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MEETINGS
The Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, London WC1. Fridays 8:15pm.

NEWS ITEM
We are sorry to report that Nicolas Walter is still in hospital. His intestine is still misbehaving and he has had to have a further operation. He hopes to be out in about three weeks and asks us to remind you about:

ANARCHISM: THEORY AND PRACTISE — PAST AND PRESENT. Third series of six weekly talks by Nicolas Walter, followed by discussions, begins in Central London on Tuesday evening, 23rd April 1985. Information from the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AQ.

anarchist monthly

FREEDOM

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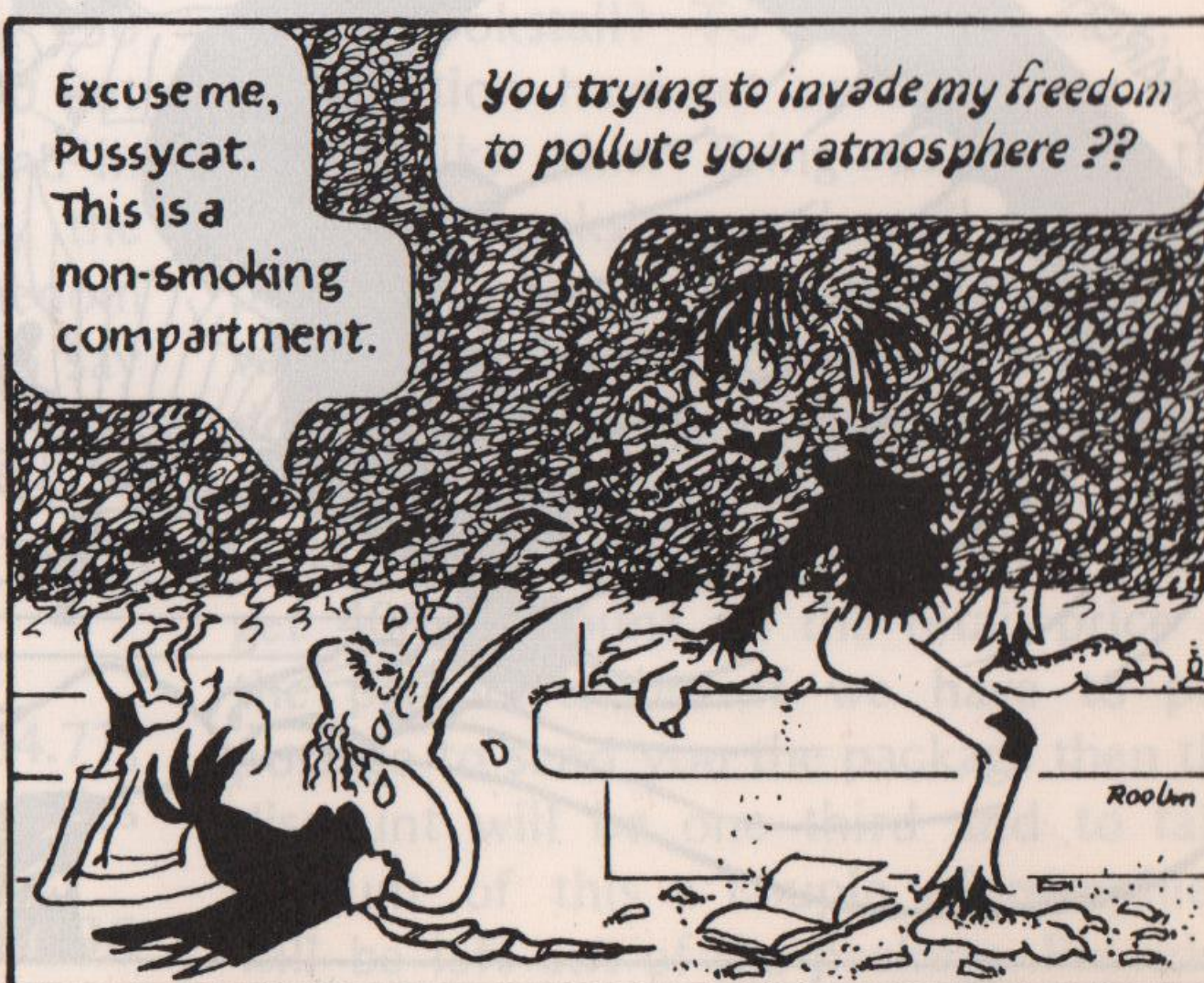


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LETTERS

Dear Freedom,

Thank you very much for the review in your January edition. I was very impressed by the issue including the support you have in your stance vis-a-vis *Black Flag* and their 'anarchism'. The letters were sound and clear, though how much a matter of editorial policy to produce them all together is not for me to say. At the same time, may I say that, despite the failings of that particular group, we still feel that there's a definite place for syndicalism within the anarchist movement, though what that position is is not made clear, or at least comprehensible, by many of the existing 'anarchist'/'anarcho-syndicalist'/'syndicalist' journals. To my mind, they seem to emphasise syndicalism to the detriment of other aspects of what I would consider to be anarchism (a rejection of all authority) or else pay more lip service to syndicalism, racism, feminism, etc, purely to concentrate on resistance to the State via pacifism, or reviews of the great intellectuals of the anarchist tradition. It seems that if we want to grasp an iota of feminist/anti-racist theory, we must resort to journals dealing specifically with those areas. How should we rectify that?

John (TV-AM)
 Manchester

Dear Freedom,

In Denmark we don't understand what's going on in England concerning the anarchist scene (*Black Flag vs Freedom*). You're producing an ocean of anarchist papers, putting out books, have an increasing interest from the public, etc. However, most of your energy is directed into internal strives. Some are pacifist, some are militant, but both sides define themselves as anarchists! Why not accept this fact and either work together as anarchists or not, but if none of these possibilities are for real, you could at least stop attacking each other . . . It is still the State we hate and not each other! That doesn't mean that you can't criticise each other — only, do it in a constructive way. (Each time you print your paper, filled with words, then I think about the number of trees which have been used and wonder if your words

are that much worth). [Our paper is a modern chemical goo — no trees in it. Eds.]

I'm not going to take part in the Larkin/DAM strife. It may be important to people directly involved, but to me its a detail which ought to be forgotten and of course cleared up in order to continue the reconstruction of the anarchist movement. People who in some way sympathise with Larkin because of the 'evil DAM-Stalinism' should, however, know what kind of shit he is defending.

The 'new' CNT is taking part in the 'worker's committees', which have been made to pacify the workers. This invention has been made by the 'socialist' government. Furthermore, why don't the 'new' CNT take another name? They are, after all, *not* the CNT (which they of course openly admit) and they do not make anarchist union-politics. The result is confusion among the workers and people in general. Again, we must ask why they don't change their name? I don't think one should look for an ideological answer to that question. The real motive is the 25-30 million pesetas, which the government has promised the 'real' CNT in Civil War compensation . . . and *who* is the real CNT? I have no doubt!

Gaspar
 Copenhagen, Denmark

Beyond the Miners' Strike

The miners' strike is coming sadly to a close. During this strike the anarchist movement, especially in Scotland and Northumberland, has won the trust and respect of many strikers. On the other hand, many anarchists have used the strike to step up their activities.

It is to be hoped that at the end of the strike the momentum of the anarchists will not falter and that groups are already stocking up on propaganda from Cienfuegos, DAM, Freedom, Solidarity and others to take the struggle further, into Trades Councils, Working Men's Clubs, Miners' Welfare Centres and so forth.

Let us use the goodwill created between anarchists and strikers to spread our message. Remember, if the miners can't get rid of the government then only organised class consciousness can!

Rob
 W Germany

► Please start/renew my subscription to FREEDOM

Dear Friends,

This week two comrades were arrested for distributing a free pamphlet called *Fuck School*. Though I don't as yet have all the details, the story goes something like this:

Glenn was out distributing *Fuck School* at a school in Shipley, which is about eight miles from Keighley in West Yorkshire. He was arrested and the pigs took him to Shipley nick. CID then went round to Simon Saxton's house and arrested him (they were living in the same house). Simon and Glenn then spent the night in the pig-sty.

Two warrants were obtained to seize material from Simon's house (of which there was a lot) and his address book.

They were both photographed and fingerprinted. One of the filth commented 'You're fucked' after they had been extensively 'questioned'.

The case comes up on 23rd March so please if you can offer any help to these comrades from letters of support to cash for fines, costs, etc. Also if anyone can offer cheap/free printing for leaflets etc, this would be gratefully received.

More info should be available soon, it would be helpful if you sent an SAE. I don't know what the charges are as yet (it depends on what they found at the house and what they can string around them) but should know soon.

Mark Earnshaw
 c/o PO Box 7, The Other Branch,
 12 Gloucester Street, Leamington,
 Warks.

A Crock of shit at the end of the rainbow

Dear Freedom,

Pacifism and non-violence definately does have its place in the arena of direct action, for the residents of 'Rainbow Fields', Molesworth, has made the British government show its ugly face to the public — except to some of its stupid and willing subjects. The Nazi-style eviction (for there can be no other way to describe it) of the pacifists at Rainbow Fields demands that those of us who are not pacifists show our disgust and revulsion of that manoeuvre by respecting the non-violent stance and joining the CND mass rally at Easter to show the nation, if nothing else, that many, many people do

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not want nuclear weapons, especially to defend a government and nation that would allow some of its people to be treated worse than dogs (animal liberationists take note).

Many of us have scoffed at the impotence of pacifists, but what have we done that's any more potent to rid the world of doomsday weapons? Class warriors live in their little ghettos, insulting the Queen, trashing butchers' shops and sex shops and taking the piss out of aged hippies who have, at least, remained consistent.

A rally is a spectacle and mostly predictable, as are non-violent occupations and sit-ins, but somebody's changed the rules of the game and the lines of the script, ie, the Tory government, which has removed the right of dissent making it almost impossible to be civilly disobedient en masse.

That good landlady of the pub at Molesworth which has the sign 'No Peace People Welcome', deserves to have no peace for the rest of her duration as landlady, with mass rallies and action so frequent that she will rue the day she scribbled her anti-social sign. Police should be getting all the overtime they ever wanted and more.

Anarchists, socialists, feminists (of both sexes), miners and all radicals should be encouraged to descend on Molesworth at Easter so the authorities can drop a bomb on us and get us all in one go, for what's the point of living if we have to keep our mouths shut? So goodies, get your asses down to Molesworth, but take care of the other goodies, for goodness sake!

PS I don't think there's any hyperbole this time . . . is there?

Zeno Evil

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Angel Alley Group

We have now restored the old tradition of informal meetings EVERY THURSDAY at 7:00pm here in Angel Alley, 84b . . . alternating helping A Distribution, the Bookshop and Freedom one week with friendly chats the next. It is from the regular Alley Angels, as we call them, that people are invited to join the Freedom editorial collective, if they so wish.

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Dear Freedom,

A K Brown has a negative approach in blaming the present crisis in the working class movement on one official. Of course we know that the trade union bureaucracy is a parasitic caste, wedged between the working class majority and the bosses, afraid of the rank-and-file action, and jealously guarding its own interests. It is by nature conservative, ready for compromise, and often counter-revolutionary.

Scargill is not the only leader of the NUM. McGahey and Heathfield are Communist Party members and McGahey, consistent with his Eurocommunist approach, began to lose his bottle a long time ago. Many local leaders, as in North Wales, called for a return to work, and let's not forget the despicable role of the Notts leadership and much of the Notts rank-and-file.

There is much to criticise in Scargill's approach, but he is still respected among many miners for his willingness to fight. To go along to picket lines and say that Scargill is to blame for everything is counter-productive. Similarly, to bring up the (debatable) question of the ballot at this advanced stage of the strike plays into the hands of the bosses and the opponents of the miners. Such an approach by the Trotskyist dinosaur, the Revolutionary Communist Party, blew their credibility completely away among the miners.

No, what we have to do is to take a more profound look at what may lead to the defeat of the strike (I'm not saying the strike is lost by any means, it's still 50-50 whether they win or lose. No one can foresee, and we should stay away from doom and gloom, and *do our utmost* to support the strike).

What we see is the profound and serious weaknesses of the political currents dominant in the British working class movement — social democracy (Labour Party), Stalinism and the 'yellow' unionism of Chapple and co, (allied to the SDP). This is what we have to explain, and from there, whether victory of defeat comes, argue for a new class movement breaking with reformism. This will be a very long and difficult process, and I hope that all serious libertarians, DAM or Freedom, will take their part in helping this come about.

While I'm putting pen to paper, I thought I'd say something about the debate between Eddie May and D Dane. I call myself a Libertarian Communist, but feel more in common with Eddie than with D. Libertarian Communism as a current has always had a view that society is class based. To cite the activities of squatters etc, as being outside the class struggle, is a false argument. The housing crisis against which squatters act (and tenants) is caused by capitalism, and is a class issue.

Racism and sexism have dynamics of their own, but these help prop up capitalism, and the struggle against one must logically extend to the struggle against all three. So, for example, no real tangible gains for women's liberation can come without a fight against capitalism.

The reverse is just as true. Our work in the anti-war movements, anti-racist, anti-sexist, ecological groups, etc, should involve a class struggle/libertarian approach. Too often the existence of these groups is cited by liberal, humanist elements among libertarians to break completely with working class libertarianism.

Nick Heath

ANARCHIST NEWS

MIDLANDS ANARCHIST GET-TOGETHER

The weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of February 1985 saw about 60 anarchists gathered together at the Queen's Walk Community Centre in Nottingham. The meeting was organised by Notts Anarchists for the purpose of bringing Midlands Anarchists together, though they did better than that, attracting people from as far away as Scotland.

The weekend was informal, and a rough agenda was decided upon by all those present, ensuring that anyone who came with a specific subject they wished to discuss were able to do so. Of course, not everyone wanted to talk about the same thing, so people broke up into smaller workshops discussing sexism, sexuality, violence, NVDA, DAM, anarcho-syndicalism, class, Ireland, animal rights, green anarchy, etc etc. . . . This format was maintained throughout the weekend.

The opportunity for socialising and relaxing came in the form of a social on Saturday night, consequently several anarks turned up the worse for wear on Sunday morning!

The overall impression was of a positive, productive and fun weekend. Well done Nottingham Anarchists. Look forward to seeing you all again at the next one!

Nick

CANADIAN TRIALS

From the Toronto anarchist community comes the news that Ken Deyarmond has been found guilty of assaulting police during a demonstration against Margaret Thatcher in September 1983, and sentenced to six months in jail.

Ken claims to have been pushed forward in the general commotion, and

activists see his conviction as a potential threat to anyone participating at a demonstration who becomes involved in a disturbance, no matter who creates the disturbance.

Money is needed for Ken's appeal. The community supporting Ken has spent several thousand dollars on legal fees arising out of the raid on Bulldozer in June '83 and the charge of procuring an abortion against Colleen Crosbie, which was recently dropped.

Brent Taylor, one of the Vancouver Five, will be coming to court early this year on charges of participating in the Litton bombing. Money is needed to do support work around this trial.

Donations for the Ken Deyarmond Defense Fund, the Colleen Crosbie Defense Committee, and the Vancouver Five Support Group, can be sent to **POB 6326, Stn A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P7**. Please specify where you want your money put.

CC

PURE MURDER

HEROIN: THE NATURE OF THE CATASTROPHE

If those who use drugs do so voluntarily, should they not be free to make this choice? Is there, then, a problem with heroin? I believe that there is: that anarchists should be concerned about the current epidemic of heroin addiction and that we should take any opportunities to fight it.

Heroin is extremely hazardous to the user. For once, the blanket anti-street-drug propaganda is accurate. But this in itself is not sufficient reason for opposing it if we believe that individuals should be free to destroy themselves if that is their desire.

We can regret that they should wish to do so and look at the pressures that drive so many people to that point: the desolation of our city slums; the hopelessness of the unemployed who are conditioned to believe that their role is that of factory fodder and who are lost without their exploiters; the despair that comes with the recognition that we are speeding seemingly uncontrollably towards destruction of the present world ecology; the isolation of individuals in a society that has lost sight of human needs. We can point accusing fingers at an uncaring State and proclaim that heroin would not be wanted in our version of Utopia. But we cannot oppose heroin use *per se* on that basis, any more than we could call for a ban on other 'recreational' drugs, legal and illegal.

My opposition is based on the psychopharmacological nature of the drug. An opiate, heroin shuts down experience and perception, leaving a comfortable blank, free from pain and free from feeling. It is a drug that offers ease when circumstances should stimulate reaction. It allows users not to care when they should care.

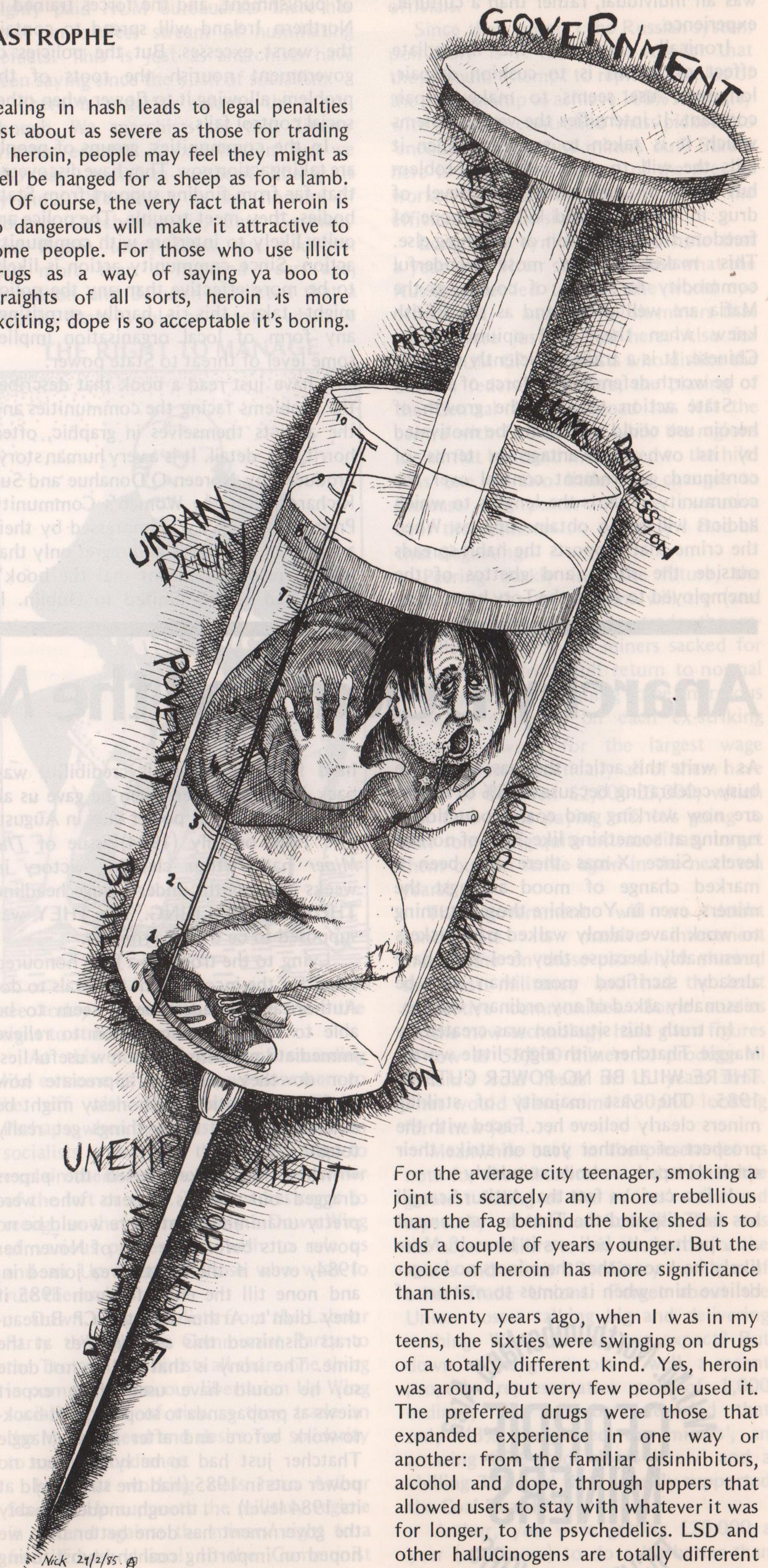
How can we hope for any sort of revolution when the oppressed drug users themselves cannot care?

Heroin has clear advantages to the State under the sort of circumstances that pertain today. It insulates against riots. It must be a boon to our government. Without heroin, Liverpool could explode again. Interesting, isn't it, that the massive expansion in heroin use followed so quickly after the rioting of 1982?

There is no doubt that the price of heroin had plummeted and that it is more easily available than ever before. Probable contributing factors include the wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and the much greater profits that can be made from heroin than less hazardous drugs like cannabis. The even-handedness of the law could also contribute to it: when

dealing in hash leads to legal penalties just about as severe as those for trading in heroin, people may feel they might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.

Of course, the very fact that heroin is so dangerous will make it attractive to some people. For those who use illicit drugs as a way of saying ya boo to straights of all sorts, heroin is more exciting; dope is so acceptable it's boring.



For the average city teenager, smoking a joint is scarcely any more rebellious than the fag behind the bike shed is to kids a couple of years younger. But the choice of heroin has more significance than this.

Twenty years ago, when I was in my teens, the sixties were swinging on drugs of a totally different kind. Yes, heroin was around, but very few people used it. The preferred drugs were those that expanded experience in one way or another: from the familiar disinhibitors, alcohol and dope, through uppers that allowed users to stay with whatever it was for longer, to the psychedelics. LSD and other hallucinogens are totally different from heroin: they add to the intensity of feeling, they sharpen perception.

HYPER-ACTION

On December 20th in Edinburgh there was a 'Day of Action' on the theme of 'Peoples need not Bosses Greed'. Anarchist groups all over the country were contacted as well as miners' support groups and various other 'Edinburgh leftie', animal groups, etc. A lot of flyposting was done beforehand, maps and leaflets were sent to various groups, accomodation and food was provided, as was a sympathetic lawyer. The night before some people went out spray-painting and glueing locks in the city centre. The day started at 10:00am with people assembling at 9:00am. There were about 50 to start off with, but it ended up nearer 100 by the middle of the day.

The first action was at the Scottish Electricity Board, where a lot of people went inside with placards and leaflets and made a lot of noise and asked a lot of awkward questions, and the fire alarm was set off. The police arrived after a while and everybody dispersed to meet

up again at a big newsagents that sells porn books. At first the shop was leafleted, then a group went inside and grabbed piles of porn and threw them in to the street. Security guards grabbed somebody and beat them up. The police arrived and arrested five people, three of whom had only been leafleting. We thought at this point the police would have clicked on to what was happening as they took some leaflets, but they didn't.

Everyone regrouped again and we decided to change our plans. We met up at an NCB office but it was shut, so stink bombs were posted through the letterbox. The Inland Revenue, which is next door, had one of its very large and expensive plate glass windows bricked. The next action was at Skincraft. The windows were sprayed and the shop was stink-bombed, and a bag of animal guts were thrown over the door. Everyone quickly moved on to the Wimpy, stink-bombs and smoke-bombs were launched into the food preparation area, much to the dissatisfaction of the customers and staff. One of their large bins was also dragged into the street and set on fire.

The next action was a 'die-in' at a big shopping centre. It was organised by YCND, who aren't really too bad (in Edinburgh anyway). Everyone just lay about and chanted until the police arrived, and we then en masse made our way to another shopping centre and had a rampage through it, leading the police a merry dance. Then it was on to Jenners (the Edinburgh equivalent of Harrods) and a rampage through there.

That was really the last action, because

the police were keeping an eye on our contact point and a lot of people had drifted home. Eleven people had been arrested and the lawyer was contacted to act for them. Four were let out that night, the rest appeared in court the next morning with a lot of people there to support them. Four were fined £50 each, the others were given a trial date (another two have been given a £50 fine since then).

During the day lots of individual actions took place, stickers proclaiming goods were free were used in many shops, there was leafleting throughout the day and two clowns gave kids black flags and anarchist balloons! A wimmin's action took place that night at a porn cinema where cement was poured into the toilets and the place was painted.

On the whole, the day was a success, but we'd like to criticise groups who didn't turn up, because a lot of people wouldn't think twice about going to a London action, but obviously don't care about Scotland in general. Don't you think it's up to us all to support each other's actions (take a page from the miners' book), that way a lot more can be achieved. Scotland is not in the North Pole!!! So we hope to see you at further actions.

Any replies, criticisms, donations for fines, in fact anything at all (within reason) to:

**Little By Little
Box A
First of May Bookshop,
43 Candlemaker Row,
Edinburgh, Scotland.**



These were the drugs selected by a generation of optimists for whom despair was an individual, rather than a cultural, experience.

Ironically, although the immediate effect of heroin is to cushion despair, long-term use seems to make despair constant. It intensifies the very problems which it is taken to suppress. Then it kills the will to deal with any problem but that of maintaining the level of drug in the body and kills the hope of freedom from addiction or anything else. This makes it the most wonderful commodity for trade, of course; as the Mafia are well aware and as the British knew when they sold opium to the Chinese. It is a trade sufficiently valuable to be worth defending by force of arms.

State action to curb the growth of heroin use could eventually be motivated by its own disadvantage in terms of continued government control over the community. This is the lengths to which addicts will go to obtain supplies. When the crime that supports the habit spreads outside the slums and ghettos of the unemployed to touch the Tory heartlands,

there will be protest; though no doubt that will be answered with more promises of punishment, and the forces trained in Northern Ireland will spread to contain the worst excesses. But the policies of government nourish the roots of the problem, allowing it to flower when other social control fails.

In the communities, groups of people are taking action now. They have discovered that far from finding support from State bodies, they meet trouble. The police are quite likely to interfere with community action. Since community action is likely to be more effective than any the police might take, this is hardly surprising: any form of local organisation implies some level of threat to State power.

I have just read a book that describes the problems facing the communities and the addicts themselves in graphic, often horrifying, detail. It is a very human story, produced by Noreen O'Donahue and Sue Richardson at the Women's Community Press in Dublin. I was impressed by their analysis of the issues and regret only that lack of resources meant that the book's scope had to be limited to Dublin. It

isn't only about heroin: it also deals with related drugs which are often used as well as, or instead of, heroin. These are mainly prescription painkillers such as Palfium and Diconal. Their effects are basically the same, though they are not associated with the particular horrors that surround fixing. Quite rightly, the women relate the use of these products to the wholesale tranquillisation of the parent generation with prescribed pills, alcohol and cigarettes.

They point out that the answer to the drug problem "lies in changing our entire attitude to drugs — all drugs". And this means "People need to have a future they can believe in, and look forward to, and are prepared to fight for. If they can't have that, they will use any means possible to opt out of what seems to be mapped out for them". Need I say more?

Arabella Melville

Pure Murder . . . A Book About Drug Use edited by Noreen O'Donahue and Sue Richardson and published by Womens Community Press, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin, 1984, price £2.95.

Anarchy Defeat and the Miners

As I write this article the mass media are busy celebrating because 50.3% of miners are now working and coal production is running at something like 35% of normal levels. Since X-mas there has been a marked change of mood amongst the miners, even in Yorkshire those returning to work have calmly walked past pickets presumably because they feel they have already sacrificed more than can be reasonably asked of any ordinary worker.

In truth this situation was created by Maggie Thatcher with eight little words: THERE WILL BE NO POWER CUTS IN 1985. The vast majority of striking miners clearly believe her. Faced with the prospect of another year on strike their spirit slumped . . . understandably so.

It is a curious fact that Arthur Scargill has not disputed the Thatcher statement . . . perhaps he believes it himself. More likely he knows that the miners no longer believe him when it comes to matters of

hard fact. He blew his credibility way back in the summer when he gave us all that bullshit about power cuts in August. The June or July (1984) issue of *The Miner* had Arthur claiming victory in weeks not months under a huge headline **THEY'RE CRACKING**. The **THEY** was supposed to be the government.

Lying to the troops is a time honoured thing for the incompetent Generals to do. Authoritarian leaders never seem to be able to resist the temptation to relieve immediate pressure with a few useful lies, nor do they seem to appreciate how useful a reputation for honesty might be a little later on when things get really tough.

When the strike started the papers dragged out various experts who were pretty unanimous that there would be no power cuts before the end of November 1984, even if the Notts area joined in, and none till the end of March 1985 if they didn't. Arthur and the CP Bureaucrats dismissed this as *Tory lies* at the time. The irony is that had he not done so, he could have used these expert views as propaganda to stop the drift-back-to-work before and after Xmas. Maggie Thatcher just had to be lying about no power cuts in 1985 (had the strike held at its 1984 level) . . . though unquestionably the government has done better than we hoped on importing coal and substituting oil and nuclear power.

The heart-breaking truth is that the

drift-back-to-work looks pretty terminal and it would take a political miracle to reverse that situation. Frankly I don't think Arthur or any of the leading bureaucrats have a fucking clue what to do about it, nor have they had for many months now. I would be more than pleased if they prove me wrong but . . . well, why tell lies or hide in fantasies. The miners are grown men and I feel that the ones who read this would rather I didn't treat them like kids and pretend it wasn't going to hurt.

In three days time (as I write) the miners will hold a delegate conference. Its main purpose will be to see if there is any way a potential rout can be turned into an orderly retreat complete with effective rearguard action to re-instate those miners who have been sacked during the strike for 'misconduct'.

Since *Freedom* won't come out until after this conference nothing I say here can possibly affect the outcome, so I can freely say that I regard the call from some Yorkshire officials for a Ballot to Return as pretty cynical and little better than an attempt to 'prove' how right they were to oppose a Ballot at the beginning!

The *Freedom* line of supporting a ballot (in order to get the Notts Area out) and calling for occupations of the pits must have seemed pretty damn incomprehensible to those still stuck in normal Left/Right wing politics (miners

and would-be anarchists).

The basic principles and spirit of libertarian socialism or anarchism are in themselves extremely hard to grasp after years of authoritarian conditioning at home, school and work. It is therefore hardly surprising that libertarian socialists themselves often 'forget' them in the heat of major events (as many did this time).

Anarchism stands for people managing their own lives for themselves, building, as they see fit, links with other groups on a mutually agreed basis. In short we stand for control from below as opposed to rule from above.

Probably the average miner or worker anywhere in Britain would say that this is a lovely ideal but . . . someone has to be leader/boss or that taking orders and/or centralised organisation was 'more efficient' than everybody 'doing their own thing'.

The hardest thing to explain is that anarchism/libertarian socialism is not merely 'a nice idea' but in practice *more efficient* and *more in tune* with what people are really all about. So let's examine the miners' strike with that point in mind.

First take the practical question of raising money for the striking miners. Central NUM had all the facilities, contacts and personnel there ready and waiting . . . a model of centralised efficiency. Months into the strike Bates Pit, with 1,600 men, was receiving a grand total of £50 per week . . . **TO SHARE BETWEEN ALL 1,600 OF THEM** or 6p per week each.

With local funds almost gone they sent less than ten people down to London to see what could be done on their own account. They have consistently raised between £1,000 and £3,000 a week, operating from the scruffiest office in the world borrowed from a handful of anarchists.

In the real live world, when it really mattered, local independent group action was between **30 and 60 times more effective**. This pattern has been repeated by S Wales, Kent and Yorkshire miners. It is not a one-off fluke.

Far from rejoicing about how effective this local initiative was the Central Fund placed every obstacle in could in the path of the local groups. Central NUM saw them as thunderstealing rivals.

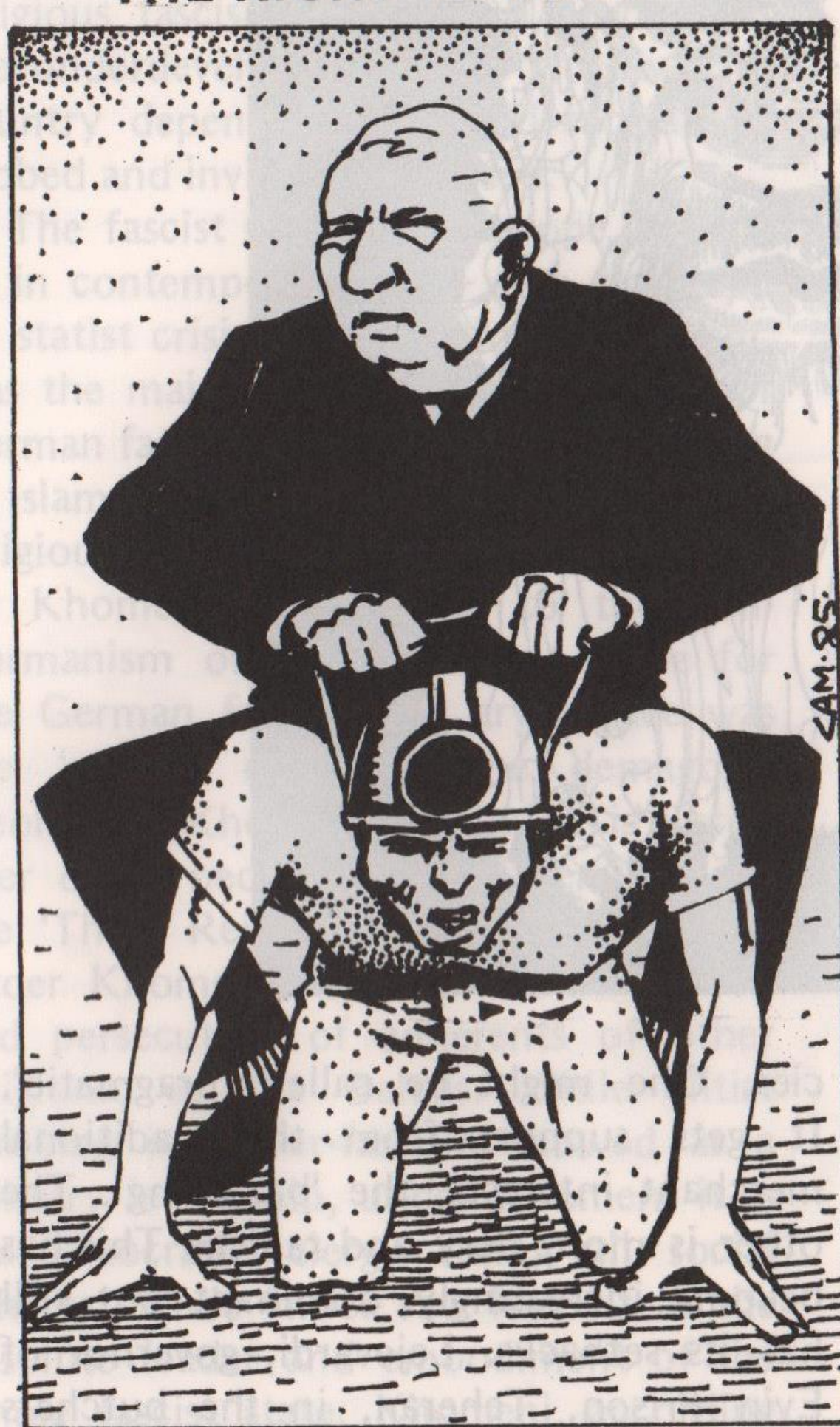
How come the small local groups did so well compared to Central NUM? Simple, they were working *with the grain* of human nature. It is just much easier for a Union branch to identify with 'their' particular pit that they can actually visit, whose miners they've really met. Solidarity is just a posh political word for friendship, when all is said and done.

The only success story in this whole strike has been what the miners and their wives, families and friends have managed

to do for themselves. Where they have relied upon the wit and wisdom of the highly paid NUM bureaucrats there has been an endless stream of humiliating defeats. This is just as anarchists have been saying since the birth of socialism.

There is a darker side to the story, though. We anarchists say that 'liberty without equality is exploitation' but we also say 'socialism without liberty is tyranny'. We point to the horrors of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Russia today from our evidence. But more than a hundred years ago, Proudhon and Bakunin predicted that a Marxist State would be exactly what we

THE RIGHT TO MANAGE



see today — tyrannies where even the right to strike has disappeared.

At this point, instead of sounding like extreme left wingers, we now seem to be off with the Thatcherite Right! Perhaps when anarchists and libertarian socialists understand that they'll start to explain themselves better. **We are neither of the left or right**. The time has come to recognise that there is only a Down Wing of various parties who wish to rule us and an Up Wing of those who wish to rule themselves.

Down Wing socialists from the Labour Party through the Communist Party to the Trots and Leninists all share one thing in common from our libertarian Up Wing socialist point of view — they trade on the natural need and desire for solidarity to extract obedience.

Look at working class hero Arthur Scargill. He supports the military regime in Poland against the miners' right to a free Trade Union! If the Communist Party were in power in Britain whose side would Arthur be on — the Government's

or the miners'? The same question might usefully be asked of half the NUM officials.

Since they support the Russian system politically is it really any wonder that they should attempt to replace a ballot of the membership to achieve 100% solidarity with centrally controlled 'mass pickets' to 'encourage' reluctant miners out? Surely here is a common distrust of the average worker here, plus a common faith in the efficiency of coercion?

Long time cynics may also note that a year long bitter strike was just what the Russians needed to take the world eye off Poland — and tell Polish miners that things were just as bad here. Also for those NUM CP centralists who dislike the union's federal structure, the placing of the Central Funds abroad has left the centre with £10 million while the regions are all flat bust and mortgaged to the hilt! Plus one or two little rule changes to increase the power of the executive over the members . . . frankly I find all that disgusting.

Peering darkly into the future, the first thing the government will try (and probably succeed) is to trade the re-instatement of those miners sacked for 'misconduct' for a full return to normal working. There are going to be enormous financial pressures on each ex-striking miner to work for the largest wage possible since practically all of them have debts of between £2,000-£3,000, which will take some paying off. It's going to take something quite extraordinary to get them out on strike again in the next ten years!

The government will no doubt concentrate its massive investment programme on those pits which showed the least militancy and had the least supportive communities. Some studies on the new technology have given figures as low as 55,000 miners to produce all Britain's coal needs in 15 years time. That would leave some 130,000 looking for a new job . . .

Meanwhile back in the present let us note for the historical record at least, the greatest failing of the miners' strike and especially of Arthur Scargill. That was the abject failure to win the battle for the hearts and minds of ordinary members of other Trade Unions. Forget about the Union bosses talking big and delivering nothing. What else did we expect? But down at the grassroots — well, a recent properly representative poll of 1,000 ordinary TU members revealed that only 43% 'supported the miners', an amazing 25% said 'don't know' and a **chilling 32% said they actually supported the Coal Board !!!**

Arthur, you were getting £20,000 a year (and more) to do a bit better than that now, weren't you?

Stu

N.U.M. Northumberland Area
GEORDIE MINERS
FIGHT FOR JOBS

Iran: God Rules OK



It is now six years since the Revolution in Iran. Then was a time of openness and freedom. Now, these are buried under internal oppression, a crippling war, a collapsed economy, unemployment and despair. Still, hope and opposition continue. The internal position is analysed in the long article, (edited from *Enzane Azad*). This is to update some aspects.

The image of the regime is often reduced to a couple of stereotypes, beards and turbans or veils. Behind this monotony ('bitomy?') a lot goes on. The regime is not secure and its members know it. This is partly due to their purist outlook which won't be satisfied until everybody, everywhere practises submission, the literal meaning of 'Islam'. The acceptable mould is particularly rigid, even by the standards of religious orthodoxy. They are also not secure in secular matters. These two necessities considerably overlap and reinforce each other. And being the mothers of invention, have come up with a useful device. The regime have produced a new machine for cutting off thieves' fingers. There's talk of an advanced model for whole hands. Part of the problem is internal, within the regime itself. Although opposition groups have been systematically outmanoeuvred, marginalised, excluded and then oppressed, there are still internal divisions. Broadly, there are two tenden-

cies. One might be called 'pragmatic'. It gets support from the traditional merchant interests, the 'bazaaring'. The other is more fiery and radical. This has become increasingly dominant but still has its setbacks. Lejevardi, governor of Evin Prison, Teheran, in the butchers tradition of his shahist predecessors, has been forced to resign. There is, at least impressionistically, a slackening of petty harassments.

One issue which is still the subject of political manoeuvring is the Divine Succession. So much of the regime's image is bound up in that brooding face. Khomeini's prestige is immense. This is often a recurring theme, they're all a pack of vicious hypocrites but the king is honest, if only he wasn't being misadvised. But, he's old and sick, he's had a few heart attacks, when he's not seen in public the rumours start, he's already dead but they won't tell us until they're ready. (I've not yet heard that he's been stuffed to bring out on official occasions. Did you know that Franco was, with a string to wave his arms?)

The official successor is still Montazeri, but he has something of a credibility gap, put simply, everybody thinks he's an idiot. He has now been promoted to 'imam'. In Islam, this can mean simply prayer leader, but, filtered through Iranian

Shi-ism, waiting for the messianic reappearance of the twelfth imam, a reincarnation of one who became invisible in the Middle Ages, it implies much more, more or less, Moses. Poor old Montazeri just can't wear this imagery. Rafsanjani, Speaker of the Majlis, is given more credit. His image problem is certainly not idiocy, more like vicious thuggery. He has taken to leaning on an AK47 while leading Friday prayers. This very difficulty in foisting Montazeri on the world shows that the regime isn't as monolithic as people think, most outsiders would assume that what Khomeini wants, goes. After all, he is divinely inspired.

There is also opposition outside the regime, partly outside the country. A few years ago the Mojehedin, radical moslems, were a formidable force. Amongst other things they killed 76 members of the Iranian Republican Party, including Beheshti, who might have been a candidate for Imam. Since then they have been crushed and driven underground. Their leadership in exile has its problems. The alliance with Bani-Sadr, former president, split up. Now they may lose their headquarters in France. They still mount an occasional attack, three rockets were fired at the Tehran prosecutors office for the anniversary celebrations. The official response was a 'spontaneous' invasion of the party headquarters of Bazargan, former liberal prime minister, rumoured to be an American sleeper. Four Mojehedin were hanged in public in Shiraz this week. There was also a grenade attack on the foundation building which, amongst other things, administers the late Shah's property.

There is industrial unrest. The regime has systematically attacked workers rights. There are guidelines on things like minimum wages and job security. These are voluntary. There has been a wave of strikes, estimated at over 100 in the last six months. One of the largest was at the Isfahan Iron Industry Complex. About 20,000 workers came out in November 1984 to protest about threatened lay-offs. The strike was finally crushed in January, using the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Militia).

Regional minorities continue to simmer. Most notable, as ever, are the Kurda. After savage repression, everybody assumed that they were quiet, but there has been renewed raiding of military supply lines and troops in the region have had to be strengthened. The campaign against the Baha'is also continues. Islam guarantees the rights of religious minorities but Baha'ism claims a prophet after Mohammad, which rates as heresy. They are also in the classical position as a minority operating many small businesses, shops

and so on. Their international headquarters are in Israel, making them Zionist agents. There have been many summary executions. The latest move is that any Baha'i who worked in government service has to repay their salary, all of it. Iran is the first state to formally repudiate the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The other major impact on the regime is still the war. This is in its fifth year,

RELIGIOUS FASCISM

Iran: Religion in power

Introduction

The events in Iran in 1978/79 have been viewed from many different perspectives. These views have only rarely reflected the social causes and have limited themselves to a purely mechanical description of the events.

What has happened in Iran is the first revolution based mainly on religious elements. Up to then, there had not been any experience of a revolution of religious content, turning back the wheel of history of a leading society to the barbarism of the Stone Age. At the beginning of the statist, royal crisis in Iran, the whole opposition tried to intensify the crisis in order to overthrow the regime but did not think of any alternative for the time after it.

It must be said that for decades the despotism in Iran had created an unfavourable atmosphere for progressive ideas. Islamic religion was the only institutionalised social movement that was able to mobilise the people, not politically but by its religious rituals. The economic pauperisation of the people had created an explosive mixture of mass and religion. These factors created — recognised or unrecognised — a new mass party of which everybody felt themselves a member.

The Islamic institutions in Iran have been preparing for this seizure of power for 1300 years. At the moment of revolution, Islam had about 180,000 clerical cadres, a well established hierarchy, economic support and a position not endangered by the ruling monarchy. The fact that Iranian society was totally ruined in five years and that a religious mass hysteria was spread, as well as the warlike expansionistic efforts of Islamic ideology lead to a new category, the development of religious fascism.

The term: Religious Fascism

In my opinion, fascism is not a national phenomenon bound to an epoch, race or party but rather a universal, internationally variable phenomenon. This ideology is based on the broad, unconscious and infatuated masses. The social causes of fascism are the economic, social, moral,

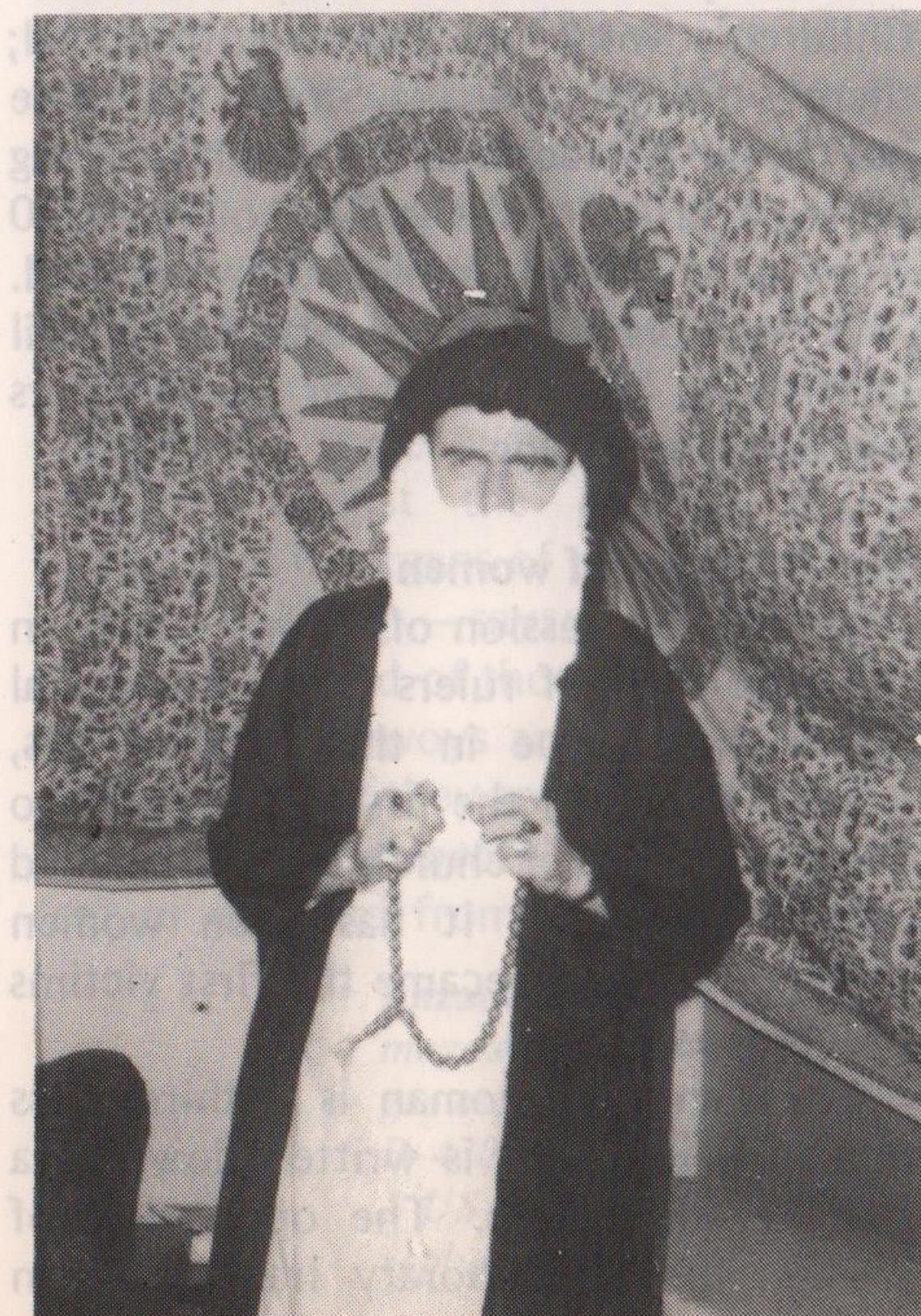
nearly as old as the Revolution. The losses are in hundreds of thousands. No family is unaffected. The long awaited final assault is still pending, perhaps because the Iraqi defences have been consolidated, perhaps because the supply of twelve year olds for mass assaults is drying up. On the Iraqi side, the government has offered amnesties to political exiles and to long running problems, like their own Kurds. The take-up has been

By Enzane Azad

cultural and traditional uprooting of people. While Italian and German fascism were a phenomenon of industrial society, religious fascism in Iran is a product of the underdevelopment of a 'third world' country depending on world capitalism, robbed and invisibly colonised.

The fascist systems in Europe, as well as in contemporary Iran, were preceded by statist crisis. While 'national socialism' was the main content of the ideology of German fascism, the extreme/fanatic wing of Islam (Shi-ism) provided the content of religious fascism in Iran. The pan-Islamism of Khomeini corresponds to the pan-Germanism of Hitler-fascism. While for the German fascists the aryan race was the 'master race', in the demagogic ideology of Khomeini the Moslem is placed over other people. The anti-semitism of the 'Third Reich' is found back in Iran under Khomeini's rule in the instigation and persecution of adherents of other religions, eg the Bahais. While elitist thinking in Hitler-fascism showed as a military leadership, under Khomeini it is the theocratic clergy ruling all social spheres. While Hitler saw himself as the absolute leader and embodiment of the whole fascist state, Khomeini, according to his own interpretation, is the sole and highest Islamic leader (*velayate faghi*) in the Islamic Iranian state.

In this connection, it has to be mentio-



disappointing.

So, post-revolutionary Iran is in something as a limbo. Organised opposition is contained, abroad or dead. People look back nostalgically and too many pine for the young shah in exile. But there is still this sense of waiting. For the old man to die.

DP
London

ned that Khomeini had already, in 1965, described the most important elements of his current way of ruling in his book *The Islamic Government*. This book, that can be compared with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, includes Khomeini's extreme views of a totalitarian Islamic state. In it, Islam is presented as an all-embracing rule of life. "For all things concerning man and society, Islam has teachings. These come from the all-mighty and are sent to the people through his prophets and messengers. They cover all aspects of life, from conception to burial. There is nothing Islam has not formed a judgement on". These teachings of Islam form the base of the Islamic concept of government and the laws of the Islamic state.

"The Islamic government is subjected to the laws of Islam that do neither come from the people nor from their representatives, but direct from God and his divine will . . . In Islam ruling means solely to let the laws of the Koran, ie the divine laws, take effect . . . Belief and Islamic law demand . . . that governments not completely obeying Islamic law . . . shall not survive."

This shows the totalitarian pretensions of Islamic fascism under the rule of Khomeini. Self-sacrifice of one's life and the fight for the native country had been utilised legitimate the fascist ideology of Hitler, today self-sacrifice of one's life by killing for Islam by the way of holy war (*jihad*) are the obligation of every Moslem. "See that Allah had bought the life and the goods of the believers for paradise. They should fight on Allah's way and kill and get killed". (*Koran, Sure 9*).

While Hitler tried in the beginning to pretend to the masses that his ideology was an alternative to capitalism and communism, Khomeini propagated his Islamic ideology by the slogan: "Neither East nor West".

But there are even further parallels to Hitler-fascism: bans on political parties, burning of books, erection of concentration camps, torturings, killings, total sexual suppression.

Considering these points, I am of the opinion that the religious rule in Iran can just keep power by totalitarian and absolutistic elements and methods of fascism. Though religious fascism might



not correspond with the forms of western fascism in one or the other point it remains a fact that all fascist regimes (from Hitler, Mussolini and Franco up to Khomeini) used a relentless and repressive state machinery.

The contemporary economic situation

The population of Iran is currently said to be 36-40 millions. During the past five years the existing social structures have been destroyed systematically in all spheres. The agricultural production is zero; there is 400% inflation and over six million unemployed, over one million drug addicts; 75% of industrial raw materials have to be imported. In 1983 exports of 300 million dollars were contrasted by massive imports of 14 billion dollars. Over 50% of the Iranian budget was spent just for the war. The production capacity has declined by 75%.

Some examples of prices: one pound of lentils costs \$1.60; one pound of meat costs \$13; the monthly rent for an average flat is over \$450. In 1978 Iran imported agricultural goods worth 2 billion dollars, in 1982 5 billion dollars were spent for this.

These factors show that Iran today is a more dependent country than during the Shah period. The situation of the working people (about 13 million) has worsened enormously; ie there are no secure agreements on wages, hours, vacations, health and annuity insurances. Children's work has been reintroduced; there is no right to strike. Since 1980 there has been a reactionary labour law; eg during a strike in Ahwas 7000 out of 9500 workers have been immediately dismissed.

Every plant has an Islamic council controlling the conduct of the workers and active in spying.

The situation of women

Often the oppression of women has been the first step of rulers to abolish social rights. In Europe in the Middle Ages, women had been the first social group to become victims of church terror (so-called 'witch burnings'), it has been women too in Iran who became the first victims of religious fascism.

In Islam the woman is a third class human being. This is written down as a law in the Koran. The oppression of women in contemporary Iran has been

very clearly expressed in the Islamic constitution from November 1979. The social situation of women in Iran is characterised by the division of living and working areas by sex (segregation) and the exclusion of women from the public and political spheres.

Thousands of women have been driven away from offices, plants and public institutions. The new Islamic legislation deprived them of rights that had been limited anyway. Judicially, women in the Islamic republic have just half the worth of men. Article 5 of the Islamic criminal law says:

"When a Muslim kills a woman of Islamic creed, he has to be sentenced to death. A prerequisite for this, though, is that the father of the woman has paid half the blood-money of a man to the committer in advance".

The evidence of a woman has just half the worth of that of a man, and this only if her evidence is confirmed by a man as well. In murder trials the evidence of women is not taken into consideration on the whole.

Soon after the foundation of the Islamic republic women were no longer allowed to become judges or solicitors. Women had to dispense with the law of divorce as well. Since the partial re-opening of universities in autumn 1983, most women lecturers have been dismissed. The proportion of women students has declined to 10%. To avoid any contact with male students, female students have to sit in the back rows during lectures. Often the rooms are divided by curtains. If a woman wants to ask a question she must do so in writing because, according to Islamic rules, women are not even allowed to speak to unknown men. Mixed schools were dissolved immediately after the revolution. A campaign organised by fanatic believers has forced women never to leave their house without veils, or at least large headscarfs, long robes or woollen stockings. Women should at best cover not only their head, neck, hands and legs but even their faces. It should not even be possible to perceive the contours of their bodies. A groups of Iranian women have collected the pious party maxims on the new morality and have published them in an open letter.

Some of the slogans are: "Either 'kerchief on the head or beat on the head', "Sister, your veil (*hejab*) is my honour", "Absence of hejab is prostitution". The same letter of protest tells of the reasons why women have been dismissed from their jobs, eg it was enough to use perfume or to shake hands with male colleagues at the working place. An unmarried woman applying for a job as an employee in a local authority has to present a medical certificate on her virginity.

Wherever a woman may go she is always controlled by the eyes of the state.

At the beginning of the revolution, spontaneously founded gangs 'cared' for the morality of women. Women who were not dressed according to the regulations got acid splashed into their faces. Women whose hair was projecting from under their 'kerchiefs' got the 'kerchief' fixed to the forehead with thumbtacks. The victims were insulted as whores and often were beaten bloody. About two years ago these terror gangs were nationalised. Armed watchers and guards who are appointed by the Ministry for Moral Conduct guard the entrances of every public building and patrol through the streets in bullet-proof cars. When they discover the slightest offence against the Islamic rules of dressing they pull their victim into the car.

The rape of women in Iranian jails has been made known to the foreign public by reports from Amnesty International and the Commission for Human Rights, of the UN parents who have visited their daughters in jail often said that the girls entreated them imploringly to provide them with contraceptive pills.

After their assumption of power the Mullahs dissolved all existing brothels and had many prostitutes executed. But since then there have been laws and measures introducing a different kind of Islamic prostitution. So beside regular marriage there is 'marriage on account' for which there can be an agreement made ranging from one hour to 99 years. Since that time numerous houses exist in which single women live together, supervised by a watcher who is authorised to enter into 'marriages on account'.

The instruction in girls' schools has been reduced to a religious/Islamic education. Boys, as well as girls, hear mostly about martyrdom, bold, vengeance, god, the devil and Iman Khomeini. Even the first words pupils learn form brutal sentences. The first sentence of the school-book which originally said "Father gives bread" has been changed, according to Islamic martyrology, into "Father gives blood".

These facts describe part of the reality women in contemporary Iran live with. It is obvious that the increase in suppression of women is an integral constituent of the all-embracing forced Islamisation of Iranian society.

Torture — a religious law in the Islamic state

The legal system in Iran is singular in history. It is founded on traditional Islamic rights and has four categories of penalty: *Ghesas*, *Dije*, *Hadd* and *Ta'sir*. *Ghesas* is blood revenge for murder and bodily harm, the culprit can, by rights of retaliation, be killed, wounded or mutilated. *Dije* is blood money. It is to be paid when *Ghesas* is waived or retaliation is either impossible or not allowed. *Hadd* is



the term used for penalties for acts like lewdness, homosexuality, drinking intoxicating beverages, rebellions, which by Islamic conception are directed against god. These penalties are seen as god's command and can therefore not be remitted or weakened. The penalties are draconian: stoning, a fixed number of whip-lashes, chopping off hands and feet, etc. *Ta'sir* is a penalty for minor offences imposed by the judge at his discretion. It can consist of detention, banishment, corporal punishment, slaps, or some other humiliating punishment.

The Code of Criminal Procedure has likewise been totally Islamised. The court is composed of a single judge who, has to be Muslim and male. Women are generally excluded from the process of jurisdiction. The judge, almost always an Islamic cleric, is not unbiased but supports the public prosecutor. Often he simultaneously has the function of the public prosecutor. The defendants have to defend themselves; the post of lawyer has been totally abolished. In the trial, which usually takes place in a jail behind closed doors, even the next of kin of the defendant are not allowed to attend. Often the 'knowledge of the judge' plays a decisive part: the judge is entitled to condemn the defendant on the grounds of his personal knowledge, irrespective of evidence. Last, the defendant does not have the possibility to lodge an appeal against the sentence which usually is enforced directly after the trial.

Since the revolution, political offences are dealt with by so-called 'Islamic Revolution Courts'. Political captives are largely accused of 'rebellion' (*bagi*), of 'war against god' (*moharebe ba Rhoda*) or of 'causing depravity' (*fesad*). In Islamic writings these 'offences' are liable for the death penalty under the category of *Hadd* and the inquisitors of the regime feel entitled, even obliged, to pass corresponding sentences. Besides those mentioned, criminal terms are applied to anyone engaged in some way in oppositional activities against the existing Islamic system and its organs of power. The book of Islam — Koran — says:

"See, the reward of those fighting against Allah and his envoys and making ruin on earth is just that they are killed or crucified or mutilated reciprocally on hands and feet or expelled from the country. That

is their reward down here and in the beyond they will be grievously punished." (*Shure 5, verse 37,33*)

What is happening in the jails of the Islamic republic is another story. The number of political prisoners has never been published, but there certainly are tens of thousands. The authorities deny the torturing of prisoners but admit that *Ta'sir* is used which in this connection is to be understood as a different term for 'torture'. The treatment of prisoners in the jails of the Islamic republic is reminiscent of the Middle Ages. It is downright barbaric and a crime against humanity.

The war — a welcomed means of two fanatic powers or: the holy source of profit for western and eastern war industry

The war between Iran and Iraq was aroused by the entry of Iraqi troops into Iran in September 1980. In June 1982, the Iraqi army was driven away from the Iranian border area. In the four years the war has lasted the Iranian forces have tried several times to enter Iraq by large-scale attacks but these attacks have always been repelled by the Iraqis. Since then there has been stabilised warfare reaching its climax with the bombardment of tankers and drilling platforms in April 1984.

This war, that is only rarely dealt with in the western media, has its causes in the following points:

- 1 The fear of the Arabian countries of fanatic Islamism encroaching on their territories;
- 2 Due to this, the strategic attack of Iraq on Iran as a move forward;
- 3 The war stabilises the inner structure of power in both countries;
- 4 The war solves the internal problems of the leaderships in Iraq and Iran;
- 5 The war distracts the population from the inner calamity of the Islamic system;
- 6 The war strengthens Islamic ideology and power.

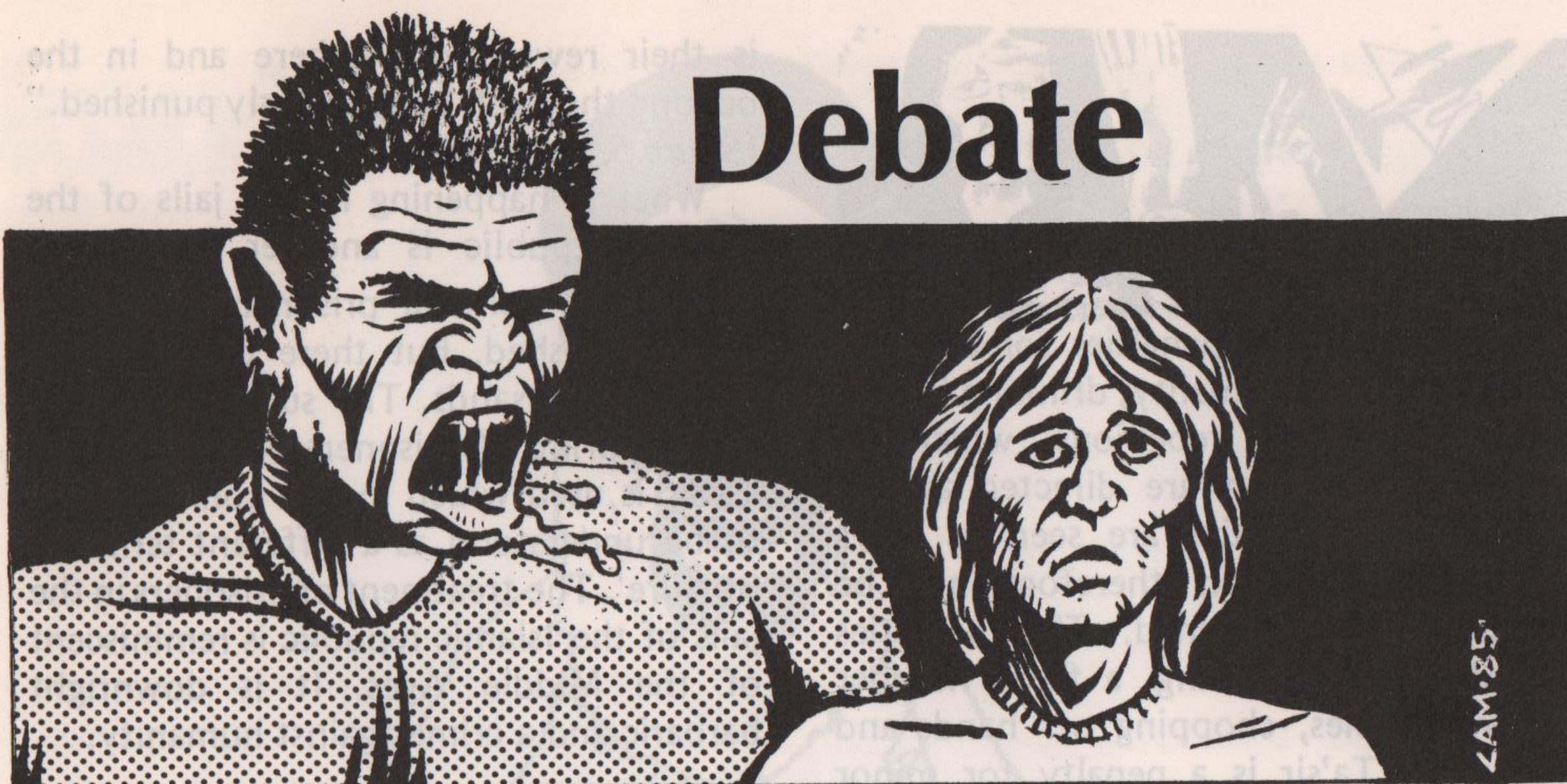
So far about 500,000 Iranians and 150,000 Iraqis have died in the war. In Iran alone over 100,000 people have been wounded and crippled, over three million people have been driven away from their cities and the economic loss is between 200 and 300 billion dollars. These numbers apply to Iraq proportionally.

This inhuman war serves only the sick religious class of rulers in both countries and the western and eastern interests in profit, preventing the peaceful living together of people.

Enzane Azad

Enzane Azad (*The Free Man*) is a bi-monthly Iranian Anarchist magazine dedicated to spreading Anarchist ideas amongst the emigre community. It is available from: Postlagerkarte Nr. 028543 B, D-4300 Essen 1, West Germany. Subscription rate for five issues is 5 US dollars (as a banknote please). Send 2 international postal reply coupons for a sample issue.

Debate



THE DEBATE SECTION: SPELLING OUT THE RULES OF THE GAME

Roughly 80% of the content of each *Freedom* is material sent in from outside the collective. We are, however, not entirely happy with the style and content of what we get for publication. Anarchists seem to churn out a great deal of long critical junk and virtually hardly any positive proposals or attempts to understand the relationships underlying social life.

Worse still, the self-appointed critics persistently fail to actually deal with what the original author actually said. In the bulk of the critical stuff we receive (and print) the critic merely picks on a word and regurgitates his dogmatic clichés regardless of whether or not they have

any bearing or not. Frankly, it's just a self-revolving little ego trip for the worst offenders (who usually freak out completely when anyone criticises their own stuff).

What we're now going to take a stand against is the dialogue of the deaf as in Eddy v Dane, etc. If you want to argue the case for this or that, you will have to do so without using slagging off someone else as a crutch to help you. We are going to give more space to the positive folks by limiting criticisms of articles in *Freedom* to 300 words, the same for ordinary letters.

the collective

A REPLY TO PETR CERNY'S 'MIDDLE CLASS WAR'

Cerny suggests that Thatcherism is the political response of the traditional upper working and lower middle classes. I would argue that Thatcherism is an ideological but not material prop to these groups. At the economic level, Thatcherism works for the bourgeoisie. The slump has been engineered in order to terrorise the workforce into keeping its mouth shut and increasing productivity. The use of new technology is the only weapon in this general onslaught. Under the current regime, the upper working and lower middle classes are themselves economically threatened, many being forced (deeper) into the black economy. Possibly, as things continue to degenerate, their economic burdens might begin to outweigh their political ties. It is conceivable that it is this group that will be responsible for an attack on Thatcherism and a return to 'caring' Conservatism. I believe there are signs of this already.

As regards the emergence of the technocratic elite, I think Cerny has overestimated its importance. To say that there are more marxists amongst computer scientists is equivalent to saying that there are more anarchists amongst the unemployed. In numerical (as opposed to relative) terms there are not *that* many.

These socialist technocrats have to pass through a whole set of preprocessing filters that we can call the 'scientific meritocracy'. Qualifications, politics, productivity, competitiveness and so on

are all taken into account when you run the rat race. And they all have an effect on you. Like many of their sociologist counterparts, the socialist technocrats can get absorbed by the system and drift into reformism, however revolutionary their rhetoric might be.

It's also worth taking into account the variety of marxisms now available on the trendy bookshelf. A bid for political power would require some sort of organisation along vanguardist/bolshevik lines. But not all marxists hold to these principles any more; some would even call themselves libertarian. Question: How many socialist technocrats are also actual libertarians?

For any technocratic vanguard to have any chance of success (and if they're marxist I assume 'success' means something more than a simple coup d'état) it needs a minimum of support from the lower classes — the same working classes that have been blackmailed and brutalised by the technology which these 'leaders' are expert in.

Finally, we might question the importance of the 'technocratic stratum'. Cerny suggests that 'man-management' is the privileged knowledge of the traditional upper classes — yet the unions have been practicing it for years. Now, what *is* exclusive to the upper classes is that they control capital and have the weight of the State behind them. It goes without saying that there are strong and complex links between State and capital. What are

the ties between State and technocracy? That is: how amenable is the State to a takeover by technocrats of whatever political persuasion? Part of the answer lies in the sort of power that the technocrats possess — a power derived from their esoteric knowledge of vital economic sectors.

The point I want to make is that, despite the increasing importance of biotechnology, information technology, etc, these innovations will always be secondary to the control of capital. Whether their expertise is put to use is still up to the profiteer (State or capitalist). The conversion to the 'management of things' is not irreversible. I suspect that when under threat, economically (if the new technology gets too expensive) or politically (by upstart technocrats) these 'wealth-creators' will swiftly revert to old-fashioned man-management.

I think that the new technology is not an alternative to man-management: it complements it. By serving to increase unemployment it terrorises the working class, pushes down wages and makes the workforce more placid. A balance between cheap new technology and cheaper, placid human beings will probably be struck. This sort of outcome necessarily limits the power of the technocrats.

This response to Cerny's article is a bit simplistic (both accounts suffer from being too abstract). For example I haven't mentioned the possibility that new technology, like bureaucracy and power, might have a tendency to creep in everywhere. Nevertheless, I believe that rather than look to the new technocrats, it's worth keeping the focus of our attention on the machinations of the man-managers (State) and capital controllers (international corporations). It is they who can convert purse strings to nooses and vice versa, not the new technocrats.

Mike Michael
Durham

Thoughts on the Solidarity discussion paper published in *Freedom*, Jan '85

Peter Cerny states the clerk/office worker class are becoming redundant (true) at the hands of a scientific-technological class (true) and that the new technocrats are — broadly speaking — products of a generation who were radical in younger days (possible). Mr Cerny, however, fails to consider

- 1 The enormous disarming power of liberal capitalism;
- 2 That new recruits, springing straight into this class from present day universities, are probably the least left-political students since 1946.

Thus the argument seems to be based on the political outlook of Mr Cerny's friends and leans heavily on the (mortgaged) class background of the computer innovators.

It is very true that the new technocracy believes it can effect an equality on a large scale, but this is in the form of the computer Super-State and the EEC.

Rob
W Germany

POWER AND PROBABILITY

Stu's article in the February issue of *Freedom*, which was very good if, like me, you could ignore the slightly patronising tone, will hopefully stimulate a long overdue debate on the way anarchists would organise power. As he says, the lack of a well thought out, and acted out, analysis in this area is the main reason why thousands of people who are anarchists would run a mile before they're actually see themselves as such.

I reckon the starting point in such a debate has to be the recognition that reality does not consist of absolutes. Not only do we constantly come up against contradictions between, for example, freedom and responsibility, but also the desire to have absolute control over our own lives, say, is inevitably limited by practical considerations such as the brain's ability to deal with the infinite amount of information this would have to involve if you took it literally. In other words, anarchism is an attempt to *minimise* the existence of authority, by which I mean the ability to make a decision on someone else's behalf. The more malignant expressions of authority, such as conscious exploitation, could perhaps be totally removed in practical terms.

If we accept the concept of anarchy as a relative goal this has several not insignificant advantages. One is that people are less likely to see anarchism as a pseudo-religion against which any dissent is heresy, but it also opens up all sorts of possibilities on an organisational level.

The main reason why anarchy is equated with disorder by Jo (sapphire) Public is probably because there are so many anarchists who see it as such. Basically if you try to apply a simplistic, absolutist definition of the word to reality it very soon becomes clear that it won't work. What a lot of people seem to do then is to opt for an organisational form which gives the *appearance* of absolute anarchy, or in other words 'the tyranny of structurelessness'. One example which springs to mind was an anarchist centre I heard of where, in the classic style, you paid for publications by putting what you felt was appropriate in an open box. Unfortunately, when a large sum of money was seen to have disappeared the response of certain comrades was to evict someone who had been 'seen acting suspiciously' under threat of physical violence. If that's 'direct action' give me Lord Scarman any day!

If, however, you accept the relative nature of politics then all sorts of useful phenomena, such as probability, come to your assistance. Perhaps if I try to sketch out what I mean it will be easier to explain.

One important point to bear in mind is

that a full-scale society is not the same as a small group multiplies by 10,000. Phenomena come into play on the larger scale which simply don't exist in the small group. To take an analogy, a glass of water is wet, but for the individual atoms which make up the H₂O, the concept of 'wetness' just doesn't exist. Similarly, it would be possible to minimise the arbitrary use of authority in society statistically, a concept which has no meaning to the four people who constitute a local anarchist system I've been dealing with is still on the fringes of utopian and anyway the process of mass organisation can in itself be beneficial. Coming back to my analogy about the wet atoms, the psychological implications of 100,000 people arriving at a decision through a process which actually expresses this scale is quite different from 100,000 people doing so in the privacy of their own homes. You actually look at the world differently, in a more socialist fashion, if you participate in a mass event from time to time and (if genuinely participatory) it can actually be uplifting.

So, I would see the TV ballot as a way of organising local variations to outline agreements which were actually made in regional/global conferences. In my opinion these conference decisions would in many cases have to be binding, though how to enforce them is a sticky question, but they would be of a general nature with the localities having the maximum degree of flexibility (relativity again).

Finally, on a more concrete note, Stu's analysis seems also to ignore the fact that delegates would be *mandated*, as well as recallable, so they shouldn't be able to get away with changing their minds. Obviously there is a limit to how precise this mandate can be, but on *average* it would probably work out okay.

In the case of the CNT (they're both

the same in this respect) members do not vote on a specific motion, rather they are asked to decide which subjects are the most important for the union and when this has been co-ordinated on a national level each union branch sends their views on the subjects which most people consider of interest. At the actual congress, no decisions are taken as such, but these reports are blended together in committees to which each union can appoint some of its delegates (so any monkeying around would *probably* be spotted) and the final agreements are then taken back to the congress as a whole where individual delegates can raise objections if s/he feels their union's point of view has been misrepresented. Finally, the delegates all have a vote to say if they accept the agreement as a correct representation. As well as a majority decision, significant minorities should also have their views noted. People who break these general outlines can be expelled from the union.

To me the main appeal of this system is that it is less mechanistic than voting 'yes' or 'no' to a motion or amendments, after all we're not machines are we, and neither do we live in a world of cogs and wheels.

The only example I know where this system may have broken down is over the decision to boycott the Works Committee in '83. I'm a bit vague on how the 'Anarchist Minister of Justice' nonsense came about, except that it seems to have got through the proper channels, as opposed to getting round them, apparently on the charismatic say-so of the same 'leading militants' who prided themselves on being 'real anarchists'.

Anyway, getting back to '83, my information to date is that a more flexible agreement was originally arrived at and agreed to as correct by a small majority group.

continued



What I mean is that I could never exert a valid influence on all the thousands of factors which make up my environment. I might know quite a lot about nuclear power, a bit about town planning, but when it comes to taking decisions about how money should be spent to finance opera, I haven't got a clue. Anyway, I'd rather not clog up my life with making decisions about things which, in many cases, I'm not too bothered about. Fortunately there is an alternative to a society of atomised individuals striving for omniscience, namely the pressure

group. As I see it, one important aspect of an anarchist society would be freedom of information. If people who had been delegated to carry out a particular mandate were made to feel (through structural and psychological means) that this did not give them the right to monopolise information this could radically affect how society is organised.

Where I would part company with Stu is his implication that we should abandon the mandated delegate system. For one thing, the kind of televised ballot in the final vote. At this the minority,

who presumably felt a responsibility to 'save the CNT', created such a fuss that it was agreed to put the whole thing off until a special conference which finally decided to boycott the Works Committee.

I mention these particular events simply to provide some practical examples of how a delegate system has been organised and may have broken down in some ways. I'll end on that rather than following its natural sequel, the psychology of anarcho-purism and how to overcome it.

Mick Larkin

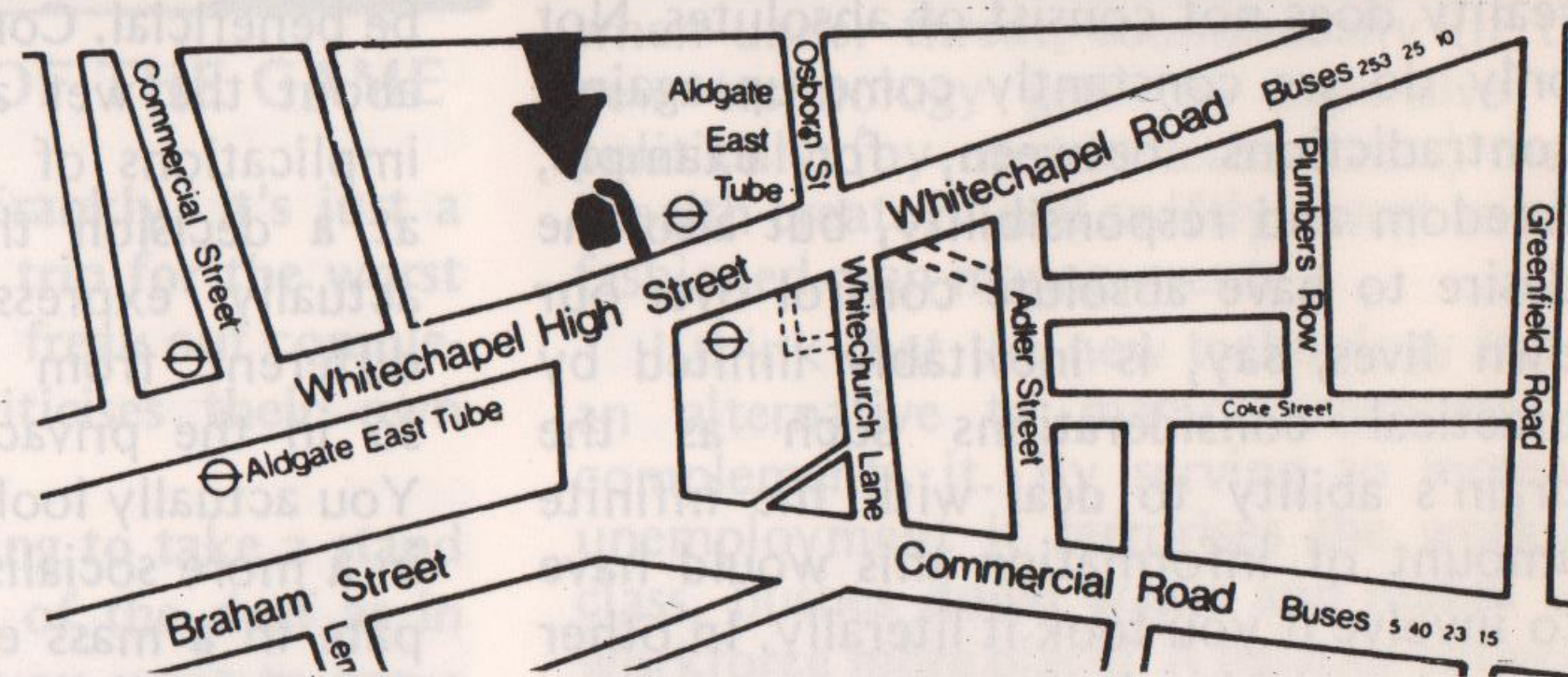
FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

Opening times:

Tuesday-Saturday

10:00-6:00

IN ANGEL ALLEY, 84B, WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET,
LONDON, E1 7AX 01-247-9249



There are two permanent appeals running here at 84b. The first is the Deficit Fund which goes to *Freedom* the paper and the second is the Premises Fund which goes towards the overheads of the building and thus benefits all the organisations who use 84b. These include *Freedom* the paper, Freedom Press the publisher, A Distribution the distribution service, Aldgate Press the print shop and, most important of all of course, the Freedom Press Bookshop. The production difficulties that *Freedom* had in early 1984 had two unfortunate effects. The first was that regular listing of contributions to the appeals lapsed which is why the last issue of *Freedom* carried a complete listing for 1984. (Typically there was a massive blunder in the listing. The AM and 3 comrades credited with £32 to the Deficit Fund in fact gave \$400 which is not £32 but £320. Our apologies). The second effect was that both funds ended the year having drawn considerably less than in the previous year. Now that *Freedom* is back in regular production we've set targets for 1985 — the same targets, incidentally, that were reached in 1983 — £2,000 for the Deficit Fund and £1,000 for the Premises Fund. Anarchism expects.

As already said the Deficit Fund goes to *Freedom* while the Premises Fund goes towards the overheads of the building (which kicks off with a £2,000 rates bill and gas, electricity, insurance and phone bill add another £300). So the Premises Fund helps all the organisations that use 84b and in order to encourage you to donate to the Premises Fund, each of the next few months will have a few words about one of the organisations using the building. This month it's Freedom Press.

Freedom Press is Britain's biggest anarchist publisher with 14 titles currently in print. 1984 saw three existing titles reprinted — *ABC of Anarchism*, Malatesta's *Anarchy* and *Malatesta — Life and Ideas* — one new title brought out — *Uprooting War*, and one title allowed to go out of print — *Bakunin and Nechaev*. 1985 has already seen the reprint of *Anarchy in Action* and the printing of a new title — *Marxism, Freedom and the State*. So Freedom Press is ticking over nicely and everything you can donate to the Premises Fund reduces the amount of money that Freedom Press has to pay towards the overheads and thus increases the amount of money that Freedom Press has to spend on publishing. All cheques, whether for the Deficit or Premises Fund, made out to Freedom Press, please (but don't forget to say which fund you want the money used for). Thanks to all those who gave money last year, especially the regular contributors. Our tiny hand is open.

Special Appeal

Due to the miners from the Bates pit using a room here at 84b the phone bill has gone through the roof — from £50 to £250. Bates NUM have paid £150 out of that amount. Could you lot send in enough money this month to pay the £150 back to them? Cheques to Freedom Press as always, but don't forget to say what the money is for.

PREMISES FUND

BL £1; Wolves JL £16; USA PC £54.71; Yorks RN £1; London DR £2.50; Wales RA £94.75; Wales BS £1.

January Total

£170.96

DEFICIT FUND

Oxon MB £10.80; TH £5; BL £1; Netherlands RL £2; Wolves JKW £2.50; Wolves JL £7.75; ZC £3; USA PC £54.72; Germany LV £10.38; Leics JE £4.75; Yorks RN £1; London BS £2.50; London DR £2.50; Oxon BH £10; Wales BS £1; Sussex JM £5; Dorset JP £1.75; Leeds RM 92p.

January Total

£126.57

A problem facing anyone who has spent money getting some anarchist propaganda into print is finding bookshops that will sell it. So about three years ago A Distribution was set up to co-ordinate distribution and today A Distribution, who operate from here at 84b Whitechapel High Street, send most of the anarchist literature produced in this country (except for local papers) to shops all round the country. The problem now is not getting our stuff to the shops that will sell it, but that there aren't enough shops willing to sell anarchist propaganda.

So, if there isn't a bookshop selling anarchist ideas in your area, why not set up a bookstall? To make it easy, A Distribution have set up a scheme that works like this. Bring £20 into the Freedom Bookshop and we'll sell you a prepared package of pamphlets to that value. There'll be between ten and a dozen different titles (three of each one) and nothing retailing at over £1.50.

If you bring £20 into the shop you'll get 40% discount on the retail price of the pamphlets but if we have to pay postage to send you the package then the discount will be one third and to take account of this a couple of pamphlets will be left out of the package. Provided

you sell everything then the difference between what you pay for the pamphlets and what you sell them for can be used to increase the number of titles you're selling or to help finance your local paper or put towards someone's fine or whatever you like. If you really don't want the money then send it to the Premises Fund here at 84b. Don't forget that this isn't sale or return and anything you lose, damage or have stolen is down to you.

We're hoping that this scheme takes off and that the number of places selling anarchist literature greatly increases. If your stall goes well, then once you get the hang of it you can start ordering from A Distribution's catalogue instead of taking a pre-selected package. Who knows? In a few years you might be running a local anarchist bookshop cum cafe cum meeting place.

* * *

March 30th 1985 is the start of the National Peace Book Week, an attempt to up the sales of anti-war books. A committee of well-known people, including Julie Christie, Ian Dury and Antonia Fraser, selected 20 anti-war books for a promotional campaign and Freedom Press duly entered its last but one title, Brian Martin's *Uprooting War* for consideration. Back comes the committee's choice and, surprise, surprise, *Uprooting War* (a snip at only £4.00) hasn't been chosen. To think I had to send the bastards a ten quid entrance fee. Last time I buy an Ian Dury album,

Chairperson Mo

JUST IN

Anarchist Feminist Magazine no 2 75p

It's been a long time in the gestation but here's issue no 2 of the *Anarchist Feminist Magazine*. Articles include a history of women in Australia, women and animal rights, a partial biography of the American Jewish anarchist Mollie Steimer who died in 1980, an account of a visit to Windscale and a statement made by Ann Hansen after she was sentenced to life imprisonment for her part in the Vancouver Five actions.

Anarchism and Feminism

Liz Verran, 30p

This is a straightforward introduction to the two ideas, setting out firstly what each is and secondly what their combination as anarchist-feminism is. 'In theory, anarchism is the liberation of all humanity, which necessarily includes the liberation of women, ie feminism'.

Marxism, Freedom and the State

Michael Bakunin, £1.00

This is a selection by H J Kenafick of Bakunin's writings from the 1860s and 1870s, correctly starting 50 years before the Communist victory in Russia that a Marxist society would not be an egalitarian, free society but instead a new type of class society. The selection, together with an introduction and biography of Bakunin by Kenafick, originally appeared as a Freedom Press pamphlet in 1950 and is now reprinted.

Sabate — Guerilla Extraordinary

Antonio Tellez, £2.95

After Franco's victory in 1939, Spanish anarchists continued to resist. *Sabate — Guerilla Extraordinary* is the story of Francisco Sabate who carried out guerilla warfare against Franco's dictatorship until he was killed, with four others, in 1960. Back in print in a new edition.

The Black Flag

Brian Jackson, £2.95

Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed in America in 1927, ostensibly for a hold-up in which someone was killed. In reality they were legally murdered for their anarchist beliefs in the wave of patriotic hysteria that swept America after the First World War. Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted on the flimsiest of evidence and the actual crime was probably committed by a group of (identified) professional criminals. Jackson is sympathetic to anarchism and his very readable book, the only one on Sacco and Vanzetti in print, has been remaindered which is why it's only half the original price.

Workers' Autonomy

80p

A few copies have been discovered hiding under someone's bed and so *Workers' Autonomy* is available again. It's a collection of articles on how workers can organise 'free from the interference of trade unions or parties'. Trying to move beyond unions, Marxism and syndicalism.

Chairperson Mo

