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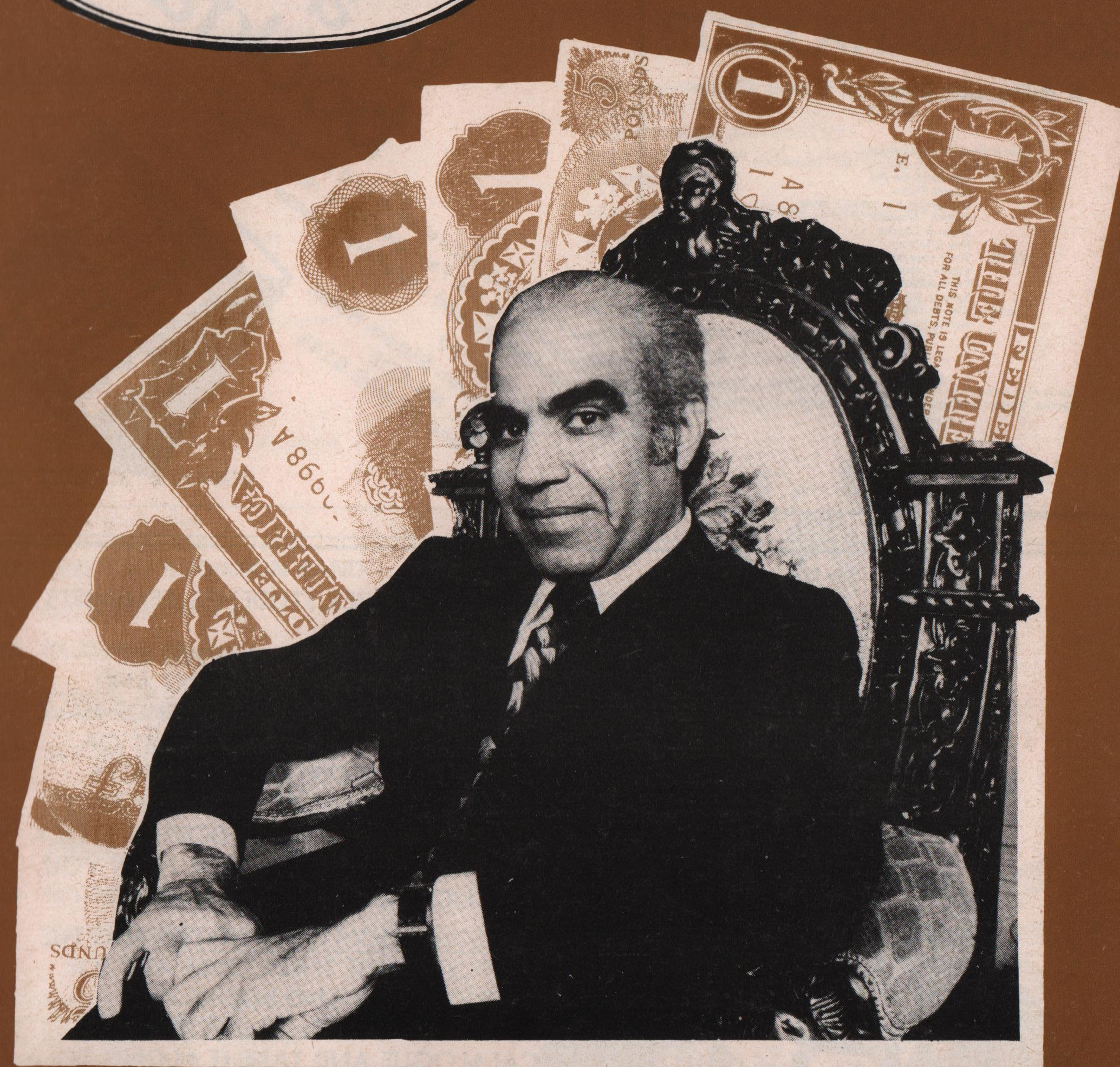
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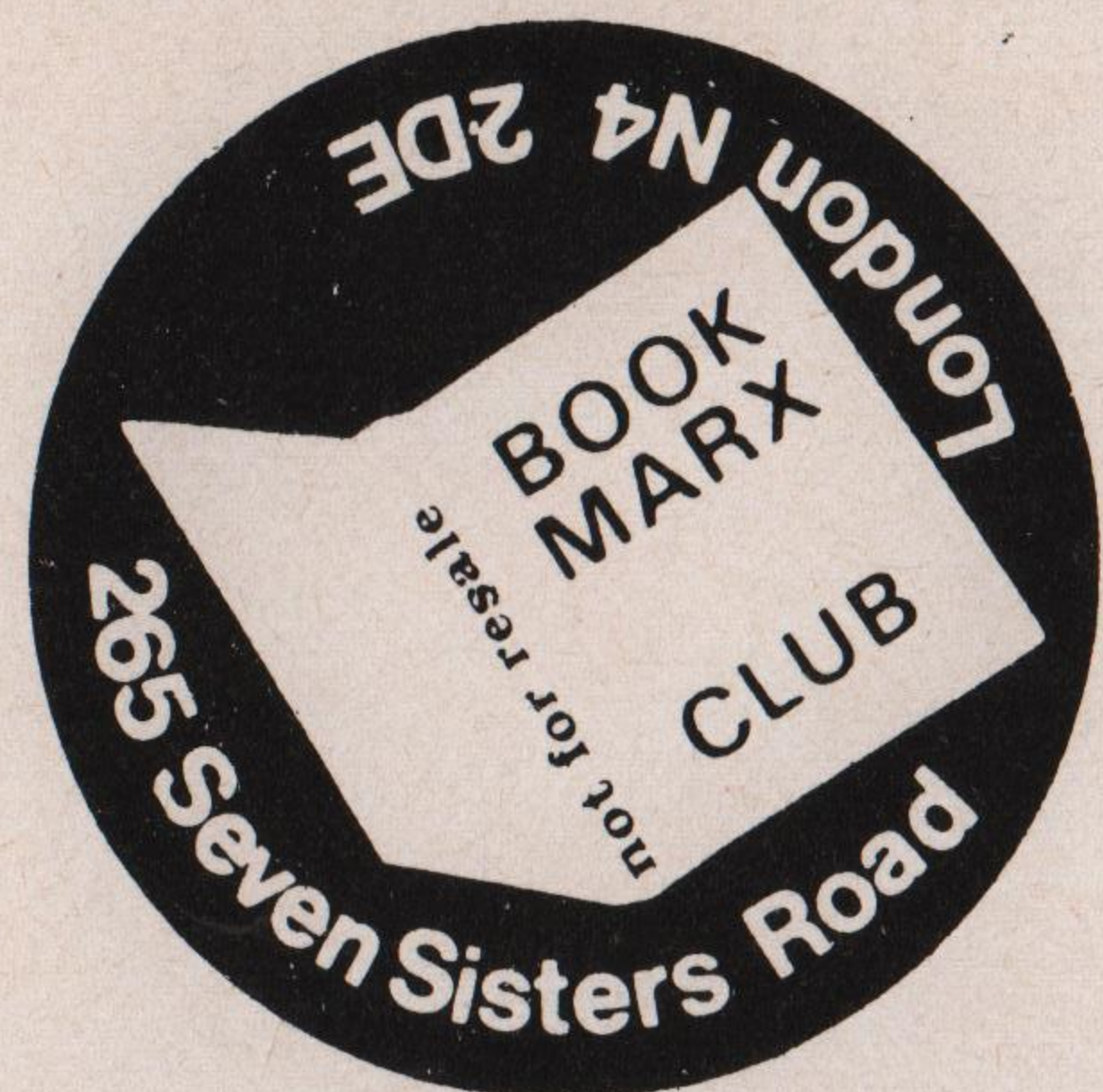
November 1977 35p



British firm buys off Mr Big

Czech rock Claimants

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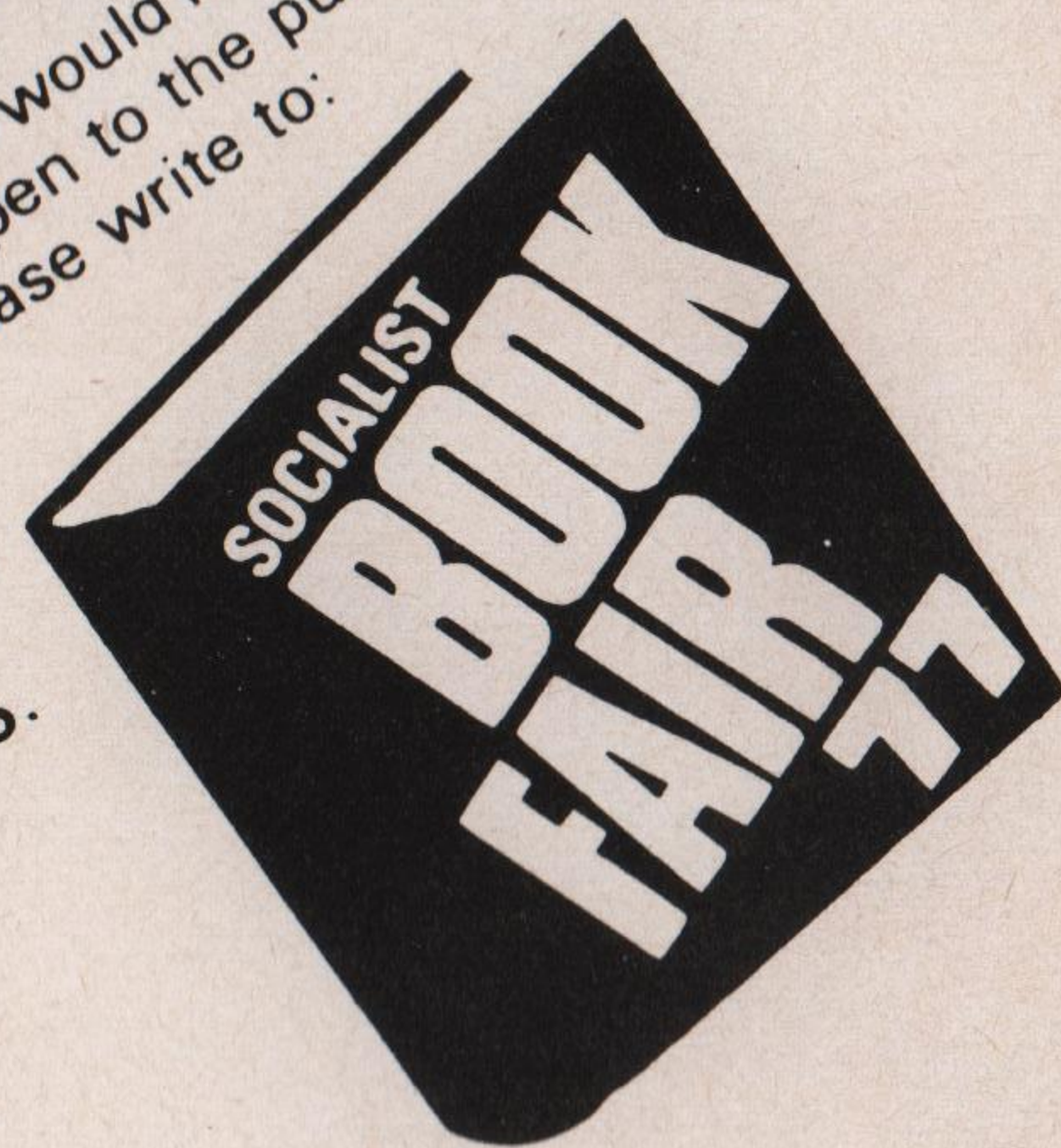
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Contents

- 4 THE RIGHT
 Anti-communism and the mortgage
 racket
- 5-7 CORRUPTION
 British firm makes multi-million
 pound pay-off.
- 8-11 JUDGES AND THE LAW
 The courts as a ruling class weapon
- 12-13 FOOTBALL
 The players and the money men
- 14 LETTERS
- 15 DEBATE
 Black youth and the white left
- 16 WEST GERMANY
 "Hitler's Children" vs Hitler's cronies
- 17 SHORTS
- 18-19 CZECH ROCK
 Voices from the cultural underground
- 20-21 VIRGIN RECORDS
 The sound of money
- 22-23 THE TOM ROBINSON BAND
 Sing, you're glad to be gay
- 25-29 CLAIMANTS
 Women on the dole; state swindles
 claimants; facing a tribunal
- 30-31 SOCIALIST THEATRE
 John Arden speaks; plus national
 listings
- 32 REVIEWS
- 33-34 NATIONAL AGITPROP
- 35 CITYSCAPES

Peter Kennard gave us the montages for the
Contempt for the Court feature. An
 exhibition of his work - Values - is on at the
 ICA, Nash House, London SW 1 until
 23 October.

The poster of the derelict doors on page 34
 is one of a set of four produced by the Wednesday
 Wednesday Group. They are being sold to
 part-fund a sheltered-house project for
 adolescents coming out of care. They are
 available at photo-galleries, Compendium and
 some left bookshops.

David Hoffman took the picture of the guy
 pogoing and the cityscape on the back page.

Cover picture is by Chris Smith and the dole
 pictures for the claimant's feature were taken
 by James Lauritz.



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Working Committee meetings are held
 at 7.30 every Tuesday evening in our
 offices. Readers are welcome to attend
 and assist in the development of the
 magazine. Written contributions, photo-
 graphs, cartoons and story ideas are also
 welcome.



Pete Clark

A RIGHT WING businessman who plasters London with leaflets proclaiming his "Anti-Communism" also runs a company offering very dubious "one hundred per cent" mortgages to young couples looking for their first home. Mortgage broking isn't usually thought of as the most principled business in the country, but even their professional body has warned potential customers to be "very, very wary" of anyone making this kind of offer.

The man involved, 36 year old Roy Dovaston of Parnell Road in Ware, Hertfordshire, escaped conviction on charges of recruiting mercenaries for Rhodesia earlier this year on a dubious legal technicality. The founder of the World Deed a Day Movement, Dovaston, who returned with his wife and three children to live in this country in 1975 after 18 months in South Africa, told *The Leveller* that he had issued "about half a

Mortgaging your future to Ian Smith

million" of his various Anti-Communism Movement leaflets this year.

The mortgage con works like this: hundreds of posters have been plastered up round London offering "One hundred per cent mortgages". It then asks "No Deposit?" and advises people to call or visit the Central Home Advisory Bureau (CHAB). Since building societies and local authorities rarely offer anything over 90% mortgages, the offer is obviously attractive, particularly to youngsters setting up their first home.

Dovaston, who is the principal of CHAB, explains

his offer by saying: "You find a property that the vendor has undervalued. If you find a flat or a house worth, say, £11,500 and you can get it for £10,000, the building society will give you 85% of £11,500 which is £9,775."

Dovaston also says that there are other ways that it can be done. A sitting tenant can buy their home for less than the market value, or someone anxious to sell a house may be willing to postpone part of the payment for a year or two.

For this service, Dovaston charges a two per cent commission on all deals. He refuses to go into detail on how many people have been conned this way, saying he doesn't look after the books. But two per cent of £10,000 is £200.

When we last spoke to Dovaston, he was standing outside Downing Street with a union jack badge in his lapel collecting signatures on a petition for Rhodesia. We heard him offer two young men £150 a week to go and fight in Rhodesia, though when challenged on this he denied it.

In April charges of breaking the sanctions legislation were thrown out after Dovaston had been taken to court for putting adverts in the paper offering jobs at £150 a week. St Albans Crown Court were told that he had a plan to recruit 30 plane-loads of men and send them out to bolster up the Smith regime.

Michael Burksfield of Ruislip told the court that "I had no doubt the £150 a week would be for military employment and I was given recruiting literature for the Rhodesian Army and a booklet about life in the armed forces."

But Dovaston was acquitted when the judge ruled he could not be convicted of encouraging or soliciting individuals to go to Rhodesia, only "members of the public generally". This legalism only served to encourage Dovaston who said after the trial was over that he had vetted more than 200 people who are now in Rhodesia, most of them in the Army.

"Yes, I am still advising people how to get to Rhodesia. I supply them with a migration form and references—nothing else. I do not pay them and they do not pay me.

"All I insist on is that they join the Anti-Communism Movement which costs £3 and just about covers my own postal costs. I have spent £3,000 of my own money on this."

The Anti-Communism Movement is an offshoot of the World Deed a Day Movement which Dovaston founded when he came back from South Africa and found out how "brainwashed" people in Britain have become.

Among its Ten Commandments are: "Number One: Cut Nationalisation and promote Free Enterprise (encourage ideas and development, assist companies that make a profit not a loss). Number Ten: Install (sic) in every British person a sense of Pride and Respect for ourselves and others (work hard and play hard, but pay our way, don't beg, the British aren't tramps)."

The Corporation of Mortgage Financers and Life Assurance Brokers warn "There is no such thing as a 100 per cent mortgage for the kind of person who hasn't got a deposit." Any young couple unwittingly parting with their money to Mr Dovaston would be well advised to keep a watchful eye on his particular vision of the benefits of Free Enterprise. *David Clark*



Anti-Communist campaigner Dovaston with his gang of four

Four acres and a bomb

ENQUIRIES INTO a cache of explosives hidden in an outbuilding at a farm recently vacated by General Sir Walter Walker seem to have come to a halt.

Walker, former Commander in Chief of Allied Forces was the founder of Civil Assistance. When the organisation was founded in 1974, he stressed that it was not a private army and that its non-violent aim was "self-defence against national suicide".

Walker left East Lambrook Farm in South Petherton, Somerset in May this year and now lives in Charlton All Saints in Wiltshire. The farm was bought by a retired RAF officer Robert Eeles. When Eeles started to clear out the farm he found a number of canisters with Ministry of Defence markings and prominently labelled "Explosives".

"I uncovered two cans right in a corner, hidden away. I didn't like the look of them so I called the police. I opened one of the cans and it contained six thunderflashes," he said.

"I tore the protective strip off and activated the delayed fuse. It went off with a hell of a bang."

Eeles then called the police, who in turn called in an Army explosives expert. The other canister was found to contain a military device used to

simulate the sound of mortar fire. The canisters and their contents were of the type currently in use in Army exercises: a suggestion that they might have been left over from the war has been countered by a serving officer who pointed out that the mortar simulator would have self-detonated after about five years.

When *Reveille* investigated the find in August, police and Special Branch claimed that they were looking into it. Since then, nothing has happened. Walker, who is prominent in Home Office plans for Home Defence in the event of a national breakdown—he is Co-Chairman of the West Midlands Emergency Planning Council—is also still active in Civil Assistance.

When asked if the explosives were anything to do with him or Civil Assistance, he snorted "Don't be stupid . . . the organisation is non-military and non-violent."

But all is not well within the ranks of Civil Assistance. It is now being challenged on the right for the loyalty of all good patriots by a breakaway group led by George K Young, the former Deputy Director of MI 6. Called the Unison Committee for Action the breakaway group has been quietly organising its own network of national contacts in the event of a national breakdown.

Costain's big pay-off

The British civil engineering firm Costain won its biggest ever contract by paying up to £10 million to the London Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Mohammed Mahdi al-Tajir, according to a confidential American diplomatic document leaked to *The Leveller*.

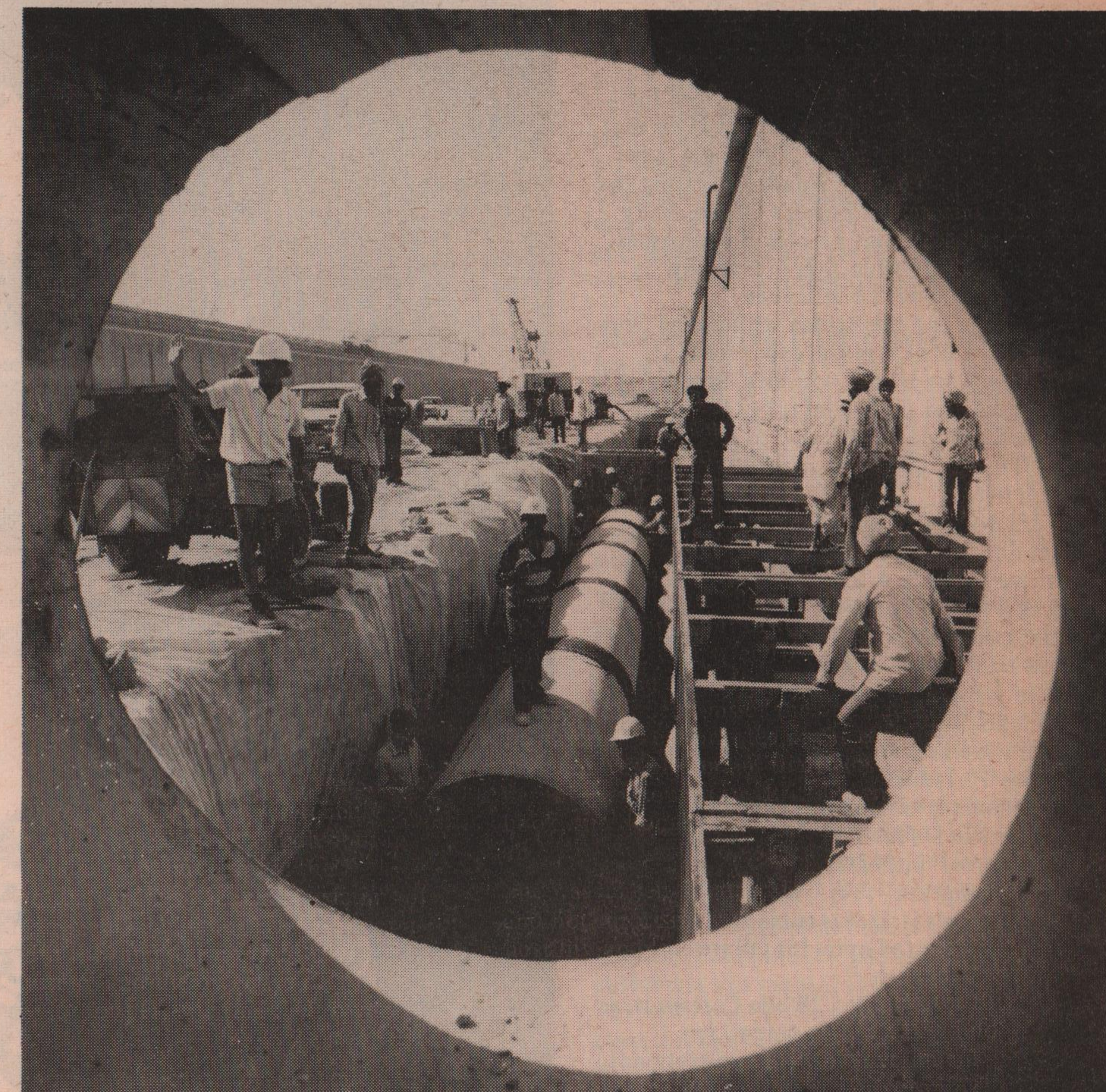
The contract, which is shared with another construction group, Taylor Woodrow, is for building a gigantic dry dock complex at Dubai, in the UAE. Originally priced, on its signing in 1973, at £91 million, now standing officially at £162 million, and likely to exceed £200 million before it is completed, the contract was awarded, it is alleged, in accordance with the custom of "baksheesh" (pay-offs) that prevails in the corrupt, feudal sheikhdoms of the Arabian Gulf.

For twenty years Tajir has been the principal operator and beneficiary of the system in Dubai, and has amassed a fortune, estimated two years ago at more than £2,000 million, purely from taking his ten per cent on trade with the Sheikdom and using it profitably. He likes to describe himself as "the richest man in the world". He has been the most powerful advisor to the Sheikh of Dubai, Rashid bin Sayed al-Maktoum, for twenty years. . . . and Costain, which is alleged to employ him as its sponsor, has won nearly all the construction contracts there.

The allegation made in the document is that Rashid (it transpires under Foreign Office pressure), had intended Taylor Woodrow to get the contract: Tajir, who had been sceptical about the dry dock, mainly, it is said, because of his failure, until then, to "share in the baksheesh", rushed to Dubai at the last minute and used his influence to get 50 per cent participation for his old client, Costain. In return for the usual consideration; the document says he was "somewhat mollified by the estimated \$5 to \$8.1 million that he will receive as a kickback." That figure represented between 7.5 and 10 per cent of the original value of the contract; at the now-likely £200 million his kickback could be £10 million.

On top of that he has probably made another £4 million profit from dealing in Costain shares. In 1974 a huge block of shares (more than a fifth of the total equity) was acquired (from Slater Walker) by an anonymous Arab source. The nominee was one Mohammed al-Fayed, who took a seat on the Costain main board, and holds it to this day, although the mystery shareholding has been broken up. Costain claims it does not know who was holding the biggest single stake in the company (which is unlikely, to say the least). al-Fayed is known in Dubai as a close associate of Tajir. The head of an American company deeply involved in the dry dock told *The Leveller*, without being asked, that Tajir held the stake.

The document is an airmail (number A-14) sent from the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE, to the State Department, Washington, on January 30, 1973. This was only three weeks after the decision to cut Costain in on the contract was taken—and nearly



As a result, the tentative agreement with Taylor Woodrow, the firm supported by Abdul Rahim Galadari who owns 25% of the Dry Dock Company, was withdrawn. The resulting award to both Taylor Woodrow and Costain was a compromise designed to partially satisfy both Tajir and Galadari. Tajir was apparently somewhat mollified by the estimated \$5-8.1 million that he will receive as a kickback. He has reportedly also submitted a list of his approved sub-contractors, thereby raising the possibility that he can yet increase his take.

a year before it was officially announced. It is classified NOFORN, which means "not to be seen by foreigners".

Four separate checks with the State Department by *The Leveller* have established its authenticity. One senior officer's response was: "Oh my God, how did you get that?". Its author, Wilson Nathaniel Howell, known to friends as Nat, who at the time was economic and commercial officer at Abu Dhabi, has confirmed its general accuracy.

Extract from US Embassy document about dry-dock contract

This has not stopped Costain from denying the charges. Costain International managing director Tyrrell Wyatt, who refused to meet us to discuss the evidence, denied that Tajir was the company's sponsor, and that company had paid him for securing the contract. "We do not pay anybody to get our contracts," he said. He agreed that the company had agents in overseas

Corruption

countries who helped with contracts, but declined, for commercial reasons, to disclose who the agent in Dubai would be. Asked to explain how Costain had landed so many contracts (four-fifths of all awarded) in Dubai, where Tajir has a hand in everything, without his participation, Wyatt simply repeated his denial.

Taylor Woodrow, themselves only indirectly involved, said the allegation was "backstairs gossip". Director J M Thomas, who had negotiated the contract, said: "It was a complicated situation. We might have had our noses out in front, but in the end it didn't work out like that. As far as I was concerned it was competitive." But he added "The ruler (Rashid) was most unwilling not to have Costain, who had done an excellent job out there."

Thomas said there had been US competition for the contract, but this is denied by an American intimately involved in the whole affair. This is John J McMullen, head of the New York firm of naval architects that took an original 25 percent stake in the Dry Dock Company, drew up the plans for Rashid, and handled all the financial negotiations. McMullen's version is very different from the British companies: "It is not correct at all that US companies were involved. The single most important party in Taylor Woodrow getting the contract was the British Foreign Office. They were very disturbed that American companies might have got into what they clearly saw as still the British sphere of influence."

Until 1971, and the British withdrawal from East of Suez, Dubai, and the other six UAE Sheikdoms, were British colonies. British troops maintained the feudal rulers in power—and, indeed, still do. Tajir came to London as Ambassador when the UAE gained its independence.

The US document says: "There was never any intention of putting the scheme out to competitive tender". A letter of intent was handed to TW on 6 January 1973. Some time in the next three days the letter was revoked. Tajir flew from London, the compromise was agreed "to partially satisfy both Tajir and Galadari", and the financing agreement was signed with the London merchant bank, Lazards, on 10 January.

The document comments: "This is the first major project in Dubai in which he (Tajir) had not 'participated' intimately the common assumption was that he was at least cool towards it. It was rumoured that his reserve was predicated upon his failure to share in the 'baksheesh'".

And it concludes drily: "While Costain is, as far as we are aware, very competent, its phenomenal success (in Dubai) is probably not based on expertise alone. So far as we can determine, it has never undertaken a project such as the dry dock." McMullen supports this: he said: "I'm not sure the dock is equipped properly. The companies don't know anything about running a dock."

The equity stake in Costain, at first only 2.5 percent, was bought by "Middle East interests" through a Swiss bank in September 1974. In May 1975 Fayed took over a 20 percent stake, and went on the board, even though he was only a nominee for the real, anonymous, owner. The 5 million-odd shares were worth £7.7 million. In November last year the holding increased, with a new issue, to 7.6 million, or 20.5 percent of the Costain capital. The shares were sold in May this year for £11 million, with the holding being broken up between more than 50 city institutions.

Wyatt admitted that Costain was "very relieved" at the break-up of the holding. The company have never made any secret of that. But he insisted, in reply to repeated, incredulous enquiries, that the Costain directors did not know who had owned the shares.

John J McMullen told *The Leveller*: "The shares were owned by Tajir."

Despite selling this holding, and retaining only a small holding of personal beneficial shares, Fayed remains on the main Costain board. According to the company, he is "responsible for construction, shipping and oil interests."

Both Costain and Taylor Woodrow are knee-deep in construction contracts in the Gulf. Costain, in particular, won more than four-fifths of all civil engineering projects in Dubai in the period 1967-73, worth more than £50 million, before the dry dock contract was awarded and before Tajir left for London in 1972.

The total value of Costain contracts in Dubai is estimated at more than £300 million. This work



Mohammed Mahdi al-Tajir, Dubai's Mr. Fixit

Conditions and treatment of workers on the dry dock site are appalling. The project is being built by migrant labour, nearly all Indian or Pakistani, and in February 1976 the 2,500 on-site workers came out on strike.

Their demands: an increase in wages from the near-slave rates (for Dubai) of £3.50 a day; free accommodation; one month's annual leave, with fares home paid by the companies; paid sick leave, and an on-site hospital.

The response of the Dubai Labour Department: the site was surrounded by riot

is absolutely vital to the company's future. With the downturn in domestic building, all the big contractors have had to look for work abroad, especially in the Middle East, which since the 1973 and 1974 oil price rises, has virtually become one huge construction site.

But the importance of the Dubai Dry Dock scheme goes far beyond its value to UK builders. It is one of the biggest single construction contracts ever awarded to British companies abroad. It is the biggest either company ever had. It is the biggest dock ever built, a contender for the eighth wonder of the world. It is also an enduring source of British influence in the oil-rich Gulf. Both companies won the Queen's award for export achievement for winning the contract.

police, 500 strikers were jailed, and 50 "ringleaders" deported. There are no unions in Dubai.

After this little local difficulty Costain and Taylor Woodrow (who are of course well-known for their extreme right-wing attitudes in Britain, with annual donations to the Conservative Party, Aims for Freedom and Enterprise, and the National Association for Freedom) simply shipped in more slaves from Pakistan.

Both companies firmly expect healthy profits from the dry dock contract to begin to show through in this year's accounts.

Tajir fixes it

Tajir was born in Bahrain, into a merchant family. He was not particularly rich, and though he was educated in England, it was at Preston Grammar School. He returned to Bahrain, but was banned from the country under mysterious circumstances, allegedly because of his family's pro-nationalist sympathies. Gulf gossip has it that he was sent to Dubai as a British intelligence agent. At any rate, that's where he ended up.

Quickly he built up his position as Dubai's Cardinal Richelieu; Rashid's right-hand man; the person without whose intervention not a penny changes hands. His list of jobs reads like the index of a Dubai *Who's Who*: Director of Rashid's Petroleum Affairs Department, a director of National Bank of Dubai, the Dubai Petroleum Company, the UAE Currency Board, the Dubai Drilling Company and the Dubai National Travel Agency (which has a monopoly of all air cargo at Dubai airport). Through this operation Tajir gets a commission on all air cargo. The airport, incidentally, was built by Costain.

Tajir is also director of a little outfit called the Dubai Dry Dock Company.

Mohammed Mahdi al-Tajir's boast of being the richest person in the world may not be strictly true—when you pass the £2,000 million mark it seems difficult to count—but he no way needs all the ten-per-cents he is still raking in.

This wealth was acquired through financial deals. Tajir, 44, has never been productive in his life.

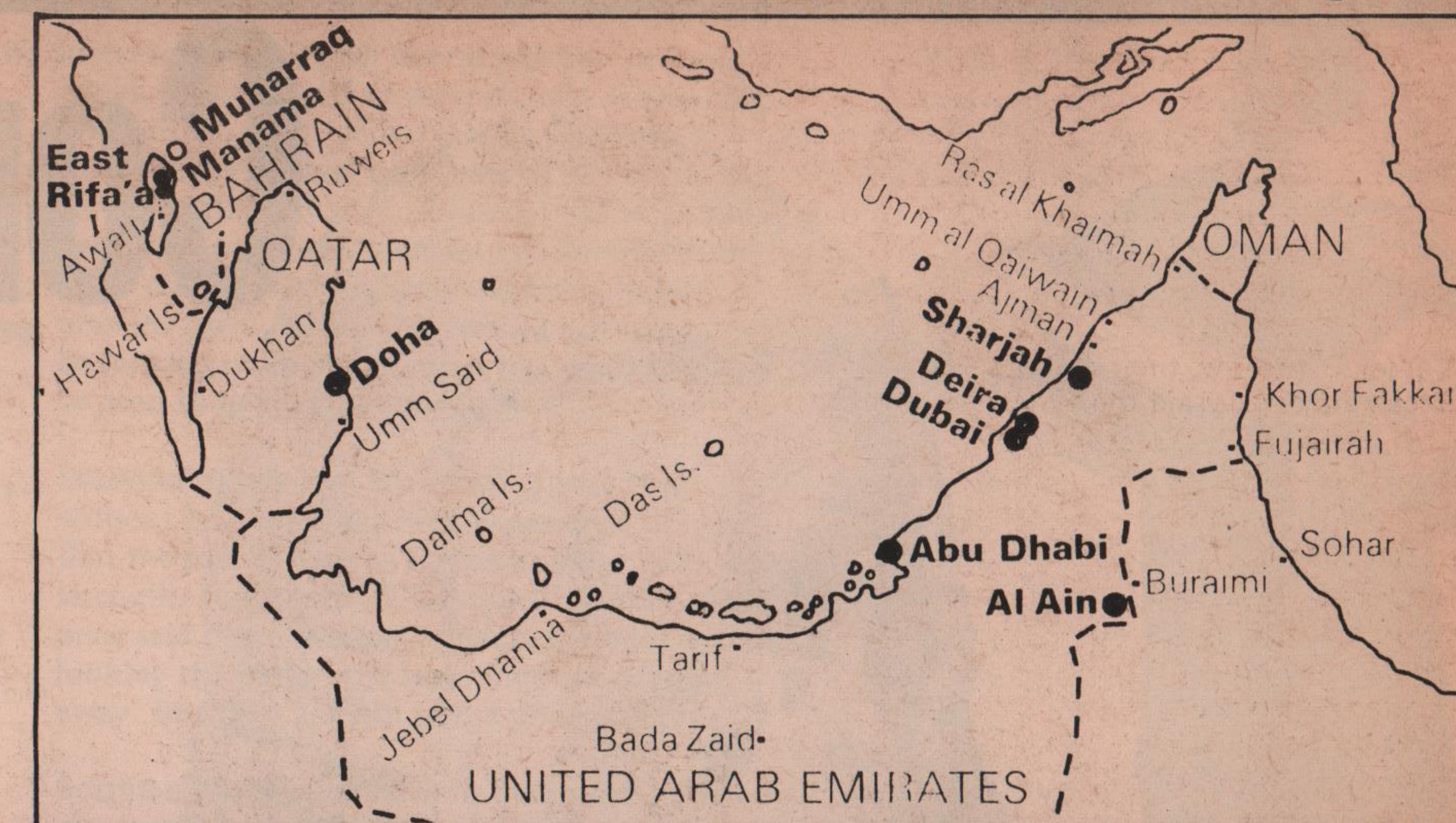
The US Securities and Exchange Commission, currently investigating Boeing's finances, has said he took commissions amounting to more than \$6million for fixing the sale of planes to Arab airlines.

For a person of Tajir's influence, the Ambassadorship at the Court of St James is not the lowly job it might seem. When the UAE was formed, the carve-up agreed between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the most important shiekdoms, was that Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi would take the top political jobs, and Rashid the business. In London, Tajir is perfectly placed to keep his finger on all trade between Britain and the Gulf. He does this through a very respectable front, the Anglo-Arab Chamber of Commerce. The chamber issues certificates of origin, proving that goods have no Israeli parts or have not been through Israel. A fee is payable for each certificate.

His power in London has recently expanded with his 15 per cent stake in the newly set up Allied Arab Bank, the successor to collapsed merchant bank Edward Bates. Allied Arab has a full licence and was blessed by the Bank of England as the saviour of one of the wretched legion of failed money-lenders which plagued British banking in the past few years.

He also owns a Bank of his own, the Al-Tajir Bank, based in the tax haven of the Cayman Islands. And, fitting for one with so many fingers in the oil-well, he is an honorary citizen of the State of Texas, USA.

Corruption



Dry dock drains Dubai

The idea of a dry dock in the Gulf was first raised by the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1971. OAPEC was looking for ways of diversifying its members' incomes. A feasibility study recommended that there would be sufficient traffic for only one dry dock and that the best site was Bahrain; not Dubai, which Sheikh Rashid had been pushing.

OAPEC decided to put the dock in Bahrein. Rashid withdrew from OAPEC in a huff in May 1972, and on 4 May signed an agreement with John J McMullen and Associates of New York, naval architects and planners, and Galadari brothers, a prominent family of Dubai merchants, to set up the Dubai Dry Dock Company. Rashid had 50 per cent, and McMullen and the Galadaris 25 per cent each.

Whereas OAPEC's original brief was for a one-berth dock capable of taking ships up to 100,000 tons, the new specification was for a dock able to take 400,000 ton ships. During 1972 it expanded magically, to two docks of 500,000 tons each. Abdul-Rahman Galadari, the senior of the brothers, boasted in November that the project was already one and a half years ahead of Bahrein. He did not appear disconcerted by yet another change of plan: now there was to be one dock for two 500,000 ton ships, with another one million-ton berth to be added in 1976. Work was to start in two months, and the cost was put in November at £48 million. Within two months McMullen had drawn up plans to include a one million-ton berth and the full contract price was valued at £65 million.

The cost continued to mount in Concorde-style fashion. In July 1973 the estimate was £80 million; by November "the ceiling" was £91 million. That was the price at which Taylor Woodrow and Costain signed the final contract. It proved a pretty low ceiling. By February 1976 the full value of the contract, including new deals for supplying cranes and other essential equipment, hit £162 million. And that is by no means the end. Latest estimates suggest that the ultimate price could be more than £200 million. Despite denials, it seems that Costain and Taylor Woodrow managed to negotiate a contract without firm cost increase provisions: their gain is Dubai's loss.

Dubai is therefore saddled with a huge project which not only may never pay its way—and certainly is unlikely to make much money—but which also is already a drain on resources. Over £240 million has been borrowed specifically for the dry dock, as well as two separate loans of \$150million and \$200million this year for allegedly general financing purposes. Some major UK banks such as Lloyds International and Morgan Grenfell are expressing doubts about Dubai's creditworthiness.

Some of this cost is being carried by the UK taxpayer. The Export Credit Guarantee Department, a government department which insures trade against losses and bad debts, underwrote 96 per cent of the £45 million, 15-year equipment loan which DDDC raised in 1973. This effectively subsidised the cost to Tajir, Rashid and the gang, and indirectly made a kickback to Tajir easier to pay.

The final financial irony is that nearly all the money raised in connection with the project, either directly for the DDDC, or for the State of Dubai, has been on Rashid's personal guarantee. Yet the distinction between the public and the private purse in Dubai is one which has eluded many observers. Banks are now wary of the place because it publishes no accounts worthy of the name. So Rashid and Tajir can cover the losses on the dock from public funds without anyone being the wiser.

The dock's trials do not end with its financing. With the Bahrein dock taking its first customers this month, Dubai finds itself a long way behind in the race to attract business. It is most unlikely that the dock will be ready in less than another 18 months. Even then, there are doubts about its functioning because up to date no managers have been appointed. McMullen claims he was promised the management contract back in 1973, but so far it hasn't come his way.

The real argument against the dock, however, is that it is simply too big. A one-million ton ship was an outside possibility in 1973. It is now inconceivable that such a monster will be built. As Bahrein comes into operation, and other docks are built in Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, it is hard to see where the business to make Dubai pay its way, let alone be profitable, can come from.

If the Dubai dry dock cannot pay its way, it can only be a burden on a tiny emirate (population 100,000) whose only resource is a modest quantity of oil. But by the time that becomes clear, Rashid, Tajir and their friends will have fled with the loot. Perhaps the best to hope for is that on the way to the bank in Zurich they die of laughter.

Contempt for the courts



Who says judges are non-political, above class conflict and repositories of wisdom? You guessed, bourgeois ideology. If some had their way, every fight to change society - strike, sit-in or demo - would end in Court, and that's where we'd all lose. *The Leveller* examines how the Courts enforce class law.

AT 78, Lord Denning could go on as Master of the Rolls - judge in charge of the Appeals Court - for ever. He was appointed before the age for retirement for judges was reduced to 75. The last three Lord Chancellors have hinted that he might consider a retreat to his native Hampshire, but the suggestions have fallen on deaf ears. Nominally number three in the legal hierarchy after the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, he occupies a key position.

Every important case goes to the Appeal Court, and that means every important case about the relations between the individual and the state. Denning (Andover Grammar School and Magdalen College, Oxford) volunteered himself into the role in 1962, bored after five years in the House of Lords. Some claim that his political position has moved to the right in the past three or four years. He caused an uproar in June when he claimed that: "our laws are being disregarded right and left. The mobs are out." And again in September when he claimed that Attorney General

Sam Silkin was afraid of the trades unions and he wasn't.

This reference to the National Association for Freedom's interventions at Grunwick and over the Postal Workers' boycott of South African mail was interesting. Denning was speaking at the University College, Buckingham, the private university run by Max Beloff. Beloff, formerly at Oxford, is a member of the Council of the Institute for the Study of Conflict. The links between NAFF and the ISC are well-known.

According to Beloff, Denning was drawn to the University College: "Because he is a libertarian and he thinks that something independent of the state is a good idea."

The concept of the courts being "independent of the state" is a little difficult to follow. The NAFF-ISC connection means that Denning sat in two cases where he had a special connection with the plaintiffs and found in their favour. He personally chose to hear those cases - his privilege as the top Appeal judge.

As master of his own show in the Appeal Court, he displays a wondrous flexibility, an uncanny knack of perceiving what is in the

interests of social peace and the management of social conflict. He let the five dockers out of Pentonville in 1972 before the intervention of the mysterious Official Solicitor. He was in a minority in the courts in opposing the injunction granted to stop the picketing of Prebbles, the North London estate agents, in 1975, saying that the courts should do "nothing to interfere with the right to demonstrate, to protest, any more than they do with the right to freedom of speech, providing that everything is done peacefully." Denning is a master of making up the law as he goes along, and the preservation of social peace is highest on his agenda.

Denning is as socially backward as he is politically astute. Take the case of a woman student who was unfairly thrown out of her college for sleeping with a man. The law was on her side - the college had not followed its own correct procedure - but he thought that a woman who slept with her boyfriend would never make a teacher. She lost.

When it comes to protecting the individual against the state, Lord Denning is also on the right side. When Mark Hosenball appealed against his deportation order, Denning went straight for the letter of the law. The Home Secretary had the power, it was a matter of national security, and the courts were not in a position to interfere. Mark lost too.

Denning sees himself as the personification of English liberal values - as contemptuous of

reform from the right as from the left. His own drift to the right, from flexibility to dogmatic authority, and his association with the new right, indicates the depth of the present social crisis. Some would say that this is no time for Lord Denning to make trouble by dwelling on legal niceties.

THE CLASS position of judges comes through clearly on tax cases. Taxation in this context is not the annoying 30 per cent which disappears out of the wage packet before you even see it, but the confiscatory taxation which seizes 95 per cent of income above certain levels. It's what leaves the well-to-do fuming about the destruction of incentives and the annoyance of having to become tax exiles in unpleasant places like the Bahamas.

Tax exile is quite voluntary of course. There are enough ways around taxation to ease its burden considerably. But there are still tax statutes, and it is said to be an important part of our democratic society that the rich are seen to bear their part of the burden.

One response to being taxed at home is to transfer assets abroad. But you will be taxed on the income from them any way. So the wealthy turned over such income to foreign companies which they controlled and collected later. This was stopped in 1938. So the rich began to allow capital to accumulate abroad. Since 1952 any sum paid to a foreign company under this arrangement could be taxed anyway if the wealthy UK resident had 'power to enjoy' not only this income, but also the capital which it became, or any other sum to which they were entitled as a result of transferring income abroad. This seemed to cover everything and the inland revenue managed quite well with it for 25 years; until this summer.

Mr. Ronald Vestey, and five members of his excessively wealthy family, appealed against income tax and surtax assessments on such arrangements totalling £5,180,472. Mr. Justice Walton took pity on the poor souls and decided that "overkill" was one thing, but overkill on the lines and to the extent suggested by the wording of the section could never have been intended."

He gave them the £5million back.

"The judge delivered a judgement of quite staggering boldness, since he appears to have, in effect, amended an Act of Parliament to achieve a judicially-desired result", was the verdict of the *Financial Times*, the well-known socialist agitational paper.

We hear so much from Keith Joseph/Bernard Levin/Woodrow Wyatt and others of the need to reduce the size of the state sector and to increase personal disposable income. But isn't it refreshing that a judge will actually do something to put tory policy into effect.

SIR LESLIE SCARMAN has given up waiting for Lord Denning to die. In September he left the Appeal Court and accepted an appointment as a Law Lord. If Denning retired under a Labour administration, Scarman would be favourite to succeed him. So he's hanging on.

At 66, Scarman somehow contrives to be a generation younger than Lord Denning. He

interprets the English liberal position in a way which pleases social democrats, just as Denning interprets it for conservatives. Scarman is the leading judicial supporter of an entrenched charter of human rights. Denning has been among its foremost opponents. Both agree that a bill of rights could bring judges into the open, where they would not only be making political decisions but would also be seen to be making them.

Scarman thinks that the judges can do this without becoming exposed because he believes that the judiciary as an institution has sufficient strength. Judges are in the political arena, he once said. "But instead of being the bold matador looking the bull in the face, they are running away. But they are still in the political arena."

Scarman has abiding faith in the judicial procedure as a method for solving disputes. He has presided over four enquiries which were used to de-fuse social conflict: two in Northern Ireland, the Red Lion Square enquiry and Grunwicks. The technique of taking the judge out of his courts and transferring the mystique of the law to a political enquiry is a last resort for cooling down disputes.

The technique is to resolve the issue at the expense of the party which is outside the political consensus - the International Marxist Group at Red Lion Square, and George Ward at the Grunwick enquiry. Except that it didn't work last time round.

Scarman sees the law as a tool, and is prepared to put it to extraordinary use. He will provide the seal of approval for a consensus solution rather than a strictly "legal" one; and in return, the Government of the day does not ask him to take on too much. Not British imperialism's problems in Northern Ireland, but the invasion of the Bogside by the RUC; not fascism, but one counter-demonstration against the NF.

Scarman is fascinated by the possibilities of the EEC; there will be lots of law for judges to play with which doesn't come from Parliament and is even more confusing. So there will be even more scope for judicial talents to invent the law. He is a judge for all seasons, but particularly for the foul weather ahead of the British state. When there's a Government of National Unity, he'll be the Lord Chancellor.

Phil Kelly



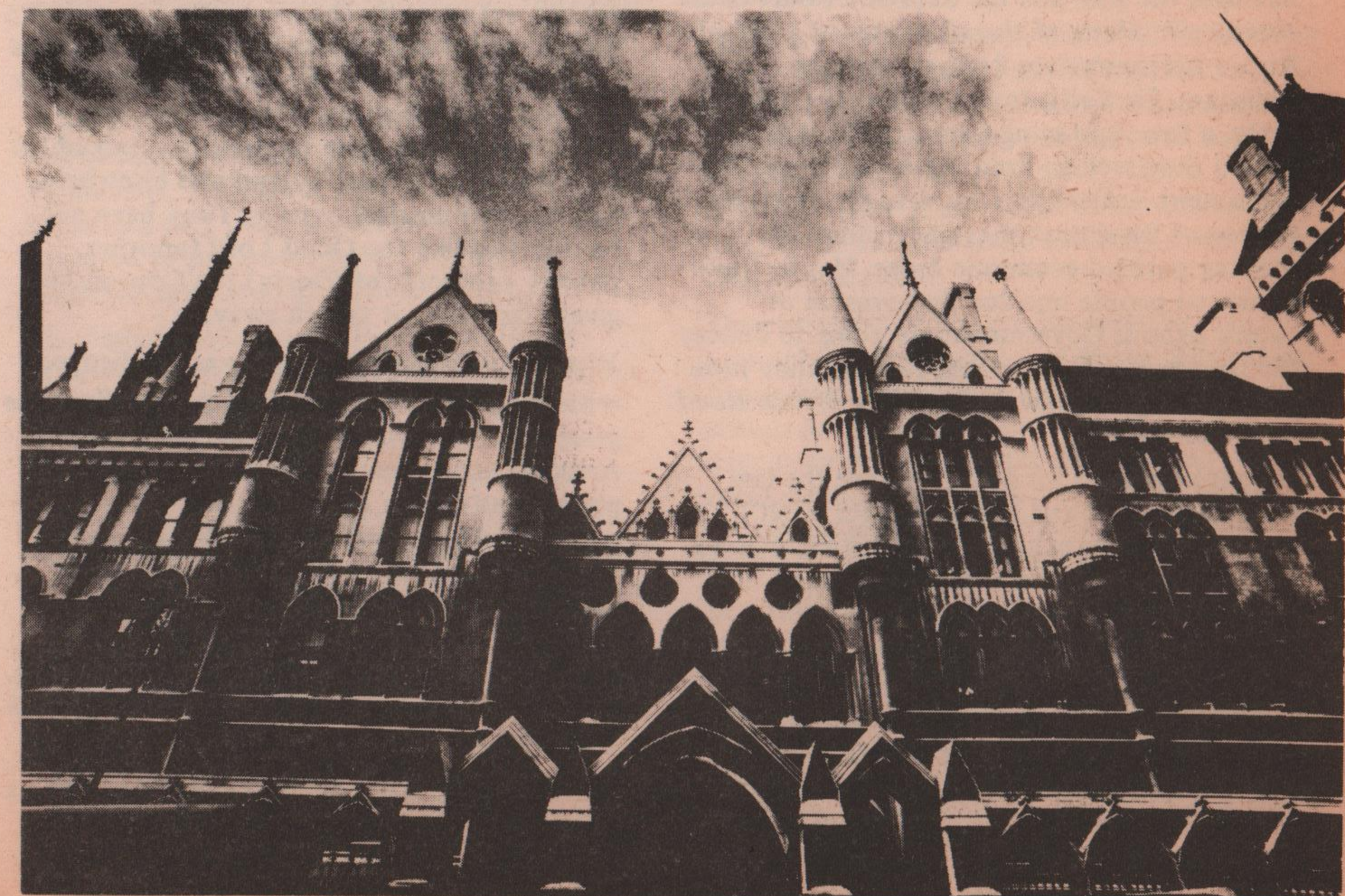
State, Class and Courts

WHY DO WE accept state power? In part because the actions of the state are legitimated by the notion of "the rule of Law" - the idea that all are equal before the law, which mediates impartially between the individual and society. Coercive state power is necessary only when we stop accepting the rule of law. Where does law come from?

There are three sources.

Parliamentary legislation: A Bill passed though Parliament at the instigation of the government. Today there are over 3,000 parliamentary statutes in force, which make up a large part of the law. Much of this dates from before the Labour Party first attained a parliamentary majority in 1945. It reflects dominant ruling class interests, which the advent of liberal democracy has done little to ameliorate.

Continued on Page 11





The Right's behind the bill of rights

FREEDOM LOVERS BEWARE : There is a quiet conspiracy afoot to declare, inscribe and guarantee our fundamental rights and freedoms under the law.

The political consequences would be enormous. A Bill of Rights would be a class weapon. It would entrench provisions against the organised working class, against socialism, even against the piecemeal progress of liberalising legal reforms.

You can always tell a proposal by the company that keeps it. The main proponents of a Bill of Rights are from the legal profession. In setting out basic rights and freedoms in general terms, and leaving the courts to interpret it, it would grant a Judges' Charter. Citizens, or corporations, who felt their rights had been infringed, could go to court—just as they can now under the civil law. The difference is that the terms of a Bill of Rights would be so vague that the scope for judicial interpretation would be vast. Only those to whose interests the Judges are sympathetic will benefit—not trade unions, or individuals up against the state or powerful private interests.

Also, citizens or corporations could take Government legislation to court if they felt it infringes the Bill, and the Supreme Court could overturn it. Many of the advocates of a Bill of Rights are themselves Parliamentarians: Lord Hailsham, Sir Keith Joseph, the entire Liberal Party, a few right-wing Labour MPs. Why should they seek to limit the sovereignty of Parliament—unless they want to pre-empt the passing of legislation that undermines the existing politico-economic order. Maybe these blinkered people imagine that present or future Labour Government are going to deliver the people into Bolshevism. Perhaps they have been reading the new draft of *The British Road to Socialism*.

Joseph has called for a Bill "to save the law from Parliament and Parliament for itself", and poor Hailsham has characteristically given the game away by claiming that most of the legislation proposed by the "elective dictatorship" of the present government would "almost certainly be caught by any Bill of Rights, however formulated". A Bill of Rights enacted now would protect private property—from state acquisition; private schools and medical facilities—from a public monopoly; anti-union employers—from the closed shop. Fascist parties would have their rights to

freedom of association and expression guaranteed; the Race Relations or Sex Discrimination Acts could be nullified; workers on strike could have their action declared illegal if the Gouriets of this country complained it was infringing their basic rights; squatters or industrial occupiers would be cleared off private property, just like that, no questions asked.

But are there not advantages too? Would not left parties have the same protection as the Front? Would not people repressed by the state—arrested under the Official Secrets or Incitement to Disaffection Acts, harassed by the security services, detained or deported under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, or maltreated by the police in custody—have new redress? Probably not. All Bills of Rights have get-out clauses allowing governments to breach them in the interests of national security, even to suspend parts completely in what they declare to be an emergency, as Britain would in Northern Ireland, for a kick-off. This is the European Convention on Human Rights, enforced by the European Commission and the court at Strasbourg, which Britain has ratified, but not formally adopted. There may be people for whom the Convention, under which Britain has been repeatedly rebuked for atrocities in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, has assumed magical powers. They have not read it. For like the Good Lord (another phoney protector of liberty) the Convention giveth, and then it taketh away.

Most of the important articles are so hedged with restrictions as to be meaningless. Suppose your mail was being opened by the police. Article 8 guarantees your right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence. Just the job. But paragraph two of the article reads: "There shall be no interference by a public authority with this right except as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security, public safety *blah blah blah*."

The European Convention is a cold war relic, a collectors item. Even as a model for freedom under the law it is a no-hoper. But the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Labour Party

National Executive wants to incorporate it into English law.

Others argue that Parliament could retain constitutional supremacy by keeping the power to legislate away certain provisions. "Civil Liberties and a Bill of Rights", brought out by the Cobden Trust, the NCCL's associated charity, proposed that there should be a Bill, but it should not be entrenched: Parliament should not be bound by it. Which seems (1) a pointless exercise, and (2) hardly practical, since the pressures against defying the courts, from the media particularly, would be great. In practice, a Bill of Rights is about as amendable as the Ten Commandments.

No-one needs telling what Judges can do, even without a Bill of Rights. The decisions on Tameside schools, on the UPW boycott, on Grunwicks at appeal—all these showed the reactionary judiciary shitting on Parliament without the clear constitutional power to do so. Every day would be open day for the NAFF armed with a Bill of Rights.

Article 17 is my favourite: "Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the Convention."

This article was used to justify the banning of the West German Communist Party. Indeed, such was exactly its intention. The Convention was drawn up in 1950 to consolidate the values of European Christian Democracy, to thwart "extremism" on all sides, Nazi or Communist. By outlawing *all* revolutionary activity it does the opposite of securing rights and freedoms; protection of dissidents and minorities is what civil liberty is all about, if you're going to have it at all.

Otherwise, in a debate that has been largely confined to legal journals, Parliament, and the correspondence columns of *The Times*, the only real political opposition came from the Communist Party. Until this year: the NCCL, which had been in favour of a Bill of Rights, staged the first open national conference on February 5. They were shaken by the depth of opposition that came from rank and file trade unionists and community workers, delegates who had hitherto been little informed on the question. NCCL is now against.

But the Bill of Rights bandwagon is still rolling along. With the leadership of the bourgeois parties committed in differing degrees, the possibility of its inclusion in all their programmes at the next election is not remote. By then it will be too late for debate.

Tim Gops

Continued from Page 9

Class & Courts

The application of acts of Parliament is the role of the judiciary. They interpret the law, set its parameters and create precedents for future judgements. In effect they decide how the law is to be implemented.

Judicial legislation: often referred to as common law. These laws have accumulated over the centuries and consist of more than 300,000 decisions. They are made up of judges' decisions and interpretations, and Appeal Court and House of Lords' rulings. As if to confuse the layperson even more, many sections of common law have been codified in Acts of Parliament, which have in turn been subject to judicial interpretation.

Administrative law: determined by the statutory instruments attached to certain Acts of Parliament. These can confer lawful powers on Ministers and tribunals, for example, immigration appeals tribunals, rent tribunals and the social security appeals mechanism. Governments have increasingly resorted to this form of law-making under which the "normal" rules of procedure and rights do not apply.

In Britain, the laws evolved in the middle ages were a mix of custom and new law. The central state—the Crown—appointed local magistrates, who dispensed justice and ran the police. The modern British state inherited law for the protection of people and homes (custom or common law) and law for the protection of the Government and the state. To these was added law for the protection of property in general. Such law grew slowly at first, but with the growth of capitalism, it mushroomed.

Law which protected people and their property was extended to include not only the capitalists' rights to own and control the means of production—land, buildings, machinery—but also to protect their right to the product of other people's labour. Thus the basic human right to security and protection became commingled with the legal framework of the capitalist system, and this fusion underlies contemporary right wing appeals to "individual freedom" which serve, in fact, only the ruling class.

The capitalist state has laws intended to protect the transfer of surplus value from worker to capitalist, which range from corporation law to the laws on picketing. A whole arsenal of law protects the State, from the collection of taxes to the prohibition of incitement to disaffection among the army and the police. But even those laws which protect the individual rights are images of their former selves, seen through the distorting lens of capitalism.



Of course, there are laws which appear to benefit the working class, which have usually been passed after a long and protracted struggle. Laws on social security and welfare immediately spring to mind. These laws are part of the price paid by the ruling class for a more contented and healthy working class. In a liberal democracy many laws may benefit individual members of the working class—but do not fundamentally challenge the distribution of power and wealth.

One legacy of history is that judges and magistrates are responsible to the Crown, not the Government. Judges were drawn from a narrow circle close to the Court of Westminster and the move to liberal democracy brought little change. In fact their bourgeois origins have remained intact right through to the present day. Over 80% of today's judges were educated in public schools and two-thirds went on to Oxford or Cambridge.

There are one hundred judges of the superior courts (High Court, Court of Appeal and House of Lords), over two hundred Circuit judges and nearly three hundred part-time Recorders. Most of the judges, all magistrates, and most members of tribunals are appointed by the Lord Chancellor. A handful of senior judges are appointed by the Prime Minister. The Lord Chancellor is the head of the judiciary and at the same time, a politician. He is appointed by the Prime Minister and is a member of the Cabinet. He is the only individual who helps to make laws, carry them out, and interpret them.

Judges are appointed from among the three thousand practising barristers. No-one under 50 is chosen, so there are less than 200 candidates at any one time. Entry of barristers into the profession is controlled by the four Inns of Court in London, under the general direction of the Bar Council. Advancement in the profession depends on a place in Chambers, obtained through social contact, and the young barrister must survive the years until someone is ready to employ him or her. A private income is virtually essential. Thereafter, a barrister must remain socially acceptable to his/her peers. Promotion to a judgeship is by exemplary class loyalty, as detected by the Lord Chancellor.

In court the judge determines the course of a trial, directs the jury on the law, and summarises the cases for the prosecution and defence. Ian MacDonald, defence counsel in the Stoke Newington Eight trial said: "Everything when you come into court seems to revolve around the judge. It may feel that all the power in the court is centred on him, sitting there in an elevated position half-way up the wall."

A judge can only be dismissed by an impeachment motion passed by both Houses of Parliament, and no MP may question the behaviour of a judge unless he or she is prepared to put down such a motion. No judge has ever been dismissed.

The highest court in the land is the House of Lords, whose composition when hearing an appeal is the Lord Chancellor, the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary and any judge or ex-judge who is a member of the House of Lords.

Next down the legal ladder is the Court of Appeal, which is run by the Master of the Rolls, currently Lord Denning, with a number of Lord Justices of Appeal. The Master of the Rolls selects two other judges to sit with him to give an appeal judgement.

Apart from the Lord Chancellor the two other senior law officers are the Attorney-General, an MP and member of the government, and beneath him the Director of Public Prosecutions, a civil servant. They are



responsible for deciding whether or not to prosecute and what charges to bring in the more serious cases, about one in ten.

Britain has one of the smallest high court apparatuses in the Western democracies, because over nine-tenths of all criminal cases are tried by lay magistrates. This works because many defendants are either not legally represented, do not elect for trial by jury when entitled to do so, or plead guilty. Magistrates' courts rely on the 'guilty' pleas.

The police, having made an arrest, prepared the charges, and presented the evidence in court, have a vested interest in getting a conviction. They employ a number of tricks and pressures to get the right verdict. The defendant's solicitor will often advise a plea of guilty whether through habit or a deal with the prosecution solicitor (plea-bargaining).

Peter Laurie wrote: "In practice, the police get the number of guilty pleas to the very high level the system needs—100,000 a year in London alone—by persuasion, giving favours in the form of bail or good words before sentences, by dropping more serious charges, through trading on the ignorance of the accused; or they get them by inventing 'verbals' or planting evidence or by threatening to bring more serious charges. And the courts tacitly abet them by giving lower sentences to those who plead guilty."

There are about nineteen thousand magistrates in this country also appointed by the Lord Chancellor from a list of names that have been vetted by local advisory committees. Magistrates are drawn from those of proven status and morality. They must attend court during the day, which automatically excludes most working class candidates.

The personnel of the law has been virtually untouched by the advent of liberal democracy. The judges come from the same class as they always have done, while the landed gentry have been replaced by the middle class in the ranks of the magistrates. The central purpose of the law remains the same too, to protect the property and power of the ruling class.

In a time of crisis, the state moves to strengthen the law and the police—criminal trespass and the intention to beef up the Official Secrets Act are but two examples. But each time the courts are used their political role becomes more evident. In crisis, the state is in danger of exposing the class nature of the law through its own actions.

Tony Bunyan



No net profit

"My aim as Chairman of Newcastle United football club is to make a profit at the end of the financial year of 1p. No more, no less." The speaker was Lord Westwood, sitting in his suite at the Great Western Hotel in London, and his statement sheds light on the bizarre economics of the football business. Although football is a typical offshoot of late Victorian capital, it has a commercial logic of its own, argues Alan Stewart. The system consists of a small number of directors who run the football clubs: exploiting their employees, ignoring their shareholders and resenting the consumers.

MOST industrial and commercial companies have as an ultimate aim the creation of a monopoly in their corner of the market. Nothing could be further from the mind of a football club. It is vitally necessary for them to keep the other clubs in existence, both as "nurseries" which can continue to create assets (players) which can then be purchased at a later date, and also because without competition there would be no-one to play against. The Football League, created at about the same time as many Friendly, Co-operative and Building Societies, is an expression of the mutual desire of its members not to eliminate one another.

Nobody who owns a share in a football club seriously expects to see much return on it. This includes directors and chairmen, as well as the smallholder. The reasons for this go back to the last century. Football was professionalised by men who saw that there was a genuine return to be had for their community by the building up of a successful football club. These men were generally the owners of factories, mills, potteries etc and football served their interests in different ways. It put the town on the map (who would have heard of Hartlepool without the football?) and provided the workforce with a compelling interest outside the factory, keeping thoughts of industrial insurrection firmly at the backs of their minds. It is for precisely the same reason that the FIAT motor company own a controlling interest in the Juventus football club of Turin. Football gave and gives, the men who control it status, respect and recognition within their own community, gets their name into the papers (spelt write) as benefactors. And in some cases, like Freemasonry, helps business in giving disparate men from opposite ends of the

country a common interest and opportunity for informal social contact.

Very few football clubs in the League can make a consistent profit on the money they pull in from paying spectators—Liverpool and Man Utd, for example. Others are in the position whereby they might well make a profit through the gate in a good year, but cannot rely on it. Steady income to tide them through the bad years comes through the transfer market and through ancillary activities. These include football pools, development funds, social clubs, the sale of catering concessions at the ground (cups of tepid bovril at half time), Golden Goal competitions, sales of souvenir scarves, rosettes, mugs and photos of the centre-forward. So football clubs operate like a cross between the IRA (spend your leisure cash with us and have just as good a time as if you did it in the pub, but you will also be helping a cause you support) and cinemas (whose excess profits come not from the movie, but from the popcorn and ice cream).

Ever since football clubs abandoned the notion that they could be viable commercial operations by relying solely on gate-money, their sense of responsibility towards their supporters has been diminishing. What other supposedly profit making business could seriously ban potential customers from other towns from purchasing the product? Football clubs can survive, and even make a profit, whilst clearly disregarding the expressed desires of the fans who, in the old days, "paid the wages". Why bother listening to them at all? It is the expressed wish of one Lancashire chairman (Bob Lord of Burnley) to create out of his football club a commercial unit which can function profitably without any supporters

being permitted to watch the team at any time.

The economic structure of football is further distorted by the tax system. Football clubs are taxed on everything except their players, and ground improvements in particular. You get taxed on them, and in addition it increases the rateable value of the ground. There is a very strong incentive to do a minimal amount of maintenance to the ground and spend all the money on players, who are not counted as assets at all. Ironically, this is one time when the interests of the men who run football clubs coincide with the people they are supposed to be running the club for (the fans). Given a choice between repairing the grandstand roof or a new centre-forward no true fan would hesitate. Personal comfort comes a poor second to glory on the pitch.

If a club approaches the end of its financial year with £100,000 or so profit, the last thing they want to do is to have it burning a hole in their pocket when the Inland Revenue call by. If they spend it all on a new winger, they can always sell him later on to recoup the investment, and for the time being the club has not made any money that it can be taxed on. Hence Liverpool's haste to divest themselves of the Kevin Keegan money, and their seeming unconcern as to how much they had to spend to get Kenny Dalglish. It was all money that would have gone to the state.

Thus the state has provoked a situation in which expensive teams play in tumbledown grounds. This wouldn't matter too much—after all the fans don't object, and entrance fees are far lower than at Continental clubs where the stadia are beautiful and impressive, but it costs £5 to get in and you can't stand—if the selfsame government had not produced legislation (in the shape of the Safety of Grounds Act) insisting that standards of ground maintenance and safety are improved immediately. As ground capacities are slashed until these repairs are done, many people in football feel unfairly treated and it is hard not to sympathise.

The asset structure of football clubs is also distinctive. Although they own very valuable chunks of real estate close to city centres, and use these assets as security to borrow money against, these assets are not in any way disposable. It is not like a firm which can, if times are hard, move from an expensive office block to a cheaper one in the suburbs, to provide them with liquid cash. Without a ground, the football club cannot trade. So these are only assets on paper, and although the club does borrow against them, in fact it is not borrowing against them at all, but borrowing against the value of the team. So when Stoke City were put under pressure by the bank last season, at the same time as part of the main stand blew down, Jimmy Greenhoff went to fix the stand, and Ian Moores, Mike Pejic and Alan Hudson went to keep the bank at bay. The team was relegated. And when Distillery (Belfast) had their ground compulsorily purchased to make way for a housing scheme off the Falls Road, they had a large sum of (taxable) money, but had to play on the corner of a public park. They are still playing there, and still are members of the League, but it's something of a joke.

If, then, all that football clubs can boast of as realistic security is their ability to prevent their employees from going and earning a living with any other employer without large sums of money changing hands, this finally puts into context the relationship between football clubs and their employees, and the current freedom of contract dispute.

We was robbed ...

"I talk about going to work and people laugh. They think you just kick a ball around on a Saturday afternoon." But for Steve Perryman of Tottenham Hotspur, and all players, it is no joke. Growing insecurity, unemployment, injury, fluctuating wage levels and a servile apprenticeship are the professional footballers' lot.

The popular image, heroes of the working class getting rich quick for working 1½ hours a week, and the entrenched attitudes of the game's governing body the Football League (an autocratic body of employers - club chairpersons who look after the game in their spare time) have resulted in feudal working conditions for professional footballers. Treated as fleshy capital, investments who only think through their feet, they are unable to change jobs without their current employer demanding cash from their would-be employer. No other worker in Britain suffers such restriction of movement.

The transfer system may not be a very big worry for the superstars who receive large signing-on fees when they are being transferred—5% over the table, and who knows what under.

It's at the other end of the market that you find the victims. The 28-year-old, dropping down the divisions as his career comes to an end, is more concerned with the practical questions of his football life—security, pension rights, accident insurance. And it is precisely these players that the system affords least protection to. Only the top 10-12% of professional footballers earn £200 a week or more, and very few of these enjoy more than a brief period of high earnings before plunging back into obscurity. Some players, the George Bests and Kevin Keegans obviously do well out of the game—it is structured so that the cream thickens whilst the milk goes sour. But it was only last month that the PFA succeeded in getting the League to agree to a minimum weekly wage of £30.

The Football League's answer to these problems is the reintroduction of amateur status to the clubs in the bottom half of the League, witness Wimbledon's entrance. Which certainly takes the financial strain off the clubs, but only to place it on the players' shoulders, 85% of whom, according to the Commission for Industrial Relations report in 1974, have no source of income outside the game.

Any solution to the game's present financial crisis will not take a step back into history, but examine new alternatives—municipalization as in France, subscription paying sports complexes as with Real Madrid in Spain or even share-holding supporters. None are original ideas, nor are they without problems. But the wider democratisation of the game that such options entail, the easier it will be to break the game out of its present financial straitjacket.

Fear of radically altering the present organizational structure of football, largely dependent on transfer fees for club income, has found both the Professional Footballers Association (the players' union) and the Football League attempting to paper over the cracks in the present system rather than conceive alternatives. Arguing just like 19th century Southern slave owners, who warned that the abolition of slavery would lead to the collapse of the cotton industry. Not an altogether surprising reaction from a union that was thrown out of the TUC in 1972 for registering under the Tory Industrial Relations Act, and is still outlawed today.

Renowned for their lack of bootpower, the actions of the 2,500 odd members of the PFA have not produced many ulcers at Lytham St Annes, the Football League's headquarters. Despite the damning criticisms and recommendations of two independent government inquiries into the workings of the game, the Chester Report in 1968 and the CIR report in 1974, precious little has changed. Admittedly their negotiations with the Football League have been likened to "a game of tennis with a glass screen instead of a net", but that is little reason to keep running back to the dressing room every time the Chairpersons score a point (as they have done over the freedom of contract issue).

Blessed with a membership that must rank amongst the most apathetic in the country, where the position of club delegate is about as attractive to the players as the substitutes bench, and a subscription payment rate that would

embarrass the trade union movement, the blame cannot simply be laid at the feet of the union's secretary, Cliff Lloyd, and his management committee.

Without union backing attempts by individual players to improve and control their working conditions are easily frustrated. Reserve football is never far away for a martyr and transfer moves can be frustrated by subtle boardroom manoeuvres. Attempting to buy the club, as Tivelino of AC Milan threatened, is one solution, but that was the response of a shattered ego after being dropped from the first team. Faced with a real grievance over working conditions most players have two options: to acquiesce or to collect their cards. Duncan McKenzie opted for the latter after a pay dispute at Nottingham Forest a few years back, primarily because he knew the flesh market offered him security. His less fortunate colleagues in the lower divisions have but one choice—to acquiesce.

Recent events at Newcastle United, where ten players out of the first team squad have successfully frustrated the ability of the club's directors to impose their will on the players, have shown the importance of collective action. They refused to re-sign new contracts

last season until a manager of their choice was appointed and adopted the same tactic at the beginning of the season to obtain wage rises. Skilful use of local press and television enabled the players to win support for their demands. But only time will tell of the effects of such actions upon their careers. Supporters have shorter memories than directors. The unwillingness of the PFA to intervene in club disputes offers the players scant security or reassurance that their short-lived careers will not become even shorter.

Propping up a system that benefits a footballers' aristocracy at the expense of the rest, the PFA acts more like an advisory service than a trade union, particularly at club level. Superstars dotted on picket lines outside clubs repelling coachloads of amateur players dying to complete league fixtures is not their style. Not that such actions could achieve the conditions necessary for the players to reach the twentieth century. It will take more than strike action to change the present anachronistic structure of the game.

John Allen

**One contributor chose to use the term "Chairperson", the other uses "Chairman". The preferable form for official titles (eg Chairman of British Leyland, Chairman Mao) is still a matter for debate within The Leveller collective. In all other cases we use "Chairperson".*



Letters

155a, Drummond Street,
London NW 1.

CAMRA: a role to play

I didn't like the tone of Tim Gopsill's reply to Roger Protz in issue 7: it was shrill and aggressive, too redolent of the sectarianism *The Leveller* is, I take it, trying to get away from.

I would want to support Protz by going a little further than he does, and indulging in some revisionism. Much socialist analysis comes, of course, from Marx, who was writing at a time when the exploitation of people as consumers was trivial compared with their exploitation as workers. Competition was alive and well in the consumer goods market as well as in the labour markets. Today we face changed conditions and competition is strictly limited by the giant monopolies and oligopolies. The upshot is that it is often easier for capital to exploit people as consumers than as workers.

To give one example: given the power of organised labour, it may well be easier for a monopolist to fully concede to a wage demand and then simply pass the whole lot on in increased prices, than to go through the bloody business of resisting the wage demand. Profits are not affected by conceding the wage demands because prices can be raised almost freely. (Similarly, quality can be reduced almost freely.) The point is that large firms have this option because people are well-organised as labour but completely disorganised as consumers. They can sell us any old crap at any old price and we take it without a whimper.

Socialists, as Protz points out, have opposed any organisation of consumers, largely for reasons of dogma related to the fact that Uncle Karl didn't have much to say on the matter. If we recognise that conditions have changed, and therefore that our analysis needs to change, perhaps we can come to see that consumer unions, like CAMRA, have a very significant role to play.

Nigel Wright

Large or small breweries?

A lot of argument amongst revolutionary socialists seems to assume that radical socialist change will not actually happen in this country. To assume it will, changes the perspective on some arguments. Consumer and environmental issues at once become much more important since they concern the layout of the world in which those

changes will take place; hence they affect the ease and detail shape of those changes and their meaning in daily life. Neither Roger Protz nor Tim Gopsill stress this in their exchange about CAMRA.

For example, the meaning of workers self-management is concretely different if it is in a few large brewing plants rather than in more smaller breweries. If socialists then prefer smaller breweries there is little chance of production switching to them for years, if brewing under capitalism has already been concentrated in a few sites. I don't know enough about the technology of brewing to know if also (as I suspect) a few large plants would mean a socialist country was denied the pleasure of a variety of beers. Enough that the layout of the pre-socialist world affects what can be done in a socialist world for a long time and so is of present concern to socialists.

The CAMRA issue is, I guess, not that important. But the argument applies with more force to issues of energy use and production and to agriculture and land use where I believe it also crucially affects the chance of socialist success by altering our relationship now with capitalist international technology and finance. I would like to see the socialist movement engaging with these issues in that perspective.

Gordon Willis

DANCING ON WHOSE GRAVE

Bob Dent's provocative article in issue 8 'Dancing on Lenin's grave—the party ends' starts out by implying that there is no place for a revolutionary party in Britain in the nineteen seventies, and ends by re-admitting them to the socialist pantheon, though with a different, more limited and humbler function. This confusion seems to be typical of the non-party intellectual today.

At the same time Mr Dent argues that the most significant political developments of the last ten years (on the left) has been 'the proliferation of the "non-aligned" and community press, movement bookshops, action groups like the National Abortion Campaign, the Women's Liberation Movement, the "information explosion" of research groups and advice centres, agitprop cultural projects'. There is no denying the importance of these different movements. However, Mr Dent sweeps aside the thought that some of these projects have been directly set up by revolutionary political parties, and that others have been set up by individuals belonging to such parties. Sweeps this aside with the expression 'have by and large been initiated by non-card carrying members of the British left'. There is no analysis as to what proportion of these projects have been initiated or deeply influenced by revolutionary parties.

Mr Dent also conveniently ignores the growth of a number of revolutionary parties in the last ten years. Growth, not only in terms

of numbers, but also in terms of influence (both positive and negative) and in terms of publicity these groups have attracted from the mass media. Who nowadays, for instance, has not heard of that great bogeyman of British democracy, the SWP?

Obviously writing from a partisan viewpoint, Mr Dent stretches across the seas to back up his argument: he coughs up Portugal and the events which have taken place there over the last three years to back up his cry for non-party leftism. I'm unclear exactly what this has to do with the British Left at the moment, or the degree of influence the "apartidario" has had on the left (as opposed to the Portuguese Communist Party). But while he's at this game—dragging in world-wide events to back up his argument—why not mention the



Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia, or the 'Back to the Land' movement in the USA, etc etc? And why does he leave out such important political events as the advance of the (organised-party) left in Italy and France?

In other words, Mr Dent is being selective to the extreme. His argument would have been better and more powerful if he had included the diversity of development of political forces on the Left. For he does have a point. The problem, the difficult part, is assessing just what importance to attach to the non-aligned movements he enumerates. And then to describe their influence, the interaction between separate isolated projects with each other and with the revolutionary parties.

His article seems to me to have been written from some anarcho-



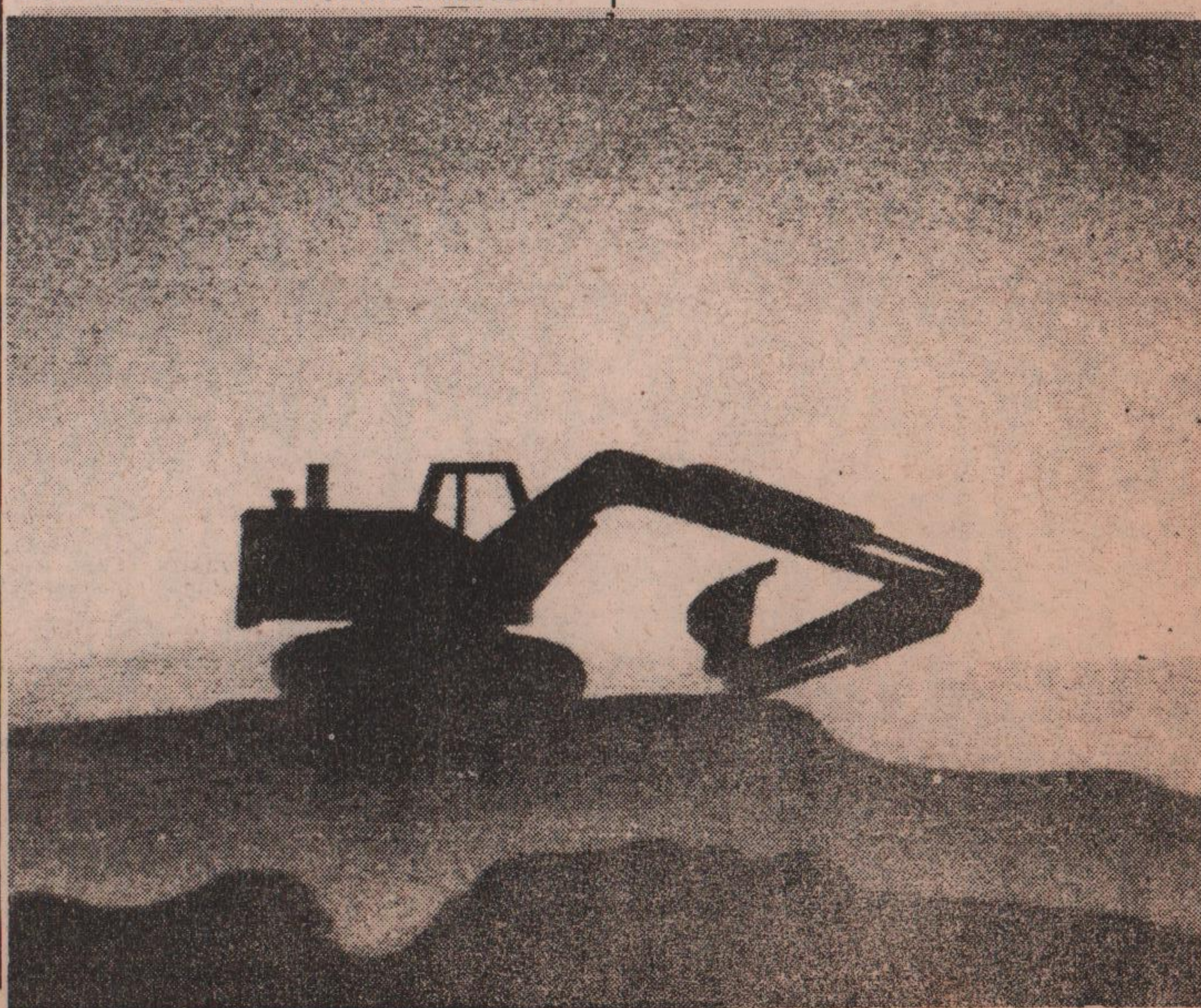
communist or utopian socialist perspective. These have important traditions, which have been obscured to a great extent, in the history of the left: However they have been there and have been important for over one hundred years. Sometimes they have been on the upsurge, at other times just ticking over.

To state then, that the last ten years has seen a blossoming of non-aligned projects and movements, while being hard to assess how much this means in absolute terms, is also to ignore any historical background and avoids comparison to other blossomings in the 1880s/90s, before the First World War, and in the 1930s.

Finally, he seems to think that all these 'movement' groups are in fact part of a movement. Are they indeed? I think it doubtful. There are many groups which while being leftist and while doing good work, are under no terms marxist or socialist, and which can and do quite easily degenerate into no more than pressure groups for various reforms. He also seems to ignore the whole development of groups concerned with ecology. But perhaps they are an important force within the left? Of perhaps they are merely middle-class trendies concerned that the noise and dirt which are the necessary products of capitalist industry be not sprayed and spumed over their Cotswold country cottages?

Though, of course, I welcome the developments which Mr Dent mentions, and welcome Mr Dent's contribution to analysing the exact relation of forces on the left, his analysis can only be seen as a biased, incorrect, and unresearched beginning to a long debate.

Craig Hartley



All eyes on black youth

Black youth and the white left

THE LEFT NEEDS to think again about race in Britain. Its reactions to last August's Notting Hill Carnival riot were utterly predictable, and suggested that nothing had been learnt over the years. What happened at Carnival poses some awkward questions which have not been faced up to.

Socialist Worker, in this instance as in others, was a model of what to avoid. Other left papers were not so bad. On 3 September, *SW*, describing the previous Monday's Carnival and riot, was a sorry catalogue of wishful thinking, liberalism dressed up as socialism, and just plain bad reporting. Worst, it had no politics. It is wishful thinking to say that "Part of the reason for that (some of the youngsters getting out of hand) was that Carnival was gutted this year." Without a doubt the virtual absence of stalls, bands and other diversions made Carnival boring. But their presence last year did not prevent muggings and pickpocketing. Those can hardly be blamed on police provocation.

The inherent liberalism of this line of argument—give them old ladies' windows to clean and they'll stay off the streets—was surpassed only by *SW*'s peroration: "If you are young and black in Notting Hill or Brixton or any other black area, you have almost no chance at all of getting a job. Instead you face poverty and overcrowding... These are the real reasons behind the tension that exploded at Notting Hill." Well, there's nothin in that which Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, who was more conspicuous at the scene of the rioting than *SW*'s reporters, would disagree with.

But the worthy cleric would disagree with the claim that "It is not true that the stewards lost control and the police moved in. Far from it. All real control was lost and most of the worst violence happened because the police charged in." This is dishonest or, at best, bad reporting. The stewards, who had been attacking the kids with iron bars and clubs in a way in which the police would rightly never be allowed to, did lose control when the kids finally turned on them. Some of the stewards had to seek protection behind the police lines. That's when

the real trouble started—and of course once the police moved in to clear the streets, as they had planned to do in such an event, the violence got worse.

These points are not merely polemical. Nor are they an attack on *SW* or the Socialist Workers' Party for its own sake. They raise serious questions about the left's position on race in general, and in particular on the presence within the black community of a stratum of kids who exist almost outside society, and certainly outside the society understood by the left.

Left attitudes towards race have been a kind of inverted liberalism. The extreme version has assumed that all blacks are automatic and natural allies of the left by virtue of being oppressed. But oppressed though they are, all blacks are no more allies than are all women, students, national minorities or any other group encompassed by this theory. There can be lumpen blacks as well as lumpen whites. It is noteworthy in this context how few blacks are members of left groups.

Another major respect in which the left has unconsciously subscribed to liberal notions on race is its mechanical emphasis on social conditions. It's all the fault of bad housing, low wages, poor education, even weak family structures. The "real reasons" as *SW* calls them. The implication is that if enough money is thrown at the problems they will go away. Such illusions go right back to the origins of Fabianism and social democracy. Once it was thought that lower unemployment and higher real wages would reduce crime. Who believes that now? So why assume it applies to other, equally complex social issues? It is a style of thought which trivialises politics.

What Carnival showed was that there has developed a big group of lumpen black kids who are remarkable for their resistance to political ideas, whether white or black in origin. *SW* did not report that these kids trashed its stall at Carnival, to the uncomprehending horror of the well-disposed politicians.

These kids won't go away. For demographic reasons they will soon be a significant proportion of the black community. They also have a very coherent and impervious culture, with its own street argot, its own styles in dress and music. Most important politically, these kids have none of the respect for property and the law, or the wish for respectability, which their parents had. That is the sense in which they live outside society.

This is a new dimension to British politics. Not since the Victorian street arabs of East London has so intractable a group existed, though in this case race certainly makes it far more complicated and politically charged. But the left does not appear to have recognised the challenge to its conventional thinking represented by the black kids. The failure plays straight into the hands of the right, by refusing to condemn in these kids what it might condemn in others.

Thus *SW* said: "Every weekend at Petticoat Lane there are pickpockets. But the police don't move in with riot shields." Such comments are despairingly stupid. When was the last riot in Petticoat Lane? The fact that the police are frequently racist doesn't mean muggings and vandalism don't happen. Those who condemn white football hooliganism should condemn black street violence. A riot started at Carnival before police intervention. Why not admit it?

The theoretical danger is that the left will go on floundering in its disguised liberalism. Even if plenty of jobs were available, many of the kids wouldn't take them. Why slave away five days a week at some soul-destroying job when you can be out on the streets earning good money picking pockets with your mates? It's more sociable and more fun. The left will have to stop patronising blacks in a way that treats them as potential white politicians. Only when it recognises that its approach to race has been that of a good-hearted social worker will it begin to get to grips with the political issues.

Mike Prest

If you are young and black, you may not have any money to go to Carnival.

Those are the real reasons behind the tension that exploded at Notting Hill.

Of course, there was trouble. Of course, the stewards did not manage to control some of the angry and frustrated young blacks at the Carnival.

But it is not true that the stewards lost control and the police moved in. Far from it. All real control was lost and most of the worst violence happened, because the police charged in.

Many of those, including some Carnival organisers and some on the left, who are attacking the young blacks who were involved in earlier incidents with the police, are

Extract from *Socialist Worker* article

W.Germany

Phil Kelly reviews "HITLER'S CHILDREN" - The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Gang. By Jillian Becker. Published at £6.50 by Michael Joseph.

'An expression of bourgeois shock'

All the facts in the world are useless in the wrong order. The widely-publicised new book on West German urban guerillas, *Hitler's Children*, is a positive barrier to understanding the phenomenon.

SUPPOSE THAT the Red Army Fraction had kidnapped Hans Martin Schleyer 35 years ago, shooting down three guards and a chauffeur in the process. After all Czech partisans did kill Reinhardt Heydrich, who was Schleyer's boss at the time. It would have been followed, as was the assassination of Heydrich, by ruthless repression which would certainly have reached those uninvolved with the partisans. And like the death of Heydrich, it would not have contributed much to the overthrow of Nazism or the liberation of Czechoslovakia. There would have been total condemnation by the local press; only outside Nazi-held territory would the act have been justified.

Since then, Germany has become a very different place. A model democracy. Former leading Nazis like Schleyer still hold high positions in industry and commerce—though they are less well represented in politics. But that is conveniently forgotten. To remind the world that economic power in West Germany lies still in the hands of men who profited from war and the extermination of the Jews is like farting at a funeral: an unpleasantness which people will go to great lengths to suppress. And no-one is allowed to support the kidnapping of Schleyer.

West Germany is not a fascist country, and it does not murder its own citizens in a systematic fashion. Equally it is not a bourgeois democracy which fits the same mould as the other nations of Western Europe.

West Germany is a front line anti-communist state. Unlike almost every other nation in the world, its political institutions have not evolved over a period of time: they were created by the Allies in order to provide a secure forward base from which to confront Soviet power in Europe. British and American occupation forces systematically destroyed emerging working class organisations, whether left social democrat, syndicalist or communist, until the safe social democrats who had spent the war in Allied countries could return. The Allied intelligence services spent about a year looking for Nazis, and then turned their attentions to the left. Ex-Nazis like Schleyer were temporarily interned, but within a few years were back at their desks because there was no-one else to run the economy in the way the Allies wanted.

West German trade unions were reconstructed as managers of capital, helped by the 'co-determination' policies of successive governments. The working class was denied any class institutions, however rudimentary.

On the political front the campaign to re-arm the country was opposed by large sections of the population, as also by the pro-Moscow Communist Party (KPD). The obstacle to successful re-armament was removed by the banning of the KPD in 1956; the Social Democrats abandoned the last vestiges of socialism in their programme in 1959; the first

serious post war recession was followed in 1966 by a coalition government in which they took part. They introduced stringent emergency laws at a time when social unrest was minimal.

Hitler's Children mentions all these points, which are essential for understanding the rise of the Red Army Fraction, but only in passing. They are touched on as fleeting events in the psycho-histories of the group's members. The book is written in a novelesque style—betraying the profession of the author, an ex-South African writer. Predictably, Ulrike Meinhof comes across like the heroine of a story in an advanced women's magazine. Fed with progressive social theories, she was still a woman, and married a man who attracted her because he was offensive to her. Married, she came to despise her dependence on his world, and revolted, but could not handle the chaos which she created. "They are middle class, frustrated, and influenced by Marcuse": the words happen to have been said by an Argentinian Minister about the Montoneros, but it sums up Ms Becker's version of the official line on the RAF.

She may have adopted the "counter-insurgency" approach consciously, or the fact that all her sources came from the establishment might be responsible. But she is suspiciously keen to avow the absence of any political motive in the Red Army Fraction's actions.

Ms Becker lists an impressive number of RAF and other left publications in her bibliography, but appears not to have read any of them. Nor does she seem to have spoken to any of the

RAF's lawyers. Yet the politics of the Red Army Fraction must be central to any left reaction to it. In calling them the Red Army Fraction, Ms Becker misleads the reader. The name *Fraction* expressed the hope—albeit totally idealist—that the RAF would one day be the armed wing of a revolutionary party.

But in effect, the RAF rejected the workers of West Germany for the peasantry and proletariat of the third world. Such a rejection was possible only because of the anti-communist underpinning of the West German state and the corporatist social structures created by the Allies, underneath which the working class at present lies buried. So when their country was actively involved in support of US genocide in Vietnam, a small group became impatient and acted alone, without waiting for the masses to follow. It is not a political position to be recommended, although it is one which has shaken the West German ruling class. Yet one must agree with all those, from *Socialist Challenge* to *Neues Deutschland*, the East German official party paper, that it was politically incorrect. The problem of criticism is that it will be misused, at a time like this, to portray the left as confused, divided, and sectarian. Why else should the position of the Frankfurt spontaneist left—which has consistently criticised the RAF in a principled fashion—suddenly become international news? Why else is Herbert Marcuse back in the pages of *Time* magazine?

Probably more than any other group of the West German left, the RAF took international solidarity seriously. They believed that revolutionary action must include disabling the imperialist potential of the metropolitan countries. Other Germans in Namibia and Latin America are still doing the job which Hans Martin Schleyer did in Czechoslovakia—overseeing slave labour for the benefit of the metropolis.

Ms Becker will have none of this. She even writes 'American imperialism' in inverted commas, as if it didn't exist. For the RAF, the unity of the struggle against imperialism has led incorrectly to the position that the tactics used can be the same everywhere. But Ms Becker's book is really only an expression of bourgeois shock as their society reveals another embarrassing aspect of its impermanence.



Government 'wanted' poster - an illustration from the book.

Coming to an unjust conclusion

I thought Wan King was a meaningful sexual activity until I discovered a sex education manual published in the People's Republic of China . . .

"Masturbation harms our bodies because it overexcites our nervous system and also debilitates it. Frequent masturbation will excite the erection centre and the excitation will become highly sensitive. Sometimes if you wear clothes which are too warm or wear trousers which are too tight, that will give you an erection, so your sexual system . . . will become debilitated, so when you marry you might be impotent and you might ejaculate too soon."

"If a girl does it her menstruations might be irregular or painful. Both for men and women, masturbation will affect the brain . . . so that individuals will think about their sexual needs all the time, and this will cause excessive nocturnal emissions . . . people will get nervous depressions, and their memory will worsen, and they will feel dizzy, and they will get insomnia and their work and studies will suffer."

"Masturbation will harm the body and affect your revolutionary will too; so it is necessary to control it. First we have to build the world view of the proletariat and study hard Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought. Secondly, frequent masturbators should participate in gymnastics; before you go to bed take an hour or half hour doing long runs, that way you will go to sleep at once, this is very necessary. When you wake up in the morning, as soon as your eyes are open don't stay in bed and don't think about sleeping any longer . . . Don't sleep on your side and don't use a blanket that is too thick or heavy. Don't wear underwear that is too tight."

—from *Adolescence and Hygiene* by Tsay Pak Cheing (Peking Publishing House). (Peoples News Service)



Montoneros break out

ARGENTINA'S Montoneros guerillas have cemented close relationships with Tanzania after a meeting in Dar Es Salaam in September. Representatives of the Montonero Peronist Movement visited Tanzania as the guests of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the ruling party. CCM, the result of a merger between the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar and TANU, means literally "The gathering that makes the changes".

The end of machismo

ABORTION rights and the creation of a Ministry of Women's Affairs are the two main demands of "Action for the Liberation of Peruvian Women". The group has already taken part in actions designed to combat Machismo—male chauvinism—in Peru, and to draw attention to the oppression of women. One of the co-ordinators, painter Cristina Portocarrero said that there were 140,000 illegal abortions a year in Peru—abortion is a criminal offence carrying a prison sentence. Ms Portocarrero said that while rich women could afford private abortions costing between US \$100 and \$250 in private clinics, peasant women had to resort to "crude and dangerous methods". Illegal abortion was a form of compulsory maternity, the group said. The women want the Peruvian military government to include a Ministry of Women's Affairs in the proposed constitution for a return to civilian rule, which is expected to be drafted next year. (Inter Press Service)

Pottery and politics

OF THE MANY thousand victims of the McCarthyist current in West Germany, Annette de Gooijer, Dutch, is the first foreigner. "We regret having to inform you that we are unable to offer you a post, but we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that you will always defend the free democratic order as defined in our constitution," wrote the mayor of the West Berlin borough of Reinickendorf to Annette, on 9 August. She had applied for a job teaching pottery in a youth centre. Her skill at modelling clay was never in doubt, but in 1972 she joined the SEW the Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin—the legal pro-Moscow Communist Party.

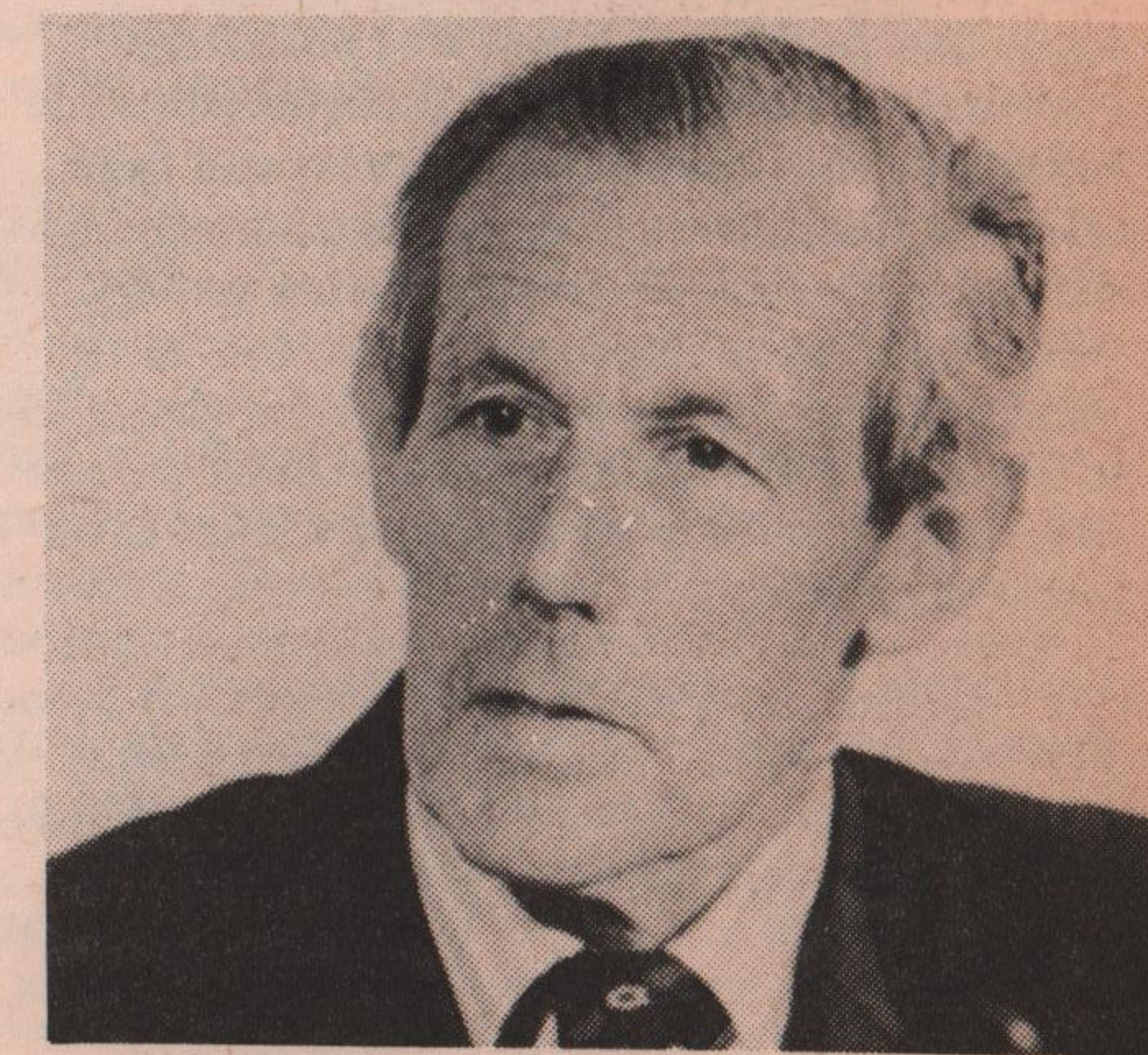
The Dutch Labour Party has protested

Montoneros being met by Tanzanians

Or, more prosaically, "the Party of the Revolution". CCM declared its support for the demands of the Montoneros, who in turn praised Tanzanian support for the African liberation movements. Behind the formal language of the communique, the contact represents an important break out of isolation for the Montoneros. Although they united with the left wing of the old Peronist movement, the "Authentic Party", earlier this year, they are under heavy military pressure. The calling in of Africa to redress the imbalance of forces in Latin America represents a real link in the encirclement of imperialism. (Inter Press Service)

vigorously. Current developments in West German politics are viewed with alarm by the Dutch, who have good reason to fear the re-establishment of a police state on their border. Annette's lawyer is preparing further steps, starting with an appeal to the French occupation forces, under whose jurisdiction the suburb of Reinickendorf still lies. That may lead to a Paris court deciding whether a Dutch teacher can teach German children pottery in West Berlin.

Rees carved up



FIELD MARSHAL Lord Carver, the Labour Government's choice to oversee the transition to neo-colonial rule in Zimbabwe, may turn out to be Britain's leading constitutionalist General. He makes no secret of his opposition to the antics of extreme right wing military types like General Sir Walter Walker, and the two of them were retired together in 1973, apparently in some kind of agreed move. But most unusually for a retired Chief of the General Staff—the country's top military commander—he has been heard arguing that Merlyn Rees was wrong over the Agee/Hosenball Affair. He believes that the Government could have given more information about the deportations, and should have done so in the interests of fairness.

The battle of 13 August, in the small village of Kdýne where the concert was scheduled to take place, saw local residents and rock fans pursuing police with stones and chants of "Gustapo"—a popular Czech pun associating Husak's first name (Gustav) with Hitler's secret police—before setting fire to a train. Previously, when rock concerts had been broken up, police have shipped people back to Prague on trains.

At Kdýne only thirteen people were detained, among them Charter '77 signatory Victor Groh, a 23 year old worker. Three years ago, on 30 March '74, two hundred people were arrested when army and police attacked a concert in Rudolfov where The Plastic People Of The Universe—one of the best Czech underground bands—were due to play. Of those arrested, six received prison sentences, including Miluse Stevichova—another Charter '77 signatory whose case is typical of the way members of the cultural opposition are continually harassed. Hounded by secret police from place to place and job to job, she was again detained on 9 July with ten others during a raid on a private concert in Rychnov.

Police vandalised motorcycles and cars belonging to the participants, detonated explosives on a nearby road and checked everybody's ID card against their own pre-prepared lists. These lists are the result of seven years monitoring the musical underground, merely one of many oppositional currents within Russian occupied Czechoslovakia. Ironic that a nation which continually reminds its schoolchildren of the dictum "Every Czech a musician" should have an estimated 3000 people from the underground rock movement alone on police files.

After the Soviet occupation of 1968 autonomous musical activity was gradually suppressed along with all other cultural, political and social life. Harsh state regimentalisation replaced authenticity. Hundreds of existing dealing in musical forms were subjected to hard pressure. The ruling establishment's criteria of political servitude replaced those of artistic mastery and truthfulness. Public lip-service to the occupation regime was handsomely rewarded and the systemic abuse of any authentic social and political content was positively encouraged. So some bands succumbed to the temptations of commercial success and fame, allowing themselves to slowly degenerate on official radio and TV screens. Other groups, who would not compromise, were forced to yield to bureaucratic pressures under threat of losing their professional licences. Such groups did, in general, recover their lost venues in an amateur activity.

Government repression continued to mark these groups further down the social scale, until many of them cracked and either disbanded or ceased to play altogether. The Plastic People however would not give in to the authorities and would not give up their music, their principles, and their right to create according to their conscience. When even their amateur licence was withdrawn in 1972, they continued to play, desperately trying to remain within the boundaries of draconian occupational laws. They resorted to mostly private activity, playing for friends at parties, weddings, birthdays and the like. Inevitably, each of these relatively rare performances turned into a memorable event celebrating an authentic Czech rock music.

At the same time, the group found an additional source of inner strength. They had all but ceased playing songs by British and American rock groups and began playing exclusively their own repertoire—setting the words of some of the best Czech poets like Jiri

Kolar and Egon Bondy to music. The band's encounter with Bondy's poetry marked a turning point. The band found a voice in which to address its growing audience in Czech, giving expression to the feelings and experiences of sensitive, creative people subjected to the stresses of life in a repressive society. As one of the spokespeople of the underground culture has said: "By setting to music the work of a poet whom the establishment has never allowed to publish even a single poem, the Plastic People were clearly demonstrating that they were not interested in gaining a place in the official culture structure, but far more in creating and acting as a medium for what they themselves, together with their audience, consider culture."

Out of this difficult situation, a lively underground movement steadily developed, with other bands and individual artists joining in (Sen Noci Svatojanske, Berani, The Old Teenagers, singers Karasek and Soukup, etc.) and new groups being formed (DG-307, Umela Hmota I, II and III, Hever a Vazelina, Bile Svelto, etc.). As this scene expanded, so did interference by the state police, culminating in March '76 when the combined forces of the public and secret police swooped on the movement. Over 120 people were raided, detained and interrogated. 22 people were jailed, among them all the members of the Plastic People and the DG-307.

Behind the phenomenon of the Plastic People and the bands to which they gave rise, lies a whole social hinterland which has never been properly examined or studied—for obvious reasons. As young people move through adolescence into young adulthood, they are gradually enmeshed in a network of social controls that they will remain trapped in for the rest of their lives.

By the time they enter secondary school, they will have chosen, or been forced to choose, the

THE TANKS of the Kremlin in '68 and their Czech puppets in '69 brought an end to mass politics in Czechoslovakia. Politics went underground. On 13 August 1977—eight Augusts later—1200 young Czechs fought with police after a small rock concert was broken up. Ivan Hartel, a Czech poet currently resident in Britain, describes how it happened. He also explains why the rock music underground has become a focal point for young workers in the cultural and political opposition

Czech rock

course their lives will take. They will have been exposed to the selection process, where they learn that simply to get a secondary education depends more on their parents' political profile than it does on their abilities. The education they receive is narrow, indoctrinating and manipulative. They are pressured to join the Socialist Union of Youth, and if they refuse they are marked for

life. If they rebel, they face expulsion and poor job prospects. And when they finally do leave school, they enter a system which, although it guarantees the right to work, sees this "right" as a duty. To be unemployed for more than eight weeks constitutes the crime of "parasitism", which carries a jail sentence. And of course there is conscription, and all young men face two years in the army.

Country house used by cultural underground



Released dissident Svatopluk speaks to a rock audience

Rather than submit to a lifetime of drudgery on the assembly-line, many lead a semi-underground existence, choosing to be unemployed and risking jail so that they can devote themselves to what interests them most—private study, music, poetry.

What distinguishes the musical underground and the alternative culture generally from other more famous and ostentatious dissident activities is not only that it cuts right across the present social scale in Czechoslovakia. Above all, it reaches out to and speaks *for* and *with* those with whom no-one else is concerned—the most underprivileged stratum of Czechoslovak society, the young workers. This movement has evolved a moral position which transcends simplistic political ideology, cuts right through the variety of problems posed by both collaborators as well as by the tacticians of the opposition, and bases itself on a profound sense of human dignity and a crystal-clear sense of mission. It succeeded in erecting an ethical mirror which revealed the precious problems faced by collaborators and the precious questions posed by famous dissidents as fake and shallow.

The music and songs of the underground express, among other things, the utter frustration of life in a totalitarian society, plagued with artificially revived bourgeois values which are supposed to compensate for the absolute lack of control one has over one's own life. They express the need for freedom, for truth and for unprostituted ethical values and, by speaking for its lowest strata, they speak for Czechoslovak society as a whole. When Karasek sings about social evil, when Zajicek cries about personal ethics, when Jirous talks about selflessness, when Soukup pours scorn on blind consumerist bullshit, when Skalicky shouts about exploited workers' life, when Havelka screams defiance to the

omnipotent police or when Hlavka sings about thoroughly disgusted youth. They are tearing down the facade of an outdated, crypto-capitalist, counter-revolutionary, inhuman and anti-socialist system that the Russians have had "temporarily" imposed on Czechoslovakia.

By their songs and by their vision of a realisable future they are changing the very fabric of the present, long ago outmoded structure. No wonder they have to be jailed. As one of the secret police interrogators exclaimed in genuine surprise: "These are strange fellows. They are willing to go to jail just for their principles."

The authorities have grossly miscalculated. Prior to their pouncing on the movement last year, they had every good reason to believe that no-one, or certainly no big shot inside or outside the country, would bother about the fate of these unknown and infamous worker-fiddlers. But in 1976 all the different wings of the organised opposition movements joined together for the first time in outcry against the repression of the Plastic People (many groups were previously either outright hostile or at best totally indifferent to the musical underground). And this joint defence campaign for the worker musicians gave birth to the Charter 77 Movement which united very different socialist opposition currents on a common minimal action programme of basic civil and human rights—a programme which has at least (as well as at last) an authentic meaning for a vast majority of Czechs.

The basic questions which the Czech underground poses, concerning the citizen as a worker and a creator, are questions which are relevant—and largely ignored—on all three sides of the "iron curtain".

☛ (on all materials) *The Plastic People Defence Fund, 1977*

THE PLASTIC PEOPLE DEFENCE FUND
c/o Amnesty International
Southampton Street
London WC2

Plastic People's Milan Hlavsa

Ivan Hartel, while writing this article for *The Leveller*, was deprived of his Czechoslovak citizenship by the Czech government. When asked to comment on this, he said:

"Well, the Russian ruling clique, like other imperialists before them, prides itself on its rationality. Thus it is in fact only logical that after they have expropriated our country, they proceed to expatriate its citizens. As for the poor [Czech] devils who have to run their errands for them, one can only have an utter and undiluted sympathy for the sorry state they got themselves in.

It would be almost tragic, if it wasn't just so sad. However, last night my former colleague, nuclear physicist Vladimir Lastuvka and his friend, agronomist Ales Machacek, were both sentenced to 3½ years for distributing Charter 77. They were in jail since January and were sentenced on 28.9.77.

These are not active in musical underground, but the regime again counts on similar initial phenomenon to operate. It can confidently afford these harsh sentences because Lastuvka and Machacek are unknown technicians, who would merit less than half a line in Western press, let alone a gentle diplomatic nudge from the Western establishments. I suggest we try to change this situation and rally some substantial support for these guys."



Punk-hippies with short hair

THE GREAT VIRGIN Success Story - from a friendly, freaky record shop, Virgin has developed a large chain of disc marts and the only record label prepared to handle the Sex Pistols. Its history sheds light on the workings of the whole pop music industry.

THE MOST IRONIC thing about the current ideology of Punk is how much of it is, in fact, the old ideology of Hippie. The rock year of 1977 has been much like the rock year of 1967: the same energetic burst of groups and labels and gigs and audiences, the same easy-spoken anti-commercialism, the same hopes for music as politics. The pace is different—it's the record companies who won't get fooled again, and Mark P has moved rather speedily from his magazine, *Sniffin' Glue*, to his record company, Step Forward, than Richard Branson managed, a decade or so ago, to make the same trip from *Student* magazine to Virgin Records—but it is surely right that the Sex Pistols should end up a Virgin group. In ideological terms Richard Branson and Johnny Rotten have a lot in common, whatever their different hair styles or trouser widths.

The Virgin Records story is not actually much different from the story of any other small successful business. Richard Branson's abilities are those of the text book entrepreneur—he spotted a gap in the market and he had the resourcefulness to fill it. But hippie rock fans remain nostalgic about the sixties, and still believe that their music was "sold out" somewhere along the line, and punks share the notion that big record companies are somehow more evil than the equally enthusiastically capitalist little labels. In the future, radical punks are likely to be as resentful of Stiff or Chiswick as radical rock fans are now resentful of Virgin. Richard Branson's history is worth considering not for its moral lessons but because of the political questions it raises about the role of cultural businessmen.

In the 1960s the popular music business discovered a new market—white middle class youth. Initially this market was self-servicing, generated its own musical enterprises, its own performers and styles and media, but the commercial potential of "progressive" rock was soon obvious to even the most reactionary showbiz operators. In 1968, the year in which the Beatles launched Apple "to open the way to artistic fulfillment for writers, musicians, singers and painters who have hitherto been unable to find acceptance in the commercial world" was also the year in which EMI launched its progressive label, Harvest. Such new labels attracted consumers not just with new musical content, but also with new forms of promotion—LPs rather than singles, psychedelic sleeve designs and hi-fi sound qualities, the college and concert circuits (no more dance halls), John Peel (not Tony Blackburn).

All this action was at the end of the record making process, directly affected the audience, and at the time it felt like the music business was changing, that hippie ideology was making a real mark. But this was not how the record companies themselves experienced the rise of rock. As David Betteridge, managing director of Island, put it:

There was a new intelligent rock—I don't mean that in any cynical way—there was a college circuit being built and a new audience was emerging. And we were running it tandem, supplying their needs. We were the vehicle for them so it all just clicked together. (Melody Maker, May 4, 1975)

Richard Branson was in the business of supplying these needs too. He began while he was still at public school, launching a national magazine for sixth formers. It didn't last long, but out of it emerged two typical 1960s consumer services. On the one hand, Branson established HELP, an advice agency providing free pregnancy tests, free information and help on sexual and social and personal problems. And HELP is still going, still providing the same free services (but with a greater psychological emphasis these days—engounter groups now feature in *Melody Maker* ads).

On the other hand, Branson established a mail order record company. Originally, as far as I can gather, the idea was to sell bootlegs and deletions, to work the fringes of record retailing. In this Branson was simply taking his place among the hosts of petty entrepreneurs who appeared in the late 60s to service the counter culture (the wealthiest of whom were, of course, the drug dealers). Bootleg selling was precarious—once it showed signs of profitability the record companies got the laws tightened—but in 1969 resale price maintenance on gramophone records was abolished. Branson realised that a mail order record company—with its low overheads, its flexible stock policy—could afford to undercut the high street retailers. Startling offers began to appear in the *Melody Maker*: Virgin guaranteed 20-35p off every rock album.

It is now clear that price was only one aspect of Virgin's appeal—as important was the company's grasp of what music was in demand. Virgin was launched at exactly the same time as the boom in LP sales began, and the object of its advertisements, with their sophisticated pastoral/erotic graphics and hip jokes, was the student consumer. Virgin's ads appeared in *Melody Maker*, the serious music paper, never in *NME*, then still teen and bop oriented. In 1970 Virgin opened its first shop (in Oxford

Street) and, as Nick Powell, boss of Virgin Retail, has put it:

We aimed at students and the rock market, because that was where our expertise lay and also because that was where the majority of album sales were. (Music Business, Nov 1976).

Virgin stores operated in deliberate contrast to the usual record retailers. Cushions on the floor, headphones, a hint of incense. And the shops—new ones were soon opened in Brighton, Birmingham, Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, Notting Hill—became meeting places for the local hippie communities, with notices on the walls as well as records in the racks. Virgin was a place to hang out. The staff shared your tastes and life style, didn't laugh or go blank when you asked for Beefheart. The contrast to the traditional provincial record shop can't be exaggerated.

'The company's first problem was its success'

Meanwhile, Branson had bought a large country house in Oxfordshire and transformed it into a record studio, the Manor. In investing in a studio Branson was, again, following the lead of other rock entrepreneurs—there was an obvious unfilled demand for studios suitably equipped for rock recording—but the Manor was not just another rock studio. Branson was as sensitive to the needs of hip musicians as to those of hip consumers and the Manor was designed to be everything that a rock album maker might want, not just electronically but also in atmosphere, comfort and good country living. Again, Branson had got his market right: the Manor was an instant commercial success.

It was also the means to Virgin's final form—as a recording company. I don't know whether this had always been the plan, but certainly by 1972 Branson wanted to make records and had the studios in which to make them. His problem was what music to make and this was solved by the arrival of Mike Oldfield, clutching his home made tape of *Tubular Bells* that had been rejected by every other record company. Branson was convinced of its commercial potential and sent Oldfield off to live in the Manor with Virgin's engineer, Tom Newman. The resulting LP was to be not just the means of launching Virgin Records but also an advertisement for the technical qualities of the Manor.

The Virgin label was launched in 1973 and its musical policy reflected less Branson's tastes (he does not actually appear to have been that interested in music) than those of his cousin and A&R man, Simon Draper. It was Draper who developed Virgin as an idiosyncratic progressive label. The first signings besides Oldfield were Henry Cow and Gong; the company did not issue singles or obvious commercial sounds. Its most interesting venture was the Caroline label which provided a cheap home for tapes brought in by experimental and unpopular musicians like Lol Coxhill and Fred Frith. In its early days Virgin appeared to be the "alternative" label that rock counter-culture needed.

Today, scarcely four years later, Caroline is dead, Henry Cow have gone, and Virgin is an orthodox independent record company with its fingers in every commercial pie, its rock and reggae and punk signings routine attempts to respond to demands rather than to create them. The company has succumbed to two sorts of pressure.

The company's first problem was, paradoxically, its success. The sales of *Tubular Bells* abled Virgin to expand very fast, to

become almost immediately a publishing company and agency as well as a label. The resulting offices and employees had to be maintained and with the increasing concern for income went the knowledge that Virgin couldn't live off *Tubular Bells* for ever. And, from this perspective, Virgin's A&R policy was not very successful (certainly not when compared with the original rock independents like Island or Chrysalis). Tangerine Dream was the label's only other commercial success. This point was forcefully made by the company's new staff (mostly recruited from within the established record business). Draper might like Henry Cow's music, Branson might be proud to have them on his label, but all Virgin's agency knew was that they weren't an easy band to place in the cosy commercial world of live music promotion.

This case was reinforced by changes in the rock market place. Between 1972 and 1974 the full effects of the abolition of RPM were belatedly felt in the record business. The multiples (Boots, Woolworths, Smiths) started using records as loss leaders, discounting top selling albums. Their share of record sales rose from 50% to 70% and Virgin, for the first time, faced serious high street competition. In the last three years its retail policies have visibly changed. Virgin stores have joined their competitors in differential discounting (the more popular the record, the more money off), in selling singles and disco music and even middle-of-the-road music. The provincial stores have not always found this shift easy but the change is clear in London. Contrast the Warehouse (Virgin's new Oxford Street shop, huge, functional, tourist-aimed) with its original Oxford Street shop, small, chaotic, selling to a self-conscious elite.

Virgin shops have never been directly important for the label (they don't go out of their way to push company product) but they have been indirectly significant. The label was founded on the success with which the shops met rock taste and the recent retail problems have, equally, had an effect on label policies.

'Virgin can only afford second division acts'

Virgin's change of musical direction has reflected the retailers' changed perception of the record buying public as well as the commercial pressures from within the label itself.

Virgin experienced directly the 1970s rock market problem: whatever happened to progressive taste? In the 1960s the belief was that intelligent rock meant the same Zeppelin and Stones album every year or the comfort of hip easy listening. And Virgin, a comparatively poor company, has only ever been able to afford second division acts—its negotiating point with artists has not been the size of the advance but the degree of artistic control. The Sex Pistols, for example, got a deal in which the company does little more than sell their independently produced tapes.

In short, given its increasing need for profit and the lack of profit left in progressive rock, Virgin had no choice but to try for a share of every successful sound going, to respond to market trends as rapidly as possible. Hence its current zeal for punk, as indiscriminate as that of every other record company.

But the contradictions remain. Go into your local Virgin now and amidst the chart toppers and special offers you'll find that punks have replaced hippies and that the communal atmosphere remains. Whatever its sell-outs, Virgin's shops still meet a need and the Virgin

record label did, after all, offer the Pistols the deal they couldn't get from any other company.

It is easy enough to show that Virgin's musical policies have always been dependent on the exigencies of money making, but it remains difficult to decide whether they haven't been, nonetheless, better than nothing. The naive hippies (and now punk) notion, that somewhere exists the pure rock businessman who can make money and music without contradiction, is a diversion. As the Virgin story makes plain, contradictions are always present and will always face musicians, however much they may fantasise the perfect contract. Record companies own the means of mass music production. The political choice is between selling one's services to a company and remaining unrecorded. And, for me, the most interesting aspects of Punk are the Clash's continuing struggles with CBS and the contradictions within the Sex Pistols' management.

For the participants in such cultural conflicts the easy socialist dismissals of entrepreneurs like Richard Branson are unhelpful. Most Marxist critiques of the record business miss the point—either expecting musicians to remain the folk members of some vaguely defined "community" or treating them as high artists, doomed to minority appeal and so dependent on the state for their livelihood. Both approaches solve the political problem of musical production by removing it from the commercial process altogether. But this, as groups like the Clash argue, is to abandon an important arena of ideological struggle. The potential power of political rock lies in its potential popularity and, from this perspective, record companies are rather a better source of support than the state—compare the treatment of punks by record companies and local authorities.

In the end, the correct reasons to maverick petty entrepreneurs like Richard Branson (or, in another medium, Tony Elliot of *Time Out*) is not the sneer but the needle. As long as culture is a capitalist enterprise, struggle will take place within its institutions as well as in opposition to them. A group like the Tom Robinson Band doesn't need the left to tell it that EMI is a business, that its music will be subject to commercial pressure. Tom Robinson's problem is to resist those pressures, to use record business contradictions. He needs all the help he can get.

Simon Frith



Virgin Act XTC in action

If you ain't with us...



"YOU AIN'T Going Nowhere" sang the busker at Bond Street, just four hundred yards away from EMI's HQ where groovy people nodded to groovy tapes. This multinational's latest signing is gay, ex-claimant and a young rebel. His name is Tom Robinson and his songs—like *Sing You're Glad To Be Gay* and *You'd Better Decide Which Side You're On*—carry a political conviction which is rare among the legions of young and old hopefuls wearing the easy camouflage of the "new wave". Tom Robinson Band rush-released single has George Ince's mugshot on the B-side, *I Shall Be Released*, and the campaign phone number on the sleeve. *Ian Walker* talked to him.

How do you feel sitting here in this opulence?

Opulence doesn't come into it. All it means is I've come off the dole and from getting £19 on social security I now get £27 a week. I come here on the tube and each time I walk into the EMI office to do an interview out comes the Southern Comfort, the lager, the big number. But it doesn't make it any better when you get back on the tube and home to the one bedroom in North London.

How did you get the contract? Did you put the word about you were interested?

No I wasn't interested. I didn't give a shit. I was going to borrow some money, go ahead and press a record. Then Jet Records said they'd sign us up. We said you'd better make it worth our while. They said OK. And then EMI got wind that Jet were interested in a very big way. The A&R guys came down and watched us at the Hope and Anchor, the Rock Garden and finally at the Brecknock Arms in North London there were nineteen people there from EMI. The director, Bob Merecer, came up after the gig. I didn't know who the fuck he was. He came bouncing up and said, "I'm speechless. I don't know what to say." We signed a week later.

Have EMI exerted any kind of pressure or made subtle attempts at censorship?

We keep our autonomy. We have enough

equipment to gig on the road whether EMI hire us a truck or a lighting rig or not. They couldn't stop us. Similarly they can't stop us writing what we want to write.

Things are as they were six weeks ago before we signed, although horizons have been broadened a little. Like, I was talking to a black South African who works for Swaziland Radio and I played him songs like *You'd Better Decide Which Side You're On* and he said it would really go down in Soweto. I wouldn't have thought of that six weeks ago. All you can say is up to now, you haven't had to blow it.

We still roneo out a bulletin every few weeks, just saying where we're playing and what's happened to us lately. We always run a bit on George Ince—how the campaign's progressing and each time say, "Don't forget, if you haven't written to your MP yet, you can find out who it is by ringing the House of Commons. That's in the telephone book." (*Leveller* note: it is 01-219 3000).

[*Interview is interrupted by Press Officer. "Do you want to do an interview with Tony Stewart? Yeah? It's not for NME, it's for the Daily Mail." "For what?" says Tom. The Daily Mail... it's a good thing actually," said the Press Officer.*]

How did you get involved with the George Ince Campaign?

Little old liberal me, as was, used to think all this stuff about police brutality was a convenient fiction dreamed up by lefties. I thought the police force, although it might contain a few nasties, was by and large decent chaps doing a difficult job.

Last summer when they decided to turn their nasty little attentions to the gay community, it suddenly hit me for the first time. There were accountants from bloody Weybridge in Surrey turning up at The Colherne, one of the gay pubs in Earls Court, getting the shit beaten out of them by policemen. I didn't believe it was possible. Suddenly these most moderate, Conservative-voting, Jaguar-owning bachelors were getting beaten up because they happened to be a minority. Then you look around. You see what happened at the Carnival. You find people do get fitted up.

Now, if you're going to do a song like *I Shall Be Released* by Dylan, which is one of the great prison songs of all time, you can say this is for everybody who's ever been fitted up by the police. But that doesn't mean anything to the audience. They think "Oh great, yeah." But if you pick the most famous prisoner in Britain (apart from now, again, George Davis) who was fitted up and say this song is about George Ince, who the audience have heard of or might know a little bit about. You actually make the point that it could happen to you or you or you in the audience. And you actually positively help George as well.

Has your involvement helped the band's publicity?

Sure it's helped us to be in the Campaign's press releases and it helps George to be in the Tom Robinson Band press releases. So we get free publicity from each other. With his photo on our single and the Free George Ince Campaign phone number on the sleeve, he'll get a lot of publicity if it makes the charts.

But I've got to be honest. I do *I Shall Be*

Released for George, a) because it helps me b) because it helps George. That said, since the song I've got involved met George, been inside to visit him, been to the wedding. Now I'm really well involved. The single comes out on Friday.

How do you feel about the organised left cashing in on punk?

I work for Rock Against Racism. They do a concert. I play for them. RAR is a means whereby people can take a united stand against racism without necessarily having to commit themselves to the left. Anybody with their average fifteen ounces can see taht 90% of what we call rock music has been ripped off from black oppressed people from Kingston, Jamaica, to the Deep South, to Chicago. So any rock fan with the tiniest piece of intelligence can see the poison that's being preached by the loonies.

On the other hand they don't want to necessarily involve themselves in, what's the word, "ideological struggle"? But by going along to RAR concerts, buying a fanzine, badge or a T-shirt, they can help to make a united stand which is of some practical value.

What's your relationship with the gay political groups?

Before this band, I was in a fairly straight band called Cafe Society. That was my job and on the side I was working for Gay Switchboard, doing benefits for CHE, going to Gay Liberation Front discos. The trouble was I was becoming a minstrel to the gay scene—someone who's gay who happened to be able to play music, rather than a musician who happened to be gay. That was the tag and I was beginning to dislike it.

So you don't play many gay gigs now?

I didn't play that many then. But why preach to the fucking converted, if you're going to preach at all. Something like *Sing If You're Glad To Be Gay* was originally written as an attack on gay men written by a gay man. But it turned out that ordinary working class straight kids could identify with it. But our job isn't to preach—it's to play good rock music—to deliver the goods. We have to be a fucking good rock band first and foremost.

Are any of the rest of the band gay?

I don't know, they might be. I didn't really bother to find out, it wasn't a precondition of their joining the band. I just said here's the songs I've written, we've got some gigs, what do you think? I said I'm gay by the way. They said that's cool. But from what I've observed of their behaviour they seem to have a definite preference for women.

How do you feel about being the "star" of the band, the front man, the guy who does the interviews?

Well, I am the front man and every band needs its front man. As for the star thing, I used to refuse to sign autograph books. I thought if it ever gets that my autograph means something, then that'll be pointless, when I'm down the same dole queue as them on a Tuesday. But after a few months it occurred to me that that was already a supercilious, pig headed, superstar attitude. If somebody wants your autograph, for fuck's sake, then you do it if that makes them happy.

Simon Frith, in his Leveller article, says you're waging an important ideological struggle within EMI. Do you see what you're doing in those terms, or does that language mean nothing to you?

Yes, you're trying to mono me. Rebellion is the

keynote, as it is for any successful rock 'n' roll. *In that sense you're in the mainstream of rock 'n' roll?*

Yeah, because we're a rock band—that's what we are. Rebellion was the keynote of Elvis, the Sex Pistols and Bob Marley. And of those the greatest by far is Marley. He doesn't just say, "Hate, tear down, destroy". When he sings "everything's gonna be alright" he means everything's gonna be alright, with the implication that everything had bloody well better be alright or else. To be able to give that kind of uplift when you're angry—burnin' and a-lootin', 400 years and all that—gives the audience a feeling of positive energy, of going forward.

Reggae is a language rooted in a history of oppression. More difficult for white rock musicians to have that kind of relationship with their audience.

Yes, they like to feel oppressed, poor little dears. That's why they got off on Mayall and Clapton playing de blues in de sixties. They like to feel it's me down in those cotton fields, sweet home Chicago. Eric Clapton later turns around and says Enoch Powell's got the right idea. Fucking terrific.

I sing songs from where I am and I don't have to put up with any heavy duty oppression. As a homosexual I'm oppressed, but less so than say a black female homosexual. There's one song that goes "We ain't gonna take it/Treasure is poison/Polluting this land/I'm a middle class kiddie/ But I know where I stand." The same bigots that are going to do in the black kids are going to stomp on the "queers".

How did you get involved in writing political rock songs?

In any year other than 1977 I'd have been a nice wishy-washy warm-hearted liberal, but

there's no room for liberals any more. The middle ground's fallen away.

It wasn't 1977 because you were on the dole this year?

No, was it bullshit I was on the dole. It was what was going down with my sisters and brothers on the street. There's only two sides. You ask anyone in the street and they'll tell you two and they'll know which side you're on. I think both sides stink, but if the right comes to power around 1980 as I think it will life is going to be very nasty round here for anyone who's different—black people, unmarried mothers, squatters, gypsies, dope smokers and homosexuals.

You reject the left on the basis of personal politics?

Yeah. Do you think those miners from Yorkshire care about sexism? You couldn't find a more macho set of guys.

They came in handy at Grunwicks

Yeah, they went back and beat up their wives.

Why are there so few overtly political rock bands?

You're setting yourself up as a sitting duck. Once the novelty has worn off. Once everyone's done their first interview with us. Once we've maybe had a successful record then they'll say "Yeah, they just cashed in on it. Fucking load of bastards. They just used it as a bandwagon to get them up. How many benefits have they done in the last six months?" You back yourselves into a corner and most bands won't do it.

[*Closing interruption: Tom asks if there are any sandwiches around. The EMI man tells him to get one of the "girls" to run out and get him some. "I'm sure they've got better things to do", says Tom.*]



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Claimants

Life on the dole



WHY DOESN'T the state let people out of work starve to death? The welfare state is very humanitarian, of course, and its provisions are partly the product of long struggles by the labour movement. But the pool of unemployed workers is actually important to capital. They are there to compete for jobs with those who have them, to keep wage rates down.

But if we have social security, why doesn't it afford a decent living to its recipients? Because they might lose the incentive to work. This incentive is considered most important: to maintain it, the SS system does not simply keep claimants living at, or even below, subsistence level, but has constructed a whole range of devices for making unemployment unpleasant in every way; devices intended to force people off their books, and back into low-paid, often un-unionised work.

So claimants are subjected to constant humiliation and harrassment. In DHSS offices they are abused, often refused benefit; when they get it, benefit is often less than they should be entitled to, and is often delayed.

The unemployed are to be socially classified as the "undeserving poor". This distinction from the "deserving", such as old age pensioners, is preserved also by the constant ideological attack on "scroungers", which serves the DHSS well, and by

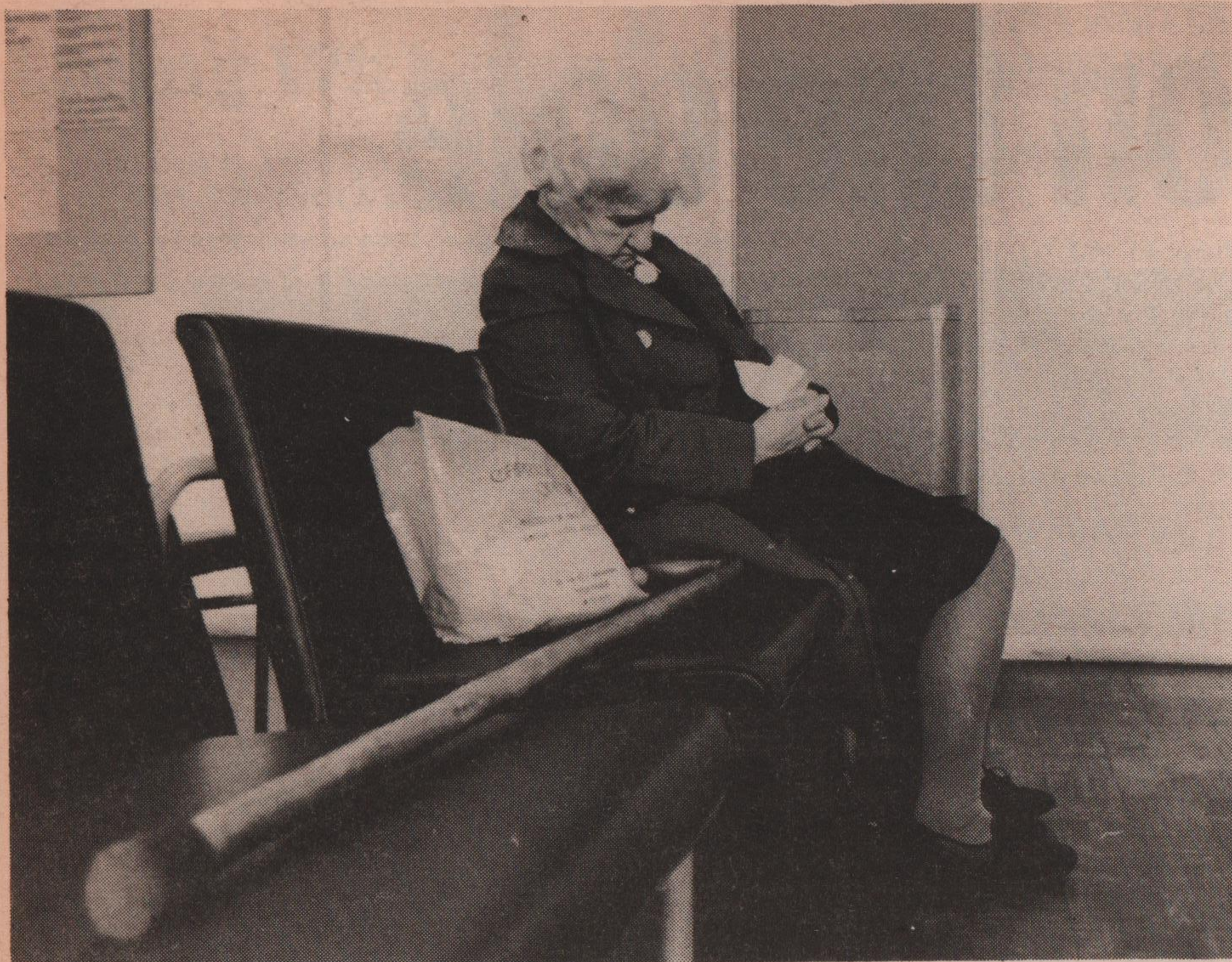
the huge range of discretion allowed to SS officers in awarding benefit. Discretion makes those who get additional benefit "deserving" and sets them apart; it allows them to feel they are fortunate individuals—not part of an oppressed class. Dividing the working class is what the welfare state is all about.

Another part of bourgeois ideology that the DHSS reinforces is discrimination against women. Sexism permeates the whole SS system, through and through. It is in fact *official*: the Labour Government's Sex Discrimination Act specifically exempted the DHSS. "Carry on discriminating" was an order.

The system is working well. Over the last two years the economy has succeeded in shedding 1.5 million workers. Britain now has, in the eyes of international capital, an acceptably large reservoir of unemployed, *for good*. That's what the IMF achieved, with the complicity of the official labour movement.

On these pages *The Leveller* launches an examination of the welfare state machine. We expose ways the DHSS outlines the ways women are discriminated against; we describe the phoney appeals machinery in the supplementary benefit system, and how "discretion" works; we talk to the unemployed; and we look at the Claimants Union itself—the people who are fighting back. In future issues we will be continuing this theme.

Claimants



WOMEN

'I sometimes slept with my boyfriend'

There are millions of women dependent on Social Security. The large majority of claimants are women, and there are millions more who don't appear in the statistics since they are merely considered the 'dependents' of male claimants. Millions more are struggling to make ends meet in low-paid jobs, getting even less than they would on SS. Some of these have tried to claim, but have given up because of hostile treatment down at the DHSS.

Society oppresses and discriminates against women in many ways using them as unpaid labour in the home, and cheap and expendable labour outside it, and the SS system both reflects and reinforces this oppression. It is not just a matter of discrimination based on vague prejudices, amenable to reform. The discrimination is official. The 1975 Sex Discrimination Act specifically exempts the DHSS. The government that makes a great song and dance about women's equality actually encourages and sanctions discrimination on the part of one of its own ministries. When the Act was drafted, the discrepancies between its theory, and DHSS practice, was noted, and the response, rather than change the practice, was to change the Act.

The Supplementary Benefits Commission, in its latest annual report, approves in principle the EEC moves towards the system of equal maintenance for men and women, regardless of marital status, but the likelihood of implementation in Britain is remote.

Women are conditioned to their dependent status and often feel that they have little choice but to resign themselves to it. Women whose dependent status suddenly changes, as with many who go to refuges for battered women—often feel the shock of punishment that the DHSS metes out to them.

"I definitely wouldn't have given it another go with my husband if it hadn't been for the money . . . I could have known it would have

been a disaster from the start, but every time John, my son, went home to visit his Dad he'd start complaining about what he couldn't have back at home with me . . . he would wonder why he didn't get the same pocket money as before and he wouldn't understand that I had to crawl for every penny to the SS."

The Social Security system does not accept that women may remain financially independent from men. The "cohabitation rule" is the most notorious and punitive example of its dealings in this respect.

The cohabitation rule is a provision of the 1966 Ministry of Social Security Act, "where a husband and wife are members of the same household their requirements and resources shall be aggregated and shall be treated as the husbands and similarly unless there are exceptional circumstances, as regards two persons cohabiting as man and wife."

The Commission have a list of criteria upon which they are supposed to base their decisions. But there is no official definition of 'cohabitation', and in fact many women are consequently led to believe that they can have their book taken away simply by having a man stay the night with them, which is not actually true. The criteria are contained in its secret 'A' and 'AX' codes. But in fact, as far as the actual working of the rule, it is evidence of sexual relations, or that a man spends three nights or more on the premises, that is given priority—certainly over and above any evidence of financial assistance by the man.

One claimant who recently contacted a local Claimants Union had her benefit suddenly cut just after her baby was born and the DHSS only admitted after many phone calls by the claimant and the CU that they had cut her benefit because they 'suspected' cohabitation. They would not pay anything until the claimant, who had given birth 6 days previously, came up to the office to speak to the 'liable relative officer' (who is responsible for looking into the possibility of cohabitation). He was not there at the agreed time, and it was only by refusing to move that any interim payment was made at

all, to cover a bank holiday weekend. The DHSS's sole evidence for cohabitation was that a male friend in the multi-occupied house had helped the claimant with her claiming — difficulties, by making some phone calls and going to the office with her, around the time she was having the baby.

The DHSS seem to make a habit of cutting off a claimant's benefit without informing the claimant of the real reason—presumably hoping that if claiming a benefit is hard and humiliating enough a woman will be forced into either financial dependency on a man or into a low paid job.

On April 7, Ms A's payment book was not returned and when she contacted the DHSS she was told that the book was being altered and was in the post. Three months later she still hadn't received her money. In fact the local authority Social Services department had been informed of the real reason: alleged cohabitation; but the duty social worker had been instructed that the reason should not be conveyed to Ms A, and that she should remain under the impression that the delay had been caused by adjustments having to be made to her book. When Ms A, who lives in Bristol, found out the real reason for her non-payment, she appealed. Until the tribunal met she received no payment, and her children had to go hungry. When it eventually met—three months later—the DHSS evidence was practically non-existent and Ms A won her case. But three months after that, she has still received no money.

"I shared a flat with my boyfriend, although we were financially independent, and I wasn't allowed to claim. After a 10 month fight I finally was considered as a single independent person, but was refused back pay. SS home visitors hid behind my garden wall for 10 consecutive days, questioned the postman, milkman and neighbours—and all the personal observations were written in my file. It was awful to suddenly find that I was considered an undeserving scrounger who should be automatically dependent without any rights because I sometimes slept with my boyfriend."

It becomes clear that the cohabitation rule works to push women into a dependent relationship with a man, in fact—into cohabiting, often unwillingly. "Your private life is not your own when you're on the SS . . . I was told that I had to tell them everyone that came to stay with me" (Ms O) The assumption underlying the rule is that an emotional or sexual relationship entails financial dependence. Not only is this not so in many cases, but women in the CU movement feel strongly that it should not be so. It is both degrading and insulting. It presupposes that a woman can never be independent in her relationship with a man.

The cohabitation rule is a method of punishing a woman who wishes to stay out of the nuclear family. It also prevents women claimants relating to men on a free and equal basis. It leads to severe emotional and economic distress and encourages abuse by SS officials who are able to impose their own "moral standards".

Another way the SS forces women into dependence is by the "head of the household rule". Although on the whole it is women who are expected to care for children, take responsibility for household bills, and so on, they are not allowed to claim SB for themselves or their children.

Even when a woman is accepted as head of the household, as in the case of an unsupported mother, she is still likely to be harassed. The DHSS want as many women as possible to take

out affiliation or maintenance orders against the fathers of their children. All the money received under an order is deducted from the woman's SB.

Some women are happy to take out orders, but others want to exercise their right to be independent of the father of their children. The DHSS try to intimidate such women into action. They can't force them, legally, to take their husbands or boyfriends to court, but they can threaten to stop the benefit of "unco-operative" women.

If the women refuse, the SS sometimes take out orders against the men themselves. To do this they have to investigate the relationship an unmarried mother may have had with the man, which involves detailed questions about their sex lives.

A woman may well feel bitter about a man who left her pregnant, or alone with children, but she gains nothing by playing the SS game in hounding him. She receives no extra money, and many men do not earn enough to maintain their children, especially if they are supporting two families. A man's obligation to maintain his wife, or woman, and children, when they can be supported independently, can result in long term poverty and bitterness. A man can be imprisoned for three months, or fined, but this helps no-one. All it does, from the state's point of view, is to reinforce the idea that women should be dependent.

Women in the Claimants Union movement demand:

- an end to the cohabitation rule
- no deduction of family allowances from supplementary benefit
- financial independence for women, in or out of the home, without a means test
- removal of the head of the household rule
- realistic maternity grants for all women
- abolition of inequality in pension and National Insurance entitlements, and all other forms of discrimination against women.
- a guaranteed adequate income for everyone, in their own right: *men and women alike.*

SWINDLE

How the DHSS fiddles claimants

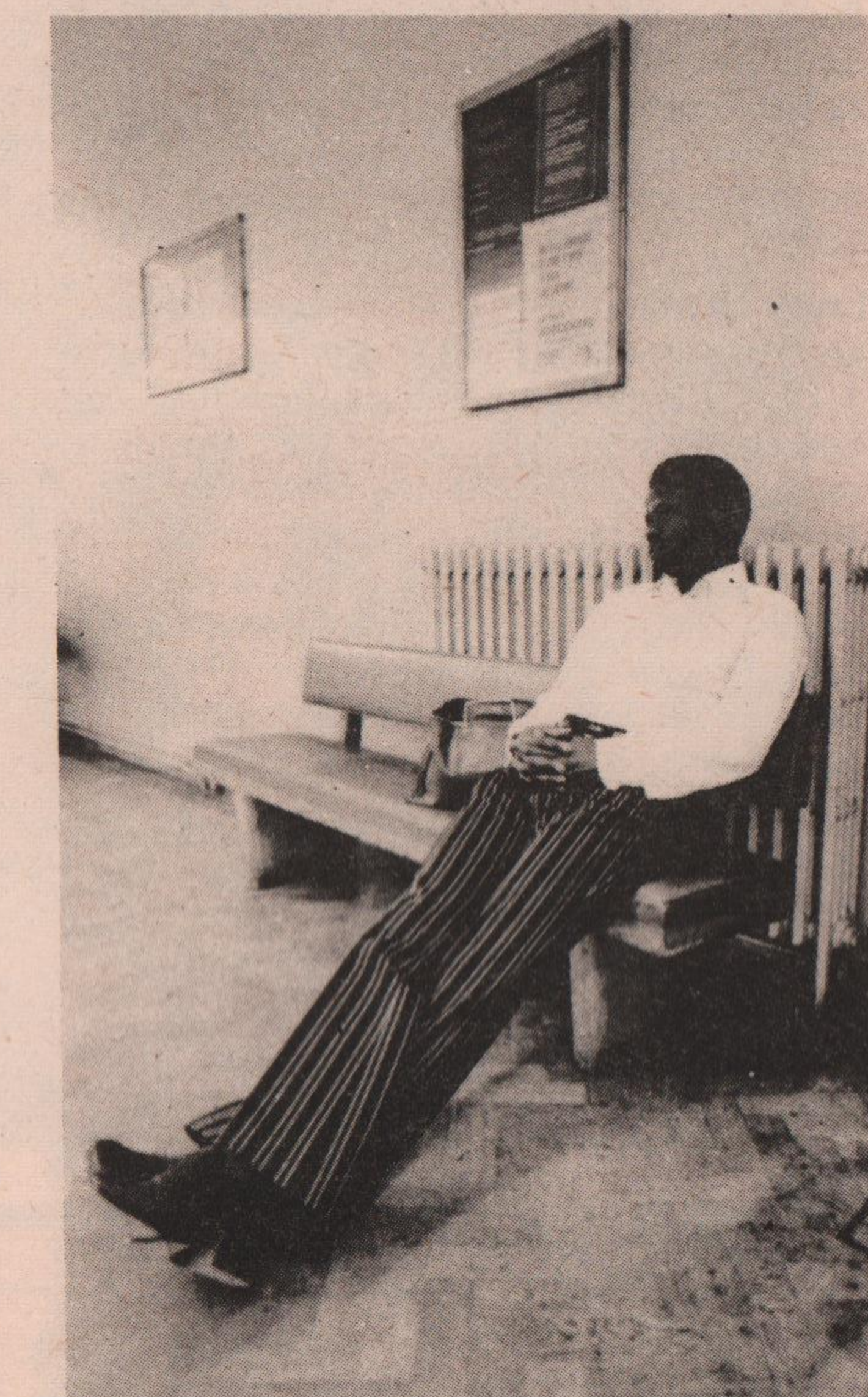
Social security claimants are scroungers and swindlers: so most people are led to believe. They would be surprised to learn that the biggest swindle in the system has been carried out by the DHSS itself: in two test cases this summer the Department has been proved to have been robbing claimants of sums estimated at more than £200 million.

Both cases related to the date on which benefit is paid. The DHSS was found to have been in breach of the 1966 Supplementary Benefits Act. For eleven years they had been ignoring the Act's instructions to pay benefit from the date of the original claim, and to pay out the annual increment on the date it comes into effect.

The ruling on the payment of original claims was made in the High Court on 20 July. It came from a person well known as a friend of the working class, the Lord Chief Justice Widgery. If Widgery could have found against the claimant, he would. But the Act is too clear. Widgery said: "There is nothing in the Act or the relevant regulations which cancel or obscure his right to payment from that date".

That date was 29 March last year, when Dave Southwell, of Bristol, who has two dependents, a wife and a child, signed on. He received his benefit (£21) on 3 April. As is the DHSS's custom, that was a week's money in advance. That was *illegal*. But every single claimant since 1966 has been paid in the same way.

The Department has got away with it because the information on the print-out that accompanies the first Giro is deliberately misleading. It tells the claimant of the "Payment now due"; it also prints the date of the claimant's last signing on as available for work. The implication is that the payment dates from then, but it does not: all benefits are paid in advance.



The DHSS reply is that the system works out fairly because claimants get an extra week (or some days) benefit when they stop claiming. Well, some may. But in the High Court this was found to be an unsatisfactory reason, anyway, because the Act imposes an obligation on the DHSS to pay supplementary benefit from the date when a person shows himself to have inadequate resources to meet his needs.

Swindle number two takes place every November, when higher benefits normally come into effect. Last year the date was 15 November. The Regulation (under the Act) instructed the DHSS to pay out the rises from that day. They didn't. They paid them from the date of the claimant's next Giro, which could have been up to five days later.

Dave Southwell appealed against the level of benefit he got on 20 November. And the Bristol SB Tribunal (which had ruled against him in the earlier case and driven him to appeal to the High Court) found in his favour. Again, the law was so clear that the DHSS couldn't appeal against it.

So what did they do? Did they pay out the difference to all the 2.9 million SB claimants affected? Or at least agree to change their procedure in future? You bet your benefit they didn't! They drafted statutory instrument no.1141, which slipped through Parliament, unnoticed, just before the end of the session in July. This regulation nullifies the Tribunal decision and legalises the practice of



paying the increases *after*, not *on* the date they come in.

For good measure, they threw in the other case as well. So it is now legal for them to pay benefit when they happen to get round to it. They also amended the existing regulations to make things more difficult for claimants in other ways, like allowing some decisions to be given only verbally, so the claimant won't have a document on which to base a possible appeal.

It's much too late to appeal against any of these payments now: claimants only have 21 days to appeal against anything. It's probably too late to get the new regulations changed as well. Jo Richardson MP has tabled a Prayer against instrument no.1141, but MPs are hardly likely to demand a debate and get it reversed. So when this year's increases are due, on 14 November, claimants will be robbed with the blessing of the law.

The DHSS explained to *The Leveller* that it would have been "very costly" to have altered their procedure to meet the two rulings. "It would have meant dealing with every claim individually." It can be very inconvenient, complying with one's obligations.

The Great Benefit Fraud of 15 November last year swindled claimants out of an estimated £4.25 million. The total swindled out of the DHSS in fraudulent claims in 1976 was £1.5 million.

DISCRETION

The power to be be really mean

OF 2.8 MILLION claimants on supplementary benefit at the end of 1975, nearly two-fifths were receiving discretionary additions to their regular weekly rate, and 17 per cent had received extra payments to meet special needs.

These figures, which have more than doubled in five years, are alarming even the Supplementary Benefits Commission. The Commission is worried at the increasing complexity of the profusion of different benefits, and has called for them to be streamlined. But the very need for these payments demonstrates the hopeless inadequacy of the basic rates, and the element of discretion makes it frighteningly easy for DHSS officials to refuse them. The payments involve rigorous means testing, and usually humiliating home visits.

There are hundreds of thousands of claimants who struggle to make do on their basic benefit without applying for extra payments. They scrimp and scrape on basic necessities (heating, clothing, decent food) and their dependents suffer.

Getting discretionary additions is not pleasant. If a claimant needs new clothes, officials will visit the home and examine what clothes they already have. If they're at all wearable—no payment.

Claimants

If new furniture is required, the DHSS will insist that it be second-hand, and that the claimant goes round and collects several estimates, and presents them to the office, to make sure the state isn't swindled out of a few bob.

Most Exceptional Circumstances Additions to benefit are to cover heating, and housing costs, principally rent, in which case local offices have the power to set a maximum. In the London Borough of Brent, for instance, the limit is £5.50 a week. It is a pretty safe bet that there is not a single dwelling in Brent with a weekly rent of under £5.50.

Exceptional Need Payments—more than a million were made last year—cover clothing and household expenses, in the main.

In awarding all of them, local officials have discretion. The mood of the counter-supervisor can determine whether a claimant's family live at or below subsistence level. There is only one guiding principle for officials to go on: need must be proved, by the claimant. The initial assumption is that there is no need. If need is recognised, the DHSS have complete discretion on the amount, and on when they pay it.

Of course, discretion extends further: staff can decide whether a claimant should even receive the basic scale rate. They can "forget" to inform claimants of benefits they might be entitled to. When an unemployed claimant signs on, gets her or his "B1", and goes round to the DHSS, officials there will assume that the industrial misconduct rule has been applied by the Department of Employment, and will dock the scale by 40 per cent. The Department may decide that it does not apply (yes, this sometimes does happen), but there is no



procedure for the DHSS to be informed. The DHSS will assume that unemployment benefit has been suspended. The claimant will, of course, receive full unemployment benefit before long. But in the meanwhile the level of supplementary benefit will have been cut.

There are many DHSS workers who are sympathetic to claimants, and will often bend the rules in their favour. But there are many more who aren't. And they have all the power, the discretion, to be really mean.

Social security fraud totals approximately £1.5 million a year, and there are around 10,000 prosecutions a year.

Income tax evasion totals approximately £10 million a year, according to the Inland Revenue. In 1973, the last year for which figures are available, there were 163 prosecutions.

TRIBUNAL

Appeals procedure pitfalls all the way

IF THE PRACTICE of law in this country were to pass sentence first, and conduct the trial later, even the judges Argyll and Widgery would be in the spearhead of a reform campaign.

And yet this is the kind of justice that claimants have to struggle against in the Supplementary Benefits Appeals Tribunal. Thousands don't even realise that they have the right to challenge the DHSS's decision on their claims by appealing to a tribunal, and if they do, they are inhibited from translating it into action.

Every claimant receives notification of the appeals procedure open to him/her. About 5.7 million claims were made for supplementary benefit last year, and 2.9 million people were in receipt of some benefit, but the number of appeals was only 101,000. As one researcher in the field of tribunal representation and welfare rights put it: "I can't believe the other 2.8 million are completely happy. There is a need for the great mass of claimants to be educated to a greater awareness of their rights".

Of those who were aware and decided to fight the DHSS by lodging an appeal, only half—55,000—finally took their case to the Supplementary Benefit Appeals Tribunal—and fewer than one-fifth were successful.

sympathetic are not often asked back. The third member is another local worthy. With the panel is the Presenting Officer (a DHSS official) and a clerk.

There are no rules of procedure, and no force of precedent. The Presenting Officer can freely cast aspersions on the appellant's character and throw in details of their history with the local office—all of which would be totally inadmissible in a court of law.

The panel's verdict is meant to be a unanimous one but in practice the chair usually carries a disproportionate amount of weight. An unofficial complicity may have developed between the chair and the Presenting Officer through long periods of panel service together. But officially, this does not, of course, in any way affect the way in which the appellant is received.

There is no redress beyond the tribunal, except on a point of law, and that means a costly appeal to the High Court. Otherwise, the panel's deliberations are absolute.

A study of the tribunal system¹ by Kathleen Bell, Professor of Social Studies at Newcastle-upon-Tyne University, in 1974, recommended that representation of appellants should be encouraged, although not by solicitors. Some local authorities, independent community groups, Claimants Unions, and Citizens Advice Bureaux are taking up this role²

It also recommended that a higher body of appeal beyond the Supplementary Benefit Appeal Tribunal panel should be established and that the chairperson should be legally qualified. In National Insurance Appeal Tribunals, which deal with the whole social spectrum—and not just the poor—the chairperson must be a solicitor. Moves towards this in supplementary benefit appeals have been barely perceptible.

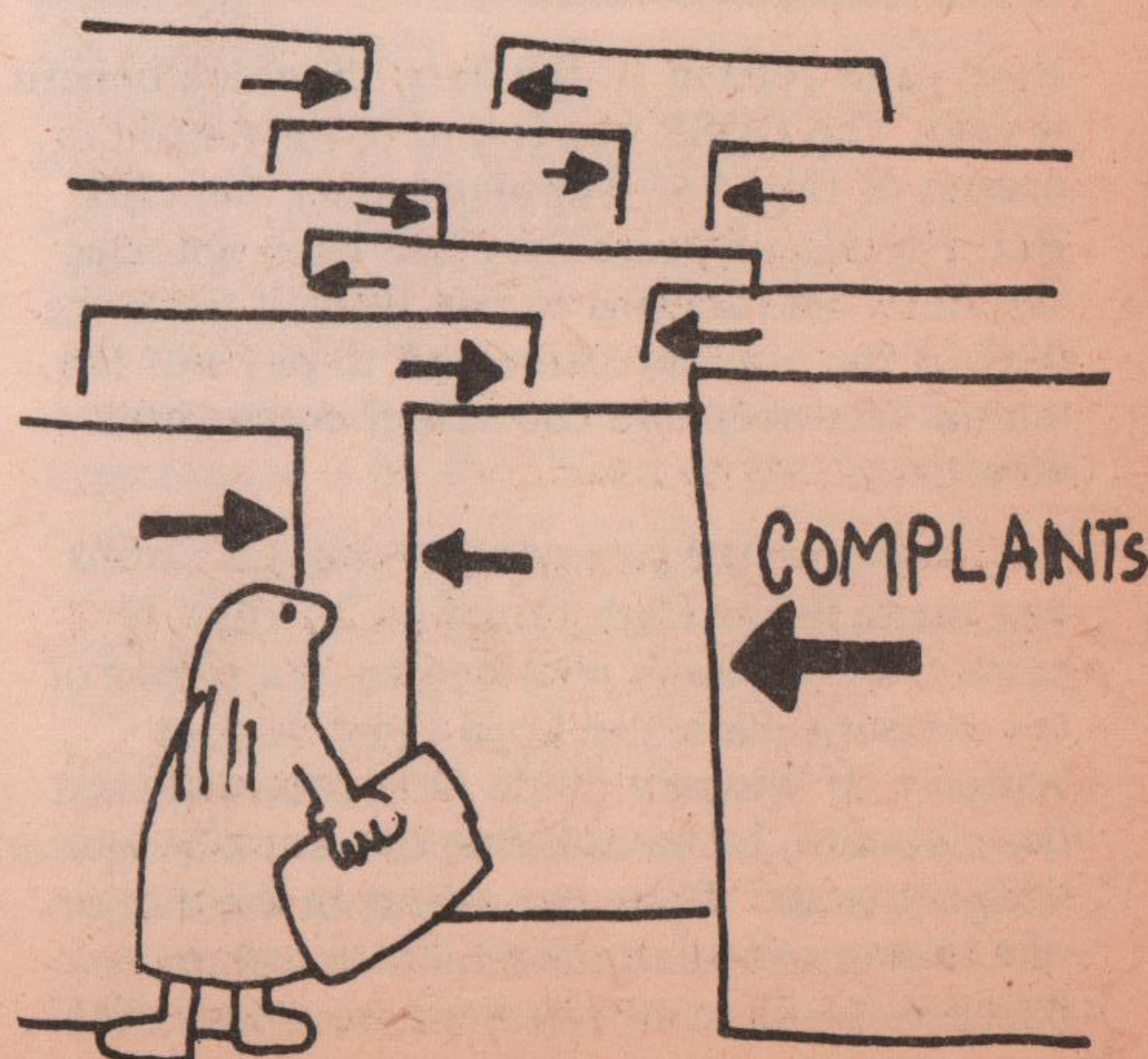
Pat Murray

1. October 1975 publication of *Research Study on Supplementary Benefit Appeals Tribunals: Review of Main Findings; Conclusions; Recommendations.*

2. *Welfare Advice and Advocacy—A Study of Current Provision in the NW Midlands* (Roger Lawrence, July 1977). Published by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

THE AVERAGE "take-up" of supplementary benefits in 1975 was 75 per cent; that is, a quarter of the people whom the DHSS budgeted for as being eligible to claim didn't. The government thereby "saved" £240 million.

The supplementary benefit scheme that year cost less than £150 million to run in total. It therefore ran at a considerable profit, with enough left over for a couple of aircraft carriers, at least.



What happened to rub out the opposition could be any of a number of things: the DHSS reviewing a decision, even in part, and voiding the appeal case; a visit to the appellant's home by DHSS enquirers; or the cost of travel to the tribunal centre, particularly restricting to the single parent family and the disabled. Travelling expenses are paid only after you reach the centre.

If the claimant survives that obstacle course they come face to face with the most immovable obstacle, the Tribunal itself. None of its three members is legally qualified. The Chairperson is a local worthy selected from a panel of regulars by the office of the Secretary of State. Of the other two, one is a nominee from the Trades Council, a 'worker representative', usually a local trade union official and also usually the most reactionary member of the panel. Those that prove too



exceptional circumstances; the abolition of the industrial misconduct rule; an end to discrimination against women, particularly the cohabitation rule; abolition of home visits, unemployment review officers and liable relative officers; drastic reform of the appeal system; automatic written explanations for all claimants; abolition of re-establishment and reception centres; and the establishment of a complaints procedure.

True to form, the TUC's final submission to the DHSS, while it raised other, more specific points, met only two of these—and not, in particular, the minimum income proposal. And, again true to form, the TUC Congress at Blackpool threw out a call for a £50 minimum income even for *people in work*.

The Claimants Union, formed in Birmingham in 1968, is a loose federation of autonomous local unions. Any claimant, but only claimants, may join, and all members have equal rights in the thrice-annual national meeting. The CU is a totally non-structured democracy. The trade union movement, if it cared to, could learn a lot from it.

There are hundreds of Claimants Unions throughout the country. The full list is too long to print, and in any case changes quite frequently. To contact your local CU, first approach the co-ordinating union for your area. These are listed below, with the times of their weekly meetings.

London North and East

East London CU, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, London E1.

London South

Camberwell CU, Union Place, 122 Vassall Rd, London SW9 01-735 6123. Tues 2.30pm

London West

West London CU, The 510 Centre, 510 Harrow Road, London W10. 01-969 7437. Tues 7.30pm

South West

Bristol CU, 46 Richmond Rd, Bristol 6. 0272-40491. Tues 8pm at Dockland Settlement, City Rd., Bristol 2.

Midlands

Birmingham CU, The Action Centre, 134 Villa Road, Birmingham B19 1NN. 021-554 2080. Weds 1.30pm

North West

Longsight CU, 642 Stockport Rd, Manchester 13. 061-255 5111. Weds and Fri 10.30 to 4.30 at Longsight Law Centre, 595 Stockport Rd, Manchester 13. 061-248 6640.

North East

South Tyneside CU, The People's Place, Derby Terrace, South Shields, Tyne and Wear. 08943-565062. Weds 12.30 to 1.30 and Sat 11.00 to 1.00

Scotland

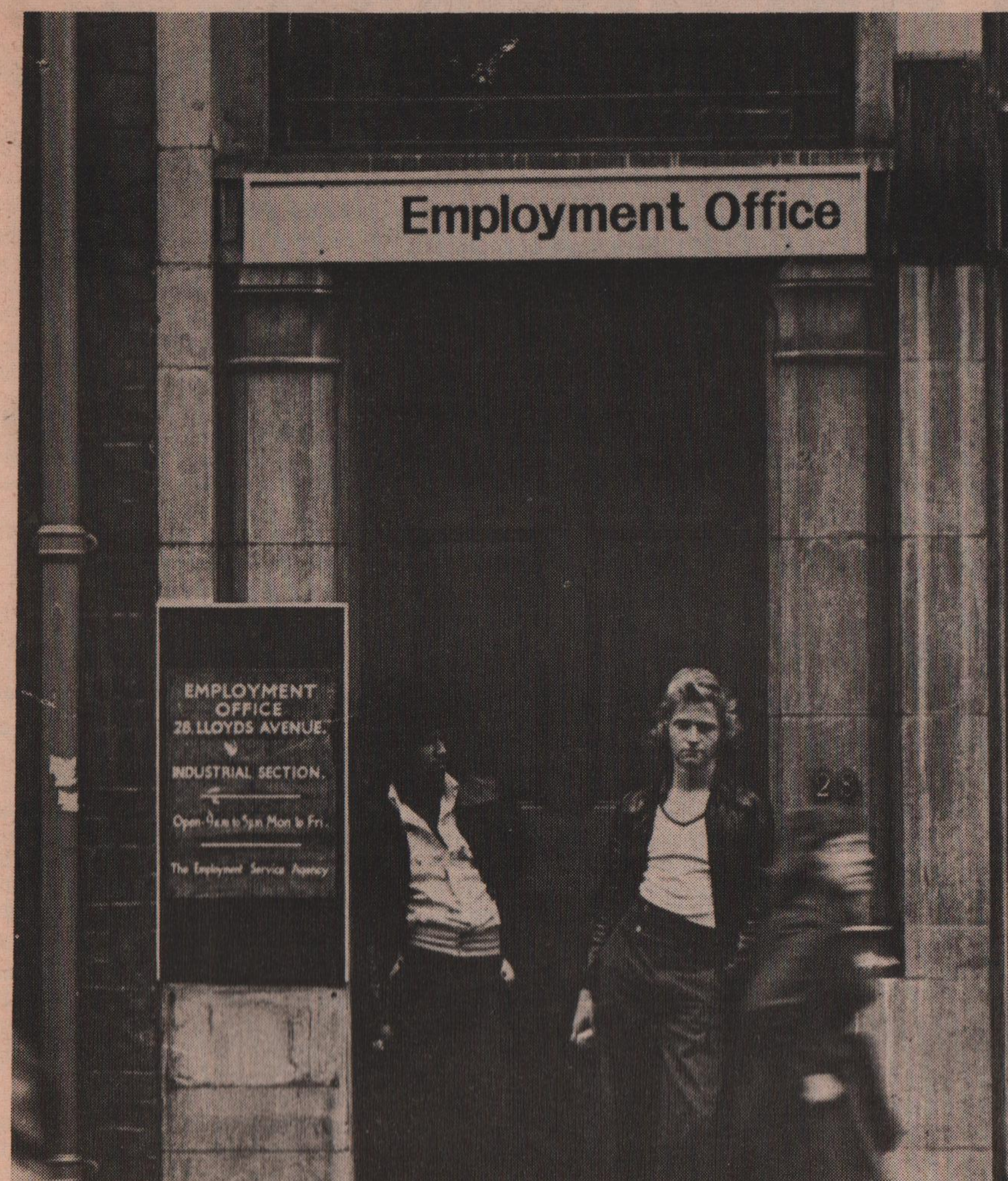
Glasgow CU, St Brides Centre, 19 Rosevale St, Partick, Glasgow 11. 041-339 7558 or 041-339 3293. Thurs 7.30

Wales

Swansea CU, 79 Brokesby Rd, Bon Y Mean, Swansea, West Glamorgan. Thurs 7.30pm at 10 Mount Pleasant St, City Centre, Swansea, West Glamorgan. 0792-462966.

Ireland

contact Birmingham CU.



UNION

How claimants can fight back

CLAIMANTS FACING intransigent or actively hostile DHSS officials are on their own, and in their isolation are usually inhibited from persisting in their claim. The Claimants Union was set up to help them, and representing claimants is probably the most important work. But a recent court decision is hampering their capacity.

The CU and the DHSS never make any secret of their mutual hatred. The union has made use of aggressive tactics inside the offices banging the counter, demanding the manager, and generally standing up for claimants' rights. Officials don't like this sort of thing, and matters came to a head in Batley, West Yorkshire, last year.

A CU representative accompanying a claimant was told to leave, or the interview would be terminated. The CU took the matter to court, and in a final judgment in the High Court in July, lost. The ruling was that the interview is a purely administrative procedure, and the court couldn't see how the claimant would benefit from being accompanied.

The DHSS responded happily. A circular was sent to all offices informing them of the ruling; most offices are now refusing to admit the more effective CU activists altogether, and although the ban is not total, it is invoked whenever things get awkward. In Oxford, the CU was shown the circular as evidence of its non-admission, and in Bristol DHSS officials have even tried to prevent a CU representative being present on home visits.

The CU can still, of course, represent claimants in tribunals, and in court. But the initial interview is the most important in determining what level of subsistence a claimant is going to achieve.

The other main handicap on the CU's work is the lack of support from the labour movement. When the number of unemployed is fast creeping up on the membership of the biggest trade union (the Transport and General, with 1.9 million), the voice of the claimant within the movement is scarcely even *molto pianissimo*.

Earlier this year the TUC invited member unions to submit answers to a questionnaire on the operation of the Supplementary Benefit scheme, to help them frame evidence to the enquiry now being conducted within the DHSS. It did not ask the CU, since it is not affiliated. But the CU submitted a report unilaterally; a comprehensive document, which began by questioning the terms of reference of the questions, which it described as "biased and partial, and framed in such a way as to suggest solutions which, while appearing attractive on the surface, are based on a misconception of the reality facing claimants. More seriously, we note that many important areas are not touched at all."

The report went on to state its total opposition to the SB scheme, with its "degrading poverty and waste of human potential", and concludes with ten demands. These were: a guaranteed minimum income; abolition of discretionary powers; automatic lump-sum grants for

Socialist theatre listings

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

AVON TOURING THEATRE COMPANY

Deadwood
BRISTOL: Oct 19-21. Central Hall.
BRISTOL: Oct 22. Dockland Settlement, City Road.
BRISTOL: Oct 24. Oak House, Park Street.
BRISTOL: Oct 25, Nov 7. Bristol University Union.
BRISTOL: Nov 10. Filton Technical College.
BRISTOL: Nov 11. Berntry Lodge Youth Centre.

Face Value

GLOUCESTER: Oct 29. Robin Hood Club.
BRISTOL: Nov 6, Nov 8. Bristol University Union.
BRISTOL: Nov 3-4. Brillling Arts Centre.
YATE: Nov 18. South World Community Association.
Further details from Avon Touring Theatre Company, McArthur Warehouse, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol. (0272-20247).

BELT AND BRACES

A Day in the Life of the World
MANCHESTER: Oct 25-29, Liberty Theatre, St Peters Sq.

Not So Green As It's Cabbage
LONDON: Nov 11. Goldsmiths' College.

CORK (Ireland): Nov 14-26. Everyman Theatre.

Do Not Go Gentle

SHEFFIELD: Nov 19. Hurlfield Company.
BURY (Lancs): Nov 21-22. Arts Centre.
EXETER: Nov 30-Dec 1. St Lukes College.
Further details from Belt & Braces, 22 Vicars Road, NW5 (01-485 2872)

BROADSIDE MOBILE WORKERS THEATRE

Divide and Rule

LONDON: Oct 20. For the National Association for Multiracial Education, Institute for Education, Malet Street, London WC1.

Anyone interested in booking them ring 01-450 6992 or write to Broadside, 58 Holbein Place, London SW1 8NJ.

COUNTERACT

Prisons

Counteract Theatre Company with the support of Radical Alternatives to Prison (RAP) and PROP, the national prisoners' movement will be producing and performing a play about prisons. The play will aim to spark discussion about the role of prisons in society. If you want to book the play for dates after Jan 1, 1978 contact Counteract, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT (01-251 4977).

FOCO NOVO

The Elephant Man
DERBY: Oct 13-15. Playhouse Studio. 8pm.
WELWYN GARDEN CITY: Oct 19. Leisure Centre. 8pm.
CAMBRIDGE: Oct 21. College of Art & Technology, Mumford Theatre. 8pm.
NORWICH: Oct 22. Arts Centre. 8pm.
LANCASTER: Oct 24-26. Lancaster University, Nuffield Theatre. 8pm.
STOKE-ON-TRENT: Oct 27. Crewe & Alsager College. 8pm.
MANCHESTER: Oct 28-29. Leigh College, Contact Studio. 8pm.
LONDON: Nov 3-26. Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage. 8pm.
Foco Novo: 2 Nugent Terrace, London NW8 (01-289 3226/286 6502).

MONSTROUS REGIMENT

Kiss and Kill
BOSTON: Oct 28-29. Blackfriars Arts Centre.

Flourish

GRANTHAM: Oct 31. Marco's Social Club.
BIRMINGHAM: Nov 5. AUEW (TASS) Womens Conference, Grand Hotel.
BRACKNELL: Nov 10-12. Southill Park Arts Centre.
Nov 18-19. North West Arts Association—details from Rosemary Heesam 061-833 9471.
Nov 23-27. Merseyside Arts Association—details from Penny Philips 051-709 0671.

MUTABLE THEATRE

Mother Country
LONDON: Oct 24-28. The Rock Garden. 1.15pm (01-240 3961).
LONDON: Nov 24. Iseldon Teachers Centre. 2pm.
LONDON: Nov 28. Vauxhall Manor Upper School. 1pm.
LONDON: Dec 1. Hainault Settlement. 8pm.
Touring schools, youth clubs, and community centres in and around London. Contact: 01-701 6710.

NORTH WEST SPANNER

Jubilations (Cabaret Show)
MANCHESTER: Nov 5. University of Manchester. 1pm.

New show, as yet untitled.
MANCHESTER: Nov 13. Moss Side Sport & Social Club, Westward Street, Moss Side, Manchester. Lunchtime.
MANCHESTER: Nov 13. '68 Club. 8.30pm.
MANCHESTER: Nov 30. Francis Shaw Social Club, Corbett Street, Manchester 11.
YORKSHIRE: Nov 19-28. Touring for further details.
Ring Maureen Ramsay (061-881 7845) or Mossley 4627.

RECREATION GROUND

Black and Blue
LONDON: Oct 25. Bar Lounge, City University, EC1. 1.30pm.
LONDON: Oct 28-29. Stage 1, Community Centre, Denary Road, E
LONDON: Nov 12. University of

London Union, Knight Street. (Camden Against Racism—One day TU Conference). 7.30pm.

Dates as yet unconfirmed:

LONDON: Week beginning Oct 31.
LONDON: Week beginning Nov 14.
YORKSHIRE: Week beginning Nov 21.
Ring for details (01-722 7334).

7:84 THEATRE COMPANY (England)

The Life and Times of Joe England

WICKFORD: Nov 1. Community Centre, Wickford, Essex.
BILLERICAY: Nov 2. Archer Hall, Billericay, Essex.
BASILDON: Nov 3. Barnett Centre, Ghyllgrove.
BASILDON: Nov 4/5. Roundacre Youth Centre.

SIDEWALK THEATRE

Soñ of a Gun

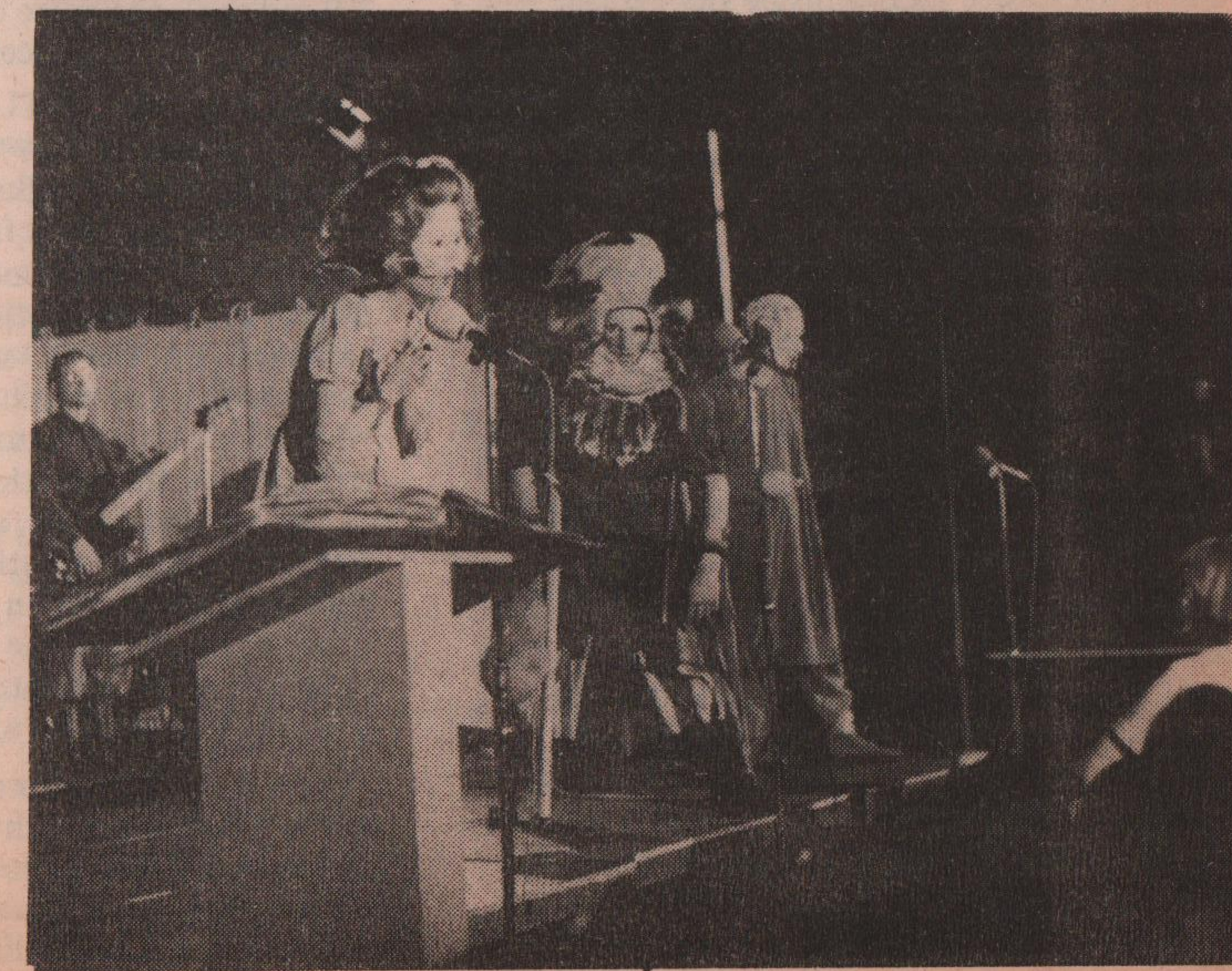
This play pieces together the story of Brenda Stanton from a nine-year-old 'maladjusted' school girl in 1957, to her squatting in an empty London house with two other women in 1970. To do this the three women/three man company takes on just over forty characters in the space of a couple of hours.

The play follows through these thirteen years and shows the impossibility of people relating equally in a society founded on the principles of inequality. Brenda is working class, lesbian, female and young which puts her on the rough end of four major inequalities in our society. Initially she experiences these inequalities as confusing, painful conflicts with the people around her: her parents, her teacher, her husband, her lovers. Ultimately she sees them for what they are, the imposed conditions of the society she lives in.

Ring Sidewalk on 01-226 5059 or 01-249 3066 to check dates.

GLASGOW: Nov 1. Eastleigh

7.84 Theatre Company (England) in a scene from Trembling Giant



Womens Group, Eastleigh Technical College, Eastleigh

GLASGOW: Oct 26-28. Strathclyde University Theatre, 126 Ingram Street. 8pm
EASTLEIGH: Nov 1: Eastleigh Womens Group, Eastleigh Technical College, Eastleigh, Hants. 8pm.
SOUTHAMPTON: Nov 2. Southampton Womens Group, Southampton College of Art. 8pm.
BRIGHTON: Nov 3. Brighton Womens Group, Shoreham Youth Arts Workshop, The Barn, St Julians Lane, Shoreham-by-Sea. 8pm.
WINCHESTER: Nov 4. Winchester Womens Group, Tower Arts Centre, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hants. 8pm.

WOMENS THEATRE GROUP

The Women's Theatre Group works as a collective, taking shows about political issues seen from a woman's point of view to schools, trade union meetings, youth clubs and community centres.

Our work has included **My Mother Said, I Never Should**, which dealt with sexual problems of teenagers, and society's double standards on the sex lives of boys and girls; **Work to Role**, dealing with the problems and contradictions facing girls when they leave school, and the experience of work; **Out on the Costa del Trico**, currently touring, which is intended to celebrate and broadcast the most important equal pay strike since the Equal Pay Act became law; and **Pretty Ugly**, a new show with music, available from Nov 18. It is intended for 12 to 15-year-olds and looks at the contradictory images thrust upon teenagers by the friends, parents and the media.

Bookings are invited; contact address, 27 Stepney Grove, London E1. (01-790 7649 or 01-226 4243)

Serving the state

PERHAPS IT WAS significant that there were no representatives of the British press at a recent conference, organised by the Arts & Leisure Committee of the Communist Party, on 'Marxism and Theatre'. It seems that British political theatre is taken much more seriously outside Britain: a collection of essays on 'The Anti-Imperialist Theatre in Britain in the 60s and 70s' has already been published in East Germany and another is forthcoming, British political theatre is discussed at international colloquiums, and the conference itself was covered by Swedish radio, but not the BBC.

The setting was the Oval House, a run-down community centre and theatre in the wastes of South London. In the cavernous gloom of its tatty interior (in the process of redecoration), over one hundred theatre workers and students debated with typical left-wing enthusiasm and vitality, while between the main debates there were impassioned pleas, a continuous flow of announcements, contacts made, performances arranged, and, of course, a vast amount of shop-talk.

One important strand of the debate was the myth that the left is traditionally philistine. This has arisen in part because socialists emphasise the distribution of material wealth; so right-wing apologists claim that we ignore "the quality of life".

John Arden, in a key speech on the first day put the myth "left-wing philistinism" in its historical context. Reminiscing, he said, "One thing impeded me at an early age from accepting the left-wing stance and this was an uneasy awareness of what I might term the traditional philistine approach of the British left towards culture in general and theatre in particular. I could not but remember that the last great revolutionary struggle in Britain, the 17th century civil war period, resulted in what was then the left wing winning, the king's head being chopped off, and every theatre in the country being closed. And this unfortunate dilemma has in fact, I think, pursued artists ever since."

Red Ladder under attack

OVER THE PAST few months there have been a number of fascist attacks in Leeds. These have included attacks on the office of *The Leeds Other Paper*, on socialist paper sellers and on a Young Communist League meeting. In this last attack, in which one woman had her leg broken, one thug was identified and is thought to have connections with the Ulster Defence Association in Belfast.

More recently there have been threats to and attacks on the premises of *Red Ladder*, a socialist theatre company based in Leeds. On several occasions windows have been smashed and British National Party stickers plastered onto the walls. One of the attacks occurred on the same night as the attacks on the YCL and on Asian shops.

Several weeks ago, *Red Ladder* found this notice scrawled on their door: "Listen Red Scum. You've got three weeks to get out of here or we burn you out. We don't make empty threats. Think what happened to the SWP headquarters in London." British National Party leaflets were shoved through the letterbox.

But this is something of an over-simplification. Arden continued, "It is usual to describe the puritan wing of the English Revolution as fundamentally opposed to the theatre on all sorts of grounds: moral grounds, religious grounds, aesthetic grounds, and that these fellows were just waiting in their black hats and their white collars to get into power to clamp down and throw the actors out of work. This is not in fact so."

Until the tight censorship imposed by the government of Elizabeth the First, the "left-wing" or puritans had written and produced plays just as much as the right. For instance, John Knox produced plays in Scotland. The hostility of the left to the theatre came later, during the reign of Elizabeth, and it was on the same basis as that of the government—because of the controversy and political agitation that theatre whipped up. This was not a principled objection to theatre as such.

"The City of London authorities, mainly Puritan businessmen, were worried about theatres collecting crowds of young people . . . and they were worried about them on exactly the same level that town councils nowadays worry about punk rock being played in public halls. They caused trouble . . ."

So, while the Puritan authorities harassed the theatres, the playwrights lampooned the Puritans in their plays. This created a division which was deepened further by the fact that by the early seventeenth century all the acting companies had come under the patronage of members of the Royal Family, and the plays they performed became more and more tailored to the taste of their masters.

"When the Civil War came the actors were quite clearly Royalist servants and the theatres were regarded as a Royalist prerogative which had to go in company with all the various other things which the court had taken under its wing, such as the Established Church."

After the restoration of the monarchy, this royalist tradition in the theatre was continued.

Red Ladder is situated in Lower Wortley in Leeds, a white working class community fragmenting after the exit of many traditional industries. It is in many ways a white enclave and there are a number of people with ultra-right sympathies. *Red Ladder's* premises have been open for community use, and involvement has been growing.

Red Ladder believe that the recent action against its premises was the work of a man with connections with "White Power", an ultra-right organisation in the U.S. He has subsequently joined the British National Party and leads a gang who pick on Asian shops and other undefended targets in Leeds.

Since the threats *Red Ladder* have spent about a thousand pounds in fire-proofing and security. The fire insurance premium has tripled and cover on riot and malicious damage has been withdrawn. *Red Ladder* is building a strong theatre group and a base in Leeds; obviously the group's involvement with the community is disliked by the ultra-right. The intimidation is having its effect on *Red Ladder*, and a housewife's group was afraid to use the premises for a while in case they got beaten up. The threat to socialist theatre groups is only part of a wider offensive by the ultra-right.

Indeed, the Restoration comedy, with its beaux and fops, appealed to an even smaller section of society.

"The legitimate theatres in the 19th century were never really thought of as places where plays of any sort of political commitment could be expected to be seen. How far do the hangovers of this set of contradictions still pertain today? We are still divided as a nation into basically round-heads and cavaliers . . . It is no accident that if you get a letter from the National Theatre the first thing you notice is, on the top of the notepaper, it says 'Patron: Her Majesty the Queen'. The big three subsidised theatres in London, the Aldwych (Royal Shakespeare Company), the National and the Royal Court are directly analogous to the Kings Men, the Queen's Men and the Prince of Wales' Men. And they are paid for by the state to serve the purposes of the state."

Arden's succinct history of the theatre not only explains away at least some of the roots of the myth of the left as philistine. It also shows why theatre for three hundred years has had no political content.

Of course, as was pointed out by Clive Barker, there is another tradition of theatre, a tradition which is often overlooked because its plays and performances were not codified, published and raised to the status of 'Great Art', because the academic worlds still treats it as a branch of social history rather than English Literature, and because being a working-class tradition it was ignored, dismissed and banned in its own day. Just as these days, the government, the press, the academic world, try to ignore, dismiss or ban the socialist theatre of today.

Indeed, it is the right who are the philistines: more and more they see theatre either as a cultural flag-waving exercise, as a tourist attraction, or as a social mechanism for keeping youth off the streets, a device against crime and drug-taking.

Sandy Craig

Sit-in ends in victory

THE FIRST actors sit in at a British theatre has ended with actors union Equity being given control of Newcastle's £350,000 University Theatre. After nearly two months of fighting against owners Newcastle University and their own union, the 40 actors who started the sit in at the beginning of August have been told their jobs are safe.

The occupation started when debts of reached £46,000 in spite of hefty grants from Northern Arts and Tyne and Wear County Council and the repertory company were sacked.

Against advice from the national hierarchy of Equity, members of the Tyneside Theatre Group led by local officer Mr Archie McMillan, moved into the premises in round the clock shifts to stop any attempt at closure.

After five days the National Council of Equity gave its blessing and sent assistant general secretary Mr Ian McGarry up to the North-East to see what was happening.

Though the Theatre Trust went into liquidation, the occupiers managed to keep the theatre open with actors coming from all over the country to give support

Equity now say they are preparing a programme for the three months they have control which will enable the repertory players at the Theatre to keep on working.

Behind US imperialism

Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy by Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter (Monthly Review Press) £9.85

The ideology of a liberal democracy holds that individuals and groups have a right to lobby the executive or legislature in order that their views should be adopted as official policy. Competing interests, so the story goes, mean that the state or government takes into account all the vying view-points, and acts in "the national interest". But when a private (ie non-elected and non-accountable) group in America dominates the field of foreign policy to such an extent that it is referred to as "the real State Department", a good hard look needs to be taken at its socio-economic composition and its activities. *Imperial Brain Trust* does just that, exposing the role played by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in the formulation of US foreign policy.

The Council began as a dinner club in New York in 1918. It aimed to give the residents of that city who were interested in international affairs—and who were able to afford expensive meals—an opportunity to hear speeches from distinguished foreign visitors. Attracting leading bankers, lawyers and educators the influence of the group soon grew, as did the range of its activities. In 1922 it launched the magazine *Foreign Affairs*,

and a range of study and research groups. Laurence and Shoup describe the purpose of the group at this time as "an attempt . . . to organise a solid bipartisan base for educating American elite opinion as to the proper role the United States should play in the World."

The CFR, and especially its powerful leadership, has always been firmly rooted in, and financed by, the most wealthy and powerful sectors of American society, in particular the New York financial oligarchy. It is at the centre of a network of people, both in and out of government, involved in the making of foreign policy. Its close contacts with the State Department, the CIA and Congress give the Council a unique position at the heart of foreign policy formulation and co-ordination. Its connections with the media are crucial for winning public approval for foreign policy decisions.

The Council on Foreign Relations was extremely influential in the drawing up of US foreign policy towards Germany (1944-46), US intervention in Guatemala (1954), and US action during the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), and these three "successes" contributed to boosting the prestige and influence of the Council. "In each case, reaching consensus within the Council met with no major obstacles. In each case, the Council's orientation rather quickly set the

framework for the decisions within the government, and in each case, the foreign policy elite, in the Council and in the government, could point to success for their policy: the Federal Republic of Germany, a pillar of capitalist Western Europe; the elimination of the communist challenge in Guatemala; the Soviet Union backing down in public over the missiles." (pp 205-6). Another important strength of the Council has been the ability to admit the failure of a particular policy, and providing a forum for the creation of a new consensus on future policy. The part played by the Council in this process is clearly and concisely shown in the revision of US policy towards China (1969-70), and in the extremely revealing chapter on the CFR and American Policy in Southeast Asia (1940-75).

It is a pity that the section on US policy towards Southern Africa is more tentative than the rest of the book, as it could have provided more useful background information to the recent Anglo-American initiatives in that area. Despite a considerable amount of material on the powerful Trilateral Commission in the last part of the book, only one page is devoted to the Bilderberg Group. Given that these two organisations have been very influential in US foreign policy formulation, it would have been helpful to have had more information on the relations and distinctions between them and the CFR. Nevertheless, the book is a good read and a handy reference text about a hidden but key component of US imperialism.

shuffling, mentally-defeated populace who can neither remember nor act upon a national identity that famine, the sword and oppressive laws could not destroy.

Dr Fields attempted some three years back, in a Penguin book called *Society on the Run*, to put over in more accessible form her accusations of racial genocide, but she ran into problems. Of the 15,000 copies printed, only 400 were actually sold, with over 10,000 being withdrawn from sale, and according to Dr Fields, being "shredded". Sections of the original manuscript were omitted at the editing stage, pressure was put on her to disclose the basis of her information on the British Army, and the book, she thought, was scarcely promoted at all.

She was herself detained in Crumlin Road Gaol, and not surprisingly experiences official hostility and lack of co-operation for her research on her frequent visits to Ireland. Dr Fields is intending to visit Britain later this year to deliver talks and interviews. It would not be surprising if the British Government were to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act against her, as they have done before against critics of their Northern Ireland policies.

David Martin

struggle." Dr Fields sees the whole present structure of Northern Ireland geared towards this end: repressive laws, mass detention, heavily-armed security forces, social control through medicine, social welfare, media, and rigid nuclear family structure that enforces strict sexual roles and allows little social variation.

She presents her grim theories in a work called *Society Under Siege*, which is wretchedly expensive and tends to cloak the obvious in psychological jargon, but reaches the conclusion that the Irish are classic victims of psychological genocide—the destruction of a group "with the sanctions of the social control systems and the objective of 'outlawing' their capacity for perpetuating their own identity".

So Irish emigrants, because of "dependency, fear, powerlessness, and inferiority inculcated through the socialisation process" become "among the most easily assimilated immigrant groups everywhere". The British, says Dr Fields, almost in the role of a collective Dr Strangelove, are striving to leave behind a passive,

Psychological genocide

"Society Under Siege": A Psychology of Northern Ireland. By Rona M Field. Published by Temple University Press

THE UNITED NATIONS Covenant's definition of Genocide includes 'causing serious mental harm' and other means less dramatic than wholesale slaughter. A psychologist attached to the Temple University in Philadelphia, Dr Rona M Fields, has expounded her theory that what Britain is intentionally doing in Northern Ireland is consistent with the stark images conjured up by that phrase "racial genocide".

Dr Fields maintains that a massive campaign is being directed against the nationalist population of the North to ensure that they stay under permanently. This she calls genocide. With comparisons on Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, she states that the British are seeking to ensure that "no capacity for future ascendancy in succeeding generations remains."

"It [i.e. the genocide] must ensure that the unborn will be unable to re-engage the



Agitprop

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Events

FIGHTING CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

A major Latin American festival will take place in London in the last week of October (23-30), emphasising aspects of Latin American culture, particularly popular culture, the struggle against cultural imperialism, and its relation to other forms of domination. A central theme will be the continental nature of cultural domination. Various Latin American singers have been invited to the opening concert—such as Daniel Viglietti (Uruguay), Yanquetruz (Argentina) Manduka (Brazil) and Patricio Manns (Chile).

The Other Cinema will run a series of films on Latin America. Costa Gavras, one of the festival's sponsors, will be present for workshops on cinema. A series of plays at the Oval House Theatre will feature groups such as the Brazilian 'Yes Nos Temos Bananas' and Grupo 8. There will be poetry readings at the National Poetry Society by Chilean Tito Valenzuela among others. Art and photography exhibitions will be on show at the new Latin American Centre in Hoxton Square.

The backbone of the festival will be workshops on the state of culture in Latin America. Prominent writers, artists and cultural workers will take part. Parallel to the workshops, refugees and friends from a number of different countries will be putting on nightly 'cafe concerts'. On the Argentine night, for example, a 'tango bar' is being prepared, with a discussion on the roots of tango.

The organisers see the festival as an essentially political event. They hope to draw attention not only to censorship—most of the Latin Americans attending are banned or persecuted at home—but also to the deeper dimensions of the repression of popular culture, among other things by disease, illiteracy, and lack of education. Further information from LAF, 56 Brompton Sq., London SW3 or telephone 01-739 2910.

YCL LONDON DISTRICT 1 meeting, Sue Beardon speaking on The Family, November 15. 7.30 at 75, Farringdon Road. London EC1.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY PARTY. *The Leveller's* own night out! Live band, disco, Wethered's real ales. 8.00pm till midnight. At: The Ludgate Cellars, Apothecary Street, London EC 4. Saturday November 12. Admission 75p. Students, claimants, 50p.

ANARCHIST WORKERS Association meetings. 27 October: Russia 1917 - lessons for the workers' movement. 24 November: Racism - the need for black self-organisation. 7.30pm at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E 8.

DON'T EVER LET THEM PISS ON YOU!



NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN CARAVAN. October 22-23 - Manchester. October 25 - Wolverhampton. October 26-27 - Coventry. October 28 - Leamington Spa. October 29 - Birmingham. Contact local womens' groups or the Caravan Committee, NAC, 30, Camden Road, London NW1. (01 485 4303).

CRITIQUE CONFERENCE. On: "The 60th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the World Crisis." Friday to Sunday, October 21-23. Registration £2.50. Contact Critique, 9, Poland Street, London London W 1.

ANARCHIST STUDENT Network (ex Libertarian Student Network) conference in Exeter, November 5-6. Includes showing the film *La Cecilia*. Contact Exeter University Anarchists, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter.

"REVOLUTION NEEDS A revolutionary party . . . or does it?" Debate/discussion led by Christine Davidson (Big Flame) and Bob Dent (News from Nowhere). Sunday 6 November, Liberty Hall, the Odd Spot, Bold Street, Liverpool.

WOMEN IN MANUAL TRADES. National meeting. Women working in construction, or as mechanics, printers etc., or interested in doing so, contact: Women in Manual Trades c/o Tess McMahon, 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Leeds 6. (0532 629427 - evenings).



AUBREY, BERRY & CAMPBELL. Submittal hearings of Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell in the Official Secrets Act case. Tottenham Magistrates Court, Lordship Lane, London N 17. Starts 10am Tuesday November 8. May last for one or two weeks.

DEMONSTRATION assemblies 8.45am, Seven Sisters tube on the 8th. Contact ABC Defence Campaign, 01 278 2377. ABC Defence Committee meeting in the evening at Northumberland Arms, Kings Cross Road. WC 1.

Publications

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST REVIEW: Theoretical journal of the Anarchist Workers' Association. No. 2 contains articles on the role of revolutionary organisation; re-evaluation of Bakunin, and more. 20p plus postage. Also 'Hungary 1956' an *Anarchist Worker* supplement on the Hungarian Revolution. 5p plus postage from: 13, Coltman Street. Hull.

LIBERTARIAN SPAIN. Bulletin of the Libertarian Spain Committee supporting the CNT, the anarchist mass workers' organisation. 30p



plus postage from LSC. 136, Burley Road, Leeds 4.

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM: The new theoretical journal from Big Flame has a long article by Christopher Roper on the situation in Argentina and a consideration by Paul Thomson on the crisis on the British Left. An interesting and worthwhile 40p's worth from: Big Flame Publications. 217, Waver-tree Road. Liverpool 7. (Four issue subscription - £2.00).

COMMITTED COMIX. Interesting attempt at a political comic book, has a striking strip drawn by Cliff Harper and written by David Edgar on the Nazi Nature of the National Front, plus lots more. 30p plus 15 p postage from AR:ZAK, 11 Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7 ER.

GLASGOW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS. For details contact Source. 041 336 4341.

NAMIBIA. New organ of SWAPO, the South West Africa Peoples' Organisation. Single copy 30p plus postage; yearly sub (six issues) £2.40, UK and Ireland £2.60 abroad (surface mail). Details from SWAPO, 21-25 Tabernacle St., London EC 2 A 4 DE.

CARF. Paper of the Anti-Fascist, Anti-Racist co-ordinating committee. Excellent material on the coming of the Ku Klux Klan, the National Front's anti-semitism, and behind the National Association for Freedom. 10p plus postage from ARAFCC. Flat 3, 5 Huntley Street, London WC 1.

OUT! The report of the National Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland arrives a little late - the delegation went over there a year ago - but it contains much useful information on the role of the British Army in Ireland and the Irish response. The conclusion - not surprisingly - is that British withdrawal should be effected as soon as possible. Copies from: NLMCI, 1, North End Road, London W14. Price 30p plus 15p postage.

SOCIALIST EUROPE. Communist Party journal of Soviet and East European studies. Number Two includes articles on Soviet industrialisation, Czech-Soviet relations and the CPSU. 50p per copy, plus 10p postage or three issue sub. £1.50 from Central Books Ltd, 37, Grays Inn Road, London WC 1 X 8 PS.

Community

COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY. Hackney WEA evening classes. Solar/Wind Power Monday October 31. Lucas Aerospace Programme Monday November 14. Community Self-Help Groups Monday November 28. All at 8.00pm at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E 8. Details from Ken Worpole (01 254 9632)

GLASGOW BIKE TO WORK. Campaign. c/o Janie Tucker, 2, Queensborough Gardens, Glasgow. (041 339 5614)

SOCIALIST/ANARCHIST CYCLISTS. Free Wheel Cycle Club meets on the last Saturday of the month. For details of runs and gatherings, contact Roger Tullet 01 653 7359.

GLASGOW GARDEN CO-OPERATIVES. c/o Tim Mitchell. 212, Wilton Street. Glasgow.





the Leveller

Classifieds

Film

FESTIVAL OF SOVIET CINEMA. Organised by Leeds University CP (staff and student branches). All shows are 30p each (tickets from Leeds Student Union), and a season ticket (£1) is available from Leeds University Union Communist Society or Barry Cooper, School of Mathematics, Leeds University. Leeds 2.

Thursday 10 November: *Lenin in October* (1938. Dir. Mikhail Romm) and *Lenin Lives On*.
 Thursday 17 November: *My Universities* (1940. Dir. Mark Donskoi) and *Unusual Match* (cartoon).
 Thursday 24 November: *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957. Dir. Mikhail Kalatozov) and *A Lion's Holiday* (cartoon).
 Thursday 1 December: *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927. Dir. V.I. Pudovkin) and *International Dances*.
 Thursday 8 December *Hamlet* (1964. Dir. Kozinsev, music by Shostakovich).

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

FREE ADS. All subscribers - supporting and ordinary - can use this column **FREE** at least once every issue.

"CANARY Girls and Stockpots". One woman's account of working class life in London from 1914-39: "A triumph of description and a joy to read" - *Leveller*: "Fascinating booklet" - *New Statesman*: "The detail of life in the period is fascinating" - *Morning Star*. Available from most left-wing bookshops. Signed copies from the author: Edith Hall, Marlin Road, Luton, Beds. Price 65p plus 12p postage.

TRADE UNION SCHOOL. The Working Womens' Charter Campaign is holding a trade union school on November 26 at Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Reading. Starting at 10.30am. The school is open to all Charter supporters and their contacts so that we can begin to work out a strategy for work in the unions and the building of Charter fractions. For further information and travel details contact: Jill Daniels, 1A, Camberwell Grove, London SE 5 8 JA. Tel 701 4173.



UNFURNISHED FLAT wanted anywhere in London. Reasonable price paid for fixtures and fittings. Ring Ian on 01-387 0176.

VEGETARIAN WHOLEFOOD for conferences etc at non-ripoff prices. Please write to 155 Archway Road, London N6 or phone 01-348 1192 (Saturdays 12-6pm).

PINBALL MACHINE for sale. Slightly tatty but in full working order. Only £30. Write to Box Y, *The Leveller*, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1.

FLAT OR HOUSE share wanted convenient Waterloo. Lady Leveller reader. Ring 0962 2866 evenings.

GENUINE socialist model railway enthusiast seeks to buy or acquire track, rolling stock and engines. Write to Box Z, *The Leveller*, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1.

YORK community bookshop, now open; selling a whole range of left, radical and alternative books; feminist literature; books from America, Russia, China and Third World; non-sexist/non-racist children's books; and of course, Spare Rib, *The Leveller*, Undercurrents, Peace News, Community Action and many other magazines, papers, comics, etc. Open 10-6 Monday-Saturday. A co-operative and associate member of ICOM. 73 Walmgate, York. Tel: 0904 37355

FLAT WANTED. Needed urgently for two. Up to £30 per week. W or NW London preferred. Contact Peter Chapman. Latin American Newsletters, 01 251 0012, or 01 928 4195 (evenings).

WOMENS' FIGHT. The bi-monthly newspaper of the Working Womens' Charter Campaign raises those demands and organisational perspectives vital for the interests of women. £1.50 for eight issues. Contact Jill Daniels, 1A, Camberwell Grove, London SE 5 8 JA. Tel 01 701 4173.

IMAGES

In the house where I was borne, first home I knew/ There's corrugated iron blinding all the windows/ In the garden Dad made round the law, where green grass grew/ There's muck and rubble, half bricks and cinders./ For the developers have come to town/ And soon I'll see it, see it come down ... see it come down.

My old Mum, they've moved her to a high-rise flat/ Where she misses her mates and hopes we'll see her Sundays/ She lives alone, with a lovely view and a clean door mat/ Afraid that death will catch her napping some day./ The lady with the meals on wheels - the one friend she's found./ Though she cries for the old place/ She won't see it come down ... see it come down.

We was all one like where we lived, wish we were now/ We had debts and dole and kids but we did have neighbours./ Where the street was they want to build some tomb-stone tower/ Like a monster concrete money-box for strangers./ Every last foot of it worth a hundred pounds/ Some day we'll see that come tumbling down ... see it come down.

"See It Come Down" - from the Red Notes Song Book.



Music

JAZZ ROCK: Redbrass are on tour throughout the autumn. Dates are as follows:
 Leeds: 4 November. Polytechnic Students Union.
 Leicester: 5 November. Phoenix Theatre.
 Peterborough: 6 November. Key Theatre.
 Thurrock: 7 November. Civic Hall.
 Newark: 12 November. Palace Theatre.
 Oxford: 16 November. Polytechnic Students Union.

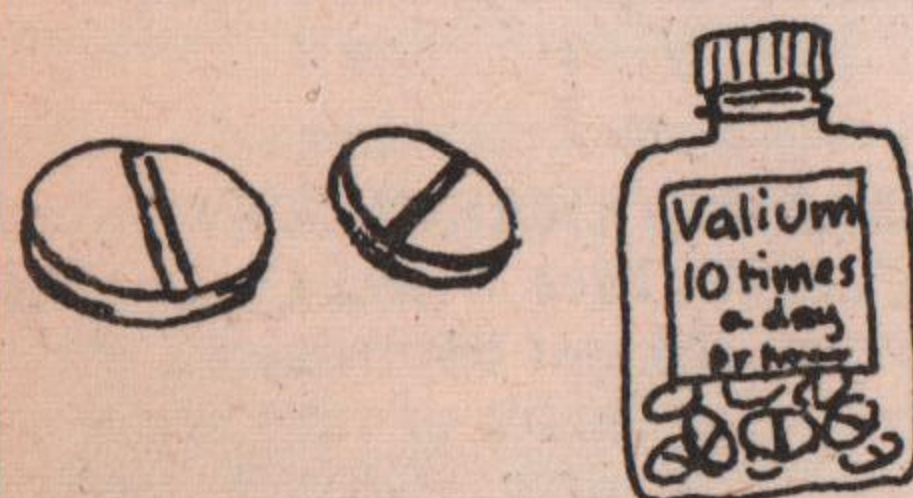
WORDS AND MUSIC: A seven-day series at the Almost Free Theatre. 9-19 Rupert Street, London W1. 24-30 October at 7.30pm. Improvisation and Structure: 24 October with Steve Beresford, David Troop and Paul Burwell, heuristic music and a feminist improvising group. Composition: 25 October. Michael Nyman and Brian Eno. Agitational Music: 26 October. Hackney and Islington Music Workshop, Counteract, Jack Warshaw, Sandra Kerr and Ron Elliot. Voice Styles: 27 October. Bob Davenport, Maggie Nichols, John Pole, Brian Pearson. Words in context: 28 October. Leon Rosselson and Roy Bailey. Virtuosity. 29 October. Evan Parker and Paul Rutherford. Theatre and Music. 30 October. Estelle Schmidt & Co and Clapper-claw.

CLYDESIDE MUSIC CO-OPERATIVE. Plans in the Autumn to rupture the performer/spectator barrier. Contact Dick on 041 632 1401.



COULD BRING **LIBERTY** BACK TO OUR ONCE PROUD NATION

LIVERPOOL. Liberty Hall Film Society present *Silent Running*, Sunday 30 October, at Liberty Hall, the Odd Spot, Bold Street.



Other

ART EXHIBITION. At Poplar Baths, East India Dock Road, E 14. Saturday-Sunday October 29-30. Works by Ken Sprague, Dan Jones and Glasgow Poster Workshop.

CAPTAIN SWING and Radical Alliance of Poets and Players performing at the Half Moon Theatre. 27, Alie Street, London E1. Sunday 23 October 8-10. £1.

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 Social security too low - official!
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 lesbian's summer camp

features - New Dance ★ The Nursery Film
 Abortion: at the turn of the century & now
 Talking to Saxophonist Kathy Stobart
 and Shere Hite (author of the Hite Report)
 plus Theatre & book reviews & regulars

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