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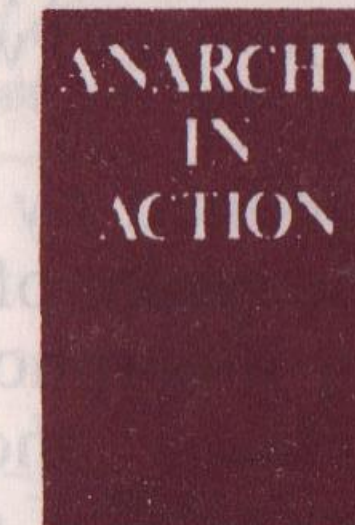
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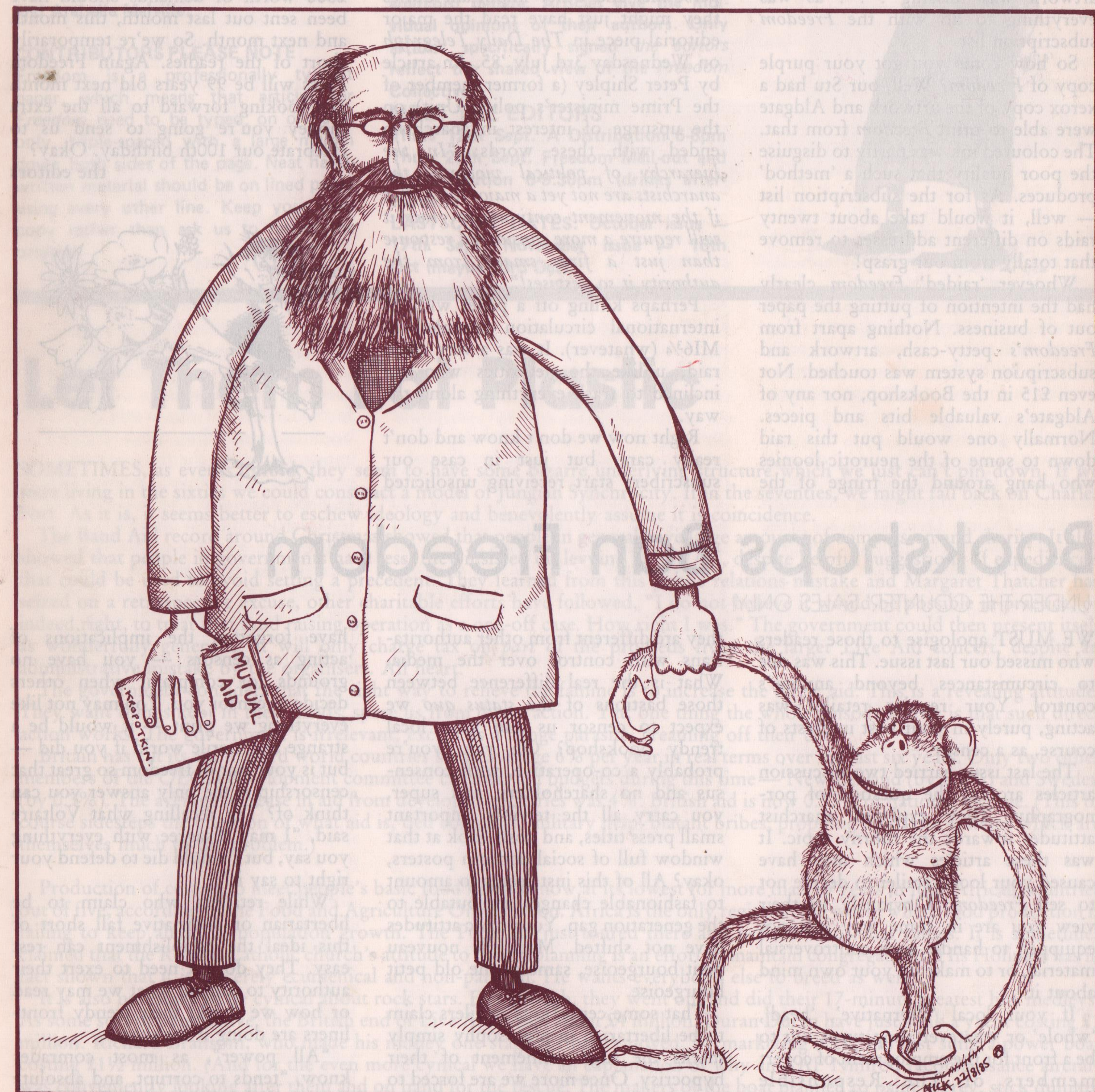
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Vol 46 No 9 1985 SEPTEMBER 45p

FREEDOM

international anarchist monthly



ANARCHY AND EVOLUTION FREEDOM BANNED AND RAIDED

Freedom Raided

WHEN the members of Aldgate Press came into work to print the previous issue of *Freedom*, they found their door crowbarred open. However, instead of the usual chaos left by our annual burglary, nothing appeared to have been touched . . . at first. They soon realised, however, that all *Freedom's* artwork was missing . . . as was everything to do with the *Freedom* subscription list.

So how come you got your purple copy of *Freedom*? Well, our Stu had a xerox copy of the artwork and Aldgate were able to print *Freedom* from that. The coloured ink was partly to disguise the poor quality that such a 'method' produces. As for the subscription list — well, it would take about twenty raids on different addresses to remove that totally from our grasp!

Whoever 'raided' *Freedom* clearly had the intention of putting the paper out of business. Nothing apart from *Freedom's* petty-cash, artwork and subscription system was touched. Not even £15 in the Bookshop, nor any of Aldgate's valuable bits and pieces. Normally one would put this raid down to some of the neurotic loonies who hang around the fringe of the

anarchist 'world'. People who, having made themselves unacceptable to the political parties, try to improve their bad tempered authoritarianism on the anarchists.

However, there is always the secret fuzz! When they've got time off from checking out BBC (and ITV actually) personnel and other important duties they might just have read the major editorial piece in *The Daily Telegraph* on Wednesday 3rd July '85. An article by Peter Shipley (a former member of the Prime minister's policy Unit) on the upsurge of interest in anarchism ended with these words: "*In the hierarchy of political violence, the anarchists are not yet a major force. But if the movement continues to grow it will require a more considered response than just a firm smack from the authority it so despises!*"

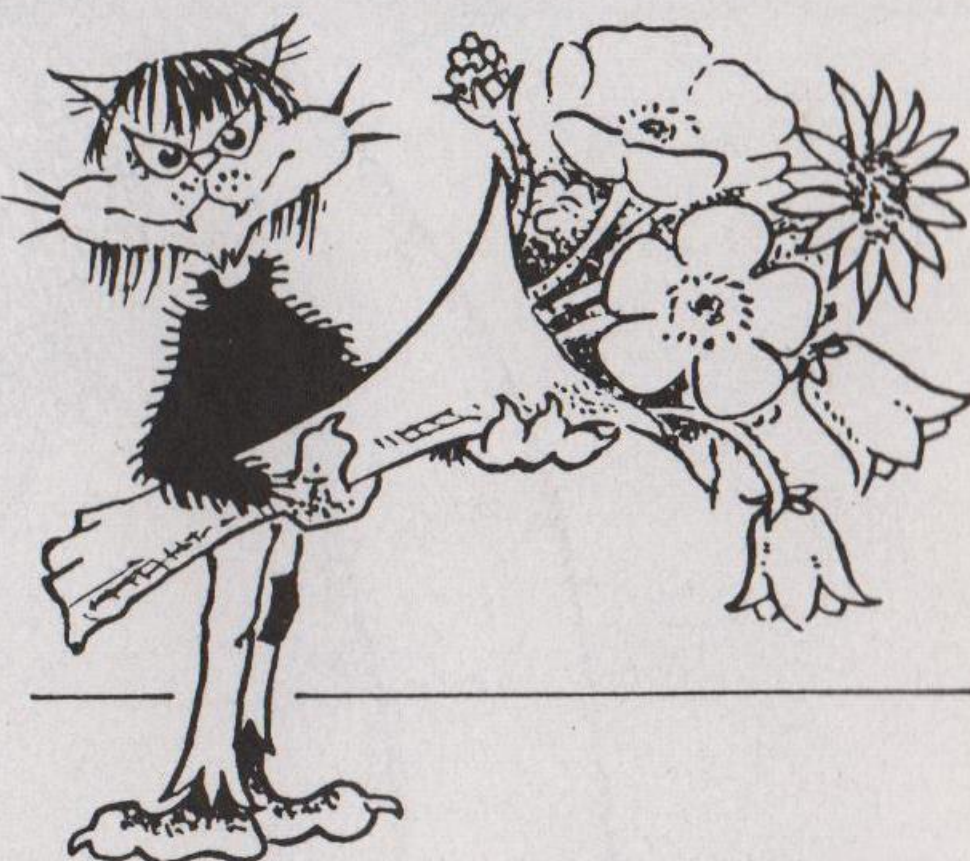
Perhaps killing off a paper with an international circulation appealed to MI6¾ (whatever). It was a very clean raid, unlike the neurotics who are inclined to trash everything along the way.

Right now we don't know and don't really care, but just in case our subscribers start receiving unsolicited

mail from one of our lower circulation rivals . . . well, we thought we'd better mention it — hopefully you'll write in and let us know too!

Meanwhile, 90% of our subscribers may take it that their subs are now due (or nearly so). Could you help us out by paying up without being asked. £800 worth of demands should have been sent out last month, this month and next month. So we're temporarily short of the readies. Again *Freedom* Press will be 99 years old next month and looking forward to all the extra money you're going to send us to celebrate our 100th birthday. Okay?

the editors



Bookshops Ban Freedom

UNDER THE COUNTER SALES ONLY!

WE MUST apologise to those readers who missed our last issue. This was due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. Your regular retailer was acting, purely in your best interests of course, as a censor.

The last issue carried two discussion articles around the question of pornography. They explored anarchist attitudes towards the thorny topic. It was these articles which may have caused your local retailer to decide not to sell *Freedom*. Obviously in their view you are in some way just not equipped to handle such controversial material, or to make up your own mind about it.

If your local 'alternative', 'head', 'whole' or whatever shop turns out to be a front for the employment of covert members of The Responsible Society/Moral Majority can we suggest that those comrades with an inclination to direct action via aerosols or super-glue get moving. 'HYPOCRITE' looks nice in red, and a glued up till could be most embarrassing.

Censorious retailers reading this might pause and consider in what way

they are different from other authoritarians with control over the media. What is the real difference between those bastions of the *status quo* we expect to censor us and your local trendy bookshop? Oh yah, you're probably a co-operative, with consensus and no shareholders, and super, you carry all the terribly important small press titles, and gosh, look at that window full of social concern posters, okay? All of this just seems to amount to fashionable changes attributable to the generation gap. Your basic attitudes have not shifted. Meet the nouveau petit bourgeoisie, same as the old petit bourgeoisie.

That some censorious retailers claim to be libertarian in philosophy simply marks the high refinement of their hypocrisy. Once more we are forced to consider the honesty of blatant pornographers, the openly philistine attitudes of major distributors, and contrast it unfavourably with the covert authoritarianism, displayed as repression and confusion, by those who should be our allies in changing society.

They seem, in their zeal for purity, to

have forgotten the implications of acting as censors — you have no grounds for complaint when others decide to censor you. You may not like everything we print — it would be a strange and sterile world if you did — but is your fear of freedom so great that censorship is the only answer you can think of? Try recalling what Voltaire said, "I may disagree with everything you say, but I would die to defend your right to say it".

While retailers who claim to be libertarian or alternative fall short of this ideal the establishment can rest easy. They do not need to exert their authority to control what we may read or how we think; their trendy frontliners are doing it for them.

"All power", as most comrades know, "tends to corrupt, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely". We are suffering from corruption caused by the power exercised by that most vulnerable pillar of our society, the British Shopkeeper.

If you can't change their minds, subscribe!

Colin Johnson

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The editors

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THE OPEN DOOR POLICY

Freedom welcomes news, reports and comrades contributions to a genuine anarchist debate. Articles give the individual opinions of their authors. Only articles specifically signed the editors reflect the shared view of the *Freedom* Collective.

MEET THE EDITORS

Thurs 12th Sept. A Distribution 6-8pm
Thurs 26th Sept. *Freedom* Mail-out and A Distribution 6-9.30pm (drinks afterwards!)

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Let Them Eat Plastic

SOMETIMES, as events unfold, they seem to have some bizarre underlying structure which we just can't pin down. If we were living in the sixties we could construct a model of Jungian Synchronicity. If in the seventies, we might fall back on Charles Fort. As it is, it seems better to eschew ideology and benevolently assume it is coincidence.

The Band Aid record around Christmas showed that people in general have large amounts of compassion and charity. It also showed that people in governments have less, they insisted on levying 15% VAT, despite helpful suggestions of expediences that could be used to avoid setting a precedent. They learned from this public relations mistake and Margaret Thatcher has seized on a retrospective excuse, other charitable efforts have followed, "I do not believe it would be possible in practice, or indeed right, to treat that fund raising operation as a one-off case. How right I was." The government could then present itself as wonderfully generous. It will only charge tax on *part* of the proceeds from the larger Live Aid concert, despite an administrative mistake by the organisers. All heart.

The government considers that the right way to relieve the famine is to increase the direct aid. This is a revealing attitude. They want things kept in their hands, spare us from direct action. Yet, one thing the whole episode shows is that such direct action works. The government is irrelevant, except as a fringe parasite, creaming off their cut.

Britain has cut its aid to third world countries by an average 6% per year in real terms over the last six years. Only two other members of the OECD development committee cut their aid budgets during this time — New Zealand (by 0.6%) and Sweden (by 0.3%). The average increase in aid from developed countries was 4%. British aid is now 0.33% of national income. (This of course sidesteps the question of what aid is, tied contracts, military help, blatant bribes, propping up of the systems which are themselves much of the problem.)

Production of cereals to meet people's basic food needs is now at its lowest for more than 15 years in four African countries out of five, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation. Africa is the only region in the world where food production is failing to keep ahead of population growth. The Pope has just toured there and praised traditional values. It is sometimes claimed that the Roman Catholic church's attitude to family planning is an effort to maintain congregations. His Holiness has in fact shown that it is sincerely ecumenical and non-partisan. He wants everybody else to breed as well.

It is also necessary to be cynical about rock stars. Fair enough, they went out and did their 17-minute greatest hits medleys. As some sort of perspective, the British end of Live Aid raised about £4 million. Duran Duran have just sunk a yacht costing £1 million. Richard Branson, who made his money one stage further removed, by marketing rock, has just sunk a power boat costing £1½ million. (And for the even more cynical we have an explanation of why an RAF Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft was conveniently looking after them and on hand for the rescue. The makers of the boat planned to paint it grey, stick dummy guns on it and market it as a coastal patrol boat. Branson seems to be the only member of the crew who didn't know.)

The final surreal twist is the great Euro-plastic scheme. The EEC has such surpluses of agricultural products that it has become a cliché, with newspaper reports about lakes, mountains, etc. It is even the theme of a television advert for lager. (The other advert which is nicely revealing sells a deodorant for use while evacuating an Embassy. Sic transit gloria Britannia.) The system is such that people must be made to understand that grain, for example, cannot simply be shipped to Africa. So much subsidy has been paid on it that we can't afford to get it out of the stores. Now there is a plan, only a suggestion you understand, to convert it into plastic bags, and presumably create a mountain of those.

There is an underlying structure after all. The system is ludicrous, and people die because of it.

DP

Local Reports

Sheffield Anarchists

POLICE ATTACK LOCAL ANARCHIST PAPER AS 'AN ILLEGAL DOCUMENT'

AS REQUESTED here's a brief report on what's happening with us in Sheffield at the moment. The group is still going strong, numbers attending meetings dropped off for a bit a couple of months ago, but this trend has now reversed and quite a lot of new people are getting involved. Although we call ourselves 'Sheffield Anarchists' many people living in places outside the Sheffield boundary are involved. These include people from Chesterfield, Rotherham, Wath, Wombwell, Work-sop and a few other places besides. It's very difficult to remember all of the things we've done over the last few months, and then again there's a few things we'd rather not mention in print. To help try and sort things out we've broken our report down into sections.

Schools Agitation

Following the distribution of our version of *The School Stoppers Handbook* to schools throughout the South Yorkshire/North Derbyshire area there has been some very militant guerrilla action in the areas schools: 'Criminal Damage' figures are up between 25% and 29% in Sheffield, 30% in Doncaster and Rotherham and 45% in Barnsley — these figures do not include arson attacks on schools which absolutely rocketed during the period of distribution (though there was no mention of arson in the handbook). We had a lot of feedback over the handbook, and hope to produce another edition soon.

The connection between schools agitation and 'second front' miners support proved very successful, culminating in the 'National Fuck School Day' on March 6th, with some very good actions and solidarity nationwide. There were some very spectacular actions in Sheffield schools, and riots and strikes dominated the headlines of the local press for over a week. See *The Sheffield Anarchist* vol 3 no 9 for full details.

Things are by no means back to 'normal', and we are still hearing about a lot of actions in the area's schools.

The Sheffield Anarchist

It is now more than ten years since we revived *The Sheffield Anarchist*, which was first produced in 1891. It has always been popular locally, and we

place a very high importance on street sales (Sheffield, Rotherham, Chesterfield, etc). Last issue (Spring) we increased the print-run to 750, but sold out quicker than we had hoped, which meant we had nothing to street-sell for several weeks. This issue (Summer) the print-run is 1,000, and so far it is selling very well. We still have the original 'Pay What You Like' policy, which works better than a few doubting anarchists imagine — we are one of the few anarchist mags without financial problems. We have also started doing subscriptions in case anyone finds our paper hard to get hold of, these are £1.60 for four issues and other publications (cheques, PO's to 'Sheffield Libertarian Society' please).

Over the last six months we have had an unprecedented amount of police harassment; South Yorkshire Police have attempted to confiscate all copies of previous issues of *The Sheffield Anarchist*, they have said that they will not allow it to be sold in Sheffield, and that anyone caught selling it will be arrested. They are now telling us that it has been declared 'an illegal document' by the DPP, though this sounds dubious. Throughout their present purge we have defied the ban and maintained an anarchist street presence. Watch this space for what happens next.

Bread & Butter (Granose?) Work

It is in this area that we have been most busy lately. We have been holding weekly meetings in a local pub for the last couple of years, and in addition to these we have 'business meetings' whenever necessary, also 'readers meetings' every quarter.

We attend local marches, rallies, carnivals, etc whenever we consider an anarchist presence appropriate. Sometimes we do our own propaganda for these events (eg an anarchist May Day leaflet for the Barnsley and Chesterfield May Day marches), and sometimes we organise our own demos. Other recent events have been the ever-popular Sheffield Anarchist (historical) Walk and our annual picnic.

We have a large bookstall which we frequently take to local events. We recently had one at the three-day Sheffield Show which was very success-

ful. A lot of new contacts were made and over £40 worth of books were sold. In addition to distributing our own magazine we distribute several other anarchist mags including *Freedom*, *Stuff It, Here and Now* and *Knee Deep In Shit*. We also include in this area: the production of leaflets, stickers and other printed propaganda; our day to day anarchist presence; forging links with other anarchist groups; graffiti of the deed, etc.

Sheffield Prisoners Support Group

SPSG was formed by some of us towards the end of the miners strike. We hope to offer as much support to those comrades inside as possible, and to work with existing prisoners support groups, and those we hope will be formed. Most of our work so far has been in supporting those arrested in connection with the miners strike, but also with some animal rights activists and some prisoners who are not inside for overtly political offences.

We have had a lot of contact with Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee, holding collections for them, distributing and printing their bulletin, etc. We have also had contact with Class War Prisoners Aid. If anyone would like to send us some cash it would be welcome, and will be used for direct support of prisoners.

Forthcoming Events

In the near future will be the publication of the Autumn issue of *The Sheffield Anarchist* (vol 3 no 10). We are also producing a pamphlet about *The Sheffield Outrages*, and will be doing another edition of *The School Stoppers Handbook*. Another area of the struggle in which we are becoming increasingly involved is the area of tenants solidarity and anti-rent agitation. We also have at least two public meetings planned and also a benefit gig. Can't think of anything else, hope that's alright for you.

Sheffield Anarchists

[Eds: "Alright for us"? This report is intelligent, readable, packed with information, modest, and it comes clearly typed with its own sub-headings. We hereby award Sheffield Anarchists with the 1985 *Freedom Report of the Year Award*.

Learning from the Miners

THE RAILWORKERS KEEP THEIR GUARD UP

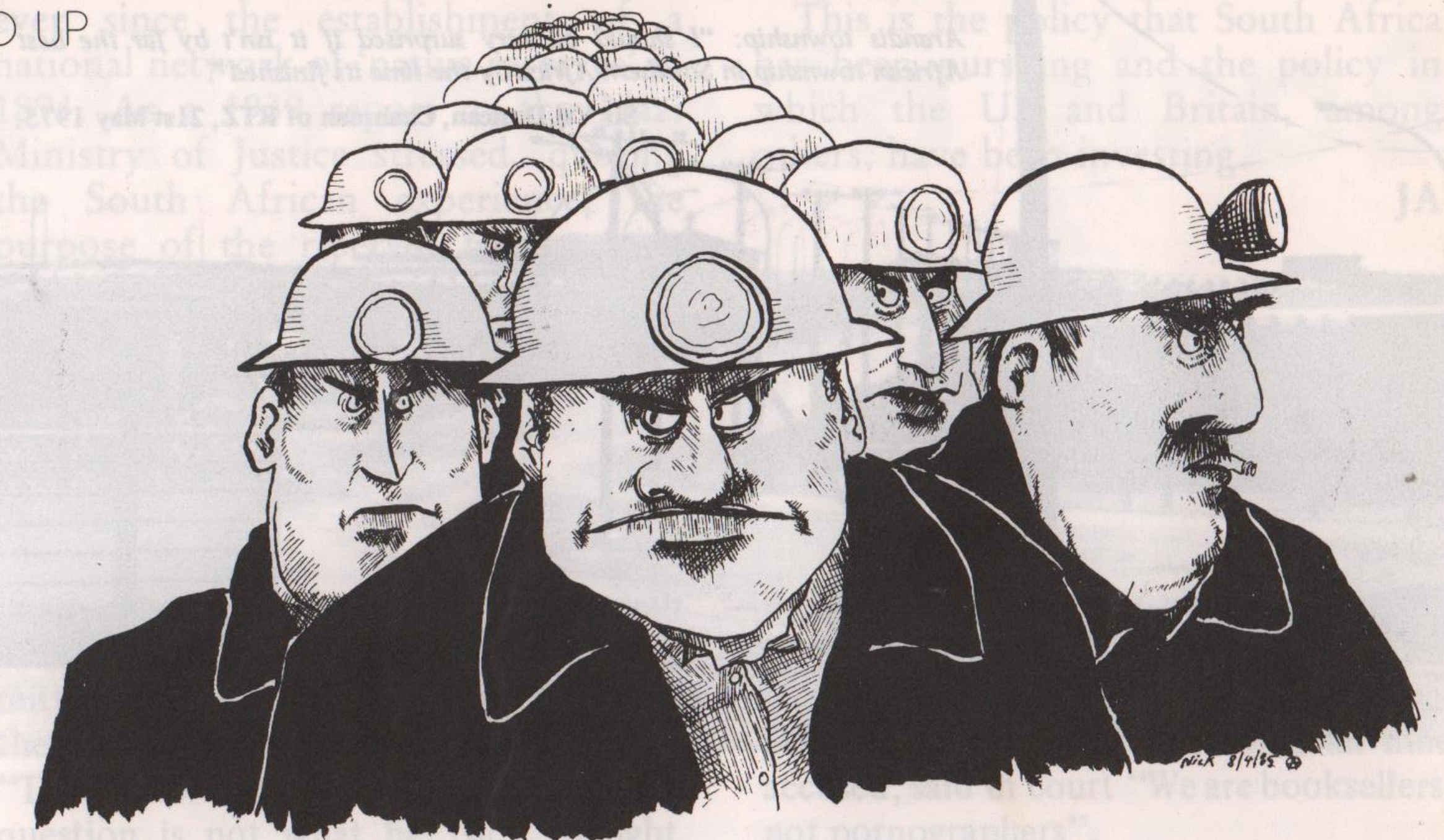
IN THE WAKE of the massive defeat inflicted upon the miners Maggie Thatcher made a classic politician's mistake . . . she boasted about her victory. Unable to resist the temptation to humiliate the defeated, she allowed the Great British Public to see her for the arrogant bully she is. The Tories are now trailing behind Labour and the SDP/Liberal Alliance in the opinion polls.

It was always a very unwelcome piece of social reality, that Thatcher had such a commanding lead in the polls throughout the miners' strike. Public opinion has now "sided with the underdog" and completely undermined the Thatcher attack on Union political funds. So far, all the required-by-law ballots have gone in favour of retaining the funds . . . not as expected six months ago.

Now the government has turned its guns on the Rail-Unions over the introduction of "guardless" trains. On the face of it, it's a good issue from the Government's point of view . . . "Luddite Unions against new technology and new trains for the oppressed commuters, etc, etc". The Tories are probably hoping to get their opinion poll ratings up to Scargill levels again. The British Rail management have been doing their level best to provoke the Rail Unions into calling a National Strike *without* a ballot. Having issued dismissal notices to guards on unofficial strike they attempted to advertise those jobs as "vacant" in the papers!

Surprisingly, the Rail Unions have actually learnt the lesson of the Scargill defeat. Perhaps, encouraged by the ballot results on political funds and certainly fearful of a split in the ranks, the Rail Union moved the date of National Strike Ballot forward. [As usual, the result of this ballot won't be known till after *Freedom* is printed.]

The "clever-money" is all on a massive vote in favour of industrial action by the guards. The union would presumably hope to pay the guards strike-pay while other railworkers continue to work. British Rail management on the other hand are threatening to close the whole system down [cost £60 million a week] and go for broke. The London-based railworkers *Freedom* has spoken to, all saw the dispute as part of management's program to install greater "labour-discipline" (their phrase). Realistically, after the ballot, the NUR is likely to continue the present tactics of sudden local strikes until a settlement is reached. After all,



only 5% of trains are going to be driver-only — hardly worth £60M a week to management for any length of time.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Nap of the NUR has proved to be one of those rare union officials who know how to inflict the maximum cost/injury on the employers at minimum cost to his members. The actual wording of the national ballot paper is for "industrial action", which leaves all his options open. A long drawn-out guerilla-type action which "dares" the management to call a lock-out would put the government in a difficult situation. Heads: they would be seen as impotent against the NUR. Tails: they would look like industrial bullies again.

While the Rail Strike(s) are hardly likely to be "Coal Wars Part II", it is worth noting how the "hard" left is slowly learning to live with the Ballot. They are not happy about giving their members the final say on strike action, but on the other hand who wants to suffer dreadful defeat like Arthur or pay all those heavy fines? The NUR is playing strictly by the Government's own rules and boxing the Government into a corner in the process.

Compared to the modest success of the NUR, the National Union of Miners is in a sorry state. The Notts-led breakaway "Union" revealed its right-wing leadership to be just as careless and cavalier about abiding by their constitution as the Communist Party dominated central bureaucracy. Interestingly it is still possible the "breakaway" faction may not win enough votes to "legalise" the new union, even in Nottinghamshire.

Be that as it may, the NUM is 'broken as a fighting force, just as Arthur Scargill has broken his very public pledges to submit himself for

annual elections. He has given up his casting vote on the executive and become a pure bureaucrat — for life. The destruction of the Federal structure goes on apace, with ever more draconian powers for the central executive over the individual members and the local Federations.

The NUM campaign for imprisoned-/sacked miners is virtually non-existent. All the bureaucracy's energy is going on the battle with the breakaway faction. The failure to learn from the 1926 experience is staggering. It is worth noting that the "Bosses' Union" set up by the Notts miners after 1926 [Spencerism] was only "brought back" into the NUM by a World War, followed by Nationalisation. Scargill will not be receiving any such help from History (we hope) in his war with the 1985 version.

The big lesson to learn from the miners strike is that only Direct Democracy is capable of producing 100% solidarity. At a National level ordinary members of Unions regard Delegate Conferences as Party Political bun-fights. The key problem is getting those people who feel/vote against strike action to actually back the "majority" and "go along" with the pro-strikers. This "minority" have shown time and time again that, while they will "respect" the direct decisions of their fellow workers, they have absolutely no respect for the loony leftists/rightists who run the delegate conferences.

If anarchists are going to make an impact on union and workplace struggles, they must take the principle of direct democracy beyond the shop floor to the regional and national level. History has called into question our traditional faith in delegated power.

Stu Stuart

Arandis township: "I should be very surprised if it isn't by far the best African township in Southern Africa by the time it's finished".

Sir Val Duncan, Chairman of RTZ, 21st May 1975.



South Africa

THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

ARE we finally witnessing the beginning of the end of white domination in South Africa? Let us hope so. The press has been unequivocal in emphasising the strength of the South African police and army in maintaining white domination — euphemistically called 'Law and Order' — and President Botha has tried to minimise the current crisis by pointing to the low percentage of districts under emergency rule in South Africa. Only Ronald Segal writing in *The Guardian* has maintained that South Africa is now virtually ungovernable, that the authorities are in a panic and the emergency is the response of those who have lost their head.

The South African authorities are in a peculiar trap. The more heavy handed they become, the more opposition builds up and the greater the resistance. In this way they play into the hands of the opposition. Every act of brutality seen on TV further alienates international public opinion. That South African brutality might be counter-productive in containing unrest is clearly what is bothering Western powers such as the US and Britain who are major investors in South Africa and therefore have vested interests in maintaining apartheid. On the other hand cosmetic gestures such as the 1984 constitutional changes have only helped in increasing opposition. To release Nelson Mandela at this point would only consolidate opposition even further and would be an implicit acknowledgement that Botha will eventually have to deal with the ANC. It is now unlikely that any gesture short of one man, one vote is going to have any effect in South

Africa. But to grant this principle would be to bring apartheid and white economic domination to an end. Clearly something President Botha is not prepared to do. It would indeed be asking him to commit suicide, as he said in his recent speech. Suicide, however, is where apartheid will eventually lead the white minority.

President Botha's recent speech which so 'disappointed' Western leaders because it failed to produce 'reforms' and 'puzzled' the press was a clear affirmation that apartheid would continue. It cannot be reformed, it can only be abolished. The positive points in his speech — the offer to negotiate and the offer of participation to blacks — are quite meaningless in terms of the real conflict. Negotiate with whom, and about what? For President Botha negotiation can only mean negotiation within the framework of apartheid. And participation can only mean participation in apartheid.

The significance of Botha's speech is two-fold. On the one hand to reassure those in his party that all the talk about reform is only rhetoric and he is still committed to maintaining apartheid. On the other hand, to send a concealed message to Western investors that South African authorities are quite capable of containing unrest and that their investments are in safe hands. This is the only sense I can make of his cryptic remark that the fall in the Rand would recover once the full significance of his speech had sunk in.

However, it may no longer be so easy to go back to business as usual. The opposition in South Africa is becoming increasingly violent and is

committed to sabotage. The non-violent stance of people like Bishop Desmond Tutu is no longer credible. He is still hesitating to call for punitive sanctions against South Africa. Moreover, there is now a concerted effort to attack anyone, including blacks, who co-operates with apartheid. The South African authorities have been pursuing a policy of co-optation creating black councils in townships to maintain control. This policy is no longer tenable. They are also faced with a strike in the mines and the boycott of white shops is beginning to hurt. Sooner or later the conflict is bound to spill over into white areas and once this happens panic will set in among the white minority. It is at this point that negotiations for the dismantling of apartheid are likely to become meaningful.

Finally, the myth that is being created by Thatcher and Reagan that apartheid can be reformed or dismantled bit by bit is an insidious one. The foundations of apartheid were laid well before 1948 when the National Party came to power. Since 1948 apartheid has been consolidated step by step. The notion that even in recent years policy has been going in the opposite direction is dangerous. The talk of reforms merely gives the South African authorities time to consolidate apartheid even further.

There are two aspects to the policy of apartheid. The first is to create a labour force of blacks that can be maintained at subsistence level to serve the economic interests of the whites. They can be made to work when and where required and banished to the 'homelands' when not needed. The second is the creation of a series of 'homelands', essentially reservations, to keep the blacks divided and isolated so that they can be easily controlled. The 'homelands' and black townships are in effect enormous prisons for the black labour force.

In the '50s and '60s the homelands policy was pushed through as fast as possible since it forms the cornerstone of apartheid. This process is still continuing. Rhetoric about reforms, etc, only serves to conceal this fact. If the South African authorities were allowed more time to 'reform', this would allow them to strengthen their position even further and make black opposition more difficult. What, therefore, lies under the talk of 'constructive engagement' and about the importance of preventing violence is an attempt to give the Botha regime time to make apartheid invulnerable and watertight.

It is not surprising that Nazi war aims in Africa were inspired by the South African Nationalists. I quote

from Barbara Rogers book *Divide and Rule*. "The Nazi Ministry of Justice prepared a draft legislation in 1940 under which the Reich could assign areas to the black inhabitants. If for any reason the colonial administration decided to restore these areas to the Reich, the blacks could be moved elsewhere. It would be a criminal

offence for Africans to refuse work to which they were directed — which it has been effectively in South Africa ever since the establishment of a national network of 'native reserves' in 1894. As a 1939 report to the Nazi Ministry of Justice stressed, quoting the South African experience, the purpose of the reserves was to give

blacks an essentially economic function in serving the white economy as and when required by the Reich."

This is the policy that South Africa has been pursuing and the policy in which the US and Britain, among others, have been investing.

JA

Indecent Gays

BOOKSELLERS, NOT PORNOGRAPHERS!

The 'Gays The Word' case has moved on a stage. Nine people have been committed to trial. The bookshop, which sees itself as a community service, was raided by customs officials last April 10th (see *Freedom* September 1984). Imported stock was seized and other material refused clearance and detained at the ports. The charges were that these books were 'indecent'. This sounds less dramatic than 'obscene', but is, in fact, more difficult to deal with. 'Indecent' covers any material which an average person in the street would find 'disagreeable' or 'in poor taste'. This rules out the defence that the material has redeeming social or literary value, a cliché of 'obscenity' trials.

The magistrate at the committal

proceedings was careful not to commit himself. He acknowledged that a 'committed homosexual' might dispute that the material was obscene or indecent. "That, however" is not the point. The question is not what he [sic] thought, but what others would think who do not share his predilection".

The raids and charge are seen as part of a continuing pattern of harassment of lesbians and gay men. An interesting aspect is the involvement of the customs. Whatever happens at the trial, they can still harass the shop by seizing stock and holding it indefinitely. Commercial pornographers accept this as a standard business risk. (Indeed, much is simply recycled back onto the market, as was

shown in exposures of corruption in the Metropolitan Obscene Publications in the late 1970's). However as Glen McKee, giving a statement on behalf of all nine accused, said in court "We are booksellers, not pornographers".

The implications of the case are apparent. If it succeeds, anything which just might, sometime, be considered 'indecent' by someone, somewhere, is at risk. The date for the trial is not yet fixed. It could be up to eighteen months.

DP

'Gays The Word' are at 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (Tel: 01-278 7654) The Defence Campaign is at 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1.

Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists

During the last two or three years a disturbing interpretation of both anarchism and pacifism has developed. The tactics of groupings such as *Class War* and the Animal Liberation Front, and the attitudes of some elements within the pacifist movement, especially of religious pacifists, have led to a distorted view of both anarchism and pacifism as some would understand it.

So some of us who share an anarchist view of pacifism and a pacifist view of anarchism believe the time is right to affirm and develop the philosophy and expression of anarchist/pacifist methods and ideas. To further this aim, it is proposed to form a 'Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists', open to both groups and individuals.

It is envisaged that a Statement of Principles along the following lines might adequately express our position (this is derived from the basic statement of the War Resisters International):

"War and exploitation are crimes against humankind. We affirm that we no longer can support war, violence or exploitation of any kind, be it caused by individuals, religion, the

State or capitalism. We therefore pledge ourselves to the creation of a non-violent, anarchist society."

While this is not seen as a definitive statement of anarcho-pacifism, we hope that such a perspective is useful as a basis for establishing an Anarcho-Pacifist Federation. Those interested in this sorely needed initiative should contact:

**Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists,
c/o Housmans Bookshop,
5 Caledonian Road,
London N1**

Historical Reconstruction Company

We companions of history have gone back to live in the past, recreating its splendour and hardship, its energy and enthusiasm. Returning to the past, not as a performance, like the Sealed Knot, but as an everyday experience. Repairing and using old tools, relearning craftsmanship, so as slowly to change our personalities and perhaps discover other ways that science might have developed rather than the video-nuke-explosion. We certainly know the happiness which comes from creating

our own environment.

We do not ignore the need for Direct Action in the wider world; but anarchy must be a way of life for the few, if it is ever to influence more than a few. We can be sure that we control our own lives because our lifestyle is so different from those around us.

Historical Reconstruction is not an organisation but a movement, mutually encouraging variety of lifestyle. An informal network of people, who are developing an ethnography of history, through its fashion, architecture, literature and science, but principally through its tools of everyday life.

Animal rights organisations looking for an outlet for liberated creatures are welcome to bring them here. Anyone who has not seen Ray Flint's *The March of the History Animal*, Merlin Books, £3.25, should get a copy. The doctrine is Marxian economics, but the Fairy story is fun. Dig the Common Land.

John Myhill

PS If you publish the above, could you let me have a copy, as we are escaping the cash nexus, including subscriptions — quite willing to pay in lettuces or articles, book reviews, proof reading, etc.

Eds: There's nowt so queer as folk . .

Evolution: The Biological Basis of Anarchism

The point of this paper is not to describe in detail either evolution or social anthropology in detail, but to look briefly at the political influences which have decided which social implications of this scientific theory we learn, why, and what this means for us.

Condensed Evolutionary Theory

Modern biologists have changed Darwin's terminology somewhat. Starting with lower organisms, bacteria, fungi and so forth (but in principle also good for more developed plants, animals, etc), species are referred to as phenotypic clusters, graphical representations of any meaningful variables expressed by the organism which you wish. The boundaries are defined statistically and are therefore fluid. Selection and evolution, as defined by Darwin, is analogous to when this fluid is held in a container (the environment or 'ecological niche') and adjusts to its shape. When this container is open with a second, part of the 'fluid' gene pool (pressure being provided by outbreeding) flows into the second vessel, and, depending on the genetic makeup (and it should here be noted that higher life-forms express only a few percent of their genetic material, the rest, duplicated or changed, being held inactive) and the environment, may fill the second one too. Thus, when this change is advantageous and stable, a related species may have evolved, or will do when the process is repeated into a third environment. In this way, over an extremely long time span, we can account for the presence of every living being found, without contradicting the genetic laws of Mendel or invoking the supernatural.

Survival of the Fittest?

In the shock of the publication of this

theory and the following battle against the Church, the seemingly minor point of social interpretation was overlooked by most people, so much so that practically all of what most people now know of Darwinism is the phrase "survival of the fittest". What does that mean? The normal interpretation is dog-eat-dog, survival of the strongest, etc. This is obvious rubbish, we're not turning into a race of joggers, and it's obvious that peaceable people live longer than either soldiers or heart-attack prone financiers. How is it then that this idea of continual strife, the so-called 'social Darwinism', has come about, and why?

History

The story can, with a stretch, be traced back to 1798 and the publication of *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* by the anarchist William Godwin. Godwin's explanation of legal misappropriation prompted Malthus to write his essay *Essay on the Principle of Population* in reply. Malthus's book became almost a text book of capitalist ideology. It was very convenient to think that poverty was due to an 'inevitable' tendency of the population to be greater than the food supply, which meant that the poor were simply the naturally doomed part of the population. This belief happily relieved the economic and social system of any blame for the existing misery. Unfortunately for Malthus it became apparent even in the middle of nineteenth century that the possibilities of wealth production far outstripped the actual consumption of the working class, and that the limiting factor was not limiting resources, but limiting purchasing power, which made poverty for the majority inevitable. This is even more obvious today when we see the majority of mankind held at survival level in a world of plenty, starvation

whilst food is burnt or dumped or fed to pigs because it's more 'economical'.

Darwin

The idea that environmental change, either shortage or plenty, as described by Malthus, was however appreciated by Darwin as early as 1838 (see *Naturalists Voyage Around the World*) and also by Alfred Russell Wallace twenty years later. Wallace came simultaneously to the same conclusions as the much older Darwin, but refused to publish when he realised that Darwin had been putting off publication for many years. Instead he urged Darwin to finally make his ideas public. Darwin, a naturally shy and even timid man, finally went ahead. The battle with the doctrinal Church lasted over 50 years. To avoid the harsh limelight Darwin retired as far as possible from the public view for the rest of his life, so all that he thought of the social aspects of his theory we know only from snatches and implications. His views were, however, certainly much broader than that which is now known as 'social Darwinism'.

Ideology

The *Origin of Species*, upon publication in 1859 was widely acclaimed as supporting the ideas of an amazingly wide political spectrum. Karl Marx, for example, called it "a wonderful work" and considered, with characteristic egocentricity, that it complemented his *Critique of Political Economy* beautifully. On the other hand the most enthusiastic supporter of Darwin was the protofascist Thomas Henry Huxley, who was linked to the Manchester school of *Laissez-Faire* economists. Huxley developed Darwin's views to the extreme point of saying that every being is in a continual state of war with every other, and presented that as a natural law of

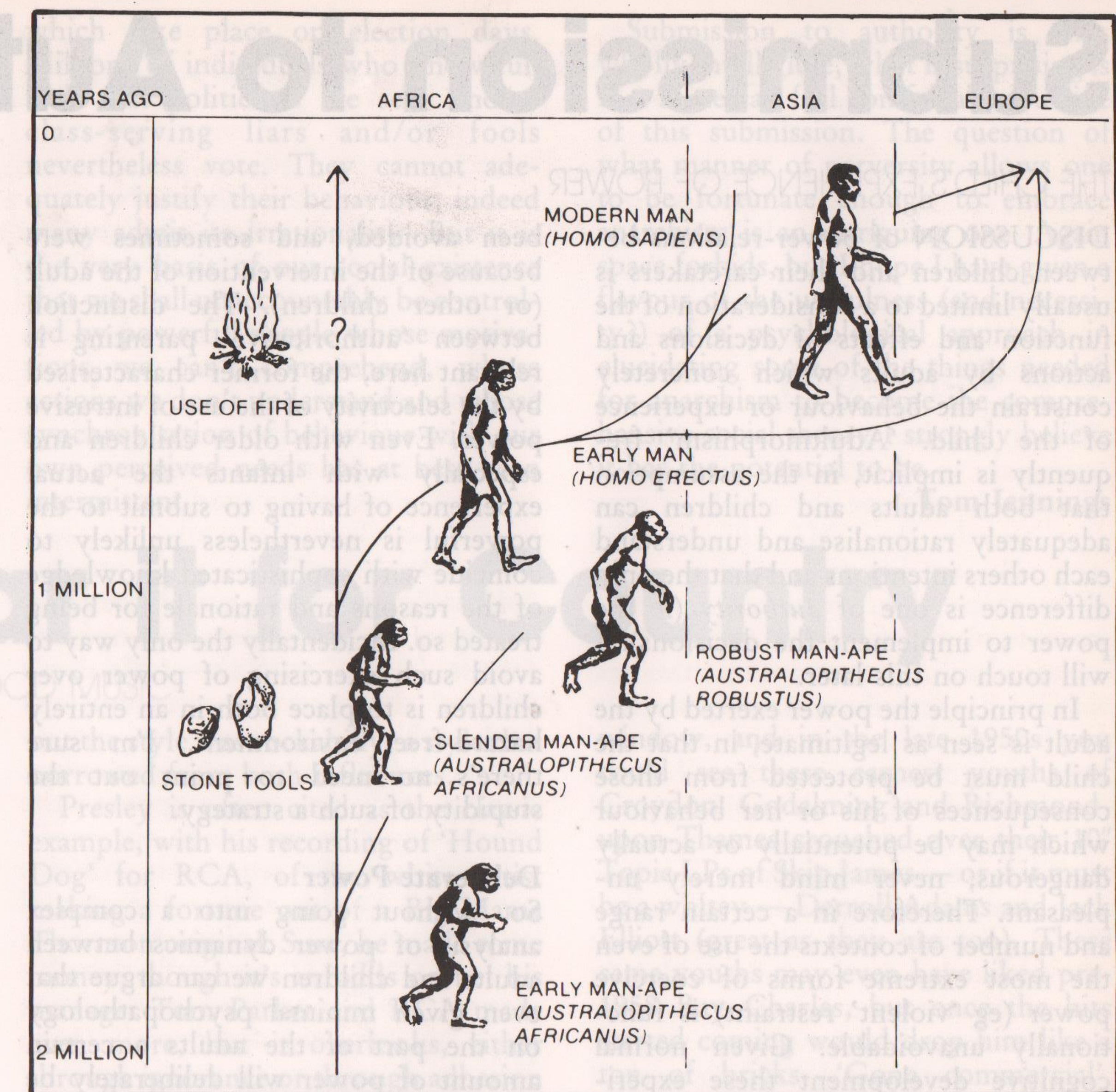
evolution. Thus what we now call 'social Darwinism' should really be called 'Huxleyism'.

Survival of the Most Apt

Huxley's antagonistic view of the social relationships between all beings was refuted by Peter Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid and Modern Science and Anarchism*. Kropotkin pointed out that the crude and simplistic view that strength and/or cunning ensure survival is not supported by the evidence. Fossil records state that all communally living animals today, including humans, had ancestors that were more ferocious, the implication being that strength alone is evolutionarily redundant and most species evolved a better survival mechanism — sociability. Instead of competing alone, like individuals join collectively in order to better secure food, defend the young, etc. I don't want to argue Mutual Aid here, Kropotkin did it better, but it is important to say that Darwin expressed similar views in his *Descent of Man*, as did Wallace in his book *Darwinism*. Mutual Aid as an important factor in human evolution is also substantially supported by modern ethnological and anthropological studies (eg South Pacific islanders, Eskimos and North American Indians).

Discussion

Thus the situation becomes clearer. Darwinism in a social sense is a football kicked between two opposing sides. On the one side are the massed authoritarians, capitalists, fascists and marxists, propping up the discredited Malthus with the help of Darwin distorted by Huxley. On the other side are the anarchists, using a Darwin modified (or clarified) by Kropotkin and supported by later research. Why is there such a breakdown and why is the authoritarian view always presented despite the evidence? The answer is clear: if you accept Huxley you also accept that you would tear your neighbour's throat out for his wife or the contents of his 'fridge if no disciplined policeman was there to stop you. You accept the State and government as a BIOLOGICAL necessity, you accept the indispensibility of good and wise politicians who stop you atom-bombing foreigners. This view, that we have progressed and evolved from a condition of continual murder to peace, fragile though it is, ensured by nation-states, is naturally very convenient to both capitalists and liberal reformers. Marxists of all shades insist upon a centralist state structure with the excuse that without it everyone will do what they like. Here they overlook the fact that man has been a social



MAN AND HIS ANCESTORS comprise the family Hominidae. Breakthrough in human evolution occurred between 1.5 and 0.5 million years ago when Australopithecus gave rise to Homo erectus.

creature, using mutual aid and support AS A BIOLOGICAL CONDITION OF EVOLUTION since the beginning of pre-historic time. Why should doing what you want be negative? All evidence points to the contrary. In hard times mutual aid comes to the fore, social solidarity is the biggest single factor in human survival, it always has been so, it is biologically programmed into us, to correspondingly lesser degrees, into lesser developed animals.

From the point of view of the politically-orientated biologists, the marxists-leninists give social evolution a particularly exotic twist by insisting that a transition between capitalism and communism must be several generations long, in order for people to unlearn capitalist ways. This is more 'social Lamarckism' than anything else (Lamarck believed that mental force influences phenotypic expression). It doesn't need much experience to tell you that young people question intensively the ideals of the preceding generation. Thus the socialistic idiocy brings society round in circles, again and again.

The Future

Where will social evolution bring us to? If the mutual aid theory is correct and our evolutionary conditioning as social animals is biologically inbuilt, then all advanced living beings need it to survive. Conversely those without it are unfit for survival. Our present, and indeed all, governmental systems crush this tendency violently and the human race looks like its chances are correspondingly less. So in the last analysis it appears a simple choice — anarchy or extinction.

Rob
W Germany

Notes

The author, an assistant Professor of Biology, must remain anonymous because the government for which he works would offer him no mutual aid if they found out his anarchistic beliefs — quite the contrary in fact.

This essay was prompted by reading J Hewitson's paper in *Anarchy* vol 55, 1965, and I have taken the liberty of borrowing heavily from it.

Submission to Authority

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF POWER

DISCUSSION of power-relations between children and their caretakers is usually limited to a consideration of the function and effects of decisions and actions by adults which concretely constrain the behaviour or experience of the child. 'Adulthood' frequently is implicit, in the assumption that both adults and children can adequately rationalise and understand each others intentions and that the only difference is one of *authority* (ie the power to implement the decisions). I will touch on this later.

In principle the power exerted by the adult is seen as legitimate, in that the child must be protected from those consequences of his or her behaviour which may be potentially or actually dangerous, never mind merely unpleasant. Therefore in a certain range and number of contexts the use of even the most extreme forms of coercive power (eg 'violent' restraint) is functionally unavoidable. Given normal cognitive development these experiences of power may also be useful to the child. Self-control and restraint may be helped by the retrospective awareness of personal responsibility for negative outcomes which could have

been avoided, and sometimes were because of the intervention of the adult (or other children). The distinction between 'authoritative' parenting is relevant here, the former characterised by the selectivity of the use of intrusive power. Even with older children and especially with infants the actual experience of having to submit to the powerful is nevertheless unlikely to coincide with sophisticated knowledge of the reasons and rationale for being treated so. Incidentally the only way to avoid such exercising of power over children is to place both in an entirely hazard-free environment. I'm sure there's no need to point out the stupidity of such a strategy.

Deliberate Power

So, without going into a complex analysis of power dynamics between adults and children we can argue that even given minimal psychopathology on the part of the adults a certain amount of power will deliberately be wielded over children who will at the same time certainly lack the cognitive capacity to understand and accept this *except as* the inevitability of having to submit to powerful others.



Actually the experience of submission to external coercion is probably far more basic than that. Whatever the caretaking arrangements the young child will have experience of needs not being met. Each experience may not last for very long but in the infant's subjective world (where tolerance of delay of gratification, for example, is conspicuous for its absence) this frustration is bound to feel more threatening and horrific than may 'objectively' be the case. Inasmuch as even newborn babies are social and vicissitudes of gratification will impinge on the child's perception in step with the appearance of and interaction with humans. I wish to suggest that the older child's experience of (necessary) constraint by adults will strongly resonate with these qualities of the caretaking of the infant, and that the child's perception of both situations will amount to passive helplessness in the face of overwhelming power.

The point is that however maximally a society is organised along anarchist lines, each new human being's life will involve dramatic and painful experience revolving around events, real and subjective, which fit very easily into a description in terms of power and coercion. Power is thus inevitable in human society and it is gross oversimplification to suggest that parent-child power relations are somehow a special case. Similarly it can be argued that personality is not largely shaped in childhood; I regard this view as a combination of ignorance, defensiveness and dishonesty.

To reiterate: *object submission to the power of others* is an integral part of psychological development ('socialisation' if you prefer sociological terms) and is *absolutely inevitable*, however inconvenient such a notion may appear to be.

Resistance to Anarchy

For our purposes many pertinent questions arise. How does an individual's experiences of, and response to power relate to other areas of psychological development and interaction with the social environment? What external conditions enhance the tendency to seek and use power for its own sake, particularly when this is detrimental to others? What conditions enable the avoidance or amelioration of the development of this tendency, and how can it be dealt with? To what extent will any positive qualities of

personal power be lost along with the successful reduction or abolition of the negative ones? Similarly there are a whole set of questions regarding the ability of individuals to evaluate the attempted or actual use of power by others.

It is not possible to address these questions here but an immediate insight is offered by this approach into a perennial problem faced by anarchists. This concerns the intransigence shown by people in resisting that supremely logical set of notions known as anarchism, and the mass acts of faith

which take place on election days. Millions of individuals who know full well that politicians are self- and/or class-serving liars and/or fools nevertheless vote. They cannot adequately justify their behaviour, indeed many admit its irrationality. But it is the very basis of our social existence that we shall unaccountably be controlled by powerful people whose motivations we can't comprehend, whose actions we don't understand and whose synchronisation of behaviour with our own perceived needs has at best been intermittent.

Submission to authority is thus wholly intelligible, what is surprising is that some can feel comfortable outside of this submission. The question of what manner of perversity allows one to be fortunate enough to embrace anarchism is an intriguing one. Again space forbids, but I hope I have given a flavour of the usefulness (and necessity?) of a psychological approach in elucidating some of the things needed for anarchism to become the comprehensive social theory I strongly believe it has the potential to be.

Tom Jennings

Let's Hear it for Country

GUILT AND IDEOLOGY VERSUS GOOD MUSIC

The white man — Presley, Perkins, Lewis — rips off the blues from the black man and makes a fortune; young whites have no popular music of their own and buy up this pale white imitation of black pain; blues is authentic, everything else — including Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee — is "entertainment".

This sort of garbage, reminiscent of the Communist Party influenced puritan attitudes of the '50s and '60s in folk circles, fouled up BBC 2's recent Blues Night and this 'sociological' line on rock n' roll is depressingly familiar in Britain. This analysis was repeated in a recent visual history of popular music in Glasgow's Mitchell Library — an analysis deeply rooted in white guilt, puritan ethic and, occasionally, class background.

John Walters, the sycophantic presenter of the TV programme, spent most of his time grovelling at the boots of guest B B King. It was left to King to occasionally, and with great politeness, point out indirectly what a lot of bollocks Walters was talking. But why this bollocks?

In the US by the late '50s the majority of blacks were listening to soul and Motown, not blues. To show bluesmen in semi-obscurity is to unintentionally or intentionally present a false picture of black music in America. Louis Armstrong, Louis Jordan, Nat King Cole and Ray Charles from the '20s through to the '50s were selling huge numbers of records prior to the rise of soul and Motown.

Presley, Perkins and Jerry Lee were as deeply rooted in country music as they were in blues — a blues they heard and learnt living almost side by side with blacks in southern rural poverty. Presley's first release on Sun echoed this dual influence. One side was a bluegrass number, the other a blues —

but the style was rockabilly, a style that borrowed from both influences.

Presley is often cited as the classic example, with his recording of 'Hound Dog' for RCA, of the white artist making a fortune out of a Big Mama Thornton original. Sure, he made some money, though it's an odds on bet his manager Tom Parker and RCA made even more, but it overlooks, either through ignorance or through adhesion to the 'line' that Rufus Thomas cashed in on Big Mama's hit by doing a reply to 'Hound Dog', different lyrics but the same tune, which resulted in Big Mama suing Thomas.



Record companies, managers or artists ripping each other off doesn't split down white/black lines — ludicrous to imagine it should. Business and greed is multi-racial. Besides, no-one, quite rightly, complains that Ray Charles had some massive world-wide hits covering originals by then-dead white country singer Hank Williams.

As indicated, it's a curious mix of guilt, puritanism and even class that results in the attitude that the less 'commercial' something is the more authentic (whatever that means!) it is. On this count nearly all great black music (but never white) goes out the

window, and in the late 1950s you could see these earnest youths of Croydon, Godalming and Richmond-upon-Thames crouched over their 10" Topic LPs of Skip James — or if it must be a whitey — Derroll Adams and Jack Elliott (great as they are too). These same youths may even have liked pre-1958 Ray Charles, but once the hits started coming would drop him like a ton of bricks. 'Gone commercial'. There's a kind of snobbery, a kind of puritan disdain for popularity and success at work here, that quite often neatly dovetailed into the emotional make-up of card carrying members of the Communist Party around that time.

Amidst this group, whether political or not, there was and still is a downgrading of country music — unless it's perceived as 'folk music'. Merle Travis and Doc Watson (great guitar pickers) are okay, Patsy Cline and Merle Haggard on the other hand, are pap.

There's even the inference that country music is redneck and somehow a symbol of white supremacy. This again from those who least know about it. Sure, there's some redneck, but have these people never heard the anti-Jap blues that came out during World War Two? Country music is the music of the poor white southerner, and has a huge working and rural class following in Europe too. Meanwhile, as this article is typed, black Ray Charles has a no 5 hit LP in the Billboard Country Top 100 and one of country's biggest stars, Charley Pride, is — yes, you guessed it — black. And he doesn't even have to get down on his knees and say 'Mammy!'

So let's hear it for country and for all good music everywhere, and hope that when the BBC get round to five hours of country TV they don't do it the disservice they did to blues.

Pete Grafton

Correspondence, Argument and Debate

Freedom welcomes comradely comments and criticisms. Letters must be less than 400 words. Contributions longer than this (up to 1,000 words) must be written to stand up as articles by themselves. Please try to remember that some readers will not have read the previous issue! **WARNING:** We frequently do not publish items simply because we can't actually read them... your handwriting is generally terrible. Learn to type — we get more than we can print and scruffy ones get left out first!

Lost Objectivity

What's happened to your objective approach to the situation in Spain? Though I welcome the article in your last issue by the CNT-AIT, couldn't you be as honest as they were themselves and present it as *their position* on the split with the CNT-U, rather than a statement by 'the real CNT'? By describing it as 'an attempt to clear up the confusion about Spain' you imply that previous contributions to this had some other motive, and although I would agree that it was a detailed article, what is your justification for describing it as 'accurate'? We're all entitled to our opinions on the subject, but surely you shouldn't let yours influence the objective presentation of information to us, your readers.

On the article itself, I can't say if much of the info given is correct, though I reckon certain bits aren't, but I can say it leaves out a lot, though this needn't be a problem if it is made clear. For example, on the history of the split, certain info that we have put out on the 6th congress makes an interesting counterbalance to the CNT-AIT's point of view.

The main thrust of the article is that there have always been people in the CNT who didn't belong there and the CNT-U was set up by such a group who were unable to have their way in 'the real CNT'. Another, equally valid, interpretation of events is that this impurity gave rise to a ruling orthodoxy with dogmatic attitudes which got up the nose of perfectly genuine militants and obliged them to leave.

I can share the author's concern that the CNT-U may be on the slippery slope to reformism, and our publications have already raised this point. On the other hand it's resolutions clearly state that they are joining the works committees so as to undermine them and there is some evidence that this has worked so far. Also, the repression of the CNT-U in Vitoria should dispel the myth that they are lackeys of the state. Yours for objectivity,

Mick Larkin
Spanish Information Network

PS. Comments by either CNT on how strong the other is are not likely to be worth the paper they are written on. A

further example of this can be found in recent attacks on the CNT-U put out by *Black Flag*. A response to these, or more details on subjects raised above are available for a few stamps to cover costs. (See contacts page for address.)

[Eds. By "real" we just meant "official". Also when people leave an organisation they have no right to take its "name" with them! We don't "imply" that previous contributions had dubious motives, we merely acknowledge that there is confusion. Saying we do not support the breakaway does not mean automatic adherence to the remainder. All this says "we", Stu has a strong emotional attachment to Spanish Anarchism and the CNT-AIT, especially since his elegant profile appeared on the front page of *Solidaridad Obrera*!] (June '83)

Stu-note: I wouldn't worry, Mick. CNT militants talk a language which nobody else actually understands.

The Joy of Sex Shops

Thank you for the article by Arabella Melville and Colin Johnson, and for the editorial note promising to take an anarchist line on sex. Andy Brown presents a less positive attitude, from unimpeachable motives but mistakenly. Most of his points are anticipated and roundly answered in the Arabella/Colin article, but I would like to add a little in defence of a cartoon anarcho-feminist's right to enjoy the sex shop.

For the information of those who know sex shops only by hearsay and guesswork, they deal in 'marital aids' such as constricting rings to hold erections, vibrators for clitoral massage, dressing-up clothes for both sexes, and erotic jokes like candles in the shape of phalluses. Their prices may be exorbitant, but they do not sell exclusively to men or present women as mere sexual playthings, nor do they represent sex as delinquency. They make their profits by offering to relieve sexual distress and enhance sexual pleasure.

I enjoy toy shops. I have friends who enjoy gardening shops and antique shops. My grandmother enjoyed shoe shops. Doubtless there are those who enjoy sex shops in the same way. All these sorts of shops provide mild

aesthetic pleasure and stimulus to the imagination, and openly try to induce us to buy; none of them influence our thinking in any other obvious way.

Granted our thinking is also influenced in un-obvious ways. But the contention that sex shops are subtly poisonous, urged by some very dubious people, is supported by no actual evidence.

The duality of attraction and disgust which Andy mentions is more or less universal, and perhaps healthy. To expand one of his instances, every human society known has incest taboos, and anyone who feels sexually attracted to a taboo person will also feel guilty; the phenomenon is not limited to males, or to societies where women are allowed to compete for the attention of attractive men.

The only people who never in any circumstances feel sexual guilt are identified by Alex Comfort in *Sex in Society* — the censorious, who obtain sexual gratification by censoring the sexual activities of others. To allow oneself to be conned into the style of thinking which such people encourage is to become dominated by a dangerous and enslaving ideology.

Donald Room
London

Porn Watcher

In their article 'Pornography: The Thorn in all our Flesh' Colin and Arabella are probably right to insist that the central issue in any discussion on porn must be that of freedom versus repression. However, in doing so they also skirt, what sexist use of language, at least two important themes, ie women as commodity and the repressiveness of porn itself.

Firstly, it is all very well for Colin and Arabella to argue that women working in porn can earn stacks of money — so what? — but the image of women presented by and in porn is far from the liberating 'blast of fresh air' adduced by C and A. In the porn films that I have watched here in West Germany both men and women in both address and action are reduced to genitals — kissing, for example, is virtually taboo (do pornographers in private get off on Barbara Cartland?) — but whereas the man is seen as a terse, laconic dispenser of spunk-cum-rap-

ture, the woman (or women, of course... up to three or four at once) is seen as enraptured, grateful recipient of spunk-cum-pleasure — clearly an asymmetric power-relationship that no anarchist can ever condone. And 'seen', incidentally, is the operative word — the sperm in porn rarely ends up where it usually and invisibly does, but I haven't got space to go into the mechanics of porn-making. Suffice to say that women are shown as always (I repeat, always) willing and available and that men are always depicted as always capable — five, six times a session. Is that 'honest', Colin and Arabella? I don't understand why C and A are so vituperatively against the cosmeticisation of, but for the pornographisation of women... both are aspects of the one process: the marketing of women. In other words the feminists are surely correct when they claim that even if porn does degrade man, it degrades women more. Thoroughly and viciously.

This brings me to my second point. If porn presents women as a give-away commodity always willing and available, indeed always grasping for 'prick' (that's porn's concept, not mine) then what are the likely responses of the (male) viewer. I can only think of three:

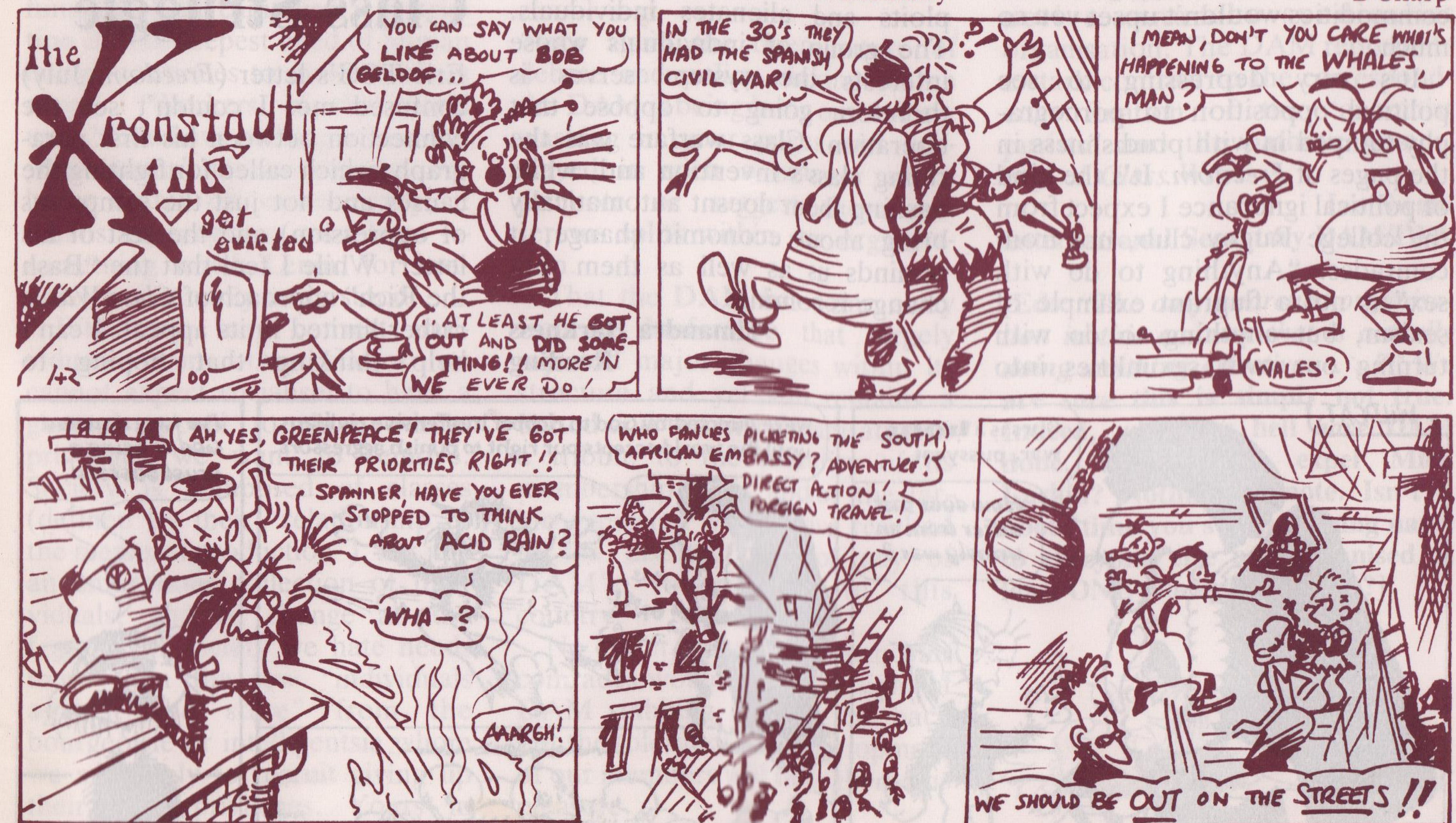
1. He can shrug it all off;
2. He can wank himself off (count the number of used paper tissues in any porn establishment — there can't be so many runny noses in the house), he could go to an adjoining prostitute, or he could go home and 'make love' to his loved one — all three possibilities here are basically cathartic for him

whilst the female partner remains an object;

3. He could come out of the bookshop or cinema somehow convinced that he's missing out on something, on a commodity that's rightfully his, on an object that's got to be caught up on. And it is here in this third response that the repressive nature of porn is exposed. Again, the feminist-argued link between porn in all its manifestations and violence against women in all its forms cannot be simply dismissed (as Colin and Arabella do). Nor can we forget the unpleasant fact (so unpleasant Colin and Arabella don't even refer to it) that a large sub-section of porn is *directly* connected with pain, extreme pain and humiliation — sado-masochism, excretion sex, mutilation sex, asphyxiation sex (where, needless to say, it is normally the woman who gets strangled so that some nutcase male can get an orgasm), child sex and, ultimately, snuff-movies. So, Colin and Arabella, where do you draw the line? That's the trouble with anarchists — they're always loath to draw a line on the dubious grounds that a freedom might be impinged.

In other words there is a righteous, strident 'more-anarchist-than-thou' tone to Colin and Arabella's article which I don't respect. I prefer the more critical, self-questioning analysis of Andy's article (also in *Freedom* July 1985) and would ultimately agree with him that anarchists, rather than tolerating/ignoring porn, should propagandise against it.

Mephistopheles
W Germany



Criticising Porn

Although porn may not always be a repressive influence, in this society most, if not all, is an uncritical and perpetuating symptom and expression of our fucked up sexuality. To suggest sex shops are as 'innocent' as toy shops, as a justification, seems silly, as toy shops sell products which, whilst not in themselves instruments of oppression, become so by virtue of the way they are marketed and portrayed and by the images affixed to them — 'masculine' toys for boys, 'feminine' toys for girls, in much the same way as sex shops promote consumer sexual stereotypes. If black people or children or some other group defined by their physical appearance are portrayed in submissive, exploitative imagery (whether sexual or not) is this to be defended and justified because it satisfies someone's desires? What is this notion of freedom that says we should submissively accept such a totally cynical and shallow definition and evaluation of ourselves and our sexuality? The problem lies in the essentially repressive nature of the values pornography seeks to promote.

I oppose all forms of censorship but surely the depiction and promotion of women as 'fantasy fodder' is a censorship and limitation of the true potential of our relationships as equals. This should not be ignored or allowed to pass without comment. There is no conflict in defending freedom of expression from censorship whilst at the same time criticising the content of that expression.

B Sharp

Correspondence, Argument and Debate

The letters in the larger typeface were simply left over from the last issue. There's no implied difference of importance!

Porn Scandal

I'm intrigued to read that, because "coercion of other people" should not be allowed, Donald Room advocates the right of pornographers to publish freely. Are there not more forms of coercion than immediate physical force? What about the economic coercion of women (and some men) into participating in pornography for lack of a better job? What about the psychological coercion — in which pornography plays a major role — of men into believing that the possession, subordination and contempt of women's bodies is not only their birthright but part of their identity as men; and that of women into believing that they cannot expect anything but this subordination and contempt, and should therefore ENJOY IT? All these form part of the pattern of pornography which boils down to rape. If you had ever suffered sexual assault or its immediate threat, smashing a few business premises and destroying a few commodities wouldn't upset you so much.

It's very depressing to see political opposition to pornography lumped in with prudishness in the pages of *Freedom*. It's the kind of political ignorance I expect from the college Rugby club, not from comrades. "Anything to do with sex" is not a flagrant example of sexism, but anything to do with turning our own sexualities into

commodities; alienated images which bend our desires and pleasures to the violent, power-centred and ultimately repressive norms of this society, is sexism and more. I'd rather have my shopwindows broken than be perpetually subjected to the propaganda of pornography telling me that rape is the occupational hazard of womanhood.

I'm also intrigued that Eric TGC regards class warfare as a distraction from the overthrow of the state. If we are supposed to unite with the ruling class, just who are these "power seeking maniacs whose motto is 'divide and rule'"? If they're *not* the ruling class, they're not doing very well. If they *are* the ruling class, heartfelt propaganda isn't going to turn them into freedom fighters. Why should the ruling class unite with us to overthrow the state? They created it to protect their property and power. They're just not impressed by our values, since commodity and power values are the ones which reassure them of the worthwhileness of their own lives.

You can't have "liberation of the individual" without overthrowing the economic system which exploits and alienates individuals. The group of individuals whose interests the system serves is therefore going to oppose that liberation. Class warfare was the ruling class's invention and, while bashing them doesn't automatically bring about economic change, it reminds us as well as them that change is coming.

Timandra Harkness
Reading

Quite Right!

There appeared an article in July's *Freedom* on Power. One small excerpt from it goes: "... My current predilections lead me to a rather pessimistic, deterministic attitude towards human nature compared to the fashionable 'humanists' (= existential voluntarists). However it does appear to me that the biological and maturational limitations of human development are highly suitable for the facilitation of characteristics such as empathy and altruism..."

Need I, or dare I, go further? What on earth is somebody like me with one English O-level supposed to make of blurb such as that. I thought anarchy was about getting to the people. If highly intellectual *Freedom* readers like me are baffled then what hope is there for the "average"?

May I respectfully request that a translation in plain English appears in the next issue for those who aren't Tom Jennings of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, or Stu Stuart of the Freedom Collective. Yours plainly intellectual

P.A.L.
Liverpool

[Eds: Stu had to read it three times too!]

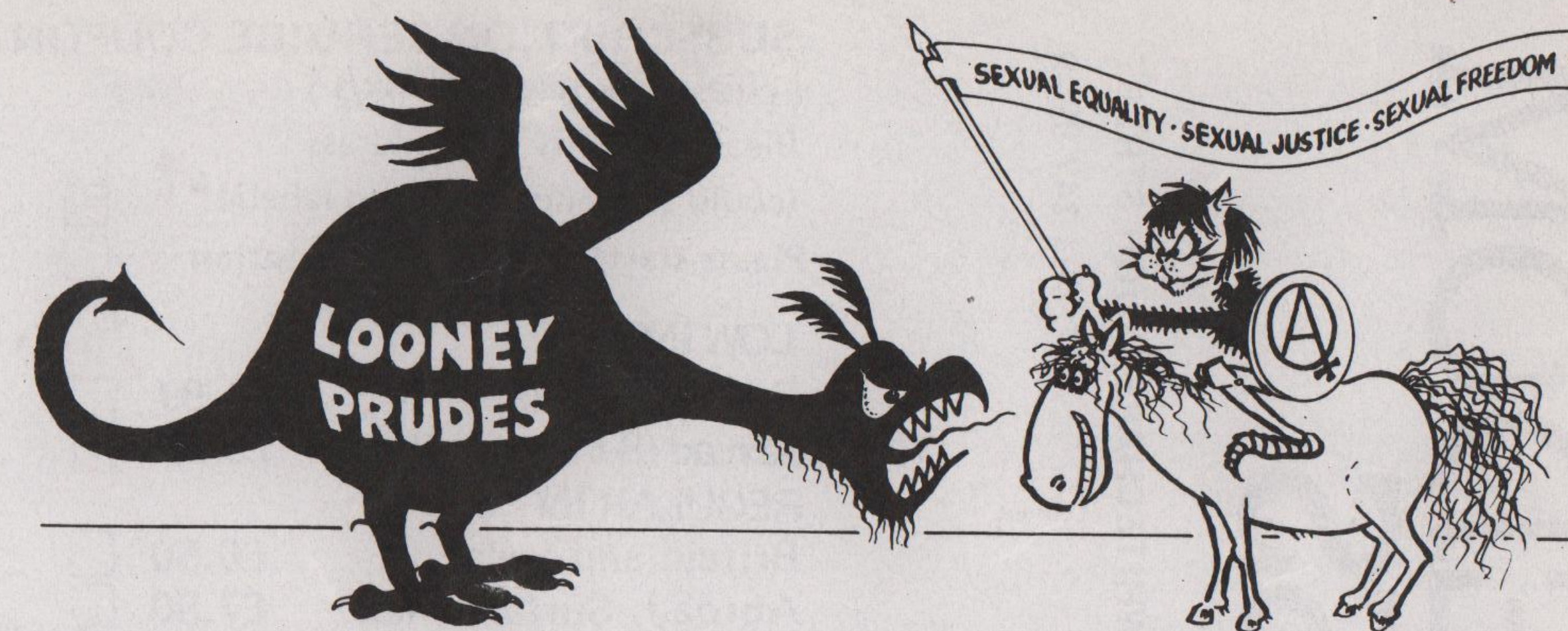
Class Struggle

Eric TCG's letter (*Freedom*, July) confused me. I couldn't see the connection between his first paragraph (which called for fighting the causes and not just the symptoms of oppression) and the rest of his letter. While I feel that the "Bash the Rich" approach of *Class War* is rather limited in its appeal, I can't help thinking that hoping to

convert individuals of all classes, on a mass basis, to socialism is purely romantic and is an entirely unrealistic strategy.

Socialism means the greatest possible extension of democratic behaviour into all spheres of life, from politics (ie decision-making about public matters), into economics, the family, etc, on both a collective and individual level (in other words, I want to have my wishes considered in everything I do). To achieve this means not only taking the means of production out of the hands of the dwindling bourgeoisie, but also removing the power of ordering from the managerial classes, many of whom now probably earn little more than skilled workers (ie they are not "the rich" in the old sense, but have the ultimate privilege of telling workers what to do. After all, in 1984 even the Inner Party, which controlled all members of the Party, led a fairly austere life by modern standards. The working class is that class which, however affluent strata of it may be in material terms, has ultimately no control over its daily life — the very fact which makes it potentially revolutionary. The ultimate "contradiction of capitalism" lies in its theoretical treating of workers as "hands" with its real need for their creativity to make it function, and capitalism's restriction of this deepest need of human beings continues to make workers revolt. "Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains" means not just our being better off economically, it means running our own lives — something which Lenin, for instance, never really understood.

While we may convert individuals from other classes we cannot expect socialism to have a general appeal to those whose privileges we want to remove. Society is composed of classes (defined by their "relationship to the means of production"), not just an amorphous collection of individuals, and to change all the features of society we hate needs more than the few "individuals against the state" from the bourgeoisie or intelligentsia whom we are likely to recruit giving up their class privileges. Yours in



We are concerned that there has been a misunderstanding; the Death Sentence which we sent to Donald Room was not intended for publication. It was merely a notification of our intentions.

We now see that the 'genuine anarchists' on your collective have also earned the privilege of being sentenced by us. Death to Sexist Prats.

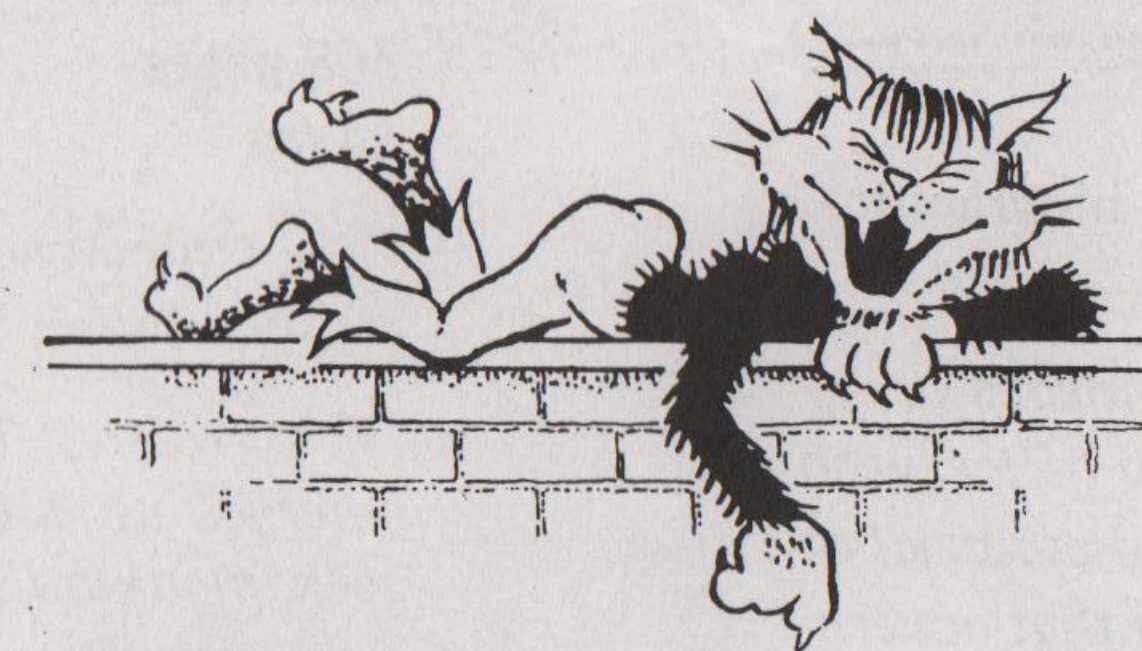
The Black Dragon

Oh Dear!

[Eds: This came from Wilmslow, Cheshire (aged 15?), the most bourgeois/conservative area in England!]

defence of class struggle,

S French



DAM Rules

Once again the open nature of debate and policy making within the DAM is being hung out as dirty washing in your pages and portrayed in such a manner as to promote or suggest there are serious splits within our organisation.

That the DAM has come away from a conference that largely rejected major changes within its structure and yet still remains a united and thriving organisation is a tribute to the maturity of its membership. This and/or the larkin expulsion would have resulted in the disintegration of any of DAM's forerunners in this country.

No doubt many of our armchair comrades would relish the sight of DAM stabbing itself in the back but the tolerance and development of our members will deny them this pleasure.

Christine Careful may like to reflect that the reason that so much space is devoted to DAM in the pages of its opponents may well be because DAM is the only anarchist organisation in this country that is actually doing anything effective. In any case she can save herself the trouble of a pen-name. We have better things to do than concern ourselves with her inane rambles.

I urge all class struggle anarchists to help continue to build an active anarcho-syndicalist organisation. The DAM represents a stark contrast to the correspondence fixation of the "anarchist purists" and the pathetic posturings of *Class War*.

Ian Swain

International Secretary DAM/IWA

[Eds: "The only anarchist organisation in this country that is actually doing anything effective..." We are sure this is simply not true. Indeed, what the hell have DAM done, apart from expel Mick Larkin? Nothing of note. Isn't it about time you stopped being nasty to everyone else and organised at least ONE workplace group?]

