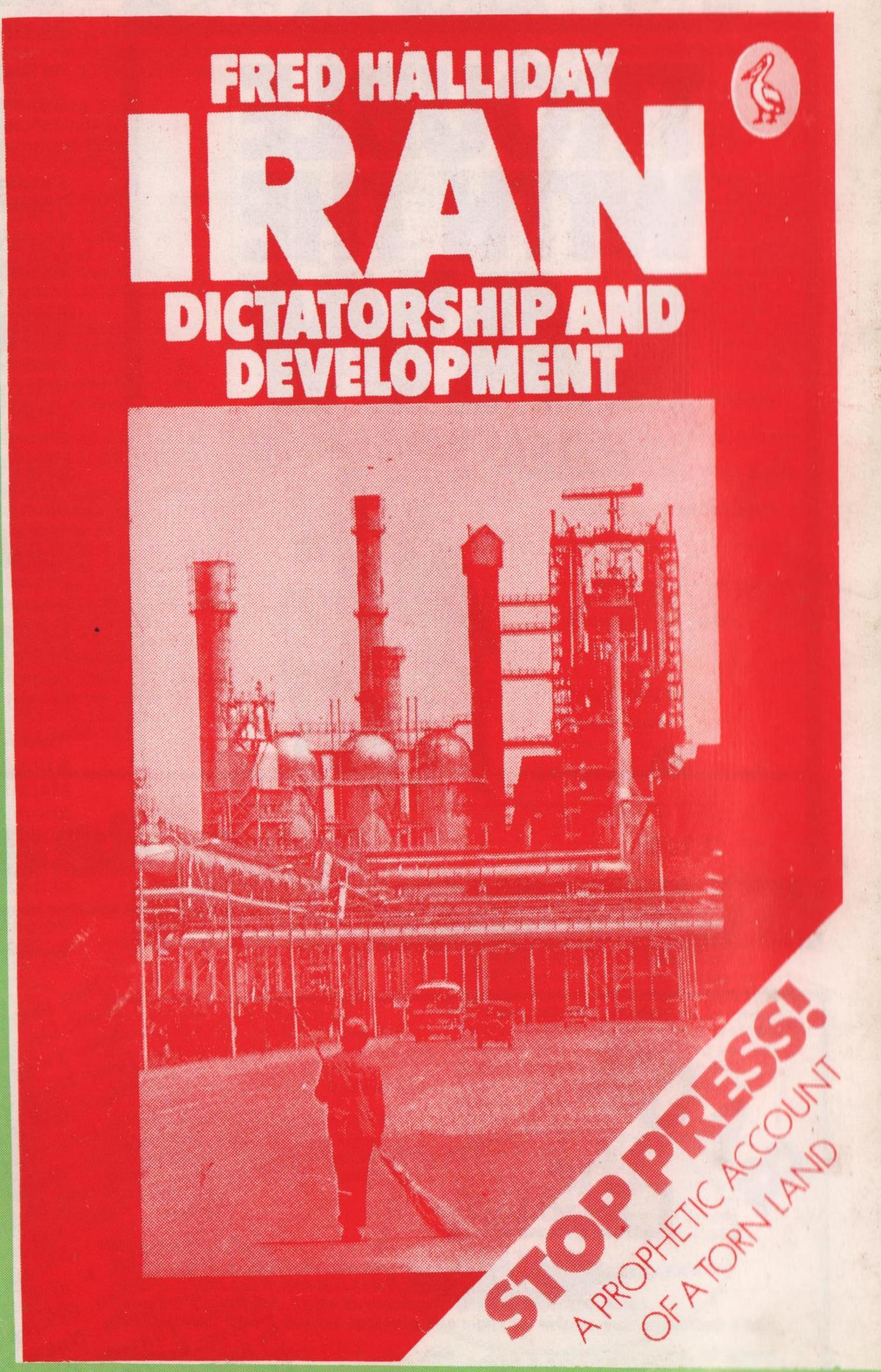
This month our book is Fred Halliday's Iran—Dictatorship and Development. Published by Penguin it would cost you £1.50 in the shops, but if you take out an annual subscription you'll get it free.

Halliday's book gives a general introduction to contemporary Iran . . . its historical origins as well as description of its economic and political structure, particularly since the early 1960's. It also looks at the opposition to the present regime, Iran's foreign policy, and what the future may hold for the Shah.

'By the year 2000 Iran will have no oil for export, unless major new reserves are discovered. It may also have no Shah; the economic problems that Iran will encounter are bound to subject the Pahlavi monarchy to serious pressures, so that the present Shah, or his successors will find it increasingly difficult to retain power. The fall of the monarchy is, of course, by no means inevitable, but it is a real possibility.'



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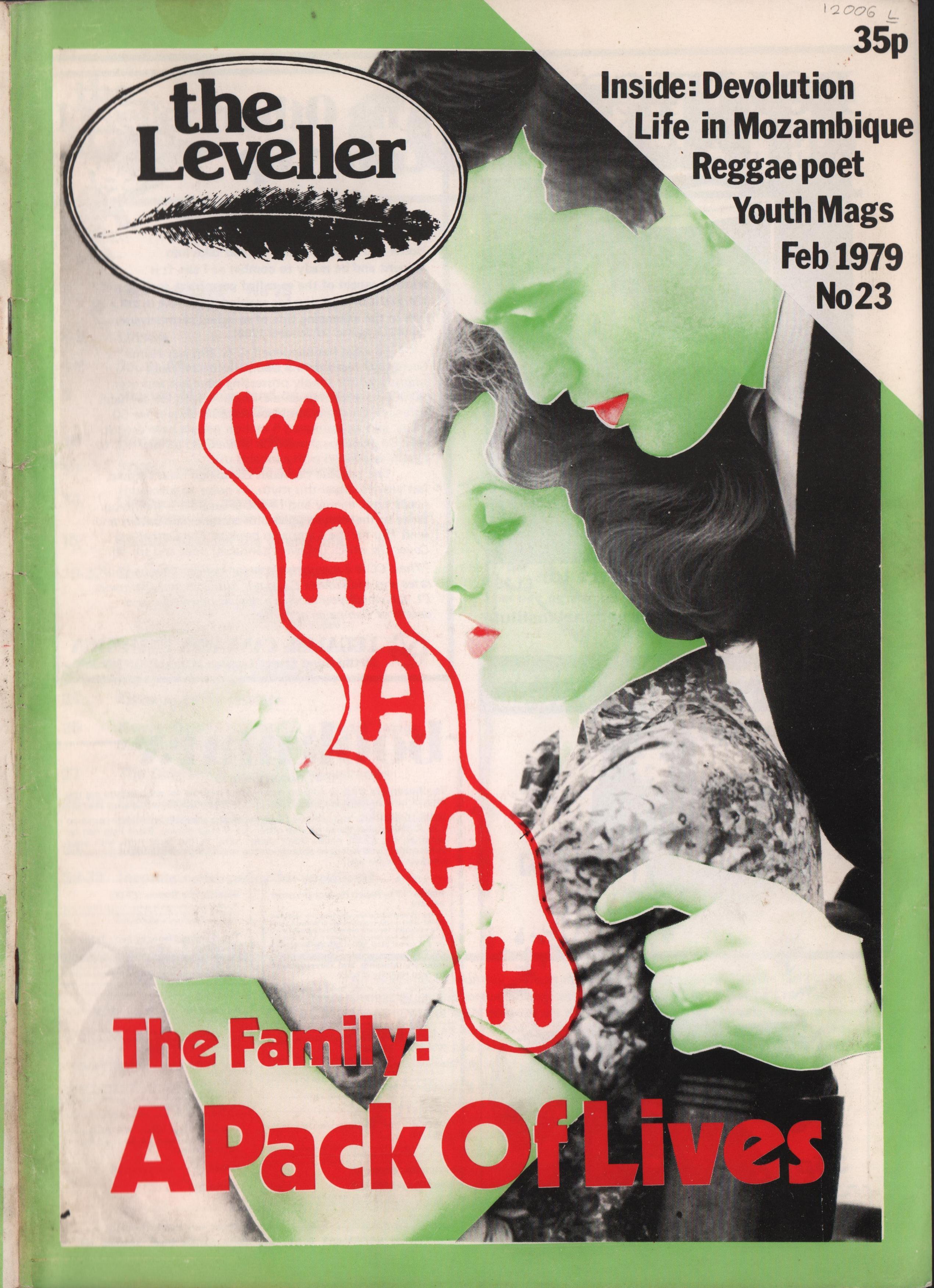
There are two kinds of subscription:

* Supporting Subscribers are the backbone of the magazine. As well as receiving a year's copies, they get regular newsletters; are informed of all developments; and are able to influence and vote on the policy of The Leveller at the Annual General Meeting of the Friendly Society which owns and controls it.

This democratic structure is one of the chief strengths of *The Leveller*. The extra subscription also gives us a secure financial basis and allows us to increase circulation and to make the magazine more effective.

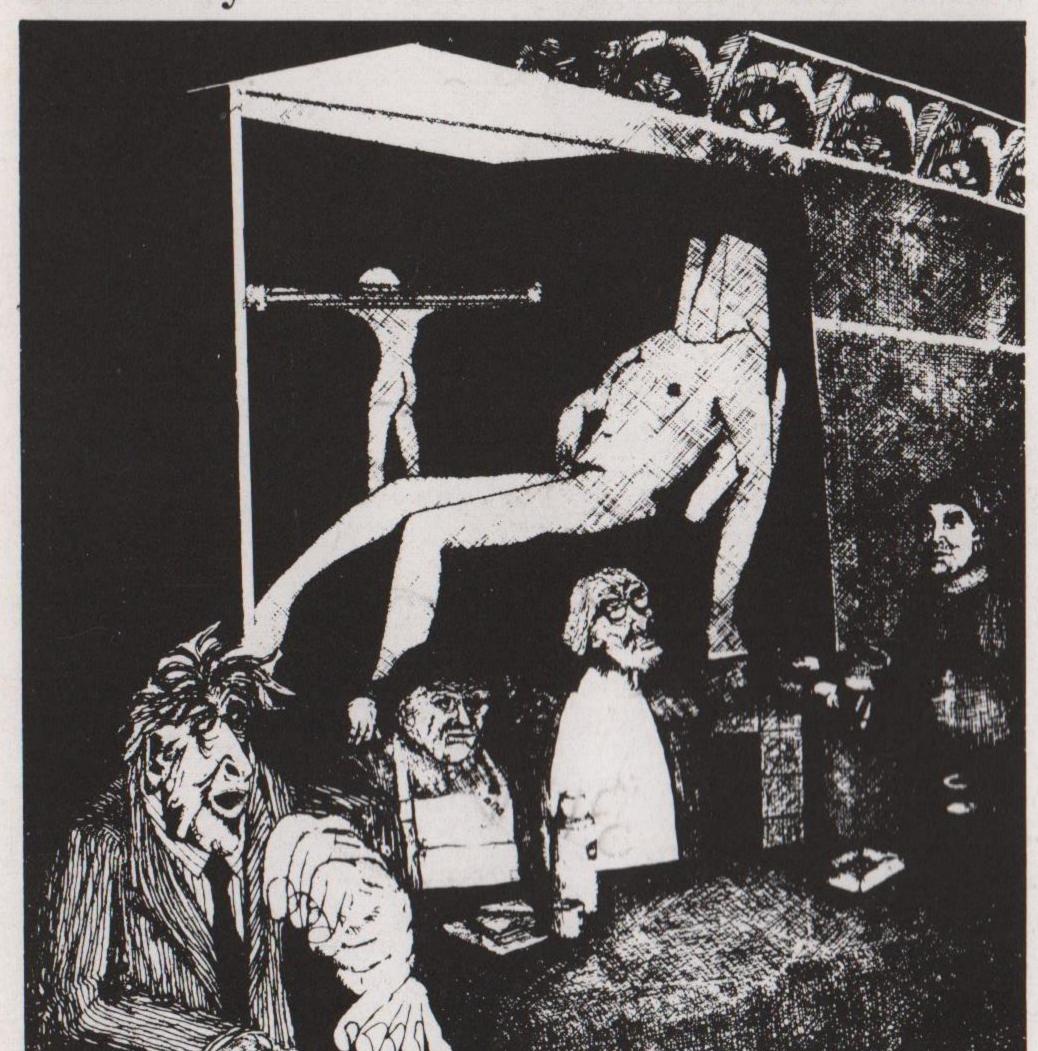
Supporting Subscribers pay according to wages: those earning less than £2,500 pay £10 those earning more than that pay £20.

* Ordinary Subscribers pay £5 and receive a year's subscription. They do not own the magazine but are encouraged to contribute ideas and articles.



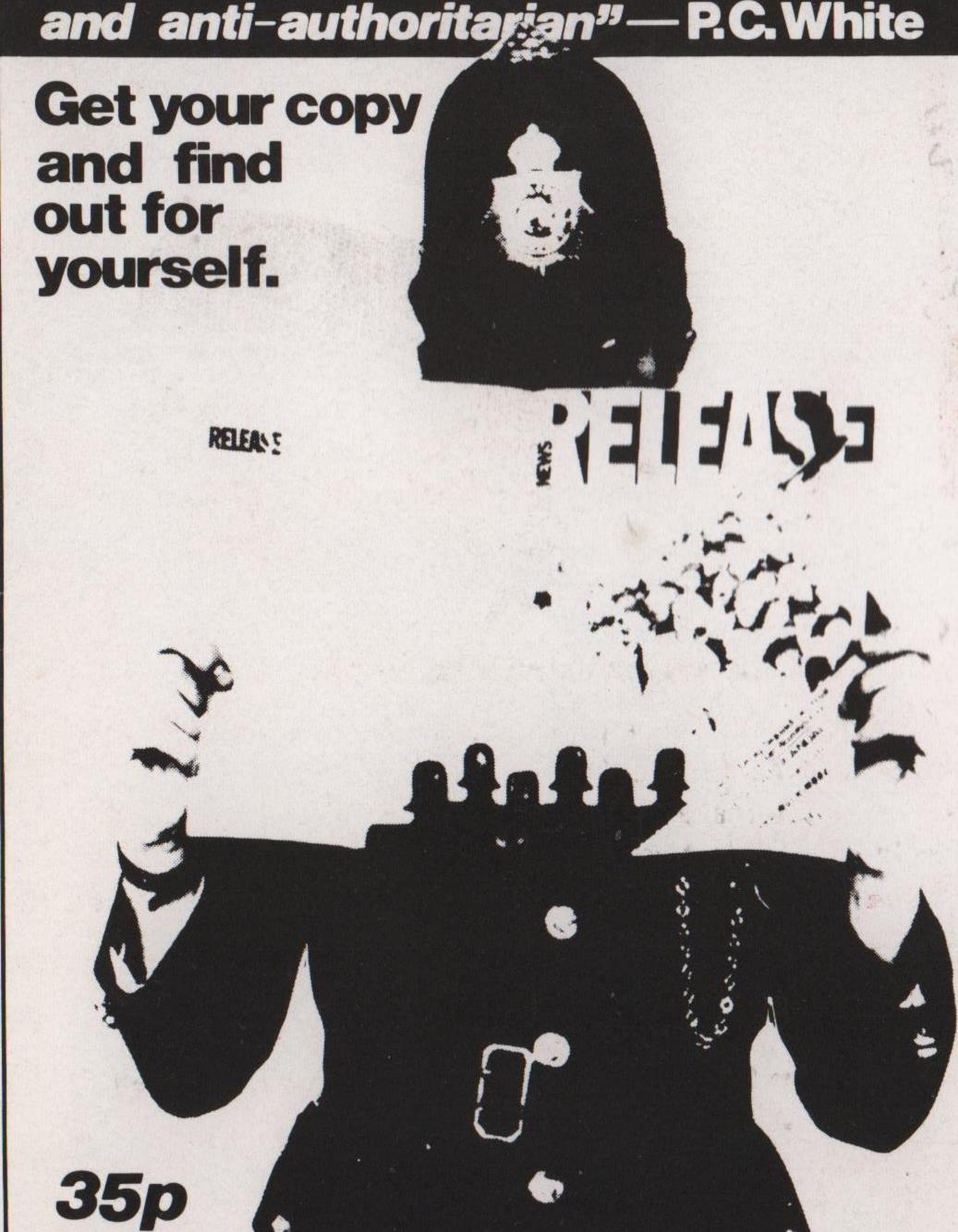
POLITICS OF ART EDUCATION

Edited by Dave Rushton and Paul Wood



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"News Release is cheeky, subversive and anti-authoritarian" -- P.C. White



NewsRelease is the quarterly magazine from Release. It reports up-to-date news and information on changes in law as they affect you and also covers drugs, housing, women's issues and lots more. Available from bookshops or on subscription (£2 for 4 issues) from Release Publications Ltd, 1 Elgin Ave, London W9

The Other Cover Up

The existence of this lobby [the procannabis lobby] is something that the House and public opinion should take into account and be ready to combat as I am. It is another aspect of the so-called permissive society and I am glad if my decision has enabled the House to call a halt in the advancing tide of so-called permissiveness. (James Callaghan, 27 January 1969)

So what has happened since Jim was Home Secretary? More than 5,000 people have been imprisoned for simply possessing cannabis and over 90,000 have been given a criminal record for cannabis offences. Cannabis has been illegal in Britain for 50 years, and an estimated 5 million people have used it. Medical evidence shows that there is no serious risk to health associated with cannabis use.

The Legalise Cannabis Campaign* was formed last year to dispel this myth. In order to succeed it needs time, energy and financial support - from you. Write to the address below for membership details and send 75p for the Campaign booklet The Cannabis Cover Up which uncovers cannabis, once and for all.

*The LCC is a membership organisation. Membership rates are: Individuals £3 (p.a.); Students and Claimants £1, for which you receive a regular newsletter and details of Campaign activities.



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ocialist in her own right. Volume 2 is also available to club members at the special price of £4.50 including postage (Published price £4.95).

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- LIST E

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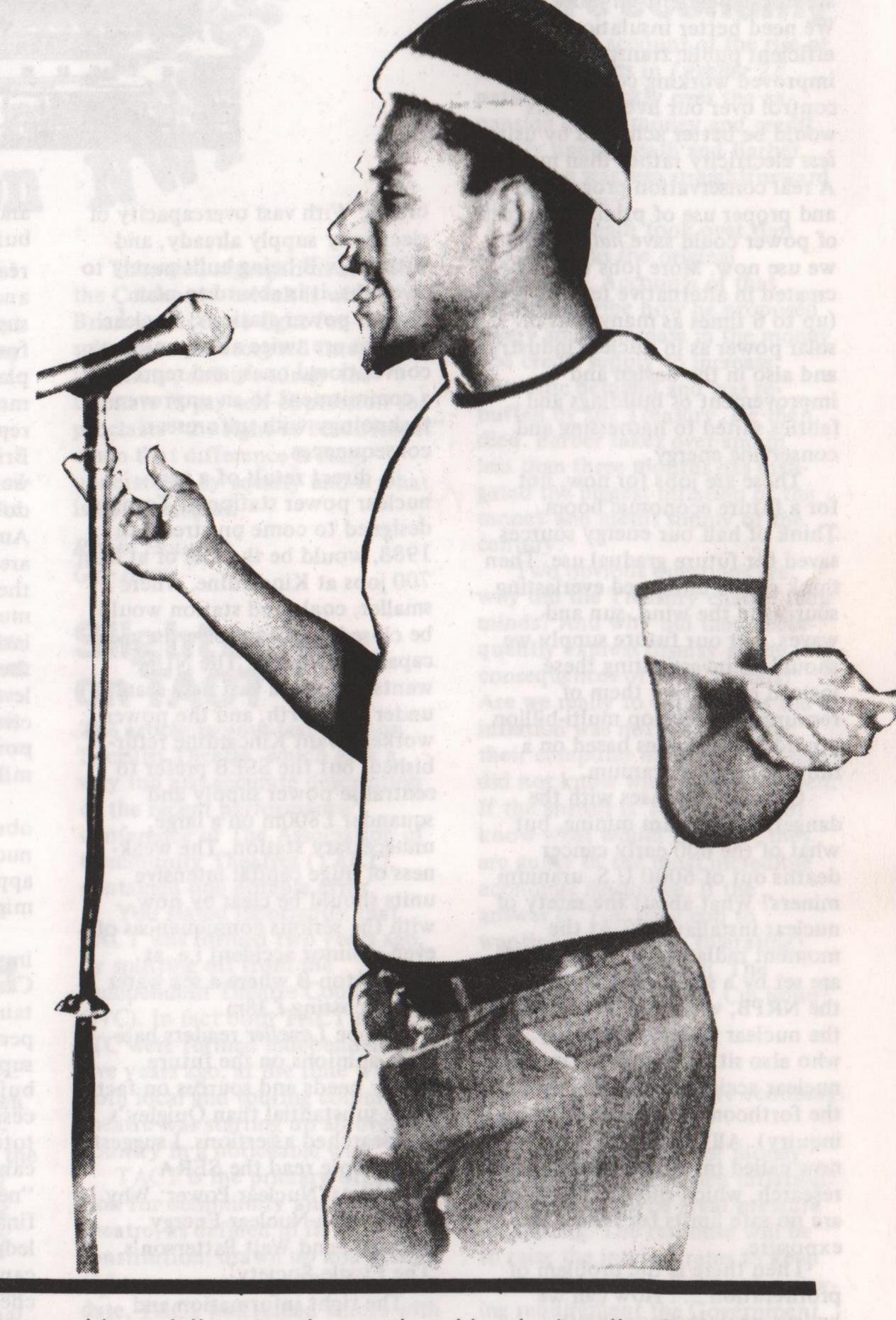
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February 1979 No 23

- Letters
- South Africans finance Caribbean Coup
- Shorts: Moonies land on campus Kimche's Connections
- Garners one year after
- TGWU: no transports of delight
- Linton Kwesi Johnson - an interview with a reggae poet
- Radical mags for the young folk
- 16-22 Special Feature on The Family: **Family Horror Stories** From Engels to Laing From the legal point of view Alternatives
- Chris Searle in Mozambique
- China rings the changes
- Kenya: Britain pushes for a 'model' image Malcolm Caldwell: an appreciation
- The Devolution Vote pros and cons
- 28-29 Back Pages: New bookshops, music, publications, agitprop
- Leveller Index
- 32-33 Incomes the policy for socialism?



Linton Kwesi Johnson - SEE page 12.

An independent monthly socialist magazine produced by the Leveller Collective. Owned by its Supporting Subscribers through the Leveller Magazine Ltd., a society whose AGM controls the magazine. Articles, photographs, cartoons and letters are all very welcome. Collective meetings are open and we invite our readers' interest and participation in the development of the magazine. The next introductory meeting will be held at our office at 7.30pm on Tuesday Feb 20th.

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THE LEVELLER, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1. 01-387 0176.

Petty attack on movement

THE IMPLICATIONS of nuclear power for the left have not been adequately discussed. Jim Quigley's article in November's Leveller went no further than a petty attack on the present antinuclear movement.

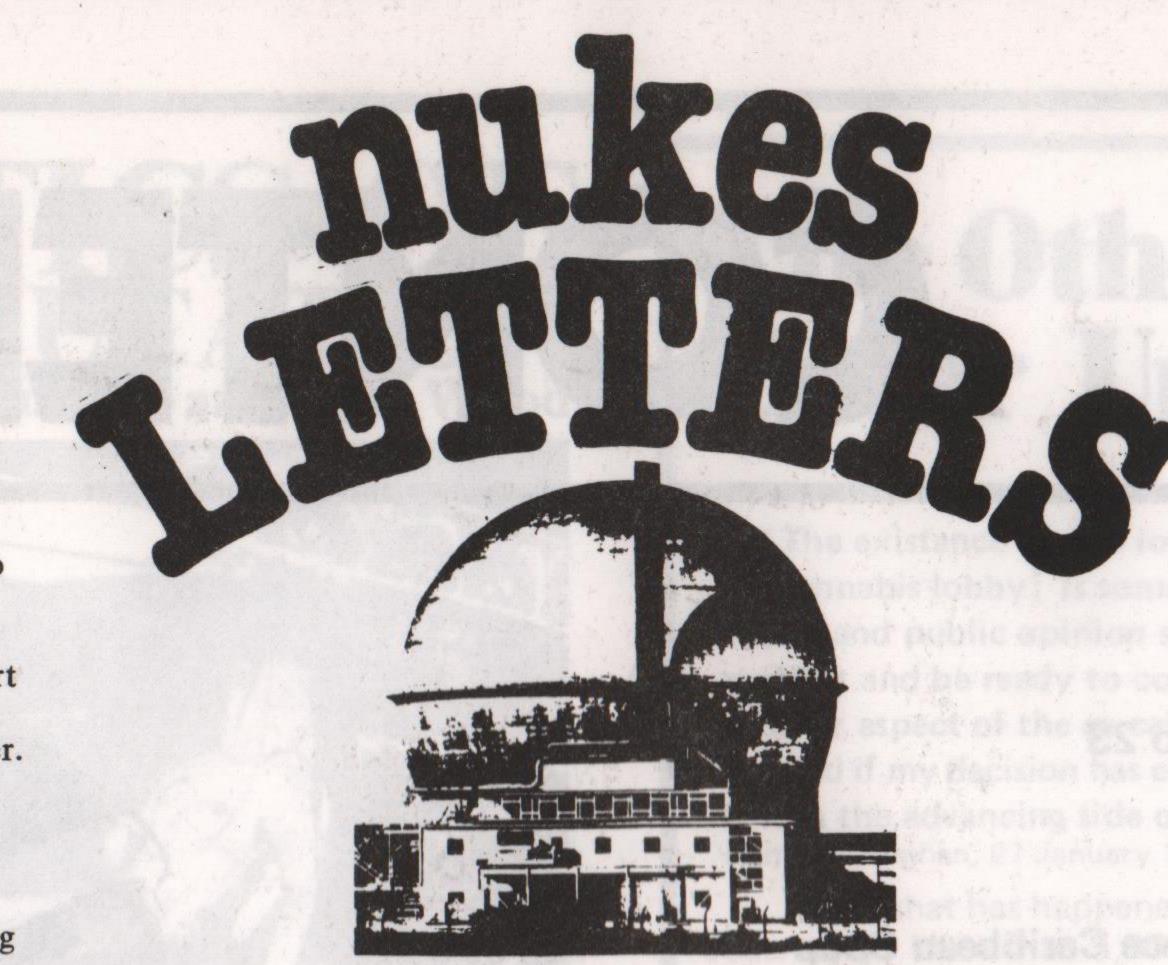
It is a mistake for socialists to associate a better standard of living simply with an increased supply of electricity. The comfort and well-being of more people are not dependent on more power. We need better insulation, efficient public transport, improved working conditions, control over our lives. All this would be better achieved by using less electricity rather than more. A real conservation programme and proper use of primary sources of power could save half of what we use now. More jobs would be created in alternative technology (up to 6 times as many jobs in solar power as in nuclear industry). and also in the design and improvement of buildings and fabrics suited to harnessing and conserving energy.

These are jobs for now, not for a future economic boom. Think of half our energy sources saved for future gradual use. Then think of the untapped everlasting sources in the wind, sun and waves. For our future supply we should be investigating these instead of starving them of resources to develop multi-billion pound technologies based on a finite supply of uranium.

Quigley dispenses with the dangers of uranium mining, but what of the 600 early cancer deaths out of 6000 U.S. uranium miners? What about the safety of nuclear installations? At the moment radiation dose standards are set by a small board of men. the NRPB, who were involved in the nuclear weapons industry, and who also sit on 'inquiries' into nuclear accidents (i.e. Pochin at the forthcoming Aldermaston inquiry). All safety standards are now called into question by recent research, which shows that there are no safe limits for radiation exposure.

Then there is the problem of proliferation . . . How can we believe protestations about control of weapons technology when reactors are being sold to dictatorships all over the world? As Quigley points out, the real terrorists have tanks and planes. The export of civil nuclear technology gives just those terrorists the nuclear bomb (Brazil Iran, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Chile). But perhaps Quigley believes the mealy-mouthed excuses of countries like Germany and Britain, who protest that the Shah and Pinochet only want nuclear power for their electric toothbrushes.

The rush to export nuclear technology has come from an industry in dire straits due to loss



orders. With vast overcapacity of electricity supply already, and with Drax B being built purely to save jobs, it is absurd to plan further power stations. Nuclear stations are twice as expensive as conventional ones, and represent a commitment to an unproven technology with unforeseen consequences.

A direct result of a new nuclear power station at Torness, designed to come on stream in 1988, would be the loss of at least 700 jobs at Kincardine, where a smaller, coal-fired station would be closed down to solve the overcapacity problem. The NUM wants to mine a vast new seam under the Forth, and the power workers want Kincardine refurbished, but the SSEB prefer to centralise power supply and squander £800m on a large, unnecessary station. The weakness of huge capital intensive units should be clear by now, with the serious consequences of even a minor accident i.e. at Hunterston B where a sea water leak is costing £38m.

I hope Leveller readers base their opinions on the future energy needs and sources on facts more substantial than Quigley's ill-researched assertions. I suggest that people read the SERA pamphlets 'Nuclear Power: Why Not?', 'Non-Nuclear Energy Options', and Walt Patterson's 'The Fissile Society'.

The right information and control over our lives is surely fundamental to any socialism worth fighting for. Surely socialists should be concerned about our complete lack of control over the nuclear power developments expanding in our midst?

Deirdre Armstrong SCRAM Edinburgh

Power back to the people

A GREAT many countries still have not signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and probably never will. Countries like India

building bombs from their reactors, not to mention up and coming Brazil which is being supplied with the biggest order for nuclear plant ever to be placed anywhere. This enormously expensive order included reprocessing plant; they saw what Britain, France and Germany were doing and of course want to do the same. The generals in South America and their old Nazi friend are looking forward to the day they too can flex their atomic muscles after they tire of annihi lating Indians and laying waste the Amazonian forest. It is irrelevant to distinguish between civil and military use of atomic power when the government is a military one.

and Israel are quite capable of

Second, if the money and obsessive care taken in the nuclear power industry were applied to the coal industry you might get comparable results.

Third, the mining of uranium in such places as Elliott Lake in Canada has resulted in vast mountains of tailings that are now suspected of endangering the water supply. In America a suburb was built on tailings and their excessive rate of cancer has led to total evacuation. Speaking of cancer, we can do without a "new chemicals industry". It is finally coming to be acknowledged that possibly 80% of cancers are linked to man-made chemicals.

Fourth, windmills can be aesthetically pleasing; old ones can be found on every coast around the North Sea and their images are found in art and literature. This type of intermediate technology is ideal for developing nations not to mention their use on the Great Plains of America for the past eighty years. I do agree that wave power is not a viable solution for the same reasons that nuclear power is not a solution; namely high capital cost.

Fifth, if you think geothermal energy would be costly what do you think it would cost to put a vast space platform into orbit? If a country did go ahead on these platforms what effect would the beamed microwaves have on the ozone layers, the earth's climate or people living near the receiver?

Sixth, most of our high technology power production is there to fulfill the capitalist's dream of endless growth, endless waste, endless consumption while they skim the cream off the top. Half of what is made and sold we don't need, most of our generated heat is allowed to escape from buildings, planned obsolescence wastes production energy, SAVE IT! but don't forget to THINK ELECTRIC. All this is to make sure that the investment by the City years ago will pay dividends. Centralised energy production is centralised power! Decentralised energy is power back to the people!

Rodney Curtis, Ecology Party (Oxford Branch)

Grim picture in Capital

A major difficulty of the "anti-nuke" versus "pro-nuke" controversy is the tendency for many issues to become fudged, a tendency that denies arriving at a clear socialist strategy. An environmentalist stance in this respect is tempting but seriously inadequate, being merely liberal in content. An understanding of the nature of technology (high or intermediate) in the context of capitalist society is essential then hence the debate initiated in the latest Leveller is to be welcomed

While a superficial reading of the Communist Manifesto may suggest that Marx is enthusiastic about the potential of the productive forces of the bourgeoisie (which are not merely identical with technology) there can be little doubting the grim picture depicted in Capital of the consolidation of bourgeois social relations, in which capitalist scientific advances play an important part in the production of surplus value.

An emphasis on the "hidden social relations" involved in technology will make us look at the sort of relations we want in the setting up of any future technology. The supposed safety factor, etc. of nuclear energy is irrelevant in this light as the latter means highly specialised and fragmented knowledge in the hands of an elite. Alternative and intermediate technology has its problems (not just technical ones

- it is by no means necessarily anti-capitalist and may in fact prove compatible with capitalist enterprise) but the relations it fosters (e.g. easy links with small scale industries) lend themselves to what might be called an "open structure" which can be easily subjected to democratic control by the socialist community.

Mike Titterton Edinburgh

Poor Leveller use of photos

It's not often that we have any cause to complain about The Leveller, but the quality of the photos, credited to us on pages 6-7 of the January issue has made us extremely angry. The photos, which were obviously screened from a contact sheet that was made on a dirty contact printer, could not be seen or read.

One quick phone-call and one day's post could have delivered sharp, clean perfect prints of the shots desired. In our opinion, printing in this fashion is simply not worth it, not least because of the way the appalling quality reflects on us.

Dave McKay (on behalf of the Union Place Collective).

No Plaid link with fascists

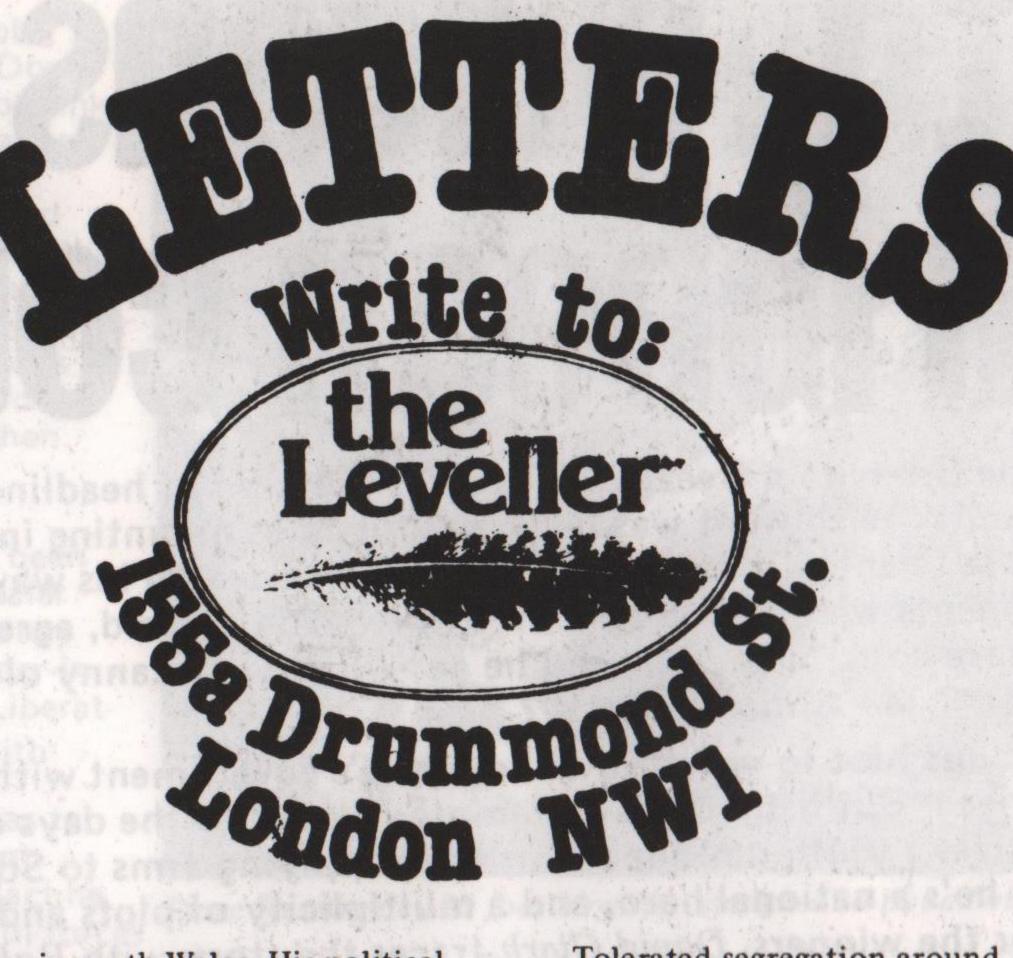
Mr Derek Smith performed a valuable service in supplying documentary evidence of the antisocialist views held by Caernarfon's Labour candidate. Less constructive, unfortunately, was his third-hand allegation of Plaid Cymru's "attempts to link with a Fascist group" viz. Volksunie of Flanders, Belgium.

Here is the explanation you requested, Mr Smith. In March 1977, the Guardian's European editor reported Volksunie's claim that they had concluded a "pact" with Plaid Cymru and the SNP. The following day this story was denied vehemently by the other two parties.

Plaid Cymru has never made a "pact" of any sort whatsoever with Volksunie, nor conducted any negotiations to that end. The author of the original article, Mr John Palmer, now accepts that this is correct. Volksunie have failed to produce any evidence to support their assertion and one can only speculate upon the reasons behind their behaviour. Perhaps the Labour candidate for Caernarfon should keep his press cuttings file, the one marked "Plaid Cymru-Fascist Smears", more up to date.

Any discussion, therefore, about the activities or programme of Volksunie (Flanders) is-in this context-purely academic. For the information of Mr Smith and his unreliable sources, I would only point out that: the party was formed in 1953, had several Ministers in the recently-deceased Belgian Cabinet and is widely regarded on the continent as a Centre Party with vigorous Right and Left wings. As far as I understand they share no links, aspirations or sympathies with the neo-Nazi Volksunie Party of the Netherlands.

The good socialist Dumbleton's position on the Rhymney Valley rent arrears case is well-known and respected (even when not shared)



here in south Wales. His political motivations (SWP) are not so public, whilst his protests against the scores of evictions over many years by Labour-controlled councils have been non-existent. Even now he has yet to criticize those Labour members of Rhymney Valley District Council who proposed and supported the original motion to evict.

Whereas I would have welcomed his general political criticisms of my article in October's Leveller (I'm sure they are abundant), Bob's deployment of South Wales Housing Action for purposes more to do with his party allegiance is—in my opinion—unworthy of him and his magnificent work in Housing Action.

Robert Griffiths Research Officer Plaid Cymru

Old-fashioned gay liberation

I don't know where Brian Deerwriting about the battle between gays and the police at the Coleherne pub in Earls Court-gets the idea from that I "disapprove of sex outside some sort of lasting relationship". I don't think any such thing.

In fact, I believe "impersonal sex" to be a valid form of sexual contact, and I defend that liberty. It's only when the manner in which that liberty is pursued degrades and oppresses the pursuenthat I find it pitiful and sad, and it's only when it endangers the liberty of others that I side with the force of the law. It's therefore not true to suggest that I consider "impersonal sex" in itself pathetic and that I "side with the force of law to suppress it".

And in the wider issue, Brian has shown that while he understands the theory of gay self-oppression in a rather crude, old-fashioned, gay-liberationist way, he hasn't yet learnt that it requires more than that to apply its principles in practice.

Tolerated segregation around the Coleherne—which is what Brian wants us to fight for—is no substitute for accepted integration in society, and it's surely the ultimate in gay self-oppression to proclaim "the right to be different when that difference is fully understood by society and is what is oppressing us.

Robin Houston
Gay News

Slight error on TACT

The article in your last issue on Socialist Theatre, which gave a very full and accurate description of the recent performance conference of The Association of Community Theatres (TACT), contained one notable error.

You stated incorrectly that TACT was formed two years ago, by splitting off from the Independent Theatre Council (ITC). In fact both TACT and ITC were formed independently five years ago, at the time when both local and touring community theatre was starting up all over the country in a noticeable way.

tion for community and political theatre, as defined in its constitution, drawn up and ratified eighteen months ago. Prior to that date, TACT had joined forces with ITC to successfully lobby the Arts Council for increased funding for the whole field of fringe and alternative theatre, which is covered by ITC and includes the area covered by TACT.

Thus when ITC also became constituted, TACT made arrangements to become formally affiliated to ITC. This happened early last year and since then TACT member companies have had dual membership of ITC also. However, TACT remains an organisation with autonomy to hold its own events, form policies and form a united pressure group within ITC if necessary.

Thus in terms of lobbying the funding bodies and negotiating

unions, socialist theatre companies. are united with all other alternative theatre companies.
It is only TACT, however, that provides a framework for discussion, so that the artistic and political criteria of socialist feminist and other forms of

community theatre can be

terms and conditions with various

Brian Davey (TACT)
London NW3

in practice.

How to rip off entire economy

examined critically and advanced

Mike Prest's account of the rise of the monetarists in Leveller 22 passes too quickly over the expansion of the money and credit supply under Heath and Barber. The thing was less straightforward than he allows.

When Heath took over, Ian McCleod was the original Chancellor. Accounts of that period describe how he proposed a very small increase in the money and credit supply to increase domestic demand and was rebuffed by the Treasury. He then died. Barber takes over and in less than three months has instigated the biggest inflation of the money and credit supply of the

century. Two obvious questions are: why did the Treasury change their minds? And why did they subsequently express dismay at the consequences of their actions? Are we really to believe that the inflation was not predicted by their computer models? That they did not know what would happen' If the answer is 'No, we did not know what would happen', they are guilty of the most incredible economic ignorance. If the answer is 'Yes' they cop to wanting (or, at best, tolerating) the inevitable inflation. The question then is: Why? Cui bono?

A Scenario

Project
How to rip off the entire economy.
Solution

Enormous expansion of money and credit supply. When inflation roars, there will be great pressure on sterling. The response will be to raise the interest rates to keep capital here. With its huge borrowing requirement the Government will have to borrow at the (new) high rates. Then, purchase as many long and medium term notes as possible at the interest rates of 12 and 13%. Finally, bring down inflation again.

Result

A massive redistribution (rip off) of wealth towards those who buy Government stocks.

Thing is: is this what happened?

Robin Ramsey

South Africans plan

"Jim suns himself while Brrrrritain freezes". That was the kind of headline Callaghan got after the Guadeloupe 'mini-summit'. With what was being described as mounting industrial anarchy at home, the Prime Minister chose to spend a couple of days in Barbados on his way back to London. At the end of the talks, agreements were announced on future trade and aid, agreements that a Junior Minister could easily have concluded. Why did he go, what was a canny old politician like Callaghan talking to the Barbadian Prime Minister about?

The answer lies in a vicious plot to overthrow the island's government with a British led gang of international mercenaries. But behind that attempted return to the days of piracy lies an incredible series of events. It involves a multi-national company supplying arms to South Africa, a paranoid gun-runner who thinks he's a national hero, and a multiplicity of plots and counter-plots with a prize worth millions for the winners. David Clark traces the story with Ralston Callender.

The mercenary coup which was to have been staged against the Caribbean islands of Dominica and Barbados just before Christmas has not been cancelled - as the government of Barbados believes but merely "postponed", according to mercenary organiser John Banks. He claims that the plot was financed and masterminded by the South African government and that £4million was set aside to carry it out. The operation had to be postponed after a security leak ennabled western intelligence services to tip off the Barbados governme Code-named "Operation Calypso", the main plans were drawn up with uncharac-

teristic efficiency by Banks himself. They are in two sets, one of about 20 pages, the other of about 16. Both sets have been seen by the Leveller. Most of the material deals with specifically military matters but a section proposes some horrifying measures for politicians and the Barbadian public.

The Prime Minister, Tom Adams, was to have been decapitated. His head was then to have been carried around the island on a pole. Large numbers of civilians, both men and women, were to have been executed. And according to Dave Tomkins, one of the mercenaries involved, there

was also a plan for mass executions in the football stadium.

The military side of the operation envisaged a preliminary party of 20 mercenaries entering the islands as tourists. Their job would have been to make an assessment of military and police routines and capacities, then to report back by radio to the main force of mercenaries cruising off the islands in a chartered merchant ship. The 350 strong force of French, British, Portugese and South African mercenaries would then have gone ashore in fast rubber boats and a landing craft.

The plotter

Alleyene's involvement in the abortive coup is beyond doubt, though he claims it was him who got it stopped. But it was Alleyne who first showed us the detailed invasion plans when we expressed doubt about the whole thing.

Sidney Burnett-Alleyne, a bearded, paunchy 51 year old, has a long history of involvement in the muckier areas of international politics and his current condition veers between intense nationalism and chronic paranoia.



In the 1960s he got into the armaments business and, according both to what he told the Leveller and what our other enquiries have revealed (we have found it difficult to sort out truth from fantasy in some of what he says), he travelled extensively in Africa selling arms and wheeling and dealing. He claims to have been a Colonel in the Portugese army in Mozambique, to have been great friends with Tshombe in the Congo to have sold arms to Kaunda and Nyerere, to have armed Portugese money into Latin America. the former Algerian leader Ben Bella, to have sold arms to South Africa and Portugal and to the Nigerians in the Nigeria-Biafra war. "I don't

deny that I deal in arms. I have done for years. I am the authentic representative for one of the largest arms companies in the world. I work for PRB""

Which is particularly interesting. PRB is owned by the Societe General de Belgique one of the oldest and largest companies in Belgium. That country exports more than ninety per cent of her arms production and the government isn't very fussy about export licenses. PRB's sister company, Fabrique National d'Armes de Guerre (FN) supplies the standard NATO rifle and is responsible for small arms production. PRB manufactures heavier weapons like heavy guns and long-range howitzers. Among the many subsidiaries of the Societe General are not only the notorious Union Miniere, but also the Space Research International Corporation.

Alleyne has always had an interest in politics. In 1965 it was he who moved the independence motion at the annual conference of the Democratic Labour Party in Barbados. A personal friend of former Prime Minister Errol Barrow. he was the DLP representative in London for a time in the late sixties. He was on

first-name terms with many Third World leaders, particularly the despots of the newly-emergent elites.

In 1974 he returned to Barbados to set up the Alleyne Mercantile Bank in the capital, Bridgetown. It had a starting capital of \$100million Barbados (about £25 million) and was supposedly for financing development projects. Informed opinion on the island said it was really used to funnel South American and In 1976 it collapsed after a financial scandal involving Barbados politicians. One month after Tom Adams' sweeping election victory in 1976 Alleyne was arrested off the French protectorate of Martinique, 150 miles to the north of Barbados. He was travelling in a yacht, Antinea, skippered by a Canadian, Russell Clouston, and was boarded by a French customs vessel. He told the Leveller that he had been outside French territorial waters and that two other boats with him had been allowed to go on. The French authorities seized four cases of ammunition, small arms and explosives, and Alleyne and Clouston were held in custody. Barrow, by now president of the opposition, denied that the DLP had anything to do with Alleyne's attempted coup.

In April 1977, Alleyne and Clouston were both sentenced to two years imprisonment in Martinique, fined \$10. 000 (US) and the yacht confiscated. Alleyne had claimed that he hadn't been planning a coup, that he'd heard that the new government had been committing "atrocities" and that he would have gone back "on the fin of a dolphin" if he could.

But there was a feeling that many others in the plot hadn't been caught.

In the early planning stages of the plot the Prime Minister of the island of Dominica, Patrick John was, according to Banks, to have played a leading role. He was to become leader of the "Commonwealth of Dominica and Barbados" and was to have received large sums of South African 'development' money. At the time of the proposed coup - mid December John was actually in place on Barbados but had apparently changed his mind about taking part. The plans were then modified to include a coup against Dominica too.

The political lynch-pin was to have been a bizarre Barbadian (Bajan) arms-dealer and would-be politician in exile, Sidney Burnett-Alleyne, the self-styled leader-in exile of the virtually non-existent Liberation Front of Barbados. Together with a number of unnamed ministers in Adams' Cabinet he thought he was to play a leading role in the government after the coup had taken place. In fact he was merely a stooge for the powerful forces behind the coup: the mercenaries intended to hold him under guard once they had landed in Barbados.

Alleyne who had already attempted one coup (see box) and had formed a partnership with Patrick John in 1975 which would have given his merchant bank a free hand to help John develop the island with South African money, has a very murky past (see previous page).

Most of the mercenaries were recruited abroad. Only eight specialists would have come from this country, since most of the British mercenaries feared they might end up fighting against their own comrades in the British armed forces who may have been sent to help Barbados. (There is no defence agreement between the two countries; but the highly professional network known informally as 24 SAS because it's a job-placement agency for Special Air Service men knew about Operation Calypso and warned their people to stay clear of it because of the conflict with British interests.)

The British government were alerted to the plan by a security leak within the mercenary camp. Inspector Ray Tucker, Special Branch's mercenary expert, the man who cleared the way for Banks' Angolan force, was involved in a process which ended up with one of Banks' team being summoned to New York at the beginning of December There, he was confronted by Barbadian Prime Minister Adams and a

representative of the CIA who told them to that he went because it would have drop it as they'd been rumbled. Adams learned of the plot while at a

church ceremony in New York to celebrate Barbadian Independence Day. He made more enquiries with the assistance of the French, British and American intelligence services.

On December 8, the Barbadian paper, The Nation, reported that the British government was investigating the links between Alleyne and officials of the Dominican government.

On December, using a leaked story in the London Daily Mail as the pretext for his announcement, Adams made a Prime Ministerial statement denouncing Banks and other governments in the area police calling on the people not to support Alleyne. their new 200 mile limits. Recent It has been suggested that Adams panicked Given the nature of the people operating against him, his reaction seems sensible.

Certainly Prime Minister Callaghan, speaking at a press conference during his Barbados



Assassination attempt

On November 6 1978, fourteen months of agitation by the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement, led by Tim Hector, a marxist and teacher, resulted in world-wide exposure of the Space Research Corporation on BBC TV's Panorama.

Next day, ACLM allege, Space Research officials in North America phoned Antigua and ordered Hector's assassination. ACLM supporters were monitoring the company's phone calls and provided Hector with the exact details of the killer's movements. Fortunately the warning came in time and he was able to escape.

The agent chosen for the job was Warren Hart, a black American who had earlier told the Toronto Globe and Mail that he had worked for the FBI and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Hart was also instrumental in setting up the assasination of Black

Panther leader Fred Hampden for the

Hart was brought into Antigua by Space Research - though even his experience as a police agent cannot have equipped him him for such a creative role - and, once the the ACLM campaign was under way, he was appointed as a "community relations expert". His task was, in fact, to mobilise public opinion on the company's behalf with steel band festivals and football competitions.

He had a high-powered hunting rifle sent to him through the Antigua customs in a pile of football shirts. The customs officer seized the rifle, only to have the Commissioner of Police issue a licence for it. Subsequently, exactly as Hector's comrades had warned him, the assassin was seen outside his school and outside his home. (The full details of this incident can be read in the current Race Today, whose account is based upon documentation provided by ACLM).

visit, did hint that the plot may have been a blackmail attempt masterminded by the mercenaries. But he thought it was serious enough to divert the British frigate Scylla from her station in Belize to Barbados, and to hold talks with Mr. Adams immediately after the Guadeloupe summit despite the crisis building up here.

Downing Street told the Leveller been "discourteous" to ignore Mr. Adams' invitation when he was already in the area. The talks, they claim, were about sugar and trade, Southern Africa and Caricom. And officials with Callaghan were telling reporters that we'd be sending out troops to advise Barbados about the "Cuban threat" to the Caribbean. Since there's no sign of any threat from the Cubans in that area, it's difficult to swallow the official version. Downing Street added that the talks included an agreement to send out Customs and Fishery Protection advisers next month to help the Barbados and reports in the British press suggest a deal will be finalised to sell Barbados six fast patrol boats and a spotter aircraft.

In late 1961, while Barbados was still a British colony, a site was set aside on

the island's south coast for a High Altitude Research Project (HARP). It was set up under the auspices of McGill University in Canada, directed by a Dr. Gerald Bull - a brilliant ballistics scientist - and financed by half a dozen Canadian companies and the United States Army. HARP was supposed to be a peaceful programme aimed at launching satellites from a gun rather than with highly-expensive rocket technology. In 1963 the United States Navy, which has a base at St. Lucy as a result of the wartime Lend-Lease agreement, brought in a massive cannon with a 120 foot barrel which, the people of Barbados were told, was to be used to shoot satellites into The project worked out well and HARP not only gained the world altitude record for a gun-launched projectile with a height of 113 miles but incidentally developed a weapon with the capacity to launch an orbital nuclear weapon which would hover menacingly over any city its operators cared to choose. But the commecial applications of such a weapon were obviously limited since such monstrosities couldn't be sold round the world without a massive outcry.

In 1967 the Canadians, appalled at the American involvement in Vietnam, started going cold on HARP and by 1968 it had

continued on next page

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become a private company called the Space Research Corporation. And the President was Dr. Bull.

He turned his attention to developing a long-range shell which would have immediate attractions in the arms market. particularly in the Third World. His real blockbuster was a 155mm howitzer shell of potentially huge significance in long-range artillery duelling. When the South Africans made the abortive invasion into Southern Angola in 1976, they were dismayed to find Cuban troops equipped with a long-range howitzer developed by the Soviet Union

The South African military authorities applied to the CIA station chief in Johannesburg to see if he could get the weapon for them. CIA officials were in favour of granting the request but the Administration blocked it because of the obvious dangers in breaking the United Nations embargo.

The situation was further complicated when Barbados new Prime Minister, Tom Adams, elected in September 1976, gave Space Research orders to leave the Barbados site amidst growing speculation that it was involved in forwarding arms shipments to South Africa or that it had something to do with the CIA. (Shells were already on their way to South Africa from Space Research in Canada. They went by air and were labelled as machinery).

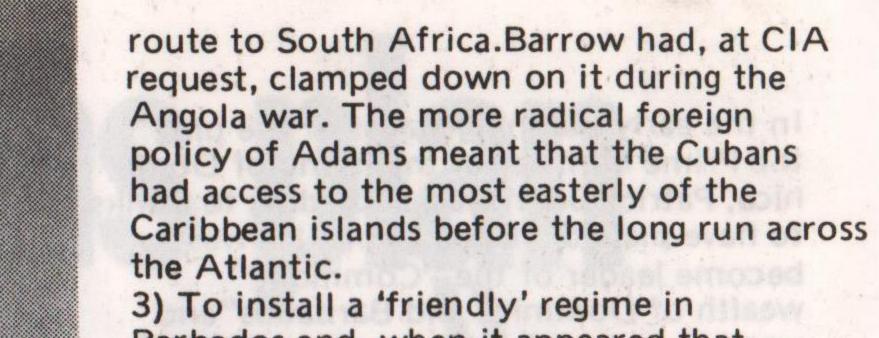
Following Adams' decision former Barbados Prime Minister Errol Barrow left to a research studentship at McGill University. But before he left he introduced Space Research to Vere Bird, the Prime Minister of Antigua, a small island 400 miles north west of Barbados. Antigua, a former British colony and now an "associated state" - that is, it has internal independence but Britain is still responsible for foreign and defence affairs - offered Space Research facilities on the island.

The agreement was made with Prime Minister Bird, and Lester Bird, his son and the Deputy Prime Minister. It was drawn up by the family law firm of Bird and Bird who also gave the company their office facilities. Space Research moved in at the end of 1976 and its movements were closely watched by the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM); the movement reported the company's activities month by month in its paper, Outlet. As it became clear that the company was up to dirty business, ACLM launched a widely-supported mobilisation against it.

Space Research had claimed from the beginning that it was simply using the Antiguan facility to 'test' its shells. But close observation, particularly of the ships MV Tugelaland, Lindinger-Coral, and Moura, all chartered by Space Research, showed that the company was loading 155mm shells in Canada, the country of manufacture, receiving an export licence from Canada so that they could be sent for 'testing' in Antigua and then being sent on from the island to South Africa.

One shipment alone, and there were many, picked up from Antigua during 1977, consisted of 36 containers of shells, two gun assemblies, two radar trucks or vans and several boxes of radar equipment. Another consignment of 35,000 shells was worth \$ 7 million US.

The full racket was exposed on BBC TV's Panorama on November 6 and the govern-



Barbados and, when it appeared that Rand Diplomacy in Dominica had failed, to overthrow that regime too.

4) To destabilise an already volatile area some of whose leaders have been vocally anti South African in the international forum.

Banks claims that he set the job up on behalf of the South Africans because he had already carried out a number of succesful operations for them.

At present Space Research is reported to be moving its equipment to the island of Redonda, a virtually-uninhabited island off the coast of Antigua. In the United States, a Grand Jury in Vermont is investigating the company's activities. And the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is also investigating. But many observers fear a

When we asked Sidney Burnett-Alleyne whether Space Research had been involved in the attempted coup, he said that they were but he refused to give any further

Another of the British mercenaries said he hadn't heard the name of Space Research but "there seemed to be about 50 people involved in setting it up - from BOSS to the Southern Christian Leadership Council" (a right-wing breakaway from the World Council of Churches - their recent London meeting was attended by a number of right-wing tory MPs.)

"Alleyne," he continued, "was a crock of shit, a lunatic. My job was to go in by rubber boat and blow every damn bank and safe in the place. It would have been the biggest armed robbery the world has ever seen. What started out as reasonably acceptable turned out like a bloody gangster film."

staff the Sultan of Oman's armed forces -

in Southern Africa, including Rhodesian

United Air Carriers and Commercial Air

noticed part-ownership which BCS had

and a number of strategic companies

Perhaps most important is the little-

in Freight Services Ltd., part of the

South African end of the Rhodesian

oil-sanctions beating operation. The

BCS is distinguished by the rigidly

Sir Nicholas Cayzer who, in his last

attack on the socialist government's

and the need for less taxation for the

doesn't apply to his own companies'

right-wing attitudes of their chairman,

company report, rounded off a robust

rigid stifling of initiative in this country

likes of himself with a stern warning of

the need for a return to 'law and order'

in this country. A need which apparently

blatant breaking of Rhodesian sanctions

And finally when is David Owen going

to do something about his promise of

as we do that it goes on quite openly.

a year ago at the United Nations to stop

mercenary recruiting. He knows as well

company claim that their share has now

been sold to Harry Oppenheimer's Anglo-

Services (Rhodesia).

American Corporation.

legislation.



155mm shells sold to South Africa

ments of both Barbados and Antigua have asked the company to leave.

Banks' claims, and our own enquiries suggest four reasons for the South African interest in the Eastern Caribbean:

1) To seize the gun from the Space Research testing site on Barbados and get it back to South Africa. That would have given it the capacity to launch its own nuclear satellites.

2) To stop the use of the Barbados airport as a staging post for Cuban troops en

There are a number of important

Force was being used to guard the

implications for Britain in the Space

Research affair. The Antigua Defence

company's chartered ships against the

wrath of the ACLM demonstrators. As

tion of the troops, the British Govern-

ment seem to have been conniving at

Panorama quoted Mr. IG Thow, the

British Deputy Representative on the

island, who wrote a letter to Mr. Vere

Bird, the Prime Minister, which assured

him that if the UN wanted to set up an

investigation into Space Research then

MV Tugelaland, the main ship involved

on to South Africa was the property

of Globus Reederei, a company which

had in turn chartered it back to Globus.

in bringing the shells to Antigua and then

in turn was a subsidiary of Safmarine, who

Safmarine is the South African state-owner

shipping line; one third of it is owned by

the British and Commonwealth Shipping

BCS is the multinational which has grown

out of Union Castle: amongst it more

which provides the mercenaries who

notable subsidiaries is Airwork Services

Britain "will resist any independent

enquiry".

Company Limited.

the breaking of the UN embargo.

the authority responsible for the disposia

The British connection

Kimche's connections

JON KIMCHE, the Swiss journalist who acted as an intermediary for a secret South African attempt to buy into British publishing, is a Zionist with close connections with the British and Israeli secret services.

Kimche was named by South African businessman Stuart Pegg as receiving funds which were provided by the South African Department of Information in an attempt to win control over major publishing groups in the western world. Together with an associate, David Abrahamson, Pegg bought shares in Morgan Grampian, which publishes several trade and consumer magazines, but abandoned an attempt to take control of the company when the scandal of the Department of Information's secret funds broke in South Africa. The former Information minister, Eschel Rhoodie, diverted several million South African rands into secret publishing ventures, including an English language pro-South African government newspaper, The Citizen,

An Israeli entrepreneur, Arnold Milchan, acted as a conduit for South African funds which were channelled to a group of European businessmen, headed by an Italian ex-nobleman, Count Ghislieri. These funds were used to finance a new company, West Africa Publishing Company, which was set up in 1975 to buy the respected, establishment-minded West Africa from Britain's International Publishing Corporation. Kimche denied that the money which West Africa received after it passed into the control of the new company, in which he and Count Ghislieri were joint shareholders, had come from South African funds. But Pegg produced a letter from Count Ghislieri to Mr Milchan, agreeing to transfer his shares as soon as the cash injection was received.

Mr Kimche's other publishing operations are of interest. Apart from being Managing Director of West Africa, he edits a bulletin on the Middle East, Afro-Asian Affairs. The company which owned this publication was set up in 1974, shortly before the company created to take over West Africa. Afro-Asian Affairs has a strong editorial line: it analyses all pro-Arab and antiwestern actions in the Middle East as being the result of Soviet covert action, and provides little-known material links between various Arab leaders and the Soviet Union, with the fairly obvious implication that Israel's interests are the West's interests, and that the West should rely exclusively on Israel to control the Middle East. The general line - that all threats to the West are to be laid at the door of the Soviet Union is reminiscent of the strident anticommunism of the British Foreign Office's covert propaganda operation, the Information Research Department, closed down on the orders of Dr Owen in 1977. Kimche was one of several journalists who were in receipt of IRD's confidential briefings on the Russian menace, which were effectively the views which British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) wanted to see in print.

When Afro-Asian Affairs started it had an unusual address. It was published from the Central Asian Research Centre, an obscure research organisation above a furniture shop in Islington. London. Kimche worked out of a dingy

office here. The Centre maintains a library on developments in Central Asia - which includes the Middle East, Iran and Soviet Central Asia, and is known to have been set up by a former British military intelligence officer. It maintains close links been flown in to tackle the city. At least

Afro-Asian Affairs was clearly receiving leaks from one of several anti-Arab intelligence services. So in addition to his links with our own spooks, it is interesting to note that Jon Kimche's brother David, with whom he has co-authored several books on the Middle East, is reliably reported to be a member of Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad.

Moonies land on campus

THE UNIFICATION Church, better known as the Moonies, have been involved in an undercover campaign in several Scottish universities and in Cambridge.

An organisation calling itself the Inter-Universities Cultural Organisation has been trying to set up student societies in Edinburgh, Stirling and Herriot-Watt universities, which once constituted would be able to draw funds from the student unions. Chaplains at Dundee and Herriot-Watt became concerned when they realised that many of the names used on the submissions to start up a society were those of overseas and first year students.

Herriot-Watt university chaplain Tom Scott contacted the students and discovered that not only were their names collected at an October concert given by the Unification Church's Go World Brass;s Band, but also that most of the students who gave their names were unaware of the connection. In Dundee a spokesperson for the Unification Church has admitted that the Inter-Universities Cultural Organisation is a branch of the Church. But again the students contacted on the Dundee submission had no idea that the moonies were associated with the Inter-Universities Cultural Organisation.

Pamela Ritchie, a third year philosophy student attempted to start an IUCO society at Edinburgh University last term. She claims that Unification Church members were "inspired to do something for society". She continued "but this does not mean that it is a front for the church itself". However three university Presidents have already strongly

criticised this "undercover manoeuvering" as deceitful.

Shorts

In Cambridge, some 15-20 Koreans have with the British Secret Intelligence Service. two undergraduates are working for the

Unification Church in the university. The Church's leader, Reverend Moon, visited Cambridge last summer, and the sect acquired a house in Norwich Street, near the centre of town as a headquarters. Those interested in the sect are invited to a rented house in Whittlesford, a small village just outside Cambridge. The house is sparsely furnished and only used at weekends.

Inside the university, the Moonies have set up the Cambridge University Collegiate Association for Research in Principle, another example of a typical tactic of working under a variety of different names. The Koreans have supported this campaign by posing as members of a Japanese choir. Another pretends to be a Japanese minister "interested in East-West relations"

One of the sect's undergraduate workers. Damien Anderson, a second-year student at Trinity College, was converted to the sect while working for a church in Paris. He originally gave up his studies to work for Moon and admits to being back in Cambridge "under orders".

Anderson's parents are deeply distressed by his involvement, and say that he is completely indoctrinated. Ritchie's mother was reported in a Scottish newspaper to have accused the Moonies of having stolen her daughter. An organisation called FAIR (Family, Action, Information, Rescue) now exists to provide information about the cult and offers other support to families including help to rehabilitate ex-Moonies into ordinary life.

But the Moonies are not under attack only because of their deceitful methods. The Reverend Moon has strong connections with the South Korean government and the Korean CIA, and his own personal holdings, derived from a business empire based on weapons, pharmaceuticals and other products are valued at £8m. In the United States, the Fraser Committee recommended a fuller enquiry into the Unification Church after discovering that it was "in apparent violation of American tax, immigration, banking currency and overseas lobbying laws", and it was revealed last year that as long ago as 1963, the CIA had reported that the Church was a "political tool" of the Korean CIA.



The moonies hit Cambridge, complete with brass band and a bizarre meeting at one of the city's top hotels, addressed by the sect's UK boss Dennis Orme.



Learning the hard way

A year is a long time in politics. It's an even longer time to be out on strike. Andy Curry and Adam Thompson look at the progress of the year-old Garners strike, and Tim Gopsill traces the long and dishonourable history of their union, the Transport and General, in its dealings with workers in the catering and entertainment industries.

THE 27th JANUARY is the first anniversary of the strike at Garners Steak Houses, and to mark the occasion, the strike committee has called a mass picket.

Entitled "Stake-Out 2", it's to be modelled on the first "Stake-Out" picket held in December, when 250 pickets joined strikers at Garners' five central restaurants, in an optimistic attempt to end the strike by Christmas.

The strike, led by some of Garners' managers, began as a recognition dispute. At that time pay was low even by the standards of the catering industry and job security was minimal. They'd been promised full support by the Transport and General Workers Union, and anticipated a short strike. "They promised the earth", said Manuel, a strike committee member. "We feel very badly about it." "They learnt the hard way" said John Bruce, a strike supporter who was the GMWU shop steward in the Metropole Hotel dispute. "When the strike began, they were looking in the window waiting for the lights to go off."

London branches, has closed five of Garners' sixteen restaurants. The strike committee estimate that picketed restaurants are losing "over 50%" of their business.

Most of the strikers have been arrested at least once, often for obstruction. Recently, police have started to arrest supporters, once their faces become familiar to them. John Bruce, for example, has been arrested three times, and has been bound over on a surety of £200. "I hardly dare go near a picket any more", he said.

Strikers have been attacked by the Margolis family. Jaliv Khan lost part of the sight of an eye when he was stracked by Rebecca Margolis, Cyril's wife (she was fined £25 for assault) and another striker had to go to hospital after being beaten up by son Barry on Christmas Day. The National Front have also been involved in intimidating strikers.

Cyril Margolis himself is a self-made man. An emigre from Hungary, he opened his first restaurant with his brother twenty eight years ago, and has built up the business from there. Garners remains a family firm. He's known to his employees as "Mr. Cyril", and he and his wife are the only directors of the company that runs the restaurants, Monsignor Grills Ltd. His sons and relatives constitute the management.

Margolis once said that he would like to be the "George Ward of catering", and before the strike began, he told the strikers that there would be "a union here over my dead body". He claims that his workers don't want a union, although he won't let ACAS (the arbitration service) in tolind out, He says it's "a biased organisation promoting the interests of the trade unions."

Instead, his figures come from Gallup surveys. The last one polled 120 in favour of joining the house staff association, (every survey to far has recorded 120 in favour of joining the association) and 52 for the union, although a manager still working for the company has told the strike committee that at least 40% of employees voted for the union.

Margolis is wary of talking to the papers. In June, he gave an interview to the Catering Times (which didn't report the 'Stake-Out' but printed large sections of Garners' somewhat rabid press release). But it wasn't until the Stake Out that he spoke to a national newspapaper, when he granted an interview to the Daily Express.



Garners claim that despite the picketing, none of their branches is making a loss, but this is hard to believe given the enormous rents of the central restaurants. The Strike Committee believe that he may be getting money from Trust House Forte, who have had their own union troubles recently, and the NAFF. NAFF-man Charles Goode says that Margolis did approach them when the dispute began but decided after discussion not to ask them for assistance "We'd like to be able to support Garners," he added, "and if he did ask us we certainly would."

The Saks Chop House in Panton Street, which Garners opened after the strike started, has been such a financial failure that the strikers don't bother to picket it despite its central position. Portuguese staff imported to work there left on the first day when they discovered that conditions weren't what had been promised. The company has plans to open a new restaurant - as Garners - in Lower Regent Street. "We don't anticipate any problems", a spokesperson said.

"We've learnt a lot from being on strike" said Manuel.

"We just came out for recognition - we didn't know then
that politics is a way of life." All the same, a strike like
Garners is the worst sort of strike to be involved in. It's
dragged on for a long time, so its publicity value is low.

Its target is a non-productive service industry, so it doesn't
have any economic bite. Catering disputes are also hampered
by the personal relationships between management and
staff, and strikers picketing singly or in pairs all over
central London can get very isolated.

Picketing long hours on little money is hard work, and it can be demoralising. Their success depends to some extent on the support they get. To date, the Workers Socialist League (which has a lot of members in catering) and some Young Communist League branches have done a lot of picketing, and some unions, notably ASTMS, CPSA, UCATT and NALGO, have donated generously to the strike fund. The TGWU's appeal for money also raised enough to double the £6 per week strike pay for a few weeks

Mahboob, of the strike committee, says thay if they win, they'll go back to work in Garners' Mayfair restaurant. If they lose they'll certainly be blacklisted. One supporter said that, like John Bruce, blacklisted for his pains in the Metropole dispute (he has to do agency work), they've probably been blacklisted in other parts of the catering industry already.

Despite the length of the strike, the strikers remain remarkably determined. Whether it's possible to win a strike like Garners without concerted union support remains doubtful. When the Portuguese workers walked out of Saks, they were invited to join the strike by the Whitcomb Strest pickets. They refused. "You don't know how to run strikes in this country", they told them. "If this was Portugal, we'd be spray-painting the windows and dumping shift in the doorways."

Stake Out 2, the second Garners' mass ploket, is on 27th January, the smallversary of the strike. It's on from 12-3pm and 6-10.30pm at the eleven Garners' branches still open. Pickets are asked to assemble at 288, Oxford Street at 11.30sm for the lunchtime session, and 56, Whitcomb Street for the evening, if you want more information on the picket, or if you're interested in getting involved in the strike, contact the strike committee at 17/15 Henrietta Street, London WCZ --- It's the TGWU satering office -- or ring them on 01-246-1058.

AS A TEENAGER I got very confused by my experiences of the T&G. My first job on leaving school was in the photographic processing factory in Birmingham. Munns Brothers was an outfit then not unlike Grunwick, but meaner. It had its own George Ward, a man called Willey, who used to stand by the "canteen" door to make sure no-one went in before the hooter went, and so on. No unions, of course until the van drivers walked out.

The drivers, six of them, trooped down to the local T&G office, and got signed up. Their strike was declared official. Willey got scabs in. After three weeks, with no support, the drivers gave up, and were magnanimously given their jobs back, at the same pay etc. And I, as a wide-eyed 16-year-old (earning 1s 9d. an hour in old money) wondered how this man had beaten the mightiest union in the land.

Three years later, as a student, I had a holiday job and actually joined the T&G. I was a deck hand at a big British Road Services depot. Closed shop, no messing about. In eight weeks we had half a dozen stoppages, over tea breaks, being expected to work, and so on. We got paid for overtime we never worked, including for Saturday mornings, when the yard was closed. We had the strength of the union around us all right.

My first job in journalism was for Tribune, a Labour Party paper. I wrote leading articles and things. I wrote one about the transfer of freight from road to rail; a political issue of a fairly safe sort. At that time Jack Jones (then deputy general secretary of the T&G) was a director of Tribune. He was furious about the article. He raged up and down about how it was anti-union, jeopardising lorry drivers' jobs, and brooked no social arguments about reducing the load on the roads or the power of the private haulage contractors against the public rail service ecological arguments just didn't come

Now I know that there's nothing confusing about these different experiences. They summed up the T&G as it always has been and always will be. A great union if you're a docker, a lorry driver, or work in the motor industry. A token union if you're in a small section, if you're poorly organised, in an industry that treats workers like particular shit - like catering.

The Garners strikers have had to fight the union as well as Margolis. Last July, Margolis, in his magnanimous way, offered to take back 13 of the then 84 strikers; he would decide which 13. They would have the right to be represented by the union in future, but not recognition. The other 71 would have £8,000 compensation to share out between them.

The strike committee rejected the offer flat. The T&G Number One Region pressed them strongly to accept. It would have been a nasty little problem off its hands. The sort of problem the union's been having to face too often, which it finds acutely embarrassing.

There's been a whole succession of them. In catering, the various Trust House Forte disputes, the Playboy Club, Talk of the Town, the Les Amb-

Does Moss give a toss?



assadeurs club, the Wimpy Bar, and Texas and Aberdeen Steakhouse chains. In the betting industry, there's been the Newmarket stable lads, and a big dispute that hardly impinged on English labour consciousness, the West of Scotland Ladbrokes dispute of 1975.

All these disputes have several things in common: they all started when non-unionised workers, finally pissed off with their conditions, walked out and approached the T&G; they all dragged on for a long time, with very little union support, and after union exhortations to go back to work, and the issues being dragged through arbitration, industrial tribunals, and such like, they collapsed. And, had the union used its muscle, they could have been over in days.

Don't just take my word for it. The labour reporter of The Times wrote, with hardly a gloat, apropos the Claridges dispute (a GMWU botch-up, that one) last year: "Several factors have hindered the unions, including their own reluctance to fight for members in hotels and catering".

Two hundred and eighty betting shop workers for Ladbrokes struck in

1975. They wanted to be paid £30 per week. The T&G kept them out for six months without strike pay, and only got them to slink back after one of them won an industrial tribunal case with minimal gain. The national officer handling the dispute was Moss Evans. This dispute ran a close second to the famous Newmarket fiasco, when 350 "lads" (some were lasses) came out over sackings and conditions: they were paid less than the cost of keeping the horses they kept. After five months there were informal-style talks between Jack Jones and reactionary aristocrats of the turf, from which a "settlement" was botched together. The lads were supposed to get a bigger share of the prize money, and wage negotiation machinery was set up. They didn't get the £3 a week they were demanding. In terms of employment relations they got nothing.

The irony of the catering disputes is that the union could, if it cared, do well out of it. With more than a million workers, the industry has only a few thousand unionised. And when a dispute like Garners takes off, thousands of underpaid, often immigrant, workers flock to the T&G as their only hope to get betrayed.

There was almost a prospect of national action, with nationwide blacking of the big employers, over the wave of disputes in THF last year. There were four parallel strikes, all involving a minority of workers in each place, all over dismissals of people trying to get the union together. Hotels in London, Oxford and Sheffield, and a nightclub in Birmingham.

In the Midland disputes, which were handled by regional organiser Alan Law, there was some action, with petrol supplies to THF motorway service stations cut off, but Jack Jones personally intervened to prevent a shop stewards' initiative for a National Action Group getting off the ground. All the actions petered out.

Meanwhile, over the past few years, the T&G has organised to free the Pentonville dockers, to get the Labour Government to promote the Dock Labour Act, and blacked inland ports opened by British Rail to handle containers, to protect dock jobs. As the Leveller went to press, it is giving backing to the haulage strike. It blacked Ford imports and exports during last year's strike, to support Ford workers.

Such national blacking could have starved out Cyril Margolis before breakfast, won the THF and Ladbrokes disputes had it been applied to all their diversified establishments.

But migrant catering workers carry no weight within the T&G. The International Branch in London, to which most belong, is a ghetto of underprivilege within the underprivileged. So the Garners strikers enter their second year with little prospect of getting what they wanted from the union they approached, huddling outside the steak bars - in groups of six. Six because the union agreed with police demands to restrict the size of pickets, and has given no assistance to strikers' supporters who have been arrested and convicted for exceeding that number.

Dread beat 'n blood

Non-Rastafarian reggae artist, poet, member of the Race Today collective and freelance journalist, Linton Kwesi Johnson has to his name a book of poetry, an LP and a Franco Rosso film — all titled "Dread, Beat And Blood". Linton's admirers include John Lydon (the Rotten one), whose band Public Image Ltd are headlining a Race Today benefit in Manchester, and Ian Walker who interviewed him.

How did you start writing poetry?

At school I wasn't very interested in poetry. I became interested in poetry when I read a book called Souls of Black Folk written by W E B Dubois who has experience of black Americans in their emancipation. It was a very very moving book and I just had to put down something on paper after reading the book and this took some kind of poetic form you know and I have been writing ever since.

How many years ago was that?

That was almost ten years ago and as I began to write more I began to get more interested in literature, I didn't know there was all this body of black American and Caribbean literature which I could have gone to and a man named John Lerose who runs an independent black publishing house introduced me to Carib bean, African and black American literature, and gave me some poetry books to read and then I found after a while I started to copy the style of the people I was reading.

When I first started to write poetry, my main poetic influence was the bible, because that was the only poetry that I had ever read and loved, like Song of Solomon and Psalms and so on.

After a while I found the things that I really wanted to write about now I couldn't really express them within the limitations of the English language and so I just started work on the Jamaican creole, which is like my first language and the everyday language of the community in which I live and the one which black people understand and relate to.

Music has always been a great love of mine, I found that as I wrote more poetry, music began to creep into the poetry more and more and more, until it reached a stage that whenever a line came into my head it always came with a beat and a rhythm. In 1973 I had written a thing called Voices of the Living and the Dead, which is like a poem and we staged it with live Rastafarian music and some slides and dancing and the guys who played the music decided to form a group of poets and musicians and the group was called Rasta Love.

I used to do the poetry and them guys used to play the drums and we would sing Rasta songs and chants. But after a while the group broke up because there was too much conflict you know from blacks who wanted to just play strictly Rasta music and I wanted my poetry with drums and you know, and some people wanted to play Reggae music, but I kept on reading my poetry all over the place. People kept on saying your poems sound so musical why don't you set some of them to music. So it was a logical element of my poetry to set them to music.

How did you get the recording contract with Virgin?

A guy named John Varnem was working for Virgin in promotions and when he got involved in reggae he contacted me to do some copy for them and I have been kind of working for the company on that basis. It is through that relationship that I made the recording move.

How have your dealings been with Virgin?

As an artist very unsatisfactory.

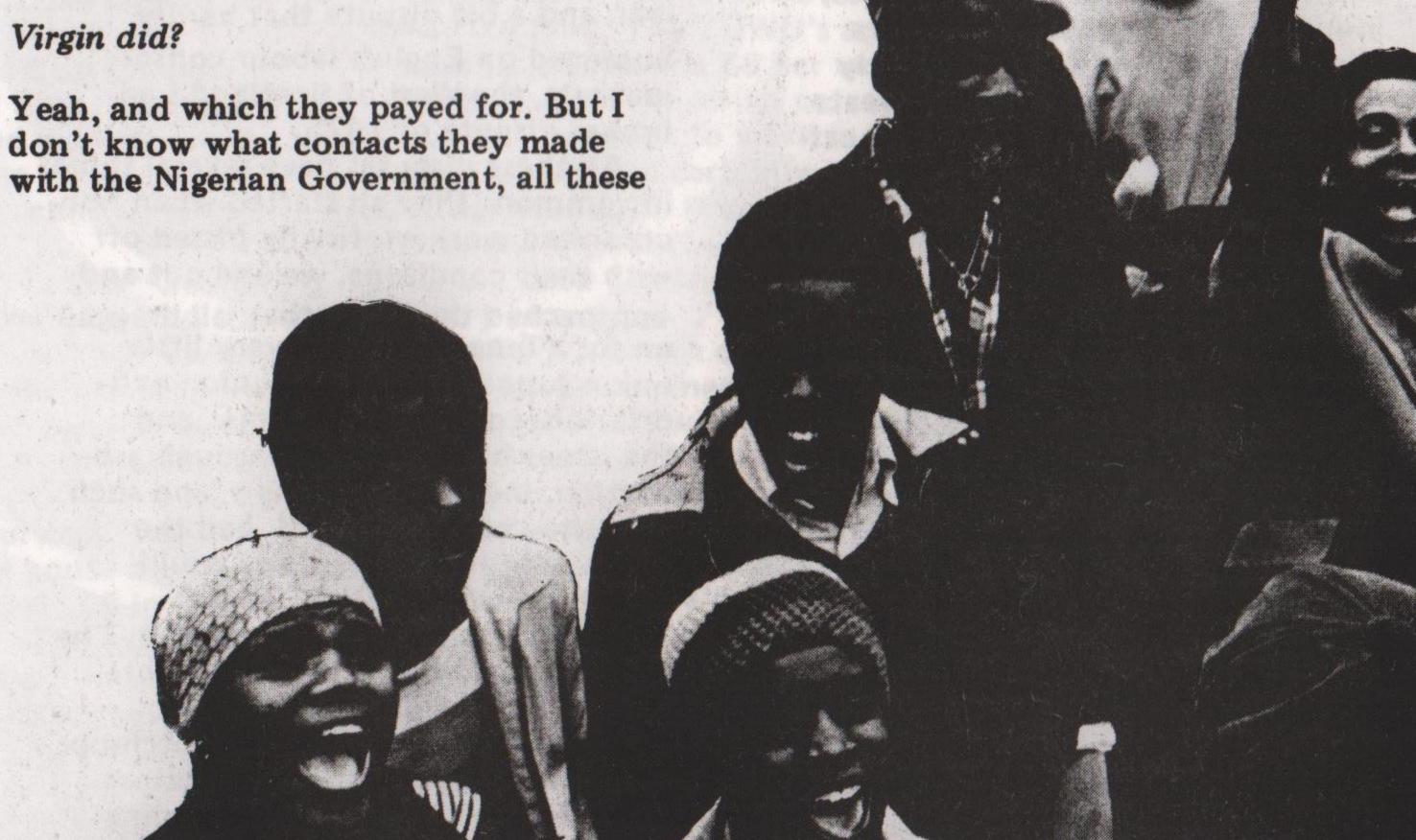
Because they have a very mercenary attitude towards reggae music you know. The actual guy who runs the label called Jumbo, he is a pretty nice guy and that you know but the problem with Jumbo is that he has no power and the people who have the power don't really know nothing about the music and don't understand it.

They have expert knowledge available to them but they don't want to use it. And its kind of like a colonialist mentality towards reggae, like Virgin they were very heavily involved in reggae because there was a big market for it in Africa and Nigeria particularly.

I thought it was because reggae was becoming hip . . .

It started out like that with Peter Tosh when they put out a Peter Tosh album and a couple of other things, but then they discovered a market in Nigeria. In fact they even had their own radio programme in Nigeria.

Virgin did?



governments are so fucking corrupt. I don't know who they made their contact with but anyway what happened eventually was they were having a lot of foreign exchange problems in Nigeria and so they just clamped down on the imports. So Virgin just closed down. They have dropped 90% of their reggae acts.

They are still running Front Line?

They are still running Front Line but like they are only putting out stuff that they have had for the last year. I don't think in that respect they are any different from any other record company. You know they are in it to make money and if the product can sell . . .

So where do you mostly recite your poems or play your music now? Do you do much gigging?

Not gigging, not really. I have only done three. But poetry readings I have been doing them for years since 1968 I have been doing poetry. Black youth clubs, schools, colleges you know, political rallies and meetings that kind of thing. I did one last year at Central Hall Westminster. The ALCARF (All London Campaign Against Racism and Fascism) rally. Them kind of things, community

Do you get a good response from black kids? Have you got black kids interested in writing themselves?

Yeah, I used to run some writing workshops, I did one in Peterborough and I did one here at a local youth club which I used to go to, it is still my youth club . . .

What for you is the point of your writing poetry?

Well firstly, like any art form it is entertainment. And I write because I feel I have to write and the things which I have to say and need to be said. I just say them and I hope that other people can get something out of it, or maybe relate to their own experience, or those who are outside that experience might get some insight into it.

But I don't see it as kind of like bringing about some radical changes with my poetry. I just write something I need to say and which need to be said and I say them in my way.

Yeah. Do you have a political position

My political position is that of Race Today's. The position is that we didn't come alive in Britain: our struggle, which our parents, like my parents' generation waged, and their parents' generation waged against British colonialism and that history, and that struggle didn't end when we had independence because what happened was that struggle was in fact repeated and resulted in the institution of petty-bourgeois governments.

Then when we got on the ships and the planes to come to Britain, our history didn't end there, but that we bought that history with us to Britain. And we see the struggle of blacks in Britain in that kind of colonial context. We see black workers and Asian workers in Britain as a part of an international labour movement, international working class. Like you have Caribbean workers in America, Canada, Britain, you have people from some of the African colonies in France, Belgium, Holland.

We know that we are here to stay and we believe that we have to organise ourselves to make the men and women which we want for ourselves.

Organise yourselves independently of the white working class?

That is our guiding principle of organising. Independent, radical and revolutionary organisation of blacks and Asians. We are in no sense isolationists, we don't want to cut ourselves off from the white working class in Britain because we know that only the working class can bring about revolutionary change, and we are part of

But at the same time we have a history which is valid and we have in the past made limited contact with white working class organisations and I am sure we will continue to do so in the future. But it is like you know you have a lot of white left organisations who sort of say to us, we are the vanguard of the white working class in Britain. You can make contact with the white working classes through us on our terms, which is like what the SWP seem to be saying to us.

My position is Race Today's position: the independent, revolutionary organisation of blacks. That is what Race Today is actively involved in, in building those kinds of organisations.

You are not actually hostile towards the white ultra-left organisations?

You sometimes get the impression that black groups do get pissed off with white lefties coming along and trying to tell them what the correct line is.

Oh yeah . . . we are definitely pissed off with that. It's a kind of liberalism you know. What it boils down to is that blacks can't do nothing for themselves, that we haven't got hands and feet and brains like everybody else and that we ar some kind of helpless victims. Like the SWP are under some illusion that they are

fighting a war against fascism on behalf of blacks in Britain. I think they are fooling

Things like the Anti-Nazi League and Rock Against Racism have been organised by white people, and with a lot of support. How do you feel about that?

That's OK

You don't think that that's paternalist in the same . . .

It is paternalist, and opportunist at the same time. I don't think that all those people Rock Against Racism mobilise, I don't think that constitutes any political mobilisation. As far as I am concerned people would have come out because there is a lot of young people who are bored musically and fed up politically and living in a kind of society which ain't offering them nothing. It is just an occasion for them to go out and have a good time.

That's political in a way isn't it? It is political if kids are wearing ANL badges, it's at least some contact with politics which they didn't have before.

Some contact with politics but I mean what does it mean in the long . . . in the final analysis. In the final analysis right, is black who want to defend themselves against racist attacks.

When Altab Ali was having his throat cut, where the fuck was the Anti Nazi League and the SWP you know? When that kid got stabbed up in Hackney the other day, where were they? In the final analysis I mean, it is all very good and nice for them to keep up demonstrations and rallies and fight the National Front, but in the final analysis its we who have to defend ourselves against them. And you know, I think it is a very patronising attitude for the white left to take when they come out and say, you know like, they are fighting our struggles for us. They are not doing that. They are fooling themselves if they believe that.

To be fair to people like Rock Against Racism they did say that its not just blacks under threat, it's us, it's anyone who is a bit different. Anyone who is anti-authoritarian, anyone who likes rock music.

Sure, those kind of things have their validity you know, I am not putting down the concept you know.

Yeah . . . I want to ask you about the Rastafarianism and what you think about that? Why is it so popular with all the young black kids in Brixton and Hackney?

Well given the colonial context of blacks in Britain right, and given the fact they are more or less a lot of youths who are disaffected and disillusioned with what British society has to offer them, right? Given the power of the sentiments behind the anti-establishment and anti-colonial, and in some cases, anti-white sentiments expressed in the music you know, given those factors it is not surprising.

And the fact that reggae music plays such an integral part in our social and

cultural lives and that the main vehicle for the propagation of Rastafarianism ideas is in reggae music.

Has that always been the case, have Rastafarianism and reggae always gone along side by side?

Since the music came in, since there has been a recording industry in Jamaica yes. In fact the whole popularisation of Rasta has come through reggae, in fact you will find there are Rastas in Trinidad, in Grenada, even in Nigeria.

Front Line they get fan mail from people who like to listen to music and want to know how to become a Rasta you know. It has become a sort of byproduct of the whole music culture. But Rastafarianism in its proper context you see in Jamaica has its origin in anticolonialist movements of the 20s and 30s right.

And like many other anti-colonialist movements all over the world it took on religious proportions. And the fact it is still such a powerful force in Jamaica today means that the conditions which gave rise to it haven't changed and I think another reason for its survival and its pervasiveness again is that it is the only movement in the whole history of Jamaica which has brought a sense of dignity and awareness of heritage to a mass of black Jamaicans.

So in a way you think it has popularised fairly radical ideas and they have emerged in this sort of jumbled up form?

Absolutely, but the popularisation I think is the most important thing. I think the best way to see Rasta now in Britain is to see it as a part of the whole reggae music sub-culture.

For example another way of seeing it is as the ideology of reggae music, a lot of reggae musicians seem to think that once you become a reggae artist you have to automatically accept or adopt that ideology which is the Rasta ideology. But people tend to criticise Rasta because they think of it in terms of a political doctrine which offers some kind of a solution. I think it is a mistake to see it in those terms.

The problem is that it is not always that easy for people to see Rasta in some colonial context and people do inevitably in a way, get pissed off by the sexism of Rastafarians.

People get very angry about it and they think well fuck this Rasta, it sucks, its bullshit. It's just white liberals who pretend its OK. Do you know what I mean? And people have been getting angry about it recently.

They have every right to.

So I mean how would you respond to that to a feminist?

Well what can I say, that part of the Rasta doctrine comes from the bible, the Old Testament, you know, its part and parcel of their doctrine. I mean its backwardness, reactionary, you know. But people only get uptight about it because they see Rastas as some kind of political ideology. It's not. It used to be, it isn't any more.

Maybe it just gives people a kind of style, an identity, hip.



YOUT SCENE

last satdey I neva dey pan no faam, so I decide fe tek a walk doun a BRIXTON. an see wha gwane.

de bredrin dem stan-up outside a HIP CITY, as usual, a look pretty; dem a laaf big laaf dem a talk dread talk dem a shuv an shuffle dem feet, soakin in de sweet MUSICAL BEAT.

but when nite come policeman run dem dung; beat dem dung a grung, kick dem ass, sen dem pass justice to prison walls of gloom.

but de bredda dem a scank; dem naw rab bank; is packit dem a pick an is woman dem a lick an is run dem a run when de WICKED come.

Of course, its all those things. In Jamaica its the beginnings of a kind of national philosophy, I think we are only the region in the Caribbean to develop that kind of philosophy and outlook on life. But Rasta in 1978 it's like Marcus Garvey, its backwardness. It belongs to another time in history gone by.

But the title of your film "Dread, Beat and Blood" sort of evokes the images of

Dread and Beat . . . well that title is the title of a poem, it's a poem about some incidents that I witnessed in Brixton. where a sound system was playing some music and a fight broke out and somebody got cut, got his throat cut. And Dread, Beat and Blood were like the central images of that experience. And I think it works as a kind of umbrella term to describe that whole atmosphere, music, culture and everyday experience on the streets. If a policeman comes up to you and pokes a fucking baton in your ribs thats Dread . .

Dreadful. . . How did you feel about the film, I've seen it.

People keep asking me that you know, but its very difficult to say because like me seeing myself, sometimes I say to myself yes thats alright, other bits I think I could have said that a bit better, or maybe I shouldn't have said that I should have said this. You get embarrassed by little bits of it, but I think stepping outside of it and seeing it as a film, I think Franco Rosso is a very very perceptive film-maker. I think he is probably the best film-maker in the business and I think he has kept some very powerful images to bring over the poems and to express the context out of which the poetry is coming.

How did you feel doing your stuff at the Rainbow, the Public Image gig, before a load of punks? Were there many black kids there?

No, most of the blacks there were my mob that came with me or came to see me. It was an experience, a new experience, I quite enjoyed it. I mean after the horrors of Christmas Day which was a complete disaster you know I sort of woke up Boxing Day morning feeling depressed and thinking to myself oh fuck I will have to go through this again.

But on Boxing Day you know everything came together, it was a great show. Public Image, man, their set was short but fantastic man. I think that John he could be the biggest thing in the world, the music, the guy is so powerful. I sort of see him in the same light as like Elvis Presley, how he just came and turned white America onto rhythm and blues or Mick Jagger in the 60s. That's how I see John now in the 70s you know. I think he needs some more serious and sensitive people around him now.

"Creation for Liberation". A black community benefit for Race Today International at Bellevue, Manchester, on Friday 23 Feb. With, Public Image Ltd., Merger, The Pop Group and Linton Kwesi Johnson. £3.50

1978 WAS the year modern megastars like Elvis Costello and the Clash stood under Rock Against Racism banners, the year left groups incorporated some at least formal notion of "fun" into their political practice and, unsurprisingly in a year when it became unhip to be over 25, a rash of new youth papers started stacking up the shelves at your friendly neighbourhood left bookstore.

The Youth Organisation!!!)

reproduces the same myths:

and men". Revolution has

jumped onto a cultural band-

wagon with a message that is

undiluted economism(this was

hotly denied by its temporary

editor, Redmond O'Neill, but

Apart from decent letters

erence between Revolution 1

and 2. In fact the editorial in

the proof of the pudding

there's not too much diff-

is mysteriously repeated

At what point does the

redundant? Revolution

future tense become

verbatim in issue 2.

has more music

coverage than

Rebel but

Redmond...).

"Capitalism divides us-black

Revolution is about as

imaginative as Rebel and

In 1978 Red Rebel (SWP youth organisation), Revolution (independent youth organisation, but initiated by IMG), Skan (Skools Against The Nazis) and Blot(Paper of the National Union of School Students) were born, joining the long established YCL paper Challenge and the RAR fanzine, Temporary Hoarding, which was launched in May '77.

Rebel, like all other mags, is fanzine-influenced D.I.Y. design with wonky columns, cut out typeset copy, handwritten/stencilled headlines and pics of moody young men leaning against walls smoking Woodbines. Trouble is, Rebel is more of an SWP fanzine ("To do all these

things we need a

were born in.

Rebel is part of the than it is a magazine Q. "From our experience we've by/for/about youth. found that many black youth

November's issue consists of "Nazi scum" rhetoric, roundthe-Rebels'-branches reports, two stories about youth and the police/army, a report on Astrid Proll and "Iran's kids" plus a piece on football. The only acknowledgement of its stylistic roots is something on Tom Robinson's Blue Murder, his song about Liddle Towers.

Rebel's temporary editor Roger Green, "is that Rebel is much more closely tied to the SWP while Revolution is more like If you place selling the party Socialist Challenge. They think above exposing ideas or a youth organisation can exist communicating experience, like in its own right. We think it Rebel does, you wind up must be the youth section of a with Trotskyist PR, not left revolutionary party." But both journalism. Roger Green and Redmond O' Its message is, simply, that Neill were falling over themselves capitalism is the root of all to be comradely, saying they evil(including sexism, girls and welcomed each other's public boys) and must perforce be ations and that in certain parts overthrown by the Party. And of the country, like Newcastle the rah-rah rhetoric also and Leeds, the two organisations necessitates the telling of were already working together. Fibs, like the one over Revolution is supported by Big Rebel's editorial which says, Flame and the International "Youth United For The Socialist Alliance. Revolution" - the kind of Rebel and Revolution have, wishful thinking that doesn' for sure, attracted some support fool anyone whatever year they to their mastheads, but they

would be more attractive still In its title and function(Build if they didn't both reduce reality

to a series of slogans. Intense (where else?) debates are taking place amongst youth itself about such things as sexism in music (from Sham '69 to Rasta), consumerism, fashion and sex, contradictions between punk/music press/music business, football and violence, class and political commitment, etc. These debates are more honestly reflected in the letters page of NME than they are in all eight pages of & white, young and old, women

Rebel, all twelve of Revolution. Challenge has been the organ of the Young Communist Leagu since 1935. In recent times, it flowered during the 60's youth movement before going into decline until about six months ago, according to editor Chris Horrie, when layouts and writing styles were pepped up.

Less didactic in tone than its Trotskyist stablemates Challenge's articles seem to be issue 1, "What We'll Stand For" penned by Real Young

People.

a high-farce

demon stration

of what happens when

Trotskyist monomania meets

up with freewheeling hipness.

reggae band, Aswad, in issue 1

want to see a new black revolu-

A"You mean like a political

Rebel and Revolution," said

tionary party formed"

Q"Yes." And so on.

thing?"

Sample from interview with

In its explainingthe-issues-of-theday-to-young-folks sections it avoids the dogmatic rantings and ravings of the Rebelution pair and also scores more heav-

ily on wit and clarity. The YCL's political position only surfaces now and again, but is elaborated more fully in a recent pamphlet, Our Future, a dreary application of Broad Democratic Alliance principles to youth. And in March a new theoretical journal-that-they'drather-call-a-magazine, Real Life, will be published. One of the people involved, Dave Warneck, says, "it will examine the specifity of youth politics "The main difference between in a way not talked about by the left."

Best title, best layout award goes sans doute to Temporary Hoarding, about which I have salivated before (issue 16). Suffice to say now that it showed how to successfully board a bandwagon, launching itself into the politrock arena with style and panache, and capturing the spirit of the moment.

I haven't seen the latest issue (mainly because it wasn't published at the time of going to press) but it will be a critical year for RAR and, if the bubble is not to burst, Temporary Hoarding will have to become something more than a single-issue mag. The "It's our music and they ain't going to take it away" warhorse must be ready for the knacker's yard there are other things to say about rock and politics.

Temporary Hoarding should also stop responding to the crita of sexism at RAR gigs with a journalistic shrug of the shoulders. One result of RAR giving the ANL the opportunity to be mor than a list of establishment worthies is the magazine Skan (Its editor made monkeys out of some redneck headmaster on

BBC's Nationwide, after the 'swearing" furore caused the exit of name ANL members like Brian Clough, Dave Allen and Michael Parkinson). Skan is a raunchy mag with a nice amateurish feel, a lively letters page, some witty graphics (like a spot-the-spud-being-chuckedat-the-NF comp) and poetry of mixed quality.

But like Temporary Hoarding, Skan will come up against the problem that can screw up any single-issue mag, that of development. You can only scream bash-the-fash so many times. Some think if you scream at all you're reproducing macho tendencies in the anti-fash movement. One thing's for sure, momentum is rarely maintained by repetition.

Of the whole batch of new youth mags, NUSS' Blot is by far the most exciting and the reading of it by school students should produce extreme feelings of political arousal. Its editorial sets the tone: "Go into any playground and listen, what you'll hear is what's in this paper. This paper is about school, about being taught, about being young. We hope you'll like it we're sorry if you don't, the school students who've written this paper have written about their own experiences - their ow fears and hopes- the aim of the mag is to tell it how it is and change it." A "nice one Gulbenkian" credit acknowledges where some of the greenbacks come

What follows are articles on the teachers' strike, bunking off, wanking, school uniform/exams rules/punishment/sex discrimination, how to set up a RAR gig an illustrated guide to contraception and a polemic against monogamy. All this and more in the first fab ish and all for the price of half a Mars bar.

Blot is custom-built to provide school students with a powerful range of offensive weapons with which to attack the tedious moralising of parents and teachers, the petty rules and taboos circumscribing youth's school/home/leisure/ sexual lives. The kind of politicisation which proceeds from experience, rather than talking down to experience (like Rebelution. Ian Walker.

Family: part one

Mummy, mummy, why are families so boring and repressive?' 'Don't worry darling. You'll understand when you're older.' (Hope I die before I get old.) Talking 'bout our generations means talking 'bout that funny little human unit known as the F-A-M-I-L-Y (all together now?). Accordingly The Leveller brings you seven pages of FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT.

Two collective members provide a personal history of nuclear warfare. There's an illustrated guide to those attempts to dress the family up in Sunday-best long-words theory. And one woman's idea of an alternative plus family fax and figures.

Long way from home

I WAS my Mum's second child by her first husband, a nice man who ran a restaurant. But my real 'Dad' was my mother's second husband. He was the man who took the putty and shaped it; with my Mum he gave me my interests and emotions. My Mum's first husband was more like an uncle. He gave me presents, lavished uncritical love on me and patted my head

The divorce was kept pretty hush-hush in family circles for many years. Later when I was in my last year at school my Mum visited me during one of my 'troublesome phases' and

told me the whole truth.

We sat in a hired car parked in a side street of the depressing little market town where I was at boarding school. She told me that I was not actually her first husband's child but was that of a lover she had during her first marriage.

Churned up by the memory she burst into tears. Was this the cause of my attitude to my parents? Was it because of this I wrote nasty letters home? No, it wasn't. But I had discovered that my biological father was a man I had never seen or met. I wasn't very curious about him because everything I fought about with my family, I knew couldn't be blamed on him.

Every family has its secrets—the still-born child, an illegitimate daughter adopted, a black sheep relative—something or someone that is never talked about. The children can't be told of it until they're grown up. These mutations threaten the harmonious vision of the family.

WHEN I GROW UP

I was sent to a minor public school in Dorset. It was an A levels factory. In my first year I was in the B stream so my parents kept up a steady pressure on me to work harder to get in the A stream. To get me to work harder, a combination of threats and blackmail was used. I was offered a train set if I was moved into the A stream. The alternative if I failed was only darkly hinted at.

Having got into the A stream, a new pressure was introduced. What did I want to be? This pressure was induced by cosy chats with my father. The pay-off only came later when I discovered I was actually meant to be taking the whole thing seriously. To start with I was going to be a diplomat, then an overseas banker and after that almost anything my parents cared to suggest so long as they thought it was a good job.

My real ambition was to be a writer, I was going to write novels and then later, plays. But no-one, not even I, could take that ambition seriously. So I drifted through pretending I might want to become a management trainee and doing nothing about it.

But the truth was that my own success ran out. I had my biggest disappointments at sixteen. I failed to get a big part in the school play (too nervous) and I didn't become one of the editors of the school magazine (not witty enough).

In my disappointment I blamed my parents who had fed my hopes. I wrote them bitter

letters complaining. What was even worse for my parents was that my letters were infrequent. I became virulently anti-public school. To placate me, my parents held out the possibility of going to a local school when they were back in England.

Being anti-public school was the first step down the road to becoming a socialist. I wasn't political at the time but my Mum would quiz me: 'Are you a communist? Why do you buy books in Collets when you're in London? It's a communist bookshop.'

DOING WHAT YOU'RE TOLD

There was a difference in attitudes to discipline between my Mum's first husband and her second (who I think of as Dad) which I was just old enough to remember. I refused to eat tomatoes. My Dad said I would get a beating for refusing to eat tomatoes and in future whenever I didn't do what I was told I would get a beating.

In the family wisdom, my youngest sister, Sue, got off lightest because after years of beating me and to a lesser extent my younger brother, Steve, my Dad had altered his views. But it was really because the world had changed. Beating children—especially girls—was no longer something recommended.

My brother who is five years younger than me, used to complain during his 'troublesome phase' that my parents beat him a lot. They claimed he made it all up. Whether he did or not, he was actually describing the atmosphere where every order was backed up with the threat of a 'clip round the earhole'.

I used to give him a 'clip round the earhole'. Part of the responsibility of getting older was looking after my brother and sister. I learned how to keep them in line. Just as at school, the system of prefects meant that you learned to control large numbers of people. You were part of a mini-ruling class; learning to take and give orders.

ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

All my family held their emotions in tight check. If you joked about British stiff upper lip to them, they'd probably think you were talking about someone else. My Dad didn't talk to me about how he felt. We talked politics and what was happening in the world. If my hair was too long, my Mum asked me to get it cut. If pushed, she'd admit that my Dad gave the order: 'But he can't tell you himself because he'd only get angry.'

Although there were arguments, everyone wished they would go away. There'd be a lot of shouting by my Dad and tears from my Mum and occasionally from us, and minutes later with all that atmosphere pressing down on us, we were all trying to joke and pretend it hadn't happened. Family harmony was important.

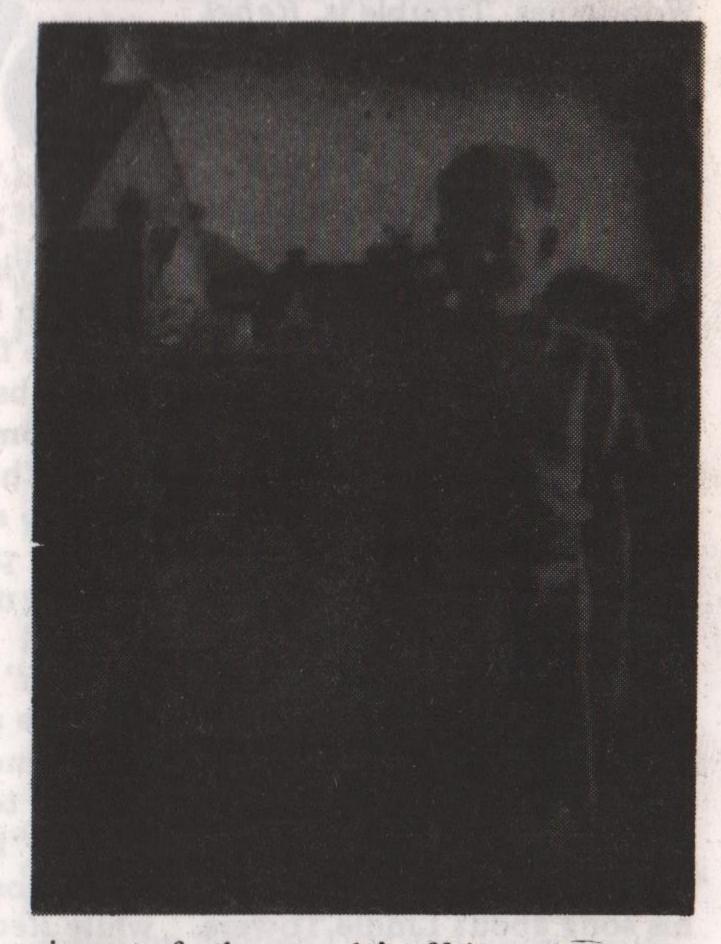
BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS

My Dad doesn't like homosexuals. I've necer actually asked him but I guess he wouldn't. Noel Coward was a 'disgusting pooftah' to

him and he was always making jokes about people who were thought to be homosexuals in the army where he worked. When I was an awkward, spotty adolescent, my Mum would tell me to swing my arms when I walked. It looked manly.

I started having affairs with boys in junior school section of my public school where sexuality was pretty freewheeling and not very closely monitored. When I went into the senior school I repressed my homosexuality and applied my wit to hounding those people whose affairs became public knowledge.

Underneath this facade, I was frightened. I would gaze longingly and lustfully at the pretty boys during chapel services and write long, meaningful letters to my platonic girlfriend who was in Germany. The shock of finding one of my close friends in bed with his boyfriend made me stop taking the



piss out of other people's affairs and get my own boyfriend.

In a very understated way, my parents were worried that I didn't have girlfriends. But all through the years I had some confidence in myself, I wasn't allowed out. Later, with greater freedom, I couldn't face the ordeal. The rare times I tried I felt myself go redder and redder, as my Mum asked some unfortunate girl where she was at school and what she wanted to be.

But this uncertainty over my own sexuality was at the heart of my own adolescent crisis. I read Freud early on and was afraid of touching my mother. It was a crisis of my ability to be a man. I was given a scooter and although hopeless at riding it, I expected to be able to ride it straight away. I presumed that being a man was something that came naturally as you got older.

In the long summer before I left home, my Mum brother and sister were all closeted in the family house; a country cottage, 200 yard off the road and miles from any other people. It was a small house that gave none of us any opportunity to escape each other. The whole summer seemed to be taken up with arguments between my Mum and I.

One day, after one of these, where my inexperience and lack of authority were losing me an absurd disagreement about what sort of job I should try for, I stormed off. As I got further from the house I decided to run away on impulse.

I had carried that impulse with me from when I was much younger. When things seemed to get bad at home, I would plan to run away to my Mum's first husband; the dream land where I was always patted on the head and given presents.

Now with only a light sweater and 2p in my pocket I actually did it. I walked over 30 miles without any idea of what I was doing or where I was going. I rolled down a large woodland bank like a kid and collapsed at the bottom in tears of rage and frustration. The first real thing I had done since leaving school to affect my life was not going to change anything. I spent a night sleeping rough and returned home in the morning. The village copper came round in the afternoon and gave me a quiet chat, saying if I felt upset again, I should go and have a chat with him.

Five years later when I told my Mum about my homosexuality at school, she burst into tears. She took the blame on herself, which she often did regardless of circumstances. Having recovered enough to question me, she asked:

'Were you forced to do it by older boys?'
'No, I actually enjoyed it myself.'

for which he, in turn, was hit. My Mum kept a soft spot in her heart for him but it was the love you give lame dogs and he saw through it.

He seemed neither ambitious nor bright. To mould him he was sent to prep school against his wishes. He was expelled and came back in disgrace. He was violent and would often lock himself in his bedroom. He felt robbed of his Mum's love was my Mum's conclusion. She admitted guilt and burst into tears at being unable to deal with him. He was expelled from two more schools before they gave up trying to get him O levels. A psychiatrist was privately consulted: 'The boy has an emotional block. When that clears, you'll find he'll probably get better at academic work.'

My visits home during this period were like group therapy sessions, with me as group leader.: 'You're always so calm and in control,' my mother used to say. But I wasn't lancing the boil, only trying to keep everyone talking to each other.

Eventually, their patience exhausted, he was consigned to a Secondary Mod. He decided to run away. This was supposed to be all my fault as I had set the example by running away myself.

The joke was that he was better at it. He came to stay with me in my London flat and I persuaded my parents to let him stay for a while to cool out. He was under a care order but they agreed not to put the police on to him.

His face would darken when he talked about home. He didn't say very clearly why he wanted to leave home but the reasons came through loud and clear. He hated the constant surveillance, the rigidly held mealtimes and the approval or disapproval which my Mum

When he left home he came back to London and I still feel close to him. He still rages at how Mum can turn the knife in him; asking questions about his job and where he's living. He still gets cross. He now sells second-hand cars and is engaged.

My elder sister became like a distant relative very early on and my younger sister.....

I was close to my younger sister. She once wrote me from her prep school that she was always being punished. I wrote back: 'When you're in charge, you can change the rules.' Her letters were all opened by teachers before she read them so my mild call to arms was transmitted to my parents.

They sent an urgent message to my headmaster to get him to ascertain if I was a
communist. A bizarre interview followed.
I was in my last year at school and the sum
of my rebelliousness was encouraging others
quietly and refusing to punish or beat other
boys. But the fear remained that I would
infect my sister with communism. All these
scares about communism were actually a
form of subliminal advertising which bore fruit
later on.

GOING HOME

I didn't often go home once I had left.

There were inevitable disputes about how often I should and it was eventually cut down to about three or four times a year. I liked the first half hour of these visits and hated the rest.

The break came during the miners' strike. 'What do you think of the miners' strike?' my mother quizzed me. I thought it was great. It came as a real bombshell to her. The world was really falling in. For four years I had carefully concealed my changing politics not wishing to face a row over the Sunday roast.

But now it was out, the horror and disgust were almost twice as strong. She saw a newsclipping in my flat of an Iranian demonstrator being kicked by a West German policeman: 'That's sick. You're unbalanced.' Her main fear after talking to my father about this change of direction was whether I'd been got at. Relations cooled but were not severed.

A Provo bombing campaign did that. I supported the early bombing campaigns. This struck home. My father was in the Army and by now, without having thought of it like that, we were on different sides. If I hadn't thought of it, my Mother was not slow to remind me. What if your father was bombed or shot? What then? The choice was between my family and some abstract philosophy (which idealistic people always got mixed up with) which murdered people in Russia, etc. etc.

I was ordered home to talk about this latest development. The implication was that I'd change my mind when I heard what my Dad had to say. I couldn't face that, so I didn't go.

The final straw was an article in a left-wing magazine about torture in Northern Ireland. I foolishly said I had written for it once. That article was reported in the Daily Telegraph. I had heard all the justifications for this torture; these men were murderers, it wasn't really torture anyway and it was the quickest way to put an end to further senseless killing.

I received an early morning phone call from my Mum. It was a patriotic obscene phone call:

You're a bloody traitor to your country. I nose people you're involved with are communists. You're a bloody red as well I suppose. What about those people who were killed in that coach? Your Dad could have been one of them.

In amongst the high volume abuse was the order that I wasn't to see my younger sister who was visiting London that weekend. They didn't want her being got at. I didn't see my 'sister. I hung up on my Mum. I left the warm embrace of the family.

John Townsend

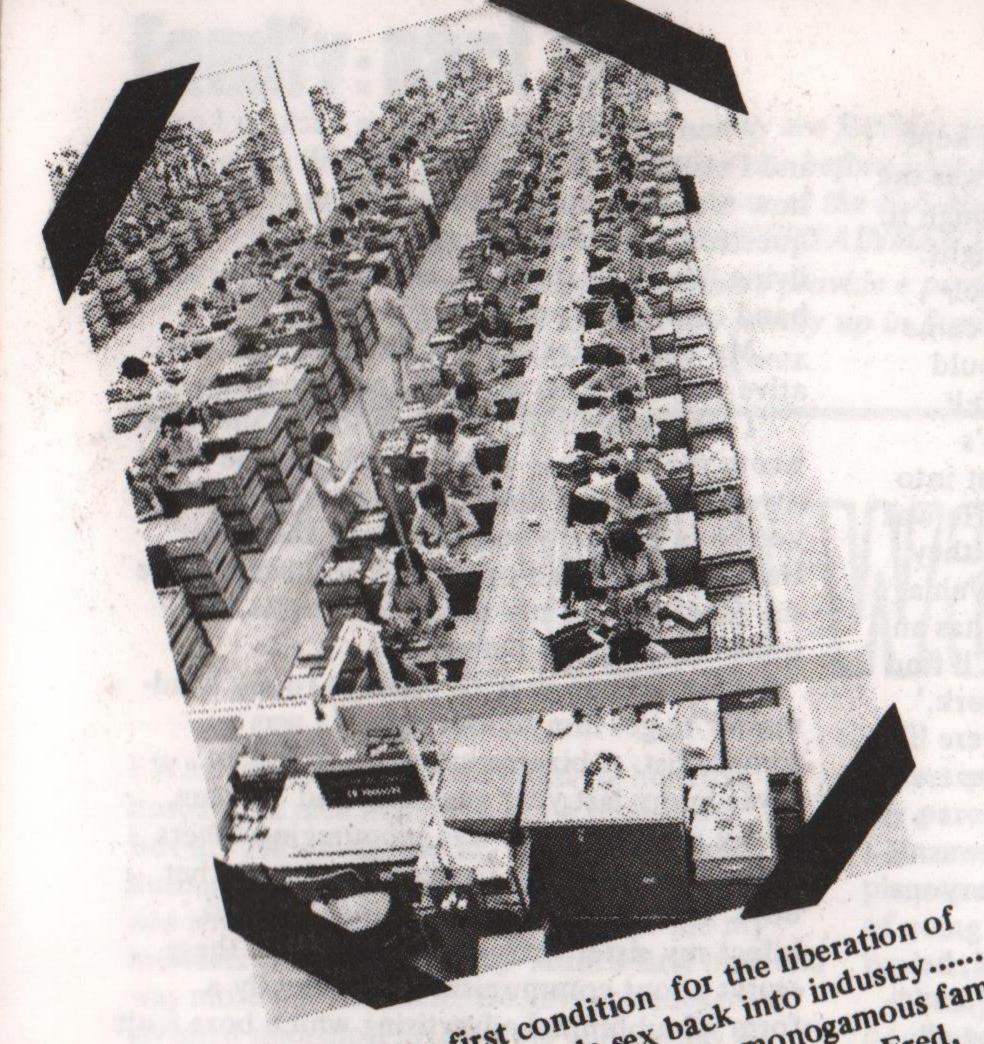
BROTHERS AND SISTERS

I have a younger brother, Steve, and a younger sister, Sue. I also have an older sister, Carol, by my Mother's first marriage. I used to hero-worship Carol. She would tease me and I would end up enraged. I once threatened her with a bread knife. Her word was always believed against mine. In the same way my word was always believed against my brother's. To add to my younger brother's troubles, Sue was quick-witted and sharp enough to steer herself out of the disputes between us. When these disputes blew up, much bickering followed and someone had to be punished for starting it.

That person was often my brother Steve. He was the 'problem child' of the family. He lived in awe of me his elder brother, according me the quiet hero-worship I gave my elder sister. By contrast, he lived in the shadow of my younger sister who beat him hands down in any argument. Frustrated, he would hit her

handed out to her 'problem child'. He yearned for approval from his father. He hated being thought of as a problem. He thought they were the problem.

By now, because of my politics, I wasn't regarded as such a good peacemaker in the family. My Mum would make long telephone calls trying to persuade me to see 'the problem' their way. All parents seek emotional collusion. I was torn. Steve was actually very disruptive, stole a lot and lied a great deal. But he had grasped that he wasn't the problem. How could I explain that they-my parents- were the problem without opening up all the old wounds, healed through neglect rather than care. I eventually persuaded him to go back home. I don't think I should have done. He was put in a remand centre with a very liberal regime; an Edwardian mansion on the edge of a small town in Sussex. I visited him there once with my parents. It was a prison without bars for working class misfits. He learned how to handle himself there.

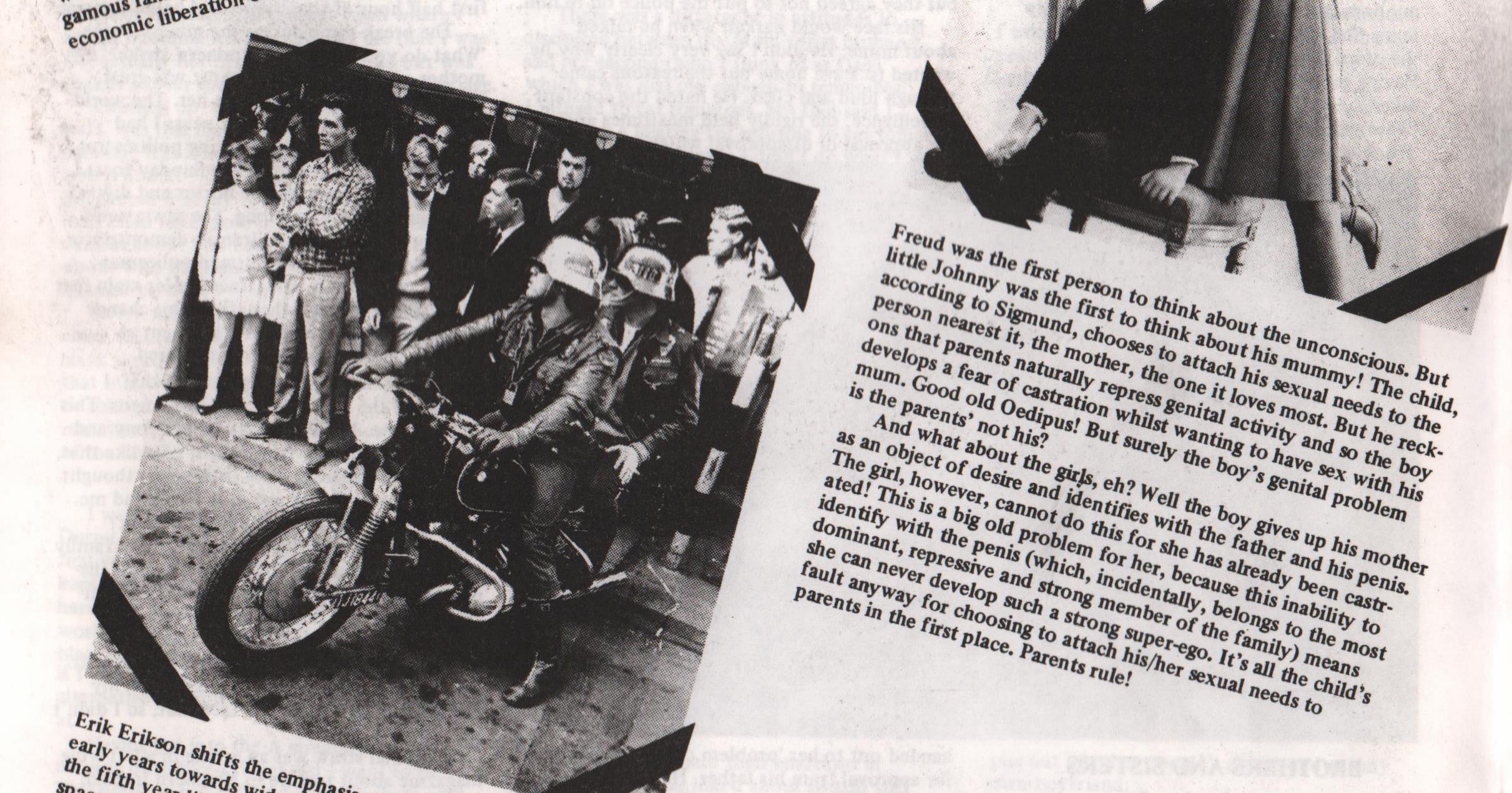


Family: part two

Here we take you on a slow family life.

waltz around a number of thinkers on the family. A selective sample of marxists and non-marxists who have tried to make sense of the history and traumas of

According to Engels, "The first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into industry..... and uns in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family
as the economic unit of society. "Socialism, said uncle Fred,
would realize what the middle classes always wanted: a monogamous family where sexual love could freely develop due to
economic liberation of woman economic liberation of women. Sounds nice and easy, eh?



Erik Erikson shifts the emphasis away from the family in the early years towards wider society in adolescence. Sure he rates outdon early years towards wider society in adolescence.

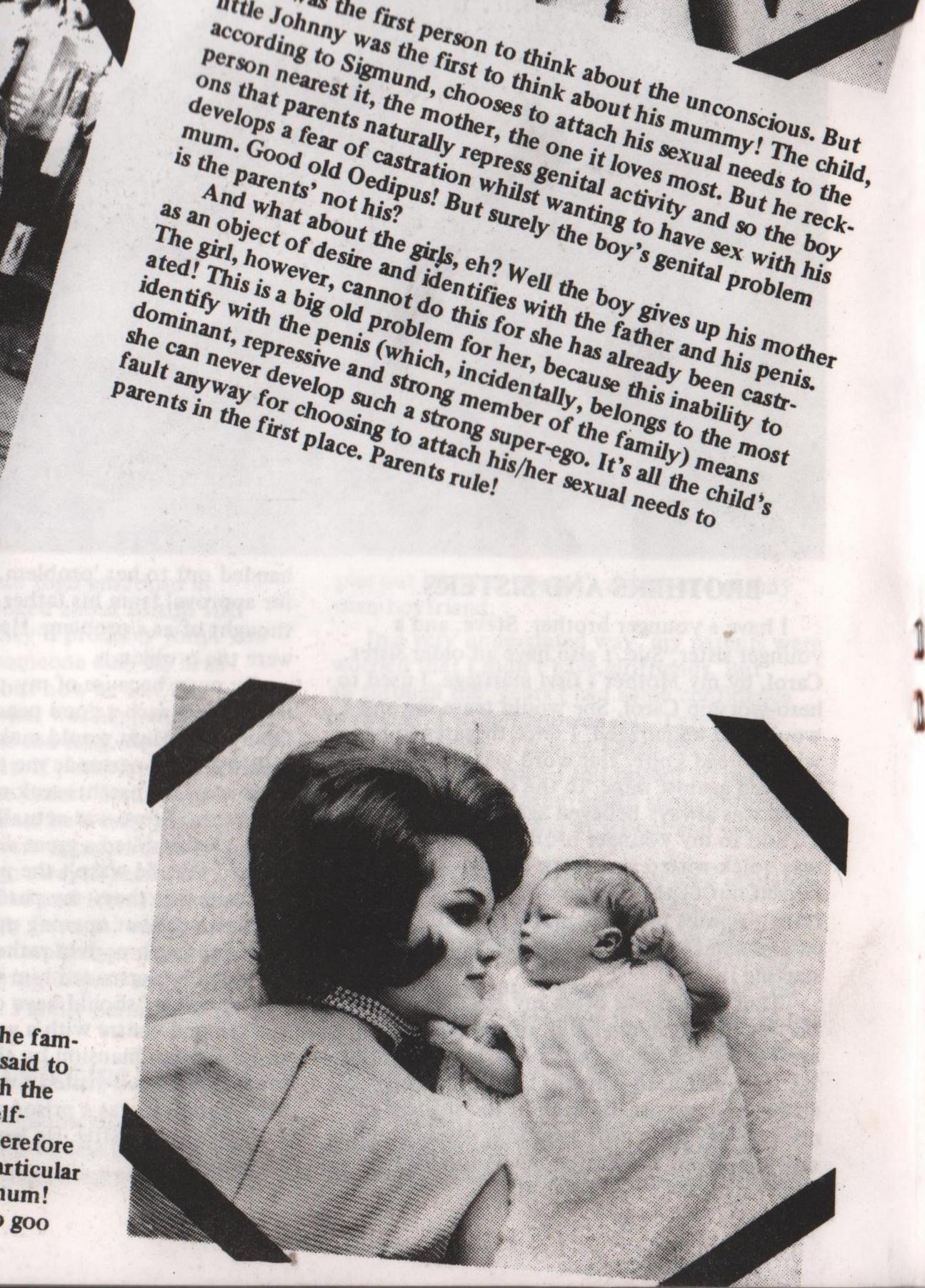
spaces, free motion of animals and cars in open spaces and high

ithe interiors of houses, and girls dream about the mention biologically determinist. The sub
anisons most in adoles.

ithe fifth year like Freud, but the spaces with year like Freud, but the structures of the penis, and girls dream about the stuff, not to mention biologically determinist. The sub
anisons most in adoles.

its cover their transmitted. cence when those disco groovers are trying to discover their true

> According to Lacan and the French linguists, its what the family says that's important, not what it does. Language is said to structure experience and as the infant enters life through the realms of its mother's discourse she will determine its selfconception through what she says to it. The family is therefore a system of signs and communications with their own particular meanings initially determined by the mother. Poor old mum! Why can't daddy share the blame, he surely goes goo goo goo





their childrens minds better than they do and the major task

that who needs enemies!

becomes attributing an identity to the other which satisfies the

needs of the self. Experience is denied in favour of a mask created

out of the emotionally violent family structure. With relatives like

Family: part three

WHEN I said I would write about my family, I had no idea how difficult it would be. I went through old diaries, letters from years back and found I had never written anything about them, yet their emotional impact on me has been enormous. My relationship with them has been, and is, the most difficult and demanding struggle of my life, affecting my identity at its roots, my relationships with other people, all my decisions . . . I seem to be falling back on the old platitudes and cliches, but I don't know what to say about it. Everything I write seems either mawkish and sentimental, or bitter and full of self-pity. There's also the guilt. How can I be disloyal, reveal all this? they'd never forgive me, never even recognise themselves. They'd see it as

BACKGROUND

My parents were young when they married, nineteen, during the war, after 'courting' for a few years. Two years after the war my brother was born, and me three years later. In the photographs, when we were very young, they looked happy, both handsome, in love.

We lived in a flat in North London. They were originally working class - my mother had left school at fourteen and gone to work in Collars laundry, my dad was a longdistance lorry driver - but he had a better job and they were fairly comfortable by the time I came to know anything about it.

My mother was one of five - three sisters, two brothers. Her mother was a large Irish woman who dominated and held together the entire family. As each son or daughter married, his or her spouse would be assimilated into the tribe and learn its manners and

rituals. They all lived near, and at some points with, each other. My grandma, like my mother after her, ruled the roost: when one of my uncles chose to marry a divorcee who'd been on the stage, none of the family was allowed to speak to him for eleven years, even though he lived round the corner. Also it's a Catholic family.

Such a grouping had its virtues: loyalty, affection, large picnics and presents. These faded as I grew up, faced with several sets of expectations, moral obligations, several surrogate mothers to confront as well as my own; cousins who fit in and do the right thing, go into steady bank jobs and on to marriage and mortgages. My aunts still visit me, still buy me presents and give me tea towels; still manage to inspire guilt in being 'different'.

My mother, probably like most, was very puritanical. Sex was never mentioned in our house, still isn't. When I was ten I asked what did intercourse mean? a look of horror, an interrogation - where had I heard that word? I was shaking like a leaf, guilty of I knew not what; I knew I'd gone beyond some line. Later, my mum told me with great feeling that sex in marriage was 'wonderful' but never give in to a man, they'll never respect you. Never let boys get familiar with you.

When I was eighteen, I had a boyfriend. On Saturday afternoons, we'd go as regular as clockwork to his house (his family were always out) undress and touch each other up. I was always sure that my mother had followed us and was outside the house; sick with fear I would keep jumping up from the bed to see if

the street. The feeling comes back to me now. Later, at university, sleeping with the same boy, I would be convinced that I heard my mother knocking at the door in the night, see her figure standing in the light of the hall.

My mother read some letters of mine after the first year at university and got suspicious. In tears, she told me that she'd rather see me dead than 'like that', would knife me herself if she thought . . . and the shame if I got pregnant, the shame on my aunts and uncles. When my parents took me back, in my second year, my mother warned me that no man was to cross the threshold of my bedroom.

She succeeded in her intention. I couldn't fuck however hard I tried, had vaginismus for years, muscles seized up with tension and guilt. My first serious relationship continued for four or five years without fucking. There may be other good enough reasons of course. I feel guilty writing this down. I love my mother. I feel sorry for her.

I had two dreams of my mother recently. In the first, she came to stay with me, broken herself by the family; she cracked, began to plead and cry and I was running to get to her, to comfort her like a child. In the other she was punching me hard, holding on to me, wouldn't stop. She finally tried to suffocate me with a pillow. I was screaming for help but my father sat by, helpless, smiling weakly.

BROTHER

I have one brother, now in his thirties. He doesn't work, he feels ill all the time, thinks he's got a pain in the head.. He comes down in the morning, lies on the sofa, doesn't speak, doesn't want to eat. He does a few jobs around the house. For about twelve years now he has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals,

our lives around him. And the routine (like most routines in society) brings its own inflexibility which generates feelings of being

Though this means we both have lives separate from it. When we are together we makes this difficult to diffuse. (And given make the most of it rather than struggle all the time. Because the nuclear family does also bring warmth and love and a sense of

3. Except for our relationships with

Either we attempt to act much the way

Tessa Weare

her car - a maroon Cortina - was parked in

BEFORE LEON existed Andy and I both had theories about ways to escape the nuclear family set-up. But precisely because this society separates children and family life off from its day to day experience, neither of us appreciated the difficulties involved in communal living or a greater connection

Two things about especially small children the vast amount of work involved and the need for almost constant attention make the undertaking of childcare something that cannot simply be "fitted in" with one's life. It calls for radical restructuring, and this is probably one of the major reasons people are forced back into nuclear family set-ups.

Everything about our society makes it difficult to integrate kids into daily life - it forces a separation between home and nearly all other activities.

We have found it necessary to create a fairly structured routine - three days a week each and one floating day for anything from dentists to shopping to going out.

On our days "on", we look after Leon, do all the cleaning, washing and cooking, i.e. we are houseworkers. On the days "off" we work and wash up the dishes (like every good husband). At the moment he is still breastfeeding and therefore my 'day' is in fact from 12.30 - 6.30, so that in the afternoon he has a bottle feed. Later it will be a whole day and then the evening as well.

This benefits both of us in that it means that neither of us is forced away from Leon, and thus alienated from him, nor forced to be too much with him, and thus lose sight of the pleasures of being with him.

Also, the roles of housewife and worker apply to us interchangeably and it does mean that we can see the roles for what they are and not as part of our natural biological abilities. Further the shared experience means we have mutual understanding of the daily difficulties we both experience.

But there is also a negative side to this. 1. The enormous and continual amount of work involved means that all the time we are forced to communicate on a fairly superficial level (nappies, food etc.) and we have to

struggle to make time to talk with each other

purpose). friends who have children, this separation between being single (and associating with

we did before he was born, or we get involved in the whole world (new to us) of families, neighbours etc. It is hard to create an interconnection. Only a society where children were expected and accepted in pubs, cinemas, roads, political meetings etc would it be easier for all of us to break down the distinction between being single people and child-minders.

'ill' and in need of a 'cure'. I think he's lost to resent everyone, although he expresses it that he feels ill. My mother is hunched over her food. Afterwards I light a cigarette; she says homosexual, but it's all suppressed. He told me something one day as though to absolve himself. He'd met a man in a pub, gone back

diagnosed as psychotic, schizophrenic, hysteric

He's very dependent on my mother, always

asking where she's going and how long will

she be. He's very aggressive. He thinks he's

his way somewhere, or never found it, and

now chooses to remain where he is - with

the family. I think he may want to be a

to the man's flat for coffee and been

offered a bed for the night, which he

authority would make it alright.

XMAS

accepted. The man had 'made a pass' at him.

He said he'd told the doctor; someone in

I arrive home tired, psychologically less

prepared than ever to be gay, reassuring, all

thin, my mother says my jeans are ugly and

it's such a shame when I could look so nice.

the usual tension in the room, the usual

with it on trays in front of the TV. My

attempt to keep things at bay when I first

come. My mother serves the dinner, we sit

brother says he doesn't want any; he does

this every meal time. My mother says she's

My brother hasn't spoken to me yet. There is

the things they want. They say I look tired and

she doesn't like to see me smoking. She's dying to talk, shows me the odd changes in the house. I bring out a few presents. The truth is, I have nothing to say. What can I tell them that they will appreciate? I say the job's OK. I'm getting a rise.

dished it up, pleads with him. He begins to

snap; she brings it in and leaves it beside him.

Eventually, he picks it up and begins to eat.

Nobody enjoys the food. My brother seems

Later, I ask if anyone wants a drink. My brother pours himself a very large whiskey which he downs quickly. My dad says, "No more, look what happened the last time". My father is looking old, tense with the effort of will involved in combatting my brother's rebellion.

Christmas Eve and my mother and I drive to the beach to collect driftwood. It's the nicest part, no longer on home territory; she gets excited; she likes doing this kind of thing but normally there's no-one to share it with. Also, she says, she doesn't like to leave the other two long. I say that they should all have a break from each other, suggest that one of

them comes to London, but they seem incapable of doing that.

Xmas day and some attempt at joviality. My father puts on a clean shirt and goes round clapping his hands authoritatively as though something is going to happen. 'Well, how's my son today?' My mum pleads with my brother to open his presents. The familiar scenario. TV is on all day, everyone listens to the Queen's speech; she says that the older generation must pass on their knowledge and their wisdom to the present generation. We watch everything that comes on; the noise and the colour and the jokes are an ironic contrast to the grimness of it all. We string out the evening. My mother goes to bed exhausted and in tears, saying she's sorry I had to come home to this.

AND THE PRESENT?

A phone call to my mother: Where was I last night? she was phoning me all evening. I answer I went to see a play. Who with? I make up a friend; I can't say that I went by myself. My dad shouts out: 'Hello baby, darling girl?'

My mum talks about what she's been doing. Then she says that Nan (my father's mother) phoned; I should ring and thank her for the birthday money: "You are terrible. Have you written and thanked Auntie Doris? it's disgusting - she's my father's only sister." She talks about one of her sisters, who keeps up a particular interest in me. "You should ring her . . . it's your place. It's a duty. You make me sick. You're out every night with strangers. You ought to ring them occasionally. It's not right . . . Have you rung Uncle Bill? It's 8 weeks since Christmas and they do think a lot of you . . . it's really terrible, it isn't fair."

I ask her how things are with my brother. He's on new tablets. He's no better. One doctor advised cutting down the dosage, another said he should double it. "I get so miserable about him . . . poor little bugger." Apparently the doctor has said it's not the tablets causing the side effects, it's my brother. "I don't believe him. They make him tremble." What can I say? I certainly don't side with the doctors. She needs to talk, needs comfort. She talks about my brother. "He needs a good talking to."

"Sally, we didn't talk about insuring yourself - it's really important. If you insure now, you get it (burial) at a cheap rate." I ask her if anyone has drunk the Drambuie I bought for Christmas. She says she has the occasional drop when she can't sleep. Then back to keeping in touch with the family. "I'm not asking much of you. You're always out . . . it's all I ask . . it isn't really much. If I had peace of mind I'd be up there and have you sorted out and tidied up." It's quite a jolly conversation, believe it or not.

My biggest regret is that they don't know me, don't know about my politics and my feminism . . . yes they know something about of it, have taken in a few hints. But because they don't really know and accept who I am now, then who I am now isn't quite valid, not quite real to myself. I feel sometimes brought back to earth by them, brought back to their conception of me, and when that happens I'm not sure who I am. They have created an identity, forced an identity of myself on me, and for all my public and social image, I haven't quite rejected it, haven't quite made it, haven't broken the bonds. They remain an authority in my life.

They love me in their own way. But when I've been miserable, lonely, confused, I have never been able to turn to them, never would, for fear of moral pressure. They are a burden to me, but I can never allow myself to be a burden to them because it means an obligation. duty, guilt.

Sally Jones

with our 'extended families'.

For this reason our temporary solution of sharing childcare between the two of us does more to challenge notions of monogamy and male and female roles, than it does to challenge the family itself.

in a deeper way. 2. In order to avoid my revolving my life around the baby, we have had to both resolve pulled along by it, frustration and boredom.

There is a tendency built into our routine (which is a reflection of society) which means when one of us is with Leon, the other goes out. Our identity as 'single' people is rarely expressed with each other.

apart from our nuclear family and identities find ourselves functioning as a family - the whole weight of our upbringing and the way we are seen by society ("such a nice couple") the alternatives, the temptation is usually to

other single people) and being with Leon continues into our friendships and social activities.

Family: part four Other property, such as furniture or stereo equipment, remains the

Getting married

CHANGING NAMES There is no obligation on a

woman to take her husband's name. If statutory agencies write to you as 'Mrs. Y' you can insist that they continue to address you as 'Ms. X'. If you have adopted your husband's name, upon either separation or divorce you can change your name to whatever one you choose by signing a simple deed.

MAINTENANCE

Both parties to a marriage have mutual duties and rights to support each other and their children. Since men generally earn more, the basic rule that has evolved is that a wife is entitled to support at a rate of one third of her and her husband's joint income for herself with extra maintenance for any children.

PROPERTY

In most cases this will be the home. If it is in the name of one party to the marriage, the other party can, on divorce, apply to the court for a share of the property to be transferred to them or to the children. If the home is in both their names, the wife, if she has the children living with her, can apply to the court for the husband's share in the property to be transferred to her. This is sometimes done where the husband has shown himself un willing to maintain the family.

someone

CHANGING NAMES

or by deed.

MAINTENANCE

Magistrates' Court.

PROPERTY

A woman may adopt her partner'

name either by simply using it,

There is no duty to support each

other, and if there is a child of

the relationship the father can

the mother applies under the

only be ordered to maintain it if

Affiliation Proceedings Act in the

Even if you live with someone for

any rights in their property unless

many years you do not acquire

you can prove that you agreed

you would do so and that you

actually contributed something

(for example, the mortgage pay-

ments). The partner who has no

legal title to the property has no

right to occupy it when the

relationship ends.

property of the person who bought it if it was acquired before marriage, but property acquired after would generally be regarded as part of the 'family assets' and divided equally. If the home is in the name of only one party to the marriage,

then the other has the right to apply to the court under the Matrimonial Homes Act 1967 to remain in occupation during the marriage. In order to prevent the person owning the property usually the husband - from selling it and leaving the family homeless, the person having no legal title to the property can register what is called a Class F land charge against the title, which indicates their right of occupation and would prevent anyone from purchasing the property.

INCOME TAX

The husband gains the married man's allowance, which improves his tax position. Unless you write to the Tax Inspector saying that you wish to be taxed as individuals he will send a joint tax return after your marriage. Even if you do elect to be taxed separately, the husband will have to pay the tax on his wife's unearned income (shares etc.) but rebates on higher tax rate and on his wife's Schedule D (self employed persons) income will be paid direct to him. This rule continues to apply even if you are separated.

NATIONAL INSURANCE

A woman who is married can still opt to pay National Insurance contributions at a lower rate. Her

pension and maternity grant will then be determined on her husband's contributions. If the wife has been working, her maternity allowance will be determined on her earnings and contributions.

BENEFITS

If you are still married, your husband has to claim for Supplementary Benefit for the whole family, which in many cases means that the woman does not get it, or her share of it. Unemployment Benefit is paid to whichever person was working, but whereas a man can claim for a dependent wife, an unemployed woman cannot receive benefit for her dependent husband unless she proves he is incapable of supporting himself. A single woman who is looking after a sick relative can no longer claim Invalidity Care Allowance if she marries. After six months, a man is entitled to Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension but his wife can only get it if she proves that she is 'incapable of performing normal household duties'.

A man supporting a family or a low income can claim Family Income Supplement. If the wife is the breadwinner, she cannot.

CHILDREN

Provided you both agree, the child can be registered in the name of either parent, or any other name. If you disagree, the child must be registered in the husband's name.

If you marry someone who already has a child, and you accept responsibility for maintaining them, the child is regarded as a 'child of the

family', and upon separation or divorce you could be ordered to maintain them. Both parents have an equal right to custody though at present the courts tend automatically to give oustody of very young children to the mother.

VIOLENCE

The law was recently changed by the 1976 Domestic Violence Act so that a person can apply to the court for an injunction restraining the other party to the marriage from assaulting them. In order to encourage the police to act instead of regarding marital violence as 'just domestic', a power to arrest instantly can be attached to the injunction.

In the eyes of the law a man cannot rape his wife unless there is in existence a separation order with a non-cohabitation clause.

CONTRACEPTION & STERILISATION

If you are married it is likely your husband will be asked if he consents to you using a coil or being sterilised. This is because the medical authorities fear being sued by the husband for "loss of consortium". A wife has no such right, although if a man wanted vasectomy it is unlikely to be performed unless his wife has been consulted.

HP & MORTGAGES

If you are a married woman it is likely that your husband will be asked to be a guarantor for any loan or mortgage you apply for. Married men are unlikely to be asked for a guarantee by their

INCOME TAX

You will continue to be taxed as individuals, paying your own tax and receiving your own rebates.

NATIONAL INSURANCE You claim for benefit on your

own contributions.

BENEFITS

Provided you can convince the DHSS that you are not cohabiting, you claim supplementary benefit in your own right. If they think you are cohabiting, they will regard the man as responsible for maintaining you or for claiming as head of the household.

Unemployment Benefit would be paid to you as individuals based on your employment record.

A woman who was living with a man who was not married to her could presumably still claim Invalidity Care Allowance.

CHILDREN

The mother can register any children in whatever name she pleases and is under no obligation to name the father on the birth certificate. The mother automatically has right to the custody of an illegitimate child, although the natural father can apply to the court for custody or access under the Guardianship of Minors Acts.

VIOLENCE

The Domestic Violence Act 1976 gives individuals who are living together as man and wife the right to apply in the county court for an injunction restraining the other party from violence, or ordering them to leave the premises so that any children of the relationship can remain there. This Act gave cohabitees analogous rights to wives to have a home for themselves and their children.

RAPE

If the man you are cohabiting with forces you to have sexual intercourse against your will you can charge him with rape.

Gingerbread — a pressure group for single parents. Groups throughout the country. 32 Wellington St, London WC2. 01-240 0953.

National Council for One Parent Families. Help, advice and information. 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5. 01-267 1361.

Action for Lesbian Parents. Advice for women involved in custody cases.

National Campaign for Nursery Education, 67 Woodland Gardens, London N10.

London Nursery Campaign, 26 Lovelace Rd, London E8.

Working Association of Mothers,

CONTRACEPTION & STERILISATION

The man you are living with will not be asked for his consent to your being fitted with a coil or sterilisation as he has no right to sue for loss of consortium.

HP & MORTGAGES

You may be asked to provide a guarantor, but it will not necessarily be your partner.

INHERITANCE

However long you have lived together, if your partner dies without making a will, his blood relatives automatically inherit any property.

c/o Lynda Kinsella, 37 Milcroft, Westdene, Brighton, Sussex.

Birmingham Women's Liberation Playgroup. They have produced a leaflet based on their experiences, and a bibliography. 65 Prospect Rd, Birmingham 13.

One Two Three — a film on the Childrens Community Centre in London. Available from Liberation Films, 2 Chichele Rd, London NW2.

We'd like to do a more comprehensive list of organisations and groups working on alternatives to the usual family structure, so if you know of any, please let us have their addresses.

Mozambique Desktop democracy

CHRIS SEARLE has been teaching for the past two years at the New Secondary School in Nampula, Mozambique. Previously he taught kids in the East End of London and helped to produce Stepney Words and start the Basement Writers group. Dorothy Jones talked to him about his experiences in Mozambique and the ways in which teachers in this country could learn from them.

BEFORE INDEPENDENCE Nampula was the headquarters of the Portuguese army. Situated in the north of Mozambique it has some industry, but most of the students at the school come from the countryside, sons and daughters of peasants.

When the Portuguese left only the school buildings remained and a new educational system had to be built up from scratch. The basis of this system is the class, or turma, which normally consists of 30 students.

At the beginning of each year the class divides itself into groups of 5 or 6 students.

One person is elected from each group and then one class representative is elected from the group representatives. The class then goes on to elect its form teacher and together the form teacher and the group representatives make up the class council.

The aim is for the class to deal collectively with its problems, "Class problems mustn't be solved bureaucratically or technocratically, or in secret or in private. The problem would first be discussed by the class council and then taken back to the class if it was felt to be necessary. Any sanctions must be suggested by the turma and agreed by the turma before they

When Chris Searle was a form teacher, he had the problem of two students not turning up for productive work sessions on the school's agricultural plot. He brought the problem up at the class council and it was put to the whole class. The students came up with some lame excuses but after discussion and criticism admitted they had been lazy.

Another student suggested a solution to the problem which everyone accepted. The two students would come to school an hour early for two days to work on the plot, and on the third day the whole class would come early to work together, just to show that it wasn't a question of victimisation, but a problem for them all.

"The main criticism of students, by the students, would

be passivity, because the enemy of any kind of democracy is passivity - when people don't work, when they allow the momentum to slacken..... People are judged in terms of their contribution to the revolution and the constant criteria is service"

It's a difficult concept for students and teachers in Britain to accept when the prevailing ethos here is competition and self betterment. However, in Mozambique,"the school is designed to give all an apprenticeship in working democracy".

When you hear the problems they have to face, you begin to understand. "The school I was teaching in was built for 800, next year it will have nearly 3,000 students.....in the ninth class there are students from pre-independence - 40 studentsbut in the fifth class there are nearly a thousand students."

The school has a political committee whose members are nominated by local organisations such as the Youth Movement, the criterion for membership being political activism, not necessarily party membership.

"It has more responsibilities than powers - organising political education amongst the students. Not just divulging the political line of the party, but classes on discussing the nature of the school, discussing the nature of education.

"Because many students have a lot of religious ideas they organise classes on the origin of man and the origin of the world". Students, teachers or school workers can conduct these classes which take place after school and are optional. However, they opt to go along but at the same time if the structure in the turma is such, then that structure encourages attendance. If it's not, then the thing falls flat".

The form teacher is seen as a "dynamiser" and in charge of any administrative or social problems. "It's not pastoral care, you see, that's the difference. It's generating momentum in the turma to make sure that the students solve their own problems, basically.

"Over here ...the discipline is out of your hands, it's above you. You take a disciplinary problem to the head of year, it's solved bureacratically and individualistically and in an authoritarian way.

"In the school in Mozambigue, the issue has to be solved collectively, with the full invovement of the people who are in the classroom....The teacher's voice counts as much as anybody's, but it mustn't dominate"

The final authority in the school is the directive commission, which consists of three teachers elected each year by the teachers of the school. They earn the same as ordinary teachers and have to teach a minimum of 15 hours per week, so they are in contact with the problems of the school. Teachers, students and school workers are also represented on the sections which deal with social and disciplinary affairs, pedagogical affairs, cultural activities, health and hygiene, and cleaning, administration and production, and sport.

Each year, teaching stops for four of five days while the school council meets to discuss the affairs of the school. All the turma representatives, teachers and members of the political committee are represented on the council. All the elected posts in the school are subject to

Chris Searle is ready to admit that the structure depends on "an incredible number of meetings. The amount of momentum needed is massive. You've got to keep going all the time because when momentum fails then the system collapses. So it shows that the kind of democratic system in the schools, which is very sophisticated, works through the internal momentum of the school and the internal energies of the components in the school, teachers, students and other workers". In the classroom both black

and white racism are opposed. Chris related an incident when he was conducting an English class on creating sentences, and there was only one Asian in the class. An African boy wrote, "Hassina feeds her pig every morning". Other students started laughing, the sentence was directed at Hassina, an Asian girl who was a muslim. Another African student accused the boy of racism; sentence composition stopped, and a discussion took place on how religious bigotry has been used in racism. The boy was persuaded of his racism and apologised. The agreed remedy was that he write another gramatically correct sentence, which was not racist.

In Mozambique there is a national women's movement - the Organisation of Mozambiquan Women (OMM). "The problem, which keeps coming up at the school, is that the girls are more passive than the boys. The girls have been brought up in the

countryside, the girls from peasant families who have been used to all kinds of traditional abuses, like arranged marriages premature marriage, rites of initiation and colonial abuses like prostitution, which have introduced the idea that they are the sexual toys of men.

"All these ideas these girls grow up with. And so there has to be an attack on that passivity by the girls themselves. By girls saying, "look, we have to get ourselves out of this passive frame of mind", so from that point of view the women have to discuss and organise themselves from their own perspective.

"There's no women's liberation in terms of being isolated from the revolutionary process or being in any way anti-men. Men are expected to take their full part in the emancipation of women and so are welcome at the meetings of the OMM".

For Chris Searle, the difference between combatting racism and sexism in London and Nampula is in the role of the state. In Mozambigue,"the power of the state not only supports the emancipation of women, but is involved in a mass campaign to make sure it happens".

And so what are the lessons for teachers and students in Britain?

"I think the most important thing about Mozambique and the system of schools there is that it can show you that a democracy can genuinely work. We've had debates here for the last ten years about not only how a school can be democratised, but is it possible?

"Well what I've learnt in Mozambique is that it is not only very desirable, but that it's the best kind of education. Education through active participation and democracy. And collective resolution of any kind of problem. But it's possible given the energy and the conviction of the people involved"

How we teach is also important if we are to really help working class students.

"We don't help students who are semi-literate, as so many of our students are, by no telling them when they're wrong and not correcting them.

"In Mozambique, and also in our own society, where to be able to stand up at trade union meetings, to be able to formulate the language of strggle....to gain confidence through language and to build organisations through language, none of this can be done if we don't correct the mistakes of our students. "It's our responsibility to dev-

elop not just a capacity to write but to develop as much eloquence and imagination in our students as we possibly can... So that they can use language, not only as a means of communication, but as a weapon against their oppressors".

China Constructing contradictions

THE POLICIES of the post-Mao, post-Gang of four leadership in China, coupled with the upsurge of public demands for "more democracy" present exciting possibilities as well as grounds for concern. Harriet Evans reports.

All official Chinese statements and activities in the last few months have clearly demonstrated that the economy, and in particular large scale plan construction projects, are the overriding priority of the Chinese leadership. The incredible boom in trade with capitalist countries has startled not only those who were "brought up" on Chinese slogans of selfsufficiency and reliance on indigenous forces, but also the stalwarts of the international business and trading community who have been taken unawares by massive Chinese requests for trading, loan and investment contracts.

The concerns of the two groups are, it goes without saying, of a radically different nature; but for the former they have revolved around the central question of what does the manner in which China is conducting its economic drive mean for the construction of socialism. Even if one is to explain the drive for rapid modernization as the result of rational and urgent need, and the recent educational policies essentially as the result of the need to train highly skilled personnel capable of undertaking and managing the new economic tasks, then how does one explain the extremes to which it is being pursued, or the total singlemindedness with which all the old revolutionary slogans are being subordinated to the development of production and so on?

The New Year's editorial of the People's Daily does not give much joy to those who already entertain some doubt or suspicion. It explicitly tells us that all policies being directed from the centre are part of an overall plan to guarantee the realisation of the modernization programme. Some may say that in such a vast country as China, with so many regional differences of geography, productivity and culture, that to see all that is going on in China as a homogeneous unit is unrealistic and premature. But the editorial is asking us to do precisely that. In other words, the educational reforms, changes in leadership, the liberalization campaign which is continuing under official approval and the normalization of relations with the United States all emerge

from the overriding concern to rebuild and recover from the economic losses of the last fifteen

China has signed commitments

to buy more than 27 billion dollars in technology from Japan, Western Europe and the United States. Chairman Hua Guofeng's announcement last March that China was embarking on a modernisation programme with a plan to double coal and steel production by 1985 and a schedule of 120 huge new construction projects was based on the assumption of imported plant, investment and loans as the backbone. While this probably means that for the next few years the Chinese will be deeply preoccupied with questions of payments, transportation, and installation, other changes in the economy are geared towards raising consumer and agricultural productivity levels.

Piece rates have been restored as the norm for payment of wage: in the heavy manual and handicraft industries, and material bonuses, paid to the unit as well as to the individual and sometimes reaching as much as 30% or 40% of the average wage, are now the norm rather than the exception in the urban economy as a whole. In addition, penalties are being imposed in the form of docking of wages and enterprise welfare funds for substandard achievements in production. In a "return to the old system" of enterprise management, revolutionary committees have been abolished in favour of a one-



Reading wallposters near Peking

production. If all this puts increased emphasis on the role of individual achievement in production, management and remuneration, then changes in education highlight that fact as part of deliberate

man system, and little or no

mention is made of cadre/

managerial participation in

policy direction. A network of officially designated "key schools" to cream off the best talent (evaluated in ways all too familiar to those brought up in the selective western tradition) is the logical result of the reinstitution of a highly competitive examination system, which starts from the second year of primary school upwards.

The barest minimum of lip service is now paid the former practice of "open-door schooling" a system consolidated at the end of the cultural revolution of combining mental and manual labour for all students in an attempt to reduce the "three grea differences" (town and country, agriculture and industry, mental and manual labour.)

Egalitarian aims, therefore, and all that before seemed to hold out the possibility of gradually eliminating capitalist values of competition and status are now apparently forgotten. Instead, practices have been instituted which focus singlemindedly on the need to train a specialised group of administrators, manager and technicians to supervise the modernization programme. As another recent article in the People's Daily said: "From now on ... modernization is the central task of the whole Party. All other fields of work, including the Party's political work, should centre around and serve this central task. No "political movements" or "class struggles" divorced from and detrimental to this central task should ever be conducted." (25.12.78)

If that were all that China were about, there would be little reason for continued debate. But alongside these apparently retrogressive steps, in ideological terms, a number of different developments are taking place which complicate the issue. Fears that it will be the rural sector which will stand to lose under the modernization programme must be re-examined now that the government has announced a reduction in grain tax, increased aid to poorer communes, a 20% increase in grain prices for state purchase and an increase of 50% in prices for grain surplus sold to the state.

The current poster campaign, and the liberalising tendencies in the arts and intellectual life in general contain many positive elements which should not be ignored; and criticism of authoritarian styles of leadership, together with calls for a reassessment of the nature of inner party struggles are backed by considerable official support.

Many of the new policies

have raised a number of doubts among those who have been following events in China; some of these are the result not of a political volteface but of the leadership's willingness to be more open in revealing internal contradictions than has been the case over the last decade. Problems of bureaucratisation, for instance, were as great as they are now even after the height of the cultural revolution . . . a movement whose initial aim was precisely to deal with the bureaucracy's growth and political entrenchment.

While there may not be as much cause for pessimism as many think, there is still cause for doubt. I recall a 1977 wallposter's assessment of the "correct" and "incorrect" view of regarding developments that are essentially of an unsocialist nature; the author wrote that there wre two methods of approach (in this case to the question of bourgeois right, which was being criticised at the time): one of saying "well, it's one of the contradictions of socialist society and it's there to stay," and the other "even though it's one of the contradictions of socialist society, we must still do our utmost to eliminate it." China's present changes in the superstructure clearly evoke the former, more static approach.

The focus of the present leadership's efforts apparently deny the influence that progressive changes in the relations of production can have over the productive forces. Official statements about the need to reform cadres' work style in order to prevent problems of bureaucratization and social stratification are very forthcoming; so are their statements about the need to realise "true" democracy among the people in order to bring the productive forces into full play. But how are we to understand this when the same leadership is embarking on a road which will not only involve it in the cycle of international inflation etc., but which in its economic and educational policy seems set to increase, rather than diminish the danger of such problems?

There are signs however that all is not well in China; there, criticisms are being made in exactly the same way as those outlined above, although, as always, the exact extent is impossible to determine. One Peking poster quoted by the Japanese News Agency Kyodo on 17 Dec., asserted that true modernization could not be attained without correcting the present social structure which it claimed is apt to bring forth bureaucracy and privilege. Another, put up on 21 Dec., criticized the ongoing wage reforms as increasing wage differentials and violating the spirit of communism. Such criticisms go unanswered by the leadership . . . but sooner or later, there will have to be some response.

Kenya

The pinstriped politicians

On the 12th December last year Charles Njonjo, the Attorney General of Kenya, could be seen at Nairobi racecourse in his Savile Row pinstaipes and bowler hat. Earlier that day 25 political detainees had been released as part of the Independence Day celebrations. Njonjo wasn't very happy about the amnesty granted to these prisoners for he firmly believes in detention for subversives. He also supports hanging and flogging. His ideas on Kenyan "socialism" do not demand a redistribution of wealth and power; after all some are born short and some tall and it is not possible to level everyone.

Educated in South Africa and in England he worked as a barrister in London before independence. He owns several houses for which he employs an English gardener and a Swiss chef. He is a true gentleman and a friend of the British High Commissioner in Nairobi.

Njonjo is one of the key figures in the new administration in Kenya and has been seen as the kingmaker after the death of Kenyatta. It is unlikely that Arap Moi would have become President without the Attorney General's support. However, it is difficult to account for all of the complex pressures involved in the production of the new team with "new" policies. During the last years of Kenyatta's rule corruption had become so widespread and obvious that it led to a great deal of external criticism (as well as the despoiling of natural resources).

The boom in coffee prices meant that Kenya could afford to ignore external criticisms and the drop in investment. The coffee prices dropped dramatically last year and the price demanded for extended aid and investment was a new clean image. Britain is Kenya's main trading partner and creditor and the Foreign Office did not want another Iran on its plate. Moi, Njonjo and other ministers were part of a group that visited England in the middle of last November for negotiations, which were oddly never reported in the press.

Part of the clean up was forced on the new administration because a section of the security establishment in Kenya had plotted to use the Stock Theft Unit in a plot to assassinate Moi, Nionjo and Kibaki, the Vice President and former Finance Minister. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of the **Assistant Commissioner of Police** in the Rift Valley, where the special anti-cattle rustling unit was based. Hinga the Com-

missioner of Police and his Deputy Nene in Nairobi have also resigned and wide ranging investigations are planned to look into land allocation and coffee smuggling from Uganda. The new head of the police force is Ben Gethi, previously head of the General Service Unit, a paramilitary force which has been used regularly for the suppression of political opposition. Gethi served with the SAS and trained with Israeli forces So this clean up is hardly likely to open the floodgates of democracy

Other parts of the new image include a development plan, designed to meet "basic needs" and import restrictions, to help with the trade deficit. The new wave of politicians is a smarter. more international bunch than the old lot of crooks but they are still fronting for Britain, and increasingly for America.

On the 15th of December Britain announced the increase o aid to Kenya. Presumably the Overseas Development Ministry wanted the new image to be seen in the release of the prisoners, who included MPs and an internationally known writer, Ngugi, before they confirmed the

extended aid. Why should Britain be that concerned with Kenya as it is not economically very important? Possibly the most influential factor is Kenya's strategic position; it borders on Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania, none of which have really close relationships with Britain. Kenya provides port facilities in the Indian Ocean and British naval vessels are regular visitors in Mombasa. Kenya also provides jungle training facilities for British troops near Nyeri, which is important as fewer and fewer jungles are hospitable to the British. Kenya also provides telecommunications facilities; it seems unlikely that satellite tracking stations are only to do with improving intra-African communication.

Not surprisingly it is difficult to find out about Britain's contribution to the arming and training of Kenyan security forces. However, it is clear that there has been a build up of arms over recent years: in 1975 3 Brooke Marine Patrol boats were supplied in 1976 9 Scottish Aviation Bulldog trainers, in 1977 6 BAC Strikemaster trainer/counter-

insurgency aircraft, 2 Defender transport aircraft, an unknown number of Fox armoured cars and 40 Vickers tanks and in 1978 12 British Aerospace Hawk jet trainer/ground attack aircraft, which Britain seemed particularly reluctant to admit. Kenya was also in March 1978 given a guarantee from President Carter of defence aid. Further Britain and the US provide training for Kenyan police, the General Service Unit, the Army and other security organisations in the country.

Kenya is most probably seen as ideologically important as well. If Kenya can be seen as a model for successful development in Africa, then it can be used as a counter example to the countries that are trying to take a socialist path. These reasons, the strategic and ideological, combine to get Britain to twist the arms of the new leaders in Kenya but is very unlikely to make very much long term difference. Some corruption is built into a system where civil servants are encouraged to run private businesses and foreign capital has always extracted its pound of flesh from nonindustrialised countries. For all their immediate gains, the Njonjos and others like him in Kenya will eventually lose out. Ngugi, on his release from prison, quoted a traditional Kenyan saying, 'poverty is a poison'. The ordinary people of the country will stick this poison down the throats of their rulers.

Kampuchea Caldwell murder

IT WAS with a deep sense of loss that the Leveller collective heard of the tragic death of Malcolm Caldwell, murdered in Cambodia two days before Christmas. He was widely respected throughout the international socialist movement for his knowledge of, and support for, the liberation movements of the Third World. In particular he was known for his commitment to the struggle against imperialism in South East

Malcolm was one of the first socialists in Britain to take up the cause of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. He was one of the editors of the Journal of Contemporary Asia.

But it was not as an internationally respected writer and commentator that we knew him best and remember him. He was one of our earliest Founding Subscribers and a regular contributor to our pages. He was always available to offer suggestions and advice, to help further our wnderstanding of a part of the world too little understood in Britain And it is in his own, sadly

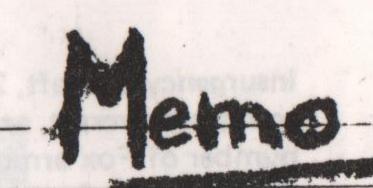
prophetic, words that we will remember him best. Last Autumn The Leveller published a lengthy theme examining China's changing relationship with the rest of the world. Malcolm had earlier published a defence of the new regime in Cambodia which earned him much critical fire in our letters column. We knew, as did those who directed his murderer, that his public positions on China Vietnam and Cambodia, of critical support for their respective revolutions, left him in a difficult position to explain their disagreements to a socialist readership. He was at first reluctant to commit himself to paper, yet the copy he gave us spelled out the issues with painful clarity. At the conclusion of his article he wrote.

"Whilst the solidarity movement itself cannot mediate between Vietnam and Kampuchea and Vietnam and China, we should support initiatives to do so on the part of those who might, and our own embarrassment at the conflicts should be made clear At the same time we have to be

sensitive and responsive to the position of the guerrillas currently engaged in armed struggle, and this number one priority points more and more unmistakeably to sympathy with Kampuchea (which we may note in passing has on innumerable occasions subtly signalled that, while grateful for the support of China, it is not a member of any "camp", far less a satellite, seeking independence not just from the two superpowers but from all big

powers)." "Building up and bringing to bear an international solidarity movement in support of the people of the ASEAN countries, and more generally of the Third World as a whole, is a giant task, and an imperative one, which does not allow the luxury of disillusion on the grounds of the China-Indochina imbroglio."

It was precisely because Malcolm continued to support the new regime in Cambodia while retaining his independence and airing his political doubts in the socialist press that he became a target for assassination. He was murdered because of the power of his pen and the socialist movement has been deprived of one of its most valued comrades. To his family and loved ones we extend our deepest sympathy. Like them, we will miss him.



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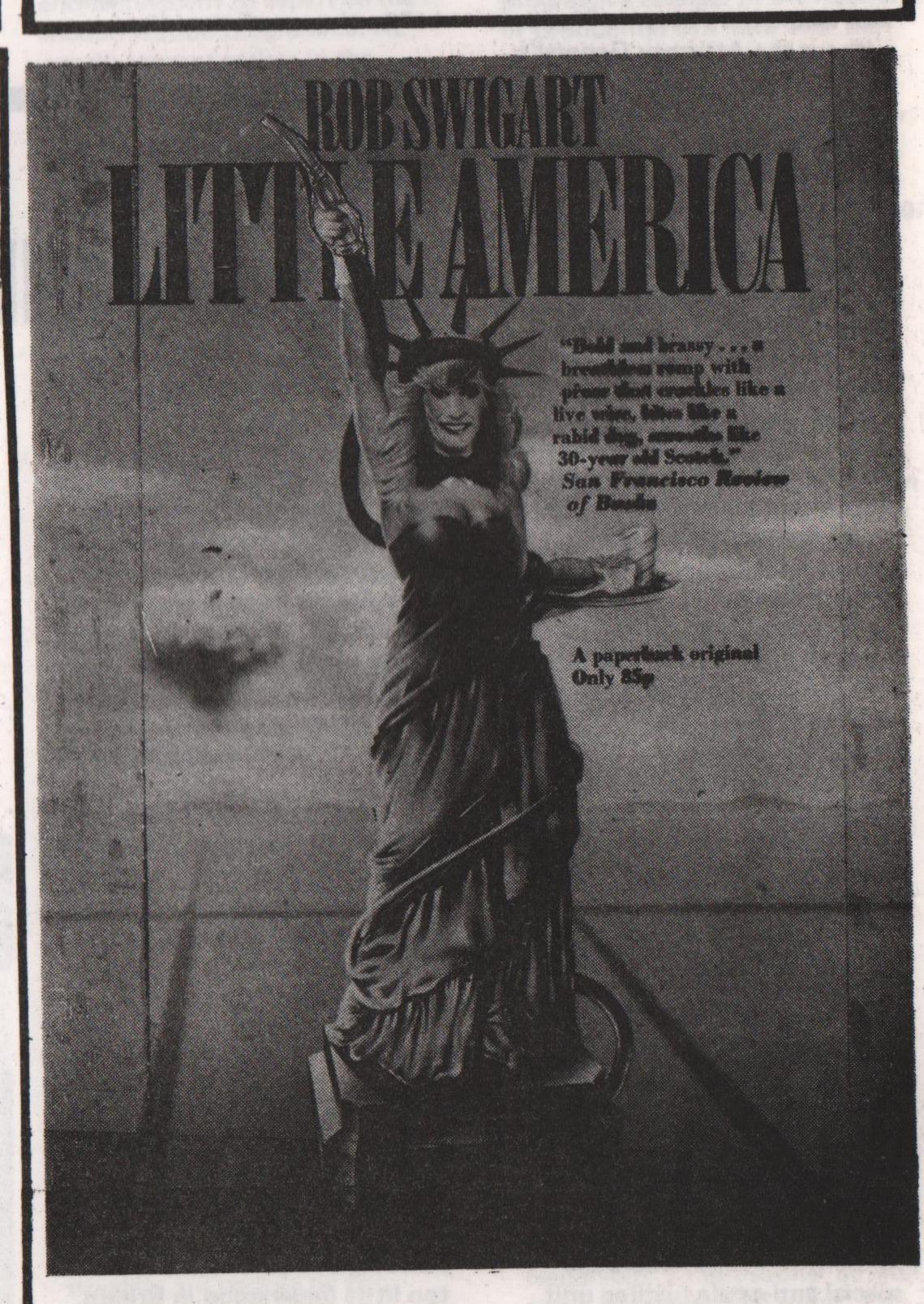
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Devolution debate Who are the tartan tearaways?

Scottish voters go to the polls on March 1 to vote in the referendum on devolution. Whatever you think of the government's actual proposals, they are all that's on offer. According to Steve Freeman the outcome is of more than passing interest; while he urges a big turnout for a Yes vote, friends from Crann Tara express some scepticism about the whole operation.

IN ASSESSING the significance of Devolution for British politics it is useful to separate two interconnected questions. First there are the effects of the Referendum, and second the effects of Devolution.

Referendums are not isolated from class struggle, indeed I consider them as political manifestations of class struggle, around which class forces align themselves.

The backbone of the No campaign is the C.B.I. and the Tories and a few Labour Unionists like Tam Dalyell. The Tories are in a politically dangerous position if they become too closely identified with the No camp. A convincing defeat for the No campaign would have repurcussions on Tory morale given their internal divisions. Thatcher knows that Scotland is crucial for a Tory victory in the general election and a No victory would strengthen Tory morale, enabling them to put forward the claim of representing Scottish opinion whilst waving the Union Jack.

The Yes campaign is based on working class organisations, the trade unions, the Scottish TUC, Labour Party, Communist Party and some revolutionary groups. In addition, of course, there is the petit-bourgeois Scottish Nationalist Party.

This is a very different political situation to the Common Market.
Referendum where the right/centre defeated the left. This time the boot is on the other foot, the left/centre is in a good strategic position to beat the Tory right and their business allies. And this is likely to raise working class expectations of change.

Scotland in the longer term? Like any constitutional reform it will give no direct material benefits in the way of social reform.

Scotland has its own national institutions and legal system which have remained intact since the Union with England. Yet Scotland is administered by the Scotlish Office bureaucracy so that any democratic influence on Scotlish law is minimized and behind the scenes pressure groups like the churches have been able to maintain their influence.

Today new laws passed by Westminster do not necessarily fit Scotland's different legal system. These laws need redrafting as Special Acts. In consequence some laws never reach Scotland "for lack of Parliamentary time". It is no surprise to find that all reactionary laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act or the Immigration Acts apply to Scotland, while many reforms apply only to England. For example:

- All homosexual relationships are

officially illegal in Scotland because there is no parallel to England's 1967 Sexual Offences Act

There has been no reform of Scotland's divorce laws
 The property laws allow a man to evict

his wife at will from their home even if

the property is owned by the Council

- People can be kept in mental hospitals
on allegedly "humanitarian" grounds,
in a system which hass been described

- And the use of the tawse for corporal punishment makes the Scottish educational system the most brutal in Europe.

In the light of this the Assembly represents a democratic reform which, by raising popular expectations, will make it relatively easier to gain some progressive changes in Scotland's laws.

What else might we expect from the Assembly? The government has decided that the Assembly will have no law-making powers over the economy. The House of Lords and its Tory friends have been able to add forestry, abortion and betting. Consequently, the Assembly will largely be a platform from which to broadcast Scottish problems. Talk changes nothing, but the increasing national debate in Scotland will create a better climate to argue the case for socialism.

But the significance of devolution may be wider than this. If we were passing from one stable centralised parliamentary system to a new stable system of

assemblies then perhaps it would be the most we could expect. But there is a strong suggestion that we are moving to an unstable system of assemblies.

The first aspect of this instability is ideological. Britain has a very long tradition of centralised parliamentary rule. Governments which command a parliamentary majority claim to act on behalf of the British people (for example when introducing wage controls).

Setting up a potential rival centre of authority breaks this tradition. The CBI is worried that "the authority of parliament" would be undermined. One can envisage a Tory government introducing a national wages policy which would be rejected by a Nationalist Assembly claiming to speak for the Scottish people. Such a conflict "above" would undoubtedly affect the struggle "below". Scottish workers would be far less likely to listen to the siren call from Westminster and far more likely to press wage demands. And that would affect English and Welsh workers as well.

Secondly, the assemblies introduce a number of unresolved problems into the system of government. One obvious source of conflict is the fact that the Assemblies will have no economic powers or authority to raise revenue. Francis Pyrn, the Tory spokesperson on devolution recently began to speak of a federal Britain and warned of the dangers of sliding inadvertently into constitutional ferment. The assemblies are therefore better thought of not as the end but rather the beginning of a period of constitutional evolution.

economic crisis, coupled with the contradictions and instabilities of the present "solution" to the national question and a popular desire for democratic control of Scottish society, grows into a real struggle for radical change.

Perhaps a Scottish republic will prove to be the only way to break this strangle-hold of the bureaucratic constitutional monarchy which stands in the way of democratic change in Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland. In which case it could be the Scottish working class which holds the key to socialist revolution in Britain.

WE'RE BORED and bewildered with Devolution. We've put it clean out of our minds. Believe it when we see it - not before.

Devolution may be new to you down south of Tyneside, in Yorkshire or Manchester but it's no novelty to us. And in the last decade we've talked our tongues dry on it.

Too many let-downs already. The referendum's your idea, not ours, and it's booby-trapped with catch 40%.

The old familiar structures have gone. The game of "pass the parcel" has landed Labour (whose local hacks will fill the Assembly) as the Devolution party. The SNP, its head split at Garscadden, has lost the initiative. Devolution isn't theirs.

Commies, Tories and Nats can be seen working happily together for a Yes vote. Yet, just as there are Tories, Labourites, Nats who say Yes, all have colleagues who say No. And the Yes Tories, Libs and Commies are further split between those who will and will not work with the Nats. Labour works with nobody, save the odd

Tory. There are three Yes campaigns and two No campaigns. Confusion reigns till the war starts.

How do people feel? Cheated. We asked for ground-to-air missles and you offer us a spud-gun. Since we've plenty tatties we'll take it. But can you be trusted to deliver?

What's that? It wasn't you, it was your ruling class? Well, why didn't you stop them? What were the descendants of the Levellers, those fine democrats of old England, doing through the Devolution debate?

Popular opinion is that you, the English, not just your bosses, that you are responsible. Please, please prove it wrong. You say you don't want me to go, but it's you, you who are driving us apart. Now, where's our spud-gun, eh? And could you make it blue and white?

By Norman Easton, Editor, Crann-Tara, Scotland's Radical Quarterly, 54 Powis Place, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Back Pages

Getting it together

Doing it yourself is one way of escaping some of the compromises you've normally got to make to get anything done. Andy Curry spoke to three groups who have done just that.

Sisterwrite, a new women's bookshop, opened in London at the end of November last year. Its stock includes a large number of British and American feminist books, as well as posters, records and journals.

Lyn Alderson, Mary Coghill, and Kay Stirling, who started the shop, have all worked in the book industry before. Lyn worked for Compendium, in the women's section; Mary for Patriarchy Publications, and Kay in Collets. Lyn explained why they decided to open a shop themselves.

"We felt that no-one was specialising in feminist books, and that if a shop was going to carry a large stock of feminist books, it ought to be done independently and controlled by women".

Bookshops notoriously require a lot of capital, because a lot of money is tied up in stock. Sisterwrite borrowed about £11,000 – all from women – and much of this has been loaned long term and without interest. The shop is a registered co-operative, and any profits will go back into the women's movement.

They've also applied to the **Equal Opportunities Commission** for a grant towards setting up a mail order scheme, but plan to go ahead with the scheme whether or not the grant is forthcoming. "We don't want to be just a" resource for London", Lyn said. "We've started work on the catalogue already. We'd like to start a reading room as well, with subscriptions to a variety of magazines, especially the expensive American ones which people can't normally afford to buy themselves. But we'll have to wait a while before we can get that organised."

They had a good first month before Christmas, always a good time of the year for selling books. "People do seem to like the atmosphere, and we're very happy for people to come in and browse, and to answer questions anyone has."

Street, London N1. Highbury's the nearest tube, and the telephone number is 01-226 9782; and it's open from 11-7pm Tuesday to Friday, and 10-6pm on Saturday.

scaping some of the to make to get anything groups who have done

If you've heard "Nicky and the Dots" or "The Dodgems" on the John Peel Show recently, then you've been hearing tracks from Vaultage 78, an LP of songs by some of the bands playing in and around Brighton at the moment. It's been put together by Attrix

Resource Centre, and the bands themselves, and 1,000 copies were pressed and distributed in the Brighton area. 800 copies of the record, which costs £2, were sold within a week of the record going on sale in December, and they're deciding whether or not they should do a re-press. The success is entirely deserved, as the LP is pretty good.

Records, Brighton Community

The idea of making a record was first suggested in the Resource Centre last August. The seven bands featured on the record all practice in the vault of the centre—hence the LP's title. (The centre's also used by local community, women's and left groups as a meeting place. It has printing facilities, and the LP's sleeve and

Rick Blair, of Attrix Records, had been involved in making a record before. He was a member of a now defunct band (called "Attrix") who had produced 500 copies of a single. "We really just wanted to prove that it could be done", Rick explained. "When we started putting Vaultage 78 together, we kept the name because we'd made a lot of contacts when we did the single".

The bands paid for their studio recordings, and the rest of the production process cost £950. This was loaned by the printer at the Community Resource Centre. "He'd been planning to buy a house, but the sale fell through and he felt a bit guilty about having all the money that he'd raised for the deposit just sitting around", Rick said. "He felt a lot more guilty once I'd talked to him about it! But he was very good about it, and let us have

Rich wants to demystify the process of making records, and the LO insert includes a step by step guide on how to go about it, including the names and addresses of companies who do tape-to-disc preparation, cut master discs, press records and press sleeves. He'd like to produce

the money without any strings

a booklet describing the process in more detail. If anyone with experience of making records is interested in helping with or contributing to such a booklet, they should contact Rick Baird at Attrix Records, The Basement, 43 Buckingham Place, Brighton (0273-27183). You can get copies of Vaultage 78 (if they're still available) from the same address for £2.30, postage included.

Lunatic Ideas, as its subtitle explains, is about "how newspapers treated education in 1977 It's a short, large-format book which starts from a theoretical discussion of the way newspapers describe the world in general, and education in particular, and goes on to look in more detail at the education reporting of specific papers (Guardian, Telegraph, Mirror and Express) and coverage of Shirley Williams' Green Paper, probably the education "event" of 1977. You're forgiven if you've forgotten that it launched the "Great Debate" on education. There's also a couple of short articles by individuals writing about their experiences as the subjects of news

The book is jointly published by the Corner House Bookshop and School Without Walls. Patricia Holland, one of the group who produced Lunatic Ideas, explained how the idea of doing a book came about. "A first we only intended to have a series of meetings on newspapers, and we started discussing newspapers and education because there were some teachers in the discussion group. We decided to collect newspapers and go through them, and we quickly built up a lot of written material, especially as members of the group produced written papers for each meeting, so we decided to do a book."

Originally, members of the group put up £100 towards printing costs, but they managed to borrow £1,000 and so individual contributions were lower. The printer is still owed part of his printing bill as well. 3,000 copies of the book were printed - it came out at the end of last year - and so far about 500 copies have been sold - 200 through the Corner House Bookshop and a surprisingly low 300 by PDC, the Publications Distribution Co-op. "We decided that there would be too much work involved in trying to distribute it ourselves, especially as the bookshop is still taking up a lot of time", Patricia Holland said. "PDC thought it would sell and agreed to take it on."

Lunatic Ideas was the first book published by the shop — which is, I suppose, continuing the long tradition of bookseller-publishers in Britain — and Patricia Holland would like to produce more once they've paid off the debts on Lunatic Ideas. Any profits made are to be ploughed back into a new project.

"I think that we filled a gap in producing the book", she adds. "There's a lot of theoretical stuff on mass communications, and there's a couple of books on specific areas of news coverage, like Chibnall's book on crime reporting, and "Bad News". about TV coverage of industrial relations, but there wasn't anything specific on education."

Lunatic Ideas comes at £1.75 (plus 25p postage) from Corner House Bookshop, 14 Endell Street, London WC2, or from left bookshops through PDC.

Agitprop

Employment law and employment practice is the subject of a conference organised jointly by the Industrial Common Ownership Movement and Inter-Action. It s to take the form of a day school, with solicitors talking about the legal side and members of some co-operatives discussing their experience in organising work relationships. The conference will be held at Inter-Action's building at 15 Wilkin St., London NW5, on March 17th, and more details are available from Keith Smith at that address.

SCHOOLS AND SEXISM

Sexual oppression a education is the chame of a conference to be held in London on 10th February—the venue hasn't been sorted out yet. Details and registration froms are available from John MacKay, 7 Pickwick Court, London SE9 (phone 01-857 3793), and he asks you to include an sae please.

FEMINIST ART

Phoenix: women artists at work is the name of an exhibition in The Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool. It's on from 16-27th January and features the work of Kate Walker, Sue Richardson, Monica Ross and Suzy Varty. In the first week of the exhibition, they'll be working - in the gallery - on a giant collage that will include things like drawings, photographs, letters and found objects "directly relating to women's lives". It's going to be an ongoing situation, and you're invited to drop in and watch it happen

Back Pages

Housing

Housing Action is a new national campaign set up to fight for decent housing for everyone, as well as establishing a national network of housing activists and organisations. The campaign is the product of conferences held last autumn in Sheffield and London, attended by more than 120 housing groups.

They've produced a 25-point discussion document as a step towards a "policy for housing action", and have a first organising meeting, open to everyone, planned for 27th January in Portsmouth, where a local group is campaigning against the demolition of houses in the Cumberland Road area. More information from Housing Action, c/o Self-Help Housing, Resource Library, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5. Tel: 01-607 2789 ext 5027.

Which Way Home? is a report on housing in Leeds by Leeds Trades Council. It argues that various council policies are designed to subsidise and create a demand for private housing, and that council tenants are subsidising the expansion of owner-occupation in the city. 45p from The Secretary, Leeds Trades Council, Savile Mount, Leeds 7.

While we're on housing, a couple of useful pamphlets have found their way into the office from Manchester. Dear Landlord, Have A Problem (35p) sounds like something out of a Dylan songbook, but is in fact a collection of specimen letters from tenants to landlords, covering problems like harassment, repairs, and rent increases.

Marriage Breakdown and Housing Law (35p) which is Manchester Women's Handbook No. 2 (the first one dealt with social security) cover the hassles both of separation and of getting somewhere else to live, and it's fairly detailed. Both of those come from Manchester Law Centre at 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 12 (061-225 5111). Add a bit for postage.

Rough Justice is a lively magazine produced by the National Cyrenians, mostly about single homeless people. Issue no. 2, which came out in December, attacks traditional views of Christmas, with their emphasis on family, sympathy and charity. People are never more

aware of the homeless than at Christmas; a recent study found that more than a third of newspaper references to the homeless came over the Christmas period.

But "the sympahy generated at Christmas for down and outs remain just feelings, and do not issue actions or solutions", writes Bob Dumbleton. His criticism is more fundamental though. The feelings of solidarity that are generated at Christmas, in being happy and having a good time (which are subversive of capitalism) are trapped inside the family, and are translated through commercialism into a safe form (gifts equal money for love) that fakes that solidarity and creates disillusion.

Rough Justice no. 2 also carries some good stuff on the Labour Party conference, mortgages, and the DHSS "revue". Rough Justice is well worth it at £1 for four issues, or 30p a single copy (incl. p&p) from National Cyrenians, 13 Wincheap, Canterbury, Kent.

MENTAL ILL-HEALTH

Snide-effects is an anti-psychatric drugs directory which lists the side effects of a large number of commonly used drugs, although a psychologist chum says is misses out some of the more horrendous effects. A present for prisoners everywhere, Snide-effects comes from PROMPT at 25 Seymour Buildings, Seymour Place, London W2, at 25p (incl. postage).

The Mental Patients' Union in

Publications

Manchester has produced a pamphlet called Your Rights In Mental Hospital, which tells you what your rights are in mental hospital, and also when you leave. It's pretty comprehensive, and comes from the Mental Patients' Union c/o Grass Roots Books, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester (061-236 3112). Price is 50p, but it's free to mental patients (although they might find it hard to get in touch if they're in (hospital on section) and £1 to social workers. Maybe they get it cheap while they're on strike. Prices don't include postage.

BAHRO

Rudolf Bahro Interviews Himself, printed recently in the New Statesman, has been published as a pamphlet by Spokesman. The "interview" is mostly autobiographical, dealing with Bahro's background and the way that he came to develop his critique of state socialism in Eastern Europe.

In the pamphlet, written before his arrest and the eight year sentence that followed the publication of his book The Alternative in West Germany, Bahro says, "Whether I am imprisoned or not will depend on the protection that international publicity can give, and above all the communist media"

30p plus postage from

Spokesman, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham.

BIKERS

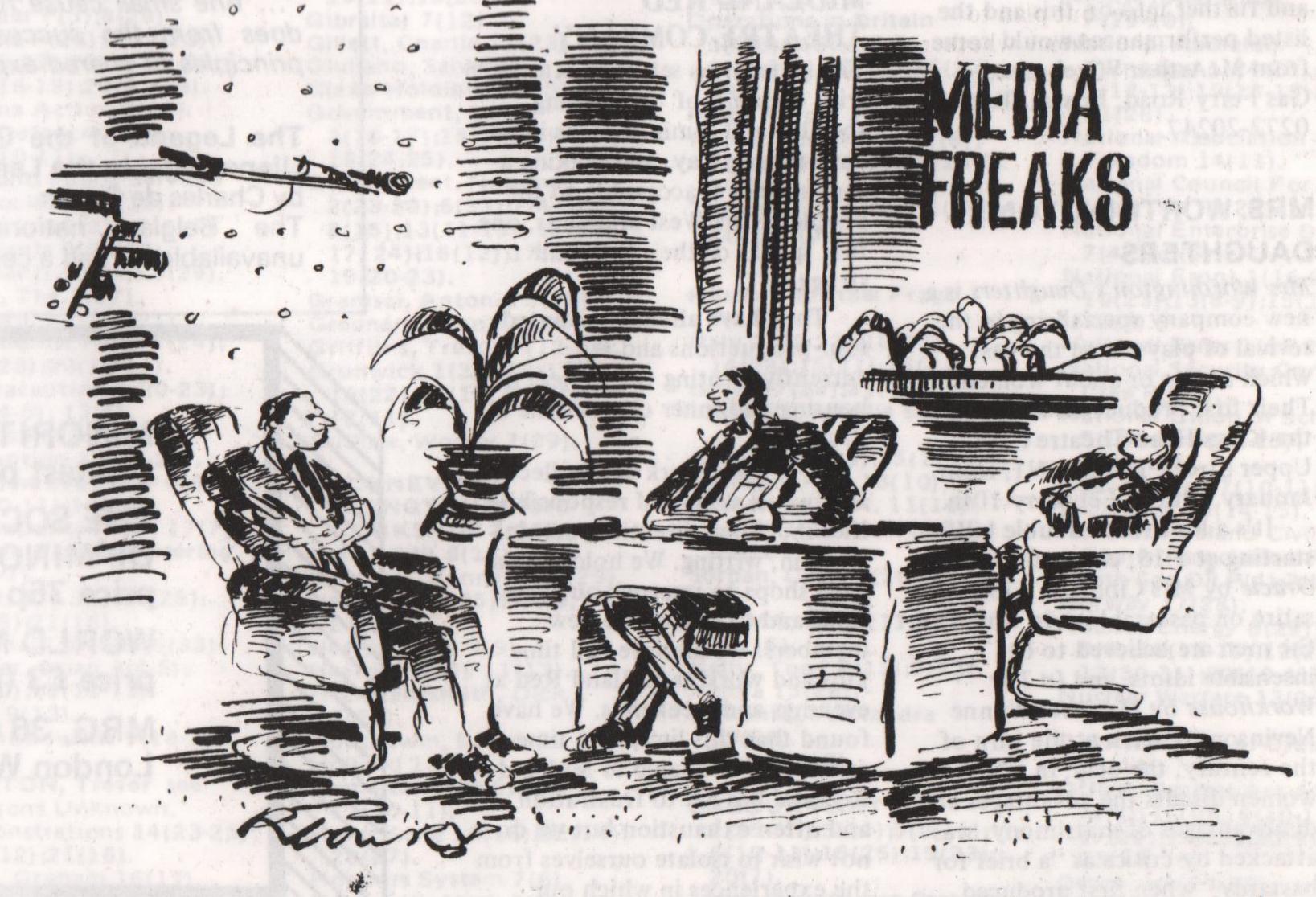
The second issue of On yer bike! the radical motorcycling journal is just out. It's trying to do biking without its usual sexist and macho associations; but it'll be an uphill struggle—after criticising the notoriously sexist Superbike in their first issue they received a copy from a staff member with the pictures of naked women blanked out and a covering message (on a "Compliments" slip) saying "satisfied?" They weren't.

There's a good piece on the Women's Bike Workshop, and RPM, a new four page news

60p (including postage) or £5 for 12 issues from 30 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

RADICAL SCIENCE

Radical Science Journal No.8
has also hit the streets. There's a
long paper by David Dickson on
"Science and Political Hegemony
in the 17th Century", as well as
articles on abortion and ideology,
and genetics and social theory.
Meanwhile this issue comes at
£1.25 (postage included) from
9 Poland Street, London W1. Subs
are £3 for three consecutive issues.



"Next we'd like to welcome a famous right-wing bore who's flown over from his home in the south of France to tell us exactly what's wrong with Britain today."

Back Pages

Theatre Listings

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

AVON TOURING THEATRE COMPANY

The Avon Company are blitzing the west country with their Measure for Measure and their Riff Raff Rules after a Christmas success with their jolly Allez Oop!, helped out by a small grant from the steel and metal company McArthur's. TORRINGTON: Tues 23 Jan, The Plough. ILFRACOMBE: Wed 24 Jan. STREET: Thurs 25 Jan, Strode Theatre. SHAFTESBURY: Fri 26 Jan, Arts Centre. GWENT: Fri 2 Feb, Congress Theatre. WARMINSTER Thurs 8 Feb, Youth Centre. NANTS: Fri 9 Feb, New Milton Centre. CHELTENHAM: Tues 13 Feb, St. Pauls College. SHAFTESBURY: Sat 17 Feb, Arts Centre.

From Monday 19 Feb, the company assault the West and East Midlands for three weeks, and further info on this and the listed performances would come from McArthur Warehouse, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol. Tel: 0272-20247.

MRS. WORTHINGTON'S DAUGHTERS

Mrs Worthington's Daughters is a new company specialising in the revival of plays from the past which are by or about women. Their first production is to be at the Kings Head Theatre Club, Upper Street, London N1, from January 30th to February 10th.

It's a lunchtime double bill. starting at 1.15, consisting of The Oracle by Mrs Cibber, a 1790 satire on pastoral love in which all the men are believed to be insensible idiots, and In The Workhouse by Margaret Wynne Nevinson. Written at the turn of the century, the play, in which women discuss the advantages and disadvantages of matrimony, was attacked by critics as "a brief for bastardy" when first produced. Further information available from 01-607 6070, 01-609 3800, and 01-226 4243.

BROADSIDE MOBILE WORKERS THEATRE

Broadside are currently in the process of setting up a new London HQ but for the while can be contacted at 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1. Tel: 01-730 5396. ROCHESTER: Fri 26 Jan, Rochester TGW, 'Divide and Rule Britannia' (to be confirmed). LONDON: Wed 31 Jan. South London Medical Branch ASTMS, 'Divide and Rule'. LONDON: Fri 2 Feb, A benefit performance of 'The Working Women's Charter Show' in aid of the Vauxhall Battered Wives Refuge. KINGSTON: Tues 6 Feb, Kingston Anti-Nazi League, 'Divide and Rule'. LONDON: Thurs 8 Feb, Hillingdon ANL, 'Apartheid: The British Connection'. HARROW: Fri 9 Feb, Harrow College of Further Education, 'Apartheid' (to be confirmed).

COMMON STOCK THEATRE COMPANY

Common Stock at present have their lively "winter entertainment" show for kids doing the rounds, and their "Morning Tiger" is available for hire ideally at a cost of £120, but this can be negotiated. The show can be seen at the Young Vic, The Cut, Waterloo, SE1 at 3pm Tues 30 Jan. Common Stock can be contacted at 31 Fulham Palace Road, London W6. Tel: 01-741

MIDLAND RED THEATRE COMPANY

This group was set up in late 1976 with the aims of "presenting socialist and feminist ideas in an entertaining way, and making a theatre that is accessible to the people of the West Midlands, one that speaks of their lives and struggles".

They have already mounted four productions and are currently treating the subject of housing and inner city decline in Brum.

"We work as a collective, sharing all skills and responsibilities including direction, administration, writing. We hold regular workshops to improve our basic skills and to encourage new members. We all have full time jobs and work as Midland Red at evenings and weekends. We have found that this limits the time and energy available to Midland Red and has led to frustration and often exhaustion but we do not wish to isolate ourselves from the experiences in which our theatre is rooted. Eventually we hope to receive at least a partial subsidy which would enable us

to become semi-professional." Midland Red can be contacted at 17a Carlyle Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham 16. Tel: 021-455 0505.

NORTH WEST SPANNER PRESTON: Sat 10 Feb, Preston

Polytechnic, 'Partisans'. Spanner are then off on a two week jaunt around Scotland mainly in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee with their 'Partisans', about the Peugeot takeover of Chrysler, and their 'Safety First', succinctly described as "a black comic look at health and safety at work". Further info from North West Spanner, Drill Hall, Manchester Road, Mosslay, Ashton-Under-Under-Lyme, Lancs OL5 9AY. Tel: 061-881

THEATRE SPACE **COVENT GARDEN**

Theatre Space are from Mon 22 hosting a three week run of "Kurt Weill in Berlin 1928-34", song and cabaret performed by the Lazarus Theatre Company Curtains up at 8pm and tix cost £1.10, which no doubt includes VAT. Theatre Space Covent Garden, 29 King Street, London WC2. Tel: 01-836 9705.

MUSIC

The Birmingham Arts Lab has its usual full quota with the highspot perhaps the performances by two contemporary jazz groups, Landscape and Joy, both winners of the GLC Arts Assocation Young Musicians' Award, on Sunday 4 Feb. This double bill will set you back £1.25 beginning at 8pm, and can be witnessed at the Aston Centre for the Arts in Gosta Green.

Keeping with Brummie-land, there is a series of five lectures starting Tues 16 Jan on the theme of Music from Five Continents at the Martin Luther. King Centre, Aston University. Further info and details of costs from Caroline Marshall at 021-472 1301 ext.3067.

Back down in London the reliable Co-op Education Department musical Saturday nights at the Singers Club, Bull and Mouth, 31 Bloomsbury Way, WC1 continues with a reluctant price increase. The high may well be Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger on 10 Feb, but every Saturday night features someone of interest.

Two new books from JOURNEYMAN

Tales I Tell My Mother A collection of feminist short stories by Zoë Fairbairns, Sara Maitland, Valerie Miner, Michele Roberts and Michelene Wandor.

one small cause for optimism, springing as its does from the successful application of feminist principles of shared experience, work and criticism. Gay News

The Legend of the Glorious Adventures of Tyl Ulenspiegel in the Land of Flanders & Elsewhere by Charles de Coster.

excellence, Belgian national unavailable for half a century.

> MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP latest publications THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF MINORITIES price 75p (+ post 15p) WORLD MINORITIES Vol II price £3 (post free), from MRG, 36 Craven St., London WC2N 5NG

THE LEVELLER runs an updated index every year. All major topics are listed by issue numbers, with page numbers in brackets. P means PILOT issue. Back numbers are available from the office - see notice on page 35. And don't miss 1980's index - find out what you've missed in 1979! Best of all — take out a subscription and don't miss anything!

ABORTION 1(24-25); 2(14-15);3(27);5(12-13); 16(13);19(18-19);21(26) Advertising 10(20-22). Africa P(10-11);P(24-26); 1(28-29);2(7-13);5(22); 6(14);7(9);8(15);14(11); 15(29);17(17-21). Africa, South P(25) 2(7-13);8(10-11);12(7); 8(10-11);12(7);14(4-5); 14(11);18(29). Agee, Philip 3(4-8);4(21); 5(20);7(21);9(17);12(7) 13(10);19(7). Aitcheson, Leslie 11(11) Ali, Tariq 19(22-28). America, North 1(4-8); 2(9);7(5);8(10-11);9(32); 15(10);17(8, 28). America, South P(14) 3(28-29);4(7);5(23); 14(14-15);18(12-15, 28) Amnesty International 16(26). Angola P(10-11);1(28-29); Carver, Lord 9(17). Annan Report 8(24-25). Cecil, Richard 17(30). Anti-Nazi League Censorship P(28); 4(25-30 Centerprise 4(22-23); 16(18-20);17(29) 20(11-13);21(16). Central Intelligence Arden, John (and D'Arcy Margaretta) 9(31); 10(30-31). Argentina P(14);3(28-29); Centre for Marxist 9(17);18(12-15). Army 1(6-8);2(10, 21); Chikuse 2(12-13). 5(4-6);6(4-5);15(10); 16(22-27);17(30); China 9(17);20(18-28). 18(20-23); (see also Chrysler P(3);8(29). Cinema P(28);2(22-23); Johnstone, H.A.; Specia Air Service; SIGINT; Ireland). Art 4(16-17). Cinema Action 7(26) Civil Defence 2(21); Ashby, Hal 7(29). Aspin, Leslie 1(28-29). Civil and Public Services Aubrey, Crispin 7(7); 17(28);19(26);20(9); 21(16); (see also John-Claimants 9(25-29).

stone, H.A.). Australia 7(7). B. COLONEL see Johnstone, H.A. Bahrain 4(12); 5(19). Bahro, Rudolf 13(29); 18(11). Bangladeshis 18(6-9). Banks, John 1(28-29); Barclays Bank 2(9). Beer P(29); 7(32). Bennett, Ronan see Persons Unkown. Berger, John 15(22-23). Berry, John 7(7); 17(28); 19(26);20(9);21(16); (see also Johnstone, H.A.) Big Flame 5(29);7(25); 13(7). Bill of Rights 9(9-10). Black Slate 13(16-17). Bolivia 18(28). Bound for Glory 7(29). Brazil 4(7). Brick Lane 18(6-9); 21(16) British Broadcasting Corp. oration 11(14-17);12(7); 14(6-7). British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 6(29);7(8);12(22-29).

British Petroleum 7(5).

Bunyan, Tony P(6-8).

Unknown.

10(23).

Agency P(4);1(28);3(4-8)

4(21);5(20);7(7);12(7);

13(10);13(11-13);19(7).

7(26-29);15(12,22-23);

18(18-19);20(31-36).

Association 7(12);

11(11);16(21);21(16).

Claimants Unions 9(29).

Communist Party 7(24);

Contraception 8(20-23);

Clash, The 7(17).

11(4-5); 13(6).

Co-ops P(16-18).

16(8);21(16).

9(5-7).

Cuba 9(13).

Clifford, Lord P(21).

19(23);20(10-11).

Corruption 18(24-25).

7(10-11);14(22).

Conservative Party 4(8);

Cosmopolitan Man 17(7).

Costain Civil Engineering

Courts 9(8 11);14(25);

Criminal Law Bill 6(33).

Czechoslovakia 9(18-19).

Demonstrations 14(23-25)

DAWTON, Trevor see

Persons Unknown.

Dene, Graham 16(17).

Denning, Lord 9(8-9).

Deptford 16(28-29);

15(12);21(16).

Denim 8(18-19).

Denmark 17(13).

20(14 15).

Crozier, Brian 3(4-5);

5(20);13(11-13).

Education P(4)

17(10-11).

Festival for Mind and Body 6(18-19);16(14-15) Bulgaria 10(25). Festivals 6(18-19); 16(14-15);17(31). C A PARSONS 7(4-5); Films and Film Industry P(28);2(22-23);7(26-29); Cable Television 12(31). 12(10);15(22-23);. Cambodia 2(19). 18(18-19);20(31-36). Campaign Against A Films from the Clyde Criminal Trespass Law 7(26-27). 6 (33). Football P(26-27);5(24); Campaign Against Arms 9(12-13);13(9, 29); Trade 17(21-23). 16(30). Campaign Against Racism Fords 1(27);2(15) and Fascism 17(29). 8(28-29);21(8). Campaign For Real Ale Forum World Features P(29);7(32) 3(4-5). Campbell, Duncan 7(7); French, Sid 7(24). 17(28);19(26);20(9); Friends of the Earth 21(16); (see also John 18(11). stone, H.A.). Funkhouser, Richard E. Cape Industries 17(13). Capital Radio 14(26). 16(17). Carr, Stewart see Persons

Derelicts 2(16-17).

18(27).

Students).

Egypt 12(15).

Dovaston, Roy 9(4).

Drugs 12(14);14(6);16(21)

ECONOMICS + (25-30).

Education P(21);3(30);

29);21(15);(see also

Edgar, David P(5); 6(23).

5(28-29);10(29);19(28-

Election, General 19(20-23

Employment 15(14-17);

(see also Industry).

Energy 20(40-41); (see

also Nuclear Energy).

Environment 17(12-13);

Nuclear Energy; Housing)

20(40-41);(see also

Ethiopia 5(22);17(21).

Human Rights P(3)

ENCE 21(18-19).

European Convention of

FAMILY LIFE CONFER-

Fashion 3(20-23);8(18-19)

Equity 19(16-17).

2(4-5);10(10).

Evita 18(12-15).

GARTREE PRISON 20(16-17);21(12). Gays 3(26);4(24);8(9); 12(8, 16-17); 17(8); 21(27). Gay Sweatshop 4(24). General Electric Company 5(7);7(4-5);8(6). Genetic Engineering 14(12-13). Germany, East 10(29); 13(29);18(11). Germany, West 2(9, 17); 6(13);8(7);9(16-17); 10(10-14);12(13);13(29) 14(11);15(20). Gibraltar 7(12). Gillett, Charlie 17(23). Giuliano, Salvatore Glaxo Holdings 8(4-5). Government, Local 3(16-17);15(13,25); 18(24-25). Government, National 2(23-30);6(33);7(4-6); 8(15);13(11-13); 15(14-17, 24);16(12);17(29); 19(20-23). Gramsci, Antonio 5(26). Grennan, Dennis P(10-11). Griffiths, Trevor P(12-13) Grunwick 1(30);12(12); 13(22);14(10, 29-31); 18(11). Guthrie, Woody 7(29).

HACKNEY AND

ISLINGTON MUSIC

WORKSHOP 7(20).

Hall, Edith 8(16). Halliwell, Kenneth 21(29) Health 1(23-25);8(4-5,17); 21(9). Healy, Gerry 4(9). Heaton, Wally 11(13). Heckstall-Smith, Dick 7(21). Hobsbawm, Eric 2(22-23) Holland 13(15). Home Defence 2(21); 17(10-11). Hong Kong 10(16);12(14); Honours System 7(6). Hosenball, Mark 3(6); Hoskins, W.G. 17(12-13). Hospitals 8(17);21(9).

Hounslow Hospital 8(17).

Housing P(9);3(25);17(13); 18(8-9). Hull Prison 1(26);2(20); 21(11).

INDUSTRY

Agriculture 3(10);4(20); 6(28);10(28-29). Asbestos 17(13). Bread 4(20). Brewing P(29) Building 7(32);3(11); 3(11). 17(11). Construction 9(5-7). Co-ops P(16-18). Drugs 8 (4-5). Electrical 5(7). Fashion 3(20-23);8(18-19 McCOLGAN, Mike 17(29). Hotel and Catering 1(6); McNamara, Jackie P(27). Malawi 14(11). Involvement in South Africa 2(7-13). Meat 3(10).

Mineral 8(8). Mining 1(15). Motor P(3,16-17);1(27); 1(27);2(15);6(26); 8(26-29);21(8). National Enterprise Board Nuclear 6(29);7(4-5,7); 12(22-29);13(30-31). Oil 7(5);18(11). Power 7(4);8(6). Printing and Publishing P(6);4(22-23);11(20-25). Sabotage 5(21);18(20-21).

Information Research Department 13(11-13); 18(11). Institute for the Study of Conflict P(10-11);3(4-8); 13(11-13). Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency P(6-8);1(3-5); 2(21-23);3(28-29);4(4-6); 6(13);8(9);13(10);14(11); 17(16);19(7,24,25); 20(17,29);21(6-7). International Marxist Group 4(9);6(30);13(7); 18(16);19(22-23). Iran 20(28).

IRELAND Army 5(4-6);7(10-11) 12(6);16(22-29);17(14-1 17(14-16). Gays 8(9). General P(3);7(10-11); 10(4-7);14(20-21,31); 16(21, 31);17(29); 19(7); 20(29). Industry 8(8). Loyalist Groups 2(6); 11(11). Music 7(22-23). Operations in Britain 1(3-5);2(6);4(4-6);

6(9);8(9);10(15);16(27); 19(7). Peace People 17(29). Republican Groups 2(6); 7(5);10(4.7,15);14(20-21 14(20-21). Torture P(3);2(4-5);6(4-5) 7(11);9(33).

Iribarne, Manuel Fraga Italy 2(22-23);10(17); 14(28);15(21);16(21). Israel 17(28);21(20-23); (see also Middle East).

JAMAICA 3(9);15(17). Johnson, Paul 13(10). Johnstone, H.A. 11(10); 13(7);15(6-7);16(6-9); 19(26). Jordan, Colin 1(16-22).

KALMA, B. 11(11); 13(15). Kelly, Tony P(13);5(11). Kenya 15(29). Kollontal, Alexandra 10(30). Kuwait 7(16).

LABOUR PARTY 2(25-30);3(24);5(8-11); 6(10-11);15(25);19(23); Ladd, Dafydd see Persons Unknown. Ladywood Elections 8(15).

Lambeth Central Elections

15(24).

Language Schools 19(28-Law 6(33). Lebanon 1(28-29). Left Groups 20(37); (see also under title of specific groups).

Legalise Cannabis Campaign 18(27). Lloyd Webber, Andrew 18(12-15). London Brick Company

London, Jack 5(25). Lonhro 2(11). Lost Honour of Katharina Blum 7(28).

Malaysia P(11-12). Manley, Michael 3(9); 15(17). Mark, Robert 7(16). Marks, John 3(7). Martin, Troy Kennedy 5(16-17). Men of No Property 7(22-23). Mens Groups 16(15). Mercenaries 1(28-29); 7(6);9(4);12(7). Middle East 4(12);5(14); 7(16);12(15);17(28). Miliband, Ralph 4(12-13). Millington, Mary and Doreen 4(26-28). Mills, Iris see Persons Unknown. Montoneros P(14);9(17). Moorcock, Michael

14(18-19). MUSIC

5(20).

11(18-19).

Morning Star 20(10-11)

Moss, Robert P(10-11);

Muldoon, Roland

Moro, Aldo 15(21);16(21).

Moseley, Oswald 1(16-22).

General 7(17-21,29); 12(32);19(10-12). Industry 19(8-9). Irish 7(22-23). Reggae P(30);13(16-17). Rock and Punk P(31); 2(16-17);3(12-13);6(27); 7(17-21);9(18-23); 10(18-19);13(18-19); 16(18-19);20(14-15); 21(17).

Music for Socialism 7(18-20);11(33). Mutumbuka, Dzingai 2(12-13).

NARAYAN, Rudy

P(19-20). National Abortion Campaign 1(24-25);3(27); 5(12-13);19(18-19); 21(26). National Association For Freedom 14(11). National Council For Civ.;

Liberties 16(26) National Enterprise Board 7(4-5);8(6). National Front 1(16-22); 10(23);13(8-9);15(12); 19(7). National Party 1(16-22).

National Security Committee P(6-8). National Union of School Students 5 (28-29); 12(9-11).

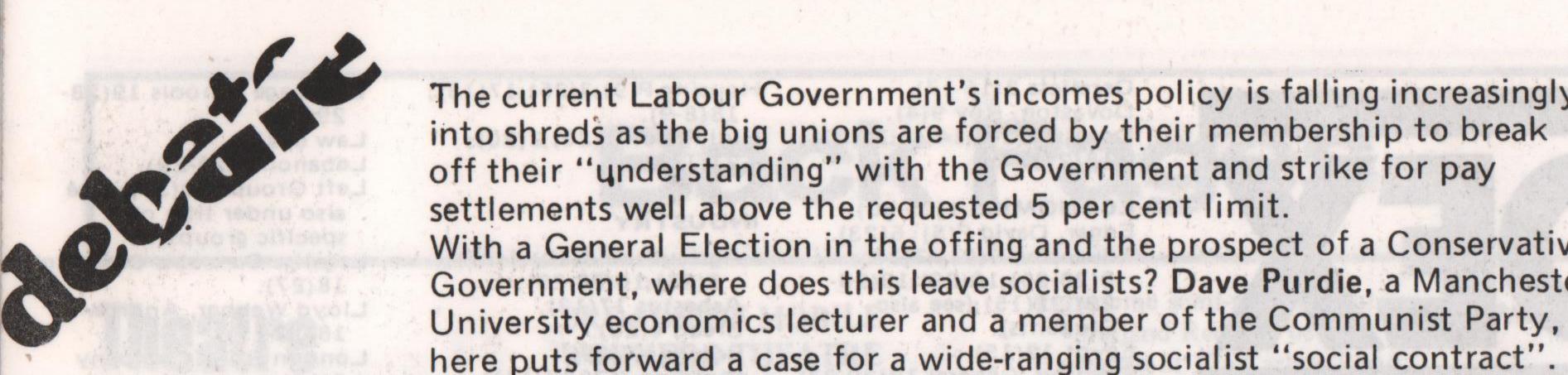
Neave, Airey 7(10-11). Nicaragua 14(14-15). Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association P(3) North Sea Oil P(4);7(5). Norway 17(28).

Nuclear Energy 6(29);7(8); 8(6);10(12-13);12(22-29); 13(30-31);20(40-41). Nuclear Warfare 13(23).

O'BRIEN, Conor Cruise 13(14).

Official Secrets Act 4(21); 7(7);11(10);16(10-11); 17(28);19(26);20(9); 21(13, 16). Orton, Joe 21(29). Ove, Horace 20(31-33).

P, Mark 20(14-15).



The current Labour Government's incomes policy is falling increasingly into shreds as the big unions are forced by their membership to break off their "understanding" with the Government and strike for pay settlements well above the requested 5 per cent limit. With a General Election in the offing and the prospect of a Conservative Government, where does this leave socialists? Dave Purdie, a Manchester University economics lecturer and a member of the Communist Party,

PAY POLICIES AND SACRED COWS

WHEN THE Jarrow Marchers reached London in 1936 a deputation called on Walter Runicman, President of the Board of Trade in Baldwin's National Government.simply the highest form to date of a long Their purpose was to demand direct government intervention to bring work back to a town laid waste by the Depression. Runicman told them that there was nothing that could be done. They must go back where they had come from and do something for themselves.

This incident reveals the gulf which separates the period since 1840 from what went before. Runicman's stark and fatalistic response would have been unthinkable from any government minister in the post-war period.

The social and economic reforms carried through during the war and under the first majority Labour Governments from 1945 to 1951 are consistently underestimated by the contemporary left. Yet they transformed British society. It is true that they also kept British capitalism in business for a great deal longer than seemed likely in 1945. But what mattered for the long term was that the weight of the state in the functioning of the economy was irreversibly enhanced by the completion of the welfare state, the nationalization of the economic infrastructure and the construction of a sophisticated apparatus; for regulating the economy at the macro

"The social and economic reforms carried through during the war and under the first majority Labour governments . . . are consistently underestimated by the contemporary left."

These changes entrenched a process of state intervention which is very far from having run its course. The recession which began in 1973 may have been bad for business but state activity thrives on it. Ailing capitalist giants are taken over and re-organised; ambitious inner city redevelopment schemes are launched; a large, new state apparatus - the Manpower Services Commission - is created to direct the job creation and industrial retraining programmes.

Alongside this flourishing statecollectivist trend there has occured a shift the unions which would have caused our friend Runicman just as much surprise as dismay. Broadly speaking the pattern of British government since 1940 has been built around the recognition that in a society which wishes to live up to its democratic pretensions, no government can rule long without preserving an irreducible minimum of union consent.

The union-government conflicts of 1969 - 1974 merely provided negative

confirmation of this feature of our polity. The Social Contract which dominated British politics in the mid-1970s was established system of consultation and negotiation between unions and government, which has ebbed and flowed, but persisted whichever party held office.

And even after the TUC formally rejected the Government's proposed pay limit for the second year in succession, the breakdown of negotiations was followed not by a political upheaval, but by the beginning of another round of negotiations in the new context created by the Ford settlement and the patchy resumption of laisser faire wage bargaining in the private

While for understandable agitational reasons the left likes to depict the union leadership as more or less reluctant prisoners of the capitalist state, in fact the flow of influence between unions and government runs both ways. At its weakest, union influence has amounted to no more than the negative ability to constrain state policy within certain limits, to fix the parameters of what is at any given time politically possible.

But at least since the passing of the wary arms length relationship between the unions and the Conservative Governments of the 1950s, the unions have been one of the strongest sources of pressure behind the continued development of state collectivism. Indeed one of the major growth points of union membership has been within the services run by central and local government, which have greatly expanded their share of total employment and now, together with the nationalized industries, employ 30% of the labour

These two trends between them - the steady march of state activity and consolidation of permanent union-government bargaining over issues of social and economic policy - make some kind of incomes policy more or less inevitable. It is simply not feasible for any government, left or right, to rule without formulating a view, at least in private and under its breath, as to what on various assumptions is likely to happen to the nation's aggregate wage bill, and how it should best affect

what happens. One reason for this is that government is responsible for a major part of total in the relationship between government and expenditure - over half if you include items like unemployment benefits which transfer spending power from one group to another. The public sector wage bill in turn accounts market. for a hefty chunk of state expenditure, all of which has to be financed somehow. What happens to wages has very definite implications for taxes, rates, public borrowing and the growth of the money supply, which the state controls, albeit rather imperfectly. These factors in turn affect the course of the rest of the

economy. Hence pay, at least in the public sector, is bound to be a matter of political determination.

It is just about possible to envisage laissezfaire pay bargaining in the private sector combined with a de facto incomes policy for public employees enforced through cash limits on public spending. The Conservatives appeared to advocate such a hybrid policy until recently. It might conceivably work for 12 months or so: But as has been repeatedly demonstrated, public sector unions would not tolerate any prolonged divergence between public and private pay settlements.

"The so-called monetarist alternative to incomes policy is merely a continuation of pay policy by other means.

It is significant that the Conservative front bench has now retreated from this untenable position to safer ground. They now favour concerted "discussion" with representatives of workers and employers on the West German model in the hope that these will produce an understanding over pay. "Understanding" is the polite right wing term for the unspeakable socialist device of pay norms.

This last point indicates that a policy for pay need not take the form of a full frontal incomes policy complete with norms, criteria for exceptions, arbitration boards and procedures for enforcement. It can also operate by the back door. Indeed. the so called monetarist alternative to incomes policy is merely a continuation of pay policy by other means. Curbing the growth of the money supply is an indirect way of imposing discipline on on employers and unions by holding out the prospect of self-inflicted penalties for "excessive" pay settlements in the form of cash flow difficulties, reduced profitability and ultimately bankruptcy in the one case and higher unemployment in the other.

The political risk of a full blooded "monetarist policy is that it would bypass the network of union-government communication and bargaining which has been cultivated over the past 40 years. In fact this is seen as its main merit by right wing commentators, whose main objective is to restore a "proper" relationship between the state and the economy in order, as they see it, to defend the individual independence and freedom which rests on the foundations of a free

But such an authoritarian approach to economic policy could easily be taken by the unions to release them from any social obligation or responsibility for the fate of the economy. When even conservative trade union leaders adopt a posture of rebellion, a serious constitutional and economic crisis cannot be far off. Well



before this point was reached the pressure would mount for a return to the tried and tested methods of negotiation and compromise. Incomes policy would be back on the agenda.

Now it is axiomatic that socialist policy is not engraved on tablets of stone. It must adjust to changes in social reality or be condemned to sterility. The argument so far has been that it is virtually impossible for Britain to be governed without some kind of incomes policy. The issue for socialists is not whether, but how and on what terms to enter the process of debate and negotiation surrounding policies for

It is essential that this issue be faced if the left is to learn from the past, recover from defeat and turn itself into an effective force in British politics. The current tendency to climb aboard the bandwagon of disillusionment with the social contract, and to identify progress with every fresh pay dispute, is sadly mistaken. It is leading away from a coherent socialist strategy for Britain.

The main reason for this assertion is that the key to contemporary socialist strategy lies in the unification of diverse areas of struggle and the creation of a broad social and political alliance around consensus over at least the main directions of social and economic policy. It was precisely such an alliance which provided the driving force for the last great transformation of the 1940s.

Wage struggles only rarely succeed in uniting the different sections of the organized trade union movement, not to speak of that section of workers (nearly 50%) who do not belong to unions. Moreover although wage militancy appears to challenge the established order, and it is often presented in this light by the media, at a deeper level it re-inforces capitalist values and the capitalist way of life. For example, it helps to strengthen the consumerist ethos with its privatized, individualistic, irresponsible and passive vision of the good life. This ethos cuts the workers' movement off from the critique of modern capitalism developed over the past decade by the environmental

movement, however one sided this critique may be from a socialist standpoint.

Similarly the wages struggle lives out the principle that success goes (and ought to go) to the strongest. This is not the result of any inherent selfishness. It is a natural consequence of a highly sectionalized system of wage bargaining unregulated by any overall and accepted rules setting limits are decided by the superior force of on settlements negotiated in individual bargaining units. But this practice divides workers with different degrees of bargaining strength, and quite sincere professions of concern for the fate of the low paid or long term unemployed are made to look like crocodile tears. It drives a wedge between the workers' movement and the feminist critique of the aggressive/ competitive features of male domination. And it is difficult to justify to the various welfare pressure groups whose entire raison d'etre is to resist the logic and ethic of the market.

.. the wages struggle lives out the principle that success goes (and ought to go) to the strongest."

It goes without saying that a ocialist pay policy must go beyond the narrow circle of linking money wages, taxes and prices. If the workers' movemen is to show the vision and sacrifice needed to sustain adherence to overall pay limits (which incidentally need not and should not eliminate lower level collective bargaining over pay), there must be a far reaching quid pro quo.

There is insufficient space here to spell out in detail the terms which might be incorporated into such a socialist social contract. But the general theme must be the democratization of economic decisions within central and local government and within private and public corporations. The distinctive contribution which socialism can bring to bear on the continuing debate over incomes policy is to press for the extension of the range of social choices and negotiations to

issues which within the prevailing distribution of social power are nonnegotiable.

Some of these issues, such as the decline of the inner city areas, are decided nowhere and by no-one, but emerge from the anarchy of the market. Others, like the segregation of male and female jobs, centuries old privilege. Such issues exist within all the dimensions of privilege and oppression in our society. These include alongside and intersecting the class divisions, which socialists have traditionally, and often exclusively emphasised, the various oppressions and injustices which are based on sex, sexual persuasion, race, age, nation, religion, the socio-technical division of labour, and the relations between the rich industrial countries and the poor and poorest countries of the Third World; together with still other issues not reducible to any of these - issues of the environment. energy sources and uses, modes of transportation and communication, leisure and recreation.

A democratic programme embodying practical steps towards the long term abolition of these divisions and sources of of oppression, would build on the trends now well established for economic life to become collectivized and for subordinate social groups to gain bargaining and pressure group influences over the system of government. It would help to unify those struggling within different

arenas. And it would highlight what is now only dimly perceived as a gap or absence at the heart of modern society: that under both capitalist relations of production and statist relations by which they have been overlaid, private money wages function as a poor substitute for democratic social control over the conditions of life and work.

No-one will ever be won for socialism if it is reduced to a bigger version of capitalist prosperity and a more perfect welfare state. What socialists must offer is a new principle of social organization and a strategy for realizing it.

Palestine 12(15); (see also Middle East). Parsons, Tony 21(17). Penguin Books P(6);9(32). Persons Unknown P(6); 9(24);20(17);21(7). Peru 9(17). Pirie, Dennis 1(16-22). Poland 4(18-19). Police P(6-8);5(16-18); 7(16);14(11,23-25); 17(16); (see also Special Branch; Insurgency and Counter Insurgency). Population 19(16-17). Pornography 4(25-30); 21(26). Post Office 14(29-31); 15(8-9);21(9). Poster Collective 12(18-19) Poulantzas, Nicos 3(30). Press P(16-18, 20); 1(11, 30);11(20-26);12(8); 13(10,14);15(10);16(31); 17(26-27,30);20(10-11). Prison 1(26);2(20);5(19); 20(16-17);21(10-15). Pritchards 4(8). Private Eye 1(11). Professional Footballers Association P(26-27). Proll, Astrid 20(29);

21(6-7). Pryor, Richard P(29). Psychological Warfare 6(6-8). Public Order Act 14(23-25);15(12). Publishing P(6);4(22-23). RACE 6(27);17(29); 18(6-9);19(16-17); (see

also Anti-Nazi League;

Right Wing Groups;

Brick Lane).

Radio 14(26-28);16(16-17); Ramelson; Bert 19(23). Red Army Fraction 6(13); 8(7);9(16);10(10-12). Red Brigade 15(21); Red Ladder Theatre 6(9, 31). Red Therapy 11(28-29). Religion 16(14-15, 21). Revolutionary Communist Group 3(27). Revolutionary Communist Tendency 3(27). Reyrolle Parsons 7(4-5); 8(6). Rhodesia 1(30);2(7-13); 6(6-8);8(8);17(30). Rice, Time 18(12-15). Right to Work Campaign 1(5-6).

Right Wing Groups 1(16-22);6(22-23);9(4); 10(23, 29);13(8-9); 14(11);15(12);16(21); 17(24-25);19(7). Robinson, Tom 9(22-23).

Rock Against Racism 3(12-13);16(18-19). Roots 6(27). Russian Art 4(16-17). Ryder, Lord 7(4-5). **SALFORD** 18(26).

Scargill, Arthur 13(30-31). Scarman, Sir Leslie 9(9). Schlondorff, Volker 7(28). School of Oriental and African Studies 5(27). Science Fiction 11(18-19); 13(24-27). Scotland 3(24);11(11); 16(13).

Scottish Labour Party

Security Firms 4(8);7(16). Seeger, Pete 6(27). Sex and Sexism 4(25-30); 8(20-23);9(17);12(8); 17(6-9);19(10-12);21(26).

Shackleton Report 19(25). SIGINT 11(6-7);19(26);

Singapore 2(20). Slater Walker 2(20). Smoking P(24-26). Socialist Challenge 6(30);

Socialist History 12(20-21); 17(12-13);18(16). Socialist Labour Party (ireland) 11(12). Socialist Workers Party 1(5-6);4(12-13);13(7);

Spain P(12);8(4-5). Special Air Service P(6-8, 11-12);2(10); 5(4-6);6(4-5);12(6). Special Branch 13(10);

15(10). Sport P(26-27);5(24); 9(12-13);13(9);15(29);

Sproat, lain 3(8);6(31). Springsteen, Bruce P(31). Squatting 17(13). Steel Pulse 13(16-17). Stevenson, Vince see Persons Unknown. Strikes 7(12);16(30); (see

also Grunwicks). Students P(10-11, 20); 5(27);15(10). Styrene, Poly 13(18-19). Surveillance 15(8-9); 16(10-11);21(9). Syria 1(28-29).

TANZANIA 17(20-21). Tajir, Mohammed Mahdi

Wales P(9);3(24);5(8-9);

18(11);19(14-15).

Ward and Goldstone

West Sahara 6(15);

Women P(15);1(7410,

18(27).

18(20-23).

15(18-19).

Party 4(9).

ment 13(28).

Walker, Gen.Sir Walter

Wallraff, Gunter 12(13).

Weapons 5(21);13(23);

Webster, Martin 1(16-22).

Weinstock, Arnold 7(4-5).

West Indies 3(9);15(17);

Winchester, Noreen 15(28)

Windscale 6(29);12(29-30);

(see also Nuclear Energy).

23-25);2(14-15);3(18,27);

12(8);13(8-9);14(16-17);

19(10-12, 18-19);21(26).

15(12, 28);16(13);18(10);

5(12-13);6(24-25, 31);

8(16, 18-19, 20-23);

Workers Revolutionary

Workers Theatre Move-

World War One 21(24-25).

YOUNG, Andrew 8(10-11).

10(8-9);13(20-21)14(4-5); 15(26-27).

X RAY SPEX 13(18-19).

ZAIRE 6(14);17(19-20).

Zimbabwe 2(12-13);

Zionism see Israel.

al 9(5-7). Tara Exploration and Development Company

Television 1(12-13);5(16-17);6(27);7(6);8(24-25) 12(7, 31);17(11);. 20(31-36).

Theatre P(22-23);4(24); 6(22-23);8(31-34); 9(30-31);10(30-32); 11(31-33);12(33); 13(28, 32-33); 14(11); 14(11, 18-19); 15(11);

17(13);18(12-15);21(29) Tolmers Square 10(23) Towers, Liddle 17(29). Trades Unions 1(6, 30); 3(26);6(20-21);7(12); 14(29-31);16(21); 17(23-24);19(16-17); 21(16); (see also Strikes; Grunwicks).

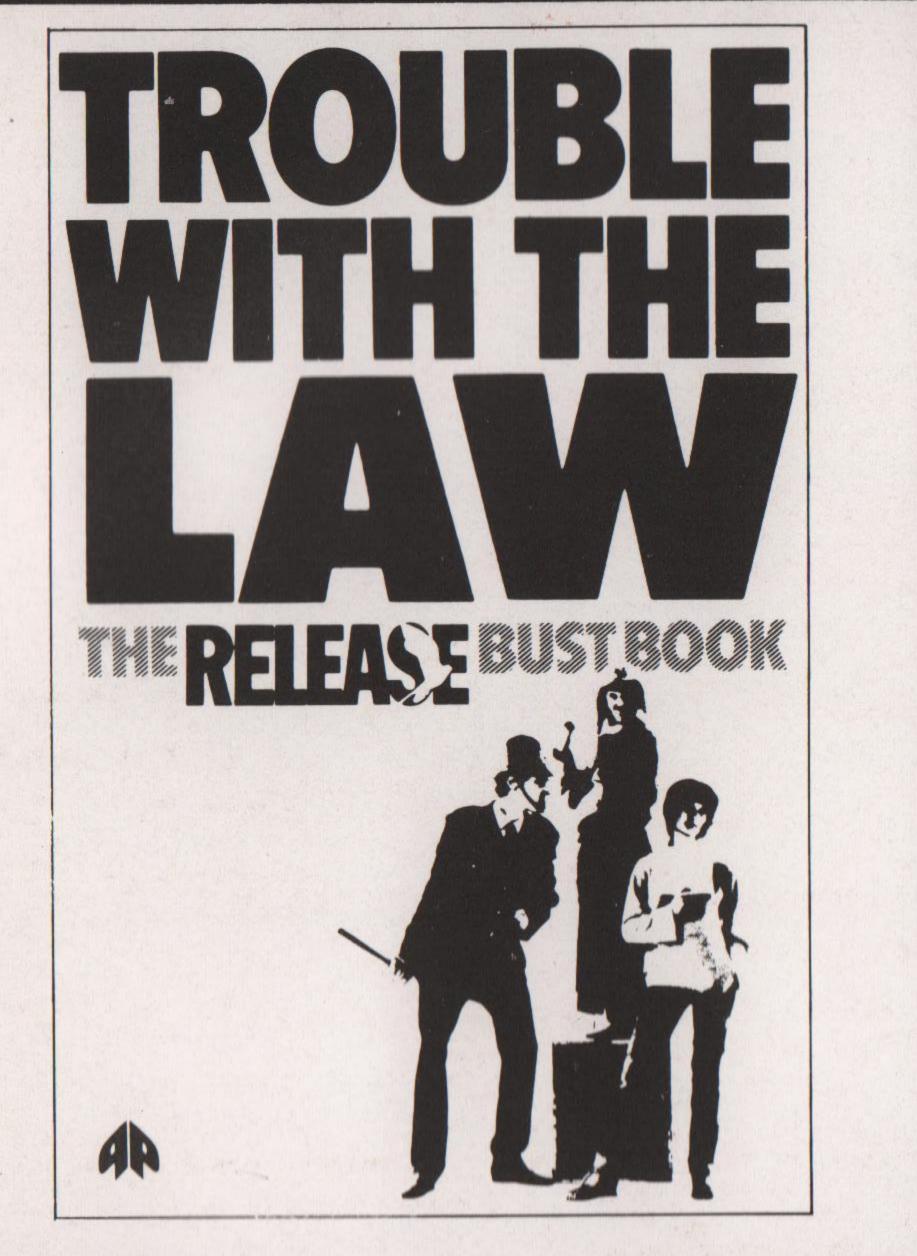
Tribune Group 5(10). Truemid 16(21);17(24-25); 21(16). Tyndall, John 1(16-22).

UNEMPLOYMENT 1(5-6) United States of America see America, North. Upward, Edward 11(27). Uruguay 3(28-29).

VIKING PRESS P(6). Vesteys 3(10). Vietnam 20(24-25). Virgin Records 9(20-21).

WAGES FOR HOUSE-Index compiled by WORK CAMPAIGN Steve Pinder 1(7-10).

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