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Heresy

POSING POINTLESSLY IN THE PARK

Now is the Nuclear Winter of our discontent

LAST month, 100,000 people gathered in London's Hyde Park to 'Ban the Bomb'. They were an unconvincing crowd, nervously grinning into the teeth of widespread public indifference. The atmosphere amongst them was of people who had 'lost the argument' and no longer really believed what they said themselves. Precisely what a couple of hundred anarchists thought they were doing amongst those Cultists, Christians, Social Democrats, Trots and Marxists I don't know.

The Great British Public has been remarkably consistent in its support for the Little British Bomb. Something like 69%, give or take a couple of points, feel we ought to have one. CND has always ignored this, living on false hopes raised by opinion polls on particular weapons systems or the declining support for America's use of Britain as the Decoy Target. Time after time CND appears to be 'taking off', then the government counter-attacks with its arguments and CND slumps.

The unacceptable truth

The unacceptable (to many) truth is that CND's 'Ban the Bomb' type arguments always fail to carry majority public support because they are simply not true. CND argues that if Britain gave up the Bomb, then Britain would no longer be a nuclear target. Now only one nation has ever had a nuclear bomb dropped on it, and that was Japan in 1945. Japan *did not* have a bomb of its own. History tells us that it is precisely a non-nuclear state that gets fried when in conflict with a nuclear one!

What makes Britain a Russian nuclear target is the size of her industrial economy, which could make a considerable, perhaps decisive, contribution to a conventional war with Russia. *All is fair in love and war*, remember? CND also argues that a non-nuclear Europe would not be a threat to Russia and therefore there would be no serious threat of war

with Russia. The temptation to invade could be deterred by purely conventional means, set out in CND's 'alternative' defence policy.

Not Cricket

Right now, CND is busily pouring scorn on Ray-gun's Star Wars defence, but at the same time, they try to argue that there is some kind of 'conventional' defence against nuclear weapons! At least Star Wars is an unconventional outside possibility. 'Conventional' defence relies solely on the nuclear state having a sort of strict 'cricketing' mentality, incapable of not 'playing the game'! CND's conventional defence policy is simply a refusal to face ugly facts about the nature of States, Armies, and human behaviour under stress and duress or the possession of power.

State Power

The historical origin of the State is the suppression of one people/tribe by another. The very essence of the State is use of political/military means to obtain economic ends. The State *is* exploitation institutionalised. The more people THEY exploit the better. ALL EMPIRES EXPAND TO THE POINT OF REBUTTAL, that is their unavoidable internal logic. The political history of Europe has been one long series of such 'Inter-State Wars', mostly started by relatively trivial events compared to the conflict of ideology and interests between Russia and the West since '45.

The Nuclear Peace

Any honest, hard-headed look at human history and political tensions since 1945 must conclude that only the fear of

continued over



[continued from page 3]

nuclear war has kept the peace in Europe. Indeed it is in precisely the non-nuclear areas of the planet that bloody, hot-wars have been, and are being, fought. The truth does not cease to be true just because reactionaries use a bit of it to justify their privileges.

Arguments against the nuclear bomb and its horrendous implications are pointless. The bomb exists, it cannot be abolished even by the world-wide assassination of every one with BSc Physics.

The Way Out

The horror of the bomb, is however a very good, perhaps the ultimate, argument against the State System. Anarchists should recognise the truth of nuclear 'deterrence', but turn the argument the right way up. The nuclear peace proves that State Power has such a corrupting influence on human behaviour that only the absolute certainty of total defeat and destruction prevents our rulers from going to war.

When anarchists are willing to face reality without self-deception and let the light of their fundamental insights show them the way out, then, and only then, is there the slightest chance that people will listen and aim their hopes and energies towards a mutual-aid society of genuinely free and equal individuals.

Stu Stuart

[Stu note: Star Wars won't save USA's cities, but even in a few years it will protect its second strike missiles . . . and that's what it's really all about.]

Defend the Birmingham 8

ON Monday 2nd December at Birmingham Crown Court the trial began of eight people charged with going equipped to cause criminal damage and conspiracy to commit a public nuisance. It has taken over a year for this case to come to court — it all started on Wednesday 10th October 1984, when some people from London decided to go to the Stop the City action in Birmingham. They drove up there on the night of the 10th October in a van. When they arrived in Birmingham they noticed that the whole area was being very heavily policed.

After picking up a friend who they were going to stay the night with, they headed off towards his house. After a while they realised that they were being

followed by a police car which soon pulled the van over. Immediately the van stopped it was surrounded by police — a car in front, a van on the right, another car on the left (actually on the pavement), another van behind, and behind that a prison transporter.

When the police searched the van, all they found was a bag containing a pot of paint and some glue. The people in the van denied all knowledge of the items and refused to answer any of the police questions. Originally they were charged with going equipped to cause criminal damage, but then the police decided to frame them up on the more serious charge of conspiracy. The so-called evidence in relation to this charge is that the eight travelled together to Birmingham the night before Stop the City and during their stay in police custody the eight refused to co-operate and some shouted and sang for much of the time. During this time the police found a leaflet on the police station floor, not even on or near any of the defendants. The leaflet suggested actions for Stop the City, such as sit-ins, blockades and causing damage to oppressive property. It went on to suggest that if arrested, disruption should continue, non-co-operation with the police and making lots of noise in the cells. The police are trying to claim that because the eight were 'carrying out' the second part of the leaflet they must have been intending to carry out the first and disrupt Birmingham, so causing a public nuisance. If it was not so serious it would be funny.

Everyone was held until Friday afternoon when they appeared in court. Only three were granted bail immediately, the rest were remanded for sureties, the last two being released on Sunday morning.

The police obviously want to get people who will not conform totally to the State's wishes — this has clearly been seen from Stop the City to the miners' strike, from Stonehenge to Greenham — and it must be resisted. It is no good saying that it will not affect you — you will be next if, through your inaction, you allow what little is left of our 'civil liberties' to be further diminished by the increasing police state. If these eight people are found guilty this could set a precedent and invite the police to arrest people before or during a protest of any sort for this conspiracy charge, therefore being able to pick out anyone THEY consider a potential troublemaker or ringleader and get them off the streets. The public nuisance charge is something of a catch-all as far as protests are concerned and so is pretty dangerous, covering anything from blocking the road to making lots of noise and all sorts of other things. If the eight are found guilty this will mean to conspire to cause

a public nuisance you need only to travel with others to a demo where anything like this might happen.

We must stand together and resist the State's threats to our few freedoms. The Birmingham 8 need your support, as do all other people threatened and attacked by the State. This support can best be expressed through direct action and support in court — come to Birmingham Crown Court (on Corporation Street near New Street station) on Monday 2nd December and for the next few days after (the trial will probably last 4-5 days).

Support the Birmingham 8 — stop police harassment — smash the state.

Contact Box Birmingham 8, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 or phone 01-888 2482.

DAM Your Civil Liberties

IN WHAT looks like a blatant act of political policing, members of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front were arrested in the North of England on October 11th. These people will now be held until after the visit of the Indian PM, Rajiv Gandhi, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

In the weeks leading up to this visit the homes of many Kashmiris have been raided by armed British police. After these raids and some arrests in September, the North West Regional Conference of DAM passed a motion deploring these attacks on civil liberties and the apparent abuse of police powers.

The second round of arrests came on the eve of Gandhi's visit on October 14th, and included the detainment of Afzal Jatalvi, the JKLF President, and Shabir Choudhry, the General Secretary. At the time of writing Mr Jatalvi of Oldham, who is disabled in both legs, has disappeared, and the police have not disclosed his whereabouts.

Because of this a member of the JKLF, who has had contact with the libertarian movement for more than a decade, asked North West DAM for their help. A press conference was called in Manchester, attended by the local, national and libertarian press.

While we do not wish to become involved in the politics of the Indian sub-continent, we object to the British police imprisoning and pressurising Asian minorities merely to discourage embarrassing demonstrations against visiting VIPs.

DAM (North West)

Liverpool Pride and Prejudice

TRADITIONALLY anarchists have little time to spend on social democrats and their political manoeuvres, particularly in the realms of government affairs. In fact we see that those intrigues and conspiracies in which the various political parties engage, either with or against each other, are only manifestations of the different factions of the ruling class.

Having said that, we are not so naive as to be unaware of the difference between a liberal bourgeois society and a fascist regime. We would know which one we would choose to live in if a choice had to be made and if we were capable of making that kind of choice without endangering or deserting our comrades and our friends.

For some time now Liverpool Council, which is dominated by the militant/left faction of the Labour Party, has been on a collision course with the government. As a result of this opposition to the government, combined with an inability to organise an effective strategy to defeat the government, the jobs of 31,000 workers employed by the Council have been put in jeopardy.

The greatest tragedy in this struggle is that the militants see it as a matter of personal pride and will not co-operate; not even with other trotskyite groups like the SWP.

An example of this selfishness was shown coming up to the strike called for September 25th. The SWP had been calling on the people in general to support the militants and had been making overtures to them that both should form a coalition to defeat the Tories.

A week before the strike, the SWP had gone around Liverpool putting up posters calling for an all-out strike. A few nights later, militants went around and, almost without exception, they put up posters of a similar size, right over the top of the SWP posters. Not only were they pointing out to people that 'this was their struggle only' they also showed what they thought of the solidarity of their kindred spirits. Not only did they sabotage solidarity they also caused some confusion and instead of an all-out strike a one-day token strike was called.

Of course it is not only the militants, the leadership of unions like NALGO and the NUT also had been opposed to strike action which was and still is the only principled position to take in what has turned into a ghastly affair. The

people most in danger of losing their jobs are cleaners and people like that.

The most sinister aspect of this whole situation is that an alliance of Tories, liberals and fascists has surfaced and is quite active in Liverpool. The struggle for the Council workers, and indeed all the working class in Liverpool, will only intensify as the weeks go by. Hopefully we will not go under as the government seems to want.

Despite our small numbers, the anarchists in Liverpool are determined to carry on with a campaign against the threatened redundancies and the tory/liberal/fascist alliance. We will also not hesitate to criticise the confusion created by the militants in a struggle which the workers of Liverpool must and will win despite the odds lined up against us.

Oskar Rossin
Liverpool

DAM Appeal

MICHAEL DAVIES has been inside for over two years and at the moment is in Park Lane Hospital which is a top security hospital. A few months ago he joined the Direct Action Movement and comrades from the Liverpool group went to see him. After two visits we became persona non grata and for nearly two months have been refused admission to go and see him. One other person was interrogated by the 'nurses' who are all members of the Prison Officers Association. His mail and other items like magazines and papers have been held up for periods of ten days, even such things as CND material.

He needs a bit of moral support, so probably some kind people might like to send a letter or card to Michael expressing support. **Michael Davies, Eliot Ward, Park Lane Hospital, Park Lane, Maghull, Liverpool L31 1HW.**

Declining in the Park

THE mass demonstration organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in London on 26th October went well enough, but as had been feared it proved to be smaller than its predecessors in 1982 and 1983. There were some enjoyable token actions — a die-in, a sit-down and a hand-link during the march around Hyde Park, and a huge human nuclear disarmament symbol during the final rally in Hyde Park — and one welcome feature was the exclusion of party political speakers at the rally. But there is no doubt that support has

definitely fallen, and this has been confirmed by recent public opinion surveys indicating that there is now distinctly less opposition than before to the installation of American Cruise missiles in Britain or to the retention of American nuclear bases in general and the retention of British nuclear weapons. At the same time the Dutch government has finally agreed to allow Cruise missiles into the Netherlands.

Meanwhile CND has made major changes at the top of its organisation. Bruce Kent and Joan Ruddock have been succeeded as general secretary and chairman by Meg Beresford and Paul Johns — both much less public figures, compromise candidates intended to fudge the differences between left and right, between moderates and militants. For the future, as well as planning yet another campaign to arouse public support, CND has endorsed a major direct action demonstration which has been planned to blockade Molesworth, the second cruise missile base, on 6 February 1986, the anniversary of the all too successful coup last winter when the authorities erected a secure fence around the base. Meanwhile the peace camps struggle on, and the construction work begins. Just like 25 years ago, the struggle is proving to be much longer and harder than most people expected. But it is important not to give up, and for anarchists to contribute their special theory and practice to one of the most significant movements in the contemporary world. **FC**

Mary Ward Centre 1985

November 29th: Riff-Raff-Poets — Jeff Cloves, Dennis Gould and Pat Van Twest.

December 6th: Up Wing, Down Wing — a practical model for anarchists. Stu Stuart.

December 13th: Xmas social.

1986

January 10th: Anarchism in the anti-war movement of the First World War. Ken Weller.

January 24th: Freedom of Access. Donald Rooum.

February 7th: An Anarchic Life: Barabara Smoker.

February 14th: The Anarchist Revival after the Second World War. Tony Gibson.

February 21st: Anarchism, the Individual and the Law. Tony Jones.

March 14th: Anarchism and the Informal Economy. Colin Ward.

Fridays at 8:00pm. Mary Ward Centre, Queen Square, London WC1.

Charlie

Solid Libertarian Socialists

The British libertarian group Solidarity celebrate its 25th birthday this year. To mark the achievement *Freedom* asked if one of its long term members would summarise the group's activities. Foolishly I agreed and I have been putting off the task repeatedly because there's so much to say.

No Brain Damage

If I had to pick the single greatest achievement of Solidarity's 25 years of existence I would claim it was that we have not done any damage to the minds of the people who have joined and left our ranks. People who leave Solidarity don't get denounced as class traitors and usually remain in friendly contact with us for a while. No one seems to feel emotionally crippled by their time in the group and even those people who now disagree with us quite sharply tend to look back on their period of membership without regrets. This, I believe, is because one of the central planks of the groups theory is that we don't like orthodoxy. We are not certain that we've arrived at the final truth, we reject 'lines' and democratic centralism and we allow virtually anything to be said at our meetings and openly disagree with each other in public.

This probably sounds like a recipe for woolly-minded liberalism. It has not proved that way in practice. Though all ideas are allowed a free expression it is very rare that anyone gets away with loose thinking. This approach of allowing the unorthodox to be said but exposing all ideas to lively debate has enabled us to observe and respond to a number of developments which the rest of the left were reluctant to face up to and, though Solidarity is a group of activists, it is in our books, pamphlets and magazines that the evidence for this can most clearly be seen.

Vietnam

A good example of the kind of thing I'm talking about would be the Vietnam War. At a time when most of the left were chanting 'Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh' and writing about how much better life was organised in North Vietnam, Solidarity members were active both on the demonstrations and in reminding people about the real nature of the regime in the North. As Bob Potter put it:

'It is not the first time in the history of Communism that bureaucracies have been founded on the sacrifices of millions of dedicated revolutionaries. The ruling circles in Moscow, Peking and Hanoi are using the genuine hatred of the peasants for the foreign invader and their genuine hunger for land as cynically today as they ever have in the past.'

Now, when the nature of the regime is clear, this sounds a straightforward truism. In the late '60s it was dangerous stuff to write and there were Trotskyists who would quite happily brick your windows for reminding them that the Hanoi regime shot Trotskyists as deviants!

A similar interest in making people better aware of unpleasant historical facts has permeated the work which the group has always done in Russia, China and eastern Europe. We published pamphlets by Ida Mett and Victor Serge on the way Trotsky and Lenin had conspired to suppress the Kronstadt Commune, with the intention of warning people about the way Leninists behave when they seize power. This was followed up by a book from Maurice Brinton called *From Bolshevism to the Bureaucracy* which showed how the 'degeneration' of the Russian revolution began on Day One of the Bolsheviks seizure of power and was not an unfortunate accident which happened to Leninism but a necessary product of Leninist behaviour and beliefs.

Independent Lines

This mistrust of Leninism led to frequent discussions of the psychological forces which made people join hierarchical organisations. In his pamphlet *The Irrational in Politics* Maurice Brinton went into the whole question of the psychological structure of the authoritarian personality. The pamphlet 'looks at the family as the locus of reproduction of the dominant ideology, and at sexual repression as an important determinant of social conditioning, resulting in the mass production of individuals perpetually craving authority and leadership and forever afraid of walking on their own or of thinking for themselves.' Brinton argues that: 'the fundamental desires and aspirations of the ordinary individual, so long distorted and repressed, are in deep harmony with an objective such as the libertarian reconstruction of society. The revolutionary "ideal" must therefore be made less remote and abstract. It must be shown to be the fulfilment — starting here and now — of people's own independent lives.'

This contrast between the repressed personality looking for a home for its soul and someone to direct its life and

the natural aspiration to enjoy life as your own person upset a lot of people on the left. It was considered at the time that we were discussing issues of no relevance to the workers' movement and the obvious conclusions which could be drawn about the personalities of members of centralised political groups gave a number of political activists very high blood pressure. They didn't like the idea that the family was political and got even more annoyed when we followed up the theme by publishing an account of the religious/communist fanaticism which led to the mass deaths at Jonestown and used it to explore the similarities with the way members of groups like the WRP behave.

Industrial Issues

In case this sounds like the group is uninterested in industrial issues it's worth mentioning that we have also published an awful lot of material about the experience of workers involved in industrial struggles. We published a whole series of bulletins written by working people in the car industry and pamphlets on such themes as the work of women cleaners, the postal workers strike and life on the buses. We have always tried to use what we publish to spread new ideas or resurrect old ones which worked well and through pamphlets like *The Great Flint Sit Down Strike* and *Strategy for Industrial Struggle* we were successful in spreading the idea of occupations which became popular in the early '70s. This made us very unpopular with a number of people in power and for a while a couple of members were regularly hounded by the national press. We also became very unpopular with a number of union leaders, notably because of a pamphlet called *GMWU Scab Union* which described how union leaders regularly acted to control, damp down and sell out strikes or, as Len Murray put it, 'very often the reason why a trade union makes a strike official is to get control over it — and to negotiate a settlement.' (Channel 4 News, Tuesday 12th July 1983). What has often particularly annoyed trade union bureaucrats has been our tendency to carefully document allegations so that our allegations couldn't be brushed aside and much of what we have written has been based on personal observation.

Paris '68

Perhaps the best and most lively pamphlet Solidarity has published to date was based on just such personal observations. When the events of May 1968 took place in Paris two members of the group were there and saw a lot of the events at first hand. Their description of what they saw has all the immediacy

which comes from writing whilst the events are fresh in your mind and demand for this pamphlet has been so strong that we are currently arranging another reprint, this time in co-operation with Dark Star Collective. Our other projects at the moment are the publishing of a pamphlet on Ranters, Diggers and Levellers (yes, socialism didn't begin with Marx, only arrogant socialism!) and the regular publication of our quarterly journal. This attempts to preserve the tradition of an open minded discussion of any and all issues (in the past we've published articles on everything from the political history of football, through the ban on masturbation in China, to the politics of IQ testing in Britain). If you want to get hold of the magazine please contact us as 123 Lathom Road, London E6.

Andy Brown

London 'Moles' Network

The recent decision by National CND to organise a blockade at the proposed cruise missile base of Molesworth on February 6th next year (anniversary of the 'Heseltine invasion') is a hopeful sign that it is at last taking the issues at Molesworth and non-violent direct action more seriously. Just how many CND members will take part in the actions on February 6th, and what level of ongoing momentum this 'new' CND campaign will reach, however, is yet to be seen. CND's past record in terms of encouraging and supporting non-violent direct action at military bases and establishments (it virtually ignored the September 16th blockade at Faslane, the proposed Trident base in Scotland) is not impressive.

While we do not wish to antagonise or reject CND's efforts towards disarmament, some of us are aware of what we see as the need for a broader network or 'loose coalition' of individuals and affinity groups here in London, to help intensify the campaign against Cruise deployment at Molesworth. This 'London-Molesworth Support Network' or whatever we may choose to call it, is something we envisage as being a kind of forum or communication channel helping to link groups and individuals in London who don't wish to rely upon CND for 'leading the way' on anti-Cruise actions at Molesworth. Major construction work on the base and missile facilities is due to start any day now, yet despite the continuous presence of peace campers at Molesworth

and the occasional CND demonstration there, it is obvious that the government is anxious to maintain a deliberate virtual blackout of any publicity to do with Molesworth protests. More anti-Cruise and life-affirming initiatives and actions, both at Molesworth and here in London, and better communication and support for activists living at Molesworth, are important needs at the present time. These are some of the things we hope this new network of 'London Moles' can help facilitate.

If you, or any of your friends, or your affinity group (perhaps we can form more of them?) feel that you have ideas to contribute to the formation of such a network, and would like to become involved in any way, we will be holding a first discussion meeting of activists and supporter on WEDNESDAY 27th NOVEMBER at ST HILDA'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, CLUB ROW, E1 (Liverpool Street tube) at 7:00pm. It would be nice to see you there.

This initiative has been taken by individuals involved with London Peace Action and London Greenpeace. For more information come to the meeting on the 27th, or contact Anna, tel: 01-986 1533.

Doris's Birthday Party

To celebrate its twentieth anniversary, Reading Anarchist Group decided to have a birthday party. It took the form of a three-day free festival on squatted land in the middle of Reading. The event came to be called by its 'code' name of 'Doris's Birthday party'. The whole of Reading was invited and the theme was 'If there is anything that you ever wanted to be, come and do it at Doris's Birthday Party'.

The necessary £1,000+ needed to finance a stage, PA, lighting, generators,

chemical toilets, first aid facilities, etc, was raised from donations and a series of benefit gigs held during the previous year. When the first leaflet and posters advertising the event appeared, the editor of the local evening paper called on the police to use force if necessary to prevent the event taking place, and to 'protect' the local residents and their property!

The festival got off to a slow start on Friday, but on Saturday night there were over a thousand people on the site and the party went on until dawn. A similar number turned up on Sunday night. The site was dotted with groups sitting around campfires (a lorry load of free firewood had been laid on) and the two dominant sounds were those of music and laughter.

At various points around the site were piles of 'dead' TV sets. Another theme of the party was 'Don't spend the weekend watching TV, have a weekend of real life and let the TV watch you!' Late on Sunday night, when the free firewood started running out, one pile of TVs went on a bonfire. People began to drift away from the stage area to watch the new sideshow. When the flames started to die down there was a shout of 'Bring more tellies! Bring more tellies!'. People appeared out of the darkness carrying TVs from other parts of the site. We don't think that anyone responded to the suggestion of one optimist who, carried away by his own enthusiasm, shouted 'Bring them from your houses!'. (Greenies please note that the broken glass and ashes from this bonfire were shovelled into drums and carted away — except for the copper wire which was recycled into beer — before we returned the site to the resident butterflies, dragonflies and bunnies.)

We think that the free festival was a success. We learnt a lot about liberation and co-operative organisation and working together — and we still run into people who came and are still thinking about the fun they had. Next year Doris will be twenty-one . . .

John Doe
Reading



SUMMERHILL EDUCATION & ANARCHISM



"No-one could lead my old pupils"

EDUCATION has always been a matter of deep concern for anarchists, for what can be more important in the struggle for a stateless future than the education of the children of today? If education remains in the hands of the State, then anarchism is condemned to an uphill struggle against the values of unquestioning obedience, hierarchy and cut-throat competition that will infect each generation as it reaches the age for compulsory schooling. Even in 1793, William Godwin expressed fears about the consequences of State-run education: "Before we put so powerful a machine under the direction of so ambiguous an agent, it behoves us to consider what it is that we do. Government will not fail to employ it to strengthen its hands and perpetuate its institutions."

As long as education consists in subjecting children to the authority of parents and teachers so as to "prepare them for the outside world" (the authority of the bosses and the police), then libertarian attitudes will remain confined to those few who consciously rebel against the indoctrination of childhood — an inevitable minority vastly outnumbered by the State's puppets and dupes. For anarchy to succeed, education must change.

Of those who have presented alternatives to Authority in education, only Francisco Ferrer accepted the name of anarchist. The greatest contributions to an anarchist theory and practice of education have been made by those libertarians who stood outside the traditional anarchist movement, notably Godwin, Tolstoy and Neill. It is A S Neill who has made the most radical and durable attempt at libertarian education: his school Summerhill, now 64 years old, continues to prove that the relationship between adults and children need not be an authoritarian one. Although Neill died in 1973, Summerhill is still run on exactly the same lines as Neill described in his book

Summerhill. After his death, the school was first run by Neill's wife Ena until her retirement in September 1985, and since then by their daughter Zoe Readhead. The principles on which Summerhill functions can be summarized as self-government, voluntary attendance at lessons, and freedom from adult morality.

Direct Democracy in School

Self-government — basically the idea that all aspects of daily school life can be organized through direct democratic meetings of the whole community — was first implemented by Homer Lane, an American educationalist, in a farm community for delinquent children in Dorset. The "Little Commonwealth", as it was called, ran from 1913 until its closure by the authorities in 1918. Neill called his visit to Homer Lane (who lectured on "Authority: the fundamental problem in society") the turning-point of his life, and used Lane's self-government system when he founded Summerhill in 1921. Self-government is represented in Summerhill by four bodies: the ombudsmen, the Tribunal, the Meeting and the committees.

The ombudsmen are volunteer arbitrators from amongst the children (who are between 6 and 16 years old), who change once a fortnight and who try to settle any minor problems. Should the problem persist, or should one of the parties be unsatisfied with the ombudsman's suggested solution, anyone may bring this up at the Tribunal, which, like the Meeting, is a weekly gathering of the 59 children and 11 staff. Both the Tribunal and the Meeting are chaired by a volunteer, who must remain strictly neutral, and decisions are made on a one person one vote, majority rule basis. The Tribunal, which meets on Fridays, acts as a sort of judicial court, whilst the Saturday Meeting functions as a court of appeal and as the

legislative assembly. The Meeting has complete jurisdiction over all areas of school life except health, safety and finance, which are reserved for the Director. It is also in the Meeting that any of the school's "officers" — chairman, ombudsmen and committees — may be voted out of office. [The two words "ombudsman" and "chairman" are used here as they are in Summerhill — without any sexist overtone.]

All of these posts carry no reward, privileges or authority. Social activities are co-ordinated by a variety of committees, usually comprised of five members, and elected by "taking the book around" — a first time to note the candidates, a second time for each member of the community to mark the relevant number of votes. At times when bedtimes get too rowdy, the Meeting may consider whether to introduce "beddies officers", volunteers who put the other children to bed, and who can fine people's lunches for breaking the bedtime laws. The system is such that adults never need to fill a disciplinary role: order is ensured by the whole community. For behaviour where the Meeting has decided on a fine, anyone can fine anyone, hence no small group of individuals has a monopoly on the maintenance of order. Fines must however be confirmed by the whole community in the Tribunal, the only exception to this being the lunch fines levied by the beddies officers. Whilst fines are beginning to take on a more important role, most sanctions voted by the community are almost trivial; a frequent response to anti-social behaviour is simply an expression of the community's disapproval, which is traditionally called a "strong warning" — the name has no significance. Other sanctions include tea-biscuit or pudding fines, doing washing-up, and entertaining the community at end of term. Certainly there is no danger of a "tyranny of public

opinion" — Orwell's fear for an anarchist society — for the feeling of individual freedom goes too deep for the Meeting to condemn anything except behaviour which infringes the freedom of others.

No Classroom Coercion

Whilst other schools have taken up self-government (some, however, rendering it worthless by restricting its jurisdiction or by reserving a Director's right of veto over Meeting decisions), Summerhill is distinguished from all other schools by its policy of voluntary attendance at lessons, an idea that was first tried by Tolstoy in his school at Yasnaya Polyana in 1861. As soon as voluntary lessons are mentioned, the authoritarians retort that the children will never go, that they will never learn anything. They cannot understand that when the element of compulsion is withdrawn, education is a joy — how can satisfying your curiosity and expanding your mind be dull when you can choose what and when you want to learn? Making lessons voluntary is the only fundamental change that needs to be made; no amount of individual study plans, wideranging options or electronic gadgetry can disguise the fact that in "normal" schools, you are forced to learn — often with disastrous results.

Cramming knowledge that kids do not want down their throats only leads to an education allergy: learning is compulsory, so it is hated, never to be returned to. Voluntary attendance ensures that people will never be put off self-education later in life if they were not interested in learning in childhood. Here, kids can come in to "taste" a subject — they are free to go if they discover that, at that stage in their life, it is not for them. Maybe later. The truth of the matter is that the kids DO come and they DO learn; very few choose to go to no lessons at all, and a good number go on to take O levels (yes, we do do them) in a range of subjects, often before the age of sixteen. Voluntary attendance also means that the teachers do not have to devote half their time into trying to interest (or control) the bored and the rebellious in the back three rows. In free classes, the teacher no longer has to ensure order; anyone creating a disturbance gets short shrift from the other kids who came because they wanted to learn. In short, voluntary attendance is the liberation of the teacher as well as of the child.

No Propaganda

However, there is more to freeing the child than simply removing the compulsion in lessons. Too often, children are made to swallow adult values. Too

often, adults pass on judgements (and prejudices), rather than what is important for the child: the information that led to the opinion. If adult values are foisted upon children, they cannot be expected to grow up capable of making their own judgements, thinking for themselves. Summerhill refuses to mould the child, for we do not presume to have a picture of what children should grow up to be like; we allow them to develop free, so that the natural good that is in them may grow undistorted by indoctrination.

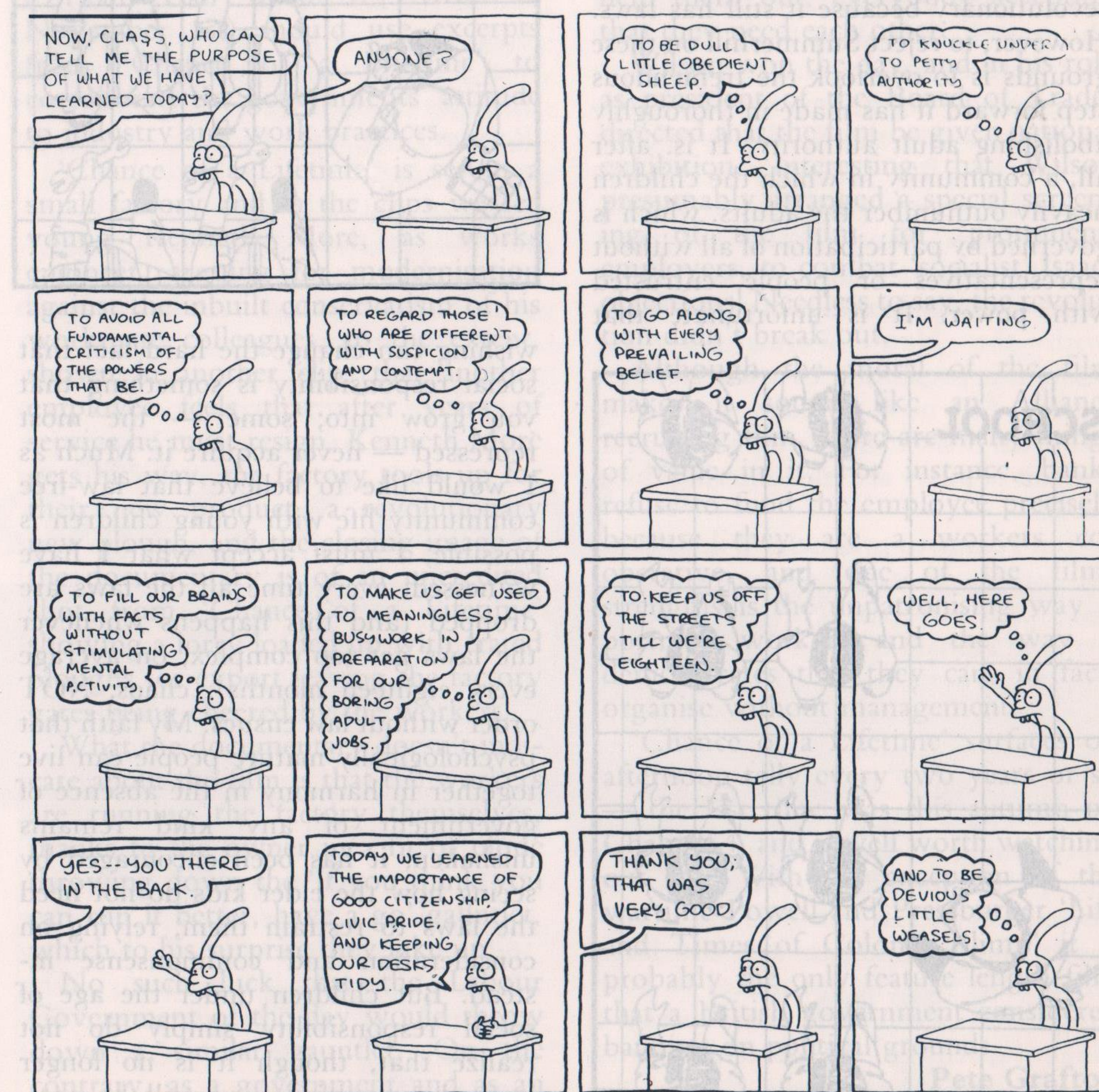
Religion and politics are two things we leave for the children to discover for themselves. That does not mean that they are kept in ignorance: they know what is happening in the world, and, of course, the adults have opinions and will answer questions if they are asked. But the school does not have a label or give formal "education" in any belief. Unfortunately, even amongst the anarchists, there have been those who wanted to mould the child; a well-known case was Francisco Ferrer, who, concerned that the library in his Escuela Moderna should have only books fitting for an anarchist school, had to start the term with empty shelves. The Summerhill library takes whatever anyone wants to give it: Gandhi, Garibaldi and Alf Garnett all sit on the same shelf.

The freedom from adult morality also includes the free development of

sexuality. The recent debate on pornography in *Freedom* pointed out the significance of sexual repression for maintaining the status quo: "sexual fear and anxiety is the last and most powerful bastion of authoritarianism; it thrives in a sexual desert" (Melville/Johnson). Pornography is in itself almost a side-issue, an effect not a cause — the question for anarchists is to create an environment where sexuality can develop freely, for then pornography is greeted only with indifference or idle curiosity. Neill saw pornography, rape, sadism, the desire for power and, ultimately, war as stemming from repressed sexualities; a child brought up unrepressed would not be attracted to them. Children, he argued, should be free to explore their own sexualities and that of others, being given sex education when they ask for it, and being free to "pair up" when they want. There may be critics (hopefully not *Freedom* readers) on a moral level, but none can attack the results of free sexuality; in 64 years there has not been a single pregnancy in Summerhill, and I doubt there ever will be. There can't be many "normal" schools who can claim an equal track record for their policies of sexual repression.

Private Progress

It is obvious that a school as famous (and notorious) as Summerhill must have attracted criticism. One of the



from LOVE IS HELL by Matt Groening, P.O. Box 36E64, Los Angeles, CA 90036, \$6.95 + \$2 postage & handling.

[continued from page 9]

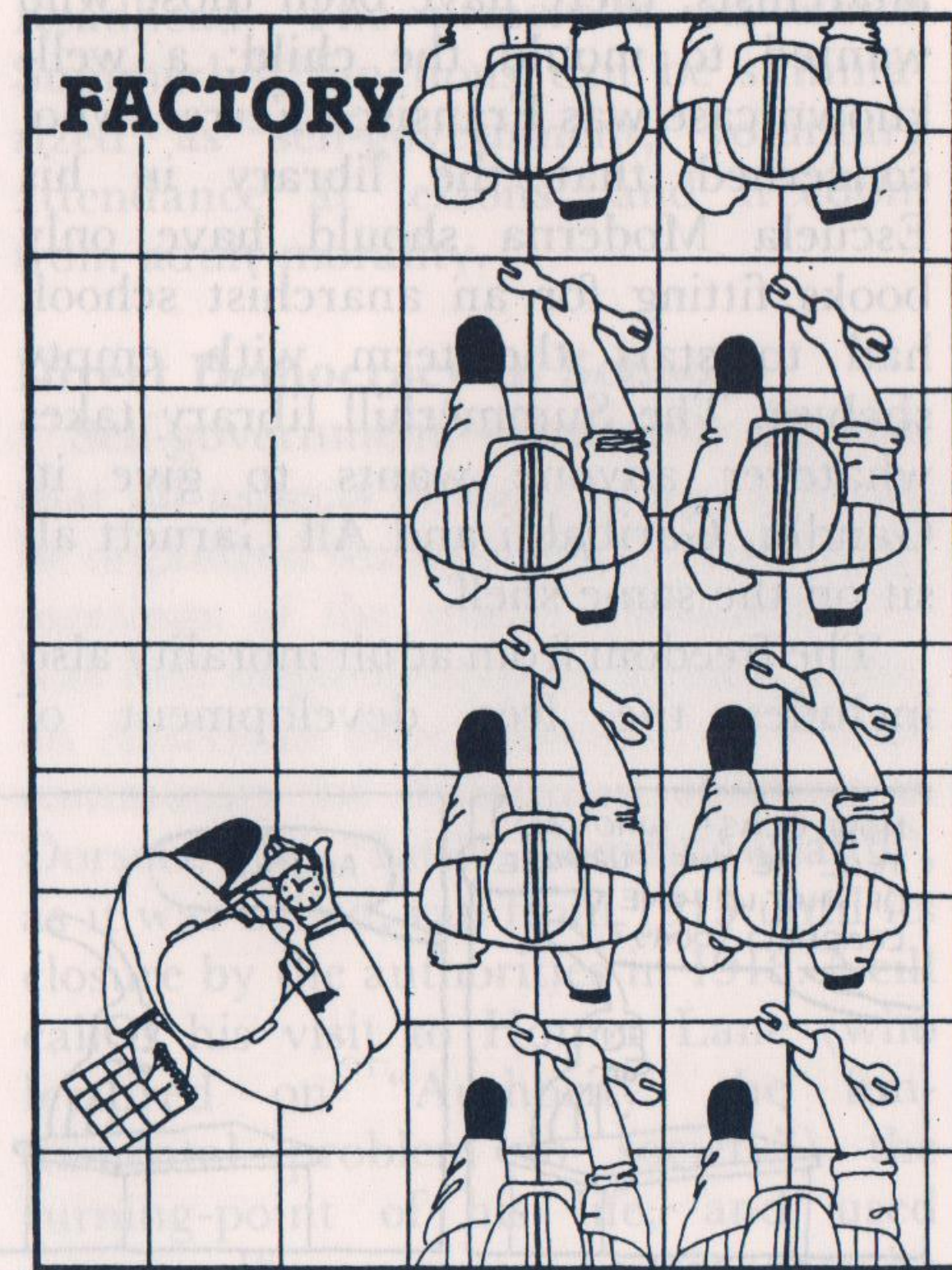
standard criticisms (usually from the State-school-loving Left) is that, whilst condemning capitalism in his books, Neill proceeded to set up Summerhill as a fee-paying private school. This criticism is one that chooses to ignore the practical difficulties involved in financing a school. The economic recession and the concentration of industry have closed the outlet that the Little Commonwealth found — supporting the school by market gardening. The obvious source of finance is State subsidy; however, this means accepting State control — to be precise, compulsory lessons and “moral standards”. This is a compromise that Summerhill has never wanted to make, and, therefore, it receives no State subsidy in any form, being “registered” but not “recognized” by the Department of Education. The only other alternative in the absence of generous gifts with no strings attached is to charge fees. It is regrettable, but at least in this way the school can guarantee its independence from external control. It should be added, though, in Summerhill's defence that at £2,000 a year, Summerhill is the cheapest boarding school in the country.

Anarchism with laws?

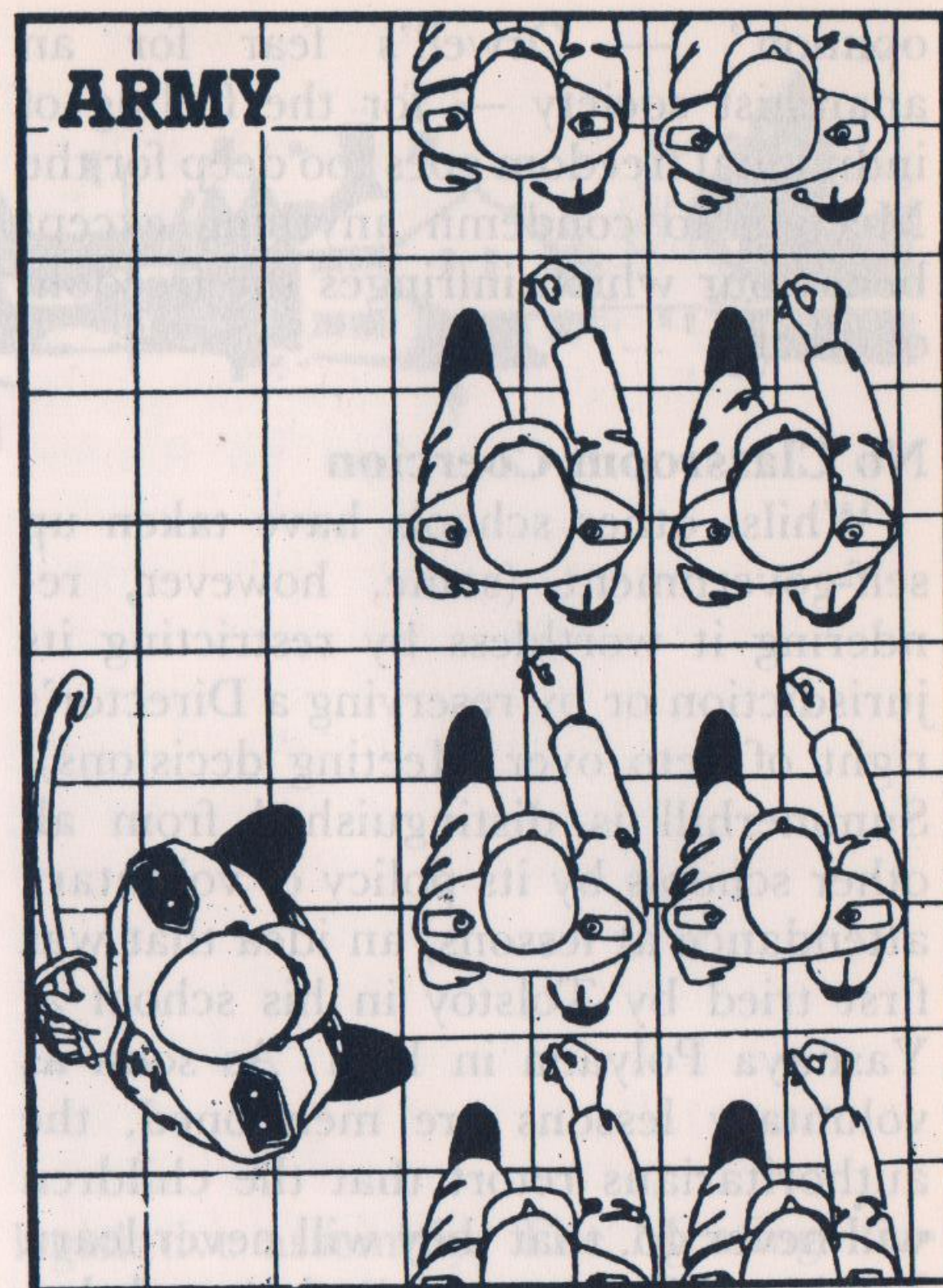
A second criticism — one that may have occurred to *Freedom* readers — is that Summerhill cannot be called truly revolutionary because it still has laws. However, to reject Summerhill on these grounds is to overlook the tremendous step forward it has made in thoroughly abolishing adult authority. It is, after all, a community in which the children heavily outnumber the adults, which is governed by participation of all without representatives or people entrusted with power. It is unfortunate that

tradition plays a large part in the school's vocabulary — “guidelines” or some such would be more apt than “laws”. It is true that Authority is not abolished in Summerhill — it is devolved down to its lowest level, that where it is shared equally by all, regardless of age or occupation. In my experience in Summerhill, it is not possible for a school with young children to go further towards the abolition of Authority than the direct democracy we have here.

Homer Lane divided the development from child to adult into three stages: the age of imagination, the age of self-assertion and the age of loyalty. Before this last stage, generally starting around the age of 13/14, children are NOT mature enough to restrain their behaviour through consideration for others without some sort of guideline from their equals. No amount of



wishing can change the hard fact that social responsibility is something that you grow into; some — the most repressed — never acquire it. Much as I would like to believe that law-free community life with young children is possible, I must accept what I have witnessed: every time all the laws are dropped (and this happens whenever the laws get too complex, on average every eighteen months), chaos, NOT order without law ensues. My faith that psychologically mature people can live together in harmony in the absence of government of any kind remains unshaken; it has been encouraged by seeing how the elder kids do not need the laws to restrain them, relying on consideration and commonsense instead. But children under the age of social responsibility simply do not realize that, though it is no longer banned, an action may still be anti-



social and violate the freedom of others. The elder kids can cope with anarchy and make it work; the younger children cannot — indeed, they feel insecure without guidelines of some sort.

Neill himself was aware of an apparent conflict between anarchism and Summerhill with its laws. As he wrote in his autobiography: “I have often been called an anarchist running an anarchist school. This puzzles me because a school with self-government, making its own laws, does not fit into the definition of anarchism. Chambers' Dictionary defines it as ‘the want of government in a state’. So what am I?” Whilst a greater understanding of anarchism may have answered Neill's question for him, Neill was certainly aware of anarchist support for his theories, and subscribed to *Freedom* (“because it is always on my side and that of Reich”), as well as contributing several articles to *Anarchy*.

This contact seems to have helped him to understand the links between anarchism and Summerhill; in a letter written eight months before his death, Neill declared: “Anarchy. You know I never knew what the damned word meant. If it means literally without law, Summerhill is miles from that with its self-government. Maybe significant that Paul Goodman was one of the severest critics of my system. On the other hand, if anarchy means being anti ‘laws-made-by-authorities’, I am an anarchist...”

Beyond Summerhill

Whilst criticizing Summerhill because of its laws ignores the practicalities of running a school with children from the age of six upwards, there is one valid criticism of Summerhill from an anarchist point of view. Oddly enough, it concerns the position not of the children, but of the staff. Anarchism has always insisted that those most directly concerned with an enterprise

should be those who take the decisions yet here, decisions that touch on the administration of the school have been made without participation from the staff. This is changing on an informal level, however, although it will not extend to the staff co-operative that would be consistent with the self-government for the children. This is not surprising — the school is fundamentally a family concern, and the idea of a staff co-operative has an unfortunate past: in the 1930's, an attempt by some staff — Communist Party members — to introduce staff self-government had to be overruled by Neill, who feared the politicization of the school. However, there are some schools, which, based on Summerhill but not having its history and circumstances, have abolished the post of Director and run the school through a staff/parent co-operative: I am thinking particularly of the White Lion St and Kirkdale Free Schools, day-schools for young children in London.

Apart from the introduction of a staff co-operative, Summerhill is the model for my dream of education in the future: a network of co-operatively-run, self-governed communities, open all year

Media BAN THAT FILM!

WHAT British politician said of which British film ‘that his advisers took the view that the film would be regarded as propaganda for Communism and workers' control in industry and it seemed doubtful whether it was expedient that the government should require an exhibitor to show it.’

The politician was Labour Minister for Labour, George Isaacs, and the film featured Hattie Jacques and Kenneth More, amongst others. Roger Manvell in his 1966 *New Cinema in Europe* reasonably described the film as a direct predecessor of the realistic films of the late 1950s. The film was ‘Chance of a Lifetime’, scripted by Bernard Miles and Walter ‘Love on the Dole’ Greenwood, and directed by Bernard Miles in 1950. The extraordinary story of the attempt to prevent what its authors called a comedy from being released came to light with the release of the 1951 Cabinet papers, and was written up by Peter Avis in *Film and Television Technician*, February 1981.

round, which would have the dual rôle of children's refuges/communities and education centres, and which could be financed by the local Federation of Workers' Co-operatives...

**David Stephens,
teacher, Summerhill.**

[Summerhill's address is Summerhill, Leiston, Suffolk.]

Further reading:

Summerhill, A S Neill, Pelican 1985.

Neill of Summerhill, Jonathan Croall, Ark/RKP 1985.

Talks to Parents and Teachers, Homer Lane, Allen and Unwin 1958.

Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth, E T Bazely (the LC's matron), Allen and Unwin 1928, reprinted for the Library Association 1965.

Anarchy No 39 “The legacy of Homer Lane”.

Tolstoy on education, Univ. Chicago Press, London 1972.

Primer of libertarian education, Joel Spring, Free Life NY/Black Rose Montreal 1977.

And an excellent book to give to people who do not realize how oppressed they are: *Listen, Little Man*, Wilhelm Reich, Penguin 1984.

Strange, then, that this autumn's TV documentary series ‘Now the War is Over’ in examining the Export or Die exhortations of the Labour Government (‘Britain Can Make It’, BBC 2, November 1st) should use excerpts from ‘Chance of a Lifetime’ to corroborate the governments' attitude to industry and work practices.

‘Chance of a Lifetime’ is set in a small factory and in the clips we see young Kenneth More, as works engineer, arguing for modernisation against the inbuilt conservatism of his workmate colleagues, to the extent, shown in another clip, that another employee feels that after years of service he must resign. Kenneth More gets his way, the factory tools up for their new product, a revolutionary new plough, and the closing image of the documentary is of an uncredited shot from ‘Chance of a Lifetime’ showing a lorry loaded up with crated ploughs for export leaving the factory gates being cheered by the workers.

What the documentary doesn't indicate about the film is that the workers are running the factory themselves, thanks to the owner in a fit of pique throwing down the ‘if you think you can run it better, have a go’ gauntlet, which to his surprise they take up.

No such luck that the Labour Government of the day would throw down a similar gauntlet. On the contrary, as a government and as an

employer, it didn't hesitate to use troops if the workers it nominally claimed to represent didn't see things their way and went on strike. Workers control was rightly understood by Labour ministers as a challenge to their legitimacy to govern, and this combined with their knowledge that some key unions in the crucially important power industry were controlled by the Communist Party, who in those post-war days did take their orders from Moscow, obviously caused some faint hearts in the Labour cabinet. Soviet subjugation of eastern Europe, the Berlin blockade of 1948 and the North Korean invasion of South Korea probably caused Isaacs to wish the film banned.

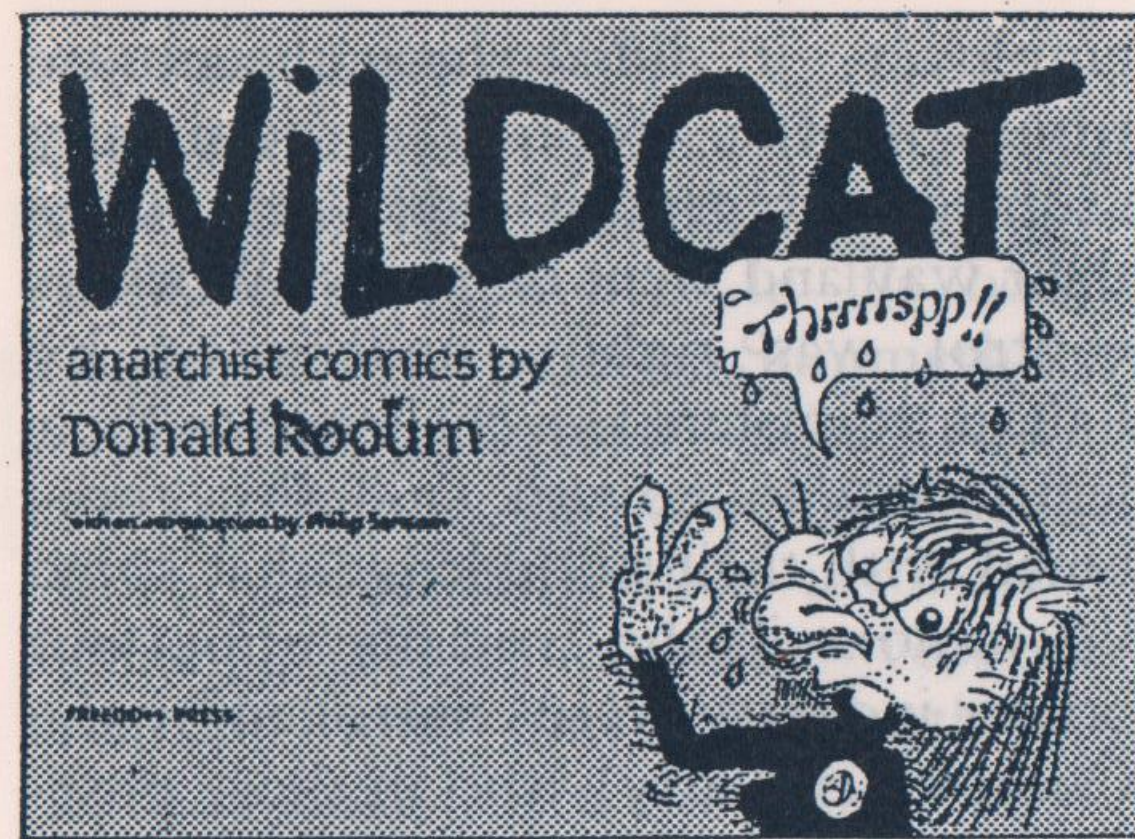
Not everyone in the Cabinet shared Isaacs view of the film; neither did those who theoretically would be most affected by workers control: the gaffers. Harold Wilson, as President of the Board of Trade, opposed Isaacs in Cabinet. The cabinet papers tell us that ‘... he did not share the view of the film taken by the officials of the Ministry of Labour; nor was that view endorsed by prominent persons connected with the employers side of industry who had seen the film.’ The employers attitude was probably due to the fact that towards the end of the film the workers are shown as not having quite enough entrepreneurial skills and the chastened boss returns to help them out, everybody accepting that they need each other.

Wilson won the day, and in his role as president of the Board of Trade, directed that the film be given national exhibition. Interesting that Wilson presumably arranged a special screening of the film for ‘prominent’ employers, to combat ‘socialist’ Isaacs objections! Needless to say, the revolution didn't break out.

Although the moral of the film makes it sound like an Alliance recruiting film, there are many things of value in it. For instance, banks refuse to fund the employee precisely because they are a workers co-operative, and one of the films strengths is the unpatronising way it portrays workers and the way it demonstrates that they can, in fact, organise without management.

‘Chance of a Lifetime’ surfaces on afternoon telly every two years or so — the last time was this autumn on Channel 4, and is well worth watching out for. With the exception of the wartime Powell and Pressburger ‘Life and Times of Colonel Blimp’ it is probably the only feature length film that a British government considered banning on political grounds.

Pete Grafton



In Praise of the Wildcat

FREEDOM has already announced and reviewed Donald Rooum's *Wildcat Anarchist Comics*, and it is stated that: 'serious argument however is more or less absent since our artist believes that "a cartoon is no place for intellectual respectability"'. But can we not have serious argument, devastatingly presented, without 'intellectual respectability'? The medium through which the message is conveyed is not intellectual, but the message is all the more powerful by being delivered as a blow in the belly. The serious argument is being delivered in the guise of knockabout farce.

The most obvious thing about the Wildcat is that it is a tom cat. Only the male of the species has those long canine teeth prominent at the front of the mouth. Female cats do not have this feature, nor do males castrated in kittenhood. Yet in the text of Rooum's excellent book, the Wildcat is referred to as 'she'. But even if you were to castrate him now (the Wildcat I mean, not Rooum) those prominent fangs would remain. Perhaps there lies a subtle message here. Ibsen presented us with the New Woman; perhaps Rooum is presenting us with the New Pussy, for now females are being exhorted to *show their teeth*, and men in pursuit of pussy are encountering those teeth.

But I come to praise the Wildcat, not to niggle at it. The generation of successful cartoons is a most difficult art, and Donald Rooum displays a rare talent. How his work will stand in the history of satirical cartoons alongside that of Rowlandson, Gillray, Low and others, cannot be assessed in this present age, but I suggest that it is outstanding and that Freedom Press enjoy a rare privilege in being allowed to publish it. His cartoons are deceptively simple and, to say the least, disturbing. True satire makes us both laugh and weep, and carry away a lingering sense of unease at the purity of our own motives and that of the

causes we espouse. Superficially these cartoons poke fun at all the usual banal targets, but here is a deeper satire of anarchists and the anarchist movement. The Wildcat is anti-authoritarian, yet put in certain situations it becomes a nasty little tyrant — just like you and me. These cartoons could only have been devised by someone who has really been through the mill of the anarchist movement; known all its splendours and miseries, its petty squabbles, its mis-directed enthusiasms, its ennobling moments. None of the 'political' movements — Trots, Commies, etc — could have produced such cartoons, for such movements are designed to preserve the illusions they foster and they attack only the targets outside themselves. Anarchism is quite different. Wildcat says, having thrown a bomb, 'Who said anything about anybody listening? All I said was I would attract attention'. When the pig mob are pushing the truck one way and the anarchist mob pushing in the other, on the top is a little girl who says 'Why not stop pushing?'. The Free Range Egghead is a marvellous character: he and the Wildcat have maintained the anarchist movement ever since it has been in existence, and I am sure that they were prominent in the Diggers movement and among the Levellers. Of course the Pig who rides upon a Sheep will always be with us, and sometimes we wish that the Sheep would run faster when our own flats are being burgled and vandalised, don't we? These two animals are common to all lands in that relationship, yet with Rooum's animals there is evidently quite a cosy, British relationship.

I urge you to buy this book, but do not imagine that it will give you a nice, smug glow to see all your favourite Aunt Sallies mocked at. A hearty laugh at the first reading, but at the second or perhaps the third, you will appreciate that there is more being mocked than perhaps you bargained for. I can think of several stock characters in the anarchist movement (I say stock character for they will always be with us) who will find this all too satirical book hardly to their taste. It will certainly be read in Britain and abroad far more widely than in the tiny anarchist movement, and will attain an international reputation.

Tony Gibson

'Fit to Lead'

THIS was the title of a television programme (Channel 4, October 16th). It is also the title of a book by Hugh L'Etang (Heineman), who appeared in the programme. The subject is the health, both physical and mental, of leaders.

The television programme entertainingly ran through a catalogue of leaders who might be thought to have been less fit. For example, Hitler, Eden, Kennedy and Andropov all had serious complaints and were affected by their medication. Hitler was so blasted on stimulants that his judgement may have been affected, even in his own terms. Eden was described as 'gibbering'. Their decisions affected, and killed, people.

A story was presented about an admiral whose brain had shrivelled 'with age or alcohol'. This was discovered accidentally — he had volunteered to demonstrate a new scanner. No-one had noticed, or at least commented, on any deterioration. Many leaders have shown signs of senile slowness. Churchill was notorious for it. Reagan is a contemporary example.

The book is less accessible. The treatment hops about, dragging in assorted examples with no clear pattern or sequence. It's worth persevering for the information.

There can be little doubt that some leaders are medically unfit. They tend to be getting on in years by the time they gain positions of power and, in the way of things, older people tend to be more infirm. The liberal dilemma is in identifying cases, sometimes through official smokescreens, and deciding when enough is enough.

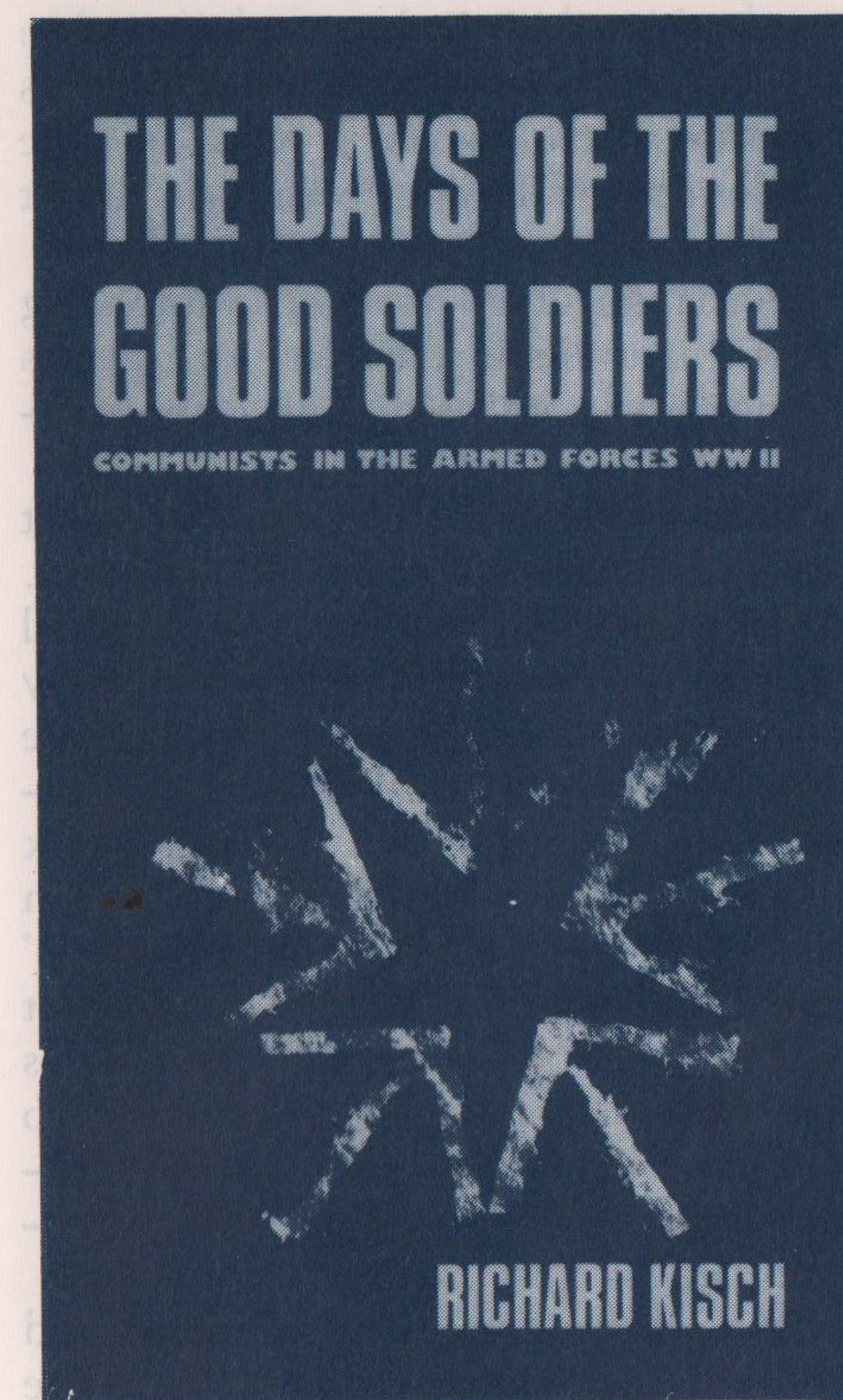
The anarchist position is simpler. Anyone who wants this power is unfit by definition. Nobody is good enough to be another's master.

DP

The Days of Good Soldiers by Robert Kisch (Journeyman paperback, £5.95)

THIS survey of 'Communists in the Armed Forces WWII' gives anecdotal accounts of various episodes in the British armed forces during the Second World War in which known Communists took an active part. The author, who served in the International Brigade in Spain and then in the British army, was a Communist and a journalist, and his book reflects both his persuasion and his profession, being a completely ingenuous or disingenuous report of what his comrades were up to in such places as Egypt and Greece, India or Malaya.

Most attention is given to events in Egypt, and in this context there is one particular passage which will interest readers of *Freedom*, especially those who have read Albert Meltzer's personal account of these events in *Black Flag Quarterly* (VII: 7, Autumn 1984):



In Egypt two individuals were notably articulating 'bolshy' attitudes . . . Albert Meltzer, another member of the 'awkward squad', was also involved in such discussions. He was already known as an anarchist writer. Before the war he had been sent to jail for alleged involvement with a then IRA bombing offensive. He had been released on condition that he joined up, and, cynically, was amused to find himself in comparative safety behind the lines as a private in the Pioneer Corps. He mused that it was surprising he had not been allocated to a front-line fighting position for 'natural' wastage! Somehow he found himself in Cairo in 1945 and had gravitated, politically, to the convenient cover of 'Buck' Taylor's Common Wealth lot. Meltzer considered the time had come to reactivate the 'Soldiers Parliament'. There was also the

Lyrics by Stu



possibility of emulating the 'Soldiers Committees' set up by anarchists in Catalonia in the early stage of Spanish Republican resistance to the 'Generals' revolt led by Francisco Franco in 1936.

Unfortunately Kisch adds little to Meltzer's account, and in general his book is a very unsatisfactory history of a very interesting subject.

MH

God and the State by Michael Bakunin (Bash'em Books, Sheffield, 80p)

BAKUNIN'S best-known writing is a fragment from his major work, *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*, which was written in French during 1870-1872 under the shadow of the political triumph of the Imperial regimes of Russia and Prussia in international affairs and of the Marxists in the international labour movement, made especially dark by the defeat of France in 1870, of the Commune movement in 1871, and of the Bakuninists in 1872.

The first instalment was published in Geneva in 1871; the second instalment was left unfinished and survived as a series of unpublished manuscripts. This particular section, written in March-April 1871, was found after Bakunin's death in 1876 by his comrades Carlo Cafiero and Elisée Reclus, and was first published by them in Geneva in 1882 as a pamphlet called *Dieu et l'état*. Benjamin Tucker's English translation was published by him in Boston in 1883 as a pamphlet called *God and the State*; this was republished by Henry Seymour in Tunbridge Wells in 1883, and by Max Nettlau in London in 1894. A corrected version of the original was published

by James Guillaume in its proper context as part of the second instalment of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*, in the third volume of the French edition of Bakunin's collected works in 1908. A corrected English translation, edited by Max Nettlau, was published by the Freedom Press in 1910. Since then the essay has appeared in many versions in many languages, the most convenient modern one in English being the reprint of Emma Goldman's 1916 edition, with a new introduction by Paul Avrich, published by Dover Publications in 1970; the text of this, without the editorial material, has been reproduced as a cheap pamphlet by Bash'em Books in Sheffield.

Like so much of Bakunin's work, *God and the State* is stimulating, because all sorts of bright ideas are thrown out in all directions, but frustrating, because they are ever pulled together into a coherent argument. It is essentially an attack on all religious and political authority — not just on God and the State, but on all God-and-the-State, on religion as a justification for slavery. He saw the doctrine of the Fall and Redemption of Man as a political and social rather than a religious and moral myth, an attempt by those in power to devalue humanity in the name of divinity as an excuse to maintain their power. In place of Christianity, he proposed evolutionary materialism and what was later called scientific humanism. He wittily reversed Voltaire's aphorism, 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him', with his own famous aphorism, 'If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him'. Although nothing he said was original, he did say what needed to be said at the time, and it is still worth reading after more than a century.

NW

End of Porn?

IT'S about time we called an end to the debate on pornography, since the various positions seem clear enough and personally I'm quite happy to stand by what I've written so far, but could I just ask you to correct one line in my last letter (issue 11) which says 'the reason I like pornography is . . .', when it should have read 'the reason I don't like pornography is . . .'. Either your typesetter got overworked or the Freudian slip is not yet dead!!!

Andy

US and THEM

SCIENCE-BASED articles in *Freedom* help to show that anarchism is intellectually respectable. Articles which pretend to be scientific, but deal in dubious facts and unwarrantable assertions, tend to bring anarchism into intellectual disrepute. Rob's articles on evolution (September and November 1985) are difficult to assess.

The proposition that 'social solidarity . . . is biologically programmed into us' is consistent with the evidence, as Rob shows and as Kropotkin showed in *Mutual Aid*. 'Our model where solidarity is species-wide' may appear to contradict the evidence. Species-wide solidarity is an ideal shared by all anarchists (not to mention Buddhists, Christians and Marxists), but if it is attainable, it is so because human behaviour may be modified by reason and education. There is no evidence of an inborn impetus towards the ideal; the evidence is that our

instinct for mutual aid is limited by an instinct to divide the human species into 'us' and 'them'.

Of course Rob knows this. Presumably, when he writes of species-wide solidarity he has moved on from discussing the evidence to discussing the anarchist model of a free society; but this is not entirely clear from the article. Nor does he mention, in either article, the ample evidence that within-group solidarity is reinforced by between-group hostility. A stranger who bought *Freedom* at the CND rally might suppose that Rob's 'position grounded in the most recent factual work' is arrived at by wishing, and the evidence to support it selected later.

I respectfully suggest that when we present evidence in favour of anarchism we ought to emulate Kropotkin. That is to say, we should not simply ignore contrary evidence, we should clearly distinguish between scientific hypotheses and ethical ideals, and we should not exaggerate or oversimplify without saying so.

Donald Rooum

Berufsverbot

A BRIEF reply to 'Evolution in Debate' by Rob in *Freedom*, November 1985. As I can't have made it clear before I'll say again that I found both Rob's pieces interesting and agreed with much of it. I don't understand the references to 'popular works . . . from South Africa', 'Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy', or the Thesaurus — unless they were gratuitous put-downs. I know what *berufsverbot* means and I

sympathise with Rob — my intention was to point out that the situation was different here when I was on the academic treadmill. Perhaps it didn't need saying.

Perhaps also it's not worth quibbling over 'naturalistic fallacies' or species being 'advanced', although I do disagree with Rob there.

But there are real differences, it seems, in our assessments of evolution. I don't think the problem of individual and group selection is resolved by choosing a different descriptive framework ('statistical clusters of characteristics/individuals'). I don't think that kin-selection or reciprocal altruism in practice involve a 'balance-sheet' mentality. I would have thought that authority, obedience and hierarchies are more likely to be necessary to operate the kind of global, all-encompassing processes Rob envisages, in:

'Solidarity species-wide, expressed by the population as a whole, to the population as a whole . . . all individuals are responsible for the welfare of themselves and each other.'

That much responsibility? The individual acting self seems to have disappeared somewhere, submerged in the population, the species (and in the planetary eco-system too I daresay). The 'stable . . . ecologically compatible' society contains no conflict, no tension between individual activity and collective interest, no history. Evolution doesn't act on bodies, minds or behaviour except to promote symbiotic species-wide solidarity. Is this really

what evolution, or anarchy, are about? I don't know why not.

Tom Jennings
Newcastle upon Tyne

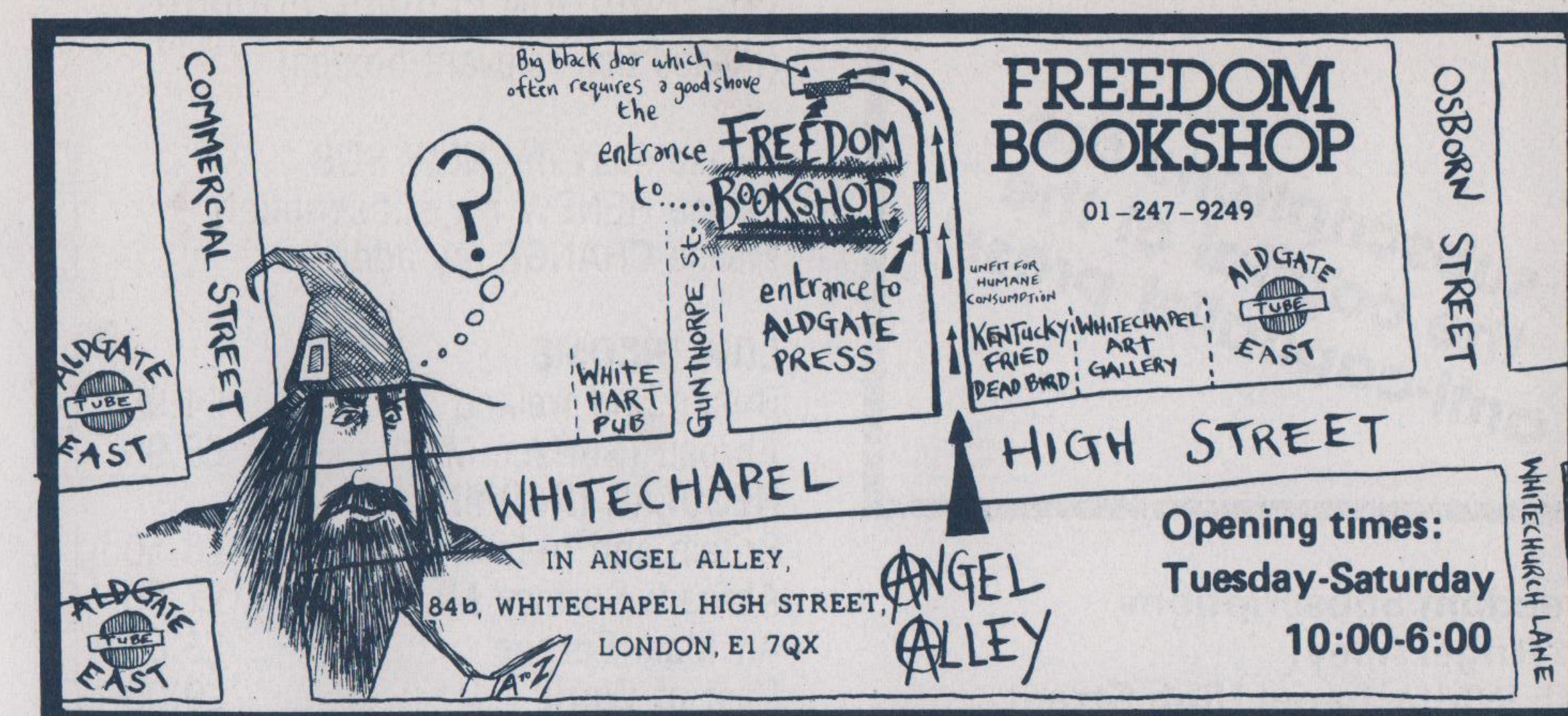
PS To Chris of Aberdeen (Letters, *Freedom* November): Kropotkin thought evolution had to be a basic part of anarchist theory. I agree with him, being simple and direct for the sake of it doesn't tend to get you anywhere with difficult and complex subjects. For dealing with truncheons read self-defence manuals. I don't think what you say is crap, I disagree with it (a lot) and sympathise with the sentiments (a bit).

Libertarian Education

Libertarian Education will be reappearing in bookshops early in 1986, after an absence of nearly four years. We have formed a new editorial collective which includes two members from the outgoing group, originally based in Leicester, plus newcomers from London and Bristol. Since April we've held monthly meetings, rotating between the three cities. We've produced a glossy leaflet announcing the return of *Lib Ed* and publication is set for January.

The magazine started nearly twenty years ago as the newsletter of the Libertarian Teachers' Association. The first 'issue' was no more than a contact list of addresses. Since then it has become a fully fledged journal, first called *Libertarian Teacher* and then later *Libertarian Education* as its content broadened. *Lib Ed* was an attempt to avoid the clumsy full title, and the magazine was subtitled 'for the liberation of learning' to try to sum up its editorial position in as few words as possible! Despite the fact that we're not entirely satisfied with it, we've kept the title as no-one has come up with anything better!

Lib Ed will focus discussion on practical alternative to the authoritarian education system, looking mainly at state schools, colleges and universities but also at the 'alternatives' that have and do exist. The first issue will examine the recent teachers' pay dispute, the role of the MSC in schools and the development of the new 16+ exams. It will discuss the rise of racism in schools and methods of combatting the racists, the arguments for and against co-education from a feminist perspective and, hopefully, give practical help to teachers who wish to work in a non-authoritarian manner. A libertarian look at the education of



profoundly handicapped children is also featured in January's edition, together with reviews, letters and punchy cartoons.

This has hopefully given you an idea of the new magazine, fuller details can be found in our leaflet which is available from us at: Libertarian Education, The Cottage, The Green, Leire, Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

Mia's Bookshop Notes:

All the titles listed on the Bookshop page are currently available from Freedom Press Bookshop. If ordering by post within Great Britain please add 10% for p&p, and if ordering outside Britain please add 20%. Cheques made out to Freedom Press.

Due to technical problems beyond my reach, there hasn't been a bookshop page since the August issue. Thus, lacking space, the new books will not be reviewed.

Those of you who didn't come to the bookfair in London in November missed out on one of the few big anarchist socials around. I reckon there were more than 1,000 people there during the course of the day. The absolute best seller was Donald Rooum's *Wildcat Comix*. There were around 30 stalls and it felt good to see that many local publishers are being so active in publishing.

God and the State

Michael Bakunin
Bash'em Books, 80p, 87pp

Offensive Literature

Decensorship in Britain 1960-1982

John Sutherland

Junction Books, £3.50, 207pp

Class War Calendar

anon, £1.20, 14pp

(the proceeds go to their bust fund)

Report on the Danish Mass Strike of March and April 1985

BM Blob, 15p, 5pp

Revolutionary Self Theory

A beginners manual.

Spectacular Times, £1.00, 24pp

What We Have Seen and Heard

The effects of contra attacks against Nicaragua.

Witness for Peace, 40p, 16pp

The Anarchist Introduction to the Russian Revolution

Alexander Berkman

Virus, 60p, 43pp

Towards a Fresh Revolution

Friends of Durutti Group

Barcelona, 1938

Drowned rat Publ., 80p, 16pp

An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto

Joseph Lane

Drowned Rat publ., 80p, 16pp

And Yet It Moves

The realisation and suppression of science and technology.

Boy Igor

Zamisdar Press, £3.00, 121pp

Strange Victories

The anti-nuclear movement in the US and Europe.

Midnight Notes

Elephant Editions, £1.95, 88pp

Anarchism

Everything you wanted to know . . .

Drowned Rat Collective

50p, 40pp

The Hackers' Handbook

Hugo Cornwall

Century Communications, £4.95, 148pp

Karl Marx and the Anarchists

Paul Thomas

RKP, £8.95, 406pp

The Conquest of Bread

Peter Kropotkin

Elephant Editions, £3.60, 213pp

The Mass Psychology of Fascism

Wilhelm Reich

Pelican, £3.95, 426pp

The Hustler

J.H. Mackay

Alyson Publ., £4.95, 299pp

Memoirs of a Revolutionary

Victor Serge

Writers & Readers, £6.95, 403pp

New magazines:

Smile 30p

Traces 40p

Black Chip no 4 out now! 60p

New issue of *Fifth Estate* (Summer '85) 60p

I have also gotten hold of a huge two-sided fold-out poster, produced by the GLC, 'Policing London'. It's covered with lost of useful pictures and interesting texts, although undoubtedly council-ish. Send an sae (12p).

Mia

