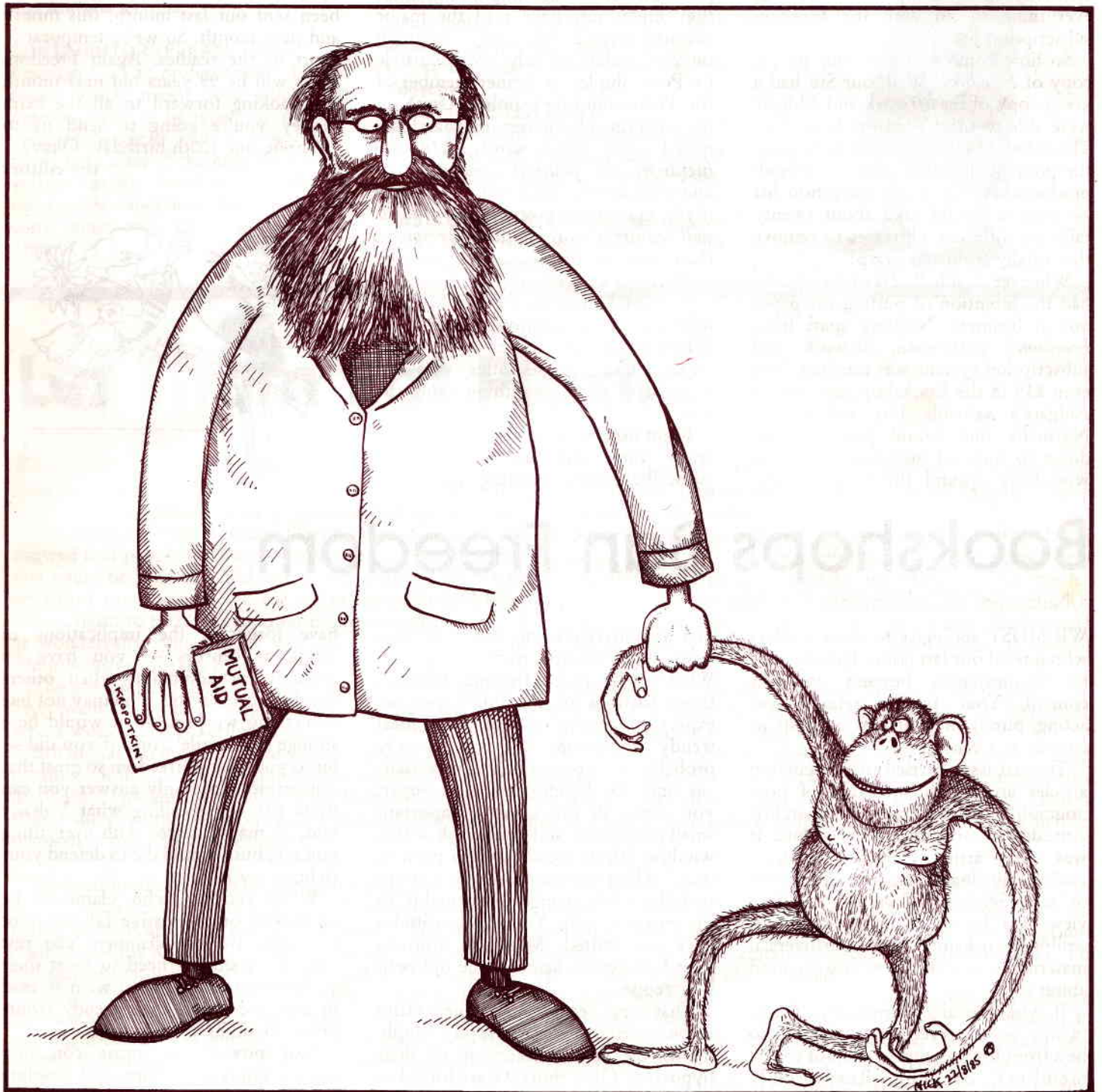


FREEDOM

international anarchist monthly



ANARCHY AND EVOLUTION
FREEDOM BANNED AND RAIDED

Local Reports

Sheffield Anarchists

POLICE ATTACK LOCAL ANARCHIST PAPER AS 'AN ILLEGAL DOCUMENT'

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

Schools Agitation

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

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

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

The Sheffield Anarchist

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

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

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

Bread & Butter (Granose?) Work

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

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

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

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

Sheffield Prisoners Support Group

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

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

Forthcoming Events

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

Sheffield Anarchists

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

Learning from the Miners

THE RAILWORKERS KEEP THEIR GUARD UP

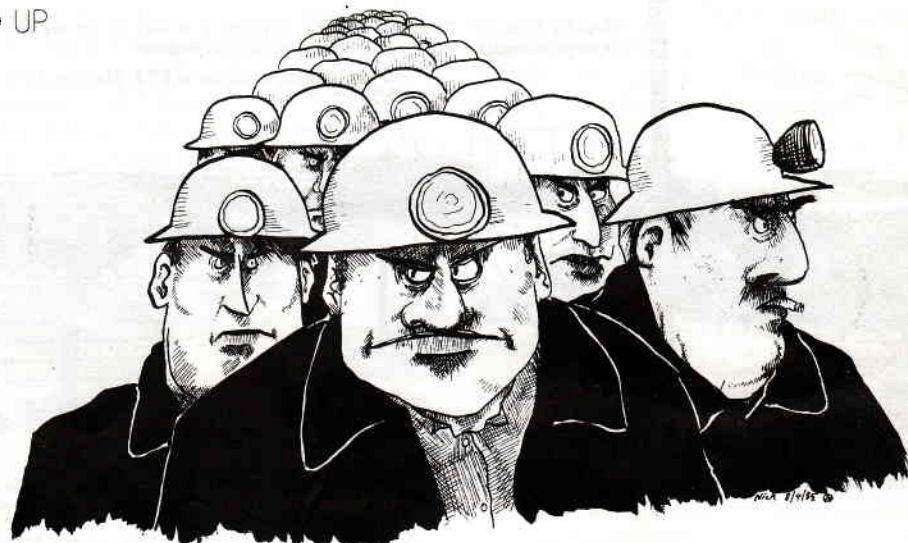
IN THE WAKE of the massive defeat inflicted upon the miners Maggie Thatcher made a classic politician's mistake . . . she boasted about her victory. Unable to resist the temptation to humiliate the defeated, she allowed the Great British Public to see her for the arrogant bully she is. The Tories are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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stu Stuart

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

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

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

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

JA

Indecent Gays

BOOKSELLERS, NOT PORNOGRAPHERS!

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

The magistrate at the committal

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

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

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

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

DP

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

Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Historical Reconstruction Company

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

our own environment.

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

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

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

John Myhill

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

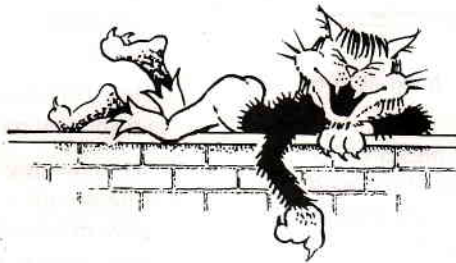
Oh Dear!

The Black Dragon

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

defence of class struggle,

S French



DAM Rules

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

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

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

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

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

Ian Swain

International Secretary DAM/IWA

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

