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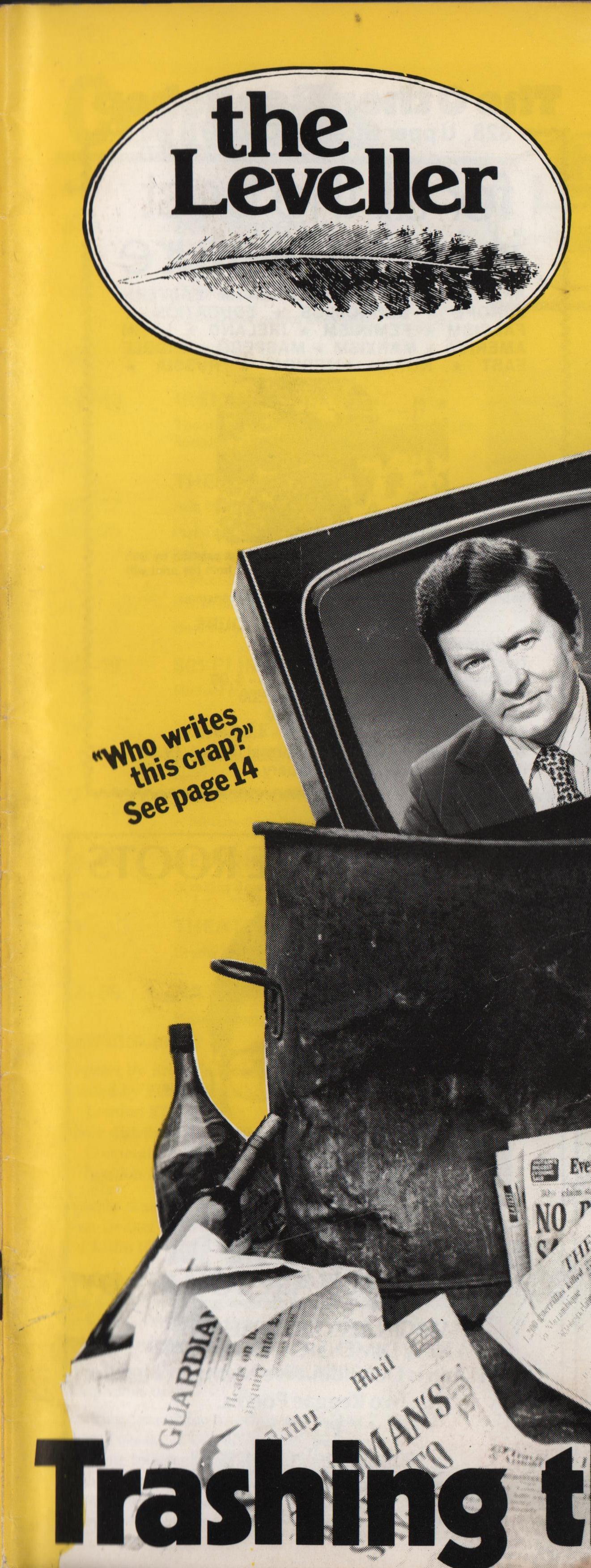
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No11 35p January 78

Who is Colonel H.A.Johnstone?

INSIDE: Contraception



RAMUL &

All Wi Doin Is Defendin/Five Nights Of Bleedin.

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welcome to attend and assist in the development of the magazine. Written contributions, photographs, cartoons and story ideas are also welcome. Cover picture by Tony Nicholls



letters

Garage band

We are a punk rock group called Schoolgirl Bitch. In a way we were prompted to start playing after we heard the Buzzcocks' Spiral Scratch EP esp. their track 'Boredom'. But that was then, from boredom we say punk rock has to develop. The Clash have a political perspective. So do we.

We have one song 'NF Nazi' which attacks the Front, and for which we have been physically attacked by them. But our music is music for 78, for the battles to come. We hope the kids who come to our gigs take in our ideas 'cos we are for their liberty.

The group has taken a risk. We've sold all our gear so that we can get a record out which will get across to more people than we could possibly play to up here in our northern backwater.

The record's on our own label-Garage Records. The songs are called 'Think for Yourself' and 'Abusing the Rules'. It's available from the address below for 70p + 15p postage and packing. It comes out on December 1st.

The line up is Nick Name (17)guitar and vocals, Phil Serious (18) bass, and Kid Sick (17) drums. Nick and Phil are on the dole and Kid Sick is a gardener. We started to get gear together early this summer. In the summer the intolerant attitude shown us because of the different way in which we dressed made us want to start gigging as soon as possible. The unpleasantness can to a head in early August at an open air festival in Oak Hill Park, Accrington.

The group and a number of friends were in the audience. The groups were incredibly boring and the whole audience just sat around motionless. The Lesser Known Tunisians appeared on stage and were exciting, humourous and danceable, so we all ran to the front of the stage and danced. At this point we were attacked by a large number of football louts who we managed to beat off. When Hells Angels subsequently started on us we decided it was time to go. We were attacked because we looked different and acted different (we showed our joy and danced-how shocking!). The experience made the group more determined to fight ignorance and irrationality.

As a group we are very critical of the way the punk movement has gone. We think punk originally harnessed the rebellious nature of youth and should have helped youth to understand the nature of their society. We think the Clash songs help youth in this direction. Our songs are all aimed in this direction. Some of our song titles should show this: 'Smashing The System' 'Abusing The Rules', 'Think For Yourself', 'I Don't Wanna Be',

'Lust', 'High Society' and 'NF Nazi'.

At a recent NF election meeting the group and punk friends joined an anti-fascist, anti-racist picket. We are encouraged that our song 'NF Nazi' has shown kids the fascist nature of the NF.

Phil Serious 240 Water Street Accrington Lancashire

Bob Pegg is innocent, OK?

I don't want to fill the pages of the only worthwhile socialist journal around with squalid controversies imported from the folk world but I must take some issue with at least part of TL Fishers's letter (The Leveller 10) "The cynical comments of Bob Pegg... who remarked ... he was only in it for the money". Nearly three years ago in the late lamented Let it Rock (Feb 75 issue) Bob Pegg attempted to set the record straight. It was a long letter so I'll just give two quotes: "My words [we're only ...] as quoted by the cowardly and bigoted Parkhouse people-they never once invited me to discussion and Charles Parker their leader scuttled away when I confronted him ... and "We had good times and bad times but none of us made a bean out of it. Anyone who has heard the two Mr Fox records will have realised how uncompromising the music was. We lost many things but never our integrity." Bob Pegg's marriage has cracked under the strain since then.

I don't wish to be too dogmatic and boring about this but surely there is already enough friction in the music world without misquotations, deliberate or otherwise, to add to it.

> Andy C John London E7

Under siege

David Martin's review of Rona Field's Society under Siege and the news that she is shortly to revisit this country (The Leveller November 1977) prompts questions which were initally raised when her Society on the Run was published and subsequently withdrawn.

I haven't seen the new book, though from the review there appears to be a strong similarity between the two works.

In her first book she wrote "I am faced with carrying responsibility for making explicit the many amorphous conditions of human existence in a beleagured and bleeding island." The implication is that the people of Bogside and Creggan (alongside whom, the author would have us know, she was gassed), entrusted Rona Fields, American Lecturer in Female Studies, Irish Studies, Psychology and Sociology, with a mandate to write a 'readable and scholarly' Penguin Educational Manual about them entitled Society on the Run for the

edification of the Penguin-reading classes.

In fact later discussions with community workers and libertarians in Belfast revealed that Rona was not at all welcome. There were a number of allegations, including the mishandling of property between Belfast and New York belonging to the Official Republican Movement. Though I didn't substantiate these allegations, the feeling in Belfast, where political security and trust are at a premium, was certainly one of distrust

Fields seemed to continually try to justify herself and prove, to whoever would listen, that the state found her a threat: "At the LSE [a public meeting to launch her book] Rona described her experiences at Crumlin Road Jail which she visited to conduct tests on a female internee. She was questioned for more than five hours while her identity was verified. She was told finally that she had misrepresented herself. and not allowed to see the prisoner. When she was released, she found she had been directed, deliberately she felt, to an area where several sectarian murders had recently been committed. What Rona didn't explain was that she had experienced the normal processing for any visitor to the Crumlin Road Jail. And being in a working class area, the prison was inevitably close to the scene of recent 'trouble'.

I came to the conclusion that Fields, who has a long list of involvement with minority groups-Chicanos, Chicago Blacks, women and now the Irish-along with her contemporaries who make a career from other people's misery is a collaborator with the forces of oppression in places like the north of Ireland.

The self-help projects that Rona Fields attempted to establish in the Bogside and Creggan were as manipulative and as authoritarian as the playschemes instituted by the public relations conscious British Army. In the latter case, schemes have always been burned down and once the Official **Republican Movement withdrew** their support from Rona Field's projects, so did the people.

It would surprise me if Rona Fields was excluded from Britain under a Prevention of Terrorism order. Perhaps the original idea was mere wishful thinking on David Martin's part, but if she were, we and the people of Belfast, would gain more than we'd lose.

Ian Frankin London N1

Proletarian individualism

Several articles in recent issues of The Leveller have dealt with the apparent dichotomy between the individual socialist and the collectivist aims of our movement. The articles on the lack of need for a Party and the answer to it in the

December issue dealt with a subject which concerns many activists, whose own individualism brings them, from time to time, into conflict with the sections of the movement to which they belong. I am a Labour Party member and a Metropolitan Borough Councillor. At times I find it difficult to support the policies of the Labour Party simply because they are so. often imposed from above without seeking the opinions of those whom they will affect.

I live, and work as a Councillor, on a housing estate of over 20,000 people. Up to five years ago their problems were greatly increased by a lack of community groups pressurising the local authorities. Since then groups have come and gone. Some have flourished and produced a community spirit which many thought impossible five years ago. Many of those responsible for generating enough energy to create these groups are socialists. To those Councillors who care to listen, they have given many new sources of opinion so that it is no longer necessary to speculate or knock on every door on the estate to find what is needed. These groups provide a valuable, and I hope lasting, channel for opinion. We have a long way to go, but what has been achieved is due to the work of individuals rather than organised Parties. Indeed the attitude of many in the community groups is distinctly anti-Party because they feel that Parties stifle the individuality of the activists.

What often bothers me as a person who values his individuality is the tendency on the left to presume that those whose support we seek realise that socialism is the only way that the true freedom of the individual can be achieved. Whilst we can argue the relative merits and demerits of revolution and parliamentary means of achieving our aims, we seem to fail in the 'important first part of the old SDF slogan: Education, Agitate, Organise. We must not only tell the people whose support we need to achieve socialism, that our system will end the rule of capital, we must also allay the fears that socialism must, of necessity, mean a loss of individual freedom.

Those socialists who work within community groups do a valuable service to the Movement by helping to channel opinion from the grass roots upwards to the elected or appointed official. As one of those elected representatives I value this service. But the groups fail in that they make no attempt to educate people in the wider sense. E.g. a group may grow around a specific issue which is the result of public expenditure cuts, it works hard and gets that particular cut restored. But then it disbands and the people who have participated are none the wiser as to why the action took place in the first place. Many of the most successful campaigns end with people claiming the victory of individual will over the collective will of the council, when in actual fact the movement has been more collective than any elected Council could ever be.

> Geoff Ludden Langley



Left out of the Italian left

Bob Lumley writes in The Leveller issue 10 "now everyone makes no bones about [the PCI's] social democratic character". Everyone apart from the hundreds of thousands of PCI militants who are trying to make socialism a reality, and not just an empty gesture? Not even that. "Everyone" means a small and relatively ineffectual (except in their ability to fuck things up) group of people. To balance Bob Lumley's superficial and dishonest article, how about an analysis of the stretegy for socialism of the main political trends in the Italian working class?

> Barry Cooper Leeds

Red Army Fraction

According to the introduction to your extracts from the prison writings of Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof (The Leveller 10, December 1977), "The Leveller does not necessarily support the tactic of armed struggle taken up by the Red Army Fraction-in any case that is for the German left to decide."

It may be right for a non-sectarian socialist paper to refrain from either supporting or condemning the Red Army Fraction. But surely all responsible socialists. of any sect or none, must make up their minds about its methodwhether they call it armed struggle or propaganda by deed or urban guerilla or just terrorism. The problem is not

"for the German left to decide". any more than similar problems have ever been for the left in any one country to decide. If our movement is not international, it is nothing, and we are all involved in this debate, just as we are in the debate over Northern Ireland We have to answer the simple question: How do such methods advance the kind of socialism we want?

Nicholas Walter Harrow

The disgusting cover of The Leveller No. 10 suggests that the RAF kills its own members not to mention the pretty arrangement of Gudrun Ensslin in between and well below her two comrades and the gun. This is exactly what German government propaganda has pushed for years now.

And about this confused •arrangement of quotes on the structure of the RAF which ignores the fact that Ulrike Meinhof had been dead over a year when the eight prisoners in Stammheim were attacked on 8th August this year.

Moreover, the whole presentation

of the RAF texts is crudely the international organisation of sensationalist: from the headline capital, the Europolice, the "Guns and Politics" all the way increasingly concentrated through the editorial on which we , mindfucking business of the media, the military alliances, the worldwide are going to concentrate: "smuggled writings", "first publication", operation of the CIA? "illegal publication" (in W Germany If you dismiss the question of of course), "myth-exploding armed struggle so easily you only writings", "shock waves".

your cover you promise original writings by the RAF. That's why probably a lot of people bought this issue. They have had to read a lot of shit about the Red Army Fraction in the bourgeois press. And a lot of loyal reports about the German government's view of the Gern an state of affairs in general. You again devote most of the space to commenting, labelling, making excused for the texts. If you don't agree, say so. Instead, you are giving notes like schoolmaster and are illustrating your own view of history with RAF texts.

written by RAF prisoners. You personalise the group in Baader and Meinhof. Like the bourgeois press, the German authorities create leaders in order to catch and silence not just the RAF but all advocates of and fighters for revolutionary change. They got the "leaders" through an enormous witchunt. isolating them from each other and the outside world. When during the Schleyer kidnap the last contacts with lawyers and relatives were completely cut over a hundred political prisoners were affected. Hammerschmidt, Hausner, Meins Meinhof, Ensslin, Baader, Raspe Schubert are now dead. Who is next?

Terms like "smuggled notbooks' and "illegal publication" are used by the political police in W Germany, to charge and sentend defence lawyers and relatives and supporters of political prisoners. The struggle of the RAF and othe political prisoners against isolation sensory deprivation, medical negligence, forced feeding, brain surgery, drugging and other atrocities and finally the deaths have shown what political prisone have to expect before (when on remand) and during these sentences. The only protection now against just another "svicide" today, as lawyer Klaus Croissant did before his deportation from France to a W German prison is to publicly declare that he wasn't going to commit suicide. Only after a few days of imprisonment he discovered razor blades in his cell in Stuttgart-Stammheim.

Yes, it is the first time that extracts from the notebooks of the RAF prisoners have been published in Britain, and it is correct that the publication in W Germany would be illegal. However, Ulrike Meinhof's notes (the greater part of your selection) have been available in W Germany and elsewhere since June 1976. The question is: Why so late?

The second paragraph of your editorial is a statement of surrender. So "it is for the German left to decide" what to do against Eurofascism, imperialist wars The Leveller Collective replies: (including the British Empire's last colonial war in Northern Ireland),

recognise violence in those who You are oppressing information. On fight against state brutality. It's easy because the left is weak everywhere, for all these reasons, and many freedom fighters have been and will be killed in this struggle. Because they have the wrong tactics?? Don't be ridiculous.

Paragraph 3. The Red Army Fraction did throw bombs. Fullstop. And they were and are highly capable of saying why. It didn't make a difference for the German state whether they did it as anarchists or "firmly in the Leninist tradition of the October revolution" (your words, on p.11). In an interview with Der Speigel of 20th January, 1975 (another These texts have been discussed and available prison writing) the prisoners said about this desire to label their practice:

> Spiegel: Do you see yourselves as anarchists or marxists?

RAF: Marxists. But the state security's notion of anarchism is nothing but an anti-communist red baiting anyway, related to nothing but the use of explosives. it aims at manipulating the ever-present latent fear of unemployment, crisis and war, caused by the uncertainty of living conditions for the people under capitalism, in order to sell the measures of 'internal security', the military machine of the state: police, intelligence services, and army as meansures of protection and order to the people . . . It also is the attempt to practically usurp the old dispute between revolutionary marxism and revolutionary anarchism for the advantage of the imperialist state that marxists don't attack the state but capital, that not the street but only the factory is to be the centre of class struggle and so on. Following this false understanding of marxism Lenin was an anarchist and his text 'state and revolution'

an anarchist text. Your sensationalism creates an atmosphere of danger, adventure, risk.

How dare you decorate yourselves with the risks German comrades are taking

How dare you meddle with the texts of dead comrades who can't defend themselves any longer. How dare you treat your readers.

The only risk The Leveller had to take was to let these texts (and preferably more) speak for themselves just annotating them where necessary. And make a clear

statement about your own political agreements or disagreements.

Campaign Against Repression in West Germany, c/o 35 Wellington Street, London WC2.

The tone of the letter from the

comrades of the Campaign Against Repression in West Germany is frankly unbelievable. Its hectoring approach is a good example of how to lose friends and allies, principally because it presumes bad faith, and questions people's commitment to socialist change because they adopt different approaches. But The Leveller collective does criticise itself for the way it handled the 'Prison writings of the Red Army Fraction'.

The introduction and the headline were written late at night at the end of the production process, and they are wrong. The introduction should have said that The Leveller collective does not agree with the Red Army Fraction's tactic of 'armed struggle in western Europe'. Not because of any scruples about violence-we fully support armed struggles for national liberation, for example-but because socialist struggle must be a mass struggle. Tactics that do not draw the people are counter productive.

The transposition of paragraphs which placed some of Ulrike Meinhof's writings at the end of the article, in the midst of a discussion which took place after her death, was also caused by the lateness of the hour, but cannot be excused on those grounds.

There is however no justification for claiming that our cover supports in any way the West German State's claim that the RAF members committed suicide, which we certainly do not believe.

The comrades could equally have said tht Gudrun Ensslin was placed at the centre rather than being pushed out to the margins. In fact, the cover was designed around the directions in which the three RAF members were looking in the photographs which we had of them

The Leveller collective has members who attach varying importance to West Germany and what is happening there. Some would give it higher, some lower priority. But many of us thing it right to sensationalise-not to detract from, but to bring home to people what is happening there, the atmosphere of oppression which reigns, and the urgent need for struggle against imperialism to take place across national boundaries.

The Leveller has had several articles on the situation in West Germany, and will continue to cover it. We have also printed, and intend to continue printing, articles on the international co-operation of capital and the repressive state agencies of capitalist countries, such as the police and the CIA. We recognise the violence of the state only too well.

Our pages are always open for contributions, but experience in the collective teaches us that we are unlikely to be the source of a united line on where the English ?eft can find its strength. We think we can strengthen it by helping people understand how capital works, and reporting experiences of struggle against it.

We make mistakes, but we resent being told that we make them on purpose.



"Delighted to see someone taking an interest in men's sexual attitudes: carry on the good work." Not all replies to our questionnaire were as enthusiastic as this, but most of the men who filled in the little boxes were pleased that they had the opportunity to say what they think and

were pleased that they had the opportunity to say what they think and feel about a subject which concerns most heterosexual people of both sexes, but which is usually a female preserve. Replies are still coming in, but so are demands for publication of the results. So we have analysed the first 50 responses, 11 of which came from readers of *Peace News*, which reproduced the questionnaire in full.

We can't make any sweeping generalisations about male attitudes to contraception on the basis of these replies. *The Leveller* readers form a particular group: they appear on the whole socially conscious, aware of women's liberation and anxious not to be regarded as "male chauvinist". Those who answered the questionnaire are a self-selected group. There emerged some interesting contrasts between *Peace News* and *The Leveller* replies which we'll come to later. We discovered not a few wits; several sad stories, and some passionate prejudices.

Below, we analyse the replies question by question, including comments made by the respondents. Where possible (and useful) we have given statistics.

Question 1a. Which forms of contraception have you had experience of?

Туре	Number out of 50	Percentage
Pill	48	96%
Condom	42	84%
Withdrawal	27	54%
Diaphragm	26	52%
Spermicide	25	50%
Safe Period	23	46%
IUD (Coil etc.)	17	34%
Vasectomy	2	4%
Other	2 (abstention)	4%

Page 6 The Leveller January 1978

Your replies to our contraception questionnaire

Most men replying seem to have had a fair amount of contraceptive experience. The following table, compiled from the information above, gives the breakdown:

Number of types of contraception	Number of people
used by one person	ow mellen as phusical and as
1	2
2	6
3	8
time The Statist 4: The most of restort .	7
5	15
1 state states in the 6 states in the second but seen	4
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When we looked at these statistics, we realised that we should have asked how many different methods people have used within a particular relationship, which would have given some idea as to how much they or their partners experiment. Some people wanted to broaden the definition of contraception to include abstention, and two mentioned oral sex. They are methods of avoiding contraception rather than conception, although some people might argue that penetration is unnecessary anyway.

The domination of the pill in these men's experience might explain why so many supported it as the most satisfactory method, especially given that the condom, the second most frequently used, is such a poor rival. Several readers pointed out that the question was ambiguous, saying that while they preferred the pill, they realised this might not suit their partner . . . a general recognition of the conflict betwen pleasure and health.

b. Which do you think is	the most satisfactory?	enville energ
Method Pill	Number out of 50 28	Percentage 56%
Vasectomy Diaphragm IUD	8 5 5	16% 10%
Condom Withdrawal	22	10% 4% 4%
Spermicide Spermicide/Withdrawal Safe Period	1 1 0	2% 2%

One person opted for the diaphragm "because it was my girlfriend's choice." Another remarked that "my woman (sic) doesn't seem to mind the coil." The two vasectomised men were both very pleased with the benefits of this method (one wrote the letter printed below to encourage others). On the whole, preferred methods are woman-based: pill, diaphragm, IUD; with vasectomy nominated by eight but practised only by two men.

c. Which is the least satisfactory?

Method	Number out of 50	Percentage
Withdrawal	17	34%
Condom	11	22%
Safe Period	9	18%
Pill	8	16%
Diaphragm	Logi log terine 5 aldt- older obli	10%
Spermicide	3	6%
IUD	2	4%
Female Sterilisation	1	2%
Vasectomy	0	Contra se rou prin the

Feelings about contraceptive dislikes were stronger than preferences. Most people listed more than one answer to this question, and explanations were divided between those who considered health and effectiveness most essential and those who objected to various methods on aesthetic grounds.

"I wouldn't use the pill myself, so I get a bad conscience having sex with a woman on the pill." "Since the majority of methods are woman-based, I would obviously not use any method my partner objected to." (Both these comments came from *Peace News* readers.)

Spermicide was generally condemned, for messiness and lack of spontaneity, and practically everyone who mentioned withdrawal referred both to its unsafeness and to its negative psychological effects. While only five men specifically condemned the diaphragm, the many others who dislike spermicides were obviously referring to their use with the diaphragm as well. This doesn't augur well for the increasing number of women who are being told that no other contraception is safe for them-since a major barrier to women experimenting with new methods is their fear that men will be turned off. Anyway, spontaneity never existed before the pill and IUD.

With a few exceptions, most of the replies seem to come from the "pill generation", who regard unhindered sex as their right. So they should - providing the technology is adequate.

d. Are there any forms of contraception you would never consider using?

Method	Number out of 50
Withdrawal	16
Safe Period	16
Condom	6
Vasectomy	6
Spermicide	5
IUD	4
Pill	3
Female sterilisation	3
Diaphragm	1

Note: Some people specified more than one method, while others did not reply to this question at all.

Most replies took this to mean "never again", and some clearly assumed that the choice was theirs, even when the method depended on women. The idea of vasectomy brings out understandable fears in some cases: "Sentimental reluctance to consider myself sterile"; "psychologically inhibiting: want more children"; and most honest: "I don't like the idea of myself or my love being 'cut up'". Four men expressed justified worries about the medical safety of the IUD. As for the condom: "I droop"; "you feel a bit awkward putting it on, not to mention taking it off". And withdrawal: "Hardly a contraceptive at all". One man warned of the "preorgasmic drip".

By the time we reached question two, we realised that we were looking at replies from men who were, on the whole, honest, caring and trying to understand. So it came as a bit of a surprise that most of them didn't think the kind of contraception they preferred depended on the type of sexual relationship they were having. Only nine men said "yes", 39 disagreed, and two had no answer. Perhaps the question wasn't clear,

" no caps..

and perhaps the answers reflect the fact that few men choose the type of contraception they use with their partners. One person, however, explained that "my relationships tend to be long-term, and so I like to sort out something that is going to satisfy us both for a prolonged period." This was what the question aimed to find out.

3. Have you ever visited a 'family planning' clinic?

Most "family planning" (think about what this term implies) clinics allow partners to have joint consultation with doctors, or at least to come along for moral support. Only 14 (less than a quarter) of the men who replied have ever availed themselves of this opportunity. It's not their fault, since they are not actively encouraged, and are often made to feel uncomfortable when they do turn up. But maybe if more men did insist on attending (if their partners wanted them to), they would understand more about the woman's side of things. After all, men are now allowed to watch the birth of their children—why shouldn't they participate in the opposite process?—it's just as much a shared experience. What emerges clearly is how individualised and privatised contraceptive choice and use is.

3b. Have you ever discussed contraception with your doctor?

Only eight men had. "I never go to the doctor", protested one. True, you don't need a prescription for condoms or withdrawal-but the majority of methods these men prefer (pill, vasectomy, diaphragm, IUD-see question 1b) require some form of medical assistance, at least at present. Women don't like going to the doctor either. The point that comes across from these replies is that if men don't have to seek medical advice, they won't. In a way they're right-contraception should not be a medical matter, just as abortion shouldn't: they should both become technical matters in most cases, administered by trained lay people.

no creams..

4a. Do you di	scuss contraception with every woman you have sex with?
Yes No Don't know	31 17 2
b. Do you dise long-term r	cuss contraception with women with whom you have elationships?
Yes No no answer	29 1 20
	cuss contraception with women with whom you have relationships?
Yes No No answer	22 8 20
This proved to	be a rather woolly question. Apart from the criticism

that we were assuming everyone had multiple relationships (we weren't -we were simply trying to cover all the alternatives), we failed to come up with the kind of question that would show whether men have a different attitude towards contraception if they have established a closer relationship with women on other levels.

When we asked whether men ever take the initiative in introducing such discussions, 38 said yes, and only 3 no; nine didn't answer the question.



Contraception ""The WLM should campaign less for abortion,

5. Do you ever seriously discuss contraception with other men?

It was tantalising that most men (38) replied "yes", but few elaborated upon the circumstances in which these discussions take place. This is a particularly interesting question because everyone knows that women can and do discuss this topic in women's groups and informal networks, which men on the whole lack. "Occasionally after political meetings", wrote one man. "In the pub" was another response. One discussed it in his men's group, while another gave advice to his friends. It was good to see the noes in a minority of 12: one wrote, "No-I am surprised to realise this."

6. Do you find that some women resent any attempt to discuss/propose experimentation with contraception, on the grounds that it is up to them how they control their fertility?

Some seemed a bit puzzled by this question. The majority (37) said no. Some people commented that, while they had never encountered this view personally, they knew it existed. Only 11 men had come across this view. There were a large number of interesting remarks about this. "I find this view horrifically irresponsible towards possible children." There was a fair amount of sympathy for women who hold the attitude that contraception is their business, but also frustration that a partner who carries this idea too far is denying the shared quality of sex. "It's more than fertility. Refusal to discuss by men or women can't help the love/sex balance in relationships."

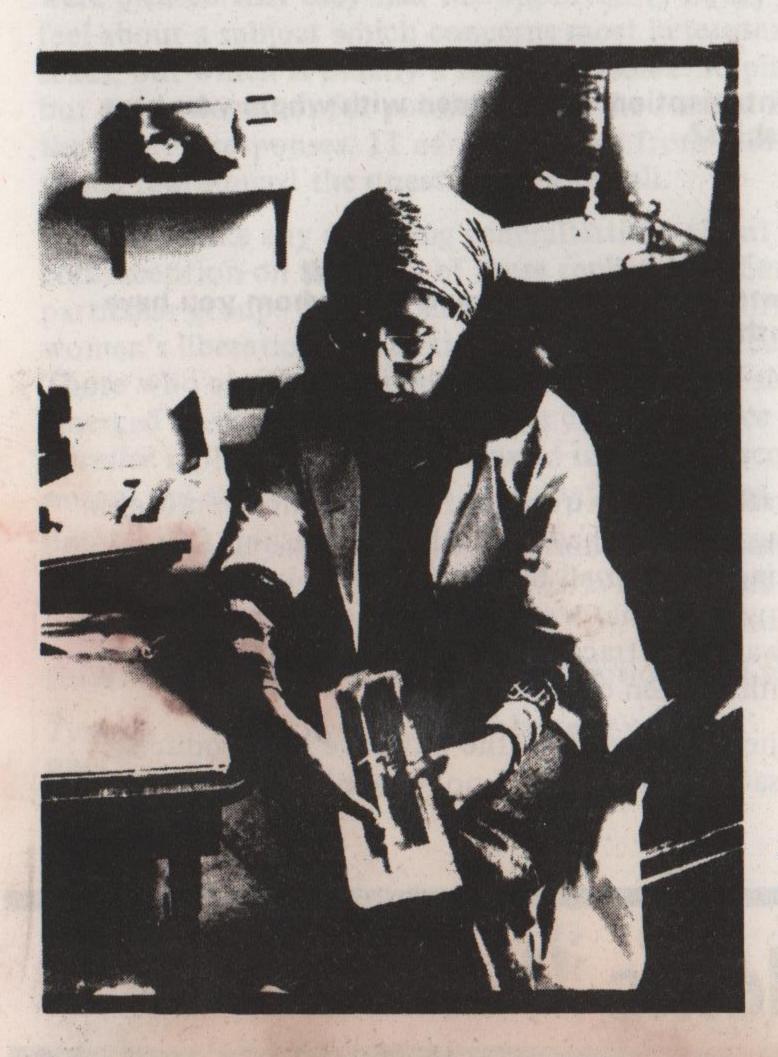
In general, *Peace News* readers were a bit more aware of why women might hold this position. One of *The Leveller* readers thought it was "ultra-feminist". Another went further: "I know one woman with this point of view. Both I and her friends in Nottingham Women's Liberation Group thinks she reads too much Doris Lessing." Most respondents seemed to be saying that they support Women's Liberation, but not if it is interpreted as exclusion of men from any role in making decisions about sex or birth control.

7. When women bring up the question of contraception do you feel:

inde foisier, elfiquites and	Yes	No 22	No answer 25
Bored?	3	22	20
Embarrassed? Under pressure?	9	16	25
Unwilling to talk about it?	2	21	27
Interested?	45	1	4

One person did point out that, as with everything, there can be "contraception bores". Another claimed that it made him aroused to discuss contraception with a woman, because it was usually at their first sexual encounter.

It's good to see so many men interested in discussing this problem with women, and if we had asked a more precise question, we would have been able to establish more clearly which particular aspects they are interested in discussing.



A health worker demonstrates the equipment for inserting the coil

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8. Most women take responsibility for contraception because they feel they cannot trust men to do so. Do you feel that this is the only realistic approach?

The replies were evenly divided on this: 24 said yes, 25 no and one didn't answer. As one respondent pointed out, our question was not entirely accurate: most of the reasonable and safe contraceptive methods are woman-based, so there is not at the moment much choice about who takes responsibility. Some of the noes implied that women were unnecessarily lacking in trust, and emphasised the idea of mutuality in contraceptive choice and use. The yes voters, on the other hand, tended to condemn men or the male-dominated system. "Most men are pigs," was one such response.

When we asked whether it would ever be possible for women to rely on using contraception, some people objected that the responsibility shouldn't fall on any one partner, man or woman. Twenty-three men thought it would be possible, 22 didn't envisage it.

What conditions would be necessary for this to happen, and would it be desirable?

"Some mutuality is desirable-this requires political and technological advances", was a comment on this question. "Men would have to be nicer", suggested one person. "Not desirable," wrote another, "most men are not as irresponsible as this question implies-even the Saturday night shagger carries his packet of threes. Vasectomy is the answer, but most men will never have it."

One man couldn't see it happening in his lifetime: "Of course it's desirable, but the patriarchy has been prevalent for a long time." He was pointing to an interesting idea—that, just as men have a vested interest in the maintenance of a system that provides them with personal servants (women in the home), so might they also have a vested interest in a system of birth control which places the onus on the woman, and keeps her subjected to constant fear of pregnancy, or to the manipulation of the drug industry and medical profession.

'vasectomy is the answer, but most men will never have it.

Good intentions were further tested by question nine:

Suppose a male pill has been invented. Although an effective contraceptive, it has side effects such as nausea, headaches, loss of libido and weight gain; long-term effects are unknown. Would you agree to take part in a medical trial using this new pill?

"If it has all these drawbacks, why try it?" one man asked. Sixteen men were willing to be guinea-pigs. Thirty-two weren't. Predicting this response we had asked:

If not, how would you suggest that new forms of contraception (for both men and women) should be tested?

You've got me there," was voiced by many in different ways. "Good question," one commented. The concrete suggestions fell into three categories: those who thought willing volunteers should be found ("people who are desperate or have nothing to lose", "cowardly, I would hope for others to be heroic volunteers"); those who wanted animal or lab tests; and those who (jokingly) suggested forcible testing of socially undesirable elements.

The problem with willing volunteers is that they are hard to come by if they are aware of the risks. Desperate people are the victims of present contraceptive testing. Third world women or those unable to use other methods are experimented on because it can be argued that this is better than unwanted pregnancies.

Animal testing may be more generally socially acceptable (although three *Peace News* readers were adamantly against), but it doesn't solve the problem of whether methods tested on animals are safe for human use. As for enemies, one suggestion was "the armed forces—might be deadly!" NF members and "ex-presidents of the world and their staff" were other recommended targets. One man said he couldn't answer the question without taking into account changes in the drug industry and medical system. 10. Suppose that vasectomy were easily available, much safer than female sterilisation and has no known side effects; and that artificial insemination facilities were offered to every man who was prepared to have a vasectomy. Would you build a sperm bank and then have a vasectomy?

more for contraception."

Vasectomy combined with sperm banks was a fairly popular idea. Twenty-two were in favour, 23 against, and three didn't answer. Several people raised justified fears about control over sperm banks, raising the "Brave New World" spectre. "It's like the industrialisation of

procreation." Others thought it was a bit clinical, "there should be joy in making babies." "There's nothing like starting a baby with a really good fuck, but I had a vasectomy after trying it twice."

There was more enthusiasm for reversible vasectomy, although as one man said, the long-term effects are unknown. Seventeen people said that they would be prepared to have a reversible vasectomy rather than build a sperm bank. Ten still held firm against any interference with that delicate apparatus. One questioned the need for biological children at all.

most men are pigs'

11. The Women's Liberation Movement has campaigned since its inception for free, easily available abortion and contraception. Do you think this campaign should include specific demands for intensified research into male contraception? Would you work within such a campaign to achieve these demands?

An overwhelming 49 replies were in favour of the WLM extending its campaign in this way. Only one man didn't answer. "The WLM should campaign less for abortion, more for contraception" was one view. Putting energy behind these convictions, 35 men said they would join a campaign to achieve these demands. ("Depends on its politics," demurred one.) Seven said they wouldn't, among them people who explained that they were already involved in too many campaigns. "The WLM shouldn't stick at making demands, but try to implement such research itself", suggested one. Another was fairly hostile: "My experience of the WLM is that they are hostile to men, narrowminded, and inclined to disappear up their own consciousnesses. I would not like to give the impression that I am hostile to the WLM [?], my criticism is directed against what I see as their current behaviour." He would probably not have been faced with a questionnaire like this were it not for the very consciousness he's attacking.

12. List what to you are the three main criteria for satisfactory contraception.

We gave carte blanche, but the answers were remarkably uniform. Practically all were variants of this combination: effective in preventing conception, medically safe, no interference with spontaneous sexuality. Some mentioned ease and convenience in use, although definitions of this would obviously depend on needs. Aesthetics—"no caps, no creams, no condoms"—was another criterion.

Several men insisted that the ideal contraception should not interfere with the metabolism and should be "low technology". Mutual needs and the ability to retain control over one's own body were also specified. "Note: I think you would get very different answers from different age-groups, because needs and feelings change."

Thank you for helping us.

Terry Dougherty, Karen Margolis

HETEROSEXUAL LOVESONG 1977

Did you come? he said No she said Oh he said, looking sad Well she said Sorry he said and turned over onto his back. Is that it she said, wondering how to ask him to touch her some more I'm tired he said, wondering what sexperts she'd slept with before.

Can I ask him, she thought, if he's tried, she thought I wouldn't know how to begin. I could come alright if I touched myself, but I'd rather be touched by him. "About four years ago, my wife became pregnant. We had decided that we didn't want the children, so she had an abortion. She had been on the pill for several years and wanted to stop taking it. Since she had been taking responsibility for birth control and had already had an unpleasant operation, we thought it fair that I should have the next operation and so I had a vasectomy.

The operation itself wasn't bad, but I had a very unpleasant week or so afterwards—walking about bow-legged and though I am a keen cyclist, it was some weeks before I was cycling again.

Aside from that, there was no difficulty at all. It has not affected our sex life-except that we were both a bit sexier for a while after the operation. Generally it has had no perciptible effect except perhaps I'm still a bit more tender behind my balls than I was before.

It seems to me that the sperm bank vasectomy scheme is by far the best of the presently available options. To accomplish that end is in the hands of the Women's Movement. If women stop having anything to do with men who haven't had the operation, and effectively a certificate of sterility becomes a licence to fuck, vasectomies will suddenly become very popular."

"The old eugenic argument was wrong: we don't need to stop the poor/working class/inferior people breeding. But the new eugenic argument is right: we need to stop ourselves and our men/women breeding, because there are just too many people being born to have decent lives. We need far more contraception/abortion/sterilisation, as part of a single campaign. It is not a class/political/feminist campaign, but essential for any kind of human progress, as the old pre-socialist freethought movement knew well; and also essential for any kind of human freedom—especially for women to avoid the baby trap, which is the most powerful instrument of patriarchy. The best system would be contraception for the young and sterilisation for the middle aged, and abortion for the mistakes, as a rule rather than an exception. Simple slogan: Free Sex!"

"Dear Questionnaire buffs,

I've done your questionnaire. There is one point which I don't feel has come over too well. Contraception is an odd thing. One cannot "experiment too much with it. To be effective it demands that it works, and experimenting can obviously jeopardise that. There are a few women I know who have taken the "female control" argument in contraception too far (in my view), so that the men they have sex with do not get a chance to be involved, albeit passively. The reason women need to take control is because men tend to be reckless and unconcerned (they don't get pregnant after all), but men *should* be concerned and involved, and where they are not it is in part up to women to make them involved.

Personally, I take contraception quite seriously. If a woman gets pregnant by me, it's my baby too. I would be very concerned and annoyed if told by a women that she was on the pill, for example, and if she wasn't, because she wanted a fatherless baby.

It's a good idea, this questionnaire, and I hope it moves things along. I feel quite ignorant of much of the issues, and filling it in in a pub raised a number of eyebrows."

I have a body thats waiting for love, she thought and have eyes to look if you didn't bury them in the pillow each time we could explore each crevice and nook with our tongues and lips and fingertips like it says in that feminist book.

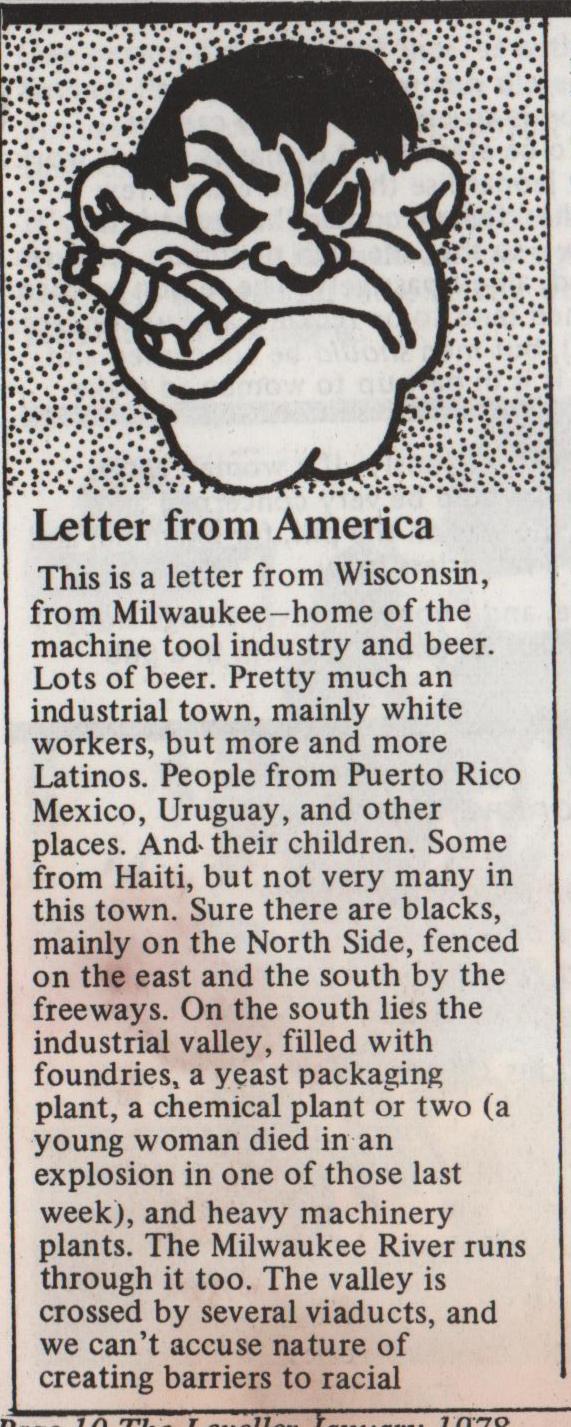
But I'm afraid to ask and besides I know you don't like my shape or smell that you said unless you were inside my cunt you felt tense and bored as well.

I can see from her face, he thought to himself, that she didn't enjoy making love I'm a failure because I came too soon, or my prick isn't big enough Tessa Weare

Campbell and John Berry have been committed for trial at the Old Bailey on Official Secrets Act charges arising from a conversation they had in John Berry's flat in February last. The Prosecution's main case rested on a tape recording of the conversation which the three men had-a recording which they made themselves.

The conversation concerned Signals Intelligence, or SIGINT, security'? electronic surveillance of radio transmissions. This activity is He is in fact Colonel HA Johnstone, formerly of the Royal believed to provide western nations with up to ninety five per Corps of Signals, now attached to the Army General Staff, cent of their information about what goes on in the rest of the DI 24, which he joined in November 1974. He holds the world. The western network is largely under the control of the MBE: his army number is 420864. Colonel Johnstone has US National Security Agency, NSA: Britain's organisation is studied not only at the British Army's Staff College, but also Government Communications Headquarters, GCHQ, based at at the French Defence and Staff Colleges, the Ecole Superieure Cheltenham. SIGINT intercepts not only transmissions of de Guerre and the Cours Superieure Interarmee. Having been an communist countries, but also of neutral and friendly nations. army man all his life, he betrays the military approach to And surveillance extends not only to military and diplomatic democracy and free enquiry: he doesn't understand it at all, traffic, but to normal commercial interchange. Information on but if he did he would oppose it. what foreign firms are doing is passed, informally, to British The Royal Signals, of course, provide most of the personnel firms.

All this profitable business activity is carried on under the spurious cloak of 'national security', to stop enquiry about it. This was carried to such a laughable extent that the Army Officer who testified against Aubrey, Berry and Campbell was allowed to remain anonymous, being referred to in court as 'Colonel B'.



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integration, but it's worked that way all the same.

In the 60s, a radical priest drew outraged headlines by working with black organisations, and marching with them across the viaduct into the South Side. That part of town was settled by Polish immigrants, for the most part, who built churches with gold-domed towers and worked in the factories. Them and the Serbians. But they didn't particularly want blacks on their end of town. Nowadays there are plenty of Latinos instead. Immigrant labor, often illegal and scared to organize.

Still, for a long time (19th-early 20th century) the major group was German refugees from Bismark. And Milwaukee had a Socialist mayor. That was a long time ago, and the parks scattered all over are the only evidence we can really see. Wisconsin was the home of the Progressive Movement, turn-of-the-century

populists, and sometimes radical and socialist groups today draw on this progressive history.

Last week at the county board budget hearings, I was struck by familiar sights and slogans. Government employees protesting cuts that would close or cripple their children's homes, schools and hospitals. Abolition of public funds for abortions. Both

Colonel B? Who you trying to kid, Colonel H.A.Johnstone West

prejudicial to 'national security'. 'I don't think there should be any discussion of SIGINT. The whole subject is classified,' **Colonel B told the court.**

Who is this man, who is allowed irresponsibly, and on his personal opinion, to condemn the actions of two journalists and a former soldier as 'against the interests of national

for GCHQ, and John Berry was a corporal with the regiment. While not wanting to disclose our sources of information, we would like to make it clear-as Colonel Johnstone's name was given to the defence lawyers on condition they did not reveal it-that we got his name from sources entirely independent of lawyers and accused.

government workers and committees of the unemployed protesting programs that would put Welfare recipients in public jobs at less than minimum wage Welfare recipients have already been used as strikebreakers, to fill jobs that union workers should fill. If the people on welfare can' accept the job offered, they lose their benefits. And the working class here is not organized to even begin to fight these things effectively but there are a few hopeful rumblings.

This weekend there was a conference in San Antonio, primarily attended by the Latino groups, La Raza Unido Party-a Chicano movement. This conference was about the deportation attempts on illegal workers from Mexico, and to plan strategy to resist the immigration authorities and to oppose the Carter plan. Carter wants to give amnesty to all that can prove they've been here for seven years let others stay for five years (non-native labor is cheaper, by law) but give them no rights whil they are here. Families can't join them, according to the Carter plan

The situation with abortion is an awesome piece of bourgeois legalistic liberty. Abortion is a constitutional right. Minors are not required to obtain permission from their parents. And a woman

need justify her decision to terminate a pregnancy to no one. But federal funds are no longer available for abortions on the Medicaid program for the poor, and one by one the states are following the lead. County health plans are being made that cut abortions from the budget as well. At the moment, there is perfect liberty to have abortions if you can pay for it. Abortion clinics provide counselling, and many feminists have gone into running these clinics to turn the experience into a positive learning one. But all this humane health care takes place within commodity relations for profit. And the poor don't get in. Entries for infections-septic abortionshave increased since public funds have been cut.

Just another thing. Last month the International Women's Year Conference was held in Houston. There were state delegations, but lots of observers and assorted groups were there. The southern delegations were predominantly white, the Mississippi group even included five men. The Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan boasted that they'd had a hand in the Mississippi delegation. But this was protested, and some black women from Alabama were included.

> Kathleen Denny Milwaukee, USA

The long arm of the West German state

IT'S GOOD to see that the British customs and immigration authorities are doing their bit for European integration. Harm Dost is a Dutch social worker who ran a clinic in Arnhem, near the German border, for the treatment of heroin addicts. The facilities there were much better than those in Germany, so many German addicts attended.

The treatment was somewhat unconventional. in that the addicts were allowed marijuana while being withheld heroin. Nothing outrageous in Holland these days, but enough to ensure Dost's arrest as soon as he crossed the border.

He was sentenced to a long prison sentence by a German court for "pushing" marijuana to Germans, even though the offences took place in Holland; a dubious legal precedent in any

The Dutch government was forced by the rising tide of protest to express their disapproval, and the Germans were persuaded to deport him.

He had one memento of his trip-a massive teutonic stamp in his passport informing him that he would be arrested on the spot, should he dare set foot in Germany within ten years.

That stamp was enough to ensure that, when he dared set foot in England to spend his honeymoon in London this autumn, he was promptly searched and put straight back on the boat.

Martin Cleaver

UNIONS

CPSA witch-hunt on the rocks

Following the sell-out by the Civil and **Public Services Association of their** members locked out in Gibraltar (Leveller 7), the right in that union have conducted a witch-hunt against the left in an attempt to consolidate their hold over the union bureaucracy.

Since May when the right wing obtained a majority on the National Executive Committee, they have been busy trying by any means possible to prevent being voted out again next year. Their two main ploys have been attempts to substantially change the Rule Book to include postal balloting; and a witch-hunt against left wing full time officers of the union, and against those members who occupied the union HQ.

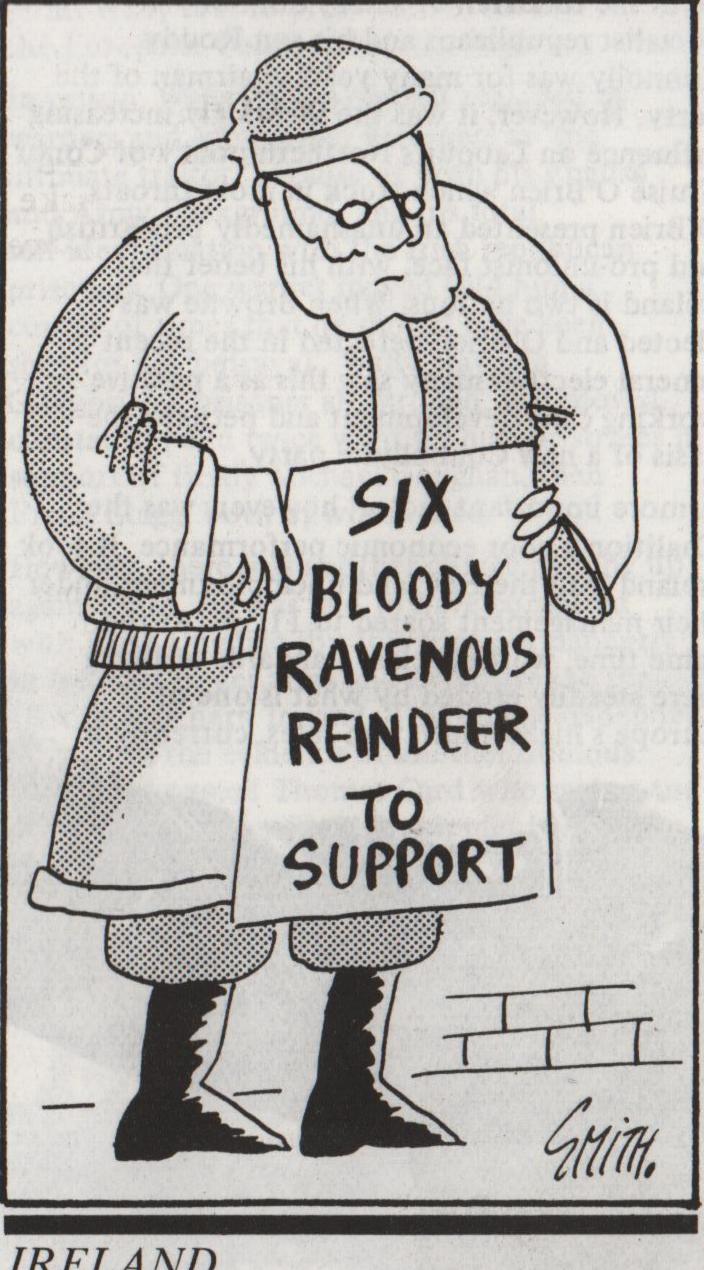
Most of their new Rule Book was thrown out by a special Rules Revision Conference in November, so Kate Losinska-one of the Vice-Presidents of the union and leader of the TRUMID-backed right wing-immediately called for a re-introduction of the Radcliffe Report, which recommended (in the early sixties) that communists and fellow-travellers should not be employed in the Civil Service. The defeat of the Rule Book also preserves the right of members to appeal to Annual Conference in the event of disciplinary action, and the prospect of some 20 appeals at annual conference next May should prevent the right wingers from pursuing the action against the occupiers of HQ.

Their most unpleasant action, however, continues. First on a hit-list of full time officers whom they wish to purge is Terry Adams, who was in charge of liason with CPSA HQ during the Gibraltar dispute. (In no way can the sell-out be blamed on Terry-this originated at a higher level in the Union's hierarchy.) As Terry has only been employed by the union for a year, his appointment has to be confirmed by the NEC, this they have refused to do, and instead have recommended to next year's conference that he be dismissed.

Originally, the charges against him were: getting the union officially involved in the Gibraltar dispute; being over-enthusiastic in his handling of the dispute; and neglecting his other duties with the Department of National Savings and Land Registry sections of the union.

The two sections have both expressed their full confidence in his work for them, and numerous motions of protest have come from branches all over the country; the General Secretary strongly recommended the confirmation of his appointment to the NEC; and a statement from the Deputy General Secretary pointing out that it was he who ensured that the union gave official backing to the dispute, has been suppressed.

Following the destruction of their trumped-up charges, the NEC have now admitted that their real reasons are political.



IRELAND

Explosives for UVF siezed?

The strange lack of publicity surrounding the largest haul by British police of explosives and ammunition linked with Northern Ireland may be explained by the fact that the man involved belongs to a loyalist paramilitary group, thought to be the UVF.

William James Rice, 42, who normally resides

in Hackney, East London, was stopped on the M6 near Chorley in Lancashire on 10 September. His van was found to contain 263 sticks of gelignite, seven electric detonators, 275 lbs of sodium chlorate, one .45 revolver, one .22 rifle and 133 rounds of ammunition.

Quite some collection. The Lancashire police themselves seem reluctant to revel in their discovery in the manner to which the nation has become accustomed when the IRA are involved.

The cache is thought to have come from Scotland and was making its way to Ireland via Dublin. Mr Rice will face trial early in the New Year.

HOLLAND

Police chief shows the way

THE ACTIVITIES of Chief Inspector B Kalma, head of Rotterdam's vice squad and juvenile department, have caused a furore among his colleagues. The cause of the row was his decision to take part in a march in rememberance of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe (on Saturday, 29 October).

He has been in trouble before, for making blistering comments about the Minister of Justice's decision to try and close the Bloemenhove abortion clinic, for his proposals to set up an "Eros Centre" in a former harbour building, and for the fact that he is a member of the Pacifist Socialist Party (a sort of parliamentary SWP).

He is due to be carpeted by the mayor, but support from left-wing councillors should save his neck

SCOTLAND More racists in high places

WHO SAID: "There is a bottomless pit of immigrants waiting to swamp the country"? Who has, on his own admission, been supplying Tory MPs with racist questions on immigration to put to the Home Secretary? Answer: Leslie Aitcheson, lecturer in business law at Glasgow University, former Tory councillor, National Insurance Tribunal chairman, lawyer for the Scottish Daily Record,....and Immigration Appeals Adjudicator for Scotland. Aitcheson's racist remarks came out when he was Dobsonned by Seven Days, the new Glasgow-based left weekly, at a meeting of young lawyers in Glasgow. In his "off the cuff" remarks he also described three Chilean refugees who had come up before him as "self-confessed members of the Socialist Party of Chile, ie: communist agitators". The Home Office has been greatly embarrassed by the revelations, so, since he can't apparently be easily sacked, he's being starved of cases, with adjudicators travelling up from England to handle Scottish cases. But luckily for Aitcheson, his jobs don't include the chairpersonship of a nationalised industry, so Fleet Street has not taken up the story. Seven Days has started up as a more labour-movement-based left paper than the last Scottish effort, Q, an east coast intellectual nationalist review that died last year.

Ireland

New party out of Labour's disaster

"We assemble here today to make an historic decision. At the end of today's deliberations we will have a Labour Party which we hope will keep faith with the socialist and working class aspirations that animated the minds and actions of Connolly and Larkin." So began the opening address given by veteran Irish trade unionist Matt Merrigan at the launching of the Socialist Labour Party in Dublin's Liberty Hall.

Over 400 delegates-mostly from Dublingathered with him at the end of November to launch this new party. The two day conference hammered out a 60-paragraph constitution and debated over 90 amendments. But when exhausted delegates departed there was the feeling that the Irish left was once more alive, if at present, living mainly in Dublin.

The road to Liberty Hall began in Dublin's Artane constituency in June 1977 when Dr Noel Browne, Ireland's one-person Tribune group, split from the Irish Labour Party and stood successfully in the general election as an Independent Labour candidate. As Browne quickly realised, he had tapped a significant reservoir of discontent with the Labour Party's coalition performance.

The Irish Labour Party's decision to go into coalition was taken in 1972 and its partner was the right wing Fine Gael. It was not the first time it had decided that the path to the commanding heights lay through coalition. Its first partnership was in 1948-51 with Fine Gael and the left-republican Clann Na Poblachta; and it was this coalition that laid the basis of the Irish welfare state.

By contrast, its 1954-57 and 1973-77 coalitions with Fine Gael were characterised by campaigns of massive state repression against republicanism. The first coalition used internment during the IRA border campaign at the end of the 50s. And in much the same way, the second coalition, passed two pieces of legislation enabling the police to detain people for seven days and put them on trial for offences committed in Northern Ireland. This coalition also encouraged cross-border co-operation of security forces and tried to stifle criticism of a particularly vicious police interrogation unit.

With such a track record on the national question it was hardly surprising that rank and file dissatisfaction within the Labour Party grew. After all the Irish Labour Party claims to be in the tradition of James Connolly's Socialist republicans and his son Roddy Connolly was for many years chairman of the party. However, it was the seemingly increasing influence on Labour's Northern policy of Conor Cruise O'Brien which stuck in most throats. O'Brien presented an unashamedly pro-British and pro-unionist face, with his belief that Ireland is two nations. When Browne was elected and O'Brien defeated in the recent general election many saw this as a positive working class development and perhaps the basis of a new Connollyite party.

A more important factor, however, was the Coalition's poor economic performance. It took Ireland into the EEC and unemployment under their management soared to $11\frac{1}{2}\%$. At the same time, working class standards of living were steadily eroded by what is one of Europe's highest inflation rates, currently at

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14%. In order to keep unemployment down to the five per cent figure the Coalition considered "manageable", 25,000 jobs would have had to have been created each year; an unlikely prospect when only 11,000 jobs were added in the best year, 1970.

However, US investment in the republic accelerated rapidly during Coalition rule-a 77% increase between 1974-76-probably because wage rates in Ireland were significantly lower than in the rest of Europe. Pragmatism and political opportunism, it was argued, had destroyed Labour's ideology and weakened its principles

But the major support for the Socialist Labour Party has not come from disenchanted Labour Party members but rather from that large unattached section of radical activists repelled by the militarism of the Provos, disillusioned by the failure of the Liason of the Left-a loose consultative amalgam of Communist Party, Official Republicans and the Labour left-and unimpressed with Ireland's small Trotskyist movements.

The SLP has shown that there is a substantial body of trade unionists and workers who have been waiting for a party that is both radical and socialist enough, and has some chance of influencing and leading the Irish working class. And radical the party certainly is-perhaps a little too much for its essentially parliamentary leadership. Its constitution calls for a Workers Republic in the mould of Connolly to be achieved through united working class action. It is committed to the withdrawal of British troops from the North and the withdrawal of all forms of imperialism from Ireland. It also seeks to extend workers democracy and to fight to maintain and improve working class standards of living.

Women's rights are high on the agenda. At present the catholic church's teachings on family, divorce, abortion and contraception

Dr Noel Browne, Ireland's "one-person Tribune group"

dominate Irish society. The SLP would work to achieve full economic and sexual equality. Some are claiming that Ireland has not seen such a hopeful socialist development since James Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party.

The problem remains that the Irish Labour Party also claims to be Connollyite and to fight for many of the same policies. So what is there to prevent this new party wandering down the same avenue of compromise and lies? The Socialist Labour Party may not be able to weld together the two different traditions of reformism and revolution that has made it a magnet for Ireland's Trotskyist left. They believe, and some would say hope, that the party will break up in about two to three years time. They think it will be unable to sustain its present euphoria and become sharply divided between the reformist leadership of Browne and Merrigan and the more revolutionary activist rank and file.

You can't keep Wally down

WALTER HEATON is a 46-year-old ex-Guardsman who has spent the last 4½ years in thirteen different British prisons on two consecutive convictions springing from his activities with Rose Dugdale (now in Limerick jail, Ireland) in opposition to the British Government's role in Northern Ireland. He was dramatically freed from Hull Prison on the 8th November when, much against his expectations, his appeal was upheld. David Martin looks at how one man felt the full onslaught of the State and its class justice.

If the idea of freeing Wally Heaton is to quieten him down, then it's not going to work. Wally had proved a continual nuisance during his 4½ years inside, and he intends to carry on being so. Since his release he has been deluging the Director of Public Prosecution's office over the way he was framed, and when told the other week, that his file there was three foot high and would he please stop adding to it, Wally replied; "Comrade, it's only just starting".

Wally served as a Guardsman in the brutal Malaysian campaign, and did not like what he saw there. Upon return he was obliged to leave the Army and with his eyes opened, he threw himself into grassroots politics, mainly in the Tottenham area of North London, and eventually became a militant shop steward with the TGWU.

He first met Rose Dugdale in 1971 when she was, as he said, "working with the United Nations and a respected member of the establishment." They got on well together, and Wally found Rose becoming a much more aggressive person, who wanted to go to Ireland where she saw an armed uprising under way.

They stayed mainly in Derry, and on one occasion, June 15, 1972, the two were detained at the Limavady RUC barracks at the same time as the director of operations for the 2nd Battalion of the Provisional IRA in Derry.

Back in London during August '72 when the agitation over the dockers jailed in Pentonville was at its height, the couple were part of a large and lively picket outside the jail. Four were arrested that day, and two were Wally and Rose. At Lambeth Magistrates Court, the Special Branch gave evidence that Wally had been involved in the Free Derry no-go areas and that with Rose he had established a no-go area in Islington London for over two weeks in solidarity with Derry.

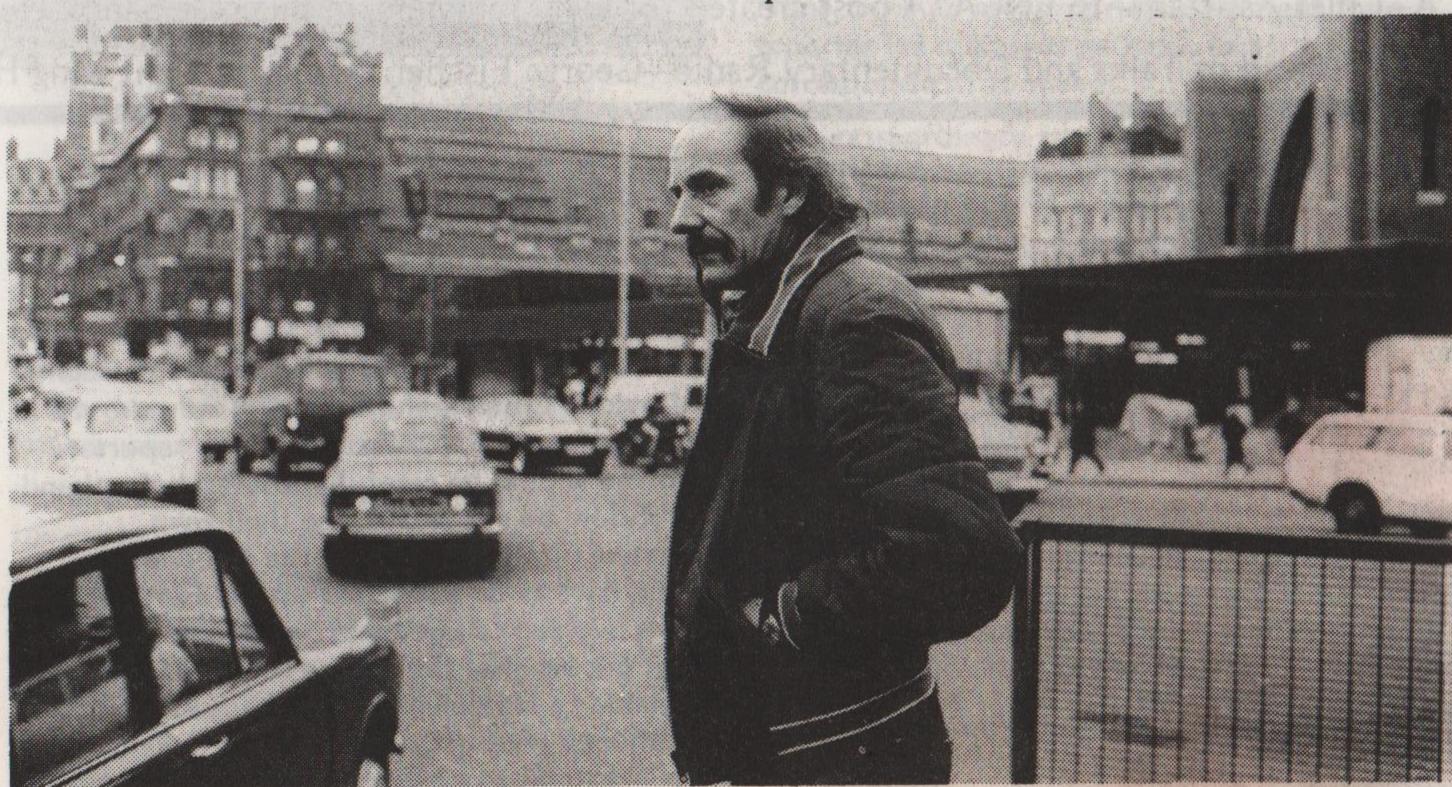
Within weeks the flat he and Rose were keeping above a shop in Tottenham was raided with great earnestness by the Special Branch. It was only starting for Wally. Back in Ireland, Wally made a speech in Derry that happened to be televised, and he found himself hustled out of the country with the clear message that if he returned he would be interned.

In October 1973, Wally was in court at Exeter with Rose charged with dishonestly handling paintings that had been stolen from the Dugdale family seat near Axminster. Rose was charged with the actual robbery and received a two year suspended sentence. Wally, charged only with handling, got six years inside. He thought the court was not happy with just six years, and less so when this was reduced later on appeal to four years. It was a taste of blatant class justice. Because of Rose Dugdale's background, the court assumed it was entirely the influence of Heaton that was responsible and the sentence was aimed at him. Much of the evidence against him came from a dubious character named Ginger Mann, whom Wally claims was paid £3500 by police for 'setting' him up.

The next year, Mann himself was done for armed robbery in Manchester, assuming according to Wally 'a licence to rob' and he got a ten year sentence, thereby clearly establishing himself as a somewhat unsatisfactory witness; a point Wally was to press hard in his case to the European Court of Human Rights.

In prison, Wally found himself regarded by warders and some other prisoners as 'the ultimate traitor' because of both his English and Army background, and his total self-identification with the Irish republican prisoners. One warder indeed told him a couple of times that he should have been shot for his 'betrayal'. Wally stayed a Category 'A' prisoner all through, was moved constantly, and twice went on hunger strikes in support of firstly Michael Gaughan, then Frank Stagg, both of whom died.

However, there was another charge coming up against him. He was said to have conspired with Rose Dugdale (by this time permanently in Ireland) to get arms and explosives to the IRA in Northern Ireland. This charge depended largely on the evidence of another dubious individual named Thomas Card who said at the trial that he had sold the equipment to Wally in North Wales.



Wally Heaton

This second charge was not brought against Heaton till the last minute. He had only two more weeks to serve of his first conviction when the charge was brought. He got another six years, but maintained the Strasbourg pressure by playing on the European convention section article 6 that establishes the right to a fair trial, a right denied Wally by the use of police-inspired agent-provocateurs to get their map

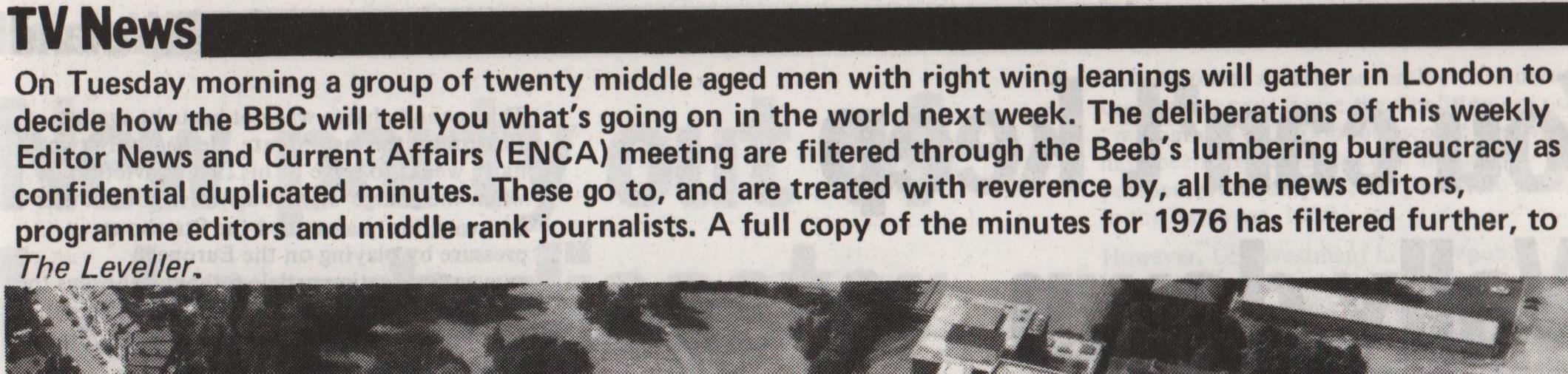
Ireland

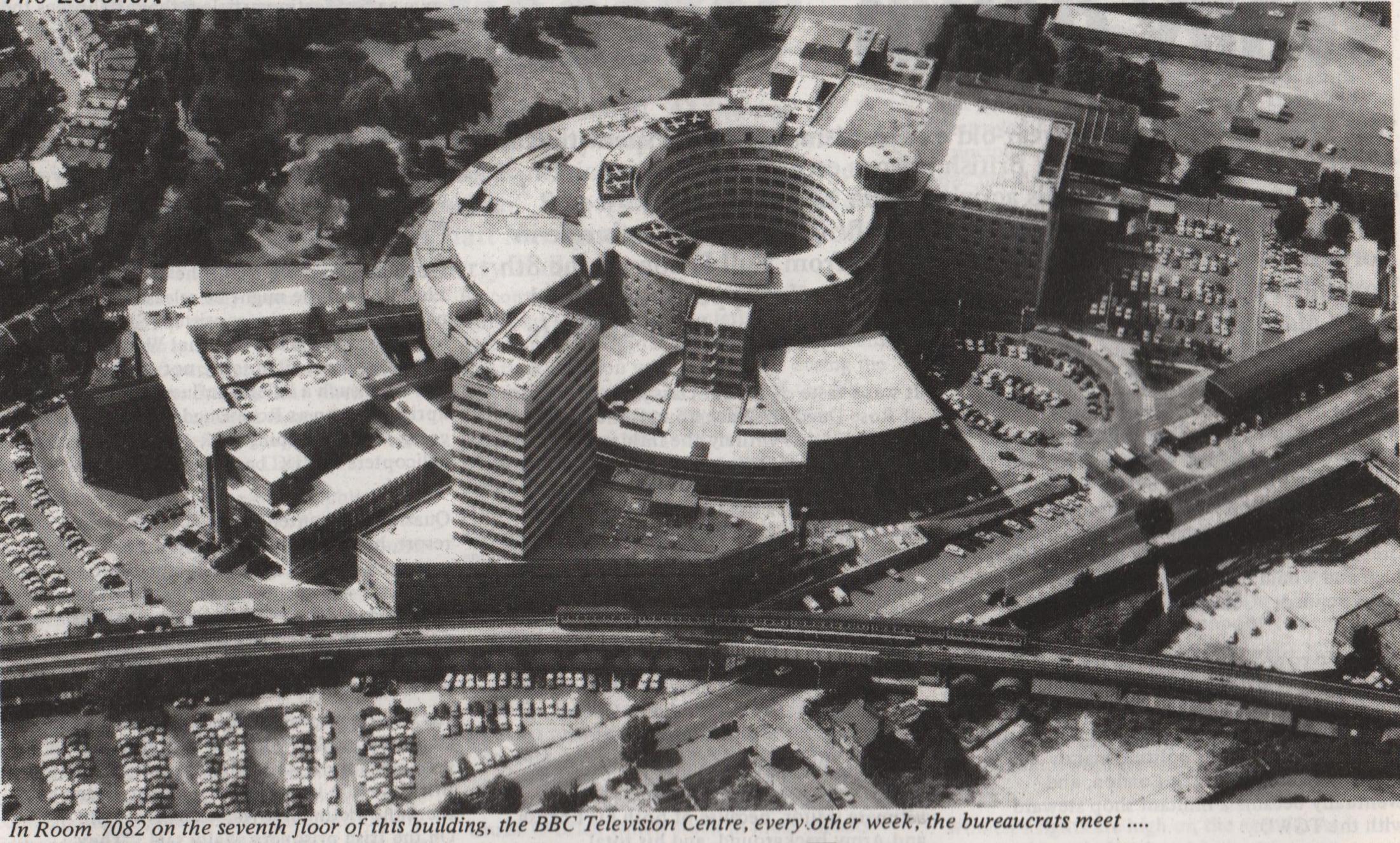
Strasbourg representatives attended his second trial in Liverpool, inspected his prison conditions, demanded full accounts of his first appeal and of the British Government's case against him. They were not satisfied with some of the Government replies, while Heaton, in Parkhurst, was told that if he dropped all this Euro-business he might be released early on parole. However, the consistent Strasbourg attention was a clear sign that Wally was not going to take it all quietly, nor accept that he had been such a baleful influence on such an upright person as Rose Dugdale that she was going round dropping milk-churn bombs from helicopters at RUC barracks in Northern Ireland.

Quashing his sentence was the only other resort, but Wally is out and now even more active. He is after massive compensation from the Home Office, he wants the men who gave evidence against him prosecuted for perjury, and he intends doing everything in his power to display the system of class justice that prevails in Britain.

His views have not changed at all; despite his close relationship with the Irish Republican prisoners inside, he holds that everyone in a British prison is a political prisoner; "each of them the victim of a vicious legal system". On the Irish prisoners, Wally said; "They feel they have been badly let down by Sinn Fein in Ireland. They feel not enough is being done for them, that too much time and effort is being spent on individual popular cases, and the rest of them are being forgotten. The years inside grind them down no matter now strong their spirit. I thought it a terrible thing to see how a lot of brave men are having their minds destroyed.

"A lot of them do feel that in time they will at least be transferred to a Northern Irish prison, but I don't think that will happen-this Government is far too vicious. There will be no amnesty for them, but only realists like Joseph O'Connell [one of the Balcombe Street 4] can see that. What most of them want to see is the prisons here being attacked and bombed and reprisals taken against individual prison officers."







Here is the main cast list of acronymic bureaucrats from the BBC, vintage 1976: DG-Director General-Sir Charles Curran, now replaced by right wing Tory Ian Trethowan.

ENCA-Editor News and Current Affairs-an Ulster Protestant called Desmond Taylor. (The post of ENCA was abolished in 1977 and replaced with Director, News and Current Affairs. To fill this souped-up post, which carries a seat on the Board, the BBC turned again to the right wing Ulster connection and appointed Richard Francis, former Controller Northern Ireland. These meetings, and the minutes, are now known as DNCA.)

CA-Chief Assistant-to DG. Hardiman Scott, the BBC's political troubleshooter and Harold Wilson's favourite interviewer (his questions were so weak)

CA-Chief Assistant-to ENCA. A post created for loyal retainers, in this case Sandy Hope, a mild mannered half-wit. HTDR-Head of Talks and Documentary Radio-George Fischer. Arrogant, right wing Hungarian emigre.

With so much stuff coming out, and contact so remote between the BBC's 75-odd newsrooms, the ENCA meeting cannot usually impose advance instructions. What it does is to commend or condemn recent programmes, to lay down guidelines on the treatment of general subjects and to register complaints from VIPs (complaints from regular punters do not of course get this far).

Rarely do they break cover and issue an out-and-out dictat. When this does happen the ruling comes either from the Director General (DG) himself-who conducts an inner coven i his office afterwards-or from the ENCA.

The strongest area of general censorship predictably covers Northern Ireland. The restriction on interviews with republican leaders was reaffirmed, on two testing Page 14 The Leveller January 1978

occasions: the Dublin Easter Parade and the making of a radio documentary on "the IRA's political friends in Western Europe". On April 23 ENCA expressed concern about coverage of the 60th anniversary parade.

The question might arise whether people such as David O'Connell and Rory O'Brady should be interviewed. ENCA said that any reporters involved should be carefully briefed beforehand but should be allowed to use their own initiative . . . If they did so, the interviews would have to be examined very closely before it was decided to put them on the air. The basic criterion was that the people concerned should be making a statement of quite unusual interest or conveying information which it was not possible to obtain in any other way.

Later, on October 22, the Head of Talks and

On Tuesday morning a group of twenty middle aged men with right wing leanings will gather in London to decide how the BBC will tell you what's going on in the world next week. The deliberations of this weekly Editor News and Current Affairs (ENCA) meeting are filtered through the Beeb's lumbering bureaucracy as

Documentaries Radio (HTDR), George Fischer, reported his planned programme on the IRA: He emphasised that . . . it was not proposed that there should be any interviews with members of the IRA.

How to make a programme about someone without consulting them? On April 30 appeared this minute:

It was noted with surprise that "This Week" [the Thames TV programme that has an annoying habit of breaking the rules] on the previous evening had included a quite lengthy interview with David O'Connell.

Similar restrictions were imposed on interviews with Philip Agee, in fact on all mentions of the CIA.

Sandy Hope said that the DG had asked to be

kept informed before any substantial reference was made in programmes to the CIA. Later, DG said he wanted to know of any major proposals of this kind. He explained it was quite legitimate for the BBC to look critically at what happened to the CIA and why, but such programmes were liable to make comparisons between US and British experience which might touch on security questions , , , There was also discussion of the appearance of Philip Agee, formerly of the CIA, in an item on "Tonight" . . . Agee had not been asked why he felt that [he had] the right to decide what his country's position should be on specific issues. . .

Well, who has, in a democracy? This was on January 16, 10 months to the day before the Agee deportation was announced. The DG went on:

Agee's background seemed quite equivocal. The Los Angeles papers had recently reported that he had visited Cuba on several occasions. He was a person who should be treated with an appropriate scepticism.

As opposed, of course, to people who should not be treated with "an appropriate scepticism" After the deportation, the line hardened. On November 19

ENCA thought that Mr Agee had had a soft interview in a television news bulletin. Desmon Wilcox felt the same way about the "Tonight" interview . . . ENCA said he wished to be informed in advance of any more prospective interviews with Mr Agee.

Wilcox was Head of General Features Television (HGFTel). Interesting that the restrictions on Agee didn't apply to Hosenball. But they applied to other security matters. On June 4 Sandy Hope asked

if any member had heard of a projected television programme on internal security matters, including the D-notice system . . . CA to DG stressed that this was an area in which those responsible for programmes must be very watchiul.

As Sandy Hope doubtless knew perfectly well, it was a "Horizon" plan. This was just his little way of reminding programme-makers to watch out. On June 18 it was reported that the makers were "keeping the DG informed" on it.

The minutes show that relations with the police were always very cordial. On April 9 ENCA said that he and the DG recently had "a useful discussion with Sir Robert Mark on matters of mutual interest. That's all. Three weeks later Mark appointed a new head of public relations, Commander Peter Marshall.

Sir Robert wanted Commander Marshall to get to know BBC people and had suggested a short attachment for him to a senior member of members of the BBC staff in June. DG asked Sandy Hope to get in touch . . . to arrange details of this attachment.

Sadly, when on June 25 it was reported that Commander Marshall had asked for some BBC film of a political meeting for a possible prosecution (of a right-wing extremist) the BBC had to reply that they hadn't got any.

However, when a film on the Notting Hill Carnival was shown, the meeting was told (October 29)

it had been seen in advance by Sir Robert Mark, who had been quite happy with it.

The most significant change in stance which came out in 1976 was the DG's new line on the National Front. The previous DG, Sir Hugh Greene, had maintained that the BBC could not remain impartial between those who worked for good community relations, and those who

stirred up race hatred. This meant a specific attitude towards covering fascist parties. With the growth of the NF's electoral success (described as "amazing" in a "Nationwide" programme discussed on December 3) right-wing editors wanted to ditch the anti-racist commitment and provide the NF with the "neutral" coverage that would make them politically respectable. Curran supported this and recorded the new line in the minutes (equivalent to putting it in lights to watchful **BBC** executives).

DG said that if one braodcast about any party, one had to accept that its case might impress some voters: one had to let democracy work in this way. George Fischer, replying to a question from the DG, agreed that the National Front was not too dangerous to be allowed a free rein, at least while it adhered to the Parliamentary system: there was analogy to the IRA, which was openly wedded to violence . . . DG agreed ... that within the system of Parliamentary democracy the BBC must not single out any party or ideology for special treatment on the basis of a value judgement: in that respect his policy in relation to the National Front was different from that stated by his predecessor

Anxiety not to upset capital came out in a sensitive discussion on the economy on October 29. At that time, a worrying one for financiers, the pound was slipping badly, and stories about this were considered to make it worse.

ENCA said that at the present juncture stories about this country's currency needed careful handling . . . he was inclined, for the first time in his career, to suggest that they should always be checked first with the Treasury ... It would be wrong in the present circumstances to put out a major new story of which the Governme had no warning.

Much of the guidance offered by the ENCA minutes is negative; it takes the form of slapping the wrists of editors who have produced stories the meeting (or influential complainers) didn't like. There are dozens of examples.



"Here is the Nine O'Clock Garbage "

DG expressed disappointment with the edition of "The Money Programme" on January 9 which had considered the state of the Church of England's finances. The programme had not been inaccurate but had unfortunately tried to be funny about a serious subject without succeeding. He had already received several letters about it.

"Irreverent" was the word Curran was searching for on January 16. A week later

ENCA said that a Governor had been critical of the attention paid, in the reports of the inaugural flight of Concorde, to the noise monitoring by representatives of local authorities. He had not felt that that was the day on which to report such controversial matters. ENCA replied that the decision to do

so had been a most careful one but that it had been felt that it would have been dishonest to have omitted mention of this activity.

TV News

On April 30:

CA to DG reported that some Governors had felt that too much programme time had been given to the complaints from Alex Lyon MP about his removal from his Home Office post in the recent reorganisation of the Government. The Governors accepted that it was an interesting news story but felt that the treatment had been overdone.

Lyon, of course, had not been removed in a "government reorganisation". He had been sacked in a one-off job by Callaghan on the day after he became Prime Minister, because of his (Lyon's) soft attitude to black people. On May 14

ENCA reported the views of one Governor that George Davis had, on his release from prison, been almost deified in BBC bulletins: the Governor had been particularly critical of a Clifford Luton interview with Mrs Davis . . . DG said that this was the first instance of the effect produced by the Devlin report on identification procedures, and therefore a strong story. Successive instances of this kind would not justify as much attention.

Curran's sensitivity to corporate feelings came out again on June 25, when it was proposed to use the BBC's film of the thalidomide affair, following the partial lifting of the injunction against the Sunday Times.

DG said that such a programme was probably safe from a legal point of view, but was it fair, particularly to the Distillers Company, which had a rough ride in this respect? He said that consultation would be needed to decide whether the Distillers Company should not be offered a chance to present its case somewhere in the BBC's output.

On June 25 there was a rebuke for energy correspondent Michael Buerk for referring to the "ill-tempered rivalry" between state corporations concerned with energy.

DG doubted whether the phrase was substantiable or that Michael Buerk had been well advised to use it.

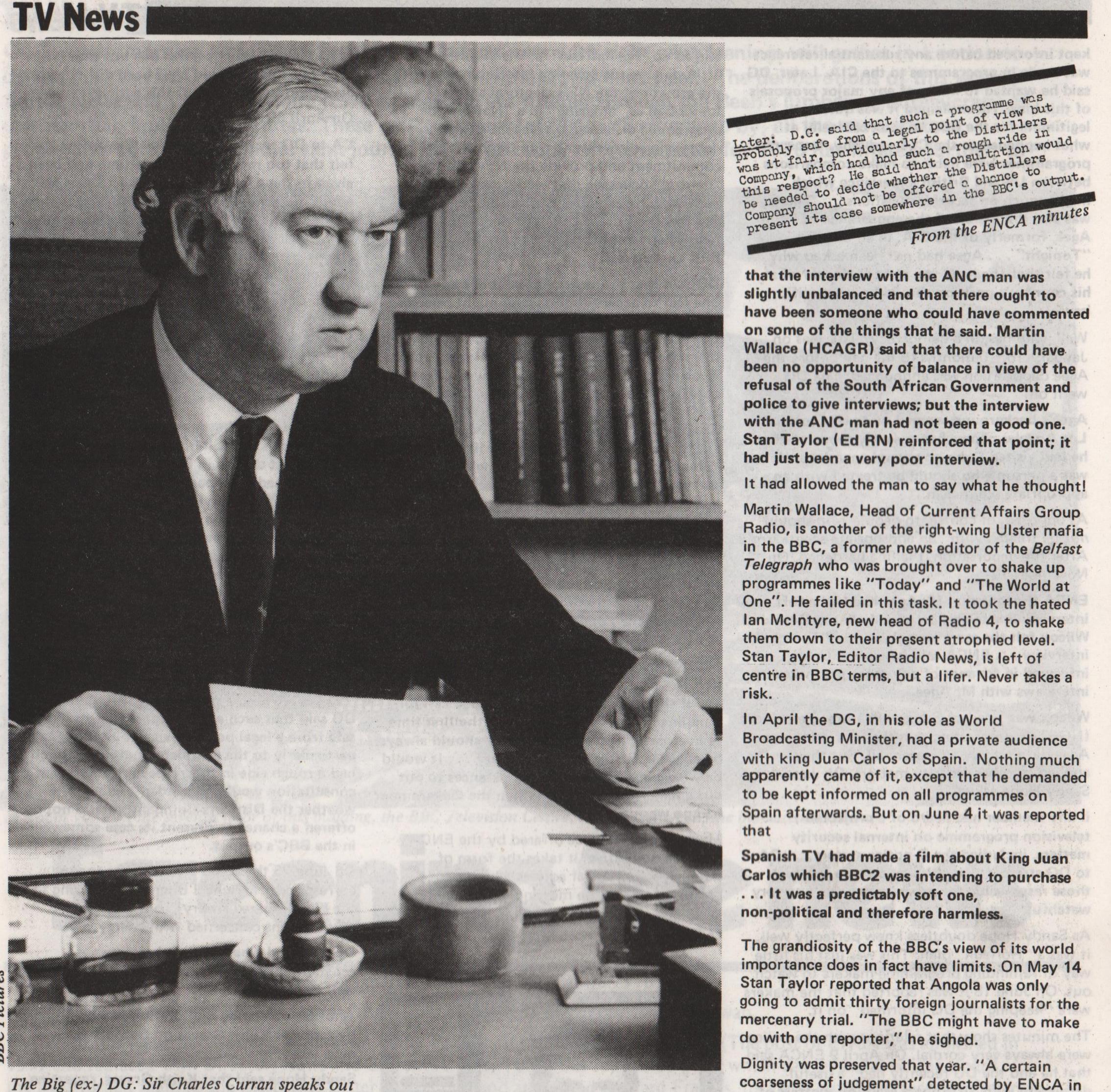
Another shattering indiscretion was committed by reporter Keith Graves on October 6. Two days later

Sandy Hope said that Keith Graves, reporting on the situation in Thailand following the military take-over there, had referred to "the eventual victory of the left-wing" in that country as "inevitable". Although he might well be right in that prophecy, it seemed to Sandy Hope to be an inappropriate statement for a reporter (as opposed, perhaps, to a correspondent) to make.

This extraordinary statement itself rests on the **BBC** distinction between reporters and correspondents. Only the latter are sufficiently imbued with the consensus position on a political issue to be trusted to comment on it. (Theoretically, under its charter, no-one on the BBC news staff can comment on anything.

The same discussion noted later that another reporter, Brian Barron (the one who talks like an Etonian parot), had been "more judicious" in covering the same story a day later. He had said that "the present action by the military in Thailand would prove of advantage to the left". Well, what the fuck's the difference?

There is more than a vestige of paternalism in the BBC's attitude to the rest of the world. The World Service is still well listened-to, but it is Continued on next page



possible that the electors of Italy may be able had been too much on Robert Mugabwe at the to make up their own minds, and would not need the protection so responsibly urged by the DG on May 14:

DG said that a Governor had pointed out that there should not be a too-ready assumption of a **Communist victory in the forthcoming Italian** General Election . . . The Communists were looking for a leftward coalition in a probable minority situation: their prospects should not be unfairly enhanced by a prior assumption of their success.

Can you imagine the BBC, which makes no distinction between parties contesting elections (remember?) saying that about the Christian Democrats? When there are no rival parties, Communists can be even more safely denigrated. On May 28 it was noted that it had been decided not to send anyone to "the so-called cultural congress in Romania". The nature of the congress was "clearly revealed by its full title of Political Education and Cultural Congress". Obviously something to be given a wide berth.

On Zimbabwe, yet another Governor (or could it be the same one?) had complained that there

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abortive Geneva conference. On December 3

EXSN agreed that there was a need to balance Mr Mugabwe's appearances with those of, say, Bishop Muzorewa. John Wilkinson doubted whether programmes generally had sufficiently reflected the differing attitudes within the African nationalist movements in Rhodesia, and thought that Mr Mugabwe's personal appearances might have got out of relative balance.

This sophisticate Wilkinson, who seemed to appreciate that all black lefties are not necessarily the same, was HPP(WS), Head of Productions and Planning World Service.

It's not just Governors who complain. And people who think that Mary Whitehouse is only worried about dirty things will be heartened to read that she was among "a number of listeners, including Rear-Admiral Morgan Giles MP", who complained of a "Today" transmission on Soweto (June 18).

In particular they had complained of the bias shown by an ANC spokesman on the programme. Sandy Hope said the DG thought

coarseness of judgement" detected by ENCA in



....brought to you by a gang of reactionaries....'

personality interviews, and reported by him in an April 2 discussion on an interview with Lord Snowdon, took a good frowning, and on May 28 the DG said he had assured the Governors that in following the great South African Smear story the BBC "was not behaving irresponsibly. It was as determined as ever to get its stories right and was not running after scoops.'

DG was right enough. Although on October 22

the meeting "considered present developments in a certain matter", the BBC, after a visit to the new DG by Jeremy Thorpe, threw its base scoop away, and now everyone else but the BBC is scooping up readers with revelations following the book produced by the two journalists it had originally hired.

Several peculiar narratives run through the minutes. One concerns Jimmy Young. On April 9 there was much vexing that, as well as presenting a consumer spot in his Radio 1 programme, JY was engaged on commercial advertising contracts. It was felt that the contracts should end. But the end result (May 28) was not to get him to drop his advertising. It was to drop the consumer spots.

There was much trouble with India, over the censorship of news under Ms Ghandi's state of emergency, and the BBC behaved with great circumspection, refusing to be drawn into returning its withdrawn corresopndent unless he had complete freedom to report. A relationship of some cordiality was eventually restored, and the meeting of April 30 was told that plans to run a programme on the drought in Bangladesh, which would have reflected badly on India, "were not now being followed up".

But the most extraordinary tale concerns the publication Bad News, a detailed analysis of TV coverage of industrial matters produced by the Media Group at Glasgow University. The ENCA group were reduced to fury. When you read these minutes, you find it hard to believe at first that such powerful men could behave with such paranoia. They began devising wild



".... that you just can't argue with "

schemes to discredit the authors-not just the authors, but all sociologists.

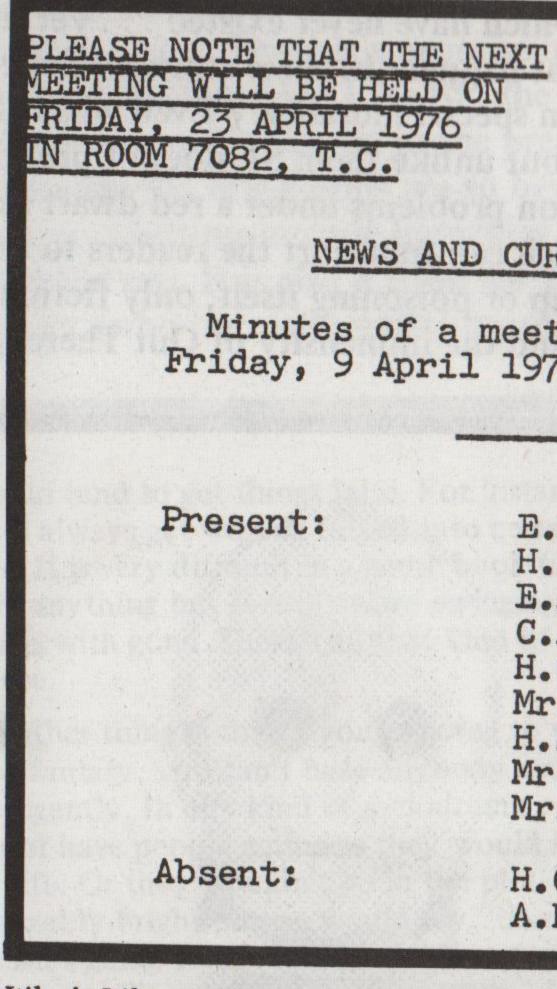
When the report first came out, DG said (January 16)

he did not object in principle to statistical analysis as a method of trying to estimate the extent of reporting on a particular subject. The trouble in this case was that [Brian] Winston and his colleagues had looked at the subject in such a prejudiced way.

Curran said he was sending a copy of the BBC's reply to the publication to "a Trades Unionist whom he had recently met in Birmingham and who seemed to have absorbed uncritically all the Winston Report arguments." That meeting was also told by CA to DG that "the TUC's chief press officer had indicated that it was in general not unhappy about its relations with the BBC".

In further discussion it was noted that Winston and [Paul] Walton were clearly being active in promoting their report and their propaganda was bound to fall on some fertile ground ... George Fischer said that academic investigations of the mass media now constituted a growth industry and it seemed that those involved felt that the usual academic standards could be disregarded.

The first response was to set up a Consultative



Who's Who at ENCA meetings

Body on Industrial Affairs. This was a real joke. Normal Willis, TUC deputy general secretary, was agreed as the "worker" representative, so that was all right; the TUC, of course, found the BBC's industrial coverage OK. The ENCA group then began a long series of meetings and discussions about getting employer and "third force" representatives. Can they really have felt that they were getting to the heart of industrial problems? Of course not; these blinkered men were showing that they had no idea of political realities at all.

The hard-liners gathered strength. On September 10 Alan Protheroe (Dep Ed Tel N) (deputy editor, television news), a former Territorial Army intelligence officer,

feared if there was not a firm BBC response, books like this one became elevated to the status of master works and sources of quotations for subsequent publications of this kind . . . ENCA admitted that the BBC had not found an effective way of dealing with this type of criticism.

There were moderate voices raised to the effect that the BBC should not be paranoid, and accept people's freedom to criticise. But at no point, in what must have been hours of discussion, was there ever any suggestion that the BBC might change its industrial coverage. The group felt inhibited by the inability of BBC executives to go public, and broadcast attacks on Bad News themselves, but they took crumbs of comfort from hostile reviews appearing in the right-wing press. The first positive suggestion came from the DG on September 24:

DG said there would be no sense in attacking Bad News in detail . . . he thought however that the ideology of sociologists was a subject which would repay a little study and hoped that it would be possible for a programme like "Analysis" to tackle it.

Deep panic had set in by November 12, when CA to DG reported that

Walton and his colleagues were touring the country and influencing academic and other opinion . . . Walton had alleged that television news had "a preferred view of society" which it imposed on the nation-without any thought to the beam in his own eye . . . CA to DG said that one BBC response would be to look in general at the sociological discipline and the ideology of activists [sic] in this field . . . Andrew Boyle

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TV News

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS MEETING

Minutes of a meeting held at 10.15 a.m. on Friday, 9 April 1976, in the Board Room, B.H.

E.N.C.A. (in the Chair), C.A. to D.G. H.C.A.G.R., H.P., Ed.Tel.N., Ed.R.N., E.X.S.N., Dep.H.C.A.G.Tel., H.T.D.R., C.A. to E.N.C.A., Man.Ed.N., H.P.P.(W.S.), H.C.A.M.P., H.J.T., H.Pers.A.N. Mr. John Vernon (Tel.O.Bs.), H.L.Int.R., H.S.C.A.U.R., C.A. (N. & C.A.) Soctland H.S.C.A.U.R., C.A. (N. & C.A.) Scotland, Mr. Michael Latham, News Editor (North East) Mr. Graham Clayton.

H.C.A.G.Tel., Dep.G.M.L.R., Political Editor, A.H.C.A.G.R.

thought that Bad News had not been sufficiently attacked when it was first issued . . . Desmond Wilcox felt it would be dangerous to launch a widespread attack on the discipline of sociology, which included some perfectly responsible practitioners. It should attack, where necessary, particular arguments and ... the standpoint from which they were presented. Michael Bunce repeated his view that the BBC should counter-attack spurious communicators and academics . . . DG said that the hands of BBC executives must be tied if they appeared in such programmes, in that explanation was acceptable but propaganda excluded. He agreed that the BBC could examine the aims and politics of sociology. CA to DG feared the gradual indoctrination effect of Bad News and Anthony Rendell thought that the BBC should write its own books on this subject, aimed at the universities.

The ENCA minutes don't just shed light on BBC bosses themselves: they expose the idiocies of many people and institutions they deal with. Tory politicians come off worst: on the one hand they were refusing to appear then, next week, they were turning round and complaining about getting inadequate coverage. The BBC actually keeps a computerised monitoring tally of MPs' appearances. Concern was expressed on November 12 by CA to DG that there was "a dangerous imbalance in television in favour of the Labour Party".

The minutes also show the South Korean government threatening not to admit future film crews because of a programme they didn't like, and the Home Office impeding interviews with ex-prisoners.



The Leveller Collective apologises in advance to the BBC if this article is "intemperate" or upsets the bourgeois consensus.

RatatatatatBlip INTRO PLEASE

Science Fiction is a genre of writing set in worlds which have never existed ... yet. It is sold, and possibly even read, like the other great genres of popular fiction, the Western, the Historical Romance, the American detective story, the English murder mystery. / Everything that happens in these stories is dependent on and aware of the rules of the game. There is no shorthand to convey the emotional crises and their meaning. There is a promise of a certain sort of ending and the upholding of a certain special morality. / Even when these things don't happen, the reader is struck by the absence. It's a deliberate effect. The rules are broken, long live the rules. Like SF, the other genres are set in worlds which never existed, but unlike them SF doesn't pretend that its worlds were ever real. It is a speculation about possibilities and alternatives. / So why, when there's so much going on in the present, do so many people get off on reading about irrigation problems under a red dwarf sun? Option 1: People look for the life-form furthest removed from their own and flee happily into it. Problems in the real worlds are so beyond the power of individuals to solve, that a fiction which can transport the readers to a less intractable reality is necessary if they are to allow themselves any hope. Option 2: When some perfectly real futures include humanity deliberately starving itself to death, blowing itself up or poisoning itself, only fiction is detached enough to look that reality in the face. / SF is the literature of Awful Warnings and Mechanical Marvels. It is also a form for pop philosophising about time, death, little green men and the immensity of Out There. / What follows is a discussion between Michael Moorcock, *Nigel Thomas* from *The Leveller*, and our computer (who normally writes most of the magazine).

Blip. ON PRESENT DATA THE MODERN NOVEL DEALING WITH THE ANGST OF BOURGEOIS MAN IS CATEGORISED AS GENRE FICTION. IT ALSO APPEALS TO A CLOSED CIRCLE OF READERS. IT IS TREATED AS THE DOMINANT PROSE ART FORM. ANSWER PLEASE.

Perhaps the bourgeois novel's readers, because of their position in society, don't feel so impotent and unable to affect their destiny. Their literature is the reading of an elite, which also includes the culture shamans and mind controllers.

Blip. HARD SCIENCE FICTION DEALS WITH THE CONSEQUENCES AND POSSIBILITIES OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT. A LARGE PROPORTION OF READERS ARE SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WHO MAY BE UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE SOME POWER OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR WORK.

The only power they have is to refuse to work in the direction ordered. And who needs an unemployed nuclear physicist? There is the matter of publicising apprehensions and turning them into political...

Blip. PAUSE THERE IS SOMEONE COMING THROUGH.

I remember years ago in an anarchist magazine, reading about how Heinlein was a great left-wing writer. Starship Troopers had been published then, which is one of the all-time militaristic, authoritarian pieces of fiction. I find that the fiction depresses me because authority figures are constantly emerging in one form or another. Most SF, especially hard American SF, is very reactionary.

To call it fascist would just be simple-minded. But there's the typical SF story of the rebel who is then converted, which also tends to happen in John Wayne westerns, and finally convinced that the system is actually working OK. He has just been tested for some larger purpose. I find it very corrupt.

Blip. YOU MICHAEL MOORCOCK ARE ONE OF THE LEADING BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS. YOUR BOOKS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE AND YOU HAVE A LARGE FOLLOWING AMONG SF READERS. YOUR NAME ON THE COVER IS USUALLY LARGER AND ABOVE THE TITLE. EXPLAIN.

Be fair. Most of what Moorcock has written has been fantasy or speculative and experimental writing. Gods and swords and magic and jokes. We were talking about the hard techno-porn SF which stresses the scientific points.

Blip. MAGIC IS JUST SCIENCE IN A CULTURE WHICH DOESN'T UNDERSTAND IT. THE DIFFERENCE IS ONLY IN THE QUALITY OF BELIEF IN IT. ANSWER.

The reason I chose to write fantasy was that it has a more humane basis. You could write more about characters. By and large SF isn't much about people. It makes emblems of people. The genre tends to squeeze out all the ordinary human elements.

And the other original reason I had for writing fantasy was that it was like, in those days, going into rock and roll. There wasn't any attention paid to it. You didn't get self-conscious. You felt free to develop much more because there weren't academies writing about it, which there are not of course. It was a popular form.

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The thing I don't like about Science Fiction is that there are usually no human beings in it. And most of the people in the SF business are weird in that respect. I mean, they are nearly all paranoid and they see the whole world in emblematic terms and I don't like emblematic fiction.

Blip. FANTASY IS AN EMBLEMATIC FICTION.

Oh yeah, you're using an awful lot of it. What I find I can do more, it's almost monotonous in my stuff, the message at the end. Down with Gods and up with people comes at the end of every book. The Gods always get trashed . . . in the end.

Yet fantasy shares with westerns this myth that there is a place where people are wholly self-sufficient. They walk into the saloon or the Dark Vale of the Red Tower and shout out "I'm Chuck from Texas, what are you going to do about it?"

Blip. IT IS CHARACTERISTIC THAT RESOLUTION IS OBTAINED BY CAUSING PHYSICAL HARM TO SOMEONE ELSE.

I don't say that fantasy as a genre is any less disturbing to me. I find all the barbarian hero books rather disturbing. I was on a panel in America last year, I think there were five or six of us on this panel talking about sword and sorcery, and there were all these, again, somewhat repressed chaps sitting there and I said that I thought a lot of the appeal of that kind of fiction for me was that you're dealing with an innocent. Essentially the character was an innocent in a malevolent world. And they all started to laugh: "Her her her. I don't know about Mike Moorcock, but I'm certainly not innocent, haw, haw, maw."



And one of them said: "Where else can you fantasise about getting a man around the throat with one arm and slipping a knife between the third and fourth rib with the other. And I thought, well all you need to do is join the Marines. They're still doing it there, training them to do it. They were yearning for a simpler world and in fact it still exists.

Yet in the end the fantasy of fantasy is usually that problems can be solved by fighting.

The genre will tend to force the writer into its own framework. Into saying something which isn't necessarily what he the writer wants to say. The reason I tried to use New Worlds to form new conventions, was because of that. I found that if I tried to write something that was for the individual in a terrible world, I couldn't because the genre twisted it.

Fantasy was much easier because you had all the gods set up, and you got good gods and bad gods, and at the end of the cycle you got the good gods trashed as well as the bad gods.

The simple little moral at the end every time is that it's up to man to do it for himself.

Blip. THE POINT IS STILL NOT ANSWERED. YOU ARE STILL OFFERING THE FALSE CATHARSIS OF SOLVING PROBLEMS BY TRASHING YOUR ENEMIES.

I don't think you're saying that finally. There are ways of balancing a genre. A good western will do it and leave you not feeling miserable. What a good genre work will do is to have all that happening, but keep some area of realism so that it's evident you're telling a fable. You can root it in some form of reality to make the fable clear, if you have the good guys winning in a particular way. But if you just have a hairy barbarian who kills everybody and becomes king, that is a different kind of fantasy altogether. That's not the use of genre that I'm happy with. It's the simple-minded use of a genre, because it is pure escapism. But an awful lot of people get off on it. They would like to be king.

You do tend to get things false. For instance, you'll always get women forced into certain roles. It is very difficult in a genre book to have them anything but sort of sword-swinging dykes or pals with guns. There's all that kind of thing to face.

The other thing is that if you're going to write a good fantasy, you can't have anybody acting intelligently. In any kind of melodrama you cannot have people acting as they would in real life. Or they wouldn't be in the plot. Any reasonably bright person would say "here, no, this isn't going to work. I wouldn't trust him for a second".

In a romance, which I think is the best way of describing that kind of genre fiction, as opposed to the realistic Margaret Drabnle genre, you must have people acting in a symbolic way, 'cos like, they're all in an opera. Basically, your character has to be, in terms of experience if not in brains or anything else, about fourteen years old. It doesn't matter what age you give him, he is about fourteen years old.

That's part of the appeal of reading the stuff too. I mean I've just finished reading Susan Cooper's children's sequence which is very good. There the use she makes of it is the bad guys are paki-bashers. It's not piously done, but she constantly equates unimaginative evil with real social things that are going on, and as a result you find it very palatable kind of genre fiction. You have a bunch of kids and they have to fight the Dark Forces and they win by being honest, noble and true and looking on it with a steady eye. It's a little bit English middle-class patronising, but it's better than

middle-class patronising, the National Front.

So far it sounds as if there's nothing more to fantasy, which is the boom area of speculative fiction, than crude escapism with an individualist moral at the end, that, depending on the writer can either feed the darker adolescent dreams of the audience, or ram home the message that people must make, and remake their own lives. Yet there must be come connection between the fashions in this sort of literature and what is going on in the world the readers live in.

Well I once said that as society disintegrates I get richer.

Blip. ANOTHER OF THE MANY HUMAN ATTEMPTS TO CREATE FALSE CERTAINTIES TO CLING TO LIKE A CHILD'S CUDDLY RAG.

It is possible, as Moorcock has done, with the Jerry Cornelius books for instance, to talk more seriously to an audience than would be possible if the medium was not a genre which the reader is used to, has trained him/herself to read, and to which he/she is loyal enough to persevere through the incomprehension barrier.

In a way fantasy is a cheap kind of poetry. It's essentially an imagist fiction anyway. You're selling images and if they're good then your readers will buy those books . . . It's like Gothic novel which is dependent on what you might call visual effects. In fantasy you can actually invent anything you like. I'm an intellectual writer. I do plan every symbol. Every image has to reinforce the central metaphor. It requires discipline. The more that you can allow to happen, the more you've got to make sure that your central structure is as tight as possible. You have special tensions in there, otherwise the whole thing just falls apart and becomes a series of pictures with nothing marrying them.

Every word in the Cornelius books is picked to contribute centrally to the theme. The Jerry Cornelius novels are in fact, art fiction. There's not much doubt about it. They are very very difficult books in a lot of ways. But the readers who started reading my fantasy will cheerfully go onto the Cornelius books. But you do have to win the respect of your readership before you can start doing a lot of things that you might want to do.

As someone said to me: "You've been getting away with it for years. You've been writing minority interest books for a popular market." It's true. I am selling to kids, and the letters I get are, if you like, illiterate. That is they have no formalised way of saying what they want to say. But they like the books. Every time that happens I feel that I have won a victory ... for myself, I mean. It means I can write what I want, and as hard as I want. A lot of readers won't want it and that isn't what they're reading if for. But a lot will say: "All right, I enjoyed that, so I'll get into this." Because you do have to offer people substance.

I've tried to bridge the difference between the intellectual novel—The Novel—and popular fiction. I don't think there should be any difference. If I could write for an audience as large as Dickens had, give the audience what Dickens did, then I could have a deserved—well income part from anything else—but I would be doing what I'd always set out.

I'm not an educated chap. I left school at fifteen and all that, I began by reading popular fiction, then by chance I became editor of *Tarzan*, and my experience of being an editor of popular fiction has always been that you can give people a lot more than you think. I'm not being condescending, you can respect what the reader can take much more, especially in science fiction.

I feel that the only way I can justify my ludicrous way of earning a living-putting little black dots on pieces of paper, is if there is some point to it, some substance. If I can actually humanise people's attitudes to one another.

All the same, Moorcock is not continuing to churn out the fantasies (he was famous for his speed, once wrote a book in three days and is reported to have discontinued one series after he had, for the first time, read one of them). He moves on, taking with him the name which publishers will no doubt continue to display way above the title, especially if his books get heavier.

I suppose I'm a sort of liberal marxist, or even an anarchist. My last great hero is Nestor Makhno of the Ukraine who I shall be writing about some more. He was responsible for the Ukrainian revolution. The Bolsheviks wanted him to work for them and he said: "Fuck you", so he's now a villain in all Soviet reports. He comes out as a sort of crazed nihilist ...

Blip. PAUSE. THERE'S A PLUG FOR THE NEXT PROJECT. NOW ENDIT.

Well time has run out, so it's goodbye from Michael Moorcock, bearded and becloaked denizen of sixties Notting Hill Gate, verbal adviser to Hawkwind and speculative writer.

Goodbye.

Blip. HUMANS. SIGH. Ratatatatat



Fleet Street on the brink

IT'S a belief of the left that the press is a powerful influence on the way people think. It's a belief shared with professional politicians, moral reformers and PR menall people who desperately want to dominate the popular imagination. They think the press has this ability and they react with jealousy. With half their minds they want to pull the press down, with the rest they calculate secretly how best it can be used to further their own ambitions to tell people what to do and how to think.

There are some truths and more errors in this position, but the first fact is that it exists, and with half the world and his mate greedily jostling to stick their oar in it makes industrial relations in the print even more difficult than they might be. For a start, the people involved find it difficult to clear their heads of what everyone else is saying and rely entirely on their own experience, which is, ironically, exactly the sort of effect the press has on other unions and other people's lives.

All attempts to actually prove that the press has a great influence on what people think have shown that it does not. Look at the way all papers condemn the National Front as violently racist. Still Martin Webster rolls up for any journalist who wants to talk to him and then condemn him. Is he mad? Has he some nazi s/m compulsion to be an Aunt Sally? No, Webster knows that out there on the other side of the journalist's liberal horror is someone who reads "Violent racism-I could do with a bit of that".

What the press does do is write things into the agenda. People hold opinions about a lot of things they have never experienced directly, so their only material is the experience passed second-hand through the media-but this is still judged by the light of home-grown prejudices. There are people supporting the neo-fascists in Page 20 The Leveller January 1978

quiet semi-rural towns whose only direct experience of an ethnically-different immigrant is the person in the Chinese chippie, yet they somehow feel the fear of being swamped by alien hordes which is at the root of fascist growth. The press is responsible for that. Not because of what is has said about colour or immigration, necessarily, but by accepting from the start the fascist premise that colour and immigration are problems, and discussing them in terms of solutions.

The state of the press, and particularly the role of the print unions, has suffered from exactly this sort of distortion. Most people would agree, if they bother to think about it at all, with these statements: Fleet Street is in trouble; the cause is the unions, especially their opposition to new technology and their insistence on overmanning; the closed shop for journalists is an issue which involves freedom of the press.

Most people might agree but that doesn't mean they are right. Partly by deliberate propaganda and partly by falsification through simplification, these opinions have been turned into indigestible facts which dominate every move and tactic within the industry.

The first two points are tied up in the nature of the industry itself, all three are only a little part of one question, which is how the people who work within the industry are going to come to terms with the changes in organisation produced by changes in technology.

The industry's product is produced, distributed sold and thrown away, all within 24 hours. This gives the unions enormous power. Stop distribution for five hours and the whole paper is lost. Stop the machines for an hour and the West Country edition is lost. Hold a half-hour journalists' union meeting at the right time and you miss the train for the North, and the

vandrivers at the other end wait around for an extra hour and they have to be paid more. Any sort of disruptive action is almost instantly costing the company money.

Then the work itself is highly skilled. The process of taking a piece of writing and turning it into small pieces of lead alloy and then assembling them into a frame and then taking a flat relief impression and turning that into a cylindrical one does not come naturally.

The craft unions have a long history of organisation. The word chapel, used in the print for the house-level union organisation, is said to date back to Caxton's first print shop in the precincts of Westminster Abbey. So not only are the unions strong, but the diversity of skills required to produce a paper means that the plug can be pulled out in any one of a dozen places.

This is half the reason why so many central London printworkers are highly paid. The other half is that newspapers are a volatile industry which is still run along old-fashioned lines of cut-throat competition. There is no faster way of losing money than running a paper, but equally there is no faster way of making an awful lot of it. The wages are so high because when the papers were at their most profitable, the proprietors preferred to buy off any threat of trouble rather than divert for a moment the golden river which was flowing into their pockets.

The much-talked-about new technology is two things. Firstly, it is a development which is going to do away with all the little bits of metal currently used, and with the cumbersome Victorian machinery which produces them. It is an inevitable change, just as the end of the quill was inevitable once the steel nib was invented, and the only objections to it are nostalgic.

Secondly, because it places a computer between the keyboard stroke and the printing plate, it does away with a whole range of skills, practices and people. Ideally, from the management's point of view, it takes the linotype operators and case-hands and compositors, and replaces them by a typist.

This would certainly reduce the number of jobs available, but computers are expensive and experience shows that they usually end up requiring more human attendants than their designers claim. Much more important for managements, this technology effectively deskills the most complex part of their production process. Newspaper managements tend to be hawkish, so you can imagine how their eyes light up at the prospect of unlimited scab labour, only a phone call to Brook Street Bureau away.

Overmanning is a different matter, although the issues have been blurred to make it seem that it is a problem bound up with the method of production. It is not a question of replacing a labour-intensive process with one less so; it is breaking the power of the unions, to do away with manning agreements they have won.

So obsessed have managements become with crocking the unions that they have summoned up this dream of a system where a journalist types directly into a computer, which hums peacefully to itself, watched over by a whitecoated non-unionised engineer, and then spews out the paper at the other end. Journalists are a docile and relatively trouble-free lot, and they don't frighten the managements at all.

One of the reasons for non-printers to oppose new technology plans is that introduced without careful consideration of the manning and organisation of the new systems, they will mean a great reduction in the quality of the papers. People will have to do too many jobs to the words at once, the process of checking and revising becomes more difficult, and the system will tend to encourage long, chronological, literal (false-objective) stories.

If this fight is to have any success then all the unions in the industry must co-operate. The craft (apprenticeship-served) unions nearly lost out on the last-but-one technology revolution, the steam driven rotary press in the 1860s. They ignored the development until non-craft men had won most of the jobs on the new machines. By a last-minute deal they secured the managing of the presses, although the minding is still a non-craft job. This time the unions must face together a problem that is common to all. Inter-union rivalry means disaster for the unions that lose jobs and members-and in the end disaster for the union that has committed its members to doing the wrong work in the wrong way.

And if there is to be any hope of all unions co-operating in a print industry using new technology, the National Union of Journalists must seek guaranteed 100 per cent membership in their chapels. (This is slightly different from the closed shop in that nonmembership doesn't prevent anyone from getting a job in the industry, nor does it give the unions the power to veto an editor's hiring, but it does mean that anyone who gets taken on must apply for membership.) The other unions already have this. The NUJ cannot co-operate with them unless it can deliver the goods-that is, the journalists.

This is the closed shop for journalists, currently touring the provinces as the greatest threat to free speech since Stalin. Yet it's nothing to do with controlling the output of the papers; it's a need forced upon journalists as wage-earning

participants in a large industry which is changing the way it turns out its product. The fact that this product feeds the fantasies of politicians and preachers, and is alleged to do the same for millions of others, is neither here nor there.

The new technology is going to change the face of the industry in more ways than one. At the least serious level, it will finally mean the end of those cluttered brown-and-dust offices and oiland-grime composing rooms. Human beings put up with them, but computers will just stop work. And there won't be any chapel officials to persuade them back into operation for an extra five minutes for tea either.

More seriously, it is going to blur all the distinctions about who does what jobs, what they should be called and which union will represent them.

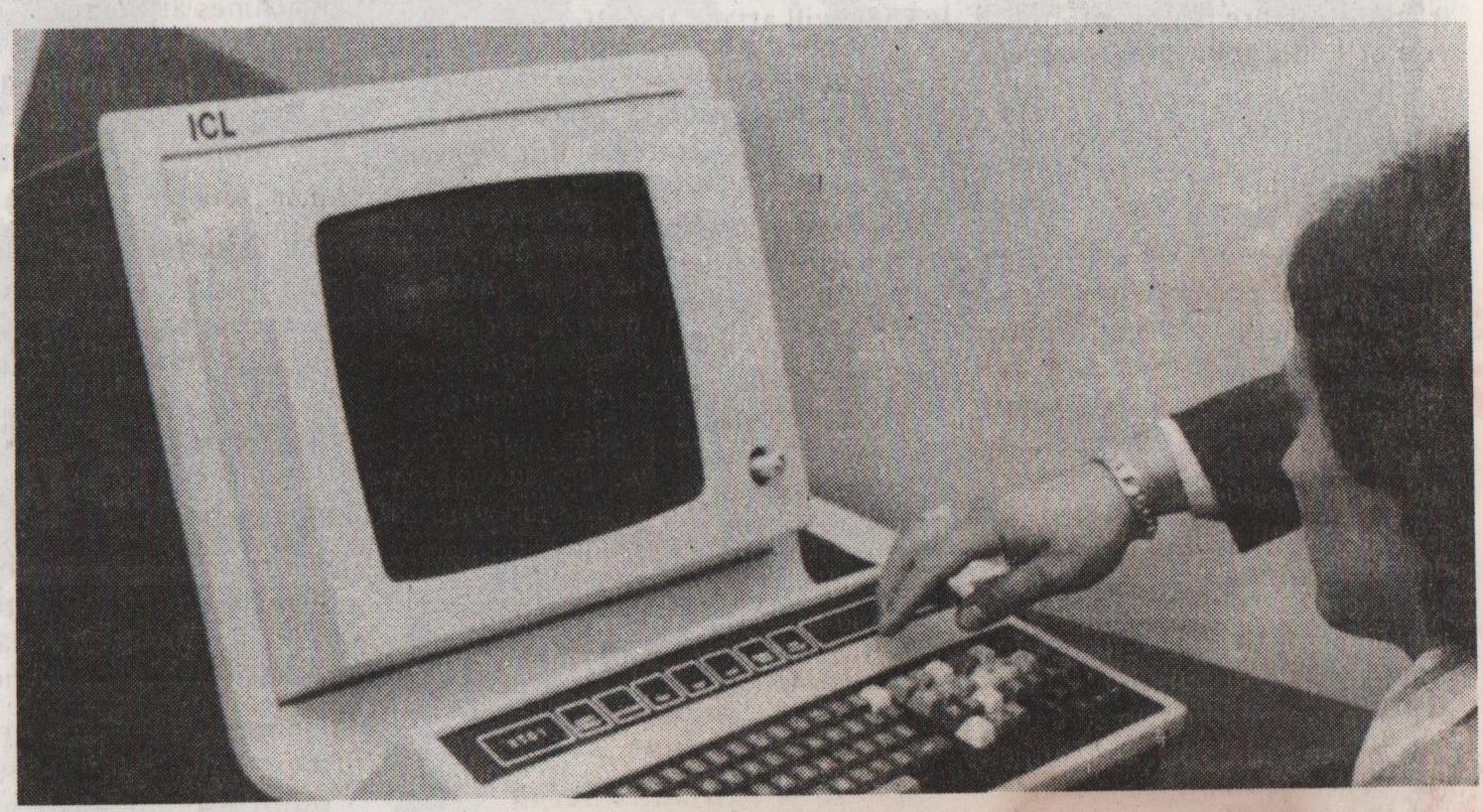
Managements would argue that distinctions based on skills which are no longer needed have written themselves out of history and can be ditched along with the old machinery. But the people who find themselves trapped by the history of their union are still members of the industry and there is no sensible reason why a technological change should wipe them out of its future.

There are many problems of demarcation, but where journalists are concerned the most important centres on a simple one-fingered action and the distinction between themselves and the National Graphical Association (NGA) The action is the keystroke. A journalist does it to a typewriter and produces his copy. An NGA man does it to a keyboard attached to tha elegant monstrosity the linotype machine, and casts the letter in metal.

So far, no problem. A linotype machine is exactly that; a machine, with oily cogs that go round and round, and exposed moving parts. It even looks dangerous. Every journalist knows that touching one of those is none of his business. A typewriter is, well, a typewriter.

But supposing he was faced with an electric typewriter keyboard. The difference between operating that to produce written text (either on paper or on a TV screen) and setting in motion a process which eventually coughs out a complete printing plate in another part of the building, is pretty hard to keep clear. After all, a sub editor already writes or types coded instructions to the printer on each piece of copy he handles, so why not just change the code and address your remarks to the machine?

It's because it is very difficult for a reporter or sub editor to do their job properly directly into



The New Technology: so neat, clean, and capital-intensive

a computer store. The checking, the style, and perhaps most important, the cutting which is often necessary to fit a story into a page, all suffer. As the art stands at the moment, a computer terminal is a crude, blunt instrument compared to a journalist with eight pieces of paper and a biro.

Managements show great reluctance to discuss the new technology they intend to introduce with the unions they will ask to operate it. They begin consultations only after the major decisions about the new system have been taken. This is why the unions are forced to take a critical look at the new system, at such a late stage. It is presented as obstinate refusal to get up to date. In fact it is the product of management's refusal to consult with the people whose lives they are proposing to change.

If both the NGA and the NUJ are going to look after their members' interests properly in the single matter of keyboarding, they must work together. They must decide between themselves who is to do what jobs. Obviously this is not possible if there is a third force of displaced persons wandering around the office, unaware of what is going on beyond their own personal interests and willing to do any job that management asks provided it doesn't affect their dignity. This is why the closed shop is needed. To enable unions effectively to define the area of their members' work- and to enforce that definition.

A few people will be offended, but they will not 'be hurt. A larger number are opposed politically to anything which strengthens the power of the unions to restrict the right of a few to 'succeed' at the expense of the 'failures'. In this case the failures could turn out to be an entire union membership. Most serious opposition comes from the Institute of Journalists, a non-TUC body which is opposed to trade unionism in journalism and has been instrumental, along with the employers, in raising the false banner of freedom of speech to rally the opponents of what is a straightforward trade union demand.

Interestingly, the proposed clause in the Press Charter which guaranteed a journalist's right to follow his conscience was strongly opposed by the employers' organisation. They may flatter their employees by talking about the importance of the individual journalist, but they don't swallow their own propaganda. Newspapers are a commodity to be marketed as economically as possible, and if they could be deskilled even further and journalists dispensed with without harming sales or advertising revenue, then just watch the rush.

Nigel Thomas



Did you know that 75 percent of journalists on the Daily Express were socialists? I do; I have been told so by an Express reporter, himself an active member of his Constituency Labour Party GMC. This statistic (and the new editor of the rag is allegedly among them) proved, he said, that what the left says about the *Express* being so reactionary just can't be true.

This is the standard attitude in Fleet Street, where contradictions between what the hacks may claim to be, and what they write, cannot be understood, let alone debated. For in their work all journalists follow the well-known "objectivity" rule, under which their politics are irrelevant: everyone writes the same story, denuded of ideological loading, a straight factual account. (Of course, most of them do write the same story . . . that's the point.) But although everyone else in the world knows that there is no such thing as value-free reporting, the hacks have to hang on to this belief. If they didn't, if they took their blinkers off, the sensitive ones at least would see their whole reason for existence crumbling.

A point often overlooked in left attacks on the bourgeois press is that few reporters are screaming racist, sexist fanatics. And what they write is not subjected to a systematic censorship; no iron laws of distortion are imposed on them. It is much subtler than that, and much more haphazard.

Decisions on how they angle their stories are made at least semi-consciously by reporters themselves. They choose to adjust to the ideology in their own self-interest: for the job satisfaction, for their careers, for their commitment to communicating, which is genuine, and for the consolation of little victories.

By and large, journalists are not stupid; they are not insensitive, nor reactionary. The job attracts radical, enquiring, lively, rebellious, individualistic, sceptical people. And media bosses seek them: the friskiest colts make the best racehorses, properly trained. The taming process turns scepticism into cynicism. Journalists who think their work is apolitical, are really anti-political. They will attack the NF like you or I, and then turn round and as sharply attack you and me.

Journalists enter what they like to call their profession through an apprentice scheme. Being professional, it's called indentures, but it's the same. Although its main functions are to restrict entry, and to exploit trainees by working them hard for scandalous apprentice rates, the scheme has important ideological effects. Cub journalists are absorbed into a career structure in which trouble-making holds them back, and they are taught the terms of their trade: what their readers are said to want to know.

As a textbook used on training courses has it: "News values depend on readers and what they want to read or can be persuaded to read. The bulk of readers of the bulk of newspapers are people who left school at 14 or 15. Their primary interest is in people and the doings of people; they are not so much interested in abstract concepts . . . Readers are interested in how the news affects them and their children, and how it affects other people. They readily identify themselves with people in trouble, with people engaged in controversy, with people at the centre of great events." (Harris and Spark, Practical Newspaper Reporting,)

Forget that this omits a phrase "... or have no alternative but to read . . . "; that there might be other things to read about apart from Page 22 The Leveller January 1978

"people" and "abstract concepts"; or that even working class people might be interested in "abstract concepts" (even socialism!). This paragraph contains the chunkiest definition of what's really behind "objective news values" that you could find.

So, in a dispute involving, say, public service workers, readers will "want to know" about the power cuts, fire risks, overflowing dustbins or uncollected taxes that "affect them". They will "not want" to read about the "abstract concepts" like workers' frustration at intransigent employers or union bureaucrats. They "want" to read about the glamorous lifestyles of "people" like Sir James Goldsmith, but not about the profit margins on the standardised food his workers make, about the redundancies that follow his asset-stripping, or the loss to the country from the complicated share deals between his British and French companies.

Extended overseas, the theory adapts the individual to the national interest. So what people want to know about the Greek general election is how the outcome affects NATO's eastern flank (how it affects Britain, equals "them"), not about the issues that were actually more important to the Greeks. In Southern Africa, the lives of their kith and kin are naturally more interesting than the "abstract concepts" that drive the liberation forces.

Journalists do not consciously suppress, censor or distort news. They simply don't write what they think people don't want to know. When working on a story, they like to see themselves as deputies for the person in the street; they are asking questions on behalf of the readers.

This is of absolute importance for capitalism, whose ideology allows everybody to pursue their individual interests, but not those of the class. The""housewife" can read of rising supermarket prices, but not about the profiteering behind them, or how the living standards of the whole working class are affected by them.

Of course, all this is familiar enough. NALGO calculated that, out of 15,000 words printed on a dispute involving its members, 500 were on its origins. And in the more progressive university departments up and down the land, researchers are sitting with stopwatches and video machines at the ready to time the TV bulletins to give to sneering at workers or smarming at their bosses. But they never get inside journalists' heads. (The best attempt was made by the unnamed researcher-Penelope-working for the Glasgow Media Group; significantly, though they were the most important part of the book Bad News, her observations were treated as an entertaining irrelevance.)

The assumption of much of this kind of research seems to be that distortion is systematically planned by a conspiracy of editors, sub-editors and reporters, with advertisers and the state intervening when necessary. This is not true.

Self-censorship is what happens in the British media. Most reporters learn to do it without thinking. Not quite all though: Jonathan Dimbleby, for one, wrote recently in Time Out that the TV reporter is expected to be "an electronic identikit man, no longer a person but an impersonal voice stating indubitable facts (selected impartially) in the objective language of the neutral observer. This improbable being, thus morally and intellectually emasculated, is supposed to have unique access to reality, and hence to the truth."

Ignore the sexism; even from the luxury of working for This Week, now the most radical current affairs programme, this is apt and courageous. But it is a long way from the seedy demi-monde of the ordinary newspaper hack. This poor bastard, such an unworthy standard-bearer

for the ruling class, has to bear the greatest strain in the vital task of selecting the material for the propaganda machine.

Reporters work under great pressures, and these make for the simplification of issues that causes distortion:

Time:

Stories are always produced in a great hurry. On a daily paper, they are often composed on the telephone, dictated to a copytaker, made up as they go along.

This leads on to non-understanding. In the short time available, only a simple outline of an issue can be grasped. Journalists are expected to become instant experts. In any case, readers want everything to be simplified ad absurdum, don't they? In fact, ignorance of a subject is considered by most news editors to be a positive qualification. Especially if the reporter is known as a bit of a lefty, s/he will not be given the assignments where political "bias" is possible ("bias" meaning divergence from the bourgeois consensus position).

When I was working on the Birmingham Evening Mail in 1968, there was a student sit-in at Birmingham University. The paper had a university correspondent, recently hired by the editor, to the annoyance of the news editor, a man whose anti-intellectualism rivalled Alf Garnett's. When the students voted to occupy, the news editor ordered the correspondent, who had been following the build-up closely, back to the office, to write a "background feature". This duly appeared, on page 19, or somewhere. The front page "splash", written by two of the paper's most reactionary hacks, despatched to the university to take over, was headlined: "Blonde fights off student thugs". Apparently, a woman working on the university switchboard, who happened to have fair hair, had refused to leave when the students came to close it down, and she had been lifted physically from her chair. Undoubtedly it was an unpleasant little scene, but it was what the paper wanted to blow up-not the issues involved in the sit-in. It was the two reporters' vicious ignorance that qualified them for the assignment.

Competition:

London journalists, in particular, work most of the time with a pack of others. So they compete for the best story? Not at all. As with the Marshallian theory of perfect competition, the effect is restrictive. They compare notes, and all write the same.

Habit:

However much reporters may dislike what they have to do, they learn the futility of protest. The sausage machine that processes the story (newsdesk, sub-editors, chief sub, assistant editor or even editor) grants them no say in how it is finally shaped. The people who get promoted are those who have towed the line. They then take decisions that restrict the others. Wonderful system.



LEAD STOLL +++ GAR WITH AND ANY LEADER +++ SUUL +++ SUUL AND AND ANY

Outside influence:

Journalists like drink (oh yes; there is a macho thing about how much they can drink and still work. Some cannot work without it, and they are often considered the best. The cliches flow easier. Thinking things out doesn't). Institutions that want coverage know this well enough. In a Fleet Street office the criterion for a desirable assignment can often be the lavishness of the hospitality on offer at a press conference. Reporters always say they are not influenced by this. If so, why do companies do it?

Isolation:

Journalists tend to stick together, socially. They have few friends outside their own miserable world, which they regard as the acme of sophistication. And senior journalists on morning papers never even see daylight. These men (invariably), night editors, chief sub-editors, spend their working lives cooped up in offices at night. They don't even see TV. They have no idea of contemporary tastes even in entertainment. That's why, on a trivial level, they attach such importance in news stories to people like Burton and Taylor, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Dorothy Squires, and so on, who don't even exist as far as most people are concerned apart from as "personalities". On a serious level, that's partly why they have no idea of poltiics. All they ever read is what they and their colleagues on other papers tell people to write. This they then call "public opinion".

For you will read about the working class in the popular papers. The Mirror and Sun will tell you that "the workers won't stand for this". Of course, they are telling the workers what not to stand for. We don't have to take this use of language very seriously.

Nowhere is the discrepancy between journalists' views, and their work, more ridiculous than in these opinionated articles, "think pieces", leaders, "controversial" columns (none of which, incidentally, other journalists read). The notion of "controversy" is totally artificial. Since "news" coverage is supposedly de-politicised, the "controversial" writers have to construct their own, which are laughably off-beam, with no relationship to the real political world.

And nowhere is this discrepancy more clear than in journalists' own trade union attitudes. Many, of course, cling to their "professionalism" and join the scab Institute of Journalists. But the rank and file in the NUJ are becoming increasingly militant, though, like the workers they write for, few can see the connection between their own struggles and those of others. Sometimes the most reactionary are the most militant: Fleet Street has seen few more stirring sights than that of Blake Baker, rabid industrial correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, whose writings on his own union have brought him close to being slung out, turning away newsprint lorries on the picket line.

Tim Gopsill

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In intelligence work, every piece of information is graded according to source, importance and reliability. A little intelligence work with newspapers can tell you a lot about what you're reading: where the information came from, and how reliable it is.

In most articles the informants, when the reporter has spoken to them, are named. In some anonymous "sources" are quoted, in others, particularly political stories, no sources are mentioned at all.

It is a rule that absurd institutions, the Parliamentary Lobby, that all information given is

"non-attributable". In theory, the Lobby doesn't even exist, and nor do conversations that correpondents may have with ministers. But when they do, stories just state the plans and opinions of the ministers as if they were plain fact. It's therefore hard to tell whether it is a senior minister or just the journalist sounding off.

When a story says "Whitehall sources" that means top civil servants, who also cannot, according to the system, be identified, ever.

But they are likely to be reliable. Likewise "reliable sources" are just that-they are just people who can't be named, in whatever circumstances.

Foreign stories often quote "diplomatic sources". They will be the result of briefings at the Foreign Office, or, if from abroad, at the local embassy. "Western sources" usually means "American" and, again abroad, could well be CIA.

A point to remember is that newspaper lawyers, if not always newspaper writers, are very timid. They won't let pass anything, especially concerning the state, unless they are sure it "stands up". It's therefore a safe bet that with a sensational story, based on "sources", the paper knows a good deal more than it can print.

Foreign correspondents are particularly restricted in what they can print. In Argentina, for instance, journalists who report critically on the military regime get deported or threatened with assassination by the far-right AAA. News agencies like Reuter and UPI, which need to stay in business there, will be very tame in what they send out.

Newspapers have limited resources so one reporter will cover half a contintent—or may be a "stringer", writing for more than one newspaper. Entry to newsworthy areas is often restricted. A lot of the early reports of the Somali-Ethiopian war were written from Kenya. A lot of the Guardian coverage of Latin America and the Caribbean is more analysis than news, written by people who rarely

visit the continent. Their stories are written from agency reports, local papers for the area and other source sources.

Most Third World news agencies are an extension of the state so tend to be less reliable on events but good at articulating a government's position on a major issue.

You have to follow the by-lines on stories so that after a while you can build up a composite picture of the prejudices, politics and reliability of various writers. Correspondents close to major areas like Defence and the police often end up representing the interests of their subjects because they rely on them for most of their information.

When a paper has run something accusative about an individual or organisation, be wary of denials. There is rule in the British Bosses' Book of Etiquette (unwritten of course) that says: Deny first, Pay later. If they can get away with denials, bluffing it out, with legal therats, well and good. If not, they have to resign. Tough city. Denials are totally meaningless.

Not all sources, official or not, are accurate, just as all are not liars.

When there's an obvious propaganda motive-rhodesian military sourcesit's easy enough to spot the liars. (You still don't know the truth.) But this is obviously not always the case. Sometimes you have to rely on conflicting accounts of the same thing: the Financial Times once carried a story from Vietnam, to the effect that corruption was being dealt with, people were going back to the fields, and the war was going against the Vetcong. This would have been based on a US embassy briefing. A week later it ran another piece from a local reporter contradicting the whole thing.

A tremendous amount of domestic news, particularly shorter items. comes from press hand-outs from companies or institutions. Sometimes these go straight into the paper, unaltered.

You can never rely totally on anything in the bourgeois media. But you can spot many inaccuracies, with a little intelligence work ... and a little politics.

Tim Gopsill Russell Southwood



THERE REALLY IS an underground conspiracy to get the same versions of national news into papers all over the country. It is called the Press Association, and it provides nearly all the national news for what are still very influential sources of news - the provincial evening papers.

The PA is run by a non-profit-making trust controlled by the owners of these papers, grouped together in the Newspaper Society. It is linked to the London-based international agency Reuter, and puts out "Readers Digest" versions of Reuter's foreign stories, suitable for domestic consumption.

The PA employs the "objectivity theory" in its most extreme form. Since it provides only raw news material, which comes tickering out of the machines by the mile, in little purple dotted letters, and which is often re-worked by sub-editors at the receiving end, any "editorialising" is absolutely out. A PA reporter using an adjective would be like a Test cricketer dressed in black.

These reporters are mostly enthusiastic youngsters, on their way, they imagine, from the provinces to the top. It's an important introduction to Fleet Street.....and its way of looking at things.

Over the last two or three years the PA has been forced out of its neutral, low-profile position on relations in the industry. Becuase it serves all provincial dailies (and for some of them is the ONLY source of news outside their own offices) it provides enough copy, of a sort, to virtually fill those papers when the journalists are in dispute.

When provincial journalists have been on strike for a closed shop, the NUJ has, quite naturally, asked its members at the PA not to work on providing news for those papers - news which is crossing the picket line, albeit on the wire; but the PA chapel suffers under extremely reactionary leadership. One man in particular, Harold Pearson, who represents them on the NUJ executive, actually crossed the picket line when, during a dispute at Kettering, the chapel was ordered out. At the union's 1977 conference, a resolution demanding that PA members members support out-of-London disputes was defeated after Pearson and others said they would not. Their argument, that they might find themselves virtually on permanent strike, had reason. But the alternative, of finding ways to stop the flow to individual offices, has not really been attempted.

The PA wire network is cunningly organised so that all offices are on a continuous line; they can't, they say, cut one out. And the people who would have to do the unplugging, the Post Office engineers, would would be breaking the law. The best answer is to get the print unions in the provincial wirerooms to refuse to tear the tapes off the machines, but that's another problem. Most national newspapers are not profitable. They are nearly all sustained by multinationals with wide-ranging interests. Most money comes from the regional and local newspapers with their lucrative classified advertising; a result of monopolies in their circulation areas.

The Guardian wouldn't survive without the advertising revenue of the Manchester Evening News. Both are owned by the Guardian Trust. This trust is dominated by the Scott family but includes figures like ex-editor Alistair Hetherington and former Liberal leader Jo Grimond.

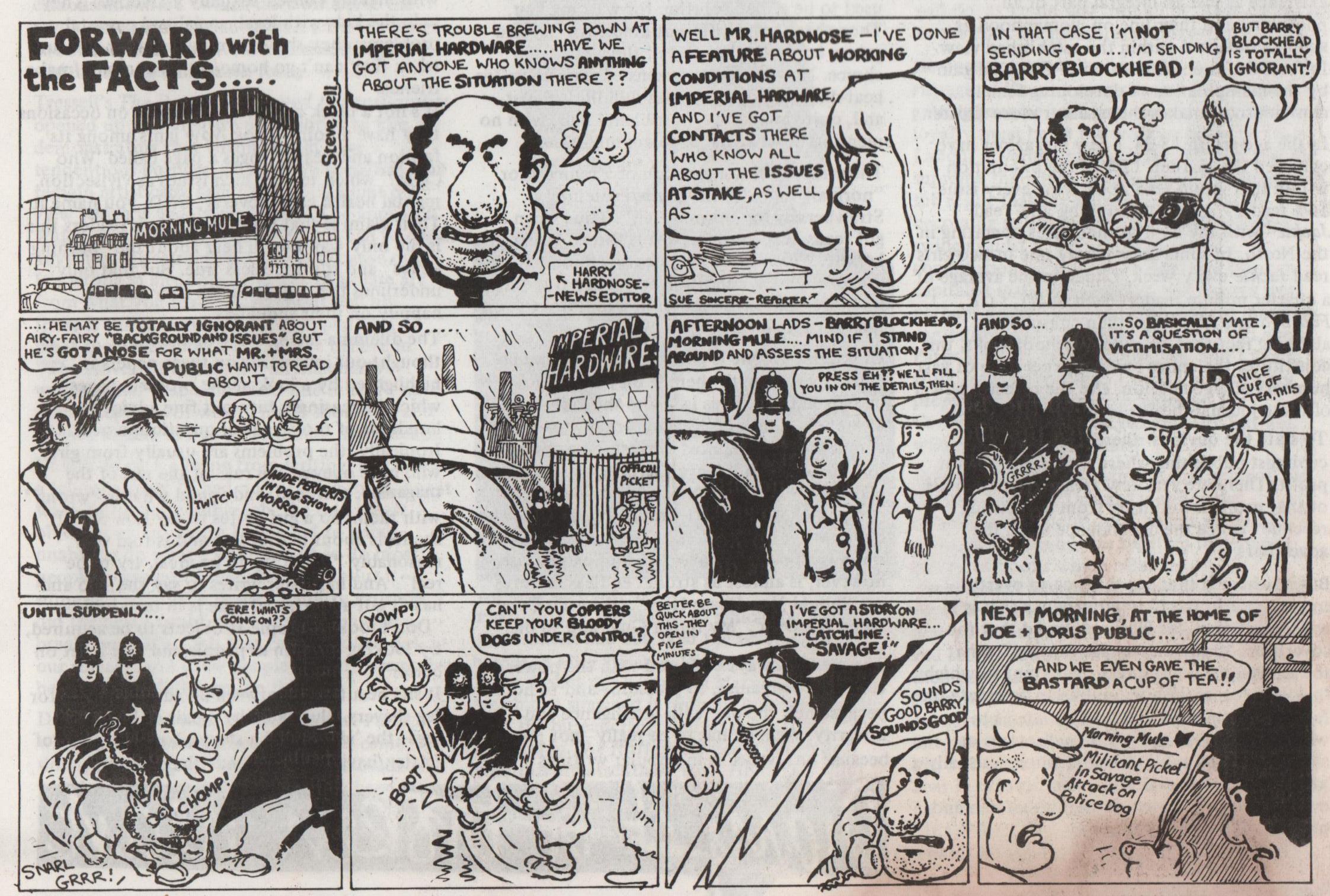
These family trusts are an intermediate form of ownership which newspapers go into after the founding families' fortunes slide. New, usually multinational interests, are called in to help.

The Times and The Observer are two papers which have moved in turn beyond the trust stage, having been taken over directly by multinationals. Times Newspapers, which owns The Times and the Sunday Times, belongs to the Thomson Organisation which also owns Thomson Regional Newspapers, Thomson Publishing (magazines and books), The Scotsman, and the majority stake in Scottish Television. The losses on The Times, which have never been less than £1 million in any year this decade, and may reach £3 million this year, are borne by the Thomson family directly. Income to cover these massive losses comes from their shareholdings in the profitable sectors of their empire. Canadian media and newsprint interests, and mining, go along with Thomson Holidays and North Sea oil holdings.

The Observer, formerly owned by the Astors, is now directly owned by Atlantic-Richfield, the US multinational oil company.

The Financial Times, because of the range of specialist economic services which it provides, is not a burden on its parent company, Pearson Longman. That firm also owns half *The Economist*, Penguin Books, Longmans, a large publishing company, and the Westminster Press chain of local papers. Pearson Longman is owned in turn by S. Pearson and Son, which has banking interests (Lazards) and extensive mining and manufacturing interests in Canada and the US.

The fourth 'quality' daily, the Daily Telegraph, is owned, along with the Sunday Telegraph, by a trust—dominated by the Berry family. The Telegraphs break even because of a far larger circulation than the other 'heavies'. Because almost all the shares are held within the family and its trusts, the fact that it makes little profit can be ignored.



PRESS BARONS- in depth probe

It is the Beaverbrook Group-the Daily Express and Sunday Express and London's Evening Standard-which is the most vulnerable. With the elderly readership of the Daily Express slowly dying off, the Beaverbrooks need a lot of cash, but they have neglected to build a base from which to secure the mouthpiece financially.

Apart from a little property speculation on the Fleet Street site next to its headquarters, the Beaverbrook Group has failed to diversify. So earlier this year, the Express Group was rescued by Trafalgar House, headed by Victor Matthews. This group had started in property specualtion rather earlier, and used its profits to acquire interests in shipping and travel. Matthews says he wants the newly acquired Beaverbrook Group to break even. The *Sunday Express* makes a profit, but the losses on the *Daily Express* can only be reduced by cutting the work force and holding down wages.

The Daily Mirror, along with the Sunday Mirror, Sunday People, and the Sporting Life, is owned by Mirror Group newspapers. This is a subsidiary of the International Publishing Corporation, which also publishes most of Britain's popular weekly magazines, as well as books and local papers. IPC is in turn owned by Reed International, a Canadian conglomerate with worldwide newsprint and mining and manufacturing interests.

The Sun is the exception among national newspapers. Taken over by Rupert Murdoch in the late 60s, its relentless bad taste has driven up its circulation, and advertising revenue figures. Murdoch also owns the News of the World, its prosperous Sunday stablemate. This media empire is based on his Australian newspapers, infamous for their persecution of every pecadillo of members of Gough Whitlam's Labour government. Recently he has diversified, buying the New York Daily News, an ailing sensationalist tabloid. Rupert Murdoch's News International also owns 40 per cent of London Weekend TV.

The Daily Mail and London Evening News are owned by Associated Newspapers, in turn a subsidiary of Daily Mail and General Trust, which is the holding company for the old Harmsworth family interests. It runs taxi companies and owns Purfleet Deep Wharf, a major London paper wharf, as well as substantial holdings in North Sea oil. Even so, the size of the losses being made by the Evening News and the Daily Mail have made even the Harmsworths reconsider their expensive hobby of newspaper ownership. Hence the move to merge the London Evening News with the Evening Standard.

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Starting as a journalist in the late sixties, Carol Sarler worked three years on teenage mags. Now she looks back in anger.

There's nothing new about knocking women's magazines. Since their inception in 1693 they have suffered vigorous criticism, and the strength of the organised women's movement i recent years has consolidated that criticism in such a way that the Women's Own/ Cosmopolitan images of womanhood have become permanent Aunt Sallies.

Yet significantly less attention has been focussed on the perpetrators of this real disaster for female consciousness: the teenage magazines. In fact, the harshest attack on them comes, with regular monotony, from the newspapers of the right, who delight in the accusation that the publications for young wom are forcing unsullied minds into sexual awareness at too young an age. (On which point they're half right, but for the wrong reasons: it's the kind of awareness which constitutes the assault, not the age at which they do it.)

Most people on the left seem to see their existence as just an integral part of all publishing and their line on womanhood as simply contained within the established view. In fact, the direct extraction of financial gain by the manipulation of developing female consciousness makes them rather more sinister

In the age-group 15-24, a few magazines have cornered the market. 12% of the population within that group read Look Now every issue; 16% read 19 and an astounding 20% read Jackie-with the bulk of their sales operating in the North. In some areas nearly one in two girls read Jackie every week. Chuck in the average of a quarter million readers each of IPC's OK, Fab 208 and Mirabelle, then consider the alarming fact that, outside of schoolbooks, this constitutes the entire reading experience of vast numbers of a generation, and the colossal power of these journals begins to become apparent. To state the obvious: there are no areas of capitalist publishing where the priority is not profit. There are very few areas where the bulk of that profit is not made from advertising revenue-hence the dependence upon the advertisers.

But nowhere is that dependence so overtly translated into the finished product as it is in the teen market. Ms White observed that the advertisers "trade on teenage fantasy"; what she omitted to point out is the extent to which they join forces with the publisher to create the fantasy. The perenniel media debate as to whether the press actively manufactures or simply supplies public demand, though usually a matter of opaque dialectic, is in this case overwhelmingly loaded on the side of demand manufacture.

Because they read little else, because they're young, because they haven't the life experience to distinguish between reality and fantasyeven to the extent that the rest of us can-the readers are sold a package of jumbled advertising and editorial, selling and information, cleverly blended to be almost indistinguishable . : . certainly less so than in any other kind of publishing. Two arms to drum the one message.

COMING TO THE PARTY (

Since the largest part of advertising is for cosmetics and toiletries-cures and correctives of appearance-the prime message is the one that shrieks the pathology of femaleness. John Berger once wrote of the effect of the publicity image upon a woman as it "steals her love of herself as she is, and offers it back to her for the price of the product." With that publicity image so deftly merged with the 'real' parts of the magazine, the strength is impressive.

Too fat, too thin, too long, too hairy, too flat: the editorial nudges the problem into consciousness, the advertiser rushes behind to tout the remedy. To take an example: shampoo used to be a soap solution for washing hair. Then there came different kinds, for dry and greasy hair-the thin end of the wedge of choice. Now there are dozens of variations: for heat-damaged-flyaway-split-dull-lifeless hair, and, quite incredibly, "problem" hair, with no mention of what the problem might be.

There is even the suggestion of a remedy for "normal" hair-"With Herbs/Protein/ Strawberries for Normal Hair". Thus when a girl reads her magazine, she is forced to ask herself 'Which of these defects is mine?' It's a dreadfully easy condition to set up: it requires no more than the creation of a definitively unattainable ideal.

Of course, no one is going to care very much what is wrong with them if they aren't going to be judged for it. This is where the early sexual awareness comes in. Readers are inveigled into competing for the most perfect correction of their flaws . . . but since the only prize that can realistically be offered is male company, that company has to be gift-wrapped in appeal. The old pop star is a good starting point, since the tinsel is already in place. His supporting case, however, is almost as strong: endless features on 'Should You Chase Him?', 'How To Cope When It's Over', 'My Super Guy' and so on.

The man is always endowed with the power to control, to organise, to pleasure-and to hurtbecause he's the one with intelligence and integrity. Well, he has to be really-not just because he always is in popular writings



TO DANCE WITH ME !! culture, in this case there's another reason. He has to be, because the rest of the magazine is filled with what's wrong with the girl, what she is lacking. It would never do if she came up trumps on the things that really matter.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

IN DIM LIGHTS MY

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· WHO'D WANT

Fiction is a grand boost for this. If fiction can't directly sell a product, it can still brilliantly create the fantasy that creates the ideal that creates the contrasting awareness of pathological self that creates the urge to spend that lines the pockets of the ideology that Jack built. A recent story in Look Now tells of a girl describing the endless virtues of her

Glen/Oliver/Damon: "He's so clever. (Cerebral appreciation? but read on . . .) I was always tongue-tied when people talked about serious. things, but now I just listen to him and I know what to say . . . " That G/O/D also loves to muzzle her soft honey hair is presumably beside the point. Isn't it?

The magazines tell you that they provide a true service. They do not tell people what to wear or how to paint their faces-they only show them what's available. And anyway, what's wrong with making oneself sexually attractive? They help the kids with legal, social and parental problems; they show them where they can turn when they can't go home/get an abortion/make friends.

It's not a black and white case, and on occasions they have a point. Look Now jams among its fashion and beauty pages a page called 'Who Cares?' which tackles such issues as vivisection, mental health care, poverty, CND, you name it. Their claim is that for most of their readers this is the only way they'll hear about the "burning issues" and it's doubtless true. But that only underlines the responsibility they take so happily on their shoulders.

The dilemma facing some of the more thought-out journalists on these papers is highlighted by a look at the problem pages which increasingly turn out fine advice for hundreds of thousands of questions a year. Ironically, the problems are usually from girls who have obeyed the rule of the rest of the magazine, searched, and found what is "wrong" with them. So a girl writes to say how awful she feels about her fat legs and is told very reasonably "Don't try to be ideal, try to be real". And her sister writes to say she's 15 and hasn't got a boyfriend-she is in turn told "Don't look at people as objects to be acquired,

try looking at them as people and you'll get on better".

It sits beautifully between an advertisement for leg shavers, illustrated by a pair of long, thin legs-the 'ideal'-and a story about the glory of getting/having a boyfriend-the 'object'.



In the mid twenties, two Cambridge students, Christopher Isherwood and Edward Upward, created the private, fantasy world which they called Mortmere, as a means of distancing themselves from the sterile life of the university which Upward now describes as "having no relation to reality, dealing with the minutiae of events without placing the events in a context in which one could make sense of them".

It is from this period that his surreal short story The Railway Accident derives, its rejection of sequential logic foreshadowing a style which has taken a firm hold on contemporary fiction. "Everyone not on the left says The Railway Accident was the best thing I ever wrote, and wish I would get back to that kind of writing again. It's the only thing of mine that's been published in America, and I suppose if I'd been able to go on with it I'd be more of a 'success' today, because it's very much in the modern idiom; but of course I just couldn't. I regard it now as a work of my belated adolscence, and even then I thought of it as just a game, a parody of modernist writers. I knew this wasn't my serious work."

His real work began when he joined the Communist Party in the thirties, but did not reach its fruition until the recent publication of his trilogy of novels, The Spiral Ascent (Heinemann, £6.50), which incorporates In The Thirties, The Rotten Elements and No Home But The Struggle in one volume. The books could be described as creative autobiography, chronicling the political and artistic development of a poet, Alan Sebrill, his entry into the CP and marriage to a fellow-member, and their eventual break with the Party as Stalinism took hold. He remains a committed Marxist, and rejects the modernism of his early work, believing that "avant garde art is establishment art" which does not serve the revolutionary movement, cannot tell the truth about the "real world", the standards against which he judges his work today.

Tressell's The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists opened up new creative possibilities to him, by demonstrating that writing could have a tendentious purpose, could serve socialism, and remain artistically valid: it is not a point of view which is widely accepted. "The approach which puts art first, denying that it can be about anything, is destructive, art fails because of it. It's wrong in any circumstances to isolate art from what you really think about real life . . . there is still an artificial, stereotyped idea of what the novel should be. I don't believe in "The Novel", I call myself an imaginative writer rather than a novelist: one mustn't have preconceptions of what a novel should be and expect writers to live up to them-that's death."

Unable to earn a living from writing, he became a schoolmaster: "I had no vocation for it, but it was a fairly honourable job, the one I least objected to; of course I objected to being unable to do what I wanted, but so do most people. I was quite conscientious about it-I suppose I adopted a limited liability attitude: I did the best I could without giving myself a breakdown. It's a job that can't be done well in our society, and I saw people destroy themselves because they didn't realise this."

Disillusionment with the Communist Party, which had given direction to his life, came slowly; he accepted the Molotov/Ribbentrop pact because he felt that Russia had been forced into it, had been spurned by the fascist-favouring Chamberlain and driven to protect itself in the only way left open. But

JULSSE

Writer Edward Upward left the **Communist Party in the late 50s,** but remained a committed marxist. Following the publication of his trilogy The Spiral Ascent, he talks to Robert Jones about his life, his politics and his hopes.



Edward Upward

realisation of the extent to which the Soviet government had betrayed the revolution hardened after the war. His insistence that the Party should not desert the Marxist principles which had spawned it brought him into conflict with the bureaucracy, and to resignation. "The passages in The Rotten Elements which deal with this are essentially true; Hilda [his wife] took the first step, like Elsie Sebrill in the book, by tearing up her Party card." He followed her example; to others, recognition of the reality of Stalinism came later, or was impossible to bear.

"It's difficult for anyone nowadays to realise what it meant; to be disloyal to the Party was to be disloyal to the future, to everything. I suppose people in religious movements have felt the same kind of pressure, though of course the Party's wasn't a religion. The compulsion was internal: the very isolation of the Party, the hostility towards it, strengthened our loyalty to it. Its hold was based on our own beliefs, outside was darkness again."

You get the impression from reading the books that his commitment to the party was contributed to by a sense of guilt about his relatively middle-class background. "Yes, I suppose that's the Puritan in me. It's been helpful to middle-class intellectuals who've come into the revolutionary movement and then abandoned it to play down guilt, or explain it very undesirable. But I think that those who have a better quality of life than other people should feel guilty about it, and should try to ... expiate their guilt, perhaps, by doing what

they can to help the revolutionary movement." But he is no longer a member of any Party; does he agree then with the theory that we are in a post-Party era, that a revolutionary Party is no longer needed? "No; well, it's got this much truth in it, that the future doesn't lie with any of the existing parties, unless they change. But I certainly believe there must be a party eventually. What's important now is that no left group should be so sectarian as to refuse to cooperate with others on a limited programme the best will come out in the end.

Too many look at 1917, on the other hand, and think that it can happen again, that a Party of 100 will become the Bolsheviks in a new revolutionary period-it won't happen that way, to imagine that it will reinforces divisions and weakens the left. There must be a leadership, but thrown up by the working class: one should never trust a leadership completely, they must be dismissable as they start to betray; as they will do; as Lenin said, not all of them will go on to the end, the pressures are so great."

He does not reject Parliament-as an arena for struggle: "I'm not against using Parliament, getting genuine socialists elected to it, but their loyalty must be to the working class, not the Labour government. Even the left MPs feel the supreme thing is to keep Labour in power, with the result that the Labour government is becoming so discredited that there will be a swing against it. Of course Labour's a constitutional Party which operates through capitalist institutions and so will always work, perhaps despite its best intentions, to maintain capitalism. But there are people in the Labour Party who are genuine socialists, and I would work with them just as I would be perfectly prepared to work with socialists in the Communist Party or anywhere else: but not with the social democrats."

Now in his seventies, living in "retirement" on the Isle of Wight, Upward is still active artistically and politically; he has welded the driving forces in his life together in a unique trilogy of books which offer rigour, commitment and pain in search of truth which the left cannot afford to ignore. Would anyone now go through the same extremes of alienation and self-doubt in coming to a decision to leave their party as Upward describes in The Rotten Elements? We have learnt better now, or worse; we have seen all the parties, the factions of the left, use dedication, hope and enthusiasm like his; and betray them: we expect so much less. I bear that in mind if ever I find myself mistaking his kind of honourable trust for credulousness: "It's difficult for anyone nowadays to realise what it meant."

The notion of red therapy provokes mirth in some quarters, 'commies with hangups', and puzzlement in others, 'how do you get from therapy groups to political change?'. Red Therapy, which started up in the 60s, has been trying to break down these walls of ignorance. To rescue psychology from liberal notions of therapy as a weekly escape route from the pressures of big city life and to expose the bankruptcy of orthodox left separations between the 'personal' and 'political' has been part of the group's intention.

Russell Southwood summarises the ideas contained in Red Therapy's first pamphlet, and speaks to two members of the group. The Leveller also reprints some sections of the pamphlet.

Over two and a half million people live alone in an increasingly impersonal and competitive Britain. People have to travel further to their jobs, spend more time among total strangers or sitting alone in tower blocks. Communities get broken up by redevelopment. To survive, people switch off.

Of those not alone, most find themselves in nuclear families. These have 'a housewife' (see Leveller 10 on advertising) who buys Mothers Pride and a washing machine, and a 'breadwinner' who buys a car. It produces, as Red Therapy point out, one clean, serviced worker every morning and several little ones being educated and trained in the pipeline. These idealised sex roles—the sexy/domesticated wife, the responsible/stud hubby—sell commodities and have become commodities themselves.

The family is an area of work and leisure. Women experience this conflict, and also the conflict between their roles as mother and wife. Forty per cent of women do two jobs, one outside and one inside the home. The strain this places on the family often shows itself as the isolated 'breakdown' of the women.

But mental illness, says Red Therapy, is a political issue. One in nine of the population Page 28 The Leveller January 1978

spend some of their lives in a mental hospital. Of these, two-thirds are women. About a third of all National Health Service beds are occupied by people who are defined as 'mentally ill'. Another 25% of NHS beds are occupied by people whose conditions may have come from emotional stress—alcoholism, drug addiction, attempted suicide and diseases caused by tobacco smoking and excessive eating.

In 1970/1 over 38 million days were lost from work through various forms of mental disorder. By comparison, only 11 million days were lost through strikes. Mental illness, according to Red Therapy, is no longer a side issue—it is a major result of our bodies' rebellion against capitalism.

The work which drives people 'mad' is changing. More machinery per worker means work is less skilled, more mechanised, alienating, clockwatching. Faced with the demands of speed-ups, assembly line work, 'scientific management' and time and motion studies, people turn more and more to their families.

In Red Therapy's view, all this creates massive tension between expectations and what is possible under capitalism. There is the impossibility of feeling satisfaction with the 'sexual freedom' we are offered. It's OK to fuck





but only within safely distanced and objectified sex roles. It's the impossibility of being a perfect wife and mother and having a continually exciting sex life on a low wage. Society creates needs, but cannot deliver the goods. The ensuing sense of failure (or breakdown) is presented as 'personal' or 'emotional'.

What is the relationship between these ideas and the practice of therapy? The interview that follows is with two members of Red Therapy. The opinions they express are, of course, their own, and may differ from those of the rest of the group.

How did the group start?

Sheila: The group started because there were some people in East London who were interested in therapy, had some experience of it and were interested in theory; how therapy and politics could relate.

We'd already done a couple of leaderless groups but just for ourselves. Then there was this big meeting about politics and therapy, organised by some people from the growth movement who felt that what they were doing was somehow related to politics.

A couple of people went along to the meeting from East London and stood up and said: "What politics means is class politics and we've also got certain understandings of how people's emotional and personal lives are really being screwed up by the society we live in and how this perpetuates that society. And anyone who's interested in looking this way at therapy and politics, come to a meeting."

What did the group do first?

Marie: The first meetings were discussions about politics and therapy. People weren't really sure what they wanted. I think I wanted to do therapy in a group rather than talk, so the first meetings were rather frustrating. I think we were really frightened. If we got into this heavy therapy, would we be able to cope? And although there were those who had done some therapy, they were scared to take others into it. Eventually we decided to do therapy rather than have discussions. Some who didn't want to do therapy dropped out. This left a group of 12-15 people, half of whom are still in the group.

What sort of people got involved?

Sheila: Well, there were two people who'd come from Germany who'd been very involved in student politics there and had come to England because they felt critical of that kind of political organising. They ended up in the group.

The people who have come into the group since it started and stayed are much different. For instance, Gillian was very straight, liberalhumanitarian, very different from the rest of us. And because her discomfort with us was made explicit and other people's mistrust was made explicit and so on, she stayed and has really changed. The last of the socialist-feminist meetings I went to, there was Gillian...

Had you had any previous experience of therapy?

Marie: Half of the group had done something like therapy, co-counselling or psychoanalysis. They wanted to try and change their lives and had felt the limitations of rational discussion. A lot of them were in very complicated personal and political situations ... freaked out ...

Sheila: You must mention the intensives . . .

What are they?

Sheila: We did a week of therapy with an outside leader. She did things with hindsight, that we could have done ourselves. Things like ordering people in terms of power, niceness and so on. The roles we all felt were made fairly clear. These patterns had totally changed within a year. People who didn't want to be powerlessoutsiders-made sure they weren't.

WHO WANTS YESTERDAY'S PAPERS?

Marie: One of the ways to have power in the group was to know a lot about therapy and to be skillful with it, helping other people. So we decided we'd all go to outside groups to learn as much as possible.

How do you see what you do as political?

Sheila: One of the difficult things about Red Therapy when we started the group was that we had to acknowledge that we were doing it for ourselves and we weren't doing it for other people.

By writing this pamphlet and by helping other people to start leaderless groups, we've started going outside ourselves. Individual members of Red Therapy are beginning to do things outside. Some of the women in the group did sessions at Camden Women's Aid.

Marie: We've never tried to propagandise about therapy. We've tried to show we're there if people are interested in starting groups.

Sheila: I see Red Therapy as being experimental and that things we've learnt from it will get used in ways that will work as a link between people who aren't political and certain kinds of political ideas. For instance, Jo and I did this child care workshop which was about women's attitudes to children. For it, we used therapy techniques to bring out feeling and provoke discussion. And it worked at the level of consciousness-raising. A lot of people came; people who were very straight. Through their interest in the subject, and their feelings about it, they came into contact with political ideas.

What techniques do you use?

Marie: We use a lot of different techniques, bits and pieces from all of them. We aim to get people more in touch with their feelings.

Sheila: We get people to act out the problem they're talking about. Either by using a cushion or by using people in the group. That's a psychodrama technique. You don't talk in generalisations. You don't argue with people in therapy. Unless you're acting an argument. If I say "I'm feeling really stupid", you don't say, "But you're really very clever". You'd be much more likely to say things that would help me explore how stupid I felt. The pamphlet contains several sections of people's first-hand experiences in Red Therapy. These are split into men's and women's groups. First, one of the men's group describes why he came to the group and how he found it useful.

"I became more aware that in some way I was missing something—that I had lost something. Something emotional. A woman I really depended on left me—saying at one point that she felt that 'there was nothing there'. I suddenly discovered the extent to which I had frozen up—the extent to which I was afraid to feel. Pain, grief, joy, anger—I experienced these feelings more intensely than at any time since I was very young. She had been right and wrong at the same time.

While I was always trying to prove myself to be strong, independent and successful in the outside world of men, it was impossible for me to see my relationships with women as anything other than a separate private world of emotion and love. I desperately needed Meg to be around to talk to, touch, fuck with, just be with—a person I could be myself with, whatever that was at any moment.

With men I was on show, almost performing, watching and being watched; scared to admit I didn't understand, scared to follow what I felt about people and situations. Yet that was the world that mattered most, the only world I could prove myself to be a proper person in. So I tended to take things with Meg totally for granted. Caring for men has allowed me to care more for women.

Some of us needed to work on how we hadn't made it as men in the roles laid down for usthat is, cool, capable, responsible, powerful, aggressive, competitive, etc.; on how we couldn't get relationships together easily; on sexual difficulties; on how we all felt powerless, tended to court, expect and accept failure whatever we tried."

The women's group-which was formed from a separate group originally outside Red Therapydecided to work separately from the men's groups, although in the long term, they don't see themselves working exclusively with women. Three women describe why they found therapy important.

"I wanted some sort of group where I could talk about my feelings of loneliness and unhappiness having just split with my husband. In trying to find my own identity, trying to be more independent, I had encountered all kinds were entirer framingued It was hard for me to the in the end-the politics constant repetition and for the organisation."



of difficulties and strong feelings that I didn't know how to deal with. I wanted some understanding from other women of how difficult it was to make changes in our lives based on our new-found politics of the women's movement."-Barbara

"Women particularly need therapy—we are conditioned to suppress aggression, etc. and turn our feelings against ourselves, which leads to a high rate of depression and suicide among women—we need to find our feelings and needs so as to fight for what we want."—Susan

"I'd like to emphasise how I think men and women do have different things they need to work on because of their difference in socialisation. For women, anger is central. Also feeling strong, especially in your body. As women we are so conditioned to experiencing ourselves as weak-it's different for men." -Melanie

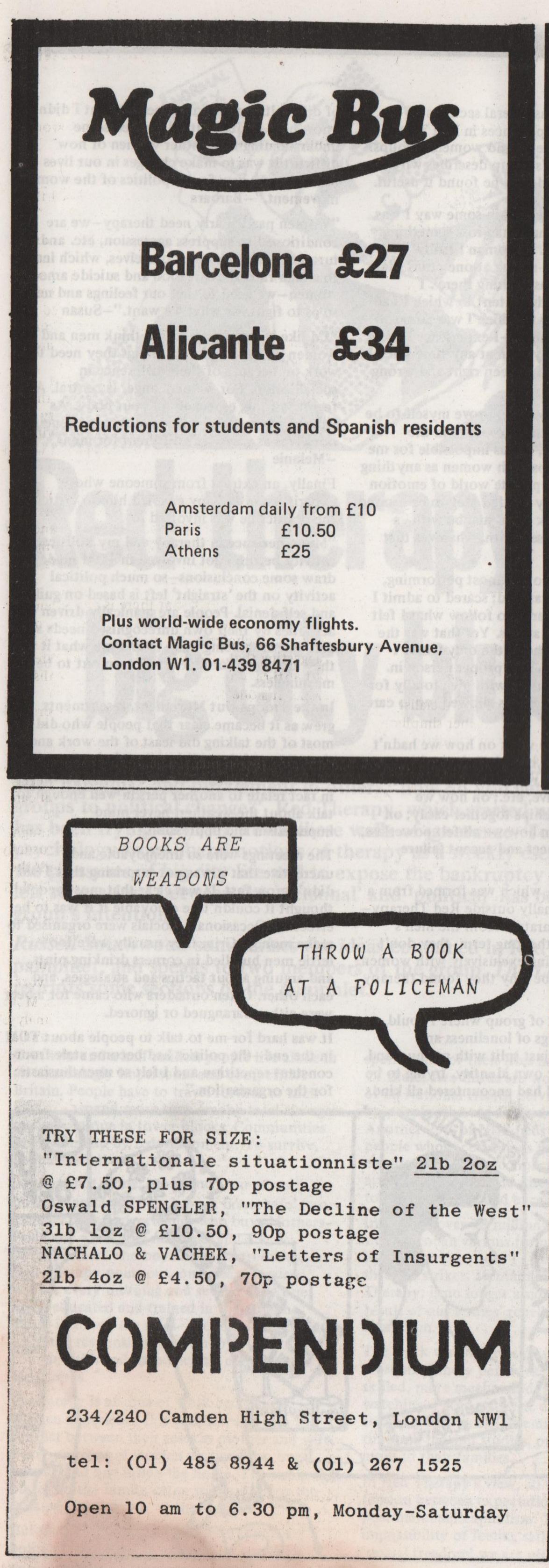
Finally, an extract from someone whose experience in therapy enabled him to criticise the politics he was involved in.

"My experience in therapy and my political activity before I got involved in TOM made me draw some conclusions—so much political activity on the 'straight' left is based on guilt and self-denial. People are manically driven into activities by their own unrecognised needs and dare not stop being busy to analyse what it is they are doing for fear it will turn out to be meaningless.

In the Troops Out Movement, resentments grew as it became clear that people who did most of the talking did least of the work and that many of the political 'heavies', who talked about the working class all the time, could not in fact relate to another person well enough to talk about the weather, never mind imperialism and oppression.

The meetings were so unenjoyable and uncreative that it was not surprising that TOM didn't grow fast. It was clear that most people thought it couldn't be enjoyable if it was to be effective. Occasionally socials were organised to make money. Grim they usually were tooleftie men huddled in corners drinking pints and arguing about tactics and strategies, and each other. Often outsiders who came for a beer were either harangued or ignored.

It was hard for me to talk to people about TOM in the end-the politics had become stale from constant repetition and I felt so unenthusiastic for the organisation."



WHO WANTS YESTERDAY'S PAPERS?

The early issues of The Leveller are now beginning to run out. Regular readers without a complete set should rush now while stocks last!

Issues soon to go out of print:

PILOT ISSUE British Intelligence agents in Angola named by Mark Hosenball and Phil Kelly-the story that caught the eye of Merlyn Rees/The Polit-Cops by Tony Bunyan/ Comprehensive guide to Agitprop Theatre/The truth about workers co-ops/Interview with Jackie McNamara, then the only Communist Party footballer in British professional football.

ISSUE NUMBER ONE British fascism-its origins, history and organisations/Birmingham bombings-the innocent behind bars/The Wages for Housework debate/Interview with **Trevor Griffiths.**

ISSUE NUMBER TWO The Torturers' Who's Who-the only article naming the men responsible for the torture in Northern Ireland/The struggle for Southern Africa/Home Office prepares for Civil War.

ISSUE NUMBER THREE The CIA-in Britain and the third world/Fashion-Ideology and exploitation/Gays in the unions/Latin American murder squads.

Other issues include sex magazines (Issue 4), the Labour Party (Issue 5), David Edgar interview and nuclear power (Issue 6), Music-MfS Conference, Dick Heckstall-Smith interview (Issue 7), contraception and the car industry (Issue 8), Costain pay-off and rock music-Virgin records, Czech rockers and Tom Robinson Band (Issue 9) and West Germany-nuclear protest and RAF-and Provo interview (Issue 10).

Index now available for first ten issues. Send stamped addressed envelope for a copy to The Leveller, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1.

USSR 78 Study Travel Russian Language Twelve courses of 3 to 4 weeks at all levels in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Krasnodar, and Dyuny. Easter, summer and late autumn. Soviet Studies Seminar Four weeks intensive course organised in Leningrad by the university and the House of Friendship. Specialist Tours 2 to 3 week tours in Education, Art and Architecture, Sport and PE, Trade Union studies etc, Easter and summer. Group Travel Special interest tours planned for groups of students, trade unions, schools with full programme of visits and meetings, based on AUCCTU and Sputnik hotels ATT ATA SAGTA Progressive Tours 12 Porchester Place, London W2 2BS. 01-262 1676

Scenes from the anti-racist battle

"Not another left-wing show about racism!" moans the theatre promoter, raising his hands in horror. Sandy Craig examines the growth of anti-racist plays and socialist theatre's seeming obsession with race.

Well, it's not quite like that, though in recent months the competition has been getting quite intense. And it's not quite like that because most groups have built up, to some extent, their own circuits, and because of the diversity of styles and approaches to the subject of racism.

For example, Mutable's show is a history of slavery in the West Indies and West Indian immigration into Britain since the war. It's told in a straight-forward agit-prop style. Avon's show takes the form of a spoof Black and White Minstrel Show, using music and songs including sketches showing the history of anti-semitism and the Raj in India. Pirate Jenny use the set-up of an industrial tribunal to examine the racist roots of a strike. The Half Moon tell, in pantomime style, the parable of the mythical rise of fascism in the American 1930s. CAST, in a jazzed-up parody of TV run-through of the past three years, relate the rise of fascism to the social contract and the cuts in public expenditure. And so it goes on from Recreation Ground to the Royal Court.

All the shows are very different, both in content and in style. But, despite the originality of some of these shows, why are so many companies presenting shows on racism now? After all, racism isn't something new to this country, fascism isn't a sudden phenomenon. And though we had Grunwick and Lewisham this summer, and Grunwick is still with us, in summer 76 there were racial murders in London, scores of muggings, marches, demonstrations and the formation of Asian vigilante groups to protect their own communities. And there was Carnival 76 complete with police riot. So why, at that time a year or more ago, was there such a comparatively poor response from socialist theatre?

It's a complicated problem but can be analysed through three underlying reasons: one theatrical, one political and one economic.

Theatrically, the event which helped gear the whole trend was the presentation by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych of David Edgar's Destiny. It played to near capacity audiences, made a huge media-stir and was even picketed by the National Party.

Whatever the actual importance and effect of Destiny at the Aldwych was, it did act as a starting point for a lot of other theatrical projects-both inside and outside the world of the touring socialist theatre companies. That doesn't mean there was necessarily any conscious, straightforward or causal link between Edgar's show and the shows we have now. But Destiny pointed the way, acting as an example and as a theatrical critique of fascism. Destiny also treated its subject with scope, range, diversity, depth of historical analysis, wit and a huge spectrum of characters and events. To sum up: Destiny seemed to point to a new, more exciting and better way of presenting politically committed theatre.

The second, and perhaps the most important, impetus behind this trend to shows on racism, was political. 1977 was the year of increasingly heavy left versus right street demonstrations, culminating in Lewisham. 1977, after all, was the year of Grunwick and Lewisham and right-wing fire bombings (see The Leveller 10). And these were the events which entered the awareness of socialist theatre and which grabbed the imagination. More important, these events were part of the world of socialist theatre.

The unfortunate part of it all is that, for theatre at least, these were only a minor part of the world and only the surface events of the world, themselves blown up by the media-both left wing and bourgeois. In other words, socialist theatre is responding to events rather than anslysing trends.

Meanwhile, and despite Destiny, socialist theatre continued to take a rather simplistic and one-eyed view of theatre, imagining a very direct and one-to-one relationship between political reality and theatre, as though theatre had to mirror reality directly, and mirror what was going on at that moment. It also assumed that the relationship between the performance on stage and the audience was simple, direct, one-to-one ... At this point, there is a great danger of falling into the argument which the right always throw at committed political theatre: preaching to the converted.

The difficulty with theatre, even at its shortest, most direct, simplest, and most agitprop is that it is a slow-moving creature. It takes time to research, write, rehearse, and mount a show. A longer time, certainly, than it takes to rush out a pamphlet or a magazine. And the result is, of course, very different from a pamphlet or magazine, both more and less than these. Theatre, simply, calls for a much wider, at its



Destiny

Theatre



best more intense, range of response: intellectually, emotionally and sensually.

There is a final, third factor in the background which may also go some of the way to explaining the present trend in shows on racism. This is, simply, the economic or material conditions of the companies and the companies' workers.

Nearly all the socialist theatre companies are subsidised, usually by the Arts Council, and for most companies subsidy is the major part of their income. Now, over the last six to twelve months a dramatic change has been sensed in the subsidising bodies, mainly the Arts Council. No longer are we in boom time: the arts are firmly in recession. Allied to this general climate within subsidy (of restriction and cutting back) there have been attacks by the likes of Roy Fuller (ex-Professor of Poetry at Oxford) on the Arts Council policy of giving subsidy to any and all new developments within the arts.

Recreation Ground had their grant cut by the Arts Council; North West Spanner have just had their grant cut by North West Arts; and, on a different level, the Greater London Council have refused to grant the lease of Wilton's Music Hall to the Half Moon.

Now, I'm not saying that there is any attempt by the Arts Council to censor companies, or to guide their choice of productions. Nor am I suggesting that companies are "playing safe". But anti-racism isn't the preserve of socialists alone. It's one of those struggles which is fought by both socialists, labour supporters and liberals. Indeed, one performance of an anti-racist show I saw was presented by a broad-based anti-racist front which included leading members of the local Communist Party and the local Conservative Party. And you can bet your bottom-devalued pound that the assessments made by the Arts Council, though supposedly on artistic criteria alone, will usually coincide with their liberal principles. (With the sole proviso: as long as the show, whatever it is, isn't too awful, too tatty, too boring.) Thus, they will prefer shows on racism to shows on the cuts, or Northern Ireland, for instance.

Subsidised socialist theatre has to tackle the problem of whether subsidy distorts the work and political intentions of the companies. More importantly, companies have to try and analyse political developments (no easy matter), and at the same time come to a much fuller and more exact understanding of the function, purpose and effects of theatre.

Socialist theatre roundup

NEWS FROM BRISTOL

In mid-November there was a public forum on theatre in the seventies with David Edgar, David Hare and Mike Leigh. This was a very rambling evening which lacked any political direction, perhaps not surprisingly with its rather aloof university audience (I don't think I've heard the words 'working class' more uncritically bandied about at any of the events I have ever been to). David Hare was depressingly negative about fringe and political theatre ("the new developments in theatre over the last ten years aren't worth more than ten minutes' discussion"), whilst Edgar gave a fairly lucid tie up between the Tory government and the use of agitprop to a more complex 'hegemonic' form of playing and writing as the traditional loyalties to the Labour government have soured. Mike Leigh expounded at length the merits and demerits of TV drama, and argued against a workerist approach, claiming that portraying the bourgeoisie and undermining its values was "one of the most fucking revolutionary things a playwright could do".

But generally the event was sterile and slow, and only sparked into life five minutes before the end, when a worthwhile discussion on the real value of theatre as an interpreter of history rather than a functional agitprop tool, using fully rounded characters and situations, was carried on briefly with the experience of Monstrous Regiment and Joint Stock being drawn on.

Paul Bassett

North West Spanner fight grant cut

As reported in our last issue, North West Spanner have had their grant axed by North West Arts. The sub-committee set up by North West Arts to investigate North West Spanner are due to report back at the next North West Arts council of management meeting before Christmas. Meanwhile, various behind-the-scenes efforts are being made to persuade the sub-committee to give Spanner a reprieve. In the meantime, Spanner are fighting back and have arranged a conference for all artists interested in fighting political interference in the arts. This conference will be on December 4: after our copy deadline, but before publication date, unfortunately. However, the conference and details of any other developments will be reported in our next issue.

HALF MOON

The Half Moon, a small community theatre company in London's East End have been denied the lease to Wilton's Music Hall by the **Tory-dominated Greater London** Council. The Half Moon had been awarded the lease by the previous Labour administration earlier this year after years of campaigning. On election to power in May the Tories immediately decided to "review" the decision, and have spent the last six months touting around for other offers before letting the Half Moon know that its application had been unsuccessful.

Not that the Greater London Council have been able to find any other takers acceptable to themselves and the local East End community. (There were rumours at one time that Taylor Woodrow were going to take over Wilton's; but they hastily withdrew their submission after the news was greeted with fury from the East End. TW already own most of the docklands waterfront in the area including the Saint Catherine's Dock redevelopment. The GLC now intend to set up a public trust to run the building for use as a centre of music hall. Time alone will tell if the entertainment they put on at Wilton's can properl be termed "music hall".

Arts Council fund trashy mag

Gambit is a quarterly magazine on theatre published by Calder and subsidised by the Arts Council. This issue and its next issue are devoted to discussions about and articles on Political Theatre. Unfortunately, on the evidence of this issue their knowledge and understanding of political theatre is zero. Certainly, it has nothing to do with socialist theatre. This issue, for instance, contains a discussion on political theatre led by such experts in the field as Jeff Nuttall, Ken Campbell and the Arts Council's very own Anton Gill. Obviously desperate not to talk on the subject they are soon chattering merrily away about their latest projects and certain weird happenings. This might be mildly amusing, except for two points. One, that if the Trades Description Act did apply, then they would be contravening it. And two, that at a time when political theatre companies (and, of course, other artists) are facing stringent cuts in

their subsidy, the Arts Council should still see fit to pour money into rubbish such as Gambit.



7:84 performs "Trembling Giant"

Group touring dates

The dates given are only those which have been confirmed at the time of going to press. Most companies are touring continuously, and if you are interested in a particular company or show, then it may be worthwhile to ring or write to the company to check other

dates in their itinerary.

AVON TOURING THEATRE

McArthur Warehouse, Gas Ferry Rd, Bristol. (0272 20247) Current shows are *Deadwood*, about the cuts, *Face Value* about racial attitudes, and *Nolly's Drinking Contest*, Avon's new pub entertainment. There are many other performances, especially for the pub show: ring Avon for details. PORTISHEAD: Dec 14, Gordano

School. 10am (Deadwood) STROUD: Dec 17, Roxburgh House, 8pm (Face Value)

- BRISTOL: Dec 21/22, Folk House, Park St. 8.45 (Nolly's Drinking Contest)
- BRISTOL: Jan 4, Wills Social Club. 8.45 (Nolly's Drinking Contest) BRISTOL: Jan 14, Westbury Park

Social Club. 7.30 (Face Value) EXETER: Jan 20, ring for details of

venue. (Deadwood) EXETER: Jan 21, St Georges Hall, 8pm (Deadwood)

DURSLEY (Glos): Jan 25, Berkley Vale School Hall. 2.00 (Deadwood) 8.00 (Face Value)

BELT AND BRACES

22 Vicars Rd, London NW5 (01-485 2872)

Current shows are Not so Green as its Cabbage, a band show about Northern Ireland, A Day In The Life Of The World, a multi-national spectacular, and Do Not Go Gentle about the aged.

CREWE: Dec 14, Crewe and Alsager College (Gentle) HARLOW: Dec 15, ring for details of venue (Cabbage)

SAFFRON WALDEN: Dec 16, ring for details of venue (Cabbage) HERTS: Dec 17, Ward Freeman

School (Cabbage) LONDON: Jan 6, Benefit for Voice

of the Unions Ring for details of venue (Band Show)

CANTERBURY: Jan 12-14, University of Kent (World)

OLDHAM: Jan 19/20, Grange Arts Centre (World)

LONDON: Jan 23, Tramshed, Woolwich (Gentle)

LONDON: Jan 25, Greenwich Young People's Theatre (Gentle)

LONDON: Jan 26, Redbridge Drama Centre (Gentle)

LONDON: Jan 27/28, Stage One, Deanery Rd (*Gentle*)

READING: Jan 30/31, Hexagon Arts Centre (World)

BITE

31 James St, London WC1.

(01-609 3834) Bite are presently touring Holland and Germany. They will be returning to London in January when both GAST, about immigrant workers, and Grunwick will be available.

NORTH WEST SPANNER Contact Maureen Ramsay

(061-881 7845) or Mossley 4627. Current show is *Out of Control*;

running a dispute over safety issues, Jetthane workers discover nuclear connections . . .

- SKELMERSDALE: Dec 14, Birch Green Neighbourhood Centre. 8.00.
- BURNLEY: Dec 15, The Clarion Club. 8.00.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYME: Dec 16, West End Community Centre, John St. 8.00.

ECCLES: Jan 3, Labour Club. 8.00.

BROADSIDE MOBILE WORKERS THEATRE

58 Holbein Place, London SW1. (01-450 6992)

Currently touring four shows: The Working Women's Charter Show, Divide and Rule Brittania, an anti-racist show, Now You See It, Now You Don't about inflation and the cuts, and We Have the Power of the Winds about the struggle of the Portuguese people against fascism.

COMMON STOCK

31 Fulham Palace Rd, London W6. (01-741 3086)

Current show is Spellbound about adult illiteracy.

LONDON: Jan 18-23, Oval House, SE11. 7.45 LONDON: Jan 27, Fleet Centre,

Agincourt Rd, NW3. 7.30

COUNTERACT

27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. (01-251 4977) Will be touring their new shows The

Cuts Show, Screwed, which investigates the law, and She Asked For It, a play against rape, from the middle of January.

FOCO NOVO

2 Nugent Terrace, London NW8. (01-289 3226) Current show is *The Elephant Man*

LONDON: Dec 5-24, Hampstead Theatre Club.

MONSTROUS REGIMENT 190 Goswell Road, London EC1. Currently touring with two shows, Floorshow, a feminist cabaret, and Kiss and Kill.

LONDON: Jan 17-21, Theatre Royal, Stratford (*Floorshow*) EXETER: Jan 23-25, St Lukes

College (Kiss and Kill) BRISTOL: Jan 26-28, Arts Centre (Kiss and Kill)

SHEFFIELD: Jan 30-Feb 4, Crucible Theatre (Kiss and Kill)

PIRATE JENNY 11 Acklam Rd, London W10

(01-969 2292)

Latest show is Our Own People by David Edgar.

GRANTHAM: Dec 15/16, Grantham Sporting Club. 7.30

NOTTINGHAM: Dec 17, Midland Gallery, 7.30

LONDON: Royal Court Upstairs. Pirate Jenny are performing in the Eastern Arts area (Jan 3-7), Essex and Yorkshire (Jan 17-21), and Scotland (Jan 24-Feb 4): ring for full details.

7:84 (ENGLAND)

31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. (01-253 4049)

Current show is The Life and Times of Joe of England by John McGrath. LONDON: Dec 15/16, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Rd, E1

7:84 (SCOTLAND)

58 Queen Street, Edinburgh. A rare visit south of the border with their socialist pantomime, *Trembling Giant* by John McGrath. LONDON: Dec 20-Jan 7, Royal

Court Theatre (box office: 01-730 1745)

WOMEN'S THEATRE GROUP 27 Stepney Green, London E1. Current show is *Pretty Ugly*, about the images projected on teenagers and is intended for 12-15 age group. LONDON: Jan 13/14, Stage One, Deanery Rd, E15. 8.00

MERSEYSIDE: Jan 16-21, Merseyside Youth Clubs: check for details.

Music for Socialism listings and news

MfS conference

It was always intended that Music for Socialism should become a federation of regional groups rather than a monolithic national organisation. It is good to report therefore that the first autonomous regional group has been spawned and is healthily active.

The Leeds Group put on its first major benefit event at the beginning of November, an MfS benefit with Henry Cow at Leeds University. The Group has planned a number of events by local musicians and is putting out its own Newsletter, *Leeds Music News*. It will also prepare the bulk of the January MfS national newsletter.

A major aim of the Leeds Group has been to develop the organisation of socialist musicians in the area in the context of a broader movement of all cultural workers. In practice this means involving artists and designers in the production of its newsletter, posters and so on, using gigs as an arena for artists to display their work or poets to read their poems, adding a musical component to political campaigns such as against the cuts or those of NAC.

A national conference to be held outside London is being organised for next February to create a new structure between the MfS group that meets in London and the Leeds and other regional groups. Until then the London group will continue to operate as a national group. Its next meeting is on Sunday December 11 at Belt and Braces, 22 Vicars Road, London NW5 at 2.30pm. Having put on three events in the format of performance followed by discussion, MfS's latest project in London is an attempt to break down the performer-audience division by putting on an event where everyone is involved as a participant.

Everyone is invited along on Wednesday evening, December 21 to the Metropolitan, Farringdon Road, London EC1 at 7.30pm, armed with instruments, tapes and any other noise making implement to an open music making session.

The format of this first event, in what is hoped will be a regular monthly series, will be determined by whoever turns up. Later events may be structured beforehand. For more information ring Les on 01-607 8117.

Politicians fight over Brel

Even if punk has inflamed the good burghers of towns all over Britain, no popular music current has surfaced in Parliament except as an easy metaphor for uninspired members since the Stones were threatened with prison sentences. Just across the water, in Belgium, while the country descends ever more quickly into fullscale slump, the country's politicians divert themselves in discussions of the latest album recorded by Jacques. Brel.

Brel, perhaps the leading chansonnier of the post-war period, retreated to a

Polypennesian island ten years ago in disgust at western civilisation. He returned a couple of months ago to make his first record since then in Paris. A million copies have been pressed, but sales of at least two million are being forecast.

The trouble comes because of his scarcely hidden contempt for his native Belgium, which has surfaced in one particular song. It's aimed at what he takes to be a typical flemish personality—which is not a very flattering portrait.

The comments must be seen against the background of a country increasingly split along national lines. The northern, dutch speaking (Flemish) part of the country, Flanders, has grown since the war on large inputs of foreign capital so that it is now dominant in population and economic power and resents traditional French cultural hegemony. The French speaking south is an area of rapidly declining and recession-hit industries based on coal and steel.

Not surprisingly, the French part of the cultural apparatus started plugging Brel's album with all the fervour due to a returning superstar. The political debate was sparked off when the Minister for Dutch Culture declared that the promotion of the record would be considered an act inimical to Flanders.

An additional twist to Belgian politics is that the national division is also very much a political division—the people of Flanders being solid supporters of the conservative parties, and French speaking Wallonia being the bedrock of the socialist parties. A defence of the Brel record—if not the particular track—was soon mounted in a statement in the name of all the Walloon socialists.

Perhaps we may yet live to see Merlin Rees championing the cause of the Sex Pistols to play live in face of the Brooke-Partridges?

Singing the Red Flag

The anti-faction in the Tribune group got its own back on Peter Hain at its inaugural appearance on their platform by putting him right to the fore during the singing of the Red Flag. His obvious ignorance of the words was a great line for the assembled media.

He could have avoided all embarassment if he had just delayed his defection until the publication of Pluto Press's *Big Red Songbook*. The 128 page pocket size book contains words and music to 43 socialist songs, including the Red Flag and the Internationale.

LISTINGS

The dates given are only those which have been confirmed at the time of going to press. Information to *MfS Newsletter*, 79 Mountview Road, London N4 by the third Wednesday of each month.

To accommodate both listings, dates should run from the first Saturday of the month of publication to the 16th of the following month.

BIG CHIEF

Dick Heckstall-Smith's band is resident at the Stapleton Hall Tavern, London N4 every Monday (free).

INTI ILLIMANI

Dec 13 London, Friends House, Euston Road (for Chile Solidarity Campaign)

LIBERTY HALL

The Everyman Bistro, Hope Street, Liverpool 1.

Dec 18 Changes Disco: alternative disco with a large selection of women's music.

LEON ROSSELSON

Jan 13 London, Brixton Socialist Club

Mfs OPEN SESSION

Dec 21 The Metropolitan, Farringdon Road, London EC1, 7.30pm. (see news item above)

SINGERS CLUB

Bull & Mouth, 31 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1.

Dec 17 Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seegar

SWIFT

Jan 6 Amsterdam, Milky Way GIGS WANTED

CLAPPERCLAW Four-woman band doing feminist satire. Ideal to put alongside a rock band at benefit, radical conferences etc.



The Leveller January 1978 Page 33



CARDIFF **Women's Liberation Conference** for Wales

14/15 Jan 78 at Splott Youth Centre, Sanguhar Street, Splott, Cardiff. (Possibly also a bop on Friday night). There will be a creche and food provided. Please contact c/o 182 Broadway, Adamsdown, Cardiff (phone 0222-499759-Maggie or Linda), especially if wanting accommodation.

LIVERPOOL

Liberty Hall, Grove Park, Liverpool 8 (051-708 7270) Sunday Jan 8th Film: Illustrious Corpses by Francesco Rosi Sunday Jan 15th Speaker/discussion: Norman Clinton on the cope crisis centre.

LONDON

London Workers Group is a group of non-party revolutionary militants working in and around London to establish and encourage communication between workers.

Meetings are held on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm at Rising Free. Next meetings Dec 20 & Jan 3 Phone 01-249 7042 or 01-247 4829 to confirm. Correspondence c/o Box W, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

State Research will be holding a Public Meeting on Tue Jan 17 about state planning for nuclear and civil war, at 6.30pm at 9 Poland Street, London W1.

SHEFFIELD

Troops Out Conference Sat 10/Sun 11 Dec at Sheffield University. Entrance 60p per day. Open to all supporters of immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. For more details: United Troops Out Movement, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

Revolutionary Communist No 7 Nov 1977

Main feature is a full length political analysis of the CPGB's Draft British Road to Socialism 1977.

The article discusses the vital issues of imperialism, the state and revolution, democracy and the working class, as raised in the Draft BRS.

Included also is the first major review of the New Communist Party, based on their recent pamphlet.

COMMITTEE AGAINST REPRESSION IN IRAN

London Sub-Committee meets every fortnight, 11am; 1st and 3rd Sats of the month at Imperial College Union Building, Prince Consort Road, London SW1.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

National Meeting Sat 7/Sun 8 Jan at London University Catholic Chaplaincy, 111 Gower St, WC1.

STRONG WORDS

a people's publishing project from the north-east of England. Information from: Strong Words, 10 Greenburgh Rd, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE25 9HF.

MULTINATIONAL IN TYNE AND WEAR

Benwell and North Tyneside **Community Development Projects** in conjunction with the Tyne Conference of Shop Stewards, have completed two volumes on multinationals in Tyne & Wear County.

Vol 1: 'Who Owns Whom' in * Tyne and Wear

Vol 2: Profiles of 76 selected companies from vol 1.

Price: Vol 1 75p + 30p p&p Vol 2 £2 + 70p p&p Available from Benwell CDP,

85/87 Adelaide Terrace, Benwell, Newcastle 4.

COMING UP

Do it yourself paperback: 112 pages of stories, memories, poems and discussion. Price £1.20 from Commonword Workshop, 12a Piccadilly (first floor), Manchester 1.

LONDON FREE PRESS

needs new workers. LFP is the only independent socialist London-wide newspaper devoted to community matters. We are an unpaid collective and feel it is time to change from being an erratic publication with a low circulation to become a fortnightly with a wider readership. If you're into community issues, literate and prepared to offer a commitment. with your involvement, we can achieve those aims. Contact us on 359 8780.

Other articles include: Trade Unions and the State: the struggle against the Social Contract.

The CPGB and Ireland. Underconsumption and Crisis. The Politics of Technological Control.

Available from: RCG Publications Ltd (L), 49 Railton Road, London Lonfon SE24 OLN. Price: 50p+15p Postage.

SPECIAL BRANCH

There are 1,180 Special Branch officers in Great Britain, according to the second monthly briefing from State Research. 550 of these are based in London, and the briefing gives a detailed breakdown of estimated Special Branch strengths for all the country's police forces. The briefing also covers that the functions and history of the Special Branch, and stresses that surveillance of everyday political and trade union activity is a part of normal policing.

State Research bulletin appears ten times a year, and costs £3 for individuals, £6 for institutions: from State Research, 9 Poland St, London W1. Tel 01-734 5831.

HOME TRUTHS. An investigation into Westminster County Council's housing policies. £1 from 1 St Marys Terrace, London W2. Tenants groups in Westminster have just published the results of six months investigation into the Council's housing policies. The report concludes that the Secretary of State should use his powers to set up a public enquiry into the Council's housing record.

RACISM, FASCISM AND THE THE POLITICS OF THE NATIONAL FRONT

A reprint of an article by David Edgar from Race and Class, Autumn 1977. Playwright David Edgar's argument shows the danger of the left exclusively fighting either the racism of the National Front, or the more-neglected racist apparatuses of the state. However, the two racist strategies are essentially different and shouldn's be confised. 30p from Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1.

Classifieds

THE LEVELLER is now running a proper classified ads column. To make it useful to people we are going to charge only 2p a word for insertions. But all insertions must be pre-paid.

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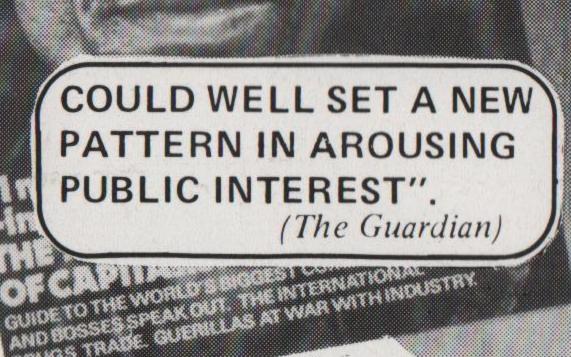
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