

FREE BOOK OFFER



REVOLUTION

JACK LONDON

This month's free book offer is *Revolution: Stories and Essays* by Jack London. Published by The Journeyman Press it would cost you £1.50 in the shops, but you'll get it free if you take out an annual subscription.

Selected by Robert Barltrop — author of the biography *Jack London, The Man, The Writer, The Rebel* — the stories chosen are unquestionably London's best. Classics like "The Night Born" and "A Piece of Steak", and lesser known ones like "The Mexican". It was his skill as a short-story writer that was to earn London his reputation — and few have surpassed him since.

But it was not only the short story by which he was known. His socialist writing was read by thousands of workers, and that too was inspired by the same London magic. Essays like "Revolution" and "The Scab", urgent and convincing, driving home the socialist message.

These stories provide an insight into the two Jack Londons: London the socialist and London the storyteller, a combination which brought him fame the world over.

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 £15 and those earning more than that pay £25.

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

Please make me a *Supporting/Ordinary* Subscriber.

I enclose a cheque for:

Please send me book offer

NAME

ADDRESS

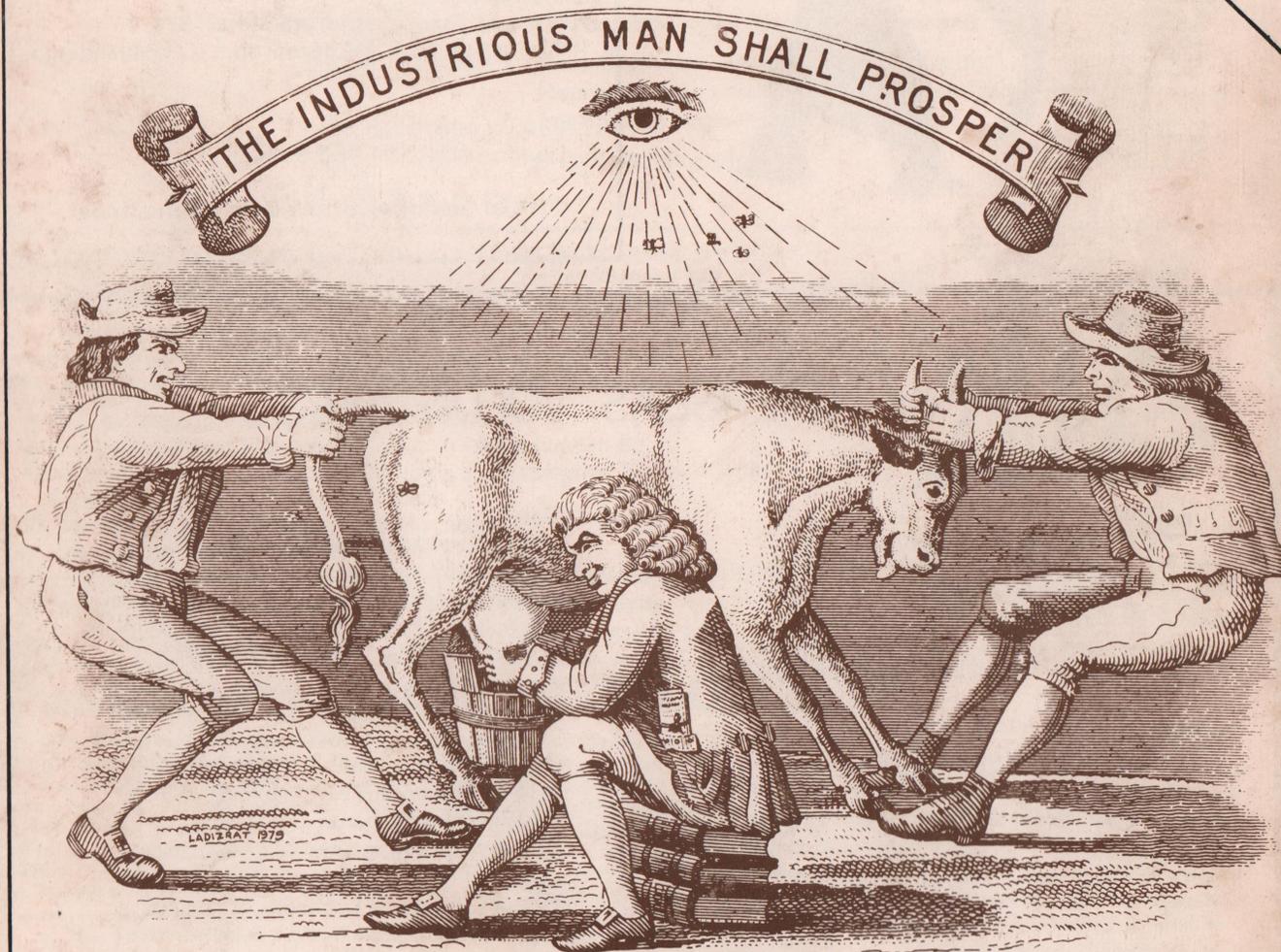
Inland Subscription rate (inc. Channel Isles, Ireland)	£6.00
Second class printed paper rate only	£6.00
Overseas — Airmail only	
Zone A — North Africa and the Middle East	£8.00/16\$
Zone B — Africa, India and S. E. Asia	£9.00/18\$
Zone C — Australasia, Japan, China	£10.00/20\$
Europe	£7.00/14\$

the Leveller



Bomb squad
blow it again!
Iran's revolution
Raymond Williams interview

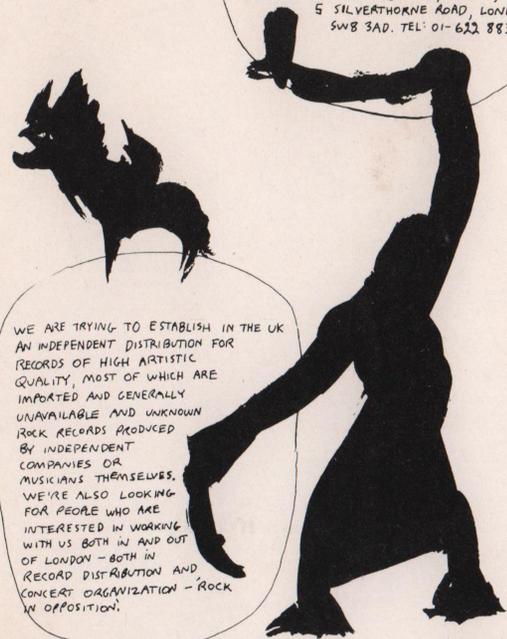
No 24 March 1979 40p



'Crisis, Crisis, What fuckin' Crisis?'
(or who's milking who?)

RECOMMENDED RECORDS

'GROUPS' INCLUDE HENRY COW, PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE (CZECHOSLOVAKIA), THE RIO GROUPS, THE RESIDENTS, PERE UBU, PHIL OCHS, BRECHT, EISLER - BENTLEY, CAPTAIN BEEFHEART, AND SO ON. WRITE FOR CATALOGUE, INFORMATION AND PRICES. RECOMMENDED RECORDS, BOX 4, 5 SILVEATHORNE ROAD, LONDON SW8 3AD. TEL: 01-622 8834.



WE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH IN THE UK AN INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTION FOR RECORDS OF HIGH ARTISTIC QUALITY, MOST OF WHICH ARE UNAVAILABLE AND UNKNOWN ROCK RECORDS PRODUCED BY INDEPENDENT COMPANIES OR MUSICIANS THEMSELVES. WE'RE ALSO LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH US BOTH IN AND OUT OF LONDON - BOTH IN RECORD DISTRIBUTION AND CONCERT ORGANIZATION - ROCK IN OPPOSITION.

COMPENDIUM BOOKSHOP

Wide range of books, papers, journals and pamphlets on politics, sexual politics, women's studies, labour process.

Philip Agee and Louis Wolf
Dirty Work -- The CIA in Western Europe . £18.75

Covert Action Information Bulletin
issues 2 & 3 £1.10

Wildcat
most issues of the proto-Leveller @15p

State Research
Review of Security and the State 1978
Introduction by E.P.Thompson. . . . 12 bleeding £'s

234 Camden High St.
London NW1 (01-485 8944)

Official bookshop of the VIth International

CIIR

OVERSEAS VOLUNTEERS

ECUADOR
AUDIO VISUAL AIDS SPECIALIST
Workers' organisation wants someone experienced in the preparation of simple audio visual materials to join a team involved in adult education and community organisation. Post would suit an AVA worker with informal/adult educational experience.

PANAMA
CO-OPERATIVE ADMINISTRATOR required by Panamanian organisation working with rural indian co-operatives. Basic skill needed is administration preferably related to an agricultural context. Post likely to suit an agricultural economist, a farm manager, or business administrator who has experience of work in a small organisation and is sympathetic to worker control.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR required by CIIR to administer its existing programme, and to identify and evaluate small scale community development projects. Previous Latin American development experience preferable. Married couples wishing to share the work on a joint co-ordinator basis are welcome to apply.

PERU
DOCTOR AND NURSE required to work in a primary health worker training programme for Amazonian indian village health workers in a fairly remote area of Peru. Post qualification experience necessary preferably in community health.

NORTH YEMEN
NUTRITIONIST required to join a small team involved in up-grading the expertise of traditional Yemeni birth attendants, and health workers. Post likely to suit someone with Nutrition or Home economics qualifications.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR required by CIIR to administer its existing programme and evaluate small scale community development projects. Previous Middle Eastern experience advantageous. Post is a joint one with present co-ordinator. Married couples wishing to work on a job sharing basis welcome to apply.

All posts are on VOLUNTEER TERMS. Accommodation, living and other allowances are provided. Intensive language training. Applications should be made in writing to: CIIR (Overseas Volunteers), 1, Cambridge Terrace, London, NW1. Tel. No. 01 487 4397.

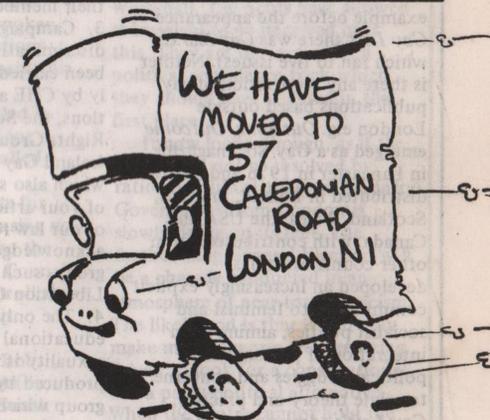
CONTENTS

March 1979 No.24

4-5	Letters
6	Bomb Squad At It Again
7	Michael Young -- "in need of care and control"
8	Persons Unknown: Ronan still in gaol
9	Shorts: Brighton Stories Politics Banned from community centre
10-17	Crisis Special: Economic Perspectives On the Picket Line The State: covert action The Labour Party What happens next?
18-24	International: The Basque Country Egypt: Sadat's new buddy Iran: the politics of Islam
25-27	Raymond Williams talks to the Leveller
28-29 and All That Jazz. John Stevens interviewed
30	Shorts 2: West Germany: funds for the right wing Repression: Guatemala and Northern Ireland Ian Sprout: further scandals
31	NGA -- our typesetters reply
32-33	Back Pages

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 7.00pm on Tuesday March 20th.

Typeset by Bread 'n Roses (TU), 01-485 4432.
Printed by Feb-Edge Litho Ltd. (TU), 3-4 The Oval, London E2.
Trade distribution by Publications Distribution Co-operative, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Phone 01-251 4976.
US Distribution by Carrier Pigeon, Boston, Mass.
Process camerawork: FI Litho, 01-359 8288.
Become a Leveller agent, 10p commission per copy sold. Call and collect from the office. Cash in advance, but money refunded on unsold copies:
THE LEVELLER, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 01-387 0176.



For the very last time: COLONEL B

WE DON'T need to say too much about the success of our appeal to the House of Lords against the High Court committal for contempt over the naming of Colonel Johnstone. *The Leveller* doesn't regard the courts as its principal, chosen battle ground, but the Colonel B case was set to show up the agents of the state as being so stupid that it would have been a pity to pass up the chance.

So what else is new? Around the same time that *The Leveller* and our comrades on *Peace News* and the *Journalist* got a winning judgement, other more important things were happening.

For example: you might think that the government was being pressed by the success of our case, the collapse of the ABC prosecution, and the rising climate against state secrecy, to relax it a little. No-one of course would expect progressive or liberal attitudes from people like Justice Minister Sam Silkin or Interior Minister Merlyn Rees -- but they might have been embarrassed at least, tired of being the subjects of universal derision. Not in the least. A very

mild Bill to amend just Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act is being promoted by Liberal MP Clement Freud. It couldn't possibly be milder, and the government could have bought out some Liberal opposition to official secrecy by allowing it to go through with sighs of relief. Not at all. Last week's news in *The Observer* was that "Ministers, together with Tory front-benchers, have tabled a series of 54 wrecking amendments to prevent the Bill becoming law."

For example: the success of publications in printing information uncomfortable for the security services might have encouraged others to do the same. The main media are all itching to be able to perform in a freer manner, aren't they? Not at all: the BBC has just scrapped a film on the ABC case and the whole secrecy question raised by it. They spent a lot of money on the film, with researchers sitting through the whole trial. Researchers say the tone was pretty moderate. But the BBC felt obliged to show the film to MI5. Surprisingly, security bosses didn't like it. The BBC dumped it.

So *The Leveller* can't really regard the Lords finding as a milestone on the road to freedom. There's still a long, long way to go.

The appeal that we and *Peace News* ran to pay the original £500 fines and costs, reached £3,000. It was a great effort. That money is now at our disposal. We said originally that if any was left over we'd give it to the ABC defendants. Well, that case was over before ours.

The Leveller could use the money for much-needed development -- moving to our new office, expanding outlets to boost our circulation, paying a second full-time worker, and so on. We will be having discussions with *Peace News* about using the money. *The Leveller* Collective will probably suggest that it be divided in two, and each collective can choose how to use it.

We would like to be able to use it ourselves. But we recognise that it was sent for a specific purpose. Anyone who sent money, who wants it now to be diverted to some other purpose apart from the development of *The Leveller*, should write and tell us.

Letters

What about Outcome?

IT'S GOOD to see six and a half pages of coverage on gay liberation in the January *Leveller*. It does seem a pity, however, that there is little indication that gay politics exist beyond Watford Gap. Most of the articles are London-centred – with some of them unabashedly male-centred. Richard Dawson in his article on coming out is honest about his oppression of a woman he lived with and about his perpetuation of that in a relationship with a man, but his account remains unredeemed by any sign of how he plans to combat his oppressiveness. Efforts to "build relationships which are better than marriage or push-button sex with strangers" need more than good intentions if they are to succeed.

The only gay publication mentioned in the coverage is *Gay Left*. It's a shame that in their article there's no mention of the development of gay publications over the past few years (for example before the appearance of *Gay Left* there was *Gay Marxist* which ran to five issues). Neither is there any recognition of gay publications based outside London e.g. *Outcome*. *Outcome* emerged as a Gay Soc magazine in Lancaster in 1976 and is now distributed in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, the USA and Canada, with contributors from other countries. It has developed an increasingly explicit commitment to feminist and socialist politics, aiming at an integration of personal and political struggles and concerned to relate theory and practice. *Gay Left's* admission of their abandonment of the difficulties of working in a mixed collective seems complacent to us, especially as we in the *Outcome* collective are still struggling with it.

That is not to say that we don't respect *Gay Left* and learn from it. We share their commitment to exploring "Marxist, feminist and gay liberation ideas"; our policy of positive discrimination towards the publication of lesbian writings is one attempt to reflect the practice of those ideas. We give space to those struggling to articulate their oppression and to those involved in local campaigns as well as those more experienced in political theory. We seek to give space to those experiencing oppression because of class, age or race as well as because of their sexuality.

Outcome is important to all those interested in the theory and

practice of sexual politics, including, we'd imagine, many more *Leveller* readers – if they weren't subjected to so much London-centrism.

Margo Gorman
for the Outcome Collective

What about CHE?

IT WAS REALLY quite a feat to publish 6½ pages about gays without any mention of CHE other than to refer in passing to "the collapsing Campaign for Homosexual Equality". There are a few points about CHE which are essential to any summary of the gay rights scene.

1. CHE is the largest and most active gay rights organisation, with 4500 members and 90 local groups. Its foundation in 1969 predated the gay liberation movement which largely followed American precedents.

2. In many parts of the country CHE groups are the *only* gay community. All CHE groups provide an alternative to the pub and club scene which is valued by their members.

3. Campaigning to reform laws discriminating against gays has been carried out almost exclusively by CHE and its fellow organisations, the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group and the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association – which also somehow got left out of your articles. The importance of our law reform efforts is acknowledged by many other gay groups such as the NUS Gay Liberation Campaign.

4. The only satisfactory educational material on homosexuality is the tape-slide kit produced by the CHE Newcastle group which is now being promoted nationally by CHE.

5. CHE is expected to represent the views of gays to the government and other institutions even by non-member gays. Our annual conference is one of the principal forums for discussing issues of importance to the whole gay community, and the largest regular gay conference.

6. CHE has played a central role in the recent creation of the International Gay Association to bring about serious co-operation between gay organisations in different countries.

7. The principal gay counselling organisation, FRIEND, began as part of CHE.

Christian Elliott,
Executive Committee.

Inside the military

AS AN EX-SOLDIER (discharged 1975) I read with great interest

your article on British Army mutinies (Stepping Out of Line, *Leveller* issue 21).

During my 3½ years service I can't remember hearing of any organised mutinies on the scale you describe in your article. I might add, though, that as a Royal Marine, not really part of the Army, Navy or RAF, I was a little isolated from the mainstream of news and rumours in the armed forces. However, I do recall a few little events which might interest you.

In 1972 at the Royal Marine Commando Training Centre at Lymington, Devon (where they trained Iranian Commandos!) a squad of trainees who joined up two weeks after my own were ordered by their training team to have their heads shaved for purposes of discipline and uniformity. With one or two exceptions they all refused. Though they continued training they refused this one order. After two weeks of pressure from the trainees the training team was replaced and dispersed.

This kind of success, however, was unusual. I heard of a more typical response to organised dissent when I joined my unit, 40 Commando. I became friends with a black marine who told me that in his previous unit, 41 Commando in Malta, the drafting system had resulted in an extraordinarily large number of black marines being in the same unit. On realising that these blacks were gravitating together and forming a clearly distinct group outside of the usual troop friendships, and that they were letting it be known that they were pissed off with racialism in the unit, the CO fixed things with the drafting authorities to have them drafted out and split up amongst other units.

Another illustration of how quick the armed forces are to suppress dissent within the ranks was the attempt by myself and other soldiers to openly disagree and argue with the teachers during the education classes on current affairs at the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester. On subjects such as Northern Ireland and Labour's planned defence cuts we voiced disagreement with the teachers' right wing views and got considerable support from other soldier prisoners. We were reported to the prison wing commander and ordered to shut up and keep quiet during the classes or face the alternative of full time punishment drill. A warden told me later that a red star had been put on my file, denoting that I was a communist and thus to be kept an eye on.

Another related experience was in 1974 in the controversy over the effects of Labour's cuts on the military. A rumour was spread throughout my unit that they were planning to scrap one of the four commando units. This

rumour was apparently corroborated by Chapman Pincher in the *Express*. It was taken as an insult by tradition-conscious officers, who saw it as a left wing attack on their sense of inherent usefulness and functional necessity in Britain's defence against the reds. Feelings were very high, and the ordinary soldiers' concern over being made redundant was exploited by officers and NCOs to encourage anti-democratic and anti-socialist ideas.

These memories are vague now but they are a snippet of info on an aspect of the state which undoubtedly contains many secrets not of the normal kind. I wonder if there are any other recent ex-soldiers out there whose experiences may throw light on a sadly understudied institution of the 1970s, understudied in terms of its internal workings and ideology.

Chris Byrne
Hull

Technology & socialism

I READ Mike Prest's article 'Difficult Questions of the Times' (*Leveller*, issue 22) with dismay. Not because of his criticisms of the NGA, but rather because of a fundamental disagreement with him on the relationship he assumes between technology and society. Admittedly Mike Prest is not alone in this, following as he does well-worn left intellectual paths. In short, he assumes science and technology are neutral. They are a blind card dealt by fate which society can use or abuse, but which are, in themselves, value-free.

Yet apart from science and technology there are few social domains which socialists would claim as having a neutral status with respect to society. Certainly, for example, art and history are seen as culturally mediated – if not determined. Why is it that science and technology are different? They are also social products. But whereas it is acknowledged widely that they are contaminated as art and history, science and technology undergo a miraculous cleansing from social contamination at some stage between production as ideas and use.

The mechanism of this cleansing is, I suppose, imagined to be contained within the requirement that scientific and technological theories must go through a process of proof and confirmation. But I would maintain that these proofs and confirmations are no better cleansing agents than wiping a window with an oily rag. For they themselves are undertaken within and by the same social network that produced the work being examined. The results of this verification process leave science and technology changed but *no* purer than before.

Letters

If this is accepted socialists can avoid being dragged along the normal sterile chain of argument which leads to two distinct but equally futile cul de sacs. For this normal argument forces socialists to either support workers against technological change from a standpoint of solidarity for its own sake or to argue – like Mike Prest does – that workers attempt to make the best bargain with the inevitable tide of history. This latter is little different from the 'rationalisation and modernisation' themes of the 1964-1970 Wilsonian programme. And from experience we should know that battles fought on such lines have only one possible victor – capitalism. The left has bound itself so tightly in its beliefs that it is incapable of doing more than agonising over its acquiescence in the inevitability of technology's progress, at best merely recording its token opposition and at worst flinging itself heedlessly into the future.

What is required instead is an analysis of science and technology which looks at coming technological innovations and asks such questions of them as: Does it lead to more equality of opportunity or less? Does it give less control to elite groups within our society or more? Does it lead towards a decrease in routine toil and an increase in creative work or not? Does it lead to more isolation amongst the workforce or more co-operation?

I suspect with regard to the new print technology most of the answers to the above and similar questions are negative as viewed from a socialist standpoint. But no matter what answers were produced, it would be progress to see the discussion on the above level instead of its present one.

James Ford
Ashton-under-Lyne
Lancs.

Ripped and Torn

IT SEEMS a shame that a supposedly subversive, radical, forward-looking mag such as *The Leveller* still fails to see beyond (above?) the left when it comes to revolutionary youth mags, going by your article on them in a recent issue (*Leveller* 23).

Take for instance *Ripped & Torn** which is neither 100% left or right, but 100% positive Steps to Overthrow Society, Positive Alternatives, Revolutionary Ideals etc. There wasn't a mention of it in your article, but thru' the ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS ethos, it is surely more revolutionary than Temporary Hoarding will ever be (the same as Adam & the Ants are

more revolutionary than Sham 69).

Perhaps we should 'toe the line' and print lengthy, tedious reiterations of the 'NF Nazis are scum' kind like "mummy's little revolutionaries" at Temporary Hoarding etc.

But sorry, *Ripped & Torn* is more concerned with pursuing the ANSWERS than indulging in pseudo-activist debates on PROBLEMS.

Don't, please don't, make the same mistakes your forerunners made with Andre Breton and Surrealism. . . .
Love and Change

Tony D

* *Ripped and Torn*
c/o Rough Trade
202 Kensington Park Road
London W11

Straight transvestites

I WOULD like to draw the attention of readers to the plight of one of society's most misunderstood minorities: that of the transvestite. OK, you've had a laugh, now read on.

In the present liberal climate, it is *relatively* easy for gays to break out and make their sexuality public. However, consider the dilemma of the transvestite. According to statistics and personal experience, as many as one person in a hundred could be a transvestite. Now think how many transvestites you have known. Plenty, I bet, but they kept well hidden. In talking about transvestites, I refer to heterosexual or bisexual males who get sexually aroused and deeply satisfied by occasionally or constantly looking and dressing as a female, yet who are still sexually attracted to women.

As a libertarian socialist I am amazed by the attitudes of so-called socialists and libertarians towards transvestites. It makes me wonder if libertarians are actually as liberal as they claim to be. Whereas all libertarians and socialists feel duty bound to defend the gay liberation movement, how many would do the same for transvestitism?

Transvestites are no more depraved, freakish, good or bad, than any other section of society. They should be given the right, both social and legal, to make public their own form of sexuality.

The choice is therefore up to the transvestite himself. He can either be honest with himself and everyone else, and try to change opinion by example, or else he can continue to live his life as a lie, with the continual fear of being found out and socially castrated.

I have discussed my transvestitism with my friends, both male and female, and I am still continuing a relationship with my girlfriend who regards my sexuality as part of me, and not as an abnormal implant.

To gain the respect and understanding of others, one must firstly respect and understand oneself.

Dave Black,
Lanarkshire
Scotland

Dumbleton fights!

I CERTAINLY didn't get where I am today by reading inaccurate letters by Research Officers of Plaid Cymru (*Leveller* 23, Letters)

I seek to put the record straight and to ask Robert Griffiths to resign his position – he obviously cannot research for a simple letter let alone for a whole political party.

The good socialist Dumbleton is indeed just that, but to suggest that his political motivations are not public is unjust. Having had the pleasure of working with the said good socialist he has always made his membership of SWP public knowledge. He has written for *Rough Justice*, a magazine covering the single homeless field, and has spoken at various Cyrenian functions 'always to his credit declaring his 'interests'.

And to say he has failed to protest against the evictions carried by Labour controlled councils . . . Christ!

Bob Dumbleton fights for justice in the field of housing *no matter* who happens to be the ruling elite. Cardiff City Council when it was Labour controlled can certainly confirm this.

And finally, my dear inaccurate Mr Griffiths, Bob Dumbleton has every right to speak with the voice of South Wales Housing Action on such matters. Party allegiance has now't to do with it.

I sign off with a little advice: keep making your pacts Mr Griffiths – you need all the help you can get.

Dave Roberts
Full time worker Cardiff Cyrenians
and a non-socialist

Sovereign regionalism

"WHAT WERE the descendants of the Levellers, those fine democrats

of old England, doing through the Devolution debate?" asks Norman Easton. The answer, of course, is "next to nothing".

We have yet to begin to build a body of organised radical opinion in England that begins to match the old Levellers. They were concerned about the rotten character of the old political order ie. the personal monarchy of Charles I, its breakdown and its replacement. There were two civil wars and a great debate out of which came the very first democratic manifesto *The Agreement of the People*. That document is now very much out of date but its spirit and method are not.

Devolution has been a fraudulent proposition right from the beginning. It was and is an idea dreamt up by English political leaders to split, corrupt and stultify Scots and Welsh nationalism – and this it has done.

There is only one way out and that is for us to understand that sovereign regionalism is as important for us as nationalism and regionalism are for our neighbours North and West. Then we shall have a common goal. And national and regionalism only have meaning if all taxing and expenditure are undertaken directly by the regions. Any other arrangement is just one more camouflage for Whitehall. The Scots have allowed themselves to be deceived over this. They are the victims of a political confidence trick which they should have rejected in the first place.

It now looks, though, as if the matter will not be resolved by rational political argument. Central Government from London is slowly dying on its feet. The forthcoming General Election will be a charade conducted in an atmosphere of near-total cynicism.

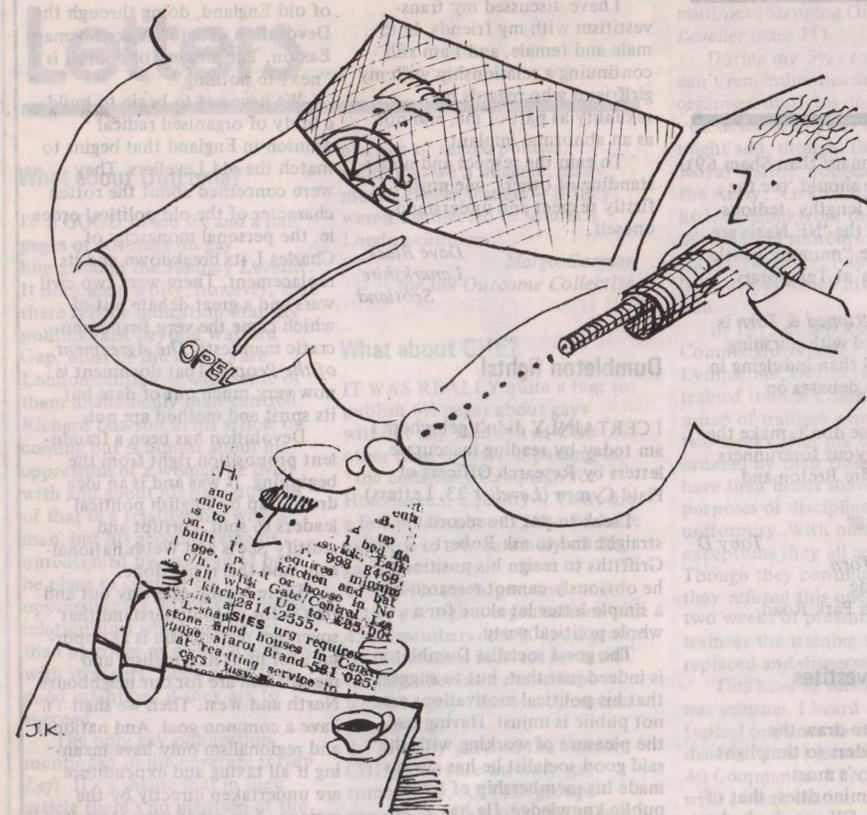
The likelihood is that it will only make matters worse. We are being driven to look for a constitutional, not a party-political alternative. When the centre cannot hold the periphery it has no option but to look after itself. The forty-six counties of England will take over because there is no one and nothing else. Once we accept that challenge we shall be in the right frame of mind to work closely, albeit separately, with our Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish friends.

It will not just be a question of making a virtue out of necessity. Sovereign regionalism is the only way to put public responsibility back where it belongs – with you and me.

Peter Caðogan
London

YOUR LETTERS TO THE LEVELLER

Send letters to The Leveller, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1. To give us more space for contributions, please keep them short. Letters intended for anonymous publication must nevertheless be accompanied by a name, address and, if possible, telephone number. All letters may be edited for length.



Bomb squad

Terror cops ruin more Irish lives

The Bomb Squad has got it wrong again, and how. A pre-Christmas two-day series of 16 bombs in London and in five other British cities claimed by the Provisional IRA, followed by a spectacular "fireball" bombing of the Greenwich gasworks and a near miss at the Canvey Island oil refinery in January, meant that the IRA were back in business.

They have overcome their "logistics" difficulties in attacking mainland targets, and once again the Prevention of Terrorism Act had failed to meet its justification — the prevention of terrorism.

And what did the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) have in answer?

Firstly there was the 'Bald Eagle' debacle. Cornelius McHugh was the man in question, and while Scotland Yard had for two weeks dubbed him as the "evil mastermind behind the bombings" he was sitting quietly at home in Belfast. False lead number one.

Then there was the white hired Opel Kadett car. A nationwide version of "Police Five" went into operation with police appeals for this car leading to over 100 public responses including a "definite" in Scotland, and to the intriguing saga of Detective Constable Edward Morley of the Surrey police force.

This policeman regaled the nation with how on 20 December he single-handedly pursued the Opel car containing at least two desperate Provisionals near Farnham. DC Morley even took an ITN camera crew in his car to recreate the drama of the "chase" and how he ducked to avoid the bullet from a shotgun. Also interviewed in *The Guardian* was a local top

cop who when asked why the IRA would still be driving around in such a well-publicised car, replied, "Think of the worst Irish joke, and there's your answer."

His own "joke" backfired when the truth about the Opel became clear. It was hired from Stanstead on 20 November with a driving licence stolen from one Mr R Poole. The car was hired with the intention of taking it to Ireland to sell for straightforward monetary gain. It went there via Holyhead on 24 November, was indeed sold within the Republic and only turned up in January at a Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath garage because it was involved in a slight road accident.

False lead number two. DC Morley meanwhile, after telling the press at the time his story collapsed. "I'm not well enough to talk about this at the moment", has since faced a disciplinary hearing and is now suspended from duty. Shame, he clearly showed he had the potential for the usual run of police witnesses in political court cases.

The day before the Greenwich "fireball" bombing on 18 January, four southern Irishmen were taken from Braintree in Essex to the top security London nick at Paddington Green under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

They were held for the maximum seven days, two quietly released, and the other two taken to Bow Street court with all the usual "for public consumption and the impressing of magistrates" police security overkill.

DCS Peter Bradbury objected strongly to bail, saying they might interfere with witnesses, they might commit further offences, they might abscond to Ireland. They were remanded in custody. Three more swoops followed in Braintree with a final detention of 23 people, including two women. Eleven were finally charged with Section 11 of the PTA — withholding information — and various driving and other offences. These eleven have all since been given bail, despite the earlier drama, a remarkable state of affairs for the Irish "terrorist suspects" as the police originally tried to bill them.

False lead number three? What really happened was that the ATS revelled in the opportunity to make out they were about their business and roping in all manner of undesirable Irish types involved up to their necks in subversion. An ITN news bulletin in January even went so far as to say that some of them would be charged later that day with the Greenwich and Canvey Island bombings. This news item was quietly dropped from subsequent bulletins.

The Bomb Squad had got it wrong again. The truth of the matter is that most of the 23 people detained were members of the Braintree Irish Society. Irish Societies are social bodies that hold fund-raising events for Irish charities, stage Irish cultural events, and form a general link for like-minded Irish people in their adopted British home areas. The ATS had taken in the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Secretary, some committee members and several other members of the Braintree Irish Society, and that was their only link.

The driving licence business appears to be that one of the accused came into possession of Mr Poole's stolen licence, and this had changed hands many times for money along the line, including the time when the Stanstead Opel was hired. Further along this line, the licence clearly came into the hands of the one Provisional IRA active service unit (ASU) that is firmly ensconced somewhere in the British mainland, and which must be hugely enjoying at a safe distance all the police activity of the past two months. This ASU has the common sense to stay close to the ground well out of sight until it deems the coast clear again.

There is a further aspect to this latest catalogue of ATS bungling and deception of the British public. The Section 11 PTA 'withholding information' charge used against the Braintree eleven is the one "hold-all" clause of the Act most under fire from the regrettably small rump of left Labour MPs. The PTA comes up for its annual review in the House of Commons within the next four weeks. It is remarkably useful for the Home Secretary to be able to say and indeed show how "helpful" this section has proved in recent weeks, and that it must therefore be retained. Who will argue against that?

Similarly, the fact that 24 alleged UDA members have just now been charged in Scotland under the PTA — invariably used to date against Irish republicans — may point to an amendment during the imminent parliamentary debate on Section 1 of the PTA, with the UDA maybe joining the IRA as a banned organisation.

But the main point is that the ATS has got it badly wrong again. Their new boss Commander Peter Duffy must be spending many uncomfortable nights pondering on the consequences of this public deception and wondering fretfully when that Provisional IRA ASU will strike again.

David Martin

Mental health

The strange case of Michael Young

Michael Young is 26, and comes from Manchester. For 6 years he has been a patient in Moss Side Hospital, a maximum security psychiatric "special hospital" located in Maghull, near Liverpool. Moss Side is run by the Home Office, not the NHS. All authority over Michael's case rests with the Home Secretary, because he is detained under a "Restriction Order", Section 65 of the Mental Health Act. His "Restriction Order" lasts "for an indefinite period"; and because Michael was judged to present a special risk to society, the Home Secretary also takes advice from a committee, the Aarvold Board, which meets in the absence of the patient or representatives.

attend to complaints, but Michael is bored with being on the ward constantly. Mail is censored by the nurses; Michael says that men are allowed to write to women, but not to other men. E.g. he has no way to contact his mates on Elms.

Why is Michael still inside? At the tribunal, his current psychiatrist stated that Michael was psychopathic because he had said it was all right for the poor to steal from the rich because the rich steal from the poor. The Campaign thinks that his long record for petty theft led the court to seek a longer sentence.

He works cleaning the wards five days a week from 8.00 till 5.30 and receives the princely sum of £3.55 on a scale that starts at 98 pence and rises to £8.00 per week in 12 stages. The scale is apparently determined by the staff and outside contractors and is about 10% of the union rate. Michael has explained what happens if these rates are questioned; "If you ask for more money or say you're not going to work they drug you with Largactil and put you in a bed. They restrict your movements and you lose your privileges like going to the pictures, the dance and the club or going out for the odd day."

If you ask for more money.... they drug you and put you in bed

The Government admits, in their Review of the Mental Health Act, that in the early 1970s, "petty recidivists". To remedy this, the "petty recidivists". To remedy this, the Government proposes limiting the use of Section 65 to the cases where the public must be protected from serious harm. This legal reform is irrelevant to Michael, who was put away because the psychiatrists lied about him in their reports, describing him as a potential violent criminal who had already attacked members of his family. The supposed victims were not interviewed, and when they found out about it, their denials did not cause the Home Secretary to overturn the original decision or alter the reports. There are no rules of evidence or procedure at the tribunals. The Home Secretary is not bound by the tribunal

MICHAEL WAS sent to Moss Side after interviews with three psychiatrists while awaiting sentencing on a charge of stealing a TV set and other property worth £315. He had a long record of petty theft, with previous terms in borstals, special schools, and prisons, but had never been charged with violence of any sort. But the psychiatrists classified him as psychopathic/and subnormal, recommending detention in Moss Side Hospital. Their reports, which contradict each other, say that Michael killed pets in his home and attacked his mother and sister with a knife. A later report from Moss Side refers to Michael molesting his younger sister. The Home Office summary of the case mentions a history of drug taking, though this does not appear anywhere else. With these reports, Michael was sent to Moss Side and his case referred to the Aarvold Board. His parents did not object to the court's decision, partly because they did not understand it, and partly because they were told that he would be going to hospital for a short time, to help him return to society.

At his first Mental Health Review Tribunal, four years after he was put away, Michael's mother and sister found out that he was reported to have attacked them. The entire family deny both that Michael was violent and that they ever suggested he was. Michael was not represented at his first Tribunal, which was over in an hour and recommended no change. At the second, he was represented by the Manchester Law Centre.

On the day, with all the witnesses present, the tribunal was put off for two months. On 7 February 1978 the tribunal heard from Dr Maire O'Shea, the independent psychiatrist who had interviewed Michael, that he was neither psychopathic nor subnormal and never should have been sent to Moss Side or placed on Section 65. His family denied all the allegations of violence against them. David Wallace, the clinical psychologist who tested Michael, said he was of average IQ. The story about the cat turned out to be no more than a rumour. The Tribunal was told by LANCE (part of NACRO) that places in a hostel and on a training scheme in woodworking, were available for Michael on release from Moss Side. This request is now being looked at favourably and a Moss Side social worker is being sent to investigate the LANCE hospital. If, however, approval for the move is not given Michael will be sent to a hospital near Nottingham for a further six months.

The one move Michael has made is from Elms to Oaks; the hospital switched him to a better ward the day after press reports on the case in September last year. On Elms, "you couldn't go to the toilet without permission", and the doctors paid no attention to your medical complaints, says Michael. He rarely saw his psychiatrist, Dr Noble, who at the time was the only consultant at the hospital. On Oaks the regime is more relaxed, and the doctors

decision (and statistics are that he rules against the tribunal about half the time). The Aarvold Board meets in secret to consider the danger to the public. All this will remain after the Government reforms the Mental Health Act, and more people like Michael Young (and others whose cases have been publicized by MIND, the mental health charity) will be imprisoned without a trial.

The Mental Health Act may be compared to the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The violence done to mental patients — treatment without consent, medical experiments, isolation, browbeating by psychiatrists, medical reports which follow you after leaving hospital, and the more general pressures on anyone seen as a misfit — is legitimated by stories of mad axemen. There are mad axemen, and the criminal law is quite capable of putting them in prison, even when they're not guilty. They can be transferred to psychiatric hospital if it is of any use. It doesn't explain Section 65, whose purpose seems to be to intimidate the public, including mental patients — who are as much a part of society as anyone else.

Legally, the Mental Health Act and the PTA are similar as well. The PTA allows any policeman to pick up any individual and hold them for 48 hours, if he suspects them of being "concerned in the commission, preparation, or instigation of acts of terrorism." The Home Secretary can extend the detention to 7 days, or even 12 days at ports and airports. The police are answerable to no-one when they arrest someone under the PTA. Under the MHA Section 136, a policeman can remove a person from a public place to a "place of safety", for up to 72 hours, if he appears to be suffering from mental disorder and to be in need of care and control and if the constable thinks it necessary to remove him in his own interests or for the protection of other people. In the "place of safety" (a police station) the person can be examined by a doctor, then taken to hospital under Section 25. Section 136 was used 1600 times in 1976. The Review of the MHA does not propose to change Section 136.

The mental patient detained under Section 65 and subject to "Special Restrictions" has to wait while the Aarvold Board, meeting without the patient or lawyers, advises the Home Secretary who appointed them to do the job. The Mental Health Review Tribunal is a complete farce for under Section 65 it has no power to release the patient.

As part of the campaign which will be necessary to free Michael, the Law Centre plans to initiate legal proceedings against the Home Secretary (mandamus and habeas corpus). The Defence Committee plans to organize a public meeting in Manchester; and if supported, to demonstrate against Section 65 and for Michael's release. Anyone interested in helping with the campaign please contact: *Defend Michael Young, c/o Grass Roots Books, 109 Oxford Rd., Manchester.*

Persons unknown

Why no bail for Ronan Bennett?

Are the police leaning on the court to stop one of the anarchist case defendants from being granted bail? Strong arguments for bail have been rejected despite the oddities of the prosecution evidence.

Four of the defendants in the anarchist "conspiracy" case have been given bail. Yet Ronan Bennett has had three bail applications turned down despite having an equally strong case. It is beginning to look as though some sinister behind-the-scenes manipulations are going on.

His mother, a civil servant from Northern Ireland, has turned up at court on two occasions to say that she would not only put up £4,000 in cash but she would also mortgage the family house on his behalf. A number of sureties ranging from a man who has been a friend of the family for sixteen years to Monseigneur Bruce Kent, chairperson of CND, have appeared to offer themselves or to offer secure accommodation.

A letter has been handed in to court offering him a job. His solicitor has offered to accept even the most stringent curfew and reporting conditions for his client. He has pointed out that Bennett is of substantially good character; his only conviction on the record is one of being bound over for attempting to escape from custody during an event in Northern Ireland which, as his lawyer explained, was "later resolved in his favour".

And he has substantial community ties, both to his own family and to Iris Mills' family; Mrs Mills has appeared in court to tell the magistrate that she regards them as a "couple" and that they would be welcome to come and live with her.

The alleged discovery of a passport bearing Bennett's picture and a false name has apparently weighed heavily with the magistrates, both of whom have refused bail because they thought him likely "to abscond". But it has to be asked just how likely Bennett is to run out on his own widowed mother and her life savings, particularly when the charges he faces, while serious, are not as serious as all that.

Nobody has been murdered. There have been no explosions. The explosive substances alleged are two tins of commercially available weedkiller. The amounts of money involved in the alleged robberies — none of which he is actually charged with — are piffling by current standards. And the firearms he is alleged to have dishonestly handled are an air pistol, which anyone can go out and buy, and an easily available .22 target rifle only one step above an air rifle. And Iris Mills is, after all, charged with exactly the same thing.

Either the magistrates and the judge-in-chambers are genuinely convinced he's going to run out on his own mother or they are displaying an unconscious prejudice because he has spent part of his life in Northern Ireland. Those are the relatively charitable explanations for their behaviour. A more sinister one would be that the police are doing some behind-the-scenes leaning on them because of earlier events that have occurred in Northern Ireland and not emerged in open court.

There is no evidence whatsoever for that, of

course. And any suggestion that it might have taken place could easily be construed as contempt. Yet so strong is Bennett's case for bail that his supporters could be forgiven for thinking that hidden pressure is what is really keeping him locked up as a top-security prisoner in Brixton jail.

The prosecution case

On Thursday December 21, thirty weeks after the original arrests which sparked the whole thing off, Barry McGill, the Director of Public Prosecutions' representative, outlined the case against **Ronan Bennett, Iris Mills, Dafydd Ladd, Stewart Carr, Vince Stevenson and Trevor Dawton**. He prefaced his remarks to Maurice Guymier, sitting at South Lambeth Magistrates' Court, by setting the case in a political context.

"The six are self-confessed anarchists", the young and ambitious McGill stated. "The prosecution case is that they were members of a London-based gang together with others not arrested and now believed to be abroad. Their objective was to bring about a radical change in society. They needed cash for accommodation and false identities and they needed firearms."

He went on to argue that they set about the conspiracy by armed robberies against shops and betting offices; and they robbed people who had advertised firearms for sale in magazines. The only substantive evidence on the armed robberies charges was against **Stewart Carr**. He had made "substantial admissions in the signed notes of interviews about the robberies." He is charged with six separate robberies and with conspiracy to rob along with the other five. **Bennett and Mills** are on joint charges: "the substantive charge is of dishonestly handling a Webley pistol. It was stolen from Steven Denton on 22 April 1978 and found in Bennett and Mills' flat. A briefcase stolen from Peter McDermott on 3 April 1978 contained a 9mm Browning automatic which has not been recovered. The briefcase has been found."

"A target rifle stolen from McDermott was found in the boot of a Cortina in Earlham Grove. The key to the boot was found in Bennett and Mills' flat. A lock-up garage was rented by Bennett in the name of Dean. Mills was identified as the woman who hired the Cortina using a stolen driving licence in the name of Helen Rothman."

"On the sixth charge, the possession of explosive substances, two tins of weedkiller were found in their flat. You might say that any home would have it... but the prosecution say that the weedkiller was kept for some subsequent explosions. We also found a list of chemicals in which the weedkiller appeared; a special point was that it had to be of the non-fire-depressive type. A list of targets was found which included the headquarters of the Regional Crime Squads, the Atomic Energy Authority, and prisons."



Police search people entering court

Photo: Newline

McGill then went on to allege that there had been an explosion at Earlham Grove in the period during which the couple were living there; he brought in a witness who had lived in the same house and identified Bennett as a man who came to apologise to her about the explosion, saying it was caused by an electrical fault. "Sweepings from the flat", he continued, "showed the presence of sodium and chloride".

All are charged with conspiracy to rob. On the day after the robbery of a Fine Fare supermarket, which Carr admits, on 3 February, in which £12,000 was stolen, an account was opened at a building society in the name of Peter Ross. (Later McGill was to correct that £12,000 to £1,200.) A Fiat car was purchased the day after the robbery for £530 in the name of Peter Ross; a key found in the flat fitted the door of the Fiat. This was the first public mention of the Fiat since the police warning to the public, way back in May, that they weren't to go near it. "On the day after the robbery of £2,700 from a Fine Fare supermarket on 17 March 1978, an account was opened in the Guardian Building Society in the name of Jacqueline Anne Summers and Peter Ross Summers."

"Bennett is linked with the others in that his fingerprints were found on a pamphlet in a holdall of cartridges stolen from Denton; also in the holdall were firearms and a great deal of ammunition plus balaclavas and a false beard."

Vincent Stevenson had been arrested in the street and refused to give his present address. Police has subsequently discovered the holdalls containing the firearms and ammunition, and **Stevenson** had admitted that he had been there for the past month. A birth certificate application in the name of Patrick Henna had been filled out in his handwriting. A Manchester United supporters' flag (sic) had been found in the holdall and **Stevenson** admitted following United. **Stevenson** denied knowing Mills and Bennett but his fingerprints were found on a book about the Angry Brigade found at their flat; he denied ever going to Earlham Grove but his prints were found on magazines there.

With that, McGill closed the formal case against the six and the rest of the committal was taken up with producing witnesses to establish identity. Lawyers for the six now have the opportunity to study the evidence and prepare for a trial at the Central Criminal Court which will probably start later this year, possibly in the autumn.

David Clark

Shorts

BRIGHTON

Seaside gays win newspaper victory

Brighton's gay community has won a battle with the town's evening newspaper, the *Evening Argus*. The *Argus* had published a strongly anti-gay editorial after NF supporters had attacked gays at a showing of the film "Word Is Out" on January 23rd, but after picketing and protests, the paper published a partial retraction and granted equal space to a reply from Sussex University Students' Union.

Two people had to be admitted to hospital after the attack, which followed a period of intensive anti-gay activity by Brighton police. Two days later, the *Argus* published an editorial that implicitly condoned the attacks. "There are all sorts of odd people," it said, "whose behaviour deviates sufficiently far from the normal as to be regarded with general disapproval... We have come a long way since the days when practising homosexuals were liable to end up in prison. Maybe we have come too far." The editorial also attacked "propaganda designed to make [people] accept the abnormal as normal."

Some 70 people picketed and occupied the office the following day, demanding a right of reply. Sussex University threatened to withdraw all communication with the paper, and area NUJ branch chairperson commented, "NUJ members are appalled by this editorial, not written by an NUJ member. It is virtually an incitement to violence."

The *Argus* made a partial retraction — saying that they did not condone the violence — and gave equal space to a reply from Sussex University Students' Union. In an attempt to press the editor to publish a full statement of support for Brighton's gay community, Gay Activists' Alliance (GAA) organised a phone-in to the *Argus* for Monday 29th January. A spokesperson commented, "The editor's comments about strident propaganda and so on are precisely the kind of statements which create the climate that encourages attacks on gay people."

An *Argus* staff member told us that the phone-in jammed the newspaper's lines for much of the day, and little work was done. Although the editor has not published a statement of support, Brighton GAA member Piers Richey said, "Since the phone-in the paper's had a special postbag on the subject, and ten letters out of twelve supported us. In Brighton that means there must have been some editorial selection! There was also a fair piece on the Campaign for Homosexual Equality education kit. I think that the *Argus* has learnt its lesson."

But the attacks continue. One person was beaten up by NF supporters on his way home from a well-attended GAA meeting held at the end of January to discuss setting up a gay centre in Brighton.

Tory on platform with Italian fascist

Who organised January's meeting in Brighton's Royal Pavilion, attended by Giorgio Almirante, secretary-general of Italy's neo-fascist MSI party, and former Conservative minister Julian Amery MP?



Lord Ponsonby, Labour peer and former General Secretary of the Fabian Society, now chairman of the directors of fringe bankers, Kendal Dent, Department of Trade and Industry inspectors have taken out an injunction against the bank, alleging irregularities ranging from failure to keep proper accounts to infringing Exchange Control Regulations. Our picture shows Ponsonby as Labour Chairman of the GLC handing over a copy of Marx' writing on London to the Mayor of Moscow. Shark meets Shark?

Amery claims that it was jointly organised by the European Movement and Brighton's Conservative Political Centre. But the European Movement was quick to dissociate themselves, and the Brighton Conservative Association (responsible for Brighton PCP, and which advised members not to attend the meeting) strongly denied any involvement. "You want to speak to a Mr Eric Sykes," a spokesperson said.

Mr Sykes confirmed that he had arranged the meeting "with the assistance of the European Movement, but not for them," but hung up when we tried to find out the organisation behind the meeting. He is, however, a former member of the Brighton Monday Club, which was closed down after it was found to be heavily infiltrated by NF members.

Mr Amery told us, "The MSI is called neo-fascist by its opponents, although I think that it is really a Poujadiste party. I was asked to attend because I am a local MP and I was in the area at the time." He added, "I think that Soviet imperialism is the enemy, and that we have a common point of understanding with all those who resist Soviet imperialism, including China, Yugoslavia and Rumania." Almirante's speech, which the local anti-fascist committee prevented him from giving, ran to 21 typed sides, and its theme was strongly anti-communist.

LONDON

Community centre threatened with closure

A North Paddington Community centre is threatened with closure by Westminster Council. The council has decided to remove the 510 Centre's £13,000 per year urban aid grant, which covers rent, some wages and some expenses, from 31st March. The 510 Centre was opened four years ago, as a result of local activity and it's used by some 21 community groups.

Urban aid grants were developed as a government scheme to help inner city areas — like North Paddington — but although the government pays three-quarters of any grant, the local authority is responsible for allocating the money. Westminster has an entrenched Conservative majority and the 510 Centre has often found itself in dispute with the council. Two years ago, as a result of its support for squatters, the council made it a condition of

the centre's grant that groups using the centre should refrain from party political activity.

It's this condition that has prompted the council's decision. After seeing a "Don't Vote Nazi" leaflet produced by the Paddington Campaign Against Racism for last year's local elections, Jonah Walker-Smith, Chairman of Westminster Social Services Committee, wrote to the centre last June to say that the "no party political activity" ruling had been breached.

The centre replied that anti-racism was not a party political activity, but the Committee nonetheless voted in November — without further correspondence — to remove the grant. A vigorous local defence campaign was launched, and a petition collected 3,000 signatures in a week. But they weren't able to meet the council until four days before the full council decision.

The council agreed to reverse their decision only if certain tough conditions were met, notably that there should be no political activity at the centre. The centre agreed — but only if groups using the centre could still comment on policies affecting the area — and this amendment was rejected. Mr Lewis, Clerk to the Social Services Committee, made the position clear: "The council will not support a grant to the centre under the present management". The centre needs to raise at least £14,000 to stay open.

But the 510 is not the only community centre under attack. Early last month Wandsworth Council removed the £10,000 grant to Battersea's Action and Counselling Centre, the only community mental health centre in South London, and law centres in Wandsworth and Hillingdon are also under attack. In Labour controlled Islington, community projects are finding their funding reduced by the council. Last year's Wolfenden Report on voluntary organisations recommended much closer control of community projects.

"An attack on community projects is well under way", said Julian Cohen, of the 510 Centre, "and our response so far has been minimal. There's a need for a co-ordinated campaign between community projects, groups and trade unions on a nationwide basis".

Donations should be sent to the 510's fighting fund at the 510 Centre, 510 Harrow Road, London W9. They're holding a benefit on 24th March, featuring local reggae groups The Samaritans and The Arawaks at The Factory, Chippenham Mews, London W9. Tickets for the benefit, which starts at 8.30, are available from the centre or on the door.

B.B.C. RADIO MIDDLE CLASS

THIS IS BBC RADIO MIDDLE-CLASS NEWS. THIS IS BRIAN BALLSAKE BRINGING YOU THREE SOLID HOURS OF NEWS, TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE NEWS IN THREE HOURS TIME....

THE CRISIS DEEPENS - LORRY DRIVER'S PICKETS HAVE REFUSED TO HANDLE VITAL SUPPLIES OF FROZEN T.V. DINNERS....

PRAWN COCKTAIL INGREDIENTS ARE BECOMING "VIRTUALLY UNOBTAINABLE" IN CERTAIN AREAS....

PEOPLE ARE DYING IN LONG-STAY GERIATRIC WARDS RIGHT ACROSS THE COUNTRY!

CHILDREN, THE OLD, THE DEAD, AND LITTLE DOGGIES ARE THREATENED WITH STARVATION IN SEVERAL WEEKS TIME, IF THINGS GET WORSE....

A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION IS REPORTED TO HAVE MADE OBSCENE AND HYSTERICAL GESTURES WHEN A CONSULTANT'S ROLLS ROYCE DROVE OVER HIS FOOT....

SMITH - I WANT YOU TO GO AND DO SOME PANIC SHOPPING FOR ME....

THE HOLYROLLER DOMINI, THE "EXILED RELIGIOUS LEADER" HAS FALLEN OFF HIS BIKE....

ZOOM!

A LITTLE LATER, IN A SUPERMARKET JUST ACROSS THE ROAD FROM BROADCASTING HOUSE....

ARMY BLANKETS

JEVES FLUID

SPECIAL CRISIS OFFER - JUNIOR HOSPITAL DOCTOR KITS

WINES SPIRITS BEERS

ENORMOUS CRISIS SIZE 2 CWT POTATO SACKS

BULK BOG ROLLS

SHOVE

BLEEDING BBC EMPLOYEES - IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME!

DON'T KNOCK THEM - THEY DO WONDERS FOR BUSINESS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR!

THIS AFTERNOON'S CHORALEVENSTOMP COMES FROM ST. RUDYARD'S WHITE NATIONALIST CHURCH, SALISBURY, RHODESIA....

GIANT CRISIS SIZE 84 LB BAKED BEAN OFFER

HAVE A CLEAN CRISIS WITH

BEAN

RAZ

GREAT CRACKS have appeared in the edifice of Labour. What looked like an economic crisis has turned out to be a profound political trauma. A weak Labour government is at odds with thousands of society's lowest paid workers, and has come within an ace of a major breach with the trade unions, its political base and historic allies. The imminence of electoral defeat for a government which has pursued unashamedly establishment policies adds a bitter irony. As the party and the TUC try desperately to cobble together a "new social contract", and the prospect of a harsh budget and accelerating inflation loom menacingly, rumours of splits in the party and the widespread demoralisation of members multiply. It could be the toughest moment since 1931.

Behind the hysterical campaigns of the press, behind the wild accounts of rats roaming the West End and corpses rotting in hospitals - as though squalor and poverty have been invented by the unions - is the vulnerability of the British state. A generation of poor economic performance, scarcely relieved by the "miracle" of North Sea oil, combined with entrenched medieval structures of wealth and privilege, has proved the undoing of social democracy. Loyalty and the weight of history preserve the Labour Party - TUC alliance, often against the misgivings of the rank and file. But the weakness of British capitalism and the conservatism of the state makes the outlook for the working class bleak. If re-elected, a Labour government would only offer more of the same. The Tories are almost too vile to contemplate.

It is an unenviable choice, and one of which the militants on the picket lines who have rocked this Labour government are well aware. They may just manage through direct action to keep abreast of inflation. But little can be done to counter the government's retribution. If Mr Callaghan is as good as his threats, the budget will bring higher taxes, even more public spending cuts, and the rough bludgeon of monetary controls. The package will be pushed as the inevitable answer to the supposedly inflationary effects of wage settlements above five per cent. A new social contract with union leaders will try to reassert discipline over their members. Grass roots militancy is very likely to be frustrated by its own political shortcomings.

Yet we seem desperately short of practical alternatives. Perhaps the most important part of the crisis has been the extent to which our ideas have lagged behind British capitalism's emerging dilemmas. So in this theme, *The Leveller* looks at the main constituents of the crisis: at the upsurge of the low paid and of other workers, the backwardness of the British economy, the ideological demoralisation of the Labour Party, the propaganda offensive of press and state, the emergency preparations. And we ask: will the crisis cause permanent changes in the Labour movement?

Hard Times

● WHEN THE Cabinet met at the height of the lorry drivers' strike one argument prevailed against declaring a state of emergency: there were only 6,000 troops to spare. Stretched by its Irish war and by the watch on the Rhine, British imperialism could not meet its domestic needs. Few recent episodes highlight so vividly the weakness of the modern British state.

Naturally, it does not follow that a much bigger army would indicate a healthier capitalism. Nor is it likely that the left would want more soldiers. But the pathetic size of the country's armed forces today is not the state's wish.

Rather, it is a reluctant concession to the prolonged low growth rate of the British economy and to the political and social forces which determine how the proceeds of that growth are allocated.

One critical figure illustrates how the organised strength of labour has protected its share of gross national product (the total money value of all goods and services and of net receipts from abroad). Over the last five years manufacturing output has fallen by 1.5 per cent, while wages have gone up by 114 per cent.

In other words, although a key sector of the economy has been shrinking, the organised working class has effectively redistributed resources from capital to wages.

Growth

Between 1970 and 1976 real company profits grew by about 7 per cent. Real wages grew by rather more. But over the same period real spending on social and health services went up by less than 1 per cent. So while labour has been able to keep ahead of inflation in the workplace it has been unable to manage the same feat in national politics.

The economic evidence therefore suggests major differences of strength between the labour movement economically and politically, and between the efficacy of local and of national activity.

These divergences, which are emerging as a constant theme in the present crisis, stem not from the perfidy of social democracy — the politics of which have never been revolutionary — but from the long-running under-performance of British capitalism. On every leading indicator, the British economy has fallen behind its competitors at a time of intensifying struggle internationally for markets.

For 30 years GNP has crept along at about 2 per cent per year. Japan, by contrast, was achieving growth rates in double

Capital ideas and poor politics

Underlying the crisis is the weakness of British capitalism. For a generation the economy has suffered from slow growth, low productivity, and declining competitiveness in ever-tougher world markets. At the same time, the political institutions of British capitalism become more archaic. But the chief victim has been social democracy, unable to carry out its reforms as the struggle to share national income intensifies. Mike Prest traces the evolution of the bourgeoisie's failure and suggests that it has thrown into relief the left's political weakness.

figures during the sixties.

Productivity, an essential clue to the economy's efficiency, has proved to be British capitalism's soft underbelly. Over the last decade the average productivity increase in Britain has been 2.7 per cent (3 per cent in 1978). Comparable EEC figures are: Germany and France 5.7 per cent, Holland 7.3, Belgium 7.8.

As a result, the average age of capital equipment is greater in Britain, investment lower, the lag between invention and technological innovation in industry longer.

For the better part of a generation, British capitalism has seen its international standing slip steadily while world capitalism has enjoyed a boom without serious interruptions. Britain may still be a relatively rich country with a GNP of about £140 billion (the USA's is around \$1 trillion), but it is no longer a dominant one, and less and less a leading one.

Structural

The failure of successive governments to achieve growth — not, pace the Transitional Programme, inevitable, since other rival governments have done it — suggests that the problems are not merely those of policy, or even of politics, but that they are structural.

British capitalism developed historically from a group of inputs which are often still regarded as model prerequisites for apprentice nations. A secure state with a unified legal system, a growing population controlled by that state, cheap merchant and agricultural capital, a sizeable market at home (after the Act of Union, Great Britain was the largest free trade area in Europe) and an empire overseas, readily available raw materials. Educational and political institutions — the public schools, the civil service — evolved to serve imperialism.

Obsolete

Yet the long, more or less haphazard expansion of the empire, left some older traditions untouched. The ideal of the gentleman amateur and the subtle social distinctions between honourable and dishonourable occupations (roughly the professions and trade respectively) have lingered in fact and ideology into a modern world in which they look increasingly ridiculous.

Most of these inputs have dried to a trickle. With the loss of empire, Britain's share of world exports has slumped. By the middle of the next decade the labour force could actually start shrinking. Political and social institutions, starting with the monarchy, are obsolete and in some cases plain preposterous.

Under the impact of nationalism among the minorities of the union, the very physical base of British capitalism is strained. Even North Sea oil, the only major new factor in the equation since Indian independence in 1947, only prevents things from being much worse. The £2 billion odd which North Sea oil adds to GNP in effect simply pays for increased imports. It stabilises sterling, and hence aids financial stability, but is not promoting economic growth.

In such circumstances the defensive qualities of the labour movement have been amply demonstrated. But by the same token, a policy of reform and redistribution derived from economic growth — the nub of social democracy's theory — has been ever harder to sustain. Now it has almost broken down completely.

Reasonable calculations suggest that wage settlements averaging 14 per cent will be accompanied by 12 per cent inflation, unemployment of 1.4 million, and a mere 1 per cent growth rate. This government can be expected to use all the prestige of the state to introduce harsh financial measures, including a budget, to cut the disposable income resulting from 14 per cent increases — in the interests of protecting a capitalism that can pay neither its own pay nor anybody else's.

Weakness

So long as workers' organisations are strong enough to prevent serious reductions in living standards the true weakness of British capitalism will be disguised politically. Social democracy cannot finance its programme because of the old structural weaknesses. Nor are social democracy's prospects likely to improve. British capitalism has not decisively benefitted during past moments of faster growth in the world economy; there is no obvious reason why it should in the future.

But the chances of a revolutionary programme do not look much better. World capitalism is expanding, and is certainly not in the kind of general crisis beloved of the advocates of world revolution. If a revolutionary government came to power in Britain it would be faced with a sick economy in a healthier world. This conceivably and paradoxically could turn out to be an advantage.

But the British left faces a possibly unique historical dilemma: never has so feeble a society seemed so difficult to overthrow. As a start to finding a way out, the left will have to re-consider its economic thinking very carefully.

Tale of three hospitals

Pix: Roger Andersen

Ten years ago the National Union of Public Employees was relatively weak. Now with a membership of 710,000 it is leading the campaign of the low paid workers. About 40% of its members are local authority manual workers, 30% hospital staff and 5% each in universities and water boards. They also have more women members, 450,000, than any other union. More democratic than most unions, NUPE has responded to rank and file pressure. In the hospitals the lead has been given by branches with a history of struggle. Roger Andersen looks at three London hospitals and talks to NUPE stewards.

The Middlesex

In the middle of a wedge between the North Circular, Western Avenue and the Grand Union Canal, the Central Middlesex Hospital (CMH) sits cramped between a mess of factories and a sweep of allotments. Out the back are old Victorian monstrosities and an unplanned jumble of small modern buildings. Amongst all this is a wooden prefab, like a forgotten site office which is for the exclusive use of the unions in the hospital.

Willie Walsh, the NUPE Branch Secretary, was in the office trying to find out what union a group of scabs were in. The porters at CMH had been out for a week and with only £5 per week strike pay it was getting tough.

"The first thing I'd like to say is that we have to retain the right to strike. If we give up the right to strike, we won't be able to do anything about our pay or our conditions of work. The Whitley agreements which are meant to control our conditions are too vague and management interprets them how they want.

"The conditions here are terrible, we are understaffed and underpaid. Nurses won't take it any more and it is difficult to recruit. Nobody would do the ancillary work if there was anything else around locally. 70% of the ancillary staff are black because they find it almost impossible to find any other jobs."

"Sixty pounds a week is just a start. What are we getting for working on Saturdays and Sundays, with split shifts and rotas, all those unsocial hours? Nurses are often on duty from midnight to nine in the morning. Many of them are having to do jobs they are not fully trained to do. Ancillary staff have to work seven days a week. A kitchen porter here worked 90 hours over the Christmas period and for that plus two weeks' basic wages he got only just over £100."

"Most people here never get a proper holiday and can't afford

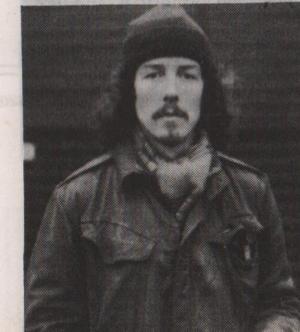
to be sick. What about the effect on your whole life? Three or four marriages have broken up amongst sixteen working on one section and only eleven of them were married. Many workers at CMH are having to get Family Incomes Supplements. In the end the whole community suffers."

"So where do we go from here? We must learn to co-ordinate the various sections of the union and we must improve liaison with other unions. It would be helpful if we had fewer unions in the one work place but at the least we have to organise proper shop stewards' committees. Within NUPE we should increase democracy at the divisional level. One good thing now is that claims for hardship funds made to the divisional council are being decided by shop floor lay members, not full-time officials. We must carry on the pressure for more local control and not leave things up to the government and local authorities."

The Westminster

Westminster Hospital is the nearest hospital to the Houses of Parliament, and has one floor of 36 beds reserved for private patients. This might explain why NUPE members here have been given the full treatment by the press, the Government and union leaders.

A week after the day of action (22 January), when NUPE had come out solidly in support of the campaign against low pay, six domestics refused to work on private wards, as part of the campaign. They were immediately suspended without pay, so NUPE members walked out saying they would not return until the six had been reinstated. This lit the fuse of frustration and soon shop stewards in other hospitals were drawing out NUPE workers from



From top to bottom: Great Ormond Street pickets, Army ambulance, Westminster, Willie Walsh.

one section after another. A horror story about a bone marrow child was spread by the *Daily Mirror* and a few days after the army was brought in, quite unnecessarily, to clear the entrance to the delivery area. In spite of the hysteria and the volunteers drafted in to help, the patients were comfortable and well cared for.

Management in the hospital seemed determined to aggravate the issue. One of their suggested solutions was that contract labour be used on the private wards and that NUPE pay for them. The Government got panicky and contacted Len Murray and other TUC officials. The NUPE side eventually agreed to go to arbitration after being told they had ruined Labour's chances at the polls.

The Children's Hospital, which the papers had screamed about, may well be closed soon because of the cuts. Will the papers make the same fuss then?

Great Ormond St

NUPE ancillary staff came out for the second time on 7 February for a limited strike at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. Conway Xavier, foreman porter and branch secretary, speaks out: *Since 22 January only a few hospitals have actually come out, why here?*

Because of the strength of union organisation, which has been built up here slowly. We have in the past had a number of bundles with management. For instance last summer, one of the administrators called in the police after some stuff went missing. The police searched only the ancillary staff and amongst them only the West Indians. They behaved like racists and NUPE called all its members out. The police were withdrawn and management finally produced a formal apology. We have also had battles over contract cleaners and the domestics were solid so we won. Our linen room was weak but now they are 100% in support of the strike for better pay. *Why are you out now?*

Ennals has made no advance on his offer of 8.8%. A percentage rise is no good if you are on a basic rate of £45.50. That means a take home pay of £37 for a 40 hour week. Because we are in Central London most members have to pay between £4 and £8 per week in travel. Nobody really likes to do overtime but porters and others have to work seven days a week to get anything like a decent wage. If we don't win, the Health Service will get worse for everyone. Here we are in a good position; we are a specialist teaching hospital and there are no shortages of either medical or ancillary staff. Look at the effects of cuts on other hospitals.

Who do you blame for the present situation?

The Labour Government. Most of the members here are sympathetic to the Labour Party and NUPE has given large donations to the party. But what support do we get from the Labour MPs? As for the NUPE sponsored MPs, Moyle, Ledbetter, Lomas, Pendry, Hardy and Bottomley, we sometimes get their voices but the Government get their votes.

How do you think Fisher and the NUPE executive have handled this situation?

They have often tried to quieten this whole thing down. But we are a relatively democratic union and there has been a lot of pressure from below. Even weaker sections have come out and I have never seen such solidarity. After an agreement, it won't go back to the old position. This will prove to have been a training ground for more intense battles ahead.

Emergencies in a right old State

DECLARING a State of Emergency is the equivalent of awarding a crisis a life peerage. It recognises the valuable service the crisis has performed to one section of the community, and helps to distinguish it from run-of-the-mill breakdowns in industrial relations, which can then assume their rightful, everyday, second division status.

Labour Governments have become reluctant to hand out life peerages (except to those who pay for them) and they have been equally mean in dignifying crises. It should be said that this is a fairly recent habit; Harold Wilson declared his only state of emergency for the 1966 Seamen's strike. But Edward Heath's promiscuous scattering of States of Emergency — he declared five between 1970 and his final, fatal celebration of the Miner's Strike from November 1973 to February 1974 — seems firmly to have identified the State of Emergency as a Conservative Party weapon, a relatively cheap political point which Wilson, characteristically, made endlessly during 1974 and 1975.

The declaration of a S of E is a very crude weapon, and has been sparingly used. Heath's five S of Es were nearly the half the total of eleven which have been declared since the Emergency Powers Act was passed in 1920. This was designed to perpetuate some of the useful authoritarian tools which the Government had acquired under World War I Defence Regulations. At the time, Russia had gone socialist, several European countries seemed set to follow, and sections of the British working class, notably in Clydeside and Merseyside, seemed equally ready for insurrection. The 1920 Emergency Powers Act was openly designed to facilitate strike-breaking, not only by the Army, but by such irregulars as the government could muster. The Act covers situations where an industrial dispute might interfere with 'the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel or with the means of locomotion to deprive the community . . . of the essentials of life.' As well as allowing the Government to call in troops, it also suspends *habeas corpus*, and provides for the requisitioning of privately owned vehicles, buildings, plant and so on.

But over the past few years,

extremis, the military, has become a normal rather than an emergency feature of the state. When the recent lorry tanker drivers' strikes were having their maximum effect, the emergency committees were operated under the auspices of the Department of Transport, staffed by its regional employees. Members of the committees included senior civil servants, from the DoT and other affected departments, and senior police and military officers. During the Firemen's strike the committees were supervised by the Home Office. A typical emergency committee, that for County

Durham, included the Chairman of the County Council and the Chief Executive, the Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Constable and the local Army Commander. Local operations were from Territorial Army centres, and much of the communications were provided by the police. Without the use of the Durham Police Operations Room, squaddies in Green Goddesses would have had little chance of finding fires in towns which they knew nothing of. But guided by police patrol cars, in radio contact with the Operations Room, and crewed by police who knew the area, they were able to give a



STEPHEN CLANCY 1977

semblance of replacing striking fire fighters. It was only a semblance, as the strikers pointed out at the time. Insurance claims shot up, and the Army's major fire-fighting tactic appeared to be to allow many buildings to burn down. But as a public relations exercise, in dramatising the Government's response to the strike, and as a blow to the morale of the strikers, it was invaluable.

The use of troops in the Firemen's strike was in contravention of the Army Regulations. Under the 1964 Emergency Powers Act, troops may be called in where an emergency is 'limited and local'; Army Regulations incorporated these words, which were designed to give effect to the intention of the then Tory Government, as stated in Parliament, that the 1964 Act, unlike its 1920 predecessor, was designed for natural emergencies, and not for industrial disputes. This was fine for such operations as the refuse collectors' strikes in Tower Hamlets and Glasgow in the 70s, but obviously did not cover the 1977 Firemen's strike. The Defence Council — the body composed of Defence Ministry civil servants and top military officers, chaired by Defence Minister Fred Mulley, which supervises the running of the armed forces — amended the Regulations in July last year by leaving out the words 'limited and local'. An MoD spokesman insisted that they were 'inadvertently retained from earlier regulations'. This is a lie. They were included in the last complete revision of the Regulations, in 1975, and they reflect the intent of the 1964 Act.

The Government has to be realistic about the abilities of the military and the police to replace strikers. In many areas, they would be less than ten per cent effective; during the hauliers' strike, they would have been hard put to supply Government installations. In the light of the increased 'emergency capability' of the state, the blockbusting weight of an S of E is unnecessary. It would achieve little more than the strike-breaking efforts of the various state agencies. During the present disputes, the Government has relied on the often more efficient strike-breaking efforts of the trade union leadership, through such exercises as 'codes of conduct' for picketing and the inevitable media hysteria. The S of E means outright confrontation, and might quite possibly provoke more strike action. The S of E has become, thanks to routinised 'emergency' planning, the battleship of class struggle; unsuited to modern conditions of warfare.

(Much of the above information comes from State Research bulletins, available for £3 a year (six issues) from 9 Poland Street, London W1.)

Phil Kelly

Rolling your own

IT'S NOT just local government workers who've found new strength in recent disputes. Like them, provincial journalists, also low-paid, had long thought that because they weren't vital to production, they lacked industrial muscle. But they found themselves in the front line during their six-week strike in December/January, and won themselves an average 14.5 per cent increase.

Their action went further than striking. They built relationships with other local unions, of course, and learned from the very hard knocks they took on the picket lines. But in many cities they also started papers-in-exile — in some places, papers much more radical than anything their reactionary employers (grouped in one of the hardest, most primitive employers' associations in the country, the Newspaper Society) would ever allow. The changed attitude to reporting, particularly of industrial disputes, that they acquired during their struggle, could turn out to be more important in the long run.

The *Eastern Daily Press* and *Evening News* in Norwich are very right-wing papers, and the NUJ chapel (office branch) has a reputation within the union of being ultra-moderate. Some were surprised that they came out on strike at all, but they went on to produce five issues of the *City Herald*, which turned their regular professional procedure fairly on its head.

Its ten-page second issue ran on the front page two "exclusives" — stories, that is, the two dailies didn't bother with. "200 ARE SACKED!" was about redundancies at an electrical factory, and "The Great Fresh Bread Scandal" told how unsold bread from Norwich factories was being re-wrapped (sometimes twice) and sold as fresh. And this story came from striking bakery workers with whom the journalists had made contact.

Inside the *City Herald* No 2 were reports of the ANL's campaign against an NF plan to hold a conference in Yarmouth; how a new Sainsbury's superstore (which in the straight press would be glorified in special advertising supplements) had rain pouring through the roof; and what building workers thought of houses they were putting up on a new estate ("You must be joking — I wouldn't live here").

Roger Duffield, the NUJ's deputy Father of Chapel, says how much the journalists enjoyed producing the *City Herald*. "A lot of people were very frustrated working for the papers we do.



And we've learnt a lot. The papers don't give a balanced coverage of industrial disputes — they forget about the unions. The dispute has made people realise that the unions deserve a better show. "There has been a definite change in attitude. The strike has been very useful, and our coverage of disputes now is much fairer."

The story is not the same everywhere. Journalists who produced the *Cambridge Brief*, the *Guildford Keyhole* and the *Preston Free Press* just churned out the garbage as usual. The *East London/Hackney Strike! Edition* was no more than a picket line hand-out, with no attempt to provide community news; and two papers, the *North Staffordshire* and *South Cheshire Reporter* and the *Southend Tuppenny Picket* succeeded in efforts to out-reactionary their masters.

Both of these, for instance, carried pin-ups, with the *Reporter* leading its front page with a picture of a woman in a tinsel bikini and a caption that began: "It's carry on kissing for pretty hospital sister Lynn Godwin this year. For the shapely blonde is one of the few who have got what it takes this Christmas — a sprig of mistletoe . . ." and so on. The *Tuppenny Picket* effort used a bare-breasted woman, with a caption indicating that she had stripped off to support the strike. Both these papers were, it goes without saying, extremely

"professionally" produced.

In London, meanwhile, journalists and print workers on the *Times Newspapers Ltd.* publications, now entering their fourth month locked out, have also produced alternative papers. One comes from the combined *Times* chapels (*The Times Challenger*), the other, in an endearingly elitist unilateral venture, from the *Sunday Times* journalists alone (*The Sunday Times Reporter*).

Both of these ape the styles of their masters. But they reflect more than that: they polarise the conflicting responses of bourgeois media workers in industrial action.

The Challenger is a meaty agitational paper, with articles by or about nearly all the different work sections in the group. In particular it shows a healthy level of solidarity and co-operation between journalists and print workers.

The *Reporter* is the polar opposite, a shadow *Sunday Times*, with long inconsequential *Insight*-style accounts of the breakdown in labour relations, illustrated with natty little diagrams and cartoons. The general drift is that employers and employees were equally responsible for the "shut-down" (never "lock-out") and the unions had better get talking quick.

It has a "Day in the Life of" feature on Marmaduke Hussey, the TNL chief executive known in the industry as one of the toughest anti-union bosses around, though you wouldn't know it from the *Reporter*. All the piece shows is that Hussey is an extremely boring and ignorant person, which may or may not have been the intention. Alongside this (presumably to provide what journalists call "balance") is a bitchy "Profile" of the NATSOPA Clerical FOC (shop steward) at TNL — totally hostile, and totally at odds with the kind of slobbering brown-nose "Profiles" of successful businessmen which normally clutter the pages of the *Sunday Times*.

These journalists displayed their elitism quite openly when the combined chapels held a march in London on January 25. Two thousand workers paraded round the Fleet Street area, and when they passed the *Times* buildings, there were the *ST* hacks, sneering benignly from the footpaths.

Their chapel was the only one to sign an agreement with TNL before the November 30 lock-out deadline set by management. Only a handful have done so since.

It would be worse than naive to pretend that when journalists go on strike, they shed their bourgeois skins and wipe out the years of brainwashing overnight, because they don't, and won't ever be able to as long as they're employed by the kind of people who own the press. But they are stirring. . . .

Tim Goppsill

Callaghan's break with Labour

Although sent to Parliament to represent the working class in general and the unions in particular, the Parliamentary Labour Party and Labour Prime Ministers have never accepted their accountability to the movement.

Brian Deer looks at the widening gap between Party and Government over incomes policy, and argues for radical democratic reforms in the movement's structure.

The first public sign that the Government would run into trouble this winter came at the Trades Union Congress last September. While formally committing itself to co-operation with the Government, the TUC rejected the continuation of an incomes policy and resolved to return to free collective bargaining. Despite the Prime Minister's warning that pay increases above five per cent would push up inflation, the flood of resolutions demanding an end to wage restraint coming in to Union head offices from branch meetings and conferences could not be ignored by the TUC.

Then at the Labour Party Conference a month later the Government's policy was massively defeated. By a vote of 4,017,000 to 1,924,000, the Party demanded that the Government "immediately cease intervening in wage negotiations, and recognise the right of trade unions to negotiate freely on behalf of their members."

Michael Foot, once the left's champion, pleaded with union leaders to break their mandates and support the Government. But they knew, if Foot didn't, what their members would say to a new pay deal.

With both the Unions and the Party against him, Callaghan had

to draw on his most subtle diplomacy. The Government, he said, had a responsibility to "the whole of the people of this country" to keep down inflation and would use "whatever means are at hand" to do it.

The concealed threat to the Conference was to cut public spending to offset the inflationary effect of pay rises. It was the old Governments-must-govern line so familiar from the Parliamentary leadership.

But Unions too have a purpose and, with growing workplace resentment over low pay and differentials, they put their policies into action. Wage demands were put in, not to suit the terms of a TUC-Government deal, but to raise the earning power of their members and to re-establish prized differentials. And, with the full might of the country's biggest Unions being brought to bear, the confrontation in the last months has brought a political crisis to the Labour movement. Seldom have the Unions and the Party been so specific in their demands of a Labour Government and to raise the earning power of their members and to re-establish prized differentials. And, with the full might of the country's biggest Unions being brought to bear, the confrontation in the last months has brought a political crisis to the Labour movement. Seldom have the Unions and the Party been so specific in their demands of a Labour Government and to raise the earning power of their members and to re-establish prized differentials.

Callaghan and Healey, faced no longer by co-operative Union leaders but by striking workers, have made it clear whose side they're on. In the name of the fight against inflation the Government has joined with the media, the Confederation of British Industry and the Tory Party in stirring up hostility to Trade Unionists. Callaghan himself boasted how he would cross picket lines and Cabinet members have queued up to assault the principles of free trade unionism.

The Government believes it can gain enough support from "the people" to weather the storm and win the General Election. But without a deal with the leaders of Britain's 12 million Trade Union members, the *raison d'etre* of a Labour Government is gone. In 1974, the

media and big business wanted Labour in to control the unions and get profits rising. Now the Establishment, with much regret, is rallying round the unpleasant standard of Mrs Thatcher. And there is no real possibility of reconciling the Unions' demands with any economic strategy which Parliament would endorse.

If Labour loses in a General Election nobody will need to look far to understand how disunity gave the Government to the Tories. Many will claim the alternative economic strategy of the left has been vindicated. And that if the Government, when it had a majority in Parliament, had carried through the socialist policies set out in Labour's Programme it would never have run into confrontation with the Unions. But, without a political strategy to get control of the Parliamentary leadership, that alternative is fantasy.

Pressure for such a political strategy has been growing for several years. In particular, the efforts of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to secure rule changes which would give local Labour Parties democratic powers to change their Parliamentary Candidate have been nearly successful (See *The Leveller* 20). And a debate has begun within the Party over a method of electing the leader. But on both issues, the position of the Unions, which dominate the Party Conference, has been ambiguous.

When the election campaigns start to roll, Jim Callaghan will be the first to call for Party unity. But it was never the strikers who broke faith with Labour: it was Jim and Denis and all the rest of the right-wing in Parliament who have turned their backs on the movement. So if the converts to collective bargaining on the TUC General Council really represent their members, they will join the campaign to put people in Parliament who will implement the policies of the Party.

Left directions

After the material in this Crisis theme had been received, *The Leveller* collective held an impromptu meeting during production to discuss the broader political implications. Mike Prest was asked to summarise some of the main lines of discussion. The following article draws on those ideas, but does not represent the collective's view.

Great and successful battles have been fought by workers in recent weeks. Individual sections of the working class have demonstrated that they have the industrial muscle to prevent the ruling class, substantially aided by this government, from making them pay for inflation. In the course of these battles the truck drivers, local authority workers and others have shown once again the inventiveness of workers in struggle on the picket line and in the factories, offices and wards. Despite the sometimes dilatory attitude of union leaders, the defensive strength of the working class, especially the shopfloor is there for all to see.

But the very fact that it is a defensive struggle highlights the extent to which these victories against a Labour government's frankly orthodox economic programme could also result in a massive political defeat. While individual employers, including the state, may be forced to concede wage increases well above the government's limit, there is little those same workers can do to stop public spending cuts, whose determination lies in the political rather than the economic sphere. Thus NUPE's very shrewd hit and run campaign will almost certainly result in better wages than those on offer. Unfortunately, further capital cuts in the Health service - cuts which NUPE has been warning against for several years - will probably be implemented. And such cuts will only be one part of a deliberately anti-working class budget or set of financial measures.

The offensive against workers has also been conducted by propaganda. Few on the left can recall an anti-union, anti-class ideological bombardment of such ferocity. On television, Mr. Callaghan said to NUPE members: "What I say to them is: go back to work." Government ministers have competed with each other to echo the thoughts of their leader. Newspapers big and small have scoured the land for anti-strike horror stories with which to freeze the hearts of Surbiton. Everywhere is talk of an imminent Tory victory.

The possibility of the govern-

ment crashing at the next election no doubt arouses mixed emotions on the left. Labour Party members and supporters will deplore it. Others have always been more ambiguous in their attitudes towards Labour governments. But all of us should abhor a Tory victory in the present conditions - all that is save those masochists who think that suffering at the hands of prospectively the worst government since 1931 is the path to redemption.

Bad though that might be, there is another, graver, outcome of the current crisis. The writers of the preceding articles did not feel that the essence of the crisis is economic; nor did they believe that it is primarily a political crisis for the Labour government - significant though it is for the left. Rather, it has been argued that the crisis has enveloped the whole left. Indeed, one might say that British socialism has been tested severely and in some vital respects found lacking.

Two major aspects of this generalised crisis are the rifts developing within the movement, and the evident failure of socialists to get their ideas across to an audience bigger than themselves. Both have resulted in some demoralisation, though reactions to the challenge have very much depended on where you are. Intellectuals, for example, have possibly been more dismayed by events than pickets who can see their own strength.

But the divisions are important. Several Labour MPs have privately raised the possibility of splits in the party. Not all rank and file activists are happy with their union leaders. While individual members of left groups have been active on the picket lines, often in key roles, their respective organisations are as far apart as ever. And perhaps most serious is the massive rift between the government and the TUC, exemplified by the utter collapse of the old social contract and the desperate attempt to replace it with a new, revised version in which nobody believes. Caught in the crossfire is the Parliamentary Labour Party, which is now paying a very high price for ignoring



party conferences for as long as anyone can remember.

The overwhelming firepower of the bourgeoisie's propaganda machine has been similarly salutary. The left - including here the Labour Party - has learnt anew that its voice is easily drowned in the din. We have few papers, no television, no radio, little money more often than not. Most important, it is not clear in the political battle for ideas to what traditions and sections of the people we are appealing. Shop floor power has in a way concealed the weakness of socialist culture in the broadest sense.

In the melee, however, we may have lost sight of certain constants. The trade union movement is as strong as ever, and is growing. The lessons of this latest round of wage struggles will be assimilated and built upon, not least because the economic prospects suggest that the struggle to preserve living standards is far from finished. Groups and individual socialists outside the Labour Party may well see in the events of the last two months a general vindication of their analyses of social democracy.

Nevertheless, the political strategies which flow from these

constants are still obscure, or where visible appear almost as varied as the number of advocates. Nearly everyone sees these developments as justification of a revolutionary approach, even if for some it is expressed by establishing popular control over the PLP through Conference. Some groups presumably view the upsurge of rank and file action as another step on the road to building the revolutionary party, either by themselves or with other groups, on familiar democratic centralist lines.

Yet, as our writers have argued, the room for manoeuvre in British capitalism is small. There is a contradiction, critical in its political implications, between the poor performance of the economy and the much healthier (if not madly flourishing) conditions of international capitalism. So between taking over the Labour Party on the one hand and building a revolutionary party on the other, there may be another way worthy of consideration: local organisation, community action, workers control and ownership, designed to revive an authentically popular socialist culture. The left has not failed. But it has not exhausted its choices either.

LABOUR HISTORY from Aberdeen Peoples Press



JAMES LEATHAM

1865-1945
Portrait of a socialist pioneer
by BOB DUNCAN

FASCISM in ABERDEEN



James Leatham 1865-1945
Portrait of a socialist pioneer
By Bob Duncan
80pp paperback 95p, £1.20 inc. post

Fascism in Aberdeen - street politics in the 1930's
By Andy Rigby and Liz Kibblewhite
50pp paperback 50p 70p each including post

Aberdeen Peoples Press
163 King Street,
Aberdeen
Telephone 0224 29669

Euskadi—the quest of the Basques

THE BASQUE country can claim to be the most revolutionary part of Europe. A high proportion of labour movement activists support parties which describe themselves as Marxist-Leninist, while many people regard the forces of order as an occupying army and approve of the guerilla activities of the ETA. While the rest of Spain (including the Communist and Socialist Parties) gave the new Constitution — which severely curtails civil rights and trade unions — an overwhelming 'yes' vote last December, the majority in the Basque country voted against it or abstained.

Suarez and his successors have, on the one hand, to face the problem of getting an administration acceptable to the Basque people. Although in the short term this problem is acute, there is no reason why the Basque country should not be given some measure of autonomy — a solution favoured by big business. On the other hand, there is no question of Spain becoming a conservative parliamentary democracy until the Basque question is settled.

The Basque country's unique mixture of nationalism, political radicalism and social conservatism has long historical roots. The exploitation of iron ore deposits in the late nineteenth century transformed a rural backwater into the centre of an engineering, shipbuilding and metalworking industry. This also meant a large scale immigration of workers from other parts of Spain.

Basque nationalism and the virulent racism of the early nationalists was a reaction to these developments. It is paradoxical that the ETA and other Basque Marxist-Leninist organisations originate from the nationalist PNV rather than the traditional workers' movement.

THE PARTIES

Probably the best known in Britain, ETA split from the main Basque nationalist party, PNV, in the late 50s and developed in a socialist direction. Over the years it in turn has had many splits. But these were not disagreements over finer points of Marxist theory but difficulties caused by trying to combine socialism, nationalism, mass struggle and guerilla action.

To start with it broke with the racist tradition of the PNV. It defined a Basque as anyone who earned a living in the Basque country and proclaimed its desire to integrate the immigrants from the rest of Spain into the struggle for national liberation. In practice its support of working class struggles antagonised the middle class, while bourgeois nationalism offered nothing to immigrant workers.

ETA split over its relationship with revolutionary forces outside the Basque country and over the relationship between mass struggle and guerilla action. A military struggle has to remain highly secret. Contact with mass movements endangers that secrecy, while contact with guerilla action brought repression on those carrying out mass activity.

ETA tried to get round this dilemma by dividing its work into various fronts. But these, however, often became the

vehicle for splits. The groups originating in the ETA now cover a wide political spectrum.

The publicity attracted by the ETA often obscures the importance of the Communist and Socialist Parties. Yet the Socialist Party got more votes than the nationalist PNV in the 1977 elections. In contrast, the Communist Party's vote collapsed because of its fierce attacks on the radical nationalists and bitter opposition to mass mobilisations or solidarity action. However, it remains the strongest force in the leading trade union, the Workers Commissions, and its Eurocommunist politics exert a strong pull on formerly ultra-left groups.

The Socialist Party, firmly based on the population of immigrant origin in the Basque country, sees itself as a more efficient administration rather than a force to change society. Although it received a huge working class vote, its few activists are middle class. Its bureaucratic internal regime prevents the development of a left wing, and its financial dependence on foreign social democratic parties prevents it from putting forward radical proposals which would undercut nationalist rhetoric.

While the Basque left is sharply divided over nationalism and over tactical questions, there is surprisingly little division — or even discussion — on economic questions. The reasons given by nationalists and by the Communist Party for the area's economic problems differ — the solution does not.

For nationalists, the relative decline of Basque industry is caused by Madrid's deliberate plan to ruin the area. Similarly, they claim that the massive immigration which resulted from the previous economic boom was not the result of impersonal economic forces but was caused by Madrid's desire to smash the Basque people's language and culture.

The Communist Party's economic policy for the Basque country is the same as for the rest of Spain. There is to be a broad anti-monopoly alliance including small and medium business. In the meantime the Communist Party supports

the Pact of Moncloa, Spain's version of the Social Contract.

The CP's Eurocommunism has not led to any change in its economic analysis. Suarez' government is described correctly as a representative of big business, rather than of capitalism as a whole. After that the Communist Party's analysis parts company with reality. It is the medium-sized traditional capitalists who, in Spain as a whole, are the heart of reaction, although in the Basque country such people often support the PNV. In reality, the Communist Party's plan for efficient, modernised capitalism could be accepted by big business, but many of those who are seen as part of the anti-monopoly alliance would go to the wall.

In practice the Communist Party's proposals consist of easier credits and aid to small businesses. Neither the Maoists nor the radical nationalists have substantially different proposals.

For both the Communist Party and the proclaimed Marxist-Leninist groups on its left, the question of social class appears surprisingly blurred. The concentration on attacking the monopolies rather than capitalism is curious when one considers that the majority of Basque workers are employed by small and medium capitalists.



Euskadi: Basque country

transformed a hitherto broad movement into a trade union under party control. Other large Maoist groups like the PT and ORT left the Workers Commissions to form their own party-controlled "red unions".

The decision to stay within the main trade union and fight for its democratic functioning and for militant policies shows a political realism not possessed by either of its rivals. This realism was also shown by its gradual edging away from the increasingly bizarre right-wing foreign policy of China's rulers.

While the Communist Movement retains a hostility to Russia from its Maoist past it remains sympathetic to some third world and Stalinist states and would probably welcome a sponsor to replace China. Previously its pro-China, anti-Russia line provided a clear differentiation from the Communist Party.

Now it becomes difficult to distinguish between the CP's Eurocommunism and what might be described as the Communist Movement's Euro-Maoism. In other parts of Spain it has lost people to the larger party, but in the Basque country its strength and the Communist Party's reverses have prevented this from happening.

Its main rival in the Basque country is the neo-Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League which rejects the mystification of the anti-monopoly alliance in favour of a united front of workers' parties. Formally this is very different from the other left parties' sectarian rejection of either the Socialist Party or the Communist Party.

The practice of the Revolutionary Communist League is not so different from its competitors. Its propaganda is terribly abstract and inaccessible to working people and it makes big concessions to nationalism. Although it conserves its forces better than its rivals, it is probably not growing.

THE FUTURE

Suarez' success in domesticating the majority workers' parties should result in municipal and general elections in March and April. Since the ruling UCD party is pathetically weak in the Basque country, elections combined with a measure of autonomy must result in a PNV/Socialist Party coalition in local government.

In a parliamentary democracy, Basque nationalism, which was such a problem for the Franco dictatorship, can become an asset to the capitalists. The PNV unites in its ranks big businessmen and ordinary workers; immigrant workers will continue to vote for the Socialist Party, and rivalry between the two will strengthen feelings of ethnic hostility.

None of the revolutionary groups in the Basque country seem to be on the verge of a breakthrough. In spite of the high level of commitment of their militants, their inability to differentiate themselves from either mainstream nationalism or the majority workers' parties means that most workers will continue to support the Socialist Party, the Communist Party or the PNV.

Despite the heroic struggles of the Basque workers over many years, a revolutionary socialist alternative is not yet in sight.

John Sullivan

THE RIFTS

The main ideological split in Basque politics is between the "Abertzales" (Patriots) — those who belong to parties, revolutionary or reformist, which are confined to the Basque country — and the "Espaniolistas" — those who support parties which organise throughout Spain.

The left Abertzales declare themselves anti-racist, Marxist-Leninist and advocates of working class unity. Unlike the PNV, they want a completely independent Basque country. They attack the "Spanish" parties for dividing the working class by organising in the Basque country. They say that immigrant workers should be integrated into national life by being recruited into Basque political parties and trade unions.

The Abertzales' genuine desire to overcome the distinction between Basque and immigrant workers coexists with a political practice which is grossly insensitive to the immigrants' real fears and achievements. For example, they are enthusiastic supporters of a campaign to encourage Basque speaking which has exhibited appalling chauvinistic

tendencies. And this chauvinistic core of Basque nationalism is not transformed by spraying on a coat of "Marxism-Leninism".

The Abertzales' ability to call demonstrations rivals that of the majority parties. Their courage, energy and determination to break with the PNV's chauvinistic tradition is impressive. Yet the indications are that their strength will not last. The effect of militant nationalist agitation, whatever its intentions, is to strengthen the PNV, a flexible cross-class party with great experience in accommodating a variety of groups and opinions.

Within the "Espaniolistas", the largest group to the left of the Communist Party, the Communist Movement (MC) organises throughout Spain. But the distinction between the Abertzales and Espaniolistas is not one of ethnic composition. The cadres of both the Communist Movement and the other far left group, the Revolutionary Communist League, originally came from the ETA.

The Communist Movement is the largest Maoist group in the Basque country. It stayed in the Workers Commissions after 1976, when the Communist Party majority suddenly



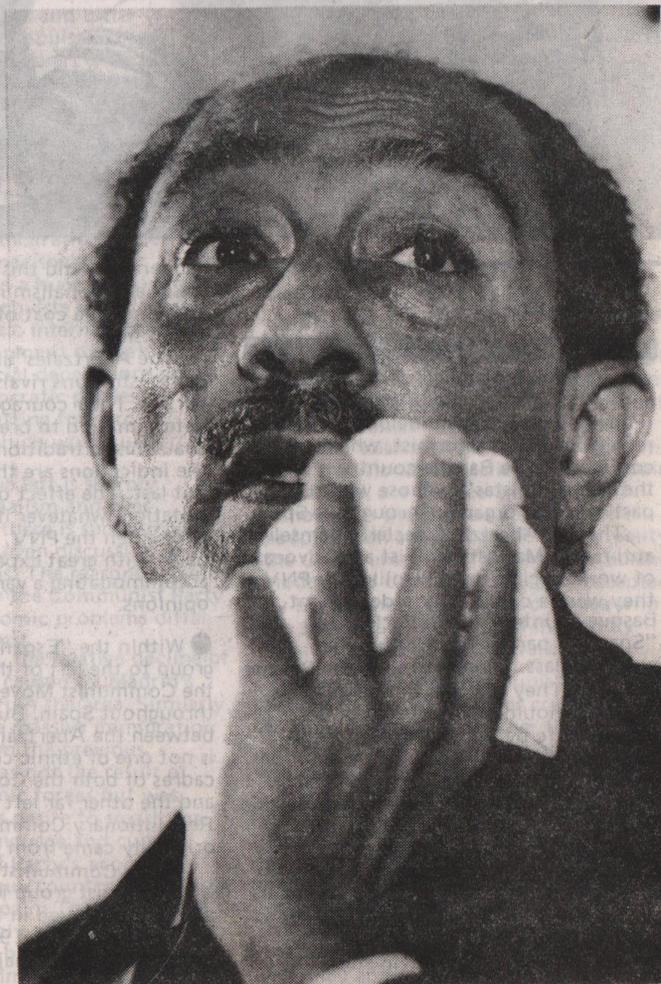
Sadat's new buddy

PRESIDENT SADAT has offered up Egypt on a plate for the Americans to use as they wish. Egypt's rulers have decided that the United States holds all the keys to the Middle East, and their task is to persuade the Carter administration that US ambitions in the region will be better fulfilled by Egypt than by Israel. They argue correctly that without the US, Israel would not exist; certainly not in its present form. And they want the United States, as the only power which exercises any influence over Israel, to pressure it to sign a peace treaty and give up its occupied territories.

But the Egyptian rulers have reasons of their own to seek the protection of the United States. A spectre is haunting Sadat. As he welcomed the deposed and discredited Shah of Iran to Aswan at the end of January, he must have been reflecting on how quickly a seemingly unassailable despot can be swept into the dustbin of history. In January two years ago, riots in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt, occasioned by price rises, expressed the discontent caused by Egypt's chaotic economy. The mass opposition which manifested itself then has been defused temporarily, partly by the relief of the Egyptian people that they will not have to fight another war with Israel. But the shouts of the 1977 demonstrators, who contemptuously demanded of Sadat, "O hero of the crossing, where is our breakfast?" were a reflection of problems which are no more solved now than they were two years ago.

With a nervous eye on 1977, security was tight at the end of December when increases of between 17 and 50 per cent in various basic commodities were announced in a vain bid to stem the huge deficit in Egypt's official budget and in the balance of payments.

A further precaution has been the closing down of even the officially-created tame leftist opposition party. Sadat and company are only too well aware that Egypt's economic fragility makes its political system inherently unstable. Sadat loses no opportunity to remind America that pro-western regimes are



menaced throughout Africa and the Middle East, and to offer his country's services in combatting what he calls "increasing Soviet penetration" in the region. Sadat told a group of visiting US Congressmen recently that the United States had been wrong to allow the "Soviet-inspired" destabilisation of Iran and Turkey, and he urged them to send weapons with which Egypt could continue its role of bolstering western interests. Sadat said that he had already sent aid to "countries fighting communism" and told the congressmen that Egypt needed new arms to go on doing this. Aware of the controversy which had been stirred in the US by the last shipment of fighters to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he pledged that these arms would never be used against Israel.

ZAIRE

Sadat has already gone beyond mere words in his support for western aims. Egyptian military involvement in the rest of Africa is seen as important by the West. "They're going to be our side's Cubans," one western diplomat told reporters. The new uniforms which the Army has been issued are olive drab: not much good for deserts, but useful in jungles. Egyptian planes carried Moroccan troops to extinguish the uprising in Zaire's Shaba province last year. Egyptian military advisors have also been sent to North Yemen.

NORTH YEMEN

The Egyptian involvement in North Yemen is ironic. In the early sixties, Nasser sent troops and planes to support Republican forces against Royalists backed by Saudi Arabia and advised by SAS men based in Aden, then a British colony.

The war ended in 1967, and North Yemen has remained in the Saudi orbit since, under right wing military governments of various degrees of viciousness. This time, Egyptian military involvement is with Saudi backing, and is designed as a counter to the socialist government of South Yemen.

SOUTH YEMEN

South Yemen is also menaced from the other side by Egyptian troops sent to help the regime of Sultan Qabus in Oman. Despite his claims to the contrary, Qabus is still fighting guerillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO).

Although the PFLO received a mauling at the hands of Qabus's Army, it fights on. British officers, the ubiquitous SAS, Jordanian and Iranian troops have all been pressed into service against a handful of poorly-armed guerrillas. The Jordanians have gone; the Iranian Army, of course, now has other problems, so Egyptians make useful replacements.

LIBYA

On the other flank, Sadat has already tried once to attack Libya, fighting a tank war on their common border in 1977. Many Libyans are convinced that once a peace treaty with Israel is signed, Sadat will feel free, with US encouragement, to turn on them. Perhaps laying the ground for such an attack, Sadat has

The Egyptians are going to be our side's Cubans

already told Newsweek that he feels "menaced" by Libya and Algeria.

One important aspect of the close relationship which Sadat has developed with the US is intelligence and covert action. The experienced Egyptian secret service is available for operations against radical Arab and African countries.

LEBANON

The right wing forces in the Lebanon, which are engaged in a civil war with the Palestinians and the Lebanese left, get covert intelligence support from the Egyptians. Fifteen under-cover agents are said to have landed at the end of December at the rightist-controlled port of Jounieh, and a further thirty are said to be in the capital itself. Each of Sadat's efforts to withdraw from the Arab-Israeli conflict, from the signing of the first separation of forces agreement in Sinai in 1975, have always been closely followed by a flare-up in Lebanon. Egyptian advisers to the rightist forces are working alongside Israelis, who control the south of the country through the private militia of former Lebanese army major Saad Haddad.

ISRAEL

The bid from Israel to retain its favoured status has been put in almost identical terms; with the collapse of Iran, and Turkey's disenchantment with NATO, Israel argues that it is the only reliable pro-western state in the region. But Sadat's offer of Egypt as a substitute for Israel will probably not be interesting enough to the Americans for them to drop the Zionists. Sadat has other good reasons for abandoning the Arab cause, however. Egypt is heavily in debt to the United States and to western money-lenders. Quite simply, Egypt is broke. The 1979 State budget foresees expenditure of nearly 13 billion Egyptian pounds (£E), about £17 billion sterling, and a deficit of £E 3.55 billion.

The IMF is worried about the deficit, and has prevented Egypt from drawing a second instalment ("tranche") of its £E370 million standby credit. Although Egypt is spending more than it earns, its current account is more nearly balanced than Israel's, which relies for current spending on gifts from the US and from the Zionist movement abroad. Egypt has revenue from cotton, oil, and the Suez Canal.

But for development and investment aid, Egypt relied heavily until recently on loans and grants from the Arab oil producers. The Gulf Organisation for Development in Egypt (GODE), comprising Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, provided the equivalent of £1,000 million sterling in 1974-1976. Since then, Sadat has turned Egypt towards western sources for development finance. Under his "infatih" ("open door") economic policy, foreign investment, particularly from the west, has been encouraged. While some firms, especially those boycotted elsewhere in the Arab world because they trade with Israel, have shown an interest, the amount of private investment has not been impressive. But Egypt's indebtedness to western governments and official moneylending agencies is booming.

This accounted for more than half Egypt's outstanding foreign debt of

£E5,884 million. Egypt is receiving about £E1 billion annually in aid and development credits, and just under half of this is from the United States. These loans are made on unusually favourable terms, so attractive in fact that loans from other western countries, offered at higher rates of interest and with less generous repayment periods, for example from Canada and Italy, have actually been turned down. The "free-enterprise" United States is quite happy to help Sadat's public companies, but insists that such companies should offer a number of shares to the public — usually 10 per cent — in order that Egypt's middle class, Sadat's vital political base, receives its share of the profits made from the labour of Egyptian workers and peasants.

The World Bank and its "soft-loan" affiliate, the International Development Association, has taken much of the credit for pushing Egypt into the "open door" policy. As well as offering advice, the Bank is responsible for convening the consultative group for Egypt, comprising 26 creditor nations. Most of the influence not surprisingly, is wielded by the Americans, who have a large permanent "aid" mission in Cairo, which actively interferes in the running of the Egyptian economy.

Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil, presenting the 1979 budget to Egypt's hand-picked "parliament" said that Egypt was seeking to raise over \$10 billion in foreign aid loans and grants over the next five years. As long as capitalists continue to worry about the stability of the country — with good reason — it is western governments, and hence taxpayers, who will foot the bill for propping him up.

Sadat's increasing reliance on the west, and the decreasing proportion of Egypt's subsidies which come from Arab States like Saudi Arabia, go some way to explaining why he has been insulated from pressure from these other reactionary Arab States.

THE WEST BANK

Indeed, what is holding up the final signing of the separate peace treaty under which Egypt will finally abandon the Arab cause, is not any disagreement between Egypt, Israel and the United States. The much discussed "linking" of the Egypt-Israel treaty with the future of the Palestinians and the West Bank is not at issue; Sadat has conceded that whatever the administrative arrangements, the West Bank will remain within the Israeli sphere of influence. Behind the delay is the US fear that when Egypt does sign, the split in the Arab world will become irrevocable; Egypt would be outcast, at least by the radicals who number almost half the Arab states, and would thus be of diminished use internationally. Saudi Arabia and the other conservative Arabs are reluctant to demonstrate their support for Egypt, for fear of being ostracised in their turn.

The demonstration of western impotence in Iran, and the US dumping of Taiwan in favour of links with China, has severely worried the conservative rulers. It is poetic justice that just as the United States thought that it could win massive new influence in the Arab world, the Iranian people's uprising has swept the carefully positioned pieces from the board. Sadat has chosen the losing side.

Phil Kelly

IRAN

Why it happened...

THE REVOLUTION in Iran is like nothing that anyone can remember: an apparently spontaneous uprising of a whole people against internal and external oppression, against military and economic power. Everyone in Britain is confused: the right because it's happened without Soviet involvement; the left because it's happened without a party.

The British left has understood the revolution no more than the right. Four British Trotskyite parties drew up a joint statement at a meeting on February 3 which reminded the Iranian working class of its duty to build a revolutionary party to seize power. The Fourth International and the SWP have flown out their western-politicised Iranian students to get on with it. Sadly, they are not likely to get very far.

There is no guarantee that the struggle will throw up a society in which the people's aims of justice and freedom will be realised. But we have to understand what these aims are.

THE STRUGGLE in Iran is only starting. What the Iranian people are fighting for is an ideology much older than socialism, the culmination of thirteen centuries of history — the prophecy of Mohammed that after world wars and much suffering there would be an Islamic Republic, that the Mahdi (guide) would return (in Iran) and fill the world with justice, and there would be a world government based on the principles of the Koran and his teachings.

I don't know whether this Islamic Republic will come. But the least that can happen is that Iran becomes completely independent. We will reject all foreign influences.

Shi'ite Islam is a highly temporal and political ideology. Unlike western religions, it does not set out to reinforce secular rulers. Rather, it exists to kick them out. But neither does it elevate religious leaders to become rulers. The Ayatollahs don't want to rule, but to guide and teach and help ensure that there is a government responsive to the people's will.

In western terms, it would be a mixture of anarchism and socialism. Marxism is a way of achieving equality. I accept this, but differ in how to do it. I agree with the classless society, but disagree with dialectical materialism. According to Marxism, we should wait until we have an organised working class and built a party.

But we have had strikes everywhere, and the people have destroyed the

institutions of capitalism. Every bank in Iran has been burnt.

The strikers are being supported by the petty bourgeoisie — the merchants of the bazaar. Trade unions are illegal, so there can be no strike pay. The oil workers who are now producing enough for domestic needs (though none for the army) are theoretically still on strike, and are paid from collections organised by the Ayatollahs.

Islamic law says you have to give a fifth of all your surplus income — more than you actually need to live — to the Ayatollahs. All the strikes are funded from this. A lot of money has also gone to the Palestinians. We support any people fighting for justice and freedom.

Economically, Islam stands for the redistribution of wealth. It is illegal to charge or pay interest. Land ownership is allowed, but all the product of the land is divided between those who work on it. So industrial organisation would be collectively owned. Workers won't just share profits — they'll own them. Some products, oil, minerals and so on, must be owned by the whole people.

These economic principles are already in practice. The merchants of the bazaar don't just pay for the strikers. They have lowered their prices, and with the shortages, are applying their own rationing. Small banks, lending money to farmers, have also started up. They don't charge interest — just bank charges.

Organisation of public services is being done by the people. Everywhere they



Banner on Teheran demonstration

Tim Gopsill talked to an Iranian activist in Britain — a committed Shi'ite, not a Marxist, a devoted follower of Khomeini, who is waiting for the declaration of Holy War to go back and join it. Much of what he said, particularly on the social policies of Islam, is reactionary by the standards of any liberation movement. But it has brought millions onto the streets.

We also profile the less-known but politically influential Ayatollah Taleghani, the so-called "Red Mullah" of Tehran, and print, exclusively in Britain, a report from Nic Brink, a Dutch journalist in Iran.

are completely in charge, just carrying out all the important functions, cleaning streets and so on, and policing, and running courts.

The ideology stems directly from the philosophy. That's why we can't say exactly what the government will be. It is still to be decided, on principles laid out by Ali, Mohammed's cousin, and his son-in-law, who succeeded him. There must be separation of the judiciary and executive, and the legislature must express the people's will. The form of government can be changed, but the legislature must not pass laws repugnant to Islam.

The western media confuse the fact that the plans are so vague. They say Khomeini does not know what he wants. This is quite true. It hasn't been developed yet. That's one reason why the west so underestimated the revolution.

There must be complete freedom for all competing political ideologies. It is true that there have been religious zealots attacking the leftists in the universities. But Khomeini ordered that to stop.

THE HOLY MEN

THERE ARE in Iran more than one thousand Ayatollahs. They are compared to bishops, but are really very different. They represent and consult the people.

It's an academic position really — to become one you have to have studied Islamic law, history and philosophy to a level where the others accept you. This can take 30 years — though Khomeini was an Ayatollah at 24. They are completely accessible — anyone can go and consult them.

From their numbers they choose five or six Ayatollahs al-Odhma (the great ayatollahs). The leading ones are Khomeini, Shariat Madari and Taleghani. They are more knowledgeable and more just, which in this sense means responsive to the people. Khomeini is just because he expresses the people's will to throw out the monarchy and establish a democratic government. The others will defer to him in this.

Iranian Shi'ites are all aware of their history. The split with the Sunni sect, which dominates most of the Arab world, goes back to the beginning of Islam, in the seventh century AD. A series of confrontations between what Shi'ites say were the true followers of Mohammed and their more powerful, aristocratic oppressors, culminated in the death of Hussein, grandson of the Prophet.

Hussein and his followers were annihilated at a place called Karbala. It was martyrdom — the highest concept of Shi'ite mythology. When you are confronted with an oppressor, you shed his blood if you can, and if not, your own, to show him up, to set an example.

This battle against the monarchy and for Islamic government and justice, is what the people of Iran are fighting again now. That is why unarmed people have been standing up to tanks and machine guns. It is the highest honour to be martyred for Islam. When people are killed, neighbours rush to congratulate the relatives. Eventually, the army had to retreat before the people.

Everyone goes to the mosque meetings on Thursday evenings (the days run from dusk to dusk, and Friday is the holy day) — but they are more like political meetings than church services. Prayers are over quickly — five minutes. Then there's two hours of political speeches. The people get very worked up in the mosque meeting. Riots always start when they sweep out of the mosques.

THE HISTORY

THE STRUGGLE, at its present level, has been going on for just a year. It was in February last year, after the army had killed several students demonstrating in Qom, that Khomeini declared an unarmed jihad (holy war by word and pen) and he had Shariat Madari order national mourning. Mourning in Iran doesn't mean weeping, it means an uprising; revolution. The culmination, naturally enough, was

on Ashura, which fell on December 10 last year. An estimated ten million people marched. No government can stop people demonstrating on Ashura.

The Iranian people have been fighting monarchy and tyranny for centuries. Shi'ism was underground until the fourteenth century, when it became the principal creed but still not powerful enough to control the state. The crucial struggles have been anti-imperialist: against the British attempt to monopolise the tobacco trade in the nineteenth century, and the British-imposed Pahlavi dynasty in this century.

The Shah's father was put in power by the British after the First War, when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. He was a fascist, a friend and admirer of Hitler — so much so that the British threw him out in 1941 and installed his son. That was a conditional monarchy, with a civilian government, but this became too nationalist and started taking over the oil industry. So the Americans staged a coup and installed Reza Shah as an absolute monarch. The British were responsible for the first Shah, the Americans for his son.

Both Shahs had pursued an anti-Islamic, westernisation policy. They wanted to develop western-style industry, with a western-style working class and bourgeoisie. They set up universities to give this embryo bourgeoisie some modern ideas. It is from these universities that the protest movement against them has now come.

They banned the women's veil, the chador — something that's been much misunderstood in the west. The chador is not just a veil, but a whole dress, and it needs a hand to hold it in place around the face — a hand that cannot therefore work a machine in a factory. Many women now wear them as a political statement. Some also wear it because it preserves their anonymity when the police are about, or on demonstrations.

Khomeini has said that women can wear what they like, as long as they are decent — that is, not nude. He has said that women must have complete economic and political freedom.

It is true that some basic Islamic principles would have to be included in new laws, such as adultery being an offence that can incur a death sentence, which the Shah abolished in response to women's demands, and things like chopping the hands off thieves. But there are lots of conditions before these penalties, and they don't have to be actually used. You can't chop someone's hands off if they're poor — only if they have stolen many times and don't need to steal to live. There are actually more than 200 conditions that have to be met.

It is important that laws can change to meet changing times. For instance, the concept of women taking part in politics is a modern one. New laws would have to take it into account.

THE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

THERE ARE some events which defy any pen to describe. In Mashad, in the east of Iran, in Qavin, to the west of Tehran, and in Khorramshahr enormous bloodbaths have been the result of tanks driving into crowds. The story goes that in Qavin a number of children were minced under the caterpillar tracks. When their parents took to the streets in silent protest, they were mown down by machine-gun fire. The city has now been completely sealed off. No one is allowed in.

I was fortunate enough not to have been a witness of the slaughter, but I did visit the large cemetery Behesht Zahra about six miles south of Tehran. How the people manage to get there in these days is a mystery, but they did. Tens of thousands of them. Interminable areas with flat stones. On the stones you can read how many people died on one day. Weeping women sit and stare vacantly into space. Mullahs preach to crowds of thousands. Columns of mourners search aimlessly.

Around the grave were women clothed in black who gave delicacies to the passers-by — a burial ritual. Behind them were a few shabby trees around which a few dozen people were gathered. I was pushed towards them. The people moved aside to let me pass. And there, on the humble branches, hung a shirt and trousers. The shirt flapped gently in the breeze, torn, seived with bullet holes and drenched in blood. A snapshot of the victim had been pinned onto it. Photos taken in the mortuary are pressed into my hands. Bodies terribly mutilated, sometimes shot to shreds. "My son," someone said, "he was seventeen".

Those who end up as corpses in Behesht Zahra can think themselves fortunate. Those felled during demonstrations or pogroms are quickly gathered up by relatives or friends and taken to the hospital. Ambulances are forbidden to pick up the dead and wounded. The hospital register the number of victims and hang a list of their names outside on the wall, where people gather every day looking for their missing relatives.

The government registers nothing. Relatives bury the dead. A rough estimate. Because those who remain behind on the streets without help from friends are piled up in army lorries. Nobody knows where they end up. The people say they probably get dumped in mass graves.

The most God-forsaken scandal is however that the relatives who approach the military authorities to reclaim their dead for a reasonable burial have to pay a tax before they are given the body. A surcharge of over \$200 (£100). A bullet tax. If you can't pay, you don't get the corpse.

Nic Brink

Freshly-dug graves at Behesht-Zahra

People look at lists of dead and wounded outside a hospital in Teheran



Pix: Nic Brink



People's voice

IRANIAN JOURNALISTS went on strike in November, in protest against censorship. On February 11, the day Bakhtiar was overthrown, they went back, and Tehran Radio, which till then had broadcast nought but official lies, came out with this:

"Attention. Attention. This is the voice of Iran, the voice of revolution. This is the genuine voice of the Iranian people. . . . We striking employees of the Radio and Television of Iran, as a result of the people's efforts, are back in our home. From now on, we want, together with you, to have a real and genuine radio. . . ."

In the three months between, the people had to develop their own forms of communications.

There has developed a tremendous trade in cassettes. Every major event — mosque meetings, speeches, demonstrations — is recorded, and thousands of copies distributed, at cost price.

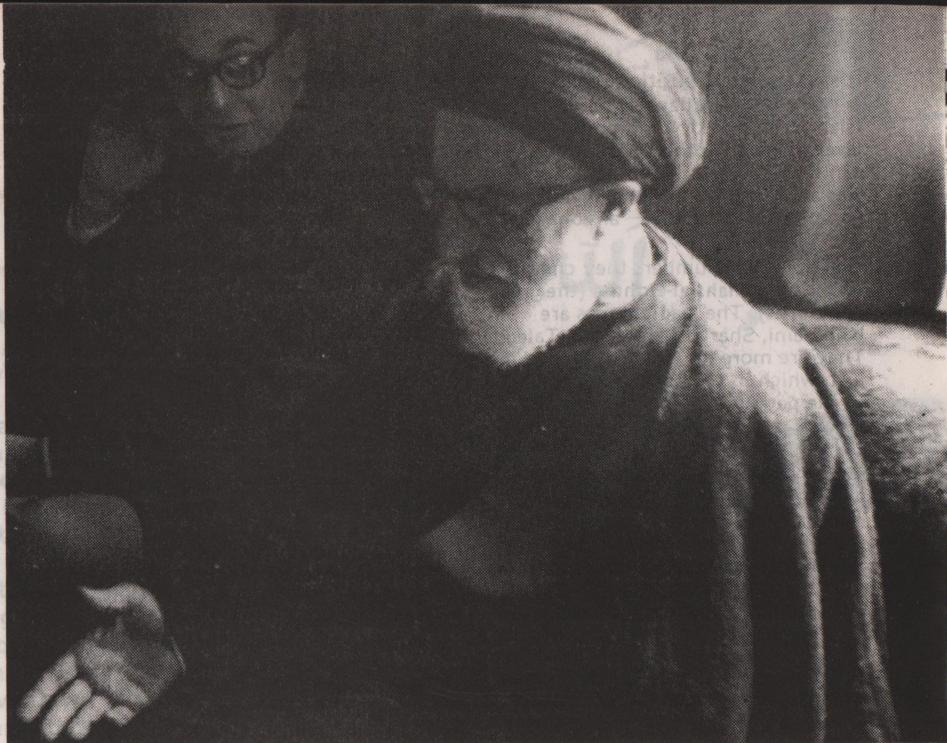
The cassettes are played in public. They are broadcast from loudspeakers, sometimes set up on buildings next to army barracks. It's the only way the troops can know what's going on. They've even recorded and re-broadcast the BBC World Service's transmissions in Farsi.

The BBC has been thoroughly pleased with itself over its broadcasting to Iran. It loves to be able to play what it imagines to be its role of providing benighted foreigners with the truth about the world, especially when it can incur opposition from the Foreign Office (which funds it) and make a big deal about its independence.

So BBC bosses have been very smug about the protests that flooded from the Shah and his friends in Britain in the months before he was booted out.

The image was sadly divergent from the reality. The BBC has treated Iran with even more than characteristic conservatism. Current affairs talks writers were told not to take an anti-Shah line. On the insistence of the Foreign Office, a direct line was installed from the Farsi section to the Iranian Embassy; all broadcasts were monitored, and there were frequent angry calls from the FO to editors. While the editors bravely refused to accept orders, there was an inevitable playing down of information unfortunate for the Shah, and for Britain's interests, and routine denials from the Palace in Tehran were often enough of an excuse for stories from BBC correspondents failing to reach the airwaves.

One such was the great mutiny in the Shah's crack Imperial Guard, the unit of ultra-loyalists that would never, never mutiny. In December, a group of squaddies rushed into the officers' mess with machine guns and killed half a dozen before they were mown down themselves. A BBC correspondent got wind of it, and his report was used by domestic news. But the Palace denied it, so they killed the story.



IF ANY one person could claim the credit for the Iranian revolution it would not be Khomeini but Ayatollah Taleghani, the so-called "Red Mullah" of Tehran. He hasn't been in exile — he spent four years in prison, tortured by SAVAK before his release in November — but inside the country, organising.

Politically, he's well to the left of Khomeini, who holds a kind of centrist position. Ever since the overthrow of Mossadegh in 1953, Taleghani has been carrying out his mission of making contact with students, intellectuals, workers and left groups, preparing for the revolution. Taleghani, like Khomeini, is not really a theoretician, rather, an activist. He helped form the Iran Liberation Movement, whose leader, Mehdi Bazargan, is now Prime Minister. And in the early 70s he started and openly supported the guerilla movements, particularly the Mujahedin Khalgh (fighters for the people) which was important in the military operations of this month's seizure of power. Taleghani was interviewed by Dutch journalist Nic Brink.

What do you mean by an Islamic republic?

By an Islamic republic we mean a regime which both stands for social justice and is elected by the people.

There is an article in the constitution which says that the legislation must comply with the precepts of Islam. What does this compliance amount to? Does it only apply to legislation concerning religious or social matters, or does it also apply far more generally?

You must not confuse the issues. Firstly there is what is meant by making the laws comply with the Koran. The Koran is a book given by God to the prophet, and unlike the Bible is does not just encourage godliness and humanity — in addition to instructions about personal behaviour, the Koran also advises on social justice, on the policies of governments and also on economic matters. All laws which are adopted must comply with the precepts of the Koran and of the prophet.

Will the mullahs and ayatollahs take part in the coming elections as a political party?

We will not ourselves be candidates but we will keep our eyes open and give clear advice on how to vote. We shall observe the elections closely and make sure they are held correctly and that the candidates are proposed and elected correctly. But the people are free to vote.

Europe, and the west in general, is of the opinion that an Islamic government would be a reactionary regime which would want a return to the Middle Ages. To name an example, would the religious

leaders abolish the present equal rights for women?

If we are called reactionary, then it is as a propaganda stunt by the imperialistic powers. After Mohammed, a theocratic state came about in which the Caliph was both head of the church and of the state. The interests of the people were not always by definition served, and nor was justice. That old image is the first reason that the impression of a reactionary state still exists. A second reason is that there are some Islamic countries which still have the same reactionary system robbing the people of their liberty. But what we think comes directly from the Koran. We give everyone the right to their own freedom, and women enjoy the same freedom according to their ability, and can take part in all social activities. You can see that the women play an active role in the demonstrations, that they distribute manifestos. Women are free to develop socially, educationally and economically. The Koran is, however, against the freedom of women to prostitute themselves and to destroy the family relations. The Koran forbids women using it as a weapon.

Why are you so strongly opposed to Communism?

I don't quite understand you. As far as the meaning of the word and the economic ideology are concerned, we are not. We are not opposed to social justice and social provisions. We are opposed to one class treating another unjustly. We differ from the Communists about the philosophy of materialism. They confuse social, political, economic and religious affairs. They want to abolish religion as well as social inequality.

Raymond Williams: building a socialist culture

Since the publication of *Culture and Society* in the 1950s Raymond Williams has been one of the central figures in the development of cultural theory in Britain. After a period in the Labour Party in the sixties, in 1968 he edited the *May Day Manifesto* attacking the Labour Party as "the agent of the new capitalism". This was the beginning of his close attachment to the new left and the libertarian tradition of Marxist politics. Here he talks to *Dave Taylor* about politics and culture.

EP Thompson in *The Leveller 22* spoke about the need to recapture the libertarian element of socialist politics and regretted the lack of a romantic element in our movement. Do you agree with this?

Recapturing the libertarian element is the major job of this generation, because orthodox socialism, whether Eastern or Western Fabianism, has not been libertarian, so to insist that socialism will have to be very much more democratic and concerned with personal liberties is crucial. This has been a major block to the development of socialism in the west.

This is different from the romantic notion which I also agree with. There is an important sense in which thinking about the future has become very much more difficult. This is partly because of what has happened to the general culture, which has become less confident of its grand design going on into the future. It is very easy for socialists to distance themselves from this — you can get stuck in the notion of the inevitable breakdown of capitalism and not have anything to do with any really positive content other than picking up the bits.

We need a revival of certain ways of thinking about the future. Nothing utopian, because that's just what we don't need. But a way of thinking about the future in more expansive ways, putting some more positive content beyond the notion of breakdown. There is a block in many people's minds now. They know what breakdown would be but they do not think beyond the phrases — which are correct as far as they go — to the liberation of new energies, new kinds of democracy, the new individual, and how those would be done. Neither the Stalinist nor the Fabian model is any good for us in this respect.

Does the far left in Britain today have even adequate notion of what that breakdown might look like?

We are all under great difficulties because there are so many urgent things that have to be opposed, so many defence actions that have to be launched. I think there is a great danger now of a lack of coherence of political perspective. If you try and put that coherence in with just a received model of revolution it will take you some of the way but not very far. You get the rhetoric of the rejection of reformist politics and the adoption of revolutionary politics. But you really do have to think about this kind of heavily organised state with a lot of powerful authoritarian institutions and with very real force at the centre, the much more deeply organised nature of the social order in the communications system, in the press and so on.

I doubt if the simple models, which I don't think anybody seriously holds but are continually pushed around — the equivalent of storming the winter palace — mean very much. This I would guess is the one kind of revolution you can't have, because it is such a deeply implanted social order, from prevailing opinion right through to military forces, that it would have to be contested very nearly everywhere. The grand attack on the centre is precisely what this kind of society is ready for.

This raises the question of the nature of political organisation best suited to these problems — the debate around the concept of the Party.

Well, I am sure that since the late fifties you have to accept the reality of a great number of groups which are fighting in particular sectors. It was quite clear from the sixties onward that these groups so much valued their autonomy — this is quite beyond questions of sectarianism, and in any case the autonomy was what so much of it was about — that to attempt to over-ride them with some received notion of a party is always I think a fantasy. At the same time when you look at the size of the forces against all those tendencies it is clear that at certain points — and this again is where we need a lot of new thinking — the capacity to assemble, to allow for really urgent common purposes has got to be there and I don't know if anybody during the last twenty years on the left could be sure that this is emerging.

What is emerging, in a very encouraging way, are all these self-organising tendencies over a much wider area which gives much more hope. Go back a generation earlier and you've got the attempt by centralised parties to control all these things. They had their people in everything they could think of. Nobody will go back to that. But equally at certain times, in real crises of transition there is the need to come together.

Is this something which is reserved for times of acute crisis, this coming together?

Unless many of these democratic procedures of alliance and popular power, self-management and so on are practised before an extreme crisis you might go into such a crisis with more than enough on your hands. Still after all that the way it goes would surprise anybody. But if you've got to improvise collective actions when you're already in a critical situation you need much more practice in these procedures of popular power. You need to think out certain institutions which are compatible with a libertarian socialism, because it's easy when you

are in an opposition period to just see all institutions but your own as the enemy.

One of the tasks EP Thompson sees as confronting the movement today is to build a 'socialist culture' and he spoke about the 'community' of the forties. How far do you think this is possible in the context of modern capitalist culture?

Well, there are two possibilities. One is, and it's already being done, to establish both an oppositional culture. With a great deal of effort these can be established at the fringes, on the margins, in the unoccupied spaces of orthodox capitalist culture. That's one job, and it has to continue — but it is difficult to sustain. These enterprises often have a relatively short life. Over a period people learn this kind of activity but fail to see, because of the controls of the official culture, that there are huge unoccupied areas that are not really being challenged on their own grounds.

This is the second possibility. You only have to move from London, with its diversity of alternatives and oppositional cultural activities, to even quite sizeable provincial towns to see that. It's as if you've moved into a different period where that sort of oppositional culture doesn't exist. And meanwhile a lot of people who ought to be with that oppositional activity are locked up in old things like the Labour Party in an accepting way, because they feel they have to engage in what they see as the central battle. The more they go on engaging on the terms of the state, the more they will go on being locked into the existing structures.

The alternative and oppositional cultures must link up with those people in those institutions — not just politically but with all the people in big institutions, for there are more potential allies there than the left usually estimates.

You believe in the left using the dominant means of mass communication in every possible way to its own advantage?

Raymond Williams.

I would put it this way. We have to establish the fringe culture — there's no alternative to that — but if we don't also contest the central institutions then we are giving away too much. You run radical theatre groups wherever you can but at the same time you really do think seriously about establishment theatre and about establishment broadcasting.

You really get in there with proposals for more democratic structures, which a lot of those institutions want, and in any case are the necessary dimension of any serious challenge to the orthodox position.

But how far can these movements go without getting absorbed into bourgeois culture. It has an amazing capacity for incorporation of oppositional elements, which blunts their edge politically.

These things tend to be pushed out towards the fringe. There was a time in the sixties in the BBC when wave after wave of radical writers were coming up then getting sacked. But there's no doubt that in the seventies orthodox culture has much more clearly identified its enemies. In the sixties there was much more rhetoric and some calculation that they needed young people with young ideas and so they let them in. Now they are more clearly seen as enemies, so I think that the danger is always there of incorporation.

But one shouldn't be so frightened of it. I think for example, there are still people working away in the broadcasting media, especially in local radio and in educational institutions — and they have to keep doing it — who have to come up with proposals which would extend their influence as an alternative to the kinds of

centralised institutions that people are now in.

This has to be done very precisely. You must show people from experience on the ground that this would be a different and better way of running institutions and would produce the programmes. John McGrath is someone who, whilst running 7:84, will at the same time write an episode of Z Cars without at all being compromised by that, because that's where a quite different kind of audience is.

You obviously value your political autonomy, but how do you situate yourself in relation to the left today?

In 1966 I decided that there was no future in the Labour Party (I worked from 1961 to '66 actively in constituency politics). The critical moment was not only what the Labour Government did in 1966, but also what happened when we got out the MayDay Manifesto. It was directed very much to people inside the Labour Party, and to watch the way the Party machinery shut down was a final experience really. And what I went into after that was attempting to build organisations where people can have discussions and coordinate campaigns, without giving up their group autonomy.

You see, it is a very different situation in London, where a group can establish itself with so many people in a relatively short time. Both EP Thompson and I have tried to build these clubs and organisations where people can come together outside of London and the established organisations. After all in the years of CND this happened.

I would rather be committed to this project of establishing a centre where you are in contact with each other, without the precondition that you give up your loyalty to your own group on a national basis — so that you're having to learn working together in a particular locality — than committing myself to a particular group

Socialist Unity

Do you feel that the *Socialist Unity* campaign is a step in that direction?

When the International Marxist Group put that kind of emphasis I felt, and still do, very sympathetic to it. You see, after the May Day Manifesto we got a lot of these type of groups going and that still has to be attempted in new ways. It's got to be the groups coming together and defining themselves. If somebody calls a meeting in a particular town and says let's get the left groups together, it very much matters who calls it. Sometimes because of the political position I've been in I've been able to call it without this problem. And I would hope to do that again.

You have mentioned the divisions between London and the rest of the country and in your work you often argue the need for a "common culture". How central do you see this division between city and country in understanding bourgeois culture?

Britain with a very centralised state and a very metropolitan culture has always had this problem in an acute form. I am involved now in Welsh politics, and if you look at the problems from the Welsh end you can see that the pull of everything is towards the metropolis, which then, through these very powerful institutions, is fed back out. Something has got to be contested, because although a lot of good things happen in the metropolis, there's no doubt that this overall metropolitan view is the really dominating one which is holding the culture together. "As seen from London" as they say in the reports, or "London thinks". This is a very small class position.

A common culture, whatever it would turn out to be, would be so much more diverse and with so many more people taking part in it. That's why certain of these cultural revivals in Scotland and Wales are so good because alternative cultural groups are trying to establish themselves in so many places.

You have been associated recently with the Rudolph Bahro campaign. How do you assess the importance of Bahro's work?

I was impressed by Bahro's analysis of the way in which Eastern European societies actually worked because it seemed to me to be the first attempt to do so by someone with a lot of experience of the bureaucracy. But the really exciting thing about Bahro was that he should sit down in those conditions and write half his book about what a different socialist society would be like. This is just the sort of practical thinking I was talking about earlier — he is really prepared to get down to details on how you could run a democratic society in a self-managing way without any concessions at all to liberal ideas about the economy or politics.

It's a socialist analysis but it's so full of new ideas about how to organise institutions. He calls it the alternative in Eastern Europe, but if we don't produce within a year or two a matching book called the alternative in Western Europe, when we've got much more freedom to do it than he has, we will look pretty bad in comparison.

Committed writing

Do you think you might write such a book yourself?

Well, I might have a try. Because I think people see with very mixed feelings what the social order might do if it was within sight of its disintegration — how it would hit back. For all those reasons which may be locking up a lot of our energies, it is necessary to think in practically convincing ways about how you could run things differently. This has to be a practical and not utopian vision, and some progress has been made on that with workers control and self-management thinking, and indeed with collectives. But the toughest stage is the next one.

Self-management is always thought of in local ways and obviously the crucial question is how self-management collectives link up with each other in a complex economy and society. The feelings which flow towards self-management take you to a certain point, and then can leave you because in an actually functioning society of a different kind the question would then be how you linked up without surrendering your important autonomy, but still at the level where you could imagine the whole range of activities of a society happening.

I think we've got to build on this first stage, of which we've got a lot of experience — workers control, collectives and self-management, then think really hard about the second stage which is the tough one. How do you then link those up in ways which don't reproduce a state directed by a centralised party? Or alternatively, avoid a kind of return of the capitalist priorities just because they always would return.

In *Marxism and Literature* you wrote about the writer's political alignment and you said, "to recognise alignment is to learn the hard and total specificity of commitment". What does this mean for the practice of a political writer today?

I mean that the word 'commitment' is sometimes discussed as if it is something that just goes on in your head and you say 'I am now committed to this', 'I am a socialist writer'. Well it's better that that should happen than it shouldn't but this is only a very early stage. What you find is the reality of a society — the way books are produced, the way they are read, or the class effect of education, book distribution — and that you are in social relations as a writer whether you realise it or not.

The act of committing yourself in the head doesn't change those relations. If you are going to change them then you have to think about commitment in very specific ways. In the 1930s the Communist Party would say to writers "join the communist party, you've now realigned your relations with the people and the Party knows what kind of writing the people want, write that." A lot of people did it in good faith, but when a second generation do it when they've seen what happens that way, neither are they writing what they really feel themselves nor connecting in new ways.

And I have to say very firmly, whereas writers have to look out all the time for new relations with readers which will very often alter their own practice, they can't accept this as a direction from somebody claiming to represent that new relation.

One way in which this has directly affected me is that I have written certain books directly for paperback because it's a quite different relation from the beginning. *Communications* was very deliberately that. On the other hand, if I felt that I still wanted to write a long hard book I should want a lot of persuading not to do so just because some people might have a certain view of the relation between the writer and the audience.



A socialist alternative to Labour government policies. The New Left analyses the British crisis, in a world perspective, and gives fresh definitions and directions in the fight against capitalism.



How can we square the idea of people who read the LEVELLER collecting David Bowie records?

An interview with JOHN STEVENS

DRUMMER JOHN Stevens has been a leading figure in British jazz since the early sixties, playing with groups like the *Spontaneous Music Ensemble* and *Away*. He's always refused to settle down and keep on doing the same old thing, and at the moment he's a mature student at Ealing Technical College: his musical plans include an eighteen piece (improvising) dance band.

With the juke box lining up one top twenty hit after another, *Andy Curry* talked to him about music, politics, and the music business, in a pub somewhere in Ealing.

"What are the social ingredients that make up the *Leveller*?" John Stevens was holding the microphone and asking the question. "I want to know because I want to use what you say in relationship to music".

Most interviews are done for one of two reasons. Either it's an anniversary, and people queue up to say what a nice chap Macmillan really was or someone, somewhere is trying to sell something. They're going on tour, they've just released a record, written a book, starred in a film. It's just another spin-off of PR Industries Inc, and some product is going to get shifted.

John Stevens hasn't got a record out soon, and if it was his birthday he wasn't letting on.

Social ingredients of the *Leveller*? Interesting people, worthwhile work, congenial surroundings? I was supposed to ask the questions. The collective way it's run I suppose, I say.

"There will be people involved in the *Leveller* people who either read it or put it together, who won't know very much about jazz, but who might know something about David Bowie. They might even have David Bowie records in their front room."

"I think that *Leveller* readers probably have quite a lot of David Bowie records", I reply.

"How can we square the idea of people who read the *Leveller* collecting David Bowie records?" said John. "To me, the existence of someone like David Bowie is a product of capitalist society, it's encouraged by society - a society we're basically reacting against - and people who don't believe in that society help by buying those records and listening to that music. That's a serious situation. I think that your beliefs about equality of collectives should go into everything but there are lots of people who have strong political feelings, who, when they listen to music, they listen to it as entertainment. People who

believe in equality should be searching for music to represent that belief."

September 1978, Elvis Costello, well on the way to becoming a star, was topping the bill at the second Anti-Nazi League Carnival. "Night Rally" is about a fascist takeover in this country, and "Less than Zero" is about Oswald Mosley. He's supposed to be as high on the NF's blacklist as he is in the American charts, though Tom Robinson probably pips him in the Front's hot hundred.

"It's possible that Elvis Costello's got real political beliefs", I suggested.

"But he's not one of the best examples of what a collective is about. Collective music is something that should be understood by anybody who has that sort of political belief, because it reflects the whole of life".

There was a woman sitting at the same table. She was on her own, but she was obviously a regular from the way that people bought her drinks. "Are you doing an interview?" she asked me, pointing at the tape recorder. Maybe she thought John was famous; really famous, I mean, not just famous in a small circle of jazz fans.

"The ingredients of the music are important", said John, "we don't want ingredients that are limited by a record company. Anyone who gets involved in the profession of music, and in the business. I wish there wasn't a profession of music; music ought to be as local as Ealing. If there wasn't a profession of music and a music business, how many musicians would be doing what they're doing now? The thing is, capitalism compartmentalises music, it doesn't encourage interaction between musicians and styles".

"The recording studio's like that", I said, "quite often you get musicians coming in and laying down their bit after everyone else has gone home".

"You're talking about it now", John replied.

There was a lull in the conversation at the bar, and the sound of the juke box came over clearly. "You're once, twice, three times a lady". A big hand for the Commodores, please ladies and gentlemen.

It's not easy to get to know about jazz. It's not played on daytime radio, you don't get it on juke boxes, it doesn't come over on the super-market tannoy systems as you pop baked beans into your trolley. I only started listening to it by chance, when a friend brought a battered tape of a Charlie Parker record round to the flat I was living in in Birkenhead. I'd heard about Charlie Parker, and I knew that I ought to like him, but I still had to be bullied into listening to it several times before I started enjoying it.

Parker was a revolutionary. His music - bebop, as it's called - was a reaction against the way that white bandleaders, like Benny Goodman, had taken black music and made a lot of money by toning it down to a big band sound acceptable to white audiences. But Parker's music is still

quite easy to listen to; he improvised on standard songs of the thirties and forties, and had a rhythm section (bass and drums) that kept the band together no matter how the solos went.

He was thirty-five when he died in 1955. Five years later Ornette Coleman released an LP that featured collective improvisation between two quartets (each of saxophone, trumpet, bass and drums). Critic Joachim Berendt describes it this way, "From the dense complexity of collective parts rubbing together, a solo emerged that led to another set of collective playing from which was born - in precisely that meaning: free solos born in painful labour - the next solo."

"Oh, Lyn, you are a darling!", John exclaimed. "You must have known that I wanted one." Lyn, a student on John's course, had just come over and given him a cigarette. "I've given up officially", he explained, "but I still like to have the occasional one. I'd like it if people smoked cigarettes the way they smoke joints".

"If you listen to the *Spontaneous Music Ensemble*, you're listening to people playing in a collective way. The word freedom came into music, like in 'free jazz', and it suddenly became very relevant, which seems to imply that there wasn't any freedom before that. Freedom means the individual being free within the collective, which isn't divorced from discipline either, that comes from the relationships within the collective".

"The phrase 'free jazz' was used as an aesthetic description of the sound", I said, "You're trying to say that it's a description of the relationships of the people within the group, as well".

"Yes", replied John, "because free jazz became free jazz because it didn't have any structure placed on it. Instead of the rhythm section being subservient to the saxophone, the bass and drums began to progress towards their own liberation. In free group improvisation, all instruments function in the same way with regard to each other, which is to me not a bad example of equality, and that's a relationship in political terms."

Jazz is about performing. It's about an event, about musicians talking to each other. Because the musicians share a common approach to the music, they can play together even though they haven't done so before, which is why jazz musicians are able to play with different musicians, or be involved in different groups at the same time. Each performance is different. It's never the same twice. Although we end up talking about important LPs, like 'Free Jazz', that's not because the LPs are a "true record": they're just a particular performance at a particular time that happened to be recorded. There are dozens of versions of Charlie Parker's "Ornithology" on record, and none of them are any more right than any other.

There's a Sonny Rollins track - he's a tenor



sax player - called "Newkleus". It was recorded in New York in 1974, and it's interesting because the way the bass underpins the song is reminiscent of the bass playing on Bowie's "Station to Station" LP, recorded in New York a year later. "Newkleus" sounds like disco-funk; if you played it in a disco the punters might be surprised, but they wouldn't stop dancing.

"You're talking about a kind of language thing", said John, "for example, in jazz-rock you get the healthy situation in terms of the freedom we have to play alongside each other and create a language that's to do with all our backgrounds."

"I'd like to be conversant with the general language of music, that goes beyond British and American music to Japanese and Chinese music, but in your lifetime you can only go so far with that. What jazz does allow to take place is that if there's an African musician and a Japanese musician and a Tibetan musician and a Euro-

pean musician, they can all improvise together, because anyone who plays an instrument can learn, quickly, what it's like to improvise."

Glenn Miller was on the juke box now and somebody at the bar had just cracked an especially good joke. There was a lot of laughter anyway. Normally, in a pub, you just enjoy the noise, part of the thing called atmosphere, but with a tape recorder you're always watching the VU meter, anxious that you're going to be able to hear something when you play it back. That makes it hard to follow the conversation, too.

John was still talking. "I describe what I do as playing jazz, and that's almost for political reasons, because it implies, look at the background, look at the development, look at what's achieved. Jazz is almost a vernacular music, and it's a good example of collective creativity."

"There are people who might read this, and

say 'I don't want to know anything about that' and all I'd say to that is, if you don't want to know about that, how are you functioning in relationship to the other things the *Leveller* is saying? I don't expect people to like my music but it would be nice if it was accepted as something usual. What I'm saying is, don't get hooked on familiar habits".

The barman called time. John had to go. "I'm supposed to be at a lecture on English drama". The group at the bar has broken up. Not much work for them this afternoon. John shook his hand. "When you write this up, remember it was a conversation. We were both involved".

The pub was pleasant enough, and maybe Young's isn't one of the four big breweries, but there's no doubting the reason it's in business. You can't do everything in a collective way. But you can try.

Shorts

WEST GERMANY

Secret police fund right-wingers

WEST GERMANY'S internal security service, the Verfassungsschutz, (Office for the Protection of the Constitution), equivalent to Britain's MI5, has been caught out doing covert action. According to the liberal daily 'Frankfurter Rundschau', the Verfassungsschutz has been spending up to two million Deutschmarks a year (more than half a million pounds at present exchange rates) subsidising the activities of centre and right wing organisations. The money was voted by the Federal Parliament (Bundestag) under 'Budget item 532 05' which was immune from detailed examination under a procedure similar to that of the 'secret vote' in the British Parliament.

Groups which benefited from the subventions included various student groups, the foundations attached to Germany's four major political parties, the Christian Trade Union Organisation, linked with the Christian Democratic Party; and 'church groups'.

The funds were not given for the general expenses of the organisations, but to subsidise seminars and special meetings which the security service approved of.

A spokesperson for the West German Interior Ministry said that the activities against extremists were seen as 'positive constitutional protection'. The other side of the Verfassungsschutz's work consists of spying on left wing organisations and individuals, and preparing the files on which depend the operation of the infamous Berufsverbot.

The Verfassungsschutz has been engaged in this covert action since 1951. It was set up in 1950 and closely modelled on the lines of MI5, by the British who were anxious to prevent the whole of the new Federal German State's espionage capability falling under the influence of the Americans.

IRELAND

Covert SAS squad on trial

The first court appearance of the two British Army SAS soldiers in a Northern Ireland court accused of murdering 16-year old Johnny Boyle in a County Antrim graveyard one year ago has already provoked an uproar.

It seems unclear whether the two soldiers — Alan Michael Bohan and Joseph Temperley — were indeed in court at all, although they are due to reappear on 7th March. The court's refusal to identify them led immediately to "miscarriage of justice" accusations, but the charges nonetheless represent a blow to the Army's morale in Northern Ireland and may yet act as a brake on the four-man covert (and often killer) SAS squads and their unsavoury activities.

If the case of Johnny Boyle is open again, then the same is certainly not true of an equally distasteful killing. One week after the car crash that killed the Maguire children and sparked off the British Government-favoured Peace People movement in Northern Ireland, a young girl, Marjella O'Hare was shot dead by a

British Army bullet near her home in Whitecross, County Armagh on 14 August 1976. A soldier eventually came to trial the next year charged with murder, and despite 17 witnesses denying his claim that an IRA gunman had fired at him, and Marjella died inadvertently as fire was returned, the soldier, a Royal Marine, was acquitted.

What was, however, widely said at the time is that the Army, seeing the instant success of the Peace Movement, and how it assisted British intentions, wished to encourage its momentum, and in a chillingly cold-blooded manner had little Marjella shot and tried to pass it off as "yet another" IRA disaster. Such suspicions are not so far-fetched when other Army activities in Northern Ireland are considered.

GUATEMALA

Death squads wipe out 20,000

Trade unions are bearing the brunt of repression in Guatemala, according to union leader Miguel Albizures, deputy general secretary of the country's only independent trade union federation, CNT. 20,000 people have been killed by the extreme right-wing death squads in the past twelve years, and at present the death toll runs at seven bodies a day. The squads operate freely, and there is little doubt that they are co-ordinated by the government.

The trade union movement has been gaining strength — although membership stands at only five per cent, their influence is much wider. But trade unionists, including Albizures himself, figure prominently on the death lists of prospective victims published by death squads like the "Secret Anti-Communist Army" (ESA). Unionists believe that only private business could have compiled such a comprehensive list of union activists.

Albizures, in Britain recently, said, "The struggle is not for union rights, but for the right to life itself." (IPS)

WESTMINSTER

Law and order MP breaks law

IAN SPROAT, the right-wing Tory MP, is in trouble again with the finances of his own companies. The Companies Registration Office has had to write to him and tell him that they intend to strike his last two companies off the Register if he doesn't file some returns.

Two years ago we reported that Sproat had set up eight different companies, none of which had ever filed any returns. We thought it was a bit odd that a man whose main political obsessions have been with 'law and order' and 'scroungers' should himself be so out of line with the requirements of the Companies Acts.

Dennis Skinner MP agreed with us and fired off a Parliamentary Question to Stanley Clinton Davis, the junior trade minister, asking him what he intended to do about Sproat's business affairs. Clinton Davis accordingly put his inspectors to work, and six of Sproat's companies were wound up for failing to provide returns.

Last October the Companies Registration Office wrote to Sproat to tell him that under the 1948 Companies Act they were going to compulsorily dissolve Sproat Communications within three months if he didn't "show cause to the contrary". And then in November they sent him another note about his last company, Sproat Films.

Briefly...

THE INTERNATIONAL Socialist Alliance, formed over a year ago to promote revolutionary regroupment, is in crisis. Big Flame have withdrawn from the campaign and the group has steadily withered to a small core.

In a recent document they say, "a real regroupment of forces on the left is not in sight". This they say has not been helped by "the IMG's sectarianism towards the SWP". After a promising initial correspondence with the SWP, in recent months they received from that organisation the following invitation: "if these claims are seriously meant you will surely wish to re-enter the mainstream of the IS tradition, the SWP". Hardly the basis for a non-sectarian discussion of revolutionary regroupment. Their main commitment now seems to be to producing a joint theoretical journal to replace Big Flame's *Revolutionary Socialism*.

☆☆☆

OUR PERSON at the MoD tells us that they've been working so hard that they've had to invent a new category of secrets. Up to now, they have got by on three — Secret, Top Secret and Nuclear Secret. But it seems that Nuclear Secrets just aren't secret enough any more, so all the *really* secret Secrets — the ones you can't get from published sources — have been promoted. They are now to be known as Cosmic Secrets.

☆☆☆

"NORMALS Up Yours . . . Love music, hate racism, but sexism is racism to women . . ." begins the campaigning letter to Rock Against Sexism, which held its first public meeting on 9 January.

RAS aims to put on gigs with name bands (with varying degrees of commitment to anti-sexism), though avoiding major gaffs like RAR putting on the Fabulous Poodles and NAC's benefit with anti-abortionists Black Slate, and also to introduce non-sexist forms of rock to a wider audience. The first gig is being tentatively planned for the International Day of Action On Abortion Rights, 31 March. Various bands have been approached including Tom Robinson, who is interested.

While acknowledging rock music is sexist, RAS reckons young people won't join up with the anti-sexist forces if it entails a rejection of that medium (rock) which plays such a large part in their lives. That's why the first gig will put on a name band. But RAS will also provide a platform for a whole range of women musicians, all-women bands, and everyone interested in the development of non-sexist rock.

☆☆☆

LAMPAIO DE ESQUINA, Brazil's first serious gay newspaper may be forced out of existence after only eight months. Despite the paper's avoidance of pornography and eroticism, or perhaps because of it, the authorities have been incensed by what they call 'homosexual propaganda'. Five of the editorial staff have been subpoenaed for trial on charges of outrage to public morality.

Two influential Brazilian papers, *Jornao da Brasil* and *O Globo* have suggested that the ultimate aim of the Department of Federal Police is to shut down the paper through intimidation and economic pressure — like the seizing of an entire issue of 15,000 copies.

The editorial staff have appealed for solidarity from friends in foreign countries and the London Gay Activists Alliance have called for letters of protest to be sent to the Minister of Justice: *Ministro Armanda Falcou, Ministerio da Justica, 70064 Brasilia, Brazil*.

CHANGING THE TIMES

THE Conference of Socialist Economists working group on Micro-processors are holding a day school on Saturday 3 March at Leeds Poly from 11.00 to 17.30. For further information contact Iain Brodie, 30 Beech Grove, Fallowfields, Manchester 14.



THIS page has been written, designed (and proofread!) by Bread 'n Roses, the collective who typeset this magazine. We are using this space to reply to an astonishingly reactionary article by Mike Prest, NUJ member and *Times* journalist, published in the January *Leveller* which attacked our union, the NGA, for resisting the introduction of new technology at *The Times*.

IN HIS attempt to be controversial and thought-provoking, the writer of the article, Mike Prest, "discovers" that technology in and of itself is at issue in the dispute, which is "a head-on clash between the traditions of a craft union whose working practices and organisation derive their logic from an obsolete technology and the alternative logic of the electronic age".

What is this modern logic? Whose interests does it promote? Our main argument is that the dispute is fundamentally one between capital and labour where "new technology" happens to be the issue. Thomson newspapers are attempting to enforce redundancies and a huge productivity increase on the workers, and to break the power of their unions.

Lord Thomson locked *The Times* workers out not because he thinks photosetting is more modern, or because he wants to release workers from typesetting to give better news coverage, or to relieve the pressure of work for typesetters; he wants to cut down Times Newspapers Ltd's losses by drastically increasing the rate of exploitation.

This he will do very effectively by means of the new technology, IF HE WINS.

Mike Prest believes that "technology can and does raise living standards". For whom? For Lord Thomson certainly. The only way that workers can wrest any increase in living standards from employers is by organising — technology or no technology.

The alternative which Lord Thomson (and other employers who will be watching this dispute carefully) hopes for is a drastically reduced, non-unionised and deskilled workforce (the promoters of photosetting machines are fond of showing pictures of women at the keyboard, presumably ex-typists).

So for whom does this technology make life easier?

Perhaps he is saying that the Public At Large will gain generally from this technology, in this instance, say, with cheaper papers? Well, the Working Class At Large, while grateful for its cut-price *Times*, might not be too pleased with those amongst them who throw away the fight to stay employed, organised, and strong.

A defeat in this dispute would have much further-reaching consequences than the consumer advantages which new technology under capitalist control might yield.

It does not follow that the NGA must not fight the dispute; what follows is that we must WIN.

Important to the traditions of the NGA which Mike Prest reduces to 'craft mentality' is the protection of jobs; some print workers have been implementing a kind of work sharing with no loss of pay (regarded by employers as "overmanning") for years. But this seems to be only grudgingly accepted by the left, even though it is a positive gain for workers to be able to control their rate of work.

From Business Equipment Digest

She's also never away sick. Never on holiday. Never refuses overtime. She's called Tel-e-sec — not a pretty name, but by golly, she's efficient! There never was a time better than now to find out more about Tel-e-sec.

Contrary to Prest's suggestion, the NGA is not opposed to new technology. The *Daily Mirror* now has new typesetting technology, according to agreements reached between management and the NGA. The NGA is still the shop union; redundancies were resisted, and levels of pay maintained, for easier work and less of it.

They did, however, agree to a reduction in staffing levels by 'natural wastage', retirement etc. — and this is surely the point at which socialists should criticise the NGA.

It is true, as the article says, that the nature of the job moulds the nature of the union, but it does not follow that the 'craft mentality' is the *raison d'être* of the union. The union exists to protect the interests of its members, and its ability to do so is under serious threat at *The Times*.

Again, what does follow, from Prest's own logic, is that a major change in technology will radically remould the nature of the union. The union cannot change if it does not effectively exist. Lord Thomson's 'alternative logic' would lead to massive redundancy and unorganised labour.

If the new technology is introduced *through the union*, however, it is the craft mentality alone which will be made redundant.



WHEN WE were writing our piece we found the SWP's new pamphlet on new technology — which we were typesetting at the time — very useful and thought-provoking. You can get it for 40p plus 7p postage from the SWP Industrial Department, P.O. Box 82, London E2.

You can read about the NGA at the *Daily Mirror* and about the union's carefully worked out policy concerning the introduction of new technology in its monthly paper *Print*.

Back Pages

BOOKS

The long-awaited publication of Rudolf Bahro's "The Alternative in Eastern Europe" in English has now come about. Bahro, an East German party functionary who spent five years writing his denunciation of the practice of "actually existing socialism" in his country, is now in the sixth month of an eight-year jail sentence on a trumped-up espionage charge. (see *The Leveller* issue 13)

"The Alternative" is much more than a denunciation. It sets out a programme for the continuing development of socialism, with the dismantling of the party/state bureaucracy and the grouping of a "League of Communists" to carry on political activity.

It is a book full of ideas, many which will appeal strongly to British lefties concerned about the democratic centralist authoritarianism of left parties here. Among these is his belief, though not very emphatically stated, that only one political organisation should be allowed.

This has caused considerable contortions within the British Communist Party. One way the CPGB was manoeuvred into its position of support for the campaign for Bahro's release was through the offer, from the publishers of "The Alternative" here, New Left Books, of a place on the platform at the conference where it was launched. Along came Political Committee member Monty Johnstone. Sharing the platform with the translator, Dave Fernbach, defence committee organiser Gunther Minnerup, and famous libertarians Edward Thompson and Raymond Williams.

It was a very odd affair. Thompson and Williams, most of the audience (predominantly IMG) spoke of the importance of "The Alternative" in posing new ideas for a non-authoritarian way forward. Johnstone praised the book with faint damning - in particular, on the single party question. Bahro was wrong, he argued, because "progressive communists" were now for a proliferation of parties. In other words, he was raising the "historic compromise" of European CPs, by which they have compromised their supposedly revolutionary role in return for a part in the bourgeois Parliamentary process. But even this has been too much for some fundamentalist Stalinists within the CPGB, who have been writing to the "Morning Star" denouncing Johnstone and Bahro (what bedfellows!) as anti-Soviet, anti-socialist and anti-Marxist. Of course they haven't read

the book. Bahro is a Marxist through and through. The task he has set himself, and carried out, in total isolation and with extraordinary dedication, is of wiping the corruption off post-Lenin Marxism, going back to the beginning and starting again. You can't possibly summarise this book in a few hundred words and at £9.50 you can't afford to buy it either, so it's an ordering from your local public library job.

If you were entertained by the recent stormy *Leveller* debate on nuclear power, you will enjoy *Nuclear Power for Beginners*, just published by Beginners Books/Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, price £1.80. It's part of the same series as *Marx for Beginners* by Rius, but not nearly as good. Authors Stephen Croall and Kaianders Sempler lack Rius' ability to project complicated ideas in a simple, witty way and there are a number of factual errors and misleading notions in the book.

Nevertheless, *Nuclear Power for Beginners* is a better read than most anti-nuclear books. It also usefully follows the account through to take up some of the political issues connected with nuclear power and offers some preliminary ideas about the kind of society we might live in without it.

MAGS & PAPERS

The scarcity of gay publications in Britain is such that the appearance of the first issue of *The Gay Journal* must be a good thing. The journal is to be published quarterly, providing a medium for mainly cultural but also some theoretical gay writing. Some of the material in the first issue is of a high standard and bodes well for the future of the journal. Some is boring, plainly silly or not much different from what you would find in the glossy soft-porn mags two of the editors have worked on. But there is too little open exchange of information and attitudes about sex and sexuality amongst even the most up-front people like *Leveller* readers, so, free from the pressures of commercial publishing, *The Gay Journal* should fill an empty space quite usefully.

The Gay Journal number 1 is from Flat F, 23/24 Great James Street, London WC1N 3ES, price 75p + 20p postage.

The latest edition of Big Flame's journal, *Revolutionary Socialism*, includes an analysis of the urban

movement in Barcelona. It looks at a new political movement born in the new slums of Barcelona's workers suburbs and how it is facing a difficult future. Other articles include a look at the dramatic increase of part time women workers and their impact on the labour market, a new revolutionary politics emerging from the ashes of Italy's revolutionary left, and the dangers of incorporation facing Britain's shop stewards movement. *Revolutionary Socialism* No. 3, 40p, from 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Kurtulus is a monthly socialist bulletin about Turkey. It contains extracts from a Turkish Marxist-Leninist newspaper (also called *Kurtulus* - it's Turkish for liberation) and articles written specially for English-speaking people with an interest in Turkey. Issue no. 4, looks at fascist ideology in the country. Annual sub £2.50 from Postbus 9720, Utrecht, Holland.

PAMPHLETS

Justice Deserted, by Harriet Harman and John Griffiths, is about the way that the twelve good persons and true that traditionally make up the English jury have proved not to be quite so true after all. Sub-titled "The subversion of the jury", it details the way the power of the jury has been slowly eroded, from the abolition of unanimous verdicts in 1967 to the legitimisation of jury vetting last year.

Sam Silkin, when he released the 'guidelines' to jury vetting, was caught, as E.P. Thompson writes in his introduction, "with his hand plainly in the jury till... (he) has subsequently informed a Conservative questioner that he was only regularising a practice that has been going on at least since 1948. I am not sure that if one was charged with larceny from a till, the court would accept it as an adequate defence that one had been stealing as a regular practice for at least thirty years."

Justice Deserted is an NCCL pamphlet, and comes from them at 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, cost 50p plus 15p p&p.

Housing - A New Guide for the Homeless, a new report from Shelter, calls on local housing groups to press the Government and local councils for a better deal for the homeless and badly housed. It covers problems associated with all types of

housing, from house building through housing associations to caravans, and there's a useful section on running a campaign, with a list of contacts and information about getting the kind of publicity you want. *Housing* is good value at 40p plus 15p postage from Shelter, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1.

SHAC, the London Housing Aid Centre, has produced a couple of useful pamphlets. *Your Rights to Repairs* is for council tenants. It explains how tenants can get repairs done, what their legal rights are and how these can be enforced.

Applying To The Rent Officer is for private tenants, and it gives an outline of how they should set about getting a fair rent registered, and the possible consequences of that. Although the information applies throughout the country, it includes a list of London Rent Officers.

Your Rights To Repairs, 25p and *Applying To The Rent Officer*, 20p, plus 10p for postage, from SHAC, 189a Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0AR.

The indefatigable Child Poverty Action Group has published a *Guide for Students* this month. Written by Mark Rowland, it explains the various benefits students may be entitled to and gives advice about social security. Many students with dependents have to survive on hardship allowances from the DHSS, yet DHSS civil servants are instructed not to volunteer information about the allowances to students who approach them for help.

CPAG Guide For Students, 70p + 15p postage and packing, from CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2B 5NH.

Whose 'Law & Order'? from the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law looks at the increasing use of law against strikes, picketing, occupations and demonstrations. Send 20p plus postage to CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington Street, London WC2.

The Rape Counselling and Research Project is now selling copies of its Submission to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. The Submission, which gives detailed evidence of the sort of treatment raped women have received from the police and police surgeons, is available from Rape Crisis Centre, PO Box 42, London N6. Cost is £2, including postage.

BOOKSHOP

Just opened in the heart of London's Bloomsbury is Britain's first gay bookshop: Gay's The Word. Although mainly stocking gay books, pamphlets and periodicals, Gay's The Word will be giving a lot of its space to feminist publications and possibly, in the future, to some non-sexist children's books. The shop's founder, Ernest Hole, says he was inspired by the world-famous Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop in Greenwich Village, New York City, but for the moment Gay's The Word will have to be a bit more selective.

Ernest Hole is adamant that he will not be stocking *Him Exclusive*, *Quorum* or any of the other exploitation porn mags. *Gay News*, *Gay Left*, *Outcome* and *Body Politic* will all be on sale, plus, would you believe, *The Leveller*. Tea and coffee will be available for people who want to sit down and read or talk, and he will also be running a mail order service.

So if you have an hour or two free in London, Gay's The Word is at 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1 - two minutes north of Russell Square station on the Piccadilly Line. Telephone 01-278 7654.

MOVIES

Sawrana, Our Revolution, a film about Eritrea, is to be shown at the Scala Cinema in London on 25th February. The film is about the work of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in the liberated areas. Men and women talk about their own lives, and the way that liberation has affected them, and the film also looks at the structures that the EPLF have created to involve everyone in what's traditionally regarded as "public life". The Scala show starts at 1pm: the film can also be hired from the Workers' Film Association, 38 Dartmouth Park Road, London NW5. It's 16mm, black and white, runs for an hour, and costs £18.

CONFERENCES

Women and Space, who are working on "feminist anthropology, architecture and community", are holding a weekend school about the way architecture structures social relations. "Have you ever wondered what houses and streets might look like if the women living in them had any say

Back Pages

PHOTOGRAPHY

in their design?", they ask. "Women's liberation means challenging the very architecture of our lives. . . It means understanding theoretically what has been done to us by the organisation of our space".

The weekend school is being held at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19. (Archway tube is nearest) on March 10th and 11th, 10am to 5.30pm each day. Food and creche facilities provided. Cost is £2. More information from 9 Poland Street, London W1, or ring 01-697 3670 before 6pm.

There's a series of one day courses being held in Leeds for people involved in small worker co-operatives. Sponsored by the Industrial Common Ownership Movement and the Federation of Northern Wholefood Collectives, the next four are about law and money: On March 11th, the topic is "Raising Money"; April 8th, Taxation and VAT; April 29th, Co-operative Law; and May 27th, Advanced Accounting Methods.

They're being organised for members of co-operatives, and for members of groups who are working co-operatively without a legal structure, and they're held at Beechwood Centre, Roundhay, Leeds 8. Cost is £5 per day, with some accommodation and a creche being provided. More information from CENA, 17/19 Wharf Street, Leeds 2 (Tel: 0532 449588), and they ask you to include an SAE.

Britain Out of Ireland: Prisoners Aid Committee/Revolutionary Communist Group forums. The PAC and RCG have launched a series of forums to discuss the issues involved in the war in Ireland. Forums have already been arranged in London, at Conway Hall (7.30pm) March 6: Coercive legislation and the Irish struggle; March 19: Ireland and the British Working class, Part I - Part II is on April 3. In Bristol, at the Crown, Lawfords Gate, Old Market (8pm) March 9: 1968-78: Civil rights to war of liberation; April 6: Republicanism. Further meetings have been arranged for the summer. If you can support these meetings and participate in the work on Ireland, please contact PAC at 2a St Pauls Road, London N1, or RCG at 49 Raiton Road, London SE24.

BACK PAGES

Help us to compile Back Pages by sending news about forthcoming events, theatre, music and anything else that grabs your fancy.

CAMPAIGNS

A campaign against

Depoprovera has been started. Depoprovera is a contraceptive jab, based on progesterone, which is being used on women in third world countries and here in Britain it is given to women in Glasgow and London. Depoprovera has not been officially approved for use in America - tests on beagle dogs produced breast cancer and preliminary evidence on its effects on women are alarming.

The Campaign urgently needs money in order to run the campaign and produce leaflets on the issue. If you know of any cases of DP being given, then the Campaign would like to know, in order to build up information. A leaflet will shortly be produced for use in your locality. Please send money and information to: Campaign Against Depoprovera c/o ICAR, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

The Medical Committee Against the Abuse of Prisoners by Drugging is now collecting evidence on (1) the use and abuse of drugs in British prisons and borstals, and (2) the prison medical service. It appeals to anyone with information to contact the chairperson, Dr Tony Whitehead, at 104a Brackenbury Road, London W6 (Tel 01-748 2646).

THEATRE

Performances of *To Whom It May Concern*, TheatreMobile's play about asbestosis in Northern mills, have been postponed until 8th June pending legal advice. Enquiries to John Wood, telephone Burnley (0282) 21986 or 29513.

Celtic Delight Theatre Company are looking for bookings for their new play "An Youse Lot". Actor Alec Menzies, a Scot with a troubled Lowland accent stumbles across Liam, an Irish night-porter who also acts . . . sometimes. The first act takes place in the gents of an intimate cocktail bar in the Royal Park Inn, London. The second act moves to a trendy novelty factory. It is set in Jubilee Year, 1977.

The play, which runs for 1½ hours, will tour from April to June. The company wish to give at least three performances in any given venue.

Information from A Slimon, 16 Hainworth, Keighley, telephone 602618, or G McLaughlin, 2 Victor Road, Bradford 9, telephone 496782.

The Red Ladder Theatre Company is touring in South and West Yorkshire until June with *Nerves of Steel*, a play about the steel industry and the effect it has on the lives of steelworkers. Through their discussions with steelworkers, housewives, trade unionists and other workers, Red Ladder say they have rooted their play "in the experience of South Yorkshire people."

Information about dates and venues from Red Ladder Theatre, New Blackpool Centre, Cobden Avenue, Leeds 12, telephone 0532 792228/8.

Teendreams

What happens to our youthful dreams when they are shattered by the realities of experience? Do they survive . . . and do we?

Frances the teacher dreams of high-minded politics, the fiery ideals of 1968, while her pupils dream of boyfriends, love and romance. When the dreams collide the lives of both teacher and pupils change course dramatically.

Over a span of ten years from 1968-1978 *Teendreams* looks at the changes wrought in some women's lives by the new respect for their demands which grew through those years . . . It looks at what remains untouched in the enclosed world of femininity in which young women still grow up.

Monstrous Regiment present *Teendreams*, by David Edgar with Susan Todd, at: The Gardner Centre of the Arts, Brighton, from 19th-24th February; The ICA, London, from 17th-27th February (not Sundays or Mondays); Birmingham Rep Studio, 19th-24th March. Monstrous Regiment, 190 Goswell Road, London EC1, telephone 01-253 2172.

Homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites/transsexuals, can chat to gay people at London Friend. 01-359 7371 every evening 7.30-10.00. Individual befriending and counselling, plus social groups.

Address: 274 Upper Street, Islington, London N1.

friend

great leap forward Leveller/benefit

A night out to celebrate our moving office, the Colonel B appeal victory, the coming of spring and so much else.

Date: THURSDAY 22nd FEBRUARY
Place: DUBLIN CASTLE pub, PARKWAY, CAMDEN TOWN, LONDON NW1
Time: 8pm till midnight

£1.25 (£1 for claimants, students, senior citizens; £2 for trade union officials).

Crass-Poison Girls -Oxy & the Morons

COMMUNITY ARTS WORKER

TELFORD COMMUNITY ARTS need someone with a developed artistic skill, an understanding of how this relates to social change, and a desire to work with local people in expressive creative activities.

Our present skills include graphic design, printing, photography, sculpture, ceramics, theatre design, video and drama.

If you are interested, please write to us at 147 Severn Walk, Sutton Hill, Telford, Salop, — by 28th February.

YOU
NEED
BADGES

We Make Them

BETTER
BADGES

286

PORTOBELLO RD.
LONDON W10
01-229 5505

ASK FOR PRODUCTION PRICE LIST

RADICAL PHILOSOPHY

Spring 1979

No 21

INTRODUCTION TO DERRIDA

DIALECTIC AND REASON

MAO'S PHILOSOPHY

EDITORIAL POLICY

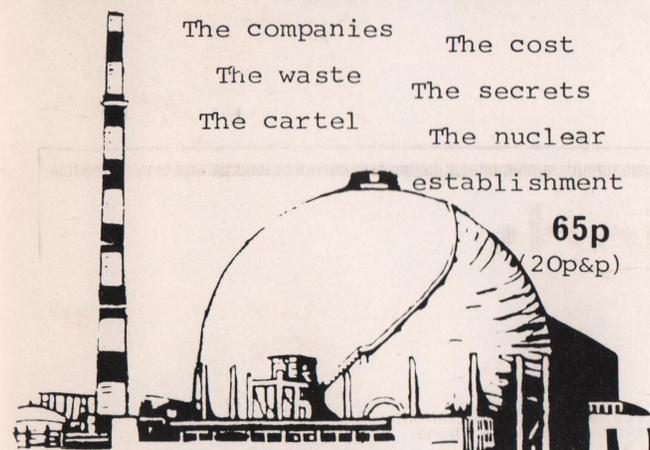
Enquiries etc. to Radical Philosophy (subscriptions), c/o Richard Norman, Darwin College, The University, Canterbury, Kent

RACISM
THE NEW INHERITORS
Annual subscription (3 issues) £2.00 (£1.25 students)
Inland £2.50 or \$ 5.00
Overseas surface £5.00 or \$10.00
Overseas airmail

Marxism & Materialism · Popper · Gramsci · News

CIS THE NUCLEAR DISASTER

The companies The cost
The waste The secrets
The cartel The nuclear
establishment



65p

(20p&p)

Counter Information Services:
9 Poland St. W.1 (01)439 3764

Classifieds

TWO FEMINISTS buying house to raise children in need of sympathetic male help as GLC only mortgages spacious houses to engaged (heterosexual) couples. Man must be under 30, on rising scale of pay (GLC Conditions) and around next 6-9 months. £50 reward if nice. London area. Write to Box H, The Leveller, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1.

CAMBERWELL YCL meets every Monday at 8pm at the Bookplace, 13 Peckham High Street.

IS SURREALISM DEAD? 25 year old writer is keen to contact anyone interested in transforming mental as well as physical life. Robert West, 75 Woodlands Avenue, Emsworth, Hants.

RECYCLED STATIONERY—Sample, details from 'Recycler', Ebrington, Bow, Crediton, Devon. Sae please.

Edward Upward's novel IN THE THIRTIES, first volume of the trilogy THE SPIRAL ASCENT is now out in Quartet paperback. £2.50.

HOMOSEXUAL? So are we. If you need to talk about it phone Gay Icebreakers. 01-274 9590. Any evening 7.30 to 10.30.

RED LADDER, a collectively run regionally based socialist theatre company, requires a female performer (musical skills an advantage) to start beginning of April. Write giving details of political and work experience to, Red Ladder Theatre, Cobden Avenue, Leeds 12. Tel: Leeds 792228 (closing date March 10th).

SMOKE: magazine of new poetry, writing and graphics. Subscription fifty pence for four issues from Dave Ward, Windows Project (L), 23a Brent Way, Halewood, Liverpool L26 9XH.

PROPOSED JOBS for unemployed people, to run Adventure Playground in Lancaster. Six months starting March 26. Send detailed description of you and relevant experience to 55 St Oswald Street, Lancaster.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS No 4: Revisionism, Imperialism and the State: the method of Capital and the dogma of State Monopoly Capitalism. Through a critique of the revisionist dogma of SMC the main article, by Frank Richards, puts the struggle against the reformist leadership of the labour movement on a firm programmatic foundation. Available from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency: BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX. 50p+15p postage. Make cheques payable to RCT Association.

ON YER BIKE yer actual radical motorcycling journal—No 3 out soon. Subscription £5 for 12 issues from 30 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

LEEDS ANIMATION WORKSHOP (socialist feminist) Temporary vacancy — background artist for health and safety cartoon. Details: 20 Westminster Buildings, New York St, Leeds 2. Tel (0532) 460171. Replies by 28 Feb.

ROCK AGAINST SEXISM gig on March 8th at Ladbroke House, Holloway Rd, N1. 8pm. Soulyard and the Spoilports. Waged £1, Unwaged 80p.

GAY'S THE WORD BOOKSHOP, 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1. 01-278 7654. Gay books, feminist books. New/secondhand. Information, tea/coffee. Tues-Sat 11.30-7.30.

HARINGEY MOBILE THEATRE is taking bookings for its socialist play on education, SPELLING COUNTS. Includes songs, slides and tapes (Blackout needed). Lasts 60 minutes plus discussion. Fee £20 but negotiable. Phone: 01-556 5905.

HAVE YOU room(s) in your house for TWO SOCIALISTS, one male, one female? We are looking for friendly, collective, mixed, non-sexist, politically active house in non-suburban London. Please phone 01-633 9377. Weds, Thurs, Fri, daytime and ask for George.

Rates: 5p a word.
Payment: Ads must be prepaid by cheque or PO. Make payable to: THE LEVELLER MAGAZINE LTD. Send to: Leveller Classified, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1.
Conditions: The Leveller reserves the right to refuse any classified ads.

I enclose for no. os issues.

Name

Address

..... Tel

Print your ad below in block capitals, one word in each box. Underline any words you require in caps.

7		
10		
13		
16		
19		
22		
25		
28		

Radical Science Journal

RSJ 8 is now available (128 pp.) £1.00 / \$2.50
DAVID DICKSON- Science and Political Hegemony in the 17th Century
WENDY HOLLWAY-Ideology and Medical Abortion
PHILIP BOYS- Detente, Genetics and Social Theory
Plus reviews of Werskey, Hindess, Scull, Noble and *Biology as a Social Weapon*, as well as a 'News and Notes' section.

RSJ is distributed in Britain by PDC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1, and in America by Carrier Pigeon, 88 Fisher Ave., Boston MA 02120
RSJ's ISSN number is 0305 0963.
RSJ 6/7 (Labour Process double issue) is still available, £1.75 / \$4.50 for 176 pages.

Subscription: £3 individual, £9 institutional, for 3 issues post paid
Bulk Orders: One-third reduction on 10 or more copies.
Payment: Please add equivalent of 60p on cheques not in £ sterling, and 15p for single copies.

RADICAL SCIENCE JOURNAL
9 Poland Street London W1

If you publish or print...

WE SPECIALISE in producing small-circulation booklets and magazines (eg *Sappho*, *Women in Iran*) and leaflets up to A3 size. We work mainly for societies and minority-interest groups who want good, quick, cheap litho printing.

TO PRINTERS we offer metal plates and repro proofs (A3 max) enlarged, reduced or same size from camera-ready copy (quick delivery or postal service). We also sell paper, and will soon have a typesetting service.

WHETHER YOU ARE a printer without a camera or a publisher without a printer, we might be able to help. Phone Rod Rivers for information and advice.

OR VISIT US.....

HANWAY PRINT CENTRE
106 Essex Rd, Islington, London N1

01-226 6868

bookmarx

FIRST QUARTER 1979

The Bookmarx Club is now an established method for socialists to get the best of new socialist books at a big discount—and delivered to your door.

HOW IT WORKS. You send us £4.50 for which you will receive the books on List A below plus those on one other list of your choice. Extra lists can be obtained for £2.50 each. Don't delay, send in the form now with your subscription, you will save pounds on the retail value of the books (shown in brackets on the list).

LIST A

Bisbee '17 by Robert Houston (no paper edition)

As the US entered the first world war the wobbles (IWW) called out the copper miners of Bisbee Arizona on a vital strike. The mine owners reacted swiftly and brutally. This fine new documentary novel tells the story. A special paper edition only available to club members.

Iran: Dictatorship and Development by Fred Halliday (£1.50)

A thorough history of the state, its agents and industry. Fascinating reading for anyone following developments in Iran.

LIST B

Eleanor Marx (Vol 1) by Yvonne Kapp (£3.95)

First volume of the paperback edition of Kapp's incisive biography of Marx's daughter, a major socialist 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)

LIST C

Walraff, the Undesirable Journalist (£2.50)

Walraff reports life at the bottom by working there and at the top by infiltrating. This selection of his stories explains why he is hated by those in authority in his native Germany.

Writing (£1.00)

A lively selection of new essays and poems written by working people from all over the country published by the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers.

LIST D

Blood in the Streets (£1.00)

A full report of the recent spate of racist attacks and killings in London's East End produced by the Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council.

The Singing Flame by Ernie O'Malley (£2.50)

A historical memoir of Irish republicanism in the early 20s. The singing flame is that gas jet which flickered and died in the free state prisons. Yet a spirit survived.

LIST E

A Piece of the Night by Michele Roberts (£2.25)

First contemporary British novel of the women's movement. Semi autobiographical, not only for Michele but for many women.

Men in the Sun by Ghassan Kanafani (£1.50)

Seven moving stories of Palestinian refugees. Written by a major figure in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who is also the foremost Palestinian writer of prose.

I wish to join/rejoin the Bookmarx Club and enclose £4.50 (+ £2.50 for each extra list)

NAME

ADDRESS

Please send list A + List(s)

Send to BOOKMARX CLUB, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.