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JOHN MINNION

The people's choice?

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MAY 1979

INSIDE:



General Election

The hard-hat politics of Margaret Thatcher are threatening to take over. We show what they will mean. How should the left treat the election? We ask the parties. We take a hard look at Labour, and present the case for support, and for ignoring the whole thing

The Plastic People

The Czech underground rock band, Plastic People of the Universe, have been busted again. So have dozens of their young supporters. *Ivan Hartel* reports. Plus a review of the Plastics album, now available in Britain



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The new secret DHSS code for the "workshy"; more trouble at the National Theatre; black people against prison tyranny; plus short news

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COVER: cartoon by John Minnion

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 on Tuesday May 8th.

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Black people in Britain's jails

Black prisoners in Wandsworth have formed the Prisoners' Liberation Front. *The Leveller* reports the PLF's manifesto, secretly circulating through Britain's prisons

PLUS
BACK PAGES
SOCIALIST EVENTS,
ACTION & REVIEWS

'Hello, Leveller..'



Profile - page 37

IT'S a big month for young David Brazil who's joining us as our new full-time worker. Is he worried about taking over from cuddly ex-maoist Terry Irott, who's going up in the world with Pluto Press? Not a bit of it: "I like being grown-up", says David.

Letters

Do we ban iron and bronze?

WITH REGARD to James Ford's letter (*Leveller* 24), I would like to point out that while it cannot be disproved that technology is influential or determined by society, I don't believe that society's role in technological development is entirely relevant in considering whether or not it should be "allowed".

For example, Benjamin Franklin, who first started using electricity early in the capitalist era has been quoted as saying "Time is money". Is this a reason for banning electricity in a socialist society?

Most items we use today were invented to make other people richer. And for thousands of years this has been the pattern. Iron and bronze were used by tribes to conquer and enslave others. Do we ban iron and bronze?

Frank Titterton
Edinburgh

Le Carre's anticommunism

I WAS interested to read John Townsend's analysis of Le Carre in your April issue. In general, of course, I'm in favour of any radical publications carrying pieces on things of which readers might have some real experience, as opposed, for instance, to your music coverage, which seems to involve bands chosen deliberately for their obscurity. But could I comment on some of Townsend's thoughts about David Cornwell and his work?

For instance, at one stage Townsend upbraids Le Carre for returning "to the monolithic anticommunism of his characters". This is grotesque. Le Carre's characters are agents of the Secret Intelligence Service and it would read a bit strange if they were to be into, say, gay liberation or alternative economic strategy.

As Townsend says, the Le Carre books mine a very rich lode—the decline of Britain as an imperial power. But surely the reason why *The Honourable Schoolboy* is so out of kilter with the rest of the books is that it takes that decline almost to its final end. Although the British spooks mock the Cousins (the CIA) and serve them South African sherry because they don't know the real thing, the point is that the whole operation is backed up, funded and carried through by the Cousins, with

their satellites, communications links, money, and the rest. As Smiley is eased out

it is with the promise (to Molly Meakin) of a closer link between the British and the Cousins, and the new boss is the Cousins' man.

It certainly seems that this aspect of Le Carre's book is as spot on as much else they contain, although he puts the service's HQ about a mile North of its true location. In a word, I agree with Townsend that Le Carre is the best we can expect but think that his reservations read a bit odd.

Martin Ince
London SW17

David de Crespigny Smiley

JOHN TOWNSEND's interesting look at the career and world of John Le Carre ends with a reference to "class loyalties".

I am continually dismayed by the attitude of many who would attach the label Marxist to their political beliefs. How many 'Marxists' really believe (or understand?) that class is a reality, and not a revolutionary catchword to be trotted out to show how 'terribly left' one is?

The reality of class in its application to the military/intelligence field was well shown in a previous *Leveller* article on the death of Lord Richard Cecil in Rhodesia.

Perhaps John Townsend does not wish to attach the label Marxist to his politics, but in any case, having introduced Le Carre as "the man who invented Smiley", and having suggested that George Smiley was based on a real-life character called David Smiley, he should have looked at the actual class origin of the intelligence link-man David Smiley.

He is in fact David de Crespigny Smiley, MVO, OBE, MC and bar, son of the 2nd Baron Smiley, and thus a member of the peerage. Commissioned in the Royal Horse Guards at the age of 20, his whole life, until 'retirement', has been in the army, with a career in the counter-insurgency and intelligence sections.

Pete Jordan
Bristol

YOUR LETTERS

To give us more space for contributions, please keep your letters short. Over-long letters are routinely cut - you have been warned!

Correcting the family

WE WOULD like to correct two inaccuracies which appeared in our guide to legal rights in the family coverage (*Leveller* 23):

1 National Insurance

A woman who was married before April 1977 and who had elected to pay no Class 2 Contributions and Class 1 Contributions at a reduced rate can still do so. However, a woman marrying since that date does not have this option.

2 Benefits

We stated that a woman could continue to claim Invalid Care Allowance provided she was not married to the man she was living with. Unfortunately, the cohabitation rule is applied to this benefit too by S. 37 (3) (b) of the Social Security Act 1975 which states that a woman who is living with a man as man and wife shall not be entitled to the allowance.

Sadie Roberts
London

A Labour movement crisis

MIKE PREST (*Leveller* 24) is mistaken. Local organisation, community action, workers control and ownership and the creation of an authentically popular socialist culture are essential parts of a socialist strategy. They do not substitute for it. Pressure within and on the Labour Party to make it an instrument for socialist change sets the context in which these initiatives become viable and relevant. Resistance to redundancy, low pay and the misuse of technology are part of a socialist strategy and provide an essential base for building the socialist consciousness Mike desires.

There is a crisis of the Labour Movement rather than a crisis of Socialism. Today—unlike the 1930s—the Labour Party has begun to map out a viable strategy of transition. But as yet it has neither imposed it on its Parliamentary Party nor mounted a campaign to get it understood by the working class.

Our economy has unused manpower and unused resources. Yet the measures required for their mobilisation conflict with the interests of corporate capital. If the room of manoeuvre of British capitalism appears smaller than that of other capitalist countries this is due in the main to three factors. Firstly financial sophistication—primarily the realisation that domestic investment may not pay the corporation though it benefits the majority of our people—is greater

in this country than in most. Secondly, we do not—fortunately—have migrant workers without votes or trade unions. Last but not least the domination of the economy by relatively few corporations—who set their own prices and declared projects by an act of political will—is more pervasive here than in some other countries.

Thr prospects for a socialist transition are good—provided we can muster the political will.

Walter J. Wolfgang
Richmond, Surrey

Prest's wrong view

IT MUST be news to most working people that 'the organised working class has effectively distributed resources from capital to labour' over the past five years. In fact the reverse is true and Mike Prest's figures prove nothing (*Leveller* 24). It is meaningless to compare output figures and figures for wage rises, ignoring inflation.

Firstly, let's look at weekly net income adjusted for inflation, that is its real value in purchasing power at today's prices. The take home pay for a married man with two children in Sept 1972 would be £74.50. The equivalent for Sept 1978 is £73.80—a reduction in real terms.

Figures produced by the Treasury, and published regularly in the monthly broadsheet *Economic Trends* show that labour, in fact, has been getting cheaper. They work it out the correct way by comparing wages and salaries per unit of output with retail prices. For a period of three years from 1975, wage costs never rose more than prices. By 1978, while prices were 50% above their 1975 level, wage costs had only risen by 30%.

Prest says that between 1970 and 1976 real company profits grew by about 7%. The Bank of England, in their December 1978 quarterly bulletin put a more meaningful gloss on this by giving figures for the rate of profit, a more reliable indicator. This consistently fell from the mid-1960s, from 13% to 9% in 1975, but rose to 12% by 1976 as a result of wage controls.

These more reliable comparisons actually indicate a trend the reverse of that claimed by Prest. The labour government rescued British capitalism from disaster in 1975, and effectively engineered, with the collaboration of the IUC a massive shift of resources away from workers to capital. The company tax concessions introduced in 1975 saved British capitalism about £3bn in just 18 months. British capitalism is weak, but is much stronger than it was in 1974/75, and it owes it all to the Labour

Letters

Party.

Finally Mike Prest appears to be arguing that crises in the UK are specific and isolated to this country. This is not so. Despite his assertion to the contrary, other capitalist economies are also facing problems, and every economy in the world has faced a decline in output, high unemployment, inflation and a decline in the rate of profit, in the 1970s.

Such a wrong view of the recent past as contained in Prest's article is no guide to the future at all.

Mike Rossiter
London E5

Living in a prick culture

TO MY sisters reading *The Leveller*—Is living in a prick culture getting you down? Does it annoy you that you can't walk alone at night without fear? Does the constant harassment of male eyes, voices, hands assaulting your privacy piss you off? Do you cry with rage and pain when you open the paper and day after day read about another woman raped, mutilated, murdered? Do you feel that you're a hated alien in a world whose language, art, technology and social institutions are based on the model of rape and reverberate with male fear and loathing of women?

Take heart. Our brother-on-the-left, writing for *The Leveller*, has put our oppression in its proper perspective:

"Male privilege may be relatively small in comparison to the privilege with which the ruling class is 'blessed' but nonetheless it is both real and substantial..." Naturally Andy Chevalier does not see the colossal scale and weight of male supremacy. He is at home in it and obviously intends to stay there.

Paula Jennings
St Andrews, Fife

Rape: understanding causes

I WAS greatly impressed with the thoughtful and well written 'Rape Theme' in your last issue.

That rape and sexual abuse generally is widespread is something that should anger us all. If we are against exploitation, then what can be more fundamental than exploitation and violence in this central area of life?

There is one issue though that I must take up with Sheila Jeffreys. As a man I strongly

resent her statement that "Every man benefits from the actions of every rapist". The action of every rapist affects me, though not in the same way that it affects every woman. For a start it makes me guilty by association for simply being male.

Also the action of every rapist hurts rather than benefits me by poisoning the relationship between the sexes. This makes it harder to relate to one half of the human race.

Every rape helps to create an atmosphere of fear, hostility and mistrust between the sexes, creating yet another division in society and thus working against our ideals of a free egalitarian society.

In the short term I would support a much tougher line against rapists. There should be a minimum prison sentence of 5 years on conviction. Rape can clearly damage a woman's life so it is only right that the man should at least be kept out of circulation.

On a more positive note I would like to see single sex schools outlawed, as they lead to the attitude that the opposite sex are some kind of different species.

There needs to be more and better sex education based on the theme of treating other people as people and not as sex objects. Then eventually we might have a younger generation that is not repressed and alienated.

It is always better to try and deal with a social evil by trying to understand the causes rather than by repression. In the meantime though it is up to society to show that rape is a crime that will not be tolerated.

John Bradbrook
London N1

Rape: a fault somewhere

I'M AN anti-sexist, heterosexual, libertarian socialist. I'm also a potential rapist, and if I ever have a daughter I shall probably "abuse" her routinely. Well there's a fault somewhere—either in my head or in Sheila Jeffreys' (*Leveller* 25) version of my reality. I think I know which.

"Every man benefits from the actions of every rapist". And I suppose every white person benefits from the actions of every white racist? "Objectively", maybe. But is this guilt-ridden, mechanical way of looking at the world at all useful? And why do people with such ideas bother to call themselves "revolutionary"

feminists? "Separatist" feminists would be more accurate.

Dorothy Jones doesn't go far enough when she objects to biological determinism. She should also be objecting to social determinism—the idea that all men are in exactly the "same place" at any one time. There is not just "potential for change" in men, there are already a lot of men who—far from revelling in their sexual supremacy—feel oppressed by having to cram themselves into masculine stereotypes that just don't fit comfortably. Some have achieved at least a partial understanding of what has been done to them, and of how and to what extent they can undo it.

Perhaps rape can be seen "as a logical extension of what 'normal' men do already". Perhaps being raped can be seen as a logical extension of what "normal" women do already. But lots of people just ain't normal, I'm glad to say.

At least Rose Shapiro had the nerve to talk about what really goes on inside people's heads, and to insist on her right to her own ambivalent feelings. There's an awful lot of ambivalence in the world—and trying to smother it in militant rhetoric isn't helpful.

Dave Bradney
London N6

A Nighthawk speaks out

IT'S SURPRISING that you didn't think to publish Brian Deer's telephone number at the end of his review of *Nighthawks*. Then every time any ordinary, dreary, gay man like myself felt a sense of "suffocating despair" we could have rung him up for counselling. Presumably, he would be able to offer right-on solutions to all of life's problems.

I have to declare an involvement in the film. It was very slight and consisted mainly of encouraging Ron Peck in the three years he spent raising money. I do not, however, see the film as beyond criticism. I don't like its treatment of women, its lack of humour and the fact that Jim seems to have no mates. But I think it is possible to make these points without being as self-oppressive, abusive and dishonest as Brian Deer.

Firstly, the way he talks about the method of recruiting people for the film is unbelievably self-oppressive for anyone who is allegedly gay. It may be true that some of the film's actors had slept with some of the film's makers. So what? Many gay men make most of their friends with people they have sex with on the first or second meeting. Is he saying that aspect of the gay male subculture is exploitative in itself? Is he advocating a model of monogamy based on heterosexual custom

and practice?

The picture he draws of thousands of media queens flocking to the sets of *Nighthawks* is extremely offensive. Many of us chose to appear in the film... because we agreed with Ron Peck that on this occasion gay men should be played by gay men rather than by actors mincing around in the style of Larry Grayson.

Secondly, he appears not to have looked at the film in more than the most cursory manner. The disco scenes are visually very rich and the long takes enable the viewer to observe different levels of interaction between people as they enjoy themselves. One of the points the film seems to be trying to make is about the difficulty of sustaining relationships which have been formed in the atmosphere of the disco when you are no longer in that atmosphere.

The kind of society we live in does not tolerate gay men meeting in this way and it does tolerate a very limited amount of sexual contact. But to assert any other gay identity or to form any other kind of gay relationship is much more difficult. One reason that Jim's relationship with John has a better chance of survival than the others is that John moves in a milieu which is tolerant of gayness. Thus their relationship could have a social meaning which other relationships did not.

It is, of course, very unfortunate that the film makers did not allow the relationship with Peter to develop as he appeared to move in a gay milieu. Nonetheless, to see John as "nice" and the other men as not "nice" suggests to me a very crude understanding of sexual politics and of the social construction of individuals.

Lastly, the review is appallingly dishonest in that it fails to mention the coming out scene in the classroom. This must surely be the main achievement of the film—to capture a real insight into the confused prejudice of our society about gayness. Even Brian Deer must have sensed spontaneity in that scene.

It is probably true that films made in the realistic mode of *Nighthawks* are always attacked for showing less than admirable features of a minority's life-style. Doubtless Brian Deer could criticise *Kes* for the fact that none of the working class characters is in the Workers' Revolutionary Party. But, happily, it is also true that a lot of people will see, discuss and be influenced by *Nighthawks*—despite his nasty, small-minded review.

Bob Cant
London N17

Collective note: Brian Deer's phone number is 01-731 5464, or try Gay Icebreakers, 01-274 9590.

Blacks against prison tyranny

THERE IS a growing campaign among black groups around the case of Wadi Williams, one of the PLF group, now serving an extra two-year sentence for alleged assault on a warder.

Wandsworth is a horrible prison. It is Britain's second biggest, and 45 percent of its 1,500 inmates are black. It is said to have a high concentration of racist screws, many Front members among them.

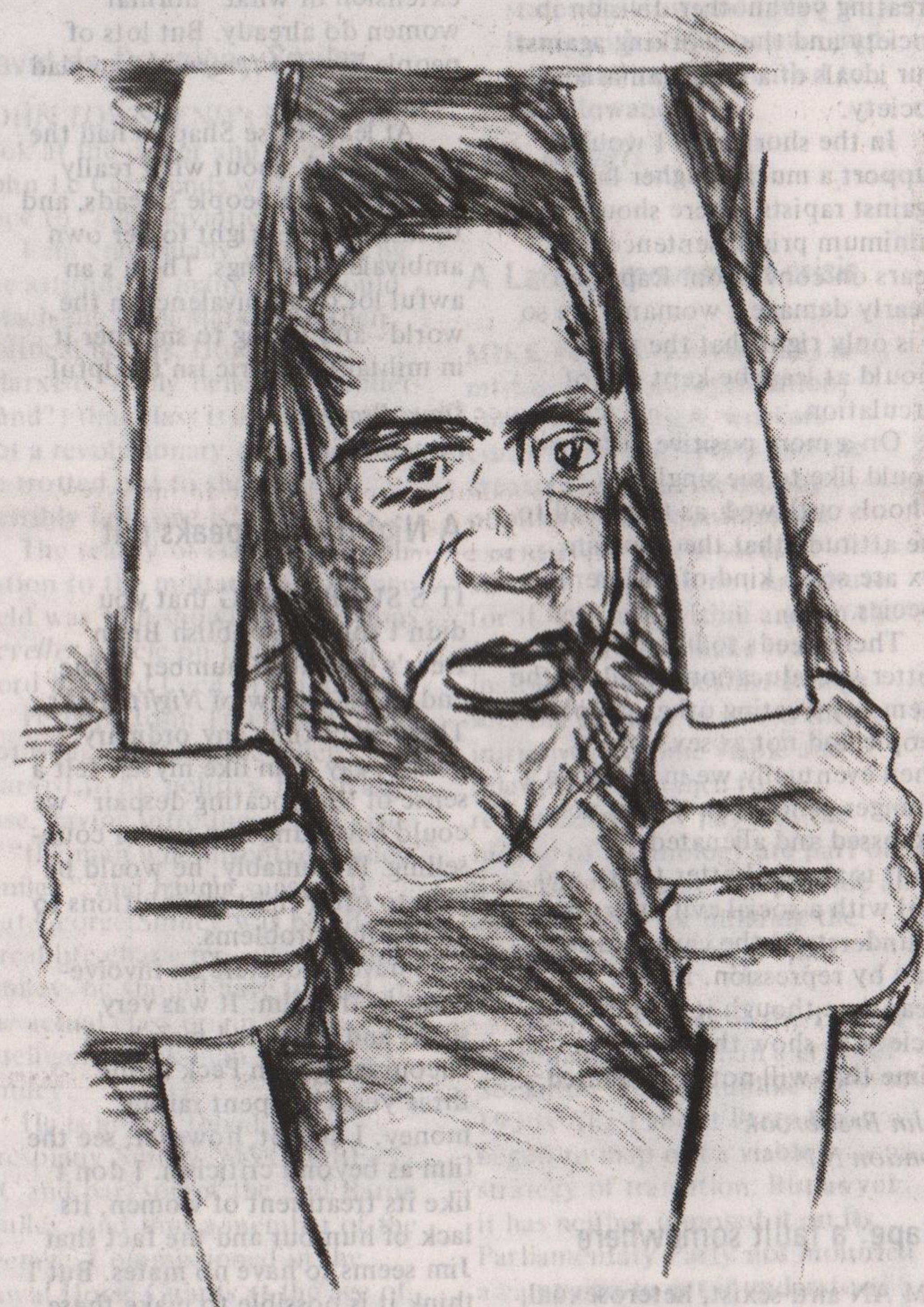
According to other prisoners, Prison Officer Lyons, on whom Wadi Williams was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm, had bragged he was a paid-up Fronter.

Williams, who was already doing six years for cannabis possession, had been in trouble in Wandsworth before. There had been a sit-in in the prison workshop, involving black and white prisoners. For his involvement though there was no formal investigation Williams got 40 days solitary.

The incident with Lyons started when the screw refused to let him out of his cell to the lavatory—a refusal decorated with remarks like 'niggers don't need the WC'. He pushed Williams back against the wall of the cell and grabbed his throat. There was a struggle, in which Lyons slipped and hit his head. Other screws came and bundled Williams back into solitary. He was then transferred to Pentonville Prison, pending the inevitable trial and conviction.

The trial, at Kingston Crown Court, was marked, not just by the bias of Judge Bax, and the hollow 'I'm not racist' protestations of Lyons, but by Williams' attempts to raise the politics of blacks in prison, and the court's

THE STATE is finding out that it can't keep black people down by sending them to prison. Even inside the wall, they are starting to organise. Late last year a group in Wandsworth got together to form the Prisoners' Liberation Front. They produced a long manifesto.



refusal to hear them.

Williams had his mouthpiece refer to the PLF manifesto. Did not Lyons know Williams had

a political platform.

Even after a loaded hearing, with a prison doctor to support Lyons, the jury couldn't agree, and Williams was only convicted on an 11-1 majority. He was then shipped off to Wormwood Scrubbs Prison in West London, and is now awaiting 'dispersal' to a top-security prison. He expects further harassment. The earliest he could be released is March 1981—he does not expect remission.

The PLF manifesto, smuggled out of Wandsworth, makes 22 demands for all prisoners—demands which go beyond the campaigning of the established prisoners' support groups.

The inspiration—and the inspiration of the support building up outside, around Grassroots and the Black Prisoners Welfare Scheme—comes from the ideas and writings of George Jackson. Later this year the BPWS is holding a conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the killing of George Jackson in Soledad.

The manifesto says: 'The disproportionately high numbers of blacks and working class inmates attest to the openly racist and class orientation of the current structure of oppression... Militant and articulate brothers/sisters/comrades with leadership potential are creamed off the streets and held as socio-political hostages... to prevent the emergence of a strong mass leadership, thus destroying the militancy and solidarity of blacks and working class...'

'We contend that if the years of suffering that is a hall-mark of these institutions are to have any meaning then as from NOW we the inmates must play a major part in the shaping of these institutions...'

10. An end to political victimisation.
11. Right to political asylum overseas for avowed political prisoners.
12. The right to subscribe to any political papers and books.
13. And end to all censorship.
14. An end to chronic overcrowding.
15. Life sentences to mean a maximum of ten years.
16. An end to cellular and solitary confinement.
17. Ethnic counsellors for minorities.
18. The establishment of an inter-prison media organ.
19. The option to wear our own clothing.
20. The right to private money for spending.
21. The provision of telephones.
22. Prisoners to be consulted about changes in the penal system.

Rob Cowan

Demands:

1. The right to form a prisoners' union.
2. Committees to run prisons, including inmate representatives.
3. An end to forced labour.
4. Union wage scales for prison work.
5. Automatic parole.
6. Conjugal rights, not inside prison: weekend home visits.
7. Full-time education facilities.
8. Right to legal representation in any adjudication.
9. An end to racism from prison staff.

Secret code for 'workshy'

THE NOTORIOUS AX Code—the Department of Social Security's secret manual for officials concerned with suspected 'fraud' by claimants—breaches fundamental elements of employment protection law. The latest addition to the Code covers 'claimants who fail to take the chance of a job'. A copy has fallen into *The Leveller's* hands.

CLAIMANTS WHO have failed to take work, and are deemed workshy, can have their Supplementary Benefit cut, and ultimately, be prosecuted for 'failing to maintain themselves and their dependents'.

Circular AX/44, the new addition to the AX Code, spells out what the trained eye of the Unemployment Review Officer (URO) can detect as the tell-tale signs that a claimant is not really trying hard enough to get work.

Of the ten criteria, *printed right*, none would conclusively prove workshyness, and at least two—numbers 7 and 8—are illegal.

The provisions of the Redundancy Payments Act 1965 (now consolidated in the Employment Protection Consolidation Act 1978) establish the right of a worker to refuse an alternative job. On two main grounds: that the alternative is not comparable to the last job, and secondly that domestic circumstances make the alternative (for instance, different hours) difficult. And there have been many Industrial Tribunal cases in which workers who turned down an offer, and were refused their *redundo*, have won it back.

But for the DHSS, workers in this position can forfeit their benefit.

Similarly, there is a body of case law that negates number 8. It is a time-honoured principle of the (Common) Law of Contract, that both sides must be amenable to any change in its terms. Even when there is no written contract of employment, the law regards any agreement over work as the same thing. So the employer cannot unilaterally alter the terms or conditions of employment. This too is consolidated in the 1978 Act.

This does not worry the DHSS. As far as they are concerned, employers can do what they like, and if workers prefer to leave—cut their SB!

The same consideration covers number 1: in law, let alone politics, you cannot 'impose unreasonable conditions' in negotiating the terms of a contract, because a contract cannot be agreed until both sides accept the terms.

Circular AX/44 (issued on February 9 this year) is saying: we back the bosses. If they offer some lousy job, 'take it or leave it', you've got to take it. It is part of a swing of power

For official use only

Circular AX/44

CLAIMANTS WHO FAIL TO TAKE THE CHANCE OF A JOB

Introduction

1. New procedures have recently been agreed with the Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission for obtaining decisions and opinions from the IO in respect of claimants who fail to take the chance of a suitable job. This

3. A claimant should be regarded as having failed to take the chance of a job if he could reasonably have been expected to know of a specific job and failed, refused or neglected either to apply for, or accept it, or failed to attend an interview in connection with obtaining the job. Some examples of this type of conduct are given below but the list is not exhaustive—

- (1) imposing unreasonable conditions on the acceptance of a job;
- (2) refusing to give references or allow references to be taken up;
- (3) delaying acceptance of a job until the vacancy has otherwise been filled;
- (4) creating an unfavourable impression at an interview with an employer, eg by being deliberately obstructive, apathetic or appearing to be under the influence of alcohol;
- (5) failing to attend an interview with an employer;
- (6) failing to return to work on the day agreed for general resumption following a stoppage of work or period of short-time working;
- (7) failing to take a job offered as an alternative to redundancy;
- (8) failing to continue in a job when the employer varies the terms or conditions of employment;
- (9) refusing the job offered;
- (10) accepting a job but failing to start work on the agreed date.

towards employers that has accompanied increasing unemployment.

Now, who knows, a Tory government might just be inclined to help this process along a little. One direction it might take has already been provided, by a working party of senior DHSS mandarins who produced a 'Review' of the Supplementary Benefit scheme last year.

(Another working party, set up by the Claimants Union, has produced a counter-review, which effects a thorough demolition of the whole thing, and proposes an alternative welfare scheme based on a guaranteed minimum income. Copies are available from the East London Claimants Union, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, London E1; price £1, or 50p for claimants).

The DHSS review suggested two options for a future legal

structure for SB: one was a new Act of Parliament, under which the secret codes would become statutory regulations, carrying the force of law, unchallengeable in the courts of tribunals. The second alternative was a Code of Conduct covering the granting of benefits. Though less rigid than legislation, it would still reduce claimants' ability to challenge officials' rulings.

Although the review preferred the second, the first would still be on the cards if the Tories wanted to try it.

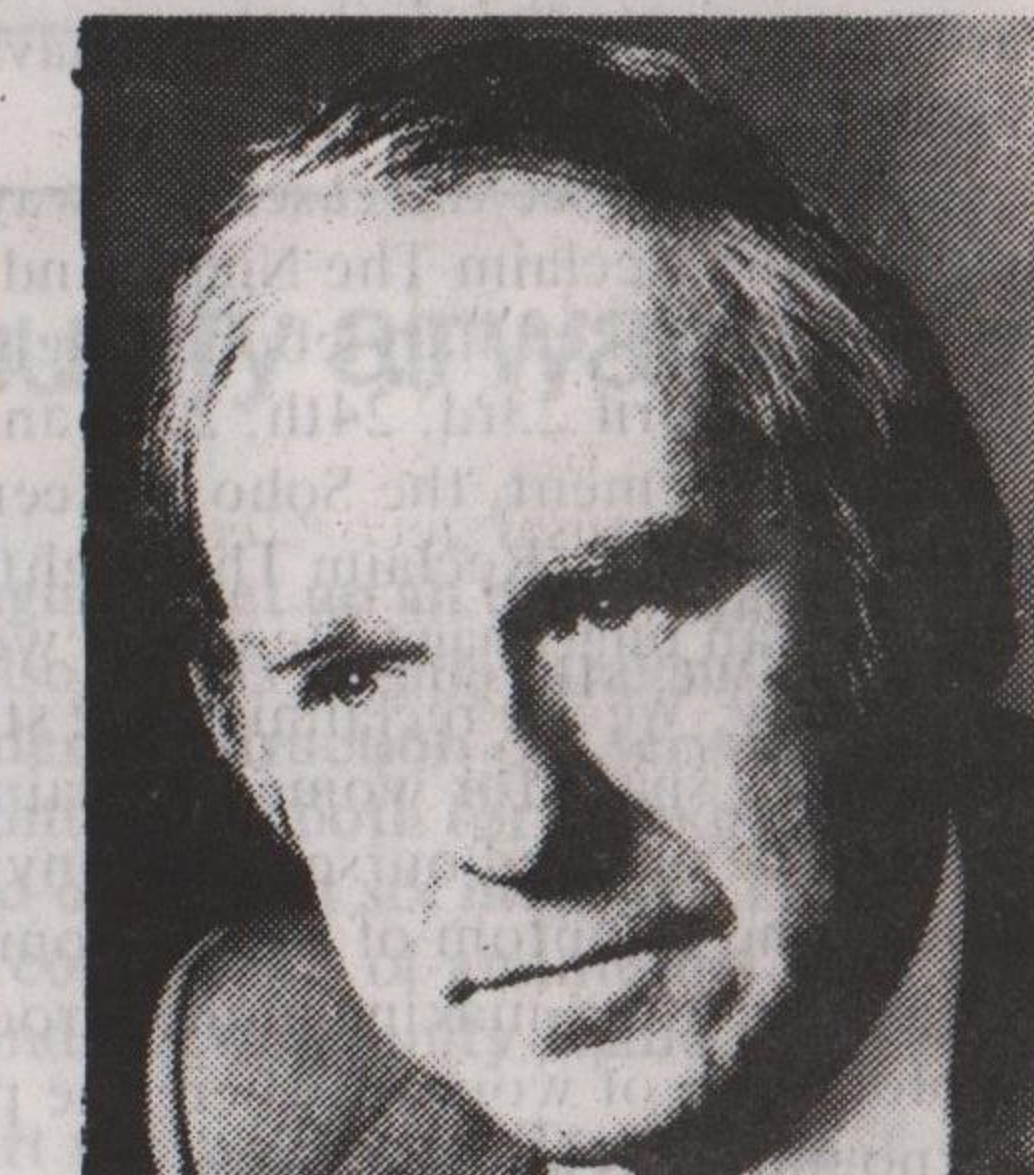
Another vicious scheme the Tories are considering is 'notional strike pay'. This is a scheme to cut the payment of SB to strikers' dependents, which is a real problem for Tory leaders: they have to satisfy the baying for workers' blood that comes from their most raucous supporters, yet they realise they can't actually abolish it. Instead,

the idea is to assume officially that all strikers are paid a set rate of strike pay by their unions, to count this as income, and disallow benefit accordingly.

Most affected, of course, would be the lowest-paid workers. Low pay will be kept low. This is a very pure strain of Thatcherism, almost aesthetic in its meanness: hit the weak, hit the poor, and *hard!*

Really, Labour's been no better: despite the employment protection laws born from the TUC honey moon of 1974/5, the plight of the poor has increased, with the number of people living below the official (DHSS) poverty line increasing from 800,000 to 2 million in the years 1973-6. And in the case of the secret codes—Labour ministers have managed to break two election pledges at once—by also refusing to lift the secrecy protecting them.

On March 26 Social Security minister, Stan Orme, former Tribune, and now, on the election hustings, probably a Tribune again, wrote an article in *The Guardian*, which attempted tortuously to justify both the alleged commitment to open government, and the need to keep his department's procedures secret.



Stan Orme

He wrote: 'Does the DHSS believe in open government? Yes. Does this mean there should be open access to our files? No...'

'So why do we protect these (regulations)? Many could be made available, but there are some it would be self-defeating for us to reveal: the instructions, for example, on how to avoid and detect fraud...'

Guardian readers must have been puzzled. What was the man talking about? There was no mention of the AX Code by name. If even its existence can't be acknowledged—what kind of commitment to open government (which in any case is a contradiction in terms) is that?

But there was more than a name to hide, wasn't there, Stan?

Tim Gopsill

Shorts

SEXUAL POLITICS

Reclaim the Night

WOMEN IN Liverpool are delighted at the success of their first 'Reclaim the Night' demonstration, held on the night of April 6. Police objections had forced its postponement from the previous month.

The demo started more than 250 strong and more women joined in as they wound, chanting and singing through Liverpool's run-down inner city areas, ending in the centre, passing queues waiting to enter late-night discos. Some women left men they were with to join the march.

There was no attack on the march and no arrests - though a large number of police had been posted to protect a sex cinema from the demo. A spokesperson for the Liverpool Women's Centre said there were more than a hundred police there.

She said they were 'delighted at the positive response to the demo', and added that many women were becoming more interested in rape counselling and the Centre's other projects. Further details from the Women's Centre, Rialto, Liverpool 8.

THE SIXTEEN women arrested during the Reclaim The Night demonstration in Soho last October (see *The Leveller* 22) are to be tried at the end of April. The women, who are charged with threatening behaviour and assault, are pleading not guilty.

The sisters see the cases as a way of publicising Reclaim The Night, and they ask women to picket Marylebone Magistrates Court on April 23rd, 24th, 27th and 2nd May.

In a statement, the Soho Sixteen Support Sisterhood say, 'Reclaim The Night is not the puritan pilgrimage the media would prefer to portray. We are reclaiming the streets, reclaiming space for women, reclaiming the right to be out and ourselves at any time, in Soho - one symptom of a male dominated society, bent on making money, rooted in the exploitation of women, where the power of pornography is all too obvious.'

Further information from Box 1, 190 Upper St, London N1.



IN JUNE 1977 this man was seen on several occasions outside Grunwicks: here he is (left) at an incident in Chapter Road. He claimed to be a freelance photographer working for local weeklies. Less than twelve months later, in April last year, he turns up (right) as a member of the Anti-Terrorist Squad who arrived at the offices of NUPE in Stockwell, south London, when a bomb was found there. So much for Merlyn Rees' lie in parliament just before the dissolution that 'no-one of any political persuasion has anything to fear from the Special Branch'. Or was everybody at Grunwicks a terrorist?

Cardiff crisis centre

A RAPE crisis centre has just been set up in Cardiff. The group responsible for the centre was formed a year ago, after a play about rape, 'She Asked For It' was performed by Counteract at the University. The play sparked off a lot of discussion and women who wanted to do something practical about rape and its effects on women, joined together. With advice from the London Rape Crisis Centre, they set about compiling information and finding premises.

The Centre was opened on March the 11th. The group's main aim is to offer a counselling service to women who've been raped or sexually assaulted, but they hope that they may have the woman power to give talks in youth clubs, schools and so on. The *South Wales Echo* welcomed the centre by publishing a demeaning and sexist cartoon. This is exactly the kind of attitudes we have always had to face over the question of rape, so it is no surprise (though very sad) to find it in the local paper. However it does mean that Cardiff RCC will need as much support and publicity as they can get.

Women interested in joining the group should call their number: Cardiff 374051. They are open at the moment on Wednesdays 8-4pm and Sundays 4-7pm.

PERSONS UNKNOWN

Facing another charge

A NEW CHARGE has been loaded on the six people charged in the Persons Unknown case. This is Conspiracy to Defraud - the first time it has been used in connection with robbery. 'Defraud' relates to exactly the same 'incidents' as the dropped conspiracy to rob charges. The exact relevance of the charge is uncertain, but as it sounds less serious than robbery, it could be an inducement for the jury to find guilty by default - the sentence could be the same. The robbery charges against Stewart Carr have also been dropped, and he now faces two conspiracy charges.

The trial date has been set for September 3rd. The Crown wanted it at the same time as the trials of the Palestinians currently being held in Brixton - the official reasoning being security, even though four of the defendants are on bail.

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UNIONS

National Theatre dispute

'BEWARE OF Pete's dragon-it saks.' The slogan at the back of the National Theatre came true last week when director Sir Peter Hall's hatchet man and general administrator, Michael Elliott, dismissed the (70) staff on strike who had been suspended for three weeks. And the first they knew about it was when a reporter came round to ask if they had anything to say about their dismissal.

The dispute began three weeks earlier when stagehands and workshop staff walked out after the fourteen month old negotiations over pay and conditions had broken down, and were promptly suspended. But a wrangle that started over organising a shift system that included all three of the National's theatres has become a fight for the right to organise at all. 'We went out with a \$10 bet on the table' said Strike Committee member Jesse Graham, 'and since then the stakes have dramatically risen.'

In a speech at the end of March, Elliott told National Theatre staff, 'The right to organise labour is a privilege. The right to organise people like you is an extra privilege.' He has offered to re-employ the dismissed workers-but only if they sign a contract that effectively takes away their right to strike. The strikers have to agree not to take 'any unofficial action which affects performance, either directly or indirectly'. Their union, NATTKE, has not had an official strike at a theatre for more than forty years.

The management has taken a tough line throughout the dispute. Elliott, who came to the theatre two months ago from paper manufacturers Kimberley Clark, told the suspended staff that they would be served with injunctions if they entered the building. He forced Personnel Manager Liz Kennedy to resign after she had commented on the dispute on television. And Technical Administrator Bill Bundy was called 'a traitor' after Bundy had criticised the theatre's handling of the strike. In a statement, Elliott described the sackings 'a matter of principle'.

And although the management maintain that the dispute is damaging because of public 'loss of faith', they have put out press statements claiming that the strike was over-with the result that the public came back expecting full shows again.

The staff involved in the dispute also have to deal with NATTKE, a weak union which includes both theatre and cinema workers. General Secretary John Wilson, who is said to prefer 'cocktail negotiations', is prepared to go to arbitration to discuss whether the sacked workers should be reinstated.

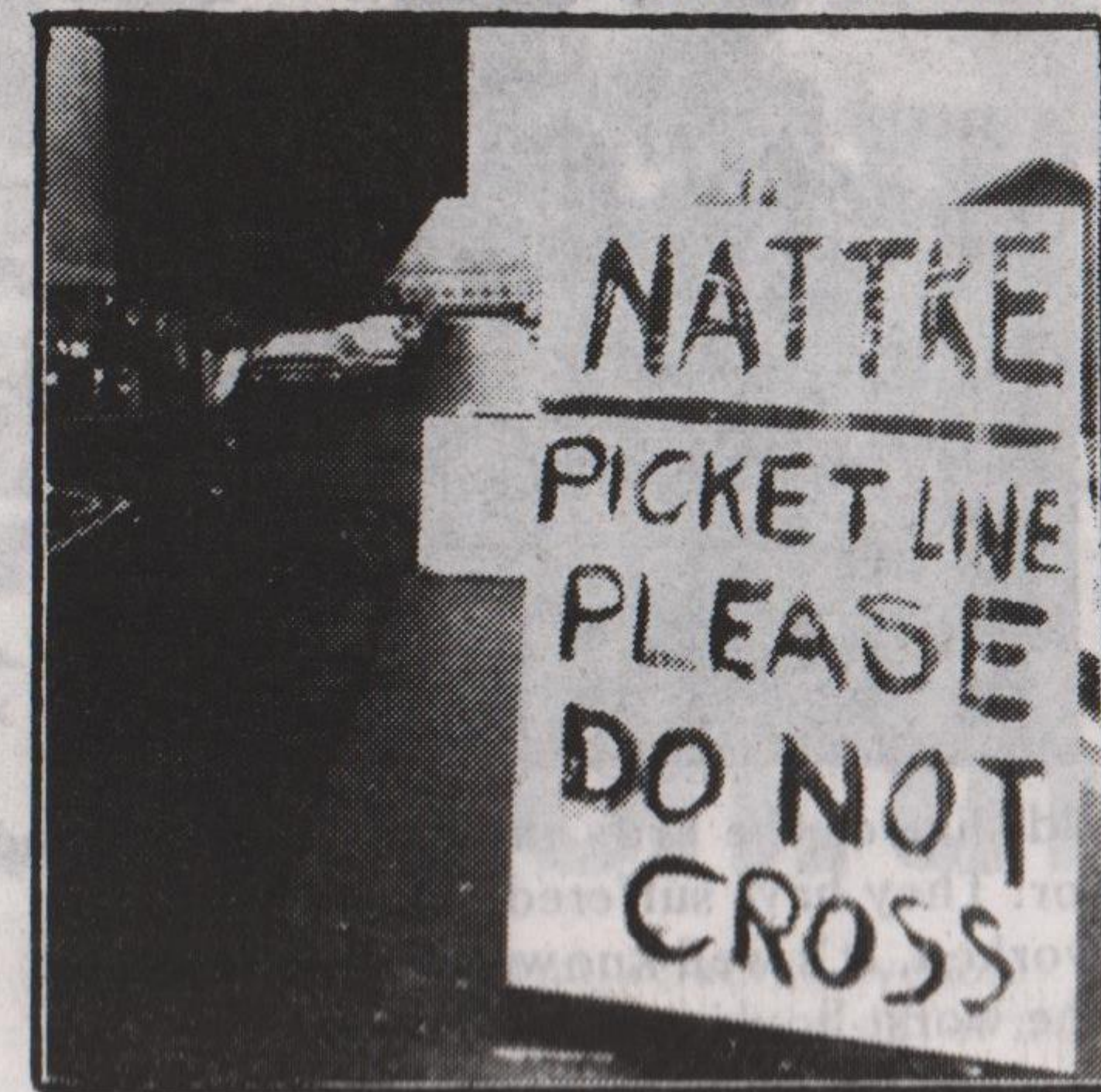
The National Theatre is a site branch of the union, and this means that the branch includes catering staff and front-of-house staff as well as part timers. The branch does not support the strike. Although the actors have continued to perform in shows inside the building, the strikers sympathise with their vulnerable position. Ironically, some of the actors in the company performing *Fair Quarrel* recently

toured with Joint Stock in *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, about early labour struggles.

But the sacked staff have strengthened their position by forming a joint committee with staff from the other major subsidised theatres in London-the Coliseum, the Royal Opera House, and the RSC Aldwych. Coliseum staff see the dispute as an action replay of their own dispute-which they won-in 1975.

Branch secretary Richard Lewis says that the management wants to close the theatre-and it's using the dispute as an excuse to do it. A lot of the National's equipment doesn't work, and the building suffers from structural faults. The roof, for example, needs to be replaced. The National, of course denies this-but says the theatre will close in May, for a week.

It could close a good deal sooner. The theatre will not be able to replace the sacked staff, and it's losing more money every week. As one of the pickets said last week, 'I suppose they must think that we're going to sign this silly contract'



...and the same old story

THE CIVIL servants strike has been unnecessarily prolonged because of the cautious attitude of the leaders of the two main unions (CPSA and SCPS). The policy of selective strikes has not caused the government anything more than mild inconvenience.

The National Executive Committee of the two unions have refused to involve the two most militant departments (Department of Health and Social Security and Department of Employment) in anything more than two one-day strikes.

Bringing out all DHSS and DE workers would be bound to have dramatic effect. When unofficial action was taken in Glasgow last month to protest against the suspension of 39 civil servants for refusing to cover the work of staff called out in the selective action, there was a march of claimants in support of the strike calling on the government to pay the civil servants.

Efforts to organise unofficial action in these departments have been rather patchy. Ad hoc strike committees have been unable to properly coordinate any proposed action, and the lack of any financial backing is a big problem. Where unofficial walkouts have taken place, full-timers and NEC members have been dispatched to demand a return to work.

The CPSA NEC complains that it would be impossible to sustain any action in the DHSS as there is not enough money in the Strike Fund. But it refused to organise a levy from those not on strike. Some branches have taken it upon themselves to organise levies

and many areas have shown themselves willing to take action without strike pay.

The real reason appears to be a lack of faith in the membership, a fear of losing control, and worry about the political consequences of actually winning the dispute.

POLICE

Eviction by force

'AUTHORITY, IF challenged will defend by force. This was the violence of a society based on violence and force. Force rules OK. I'm afraid I don't respect that kind of rule', commented Stuart Brickell shortly after being sentenced to five years in February on charges of causing GBH to police officers. He achieved some national notoriety in November 1977 when his Islington council flat was the scene of a large scale police siege, at a time when police were practising their 'siege technique'.

Brickell was defying a council eviction order - they wished to enforce repairs on his flat - and he held out for ten days before being overpowered. At one point he fought off a police charge with a machete. 'This case is listed as the Queen against Stuart Brickell' he said in the dock. 'But it could be called, just as easily, the case of property rights against human rights'.

Brickell, formerly an accountant, had resigned from the Thames Water Board some years previously when he became convinced that there had been a cover-up over an IRA bomb explosion at a North London water pumping station.

The Labour-controlled Islington Council had promised to keep his flat available until the result of the trial was known. But two weeks before his conviction, his flat was let to - of all people - former Tory Mayor, Don Bromfield - a decision that was taken by the Labour Housing Committee Chairperson Valerie Veness.

RADIO

Community airwaves

THE BBC ought to set up an ethnic station, and should also use its mobile caravans - presently under construction - to serve small London communities, both for an experimental period of at least six months. These are the main conclusions of an internal BBC report on London Community Radio.

The report was written by Tim Pitt of Radio Carlisle and Frank Mansfield of Radio London. The BBC is treating it only as a discussion document, and has set up a working party to review it.

The ethnic station would cater primarily for Black and Asian listeners, but would also feature programmes for other minorities, in both English and other languages.

The 'Radio Circus' - the tour by mobile caravans - would visit communities of 'about 60,000', staying in each place for up to two weeks. This follows recent BBC community radio experiments in North Wales and Cumbria - the idea has not been tried in a city yet.

Mansfield and Pitt suggest that one outcome of the Radio Circus could be the development of independent community stations, which - not being BBC stations - could carry advertising but still receive help from the BBC with engineering, staff training and programmes.

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Tony Jones

Long Kesh and the long war

THE ARRANGEMENT was made very efficiently. A brief meeting in the rain, a car-switch on the Falls Road, the driver bemoaning the weather as we drove the few blocks to the house of a sympathiser. We made ourselves comfortable in front of the fire, a Long Kesh tapestry on the wall while the driver disappeared upstairs to keep an eye on the street below.

Pat, a man in his mid twenties, is a middle-ranking Volunteer in the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional IRA. When we met (before the assassination of Airey Neave) the propaganda advantage probably lay with the Provisionals. The Bennett Report had served as a backdrop to the 'blanket campaign', with an upsurge in Provisional activity as its corollary.

That week they had staged a series of bomb attacks all over the Six Counties. More than 40 bombs had exploded in 16 different towns, demonstrating that last year's shortage of explosives - which had caused them to fall back on a fire-bombing campaign - was now a thing of the past. And two bomb attacks on barracks, in which one soldier was killed and six policemen or soldiers were injured, showed that far from being 'beaten', the IRA are still capable of mounting attacks at will.

But the Provisionals are well aware that they can expect no overnight victory. Many Republicans now see this as a positive advantage, as a period when political ideas can be worked out and tested in struggle. Pat agreed with this :-

We are tending towards a long drawn-out war, so our structures do change. In the past we have had a regular army, but with the long war, you tend towards a cell structure and your security is tighter. And your Volunteers are more politically oriented, much more so. They are engaged in social and community problems.

There is a marked change in the political awareness of the Volunteers. Long Kesh is our university. Many of them may not have been politically aware when they went to jail but while they've been there they've had time to sit back and think what they're fighting for, what they're prepared to die for. It used to be an emotional thing. Now it's a political thing.

The average active service Volunteer would be young, in the age-range 18-25. They have



a dislike of the Brits and all that they stand for. They have suffered. They haven't worked. It's well-known that Belfast has the worst housing in the world. They put all that down to the British presence. They're all from working class backgrounds. They suffer from the same environment. That's why you have such a heavy Brit presence in those areas. There isn't much support from the middle class because they don't relate to what we're fighting for.

Pat classified himself as a 'socialist republican' and is typical of the leftward tendency among the Belfast Brigade - though he was not prepared to discuss political differences within the movement.

To an outsider, Belfast seems quieter, there is less obvious military presence on the streets, the searches at the barriers in the city centre are perfunctory. But the same number of soldiers are still there. What changes in army tactics have the Provisionals noticed?

There have been noticeable changes - for example, the policy of shoot-to-kill. They have killed a number of Volunteers and civilians. The policy of shooting Volunteers seems to be coming from the highest level. They have a greater deployment on plain-clothes work, undercover work. Initially we found that hard to counter, but not now because the civilians know them by sight. Strangers are fairly easily known. That's the advantage we have.

There does seem to be a decline in the uniformed-presence. A number of billets have been closed down and the uniformed Brit on the ground is doing more work than he was before. The numbers haven't changed but the policy now is to share out the work between the RUC and the

UDR, a policy of 'normalisation'. You have the RUC up here in their Landrovers to show the flag and to say that they have a presence in the ghetto areas.

A new, strange phenomenon has emerged in Belfast: a gang of youths calling themselves 'the hoods'. Many of them have been kneecapped in the past for crime in Republican areas. In the absence of the RUC the Provisionals have taken it upon themselves to enforce discipline in their own way for crimes such as vandalism, thieving or rape. Recently 'the hoods' have smashed up black taxis operating on the Falls and vandalised shops in a bizarre hooligan backlash.

To a certain extent there is a war-weariness amongst the people. But if you take the extent of the operations, then you can argue that the people are still with us. 'The hoods' are a problem. We know for a fact that they are being used by the Brits and the RUC, and that there are direct ties between them. They come from well-known criminal families and they suit the RUC in that if there is an outburst of stealing, people might say "enough is enough, we want the RUC back".

'The hoods' are over-estimated. There are only a few of them and it's not a backlash. But they're not just hoods. They're touts as well and they're a small minority. Somebody has to deal with it and we are forced into that position because these people are exploiting the war.

For British socialists the big problem with the Provisionals has always been their tactics and strategy. Civilian bombings and assassinations, whether in the North or on the mainland, are politically indefensible and aid reaction and repression to "stamp out terrorism". But while Pat said that waging war against military targets was most desirable, he supported the policy of economic de-stabilisation behind the bombing campaigns. To wage war purely against the military would lead to an unacceptably high rate of attrition among the Volunteers.

For us to kill 30 soldiers might mean we lose ten Volunteers. The British state has those kind of resources but we don't, we would lose our support in the community.

And what about the Protestant working class?

The question is that of Loyalism. We have to break that to achieve a socialist republic. There can be no compromise with it. Even those loyalist politicians who



have been pushing for an independent Six Counties - we're totally opposed to that.

But the Protestant working class is moving. They seem to be moving away from the Brit thing. They've seen that they have been used and abused by the Brits. It's dawned on them that they're no longer of any use to the British establishment. But they still depend on them. For example, if we had a united Ireland, then the shipyard would be closed down. The Protestant working class can't see its own power. They've been fed on this for so many years that it's going to be a slow process. There will be no really positive movement from the Protestant working class while you still have the British presence.

Meanwhile the Provisionals wage their war from within the working class heartlands of the minority community, the unemployed youth of West Belfast shooting at, and being shot at by, the unemployed youth of Tyneside or Glasgow.

Pat left first, carefully checking the street before hurrying home through the rain to his wife and children. A nice, ordinary man, but a man who has killed already and will do so again to achieve the united socialist Ireland that he wants. When the present troubles started he was an unemployed teenager hanging around on a street corner throwing stones at the Brits. Now he spans a generation and there are many more behind him within a dying outpost of a dying imperialism kept afloat by state subsidies. While the British remain in Ireland, substituting repression for political action nothing will stop them picking up the gun and going out to fight for the only hope they feel they've got.

John Barton

Mason: the final days

ROY MASON will not return to overlord Northern Ireland whatever the result of the imminent general election - he made this plain two weeks ago during a speech in Co. Down. The word is that within a year he will retire from politics and become chairman of the National Coal Board.

His epitaph, in his words, is that he gave Northern Ireland "the finest prison system in Western Europe". He could have spelt this out further to say he made the cornerstone of British policies in Northern Ireland the highest prison accommodation per capita in Western Europe.

A new "supernick" will open at Maghaberry Co. Antrim, next year with room for some 2000 people. No RUC, UDR or British Army men will be amongst this number. The new jail will bring to nine the total of such institutions. Last year some £40 million was spent in capital expenditure on this prisons programme to which must be added the £30 million-odd sum for running and maintenance costs.

This is Roy Mason's contribution to Northern Ireland's administration - the imprisonment of the dissidents. At least Mason and the recent Bennett report on RUC interrogation brought the current Labour Government down. The vote of either Gerry Fitt or Frank Maguire could have saved Labour, the votes of both would have pulled Labour to win in the vote of confidence.

Maguire, the Independent MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone whom it is only too easy to insult merely because he has not adapted to the seductive smarmy ways of Westminster, was certainly wooed for his vote.

He had a letter from an unnamed Labour MP who wrote "Many of your friends here in the Labour party are every bit as opposed to the recent increase in seats for Northern Ireland as you obviously were." This anonymous chancer had got it all hopelessly wrong.

Then Minister of State Don Concannon had a chummy lunch with Maguire in his native



Lisnaskea. Chummy but no movement on the H Blocks which was the price of his vote. No contact from Roy Mason though, nor as in the past from Merlyn Rees who called him on a similar previous occasion to remark, "Vote for us or we're fucked, Frank."

In London other Ministers of State like Ray Carter and Stanley Orme tried Frank but as he said; "None of them had any ideas, they were quite stagnant, nothing was doing". Maguire in the Commons to "abstain in person", abstained and the Government toppled. He was happy to think it was the H Blocks that made them stumble - he also thereby guaranteed his re-election unless the SDLP split the nationalist vote.

Final tributes to Roy Mason from Frank Maguire; "Ireland's loss is England's gain - when all this is over, we'll want Nuremberg-style war crime tribunals and Mason will be the first up for judgement."

And from Fr. Denis Faul, the Dungannon-based priest who tirelessly campaigns for justice in Northern Ireland; "Mason is the most deplorable blackguard we've seen in Ireland since Oliver Cromwell. When he gets that Coal Board job, he should be dumped down the deepest coal-hole in England and left there. The man is mad."

David Martin

We're jammin', we're jammin' and I hope you don't like Radio Two

SOUTH LONDON'S Radio Jackie, the longest running of Britain's land-based pirate radio stations, celebrated its tenth anniversary last month. Its ability to survive a decade of raids and confiscations of equipment has mainly drawn on the energy, commitment and staying power of the people who run Jackie. But there are signs that its survival may be helped by an informal understanding with the Post Office Detection Unit — a revealing hint at the authorities' attitude towards pirate radio.

RADIO JACKIE has stuck pretty consistently to basic Top 40 material plus some specialist rock and oldies programming. It has moved on from its original pro-commercial radio lobbying in the period after the 1967 Marine Offences Act which outlawed stations like Radio Caroline. Following the establishment of official IBA commercial stations in 1974, Jackie's support was thrown behind a new demand: 'community-based' local radio.

Though there is no overall consensus amongst pirate radio operators, it does seem that, like a separate Citizen's Band, these kind of stations could eventually be accepted and licensed. The number of pirate stations and the availability of the technology and the people to run it could prove a major factor in bringing this about.

Nick Catford, Jackie's manager, says he wants to see radio stations in every big town in the country financed by the community and without the need for wealthy backers. 'It should be possible

to set up a complete radio station for well under £1,000 and the weekly running costs could either come from listener contributions (as with some American stations) or from local advertising', he says.

But there is a lot of opposition in the Home Office, the Post Office and of course from the IBA-BBC duopoly. A look at the MegaHerz frequency allocations gives a fair idea of the Home Office/Ministry of Defence interest in controlling large areas of the spectrum. For that reason alone pirates can't afford to be too complacent about detection, or the legal consequences of getting caught. Nick Catford served 28 days in Pentonville for repeated offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Act after his voice was 'personally identified' by two P.O. officials on a pirate VHF broadcast.

The Home Office will naturally be more sensitive about any station that broadcasts material which is in any way 'political'. This was certainly the case with Radio Concord in the past. Once it

broadcast programmes on drugs and in favour of Troops Out in 1975 it was quickly closed down. Nick Catford says that as long as Jackie sticks to a straight non-political programming framework they are less likely to feel strong pressure from the authorities. The case of another London pirate station, Radio AMY (Alternative Media for You), may add evidence to support the view of official sensitivity to any station that steps off the 'entertainment' slot and starts to cover a broader range of news, views and current comment.

One of AMY's operatives was recently fined £150 plus £50 costs at Highgate Magistrates Court for illegal broadcasting, which is several times the regular fine for a first offence. A transcribed cassette recording of one of their programmes was referred to by the prosecution as 'political propaganda' and AMY was called a 'political propaganda station' by Eric Gotts, head of the P.O. Detection Unit.

This may have been simply a ploy to encourage the magistrate to pass a heavier sentence, and AMY refuses to accept that it is a 'political' station. In fact, it comes much closer to Nick Catford's definition of a 'community-based' station than successful pirates like Jackie and Invicta.

AMY don't feel they have been specially singled out by the Post Office. To them detection and confiscation are part of the routine. You win some, you lose some.

STANDARD LONG, medium and short wave broadcasting falls within the heavily populated region 100 KiloHerz (KHz) to 27 MegaHerz (MHz). Above that in the MHz range the picture becomes interesting, as the table shows. The Home Office and Ministry of Defence take a major share of available channels, leaving amateur radio, FM radio, public mobile (ambulances, fire engines, taxis etc) and marine band (ship-to-shore) to haggle over the rest with the TV bands.

The Ministry of Defence has always argued it needs all its frequencies, though it's thought some of their allocations haven't been used since the war. But it's illegal to listen in to these frequencies and the MoD are a big lobby against opening up the MHz range for greater public use.

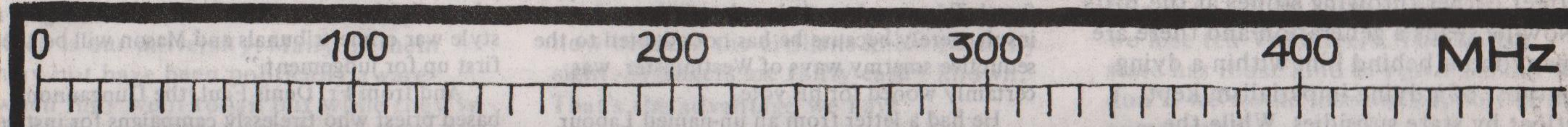
The number of individual channels available depends on the bandwidth chosen. Public mobile radio uses 12.5 KHz steps—80 channels to the MHz—since voice only traffic can use a narrow bandwidth. Amateur radio tends to favour 25 KHz steps—40 channels to the MHz. FM radio uses a bigger bandwidth, 300 KHz, because its music and stereo need a wider frequency range.

Looking at the MHz spectrum the league table of available frequencies looks like this:

625-line TV	370 MHz
Ministry of Defence	197.3
Public mobile radio	83
405-line TV	68
Aircraft/Marine	48
Home Office	33
Amateur	13.7
FM Radio	10

625-line TV seems reasonable enough as a league leader, but what does the Ministry of Defence do with all its frequencies? They could have anything up to 8,000 channels there.

27 Radio Control frequency band, also CB frequency channel
28-29.7 Amateur band
29.7-40 Ministry of Defence (Military) of lines
40-68 TV BBC 1 (405 lines) to be phased out
70-70.7 Educational and military use
71-88 public use (fire engines)
88-98 VHF amateur band
98-108 VHF Radio (FM)
108-136 Home Office
136-144 Home Office
144-146 Amateur Band (including 146.248MHz)
146-146 Public Mobile (including 146.248MHz)
149-175 Public Mobile (ship-to-shore)
175-215 ITV (405 lines)
214-400 Ministry of Defence (Military)
400-430 Public Mobile (420MHz is Home Office portables frequency band)
430-440 Amateur Band
440-470 Public Mobile (Police, Gas Board, Office, etc)
470-860 Public Mobile (Space in middle of beacons)
860-900 625-line TV (Space in middle of beacons)



State Security Radio Network

THE COUNCIL has existed on the understanding that it is an acceptable body, independent and impartial, capable of curbing the worst excesses of excessive journalists and newspaper bosses.

The extent of self-delusion is such that this idea has held sway even though the Council has developed into a political reflection of the ruthless ideas at play in Fleet Street boardrooms. The Council has done more to legitimise discrimination and unprofessionalism within the press than even its most cynical supporters could have hoped for. It has:

- * condemned industrial action within the press, and those who support it, as an attack on The Freedom of the Press.
- * endorsed the idea that press discrimination is justified against minorities like lesbians
- * supported press subterfuge and 'infiltration' in matters of 'the public interest' but has screamed unmercifully over breaches of confidentiality within the Council itself. (It is obsessive about the secrecy of its own proceedings).
- * allowed itself to be used continually as a propaganda vehicle by its most constant and devoted complainant, the National Front. Almost every meeting deals with at least one complaint made by the Front.

Just look at its make-up: there are 36 members; 18 from the press, 18 non-press. The chairperson is Patrick Neill QC, an extremely tall person with the added qualification of being Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.

Of the 18 press members, the NUJ has four seats, the bosses ten seats and their natural allies, the editors, two. Another two seats are taken by the bosses' 'sweetheart' union, the Institute of Journalists, which has fewer than 2,000 members and exists mainly to blackleg in disputes.

Ten new lay members were appointed last year: Mr. R. Bates (aged 58), a solicitor and former Mayor of Brighton; Mr. C. Carrol (42) Director of the Commonwealth Institute, Scotland; Mr. J. Chalmers (62), General Secretary of the Boilermakers' Society; Mrs. M.B. Chitty CMG (60), former Deputy High Commissioner in Jamaica and former head of the Commonwealth Coordination Department; Rev. Dr. R. D.E. Gallagher, OBE, MA, DD, (64), Superintendent of Belfast Mission, member of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee, IBA, and IBA Religious Broadcasting Panel; Mrs B. Huffinley (51), Regional Secretary of Yorkshire and Humber TUC; Mrs M. Parkes, M.Ed, JP (52), Principal lecturer, Homerton College, Cambridge; Captain R.N. Phillips, MRCVS, DVSM,

Press gang in shock shame scoop cover-up sensation

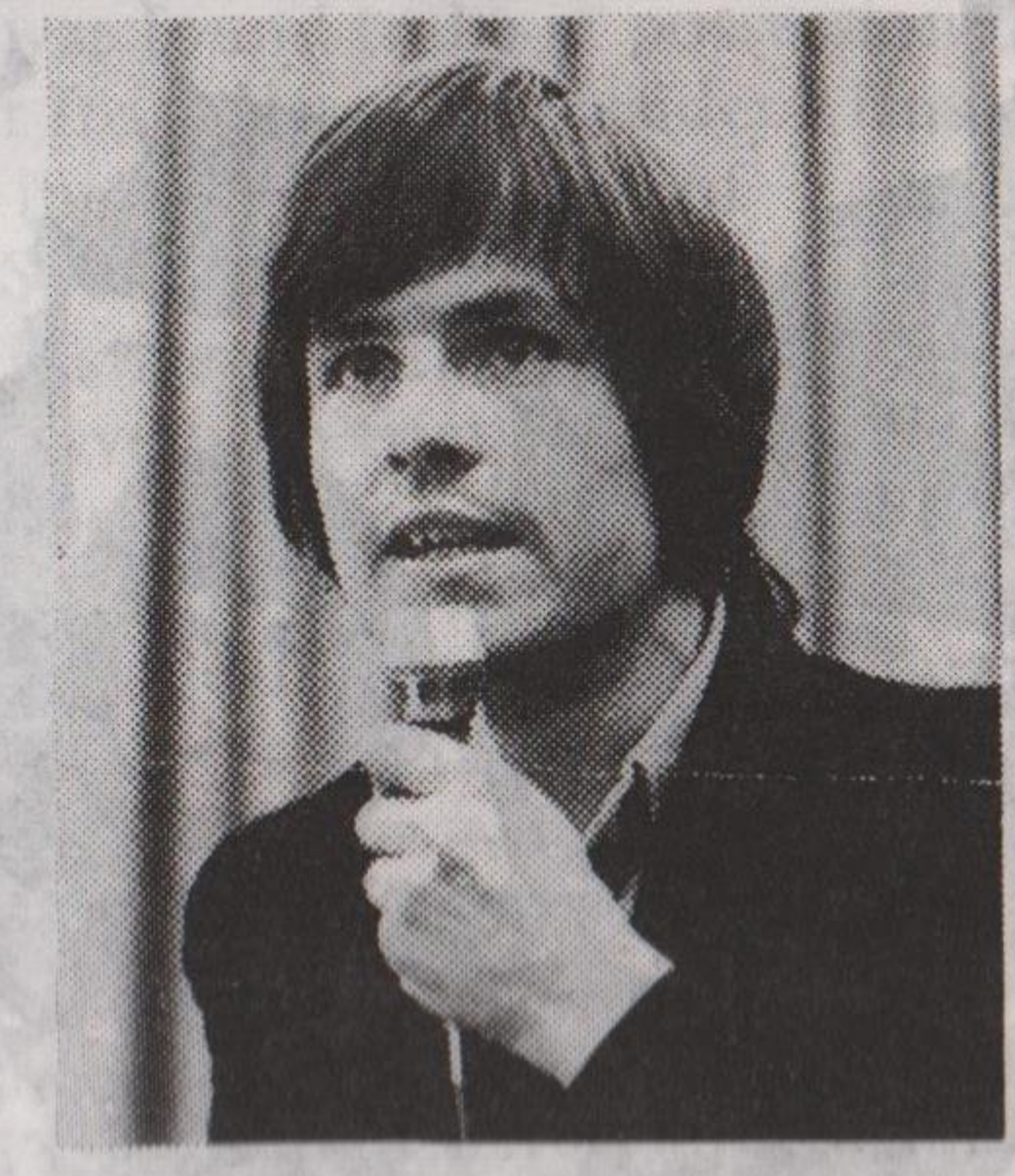
THE FIRST, welcome step towards the destruction of the Press Council is likely when the National Union of Journalists' annual conference faces an Executive call for the union to withdraw. If the union does pull out 30,000 of Britain's 35,000 working journalists, the Council will be stripped at last of the credibility which has kept it in existence for more than 20 years. AIDAN WHITE, a member of the Council, and of the NUJ National Executive, tells the story from the inside.

AFICD (60), former President of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons; Mr. F. Purcell (59), lecturer at Manchester Polytechnic; Admiral Sir John Treacher, KCB, FRAS (53), former Allied C in C Channel and Eastern Atlantic, director of National Car Parks.

Then there are Dr. A.C. Copisarow of business consultants McKinsey and Co. Inc., the Bishop of Edmonton, a professor, two Dames and a knight. There are no black people, no students, no miners or bus drivers, no homosexuals or representatives of other oppressed minority groups. It is a mockery.

Given this structure, Council members have nestled nicely into the comfortable appreciation of how the press is looking after their natural interests, pausing only to smack the wrists of headline writers, reporters and editors who let their enthusiasm stray the wrong side of accuracy and good taste. The 'West Highland Free Press' a radical local paper circulating in North West Scotland, was one that didn't. And it went further and published a stinging counter-attack.

The Council investigates complaints and then comes to an adjudication. If the complaint is upheld, the publication concerned is expected to reproduce the adjudication in its next appropriate issue. Most do, happy in the knowledge that it's just a matter of making it clear that it's the Press Council's view: some do add a footnote answering the criticism; some don't. The Council then issued another adjudication, highlighting the 'Free Press's' refusal to print the earlier one - and sent it to the Highlands and Islands Development Board,



Aidan White

a Government agency which funded the 'Free Press's' printers and provided much-needed employment in the area. It was a cynical attempt to force the paper into line. Again the Council showed its nasty side in dealing with the complaint by Sappho against the London 'Evening News' over a salacious expose of lesbian parents and artificial insemination by donor for lesbians. Sappho complained of subterfuge ('Evening News' reporters had posed as lesbians to get the story), of breach of promises given not to use photographs and the text of a discussion, and of failure to correct a misleading statement.

In an astonishing adjudication the Council rejected the complaints and declared open season for the press in its continuing war against minorities. It said: "There was discrimination in the limited sense that the articles were aimed at a lesbian organisation and lesbian couples to pose the question as to whether lesbian couples should be assisted in this particular way to bring children into the world by artificial insemination. The Council finds that such

discrimination as occurred was justified."

The issue which has most angered the NUJ, and has at last turned its leadership against the Council, is the continual interference in the union's industrial affairs.

In 1975, during a bitter dispute in Birmingham, two Labour councillors refused to have any dealings with the 'Birmingham Post' and 'Evening Mail' in support of NUJ members who had been locked out. The Press Council was furious: it issued a statement deploring the councillors' action as threatening the "freedom of the press".

The same sort of solidarity was given by the Labour councillors of Waltham Forest last year when journalists working on the 'Waltham Forest Guardian' went into dispute with their employer. The Council initiated its own investigation when borough officers were instructed not to talk to journalists trying to bring out a blackleg paper. The Council reaffirmed its 1975 position with a statement which accused Waltham Forest of discrimination: "The principle of unfettered and non-discriminatory dissemination of news must apply".

It is extraordinary that this glorious principle has not been invoked to deplore the action of 'Times Newspapers' Ltd., who have interfered with the dissemination of news for five months now. That may be due to the fact that Sir Denis Hamilton, one of 'The Times' management, is a Council member.

The Press Council is totally opposed to any workers taking industrial action which stops newspapers. As it is something of a trade union right to take industrial action, it is not surprising that the NUJ is likely to ditch its association with this organisation.

The Press Council is beyond reform. Only when it is killed off will we be able to get down to examining the best way to monitor the press.

The NUJ itself has the framework for some kind of correcting process: a Code of Conduct that prohibits any kind of biased, discriminatory, inaccurate or malicious journalism. It's a fine set of words, but no-one can pretend it's effectively used. Nor can anyone pretend that most journalists stick to it, because they plainly don't. But, it could be a good start if it were placed in the hands of a wider range of working people than the self-appointed VIPs of the Press Council.

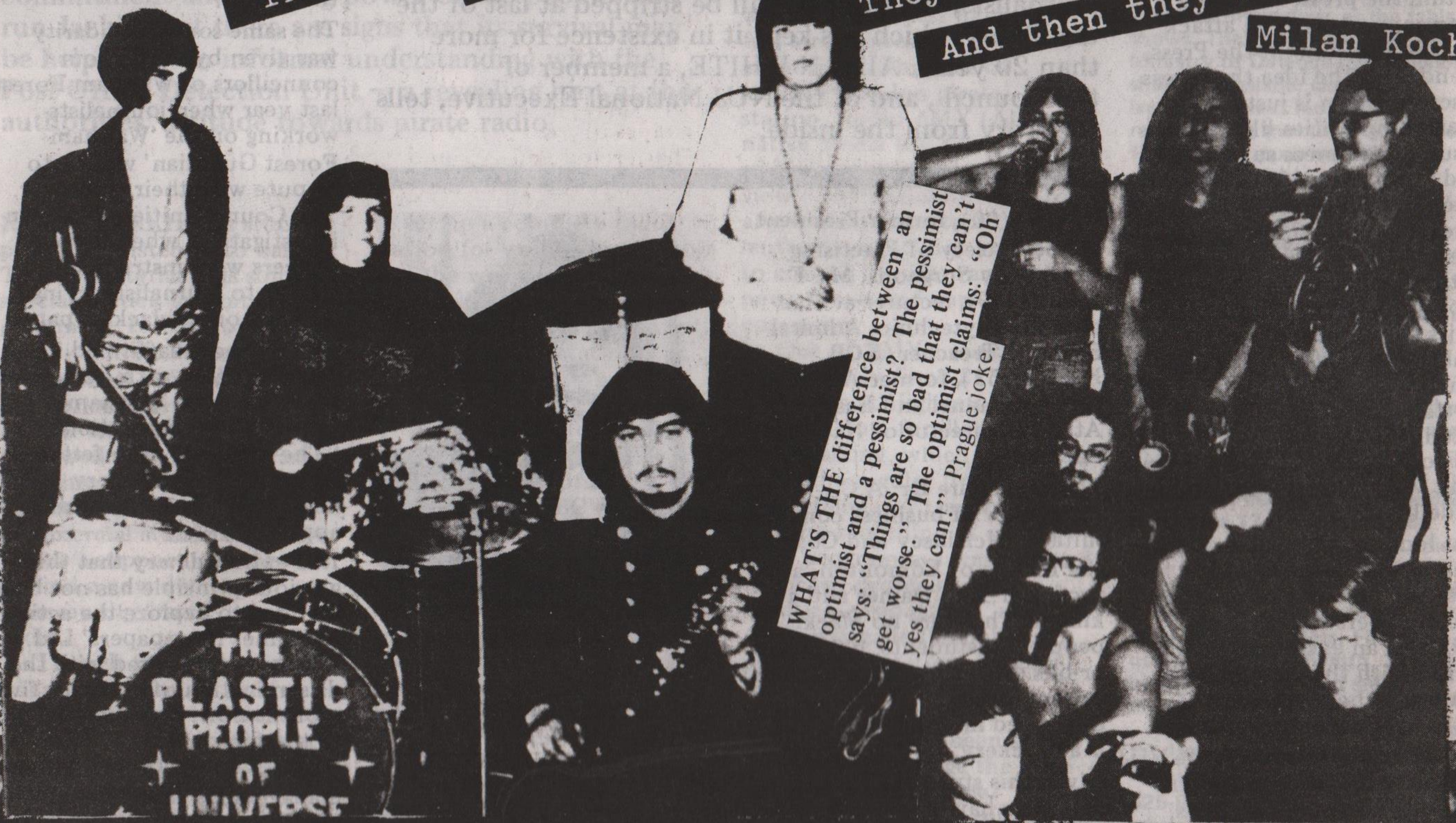
Those who never fell out of street
 Those who survived explosions in gasworks
 Those who crossed the street and were never run down
 Those who collected stamps
 Those who talked about sports every day
 Those who never saw the sun in their life
 Those who saved up half their lives for a car
 Those who only read their pay-cheques
 Those who only thought about what to wear
 Those who worried too much about their neighbours
 Those ordinary unordinary ones
 They will survive everything
 And the unordinary ordinary ones
 They will die

Milan Koch

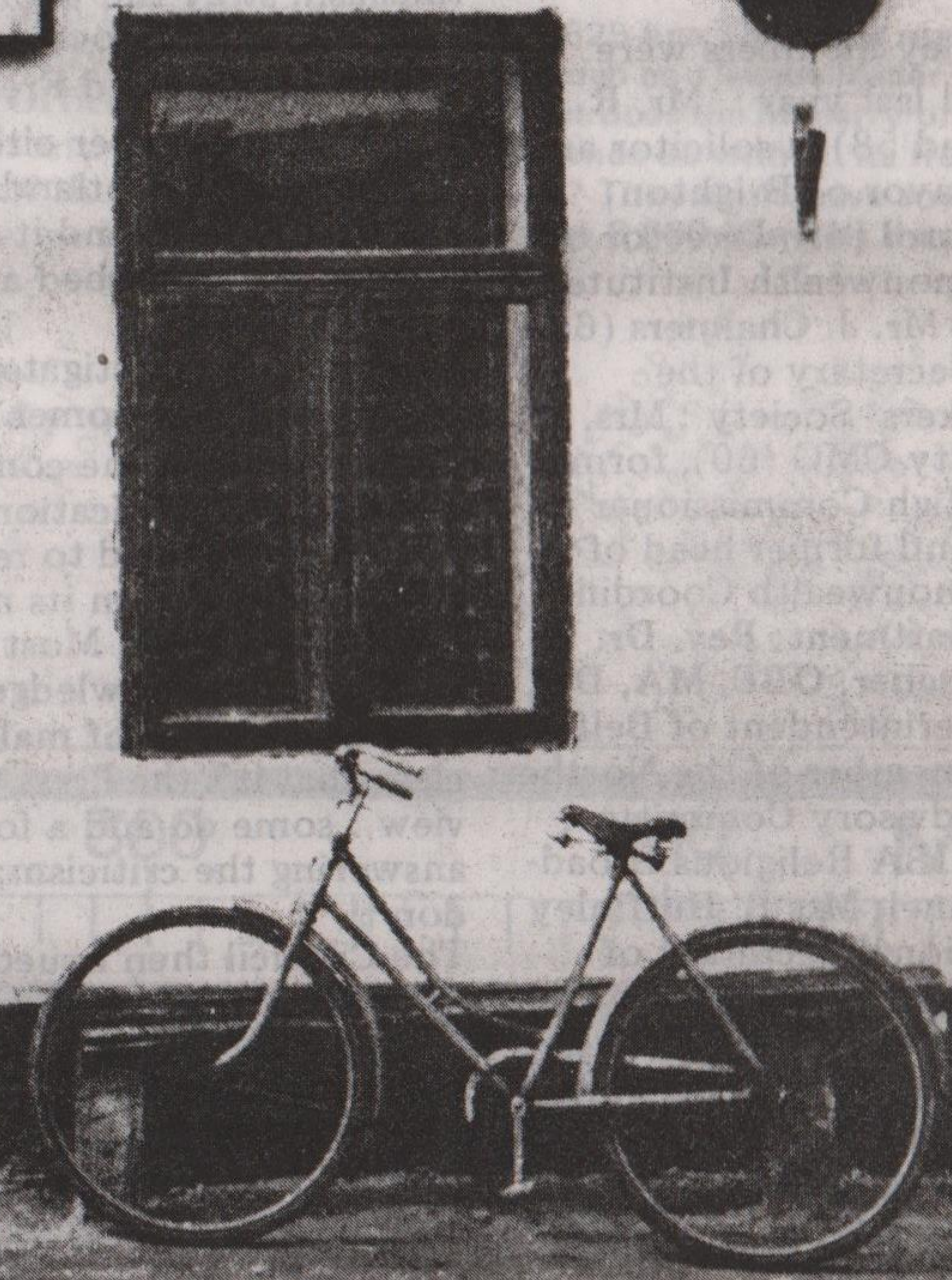
WHAT'S THE difference between an optimist and a pessimist? The pessimist says: "Things are so bad that they can't get worse." The optimist claims: "Oh yes they can!" Prague joke.

Sources: Samizdat communications from the Prague-based Committee to Defend the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS). Photos, texts, etc. copyright Plastic People Defence Fund.

every decent person condemns and what disturbs the spiritual health of the younger generation. Our young people like popular music and can devote



HUSTINEB



STOCKS the State

Underground

IN *The Leveller* issue 9 we drew attention to a then unknown and ignored phenomenon of opposition in Eastern Europe: the cultural underground of Czechoslovakia, a movement started by the now illegal hard rock group, the Plastic People of the Universe.

We reported on the battle between police and rock fans in the village of Kdyně, and a raid on an underground concert in Rychnov. We published pictures from the Rychnov concert featuring Milan Hlavsa, the Plastics' composer; singer Svatopluk Karásek; and the house where the concert took place.

Today, Hlavsa is back in jail, Karásek, after serving eight months, is being repeatedly harassed and interrogated, and the house no longer exists. It was blown up by the authorities, and its owner, Jan Princ, was jailed for three months.

His was the ninth major trial directed against members of the cultural underground. In the tenth and eleventh trials, 13 youngsters got sentences of up to two years for being at the Kdyně concert.

In the twelfth, the Plastics' artistic director, Ivan Jirous, was sentenced for eight months for a speech at the opening of an art exhibition. He had commented on the eternity of art in comparison with the transitory nature of the official organisations sponsoring the exhibition. At the time he had been out of jail for just a month.

And a month before his release again was due, his sentence was increased, following a prosecutors appeal, to eighteen months. This is his fourth jail term, so far. Police are already interrogating members of the underground in Prague as to what they will do when he comes out. Amnesty has taken up his case - as they did for the Plastics when they were jailed in 1976.

Another trial had been prepared against three more comrades of the Plastics, including playwright Václav Havel. They were arrested at a music and dance evening organised by the Railway Workers Union. But this one might not materialise, given Havel's international reputation.

The third festival of the underground took place at Havel's country house in October 1977. Since then, there has been a permanent police guard from a specially-built watch-tower by the house.

At present Havel is held incommunicado in his Prague flat with a police guard outside the door which prevents people visiting, and Havel from fetching food. They told him they would like to see him starve to death.

Yesterday news was published about the trial in the district court of Prague-West of Ivan Jirous, Svatopluk Karásek, Pavel Zajíček and Václav Brabec, who were tried for crimes of disturbing the peace.

Every civilized country has its laws. The power of the state protects the country and the individual citizens in it. And therefore the general rule is: anyone who does not conduct himself according to the laws and breaks them must expect to be prosecuted, tried and condemned. We have no intention of tolerating anti-social phenomena, including disturbing the public peace which, in

our Criminal Code, is covered in Article 202. Especially not if it is carried out repeatedly, in organized groups, and if it arouses public disgust and leads to a disturbance of morality.

If there are other countries where hooliganism and disturbances of peace are considered « normal », in which they are indifferent to drug-addiction among the young, where decadence and nihilism are a natural part of the life style, that does not mean that we would want to apply such a way of life here, or that we allow our young people to be infected in one way or another.

Those who were condemned performed for a number of

While the authorities might be reluctant to try Havel, they have no such inhibitions when it comes to the unknown working class kids who support this movement. Thus Jirí Chmel, a Charter 77 signatory, was sentenced to 18 months for showing people the charter, enabling them to sign it, and playing tapes of the Plastics and other underground groups. He was convicted although prosecution witnesses told the court they had been forced by the police to give their evidence. The witnesses were then charged with perjury and sentenced to two years.

Next in line for the Kafka treatment were three young workers in Brno: Petr Cibulka, Libor Chloupek and Petr Pospíchal, who get up to two years for organising underground concerts, copying tapes of the Plastics and distributing the Charter and underground literature. The court was especially annoyed that Cibulka was found to be in possession of an open letter from Havel to President Husák. (The letter is included in "Voices of Czechoslovak Socialists", published by Merlin Press.)

The Chief Justice remarked that Cibulka should really have been tried for undermining the state. Supporters were kept out of the

These last cases reveal a new attempt by the authorities to deal with the underground culture movement. After failing to stop its growth by jailing its focus - the Plastics - in 1976, they tried to scare the people on the periphery, by giving heavy sentences to unknown young kids. This didn't work either. So on March 30 the public and secret police raided a private flat in Prague and rounded up 18 people, including all the Plastics all over again. It was carefully planned. The Special Underground Squad led by Captain Felix Daniš, and complete with dog and film crew, burst in just as the Plastics were stubbornly confirming their criminal activity: on borrowed instruments (their own had been confiscated), and in a grand classical style, they were just performing a hilarious Anglo-Latin soap-bubble opera, "Hello Fellow - Ave Clave".

Undoubtedly we have reached a fine point in Czechoslovak art history: the police are so sophisticated in busting the underground that they create the happenings themselves - outdoing the unwitting artists.

PRÁVO



MUNISTICKÉ STRANY ČESKOSLOVENSKA

years as members of beat groups called The Plastic People of the Universe and DG-307. But not even the most tolerant person could call what they did art. Both modesty and the law prevent us from publishing at least one example of their lyrics. If we were to call them vulgar, it would be too weak a word. They are filthy, obscene. We can be absolutely certain that those who raised a hue and cry about the « persecution » of musicians in the CSSR knew very well what kind of elements were involved.

Our society does not tolerate any form of hooliganism, or disturbing of the peace and natural defends itself against moral filth and attempts to infect

Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned

Album by the Plastic People of the Universe (with 60-page book, "The Merry Ghetto")

"THE POLICE guns of all dictatorships are aimed at the men with the horns" concluded Czech novelist - now exiled - Josef Skvorecky in an essay on jazz in Eastern Europe. Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned has never been released in Czechoslovakia, and indeed the record was produced by exiled sympathisers without the knowledge of the Plastics themselves, from tapes smuggled out of the country.

They claim Captain Beeheart, the Mothers of Invention, the Fugs and the Velvet Underground as their influences, but their music is distinctively European. The band is a five-piece: Václav Brabec on saxophone and clarinet, Milan Hlavsa - who wrote the music - bass guitar, Josef Janicek, lead guitar, electric piano and vibraphone, Jirí Kabes, viola guitar and theramin, and Jaroslav Vozniak, drums.

The music is carried along on the rhythm section - mostly bass guitar and drums, but sometimes piano as well. It's insistent but not overpowering, and they vary constantly. Saxophone and violin improvise around them. Brabec has been described by a US critic as "probably the best saxophonist in the world today".

The lyrics are poems by Egon Bondy, and this is the first time his poetry has been published. They're not so much sung as spoken over the music - the voice coming over the rhythm section in much the same way as the sax and violin. The complete effect is reminiscent of parts of Robert Fripp's music - good music to get stoned to, in other words.

This music is now five years old, and it was recorded on primitive homemade equipment. Despite that the sound quality is high. The US critic described them as "the most significant rock group of the past decade", and one can only wonder what they must be playing now.

The LP comes with the 60-page book, about repression of the Czech musical underground. As well as a history of the development of the "cultural underground", it includes photos, collages, unknown samizdat literature and poetry, and news cuttings from the official press.

On the record sleeve there's a stanza from a song by the Fugs: "When the mode of music changes, The Walls of the city shake." The Czech authorities must agree.

Book and record are available (£5.30, including p&p) from the Plastic People Defence Fund, Boží Mlýn Productions, BM 1415, London WC1V 6XX. Also available at main London left bookshops.

Andy Curry

Fo: Laugh a Minute

Dario Fo started in cabaret and the small urban theatres around Italy. His early comic pieces were satirical attacks on middle class life in Italy and things like the cult of the hero and religious mystification.

By 1962 he had built a big enough reputation to be allowed to do a show on a newly-opened second channel of the state-controlled TV network. The programme — *Canzonissima* — was given critical acclaim. It was a vicious political satire which lambasted furiously sacred areas like the Pope and religion.

"We were 'warmly' applauded by the 'selected' audience," commented Franca Rame, Fo's wife and collaborator. "However, when we tried to say the same sort of thing before an audience of over 20 million people and in the most popular programme of the year (which *Canzonissima* certainly was), the heavens fell. The newspapers that had applauded our earlier show now unleashed a lynching campaign."

As a result, the TV governors asked for cuts to be made in the script. They were forced to abandon the programme and faced four law suits.

Meanwhile, between 1964 and 1968 they toured Italy, their box office takings getting larger all the time. But in 1968, they decided to drop out of conventional theatre. For as Franca Rame wrote: "... the haut bourgeoisie reacted to our 'spankings' almost with pleasure. Masochists? No. Without realising it, we were helping their indigestion."

The decision to leave conventional theatre was not a sudden conversion, or a greater politicisation for as Rame commented: "... the point that really mattered we took at the very beginning of our journey, 22 years ago ..."

The early comic farces, although not deeply political, had been understood by those in power: "Every night there would be an inspector in the auditorium checking our words one by one against the script and the Ministry of Entertainment would obstruct our touring arrangements ... reactionary theatre owners would refuse us their buildings and bishops would ask us to tear our programmes from the walls of their cities."

They faced constant harassment from the police and fascists. It did, however, have its amusing moments: "Dario was even challenged to a duel by an artillery officer, for having slighted the honour of the Italian army ... he even accepted the challenge on the condition that the duel should be fought barefoot as a Thai boxing match, of which he boasted being a regional champion. The artillery officer was never seen again."

They decided to work in the workers' social clubs (Casa del popolo): "The fronts of these buildings used to bear the inscription: 'If you want to give to the poor, give five coppers, two for bread and three for culture', and culture does not mean only being able to read and write, but also to express one's



Scene from 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist', production by Belt and Braces, running at the Half Moon Theatre, Alie Street, London E1, until May 5.

own creativity on the basis of one's own world view."

But as in Britain, these clubs "had become nothing more than shops, selling more or less alcoholic drinks, or dance halls or billiard rooms. I'm not saying that drinking, dancing and playing cards or billiards is unimportant. The trouble is that nothing more went on there."

Nuova Scena, Fo's theatre group, collaborated with the Communist Party's cultural organisation, a partnership which went well so long as they limited their attacks to the bourgeoisie and the state. They were, however, developing a critique of the Italian Communist Party which eventually caused the two to go their separate ways.

This was not without rancour. The party reacted by denouncing Nuova Scena. It threatened to close off its access to labour halls and other meeting-places and finally, boycotted its performances. So in 1970, Fo and Rame formed their present company: Il Collettivo Teatrale La Commune.

Fo's type of farce is left-wing "Basil Fawlty". In *We Can't Pay? We Won't Pay?*, two housewives get involved in hiding goods they have "liberated" from a supermarket. They have to hide the fact both from their law-abiding CP husbands and from the police who are conducting house-to-house searches to find the goods.

To carry the goods to a safe place, one of them pretends to be pregnant, which involves explaining away how she got pregnant to the second woman's husband. To cap it all, the Police inspector insists on searching the pregnant woman. To avoid this, they convince him a miracle has occurred and the baby is turned into sticks of celery. And so the complications get bigger and bigger, as the characters to and fro across the stage, never all meeting

Accidental Death of an Anarchist, the only other play of Fo's in English, is a far

more astringent play. Starting with the killing of an Italian anarchist railway worker Guiseppi Pinelli — at the hands of the police interrogators, it is about the cover-ups conducted by the state.

Through a series of misadventures, a person who you think is a lunatic impersonates the Professor who is meant to be leading a government investigation, following a police whitewash enquiry. To the police interrogators' surprise, he colludes with them in a further cover-up by getting them to straighten out their stories by first telling the truth. At which point a CP woman journalist appears.

There is an amazing scene where one of the police interrogators is showing how he beat up the suspect, pretending to be both interrogator and suspect. It's pure John Cleese knockabout comedy.

No device is spared. In one play he toured, several actors who had not appeared on stage would enter the hall looking for left-wing activists. They would read out a list of names while the actors protested. At most performances the audience was moved to throw out the police, at which point they would leap on stage and join the rest of the actors in the *Internationale*.

The secret of Fo's appeal is the high premium he puts on entertainment: "What are those laughs we put in there? We could take them out if we wanted to. But they provide a breathing space to make the audience pay attention. An audience which isn't used to following continuous discussion with no pauses, would grow bored after a while and lose its contact with what's being discussed"

I stopped going to church because I didn't like sermons and I still don't see why the other side should have a monopoly on laughter. Long Live Il Collettivo Teatrale La Commune!

Russell Southwood

Churchill: Shaking the norms

One would have thought that the time had long past when people could be shocked in the theatre, in the way, say, that Edward Bond's *Saved*, with its stoning of a baby in a South London park, shocked people in 1965. But Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* has had that effect, and undoubtedly for similar reasons. It is profoundly political — with a lower case 'p', but that is her style. It is aggressively sexually political. Not agit-prop, but 'art' — with powerful, startlingly original images that can't be argued with. If it is alienating, that is because it disturbs the most deep-seated assumptions about sexual roles and role conditioning.

Because it links sexual repression with capitalist oppression. Because it relates economic imperialism to sexual imperialism. Churchill: 'For the first time I brought together two preoccupations of mine — people's internal states of being and the external political structures which affect them, which make them insane.'

The first act is set in colonial Africa in the 19th century ('It was deliberately historically imprecise') where restless natives are shaking the foundations of Her Majesty's dominions. But it is a domestic drama that is acted out: the foundations of The Family are crumbling. The second act is set in a London park in the present — but with the same characters, 25 years older, 100 years further on in history. This dis-jointing juxtaposition — shattering all unity of time and place — is what finally 'marries' the 'external' and the 'internal'.

Churchill's real coup, though (thematic and theatrical) comes from having a man play the mother in the first act, a doll her daughter, a girl her son, and a white the black servant. And in the second act, a grown man playing a little girl. She thereby conclusively and very comically exposes double sexual standards and the suffering they impose on both men and women.

Having set her scenes, Churchill then hilariously up-ends expectations. Clive, the colonial governor and rigidly authoritarian husband and father, keeps his wife firmly subjected, but has a 24-hour hard-on for a neighbouring lady of independent means and manner. The wife pines romantically and unrequitedly for the heroic explorer Harry Bagley, a closet gay whose idea of conquering the natives is not quite the same as his Queen's, who's having it off with the servant and Clive's precocious young son (who prefers dolls to daddy) and who conveniently marries the governess (herself gay and in love with the wife) to salvage his honour at the suggestion of Clive whose absolute horror at a homosexual advance from his friend was one of the high points of the play. No soap opera this. All of the latent sexuality comes to the surface in the second act and Churchill shows her characters coming to terms with themselves. The final moment, when the

mother of the first act and the mother of the second (one and the same person) meet and embrace must be one of the finest and most fitting images to have been invented in seventies theatre.

Churchill: 'I had the image of a black man aspiring to white values and being literally a white negro. And the idea of a woman who has taken on men's values, a sort of man-made woman who has no sense of herself as a woman. In the same way that the black takes on white values and has no sense of his blackness.'

Caryl Churchill wrote *Cloud Nine* with the Joint Stock Theatre Company, starting with workshop sessions. The research was limited and amounted to looking through some children's books about explorers 'just to confirm this was the era we wanted to be in', and a talk in rehearsals from a man who'd been in India. Otherwise it was a matter of everyone involved 'exploring' themselves. Churchill: 'People talked about themselves and their own lives. They talked about their sexuality, and we did improvisations about stereotypes. One person would have a stereotype they would lay on another and the first person would find themselves becoming like that — how people would expect them to be. A wife expects her husband to be dominating, and he expects her to be hysterical. We made those things happen.' Caryl Churchill wrote the script, but a lot came out of the workshops 'and the company took a lot of responsibility for what it was like and what it was saying.'

This wasn't the first time Churchill had worked with theatre companies using a workshop approach. There had been *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* with Joint Stock in 1976. They'd started then with the idea of the Crusades, but 'we were getting into rather a mess thinking about people clanking about in armour.' They were taken with the idea of the Millennium and ended up with the Commonwealth rather than the Crusades — set in 1647, about the Levellers and the Ranters and their struggle with Cromwell. Churchill: 'We had debates in the workshops and talks about specific historical characters. We read a lot and talked about moments of amazing change and extraordinariness in our own lives, things turned upside down. We got ourselves fluent with the Bible, so the whole area was opened up and everyone knew what it was about.'

And with *Monstrous Regiment*, also in 1976, she wrote *Vinegar Tom*, a play about 17th century witchcraft with contemporary songs. 'They were thinking of doing a play about witches which is something I'd had in mind. We didn't do a workshop, just had a few meetings and they gave me a book they'd been reading.' The group approach was a departure for Churchill who had worked very much in isolation. 'Discussing with them helped me towards a more objective and analytical way of looking at things. Their attitude towards witches was in terms of economic pressures and the role of women in that society. They ensured that I approached the witchcraft with a cool analytical frame of mind. I was more aware than I had been before of what I was doing.'

Like many women Caryl Churchill's political consciousness came slowly and subjectively and grew out of her own personal experience

rather than as a response to public political events. 'I didn't really feel a part of what was happening in the 60s. During that time I felt isolated. I had small children and was having miscarriages. It was an extremely solitary life. What politicised me was the discontent with my own way of life, being a barrister's wife, just being at home with small children.' And the most politicising events were (with her husband) changing her way of life — when her husband left the bar and started working for a law centre ('we did not want to shore up a capitalist system we didn't like'), when after another miscarriage her husband's vasectomy ('that decision of having no more children'), of packing up lock stock and barrel for three months in Africa and three months on Dartmoor (when she wrote *Objections to Sex and Violence*) — me living with David and coping with things so that he could work for 10 years, so why didn't he take off to do what I wanted to do? And like Edward Bond, she has come only gradually to be able to intellectualise what has always been an intuitive socialist and feminist perspective — to analyse and to understand her own personal experience in terms of class society. 'My attitude then was entirely to do with self-expression of my own personal pain and anger. It wasn't thought out.'

But if one can measure political commitment by the adage of actions speaking louder than words, then Churchill rates high. Not just with the content of her stage plays, but with the stance she took against the BBC's censorship last year of her TV play *The Legion Hall Bombing* — an edited transcript of the trial and conviction in 1976 of Willie Gallagher who was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and who was then in the sixth week of a hunger strike at Long Kesh, a play intended to draw attention to the juryless 'Diplock Courts'. And with her active involvement in the Theatre Writers Union which she was instrumental in founding in 1975. 'I'm glad,' she said, 'you didn't ask what my politics are and how I try to affect the audience and change the world, because I'd have to say what everyone says and it just sounds like rhetoric. I'm not sure what it all means. I just do it.'

Cathy Itzin





The People's Choice?

EVERY four years or so, with a great whirring and grinding, a collection of little figures strut out from under Big Ben for a short mechanical show called 'Democracy'. The next few weeks pass with a flurry of paper through the letter box, flashing smiles and rosettes at the doorway, loud hailer vans competing in the streets with the chime of icecream vans, meetings attended by more than just the faithful few and finally the trooping of the people, into the polling booths for a quick tick, followed by collapse into an armchair for the goggle parade of pundits and politicians shambing into the early hours of the morning. Then it's all over. The little figures jerk off into the Palace of Westminster and the government winds back into its quiet machinations.

From the time of the Magna Carta, progressive groups in this country have tried to restrict the arbitrary powers of the State and widen the basis of democratic control. In this task, elections to parliament have always been seen as very important. In 1647, one of the Levellers argued that 'the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he; and therefore truly, Sir, I think it's clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government'. The Levellers wanted a more equal distribution of parliamentary seats, a wider franchise and elections every two years. Even though they represented important forces, both in Cromwell's army and in the civilian population, they were largely suppressed.

Almost 150 years later the London Corresponding Society, stirred by the French Revolution, demanded the vote for every adult person and annual elections, but again the demands were repressed. Because of wars, enclosures that threw people off the land and industrialisation, there was a slow switch to demands more related to conditions of work and wages. But riots in Bristol, Nottingham and Derby in 1831 when the Reform Bill was rejected showed that the issue of who should be able to vote was still an important one.

In 1837 the Chartists demanded universal suffrage for men, the secret ballot, payment for MPs, equal constituencies and annual parliaments. Most of the demands were finally met but only after strong pressure which was opposed by force in



which many people lost their lives. Agitation by the Suffragettes and others gave women the right to vote, but it was not until 1928 that men and women over 21 could vote on an equal footing. Only when these struggles were won did the Labour movement really look beyond the vote in their campaign for democratic rights.

Marx and many others made it clear that key institutions like parliament could not guarantee people control over their own lives. Behind the structures of political power lay the power of capital — the few who owned the factories, the railways, shipping and the land. After the 20s and the 30s demands for nationalisation of 'the commanding heights of the economy' became more prominent, together with those for a comprehensive welfare system and more equal education. After the 1939-45 war a militant electorate voted in a Labour government to put these demands into practice. Nationalisation produced huge corporations operating on behalf of the State



but supporting private enterprise. The welfare system failed to develop and elitism in education continued. With the help of Labour governments and Trade Union bureaucracies, labour demands were accommodated within the capitalist state.

Grass roots Labour movement pressure is building up again with a different set of demands, which at first seem to be very specific, local and unco-ordinated, but which when drawn together can be seen as a demand for more direct political democracy and workers' control in industry. Fights inside the Labour Party for reselection of parliamentary candidates, the struggle by Clay Cross councillors to keep rents down, occupations of factories threatened by redundancies, local fights against health service cuts together with traditional trade union struggles for better pay and conditions, all show this new mood.

We have to defend the rights which bourgeois democracy allows us, the rights to vote and, within limits, to say and think what we want, to organise, to demonstrate, and to strike. But we must also prepare ourselves to fight the state and capital in other ways. New types of organisation which are not the mirror image of hierarchical and patriarchal structures must be tried out. When the struggle for state power is on the agenda, we need more than just a vanguard of cadres waving the red flag.

What we need is ordinary people who in their daily lives have organised without the mediation of 'representatives' and 'experts' to control their own situations. Elections can be used as an opportunity to agitate against the limitations of our democratic rights and institutions.

Roger Andersen

Around the branches

The quinquennial problem for left parties: to take to the hustings themselves, or not? And where they don't, who to support? Dave Clark asked them: 'What are you going to do, and what do you hope to get out of it?'

The International Marxist Group will be standing candidates in about a dozen constituencies. Socialist Unity candidates include Tariq Ali — standing against Sid Bidwell at Southall; Pat Arrowsmith — standing against Callaghan in Cardiff and Brendan Gallagher against Mason in Barnsley, where the main issue will be Britain's presence in Ireland.

Tariq Ali says the Socialist Unity campaign will be worth doing even though the vote is likely to be low: "the point is to offer a socialist alternative to the Labour Government and offer people some sort of option." He estimates it will cost about £1,000 per constituency but argues the money will be raised from local supporters and people who will give money for an electoral intervention but wouldn't necessarily give it for any other campaign. Ali is angry at the SWP's decision not to go into a joint campaign with Socialist Unity, saying that if they'd gone in together, they would have got valuable TV time. Where the IMG has no candidate, they'll call for a Labour vote.

The Socialist Workers Party won't be fielding any candidates, despite a conference decision last year to do so. Simon Turner, National Secretary, says that decision — which included a call to go in with Socialist Unity where possible — was overturned by two later National Committee meetings. But he says there's been no dissent within the party to the new line. "Our political line will be that Labour has paved the way for a Tory victory". Nevertheless, they will be supporting the Labour Party but running their own campaigns in the localities stressing the line of building up the SWP as a socialist alternative.

SWP members won't be supporting Socialist Unity — though some of them apparently might help Pat Arrowsmith.

The Communist Party will be standing about 40 candidates of its own and supporting left Labour candidates where they can. In general they've tried to stand against right wing Labour MPs,

though, as National Agent Malcolm Cowle points out, there isn't much political mileage in just standing against right-wingers if they've had people on the ground building a left-wing presence in the labour movement. So in Hackney North the CP will be standing, despite the candidacy of left-Labour Ernie Roberts.

The general strategy will be "to see the defeat of the Tories and the return of a Labour government"; and afterwards to use their influence "to force the government left". Cowle estimates that it will cost £1,000 a constituency. Despite rumblings from some in the party, Cowle considers it a "bargain".

Militant will be campaigning on the slogan "Labour to power on a socialist programme" and paying special attention, in the words of Militant editor Peter Taffe, to "a number of candidates who support our ideas". He instances Dave White's campaign in the Tory marginal of Croydon, where a 2% swing would bring it over to Labour, as a suitable place for Militant activists. Taffe estimates that the group will be able to mobilise upwards of 2,000 supporters to help bring in the votes nationwide.

"Many Militant supporters will be working particularly in constituencies where left MPs are in a dicey position — for example Eddie Loyden in Liverpool Garston or Eric Heffer in Liverpool Walton. Those MPs may not necessarily support us but we will be giving our support to the whole party anyway to bring about the defeat of the Tories."

The Workers' Revolutionary Party had not finalised their position by the time we went to press but a spokesperson told us they will be standing candidates on a national basis. Although the Party has taken a trouncing in some of the by-elections it's fought, they still think it's worth while in terms of taking their message to the people and building up their party.

A longer inch to live in

AFTER BEING an independent, out of any political group, though involved in many political campaigns, for the last ten years, I joined the Labour Party as the end of last year, and I'm going to vote and work for Labour in the forthcoming general election.

This will probably be greeted by cries of horror by many *Leveller* readers. How can he, you might ask, in view of the record of the Wilson-Callaghan government. The last four-and-a-half years have seen a steady erosion of democratic rights, marked by such atrocities as the Criminal Law Amendment act, the throwing out of Phil Agee and Mark Hosenball, the ABC trial complete with state-organised jury rigging, the strengthening of police powers, the continuation of the war in Ireland and the introduction of anti-Irish legislation in Britain under the guise of 'Prevention of Terrorism'. Through its cuts in public spending, the Labour Party has presided over the very reverse of its pledge to produce 'a fundamental and irreversible shift of power in the direction of working people and their families' made in the 1974 election.

Still, I'm going to vote Labour. Not because a Thatcher Government would, as some people fear, preside over the introduction of a system in this country approaching, if not Pinochet's Chile, then at least the well-spoken, liberal repression of West Germany, the country Mrs Thatcher most admires. Thatcher, Keith Joseph, and the rest would probably like to. But there are limits, as the miners proved to Heath, and as the organised working class would undoubtedly prove to Thatcher.

Let's examine what the short term effects would be on the sort of people who read the *Leveller*. The fundamental question of British politics is class struggle, or (as it will be put endlessly during the election campaign) which Party will be best able to form a Government which can 'deal with' the Trade Unions. No political party possesses enough power to reduce the strength which the unions have, because that power is a misdirected, badly-led, often wasted and usually divided refraction of the real

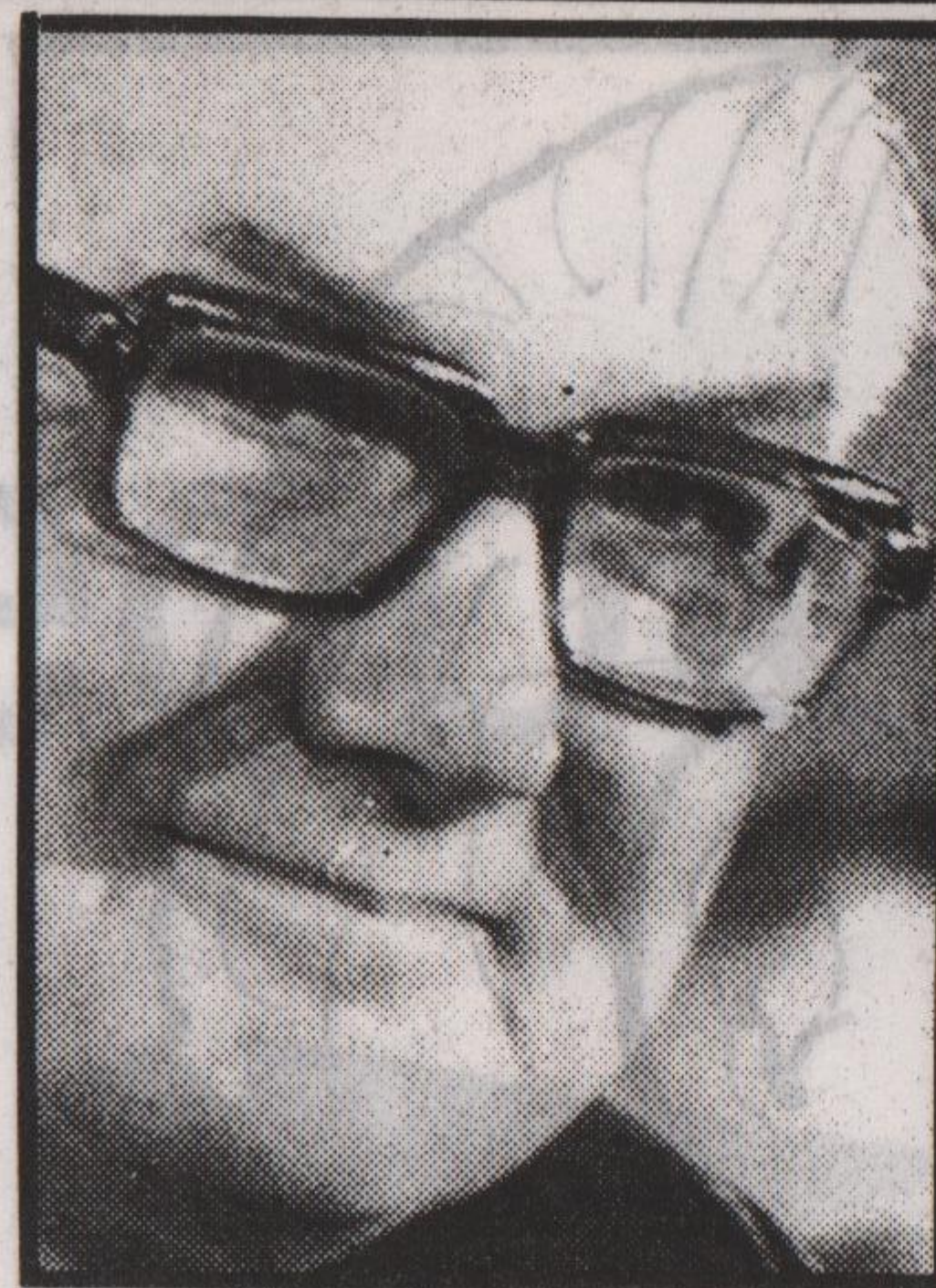
power of working people in our capitalist society. Mrs Thatcher may dent it, but she won't break it. But she will have to persuade her assorted bunch of rabid, NAFFite, racist, county and suburban supporters that she's 'doing something'.

That 'something' will be attacks where the organised working class probably won't hit back. Social security 'scroungers', 'immigrants', 'Irish', 'sexual deviants', 'terrorists' and 'terrorist sympathisers', 'marxists' of every hue in education, the media and the unions — they will be Thatcher's targets. Not so much through legislation, as through Government initiative, through the courts, bosses' organisations such as the Economic League, the yellow press and the respectable knee-jerk reaction of Levin and Worsthorne.

'Monetarism' as preached by Joseph and the Tories' economists-come-lately is impossible. Capitalists are kept afloat by Government money. If you think cuts have been bad so far, you wait. Nothing at all for community or experimental arts, for courses in education which don't train people exclusively for the job market, for job creation programmes which benefit alternative projects. If there had been no job creation programme, *The Leveller* wouldn't exist in the form it does now — because the Publications Distribution Co-operative, has relied in great part on job creation money. That may only be a pin-prick in terms of national politics, but it's important for me.

The parties of the far left, and many independents, have argued for the past ten years or more that the real struggle was to build an alternative to the Labour Party and its domination of working class politics. That alternative is not in bad shape, in the form of resistance to the cuts, to government-imposed wage limits, to the removal of democratic rights. More importantly, it is there in the affirmation that society can be organised on different lines — which comes above all from the women's movement.

The left parties have always seen these movements as contributing to their accession to power within the Labour movement as a whole; but the practice has been



different. While maintaining their commitment to an alternative vision of society, these organisations have never been afraid to use the unions and parliamentary politics as one of their many weapons. The result has been a greater cross-fertilisation of ideas between the socialist left and the Labour Party, than ever before. Fights which partly take place in Parliament, like the struggle against restrictions on abortion, or the fights over state secrecy and covert action which were at the core of the Agee and ABC affairs, catapult those issues which socialists want discussed before the labour movement and the country as a whole.

That possibility would disappear if Labour lost. Callaghan, Mason, Healey, Rees and all the rest would re-assume the leadership of the great party of the anti-Tories to which we would all perforce belong. Once more, the return of a Labour Government would be peddled as the panacea for national ills, as it was in 1974.

I don't think anyone takes seriously the assertion that voting, as against any other action in our society, such as joining a union, drawing the dole, or taking part in a campaign with a limited political aim, is 'reformist'. No-one thinks a General Election is an opportunity to install socialism, and no one is arguing that a Labour Government would be a 'socialist' government. But it would offer greater opportunities for socialists to continue the struggle for socialism.

In 1970, when we were facing the advent of the Heath regime after the complete discredit of Labour amid a welter of attacks on working people and its total capitulation to US imperialism in Vietnam, Richard Neville, of all people, wrote that 'There may only be an inch between Labour and the Conservatives, but it's in that inch we live'. I agree; but I also think that under Labour, we can go on lengthening the inch.

Phil Kelly

Feeding Labour's donkeys

THERE'S A saying that in many working class areas, the Labour Party could field a donkey and still get it elected to Parliament. Doubtless there is some ancient legislation which prevents farmyard animals from taking a seat in the House of Commons. But in a general election especially, the identity of the candidate is definitely overshadowed by the party she or he represents.

The loyalty which the working class shows to the Labour Party in elections is mirrored in a similarly uncritical commitment party members have to their local candidate, to the party as a whole and to Jim and Denis their leaders. Even those of us who, during a period of Labour government, show the most public hostility to the parliamentary leadership, close ranks against the Tories.

Like Cardinals off to Rome when the Pope dies, or eels returning to breed in the Saragossa Sea, members of the party like myself will be reporting for duty with constituency organisations, collecting our leaflets and going out "on the knocker" for Labour. All the campaigns, the publications, the dizzy social whirl of our private lives, are pushed to the side. And in a seemingly bizarre reversal, we become comrades with our former foes.

I was shocked when I heard the government had fallen. Not because I didn't expect it, but because, for me, the most important forms of political activity were suddenly changed. A naive socialist believing in "us and them" politics, I was faced with a dramatic shift in who were "us" and who were "them". A dozen questions, handily ignored in my day to day work, immediately demanded an answer.

Looking around at other young party activists, I sometimes envy their enthusiasm and natural conviction. Many, of course, pursue careers in the labour movement on the



assumption that when they are MPs or union leaders, then the task is done. But I cannot have that ambition and must look for a more convincing reason to believe in the party.

My first argument is easy. Even the briefest look at the Tories is enough to reassure me how much we need a Labour government. In the past five years, it is true, the government has abandoned any pretence about being socialist. But if a Tory victory put just one more woman or man on the dole, deprived one more parent of the rightful custody of their children, or caused one more death in Ireland or Zimbabwe, this election will have mattered.

My second argument is a response to those who say in the long run it doesn't matter. I have listened to them with care and I've looked in their books, pamphlets and newspapers to find their alternative. As yet I have found no individual, party or campaign which has effectively denied our need for a Labour government. Instead, I have discovered how they all feed off the failure and success of social democracy.

But there is a more positive reason why I as a socialist, continue to work for the Labour Party alongside my other activities. From within, I can see how its socialist philosophy can be translated into the policies of a socialist government. And I can also see how its links with the working class and its achievement of state power have created an internal conflict which represents in the most remarkable detail the wider class struggle. If we cannot win the arguments in the Labour Party, we have little chance outside.

And so I'm off. What exactly I will be doing depends on others as much as myself. I hope I don't have to work for an ass, pushing carrots through letterboxes. But, if I do, I hope we win. Because the thought of being comrades with Jim and Denis for the next five years is more than I can handle.

Brian Deer

Parliament's far left: Vote for the marginals

AROUND THE time of the February 1974 election, a Kingston Polytechnic lecturer conducted a detailed survey among Labour parliamentary candidates who were not at that time MPs. Those who believe the Labour Party is about to be gripped by a Marxist conspiracy would have found the results gratifying. No less than 70 per cent of the 159 candidates who responded believed that the class struggle between labour and capital was the central question of British politics; 89 per cent were in favour of nationalisation of profit-making industries; 88 per cent wanted to abolish all private education; 80-85 per cent favoured nationalisation of all or most financial institutions, 84 per cent were in favour of Britain giving financial and diplomatic support to liberation movements in southern Africa.

If all this is true, I hear you say, what went wrong? Assuming those interviewed were not lying through their teeth and that they were reasonably typical of most Labour candidates, how come the gap between promise and delivery is so vast?

There is no simple answer apart from the obvious that the establishment has 800 years' experience of absorbing potential threats through the dishing out of honours and quangos to its enemies as well as its friends.

Perhaps it should also be borne in mind that for the most part the Parliamentary Labour Party is not made up of the sort of people who responded to the survey quoted above, many of whom are destined only ever to fight hopeless or marginal seats. By and large those chosen to fight the 'safe' seats in the industrial towns of Scotland and the north of England or the valleys of south Wales tend to be loyalists. They usually owe their selection either to the block vote of dominant trade unions or to a power base in local politics and perhaps just a little help from a friendly Labour Party regional officer.

Once in parliament, office or the prospect of office is usually sufficient incentive to deprive the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party of whatever ideals they may have brought with them to Westminster. Until recently the prospect of preferment has meant that most of the pressure on an MP to conform has come from above. In the last



Left MPs to support (from top): Audrey Wise, Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson, Joan Maynard.

few years, however, a growing number of local Labour parties have begun to insist that their MPs should be more accountable to the Party they are supposed to represent.

The last Labour Party Conference approved (albeit in a rather watered down form) changes in the rulebook which will provide for all sitting MPs to have to face a vote of confidence from their constituency party once during every Parliament, failing which they will have to fight to hold the nomination in competition with any other candidates who wish to apply. This is a healthy development which has already begun to have a truly wondrous effect on the minds

of some MPs. The mere prospect of being held accountable has brought deadwood tumbling out of rotten boroughs the length and breadth of the country. The constituency I live in, for example, has had the same Labour candidate and MP since 1924. We have replaced him with a good, young leftwinger and membership has nearly doubled.

This being so all moderates can sleep easily in their beds. The Parliamentary Labour Party, far from being infiltrated by 'extremists', remains as far as it has ever been from having a majority genuinely committed to the Party programme. If this is so, what makes a socialist want to be a Labour MP? There are two basic reasons. One is that he or she may be idealistic enough to feel that a properly organised group of socialists in Parliament can make a difference. Secondly, a socialist can without illusions look upon Parliament as a platform for a point of view which might not otherwise find expression.

If all else fails, a decent MP can at least be effective as a glorified social worker rescuing people from the bureaucracy: saving immigrants from the clutches of the Home Office; Irishmen from the Prevention of Terrorism Act; squatters from the conspiracy laws; and so on.

This may provoke sniggers from some on the left, but many are quick off the mark to lobby the handful of reliable socialists in Parliament when it comes to preventing changes in the abortion laws, saving Phil Agee, or resisting the Criminal Trespass Law.

In a nutshell what I'm saying is this: there are obviously no grounds for believing this election will see an infusion of sufficient new blood into the Parliamentary Labour Party to herald the socialist millenium. But for goodness sake exercise a bit of discrimination. Where you've got a decent candidate or sitting MP, get out and work for him or her. We shouldn't exaggerate, however. Reselection or not, the power of the block vote and the local mafia go on stacking the Labour benches with place-men has not been greatly diminished. With certain exceptions the new crop of candidates for safe Labour seats looks remarkably like the old.

Chris Mullin

The law against the left

DON'T VOTE for the National Front: **The Leveller** can print this. Under the terms of the 1949 Representation of the People Act, anti-racist activists can't.

The law sets strict limits on candidates' expenditure, and adds that anyone who spends other money on propaganda for or against particular candidates commits an offence. The idea is that by knocking the Front you help the other candidates, or, for that matter, if you support one, the others suffer.

It is an Act more honoured in the breach than the observance, but the police are starting to take it up as a way of hitting radical fringe campaigners. Two members of the Southwark Campaign against Racism and Fascism are up in court on May 22, charged in relation to a leaflet issued in last year's London borough elections. Police refuse to say who lodged the complaint.

The Anti-Nazi League regard this law as ridiculous, but they have taken legal advice, and the 20 million odd leaflets they are distributing now read: 'Say no to the National Front'.

There has only been one prosecution under it: last year the SPUC was convicted for circulating a leaflet describing the stance on abortion of all the candidates in the Ilford by-election. An appeal is pending. (The leaflet happened to register that only the Tory candidate was anti-abortion.)

Meanwhile, the ANL are following new legal lines around the election: the 1976 Race Relations Act makes it an offence to distribute, as well as produce, racist literature, and Post Office mandarins can expect injunctions when the Front offers racist leaflets for distribution to voters' homes. The UPW has already succeeded in getting a clause in its national agreement with the Post Office, that members will not handle literature that breaches the Act.

The real face of reaction

THE KEY points of the new Toryism stem from adherence to monetarist theory, and reliance on market forces. Cuts in public expenditure will mean the end of a range of subsidies to industry which at present guarantee anything up to four million jobs. Whilst they're unlikely to go as far as the loonier monetarists would like, they are already calling for cuts in the order of £2,500 million in public expenditure, much of which would cut back the positive role of state involvement in private enterprise. The National Enterprise Board would be withdrawn from much of its activity, becoming instead a gatherer of 'lame ducks' in areas where mass unemployment would be politically dangerous.

Loosening of planning controls, juggling with environmental limitations, a weakening of the inspectorate system, would combine to ensure that the work process itself becomes harder and more demeaning.

In education, we can also expect a 'return to traditional values' and the dominance of Black Paper thinking. The plans to bring in a universal exam at 16 will be scrapped and replaced with the old GCE system, ensuring that examination success dominates a child's life-chances. The moves towards comprehensive education will be reversed. The private sector can expect relief and encouragement — probably through the tax system — while inner city schools will languish. At higher level, university expansion will be stopped and vocationally-oriented courses at the polys stepped up. And we can expect a heated debate about repayable loans instead of grants for students.

Two of the Tories' strongest populist campaigning points are on **social security** and **law n' order**. On social security, Tories demand cut-backs. The already draconian inspection system will be reinforced in the name of hounding out the 'scroungers' and its effect will wash over all claimants. Proposals to tax benefits for strikers' families will be put forward, as will an attempt to stop instant tax refunds for strikers themselves. Shadow social services spokesman Patrick Jenkin floated the idea of 'starving them out' during the bakers' strike last year and the Tories' long-range theory

is to keep payments so low they force workers into the lowest paid jobs.

Jenkin is also on record as wanting to see National Health Service patients contributing an element towards their food and upkeep. There will be a dynamic increase in private medicine.

On **law n' order**, the Tories can expect support from a citizenry said to be alarmed at the rising crime rate. Its effect will include increasing police powers, lengthening custodial sentences and bringing in 'glass houses' for dealing with young offenders. High on the list for corrective treatment will be the young of the inner cities — particularly the poor and the black — thrown out of work by the decline of traditional industries and the cut-backs to be enforced on local authority spending. And hanging will be back on the agenda.

On **Northern Ireland** there will be little change. More security, a looser rein on the forces and police, a reliance on more counter-insurgency techniques (and their further extension to the mainland), and a closer relationship with the Unionists.

In **industrial relations** their policy will be to outlaw the closed shop, repeal or moderate the Employment Protection Act and to insist on postal ballots. Proposals for legislation are in the air, but even the most die-hard Tory is wary of grappling with the power of the unions. Instead attempts will be made to diffuse that power, to divide and rule, to set off the leadership against the membership, the newly-fashionable self-employed against the ranks of organised labour, the white collar against the blue collar.

It won't be done overnight but we will notice the effects in the morning. Playgroups, community groups and inner city legal projects will find their budgets called in for questioning. Council house programmes will be 'reviewed', private developers will get the green light for land earmarked for local authority housing. Police arrest figures will go up, immigrants deported will increase and families trying to re-unite through the maze of legislation will find it takes longer. Jobs will decline even faster in industry as capital finds a more profitable home in South East Asia or tower

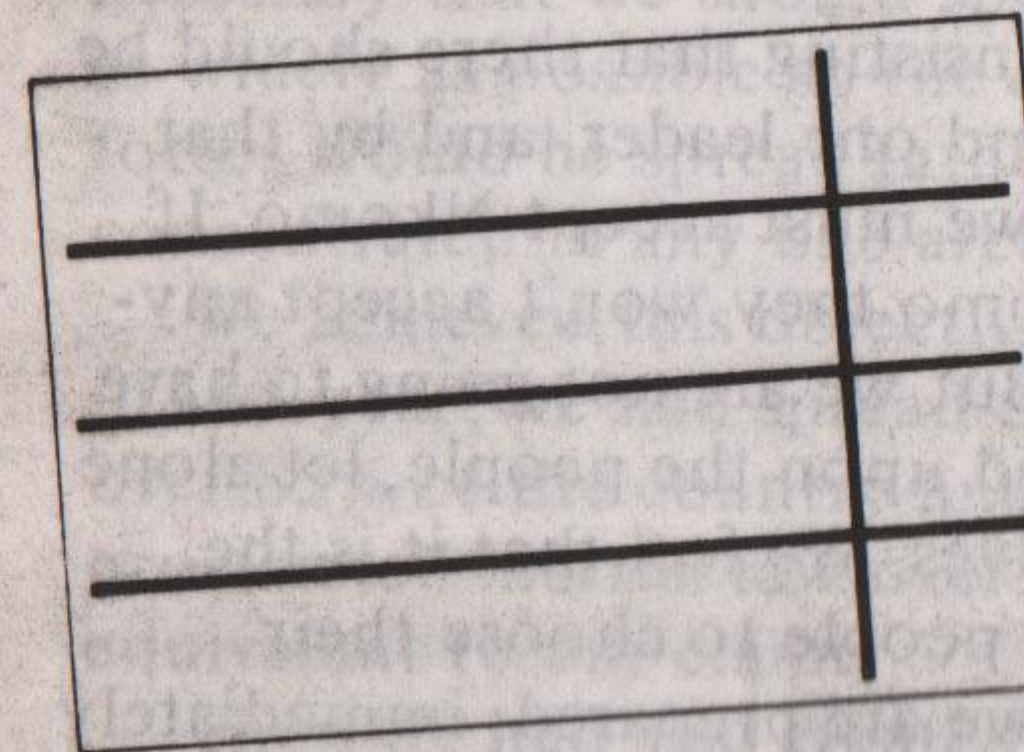


David Clark



IF VOTING could change the system (the old anarchist slogan runs) they wouldn't let us do it. But most of us, even those who recognise this, will be voting, and why not?

It seems a pretty harmless activity, after all. It doesn't take long, no-one gets hurt, and it can give you a positive post-polling euphoria as you walk out of the booth with your head held high and a great feeling of solidarity with your fellow-voters. And when they're all counted up, you can say: "One of those is mine, and we won" or "put up a great fight". What could be more politically fulfilling?



What could be a bigger fraud? It is the solidarity of the suicide pact. Far from exercising that famous freedom of choice, voting just endorses the withholding of it.

All elections are rigged. In some countries this is done by force of arms, or by outlawing certain parties. Other governments falsify the returns (and no-one can do anything about it) or allow only one party to take part. In Britain, of course, we are much more sophisticated. It is done through economic and ideological channels, through the superior resources in the hands of the contestants supporting the capitalist state, through propaganda and control of the media, through the absorption of the radical opposition into the Labour Party, and the "outlawing" of that not absorbed as "extremist" — the whole apparatus of bourgeois consensus politics that I thought the left was supposed to be breaking down.

To adapt another classic slogan (the old ones are still the best ones), no matter how you vote on May 3, a centre/right government will get in.

Don't vote — it only encourages them

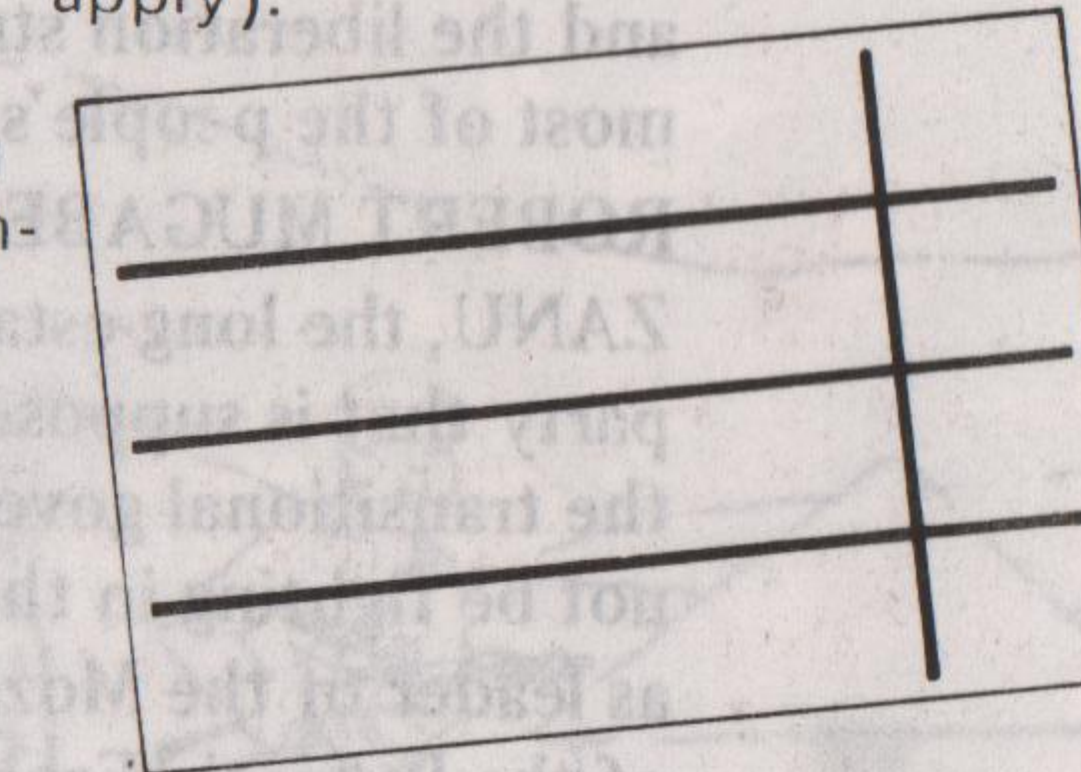
The Tories in government will not behave like a military junta because organised labour won't let them. The Conservative Party is, after all, the "political wing" of the CBI and the last things the City wants are strikes, insurrection and blood on the streets, with the disruption of production that these tend to entail.

The British political problem, I've always been told, is the failure of the organised working class to use its economic bargaining power for political change. Thatcher will be checked by labour; but by an angry rank-and-file, not by the "secondary Tories" of the Labour front bench.

There is a creaking crevasse between these two, and leaders on both sides are busy slinging rickety ladders across them. But millions of people won't risk crossing them.

Thatcher will win the election by default, not because people have been turned into mean, vicious self-seekers like herself, but because of a mass defection

from Labour. In the Edge Hill by-election the turnout was 56%. On May 3 it won't be much higher. (And it's a pity that the democratic advance instituted in the Scotland and Wales referendums, that abstentions count as a vote against the whole thing, and the result is not valid unless the winner gets 40%, won't apply).

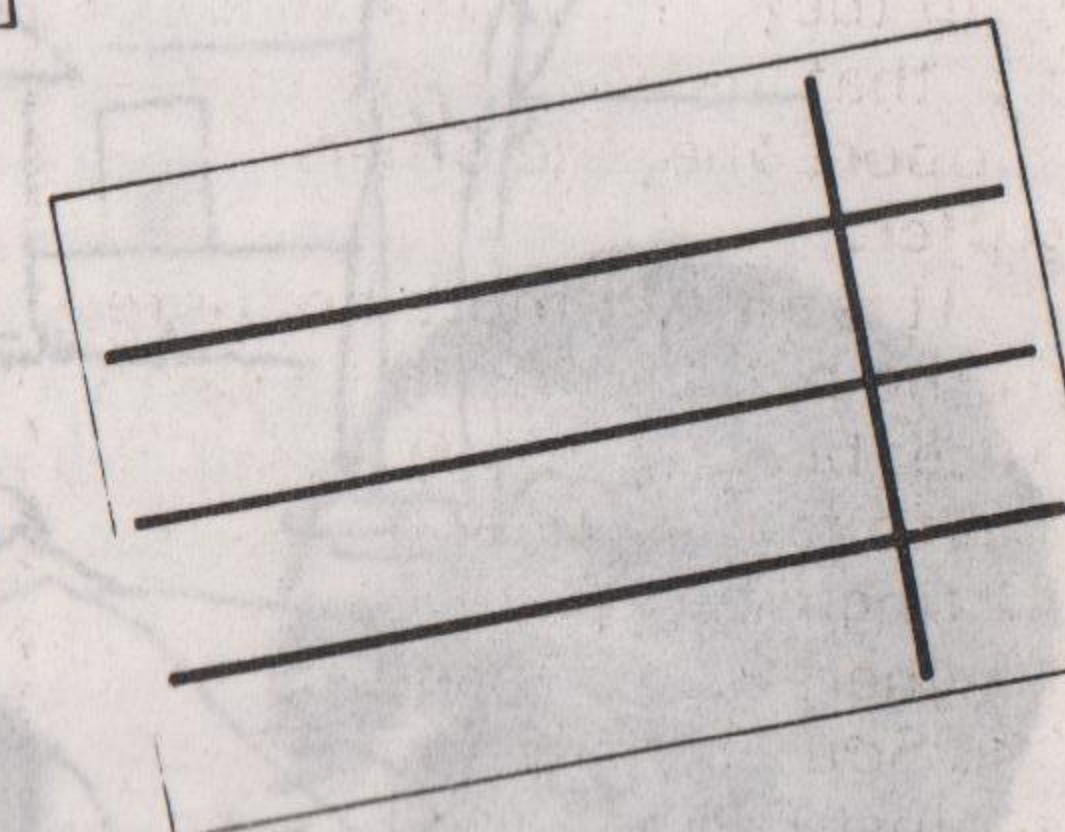


But isn't there an alternative for some lucky voters? Those in Edge Hill, for instance. They had a Socialist Unity candidate, and he placed before them a most attractive programme.

He also got 126 votes and the IMG probably picked up more than a dozen recruits.

But what did it cost the IMG, in terms of wasted resources and lost credibility, to make such fools of themselves? To be paraded before the watching millions at the end of a list of political deadbeats, sandwiched between a law-and-order lunatic with 330 votes, and Lieutenant Commander Boakes, who didn't even visit the constituency but still got 36. Is this building the movement?

There is such sickening inconsistency in the British left's attitudes to elections. Liberation movements all round the world have always seen the trap of taking part in rigged elections.



And how the left applauds them! More power to Robert Mugabe, let a thousand missiles fly! Get dug in, SWAPO comrades!

I've not heard advice from the British left on how people in the Soviet Union should treat elections, but in the last week I've been reminded several times that the Bolsheviks took part in elections up to 1917, as if next October Tony Benn was going to ride in triumph on the High Speed Train from Bristol while the Royal Marines stormed Buckingham Palace.

Of course there is no Bolshevik Party here. But there is a whole range of alternative politics taking shape, creating channels for people to extend their control upwards, which is how democracy works — not by accepting restrictions imposed on political activity from above.

There won't be any radical change until there's a mass political will for it. That's what we're working towards, and when it happens, Labour / Conservative elections won't come into it.

Meanwhile, if you have to go to the polling booth, for socialism's sake write something on the ballot paper that's more constructive than an 'X' on a list prepared for you by the state.

Tim Gopsill

How to report the left

THE LEVELLER brings to a wider audience edited highlights of an internal 16-point plan designed to keep the nose of provincial newspaper journalists out of election libels. The august Newspaper Conference, the self-important London editors' cartel, prepared a guide, most of which is deadly dull, but try these:

- Statements which associate Labour party members with Communist party 'front' organisations or any bodies which have been proscribed by the Labour party are dangerous, as too, it is unwise to describe the National Front or other right-wing candidates as 'fascists' or 'racialists' because such imputations are difficult to prove.
- The word 'crypto-' should not be used as it implies that, for instance, a crypto-Communist or fascist is someone who deliberately conceals his real political beliefs.
- The attribution to a candidate of views or aspirations akin to those of Eastern European governments could imply that, notwithstanding his professed adherence to democratic principles, he really seeks to introduce a Communist-style dictatorship in this country.
- Any statement that Labour candidates have been associated with CND, the committee of 100, or similar movements, should be verified.
- In editorial comment, the word 'Watergate' should be used with the utmost care as it has acquired the imputation of political dishonesty.

Mugabe: 'Year of the people's storm'

THE FIRST and famous "majority rule" elections in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia (the "Transitional government's" "transitional" name) are on April 20. Even Ian Smith has predicted a low turnout, due to the increasing hold of the guerilla armies on most of the country and the liberation struggle's hold on most of the people's minds.

ROBERT MUGABE is President of ZANU, the long-established liberation party that is supposedly represented in the transitional government. But he will not be fighting in the election. Instead, as leader of the Mozambique-based wing of the Patriotic Front forces, he will be fighting to disrupt the poll. HELEN HILL talked to him in Maputo.

What is the relationship between ZANU and ZAPU and what led you to combine in the Patriotic Front while at the same time remaining as separate parties.

Well we started off as two separate parties. But we had one aim in common, to struggle for the liberation of our country. We started off by being the only party committed to armed struggle as the principal means of liberating the country, whereas ZAPU was using armed struggle merely as a lever to get negotiations going and hoped, through negotiations, a settlement could be reached one way or another. Through practice we proved ourselves to be the only party so committed.

In November 1975 we deemed it necessary, when we were under the umbrella of the ANC led by Bishop Muzorewa, that within that umbrella ZAPU and ZANU should come together. So we formed ZIPA in 1975. Thereafter we opened two additional fronts together. But the military unity did not last as there was no similar political front to go with the military front and ZIPA went apart in a matter of a few months. Then in that same year, 1976, in October, we launched the Patriotic Front with a view to constituting an alliance of the two parties which would enable us to combine our political strategy mainly in the face of the Anglo-American initiatives.

Then we also wanted to reconstitute ZIPA which had fallen apart for lack of political direction. We visited each others' camps, worked out a common syllabus for training, in the same camps with one command structure and code of discipline to guide our forces, one set of ideological

concepts harmonising the ZANU and ZAPU sides of ideological philosophy; we worked all this out. But when it came to the implementation of this programme ZAPU started talking in terms of one party, one leader. Naturally we couldn't accept that because here outside Zimbabwe we are without the main organs of the party, except the command structure of the army and the central committee, and this is only in part because we have some members of the central committee who are in prison just now and we felt we couldn't unite the parties outside here. Also it was contrary to the priorities we had set ourselves for uniting. And so we found ourselves differing. ZAPU insisting that there should be one party and one leader, and by that they mean we must accept Nkomo. If it's not Nkomo they won't accept anything else. But we are not going to have that imposed upon the people, let alone upon ourselves. We feel that it is the right of the people to choose their leader and we are prepared, immediately we get back home, to work towards unity, starting from grass roots. Our branches will merge and establish new committees, the district organs do the same, the provincial organs do the same, until we get to a congress to elect a new central committee and one leader. That's the way we envisage it. But at the moment we want military unity. We are ready for joint operations, joint strategies, but they are not ready for that type of unity.

What is the attitude of the Patriotic Front to elections?

We are prepared to participate in democratic elections before independence, provided that independence is of a genuine kind. We cannot participate in democratic elections until we are satisfied that the type of independence we are getting is one which creates democracy in our country and does not leave the colonial power in a position to manipulate us. We must not be driven into establishing a neo-colonial state. Given that position we are prepared to participate in democratic elections.

We feel that once the situation allows elections to take place before independence we would be able to participate, but this will not be the case if we win through the barrel of the gun. If this should be the case elections would naturally have to follow a period of our administration of the country unilaterally.

What is ZANU's strategy on the battlefield? In the rural areas and in the cities? How freely are your guerillas able to move inside Zimbabwe?

We started off with a strategy which required us to gain control of the rural areas before we could move into the cities. We had the advantage of a big supporting population in the rural areas as peasants. We estimate six out of seven million Africans in the country live in the rural areas. Only about one million are in cities and other industrial centres. So we have the advantage of population. We have other advantages like our being able to get food, shelter and clothing from the people. And as we say, we swim amongst the people, the people are to us as water is to fish, that's what Mao said. The enemy is thinly spread in the rural areas, there is only a population of 6 to 6½ thousand settlers occupying half the total land area of the country, the more fertile half for that matter. It is an advantage to us if the enemy cannot mobilise forces easily in these areas. He is bound to spread himself thinly. And so when we started on this strategy it was necessary that we should spread ourselves as widely as possible so the enemy's forces would be spread rather than get concentrated in any one area.

We achieved this objective by the end of last year; we had spread our operations over 85% of the country and the enemy proclaimed martial law over 90% which is equivalent to our claim.

Then we had also created liberated zones in nearly one third of the total land area, and semi-liberated zones, which we are fast turning into liberated zones. Then there are the contested areas where sometimes we drive out the enemy and sometimes he drives us back, and so on.

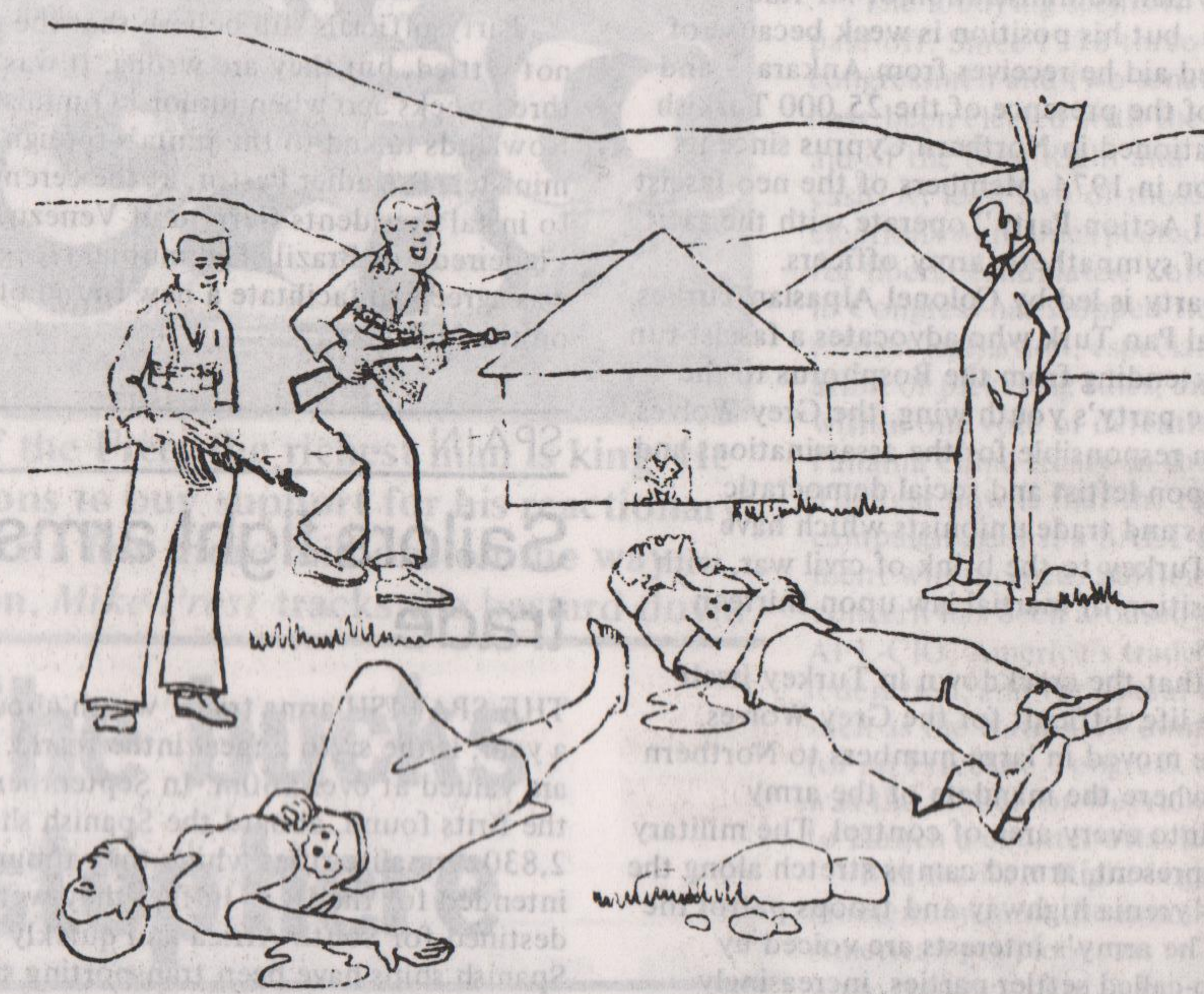
And so this pattern remains, in the present position we are able to organise the masses in the liberated zones into undertaking self-reliance projects, mainly agriculture, farming, keeping of animals, education—we run our own educational service conducted by our own teachers, maintaining schools where they have been abandoned, establishing them where they never existed. We are running a health service using our own nurses and medical orderlies. Then we have established peoples' councils to run these areas.

Now we are able to move into urban areas and to assault the vital farming areas which are well protected by the enemy with a greater degree of ease than we would have managed two years ago. This is why the struggle is getting intensified in the cities. You'll be hearing lots from us. The sound of our guns will obviously greet your ears from now on in the cities of Salisbury, Bulawayo, Gwelo, Fort Victoria and the rest of them. You'll get the rhythm of our operations in the next two, three, four weeks, it's going to intensify.

Last year was the Year of the People, the year in which we created a greater consciousness of the struggle in the people, with a view to making the people part of the struggle and identified them with the party and the party with them

Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorists in Rhodesia.

See the mad dog communist terrorists shooting old men and young girls with their communist AK guns. They do this because they want the people to be afraid of them. The communist terrorists say they are fighting for you. Do not let them deceive you. They are fighting against you. They have been turned into evil men by the communist camp instructors in Mocambique. The communist terrorists are now the murdering mad dogs of ZANU/ZANLA. Anyone who helps the communist terrorists is helping to bring terror and death to the people. Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorists.



How the Smith regime paints the ZANU army. One of a series of propaganda leaflets airdropped into rural areas

so that the struggle could become a peoples' struggle.

Now having won over the people in 1978 we feel that we should not put them into action and this year we have declared as the Year of the People's Storm. The people must storm to victory, storm the cities, storm the enemy citadels until victory is achieved. If we don't achieve it this year it should be achieved next year.

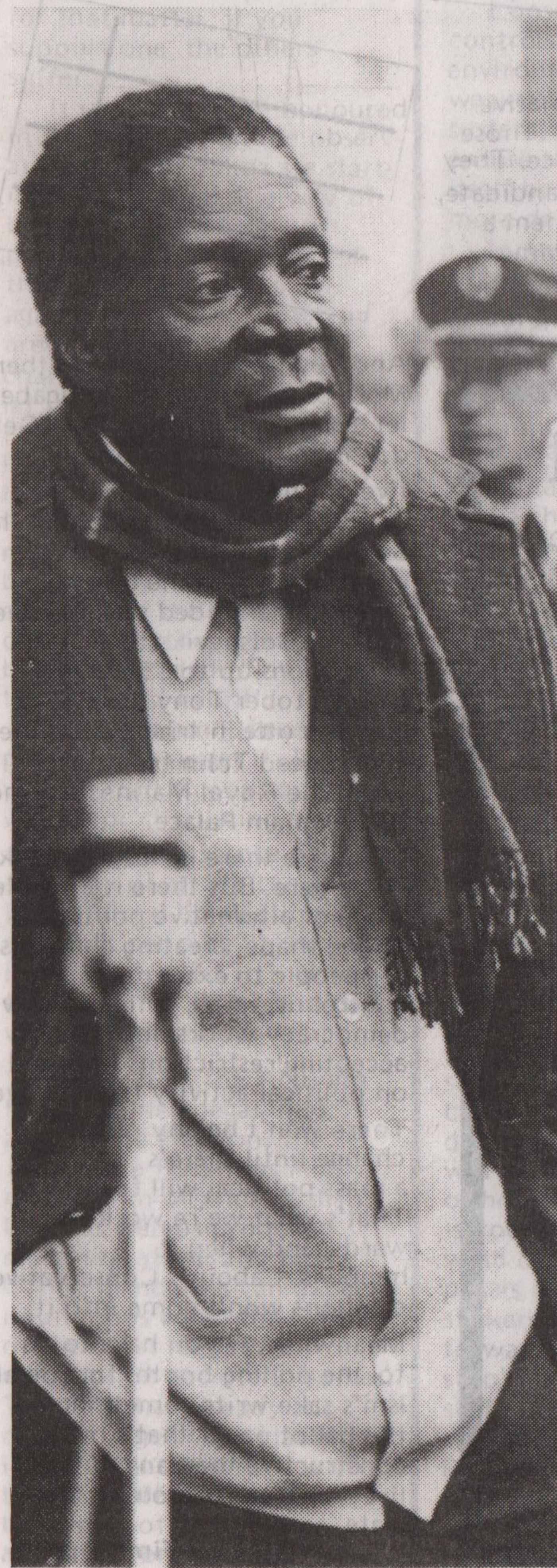
Do you have a programme for training Zimbabweans in skills which will be needed after independence?

Just now we are conducting a manpower survey into the manpower needs of a free Zimbabwe. Firstly to assess within the country the manpower strength within the various sectors of industry, the public service and other areas of state activity, manpower in training. And then a projection of future needs, what we can train in the light of such a projection. Do facilities exist where we can get aid to enable us to train? This is the kind of survey we are doing jointly with ZAPU as the Patriotic Front, this is one area where

we are combining marvellously and we hope it works.

It is being promoted by the International Universities Exchange Fund. We are also undertaking an economic and social survey under the United Nations Development Programme, to assess the present state of the social and economic system, what industries exist and what will be the likely problems on independence day. What is the likely effect of the lifting of sanctions on the small industries that have been localised in terms of their markets? Should you lift the tariff walls and allow goods from well developed countries to flow in? What would be the effects of this on our own nascent industries? Is it going to promote them? At the same time are we going to be producing at higher cost when we can often do better at cheaper prices?

And are we able to bring the necessary items to our own people purely from our own local resources? How much dependence do we owe the outside world? And how much should we be dependent upon ourselves? These are some of the things we would like to see brought to the fore so we can study the situation and work out in advance our policy.



CYPRUS

Grey Wolves at Turkey's door

TURKISH-CONTROLLED Cyprus is being used as a base for the operations of right-wing political activists on the Turkish mainland. "The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus", as the Turkish sector is known, is nominally run by the civilian administration of Mr Rauf Denktaş, but his position is weak because of the limited aid he receives from Ankara – and because of the presence of the 25,000 Turkish troops stationed in Northern Cyprus since its occupation in 1974. Members of the neo-fascist "National Action Party" operate with the tacit support of sympathetic army officers.

The party is led by Colonel Alpaslan Türkeş, a fanatical Pan Turk who advocates a fascist-Turk empire extending from the Bosphorus to the Urals. The party's youth wing, the Grey Wolves, have been responsible for the assassinations and attacks upon leftist and social democratic politicians and trade unionists which have brought Turkey to the brink of civil war, with the imposition of martial law upon thirteen provinces.

Now that the crackdown in Turkey itself has made life difficult for the Grey Wolves, they have moved in large numbers to Northern Cyprus, where the mandate of the army extends into every area of control. The military are omnipresent, armed camps stretch along the Nicosia-Kyrenia highway and troops patrol the streets. The army's interests are voiced by several so-called settler parties, increasingly vocal in their support of aggressive nationalism and "strong government".

Turkish Cypriot newspapers have published maps showing the locations of paramilitary training camps in the Kyrenia mountain range. It is also said that members of the National Action Party meet regularly with businessmen and army officials on the top floor of the Turkish Embassy in Nicosia to discuss the overthrow of Ecevit's Social Democrats.

Unless Ecevit can control these people – which so far seems improbable – he may be wasting his efforts with the IMF and western aid officials. His domestic opponents, secure in the knowledge that the west will support any anti-communist regime in the area after the "loss" of Iran, may move – with their military friends – faster than he thinks.

ARGENTINA

Owen smiles on Videla regime

ONE OF the last acts of Dr. Owen's dying administration of foreign affairs has been to resume full diplomatic relations with General Videla's regime in Argentina.

The FO are being very mealy-mouthed about it, saying that nothing is yet fixed: that the Argentinians have requested an exchange, and permission to forward a name for their ambassador in London, which is awaited.

The breakdown in relations came three years

ago, and it was over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands question. Argentina ordered the British ambassador in Buenos Aires out over Britain's refusal to allow the Argentinian claim to the islands.

So it's been nothing to do with disapproval of the Videla regime, and when the FO's Lat-Am spokesman Ian McCrory was asked: "Does not Britain want to refuse to exchange ambassadors because of our disapproval of the human rights situation?", he replied: "That is a question of internal Labour Party politics, which I cannot comment on", and added: "In any case, we prefer to have full representation. If we have a complaint we can then address it to a more senior representative."

The Labour Party matter in fact came up only afterwards. The party has not demanded that full relations should not be restored, and at the last pre-election NEC meeting, a resolution was adopted which "deplored" Videla's atrocities, and registered that "this is not an opportune time" to restore relations.

Party officials still believe that the matter is not settled, but they are wrong. It was fixed three weeks ago when junior FO minister Ted Rowlands talked to the junta's foreign minister, Brigadier Pastor, at the ceremonies to instal Presidents Herrera of Venezuela and Figueiredo of Brazil. The mutual recognition was agreed to facilitate a new round of talks on the Malvinas.

SPAIN

Sailors fight arms trade

THE SPANISH arms trade, worth about £300m a year, is the sixth largest in the world. Exports are valued at over £60m. In September 1978, the Brits found, aboard the Spanish ship *Allul*, 2,830 Armalite rifles which they thought were intended for the IRA. In fact they were destined for South Africa and quickly released. Spanish ships have been transporting similar cargo, whether produced in Spain or elsewhere, in containers listed as carrying fruit and drink products, with the connivance of the Spanish government – Defence, Industry and Foreign Affairs Ministries – to countries like Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Morocco, Zaire, Thailand, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The *Allul* find triggered off a decision by the sailor's union, Sindicato Libre de la Marina Mercante (SLMM) to boycott the shipment of arms and ammunition (anything from mortars to tear gas) in Spanish ships. In a document prepared by the SLMM and currently being circulated among sailors' and dockworkers' unions all over Europe, they gave their reasons for the boycott:

1. Merchant sailors were involved in transporting explosives without even knowing the dangerous nature of their cargo.
2. Merchant sailors' lives were put at risk in the warring countries and tense areas to which the cargo was being shipped. (Even before the *Allul*, Spanish sailors on the *Benifaraig*, carrying explosives from Lisbon, via Barcelona, for the Lebanese Falangists, refused to proceed beyond Barcelona.)
3. Spanish workers were becoming, in effect, the tools of dictatorial regimes, against SLMM's international policy of working class solidarity.
4. The shipments were very profitable for business, but Spanish sailors were receiving very low wages, and did not even get 'danger' money.
5. If arms shipments had to be made at all, the Navy or Air Force should do it. The SLMM rejected the militarisation of the merchant navy.

As a result, crews have refused to sail if they have any doubts about the cargo, or if cargo is destined for dictatorial regimes, from the ports of Bilbao and Valencia. Sailors have refused to move cargo between Spanish ports. They have organised, for detection purposes, vigilante committees open to members of all trade unions and solidarity organisations. They are making contacts with foreign trade unions to obtain information about Spanish ships loading arms cargo abroad, the SLMM have also been consulting Spanish TUs whose members are involved in arms manufacture, and in transport of arms to Spanish ports, to obtain information of destinations, and to consider the consequences of the boycott for them.

Not all union federations have given their support, but Las Palmas (Canary Islands) dockers, disregarding the instructions of the central committee of the Union General de Trabajadores, refused to load armaments on the Argentinian ship *Rio Calchaqui*. The SLMM document was circulated last month at the conference of European dockworkers in Liverpool, and supportive action at other European ports is being planned.

SINGAPORE

Migrant women face pregnancy tests

If you can tell a country by the company it keeps, then Britain ought to be somewhat embarrassed that the Singapore government insists on pregnancy tests for Asian women who go to the country as migrant workers. The women, who mostly come from Malaysia and Thailand, are required to have half-yearly pregnancy tests as one of the conditions of their work permits. The tests were introduced by the government's Economic Development Board last September.

It's only one part of a harsh set of regulations under the 'block work permit scheme' that controls Singapore's guest workers. Work permits are granted for a two year period only, and must then be renewed regardless of the length of a worker's employment contract. Employers are also required to 'exercise proper supervision' of their workers even after working hours.

Migrant workers are not allowed to marry Singaporeans and cannot change jobs during the period they have contracted to work for. Pregnant workers, and those who contact contagious diseases are repatriated. But the same regulations do not apply to foreign women 'professionals', including call-girls and nightclub singers and dancers, who earn more than £170 per month, or to female members of the families of foreign investors.

The migrant women workers work primarily in Singapore's labour-intensive electronics and textile industries, both of which suffer from a chronic labour shortage, and as domestic servants. Pay is low and the industrial injury rate is high. Migrant workers are the first to be sacked during recessions, and about half of all Singapore's migrant workers were sent home between 1974 and 1976, when the economy was depressed.

Singapore is one of the world's major electronics exporters, and its textile industry has expanded rapidly since 1972, when the United States imposed quotas on textile imports from a number of Asian countries. As a result, many companies moved to Singapore or set up subsidiaries there. The country remains a foreign investor's paradise, with incentives like unimpeded repatriation of profits and a tax holiday.

Singapore's independent trade unions have been smashed, the press is controlled, and television and radio are government-owned.

RICHARD A. VIGUERIE is a living rebuttal to those incorrigible subversives who maintain that the American Dream is dead. In recent years Mr Viguerie has become a wealthy man, his critics say a millionaire. Moreover, in Washington political circles he is a figure of some notoriety. For Mr Viguerie is set apart from other self-made exemplars of capitalism's beneficence. He does not sell such necessities as pet rocks; nor does he despatch silicon chips on long, quickly forgotten journeys into space, or package Grandma's Real Old Time Chicken Soup. No Richard Viguerie has tapped a unique vein. He peddles the politics of the "New Right".

Indeed, being peddled is an integral part of the New Right's novelty. The term was coined about two years ago to describe a network of conservative individuals and groups prepared to use the lobbying techniques that were previously the preserve of liberals and generally eschewed by the traditional right. That old right, identified with the lunatic anti-communist, free-enterprise fringe of the Republican Party and with more sinister racists and anti-semites of the John Birch Society and the Ku Klux Klan was dismissed by a rising generation of conservatives as hopelessly fuddy-duddy.

From the destruction of Senator Barry Goldwater's presidential aspirations in 1964 through to the third party of Governor George Wallace of Alabama in 1976, the technicians and functionaries of the New Right began to realise the potential of well funded single issue campaigns and of saturation support for chosen candidates in favourable congressional districts or even states. The strategy was that these campaigns, either on directly political issues such as Anita Bryant's anti-gay Save Our Children, could eventually coalesce into a third, conservative party with help from right wing members of congress.

But however badly touched they were by 'Potomac fever' – lust for power – Mr Viguerie and his friends needed money. Selling presidents, though by now an honoured pastime, still costs a lot. So in 1974 the man who was to become the sugar daddy of the American right lighted on a jolly wheeze. Why not assemble a gigantic mailing list of every conservative voter in America, and then market it to interested bodies? The big break was Wallace's 1976 campaign. It hardly mattered that Mr Viguerie ran on the ticket as vice-president – and was ignominiously annihilated. What did count was that throughout the Wallace organisation the Viguerie companies acquired millions of names and as many dollars. He could set up shop as the right's leading entrepreneur.

From his base in Virginia comfortably on the other side of the Potomac River from Washington, Mr Viguerie runs four companies and two papers. By



IN THE Land of the Free, the richest man is king. He can use his millions to buy support for his reactionary politics, and make a few more millions on the way. From Washington, Mike Prest tracks the bastard down.

The bucks stop here

American standards it is still a modest business. But its effect on American politics over the next few years could be profound. At the heart of the operation is an elaborate computerised mail-out system able to select from a data bank holding millions of addresses of conservatives across the nation and post hundreds of thousands of letters to target groups within days.

A deal might work like this: In the generally liberal state of Colorado the local branch of the Gun Owners of America, a campaign started by Viguerie in 1975 to elect politicians opposed to ending America's civil slaughter, wants to support the Congressional ambitions of Mr Shitty Bang Bang, a marksman famous in the state if not the outside world. So GOA calls Virginia and asks that suitable literature and begging letters be sent to everybody on the list for that Congressional district. If the plan works, money pours in to finance the local campaign – except for a percentage which sticks to Mr Viguerie's fingers as a service fee.

How much sticks is a deadly secret. The Washington Post estimated at the beginning of last year that the main conservative groups serviced by the master bagman raised £3.7 million in

1977, of which just 7 per cent or \$270,000 actually escaped to candidates. According to Americans for Democratic Action, a left wing pressure group within the Democratic Party, however, GOA alone raised \$2.2 million in 1975/6. That, admittedly was an election year, but it is therefore even more curious that only 6 per cent or \$35,000 was distributed to candidates.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that right wing America has a new source of loot. ADA estimates that the fund raising potential of the 10 main groups making up the New Right around Viguerie and his associates is a cool \$20 million. Apart from GOA, the two other leading new groups are the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, run by Paul Weyrich, the archetype of the sleek young conservative Washington lobbyist, and the National Conservative Political Action Committee. Both probably raised over \$3 million each last year. These committees are closely linked to campaigns against abortion, trade union research; and progressive education, and "research" bodies such as the Heritage Foundation, started by Messrs Viguerie and Weyrich with money from Joe Coors, an ultra-conservative, anti-labour brewing millionaire

from Colorado.

That Coors, who is also connected with the John Birch Society, should have given the New Right its grub stake is significant. For the New Right openly boasts that its ideas are old, though the phrase "traditional values" is preferred. The values are those of the family (against abortion and gays), religion (a euphemism for Christianity), individual liberty (no gun control), free enterprise (much weaker unions), strong national defence (dismantle social programmes to spend more on the anti-communist crusade), and that old favourite law 'n order. The only changes are the image, no mean thing in American politics, and the method; less ranting and much more lobbying.

The lobbying seems to have paid off. Since 1976 three congressmen and two senators have been elected with the active aid of the New Right and Viguerie cash. At least two of those elections were unexpected defeats for liberal candidates. Lobbying in Congress has stopped trade union reform legislation, especially relaxation of picketing rules, and came within one vote of defeating the Panama Canal treaty in the Senate. The fear now is that the right's campaign against a SALT agreement will succeed. Sufficient concern has been aroused for the AFL-CIO, America's trade union federation, and for liberal bodies such as the National Committee for an Effective Congress, which was the model for Weyrich's CSFC, to launch a counter-attack.

But the New Right is gaining momentum, and the mood of the American people seems to favour some retrenchment, a breathing space in which to reassess the legislative landslide of recent years and to confront the threat of recession and inflation. Tax reform is as much a cry to government to stop as it is a crusade against big spending and iniquitous burdens. The right wing of the Republican Party is already jostling with prospective Presidential candidates who may well take up the message of the New Right and in doing so drag the Democrats down as well.

A national political campaign is unlikely to realise Mr Viguerie's dreams of a third party, however. If the opinion polls are remotely reliable, Senator Edward Kennedy would sweep the field if he elected to run – hardly a New Right candidate. But it would still be a mistake to underestimate the power of single issue campaigns. Women will be lucky if the Equal Rights Amendment is ratified. Countless Americans will cling in adversity to the instincts of family, church and decency with which they are most at ease. It is on this syndrome that the New Right plays, and will continue to play. A new reactionary party may not emerge. But Mr Viguerie's computer will separate the issues in American politics more sharply than at any time since the Depression. And Mr Viguerie will go on peddling politics profitably.

Aberdeen People's Press. 163, King Street, Aberdeen. (0224 29669). A socialist printing and publishing co-operative, the publishing side is run by an informal and unpaid group. They hope to form a publishing company independent of the printing side. Their Labour History series has proved popular, although some of the titles were specialised. Within the next year they intend to extend their range of titles, including material both by and for children, and books on aspects of Scottish energy.

Allison and Busby, 6a Noel Street, London W1. (01 734 1498). Independent publisher of general books: novels, politics and social questions (including the Motor series of radical writings) poetry, children's books and quality paperbacks.

Caliban Books. 13, The Dock, Fife, Lewes, Sussex. (079 159 335). A new publisher specialising in source material for social historians and social scientists, their major emphasis is on working class autobiography. Recent titles include a facsimile edition of John Wilson's 1910 *Memories of a Labour Leader*.

Centerprise. 131, Kingsland High Street, London E8. (01 254 9632). Centerprise publishes work written by, for or about people in Hackney, East London. "We publish because working class expression has not been allowed through established institutions of communication, because the history books in society do not acknowledge the existence of the many people that have struggled to change society".

Central Books. 14, The Leathermarket, London SE 1. (01 407 5447). The sole UK distributor for books in English published in the Soviet Union. Topics covered include Soviet literature, children's story books, art books, and biography and history, as well as an extensive list of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Cienfuegos Press. Over - the -Water, Sanday, Orkney. Aiming to promote the widest possible circulation of anarchist ideas, Cienfuegos finances its titles by a subscription from supporters (£12 this year). This year's titles include: *Land and Liberty!* (on the Mexican

Left publishing

RED PAGES

Herewith, **The Good Pubs Guide** - an extensive (but, sadly, not comprehensive) list of the UK's dissident publishers.

Revolution) and *The Faces of Spanish Anarchism*. They also publish the *Anarchist Review*.

Corner House. 14, Endell Street, London WC 2 (01 836 9960). Publishing activities grew out of activities as a bookshop and information exchange. *Lumatic Ideas*, their first title, was about media coverage of education. Future plans include books on socialist childcare, media images of children and on pictures in children's books.

CSE Books. 55, Mount Pleasant, London WC 1. The Conference of Socialist Economists established a new socialist publishing house and related book club last year. Titles are mostly economics-oriented. Members of the book club - which is intended to break down the idea of readers as passive consumers - choose from a long list of titles at a big reduction without obligation (£4 initial subscription plus 50p registration for non-CSE members entitles you to the first three titles.)

Federation of Worker Writers. E Floor, Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle NE 1. (0632 20719). The Federation exists to encourage and publish working class and socialist writing. It acts as an information and resource centre for local community writing groups, who each try to encourage working class people to write about their lives and experiences. They recently published an anthology, *Writing*.

Freedom Press. 84b, Whitechapel High Street, London E 1. (01 247 9249). Freedom Press (which also owns Freedom Bookshop) publishes the anarchist fortnightly *Freedom* and books and pamphlets on anarchism and libertarianism. Latest titles include Vernon Richards' *Impossibilities of Social Democracy*.

IDAF Publications. (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa). 104, Newgate Street, London EC 1. (01 606 6123). Specialises in authoritative information about Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Produces a news bulletin, paperbacks and pictorial material.

Ink Links. 271, Kentish Town Road, London NW 5 (01 267 0661). Set up in 1978, Ink Links wishes to play a role in the re-arming of the left. It has explored *Law (Law and Marxism)*, *Sport (Sport - A Prison of Measured Time)*, and will aid in the critique of the legacy bequeathed by the Third International and its enigmatic embodiment in the USSR. In addition, it has published a major book on Zionism and on the American working class. Forthcoming titles include a new book look at Ireland and a buried Marxist classic, Rubin's *History of Pedagogy*.

Inter-Action Inprint. 15, Wilkin Street, London NW 5. (01 267 9421). Grew out of the community advice work of Inter-Action. Their first titles were do-it-yourself guides to community newspapers, printing, community video and setting up a community bookshop. Since then titles have included *Homosexual Acts* (a volume of gay plays), *Battered Women and the New Law* by Anna Coote and Tess Gill, *Football Hooliganism: the Wider Context* by Roger Ingham and others. They are currently working on a major series of booklets on community arts.

Intermediate Technology Publications. 9, King Street, London WC 2. (01 836 9434). Publishes books and other materials on low-cost, small-scale technology, appropriate to the real needs of developing countries; more recently, publications on appropriate technology for the UK are also being produced.

Journeyman Press. 97, Ferme Park Road, London N8. (01 348 9261). Set up in late 1974 to reprint books which loosely fall under the heading "socialist classics". Since then it has broadened its scope to include new poetry, fiction, art, biography, history, politics and art prints by progressive artists. It has attempted to make its books accessible to the widest possible readership by keeping prices as low

as possible. Titles include Jack London's *Revolution* and Shelley. They also publish a series of chapbooks (ballads, tales etc. retailed by historical chapmen) and radical (reprinted) pamphlets.

Lawrence and Wishart. 39, Museum Street, London WC 1 (01 405 0103/4). The longest-established left-wing publishing house in Britain. Has retained its Marxist character since its formation in 1936. Current major projects include the collected works of Marx and Engels, a comprehensive selection of the writings of Gramsci, and an expanding programme of translations of works by foreign Marxists. Recently emphasis has been placed on publishing the works of younger UK Marxists including those lecturing at the annual Communist University of London.

Merlin Press. 3, Manchester Road, London E 14. (01 987 7959). Merlin have been publishing books of interest to the left for over 20 years, unattached to any political organisation and financially independent. Publishers of *Socialist Register* since 1964, recent successes include *Poverty of Theory* by FP Thompson and *Marxist Theory of Alienation* by Meszaros.

New Left Books. 7, Carlisle Street, London W1. (01 437 3546). NLB publishes quality titles in the fields of philosophy, history, economics, psychology, politics and aesthetics. Its list is predominantly, though not exclusively, Marxist in character. NLB's main cloth list is now supplemented by the paperback Verso Editions.

Onyx Press. 27, Clerkenwell Close, London EC 1 (01 253 6235). A new, independent publishing house, specialising in Third World politics, in particular Africa and the Middle East. We also handle the *Review of African Political Economy*.

Pathfinder Press. 47 The Cut, London SE 1. (01 261 1354). Publishes books and pamphlets on Marxist theory and politics, women's and Black Liberation, Eastern Europe and China, the Middle East, and literature, culture and art.

Peppercorn Publishing. 37, Kennington Lane, London SE 11. Workers' Co-op. Material related to black history, culture, politics. Published Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* (1977, Commonwealth Poetry prize-winner). Forthcoming: School package on the Indian festival of Diwali.

Pluto Press. Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7, Chalcut Road, London NW 1. (01 722 0141). The largest independent socialist publisher, Pluto's list is extensive. A selection of this year's titles give an indication of the range: *For Her Own Good* (150 years of expert advice to women); *The Workers' Report on Vickers* by Huw Beynon and Hilary Wainwright; *Demystifying Social Statistics*; *Cloud Nine* by Caryl Churchill; *Trouble With the Law*, (the Release Bust Book). Pluto publish the Workers' Handbooks series and the Big Red Diary and run a play subscription series. They're interested in selling books to people who don't normally buy them through union contacts and mail order.

Prism Press. Stable Court, Chalmington, Dorchester, Dorset. (030 020524). Specialising in books on self-sufficiency and alternative technology - including energy. Prism's list features the 'Backyard Books' series. They also include a couple of handbooks - health rights and community action for kids - as well as *Land for the People* (about the agribusiness) and *The Essential JP* - Narayan's prison diary and philosophy.

Spokesman. Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham, NG 7 (0602 74504). The publishing house was founded by Bertrand Russell shortly before his death. Since then many hundreds of books and pamphlets have been published on political and economic theory and practice: imperialism, international relations and the Third World; workers'

control and industrial democracy, resources and the environment. Spokesman maintains a close relationship with the Russell Press and the Institute for Workers' Control, whose bulletin and pamphlets it distributes.

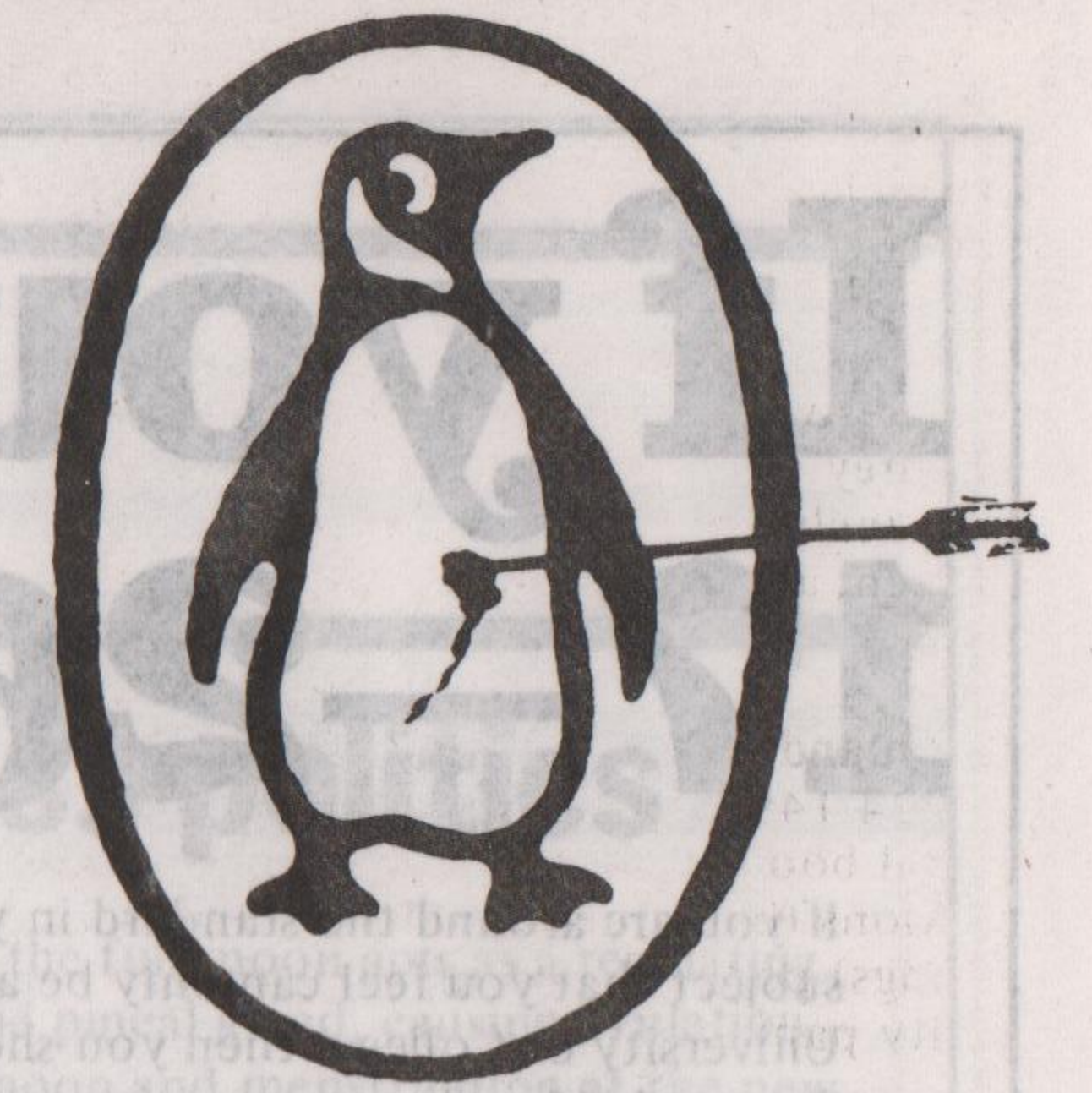
Stage One. 47 Red Lion Street, London WC1. Started by Richard Handyside, who shot to fame through the prosecution of *The Little Red Schoolbook*. Stage One publishes titles on women, the Third World and British industrial struggles. Their most recent title is *Let Me Speak*, the testimony of a Bolivian tin-miner. Stage One also distribute the books and magazines of the *Monthly Review Press*.

Third World Publications. 151, Stratford Road, Birmingham, B 11 (021 773 6572). TWP is a non-profit-making co-operative distributing books, pamphlets and teaching materials from and about the Third World. Set up in 1972. TWP's aim is to both enable and ensure that Third World materials reach the widest possible audience.

Virago. 4th Floor, 5, Wardour Street, London W1. (01 734 4608/9). A feminist publishing company publishing books for the general and educational market which highlights all aspects of women's lives. The emphasis is on books which express the ideas of the women's movement in the widest possible context for the widest possible audience of both sexes. The first title was published in 1975. So far they have published 30 titles and will publish 40 more this year. Subjects covered are: fiction (both new and re-issues of out-of-print classics) and non-fiction, ranging from biography and history to women's studies, health and practical handbooks and sexual politics.

Women's Press. 12, Ellesmere Road, London E3 (01 980 1543). The Women's Press began to publish in February 1978 and published 12 books last year. They aim to publish lively, readable books by women, chiefly fiction (new fiction and historical reprints), literary history, art history, physical and mental health, and politics, and have achieved a wide general readership through bookshops and mail-order. Their work - although not all of it is directly polemical - comes out of the politics of the women's liberation movement. The Press consists of two full-time workers based in one of their homes: they are responsible for all aspects of their publishing. New titles this year include *Women and Writing* by Virginia Woolf and Marge Piercy's *Women on the Edge of Time*.

Writers and Readers Publishing Co-Operative. 9-19, Rupert Street, London W 1 (01 437 8942 437 8917). Formed in Autumn 1974, WRPC are publishers working in a non-hierarchical structure and are members of ICOP. Writer-members include John Berger, Arnold Wesker and Chris Searle. Their list is made up of fiction, poetry, education, politics, sociology, and children's literature and they publish two subsidiary imprints, the cartoon-strip documentary series, *Beginners Books* (including the best-selling *Marx for Beginners*) and a



new educational imprint, Chameleon Books. A Book Club has just been formed.

Zed Press. 57, Caledonian Road, London N 1 (01 837 4014). Publishes radical and socialist books on the Third World by both Third World and Western authors. Although most of their books at present are 'academic' in tone, they are interested in producing more widely-accessible books. They also run a Book Club. Recently published titles include Malcolm Caldwell's *The Wealth of Some Nations* and *Soweto: Roots of a Revolution?* by Baruch Hirson.

LATE ADDITIONS

Housman's. 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 (01-363 4398). Part of the Peace News Trustees group, Housman's publish the Peace Diary, and a range of pamphlets on all aspects of non-violence. The distribute books on the subject from India and the United States. Their bookshop carries Britain's largest selection of magazines and books on pacifism and non-violence.

New Beacon Books. 76 Stroud Green Road, London N4, 01-272 4889. While continuing its main policy of publishing books by Caribbean authors about the Caribbean, New Beacon will be moving into new areas in 1979, with a book about the liberation of Nigeria, and another title identifying issues that affect blacks in a white society. They will also continue to develop their bookshops and book service.

Other services

Publications Distribution Co-Operative. 27, Clerkenwell Close, London EC 1 (01 251 4976). PDC, the alternative distribution company, was started in 1976 by the publishers of left and feminist magazines, and distributes to a network of over 100 left and alternative bookshops in many parts of Great Britain. It operates as a workers' collective. Recently it has decided to concentrate more on distributing books, and it handles many well-known left, alternative and feminist publishers as well as books from pressure groups like NCCL and Friends of the Earth.

News From Neasden. (A Catalogue of New Radical Publications) mailed free to bookshops and financed by radical publishers, "the service is non-critical". Bill Katz *Library Journal*. Relatively comprehensive News From Neasden combines short entries on a large number of books with longer review articles. The long-delayed issue 11 will be out soon and includes articles on working in feminist publishing and bookselling. All the books in News From Neasden will now be available by mail order from Grassroots, 1, Newton Street, Manchester M 1 1 HW. Editorial: 12, Fleet Road, London NW 3. Subscription: £2.50 for three issues from 10, Garden Terrace, Chorley, Lancs.

This list isn't comprehensive - London's postal dispute saw to that. We'd be happy to run an update/supplement in a couple months if other publishers would like to send us amendments or other information, if we missed you this time you know.

Books is weapons

SOCIALIST PUBLISHING, for Pluto, ranges from their *Big Red Joke Book* to Bukharin's *The Economics of the Transformation Period* taking in books on history, social science, psychology, sexual politics, the labour movement, current affairs, and playscripts on the way.

This wide range reflects Pluto's political commitments and, in traditional terms, sound business sense. As Richard Kuper argues: "We have to be successful in order to be able to publish what we want. Instead of publishing serving profit, profit serves publishing. Our real handicap is that we're not profitable enough."

"Our broadness is, in some way, a compensation for the narrowness of the organised left. We want to reach out to people outside the traditional left, to those who might become socialists as well as the committed. We want to relate their experiences, their grievances to the movement as a whole".

One of the best examples of this policy is the series of Workers Handbooks. *Hazards of Work*, by Patrick Kinnerly, has gone through four impressions, with 80,000 copies sold and a new edition is being prepared. *Rights at Work*, by Jeremy McMullen, has sold 25,000 copies since publication last November and is about to be reprinted.

The Workers Handbooks are mostly sold through trade union branches. *The Boy Looked at Johnny*, by Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons, was partly sold by mail order through *New Musical Express*. *Trouble With the Law*, *The Release Bust Book* sold a lot of copies through

mail order after it got wide coverage on TV and radio chat shows.

Richard Kuper points to *The Boy Looked at Johnny* as an example of what left publishers should be doing: "It went out to an audience of kids often ignored by the left and spoke to them in a language totally foreign to the left. It showed that there is a large potential audience out there and that we can reach it if we are prepared to expand."

As part of this expansion, Pluto already publish a book on beer. They have promised a socialist cook-book in the near future and they are preparing a book on reggae which will include a full discography.

They are also going to add to this "cultural intervention", their plays and books on art and literature, by publishing novels and, one day, poetry.

They have worked hard at publicity. "The idea that a good book sells itself is balls. We have got to persuade people. This is not easy when your books are critical, anything but a cosy read, but the more we talk to people not part of the revolutionary left the more we've got to relate to papers, radio and television and get into promotions."

"We have now shifted from being acceptable to the left only to something mainstream opinion takes notice of. More and more reviewers are seeing the value of our books and making an effort to reply to them, instead of dismissing us as lefties".

Jerry Hearn

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MEDIA CULTURE & SOCIETY

Managing Editors:
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This major, new, international journal will provide an important forum for the presentation of research and discussion across the whole field of cultural practice. The main focus will be on the mass media (television, radio, journalism) within their political, cultural and historical contexts. Their relationship to literature, the visual and performing arts, photography, publishing, and to more general artistic and cultural practices is of central reference to the journal. Each issue will contain a core of thematically linked articles - the first issue taking the subject of the media and politics.

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Back Pages

Matriarchy Study Group: reviving goddess politics

The science of anthropology has for some time been of growing importance to the women's movement. Most feminists are familiar with the evidence suggesting that in primitive, classless society women were at the centre of social, cultural and economic life; that the social unit of many of these societies was matriarchal and the line of descent matrilineal. While the men were hunters, the women, as the procreators of life, were the innovators, developing tools and skills, pottery and leathermaking, making beginnings in horticulture, agriculture, science and medicine.

Women lost much of their power with the growth of large scale agriculture and stock raising; a surplus was produced and with it the beginnings of class and private property. With the establishment of private property came the "patriarchal principle" - property being inherited through the father. Thus, the paternal rule of descent, monogamy and the nuclear family which were the basis for male domination came into being.

Politics of Matriarchy, a collection of essays, poems and stories just published by the Matriarchy Study Group, is above all a

celebration of matriarchy, an invocation to "Goddess politics", the Goddess being "the most powerful symbol of women's mystery and power." As such, it retreats into a mysticism which I for one cannot identify with. The patriarchy celebrates its own mystical traditions - God the Father and God the Son, the divinity of kings, the worship of warrior heroes ... Joe Jordan and the Deerhunter. But you can't invoke mystical powers without having some notion of their political meaning.

The matriarchy group assert that they are founded on a "firm political base", that they are not reactionary, that they do not wish to turn back the clock: "patriarchy has presented us with too many problems for an immediate return to small agrarian societies to be feasible." I should say. Patriarchy has also, whether we like it or not, given us modern technology and industrialisation, an abundance of wealth and the possibility of socialism. Yet the political manifesto of the group includes demands for "Home Rule" - the return of life processes such as birth, death, healing and learning "to the household base", and the re-establishment of a lunar calendar. "It has been suggested that

the light of the full moon acts as a regulating device on the pineal gland, causing ovulation at the full moon and menstruation at the new moon ... we demand the re-establishment of a lunar calendar to mark our awareness and empathy with nature."

They want too to see "the household as the determinate unit of production" as well as consumption - a decentralisation of resources. Again the imagination gets tied up in knots - small technology's OK but what about the steel industry?

The sexual freedoms of the matriarchal temple culture, the importance of the menstrual cycle to nature, science and sexuality makes for fascinating reading but where does it leave us? Presumably "talking of menstruation, rhythms and magic" as does the Sheffield group.

We have no "repressed power and wisdom of the Feminine" to return to: our symbol for liberation can never be "the serpent, symbol always of women's wisdom, immortality and totality" stretching from "our womb to our nipples, coiled round the tree of life inside us". We can't draw our strength from a Utopian Golden Age and our future lies in the future. I for one don't want to be a fertility symbol.

Cherrill Hicks

Gay Sweatshop: The Dear Love of Comrades



Edward Carpenter (left) and friends have a picnic

not only did his bit to help build the working class movement, but tried to combine this with a personal life and ideology which was non-exploitative, non-monogamous, self-sufficient and gay.

Carpenter's small farm near Sheffield is the setting for most of the play, during the years 1891-1898 against the background of the Walsall Anarchists Trial, the founding of the Independent Labour Party and the trial of Oscar Wilde. At the heart of the play are the relationships between Carpenter and his friends: George Merrill, who he met on a railway train and lived with for over thirty years, George Hukin and George Adams.

We also meet Frank Simpson, an aspiring ILP candidate, who needs Carpenter's help, comes to stay at his farm, but cannot come to terms with Carpenter's homosexuality; Fred Charles, an anarchist who goes to join other anarchists in Walsall and is sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for allegedly planting bombs; and F.M. Forster, whose 1944 radio broadcast on Carpenter provides a prologue and epilogue for the play.

All in all, writers Noel Greig and Drew Griffiths have, with the Gay Sweatshop company, put together a play which is almost

tailor-made for Leveller readers. The music, by Alex Harding, and the work of the company including Ray Batchelor (F.M. Forster, Fred Charles, Frank Simpson), Peter Glancy (George Merrill), Noel Greig (Edward Carpenter), Stephen Hatton (George Hukin) and Philip Timmins (George Adams) set a new standard for Gay Sweatshop which will be hard to live up to.

Gay Sweatshop's tour with The Dear Love of Comrades includes the following: April 19-20, Pavilion Theatre, Brighton; 22, Kent University; 25, Essex University; 26, Cambridge (provisional); May 1, Jordanstown Poly, N. Ireland; 2-3, Belfast; 5, Riverside Theatre, Coleraine; 8-9, Theatre Y Werin, Aberystwyth; 16-17, Albany, Deptford; 28-30, Munich Theatre Festival; June 1-15, Tour of West Germany; 20-23, Oval House, London; 25-1 July, Sheffield, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen. Check local press etc. for details, or phone Gay Sweatshop on 01-226 6143.

Brian Deer

Only Connect - a television play by Noel Greig and Drew Griffiths - will be shown on BBC2 at 9.25 on 18th May

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LIST A

WORKERS AGAINST THE GULAG, by Victor Haynes and Olga Semyonovna (£1.95).

Documents by Soviet workers that spell out in clear language the grim reality of life for the working class in Eastern Europe, and contain the seeds of their fight back.

THE CHANT OF JIMMY BLACKSMITH, by Thomas Kenally (85p).

A new edition of the story, now made into a film, of an Australian aborigine who tries to come to terms with white society at the turn of the century—and fails. His story exposes the ruthless exploitation of the aborigines by the British settlers.

THE NEW TECHNOLOGY, by Counter-Information Services (65p).

The latest CIS report on a subject vital to the future of just about every worker in Britain: employed, unemployed or maybe soon to be unemployed as a result.

LIST D

REVOLUTION, by Jack London (£1.50).

A new selection of London's most revolutionary writings, made by Robert Barltrop, London's biographer.

HELLO, ARE YOU WORKING? (50p)

Workers' memories, in their own words, of the Thirties in the North of England.

LIST C

A HUNDRED YEARS OF LABOUR IN THE USA by Daniel Guerin (£3.50)

A new, somewhat idiosyncratic, but comprehensive and very readable history of America's workers.

LIST B

LET ME SPEAK, by Domitila Barros de Chungara (£2.95).

The wife of Bolivian tin miner tells how she became involved in the struggles of the local community—some of the most militant workers in Bolivia.

LIST E

FAREWELL COMPANIONS, by James Plunket (£1.50)

A novel by the author of the acclaimed Strumpet City, this one set in Ireland four years after the Easter Rising of 1916.

WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME, by Marge Piercy (£1.95)

A Spanish-American woman, forced into a mental hospital by pressures from her family, escapes to a utopian future—and there finds strength to fight in the present. First British edition.

LIST F

LENIN Vol 4: THE BOLSHEVIKS AND WORLD REVOLUTION, by Tony Cliff (£3.60)

NOTE: The first three volumes of Cliff's biography of Lenin may each be treated as an extra list and obtained by club members for an extra £2.50 each volume.

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Back Pages

REGGAE

Linton Kwesi Johnson's second album, **Forces of Victory**, sets his uncompromising poetry against a backing of fine reggae musicians to produce something that's not only politically stimulating but also very danceable. Every track is full of meat, no punches are pulled to appeal to a mass market, yet it probably has commercial promise anyway if the DJs can find anything to play that won't upset the General Election.

Stand-out tracks include: 'Forces of Victory' - a colourful tribute to **Race Today's** band at last year's Carnival; 'Independent Intervention' - an attack on the politics of the white left; 'Age of Reality' - a plea to the Rastas to get themselves into the twentieth century; and 'Sonny's Letter' - a sad tale of a lad who intervenes when his friend is picked up for 'sus' and finds himself on a murder charge.

An awful lot of nonsense passes for lyrics in some reggae music - producers knowing that any permutation of 'dread; babylon; I & I; or rastafari' will give it that stamp of authenticity. Linton's record shows the way it really can be done when the artist has genuine talent and political commitment.

THEATRE

The **Sidewalk Theatre Company** are currently touring infants schools, nurseries and playgroups with their latest (and possibly last) play for the under-fives, **Spilt Milk**. Jimmy, a milkman stubs his toe and can't work, so housewife Jilly steps into the breach and goes out to work. A great play for the very young with lots of singing and dancing.

Spilt Milk will also be performed at the Round House in London on May 29th and 30th at 2.30. If you can arrange a booking for **Sidewalk**, contact them at 291 Finchley Road, London NW3, telephone 01-794-0958.

If you are looking for "four women who combine pungent wit and political satire with theatrical panache and musical versatility", **Clapperclaw** are touring with their latest production: **Ben Her**.

At last, say the company, here is the story "men have feared to tell - not history, but herstory". **Ben Her** is a play about women in

history, or rather why women are not in history and showing how history, as it is written, reflects the lives and self-image of the powerful.

Clapperclaw will be performing **Ben Her** as follows: May 4th, **Leicester Women's Drama Week**, Drama Centre, Fearon Hall, Rectory Road, Loughborough at 9.30; May 7th, **Birmingham Joint Labour May Day Celebrations**, Digbeth Civic Centre, Birmingham at 5.15; May 12th, **Leeds Alternative Theatre Project** (details to be finalised); July 14th - 15th, **Dagenham Town Show**, Dagenham, Essex (details to be finalised).

Clapperclaw, 87 Bulwer Road, London E11, telephone 01-558 3396.

Leeds Alternative Theatre Events is a new organisation formed to promote new community and political theatre in Leeds. **LATE** is particularly keen to bring into the area companies which have not previously performed there, and in the longer term to encourage new local theatre.

LATE's first event will be a three day performance festival from May 11th-13th at the Swarthmore Centre. It will include: Friday evening, **Gay Sweatshop** (men's company) in **The Dear Love of Comrades** (to be held at the Trades Club, not the Centre); Saturday morning, Open theatre workshop run by **Gay Sweatshop**; Saturday afternoon, **Beryl and the Perils** (a new women's company) in **Nuts** (a play about women and mental health); Saturday evening, **Clapperclaw** (see this page) in **Ben Her**, followed by **Hormone Imbalance** (see last month's **Levellor**); Sunday morning, workshops; Sunday afternoon, **Beryl and the Perils** in **Is Dennis Really the Menace?**

All performances will be followed by discussion. Creche and canteen facilities will be available. Tickets: 75p (50p for non-earners) per performance, or £2.50 (£1.50 for non-earners) for the whole weekend. Details from **Leeds Alternative Theatre Events**, 50 Armley Ridge Road, Leeds, LS12 3NP, telephone 0532-454759 or 756641.

An 8-month long campaign launched last summer when the entire **Theatremobile** was wrongfully sacked, is now reaching the end of the road. The company have now staged what will almost certainly be their last production, **No Pasaran**, in



Skelmersdale, Whitworth and Manchester.

The company were dismissed by the Mid-Pennine Arts Association following their production of the controversial asbestos play **To Whom it May Concern**. And, despite a tribunal finding they had been wrongfully sacked and awarding them £37,000 in damages, the company of 18 were not reinstated.

In a determined effort to restore the theatre service provided to the North West by **Theatremobile**, most of the company stayed on to fight their campaign. They mounted a highly successful tour of **Chalking the Flags** written by Elizabeth Bond and have toured with **No Pasaran**, a play set in Germany and England during the 1930s about a young Jewish boxer's efforts to fight in the Berlin Olympics.

Despite the moral and financial support the company has received from trades councils, trade unions, other theatre companies and the public, **Ex-Theatremobile** may be no longer. More information from John Wood on 070685-2677 (evgs.).

The **Women's Theatre Group** are touring two plays around London: **The Soap Opera** and **Hot Spot**.

The Soap Opera, a play about a mixed group of women accidentally locked in a launderette, can be seen as follows: April 22nd, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gerry Raffles Square, Stratford E15 at 8pm; May 1st, Sports and Social Club, Angel Road, London SW9 at 12 noon (women only); 5th, Jackson's Lane Community Centre, 271 Archway Road N6 at 8pm; 10th, Redbridge Drama Centre, Church Fields, South Woodford E18 at 7.30 pm; 12th, Whittington Community Centre, Yerbury Road N19 at 8pm.

Hot Spot, a surreal spoof about sexual stereotypes, can be seen as follows: May 2nd, Carlton Centre, Carlton Vale, London NW6 at 1.30 (women only) and 8pm (mixed); 9th, Hoxton Hall, 128a Hoxton Street N1 at 11 am (women only); 11th, Old Bull Community Centre, 68 High Street, Barnet, Herts, at 8.30pm.

The Women's Theatre Group, 291 Finchley Road, London NW3 telephone 01-794-0958.

MOVIES

Two movies now showing in the USA are worth watching out for:

The China Syndrome, a rattling political thriller starring Jane Fonda and Jack Lemmon, is built around the attempted cover-up of a radio-active leak from a nuclear power station. Can the diligent news reporter save the nation with his fearless news reporting? A cross between **All the Presidents Men** and the **Harrisburg** nuclear disasters, it can hardly fail at the box office.

Norma Rae, directed by Martin Ritt (who did **The Front**, **Sounder** and **The Spy Who Came in From the Cold**) is about a battle for unionisation in a southern American textile factory led by a courageous and thoroughly believable young woman. Sally Field leads the way in showing what the newly-vaunted 'women's films' should be about, and we can only hope **Norma Rae** does better over here than **Blue Collar**.

BOOKS

Careers guides for girls seem an obviously fertile ground for women journalists to get into. And Anna Coote's latest book **Equal at Work?** is such a guide. It follows the careers of thirteen women in traditionally men's jobs, looks at their daily routine and reports the difficulties they have encountered establishing themselves. The book also includes a section on legal rights and information about training requirements.

Equal at Work? is published by Collins, price £1.50 (paperback).

Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism by Alfred Sohn-Rethel is a fascinating account of the founding of the Nazi state in the early 30s. Sohn-Rethel was an activist who infiltrated the office of the MWT, equivalent to the

CBI, and became an editorial assistant on **Fuhrerbriefe**, a newsletter commenting on current affairs which was circulated exclusively among the upper echelons of German big business.

The book is a product of Sohn-Rethel's unique opportunity to observe at first hand the lurid personalities and events of the period. It is also a very relevant analysis of the relationship between economic crisis and the rise of fascist ideas and politics. As David Edgar says in his introduction to the book, it explains "... how it was that German Big Business, most of whom held the Nazis in deep contempt, were forced to support (and indeed encourage) the seizure of power by a hysterical Austrian mystic at the head of a ragbag terrorist army."

Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism is published by **CSE Books**, 55 Mount Pleasant, London WC1, price £2.50.

PAMPHLETS

Those active in the Women's Liberation Movement, as well as to get hold of a great little pamphlet by Evelyn Fension called **You Don't Need a Degree to Read the Writing on the Wall**. It's very much a personal response by London East Fender Evelyn to the way the women's movement has treated working class women.

In an overwhelmingly middle-class women's movement, rife with a new breed of feminist-careerist, Evelyn wants to raise again the question of class. The point of discussing class, she says, is not to make middle class women feel guilty or to glorify being working class ("Anyway, it's middle class women who do that, with their flamboyant poverty and groovy working classness") but to assert the existence of working class women and their oppression by the women's liberation movement.

Of course, middle class women like to have working class friends in the same way as straight people who are right-on like to have gay friends, from whom they seek approval. But, as Evelyn points out, this kind of trendiness is a diversion from the need to face up to class politics.

In the section of her pamphlet called "I'm alright, Jill", Evelyn answers the inevitable charge that her own articulateness means she is not working class either: "Their mistake", she says, "is to assume that any articulate woman is middle class because of the middle class assumption that working

class speech is a lesser, ungrammatical version of their own."

You Don't Need a Degree to Read the Writing on the Wall costs 45p or 60p by post from **Sisterwrite**, 190 Upper Street London N1.

The anarchist **Black Beetle Co-op** have just published **West Germany - Prototype for the European State**, which includes an article (translated and reprinted from **Le Monde**) by French gay socialist Jean Genet.

Genet's article, "A Propos RAF", concerns the West German government's response to the work of the Red Army Faction. Interestingly, he makes a distinction between violence and brutality and applies it to his analysis of armed struggle in general and the so-called Baader-Meinhof group in particular.

"Violence and life are virtually synonymous", he writes. "The grain of wheat that sprouts and splits the frozen earth, the chick's beak that cracks the eggshell, the fecundation of woman, the birth of a child can all be considered violent". The brutal action, on the other hand, "is that which crushes a free act".

Genet points to two debts he says we owe the RAF. Firstly for helping us understand, "not just by words but by their actions inside and outside the prisons that violence alone can end man's brutality." Secondly for showing that "from Lenin to the present day, the Soviet politic has never diverged from support for the Third World."

The pamphlet also contains articles on Astrid Proll, the Third Bertrand Russell Tribunal, the Persons Unknown case and other bits and pieces.

Unfortunately, **Black Beetle** don't say how much the pamphlet costs or where you can get it from.



ANL crowd: under attack from the RCG

Back Pages

The **Birmingham Community Development Project** have published their final report no 5 on **Problems of Owner-occupation in Inner Birmingham**. The report aims to show how owner-occupation which now dominates many inner-city areas, contributes to their decline. The report also describes the campaign of local residents to reform the leasehold system.

The report is called **Leasehold Loopholes** and costs £1, plus 25p postage, from **BCDP**, 2 Alum Rock Road, Salfley, Birmingham.

The **Revolutionary Communist Group** has just reprinted its bitter attack on the policies of the **Anti-Nazi League**, the pamphlet **The Anti-Nazi League and the Struggle Against Racism**. This new edition contains a postscript arguing that the September "Carnival 2" should have been cancelled in favour of defending Brick Lane against the Nazis.

According to the **RCG**, "an anti-racist movement must be based on opposition to the racism of the British imperialist state. Only such a movement can defend black people against attack and unite the working class in opposition to racism. Such a movement will be built in opposition to unprincipled movements such as the ANL."

The Anti-Nazi League and the Struggle Against Racism is from the **RCG**, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN.

Back on the Right Rack is a pamphlet guide to bicycle parking facilities by **Friends of the Earth** bike campaigner Zea Katzoff and **Transport 2000's** Nick Lester. The pamphlet gives guidelines on bike parking for local authorities and other organisations. **Back on the Right Rack** is from **Friends of the Earth**, 9 Poland Street, London W1, price 40p plus 10p postage.

CAMPAIGNS

This year's **Gay Pride Week** is expected to be the biggest gay event ever held in Britain. The week, from 22nd June to 1st July, will mark the tenth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City. On the night of 27-28th June 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a famous gay bar. But the raid resulted in a massive riot which subsequently brought about the formation of New York's Gay Liberation Front. **Gay Pride Week 1979** will

include a massive carnival to Hyde Park in London on 30th June. For information, contact Don Tyler, **Gay Pride Week Committee**, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

The **Torness Alliance** is organising a gathering on the site of the proposed nuclear power station at Torness. All the anti-nuclear organisations will be making this event a major priority and many thousands of people are expected to turn up from 4-7 May. The gathering will include music, alternative technologies, theatre, stalls, workshops etc. Special trains and other transport are being arranged from all parts of the country. For details of transport, contact **SCRAM**, 2a Ainslie Place, Edinburgh 3, telephone 031-225 7752.

Friends of the Earth have published a pamphlet on Torness, by FoE energy consultant Mike Flood: **Torness - Keep it Green**. The pamphlet can be got from **FoE**, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG, price 85p plus postage.

COURSES

If you feel left out of the rather esoteric debate on the class origins of Smiley, which has recently broken out in this magazine, the **North London Polytechnic School of Librarianship** may be able to put you right. The school is running a short course on **contemporary political fiction called Authentic Possibilities?**

The course will open with two contrasting presentations: with Mervyn Jones (author of **Today the Struggle**) talking about "How the novelist makes use of political themes" and with Alan Pakula's "conspiracy movie" **The Parallax View** (based on the novel by Loren Singer). Other highlights will be: Nicholas Walter (author of **About Anarchism**) on "Anarchist aspects of revolution in fiction"; Bruce Merry (author of **Anatomy of the Spy Thriller**) on "Spy thriller versus political reality"; and Richard Appignanesi (author of **Lenin for Beginners**) on "The publisher as political witness". There will also be seminars on the relationship of fiction to political action.

The non-residential course will be held on 4th and 5th May at the **Polytechnic of North London School of Librarianship**, 207-225 Essex Road, London N1 3PN, telephone 01-607 2789 extension 2414. The fee is £14 (including lunch and refreshments) and the organisers say the event is zero rated for VAT.

