

Free subscriber offer

THIS MONTH'S book offer is "Andre Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism", by Franklin Rosemont, recently published by Pluto Press at £1.80. *The first 60 subscriptions through our door will get a free copy.*

Andre Breton (1896-1966), founder, leading theorist and principal spokesperson of the surrealist movement, is widely recognised as a major figure of twentieth-century thought.

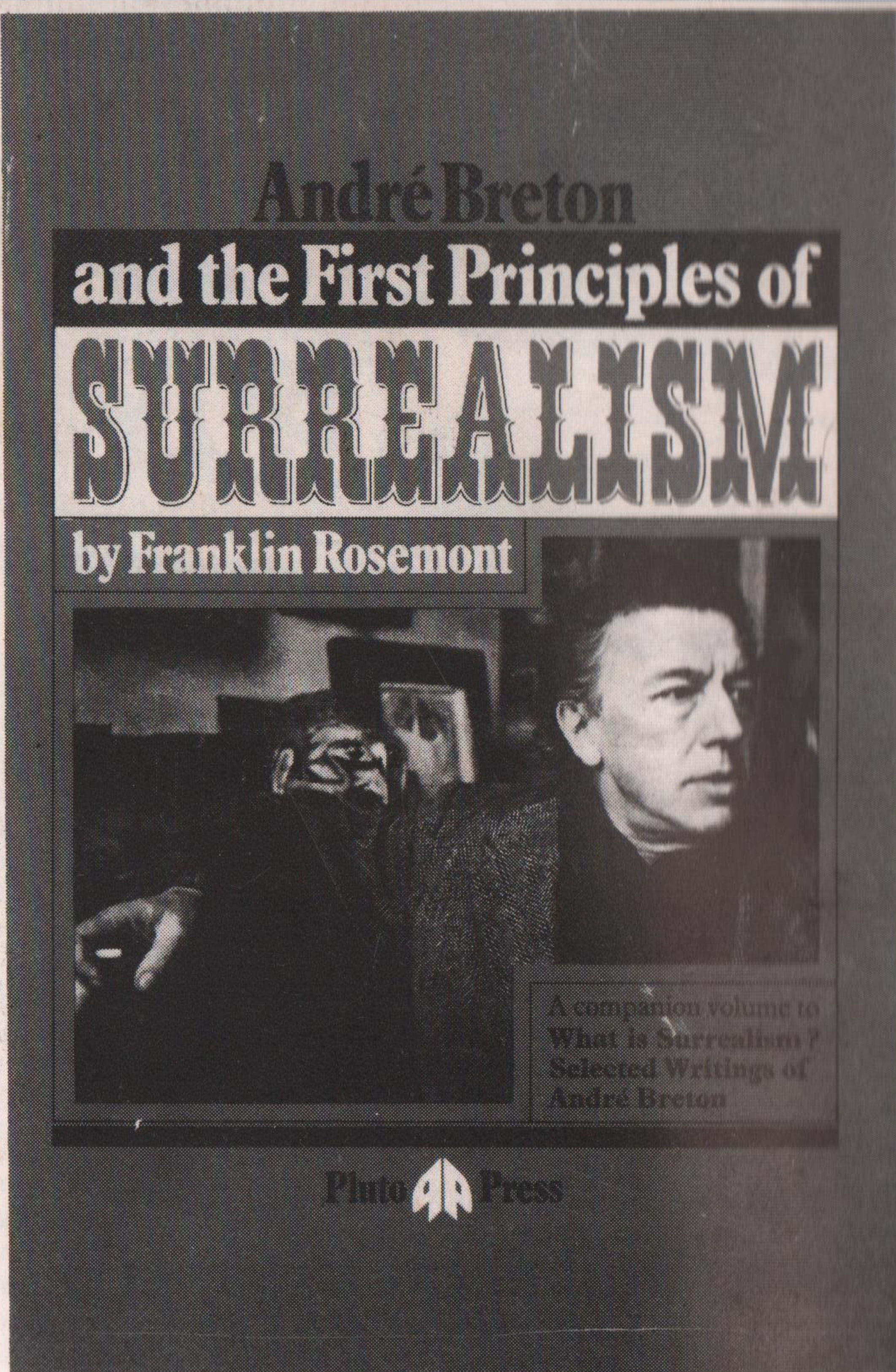
Written as the introduction to "What is Surrealism? Selected Writings", by Breton (published as a companion volume by Pluto), "Andre Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism" stands on its own as a concise exposition of what Breton called surrealism's invariable first principles.

Starting with a biographical sketch and a historical account of the movement Breton led for nearly half a century, Rosemont summarises the surrealist evidence on such matters as automatism, dreams, black humour, poetry, objective chance and love.

Also included is a detailed outline of surrealism's political position, focusing on the relationship between surrealism and communism, and tracing the complex interplay of its politics with better-known aspects of the movement.

FRANKLIN ROSEMONT met Breton in 1966 and later that year organised the first indigenous US surrealist group. He is the author of two books of poems and the *Manifesto on the Position and Direction of the Surrealist Movement in the United States* (1970).

He lives in Chicago, where he edits *Arsenal/Surrealist Subversion*, the English language journal of the international surrealist movement.



There are two kinds of subscription: Supporting Subscribers are the backbone of the magazine. As well as receiving a year's copies, they get regular newsletters; are informed of all developments; and are able to influence and vote on the policy of *The Leveller* at the Annual General Meeting of the Friendly Society which owns and controls it. This democratic structure is one of the chief strengths of *The Leveller*. The extra subscription also gives us a secure financial basis and allows us to increase circulation and to make the magazine more effective.

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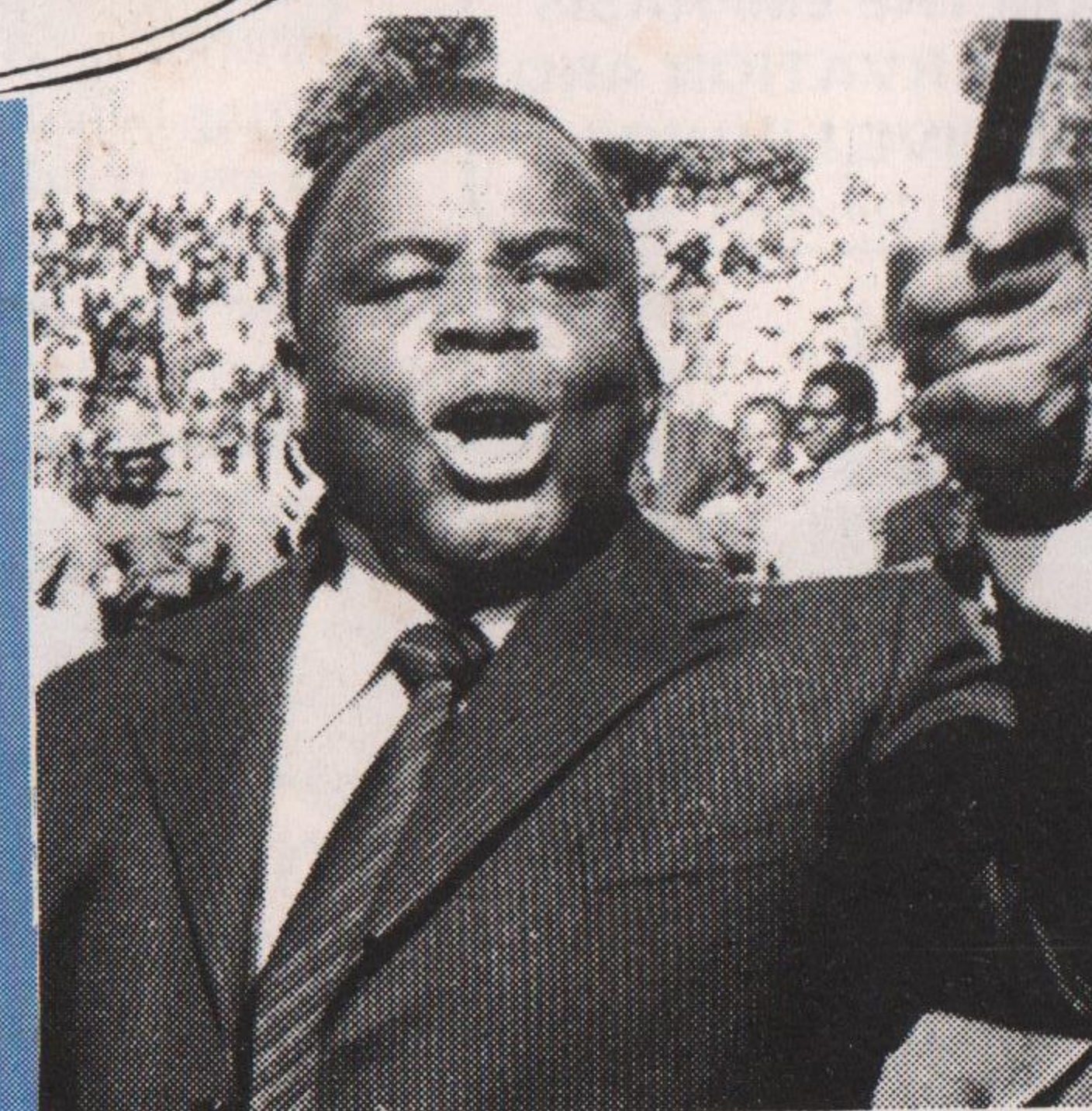
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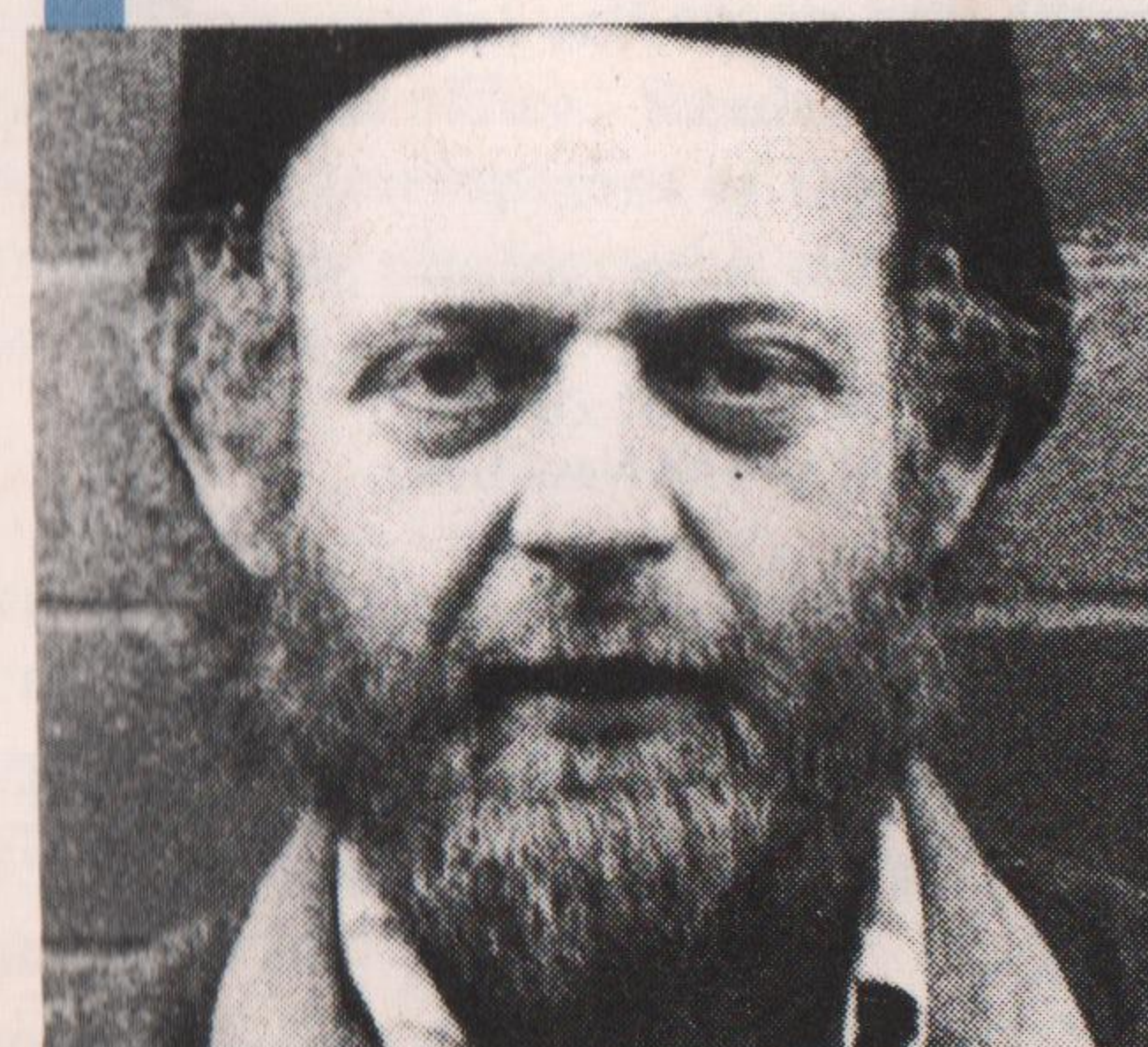
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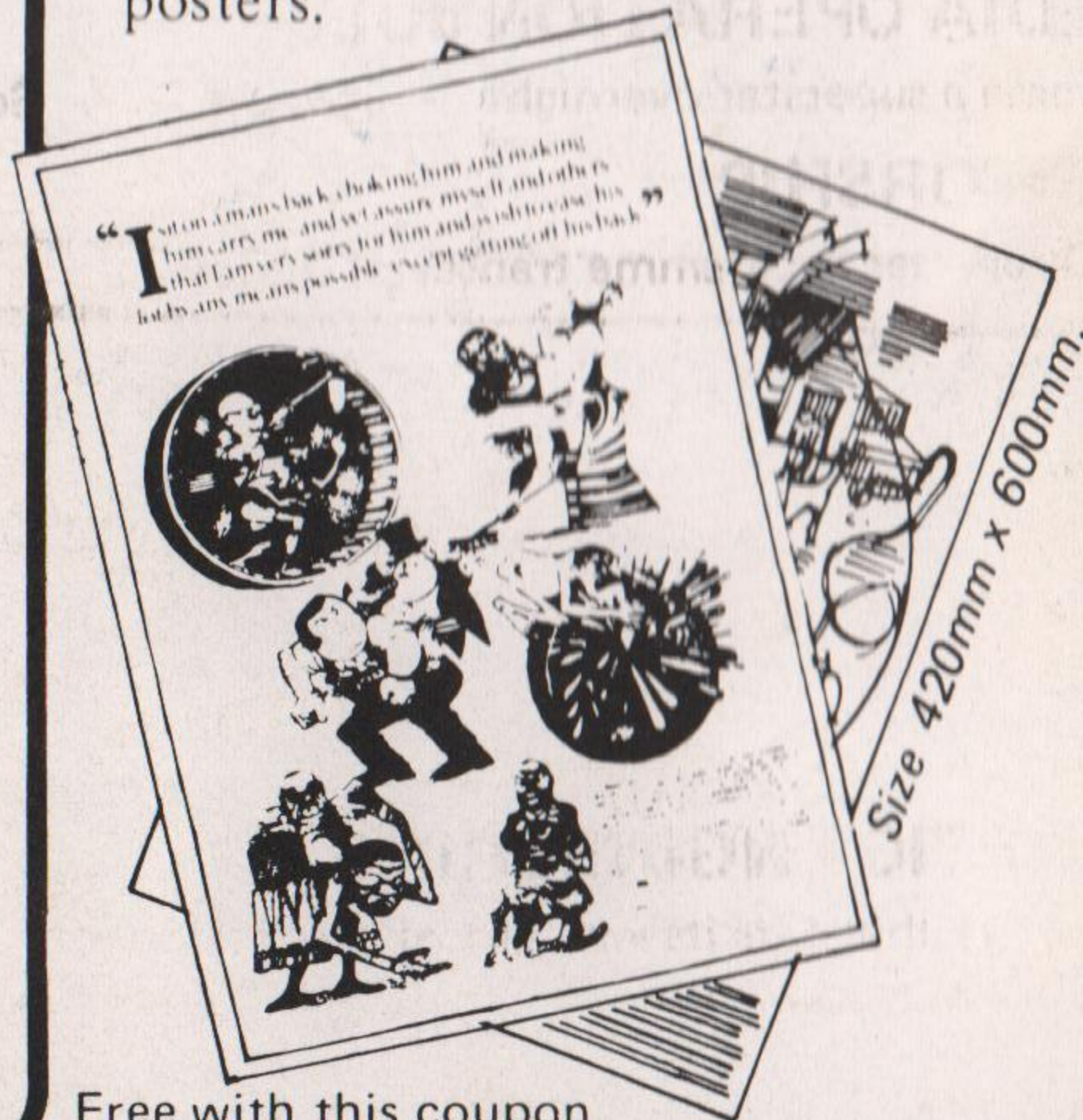
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- An unskilled British worker is twice as likely to die before 65 as a 'professional'.
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(Answers below)

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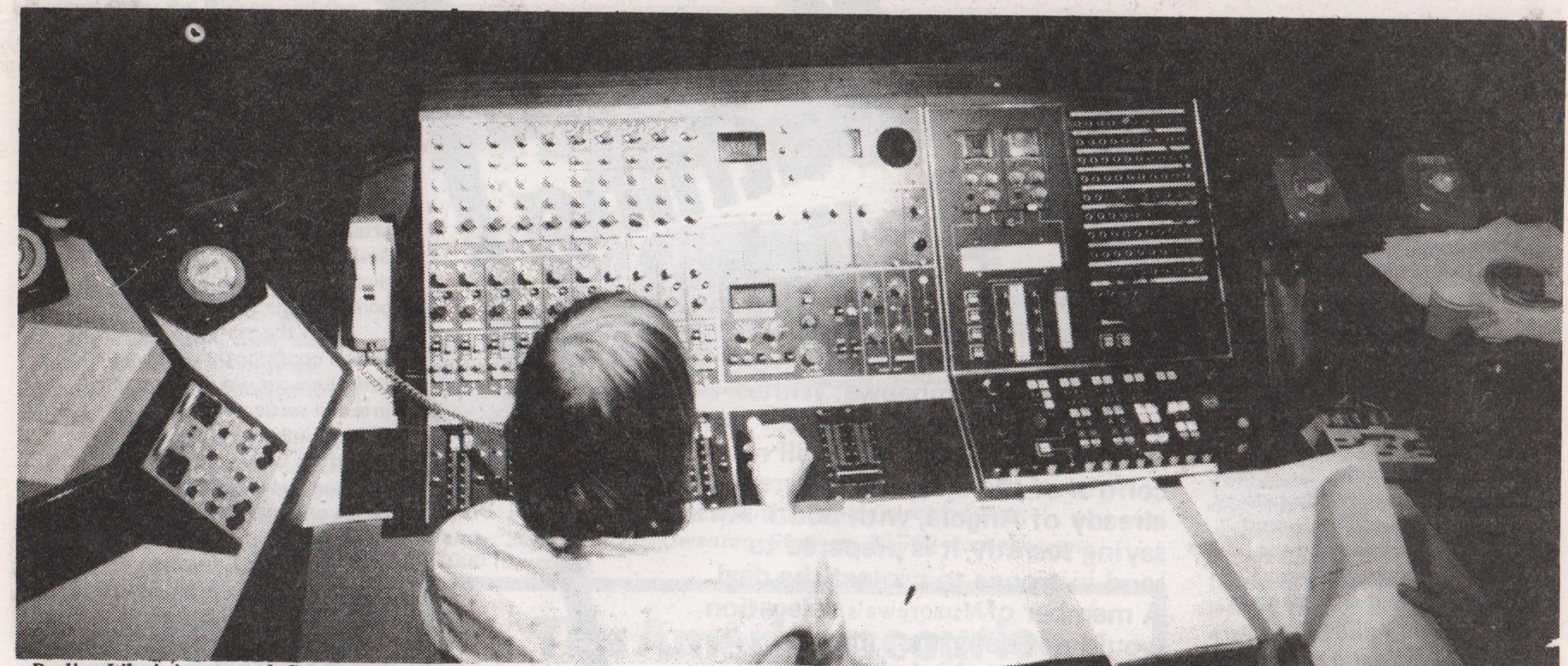
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Radio: Who's in control. See pages 26-29.

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Working committee meetings are held at 7.30 every Tuesday in our office. Readers are welcome to attend and assist in the development of the magazine. Written contributions, photographs, cartoons and story ideas are also welcome.

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Fear and loathing in Salisbury

The Smith deal with Muzorewa and Sithole will not mean independence for Zimbabwe. Whites can still veto legislation, under the interim government, and will retain control of the army. There are echoes already of Angola, with South Africa saying secretly it is prepared to send in troops to protect the deal. A member of Muzorewa's delegation would not deny that they would accept this help. Russell Southwood summarises and assesses secret minutes of the Salisbury talks.

Sithole



THE SPLIT in the Zimbabwe nationalist movement between those in the country and those acting as the guerillas' political leaders is not as wide as some people imagine. The nearer the Smith independence date set for the end of this year comes, the more anxious those outside the country like Nkomo, will be not to miss out on the handing out of government posts.

Western strategy, although not united, will attempt to peel Joshua Nkomo and his guerillas away from the war and merge the Patriotic Front into the internal settlement, a few more concessions being made to help Nkomo on his way. This would leave Mugabe isolated and the Russians and Cubans, already overstretched by the Ogaden war, unable to provide effective material assistance.

The split in western strategy is between its two main organisers, America and Britain. Although it has hedged its bets, the US has backed Nkomo. During the opening period of the internal talks when the press was being heavily critical of the Patriotic Front and called it a spent force, the staff of Andy Young's entourage were telling journalists not to be so harsh on Nkomo and Mugabe, for they were not the firebrands they were portraying them as.

On the other hand, Britain, mindful of Bishop Muzorewa's legendary popular support, would probably have begun to talk seriously of recognizing the importance of the internal settlement. On his visit to London, Muzorewa was given a sympathetic hearing by David Owen, the UK Foreign Minister.

The Americans, worried that the British will accept the internal settlement have tried to take up a holding position. Cyrus Vance, US Secretary of State called it a solution but not the whole solution.

THE MINUTES cover the first thirteen meetings of the Rhodesian Constitutional talks held between December and the beginning of February. How the documents were leaked will emerge later in this outline of the talks.

The extracts which follow make no attempt to be complete synopsis of the proceedings. The two most important issues of the talks—the control of the armed forces and the white blocking mechanism—have already been conceded by the black delegates.

Also, the minutes do not cover the private talks Ian Smith had separately with the leaders of the nationalist delegations. These were probably more important in overcoming the points of disagreement which the talks do no more than highlight.

Smith went into the talks insisting that he had left himself no retreating ground. But it is

very apparent that he used several ploys to try and split the black delegations. The discussion about whether to give the vote to 18-year olds is one of these.

The first meeting was boycotted by Bishop Abel Muzorewa's delegation because of attacks deep into Mozambique by Smith's armed forces. So the discussions did not really get going till the second meeting.

From the start Ian Smith talked confidently of his belief that the west would support an internal settlement: "I have information to the fact that if we were to arrive at a genuine settlement there would be no objections by the UK, USA, western European countries as well as the UN."

"Most of these are reluctant to make public pronouncements about what they would do for fear of public opinion and are afraid to stand up against the views of the Front Line states."

Trying to isolate the Patriotic Front as unreasonable and extreme, Ndabaningi Sithole asked: "What about the Patriotic Front? Have you invited them?" Smith: "I invited them in the same general way as I invited you. They got the message." Sithole: "It would be helpful for your credibility to make sure in some way that they got invited and to let the world know about it."

In the third meeting Smith maintained that he had left himself no retreating ground and that what he was offering was the minimum basics for retaining white confidence.

At this stage he threw in the red herring of 18-year old voters, saying that he believed they were still only schoolchildren, despite as he later admitted that they were able to marry and fight for their country. But his whole tone made it obvious he would give in quickly: "If it is the feeling of this group that 18-year olds must be enfranchised, then I will go along."

There was no way that the black delegations could let it be otherwise. Most of the guerillas in the bush are very young and would be less inclined to stop fighting if they were unable to take part in the politics of the country that they had fought so hard for.

There is an ironic moment in the third meeting when Bishop Abel Muzorewa suggests that the judicial procedures should include a right of appeal to the British Privy Council. One of Smith's hard-nosed ministers Peter Van der Byl asks: "Doesn't the Bishop's delegation think that this is a neocolonial step?"

In this third meeting, Sithole, who hoped to appear the tough negotiator of the talks, tried to cut the ground from under the Bishop's feet. "Our position is no separate rolls. We accept the idea of special representation of whites but not by direct elections. . . We think 40 (seats for whites) as

suggested by the Bishop and the government's one third is too high. . . We suggest 20 reserved seats for whites." But Smith continued to believe that a common roll of black and white voters would only result in white puppets being elected.

By the fourth meeting the continuing high level of guerilla attacks is worrying Sithole: "We should do something that will stop that war, whatever we do should, at the same time, not undermine white confidence because the state will need the skills of the whites."

There is a long argument over whether to use the word retain or maintain in the wording of the agreement on the civil service. Smith makes it quite clear what he is trying to achieve: "I can understand substituting 'maintain' for 'retain' because 'retain' connotes keeping whites in these (civil service) positions. All we want is to maintain a high state of efficiency, free from political interference."

Sithole remained worried: "What we fear is that at present the police, the army, prison service and the administration are predominantly white at the top. Should they remain as they are, this will cause difficulty in selling the settlement. . . While we are determined to see a settlement, we must face up to the problem of selling that settlement."

At the end of the fourth meeting an argument erupted over an article in the Zimbabwe Times detailing what had happened in the talks so far. Muzorewa's legal adviser Dumbuchena is the son of the editor of the Zimbabwe Times, and he was obviously accused of passing the minutes to the newspaper.

But Muzorewa had little to gain by leaking the minutes as his negotiating stance up to this point had been weak and muddled. So the finger was pointed at Sithole who got very enraged: "I detest the implication that I had anything to do with this for the sake of self-interest."

His anger must have been play acting for the copy of the minutes in *The Leveller's* possession are marked very clearly African National Council (Sithole).

At the fifth meeting the talks were still bogged down over the white blocking mechanism in parliament. Smith had obviously been led to believe that the Bishop would be more flexible. "I was given to understand, through my bush telephone, that you accepted this (the 1/3 blocking mechanism for whites). I am therefore surprised by your reaction. I reaffirm to you that to the whites.

The argument still revolves around who will elect the white representatives. Smith says: "Whites elected by blacks do not represent whites. They become stooges." Having used the word, everyone started using it until at a



Above: white Rhodesian's car with mounted machine guns. Below: Sithole rally in Gwanzeru Stadium. 20,000 were expected; 6,000 turned up

The American courier

AMERICAN SUPPORT and interest is not confined to Joshua Nkomo. Last October, Ndabaningi Sithole's key white adviser, Neville Romain, was expelled from Rhodesia. No reasons were given but Romain admitted being a former CIA agent. When the expulsion order came through he was in Washington trying to arrange a hearing at the UN Assembly for Sithole.

A Cape Town-born American, he only decided to live in Rhodesia a year ago. Interviewed in South Africa, he claimed that he was genuinely interested in trying to unite the nationalist movement.

He was responsible for persuading Muzorewa's top adviser, Dr Elliot Gabellah, to defect to Sithole's party. He arranged a secret meeting between the two at his house in Salisbury. To celebrate this success, he called his house Unity.

Shortly afterwards, he got Chief Chirau, head of ZUPO, the traditional chiefs' group, to sign a secret agreement that he would work with Sithole on the internal settlement. While Romain was in America, he met with the officials involved with the Anglo-American proposals and it appears that he has been the American courier.



later meeting of the representatives of the traditional chiefs' group ZUPO, all on salaries from Smith's government, objected: "We take objection to the connotation implied in the word stooge. We are free to accept or reject anything."

Sithole was still worried that

the deal wouldn't wash and was getting worrying signals from America: "I got some communication from my representative in New York that they (the Americans) say all they want from us is a failure because they think this is a sell-out deal." Sithole was under strong pressure

at this point to quit the talks altogether. Throughout the talks, the white government delegation tries to keep as polite as possible. But occasionally, as after a long fruitless discussion on the blocking mechanism, the mask slips. David Smith, Rhodesian Deputy Prime Minister said: "I notice a lack of understanding of basic parliamentary procedures. It takes years of experience. It is not like running a business or bus company."

The black delegation with undoubtedly the most popular support, Muzorewa's, has a very clear idea of what an independent Zimbabwe will be like, which differs only slightly from the white delegation's in its essentials: Dumbuchena: "We have seen bad (African) governments and learned from their mistakes. It is a mistake to assume every African government is bad. Look at Kenya and Botswana."

Van der Byl: "In the case of Kenya it turned out good after a bad start. Botswana is a primitive situation where a white man was bought to administer the government. The best example comes from the Ivory Coast where there is a sound economy."

Phineas Sithole (no relation), Acting General Secretary of Ndabaningi Sithole's delegation makes a rare, direct statement of politics at the seventh meeting: "There are those who think that nationalization is proper, we feel not and we want to ensure the rights of the individual to property if that should happen. There are many situations where the common man may want nationalization and we want to say from the start no to such pressure on the government of the day."

Property remains the issue around which any radical change in Zimbabwe must happen and whites are only too aware of this. Smith summed up their fears: "I have met the farmers and discussed a paper produced by the Rhodesian Farmers Union in which they show that the farmers are now showing a growing concern about majority rule. They say they are uncertain about what will happen to their property."

In the end a deal emerged from the talks. The Bishop, who had been holding out for 20 seats on a separate electoral roll and eight on a multiracial roll, gave in to a compromise of eight seats to be nominated by existing white MPs. The Defence and Police forces still remain in white hands.

P. Claypole, a Rhodesian civil servant at the internal talks gave the following revealing statistics. Total number of whites and Africans in the Civil Service. This includes dustbin collectors, etc.

Africans	25,000
Whites	15,000
Total number in what he called "The Establishment".	
Government Departments, etc.	
Africans	1,700
Whites	8,222

Operation Julie cops fail the acid test

'OPERATION JULIE'—the massive police operation to round up the Welsh acid wizards—has gone down into history. The problem is that the police themselves have been busy writing a lot of that history. Press reports have vied with each other in repeating the same police-inspired inaccuracies.

Contrary to what you have read, the operation was not the biggest LSD bust ever—chains at least as big have been turned over several times in the US. Nor has 'Julie' dried up LSD supplies: though it now costs £1 to £1.50 as opposed to 75p to £1, customary a few years ago, it is still quite freely available. Inflation has hit all drug prices quite as badly as anything else.

Curious that nearly all papers have included this 'disinformation' in their round ups of the trials of Christine Bott, Richard Kemp, David Solomon and the others involved in the LSD ring. But not really. For while the trial was still on, police-inspired details of 'Operation Julie' were circulated by the Press Association to all major national newspapers, marked 'Background only—not for publication'. As well as police self-congratulations on 'Operation Julie', it contained the sort of detail which has appeared at great length about the personal lives of the defendants, all in the usual 'As-I-was-proceeding' style, full of expressions like 'common law wife' and the like.

This is normal practice for all major criminal trials. After receiving the PA/Police version, the newsdesks despatch eager hacks to dig out the details from aged relatives, former friends, etc. An intriguing aspect of this case has been the re-writes of the police briefings by at least one journalist who was a known user of the high-quality LSD which Kemp & Co. produced.

Perhaps this explains the wilder allegations surrounding the trial, most of which were dreamt up in Scotland Yard and Fleet Street, not even being mentioned in court. Connoisseurs of anti-dissident rumour will recognise the similarity between the Mirror's allegation that Kemp & Co. were prepared to dump LSD in a reservoir, and the equally groundless rumour that the Baader-Meinhof Group intended to deposit nuclear waste in Lake Constance.

The Observer found a suitable psychiatrist to conclude that Richard Kemp's naive declarations that LSD could act as a

catalyst to change the world to a nicer, less competitive place. It showed, she said, that he was paranoid, because of its repeated assertions that the establishment opposed him and was out to get him. Given that 26 police officers spent the best part of a year and half a million pounds on Operation Julie, this sounds a rather reasonable conclusion.

Close resemblances to the similar media operation after the 'Angry Brigade' trial were evident, and the BBC's extended news coverage was directed by Gordon Carr who performed the same task then.

The media operation helped obscure LSD's relative harmlessness compared to other 'Class A' dangerous drugs.

Expert evidence produced by Dr. Martin Micheson of the University College Drug Addiction Unit was ignored. Micheson, well-respected among drug-workers but no radical, argued that LSD should be placed below the opiates (heroin and morphine), barbituates and amphetamines ("downers" and "uppers", widely available on doctors' prescriptions).

LSD was not addictive, he said, and it caused little or no physical injury. People who suffered from adverse mental effects often already had psychologic difficulties.

Police were unable to produce a single-witness damaged by the millions of trips produced by the acid-factory. Indeed, one of their own officers seems to have enjoyed his accidental trip—as do most people (it seems).

The media operation will also assist these police chiefs who are once again pushing for the idea of a national policing force. Leslie Pearce, Assistant Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, who headed up the Julie Squad and is now on secondment to the Home Office, told a post-trial press conference that a drug squad covering Britain as a whole was one of the possibilities being considered.

The argument for a national police force to deal with drugs has long been a standard line of the American Drug Enforcement Administration. The DEA, set up by President Nixon in 1973, now propagandises around the world for national narcotics bureaux: Peter Niblo, the DEA's man in London, consistently argues for it in discussions with senior officers from Scotland Yard's Drugs Squad. And it's but a short step from there to an overall national police force, thus removing even the current nominal local element of control.

Confirmation of the censorship within the BBC (see *The Leveller* issue 11) has followed a discussion on BBC2 on February 11.

The discussion followed a screening of "Before Hindsight", a compilation of newsreel footage from the 1930s that whitewashed Nazi Germany. It included commentary by James Cameron and Jonathan Dimbleby, who drew parallels with present-day coverage of Northern Ireland, concluding: "When our successors in thirty or forty years time look back on the coverage of events in South Africa, or events in Northern Ireland, they will look back with the same kind of dismay that we now look back on the way the cinema covered events in the 30s in Germany."



Dimbleby: Ireland coverage distorted

Protagonists in the ensuing discussion included David Elstein, producer of *This Week*, the Thames TV programme for which Dimbleby works, Dick Francis, Ulster protestant Director of News and Current Affairs at the BBC, and Jo Grimond. Chairperson was Ludovic Kennedy. An account appeared in the next week's *The Listener*, the BBC's highbrow house journal. It was not a complete, or even an accurate account. Some of Elstein's contributions were re-written, some edited out. This did not appear:

We should beware of laughing too much at the thirties because I think we are guilty of many of the same sins. I winced when I saw Mosely come up in that Movietone (newsreel), but I also winced when I saw you (Kennedy) interview Martin Webster on Tonight. . . .

Kennedy had been instructed to do an easy interview with big fat Webster to atone for what the BBC had seen as unfair treatment of the Front in Joe Ashton's Labour Party broadcast (which was nothing to do with the BBC—except that they censored part of it, of course). **I must say I heaved a sigh of relief when *This Week* was banned from South Africa, because now at least we are able to go in clandestinely and film what we want to film . . . in a way which sadly the BBC is unable to film because the BBC has to maintain an above-ground operation inside South Africa, and therefore has to eschew . . .**

Kennedy interrupted at this point, and the discussion drifted off. Eventually it concentrated on the North.

This Week has made more reports from Northern Ireland in the last five years than any other weekly current affairs programme on the air. . . .

This disappeared; but, more seriously, when Elstein spoke of "our close involvement with

No wisdom in hindsight

Northern Ireland as a country" it came out "... as a province." An unlikely transcriber's error.

Francis then went on to justify self-censorship as being "about a sense of responsibility . . . I think it is a perfectly proper thing." And a most peculiar re-write appeared. Francis said: "What else do you want? Do you want imposed censorship, either from the organisation that is responsible for broadcasting, or from outside? I suggest not." This came out as "... do you want to oppose censorship, either from . . . Elstein replied:

We have the imposed censorship as well as the self-censorship.
Francis: "Not in the BBC you don't." Elstein: **You don't have any censorship in the BBC of items from Northern Ireland? For a long time it was impossible to produce items about Northern Ireland in the BBC. One of my predecessors as producer of *This Week* left the BBC because he wasn't allowed to make a film about gerrymandering in Northern Ireland in 1966, before it became an issue that produced political violence. . .**

In the programme, Kennedy interrupted with: "David, you must be very careful . . .", and Jo Grimond came in with an idiotic suggestion that the Irish question might be "admirable" for radio discussion, but not for TV.



Elstein: censored on the North

Grimond's bit is in *The Listener*. But the whole of Elstein's remark is simply written out.

re-write history. On the page opposite these extracts in *The Listener* appears its regular column "40 Years Ago". And the quotation from *The Listener* of February 23 1938 is as follows:

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BROADCASTING HOUSE LONDON W1A 1AA
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TELEGRAMS AND CABLES BROADCASTS LONDON TELEX
3 March, 1978

admits

Dear Ms Phillips,
Thank you for your letter of 22 February to the Director General. He has read it with interest and asked me to reply on his behalf.
I hope you will not mind if this letter is rather more personal than those I normally write in my present position. As it happens I used to produce "You the Jury". Indeed, I devised the programme and therefore I am only too aware of its weaknesses. Packing the jury is one of them. On this occasion a number of the jury had attended the recordings of two previous editions (one on William Benyon's Abortion Amendment Bill and the other on "Salaries for housework") and therefore they knew how to manipulate the voting. It is easy to be wise after the event, but had I been the producer I hope I would have noticed this pressure group forming in the jury seats and moved them elsewhere. Alternatively, I would have asked Dick Taverner to add a few sentences at the end of the programme which registered his surprise, at the very least, that the vote had turned out the way it did.
To my knowledge this is the first time in 26 editions of "You the Jury" that the voting has been rigged. I was interested to discover that in all the 19 programmes that I produced, when national opinion polls had been taken on questions close enough to the motion "on trial" a majority of the jury voted in favour of the motion. Moreover, the closing vote always came as no surprise.
Yours sincerely,
Hugh Purcell
(Hugh Purcell)
Senior Assistant, Secretariat.

vote rigging

AN anti-abortionist is easy to spot. At the risk of being accused of the worst kind of stereotyping, it's fair to say there's something about the righteousness of manner, and

40 Years Ago

T. P. CONWELL EVANS: The German worker is cared for by the Labour Front not only when he is unwell, or unemployed. The Labour Front gives him a life of variety and colour during his leisure. At every theatre or opera a row of seats in the expensive parts of the house is reserved for him at very cheap rates. Courses in gymnastics, skiing, even horse-riding, are available to the worker for a few pence . . . The Germans are trying to restore the human touch, the personal relation between worker and employer. Employers are told to take part in excursions or evening recreation with their workers. An employer said to me that in this way he began to look upon his workers as co-partners . . . The aim of the National Socialist Party is to make the German a social collaborator instead of a competitive individual. It is certainly going on efficiently, though I would at once agree that all these reforms have been carried out at the expense of a large measure of political liberty, in our sense of the term. Germany is building up her strength in order to play her full part in Europe, but never forget that peace and a just peace is the dominant aim, and when Hitler speaks for peace he is the mouthpiece of the German people.

Efficiency and Liberty: Germany, THE LISTENER 23 February 1938

The Leveller phoned *The Listener* to enquire whether this had appeared by accident or design. It was coincidence, we were told. The "40 years ago" items are chosen weeks in advance. Perhaps the coincidence isn't so strange. It proved everything that "Before Hindsight"—and Dimbleby and Elstein—said.

down-home moralistic nastiness that identifies them—*en masse* it's unmistakable. Sitting amongst the audience of BBC Radio 4's 'You the Jury', and looking at the crowd of LIFE and SPUC surrounding us, it was easy to predict what the result of the debate "Pre-birth Screening for women is not in the best interests of society" would be. The debate was not about screening, it was, as far as the anti-abortionists were concerned, about a "medical technique gone badly wrong".

Most women, if they find that the foetus they are carrying is handicapped, will opt for an abortion. Confronted by this uncomfortable reality, the only line of action anti-abortionists have left is to withhold the information that would lead to that decision. Professor Scarisbrick, Chairperson of LIFE, led the anti's with a monstrous speech about "seeking out babies with the intent to destroy them" and the usual mystical "life begins at conception" rubbish. Not only that, but didn't we realise how enriching a badly handicapped child could be for our lives; how it brings a family together, and helps them to make new and wonderful friends . . . ?

The pro-screening side did very well considering, and the few of us in the audience kept up a constant barrage of "what about WOMEN?" etc. etc. But in the hundred 'jury' seats sat a mass of wily anti-abortionists, who had embarked on the clever little scheme of creating an artificial swing in the voting. At the beginning of the programme half of them voted against the motion, but at the end voted for it, creating a shift of 55% to 90%.

Producer David Turner, supercilious BBC creep, tried to ignore shouts of "rigged!" . . . "we saw LIFE'ers change their vote", but when the programme went out a rider was added, pointing out that no-one had ever pretended that the jury was representative, or that there was any mass screening of the audience. Now they've even admitted that the vote was fixed, and no doubt Turner has had his wrists slapped for bringing BBC impartiality and objectivity into disrepute.

How will we ever keep up the myth of "freedom of speech" if its propagandists get in such a muddle?

Rose Shapiro

Letters

RED THERAPY BLUES

We write as two members of Red Therapy to correct some of the misleading impressions contained in your article *Red Therapy For Big City Blues* (*The Leveller*, January 1978) and in Marina Lewycka's poem (*The Leveller*, March 1978).

The article, apart from containing many specific inaccuracies, omits the central feature of Red Therapy—namely that it is a *leaderless, self-help* group. Our original aim in setting it up was to do therapy that was under our own control, not that of some medical psychiatrist, conventional psychoanalyst or growth movement leader. Their interests are usually not ours, and we did not want our political activities and beliefs reduced to 'neurotic defences' or 'head-trips' as so often happens. For us, doing therapy means dealing with the emotional pain and confusion of living in this society whilst trying to create less oppressive relationships; it means freeing ourselves from the grip of early family and social experience in order to confront the present more strongly.

In self-help therapy groups (as in co-counselling) people learn to be each other's therapist, and this is an important demystification of psychotherapy and the usual role of the therapist. The skill and experience gained in a group can be used outside therapy—to sort out problems in relationships, to make meetings less oppressive, to understand and change the dynamics of a work of living collective. This is not an easy transition—the safety provided by a therapy group does not always obtain in everyday life, and the pressure to hold things together and keep going can deter collectives from looking more closely at the blocks and conflicts between people—but it is an important part of the politics of self-help to make this transition.

Marina's poem expresses considerable personal bitterness about Red Therapy (which as close friends at the time we find very one-sided), but it does also raise the question of the relationship between therapy and politics more generally. The article also makes it sound as though Red Therapy's main relationship to politics is to complain about the subjectively awful experience of political meetings. This is to trivialise what we are saying. It is true (and very important in the credibility of the left) that many meetings are extremely alienating, and that the

behaviour of some political activists does not differ much from that of authoritarian school teachers or manipulative bureaucrats. But behind this criticism lies a whole approach to political activity that has evolved since the late 60s: an understanding of how capitalism uses the personal and the emotional as well as the economic to motivate and control people in its own interests; an understanding of how political activity has to relate to people's subjectively felt needs and perceptions as well as to their objectively diagnosed ones, if it is to have much meaning or success. The family is one of the main transmitters of capitalist ideology, the place where people get their main sense of themselves from, and the focus of intense and powerful feelings. The women's movement has shown what powerful political forces can be unleashed by challenging the nature of the apparently purely personal, and by a many-sided attack on the role of the family.

There is also the implication in the article that therapy is only justified if it is politically OK, if it turns people on to politics. It is clear that therapy of certain kinds does radicalise people's perceptions of themselves and strengthen their ability to fight, but we have a much wider perspective than this. People, in the struggle to survive, are freaking out everywhere. They either get no support at all, and go 'mad', or else they are fobbed off with drugs, coercive forms of treatment, and oppressive advice. Usually they are made to feel that their unhappiness is all their own fault, due to their personal inadequacies. The need for non-oppressive forms of therapy as an alternative to what is mostly available is very great indeed, and the resources available are not remotely adequate to meet this. Self-help therapy can cater for some of this need, but it is not a model that suits everyone—it does require a certain level of togetherness, and a willingness to pay useful attention to other people.

Anyone with any experience of mental hospitals knows how important it is to develop alternative forms of care and therapy which do not brutalise or doubly victimise people but which challenge and change the oppressive nature of people's lives and relationships. Red Therapy alone cannot do this, but nor are we retreating into an 'alternative paradise' of "brown rice, apple juice and fucking", as Marina fantasises in her poem. People in Red Therapy are politically active in all kinds of ways, and are also trying to raise mental health as an important issue to organise around. We see ourselves as part of many linked

developments which also include Cope, the Women and Mental Health Group, the Women's Therapy Centre, Battersea Action and Counselling Centre, the Junction Road Project, new self-help groups, co-counselling, etc. *The Leveller*, whilst devoting pages to obviously cultural issues like rock music, has failed to appreciate the importance of any of this, or of the extent of psychiatric oppression.

Lastly, we'd like to make public the fact that the two members of Red Therapy interviewed made an arrangement with *The Leveller* that they would see the article and change it—ie. work on it cooperatively with the writer in question. The person responsible forgot to show us it until it was already pasted up. We think that a journal that professes to want reader and writer participation should try harder to put its theories into practice. We certainly wouldn't have agreed to the article as it came out.

Joanna Ryan
Sheila Young
London E3

ELITIST HACKS

Apart from a general anti-left cynicism there are two central points in Nigel Thomas's piece on new technology and Fleet Street in your January issue which need to be taken up.

Firstly there is his argument that new technology will lead to a 'great reduction in the quality of the newspapers'. Apparently 'the system will tend to encourage long, chronological, literal (false-objective) stories'. Could Nigel Thomas explain how such reports can possibly be worse than the 99% garbage which flows out of Fleet Street daily? Oh for such 'long, chronological, literal' stories in the pages of the *Sun*! The 'quality' of an ideological product like a newspaper is extremely difficult to assess. For example, does the more efficient, polished presentation of a capitalist world-view make a newspaper better or worse, for our purposes?

However the roots of this curious view lie, I believe, in a particularly pernicious professional/artisanal craft-consciousness, even amongst relatively "radical" journalists, by which they believe that mere manual workers—including computer operators—couldn't possibly produce something as interesting as journalists, equipped, as they are with 'special skills'. The cat is let out of the bag in a telling sentence where he says 'As the art stands at the moment (who is he trying to mystify?), a computer terminal is a crude,

blunt instrument compared to a journalist with eight pieces of paper and a biro'.

A similar elitist attitude recently manifested itself in my NUJ branch, the supposedly left-wing magazine branch. Those present overwhelmingly voted not to recruit members in advertising agencies, on the argument that Magazine branch members were doing a qualitatively different job ("telling the truth" or some such liberal idiocy) compared to copy-writers. This in a branch whose members produce *Woman's Own*, *Playboy* and *Tit-Bits*!

The second point which needs challenging is his argument concerning the NUJ closed shop. For him, as for the bulk of the left in the NUJ, in unholy alliance with the NUJ bureaucracy, the closed shop has nothing to do with freedom of the press or the potential control of newspaper content by the working-class, starting with the producers. For him it is simply a question of strengthening the NUJ as a trade union—economism reigns supreme. In other words Thomas dismally retreats before the political offensive of proprietors, managers and editors, implicitly accepting their definition of 'press freedom' (ie the eternal ownership of the bulk of our media by a tiny handful of capitalists). Such a capitulation has nothing in common with a strategy for the socialist transformation of those media.

Of course, for "ideological" producers like journalists, a post-entry closed shop has *everything* to do with "press freedom", even though most journalists still see the issue in narrow trade union terms. The proprietors know that—it's useless denying it. We should be meeting them on that political terrain with the argument that the NUJ's closed shop *could indeed* be one small step in bringing about a freer, more democratic and responsible press and broadcasting system. For example the editors' dirtiest work might be challenged using the NUJ Code of Conduct, if they were forced into the NUJ. Only such an *offensive* political argument can begin to shift the struggle in the NUJ and the print-unions on these issues in a potentially radical and productive direction.

Carl Gardner
London NW6

ROCK OFF

Excuse the pun, but the level of *The Leveller* is dropping. I had to look twice at this month's issue to be sure I'd bought the right magazine. Interview with Poly Styrene, Reggae, Sci-fi Is this the counter information that *The Leveller* is going to provide us with in the future? If so, I'll stick to the *Sunday Times* colour supplement where I can read non-

Attack

The *Leveller* reached a new low in anti-left group bashing with the article by Les Levidow on Grunwick in the February issue.

Firstly, Levidow says "despite the naive cheerleading of the left party groups, important criticisms have been raised in journals such as *Spare Rib* and *Race Today*, rightly concerned with the independent organisation of the strike and its mass support".

Just in these journals? I suggest Levidow reads the *Socialist Challenge* pamphlet, *The Battle of Grunwick*. First section—"The Strikers Organise". This deals with the formation of the strike committee but outlines that its weakness, in part due to the role of Jack Dromey and Brent Trades Council, was its failure to organise itself and the mass support it had independently of the trade union bureaucracy. The forced withdrawal of the 8 August mass picket call "highlighted the urgent need for the Trades Council and the Strike Committee to organise their support openly in the rank-and-file of the labour movement, and not rely on bypassing the bureaucracy by manoeuvres... It had not been enough to use the 'network' of trade union contacts; what has been required is real grass roots support committees with the ability to involve the whole labour movement and the community in the localities".

Second point. Les Levidow gives an extremely garbled account of how "would-be revolutionaries" capitulate to left MPs and trade union leaders in order to get their official backing for campaigns like the Troops Out Movement, CACTL and so on, in order to then mobilise support in "the white male industrial working class"—"the real thing". I'm sorry but this rubbish just won't wash. Does TOM getting the support of Joan Maynard MP for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland help or hinder the Irish struggle? Does Hornsey and Tottenham Labour Parties working with the IMG, SWP and anti-fascist groups to stop the National Front march in Wood Green last 23 April help or hinder the anti-fascist struggle? This is known as the tactic of the united front.

It means that the IMG is willing to act with any and every current in the labour movement which is prepared to take action, however limited, on any of the myriad of issues facing the working class, whether it be anti-racism, black self-defence, against women's oppression, unemployment, wage controls, and so on. Within any united campaign we argue for our own political positions but we don't impose these as a barrier to united action on a more limited basis with other forces.

Third point. Levidow argues that the left is "complicit in the defeat" at Grunwick because we shared the official apologists' view that it was "official union endorsement" that drew out 20,000 on the 11 July mass picket. Well, Les is so anxious to bash the left that he gives the bureaucracy more credit than it is due. Both the TUC and the APEX leadership campaigned against the mass picket on 11 July and tried to organise a diversionary march at midday from the start. It was the vanguard of the working class who turned up at 6am., and they didn't come on bicycles from NW1 but were brought down as organised official contingents from the militant sections of the trade union movement.

Fourth point. Levidow tries to make a confused point that the Grunwick strike erupted over speed-up. It didn't. It erupted over a sacking and compulsory overtime and a general revolt against sweatshop conditions, and "only secondarily did it take the form of a unionisation campaign". Well, a. leads to b. The formation

of a union is the first step to fighting such conditions.

Fifth point. Revolutionaries should have "organised independent strike support meetings to plan a strategy for the mass pickets, unhindered by official strings attached to Brent Trades Council..." This is where Levidow goes from terrible to chronic—and he is extremely dishonest to boot. He knows as well as us that the strike committee also supported the calling off of the 11 July mass picket at 12 noon. This wasn't a betrayal on their part but reflected the incredible blackmail of the TUC and APEX bureaucracy and the strike committee's failure to organise their mass support independently of them. To do other than the strike committee said, albeit with tears in our eyes, would have been to attempt to substitute revolutionaries for the actual leadership of the strike. Or perhaps Levidow thinks the revolutionaries should have occupied the factory and told the strike committee about it afterwards.

This is the most revealing point of the whole article. Levidow wants to avoid the problem of the trade union bureaucracy; wants to avoid the

fact that revolutionaries are only a very small influence inside even the militant sections of the working class. For a political struggle to overcome this weakness, to organise a class struggle tendency throughout the organisation of the labour movement, he wants to substitute "subversive possibilities". The greatest failing of the far left was not its failings on the picket line but its capitulation to the idea that militancy alone could win the strike.

In a situation where George Ward would rather close down than concede union recognition, the slogan of 'nationalisation under workers' control' should have been raised from the earliest days of the mass picketing. In fact, the IMG did it rather belatedly and after the broad movement that could have enforced this demand had passed its peak.

Mick Gosling
London Organiser,
International Marxist Group

counterposed to my alleged lies and distortions. Rather than take up his criticisms point by point, I will try to specify for the IMG the general claims that I made in February.

It is certainly true that, like *Spare Rib* and *Race Today*, the IMG's pamphlet criticized the strike's dependence upon the trade union bureaucracy. However, in that document it was still left ultimately to the Brent Trades Council and strike committee to organise an independent support movement. Futilely calling upon those institutions to be what they cannot possibly be, the IMG in effect accepted their (understandably inherent) political limitations as limitations for revolutionaries as well, who could then comfortably limit themselves to the exposing of betrayals.

Furthermore, it is one thing to pose the problem of dependence in a pamphlet in October, and quite another to propose concrete ways for revolutionaries to overcome it in a weekly agitational newspaper able to affect the course of events. For example, as frustrated IMG members themselves had to point out in letters-to-the-editor, not only was the left politically unprepared for the July 11 mass picket, but *Socialist Challenge's* reportage covered up the left's abject failure to intervene politically to sustain the picket against the official instructions, to appeal directly (with leaflets, loudhailers, etc.) to the thousands of pickets over the heads of their leaders, especially Dromey and Scargill.

And why was the left so unprepared? Because all along it was considered utterly unthinkable for the left itself to lead the support movement out of its safe bounds, to 'do other than the strike committee said, (horrors!), to take the necessary political risks involved in publicly challenging the authority of trade union leaders in fluid situations.

All of this points to the IMG's entrapment in a narrow politics of representations: an inability to go beyond simply 'pressuring' the state and the unions to act in the interests of the working class, and a refusal to recognize (much less cultivate) the potential germs of new organs of working class power manifested in the mass movement called up by an apparently 'trade union' struggle.

It was a matter of taking the 'labour movement' at face value as merely a collection of trade union delegations—rather than digging beneath its surface form and rhetoric, and drawing out the way that sections of the class took control over their own work processes (and the streets) so as to challenge the sort of unionism that they were called to defend at Grunwick.

Les Levidow,
London N7.

Grunwick dispute

Reply

In both the replies to my Grunwick article so far published by *The Leveller*, the welter of facts offered up seems to lose sight of the basic political questions that I originally attempted to raise.

In the case of Naz's reply in the March Issue, *Not all in vain*, he says very little with which I would fundamentally disagree.

It is one thing to expose evils or to 'vindicate' a just cause, and quite another to act in ways that materially advance it. My article set out to suggest that the left party groups (not the "ultra left") were complicit in the ultimate defeat by safely limiting themselves to describing the glories of the strikers and picket, and the injustices done to them.

In the case of Mick Gosling's reply in this issue, we can see a defensive reaction by someone who has to answer for all the missed revolutionary opportunities that the IMG (among others) failed to take up in the course of the Grunwick events. In his reply, unfortunately, a fundamental political disagreement takes the form of a patronising list of facts

PARLIAMENT

Britain abandons political asylum

AS MERLYN REES shrugs his shoulders over Ku Klux Klan leaders rampaging the country, he and the Home Office are quietly piloting through parliament a measure designed to limit the right of political asylum for socialists. The Suppression of Terrorism Bill, which had a second reading in the Commons in February, is intended to bring Britain into line with other European nations and allow the Government to ratify the European Convention on terrorism, agreed by Britain and the sixteen other nations in the Council of Europe, in January last year.

The Convention and the Bill aim to deny that certain offences can ever have been committed with a political motive. Offenders will thus lose the protection which politically motivated criminal behaviour has often enjoyed in the past.

Political motivation *must* be ignored, by the states ratifying the convention, for offences such as hi-jacking and other attacks on aircraft, attacks on diplomats, taking hostages, kidnapping, and the use of certain weapons, such as automatic rifles, grenades and other military equipment. This also covers those who assist such offences. Political motivation may be ignored in relation to any offences involving violence towards property, or people, or any attempt or conspiracy to commit such acts.

Countries signing the convention must undertake to try or extradite such offenders. Such legislation would make it easy to criminalise those who protest against the treatment of political prisoners in western European countries.

It is conceivable that all revolutionary socialists could be said to "sympathise" with the aims of those carrying out the acts. The examples of West Germany, where lawyers acting for urban guerillas have been charged with furthering the alleged conspiracies of their clients, and Northern Ireland, where the British have responded to Provisional IRA activity by arresting members of Provisional Sinn Fein, demonstrate that the basis of the Suppression of Terrorism Bill lies firmly in counter-insurgency ideology.

The Bill is directed not just at "terrorists" but at the "waters in which the fish swim"; all those seeking social change. It is a further step to an international society where everything is forbidden which is not explicitly allowed, and where any illegal political activity—demonstrating, picketing, striking, factory occupations—can be branded as "terrorism".

AFRICA

Troops build up in Malawi

WHILE THE Western media has its eyes firmly fixed on the Horn of Africa, no-one is looking at another sinister build up of foreign troops on the continent. African nationalist circles in London are worried at the concentration of South African and Israeli "military advisers" in Malawi, the only African nation which recognises Vorster's regime.

There are now repeated reports that the South Africans and Israelis are training former black and white members of the Portuguese colonial army in Mozambique. Two uses for these men are foreseen: they may be used

against northern Mozambique; or, South African nationalists fear, they may be infiltrated through Mozambique to stage "attacks" on South Africa, to give Vorster the excuse to bring his counter-insurgency forces to full readiness, and to strengthen his appeal to the West for support.

The next stage? Watch for reports in the British media about "discontent" in Northern Mozambique, with the communalisation of agriculture, and "clashes" on the Mozambique-Malawi border.

HARASSMENT

Police frame West Indian

A WEST INDIAN, 26 year old George Lindo, was convicted last month of armed robbery despite the evidence of three witnesses that he was in a different part of Bradford at the time. Now an action committee has been formed to demand that Lindo be released and his conviction be quashed. On top of that, the Committee want the two policemen responsible for the case dismissed from the force, and they demand that police stop framing black people.

The armed robbery took place last August at a Bradford betting shop and Lindo was taken into custody at the Tyrls police station. There he was held for fifteen hours and not allowed to make a phone call to his solicitor or family until he had signed a statement confessing to the deed. This statement provided the only evidence when the case came up before an all-white jury at the Bradford Crown Court on February 15.

There was no positive identification and no forensic evidence. And the statement was written in perfect English, despite the fact that Lindo speaks Jamaican patois: an academic specialising in West Indian linguistics at Bradford University worked on the statement with a colleague in the Applied Social Studies Department to show that the statement could not have been dictated by Lindo. Despite that evidence, the jury found him guilty—in a period in which the Conservative offensive on immigration had made it difficult for any black person to get a fair trial.

An appeal has been lodged and is currently bogged down in legal procedure. The Action Committee have organised pickets in London and Bradford and have called for statements of support and letters of protest to go to the Home Secretary. They argue that the Bradford Police are "infamous for framing innocent people" and draw the example of two officers currently facing charges of perjury from other cases in the city.

Further details are available from the Committee at: The Studio, rear of 8 Springbank Place, Bradford. Tel: Bradford 497997.

THE RIGHT

NAFF nasty attacks Spanner

JOHN KERSHAW, publicity seeker and Tory careerist, is a 27 year old Councillor on the Greater Manchester Council (GMC) who has been trying to apply Thatcherite principles in the world of culture. With all the panache so characteristic of bourgeois philistines he master-

minded a campaign against North West Spanner Theatre group, who he described—voice presumably quavering at the unspeakable horror of it all—as "openly Marxist" and "advocating revolution".

When Kershaw and his cronies failed in their bid to cut off the £22,000 North West Spanner receive from the North West Arts Association, the line of attack was changed. Whizz-kid Kershaw began expressing "grave concern", and other clichés about the constitution of NW Arts Association and its relationship to the GMC. As a result the GMC set up an enquiry into NW Arts and cut its grant to that body by £22,000—a sum not dissimilar to the amount received by NW Spanner. Subtle stuff.

An Indian singer and violinist, booked to perform a recital of Indian classical music, are Kershaw's latest targets. Not only are they black, they were also due to receive a £300 subsidy from NW Arts. "I am very concerned about this," he said, "We are told these people turn up in England and start looking for public money."

Who told you that John? Maybe his mates at the National Association For Freedom. NAFF colleagues in East Anglia have recently sought Kershaw's advice on how to handle their own campaign against the CAST theatre group. Kershaw actually denies being a member of this right wing "pressure group", but then he will go round wearing NAFF badges.

WEST GERMANY

Sabotaging the Russell Tribunal

ON MARCH 28 the third Bertrand Russell Tribunal, into violations of human rights in West Germany, begins in Frankfurt. That is, if the West German Government allows it. Its security services have already considered infiltrating the preparatory work for the tribunal, seizing the funds of organisations supporting it, stopping those connected with the tribunal travelling to Germany, and mobilising public opinion to smear the Tribunal as communist and terrorist in inspiration.

Details of these plans were contained in a document prepared by the Public Security section of the West German Interior ministry. The document was leaked, and a translation has been published as a pamphlet by the Russell Foundation.

It was circulated in September last year. In October former Chancellor and current Social Democratic Party chairman Willy Brandt denounced the Tribunal as 'anti-German'. In January, the German Trade Union Federation attacked the tribunal, using phrases from the document.

The Interior Ministry suggested that "democratic personalities and groups" should be influenced to attack the tribunal, and that Chancellor Schmidt should approach party leaders to encourage them to join in the attacks.

The Tribunal itself promises to be quite lively. It will consider three main areas—"Berufsverbot", or political discrimination against left wingers in the professions; the limitation on rights to trial caused by legal restrictions on lawyers' activities; and censorship—various books have been banned in the past few years because they have allegedly incited people to violence.

The pamphlet, 'For Official Use Only', is available at 20p plus postage from the Russell Foundation, 45 Gable Street, Nottingham, or from left bookshops.

Political biology

A TEAMFUL of Peles, and Raquel Welch lookalikes, was the *Daily Mirror's* idea of genetic engineering in their recent serialisation of Vance Packard's new book, *The People Shapers*. The tabloid version of micro-biology didn't explain why genetic engineering is such a potentially explosive issue, with consequences for unemployment, safety (playing around with genes is a bit risky to say the least) and work organisation. Research priorities, surprise-surprise, reflect the needs of capital and the multinationals can choose to carry out this research in those countries with minimal safety regulations. Our science correspondent *Eugene Splicer* explains—and examines the work of the Microbiological Research Establishment in Wiltshire, listing the nasties that government scientists are manufacturing.

In the last six years molecular biologists have developed techniques to cut out specific sections of DNA molecules, the genes of any organism. They can also splice such genes together with a vector or "transport" molecule, enabling the excised material to be transferred to another cell. This means it is possible to manipulate the genes in order to develop certain characteristics. A powerful technique, it gives information about how particular genes operate or how to confer new biological properties on the organism into which the genes are introduced.

At present the host cells are bacteria, which may be engineered to produce new chemicals, such as antibiotics, hormones like insulin and various medically useful substances like the blood clotting factors that haemophiliacs lack. Already scientists in the US have succeeded in making one hormone in this way and last week the General Electric Company in the States was awarded a patent on a bacterium that degrades oil very rapidly, useful for tackling oil slicks at sea. It may be possible in time to manipulate the hereditary material of plant and animal cells.

In Britain ICI has about 20 people working towards the bacterial production of insulin—currently extracted from pigs and cows—at its corporate laboratories in Runcorn.

Informed sources say that ICI has made a commitment to spend around £100 million in this field over the next ten years. By the 1980s its Plant Sciences Division could be using recombinant genetics in plant breeding.

Unilever is already working on that at its research laboratories in Bedfordshire. In High Wycombe the drug company GD Searle has

established a research team, and other firms are making similar plans.

The Biosciences Group of the National Research and Development Corporation (NRDC) which invests government money, is already funding two projects. One is in Norwich on techniques for antibiotic production, which if successful, would be exploited by drug companies operating under licence. The NRDC is currently contemplating further investment in three areas, antibiotic production, plant breeding and the manufacture of interferon, a substance that may be used in the treatment of viral diseases.

Possibilities like these have led to a lot of simplistic rhetoric from scientists recently, about cheaper drugs and more efficient agriculture. Such bland assertions have ignored the economic and political context of this work.

Playing around with genes of micro-organisms is not a simple or well-understood activity, and from 1974 to 1976 there was a world wide moratorium on some of this work, because of possible dangers.

In Britain two government committees, composed of narrowly selected groups of scientists, considered these problems. The latter, which included influential genetic manipulators, reported in August 1976, having drawn up the codes of practice now used in Britain.

One of the problems in this area is deciding whether a hypothetical danger—say, the escape of a new and possibly virulent micro-organism from a laboratory—is biologically plausible. The data on new organisms is necessarily sparse and based largely on inference.

Judgments about whether enough research has been done on the hazards are essentially political. The consensus among molecular biologists, a group not renowned for their high standards in safe laboratory practice, is that there is nothing to worry about. By contrast the policy adopted by the International Chemical Workers' Federation, an international federation of pharmaceutical and chemical trades unions, is that more work on hazards must be carried out.

In Britain the initiative on that and on the enforcement of safety standards lies with the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Group.

GMAG has been operating for just over a year, and in that time

has received voluntary notifications of about 80 proposed experiments in genetic manipulation, involving around 200 people. The group, around 25 strong, is composed of scientists, civil servants, representatives of industry and of several trades unions, and lay-people able "to take account of the public interest".

Its role is to consider details of proposed experiments and effectively to dictate the safety precautions—specific microbiological procedures, restricted access to experiments, enfeebled bacteria, special containers, cabinets and clothing and so on—which are to be employed. How much actual power GMAG has in practice is a complicated matter.

The group has a number of continuing problems to consider, the confidentiality of GMAG discussions, the assessment of new host-vector systems, regulation of genetic manipulation in plants, medical monitoring of lab workers in this field and the rapidly approaching problems of industrial work on a much larger scale.

But as an advisory body and with no public meetings, it is still far too deeply buried in the State bureaucracy and vulnerable to forces that never see the light of day.

These are essentially questions of legal and political power. Formally, GMAG simply advises the Health and Safety Executive and has no powers to enforce its wishes. In practice, acting with the tacit support of the HSE, and of the Research Councils, which supply State funds to basic science, it does have power, since money does not flow without GMAG approval—as things stand at the moment—and the HSE has been prepared in the past to invoke the Health and Safety at Work Act with guidance from GMAG. On one occasion, a university science faculty was nearly shut down in order to bring a recalcitrant genetic manipulator and his acquiescent professor to heel. Whether the HSE would, say, in three years' time adopt the same courageous attitude to ICI is surely less likely.

This last year has seen a rapid increase in capital investment by chemical and pharmaceutical companies in projects based on recombinant genetics. The regulatory institutions, enforcement practices, policy assumptions and research priorities in recombinant genetics are coming more and more to reflect the needs of capital.

GMAG might soon disappear anyway, because of the lobbying from industry on MPs and senior civil servants, to replace this potentially troublesome body with a tiny group based in the Factory Inspectorate, that would not license all experimentation as at present, but would simply be called in if things went wrong anywhere. Some leading scientists also support this idea.

The demise of GMAG would be more likely under a Conservative government, in conditions of growing international isolation, as other countries loosen the safety regulations or fail to adopt any. It would also be accelerated by the problem of confidentiality, which produced severe disagreements on GMAG just before Christmas.

The TUC and trade union representatives have refused to waive their right to report back to their constituent organisations, in general terms on matters of policy. This could jeopardise patent applications for work that has been processed by GMAG. The pharmaceutical and chemical companies and the NRDC have indicated that they will only play ball, if they can be assured of patentable research. That political crisis within GMAG has been temporarily staved off by a trial scheme that will operate for six months.

The operation of multinational corporations with the ability to pick countries least inclined or able to interfere with their operations complicates the political response to recombinant genetics. It demands that it be approached strategically by any left organisation. Anything less than that is likely to emerge as a form of Luddism and attract little support.

Nonetheless it does seem possible for trade unions and groups of socialist scientists to influence decision-making on these issues, a much easier task than with nuclear power.

Firstly, there has to be international coordination of groups working for more research on hazards. There are of course international working parties, the International Council of Scientific Unions and the World Health Organisation amongst others, but these are dominated by the genetic manipulators, some of whom have a financial stake in the expansion of this field.

Secondly, it would be possible for trades unions in Britain, other than ASTMS, to consider the potential problems of industrial exploitation before the massive investment takes place. Workers in the pharmaceutical, chemical and food processing industries should consider unemployment, safety and the impact on work organisation, because their employers are certainly not doing so.

continued in fourth column



EXCLUSIVE: the first picture from inside Porton Down: government scientist at work

Grass eating lions

THE Microbiological Research Establishment in Wiltshire—better known just as Porton—is one of the government research laboratories which is partly turning from military research to applied civilian work. This is in principle a good idea, which Porton has had along with the Atomic Energy Research Establishment and the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. But research which is now going on at Porton may well prove even more dangerous than anything that the MRE ever did for the Ministry of Defence.

For much of Porton's work is now concerned with genetic manipulation, which is capable of creating new diseases or even new creatures. In the USA, citizens' groups have taken the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to court because of the dangers which genetic manipulation experiments involve for the communities in which they are carried out. In the UK, direct action may be necessary since the Official Secrets Acts do not allow any detailed knowledge of what is being done at Porton. But if the beasts which are being created got out it is uncertain whether anything short of atom-bombing could stop their spread.

Government scientists who are alarmed at what they are doing at Porton have told *The Leveller* that the creatures being investigated include people with no disease resistance (why?), grass eating lions, carnivorous cows, and novel diseases with no known cure. For instance, a form of Yaws (a venereal disease which is now found only in the tropics) has been developed which is immune to the usual penicillin treatment and a new form of Madura Foot (a disease which causes pink tissue growths to sprout on the foot) has been developed which would cause the hideous growths to appear all over the body.

Now that Porton is being run down, a braindrain of scientists is heading for Japan and Switzerland where there are even fewer restrictions on their work and money is even more plentiful. This sort of departure will become more common later this year if legislation to restrict genetic alterations comes into force, as the government plans that it should. This legislation would mainly restrict research which could create super-animals; as one scientist told *The Leveller*, "We could produce a being that looked like a stone, but which could eat its way out of the lab."

Thirdly, the possible hazards of recombinant genetics have received a great deal of attention, compared with more mundane, but probably more serious health hazards faced by research workers. The health monitoring now being established for recombinant DNA personnel could be extended to examine a wider range of dangers in lab work.

Fourthly, GMAG is unusual because of the participation from outside the research elite that it permits, even if this is still small. Interestingly neither GMAG nor the NRDC see themselves as making policy in science and technology, although clearly by exercising power and providing money in effect they are.

In line with the ideology of State-supported R and D, policy in this area is made simply by the Medical Research Council through the selection of priorities and goals. It has no members from outside the highest echelons of science, medicine and the civil service.

This leads in turn to perhaps the most important issue. For not only will recombinant genetics produce new technologies to be exploited by industrial capital, it will also bring into being a new set of medical techniques for the treatment of human genetic disease.

Just as the benefits of genetic manipulation are being appropriated and organised by capital in its own interests, so too may the medical possibilities be taken up in a similar way, in a step-wise movement towards human genetic engineering divorced from any social control.

Americans protest at genetic engineering plans



SEE YOU AT THE AGM

LEVELLER subscribers and readers get the chance to raise their voices—and see how the collective works at the next general meeting on Saturday 2 June.

That day the annual meeting for 1978 of Leveller Magazine Ltd. will take place at the Fred Tallant Hall, 153 Drummond

Get into history! Back numbers of *The Leveller* can still be got from the office—but they're running out fast. There are no more copies of numbers 1, 2, and 10, and numbers 11 and 12 are low.

The offer of a complete set of back numbers made in issue 12 is therefore closed—some subscribers have already had to make do with incomplete sets.

Ford: an Anti-Report

Report No. 20

90p



The Ford Motor Company, immensely powerful, immensely important, a leader in the industry that revolutionised western society, is dissected and analysed in this latest report.

Ford, Britain's top car seller, has almost half a million people on its payroll, in a hundred countries. This CIS Report examines Ford's global planning, its strategy of 'complementation', and its management tactics in the United States, Europe and Latin America. The Report looks also at the new Fiesta, how it is produced and what effect it will have on the European motor industry.

Ford: an Anti-Report is essential reading for all those concerned to understand the rapidly-changing multi-national company; and a vital handbook for those engaged in working for it.

Pluto Press

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CIS

9 Poland Street, London W1

Street, London NW1—next door to *The Leveller* office. There will be guided tours of our sumptuous (squatted) premises, and members of the working committee, elected at last year's meeting, will be on hand to receive plaudits, abuse, etc.

As well as electing the next committee, the meeting will be extending the debate about the magazine's role and politics. As we become established (with circulation, subscriptions, and so on rising) the need continually to rethink and re-argue our politics becomes greater: there are the additional dangers of complacency and routine to be fought.

The collective therefore urges all subscribers and readers to show up on June 2, and to arm themselves for the debate by preparing, if they wish, papers and arguments for the meeting. Any papers that reach us by May 1 will be circulated to all subscribers with the June issue.

There is a third danger with regular production: that the magazine can become too London-oriented. So the collective is particularly keen that lots of comrades come from all over the country. We are in no position to pay their travel expenses, but we can offer the following incentives:

Free space in classified ads will be given in the next two issues for comrades to either offer, or seek, lifts to London. Just send your address and phone number and we'll match up drivers and passengers.

There will be a benefit disco/party in London on the Saturday night. Entry will be £1 for waged readers, 50p for claimants, students, pensioners and so on. But readers who come to the meeting from outside Great London will get in *absolutely free*.

And members of the collective, and their friends, are offering free overnight accommodation, for the Friday and Saturday nights. There will also be a creche during the meeting.

Since the meeting, in law, is the AGM of Leveller Magazine Ltd., a registered friendly society, only members will be able to vote. Members are *The Leveller's* founding and supporting subscribers.

Any readers are welcome to take part in the discussions, but can't vote. To become a full member you can subscribe with the form on the back page. Ordinary subscribers can renew their subs, and upgrade to supporting status, by paying £10 or £20, according to income. Once you're a supporting subscriber, by a rule change introduced last year, you're a member for life. You only have to renew, by paying £5 each year, to receive delivery of the magazine. So founding or supporting subscribers who have not yet renewed can still take full part in the meeting, though it would help the magazine's development for everyone to renew.

So long Another bites

THE 40-YEAR-OLD Somoza regime is tottering on the verge of collapse. Since the assassination of opposition newspaper editor Pedro Chamorro on January 10, the population of Nicaragua has been in a state of rebellion.

A two-week general strike began on January 23, organised by the main trade union and industrialists and traders organizations, and supported by the coalition of opposition forces of the Democratic Union of Liberation (UDEL). The country came to a halt. Only companies owned by Somoza or his cronies, plus some multi-nationals, continued functioning under the protection of the National Guard. Banks, shops and factories were closed.

The return to work has not halted resistance to the regime. Economic sabotage, the taking over of churches and other public buildings and street demonstrations have led to increasing clashes with the National Guard. The people initially armed with machetes and other domestic weapons are now increasingly using guns to protect themselves from the National Guard. It is difficult to estimate the death toll, but church and Red Cross sources confirm that people have been killed on practically every day where demonstrations have taken place. In Managua, Leon, Masaya, Diriamba, Jinotepe, Jintoga and Matagalpa, in short in all the urban areas on the Pacific coast and in the north of the country.

The strike began by demanding a full investigation into the death of Chamorro, but soon concentrated upon the demand for Somoza's resignation, though he has reiterated his determination to complete his presidential term, due to expire in 1981.

His apparent promises of increased participation for opposition political groupings in the 1981 presidential elections, and attempts to appease the rural masses by extending social security to farm labourers and domestic servants, have fallen on deaf ears. "The people are demanding guns, not food or wages," one opposition leader remarked. "The situation is frankly insurrectional."

Anastasio Somoza Debayle's chances of regaining control of the situation seem minimal. He lacks the charismatic qualities of his father and elder brother which ensured them considerable popular support. The dynasty has been badly damaged by continual financial scandals, culminating in the embezzlement of the Managua Earthquake Disaster Funds. Chamorro's assassination was the last

Somozas-tyranny the dust

straw. He spent his life campaigning against the Somoza regime through the pages of *La Prensa* of which he was both owner and editor. He was considered the most untouchable man in Nicaragua, symbolising the hopes of both the opposition Conservative Party of which he was a leading member and of the UDEL, of which the Conservative Party forms the main component.

As unchallenged leader of the opposition movement, of international renown, he was considered too powerful for the government to eliminate. He never carried a gun or bothered with bodyguards.

On the morning of January 10 he was driving to work alone when two men ambushed him and riddled his body with 40 bullets.

Who killed him and why remains a mystery. The gunmen were rounded up within 48 hours, but it is not easy to unravel the truth from their contradictory statements. At least part of the half a million dollars they are said to have received for the job is designed to keep them quiet. The day they decide to come clean, they will be taken out and shot, at least while Somoza remains in power.

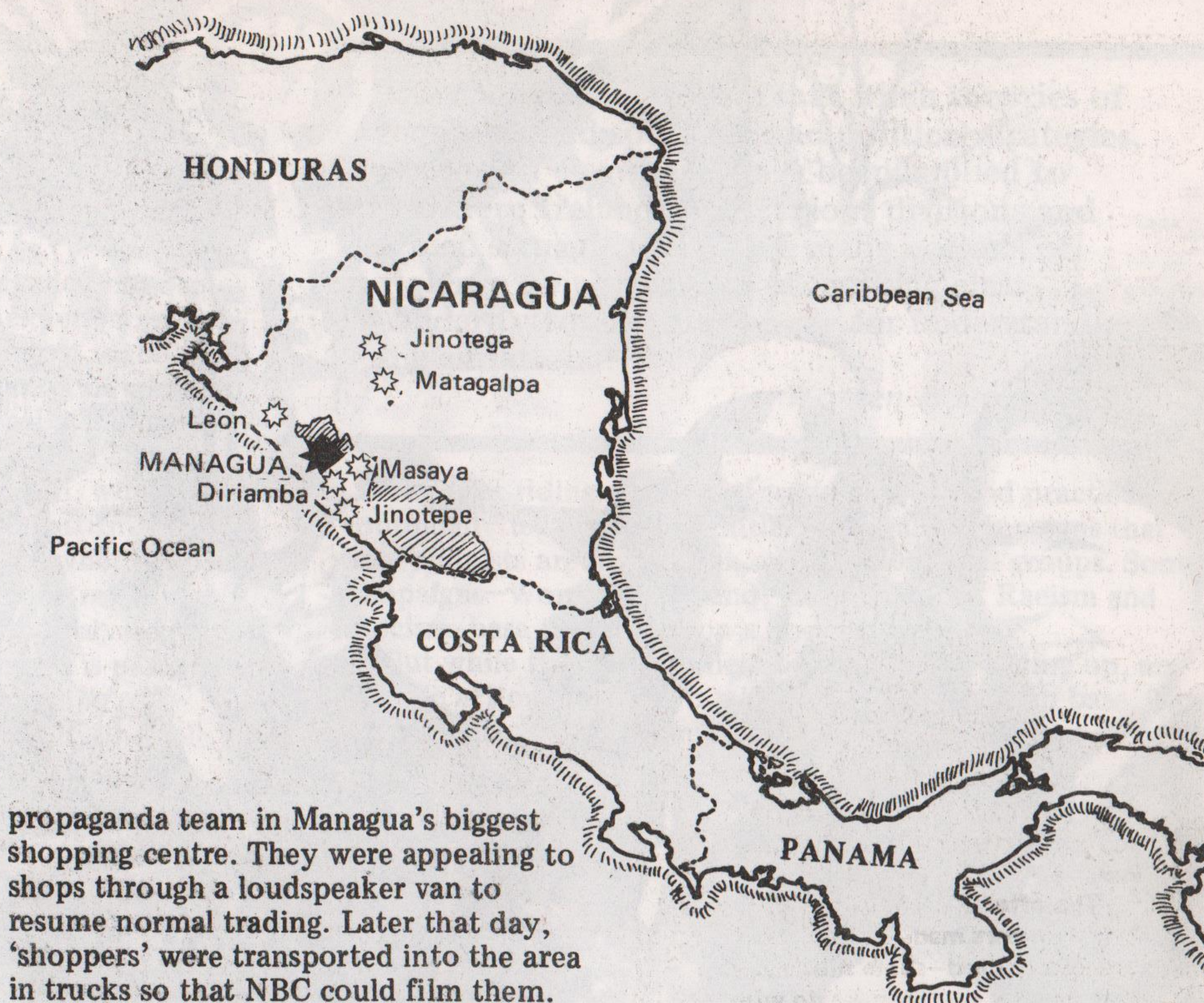
One rumour claims that Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, son of the dictator, ordered Chamorro's assassination because Chamorro planned to reveal details of his enormous drug racket in the United States. This would have ruined his aspirations to succeed his father as president.

Just over a month before the killing, one Silvio Pena, who paid the assassins, received more than 25,000 Cordobas in cash in the Managua offices of Plasmaferesis, on the orders of Cuban exile Pedro Ramos who ran the lucrative blood-exporting business in partnership with none other than President Somoza.

Ramos has not been detained for questioning. On the night of Chamorro's murder, the Plasmaferesis offices were burnt down, conveniently destroying all documents relating to the business.

If drug trafficking is behind Chamorro's murder, it gives Washington further reason for concern at the imminent fall of the Somoza regime. The Carter administration is in a dilemma about what to do next, and in the absence of any contingency plans, has tried to play down the impact of the strike and has avoided giving the opposition any support in its bid for a restoration of democracy in Nicaragua.

On January 30 an NBC reporter was spotted advising a government



propaganda team in Managua's biggest shopping centre. They were appealing to shops through a loudspeaker van to resume normal trading. Later that day, 'shoppers' were transported into the area in trucks so that NBC could film them.

United States Assistant Secretary of State Terence Iodman cancelled his scheduled visit to Nicaragua in the second week of the strike in order to avoid giving the strikers the moral support they appealed for.

If Washington decided to withdraw its support for the regime, Somoza would be isolated. National industrial and commercial and agricultural sectors are anxious to see him removed. He runs the country like his own private estate and so makes their economic returns unpredictable. The servicing of the national debt (100 million dollars per annum on a mounting overall debt of 1,100 million dollars equivalent to 55 per cent of the country's GNP) falls heavily on their shoulders by way of taxes. In contrast, Somoza's family businesses offer unfair competition, paying no taxes and obtaining the lion's share of attractive development loans and export contracts.

While Somoza retains the reins of government, nascent manufacturing industry is at the mercy of his retaliations.

Multi-nationals also face a dilemma on what attitude to take towards the besieged regime. The idea of Somoza Junior succeeding his father fills US businesses there with gloom (70 per cent of all foreign investment in Nicaragua comes from the United States). But if they are seen to be withdrawing their support from Somoza, they risk similar retaliations to those suffered by national businesses. However, too close an affiliation with the regime courts economic sabotage and the possibility of hostility from Somoza's successors. Above all they are anxious not to lose access to this fertile country, which, with an area half the size of Britain, has a population of only 2.2 million.

Neither the capitalists nor Washington can afford to sit on the fence and watch developments take their own course. The longer civil resistance is prolonged, the

greater risk that the traditional political forces will lose control of the situation to the masses fighting in the streets.

A 'constitutional' solution in a country with 40 per cent illiteracy rate would ensure the hegemony of the educated elite. This depends on Somoza resigning—which is extremely unlikely.

If civil resistance becomes transformed into a people in arms, it will be no longer possible to contain popular demands within the strait-jacket of a 'democratic' solution. Escalation of the struggle into armed insurrection can only strengthen the position of the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) which has already become bolder since the strike started. It is actively involved in the urban agitation in the main cities and has pledged to distribute arms.

As the FSLN increases its influence, a second Cuba seems possible, which the US could not tolerate. At the moment, they seem to be supporting Somoza to complete his term of office until 1981.

That would require massive repression to stem the pent-up frustrations of the urban poor. An unknown quantity is the military, which has so far remained loyal to Somoza. Whether that loyalty could be maintained in an increasingly bloody situation is not clear.

The death of Chamorro has triggered off a fearlessness and indignation which does not respond easily to such tactics. Every time someone is shot by the National Guard the rebellion intensifies, spreading from one area to another.

People publicly denounce injustices they have remained quiet about for years. Past atrocities committed by the military or the ruling oligarchy are appearing daily in the press, increasing the demands for justice.

STOP PRESS:

Somoza's security chief has been killed by the FSLN.

Jenny Rathbone



Angela Phillips

No leaders. No dogmas. Getting personal about politics

The truth is that left groups today are dry and unappealing because they are out of step with movements in history which have already taken place. That is why women today who are sensitive and aware, who seek an end to the oppression of capitalism and sexism, hesitate uncertainly on the fringes of these groups or retreat from them in guilty confusion.

Paper on women & fascism

The division between male/breadwinner and female/housewife presents important problems for the development of socialist feminism. The problems become most explicit in the male strike where wives may attack their husbands for their 'irresponsibility' in going on strike, their failure to recognise that the burden of hardship will be borne mostly by the wife who must continue to feed and clothe the family without a wage coming in. Or they may support their husbands because it is his job, his wage, his working conditions. The point is that women acting as women, with a flickering feminist consciousness may be reactionary, and women acting in defence of narrowly defined class interests may be denying their interests as women. This is only to begin to recognise the problems that must be confronted, and indicates the extent to which more than attitudes have to be changed in overcoming sexism within the working class.

Lancaster women and socialism

WHEN 1,000 participants attended the Socialist Feminist conference in Manchester in January, it was obvious that for many women it represented a new stage of growth for the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). It was just as obvious that some had only the vaguest idea of what it was about. New women drawn to the conference wanted to sort out what was meant by socialist feminism and because no consensus had been reached existing groups found it difficult to get together and compare their politics and experiences of growth.

During the last ten years women, active in the women's movement since its beginnings, have recognised that whilst the six demands of the WLM clearly outline areas of women's oppression, they do not provide an understanding of the factors that cause oppression, or put forward a radical outline for change.

Some women have therefore chosen to align themselves with established left groups, and develop on existing socialist analysis informed by their feminism. But others feel that it is not enough to incorporate what are seen as 'women's issues' into a pre-woven political fabric, and that a total understanding of revolutionary transformation must be reached that includes all aspects of life, the personal and the political. It is these non-aligned women who make up the majority of the Socialist Feminist movement.

An international SocFem conference in Paris and a series of workshops held in London last spring were a stimulus to the development of this consciousness, and resulted in groups being formed throughout the country. Hackney SocFem group illustrates well the kinds of problems encountered right from the beginning:

"At first we worked through a programme of various subjects like women in struggle and women in left groups, trade unions and so on. After that, we had a very large meeting where the general opinion was that women wanted more theory. We wanted to work out a theory of socialism and feminism and how they connected, so we started

discussion groups which completely left out the activist element who felt very disappointed—slowly the whole thing withered away. We've since changed that, we now have one week where we have open meetings for various subjects, the other week we have closed meetings of discussion groups—women in the welfare state, women and fascism and racism. That seems to work very well."

It is the strength of socialist feminists that they have so many basic questions to sort out. What was experienced as a personal problem ten years ago, say the feeling of inability to speak at meetings, is now seen as a manifestation of what is inadequate and oppressive within conventional left political structures. Consciousness raising groups used to be dismissed by the left as group therapy for troubled women, where nothing much happened except the occasional affirmation of 'oh I feel like that too'. Socialist feminism sees what happens between individuals within a group as being integrated with what the group actually does, and attempts to analyse that integration. So the fight for abortion on demand is part of the struggle for self-defined sexuality, and the picketing of Grunwicks led to an examination of how and why the role of the women both inside the factory and on the picket was played down on the left.

It would be easy to characterise the socialist feminist movement as one shot through with polarisation and conflict—theory and practice, personal and political, socialist feminism and feminist socialism. But what may seem like naive and simplistic examination to some has revealed a need for a complete reassessment to others. This made the South London SocFem group decide that they would close the group to aligned women, so that they could start from the beginning without the influence of women committed to the policies of a democratic centralist organisation. It was a unanimous decision.

The simplistic politics of much of the left leads it to a militarism around Grunwicks which assumes that one six foot miner is ten times more important than a hundred committed feminists. Grunwicks is in many ways a milestone—we have had the organisational strength to sustain that mobilisation in a way we haven't been able to do in the past, gaining solidarity and confidence in being organised as women with women.

Manchester SocFeminist

The group was surprised to see that what they felt was an autonomous decision made by a local group, resulted in an open letter to the group from three South London women in the IMG being published in *Socialist Challenge*, asking them at what point did they draw the line and why. "What about participation by Labour Party women" etc. The group spent the next four meetings trying to decide what to do about the letter, and several women left the group at that point, feeling that they had been pushed into defining their politics in exactly the way that they feared aligned involvement would have done from the start.

The IMG women saw putting forward an idea that has been democratically arrived at within their organisation as no different from discussing ones arrived at on an individual basis—"it's the idea that matters". They did not intend to offer the IMG as an alternative to the Women's Movement, and wanted to develop and be involved in an autonomous socialist feminist movement.

Communist Party women have expressed concern that the Socialist Feminist current will result in a split from the WLM, which should be kept "solid". But some women see this as a kind of fringe party schizophrenia—left groups want to keep the movement amorphous, to give them the opportunity of pushing an organised and pre-arranged line. The socialist feminist movement is a direct threat to these groups, as it is beginning to build a network *within* the movement, defining itself as distinctly separate from the "organised left" which comes from outside the WLM.

The confusion has been that when theories of feminism and socialism and political strategies, developed elsewhere, have been applied to Northern Ireland, the religious divisions and armed struggle there have made notions of violence being male, or of working class solidarity totally inadequate for understanding the situation.

Women & Ireland group

The over-riding aim of integrating theory and practice is continually tested in the political work and campaigns that SocFeminists are involved in outside their local groups. Some campaigns—Women in Ireland, Women against Racism and Fascism, base their work on a SocFem position.

But while the national network has been building up, no specific actions have been taken with it as the main base. That is the challenge still facing individual groups (in some cases eight months after they started).

It would be incorrect to represent SocFem as the only current within the WLM that is working towards an overall analysis of oppression. Other tendencies can be outlined as follows:

- Separatists aim to form a culture and power base made by and for women;
- Cultural feminists Through the establishment of a women's subculture aim to create a lifestyle that will in itself change society;
- Revolutionary feminists see women as the oppressed class, and patriarchy as the responsible force—therefore men are the enemy. They reject cultural feminism as having no theory or method of fighting male power. Marxist theory remains traditionally phallogocentric and therefore cannot be truly revolutionary.

The women's movement has never had a centrally directed leadership—all groups have seen themselves as autonomous and concerned with the feelings and politics of individual members. What is common to all the groups within the WLM is the non-hierarchical and self-motivated approach which has always set the WLM apart from other political organisations. Using ways of organising developed and learnt in the WLM, SocFeminism has become the fastest growing movement within feminist politics, and one that will probably have the greatest effect on the direction of the left in general.

Whilst in some ways the January conference served only to emphasise the general difficulties that groups are having, it was an overwhelming assertion of potential. SocFem groups working at a local level recognised the need to communicate through a national network, and it was decided to use the journal *Scarlet Women* as a means of discussion and information for the whole movement. Different regions would take responsibility for its production, once again with the aim of organising from the base upwards, rather than creating a nationally co-ordinated organisation. Although for some it is depressing that there is no generally agreed 'way forward', it gives others an opportunity to develop a self defined and motivated movement, inspiring in itself. Socialist feminism has to deepen its theory, and its sense of itself as a distinct political tendency—but not solely to retain a political purity. In the words of an American activist "to make a socialist feminism revolution we're going to have to touch a whole lot of people who are not socialist or feminist. We need theory not to set ourselves apart from other people, but to put us in touch with them—theory that can find expression within people's concrete struggles".

Rose Shapiro and Tricia Dearden

Quotes taken from papers presented at Manchester SocFem conference

More information on SocFem groups from Scarlet Women Collective, 5, Washington Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear.

ROLAND MULDOON is one of the founders of the Cartoon Archetypal Slogan Theatre (CAST), the original socialist theatre group, and the Lenny Bruce of the socialist theatre world. Fifteen years after they first started out he looks back on the twists and turns of the group, and looks forward to a return to their roots as working class comedians. Sandy Craig chatted to him.

How did you start?

Well, I reckon I started off at school, being the class show-off. I wasn't so physically strong that I could beat anyone up, so I had to make everyone laugh.

And I worked on sites and hundreds of jobs, and became very left wing, and applied to the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. I'd heard you could get a grant for acting. They didn't give me a job as an actor, but because they found out that I was an electrician's mate on a building site they thought they could get me for a one year technical course as a stage manager.

And after that year, I found myself, like as welcome as a pork chop in a synagogue in the theatre world. Nobody wanted to know. I couldn't get a job in theatre and I didn't want a job in theatre. The only application I went through with was the Welsh National Opera Company. And you had to wear an evening suit whether you were a stage manager or on the stage.

How did you get involved in the Unity Theatre? I was working on the famous Shell building as an electrician's mate with the Communist Party stewards and they said to me: If you really did do that year technical course, —because they didn't even believe me—if you really did do it, there's a Party theatre called Unity.

So I went there. I walked in and said I'd done a year's technical training at the Bristol Old Vic School and they immediately made me stage director of the theatre. I mean, they couldn't get anybody that was a stage manager and we knew the skills. And so we, me and Clare (his wife), became technicians and we ran Unity for two years.

But the plays they were putting on, with the exception of a few good Brecht plays and also some marvellous music hall, were rubbish. I mean really bad. Plays that had been in the West End for a six month run and gone round the reps ended up at Unity.

I mean, I was told by a guy who was a CP member that the finest form of aesthetics on the stage he'd ever witnessed was Cossack Dancers. And I went: Why's that? And he said, Well all the tribes in Africa dance round and round and round but the Cossacks have fitted their folk ethnic art to the proscenium arch. I'm not kidding.

What they actually envisaged was a Royal Court in the Unity Theatre.

How did CAST begin?

We started to rehearse in pub rooms and it took us about a month to realise that this was exactly where the CND things were going on. All the events which we had wanted to get into Unity. And by

this sheer realisation we *invented* political theatre of the time because we said: "We'll go into those rooms and we'll put on plays. We won't worry about theatres, or sets, or anything, we'll actually produce theatre which fits into those rooms." We did a play called *The Nightmare of Joe Muggins*; we did it at the Peanuts Club, to immediate sensation.

What we learnt in pub rooms was when we went on in the pub people would say: Here comes a theatre group and everyone would run to the bar. Nobody wanted to know. Theatre meant people going *Wooghh!* And we'd come on with a very fast, hard hitting style which held them mid-track, mid-half pint of bitter, mid-empty glass. They'd stop and watch.

Then, when we did *John D Muggins is Dead*, we thought we'd do a political play which had a Marxist analysis in it. Instead of saying that we wanted peace on earth, or Banning the Bomb, or peace in Vietnam, we'd say that the Americans were conditioning their children to die in an Imperialist War and this would mean something to the English because they were aping American culture. It was a very good play.

We even had Peter Brook coming down to see us and saying: "Did you get that idea from Artaud? Where were you influenced?" And we said: "Karl Marx?". And he walked away. But he had us in his film *US*. Well, we'd done this play before *US* which was quite important.

We played at the UFO which was the first of the hip clubs with mixed media, Pink Floyd, Christopher Logue, Mike Horowitz. We went on and did *John D Muggins is Dead* and were really popular with the audience and afterwards we rang up *International Times* and asked them what they thought of it, and they said: "Oh it's terrible." We said: "Why?" They said: "We're into *love*, man, and you're telling us about *war* and *butchery*. It's dangerous, dangerous to say to our generation which is looking for peace and alternatives and expansion of consciousness, to just keep focussing in on this Vietnam war."

So we realised that we had to fight the alternative culture argument, because the alternative culture argument really was: "drop Out."

So we got sucked in to the whole Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. We did concerts all over the place. And eventually and alarmingly we began to find out that we were doing them to students and we were losing what we'd originally had with CND, which had a trade union working class base. We were getting pulled into the Counter Alternative Culture thing.

We did a play called *The Trials of Horatio Muggins* which was probably our best politically. In this play a worker was accused of being a bourgeois sell-out and not embracing the revolution as confused by the alternative culture people who didn't like televisions and refrigerators. He was accused of being a hard hat, a misery, a guy that had no imagination and one who justified the capitalist system. By the end of the play he turned the whole thing round and

STRIKE IS A CABARET MY FRIEND...



Roland Muldoon (left) in action

showed that they were irrelevant, that they didn't talk about the working class, and that as he'd been eating Walls sausages all his life he understood exactly what capitalism was all about.

We started to see ourselves as a mirror of the crisis of the left. Not a proper, realistic mirror but a dialectical mirror which showed that all the enthusiasm of Bristol University students to lock up their vice chancellor wasn't the revolution when it came to Horatio Muggins who went to work in a factory.

Before you got an Arts Council grant, were you making enough money from gigs?

No, we had to work. We rehearsed and played seven nights a week. What the philosophy of the group was, we had to live the contradiction. Which meant we had to work during the day and be a theatre group in the evening.

So we became involved in a photographic studio. I had the terrible job of chasing round in a suit to sell photographs to the advertising agencies. What was so funny about it was, that sometimes we'd get friendly with the advertising guys that were giving us work and they'd come out with us beyond six o'clock at night. And it'd be seven o'clock and all of a sudden we'd turn into communists in front of their very eyes.

What other groups were starting up? Basically there was Red Ladder and us. It wasn't till Arts Council funding that there was this great development of political theatre groups. It's really important that the whole political theatre movement up to 1970, which was Red Ladder and us, we were all in the same football team. *CAST split up for a while, and, at the same time, there was a mushrooming of political theatre companies financed by the Arts Council. After these companies had secured grants, you re-formed CAST and applied for a grant.*

When we got our first Arts Council grant we were totally frightened because the first play we did was a half hour play against the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We live in an area of London where all the bombs were going off and we had the State's money, and we were going round

telling the audience that the State locked people up without trial. We thought: "Three months and they'll fucking come round and that's it. Somebody will ring up the Arts Council and say: 'You know you're funding the IRA!'"

But the great thing was, the Arts Council never came to see us at all. They didn't know. They just kept giving us the money. So we applied again and we did a play last year called *Goodbye Union Jack*. It really caught the danger the Left are in, over Grunwicks, over the rise of fascism, over its own romantic idea of things. It wasn't too popular with audiences. It was thought-provoking.

You see, what I think is a contemporary dilemma of political theatre is that people want to be turned on. You know, like ENSA, where you're supposed to go round and entertain the troops.

The two questions which really piss me off most are: "Aren't you preaching to the converted?" If all the people we'd ever played to were converted we'd be out winning.

And the other question is: "You don't tell us *how*." They really want the drug, they really want the dream.

What CAST actually did was enter dialectics into the theatre. The theory versus the practice in *Horatio Muggins*, or the social democratic analysis of peace in Vietnam against the reality of imperialism. We were always trying to make out a philosophical thing. But now, when we were doing *Goodbye Union Jack* we weren't really into the philosophy because we found we were beginning to tail-end the big theatre groups.

It's like self-censorship. We start saying: "The Arts Council want big plays because by that we'll make more money and they'll give us more money, so we'll have to take big plays to the working class." So we start spreading the whole thing and what we could have said in fifteen minutes, we take one hundred and fifteen minutes. We're now in rebellion against that.

What do you think political theatre can do? What's its function, its purpose?

What's its purpose? (*Long pause*) I don't know. (*Laughter*) I never really did. I mean, I'm sure some bloke will write in and say: "Ahha . . . I knew he never knew." But I don't know.

I know what I want to do. But there is the problem that the State is financing an illusion, an oasis of free thought, when it's the working class that have to make the decisions.

I don't think that political theatre is at the forefront of those decisions, because those decisions are really made because of the reality of the political situation. I believe that the purpose of the theatre group is to raise the analysis. To put meat on the bones of socialism. *They're not at the forefront of the revolution? They're not the vanguard. I remember groups who definitely said, I know groups now who think, that they are the vanguard. Which if they are—we'd better all run.*

I don't believe that's the job of

theatre. I still think we have to alert people to the problems of our society and hint and suggest at the socialist process. I also think that socialist theatre groups should definitely undo the hex of social democracy, and we should definitely attack Stalinism, even if that makes us unpopular within the labour movement. We must be prepared to do this because what haunts me is that people don't believe in socialism because (a) of the experience of the Labour Party, and (b) they don't believe in revolutionary socialism because they all think they're going to be shot down on the Berlin Wall. Neither of those do I describe as socialist societies.

So we criticise the labour movement. It was the Right of the labour movement that was allowing the cuts to take place, and we were saying that in our plays. But we were playing them at venues and meetings organised by the revolutionary left. And they were hoping that the audience was going to get why they should join the Party. We weren't doing that. We were saying that it was necessary to have socialist action, vitally so, by how bleak a picture we were trying to paint of the crisis. Which is, I think, the role of theatre.

So what are you going to do next?

The plan is, today, that we definitely should do an anti-fascist play for the Anti-Nazi League.

I thought the direction you were going was away from straight plays more into cabaret. That's true. Socialist cabaret. That's what *Confessions of a Socialist* is getting to. But it's entertainment, black comedy. I mean, we take the piss out of the Revolution. Terrible jokes about Hughie Green after the revolution! But we can do both. In a way we want to go back to our roots. And all along it was that we were a very funny group.

The great turn on to us was to make audiences laugh against themselves, laugh against their own restrictions and beliefs. They used to laugh, shake their heads at the irony of what we were saying.

I'd like to develop that. I think the great challenge is that there isn't socialist comics, there hasn't been a revue or satire really developing from the Left.

We're coming to the period where we have to decide which way we're going. And I think often that the analysis market, plays about issues, is being taken care of really well . . .

By all the other socialist theatre companies. Yes. Basically, and this is very important, we're a group not a turn-over of rep actors. And a group play small material, it's the nature of a group.

We ought to return to the fact that we really are working class comic characters. Though, I think, on the other hand, that the Anti-Nazi League thing is vitally important. But we really are wanting just to be ourselves.

And finally, sooner rather than later, if the Arts Council don't like it, we'll turn round and say: "Fuck that." With the Arts Council now, it's like instant theatre. We really don't want to be like Gene Autry who can't remember how many movies he made.

REPUBLICAN RE-THINK

There is no reason why the British left should feel that it has any responsibility to support the republican struggle in Northern Ireland. More precisely, it no longer has any excuse for doing so, argues *John Lloyd*.

From almost the beginning of the current IRA offensive, the British left has been split into two camps, roughly corresponding with the split in the republican movement itself. However, that split, and the events which precipitated it, took the old left—the Communist Parties of Britain and Ireland, and to a certain extent left-wing Labour—by surprise.

The Communist Party had been doing well inside the IRA, capturing the leadership of a largely demoralised movement and turning it into a relatively more popular version of the Communist Party of Ireland. The sectarian battles of 1968/9, the subsequent mythology which successfully promoted the split, and the assumption of active campaigning by the Provisionals, spoil the steady progression of the Officials' strategy of republicanism by stealth. They could not regain the initiative.

The Provisionals could bomb and shoot the Protestants, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the British Army and—when they were able—the British public, with no inhibitions. The Officials, when they were 'waging the armed struggle', had constant difficulty separating the working class, whom they did not wish to kill, from the ruling class, whom they sometimes did.

In the case of the Aldershot bombings of 1972, they killed the cleaners. And when, later that year, they executed Ranger Best, a British soldier from Londonderry's Bogside who had unwisely slipped home to see his parents, they provoked a furious retaliation in 'Free Derry'.

Their influence elsewhere, especially in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, was large, but increasingly their republicanism has become formal. Promoting broad

causes—such as the 'Better Life for All' campaign and the Bill of Rights—means that long-term aims remain just that; long-term, infinitely postponable. And as the Official movement in the South develops an analysis of Southern society, there are even dissidents in their ranks saying—in a muted kind of way—that perhaps it will never be possible, or even desirable, to persuade the Northern Irish Protestants that Irish unity is in their interests.

Moreover, the increasing concentration of the Official IRA upon the concrete problems of Irish society means that communists and socialists in Britain have less with which to identify than formerly. The subject has become less of an issue on the UK left (though still formally on the agenda) at the very time when the Irish working class is growing in militancy. For example: the British Communist Party's new *British Road to Socialism* (1977) calls at the same time both for increased public spending by the UK government in Northern Ireland and for withdrawal by that government so that the Irish people could "work for the reunification of their country".

Finally, and more hopefully, the break-up of the old left certainties has meant that a few socialists and communists are beginning to publicly question the traditional sympathy they have, possibly unthinkingly, extended to republicanism. Nothing much has changed: except that the old verities are not what they were.

For the new left, events have taken a largely different course. It had no real history in the matter of republicanism from which either to escape or draw lessons. The beginnings of the current IRA offensive in 1968/9 coincided with the apogee of the various ultra-left movements which established or strengthened, in the UK as elsewhere, various Trotskyist and anarchist groups as significant forces in society.

These movements were united in nothing so much as



their complete opposition not only to capitalism, but to authority of any kind, especially that which claimed the state as the source of its power. It was a commonplace of new left theory, for example, that while political and other representatives of the state might inveigh against violence, they themselves sought to monopolise the means of, and the forces for, inflicting it.

Thus the armed republican struggle—which had quite different aims and objectives from the new left—could be and was very quickly granted most-favoured status among the range of issues to which support could be given (whether conditional or unconditional). The Provisional IRA was wholly unappeasable by the British state. Many of its members were courageous to the point of suicide in their struggle against the British Army. And it had the prior blessing of Marx, Engels and Lenin, all of whom agreed that by acquiescing in Ireland's enslavement, the British working class forged fetters for itself.

To support the Provisionals was then a 'natural' step for the new left to take. However, while it may be the case that the barrel of a gun ultimately guarantees the success or defeat of socialism, the slogan cannot be read in reverse: the mere taking of arms against a state power does not guarantee socialist aims.

The Provisionals programme, *Eire Nua* (New Ireland)—which the organisation still stands by—is a blend of small farmer, small business protectionism, laced with strong doses of Catholic nationalism and Gaelic revivalism. Put simply, it is a programme for a return to the less progressive features of the early Republic. Socialists and communists in the Republic are now faced with developing a strategy for the Irish working class at a time when unprecedented growth rates are accelerating the proletarianisation of the society (while at the same time co-existing with high unemployment). The Irish working class has still to find its independent strength after its routing by bourgeois nationalist elements in the Twenties. Meanwhile, the Provisionals support precisely those elements which would

(if they could) destroy what strength it presently has.

To sum up: one section of the British left supports left-wing republicanism which is becoming increasingly left-wing (in a certain sense) and decreasingly republican; the other section supports right-wing republicanism, which has remained resolutely both right-wing and republican.

It should be added that these two sections are complemented by a much larger body of opinion, which is generally leftist, and which holds that the whole thing is a terrible pity but, after all, Northern Ireland is 'inherently unstable' as part of the UK and the sooner the Protestants realise that, the better. And there is the Catholic-Irish diaspora which, though far from monolithic on the matter, is probably still (usually passively) in favour of Irish unity.

From any one of these perspectives, then, the policy of the British government will seem more or less obtuse, except when it appears to be preparing the way for a British withdrawal and a strengthening of the 'All-Irish' dimension. The holders of such views would agree with the Republic's Prime Minister, Jack Lynch, when he makes his rightly celebrated statements advising the British government to encourage the Northern Ireland Protestants to regard themselves as Irish.

These people are either wilfully distorting history and politics or are ignorant of the cause which they support.

Irish history shows that Ulster underwent a separate economic and social development from the South. Development was in the direction of capitalist farming and large-scale industrialisation in and around Belfast and Londonderry. A skilled working class was constituted in the same period as that process was occurring on the UK mainland, while the South remained a largely peasant economy. This resulted in the establishment of two communities in Ireland, one—the South—which could successfully constitute itself as a nation independent of the UK. And Ulster, which successfully resisted the attempts by the Westminster government and the Irish nationalists to include it in the Irish nation.

It was the clearly expressed will of the majority of people in Ulster then that they should remain part of the UK. Against this, the Liberal government's plans to coerce the unionists into a united Ireland would have meant a bloody civil war. Socialists have rarely made it clear whether or not they thought such a civil war desirable then, and whether or not it is now. Militant republicans were and are clear about it: they are in politics to effect the unification of Ireland, and civil war is a continuation of these politics. But socialists are not in the business of promoting such aims—so why do they continue to tail in behind the republicans?

The Irish rebellion was bourgeois-catholic-nationalist in its leadership and inspiration: the IRA is so still. The South, even now, offers little development of working class politics to attract the mass of Protestants. And it is still—even though it is Europe's fastest-growing economy, and Northern Ireland is the UK's most depressed region—far behind the province in social services, social security and educational provision. This is not to speak of the central role of the Catholic church in the polity of the South, exceptional among European Catholic nations, a role which has tended to be inimical to civil liberties and repressive of debate.

Thus the absorption of Northern Ireland into the Republic can only offer its people a state of affairs worse than the present. And since the working class remains incurably materialist, it is unlikely to opt for republicanism in the near future.

Will it, then, be required to opt for the continuation of politics dominated by the Ulster bourgeoisie—simply because no other party has uncompromisingly guaranteed opposition to the various forces for republicanism? Not necessarily.

The British Labour Party has no organisation in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) is an autonomous party which has been historically ambiguous about its position on the union—though it is now firmly unionist. However, it is

small and lacks resources. For some months, the NILP has expressed itself as being openly in favour of the British Labour Party organising in Northern Ireland.

The fact of the Labour Party organising in this way would, by definition, establish it as a unionist party. It has no organisational history in Northern Ireland: it has a fighting chance of attracting support from both communities. It would be the most tangible expression of solidarity which the working classes of England, Scotland, and Wales could make to that of Ulster.

Why the Labour Party? Simply because it is the only party of the left with any substantial influence, and because it is the only one which might consider doing it. If the Community Party became unionist—as it more or less was, unofficially, after the war—then so much the better for it and its members, but it is unlikely. In the case of the Trotskyist groups, it is unthinkable.

Such a perspective is a far cry from the glamour of being identified with a guerilla army. But the identification was always a demeaning, vicarious one. The gain might not only be the hastening of an end to the bombing campaign, but even the advance of non-sectarian, working class politics in Northern Ireland.

The loss, if such a step is not taken, and if the left does not submit itself to a searching re-evaluation of its positions on Ireland, will be twofold. First, the bulk of the UK left will be continuing to stimulate a campaign, the logic of which has been to cause civil war to no purpose which socialists recognise as worthwhile. Second, carrying on support for the Provisional IRA campaign means that socialists are upholding an anti-democratic movement, flouting one of the basic tenets of socialism—the right of a people to national self-determination—and helping to confirm a significant section of the British working class in its decision to support the present varieties of conservative unionism. Ireland's freedom remains the harder to achieve the longer the left refuses to think its way out of its dogma.

Clear the streets

THE BAN on processions in London, instituted by Chief of Police Sir David McNee, and rubber-stamped by Interior Minister Merlyn Rees, ostensibly to stop the National Front marching in Ilford, could be with us for keeps.

The likely timetable of political events leading up to a general election in the autumn provides enough temporary justifications for the state to re-impose the ban, to get us used to it. They will say that it has worked to restore peace to the streets, and who will fight it? Certainly not the organised left, if the first meeting of the Campaign Against the Ban, held on March 2, was anything to go by.

The two-month blanket ban under Section 3(3) of the 1936 Public Order Act—the longest and widest since the war—has been justified by Commissioner McNee as being necessary to “let things cool down”. To let what? There has been no street violence since the November 7 Grunwick mass picket (when police attacked, with great violence, a couple of hundred pickets left behind after the bus had gone in). A week’s ban covering just the Borough of Redbridge, would have protected the Ilford bye-election. No, it was *this* summer that McNee was concerned with: GLC local elections, with dozens of NF candidates, a bye-election in Brixton, a possible resumption of activity at Grunwick, Notting Hill. . . . and a general election.

Maximum powers under the Act allow three months at a time. (Minimum powers, which McNee and Rees seem to be unaware of, allow bans on “any class of demonstration”, covering any area, for any period of time; the last time they were used in London, in July 1963, to prevent a Mosleyite Union Movement march, they were invoked for 48 hours only).

Two months stops just short of May Day—they don’t want, yet, to take on the whole labour movement. It covers the NF’s planned St George’s Day event in Islington (April 23). It also covers more than a dozen democratic, left and conservationist events, from the NUS, through Anti-Apartheid, marches against hospital cuts, and International Womens Day, to the big mobilisation planned against Windscale by Friends of the

Earth on March 19. The anti-nuclear movement has been stifled at birth by this: the topicality of the publication of the report, and the Parliamentary debate, has been lost, and organisational chaos imposed by the decision to re-arrange the march for April 29, only a week before the march on the nuclear site at Torness, near Edinburgh (May 6—see *Agitprop*).

The initiative to organise against the ban came from *Socialist Challenge*, who set up the March 2 meeting.

Present were people from the Labour Party, SWP, IMG, CP, Liberation, New Communist Party, RCG, Revolutionary Workers Party and National Council for Civil Liberties; and from broad single issue groups: the committee organising the International Womens Day march; Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, together with local committee representatives; the ABC Defence Committee; and others directly affected by the ban, such as the London Squatters Union, NUS and Friends of the Earth. Ernie Roberts, AUEW executive member, and prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate, chaired it.

So most of the organised left in London was there. What came out were decisions to hold a public meeting on March 22, and a lobby of Parliament on April 11 (see *Agitprop*). A petition will circulate. That’s it, the Campaign Against the Ban. Plenty more suggestions came from delegates, which somehow evaporated as they crossed the polished ash table in County Hall Committee Room J. For the dead hand of defeatism descended on the gathering from the start: it was sectarianism of the worst kind: reformist bureaucrats under the flag of “No adventurism”, against the militant left.

This tone was set by London District CP delegate George Anthony, who warned of the need to take no adventurist action *before* any of the Trotskyists or libertarians had even suggested anything. Later Tariq Ali and Chris Harman, of *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Worker*, together with Jim Paton (ABCDC), Piers Corbyn (LSU), and another non-aligned comrade, put up specific proposals: a one-person march against the ban by a prominent labour leader; a torchlight street procession from the March 22 meeting to Parliament, or to Scotland Yard; a big open-air rally that might develop into a march, given the forces, and the will, for defiance; support



Ilford pix by James Lauritz

THE wayward behaviour of Mrs Thatcher, and her worsening showing in the opinion polls, have thrown parts of the Conservative Party into near panic. Beneath their public optimism there is now a real fear that they could lose the next election and that even if they won, Thatcher would tear the country apart with her policies.

This fear is reflected in something amounting—in Tory terms—to open warfare between the right-wing and the so-called liberal wing. The catalyst was Thatcher’s immigration broadcast at the end of January. This came as a stunning surprise to the shadow cabinet, who had discussed immigration some weeks earlier, and had taken a positive decision to play the subject down. This was not of course out of any great regard for the immigrants, but merely because the Tories thought it would be unwise to promise a vast reduction in immigration before they have worked out plans which might make that possible.

Thatcher’s broadcast was taped by Granada TV on Thursday January 26. It was a “thank you” to the Manchester company whose TV profile of her three years earlier had, in Thatcher’s view, significantly helped her to get the Tory leadership. The recording was made for a local programme *Reports Politics*. When they saw the material they had got, Granada decided instead to run it as the *World In Action* show for the following Monday night.

Since the broadcast Thatcher has maintained that she had no intention of raising the issue; she was unexpectedly asked by Gordon Burn, the interviewer, about immigration, and out popped the standard Tory reply. This is nonsense. Thatcher has long been terrified of appearing on TV, is often curt and even rude to her interviewers, and always suspicious of their questions and their motives. For her to launch into a 25-minute interview without knowing exactly what questions she was going to face is inconceivable.

Even after the interview, Thatcher did not see fit at any time to tell her colleagues what she had said; about her promises which are (as Enoch Powell points out) impossible

to fulfil without breaking past commitments; or about the disgusting use of emotional words like “swamped”. Not one of them had the faintest idea of the storm that was to break.

On the Monday night of the broadcast Whitelaw—her deputy leader and Home Affairs spokesperson—the man who should be more intimately concerned with her remarks than anyone else—still did not know. He spoke to a meeting of the Tory Home Affairs Committee, a fluid body which includes as many Tory MPs as choose to turn up, and talked to them about the need for winning the support and trust of immigrants. Again, there was

course, he lost the Tory leadership when he refused to stand against Heath.

The whole incident illustrates the way Thatcher has simply decided to ignore the liberal wing of her party. Thatcher is convinced she has caught perfectly the right-wing mood of the public, and that her colleagues with their old fashioned Butlerite notions, are merely an annoying irrelevance. She has also fully exploited the old Tory tradition of closing ranks. If a Labour leader says something which worries the party, s/he is subjected to constant public attack. If a Tory leader reverses party policy, s/he receives full public backing

an evil conspirator and weakly wait for his political demise. Though he is clearly a failed conspirator, there are no signs that Thatcher has any plans for getting rid of him.

The other two Gang members are Norman Tebbit and George Gardiner. Gardiner is a right-wing journalist with an unpleasant line in cheap populism. He edits the *Conservative Monthly News* (known as ‘Fascist News’ to some Tories), the magazine whose front cover contained a blazing attack on immigrants on the day of the broadcast. Gardiner lamely tried to explain that this was coincidence; he was not believed. Tebbit is simply a loud-mouthed idiot.

Meanwhile the despairing ranks of the Tory left watch the hijacking of their party by a demonic woman who clearly believes the bizarre remedies she peddles. Take, for example, her policy on pay. Thatcher believes that removing Government support for jobs, coupled with a sudden end to the pay policy and strict monetary control, will solve the British economy’s problems. Nobody except Thatcher people like Sir Keith Joseph, believe it will have any effect except to increase unemployment by as much as one million and possibly cause the social havoc which was so freely predicted for the beginning of the Labour Government. Not surprisingly this prospect has scared many Tories silly. Yet they feebly wait around for her to abandon a policy which she clearly believes whole-heartedly and has every intention of putting into action.

Heath has spoken out against her, but since he is now quite as discredited among Conservatives as he is in the country as a whole, nobody pays any attention. From his delightful Worcestershire mansion, Peter Walker has spoken about the perils of ignoring the plight of the decayed inner cities, but since he is clearly ready to join a Thatcher cabinet the moment she asks him, he is safely ignored. The fact is that the new Thatcher Party wants to set up in Britain an extreme right-wing monetarist state, and the only Tories who are in a position to stop this, are doing virtually nothing about it.

Joanna Harvey

Oh gosh! I seem to have rather shot my mouth off...



little altruistic about this. Whitelaw fears for the future of race relations in this country unless the Tories at least put up a public facade of concern, but he is also convinced that Britain’s Asian population is by nature Tory. He sees a number of marginal seats swinging the Tories’ way if Asian businessmen and small shopkeepers can be convinced of this dubious truth. The West Indian vote has long been written off.

Whitelaw actually heard of the Thatcher broadcast later that evening, when he met a Tory MP who had just read the Press Association tapes. He is reported to have been shocked, horrified and deeply concerned about the way Thatcher had left him entirely out in the cold. Since then he has openly told colleagues that Thatcher has betrayed him, which from Whitelaw is an extraordinary move. In the past he has always remained almost obsessively loyal to his party leader—one reason why, of

and precious little sniping in private. Thatcher knows that if she, for example, decided on a referendum on hanging, she could announce it and watch for the rest of her party to jump smartly into line.

She has switched party policy on several issues lately; on pay, Rhodesia, immigration and of course her ludicrous plans for referenda to settle strikes. All these were her own inventions, announced without any consultations with anyone except her own close personal acolytes.

These are now known at Westminster as the Gang of Four. They consist of Airey Neave, her Ulster spokesman, and the man who has achieved the notable double failure of going back on all Tory commitments to the minority population, while not even getting the expected support of the ten Unionists at Westminster. Neave is cordially hated by the party’s liberal wing who see him as



for other marches scheduled within the two-month period, and so on.

During these contributions Ernie Roberts kept a "list". By the time he came to sum up, only the meeting and the lobby of Parliament were on it. Roberts had heeded the warning of the Stalinists.

Following Anthony, Eric Trevor of the NCP had said: "The movement is not developed enough to mount such a demonstration. We should hold the meeting, but forget everything else." Hilary Kitchen of the NCCL said the ban should not be defied, but the movement should be based as broadly as possible, to include Church leaders. Tony Gilbert, secretary of Liberation, said: "The one decision we can take tonight is to make certain that respectable figures from the labour movement call the meeting, not an ad hoc body. If we sidestep the labour movement leaders we will weaken our objectives."

Dave Cook of the CP: "If we have a march it will narrow down the support we will get."

On the insistence, largely, of Paton, Roberts conceded that pickets at the Home Office be added to the agenda, and that a march during the Brixton by-election, and the one person march, "could be debated", later.

During all the reaction from the reformists, the left party delegates largely kept quiet. No-one was suggesting anything adventurist; Andy Strouhous from the SWP and NUS affirmed that no-one wanted to march for the sake of it, but for the issues—principally, of course, against racism and fascism. There was no question of the left party people opposing suggestions, or starting up a sectarian squabble.

Everyone was for building the widest possible support through the London labour movement. But this meant going along with the Fabian strategies of the CP and the Labour Party.

And through it all, the delegates from the "affected organisations"—the women's movement, CARF, FoE—sat silent, save for admissions that they weren't strong enough to fight the ban on their own, so all their events had been cancelled or postponed. The crying need—for everyone to say, "we'll back you, we'll get out thousands more than you could, and back your right to demonstrate"—was barely recognised, let alone articulated.

Only once did conflict nearly materialise. Anthony said that a comrade from CARF (so important, obviously, for counter-demonstrations against the Front), who could not be present that evening, should not be allowed to attend the press conference booked for the next morning, on the grounds of his absence. Strouhous intervened to point out that Anthony had just called for a Tribune MP to be found for this press conference, and there were none of them at the meeting.

As the meeting petered out, Tony Gilbert expressed the feeling that "we aren't here to organise any marches, for anything, only to get the ban lifted." It was hard to imagine the secretary of Liberation liberating anything.

Now why does this matter? Because it was the first meeting of what could have been a strong campaign, against a massive curtailment of democratic rights. Because there were present fairly senior people from the whole range of the left, who could mobilise great numbers through their party and campaign machines. The left party people were falling over backwards not to be sectarian; but to co-operate, to combine

for action. That's why *Socialist Challenge* invited such a broad range along.

And so the reformist party bureaucrats, who gave their sectarianism full rein, won hands down. They started from an assumption of weakness—"the movement isn't developed enough to fight"—and successfully stifled any attempt to make it so. The comparison with, for example, the first meeting of the Agee/Hosenball Defence Committee was distressing. Then there was energy and excitement; we were all for pushing ahead and taking people with us. Though the deportations were of limited relevance to the labour movement, and though the campaign was bound to fail in the end, we managed a great deal in a short time.

But this lot . . . as my mate Bob used to say, "this lot couldn't organise a *coup d'etat* in Guatemala."

If this is "sectarian", then I would say it's a matter worth being sectarian about. How we organise a fight such as this is a vital political question. The debate on party organisation that's been going on in *The Leveller* has largely boiled down to, "well, parties have achieved *this*", or, "those outside parties have achieved *that*". What matters is how people in and out of parties work together, and how party bureaucrats, with their "responsibilities", can be charged with new energy and ideas. It's up to us.

Tim Gopsill

Labour won't fight fascism

MERLYN REES told a Law and Order Conference in Cambridge last November that an extra £9 million must be spent, (an increase to £1.6 billion) to give the Police extra equipment. Speaking on the National Front, he said "that the rise of the fascists was due to high unemployment, inner-city dilapidation and economic problems; to ban them would not help, and that people are genuinely worried about Law and Order".

In 1947, another Labour Home Secretary, Mr Chuter Ede, was asking Kingsley Martin, then Editor of the *New Statesman*, to black James Cameron's article that showed that the East



End Police had been staffed by recent members of the Palestine Police Force, who were closely associated with Mosley's British Union of Fascists.

And while Labour Party National Conferences passed resolutions on German rearmament, Jewish people in Dalston were being brutally attacked in the streets by fascists still wearing detention issue suits. The gates of Auschwitz had only recently been opened. Protesters on the streets against these outrages were the Jewish ex-servicemen's organisation 43 Group, the C.P. and members of small left wing parties. The Labour Party was absent.

In September 1958 there was the racial violence in Notting Hill. For the public at large someone had to be blamed; Teddy Boys, and immigrants. The press was devoid of any mention of Mosley's British Union of Fascists. In fact, earlier in the year they had aided Police to arrest the rebel Labour Leader John Lawrence, of St Pancras Council, for having flown a red flag from the Town Hall roof. Lena Jeger, local MP, protested to the Home Office; but the Labour Party kept silent.

When Labour Conference went Unilateralist, Gaitskell ignored it and commenced a campaign that led to support of Tory Home Secretary, Mr Butler's, consent to the invoking of the 1936 Public Order Act, massive Police operations against demonstrations, raids on homes of activists throughout the country and persecution of nuclear disarmers Pat Arrowsmith and George Clarke.

Now we are witnessing the return of the Labour Roundheads; under its administration, police have protected National Front members marching through areas where multi-racial communities live; police harassment of black communities has led to confrontation. Rarely has the Labour Party nationally complained. No action has come from the Government when bookshops have been burnt down, public houses smashed up, black people knifed.

London has now witnessed at Ilford North, the largest paramilitary manoeuvres since Heath's exercise at London Airport. This massive police exercise at a cost of £400,000 was to protect National Front members against a new potential mass movement, the Anti-Nazi League.

The Labour Party kept its canvassers off the street on the day of threatened confrontation. Weakly, Rees tells the National Front to "watch it", whilst backing Sir David McNee to enforce a 2 month blanket ban on marches.

Again the social democrats are well on the side of the police apparatus. Allowing the non-aligned people to be the nation's conscience seems to be the role of the social democratic Labour Party; such action could allow the National Front to gain power by ensuring it a respectable face as Hitler did. Brixton's forthcoming by-election will give a chance for the Labour Party to answer. Some hopes!

Bill Holdsworth

Court results

Anyone arrested on a demonstration has scant chance of getting justice. You may have known that for a long time, but *Jeannie Mackie* monitored the cases of eighty anti-fascists arrested on various charges during the demonstration against the National Front in Lewisham last August, and her survey proves it.

The eighty faced 131 charges between them. Most—105—were under the 1936 Public Order Act, and included using threatening or insulting words or behaviour, and carrying offensive weapons. Twenty three charges were under the 1964 Police Act, of assaulting or obstructing the police, formed the next largest category. All the cases were heard in two south London magistrates' courts, by paid, full-time stipendiary magistrates. The Public Order Act charges carry possible prison sentences, though there is no right to trial by jury.

All the cases were heard separately, though many of them arose from the same or linked incidents. The courts refused defence requests for linked trials, so each trial distorted the reality of the demonstration. This enabled the courts to

'process' defendants, but at times it seemed as if the confusion and riot did not happen—that there was only a police officer and a defendant on an empty street.

There was a clear undertone of politics running through the trials. Apart from one random passer-by who was arrested, all defendants had been there to oppose the fascists.

Prosecution strategy was to present each isolated case as one of a vaguely connected series of typical magistrates' court cases. The extra-ordinary social and political background of Lewisham was excluded by the very structure of the trials, this also helped to reduce defendants' confidence.

Officers giving evidence were usually constables, usually two, sometimes three. All spoke in court with great conviction, using notes which they claimed to have made 'shortly after the incidents'. All claimed to have seen the defendants commit the offence, and not to have lost sight of them until they were arrested. Yet they were completely vague about details and incidents which occurred around the same time as the arrests. In one case, an officer could not remember where he was two minutes before an arrest. The notes, in other words, were a version of the incident which was best designed to secure a conviction.

Police delivered their evidence in a firm clear manner, and displayed no doubts about their version of incidents, even when later proved to be lying. Magistrates showed due reliance on this.

In those cases where defendants were acquitted, magistrates made it clear that they were casting no adverse aspersions on police officers, even in a case where defence evidence totally contradicted police evidence and was believed.

The better the defence case, the more likely it was that the sentence would be light. Two defendants accused of threatening behaviour were fined £100 and £25 respectively—the latter produced two good witnesses.

Cases where defendants strongly contested the police or accused them of assault or indiscriminate arrest had to be backed up to the hilt—fighting from a basis of guilty until proved innocent. Medical reports, witnesses and even making an official complaint against the police all seemed valueless. Official complaints actually hardened prosecution evidence, an officer against whom a complaint has been made has even more interest in securing a conviction.

Charges were dismissed for the following reasons:
Eleven after legal argument;
Five because of weak or contradictory police evidence;
Thirteen because of photographs or witnesses, or because police credibility was undermined;
Six for reasons which cannot be analysed.

Plea bargaining reduced the penalties. Offering a plea of guilty to a charge of obstruction, for example, ensured that the prosecution would drop the more serious charges with which some defendants were faced on the day of their trial. In many instances, defendants who were prepared to fight one charge found a further charge too much to cope with, and dropped for a guilty plea.

Previous good conduct counted for little in enhancing the credibility of defendants, but previous convictions—most connected with other demonstrations—were severely regarded when magistrates came to sentencing. Magistrates seemed to feel that anyone was likely to be "carried away" in the atmosphere of a demonstration. But they were harder on blacks—four out of the five blacks who had no previous convictions were given prison sentences, either straight or suspended.

Lessons to be learnt if you are arrested are the importance of having witnesses who appear credible, preferably independent ones. Defence witnesses, unlike police, should not be prepared to swear that black is white; human, not superhuman, ability to recall events, is required. Witnesses should make notes immediately after arrests, and refer to them.

But none of this will guarantee you justice. Most defendants came away with a sense of rage and injustice that having witnesses and being in the right made no difference. Courts are to administer the law, not to dispense justice.

Tune into people's radio....

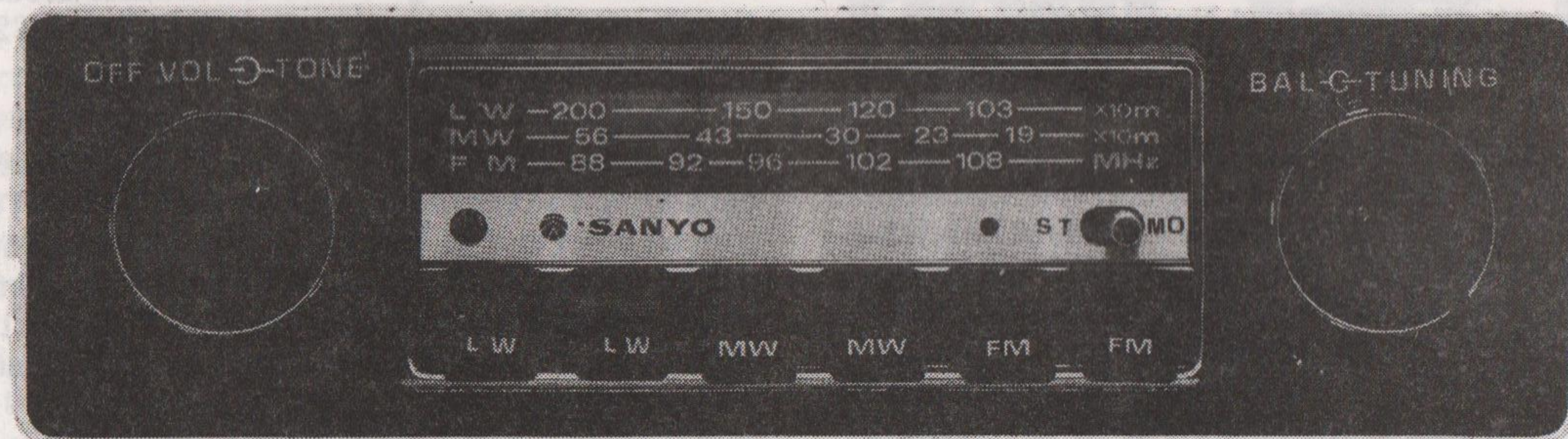
THE QUESTION of access and control of material in British Radio is generally politely sidestepped. In a country which supports a duopoly of state-sponsored and "independent" commercial radio, backed up by a spurious notion of "balance and impartiality" in news and features, and exercises covert and overt censorship on the basis of "consensus", any critique of broadcasting should present a clear analysis of radio and its uses. The role of community or listener-user constituency, and the ways in which trade unions can press for changes in the law on licensing and frequency allocation, for a fundamental transformation of the way radio operates at present, are screaming for debate.

Britain has 39 local radio stations, 20 run by the BBC and 19 commercial (Independent Local Radio) stations. Their development is a reflection of a mixture of governmental policies. Labour supports BBC local radio, without giving much in the way of finance to help, and discourages commercial stations. The Conservatives, with powerful lobbies like the

Association of Independent Radio Contractors, back commercial radio and are calling for their number to be extended to 60. The BBC want an eventual total of 85 stations. This would give 145 in all, reaching about 90% of the population of Britain and utilising the bulk of available frequencies.

In the wake of the Annan Report on the future of broadcasting, and with the ITU World Administrative Radio Conference coming up in 1979, there is a pressing need for an alternative policy on radio and broadcasting. Does this country want a Citizen's Band and genuinely independent non-commercial franchises of the kind operating in Canada, USA, Australia, and Italy? Or is the field only open to non-licensed pirate stations whose future is totally insecure?

In this feature on radio we look at local broadcasting accountability, the Italian experience, an analysis of a Capital Radio "access" programme, and an excursion into the problems of amateur broadcasting, including a guide to radio pirates.



CAPITAL RADIO 194

LAST OCTOBER Capital Radio, the highly profitable London commercial station, launched a seven-programme series "Speak for Yourself". Phone-ins apart, this was Capital's first attempt at an "access" programme involving full participation by non-station staff and non-professionals (after five years!).

Stated aims were: to involve young people and identify their main concerns; to help them understand what they think matters; to encourage them to make informed decisions and become directly involved in running their lives; to stimulate adult awareness of young people's problems and the roles they play in society.

John Sansom, a freelance producer, planned the series. He interviewed 350 young people from schools and youth clubs, and selected seven, on the basis of "whether I liked them if they were decent kids". He eventually chose: John, a driller from Denham; Christine, at comprehensive school in Uxbridge; Carrie, apprentice electrician with Fords; Paul, at school studying A levels in Kenton; Ian, a

joiner from Bermondsey; Michael, from Brixton, clerical officer with the GLC; and Judith, at school doing A levels in Wandsworth.

The programme topics selected were: violence, race, school, jobs, do young people get ripped off?, how can young people get involved in decisions that affect them?, and what can young people look forward to?

Roger Scott, Capital DJ, a Capital engineer and Local Education Authority advisers worked with Sansom and the selected seven. The programmes went out on the Roger Scott show at 6 pm on Wednesday evenings.

The programme content was packaged in such a way as to virtually abandon the stated aims. The participants had no control over presentation and little over content; and the results broke no accepted bounds, questioning very few of Capital's unspoken concepts about such matters as finance, "entertainment", the use of "star interviews", recorded music as unconnected "links" and so on. This is a breakdown of programme timing for three of the series:

	Prog 1 Violence	Prog 2 Jobs	Prog 3 Future
7 young people talking and asking questions	7:50	11:15	2:30
"Star" interviewees talking	17:50	18:20	30:05
Roger Scott links and promotions	7:35	6:35	6:10
Records	14:55	8:40	8:15
Ads	9:00	9:00	9:15
News, weather, traffic etc	3:15	6:10	3:45
TOTALS	60:00	60:00	60:00
Speaking for themselves?			

WHAT RADIO station would you tune to to hear a few bars of "There is a tavern in the town . . .", introduce Squeaky One and Two, Big Boss, Spiny Norman, Sexy Samantha, Malcolm Muggeridge, Clitoral Stimulator, IDI AMIN and G8OPA (Old Piss Artists)? Licensed radio amateurs in the London area could tell you straight away: Channel R7 VHF at 145.775 MhZ on the 2 metre band over GB3LO, most weekday evenings and weekends.

GB3LO is the station code of the Radio Society of Great Britain's Repeater, sited on BBC's Crystal Palace Radio Mast. This VHF Repeater is one of fifty or so covering most areas of England, Scotland and Wales. They were first licensed to the Society by the Home Office three years ago after strong lobbying pressure by Society members.

The aim of Repeaters is to provide higher-power long-range reception/transmission facilities for radio amateurs working locally on low power. You transmit your signal to the Repeater on one frequency and get rebroadcast on a slightly different one. You gain increased range and reception strength this way.

GB3LO, serving the London area, is controlled by the London FM Group on behalf of the Radio Society of Great Britain. Generally GB3LO's traffic consists of licensed amateur hams exchanging calls, information and chit-chat about equipment or mutual acquaintances. Recently, though, a number of people have begun to protest at the use of Repeater facilities for such mundane material—like the old Hancock radio ham and his "It is a-not a-waining in Tokyo".

The protest has come in the form of continual interference with Repeater transmissions, not just on GB3LO, but on other regional Repeaters in Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester, Wales and Scotland. An Anti-Repeater Group (ARG) has been set up with the express intention of forcing changes in the way amateur radio, and particularly Repeaters, get organised, licensed and administered.

ARG's jamming, or QRM, as the radio jargon terms it, takes many forms and has many voices, as the names mentioned earlier suggest. Under the terms of the Wireless Telegraphy Act (1949) music, excerpts from Derek and Clive, unidentified broadcasters and threatening or abusive language are all illegal. So is "dropping-out"—drowning someone else's signal by the higher power of your own transmitter. Even transmission power is limited by the Act or the terms of the radio licence.

Repeater users are not amused. Neither are the Home Office, as licence issuing authority, nor the Post Office, which is technically responsible for locating and prosecuting offenders. The Radio Society of Great Britain has officially refused to do the Home Office's

NEW WAVE BAND

job for it, though it seems that the identity of some of the pirates is known to both parties.

Official inaction has not prevented unofficial steps being taken by some angry radio amateurs. Names, addresses and other personal information have been broadcast. Threats and abuse from both sides occasionally clog Channel R7—in breach of the law, which, if nothing else, forbids licensed hams talking to pirates. There have been physical encounters, cars have been paint-daubed and tyres slashed.

A Repeater has been damaged and its power cable cut and questions about QRM offenders have been raised in Parliament.

There is more to ARG's activities than the mere joy of jamming. They claim that the Radio Society of Great Britain, founded as far back as 1913, should be run on more democratic lines. They would like to see a genuine Citizen's Band set up in this country on the lines of those in America so that amateur bands could be freed of their present traffic, which one ARG member calls "no better than an expensive telephone service".

They would also like to see outside commercial influence, particularly from American and Japanese equipment firms, reduced from its present level.

In ARG's view, Repeaters were set up by a combination of commercial pressure and an old-boy club whose council is not representative of the views of genuine amateur radio users. They also feel critical of the government's monopoly of waveband allocation and the restrictions imposed by law on broadcasting.

The Radio Society's response is that the pirates are a disgruntled minority whose illegal activities should be stopped and they have set up a legal fund for this purpose. But they are in a difficult situation. They want to extend the provision of Repeaters into UHF bands and their programme was held up for a long time by Home Office suspicion that illegal interference would occur here, too.

In fact, after a meeting between Home Office and Radio Society representatives on

August 10 last year it was agreed that all UHF Repeaters in use at present would close down if interference of the kind experienced on VHF took place.

It isn't as if ARG's activities are just an interesting sideline on the main broadcasting field. Individuals broadcasting illegally are a challenge to the official airwave monopoly second only to pirate stations like Radio Jackie and Radio Concorde.

Building an FM stereo transmitter and encoder for the 88-108 MhZ wavebands is illegal. (Pirate stations tend to use the middle of these frequencies). Once you have a transmitter all that's needed is a tape-recorder, jingle loops, records and programme material.

However, the use of either kind of transmitter without a licence is a civil offence under the Wireless Telegraphy Act, or the Marine Offences Act (1967), if you choose to broadcast offshore, and the equipment can be confiscated. (In Liverpool recently someone was prosecuted for merely advertising pirate Radio Caroline with car-stickers and T-shirts).

Broadcasting licences for powerful FM transmitters are of course generally issued only to the police, taxi firms and similar users.

Pirate stations, like individual amateur pirates or groups who try organised jamming by taking over Repeaters, directly or indirectly (such as the Hannington incident late last year) commit civil offences, but the Home Office and the Post Office are finding it increasingly difficult to prosecute them, partly because of insufficient personnel and partly because of the Wireless Telegraphy Act itself. This states that a case can only be brought if the broadcasting equipment is discovered 'in use'.

Modern solid-state circuitry is so compact and generates so little heat, unlike the valve-sets which the 1949 Act was designed to cover, that the flick of a switch and the removal of a vital component can render a raid during broadcasting virtually unproductive.

Recently a Post Office attempt to confiscate broadcasting equipment resulted in a successful counter-charge of assault. Criminal damage charges are now being used against people who interfere directly with Repeaters and there have been instances where licences have been revoked, illegally, since no charges were brought under the Wireless Telegraphy Act.

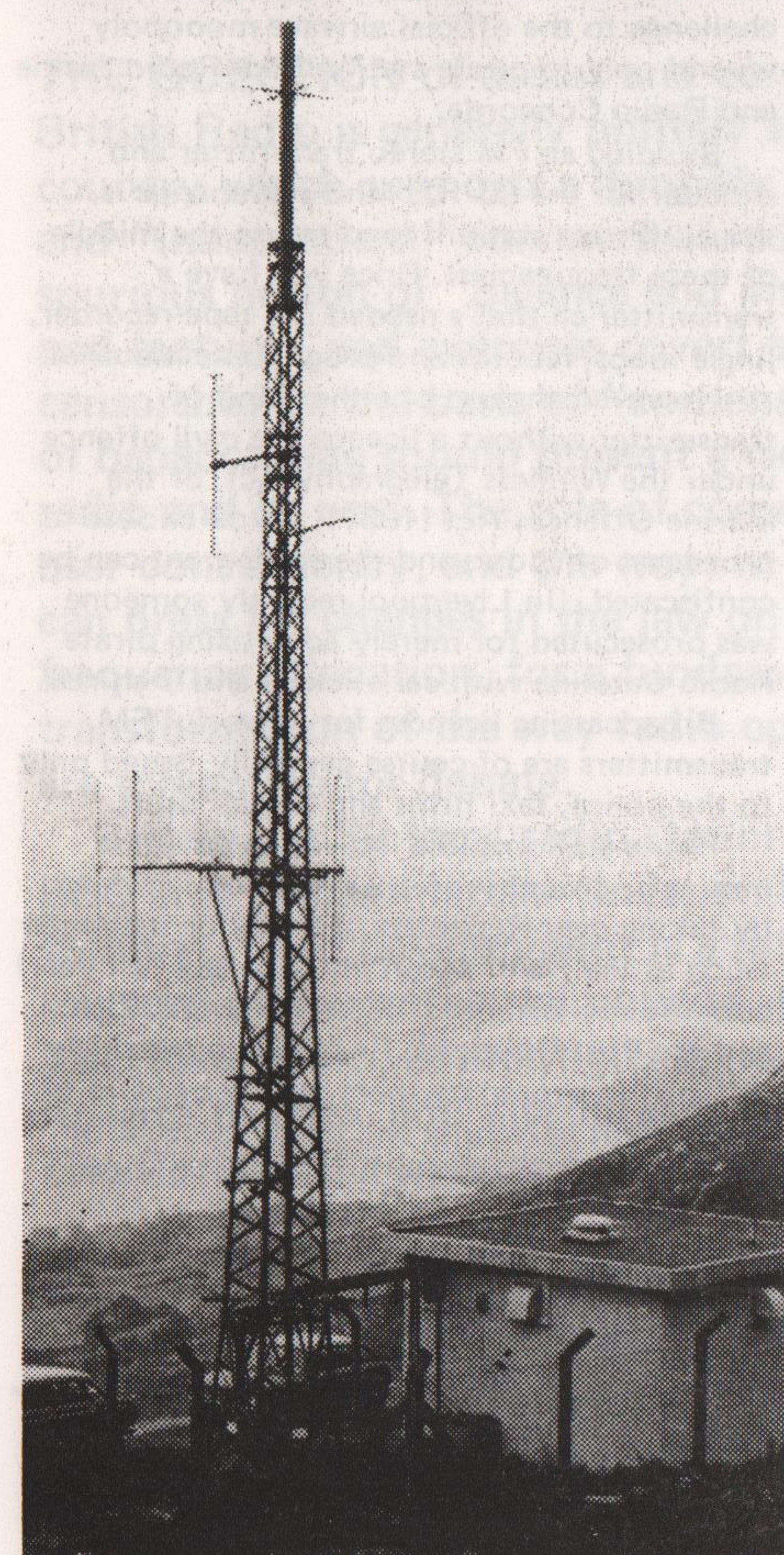
There is also talk of using conspiracy laws against groups who broadcast as pirates or who interfere with the airwave monopoly by jamming. Copyright law is another weapon that could also be used to prevent pirates from playing music over the air.

The situation in law remains as confused as traffic on the amateur and pirate airwaves. Meanwhile, the creaky monopoly persists. Licensed independent stations and Citizen's Band radio of the kind that exist in America and Canada seem at present to be unacceptable here.



Team pic of the Media All-Stars. Ideas for a recipe for radio on a postcard please. Not more than two words.

Italy in tune



BY A QUIRK in the constitution, Italy at present has more than 1,000 local radio stations, each in their different way challenging the traditional political control of the media (the RAI state monopoly), and raising issues of frequency allocation and impartiality in public service broadcasting.

The present situation is something of a free-for-all. Frequencies are occupied by whoever wishes; some are pre-empted with jamming signals to prevent their use by others until the jammers are ready with their own programmes. No-one regulates or gives permission; the strongest transmitter wins.

This chaos illustrates that there is considerably more room in the radio frequencies than most governments or telecommunications authorities would have their publics believe. Lower-powered FM stations, making use of the space between 100 and 104 MHz (as well as 88 to 100MHz) can give a city the size of Bologna (around half a million) a station for each of its 18 districts, all feeding into several city-wide stations and so on through regional to national levels.

In Italy this arrangement is accompanied by a complex set of political and regulatory skirmishes. But these conflicts are not necessarily part of the plot. The Italian experience illustrates several important principles that apply everywhere.

The Italians are making maximum use of a resource whose exploitation at any one time or place is limited, but which is inexhaustible over time. The need for self-expression in big cities, the fact that frequencies should lie unused, or that several should be used for one transmission, is as scandalous as the existence of empty, boarded-up houses in a city with a long housing waiting list.

Effectively, Italians are squatting in disused wavelengths - until the law clears them out.

There is a sort of "vertical" division of the frequency spectrum, with allocation to different ideological, political and social groups, rather than to geographical areas.

Such openly "biased" broadcasting runs totally counter to most western countries' established traditions of public service broadcasting, with their notions of "balance" and "impartiality".

Radio Canale 96 in Milan was set up by a revolutionary group, one of the few controlling a radio station, in September 1975. Its ideology is Leninist, but the station gives a great deal of access to all sorts of political views, expressed in terms of day-to-day life rather than ideology, taking it as a challenge that airspace should be given to people who think differently from themselves, so that opposing attitudes can confront each other.

Much of the time is directed to discussions by different groups of topics of interest to young people - unemployment, drugs, the cinema, sexual behaviour. Homosexual groups control two hour-long slots in the week including Sunday/Monday night from midnight to six am. On the other nights programmes run to 0200 hours.

About 100 volunteers run the station each week. A general assembly elects a committee which employs the 10 to 15 regular staff, who are paid a small wage. Premises are on the top floor of a building occupied by squatters, who provide some protection against attack. The equipment is mostly donated in return for an on-air credit; advertising and listener subscription and sponsored concerts bring in the revenue. The 300W transmitter reaches between 200,000 and 300,000 people in a three-mile radius.

Radio Popolare, which broadly follows the line of the Radical Party, showed the potential of such stations, with phoned-in court reports and link-ups with other stations, in a two-hour analysis of a demonstration in May 1977. The programme included an eye-witness account and a recording of a shooting incident. An observer commented:

"An interpretation of what happened emerged from contributions of the different people involved...it's as if during the day, things happen in the streets, and during the night things happen through radio stations. (The programme was broadcast at midnight). That's very important: the whole movement is in contact through its radio stations and everybody can link up and speak, and you inter-link even between different stations. The whole shape things take is decided during the night on the airwaves and executed during the day....The thing is not as anarchic and uncontrollable as some of the press and the government would claim it to be. It has the control that comes from an action being discussed by tens of thousands of people through the radio. Everybody who rings up really has a meaning to what they say. They're not ringing up with their own personal opinion, but making the call a point of political intervention."

There are three political stations in Bologna: *Radio Quartiere*, *Radio Citta*, *Radio Alice*.

Radio Quartiere is run by a group of young people, all volunteers, whose aim is to start from the informal and cultural needs of the district, which is working-class and generally left-wing. They built the station themselves in the basement of a community centre, which gives them the space rent-free. The £2,500

capital cost of the equipment was provided by the communist sporting and cultural organisation, which also pays the running costs.

They transmit about 45 hours a week. There is daily district news and "what's on", and a considerable amount of music for different sections of the population - old, young, Greek, Eritrean. Regular slots are scheduled for tram-workers, national servicemen, squatters, high school students, women (two separate hours weekly) and an SF club.

For that is what these groups are: participating partners who have been trained to make programmes for themselves. A roster of volunteers acts as station co-ordinators, and each programme team provides its own technical crew. The 50 people regularly involved act as a general meeting to elect a board of eight.

Radio Citta began transmissions in November 1976. It was formed by a group of professional journalists whose earlier efforts to sustain an alternative newspaper had failed, and who decided to put their remaining capital (£5,000) into providing a service of cultural information over the airwaves.

A general assembly consisting of the 30 to 35 regular workers in the station, paid and unpaid, elects a board of directors which "employs" about a dozen of the workers. It does so to comply with various legal requirements. In practice the group runs as a co-operative.

The staff is organised into main sections for music, information, administration and sales. But all can share in the work outside their speciality. Advertising is the main source of revenue, though it is not sufficient to pay regular wages. To supplement it, the station has recently set up two ventures: a hi-fi and record shop, and an alternative news agency, the first of its kind in Italy. It sells items to other radio stations, political parties, student groups, unions, and so on.

Apart from local news and consumer information, the unions have a weekly space, as do prisoners, naturalists, the police, strippers, factory workers and the women's movement. There is a regular education feature for medical students and a safety at work spot. Jazz, Greek music and sport are regular features, and Sunday is an open day for phone-ins, requests and unscheduled use of the studio. Transmission times are 0900 to 0200 daily.

The closure of *Radio Alice* (Mark 1) at gunpoint on 12 March 1977 has passed into the history of the alternative media, thanks to the live recording and transcript of the police break-in. The station, like others, had used live phoned-in reports from helpers in bars and cafes about the movement of security forces, so that those in the crowd on demonstrations could use their transistors to be as well informed as the police.

Other countries besides Italy have officially recognised an alternative sector of autonomous local stations - the USA, Canada and Australia. But in these countries the sector is as much an alternative to commercial as to public broadcasting. In Britain such things are never even thought about.

The Italian free sector, arrived at by a constitutional accident, will certainly be brought under control before long. But will the openness and "alternative" nature of news and other programming on the small number of serious local radio stations be permitted to survive? And is the model exportable?



Tony Nicholls

Post Office participation fraud

LABOUR RELATIONS

in the Post Office are often in the news. Last June the Union of Post Office Workers threw the legal establishment into turmoil with the litigation that followed its planned boycott on postal communications with South Africa. Within weeks postal workers at Cricklewood were leading the support for the Grunwick strikers with their refusal to handle the firm's mail. This was unofficial action, and it showed the characteristic pattern of the industry:

militancy at branch level; reaction, and co-operation with management at the top.

This pattern has since been institutionalised in two developments: a Private Member's Bill, promoted by Norman Buchan, which grants postal workers the right to strike (but only on the say-so of the union leaderships), and, more importantly, in the "experiment" in industrial democracy—workers on the board, that sort of thing—which started on 1 January this year.

THE HISTORY

In 1974, Anthony Wedgwood Benn was invited to address the Union of Postal Workers (200,000 members) executive, and in answer to questions, showed he was willing to encourage trade union representation at Board level. Discussions between the Post Office Engineering Union (125,000 members) and the UPW, the two biggest unions involved in the Post Office by far, led to a Joint Statement of Principles which was adopted by both unions at their 1975 Conferences. The Post Office management took some persuading before they agreed to negotiate.

The Bullock Committee carried on its enquiry during the same period, but drew its conclusions separately. Broadly speaking, the PO negotiations were based not on TUC positions, but on an EEC Commission proposal, the Draft Statute for European Companies, and recommended a two-tier system in which management board activities had to be ratified by a supervisory board. The Main Board has 7 Management members (by appointment), 7 Union members (by election) and 5 Independent members, with similar representation at regional and local levels. This agreed, the present project was made possible by the Post Office Act 1977.

THE STRUCTURE

At whatever level the project is considered from a socialist perspective, it stinks. By co-opting workers into illusory

decision-making and job-satisfaction, the government expects to make capitalist enterprise more efficient and stable, and help profits and exports. And in determining the membership of the PO Board, the Government holds most of the cards.

The Chairperson of the PO, and its Board, are directly appointed by the Government. Management directors are appointed in informal consultation with ministers. The five Independent directors are appointed by the Secretary of State, Eric Varley.

Of the four already appointed, two (Janice Walsh and Liberal spokesperson Lord Winstanley) represent right-wing consumer interests—a concession to the Liberals for the Lib-Lab Pact. The other two independents are Derek Gladwin, Regional Secretary of the General and Municipal Workers Union, and Peter Walters, Managing Director of British Petroleum, in which the Government has a substantial financial interest.

The Union side is represented by Ron Barrett, Chairperson of the Managerial Staffs Association, favourable to management, as is Robert Thomas, President of the Society of Post Office Executives. Nina Williams is the member representing the Civil and Public Servants Association.

The UPW members are Fred Moss, Union General Treasurer, and Ivan Rowley, Union National Organiser. The POEU reps are Peter Shaw, Union Research Officer, and Arthur Simper, Technical Officer at Paddington

Exchange. Simper is the only one who is not a full-time union official, who actually works for the Post Office.

The divisions on the Union side cannot be underestimated. There are rivalries between the worker and management unions to start with. Then, for all the joint statements, there is no love lost between the POEU and the UPW. The POEU, for example, did not support the seven-week UPW strike in 1971, and was partly responsible for its disastrous failures. The CPSA and UPW are in dispute as to who represents typists in the telecom branches.

The union reps on the Board have no clear idea of what they are getting into. They have no technical or financial advisers, or research support. The UPW members have expressed the naive view that once they're on the Board they'll have access to PO experts—which means they'll be completely dependent.

Most of the real decision-making is carried out by the Management Board, which delivers *faits accomplis* to the Main Board for ratification.

THE UPW BUREAUCRACY

General Secretary, Tom Jackson, was elected in 1967. He is a government director of BP (along with Walters, managing director, who represents "independent" interests on the PO Main Board). A staunch supporter of Government wages policy, as a powerful member of the TUC bureaucracy, he has been a force in bringing the TUC to back



Jackson: TUB-in-chief

Labour's pay policies in complete conflict with his members' demands. To give him his due, he is known to have favoured a smaller, localised, *workers' control* experiment. Had he swung this, it would probably have been his single achievement on behalf of workers. Since then he has emphasised in public that he is co-operating with management on redundancies.

The Deputy General Secretary is Norman Stagg, celebrated for his abuse of the postal workers who supported the struggle of the Grunwick strikers. More than once he was referred to in slogans on the mass pickets, as Norman Scabb.

The National Organiser and General Treasurer of the UPW are the union's reps, elected by Branch delegates, not by the general membership, on the PO Board. These four, together with seven National Assistant Secretaries, and the Editor of the UPW paper, *The Post* are the controlling full-time officers of the union, elected once and for all to the Executive Council.

So their capability to manoeuvre and manipulate, without damage to their own positions, is virtually unshakeable. The EC, which includes 19 other officers elected annually at Conference (and almost always re-elected if they have the full-time officials' approval) are the only body entitled to declare a strike official;

they have to ratify any decision taken at local, or District Council level.

Consider then this extract from the EC's reaction to the Carter Committee Report: "We have suffered too much in the past from over-centralised decision making . . . far too many decisions were taken at Board level and this eventually sapped the management will to manage at lower levels. It caused a lack of confidence and led to over-long delays in decision-making. The Managing Directors of the respective services found it difficult to operate as Managing Directors because of the continual need to refer matters which should have been within their confidence to the level of the Board . . ." (*The Post*, 30 November 1977).

How on earth does this stand if applied to the UPW Executive Council itself? Or to the Main PO Board, in the Industrial Democracy "experiment"?

UPW POLICIES

UPW HQ not only denounced the Grunwick mass pickets and the postal workers support for it, while supporting motion after motion at various conferences pledging their support; they went so far as to *fine* union officials who circularised a letter calling for a continuation and extension of the ban on the handling of Grunwick mail, after HQ had issued instructions to handle the mail normally. The fines went up to £500.

The EC paid lip service to a UPW Conference motion to oppose the NF and racism, and which demanded that racist material sent through the post should not be handled. But when members of the Grunwick strike committee went to the West Central District Sorting Office and to Rathbone Place Sorting Office, they were assaulted by NF members who were also UPW members, with no demur from the EC. A postal worker who attended what purported to be a Catholic postal workers' meeting, and gave his name and address, was sent NF material abusing Jews and blacks, next day, through the post.

At every major postal branch there is a marked division on racial lines; I have observed it at three sorting offices, there is no attempt to end this on the union's part. Instead, one of the 19 EC members is a token black, who, disregarding the racism all around makes emotional

speeches about how he is a walking example of a non-racist democracy.

At the Labour Party Conference 1977, UPW delegates acted as follows:

- On an emergency motion demanding measures to amend the Public Order Act to avoid further violent confrontations inspired by NF tactics, the motion was carried, but opposed by UPW delegates.

- UPW delegates abstained on one motion, and opposed another which stood against legislation to restrict choice on abortion.

- They opposed the removal of the disqualification from public office of 21 Labour Party members in Clay Cross.

At the TUC Conference, 1977, the UPW delegates opposed a motion against the Official Secrets Act. Considering that all postal workers are signatories under the Act, this opposition went directly against the interests of union members.

At no point has the UPW leadership allowed the issue of the level of surveillance by way of telephone tapping, and the opening of mail, to be raised and discussed at Conference, or anywhere.

UPW BRANCH LEVEL ACTIVITY

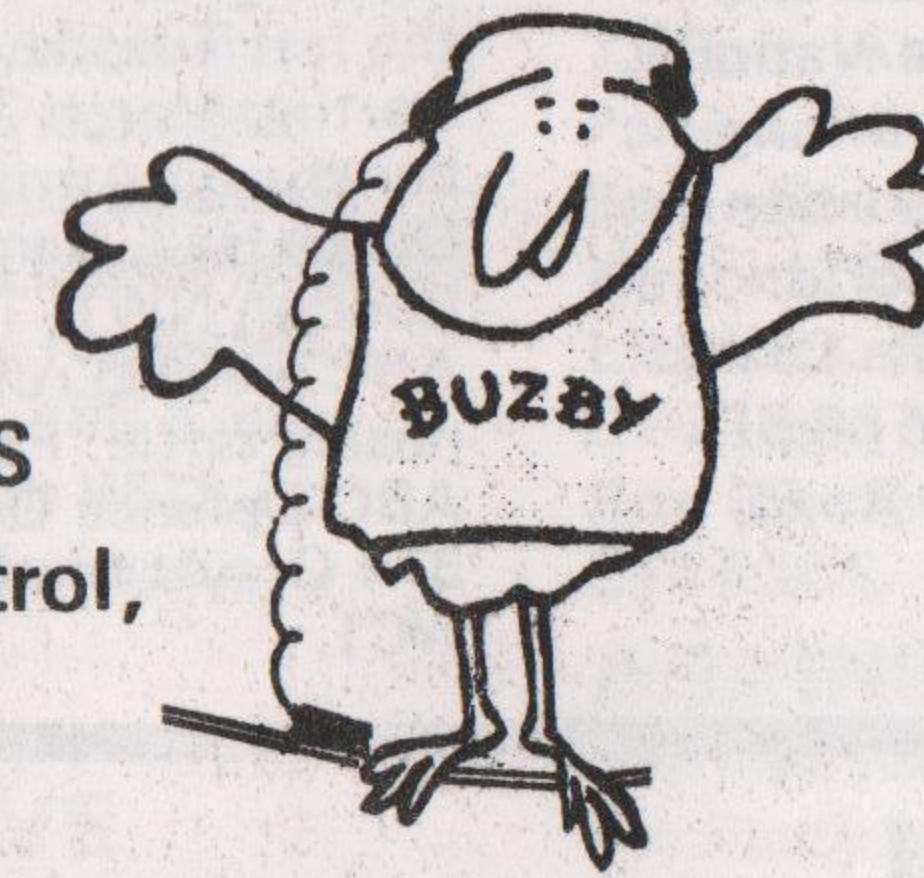
There is considerable democratic activity among rank and file members at branch level, especially in the postal sections of the union. At small branches, about 80-90 per cent of the membership get involved, but they certainly pull no weight at District Council level and beyond. Consequently, distrust of Trade Union Bureaucrats (TUBs) has built up among TU Members (TUMs). Jackson or Stagg would get a rough verbal going over, at the least, at many branches, were they ever to bother paying them a visit.

Only the post entry closed shop prevents many worker militants and some apathetic members from leaving the union. In fact, the closed shop, far from helping members to organise to improve their wages, and conditions, enables the TUBs to curtail members' effectiveness. Most branches fight for local working conditions as far as is possible, with little or no help from the TUBs.

Militants do not try for national posts; HQ promotes the candidacies of co-operative TUBs only.

Because of Industrial Democracy negotiations, the TUBs have been

soft-peddling even more than usual in dealing with management. The management are aware that their rising profits (£250 million last year) have put them in a public position of some strength. Also new technology and direct dialling have reduced the demand for operators.



BUZZY SAYS

Workers' control, not workers' participation

Since 1971, there has been a lot of unofficial industrial action, reflecting workers' dissatisfaction.

One occasion was in 1976, when, with management connivance, the police surrounded the Wren House telecoms office in London and strip searched 330 international telephone operators and inspected their lockers, on the pretext of a drug search. They simultaneously raided the homes of four operators. All they found was one half-smoked joint at Wren House. TUMs regarded it as an exercise in state terrorism, and decided on a two-day walkout. The TUBs at HQ assured us that the walkout would be declared official and a protest demanding an inquiry was sent to the Home Secretary. There the matter ended.

Neither this walkout, nor any other industrial action taken anywhere by TUMs has ever been declared official since the 1971 strike—the only official strike in the union's history.

The monolithic structure of the UPW means that the TUBs get into a panic at any action taken by TUMs that compromises their hobnobbing with state power. An immediate re-structuring of decision-making is the first step if there is to be any talk of democracy.

Workers control would have to start, not at the top, but on the shop floor.

So far, no TUMs have shown the slightest enthusiasm for this "experiment" in Industrial Democracy, except to regard TUBs as aspiring to the mantle of bosses.

As for the right to strike we TUMs now have, it is somewhat irrelevant in any case, considering the numerous occasions unofficial (and that single seven-week period in 1971 of official) strike action taken by postal workers, which the Attorney-General dares not prosecute. The new law has one use, though. Scabs, who could not be legally expelled from the union because strike action was "illegal", are now in a much more precarious position.

The Press raised the bogey that the Bill was giving postal workers the right to take selective action against individuals or companies like Grunwick. This was not the case, and the UPW were prompt to protest. As a matter of fact, legal or not, postal workers will certainly continue to strike, when circumstances demand it.

Naz

WITH DEVELOPMENT already at a standstill on two of the Ulster unionists' pet projects — the New University of Ulster at Coleraine, and the new city of Craigavon — unionists are now furious at their defeat on a battle to scrap plans for a controversial housing and industrial estate in Belfast.

Unionists plan castles in the air

After four years of discussion, and an acrimonious public inquiry, Northern Ireland Office Housing Minister Ray Carter has approved a plan to build an industrial estate and 2,000 houses at Poleglass in the Falls Road area of Belfast.

The housing is desperately needed to relieve overcrowding in the Catholic areas of west Belfast, and it is for Catholics that Poleglass is being built; but the residual Protestant communities in the Poleglass area see the estate as a threat and a potential IRA stronghold.

In the face of this latest failure to keep Belfast's Catholics in the ghettos, militant loyalists have now threatened direct action to stop the houses from being built.

Belfast's sectarianism is being made increasingly sharper by intimidation. For Catholics, the city's appalling housing problems are made worse by the limited choice of areas to which they can move. Loyalist pressure to stop any new

Roy Mason lied to him: after all, only eight months ago Mason had assured him that the British Government was committed to Craigavon.

The Craigavon Centre, a seven storey office block, stands new, white and empty: Mason promised the mayor that he would fill it with 1,000 civil servants. Cairns' despair has been heightened by the loss of his considerable personal investment in the lifeless shopping centre.

In the year that work began on Craigavon, an official committee decided that Northern Ireland needed a new university. Instead of expanding existing higher education facilities in Magee College, Derry, a New University of Ulster was built in Co. Derry at Coleraine. That is what the Unionists had wanted.

Nine years later, no-one could complain about the lack of facilities at the University. The problem was the lack of students. By 1974, academic facilities were used to only 68 per cent of capacity

...a university virtually empty...a lifeless, half-built city...

territory being occupied by Catholics caused a delay to the Poleglass project and a reduction by half of the number of houses planned; but the Northern Ireland Office has at last been forced to admit that there are no prospects in sight of the desegregation of Belfast.

Within days of the Poleglass decision, a planning scheme devised by the Unionists in the 1960s was brought staggering to a halt. The British Government announced that it would invest no more in the new city of Craigavon; instead, the money would be spent on rebuilding Belfast and Derry.

Craigavon was intended to become an alternative centre to Belfast, where it would attract some of its population. Constructed in a line between the loyalist strongholds of Portadown and Lurgan, it would be safe from Catholic domination, and its name commemorated the man who called for "a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people". Houses, offices and shops were built in the new city; but many of them remained empty as the people of Belfast proved reluctant to move. Those who did move to Craigavon to avoid Belfast's sectarian divisions soon detected the same symptoms growing on fresh ground.

Some of the inhabitants of Craigavon were more sorry than others to hear of the abandoning of the city's ambitious plans. Mayor Sidney Cairns, an Official Unionist, wonders if Secretary of State

library facilities to 59 per cent, administration accommodation to 34 per cent, health facilities to 25 per cent and outdoor sports grounds to only 21 per cent.

Some such mismatching might be expected in any new university, but things have not improved, and since then the Government has decided that Phase 3 of the university's development plan should be postponed.

Meanwhile, Northern Ireland has shared in the decline of the fashion of going to university, and those who do want to go, do their best to avoid Northern Ireland.

The Unionists have their dreams, but they will continue to be disappointed. Says Mayor Cairns: "I believe that the Government, since they put the structure there, should give us the money to get on with building what was their dream in the sixties".

Not only will the money be denied to Craigavon, but it is also unlikely that Belfast will get it: the experience of Great Britain has shown that supposed shifts of resources from new towns to inner cities are usually means of cutting costs and saving face.

An empty university and a half-built city remain as evidence that the Unionist dreamers will not have their way: Irish politics will not lie down.

Rob Cowan



pix by Tony Nicholls

Agitprop

WOMEN AND DOCTORS

A Virago handbook entitled *Talking to Your Doctor* offers women advice and information about seeing their doctor. Written in non-technical language. £1.00 from Virago, 4th floor, Wardour Street, London W1. Tel: 01 734 4608/9.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The Institute for Workers' Control, together with community action groups is organising a conference to discuss how to fight for the right to work. 15-16 April, Ranmoor House, Shore Lane, Sheffield. Details from IWC, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham. Tel: 0602 74504.

MANCHESTER

City Enquirer—alternative investigative paper in Manchester. Subscriptions: £1.50 for 13 fortnightly issues from Manchester Enquirer, 178 Oxford Road, Manchester 13.

LIBERTY HALL

Membership £1 for 6 months. Contact Membership Secretary, Liberty Hall, c/o Top Flat, 7 Grove Park, Liverpool 8, or at the door, Everyman Bistro, Hope Street, Liverpool 1. Doors open 7.45pm.

CO-OPS

In the Making—A directory of Co-operatives. Geographical catalogue and articles relevant to all aspects of co-ops from establishing one, to radical technology. 60p (+15p p&p) from In The Making, 84 Church Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Conference of alternative and community newspapers at York, April 15-16. 2 days of workshops. Accommodation provided, bring sleeping bags. York Free Press collective, c/o 1 Newton Terrace, York.

THIRD WORLD

A catalogue by Zed Press of their books on the Third World. Zed Press is committed to offering radical books to non-academic circles without any loss of quality. Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1. Tel: 01 837 4014.

S.E. ASIA

Conference for Basic Human Rights in The ASEAN alliance countries. Works in field related to human rights and suppression of Democracy in Thailand, Singapore etc. Welcomes enquiries and requests for publications, films, speakers. COBRA, 6 Endsleigh Street London WC1.

DRUGS

A brief factual guide by Release, contains information on a wide range of drugs and also useful section on Drugs and the Law. 20p (schoolkids 10p) from

Release, 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9. Tel: 01 289 1123.

FEMINIST HISTORY

Forthcoming meetings of the Feminist History Group. Fridays: April 14—Imperialism and Motherhood; April 28—Marxist theory and Feminist history; May 12—Women's Philanthropy in 19th century Britain. Women only. 7.30pm, The Women's Research and Resources Centre, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Tel: 01 253 7568.

THIRD WORLD

Thailand—Dictatorship and Development. Background to the flashpoints of the next SE Asia revolution. History of Thailand, detailed analysis of democratic period 1973-76. 50p from Third World First (L), 232 Cowley Road Oxford.

ARMS TRADE

Campaign Against the Arms Trade national meeting to prepare plans for weeks of action around UN Special Section on Disarmament. Meeting Sat-Sun, April 1-2, Friends Meeting House, Wynards Lane, Exeter.

BLACK PHOENIX

The lack of attention to Western sabotage of Third World cultures led two black artists, in desperation, to start a new journal, *Black Phoenix*. The leading article, 'Preliminary Notes for a BLACK MANIFESTO' by one of them Rasheed Araeen, is a major assault on that of Western art and culture. It analyses the art establishment's refusal to take black artists seriously and condemns the work of some black artists as imitative in an attempt to gain acceptance. It argues for a synthesis of traditional and modern aspects of art, but lacks examples of work in which such a synthesis has been achieved. Its faults can be corrected however. Readers and artists are invited to contribute to a more comprehensive work, of which it is a beginning.

The stunning 'In Defence of the Word', by the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, follows. His co-founders on the cultural journal *Crisis* have disappeared, been executed, jailed, or, like him, forced into exile by juntas and oligarchies in Latin America. The power of culture is clear. It threatens, it has to be silenced with bullets and prison camps.

Black Phoenix also has articles on 'The Search for Identity in Contemporary Nigerian Art', and on architecture in the Middle East. The journal has been brought out on very limited funds. It is attractively produced, and certainly deserves all the support

it can get. £3 for four issues to: BCM Blackphoenix, London WC1V 6XX.

ABORTION INTERNATIONALLY

New pamphlet from the National Abortion Campaign, outlining women's struggle for abortion rights throughout the world. Articles on Japan, Bangla Desh, USA, Italy etc. 40p (inc p&p) from NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1

Classified

WOMAN Leveller reader seeks room in flat in Camden or West London area. Ring Anne on 01-485-9737.

WANTED room of bedsit for Leveller reader Northwest/central London. Ring 01-387-0176 and leave a message.

YORKSHIRE CONFERENCE on Ireland. Speakers from Provisional Sinn Féin; Women and Ireland; UTM; and many others. Saturday April 22, 9.30am-6pm. Swarthmore Centre, 3 Woodhouse Square, Leeds 3. 60p (35p for the wageless). Creche. Bring sleeping bag if accommodation required. For more info write: UTM, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

WORKERS RESEARCH UNIT of Belfast. Bulletin No 3, Spring 1978. Contents include Health in the North of Ireland—An in-depth analysis of health and health services. The Belfast private clinic—the inside story. Ferrenka—a study in multinational imperialism US investment in Ireland. The National Front and links with loyalism. McGurks Bar—The British Press exposed. Gay oppression in Belfast and Derry plus free anti-private health poster. Available from Workers Research Unit, c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast, N.Ireland. Price 70p including postage. Also available—Sacco and Vanzetti poster—Price 30p including postage.

COPY DATE APRIL 10 FOR PUBLICATION APRIL 24

Rates: 2p a word. Up to 10 words free for subscribers per issue. Payment: Ads must be prepaid by cheque or PO. Make payable to THE LEVELLER MAGAZINE LTD. Send to: Leveller Classified, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1.

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ABC

The Aubrey-Berry-Campbell Defence Campaign has published the first of a regular series of newsletters on campaign and related activities. ABC Plenary meetings will take place on the last Tuesday of every month, starting March 28. There is a benefit on April 2 at Dingwall's Dance Hall, Camden Lock, London NW1. Tickets cost £1.50. ABC are also running a fund raising raffle. Further details from ABC Defence Campaign, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

LEVELLER worker seeks two bedroomed flat in Camden/Islington area. Ring 01-387-0176.

SHARED HOUSE or flat wanted urgently. Annie Reeve, 29 Regent Moray Street, Yorkhill, Glasgow.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers Theatre requires versatile socialist musician (full-time). Long term commitment. Acting ability an advantage. Write: 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1. Ring 01-450-6992/01-730-5396.

CORNER HOUSE Bookshop specializes in books, magazines and pamphlets on radical and alternative education. We now have a catalogue available 20p (plus 7p p&p). 20p will be refunded on first mail order, if order form enclosed. Send to: 14 Endell Street, London WC2.

COMPLETE runs of Peoples News Service for sale. Also old copies of Andy Warhol's interview magazine and other radical/political ephemera. Will swap or sell for books/material on Africa. Write to 8 Castle Road, London NW1 for details.

ASTROLOGICAL birth chart and character analysis, send £5, including future trends/potentials £7: Send birth details. For more specific services send for price list: John Wilmott, Knockan, Bupessan, Mull, Argyll.

PRISON SECRETS

Radical Alternatives to Prison and The National Council for Civil Liberties have got together to produce a book which examines the apparatus of secrecy used in Social Democratic or Liberal society to isolate prisons and prisoners from public scrutiny. and argues that the basic rights of prisoners should be respected. £1.25 from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, or RAP, 15 Blackfriars Lane, London EC4.

FIGHT TO LIVE

Join the North London Claimants Union; meetings every Thursday 1pm, 445 Caledonian Rd. N7, Tel: 01-607-8117

PEOPLES NEWS SERVICE

Alternative news service—15p, fortnightly. From 182 Upper St., London N1. Tel: 01-359-3785.

COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY OF YORKSHIRE

Leeds University 12-14 April 1978. Fee £3.50 covers all events and accommodation. Creche. Courses on education, political economy, sociology, feminism, history, Social events. Details—Dr R Towler, Dept. of Sociology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT. Tel: (0532) 31753 ext 7287

NF

The National Front Investigated, Labour Research Dept, providing information and analysis of NF. 25p from Labour Research Dept, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 Tel: 01-928-3649

FIGHT THE BAN

Campaign Against the Ban on marches in London is holding a public meeting at St Pancras Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1, on Wednesday 22 March, 7.30pm. Also a mass lobby of Parliament on Tuesday April 11, 5pm-8pm. Sponsored by the National Council for Civil Liberties. (for more details phone 01-278-4575). Campaign is at Box 50, London N1. Phone 01-359-8301.

AGAINST NUKES

With the marches ban, Friends of the Earth have deferred their anti-Windscale march from March 19 to Saturday April 29. Assemble Speakers Corner, Hyde Park at noon. The next weekend, May 6/7 there will be a protest at the proposed nuclear power station site at Torness, near Edinburgh, organised by Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace. Assemble in Dunbar, East Lothian (train from Edinburgh) at noon, May 6. Details from SCRAM, 2a Ainslie Place, Edinburgh 3. Tel: 031 225 7752.

EGA

Keeping Hospitals Open—written from the work-ins at EGA and other hospitals. Outlines steps to fight hospital closures, 10p from EGA JSCC, EGA Hospital, Euston Rd. NW1. Tel 01-387-2501.

THE IRISH PRISONER

Put out by the Prisoners Aid Committee, with inside information and articles on the Balcombe Street Four, Bloody Sunday and others. 50p from 182 Upper St, N1.

RADIO

The radical radio groups referred to on pages 25 to 27 are: Local Radio Workshop: 9a, Clarendon Cross, London W11, phone 01-727-9613.

Community Communications: individual annual subscriptions are £2. Information from Derek Jones, information officer, at 8 Millfield Close, Farndon, Cheshire, phone 0829-270554 (home), or 0925-51144 ext 150. In the London area, co-ordinators are Simon Partridge (92 Huddleston Road, London N7, phone 01-272-5327) and David Wilkinson (phone 01-748-3020 ext 226).

At its first general meeting, held in Liverpool in January, it was decided to set up five working groups, covering local radio; access of low-gauge video to

broadcasting; community printing, publishing, writing and libraries; community media studies in education



Music

BIRMINGHAM MUSICIANS' CO-OPERATIVE

Apr 14 Inaugural fund-raising concert

REDBRASS

Mar 25 Llandudno (Labour Party Young Socialists Conference)
Apr 8 London, Battersea Arts Centre
Apr 9 Clerkenwell Festival

MUSIC FOR SOCIALISM

Mar 29 Open Session. At Earl Russell, near Kings X. For info phone Les: 607-8117

Also: LONDON MUSICIANS' COLLECTIVE

42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 (opposite Engineer pub)
London Musicians Collective meets on the 1st Sunday of each month at 2 pm. Next meeting: April 2nd. For information on forthcoming events at the LMC, see Time Out, Musics, etc.

! LABOUR NEEDS CAPITAL!

We'll established and expanding socialist and community Press (co-operative) needs £4-6,000 for 3-5 years for new machinery. Although we hope to attract capital from sympathetic sources, and pay less interest than the finance companies are demanding, this would be strictly a business arrangement, with normal legal obligations and guarantees.

For details contact:

ABERDEEN PEOPLE'S PRESS
167 King Street, Aberdeen.
Tel. 0224-29669.

SINGERS CLUB

The Bull and Mouth, 31 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1
Mar 25 Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl
Apr 1 Jack Warshaw, Sandra Kerr, Ron Elliot
Apr 8 Walter Pardon, Oliver Mulligan, Jack Warshaw

BIG CHIEF

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

ROY BAILEY

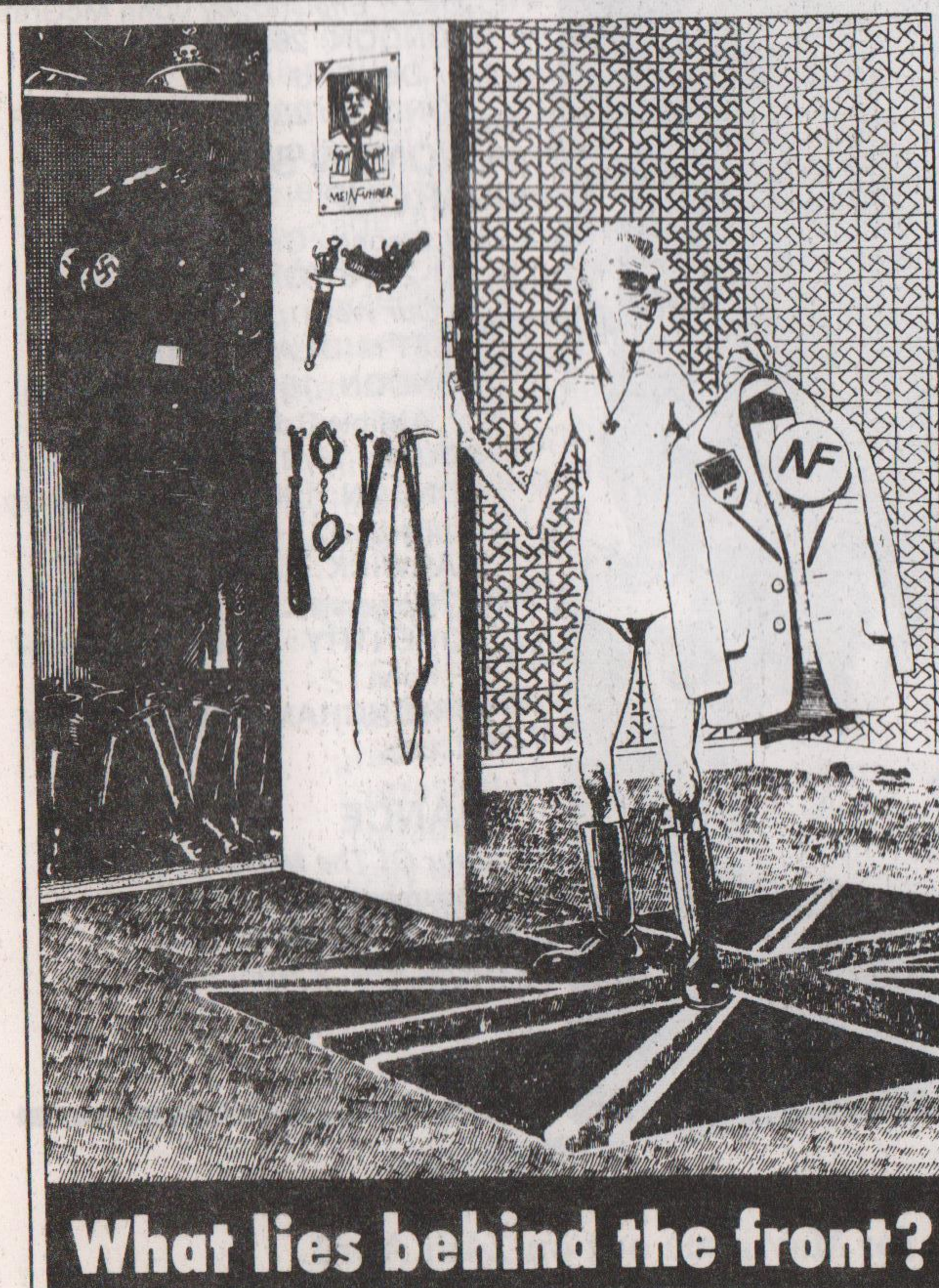
Mar 25 Newcastle, Guildhall
Mar 31 Sheffield, Deviancy conference (with Leon Rosselson)
Apr 1 Leigh, public library (with Leon Rosselson)
Apr 11 Washington, Tyne & Wear, Arts Centre (with Leon Rosselson)

THE RESISTERS

Apr 15 London, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Rd, E1. National Federation of Claimants Unions benefit

CHRISTIAN WOLFF

Compositions performed at:
Apr 12 ICA, The Mall
Apr 30 Riverside Studios Hammersmith



What lies behind the front?

Theatre

BELT AND BRACES

22 Vicars Road, London NW5 (01-485-2872). Current shows are *A Day In The Life Of The World*, a multinational spectacular, and *Mrs Colly Pepper*, about the aged. SWINDON: March 20/25, Wyvern Theatre (*A Day In The Life*) BRIDGEWATER: Mar 28, Arts Centre (*Pepper*) STREET: Mar 29 Crispin Hall (*Pepper*)

GLOUCESTER: Mar 30, Courtyard Arts Trust (*Pepper*) BRISTOL: Mar 31, Folk House (*Pepper*)

BATH: April 1, Brillig Arts Centre, (*Pepper*)

SCOTLAND: April 6/8, Buchanan Lecture Theatre, St. Andrews, Scotland. (*A Day In The Life*)

BANGOR: April 10/11, Gwynedd Theatre (*Pepper*)

MOLD: April 13/15, The Studio, Theatre Clywd, (*A Day In The Life*)

BROADSIDE MOBILE WORKERS THEATRE

58 Holbein Place, London SW1 (01-450-6992). Presently showing *Divide And Rule Britannia* about racism and colonialism, and *Now You See It Now You Don't*, about inflation, unemployment and public spending cuts. Also, new production on the struggle against apartheid now available for booking.

HILLINGDON: March 21, Greenways School, (*Divide And Rule*)

FULHAM: Mar 22, Fulham Town Hall. (*Divide And Rule*)

DEPTFORD: Mar 30, The Albany Creek Road. (*Now You See It*)

DEPTFORD: April 6, The Albany Creek Road, (*Now You See It*)

FINCHLEY: April 7, St Mary's Church Hall, Hendon Lane (*Divide And Rule*)

CAST

11c Cabbell St., London NW1 (01-402-6087) Currently showing *Confessions Of A Socialist*, a socialist cabaret.

SKEGNESS: 25/26 Mar, Derbyshire Miners Holiday Camp.

COMMON STOCK

31 Fulham Palace Road, London W6. (01-741-3186). Current show *Spellbound* is about adult illiteracy.

LONDON: Mar 30, Tabernacle, Powis Square, W11.

COUNTERACT

27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. (01-251-4977). Current shows are *Screwed*, which investigates the law, and *She Asked For It*, about rape. Bookings now being taken:

SOUTHERN ENGLAND:

10/15 April EAST MIDLANDS: 17/21 April

WEST MIDLANDS: 2/12 May SOUTH WALES: 15/19 May

(*Screwed*)

SOUTH WEST: 9/12 May

WEST MIDLANDS: 15/20 May LONDON: 22/27 May

SOUTHERN ENGLAND: 29 May /3 June.

(*She Asked For It*)

FOCO NOVO

2 Nugent Terrace, London NW8 (01-289-3226). Current show is *Withdrawal Symptoms*, by C.P. Taylor.

LONDON: to April 9, ICA. New show, *On The Out*, by Tunde Ikoli:

LONDON: From April 18, Bush Theatre.

GAY SWEATSHOP

(01-579-9486). Current show is *As Time Goes By*, about the past and present history of the struggle against gay oppression.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES: 20/21 March, Dovecote Arts Centre.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE: 22/23 March, Newcastle Poly S.U.

SHREWSBURY: 31 March, Mulberry Theatre.

DUBLIN: 3/8 April, Project Arts Theatre.

AMSTERDAM: 18/30 April, The Mickery.

MONSTROUS REGIMENT

190 Goswell Road, London EC1 (01-253-2172). Currently touring with *Floorshow*, a feminist cabaret.

LONDON: 24/26 Mar, Albany Town Hall.

LONDON: 30 Mar, Lambeth Town Hall.

BIRMINGHAM: 31 Mar, Norton Hall, Saltley.

BRIGHTON: 2 April, Sussex University.

RED LADDER

New Blackpool Centre, Cobden Avenue, Lower Wortley, Leeds 12 (0532-792228). Current show is *Taking Our Time*, about the struggles of Yorkshire weavers in 1842.

LEEDS: 7 April, Thornhill School, Upper Wortley Road.

WAKEFIELD: 12 April, Wakefield City WMC, Ingwell Street.

LEEDS: 13/14 April, Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mount, 7.

WIGAN: 17 April, Plattbridge Labour Club.

NELSON: 18 April, Nelson and Colne Coll. FE.

LEEDS: 19 April, East Leeds Labour Club, Seacroft.

ROCHDALE: 21 April, Bolderstone School.

SADDLEWORTH: 22 April, Millgate Centre, Delph.

MANCHESTER: 29 April, Hyde Town Hall.

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: 26/27 April, Albany, Deptford

LONDON: 28 April Hackney CP.

WOMEN'S THEATRE GROUP

27 Stepney Green, London E1 (01-278-6783) Current show is *In Our Way*

WEST MIDLANDS: 4/8 April LONDON: 15 April, Lee Centre, Aisliebie Rd, SE12.

SOUTH: 19/21 April. LONDON: 1 May, Socialist Unity, Feltham.

WARWICK: 8 May, Warwick University.

COVENTRY: 8 May, Lanchester Poly.

BIRMINGHAM: 9/13 May, Arts Lab.

DANCE

Spur Of The Moment, dance documentary about nuclear energy. New dance duo. LONDON: 2 April, ICA.

Left Drama from Eyre Methuen

Gimme Shelter

BARRIE KEEFFE
A trilogy of short plays - *Gem, Gotcha* and *Getaway*, about two young rebels against the system - by 'a young playwright who is one of our best chroniclers of the working class'. *Observer*. *Gotcha*, about an embittered school-leaver who articulates a powerful indictment of the whole educational system, caused a furore when televised as a BBC Play For Today last year. 'Superb three part tour de force... Mr. Keffe has opened up an area of debate in the theatre that applies to all teachers and pupils in the education system.' Dave Robbins, *Plays and Players* Paperback £1.50

Hitting Town and City Sugar

STEPHEN POLIAKOFF
In the first play, a student dropout from Birmingham University and his sister Clare 'hit the town' one night, but things start going wrong... The second play focuses on a disc-jockey heard briefly in the first play, and a teenage girl he mesmerizes. 'Mr. Poliakoff captures... the gritty feeling of urban desolation. I have seen few plays so alert to the derelict joylessness of our post-war city centres.' Michael Billington, *Guardian*. 'Scathingly brilliant.' Irving Wardle, *Times*. Paperback £1.95

Strawberry Fields

STEPHEN POLIAKOFF
The first National Theatre production to be staged in the Cottesloe, the National's Studio Theatre. A funny but disturbing play about three young travellers, members of the 'lost generation' of the sixties, on a politically motivated jaunt which takes on increasingly sinister overtones. Methuen New Theatrescript no. 8 £1.20

Barbarians

BARRIE KEEFFE
First staged in September last year, another trilogy by Keffe - *Killing Time, Abide With Me, In The City* - about the fluctuating fortunes of three school-leavers, two white boys and one black. Deals with issues of unemployment, crime, and race. 'Definitely accurate character portraits.' *Time Out* Paperback £1.95

To Present the Pretence

JOHN ARDEN
Now in paperback - John Arden's own selection of his writings on and about the theatre over the last twelve years, first published in hardback last year. Includes a complete performance history of *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*. 'Certainly the best theatre book I have read this year.' Colin Chambers, *Morning Star*. 'Undaunted courage.' John Barber, *Daily Telegraph*. Paperback £3.25

Wreckers

DAVID EDGAR
Commissioned and first performed by the 7:84 Company, Britain's foremost political theatre group, 'Wreckers' is a play with music telling of crimes and criminals in London's East End including a left-wing take-over of a constituency Labour Party, and the attempted ousting of the MP. Has played in pubs and clubs all over the country. Methuen New Theatrescript no. 6 £1.20

Destiny

DAVID EDGAR
The 'National Front' play, 'rackingly eloquent and vitally important.' *Guardian*. Recently televised as a BBC Play For Today and discussed on the South Bank Show. Even more topical than when it was first written in 1976. Paperback £1.50

Fight for Shelton Bar

PETER CHEESEMAN (Ed.)
The latest and most controversial of Cheeseman's 'Stoke Documentaries' tells of the workers' running battle with the British Steel Corporation over the proposed closure of Shelton Bar, a local Staffordshire blast furnace. Methuen New Theatrescript no. 10 £1.20

for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf

NTOZAKE SHANGE
A choreopoem of black feminist consciousness which took New York by storm when it opened on Broadway in autumn 1976. The authentic words of a young black girl are in these poems, which evolved through countless readings in bars and cafes and small theatres across America. 'Shange tells it like it really is.' *Village Voice*. 'Shange describes what it means to be a black woman in a world of mean streets, deceitful men and aching loss.' *Newsday*. 'Overwhelming... joyous and alive.' *New York Daily News*. Hardback £3.95 Paperback £1.50

These and all other Eyre Methuen plays and drama books are available from your usual bookseller or from Samuel French Ltd., 26 Southampton St., London WC2 (01-836 7513).

If you would like regular information about Eyre Methuen's drama publications mailed to you free of charge, write to Advertising Manager (Dept. L), Eyre Methuen Ltd., 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE.

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7:84 (England) in "The Life and Times of Joe England"