
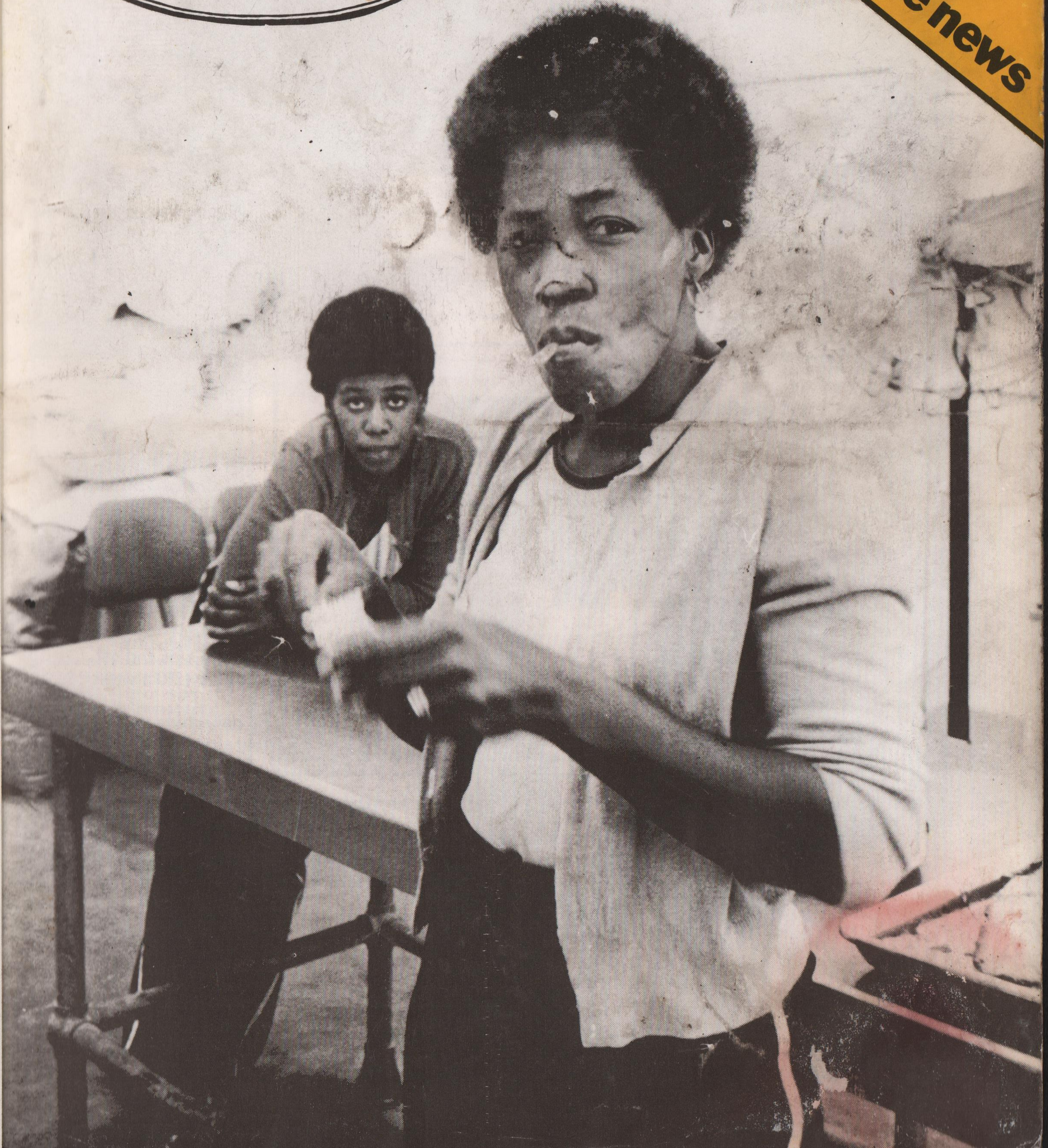


**the  
Leveller**



12011  
No 28  
July 79 40p  
**The tourist trap  
Britain's gipsies  
Secrets behind the news**







**Above:**

Unemployed in Wrexham —  
Gresford Colliery. Closed 3½  
years.

**Left:**

Unemployed in Wrexham — Terry  
and Susan Harper. Terry has been  
out of work for 3½ years, Susan for  
5 years. They have 5 kids and get  
£40 a week. They pay £10 a week  
rent.

Terry: "The only thing that'll  
help us is getting a republic in this  
country."

**Photographs by  
LAURIE SPARHAM**

**Front cover:**

"Doing time for manslaughter"  
Mississippi State Penitentiary,  
Parchman.

**Photograph by  
VAL WILMER**

# JULY 1979

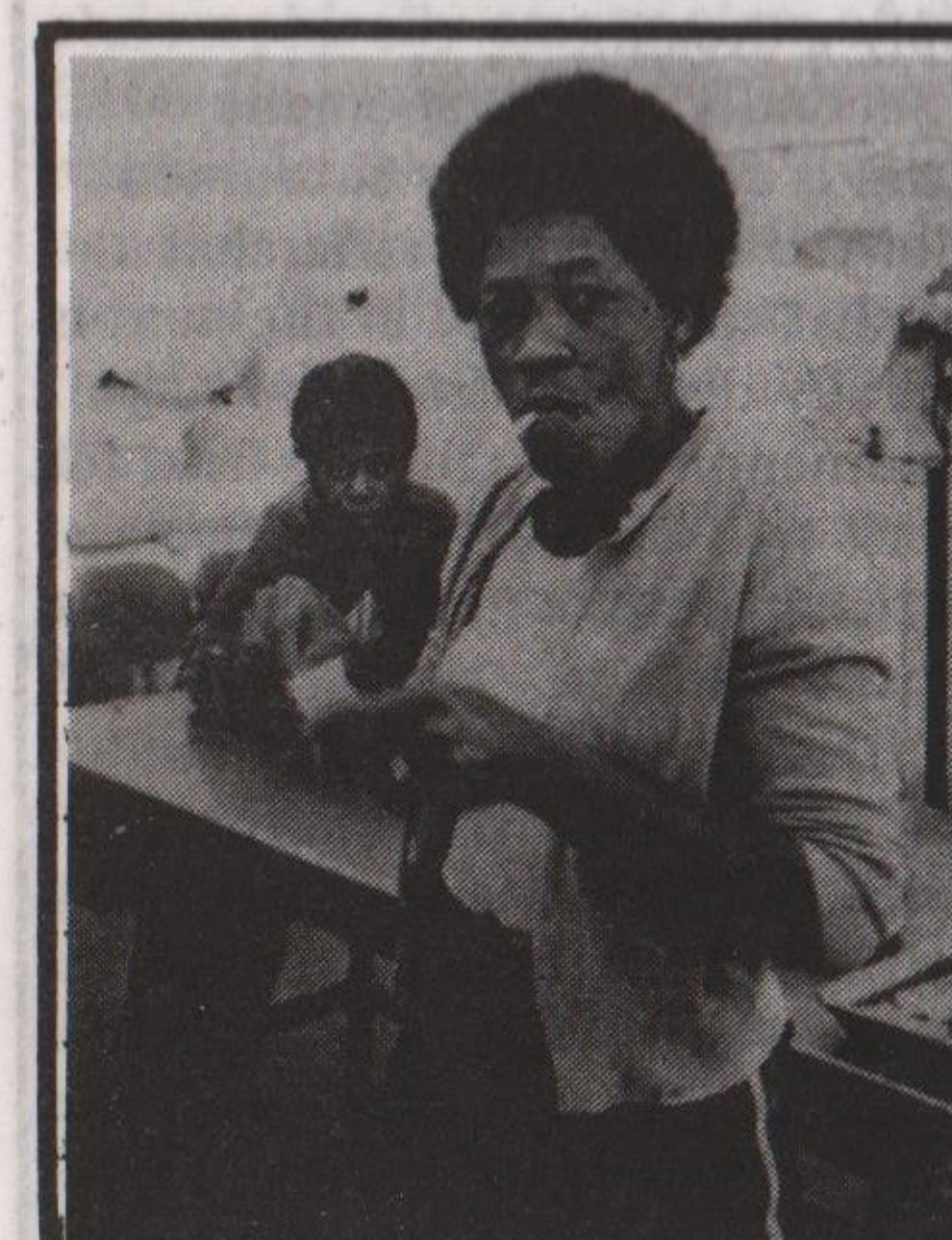
# INSIDE:

20 December 1977

## Security of News and Current Affairs Minutes

Andrew Todd said that certain newspapers and magazines had received a complete set of the News and Current Affairs Minutes for 1976. This had led to references to the Minutes in the "Guardian" and, at greater length, in a magazine called "The Leveller". C.A. to D.G. said the systematic pirating of a complete year's file emphasized the need for a responsible attitude to the security of the Minutes by all recipients of them.

Every Tuesday a group of senior BBC editors and executives sits down to discuss the Corporation's News and Current Affairs output. The decisions they make, the 'tone' they adopt filters all the way through the BBC and out to a listening and viewing world. South Africa, Iran, devolution, relations with the Prime Minister, even a plug for an old, safe friend's book, this is the stuff of the NCA meetings. The discussions are carefully minuted and, headed 'confidential' circulated to a select group of powerful decision-makers. Formally we have no way of watching how these people decide what to tell us: from time to time copies of the Minutes seem to appear in our office and (above) the NCA meeting gets hot under the collar about their own security. See Page 6.



Cover photograph by VAL WILMER, "perhaps the most under-appreciated of modern photo-journalists". On page 34, David Widgery writes about socialist photography and the achievement of Simon Guttman, founder of the Report photo-agency.



**Tourism: fun and sun in exotic locations means booming business for private capital. An examination of the holiday world. See Page 18.**

The AGM of Leveller Magazine Ltd, the friendly society that publishes the magazine, will take place on July 21. This is two weeks' later than announced in the last issue — it's been deferred for organisational reasons. The meeting will have a new structure: to overcome problems at last year's meeting, when there was a conflict between people who wanted to talk about the magazine's politics, and those who wanted to discuss specific organisational issues, there will be short plenary sessions (with reports) plus workshops, tentatively scheduled to cover collective practice, legal matters, the expansion of circulation, relations with the left, and so on. Details, and venue, announced in next issue (out July 8). The meeting will be open to all readers, though only founding and supporting subscribers (the shareholders) can vote. If you've got ideas on what the meeting should discuss, or want to submit a paper for discussion in a workshop, send them in.

- 4-5 Letters. Keep them coming.
- 6-11 DNCA. The minutes they said you mustn't see. Again.
- 12 The Irish round-up. No nearer Airey Neave's killer the police are desperately turning over the Irish left in London.
- 13 Meriden. Compulsory lay-offs rock the workers' co-op.
- 14 Migrant workers. The EEC proposes a 'rationalisation'.
- 15 Shorter foreign news: Cyprus Portugal; W.Germany.
- 16 Pakistan. Bhutto's legacy - a nation in turmoil.
- 17 Dominica. Violence then a General Strike in the Caribbean.
- 18 - 19 Tourism. A socialist view of the booming holiday business
- 21 Radiation and ITV 2.
- 22 Worker-writers. Writing and publishing co-operative examined.
- 23 Ian McEwen. Interview with the playwright the BBC banned.
- 25 Domestic short news.
- 26 Gypsies. A view of the travelling people.
- 27 Alarm. Local paper stirs it up in Swansea.
- 29 Even more shorts.
- 30 - 31 Back Pages.
- 34 Widgery on socialist photographers.

**TELEPHONE.** Our phone's flipped. Not our fault, it's the GPO - who don't seem very bothered about it. We're sorry.

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.

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# Letters

## The big dope debate

SALLY WILSON ADVISES us that "the consumers in Britain and the rest of the world should open their eyes, stop rolling their joints, and accept responsibility for their actions (*Leveller* 27 - Dope - Getting High can damage other peoples' lives). Of course, it's true that people who smoke dope are the consumers of a product, whose production, distribution and consumption are part of a system of exploitation which oppresses third world peasants.

So does consumption of bananas, coffee, tea, cotton, sugar, and so on. But why stop there. Consumption of any good produced in the capitalist world results in the exploitation of the workers who produce that good.

Refraining from consuming cannabis will not result in more food, better housing, etc. in the third world. Sally Wilson hints at the real problems to be overcome; high unemployment, low wages and cash crop production controlled by multinationals. In short, third world economies distorted by western capital.

The real solution to this problem is political, involving changes in the relations of production and not the simplistic one of refraining from smoking dope.

Name supplied  
Liverpool 8

## Legalise it!

HAD SALLY WILSON been writing about anything but the good herb in her description of exploitation in Columbia, surely her conclusion, that we should all down joints, would have been very different. People may choose to buy grapes, but not South African ones.

Clearly what is wrong is the commercial Columbian market, not the product itself which often grows in places unsuitable for other crops, and has played an important part in many Third World economies and cultures for thousands of years. In Columbia, which produces a large slice of the US cannabis market, now worth more according to the Drugs Enforcement Administration than their tobacco market, organised crime appears to have moved in with its historic exploitative tactics and right wing political connections. Prices stay high, low level dealers, people who can't afford protection, are busted, and police and politicians get fat on the proceeds. Real scrutiny of

labour conditions and land use is clearly impossible.

When will people open their eyes to the political implications of a massive commercial cannabis market supplying some 250 million consumers worldwide? Legislation will alleviate some black market abuses, but beyond that what is required is a non-exploitative legal market sensitive to its policies to the problems Sally Wilson describes. The LCC has formed a group which is working now on a practical model for realising such an ideal. So let's stop pissing in the wind with exhortations to stop smoking dope, man, and look to the shape of an inevitable future legal market to put a stop to what is happening in Columbia and may well happen elsewhere.

Tim Malyon  
Legalise Cannabis Campaign

## The lunatic system

EACH TIME Sally Wilson (Dope: Getting High can damage other people's lives, *Leveller* 27) sips her morning orange or grapefruit juice, swallows tea or coffee or consumes sugar produce she is guilty of "fostering poverty and great insecurity" in the pursuit of her own "nice buzz". Nobody needs to consume any of the above mentioned items (and many others beside) to sustain life and well being. The alternative may be to eat locally produced, organic foodstuffs, although these may be undesirable or simply unavailable under the limiting and lunatic food distribution system that we have right now. The argument doesn't call for insipid moralising - it calls for social revolution both here and in the Third World.

Columbian marijuana cultivation is a consequence of multinational domination. It stems from successive cash-crop farming which has left the country in poverty. The manoeuvres of a multinational called Purina are of particular importance. It created a vast poultry business (with small injections of stock capital in the form of plant machinery, hens etc.) and required an overall cultivation of soya bean for animal feed. They raised the livestock and sold it back to the people at inflated prices that the rich could afford; the subsistence farmers starved.

This lunatic system perpetuates the obvious chance to earn a few extra bucks selling dope. If people refuse to consume a particular item, it doesn't in itself mean that the third world will prosper. They will more than

likely starve, waiting for the multinationals to create another cash crop to exploit them.

Inside the co-operative whole-food distribution networks, small as they are, questions such as these are a daily event. Among some, the consensus is in favour of a total ban on South African and Chilean products, respecting the call from campaigns and labour movements within (or exiled from) those countries.

A Colombian rejection of multinational domination and development of pulse protein re-direction through expropriation of the land, can be the only realistic factor in this debate.

J. Munn  
Bread & Roses Foods (Co-op)  
London N1.

## On confusing sexism and capitalism

HAVING read, and I hope, understood the substance of Jenny Vaughan and Tessa Weare's letter, I believe it important to offer a few general criticisms of the position they adopt. We must evolve strategies concerning the nature of sexism over and beyond the self-defeating notion that all men are sexist.

Firstly, Jenny and Tessa state, "The values of a sexist society are structured into us from the moment we are born and define how we see ourselves and each other." This may be true, but whether or not it is, is unimportant. If, for example, one substitutes "capitalism" for "sexism" (and the two are seen to be interchangeable in Jenny and Tessa's letter) what does one get? Merely a simplistic and reactionary view of the world.

In effect, such a statement holds that we are all subject to the laws

of capitalism; ineluctable laws; laws from which we cannot escape, so we may as well not try. It rejects socialism or the possibility of ever achieving socialism, and it does so because the argument is advanced or located in a view of the "world" and capitalism, that is so absurd as to be almost unbelievable.

Values are not "things" which float around in society, having first been consciously "thrown-up" by the clearly-definable workings of structure. On the contrary, within capitalism "values" are the product of the contradictions between structures. Just as the capitalist mode of production only "exists" in its pure form, values, as Jenny and Tessa conceive of their nature, only "exist" in the pure form. Their reality is somewhat different in the "real" world.

Jenny and Tessa appear to believe that values are structure simply "writ small". If this were to be the case, capitalism's contradictions could only be theorised about, not used as the basis for socialist action since, if the values of a capitalist society were "structured into us from the moment we are born and define how we see ourselves and each other", it would be, as they implicitly argue, impossible to transcend their grip. Socialism would become not a politico-economic alternative, but simply a dream.

Secondly, at one moment sexism is conveniently subsumed under the notion of patriarchal capitalist society, and in the next is magically divorced from the very phenomenon. Capitalism is held to benefit two classes; the ruling class as a right, and the middle class almost by default, whilst sexism benefits men of all classes, and patriarchal capitalism benefits women of the ruling class (quite how the latter can be illustrated, I fail to see).

'DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE  
VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE...  
... WE'RE FLYING THEM IN  
BY DC-10!'



# Letters

However, in relation to class and sexism, it is evident that working-class men do not "benefit" from their class, but are still perceived as sexist, which simply does not follow from the logic of the argument. Class and sexism, by this argument, are mutually exclusive, since the one does not correspond to the other. The only reason for dragging a concept of class into the argument appears to be an attempt to relate sexism to capitalism, at such a general level or to render both "class" and "sexism" to be almost meaningless concepts.

Following that, the parallel drawn between "Middle class people inevitably benefit from their class" and "... in the same way it is vital to see that men benefit from having more power, self-esteem, etc." just does not stand up to close inspection. Whilst it is clear that men do have more power, self-esteem and so forth, it is far from being "in the same way" as the operation of class "benefit" or interest, since the latter depends upon a particularly narrow and philosophically empty view of class. Extending Jenny and Tessa's view, relative to the ruling class "such" benefits evaporate. A relativistic view of class hardly predisposes itself as the basis for the action they advocate.

Finally, "deciding to be anti-sexist... is not in itself going to change these structures", presumably in the same way "deciding" to be socialist is not going to change these structures either? Confusing capitalism with sexism in the most mechanical way possible, their argument simply lapses into tautology. A tautology which holds that capitalism promotes sexism through the structural dissemination of sexist values, which in turn means that all men are sexist (and by implication all women accept this sexism, since, like men, they cannot avoid it!), because of the structure of sexist values.

How can men not simply decide but act to negate this sexism? In Jenny and Tessa's view of the world they cannot; since one cannot escape capitalism as they view it one cannot escape sexism either. If one accepts their argument, the debate is closed. I sincerely hope that the picture is not as they have painted it.

Chris Livesey  
London W10

## YOUR LETTERS TO THE LEVELLER

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

## Left hypocrisy

IT WAS GOOD to see the interview with a Provisional IRA Volunteer (*Leveller* 26). It is important that we in Britain hear the views of members of the leading organisations fighting British imperialism in Ireland. What a shame then that the article should be marred by the reactionary comments of John Barton.

In an amazing statement he says: "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 political indefensible and aid reaction and repression to 'stamp out terrorism'."

I have yet to understand how anyone can support the right of the Irish to self-determination and then promptly attack them for fighting a war for that right.

John Barton should understand that the "big problem" for socialists cannot be the way that an oppressed people fight back. British socialists have never been this fussy about the liberation wars of the Vietnamese people or the black peoples of Southern Africa.

The truth is that the so-called British socialists who find the tactics of the Provisionals a big problem, are not socialists at all - but petit bourgeois opportunists who desperately want to cover up for imperialism, who would rather not face up to a struggle against imperialism nor stand in solidarity with the leadership of that struggle.

Finally, what does John Barton mean by: "While the British remain in Ireland, substituting repression for political action...?"

We can only assume that British imperialism, which has meant nothing but murder, torture and repression to oppressed peoples throughout the world, is capable of some sort of progressive "political action" in Ireland. The point here is that there is no choice for British imperialism but continued repression. This is evident in the debates around the so-called six county solution. This imperialist

"solution" would mean nothing more than a shift in the responsibility for policing the six-county statelet to the RUC and UDR - the "native" forces of sectarianism and repression.

The Republican movement and the British working class would be much better served by having the words of liberation fighters unadulterated by the cowardly equivocation and hypocrisy of the British left.

Mike Gibbs  
Edinburgh

## Fighting racism

HOW MANY more Southalls will have to take place before the British left understands that police brutality against the black community is a regular occurrence, not an exception? (See June issue of *The Leveller*, articles on Southall.) The ritual calls for a 'full public inquiry' into Southall by the Anti-Nazi League and others are an insult to those who suffer daily at the hands of the police, immigration officers and racist officialdom. The ethnic minorities in Britain do not want any more whitewash inquiries conducted by peers, judges and trade union bureaucrats. If the left hopes to be taken seriously it must offer effective solidarity with the struggles of black workers against the racist British state.

In Southall, East London and Bradford, racist attacks and trumped-up charges against the victims of such attacks are on the increase. On picket lines at Grunwick, during the bakery strike, and at Garners, immigrant

workers have been subjected to systematic police harassment and violence. But the only response of the left and the leaders of the British labour movement has been an apologetic call for 'inquiries'.

It is time to put an end to this futile phrase-mongering. The state's immigration laws provide the police with a free hand to arrest any black person in Britain on suspicion of being an 'illegal immigrant'. Immigration controls legitimise state racism, allow black workers to be forced into the worst jobs and moved around as the state sees fit. That is why the struggle against racism must begin with all-out opposition to immigration controls. The TUC, the NUT and the ANL - who are calling for 'impartial' inquiries into Southall - have never campaigned for an end to all immigration controls. Their 'anti-racism' is confined to moral outbursts against the National Front, and appeals to the British state to outlaw racism.

Meanwhile thousands of so-called 'illegal immigrants' are incarcerated in jails and detention centres up and down the country under state immigration laws. As part of a campaign to small all immigration controls the Revolutionary Communist Tendency is mounting a series of pickets on these centres, beginning on Saturday 21 July at Harmondsworth detention centre, Heathrow. We urge all anti-racists to attend, and to build support for this picket in their organisations and trade union branches.

Judith Harrison  
Revolutionary Communist  
Tendency

## "Working Papers" Collection

Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy 192 pp.

A dossier of translations, bibliographies and essays on recent work by French philosopher Michel Foucault, who attempts to locate the relations of power, truth and knowledge functioning within strategies of contemporary culture. Dominant philosophical themes - marxism, semiology, theories of the subject - are questioned: "The history which bears and determines us is war-like, not language-like; relations of power, not relations of sense." (\$AUS5-50\*)

Language, Sexuality and Subversion 208 pp.

Taking a critical distance from freudo-marxism, the essays in this book question the politics of the recent move by sexual radicals back towards the "Party" and the "Analysis", and imply a critique of radical engagement with two major institutions of transmission, the media and pedagogical bodies. (\$AUS4-95\*)

\* Price from the publisher. Orders should be accompanied by prepayment (bank draft only) adding 80 cents per book for postage and handling.

Feral books are available in Britain from Collets, Compendium, Dillons (Cambridge) and Rising Free.



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# INFORMATION SURGERY AT THE BBC



EVERY TUESDAY the BBC's News and Current Affairs (NCA) bosses meet to decide what we are — and are not — going to be told about the world in the next seven days. The minutes of these meetings are confidential, and carefully guarded, but they're circulated as guidelines to a selection of lower-level executives. Eighteen months ago *The Leveller* acquired a complete year's supply (see issue 11) and the revelations embarrassed the BBC hugely. Now we have another great wodge of them, covering the period from December 1977 to May of this year. Through the anaesthetic of their generalised,

diplomatic language, it is possible to perceive what's going on in the heads of the most powerful group in the media. The minutes show how the consensus is maintained, how the powerful are deferred to and the weak ignored; how censorship, at home and abroad, is complied with; how radical ideas are excised. They show the participants to be ignorant, reactionary and out of touch with reality. There's too much to print all at once, but we present a selection covering Rhodesia, the unions, and their relationship with the Metropolitan Police. Next month we'll be printing some more.



## RHODESIA:

WHEN THE BBC is confronted with censorship by a foreign government it reacts strongly, as a rule, but not always. In January 1978 the Smith regime in Rhodesia imposed censorship on military news.

DNCA urged all concerned not to over-react to a situation which was common in many countries.... There followed a detailed discussion about a report from Ian Smith in Salisbury (BBCTV reporter, not the Prime Minister). The Rhodesian authorities had insisted on cuts which would remove two lines. It appeared, however, that the film, which was en route for London, still contained the "offending" passages and an editorial decision would have to be taken on its arrival whether to delete those passages....DNCA said that Ed Tel N (Alan Protheroe) would prefer not to push the issue at this stage....It appeared possible that the censorship would not be maintained for very long and that any decision to react immediately to such pressures should be considered against that background and against the importance of maintaining BBC representation to get news out of Rhodesia.... DNCA emphasised the need for great care in considering such matters.

Well, what did they do? The did the censors' job for them. A week later (19.1.78):

DNCA said it had been decided in Television News that it would not invalidate the report if the two brief censored portions were omitted: the report had been edited accordingly....Alan Protheroe said that the censorship position in Salisbury was unchanged.... John Wilson said that not much material was being lost through censorship. It was necessary to rely a good deal on the Rhodesian authorities at the best of times, in the absence of any other real news source.

## who's who

Director-General (DG): Ian Trethowan, *Tory ex-political journalist*. Chief Assistant (CA to DG): Peter Scott, *formerly known as Hardiman, safe political correspondent, toadies to DG*. Director, News and Current Affairs (DNCA): Dick Francis, *liberal, conscientious, former Controller Northern Ireland*. Deputy DNCA: Andrew Todd, *BBC apparatchik, former (unsuccessful) head of BBC2 News*. Editor TV News (Ed Tel N): Alan Protheroe, *derided Welshman, army intelligence background*. Editor Radio News (Ed RN): Stan Taylor, *now shunted to Scotland*.

Labourish but a lifer. Deputy Ed RN: John Wilson, *able schemer*. Editor, TV Current Affairs (Ed Tel CA): John Tisdall, *ex-provincial newspaper brought down to level up London news, but now totally absorbed*. Chief Assistant Current Affairs Group TV (CACAGT): Michael Bunce, *Etonian, made "Nationwide" what it is today*. Editor, "Tonight": Roger Bolton, *liberal, progressive in BBC terms*. Assistant Head Current Affairs Group Radio (AHCAGR): Anthony Rendell, *produces standard right-wing documentaries etc*. Head of Information Department (HID): Peter Woon, *BBC meteor, ex-Fleet St, sharp, revolutionised radio news*.

## Cutting out the 'bad bits'

Not very much information was in fact being suppressed; the John Simpson despatch of an attack on a white-owned farm during the previous week had been fuller than several pre-censorship ones. Ken Brazier said that John Simpson had cued his reports for censorship but it had not been very appropriate to repeat the warning on every occasion since very little was missing and the warning note could imply that matters of substance had been cut out.

In deleting from reports the fact that they had been censored the BBC was again doing the censors' job, for on January 31:

there was further discussion following the escalation of censorship over the past few days, including the prevention of journalists from saying that their reports had been censored. Stan Taylor said that the regulations had been extended to cover comment as well as news on the security situation. Rhodesian journalists were now subject to a kind of D Notice on political matters which prevented them from mentioning the names of Messrs Nkomo and Mugabe. Ken Brazier confirmed that in his view the censorship was being widened and tightened although he did not feel that as yet the BBC had lost any significant information thereby.

After this the NCA people rather lost interest. From time to time it was reported that censorship was continuing, but there was no more discussion. On October 31

DNCA said he was in communication with the authorities in Salisbury. The BBC could not afford to have television Current Affairs excluded from Rhodesia: the question was how to renegotiate their entry without jeopardising the News presence.

## minor operations

*"David Holmes was critical of the way in which 'Today' that morning had set the start of the Thorpe Trial, the 'trial of the century', alongside an item about a man who played 'Rule Britannia' on his armpits" (May 8 1979).*

*"DDNCA said that the Governors were still eager to see a coloured presenter or news-reader on television, but not to the extent of 'positive discrimination'" (November 7 1978).*

*"CA to DG was critical of the final sentence of a report by Simon Dring at the end of the Red Brigade trial in Italy. When he said that the Red Brigade could 'with impunity continue to disrupt Italian life. CA to DG described that comment as either insensitive or as an example of editorialising....Andrew Todd accepted that it was not so much the words themselves as how they had been delivered. They had been spoken almost with relish and had made a false impact at the end of the item" (June 27 1978)*

The Rhodesian regime runs a front called the Rhodesian Promotion Council, which came to see BBC chiefs, and the NCA people seized the opportunity to make friends with barely concealed enthusiasm (27.3.79):

CA to DG reported that he, ADNCA and John Osman had had an interesting meeting with the Chairman.... Mr C G Tracey, and his vice-chairman, Mr A Chavanduka. Mr Tracey was on the boards of 20 important companies spanning the whole of Rhodesian industry, from banking and insurance to agriculture. He had met considerable opposition to his liberal views and his efforts to place Africans on the boards of his companies. The Council had been formed some years earlier, in fact before UDI, with the object of ensuring the minimum economic and industrial upset when Zimbabwe came into being. It had remarkable contacts with black people in South Africa and Rhodesia. He and Mr Chavanduka were in Britain for talks with leaders of commerce and industry, with officials at the FCO and with shades of opinion. Although they had previously been operating under cover, they were now prepared in a cautious way to be more open about their activities. John Osman, who knew Mr Chavanduka's brother, had prepared a briefing note and would pass on the necessary information to anyone who could use it. Mr Tracey and Mr Chavanduka would be at the disposal of any BBC representatives visiting Rhodesia to help in any possible way.

Which just shows that you can believe anything if you try hard enough. This was followed by a brief report: Ron Neil said that the Rhodesian authorities were still refusing to allow any documentary crews to enter Rhodesia.

On May 1 this year there was a follow-up: Peter Scott reported that he had received a letter from the Chairman of the Rhodesian Promotion Council expressing appreciation of a recent meeting with himself and other BBC staff at which the problems of obtaining facilities in Rhodesia had been discussed. The letter suggested this might be the moment for a "new and fresh approach, trying to forget the past and to establish a better new relationship."

How was this supposedly underground body, persecuted by the transitional government for its liberal views, able to restore relations between the BBC and the government? No-one asked.

The BBC practiced another kind of censorship over Rhodesia: the suppression of information given to the very NCA meeting itself. On March 6 this year the prestige guest at the meeting was Cledwyn Hughes, fresh from his "fact-finding" mission to Southern Africa. The minutes of the discussion are marked: "Not for Attribution", and it's not hard to see why,



## 'bad bits' continued

for Cledwyn delivered himself of views that were not included in his official report, and not broadcast anywhere, and, again, it's not surprising:

He described it as a darkening scene....Mr Hughes doubted whether a viable election could be held on April 20. There was much intimidation, especially in the tribal trust lands, both from the private armies of Bishop Muzorewa and the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole and from the guerrillas. The whole social structure was breaking down and there was a risk of starvation in three months or so....Mr Hughes said the attitude of South Africa was all-important to the future of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, but South Africa had not recently played a very active part....South Africa could have put pressure on Mr Smith, to come to a reasonable settlement, particularly by threatening to cut off his oil supplies....Mr Hughes expected the turn-out in the election to be no more than 20 per cent, but even that figure would be enough for Mr Smith to argue from, if it suited his book. He found the situation very depressing. After the election a new government might be set up but could it stop the war? Replying to John Osman he said that divisions between Presidents Kaunda and Nyrere were less serious than those between Mssrs Mugabe and Nkomo. Of the latter pair, Mr Hughes himself had been much the more impressed by Mr Mugabe, who might even adopt a non-aligned position if he came to power.

Next week DNCA brought out "a point that was well worth looking into":

This was that the one man one vote elections were to be held by 20 April not on 20 April. According to Lord St Oswald the government and the security forces would be trying to restore normality area by area during a rolling series of elections up and down the country....They realised that they had no chance of creating a peaceful enough situation to hold elections across the country but by holding them piecemeal they could speak in terms of a 70 percent turn-out. John Gau (HCAPTel) said that television Current Affairs were generally excluded from Rhodesia Rhodesia and that 90 percent of the country was under martial law. It would be difficult to see what they were up to. Alan Protheroe agreed that television news would also be extremely restricted in its information.

Now, it is far from clear whether the NCA people understood all these things. But if they did, they soon forgot them. They had been given, in advance, an explanation of how the elections were eventually run, and had admitted they would not themselves be in a position to check properly. But afterwards (1.5.79) DNCA asked:

Were the elections rigged? Stan Taylor said that BBC correspondents had travelled a good deal through the country and were satisfied they were being fairly conducted; Alan Protheroe felt no sense of unease and Ken Brazier believed that the reporting so far had been adequately probing and perceptive. Apart from Lord Chitnis, the only critic of the election was the "New Statesman".

You can't just put this down to stupidity. You have to face what the NCA people refused to face: that the Rhodesian elections were carefully staged to appear fair to the west, and the BBC were complicit, all along the line.



## UNIONS:

THE BBC's coverage of labour activity is informed less by any conscious anti-union line than by a total and apparently wilful ignorance and misunderstanding.

In December 1977 DNCA reported a complaint from Tory MP Lynda Chalker, that too many trade union extremists were getting on the air, and too few moderates. Sagely, the NCA people agreed:

*Anthony Rendell (AHCAGR) said it was of course necessary to report extremists when they were active but overall he was satisfied there was plenty of use of moderate trades union spokesmen....Andrew Todd (DDNCA) said that one difficulty was that some trade union leaders were unrepresentative of the mass of their members and were out of touch with moderate opinion. Roger Bufton (NE North) said that the Regions often had acute problems in this area. For instance, Arthur Scargill was clearly a major figure in Yorkshire making a lot of news and inevitably cropped up in a number of programmes. There was no-one else of equal weight locally who could be used to balance him with more moderate views, although every effort was made to use national figures like Joe Gormley whenever they were in the vicinity.*

That meeting (13.12.77) even considered compiling a running "tally", like the BBC's ludicrous MPs' Tally, of time allotted to moderates and extremists on the air, but decided it was impractical, and concluded that it shouldn't attempt to impose a more active "balance" (their quotation marks). DNCA re-

## KEEPING IT CLEAN

WHILE THE NCA people react with uncertain hostility to left or labour criticisms as "attacks on the media", they fall over themselves to accommodate business or establishment critics.

There is a particularly aggressive bosses' organisation called the Chemical Industry Association. On October 17 1978 it had

reacted rather strongly to two recent television programmes, one on the safety aspects of the herbicide 2,4,5-T, the other on safety aspects of Acrylonitrile.

On November 14 DNCA drew attention to a top copy of the Presidential Address delivered at the AGM of this body. It mentioned that "a particular feature of our activity has been to improve the accuracy and balance of television current affairs programmes"....The Association intended to continue its efforts during the current year to develop co-operation between its members and the media.

Accordingly it was reported on January 30 1979:

ADNCA said that following a series of complaints about the BBC from the Association, there had been a recent meeting between its director-general, Mr Martin Trowbridge, and DG, who had been accompanied by DNCA and HCAPTel (John Gau). This had been a bridge-building exercise. One point that had emerged was that major programmes should contain their own balance and should not use the excuse that any partisan opinions which were expressed in them would be balanced over a period.

This actually does mean something. It means that the three top editorial men in the BBC took time out to cower to a representative from an industry some of whose poisonous products had been analysed in programmes, and then issued what amounted to an instruction to staff to lay off exposing chemical health risks in future without "balance" — that is, equal prominence to manufacturers' contentions that their products are perfectly safe. At the same meeting, this was reported:

There had been recent correspondence between the managing director of Associated Ocel Company, which is responsible for lead additives in petrol, and DG. This had arisen from a "Nationwide"

## Cutting off the air

mind of the "age-old problem that the voice of moderation was invariably not as powerful as that of extremism."

The next item on that agenda was the firemen's strike. The trouble here was that too few strikebreakers had been publicised:

DNCA asked whether editors felt there had been too much coverage of the activities of the firemen and not enough of the fire officers, since they declined to join the strike. Alan Protheroe (Ed Tel N) said that....their activities had been reported wherever appropriate. DNCA asked whether the officers' point of view had been represented in discussion programmes....John Tisdall said that "Nationwide" had broadcast a profile of an officer who was working while his brother was on strike.

Now compare all these assertions with this (7.2.78); DG said of Arthur Scargill's recent appearance on "Nationwide":

*The item had been criticised for failing to reflect the fact that Scargill no longer held such sway over his members in Yorkshire as he did before the vote on productivity deals. He also raised the question of Joe Gormley, who had been given too easy a ride on the Michael Parkinson show. CA to DG said Peter Woon (HID) did not agree with the criticism of the Gormley interview. Parkinson's style was not expected to extend to challenging questions about current affairs issues. On the treatment of Scargill, Michael Bunce (CACAGTel) said that it was not necessary to be aggressive in order to uncover a man's*

report and from earlier items monitored by the company, which, it was alleged, had added added up to a lack of balance in the coverage of this subject, particularly in regard to the effects of lead on the health of young children.

The programmes had said lead is poisonous and neglected to air the case that it is not.

In his reply DG had said that "Nationwide" would have done better to have identified as such contributors who represented, or who were members of, the anti-lead pollution body. He had also invited Ocel to send a list of names of medical people expert in lead who might be considered as contributors to any future programmes on this subject.

## BEDSIDE MANNERS

THE THORPE trial really brought the NCA people up against their own prejudices. For millions of years the BBC has referred to defendants in criminal cases by surname alone. Now they had an establishment figure in the dock, and they just couldn't call him "Thorpe". On November 28 last year

DNCA agreed it had sounded

particularly strange to hear of "Thorpe being accused of murdering Mr Scott".

Sensible Stan Taylor ventured that that was the convention, and one could hardly start calling him "Mr" because he was eminent. He went on:

However, the public were always sensitive on this point. Ken Brazier thought it might be reasonable to call all the defendants in any case "Mr" until they were convicted. George Carey said that one could then end up with sentences....which sounded cumbersome....which sounded cumbersome. Ken Brazier said that in such cases one could drop the "Mr" all round. DNCA said he would not lay down any amendment to the normal rule but asked that the distracting effect of incongruities be borne in mind.

And so it went on, week after week, during the committal, with Thorpe getting his "Mr" when it wasn't too "incongruous". Come the full trial (15.5.79):

DNCA was happy with the coverage so far, and said the style references to Mr Thorpe had not jarred on the ear as they sometimes had during the committal hearings, though Michael Cole had dropped the "Mr" rather frequently during one report. Tsk tsk, Michael.

qualities and show the degree of esteem in which he was held. DNCA pointed out that in the firemen's strike, the BBC had been carrying a wide range of opinions from a Union in which it was plain that the rank-and-file membership were more militant than their leaders....He questioned the traditional view that, invariably, moderate union membership was led by extremists.

What on earth can we make of all this. The answer: nothing. Nothing at all. This is the muddled thinking of the middle class who've never had any contact with working class people and have no comprehension at all of the relationship between union leadership and the rank and file. But they're controlling what working class people are told of their own activities. (Interesting, too, that they were later quite happy with the plan to replace the "Tonight" programme with a late-night BBC1 chat show hosted by....Michael Parkinson). This discussion had started round a "Tonight" programme, "The Didcot Dossier", an attack on the TGWU's policy of blacking inland container ports, to protect dockers' jobs.

Jack Jones had been invited — by letter — to watch the programme and say if he wanted to reply. He had telephoned Andrew Todd to object to the broadcast the following day. Andrew Todd said that apart from the method of being told about the programme, Mr Jones had bitterly complained that he had not been given the opportunity to reply in the same programme. Andrew Todd said he had sent Mr Jones a transcript of the programme, which he thought was a good honest piece of reporting, and had repeated the offer to Mr Jones to take part in subsequent discussions....John Tisdall said the edit or of "Tonight" had postponed the showing of the programme for 24 hours, so as to consider this point and to alert Jack Jones....That instinct was right and it was perhaps unfortunate that the film had lacked roundness. But he did not think that everyone implicated in a report could expect to be alerted.

What was that BBC thing about "balance"? Clearly, however assiduously they may post off transcripts of attacks on unions to their leaders afterwards, it doesn't extend to letting them on the air to defend themselves. Jack Jones kept pressing the point, and eventually secured a meeting. On April 4 it was reported he had met the Chairman but "apparently still felt he had been treated less than fairly." Two weeks later

John Tisdall (Ed Tel CA) said he had been checking points raised by Jack Jones with the Chairman, but had found that they raised a host of other questions which militated against as early return to the subject.

No-one asked what these questions might be, or why they meant Jones should not be allowed on the air. Now try this discussion of the September 1978 British Leyland strikes: Michael Edwardes had written to say that BL itself took some of the blame for the fact that few management spokesmen had contributed to programmes about them:

*Strenuous efforts were now going to be made to put forward company spokesmen to take part in programmes....It was planned to facilitate interviews with key company executives where they appeared to be necessary....DNCA said that Mr Edwardes' letter represented a move in the right direction.*

When it came to the great "industrial crisis" of winter '79 (remember that one?) the NCA people were totally lost. They faithfully put out all the scare stories about people dying, "secondary picketing", Britain crumbling, panic buying, and so on, then started checking and found they weren't true. Even though it was reported (30.1.79) that the only thing their bosses (the board) was worried about was inaccurate motoring information, they were very troubled, particularly



## no air continued

over the excesses of the more reactionary of their staff. Eyebrows had been raised (that is, there had been a flood of complaints they didn't agree with, as opposed to those they do, to which "attention was drawn") at John Timpson's closing remarks on "Today" on January 19: "Brian Redhead will be back on Monday with a brand new set of strikes to report on!" Stan Taylor and Margaret Douglas thought this was a truthful and quite acceptable remark. DNCA said it was not easy to lay down a general rule about such remarks.

The January 23 meeting then considered a story about London ambulancemen, during the strike, who'd saved a little girl's life. There was a great debate as to whether this was pro- or anti-union, but no-one seemed to be sure, so DNCA had to rule:

When some item could be taken in more than one way, it was necessary to indicate a little more clearly why it was there.

In case people might be tempted to make up their own minds. DNCA went on:

One of the less well-judged questions brought to his attention came in an interview with a NUPE man who had complained that NALGO members were crossing the picket lines. The interviewer had said:

"I'm not sure whether anyone is sympathetic to pickets at the moment. For the past fortnight I would have thought that everyone had got heartily sick of hearing the work "picketing" (and who was using it all the time?) and at some of the tactics we've seen up and down the country."

Peter Woon thought the wording would have been more acceptable if the interviewer had left out the words "I would have thought". DNCA agreed the question had been too subjective. It were better it had come out.

Next week there was proof of how bad the scare stories had been. "The Money Programme" had done a random survey of 100 companies and found that none had suffered any lay-offs or export losses through the crisis.

This did give rise to the thought that there might have been too much alarm and despondency expressed.

The thought was soon forgot. A week later (6.2.79) they were reminded:

that the long-term effects of the road haulage strike were likely to be greater than supposed....DNCA said the point was a valid one which he commended to editors. For instance, he had been pleased to hear the hospital dispute being reported in this way. Stan Taylor said that coverage of the latter was proving difficult, due to the reluctance of hospital managements to draw attention to their use, or non-use, of voluntary labour....Tim Slessor said the greater difficulty was not in finding articulate union spokesmen but people prepared to put the management case effectively. The BBC was almost forced on occasions to put it for them in the course of interviewing union spokesmen.

It would be misleading to imply a uniform ignorance and anti-union attitude among NCA people. There are more enlightened voices. On January 16

Roger Bolton wondered whether BBC programmes were becoming instinctively antagonistic to the Trades Union cause. Any new industrial dispute was seen only in a national context....Ca to DG thought that was inevitable. The effects of strikes on those not directly concerned with them was dominating the news and precluding any detailed studies of the justice of a particular case. Roger Bolton said that with relation, for instance, to the ambulance drivers' dispute, the question seemed to be "how could they do it?" rather than "how can we deny proper rewards to such underpaid people?" Ken Goudie said that programmes must ask the questions to which the public wanted the answers.

On February 6

Andrew Taussig then asked if the BBC was adequately reflecting the basic hostility of many trades unionists to society as currently organised, especially the obviously unequal ways in which wealth was distributed.



## POLICE:

Last year the BBC found itself fighting one of the most important battles in its history when it faced a crude but concerted effort from Scotland Yard to preview and censor programmes concerning the Metropolitan Police. The immediate focus was the 'Law and Order' series on BBC2, but it is clear that police had gone on the offensive since the appointment of Sir David McNee as Commissioner in succession to Sir Robert Mark.

The first 'Law and Order' play was transmitted on Thursday April 6 last year. The next Tuesday DNCA said 'Law and Order'

raised important questions about 'faction', the documentary approach to drama, which in turn could have repercussions for the BBC's documentary programme makers.

He asked the meeting to watch the series with a view to returning to the discussion. Next week, April 18,

there was a brief and rather pessimistic discussion. John Gau said that co-operation from the Metropolitan Police was so poor that it was now normal practice to go instead to Forces outside London, who were usually quite ready to assist. It was agreed that the departure of both Sir Robert Mark, the previous Commissioner, and of Mr. Peter Marshall (Director of Information) had led to some deterioration of relations.

On May 9 the meeting returned to the subject again.

DNCA drew the attention of the meeting to criticisms by the Home Secretary and suggestions made in the House of Lords Debate that the 'Law and Order' drama series was evidence that the BBC sheltered subversive writers under the cloak of its Charter. DG said the BBC's defence of controversial programmes, be they fact or fiction, was that if someone felt traduced by them he had a method of redress... If a group felt traduced they must be provided with air-time to make their case.

Scotland Yard apparently did feel well and truly 'traduced'. They introduced a form of contract which they were expecting BBC producers to sign: the contract would guarantee that they BBC would allow them to see material before transmission and not to broadcast material they didn't like.

On July 11, Peter Neivens, a Deputy Assistant Commissioner and Director of Information of the Met was invited to address a Part Two meeting of the NCA group.

Desmond Wilcox said he was worried to the point of being alarmed at a form of contract now being put in front of BBC programme staff by the Metropolitan Police before any facilities were offered... unless this document was withdrawn there could not be any effective cooperation between the two organisations.

Mr Neivens spoke of the Metropolitan policemen's disillusion with the BBC. Over the years there had been an absence of any real partnership. The feeling had grown among his colleagues — and it was very difficult to overcome — that there had been a succession of 'short-sells', let-downs and incorrect portrayals of their activities. Of course there had been some 'bent' policemen but they were not typical. The conditions stipulated in the contract to which Desmond Wilcox referred were not likely to have to be implemented.

Both Wilcox and Gordon Carr came back at Neivens, arguing that

never in the past had there been such a claim for blanket editorial control over BBC programmes. Mr. Neivens said it was the BBC that exercised the censorship, and in matters where the Metropolitan Police's good name was at stake; he referred to a widespread belief among policemen that the BBC deliberately sought to present them in a bad light.

Replying to Peter Woon, who asked if he saw 'misrepresentation' of the Police as an exclusively BBC problem, Mr Neivens replied that he did not — it was a problem of the media generally although much of it was attributable to the BBC. Mention was made of the 'Law and Order' plays and Mr

During the blizzards of New Year 1978/9, DNCA was puzzled by Radio Scotland's reporting that "most roads were impassable." He had driven 900 miles during the

period and found that only 2½ were impassable. What could be happening? South of the border, Radio Cumbria was saying the same roads were open. "On enquiry the police

had admitted to the Glasgow newsroom that they were deliberately trying to keep the public off the roads before the hogmanay holiday." (January 9 1979).

## Getting a second opinion

Neivens said there had been a strong police reaction to them. Mr. Neivens could see no prospect of the Metropolitan Police withdrawing the contract but said it would be prepared to discuss rephrasing of it. He did not think there was an effective way of controlling BBC filming by any other means: it was too late to try and do so once filming had been carried out. CA to DG contested that and said that the police could always see a film and discuss it before transmission with programme staff.

When the NCA met again they found that the police had escalated their demands by adding a new clause to the 'contract' stating: "The BBC undertakes not to sell, dispose of, lend or otherwise make available to any other person or company any of the material to which this agreement relates without the prior written consent of the Metropolitan Police."

But behind the scenes the police were beginning to pull back. Neivens had written to the editor of Radio News to tell him (August 1):

no change in routine relations with the media was intended. The present disagreement related solely to special facilities sought for individual programmes and it was hoped this would be resolved at a forthcoming meeting with DNCA.

The heavyweights had moved in: the previous week, DG had been to lunch with McNee:

DG said that he had made clear that there was absolutely no question of the BBC signing away its editorial control of programmes, and he felt this was now accepted. On the other hand, the police were concerned that where they gave facilities for filming, the BBC would be willing to listen to any representations.

What the police now wanted was the opportunity to see programmes before transmission and to comment upon them. There need by no difficulty over that, provided the police understood that the final content was up to the BBC.

Next week DNCA was able to tell the meeting that he would be seeing Neivens the following week.

### APPENDIX

#### PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

1. These points are only for cases which the Metropolitan Police consider delicate, affecting privacy, "sub judice", national security and such areas. They are not for news items or straightforward current affairs features on police work — e.g. the opening of new police stations, the introduction of new vehicles and equipment, etc.
2. When embarking on a potentially sensitive programme, a BBC producer would meet with somebody from "P" Department to talk over the subject and the area the BBC wished to portray, as well as the facilities they considered necessary to do this. The programme area would be defined as clearly as possible at this stage. Afterwards, the BBC producer would send a letter to the Metropolitan Police setting out what had been agreed.
3. The Metropolitan Police would then agree the letter's contents and acknowledge that it covered the necessary points.
4. The Metropolitan Police would be kept informed of any subsequent change of plan and, if necessary, a further meeting would be convened to agree any alterations. Similar talks would be held between the Police and the BBC to sort out any disagreement.
5. It would be open to the Metropolitan Police to write to the BBC outlining anything they thought went against an agreement between them. The BBC would then look into the matter and report their findings to the Metropolitan Police.
6. If the Police were not satisfied, they could register a formal complaint with the BBC's Director-General.

Text of the secret agreement with the police.

He would make it clear that the BBC had no intention of entering into any form of written contract. Nevertheless, if the police were saying that they were prepared to offer special facilities in sensitive areas, in such cases it would be sensible procedure, if only as a precaution against errors, to show them the film at the rough-cut stage and obtain their comments. That would not affect the BBC's editorial responsibilities.

On August 22, the Deputy DNCA was able to report that his boss had been to see Neivens.

It had become clear that the police had drawn back from the original contract proposal and were now seeking a more pragmatic means of trying to avoid serious disagreements between senior police officers and producers. It was also clear that the Metropolitan Police would be scrutinising any requests very carefully in the coming weeks. Producers who wanted police cooperation would have to be very explicit about their programme aims.

For the next few weeks, the NCA people continued to be extremely sensitive to all police items. But Neivens was still fighting for a foothold in the editorial process. On October 27, he wrote to the BBC. Next week DNCA said the letter set out an elaborate procedure for further relations between the BBC and the police, which he, DNCA, thought would establish an altogether too formal system. Some of the points made were reasonable and it would, for example, be sensible for a producer, as suggested, to write to his police contacts after a discussion confirming what had been agreed, but the full procedure set out by Mr Neivens, which included explicit provisions for an appeal to the Board or DG, were unacceptable... Tony Isaacs said that the new rules proposed would mean entering into detailed commitments before programme plans were finalised. DNCA agreed with Michael Bunce that the procedure outlined might perhaps apply to exceptionally sensitive programmes but not as a general rule. He would convey the BBC's reactions to Mr. Neivens.

By February 27 a final draft was just about ready: DNCA told the meeting that it might also be circulated to other Police Forces. He asked for final comments before the end of the week.

On March 6 the final agreement was ready and attached as an Appendix to the Minutes as an instruction for anyone in the BBC who had to deal with the police in future. DNCA had a couple of points to make:

He had deleted the word 'formal' before 'letter' in the final sentence of paragraph 2, to avoid any impression that this was a contract. DNCA drew attention to paragraph 6, which set out the police's right to appeal to DG — this was entirely consistent with the BBC's normal practice in dealing with cases of dissatisfaction. The assumption underlying the note was, however, that the relationship between the BBC and the police must rest on trust; it would be helpful in eliminating possible causes of misunderstanding.

The police may have backed down from their initial position, but so had the BBC. They had agreed to a unique procedure of checks which would effectively give the police an infinitely greater editorial say than they had before. A new climate had been set which will dilute investigation in the most sensitive areas. Although the police hadn't got everything they wanted, they had got more than any self-respecting independent broadcasting organisation should have allowed them to have.

Next issue: The BBC and Northern Ireland — how the RUC stopped a story. The National Front — guaranteeing their political rights. How the NCA bosses tried to block the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, and what they think of access programmes. Plus more sillies, and lots more. Order your copy now!



# Neave killing: they came in the morning, the afternoon and the evening

MARGARET THATCHER still keenly wants revenge for the killing of her former colleague Airey Neave. Two months have passed since his death, and still nobody has been charged with the murder. The political pressure for results must be intense on the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Special Branch, who have intensified their mission since Thatcher took over.

The most recent ATS/SB operations suggest, however, that the actual culprits will not be caught, and that the emphasis has switched to a blanket low-intelligence operation that has already resulted in swoops on a considerable number of North London homes, the detention of eleven people, the questioning of three more, a vindictive expulsion order, a desperate "catching-up" on newish factors like the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and feminism, and the hounding of one nearly-broken man, Peter Grimes.

The intensity of the operation springs in part from another police blunder like in their Brain-tree operation last January (see *Leveller* issue 24). Up till Neave's death they were looking for a Provisional IRA team to follow up the well-publicised threat of major political assassinations in Britain.

Airey Neave was hit alright, but not by the Provisionals. It was the INLA, the military wing of the IRSP. Belfast interviews backed up by subsequent statements from Irish republican prisoners in British jails confirmed that the Provos were after Neave too, but were just beaten to it.

Peter Grimes, now 31, is the former National Organiser of the IRSP support group in Britain. His long series of arrests began in August 1977 on the strength of a statement given to the police by a man in Canterbury, Kent, who called himself Mallon but whose real name was Ken Driver. Driver himself got a three year sentence on an explosives charge soon after Grimes' arrest. He had implicated the IRSP's organiser in circumstances only too similar to other Irish republican 'frame-ups', such as that of John Higgins (see *Leveller* issue 25).

Mallon/Driver is long since forgotten, but the intense questioning left him with a broken relationship, shaky health, and a statement in court that he would give up all Irish political activity.

After a short prison sentence, Grimes was approached several times by the Special Branch during 1978 to make him inform, although it seemed quite likely that the police had infiltrated the support group Grimes once headed. In 1979 Grimes was again involved in the IRSP support group but his health was still weak and he resigned in February this year.

He saw the inside of a police station again on May 2, this time ATS operational HQ at Paddington Green in West London. There he was pumped for information by a team of interrogators headed by DCS Richards, second-in-command of the ATS. Also present were DS Vickery, DS McDonald, and DS Peter Weston of the SB. Irish section. There are suggestions that Dublin SB officers also attended the interrogation.

Grimes was released after four days of round-the-clock interrogation with little sleep allowed, but not before being told that if he provided names and addresses for the Neave killers and rung Scotland Yard, he would be given a new house, job and a safe future. Nor was he to contact his MP. He did not contact the Yard.

Back in the Irish axis of North London - a sprawling area from Kilburn, Cricklewood, Willesden across to Hornsey and Highgate, the area was being saturated. The main police tactics seemed to be staking out certain houses and grabbing anyone going in or out; sitting openly in cars outside homes, pubs and clubs; and even going into church clubs (such as Kilburn's Quex Road church hall), the music clubs, the Irish ballrooms, simply, it seems, to watch who was watching them.

All this was happening in an obvious way, with no attempt at subtlety. The idea was to discomfort, unsettle, by the all-too-obtrusive police presence. With over 200 cops in the area plus the local CID, it has been difficult to move without an overt security presence boring itself into the skull. A whole community has been under intense observation. The Irish are experiencing what blacks in British cities term the "sus" offensive. Bernadette McAliskey in a European Parliament campaign speech last month (May) aptly called it a "reign of terror".

On the more covert side, the police operation has been combing the membership lists of those clubs and places they've been watching hoping thereby to turn something up. There are even reports they've been through the Labour Party membership lists in the area. During a big Irish concert last month at the National Ballroom on Kilburn High Road, the cops were again much in evidence inside and out. They ran computer checks on the registration numbers

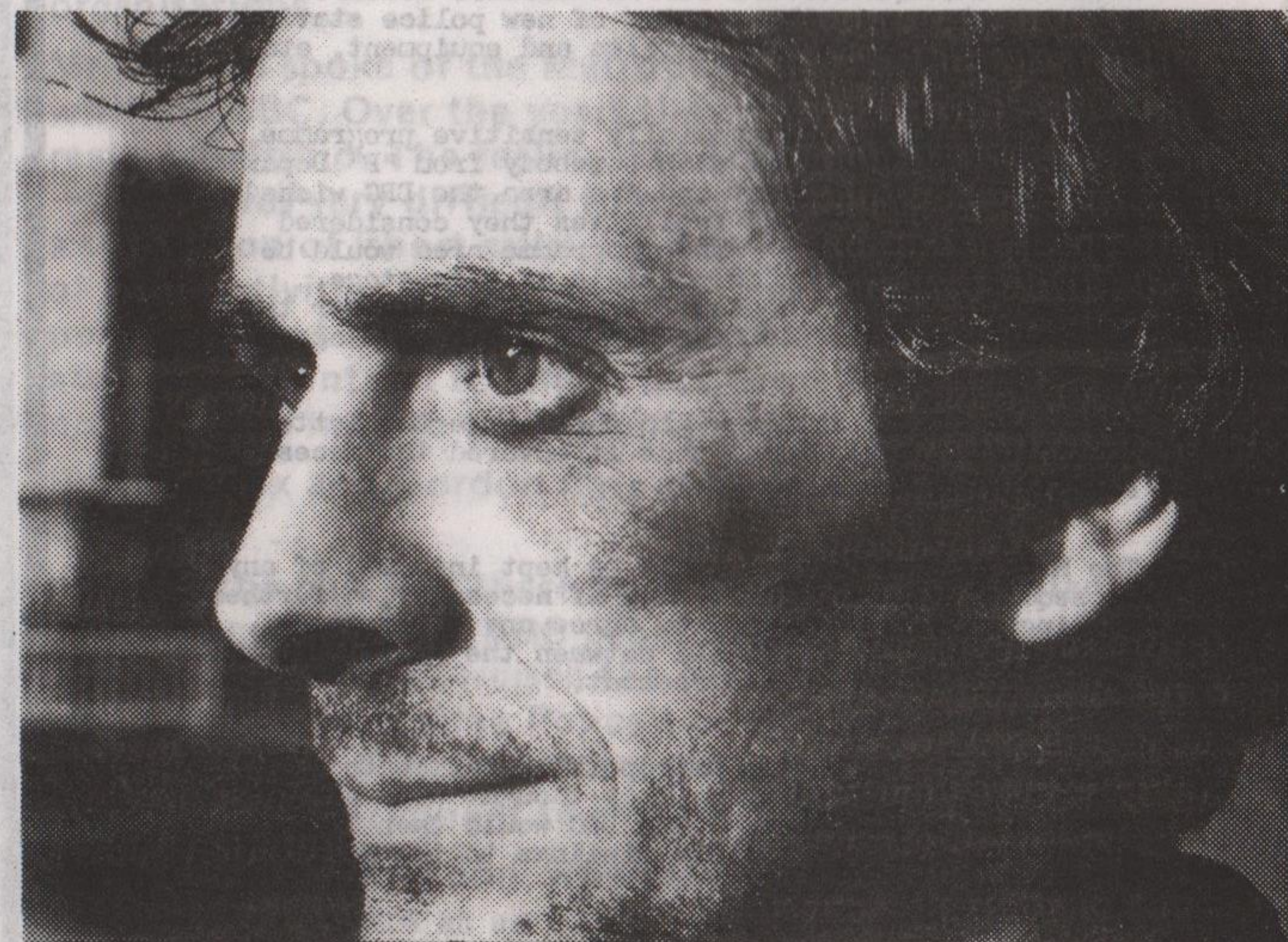
of all cars that turned up for the concert. As might be expected, the cops have also gone through the Britain-Ireland passenger lists for the periods just before and after the expected election announcement last October and the real election this May.

Any name that came out of the computer with any left link, be it only ANL, was followed up.

The Irish community has, as a result, been mapped to near totality. It's like the old Agatha Christie denouement when the Inspector announces: "Nobody leaves the drawing room, you're all suspects."

Some women have been held during the swamping, and a new line of questioning has emerged. Eileen Fairweather, active in the Women-in-Ireland group, was one they wanted, but she wasn't in when they called. The cops still took four bags of her papers to sift through, and then told her through her solicitor: "No thanks we don't want you after all." She's thoroughly on file now though, and clearly a big worry has been stuck into her mind.

Talking with some women friends involved in the police sweeps, she noted how many questions were directed towards an official understanding of feminism as a movement. Cops fired questions like: "Are you gay, bi-sexual, het, who's sleeping with you, what's the sex thing with so and so?" Such remarks were not for the sexist amusement of male cops but a rather late bid to figure out the non-heirarchical structure and methods of the movement. It was also to make links between sexual partners, to draw up a picture profile, to introduce material for some kind of moral blackmail that could be used on future occasions, and to figure out the intelligence network.



Peter Grimes with a black eye after the first of his recent interrogations by ATS and SB in Paddington Green. He was told to describe his injury as the result of a fall.

The "flushing-out", the "un-nerving" campaign in the Irish areas is also both a late bid to work on possible weak links, i.e. non-activists who could be frightened into talking about people they may know who are involved. The police were caught on the hop again with the Neave killing, and the Irish community must bear the brunt of their ineptitude.

At the end of it all, what have the police got to show their paymasters? After the arrests there is one man, Peter Grimes, in an even worse physical state, several people who just had to be released again and another, James Scanlon, served with that most wicked section of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, an Exclusion Order back to Ireland, as a final vindictive police gesture, and no charges whatsoever.

Mr. Scanlon was further told that if he and members of the IRSP support group had been more "co-operative", the heat on them all would have been less intense.

The police, though, are still nowhere near getting their hands on those who actually killed Neave, nor are they likely to. The cops are still far from getting it right. Their computer files, however, are now no doubt jammed to capacity with all their new low-level intelligence. As solicitor Alastair Logan put it: "They don't really know who they're looking for, and the PTA has been used simply as an intelligence-gathering facility. The whole police operation in London has been pure Kitson; they just hope the information they get will fit somewhere and make a positive link. It also makes the news media and the politicians think the police are actually doing something about the killing, and as a spin-off, the harassment caused may warn people off from normal legitimate politics on the Irish issue".

# Wheeler-dealing at Meriden

THE TRIUMPH Motorcycle (Meriden) workers' co-op is in crisis. On May 24 the 720 workforce was forced to accept 150 redundancies. These were due to the vital exports to the US being hit by the rise in sterling against the dollar, but the way they came about shows just how far the co-operators have been dragged from their original ideal.

In October 1977, during another of their intermittent crises, the workers agreed to set up a professional management team, outside the co-operative structure itself, to improve the efficiency of marketing and production (see *The Leveller* last issue). In the new crisis management behaved with virtual autonomy, and made the co-op structure look irrelevant, if not defunct. This is a diary of what happened:

**Friday May 18:** Faced with a mounting stockpile of unsold bikes, the management team drew up plans for cutting back production. The members of the board were called to an emergency meeting.

The management team consists of eight people, all paid higher salaries than the workers. The board also consists of eight, one from each of the seven unions in the co-op, plus Geoffrey Robinson, right-wing Labour MP for Coventry NW. Supposedly, the board and the general meetings run the place. Some supposition.

The board member for the TGWU white-collar section, ACTSS, is (was, rather) Felix Kean. "The first we knew about the redundancy plan was when we read it in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, from a management leak, on the Friday", he says.

The board met that afternoon, and management presented three alternatives: 150 redundancies, 18 months of three-day-a-week working, or a four month total shutdown. They were told there was a stockpile of nearly 3,000 unsold bikes, and production had to drop from 300 to 200 a

week. The co-op had lost £700,000 in 1978, and was facing payments of £1 million interest on the original government loan, plus £100,000 in rates to the local council.

Management, headed by Robinson, with board chairman John Rosamond in tow, wanted the redundancies. "Reluctantly", says Kean, "we had to agree, but we put it in the minutes that we were reluctant."

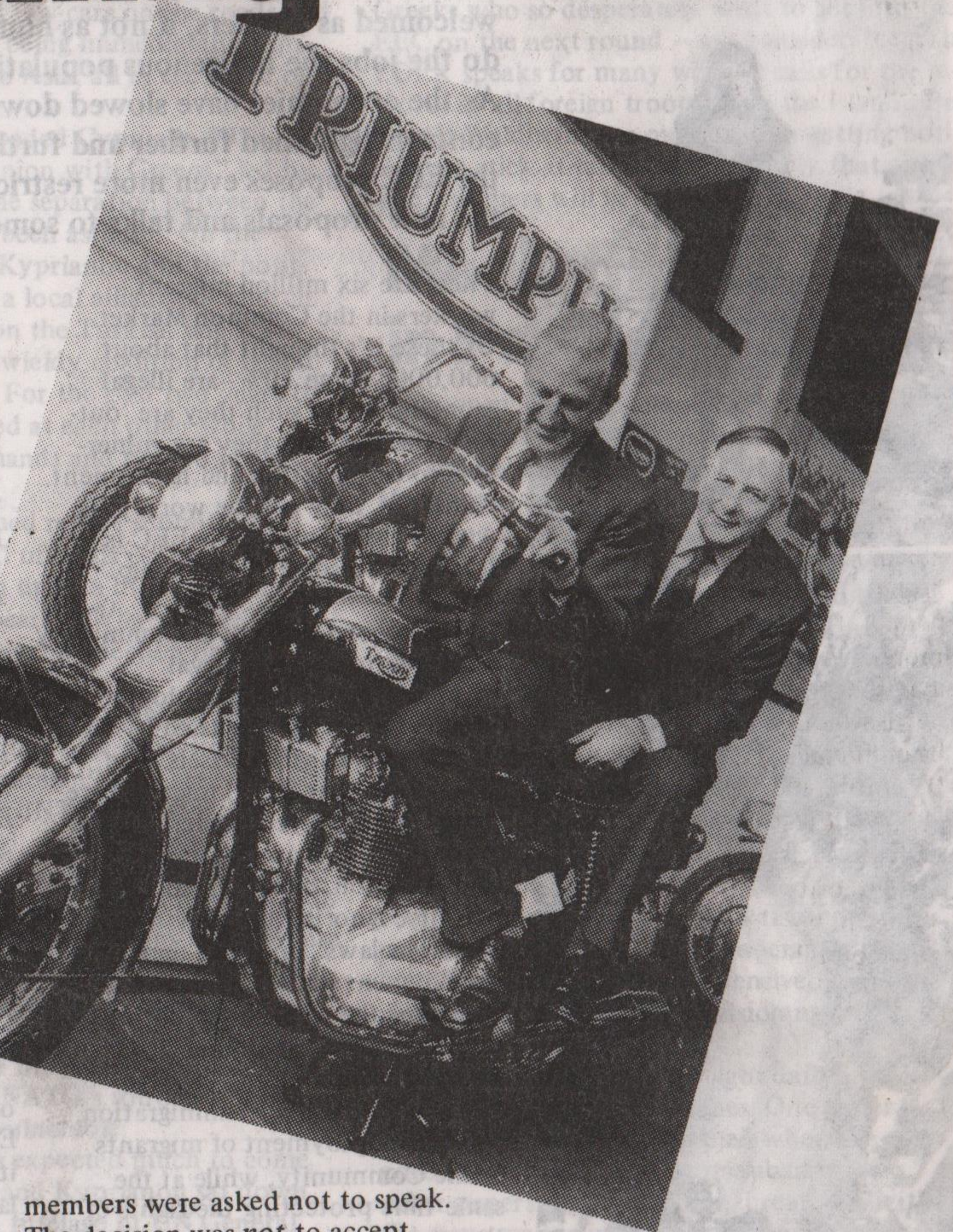
**Tuesday May 22:** The board called in the local union officials. This was not due to labour solidarity, but the Employment Protection Act, which requires unions to be informed of lay-offs. So six Coventry area officials came up to the plant.

Ray Lissaman, AUEW district secretary, says: "It was only the second time I'd ever been to the place. The unions had never been involved in the co-op at all. We met Robinson and the board, and they were worse than many managements I've met. One of my colleagues turned to me after half an hour and said: 'This is like Massey Ferguson' - a reference to a notorious Coventry employer."

The lay-offs had still to be 'approved' by a mass meeting of the workforce. They haven't actually torn up the rules yet. The officials demanded a meeting with them, so one was called for the Thursday afternoon.

**Wednesday May 23:** Robinson went around the plant talking to workforce sections, to persuade them to accept the redundancies.

**Thursday May 24:** Lissaman chaired the mass meeting, which as a union meeting Robinson was not allowed to attend. Board



members were asked not to speak. The decision was *not* to accept the redundancies, but to go on 18 months' short-time working. There was no count, but Kean puts the vote at "more than two to one", Rosamond at "60:40".

The officials then met Robinson and the board. "Robinson was furious", says Lissaman. "He jumped up and said he would not accept the decision. He shouted that he would resign. He ordered John [Rosamond], like a dog, to go and call another mass meeting. He wanted to talk to them."

At the second mass meeting Robinson succeeded in persuading the bewildered workforce, who at no stage had been involved in the discussions, to accept 150 redundancies, plus a three-week closure, while future production was worked out.

The vote was overwhelming, about 80:20. But a lot of the strongest opponents of redundancies weren't there. "None of my members went", says Kean. "As far as we were concerned the decision had been made." Kean quit the board (and the co-op). So did Jim Barclay, TASS member on the board.

**Friday May 25:** Geoffrey Robinson flew off for a holiday in Malta. The workers went back to their machines for a last half-hearted day's work before the temporary closure.

Rosamond is hoping for voluntary redundancies, but

since Robinson ruled that no-one should get more than the statutory payments (which means no-one can get more than the equivalent of three weeks' pay), there probably won't be many, which means some kind of selection process. At the second mass meeting, Robinson reportedly told one critic: "You'll be one of the 150 if you aren't careful."

Management have also decided *not* to apply for Temporary Employment Subsidy - the hand-outs freely available to firms facing redundancies (£20 a week for each worker threatened). Instead, they're going to press the Department of Industry for a waiver on the interest debt. Coventry council has waived, for a month, the rates debt.

This has not been the most serious financial crisis for the co-op. In March 1977 the place was closed altogether for seven weeks, but they came back. They will again now - sales of the 750 Bonneville in the US are actually up by 10 per cent, and it's out-selling the new Honda 750 even in Britain. But it's been the biggest, possible terminal, crisis, for any idea of workers' control or self-management with which the co-operators may have set out in March 1975.

Tim Gopsill



# Pass laws in the EEC

When the economies of the West were booming immigrants were welcomed as workers, if not as human beings. They came to do the jobs the indigenous population no longer wanted to do. As the economies have slowed down, so have immigration controls tightened further and further. Now a Directive from the EEC proposes even more restrictions. Andy Curry examines the new proposals and talks to some of their opponents.

There are six million migrant workers in the Common Market. Of these it's thought that about 600,000 - some 10% - are illegal immigrants. As such they are 'outside' the law, and they are vulnerable to exploitation and harassment. Naturally, they get the worst jobs. And at the moment, the EEC is trying to do something to help them.

The second draft of a 'Community directive 'to combat illegal migration and illegal employment' is currently being discussed by EEC working parties in Brussels. The draft notes that illegal migrants are generally employed 'under abusive conditions such as discriminatory remuneration, misuse of social security, ignoring the provision of labour laws', and that their employment under such conditions threatens the working conditions of all workers. If adopted, the directive would be the basis of EEC policy on illegal immigration, and the employment of migrants in the Community, while at the same time protecting the rights of those workers.

The British government doesn't like it. Nor does the CBI or the TUC, or the GMWU and the TGWU, the two British unions with most migrant members. Gwyneth Dunwoody has called it 'totally misconceived'. And fellow Labour MP Christopher Price has said that it could be the first step towards a South African style system of Pass Laws in Europe.

The opposition is to the method, not the intentions' said Michael Lloyd of the European Commission's London Office. That's more or less the official Community line, and they naturally emphasise the directive's good points. It views illegal migrant workers as 'the victims of unscrupulous individuals' and therefore protects their rights as workers. It also gives them the right of appeal against deportation. (That's said to be one of the clauses that alarms the British government; of course, illegal immigrants here have no such right.)

But as Gwyneth Dunwoody, who was a member of the European Parliament when the directive was discussed, says, 'The whole thing is based on hypocrisy. You can't say that you're protecting the interests of the migrant workers when you're making life much harder for them'. She describes the provisions for the protection of migrants' rights as a 'cosmetic tacked on to the second draft'.

When you look at the methods that the directive proposes you realise why it has attracted such

hostility. The European Commission believes that controls at the frontiers of Community countries are no longer effective, and the directive suggests that it will be necessary to provide 'checks on non-Community labour at places of employment', with the consequent increase in police powers. At present there is no such offence as 'illegal employment' in English law. There is only 'unauthorised working' which happens when migrants work without a permit.

Normally, EEC directives are intended only as guidelines for legislation in each member state. But provisions in the draft directive say that Community countries are to enforce sanctions against people organising or participating in illegal migration or employment. This is the first time that Community law has imposed on the national law of each of the members.

But the most frightening aspect of the directive is its racism. The European Community has changed its policy on the migration of labour as a result of the present recession. As Henk Vredeling, the EEC Commissioner for Social Affairs, said in London recently, 'The emphasis should be placed on preventing any more uncontrollable or spontaneous migration'. And revealingly, the figures that the EEC quotes for Britain's migrants include all coloured workers - including those who are resident here.

A look at the directive shows that even its good points are to discourage migration and employment. The emphasis on rights and insurance payments for migrant workers is intended to put up the cost of employing them. 'The measures proposed in this field are of a persuasive nature and strengthen the prevention of illegal employment', the directive says.

And the costs of repatriation of the workers are to be borne by the employers and any agencies involved. The result is quite clear. Employers won't take on people who they think might be 'illegal workers' if they risk paying fines and costs, as well as possible imprisonment. The workers who don't get employed won't be white. Britain's temporary workers mostly come from Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Turkey, the Phillipines and South America. It's not surprising that Gwyneth Dunwoody says that the directive 'promotes attitudes that are positively racist'.

In any case, it's inappropriate to Britain. With tight controls at points of entry there are very few illegal immigrants here. Christopher Price argues that it's always been British

policy to have tough controls on entry, and then assume that people are in the country legally. Philip Pearson of the Migrants Service Unit says that this is how it's worked in practice. Britain's unauthorised workers tend to be those who have breached the conditions of their entry permit.

That's very easy to do. Permits are granted to the employer for a specific job. If you lose your job, or leave it - common enough in the hotel and catering industry, which employs the vast majority of migrants - you can become an unauthorised worker if you move to a job for which a permit hasn't been granted; or if the your new employer promises to get a new permit, and doesn't bother.

Agencies, which deal with a lot of the migrant workers who come to Britain, do the same trick - it's especially common with Filipino girls, who come here only to find they haven't got permits. But even if an agency does get a permit, the job it's for can be gone by the time the worker gets here. A permit isn't a contract of employment.

The Migrants Service Unit suggests that the Community ought to look at those industries which employ a lot of migrants if it wants to dissuade migrants from coming into the Community. That's the line the GMWU takes as well. If wages and conditions in the catering trade were better, the jobs would be taken by indigenous workers, and the directive would be unnecessary.

The multitude of committees and working parties, and the long delays as the directive works its way through the Community bureaucracy, have conspired to ensure that it hasn't been reported.

The directive was discussed in the House of Commons in June 1977, when it was stongly criticised by a number of MPs. On that occasion the government promised that it would be debated again before it went to the Council of Ministers. Christopher Price, who was one of the two MPs who pressured the Government into making that promise, thinks that the new administration will probably uphold it.

'We need a good debate on the subject very soon,' he told me. It's got to be held before the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which sets the agenda for the Council of Ministers, makes its decision on the directive. It's also possible that Britain could veto the directive as it can't be passed without the approval of all nine countries. But Britain's objections could also be traded off in one of those deals the Community specialises in, in exchange for changes in agriculture or fishing policy.

'We're dealing with a specific attitude,' says Gwyneth Dunwoody, 'that migrants are a problem to be dealt with.' But even Henk Vredeling, who does believe that migrants are a problem, thinks that the directive is 'like taking a rifle to shoot a flea'.

# Shorts

## German journalist acquitted

KAI EHLERS, the West German newspaper editor accused of defaming the state (*Leveller*, JUNE) has been acquitted. Ehlers had published an article in the left-wing fortnightly *Arbeiterkampf* suggesting that it was quite possible that official circles knew or helped organise the 'suicides' of imprisoned urban guerillas. A Hamburg court dismissed the charge at the beginning of May. But the Communist League, which publishes *Arbeiterkampf*, is still facing charges over a book on the recent history of German police forces, 'Special Commando Groups in West Germany - Creation of a new Gestapo?'. The authorities claim that to compare 'democratic' Germany with the Third Reich is also defamatory of the state. But hopes are high that this charge too may now be dismissed.

## NATO wants Cyprus settlement

THERE IS just one vehicle crossing point between the Turkish and Greek sectors of Nicosia. On each side, armed soldiers keep a wary eye on the few foreign travellers who cross each day while the Turkish and Greek border police check their passports and want to know who they are and where they're going.

For the traveller going from the Greek to the Turkish side the contrast is immediate and profound: on the Greek side there's relative prosperity, the shops are full, there's even a mini traffic snarl up in the rush hour. On the Turkish side the range of goods on sale is distinctly limited, there's few cars on the roads and there's a lazy sense of being immediately transported from Europe to Asia, all in the space of a few yards.

Since the Turks invaded Cyprus in 1974 after an attempted 'union with Greece' led by the Greek Colonels, the separation between the two communities has been asolute. On the Greek side, President Kyprianou and the politicians govern through a local alliance of church and socialist parties: on the Turkish side Rauf Denktash heads an unwieldy coalition of island and mainland forces. For the past two years the two men have glowered at each other while NATO has wrung its hands and poured in the money.

A recent unpublished report submitted to Washington by US Aid officials estimates that the west has poured in up to a billion dollars in aid over the last five years. 'What are we getting for our money?' is the question on Aid officials' lips.

What the west is getting is a superb spy-base for monitoring the middle east. The British still maintain two 'sovereign' base areas which are used to house a SIGINT installation for picking up radio traffic. And recently the EDEK Socialist Party revealed that the bases are being used for U2 spyplanes by the USAF. Now that Iran has been 'lost' many State House experts fear that other sensitive middle eastern 'allies' are in danger of 'unravelling' and that's partly why they're so keen on a settlement. For while the row between Greece and Turkey simmers, NATO's southern flank remains dangerously vulnerable.

Nobody in Cyprus expected much to come of it when Denktash and Kyprianou sat down in mid-May under the tutelage of UN General

Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. The decision to keep on talking - it really amounts to very little else so far - came as a surprise to most Cypriots. The pressures being applied by NATO chiefs behind the scenes - on the Turks, whose economy staggers from crisis to crisis - and the Greeks who so desperately want to get into the EEC on the next round - are considerable. The EDEK speaks for many when it calls for the removal of all foreign troops from the island. But even if Waldheim has succeeded in getting both sides to stick at talking, it's unlikely that either side's soldiers will be leaving for a while.

## Media threat in Portugal

In an open assault on freedom of expression in the Portuguese press, radio and television, the right-wing government of Prime Minister Mota Pinto is clamping down on nearly everyone in the media who opposes his policies. The government, tottering towards collapse, is desperately trying to build a base in the public media for a new coalition party which, the right hopes, will break the hold of Socialist and Communist Deputies in the Assembly.

But this is only a potential hold. The Socialists have been moving steadily right, and refuse to have anything to do with the Communist Party. And because of their rightward swing they dread future elections. The coalition now forming around the 'non-partisan' government of technocrats is launching its propaganda offensive, using newspapers, radio, and television nationalised in 1975.

The government owns eight daily papers, of various political tendencies. One paper, *Diario de Lisboa*, was crippled when the government suddenly cut its subsidy. Two other papers, in Oporto, are threatened with the same manoeuvre. Another newspaper, *Diario Popular*, which had a broad left orientation, was less vulnerable to this tactic. For several years it had maintained itself successfully with only a relatively small subsidy, mainly because of strong participation and sacrifices by the workers. But in January the government simply sacked the director and installed a right-winger loyal to Mota Pinto.

Portuguese radio is under even heavier attack. In January, the director of the state-owned radio system, a Socialist, was sacked. More than 150 workers have since lost their jobs, supposedly for 'economic reasons'. All controversial programming has been cut to make way for foreign pop music, Portuguese music of the sort favoured by the Salazar regime, and mild talk shows. Under a 'temporary statute', the new administration has taken direct control over all programming, including the news department.

Television, which was brought under tight control in 1977, is again being purged of those with suspected leftist tendencies. Many of the writers and producers who gained prominence since 1974, who had fought for years against the fascist regime, have been suspended, sacked or relegated to low-level positions. Media workers have fought the government at every step, through their unions, workers' committees and in the courts.

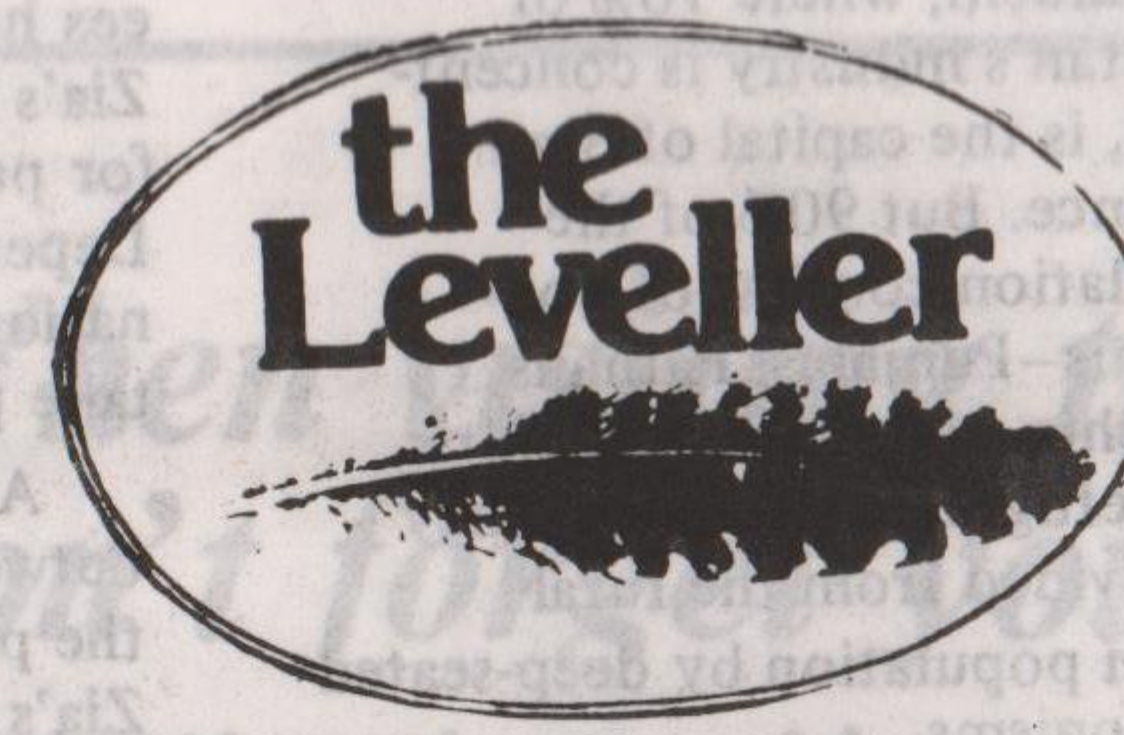
The Socialist-Communist majority in the Assembly may pass legislation to block the worst excesses of the government. But only when the present government falls, and is replaced by a more liberal one, will media workers have their first chance of restoring the press freedoms which they have lost recently.

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The middle row extreme right caption on the picture spread (A March day in Paris) in the last issue should have read: "The CP stewards are separating Autonomes and police, not Autonomes and the rest of the demonstration. Apparently the Autonomes were part of the demo all along."



# PAKISTAN: Zia faces a growing socialist movement

In the short span of ten years, several uprisings have rocked Pakistan. Another is in the offing. This one will be much more serious, resulting in the country's disintegration, or the emergence of a popular anti-imperialist power structure. *Shahid Mahmood Nadeem* reports.

IN 1968, STUDENTS and intelligentsia opposed to the military dictatorship of Ayub Khan took to the streets of Pakistan. When workers in Lahore and Karachi joined in by organising a one-day general strike, the whole situation changed. Then, for the first time in Pakistan, peasants marched in support and surrounded the National Assembly in Lahore. Within a few weeks, the workers began to make revolutionary demands. General Yahya Khan took over, and strict martial law was imposed.

In 1970, right-wing parties suffered a humiliating defeat at the elections. Bhutto, campaigning on a socialist platform, won an overwhelming majority in West Pakistan, while Mujib ur-Rehman did the same in East Pakistan. When the Pakistani army occupied the East, Bhutto's own attitude could only be described as one of criminal acquiescence. Maulana Bhashani, the veteran socialist leader in East Pakistan called for *gheraos* (takeovers) of industries by the workers. The *gheraos* spread west. Workers in Lahore, Lyallpur, Karachi and other places occupied factories, imprisoned their employers and ran the establishments. Peoples Party leaders like Mukhtar Rana were actively involved, though Bhutto disapproved. And religious leaders issued decrees branding socialists 'infidels'—in effect a licence to kill.

Bhutto took charge after East Pakistan had broken away to form Bangladesh. Under internal and international pressures, he soon came to a compromise with the industrialists. And in May 1972 workers took over various industrial estates in Karachi and

fought pitched battles with the police and para-military forces. Wives and children of workers also took part. Bhutto, instrumental in encouraging working class aspirations with his reforms and mass-political style, taught the workers another lesson by killing and imprisoning them, having got to power on their votes.

In 1977, the right-wing National Alliance Party began their campaign against Bhutto. Workers expressed their dislike for both political groupings and turned the scene into a confrontation between the army and the people. Bhutto's loss of support prompted the military under General Zia ul-Haq to assume power in July 1977, and toss him into prison.

Zia makes no secret of his right-wing views. His cabinet includes several industrialists, among them Mehmood Haroun, the Home Minister, who belongs to one of the four most powerful and wealthy families in Pakistan, and Mustafa Gokal, a shipping magnate of the Pakistani National Shipping Corporation.

On taking power, the military dictator de-nationalised several industries, and made tax-concessions to businessmen. Employers were given the freedom to harass, sack and even kill workers, with the police following instructions. In January 1978, police and the employers' security men surrounded workers on strike at Colony Textile Mills, Multan, and opened fire on them. Over one hundred were killed and buried quickly by the police. The wounded were prevented from getting immediate medical treatment. Their union leaders were flogged and clapped into jail



where they remain.

Zia, dependent on massive American and Arab aid, has made an effort to enlist the support of religious leaders by 'Islamising' the country—cutting off limbs, floggings and executions by hanging. The weaknesses of the military-industrial alliance and the federal structure of the country, make the dictatorship vulnerable to workers' revolts on the one hand, and on the other, to separatist regional movements gathering strength in most provinces of Pakistan.

In the past, the left has had no national unity. The parties 'of the working class' have shown themselves to be ideologically bankrupt, with small followings and little contact with workers and peasants. The unions, divided into a dozen federations and confederations, have generally, no associations with any political party. They are led by bureaucrats, and there is resentment growing against their reformist policies. They are beginning to be replaced by younger and more militant leadership, but not without old guard resistance.

Karachi, where 70% of Pakistan's industry is concentrated, is the capital of Sind province. But 90% of the population consists of non-Sindh—Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis, Makranis, Kashmiris, and refugees from India. They are divided from the rural Sindhi population by deep-seated antagonisms.

Lahore and Lyallpur (renamed Faisalabad, after the Saudi king, by Zia in late 1977) also have a sizeable working population. But they are situated in the agricultural heartland of the Punjab, and workers still keep their feudal and peasant ties. There is also considerable infighting between unions. A popular and radical leader of the Mazdoor Action Committee, Abdur Rehman, was assassinated by members of a rival union, with the support of employers and smugglers who saw him as a threat. After a three-year revenge campaign by the Committee, Altaf Baluch, chairman of the Federation of Pakistan Workers has been put in the death cell for his involvement in the killing.

The hanging of Bhutto has brought about a qualitative change, much deeper than it appears. Although workers had

joined the agitation against him, he has now been taken up as a martyr. Spontaneous protests and confrontations with the military have taken place in Punjab and Sind. Workers attacked the Kotlakhpat jail where Bhutto was held, and some senior army officers were beaten up. Military courts sentenced those rounded up to floggings and long jail sentences.

Because the army is predominantly Punjabi, and openly aggressive, the autonomy movements in Baluchistan and Sind have gained a lot of support. The movements have diverted, but often also supported workers' struggles, in the past. Workers are now joining the movements, and the situation is getting explosive. There are also reports that a Pakistani socialist alliance has been formed to fight the dictatorship, which is planning to introduce 'constitutional' amendments involving the vetting of candidates for elections, a permanent role for the military in the running of the Government and a right to intervene when they think fit.

All National Alliance nominees have now withdrawn from Zia's cabinet to prepare the party for possible local elections. Depending on their outcome, national elections will or won't take place.

Any chance of co-existence between the dictatorship and the people has been smashed by Zia's actions. The army will probably be unable to cope with the rising tide of opposition. The confrontation is likely to be protracted and very bloody, and will almost definitely result in drastic change—whether socio-economically, or by way of the disintegration of the country.

*SHAHID NADEEM is a Pakistani journalist, former producer with the state TV network, who fled the country in March. Imprisoned by three of the last four governments for his trade union activities and opposition to censorship imposed by these military regimes, he was tipped off that he was about to be framed on a bombing charge and left. His wife and two children are still in the country. He is convener of the Lahore section of the Pakistan TV workers' union.*

# DOMINICA: How long till Prime Minister John's gone?

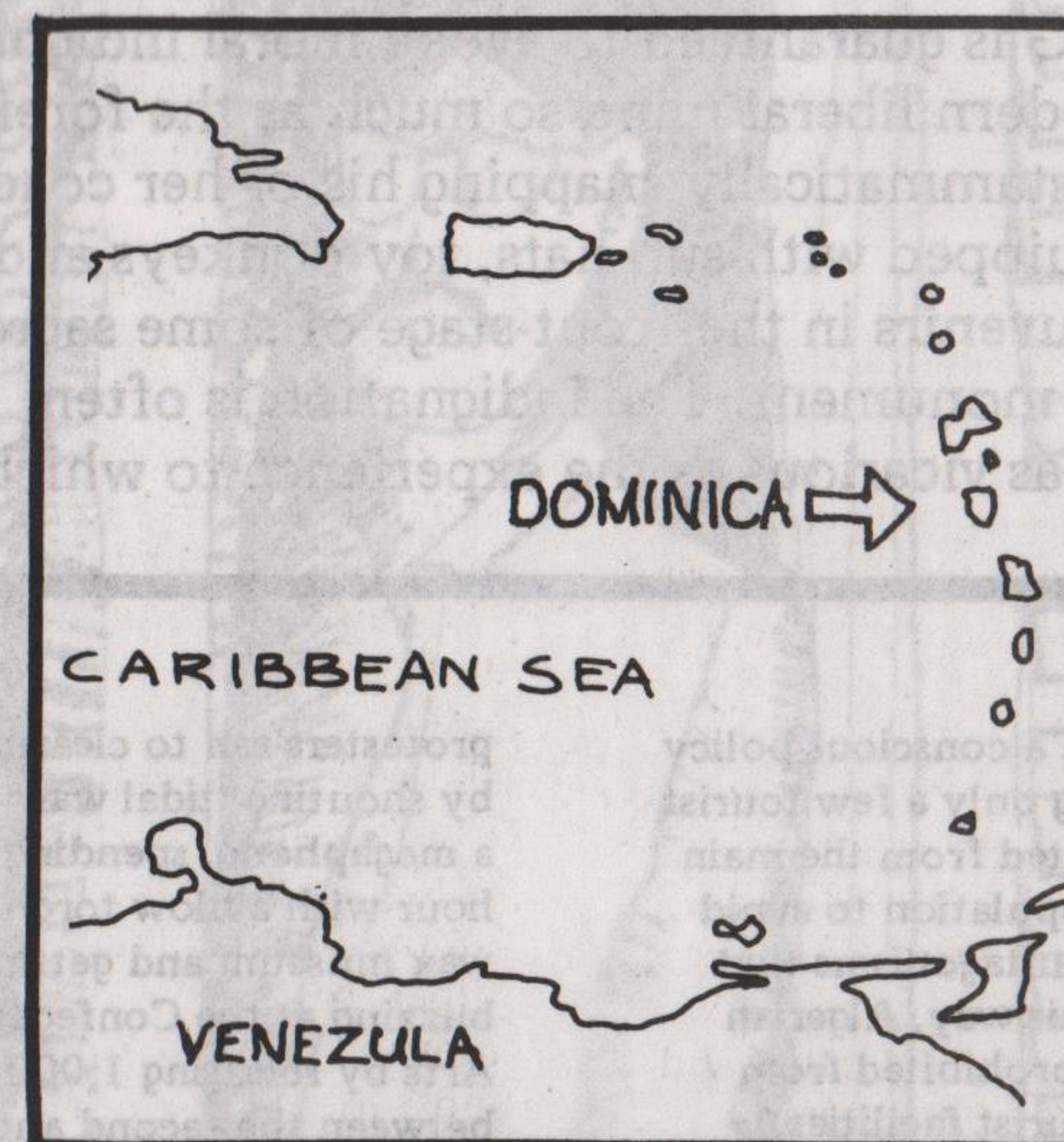
A mass meeting of Dominicans in London passed a motion calling on the government at home to resign at the beginning of June. They were furious over the deaths of two demonstrators and a baby attacked by troops the previous week. *David Clark* reports.

POLITICAL violence came to the small West Indian island of Dominica at the end of May when the local Defence Force opened fire on unarmed demonstrators outside the Parliament building. Estimates placed the number of demonstrators at between 15 and 20,000—up to a quarter of the total population of the newly-independent island which is at the centre of a row over offering oil storage facilities to South Africa.

The demonstration was called after a meeting of the island's trades unionists on Monday May 28: Parliament was to debate two important pieces of legislation the next day and the Government was to face a vote of No Confidence. The two pieces of legislation were: an amendment to the libel laws—which would have muzzled the weekly *News Chronicle*—and an attempt to introduce a form of industrial relations act which would have neutralised the trade unions.

The demonstrators assembled peacefully outside Parliament and called for the dismissal of Leo Austin, the island's corrupt Attorney General and Foreign Minister who has been at the centre of the South African scandal: he is the power behind the scenes for Patrick John, the Prime Minister, who likes to be known as 'Colonel' John.

When John's car arrived, the demonstrators surged forward and caused some superficial damage to the vehicle as John ran into the Parliament building. Although the police had not apparently lost control of the demonstrators, John called out the Defence Force who arrived with a truck-load of soldiers carrying a banner calling on the people to disperse.



When they didn't move off with enough speed, the soldiers opened fire, killing two men outright and wounding nine others. A baby was killed by tear-gas fired by the soldiers. The Parliamentary session was cancelled by the Government. That night demonstrators burned down one Minister's house and stoned another.

As we went to press the island was paralysed by a general strike and John had announced on the radio that he had no intention of resigning. The Defence Forces had been ordered to disarm the police—who have shown sympathy with the demonstrators—but have apparently refused to do so. There are about 70 full-time members of the

Defence Force and a further 130 reservists. But in an island as small as Dominica shooting demonstrators is equivalent to shooting the neighbours and it is thought that the Defence Force may not back John much longer.

Opposition to John and Austin has been simmering for some years. They have been involved in a large number of dubious financial projects aimed at 'developing' the island. Full checking on the 24 companies the men have a stake in is difficult since they have passed a law confining company records to their own offices.

On February 6 Austin wrote to the commercial attache at the South African embassy in London offering the South Africans oil storage facilities and noted the development of good relations between the two countries.

Then there is their involvement with Sidney Burnett-Alleyne, chairman of Dominican Development Corporation, who had wanted to use the island as a base for the projected invasion of nearby Barbados (see *Leveller* 23).

It was the combination of these deals, the involvement of Burnett-Alleyne and some of his unpleasant friends, and the intended passing of the two pieces of legislation that brought the people of Dominica out in such numbers. It seems unlikely that John can hold on alone in the face of such popular hostility.

But the left in Dominica is not as strong or cohesive as the New Jewel Movement was before the coup against Gairy in Grenada and the Dominican progressive forces are divided.

And there is a threat from the US. During his recent visit to London, Cyrus Vance spoke of his 'worry' about Britain, a newly-independent small island colonies in the Caribbean. He said there was a danger of a leftward swing in the region that the US had ignored for too long. While he dressed it up with references to a (non-existent) Cuban threat he was actually referring to the influence of the revolution in Grenada.

While the West may not find it politically acceptable to intervene militarily on John's behalf—if he asks for help—they may well use financial and political measures to attempt to keep him in power.

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### PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE PLIGHT

Total foreign aid 1947-77	\$ 10,033 million
of which, in loans	\$ 7,000 million
Repaid by Pakistan	\$ 1,600 million
Percentage repayable in foreign exchange	91%
Percentage of foreign exchange earnings consumed in repayments	43.6%
Annual repayment for 1977/8	\$ 700 million
Population of Pakistan	70 million
Average repayment rate per capita	\$ 100
Average per capita income 1947	\$ 23.04
Average per capita income 1977	\$ 32.50



# In the colonies of leisure

● Moral scrutiny is not the real test of the ever-growing tourist experience. Rather, it is better understood as part of a complex economic and cultural experience called forth by the expanding orbit of values of the 'advanced' world.

With a growth-rate of around seven per cent per annum, tourism is growing faster than world exports as a whole. Expansion of world transport has brought international travel within the range of large sections of the West and forced Third World countries into a new form of international industry.

Since the 1960s international monetary organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank have given significant subsidies to Third World countries to develop the apparently quick-profit tourist industry. Tourism has been seen as the panacea to all the problems of Third World development. In some countries it has proved successful (to the owners of tourist capital at least) but often this gift of western culture has a devastating effect on the host economy.

International travel brings international values and host economies find themselves having to support international jet-setters in a manner often far superior to that which they would find at home.

Kenya has been one of the more successful Third World countries in terms of tourist profit, attracting high-income travellers who pay heavily for safari services and buy indigenous products like ivory. In the west, Spain exports 90 per cent of its merchandise to tourists. But in other countries tourism has produced 'enclave' industries where travellers demand international services and products which have to be imported from the West, thus using up the foreign exchange gained initially.

Resort industries require high expenditure on hotel, transport and service development which do little to benefit the wider economy. There may be a short-term improvement in urban employment, but the tourist infrastructure usually depends on influxes of foreign capital - most hotel chains are part of international companies and often associated with large airlines - and can only be maintained at the cost of other sectors of the economy.

This one-sided social development often brings extreme antagonism from the indigenous population. The resort labour force is forced into economic and cultural servility and develops only service skills. Algeria has

NOTHING is guaranteed to evoke moral indignation in the modern liberal mind so much as the foreign tourist instamatically snapping his or her coach party, equipped with sun-hats, toy donkeys and plastic souvenirs in the front-stage of some sacred historical monument. The indignation is often, however, as vicarious as the experience to which it refers.

embarked on a conscious policy of developing only a few tourist centres, isolated from the main centres of population to avoid some of the antagonisms that develop in this way. Algerian subjects are prohibited from using the tourist facilities.

In Turkey, where local hostility to tourism has developed, the Ministry of Tourism and Information embarked on a public relations drive with TV programmes to create public attitudes favourable to tourism. In the Prince Edward islands local ingenuity on the part of anti-tourist

protesters ran to clearing beaches by shouting 'tidal wave' through a megaphone, spending half an hour with a blow torch in the wax museum and getting things buzzing at the Confederation of Arts by releasing 1,000 hornets between the second and third acts of *Anne of Green Gables*.

For the underdeveloped world the tourist promise is one of quick profit, the creation of short-term service employment and the attraction of foreign capital. The reality is often the destruction of traditional cultures, high import costs to satisfy international tastes and

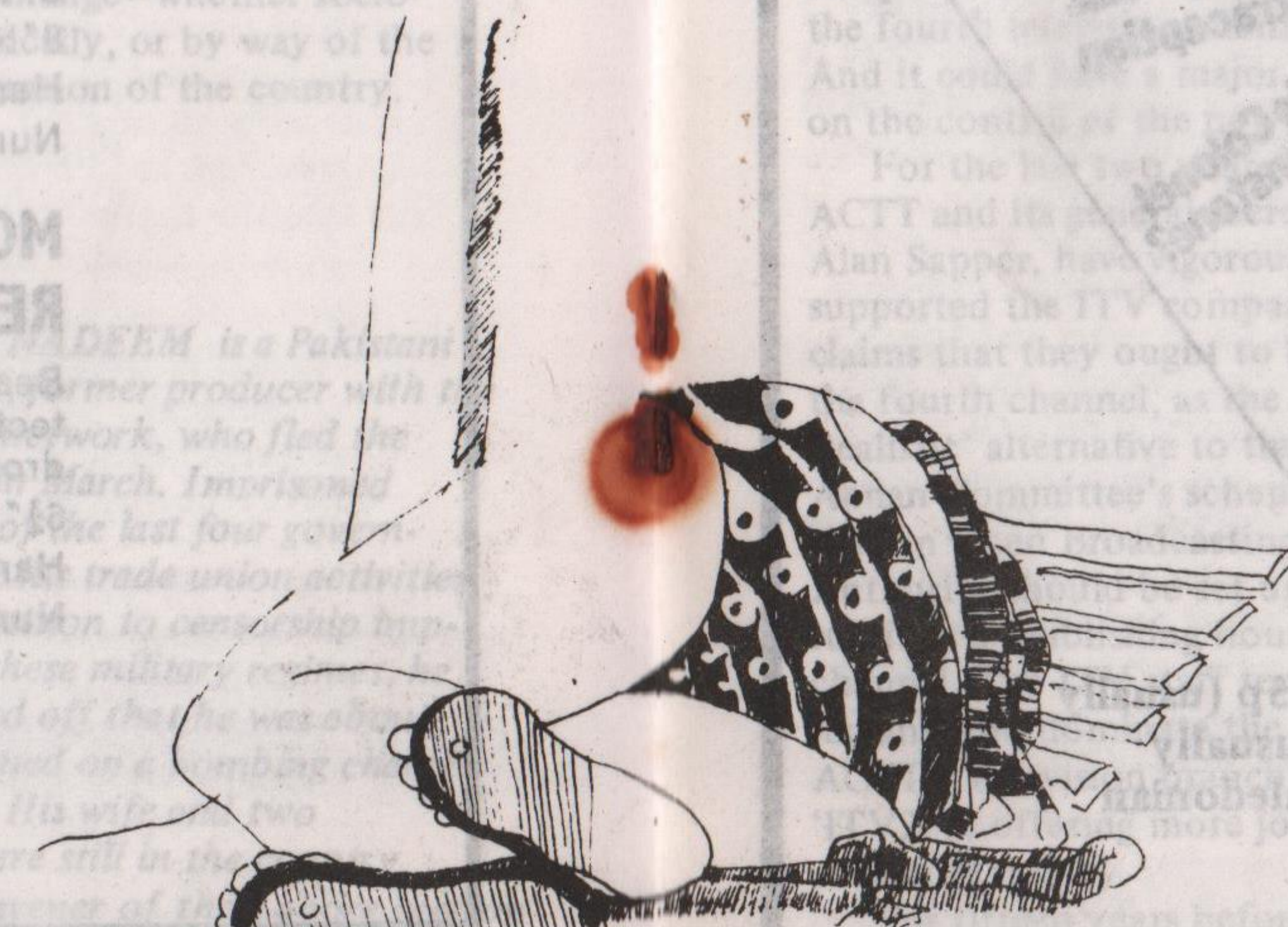
the creation of an economy based on patterns of work and leisure in the 'advanced' world. This sometimes leads to the criticism that the tourist experience is somehow 'inauthentic', opposed to more intellectually-oriented ways of travelling and 'discovering' the world, that what is produced is in some way a false culture, hiding beneath it the true life of nations and peoples.

But the tourist experience is in no sense 'pseudo'. It is here to stay. It is part of the package of cultural imperialism based on specific ideological notions about 'holidaying'. And in the visited country it forms part of the real developing economy and culture. So what gives rise to the ever-growing desire to 'see the sights', 'get away from it all', to see the world?

It can hardly be just relaxation or a rest from work. The effort involved in many tourist trips is often as arduous as many jobs. It has almost a ritual function in modern culture.



Es Cana Ibiza June 77



As a ritual it is closely allied to photography. The photographic image is important at every stage of the holiday. In advertising and marketing it imagines a dream world of escapism. In the hands of the tourist the photographic image becomes a record of enjoyment, proof of having been there, as much a ritual as the holiday itself.

The notion of the image is important in this respect. Just as what is presented in advertising and recording of the visit is a series of images, so is the sight being photographed. The way the tourist 'sees the sights' is as a number of images or symbols describing the context in which they appear. The Great Pyramid at Giza, or the Taj Mahal are symbols of the cultural achievements and fruits of the labour of past cultures. They signify a particular meaning to the observer.

One form of tourism relates to these symbols in an empathetic way. Standing before the Great Pyramid one simply marvels at the achievement or has a 'mystical experience'. Another simply clocks up another visit on the international tourist map.

This mapping has a particular ideological function. World history and culture can be neatly grid-referenced with a spot for the viewing tourist marked YOU ARE HERE. The view of world history thus rendered is one which sees history and culture emanating from a metropolitan centre and monuments from the past as pinnacles of achievement in the march of historical progress.

What we know of other cultures is as a result of this: that which is signified through the 'sights' fitted into an overall picture of the world based on Western beliefs about history.

In a capitalist culture for which the past is denied this process of placing oneself in a world-historical/cultural context is one of equalising and drawing-in of diverse cultural phenomena into a global de-historicised present.

The function of 'the sights' is already pre-determined in this ideological system. We know how to react to a particular sight before



we even see it and which sights to single out. For most people a trip to The Louvre means queuing to see the Mona Lisa. It is known that this is 'great art' and we know we must 'appreciate it'. This is exactly the ritual function of tourism.

Perhaps this is most obvious in the modern tour of the 'Holy Land' which follows the path of the religious pilgrimage, and where churches now deal in tourist post-cards as religious icons.

What is often forgotten, however, is that the monuments we visit and admire have a real meaning in their present historical and cultural context. They have their own set of meanings and economic functions in the modern imperialist world system just as they had a very different set when they were constructed. Their reduction to marketable symbols on an international tourist market is part of the process of cultural imperialism which denies the right of peoples to their own history.

Sometimes the whole process appears to be reversed. The cult of 'negative tourism' is now well under way. Deprivation itself is constantly turned into spectacle, with organised tours of Harlem, ghettos and areas of urban decay.

Wanting to see 'how things work' in this respect is another aspect of the tourist experience. Those who see the package-tour holiday as something rather tacky prefer to get inside the life and customs of the culture being observed. The trip into the darkest reaches of the North African Casbah, the visits to factories so much a part of tourism in the Eastern bloc, the



trip to the painter's studio all represent an attempt to get behind the 'facade' of the sights.

Often this experience is seen as somehow more authentic. It is getting to know the people. But the whole process of presenting a spectacle, staffed back-stage and out of view by armies of servicers, administrators, manufacturers and so on is part of an economic and cultural system of which all parts must be equally real. The tourist sight itself is an edifice of battles fought on the economic and political level and represents part of a past, present and possible future whose meaning is constantly changed for the host people by the expansion of Western cultural imperialism.

In the view of world history characteristic of Western capitalism the tourist represents a future, the urban worker or peasant of the Third World a disappearing past. In this way the Western tourist has a symbolic function for those who service him or her. Demands and wants are created for the luxuries, affluence, and the commodities of the international life-style. The modern tourists become the troops of neo-colonialism.

There are, of course, many types of tourism and many types of tourist: the sight-seer, the escapist, the traveller, the stay-at-home, the businessperson... the list is endless.

Each will have very different motives and explanations and some will appear more moral, more or less arrogant, more or less politically aware of the realities of the culture which receives them, but all are part of a developing world culture which denies real history and appropriates divers symbols into a global present. It is useless to criticise the tourist for being satisfied with plastic donkeys. International travel is an important element in the spread of the possibility of an international democratic system where information and experience can cross-fertilize. What is in question is the world system which gives rise to the dominant imperialist ideology which informs most of the current tourist experience.

Dave Taylor



EVICIONS have started at one of London's oldest squats. Tolmers Square, near Euston, has been a focal point for the squatting movement for the past six years. Now, after the eviction of the south-side of the square by Camden Council, the local action group has started a campaign to re-house single people.

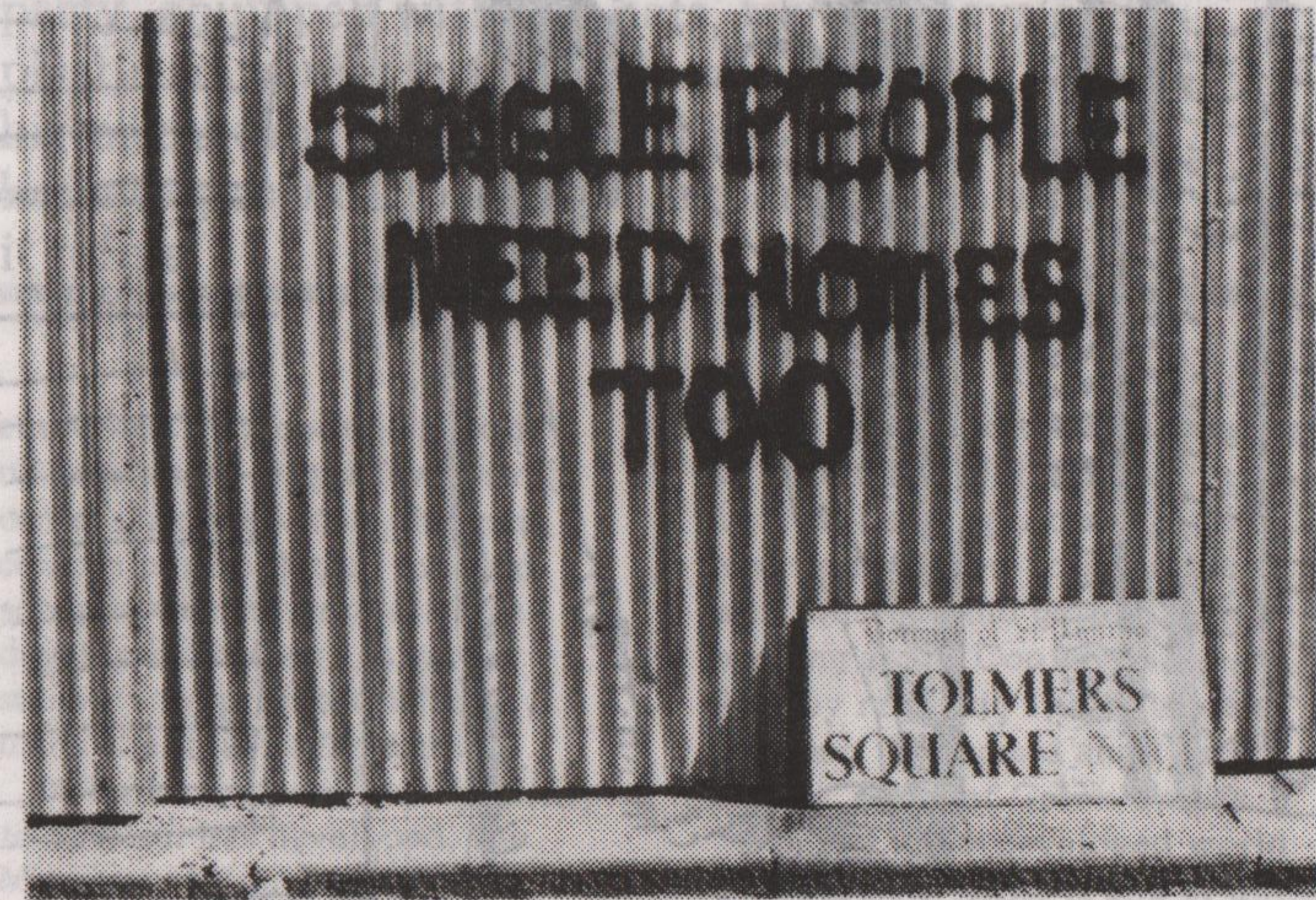
Tolmers Village Action Group (TVAG) campaign—Single People Need Homes Too—is being launched on Thursday 14th June, with the building of an open-air house, symbolic of the inadequacy of the council's policy towards the single homeless. This will be followed by a picket of the full council meeting. Already the TVAG has forced the council to think about its housing policy by pointing out some obvious contradictions.

45% of people currently on the council waiting list are single, whilst last year only 3.4% of allocations went to single people, mainly to the elderly and infirm. This comes at a time when Camden is reported to have 3,300 empty properties on its list. The method of allocation through the points system is also heavily weighted against the single, yet one third of all London's homes are now occupied by single people. And as the TVAG point out this is the sector of housing likely to expand most in the near future. Back in 1975, Camden Council, with an eye to its public image,

## Taking on the council

was happy to work with squatters in its fight against property speculator Joe Levy. Having purchased the site—at such a high cost that it was only made possible by the intervention of merchant bankers,

Morgan Grenfell, it presented its own plans to build a mixture of housing and 250,000 sq. ft. of offices. Since then squatters have been fighting the council over the plans for the site and now



Further information and messages of support to: Tolmers Village Action Group, c/o 13 Tolmers Sq, London NW1. 01-388 1650 or 01-388 7931.

Open-air housewarming, 14th June, 4.45 Tolmers Sq. Council picket, 6.00 Town Hall, Euston Rd.

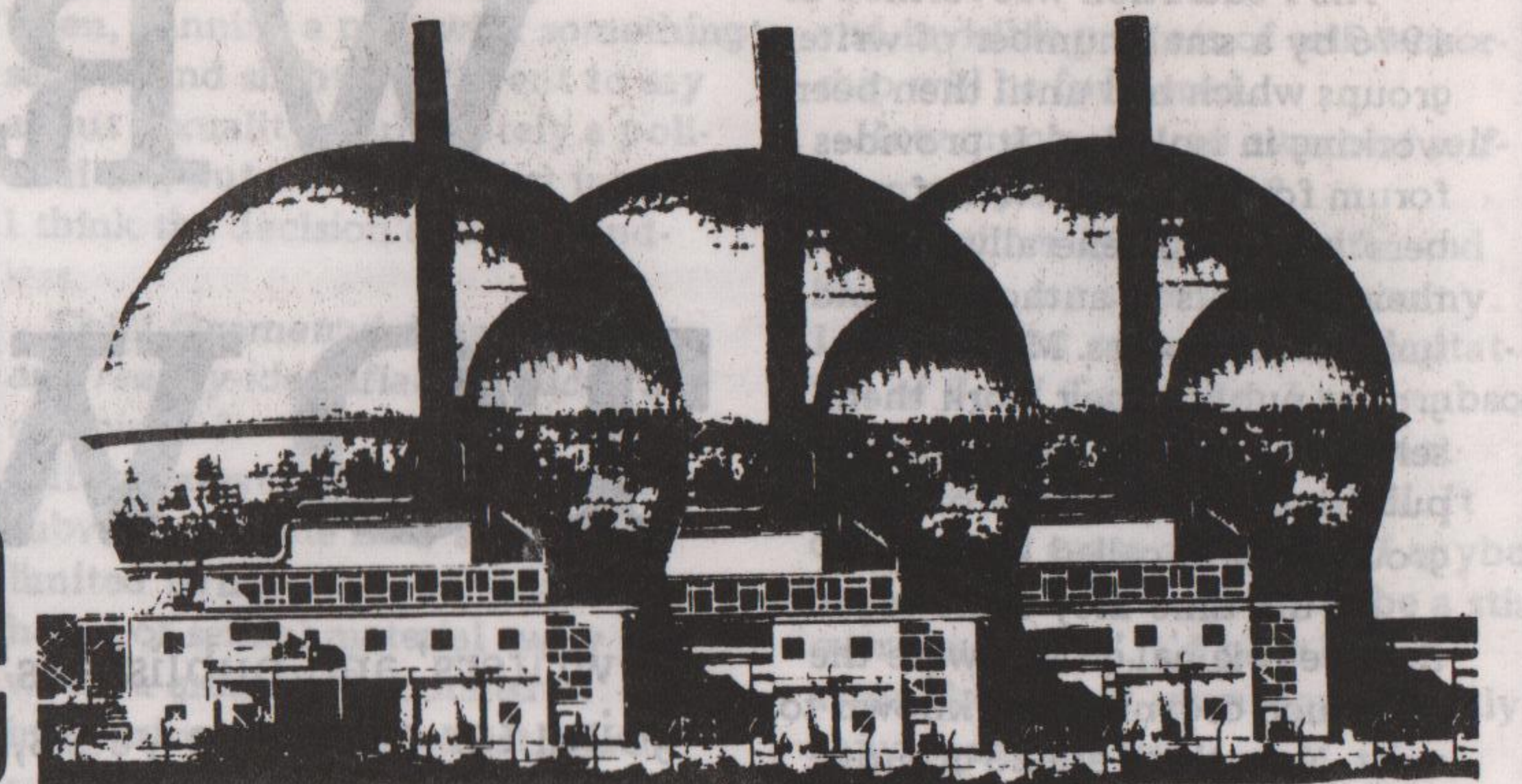
over its attitude towards rehousing.

The day after the general election the sheriff and 50 police arrived without notice and evicted 46 squatters from the south side of the square. The north side expects eviction in September. So far no offers of accommodation have been made to single people but the Local Government Committee of Camden Labour Party has just voted to re-house the squatters. Camden's housing committee may not be influenced unduly by this decision, however, as so far they have refused to give any assurances whatsoever.

The campaign itself has gained wide support from the local trade union movement, with the Trades Council, and branches of CPSA, NUR, TGWU and AEWU all supporting the demands of the campaign.

The long term solution to the problem must be, in the words of TVAG, 'to build more council housing and bring more land and housing into public ownership', but in the short-term councils could extend 'hard-to-let' schemes, property unsuitable for families, and place single people in short-life housing while they await proper tenancies. At the moment evicted single squatters have no statutory rights to housing at all if the campaign is successful it will be an important gain for the squatting movement and all single people.

# Radiating confidence



Recent events around the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania have alerted many more people to the possible dangers of a 'core meltdown' accident. But a somewhat less spectacular danger from such plants has been downplayed: namely, the long-term cancerous effects of low-level radiation exposure, which is a common feature of nuclear power generation. As an early Commissioner (Willard Libby) of the Atomic Energy Commission put it back in 1955, "People have got to learn to live with the facts of life, and part of the facts of life are fallout."

What is revealing about the Three Mile Island incident is exactly how the government attempted to presence the ongoing radiation leakage as 'part of the facts of life'. Throughout the crisis, government officials tried to shift people's concern away from that leakage and instead towards the speculative possibility of a 'catastrophe' as if one wasn't already occurring. They achieved that effect by complacently comparing the radiation exposure of the surrounding population to medical X-rays, as if such medical exposures were themselves some entirely benign 'safe level', and as if they were commensurable

with the exposure from the plant.

Actually, when the crisis began, Metropolitan Edison, the utility company, initially claimed that no one at all outside the plant was receiving any radiation exposure! Officials of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission did acknowledge the exposure but described it as 'no more than you get from a dental X-ray'. Even in its own terms that comparison was a gross underestimate. But, more importantly, that sort of comparison itself was misleading because a 30-second exposure to teeth is simply not commensurable with a 24-hour per day continuous exposure to more cancer-prone parts of the body. And any increase in radiation exposure, no matter how little per person, will still increase the cancer rate if large numbers of people are exposed.

By making such complacent comparisons between radiation exposure from the plant and medical X-rays, the authorities were ideologizing the low-level radiation exposure as somehow 'normal'. And by initially fetishizing the low-level exposure per person—involving over one million people in the Harrisburg metropolitan area—the authorities were later able to justify limiting the evacuation to pregnant

women and pre-school age children, and only those living within a 5-mile radius of the plant.

Pennsylvania Governor Richard Thornburg did not order even that limited evacuation until the third day of the crisis, when Metropolitan Edison tried to solve the hydrogen bubble problem by releasing a plume of radioactive gas, noticeably increasing the radiation levels in the Harrisburg area. Although an estimated 40% of the population within 5 miles leave the area despite the official reassurances (not to mention tens of thousands more in the Harrisburg metropolitan area), they began to return after just a few days—many days before the radiation diminished to background levels.

Reassurances from the government again took the form of a medical X-ray comparison, but this time the metaphorical 'safe level' shifted unnoticed from the dental X-ray (7-20 millirads) to the chest X-ray (30-40 millirads). That comparison did help to dissuade many people from voluntarily making the 'precautionary evacuation' which the government said it would order only if a core meltdown became imminent.

By making a total evacuation seem unnecessary, the government also made people feel less threatened than otherwise by the (quite commonplace) low-level emissions of the nuclear industry, as well as helping the industry to congratulate itself after the crisis for having prevented a core meltdown. As one president of a power company so arrogantly put it afterwards, "Everything went wrong that the anti-nuclear people said would inevitably result in a catastrophe. There was no catastrophe—just a couple of chest X-rays..."

So, what is important for us to learn from Three Mile Island is how the state manages the contradictions arising inherently out of the nuclear industry. The state makes scientific categories a material force for manipulating the population, while at the same time publicly representing its control as protecting the population from the industry's excesses. As President Carter was to put his praise of Governor Thornburg, "... because of the trust of the American people in him, and particularly those who live in this region, potential panic and disturbance has been minimized".

Les Levidow

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## ITV 2-Contest wide open

THE ANNUAL conference of ACTT, the film and television workers union, produced a sharp reversal of union policy on the fourth television channel. And it could have a major effect on the control of the new channel.

For the last two years, the ACTT and its general secretary, Alan Sapper, have vigorously supported the ITV companies' claims that they ought to have the fourth channel, as the 'realistic' alternative to the Annan Committee's scheme, that an Open Broadcasting Authority should be set up to run it as a 'publishing house' channel. The ITV staff technicians who dominate the ACTT's Television branch saw 'ITV2' as offering more jobs and more money.

For fifteen years before

Annan reported, ACTT policy had been to oppose any extension of the commercial television system, and the union's evidence to the Annan Committee was against a second commercial channel. When the government invited responses to the Annan Report, the 1977 ACTT conference called for a special conference on the fourth channel to decide union policy. But no conference was ever held. Instead, at the last moment, there was a small inter-branch committee meeting. Only the television branches produced a policy document, and by a small majority, ACTT became officially in favour of a second commercial channel.

At this year's conference, an emergency resolution from three television shops challenged the

official line. It called for the fourth channel to draw a majority of its programmes from independent British production sources other than the ITV companies. This would keep the channel outside their control.

The challengers argued that new production sources would mean new jobs, and that, in principle, control of broadcasting should be spread, not concentrated. The emergency resolution was carried by a two-to-one majority.

There has always been a majority view within the IBA that the fourth channel should be run by a programme controller and programme board independent of the ITV companies. The idea has been to let the companies sell the advertising space on the new channel, but charge a levy on their total advertising income, which would cover the costs of all channel four's programmes. That way, the controller would have enough purchasing power to make his own decisions about

how many programmes to take from the ITV companies.

The new ACTT policy would encourage that view, and it also removes the fear that the union might black the new channel if it were not firmly in the hands of the ITV companies. But the most important benefit is one that has been scarcely considered in the fourth channel debate. It bears heavily on the other major decision the IBA must make in the next 18 months—reallocation of the ITV contracts.

At the moment, if the IBA removes an ITV company's contract it takes a double risk. What will happen to the displaced contractor? And will the untried replacement be up to the job? With a thriving independent sector providing programmes for the fourth channel, there will always be a pool of companies with proven ability available to replace a declining ITV contractor. And the displaced company will not have to go out of business altogether if it joins the independent sector.



The Federation was formed in 1976 by a small number of writers' groups which had until then been working in isolation. It provides a forum for the discussion of members' work and generally presents their interests to authorities and fund giving bodies. Most of the groups publish their work themselves, though the Federation has published an anthology of all the groups' work, called *Writing*.

At the time they came together the five original groups were the only such organisations known to exist. Now there are 23 groups within the Federation, involving up to three hundred people, and there are several new publishing projects outside.

"The emphasis is on local writers' workshops, where working class people meet on a regular basis - fortnightly, monthly or weekly - and bring their work, whether it's short stories, poetry, plays, a novel or whatever. In the workshops they discuss and criticise each other's work. Obviously it's up to them what they write about, but usually it has something to say about their own lives - about the politics of their own environment."

"The printed page doesn't do poems justice. You've got to hear the people read it themselves."

The workshops are mainly creative - publishing is secondary - but all the groups have to have published or be about to publish something to be in the Federation.

"Discussing their work is raising consciousness anyway. Publishing naturally comes out of that. Sometimes it's just duplicated - say 200 or 300 copies - and when they've sold out they might go on to something else without reprinting. The amazing thing about the workshops is that although the members all have to work - taxi drivers, lorry drivers, housewives, teachers - they are very prolific. Once they start writing they can't stop."

"You can't expect every working class person who comes to a workshop to be a revolutionary socialist, though if someone turned up with blatantly fascist material, or racist or sexist material, the workshop collectively would question it and discuss it."

With sales of publications ranging from a few hundred to 12,000 - sold in alternative bookshops, but mostly missing out the commercial network altogether and being sold on doorsteps and at meetings (another significant market being local schools, which buy dozens of copies at a time) - does the Federation see itself as an alternative to the bourgeois publishing houses?

"We're not in opposition as yet. If someone wanted to go to Penguin I wouldn't dissuade them if it meant reaching a wider market - as long as their work wasn't going to be chopped about. It hasn't happened yet and none of our worker writers would accept it. They aren't in it for the money, they write because they want to."

# WRITE TO WORK

A writers' and publishers' project which has been going for only two years, which began without capital or big-name writers, and which now has a publications list of some 140 titles and total sales at around the quarter million mark has got to be a success by any standards. Such is the record of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers. Terry Ilott spoke to the Federation's full-time coordinator, Mike Kearney.



Picture from "Working Lives", compiled by the Hackney Writers' Group and published by Centerprise - members of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers.

The Federation policy is to keep prices low - 95p for a well produced 200 page novel - so as to reach as many readers as possible. The type of readership they are aiming at can't afford high prices anyway.

"If we keep going and growing and consolidating, in five or ten years' time we'll have sold maybe 5 million copies. They're just figures of course, but I don't see why not."

"I approached Bookwise, the book distributors, and offered them virtually any terms they wanted to distribute us in Woolworths. I got a letter back saying thankyou, it's a very good book but it does not fit into our concept of marketing in the book trade."

"We tried for Woolworths because so many people asked us why our publications weren't widely on sale where they could get them."

"We're also aware of the need to turn the other way - to the left and the labour movement - and not rely on or get caught up in the

commercial world that would politically destroy us." And how do they see their relationship to the left?

"The whole attitude of the left towards culture needs looking into. The CP has been very sympathetic towards us. *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Worker* have been very slow to pick us up. The review we got in *Socialist Challenge* was abominable - they hoped we'd turn up another Brecht or something! - but the one in *Socialist Review* was excellent. A lot of people think that politics is one thing and culture is somewhere else - not really politics. This is a capitalist view which has been adopted by the left. But when you see the way the workshops operate, the way their writing reflects the political struggle - tenants, ANL, and so on - you see how the connection between the two, the cultural and political revolutions, is complete. That's the way it should be. Writing, people expressing themselves and people reading about it and being encouraged by

it, is an integral part of revolutionary politics.

"Many of our members are in the SWP, the CP, or the ANL and others consider themselves non-aligned socialists. One or two are in the IMG. So there is that kind of direct link with the organised left."

Are there many women involved in the workshops?

"I'd say the numerical balance is probably in their favour. There's a group called *Shush, Mum's Writing*, which came out of a play-group in Bristol. Their first publication, published by Bristol *Broadsides*, sold 3,000 copies in 3 months. Two of them are on our editorial committee, overseeing the next joint Federation publication, to be called *Them and Us*.

"And there is a group in Netherley in Liverpool which is mainly women - mainly single mothers in fact. They are all members of the ANL and the local tenants' federation. Anyway, one of their daughters wrote a poem about local conditions, and they thought if she can do it so can we. They put a week's rent money towards their first publication and

- after a few pints at one of our joint meetings I just get high on it."

they sold out in a few days. They only did 150 because the stencil got chewed up in the duplicator. The cover was silk screen printed by two people who could barely read and write but wanted to help in some way.

They were refused a grant by the Merseyside Arts Association, who said the cover wasn't good enough and that they should edit their work more - they don't feel qualified to edit each other's work. They told Merseyside Arts that they weren't going to go back and tell these people that their cover was no good."

Two of the workshops, Liverpool 8 and Common Place in Ealing, have a predominantly black membership. There is also the prospect of a group being formed in Belfast, drawing writers from both Catholic and Protestant communities. In addition to the existing groups in London, Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and Liverpool, there are possibilities of groups being formed in Coventry, Bradford and Norwich, and Mike is hopeful of turning up something in Glasgow and Birmingham. Money, however, is a problem.

"We have to be self sufficient and have an office and a full-time worker in three years and how we do that I don't know. At present my wages are paid by a Gulbenkian grant. Perhaps the only way out is to have a national publishing house that takes a cut - enough money for the worker and the office."

"Our network is already there, with the local groups and libraries, and these can only grow."

Federation: E Floor, Milburn House, Dean St., Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1LF. Tel: 0632 20719.

# THE SHOW MUST GO ON

LONDON-BASED writer Ian McEwen is, at 31, the author of two collections of short stories: *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) and *Between the Sheets* (1978). His novel *The Cement Garden* was also published recently. He has written for television and the stage. A TV adaptation of his short story *Solid Geometry* was commissioned from him, rehearsed and then suddenly dropped by the BBC this March because it was 'too sexually explicit'. Afterwards McEwen wrote a short piece in *New Statesman* critical of the BBC. Nick Anning interviewed him, and we publish extracts from their conversation below.

In your *New Statesman* article you called for 'clearer, less idiosyncratic and paternalistic ways of determining what is "untransmittable"'. Can you expand on that?

Well, without being too bleak, you have to accept that the BBC will always have ultimate editorial control over what it puts out. Its new guidelines state that they wish to attract and back adventurous projects and to continue to use the best writers available. They've also said that once they've accepted a script, then that represented a commitment to complete work on it. So somewhere in the BBC there is some conscience. I feel we shouldn't be too pessimistic - we have to keep hacking away at the structure ...

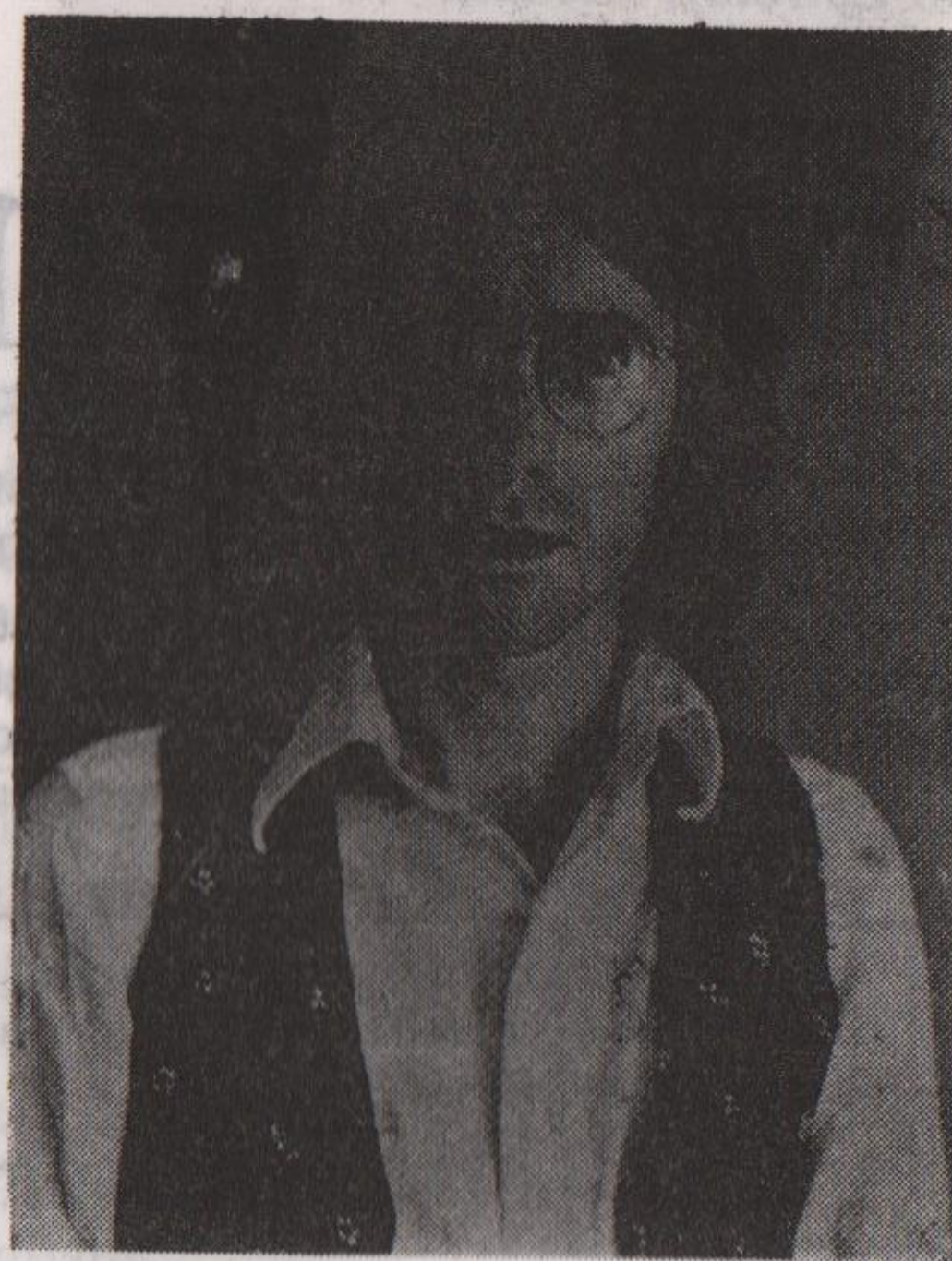
Since *Solid Geometry*, the Writers' Guild, the NUJ and ACTT have been having talks with the BBC. They've agreed that the BBC must give early warning to a writer if they intend to ban a play that's already gone into production. That may be cold comfort. My concern in the *Statesman* piece was - who makes those sort of decisions.

The people who make it to the top management level at the BBC are not generally those who throughout their lives have been committed to radically adventurous projects. They are largely hard-working corporate men whose sense of order and priorities are fundamentally different.... They're always going to be there, but it would be preferable if the programme-makers had some voice in the decision-making process.

Was there no feedback over the decision? Didn't anybody express sympathy?

Lots did, at the BBC itself, especially once Stephen Gilbert was

sacked, but before that too. Many just wrote to the Director-General off their own bat, expressing displeasure. The BBC's programme-makers were astounded and hundreds of signatures were collected.



*'Solid Geometry' could hardly be called a political story. Do you think the decision to ban it was in any way political?*

The play is really an entertainment, though wrapped up in it are some fairly serious things about sexuality. To my mind *Solid Geometry* was always more innocuous and self-consciously a fiction than most of the other stories - the most 'bookish' of them. Its layered time-sequence made it ideal for adaptation as a TV play, especially given the freedom to use video in exciting new ways. That was one of the great disappointments ...

The decision to ban it is only political in its broadest sense - where the political has to do with the large-scale ordering of people's behaviour.

Then, banning a play with something serious and slightly different to say about sexuality is ultimately a political act, but not in the first instance. I think the decision's fairly mindless.

*'Solid Geometry' doesn't contain any readily-identifiable structural criticisms?*

If it's subversive, then it's only subversive in the BBC's rather limited terms. The BBC puts out hours of sexual material every week, a great deal couched in innuendo, a lot of it sexist. Most sexual material on the BBC is at someone else's expense. *Solid Geometry* isn't at anybody's expense. (McEwen has objected to the sexist covers of Picador's paperback collections of his stories. They have agreed to withdraw and replace them with something more suitable)

*Does that make you angry or just disappointed?*

Very disappointed. I did forget about it for a while, but it would have been included in Stephen Gilbert's season of plays and I really like them. I feel impatient when I think that *Solid Geometry* would have been part of that. Also, it almost certainly won't get anywhere else. There was talk of ATV or one of the independents doing it, but that's unlikely now.

*Dennis Potter's reaction to BBC censorship was to go to 'the other side'. Would you take your writing elsewhere if it gave you the opportunity to be franker?*

I'll take my work wherever it will be done. I certainly won't make a systematic decision not to write for the BBC. If writers did that the BBC would become a cesspool of light entertainments. They would have won - and there are so many good directors and good cameramen there, good producers, people with ideas. It would be a shame to identify the programme-makers with the institution.

In any case, the BBC is in almost a monopoly position. It puts out at least half the one-off dramas that go out. For that reason I wouldn't make a cut-and-dried decision.

I took *Solid Geometry* to the independents, hoping they would come up with something, but it's contract-awarding, licence-renewing time, so they're a bit nervous... Yet all the heads of drama have said they think the play's fantastic and they're thinking of doing it. But if they were going to, they'd have made a move by now. Usually if a play's with six or seven companies one of them will buy and decide later. It's low-budget, it wouldn't cost much, so they're not nervous they might miss out. I think I may as well kiss it goodbye.

*'Solid Geometry' was commissioned from you as a writer with an established reputation. How do you think the BBC's decision will affect other people, particularly unknown writers, who might come up with similar 'explicit' treatments of good ideas?*

It's hard for unknown writers already. It's going to be a damn sight harder now. Directors and producers will be more wary. That whole invidious

and invisible process of self-censorship will be furthered.

*How much are you aware of self-censorship in yourself?*

I'm primarily a prose-writer and that gives me a certain autonomy. I carried that over into my adaptation of *Solid Geometry*. I made absolutely no concessions to the fact that people might be offended. It didn't even cross my mind. If anybody had said: "There's going to be a stink over your play", I'd have been astonished. That seems fantastically naive looking back.

But the way people interiorise the 'oughts' and 'ought not's', the 'do's' and 'don't's' is very destructive of good drama and needs to be consciously fought off. But the level of self-censorship in those with final editorial control is huge. They completely identify themselves with what they take for granted as a moral consensus ... and they stand at the very epicentre of this large moral universe which they don't even bother to examine. It's just a given, as far as they're concerned. Who are they defending against what? It's just an automatic, unquestioned, almost unconscious way in which they identify themselves with some invisible moral structure. Their reactions are visceral. They don't have to explain themselves and they don't feel the need to, except in general terms about what people will and won't accept. That's what I meant about "punching the breeze".

*Do you think England, with its 'repressive tolerance' and its depressing rightwards drift, is still the place for a writer like yourself?*

I feel fairly, if not profoundly, pessimistic, because there isn't a powerful, unified libertarian left. I'm almost glad Labour didn't get in, though it's hard to choose between Callaghan and Thatcher. It does seem as if we're heading for an energy crisis, shortages. No doubt the kind of measures taken will be strictly monetarist. Only the best-off will avoid the consequences. Somewhere at the back of my brain - not rationally, it's just a feeling - I associate the banning of *Solid Geometry* with that whole process.

What I do like about London and England is what a number of individuals and groups are doing. Whether that adds up to a culture or a potential political structure is another matter. The Women's Movement is still strong and energetic despite being split up into different camps. But that diversity is a sign of energy. There's energetic theatre and some good writing going on. I don't think anything can stop that. London won't be any less exciting with a right-wing government, it may even be more exciting.

No matter how bad things get I'm happy to stay. The worse things get the more I'll want to stay. The only thing that would drive me away from London is a succession of six wet summers. That would strain my tolerance. I can take any amount of shit .... but not too much rain.



## COMMUNITY WORK OVERSEAS

### PANAMA

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

AGRICULTURALIST. Volunteer required to advise cooperative production groups of peasant farmers and to help institute production planning. Post should suit qualified agronomist with planning skills, related to a knowledge in basic grains and animal husbandry.

NURSE/MIDWIFE required to work in a medical team providing mainly preventative services to local indian community. Any training in health education would be useful. Post-qualification experience necessary.

### ECUADOR

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DOCUMENTALIST required to work in centre producing information on human rights issues and social conditions in Central America to systematise available material and expand area of work. Post would suit someone experienced in documenting material particularly in relation to Latin America.

### NORTH YEMEN

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# Shorts

## N.IRELAND

### Powell Shock Horreur

The newly re-elected unionist MP for South Down in Northern Ireland, one Enoch Powell, ought to be hugely embarrassed by a section of a sycophantic book about his unpleasant self.

"Principle in Politics" it's called, written by a Roy Lewis and during a section on France and De Gaulle after Algeria, it quotes the Prince of Darkness (Powell) like this:

"Indeed the psychological renewal of France... could not begin until the French had proved they had the ability, by a decisive act of will, to put their imperial and colonial past behind them.

"They were spared the weary and perhaps, in some of its consequences, fatal course of self-deception with which the British were fain to beguile themselves..."

Just as well his eager "we belong to Britain" unionist constituents did not receive early copies of the book with such revealing passages on his real thoughts.

## THEATRE

### Better L.A.T.E. than ever

LEEDS Alternative Theatre Events held its first event, a three day performance festival, last month. The festival featured *Gay Sweatshop*, *Beryl and the Perils*, *Clapperclaw* and *Hormone Imbalance*, and its organisers say it was a huge success. Leeds is currently the home of three (for want of a better word) 'alternative' theatre groups, *Red Ladder*, *Local Brew* and *Interplay*.

L.A.T.E. was set up following a long history of cynicism towards, and disenchantment with, socialist theatre, especially shows dealing specifically with 'sexual politics'. It seems it all started when a women's theatre company played Leeds Trades Club, the topic of the play being sexual politics. However the audience felt the show lacked a distinct feminist perspective and the show was stopped.

This incident is not easily forgotten and for a long time few 'alternative' theatre groups will visit Leeds. Whilst many people, particularly theatre workers, felt what had happened at the Trades Club was an isolated incident and that other groups should be encouraged to visit Leeds to redress the balance, others on the left seem to place little importance on the role of theatre in the 'struggle' (sic).

At the autumn conference of T.A.C.T. (The Association of Community Theatres) there were many new and dynamic women's theatre groups. This gave renewed enthusiasm to the theatre workers who were eager to see more 'alternative' theatre in Leeds. A meeting was called to ask why these groups were not visiting Leeds. Whilst the only obstacle the theatre workers could see was money, the majority of the left groups still remembered the Trades Club incident. L.A.T.E. was born, its organi-

sational 'core' being made up of theatre workers. The theatre groups were booked and L.A.T.E. had no money, nonetheless they were committed to staging a weekend festival of alternative theatre. Various 'left' organisations agreed to guarantee nominal sums for the well being of the festival. At that stage however had the festival been a flop then the organisers would have had to dig deep into their own pockets. As it turned out L.A.T.E. were able to secure a grant from the Yorkshire Arts Association which covered half the costs, the other half was made up by the door take.

L.A.T.E. currently have no definite plans for their next festival and are unsure whether to stay with the specific theme of sexual politics or to include other subjects. Although a creche was provided at the first festival L.A.T.E. feel strongly that kids were left out and would like to involve them more in the future. Already a women's group has come out of L.A.T.E.'s first festival and the organisers hope to see a men's group in the future.

L.A.T.E. is almost certainly unique, a co-operative of already overworked theatre workers committed to bringing 'alternative' theatre to Leeds and doing it all in their spare time for love not money. They deserve all the support we can give them.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Kings against racism

THE STUDENT STRIKE at King's College Cambridge is beginning to bite. The protest strike is against the rich College's extensive financial holdings in South African companies and to demand that the College move its bank account from Barclays. The students are especially alarmed at £1.5 million shareholding King's has in BP's South African operation, and indeed in GKN, the financial mainstay of the Conservative Party.

The rent strike decision was taken last March and some 80 students are now taking part, which means over £8,000 in rent ~~is~~ being withheld from the College authorities who, with their sedate lawns and inspiring spires, must be thoroughly unaccustomed to such dissent.

Spokesperson for the College student's rent strike committee, Joe Finer, said the strike would go on over the long summer holiday in readiness for the next term. "It may well double then, and we'll keep it up till the College acts on its South African holdings."

## ELECTIONS

### Voting 1984-style

IT IS POSSIBLE to trace the way in which anyone who cast a vote in the last election expressed their electoral preference in the 'secret' ballot. When you received your ballot paper, your number on the electoral register was written on a counterfoil in the book of voting papers. The counterfoil bears the same number as that on the voting paper on which you mark your cross. So, having gained access to the ballot papers and counterfoils after the election, it is a relatively simple matter to trace a vote for a Communist or

other left candidate back to the person who cast it.

After the election, the papers and counterfoils are locked away under the supervision of the Returning Officer, usually the Chief Executive of the local council. He or She is not legally allowed to release them unless the result of the election is challenged, and then only to the court conducting the enquiry into the challenge. After two years, they are destroyed. Given the ease with which the authorities gained access to the jury lists to keep 'secret subversives' off the Aubrey, Berry and Campbell jury, one wonders whether or not access to the evidence of who voted for subversive candidates is really quite as 'secret' as we're told.

## SOUTHALL

### Peach's murderer still free

THE MURDERER of Blair Peach in Southall on April 23 is still at large, cruising around London in a big blue van, looking for more trouble. But the strenuous efforts of Commander John Cass, heading the police enquiry into the events of that day (see *The Leveller* last issue) don't seem to be getting close to identifying him.

When the inquest was adjourned on May 24 Cass said it would take him another ten weeks to complete his enquiries. What for? The murder itself was a relatively straightforward matter, with dozens of witnesses, who have given statements. It is known that the truncheons of six SPG officers at the scene have been forensically examined, but there's been no indication that an identity parade might take place. There have been two autopsies, one by the police, another by an independent pathologist, and their results are said not to differ greatly. How strange it all is. The inquest will not take place until after any possible criminal proceedings. Cass is to forward his report to the DPP some time in the summer.

The widespread demand for a full public enquiry (from the TUC, the Friends of Blair Peach and hundreds of labour and anti-racist organisations) have not even been acknowledged by the Home Secretary, and it's now certain there won't be one. The attempts by local anti-racists to set up their own are progressing slowly.

Meanwhile don't forget the other victims of the police-NI invasion of Southall. The 340 people arrested are soon to start appearing in court, and their defence has not been helped by the fact that two big London press photography agencies, the London News Service, and the London Express agency, have handed over all their photographers' films to Scotland Yard.

There were also more than 20 anti-racists injured by police, some seriously. Clarence Baker of Peoples Unite is out of hospital, but still not well, and tests are continuing to determine whether he has permanent brain damage. About half a dozen injured anti-racists are planning to sue the police for compensation.

The East London Teachers' Association is appealing for donations to finance a full-page national newspaper advert to press the enquiry demand. Minimum individual donations of £2 and organisational ones of £25 should go to the Blair Peach Advertisement Fund at 221, Westcombe Hill, London SE3, before June 30.

A four-track EP for Blair Peach is now available for £1.10 from SW Recordings, 265, Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE. Songs written and performed by Mike Carver: one for Blair, the others: "The SPG Song", "Urban Decay" and "Nobody Loves You when You're Unemployed".



# Duckering for the Gaugios

GYPSIES come pretty low down on most people's check list of minority groups in Britain. They're certainly not the colourfully-clad romantic figures in their painted caravans tripping around the country; there could be some of them round the corner in your local inner-city car park. With over 10,000 caravan units around Britain, they've got some real problems, and David Brazil looks at some of them.

The 1968 Caravans Act was supposed to be the basis of a new deal for Britain's section of the Europe-wide travelling people. It came during that "dawn of parliamentary enlightenment" with the then Liberal MP Eric Lubbock presiding over laws that were to oblige each county, metropolitan district and the London boroughs to provide decent sites with full water and toilet facilities for gypsy caravans. In 1977 this was backed up by the Cripps report on "Accommodation for Gypsies" which recommended Government grants for sites, and amongst other things, that councils provide alternatives for those caravans they want to move on.

That's the theory of it all anyway. The practice is a long series of hostile local authorities of which the following is only a selection. A public meeting in Bradford heard one councillor say: "Gypsies are like dogs, and should be kept under control"; an apparent private army in Monmouth wrecked a camp, on an unauthorised site, with similar reports from Wolverhampton; Swansea and Epsom in Surrey have notably refused to meet their legal obligations, Rotherham spent £35,000 one year on evictions.

The National Gypsy Council estimates that only a quarter of the needed sites have been provided, and that there are over 6,000 families being shunted along all the time. Constantly these caravans are forced off 'unauthorised' roadside, or wherever, sites by police or private bullies, maybe just into the next local district where the same thing inevitably happens.

This is the formal gypsy battle, but in the wider sense, they have to battle against general public apathy about their lot, and too often sheer ignorant prejudice. People just don't seem to want what they regard as dirty, probably criminal and certainly culturally different people near their own mortgaged homes in caravans often a far call from the romantic Romany vehicles.

So who are the gypsies and what do they want? They want to be left alone. A pretty strict

code of behaviour pervades the genuine gypsy community.

They don't believe in "choring" (stealing) from their own kind or from others; nor in "rocking" (informing); they certainly get almost obsessively houseproud about their 'vardoos' (caravans); the family unit and "respect" for your elders is of crucial importance; their unmarried women must remain virgins till they marry (ostracism beckons otherwise) and in a rather smugly moral manner, they regard their everyday code of behaviour as superior to that of the average "gaugio" — the non-gypsy person.

Apart from social welfare when they can get it (although any connotation of charity is abhorred), gypsies tend to earn their livings still in the traditional manner; scrap metal dealing, road-building, selling cars or car parts, flogging "objets d'art", repair work, temporary farm work, or even the colourful practice of "duckering", meaning fortune-telling in appropriate places.

Two gypsy women, who also had Irish republican connections, have been living for some years in Ivybridge, South Devon, but now feel forced to leave the area. Jacqueline Orchard and her mother Louise have had many battles with the "gavangoes" — the police — and accuse the cops of deliberate victimisation, harassment and abuse.

Jacqueline relates how common prejudice against them usually leads to action by the men in blue:

"If litter is ditched on the

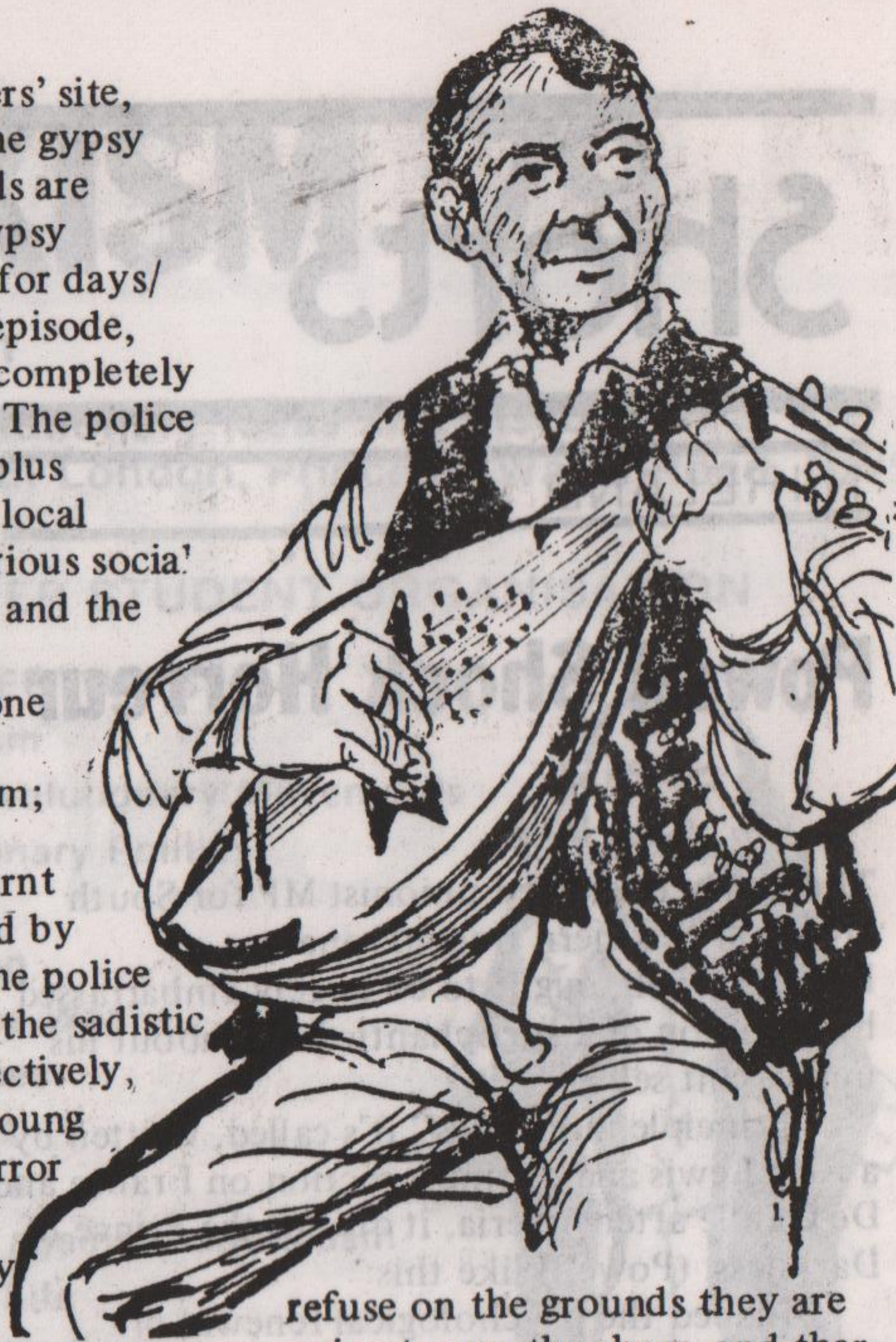
roadways near a travellers' site, it's always blamed on the gypsy community; if any goods are stolen in the area the gypsy families are questioned for days/weeks on end over the episode, even though stealing is completely against the gypsy code. The police torment the travellers, plus harassment from many local district councils and various social service/welfare systems and the average gaugio."

Jacqueline related one episode that happened just outside Birmingham; "One travelling family watched their trailer burnt upside down in the mud by council workers with the police watching to make sure the sadistic act was carried out effectively, with the result that a young woman watching in horror her possessions being destroyed, lost the baby she was shortly due to have."

Both women have had a gutful. The daughter puts it vividly, addressing both police and aggressive gaugios; "Leave us to our own lifestyle and traditions which we would rather take the gun to you than lose, and we will leave you, the gaugios, in perfect harmony."

"Do not continue to victimise us by holding back amenities from our properties like electricity and mains water; do not continue police harassment with continuous visits to our properties by the 'black boot' brigade, or issuing summonses on trumped-up charges of breach of the peace or some litter upon the highway act etc etc."

Jacqueline, who likes to make it known she and her mother support Provisional Sinn Fein, sees it somewhat on nationalistic grounds: "The average Britishers are not the easiest people to compromise with and are the most difficult people with which to talk and resolve problems. They



refuse on the grounds they are going to run the show, and then the Anglo sadism appears."

Or she put it another way: "We have lost too much at the hands of the gaugio, but the prize we cannot afford to lose at any price is our pride."

A seeming anachronism with their lifestyle and customs in this urbanised industrialised age, gypsies need much more than liberal acts of parliament to keep themselves afloat. They are Britain's Red Indians in Britain's reservations (if they're lucky).

Some addresses:  
**National Cypsy Council:** Greengate St., Oldham, Greater Manchester (publishers of Gypsy newspaper Romano Drom)  
**Romany Guild:** Tom Lee Clays Lane Caravan Site, London E15.  
**Minority Rights Group Gypsy Campaign:** c/o Bill Forrester, 196 Stapleton Hall Road, London N4.

# Alarm clocks corruption

If Superman was a working class militant with an urge to right political rather than gangland crime, he would find plenty of work in Swansea. In the past three years the city has been rocked by corruption scandals which have sent two successive Council leaders to prison. And the alternative paper which has dug the dirt on what is openly called the local 'mafia' made the unusual recent decision to take its battle to the polling booths. *Crispin Aubrey and Charles Landry report.*

It was in the wake of Swansea's first public scandal that *Alarm*, a six-page roughly printed news-sheet selling for just 2p, began to chronicle the seemingly indigenous rottenness of local Councillors and capitalists. 6,000 copies of a pamphlet entitled 'The Swansea Mafia', which detailed the careers of five prominent figures, had mysteriously dropped through the city's letterboxes. Just before the 1976 Council elections the expected dam broke. Labour leader Gerald Murphy and housing manager Emrys Harris were both found guilty of corruption and jailed, Murphy for two years.

With Labour discredited and a makeshift Ratepayers' coalition in power, *Alarm* set to work to show that corruption would not disappear with a single show trial. In angry language that made *Private Eye* appear tame, Councillors were seen to grant planning permission for their business friends' office blocks, loan out their limousines at extortionate rates, allow council housing to crumble away and then retire to their personal night clubs to get drunk. Prominent personalities were nicknamed 'Vicious' and 'Babyface', articles by-lined 'Man of the Peephole' and 'Rabble Rouser'. No sympathy was accorded anyone in public office whose dealings were not above suspicion. Every page was irreverent, angry, funny and potentially libellous.

Earlier this year, the paper's persistent warnings proved right. Ratepayers' leader Sidney Jenkins and night club owner Bernhard George were in turn found guilty of corruption over a land deed. Jenkins received a year's prison sentence, George 9 months. The 'Ratpack', as *Alarm* dubbed the Ratepayers, had been given their comeuppance.

But it isn't just the straight talking language ('There are a group of men and women in Swansea, vicious, corrupt and determined to cause explosions, arson and mass poisonings! No they're not the IRA, Red Army Fraction or even the SAS, but our councillors and senior officials' starting a story about safety hazards) that makes *Alarm* different from other alternative papers around the country. In a city without any obvious centres of community action, only a small proportion of the news

sheet's 30-odd regular workers are either students or middle class. Their views range from socialist to seeing *Alarm* as 'the paper of class hatred' but the most common description is 'the voice of the people of Swansea'. The attitude of the (small) local organised left has changed perceptibly. 'They first saw us as a joke', said one worker, 'then as anarchist and populist. Now there's a grudging respect.'

One simple reason is that since August 1977, *Alarm* has appeared every week. From the regular Monday evening meeting, when new rumours, leads and letters (4 to 6 each issue) are allocated for follow-up, through to Friday night printing, there is hardly time to stop. Writing the next issue and selling the last inevitably overlap. 'You tend to live and breathe *Alarm*', was one comment.

Apart from corruption, *Alarm* covers industrial news, carries a weekly gig guide to new wave

bands and sends up the local football team management in an hilarious satirical column headed 'Tommo Talking'. (Ex-Liverpool star Tommy Smith plays for the Swans and many people believe he actually writes it.) The most common reaction from readers is that *Alarm* tells the truth, something not felt about the commercial *Evening Post* or the local radio station Swansea Sound.

And readers there certainly are. In a population of 180,000 the paper sells up to 5,000 copies each week. Its circulation leaped 1,000 when a social club on a large housing estate banned its sale and *Alarm* in turn exposed the club's undemocratic control. Roughly half are sold on the streets in the city centre; the rest go out through a team of sellers touring 100 pubs, mostly on working class estates. 'People actually go to the pub to buy *Alarm*', said one of the regulars. 'They throw themselves at you. If you run out of copies, you nearly get hung.' Pubs also provide feedback and scandal for the following week's investigations.

So far, there have been no libel actions. But there are signs that the paper's aggressive finger-pointing of the 'guilty' people has made it unpopular. Sellers have been photographed and harassed. An enquirer to the agents for an empty house overlooking its



printing press was told it was being used by the police. During the most recent corruption trial, someone wearing a badge reading 'Hard Labour for Sid' (a reference to convicted Councillor Sid Jenkins) was hauled out of the public gallery and threatened with contempt of court.

A decision to turn the angry probing into a political campaign was taken a year ago, and steadily canvassed in the paper. Public meetings were called, building up to the local Council elections in May. 'We felt that if we were going to follow up all the stuff about corruption we had to have an organisation', explained one supporter. 'The elections seemed a heaven-sent opportunity. It was one time that *Alarm* could do something and if we got a lot of votes it would give people confidence. There's a very depressed feeling in Swansea, an inevitability about Labour always being in power. People say there's been corruption here since 1945 and if *Alarm* gets in it'll just be the same. We wanted to break that down, to show that something could happen.'

With a wide-ranging manifesto that included a compulsory register of Councillors' business interests and closure of the subsidised Swansea airport, *Alarm* eventually put up four candidates, though it had hoped for more. For a completely new party it was comparatively successful. Overall it polled 16% of the vote and in one ward got 700 votes, coming second to Labour. The result there both shocked the Labour Party in one of its strongholds and surprised the left.

Though *Alarm* didn't make it into the Council chamber, where one candidate had promised 'to kick up so much stink, they won't know what's hit them', it was not entirely disappointed. Even so, the pressures of running a campaign and a weekly newspaper on the same limited resources have taken their toll. For a period, the paper is being produced fortnightly to leave space for political discussion.

If the newly elected Labour Council thinks this signifies any let-up in the paper's consistent needling at the corridors of power it is likely to be wrong. There is only precedent *Alarm* has no desire to follow. The name comes from an anarchist paper published in Chicago in the 1880's. Its editor was hanged.





CSE

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CSE is a forum for socialists concerned to develop a materialist critique of society and of political practice, and to overcome boundaries between different areas of social study. Formed in 1970, it now has 1800 members in Britain and around the world. It is politically broad-based, and offers a wide range of activities, debates and publications.

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## Shorts

ASTRID PROLL

### What's new on the Home Front?

FOLLOWING a rout of the Authorities in the Family Division of the High Court of Justice, Astrid Proll has the Home Office on the spot.

The judgement of the President Sir George Baker makes several critical findings of fact vital to Astrid's application for citizenship, in respect of which an official decision is expected as we go to press.

Notwithstanding her courtroom steps to acquire registration as a national, she must attend court again both to respond to a forlorn application of the German government to reinstate a minor charge dismissed at the extradition hearing and her substantive appeal against the whole extradition hearing.

Her support group The Friends of Astrid Proll has decided to no longer hold meetings and to operate by way of subgroups. The Friends can be contacted by P.O. Box 174, London E3.

The Friends plan a Benefit soon to be announced in the left press when details are settled.

### NATIONAL THEATRE

### Exit, pursued by the management

WITH THE collapse of the National Theatre strike in the middle of May, the 78 strikers dismissed during the strike are about to find out at first hand how subtly victimisation works.

The official line, from National Theatre Press Officer John Goodwin, is that "We're going to take people on as and when we can". At present they're employing 15 staff in the stage and workshop departments that were affected by the strike (see *Leveller* 26 & 27). These include the 5 "casuals" who were taken on by the theatre during the strike, now employed full-time, and some strikers who went back to work early. Because the present productions have been designed as simple box sets which require few staff, Mr Goodwin says the theatre doesn't need to take more staff on until August.

The theatre will have to re-employ some of the strikers, because it needs their experience, and it has issued them all with application forms. But Michael Elliott, the General Administrator, has made it clear that the theatre intends to recoup some of the losses caused by the strike—at least £250,000 according to management estimates—by reducing the number of staff. "All they're interested in is the names on the application forms" said one source inside the theatre. "They won't be interviewing".

Meanwhile ACAS, the arbitration service, has advised the dismissed workers to appeal to an industrial tribunal on grounds of unfair dismissal. The theatre would probably be

happy to pay off the members they don't want to take back on again" said Richard Lewis, NATTKE Branch Secretary at the theatre.

The strike collapsed largely because NATTKE refused to take any action about the five casuals—all NATTKE members—taken on by the theatre during the strike to prevent the technical departments coming to a complete halt. The theatre even claims that they were taken on with the agreement of the union. This meant that the strikers' failure to get the other big subsidised theatres—the Royal Opera House, the Coliseum and RSC Aldwych—to come out in sympathy proved crippling.

Richard Lewis says that their biggest mistake though, was not to get other unionists involved from the beginning of the dispute. And he predicts that the strike at the National will be the first of several in theatre. The management of Covent Garden are already complaining that their technical staff only work a three day week.

### DUNLOP

### Tireless fight in Liverpool

DUNLOP has reinstated 154 of the 2,300 workers it dismissed when it closed its tyre factory at Speke last month. And they've agreed to set up a working party to look at ways of introducing new products at Dunlop's remaining factories on Merseyside.

The reinstated men, who had refused to accept redundancy pay when they were dismissed, started work on 21st May despite some initial problems with their contract. At present, they are being employed tidying up the old tyre factory, but their position is to be reviewed in six months. It is thought that by then they will be able to fill vacancies caused by natural wastage at Dunlop factories on Merseyside.

"It is a victory, though not a brilliant one" said Tony Lane, a Liverpool University lecturer who has been closely involved with the fight against redundancy. "We didn't expect to get anything". He pointed out that reinstatement meant that the men did not lose their pension rights and other long service entitlements. The company had wanted to re-employ the men as new workers.

Dunlop were forced to take the men on again because they disrupted the company's British tyre production by picketing Fort Dunlop in Birmingham, the centre of Dunlop's tyre operation in this country. "We effectively stopped Fort Dunlop with twenty men and the official backing of the TGWU" said Tony Lane.

The joint committee is to discuss the prospects of introducing alternative products on Merseyside. It's said that the company wants to look very seriously at ways of helping Merseyside by developing new products, and the committee, which consists of five company and five union representatives, is to report in ninety days. "We're very pleased", said John Miller of the Transport and General. "We'd been pressing the company to set up such a committee." Now the union and the reinstated workers are trying to ensure that it does not just become a public relations facade.

"With 2,300 men we could have got everything we wanted", said Tony Lane. "I think people took the redundancy money because of the long history of redundancies in the area. There's been no successful resistance to closures on Merseyside before."

### CLASS WARFARE

### No hope for the homeless?

RESIDENTS of a hostel for homeless families run by the London Borough of Ealing are planning to fight back against neglect by their Tory council. Castlebar Court, an old mansion, has fallen victim to savage cuts in spending on hostel repairs. After nearly a year of being ignored, the mainly black residents are planning a demonstration soon.

The hostel was designed for 30 families, but now holds over 40, with up to five adults and children in the same room. Castlebar is run by the borough's Homeless Families Unit, but is in serious disrepair: plaster crumbles into the bath, the playroom's parquet floor is broken and dangerous, the fire escape from the top floor is blocked.

Estimated expenditure by the Tory council on hostel repairs for 1978/9 was slashed from £30,000 to £6,000. The one caretaker does not even have enough Ajax with which properly to clean the place. Tory councillor John Marshall, chairman of the Finance Committee and a member of the Housing Committee, says he will do what he can. But hte residents are sceptical. They know what Mrs Thatcher thinks of the homeless.

### BALLROOMS

### Mecca for Tone-deafs

THEIR EX-MANDARIN and failed Tory MP Eric Morley, would have approved no end. Mecca, that conglomerate of "pleasure", owns the Ilford Palais in east London, and last month that sturdy Irish "rebel-folk" band the Wolfe Tones, who include "The Men Behind the Wire" in their repertoire, were due to appear.

Some toady within clearly did some early checking and informed to his bosses who presented the promoters Star Promotions with a sudden ultimatum. Either the Wolfe Tones "delete rebel ballads from their programme" or else.

To their credit, Star would have none of it, and their co-owner Joe Green retorted: "I rejected this without hesitation, stressing it was up to the Wolfe Tones to choose their material and that Star Promotions wouldn't seek to influence their choice".

He retaliated further by cancelling a subsequent straightforward booking at the Palais, but the denizens of Ilford have had their ears protected from turbulent Irish tunes.

### Southall cont.

A BUNCH OF skinheads organised by London East End fascist groups bust up a benefit for the Southall Defence Fund at Ealing College of Higher Education given by Crass and the Satellites on June 1. A gang of about thirty stomped into the gig shouting "Heil Hitler", "Bring back Belsen" and "the reds, the reds, we've got to get rid of the reds". They broke up the coffee machines, the pool table and the window with sticks. The police were called in and they all disappeared smartly, leaving about £200 worth of damage and a number of injured stewards, some of whom had to be taken to hospital. It seems that it was deliberately organised and not just a random punch-up. It is also possible that the local council, who own the college, will make the organisers pay for all the damage - which will wipe out all the money raised for the defence fund.



# Back Pages

## BOOKS

Two books from a new educational imprint came out on May 17th, when Chameleon published two titles. The books, *Positive Image* (about multi-racial education, and *Working With Words*, about adult literacy, are published by Writers and Readers. But Chameleon is more than just a name for an educational imprint.

It is a group of six people who work as an editorial collective in their spare time. They started in April 1974, to publish some of the titles in preparation by Penguin Education, for whom they had previously worked, when Pearson Longman closed the imprint down. Books in the 'Connexions' series were published by Oxford University Press as 'Standpoint', and Penguin Educational Project became the Education Project at Ward Lock.

The books published by Writers and Readers are Chameleon's first new titles—books developed by the group since they've been working together. (Different members of the group, which meets every 4-5 weeks, take on different projects). "We did feel quite strongly that since Penguin Education folded nobody had tried to produce a series that was highly readable and based on experience, for teachers and a wider public", explained Chameleon's Jonathan Croall, who has been working on the titles with Myra Bars.

The two books published last month bear traces of the Penguin style, both in design and content. Jonathan Croall describes them as 'first cousins' to Penguin. "We've tried to get authors with personal experience of what they are writing about. It makes the books more interesting to read, as well as reaffirming the theoretical points they are making", said Jonathan.

Ward Lock had originally agreed to publish the Chameleon titles, but they demurred at a proposed book on the causes and effects of school suspension (*Beyond Whose Control?* by Rob Gunsell). So Chameleon decided to move to a more sympathetic publisher, and Ward Lock agreed to the contract being broken.

Writers and Readers had contacts with Chameleon through Jonathan Croall, who had worked with Writers and Readers before. They see Chameleon as a free-lance editorial group who put ideas to Writers and Readers. If an idea is accepted, Chameleon take it to the manuscript stage, leaving the business of publishing to Writers

and Readers, who retain a right of veto.

But the two liaise quite closely during all stages of production. "Relations with Writers and Readers are much easier than with other publishers", commented Jonathan.

Chameleon have agreed to produce 4-6 books a year for Writers and Readers. The first four titles are *Working With Words* by Jane Mace, and *Positive Image* by Robert Jeffcoate, published on May 17th, *Fit For Work?* by Colin and Mog Ball which comes out at the end of June, and *Closely Observed Children*, a primary school 'diary' by Michael Armstrong, due in the autumn. *Beyond Whose Control?* and *Keeping It Small*, edited by John Coe, about Oxfordshire's primary schools, follow next year.

The last word goes to Jonathan Croall: "We hope they're books that people who are teaching will recognise as being of practical use as well as being strong on ideas. They're not descriptive books, they're argumentative. There's not enough of those".

**Working with Words: Literacy beyond school** by Jane Mace (Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, in association with Chameleon Books, £1.95)

**Working with Words** is first of all a detailed study of the students and tutors who have been involved in the adult literacy campaign in this country. It is also a lively and self-critical analysis of the many diverse issues surrounding the campaign, such as the links between literacy and class, the implications of recruiting and training voluntary staff for one-to-one tuition schemes, and the challenge of finding a method of measuring student progress which is appropriate to a student-centred teaching approach. Jane Mace offers a 'wider perspective' on literacy not by a statistical analysis of adult illiteracy in Britain or by the construction of an ideological model of education, but by thoughtful and persuasive generalisations based on the actual words and experiences of dozens of adults who have been failed by our education system and who have later found the voice to talk and write about themselves.

**Poems** by Patrik Fitzgerald, the first book from the Publishing unit of The Tower Hamlets Arts

Project, is a collection of poetry and prose by the 'punk' poet. The pieces of prose are particularly interesting, Fitzgerald writes touching bittersweet observations on life. When he's not being bitter he pulls out pure gems like,

**That girl went to see  
'Jesus Christ Superstar'  
My friend said to her.—  
'What was it like?'  
She said "It was alright.  
A bit boring.  
He dies in the end".**

Patrik Fitzgerald is 23, lives in Bow and is going to be very rich and famous. **Poems** is published by THAP Publishing Unit, 59 Watney St., London E1, price 75 pence.

"Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an 'army of unemployed' always exists. The worker is always in fear of losing his job.

"Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than easing the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilisation of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labour and to a crippling of the social consciousness of individuals.

"This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.

"I am convinced that there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be orientated towards social goals."

This extract comes from an extensive analysis by Einstein in the US magazine *Monthly Review* in 1949. It figures in *Writers and Readers' 'Einstein for Beginners'* by Joseph Schwartz and Michael McGuinness. Paperback price is £1.95p. The book is termed 'a great introduction to social history and physics from Babylon to the 20th Century', and 1979 is Einstein's Centenary Year!

## PAMPHLETS

**The New Technology** (Counter Information Services report) is about the ubiquitous silicon microchip, responsible for those frustrating TV games and probably mass unemployment. CIS have done a thorough job of rounding up the available information on the issue, and presenting it in an understandable fashion. It is a review of the current state of the technology, and the scramble by firms and governments to secure markets for their products. It deals with the transfer of assembly to low-wage dictatorships such as Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong, and with the half-hearted efforts by the trade unions to resist the changes which the chip has brought and will continue to bring. But its main effect is like Dicken's *Fat Boy* — it simply makes your flesh creep. The crucial question, which it does not answer, is whether a working class response based simply on a trade union desire to keep things as unchanged as possible can work, except in the short term in those sectors where workers are well organised. The answer is almost certainly no, and the creation of an alternative strategy requires urgent discussion. Available from Counter Information Services, 9 Poland Street, London W1. 75p plus 20p postage.

It is still conceivable that elections will be held in Namibia under UN supervision, perhaps late this year. *Elections in Namibia* is an account of the attempts by Western governments and the United Nations to achieve a peaceful transition to independence, South Africa's successful orchestration of an 'internal settlement', and the elections organised by South Africa in December 1978, in which they put the DTA party into power.

Published by two church organisations, this book gives little attention to the political character of the independence movement, SWAPO, beyond its origins as the "most coherent expression" of black Namibian discontent, and the DTA's portrayal of SWAPO as "a fearful, communist-terrorist organisation". The "moral responsibility of the West" is seen as having a crucial role to play.

Still, after more than a year in which some sort of settlement seemed eminent, this guide to the various issues at stake in the negotiations is both interesting and relevant to future

developments. Available for 50p from either the **British Council of Churches**, 2 Eaton Gate, London SW1, or the **Catholic Institute for International Relations**, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1.

## MAGS & PAPERS

**Labour Activist**, the paper of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, which is not unfairly seen as the Bennite group, has appeared again. First reactions are that it is unlikely to be read except by anyone except Labour activists (and the Special Branch), consisting as it does of a single sheet of print with tiny headlines. Even the *New Statesman* has acknowledged that technology now allows printed matter to contain illustrations. But the LCC are aiming at people who already immerse themselves in the world of GMCs and ward jumble sales. One feels they might strike a richer vein in people who broadly sympathise with the Labour Party, but rightly expect its meetings to have as much to do with politics as Sunday afternoon in a railwaymen's retirement home. If you do take a deep breath and plunge in, you will become aware that the Bennites are evolving a distinct strategy which isn't afraid to show itself at odds with the comfortable Labour 'left'. In a quite unprecedented fit of boar-rocking, they are proposing to have the Party Conference censure the 'left' dominated NEC for its failure to put in the Manifesto matters like freedom of information, ministerial control of civil servants, the Bullock report, and the immediate total abolition of the Lords, all passed at Conference. In other words, they want to make the NEC carry the can for allowing itself to be out-manoeuvred by Callaghan. Strong stuff? **Labour Activist** costs 10p plus 9p postage from the LCC, 9 Poland St., London W1. Annual sub. is £2 (£1 for students, pensioners, claimants).

**PICKET HARMONDSWORTH DETENTION CENTRE, HEATHROW.** Saturday 21 July. Demand an end to all immigration controls. Organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency. Contact BM RCT (1), London WC1V 6XX for further details.

**'SMASH ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS—FIGHT SUS'**. 3rd in a series of Revolutionary Communist Tendency public forums on racism. Speaker—Judith Harrison. Friday 29th June, 7.30pm, North Library, Manor Gdns, London N7. Nearest tube Archway.

## EVENTS

The Spirit of Robin Hood lives on. The Sheriff of Nottingham once again has a fight on his hands. On June 16 the trades unions in Nottingham are massing for a picket at the **Nottingham Evening Post** in Forman Street in the battle to win trade union recognition for print unions and the re-instatement of 28 journalists of the NUJ, sacked for having the

nerve to go on strike in December. The picket is being preceded by a rally, organised by the local trades council, at Forest Recreation Ground, Mansfield Road at noon. The managing director of the anti-union Evening Post is Christopher Pole-Carew, recently appointed by Her Majesty as her Sheriff of Nottingham.

Buses from London and other major centres are being organised. Call Ron Knowles, NUJ, 01-278 7916, for details.

Anti-Apartheid are organizing an emergency demonstration on the theme, *No Tory Sell-Out in Zimbabwe*, on Sat 30th June. A 10,000 turn-out is anticipated. Assemble 2.30 Smithfields Market (Faringdon tube) and march via Fleet St. and Rhodesia House to meet at 4.00pm in Trafalgar Sq. Speakers from the Patriotic Front.

Earlier on June 26th, the 20th anniversary of the ANC and Southern Africa Freedom Day, there is a one-day conference: *Southern Africa in the 1980s*, at The Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd. Speakers will include Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC and there will be an exhibition of paintings by Melissa Lipkin. Tickets 50p from: Anti-Apartheid, 89 Charlotte St, London W1. Tel. 01-580 5311.

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## CAMPAIGNS

On the night of June 27th 1969, a routine police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a popular New York gay bar, sparked a riot. For the first time, gay men fought back and drove the police out into the street. In the heady aftermath, the New York Gay Liberation Front was formed — inspiring gay people all over the world and marking the beginning of a new movement for gay liberation.

To mark the tenth anniversary of Stonewall, London will see its biggest ever celebration of gay sexuality during the 1979 Gay Pride Week. The week will include theatre, music and political meetings and will culminate in a Grand Carnival. Full details in *Gay News* and *Time Out*.

**Grand Carnival:** Saturday 30th June. Floats, bands, costumes, balloons and fun! Assemble 1pm, Temple Place, Temple Embankment, London EC4 (nearest stations, Temple and Embankment). Carnival to Hyde Park.

**Film Festival:** The Scala Cinema in conjunction with the Gay Pride Week Committee will present seven days of gay movies from Saturday 23rd to Friday 29th June.

**10 Years of Gay Liberation:** A photographic exhibition of the past ten years as recorded by gay photographers. Tuesday 26th - Saturday 30th June at Action Space Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street, London WC1. Admission free.

**Just Good Friends:** Tom Robinson in concert featuring largely unrecorded material. 10.30pm at the Collegiate Theatre, Gordon Street, London WC1. Monday 25th-Saturday 29th June. Admission £2/£2.50 (£1 off for people with dole cards).

**The Dear Love of Comrades:** Another opportunity to see Gay Sweatshop's best yet play about the life of Edward Carpenter (see Back Pages, *Leveller* 26) by Noel Grieg and Drew Griffiths. 7.15pm at Oval House, 52 Kennington Oval, London SE11; Friday 22nd & Saturday 23rd June. Admission 90p.

For more information about Gay Pride Week, or to arrange free crash pads in London phone **Gay Switchboard** on 01-837 7324.

A new organisation hoping to bring together people involved in the arts in a campaign against racism and fascism has been set-up. **Art Against Racism and Fascism** hopes to be, 'a national organisation that will provide a forum for all those working in the arts, amateur and professional, to relate their skills practically to the campaign being waged by all the anti-racist, and anti-fascist bodies throughout the country'.

For further information contact AARF, Box 151, London WC2.

**Friends of Astrid Proll**, with the assistance of Liberation Films, have produced a half hour video tape dealing with the events surrounding the Astrid Proll cases as well as some of the issues behind it.

The tape provides a full account of the Astrid Proll case — her initial arrest and trial in Germany, her efforts to start a new life here in Britain and the struggle to stop her deportation to Germany.

F.A.P. have tried to relate the Astrid Proll case to the reasons behind the growth in anti-terrorist legislation throughout Europe and in particular, Britain's role in Northern Ireland and the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Although somewhat strident in tone and style, nonetheless the tape is both interesting and useful. It is being distributed by Liberation Films (01-450 7855) and is available on Sony 1/2" high density open reel or Sony 3/4" U-matic cassette. Hire charge — £5.00. Liberation Films can advise as to the availability of equipment and may assist with their own if necessary.

The Minority Press Group, formed last year with a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation, aims to investigate the rise of alternative and community newspapers over the past few years.

The group consists of journalist Crispin Aubrey, Charles Landry of PDC, and academics James Curran, Allan Pond and Dave Morley, and they write, "We think the development of community papers has been important because they have played a significant role in widening access to groups normally excluded from the press and broadcasting". They're trying to find out which factors have affected the development of the alternative press, so that the problems the papers face can be overcome. "The best way for this to be done", they say, "is for us all to pool our experiences". The Minority Papers Group is at 9, Poland Street, London W1.

## BACK PAGES

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



