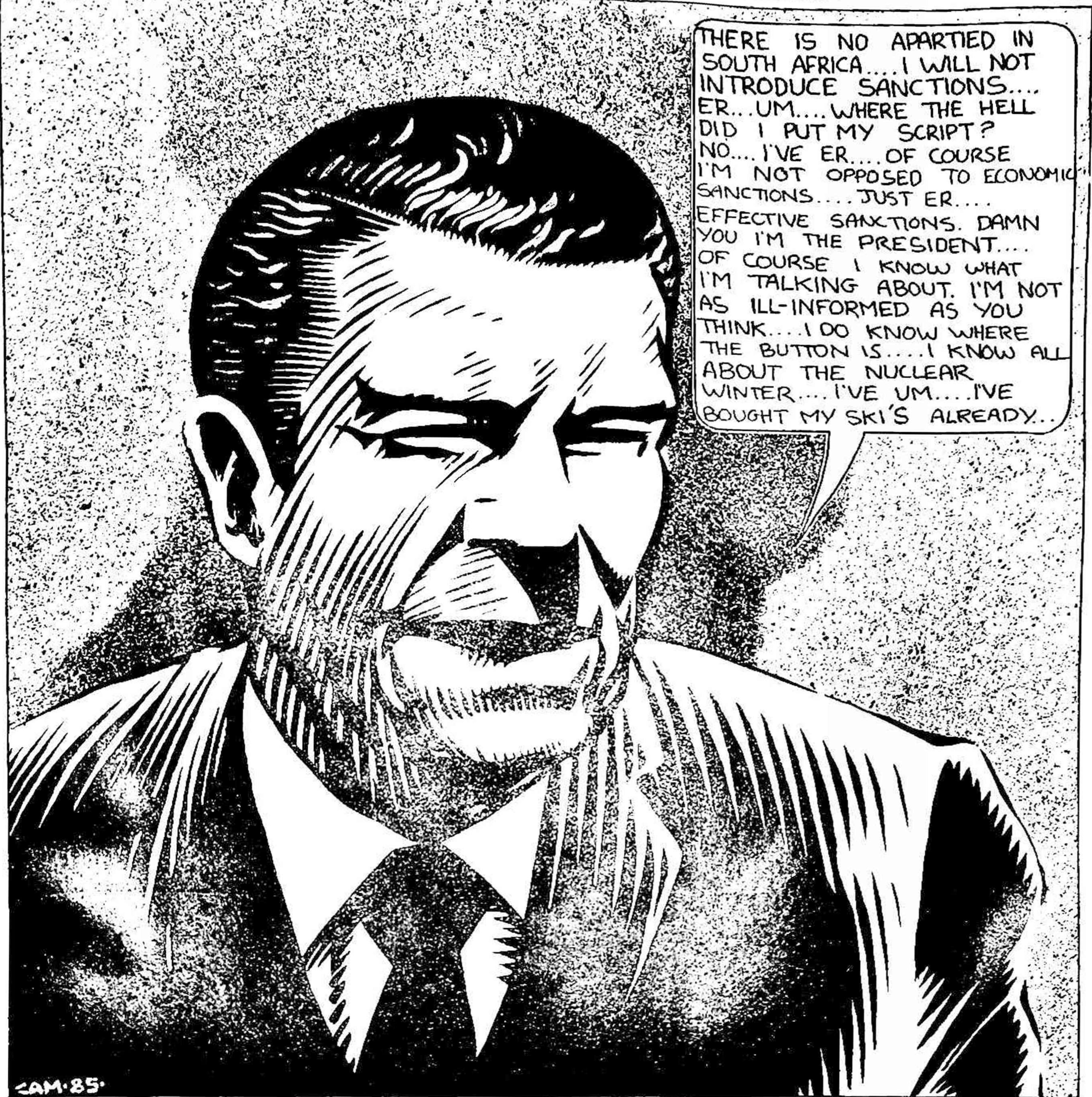


FREEDOM

international anarchist monthly



THERE IS NO APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA.... I WILL NOT INTRODUCE SANCTIONS.... ER... UM.... WHERE THE HELL DID I PUT MY SCRIPT? NO... I'VE ER... OF COURSE I'M NOT OPPOSED TO ECONOMIC SANCTIONS.... JUST ER... EFFECTIVE SANCTIONS. DAMN YOU I'M THE PRESIDENT... OF COURSE I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. I'M NOT AS ILL-INFORMED AS YOU THINK... I DO KNOW WHERE THE BUTTON IS.... I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE NUCLEAR WINTER.... I'VE UM... I'VE BOUGHT MY SKI'S ALREADY..

HANDSWORTH — EVOLUTION
VALPRED A & STATE MASSACRE

Editorial

Happy Birthday to us 99 today!

THE very first *Freedom* was published in October 1886. Interestingly it was subtitled 'A Journal of Anarchist Socialism', and came out monthly. This first series ran into the 1930's when there was a break of a few years until Vernon Richard's *Spain and the World* in 1936. From 1939 this became *War Commentary* (for anarchism) and back to *Freedom* again in 1945. Throughout this time *Freedom* Press has also been the main publisher of anarchist books in the UK.

This current series of *Freedom* has

been going since Sept/Oct 1945, which was just when I was born. Thus we have both just turned forty! I hope both *Freedom* and I do better in the next forty years.

While I know that the mere survival of the libertarian ideal in an authoritarian age is something of a minor triumph . . . it just doesn't feel like that to me personally. Meanwhile . . .

A FREE FREEDOM?

As you may or may not have noticed we have introduced special 'low-income' rates for *Freedom*. Twelve issues for £4.95 means you actually get one whole FREE *Freedom*! It is now cheaper to subscribe to *Freedom* rather than buy it at your local bookshop.

Apart from our natural human generosity, this move was prompted by a hard look at the realities of sale or return via A Distribution. First the bookshops take 1/3, then, allowing for bad debts, postage costs and returns we

only get 60% on 2/3, which is 18p per copy. Unfortunately *Freedom* costs almost 50% more than that to print! (If you divide copies actually sold into print bill.) So you will be helping us out a great deal if you got your regular copy of *Freedom* via a subscription (even the cheap rate one).

Cheap Group Subs!

Keeping track of sale or return records seems to be beyond the average local anarchist group. Indeed, as A Distribution have reported ever since they started, some anarchist groups are not very good at paying at all!

So to save you a lot of bureaucratic nastiness *Freedom* has decided to offer (from now until the end of 1986 anyway) a stupendous loss making (for us) deal. Wait for it . . . Group or Bundle Subs at 50% off cover price — post free! The offer is restricted to anarchist groups and *Freedom* contacts only and is really intended to help those who do 'irregular' bookstalls-/street sales. We will lose money on it, and you will make money on it, so take advantage of our 'Centenary Madness' while it lasts!

The catch (there always is one) is that subs are PAID IN ADVANCE — no pay, no get! For 'Freedom Contacts' we'll do a quarterly sub. For others, six months minimum period. Also we only want to deal in multiples of five copies per month (5, 10, 15, etc) to keep it simple this end. Bundles mailed to a single address only!

The Group Bundle subscription rates per 5 copies are quarterly £3.25, six months £7.50, one year £15.00, plus as many donations as you can scrape together!

Stu Stuart

STREET-SELL FREEDOM?

Yes, it does get down to that occasionally. Anyone who wants to help street-sell *Freedom* (and any other rubbish we might have stashed away at the Bookshop) at the CND National Rally on October 26th, should give us a ring on 01-247 9249 a couple of days before the event. Go on, pretend you're an anarcho-trot for the day!

the editors

WHY RIOT?

NO ONE seems particularly surprised that there was a riot in Birmingham. Some people with local knowledge didn't expect it just then. But the idea of riot itself, in Britain, no longer shocks. 1981 has taught something. Forgetting the long homegrown tradition, two basic explanations are produced.

One is that foreigners riot, especially



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written material should be on lined paper
using every other line. Keep your own
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original.

The editors

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THE OPEN DOOR POLICY

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

COME AND HELP

A Distribution: Weds 16th Oct and 30th
Oct 5-8pm.

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black foreigners. If we let them live
here and don't keep them in their place,
this is how they behave.

Another is that, if we are nasty to
people, if we don't socialise them
properly, teach them proper values and
allow them to integrate into our value
systems, they will behave like naughty
children.

The first view has its purple outlet in
most of the press. The level of open
racism varies. *The Express* draws South
African parallels, *The Daily Mail* talks
about tribalism, *The Sun* has maps
equating riots with 'immigrants'
(Jews? Hugonats? Poles? Anglo-
Saxons?). There are problems with this
analysis. The rioters were mixed. If
Asian-owned shops suffered, it might
be because most of the local shops were
Asian-owned. White mobs riot, and
not just Irish (who are honorary
foreigners anyway) or football crowds
(who are working class). Even police
riot. There have always been riots in
Britain, out of hunger, desperation,
politics or simple fun.

The second view sees itself as more
well-meaning. These things are due to
disadvantage. Unemployment in
Handsworth is twice the Birmingham
average and three times the national
average. There are more than twice the
national average of single parent
families. The statistics are endless. *The
Sun's* maps match as well with these
things as with 'immigrants'. This
analysis also has problems, apart from
being patronising. For instance, it now
sees solutions as employment and
nuclear families, monitored by local
authorities, social workers, the 'caring
professions'.

Policing

Both views rely on policing. In the
first case this is obvious and the South
African parallels hold up. In the second
case, community policing tries not to
irritate people. There is a professional
dispute about which version, they have
had both, is to blame for Handsworth.
The Labour-controlled police author-
ity, which traditionally takes the softer
approach, supports the force's hand-
ling of the riot. The chairman, Edwin
Shore, thinks that most of the area's
56,000 inhabitants want to be policed,
notice the wording, not want policing
for others. 'We will never turn our (sic)
streets over to vigilantes'. The solution
according to the first view is to pour
money into military policing. That of
the second view is to pour money into
community projects and to use such
police as a reserve.

There are various specific reasons
put forward for Handsworth. Racial
tension between blacks and Asians
hasn't got very far, ('Why the West
Indians Hate Asians' feature article,
The Sun). The police say that it was set
up and organised by drug dealers,
things cannot happen without a clear
hierarchy and leaders. This may seem
thin but it is enough to disturb media
opinion, ('We cannot condone a soft
approach by the police to the drugging
of our communities' — editorial, *The
Sunday Times*). Liberal opinion blames
unemployment, as if shitty make-work
schemes keep people content. They
may well be right that the boring,
deadening nature of most work stifles,
but not because it gives fulfillment. It
just stifles.

Two Dead

There are sad aspects of this riot.
Two people died. Maybe not so much
in that homegrown tradition or in
international terms, but still dead.
Another is that, like most traditional
riots, it was on home ground. This has
tactical advantages, but obvious disad-
vantages. *The Guardian* sees these as
enough to label as stupidity, why do
people destroy their own. As if it was
theirs, rather than the place they
happen to find themselves, controlled
by outside agencies. And if it was
worth preserving.

This riot also has its own cheery
aspects. One is the way Home
Secretary Hurd was smartly seen off.
Next time they'll have to send Michael
Heseltine and his flak jacket.

We don't present solutions to the
issue of rioting, mainly because we
don't see the same problem. People
will riot. People with more reasons to
be pissed off will riot more easily. The
problem is that, despite the efforts of
Class War, they could often riot more
constructively (sometimes the riot is
completely wrong and directed against
some equally oppressed community.
The world has too much of this).
Anxious official enquiries, whether by
Lord Scarman, the police or the local
authorities, cannot seem to grasp this
point. Whether a direct iron fist or a lot
of waffle is the best containment
mechanism is a problem for others.
Ours is to help people to know 'why
riot'.

DP

Anarchist Bookfair

AS regular readers of *Freedom* will know, if there's one thing the London anarchist groups can actually do, it's organise a good book fair. The last two were jam-packed, with a mob milling about on the pavement outside waiting to get in. The New Anarchist Review who actually 'organise' it consists of Housmans Bookshop, The Anarchist Book Service, A Distribution and Freedom Bookshop. Last time everybody who came asked them to book a bigger hall . . . and so they have.

The next Anarchist Book Fair will be at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 on Saturday 9th November. Doors open at 10:00am until 10:00pm, entrance free, food and booze available all day plus a social with riders, rants and mystery events after 6:30pm.

Local Papers

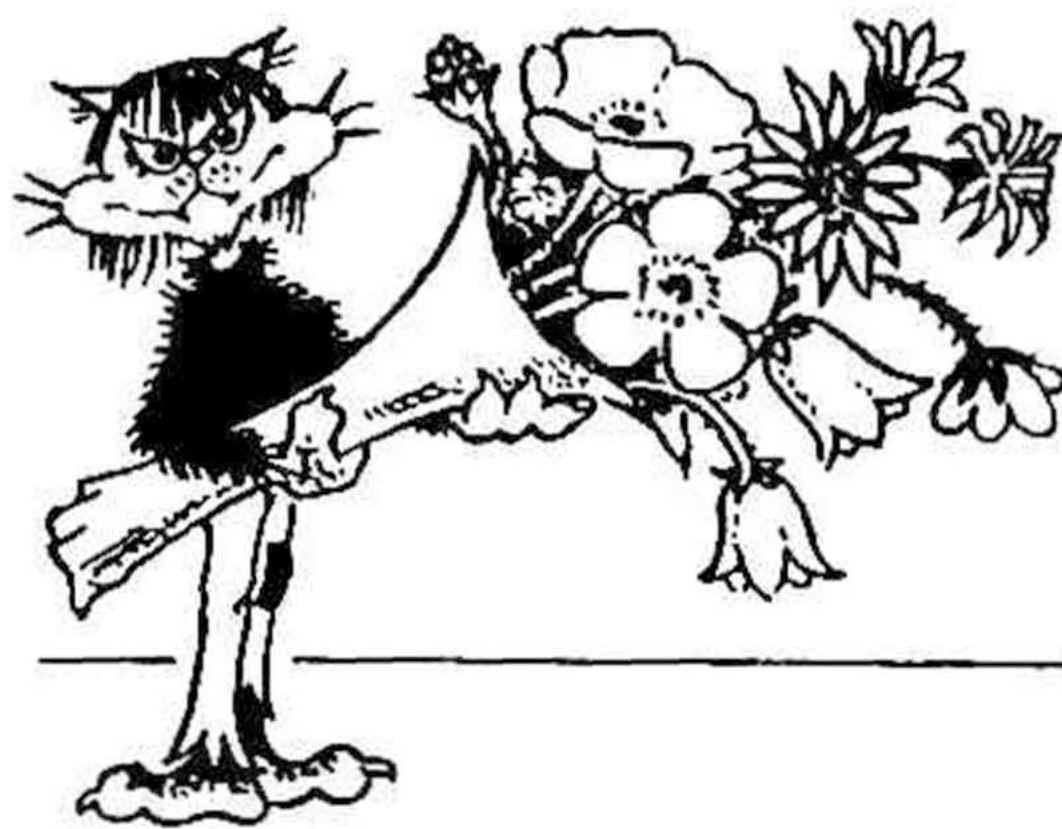
There will be a free stall with space for your paper provided by A Distribution. You should get letters telling you all about it but write to A Distribution care of *Freedom* to say you're coming if you can. Any local anarchist publishing group that would like some space please do likewise.

These Book Fairs really are very relaxed, friendly events and a great chance to get to know other anarchists, score a few 'specially cheap' books, eat some surprisingly good food and generally have a good time. Everybody who is anybody will be there, so why don't you be somebody who will be there too! See you Saturday 9th November

Stu

Mollies Café 287 Upper Street, N1

Mollies Café, which celebrated its first birthday in grand style last July, has had a fresh lick of paint and now sports a revitalised anarchist bookshop. Vegan cats: open 1:00pm to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday.



Riff Raff Poets

Charlotte Wilson and Peter Kropotkin founded *Freedom* in 1886. He was a Russian Prince become soldier become geographer become social revolutionary become philosopher become anarchist and prophet. His autobiography *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* is a book that should be on every reader's list. To celebrate his life and work, and this centenary of *Freedom*, RiffRaffPoets will be on tour (as they have been these past fifteen years) carrying literature — books and pamphlets — and performing, giving readings of poems and songs to inspire and entertain. We intend to carry *Freedom* Press titles, to have a range of Housmans pacifist and peace literature, to encourage others to publish postcardpoems, posterpoems and magazines as we do. Coincidentally with *Freedom*'s 100th birthday is *Peace News*' 50th birthday. We shall endeavour to promote both, not forgetting the other magazines like *Green Anarchist*. We also publish our own magazine, *RiffRaffPoets*, number 3 of which may be of interest, get in touch if you can organise a meeting/performance in your home town. **RiffRaffPoets, c/o Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.**

Dennis Gould,
Pat Van Twest,
Jeff Cloves

Iron Hawk Appeal

Greetings Brothers and Sisters, I am an innocent native American on death row in Tennessee. I need funds to hire investigators and specialist lawyers to obtain a new trial and prove it.

Please contribute to my defence fund and accept my sincere thanks. Please don't let me be a victim of capital punishment for a lack of capital. Send all contributions to: **The Iron Hawk Defense Fund, c/o Melodie Hartline, Ashwood Church of Christ, 2206 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.**

Mary Ward Centre

FRIDAY September 27th sees the start of a new series of weekly discussion meetings at the Mary Ward Centre. These meetings have been held since 1983 as a continuation from Nicolas Walter's course on 'Anarchism — Theory and Practice, Past and Present' and, to quote the prospectus, "discussion is open and wide-ranging, all are welcome".

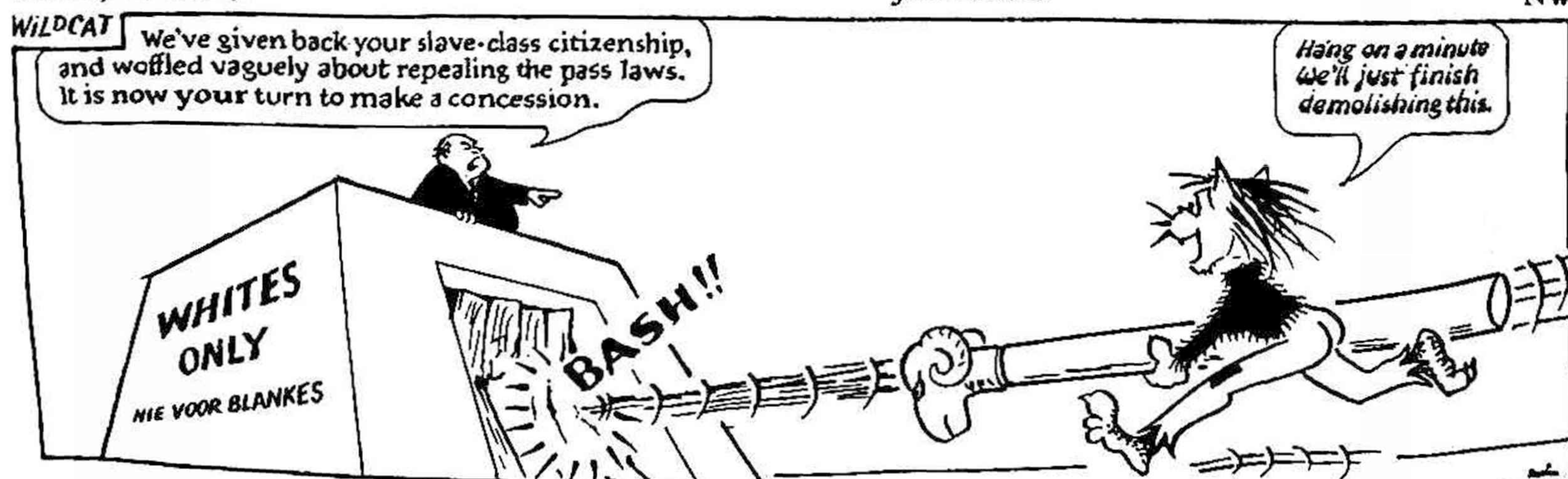
This session we hope to present a lively programme of debates, talks and teach-ins on a variety of topics, and the opportunity to hear some of our movement's noted orators: check the listings in *Time Out* and *City Limits* for details.

**Fridays at 8:15pm
Mary ward Centre
42 Queen Square, London WC1**

Announcement

CND demonstration on Saturday, 26 October The annual national demonstration this year will consist of a mass rally in Hyde Park, London, involving a march round the park to call at the Russian and American embassies, a 4-minute die-in, a 4-minute sit-down, a 4-minute hand-link, and a closing meeting. Further information from local CND or from the new address of **National CND: 22/24 Underwood Street, London N1 7JG.**

NW



Italy

VALPREDI AND THE STATE MASSACRE

ON the 1st of August this year the longest and most complicated political trial in Italian history came to an end in Bari, in Southern Italy. Bizarrely, the anarchist Pietro Valpreda was together in the dock with a number of fascists accused of having bombed a bank in Milan sixteen years ago. The court found them all not guilty for lack of sufficient evidence.

Although this should now be the end of the affair, the trial has gone through so many twists and turns that it is not impossible that the state may under some pretext or other continue its vendetta against Pietro Valpreda. All the evidence indicates that the bombing which took place on 12th December 1969 in Piazza Fontana in Milan and led to the death of sixteen people (with a hundred injured) was instigated by the State and carried out by fascists. Valpreda was always innocent.

The bombing was the first of its kind in Italy and deeply shocked the public. The police immediately claimed that anarchists were responsible. They could not have chosen a better scapegoat. The press took up the theme and launched a smear campaign against anarchists labelling them bloodthirsty monsters and madmen. The real monsters, of course, those members of the government and secret service who set up the bombing. The motive of the bombing was clearly to discredit the left at a time when the political temperature in Italy was rising. 1969 was a time of tremendous political unrest when students and workers were joining forces, barricades were being erected and demonstrations and strikes were commonplace. *

Giuseppe Pinelli was the first anarchist to be accused of the bombing. He was held in detention illegally for 3 days. On the third day he was dead. According to the police he had committed suicide by jumping from a window. However, the police report is so full of contradictions and holes that no one in Italy believes the police story. It is generally accepted that

Pinelli was thrown out of the window and therefore murdered by the authorities.

Valpreda was arrested immediately after this episode on December 15. Once again the evidence was contradictory. One of the witnesses was an alcoholic taxi-driver who was shown a photograph of Valpreda before he was asked to identify him in an identification parade. Valpreda remained in prison till 1973 when public opinion finally forced the authorities to pass a special law under which Valpreda could be released.

The judgement of the court of Bari will, hopefully, be the last in the series of trials to which Valpreda has been subjected over the last 16 years. Unfortunately, the verdict of the court does not necessarily imply that the innocence of Valpreda has been officially acknowledged, despite the public prosecutor's clear statement that Valpreda is innocent.

Practically everyone in Italy now realises that the State was responsible for the bombing in Piazza Fontana — it is popularly referred to as the "state massacre". On this occasion, at least, the state's attempt to smear anarchists has gone badly wrong. The whole episode has probably done more to damage the state's reputation than that of anarchists.

JA

source: Paolo Finzi of *Rivista 'A'*

Obituary

JULIAN BECK

JULIAN BECK, who died last month, lived and worked with Judith Malina for nearly 40 years as directors of the Living Theatre and leading proponents of cultural anarchism.

Julian Beck was born in New York on 31 May 1925. He met Judith Malina while they were studying with Erwin Piscator, the great German pioneer of left-wing theatre, and in 1947 they founded the Living Theatre in New York. This radical company combined the tradition of Antoine Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty with the tradition of Wilhelm Reich's political psychology to create an extreme form of dramatic realism intended to involve audiences in a total theatrical experience. After several years of successful avant-garde work, including such contributors as Kenneth Rexroth and Paul Goodman, the Living Theatre became world-famous 25 years ago for its productions of Jack Gelber's *The Connection* (about the drug scene) and

Kenneth Brown's *The Brig* (about military detention), both of which were seen in London.

In 1964 Beck and Malina were fined and imprisoned for refusing to pay taxes, and their theatre was closed. After their release they spent most of their time in Europe, being based in Italy but often visiting Britain. Their productions became larger and looser as their ideas became more mystical and universal, and they also became increasingly conscious of their Jewish roots. But they remained convinced anarchists, expressing their politics in their life and work and inspiring individuals and groups in many places by their communal and artistic vision.

Julian Beck died of cancer in New York on 14 September 1985. He will be remembered as a key figure in the revival of anarchism after the Second World War.

NW

In Brief

David Martin, Labour Member of the European Parliament, has accused the government of failing to impose sanctions on South Africa because 47% of the Tory Party's corporate donations are provided by companies with vested interests in the country. These companies give over £1 million, about one third of the Party's total income.

Paul Rootes, industrial relations director for Ford's cars, is disappointed in British management. He has told a meeting that the only useful result of weakening trades unions is that it has removed management's excuse for Britain's 30 years of relative inefficiency.

AIDS carriers who knowingly pass on the disease can be fined \$3,500 under a new law in New South Wales, Australia. The draft legislation, to be submitted to the state parliament in September, also calls for a \$700 fine for doctors who fail to notify health officials of an AIDS sufferer or carrier.

A former astronaut, James Irwin, has abandoned his fourth attempt to find the remains of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat, Turkey.

The Home Office is to replace the entire police mobile radio communications system in England and Wales outside London. This is because the wavebands now used are the most suitable for VHF broadcasting. The project will cost £64 million.

Sri Lanka

KILLING WITHOUT MERCY

BADULLA is a small town in the South East of Sri Lanka. When I was there recently I stayed in a seedy 'hotel' where I was the only guest (if you don't count the mosquitos). After dinner the owner explained to me why the place was so spartan in its furnishings. In 1983 the Sinhalese majority in the town had indulged in a race riot in which the furniture from the hotel had been smashed up or stolen. In the same riot the man had seen all his other businesses, a factory, four small shops and another hotel, burned to the ground and he had narrowly escaped with his life. His brother had not been so lucky; he was dragged out onto the streets and beaten to death for the simple crime of being a Tamil.

Such experiences were fairly commonplace in the '83 riots and the result was not difficult to predict. The Tamil minority made considerable efforts to arm itself and began a struggle for 'national liberation' which had as its purpose the establishment of a separate state in the north and east of Sri Lanka which they refer to as Eelam. They were none too fussy about their methods. At one stage a group of liberation 'tigers' drove into the old bus station at Anuradhapura, yelled something equivalent to "take this you Sinhalese bastards" and machine gunned everyone waiting for a bus. The death toll was around 100 and the guerillas apparently had time to check whether the injured spoke Tamil or Sinhalese and to finish off those who spoke the latter before driving off into a wildlife park where they shot dead a couple of the guards.

Terror and Traitors

The situation has now polarised on fairly classical lines. Parties representing the majority Sinhalese argue in parliament over how best to deal with the 'terrorist' threat. Spending on the armed forces has been increased sufficiently to tip the budget into deficit and there are reports of Israeli involvement in training the security forces, yet genuine successes against the guerillas are very rare. The

guerillas mine roads, attack army posts and string up 'traitors' from lamp posts but by the time the army responds in strength they have disappeared into scrub jungle which is virtually perfect guerilla territory or else are absorbed back into the community which they sprang from.

The army, frustrated by its failures, has given up trying to control the far north and has taken to random killings of Tamils who live in border regions as reprisals for raids. The best parallel I can give for this would be if the apprentice boys of Derry were called up and sent into the Bogside every time there was an IRA explosion. At the gate of the army barracks in Matara there is a picture of a soldier running a bayonet into a tiger's stomach — the caption of "kill without mercy" gives a good indication of the current mood being fostered in the armed forces. Many Buddhist religious leaders are encouraging this mood as their respect for the sanctity of all forms of life clearly doesn't extend to the Tamil Hindus. One leading Buddhist recently announced that if the government couldn't deal with the terrorists it should hand over power to the Buddhists who would know how to handle the job. Compromise wasn't what he had in mind.

Compromise remains nevertheless a serious possibility since the civil war is taking its toll on both sides. Sri Lanka is heavily dependent on tourism and the civil war has hit the tourist trade so hard that many people in the country are desperate for a solution. Financially the war is a constant drag on the government's development programme and so it had good reason to welcome Rajiv Gandhi's arrangement of peace talks at Thimpu. The guerillas were less happy about the talks but had little choice other than to attend them because their arms supply and their training grounds are both rooted in the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. If they refused to attend Gandhi could, theoretically, have left them without either adequate arms or a secure base and consequently wide open to a massacre.

The peace talks have, however, frequently been lurching on the brink of failure because neither side is willing to give way on the abstract question of national sovereignty. The Sinhalese politicians consider it to be an imperative that Sri Lanka remain one nation (though they are prepared to concede some degree of autonomy to the north) whilst some Tamil politicians glimpse the prospect of power for themselves and are insisting on the need to create Eelam. In other words the politicians of both communities have decided that the fact that ordinary people are dying doesn't matter half so much as their own desire to lead a nation. A better illustration of the evils of nationalism it would be difficult to devise (though the Lebanese and the Ugandans are trying).

After the British

From the second the British departed, the Sinhalese leaders behaved as if national liberation meant that the good jobs would now go to them instead of the British. They even imposed a ruling saying that all dealings with government officials had to take place in the Sinhalese language thus ensuring not only that the minority were shut out of government work but that they would also find it very difficult to get the simplest piece of paperwork completed. A settlement programme was begun which gave jungle land in Tamil areas to Sinhalese families to farm (ie they stole the common land from the locals). Every compromise that the Sinhalese politicians have made on this racist system has come far too late and gives every appearance of being forced out of them by armed struggle or civil disobedience.

Yet the experience of being on the receiving end of a virulent nationalism taught the Tamil politicians little about human rights. In the north and east of Sri Lanka there are many other nationalities besides Tamils; there are, for instance, a lot of Muslims. When Muslim leaders asked for permission to attend the Thimpu peace talks and asked for guarantees about their position in any independent or autonomous state they were rebuffed by the Tamil politicians. "First let's create Eelam, then we'll talk about Muslim rights" was the attitude and fighting between Muslims and Tamils amply demonstrates the respect with which such promises are greeted by Muslims in the east. Clearly the prospect exists that an independent Tamil state would behave as badly towards its minorities as the Sinhalese have towards theirs.

In this complicated situation it now appears as if President Jayawardene's

government has at last been forced into offering something worthwhile. Law and order, land settlement, agriculture and education will come under provincial jurisdiction and 95,000 Tamil tea workers will at last be granted citizenship of the country where they were born. The government is thus clinging desperately to its desire to rule the whole island but granting under pressure the things that matter — the army will no longer raid majority Tamil areas, land will no longer be stolen, and Tamils will no longer be forced to go abroad for Higher Education because they are effectively shut out of local colleges by a quota system. Such an offer is, I suspect, perfectly acceptable to the bulk of the Tamil population since it would leave them free to get on with their own lives without the risk of a pogrom. Yet there is still a prospect that some or all of the guerilla groups may turn it down for the simple reason that it doesn't establish a separate nation state. The prospects for peace are therefore riding on the fragile egos of a few guerilla leaders and on the trust they place on the word of a government

which they have every reason to mistrust. For the guerilla leaders the time may well have come to ask themselves whether it is more important to create a nation or to look to the welfare of those who might live in it. For the racist Sinhalese politicians there may be plenty of time to dwell on the fact that it is a lot easier to spark off a bloody nationalist conflict than it ever is to end it.

Andy Brown

[Eds: Andy Brown is perhaps being a touch too "pro-Tamil" in his report. Under British rule the Tamils had an extremely privileged position, dominating the bureaucracy of government, finance and education as "trustees" of British rule. Early Tamil nationalism was openly fueled by a desire to maintain that privileged position against the majority Sinhalese majority. The educational "quotas" were a reasonably accurate reflection of the different size of the Tamil and Sinhalese populations. "Eelam" is also made up of large areas where the Sinhalese are 60% of the population!]

Spain

A REPLY TO THE CNT-AIT

THE report by the press secretary of the CNT-AIT contains a number of omissions, errors or inaccuracies, and for the sake of the international libertarian movement, they should be corrected.

He states that the anarcho-communists around the magazine *Askatasuna* were ejected because they were followers of the 'Organizational Platform' of Arshinov. Nothing could be further from the truth. *Askatasuna* was not Platformist, and it was not ejected for this reason. It was expelled because it advocated a libertarian *Enszadi* (Basque country) against the 'greater Spain' ideas of many in the CNT leadership. There was a tendency influenced by Platformism, although it used the 'Platform' as a point of reference, and not as the gospel. This was the Movimiento Comunista Libertaria (MCL) and they too were expelled around the same time.

Makhno

Incidentally, why is the 'Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists' always referred to as the sole work of Arshinov, when it was also signed by, among others, Nestor Makhno, and Ida Mett, author of the Kronstadt Commune. Is it because Makhno is a 'hero' of the anarchist movement, and it's OK to salute his work in the Ukraine, but not his part in the writing of a so-called scurrilous document? Arshinov never advocated, or even mentioned, the creation of an 'anarchist party', whereas Malatesta during a period in the 1890s talked about the 'anarchist social-revolutionary party'. Of course, with Malatesta this was obviously a temporary aberration, not worth talking about.

The CNT-AIT press secretary fails to mention the expulsion of Sebastian Puigserver, former member of the national CNT committee, and a tendency with which he was affiliated, the Anarcho-Syndicalist Affinity Groups. The grounds for their expulsion, as for the MCL, was that they had set up parallel groups that planned to take over the CNT. If one bears in mind that the CNT was only reconstructed on the merger of different libertarian tendencies — the councilists, the libertarian communists, *Askatasuna*, autonomists, traditional anarchists, etc, and that the basis on which it attempted to function was the reconciliation of differing points of view, then this change seems amazing.

BICICLETA, an independent anarchist collective, themselves expelled from the CNT, published a letter outlining the links between the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (the group that had dominated the CNT for so many years) and the CNT exiles in Toulouse. Juan Ferrer, a FAI leader, had proposed at an intercontinental meeting of anarchist federations that the exiles should take the reins of the CNT, and Federica Montseny, leading exile, and one of those who had served as minister (!) in the Republican Government in the Civil War, said in Paris at a public meeting that rather than let the CNT escape from their hands they would prefer to see it die.

Physical attacks

One should also remember the physical attacks on the so-called 'reformists' during the expulsion period, and just after, when those unions who had broken away had their offices ransacked (the Water, Gas and Electricity Union in Barcelona in January, and the entertainments industry union in March 1979). The worst incident was on the 16th March, when 60 'anarcho-syndicalists' attacked the office of the CNT of Maturo, near Barcelona, where a regional plenum of the opposition unions was being held. Firing shots in the air and laying about them with iron bars, they wounded several militants, including Enrique Marcos, the former general secretary, and a militant of Maturo who nearly lost an eye.

Since then, other aggressions have taken place. 150 Faistas, waving pistols and knives, demonstrated outside the founding conference of the CNT-Unificado. This was as the CNT-AIT press secretary says, obviously the 'last straw'. Other incidents have included a CNT-U militant being struck over the head with an iron bar after a demonstration in Barcelona last year, result a fractured skull.

For an organisation which accuses the CNT-U of being reformist, it seems mighty strange that they should take the question of who owns the initials 'CNT' to the bourgeois courts. They lost the case, by the way.

[Eds: We did see a Spanish Report saying they actually WON . . .?]

There are probably many workers in the CNT-AIT thoroughly sick of the violence and sectarianism employed against workers in the CNT-U, libertarians themselves, just as there are many workers who have left the CNT, and are disgusted at these antics. The sooner these destructive squabbles are settled, the better for the libertarian workers movement in Spain.

Nick Heath

Evolution

ANARCHY AND NATURAL SELECTION

IN his article 'Evolution: the biological basis of anarchism' (*Freedom*, September 1985) Professor Rob gives an interesting historical account of the relationship between ideology and conceptions of social and biological evolution. However in addition to (what looks like) mistranslations/typographical errors and some blunders he manages to avoid all mention of the current issues and debates in evolutionary biology and sociobiology (the study of the evolution of social behaviour) of most interest to anarchists. The only biology is to be found in the opening paragraph which masquerades as 'condensed evolutionary theory'. The content seemed a very odd way of introducing the subject to non-biologists and despite several years research in sociobiology I found it difficult to interpret (perhaps I'm not the one to say this — see PS).

The first mistake occurs in uncritically repeating Kropotkin's point that most species had more ferocious ancestors. Unfortunately most species, including 'communally-living' ones are just as likely to have had less ferocious ancestors too, so that this can't be used to justify a naive belief in the historical (now *biological*) inevitability of mutual aid. In any case mutual aid as opposed to strength and warlike behaviour are in no way logically exclusive. The most mutualistic of animals may also be the most 'barbaric' in different contexts or at different times.

Rob also suggests that studies in social anthropology support the hypothesis of the *biological* evolution of mutual aid, but in fact anthropology is rarely in a position to answer such questions. In one sense *everything* about humans could be said to have evolved biologically, in that our biology/genetic structure provides the framework and limits on potential that cannot be transcended. But as I'm sure Rob knows biologists mean something more specific in saying that evolution has occurred — namely that a genetically-controlled (or substantially influenced) characteristic has spread throughout a population over generations (although not necessarily to *all* members of any given generation). Natural selection implies the differen-

tial survival (strictly speaking the *more successful reproduction*) of some individuals, but at what level? One possibility is the greater survival/reproduction of 'fitter' individuals at the expense of others, or of 'fitter' genes operating in the bodies of individuals. This can be called *individual selection*. Alternatively natural selection could operate at the level of populations, where some groups of a particular species survive/reproduce at the expense of other groups of that species. This is called *group selection*. Note that the reason for one type of individual/group 'winning' in evolutionary terms may not involve *any* direct conflict or fighting at all, contrary to the popular fallacy. For example if one sort of individual or group gets up earlier in the morning than the other and gets access to a restricted food supply, then that type may survive and reproduce more effectively than the late-risers without the two ever even meeting, let alone 'fighting tooth and nail'. The jargon of sociobiology (with evolutionary arms races, wars of attrition, etc) often completely contradicts the reality.

Kropotkin's mutual aid is a variant of the idea of group selection but it is not just a reactionary ideology which leads one to doubt the likelihood of it happening. Despite much effort evolutionary — and population — geneticists have had a very great difficulty in describing a possible mechanism for group selection that doesn't fall down because individuals would 'cheat' (eg not do their 'bit' of mutual aid but reap the benefits of the mutual aid of others). Having said that it could well be that hidden right-wing ideology may lead sociobiologists not to need *much* convincing that group selection is improbable. The provisional conclusion is that the number of conditions (environmental, population-genetic, etc) which would need to be fulfilled for group selection to be possible is rather large. Whether there was a situation in human history that might have ever met those conditions is less certain — probably *not*, it seems to me.

But it is a big mistake to assume that Huxleyan 'social Darwinism' is an inevitable concomitant of accepting

individual selection as the most widespread level of operation of biological evolution. As more recent theory is showing cooperation and mutualism could evolve, via *individual* selection by mechanisms such as kin selection and reciprocal altruism. In kin-selection genetic-relatedness serves as the criterion for who gets 'helped' (kin not necessarily meaning close family members). In reciprocal altruism individuals survive/breed more successfully than when they are prepared to help others given that those others will help them in the future. Both kin-selection and reciprocal altruism are susceptible to cheating but the scale of the problem is far less severe than for group selection with all that the latter implies concerning the subordination of *all* individual interests (even throughout life) to those of the group. But I'm not sure that group selection would be such an ethically positive evolutionary trend even if it were to be feasible. The 'hive mentality' which would surely result seems alien to any anarchist conception of what to aim for — it would certainly do away with any notion of the potentials of *individuals* being fulfilled.

Even if it be concluded that Kropotkin's evolution fails (in its grounding in the then rudimentary state of evolutionary biology) his arguments can still be effective counters to the utter crudity of much sociobiological commentary on social matters. The main problem, as always when social implications are being drawn from evolutionary ideas, is to delineate exactly what *mechanisms* in individuals can express the characteristics that are supposed to have evolved. Kropotkin is virtually useless for this purpose as are most other evolutionists who don't stick to biology. It certainly doesn't help to sidestep the problem by introducing long-discredited (in fact pre-darwinian) notions such as humans being 'advanced' or 'developed', as Rob does. *Biologically* humans are very primitive, undeveloped members of the mammalian class of primates. I wouldn't even agree that we're very advanced *socially* either. Similarly it is daft to assert that since mutual aid may have enabled humans to evolve biologically that we have some kind of biological *need* to 'experience' mutual aid in order to survive. Perhaps Rob meant the survival of the species, a concept that has nothing to do with group selection, in fact it's anti-evolutionist or non-evolutionist. Either way Rob has moved a long way from evolutionary biology, but he's also committed the well-known *naturalistic fallacy* which is the idea that because something is or has been 'natural' (such as mutual aid, if it is)

continued page 10

A MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION
SAW US PLOD PAINSTAKINGLY FROM
THE SIMPLE BARBARISM OF THE APES
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRUDE
STONE TOOLS.



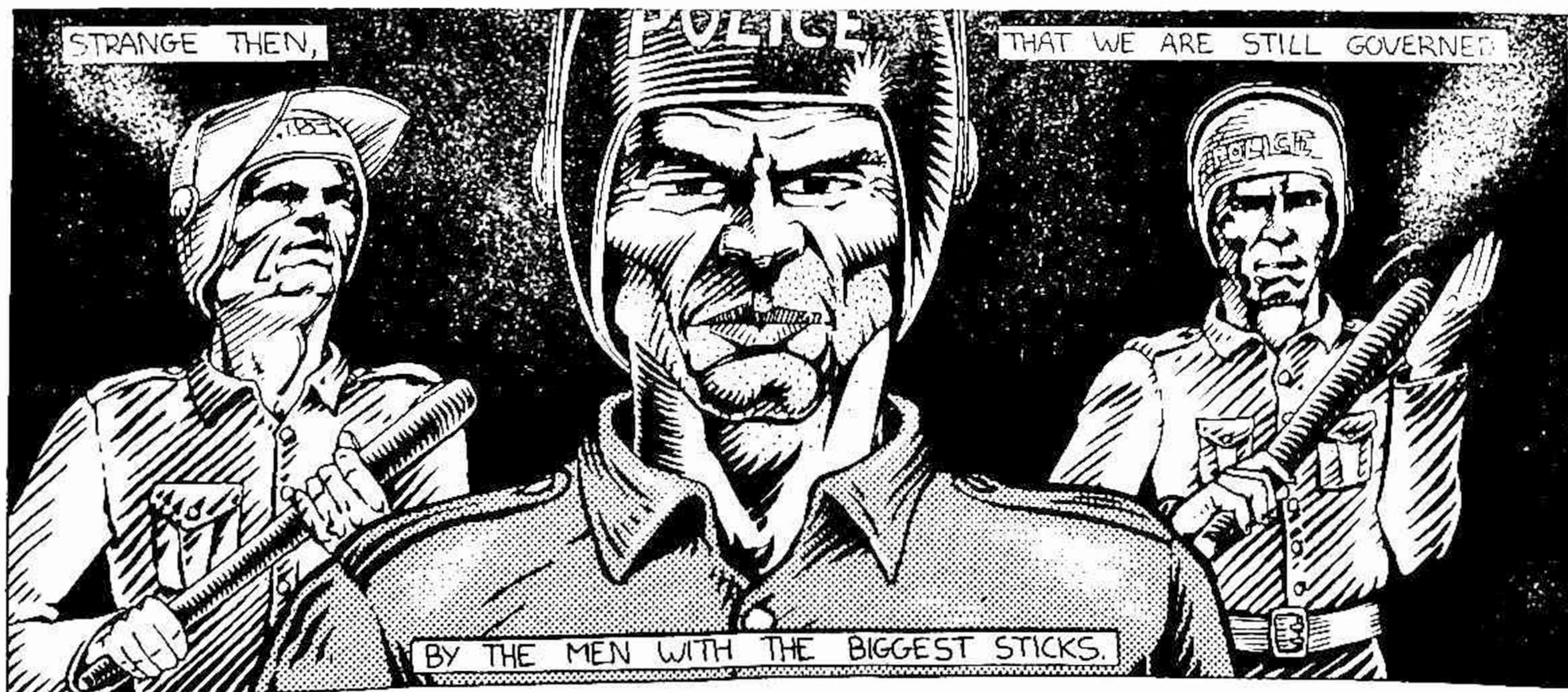
ANOTHER MILLION YEARS SAW US
LEAP FROM THE DISCOVERY OF FIRE,
THE INVENTION
OF THE WHEEL,
INTO AN AGE
OF SCIENTIFIC
MARVELS.



STRANGE THEN,

POLICE

THAT WE ARE STILL GOVERNED



BY THE MEN WITH THE BIGGEST STICKS.

then it is a moral imperative that should be encouraged just because it's natural and irrespective of any other effects of it. Whether fitting into a right-wing or left-wing view the naturalistic fallacy *always* leads to a sentimental and anti-historical belief in the illusion of inherent good or evil in humankind that if only we could get back to it we could grovel around happily in some version or other of the Garden of Eden. Such is not constructive.

Finally, I may be naive, but I don't believe my openly-proclaimed 'anarchist beliefs' had any effect on my career

in sociobiology — perhaps English academia is politically less restrictive than in Germany. If anything anarchism was rather refreshing to some people, compared to all of the liberal reactionaries and resigned apologists of whatever variety of rightism was in vogue.

Tom Jennings
Newcastle upon Tyne

PS Also in September's *Freedom*, PAL justifiably criticises my proclivity for pretentious pseudo-intellectual pedantry (!). While I accept this and will try to do better I oppose the 'philistine tendency' and the allied wish

to oversimplify everything for the benefit of those too lazy to exercise their minds.

While I'm 'on', a typo completely bugged up the meaning of a crucial passage of the September piece, 'The child's experience of power'. In the second section a sentence begins, "Inasmuch as even newborn babies are social and . . ." Cross out the 'and' and replace it with 'the' as the start of the next phrase and the sentence makes sense (honest).

[Eds: Try short sentences, Tom]

Kropotkin

BIOLOGY

AND

MUTUAL AID

I ENJOYED the September article on evolution. It did a good job explaining the opposing interpretations of evolution as put forward by individualism and anarchism. The article concluded by outlining a set of evolutionary alternatives for the future. The choice being between anarchy and extinction. Yet there is more for anarchism in evolutionary theory as a basis. Kropotkin saw his major task in *Mutual Aid* as providing a refutation of the oversimplified individualist explanation of competition in evolutionary theory. *Mutual Aid* was, Kropotkin said, "A book on the law of Mutual Aid viewed as one of the chief factors of evolution — not on all factors of evolution and their respective values; and this book had to be written, before the latter could become possible". He never lost sight of the fact that a host of other factors existed. For instance, he also wrote of the effects of environment on evolution.

Mutual Aid and Anarchism

However *Mutual Aid* was, for Kropotkin, the chief factor upon which the progressive development of human society depended. As the September article suggests, *Mutual Aid* could be regarded as the biological basis of anarchism as it provides evidence for the point of view that man is at root an altruistic being. Kropotkin was not content to leave it at that. In his writings he uses the theory of *Mutual*

Aid as an analytical tool for the analysis of society and in the end as a means with which to change society. It is arguable that Kropotkin used his theory of *Mutual Aid* not merely as a refutation of the individualist interpretation of evolution and to provide support for a communal view but that he extended its use so that it enabled him to elaborate a view of anarchism.

Morality

In *Ethics* Kropotkin spoke of the need for a new and realistic moral science. *Anarchist Morality* was his attempt to set out such a moral science. He uses *Mutual Aid* and the solidarity which arises from its practice to set down a code of moral conduct. This was done at two levels. At the very least *Mutual Aid* is practised because it pays in evolutionary terms. More importantly, for Kropotkin, such practice requires an equality which in turn yields a feeling of solidarity. It is this feeling that urges the individual to perform at a level of sacrifice beyond the mere reciprocal level that would suffice for a simplistic interpretation of *Mutual Aid*.

The State and Capitalism

Mutual Aid provides a historical view of society as organic. It allowed Kropotkin to sharply differentiate between the state and society. He is to be found using the point in *The State:*

It's Historic Role, against those who characterised attacks against the state as attacks against society.

In *Mutual Aid* he traces the development of the state back to Rome and beyond. More importantly he outlined a view of the modern state and capitalism as interlinked in purpose. In *The Great French Revolution* Kropotkin pointed to the origins of the bourgeois characteristics of the modern state. The state became, for him, an instrument of class oppression (*The State: It's Historic Role*). Therefore in evolutionary terms the state can be defined as a barrier to human progress (*Anarchist Communism and the State*).

Revolution

Kropotkin took an evolutionary view of social change. "Our first duty is to find out by an analysis of society, its characteristic tendencies at a given moment of evolution and to state them clearly. Then to act according to these tendencies in our relations with all those who think as we do" (*Anarchism: It's Philosophy and Ideal*). Kropotkin used his analysis of these tendencies to criticise what he saw as the wrong roads to change. He rejected the parliamentary route to social change as he saw parliamentarianism as the political manifestation of the relationship between the state and capitalism in the developed nations (*Paroles D'un Revolte*). The state socialist methods are ones which he naturally rejected. His later experience in Russia allowed him to see how they operated against the practice of *Mutual Aid*.

Anarchism as a revolutionary strategy did fit in with Kropotkin's evolutionary perspective. Outlining that vision of revolutionary change as evolution would take up too much space here but it does seem something worth following up. As far as it goes I hope this brief paper has shown that we have in Kropotkin's work a consistent view of anarchism based on evolutionary theory.

K Brennan

Freedom

PORNOGRAPHY & STATE CONTROL

PORNOGRAPHY, more than any other issue, brings extreme reactions from *Freedom* readers. The anarchist movement is apparently riven by deep divisions, the positions of the contenders defended with an emotional passion that we don't normally encounter. It is a pity that so much anger generated is misdirected, wasted on confusion. It is an even greater pity when the flames of rage are fanned by publications produced by groups who see themselves as anarchist, yet advocate actions which contravene fundamental anarchist beliefs.

Actions such as the burning of material which is believed to be pornographic amount to censorship, a denial of the individual's right to choose what s/he wishes to see or read. Yet this is proposed as a suitable way of dealing with such material by Liz Verran's pamphlet, *Pornography and State Control*, published recently by Medway DAM-IWA. This pamphlet and articles on the same theme which have appeared in various 'anarchist' journals, undoubtedly influence their readers. It was a report of just such direct action published in *Freedom* that set off this whole debate in our pages.

I found Liz Verran's pamphlet profoundly disturbing because, read uncritically by those whose rejection of female exploitation focusses on their degradation in some pornography, the views expressed will seem credible and will probably be received sympathetically. Many of the statements, such as those about the family, are indeed at the core of the anarcho-feminist position and will be acknowledged as valid by any anarchist. But woven in with this acceptable material (much of which actually has little to do with the specific question of pornography as defined by most of us) are strands of nonsense; and the conclusions follow not from the sensible parts but from the unreasoned hysteria.

The question of what constitutes pornography is important in this context, and Liz Verran devotes her first page and a half to it. Her summing up reads as follows: "The term pornography covers everything from cigarette adverts, which are effective because the sexual element is seen

unconsciously, to snuff films, in which women are shown being tortured to death for male pleasure." I found the breadth of her definition astonishing; reading her tirade, I felt that she would label as 'pornographic' everything she found distasteful, any visual image of a woman of which she does not approve. Even in her first page, the basis of unreasoning prejudice is evident. Unfortunately it may not be quite as obvious to her average reader as it was to me, for I have the dubious advantage of having spent some years listening to the consumers of this type of literature. I know the porn market; I used to know the punters. And they were not the monsters Liz Verran seems to think they are. They are, for the most part, ordinary human beings who no more revel in cruelty than any other randomly selected group of people living in Britain. They want to be part of loving relationships as much as everybody else. Many are lonely. Sexual fantasy offers a warm dream of acceptance: a very human reaction to the pressures of a frequently inhuman world.

Liz Verran seems to see all the men who read girly magazines as potential rapists, people whose anger at womankind surely mirrors her obvious anger with men. She clearly moves in a perceptual world that is very different from mine; for her, for instance, the only way to avoid being molested is to wear a wedding ring; I do not, have never done so, and cannot remember the last time I was molested when travelling, in the street, or anywhere else. I suspect she perceives molestation when I do not; she certainly sees sexual symbolism where I do not. Do others really believe that the Silk Cut cigarette advertisement shows "a vagina-shaped cut . . . implying the pornographic image of vagina as wound (a castrated male perhaps?)" For me it is simply fabric with a cut in it; a direct visual representation of the brand name.

When we see sexual threats all around us, does that not say more about us as individuals than about the world that we inhabit? And on that basis, should not some of those who would brick sex shops and burn

pornography look into their own motives, their fears and sexual attitudes?

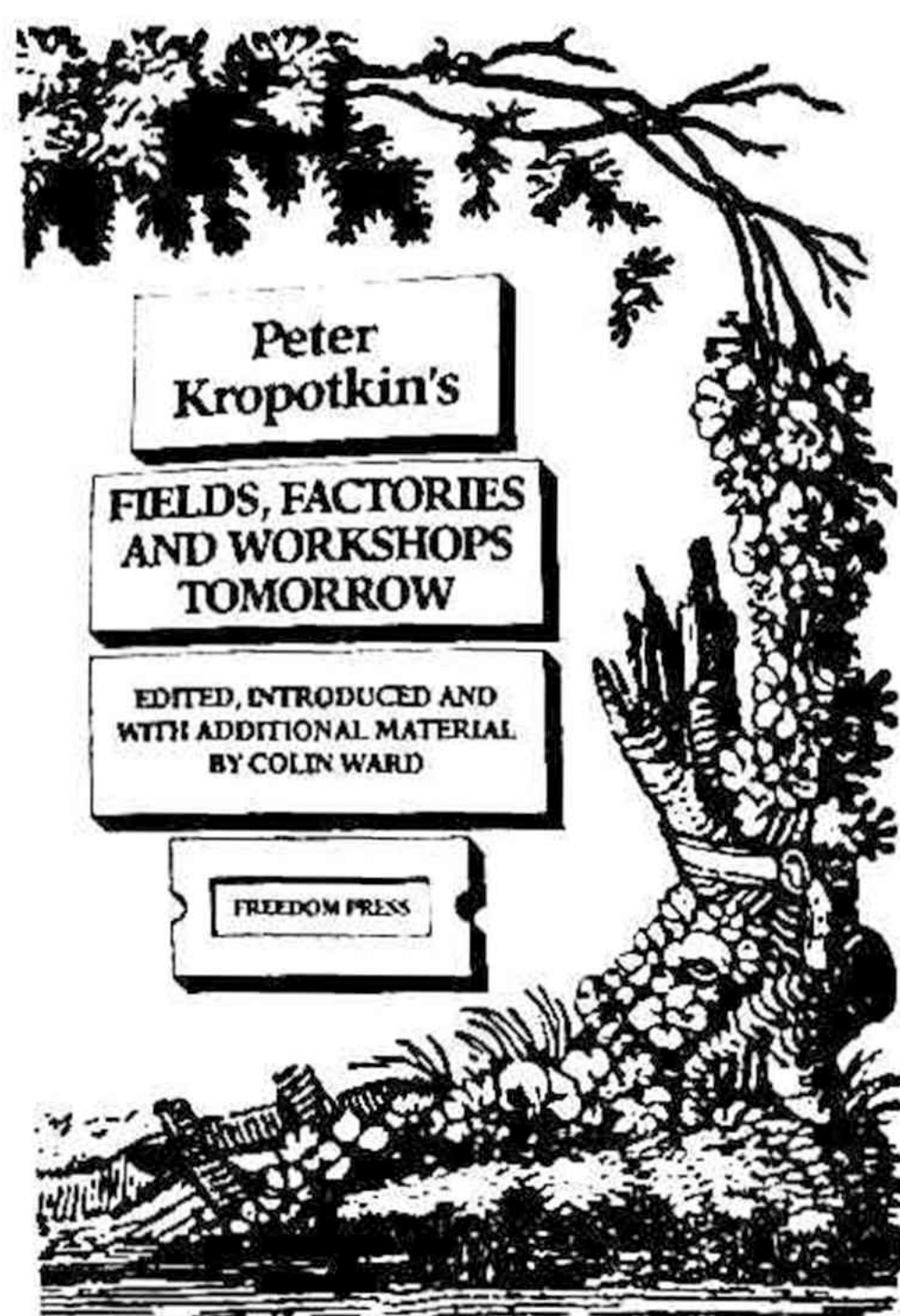
I freely acknowledge that it is difficult to grow up comfortable with sex in a paternalistic society. But to build fear of men in women's minds is to hold back the progress of personal liberation. If women make men into enemies, they are more likely to behave as such. Loving relationships, undermined (according to Liz Verran) by the attitudes revealed in pornography, become even more impossible between the sexes if women react in the way that she seems to do.

The sort of pornographic material that does show people — of either sex, any age — being exploited, being subjected to experiences which they would not freely choose, is unpleasant. Most men who enjoy looking at it actually fail to recognise the degree of subjugation that is present. Many are fooled by the smiling mouth of the model, they don't see the withdrawal in her eyes. In a more sensitive world, I would hope they would be aware of the absence of genuine sexual joy in the vast majority of publications. But until they have worked through their obsession with the plumbing, they are not likely to realise that rewarding sexual relationships include an essential component. By refusing to permit the display of the female body, we shall only increase guilty fascination with it. Let all see whatever they wish; then they will come to recognise the emptiness of the pornographic image.

In taking this position, I fall into the group that Liz Verran labels 'liberal'. Unfortunately she makes as many totally unwarranted assumptions about those of us who defend the rights and freedoms of pornographers as she does about the consumers of pornography, asserting, for example, that those who believe in freedom of publication also believe in the nuclear family! Where is the link between these two positions? Yet this non-existent link seems to be sufficient for her to separate belief in freedom from an anarchist position — a remarkable feat.

The separation of libertarianism from supposed anarcho-feminism is the product of irrational anger. Logic has been submerged under passionate rejection of an admittedly objectionable pornography industry. We must not lose our heads. We must not be swayed by name-calling by those who say they are with us but seek to turn anarchism away from the struggle for freedom on every level. We must have the courage of our deepest anarchist convictions and reject calls for censorship, whatever their source.

Arabella Melville



The Conquest of Bread

by Peter Kropotkin
(Elephant Editions
£3.60)

Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow

by Peter Kropotkin
(Freedom Press £3.50)

PETER KROPOTKIN is still the most readable and most read of the classic anarchist writers, with a special appeal to British readers because he lived in this country for more than 30 years. Half a century after his death, at the height of the revived interest in anarchism during the 1970s, all his books which were published in English were brought back into print, but since then they have gone out of print again. New reprints are therefore welcome, and here are two of his most important books.

The Conquest of Bread was Kropotkin's most popular political book, being in effect a textbook of libertarian revolution. His argument was in general that politics should be based on the combination of anarchism and communism which he had done so much to popularise during the 1870s and 1880s, and in particular that the revolution — which he imagined beginning in a large city on the lines of the Paris Commune of 1871 — should abolish not only private property but also the division of labour and the system of wages and prices, and should establish the free distribution of goods and services based on need rather than work and the free organisation of work and leisure based on co-operation rather than compulsion, and that

society should be based on the decentralisation of power and wealth among voluntary associations. He suggested that enough wealth is produced for everyone, that the first task of the revolution is not the conquest of power but the 'conquest of bread' or the expropriations of this wealth for the use of everyone, that the second task of the revolution is the conquest of so-called luxury which is actually a necessity, that most really serious decisions are already made by free agreement rather than by the imposition of authority, that the emancipation of humanity involves the emancipation of women (which involves liberation from housework), and many other points which have become the common coin of revolutionary anarchism. The most obvious omission is of course how all this is to be achieved in the extreme conditions of revolutionary struggle, and here the optimism which was Kropotkin's most attractive feature becomes his most dangerous weakness.

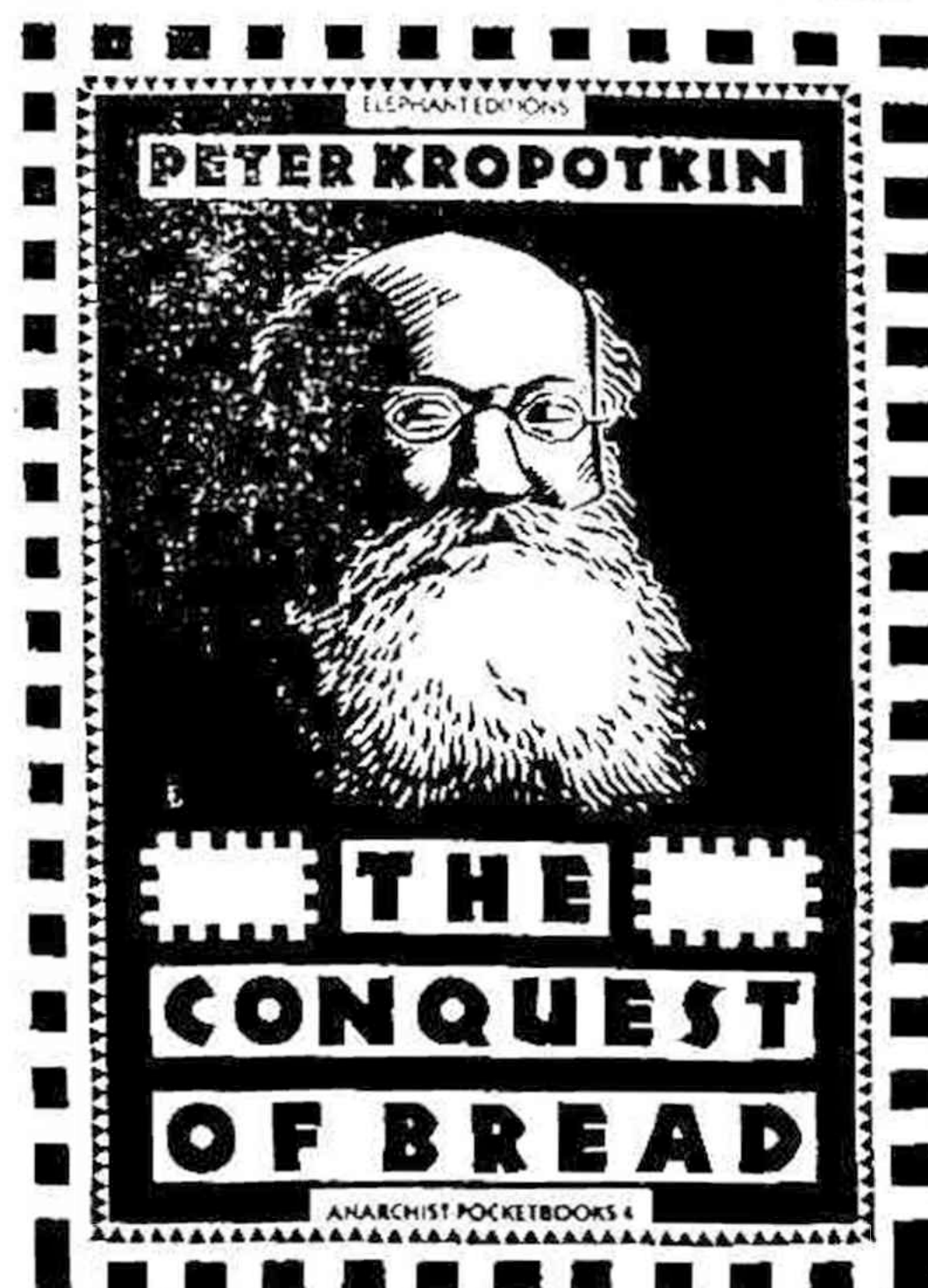
The book was based on articles published in the French anarchist press from 1886 to 1891, while Kropotkin was living in exile in Britain, and it was first published in France in 1892. English translations of some of the chapters appeared in *Freedom* during the 1890s, and an English translation of the book was published in 1906, a revised edition appearing in 1913. After a long period of oblivion, expensive facsimile reprints were published in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Then in 1972 Allen Lane published a new revised edition which included Elisée Reclus's preface to the original French edition and Kropotkin's introduction to the revised English edition, together with a new introduction, bibliography, index and notes by Paul Avrich, the American historian of Russian anarchism. This hardback edition was intended to be reprinted in paperback in the Pelican Classics series, along with Avrich's new edition of *Mutual Aid*, but unfortunately this never happened, and both books went out of print again.

This edition has now been republished by Elephant Editions as a cheap paperback in the Anarchist Pocketbooks series, consisting of a reduced reproduction of the text, with the loss of Reclus's preface and of Avrich's introduction, bibliography and index, but with the retention of Avrich's notes and the addition of a new eight-page introduction by Alfred Bonanno, the Sicilian anarchist writer and editor. It is good to have this classic available again, but it is sad to lose so much

useful editorial material and to have instead a rather obscure introduction. (Incidentally, although Bonanno mentions Avrich's edition, there is no acknowledgement of the way it has been used for this edition, and indeed no account of the publishing history of the book.)

Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow was Kropotkin's most practical book, being in effect a textbook of libertarian economics. His argument was in general that the economy should be based not on physical accumulation or financial profits but on human needs and technical possibilities, and in particular that the obsession with size, specialisation and centralisation was a delusion which would become a disaster. He suggested that industry should be broken down into small units and reformed to make work more rewarding, that agriculture should be broken down into small units and reformed along horticultural lines, that industry and agriculture should be integrated so that countries and communities would be economically self-supporting, and that education should be reformed to eliminate the false distinction between manual and intellectual work. Perhaps his most striking points were that Britain should not develop industry at the expense of agriculture, that it could well feed its own population, and that it could not long survive as the workshop of the world.

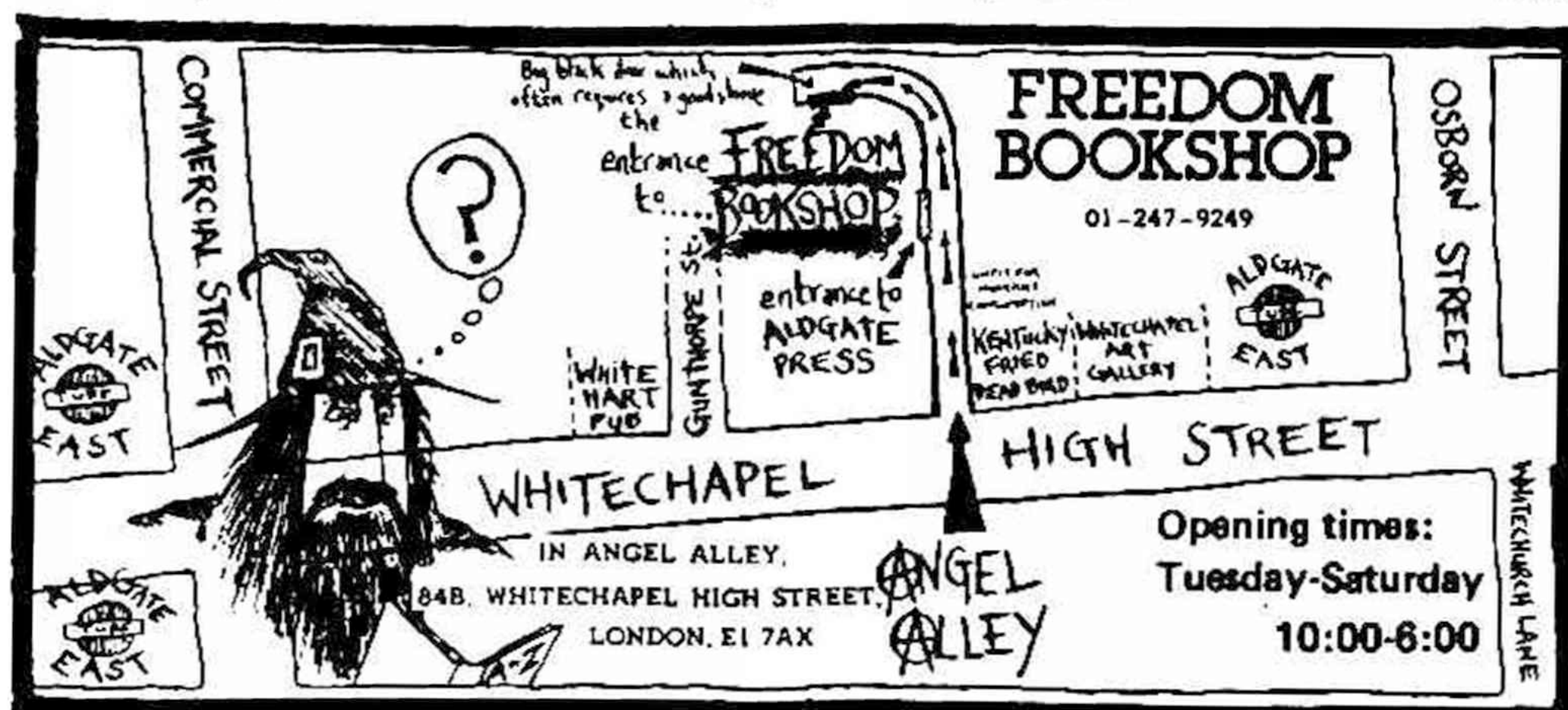
The book was based on articles published in the British liberal press from 1888 to 1891, and it was first published in the 1899, a revised edition appearing in 1913. Again, after a long period of oblivion, expensive facsimile reprints were published in the United States in the late 1960s. Then in 1974 Allen & Unwin published a new



revised edition, with a revised title, in both hardback and paperback. It was edited by Colin Ward, the former editor of *Anarchy* and the author of *Anarchy in Action*, who skilfully subtracted from the original text much of the statistical material which had become obsolete during the intervening decades and added long commentaries with more recent material confirming the original argument.

This edition has now been republished by Freedom Press as a cheap

paperback, with a facsimile reproduction of the text and the addition of a new fourteen-page introduction by Colin Ward to take account of further developments during another decade, with special emphasis on the parallel decline of the formal economy and growth of the 'informal' economy. The book remains a very valuable source of facts and ideas demonstrating that anarchism is not an unrealistic vision of the future but a realistic view of the present. NW



Dear Freedom

No Joy of Sex Shops

JUST a brief comment on Donald Roum's letter in the last issue which the *Freedom* editors, with tongue firmly in cheek (or whatever else is appropriate in this context) entitled 'The Joy of Sex Shops'. I have no difficulty at all in accepting that it is possible to publish sexually exciting material and produce products which enhance sexual pleasure without being exploitative. The point which I'm determined to persist with is that this is not at all the way sex shops normally operate at the moment. They are interested in making money not making the sexual revolution. Therefore to say that 'these sorts of shops provide mild aesthetic pleasure and stimulus to the imagination' and to compare them to toy shops, gardening shops and antique shops seems to me to put too much faith in the good intentions of the owners. It also, and more importantly, seems to me to pay too little attention to the rights of women.

PS The issuers of the death threat who referred to us as sexist prats may like to reflect on the fact that most feminist women I know regard using the word prat as using sexist language as it denigrates a part of the female anatomy — I therefore condemn these comrades for issuing sexist death threats and pass proletarian/feminist justice on them — sentence life

imprisonment in Wilmslow.

Andy Brown
London

No Sacred Cows

DESPITE the hysterical cries of the capitalist press about the "anarchist threat" it is apparent to me that the so-called anarchist movement has in the last few years degenerated into just another section of the confused, authoritarian left.

In view of the authoritarian actions of some of our "comrades" I had started to doubt the usefulness of the label "anarchist". The word was in serious danger of being hijacked like those other one-time radical labels, "socialist" and "communist".

However, Arabella and Colin's article on pornography has restored my faith in *Freedom*. I hope that the discussion they provoke will mark a turning point in the fortunes of *Freedom* and the anarchist movement.

We need a paper that will provocatively tackle authoritarianism, censorship and hypocrisy from whatever source. Wherever in the world working people are fighting for freedom there is a flowering of free expression and uninhibited discussion. *Freedom* and the genuine anarchist movement belong in that revolutionary current.

Terry Phillips
Dyfed/Wales

Lovely Flesh

I am writing to say how much I liked your article 'Pornography: The Thorn in all our Flesh'. You have put into unambiguous words what I have been thinking for a long time — namely that on the question of sex, anarchists have been becoming increasingly censorious instead of libertarian. In our zeal to condemn symptoms of capitalism, many of us have confused sex and expressions of sexual desire with sexism, role-playing and exploitation. The issue of sex shops is a case in point. A similar lift on censorship to that in Denmark took place in Sweden, with a concomitant drop in sexual offence figures. (I know it's not 'good journalism' to make such claims without also producing the relevant figures, etc, but I do not have them to hand. You'll have to take my word for it, or look them up yourself.) I have always viewed pornography as an outlet, a fuse rather than an incitement to rape.

I am not against people wishing to picket and smash the windows of their local sex shop, but I'd *much* rather see it done to Tesco's, Sainsbury's, Marx and Sparx, and their ilk. These pose a greater threat by far.

Andy Brown's essay made sense too, though his piece about sex shops seemed to contradict the previous essay. Was a contrast the desired effect, or am I reading it wrongly? And what was the Donald Roum cartoon he was referring to? (Please can you show it.)

Finally, I read every anarchist periodical I can lay my hands on, and I like *Freedom* best because, though it is not as hot as *Black Flag* on news, it does not, like them (and *Socialist Worker*, etc) appeal to the lowest common denominator with its banner headlines. Every other anarchist magazine now seems to be using the ploy of emotive front pages. Though it doesn't put me off reading and enjoying them, I prefer less impulsive writing and more reasoned debates.

Johnny Yen
Hove

PS Like you say, the porn trade flourishes in a sexually inhibited, seclusive, guilty society. Here's to putting the porn merchants out of business by screwing in the streets.

Dope Aid

Let them eat plastic is a pedestrian way of coming to the point — the pop music industry's contribution to the Third World over the past two decades has been the buying of dope, as of course it will be again over the next twenty years.

Rodney Legg

Marked Improvement

AS a result of the appalling mess made of *Freedom* by the 'old' collective I haven't paid a subscription for some time. Nevertheless I have continued to receive the paper, no doubt also as a result of the mess made of the subscription lists by the old regime. Rather than immediately renew my subscription I decided to take a "wait and see" attitude to the paper. I must say that there has been a marked and steady improvement since the house was put in order, so I am hereby renewing my subscription. Someone has been doing a lot of work and they should be congratulated.

Perhaps the final spur to renewal was provided by the excellent article on pornography written by Arabella Melville and Colin Johnson in vol 46 no 8. It was the most thought out and sensible article on the subject which I have read in the last decade, and very necessary it was too in the current semi-hysterical climate. I wonder if Andy Brown has read it? If so he hasn't learnt anything from it. I became increasingly dismayed while reading his article because I was waiting for what I knew from experience had to come (it always does). Sure enough towards the end it came. We are to be 'liberated' from the power of such places (ie porn shops). *We cannot allow them the freedom to permeate our minds with crap.*

First of all, in the final analysis, nobody ever 'liberated' anybody from anything, all you can do is create the optimal conditions whereby they may

liberate themselves. Secondly, this is a typical elitist, 'vanguard' of this or that argument which in essence is extremely paternalistic (and, unfortunately, increasingly maternalistic). It is, furthermore, an arrogant assertion. It is the "we know better than you what is good for you" common ground where elitist leftists and the moralistic right meet.

But, perhaps worst of all, it is a very dangerous attitude. Who decides what the crap is from which we are to be protected? Where are the borders? Look again at the dictionary definition of pornography: that which "is intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feelings". Now very often the difference between the 'erotic' and the 'aesthetic' may be obvious and agreed upon. But there is a huge grey area, especially between 'erotic art' and 'pornography'. There is no more time and culture bound, no more subjective area, than the definition of the aesthetic. How will Andy Brown distinguish between the two? Are the Art Galleries which fail to live up to this standard of 'crap' and 'non-crap' also to be subjected to his 'treatment'? This is no academic distinction, it is the crux of the matter — for there is always a veiled threat in positions like those adopted by Andy Brown. Measure up to my definition of the ideal, to my definition of the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic — or else! Or else you'll get a brick through your window. Or else you might be deprived of your liberty. Or else we may be forced to 're-educate' you!

Such is the end result of salvation-

ism, of 'liberating' people, of 'saving them from themselves'. Beware of the salvationists and self-styled 'liberators', of all religious and political ideologies. They don't really want to liberate us, they want to rule us.

Keith Roe
Sweden

Puritanical Dictatorship

'MEPHISTOPHELES' (*Freedom*, September), asks where does one draw the line with regard to tolerating porn. The correct answer for anarchists surely must be 'nowhere', since there is the most violent disagreement about what constitutes porn. Are the writings of Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence, Molly Parkin, the Marquis de Sade and John Cleland (*Fanny Hill*), pornographic? There will be about as many answers to that question as there are people asking it. The only safe course for anarchists to follow is to oppose *all* censorship of porn, however one defines it. By all means campaign against literature which you consider obscene as 'Mephistopheles' recommends, but banning it or setting sex shops alight is counter-productive, and will ultimately lead to a puritanical dictatorship. Give the censor the right to ban or burn a book or magazine he disapproves of today, and he will be back demanding a similar right tomorrow. His appetite is insatiable. And remember, raping is much older than reading!

John L. Broom
Scotland



Heckling CND

IN recent years at the annual CND march certain groups of anarchists have taken to heckling the speakers. While it is true that this has the advantage of showing that not everybody believes the illusions being promoted by some of the speakers (such as, for example, a Labour vote would bring about nuclear disarmament). I feel that such a tactic does not contribute very much to the spread of anarchist/libertarian ideas for the following reasons:

1) Many people probably go on the CND march partly to hear their favourite speakers. The sight of many 'strange looking' people screaming at the stage would probably confirm their opinions that anarchism/libertarian socialism has nothing constructive to offer.

2) Some people will just be looking forward to watching the confrontation 'anarchists' v the rest without thinking deeper about organisation and actions.

Instead, what may be better would be for libertarians to continue to develop a positive approach which has also been developing. This would be to produce even more leaflets/general material about their ideas and get involved in discussions with people at the demonstration. While this may produce less arrests it may be more constructive given the limited resources that we have.

D. Dane
London



DAM Silly

THE address for DAM is no longer at Raven Press and hasn't been for some time. If you wish to include DAM in your contact column you should have the up-to-date address, as it's a bit annoying to see letters in *Freedom* from people complaining that DAM hasn't replied to their letters!

The current National Secretary's address and Manchester group address is DAM, 223 Greenwood Road, Benchill, Manchester.

T Crowther

[Eds; If it takes you 8 months or more to let us know of a change of address whose fault is that? We don't do a Grande Tour every month to check the Contact List! Be sensible — even you can't be efficient.]

FREEDOM CONTACTS

ABERDEEN

Anarchists, c/o Boomtown Books, 163 King Street, Aberdeen

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Anarchist/Libertarian Collective, c/o Greenhouse, 1 Trevelyan Terrace, High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd

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Anarchist Society, Box A, Bedford College of Higher Education, Polhill Avenue, Bedford

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Anarchists/Direct Action, c/o Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street, Bolton, Lancs BL1 1DY

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A's, Box 21, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham Street, Reading

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Anarchist Society, University Students Union, Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol

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A's, 2 Quarrybank, Burnley

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Box A, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge

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Green Anarchist Group, c/o Tom, Flat 3, 19 Glencairn Park Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

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Mall Housing Action Group, 87 Mill Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire

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A's, c/o Jon, Box 42, 48 Beetwell Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1SH

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Anarchist Group, PO Box 125, Coventry CV3 5QT

Anarchists, c/o Students Union, Warwick University, Coventry

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Cats Cradle, 20 Camp Street, Maryport, Cumbria

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Anarchist Times, 40 Leacroft Road, Normanston, Derby

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Spanish Information Network (Sinews), 37 South Terrace, Esh Winning, Co Durham, DM7 9PS

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Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex

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A Group, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter

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Direct Action Group and DAM (confusing isn't it), c/o 82 Lark Lane, Liverpool 17, Merseyside

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Solidarity (London and editorial groups), c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6

Streatham Action Group, c/o 121 Books, 121 Raiton Road, London SE24

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Manchester University Libertarian Socialist Group, c/o General Office, Students Union, Oxford Road, Manchester

Timperley Village Anarchist Militia (TV-AM), Room 6, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BU

DAM, National Secretary, 223 Greenwood Road, Benchill, Manchester

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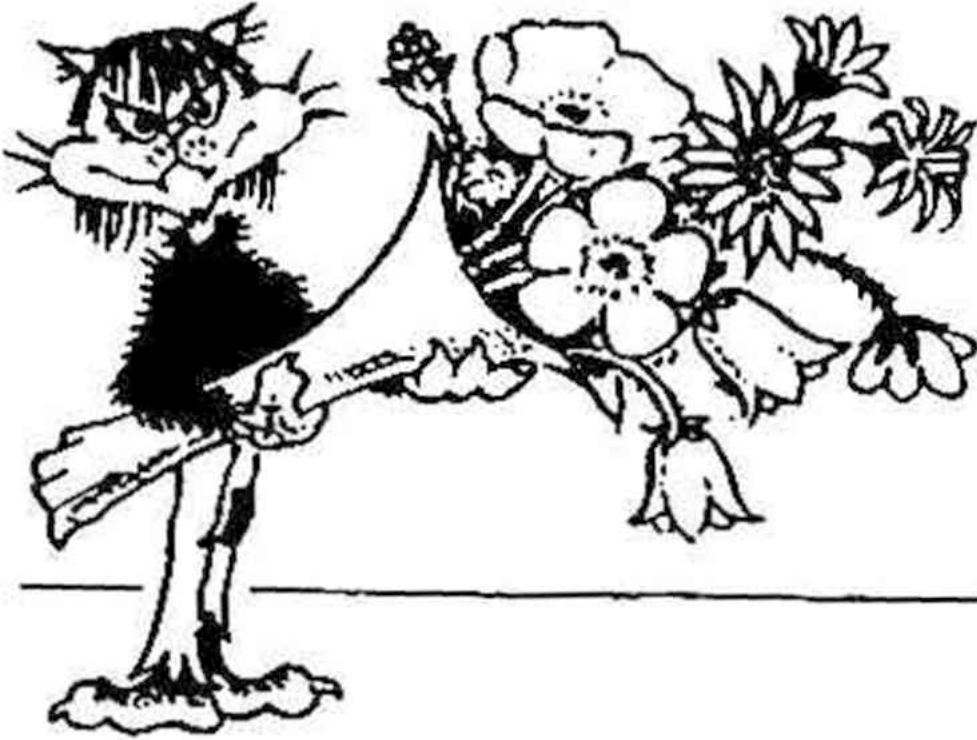
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