



# General meeting gets it moving



The owners of *The Leveller* — its supporting subscribers — laid the groundwork for big improvements at the Annual General Meeting of Leveller Magazine Ltd. in London on May 14.

Regular monthly production from September, financed by a big fund-raising drive, and closer contact, two-way contact, with readers, particularly outside London, were agreed.

The *Leveller* office, which many readers have found unattended at times, will also be staffed on a full-time basis from the autumn.

But the most important part of the conference was the discussion of the six issues produced so far, with suggestions for lines of political development. While it was agreed that progress had been made, there were criticisms that the magazine was too macho, with too many firearm images; too much crammed with fact, as opposed to reflections of people's experience and efforts to resist capitalism in all its manifestations; too remote from working people; and too London orientated.

The new working committee, elected at the meeting, is pledged to take these points into account. There will be regional groups and meetings, and more contributions from working people around the country. There will also be more material on the ideas and activities of socialist groups.

There is no other publication in Britain whose production is so democratically controlled. Any reader can, by becoming a supporting subscriber, take part in discussions over the magazine's development, and, if s/he wishes, in the actual production. And this structure is important for the Working Committee too: we are building a completely independent and non-sectarian socialist magazine to provide information and ideas for the movement against capital, and this needs the maximum participation.

*The Leveller* is not attempting to build a party. Its non-sectarianism means that it is pledged to fuel the *whole* of the left. To socialists inside and outside parties the meeting's message was: support and subscribe to *The Leveller*. It's going to grow.

The new Working Committee, elected at the meeting is: Dave Clark, Terry Dougherty, Paul Flather, Tim Gopsill (secretary), Dorothy Jones, Phil Kelly, John Knepler, Karen Margolis, Tony Nicholls, Kathy Porter, Mike Prest, Russell Southwood (treasurer) Dave Taylor, and Ian Walker.

*The Leveller* is produced entirely collectively, and Working Committee meetings are held every Tuesday evening, at the office, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1, 7.30 pm. A readers are welcome to take part. If you can't make it, ideas for articles are always welcome, by post or phone.

## Subscription Offer

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER IS "A VILLAIN'S TALE" BY G. F. NEWMAN, A COMPELLING STORY OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND BRUTAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VILLAINS AND POLICE IN THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD, BY THE AUTHOR OF "SIR, YOU BASTARD". SEND IN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BY 15 AUGUST AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A FREE COPY OF THIS BOOK PUBLISHED BY SPHERE

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December '76/January '77: Jamaica: Heavy Manners; Parents and Youth Against 'Sus'; Asians and the Police; East End at Your Feet: Farrukh Dhondy Replies.

February '77: Elections in India: The Ballot and the Bullet; Carnival '77: The Threat is from Within; Up Against the Lawyers; Manley in the Saddle; Dread Fred Interviews Linton Kwesi Johnson.

March '77: The Milrod 34: West Indians on Strike in Canada; Plotting Against Angola; Bradford Defendin'; The Bogle Bookshop Diary; The Fall of Indira.

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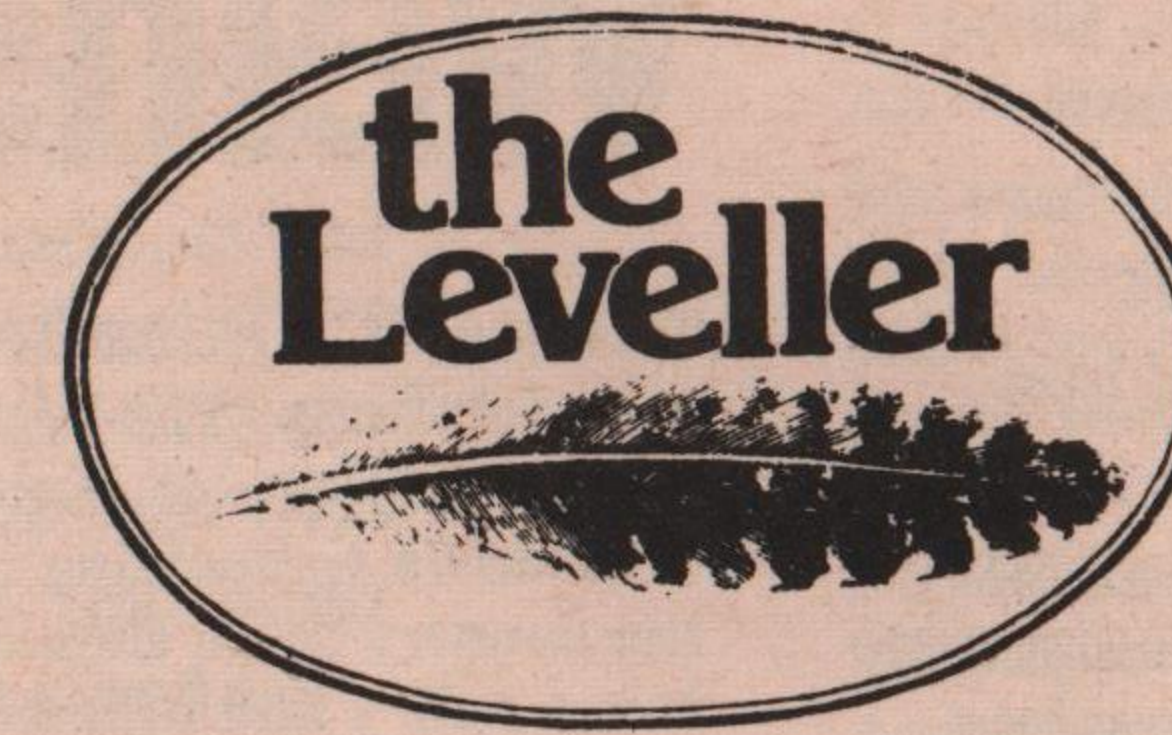
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on September 19: we are taking  
a summer break.

SOLIDARITY WITH GRUNWICK STRIKERS!





THE CONFEDERATION of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has turned down the "Weinstock Plan" for the turbo-generating industry. The plan, heavily backed by the National Enterprise Board, envisages the closure of - at least - the CA Parsons plant on Tyneside with the consequent loss of 6,000 jobs.

The main agency pushing for the closure has been the National Enterprise Board, supposedly the body thrusting the British economy into the 1980s by taking a state share in the most dynamic sectors.

The choices offered by the Board are hard and crude, and so are the methods used to force their position through. Industry Minister Eric Varley deliberately lied to Fleet Street correspondents when he summoned them last month to a booze-up to hear the views of the Government on the projected rationalisation of the industry.

He told them that Lord Ryder, chairman of the NEB, had written that it was the 'considered view' of the Board that Arnold Weinstock's GEC should take over the whole of the industry. But the trade union representatives on the Board, David Basnett of the GMWU and Harry Urwin of the TGWU had never even agreed to the letter. But such little niceties do not matter to 'Get me to the top on time' Varley.

The future of the industry is now in the hands of the NEB and the Parsons and GEC workforces. Parsons' management has suddenly taken an unprecedented interest in the well-being of trades unionists employed in the company since they understand well enough that without union support they will lose control of the old family firm.

The shop stewards are well aware of this and Tyneside trades unionists have mounted a campaign of letters and demonstrations to save the jobs. They were also scheduling a meeting with stewards from GEC's Rugby plant as we went to press to decide how best to combat the scheme.

Terry Rodgers, chairperson of the AUEW/TASS shop stewards committee at Parsons recently told *Socialist Challenge* :

"At the frequent mass meetings we have always said that we are being granted facilities for lobbying because it's in the interests of the management at the moment. But we have stressed that we are moving to a situation where a division of interests will become obvious.

"Any attempt to declare redundancies in August when the 90 days are up will be one of these situations.

"We're making approaches to the GEC Combine Committee because we sense there is a lot of confusion in their ranks. Weinstock's stated intention to sack 40 per cent of the workforce in the turbo-generating industry is bound to hit GEC workers. He has said that he would close more than one factory and GEC stewards are already saying he would close Rugby."

But the future of the industry is not just a matter of the jobs in Tyneside or Rugby.

But the Parsons Affair is not just a matter of jobs on Tyneside or the Midlands. It throws a light on the whole behaviour and rationale of the NEB. A special *Leveller* team has been following the progress of the Board throughout the argument.

## Carving Up The Power Industry Weinstock, Ryder &

THE NATIONAL ENTERPRISE Board has a job to do. The job is to try and patch up the problems of capitalism. Often this boils down to deciding in which region of the country there should be unemployment. It is a policy and programme fully endorsed by leaders of the trade union movement.

The biggest problem the NEB has been handed is British Leyland. There is massive over-capacity in the industrialised non-communist world's car industry. If car-producers are to make profits, one of their brethren has to go. But no country can afford to do this because too many people are employed - both directly and indirectly - by the car industry, and in most cases such a move would leave each national state without an indigenously-owned car producer.

It so happened that British Leyland was the first to fall. But it was too important for the British Government to let go completely - something which leading Conservative politicians were prepared to admit privately. The argument between the two parties was over the form, not the principle, of the rescue.

The Labour government plumped for the policy which was likely to cause the least trouble. They gave the NEB the job of supervising a massive investment programme which aims - probably fancifully - to make

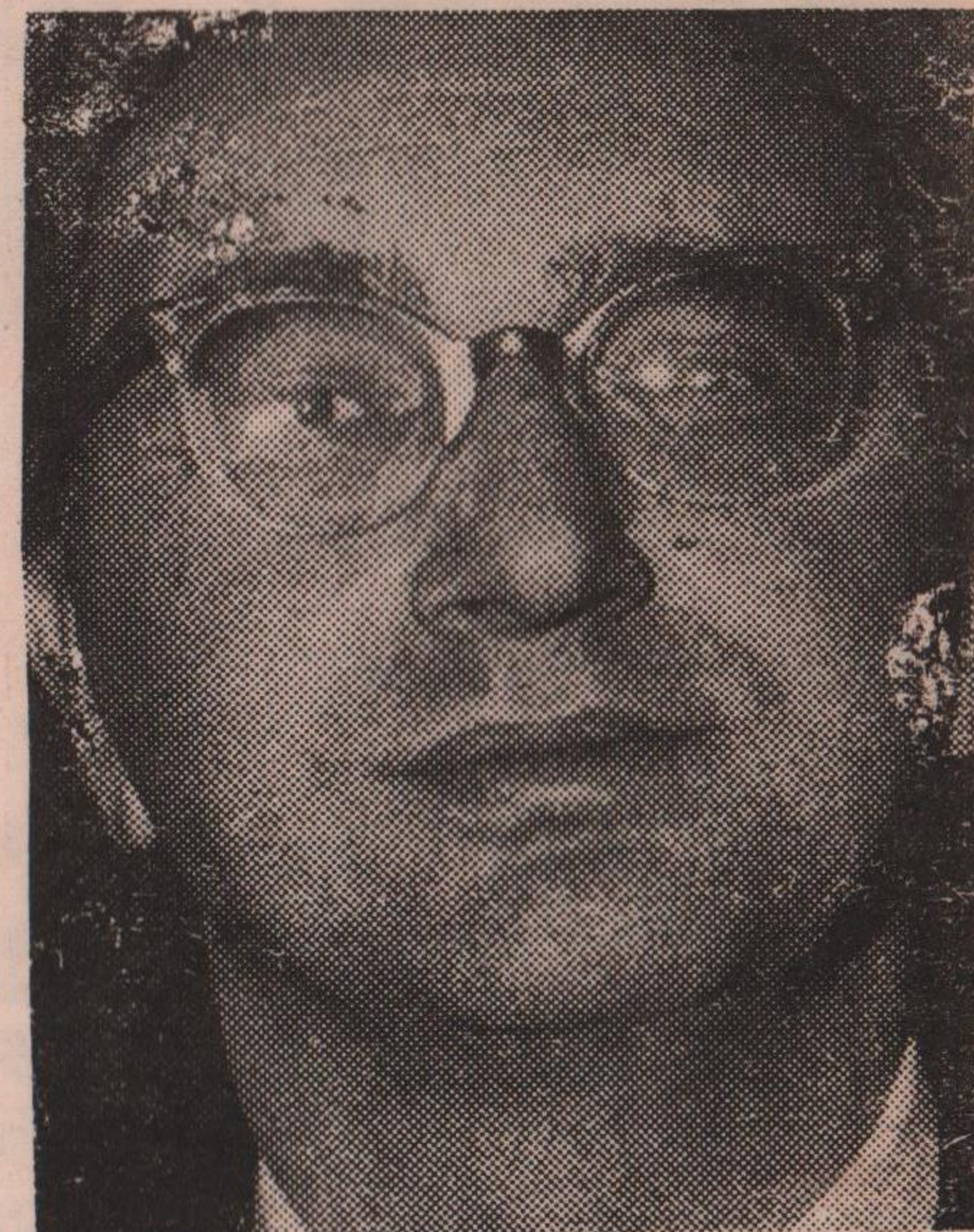


Leyland internationally competitive again. The size of the investment, and the risk, is far too large for the private sector to ever countenance it.

Many of the other NEB ventures are very similar, if smaller : they are putting money into companies which need the investment which the private sector won't come up with because the prospect of profit is too far off. With limited resources and many companies competing for them, and with the NEB's anxiety to get the best return for the government, the sort of decision the NEB often has to make is this :

"Do we spend money on this company, and save jobs in this area of the country ? Or do we ditch these workers for workers in another part of the country where unemployment is much higher ?"

This has been particularly evident in the recent arguments over the future of the power-generating industry. Last year the Think Tank reported that it thought there should be a 'unified' electricity-generating machinery industry. The logic behind the



proposal was simple : only with a more efficient monopoly could the industry compete for the massive international orders.

The NEB was given the job of finding a way to achieve a unified industry. They soon settled on the idea of one company bringing together the turbine interests of both GEC and Parsons. (The two companies in the boiler-making side of the industry were sorting out their own solutions). A quick look at the figures convinced the NEB that GEC should be allowed to control the new concern: they had the most successful record in getting orders, better management, greater financial strength. And they would be putting in most of the assets.

The plan was explained in outline to the managements of GEC and Reyrolle Parsons - CA Parsons' parent company. Both seemed happy with the plan - Parsons had been a drag on Reyrolle for some years and they were probably pleased to get rid of it.

The problems started when the Reyrolle management told the unions about the scheme. They were far from happy with the idea, because they understandably feared for their jobs if they ended up in a company controlled by Arnold Weinstock. The Reyrolle management did not want to have a serious argument with their unions over the issue. way in the current negotiations. Either way there would be more jobs lost, in addition to those which would be lost as the result of a merger. The government accepted the GEC case as well, believing that adequate assurances. Many of their other factories are right next door to the Parsons' factories. They feared that trouble might spread. So they handed the negotiations over to the management in the Parsons subsidiary, who were only too anxious to fight for their independence. Weinstock has a reputation for being as ruthless in getting rid of managers as shop-floor workers.

The Parsons people argued that their company was now profitable. If it could secure the order from the Central Electricity Generating Board for the new Drax B power station, it would be better able to get other orders - notably one from Australia - and thus have a future as an independent company.

The unions - both locally and through the

## the NEB

Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions - seized on the order - it looked like a way of saving jobs. The Reyrolle management also went along with it - perhaps in the hope that a good fight might push up the price that they would then get when they eventually sold out.

The NEB and the GEC thought the Parsons' argument was nonsense. The NEB accepted the Think Tank's line and realised that redundancies would be needed to put it into effect. It was a question of where, how many redundancies, and when.

If the merger did not go ahead Parsons would struggle on for a few years and then go under. Either Weinstock would then get it for nothing or by then he would have dropped out of the industry because he had not got his could be extracted from Weinstock about employment at Parsons' important Heaton factory.

The whole thing was thrown into disarray by Jim Callaghan when he visited the North East with President Carter. Whilst there he said that the all-important Drax order would be placed. This was interpreted as meaning that it would go to Parsons - and soon.

The civil service and the NEB panicked. Lord Ryder, NEB chairperson, wrote to the government saying that he was behind the GEC-dominated approach and that the NEB did not really need to get involved. The reason - not fully spelt out in the letter - was that very little new capital investment was needed. Thus the whole restructuring was within the capabilities of the private sector once Ryder had acted as the marriage-broker.

But the letter was extremely embarrassing for David Basnett and Harry Urwin, the two trade union directors of the NEB. It appeared that they were co-operating in the NEB washing its hands of the whole thing. Both of them said that they had never seen the letter. This was true but they had, at a board meeting, approved the plan, recognising that it might cause a lot of trouble on Tyneside.

The Confederation however - dominated by anti-Weinstock people - was on Parsons' side. And as we go to press it seems that they will stick to this decision. Their problem is that, if Parsons wins and then gets Drax - something which anyway many experts in the industry think unlikely if it goes to open tender - then there will be sackings at GEC later. But whatever the Confederation decides, the Parsons workers could still occupy their factories to stop the merger going ahead.

What all the manoeuvring cannot disguise is that if the industry is to be made internationally competitive and profitable, some jobs have to go. The job of the NEB is to make this medicine as palatable as possible - something made much easier if it carries the stamp of approval from the trades union leadership of Basnett and Urwin. Whether they should be giving this medicine at all - a medicine to cure the problems of capital by producing a profitable private sector monopoly - is not something that the two men are encouraged to discuss in the privacy of the NEB boardroom. That is, if they ever dreamt of wanting to at all.

## The £550m Oil Bonanza

THE BP SHARE sale was a monstrous rip-off. The Labour Government sold majority control of a strategic multi-national and effectively de-nationalised it. The pot-bellied chaps in the City made the licenced killing of their lives, aided and abetted by that other industry once nationalised by Labour, the Bank of England. And the people never got a word in edge-ways.

The decision to market 66,785,591 British Petroleum shares shows once again how vulnerable the Labour Party is to seduction by orthodox finance. The instincts of thousands of rank and file party supporters, not to mention other socialists, is against reducing government control over the commanding heights.

Yet the government agreed to raise a measly £564million by selling the shares at 845p each. The price had been suggested by the Bank of England on the advice of a band of bankers and brokers not distinguished for sympathy to Labour. The Bank continued to pursue the myth that it can represent the interests of the City and the government simultaneously.

The £564m would come in handy for meeting debts to foreign bankers. It would also make the government's borrowing this year look much better for the hatchet men from the IMF. There was even a chance it would mollify the City, currently somewhat aggravated by the investigations of the Wilson Committee.

So on June 13 a Cabinet Committee agreed to the sale at the recommended price. The City rejoiced, salivating at one of the biggest deals in years. Placing the shares was in the hands of a cabal of merchant bankers - ten of them - and five stockbrokers, acting under the benign influence of Sir Jasper Hollom, Deputy Governor of the Bank ; leader of the cabal was David Scholey of SG Warburg. Another group of US financiers, led by investment bankers Morgan Stanley, was responsible for disposing of 25 per cent of the stock in the USA.

How profitable the deal looked to the City can be judged from the fact that the shares were even more over-subscribed than was expected. Applications were formally taken for just one minute on June 24. Investing institutions were offered an eighth per cent commission on applications made nearly two weeks earlier. There was similarly no trouble in selling 25 per cent of the stock to

**SOCIALIST THEATRE : NEXT ISSUE**  
Starting with the first monthly issue in September, we will be running a monthly listing of locations, dates and performances by socialist theatre groups in the length and breadth of the UK. Plus features and news about socialist theatre in general. If you have information on this topic, please let us know.

eager US investors, licking their lips at the fat profits to be made from Alaska oil just beginning to flow.

The calculation was simple. The government had been conned into offering the shares too cheaply by financiers who argued that only a substantial discount would persuade investors to take up the stock when so much was being unloaded at once.

And what a discount. On May 20, when the Cabinet decision was taken, the price was about 934p. After being talked down by the City in the next month, the price recovered to 912p when business closed on June 24. There was no risk and a certain profit.

But the greatest beneficiaries will be those institutions which were allocated large chunks of shares. Payment for the shares is in two stages : £3.00 on application and £5.45 on December 6. The institutions get the interest on the money they have not paid, the government waits, and if the shares, or some of them, can be traded at a profit in the meantime, part of the second payment can be covered long before it's due.

The lost interest alone could be £15m. At the very minimum socialists should demand the sale be revoked.

## US planning IRA drug plot

THE UNITED STATES Drug Enforcement Administration is planning to set up a scheme in Ireland to link Provisional IRA gun-running with drug smuggling. A DEA agent in Dublin, working out of the American Embassy, is collaborating with the Garda Drug Squad on the project.

The project has been ordered from the highest level in Washington in an attempt to cut the ground from beneath the feet of Provisional IRA fund-collectors. America has become the major source of IRA financing through the efforts of Noraid, the American charity which collects for 'relief work' in Ireland.

If it can be shown - however tenuously - that the Provos are involved in smuggling drugs as well as arms, the Carter administration believes that sympathy for them among the more traditional Catholics will be severely dented.

It will not be the first time that Irish police have tried to get at the Provisionals through narcotics. In 1972 the RUC's Drug Squad in Belfast was operating a programme of entrapping hippy-inclined Provo supporters. Once they had busted someone on a dope charge, they would offer them their freedom in return for providing information.

The DEA is supposed to have a simple watching brief around the world, providing information on drug movements to feed into local police forces. Black propaganda and interference in the internal affairs of other countries are not supposed to be part of their brief.

The White House has consistently denied earlier, well substantiated, reports that the DEA works in close collaboration with the CIA.

The Provisionals are well-known for their authoritarian attitude towards drugs. Until recently anyone caught smoking dope in Provo areas was subjected to the most harsh punishment. The DEA will have its work cut out to link them to a drug smuggling programme.



GET THEM YOUNG

"Two men meet on a city corner to pass secret documents along an espionage chain .... and from a window across the street a camera records their meeting. Behind the camera is an officer from Scotland Yard's Special Branch carefully collecting information which will be used to break a spy ring operating for a foreign power.

"The Special Branch is responsible for the protection of VIPs and politicians as well as the investigation of all matters relating to national security. Owing to the nature of its work, Special Branch activities are rarely publicised."

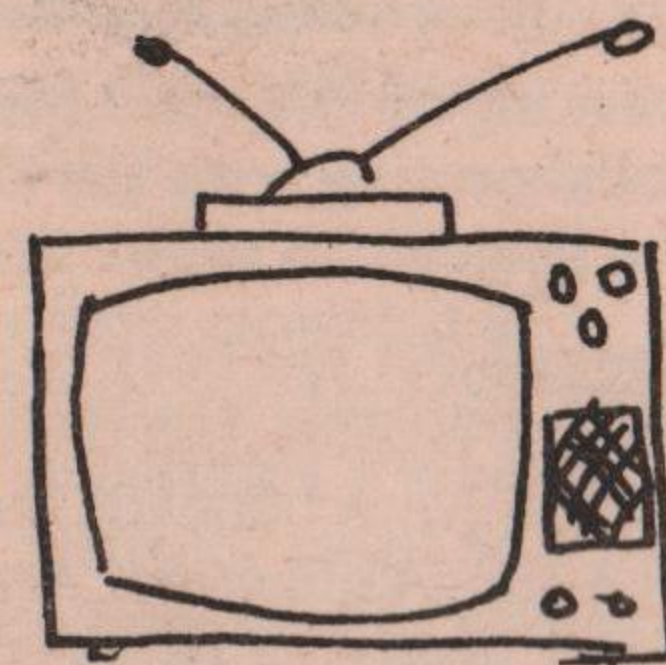
Sound like a public relations exercise from the Psychological Operations Department? Well, not quite, but near enough. The quote is from Card number 24 in the new PG Tea Bags series. The cards, there are 40 altogether, are given away free with every box of tea bags. (PG Tips is the brand advertised by those clever monkeys).

Once eager youngsters have started their collection, they're invited to send away for an album introduced by Police Five smoothie Shaw Taylor.

Other cards in the series deal with the Special Patrol Group - major disasters and train crashes but nothing about attacking pickets or demonstrations; Powers of Search - raiding a club for stolen spirits, but nothing about stolen address books and files; and Fingerprints - a robbery suspect, but nothing about taking them without a Magistrate's Order.

Next: A series about the wonderful people of the Prison Service?

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TV CONTRACTS THREAT

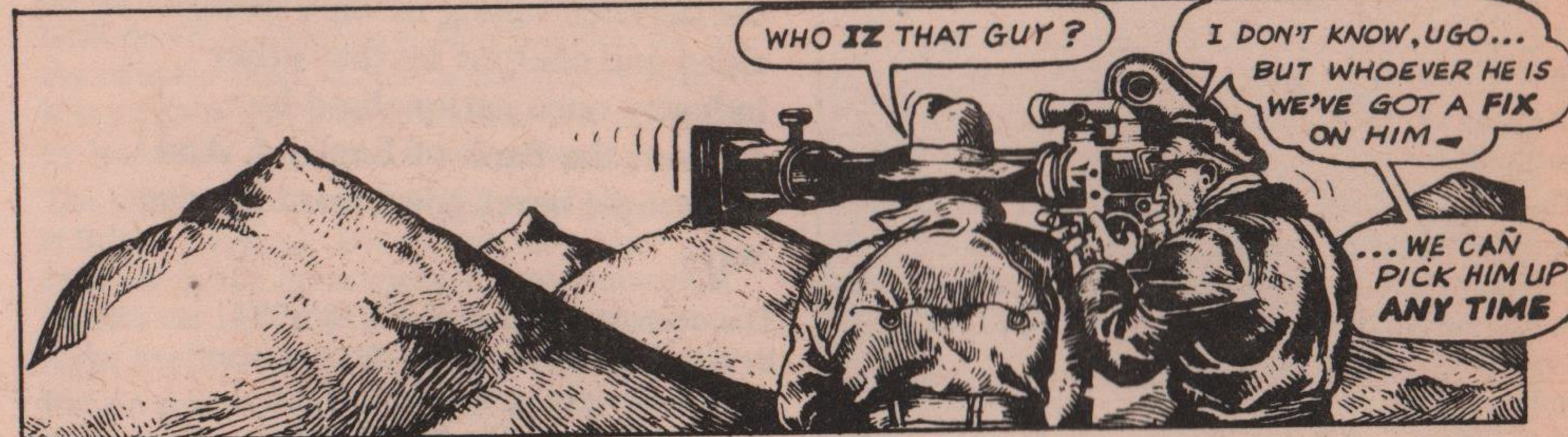
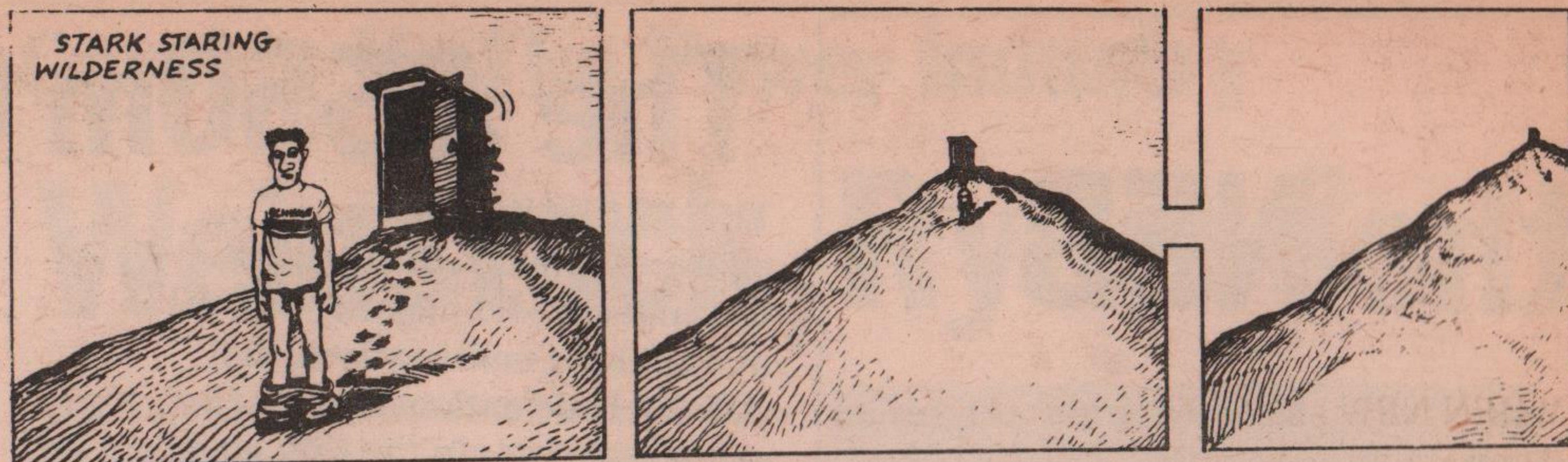
The contracts to run the country's commercial television stations come up next year for review by the Independent Broadcasting Authority. They should by rights now be subject to fierce competition between unprincipled alliances of money-grabbers and programme makers.

But the current contractors, basking in their post-Annan glory, are confident that they will easily renew their 'licences to print money' for the next seven years. And few programme-makers are willing to commit themselves in the open to competing tenders when to do so will get them a black mark with their employers.

The programme companies themselves are busily trying to keep the debate focussed on what they are determined to call ITV 2 - the fourth channel which they are sure they'll get if the Tories return to power.

But two companies that might have to look to their lines of defence are the apparently unassailable Thames TV - lately racked by more faction fights than a trotskyist convention - and Scottish Television, where the last-minute import of a south-of-the-border documentary producer is unlikely to mend the company's reputation for unrelieved banality.

The threat at Thames comes from a small group of producers and directors alarmed at the complacent cosiness of the company's programming policy. There have been informal meetings to discuss the possibility of demanding some worker-participation



Birmingham Broadside

Short and nasty

when the contracts come up for renewal. At STV there are persistent rumours of Scottish nationalist money seeking programme talent to put up a bid based on demands for more 'relevant' programming with more benefit for local capital.

Rather more hopeful is the idea being canvassed in some radical circles that a combination of trade union and community activists should put up their own bid in an attempt to seize the station from the hands of the big financiers and put it in the hands of the people.

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A NASTY MAGAZINE

A nasty American magazine has started to circulate in London. Called Vigilante - The Magazine of Personal Security, it joins the ranks of such classics as Assassin and Soldier of Fortune for unmitigated unpleasantness.

The magazine's slogan - in answer to a reader's letter about the morality of carrying a gun or a knife for self-defence is "Better tried by twelve than carried by six".

The back-page carries the de rigeur "Be a man amongst men" advert for the Rhodesian Army while inside is another full-pager for the anti-gun lobby which reminds people of the 1940 slogan "Send a gun to defend a British home" and asks "if the anti-gun zanies have their way, where will Great Britain look for help next time?"

One hopeful has placed an advert in the Classifieds, describing himself as "single, bondable, experienced light weapons handler, gunsmith, sniper, explosives-handler, radio operator, light pilot. Experienced in and available for black operations and black bag jobs. Valid passport, can travel on short notice to anywhere in the world."

But business can't be too good for this pleasant character. A note at the bottom of the advert says: "I want a job for myself, I can't hire anyone."

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THE STATE HONOURS ITS SERVANTS

Sir Harold Wilson may have sullied the Honours List beyond repair with his collection of appalling hangers-on and dubious businessmen, but Honest Jim put it all back into perspective when he announced his bumper Jubilee Honours on June 10. Tucked away among those sportsmen, showbiz personalities and the Queen's plume-maker, are some of the state's key personnel.

There's an Order of the Bath (what?) for some top military men, including a Knight of the Grand Cross for Lieutenant General Sir David House, currently Commanding Officer in Northern Ireland.

There are slightly lower orders for Lt. General Anthony Heritage Farrar - Hockley, Director of Combat Development at the Ministry of Defence and a previous GOC in Northern Ireland. An ex-para, he made his reputation in the Persian Gulf and Radfan campaigns from 1962 to 65, and consolidated it with the strictly secret cross-border raids into Indonesia during the Borneo operation of late 1965.

He's joined by another pleasant chap, Lt. General Peter Hudson, now Deputy Commander in Chief of UK Land Forces. Hudson made his reputation during the 'anti-terrorist' wars in Malaya and Kenya.

One nasty man who might particularly interest Leveller readers is Arthur Bonsall, the Director of the Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham. Bonsall, who gets a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George, is the man mainly responsible for the collaboration between the NSA and British intelligence in the monitoring of the international radio and telephone systems.

There are quite a few top policemen in the lower orders, chief among them those stalwarts of good behaviour and fair play, the RUC. They clean up with a record of six MBEs. (That stands, piquantly enough for the RUC, for Member of the British Empire.)

One of the more interesting ones there is Chief Superintendent Bill Mooney, the man in charge of the Regional Crime Squad. The Squad is known as the cream of the force because of its success in tracking down republican and loyalist paramilitaries. They are not known for their subtlety in questioning their suspects and have been responsible for a number of allegations of police brutality.

Why Security pounced on Aubrey, Berry and Campbell

WHEN NEW and more serious charges under Section One of the Official Secrets Act were brought against Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, the three men's supporters reeled under the implication of the possible 14 year sentence.

It was inconceivable that two journalists working with a contact on a story that had not even been published could have committed a crime so serious as to warrant that sort of potential punishment.

But new and disturbing evidence of intelligence involvement in the downfall of Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam shows the magnitude of what the three men may have stumbled on.

NONE OF the three have at any time revealed what they were talking about on the night in February when the Special Branch swooped. But information published before their arrests makes speculation possible about the areas which they were talking over.

Duncan Campbell's specialisation is electronics and electronic surveillance. An article, "The Eavesdroppers" in Time Out in May 1976, written by him and Mark Hosenball dealt at length with these subjects, in particular with the role of the British Government's Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham, and with the US base at Chicksands in Bedfordshire. GCHQ, despite its name, is an organisation not a place: it controls a network of British 'listening stations' in outposts of the former empire, from Botswana to Cyprus. The Royal Signals Regiment provides most of the personnel who man these stations.

Chicksands is the main base in Britain of the US National Security Agency, and is one of a chain of similar monitoring bases operated by the NSA. The complementary intelligence organisations of the other Western nations also operate links in this chain but the NSA, as the best-financed and largest partner, controls the activities of its allies. Without NSA's technical intelligence, and particularly the satellite reports of activities in the socialist countries, western intelligence would be virtually clueless.

An estimated 95 per cent of information available to intelligence organisations comes from such 'signals intelligence' or SIGINT while the traditional dirty mac spy contributes only five per cent.

The high priority given to technical intelligence is illustrated by the role which the protection of a SIGINT base played in the CIA intervention which at least in part led to the dismissal of Gough Whitlam's Labour Government in Australia.

There the equivalent of Chicksands is the Pine Gap monitoring station near Alice Springs. It is operated jointly with the Australian equivalent of NSA and GCHQ, the Defence Signals Division or DSD.

Whitlam, who was after all the elected Prime Minister of a sovereign state, wanted to know the exact extent to which the CIA and US intelligence organisations operated in Australia, both alone and with the Australian security circles. He asked civil servants in both the Foreign and Defence Ministries to provide

campaign against the deportations, would be a marked man.

So as well as the Section Two charges, which remain, charges have been brought under Section One of the Act. Although this is introduced as 'penalties for spying', it is, in fact, an even wider catch-all, only narrowed by the proviso that the information concerned must be of use to an enemy. The judges have in the past decided that it is up to the Secretary of



Campbell, Aubrey and Berry bid farewell to Philip Agee

him with a list of operations and personnel. They refused.

On November 2, 1975, he alleged that the CIA had financed the opposition National Country Party, led by the present Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. On November 10 the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) representative in Washington sent a cable to his Director General in Canberra, explaining the near-panic in the CIA and US intelligence community following Whitlam's interest in the CIA in Australia.

The cable complained "CIA cannot see how this continued dialogue with continued reference to the CIA can do other than blow the lid off those installations in Australia where the persons concerned have been working, and which are vital to both our services and countries, particularly the installation at Alice Springs."

On the same day, ASIO representatives briefed the Governor, Sir John Kerr. The following day, Kerr sacked Whitlam and installed Fraser as caretaker Prime Minister.

The concern of the CIA and Australian intelligence at revelations about Pine Gap would be paralleled in this country were there any suggestion that Cheltenham, Chicksands and the joint overseas operations of GCHQ and NSA would be 'blown'.

Such jealous protection of the secrets of SIGINT probably lay behind the deportation of Mark Hosenball, and can hardly have contributed to the popularity of Duncan Campbell in British security circles. And John Berry, a man from the inside prepared, as his lawyers said in court, to help the

State to decide whether information is or is not of use to an enemy: it may not be argued in court.

Nevertheless, no evidence will be produced against the three other than a conversation which took place on February 18, the day they were arrested at John Berry's flat in North London. And despite the fourteen year sentences which the charges carry, they are out on bail, which contrasts sharply with police suggestions that more charges might be brought.

Meanwhile, Merlyn Rees has clearly been told that Agee, Hosenball and everybody whoever sneezed about intelligence caught their colds from the KGB and the Cubans. Rees told Judith Hart MP at their famous confrontation during the Agee hearings that he was "looking for just one meeting" during which Agee contacted a foreign intelligence officer. When a London Labour Party delegation led by Arthur Latham MP saw him about the deportations just two days before Philip Agee left for Holland, Rees was so concerned about "contact with foreign intelligence agents" that the delegation had to remind him that there were two other allegations against Agee.

The danger is that the atmosphere of secrecy which the state, through its threats against the liberty of the accused, and its undoubted power to hold a secret trial in this case, has created so far, will make it possible for the real issue - the unchecked power of the security service - to be obscured. Hopefully, the defence of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell will be carried on in tandem with continuing pressure for an end to security abuses.

Angela Phillips



# PLUTONIUM Jubilee



## The Final Frontier of Fear

IN TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME ON THE STATE OF THE NATION OUR SPECIAL REPORT IS PRESENTED BY H.M. THE QUEEN.

Good evening... Earlier this week I made a secret visit to WINDSCALE in Cumbria, whose expansion proposal is the subject of a public inquiry. After climbing stealthily over the perimeter fence, I investigated the works. A set of radiation-protection overalls assured my anonymity. Later I revealed my identity and confronted SIR JOHN HILL, Chairman of B.N.F.L.\* the company that runs Windscale.

\*British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.



Sir John: in view of the numerous accidents and radioactive leaks from the existing WINDSCALE plant, is it not madness to build a new plant involving even more untried technology?

There are always people willing to stand in the way of progress. They're the same sort of people who said that the TITANIC would never fly. Alright, Windscale is unsafe. So what? Crossing the road is unsafe, but no-one suggests that we ban feet.

Do you not think that "it cannot be regarded as beyond the capabilities of a well-organised and determined terrorist group to construct a crude but very effective weapon" from one kilogram of plutonium, that "plutonium appears to offer unique and terrifying potential for threat and blackmail against society" and that there is a danger that the security of installations such as the proposed re-processing plant at Windscale "will be obtained only at the price of gradual but inexorable infringements of personal freedom and only with an effective security organisation to infiltrate potentially dangerous organisations and generally carry out clandestine operations."

With respect, that's just your opinion.

I was quoting from the report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, paragraphs 182 and 185.

So what's new? Our security organisations do all that already. Besides, no terrorist with any sense would go anywhere near Windscale - it's leaking like a radioactive sieve.

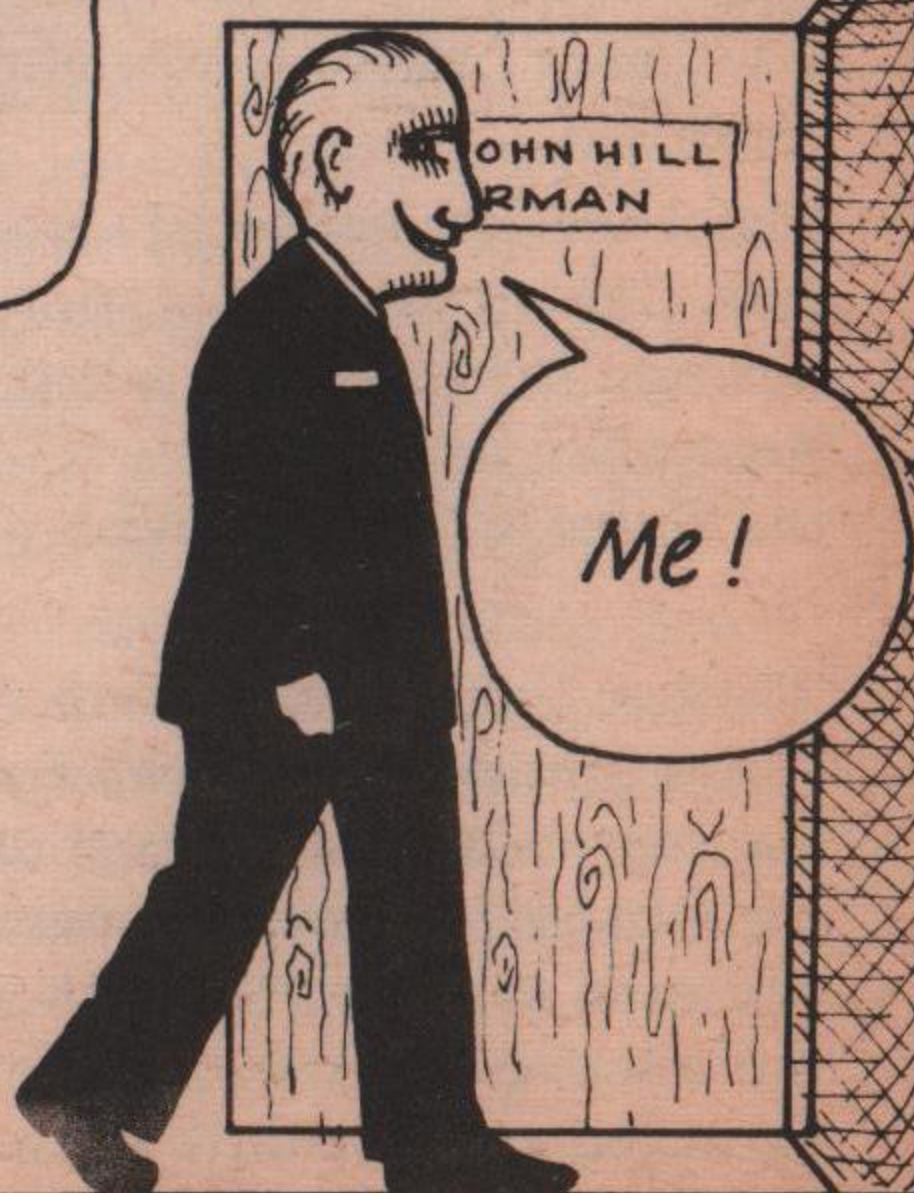
## WINDSCALE

The radioactive waste products of the new plant will need to be kept safe for hundreds of thousands of years. How can this hazard to future generations possibly be justified?

I'm sorry, I won't answer any more questions. Safety is the responsibility of the ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY - you'll have to see if they'll help you.

In that case I'd better ask their Chairman. Who is he?

Me!



ROB COWAN

## Angola

# Revolution under pressure

The attempted coup in Angola lasted only six hours. Those involved took over the Luanda Radio station and broadcast appeals to the people to march on the Presidential Palace. They claimed that they didn't want to overthrow the government, only change its policies. Their appeals fell on deaf ears. No-one marched and only 100 people took part.

They also went to the Luanda main prison and released an assortment of prisoners. Mercenaries in the jail were offered the chance to go free but preferred to stay put. Russell Southwood examines the men and the forces lined up against Neto.

The coup was led by Nito Alves, respected MPLA leader and former Minister of the Interior. From the slums of Luanda, he rose to a leadership position fighting in the MPLA's first front in the northern forests of Angola. Jose Van Dunem, another ex-member of MPLA's Central Committee and expelled at the same time as Alves, was also involved in the coup attempt.

As Minister of the Interior, Alves was responsible for organising the provincial commissariats, which enabled him to place several of his supporters in useful positions. During this time, he was known to hold political views that were different from the MPLA but was nonetheless tolerated.

But although it is possible to give some outline of Alves politics, it is difficult to say the same of those involved in the coup attempt. In different broadcasts they accused the regime of being 'social-democratic' and too reliant on Moscow, only later to describe the regime as Maoist.

Their three main demands were: 1) All power to the workers; 2) Down with the right-wing forces; 3) Down with the collaborators of PIDE, the former Portuguese secret police. But a lot of the broadcasts contained half-digested philosophy, including the puzzling slogan: "Down with the metaphysical!"

MPLA reaction to the abortive coup was surprisingly lenient at first. President Neto made a speech saying that both Alves and Van Dunem would have to undergo political rehabilitation before they would be welcomed back to the leadership.

Later, when it was discovered that several MPLA leaders had been assassinated by the plotters, executions became the order of the day.

The coup attempt had its origins in a political debate that raged even while the South-African supported troops were within a short distance of Luanda. A roneoed paper, *Jornal, Comunista*, was put out by OCA, a Maoist group that came back by OCA.

It accused the MPLA of betraying the revolution and becoming the instrument of the emergent bourgeoisie. They called for the destruction of the MPLA and the formation of a communist party to take on the task of national liberation.

A small group without much influence, it drew heavy flak from the MPLA leadership, which accused them of "student leftism", and said that they failed "to distinguish between the struggle for democracy and independence and the struggle for socialism." In 1976, several members of OCA were arrested.

Alves's political position was not greatly different although he appears to have had no

formal links with the group. The decisive difference was his resentment of the university educated white and mulatto leaders of MPLA, which led him to make statements that bordered on being overtly racist.

This faction fighting masked an even more important debate raging over the political soul of MPLA. As a broad movement, it had attracted its fair share of people who were careerists and jobseekers. Many of these had come into MPLA and the parallel Peoples Power Committees with little grounding in politics. This trend represented a larger and more serious threat than the opposition from the left; and above it stood the Moscow oriented MPLA leadership, by then small in relationship to the movement as a whole.

At about the time of this debate, at the end of 1975, Nito Alves publicly attacked "all those careerists and ambitious wangers in Angola, and already inside the MPLA, who seize on every argument they can so as to undermine the MPLA from within. They want to make the MPLA defenceless against the economic aims of trusts and foreign corporations which have invested in Angola. These right-wing opportunists shaped in the academic schools of modern revisionism, give their own specious interpretation of the true ideals of our struggle and quite often, carry off behind them a mass of a-political or alienated people."

The oppositionists clearly believed that the struggle against the right wing forces had not been won and that they should prepare their own power base for that struggle. In the month before the attempted coup, DISA, the state security police (much criticised by the oppositionists), made several raids in Luanda, seizing several arms caches.

The attempted coup took place at a time of increased pressure on the Angolan government from France, Zaire and South Africa. The plot is to cut off the oil revenue from the Cabinda enclave, which makes up about 80 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

The plot—codenamed Operation Cobra—was officially unveiled by the Angolans themselves at the beginning of this year. Backed by Zaire's Mobutu and "a Canadian multi-millionaire living in Switzerland", it provided a rumoured \$3 million to undermine the Angolan currency and provide arms for a force to invade Cabinda in September or October this year.

Four days after the plan was announced, a raid was made on the Northern Angolan village of Pangale, killing 43 people. Calling itself the FNLA, the raiding party was made up of Zaireans and Angolans, and included three Europeans.

Furthermore, one of the two Cabinda separatist movements, continued to mount attacks on the enclave, on one occasion making the bad mistake of killing several French technicians.

Their latest claim is that they control a town in the north of the enclave where they have set up the Peoples Republic of Cabinda, calling for elections. MPLA has responded by inviting journalists to visit the town.

FLEC's Chief of Staff is former French Army NCO and Congo army instructor Major Jean da Costa, who was also a French secret service agent. The France-Cabinda Association has supplied him with both arms and money through Gabon and Senegal. The latter refuses to recognise Angola and still maintains a UNITA office in its capital, providing it with political advisers.

But UNITA's main bases of operation are in Northern Namibia and the Caprivi Strip. Here they are able to make raids deep into Angola, making sporadic attacks as far north as Silvo Porto and Mocamedes.

Their raids have included a couple of ambushes on the Lobito-Benguela railway which, although functioning, is of limited use while Zaire remains antagonistic to Angola.

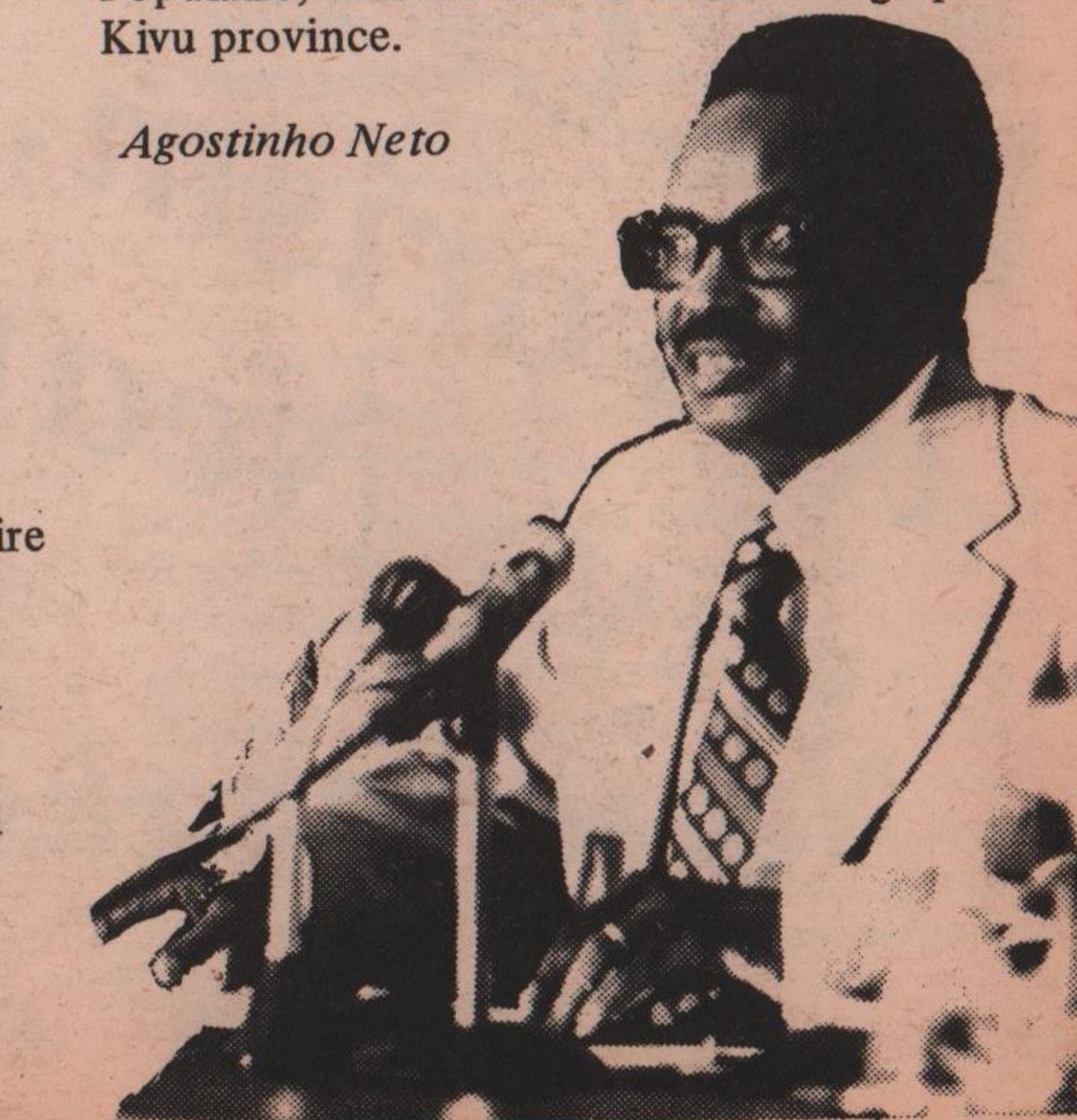
UNITA raids are sufficiently disruptive for the MPLA to call a curfew at night in the provincial capital of Huambo, but reports that they actually control territory seem unlikely. Moreover, the longer they fight with South Africa, the more committed to helping the South Africans they become. Reports filter back that they are helping provide intelligence about SWAPO, and in some instances actually fighting against them.

So in giving the green light to the invasion of Zaire by the FNLC, Angola was in fact upping the stakes to stay in the game. The swift French response showed that they still held most of the cards, ably assisted by their proxy, Morocco (see *The Leveller* No. 6).

Originally, FNLC had planned to go into Zaire to start a guerilla war but when they found that several garrisons either fled or deserted, the temptation of bigger things was too great. Their small army proved no match for the Moroccan task force.

To prevent the embarrassment of harbouring this defeated army—which it was maintained was only a group of exiles returning home—the Angolans closed the border to the retreating army. But the FNLC has already taken to the bush, going back to the original plan of guerilla warfare. And so far not many captives have been produced to prove otherwise. With more time, the FNLC may well be able to make a proper liaison with the Parti Revolutionnaire Populaire, who are said to control large parts of Kivu province.

Agostinho Neto





## 'Neanderthal demands for increased security'

# Airey Neave's Victory

Last month Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason announced a comprehensive and repressive package of new security measures for the province. It includes increasing the size of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment, more SAS-type operations, an ominous but undefined form of semi-military role for the RUC and drastic new sentencing powers for the courts.

One man, Airey Neave, can take much of the responsibility for the new measures. It has been his almost manic insistence on a strong-arm policy that has contributed most to Mason's ability to get the policy through in a time when explosions, murders and mayhem are running at half the level they were a year ago.

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT** was greeted with glee in the back-streets of the Shankill and the Newtownards Road, while the more conventional Unionists gave it their qualified approval and the SDLP wondered what to do next.

But nowhere was the clink of victorious sherry glasses louder than in the office of the Leader of the Opposition and her most loyal servant, Airey Neave. For the new hard-line policy is almost directly in line with Mr. Neave's own position.

Mr. Mason is known as an Army man with an uncritical view of the behaviour of his boys in the North. But for the past two and a half years he and his predecessor, Merlyn Rees, have been subjected to a series of Neanderthal demands for increased security from the Opposition Spokesman on Ireland.

If the position were not so serious it would be easy enough to laugh at Airey Neave and his ludicrous views. But the alarming fact is that the Member for Abingdon is the man most likely to succeed Roy Mason after the next General Election.

And despite the almost universal contempt in which his schoolboy military views and woeful ignorance are held by relative liberals like William Whitelaw, there is every indication that he is so well dug in as Mrs. Thatcher's errand boy that nothing short of another heart attack will shift him.

Until he master-minded the Thatcher leadership campaign in January 1975, the 61 year old Neave was thought of as a Parliamentary has-been tucked away as deputy chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology who could be safely left to get on with his engineering consultancy and produce the occasional report.

The product of Eton, Oxford and the Bar, he was best known for his escape from Colditz and subsequent leadership of M19, the escape route set up for Allied airmen trapped in Europe.

A writer of second-rate adventure books based on his military experience, barrister, collector of obscure decorations and minor businessman, his political attitudes atrophied in the war-time mould as he sat in the Commons bar and mulled over the good old days with a few like-minded Tory die-hards from the Shires.

There he would have stayed had it not been for the group of Conservative intellectuals and propagandists, of whom the most persistent was Robert Moss and the most obvious Rhodes Boyson, who sensed a strong wave of populism in the country. Neave, who was picking up the same feedback from his own constituency and right-wing contacts, offered his services as campaign manager to Mrs. Thatcher.

After the victory - which he characteristically described as 'More exciting than Colditz' - he was rewarded with a job as boss of her private office and a place on the Front Bench as Opposition Spokesman on Ireland.

This has given him considerable power within the party and he is feared by those MPs who want keep in with Mrs Thatcher because of his reputation as an informer and spy. Disloyal remarks, disagreement with the party line, even blots on the escutcheon of private life are all meticulously reported back.

His reputation within the Tory Party does not much concern us. What does is his appalling attitude on Ireland. It's hard to believe but when he got the Northern Ireland job in February 1975, he knew even less about it than he does now. Mrs Thatcher put him in because it was thought he would be able to fix the ten Unionist MPs who, already subject to the critical influence of Enoch Powell, were known to think Ian Gilmour, the previous Spokesman, an ineffectual liberal.

Although the Unionists were initially impressed with Neave's military reputation, it was largely the efforts of William Whitelaw - who has a deep and abiding loathing for Ulster Unionists - which prevented Neave from getting them back into the Tory fold. For which small mercy, James Callaghan has reason to be grateful.

In the early months of 1975, Neave rallied the party behind Mrs. Thatcher, tried to learn about Ireland and made a major political intervention when he announced that he would be leading his constituents in their plans to repel the 50,000 anticipated fans for the Watchfield pop festival.

Then in August, he announced that he feared the Rees policy of ending internment and went on to spell out Tory policy: that Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and would remain so; that the armed forces must remain in strength; and that they welcomed all measures that would bring about a permanent end to the violence.

There was nothing outstanding about that, except that it showed Neave beginning to break from the bipartisan approach while identifying the fertile ground to the right in which he could manoeuvre. If the Labour Government could be shown to be soft on terrorism, there may well be votes in it.

Neave then started to gear up a campaign whose real dynamic was both to convince the Unionists to come back in permanently with the Conservatives, and to appeal to the populist trend in the British political mainstream which still thinks the problem can be solved if only the Army could go in there and get the terrorists out.

Neave was later to eagerly deny that there was any split within the Conservatives on Ireland,

or indeed in the bipartisan policy. But in November, after an official visit to the province in September when the army were able to convince him of the need for a harder line, he took the stand in the Commons to stake his claim to the hard man title. The occasion was the debate on the death of three British soldiers in South Armagh and Neave asked when the Government would "give some evidence of leadership and decision in fighting terrorism".

He wanted the army to counter-attack and clear up South Armagh as though it were some municipal rubbish dump with a rodent problem. And as the policy of running-down detention continued to opposition from some elements in the army and the die-hard loyalists, he later called for the death penalty for terrorists while accusing the Government of "indecision and fumbling".

There are still those in the Conservative Party who maintain an element of sanity about Northern Ireland (though not many) and Neave found less support than he thought for the policy of phasing-out internment. Particularly when it became obvious that it was to be replaced by a strengthening of the judicial system that would have the same effect without the embarrassing international concern at the whole thing.

Throughout 1976, Neave continued to blunder his way through Ireland with all the subtlety of a bull elephant. His political strategy has been to impress the Unionists with his militancy by making a number of proposals that have seemed stupid even to a group of politicians not known for their grasp of the possible. At the party conference last year, he told them that the Heath-inspired policy of direct-rule had been

a great mistake and he suggested a number of plans which might restore majority rule. These included a scheme by which an All-Unionist cabinet could be augmented with a few tame Catholics who might be able to deliver enough of the rank and file to make the thing look decent.

Whitelaw has been involved in a running battle to keep Neave just this side of total lunacy. When it was clear that the Unionists had the impression that a Conservative Government would mean a swift return to majority rule, Whitelaw had to virtually dictate a letter to Unionist leader Harry West saying that the official Tory policy of nominal power-sharing remained the same.

But if his political strategy has failed, he has had unqualified success with his military arguments. And with Mr. Mason in charge at Stormont Castle, he has had a ready audience for his views, despite the little Yorkshireman's known distaste for the Blunderer from M19.

Neave's consistent argument has been to give the troops more rope, to bring in more SAS men, to increase cooperation with the RUC and generally to crack down on the terrorists. While some of his more silly suggestions (like the proposal for a joint frontier patrol zone with the South, or -even more ludicrous - that 'communist agitators with contacts in the House of Commons' are sowing the seeds of despair in Northern Ireland) have been laughed out of court, his total arguments have built up into a horrifying catalogue of what could happen if he comes to power.

He wants the army "released from the political restraints which prevent it from going on the offensive". He believes that those suspected of terrorism should be made to prove their innocence instead of the other way round. He wants even stronger laws, both in Britain and

Ireland, against terrorism. He wants a specific psychological war department set up - as if they didn't even already have one in the Northern Ireland Office. He wants a clamp-down on the "squalid admirers of the IRA" in the Troops Out Movement. And he believes that the BBC is acting as a propaganda outlet for the IRA. He also believes that Provisional Sinn Fein should be banned - as if clamping down on the political wing will somehow stop the 'terrorists'. He wants the army to launch a drive against the 100 most dangerous "merchants of terror". And of course, he wants internment brought back in - albeit on a selective basis. (Wasn't it always selective?)

Ironically, Neave himself recognises his inability to placate either the liberal wing of the party (who are thoroughly embarrassed by him) or to win the support of the nuttier Unionists. He doesn't even expect to get the Northern Ireland job after a Conservative victory at the polls.

But his importance has been as a populist gadfly on the rump of Mr. Mason and the bellicose stance of the Northern Ireland Secretary is a complete vindication of Neave's benighted views. And his position within the Tories gives him a secure power base from which to preach to the most backward elements in Britain a firm-line policy that is often superficially attractive.

Thirty months ago, Airey Neave thought he was in the twilight of his political career. But if the Tories win the next election, he will now be in far stronger position to argue for the Northern Ireland portfolio as a result of Mason's own policies. If that happens, there will be a sudden and appalling increase in the death rate. And for that, Mr. Mason will have largely himself to blame.

David Clark

## What the RUC did to Terry Magill

LAST YEAR Terence Patrick Magill, then 20, of Norglen Crescent, Andersonstown, Belfast was arrested and taken to the Royal Ulster Constabulary interrogation/torture centre at Castlereagh (East Belfast). There, according to police, he was 'interrogated' for 20 hours over a period of four days, while being held incommunicado. The police say he strenuously denied any involvement in terrorism but after five minutes of his final interview 'suddenly a complete change came over him', he ceased to be uncooperative and confessed to three attempted murder charges against soldiers in Belfast in May '73 and February '76.

In Court Magill, who is not a member of the IRA, denied any such 'admissions'. He claimed he had been beaten, burnt with cigarettes, threatened with electric shocks and been told that he would be handed over to a UVF murder gang.

Magill was lucky. A doctor had managed to get in to see him - an unusual occurrence - and testified in court that Magill had burn marks on his back, right arm and behind his left ear as well as extensive bruising.

Normally even such clear evidence of torture is not enough to acquit a suspected Republican in the eyes of most Unionist/Orange judges. There are no juries here for this kind of case - but Magill was doubly

lucky and appeared in front of one of the very few judges with an almost liberal reputation, Garrett McGrath. He was apparently horrified at the extent of Magill's injuries and the ineptitude of police 'evidence'. Accordingly, Magill was acquitted.



The next day the same courts acquitted Brenda Murray, a 19 year old girl from the Short Strand in Belfast, who had been sentenced to 15 years for bombing a boutique on April 16, 1976. The court found that her 'statement' was obviously written by the police, couldn't possibly be true, and that the descriptions from eyewitnesses of the girl bomber could not in any way fit Brenda Murray. She too was released. Both had spent almost a year in custody but are not entitled to any compensation.

In the press there has been the usual silence. Great space has been given to Mason's tough talking about the use of more SAS type operations and the introduction of more 'draconian' penalties (10 years for membership of the IRA for example, while membership of the UDA, whose members have been convicted of the most horrendous sectarian murders and bombings, is still quite legal). But nothing of the daily torture that goes on in RUC premises.

Yet, despite the condemnation of the International Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg, not one policeman or interrogator has served a single day in custody.

The Leveller named various policemen involved in the torture of the 14 'Guineapigs' subjected to Sensory Deprivation. Not one of these men has been suspended, let alone charged. Six have been promoted. Two have been given awards by her Jubileeness.

Two men were primarily responsible for torturing Magill. One is still carrying on his 'trade', the other is dead. 'Big Ronnie' McAdam was shot dead outside Springfield Road barracks by an Active Service Unit of the Provos last year. Next time you read of the 'shock and horror' felt by all at the 'murder' of police and UDR men in N. Ireland as happened after the killing of three policemen near Ardboe in June, stop and think. Two of those police officers, Davison and Lynch, were well known 'interrogators' in the Co. Tyrone area.

Dhearg Doom

**B.B.C. helping terrorism, says Neave in Ulster, seeds of despair, Neave attacks 'squalid admirers' of IRA**



# 'better believe it, pal' Exiled Agee's Amsterdam Letter



POLITICAL BANISHMENT ain't what it used to be; times was, I suppose, when exile meant just that, roaming around, for ever a stranger in a strange place.

Media reception when I got to the Hook both friendly (a socialist outfit, who would guess?) and hostile: a reporter who began by blurting out a string of questions about the Transnational Institute and its former director (Orlando Letelier), the man who was assassinated in Washington. The reporter was so uptight and nervous that I had to prompt him on Letelier's name, but then some lorries leaving and motorcycles revving up caused two more retakes before the reporter called it quits. Not before leaving me his telephone number and extracting a promise to do a studio interview later. Shades of Gerard Kemp. (Intrepid *Telegraph* hack who dogged Agee in Britain.)

From the first day people volunteering assistance with a regularity that made me think it must have all been planned. They ask what's happening in Britain: rampant inflation again, racial tension again, secessionist sentiments, now this arbitrary expulsion. Some people must be running scared.

## The forgotten strike

**THANKS TO a sell-out by the leadership of the Civil and Public Services Association, a seven-month lock-out of members at the Ministry of Defence has ended in defeat. Didn't see it in the papers? Not surprising: the dispute was in Gibraltar, and the CPSA made sure that embarrassing solidarity from rank and file trade unionists in Britain was kept to a minimum.**

Potentially, the support was there: the CPSA annual conference at the beginning of May called for a national one-day solidarity stoppage on May 26. This would have been the biggest trade union action in the Civil Service for four years, but union officials worked overtime to get a settlement - any settlement - and on May 24 the dispute was over. The Gibraltar members accepted the hasty deal - by only 122 votes to 109, despite a threat that their strike pay would be cut off if they rejected it.

But on May 26 there was some action: a group of rank-and-file members went to the union's South London HQ to see general secretary Ken Thomas. He refused. When sympathetic members of the executive interceded to ask him to meet the members, his response was to order all the staff home and call the police to clear the building.

Disciplinary measures were threatened against any staff who did not leave (through a picket line set up by the members at the door). The police duly arrived, but pointed out that it was an internal matter, and refused to eject the members. In fact, one officer said he thought their attitude was 'very reasonable'.

The workers therefore maintained an occupation for the afternoon and evening. A message of support was sent to the Gibraltar comrades.

The lock-out had been over parity between Ministry of Defence and Gibraltar Government pay rates. The CPSA represents workers for both, and after a new deal had been fixed for Government employees last summer, the union submitted the same claim for its members working for the British Government.

After an overtime ban and work to rule, the Ministry locked out the workers on October 25, admitting to work only those who would sign a declaration to work normally. No CPSA members would.

Locked out, the workers staged a sit-down demonstration outside the Governor's Palace - the headquarters of British rule in Gibraltar. Police arrested 187 of them.

In January the Ministry offered a 'joint staff inspection', plus a small lump sum payment, to settle the dispute. This was rejected out of hand by the workers. In March the offer was upped to an independent enquiry. The CPSA executive in London accepted this; the workers again threw it out.

The final May 24 settlement, was actually worse than that offer. A board of enquiry was to be set up, but after the members returned to work. The March offer had allowed the enquiry to take place without a return to work. The only benefit in the settlement was a slightly increased lump sum payment.

The defeat has serious consequences: the action had not just been the strongest ever threatened against the Ministry of Defence, historically a weak trade union area, but the strongest manifestation of solidarity and militancy within the Civil Service, particularly important as it was to have been in support of an isolated group of workers a continent away.

But this isolation allowed the CPSA leadership (the notorious Kate Losinka was among the party of senior officials that flew to Gibraltar to fix the final deal) to cut off support.

Others said that would never happen in Holland. At least here you can appeal and defend.

I answered that my efforts in Jamaica to spoil the CIA's destabilisation operations must also have affected British interests and secret British participation with the Agency. Coming only a few weeks after my return from Jamaica, the deportation decision must also have resulted from American pressure, and the recently-revealed CIA threat to break intelligence connections with Australian services in 1975 serves as a precedent. Such a coincidence that Governor-General Kerr, himself a former officer of the CIA propaganda front (the Australian affiliate of the Congress for Cultural Freedom) chose the day after the CIA's threat to pull off a coup against the Whitlam government. As any CIA watcher will tell you, sometimes with glee, other times with despair, the tentacles of imperialism go round and round, appearing and disappearing with bewildering regularity. Holland too? Better believe it, pal. Question is, can whistle-blowing and spook-spotting by a foreigner be tolerated here any more than across the water? Will working with the victims of covert action be a no-no in Holland too? Can sufficient leverage be applied here to bring another expulsion just when we get reorganised again?

We shall learn in time. Holland too has its liberal and radical tradition, and already political support, as from the Mayor of Rotterdam, has been expressed. Dutch people are as shocked as any others by the avalanche of exposures of the CIA's secret subversive operations. Still, one would have assumed that in Britain .....

Red-baiting too goes on. Certain right-wing media enterprises are campaigning against the Dutch Minister for Overseas Development, who is carrying on with aid programmes to Cuba, the Patriotic Front and other worthy recipients. They tried to tie the Minister with the TNI and the contents of the Letelier briefcase (that supposedly established him, in the words of Larry McDonald, the far right congressman for Georgia, as an "agent of influence and covert conduit for Soviet and Cuban fronts"). Picking up on my expulsion, they have also falsely claimed that I am a TNI fellow, but it serves to fill out their conspiracy framework. All in all, though, a really warm and friendly reception. No different in this respect from my arrival in Britain.

So here we are, labouring in a mundane world of flat-searching, school visits and press interviews, and, of course, getting back to work. Well, back to getting back to work. How much can you do without files, and summer in Amsterdam is lovely, no question about it.

Who said deportation was a punishment? Must have been Merlyn Rees quoting from a security services manual. Who said deportation would stop anything? Rees again, but only in his dreams. Here we are, ready to continue with closer collaboration even than before. The Movement Against Security Abuses and the ABC Defence Committee must prosper and prevail. Britain needs more journalists like Duncan and Crispin, and the comrades on *The Leveller*, and a John Berry is needed in every government department. These are the people who will show in whose interest government really functions, and will expose the importance of 'national security' in a society founded on class exploitation.

Philip Agee,  
Amsterdam, 19 June.

## From an OZ survivor

No, I'm not going to become any kind of subscriber to *The Leveller*. I know that you believe in what you're doing. I remember that I did for the six years that I worked on *OZ*. My reasons for publishing have altered, but a couple of things haven't. I may be a prize capitalist bastard today but I readily recall my contempt of guilty liberal wankers whose only contribution to our efforts was an occasional cheque in the post. It's partly for that reason the envelope you have opened contains only this letter, and partly for another.

It's been a while since I bothered to formulate my recent change of direction, and I doubt if it could really be of much interest to anyone else, but let me try in a couple of paragraphs. We all know that the old underground press (especially in the UK) was basically a bunch of middle class kids exploring the joys of putting visual and verbal graffiti down on a wider canvas than a Ladbroke Grove wall.

Certainly it occasionally transcended that definition, but - in truth - not very often. *OZ* was especially always anarchic in its choice of contributors and staff, though not, I hasten to add, from any real understanding of 'anarchism' as such. All we ever wanted to do was have some fun, kick a few pretty obvious targets, mess about with new forms of printing enjoy the kudos of belonging to a really 'hip' organisation and publish outrageous (for the time!) material. Others would probably disagree with me here but I like to think that is probably the most honest appraisal of our intentions and, probably, of our influence. If you take this as being true then it follows that people associated with those magazines today fall into several categories.

Firstly, we have those who took the opportunity of learning how to write or design. No-one could dispute that *OZ* and the other magazines offered incredible opportunity to anyone with an interest in any aspect of publishing. Those who never took that opportunity either today work as dealers, bus conductors or record company hacks. Very few, to my knowledge, were absorbed or continue to work for the 'left' in any sense. In any case, the left's only real interest in such magazines was the enormous readership they offered compared to most serious left journals.

I freely admit that my interest in the material the *u/g* press carried always lent towards Robert Crumb and Jim Leon rather than the garbled and usually pretentious diatribe on subjects like Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Male Chauvinism etc. I suspect that this is also true of the majority of *OZ*'s readers. I would add that there were exceptions to this slander, including David

Widgery's pieces, Richard Neville's articles and the odd piece here and there. I've bored you with all this because it seems to me that the *u/g* press was a child of its time and that time has long since passed. I am a born opportunist and entrepreneur. When British Rock and Roll ruled the world in 1964-7, I played in rock bands. When the *u/g* press exploded in 67 I drifted straight into it. Now, I'm making money publishing garbage because its an interesting way to pass the time currently, especially the travel and the fun of trying to be first on the market with whatever Joe Public suddenly decides he can't bear to be without.

I know that this is heresy to those human beings whose life is dedicated to changing the world into a better place (as they see it) but I won't subscribe to *The Leveller* because I am not one of those persons and never will be. And in all honesty, I don't think I ever pretended to be. "Courage! And Shuffle The Cards"

Felix Dennis  
H. Bunch Associates  
London.

### OBSCENITY CAMPAIGN

Recently I chanced upon a copy of your March issue and was gratified to read, for the first time that I can recall in a British publication, your frank, truthful, well-researched and intelligent articles on the UK Porn Industry. My congratulations to Nigel Thomas, Carol Sarler, Russell Southwood and Tony Nicholls.

In the introduction to the Sex - Mags article it is stated that *The Leveller* will be running future articles on human sexuality. With these in mind, and wishing you to be completely up to date regarding the censorship issue, you may be interested to know that the National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts was formed last summer, to militate for much-needed legal reforms. These reforms we tend to view as long-term objectives; more to the point we aim to keep the censorship issue in the eyes of the media and Parliament - who, as you probably know, have refused to accept the Law Society's recommendations to ease film censorship and act as an antidote to the ravings of the Whitehouse Brigade.

If you would like to know more about NCROPA, feel free to contact me or the National Organiser, David Webb, anytime.

William J Wright  
National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts,  
22, St. John's Court  
Finchley Road London NW3



# Letters

155a, Drummond Street,  
London NW 1.

### NATIONAL LIBERATION OR SOCIALISM?

Many years contact with 'anti-imperialists' have made me cynical. When I hear of a "Popular Democratic Independent Front for the Liberation of Upper Ruritania", I suspect at once it is unpopular, undemocratic, dependent on some outside power (generally that which preserves the "independence" of Czechoslovakia and Hungary) and interested only in enslaving the people of Upper Ruritania under the cover of nationalist slogans. Nothing in your articles on Zaïre and West Sahara dispels this cynicism.

It is blatantly obvious from Mike Prest's piece that Polisario is supported by Algeria. The obvious possibility that the Algerian bosses have their own interests at heart, as much as Hassan, is apparently not worth discussing. It seems Polisario is 'recognised internationally' as the sole legitimate representative of the Saharan people. No evidence is presented that the Saharan people recognise it as such. In fact no evidence at all is presented about the class nature, internal structure or policies of Polisario, except for the claim that it is 'socialist' in some unspecified manner. Nothing in the article gives me any confidence in Prest's ability to recognise socialism.

Then we are told that 'China and other Communist countries' support Polisario. Yet a few paragraphs later 'It is no coincidence that countries which support Mobutu also support Morocco'. Perhaps you should introduce Prest to Southwood and Osakwe. They include China among Zaïre's "curious collection of friends". Apart from this difference of opinion, the Zaïre article reproduces the same level of 'analysis'.

Apparently the wicked reactionary Katangese are now progressive FNLC. But how real is this change, apart from propaganda? If the National Front changed its name (say to the National Socialist British Workers Party) and got money from Moscow would it get a rave write-up in *Leveller*? Again there is precious little information about the FNLC.

The only evidence produced is

criticism of Mobutu. However, it is not true that our enemies' enemies are always our friends. Bosses frequently squabble amongst themselves, it is not the job of socialists to join in.

If FNLC and Polisario were operating in Birmingham we would want to know about their policies, how they operated, whether they were democratic and so on before making up our minds about them. In Africa it seems, things are different. This is not 'anti-imperialism'. It is the old racist/colonialist mentality in a leftist guise. 'They' can't deal with complicated issues like class struggle and socialist democracy, which are only for Europeans.

Furthermore, it is about time we learned that 'national liberation' has nothing to offer the masses but bloodshed and exploitation. Socialism is about liberation from the nation, which is the political foundation of capitalism. The fact that the 'nations' of black Africa are all creations of colonialism only adds comedy to the tragedy of nationalism.

Yours fraternally,  
Phil McShane  
Oxford

From the Letters Editor,  
*The Times*

The Editor thanks you for kindly writing to him about the European Court hearing into the Ulster torture case. With respect, Christopher Walker wrote that no mention had been made officially of the identities of the members of the security forces involved. He then added that two newspapers in Dublin and one in London had published lists of names.

Your comments were read with interest, but the editor regrets he has not been able to find a place for them in his columns.

Yours sincerely,  
Nick Wapshott,  
Letters Editor,  
*The Times*.

*\*Collective note: The Leveller wrote to The Times in reply to an article by Walker claiming that the names of RUC and Army officers responsible for torture (whom the Irish Government wanted prosecuted) had never been publicised. The added sentence referred to by Wapshott was not in any edition we saw. The Leveller was the first publication to name them, last December. After pointing this out, our letter made some trenchant political points, which, though couched in the best reactionary Times correspondents' style, were clearly too much for Rees-Mogg.*

more ...



## more letters

## what is 'centrism'? does it matter?

A dreadful numbness sped through my entire nervous system when I learned from comrade Grogan of the IMG that we in Big Flame are centrists. The comrade will himself be sad to hear that two of our best militants, often heard mumbling praise of the IMG in their sleep, were taken to their final resting place in Highgate Cemetery as a result of reading these words (in your article on Regroupment (issue 6)).

But I wonder whether anyone else knew what he meant? I managed to keep my mind free of the arcane jargon of Trotskyism for many years, but when my libertarianism finally ground me to a halt I started to look around at the various left groups. During a doorstep lecture from an earnest young man in the WRP I heard the word 'centrists' issued with such a hiss of contempt (in reference to the International Socialists) that I knew something evil was being conjured up.

A comrade in the IS (they used to talk to people like me in those days) told me that it referred to those organisations which seem revolutionary, but, in the heat of the struggle, objectively capitulate to the bourgeoisie. He told me that the IMG are centrists. I've recently heard from an IMG comrade that the SWP (formerly IS) are centrists.

Well, there's no doubt in my mind that centrism is a damnable deviation, but when is a centrist not a centrist? It seems that final arbiter of centrism is the person making the charge. If you disagree with what another group is doing you call it centrist. Surely this is just the kind of indiscriminate abuse which some of us are now trying to escape? If the left is serious about unity, we should all commit ourselves to argue the issues, not to hide behind the mystifying jargon developed when the left lived in libraries.

If the policies of an organisation prove, in struggle, to play into the hands of the reactionaries, then let's argue about that and find ways of organising which prevent it happening. Above all, let's try and make what we say and do crystal clear to everyone, so that people who are unfamiliar with Leftspeak can understand us. Maybe then they'd take us more seriously.

In solidarity  
Max Farrar  
Leeds



From Brian Grogan  
Nat. Org. IMG

I would like to thank you for the report of the interview you did with me in Leveller No.6 (Regroupment). I would just like to clear up some of the quotes attributed to me in the interview which could be misinterpreted.

You quote me as saying:

"The Big Flame election programme is virtually the same as the IMG...but the only way we would be interested in any form of regroupment with them is on the basis of winning over their militants as they are a 'centrist' organisation." Just prior to this, you quote me as having said that the group we are out to 'catch' first is the Workers League.

The point I was trying to convey about Big Flame was that although we find ourselves having nearly complete agreement on our programme of action which we would present in elections, we do not believe that regroupment with them is a short term prospect. This is not because we don't think much of their members. On the contrary, Big Flame has some really fine militants which we would see as a real gain if they were won to IMG. This assessment does not lead us to the view that we should just poach a few of their best militants. This would be totally counter-productive.

The difficulty with short-term regroupment is the different political traditions from which our two organisations come. The Big Flame has found its closest collaborators and inspiration in the European centrist groups—particularly Lotta Continua in Italy. Given this, we do not reject the opening of a political dialogue with Big Flame, for we think this is very important. For instance, we have agreed to exchange documents on the main question which separates our two election programmes—that of whether we should put out a call for the return of a Labour government, as the IMG believes we should, or whether we should be indifferent to this, as are the comrades of Big Flame.

This issue is illustrative of our different traditions. For a militant or organisation from the Trotskyist tradition, the question of calling for a return of a Labour government is "second nature" in those cases where we do not have the allegiance of the mass of the class and Labour still does.

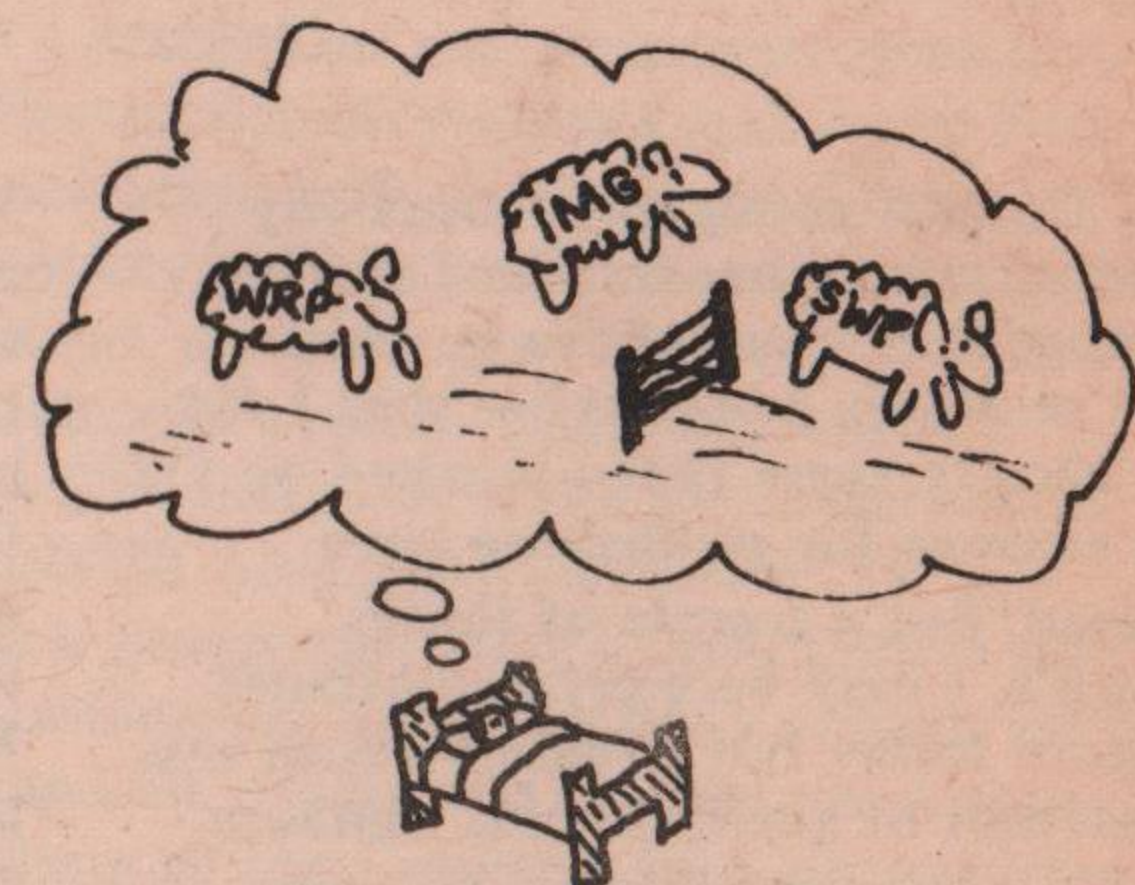
This is why we think it more likely that regroupment will first come with an organisation from the Trotskyist tradition—like the Workers League.

Having said this, to say we are out to "catch" the Workers League (or any of the other of the Trotskyist groups) misses the point. For a genuine fusion between the IMG and the Workers League would produce a thoroughly new organisation which could not be reduced to simply absorbing a few members of Workers League—let alone "catching a few." The problem is—and what lies at the root of our regroupment proposals—is that the enforced isolation of the 50s and early 60s which was at the base of the fragmentation of the revolutionary movement has distorted all organisations, including the IMG. The different experiences of the Workers League militants, would result in the formation of a much more powerful organisation. Nor must it be neglected what the impact of such a fusion would have on those many militants alienated from joining one of the many revolutionary groups because of the fragmentation, disunity, and ineffectiveness of the groups.

The IMG is not putting a gun to the head of all these small groups and simply screaming "Join us". Rather we see the whole question as involving a more or less drawn out process. We have to build a common organisation. We have to build up our mutual confidence that we can build a common organisation which doesn't explode when the first tactical disagreement surfaces. This will take a whole variety of forms. Socialist Challenge might be just one such arena where the mutual confidence can be built up and a number of our disagreements are either overcome or given a sense of proportion.

Brian Grogan  
National Organiser, IMG

This letter has been cut



## THE LEFT'S DILEMMA

Your articles on the Labour Party and the Tribune Group were timely to say the least. However, I feel you miss the Labour left's dilemma. As a minority group in a party that throughout its history has nearly always followed orthodox economic policies (let alone socialist ones) they face the daunting prospect of converting the rest of the party to socialism.

Left MPs may campaign against the cuts but when it comes to a vote of confidence in the House they will always support the Government. They are scared shitless of being accused of bringing down the Government in case it gives the Right the chance to expel them from the Party, though the chances of that actually happening are slight. Their position seems to be that because the working class outside Parliament tends to assume that any Labour Government would be better than a Tory one, this means that the Group should keep the Government in power.

So logically the left campaign for an alternative economic policy which would enable Labour to win the next election and hopefully to implement socialist nationalisation etc. Of course, the trouble is that given the economic recession and Britain's weak economy one wonders what effect any alternative policies, short of socialist measures, would have. Moreover, successive Labour Governments have always refused to implement the very measures an alternative policy would involve: witness Wilson over devaluation in the 1960s.

Having said all that, it still remains that we have never had a truly socialist government in this country. Socialism has yet to be tried. The prospect of a civil war, in what could be a vain attempt to establish socialism through extra-parliamentary means, still remains unattractive.

Yours etc.  
D A McRobbin  
16 St. Michael's Park  
Bristol

## more letters

## going down with the ship

I have been surprised and disappointed to see so much space in *The Leveller* devoted to the Labour Party, SWP, *Socialist Challenge* and other issues relating to the changes occurring within left-wing groups.

I'm disappointed because it seemed that *The Leveller* might be a new departure in left-wing journalism looking at what was significantly new and exciting. Yet here we are again presented with long articles and 'open Letters' debating the pros and cons of this or that political grouping. This disappointment is based in the observation that *The Leveller* seems to be missing the boat as far as radical developments are concerned. By far the most interesting and significant projects on the left are taking place outside of any political party or group. People are doing things not only without reference to political parties, but often seeing the groups as an obstacle in their path.

I think this situation is a result not so much of a general increase of conscious 'libertarianism' but of changed circumstances. Let me give an example.... modern technology has done more to undermine Leninism than any amount of anarchist propaganda about Kronstadt; for who needs to wait for a party directive when a telephone call enables one person, one group, one picket line, one barricade, to communicate directly with another. The arguments for the revolutionary Party mediating between different sections of society are no longer relevant—worse still, they are extremely harmful, and people realise this. But don't take my word for it. Just look around.

The issue came to a head quite clearly in Portugal. A new word was even invented—'apartidario' (non-party). People were so pissed off with the manipulations of the groups that this concept emerged as part of the struggle, not just as a theoretical elaboration. Even the groups who wanted to attract a following had to try to organise under a non-party label!

But to return to this country. The majority of radicals and militants (including, I suspect, *Leveller* readers) are non-party activists, pursuing their politics on a wide variety of fronts—industrial, educational, legal, sexual and personal etc. And contrary to all the Leninist myths, we do organise, though in networks rather than more noticeable top-down structures. It's easy to see how we get ignored. We don't have any handy party labels or categories to hang on us. We 'apparently' have no traditions. We aren't very good at making the links between our separate activities, and we don't often go in for state- or media-directed actions. But we do exist and we're slowly developing our politics.

*The Leveller*, itself a good example of a non-party project, could be a

useful tool in developing the practice of this new politics. Alternatively, like the groups, it could simply tail-end our changing reality being merely content to rearrange the deck-chairs, so to speak, on the Titanic known as left-wing party politics.

I hope this will not be the case.  
Best wishes,  
Bob Dent  
100 Whitechapel  
Liverpool 1



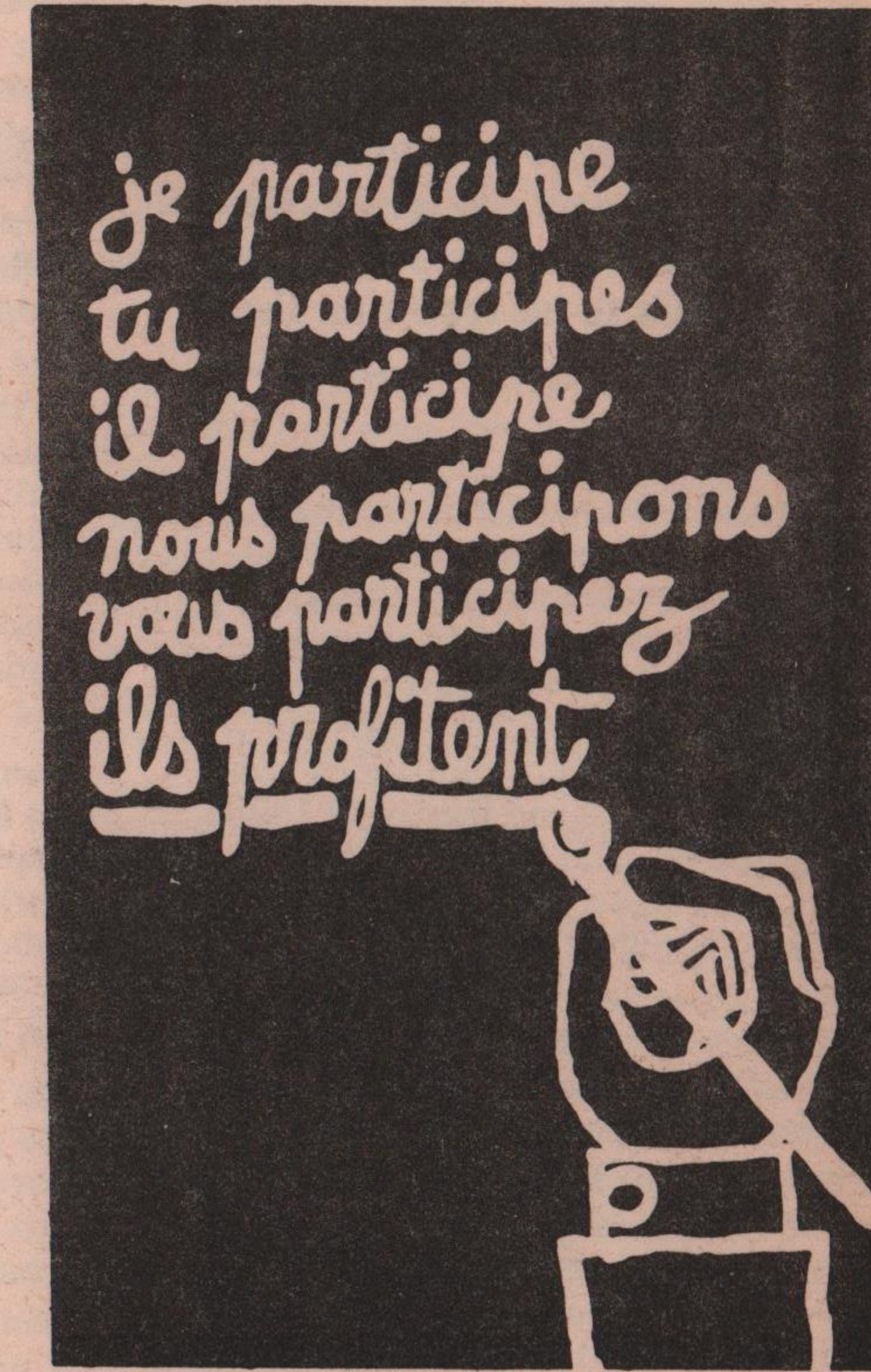
## MORE CHAIRPERSONS

I'd just like to make a short reply to Alan Stewart's letter "Chairperson" in *Leveller* 6.

His minor objections to the word 'chairperson' were classic examples of the perfect acceptance in much writing that women don't count—football is not an exclusively masculine world. The fact that only a small number of women play football is obviously due to the conditioning that young girls receive from men as well as women that football is not a 'feminine' game. And I'd like to see the basis for his assumption that there no female chairmen (or chairwomen for that matter) of football clubs.

But what really made me angry was the arrogance and condensation of the remark that "To the lads on the terraces chairperson is an entirely alien word, foreign to their vernacular, incomprehensible, ridiculous", when his very criticism was that if you want to talk to these lads you soon learn not to use words that they don't use themselves. I feel that the meaning of 'chairperson' is very obvious (more so than vernacular) and I welcome the phasing out of all language that assumes that there are no females in this world.

Yours sincerely  
Sara Knight  
Sheffield



## points

I thought *The Leveller* (April issue) was very interesting (except for the *Tribune* article, which was inaccurate and bitchy). In fact for *Tribune*, I take no paper or periodical regularly. I am interested in knowing more about Ralph Miliband, but find long, windy discussions on the numerous divided sectarian British revolutionary groups extremely boring. Sincerely,  
P. Cammer (Mrs.)  
59 Sulgrave Gardens  
London W6.

Dear comrades,  
I hope that you are successful in your enterprise of expanding the magazine and establishing a number of full-time workers. I have been pleased with the coverage of Ireland which I hope you can maintain.  
David Holland  
15 Barrett Road  
London E17.

Dear Friends,  
Congratulations on the 'New Radical Examiner'—it's refreshing to read non-sectarian journalism. I would find it helpful if, as well as continuing a critique of the present economic and political system, you could try yourselves (or invite others) to contribute a series of articles on some practical socialist alternatives. What sort of socialist society do we wish to create—what will be the role of the state, how will it treat its offenders, because there will be some, what will be its economic objectives and modes of production etc.?  
Adrian Howells  
3 West Street  
Huntingdon, Cambridge.



# POLICE EXPERT EXPORT BOOM

**SIR ROBERT Mark, former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was not available for comment last month when his final annual report was issued. He was at home in London, busily putting the finishing touches to his report on the security forces in the oil-rich Gulf state of Kuwait.**

The country is in the middle of a security clamp-down which involves such modern refinements as putting everyone's name on a computer, modernising the feudal servant laws to incorporate the extensive influx of immigrant workers, often from Pakistan, and shopping around for sophisticated arms systems from the West and the Soviet Union. There is plenty of money to play with: last year Kuwait had a surplus on its current account of eight billion dollars.

Sir Robert paid a short visit to the country at the end of May on the direct invitation of Sheikh Saad Al Abdulla, Kuwait's Minister of the Interior and Defence. When the Sheikh visited Britain at the beginning of June he spent most of his time touring Army, Navy and Air Force bases, placing a firm order for Vosper Thornycroft patrol boats and making encouraging noises about tanks, aircraft and other complex weapons systems. Slotted in with his visit was a quiet discussion with Home Secretary Merlyn Rees and a longer informal talk with Sir Robert.

Well-informed sources in Kuwait say that an agreement has been reached that Sir Robert will be involved in sending police experts to Kuwait to train the local force at the new police college. They will be joining the small number of British officers involved in training the Kuwaiti army. Among the more irreverent soldiers involved in similar missions in the Middle East, this type of assignment is known as a 'bucket and spade job'.

Sir Robert is positively shy of talking about the visit and has been telling inquisitive reporters that it would be "quite inappropriate" to give any further details. Apparently he now considers himself a private citizen whose affairs should be of no further interest to the press.

But we understand that he has been paid a "substantial" sum as an adviser. What this might be we have no idea, but a Special Air Service paratroop expert who recently returned from a similar job in the Middle East had 20,000 dollars gratuity tucked in his back pocket by a grateful Sheikh.

The Leveller does not believe Sir Robert can be short of money. In addition to his index-linked £14,000 pension as a retired police officer, he will be expecting handsome royalties from his forthcoming biography. And his recent appointment to the board of Phoenix Assurance - chairman Viscount de Lisle of the National Association for Freedom - brings him in a further £2,000 plus.

There is some confusion as to who exactly Sir Robert is working for. Is he employed as a 'private consultant', or is he working for the Government? Robin Corbett, Labour MP for Hemel Hempstead, has written to Merlyn Rees asking for clarification on this point.

The Foreign Office say that "Sir Robert went as a private citizen and there is no British Government connection". But the Home Office have admitted that "Sir Robert has been promised the support of specialists from the Home Office on his next trip. We have a number of policemen working on special projects here. But they are still serving policemen, not civil servants."

Amnesty International has had a number of letters this year complaining of beatings and torture in Kuwait's Central Prison. One letter in particular, smuggled out from a former Lebanese journalist, complains of inhuman treatment and poor diet. He calls the prison a "torture camp" and provides graphic descriptions of beatings, kickings and fallanga - beating the sole of the feet with a cane.

Sir Robert resigned from the police prematurely as a protest against the new complaints procedure. Martin Ennals, Secretary General of Amnesty International commented: "I'd like to think that Sir Robert is going to stop torture as it should never happen with proper police training. But you have to be an optimist to work for Amnesty anyway."

**THE HOUSING CRISIS:** Wanted soon or immediately - flat, room, box, cupboard etc. to live in somewhere in London. Contact Rob on 01-949 6013, evenings.

**LEVELLER READER WANTED:** Preferably woman to rent small room in flat. £41 p.c.m. Write to 12 Langham Mansions, Earls Court Square, London SW5.

**UNFURNISHED FLAT:** Wanted anywhere in London. Reasonable price paid for fixtures and fittings. Ring Anne 01-289 1645.

**PEOPLE WANTED:** Women, children, men, to join smallholding in S.W. Eire. Not much land. Lots of empty barns. We've been here four years and can only really stay if more people join us. Collective feminist ideas prevailing. Write to Chrissi and Nick, The Farmhouse, Johnstown, Kilmichael, Co. Cork, Eire.

## Small Ads

From September when *The Leveller* goes monthly, we will be running a proper classified ads column. To make it useful to people we are going to charge only 2p per word for insertions. But all insertions must be pre-paid.

**FREE ADS:** All subscribers - ordinary or founding - will be able to use the classifieds ads column FREE at least once in every issue. Looking for a flat, want to share a house, got some oddments to sell, advertise it in the *Leveller* and reach thousands of people without trouble or tribulations. These ads are mainly from London, but we reach most cities and towns in Britain, so anyone, anywhere can advertise.



**THE CLASH**



**"White Riot, I wanna Riot, White Riot, I wanna Riot of me own!"** Albert Earwig couldn't believe his ears. Was this real politics coming out of his Dansette Portable? He had to find out for himself. So, picking his nose and sliding through the vomit and beer cans, he got the correct line out of The Clash in Leeds.

# IS IT MORE THAN ROCK'N'ROLL?

**SHE WAS** looking shocking in her torn black stockings and corset, superbly made in sensual easy-care Tricel satin with gorgeous lace frills and detachable suspenders, walking head high across the foyer of the Metropole four-star hotel. The Clash, plus entourage of punks (and reporters) had just done a gig at Leeds Poly, and were getting ready to behave like pop stars.

In the foyer, Rodent, the tour manager, is getting all the shit, as usual. With his spiky orange hair and matching complexion, he doesn't really look like he's up to the task of finding everybody a room, getting their food, collecting publicity stickers and the hundred and one things that people in the pop world can't do for themselves.

But he does it, and never throws any of the fits the media tell us punks are prone to. The foyer is filled with cockney and American accents, and punks stride around trying to outrage the well-heeled Leeds business community, who don't turn a hair.

The gig had been a big success, compared with their visit in the winter. About 300 people had shown all the signs of being committed punks, with their torn shirts, schoolboy uniforms, plastic shoes, coloured sunglasses and, of course, the obligatory razor blades, paper clips and nappy pins. The frenzied pogo dancing reached new heights as at least three people had to be carried out. And this time there was a good handful of women, undaunted by the macho.

But for all the talk of violence and vomit, as the lights came up and make-up ran off in rivers of sweat, the crowd either dispersed or quietly queued up for copies of the publicity poster, back home to get ready for another wasted day at the factory.

Order reigns too in the Metropole, where Barry, the Manager, is explaining to five Japanese trendies from CBS that "I'm not their Manager, I'm their friend".

He'd not been too friendly towards the assorted penniless punks who'd tried to touch him for a quid to get a drink, but he goes on to tell the eager interviewers (who have a lot of trouble with their English): "We've got so many new ideas that we want to express". Such as?

"Well, musical ideas, artistic ideas, political ideas". But they don't press him for detail, which is just as well, since Barry Bullshit has only got one idea in his head.

Fortunately Joe Strummer arrives. Joe looks like an average bloke, with short, well-cut hair, and his many-zipped jacket neatly stencilled with SKA and DUB. But he talks like an art student, despite his claim to have been cleaning toilets for the last five years. His voice is hoarse from shouting at the leaping punks every night for the past two weeks, but he doesn't seem to mind holding forth for the benefit of Japanese punks.

All The Clash seem very keen to philosophise. Mick Jones (unable to talk to CBS because he was performing the time-honoured pop-star ritual upstairs) had told us all about violence, while his mate had given us the opposite view - that The Clash weren't violent, they gave out energy vibrations, and if people responded negatively to them, that was because they had problems with their karma.

But Joe had time to expound in detail. He was glad that people got violent, because it is such a shit, useless, boring world that's all there is left. CBS asks Joe about politics, about Northern Ireland. "The British haven't got any business being in Ireland."

"What about communism?"

"I don't know no Marx, no Trotsky, no nothing. I know about fascism, and I don't like it, but I don't know about communism. The Socialist Workers' Party, you know, they keep coming up to us and saying 'Come on, join us' - but they can fuck off, the wankers, that's just dogma, I don't want no dogma".

At this point, *The Leveller's* own youth culture voyeur, Albert Earwig, had to probe. He'd heard that Punk, especially The Clash, was political. Rock Against Racism said that punks had got stuck into the National Front at the 23rd April demo and asked "Could there be a spontaneous youth movement going on?"

At the gig that night, the backdrop had been a gigantic projection of a photo from the Notting Hill Carnival revolt, and the best number had been a brilliant punk variation on Junior Marvin's classic 'Police and Thieves'. And the

lyric of 'White Riot' (forget the fact that it is inaudible live) goes "Black men have gotta lot of problems/But they don't mind throwing a brick/But white men have got too much school/Where they teach you to be thick ... White Riot, I wanna Riot/White Riot, I wanna Riot of me own!"

Surely, Joe, "White Riot" is Political? "No it fuckin ain't. Look, I'll tell you how it happened, right? I was at the Carnival, chuckin bricks havin a great time, right. Then a copper grabs me, but he lets me go, cos I'm white. Later on some black kids get hold of me. "Hey mon, you give me a poun, mon and we let you go". (Joe's accent is OK for a honky.) "I give them a pound and I go home. I sit down; and I think I can't fucking win - the police get me and the blacks get me. I'm pissed off right, and so I write it down "I want a riot of my own'. That's all there is to it."

So Joe's no Che Guevara of the concrete jungle. Punks do represent a real reaction to the shit-life - a sense of outrage, an assertion of a different style. But outrage can go in many directions, and punk seems to be taking them all. *Jam* says they'll vote Conservative, and the *Stranglers* glorify violence against women. ("Someday I'm gonna smack your face/Somebody's gonna treat you rough/You're way past your station/Beat you, honey, till you drop.")

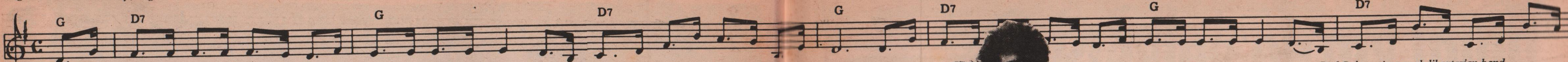
As usual, the left is way out of touch with all this energy. There are some signs of an effort to create a youth movement from the NUSS, the SWP, Rock Against Racism, Birmingham Big Flame, and in Leeds there have been the Youth Power leaflets and some school students have done an anti-fascist leaflet in several schools. No doubt there are similar efforts elsewhere. But in general the line seems to be "We must harness all this energy, and show that only socialism provides a decent life". When that fails we hear the familiar cries of "Leninist interventions never work - the revolution is too spontaneous". Part of the trouble is that we are too heavy-handed, too anxious to categorise and control.

Punk consciousness is no model, its much like everyone else's consciousness - confused, contradictory, pissed off. It's not a matter of correcting and harnessing that consciousness from outside, nor of dressing up and trying to out-punk the pogo dancers. An organised youth movement will only emerge when revolutionary youth can show that there are ways out.

And that can only make sense if the whole of the working class feels confident and powerful and able to create a new world. Some of the punks think the National Front is the way out. Some, like The Clash, are on our side, and their violence has all the strengths, and weaknesses, of the Dagenham, Hull, and Notting Hill rioters.

Max Farrar





Streets alive with the sound of music? Red suede shoes dancing on to happiness? Massed choirs of workers on the march? 'Music For Socialism' — a grand phrase productive of grand images, which tend to fade as you step out of Clapham tube station, ask where Battersea Arts Centre is (no-one seems to know) and finally traipse into that imposing structure on a hot Saturday morning.

THE FIRST MFS festival held on May 28 may not have shown us what the future looks like, but it did provide a first opportunity to assess the diversity of theoretical and practical work being produced by socialist musicians in Britain. An impressive range of events included workshops on songwriting, the politics of performing and Women's Liberation Movement Music Project, with 'main sessions' on Women and Music, Culture and Tradition, Musical and Political Action.

This last session was held in a setting which seemed strangely out of tune with the purpose of the day: a cavernous room with an elaborately domed ceiling, tablets commemorating those who lost their lives in the Great War, chairs in curved ranks around the stage. And no-one's quite sure what we're all doing here.

Music For Socialism? What manner of beast is this? A many-headed monster, it seemed, after listening to sets by *Elevator* (marimba, glockenspiels, tapes and improvisation), Leon Rosselson (folk singer and satirist with his roots in the 60s), *Red Balune* (a libertarian jazz-rock band) and *People's Liberation Music* (PLM) who were all members of the Communist Party of England Marxist-Leninist and sang traditional songs from the revolutionary movement.

Despite the stated aim of 'a structure that's not simply a series of performances with applause at the end', most of the day was just like that. But after all the sets had been completed there was enough time for a brief period of discussion, initiated by a woman who launched into a tirade against PLM, screaming that 'their music was devoid of all human content'. Is there anybody from PLM here to answer these charges? Howls of derision greeted the news that there wasn't. 'That's just typical', said the sax player from *Red Balune*, 'they're professional politicians, they've probably gone off to address another meeting'.

While the organisers went off to locate PLM, discussion turned on *Red Balune's* Dadaist approach to music — for their band comprised keyboards, drums, sax and a broom, played by a man in an orange boiler suit. Cornelius Cardew of PLM, who wrote *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, eventually returned to answer his critics and then asked, quite reasonably, 'If musicians started playing brooms, what kind of music would the people have?'

Discussion tended to focus on PLM, mainly because they had a clear view of the relation between music and politics — 'music should serve the politics and not vice versa' — even if their doctrinaire pronouncements were at times positively unhelpful. The drift of the argument against PLM was that their music — Irish republican songs and revolutionary marching songs from the 30s — was not derived from our experience. I enjoyed their set, although to ears trained on rock, blues, country and soul the songs sounded bizarre, almost quaint.

The ideological chasm between the various musicians was exemplified by, on the one hand, PLM talking about their direct interventions in working class struggle, and on the other, by *Elevator* and *Red Balune* holding forth on experimentation, 'breaking down the divisions between performers and audience' and so on. For PLM the purpose of music was 'to consolidate the will to fight', while *Red Balune* claimed (rather mysteriously) that 'When people start shouting 'Bullshit' that's when the gigs start happening'.

And inevitably there was a debate on punk and the 'new wave'. PLM trotted out the party line: 'The monopoly capitalist class consciously selects for promotion the most reactionary elements of culture. Punk is fascist'. (Groans.) '*Clash* promote anarchy'. (Cheers from the libertarians.) *Red Balune's* very vocal saxophonist — driven to near desperation by PLM's party line, appealed to the audience, arms outstretched: 'Hands up members of the working class'. Half a dozen embarrassed hands pointed up to the dome. 'You mean to say you're all capitalists then?' came the riposte, and then we were treated to a potted biog (university drop out, played in a soul band for ten years, etc.) designed to demonstrate that he was indeed a worker through and through.

An ageing hippy implored us to forget all this boring political wrangling: 'All that's important is that we're getting the shit on...'. A woman complaining about the absence of rock 'n' roll got up from her seat to make the point with a vigorous twitch of her bum and a cry of 'Boogie!' She later turned out to be the lead singer with *Bicycle Thieves*.

In the evening Henry Cow — the one 'name' band after Carol Grimes pulled out — were on last in the main hall. Ian Hoare, one of the organisers, was apologetic about giving them 'star billing' but explained to me that they had to bow to superior forces: 'All yesterday people were ringing up and all they wanted to know was "When are Henry Cow due on?" Then all the technology it takes to produce their music and the hours it takes to set up, the fact they needed a big hall and one thing and another meant that they were on last after all'.

Henry Cow introduced their first number by saying, 'It's about alienation... maybe it's too pessimistic'. Whether it was about alienation or designed to induce a feeling of alienation in the audience, or both, who knows? No fan, or judge, of that kind of music, for me it raised in an immediate and painful way these crucial questions of form/content and accessibility.

Sunday's session, at Oval House, was largely given over to discussion. When I arrived everyone had just finished watching the notorious (and unadvertised by MFS) film on the Sex Pistols, who had reportedly offered to play at the Communist Party's anti-jubilee bonanza — 'The People's Jubilee at the People's Palace' — but were turned down. I wonder why?



*Red Balune*, jazz-rock libertarian band  
Inset: Namibian singer at the Culture and Tradition session



# Whole lotta shakin' goin' on

Ian Walker

But I was in time for the Great Punk Debate Part II. 'Monopoly capitalist class' was still issuing, staccato fashion, from the mouths of the PLM spokespeople as they expounded their crude conspiracy theory: 'Punk is promoted because it is fascist. It would have been as bad to watch a commercial for the National Front as the film we've just seen'. Others thought that punk was in some way oppositional — the *Sex Pistols* can wear Karl Marx T-shirts at the same time as daubing swastikas across their stage because they are both, more or less interchangeable, symbols of revolt. Anything goes as long as it offends bourgeois morality.

The broom player from *Red Balune*, an American who had, he said, been involved in two revolutions, then attacked the 'intellectual' tone of the discussion: 'Intellectuals go out into the street. These cats (the punks) live in the street. Fuck it,

who cares if they wear swastikas... and I'm Jewish.' Someone else suggested that, 'If what they claim would come true — that they can make better music than the stuff churned out over the radio — then that would be areal challenge, not an illusory one'.

Simon Frith, author of the recently published *Sociology of Rock*, said: 'Punk bands find it easier to get record contracts than gigs. Punks tell us more about the record business than they do about unemployed kids'. A 17 year old brought us all down to earth, told us we were getting far too excited about the political import of punk. 'We missed hippies and all that, and it's the only movement around now for our age group. Too much is made of its politics — it's just based really on rock 'n' roll'.

One of the more perceptive comments intimated that in punks we somehow see

'a distorted picture of ourselves'. True enough. A lot of us at MFS were probably, at the age of sixteen, down the local disco bopping to the Who, Them, the *Zombies*, *Yardbirds* or *Tamla*. What would we have said then to geezers coming up and telling us we were being duped by bourgeois culture? Interesting too the sheer amount of time we spent arguing the toss about the 'new wave'. We seemed in a way more fascinated by the punks than by the vast array of socialist musicianship on display.

There had been no dancing music all weekend — no rock, soul or reggae — and it was ironic that when we did get a gutsy rock 'n' roll band, *Bicycle Thieves* on the Sunday, it was in an atmosphere that could hardly have been less conducive to boogie; with everybody arranged on tiers in front of the band, politely clapping at the end of numbers which should have got the sweat moving.

So *Bicycle Thieves* were in sharp contrast to the glockenspiels, improvisation, broom players and marching songs from the 30s; and for me their set — although it wasn't discussed — crystallised the problems of form/content. They could have been taken to task for adopting an uncritical position towards the rock 'n' roll form, but we can't forget where we all came from.

Although it has become a cliché that an oppositional content is insufficient that new forms must be created, it was difficult at MFS to see what these new forms would look like. Which is not to deny the need for new forms, merely to argue that rock 'n' roll — like the stuff *The Derelicts* used to play before their demise — must be an important component of a socialist music which aims at a wider audience than that present at the MFS weekend. Also, the new forms have not yet produced the kind of rhythms people can actually dance to.

After the musical intermission an official from the Musicians Union explained the problems of organising in the business — 'Musicians are craftsmen, members of the petty bourgeois class, traditionally cautious and reactionary' — and the particularly acute problems faced by rock musicians. 'It's a real Catch 22 for rock bands. You say to them, 'If you do this you'll get ripped off; if you don't do this you won't get anywhere'.

That is why in the future MFS hopes to be more than just a forum for debate; it has plans for intervening directly in the nitty gritty of production and distribution. Nick Hobbs, who works for *Henry Cow*, thought there might be something to be learned here from the practical steps that have been taken in Italy and Sweden to take over the musical means of production.

In Italy there is the great bonus of 600 active, independent radio stations, 20% of which have a clear left line, mostly run by student DJs. Government attempts to close down the stations have failed.

There are many active political bands in the folk/rock format and this forms a big section of the market, so that you get a lot of pseudo political bands cashing in... The Italian CP, for fund raising and ideological purposes, is the main promoter of progressive gigs'. The general situation in Sweden, we were told, is the inverse of Britain; a radical infrastructure, with ten alternative record companies, but very few radical bands.

But at the end of the day MFS was still a long way from setting up an alternative record distribution network or taking on major promotional jobs. We were still grappling with the fundamental political questions. Should socialist music be complex, like *Henry Cow's*, a craft which requires high levels of musical proficiency and expensive technology, or simple like *Hackney and Islington Music Workshop*? Where is this music to be played? For PLM it is on the picket line and in the demonstration; for others it could



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## more music

be in community centres, pubs, schools or even places like Battersea Arts Centre.

Who is this music to serve and what is it designed to do? It is of course utopian to imagine that the working class will become instant converts from the Top 20 to MFS, but what precisely is the audience – and generation – we are aiming at? Is MFS committed to 'consciousness raising', demystifying music by bringing instruments to the people, making people question the whole nature of music and sounds or simply providing some form of non-bourgeois entertainment for the left?

The various answers to these questions would reflect the political positions taken up on all the points from the Maoists to the dadaist anarchists – in that sense, whether it is acknowledged or not, politics is in command. And the main task confronting MFS is how to contain these ideological conflicts; how to provide an organisational framework which will assist all those bands that, in different ways, are linking music to the class struggle.

Other questions, like the role and importance of dance and dance music, remain unasked. Socialists too must ask themselves why it is that an average crowd of foot-

ball fans is infinitely more inventive than the left when it comes to producing chants and songs. Part of the answer at least must be that for too long the left has restricted the space of political practice to industrial struggle. 'You can't change the world with guitars', we were always told in those world-weary tones.



Cornelius Cardew of PLM

But times change and the MFS festival, despite all its problems, is symptomatic of a commitment towards redefining and enlarging the terrain of political practice. And Music for Socialism lends a new dimension to our ideology, carrying as it does the promise of new colours, new sounds. As the striking women textile workers from Laurence, Massachusetts sang in 1912, "Yes, it's bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too".

MFS are already in the red for £300 from the festival, plus a bill for £165 they picked up courtesy of a mad piano smasher, but there are high levels of interest and confidence in the project. Already there have been spin-offs (the songwriters' group is, as a result of the festival, meeting on a regular basis) and there are plans in the pipeline for a joint project with the Other Cinema – a season of music films, tied up with performances and discussion. But to pay off the debts and keep the organisation moving, MFS is asking for a £2 membership fee from its supporters. Cheques/postal orders to Music For Socialism. All money and other enquiries to MFS, 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8.

## Rebel Music They've got it TAPED

FOR THE first time, there is now on sale a tape full of good songs to sing while you make trouble. No more humming *Money-Money* by Abba or the latest Bay City Roller single . . . .

Hackney and Islington Music Workshop have put out over 30 previously unrecorded songs. The styles vary from traditional folk to acoustic blues, avoiding the monotony of much 'protest' music that concentrates on words, at the expense of musical form. The sheer variety of styles raises important questions about the best form to make 'political music' in, to reach the largest number of people.

In America, traditional folk protest songs – as re-interpreted by Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan – became accepted during the folk-boom of the early 60s. But in England, there was only a brief mimicry of the American experience, largely around the chart success of the early Donovan singles. Only later when the music business began to cast about for new forms – jazz, Indian, classical, ska and later, reggae – did it rediscover traditional folk protest songs with groups like Fairport Convention and its successor, Steeleye Span.

English folk music's difficulty was its roots, which made it rather like singing 12th century madrigals. While Led Zeppelin were taking the black blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson, ripping it apart and putting it

back together again for troubled white youth, folk remained a home-spun minority interest that never made the transition.

Singing about press gangs in Ireland or the Diggers, like two of the songs on this tape, hardly seems to have an immediate relevance to a bus worker or a housewife. It's not their history. It's a bit like watching Charles Dickens TV serials; 'It's all very terrible but it's not like that now, you know'.

So, for better or for worse, the music that almost everyone listens to, is electric music – chart music; you can't escape it. It makes the biggest claim to talk about everyone's life; love, dancing or whatever part of life they enjoy, their private life. This is the music that reaches into factories over the tannoy every day of the working week.

Because it's loud and noisy, people interested in 'political music' always pose the problem of hearing the words. And significantly there has only been one 'electric' record: the KK band's single. This difficulty is misleading. Although the words may not be immediately obvious, people pick them up because they are heard so often. The ideas in a rock song are not gleaned by careful, textual analysis but by yelling them out at a dance.

The other problem is equipment. As any starting band will tell you, they haven't got the equipment to sound as good as they could. There is an awareness that pop music made by the business is too clever and professional to compete with.

It depends what you want: perfection or excitement? One of the best things about bands like the Sex Pistols is them saying you only have to play four chords and have a guitar to make music. It means people

entertaining themselves not mass consumption of a passive culture. You could call it street music; played in grubby pub rooms and youth clubs where people can dance, drink and enjoy themselves.

Not surprisingly, few of the songs on this tape are 'electric-music' because that takes studio time and money. But those that stick in my mind are those closest to being 'electric'. The powerful *Man in the Middle* on this tape builds and builds, with that same angry insistence that makes some of the best Arlo Guthrie songs memorable. Again, *Hang in there* is another haunting anthem that stays with you. Of the other songs many of them are touching and personal in a way that surprises. Others are jokey music-hall, with chorus lines that can be sung by audiences.

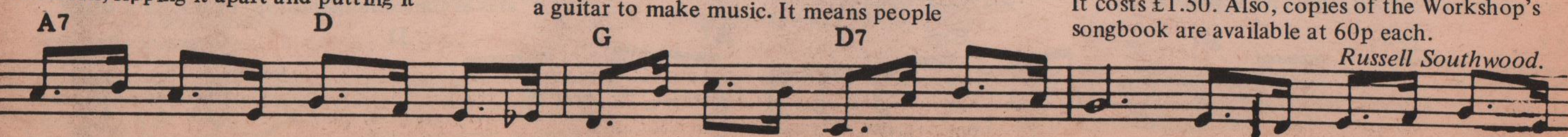
Above all, this is a tape which Hackney and Islington Music Workshop hope will be used 'to help people learn the songs,' and 'to make a contribution towards the building of a culture of opposition'.

To spread this 'culture of opposition' Music for Socialism are planning to start an alternative distribution network for socialist performers, outside the commercial system. And it seems to me that tape-cassette will be the technology for spreading that music.

Already, MFS have received tapes from all over the country – including a set of songs from Gateshead about the death of Liddle Towers together with numerous enquiries about the possibility of distribution. Only when we have the chance to buy good tapes and records as easily as pamphlets and books, will the building of that culture of opposition be on the way.

Copies of the tape cassette can be obtained from Hackney and Islington Music Workshop, 2A St Paul's Road, London N1. It costs £1.50. Also, copies of the Workshop's songbook are available at 60p each.

Russell Southwood.



HOW DO YOU get from playing rock 'n' roll at Butlins to researching Marxist theories of science at LSE? *The Leveller* went to find out from a man who's been a pro-saxophonist since 1953, became a star in the 60s and early 70s with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Colosseum. He still blows a mean horn – with his own jazz quintet and around the London pub circuit with a band called Big Chief – but now he's more interested in historical materialism.

When and how did you become committed to socialism?

A recurrent back injury came back in March '73 when I was in the middle of making an album. I came home from the studio for the weekend, crawled into my flat on the floor and lay on my back for three months. By the time three months was up, I had done a lot of thinking – there isn't a lot else you can do. For roughly the past seventeen years, my life had consisted of two periods: one between 8 and 11 pm which is the pinnacle and object of the whole issue, the rest of it mostly spent on runways and motorways, in transits and hotel rooms.

Nothing changes because no-one's got time to think, you go on having the same merry, stupid existence. And that struck me as a drag because if you travel round the world long enough you do begin to notice that everything isn't as it should be. You start asking questions and, lying on my back, I first thought it must be possible to answer these questions in terms of the basic characteristics of human beings. So in October '73 I went to South Bank Poly to do sociology. I didn't get a grant for seven months – ILEA thought because I was a musician I must be frivolous.

The original project went caput in the first term when I realised that there is no such thing as an individual on its own. That realisation comes very hard, especially if you're a musician – jazz musicians in particular believe that their own strength is in their individuality and that's what it's all about.

I'm very sceptical, I always have been, so I didn't accept that this thing sociology was a 'social science' – science seemed to be a privileged word – and that demanded to be taken apart. Eventually, after spending two years looking at science, it became clear that apart from the viability of Marxism as a political practice, historical materialism seemed to be the only social theory which could possibly have any claim to being a science or privileged knowledge.

What are your feelings now about the music business?

Looking at it as a Marxist, it appears to be a very obvious instance of the separation of the producer from the means of production. In a way it's like a guild from the late middle ages. You must own your own instruments, but then you need gear, access to a recording studio, insurance and so on. Once you're separated from that part, that enables you to get on the road. Then there comes the division between mental and manual labour because you simply don't have time to be your own manager and once the managerial and agency day-to-day activities are handed over to a pro-organisation the quality of the work you do is determined by these people. A manager has to take decisions about the sort of work you do. You can give them general guidelines, but they'll send up by giving you general guidelines.

# Playing on my mind

Dick Heckstall-Smith



down the streets he would not have produced *Capital* and there would have been no revolutions. These questions of tonality and scales are profoundly important. It's only on the basis of something that looks like a very internal musicians kind of practice that musicians after the revolution will not be taken completely by surprise and will not have to go back to playing *All My Loving*.

But there might be quite a few socialists around who still want to listen to *All My Loving*, and *bop to rock 'n' roll*, *soul* and *reggae*.

Of course, but the question of whether the new music is going to be like or not depends upon the relationships between musician/audience and everything else that's going on in society. Coltrane sounded very strange to everyone's ears when he first appeared, but it was people's ears which changed and not Coltrane. He advanced.

How if at all does your politics intrude into playing the sax at night?

It doesn't and I don't see how it could, which doesn't mean it couldn't.

Aren't you then doing what you criticise, separating theory and practice, cutting off your life as a musician from your theoretical work?

I've got a simple answer to that one. There are no divided loyalties. My work is on Marxist theories of science.

But you're perhaps more famous as a sax player than a Marxist theoretician of science.

Before I joined Alexis I was more famous as no-one at all. It's a question of priorities. I deny that it is possible to institute a correct political practice in something as mysterious as music, simply by getting up one morning and deciding to be political. The enquiry into the specifics of the problem – the definite forms practice should take – is a long and arduous one.

I'm glad to see that, through Music For Socialism, people are going to get into it and sorry in a way that I'm not heavily involved, but in another three or four years I might be. Especially because over the years I now see some theoretical grounds for a junction of physics and historical materialism. Take tonality – you know that extraordinary feeling you get when you achieve a resolution at the end of a song; the last chord, it's in the key of the whole piece, complete and satisfying. That is the experience of tonality.

Using physics and historical materialism there is an unanswerable case that that thing – tonality – which seems so natural is a historical product, ultimately connected with the form of the labour process. So all western forms of music – rock, jazz, classical, etc. – are not natural things at all. They are social, and hence class, objects. That throws everything into chaos.

But it doesn't get us very far.

Yet if it's true? I'm happy to say that it shouldn't: the point about this sort of thing is you don't expect to get the correct answers immediately.

It's the mode of rationality of organisation of the music business that brings about what appears to be a rip off. Large organisations which supply capital, telephones, personnel, etc. use up a lot of bread for various reasons (some of them completely ideological like having flash offices in the middle of town) but for others which are technical. It takes an awful lot of money to run an office, so the performers get 0.9% back from the records in royalties.

That looks like a rip off. The producer is producing the goods for the people who like it and they're there – only six feet away from you. They're paying a fortune for gigs and records and they're getting ripped off too. People say why don't you keep your prices down; we saw you last year but we can't afford it now. Bleeding heart time then isn't it? But if we had dropped our prices we would have ceased to play and once again they wouldn't hear us. It looks at the level of appearances as if it's a rip off, but rip off is a bourgeois word: it is impossible to be ripped off for something you don't possess.

What about socialist music? Do we need new forms as well as a critical content? Is it OK to stick a revolutionary lyric on a standard rock 'n' roll number?

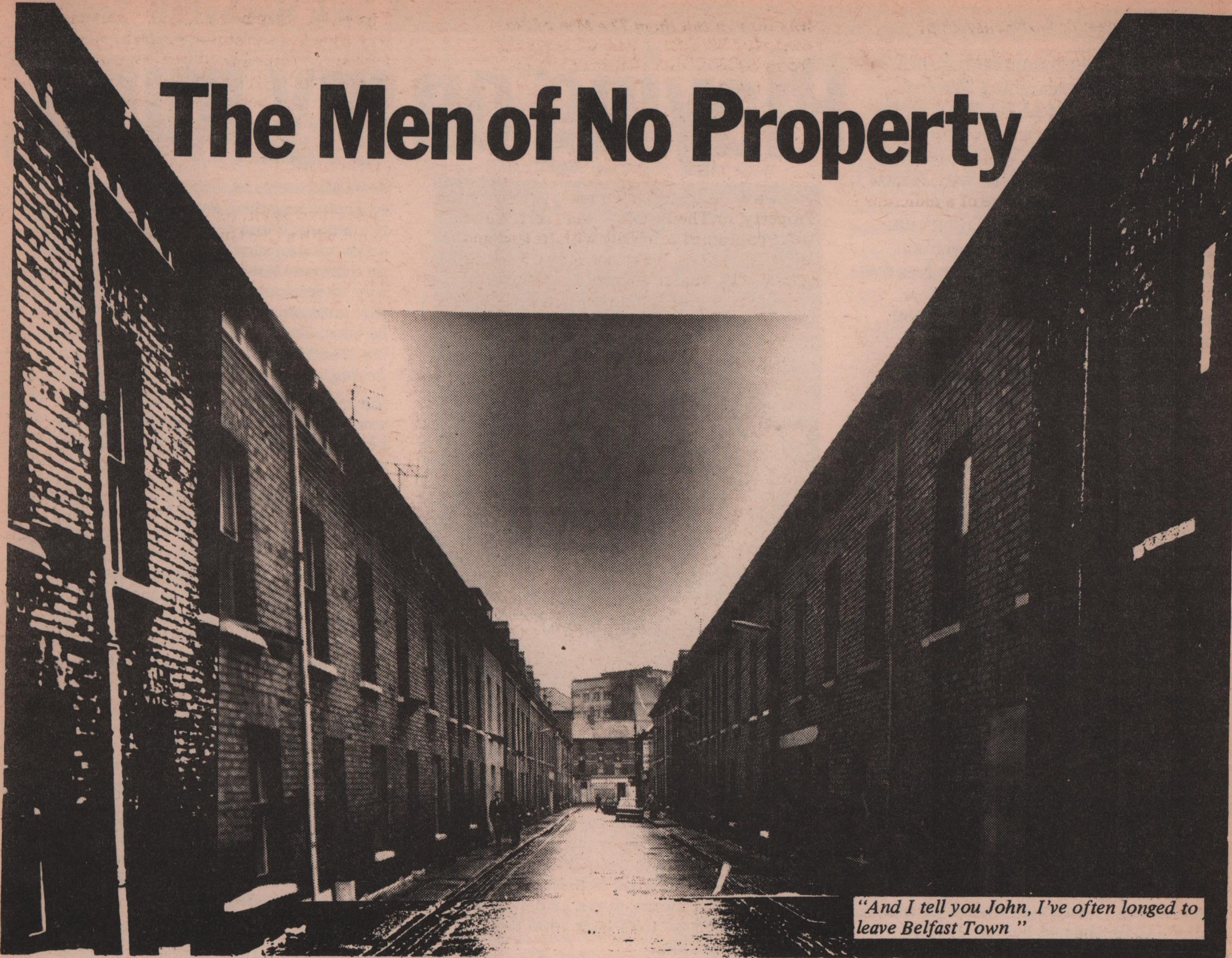
There's nothing intrinsically wrong with doing that. In fact there's not very much else musicians can do at present to communicate directly because communicating with an audience is down to playing things people like – that means things people know. There's nothing wrong with putting revolutionary lyrics to rock songs: if it's good music it gets across; if it's bad, merely created to put across a feeble-minded revolutionary lyric, then it had better not be done.

What is your view of the experimental groups, like free form jazz musicians, who are trying to question the whole nature of scales and sounds themselves? Is that elitist?

It is necessary. I regard that activity as theoretical investigation. If you condemn it for being irrelevant you will have to answer to Marx because that is exactly what he did, producing *Capital* in the British Museum. If he had felt duty bound to march up and



# The Men of No Property



"And I tell you John, I've often longed to leave Belfast Town"

THERE'S A tradition of rebel music in Ireland as old as the tradition of rebellion itself. Music has a power to move people far beyond the coolness of the written word. And it's a tradition well understood by a revolutionary Irish group, the Men of No Property.

They have issued three albums so far — *Songs From the Barricades*; *England's Vietnam* and *Ireland: The Fight Goes On*. The last two have had a limited distribution through Rising Free in England. The first is a rarity little heard outside Northern Ireland or the United States.

The group's songs are raw and hard with little claim to subtlety. The issues are clear, the words as harsh as a soldier's boot. It is the music of the Green Briar in Andersonstown on a Saturday night, the tune in the mind of a young volunteer as he crouches shivering in the Short Strand twilight.

The musicians and singers behind the Men of No Property all have other jobs to do: none see themselves as 'stars', none expect to make money out of the group. *The Leveller* asked John Belfast what the group is all about and what they hope to achieve.

The main emphasis of the group is on modern revolutionary material specifically related to the Irish struggle. We don't want the old republican ballads. Obviously there's a heavy republican orientation. There's lots of songs about jail escapes and freedom fighters and that sort of thing because we all identify with that.

The group is composed of an anarchist, a trotskyite and two left wingers of differing hues. The backing is all done by friends and comrades who come and sit in on the records.

What is the purpose of the records? Are they seen as propaganda or are they simply a business?

The records are agitprop and we don't reckon on making money. We're amazed that we've been able to sell as many as we have. The main function of the record is that once you've got the money you go on and produce the next one. We were tired of getting ripped off. The only way to do it is to do it ourselves. That way you don't have any censorship, you don't have to give a third to a wholesaler or a lot to the boy who produces it.

Have you had trouble with censorship?

In 1975 an East German producer came over and met some of the group at Listowel. He'd heard them singing and wanted to do an LP. It was agreed to do it and the East Germans paid the expenses. We went over to London, recorded it there and then went on to Germany and the East Germans wanted cuts in it. We thought the cuts were of a ludicrous nature.

There's one song called *Paddy Reilly*: he joins the IRA and it's about why he joined and what he's doing. There were a couple of verses they objected to. There's one that goes:

'He moves with the cunning of a fox  
There's another Brit gone home in a box.

Another verse goes:

'For liberals and moderates I do not give a straw;  
They've let us rot for fifty years and say  
'Now keep the law'.

And there's a third one:

'He idles away the night-time hours planting bombs for freedom, Paddy Reilly'.

Well, the East Germans said we couldn't have that on our record, it's impossible to put 'Planting bombs for freedom'. It might give some East Germans ideas. The producer was very disgusted with his bosses and in fact virtually handed over the copy of the master tape to us. We were then left with it.

Who actually makes the records for you?

In Northern Ireland this kind of record production is all tied up in the hands of one man, Billy McBurney. He's made a large sum of money from producing orange and green LPs.

So all the UDA and UVF records are produced by the same man who makes the republican records?

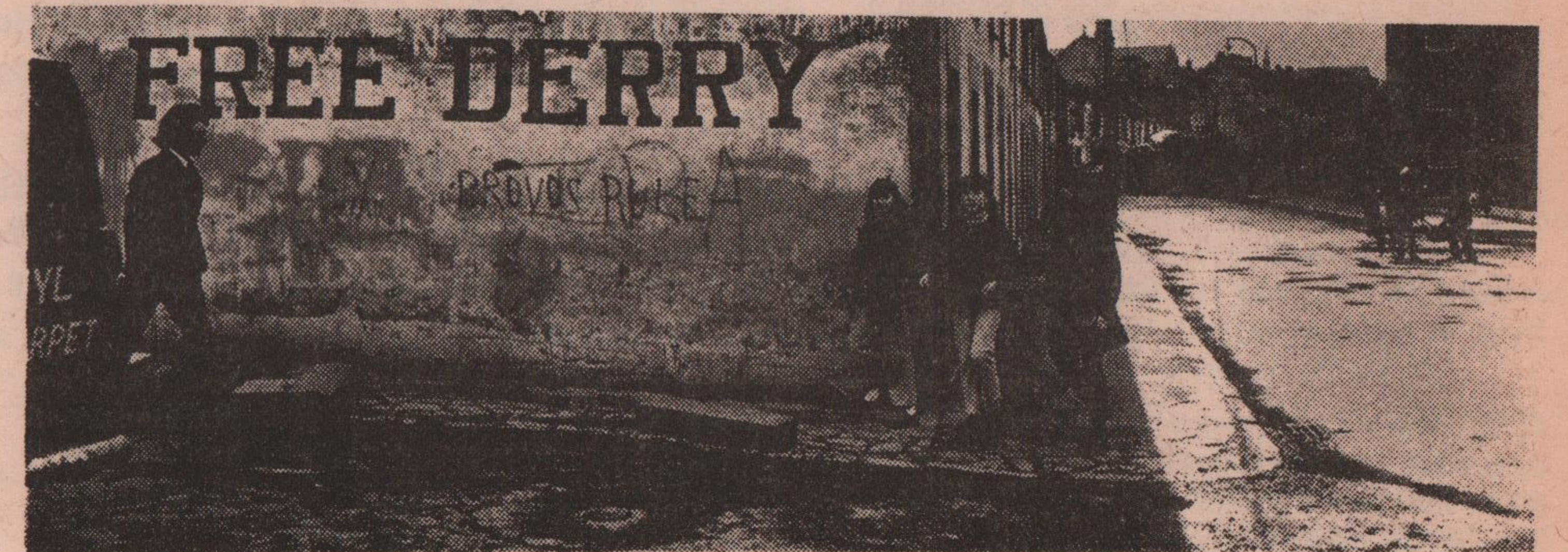
If they're produced in Belfast, 90% of them do. He's got Outlet Records, Inset, Home-spun — those are his three big labels. He also does gospel and country and western. But when it comes to all the rebel LPs that were coming out, McBurney cleaned the market up. His favourite stunt used to be to go into Kelly's Cellars and say 'How are you doing lads?'

And the lads would all be sitting there having a session with the guitars. So McBurney would set up, a couple of drates of Guinness and say 'Would you mind hopping over to the studios and sitting in for a few tracks?' And people would be all chuffed because they would go in, hear nothing more of it and then maybe a year or two, or five years later they would be put out on sampler albums. You know, anonymous albums of '21 Rebel Songs'.

There was a standard joke that a folk group said to us. We heard that they were doing a record for McBurney and we asked whether they were happy about it. And the fellow says to us 'When you do a record for McBurney, you get two contracts, You can either get paid in Smarties or in sweetie mice.

Why do you call them The Men of No Property? Why don't you call them the People of No Property when there are women in it?

It was a name cobbled up very quickly in 1971 and it's a reference to Wolfe Tone who said 'The only people who've never betrayed Ireland are the men of no property'. Now if you want the Men and Women of No Property, or The People — well, sure. But we're concerned primarily with Ireland and left-wing politics. We're not primarily concerned with women's liberation. Of course we're in favour of it but we think that if you get too heavily involved in it that it just side-tracks you from the much more serious problem here in Belfast.



Are you identified with any political tendency here? How would your relationships be with the Provisionals for example? Are they quite happy to have you propagating socialist ideas?

They've never asked us to censor ourselves or not to do any songs. We're independent, but we do gigs for them. For example, we sold them a lot of copies of *England's Vietnam* and there was one song on there that we thought there might be trouble with — 'Jesse James and Jesus Christ ride into Belfast Town'. Lots of people said 'you can't put something like that on a record, there's just no way people will buy that, let alone the Provos.' And in fact we got no complaints whatsoever. They bought a lot of LPs off us and helped us out financially. If they hadn't, we would have been in trouble.

They've bought the subsequent album and they're very friendly. The gigs we've done for political prisoners are for them. It's mainly a personal thing — various comrades and friends who are associated with Sinn Fein in the South have asked us to do various gigs — for example for Rita O'Hare or Bridget Dugdale who are in Limerick. Also of course for the hunger strikers and the Murray Defence Committee.

Do you ever do gigs for loyalist organisations?

No. We've never been asked and there's no earthly reason why they should because we're poles apart. And apart from anything else there's no question of us doing gigs for organisations which we basically regard as fascist or crypto fascist.

The various members of loyalist paramilitaries who have had socialist ideas have generally tended to be eliminated by their own organisations. There's quite a few have been shot by their own men because they were felt to be socialist, albeit half-baked and mixed-up socialists. But at least they had grass roots, anti-authoritarian ideas and they've been eliminated.

Ernie Duke Elliot, for example, used to wander round with a Che Guevara book in his back pocket and he was eliminated. Jim Hanna, head of the UVF, was killed after he expressed vague socialist leanings. They were very well respected men in the loyalist community.

What are the plans for the future?

We intend to produce more LPs and use them to finance *Resistance Comix* which we think are important because, although they're not great artwork they're not necessarily that heavy, they are popular. We've all had experience of selling political papers around pubs and generally people would buy them, glance at them and then throw them away whereas the *Comix* have a much more instant appeal.

We've also started something called *Resistance Archives*. We're going around and getting down on tape people who've been involved in resistance in Northern and Southern Ireland for the past fifty years. We're starting with old kiddies who were involved in the troubles of the twenties and then we're going to do people involved in the forties and fifties. Then we're going to do people involved in the present day struggle. Not just necessarily well-known people, but ordinary people. It's not even for publishing, not to make money out of, but to try and preserve stuff.

You read in *Republican News* that so-and-so died and you think to yourself 'God, if only we'd been able to talk to him, he'd have been able to tell us so much of what went on'.

And it isn't recorded in books and it never will be. Alright, he's talked to his kids and that's about it. We'd like to be able to start recording this before it goes.

And there's a vague offer in line for a kind of book to do 75 Songs of Irish Resistance and Rebellion which would be our songs with our illustrations and coming out in a glossy kind, of thing. Some publisher is apparently interested and that's another possibility providing we don't get ripped off.







## 'The Soviet Union is our best card....'

The Communist Party has plunged into a major debate whose result is likely to be a split more serious than at any time since the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. On the surface, the argument is about the new draft of the Party programme, the *British Road to Socialism*.

But underneath, the discussion has brought to the fore tensions that have long been endemic within the organisation. The Party, whose 27,000 members still represent the largest organised body on the revolutionary left, has bared its soul to unaccustomed public gaze. David Clark examines the debate.

IT TAKES a major event to draw more than 800 comrades to a meeting at the best of times. And when that meeting is at the Merton Civic Centre, deep in the heart of proletarian Surrey, we must be sure something serious is going on.

Inside the hall, a thirty-foot long banner reminded us of Lenin's dictum that: 'Whoever expects that socialism will be achieved without a social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a socialist.' The business of the evening was clear enough from the banner: the struggle is on for the heart of the Party.

The argument stems from a decision taken at the Party's 34th National Congress back in November 1975. It was felt then that the previous version of the *British Road* — the Party's programme and policy document — was becoming outdated and no longer in tune with the new surge of Eurocommunism.

Congress told the Executive Committee to appoint a commission to prepare a new version of the *British Road* for discussion by Party members. The Commission, composed of a mix of old-stagers like George Mathews, previous *Morning Star* editor, and the new critical intellectuals like Martin Jacques, came out with a 20,000 word draft at the beginning of this year.

Uniquely for the Party — many of whose members, like AEUW/Tass General Secretary Ken Gill think these things should be discussed by Party members in private — it was decided to hold a public debate on the draft. In large part this was a response typical of the new lines argued in the document: that the Party has to work with other sections of the left, and be seen to be doing so openly.

We cannot summarise the document here (It's widely available from left bookshops) but the main arguments bear repetition. It opens with an analysis of why Britain needs socialism, goes on to look at the forces for change and examines the labour movement and the role of the Communist Party within it.

'The vital need,' the *British Road* argues, is 'for an organisation of socialists, guided by the principles of scientific socialism, active in all the struggles, in all the unions, in all the progressive movements, and able to give leadership to them — in other words, an organised party, as distinct from the left groups in the Labour Party, the separate unions and the other social forces and movements.'

Finally, the party needs 'close relations with the Communist movement in other countries, based on the independence and equality of each Communist Party in the great world movement'.

From this view of the Party, the document turns to the vital question of how power is to be achieved. The grim reality of the ballot box has shown that it is not likely to win power in a General Election. 'Success depends on the left becoming the dominant force in the labour and democratic movements, and on the building of a larger Communist Party as part of that left.'

By building alliances within the socialist movement, the document envisages a Parliament to be 'won by the people, made into the mirror of the country, with the activity of the working class parties in Parliament being intimately linked to the mass struggle outside it.'

'Britain's road to socialism will be different from the Soviet road... the different conditions and history of Britain, and the changed balance of world forces, give us the confidence that socialism can be achieved in our country without civil war... Parliament itself the product of past battles for democracy, can be transformed into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of the people... Thus the possibility exists of advance to socialism without armed struggle.'

It is the world of Berlinguer and Carrillo, rather than of Lenin and Trotsky. The draft even argues that if, in subsequent elections, a conservative party won, then the Socialists would step down from power.

But it is not all that new. It has been Party policy, in theory if not in the hearts of the members, since *For a Soviet Britain* gave way to the *British Road* in 1951. In the words of one leading Manchester Party member:

'Over the years, the leadership has neglected to argue for the strategy to which it was overtly committed. The redraft really is not that different from previous versions, but in the past there has been a kind of schizophrenia.'

'The members have said in the past that they don't believe in the *British Road* because when it comes down to it, it's going to be a military seizure of power. But there were sufficient ambiguities in the old version for people to be happy about it.'

George Mathews, official Party spokesperson, as well as a member of the commission, describes that view as 'absolute balderdash' and argues that on each redrafting of the programme — '51; '58; and '68 — there has been intense discussion. Once the programme has been democratically decided on, he told the *Leveller*, then the leadership argues for it, and the membership has accepted it.

What is so different this time around is that the discussion is going on in public and that was what brought more than 800 of us to hear Sid French, on a damp Thursday evening.

The District Secretary of the Surrey Communist Party joined the Young Communist League when he was 15, just before the Civil War broke out in Spain in 1936. He has held his Party card ever since, and is the most public representative of the third of the party who still think the Soviet Union is the 'greatest card the British Communist Party possesses today.'

For French, balding, grey-suited, his slight figure contrasting with the bellicosity of his platform manner, the new draft is a 'complete revision of Marxism... a refusal of the class struggle.' For 45 minutes he argued that the Parliamentary road is an attempt to 'substitute the government of the broad alliance for the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

What the King Street comrades were arguing for was not Leninism, he argued, but another road — and we were left in little doubt that the reference was to Kautsky. 'The struggle for Parliamentary representation is a legitimate part of the revolutionary strategy,' he argued, 'but on taking power, the working class would have to impose a state of emergency.'

It was obvious to French that the commission had not learned the lessons of Chile. In the Surrey contribution to the debate — an 800 word statement published in *Comment* on April 30 — they had argued that: 'A peaceful road is infinitely preferable to a violent road and must be striven for, but any road should project the concept of coercion to force through the change.'

'The document is too short on coercion and too free with liberalism.'

The other main thrust of French's attack was a defence of the Soviet Union where, he assured us, there had been no rent rises for 49 years and no unemployment since 1923. It was his pro-

Soviet line that drew the loudest applause from the packed hall.

'They are concerned about the mythical lack of freedom in the Soviet Union. But they speak of freedom as though it were something absolute and removed from the economic base.' He went on to argue that if the revolution was to happen peacefully in Britain, part of the reason would be the existence and support of the Soviet Union.

And to drop the Soviet commitment 'to ingratiate ourselves with the electorate does not work — at the end of our recent card signing campaign, our membership is down by between two and three thousand, and sales of the *Star* are dropping.'

It was a hard attack, which lasted 45 trenchant minutes. At the end, the applause was long and solid and obviously encouraging for French. He later told the *Leveller*: 'I'm confident on the basis of that meeting that we will carry the party on the Marxist Leninist line. But I wasn't surprised by the size of the meeting — quite definitely not. I went out and booked a hall that holds 1,360 seats. That gives some indication of my optimism — and I've been organising meetings for 41 years.'

And it surprised other people too, including many identified with the document. One prominent Party member told the *Leveller* that he had expected fewer than 500 and the packed hall had surprised and worried him in a debate which he thought was home and dry already. One indication was the £418 raised after an appeal from ex-dockers' leader Jack Dash.

And although Mathews claims that the Executive is pleased with the level of the debate, the party's own *Morning Star* reported the meeting two days later in a one-paragraph short which was remarkable only for its lack of information

Another indicator is the way in which Charley Doyle, a leading activist, made an attempted longer critical contribution to *Comment*. The leadership, perhaps reasonably in view of space problems, had set a limit of 800 words on contributions. Doyle's argument was longer, so he circulated it as a pamphlet which Party members have now been instructed not to sell.

At question time, Executive Committee member Mike Hicks was first on his feet and asked French to guarantee that if his faction lost the debate, he would 'denounce any attempt to split the Party?'

French, who has been in politics long enough to know how to handle these things, told the meeting that he had his reading glasses on and could not see the speaker. Meanwhile, he searched for the right form of words.

'I will give no guarantee,' he told Hicks, 'that I will remain in membership of any organisation if it's taken over.' That was not an answer to the question. But when the *Leveller* asked French for clarification later, he would not be drawn: 'If you say that's what I said, then I stand by my answer,' he told us.

Of course, he has little choice. If he says he will split the Party, then King Street has every reason to suspend him. If he says he won't, then how seriously can we take his arguments? The Party now faces its most serious debate since Hungary and in the eyes of many members, the whole thing is very much more fluid than they had anticipated.

French spoke to the Merton meeting on a civic stage crowned by the corporation motto: 'Stand fast in honour and in strength'. Sid French and the bulk of the tankies will be standing fast until November. But from then on, it's anybody's guess.

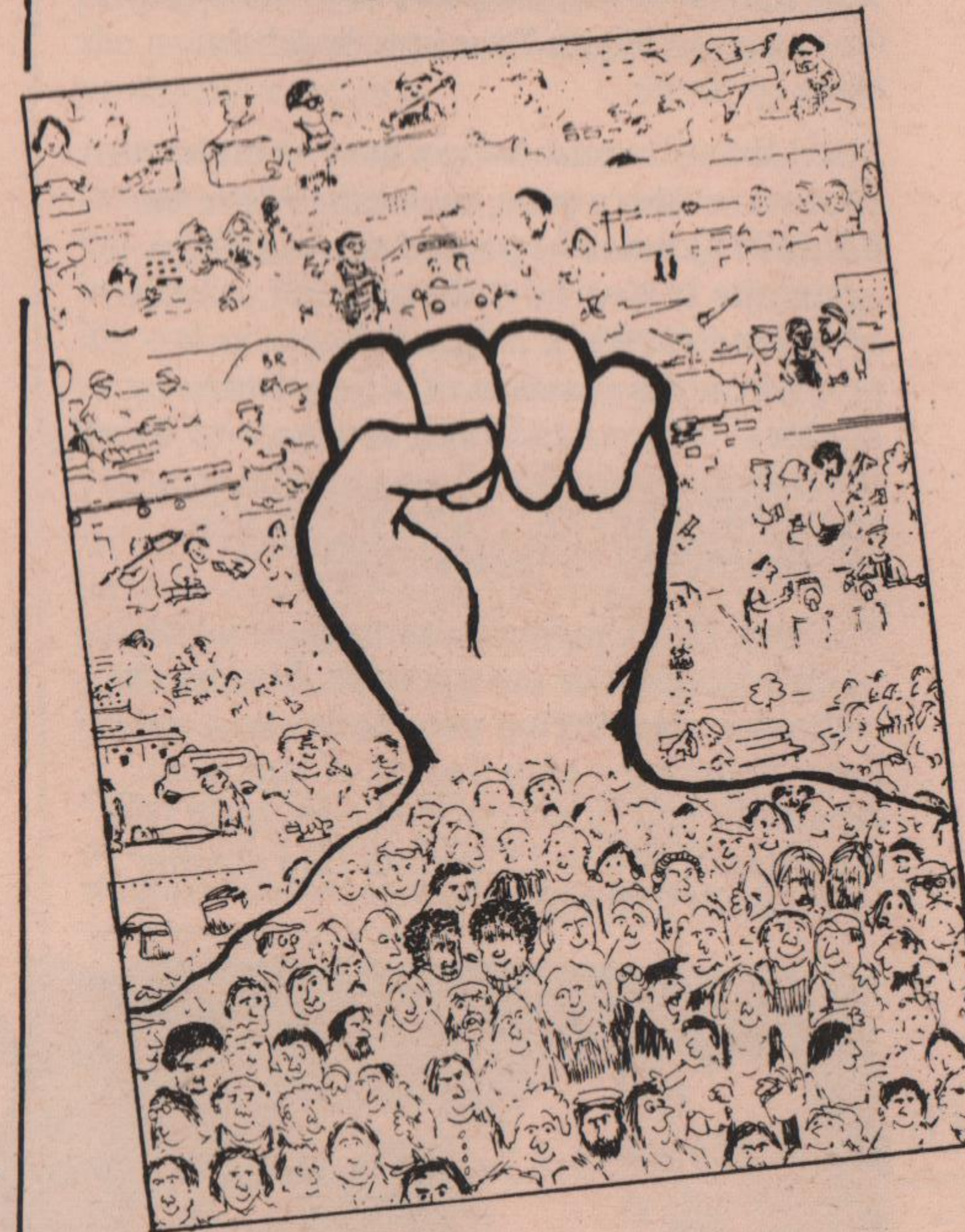
## Moves to left unity

WITH THE publication of its draft manifesto - *Towards a New Revolutionary Socialist Organisation* - Big Flame has started a process which it hopes will end with a re-alignment of people on the organised and unorganised left.

The manifesto is rich in ideas which took root in Big Flame's more libertarian past. It includes a section on the struggle in personal life and maintains that both black's and women's struggles ought to be autonomous.

From a handful of people in Liverpool in 1970, Big Flame has now grown to a group of approximately 150 members - although it provokes interest out of all proportion to its size.

But what marks off Big Flame from most of the rest of the organised left is that it does not come out of the Trotskyist tradition. To make this quite clear, it has published a trenchant critique of Trotskyist policies in its pamphlet *The Revolution Unfinished?* which, according to one member, is selling "like hot tamales".



Where will the people come from for a re-alignment of the left? They believe that "there exists in this country a certain tendency that is not defined by a common political line but consists of several groups" with a broadly-shared view of political practice.

This tendency of people falls into six groupings. There is a broad set of people who have been in the women's movement, claimants' unions, the Labour Party etc. - often working solely on one issue in their own sector. These people have not joined any revolutionary organisation because they reject the manipulative politics of these organisations. Some of these are principled libertarians, but the majority are now looking for an organisation that will not become a substitute for their base work.

There are also many ex-comrades, according to Big Flame, of parties like IS/SWP, who now place their emphasis on mass action, not

conspiratorial politics, and believe in working inside the mass of the working class. (Of Big Flame's interventions, the one at Ford's Halewood plant seems to have been the most successful).

Big Flame also say that: "Within the working class in most work-places, factories and communities there are identifiable groups of comrades who put forward anti-capitalist and anti-reformist struggles. The situation is worse than three years ago but there has been a qualitative improvement in looking for a total alternative".

Outside of these three large areas, there are at least three other smaller sets of people. Developments like the increased activism of left intellectuals and the emergence of non-aligned students in Socialist Alliance, Big Flame believes will contain many people interested in the new organisation.

Perhaps surprisingly, given their differences with Trotskyism, they have been contacted by several small revolutionary organisations like Marxist Worker in Bolton, and the Revolutionary Marxist Current, an IMG splinter group from the early 70s. The latter have discussed the manifesto and agree with almost all of it. As a result, they have asked to work with Big Flame for three months with a view to joining them.

Big Flame believes that differences over how you regard the USSR and China can co-exist within a single organisation, and that "there is a broad thread of common politics and method."

Another project of Big Flame's has been its cooperation with IMG on socialist unity/class struggle candidates. There is still disagreement over whether these should stand in marginal seats, but both sides have agreed to let the issue be resolved by a jointly-called conference in the autumn.

There are differences over the Labour Government. Big Flame see IMG's policy of calling for the return of a Labour Government as unhelpful at a time when Labour has moved perceptibly rightwards. They believe it is wrong to hamper any electoral strategy with this slogan, when a Tory Government is on the cards "unless the class struggle changes very rapidly".

The next candidate will stand in Liverpool Edge Hill and although the group believe he will get less votes than the far left in Stechford, they think it will show how effective a class struggle candidate could be.

Russell Southwood

And in a move which is bound to be viewed with some suspicion in King Street, the Socialist Workers Party has issued an Open Letter to the Communist Party calling for closer cooperation on a number of important fields.

Most disturbing to the CBI and the TUC must be the suggestion that the two parties' industrial departments work together more closely in fighting the Social Contract.

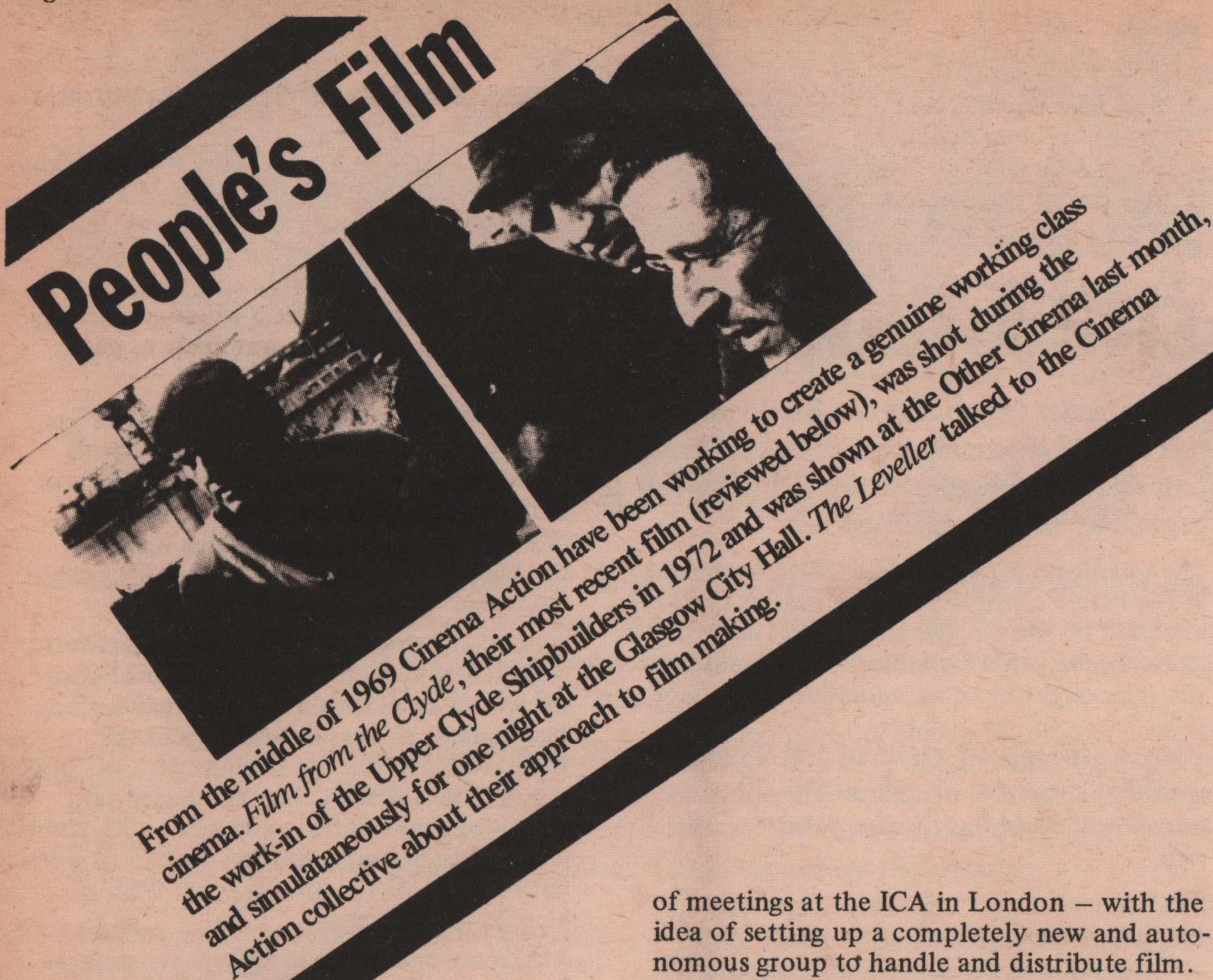
The letter, which was printed in full in *Socialist Worker* on the week ending June 18 called for five specific points of co-operation in the fight against racism and in the industrial field.

SW's Chris Harman told *The Leveller* that "we are prepared to see whether we can work together in concrete situations like Grunwicks. This won't mean hiding our political differences".

The CP's political committee had not met to discuss their response when we went to press.



# People's Film



From the middle of 1969 Cinema Action have been working to create a genuine working class cinema. *Film from the Clyde*, their most recent film (reviewed below), was shot during the work-in of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1972 and was shown at the Other Cinema last month, and simultaneously for one night at the Glasgow City Hall. *The Leveller* talked to the Cinema Action collective about their approach to film making.

of meetings at the ICA in London – with the idea of setting up a completely new and autonomous group to handle and distribute film.

This was to be known as “parallel cinema”, but a conflict of ideas and personalities prevented it ever taking off. Cinema Action though began work on their first project, on squatters, and completed a short on the Government White Paper proposal, *In Place of Strife*.

Since then Cinema Action have completed about one film a year, including *Fight the Bill* (1970) made as part of the campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill; *People of Ireland* (1973) a long and important project on the creation of a Free Derry by the local citizens and their attempts to develop their own appropriate forms of democracy; and the *Miners Film* (1974-5), the first documentation of their victory.

The way that Cinema Action approach their work is distinctive in two ways. Firstly, the collective regards film production as a privilege, requiring a high degree of technical capability and funds on a massive scale (the production of one 25 minute film costing upwards of £10,000).

“IT IS NOT enough to talk: we want action and we want it now (applause) and based on that we are all behind you.” Taken from *Film from the Clyde* (FFTC), this was the moment when unions up and down the country and from abroad promised total solidarity for the 9000 workers involved in the 1972 occupation of the UCS yards.

Cinema Action are a collective with four full time members at present, though at any time there might be up to 25 people involved in a “project”. They produce films about workers’ struggles - but in a strong campaigning style that puts as much emphasis on the discussions to be generated by and during the film as the actual production of the film.

Cinema Action emerged almost by accident when the two founding members arrived in London from Paris towards the end of 1968 and, through a fund raising party, managed to buy some rough footage of the events of May. Shot by a group of French film students, it covered such incidents as the attack on the barricades, a speech by Sartre and the occupation of the National Theatre by the Living Theatre group.

A projector was also bought and the film shown round the country, until it was stolen after a showing in Liverpool in the spring of 1969. These impromptu showings demonstrated the genuine need to continue such exhibitions, but cheap and politically committed films were hard to come by at that time. So Cinema Action was formed to produce and distribute their own films.

The alternative film scene was buzzing with activity in 1969. The events of May '68 had led to intensive discussions on the French campuses about the role of film in the struggle between capital and labour. These discussions became known as the “open secret” project and in Britain led to a series

The collective thus sets out to demystify the film process by encouraging participation on as many levels as possible – from leafletting for funds to the cutting room floor. While making FFTC Cinema Action involved workers from the UCS shipyards and Fighting Fund and even Clydebank Town Council. They also offer to teach anybody about film whenever possible and reckon that thirty-odd films a year pass through their house – with their editing deck in constant use.

Secondly, the collective puts very special emphasis on film exhibition and plan on attending up to 85% of their own showings: “Cinema Action does not see the making of films as an end in itself, but as a means to an end, and because of this puts emphasis on showing the films. As far as possible members of the group show the films themselves and after each showing a discussion on the issues brought up by the film can be created – with questions of strategy and politics of the working class movement often clarified.”

They pinpoint some of the audience reactions: the middle class audience is often afraid to interrupt the “holiness of the soundtrack.” They react passively unlike the working class who “appear altogether more spontaneous, less hesitant with their questions...” It is this process that allows Cinema Action “to create a dialogue even while the film is running.” In part all this must be explained by the distinctive subject matter of Cinema Action’s films: all action is derived from the labour movement. *Arise Ye Workers* for example was a project made in 1973 on the fight of the London dockers against redundancies threatened by containerisation. “Mass workers action – we march on Pentonville” is the title of one sequence, showing the stop-and-



search of a coach load of flying pickets; the visiting dockers persuading the Fleet Street printers to come out in solidarity; and the demonstration that led to the release of the five arrested pickets from Pentonville.

Another factor that oils the wheels of discussion is that Cinema Action – like all independent groups faced by the Rank/EMI duopoly on the commercial circuits – relies on bookings from trade unions, colleges, and campaigns; meetings which already have some strong cohesive nature, living working or struggling together..

New participation and fresh discussion saved FFTC from remaining unfinished. The project was started in 1971, but it was not until a selection of Cinema Action showings in Denmark provoked a group of local dockers faced with similar closures to raise close on £3000 earlier this year, that the project moved nearer completion. It was finished when the UCS workers were spurred to raise the rest of the funds needed.

The collective has never worked within a set budget, but aim to raise funds as the project and the particular struggle develops. The *Miners' Film* was begun on a budget of £5 and the bulk of the money for a project comes from the particular group of workers. In this way, it is argued, political commitment is reinforced through economic commitment: “Unity and solidarity are part of the *Miners' Film* in the same way that they are part of the miner’s life.” The rest of the collective’s funds comes from public sources - the occasional award and two grants from the British Film Institute.

Their most recent project, on the *Social Contract*, began with a £20,000 grant from the BFI to be paid over an 18 month period starting from early 1974. With the extension of the government’s wage restraint policy, the group applied for further funds. But the BFI and Cinema Action are still negotiating over the original sum and, meanwhile, the group have been asked to produce a roughcut before further funds are paid out. With the situation on pay policy so critical it seems that the real “drama” – which is an important concept for a group so caught up with reaction to their work – has been put under a sort of suspended sentence.

Cinema is “any place where mobile pictures are shown.” These days it could be one man sitting with a video in his room. But the Cinema Action collective want to change cinema from a place where people stroll in off the streets to sit for a while in a darkened room for a specified length of time and then to leave suddenly, to a place very much concerned with the organic development of the working class movement. They look forward to increased feedback, with all producers forced to exhibit their own material; to increased participation through well staffed film schools that teach all aspects of the film process; and to increased access for the autonomous film group, even starting with a fourth transmission channel for independently made films only.

All this is to help people become actively involved. “We don’t want passive cinema audiences.”

For further information and details of films for hire, contact Cinema Action: 35a Winchester Road, London NW3 (01-586-2762). The Leveller plans to continue discussion on autonomous groups and the film industry and invites contributions.

## Red flows the Clyde

A Fleet Street film critic fell asleep next to me during the press showing. The others took some handouts and scooted immediately the film ended.

If you like your cinema as “form” you’ll find little to reassure your ideas of perfection here. If however you get into cinema more through content, then the film will provoke you, indeed – defined by Cinema Action’s philosophy – the best part of the film may be what you contribute to the dialogue after the screening.

Within the “normal” cinematic conventions where films are used as a commodity, *Film from the Clyde* could be written off as crude propaganda. Another perspective would see the potential of this radical approach to production process.

As a base for creating working class cinema, the direct involvement of workers in recording, editing, screening and financing film, are integral to Cinema Action’s role in stimulating and consolidating the expression of values and struggle continually distorted by all bourgeois media.

The determination to make films “with” rather than “about” people, releases promising new dimensions in communication. It also reveals new problems. Not least of these is effectively challenging the slick visual codes firmly established now by TV and cinema.

Opposite Page: Press conference given during UCS sit-in. Below: Glasgow demonstration against the closure of UCS by Tory government.



## People's Film

*Film from the Clyde* is without doubt the best document of the UCS workers fight for their jobs because it was made as part of the struggle by those involved.

Organisation and Solidarity jump off the screen with sharply redefined meaning. Meaning that has been smudged by excessive slogan mongering from groups using words to gain acceptance as “revolutionaries”.

The sense of shipyard environment and hazardous working conditions is graphically presented and press operation within the work-in hilariously reveals their inability to deal with what is happening all around them.

However whilst frustration and confusion must also have been experienced at times within the yard, I feel that the parts of the film which evoked these sensations were to do with a failure to establish information.

Cinema Action being so closely involved in the whole event had knowledge of certain situations which may have provoked relevant responses to the material in them, but left me completely baffled at times.

Indecision and lack of concentration in the operation of equipment is to be expected on occasion. But there were too many times in the film when this was a conscious feature of chosen footage – creating barriers to an understanding of a scene or its drama. Echoes on the sound track added to the confusion. That said, the rest of the film comes over fighting.

I left the film pondering how to sum up an approach to the film within Cinema Action’s methodology and perspective; the film and audience participation around it are seen as fundamental. And my fellow audience left without comment.

Tony Nicholls



# Model State Media Nightmare

The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum Dir. Volker Schlöndorff

Based on the novel by Heinrich Boll, *Katharina Blum* is a film about authority, about the media which reinforces it and the people who confront it. The film has proved a remarkable exception to the way most German "New Wave" has been treated in its own country — about a million Germans have seen it, compared to average audiences of 50- to 80,000 people. Its director admits, however, that despite the film's savage social criticism, it has had little real effect. It hasn't stopped people seeing it and then going out to buy *Bild Zeitung* the following day. Anyway, *Bild* itself mentioned the film in its list of recommended films.

SCHLÖNDORFF has worked with "Red Help" groups which support political prisoners, and he identifies with the revolutionary left. But he does not regard film alone as any alternative to the political barrenness of West German life, nor does he think it possible to use film to organise politically because "you can't be politically active using film in a society where you can't be politically active at all." Furthermore, "to go round towns founding anti-Springer committees would be a completely idealistic initiative."

His own dilemma typifies that of many West Germans who feel marginal to their own society, a feeling that has turned many to alternative possibilities of living — around communes, in bookstores and in community activism. Even though many of these attempts seem to be faltering, Schlöndorff supports the movement, and rejects the proposal of Dutschke and others to found a new independent socialist party. This response Schlöndorff sees as a bureaucratic one.

*Katharina Blum* was distributed successfully in Germany despite, rather than because of, its politics (some even saw it as a simple love story) although "nobody drew any conclusions from the film's success" says Schlöndorff, "even when they say that people expect to see social reality on the screen."

Katharina is a woman involuntarily caught up

in confrontation with authority, hounded by police and press because she takes an army deserter back to her flat. Her final act of defiance against her unending persecution in the press and on the street is strikingly similar to another Schlöndorff film which has been shown in Britain, *The Sudden Fortune of the Poor People of Korbach*. In the 17th century, the starving villagers of Korbach determine to rob the elector of his taxes as his carriage passes through their village. The ringleaders are caught, brought before the ruler and sentenced to death. Ordered to express their acceptance of lawful authority, one of them refuses, insults the ruler, and dies without absolution.

Although Schlöndorff says he doesn't necessarily support the individual acts of violence as practised by groups like the Red Army fraction he does attempt in his films to show that "in view of the way the student movement was suppressed, it was inevitable that violent groups would be born out of it. I'm not saying that it's the only response, or even that it's a good one. But I say that it exists .... It's that situation which has produced the Baader-Meinhof group, and then produced the totally disproportionate response, one which has extended itself to the whole of Europe. For example the anti-terrorist convention (a West German initiative) will be used in the next decade to eliminate opposition movements in France or Italy."



It's both ironic and appropriate that the film, like Boll's novel, starts with the statement that resembles a balance between events described and real life "are neither deliberate nor accidental, but but unavoidable." The words are a conscious parody of the similar dedication with which Costa Gavras begins *Z. Katharina Blum* is *Z* in reverse. While in *Z* the magistrate and the journalist ferret out the truth about the conspiracy, in *Katharina Blum* it is Totges and Beizmenne who are the conspirators.

This symbiotic relationship between police and journalists is not a caricature. Heinrich Boll, for all his status as a Nobel prizewinner and his social-democratic political sympathies, was subjected to very similar treatment when he objected to the restrictions on liberty in the name of security, during the hunt for the Red Army fraction. Springer's press, best-known in this country for its implication in the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, kept up a constant stream of propaganda against him, and Boll eventually found himself denounced as a terrorist too.

According to Schlöndorff, while intellectuals are free to criticise in W. Germany, they pay a heavy price — literally. "They're rapidly marginalised, they're kept out of radio and TV, their writings simply don't get reviewed; it's an indirect *Berufsverbot* which is numerically larger than the original version." The preferred relationship between the writer and state power is exemplified by the relationship between Totges and Beizmenne. Schlöndorff is attacking the "lobby system" and the pressures which converge to make most of the press an uncritical handmaiden of authority — any authority. The Springer press has extended its denunciations of "terrorists" to cover the entire left, but this is not of course a uniquely German phenomenon. The free British press has not exactly been to the fore in investigating complaints of harassment and discrimination suffered by blacks at the hands of the police, and the attacks on the Irish community under cover of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Scotland Yard has systematically improved its relationship with journalists, who rely on the police for those dramatic "exposes" which follow major trials, to say nothing of the tips which preserve the reader's interest and sustain the illusion that we're actually being "informed". Outside West Germany, this is probably the one film which sums up the state whose rulers project it as the model for Europe.

Phil Kelly



# Glossing over Guthrie's revolt

Bound For Glory Dir. Hal Ashby

There's a hole in the middle of the film *Bound For Glory* going by the name of David Carradine, but it's no discredit to the film. There's a hole in the middle of the book, too, this one going by the name of Woody Guthrie.

All the faults but one in the film come from trying to be truer to Guthrie's autobiography than it deserves, and as a bonus you can see the things that Guthrie sung about: see just how high was a rattler box car; just how flat was a dustbowl plain; just how sad was a wheezing Ford with a family and all its possessions strapped on. Sick as it sounds, there's real pleasure in looking at these beautifully reconstructed tableaux from depressed America, and style slaves will cream themselves over the curved concrete facade of the radio station where Guthrie gets his first show.

Where the film does depart from the book it is probably more honest. It shows him getting involved in the commercial world of entertainment and it shows him walking out on a wife and kids. The character he drew for himself was of a slow-talking perpetually innocent Okie with a feel for making music and just driven to hard travelling by that Rambling demon. But mainly the film swallows his romantic image by the cupful, and so says nothing at all about the man. But that's all right. It's not as a man that he's important.

Guthrie was a genius who stepped in when commercial music was gearing up to destroy the folk tradition, and he preserved it as a popular instrument of discontent, rebellion, lament and pride. It's thanks to him that America has a living folk music.

He came from Omegah, in Oklahoma, an oil boomer that died. He joined, like millions of others, the migratory workers who because it was America, and the frontier was only thirty years closed, reacted to disaster and depression by getting on the move. They were seduced by handbills put out by the growers of fruit and cotton in California, and, before the combine came along, the grain farmers of the midwest. The growers kept the labour supply in surplus, the wages at bare survival, and when the harvest was over, financed the Town Vigilante Committees who moved the migrants on.

Riding the trains was a necessity for this lost tribe which wandered the States from the 1880s until Pearl Harbour took them into a war and a healthy surplus demand for labour. It was not a funny or romantic way to travel. Climb onto a moving fruit freight as it picks up speed hopping to rest in the basket which hung from the roof of the cars to hold ice, and if you're unlucky it's full. So you're committed to hanging on the outside of the rattler for perhaps twenty hours at 40 miles an hour and a fair chance of being dead by destination.

There was a constant war with the Railway employees. One trick for dealing with those riding the brake rods under the cars was for the guard to get on the platform in front and let a chain out under the car. It bounces off the sleepers and, quicker or slower, flays the rider to death while the guards laugh.

America's devotion to the economic law of the jungle was no empty metaphor in the Thirties. One official commission estimated that in 1932 there were half a million stateless, homeless, workless transients on the road at any one time under the age of 18. Those Johnny Cash songs about the young buck saying goodbye to his Mom and going off to seek fortune are the



sweetened grandchildren of songs about a common and very bitter experience. There was not enough work to allow children to stay at home beyond their adolescence, sometimes not even that long.

Guthrie did his work right in that American junction of railways, songs, and politics, the place where the Wobblies worked, where preachers worked and the place the American consciousness couldn't drag its eyes from. The American Dream rested on the shoulders of the rootless losers, because you can't have Ford and California and Opportunity without them.

There were two trains: the White Flyer to Heaven, the Gospel Express. This train don't carry no Gamblers, no Liars, thieves and big shot rambblers, this train is bound for Glory. The other train is the Black Diamond Express. Her bell is

ringing "Hell bound, hell bound".

Out of the imagery of the trains Guthrie made his songs, songs of the poor boy a long way from home. They were about the survival of dignity in the exploited, they were felt, they were close tied to the economic fact, they had political content, and they worked. The romantic fallacy is to make man his own god. As the old hobo said: "Since I was a child everybody's been calling me God, like 'God, you're ugly', 'God, you're lazy', 'God, you're of no account'."

The story of the migrants is at the centre of America's political myths. The film, worth seeing by the way, does the pictures. But Guthrie did the words, and they are still potent.

Nigel Thomas

## WEDGE

revolutionary journal of cultural practice and theory

*Wedge* is a new quarterly journal produced by journalists, film-makers, musicians, theatre-workers, teachers and students; a group of people who share a commitment to revolutionary socialism and a belief in the importance of 'cultural politics' as a central part of that struggle.

The first issue of *Wedge* will appear in July. Contents will include: grant aid and the crisis in political theatre groups; a debate on the mass media; an introduction to Brecht's theatre poems; a critique of the CP's cultural practice; the work of the Chile Cultural Committee; and articles on the pop charts, Italian free radio and the role of film in workers' struggles in France. Each issue will contain a substantial Notes section dealing briefly with current problems of cultural politics. We are also using visual material and photomontage.

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# The history of sexual

Sheila Rowbotham. A NEW WORLD FOR WOMEN: Stella Browne, Socialist Feminist.

Pluto Press, June 1977, £1.50

STELLA BROWNE wrote about and agitated for increased sexual freedom for women and access to abortion and contraception facilities. Her span of activity ranged from letters to The Freewoman in 1912 in defence of masturbation, to her involvement with the Abortion Law Reform Association in the 1930s.

She was a Marxist, and in a pamphlet written in 1915 (*The Sexual Variety and Variability among Women and their Bearing upon Social Reconstruction*, which is reprinted along with her *The Right to Abortion* at the back of Rowbotham's text) she attempts to link the rebirth of women's sexuality to a Communist society.

She was a founder member of the CPGB, but left it in 1923, disillusioned by its failure to take up the question of birth control. She joined the Labour Party and was one of their key activists in the struggle to commit it to the dissemination of birth control information and advise at municipal welfare clinics.

I will not use this review to ring the book's praises, which I am sure will be heard far and wide. Instead I shall offer, in a sincerely sisterly spirit, some criticisms of it from a point of view of a socialist feminist historian working on roughly the same bit of turf.

Firstly, this is not a biography. Indeed, there are scarcely any biographical details in it. This is not the fault of the author, since Stella Browne left no personal papers, wrote almost nothing about her personal life, and there are only a very small number of veteran socialists who remember anything at all about her. It would read very much better if it had been designed as a general work on birth control and the left.

There are other women, Dora Russell for instance, who fought as courageously and as passionately as Stella Browne for the right of women to control their own fertility. These figures are obscured under the veil of a biographical framework that in fact has no substance. The reason why Browne is singled out is her explicit commitment to marxism and especially her membership of the CP.

I do not share Sheila Rowbotham's belief that feminist consciousness was still a vital force after 1918, and that Stella Browne was its major spokesperson. In fact, Browne was dreadfully isolated in the CP. Practically single-handed she tried and failed to establish in it the link between bolshevism and sexual freedom.

The ideas of Kollontai and the New Woman carried little weight with British Communists, who firmly identified with Lenin's vehement denunciation of promiscuity in sexual matters as "bourgeois". And this included Communist women as well as men.

Neither do I find myself in agreement with Sheila Rowbotham's analysis of the CP's failure to take up the question of birth control. The Comintern's record was not as black as it appears here. Clara Zetkin's International Women's Secretariat went a good deal further

than the CPGB, and during the early 1920s it was continually criticising the attitudes of the British male comrades and urging the British Party to take work among women seriously by building women's sections at all levels of the Party structure.

It is true that birth control as such was never specifically pushed by the Comintern, but in Germany when communist women fought a vigorous campaign against the abortion laws they were supported by the International Women's Secretariat, and, indeed, the issue was publicised throughout the Third International.

In addition I feel that the disparaging remarks about the CP being seen as "an end in itself" are misplaced. It does not convey the intensity of those early years after the Russian Revolution when so many women joined the CP with the firm conviction that the working class would soon be seizing power. The Party was seen by them as an instrument for their liberation. Only under Stalin did it become "an end in itself".

I do not think that a sharp enough distinction is made between the CP and the Labour Party, and of the significance of Browne's transition from one to the other. She was forced out of the revolutionary socialist movement and into a party whose tradition was based not on the dictatorship of the proletariat, but on ideas of evolutionary socialism through social engineering and municipal reform.

In the short term, this was more compatible with birth control agitation, but what of Stella Browne's ideas?

In *The Sexual Variety and Variability of Women* there are some important statements regarding the propensity of women for non-monogamous sexual relations and its true expression in a post-revolutionary society.

In this essay, and her early articles in the Party paper *The Communist* she is groping towards ideas regarding the relationship between patriarchal and capitalist structures.

In 1922 she began full-time writing and speaking for the New Generation League. In its paper *The New Generation* her articles were of a directly agitational nature. This slight, journalistic prose may have masked her real thinking in this period. But we have no other published or unpublished material to go on. We are left, therefore, to assume that her political demoralisation was such that she renounced ideas about any further serious writing in favour of the day-to-day practical struggles for birth control facilities.

She never failed to stress the link between birth control and socialism. But her articles do not go beyond a simple expression of this conviction. Rowbotham does not attempt to draw out this distinction between the early and the later Stella Browne. Apart from the drying up of theoretical work on women's oppression under capitalism, her later work reflects the prevailing mood of viewing birth control as acceptable if argued for on humanitarian grounds.

This inevitably involved the playing down of her earlier ideas regarding contraception as a necessary instrument for enabling women to achieve sexual pleasure and to engage in non-monogamous sexual encounters.

As an essay on socialism and the struggle for birth control this is an important work, which deserves to be widely read and studied. (No doubt it will become a standard read for NAC activists).

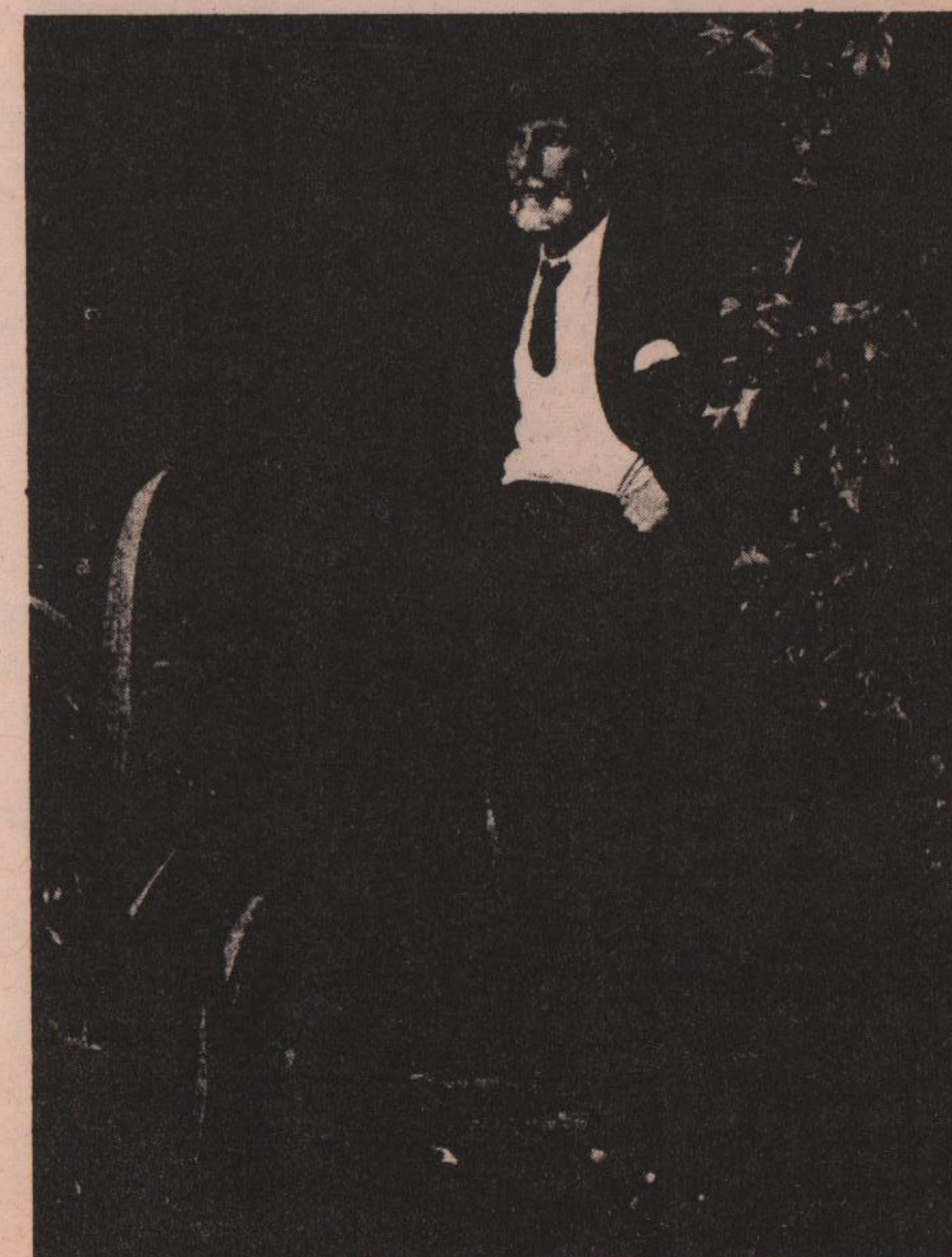
But in my view we should bear in mind that the author has succumbed to the temptation to pluck out of the complex matrix of ideas personalities and movements around the question of birth control in these years, the one strand of socialist feminism we can most easily identify with today.

Inevitably this obscures the real problem for socialist feminist historians of this period, which is to come to grips with the defeat of feminist ideas in the left after 1918. Why did so little of the enthusiasm of the early women's movement not spill over into post-war socialism? Why did almost all the women who joined the CP see Leninism as an alternative ideology to feminism and not seek to achieve any sort of synthesis?

Sue Bruley



Edward Carpenter



Havelock Ellis

# revolt

Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks. SOCIALISM AND THE NEW LIFE: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis. Pluto Press, June 1977 £1.80

EDWARD CARPENTER and Havelock Ellis both wrote pioneering works on sexuality in the period from the 1880s to the inter-war years.

Carpenter threw up a life in the church to live openly as a homosexual and participate in the early socialist and anarchist movement in Sheffield. Sheila Rowbotham skilfully recreates in impressive detail his activities in the Socialist League and his feelings towards those around him, particularly his love for George Merrill, with whom he lived for most of his life.

With this vivid, local setting before us, the author explains Carpenter's ideas and how they evolved. He loathed industrial society and its infatuation with materialism. He preached the simpler life, an ideal which he tried to live out in his own life at Millthorpe. After a trip to India in 1890 the 'otherworldly' side of Carpenter, which was always present, was enhanced. Sheila Rowbotham is rather too indulgent toward this mystical trait in Carpenter, and also towards his reluctance to concede the benefits of industrialisation and the possibilities they might hold for a socialist society. But these faults are of no great consequence, since what makes Carpenter a unique figure in the history of British socialism is his ideas on 'homogenic' love and his advanced views on women and the sharing of household labour. And in both these respects the author does him proud.

Havelock Ellis is usually placed in a medical rather than political context. Although a founder member of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology during the first world war, he worked mainly as an individual scholar. The enormous *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* is his most important work. Ellis accumulated a wealth of empirical data on sexual deviations (his own was urologia, watching women urinate). He was the first to use the term homosexual, although 'invert' was the term he more usually employed.

Jeffrey Weeks, with great competence, surveys Ellis's work, analyses the ideological framework of his theories and sketches the context in which they were received. His description of Ellis's views on women and the feminist movement is particularly enlightening.

It is only since the rise of the women's and gay liberation movements that we have grasped the importance of writers such as Carpenter and Ellis. This book gives us a slice of our heritage. For too long the personal and sexual aspects of socialist history have been obscured under the veil of orthodox Leninist theory.

Sue Bruley

# Demand the impossible

William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary, by E.P. Thompson. Merlin Press 1977. Paperback £3.90.

IN PRESENTING to us the truly remarkable range of William Morris's activities, Edward Thompson has produced a major piece of theoretical reconstruction and reconciliation: he has examined and meshed together the explosive human aspirations of romanticism and revolutionary socialism, and has thus paid proper tribute to a man sadly underestimated by the labour movement until several decades after his death in 1896.

It was in 1955 that Thompson's biography was first published by Lawrence & Wishart, and with the cold war hitting the depths of vulgar anti-marxist abuse, a flurry of predictably hostile reviews acted as a tonic to the author's fighting blood. He has now revised and reissued the work, changing little and adding a new postscript in which some recent studies of Morris are reviewed.

Thompson's work must stand, however, as the most convincing interpretation of Morris's ideas, an assessment of their importance to the early socialist movement as well as to present-day socialists. For this is much more than a brilliantly researched biography of one of our first socialists; it is a study of 'our greatest diagnostician of alienation'.



Cartoon by Walter Crane, political contemporary of William Morris

Eccentric and isolated, personally admirable and frequently irrelevant, when Morris made his commitment to socialism it was not simply one of many choices open to an artist and an intellectual. It meant a lifelong and thoroughgoing rejection of bourgeois values — it meant 'crossing the river of fire'. For Morris society 'which to many seems an orderly arrangement for allowing decent people to get through their lives creditably . . . seems more like cannibalism . . . One must turn to hope, and only in one direction can I see it — on the road to Revolution . . .'

Morris's affinities with the socialism of the 1st International flowed naturally from his youthful identification with the poetic rebellion of English romanticism, a rebellion rooted in the barren industrialised landscape of a

society which ground out its utilitarian philistines, its Gradgrinds, its Podsnaps, Morris's early attraction for pre-Raphaelite idealism and for Keat's world 'beyond the magic case-ments' was the prelude to his prose romances, and eventually to the mature intellectual realism of *News from Nowhere*, still strikes at some of the most mutilating aspects of industrialised bourgeois culture; it still stirs our hopes for a better world; it affirms that the romantic critique of our society remains a powerful one, one we have yet to fully understand and integrate into our socialism. It is to the possibilities offered by this imaginative understanding that Thompson's marvellous conclusion addresses itself.

There can be few socialists who recorded with such unflinching honesty the painful emotional problems thrown up in the early struggle for socialism. Time and again, in speeches and letters, Morris berated the Socialist League for vanity and incompetence, while steadfastly affirming the correctness of their aspirations. Nor did he choose to function solely as a party intellectual, but committed himself to an equal share of all the routine practical work involved in building an organisation. When he died, thousands of working people mourned the loss of one who had made his cause with them.

Thompson's brief comparison of Morris with Gramsci might well have been expanded on, for their similarities were significant. Both were preoccupied with the relationship between intellectuals and the revolutionary movement; both chose on principle to be both activists as well as theoreticians; both saw the necessity for the movement to create its own cultural formations and to integrate these into the class struggle. In short, both Morris and Gramsci realised that simply to grasp the economic and ideological contradictions immanent in capitalism falls very far short of a full commitment to marxism. Economic contradictions may tear towns to pieces and rip apart thousands of lives every day, but they don't automatically make socialists — and 'making socialists' was for Morris the purpose and lifeblood of the movement.

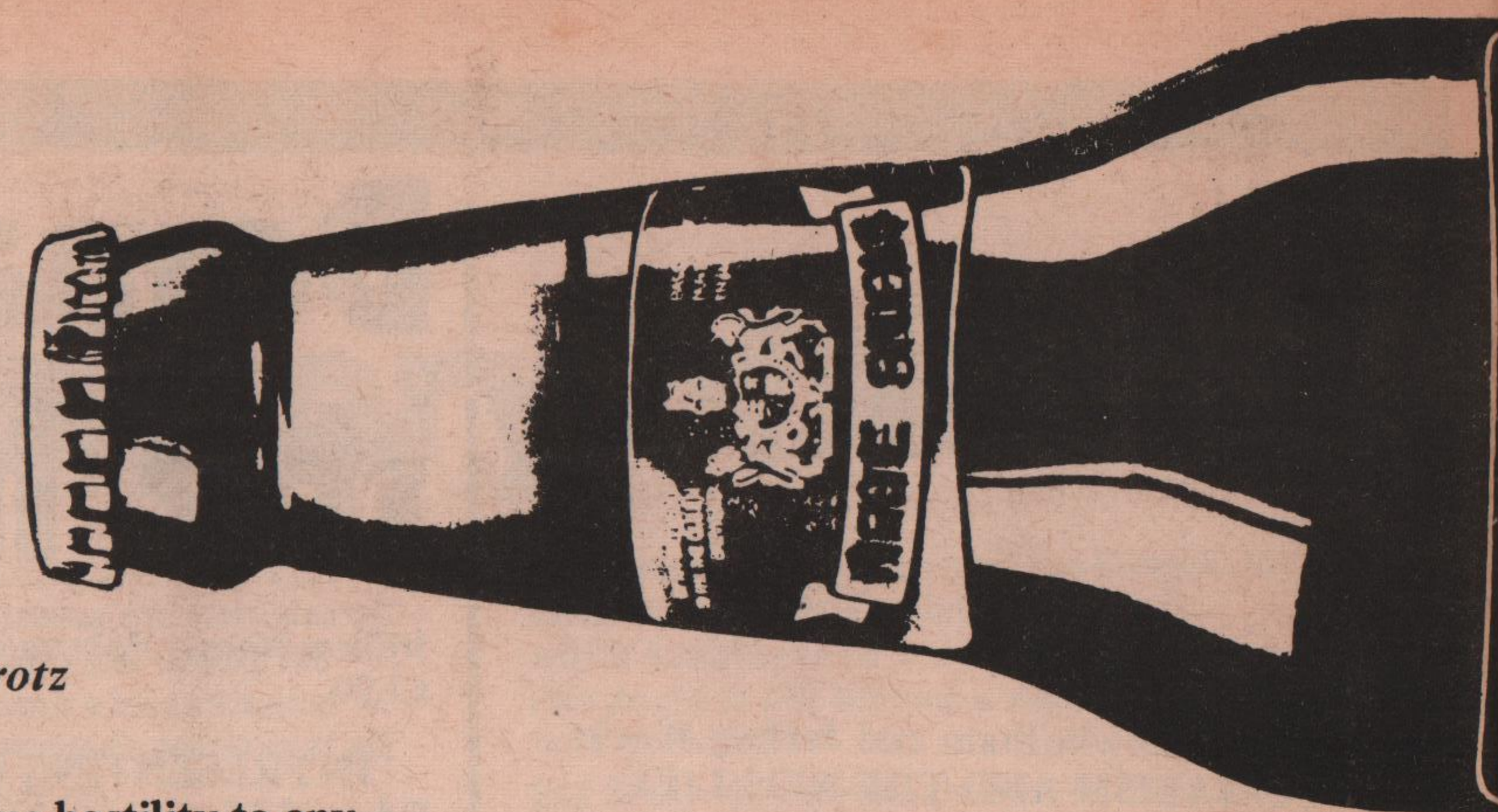
It is on this point that Thompson, after fulfilling with enormous care and generosity his commitments as biographer and interpreter, comes into his own and presses the very lessons propounded by Morris himself. The book leaves us with the sure knowledge that unless socialism can offer a recognisably different order of values and a quite distinct moral apparatus — unless we can incorporate into our socialism the language of our own experience and a 'vocabulary of desire' — then we are condemned to repeating the sectarian mistakes of our predecessors, even such predecessors as Morris himself.

Ken Worpole



# FACING THE CAMRA

Roger Protz



The left in Britain has an ingrained habit of reacting with extreme hostility to any movement it can neither understand or control.

The consumer movement proves the point. Because "consumerism" is concerned with marginal reforms within capitalism it has been dismissed as at best an irrelevance and at worst a fig leaf for the system itself.

THE CAMPAIGN for Real Ale (CAMRA), unquestionably the most successful consumer movement in Britain, has borne the brunt of the criticism. Way back in the pilot edition of *The Leveller*, Tim Gopsill unleashed an attack on CAMRA that set out to prove—with shaky facts and bastardised marxism—that CAMRA is essentially a reactionary movement which in attacking the giant beer monopolies, ends up by giving tacit support to the small, conservative, sometimes semi-feudal brewing companies.

I had better put my cards on the table. I am a marxist, a revolutionary socialist; I fight for the total transformation of the present social system. I also like drinking beer and I work full-time for CAMRA.

I don't think there is a contradiction between my politics and my job. Many socialists make a fundamental error in ignoring or condemning the consumer movement. People campaigning for good quality consumer goods who attack profiteering, price extortion and lack of choice may take a different route to socialists, but they end up confronting the same enemy: the giant economic and political monopolies that dominate our lives.

Consumerism is not an alternative to socialism. But if socialists play a sensitive and sympathetic role within consumer movements like CAMRA then they could win many converts to socialism.

Modern monopoly capitalism is geared to maximising profits. An army of accountants, economists and scientists devote their working lives to deciding how much extra profit can be made from standardised pap that does not offend people by its sheer ordinariness, blandness and lack of distinction.

The brewing industry pinpoints the problem. There are some 90 brewing companies in Britain, but the top seven control 89 per cent of the business. Number seven is Guinness, which owns no pubs, but the remaining six—Bass Charrington, Allied Breweries, Whitbread, Watney Mann & Truman, Courage, and Scottish & Newcastle—between them own nearly half the tied houses.

In the late 1950s and 1960s the brewing giants set out to transform the face of British brewing. Without any consultation with the consumers, they closed down local breweries, wiped out hundreds of local brews and replaced them with national, standardised brands of dead, pressurised keg beers such as Watney's Red, Worthington E, Tavern, Trophy and Tartan.

Huge amounts of money—£17 million in 1976—were spent to convince beer drinkers that they really preferred the fizzy, tasteless keg beers and lagers to their traditional local brews.

Then the consumers revolted. CAMRA started almost as a joke, the brainchild of a few Northern drinkers, but when they called a conference, people turned up, took membership forms, went back to their boozers and recruited people. When Richard Boston mentioned CAMRA in his *Guardian* column, the fledgling organisation's tiny office was deluged with requests to join.

Today CAMRA has 25,000 members and close on 160 branches. As a result of its activities, several small brewing companies have been saved from extinction or takeover and traditional draught beer is now returning to thousands of pubs. Encouraged by CAMRA's success, similar campaigns have been launched to preserve such basic dietary items as real bread and real cheese.

Does it matter? We could dismiss consumerism as simple reformism, tuck into our baked beans, fish fingers and Tartan keg and await the great socialist commonwealth when such problems will be solved. Well, so will such problems as pay restraint and racism, but sensible socialists think they should be combatted now.

Of course, campaigning for a decent pint of beer should not be elevated to the same level as fighting racism, but the movements dedicated to getting a better deal for consumers are important and should be supported by socialists.

Ah, the critics will say, but organisations like CAMRA are not socialist; some of your members are downright reactionary and some of your policies are confused and wrong.

That is true—but that could also be an argument for not joining a trade union. A consumer group like CAMRA must of necessity cover a wide

spectrum, from Tories through liberals and social democrats to hard-line socialists. If it were a simple, narrow socialist front, it would not have its present support and would not have notched up its considerable achievements.

The role of socialists in CAMRA must be to put forward a socialist critique of the brewing industry, to generalise from that to a critique of the system as a whole and to formulate progressive demands for how the industry should be run in the interests of workers and consumers.

If CAMRA is uncritical of the smaller brewing companies and opposes such measures as Capital Transfer Tax because it could close some of the family-owned firms, that is a result of too few socialists taking the time to challenge the prevailing policies of the leadership.

There is a certain irony in the fact that most of the socialists who attack CAMRA in general and me in particular for working for it do so in pubs as they sup their pints of Ruddles, Youngs and Sam Smiths: Ruddles for one have admitted that they would have gone under years ago had it not been for CAMRA's activities.

It is a total parody of marxism to argue—as Gopsill has—that support for the independents is support for the *petit bourgeoisie*. Firms such as Boddingtons and Greenall Whitley are not run by small shopkeepers and jumped-up bank clerks: these are large concerns with turnovers running into millions of pounds a year. They are only small in comparison with the Big Six giants.

The task for socialists who think CAMRA is worthwhile is to support the campaign for good beer and to put forward schemes for transforming the entire industry. CAMRA should be won to a policy that includes not only opposition to the Big Six but to the smaller companies that are right-wing, paternalistic and anti-union.

Socialism should be a flexible system open to a variety of forms of democratic ownership and control. I hope it is not Betjermania to suggest that brewing under socialism could be run along small local and regional lines so that the rich variety of tastes and traditions could be saved and restored.

I think the forms of ownership and the question of consumers' choice is a debate worth having on the left. In the meantime I shall connect a cylinder of carbon dioxide to Tim Gopsill and continue to enjoy my pints of the real McCoy.

## Tim Gopsill replies:

1) Consumerism is a negation of socialism and a sell-out when adopted by socialists because it challenges only the *product* of capitalist production, not the ownership and control. And it diverts energy from that struggle.

2) There is a conflict between Roger's politics and his job, just as there is for nearly all socialists. Most can't be too choosy about who they work for; but most don't publicly eulogise their employers.

3) Of course the real ale breweries are not *petit bourgeois*. I never said they were: in fact my article illustrated this very point, with six figure quotations of their rising turnovers and profits. If these facts were shaky, it can only have been because the companies falsified their accounts, which I examined. I pointed out that Ruddles, cited by Roger as "saved by CAMRA", is part-owned by the Whitbreads combine. In any case I don't see why they should be attacked the less for being big business. I hope they do "succumb": not to the big combines, but to their workers - and consumers.

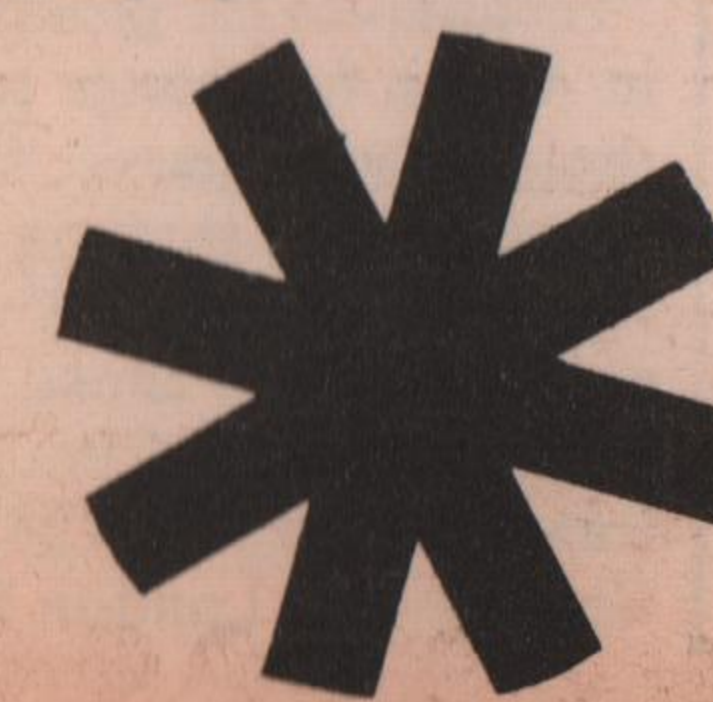
Takeover by workers' control (and whoever said that nationalisation under workers' control meant lumbering national bureaucracies?) That's what we have in the "mixed" economy) must mean production more responsive to people's needs. In this context, "consumerism" might be progressive, but the political fight comes first.

4) One point in my article was precisely that CAMRA *wasn't* fighting the big monopolies. As long as they introduced real ale, CAMRA was happy.

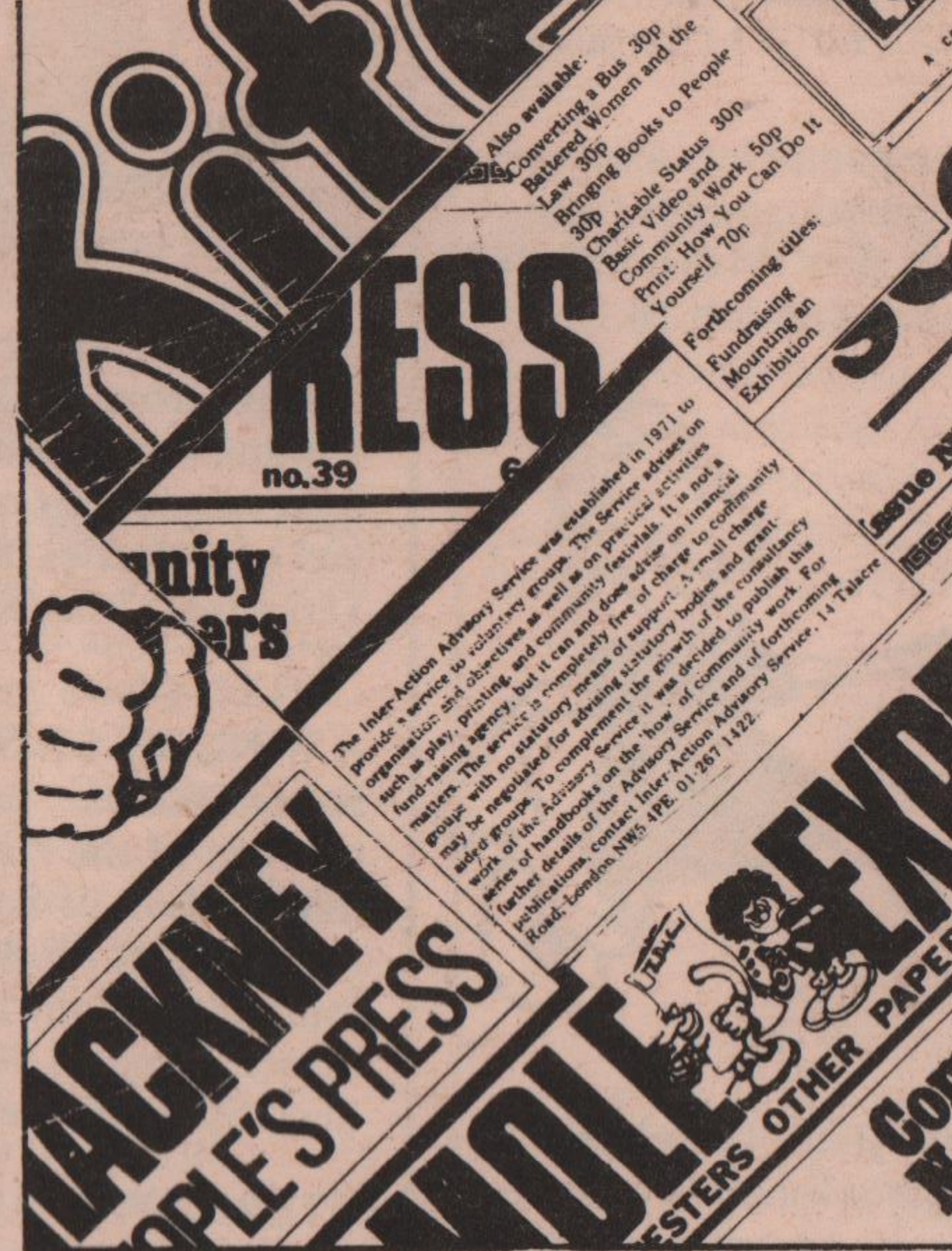
5) I don't need carbon monoxide to fizz. I do anyway. (True - the comrade on the typesetter). And, incidentally, I wrote (favourably) about CAMRA in the straight press long before Richard Boston did.

6) To defend CAMRA's policies as having to accommodate a membership covering a wide political spectrum like the unions comes close to defending the policies and leadership of the unions, or, for that matter, another organisation that boasts Roger Protz among its adherents, the Labour Party. Certainly it justifies entrisism, which I oppose, though it is up to individuals and groups to decide their own positions. I would have thought that socialists entering CAMRA would be neutralised, just like anywhere else, but would be prepared to give qualified support to Roger's plea for them to do this, if I was convinced that he was offering a lead.

7) The main purpose of my article, which was written 18 months ago, was to provoke socialists in CAMRA (like myself, at one time), into *thinking* about the politics of what they were doing, which socialists should do *all* the time. I am happy to have succeeded to this extent, that Roger Protz, the Andy Bevan of CAMRA himself, has been so provoked, even after such a long time, and I likewise hope that his article was intended to be provocative. If he is in fact serious, he will have to join the Campaign for Real Socialism.



# newsthatgotaway



## MILITARY RULE OK

In another major drive against terrorism during the 'crisis situation' eight householders were arrested by British soldiers early one morning, and taken to Bedford House. No, not a new interrogation centre, but the headquarters of the Enforcement of Judgements Office. Hawked in front of the Chief Debt Settler, virtually all arrested persons were ordered to pay £10 off outstanding gas/electric bills.

From Ballymurphy News Vol 4 No 19.

## WINDSOR TRIPS

No... it ain't all in fairytale gold coaches which are parked in museums when not being used. Ms E. Windsor's less publicised travelling arrangements are organised by the dept of the Environment and paid for by... Us lot. How much? Read on...

Cost £201,000 in 1974/5. It is now being refurbished. Facilities will include fitted carpets, sofas, curtains and elaborate lighting. Recent figures suggest £300,000 will be the cost.

Cost £1 million a year to operate. It consists of three light planes and two helicopters and was serviced by 20 officers and 156 other ranks.

Built in 1954 for £2.25 million, it has cost us over £14 million since - including £2 million for modernisation in 1972. It will cost £1.9 million to run in 1976/7. Twenty two officers and 258 ratings serve on board.

And in case you were thinking of ringing Buckingham Palace reverse charge to complain about all this, you should know that we also pay her telephone bill. This cost us £53,000 in 1971/2 so just think about it now.

From Labour Research Vol 6 No 6.

## WORK (BUT NO PAY) 'EXPERIENCE'

A legal loophole could mean that hundreds of school-age teenagers are working in factories, unpaid, and without Nat Ins cover against injury.

This came to light after trade unionists at the firm of Butterworth Clifford found a 15-year-old boy there operating a nailing machine and getting £10 'expenses' for a 40-hour week.

He was there under a 'work experience' scheme: The result of a 1973 Act of Parliament, passed after the school leaving age was raised to 16.

Pupils 'go to work' for up to thirty days in their last year of compulsory school. The time need not all be spent at one firm or in a single block.

While on the scheme they should be given 'real work' to do, but they cannot be paid because it's 'educational'.

Although Employers can pay expenses, a Tameside official told us that £10 a week seemed 'excessive'. He explained: 'The idea is to give pupils an 'insight into the world of work'.

From Manchester Mole Express

IF YOU LIKE LEVELLER NUMBER 7, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU'LL LIKE NUMBERS 6,5,4,3,2 & 1.

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# Agitprop

Most of the pamphlets and journals listed are obtainable from Rising Free, now settled in at 182, Upper Street, London N1.



**ALL NOTICES IN AGITPROP ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE — THE LEVELLER COLLECTIVE WELCOMES ANY INFORMATION FROM GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS SENT TO 155, DRUMMOND ST: LONDON NW1**

(By the end of August for the next issue.) It is hoped that when *The Leveller* goes monthly from September, Agitprop will become an even more important feature, so all contributions are especially welcome from now on.

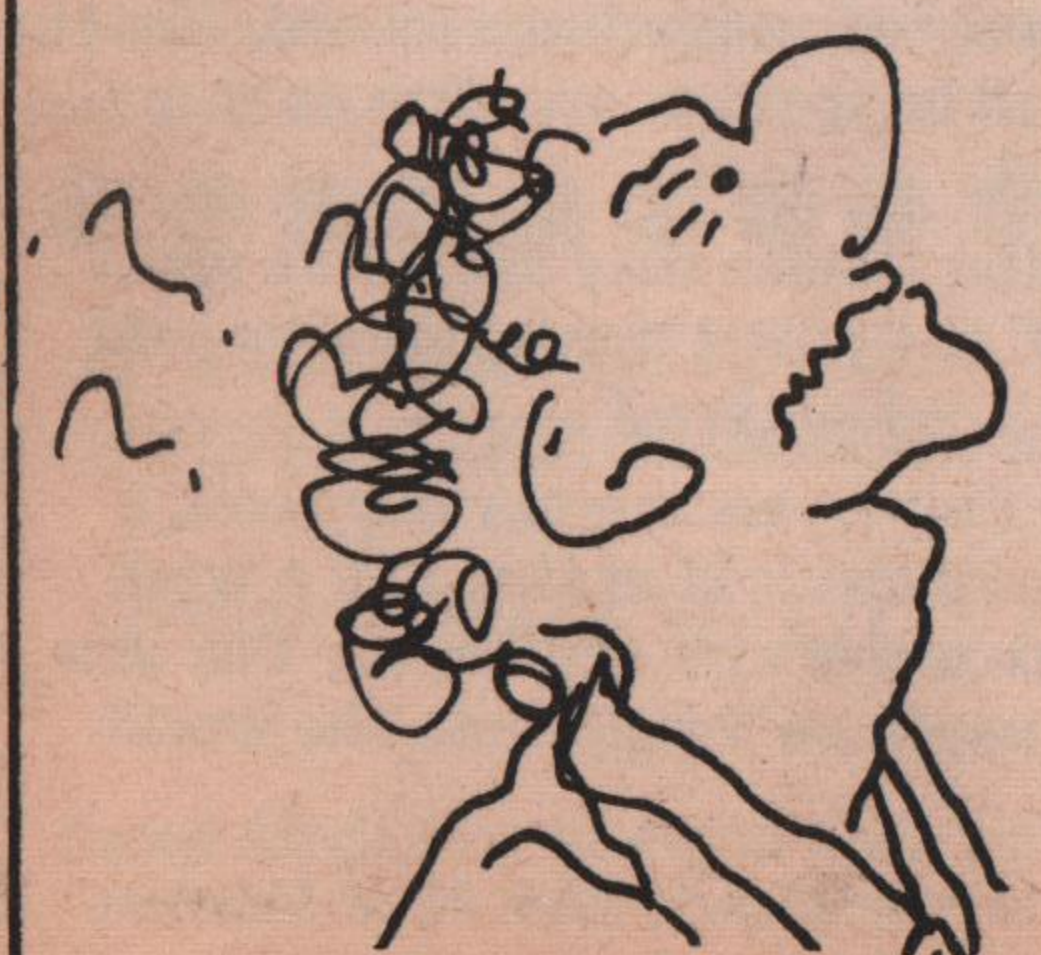
## publications

**MEDICINE IN SOCIETY:** A Marxist journal of Health Studies. Current issue features depression in working class women; health care in W. Germany; and positive care — why British medicine has turned away from prevention. 20p from 16 King Street, London WC2.

**BREAKING CHAINS:** the first issue from the Abortion Law Reform Association out now — 15p. Information on the continuing fight against the Benyon Bill, info. on meetings, groups and personal cases. From 88a Islington High Street, London N1.

**FEMINISM AS ANARCHISM:** by Lynne Farron, from the Black Bear Collective. "Feminism practises what anarchism preaches". An attempt to build from an 'autonomous collective'. 20p from 76 Peckham Road, London SE5.

**AGITBIT:** A new monthly diary of events (you may have noticed appearing around London) - produced by a workers' collective, it is open to all progressive/alternative/community groups (small fee). Details from 31, Regina Road London N4.



**NEW BOOKSHOP:** Leicester's only radical bookshop is now open at 74 Highcross Street, Leicester. Tel: 0533 218 96.

**WORKERS NOTEBOOK:** Issue 4 of the Communist Workers Movement, a new national Marxist-Leninist organisation. Articles include: On the Building Site, Death of a Thousand Cuts — Education, and Ireland — Divide and Rule. Copies 20p from Workers Notebook, c/o October Books, 46 Temple Court, Liverpool.

**PAYING FOR THE CRISIS:** Latest CIS Report on the social contract and its effect on wages and working conditions. Attempts to break the contract plus why the government strategy won't work. 60p from 9 Poland Street, London W1.

**ON ORGANISATION:** translation of an article first appearing in the French journal *INVARIANCE*. A reply to an earlier discussion in that journal, so may be hard to follow from Black and Red, PO Box 9546 Detroit, Michigan 48202. 10p.

**NATION OR CLASS No 2.** International Communist Current examines the national liberation movements concluding that "workers always lose". Viet Nam, Ireland and Africa. 35p from BM, Box 869 London WC1.

**CRITIQUE OF SYNDICALIST METHODS** by Bonanno. Anarchist Pamphlet No. 2 traces the development of trade unionism and anarcho-syndicalism. 30p.

**IRAN, OUR STRUGGLE TOO:** (No. 2 in Revolutionary Struggle). Gives a simple and general summary of the struggle against Iranian imperialism, with details of international support from multinationals. Useful for basic facts. Contact Box RS, 182 Upper Street, London N1 for details of meetings, discussions, etc.

**HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES — NCCL** survey of local authority SS committees, based on a questionnaire (with quite poor response) producing strong evidence of discrimination. Good material on legal restrictions on homosexuals and case studies. 85p from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1

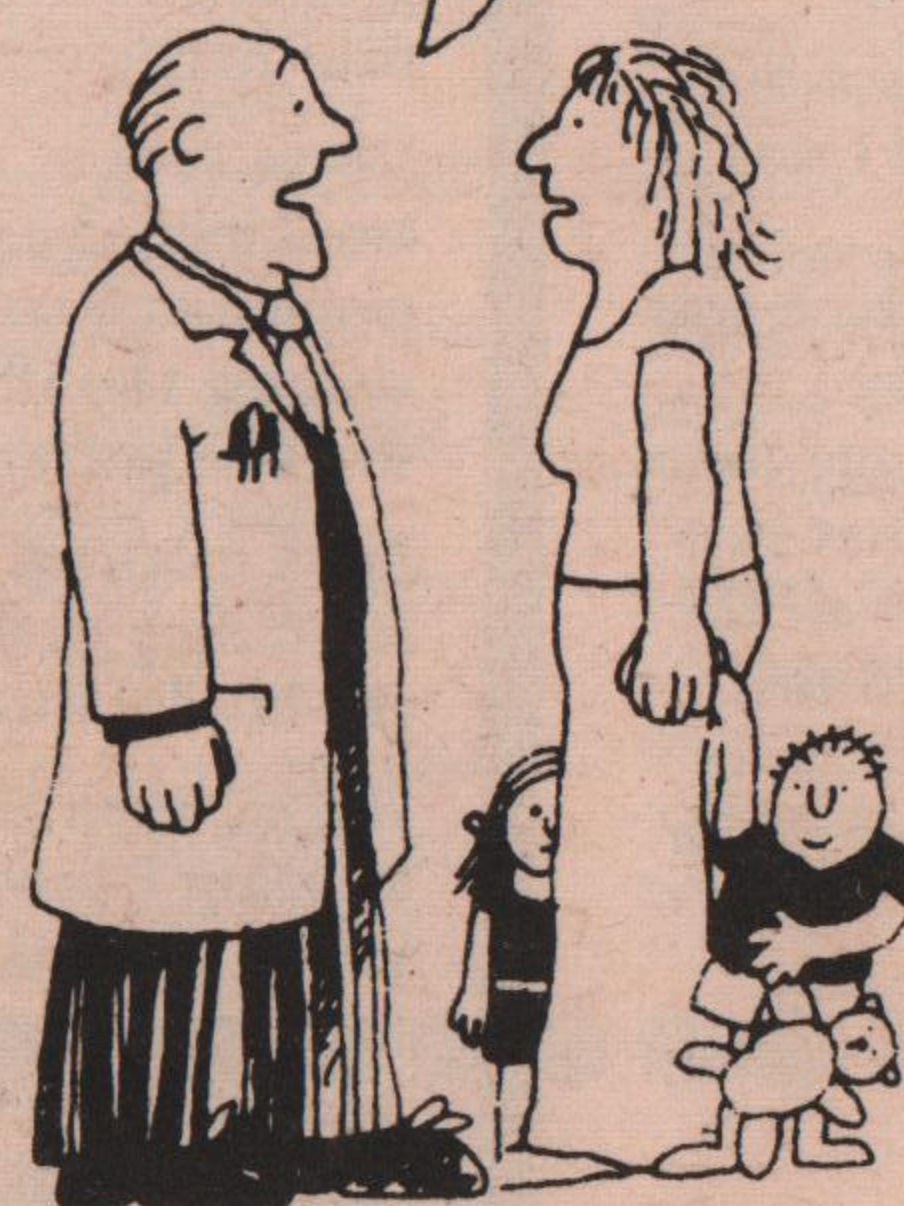
**A WINDOW ON SOWETO** by Joyce Sikanane. An excellent account of the history and administration of Soweto by South Africa's first black woman journalist. From 104 Newgate Street, London EC1. 80p illustrated and well-produced.

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM No. 99 —** Monthly journal of the SWP — with articles on Labour on the Rocks, Health Service, Gramsci and British Road to Socialism. 30p from 6 Cottons Gdns., London London E2.

**REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS No. 1 —** Documents on the split within the RCG — a reply to David Yaffe, and on the CP. 50p.

**EQUAL PAY AND SEX DISCRIMINATION —** latest pamphlet from Aberdeen Free People's Press, dealing with wages/unions/law and order and the future. 45p and 15p p&p. Other publications: Aberdeen and the General Strike, 35p or 5p p&p; and Pre-School Childcare in Aberdeen 60p incl. p&p from 163 King Street, Aberdeen

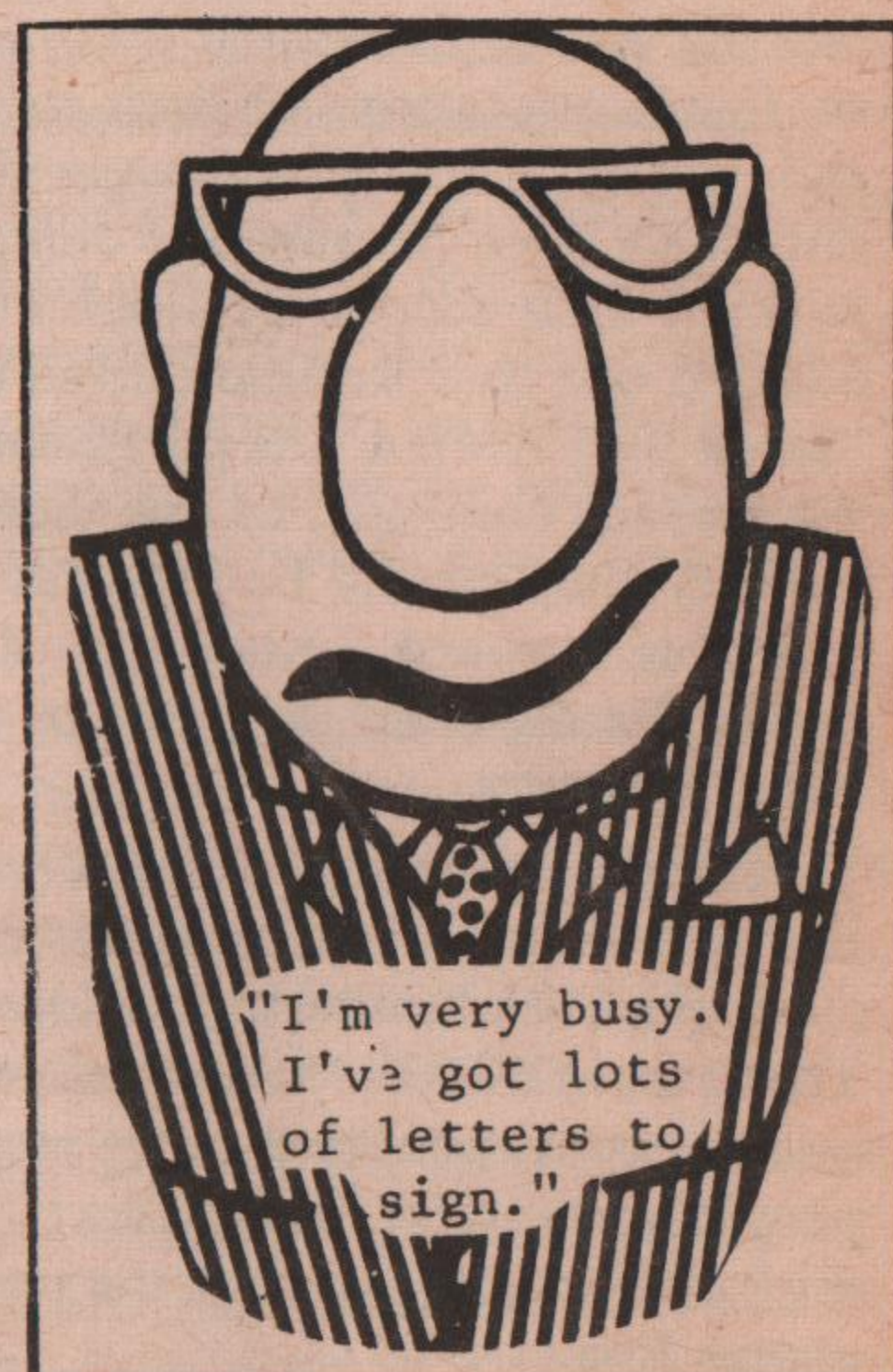
OF COURSE I CAN PUT YOU DOWN FOR AN ABORTION - BUT THERE'S A NINE-MONTH WAITING LIST...



**WORKERS SAY NO TO THE SHAH** by T. Jalil. Report on Iran's farcical labour laws and the lack of genuine trade union right well documented on strikes, and laws. £1.50 from CRTURI.

**STRUGGLE.** Official organ of the Workers' Liberation League in Jamaica. "Don't Give Up the Fight!" From Caribbean Labour Solidarity. 60, Wellesley Road. London E11. (01 989 7400)

**TEMPORARY HOARDING** Rock Against Racism. We want music that knows "who the real enemy is". Filled with powerful imagery. 20p from Red Wedge Graphics. 6, Cottons Gardens. London E2



**SQUATTERS — Myth or Fact —** based on 4 recent surveys, it argues that squatters are not jumping housing waiting lists; not causing damage; not drop-outs; and not politically motivated. 10p or a large SAE from Self-Help Housing, N.London Poly, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5

**PEOPLE'S NEWS SERVICE** have revitalised their collective and plan to issue their bulletins regularly every fortnight. They are looking for reaction from all left groups (they are including questionnaires in their current issues) to help decide what particular service they can provide. All details — from the basement of Rising Free. Fortnightly, 15p, better by subscription. 182 Upper Street, London N1.

**KNUCKLE —** the Lambeth community paper is back on the streets. 5p.

**NEW SOLIDARITY POSTCARDS** George Ince, Hull Prisoners etc. Striking in reds and blacks 5p and 10p from Rising Free.

**MANUAL FOR ACTION** "Techniques for groups engaged in Action for change to Increase their Effectiveness". Well put together with stuff on sensitivity, vision, strategy, tactics etc. Seems very useful and aimed at a wide audience. £1.00 from Action Resources Group. 128, Bethnal Green Road. London E2.

Leeds Other Paper



**INEQUALITY IN BRITAIN** Today. Labour Research Pamphlet. Looks at all the issues derived from ownership of different forms of wealth. 35p from LRD. 78, Blackfriars Road, London SE 1.

**RENT ACT REPORT** 'The Streets Where We Live' report from Shelter team in Westminster on the evasions to the 1974 Rent Act and the need to close loopholes 35p (plus 10p p&p) from P.Molyneux. 7a, Alexander House, St. Mary's Terrace. London W2.

**IAN SMITH'S HOSTAGES —** New pamphlet on political prisoners in Rhodesia, with complete details on trials, courts, missing people etc. plus information on 'a people in struggle', justice and camps. £1 from International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 104 Newgate Street, London EC1.



**CAPITAL AND CLASS No. 2** is out, with articles on the theory of the state, trade unions and international capital, use and exchange theory, the motor industry. £1.00

**SOCIALIST PROGRAMME FOR the NHS.** Militant pamphlet attacking predicted redundancies. 30p from 1, Mentmore Terrace. London E8.

**PORTUGAL : THE IMPOSSIBLE** Revolution. Well-researched account of the material. Now out in paperback. £2.25 from Solidarity. 123, Latham Road. London E6

**LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION.** Now redesigned. Contains articles on truancy, schooling, the Walt Disney myth, NUT etc. 20p from 6, Beaconsfield Road, Leicester.

**ZERO - No. 1.** New anarchist/anarcho feminist paper, projected as a monthly. Major articles on Anarchism/Feminism. Marie Louise Berneri, plus news, reviews etc. 20p from left bookshops.

Sheffield Free Press

Pavement

## events

**RISING FREE/ BREAD & ROSES** Benefit. Concert on July 1 (with Lee Kosmin Band and Dire Tribe) Disco, food, bar, books. £1.00. (50p claimants etc) 8-12pm, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N 5. (Contact the two organisations direct at 182, Upper Street, London N1 for future events).

**HALF MOON THEATRE.** A Cool Million. Play with songs, a comic odyssey, in search of money : from July 6 to August 6. Also "30s and Today" - a visual comparison of the different struggles. In the foyer until July 21. Full details from Half Moon. 27, Alie Street, London E1. (01 480 6465)

**WE HAVE THE POWER OF THE WINDS —** Broadside Mobile Workers' theatre benefit for Camden Tenant. Thursday 7 July 7.30 pm. At Clarence Way Estate Tenants Hall, Hawley Road, London NW1. Admission 25p.

**WINDSOR FREE FESTIVAL** Planned for 12 midday on August 28 in Windsor Great Park The people's response to authoritarianism. Details from : BM Circle. London WC 1

**WOMEN AGAINST RAPE:** The first meeting in London to discuss rape experiences, political and individual action. International speakers. 24 June, 7.30 Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Women only.

**INTRODUCTORY PAMPHLET** available from 29 Lydford Road, London N15. "Rape, like charity, begins at home." Discusses legal situation, aims for change: state compensation, crisis centres, conduct of trials.



**LONDON SOCIALIST FEMINIST WORKSHOPS No.4:** What is a socialist feminist practice? Sunday 10 July, 10-8, Camden Women Centre, Rossllyn Lodge, Lyndhurst Road, London NW3. 60p (claimants 40p). Creche. Women only. Papers in advance from 13 Malfort Road, London SE5. (SAE + 11p).

**FIGHT BACK:** March for George Ince to demand publication of Sills Report. Sunday July 3rd, Tower Hill; details from 40 Thornfield House, Rosefield Gardens, London E14 (01-987 6542).

## contacts

**CHILDREN:** Childcare Bulletin No. 1 is about organising creches at political meetings and events, providing a practical and detailed guide. Copies from Childcare Bulletin, 112b Forest Road, London London E8.



**APPEAL:** Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is raising money to fight to make MPs accountable to constituency Labour Parties. If interested, send for newsletter to CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

**CAAT — Campaign Against Arms Trade** working for the conversion of military industries to peaceful production, away from profiteering by governments and private industry. CAAT produces information on the weapons that Britain sells, companies involved, countries that buy them, and their effects. Details from 5, Caledonian Road, London N1.

**68 CLUB:** Meetings every Sunday at 8pm in the West Indian Sports and Social Club, Westwood Street Mosside, Manchester. July 9th: Revolutionary Organisation: Why and How? A Speaker from Anarchist Workers Association.

**LIBERTARIANS:** Scottish Libertarian Federation holds public meetings on first and third Mondays in the month at St. Brides Centre, Partick. Start 7.30 pm.

**INDUSTRY:** Libertarian industrial network — contact Graham Short, 8 Mylor Close, Pennycross, Plymouth, Devon.

**MEN'S CENTRE:** Living in East London, contact 19 Redmans Road Whitechapel, London E1.

## conferences

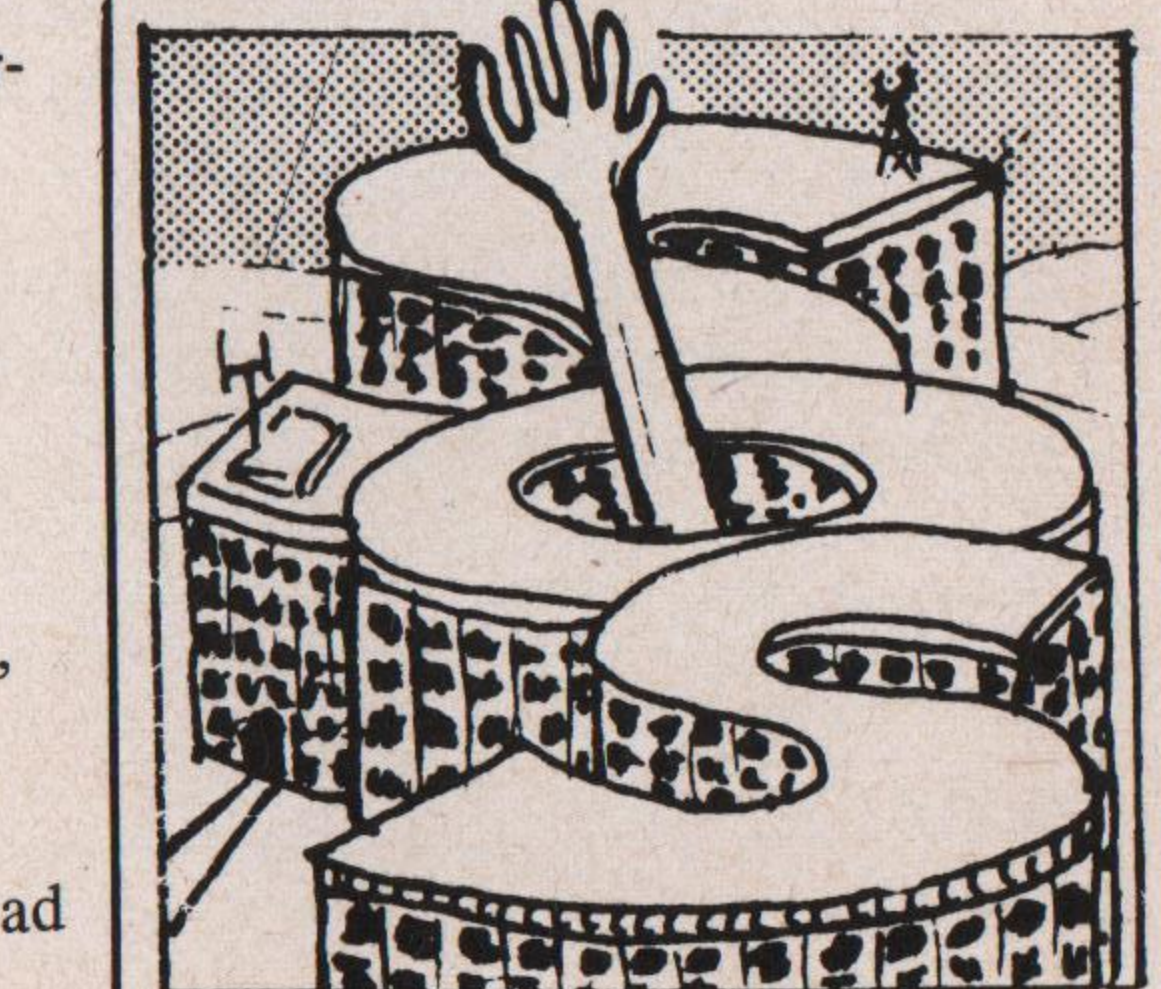
**FORTY YEARS ON :** Lessons of the Spanish Civil War. Anarchist Workers' Association open meeting. The collectivisation of the land, and self-management of industry in the Spanish revolution were profound moments in working class history. We look at the failure of anarchists to carry through the revolution and the re-emergence of libertarian ideas in Spain today. July 30 at Centerprise. 136, Kingsland High Street. London E 8

**ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS CONFERENCE —** organised by the Bristol Voice to promote feedback etc. amongst all such papers. July 1/3 at the University Settlement, Barton Hill, Bristol. (All papers are encouraged to send representatives).

## misc

**BRITISH BANKS FINANCE** Apartheid - campaign to force the Banks (Barclays, Midland, Hill-Samuel and Chartered) to cut all links with South Africa. Details from ELTSA 134, Wrottesley Road. London NW 10.

**SWAPO** are launching an urgent appeal to raise money for £100 medical kits to help in their struggle against the 50,000 troops sent to their country. Details from Namibia Support Committee 21-25 Tabernacle Street, London EC 2 (01 588 4342)



Leeds Other Paper

Tollcross News

Community Action

Sheffield Free Press