Erimore, Australia), and with amendments and additions.



Black Flag by Clifford Harper



First ever use of A in a circle

Folk Music

'All music's folk music — leastways, I never heard of no horse making music!' (attributed to Louis Armstrong).

DID IT ever occur to you that until the mid-19th century no-one in all of human history had ever travelled faster than a horse could gallop or wind could blow a sailing ship? Or that until 1876 there was no means of recording actual sound (and motion even later)?



William Morris
'a vision of rustic anarchist peasants
singing lusty rural folk-songs'

Until the very end of the 19th century the only music anyone ever heard was live music, whether the written (or 'classical') music of the gentry or the songs and ballads — disseminated with the increase of literacy by penny broadsheets — and traditional folk music of the ordinary people. Music was always live, and usually orally transmitted (although Pepys shows evidence that many working people could read music if not letters). Songs were conceived, transmitted and reworked by numbers of singers: bawdy songs, drinking songs, songs of sport and work. Many of these were social comment and so are interesting as historical 'documents' of a sort.

Such a song is 'Mad Tom O'Bedlam', which Dennis Gould ('Poetry and Anarchism', *Freedom*, September 1987) wrote was one of the finest and perhaps the greatest of ballads in the English language. Now, Dennis is a fine poet and a nice bloke; but he is either very ignorant of the richness of the various

folk traditions of the British Isles (and English-speaking colonies overseas), or he is allowing political considerations seriously to cloud his judgement.

It is hard to say what makes a 'great ballad', but I personally would not put 'Tom O'Bedlam' in that category. In fact, I would argue that it is not strictly a ballad at all. The whole tradition (not to mention metre) shows that a ballad is not a mere collection of poetic stanzas, but is in fact a song, sung in verses, often of great length and usually without a chorus, which tells a story.

Just as Dennis is well-known as a poet, I should perhaps declare my interest — I sing traditional songs, and have done so publicly for around ten years. I don't write songs and don't know much technically about poetry, but I do know what makes a ballad.

Whether a ballad be an epic tale of heroism, a love song, a lament, a tale of Robin Hood or a traditional religious carol, it is still recognisably a ballad — a sung story — and not what one might call 'poetry'. It was clearly not originally composed or written down as a poem, even if there is poetry in it. I admit the earliest origins of both poetry and the true ballad were half-chanted epic prose, but we have come a long way from 'Beowulf', and I don't think it's 'academic' or pedantic to say so.

William Morris had a vision of the future (*News from Nowhere*) in which rustic anarchist peasants would while away the evenings singing lusty rural folk-songs. (This sort of idyll may not be everyone's cup of tea, but most would agree that anything is better than 'Dallas' or 'Wogan'.) Perhaps Morris's idea of folk-music was 'Tom O'Bedlam', who knows? It wouldn't be mine. The powerful imagery of the really great ballads like 'Tam Lin', 'Mattie Groves' or 'Sir Patrick Spens' hardly compares with a somewhat weird song about the fortunately long-gone days when people went to stare at the mentally ill inmates of Our Lady of Bethlehem's Lunatic Asylum, much as today's kids go to look at the caged animals in the zoo. (I suppose in the same vein one might cite 'Little Sir Hugh', the 13th-century ballad about an anti-Jewish blood libel in Lincolnshire.)

I'm not sure if there is any future in this kind of song — or come to that to poetry either. But when there are so many great ballads in the English language it seems a shame to pick on 'Tom O'Bedlam', which I find a very sad song to be honest, to epitomise them.

Bjarni

Be an influence

THERE has been much space in *Freedom* given to exchanges about 'class'. A practical consideration interferes with that hypothesis today. The expression 'working-class' has been gradually evaporated by absorption of innumerable such, so-called, individuals into the make-up of today's Conservative Party. When Thatcher became leader she had her voice modulated.

Living standards have risen gradually over the years (with inflation), and greed has developed without apology, or need for one in this society as it stands. Anarchism is no-class, because by definition anarchism means 'absence of government'. While people continue to compete for wealth there will always be a need for government or dictatorship, with society broken down into convenient divisions.

The prospect for the future needn't be daunting if we keep our wits about us. The question is, how to erode the power of government. The current drift into fascism will be brought to a halt only by an uncompromising change in practice.

For instance, at a general election, demonstrate clearly by spoiling your ballot paper. Be pleased not to give money to the state — lower one's income and pay no state tax. And become sufficient unto ourselves and each other. The contemporary anarchist will be relatively poor from choice because of the way everything connects in a rigidly structured and centralised state. To break the connection is the reason for being poor, as well as being non-violent and uncooperative when up against nasty ways and means of the State.

Be an influence in one's daily life. Whatever one does, whatever the level of work, wherever one works, remember, one's role is to change people's attitudes. And introduce the idea of part-time, shared work.

I can't believe that anarchists are celibate, and the lasting revolution could begin with those new individuals' first thoughts. Conditioning of the human being commences before playschool. Be pleased not to cast off one's child in to the State or any other moulding scheme — support schools which run on libertarian principles. Live near one: schools such as White Lion and Sunrise in North London, and Kirkdale in South London. Or start one with others of like mind. Education *must* be taken out of the hands of the State and authoritarian school teachers, if children are to find their own way.

Stand up, stand up for Anarchy!

Rodney Aitchtey

THE DAY WILL COME WHEN OUR SILENCE WILL BE MORE
POWERFUL THAN THE VOICES YOU ARE THROTTLING TODAY.

Two minutes silence for the 11 November Centenary

IN MAY 1986 the anarchist press observed the centenary of the 'Haymarket Affair'. Some excellent books and pamphlets about it are still in stock.

Briefly, for the benefit of newcomers, a general strike for an eight-hour day began in Chicago on Saturday 1 May 1886. On Monday 3 May there was a battle between strikers and hired thugs from Pinkerton's detective agency outside McCormick's agricultural machinery factory, which ended when police fired their revolvers into the strikers, killing six. Anarchists called a public meeting in the Haymarket for the evening of 4 May.

Attendance was disappointing, and after waiting for a time the organisers moved the meeting out of the Haymarket to a smaller site in Desplains Street. All three speakers discouraged violence. The mayor of Chicago was there for the start, and reported officially to a police station, on his way home, that the meeting was peaceable.

Violence came as the meeting was dispersed, about ten o'clock, when two hundred armed police turned up. There is no serious doubt that the violence was planned and largely perpetrated by the police, but it did not go quite as they planned. As they prepared to charge, a dynamite bomb went off among them, killing one. In panic and confusion they fired their revolvers, killing seven more policemen and seven or eight civilians. Six policemen were injured by the bomb and a further sixty (as well as sixty civilians) by police bullets.

Anti-anarchist hysteria reached new heights, especially in Chicago where hundreds were arrested. Eventually most were released, but ten prominent anarchists were indicted for the murder of the one policeman killed by the bomb. One escaped, one turned State's Evidence, one got fifteen years, two got life, one escaped hanging by suicide, and four were hanged. Whoever threw the bomb, it was certainly none of those convicted (the three in prison were released when the hysteria died down).

The first of May was afterwards designated the anniversary of the Haymarket Tragedy (though it occurred neither on 1 May nor in the Haymarket), and celebrated as International Labour Day with a one-day general strike. It has

been 'hi-jacked' many times. As early as 1905 the British Labour Party shifted Labour Day from 1 May to the first Sunday in May, so that workers could attend the rallies without being absent from work. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China declared 1 May an official holiday with the same objective. So did Nazi Germany, who redesignated it Adolf Hitler Day. In 1955 the Pope designated 1 May 'the Feast of Joseph the Worker'. Perhaps the most infuriating hi-jack occurred in Chicago on 1 May 1986, when a big international rally was held to celebrate the centenary of the Haymarket Tragedy, admission by ticket only and all anarchists excluded.

Another anniversary, much commemorated in the nineteenth century but not so much recently, is that of the death of the four anarchists who were hung. This event occurred at Cook County Jail at 11am on 11 November,

A MASS MEETING & DEMONSTRATION

To Commemorate the thirteenth anniversary
of the death of

THE CHICAGO MARTYRS

WILL BE HELD ON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13,

at 8 p.m. at the

WORKINGMEN'S CLUB & INSTITUTE UNION

CLERKENWELL ROAD, W.C. (near HOLBORN TOWN HALL)

Speakers:

P. KROPOTKIN, JOHN TURNER,
E. MALATESTA,
SIDNEY BLOOMFIELD, W. TCHERKESOV,
T. del MARMOL,
E. SHEPHERD, S. MAINWARING,
R. ROCKER,
I. CAPLAN, E. LEGGATT,
F. KITZ,
W. J. NEEDES, W. WESS.

Doors open at 7.30. Commence at 8.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

We sing their praise because they died for humanity.

Handbill for a meeting to
commemorate the deaths of the
Chicago Martyrs
London 1900

1887. The number of witnesses was nearly 200, about the same size of audience as was present when the bomb went off at the 'Haymarket' meeting.

August Spies, editor of a German-language anarchist paper, said 'The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today'. Adolph Fischer said 'Hurrah for Anarchy'. George Engel said 'Hurrah for Anarchy, this is the happiest day of my life'. Albert Parsons, the best speaker on the platform, began 'Let the voice of the people be heard . . .' but was prevented from continuing by strangulation. So 'The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today' was engraved on the memorial statue, and became the slogan of the commemoration.

The Armistice Treaty which ended the First World War was signed on the exact anniversary of the Haymarket hangings, at 11am on 11 November 1918. From 1919 to 1955 (when Armistice Day was mostly shifted to a Sunday the same as Labour Day), it was customary throughout Britain to shut everything down, stop moving, and observe two minutes' silence beginning at 11am every 11 November. There is a pretty story that this is another example of an anarchist event being hi-jacked but on investigation the coincidence appears to be purely accidental.

The two minutes' silence is still observed at the same time, at the military ceremony around the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London. In past years people have infiltrated the military demo, and during the two minutes' silence unfurled banners with offensive slogans like 'Never again' and 'No more war'. This year, we wonder, will anyone unfurl a banner saying '1887-1987 — the time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today'? And if they do, how many will understand?

DR

Haymarket and May Day, a centennial history 1886-1986 by NW (12 pages A4) 50p.

Haymarket Scrapbook by many authors compiled by Dave Roediger and Franklin Rosemont (256 pages A4) £10.00.

The Haymarket Tragedy by Paul Avrich (535 pages) £6.25.

Reasons for pardoning the Haymarket anarchists (Governor) John P. Altgeld (64 pages) £2.50.



Some letters are cut to save space or bring out points. If you object to your letter being edited, please write a note to the effect on the same sheet as the letter.

Romantic Revolution

AS A member of the Anarchist Communist Federation I thought I would try to answer some of the reservations expressed in DR's review of *Anarchism as we see it* (October).

In describing 'the romantic revolutionary dream' DR appears to deny the fact of class struggle, which exists at all times in our society. Only through self-activity can people get an idea of their own power, i.e. the ability to control their own lives. Class ideas come mainly from industrial, i.e. collective, action.

The oppressed classes are not 'shown by revolutionaries' to fight back against the rulers, but do so by their own actions. Revolutionaries can help the 'masses' with ideas, but they cannot start, or control, a movement which can smash the state. They can only influence the outcome of such movements.

In the long term, only the oppressed can bring about anarchy, for it is in their long-term interest to do so. In the short term, however ...

Government can only be destroyed when the great majority of a given population realise they can do without it. Education of the 'people' cannot produce this realisation because the state has a monopoly in the field of education. Only self-education through struggle can bring the realisation about.

Concerning the 'population accustomed to the old system': would the majority drift back into subservience if they were in real control of a revolution? The reaction starts with the creation of any power over the people. I doubt that they would allow new masters to order them about if they were in true control.

The 'armed community' would be needed to stop any counter-revolution. If a community cannot defend itself against a reactionary and/or dangerous minority, then whose liberty is in most danger? Of course any such minority is free to move on to a community nearer its own ideas. The armed community would be a majority, but hopefully would be in favour of anarchy. You cannot force people to live

in anarchy, but you cannot let government be created again just because a small minority want it.

A 'n-y-layered society' is not a multi-class society. Most of the layers are oppressed. Class is not an immovable, inflexible force or idea. Individuals can rise up and down, but there are still classes and bosses no matter how high (or low) you travel.

Revolutionary situations can break out at any time, and it is then that the 'romantic revolutionary dreamers' try their programme. In the meantime practical anarchist activity goes on, but it is misleading to call this 'practical revolution'. Anarchist activity must continue at all times, but to ignore class struggle is to ignore revolution, and so make anarchy an impossible dream.

Iain M McKay
Glasgow

Anarchism kills Communism

YET ANOTHER REPLY : FASCIST WRITING IN THE ANARCHIST PRESS.

I WAS interested to read the replies to Dan Dare's article 'Anarchism kills Communism' because none of them conveyed the disgust and shame with which this ridiculous piece of writing was received.

If we call ourselves anarchists, then why must we be forever plagued by fascists writing in our magazines? Why did not of the replies take our courageous Dan Dare to task over his view that we all had the 'right' to rape and shoot smack?

If we are to be taken seriously as a movement, then such people have got to be denied a platform in our magazines. In his case, perhaps a bullet in the brain would be the most merciful solution.

Anarchism is about developing a coherent analysis of class, race, sex, and sexuality, and how we proceed to eliminate oppression based on these things.

Debates with those on the 'right' of our movement are for those who wish to indulge in Armchair Anarchism and intellectual masturbation, but absolutely no use whatsoever for those of us who take anarchism seriously and actually want to change things.

Chris Hall

[To avoid misrepresenting Dan Dare, his statement that 'everyone has the "right" to rape and shoot smack' was not to advocate rape and shooting smack, but to illustrate his contention that 'right' is a nonsensical word. This is quite clear in his article.]

One more we missed

MANY older people, if you take the time to talk to them, can tell of so many times and events when, to quote the old phrase, 'I was there', and I can remember on one occasion, speaking to my grandfather ... born in 1901 in the outback of Australia, he travelled back to England with his parents and brother on a rather extended journey, taking some ten years through Latin America during the early 1900s.

I had expected a tale or two of strikes, lockouts, atrocious working conditions, revolts, the F.O.R.A., but my grandfather related nothing of such events. What had impressed him was simply the local habit in Paraguay of eating raw garlic. My grandfather, or rather the events he witnessed in his life, must offer some clue as to why we have, as a movement, achieved so little.

At sixteen he was old enough to run off to join the merchant navy, to see torpedoes pass close by his ship, as likely as not fired by some other German sixteen year old runaway. At twenty-five he was

old enough to strike in the general strike of 1926, and like so many others to lose his job as a driver with the brewery in Warrington, Lancs. Yet he was determined and strong enough to start his own delivery van business when he couldn't get a job to feed his wife and growing family. He and many of the working class of this country could give the fatuous likes of Thatcher et al some lessons in self-help.

He lived in the same house for 55 years but never owned it, even though the rent he paid would have bought it ten times over. He was, in the South Lancashire working class tradition, a catholic. He used the co-op, in his later years driving their funeral hearses, drank at his local catholic working mens club - in all these areas of his life the practise of mutual aid survived and was important.

He was always against something the government was doing, but his paper was the *Daily Telegraph*. The books which filled his shelves were the classics, school

books for his children and catholic religious tracts of the same church that taught the Spaniards it was a mortal sin to vote liberal!

One would have thought that the anarchist movement in this country would have made some impact on his life at so many points which stand out as the failed milestones of our movement: the 1st world war, the general strike, the depression, the coming of the 2nd war; times when we should have been spreading our message effectively.

However, he and millions like him, though they practised self-help, solidarity and mutual aid in their daily lives in order to survive, had never even heard of anarchism. He died last month so we will never reach him now, but he was only one of millions we have missed. Somehow we must reach out and find those millions of people who need our movement and its liberating ideas, lest the next century be but a repeat of the last 100 years of war, death and exploitation and, to coin a phrase of Kropotkin's, 'Until this is done nothing shall be done'.

Jonathan Simcock

1968 + 20

1968 was a year of great historical significance and symbolic value for anti-authoritarian movements and thought.

The memory of those events and, even more importantly, the reflection on what happened in that year (and following on from that year) is important for whoever 20 years on continues to recognize the spirit of revolt and the desire for freedom.

If it's true that 1968 wasn't only about occupations/strikes/demonstrations but that it went beyond to deeply affect many aspects of society (from pedagogy to culture, from psychiatry to the family, etc), then a reflection on 1968 automatically becomes an analysis of the present reality and the prospects for libertarian

and anti-authoritarian tendencies today.

Various initiatives inspired by the 20th anniversary of 1968 within a libertarian context have already been announced. Among these the Centro culturale LM Vega in Turin, with whom we are already in close contact, has proposed a conference for the spring of 1988.

In order to contribute to this information and reflection of the international anarchist people, and because we believe that freedom and anti-authoritarianism are fundamental values, the editorial collectives of *'A-Rivista Anarchica* (Milan, Italy) and *IRL* (Lyon, France) have decided to produce together a collection of articles (*Dossier '68*) which we foresee publishing in our magazines by mid '88.

The formulation of this *Dossier '68* is open as wide as possible to anyone who has something to say or to suggest within

a libertarian framework on any of the 100's of themes connected to 1968.

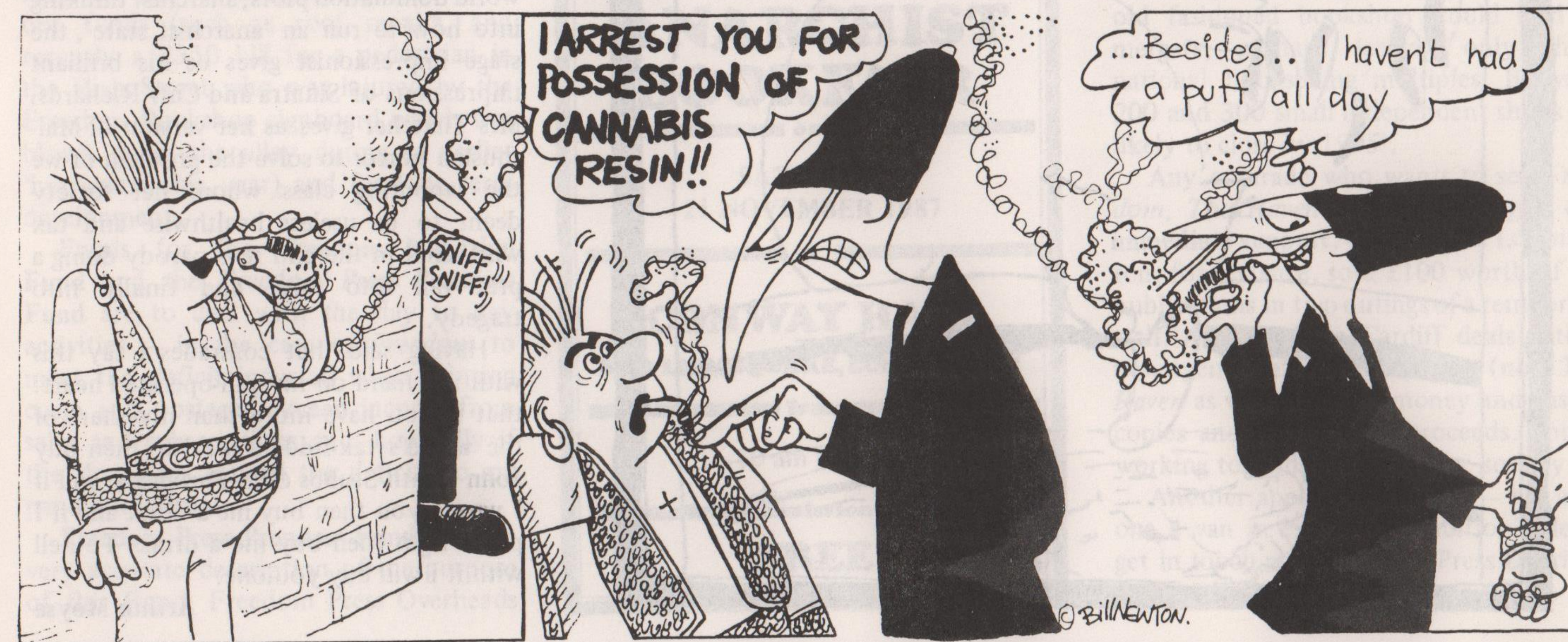
We invite anyone who would like to contribute to get in contact with one of the two editorial groups.

We would particularly like to invite other anarchist publications to actively participate in the production of the *Dossier '68* (ways and means to be agreed upon) hopefully thus allowing a more international perspective. The present axis Milan/Lyon could so be widened...

But we don't want to go on. We'd just like to let you know that the project has already taken off and whoever is interested can get in contact with us by writing to the following addresses:

Editrice A, Cas. post. 17120, 20170 Milan, Italy.

IRL c/o ACLR, 13 Rue Pierre Blanc, 69001 Lyon, France.



BOOK REVIEW

Cats' Parnassus

John Heath-Stubbs (illustrations by Emily Johns)

Hearing Eye, £2.95, signed copies £10.

THERE comes the time of sad inevitable realisation that the creative talent has exhausted itself and for reasons of rent or fashionable fame the public performer has to rehash Old Glory in a bid to catch the world's wandering attention. It is then that yesteryear's talent becomes parody. It is then that the academic and the wits move into that dead ground mocking the style, aping the manner and turning the artist's statement into the dialectic by providing the negative.

Parody demands three things. One is the ability to perform the act, two is a sure knowledge of the art that one is parodying and the third the most baleful of all of all, the assumption that the reader is one of a small informed minority who are immediately aware of the work or the artist of whom the piss is being taken out of.

Failing these three gifts it is necessary, nay demanded, that one's own work should be able to take its place in the public market on its own merit as a work of creative art. And in spite of my harsh words 'tis no crime; for if the humour is without malice, then let us join in the laughter of the fashion of the hour, and either wish that we had the like talent or demonstrate that we have. It is asked (by no one), when does parody become forgery? The answer is when the parodist offers it as the work of the artist who is being parodied. Tom Keating the artist stood in the dock charged with 'forging'

and selling the paintings of various mini masters; but if he had signed them with his own name, sadly, Tom's 'in the style of' paintings would have been worthless, he would never have stood in the dock and the world would have been that bit poorer for not knowing him. No one parodies the engravings of Dürer or the sculptures of Michelangelo so that those who have been chosen to be dissected should, after a brief and worthy rage, feel honoured that their small talent has been worthy of a lesser pen or brush or voice.

John Heath-Stubbs gives us and the world six poems 'in the style of' Dr Johnson on to and including T S Eliot and they are the poetic voices of the six cats owned by the six poets and writing and rhyming in the manner of each particular poet. The pleasure, for me, in reading and handling this well produced twenty page book of six parodies, in the style of, is knowing the work of the original poets, that I still remember Gray's 'Selima' poem from childhood, and running in harness with the 'poetry' of Heath-Stubbs are the truly delightful black and white drawings that illustrate the six poems. Fine pen lines with a use of solid blacks that lifts the drawings off the pages. The drawings are by Emily Johns and poems and drawings are fronted by a delightful yet powerful two-toned drawing covering the whole cover area.

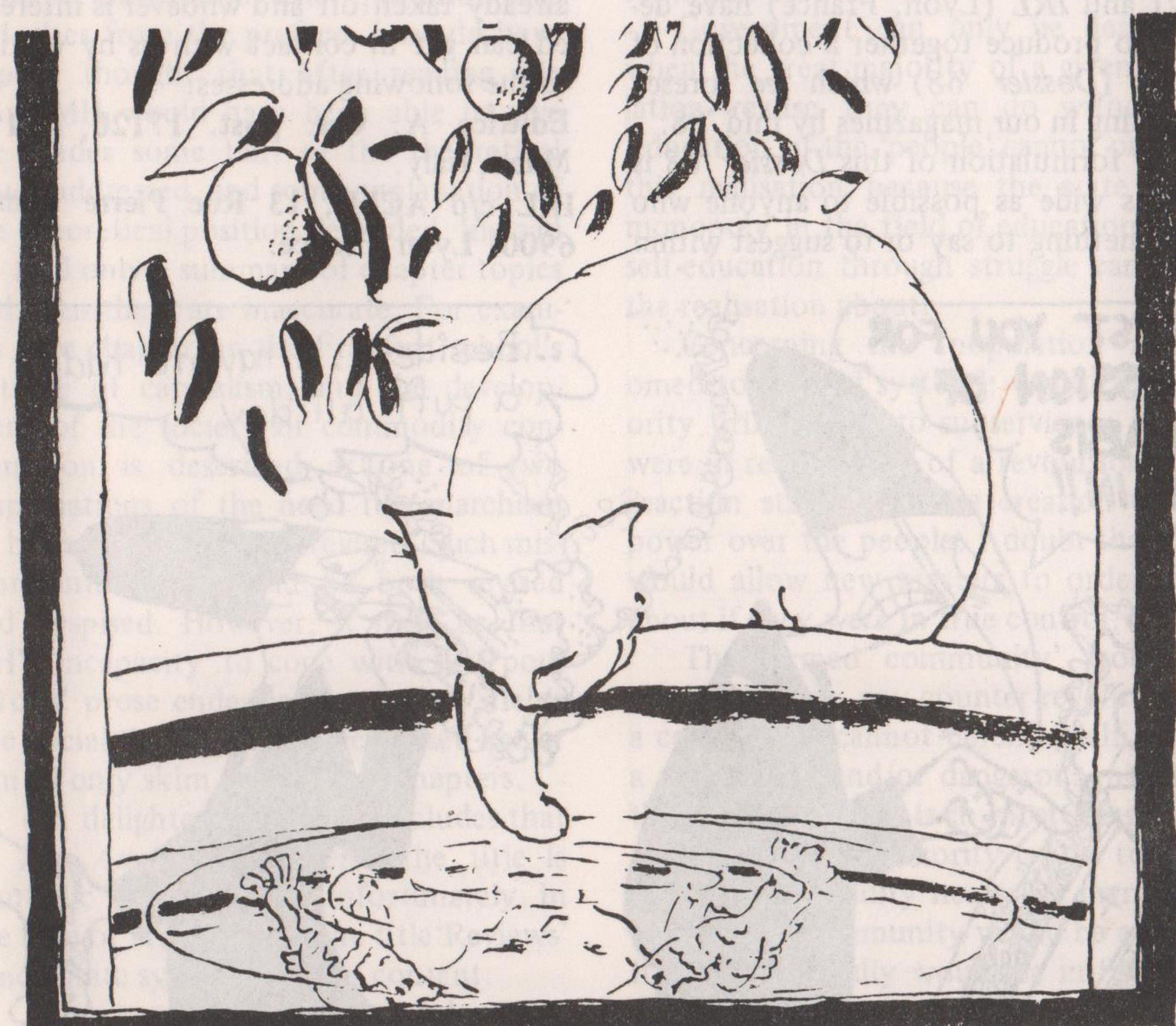
The classic among parodies must surely be Graham Greene's parody of himself, under an assumed name, thereby winning a *New Statesman* Weekend Competition. But in the end let us believe that the ability to parody, as in art and as in politics, demands a minor talent. It is to take the burned out life of the body and

carry on with the corpse. Marlowe 'Come, drink with me and meet the wife/a nagging creature full of strife'; Longfellow 'Charlie can't you hear me calling/Philip kindly please stop bawling'; Housman 'They hanged him on the canteen door/Not again o what a bore'; Kipling 'The sergeant major's lying drunk/The colonel's wellies gone an' shrunk'; Eliot 'Shall we return to the Nag's Head/Beer staining the ceiling/The women weep under the stale rain'; Wodehouse '“Jeeves” I said, lifting the old “e and b” to the waiting mouth, “concerning the yellow socks”; and I knew that the faithful retainer was drilling holes in the back of the trembling neck'; Betjeman 'Mrs Carter's nearing forty/Tall and slim but very haughty/Rings the church bells every Sunday/In bed with the vicar every Monday'; Chandler 'She came through the closed door flat footed and carrying a 38 and hooking a pink shoe foot on my desk snarled “You's Marlow” and with a 38 pointed at the middle who am I to argue?'; Richmal Crompton '“I think” said William throwing a stone at a tree “that I shall become a famous revolutionary”. Violet Elizabeth lisped “What shall I do” and William thought for a moment and said “You'll do the typing”'; Hemingway '“The god damn off sets clamped up” said the small man, and the man called Lew tossed his rod to the customer on the floor and kicked the copy machine. “It still don't work” said the small man, and Lew spat on the customer on the floor saying “Go get that god damn Tebbit to go come fix it”'.

Now you carry on from me comrade. We live within a society so constructed that we have to be continually entertained and the small modicum of originality cannot daily fill the demanding media so that art, politics, entertainment, social ideological thinking is forced into parody. James Bond becomes fantasy pantomime, art sinks into abstract, the novel into rehashed subjective emotions or exhausted world domination plots, anarchist world domination plots, anarchist thinking into how to run an 'anarchist state', the stage impressionist gives us his brilliant impressions of Sinatra and Cliff Richards. Mrs Thatcher gives us her version of 'Malthusian horror to solve the problem of we the labouring class whom her society deem to be useless healthwise and tax wise. And in the end it is parody doing a prat fall into farce and finally into tragedy.

Having said that comrades I say this with my hand on my pill-operated heart: that if you have more than my share of the world's tax-fiddled wealth, then buy John Heath-Stubbs *Cats' Parnassus*, and if I wrong you then buy me a drink and if I prove right then buy me a drink. To hell with it I will buy you one.

Arthur Moyse



News from Angel Alley

WE DON'T often trouble readers with our perennial financial problems, but since with this issue of *Freedom* we are including the **Friends of Freedom Press** brochure we felt that a few words about our Deficit Fund and Premises Fund would not come amiss, both for the many new readers of *Freedom* who would like to know more about the purpose of these funds, and for older comrades and friends who may have forgotten how important these funds are.

The aims and constitution of FFP are explained in considerable detail in the brochure. All we would add here is that any of our older comrades and friends who would like to leave something to FFP should make sure that they deal with the matter when they are in the pink of health, and not wait until it is too late. Our old friend Constance Stork, who died recently, had written to us only when she was taken seriously ill to say that she wanted to leave her effects to FP, and would we draw up a document with names of beneficiaries etc? Which we did but she died before she could deal with the matter. Many people are superstitious or reluctant about making Wills. Perhaps if they realised that by not doing so the Crown or some remote relative could benefit they might have overcome the difficulty.

FFP have already done much to ensure that we have a roof over our heads – for instance by providing £1,500 a year ago, to repair that leaking roof. They also subsidised the publication of the Centenary issue of *Freedom* to the tune of £2,000, and have advanced funds for the expansion of the Bookshop and for setting up **Freedom Press Distributors** which is now handling the important anarchist titles from Black Rose Books (Montreal), Charles Kerr & Co (Chicago), See Sharp Press (San Francisco) and others.

Funds for the **Friends of Freedom Press** are also for unexpected demands on our funds (such as roof repairs, and recently a £350 bill for a pedestrian in the High Street who was injured by the Freedom Bookshop signboard which was blown down the alley during an earlier 'hurricane' this year) and for long term development.

Funds for the **Freedom Magazine Fund** and the **Freedom Press Premises Fund** are to deal with the day to day activities – in the case of *Freedom* to meet the deficit incurred when printing costs and postages exceed income from sales and subscriptions and, hopefully if the donations exceed the deficit, to expand our journal.

Freedom Press Premises Fund is not a very accurate description of the purpose of this Fund. Freedom Press Overheads

Fund explains more clearly its purpose. Freedom Press is responsible for rates, insurance, heating, telephone, advertising and all postal and other overheads incurred in running an office which deals with all mail orders, subscriptions to *Freedom* and *The Raven* as well as enquiries. None of these overheads are charged to either *Freedom* or the Bookshop. Aldgate Press the printers – another creation of the FFP – who have made such a success of the enterprise, share with Freedom Press the major items. Nevertheless Freedom Press still has to find £5,000 a year on overheads.

Last year the Premises Fund amounted to £554. This year the total, so far, is £451. So how do we get by each year? The answer is quite simple, but the consequences are serious: we use the income from the sales of Freedom Press titles. Our 'capital' is our stock of some 30 FP titles all paid for. This year alone we have reprinted five of them: *Why Work?*, *Journey through Utopia*, *Wildcat anarchist Comics*, *ABC of Anarchism*, *Anarchy (Malatesta)* at a cost of some £7,000. Stocks of other important titles are getting low and will need to be reprinted, but if we go on raiding much longer our income from the sales of Freedom Press titles to meet the overheads which cannot be reduced – if anything they will be increasing (postages don't go down; insurances on the building and stock have doubled), then the output of new FP titles and the reprinting of those that go out of print will be seriously affected.

Many of Freedom Press' titles carry an acknowledgement to someone who has made publication possible. What those contributions do in addition to providing the money to cover some or all the printing and binding costs is to make it possible for FP to sell its publications at the kind of prices that the non-affluent can afford.

ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

on

SATURDAY
21 NOVEMBER 1987

at

CONWAY HALL

RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1

from

10 am to 6 pm

admission

FREE

And because even those low prices have to take into account that wholesalers demand 50% discounts and booksellers 35% we seek to make amends to our readers and anybody who orders direct from us by offering them our titles post free – which also explains why our postage bill is so high.

Freedom Press' policy of 'subsidising' new titles to keep down the selling price has been criticised by our wholesalers and some alternative booksellers on the grounds that the margin for the middlemen is not enough. If our books were more expensive they would make more on each copy sold. Agreed! But we have to point out to them that we are not publishers but anarchist propagandists. No one connected with FP is paid a wage; nor are the editors of *Freedom* and *The Raven*; nor are the comrades who keep the bookshop open six days a week, or run FP office (they can draw £5 a day for travel expenses and a lunch with home brewed beer or lemonade). With our overheads – Rates at over £2,000 a year up an Alley in Whitechapel, plus Water Rates of another £250pa makes you think doesn't it? – we can appreciate what some alternative booksellers are facing in overheads, but surely by the fact of being alternative booksellers they should welcome those publishers such as FP who produce *alternative* books at *alternative* prices. After all, as the *Independent* (14/10/87) pointed out in a feature on 'Book world reaches its saturation point': 'over the last seven years, spending on books has gone down in real terms and so has the number of people buying them. During the same period, book prices have risen 40 per cent faster than inflation.'

The reason why Freedom Press has decided to launch **Freedom Press Distributors** is that we are convinced that we cannot depend on commercial outlets to sell our publications. Just as most of the independent publishers have been absorbed by the multinationals so also are traditional booksellers. The Young report says that the trend away from the old fashioned bookshop 'could lead to mergers, perhaps leaving only three national bookselling multiples. Between 200 and 300 small independent shops are likely to close by 1995'.

Any comrade who wants to sell *Freedom*, *The Raven* and FP titles gets our **immediate support**. Comrades in Leamington, for instance, sold £100 worth of FP publications in two outings of a temporary stall. A comrade in Cardiff deals with a newsagent, delivers the papers (now *The Raven* as well), collects money and unsold copies and sends us the proceeds. This is working towards an alternative society.

Another appeal – seriously – has anyone, a van in excellent condition? Please get in touch with Freedom Press Distributors, with practical suggestions.