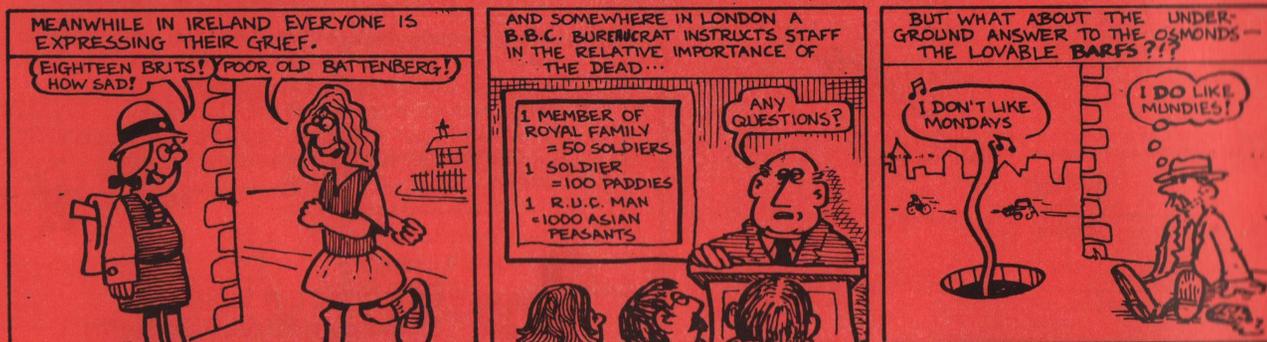


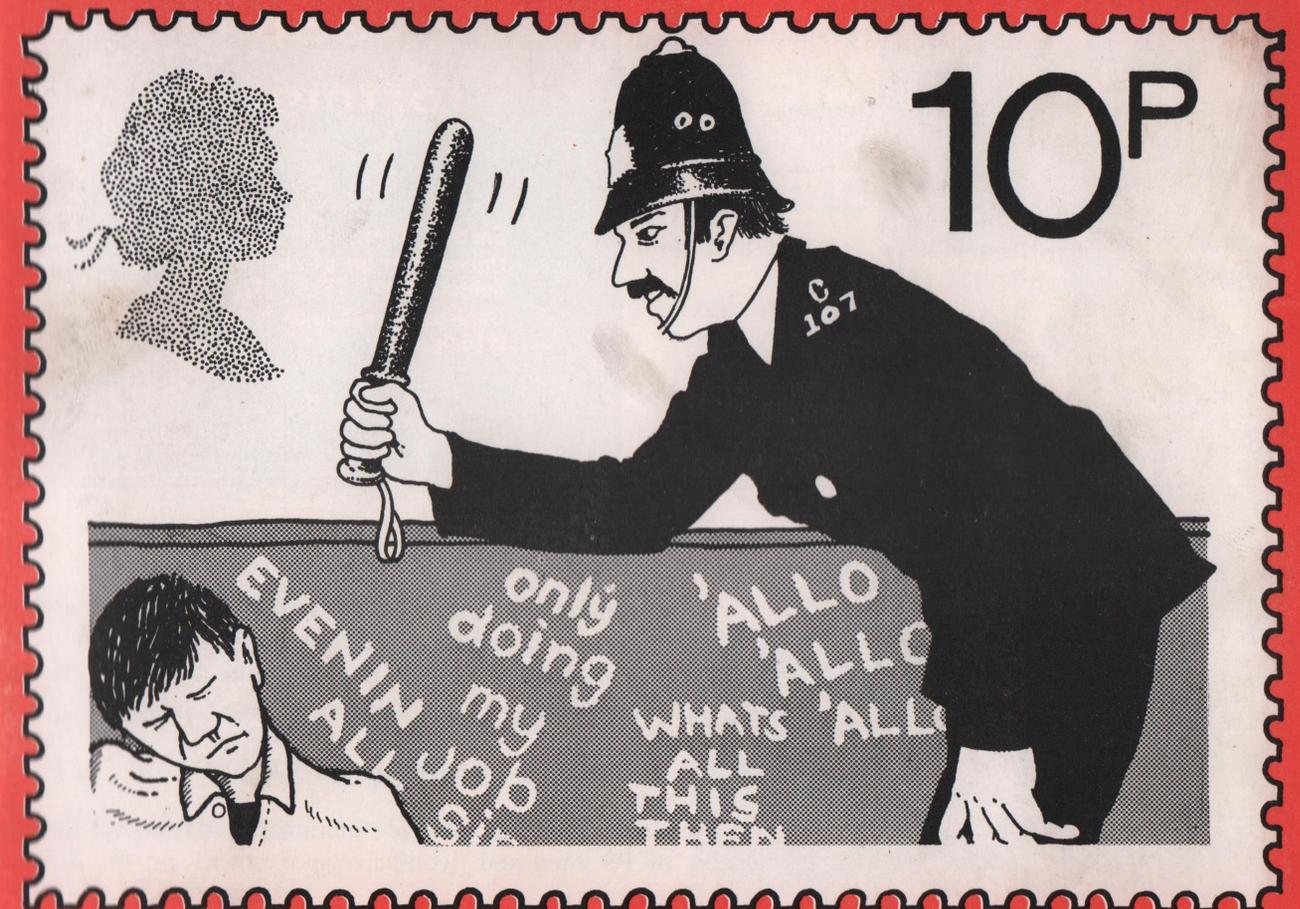
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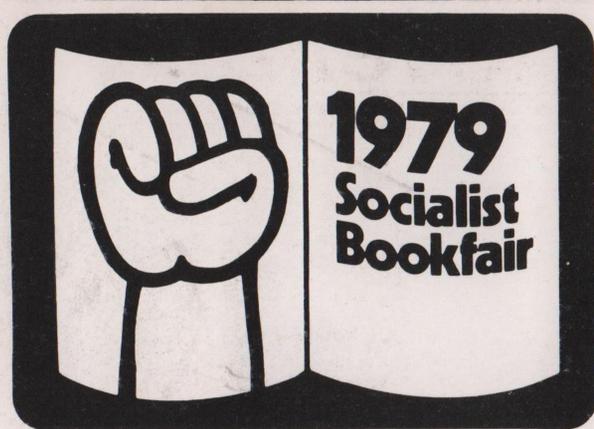
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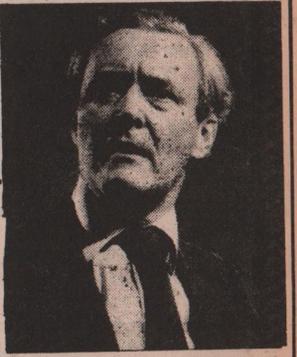
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Cover drawing by Pete Sutton

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Apologies to Virginia Turbett for leaving out her credit for the splendid Sham's Last Stand cover pic in last issue. We're really sorry. Back cover thanks to Cormac and Republican News.

# Letters

## I'll Fail the Jury Vet

THE ARTICLE on jury-rigging (*Leveller* 31) complains about the official proposal to exclude anarchists from juries in political trials, and comments: "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."

Brockway, of course, has never been an anarchist but always a democratic socialist, being a member of the Independent Labour Party and then the Labour Party for more than sixty years and a member of both Houses of Parliament in succession for more than thirty years. I don't know about the others on your list, but I certainly consider myself as unfit for jury service as for the civil service, because as an anarchist I reject the basic assumptions of the system in question. Indeed, I should think that most anarchists would feel insulted if they were considered fit rather than unfit for jury service!

On this particular issue, I would be prepared to act as a juror or in any other capacity in legal proceedings only to make a verdict of guilty more difficult. On the broader issue, juries always have been rigged in sensitive political and religious cases, and the real difference now is that the institution and its implications has been exposed to view. From either perspective, no anarchist will be either shocked or surprised to be kept off juries.

Nicholas Walter  
Harrow

## Rebellion Into Money

AS ONE of the organisers of the 'Persons Unknown' Benefit on the 8th September, I would like to answer last month's article.

As anarchists and in view of Crass' very determined attitude towards the conduct of their gigs (at which they actively discourage any polarization of the right and left wing—a view with which we are sympathetic) it was unfortunate that fights broke out at the benefit and the police ended it before Crass could play.

We are not prepared to accept your advice that we should either liaise with the police or keep out 'obvious troublemakers'. We did not 'abandon any thought of taking money' by 9.30 p.m.—at all our Benefits we stop taking money around that time. We thought there was a chance of

trouble occurring but we didn't consider it too much as the Benefit Crass did at Conway Hall only a couple of weeks before attracted no trouble at all. Up until 9.30 p.m. the door was strictly controlled—no-one got through without paying except a few who had arrived early in the afternoon.

'Persons Unknown' is a small organization and all of the people involved were assigned tasks. When one of us on the door was forced to challenge a few British Movement guys he was unfortunately unable to handle them on his own. As for the police, fearing for Conway Hall, the caretaker went to try and get some help from them and of course the police refused outright to intervene in any way. So much for the *Leveller* recommending that we liaise with the police. The police only seem to co-operate when it is the NF who are in need but not for lefties. (Not that we relish the thought of working with them).

Taking into account the various constraints, in future we will be more organized, but not in the way the *Leveller* suggests. On principle we won't A) search people B) keep out fascists C) liaise with the police, but we will be prepared. We would like to point out that we have organized several Benefits with Crass and this was the only one at which there was trouble. There have been some near-misses but fortunately these didn't get out of hand. Anyway, unlike this latest gig we didn't have the provocation caused by the SWP invading the hall to contend with.

If 'Persons Unknown' had gotten more support from the left for the five anarchists over the past year and a half, then we may have been able to enlist more help for the Benefit. 'Persons Unknown' has suffered from this apathy and lack of interest from the left in general throughout the whole campaign. Bearing in mind the size of 'Persons Unknown' as an organization I would bet that there isn't another organization that has had such a financially-successful benefit as was our troublesome one, at which we made several hundred pounds after expenses—most of which has been used to pay off the bill for a pamphlet (available from Rising Free at 40p) we just produced, outlining the 'Persons Unknown' case from the first arrests in May '78 till now.

R. Miles  
c/o Box 123  
182 Upper Street,  
London N1.

## Unhappy Anniversary

YOUR REPORT 'Unhappy Anniversary' (*The Leveller*, September 1979) makes a central point: despite ten years of war in Ireland the labour movement has not supported the struggle for self-determination. Revolutionaries in Britain have not yet taken anti-imperialist politics into the working class. The problem with 12 August was that it wasn't even trying—either to build a specifically working class movement or to win broader sections to anti-imperialist politics.

The 'unusual solidarity' which you correctly described as solidarity between the left groups was aimed not at supporting the anti-imperialist struggle, but at supporting... the pro-imperialist Liberal Party! This was why the Revolutionary Communist Tendency did not support the demonstration and argued against it before, during and since 12 August.

Since our formation three years ago we have supported every demonstration called in support of the Irish struggle. This one was different. 12 August was led by the youth wing of the openly imperialist Liberals and called for unity above class interests. It refused to take a position on British imperialism or those fighting against it. Instead it called for support for Garret Fitzgerald's reactionary proposals for a federal Ireland—a rejection of the right of the Irish to self-determination.

Neither the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland, which you take too seriously, nor this demonstration will succeed in getting the troops out of Ireland. Neither were based on working class politics. Unprejudiced tribunals and war-weary walkabouts are not only unprincipled; they do not work. British imperialism will only be forced out of Ireland by a revolutionary working class movement, not by a campaign led by a gathering of liberals, moralists, pacifists and vicars. This is why we have called a demonstration in London on 24 November 1979 which calls for Troops Out Now and Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Kate Marshall  
(For the Irish Commission of the RCT)

## Oil and Whisky

THE STATEMENT in your October number, p. 17, about "the disintegration of the Scottish Nationalist Party" is false. (The Party's title, by the way, is the Scottish National Party). The SNP has just concluded a highly successful three-day Conference in the Caird Hall, Dundee, much better attended than the Labour, Liberal or Tory annual conferences in Scotland. The Scottish Nationalist

paper has a larger circulation than *Labour Weekly*, and is not TU subsidised. It is to the credit of the Hebrides and the Northern Isles that the electors there voted against EEC membership, and recently elected a SNP Euro MP, which is more than the Liberals in England, Scotland and Wales have. The SNP has more than 500 branches, and SNP candidates collected over 500,000 votes at the last general election. That was about 17 per cent of the vote: the Liberals obtained about 8 per cent, but nobody talks about the "disintegration" of the Liberals.

Every Scottish Nationalist knows that Scotch whisky is Britain's leading export industry, a non-subsidised industry: and that without the oil off Scotland's shores, England would be in a bad way: and that if Scotland had independence, like Norway, the oil off Scotland's shores would be *Scottish oil*.

Being an anti-Establishment party, or an "anti-Constitution" party—i.e. against the 1707 Act of Union—the Party naturally has the media against it: and the Party did suffer severe reverses at the last general election: but it is rubbish to say that the Party has disintegrated. On the National Executive's agenda at the moment is the question of what to do with a £250,000 bequest newly made.

I am a new *Leveller* subscriber, and I naturally wonder if your other reporters or contributors are as unreliable as the one, un-named, who has inspired this letter. For years it has amused me, of course, how the English "left" is so pro "freedom" movements everywhere, "Long live home rule for Nigeria" etc, but never when it applies to Scotland.

Bill Comrie  
Edinburgh 15

## Classic Headbangers

SO ALAN GIBBONS (*Letters, Leveller* 30), in classic headbangers style, sees his task as "building a working class revolutionary party for the overthrow of capitalism".

And not only does he not need the help of environmentalists, trade union officials or other "anti-monopoly elements" (a phrase he boasts of not understanding), he doesn't even want the help of fellow socialists who want to make revolutionary theory fit contemporary reality—"take a nap until the fighting's over. We'll wake you when it's done" he tells Dave Purdy. The implication being that the SWP will soon recover from its post-1974 setbacks, reach and rapidly leave behind its 4,500 member high-point of that year, replace the Labour Party as the party of the British working class... and so on.

I don't agree with everything Dave Purdy writes (and it is not

# Letters

true—as Dave would confirm—that his views are a disguised version of *The British Road to Socialism*), but I think his arguments deserve a more thoughtful response. OK—so the Rank and File Defend Our Unions conference was a useful SWP initiative—as were the ANL, the Right to Work Campaign etc.

But are we really just going to repeat the mistake of the early seventies of expecting mass activity on bread-and-butter issues to automatically lead to socialist advance?

Having said that, I hope one of Alan Gibbons' friends won't write in to suggest I won't be out on the streets in the coming months—because it won't be true.

Barry Cooper  
Leeds 6

## Overalls Are Not Enough

I FEEL THAT your review of *Blue Collar* (*Leveller* 31) does not do justice to the film.

You state: "what is so infuriating 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". This, however, is precisely the most important message of the film—that the bosses will use racial divisions in order to divide the workforce and set worker against worker.

Or is it just that your reviewer cannot stomach the reality that the employers do sometimes succeed in this ploy? Smokey's reference to "the way they pit the lifer against the new boy, the old against the young, the black against the white" clearly indicates this tactic by the bosses to divide workers by means of any wedge they can drive between them.

As for the question of union corruption and bureaucracy, the importance of this is made in your own article where you refer to the complicity of Boyle in the assassination of Jock Yablonski. You say that there should have been "an organised response to a lot of hassle" by the workers in *Blue Collar*, but if you recall, when Zake goes to his union even over a fairly minor matter, the attitude is to get rid of him as soon as possible.

Thus it is clear that workers instinctively look to their unions

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Dick North Nigel Wright

for protection, and only when these are made democratic and officials are accountable to the members, can they properly fulfil their tasks.

Therefore the vital issues are not sidestepped, as you put it. The questions of racism, union democracy and accountability, and the conditions of life that can drive workers to extreme measures are all raised. The film is only "anti-working class, anti-union, and pessimistic" in the eyes of someone who believes that no film should ever show defeats for the working-class, only victories.

This bears no relation to reality however, and the successful divisions sown between the workers and can reinforce our determination to remain united on a class basis. Likewise, the success of the union bureaucracy in preserving their own position at all costs hammers home the need for accountability and control in the international trade union movement.

Dave Gartrell  
Neuilly-sur-Seine  
France

## The People's Press

TIM GOPSILL is quite right to point to the importance of the labour movement having its own press, and to the lack of the basics of press freedom exhibited by the large majority of the existing trade union journals.

Certainly, a campaign on the latter is needed, with calls for the regular election of union journal editors. Such elections would not automatically free the journals from bureaucratic control—after all, most union executives are regularly elected. But they would lay the basis for accountability to the membership, not least by calling into question the appointment for life enjoyed by most full-time officials, including many of the present journal editors.

The fight for elections would also bring to the fore the role of the journals, and help to open their pages to genuine debate.

A major theme within the labour movement at the moment is the requirement for the movement to have its own national daily paper, but here I think Tim's proposals are wrong. He suggests a *Leveller*-type operation on a grand scale. Of course, if it were possible to secure the support of millions or even tens of thousands of working class subscribers that would be fine. But there can be little hope of that in Britain just now, when the overwhelming majority of the working class gives its political allegiance to the Labour Party.

Apart from the organisational and ideological dominance of the Labour Party and the trade unions, these bodies centralise the

movement's funds. The fact that Britain, unlike France, Italy, and other countries, has no alternative mass daily attests to this state of affairs, which cannot be bypassed.

Only the TUC and the Labour Party have the capacity (if not the will) to set up a labour movement mass daily, and we should demand that they do so. Their reluctance provides part of the reason.

Take the example of last winter's strikes. Would a TUC/LP daily have given the strikers support? Probably not (although the TUC's recent pamphlet 'A Cause for Concern' gives a very good analysis of the bourgeois media's atrocious coverage of the strikes).

But there's the rub. Council workers and lorry drivers may not have been moved to take action against the *Mail*, the *Mirror* and the rest, yet it is considerably less likely that they would have stood by if 'their own' paper had come out with similar denunciations.

In this context, tickets of Congress House and Transport House, with demands for the publication of the strikers' own accounts of their claims and actions, are quite conceivable. That would have helped to strengthen the strikes, advance the battle for press freedom, and challenge the leadership of the labour movement.

A TUC/LP daily would provide a focus for support or protest on all the political issues of the day. It's to duck out of laying themselves on such a vulnerable line that I suspect explains the bureaucrats' lack of enthusiasm for the project.

A last point. Tim says that union journals have never been written about by Marxist theoreticians. Not quite so. It's one of the many questions examined by contributors to 'Media, Politics, and Culture—a Socialist View', published in August '79 by Macmillans. The editor is Carl Gardner.

Geoffrey Sheridan  
Socialist Challenge.

## Something Rotten in the State

I WAS very pleased to read Emmanuel Goncalves' excellent article "Something's very rotten in the state of Paraguay" (October edition). It is indeed rare to be able to read a full-length article on Paraguay in a British publication.

Readers may be aware that a growing number of people in this country are deeply concerned about the abuse of human rights in Paraguay and I should be glad to supply information about our work to anyone who is interested.

Roger Clegg  
Secretary  
Paraguay Committee  
for Human Rights

WHILE HURRICANE Thatcher continued to devastate Britain, making thousands homeless and jobless, the feeble Opposition on which people's hopes are supposed to depend met to work out how to salvage something from the wreckage. The Labour Party conference at Brighton had an air of complete irrelevance to contemporary power politics . . . but the left's much-proclaimed victory may yet mean something. Can the party now become more of an instrument for working people to control their lives? Will the left be able to work more profitably within it? *The Leveller* lifts its customary scepticism for politics of this kind to present the view of one collective member, *Mike Prest*, that there's little there to work on, and an interview with *Tony Benn* (a leading party member), who says there's a lot. For good measure we throw in two nasty little tales by *Tim Gopsill* to show that, whatever Brighton's supposed to have achieved, the party's rhetoric and its practice are still as far apart as ever.

If Callaghan had led the comrades to disastrous defeat, paved the way for the most reactionary government since 1931, ignored the party in formulating policy, forced the five percent down millions of trade unionists' throats, how could he *not* be held responsible for the collapse of Labour's fortunes? And how on earth could a series of internal reforms acceptable even to the German Social Democrat Party and a political platform echoing Atlee be the work of "termites" and "extremists" as Shirley Williams claimed at the Campaign for Labour Victory meeting?

The debate on Party policy was one of the briefest. Class struggle was never mentioned; indeed, delegates betrayed little hint that they lived in a class society. No explanation of capitalist development was advanced; no understanding was apparent of what compelled droves of workers to vote Tory, except that it was the doing of the media.

The dis-orienting thing about the Party is this: it has no future leadership. All most of the younger delegates could manage was a weak version of the politics of 1945. There are no new ideas.

The meeting in Brighton — a professionally entertaining town — had none of the fringe culture characteristics of the extra-Parliamentary left, no discos (except in support of another ailing

institution, the *Morning Star*), no theatre, no happenings, no life. The fringe political meetings which stalwarts say are the great feature of conferences were simply the tedium of the conference writ small.

Indeed, it was on the fringe circuit that atmosphere of delusion finally overwhelmed me. I heard Benn make the same speech five times, on occasions ranging from the Labour Friends of Isreal to the Public Enterprise Group.

It is symptomatic of Labour's problems, and of the delegates' flabby thinking, that Benn could do no wrong. When he rightly attacked the BBC for hostility to working people nobody mentioned that a few months ago he had advocated that the BBC should take over Times Newspapers because of its impartiality. It's because the Labour Party has moved so far to the right that Tony is the left. He only has to list an ABC of reformism for members to applaud ecstatically. It is not his fault that the party cannot recognise a socialist programme when it sees one.

The measure of the left's delusion that it has made real gains at the conference is not merely that it has no politics to connect party and conference with the rest of the world, but that the right has defence in depth in the organisation.

Mike Prest

## REFORM OR A short play

*A shabby hotel bedroom in a large seaside town. Unmade double bed, the day's 'Guardian' open on it. Clothes on the floor. Two beauty-style wooden-armed cloth-covered chairs. Curtains pulled across back wall to suggest a window. An open door, left, leads to the BATHROOM, next to large fitted wardrobes painted, like everything else, a fading cream. TONY BENN, a tall slim good-looking man, aged about fifty, greying hair combed to the side from a parting, is stalking round the room in shirtsleeves, tieless. He carries a dark tie in his hand, uncertain where to put it. Later it becomes clear he is a politician, who's had a significant success at the annual conference of his party in the town. He's also just published a book called 'Arguments for Socialism'.*

*A tap on the door. BENN opens it.*

BENN: Ah, hi! Come in.

*An INTERVIEWER enters. Male, age indeterminate, non-descript ratlike appearance. He talks in a nasal, sneering tone. He is clearly sceptical about politicians, but has a certain awe for this particular specimen.*

INTERVIEWER: Hello.

BENN (friendly): How are you? Take a seat.

*He moves the chairs to face each other, next to the bed. The INTERVIEWER sits and takes out a used notebook and chewed biro.*

BENN: Whisky?

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, yes.

*BENN puts the tie on the sideboard, goes to the wardrobe and produces one paper cup and a bottle of whisky.*

BENN: I hope you don't mind if I have tea.

*He lifts an enormous, battered white enamelled mug, with a floral pattern painted on one side, off the sideboard, takes it into the BATHROOM and returns with it full of water. He puts it on the floor by the INTERVIEWER's chair and clips an electric element to the rim, plugging the flex to a point on the skirting board.*

*He sits down. The INTERVIEWER has meanwhile poured himself a generous cup of whisky and lit a cigarette. Looks round for an ashtray. There is none, so he pulls across a trashbin which he uses as he smokes almost continually through the interview. BENN smokes a pipe.*

BENN: Well what do you want to talk about.

INTERVIEWER: I want to talk about the left. Not about the conference or the leadership, but the left and the Labour Party. Why the left should be outside the party or in it, and what you think of the left.

BENN: As I see it, the base strength of the working class is the 12.5 million trade unionists and the six million affiliated to the party. We are exceptionally fortunate in that we have one party of substance representing their political aspirations, which other European countries don't have. This is a most extraordinary inheritance. The party has always been broad enough to include the enormous range of opinion from people who'd be Christian Democrats or even further to the right, to people who would be able to fit into any of the ultra-left groups. What brings them together is an agreed objective in Clause Four, and a programmatic agreement, provided the democracy of the party permits the agreement to be implemented. Around and outside the Labour Party are the socialist sects whose streams of analysis have the merit of variety, their analysis is a great educational source. I don't believe that organisational links with the left have much value or prospect of success. You can't have an organisational link where you have an adversarial electoral policy. If they believe that the Labour Party's main function is to betray the working class they wouldn't come in, or would come in with the object of

## REVOLUTION in one act

'exposing the con-trick', which is a disruptive entrism, like we had with Gerry Healy, which was not sustainable. There is another form of entrism, which is to persuade, to argue, and I regard the Militant tendency as that. They have accepted that the Labour Party is the main instrument of the working class, but they understand it has not departed from its basic socialist analysis. They believe it has an analysis of capitalism in decay. Looked at from the left, the logic of the Militant is indisputable. The WRP says the party is a confidence trick. It is engaged in reform, and "we are not reformists. It is full of left-talking reformists". When they accuse me of being a left-talking reformist I plead guilty. They have denigrated the exceptional radicalism of reform. The problem is, we have not reformed enough.

*The mug is making a gurgling sound and emitting steam.*

INTERVIEWER: It's boiling.

BENN gets up, lifts the element out of the mug.

BENN: Marvellous thing this, I take it everywhere I go.

*He carries the steaming mug to the sideboard, pops a teabag into it.*

INTERVIEWER: Can't you get tea from room service in this hotel?

BENN: Yes but it's very expensive. And they can't supply it in the quantity I drink. This is my second pint and a half since six o'clock.

*There is no indication of the present time in the room.*

BENN: More whisky?

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. *Pours another cupful. Lights another fag.* But the left's analysis is that it's not such a wonderful but a terrible inheritance, because the party absorbs the ideas and energy of the left, while the leadership is so incorporated into the state machine that it's a hopeless instrument for change.

BENN: We are trying to de-incorporate. Under the outer skin of the Labour Party there is a real democratic socialist trying to get out and there always has been. It's said the crust is so strong that the real Labour Party can't get out, but I say it's the first step in radicalising politics. I say the party has never departed from its view that capitalism is unjust and inefficient. The Labour Party has always voted for public ownership resolutions. But it is nothing without party democracy. The PLP is the buckle that either links or doesn't link with a labour movement that has adopted Parliamentary democracy as one of its instruments, and if it doesn't work the party can't. You can't say incorporation is inevitable. If it was as inevitable as you say, the party wouldn't frighten the establishment as much as it does. You have to follow the arguments though. There is a difficulty in Parliamentary democracy. It's not a sell-out, it's a push-out. A sell-out is where a guy gets through and is bought out. What really happens is, he's thrust into the establishment, and when he gets there he's diverted by the oath of allegiance, the Official Secrets Acts, collective responsibility and the whole structure of the permanent government — the civil service. Then when he's isolated from his supporters he's exposed to the full weight of government, NATO and everything. Party democracy is a push back. Even if you do push back you still have problems with the power structure. How do you get public support in coping with the power structure? The Reformer says, we are going to run it and change it simultaneously. There are so many people locked into the present system. If you have revolutionary socialism you may have an answer but you don't have a say in the struggle. I am trying to restate the legitimacy and radicalism of democratic socialist reform. Am I talking too much?

(continued over)



INTERVIEWER: No, that's what I'm here for. In the book you draw the distinction between three kinds of economic policies: monetarism, corporatism and democratic socialism. But isn't the Labour Party permanently social-democratic, that is, corporatist, rather than democratic socialist?

BENN: They aren't the same. It has been, but it's changing. Capitalism thought it had been licked in 1974, with all the talk of private armies, a national government, and military coups. The historic role of Wilson was to persuade them it wasn't. The fifteen months at the Department of Industry was the most important experience I've had, because I had been radicalised at the end of the previous government. I thought, when I get back in, would I be persuaded out of what I was, would I let people down? I don't believe I did let people down. We actually brought 125 companies, including subsidiaries, into public ownership. There was undoubtedly a very big change. All that had to be stopped after the referendum, and the whole thing went back to corporatism. But we had done a lot, or rather allowed other people to do a lot. Look at how they attack the £10 million handed out to my little co-operatives, less than they give to private industry every day. We have had twenty years of official revisionism. Three stages of revisionism that we are now in the process of reversing. The first was Gaitskill — abandoning socialism altogether, which failed. Then there was breaking with the unions, In Place of Strife, which also failed, and then the IMF deal and so on that was repaired by the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee. The third stage was incorporation at the top, incorporation of the Labour government with the CBI and the City. Macmillan began it. Wilson

## WHAT DARBY & JOAN DON'T KNOW

THE ADMINISTRATORS of the Labour Party's pension have decided to retain their investments in companies that invest in South Africa, and donate to the Tories. A meeting of the party's Superannuation Society, held at the Brighton conference, decided not to withdraw the investments, even though those present—all past or present employees of the party—had been informed of the facts.

The complete portfolio of investments—leaked to *The Leveller* shows that seventeen of the 55 companies in which the fund is invested donate money to the Tories (they gave £171,205 last year). Twenty-one of them have South African subsidiaries; at least three of them, according to *their own* returns, employ South African blacks at wages below the official poverty datum line. (These are British American Tobacco, Great Portland Estates and Tarmac.)

At the meeting—held at the Grand Hotel, Brighton—there was a motion from the party's economic adviser, Adam Sharples, calling on the trustees to 'progressively dispose' of these investments, retaining, where appropriate, only a nominal holding, to allow representatives to go along and kick up shit at shareholders' meetings.

Even before it had been defeated, on a procedural motion, it had been amended: firstly, to remove the references to companies that donate to the right, so that only the South African

ones would have been left; and then, to replace 'progressively dispose' with 'reduce as far as practicable'.

But even this was too much for the Labour Party workers. 'The Previous Question' was moved (a way of moving on to next business) and carried by 41 votes to 8. So there was no vote on Sharples' motion itself; members were saved the embarrassment of voting for the Tories and exploiters of South African blacks, by voting not to vote instead.

Meanwhile, in the conference hall, the following statement on South Africa by the NEC was unanimously adopted:

'Conference condemns the persistent denial of human rights to the African majority within South Africa and calls on the British government to seek mandatory UN sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Conference calls on Britain to give a lead by making the widest possible use of domestic legislation to prevent new investment in South Africa, and generally to discourage economic, social, cultural and sporting ties with the minority regime in South Africa. Conference declares that only by demonstrating a clear commitment to the liberation of the oppressed majority can Britain retain any moral standing in relations with the independent states of Africa and the Commonwealth.'

Fine phrases.

and George Brown carried it on, and I was instrumental in it at the Ministry of Technology, that's what radicalised me. This is a very attractive type of agreement to the state. Because when capitalism fails it can only be made acceptable if the people running it have a special link with the working class to tell them to be loyal because Labour ministers are in power. For some years this has been the instrument by which capitalism has survived. This is where the argument of the ultra-left has a validity, but that set-up doesn't work. You actually can't run capitalism today with socialists. Yet even the loyalty that the *social democratic* leader requires of his rank and file to administer the declining system breaks down; the leadership proclaims the need for loyalty but the unions don't follow. That's what happened: the principle of social democratic leadership successfully administering declining capitalism has been knocked away. You now have capitalism run by capitalists, the return of monetarist policies where there is no claim for the loyalty of the working class. This is a very important opportunity for the left.

INTERVIEWER: (*More whisky*) But why shouldn't it all happen over again?

BENN: These are problems to which the Labour Party has got to turn its mind. That's why the manifesto and reselection are so important. These debates are now going on in an interesting form inside the Labour Party as well as inside the ultra-left groups. That is why some on the left are saying, this might be the movement to join. This week will have started a tremendous debate with the left groups. If they come in as individuals — there is no question of a popular front with any organisations — they would have to ask themselves if there was anything in the analysis that the methods we have chosen for change can work. It can't work if they don't agree.

INTERVIEWER: But so much of the left is outside and won't join the party. And as you know you're much reviled as a fake left reformist.

BENN: I wish they wanted to join us. I am as unpopular with the left press as with the right, which says I'm a revolutionary, which I'm not, while the left says I'm a fraud, which is also untrue. But the left criticism is much more important to me. I read it all, or as much as I can, and take it very seriously. It's extremely helpful to me, in fact I'd be lost if I didn't read what they say. Now about the left: In the churches, organizational ecumenicalism is a sign of weakness, that they're declining. But the wide variety of left sectarianism is a sign of *strength*. I would not want to merge with them. They are bound to be small in numbers, but they are really important in terms of opinion-forming. If they get too big it's an indication of the failure of the Labour Party. I would like to make us a party these people would like to join. But I have no desire to make alliances with them. When they come into the Labour Party they are immediately absorbed. I've seen it happen. You get a young person who's been in the CP or SWP, who's a thoughtful guy, when they get into the party they make a very radical speech at a GMC and find themselves being cheered, mostly by the Old Age Pensioners who haven't heard such a clear message since 1926. There is a mass of alliances between the young and the old. There is an archaeology of the Labour Party. If you are digging down, you have the radical young, then a thick zone of revisionists who joined in the fifties and sixties, then underneath that you have these very radical old people from before the war. So they notice how radical everyone is, and they're absorbed. All these are good people, they're not frauds. Even the MP needn't be what he's made out to be. The next thing is: the single issues, the ANL, campaigns against the cuts and so on. These are happening in the party all the time, here there is a perfectly ordinary collaboration with the left.

INTERVIEWER: In the book, in saying that workers are better-equipped to run industry than the owners, you say the unions have bred a quality of leadership quite capable of

adopting a leading role. But isn't the union leadership just as corrupted as that of the Labour Party?

BENN: Well the Tories aren't frightened of the Labour Party as such but they're frightened of the unions and of the links with them. The trade union structure is like Parliament, we have the statesmen of labour, the General Council, who are extremely good at negotiating with civil servants and ministers. As with Labour ministers, there's a high peak of incorporation there, but no, I was thinking of the shop stewards. They have developed in two ways: the Labour movement has grown apace at the white collar levels. They are also the most radical. And there's the development of the combines. This is where Lucas is so important. You can't run a plant now without the consent of the workers. You can't run Longbridge without the consent of the stewards, but you can run it without the consent of Michael Edwardes. Combines include trade unionists working in management who realise they've got more in common with other workers than with the owners. The first thing the combine does is say, let's talk to the professional managers and of course this does upset the official union structure, which is why the unions have obstructed the Lucas plan and they don't like the co-ops either. Management have discovered they can come to terms with co-ops quite easily. They know that the management prerogative has gone, people simply won't buy a management appointed by an owner any more. So the owners say, let's withdraw from management to a banking function, we'll put up the money to the ones that can be successful, and let the workers themselves confront the market. Once you do that, you find that a co-operative which appeared to be under worker control turns out to be enslaved to market forces. You have got to be very careful of co-ops, that it is not a way of by-passing trade unionism. But the official union structure does contain an element of strength. You mustn't think there's a syndicalist option waiting to be picked up, because there isn't.

INTERVIEWER: Doesn't this programme underestimate the strength of resistance from the state, with its military and

## RED-NECS AT WORK

AN INTRIGUING aspect of the Labour Party's much-vaunted democratic advance, one which didn't get raised at all at Brighton, concerns the proceedings of the National Executive Committee itself.

Some members appear currently to be engaged in an extraordinary cover-up over the behaviour of John Golding, right-wing MP for Newcastle Under Lyme, sponsored by the Post Office Engineers Union (POEU).

At the NEC meeting of January 21, which drew up the party's manifesto for the EEC election, Golding apparently switched from supporting the inclusion of a call for a 35-hour week to voting against it. The clause had been moved by LPYS delegate Tony Saunio, and Golding had said he'd only support it the 35-hour week if it was implemented throughout Europe. When it was explained the manifesto applied to Britain alone, he joined three others in voting against (it was passed 11-4).

This, at any rate, was printed in *Militant*. Golding is suing for libel, and threatening an injunction to prevent *Militant* referring to it again. The case has

been put down for action.

*Militant* are fighting it all the way. They have the support of four NEC members who say they can remember Golding raising his paw against General Secretary Ron Hayward and others say he voted *for*. Other members say they can't remember.

It would seem to be a fairly simple matter to sort out. Check the minutes. Don't they record the voters? No they don't. In any case, NEC minutes are *not published*. What was that about *open government*? And about *Militant* posing a threat to democracy?

In no democratically-run organisation could such a witch-hunt as *Militant* are facing (in this and other ways) occur. What about opening the minutes, comrade Hayward?

It's not hard to see why Golding is suing. The 35-hour week is POEU policy. The allegation is extremely damaging.

If the case does go through, *Militant* could have to find up to £20,000 for their costs. Send donations to *Militant Defence Fund*, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London SE8.

security power and the support of the media? Don't you agree that Northern Ireland is a dress rehearsal for what they'll do when they're confronted in Britain. And won't there inevitably be a fight, and will the Labour Party fully support workers when there is?

BENN: The last people who understand these things are the people at the top, but the left is putting them on the agenda. You must not carry your attack on the state to the level where you deprive the working class of its need for the state, which is the expression of the ballot box. I have a mixed feeling about the state, it can be the liberator against the oil companies and other oppressors. You must not be too frightened about the state. The important thing is that it should not be a barrier to thought and freedom of expression. But I agree, Northern Ireland is the Spanish Civil War of Britain's World War Two. We are facing a very formidable enemy. But the British establishment has survived by judicious withdrawal. I don't think there'll be blood on the streets, though people will be killed, that is part of the sacrifice. But it is very important not to overestimate the enemy's armoury and think you can't win. The confidence of the labour movement is the most important thing of all.

INTERVIEWER: But what will you do when there is a conflict?

BENN: That's like asking me what would I do if I was Prime Minister.

INTERVIEWER: Well you might be one day, who knows?

BENN: No I won't be Prime Minister. I've actually lost support this week you know, in the PLP: There's probably not one member of the Cabinet who'd vote for me. Though I might stand, to raise the issues. But as far as class conflict is concerned, I find it strange that I who am not involved in the front line should be encouraged to call out a mass action when I would not suffer from it. (*Getting angry*) Those who use the Northern Ireland parallel might be saying, perhaps it is a dress rehearsal for what we will do too, perhaps the revolutionaries are saying that, and that would be very dangerous. Long before the confrontation reaches that stage, there will be a substantial advance in the middle. If they want a confrontation like that, they can have their dream worlds which won't happen. The leadership which the Labour Party has to offer is the politics of hope. Compromise is not wrong. Every strike settlement is a compromise. If you don't accept that, every battle ends with a gunfight.

INTERVIEWER: It's generally agreed that the political consensus is moving to the right. Won't the Labour Party do the same?

BENN: The labour movement and the trade unions are ranging together and moving to the left. Every leftwing socialist who says, you are betrayed by your leaders, is playing into the hands of the right. That is the danger. This is where the left wing has got to be very very careful. This is where I fundamentally disagree with what they are saying. They say that only by destroying the Labour Party will they come into their inheritance. The Labour Party is a much more formidable instrument than revolution — the politics of grinding away, rather than by a coup. Revolution would involve us in denying the whole of our history, and you would end up with the most dictatorial state in history if you got revolution with Gerry Healy running it all.

INTERVIEWER: So you can say the Labour Party isn't complicit with the capitalist state?

BENN: I've been a worker on the board, when I was in government. (*Getting mad again*) I've sat up for 36 hours with BP to try and get an agreement to benefit the British people. I've taken the arguments to City businessmen. This is "complicity, betrayal, a sell out". It's a bit hard if you fight as hard as I have. "He's a left-talking reformist!" There's a process called negotiation. You have to judge people by their record and whether they're doing what they think is right. It is not complicity, it's diplomacy, for socialism.

### THE PLAYERS

Tony Benn. . . . .himself  
Interviewer. . . . .Tim Gopsill



Chile: whose side was the TUC on?

## Handing over the workers to the CIA

IF LEADERS of the world's major transnational companies met to discuss co-ordinating union busting activities it would undoubtedly attract global attention. In November union top brass from throughout the non-Communist world meet in Madrid to plan their strategy to fight the bosses. If it runs true to form there will barely be a ripple of outside interest.

International labour has for so long been confined to bureaucratic super-structures and backdoor intrigues that this lack of interest — particularly by the rank and file who foot the bill — is no surprise. Even this particular Congress which meets every four years under the banner of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) — the labour international for the Western bloc — is normally not much more than a showpiece occasion. This time it could be different.

The current unprecedented wave of labour oppression, spawned by the global recession, has left international labour bureaucrats feeling helpless and dazed. Even their most determined solidarity action in recent years — over

the jailing of Tunisian union leaders — ended in failure. The feeling of impotence is heightened by increasing admissions of failure to check the transnationals.

This troubled scenario looks like leading to a watershed in the history of international labour solidarity. For this Congress will either disgorge bitter charges about government subversion of international labour from delegates anxious to rebuild worker internationalism afresh — or alternatively consign international labour solidarity into the hands of the bosses and the CIA.

Either way the TUC will be a major influence. And it's odds on the TUC will help swing international labour toward the latter course. The reasons become apparent when examining its foreign policy.

**"It's not necessarily about helping to remove poverty"**

In 1975 union boss Jack Jones discovered and destroyed a TUC plan to work with the Foreign Office and

CBI in a jointly funded overseas 'labour' programme. Eighteen months later the TUC completed a deal to receive government cash for an independent Third World labour programme. The £75,000 came from the Ministry of Overseas Development. It was authorised by the Foreign Office. Today the total has climbed to an annual £180,000.

During this same period Michael Walsh of the TUC's International Department was seconded to the Foreign Office for two years. Meanwhile, Jack Jones tried — and failed — to get rid of Walsh's boss, TUC International Secretary Allan Hargreaves. He previously worked in the Foreign Office.

Both the Americans and the Russians monitor TUC International Committee meetings. Minutes of these meetings are reputed to be in the hands of the US Embassy and CP London headquarters within hours of being delivered to committee members. Precious little information, however, is ever handed over to ordinary trade unionists who pay the TUC's international bill — a cool £400,000 and rising fast. The civil service atmosphere in the TUC's Inter-

national Department gives way — as I found out — to some fairly uncivil exchanges if the right to information is pressed.

TUC international reports to conference have for years been a masterly example of concealment. None have detailed who overseas receives this cash. This year's report, however, disgorged one striking confession. The TUC acknowledged, for the first time, that their Latin America and Caribbean regional wing, the Pan-America Organisation of Workers (ORIT) has been receiving lavish backhanders from the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD). No explanation was given about AIFLD. It is, in fact, a bosses organisation.

Headed by multi-millionaire businessman Peter Grace — who has extensive holdings in Latin America — its other financial sponsors include a pile of companies ranging from Coca-Cola to Readers Digest. The AIFLD — whose stated aim is the creation of free and democratic unions — is notoriously a CIA vehicle.

ORIT itself was created by CIA agent Serafino Romualdi in the late forties and today comprises nearly all government controlled 'yellow' unions. In 1968 a US Senate hearing found that ORIT had been associated with the downfall of democratic governments in Guyana, Guatemala, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. Despite this, TUC funding to ORIT continued up to and during the period it worked alongside the AIFLD in Chile to help bring down Allende's government. TUC funding finally ceased in 1975, but ORIT remains its official affiliate, preventing British union links with real worker and peasant movements.

For years the CP has been trying to nudge the TUC away from the ICFTU and toward the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) based in Prague. As this is controlled by the KGB, the CP does not relish open debate about government control of international labour. They instead justify their silence about the TUC's foreign policy, and the need to link with the WFTU, with that good old working class expression, detente. The result has been a striking conspiracy of silence between the CP and TUC bureaucracy over the TUC's foreign policy — whatever that is.

TUC standing orders do not explain the purpose of its internationalism. The relevant clause states merely that the TUC will enter into relations with overseas unions with a view to united action. But after a heated exchange Allan Hargreaves conceded, 'It's not necessarily about helping to remove poverty.' Nor is it about fighting the bosses. The plan to undertake a jointly funded overseas labour programme with the Foreign Office and CBI has dished that idea.

According to Hargreaves, however, there is something else the TUC's international programme isn't. It isn't political.

**"ALF President George Meany . . . was already busy saving Europe from Communism."**

This same credo, however, has massively helped shape (or rather misshape)

present day Western trade union internationalism. That story began in the post war years following the bust-up of the short lived KGB controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Unable any longer to stomach Communist conversion of this organisation into a propaganda machine, Western affiliates deserted in 1949 to set up their own rival international, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

With European labour movements decimated as a result of the war, the two dominant forces in this new international for years to come were the TUC and its US counterpart the American Federation of Labour (AFL) — later to amalgamate with the rival Congress of Industrial Organisations to form the AFL-CIO. By then the AFL had developed its own powerful overseas programme. In contrast with the TUC's watery non-political credo, it was tough and single-minded. Its purpose was to fight Communism.

These post-war years saw established all the various and extraordinary elements of the present day AFL-CIO programme. Led by AFL President George Meany, whose politics remain somewhere to the right of Genghis Khan, and masterminded by a former General Secretary of the American Communist Party, Jay Lovestone, the AFL international team was already busy saving Europe from Communism.

It was the Swedes and then the Dutch ICFTU affiliates who expressed ideological objections, particularly over AFL-CIO tactics in Latin America. The Swedes long ago — unlike the TUC — refused to have any dealings with the ICFTU's Latin America regional wing, the CIA created ORIT.

TUC strategy, however, suggests they were willing to turn a blind eye to Latin America provided the AFL-CIO toed the British line over Africa. TUC concern about ORIT, for instance, appeared to diminish when Meany declared he was willing to place a Briton in the ORIT hierarchy — provided Irving Brown from the AFL-CIO was given ICFTU responsibility for Africa.

In the event the AFL-CIO in the middle sixties — and again in clear breach of promises made to European labour leaders — went on to open up their own independent Africa programme, the Africa-America Labour Centre led by Brown. By then it was clear that the ICFTU had abundant grounds for throwing out the AFL-CIO. The break came in 1968. Significantly, however, the TUC complained that the ICFTU General Secretary at that time, Harm Buiter, had bungled the whole business — the AFL-CIO could have been kept inside the ICFTU.

By this time it was common knowledge in international labour circles that at least two of the AFL-CIO representatives were CIA agents — and that the AFL-CIO had embarked upon a labour programme designed to drive out the ICFTU influences and destroy militant Third World Labour unions.

In the 10 years since their departure from the ICFTU, the AFL-CIO has gone on hugely to expand its Third World labour work employing hundreds of personnel and millions of dollars. Following their walkout from the ICFTU, CIA agent Morris Paladino — a

former ICFTU Assistant General Secretary — went on to open their third independent labour programme, this time for Asia — the Asian America Free Labour Institute. Each of these independent programmes has resulted in bitter allegations of corruption and subversion. Belgian Christian trade union leader Jean Bruck told me that their operations have destroyed numerous Third World unions.

Yet the TUC persists — against the wishes of some of the smaller ICFTU affiliates and at least half the present ICFTU staff to try and inveigle the AFL-CIO back inside the ICFTU. Former Dutch trade union leader Harry Ter Heide complains that the result is that the TUC and its German equivalent, the DGB, continue to tie the ICFTU to discredited US created yellow union fronts throughout the Third World.

But TUC foreign policy hinges on the idea that this kind of embarrassment could be removed if the AFL-CIO was back under the same roof so they could discuss their differences. Recently a TUC delegation flew to Washington and pleaded for an unconditional AFL-CIO return. It is a gamble that could go wrong, and now there is growing rebellion among European unionists who are increasingly arguing that international solidarity has been prostituted long enough to suit the Americans.

**"The most profound changes, however, have taken place among Third World labour."**

The last few years has seen some bewildering — but enormously hopeful — efforts to escape the appalling restraints imposed on international labour solidarity. The Swedes, for instance, in direct contradiction to the TUC line, are arguing that there can be no such thing as non-political union action overseas. The Dutch FNV union centre has meanwhile infuriated the TUC by calling on the ICFTU to bar any US return and instead link with the smallest of the three world internationals, the formerly Christian World Confederation of Labour (WCL) based in Brussels. It has now adopted a Socialist programme.

The most profound changes, however, have taken place among Third World labour. Faced with unprecedented repression in many countries the result has been tighter organisation and increased militancy. It increasingly is placing the KGB and CIA labour spooks on the defensive. The Communist WFTU, on the other hand, has barely any affiliates left in Latin America or Asia.

For the TUC international bosses who both at home and overseas link with the State and not the workers this move towards a new workers' internationalism — no matter how slowly it is developing on the European level — poses a direct threat to their own Foreign Policy.

If they still manage, however, to get the Madrid Congress to endorse an unconditional AFL-CIO return there will be no more fitting testimony to its non-political credo than that it handed over our labour internationalism to the bosses and CIA. It is hardly likely, however, to last for long.

Don Thomson

# Their Sort of Justice

magistrates  
unknown

persons  
unknown

THE COVER-UP over Southall continues. While the police refuse to charge any of the SPG officers who attacked the group of anti-NF demonstrators in Orchard Avenue on April 23, killing Blair Peach, the 342 people arrested that day are being hauled before a specially-convened court at Barnet, North London, 20 miles away, to receive summary justice from a hand-picked group of professional magistrates who can be trusted to come up with the verdicts the state wants.

The selection of the stipendiary magistrates to "hear" the cases is only part of the state's well-oiled machine for dealing with political opposition when it arises. Stipendiary magistrates, like Peter Badge, John Canham, Kenneth Cooke and Edmond MacDermott, who've been sent out to convict the Southall defendants, are full-time one-man justice machines who's everyday job is to hurry through police prosecutions without the formality of discussion allowed on a lay bench.

There's no need for anyone to be surprised that while the Blair Peach inquest—or the "Officers Unknown" conspiracy case, as it should be known—won't result in a conviction, the Flying Stipes at Barnet have the power to send anyone down, without too many questions being asked. The British ruling class has, after all, had centuries to perfect the "liberal" system that allows people to demonstrate, but stamps on them *hard* when their threat becomes too real.

The credibility on which the system depends is obviously crumbling over Blair Peach; but at Barnet it's hardly challenged. By October 8, Badge, Canham, Cooke and MacDermott had convicted 87 percent of the 91 cases they'd disposed of. Seven defendants had been jailed and twelve given suspended sentences. And Canham has gone as far as binding over *witnesses* to keep the peace—which may not be unprecedented, but shows his attitude to people who dare to stand up

to a racist incursion into their community.

Of the four, Canham and MacDermott are particularly notorious among London lawyers for their propensity to convict. Canham was a Major in the Army Legal Services in the British Army of the Rhine, and after that earned his keep as a barrister prosecuting Crown cases. MacDermott worked for the Director of Public Prosecutions' office for 25 years, and was for four years Assistant DPP.

Badge worked in the solicitors' department at Scotland Yard from 1958-61, and was later senior solicitor to the Commissioner and Detention Appeals Tribunal in Northern Ireland—which means he presented the state's case against detainees who appealed against internment, before it was abolished in 1975. Cooke worked his way up as clerk to various lay benches in Lancashire and Yorkshire. He was a Squadron Leader in the RAF Volunteer Reserve.

When stipendiary magistrates were first used, in the seventeenth century, they were specifically appointed to deal with security cases and were paid out of secret service funds. Their role hasn't changed that much. They are now paid by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police.

Just how these four were chosen to carry on the process begun by police on April 23 is hard to discover. It's within the province of the Lord Chancellor's Office, but Sir Brian Roberts, Secretary of Commission at the Office, will only say it's a "question of matching the work to the people with experience." It's all very informal and completely unchallengeable: the kind of people who took the decision don't have to answer to the public.

It is clear that the local bench in Barnet weren't involved. The clerk to Highgate Magistrates says they weren't consulted about the use of their Court Number Three at Barnet for these cases.

The Persons Unknown case opened at last on Thursday September 20, sixteen months after the first arrests. The opening was accompanied by a blaze of argument over the jury-vetting issue but the case itself is attracting relatively little attention.

As we went to press Prosecuting Counsel Michael Worsley was still working his way through his case; it will take at least two months to complete.

The Crown's argument is much as we outlined it last month: that Ronan Bennett, Iris Mills, Dafydd Ladd, Stewart Carr, Vince Stevenson and Trevor Dawton were conspiring, together with others to rob supermarkets, steal firearms and build up an "anarchist terrorist cell" which would later turn to causing explosions and assassinating famous people.

Worsley stressed that much of what the prosecution would produce would appear circumstantial: he compared it to building up a huge jigsaw puzzle, claiming that each tiny piece of evidence would eventually fit together as a whole.

It is apparent that the police have gone to fantastic lengths to assemble the evidence. Yet only four of the alleged conspirators are actually in court. Dafydd Ladd failed to turn up at the start of the trial and has been on the run ever since. He told *The Leveller* just before the trial that he "didn't think he would get a fair hearing in front of a vetted jury."

Five of the defendants appeared at a public meeting at Conway Hall just before the trial: they dissociated themselves from Stewart Carr and, they announced, he dissociated himself from them.

Carr came into the dock on the first day of the trial, refused to recognise Judge Alan King-Hamilton and was bundled out to the cells below. He was originally charged with six robberies, the proceeds of which—guns, ammunition, building society accounts containing cash deposits and so on—form an

important part of the evidence. Now he is pleading guilty to the charge of "conspiracy to rob."

This charge links all the remaining defendants. It also names two others, Graham Rua and Michelle Poiree, who have not been captured by the police. Rua is Iris Mills' former husband (she and Ronan Bennett are companions); like her, he is a New Zealander. Worsley has mentioned him a number of times—apparently victims or witnesses to the robberies said that a man with a New Zealand accent was involved—but he has barely talked about Poiree, who may simply be named because she was his companion. Both are now thought to be in France.

The defendants face a variety of other charges, including the possession of stolen firearms, lack of a firearms licence and, in the case of Bennett and Mills, possession of explosive substances.

The defence will face a number of difficulties. Some of the case has effectively been heard 'in camera' when the jury has been cleared to enable the judge to decide whether a particularly contentious piece of evidence should be admissible.

Worsley appears to be using these periods to fill 74-year-old King-Hamilton's mind with the bleakest possible picture. His behaviour once the jury has gone out of the room changes completely and, instead of the slow, reasonable man he appears to the jury, he becomes a very nasty man indeed.

Bennett is conducting his own case, using Martin Walker of the Criminal Research and Action Group as his McKenzie Adviser. But the bail conditions make it difficult for him to really work at it.

The other defendants have some of the best-known barristers of the civil liberties left working for them and we have yet to hear their point of view. But out of the total of nine alleged conspirators three are on the run, a fourth refuses to recognise the court and the role of the fifth is beginning to look very questionable. The jury has been vetted, and a political climate has been created which will be as much a part of the case as the evidence put before the court.

## who's going to know?

The people of Southall will know nothing of the Barnet proceedings—at least, not through the local press. The only weekly paper covering the area is the Southall edition of the *Ealing Gazette*, which is owned by the notorious right-wing Westminster Press group. The *Gazette* says it can't spare a reporter to travel all the way to Barnet. And the local paper there, the *Barnet Press*, says it can't spare reporters to cover cases that are of no interest locally for them, and neither can the local court reporting agency.

*Gazette* executives therefore took the decision: if we can't cover all the cases, we won't cover any. The result: Southall people won't be told about the outcome of state attacks on 342 of their number on the most important day in the community's political history. And since all the cases are being defended, and police witnesses challenged, this means that all the important detail about how the police planned and mounted these attacks on the black people of Southall on April 23, and how the judiciary is now following up these attacks, will also be kept dark.

Without suggesting that newspaper proprietors and police are in secret conspiracy, one can suggest that police and judicial authorities will not be particularly distressed at this.

# Shorts

METRO CLUB

## RE-OPENS XMAS

LAST ISSUE we reported the sit-in at the Metro Club against the ILEA's attempts to "close for re-decoration", which the local black community regarded as probable attempted closure. But, in fact, the Metro Sit-in committee have won their victory. A spokesperson said: "After a meeting with the ILEA we made a decision to hand over the keys so that the Metro can be decorated and have showers put in. After 12 weeks—around Xmas time—we're going to run it just the way we want. They had said they were going to redecorate, but they never said when they were going to re-open.

"When they decided to close the club, they thought no-one was going to give them any trouble. They thought that everybody was going to walk out and leave it at that. They tried everything in their power to get us out, but what was on our side was that they knew it was more than an ordinary bunch of kids. We were prepared to sit-in and fight it out, or even go on the streets and fight it out physically."

New plans for the club include more cultural classes revolving around Africa and Amharic language classes.

BAHRAIN

## ISLAMIC REVOLT?

REBELLION is in the air in the feudal sheikdom of Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf. Since mid-summer the ruling Khalifah dynasty has been under challenge from a loose alliance of Islamic fundamentalists inspired by events in neighbouring Iran and left wing students and intellectuals opposed to the autocratic regime.

There's been a heavy handed reaction from the authorities who have stopped every attempt at peaceful demonstrations with tear gas and riot police. Although the government denies that any arrests have been for more than routine interrogation, reports from Iran say the Amir Sheik Isa's aptly named "Public Security" force have tortured suspects and are "keeping the people down at the point of a bayonet."

The authorities do admit to holding at least 30 political prisoners on Hidd Island, a rocky islet between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, including the speaker of the suspended National Assembly, and Bahraini Shia leader, Al Akri, who was arrested in August for allegedly making inflammatory broadcasts from Iran. Another religious leader has been deported.

Bahrain is dominated by a Sunni Muslim minority, to which the ruling family belong, but the Shia majority who make up about 65 per cent of the 260,000 native population have been consistently denied the top jobs in government, the security forces and the civil service. Only five Shia hold Cabinet positions and these are of relatively minor importance.

In July the Shia community was moved to present a petition to the Amir Sheik Isa (the name means Jesus) calling for "an Islamic form of government" and curbs on alcohol (sold freely), cabaret (offensive to some Muslims) and dress by women in public. A brisk walk through the downtown *souk* where Shia stalls are

decorated with posters calling for an Islamic republic, shows the demands are a reality.

The government has imposed strict press controls, including registration for the dozen or so resident foreign correspondents, most of them British expatriate housewives doing journalism as a side line. Among the incidents on which news blackouts have been imposed were the burning of a cinema and the destruction of two pleasure boats owned by a UK firm which imports alcohol into Bahrain.

The expatriate banking community which latched onto Bahrain in 1975 as a tax haven centre for doing business with Saudi Arabia is clearly nervous. Few Bahrainis play any part in controlling the £10,000 million in assets held by the 50 offshore banks. As one banker put it: "If Isa falls this will be Tehran all over again: whole hands not fingers will get burned." The banking community is, however, predictably blaming the blow to business confidence on "exaggerated reports in the foreign press."

The outlook for Bahrain is certainly stormy. This month will see the Shia festival of Muh Muharram, traditionally a time of heightened emotions, and the start of the revolution last year in Iran. Unrest will result in more repression and serious sectarian violence. And how will the Saudis react to trouble across the water? There are reports of Saudi troops in Bahrain, but as yet these have been difficult to confirm.

WALES

## CONTINUING TO CONSPIRE

OVERSHADOWED BY other mega-political trials in the UK, a conspiracy case against a member of the Welsh Language Society got underway last month in, of all places, deepest affluent English rural Sussex.

Hywel Pennar belongs to the Society and together with an ex-member, Eryl Fychan, he was charged with conspiring to damage the BBC TV transmitter station at Beckley Hill, Midhurst in West Sussex last February.

They were remanded to face trial "after Christmas" at Lewes Crown Court and it may well be that the militant cause of the Welsh language and the issue of proper Welsh broadcasting in Cymru takes on some overdue national prominence.

Pennar's supporters point menacingly to the use of the conspiracy charge indicative as it is of insufficient solid evidence against him, and permitting also the Crown to introduce no end of "scene-setting" irrelevant political information to gain their conviction.

Doughty citizens of Lewes will scarcely be the most sympathetic towards nationalism in the UK, and anyway the four previous trails of Society members in Wales have involved this autumn's favourite issue — rigged juries.

At the time of the Beckley Hill incident, the Society took full responsibility, (although they state also they reject all violence). Commenting on the affair, they said; "This time, the police have chosen to pick on a common member of the Society in the hope that they can make an example of him and quell any further tide of feeling.

"We stand with Hywel Pennar and continue the campaign. We have ALL of us conspired to demand a Welsh Channel in our language and our children's language — a natural right and an essential prerequisite of our future as a Nation in the modern world.

"We shall continue to conspire and act towards this objective".

Further info from the Society at Swyddfa, 5 Maes Albert, Aberystwyth, Cymru (p.4501)

### Southall Hearings: The Score So Far . . .

Magistrate	Cases Heard	Remands	Effective Cases	Acquittals	Convictions	Custodial Sentences	Conviction Rate
BADGE	67	31	35	8	27	7*	77%
CANHAM	73	41	30	2	28	1	93%
COOKE	46	19	25	4	21	22*	84%
MACDERMOTT	2	1	1	0	1	1	100%

(\*Suspended sentences)

Total Fines charged at Oct 8: £6987

# BLUE MURDER

You are more likely to die an 'accidental death' under arrest at the police station than surrounded by all the dangers of your own home. As public unease mounts over the death of Jimmy Kelly and the behaviour of the Huyton police force, David Clark examines deaths in police custody.

On 22 January 1978 52 year old Elizabeth Coulson went to a party in Newcastle and got thoroughly plastered. So much so that on her way home she collapsed in a drunken stupor. At 1.40am she was found in the street by police officers after lying out in weather described as 'freezing and sub-zero' for about 90 minutes.

They arrested her for being drunk and disorderly, taking her into custody 'for her own protection'. At the police station she was put into a cell without any blankets despite her obviously frozen condition. At 11 o'clock next morning Duty Sergeant Parker became alarmed when he couldn't wake her up. He covered her with blankets and called the Police Surgeon, who arrived 70 minutes later and sent her straight to hospital. There she died of hypothermia and a massively high dose of alcohol.

On 24 February 1978, the coroner, Montague Levy, stressed that no blame was to be attached to the police but directed that a warning should be sent out that in future the police should be aware of the dangers of hypothermia. He gave his warning after Police Sergeant Eileen Flemming told the court that it was normal practice not to give a blanket to people arrested for drunkenness in case they smothered themselves.

Amazingly, the Coroner accepted this bunkum. Yet two doctors contacted by *The Leveller*, both of whom have wide experience of dealing with alcoholism, said they had never come across anybody who had smothered themselves in their blanket, nor had they read of it in the medical literature.

They did say that there is a danger of the patient swallowing his or her own vomit and suggested that drunken prisoners should be checked regularly to make sure they are still alive. Five people have died in Northumbria's police stations in the past 18 months, choked in their own vomit. Regular checking might have saved 67 year old Violet James of Whitley Bay who was taken into custody on 1 November 1978 and put into a cell. She died 15 hours later from a massive cerebral haemorrhage which had been obscured from police eyes by her drunken condition.

Violet James and Elizabeth Coulson are just two of the people who died in police custody recently. Their cases are not as horrific as those, for example of Jimmy Kelly in Liverpool, James McGeown of Glasgow or Liddle Towers in Newcastle, all of whom died directly as a result of police violence. But they are important for the degree of callousness involved from those whose most important task is to protect life.

And they are just the tip of a barely-visible iceberg. On average people die in police custody at the alarming rate of one a fortnight. And less than a third of those die of 'natural causes'. Official Home Office statistics show that in the six and a half years from January 1970 to June 1977 a total of 169 people died in police custody. The statistics, which are not normally collected by the Home Office, were specially collated in response to a Parliamentary Question by Stan Newens, Labour MP for Harlow.

The cold statistics (see box) give only a hint of the full picture. Only in two cases was the verdict the serious and criminal one of 'manslaughter'. But in a further 11 cases the coroner's court returned an open verdict: the police, in whose custody the victim died, were unable to produce enough evidence for a proper verdict to be given.

In 39 cases death was by 'misadventure'. In other words, 'bad luck', like poor Elizabeth Coulson whose main bad luck seems to have been to be arrested rather than taken home to face the risk of smothering in her own blankets.

A further 26 cases were accidental death, a statistic which needs some examination since it implies that you are rather more likely to die by accident in the police station than you are in that notoriously dangerous place, your own home. Based on extrapolation from Metropolitan Police total arrest figures (which underestimate, if anything, since they include people arrested more than once and London has a higher crime rate

than the rest of the country) in the average year four arrested people died by accident out of approximately 400,000 arrests — i.e. one in 100,000 or roughly the same proportion as those who died at home in 1974. But those victims overwhelmingly died from poisoning, fire and flames — none of which are usually thought of as problems in a police station. And a significant proportion of them were the very young, the very old and the infirm — who don't usually figure very high in the arrest statistics.

A further 24 committed suicide — a really remarkable achievement considering the lengths that police go to to ensure that those arrested have not got the means to take their own lives. In other words, once every six weeks somebody is going to die from accident or suicide while in police hands.

The 52 deaths from natural causes deserve examination. In theory, people will die from old age, heart attacks or other natural circumstances while in custody. But what about 55 year old Ronald Blair, again of Northumbria? The records show that Blair died of a heart attack in Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 10 February: but when he was admitted, X-rays showed that he had four fractured ribs — a serious business for a man his age.

Blair had been arrested in January by police from the notorious Gateshead division, whose officers had previously been involved in kicking Liddle Towers to death. (Three years ago the whole nightshift at the Felling sub-division was convicted of carrying out burglaries while on duty.)

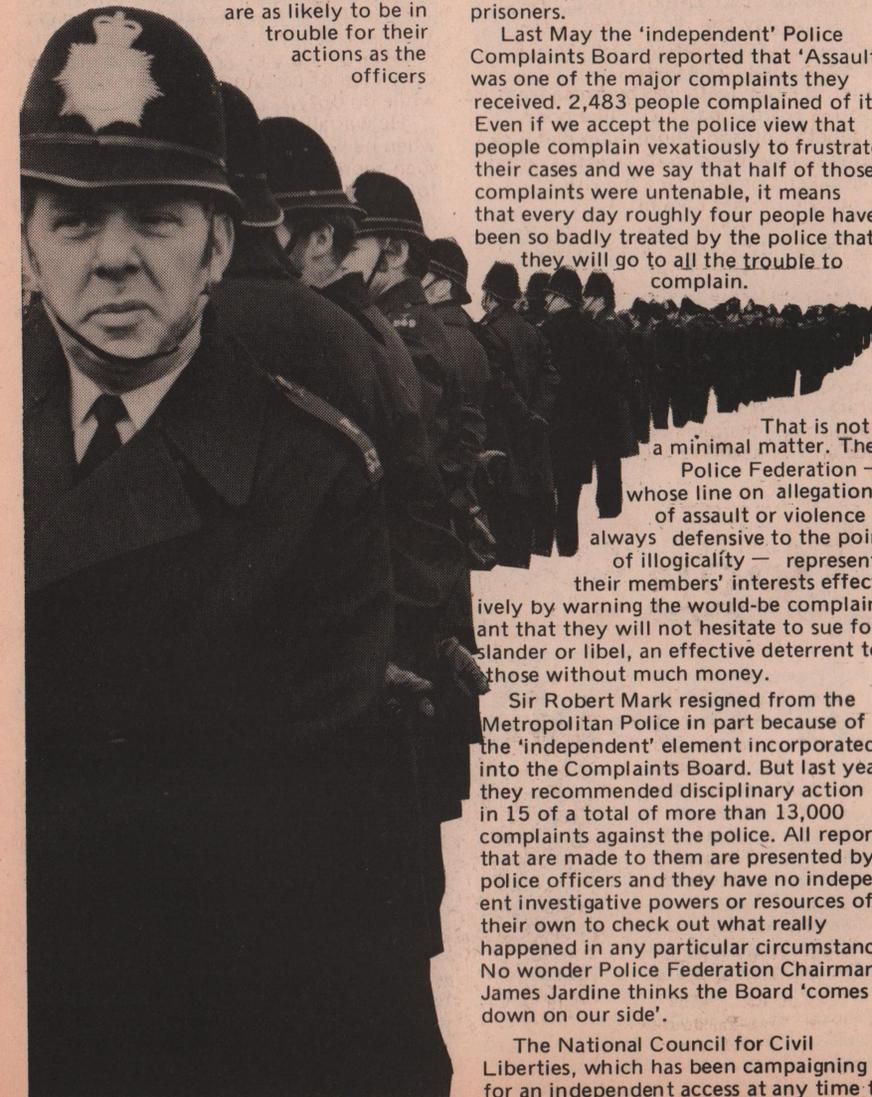
He was allegedly drunk and disorderly; when he was released next day he was in such agony he could hardly walk and he told his daughter he had been given a good going over by the police. Eventually he went to his own doctor and thence to hospital. At the inquest the Home Office pathologist said the injuries to his ribs were such that they could have been made by someone's shoe. The police said they thought he had injured himself falling out of bed before they arrested him. But his daughter, Ms Rosemary Graham, said he had told her about falling out of bed and he had thought it was a joke. He certainly had not hurt himself, she said.

Police investigations into deaths in their own premises can be slipshod or even dishonest. Compared to the fantastic detective work that has gone into making a case against 'Persons Unknown', some police investigations are appalling.

22 year old James McGeown, for example, was kicked to death in Strathclyde A Division police station at Stewart Street, Glasgow on 10 November last year. So disgusted was one young constable that he gave eye-witness evidence against Sergeant Meehan. But so badly had Glasgow police prepared their case that the judge threw it out. Thus the public is asked to believe that police — who prepare cases every day of the week — could not muster evidence to convict from a police station that must have been ringing with agony from James McGeown.

And in the Liddle Towers case eight of the nine officers involved simply refused to give evidence the first time around. When public outrage was so great that a fresh enquiry was held, all of them gave evidence and agreed with what had happened. Liddle Towers' own account of what went on — the kicking he had received both outside and in the cells — was ruled inadmissible evidence, and the public asked to believe that eight abrasions and 30 bruises were caused by one fat officer kneeling on the poor man.

Even where there is public outcry, or where the family and friends start to campaign, they are as likely to be in trouble for their actions as the officers



## DEATHS IN POLICE CUSTODY

January 1970 - June 1977

Total Deaths: 169  
In police stations: 104  
In hospital: 65

### Available Detail on Cause of Death

Natural Causes: 52  
Misadventure: 39  
Accidental Death: 26  
Manslaughter: 2  
Suicide: 24  
Open Verdict: 11  
Unknown: 4  
No Inquest: 11

(Source: Hansard 26 October 1977)

involved. Norman Barr, a 20 year old from Barrow in Furness, was taken into custody and slapped and shaken so much — despite police knowledge of a fatal disease he suffered from — that one week later he died. His brother, infuriated by his death, found the officer who did it and assaulted him. It was the brother that got two years. And when McGeown's father and brother yelled out in court that the verdict was a travesty of justice it was they who were arrested and charged with breach of the peace. Deaths like those of McGeown, Barr or Towers are the tragic results of police assault on their prisoners.

Last May the 'independent' Police Complaints Board reported that 'Assault' was one of the major complaints they received. 2,483 people complained of it. Even if we accept the police view that people complain vexatiously to frustrate their cases and we say that half of those complaints were untenable, it means that every day roughly four people have been so badly treated by the police that they will go to all the trouble to complain.

That is not a minimal matter. The Police Federation — whose line on allegations of assault or violence is always defensive to the point of illogicality — represent their members' interests effectively by warning the would-be complainant that they will not hesitate to sue for slander or libel, an effective deterrent to those without much money.

Sir Robert Mark resigned from the Metropolitan Police in part because of the 'independent' element incorporated into the Complaints Board. But last year they recommended disciplinary action in 15 of a total of more than 13,000 complaints against the police. All reports that are made to them are presented by police officers and they have no independent investigative powers or resources of their own to check out what really happened in any particular circumstance. No wonder Police Federation Chairman James Jardine thinks the Board 'comes down on our side'.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, which has been campaigning for an independent access at any time to

police stations, argues that simply to look at the deaths in police custody underestimates their importance since there is no way of telling just who might die later from injuries received at the hands of the police. Harriet Harman, the NCCL's law officer adds that the police station is very much a closed place — suspects are on their own, held incommunicado. In such a closed environment beatings are more likely to be allowed than if there were an independent presence.

The NCCL has put this point to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, which is currently sifting the evidence it has received about police interrogation. The Commission apparently thinks that interrogation malpractice goes on all the time but that it would be impossible to have independent people in the police station 24 hours a day to monitor what goes on, partly because they might become absorbed into the police framework.

Michael Meacher, Labour MP for Oldham West, has associated himself with the campaign run by Liddle Towers' family and intends to raise the matter in Parliament with an Early Day Motion. He wants to see a pilot project set up in six towns with an independent panel of visitors who have the right to visit a police station at any time of day or night and see and talk in private with any prisoner they want. Meacher, who has a dossier from the Liddle Towers family composed of 150 letters from the relatives of people assaulted by the police, says that the Police Federation have turned his idea down flat. He also wants more attention paid to the role of local police committees, which do at least have an elected content even if they are usually rode rough-shod by Chief Constables.

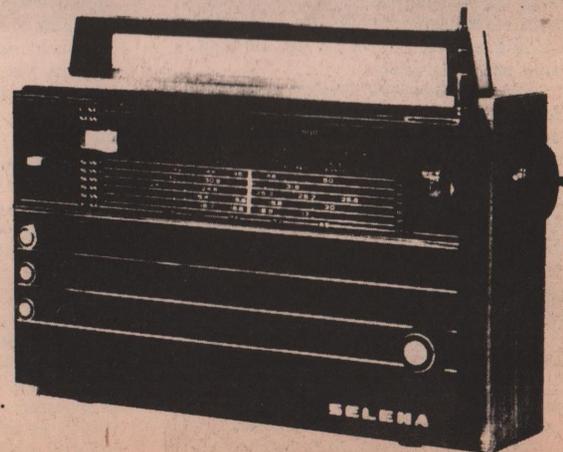
Ray Challinor, the polytechnic lecturer who's been active investigating cases in Northumbria, wants to go further than that. He argues that the public should also monitor the police and keep as careful an eye on them as the police do on us. In addition to a higher level of public awareness he wants to see some form of tamper-proof system installed in police cells to be produced in the magistrates' court as part of the evidence. 'Sophisticated equipment is produced for the police all the time', he says, 'but it's never produced for civil liberties.'

Simply to enumerate a list of recent cases shows how little value some police apparently place on human life. Blair Peach; Mickey Calvey, shot in the back during an armed robbery in South London last December; Paul Howe, shot by a marksman in a public house siege in Harwich last March; Anthony Barbour, the 'normally peaceful man' shot by police marksmen in Cumbria after apparently going berserk in Cumbria last January; Swarm Grewal, allowed to choke to death in his own vomit at Southall police station in August; different kinds of cases but all linked by indifference to humanity and the obscene scramble of the police authorities to get the details covered up. The existence of the few cases that have been given national publicity together with the statistics of those that have not should create a deep sense of public unease about the violence of the British police.

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Women against violence

# SELF-DEFENCE...

ON JUNE 17, 1975 Dessie Woods and Cheryl Todd were hitching home to Atlanta. They had been on the road for 10 hours and were exhausted having spent the past three days in prison, wrongfully accused of drunken behaviour whilst waiting to visit Todd's brother in Reidville Prison. They accepted a lift from Ronald Horne, a white Southerner.

The presence of a citizen's band radio and a gun in the car gave the women the impression that he was a plain clothes detective. In fact he was an insurance salesman, renowned in his home town for raping black women. He sympathised with the women's experience in Reidsville and radioed a friend, Royce Yawn, arranging to discuss their grievance at a cafe en route. At the cafe Yawn tried to persuade Todd to go with him but the women were suspicious of his motives and stayed with Horne. However once in the car Horne, deliberately started driving in the wrong direction. The women became alarmed, forced Horne to stop and walked back to the cafe. Horne pursued them and when they refused to go with him, he threatened them with arrest. They complied and were then informed that they were going to be raped.

Todd became hysterical and immediately the car drew up, she leapt out and made to escape. Horne grabbed the gun and took aim, but Woods intervened and securing the gun, shot him in the head twice. She then recovered Todd and, with money taken from Horne's pocket, the women returned to Atlanta. The next day they were arrested and charged with first degree murder and armed robbery.

The trial was scheduled for September 2, 1975 but several defense motions — one being that the Grand Jury re-convene due to undisguised anti-black sentiments — delayed it until January 19, 1976. By that date, the trial was still in error on 20 counts including the fact that Horne's family were paying a special prosecutor and that Judge O'Connor had ordered restrictions on publicity:— nothing but pen and paper to be taken into the courtroom, no statement to be made on the trial without written consent... All demonstrations were prohibited.

However, despite the obvious attempt to railroad Woods to prison and possibly death row, — Woods was considered more of a threat to society than Todd — it was only after private persuasion by Judge

## "DESSIE WOODS RESISTED 500 YEARS OF TRADITIONAL CRIME; THE RAPE OF BLACK WOMEN BY WHITE MEN"

O'Connor that a compromise verdict was reached. On February 2, 1976 Woods was convicted of armed robbery and manslaughter and given sentences of 10 and 12 years to run concurrently. Todd was convicted of theft by taking and given a sentence of 5 years, 3½ of which were to be served on probation.

This result caused the African Peoples Socialist Party to take up Woods case and the National Committee to Defend Dessie Woods was formed. The Chairman of the Committee states: "It is not enough that we hold another 'free a political prisoner' effort. This effort must address itself to the key, fundamental, contradiction responsible for Sister Dessie's predicament. And that contradiction is colonialism."

Demesha Blackearth, of the APSP, has recently been on a whistle stop publicity tour of Europe working under the slogan "Not One More Year". She updated the case for us.

"It's been a problem getting word out in the white, right wing press who consciously attempt to blot cases like Dessie Woods' out of the news media." For example, when Woods was imprisoned some prison officials tried to hang her; she was stripped, put in an ice cold room for days and beaten. Complaints brought about her certification. The Committee then intervened and she was returned to prison, but when a suit for malpractice was filed against the prison no record of Woods' detainment in the mental institution could be located. There was a "total white-out" of the incident.

National Committee to Defend  
Dessie Woods  
PO Box 92084  
Morris Brown Station  
Atlanta  
Georgia 30314

At present, Woods is being forcibly drugged with Polixem, a behaviour modification drug. Slurred speech, shaking and constipation are just three of the many side effects. The drug is still in its experimental stages and is a proven paralysing. Woods is also subject to constant demoralisation. Her release or transfer is frequently promised and then the promise is retracted. She has not seen her children, except for a visit which was deliberately curtailed to two minutes, in three years.

The National Committee is emphatic that the case is not "a women's liberation issue", we see it as a people's liberation issue". In defending herself against Horne, "Dessie Woods resisted 500 years of traditional crime; the rape of black women by white men. Therefore, we feel that she is part of the overall struggle and a symbol of the resistance that black people have displayed for the past 500 years. Never once in the history of Georgia has a white man ever been convicted of raping a black woman, yet we know that countless numbers of black men have been castrated and murdered for supposedly raping white women."

Considering the prevailing colonialism in Georgia, the National Committee feels that "James Carter's human rights campaign is hypocritical as it relates to black people" and that there can be no human rights campaign until Woods is free.

However, they have no confidence in the ability of the legal system to bring about justice: "The entire court system is illegitimate to our lives. We see the death penalty as genocide against the black people. 58% of the people on death row are black people. We say bring Dessie Woods before the masses of our people, the day to day working people, who suffer every day from this colonial terror and they will not find Dessie Woods guilty of any crime." Nevertheless, the National Committee is optimistic about the future of Dessie Woods. "We know that even though we have not freed Dessie Woods thus far, that it is a victory that she is alive and we know that it is the direct result of the masses the righteous thinking people showing unconditional support for her that has kept her alive."

Plans for future action are still being discussed, but anyone who wants to help but doesn't live locally could write to Women's Aid, 88a George St, Edinburgh, 031-225 6167.

battered women who might be tempted to kill their husbands. He said that he had taken into account the fact that her husband had "knocked her about a bit", in the face of evidence which pointed to extreme and systematic violence. (Witnesses in the trial testified to incidents like when her husband had kicked her in the stomach when she was pregnant, slashed her with a ghirka knife, tied her wrists and hit her over the head with a chair and burned her with cigarettes.)

The campaign organisers intend to keep up the pressure until the sentence is quashed.

Joanna Blythman

# MODERN HEROINES...

ONCE UPON A TIME images of women's strength and creativity were a major component of people's cultural life. If we draw upon myth, folklore and archaeological remains, we get a picture of a revered Mother, Great Goddess, Harvest Queen. Early cultures dependent for survival on progeny and agriculture, both the labour of women, praised and feared women's seemingly magical power to create babies inside themselves, just as the earth gave forth its produce.

Over the centuries, things changed. Labour extended itself to the production of tools, machinery and ever-increasingly sophisticated technology to ensure the necessities of life. At the same time the beginnings of monogamy and the family meant that control of women's sexuality and reproductive capacity passed into the hands of men in order to ensure the inheritance of private property, now that it was a question of not just a sufficiency, but a surplus, being produced. One result of this has been that production has come to be the most highly valued activity in so-called developed societies, and that reproduction, and all its associated activities, is seen as less crucial. Despite the fact that the rearing of children is indispensable for the inculcation of social and moral values, and that, to put it crudely, a supply of workers is still necessary, women's traditional work is downgraded. Not only that; birth itself is increasingly removed from women's experience as delivery wards are turned into assembly lines, and women's participation in delivery reduced by methods such as induction, sensation-killing drugs and unnecessary Caesareans.

The post-war women's liberation movement has concentrated on our needs not only to be producers (arguments and campaigns for women's inclusion in the workforce on equal terms with men, with all that that entails in the way of training opportunities, education and nursery provision) but also to be reproducers of children, certainly (campaigns for men to become involved in childcare, for safe and effective contraception, for abortion, i.e. for choice around motherhood), but also of ourselves within the culture (campaigns for economic independence, the right to live with and love other women).

Art is very important for the reproduction by a society of itself, of images, hopes, fears and contradictory state-

ments about our relationship to our work, ourselves and each other. Cultural struggle is crucial to feminism: unless we explore ourselves and our relationships to other women and to men, how can we find out who we have been, who we are now and what we might become? However, to participate as creator in a modern culture takes time, money, and the conviction that you have something to say worth listening to.

Television, our main purveyor of popular culture, both teaches us that we do not need to create our own culture which expresses ourselves in all our complexity, but also subtly teaches apparent truths about who we are, one very important truth still being the idiocy, weakness and laughable nature of women. The literary establishment is still dominated by the rationale that one voice, that of the white, middle-class man, can adequately explain all of us to ourselves. Some male bourgeois reviewers, for example, still consider that a novel by a woman is good if the gender of the author is not noticeable, i.e. that it could have been written by a man. Man here means, as it still so often does, human being, whereas woman means other, animal, peripheral, not worthy of the books page in the newspapers. On the other hand, a bad novel by a woman often means that it is feminist, i.e. that it dares to speak with a gendered voice, to proclaim difference of experience and of concerns, and perhaps to be angry, that most unfeminine activity.

The fact that three feminist publishing houses, Virago, the Women's Press and Onlywomen Press, are now in full swing, demonstrates how much things are changing, and what a large and hungry audience there is for books by women about all aspects of our lives. Women's writing collectives have also sprung up, to produce anthologies of short stories and poetry, and also to provide a forum for women to read and criticise each others' work, to encourage one another to be honest, even if that is painful, and to write as well as possible. This is a big move away from the traditional notion of the writer, usually male, solitary in his garret, serviced by the muse in the shape of wife, and absolved from the cares of domesticity and children.

To go back to the image of the Mother Goddess I mentioned at the beginning of this article: I think that one

function of feminist writing is to heal the breach that has been made in us, between our sense of ourselves as sexual and as reproductive. When Christianity took over from the earlier fertility religions, which stressed sexuality, motherhood was left as a female activity, in the image of the Virgin Mary. Sexuality, however, was incorporated into the male godhead through the image of the wound in the side of Christ, which surely must represent menstruation. To bear a child has nothing to do with sex. Women have nothing to do with sex.

The other side of this contradiction is the way that the male theologians of the early Church so often reviled earthly women, as opposed to their role model, Mary, as being sexually voracious animals. This pervasive Christian imagery, rooted in our psyches, is a most inspiring source for poets and writers trying to question notions of femininity and masculinity, productive and reproductive, being and doing. For example, Doris Lessing broke literary ground in *The Golden Notebook*, when she gave an integrated picture of her heroine, who in the course of one day is shown as a writer, a worker, a mother, a Communist Party activist and as a woman beginning her period. Other images of femaleness are being reclaimed. Sara Maitland in her novel *Daughter of Jerusalem*, discusses infertility, and the guilt of a feminist would-be mother that her feminism has unwomaned her and stopped her ovulating. The short stories in the collectively produced *Tales I tell my mother* describe political and productive life, but also motherhood, domesticity, lesbianism. What I personally await with fascination is the day that male writers decide it is crucial for their politics to write about the experience specifically of masculinity, the day that Batman and the Great Mother dance with each other and talk on the telephone the day that heroes and rulers become human again.

Michele Roberts

Doris Lessing, 'The Golden Notebook' (Panther Books).  
Sara Maitland, 'Daughter of Jerusalem' (Blond & Briggs).  
Zoë Fairbairns, Sara Maitland, Valerie Miner, Michele Roberts & Michelene Wandor, 'Tales I tell my mother' (Journeyman Press).

# ... IS NO OFFENCE

JUNE GREIG, battered woman who retaliated against her violent husband and killed him, got through the first stage of her appeal in Edinburgh last month. She is appealing both against her 6 year prison sentence and against conviction.

More than 40 women staged an all night vigil outside the High Court the night before her appeal, and on the actual day around 200 people turned up to demonstrate against her sentence.

The court granted leave to appeal against sentence but postponed the hearing for another 6-8 weeks, in order to consider the notes of evidence from the original trial more carefully.

The Free June Greig Campaign, which

started off as a small local campaign, has grown to such an extent that the case has become something of a cause celebre. It has attracted attention both in the national (British) press and from abroad. Support has come from all quarters, but in particular, from hundreds of individual women all over the country who have sent in donations and letters of support.

The campaign is trying to highlight some of the issues about battered women in general — lack of legal protection, adequate alternatives to a violent marriage — but especially, it is reacting against the disgusting statement of the judge who when sentencing her, said that he was using her case as a "deterrent" to other

battered women who might be tempted to kill their husbands. He said that he had taken into account the fact that her husband had "knocked her about a bit", in the face of evidence which pointed to extreme and systematic violence. (Witnesses in the trial testified to incidents like when her husband had kicked her in the stomach when she was pregnant, slashed her with a ghirka knife, tied her wrists and hit her over the head with a chair and burned her with cigarettes.)

The campaign organisers intend to keep up the pressure until the sentence is quashed.

Plans for future action are still being discussed, but anyone who wants to help but doesn't live locally could write to Women's Aid, 88a George St, Edinburgh, 031-225 6167.

# ... AND THEIR AGENTS

"I WANT TO ATTRACT people into my shop so that they'll buy my lovely books, but I don't want to compromise myself." Viv's remark at Feminists book-selling conference epitomised the conflict that many women felt between the necessities of commercial success and the desire to stock the books they want to see read.

The best thing that this conference at Hebden Bridge did was to draw together women from different areas of the book world from an established London publisher, The Women's Press, to the owner of a

secondhand bookstall in Wales. A lot of much-needed practical information was provided for those setting up new bookshops. Repeated complaints about the inadequate distribution of feminist literature led to a *Publications Distribution Co-operative* rep's refrain of "What we need is a radical wholesaler." Meanwhile the Women's Liberation Bookbus is struggling to establish itself as a mobile bookshop, reaching small towns where no alternative bookshop exists.

Other enterprises bubbling on the feminist scene deserve some attention: a London based feminist newspaper,

initially to be issued twice monthly (and sounding rather dangerously like *Spare Rib* wearing tabloid make-up); plans for a feminist radio, starting with some free-lance programmes.

For specialists there's a new publication *The Radical Bookseller* coming out before Christmas. Its aim is to carry information which the notoriously stuffy trade paper, *The Bookseller*, neglects. All bookshops are urged to take out subscriptions at £10 pa. Bookshops — and anyone interested in writing for the first issue — should contact Janet Slade, 12 Slade Grove, Manchester M13 0QF.

Tim Gopsill has been to see the occupiers of a Papal property that has fallen into better hands.

# WOMEN OF ROME

THE ROME guidebooks say the Palazzo del Governo Vecchio has a magnificent porch. Those guidebook editors should see it now, with its magnificent banner: "Occupazione MLD".

MLD is the Italian Women's Liberation Movement, the *Movimento di Liberazione della Donna*. They're just celebrating the third anniversary of their seizure of the palazzo. Another note to the guidebook editors: it's not the Palazzo del Governo Vecchio any more; you refer to it as the Casa di Donna, because that's what it is.

It's still officially owned, for what it's worth, by the Vatican. Perhaps Il Papa is the Old Governor of the old name. At any rate, the women put his holiness in its place very graphically, right at the gate of the palazzo itself, when the theatre group — one of dozens of activities sparked off from inside — staged a symbolic crucifixion of one of the sisters, tomato ketchup and all.

Though the Vatican owned it, like much of the desirable property in Rome, it had been used by the city council for storing records. However, tourists clutching those guidebooks could still be shown round by the caretaker, and that's what fifteen women did on October 2 1976. Inside, they told him it was henceforth occupied, and there wasn't much he could do about it.

There hasn't been much of the dreaded Rome police could do either. Every time they've been, at the instigation of the City or the Vatican, there've been at least 200 women in the way, and as one of the original occupiers, Daniella, says, "they'd have to kill us".

So they stayed. The MLD joined the original occupiers after six months, and now it's owned by 81 women's organisations, used by more than 3,000 women. It's been decided it's separatist. "That's why we threw you out", Daniella explained, "It's the decision of 3,000 women, not mine."

They offer legal and health services for women. They take in women (and their children) needing shelter, though they've got to

restore the crumbling upper storeys to be able to run a proper refuge. Being Rome, there's a free radio station, *Radio Lilith*. There's a women's bar and a women's newspaper, *Quotidiano Donna*. They're planning a cinema.

And of course it's a meeting place, where individual groups can meet, and where groups can work together on women's issues. A fortress of women's consciousness, and the most important thing coming from it now, they say, is the proposed Law Against Crimes Using Physical or Sexual Violence Against the Person.

This is being propagated by the *Comitato Promotore per la Legge contro la Violenza Sessuale*, a committee of groups extending beyond even those inside the Casa. For they've had their political difficulties, have the women, particularly with the Parties. Originally they were supported by Italy's libertarian/ecological Radical Party, and they had women from the PCI's *Unione dei Donne Italiane*. But it was decided they didn't want these connections, so it's a rule now, "No parties"; except that the UDI and its paper *Noi Donne* is taking part in the Comitato (and in that activity alone).

Which is quite something, for the PCI has its own proposed law against sexual violence, but to the MLD it's inadequate. "It is set out against crimes about *pudore* ('sexual modesty')", says Daniella. "The current Italian law speaks of crimes against morality. But we aren't *pudore*, and we aren't moralistic. We're persons."

There's a peculiar provision in Italian law, that any bill presented to Parliament with 50,000 signatures has to be debated therein, whether it has the support of any deputies or not. They're just setting out to get the signat-

*Pictures from a marvellous 60-page book (in Italian) produced by the women. Send £2 (or more!) and an A4 envelope to Casa di Donna, Via del Governo Vecchio 39, Rome.*



*The Casa's theatre group takes to the streets, with Daniella (in hat) freaking away*

ures, but they won't have the slightest trouble. And in Parliament? Well that's not really the point, which is to get the issue debated publicly, and to get to all women, in factories, offices and homes.

"We would rather the women deputies voted for it", says Daniella, "but all the parties are telling them not to, and at least they'll have to declare their positions on the question."

The proposal is really radical. The women's movement would have the right to represent all women victims in court — a parallel to trade unions' right to represent workers in industrial accident cases. And there are radical departures from the present law: Rape wouldn't require proof of penetration. No medical examination. "It's any kind of physical violence", says Daniella. "Every time my arse is touched on the bus it's rape."

Husbands would be liable for prosecution like all men. The victim's life would not be taken into account, which it is now, as in Britain, "If a woman's a prostitute, so what. If she's said yes twenty-five times before that's her problem. It's rape when she doesn't."

A prosecution wouldn't require a *denunziatore*: at



*Women occupy the palazzo courtyard*

## No modesty, no morals... no Parties

present, a woman has to go to a police station and denounce the rapist, by name, for an investigation even to be started (and there was a famous Italian case, over Claudia, a woman raped, who like so many, wasn't able to make the denunciation, and was raped again, by the same men.) And it would sweep away an even more disgusting provision, that if a rapist, even if charged, agrees to marry the victim, then the charge is struck off.

The woman has to agree too, but in parts of Italy, the choice isn't very great. In fact it's said still to be custom, in parts of the South, for a man to "acquire" a wife he happens to fancy, by getting a gang together to rape her. Then she's under tremendous family pressure to marry, for the sake of her "honour".

But this persisting image of Italy as a land suffering under particular macho violence shouldn't be allowed to comfort Teutonic men. Daniella points out, "I've travelled around northern Europe and the States, and

patriarchy here is no worse. It's just that in Italy it's more open, but so's the whole way of living. Men make more noise against their wives. But an English man will beat his wife just as much. And here, women also scream louder when they're hit."

The proposal would also speed up rape cases. At present, when they're brought, they take up to two years to come to court, during which period the rapist is at large, with obvious intimidating effect. And the investigation would have to be conducted openly by magistrates, with women's organisations able to keep a check on what's going on.

Just down the road from the Casa is the ruined statue of Pasquino, a legendary figure of ancient Rome, apparently some kind of rabble-rousing troublemaker, a cobbler, who got smashed by the empire but is supposed to represent some kind of rebellious tendency in the Roman character. The statue's just a weather-beaten relic (and a neat contrast with the smooth, fenced-off, perfectly-preserved sculptures of gods and so on that the tourists go to see. Pasquino isn't in the guidebooks.)

The women have further defaced the statue. They've daubed it with its new name, "Pasquina", and they're taking up this tradition. "There's a good reason why we kicked out the parties. It's because the women's movement is the only interesting thing happening in Italian politics at all."

*Pilar Castel*



# THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

AS WE went to press the Lancaster House talks on the future of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia were resting on a knife edge. Bishop Muzorewa had accepted Lord Carrington's proposals for a British-supervised election, Smith was back in Salisbury lobbying up resistance amongst hard-line whites, and the Patriotic Front seemed to be moving towards acceptance of the proposal in some form if it was non-racist.

Carrington is desperate to head off the advance of the Patriotic Front with a settlement that will be acceptable to the black majority within Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and to at least a minority of white opinion. At the same time he faces pressure himself from within the Conservative Party to lift sanctions and recognise the new regime. But he cannot rush into that without facing an attack from influential African opinion, North and South.

The position of the security forces inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia will be crucial in the coming weeks. Will they back Smith, or Muzorewa, or will they split altogether? Carrington's man is General Peter Walls, commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Successive British governments have stayed in close contact with Walls and with the state of morale within the armed forces. Of particular importance in this operation has been the network operated around the Special Air Service Regiment. And Walls is locked into the British government through South African support of his armed services — now estimated to be running at £30 million a month.

As the conference works towards some kind of climax the *Leveller* examines the political lobby in Britain, the companies who profit from the war and the SAS network into the Rhodesian military.



tures regarding the lifting of sanctions between her election as Prime Minister and the Commonwealth conference in Lusaka, when this line was drastically modified.

When one looks at this lobby, one finds a remarkable cross-over of personalities, from the colourfully eccentric to the viciously racist.

The Anglo-Rhodesia Society, the Monday Club, the Institute for the Study of Conflict, the Foreign Affairs Research Institute and the Christian League of Southern Africa are all concerned mainly by the involvement of various Conservative MPs who have led the political fight in Britain in favour of Ian Smith's governments.

The most prominent has been the Anglo-Rhodesia Society which has a long history but only came to its present form after UDI, when some members left the organisation because of its continued support for the regime.

Several right-wing Tory MPs are involved in the A-RS and it is presided over by the Marquess of Salisbury.

The leadership consists of umpteen double-barrelled names, mostly people who were outraged by Prime Minister Macmillan's

"Winds of Change" speech and who hark back to the glory of the British Empire. One of its council members, T.D. Lardner-Burke, is the son of the Rhodesian Minister of Justice. Tory MPs Ronald Bell, Stephen Hastings and ex-MP Harold Soref are all on the Council of the A-RS. Bell and Soref are renowned for their outspoken statements on immigration and several years ago formed part of a Monday Club committee on immigration which took a strongly Powellite line.

The Monday Club was set up in direct response to Macmillan's "Winds of Change" speech, seeing as the primary area of work the necessity of keeping Africa within the British empire. The Club has been through phases of extreme right-wing tendencies. Today it clings, sometimes tenuously, to the "respectable" right-wing of the establishment.

Bell led the 1971 revolt of 24 Tory MPs (including Hastings and Soref) over the annual vote on the renewal of sanctions and in 1968 actually attended Africa Day celebrations in Rhodesia.

An officer in the Special Air Service during World War Two, Stephen Hastings then teamed up in the Foreign Office with

fellow old Etonian and uncrowned king of the backbenches, Julian Amery. Amery, who has visited Rhodesia "27 times in the last 28 years", has led the Parliamentary lobby for many years, and is a friend of Smith. Amery sponsored Hastings for his first appearance in Parliament. Hastings has made frequent visits to Rhodesia aided not only by the fact that his father was a respected MP there, but by introductions given him by another "friend of Rhodesia" and the man who held Mid-Bedfordshire seat before him, Viscount Boyd of Merton.

As Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd, who led the Tory Party delegation to observe the April 20 elections in Rhodesia, had the image of a hard-line Conservative on colonial freedom. He has been director of Tate and Lyle, which had a big interest in various refining and marketing concerns in Rhodesia.

Another of the three peers on the Tory Party delegation was Lord Elton. He was a director for 15 years of Cape Asbestos, whose mines in Rhodesia produce the finest quality asbestos in the world. Lord Paget of Northampton, the Vice-President of the A-RS, was also there, remarking

how "bloody marvellous" it was that so many people were turning up at the polls.

The Foreign Affairs Research Institute (FARI) is headed by backbencher Sir Frederick Bennett, the Monday Club member who has family connections with the merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson (his mother was a Kleinwort), and by former Tory MP Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, who was in charge of the British affiliate of the far-right World-Anti-Communist League.

FARI, which has sympathies for the South-African and Rhodesian Governments, ran joint publishing efforts with South African Department of Information-funded bodies like the South African Freedom Foundation.

The South Africa Freedom Foundation hosted visitors to the Republic, and published 'The Communist Challenge to Africa' jointly with FARI. The book was written by Ian Greig, who also wrote reports favourable to the Salisbury regime for FARI earlier this year.

The MPs on the Council of FARI (all Tory) also included Julian Amery, Julian Critchley, Tom Normanton, Sir Ian Gilmour (Lord Carrington's spokesperson in the House of Commons) and Philip Goodhart, once a member of the Anglo-Vietnam Friendship Society in the mid-50's which, according to *Private Eye*, was financed by the South Vietnamese Government.

One does not have to cast the net much wider to encompass most of the other right-wing organisations in Britain involving the network of Tory MPs, ex-officers in the armed forces, former intelligence personnel and members of the aristocracy.

Both Brian Crozier and Robert Moss, leading lights of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, were on the Council of FARI and have been heavily involved in the Freedom Association (better-known by its former title, the National Association for Freedom).

One of the Institute's researchers, Dr. Peter Janke, helped compile the South Africa Freedom Annual, which was published in 1978 by the South African government-funded Foreign Affairs Association. Janke also had links with Michael Morris, an officer seconded to the South African security Police. Morris had previously infiltrated the South African Liberal Party, and when in Britain, could be seen at anti-apartheid demonstrations photographing the participants.

The settler regime in Zimbabwe can obviously wage with confidence the propaganda war in Britain. The editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, William Deedes, was a guest of the Rhodesian Promotion Council in 1976 (as were many British

MPs), and the Council reprinted Deedes' article on Zimbabwe in their annual report.

The Council also hosted in February 1978 the veteran of the British counter-insurgency campaign in Malaya, Sir Robert Thompson (who is also on the Council of the Institute for the Study of Conflict). The Rhodesian army's tactic of setting up "protected villages" derives directly from the Malaya campaign.

The Rhodesia Promotion Council claims to be a "non-political, non-profit making organisation which aims to promote knowledge of Rhodesia's economic development and potential. It is financed entirely by subscriptions and donations from corporate and individual members." It claims to have hosted "industrialists, businessmen, agriculturists, newspapermen and other opinion-formers", from over 28 countries, showing them industry and farming as well as arranging meetings with the top Rhodesian political leaders.

The Scottish Friends of Rhodesia is run by former Lt-Colonel B.A. Innes from the Scottish Highlands; the organisation recently claimed increased support because of "the words and actions of comrade Owen, our Marxist Foreign Secretary."

The Press in Scotland cannot be too much of a problem as Innes says in a letter to the Rhodesian Department of Information, "you are very well supported by those widely read papers the *Dundee Courier* and its sister paper... The *Sunday Post*". Owned by the ultra-conservative D.C. Thomson, the *Sunday Post* is one of the widest circulating papers in Scotland.

The Lt. Colonel also remarked in the same letter that the Scottish Tory MP, Nicholas Fairbairn Q.C., had just returned from Rhodesia on a trip at his own expense and that he "is giving much-valued publicity to your cause in Parliament, in the Press and on TV." Fairbairn is now Solicitor-General for Scotland in the Thatcher government.

But the supporters in Britain can provide more concrete services than newspaper support. John Gibbs of Bristol helps the war effort through his Medical Aid for Rhodesia Fund, which has supplied much medical equipment. The Fund collects contributions in the UK and "buys and dispatches medical equipment which is listed for us by hospitals and clinics in Rhodesia." Gibbs also cheerfully remarks that "equipment that had been on order for three years was supplied by the Fund within three weeks!"

Probably more useful to

the Rhodesian settlers is the service for supplying bolt-holes in Britain provided by the Scorpion Society. Headed by ex-Major-General Lloyd-Owen and started in 1977 in Norwich, it now operates from Scotland and claims 3,500 members, most of whom are still in Zimbabwe. Since Whites are only allowed to leave Zimbabwe with £1,000 Scorpion helps them get started in Britain by offering advice on jobs, loans and housing. It says it has been so inundated with enquiries that it has set up an office in Bulawayo.

One of the most strident, yet smallest, groups has been the Christian League for South Africa. Its principle propaganda plank is opposition to the money donated by the World Council of Churches to SWAPO and the Patriotic Front through the Programme to Combat Racism.

According to Eschel Rhoodie, the Christian League was set up with South African Department of Information funds (although they strenuously deny it). It is headed by the fanatical Reverend Fred Shaw who wages an evangelical campaign against "godless communists" the pawns of Moscow threatening to engulf "white civilisation". In Britain the League has conducted a widespread campaign with leaflets, posters and pickets decrying the WCC. Their most recent propaganda offensive has been in standing around outside Lancaster House, egging on Ian Smith, and organising meetings with prominent British rightists and Rhodesian politicians. However, greater "respectability" than might be indicated has been accorded them by their association with MPs, like Patrick Wall, Ronald Bell, and John Biggs-Davidson, as well as John Gouriet of the National Association for Freedom.

In its campaign the Christian League has succeeded in rattling the charities and churches quite severely: some have opted out of the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism.

These people have had significant successes in the recent past, and although they may superficially be thwarted by Margaret Thatcher's turn to the sort of pragmatism put forward by Lord Carrington, it is still possible that a vote on recognition of the internal settlement at the Tory conference could be won by them. Although South African government money has been at work in these circles promoting its own interests, and those of the Rhodesian government, the activities of the MPs and lobbying organisations result more from a natural convergence in political opinions than from covert funding.

## Firms: Smith and Nephew

THE ILLEGAL activity of British companies in Rhodesia has enabled the Smith regime to survive. From weapons, to fuel, to personnel, British companies have supplied Smith all the way. At the time of the Pearce Commission's deliberations on lifting sanctions in 1972, British industry geared up for big sales to Rhodesia. British firms offered new and second-hand aircraft and armaments to the Rhodesian Air Force. Outwardly the United Nations sanctions were being observed. But under very little cover, and before the decision of the Pearce Commission was reached, British sales teams were active.

Deserters from the Rhodesian army have reported that Smith was able to obtain spares for Canberras, Hawker Hunters, Vampires and British Ferret armoured cars, and have witnessed the arrival of crates of British-made self-loading rifles. The security forces also have British army manuals on guerilla warfare. It has been reported the Rhodesian army has acquired new tank-busting units equipped with British-made recoilless rifles.

Many different companies are involved in these types of sales. Hasler of Croydon was alleged, on 21 April 1976 by Robert Hughes, MP, to have used Hasler of South Africa as an intermediary to supply Rhodesia with a

## The far right family

THE PRO-RHODESIA lobby in this country has grown in strength in the past ten years and come to influence strongly the leadership of the Tory Party, from whose ranks it has always drawn its supporters. In 1971, 24 Tory backwoods MPs voted against sanctions on Rhodesia, but by November 1978 the number of Tory 'rebels' on the vote had risen to 114. It was this grassroots tide of opinion in the party which influenced Thatcher to make her over-

message switching unit. "Tiny" Rowland (boss of Lonrho) alleged that British Leyland was assembling Landrover kits in Umtali, Rhodesia, for the Army and police. Leyland denied the allegations.

Lonrho itself, however, according to Maputo Radio, was reported to have delivered a consignment of ammunition to Rhodesia in 1977, continuing their ten year trend. One of its subsidiaries, Zambezi Coachworks, manufactured armour plating for vehicles.

The best-known evasion of sanctions is that of Rhodesian subsidiaries of Shell supplying all the necessary oil to the Rhodesian Armed Forces. In 1977, aviation fuel was still being delivered to Rhodesia air force bases in Shell tankers. It is clear that Shell Centre on London's South Bank knew of the operation, for in 1972 Shell's Southern African subsidiaries asked Shell Centre to help organise the "transport requirements" of the then retiring commander of the Rhodesian Army, General Keith Coster (who was on a secret visit to London) because "the Rhodesian Armed Forces were 100 per cent customers of Shell Rhodesia."

Racal Electronic engages in the design, manufacture, installation and commissioning of ground radio communications systems for use by military, paramilitary and civil authorities. Racal equipment was found in a 'Ferret' scout car left at the scene in Mozambique of a Rhodesian massacre of 800 people.

In 1974 British Tigercat missiles and Centurion tanks went to Rhodesia via South Africa and Jordan. A Jordanian attempt to sell Hawker Hunter jets to the Rhodesian government was stopped only when the *Guardian* supplied too much evidence to the British government for it to be ignored. However, the government made no public statement nor any diplomatic protest to South Africa for breaking sanctions. Nor did they explain why Commander Kitchoff, the South Africa security agent involved, had been allowed to operate in Britain for so long without interference. There was also no investigation as to why two Rhodesian serving officers were able to enter and leave Britain with such ease.

Another British weapon ideal for counter-insurgency warfare has been boosting the Rhodesian war effort. It is the short-take-off and landing, twin-engined patrol aircraft, the Britten-Norman Islander. There are several independent sources for evidence that the Rhodesian Air Force operates in. Without armaments the plane can carry

ten passengers, possibly paratroops, and with 2,300 pounds external loading capacity, can also be armed with 68mm rockets.

The Rhodesians got hold of two of the planes from neighbouring African countries, which they rebuilt from wrecks, but that still leaves many unaccounted for. Mr. Gething, aviation editor of *Defence Magazine*, said that he introduced a Rhodesian Air Force Squadron Leader to the publicity manager for Britten-Norman, Simon Thompson, in 1978 at the Farnborough air show. Thompson admits that he met another Rhodesian Air Force representative the year before, at the Paris air show, and there the man asked him how to get hold of second-hand B-N Islanders. Thompson says that he said that B-N "did not want to get involved." Nonetheless, the British government was aware that the Rhodesian Air Force was using the planes. Sources close to the Labour cabinet confirmed earlier this year that the Foreign Office knew of the presence of the Islanders in Rhodesia.

Britten-Norman itself claims that the planes came from Angola and Mozambique, immediately prior to the Portuguese withdrawal. Although the story of the supply of the planes remains a mystery, one unconfirmed source holds that fourteen planes were flown from the Britten-Norman factory in Bembridge to Rhodesia when the plant was closed down in the mid-seventies.

## SAS: Blood ties

A WOODEN plaque bearing the Osprey insignia of Rhodesia's crack counter-insurgency unit, the Selous Scouts, hangs on the wall of the Palud-R-Inn Club at the Special Air Service barracks in Hereford. It was sent over recently by Ron Reid-Daly, the Scouts' former Commanding Officer, as a mark of apprecia-

tion for SAS help with recruiting.

Reid-Daly is a key link in the efficient and clandestine network responsible for identifying and recruiting British-trained counter-insurgency experts for the Rhodesian Army. The network reaches into the heart of military, political and intelligence sources both here and in Rhodesia. And there is no shortage of recruits for what is commonly regarded in the SAS as "the best war going." The network has been in operation since before UDI and its role in any British-backed settlement will be crucial. Tory MPs with good SAS links and Southern African interests are thus in a powerful position.

Rhodesian SAS numbers about 350 men, the Selous Scouts a further 1400. While the Scouts are 80 per cent black, the SAS is still largely white. The SAS is far less publicised than the Scouts but they are a vital element in the Rhodesian armed forces. Competition for selection is stiff and includes a complete range of advanced military skills including parachuting, tracking and bush craft. Rhodesian SAS activities have included long range strikes into Mozambique, and, on one highly secret occasion, into Angola. And it was the SAS who attacked guerilla homes in Lusaka, Zambia, and attempted to kidnap Joshua Nkomo.

A discussion document in the hands of the *Leveller*, believed to be about a year old and to have been prepared by a British Army officer on possible scenarios in the event of violence in the transition to majority rule, shows that the regiment would play an important part in any political change.

"The Special Air Service is also generally regarded as being capable of a greater degree of political understanding than the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). It is just possible that, if senior military men were convinced that the 'coup by the back door' method was the only way to preserve their role and jobs the various Rhodesian security units would be given orders to facilitate such an operation — the more conservatively minded RLI and Territorial Force Units might be sent out on border patrol while the more 'reliable' SAS and Rhodesian African Rifles took care of security at crucial points in the Central central urban areas such as radio stations, parliament buildings, airports, etc."

Sources within both the British and the Rhodesian armed forces suggest that there are up to 50 former British SAS men in the Rhodesian SAS and a slightly smaller number in the Selous Scouts. Other former SAS men have important jobs in Rhodesian

military intelligence. Most of them have British passports; many receive army pensions and are on the British Army's Reserve List.

Serving soldiers returning to Britain on leave bring with them valuable intelligence: personalities and equipment used in Rhodesia, training techniques, the state of morale, the political picture. They take back equally useful information about the latest British Army techniques and equipment and the names of likely future volunteers.

The SAS recruitment network is loose and informal, relying in part on friendships forged years ago when Lieutenant General Peter Walls, commander of Rhodesia's armed forces, commanded C Squadron of the Malayan Scouts (Special Air Service) from 1951 to 53. C Squadron was mostly made up of Rhodesians and when the British SAS redeveloped, C Squadron retained its Rhodesian identity. One of Walls' Commanding Officers during that period was Colonel John Woodhouse, a former intelligence officer who went on to become commanding officer of the 22nd Special Air Service (the full-time British regiment).

Reid-Daly served in the Rhodesian squadron in Malaya and went on to fight with the SAS in the Middle East. He returned to Rhodesia and left the army. When he was brought out of retirement to set up the Selous Scouts in 1973 he had ready access to the SAS network.

Dudley Coventry was commissioned into the British Army in 1938 and served in the Parachute Regiment. In 1955 he formed the first paratroop squadron of the SAS in Malaya. Described as a "real gentleman, full of the blarney and charm" he retired from the British Army in 1961 and moved to Rhodesia. Although he's described in the *Army List* as an 'Officer on Retired Pay', he is employed full-time by the Rhodesian government in Special Branch Two.

Ken Phillipson joined the British SAS from the Parachute regiment and also served in Malaya. He has a reputation as a "real bastard", and was for a while personal aide to Lieutenant Commander John Hickman, Commander of Rhodesia's regular army. (Hickman won the Military Cross in Malaya: it was a public row earlier this year between him and Reid-Daly which led to the recent resignation of both men.)

Phillipson comes on regular trips to England on recruiting missions, usually staying at the Castle Pool Hotel in

Hereford. He drinks at the Palud-R-Inn Club and has an account with the National Westminster bank in town for offering potential recruits their air fare and an advance on their wages. Rhodesian intelligence sources say that "Phillipson is so well-connected he gives the Rhodesian Army the name of every likely SAS man in Britain."

The Rhodesian SAS is still officially designated as C Squadron of the British SAS and the affiliation is proudly printed in the regiment's magazine, *Mars and Minerva*: until UDI it ran joint training operations with the British. At that time John Woodhouse went to Rhodesia to assess the military situation and, he claims, ordered that all the regimental links should be cut.

But Woodhouse himself maintains close contact with the Rhodesian authorities. He has officially retired and runs the soft drinks side of the Hall and Woodhouse family brewery in Dorset. In 1977 he went on a clandestine mission on behalf of the British government to sound out Walls on the military situation. While he was in Salisbury, it was Ken Phillipson who showed him the sights.

Peter Rich was in the British SAS then 'left' and went first into the civil service and then banking. He re-emerged as one of the first Commanding Officers of the Rhodesian SAS, moving on to take charge of the whole Rhodesian Light Infantry. (In Rhodesia, as here, the SAS is officially part of the Light Infantry).

One of the network's most valuable assets is its access to the SAS Regimental Association, which keeps former members in touch with each other. Its records are kept at the regiment's London headquarters at Chelsea barracks and maintained by the secretary, Major Dare Newell. Newell is a one-man walking encyclopaedia of the SAS and crucial to the recruiting operation.

Although the officer network is important, it's the rank and file who do the fighting. The most notorious of these has been Peter MacAleese, the mercenary who was thrown out of the British SAS for drunken brawling, fled into the Rhodesian SAS with warrants hanging over his head in Glasgow and Hereford after beating up various members of his family. MacAleese was back in Britain recently, boasting of having killed more than 70 people in Rhodesia since he got there.

Others, however, have got their just deserts. Chuck Hinds, formerly of the British SAS, was killed in action two years ago. Ian Wardle was court-martialled for throwing a grenade into the Lighthouse Club in Salisbury and had to go to Oman as a

captain in the Sultan's armed forces.

Oman has been a useful conduit for other personnel and weaponry, usually with the help of Timothy Landon, the Sultan's military adviser. According to a recent report in *New African*, London, a former British Army intelligence officer was instrumental in providing helicopter training for Rhodesian pilots. And it was the unlikely location of Oman that Peter Walls chose for a recent holiday.

Bill Bayliss, who is still in the British Army List as a Captain in the Territorial SAS, assisted another SAS Commanding Officer Mike Wingate-Gray (Woodhouse's successor) in training the Sultan's Army and then, according to Rhodesian sources, went out to work for the Rhodesian Special Branch in security liaison.

One of Wingate-Gray's close associates is Major Andrew Nightingale, a former Major in SAS Group Intelligence at Chelsea Barracks. Last year the *New Statesman* reported that Nightingale accompanied Lord Carver as his bodyguard when he visited Rhodesia in November 1977. Nightingale's contacts take him into the more 'disreputable' end of the business: during the trial of John Higgins (see *Leveller* 6 & 25) mercenary recruiter John Banks named Nightingale as his SAS contact.

Colonel Terry Hardy is now CO of 21 SAS, one of the two British territorial units, yet between 1971 and 74, according to Rhodesian sources, he was in Rhodesian intelligence and based in Salisbury.

John Ormowe, was thrown out of 21 SAS at the same time as he was thrown out of the Monday Club in Brighton for being too openly fascist even for them. He went to Rhodesia in the middle seventies and is now the London organiser of the Rhodesian Ex Servicemen's Association, REX, as it's regally known, is closely associated with the Anglo Rhodesian Society and provides a London social network for former Rhodesian servicemen and those still in the forces who come to London for their 'holidays'.

The Society, the public face for some of the SAS network's activities, also provides money for would-be soldiers' air-tickets. At the memorial service for Lord Richard Cecil, the former SAS man turned 'journalist' who was shot in Rhodesia, supporters of the Society turned out by the score at the Guard's Chapel in Wellington Barracks. (See *Leveller* 17). The British SAS sent a Captain Collyer as their official representative.

Written by: David Clark, Andy Weir and Jonathan Block of Peoples' News Service and Counter Information Services.

While the guerillas are subject to massive publicity and condemnation if they bring down an airliner or kill an MP, the network quietly and efficiently provides a regular supply of highly-trained and ruthless operators for many of the key positions in the Rhodesian security operation. Just like the perpetrators of 'Oilgate' their irregularities go uninvestigated and they are handsomely rewarded with money, power and influence. Yet between them they are responsible for the deaths of countless thousands of innocent people.

### Equipment captured from Rhodesian Security forces by the Patriotic Front:

—A pair of leg shackles manufactured by Hiatt of Birmingham.

—Gas canister used by Rhodesian troops for a camping stove, manufactured by Europleasure Gas of Dorking, England.

—An air pilot's helmet, with NATO number and British Patent numbers, manufactured by Denis Ferranti Meters of North Wales.

—A field telescope, the type normally fitted to Rhodesian helicopters, manufactured by Cooke, Troughton & Simms, York.

—A typewriter, as used by district commissioners or by security forces in charge of "protected villages" made by the British firm Underwood.

—A wire tape measure used by Rhodesian troops, made by John Rabone & Sons, Birmingham.

—Parts of a receiver of a field telephone for use with military radiocommunications equipment made by A.P. Besson Ltd., England.

—Pistols made by Webley & Scott Ltd., Birmingham.

On 1 August tough law amendments were put into force clearly aimed at domestic critics and organised opposition. *John Verner* looks at the GDR economy to find out why this state with its perfect state-security police needs to feel so insecure.

# Getting ready for trouble

LIVING standards in the GDR have been rising steadily since the fifties but especially after the building of the wall in 1961. The average now is probably higher than in Britain — and without the extremes of our real capitalism. Workers have come to take a continuous increase for granted, especially since Erich Honecker awakened high expectations after taking over from Walter Ulbricht as First Party Secretary and Chairperson of the State Council. He promised a kind of "Consumer Communism", imported Western consumer goods, brought in the 40-hour working-week and increased minimum holidays.

With the help of sizeable state subsidies prices for basic consumer goods like bread, milk, potatoes and rents have been kept stable since the fifties and are now ridiculously low.

But now it looks as if this period of gradual increase in living standards has come to an end.

## Economic Growth

In the current long-term plan a 5.1% growth was foreseen but at the end of 1978 this was reduced to a more realistic 4.3%. Now West German economists estimate that the results will lie between 3 and 4%. And these figures don't allow for inflation which the GDR is increasingly importing as its economy gets more closely linked to the West. Also the Soviet Union is gradually increasing the price of its oil on which the GDR is dependent — although it is still 20% below market prices. This year's increase in exports of 7% (9% to the Soviet Union) will hardly be enough to compensate for the increased price of imports.

Equally, state subsidies for consumer goods have to be raised continuously. In the first half of this year they totalled 6,900M marks (approx. £1,725M). This was 7.5% more than in the first half of 1978.

Add to these this year's specific problems: during the long winter the transport system completely collapsed and in large parts of the Republic the electricity supply had to be cut off. (For this the Energy Minister was fired.) The economic results were disastrous.

## Cut-backs and price rises

So for some months now the party has instructed its functionaries to gently prepare "the masses" for cut-backs and price rises. Now, of course, rumours and speculations abound. So far there have only been cut-backs in the building programme, announced at a Berlin party conference in August. Affected are mainly prestige projects but also those housing plans which are considered to be in some way extravagant or out-of-the-ordinary i.e. non-standardised houses. Even a new building for the State Security Police has been cut.

Instead there is to be a switch to standard-type housing of which there is still a severe shortage and to renovation rather than renewal. Further measures are expected after the 30th birthday of the Republic on 7th October has been celebrated with officially prescribed joy, some special imports of Western consumer goods and lots of cynical remarks.

Other socialist countries have already prescribed severe price rises. The most dramatic have been reported from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In both countries the cost of fuels, domestic gas and electricity were raised by about 50%. In Hungary there were increases in the prices of meat and sausage (30%), bread (50%), and cars (20%). Bulgaria doubled its price of petrol. Only the Polish leaders were — understandably — wary of price rises and started an economy drive instead.

So people in the GDR are expecting similar measures with bated breath. And it is in this context that one should see the recent tightening of the GDR laws and not — as the Western media did with-out exception — as merely to deal with critical writers and intellectuals.

## Law Amendments

Briefly the 48 amendments to existing laws broaden the definition of and increase the penalties for "political" offences and crimes against the state and "public order". Paragraph 106 on "anti-state slander" has been considerably tightened and the maximum penalty increased from 5 to 8 years. Even before this every third political prisoner had been convicted under this broad definition, applicable to any kind of opposition.

As with all political prosecutions the jail term is automatically increased if a group is involved — and that means more than one person. . . . And for organising a political group you can get eight years, increased from five.

The way these amendments were

formulated and passed was even less public than usual. The *Leveller* was told that the independent panel of law professors from the East Berlin Humboldt University and other legislative experts was not consulted as is the procedure with less sensitive laws. And, as the *Morning Star* writes, the amendments were "passed without comment or debate by parliament on June 28. . . . The GDR public has still not been fully informed of the new laws since the official press has not printed them and the official gazette carrying them was printed in a relatively small edition which sold out immediately." It seems that even institutions that are usually supplied with all the law gazettes did not receive this issue.

In the GDR as in the other countries of "Socialism as it actually exists" people have no legal means of voicing political criticism or of defending their standard of living. It is illegal to organise any kind of politically motivated group, let alone party. The official trade union has the function of raising productivity and all wages — just as prices — are planned centrally. Strikes of course are illegal.

Although there is no well-organised dissident movement as in Czechoslovakia and Poland, we were informed that there are dozens of "political study groups" reading and discussing Bahro's "The Alternative" (see *The Leveller* 13) and the Marxist classics. And the general level of political interest and discussion is much higher than in the West.

So with harder times ahead the party leaders seem to be wary of the reactions of hitherto relatively disciplined citizens.



Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party and Chairperson of the State Council

# Welkom in ♀ land

A FEMINIST PILGRIMAGE TO LAST MONTH'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FESTIVAL



Alix Dobkin

ALIGHTING FROM the Amsterdam train, I bought a map and started out for the Melkweg, where the festival was happening. I got lost and vaguely dispirited and the rucksack got heavier but eventually I found the place.

The Melkweg is a huge maze of rooms, used for music, theatre, food, cinema. It normally operates as a commercial club for young people; the Melkweg women workers, who had organised the festival, had sent the male workers off on paid leave for these two weeks.

An organiser told me I had to book and pay for workshops and in any case many were booked up with a few gaps here and there. She gave me the address of a 'sleep-in' some distance away which I couldn't go to until midnight. It wasn't a good start.

A notice had gone up from some Dutch feminists boycotting the festival. They attacked it for all kinds of reasons. They said it was commercial — part of the Melkweg scene — and hadn't been organised by the Dutch women's movement. It was expensive and consumerist, a 'spectacle' rather than a festival' organised on feminist principles. No creche had been organised. They said the structure made it impossible for women to get to know each other and exchange ideas.

It didn't sound too good and what's more the criticisms seemed to make a lot of sense the way I was feeling — like going home.

I sat in the Melkweg cafe until I got turfed out at 5 o'clock. That was another thing — the club didn't open until one and shut between five and seven. I drifted along to the famous Amsterdam Vrouencafe and met a couple of English women feeling similar to me. Most of the women I got to know were English.

We returned to the club when it opened and paid our six guilders for the evening (about £1.50). Actually that was OK given the amount of entertainment available.

That night I watched Gay Sweatshop's *I Like Me Like This* . . . "Can you tell a lesbian by her voice? her smile? her HAIRCUT?!" was how it was advertised. After that, too tired to stay to the after-midnight events, I slept on the floor of someone's hotel room.

It turned out that I'd chosen the wrong time to come. It was mid-festival. The Melkweg was shut completely for the next two days. I booked into a hotel, feeling too old to sleep rough. It was a bad move since it isolated me from other women. Typical me, I thought, wanting comfort and no risks attached. Safe, clean and boring with couples and families at breakfast.

I spent the next two days wandering round the galleries and cafes, drinking, reading and watching the world go by, occasionally meeting up with other feminists from the festival. It was nice, but I was glad when the festival reopened.

I joined a movement/mime workshop and toned up muscles I didn't know about. The teacher said women stand, walk and move in a particular way. They try to take up as little space as possible, they walk on the street with heads down, they make themselves invisible. Wearing high heels meant they didn't stand straight and created the 'porno-butt' as she called it. We had to work to alter that.

She herself moved very powerfully and confidently and made it easy to see what she was on about. I stuck to that workshop the rest of the time.

Despite the lack of political exchange, I saw a lot of good feminist 'culture'. Not much of this was Dutch, funnily enough. It was mainly English, American and German.

The American feminist theatre group *Spiderwoman* performed their 'Lysisistrate numbah' — a very broad adaptation of that classic Greek comedy about sex and power. But perhaps the entertainers are better off speaking for themselves.

Flora and Gloria describe themselves as 'the versatile hot duo . . . bringing you our heartbreaking, adorable, lonely, horrible and sometimes juicy adventures . . . Besides hearing your laughter, we really hope to move you, preferably not out the door.'

It was the zany and funniest theatre groups which were also the most spine-chilling. *Beryl and the Perils* did their show 'NUTS!' which explores many kinds of licorice of male defined madness and sorts out the smarties from the tootie fruties!!

**Freud reinforced the male role sending lots of women up the pole The Perils climb down and look afresh with steel wire cutters they tackle the mesh.**

And **Hormone Imbalance**, who emphasise they are "not another chapter from the Kinsey Report, a Freudian description, nor . . . the definitive guide on lesbian erotica" but a lesbian feminist theatre group "with characters from Beatrix Potter to Punk with more than a pinch of surrealism".

Of the musicians, one of the most powerful was an American lesbian singer called *Alix Dobkin* whose act raised a big debate in a workshop on the politics of music the following day. Some women thought she was guilty of startripping, manipulating the audience with a practised patter. To me she was an

extremely powerful and talented presence and no wonder the audience raised the roof when she sang. Although perhaps we did act like groupies.

**The woman in your life will do what she must do to comfort you, and calm you down and let you rest, now the woman in your life she can rest so easily she knows everything you do because the woman in your life is you.**

**And who is sure to give you courage and who will surely make you strong and who will bear all the joy that's coming to you, if not the woman in your life?**

And a strange German lesbian group who seemed like something from Berlin in the 30s, slightly decadent — nothing like that in England!

Not all the entertainment was feminist. *Rosa King*, black saxophonist and jazz singer, very powerful and sensual; but someone had pinned up the words to one of her songs: "When a woman says no, she means yes" (or some such), asking "Rosa, why are you here?" Comedienne *Sharon Landau*, somebody described her as a female Woody Allen, laughing at herself and her neuroses but nevertheless hooked on romance. Self-deprecating humour, if easy to identify with, is dangerous because it relieves the painful need to change.

And not everything on sale in the markt seemed to have much to do with feminism. Candles and knickers with our symbol on. But then this was advertised as a women's festival, not a feminist one, and given the nature of the Melkweg, perhaps I expected something impossible. What was strange was that there was all this very political, lesbian feminist culture in the slightly ambivalent atmosphere of the Melkweg.

It's probably impossible to interpret what is going on politically or any other way given the language and culture gap. In any case I got involved enough to stay to the end, and transferred myself from the hotel to a condemned prison in the middle of town which was filthy but friendly.

I'd like to see the Melkweg opened up more hours for those of us who have nowhere else to go so that it is a real base in a strange city; more space for workshops suggested and set up by women who are guests; a creche of course; and more involvement by all of us in organising events so that we're not just consumerists. It's a mighty task anyway, an international festival, and perhaps this is too much to ask. In return I promise not to moan so much.

Cherrill Hicks

Jimmy Pursey, give him his due, has re-considered just what did happen when Sham 69 ran adrift last July on the rocks of the British Movement. Reportedly stung by last issue Leveller's accusations of not identifying his enemies, Pursey is now calling for a strike, no less, in live gigs till something is done about fascist disruption.

Meanwhile the anarchist-pacifist band Crass — their symbol seems everywhere these days — aren't very happy with it all either, but then neither is Rock Against Racism (RAR). Confused? You won't be after David Brazil orchestrates latest developments in the field of Politrock.

FIRST OFF, what's this about Pursey calling a strike? What's with the British Leyland shop steward complex? It's true, y'know, the Hershman Boy with Sham restored is telling music papers he would lead a musicians' strike against right-wing violence at live venues, and what's more he's challenging other bands to openly state their position on this vexed issue.

Some may well question Pursey's political validity, some may even point to his at least encouraging many of the problems he ran into, but no-one can deny Sham have been in the frontline from the beginning.

Now Pursey's saying Sham will not be martyrs any more, and with band members' support, is insisting: "There's only one way to stop this violence and I'm not going to be a martyr doing it all on my own."

"But if another band like the UK Subs will come off the road, we'll come off the road."

Pursey then spelt out it was NF and BM members who wrecked the Last Stand, a real development from his previous publicly stated position. Talking about Sham Gen. Custer re-enactment, Sham bassist Dave Tregonna said: "When you're on stage you can only see the first three rows because of the lights. I didn't see the Nazi salutes at the Rainbow. (check out the cover of *Leveller 31*) If I had, I think I would have given up then".

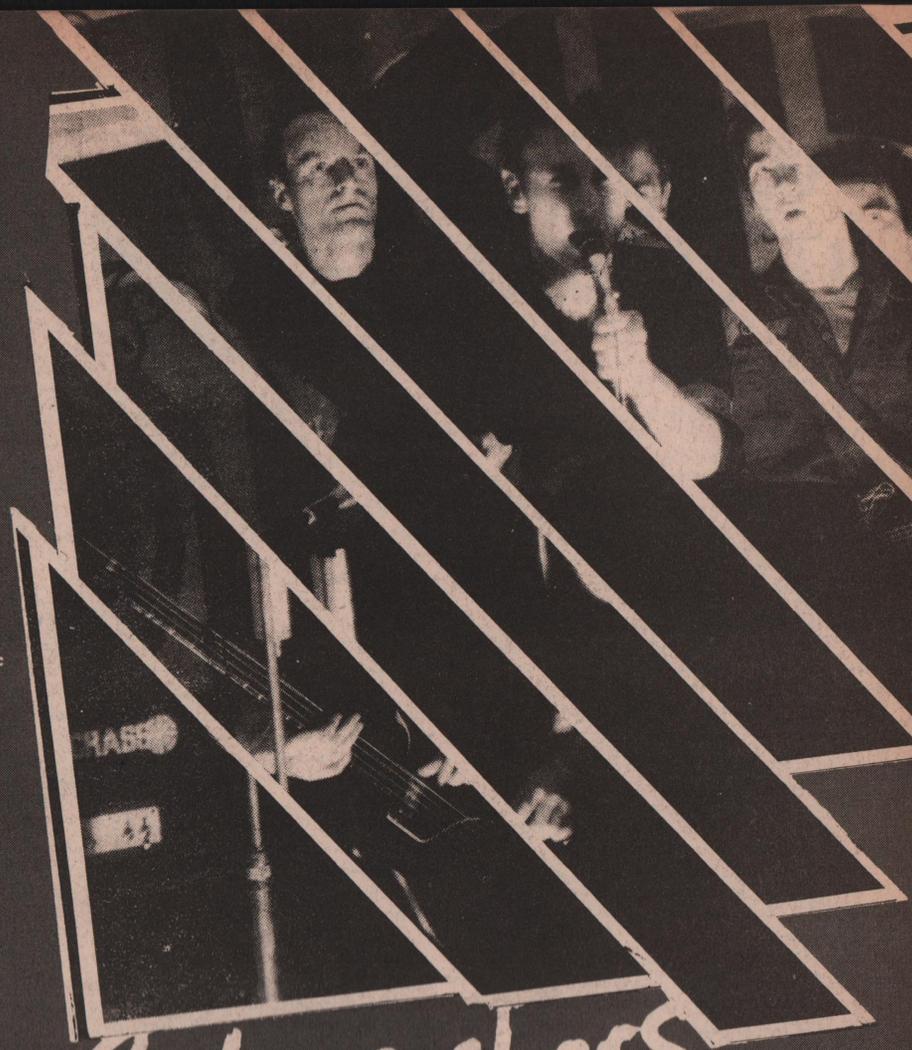
Pursey's words on the proposed strike: "We're not going to play anywhere when there's a chance that some kid might get hurt. If there's no live music, then people will go up to the ones who cause the trouble and say 'It's you that's stopping me seeing bands'. The finger will be on the ones who are doing it."

"We went in front of the hardest kids in England and told them if you want to fight, fight amongst yourselves, don't fight other people. We had the National Front coming to our gigs and we stood up on our own. Look what happened to us then at the Rainbow."

OK so maybe it's difficult to see anyone from Boney M and the New Seekers through to Dana taking head from the Sham Stand, but Pursey seems realistic: "If we came off the road on our own, there would be too many people who could laugh at us and step into the gaps we left. If others do it, we state categorically that we will pull out".

Wayne Minter of RAR buys Pursey's sincerity, and as he originally pointed the finger at Pursey last issue, maybe we should all listen. "Jimmy has yet again beaten the count and come out with some firm statements and proposals".

Outlining Pursey's strike call, Minter adds: "Whether other bands will respond or not is debatable, but it's fucking heartening to see some proposals towards what is needed . . . that is bands, gig organisers, and real punters making it clear, in their respective ways, that they know who is wrecking their gigs, and why, and that they're not welcome."



## Gatecrashers

Now then, what was all that at the beginning about Crass being in a biff? Regular readers will recall that in September Crass mainlined with Poison Girls, a London benefit that was totally over-run by fascist monsters, and that the evening was thoroughly frightening, whether or not you believe a lot of the aggro was caused by the late arrival of an SWP delegation, looking for action.

We should comment with pleasure on RAR's campaign to arrest any development for Rock against Communism or the BM. RAR's appeal to prominent in the 'rock community' have brought sturdy responses from some names we all know and love very well but can't release just yet. Mug-shots of identified fascists have been identified and will soon be circulated.

Music papers and the *Leveller*, though surprisingly not RAR, recently received a ponderous broadcast from Crass in which their view of the Politrock world was laid out in great detail.

It starts: "So now RAR are moving in for the kill, they are recommending the 'vetting' of audiences at gigs, claiming the right to throw out those that don't conform to their idea of how it ought to be, attempting to predetermine the political atmosphere in which gigs may take place, and advocating the ban of political beliefs with which they do not agree — so much for anti-fascism."

The Crass missive then goes on rather, incorporating such observations as, why not let Rock Against Communism (the NF answer to RAR) have its way, and "Is a Marxist murderer any better than a Nazi one?"

Mmm, shades of Moscow-gold style

accusations against RAR and there's more, much more: "The RAR star became the platform ticket to instant political approval; no matter if the train was a cattle-truck, who cared if you beat the wife? banked with Barclays? took weekly confession? If you wore the star you were AOK, know what I mean?"

Hey, hold on there. This is all too much out of the black and into the red, surely? Crass waste RAR for giving "a legitimacy to an otherwise laughable British Fascist movement", for "making the division wider by demanding that the 'opposition' be eliminated", and adding the comment: "When punk started, we were ALL enjoying the party, then RAR gatecrashed, and now they're throwing out the people they don't like the look of and locking the door — the sound of socialist free speech, silence."

Crass then, through main scribe Penny Rimbaud, accused "SWP bully-boys" of breaking up their Persons Unknown benefit, not the British Movement, as was widely and no doubt naively assumed.

So what is the Crass message? What conclusions do we, fellow-punters, draw from this?

The Sermon from the Mount continues: "If the RAR/SWP or the BM/NF want to use our gigs as testing grounds for their bigotry and blindness, let them go ahead because, ultimately, we believe that our message of CREATIVE TRUST will outweigh theirs of BLIND HATRED. We are all victims of an oppressive and unthinking state, slaves to a stagnant and corrupt system, if all we can do to deal with that is to involve ourselves in political in-fighting, what hope is there?"

"The people of this country, be they right, left, black, white, man, woman, etc etc, are



ALL oppressed by the same things: rulers, bosses, clergy, police, army, etc etc., and NOT each other; the sooner we ALL get together to realise that, the sooner some sort of creative solution may be found.

"It's time we stopped blaming each other for the problems that oppress us all and started pointing the finger in the right direction, that is THE SYSTEM."

One band not overimpressed by this notion of Creative Trust is Crisis. When the Small Wonder record company — they handle Crass and Poison Girls — offered to distribute their UK 79 single, they also offered a gig with Crass. Crisis thought, Hey that's OK, then asked about security arrangements. Crisis, y'see, have been fingered by the BM after a bout of fist-cuffs a while back with a fascist-thug. Small Wonder explained the Creative Trust concept to Crisis; Crisis were not impressed, and no gig will take place; no wonder.

(If you're intrigued by the Crass world-view, you should check out the *Leveller* mega-interview with the band in issue 25.)

Anyhow, you'd hardly expect the doughty RAR Wayne Minter to take all this lying down, and if you didn't, then you're quite right.

Picking up his biro in the red heat of the moment, Minter retorted: "If you put on, or play at, a political benefit, that's a political decision with responsibilities. In particular, making as sure as possible that the bands don't have their sets ruined or stopped, and that the audience aren't intimidated or attacked."

Quoting our report that 30-40 "identifiably NF/BM youths" caused the trouble at the Crass benefit, Minter observes that Crass's

interpretation differs towards the aforementioned "SWP bully-boys".

Minter comments: "Doubtless there was a set-to. When gig organisers cop out of their responsibilities (check this issue's letters page for the organisers' version of events), you can expect a backlash. Not everyone is going to sit back and watch, or stop going to gigs, while the tufty-club gestapo jackboot their way through London's rock venues. Is this "fascism" or "anarchy"? Answers on a postcard."

Never one to mince words, Minter goes on: "Crass's fantasy of a peaceful, free, anarchic early age of punk is bullshit. Three years ago whilst Kings Road punx were dancing in the Roxy with whom they would . . . there were three racist murders in London, and Brick Lane was under siege from young NF thugs . . ."

"Crass see 'trust' as the answer. Pursey 'trusted' the BM/NF rumps of his fans. He tried very hard. They wrecked his band. If they couldn't have Sham, no-one was going to. What Crass call "the laughable British Fascist movement" wouldn't leave our music alone if we ignore them."

"It won't leave immigrant minorities alone if we ignore its attacks on them. It will go on intimidating, bullying, recruiting in the bogs of the Electric Ballroom, bricking windows in Brick Lane, and splitting punkettes' heads in Finsbury Park tube . . . not because RAR opposes it but because it's a political tactic that works for them and their dreams of power. I dunno where Crass live [ed's note — North Weald in Epping Forest] but round here, the "laughable British Fascist movement" is about as laughable as an iron bar in the face and about as easy to ignore or argue with".

Minter isn't finished yet. "Nothing is more

crass [ed's note — geddit?] than blaming the 'system' for 'oppression' and then apeing one of its traditional methods of control as an argument: i.e. lumping together anyone who dissents or works for change as 'violent extremists'.

"It's straight out of the *Daily Mail* song-book . . . 'SWP/NF/BM/ANL/RAR etc . . . They're all the same'. Neat. Saves you doing your homework or actually thinking — trying to sort out the differences for yourself between socialist dogma and fascist dogma. Finding out who you can work with. If they're all the same, you can forget it all — that leaves you with what you've got already: the *Daily Mail* editorial, BBC, status quo . . . fuck all."

Wayne Minter reads the small print too. Remember last issue when Penny Rimbaud remarked in explanation for the Persons Unknown benefit bust-up: "I don't want to sound mystical, but there was a full moon that night"? Yes of course you remember. Minter added: "I don't want to sound demystificatory but there wasn't a full moon on Sat. 8th, the night of the Persons Unknown gig. It was on Thursday 6th, when we had a RAR gig in Clapham . . . there was no trouble."

"The next one's tomorrow night (5th) when we have gigs in Manchester and Clapham . . . we do it on purpose."

Now there's a talking point. Not that Minter spares The Leveller either. He said: "It's a bit ironic that Dave Brazil's piece on fascist violence at gigs should end with a call to stop the National Front 'kicking their way into the headlines' when the cover of the same issue blasts 'Nazi Rock' across its dramatic frontage. Not even a question mark."

"No doubt this striking cover sold lots of Levellers. It also rewards the fascists' efforts in this direction with a bit of what they're after — credibility. There now exists, on the strength of one set-up joke gig and a bit of organised bother, a 'Nazi Rock movement' — official. Wish we'd had it so easy."

C'm on Wayne, you don't think we do these things without thinking do you? The article last issue dealt first with NF plans for its record label, its recording studios, its willing fascist-stooge bands — that spells fascist rock dunnit?

It should be further recorded that Joe Pearce who we met last issue as the NF "Boy Wonder" behind the Nazi Rock endeavours has cropped up again meantime. On BBC Radio One last month, the *Talkabout* programme appeared as "an ordinary teenager", giving his views on rock.

Would you believe, he said "a mate of his" saw a Rock against Communism gig at the Conway Hall and told him White Boss were "a great band". Pearce should know — he organised it.

He regaled the airwaves further by telling of Moscow control of the music biz, blood-curdling accounts of physical assaults by swarthy aliens, and how the Race Relations Act was about state repression.

RAR among others were quick to respond, and got a *Talkabout* researcher to admit they had known all along just who Pearce was — in fact, they'd used him before as an "authentic youth" to talk about the Vietnam boat people.

So no more cons please BBC. At least five Leveller subscriptions go to your HQ, so it should now be clearly understood Pearce joined the NF when 15, edited Bulldog when 16, and is now 18 and the driving force behind Rock against Communism — watch out for an imminent *Daily Mirror* profile of the "ordinary teenager".

So there you have it — The Great Debate. Readers, as they say, what do you think? Five pounds will not be awarded your Brightest Letter. Watch this space.

MERVYN JONES has been a prolific and important political journalist on the Left for several decades now. As well he has written a number of significant novels, the more recent and most well known being, *Holding On and Today the Struggle*. He has also written several books of documentary reporting on social and political themes. His latest novel is *The Beautiful Words*, published this year by Andre Deutsch.

Ken Worpole talked to him about his writing, his experience of Left politics in Britain since the war, and his observations on contemporary issues.

Have you always earned your living as a writer?

Yes, I've always been both a novelist and a journalist. I started doing both in 1947 after being in the army during the war. I've had two jobs—I dislike jobs and I dislike offices—one on *Tribune* from 1955 to 1960 and the other on the *New Statesman* from 1966 to 1968 and apart from that I've earned my living as a freelance journalist and a novelist.

What was working on *Tribune* like?

It was a very inspiring period politically. It was a time when *Tribune* was changing format from being a *New Statesman* type paper to the style of paper we know it as today. It was a time when *Tribune* did have quite a considerable sale, a sale that did matter, particularly in the trade unions, in the constituency Labour Parties, trade union branches, miners' lodges—and *Tribune* meetings, *Tribune* conferences were held up and down the country.

It was the period of Suez and *Tribune* played a leading part in exposing all the conspiracies which led up to Suez; the period of Hungary, the period of Khrushchev's speech admitting some of the errors of Stalinism, and then a little later it was the period of the nuclear disarmament campaign and *Tribune* committed itself completely to that.

What was your relationship to the Labour Party then?

I was always in the Labour Party and I was a Labour candidate in 1955 when I was living in Chichester. It was a safe Tory seat. It was rather enjoyable because there was no possibility of winning the election and therefore Transport House took no notice of what I said. I campaigned on policies which pleased me, and campaigned quite a lot on the menace of the Hydrogen Bomb. So I can claim to have been a CND'er before CND. I was very active in CND from 1958 to 1963 when it died down; went on all the marches, did a lot of speaking.

Since then I would say really that I've not been able to find my political niche. I left the Labour Party at the time of Vietnam and rejoined in 1971 without any great confidence that I was doing the right thing. In the past ten years I've only been sporadically politically active, in particular single issue campaigns, and otherwise I suppose my politics has been in my writing.

Did you ever feel that the Labour Party could be the agency of a working class struggle for socialism?

Could be, yes, but is not. I think the great unsolved political problem for socialists in this country is the existence of the Labour Party. There's no other party like it in the world. The continental socialist parties are not the same because the unique thing about the British Labour Party is its umbilical link with the trade unions and its character as an essentially working class party. And, of course, its overwhelming support, thanks to the marginal character of the Communist Party in this country. And one doesn't really know what to do about it. One feels that one can only be politically effective within the ranks of this party at the same time as knowing you are doomed in advance to be cheated and frustrated whenever the Labour Party comes into office.

Nearest to a solution that I can imagine is that whether one belongs to the Labour Party or not people have to engage in mass campaigns—which are not rival parties but which are mass campaigns—on specific issues which push the Labour Party from outside towards a given direction. And to me that was the political importance of CND; that is the only time in my lifetime that this has been successfully done. That campaign was, if you like, politically amateur, in which the active people were not people normally engaged in politics, and which, by its independent activity, forced the Labour Party to adopt a position which was extremely unwelcome to the leadership. For all sorts of reasons this didn't last, didn't stick, mainly because of weaknesses within CND, but nevertheless it was the only time it has been done.

## “A political event touches some people like the end of a love affair”

People have been waiting for the imminent split in the Labour Party for years. Do you think it is still monolithic and will carry on as it is for the indefinite future?

I don't see it splitting. I think there was very much more chance of it splitting in the 1950's, which I remember as the time of the Bevanite movement, than there is today. And I don't see that it would be a good thing if it split because this would entail equally a split in the trade union movement—left unions, right unions—and then given the 'first past the post' British electoral system, it would guarantee until the end of time that there would never be a Labour majority in Parliament.

Your novel *Holding On* perhaps broke through to the Left and a much wider readership more than any previous novel, and brought your name forward as a novelist equal in significance to your reputation as a political journalist.

Yes, I have more letters about *Holding On* than about all the other books I've written put together. Interestingly enough it appears that only working class people write letters to authors. I very seldom get letters from middle class people. Incidentally far more letters from the appearance of the novel than from the T.V. adaptation. And a lot of the letters came from people in the East End. Occasionally they pointed out minor errors, but mostly they wanted to share their memories. These were not all very old people but they were people who were pleased to read a novel which was concerned with their own experience.

What made you want to write that particular novel?

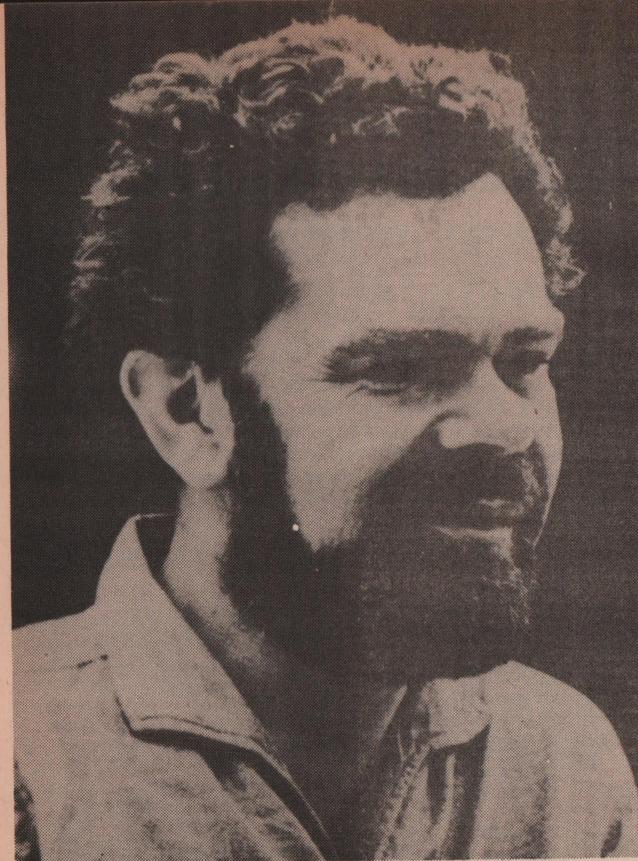
I wanted to write a novel with a very long time span, taking a large panorama, and dealing, if this doesn't sound too pretentious, with the experience of the English people this century. I never thought of it specifically as a working class novel. It's a novel about English people, and since the majority of English people are working class people it seemed natural to place it there.

But what about the pessimism of the novel? It seems to be saying that the traditional, and partly mythical, political working class has just about disappeared, whereas the case simply is that the working class changes, and there are now new sources of pride and political traditions?

Yes, I can only say that to write about that would be to write a different book. *Holding On* is the story of a man, an East London docker, who finds himself bewildered in a world that has changed. He has been unable to keep up with the changes. And I think that that is true for a great many working class people, even those of a much younger generation than Charlie Wheelright. But I would be the last person to claim that it was the whole picture.

Can we talk about one of your most recent books, perhaps the most ambitious of your novels, *Today the Struggle*? Was it in some ways an extension of *Holding On*?

Structurally it's the same sort of novel but it's something



different. It's intended directly to be a political novel. The subject of the novel is people who are inescapably concerned with politics, who live a political life. People for whom a political event, Suez, Hungary, whatever, touches them as nearly as does the end of a love affair or a death, or something like that. People who feel deeply about politics and who really can't live without a political commitment. And, quite obviously, I'm a person rather like that myself and I've always lived among people like that, and that's what interested me to portray. And the second thing about the novel is that it is, if you like, my substitute for an autobiography—I don't think novelists ought to write autobiographies—and it is a summation of the political experiences I have lived through.

When you started to write it did you want to make a particular statement about politics and life?

I don't think novels are written for messages, but I do think more than most that this novel has a 'message' and I think the message is there in the last chapter, and that is that in the presence of evil one must resist.

But again, isn't there a picture of the working class family in decline morally and spiritually—the same pessimism as in *Holding On*?

Well, the novel for the most part is about middle class intellectuals and therefore as a picture of working class life it is very incomplete. But I think that the erosion of the old family structure, of class solidarity, and of political instincts are linked developments which have affected at least a part of the working class.

But even though the novel finishes in 1977, the whole political explosion of young people, and particularly women, is not gone into?

True. I do think most emphatically that the most significant political development of the 1970s has been the women's movement. There's something about it in the novel but evidently not enough. But in that field the novelist's contribution isn't so much to write about the movement as to depict the growth of women as liberated personalities. I've tried to do that in several of my books and I was very pleased when Clancy Sigal, in reviewing *Today the Struggle* said that what he'd remember best in it was the women. A working class woman called Terry who becomes an artist and also a CND activist is the pivot of the novel.

To revert to CND, one of its most notable aspects is that women took a leading part both nationally and locally—in contrast to the civil rights movement in the USA in the sixties in which, so one gathers from American women, they just took orders from the men.

In most of your novels you have stuck pretty closely to a conventional narrative technique. Don't you think that the development of a socialist literary aesthetic requires an appropriate development in technique and form?

I think you're making too direct a link, though I imagine that

a real socialist society would generate innovations in the novel as in other art-forms. I'd say that a socialist or radical writer must be, if only as a matter of temperament, open to innovation—have a desire to shake things up. I've done this to some extent, as regards the focus of vision and the chronology, in some novels, especially *Nobody's Fault*. But frankly I doubt if I am cut out to be an experimental writer, and in the long novels you've been asking me about, where the stress is on the passage of time and the diversity of experience, I've probably become dominated by my material. That is, I couldn't see how to make it clear and meaningful except through the traditional narrative technique to which readers are accustomed.

So you've never been preoccupied with formulating some kind of socialist theory of novel writing?

I don't think there is any way of writing novels which is more socialist than any other way.

I suppose I am thinking of the endless debates in Russia which I used to read about which were concerned with the importance of developing 'socialist realism'—which was going to supersede all other, discredited forms of literature.

I don't think socialist realism is a new form, it's a very old form. Socialist realism in the sense in which it has been used by the Russians is very firmly based on the realistic traditions of the 19th century. And every Russian who is trying to write socialist realism is in fact trying to write like Emile Zola who died in 1902.

And then another political problem has been why the tradition of working class novelists has been so sporadic and thin . . . ?

Yes I would agree, it has been rather disappointing, particularly I would say in recent years. I think in the 1930s up to the 1950s there were good political novels by working class writers, people like Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Len Doherty. I can only speculate that a whole new culture for young working class people has emerged in recent years, particularly in music, and has become the language of the younger generation and so therefore the novel has seemed a less appropriate form in which to express oneself. Actually when I had a Writer's Fellowship at Woodberry Down School in Hackney, it was exciting to find amongst the kids a lot of writing talent but I don't think any of them had the ambition to write a novel. They were interested in three things: poetry, short stories and science fiction.

Yes, poetry has clearly enjoyed an enormous upsurge in popularity in recent years . . .

Yes, and if we go back to this question of techniques in the novel, I think it is disappointing that predominantly the novel hasn't changed its technique let's say during this century much, whereas poetry very clearly has.

Coming back to the novel, there's a kind of tradition on the left which believes that on occasions novels can have an enormous effect on a people's political development, with people testifying to the disproportionate influence particular novels have had on their lives. Do you hope for this kind of power for the novel?

Well the terrible thing about the cultural situation in this country is that all of us are creating very much in a void where ever we're writing for—we're getting no feedback, no response. For a novelist this presents a very great difficulty. I go on writing because I know the novel has a great many readers and this number is increasing year by year. But I know very little or almost nothing at all about my readers. And of course in the Soviet Union while one says everything about the repression of writers, the persecution of dissidents, the boring nature of most of the output, and everything else like that, having said all that a writer there still has something tremendous and that is that he or she can read and extract from the latest novel or work in progress in a factory and at least finds out what the readers think. And evidently Russian writers receive thousands of letters in response to a new book and that is something which I envy very much.

I think this happens to a large extent in the women's movement, where there is much more discussion and reception of a new novel or a book of poems by a feminist writer.

Yes I am sure this is true. And I am sure that any alive political movement must be some sort of a community in which people form personal friendships, sit up half the night drinking coffee, talk about this or that, and in a way live their lives together. Nothing very much represents this sort of community today—CND by the way was that sort of political community—but the only thing today which is that sort of community is the women's movement, and that must have a very, very beneficial effect on poets and writers and anybody who is creative, within that movement.

**FLY PRESS**

Corner House Bookshop needs another worker (unpaid) for its collective. An interest in feminism/childcare/social history/politics would be useful. Write to 14 Endell Street, London WC2 or phone 836 9960.

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**LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE?**

Thanks to an Arts Council Writers Grant, Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre need another versatile socialist actress (singing an advantage). We perform shows on women, racism, workers' control, for trade unions, womens' groups, schools. Long term commitment desirable. Write giving FULL details of theatrical/political experience to 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1 8NJ, or ring 01-470-2581 or 01-730-5396.

Communist Students subvert the Central London Poly at Wells St! Reds everywhere on Sat 17 Nov. It's a Festival, y'see with lots of wonderful people at it. All info from National Student Committee at 16 King St WC2.



**NEEDLESS DEATHS** of third world babies who are bottle-fed continue despite pressure to halt the promotion of artificial milk. War on Want's new report *The Baby Killer Scandal* shows the problems, points an accusing finger at the baby-food industry and explores the campaign to stop them.

Get your copy, £1.50 plus p&p from War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE.



Person with youth work experience required as PROJECT YOUTH LEADER for a social and recreational centre in Leicester for the young unemployed (IAP funded). Salary £5,256 - 5,790. Phone 0533 26294 (preferably 2-4pm) or write LYUDIC, 74 Rutland St., Leicester.

**CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**

29 GREAT JAMES STREET LONDON WC1N 3EY TELEPHONE 01-242 0362

Protest Against Nuclear Weapons on 27th October. Disarmament Festival all afternoon at St. Martin-in-the-Field (off Trafalgar Square). Peace and anti-nuclear stalls and exhibitions. Anti-military disco. Refreshments. Come and find out about the anti war movement in the 70s and 80s. Protesters will be going out in gangs to embassies of nuclear countries, the MOD etc. At 6pm there will be a rally at Central Hall Westminster. With speakers from Parliament, the TUC, Bishops etc. More info from CND, 29 Great James St, WC1. 01-242 0363.

**Benefits: Enough to live on**

THE PUBLICATION of *Benefits* is timely. The story takes us into the next thirty years or so and imagines the breakdown of the welfare state and the effect this has on women. Recently I listened to a 5 pm programme on Radio 4, during which they read out a letter from one woman who thought that all women should be forced to stay at home if they had children. A couple of days later I heard Mr. Prior talking about his plans to help small businesses by allowing them to make pregnant women redundant. The Commissioners in Lambeth and Lewisham are discussing which hospital beds to scrap. Local councils may no longer provide free school meals. The welfare state is being dismantled.

The book describes how the fertility of women is manipulated by the state and makes the point, yet again, that women can be assured that the ability to bear children is a privilege, while being treated as if it were a curse which makes them unfit for anything else.

Women demand nothing less than the right to choose: either to bear children safely and receive financial help if they choose to do so or not to have children and in such cases to have access to safe free contraception and/or abortion on demand. All women should have a free choice throughout their reproductive lives.

While the welfare state is being dismantled, all women with children are entitled to *benefit* — enough to live on. (A similar scheme was proposed at the Liberal Assembly in Margate on September 26th, along with a preposterous idea that unemployed teachers should take voluntary classes in the evenings and during the holidays). When *benefit* for all becomes too expensive (North Sea Oil still isn't delivering the goodies) and undesirable elements are breeding like rabbits, it is selectively withdrawn and women have to prove they are worthy of it or receive no help if they insist on having babies. In the end — horror of horrors — contraceptive is put in the drinking water and only those women with clean genes and spotless records are given the antidote. Meanwhile the standard of living has been dropping, people are scavenging for food, making clothes out of oil by-products and travelling to Europe as cheap immigrant labour.

To those sisters involved in the anti-Depo Provera campaign, or who have been perfunctorily checked and issued with the pill or the coil only to swell, ache or bleed, to those who have been treated as subhumans in ante-natal clinics and maternity wards, this will probably read like what they've been saying all along. Certainly for development experts who think that world starvation would



Zoe Fairbairns

cease if only people would control their fertility, who fund schemes to try and make them do so, this would be a dream come true.

What about organised resistance? Well, comrades, there isn't much of that and what there is is carried out by women. In a world where men are running the show, be it decaying capitalism, repressive socialism, revolutionary Islam or patriarchal liberation movements, is it any wonder there's a lot of pessimism about?

I was at a seminar where a woman from Namibia admitted that the liberation movements are patriarchal. She went on to say that the women were so busy coping with everyday problems of refugees, supplies etc. that they didn't have time to struggle on that level.

So it is with us. Engaged in the everyday grind — to keep our jobs, to survive on what we get — to

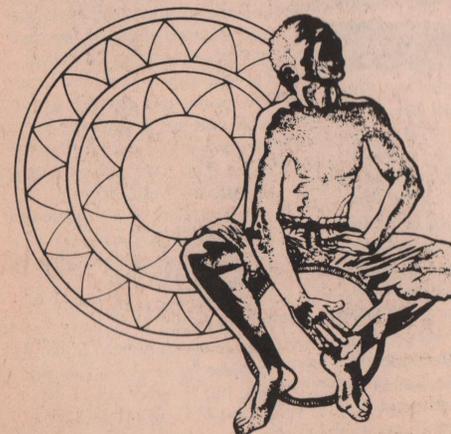
keep our schools, to survive sexist antiworker propaganda, the struggle for power seems light years away. We are on the defensive and sometimes not even that. The Tories were voted in and claim to have a mandate for what they are doing to us. Our rulers have the power to manipulate us and change our lives for the worse and they are using that power.

In the book they 'go too far' and change course — forced by natural (unnatural) events, not human actions. But don't be discouraged. The book is a good read. There are people, relationships and attitudes which are interesting, varied and well described. And taken with the stuff coming over the media right now, it may give you a healthy jolt. It did me.

Chris Stretch

*Benefits*, a novel by Zoe Fairbairns. Virago £2.95

**Black Bookfair: facing up to the issues**



SABARR BOOKS, who specialise in Afro-Caribbean material, and Soma Books, specialists in Indian literature, organised the first ever Black Book Fair in Britain last December at the Abeng Centre. The walls were

covered with paintings by children and professionals, and with political posters. The stalls were covered with books and artifacts on Afro/Asian history, culture, politics. The flurry of activity in the middle included story telling

sessions for children, some hard poetry, and general discussion about Black cultures, primarily about education. Heartened by its success, the two bookshops have organised a two-day event this year, on 9/10 November, at St. Matthew's Meeting Place, opposite Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2.

The Black Book Fair is not about promoting the book trade as such. It's more about getting known (and sold) a growing body of information by and about Britain's Black population and their background. There are therefore workshops to focus on: 'Disruptive Units', English as Second Language, and Mother Tongues. Linton Kwesi Johnson, among others, will be reading poetry. The Black Publishers, Bogle L'Ouverture (now celebrating a decade in publishing), and New Beacon Books will participate. Community theatre, story-telling sessions and workshops, visual art exhibitions are

all planned. Creches, and Indian and Caribbean food will be available. (Incidentally, of all the big publishers who've jumped on the 'multi-racial Britain' bandwagon, not one of those approached has shown any interest in helping finance the occasion — though their books are on display. Just shows where they're at, dunnit?).

The programme is intended to put squarely Black issues to blacks and whites, and is particularly relevant to all teachers and school children.

For further info: Sabarr Books (01-274 6785) 121 Raiton Road, SE24; and Soma Books (01-735 2101) 38 Kennington Lane, SE11.

Then, from 19-25 November, Soma Books (Independent Publishing Co.) exhibit a wide range of Indian books, for children and adults, in English and in Indian languages, at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, W8.

# Back Pages

## BOOKS

The *Anarchists Cookbook* has made another revival at the Persons Unknown trial, and for those loyal readers who have found their local WH Smith's unable to supply this tome, we offer a brief guide.

Published in the USA by Lyle Stuart of Secaucus, New Jersey, the Cookbook has not one whacky recipe in it at all. Instead it breaks down into these sections; Drugs; Electronics, Sabotage and Surveillance; Natural, Nonlethal and Lethal Weapons; and Explosives and Bobby Traps.

Yes folks, it's the real thing, 'cos as the Intro notes anarchism as an idea as well as a movement was much stronger and more conspicuous than Marxism.

The US Constitution's "Freedom of Speech" sections in bookshops there of the Cookbook, and I like its dedication. "If the real people of America, the silent majority, are going to survive, they must educate themselves. That is the purpose of this book."

It's disgustingly subversive, and shows you such things as the best point under a bridge to which you should affix your explosives charge, the handiest form of home-made hand grenade to prepare, and how to blow up the driver of a car when the ignition key is turned.

Just the thing to ask Santa Claus for this Xmas at Selfridges. There oughta be a law against it; oh yes, there is of course.

CONNOISSEURS of left sectarianism will find treasure in *Kronstadt*, a collection of Bolshevik and oppositionist writings on the 1921 uprising that provided the first real touchstone of the Revolution's relationship with popular and workers' opposition. The rising has always been a banner for anarchists and other anti-Leninists, and here we have accounts by Lenin and Trotsky (War Minister in charge of the brutal suppression of the rising), as well as (much more interesting) extracts from the debates and correspondence on Kronstadt between Trotsky, John G. Wright and other Fourth Internationalists, on the one hand, and, on the other, the great Victor Serge and Dwight MacDonald, that took place in the late thirties.

There will be those that find Lenin's and Trotsky's self-justification nauseating; available soon at £1.50 from most left bookshops, or at £1.65 (inc.p&p) from Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, London SE1.

The women's healthcare system in the USA will soon be a topic in the UK as the two women behind Pluto Press's *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts Advice to Women*, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, arrive to plug the book.

They'll be here from 22nd Oct-9th Nov, and travelling all round the big towns in the land. They'll even be signing books Ted Heath-style at Wedge Bookshop in Coventry and Grassroots Bookshop in Manchester.

Further info from Gail Chester of Pluto at 01-722 0141.

Interested too in *Let the Seals Live!* - an unashamed tear-jerker about the Orkney-based campaign with Greenpeace to stop the planned cull of 5000 grey seals late last year. It sets out a well-argued plea for "a more informed and less emotional basis for decisions which involved the lives of thousands of animals whose ecology is still little understood."

It's published at £5.95 by The Thulè Press, Sandwick, Shetland, and written by Sue Flint - "Let the Seals Live" stickers are also available from the publishers at 20p for six.

Interesting books around this month include Lawrence & Wishart's *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the 30s* which shows how the 1970s-style unemployment, fascism and the like in the 30s affected the eggheads of the time.

Penguin too have an original out on *Euro-Communism - Myth or Reality?* which seems a sound reader on the area, and *A Savage War of Peace*, a fine account in special difficult-to-read small print of the Algerian war by Alistair Horne, with one of those excellent David King cover designs.

## ROCK

**SORRY TO HEAR** the all-woman rock-swing band *Spoilsports* are temporarily off the circuit following the departure of their bass guitarist and percussion person. The band is a favourite of ours if you recall *Leveller* no. 29, and we hope they're soon restored to a full compliment, as they've got a couple nice new tunes we wanna hear.

The wondrous world of fanzines we like too on the "roll yer own" principle. Most of them sprang up during 1977 when would be rock-writers thought, like the bands themselves, they could do things themselves as good as the so-called professionals.

The harsh climate of these times though bites everywhere, so fanzines have got together to set up *The Fanzine Co-op*. Unity is strength and all that, so we wish them well. Priorities are to find alternative methods of distribution, prepare monthly fanzine catalogues, and combine on the printing costs.

Further info c/o Rough Trade, 202 Kensington Park Road, or give Keith Copley a bell on 0582-67321.

Two bands we recommend on the benefit gig circuit are *Crisis* c/o 01-737 4808, and *Alternative British Army* c/o Bill Smith at 0273-202510.

Now this does sound like fun. That woman, whatshername, who does the Mrs. Thatcher impersonations has come up with a record entitled *Iron Lady - The Coming of the Leader*, spoofing our regrettable leader's dafter speeches. Brought out by Logo Records (*Hold on - have they given us an ad? No, so what's the plug for then? - cynical ad manager*). All right I'll stop there then.

More stirring initiatives from *The East London Jazz Society*. Independent of the doughty Jazz Society Centre, they've now got a series of six regulars planned for Wednesday (till midnite too) at the Earl of Aberdeen in Roman Road E3. First on on 7th November has Ronnie Scott no less, and is co-sponsored by the Tower Hamlets Arts Committee. I'd reckon you'd better get there early.

Many issues ago we slagged off the Belfast Repubrock band *Men Of No Property* for their sexism. Interested they've now changed their name to *People of No Property*. The *Lev* strikes again.

## MOVIES

Oh for those steamy days when students were nasty and, my dears, used to shock us so. A review in the current issue of the London University student newspaper *Sennet* of the fine smokin' borstal film *Scum* had a whole sentence excised 'cos it was thought too hot to handle.

All it was saying was how the violence and degradation of the young prisoners while brutalising both them and the officers responsible, had become necessary to keep the grim system functioning.

Its suggestions that borstal officers are violent people did not materialise in print. Anyhow, the film is excellent and will make you feel angry, and you hardly need to be told of its genesis from the BBC ban imposed on its TV version.

## THEATRE

The glare of the footlights, the smell of the greasepaint, the rustle of the curtain rising, the thrill of the first night! Yes it's theatre time folks, and several we commend to your attention.

*PULSE*, by the Ethiopian dramatist Alem Mezgebe, is performed by the Gbakanda Afrikan Tiata Company, based in London. It won an award at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

The actors represent various facets of a dictator: Conscience, Ambition, Complex and Body. The interaction between these 'split' personalities directly affect the dictator's use of power. Although no nationality is attributed to him, the fact that the dictator is played by a black actor gives the play a particular significance.

*Pulse* venues include Theatre Space Space, London 15-21 Oct; Wigan 9 Nov; and Oval House, South London 21-25 Nov.



A black Liverpoolian is held on sus in a London police station and taunted with the 'murder' of his pregnant wife. The tense cat-and-mouse game between two policemen and the suspect is played out against the events of this year's General Election night. The three strongly individualistic but very different characters are deftly placed in the wider public context of continuing economic crisis and right-wing backlash.

There are some minor inconsistencies of dialogue but the play is worth seeing. Some will criticise its bleak British naturalism, but it has much more to offer politically than a lot of recent sub-Brechtian experiments. All drama, especially at the top of the Kings Road, is fiddling during the conflagration, but at least Keefe has the courtesy to point to the flames.

*Sus* by Barrie O'Keefe, now at Theatre Upstairs London.

# Back Pages

## CAMPAIGNS

*CAST/North West Spanner* are taking their *Waiting For Lefty* around the North this November. Nov. 6th at the Star Club, Essex St, Brum; 7th at the Poly St, Peters Square, Wolverhampton; 8th Selly Oak, Brum; 9th Coventry; 10th Dudley; 13th Tameside; 14th Stockport Labour Club; 15th Eccles Labour Club; 16th Wigan or Salford; 19th Warrington; 20th Sunderland Arts Centre; 22nd Teeside Poly; 23rd Newcastle Ploy; 29th Northwich, 30th Capri Ballroom Manchester.

More info from N.W. Spanner at 061-881 7845.

## BACK PAGES

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

Foco Novo have a new production called *The Guise* which deals with political censorship in the theatre and the effects of cuts in the arts. Written by David Mowat, it's on at the Ashford Stour Centre on 26th Oct; the Battle Memorial Hall on 27th, and then at London's Royal Court Theatre Upstairs from 30 Oct-17 Nov.

7:84 have got their "most adventurous musical to date" on the road. It's called *Bitter Apples*, written by John McGraph, and set on Merseyside. It deals with a young Liverpool woman starting in the brash Sixties and coming right thru the 70s realities and into the 1980s.

The play is at Brighton's Gardner Centre till 27 Oct, and then at the Swindon Wyvern Theatre from 30 Oct to 3 Nov. Contact 7.84 Theatre thru Unit 407, 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Frances De La Tour, well-known on the political circuit, handles *Hamlet*, yes the befuddled Shakespearean prince himself, at the Half Moon Theatre, 27 Alie Street, London E1 up till 17 Nov. Box office 01-480 6465.

And then there's *Cunning Stunts* - try saying that quickly. These womenfolk have *The Desert or What's For Afters?* ready to go at south London's Oval House, then Action Space, and who knows where else afterwards. Its sounds good fun, satirising the holiday concept with a barrage of musical instruments.

They threaten an evening "you're not likely to forget", and are charging £150 for hiring. They also do a smaller cabaret and workshops too. So phone Jan at 01-249 6232.

The Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell, central London belongs to us all on the left in the UK. It's a splendid place - dripping in socialist history with Lenin producing his *Izvestia* weekly paper in a cramped back room there much the same size as the *Leveller's* premises.

They have so much stuff there that deserves better presentation but the old cash shortage problem affects them badly. To expand they need £50,000 and an impressive cast of lefties - almost the British socialist Royal Family - have lent their names to the appeal.

Hobsbawm, EP Thompson, AJP Taylor, Ray Williams, Michael Foot, Ken Gill, they're all helping out. Relevant address is 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.

Most important, all out for the big TUC-sponsored London *Anti-Corrie Bill* demonstration on Sunday 28 October. Defend the 1967 Abortion Act from these reactionary attacks by assembling with yer banners at Speakers Corner Hyde Park on noon that day.

The *Birmingham Rape Crisis Centre* is now running a 24-hour counselling service for women who have been raped or sexually attacked - only the second round-the-clock such centre in the land. All the counsellors are women who have a specific knowledge of rape and its possible effects, and they all have a sound basic knowledge of medical, legal and police procedures.

The Centre stresses it is not specifically just for Brum but nationwide as well.

The address is c/o The Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Queensway, Birmingham 4. The phone no. is 021-233 2122 (24 hours) or 021-233 2655 (10am-6pm weekdays). The service of course is free and confidential.

The Royal Court Young People's Theatre in London is launching a novel series of discussions on *Youth and Sexuality*, on Tuesday evenings 6-8 pm, open to all, and presumably free, though the letter doesn't say so. At The Garage in Holbein Place, SW1, just behind Sloane Square tube station, you can witness on 30 Oct Maureen Colquhoun (billed as ex-Labour feminist lesbian); on 6th Nov. Rose Robertson (Parent's Enquiry, for gay teenagers); on 13th Nov, Hazel Slavin (contraception); on 20th Nov. a person from the Rape Crisis Centre; and on 27th Nov. Lucy Toothpaste of Rock Against Sexism.

The East London Gay Liberation Front are holding several mixed group meetings at 8 pm on 25th Oct; 8th November; and 22nd November. They're all held at the back bar of the Duke of Fife pub in Katherine Road, Forest Gate London E7, and further info c/o Flat 9, 33 Great Cumberland Place, London W1.

Transsexuals who would like to meet anti-socialist men, in men's groups or individually, should get in touch with Danny Cohen at the London Men's Centre, c/o Bread and Roses, 316 Upper St, London W1.

The Centre is having a special meeting on Wed. 12 Dec at 8 pm to examine their attitudes to transsexuals. The meeting, open to all, will begin with a feminist speaking about her attitudes to TSs.

## PAMPHLETS

Several outpourings we can safely recommend this month. Counter Information Services have produced a timely and thorough 85p-worth on *Sell Out in Zimbabwe*. Upholding their usual high standards, the low-down's all here - get it from CIS at 9 Poland St, London W1.



The International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa have sent us two bumper bundles of their "portable photographic exhibitions" for schools, clubs, and the like on *Children Under Apartheid* and *Nambibia In Struggle*.

Both cost £5 and both are very impressive. IDAF live at 104 Newgate Street, London EC1.

Pedal-power the Lev also thoroughly approves of and *Freewheeling* is clearly the mag to read. The Oct. issue sensibly looks at the whole area - news and views, technical info, legal advice, road tests, even a Controversy Slot. It costs 40p from 14 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.



"NOTE THE MORE ETHICAL APPROACH IN THE CURRENT AD."

War on Want are hot on what they call *The Baby Killer Scandal*, written by Andy Chetley which investigates the promotion and sale of powdered baby milks in the developing world.

Copious illustrations show the nefarious barrage of PR the Fat Cats use to push their powders when breast milk is so obviously superior. This natural process is downgraded by the ads which almost make out it's a savage practice. Well done WoW, and their £1.50 booklet is available from WoW, 467 Caledonian Road, London, N7.

## EVENTS

We're pleased to plug the *Feminist Review* sponsored walk around Birmingham to absorb the past and present of women in that sturdy city. A fine detailed programme of the walk is now available from Rebecca O'Rourke at CCCS, PO Box 363, Brum at 35p plus SAE, and is highly recommended - the London walk got glowing reviews.

## EXISTE-T'IL UN ART ANGLAIS?

The British Council recently received a stringent open letter from *Black Phoenix* in London over an English art exhibition in Paris. The show was intended to present all modern aspects of English art - there were no black participants.

The accompanying illustration makes the point astringently, and the letter accusing the British art establishment of "official censorship", demands; "Let there be an open and declared policy and artistic criteria, applied equally to both whites and blacks, in the context of the present reality of British society."



