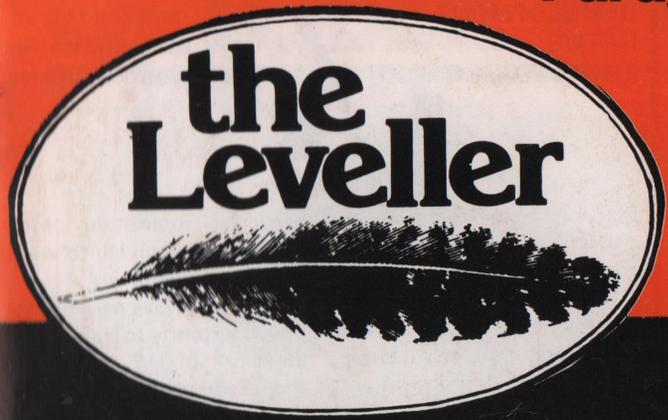


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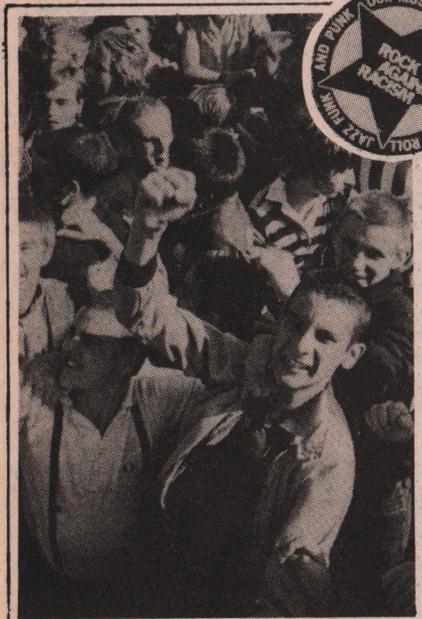
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OCTOBER 1979

INSIDE:



There's been Blue Collar and FIST, now there's Norma Rae. So what's with this Tinsel-town thing on trades unions?



NAZI ROCK: How the British Movement and the NF are kicking their way into rock music, and what's being done about it? Pages 18-19

Why Pedro and his chums are in Latin America. Pages 22-23.

We'd like to apologise for the lack of caption heading to the review of Walter Benjamin's *One Way Street* in *Leveller* 30. The book is published, like other Benjamin material, by New Left Books.

The reviewer was Paul Tickell, who'd like to point out that the article, especially in the opening paragraphs, was edited in such a way as to misrepresent his argument.



"No offence meant Pedro, only your clothes always seem strange."



Andy Arnold

- 4-5 Letters — don't delay, write today
- 6 Fear and loathing at the Crass benefit
- 7-8 Persons Unknown: This year's big political trial
- 9 Jury Rigging: Treating a scandal with contempt
- 10 Inside Harmondsworth Detention Centre
- 11 State Racism now official policy
- 12 Plastic passports for the future
- 13 Prose-poem by Edward Upward and Steve Bell on education
- 14-15 TUC and the news media: The debate rages on
- 16 Black voices from the Metro youth club
- 17 News shorts
- 18-19 Nazi rock: The battle for the stage
- 20 Australia: Aborigines hit back
- 21 Guyana: Walter Rodney interview
- 22-23 Paraguay: You wouldn't believe what goes on here
- 24-25 Lotta Continua: The party's over but the paper goes on
- 27 Feminist films at Edinburgh
- 28-29 The Hollywood movie machine chews up the US trade unions
- 30 Revolt into sub cultures
- 31-33 Red Boxes and Back Pages

See page 34 for special subscription offer and marvellous new 'jury-rigging' badge details.

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Letters

Nitpicking

I THINK I am right in believing that included with the article about Clyde shipyards (Leveller 30) is a general shot of what was Swan Hunter's yard at Wallsend.

It's nitpicking, I know, but possibly more irritating to a shipyard worker in one of the areas concerned.
Stephen Gregory
Milton Keynes

Masturbation not an issue

I WAS SOMEWHAT dismayed by Brian Deer's article on transsexuality, both as a whole and in those sections which related to myself and my Oxfordian vagueness: I was deeply hurt by the cover which was a degrading insult to transsexuals, who have quite enough to put up with already, thank you.

Brian must of course be the judge of what he considers relevant — but I must protest at his dealing with transsexuality less as an experience possessed by transsexuals than as a condition theorised about by doctors, social workers and feminists. What is the *Leveller* doing with so repressively tolerant a liberal approach as one which assumes that experts should decide what my sexuality is and make me conform to it?

To get anywhere, even by paying, with their medical needs, transsexuals have to jump through hoops at least as complicated as women have to go through to get abortions; much of what is seen as reactionary stereotyped behaviour by transsexuals has to do with the necessity of complying with the prejudices of doctors, who can get amazingly stropky over issues as minor as a male-to-female transsexual's wearing jeans.

I stressed to Brian the importance of making clear how deeply oppressed transsexuals are. The NHS service for transsexuals is limited and private medicine is expensive. Jobs are hard to come by and keep — and we often get our education screwed up by internal stress and external bullying. Even without breaking the law consciously, 'breach of the peace' charges put us at risk of bigoted members of the public and overzealous policemen. In jail, transsexuals are made to revert to their sex of birth and denied continuation of hormone treatment. Post-operative transsexuals are not allowed to marry. We are continually subject to casual

abuse from strangers, and often to threats, violence and rape. Brian may have considered these issues less important than my passing references to masturbation; but perhaps not everyone shares the trivial priorities of the aspiring Polly Toynbee of the sexual Left.

It is a shame that the anonymous feminist quoted in the accompanying story considers me a Thing and an enemy — she is at worst my comrade, at best my sister. The exact theology of the extent to which pre- or post-operative transsexuals are to be allowed to work inside the women's movement is perhaps a side-issue. Those of us who see ourselves primarily as transsexuals working for transsexuals find it more important to work with women on those practical issues — employment, rape, control of medical technology — where our interests largely coincide.

Ros St. John
London E8.

Essence of transsexualism *

FULL MARKS for opening the debate but, speaking as one fairly openly practising transvestite, don't underestimate the degree of self-doubt and confusion that such a 'harmless activity' can cause for the practitioner. This problem with identifying oneself is one reason for the 'anti-gay/female stereotyping/dual personae' that often develops. One of the problems for TVs and TSs is that they only have before them ridiculous drag models from the media to relate to, and thanks to the almost complete absence of any serious discussion on the subject there is a tendency to believe that you must be the only one in the whole world like that. Caught in isolation that way and lacking any supportive group with an alternative ideology TVs and TS's are perfect victims.

Quite often transvestites have doubts about whether they might be gay. Since they are usually straight the response can be fear (read uncertainty) towards what they might become — gays. Add to this the difficulties involved in public appearances unless passing as 'perfect' women (one reason for the elaborate dressing up) and the mistaken but widespread idea that gays wear skirts and carry handbags; and it is clear that transvestites can feel in the front line of ridicule or abuse. 'Coming out if you're gay usually involves a badge or telling someone; once known and accepted it can almost be overlooked, but there's no hiding the skirt you might be wearing in public.

The basic problem is that hidden dual personality. 'Coming out' to friends and acquaintances helps, but beyond that there is the barrier of straight society, sometimes reinforced by the attitudes of socialists and women's movements.

Yes, transvestites do ape female stereotypes (and, incidentally, can share many of the feelings and histories of transsexuals — don't stereotype us Doctor Stoller!) but they can be strongly pro gay and women's rights if you tolerate them and allow them to declare themselves.

Transvestites get off on several things; fetishism, a rejection of male chauvinism (because this, too, is a difficult role) and a strong identification with women — in the psychological and physical sense as well as in dress, appearance, behaviour. The hidden cock out of the nickers that you mention is a game that may come into it, but attitudes are often ambivalent, and the same person may wish to hide her penis under her clothing as well and appear female. Similarly transsexuals have, I suspect, quite an ambivalent attitude towards their own gender.

In some ways the phenomenon aces the narcissism that we expect from the traditional woman's role — the practitioner wishes to make an object of himself to himself. Perhaps because of his inadequacy to fulfill the traditional male role and make advances to women he falls back on himself and creates two opposite sexual identities within himself. This gives him strength and makes him independent of normal sexual mores.

But TVs and TSs have many causes in common. They may be very impressed by the apparently dominant role of women in certain situations. Obviously Stoller investigates the mother fixation though I don't agree that early cross-dressing need be the root cause. My own experience suggests that it is the implied or stated threat of castration that goes with being a 'mummy's boy' that causes the 'perverse' reaction of transvestites in adolescence. Cocking a snook at the family if you like. Transsexuals accept this castration demand and make a virtue of taking it to its logical conclusion.

But the causes need not all be deeply buried in earliest childhood. At primary school he may notice the girls' more rapid, enviable development of strength and intelligence; he may find their attitudes less threatening or violent. Being a 'man' is not just a question of strength, it is much more a matter of inner conviction. If your identity is less certain, or if you prefer a role which seems more humane, more warm, exuberant or more appreciative

of beauty, you may envy a notional version of girls.

Another image of women that sometimes appears powerful to adolescents is the girl whose sexy clothes allow her to dominate men, and she seems to have the advantage that ultimately she need not make the advances and need not risk rejection.

Undoubtedly TVs and TSs are into sextyping and, to be honest, there is a certain willing bondage involved. But until the entire fabric of thought is turned inside out I suggest that this 'distasteful' or reactionary behaviour is similar to punk: it aims to subvert using their own weapons. Also I suggest that the more TVs TSs come out of the closet the less sexist they are likely to become.

I think the phenomenon is primarily a rejection of traditional maleness and a search for something in between — a middle role. It is possible, with supportive groups, to grow out of the aggressive male pornography side, but that wouldn't mean that TSs or TVs would disappear; feelings at that level cannot be 're-educated away', but it would be possible, I think, for men who feel that they are women to identify with more liberated versions of the opposite sex.

Les Tate

Enough enemies as it is

BRIAN DEER on transsexuals would be unworthy journalism by any standards, but in a socialist journal it really is a disgrace.

Deer seems unaware of the existence or influence of many of the major achievements of the gay and women's movements, in exploring the political origins of sexuality, and opts for a clumsy biological determinism.

His examinations, such as they are, of the medical conventional wisdom on the subject is confined almost entirely to one writer, and he doesn't attempt to place that view in any wider context.

The tone of the article is often snide, and the light humour is often at the expense of transsexuals themselves. One boggles at the *Leveller* publishing this, and then, to top it all, producing a cover and 'illustrations' that are about as insulting as can be imagined!

Roland Jeffery
London SW9

Don't knock Hull News *

FOR A Trades Council to attempt such a venture is in itself remarkable. Why Tim thinks *Hull News* won't open up new ideas is beyond the comprehension of local lefties who believe their newspaper is the best thing since sliced bread.

Letters

* Letters marked with an asterisk have been shortened.

All right — so the *Hull News* will have an editor: try producing *The Leveller* every week without a journalist who knows his stuff!

The editor of *Hull News* hasn't yet been elected by the Trades Council, but those in the know say the newspaper won't cop out on anything. Tim was wrong about the newspaper being set up "with plenty of Trade Union money..." It's been set up by a handful of energetic individuals and is now appealing to Trade Unionists for money.

I seem to remember *The Leveller* doing much the same thing a few years back.

The full-time staff Tim remarks on were all formerly unemployed. As there is workers' control of the Newspaper Management Committee of Hull News they set their own wages.

Messages of support, requests for more information, but above all money to: *Hull News*, Corporation Chambers, Trinity Horse Lane, Hull.

Graham Smith
Hull

* More letters on the labour press on pages 14-15.

Dope debate rages on *

SALLY WILSON'S recent article (*Leveller 27, Dope: Getting high can damage other people's lives*) gives the reader the impression that the export of marijuana has had a net negative effect on the campesinos and other poor people in Colombia.

Until the marijuana trade

marshroomed, campesinos were locked into a life of total economic subjugation. Virtually all the commercial agricultural land was owned by the old autocratic families, who kept the wages artificially low through monopolistic practices. The campesino's life was a cycle of subsistence and enforced poverty based on the vagaries of the international commodities markets.

Most marijuana is grown in areas of the country that were devoid of industry or commercial agriculture. Subsistence farming was chancey at best, and 20th century technology was a fantasy. Marijuana has changed all that. The cultivation and export of marijuana has injected approximately \$35,000,000,000 over a ten year period, into an area of Colombia where the typical resident had previously relied on barter as a means of trade. The tremendous profits realised on the marijuana trade pass down to the campesino more directly than any other commodity, and the actual (rather than government-reported) standard of living has become the highest in the country.

In addition, many campesinos have become wealthy and crossed the class and political barrier. Although the new wealth is inequitably distributed, the new 'bosses' seem to be much more sympathetic to the plight of the campesino than any of the old autocratic families ever were.

By necessity, most dope is grown in large fields (not interspersed with other crops) in remote, largely underpopulated

areas. The Colombian government's concern and subsequent military actions are based on fear of 'uppity' campesinos and the new moneyed class. If anything, government tactics have alienated and politicised the population, which views the government policies as interfering with their opportunity to live a decent life.

Ms. Wilson claims that marijuana has caused a tremendous inflation in Colombia. But before marijuana became a major export the country had a severe inflation rate. It is a direct result of Colombia's dependence on coffee and cotton for its foreign exchange. These commodities have an unstable market value and contribute to the roller-coaster cycle of the country's economy. Conversely, the price of marijuana has been rising steadily. Quoted in New York City retail 1 lb. prices, the value has risen from \$175 in 1967 to \$450 in July 1979. This has more than kept pace with the decline of the dollar, and has had a stabilising effect on Colombia's economy.

Ed Rosenthal
PO Box 477

San Francisco, CA 94101.

A-Z controversy

YOUR CORRESPONDENT 'MacHenry the Navigator' who was irritated by our failure to connect with the Number 9 bus after the nursery demonstration at the Hayward Gallery is obviously a clear-headed character who would be a great asset to anyone thinking of transporting small children about London. The best alternative it strikes me would be for much better council provision of mini-buses.

But I was not being completely literal in describing the journey. I wanted to try and communicate how travel with small children transforms the

whole way you feel physically about urban space. This seems to me one important indication of how we might imagine the different design of communities under socialism.

The account of the Greenwich Women's Voice parties for children and the Woodcraft Folk were heartening. I'm sure there must be a lot more things like this? It would be good to hear about them in socialist papers.

I wouldn't expect that more explicitly socialist children's groups would get any outside help any more than other socialist organisations do. They would obviously be on a quite different basis than non-political organisations like Woodcraft or Flysheet Camps.

But I have been very struck by the way in which people who were in Socialist Sunday Schools remember them so intensely all their lives. They were pretty widespread nationally at one time. For instance, there were about 30 Independent Labour Party groups as well as a few anarchist and Social Democratic Federation (Marxist) ones in Glasgow alone at the end of the 1st World War. In Glasgow they were helped by the Socialist Teachers in which John Maclean was involved. Some socialists evidently didn't like being asked things they didn't know the answers to but he was very good about this.

I feel uncertain what children nowadays would like. But it still feels like a big gap in the socialist movement.

Sheila Rowbotham
London

SPG no joke

KEVIN HALPIN, secretary of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and Communist Party member, was 'scathing' about the decision of delegates to the Rank and File 'Defend Our Unions' conference to call for a public inquiry into the killing of Blair Peach, and the disbandment of the SPG (*Leveller 29*). He wondered what these issues had to do with the 'labour movement'.

I note from reports of this week's TUC that on Monday Conference delegates voted unanimously for the disbanding of the SPG, and on Tuesday the chairperson of the TUC Equal Rights Committee, in presenting his report, described the refusal of the government to hold a public inquiry into Blair Peach's death after the Southall demonstration as 'one of the most deplorable issues ever to come before the nation.'

Any comments, Comrade Halpin?

Nigel Currie
S.C.P.S. member
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CRASS 'heavy mob' invade

PRE-TRIAL BENEFIT

THE DANGER OF the new fascist tactic of breaking up rock concerts (see centrespread) was vividly illustrated at a benefit for *Persons Unknown* at London's *Conway Hall* on September 8. At least four people were taken to hospital and many others were hurt in fights and scuffles that broke out between fascists, fans and a group of heavies claiming to be from the SWP. When police had eventually cleared the hall it was left a blood-stained mess of broken glasses and bottles. Ironically, and sadly, one of the worst-injured victims was *Vince Stevenson*, a defendant in the forthcoming 'conspiracy' case. He was taken to hospital with a badly-cut head.

The gig featured *Crass*, *Poison Girls* and *The Rondos*. It had been widely publicised and by nine o'clock there were about 500 people in Conway Hall. The atmosphere was repressive and brooding, strangely quiet too for a rock gig as though the punters knew something was going to happen. There was no security at the door and the organisers had abandoned any thought of taking money.

Perhaps 30 or 40 identifiably National Front or British movement youths marauded through the audience, some of them wearing NF tee shirts, swastikas and, in one noticeable case, an Ulster Volunteer Force badge. The fascists seemed to move in organised groups, congregating in the bar, the foyer and the body of the hall. Though it was difficult to tell who was who, regular Crass fans noted that there were far more fascists than at previous gigs.

The violence started early with the fascist groups picking on people. In one incident a black youth was surrounded and beaten and kicked until he ran out of the hall. And a group of skinheads took over the men's toilets and beat up unsuspecting visitors.

One of the *Persons' Unknown* organisers remarked that there were rumours all around the audience that the British Movement were threatening to stop Crass playing. The police were called to the hall at about nine to investigate complaints about noise but left after the organisers assured them they could handle the situation. As they left one of the fascist youth followed

them out to make sure they'd gone.

Shortly after, as *Poison Girls* came to the end of their set, the atmosphere deteriorated noticeably: two of the organisers left the hall, others were drinking in a nearby pub. There was some discussion amongst those who were left as to what should be done, if anything. They apparently felt that the fascists were in such a minority that the rest of the audience would either ignore them or deal with them. Both because of their own political stance and because they didn't want to upset the fans, they decided to carry on and not to call on the police for help.

The real violence started at about ten with a confusing series of incidents. In one, a youth said by one witness to be a 'real nutter' ran into the hall and shouted 'come and get me' at a group of skins. After a shouting match they all went for him. Scuffles broke out in the darkened body of the hall, bottles and cans were thrown and a number of people hurt.

In a separate incident, which started at the door, eye-witnesses described a group of between ten and fifteen youths claiming to be SWP members, some of whom were wearing RAR badges. Other witnesses said they thought they were a football gang. We do not know if they were SWP members, presumably thinking they were breaking up a fascist gig, or if they were fascists masquerading as the SWP. All were agreed that they were fairly drunk: 'They came in shouting 'fuck the Front' and there was bother at the door. Someone hit a kid wearing a union jack badge and then they all piled in on him.'

Another witness said: 'The SWP gave a union jack guy a right beating but he was nothing to do with the British Movement. One of them had a knife out. They said they were the SWP — they weren't skins or punks, they looked fairly ordinary. Their leader 'was Scots.' Having dealt with the youth this group then marauded into the hall and joined the general melee.

(Party members contacted later said there would be an internal enquiry into the evening's events.)

By this time some of the fans were running away from the hall

while others waiting outside ran in to join the melee. By the time the police arrived there had been a number of injuries, at least four of them requiring hospital treatment for cut heads or hands. The floor of the Hall and corridors covered with broken glass and there were at least six separate pools of blood.

Crass have had trouble on three or four previous occasions — most noticeably on a benefit gig last July in *Ealing*, broken up by fascist youths. Their stage act is harsh and striking, their appearance bizarre. The *Leveller* first came across them last year when they did a benefit for us in Manchester: performing beneath a distinctive symbol and all in black, they alarmed our student promoter with their apparently fascist overtones. They are, in fact, a very committed anarchist band who have chosen a potentially dangerous road.

Interviewed for the April *Leveller* they said that their 'whole appearance is designed to be a barrage of contradictions. We try to challenge people on every ground we can.

Over the summer their distinctive symbol has been turning up on leather jackets, usually next to *UK Subs* or *Siouxsie* graffiti and *CND* badges; they have attracted a large following amongst the most committed punks and skins. Interviewed immediately after the hall had been cleared, Crass' Penny told the *Leveller* that he 'didn't think they did go crazy. We have to be careful not to be hysterical. This gig is mild in comparison to a football match. It's not a calamity, it's just a fuck up.'

Penny said he didn't want to sound mystical, but it was a full moon that night. He also said that they've got used to rumours of BM attacks on them but that he thought the violence

had not been particularly organised. 'Every time we play we're told that the Fuhrer has brought out his rocket ships. What the fuck do you do?'

And he went on to blame the *ANL* and *RAR* for polarising music audiences: 'two years ago you could go the Roxy and dance with a punk, a black, a man, nobody cared what you did. But *RAR* developed, capitalised on punk and used up all the energy. They created a gap where there wasn't one before. There isn't a war going on, it's frustration.'

While the blame for the violence and successful stopping of the gig lies with those who carried it out, the behaviour of the organisers leaves much to be desired. When the event is, by its nature, likely to be chaotic (and the Conway Hall is a labyrinthine paradise) and the band or organisers likely to attract violence, the organisers have an obligation to the audience to make sure it's properly handled. That means the door has to be firmly controlled and obvious troublemakers kept out. Most supporters would understand the necessity for a personal search — adopted by the *Rock Against Sexism* gig last month — and an effective and visible stewarding system with enough people to damp down any trouble before it starts should be adopted and practiced before the doors even open. And even, bizarre though it may seem at a benefit for anarchists about to go to trial on conspiracy charges, some sort of liaison with the police may have to be established.

None of this was in evidence at the Conway Hall and by the time the real violence got under way there appeared to be no organisation at all. If the left is to continue to promote successful gigs free from interference an efficient stewarding system may be the price we have to pay.

Poison Girls say:

Statement issued by *Poison Girls* the day after the Conway Hall... 'Events like last night where large groups of young people congregate to share the energy of rock music are being increasingly manipulated by outside agents who wish to colonise that energy and see the audiences as young fresh blood to turn into soldiers for various causes — outside agents who are often the doddering relics of past battles like the dusty, shadowy leaders of the National Front and the British Movement, like the weary, jaded lefties left over from the failures of the 60s.

'Right wing, left wing, people with old and new ambitions for power and control. The same old sad, bloody story. *Poison Girls* want nothing to do with these games. We are not there to participate in or stimulate gang warfare.

We are not after anyone's blood. We don't want a following which can be manipulated by us or anyone else.

'The only way out of this shit is for people to resist these outside agents. These agents are the system, no matter what they say. *British Movement*, *Rock against Racism*, *National Front*, *SWP*, all support the system of gang warfare while pretending to oppose it.

'The system hurts us all.
The system hurts us all.
The system makes us hurt each other
So the system hurts us all.'

'The system is gang warfare and the system is the biggest gang. The system always wins if you play that game.'

Persons Unknown trial 18 months in the waiting

Was Britain really threatened early last year with an outbreak of terrorist violence organised by a local equivalent of the *Red Army Fraction* or the *Red Brigades*? And was police action so effective that the conspiracy was nipped in the bud before any damage could be done? Those are the two main questions the carefully-selected members of the jury will have to ask themselves when the 'Persons Unknown' case opens this month at the Old Bailey. *David Clark* sets the scene.

Unlikely though the anarchist terrorist conspiracy theory seems in the light of the publicly-available evidence, it was apparent from the very first that the police were determined to make that version of events seem plausible by employing every device available to them.

The story started 16 months ago when *Ronan Bennett* and *Iris Mills*, two young anarchists, were arrested in a Bayswater London flat. Although the initial police enquiry on Wednesday 24 May was ostensibly about some missing medical cards, six police officers were involved, two of them from the Special Branch. After a search of the flat revealed anarchist literature and two cans of sodium chlorate weedkiller, the couple were held incommunicado at Paddington Green police station.

Their questioning was apparently desultory and in complete contrast to the kind of stories being fed to the press. *John Weeks* of the *Daily Telegraph* set the standard with a prominent front-page story headed 'Bomb material seized in hunt for anarchists.' Weeks works out of Scotland Yard's press bureau and is well-placed to record police thinking. He told his readers that the Anti-Terrorist Squad was investigating the activities of what could be an important anarchist cell operating from Britain... For several months the anti-terrorist squad has been investigating the activities of an anarchist group which was formed on the lines of the *Angry Brigade*. The group has no name and is a loose organisation of anarchists who help various causes.

He followed up this report in the next day's *Telegraph* with the information that the police were investigating a number of robberies which may have been used to finance the activities of an anarchist cell operating in Britain. It was an accurate assessment of the way the police then played the case.

The general tone of Weeks' reporting was closely mirrored by most of the popular press and on the Friday night BBC News

Broadcast a special announcement warning the public not to go near a Fiat. (The car, which belonged to *Mills* and *Bennett*, had been lent to a friend and was subsequently recovered after it had been crashed over a cliff-top and into the sea in Wales. Forensic tests on the wreck revealed nothing of interest: the friend had heard the announcement and apparently panicked.)

On the Friday, *Mills* and *Bennett* were charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions' and allowed to see a lawyer. The next morning they were brought before the *Marylebone Magistrates' Court*. *Bennett* was handcuffed but, apart from that, there were no security precautions in the court. At that stage Detective Superintendent *Peter Bradbury*, an ambitious and fast-rising officer, suggested that it would be

a further two months before the case was ready for committal.

Bradbury seems to have been the initiator of the 'terrorist conspiracy' theory. Sources inside the *ATS* say that he was convinced that he was dealing with a British version of *Baader Meinhof* and, having got *Mills* and *Bennett*, he then set out to prove that that was indeed what he'd got. Other members of the *ATS* — which had recently been cut back to 30 from a high 220 — were dubious about the *Baader Meinhof* comparison.

Over the next week *Mills* and *Bennett* were remanded in custody while police raided a number of anarchist homes; on 2 June they arrested *Dafydd Ladd* in north London. At the next remand hearing *Ladd* appeared with *Mills* and *Bennett*, all three being charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions.' *Bradbury* applied for the remands to be transferred to *Lambeth Magistrates' Court* because of the security risk at *Marylebone* and, objecting to bail for *Ladd*, uttered the classic phrase which has set the tone of the whole case since: 'Ladd,' he said, 'is one of a group of idealistic persons who believe that they should take positive steps to overthrow society. There are others still at large with whom they could associate and make efforts to carry out their intentions.' There was laughter from the public gallery.

All three defendants were well-known in the anarchist movement, particularly by those around the *Black Flag* magazine. A support group, calling itself 'Persons Unknown' after the

wording of the charge, was formed.

By the next Tuesday the whole tone had changed: the defendants appeared at *Lambeth Magistrates' court* and the police had laid on a massive security exercise. All the defendants were handcuffed, armed police patrolled the rooftops, everyone going into court was searched. Police restricted lawyers' access to their clients (in a later incident one lawyer's confidential papers were searched and attempted to keep out certain reporters).

The three defendants were all held as top security Category A prisoners in *Brixton*, leading to a campaign to get *Iris Mills* out of her intolerable situation as the only woman in an all-male prison. The defendants repeatedly protested about their conditions but a series of magistrates, presumably as impressed by all the security as they were meant to be, refused to order any change in their conditions.

Meanwhile, the police conducted a series of raids on anarchist homes — *Peoples' News Service* estimated that there had been about 30 raids — and on 15 June *Stewart Carr* was arrested. The news wasn't made public until a week later but *Bradbury* had introduced the idea in court earlier of unspecified firearms and robbery charges, suggesting to *Ladd*, *Mills* and *Bennett*'s obvious bemusement that they were associated with four robberies in which 10 firearms had been stolen.

Carr appeared in court with the other three on 28 June, charged with conspiracy to cause ex-



Ronan Bennett and Iris Mills, a moment of relaxation pre-trial.

Continued from previous page

plosions. He had lived in the same house as them earlier in the year but was arrested in Gillingham, Kent. During his enforced custody he made a statement — unlike the other three — and two more arrests followed. On 4 July Vince Stevenson, who works at Rising Free bookshop, a London left-wing bookshop, was arrested on the way to a support group meeting. He too was held incommunicado. It was beginning to look as though there really was what Rising Free called a 'police attack on the London anarchist/libertarian movement.'

Faced with growing disbelief about the 'conspiracy' — there had, after all, been no explosions — Bradbury had claimed that it hadn't really got under way because the police had moved in fast and 'nipped it in the bud.' On 7 July he had a sensational windfall. Police arrested Trevor Dawton, a 20 year old student and associate of Rising Free. In an Islington London flat he shared with Stevenson, the police found a holdall containing six guns and a thousand rounds of ammunition.

Now there were six people in the dock, all charged with conspiracy to cause explosions: before he was bundled out, Trevor Dawton made a speech to the public gallery protesting about Iris Mills' detention in solitary confinement. Next week all the defendants protested about her conditions, Vince Stevenson taking a smacking from a zealous officer in the process.

At the end of July more charges were added. Mills and Bennett were charged with dishonestly handling an air pistol; Carr with six robberies; Stevenson and Dawton with dishonestly handling stolen weapons and with possession of firearms and ammunition without a licence; Ladd with possession of a firearm without a licence.

The arrests were complete and the summer spent in hopeless appeals for bail while the police set about assembling their case with the Director of Public Prosecutions. In September, after other members of the support committee had been arrested over some small unpaid fine and then released, the police set up a huge series of identity parades — at first refusing to

provide defence lawyers with lists of names of witnesses and what they were supposed to have seen. This was overruled after appeals to the DPP.

On 28 September, Trevor Dawton was granted bail on stringent conditions, the first of the six to be released. Iris Mills, meanwhile remained in solitary confinement in Brixton: denied privacy she was expected to make out a request for even the most menial items and was subject to continual harassment. In a letter to the support committee, Home Secretary Merlyn Rees argued that it was necessary in the interests of security. On 24 October Peter Cadogan, secretary of the South Place Ethical Society and Mills' employer at Conway Hall, London, issued a pamphlet on 'The Case of Iris Mills — Imprisoned Without Trial Since May 24.'

Two days later Iris Mills was released on £10,000 bail despite strenuous police objections that she would attempt to escape or interfere with witnesses. Slowly over the next few months all the defendants, with the exception of Carr, trickled out on bail. Ladd's bail was obstructed by the police even after he'd been granted it by the magistrates and Bennett only got his this August after six attempts and nearly 15 months in prison.

At the end of November, when the magistrate had taken to asking when the committal would be ready, the police were forced to drop the conspiracy to cause

explosions charge when even Labour Attorney General Sam Silkin couldn't see that there was enough evidence to make it stand up in open court. All the defendants were charged with 'conspiracy to rob' instead.

Eventually, on a bitterly cold morning four days before Christmas, the prosecution spelt out its case at committal proceedings. The six are self-confessed anarchists, said Barry McGill from the DPP: 'Our case is that they and others not arrested and now believed to be abroad had the objective of bringing about a radical change in society. They needed cash for accommodation and false identity. They needed firearms. The prosecution case is that they set about this by armed robberies against shops and betting offices, and attacks on private houses.'

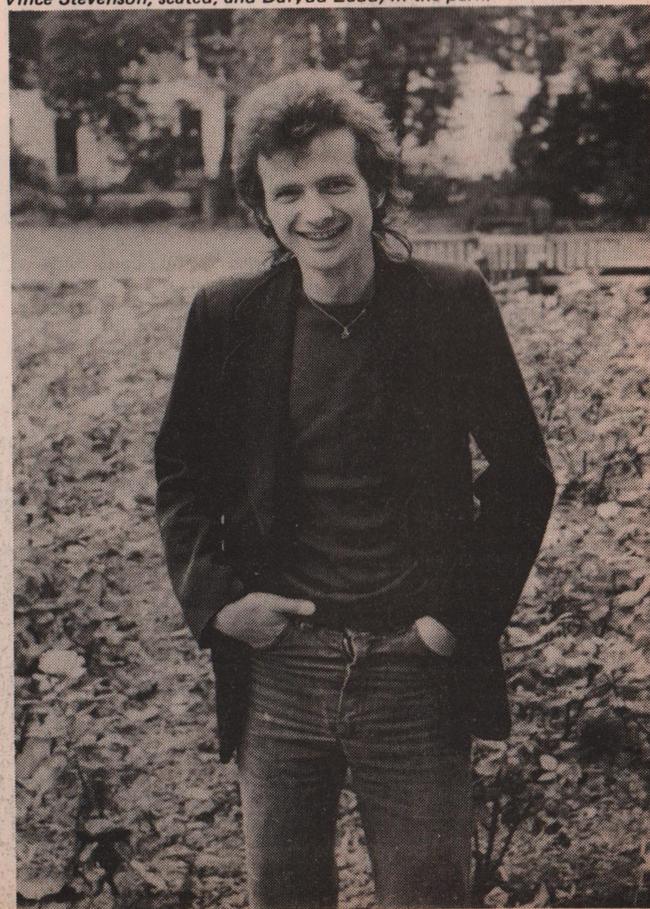
It will have been nine months between the committal and the start of the trial. During that time some of the charges have been dropped and a new obscure 'conspiracy to defraud' charge has been added. All the robbery charges against Stewart Carr have been dropped.

But while the nature of the case has changed radically since the defendants were first arrested, the police approach doesn't seem to have changed at all. They still, apparently, believe that they stopped an anarchist conspiracy and saved authority, sorry society, from overthrow. Whether the jury will choose to believe this version of events remains to be seen.

Vince Stevenson, seated, and Dafydd Ladd, in the park.



David Clark



Jury rigging

Contempt for justice

On August 10 Judge Brian Gibbens, QC, sitting in chambers, gave both prosecution and defence permission to vet the jury. The application was made by the prosecution, who argued that the case fitted within the guidelines that where the safeguards of the 1974 Juries Act — which enshrines the basic principle that juries must be randomly selected unless the Act disqualifies them — are insufficient, then vetting may take place. They are not specific on the exceptional circumstances but include cases where 'strong political motives' are involved. If the police offer 'strong reason for believing that a juror . . . might be influenced in arriving at a verdict by extreme political convictions', the prosecution can have them removed from the panel.

To check potential juror's politics, the prosecution have access to information contained in Special Branch records, CID and the Criminal Records Office. Since there is no formal definition of 'extreme political convictions' and the Special Branch are known to collect and computerise information on hundreds of thousands of people involved in politics, it will be the prosecution who will define 'political extremism.'

By making their application in the privacy of the judge's chambers, the prosecution ensure that there can be no public discussion of their reasons for entering this dangerous area. Indeed, if the news hadn't leaked to the press five days later nobody outside the room would have known what is happening.

Fortunately we have some idea of what happened in the judge's chambers. Prosecuting counsel Michael Worsley outlined the prosecution case, stressing that 'the defendants were part of a band of self-confessed anarchists intent on disrupting the order of society in this country and elsewhere — Germany for example — by violent means such as kidnapping, shootings and explosions. There is a large amount of documentary evidence found on some defendants to prove that they intended to blow up nuclear power stations and kidnap members of the Royal Family.'

This, of course, was strong stuff and far more than had been made publicly available at the committal proceedings. And the defence — which, presumably, has perfectly good answers to the allegations — has no opportunity to challenge the prosecution version for a judge who has no real idea of what the facts are.

Worsley went on to outline the alleged robberies, stated as a fact that Bennett was a former

member of the Official IRA and said they would produce letters from him to Mills written from Long Kesh. The prosecution have consistently 'played the Irish card' — particularly in opposing bail for Bennett. Yet the IRA membership allegation was made in an earlier trial concerning Bennett and was officially withdrawn. Bennett was found not guilty on appeal on the earlier matter, hence his letters from Long Kesh are those of a prisoner convicted wrongly, not an Irish terrorist. And none of the current charges have anything whatsoever to do with Ireland. The judge of course has no means of knowing this.

Worsley stressed that he brought these matters up because he thought it 'vital to secure that any jury empanelled is independent-minded . . . we must be careful, therefore, for example, that no members of the jury have relatives in Long Kesh . . . a substantial proportion of the male population of London have criminal records. And the number of persons with connections through close relatives with criminals or other undesirable elements is wider still . . . Were there to be one, two or three jurors who have connections with violent organisations, they might be more open to pressure.'

What the DPP is demonstrating here is an absolute contempt for the intelligence and perception of the public who will form the jury and in whose name the trial is being carried out. But it is a contempt shared by Judge Gibbens who, in giving his permission for the vetting to take place, emphasised that he could only speak so freely because he was behind closed doors. Then he said that it would be necessary if, 'for example, the jury panel came from Kilburn where there is a high content of Irish people and most of them go round to pubs collecting money for the IRA,

'Explosive substances' alleged earlier composed sugar and flour....



which is a proscribed organisation.'

In granting the defence the same vetting rights the judge simply compounds the dangers. While the prosecution has access to far greater information, in approving of private investigators making enquiries about peoples' politics Judge Gibbens has widened the invasion of privacy and further breached the principle of random selection.

We have no idea of the sorts of information available to the police in the current case but we do know that, for the first time since vetting was introduced, they're going to use the complete range of Criminal Records Office, Special Branch files and local CID files. It's reported that both the SB files and the local CID are full of gossip, unprovable police hunches and hypotheses. So one dangerous effect of the vetting will be to ensure that people who are well-informed, active in politics or who have simply aroused the suspicions of some local constable will be excluded from the jury. (It is not too far fetched, for example, to assume that our own subscription list is monitored from time to time). And by excluding a certain kind of person from the jury the sort of informed insight that they could provide is lacking from the decision-making process.

The real dangers were spelled out—once again behind closed doors—on Monday September 10 when Judge Gibbens held another session in chambers at the Old Bailey. The formal reason for the hearing was an application by the Court Administrator for the judge to clarify the legal aid position on vetting the jury.

(In his earlier decision, Gibbens had said that the defence could have their costs for vetting in line with the Silkin guidelines. The

defence didn't want any vetting at all. But in simply paying enquiry agents to examine the outside of the house where each of the 93 jurors lived to establish basic information about lifestyle and income they had already spent £5000 and the Administrator wanted to know how much was to be allocated.)

The question of legal aid took up most of the day but a number of crucial points about the insidiousness of jury vetting emerged.

Prosecutor Michael Worsley said he was prepared to give all the information they had obtained from police records to the defence. But he would exclude information of a sensitive and personal nature: here he gave as an example a potential juror suffering from terminal cancer who didn't know they had it.

Accepting Worsley's offer as very proper, Judge Gibbens gave another example: a juror whose daughter might be having an illegitimate baby. Neither prosecution nor judge answered a defence query about the limits of these personal enquiries. (And *Leveller* readers might well ask where the police are obtaining information on terminal cancer patients or illegitimate babies.)

The judge refused to be specific in spelling out just what kind of political information would be relevant to jurors. But he did note that it would be impossible for any anarchist-minded person to try a case dispassionately: "Anarchy means without law and without order" he told the court. Presumably such people as Nicholas Walter, Dr John Hewetson, Dr Alex Comfort or, in their day Sir Herbert Read or Fenner Brockway are thus not fit for jury service. Demonstrating his ignorance of anarchist ideas, he then asked whether there were any such thing as an anarchist party.

Worsley spelled out the limits a little more when he said he wanted to keep people off who had criminal convictions plus those living with or closely associated with people with criminal convictions.

From the little that we are able to report of these alarming proceedings, it's already apparent that the prosecution have access to the most intimate personal and political details of the 93 jurors and are determined to remove any who might take a critical view of society.

The current application will have been given the consent of the new Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, and William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary. That they agreed to the application shows the way in which they intend to take sensitive prosecutions in the future. Jury vetting is a most dangerous principle and a threat to a fair trial. And vetting applications behind closed doors is an insidious advance. Both should be stopped immediately.

Harmondsworth

Securitor: Whitehall's Welcoming Committee

HEATHROW AIRPORT conjures up images of stars and tycoons floating in and flopping out in the perimeter hotels to refashion their faces before sweeping into London. For others it is not so romantic. The crowds of package tourists queuing for hours for saved up holidays and the shuttle passengers to Manchester, Belfast and Glasgow have time to notice the heavy security guards and the armies of black women cleaners. For yet another group things grind slower and even smaller — the 'immigrants' from the Indian subcontinent and Africa. They sit in quiet groups with their luggage waiting to be interviewed by immigration officers who search through their papers looking for the slightest pretext to refuse entry. Almost every day a few are separated from the others, watched over by guards and then, much later, taken over to the Harmondsworth Detention Centre.

The centre lies just over the A4 road between the parking lots and the flash hotels. It is announced by a bland sign — Government Buildings — but its real purpose is shown by the high barbed wire topping the fence. Up to 22 people can be detained there, either waiting for the next flight to 'where they came from' or for representations to be made on their behalf. In 1978 over 5,000 were held in Harmondsworth (this figure does not include those held at Gatwick and other airports) so it is clear that the unit is crammed full nearly every night. The conditions inside are very clearly third grade government issue and the security is in the hands of a private firm — four guards are on duty at all times. The small exercise yard is dominated by the barbed wire fence and the sound of planes is deafening — a constant reminder of possible deportation. There is not much to do but sit and think, watch television, read the papers (mainly in English) and wait for the godots in Whitehall to make up their minds.

Giaz Uddin has been held in the unit since 6th August and is likely to spend his 19th birthday on 19th September, there. A number of individuals, 4 MPs and 7 Liverpool Councillors, as well as various labour and community organisations have taken up his case, so he is still in this country and not back in Bangladesh. His father here since 1962, works night-shifts in a cotton mill. In 1975, his wife, daughter, and son Giaz Uddin, joined him.

They arrived at Luton but then went and spent 3 weeks near Brick Lane, East London while accommodation and other affairs were sorted out.

After six months at school in St. Helens, Giaz Uddin began to work in a Bangladeshi restaurant. He lived on the premises because of the late hours that he had to work in the kitchen. Later he moved to the Oriental Grill Restaurant in Southport, working now as a waiter earning about £35 plus food and board. In July 1978 immigration officers visited the restaurant officially to make enquiries into a tip-off about illegal immigrants. They found a letter in his room addressed to Salik Miah and therefore assumed that he had entered the country under a false name. On the 25th July he was arrested by immigration officers and police and spent the night at Southport Police Station. In the morning he was taken to Risley Remand Centre and detained for a month 'while enquiries were made'. Very often Bangladeshis are formally given one name which may seldom be used but within the home and village they are known by a 'nick' name. This is the case with Giaz Uddin and the immigration authorities are well aware of this

practice. His father was questioned and has sworn an affidavit saying that Giaz is his son and is even willing to provide a blood sample to prove it.

After a month Giaz was released, provided he reported to the immigration office in Liverpool once a month, while investigations continued in Bangladesh. He went back to work in Southport and his employer was glad to have him back.

On 5th July this year Giaz Uddin was rearrested and taken back to Risley, where 15-20 immigration detainees are held in a separate wing. 'It's a horrible hopeless place and the officers treat you like animals.' They are allowed one hour of exercise and one of television per day, the rest of the time they are locked up in their cells. On 5th August Giaz Uddin was taken to Manchester airport and sent to London. Fifteen minutes before his flight to Dacca, Bangladesh he was handed a note saying 'You were refused leave to enter the United Kingdom on 6th July 1979. I have given instructions for your removal from the UK so as to require your removal to be advised.' There was no explanation of this piece of officialese

and hours later Giaz Uddin was removed to the Harmondsworth Detention Centre, where he has since remained uncertain of his future.

While this is just one particular case, and by no means one of the worst, it does help to focus attention on the workings of the racist 1971 Immigration Act. Newspapers generally seize on stories of illegal immigrants crawling through the morning mists at Deal and Dover but the truth about 'illegal immigration' is much less romantic. Most people detained under this act are caught in a web of Catch 22 suspicions, and when it comes down to it how do you prove on paper who you are, if every piece of evidence is assumed to be fraudulent.

The Immigration Acts are constantly used as pretexts to raid any place where black people live and work. What's more, anyone can go to the police with a malicious rumour. In any case the police themselves don't need any excuse for random harassment.

Last year 822 people were detained in prisons under the Immigration Acts and held for indefinite periods without warrants or trials. Many of them were later released with nothing proved against them. These are all additional to immigrants held in airports and other detention centres. Because of the vulnerability of anyone picked up on suspicion of immigration offences it is important to mobilise protests at every unjustified arrest and every instance of state racism. In the case of Giaz Uddin protests, preferably through organisations, should be made direct to the Home Office now.

Immigration

State Racism: It's Official

Fenna King of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency presents their group position on immigration and racism.

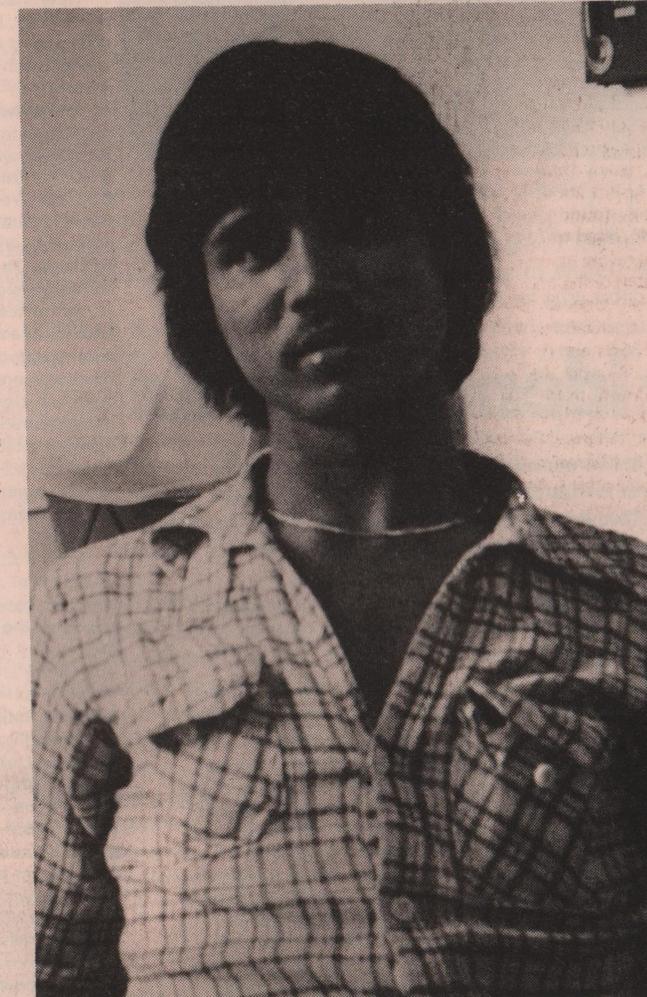
Recently the cases of the Patel children, of Mohammad Hassan and Giaz Uddin — cases of deportation under the 1971 Immigration Act — have hit the headlines. They received the sympathy and moral condemnation of concerned individuals, including left-wing Labour MPs. Even more conservative quarters were perturbed. The *Spectator* talked about the 'use, or rather abuse (of) the Immigration Act 1971', and saw the real problem 'in the Schedules to the Act rather than in the main body of it' (18 August 1979). This was accompanied by anxiety over the violation of the proper legal procedures, deportation having become a mere administrative act, and the increasing irrelevancy of habeas corpus — 'the cornerstone of liberty in English law.'

Since their election victory the Tories have stepped up the attacks on the immigrant community. Police have been given greater licence for tracking down 'illegal immigrants' (now aided by sections of the trade union bureaucracy — the T&GWU carrying out this work by searching for non-work permit holders in the hotel and catering industry, see *Evening Standard*, 1 August 1979). But we should not be blinded by the increasing harshness of the Tories. It was the last Labour Government that paved the way for the stricter application of immigration rules by perfecting the legal framework within which such attacks could be carried out. In blatant contradiction to its radical promises when in opposition until 1974 to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act, the Labour Government later extended the definition of an 'illegal immigrant', launching a concerted attack on the democratic rights of blacks in Britain.

Merlyn Rees, for the Labour Government, justified the sharp measures found necessary to ensure the operation of immigration controls: 'I strongly condemn illegal entry; it is both an offence under our law, and a threat to harmonious community relations. I do not shrink from firm action to deal with it, and it will remain the Government's normal practice to send away those who entered in this way on or after 1st January 1973.' (*Hansard*, 29 November 1977).

While the Labour Government was quite satisfied over its administration of controls, left Labourites and the Communist Party alike attacked their obviously racist content. In the interest of good race relations they called for fairer 'non-racist' immigration controls. But the Labour Government

had already got the trump card up its sleeve: to clear up the bad reputation of Britain operating blatantly racist immigration controls, it had to sort out the messy business of British nationality. Hence the *Green Paper* of April 1977. These proposals, though left sufficiently vague, at once



Giaz Uddin

embodied the provisions contained in the present immigration act and allowed for greater social control of the black community within Britain itself by creating a new second class citizenship. Today the Tories are merely continuing the bourgeois strategy of attacking black workers. The introduction of a new British Nationality Bill later this year will be a formality.

The increase in open state attacks on blacks has fuelled the left Labourites' anti-Toryism. Since the election, Labour MPs have been queuing up at immigration appeals tribunals and lobbying the Home Office. The tough line taken by Timothy Raison, Minister in charge of immigration, especially over the Patel case, has

been met with helpless appeals to his concern for family life. Raison's response was this: 'one tries to be humane, but on the other hand there are rules' (*The Guardian*, 9 August 1979). How do the Labour Party humanists confront this argument?

While Stan Newens, Labour MP, found the separation of the Patel children from their parent 'quite scandalous', his colleague Alex Lyon, MP for York, still regards appeals to Ministers more

democratic supervision of the police force' (August issues of *Tribune*). This goes alongside the now familiar calls for the disbanding of the SPG. 'Make the state racist institutions less racist' cry the left critics of bourgeois strategy, 'also put policemen back on the streets as friends of the community rather than have them preparing to make war against it' (*Tribune*, 10 August 1979). *Labour Weekly* summarised the 'soft approach' to state racism quite neatly:

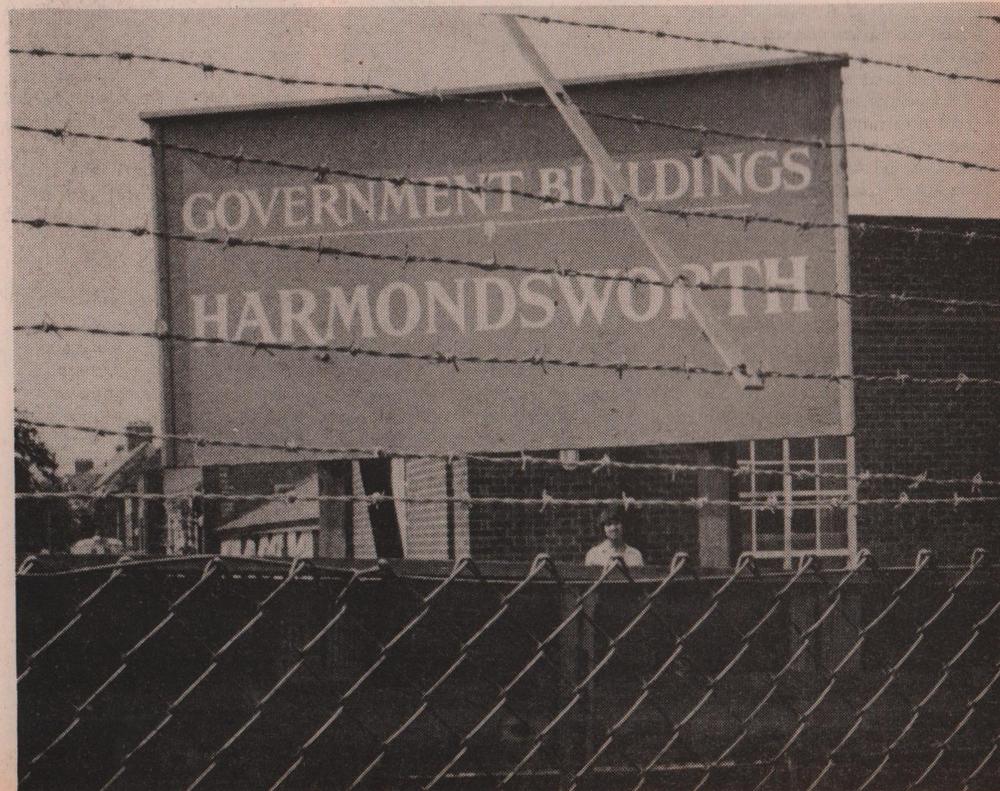
'No system that restricts people from coming to Britain can be administered without some people suffering. But at the very least the rules should be operated humanely... there is an urgent need for a more civilised approach' (10 August 1979).

Neither these appeals for 'humanity' nor the radical sounding phrases can defend black workers. More importantly, and dangerously, they in fact provide the soft cushion to the mounting attacks — physical and ideological — launched by the British state. Sandpapering the rough edges of state racism through anti-Tory rhetoric, the Labour lefts reinforce the view that immigration controls can and should be fairer, and that internal control should be carried out in a friendlier manner. In this way they hope to win socialist credentials — at the expense of the democratic rights of black workers. No principled opposition to all forms of racism can be expected from these quarters.

The building of workers' defence of the black community is vitally important. This requires a clear, unambiguous class response from workers, a precondition of which is opposition to all immigration controls. Acceptance of the framework of immigration controls and of the right of the state to subject one section of the working class to continuous harassment has severe consequences. No moral criticisms of the way these controls are operated can defend black workers. Neither can they demonstrate to the white labour movement why it is in the interests of the working class as a whole to repel the attacks that are forthcoming.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency is committed to build a campaign for workers' defence. This is why we organised a demonstration at Harmondsworth detention centre in July (see *The Leveller* 30) on the basis of opposition to all immigration controls. This was only the first step. We will be raising the issue of workers' defence of black communities in our local work, in trade unions and in colleges. We hope to mobilise support for a national conference on this issue later this year. We urge all seriously interested in building effective opposition to immigration laws and defence against racist attacks to contact us and find out ways in which to get involved.

Detention unit: third-grade government issue



Towards Press Freedom

Intellectual adventurist

IT WAS A great pity that Tim Gopsill chose to write about the serious question of promoting a better, and more radical, press in such a cavalier, sneering and ill-informed way.

The subject is a crucial one for all socialists, and has been for many years. It is not a newly discovered problem as one might assume from Mr. Gopsill's contribution. Nor can it be resolved by collecting together a few clichés and slogans or indulging in destructive abuse in the style of his article.

However, my purpose in writing this letter is not to descend to that level of personal ridicule.

A serious attempt is now being made by a number of people on the Left of the Labour Party and in the trade union movement to promote a new newspaper—or, better still, a number of new newspapers. As yet there is no definitive blueprint; but the idea is taking shape in a more positive form than before.

A substantial amount of money is likely to be made available from within the trade union movement. But, of course, there are many practical problems yet to be resolved. If the trade union leadership is not to have a power of veto over the freedom and independence of such a newspaper (or newspapers) it will be necessary to construct some form of Trust. This will be essential not only to ensure an independence from crude interference but also to assist in the running, and development, of a fully professional, efficient and effective paper.

I see no virtue in launching yet another "fringe-type" newspaper of the Left that would have very few readers; would be confined to an elitist sect; or one that would merely seek to satisfy the vanity of intellectual adventurists.

As I sought to point out at the Nottingham conference last March the development of a radical press has to be treated much more seriously, and professionally, than has been the tendency in the past.

In this context it is quite ludicrous to attack "the trade union bureaucracy" in the way Mr. Gopsill did; of course there is bureaucracy in the trade union movement as in any other institution (perhaps, even including *The Leveller*). But that argument ought not to be advanced to shout down the serious attempt now being made by trade union leaders to launch a new radical press. They ought to be encouraged, helped and given constructive

advice—not to be ridiculed. And they ought to be joined by those groups who now make a virtue of remaining outside the ring so that a new newspaper of the Left can reflect a broad range of views.

Mr. Gopsill's article also referred to the *Daily Herald* which he claimed, "went downhill as soon as the TUC laid its dead hand upon it."

This is factually incorrect. The *Daily Herald* was the first national daily newspaper to push its circulation beyond two million, in the early 1930's, when the TUC had nominal control of its policy.

The failure of the *Daily Herald* in the end can be attributed to many things — no doubt including the "dead hand" of the TUC. But it is worth recalling that even in its dying days, the *Herald* was the only national daily newspaper to support the CND campaign to ban the bomb. It is important for a new generation of socialists to know the truth about what happened in earlier years.

Geoffrey Goodman
Daily Mirror

Journalistic macho

COME OFF IT TIM! Gopsill's piece on a Labour movement newspaper and trade union journals displayed all the swaggering journalistic macho that a Jamieson (Derek) or Lamb (Larry) would snap up if ever Tim put his talent on the open newshacks' market.

His second column has a fine bit of *Summery* for a start. First Gopsill lists the aims of the Campaign for Press Freedom including "the creation of alternative newspapers of all kinds, including those sympathetic to the labour movement" and then in his next paragraph our Bouverie Street basher writes that the aims "omit the use of labour movement money to actually set up papers."

Are there no subs on *The Leveller* or don't reporters re-read their copy before it's printed? The Campaign for Press Freedom wants a (or some) Labour movement paper(s) and, of course, the cash for that will have to come from within our own ranks.

Gopsill cites *The Leveller* as a good example of a readers' collective. So too does the Campaign for Press Freedom's launch pamphlet (available from John Jennings, 274 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex, price 30p).

The Leveller is an excellent journal, owing more to the dedication of the handful of journalists who produce it month after month than to theoretical

control by readers. The trouble is that *The Leveller* and the rest of the socialist press combined have not managed to sell more copies in the past five years than the newly-launched *Daily Star* managed last month.

Nowhere in Tim's article is that problem confronted.

His description of all trade union journals as "really horrible papers" comes straight from a *Daily Mail* leader column. Some are, some come close to it and some are pretty good (has Tim ever seen the *ACTT Journal*, *The Landworker* or *NUPE News*?). But the main point is that such windy generalisations may win Tim an award as the left-wing's Jean Rook, but they're not accurate or much help to those who do want to see a major change in the way trade union journals operate.

Even when burbling about his own union (and mine), the NUJ, Gopsill is talking rubbish. The NUJ rank and file at its annual conference has always elected the editor of the NUJ journal, the *Journalist*. Currently the rank and file elects a superb individual, Ron Knowles, who seized and made it a living thing. But for years the same NUJ rank and file elected a hopeless deadhead.

Why on earth does Tim describe *Nottingham News*'s scoops as "stupid"? When I've bumped into him he's always been as pleased as punch when he secured a *Leveller* scoop like the BBC current affairs minutes.

What's all this nonsense about the *Daily Herald* being a radical paper before the war? It may have been under George Lansbury in the first three decades of the century but it chiefly built up its 1930s circulation by such brilliant socialist devices as offering free sets of novels to those who took out a subscription. Aneurin Bevan and Stafford Cripps, let alone any non-Labour Party socialists, must revolve in their graves at being told the pre-war *Herald* was a "really radical paper".

And what is Tim's answer to all this? For workers to stop "bellyaching" (a good old *Daily Express* verb, that) and become shareholders controlling papers through a democratic structure. Presumably just like shareholders control the *Sunday Times*.

The IWC and the TUC and just about everyone who has sat down for two seconds to think about extending press freedom and alternative forms of ownership and control have thought about Tim's suggestion and decided it won't work, at least, not as the sole answer.

You can also make the editor of every trade union journal accountable to his or her rank and file by elections. That won't work either as some of the worst union journals are produced by editors currently elected by such means.

Both issues need more careful thought and analysis. In the meantime I think Tim's union-bashing

article will help boost *The Leveller's* circulation and that, like page 3 in the *Sun*, is what really counts isn't it?

Denis MacShane
London NW1

If you don't have the great good fortune to be a London hack, here's *The Leveller's* glossary:

Derek Jameson and Larry Lamb are editors of the *Daily Express* and the *Sun* respectively; Bouverie Street is where the *Sun* lives;

The NUJ is the National Union of Journalists (of which Denis MacShane was President).

Liberation

TIM GOPSILL's article on the need for a left daily paper prompts me to add to the debate — something I had in any case intended doing ever since visiting the offices of the French daily, *Liberation*, some months ago.

The article identifies crucial hurdles on the obstacle course leading to the establishment of such a paper:

The dead yet grasping hand of the TUC

Finance and the question 'do we carry advertising?'

But in stating 'Workers will never get their own national paper till they get their union papers first', I feel Mr Gopsill is perhaps a little pessimistic. Desirable, yes, but a different question surely?

While in urging, however commendably, that a left daily should require a financial and 'political commitment' from its readers he is expecting too much in a society in which people — lefties included — are conditioned for passive consumption rather than active participation.

Organisational structure is, of course, crucial. That ventures such as the *Nottingham News* and the ill-fated *Scottish Daily News* have found themselves unable to challenge organisational norms — relying instead on the time-worn practice of vesting absolute responsibility in individuals — reflects the fact that they were born out of unfortunate circumstances rather than common commitment.

My experience working with the alternative press in Leeds suggests that even loosely-bound political groups can work collectively to produce a successful paper — admittedly on a somewhat smaller scale — *Leeds Other Paper*.

It is the total commitment of those responsible for actually producing, and selling, the paper that is essential.

Wanting to believe in an active commitment from owner-readers seems most likely to lead to the sort of disappointment the *Leveller* collective must have felt when so few turned up for the annual meeting.

Liberation was begun as an ambitious Maoist experiment

with the theory that it should become a newspaper not merely owned but actually written by its readers.

It did not work out: we come back to the difference between consumption and creation and, dare I say it, the fact that concise, easy-to-read writing is an acquired skill.

Now *Libe* relies on the continued commitment of its 100-plus workers.

There are problems: when I was there the group was trying to finance increased pagination from 16 to 20 and facsimile printing in four centres outside Paris at a time when there were internal splits.

All workers are paid subsistence plus a bit extra. The journalists work 40 hours; those with more menial jobs, 25 hours.

The problem comes with

some members who are really just after an easy life — cash to live and plenty of free time.

These are the people who won't turn up on Sundays and leave the committed, but bitter, to bring out Monday's paper come what may.

Circulation stands at over 60,000 — not bad in country where *Le Monde*, the biggest national daily sale, manages just 424,000.

Libe carries no paid adverts and was started with £15,000 and one huge advantage over any potential British counterpart — a national constitution that obliged wholesalers to distribute it.

Absence of casual sales because of restrictive distribution in Britain undoubtedly hits the Communist *Morning Star*.

Other criticisms of the *Star* are obvious and many, not least the employment of a capitalist

structure to produce a 'socialist' product.

But in any case no-one wanting their daily dose of news could survive on the *Star* alone. The Trot *Newsline* grasped the nettle when the old *Workers Press* image was cast aside in favour of a NEWSpaper.

But the failure of *Socialist Challenge* to make any real impression as a 'broad left' paper illustrates the need for a daily to be non-sectarian if it is to serve — hopefully — everyone from anarchists to Friends of the Earth, straight trades unionists, politicians and trendy lefty *Guardian* readers.

While its *raison-d'être* would be to report people's struggles, it should include enough 'straight' news, humour, arts, general interest to make it a paper in its own right, not leaving the reader with the feeling they need the

Guardian or a 'pop' or whatever to go with it.

And couldn't brilliant and witty arts and music coverage help attract the sort of advertising that doesn't demand too much compromise?

Indulging in a little running before I can walk, I would reiterate the belief already discussed with sympathisers in and out of London that for practical and psychological reasons the daily would be better originating from outside the capital.

As far as format goes, a large tabloid with news front and back could make a distinctive compromise between the inevitable association of tabloid with cheap clichéd crap, and broadsheet sobriety.

Any more thoughts anyone?

Stan Abbott,
Darlington.

...meanwhile at the TUC

FOR THE first time, the ritual vote of thanks to the press at the end of the TUC conference attracted some attention at Blackpool this year. The previous day, there'd been an emotional debate on the press and the unions, which had peaked with a fierce speech by Alan Fisher of NUPE, who attacked the National Union of Journalists for its failure to prevent members turning in vicious anti-union copy.

So everyone was listening as the General Secretary (Lord Murray) stood up. Murray said: "I want to support the vote of thanks. We have a very good relationship with the industrial correspondents . . . I hereby move a very warm vote of thanks to the media as a whole and thank them for their services to this movement over the year." Everyone clapped, and that was that.

But the Great Debate had at least committed the TUC to looking into the questions of alternative media. The motion passed committed the TUC General Council to:

1. Assist in promoting a national debate of alternative forms of democratic ownership and control (of the press) and ways of obtaining freedom for, and accountability to, workers in the media, industry, and the public — while at the same time guaranteeing autonomy and freedom from interference in their day to day work of editorial and production workers;
2. support recognition of the right of reply of individuals and organisations when attacked;
3. encourage the creation of alternative newspapers of all kinds, including a newspaper sympathetic to the labour movement;
4. assist in developing the general principles contained in the minority report of the Royal Commission on the Press, which includes proposals for a National Printing Corporation, support for producer press co-operatives, and a launch fund to assist new publications;
5. report on the approach of the trade union movement to newspapers, radio and television, with a view to determining whether a more positive attitude might produce less distorted results;
6. to campaign for a reformed, independent and impartial Press Council as a prerequisite for continuing trade union support.

So the union bosses are going to have to get to work, and people with ideas are going to have to get to work on them.

But at Blackpool the air was thick with ducked issues. Speakers who attacked the NUJ didn't talk of using workers' strength to attack the media, by direct action, boycott, or stopping supplies: no-one challenged the TUC's willingness to co-operate with scab journalists . . . and even Alan Fisher, flushed with excitement at the end of a speech he'd been storing up for seven months, swept from the conference hall into the BBC's studio to give an interview to BBC TV industrial correspondent Ian Ross, a non-trade unionist.

It can't be left to the NUJ, which is nearly as frightened

as other unions of openly tackling the press barons on editorial grounds. Lord Keys of SOGAT made a speech: reading it back now, it seems a fine analysis of the links between press ownership and ideological control, and of the need for alternatives. But everyone knows that; and when did the leadership of SOGAT or any other print union last support their members' will to handle material biased against working people? Print unions have tremendous industrial muscle (the NUJ does not); their chapels can stop papers over pay and conditions, and often do, and then they go back and set whatever the journalists send down. Very very rarely they rebel; when they do, the proprietors come down on them like a ton of bricks, and the general secretaries shit themselves. It's easy to be brave at the TUC; but it needs a mite more fight to challenge the proprietors.

It's fine to see the labour movement committed to alternatives, and refreshing that thinking is towards enabling workers to roll their own, rather than to the big monolithic bureaucrats' daily paper — the *Daily Lionel* project (see last issue) seems to have quietly disappeared . . . But the power of the big media will remain as long as their workers and their workers' leaders, and readers, remain compliant.

This is the major fault in *Towards Press Freedom*, the launch pamphlet from the Campaign for Press Freedom, which provided the basis for the TUC resolution. (The programme was wrongly attributed to the Institute of Workers Control in the last issue; but that was written before the CFP or the pamphlet was launched, and in any case its personnel is the same as those who emerged from the IWC conference on democratic accountability on the media as the leaders in the way forward.)

When you pick up the pamphlet, you're amazed, at first, to see right-wing names like "Roy Hattersley MP" among the sponsors. The amazement soon evaporates. The kind of alternatives held up are, for instance, the French liberal paper *Le Monde* (NOT *Liberation*!); ownership of papers by trusts (the *Guardian* and *Observer* are cited).

It's not all as bad as that. The section on labour papers is much more thoughtful, presenting more problems than answers, and they seem to be the right ones. *Towards Press Freedom* is packed with the right facts. You know something's wrong. It doesn't have the answers, but like the TUC debate . . . it's a start.

It's available from the CFP, 274-88, London Road, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE, price 30p.



Black youth

THE METRO Club is a modest one-storey building behind Westbourne Park tube station. It's an ILEA youth club, but its function far out-strips the twice-a-week disco vision conjured up by that description. At the time of this interview, the club was entering the fourth week of a sit-in held by the members to protest against the Inner London Education Authority's plans: ILEA had sacked Emerson, the last of the three official youth workers, and had declared its intention to close "for re-decoration". Club members had a shrewd suspicion

that re-decoration could stretch to months, then years, and would certainly mean the end of the Metro as the centre for the black community, of all ages, which it has become over the years.

By now, the sit-in's heading towards two months. The members had elected 12 people to act as a committee. I spoke to six of them. Due to lack of space, I've selected crucial quotes and attributed them to the committee—certainly, everyone seemed in accord with everyone else's points of view—the Rastas controlling the club agree they're just standing up for

basic truths and rights . . .

It's not long since the Sheppard's Youth Club in Brixton's Railton Road fought a similar sit-in/battle with the Methodist Church. Extra attention was drawn to that struggle by the presence of one member, the poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. The members at Sheppard's won their fight, and by their tenacity, the Metro stands a good chance of winning theirs; various individuals concerned have given up their jobs to be present day and night. The Metro sit-in is a serious thing.

Vivien Goldman

“

IF THE CLUB CLOSED, the kids would have nowhere to go, and the summer holiday projects are about to start . . . strictly Rasta classes, black cultural classes; we show films, painting, sewing, Bible—all forms of classes. We even have music classes every day, someone from the Black People's Information Centre comes in and teaches. At school they only teach kids about Henry 8th and Christopher Columbus, 1066 . . . in India, in Africa, they'd teach you English culture same way, it's the Empire . . .

BLACK PEOPLE ROUND HERE don't have anywhere to go except pubs, and most round here don't like to go to pubs. They like loud reggae music, they like to stand on street corners—it's African culture—but the police just move in to pick you up. The ILEA just want the Metro as a proper youth club, 7.30—10.30 . . .

OTHER PEOPLE IN OTHER PARTS of London should really take notice of this and check us out—we'd like to check them out, so they know it's one fight . . . it's not just Ladbroke Grove, it's Paddington, Kensal Rise, kids come to Metro from all over. The ILEA know that but they'd rather see the youth in gambling houses and pubs and dem little Babylon places. But we want to run it as a Rasta club, because it's only Rasta that brings out the fullness of a black man. Black man's been round the Grove for years but there's no other black community centre—except for the Mangrove and we're not dealing like that, we deal strictly truth and rights (there's gambling at the Mangrove) but still, the

police have fucked with the Mangrove for 11 years because it's a black man's place . . .

I AND I IS IN BRIMSTONE (a reggae band) and we use the Metro as a rehearsal room—if the ILEA have their way,

that whole side of it will go . . .

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY comes in and decide to cut down expenditure, they lay people off work, less jobs but more people on the streets. They lock

off a few meeting-places so when a man leaves his work they can't go to Metro, so he goes on the streets. His friends tell him about a club where he can make money, so he goes down there—police raid, that's ten men locked away, 10 jobs less to find . . .

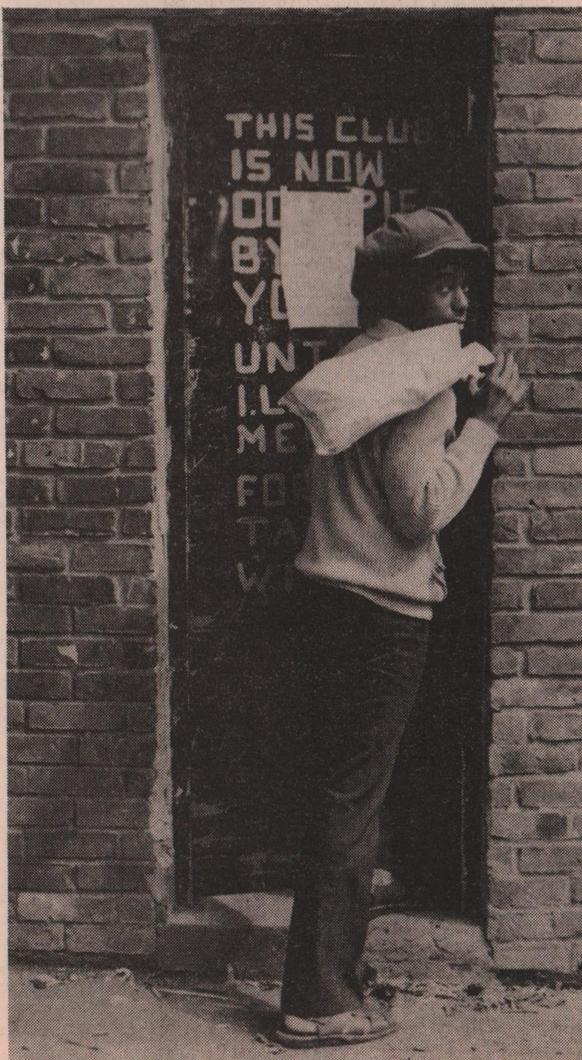
WHEN YOU GET IN PRISON they have a way they call rehabilitation. It's supposed to change you to do certain things—clean living, get a job, short hair-cut—but the youth can't get no good living because when they go for a job their record shows they've just come out of prison . . . right back in the same circle . . . they don't want Rasta because it opens your eyes to certain things, the youth know they're killing off our parents and want to re-cycle us the same way. I and I want to open up the youth's eyes . . .

RASTA MAN'S not the aggressor, we just deal, well, if you step on my toe we'll have to do something about it, basic rights . . . Rasta's supposed to show where the black man comes from originally . . . Our parents' attitude is: This is *their* country, we should stay off the streets, and that's what they tell the youth . . . Rasta tells the youth a different way . . .

WE BELIEVE THE WHOLE SOCIETY is against black people—we know they're against other things too, but they're against black people and they want them to remain in a "proper situation" which means, destroy the youth because they won't progress to do anything good. We want to make sure a small percentage of the youth get something that is right . . .

Club talk

Vernon St. Hilaire



The Metro: sitting in to serve the youth

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Shorts

GMP's 'Little Blue Book'

FROM THE HOUSE of Adernton, courtesy of *Police Review Publishing Co. Ltd.* comes a nifty little number meriting comparison with Mao's *Little Red Book*. *Public Order And The Police*, otherwise known as *The Thoughts of Kenneth Sloan*, Chief Training Officer in the Greater Manchester Police, is a plod pocket-primer on aspects of the law seen very much through blue-tinted spectacles.

Not to worry about the bias, though. It comes with the stamp of approval of none other than Willie Whitelaw, whose introduction commends the booklet for its lucid analysis of 'the many small minority factions who are now frankly conspiring to overthrow our society.'

There are 16 chapters in the 133-page booklet. Nine deal with public (dis)order, free speech and the right of assembly (seems that in law there isn't one), the police and crowd control, public meetings, trade disputes. There's a chapter on public order and the police in Europe and then six chapters on political organisations and their creeds: *Marxism, Trotskyism, Maoism, Anarchism, Fascism*.

The first section whisks through a huge mass of topics at breakneck speed, with such throwaway goodies as: 'Political activity is behind most organised disturbances these days' (Ta, Ken, We'd never have thought!) and even: 'The SWP is led by middle class revolutionaries Paul Holborow, Steve Jeffreys, Paul Foot and Duncan Hallas. All are disciples of Tony Cliff . . .' (So *that's* what's meant by democratic centralism). It also swallows the Thatcher line that the NF and SWP must be lumped together. 'Your Communist is the left foot of socialism and your Fascist is the right foot—using socialism in the same sense that it is total regimentation, control by the

state.'

Not a man to soft pedal on such matters, author Ken, captain of men (and the odd woman) advocates proscribing the SWP under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. That should deal with *that* little problem—but what if it actually increased SWP recruitment of romantic doddies trying to threaten our sacred freedoms and (gulp) change our society? *Hmmm*.

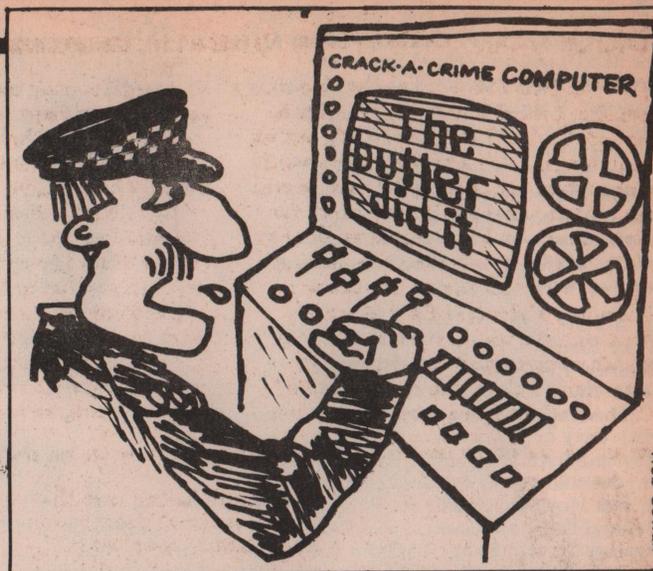
The philosophy section is a must. A condescending little run through the familiar names and ideologies with thumbnail sketches every other page. Most intriguing of all is the little entry on NAFF on page 110, which was inexplicably pasted over by the printers. It should have read, forensic tests can reveal: 'NAFF is only fascist in that its members are extreme rightwing and oppose communism.' So *now* we know.

A small point, this, since the

Nurses in 'Misconduct' Row

TWO NORTHERN Ireland charge nurses who took part in a COHSE strike at their hospital earlier this year have been found guilty of professional misconduct by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales (the statutory nursing body). They have to face another disciplinary hearing by the Northern Ireland GNC soon.

This is an important test case and the first since the GNC's recent pronouncement that nurses who take part in industrial action may face a charge of professional misconduct. It means, in effect, that any nurse who walks off the ward as part of strike action is liable to the same charge. Being found guilty can mean a loss of livelihood if the GNC then decide to strike the defendant off the register, although in this case judgement on the two nurses—John Patrick White and Robert Cooke, both from Longstone



Leveller itself has been known to make the odd editorial ball-up, but either Ken Sloan's a lousy proof-reader, or else we now know why there's often so many inaccuracies in police notebooks. It's easy—their *training manual's full of them too*.

HIP YOUNG TORIES

TIRED OF seeing groups of left-wing activists selling newspapers aimed at young people? Then what you need is a copy of *Democrat* (slogan: One people, One nation) - the new Young Conservative paper 'aimed at all young people'. The first issue came out at the beginning of September and the YCs see it as the latest weapon in the battle for the hearts and minds of the nation's youth - Rock Against Lefties is still said to be a twinkle in a YC's tie-pin. The style's been borrowed from the left press: *Democrat* is an eight page tabloid, *Socialist Worker* with smaller headlines.

But if it's aimed at young people, it's been written by older people, and they obviously haven't got a clue who they're supposed to be writing for. So they drop in 'youth' catchphrases from time to time, just to prove they're hip: sample - in an article on the TUC Conference - 'After all, if you pay for a rock concert, you don't expect a violin quartet'.

And because the paper's purpose is negative - to keep the extremist hordes at bay - and because the world looks pretty good if you're a Young Conservative, the politics get added to the articles (mostly on subjects Relevant to Young People) as a sort of afterthought, something which no 'political' paper should be without. And it comes out reading like the propaganda sheet it is, with rock guitarists being asked pointed party political questions (and inevitably answering 'politics has nothing to do with music').

Democrat's obviously been started because someone in Conservative Central Office think it ought to be. It comes out as boring as any paper produced with money but without enthusiasm. But all the cash in Conservative Headquarters wouldn't save *Democrat* from being dull.

WHEN THE CLYDE WAS RED

A CIVIC reception was held in Glasgow last month to mark the centenary of the birth of John Maclean, revolutionary socialist and chief architect of the 'Red Clyde'. Whatever Maclean's own feelings on the matter might have been, it was obvious that the tribute was not well-received in other quarters.

Predictable grumbling opposition had been voiced by the Tories before the reception, and on the evening those invited to the reception (amongst the most scruffy ever to have been permitted inside the city chambers) were met by a picket organised by Scotland's answer to Ian Paisley,

Pastor Jack Glass and other assorted Scottish bigots.

Sales of *The Protestant View* didn't seem to be going too well but the slogans attracted a fair amount of attention with gems like 'Marxist Monsters Murder Christians' and 'Let Glasgow flourish by Preaching the Word and the Denunciation of Communism'.

The civic reception was just one of the events to commemorate John Maclean. Others include a schools competition, a gable-end mural, a postage stamp issued by the USSR

and numerous plays, radio and TV programmes.

John Maclean has become something of a cult in Scotland recently, representing Scotland's socialist as well as nationalist tradition. Maclean believed in a Scottish Workers' Republic and fought hard on the issue of nationalism, which he saw as an integral part of the struggle for socialism in Scotland. As such, he has become a focal point in Scottish politics (since the disintegration of the Scottish Nationalist Party and the failure of the British Labour Party to come up with a Scottish Assembly.

* SHAM'S LAST STAND at London's Rainbow Theatre last July saw lead singer Jimmy Pursey finally go under as his band's act was ruined by a stage invasion. Pursey shouted at the swarming crowds: "I did my best for you, now look what you've done." He was wrong; the kids hadn't let him down. It was a rump organised by the British Movement. The National Front, too, are behind the new Rock Against Communism, and the battle-lines are clearly drawn. David Brazil tries to sort out just what is going on.

IN A FEW months' time, the wretched Tony Blackburn could be playing "Robert Relf is Innocent" by White Boss as his Record of the Week. Come again?

The National Front (NF) y'see, hurting with envy at the success of Rock Against Racism (RAR) and smarting at the drift in potential young fascists towards the British Movement (BM) after the Front's General Election disaster, now have Rock Against Communism (RAC) on the road.

At their increasingly lush HQ near Old Street in east London, the NF's "Boy Wonder", one Joe Pierce has big plans: the NF's own record label, their own recording studios, and at least ten bands willing, nay anxious, to dedicate their services. Six of these are The Dentists, Damaged, White Boss, Phase One, Beyond The Implod, and The Raw Boys.

RAC has had one public outing so far — this August, when London's Conway Hall had one of its regular fits of liberal perversity in hiring its room, requiring the usual phalanx of company police to keep a speedily assembled RAR protest march well away. Inside an apparently dismal gig some 150 nasties heard White Boss and The Dentists give of their limited best. Another band Skrewdriver pulled out, at the last minute, through "record company pressure". Maybe something to do with their distributors', Rough Trade, speedy action in smashing every Skrewdriver disc they possessed and dumping the pieces in plastic bags near the Conway Hall.

That's one side of things, and in a way even almost a compliment to the RAR concept. But building up to this has been a long series of unpleasant incidents, culminating in the Pursey debacle.

The NF's welcome failure — largely through ANL activities — to replace the Liberals as Britain's third political party, is a starting point. Till the election the NF were anxious to appear "constitutional" and preserve their "law 'n' order" myth. They tried to curb the street level activities of their more "exuberant" young supporters.

This Master Plan failed, and the BM, the main rival right-wing organisation, put it about the NF were "soft", a spent force, and old boys with it. The BM didn't mess around with lofty ideals; they knew the potential support from the white cockney macho working class kids mainly in the east end of London, and they offered more "kicks", yes literally, encouraging the gang following.

The gloves were off, a skinhead/braces revival was on, and this co-incidence led to a distressing continuous disruption of music events. The *Leveller's* old pals Crass found their anarcho-show, in aid of the Southall Defence Fund, smashed in June; Scritti Politti were attacked at a Stevenage RAR gig; the Albany in Deptford, south-east London, was wrecked, The Upstarts were hit in Wolverhampton, and then of course Sham's Last Stand proved to be just that.

Music

Spittin' hate at the future of rock n' roll

In the meantime, RAR had taken a Militant Entertainment tour around the land in April, and raised the antes.

The BM way of messing up a rock gig has revolved around a hard core of 20 to 30, at the most, getting through the doors, with or without their spoof blue and white ANL badges or their mod-smart union jack enamel badges, and coming heavy with other kids they run into, especially those with RAR or ANL insignia.

There are also clearly identifiable older hard-nuts with these gangs who know clearly what they're doing. They pass foul leaflets out and put the word around.

Inside, the BM gangs are looking for trouble. Some bands, without themselves being right-wing, attract thugs more than others, mainly by the hardness of their sound. The UK Subs and The Specials with their ska-revival music know exactly who they're going to attract, and with Madness you'll find wall-to-wall skins.

The Specials like Sham, are well aware of the problems, but often waver in their response. They, and the other bands, saw how Sham were sunk by their outspoken political stance, and they just don't want

to risk it themselves, so they keep quiet when often it would help if they didn't.

Jimmy Pursey and Sham 69 put themselves into the eye of this storm. In his songs, Pursey tried to put over anthems, football chants, solid populist stuff, but the message was one not wanted by a determined band of his followers. Pursey felt the whole world had let him down, and indeed he did have an unenviably rough time.

Yet Wayne Minter of RAR for one, thinks he got it wrong. "If I was being hard on Jimmy, I'd say it's not the kids that sunk him, but the BM rump. He knows that too, and he should have chased them hard but he never said "You know the trouble-makers — keep away from them" or "Hands up all those who are innocent". Nor like some bands has he asked for the spotlight to pick out the bother merchants and isolate them that way.

"Pursey makes out it's the kids in general when it's not, and many of them don't like being accused like that. We in RAR, we know that being a skin doesn't mean the same as being in the NF or the BM, it just doesn't work like that."

There was a pre-Notting Hill Carnival RAR gig at Acklam Hall in West London that was smashed up this summer, but afterwards a group of Notting Hill skins were so incensed at generally receiving the blame, they even wrote to the music papers in angry protest.

Other factors too, of course make trouble — the old one of "territorial disputes" between bands of skins is much the same as it ever was, going back to mods and rockers or even teddy boys. It is also facile to try and work out some theory that because there's no football going on, there is a vacuum to be filled by gig violence — if anything, it happens there as well.

So what is being done about all this? RAR have pitched their opposition at a high and a thorough level. They have sent their own letters to the "Rock community" — journalists, music paper editors, promoters, PA equipment hire outfits, club owners, pub landlords, managers — that area of humanity.

These letters comment that the recent racist and fascist outbreaks have been "more violent, more ominous and more organised than ever before. Their targets, on current evidence, are all live music venues throughout London.

"Their bullying tactics with collection boxes are well known around the Wellington pub in Waterloo. And the level of intimidation is highlighted by the



Uninvited guest disrupts Stiff Little Fingers at Brockwell Park anti-racist festival. Minutes later he punched steward, left.

Mark Rusher (I.F.L.)

PUNK FRONT



fascist violence amongst the audience."

To help in these requests, RAR are preparing a "Rogues Gallery" of photos clearly identifying the hard-core fascists, which they'd like pinned up in box offices, publicised in the press, and kept by bouncers.

Wayne Minter is himself somewhat sceptical of bouncers acting this way given their recent form, but at least they'll soon have an opportunity to do what they're supposed to do — stop people who only want to make trouble, and protect the "general public".

The power of the music press has already shown through. With a fine piece of "infiltration guerilla journalism", Viv Goldman recently wrote of her impressions of the Conway Hall RAC gig in the *Melody Maker*.

Would-be recruits reading that article can only have been turned off by the RAC's banal view of women as expressed by NF organiser in Ipswich John Williams, who after it all tried to make it with Viv, and by her descriptions of the gig's unpleasant atmosphere and weak bands. In short, Nazi Rock sucks.

Presumably, though, many more such gigs are planned if they can get the bookings. Minter remarked ruefully; "They'd be daft not to". So what makes such a sizeable number of kids behave this way? Sociologists could no doubt rattle off PhDs till the end of time on this subject, but it all seems to do with "peer group associations", where you live and where you go to school.

If you're brought up in solid East London territory then you're prey to the kind of BM lowest common denominator appeal — their arguments are easier to

grasp than complex anti-racist expositions of the consequences of imperialism.

RAR will keep using music as their argument, but Minter knows it takes some bottle for bands to be as upfront as The Ruts recently when their singer yelled into the turbulent crowd: "Hitler was a prat and so are you lot". Another conspicuous recent act was by The Angelic Upstarts' roadie who fought off a stage attack and sustained injuries himself in the process.

It's that raw, and deep in Old Street, some wicked plans are being drawn up. Down there, they particularly hate Tom Robinson, I suppose 'cos he's been on the line from the start as well as aggressively gay, and Stiff Little Fingers, who were the victims of the most recent stage attack, when BMers swarmed on the anti-racist free concert this September in Brockwell Park, South London.

They remember no doubt the time Fingers' singer got a spotlight focussed on trouble-makers, and shouted at them; "So you're the bastards".

RAC still peddle the belief that rock 'n' roll first started with Elvis Presley and Bill Haley (both by a strange co-incidence true Caucasians) and insist that the youth of Britain are fed up with their music "being taken over by the communists". They're going out "to get the kids on our side"; and RAR are pledged to stop them at source.

The NF some years ago said they would "kick their way into the headlines"; they must now be stopped from rocking their way into the same headlines.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE 'GAY' TO JOIN THE ANTI NAZI LEAGUE, WE'LL TEACH YOU!

GAZE ADVERT (N.M.E.)



graphics from NF Leeds F Club "Punk Front"

Utopia Reclaimed

Like the indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Eskimos, the Aboriginal people of Australia have suffered outrageously from white colonialism. But in recent years they have begun to assert their demands. Jenny Green talks about the fight for landrights, and an attempt to achieve some Aborigine independence through the outstation movement, and particularly, the Aborigine-run Utopia outstation.

Only remnants of Aboriginal culture have survived the shootings and the poisonings, the incarceration in settlements and missions and the confiscation of land. After more than 50,000 years of isolation Aboriginal culture had adopted fairly rigid codes of conduct within and between tribal groups. As hunters and gatherers they lived in delicate balance with their environment. Their culture had never needed to organise against an alien threat.

Early attempts at resistance therefore led immediately to their near extinction. It was then assumed by the white man that these 'savages' would soon be absorbed into the mainstream of colonial society, divested of all traces of their land and culture. It was a view which took no account particularly of the importance of the territory in Aboriginal culture, of the deep spiritual significance of the very land itself. And although the assimilation policy has officially been abandoned by the Commonwealth (federal) Government, prejudice still runs deep in many whites. The government of Queensland has been especially recalcitrant.

But Aboriginal people have shown increasing unwillingness to accept the whites' terms. In 1972, continued pressure by Aborigine groups from all over Australia on Canberra for land rights proved effective. Gough Whitlam, leader of the Labour opposition, promised to recognise Aboriginal land rights if his party came to power. When it did, legislation was enacted to allow Aborigines in the Northern Territory, which has the biggest Aborigine population and was not then a state, to make claims for their traditional land.

After the Labour government fell in 1975, however, the Liberal (conservative) government under Malcolm Fraser granted statehood to the Territory. The new state assembly amended the landrights legislation, dramatically reducing its scope and impact. It also restored concessions to mining companies, and slashed funds for Aboriginal organisations. While the skeleton of the NT landrights law means that some claims are still being processed, no other states have similar legislation.

In Alice Springs, the heart of the NT and a 1,000 miles from nowhere, whites pour beer into one side of their mouths, and out of the other spews rhetoric criticising Aborigines for drinking in the creek bed flagon port sold to them at inflated prices by the same whites. Recently an organisation called 'Citizens for Civilised Living' has successfully blocked housing programmes for

Aborigines in Alice Springs. Yet the town depends on those same despised 'Abos' as a tourist attraction and on their trade. Without them, places like Alice Springs could be ghost towns.

Landowners' fears that their property will be handed over free to Aborigines are groundless. The area claimed by blacks (who make up a third of the NT's population) is insignificant. Besides, only the dregs of land are left for Aborigine claims — after the sheep and cattle station-owners, the mining companies, the tourist industry, and the national parks have staked their claim. And even if blacks do secure freehold titles under current legislation mining will be allowed if it is 'in the national interest'.

To reinforce the backlash against Aborigine rights, the national press has been pushing the image of 'Stone Age millionaires'. The mining companies have prompted the myopic Peregrine Worsthorne to conjure up, without any foundation, 'mini-Arab sheikdoms in the middle of the Australian desert' while describing the Aborigines as 'untidily stacked black plastic bags'.

It is an attempt to crush the most positive trend in recent years, the establishment of the Aborigine outstation movement. Aboriginal people had

drifted into communities based around station homesteads, missions, settlements, and on the fringes of town, the effects of having to eat junk food, and live in crowded insanitary conditions, led to serious health problems. Many Aboriginal groups have now moved back to establish communities on their own tribal lands, living a modified tribal life with minimal white interference and supervision. Outstations have been formed in NT, and on the reserves spanning South and Western Australia.

The contrast between these smaller communities, and the squalor, disease and social malaise of the settlements is enormous. They have regained some independence and dignity, and a resurgence of spiritual life. The noticeable strengthening of traditional law has enabled people to cope with drinking problems.

Utopia, a 700 square mile cattle station, 150 miles north east of Alice, is an example of the success of the outstation movement. In the days of the Labour government, several cattle stations were purchased and transferred to aboriginal ownership. Initially, a white manager was put in charge, and the blacks had no control over the property, though Aborigine 'directors' were appointed.

These directors finally decided to take the company into their own hands. They sacked the manager. The original structure had paid little attention to the ownership rights of particular clans of people to various parts of Utopia. Only when the company was controlled by

the blacks themselves could this issue be resolved. The solution was to decentralise. Clans of people moved to establish outstation communities on their traditional lands within the Utopia pastoral lease.

These communities have established their own, separate but cooperative, cattle operations within the cattle company, which is now financially independent of government funding after only two years of Aborigine control. The funds for purchase of equipment are generated from the proceeds of cattle sales. The Aboriginal health service, and women's educational programmes cater to the needs of the outstation communities.

The station-owner's house is empty, and no longer the focal point of the community. Newspapers indicate the expensive house as a demonstrable symbol of neglect and waste of funds. On the contrary, it is a symbol of a time when aboriginal strength and initiative have been able to withstand, and to an extent reject, the pressures of Europeanisation.

But neither Utopia, nor any white-run cattle station on similar land, could

possibly provide an economic base for the 400 or so people living there. A significant amount of financial support is received by way of unemployment benefits, pensions, and child endowment. There are few alternative sources of employment, even in the pastoral and mining industries, and these are hostile to Aboriginal interests.

Aboriginal culture survives. It is adapting to accommodate some aspects of 'whitefella' society. But without sound political and economic bases, black communities will remain at the mercy of government whims and hypocritical policies towards minority groups. It is bondage under a different name. The outstation movement at least provides an opportunity for Aboriginal people to strengthen their ties to the land, and to start posing solutions to their own problems.

For a brief and perceptive account of the predicament of the Aborigines, read Janine Roberts' 'From Massacres to Mining', published jointly by CIMRA, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1, and War on Want, 467 Caledonian Rd, London N7 9BE, 1978, £1.99.

Guyana

Smoking Out Burnham

GUYANA, which recently hit the headlines as the country in which the People's Temple sect massacre took place, is in political turmoil. Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, appears to be making a socialist revolution in words only, while he holds on to power by rigged elections, and the use of another sect, The House of Israel, led by an American convict, David Hill, alias 'Rabbi Washington', to assault opposition figures. The long-standing Marxist People's Progressive Party led by Cheddi Jagan, has been joined in opposition by the Working Peoples Alliance, in which Walter Rodney, author of 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' is active. Rodney was arrested on an arson charge after the HQ of Burnham's People's National Congress caught fire on 11 July, 1979. Now out on bail, he talked to Alex Pascal.

I would start with this case of arson in which a number of us are held. The government has no intention of proceeding with a speedy trial. They refused our application to have a date named for preliminary hearing and we are therefore still at the stage of 'report'. This is significant in the light of certain practices which the government has adopted in the past, of using political cases and stringing them out over a period of two years or more.

Secondly, outside of the court the extent of mass activity has increased and the extent of police repression has also increased. We had an incident outside of the court of some twenty-eight persons, belonging to the Working Peoples' Alliance, being beaten, placed in a vehicle and carried off outside the city to be let loose and left to make their way back to their homes as best they could.

They were beaten because they were picketing, they were wearing the normal slogans of peaceful pickets, outside the court. And on this occasion they were set upon *not* by the thugs of the House of Israel, the Rabbi Washington, but rather by the police themselves.

The police have constantly claimed that they have others to be brought to trial, or against whom charges will be laid, but in fact this has not occurred; so it remains three persons who are charged with arson.

Obviously, many restrictions on one's freedom arise out of the fact that one is on bail. At least one of the other defendants has made an attempt to leave the country on legitimate business, and this has been denied. In my own case, I travel quite frequently, again in pursuit of my own livelihood since I am not allowed to work in Guyana. And as long as the trial is on, so long as the case is left to hang over our heads, then quite obviously it means that I would be a prisoner in Guyana.

We are getting a tremendous amount of support. We have had this period of tremendous upsurge in Grenada, in Dominica, in which the Caribbean people have said 'no' to tyranny and petty dictatorships. And it seems to us that the moment is at hand in Guyana when the Guyanese people are also saying their 'no'.

There is in fact mass protest going on in this society at the moment, mainly at the level of the trade unions who are out on strike. There's the Bauxite union, and then there are two unions in sugar: GAWU — Guyana Agricultural Workers Union — and NASICE — National Association of Industrial and Commercial Employees. Bauxite and sugar are, of course, the largest sectors of production. And then we have on strike also the Clerical and Commercial Workers Union and the University of Guyana Staff Association.

On 16 August we had the police using tear gas to disperse one of our meetings, and on the 17th large spontaneous demonstrations of people moving on the streets. It is obvious that police repression and government repression brings in its wake a certain renewed vigour on the part of people. The government had hoped to cow people into submission and instead the various acts of provocation and violence are bringing more and more persons out onto the streets, and we think therefore that we have reached a point of ultimate confrontation with the minority government led by Forbes Burnham.

The PNC (Peoples National Congress) as a party has already disintegrated to a point at which what they would have called a mass base is no longer with them. They constitute now a clique in government, a clique which is prepared to hold on to power by whatever means; and it is clear even from their attempts, their very futile attempts at public meetings, that they have lost whatever semblance of mass character which they previously had some 10 or 15 years ago.

If we had the opportunity, as was the case in St. Lucia, to vote for a new government, then the PNC would have been voted out of power a long time ago. Because we lacked that opportunity and because the PNC clique which rules has made it clear that they will not allow the people of Guyana to go to the polls and elect their own representatives in free and fair elections, then the people have no alternative but to resort to various acts of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, striking, withdrawing their working power and so on. We have to engage in a level of confrontation which will show the Guyana government, as it showed the Patrick John regime, that the people of Guyana have had enough.

Everyone in Guyana knows that for the last 10 years, at the very least, we have had a mockery of elections. No one expects to take the word 'elections' in the mouth of the PNC very seriously. And it is already clear that the present prime minister has every intention of becoming an executive president under a new constitution, and that the chances of electoral change will become even less — even more microscopic under a new constitution than under the present; and therefore from one end of the country to the other people are coming out and saying 'what we require is an alternative government now'.

This is a position being taken by workers. Very recently, indeed on 15 August, a statement was circulated by many prominent businessmen in Guyana, to which they have attached their signatures, saying that what the country requires is a government comprising the various political parties, because of the nature of the social, political and economic crisis caused by the deterioration in human rights and civil rights in this society under PNC misrule.

Now when you have very conservative, usually apolitical, businessmen taking this sort of stand, you can understand that this is now a truly national crisis in which all strata and all classes are responding to the demand that the PNC must go. We have moved beyond election. We say that elections must be reinstated in Guyana after the PNC goes, and that the Working Peoples Alliance and many other groups are prepared to allow international or Caribbean-wide supervision of elections after the PNC has been removed from power.

Aborigine health worker treating trachoma at Utopia outstation.



Toly Sawenko



Jenny Green

Nazis

Something's very rotten in the state of Paraguay

Twice the size of Britain and with a population of only three million, Paraguay has been ruled for the past twenty-five years by the brutal dictator, Alfredo Stroessner, the son of a Bavarian immigrant, and the longest surviving dictator in the western hemisphere. Most of the country has been under permanent state of seige throughout his rule and the torture of political and common prisoners continues to be standard practice on detention. One million Paraguayans live outside the country as a result of the grossly unequal distribution of land and persecution of political opposition. Emmanuel Goncalves writes.

Dr. Mengele—
"the angel of death"

The ideological base of the Stroessner regime is an anti-communism so rabid that even the centre-right Christian Democrat Party is denied legal representation on the grounds that it is 'communist-infiltrated'. As opposition politician Domingo Laino has shown in a new book now circulating inside Paraguay, there is a lot of money to be made out of the convenient 'anti-communist' ticket for Stroessner and his henchmen. (Laino, an immensely brave, and some would say foolhardy politician, was himself kidnapped in broad daylight the day after returning from Washington last year, where he denounced the constant violation of human rights by the Stroessner dictatorship before the Organisation of American States and the US media, and requested the US Government to end their consistent financial and military support for Stroessner.)

Under Stroessner Paraguay has for long been a refuge for embezzlers and financial tricksters from all over the world. In more recent years the country has also become an international haven for fascist groups of which the recently-arrived former Nicaraguan President Somoza and his 20-person entourage are just the latest and most well-known examples. Already residing in Paraguay are German Nazis, Croatian and Italian fascists, Chilean terrorists and World Anti-Communist League cronies. Most important in the long term however are the sinister links being forged between Stroessner's regime and South Africa.

After the Second World War, many hundreds of Nazis from Europe sought refuge in Paraguay in isolated agricultural colonies. Of these the most infamous is Dr. Joseph Mengele, the 'angel of death' at Auschwitz concentration camp, who is featured in the best-selling novel and film *The Boys from Brazil*. Following the abduction of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina, Mengele left that country and crossed over to Paraguay in May 1959. He was granted Paraguayan citizenship in November, as number 809, without even bothering to use an assumed name.

Since 1964 the governments of West Germany and Israel have repeatedly requested the extradition of Mengele but without success. According to *Time* magazine Mengele serves as an advisor to the Paraguayan police and frequently travels to remote areas where indigenous peoples are being hunted down and reduced to slave labour. In December

1977 Laino, in a motion to Parliament, requested an enquiry into the granting of Paraguayan nationality to Mengele, but Stroessner's ruling Colorado Party blocked the motion. On 12 June 1979 a local paper ABC published a statement by Simon Wiesenthal in Vienna that he was going to ask the United Nations to obtain the extradition of Mengele from Paraguay. Dr. Miguel Angel Bestard, the number two man in the infamous Ministry of the Interior then denied that Mengele was in Paraguay.

Despite this denial, international pressure continued to mount in the weeks leading up to Stroessner's celebration on 15 August of 25 years of dictatorial rule in Paraguay. On 3 August 57 US men sent him a telegram protesting his continued protection of Mengele and on 12 August the Paraguayan Supreme Court formally revoked Mengele's citizenship, after finding him guilty of war crimes, something which took them seventeen years to do. Any doubts that the decision did not reflect any change of heart by Stroessner were dispelled days later with the news that another war criminal, Gustav Franz Wagner, released after the Brazilian Government had rejected a West German request for extradition, had crossed into Paraguay.

In August 1977 another wanted Nazi, former SS Captain Eduard Roschmann, 'the Butcher of Riga' whose atrocities are retold in Frederick Forsyth's *The Odessa File*, died in an Asuncion hospital. In the few days before his identity was established, Emilio Wolff, a former concentration camp inmate and a member of Paraguay's tiny Jewish community, swore to the press that he could recognise Roschmann if he passed him in the street. The same night his statements were published, Wolff's home was sprayed with bullets from a passing car.

More evidence of a continuous neo-Nazi presence in Paraguay is supplied by periodic announcements in the official press of visits to Stroessner by Col. Hans Rudel — Luftwaffe pilot and Hitler's most decorated officer and a well-known neo-Nazi in the West German army who was the central figure in a recent scandal surrounding a Nazi war veterans' reunion, staged with the knowledge of German army chiefs in November 1976. And on 21 April last year neo-Nazis in Paraguay organised a public meeting on Rudolph Hess. Also of note, during the past four years the von Thyssen steel barons of West Germany have been buying up large tracts of land in Paraguay.

Through the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) with headquarters in South Korea and today largely funded by Saudi Arabia, Stroessner maintains contacts with ultra-right wing organisations in Europe and the rest of Latin America. In April this year Paraguay hosted the twelfth Congress of the WACL, with 400 delegates from 81 countries taking part. The Congress elected as

WACL's new President Dr Juan Manuel Frutos, top man among Paraguay's anti-communists and head of Stroessner's Rural Welfare Institute, which has been the main organisation used to maintain the grossly unequal system of land tenure in Paraguay.

Among the foreign 'guests' at the meeting were Thailand's Gen. Prapham Kulapichit, an anti-guerrilla expert, Liberia's obscure former Minister of Justice Lawrence Morgan, Uruguay's Army Chief-of-Staff General Hugo Medina, Spain's head of the fascist party Fuerza Nueva, Blas Pinar, and Philippine Catholic Cardinal Archbishop Julio Rosales, a veteran participant in WACL meetings who considers that martial law in his country — which has taken the lives of thousands — is justified by the communist threat. Delegates were quick to condemn what they called 'Carter-Communism'.

More important than the grandiose meetings which it holds, are the contacts which WACL encourages between its member organisations. Carlos Barbeiro Filho, the Brazilian president of the South American division of WACL operates a finance company in Asuncion, Financiera Urunday, which acts as a conduit for laundering 'dirty money' from Saudi Arabia and South Korea through Paraguay's completely free foreign exchange market to anywhere else in the world. He also arranges training courses in Taipei for Paraguayan police.

In December 1977, Paraguay's section of Interpol arrested Elio Massagrande and Gaetano Orlando, heads of the fascist organisation Ordine Nuovo, wanted in Italy for ordering the July 1976 murder of a magistrate Vittorio Occorsio in the centre of Rome. However, they were released days later and have been living freely in Paraguay ever since. That there was pressure from above to release them is hardly surprising considering that it was Stroessner himself who invited Mirko Tremaglia, leader of the neo-fascist Movimento Social Italiano to lecture to the youth wing of his ruling Colorado Party in September 1977.



Another fascist organisation which uses Paraguay as a 'safe base' is the ultra-right Croatian autonomy movement which has waged terrorist war against the Government of President Tito in Yugoslavia for many years. The original contact was made in July 1973 by Croatian extremists with Stroessner's entourage during his private visit to Bavaria to visit the birthplace of his father in Hof, near the Czechoslovak border. The Croatians were seeking refuge following an attack on the Yugoslav Embassy in Stockholm. Ten were granted asylum in Paraguay, ostensibly hired to train Stroessner's personal bodyguard, the Battalion Escolta.

Tony Zarisch, alias Casimiro Weiler, their leader, opened a karate school and was soon training Paraguayan police in 'self defence' at the Department of Investigations — Stroessner's infamous torture centre. One of the Croat extremists granted asylum, Jozo Damjanovic in June 1976 shot and killed Uruguay's Ambassador to Paraguay Carlos Abdala as he walked in the city centre. The killer had mistaken him for the Yugoslav Ambassador accredited to Paraguay who was in town to present his



Veteran Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal

credentials to Stroessner! Although Zarisch and the others were arrested at the time, their pull with top authorities is so strong that they were soon released and are still operating from Paraguay. Two of them, Milo Baresic and Ivan Vujicevic were later hired as personal bodyguards to Paraguay's Ambassador to the United States, Mario Lopez Escobar, which enabled them to travel widely on diplomatic passports. Their continuing terrorist activities, mostly based in Paraguay, have been under investigation by the F.B.I. recently and in July they were handed over to the US authorities for an alleged assault in New York in March 1978.

Also residing in Paraguay is the Chilean hit group which, under the command of Gen. Roberto Viaux was responsible for murdering Gen. Rene Schneider in Chile in October 1970. Viaux regularly visits the group in Paraguay which operates under the cover of FEGESA, a cattle auction company ostensibly owned by a German named Ernesto Gehre.



Since April 1974 when Stroessner, with a 100-strong Paraguayan delegation, figured as the first non-African head of State to visit South Africa in 20 years, economic and political relations between the two countries have expanded rapidly. After this visit South Africa agreed to finance the construction of Stroessner's

new Palace of Justice and a 14 storey Foreign Ministry building with soft loans totalling US \$10 million. In January 1975 a 14 man South African economic mission led by Foreign Minister Brand Fournie tied up a financial package for US \$22 million in loans to the National Development Bank and for credit lines to the Army Engineers' Command for importing South African fertilisers and road-making equipment. The team's one visit outside Asuncion was to the Department of Itapua, the southeastern agricultural strong hold of Paraguay's wealthy German community, most of whom settled in the country after 1945.

In August of 1975 South Africa's head of State Vorster visited Paraguay with a group of top officials, most of whom figured in the 'Muldergate' scandal — Chancellor Dr Hilgard Muller, Foreign Minister Brand Fournie and State Security Chief HH Van der Bergh. In this first official visit to South America Vorster met with all his Ambassadors in the Western hemisphere in Asuncion and signed additional loans to various Paraguayan Government agencies. And at the height of the Muldergate scandal in March this year, the head of Intelligence of the Armed Forces in South Africa, Major-General Pieter Willen Van der Westhuizen made a surprise trip to confer with Stroessner in Asuncion. He was accompanied by what were described as his 'Paraguayan military aides' — Cnel. Dionisio Chaves Altumann and Cnel. Dr. Victor Boettner, both Paraguayan army officials of German extraction.

Relations with the regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia are also on the increase. Already the illegal processing of Rhodesian tobacco by a Paraguayan company La Vencedora, for later re-exporting to Holland, has been denounced to the UN Sanctions Committee. The pro-Government press waxes eloquent in its welcoming for White Rhodesians, such as in this editorial from ABC newspaper, Paraguay's leading daily on 6 October, 1976, "Among the countries which could receive the Rhodesians, ours is one of the best. Physical reasons — good land, excellent climate, a small population: political reasons — stability: and legal reasons — laws protecting immigrants and foreign capital. All these add up to Paraguay's being of interest to those Rhodesians who decide to leave their country." And Paraguay has opened an Information Office in Windhoek, Namibia for Whites interested in emigrating to South America.

Culture and trading links between the two countries have increased rapidly, military ties are also strong. The South African military mission in Paraguay is second only to Brazil in size and the second-in-command of the Paraguayan army, General Andres Rodriguez, whose involvement in heroin smuggling to the USA caused a diplomatic row with the US Government in 1971, recently made a tour of South African military bases. The Apartheid regime has already begun to supply the Stroessner armed forces with military hardware on concessionary payment terms.

More recently the international link between the two regimes was cemented with the inauguration of Paraguay's Embassy in Pretoria. A Paraguayan priest was flown there especially to bless the structure. Not surprisingly the spacious building which covers an area of 1,000 sq. metres was an outright gift from the South African Government.

Carry on struggling

If the only possibility of change in Italy is linked to change in the Communist Party, will Lotta Continua address its debate more towards the PCI? Lotta Continua interview.....

What is Lotta Continua's view of the Historic Compromise?

The Historic Compromise was a theory put over by the secretary of the Communist Party in 1973 after the coup d'etat in Chile. From the Chilean experience, the Communist Party worked out that you couldn't have in Italy — as you had in Chile — a government without the Christian Democrats. That was the institutional view of the thing.

Then there was a sort of philosophical theory which said that revolution in a highly industrialised country was possible only with the real forces that counted in the society — in Italy they were the communist forces, the socialist forces, and the Catholic ones. Then they made a little sophisticated somersault, saying the Catholic forces were Christian Democrats. In that they changed a lot from what had been the line of the Communist Party.

Now, we always opposed this theory. In fact, Lotta Continua had a strange life because when it was born it was not very much interested in finding an institutional way in which we could be involved. We were very interested at the beginning in 1969 only in social struggles — student struggles, and the assembly line workers' struggles which were widespread in Italy in 1969. So our problem was to make the government fall, not to make a government.

In 1975 we supported the Communist Party. In 1976 we went into the election with all the revolutionary left of Italy united in an electoral group called Democrazia Proletaria. We put everything into that election, we expected a lot. But we didn't get much. We got 1.5 per cent of the votes, six deputies, and one of them was a Lotta Continua one. The result of the election was a big vote for the Communist Party — 34.4 per cent — and a big result for the Christian Democrats, 38.8. It was a real shock for the extreme left, for everybody. A lot of people dropped out.

How and why was Lotta Continua dissolved?

We had an extraordinary congress in November 1976 in which the organisation dissolved. This is the first case example of a revolutionary organisation disappearing and deciding not to continue. But you were only founded the year before, weren't you?

Yes, but the organisation was built in 1969. At the beginning of the 1970's it was fairly widespread in the north, and we sent a lot of militants to the south where we had fantastic experiences with unemployed struggles and with the new struggles, for example in the new factories that were being built.

Then we had a section that was involved only in work with soldiers, the supposed 'proletarians in uniform.' For example, in 1974 we called for a general strike in the barracks and some places did answer. We worked in support of the divorce referendum. Every year the revolutionary left showed its force in a national demonstration — we always had something like 80,000 - 100,000 people.

But in 1975, at the congress, a small part of the organisation split, from the left, saying you needed a more military way of taking advantage of the situation. Many of the people who had built up the prison network also split, the people who tried to pose the question of criminality in a political way. They formed the first Proletarian Armed Nuclei, with the theory that the criminal act and especially robbery was in fact a reappropriation in the Marxist term, so you didn't need to put it into politics because it was already political.

Many people were killed by the police or by blowing themselves up making bombs and the ones who remained joined the Red Brigades.

This was the situation at our 1976 Congress. The meeting was dominated by the workers, especially from Milan and Turin, and the women. The workers said: 'we've had enough of being told what we've got to do, because we can't translate these slogans into action, so we attack the intellectual leadership of the organisation first.' The women were well prepared and they did in fact carry the congress. They attacked the principle, we called it the 'centrality', of the working class, saying that it is not the only centrality and that feminism can't accept the centrality of the working class because it means always being subordinate to the mass.

At the end you had a sort of Shakespearian finale in which all the leadership was called onto the platform to answer for its faults, people screaming. The only thing left was the paper.

What did you do with it? The paper always had a difficult life. It went on for two or three months publishing the story of the Congress, with debates and so on. We didn't know what to do with this paper, you see. It was the voice of the party, but there was no party anymore, and everyone was going a different way. So we decided to open the paper up. For example, older papers on the revolutionary left do publish letters but only in a short space, with the answer from the editor saying: 'No you are wrong, this is the right way to do it.' So we decided to publish every kind of letter we had from comrades. Many people wrote of their experiences as in a confession. They were very moving.

Who now reads Lotta Continua?

We've got very accurate statistics. I mean, we've got fundamentally two kinds of readership. One is very young people, from 15 years old, let's say, to 18, mostly schoolboys. And the other is the older militants, let's say from 25 to 35.

The paper has got a very good reputation, so we also have the intellectuals and the radical chic writing in it — famous writers.

But the real force is the students. You can go on a bus and you see the people reading it. And then you can see the page, for example in the Rome edition, of small ads, many of them saying: 'I've seen you on that bus line at nine o'clock' and so on — absolutely incredible.

This readership is opposed to the Historical Compromise because we've seen it in action. And to see it in action means two things. One is stopping all working class struggles. The trade unions dominated by the Communist Party advanced the slogan of austerity — in this moment of crisis the working class must be austere. So no salary increases, abandon all issues of new kinds of work, new ways of living, health in the factory. Inside the factory the trade union leaders say: 'We are in crisis, we want to produce more.' All this was supposed to give jobs to the brothers in the south.

The other point was the attitude towards democracy. You could really see the authoritarian face of the Communist Party on these occasions, towards intellectuals, towards the working class, towards students. You could see what the paper *Unita* was like. You know, if you had to do a joke Russian paper, a sort of Breznev style daily paper, you could have *Unita*. And then there was all the conformism of the Communist Party — the value of the family and so on.

But what kind of class base does Lotta Continua have for social change in Italy? Does the paper have a line? Does it act as a mobilising force?

Not in that way. We don't put out an editorial saying 'This is our issue.' But we do set out the problem, try to enquire into problems, get letters, encourage debate — and that usually has a mobilising effect. That happened, for example on ecological matters and with the nuclear thing.

The paper has also become a referral point from outside. We now have an important gay movement in Italy which is coming out quite rapidly. The gays have decided that *Lotta Continua* is their paper. Then there was big wave of strikes in November last year, against the union line. A sort of national struggle committee was set up which used the paper to debate the strike. Most of the things that are moving in society find in *Lotta Continua* a place in which they can get them across.

The line about which we had a very long period of difficult discussion, was over whether to provoke the reader — not to give the reader what he or she wanted in the paper but to try to make them react to what you are writing. The main argument over which this was tried — I think with success — was terrorism and armed struggle.

For example, on the first day after Moro was kidnapped the editorial was absolutely against the operation. After that some radio stations said *Lotta Continua* was no longer part of the movement and should be occupied. That went on for a year. What is your line on the Common Market?

The Common Market is not an issue in Italy. But we do have links with the French paper *Liberation* and a new paper in Germany called *Die Tageszeitung*. We will try next year to set up a joint European staff. Already we have shared the cost of sending people to Nicaragua and to Iran, and we published a long interview with the German Klein, a member of the RAF.

There are two or three things — one of which is anti-nuclear policy — in which European links are starting. Another is democratic issues — the convention on extradition of prisoners. Now there is the problem of European task forces for the Middle East. You had the American one first, and then you had Giscard saying 'I have a task force', and now you have a German one as well.



DENG XIAOPING SULLA AUTODETERMINAZIONE DEI POPOLI:

«TU MI DAI UNA CAMBOGIA A ME, IO TI DO UN VIETNAM A TE»

Gli USA e quasi tutti i paesi asiatici sostengono la posizione di Deng. L'URSS tace, ma la sua flotta continua le manovre e le truppe di complemento attaccano nello Yemen

I carabinieri in borghese hanno sparato da tre metri!

La scorta di Andreotti mentre lo confermano i risultati dell'autopsia sul corpo del medico romano Luigi Di Sarro.

ULTIMA ORA: il procuratore generale Pascualino avoca l'inchiesta.

Ciao Renzo!

In libertà provvisoria Renzo Filippetti, Carmela Della Rocca, impunita insieme a lui di favoreggiamento, costretta ancora alla latitanza (a pagina 3)

Roberto Scialabba

Un anno fa veniva ucciso dai fascisti. Oggi manifestazione a Roma (nell'interno)

Negli altoforni c'è ancora tanto posto

Un'intervista ad alcuni operai genovesi su come vorrebbero combattere il terrorismo e su quello che pensano degli estremisti. Esprimono una piccola ma molto significativa parte della realtà (in ultima)

«Libro Bianco» sul «male oscuro» e su chi non vuole chiarire

Nel paginone centrale la storia delle responsabilità della classe sanitaria napoletana. Una denuncia sulle terapie del Santobonaro. Alcune cartelle cliniche dimostrano che su alcuni bambini si è «sperimentato» alla cieca. A Napoli il cardinale Ursi espone le reliquie di S. Genesio ed invita i fedeli a pregare per i bambini e a sperare nel miracolo (nel paginone)

Di fronte alla cittadella nucleare

A Genova sabato e domenica si è svolto il convegno antinucleare organizzato dalla rivista «Rosso vivo». Referendum, moratoria, rapporto con gli operai che lavorano nel settore, energia alternativa. (nelle pagine interne)

«La cosa triste è che giusto e normale sembra a molti»

All'interno un'intervista ad Akescie Campanile

L'altra faccia della luna

Venerdì uscirà il quarto inserto sulla salute della donna. L'argomento di questa volta: le infezioni vaginali.



Mentre prosegue l'operazione cinque non cessa quella vietnamita in Camboja

Finiti rapimenti e misteriosi attentati: ritorno alla crisi di governo

Anziani costretti sempre più a questo stato di inferno. I comunisti nell'Espresso, mentre si infila la serie dei «misteri» di Stato «il numero delle potenziali vittime. L'Espresso, nel numero in edicola oggi, pubblica un altro servizio sulla vicenda che ha per protagonisti il giornalista iscritto alla DC di Roma, Maurizio Frosini, e il figlio «let» di un altro servizio. Frosini ha rivelato che Valerio, il figlio di un professore di Filosofia a Padova, di fatto è da questa a Milano e sta in un conflitto a fuoco. Un Piacenza è propiziato a che fare la rivelazione. Il figlio di Frosini è stato arrestato dal MSU. Frosini ha raccontato che un pregiudicato calabrese accompagnato da un sedicente avvocato e caporale missino lo assisteva e si rivelava ostile all'operazione. Il 14 febbraio Craxi ha convocato per la prima volta un meeting di dirigenti. Il meeting è stato convocato a Palazzo di Giustizia. Craxi ha convocato i dirigenti per

Would your policy as a paper be to call for mass mobilisation against that?

Yes, but it would be very difficult. This consumer anarchist way of life is widespread. If they put to you a cruel decision — not to have any petrol but risk a war against the Arabs, I should say the Italian attitude is not going to be so progressive.

If the only real possibility of change in Italy is linked to change in the Communist Party, will Lotta Continua address its debate more towards the PCI?

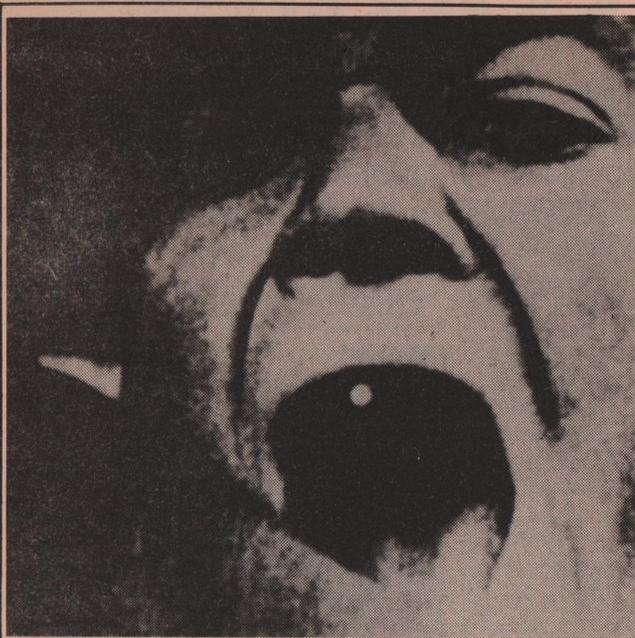
Yes. But, you see, what is in crisis is not only the Communist Party, but the conception of the political party, the party which gives you the answer for everything. It's a sort of crisis of identity. The Communist militants haven't got a goal to reach any more. So their militancy has collapsed.

You don't see the possibility of any large-scale independent organisation on the left outside the Communist Party?

Yes. What I see is fragments of organisations, not a new party, but people who organise themselves not on a general issue, but to achieve a particular thing. The attitude of the single person is to find an autonomous space: that could be organisation in the factories, in the town, in the district and so on.

But if we have to face an energy crisis in the winter I should say the Communist Party is going to take over again the leadership of all these movements, because there isn't anything else.

Can the paper survive? We have a lot of projects. We know we can reach 50,000 copies with better distribution, with local editions, things like that. So it's quite frustrating. We see there is a market, but we don't have the money to invest there. But we can stay the same.



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Feminist films



A Spanner in the Dream Machine

The Edinburgh Film Festival, now in its 33rd year, combines a distinguished international reputation with a good track record in screening feminist and socialist films. *Joanna Blythman* talked to *Lynda Myles*, Director of the Festival, and took a look at this year's films.

FEMINISM HAS BEEN a strand running through the film festival for many years now, Lynda Myles is herself a committed feminist and sees this not only as a matter of showing the right films but in terms of the organisation of the actual festival. Most of the people who work at the festival are women and feminists because it has become apparent over a number of years that women seem to stand up better to the strain of working often a 20 hour day. Apart from the practical aspect, however, they can create a strong supportive atmosphere in which to work.

A "feminist film", for Lynda Myles, is one which shows some commitment to a feminist position either in terms of its content or its form. Content is fairly explanatory, but the idea of form is more complicated. Lynda thinks that the work of Chantal Akerman, for example, illustrates this. Akerman gives space in her films to things which are almost never shown in that way, like the daily gestures of a woman. They are the lowest in the hierarchy of film images.

A kiss or a car crash come higher, and not coincidentally. It's because they are women's gestures that they count for so little. Lynda Myles feels that it's important that feminist film-makers make a departure from the commercial camera which tends to treat women in a voyeuristic way, almost as though it was shot through a key-hole.

One of the disappointing things about the Feminist and Socialist work that's coming out of Britain today, according to Lynda, is that there's so little of it, and

this is simply because of the problems involved in getting financial support for independent films. An American film, like *Harlan County*, for example could call upon a number of established sources for money. Likewise, one of this year's feminist films, *Abortion - from Knitting Needle to Political Swordplay*, made in The Netherlands, was given sub-titles at the expense of the Dutch government which meant that it could be shown abroad. But in Britain, not surprisingly, no such help is given.

True to form, this year's Film Festival has come up with yet another batch of goodies which deserve more than a second look.

The Power of Men is the Patience of Women Directed by Cristina Perincioli Germany 1978, is a powerful film which shows the problems encountered by a woman when she tries to escape from her violent husband. It was made with the co-operation of the women who live in the Berlin refuge for battered women, who act out their own experiences in a semi-documentary manner. Ideal for showing in Women's Aid Refuges or to provoke discussion on male violence against women. 76 minutes.

Abortion - from Knitting Needle to Political Swordplay Directed by Hillie Molenaar, The Netherlands 1978, documents the struggle for abortion rights in the Netherlands, starting in the late 1960's, and shows how it became a political issue dependent upon the politicians' hunger for power: it also

depicts the struggles of individual women and what it has meant to them both personally and politically. A useful film as a weapon in the campaign for free abortion on demand. 60 minutes.

Taking a Part Directed by Jan Worth, UK 1979, is an excellent film on the subject of prostitution, perhaps the first real feminist film on the subject. It centres on the experience of two girls from a working class background, and treats the fact that they are prostitutes as only one of a complete set of relevant issues: problems of being a single parent, the unrewarding nature and exploitation of traditional 'woman's work', and focuses on how an escape into fantasy can obscure any real understanding of reality and how to change it. 45 minutes.

Often During The Day a film by Joanna Davies, UK 1979, illustrates the boredom and repetitiveness of housework, by looking in minute detail at the kinds of habits and routines that we take for granted as part of our identities as women. It's set in a kitchen and uses this as a concept with which to analyse the ideology of the family and capitalist relations. 15 minutes.

The Spell of the Past Directed by Barbara Evans, UK 1979, is about a film director (male) who imagines that the women who work alongside him are witches (he is making a sexist film on the subject). It's very funny but at the same time deals with the serious issue of how men can find strong women very threatening. 25 minutes.

I Stand Here Ironing Directed by Midge McKenzie, USA 1979, is a mother's reflections as she works at her ironing board. The woman has raised her children on her own, and she thinks about the

Don't forget...

RED BOXES

see page 32

These boxes can be bought in any number of units up to one quarter page (i.e. eight boxes). They are intended for the movement in its broadest sense, and can be used to promote any and everything - from meetings, demonstrations, jobs, pamphlets, to sexpol, books - you name it.

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If you are at least one of those things - preferably more - or if you'd like to be, you'd be very welcome on the *Leveller* collective. We've got lots of big plans for the future and we'd like more people to join us. Enthusiasm is more important than experience and you're obviously a socialist, feminist, anarchist, communist, trotskyst, libertarian trouble-making dissident who shouldn't get on anybody's jury list or you wouldn't be reading this.

If that sounds about right for you, we're holding a special introductory open collective meeting on Saturday September 29 at 3pm. We'll introduce ourselves and give you some idea what the collective is like. And afterwards there'll be a party or some other form of merriment. Details from the office on 278 0146.

Adding a taste of reality

America's working class is largely invisible to British eyes. But Hollywood's latest offerings on the subject have not improved the picture. Nick Grant has been to the movies

If we try hard there is a tatty mosaic that can be composed from the bits. On TV there are the junkies and the honest cops *Kojak*, and the wise-cracking mini adults of *Fonz*, in the rural setting *The Waltons* toil effortlessly and countless gunslingers and cattle herders have achieved nobility. Documentary and news footage is usually concerned with spectacle (Three Mile Island), and matters of state (the energy crisis). But other than the struggles to maintain law 'n' order, strive for decent self-advancement, or simply make a fast buck, where are all the folks who produce the nation's wealth?

Well, if we look away from the small screen towards Hollywood of the late '70's, in its traditional guise as movie factory, we see an increasing number of scenarios firmly situated amongst the working class. They comprise big-budget feature films which have done well at the box office in the States, and have been released here on that basis.

I include films such as *Saturday Night Fever*, *Taxi Driver*, *The Deer Hunter* in this category.

The trouble is that these movies, whilst undeniably picturing a class both at work and at home, do not admit of workers seeing themselves as such. There is no sign of collective action bound by a conception of their class position. *ROCKY* is another such movie. They all highlight males alone in their class, who make it by and for themselves. They are just movies which show working class capitulation rather than attack.

But we have to be more circumspect than that. If we agree that trades unions are traditionally a form of expression for class con-

sciousness we must also look at the treatment Hollywood has dealt recent movies that centrally concern the unions. Most notable of these have been *Harlan County, USA*, *Blue Collar* and *Norma Rae*. There is also *F.I.S.T.* a piece of fictionalised labour history, where Stallone portrays a thinly disguised version of Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa. This film posits corrupt union officialdom as a modern evil, which has echoes in the three other movies.

Harlan County USA is far from being typical Hollywood fare. It is an independently produced documentary covering a major union dispute. Nevertheless it was amongst the top fifty grossing films listed in *Variety*, and won the Oscar for best documentary. Its distribution in Britain has been patchy although The Other Cinema has kept it going in London with runs at the Scala and the Ritzy. It has also reached the regional film theatres and been used at political meetings like those organised by the Socialist Worker Bookbus. It is a film remarkable both for its political stance and the circumstances of its making.

At the end of 1972 Arnold Miller, Mike Trbovich and Harry Patrick had emerged as leaders of a rank and file grouping within the United Mine Workers of America called Miners for Democracy. They campaigned on issues like local autonomy, the right to ratify contracts, black lung benefits and disablement compensation. Director Barbara Kopple was at first able to raise 9000 dollars. She then toured the coalfields with a paid crew gathering footage to cut for a promotional film to raise further funds. The reform leadership got in which encourag-

Robinson number thrown in. Worth seeing nevertheless. 107 minutes.
Scum Directed by Alan Clarke, UK 1979, a film of conditions in Her Majesty's borstals, made after the BBC banned its TV screening. Shows the level of institutionalised violence that is used to control the inmates and how this depends for its existence on a hierarchy of male violence which brutalises both staff and inmate alike. Heavy going, but very necessary. Hopefully, it might go on wider release. 96 minutes.
Nicaragua September 1978 Directed by Frank Diamand, Netherlands 1978, documents the struggle against Somoza that broke out in September 1978, and includes interviews both with members of the Sandinista liberation front and ordinary people who had been on the receiving end of Somoza's retaliation. The film also provides an important historical and economic background to the current situation. 41 minutes.
For any information about hiring these films contact: The Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road Edinburgh. (031) 228 6382/3.

ed the workers at Brookside East Kentucky to join the UMWA. The mine owner Duke Power said no, and the new leaders had their first fight on their hands. She went down to Harlan with chief cinematographer Hart Perry, filming, and gaining the confidence of the local community, who later took part in major editorial and research duties. Often in strategy meetings at the Brookside Women's Club they would be asked directly, irrespective of whirring cameras, if they could be relied on to appear on the coming picket.

The women's intervention was crucial to the outcome of the strike, in the same way as the cameras somewhat dimmed the violent urges of the scabs and police. Duke Power held out with the support of scabs initially, but later a court injunction limited the picket numbers to six workers. The women's fantastic response was to organise strike support fund raising, and to 'man' the pickets themselves. Tense scenes of confrontation climax with the fatal shooting of a young miner Lawrence Jones. Under pressure from Washington the company gave in and signed the UMWA recognition contract. They were out again though when Power refused to sign the 1974 national coal contract.

A number of leading players emerge from the cast of real life characters, which in part explains the unprecedented popularity for this type of movie. Lois Scott, a miner's wife, plays a leading role in picket organisation, and brandishes the gun she keeps in her ample bosom as a measure of her commitment. Her arch enemy as we the audience see it is Basil Collins, the mine foreman and leader of the hired scabs. He has the pot-bellied, bow legged swagger of a degenerate John Wayne, and spouts a similar line in anti-Communism. He is really all we know of the strikebreakers, as they rightfully distrusted the crew.

Much additional footage is interwoven throughout the chronological exposition of the dispute. There is an interview with early UMWA president John L. Lewis on the need to organise, and with doctors and retired miners on the horrific effects of black lung. There are scenes of Jock Yablonski's challenge to Tony Boyle's leadership in 1969, Yablonski's subsequent assassination alongside his wife and daughter, and Boyle's indictment for complicity, Miller's leadership of the Miners for Democracy, which ousted Boyle in '72, and his record in the reformed UMWA are treated critically. The film ends by saying that miners, and by extension all workers, are involved in a continuous struggle to defend and advance their interests. Rank and file miners have waged a successful political fight.

Besides a crack about how, at the end of a day in the mines, all workers are black, the question of racism is not central to *Harlan County*. What is so infuriating then about *Blue Collar* is that racism, together with union corruption, comes to divide a trio of workers who are on the verge of something good. That 'something good' ought to have been an organised response to a lot of hassle. They work in a Detroit car plant with unsafe conditions, racist supervision, backlogged grievances and conniving union officials. For Jerry (Harvey Keitel) and Zeke (Richard Pryor) the pressure doesn't stop there. They have families. They've got to find the TV rental, pay for braces on growing teeth, put food in the kids' stomachs. They are pincered in the claws of modern consumer capitalism. 'Not only are they required to break their backs on the line to subsist, they are driven to spend that money, and more, to consume the products that make their down-time recuperative, a sanctuary from the job.'



'Blue Collar'

This kind, rather than the realism of their working conditions, is what is harrowing in the film. The filming was done at Checker Motors plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which produces fifty vehicles per day. The major truck and car plants assemble fifty to sixty per hour. We never see a fully moving assembly line, nor the many women and workers of diverse nationalities, who make up a typical-Detroit workforce. No matter — the picture is still vivid. But writer-director Paul Sharder, fresh from his script success on *Taxi Driver*, fudges it. The vital questions raised are side-stepped and treated with depressingly melodramatic solutions. They're pissed off with work so they decide to rob the safe at their union HQ. They bungle that in comic fashion, but come away with a ledger that has blackmail potential. They then begin squabbling about how best to capitalise on this. But . . . somebody arranges Smokey's asphyxiation in the spraying room, and Zeke is bought off with a shop steward's position. Jerry is hounded by a clean looking FBI agent for the bank job, following a tip-off from someone, probably Zeke. The racial split is final when, after Jerry has accused him of selling out by accepting the shop steward's job, Zeke tells him that as a black he is unlikely to have another such opportunity: 'You're my friend. But you're thinking white.'

An observation of Smokey's made half-way through the movie is reiterated over the closing credits. 'Everything they do — the way they pit the lifer against the new boy, the old against the young, the black against the white — is meant to keep us in our places.' The film has undeniably defined a problem, but who are the *they* that Smokey is on about? Like *F.I.S.T.*, union corruption seems to be the evil at work. There is no sign of criticism of the company or government. Few fellow workers are involved in the expression of their grievances. There is no place for even a caricatured community or political activist. The value of the film therefore is limited. It serves as a graphic indictment for the bourgeois audience of how the other half lives.

And for those industrial workers masochistic enough to spend their leisure time reliving their daily grind, there are no hints of an alternative and how to fight for it. Ultimately the film, though absorbing, is anti-working class, anti-union and pessimistic. In it Hollywood is able to portray the United Automobile Workers as the Mafia of the seventies, the corporate bad guys.

Which brings us to *Norma Rae*. A simple reading of the film could leave you with the feeling that at last we have a popular movie where the union wins out, and does so as a result of shop-floor persistence and organisation. Norma Rae works in a southern textile mill to support herself and two kids, all of whom live with her parents. They too work at the mill and it is her mother's deafness that prompts Norma's first run-in with the management. She is bought off with a checker's job until she realises that nobody,

'The best form of criticism is trying to make your own film'

including her father, will speak to her. So she goes back on the machines and starts paying more attention to Reuben, a New York union full-timer, who has been leafletting the gates every morning.

She becomes the militant in a small group that he has convinced need to fight for recognition. A heated, though peaceful, battle ensues inside the factory during which Norma Rae is sacked. However she and Reuben stand outside and smile as a cheer goes up inside the factory. A victorious ballot result has been announced, Reuben moves on, his mission accomplished.

But there is another thread which mars all this, concerning the personal changes she goes through. At the start she is sexually independent, if still subject to abuse. She is under attack from her father for answering the door to so many different men. She then marries a guy from the factory who wins her over with the news that he has a new

job and a heart of gold. He then disappears as a character. She is bemused by Reuben's other-worldliness — he is the first Jew she has known, he's a city boy, reads a lot. She progresses to a celibate, spiritualistic relationship with him. By the end she enjoys telling him that she now has her own copy of Dylan Thomas, having first come across him amongst Reuben's gear in the motel room-cum-office. Surreptitiously her personal life has been brought in check. Reuben has not only sold her the union, which he has been doing in spiritual terms from church altars, but redefined her sexuality.

It is this angle which Twentieth Century Fox are exploiting in their promotion. 'It's a film with a certain amount of soft centre', said Oliver Groom at their London office, 'and we'll play up the performance of Sally Fields.' There's no getting away from the aptness of casting her for this part, but that's not all of the story. Following the box office disasters over here of *F.I.S.T.* and *Blue Collar* they are being cagey. 'We're trying to play down the union angle in our campaign,' Groom confessed. He estimated that over 600,000 punters will have seen the film by the new year, plugged as the story of a determined yet vulnerable woman. Thus a potentially important movie is messed over first by director Martin Ritt's sentimentalised treatment, and then by carefully worded programming.

It is clear then that Hollywood is comfortable coping with the working class as a subject. It can do so by a variety of ploys. The second-chance escapism of *Rocky* and *Saturday Night Fever* at least makes for an enjoyable night out. Where class consciousness creeps in it's at the expense of exploiting fears about evil unions, the inevitability of racial divisions and the eternally male definition of female sexuality. *Harlan County* stands alone as a movie that combines narrative interest, political analysis and, at least in the States, popular consumption. It also serves as a clear rebuttal to those reformist critics who believe that because it so dominates the popular market we must savour what radicalism Hollywood offers us. The best form of criticism is trying to make your own film.

Continued from previous page

damage her struggle for survival in the early years has done to the relationship between herself and her daughter. 20 minutes.

Northern Lights Directed by John Hansson and Rob Nilsson, a rare example of American independent political cinema, depicts the lives and struggles of the Scandinavian immigrant farmers in the American wheatbelt in 1915, and in particular the emergence of the Non-Partisan League, a radical, grassroots political movement. Combines a clear political message, with some starkly beautiful photography (black and white) and a real feel for the period. 93 minutes.
Army of Lovers, or Revolt of the Perverts Directed by Rosa von Praunheim, West Germany, 1979, looks at the various strands in the Gay movement in the United States, ranging from Gay Quakers to Gay Nazis (No, not Gays against the Nazis). No doubt comprehensive, the film is fascinating, but a bit short on clear analysis apart from the odd Tom



Review - Paul Tickell Subculture: the meaning of style. Dick Hebdige. Methuen. £2.75.

As Hebdige says, culture used to mean the high stuff — “the best that’s been thought and said”. Today it can also refer to the manner in which people live out their daily lives — eating habits, clothes, modes of entertainment etc. In this sense, culture more or less means leisure time.

For the working-class this time isn’t ‘free’. As much as the working day, workers’ playtime must be seen to be ruled by the ethos of production and the ideas of the ruling class: by bourgeois ideology. In this way the ruling class maintains a cultural as well as a political domination.

But this domination or hegemony, as the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci called it, is not a totally successful smothering operation. Just as political struggle threatens the state, so in daily life there can be opposition to the dominant mass-cultural ideologies. Hence, subcultures.

Bourgeois ideology is used to dealing with a challenge, especially in the area of high culture whose enemies — within which have been the European avant-gardes and their ancestors the Romantics. Their intellectual dissent was frequently backed up at the level of appearances — of style — by their outrageous clothes.

According to Hebdige the point about contemporary British subcultures is that the conventions they flout are those of mass, not high, culture and that those breaking the codes of behaviour and dress are predominantly sections of the young male working-class. Enter, in the 1950s, the teds.

The teds’ emergence, especially in south and east London, can be explained in terms of the post-war boom and the ‘redevelopment’ of many working-class housing areas. It can also be seen as a response to the institutions which young people find themselves squeezed between — the Family, the Workplace, the Law.

The subcultures which have followed on the teds — mods, rockers, skins, punks — have similarly been a response to these institutional pressures. The problems they face are resisted and “magically resolved” by creating a temporary group identity.

But the group identity that results varies according to historical circumstances. For instance, the Workplace — or the lack of it — has a much more pessimistic emphasis in punk than it does in mod. Again, punk may well rock against racism, but teds were on the reactionary side of the barricades in the 1958 Nottingham

Hill race riots.

In fact, in subculture Hebdige finds a “phantom history of race relations”. Unfortunately, he doesn’t place this history in its full context. In the late eighteenth century, during the early phase of imperialism, the Romantics, responding to the social disruption which capitalism brought in its wake, found consolation in the wholesome, pastoral myth of the Noble Savage. This myth became part of the narcissistic canon of the aristocratic French dandy who sighed after the poise and pose of Indian chiefs as recorded in engravings and illustrations. The dandy’s lumpen imitator was the Parisian *apache*.

By the mid-twentieth century this White Redskin had changed into Norman Mailer’s ‘White Negro’ or American Hipster. The image of the urban working-class black was regarded as something worth emulating: he seemed, to Bohemian elements and white youth, so much more stylish and cool in the way he lived out his alienated existence. Adding to this romanticised notion of the ghetto experience was the fact that black jazz, blues and R&B collided with white musical forms to provide the foundation for the vast post-war market in popular music.

If Hebdige is short on this general background, he’s hot on the specifics of the British situation. Thus in the late 60s skinheads adopted ska music and elements of West Indian dress, because they admired what they saw as the cohesion and ‘defensively organised collectivity’ of the black ghetto: the skinheads themselves seemed to be hankering after a thoroughly static, conservative, macho version of working-class ‘community’.

Hebdige sees the more recent punks as white Rastas. But, unlike the Rastas, they don’t even have a mythical Zion to return to. Their mental state of permanent exile comes of their nihilistic attitude towards the current crisis: No Future.

For Hebdige punk has so far proved the most subversive of the subcultures. Subcultures have always ‘exploited’ commodities by giving them a new meaning, like the teds with their Edwardian jackets and the mods with conventional suits. But punk carried this sort of re-appropriation to absurdist extremes: the rips and tears and bondage gear served as a dark parody of commod-

ity fetishism. In every dandy there’s a clown trying to get out.

Where does all this lead? Not too far. Histories of subcultures are studies in the moment. And moments soon pass: subverted commodities are turned into the packaged rebellion of mass fashion commodities. Revolt into style — and fizzle out in it too.

The media help take care of that. After their initial moral panic, the trivialisation/naturalisation process can begin — punks or skins or whatever are harmless after all. It’s just the kids letting off steam etc.

Even though subcultures are easily incorporated and sometimes have a reactionary component, a movement like punk, however briefly, still managed to undermine dominant ideology. Subcultures expose the cracks in the cultural monolith and in this sense can be called utopian: although they reflect the political confusions of the working-class, they are negative glimpses of how things are and how they might be.

Students of appearance are in good company. Marx himself recognised that clothes signify more than individual taste. They also indicate a person’s class status and politics. This is why he saw fit to comment upon those progressive elements of the French bourgeoisie who, during the Revolution, strove for a constitution modelled upon the Roman republic and appropriately dressed in a ‘Roman’ fashion. In 1789 the more radicalised lower-class Bras-Nus and Sans-Culottes didn’t go for this style, which probably makes them the forbears of those ragged-arsed misanthropists, the punks...

Before all this is dismissed as frivolous and beyond all common-sense, a final point from Hebdige. He sees common-sense itself as the product of the British post-war politics of consensus. Subcultures, even the regressive skinhead one, challenge this consensus, not to mention that peculiar brand of Anglo-Saxon puritanism which often goes with it. At the same time subcultures reject the myth of classlessness and throw right back in the face of the media that image of the working class as simple, sentimental clods.

Hebdige turns at least one piece of conventional wisdom — common-sense? — on its head: you can judge a book by its cover.

BOOKS

While the Zimbabwe chin-wag was on the go in London, one small occurrence undermined Muzorewa’s insistence that a ‘new-look’ country now exists there. Zed Press are primarily a third-world anti-imperialist publishing imprint, as well as the Leveller’s landlords (*don’t worry we’ll get the rent to you soon*). They’re best known perhaps for their fine Pan Africa Diary 1979.

Imagine their faces when they heard the new look Zimbabwe admin had issued an Emergency Powers Act order to ban all Zed Press books, but specially that Diary.

Zed have written to the mighty Bishop himself asking what the problem is, and astutely observing the ban was perhaps the work of the still white police Special Branch acting without referring the matter upstairs. Says a lot too for Salisbury bureaucracy if it’s taken them till August to spot a 1979 Diary not quite to their liking.

At press time, no reply yet from The Bish.

More titbits from the world of boox. Lawrence & Wishart have quietly slipped out volume eleven of the massive fifty-part collection of Marx and Engels’ writings, and are pretty chirpy about *The Novel and the People*, by Ralph Fox, who was killed in the Spanish Civil War. This re-issue sorts out the British novel from a Marxist viewpoint.

We are grateful too for the informant who told us about Hutchinson’s book on USA GI’s in Britain during the war.

Back Pages

We learn here that Foreign Secretary in 1942 Anthony Eden remarked about US troops with a less than white face there should be less of them in the UK because ‘Their health would be likely to suffer during the English winter.’

The US Army then capped this by issuing instructions about not mixing too much with ‘coloured troops’ — ‘They have not the white man’s ability to think, act and plan... they respond to sympathetic treatment... too much freedom, too wide associations with white men tend to make them lose their heads.’ As Andrew Young would appreciate, that’s only 35 years ago.

THEATRE

A new play by Nicholas Wright, *The Gorky Brigade*, started at London’s Royal Court on September 5. Wright’s idea is potentially a strong one, even if the straight press slammed the play. It’s an impressionistic view of changes in the Soviet Union between 1920-27, the decayed romantic hopes and ideals with the rise of Stalin, the end of experimentation and the re-establishment of authoritarian conformity. All seen in an experimental colony for orphaned strays of the revolution and civil war. Top performance by Paul Curran as Maxim Gorky, whose maudlin humanism and moral compromises ended up saving nobody from Stalin.

Lots of Brecht, Meyerhold and ‘alienation’, but in the end what is it saying? Somehow there has to be more to genuine revolutionary fervour, its failings and achievements.

Several rather good artists have come out of the Northern Ireland war, most notably Cormac, and these early graphics (artist not named) continue the high standards.

ROCK

A bumper music section this month for you, gang. First off, RAR are taking their road show round the land over the next couple months with the theme *Dance and Defend*, to raise loot for the various anti-racist defence funds.

On 27 Sept. it’s at Chesterfield’s Conservative Club (*have I got this right?*), the 28th at Barnsley’s Portcullis Club, 29th Sheffield Polytechnic, 2nd Oct in York, 3rd Leeds, 4th Bradford, 4th Manchester, and 6th Huddersfield. Bands are different at each, and more venues for October will be sorted out.

There’s nothing you can’t Rock Against these days. After the new Rock Against Recruitment launch this month, there’s Rock against The Nuclear Holocaust with A.D. 1984 at the Greyhound in west London on Sept. 22. Maybe we should run a competition for the most far-fetched Rock Against whatever. I say Rock Against the Slugs in My Kitchen, but there you go.

We think Recommended Records are Good Eggs, so we’re pleased to note they’ve now got their own record label, and their first two releases full of whacky presentation gimmickry. The new records are *Faust and Faust So Far*. RR’s statement of intent is noble: ‘We will go for ‘classical’ pressings, high quality covers, etc. to show some respect for the musicians, artists and listeners for whom we work.’

‘Our policy will be one of slow expansion with a small and carefully controlled output of high quality records.’ More

power to yer elbows. Phone them at 01-622 8834.

The Leveller’s new ‘enfant terrible’ Adam has the following measured observations to offer on a new Object Records disc.

About time; the new EP from Passage. Sitting here with my Radio One pen, I’m thinking fucking great. When I saw Passage live, they just seemed into themselves, real analogy, and they pissed me off. But this EP changed my mind about them.

It’s not bad to bop to. The lyrics are interesting if not overtly political, but then what does that mean. Neat cover design too. ‘Wish we had a few more records like this here — we’ve got a record player in the Leveller’s office now’

Subtle our Adam, huh? A concert to launch the publication of a new women’s song book, *My Song Is My Own*, will be held on Sunday October 14th at 8 pm, at the ICA, The Mall, London SW1. The concert will feature Frankie Armstrong and others and is set to be something of a celebratory women’s movement musical event.

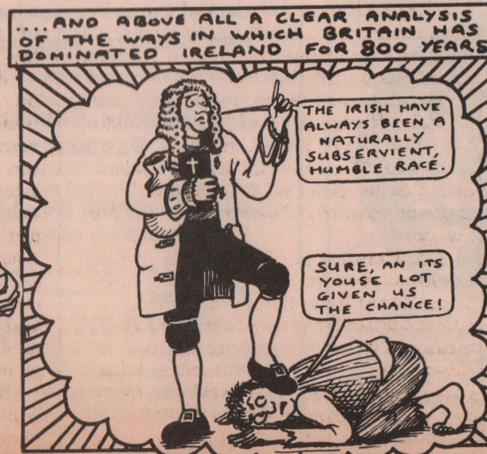
The book is a collection of 100 songs spanning some 400 years of history (footnotes explain the origins and interpretation of some of the songs), interspersed with pix. Nothing like it has appeared before.

Tickets for the concert can be bought from Pluto Press, Unit 10 Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd, London NW1, or from the door at the ICA.

Further info.: Gail Chester 722 0141.

The Co-op, like us all, needs money though. They want to build up a resource centre of information on Irish history, and how British political commentators and historians have viewed Ireland.

The Co-op wants help and information too, and can be contacted through 224 Digbeth High Street, Brum 12. Not clear though what political affiliation if any is behind the Co-op.



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Defend Rudolf Bahro: a conference organised by Critique. 12/13th October 1979. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Details from Critique, 31 Clevedon Rd, Glasgow G12 0PH.



AT EASE
 Counselling service for military personnel urgently needs volunteers (particularly in London) to help service people know and use their rights. A training weekend for all volunteers will be held mid-October. Contact Phil at 201 Slade Lane, Manchester 19 2AE 061-224 3003.

The Politics of Matriarchy—by the Matriarchy Study Group. All you ever wanted to know about women's liberation politics and the Goddess. Send 90p + 20p p&p to 15 Guilford St, London WC1.



DO YOU REMEMBER the revolution? We've a special sale of "underground" papers from the 1970s. Black Dwarf, IT, Idiot, Grass Eye, Frenz, Come and buy a memory. Grass Roots Books, 1 Newton St, Manchester 1. tel 061-236 3112.

I didn't vote Tory
 "I didn't vote Tory" popular lapel badge from the Morning Star. Two for 25p, ten for £1 or fifty for £4 (post inc.). Cash with order please to Star Market, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JX.

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Back Pages

If you're into Keeping Jazz Smelly, you'll have the ideal opportunity on 22 Sept as the East London Jazz Society gets underway with a session at the Brady Club in Hanbury St, Whitechapel in east London.

The highly-rated 16-piece (i.e. people) John Bennett Band are playing with The Blurters.

CONFERENCES

An important conference on the theme **Defend Rudolf Bahro** — the jailed East German marxist — and the socialist alternative is being organised by the Glasgow-based journal Critique for London's Conway Hall on Oct. 12/13. Names such as Rudi Dutschke and Ernest Mandel will be much in evidence on such topics as Euro-Communism and the USSR.

Info from Critique at 31 Cleve-land Rd, Glasgow G12.

EVENTS

Tenth Anniversary celebrations are very much in order this Oct. for **Bogle-L'Ouverture**, the UK's main black community publishers. Their bookshop has received its share of racist and fascist attacks, but ten years is ten years, and extensive beanoes are planned, ending with a 'Grand Cultural Event' at London's Commonwealth Institute on 10 Nov. Info from the Bookshop at 5a Chignell Place, Ealing, London W13.

Greenpeace (London) have two interesting October dates. The 4th sees a pow-wow on 'Animal Liberation — as opposed to conservation' and on the 25th the talk is on 'The struggle of American Indians against Uranium Mining.' Together with their regular open Thursday evening meetings, all tasks at their HQ, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1.

Two anti-nuclear cyclists are still pedalling their way round this green and pleasant land, this scepter'd isle, this (*that's quite enough-ed*). Howard Clark from York, and Rudi Pohl from Norwich are building up their leg muscles by taking in 17 nukes and seven more sites. Go give 'em a wave on 27 Sept at Berkeley; 29 at Hinkley Point 3 Oct Winfrith; 7 Dungeness; 10 Bradwell; 11 Orford Ness; 14 Denver site, 23 Druridge Bay site; and on 25th at Torness. They'd like to see you.

Continuing the welcome blending of graphic skills with political immediacy, started by the London-based Poster-Film collective, an initial series of four posters about health has been produced by two artists for the East London Health Project.

The four, which can be adapted for use in battles all over the UK, are on the themes; history of the NHS; hospital waiting lists; mental illness; and perhaps the most effective, Tory attempts to drag down the NHS (see back cover).

Overall, a series of twenty of these 'visual pamphlets' is planned. The next four, nearly ready, are on women's health; radiation dangers; pay beds; and diet and nutrition. Further info from the artists, Loraine Leeson and Peter Dunn at 56 Gelling Rd, London SE15 (01-231 2888).



MOVIES

An important political film emerges this month courtesy of **The Other Cinema**, and the hot tip from the Leveller's cinematic guru is 'Go see it.' It's called **The Spiral**, and it's about Chile, or more precisely about the six years leading to Allende's death and the installation of the army brutes still in power.

Made in France, it's long — 145 mins., yet it keeps the viewer glued. A telling narration by Donald Sutherland of words translated/adapted by Susan Sontag keeps the painfully-well gathered visual material smokin' in a way that makes you leaving your seat feeling angry.

The coup in Chile is in danger of becoming just a historic occurrence; this film jerks it all back to the front of the brain. **The Spiral** is on for 3 weeks at London's ICA from Sept. 17, and available for hire in 16mm from the Other Cinema at a £35 rental.

BACK PAGES

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

CAMPAIGNS

The big Chile London demonstration will have happened by the time this is read, but a benefit for the Chile Committee for Human Rights in the form of a tribute to the poet Pablo Neruda happens on 18 September at the Logan Hall, University of London, Bedford Way, WC1.

This Committee is still amazed at the written response they received from Lloyd's Bank City Trust Branch manager when they complained to him about Lloyd's Chilean investments.

The hapless Mr. E.M. Smith wrote; 'As a committed Christian, I wholeheartedly approve of this support for the present anti-Marxist government.' If you still haven't ditched Lloyd's as your bank, then go so soonest.

Rumbles within the ANL. Following their July delegate conference which elected its new Steering Committee (see *Leveller* 29), the Burnt Oak ANL has pulled out.

They sent an angry letter to HQ accusing the conference of steamrolling the new committee through, centralism, and the old SWP-domination accusation. It's only Burnt Oak so far though, and the ANL insist the conference was 'deliberately structured to facilitate representatives from local branches.'

Furthermore, every motion submitted was debated, and on the SWP front, well no new SWPers appeared on the panel, and three Asians were elected. Maybe just a small rumble then.

PAMPHLETS

Queers Need Not Apply is the vivid title of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality's 'scandalous dossier of discrimination' against Britain's five million homosexuals and bisexuals.

Blackmail still flourishes, it argues, newspapers are biased, gays lose their jobs, and a blacklist is still operated against gay teachers. Copies costing £2 (post free) from CHE at PO Box 427, 69 Corporation St, Manchester M60 2EL.

Landlords could be in for a comeback in the general Get-Britain-Moving-Again blitz, and SHAC the London Housing Aid Centre are quickly in with a **Shorthold Tenancies** pamphlet. In brief they warn more flats may well not come onto the market if the Rent Acts go, but indeed homelessness will rise. The pamphlet costs 60p from SHAC at 189a Old Brompton Rd, London, SW5.

Transport, Politics and The Environment is the title of SERA's latest pamphlet which delves into a crucial if unglamorous area. As its basis, it works on the belief that present transport problems are 'political rather than technical.'

The pamphlet's argument comes out for a 'socialist transport policy based on meeting people's needs', and it's available from the Socialist Environment and Resources Association at 9 Poland St, London W1.

Is your thinking on bourgeois culture that although it is of 'secondary importance to the question of state power, the cultural question is a more immediate one; bourgeois culture must be attacked and weakened to a certain extent before the seizure of state power is possible.'

Then presumably you'd be interested in the rest of the **Communist Workers Movement** political programme, available at 30p via Box 34 Rising Free 182 Upper Street, London N1.



Plugs time. **DAWN** Wholefood Co-op at 77a Water Street, Chorley, Lancs have many good ideas in mind but are strapped for work-help. Get in touch with David there if you're 'committed and dedicated.'

Creative Mind c/o 26 Linnet Lane, Liverpool L17 3BQ (051-727 6917) are lively people in Merseyside who produce a quarterly hippyish mag and are keen to fill up the rest of their 5 storey former sugar warehouse building in central Liverpool with people who 'can do their own thing, run workshops, projects and be involved with the community.' Lots of other things are happening there too, so get in touch with Helen Prescott. Oh yes, and Steve Hillage is a co-trustee.

SCRAM, the Scottish anti-nukes body, will have had another big Stop Torness demo with Julie Christie no less by publication date in Edinburgh, but are still awaiting replies from Electricity Generating Board's senior officials on several pertinent questions.

