

the Leveller

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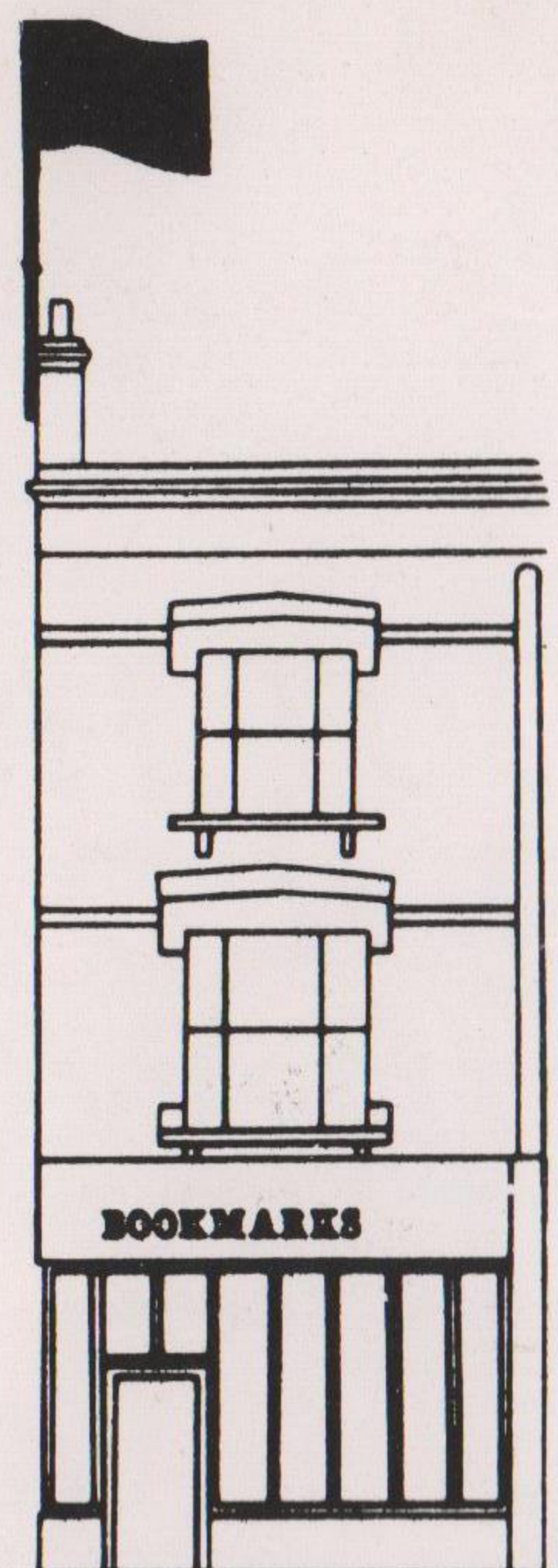
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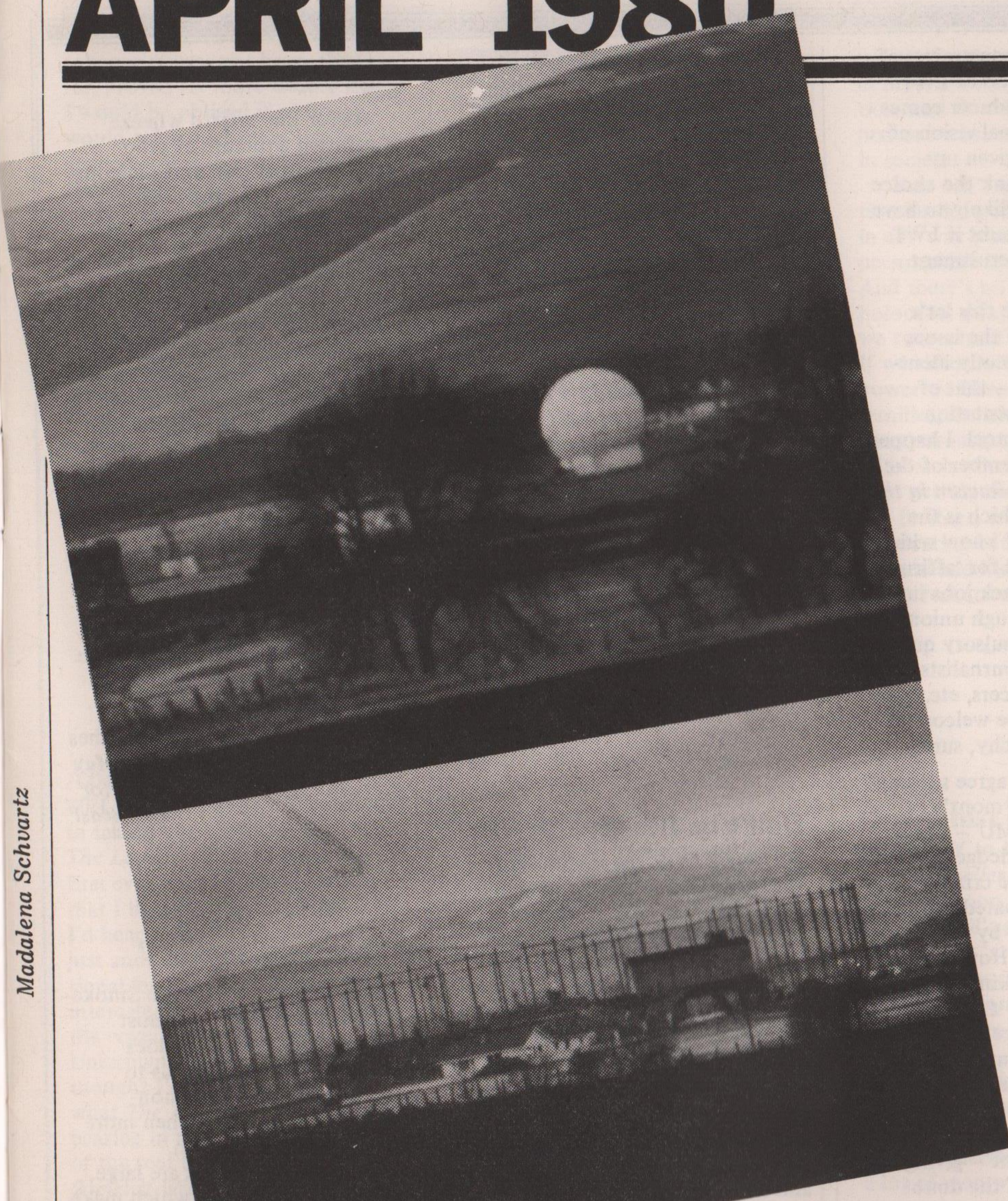
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Cover design: Richard Dyers

Cosmetics: See pages 6-9.

IN MEMORIAM: Bucky Marshall, co-engineer,
along with *Claudie Massop*, of Kingston Peace
Treaty, in 1978. Leading gun-men of *JLP* and
PNP gangs respectively, and workers for the
community. Claudie was shot by police last
year; inquiries are still going on; Bucky was
shot last week in a Brooklyn NY dance-hall,
while wanted for murder.

Madalena Schwartz



Debacle of the Decade: Peter Hain calls for order as Paul Foot looks on. See pages 20-23.

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The thought of war and oppression is unpleasant to decent people the world over, both East and West. Yet, if you want to survive the worst with dignity then you must be least imagine the very worst, and try to think how you would act. The government knows this only too well. This year they will spend £10,500,000,000 of our money to prevent the country falling to the enemy, without and within. But what happens if they've got it all wrong!

Suppose the Russians or — heaven forbid! — a cabal of army and police officers took power tomorrow at 4.00 a.m.? Having lived for centuries in a society rooted in obedience to authority we can assume that by midday there would be people clapping them in the streets ... by three we'd have citizens loading other citizens — particularly Leveller readers! — on to three ton lorries ... on the nine o'clock news there'd be a well-known personality oozing assurances that it is all for the best and it is our constitutional duty to accept the new order ... and by 10.30 the following morning we'd have respected members of the bench setting the seal of legality on the authority of the new regime and packing the opposition off to the uranium mines in Orkney, or to Wembley Stadium to await whatever authoritarian delights lay in store for them.

However, if you are one of those people who feel it your civil duty to defend whatever freedom you feel you have, and haven't bet your all on IBM, the KGB, or any other power obsessed minority, then it is your responsibility to be aware of the many ways bad people can be harmful when angry, acquisitive, or generally out of sorts. You, of course, are one of the Great Pumpkin's loftiest creations, so we are safe in putting this book in your hands. We hope you'll never need the information contained here, but it is your inalienable right to share with your enemies the knowledge of this useful publication.

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Putting the record straight

GENUINE POLITICAL criticism I welcome, but the ill-informed, near-libellous, apolitical attack on me by Julia Mclymont in her review of LWT's Minorities Unit (*Leveller 36*) is stooping pathetically low. Her clear implication that I write favourably about LWT's programmes to facilitate my entry into the ranks of John Birt's producers is really the kind of unsubstantiated innuendo that belongs in the putrid pages of *Private Eye*.

Firstly would Ms Mclymont like to provide evidence from my writing in *Time Out* or elsewhere for a specially favourable coverage of LWT's current affairs output or promotion of John Birt as an outstanding 'radical'? I would say that on the contrary our coverage of

LWT's output has been consistently critical. Indeed the first article I wrote about LWT's Minorities Unit was openly cynical about LWT's motives in setting up the unit, as a franchise-renewal tactic pure and simple. Neither, as far as I can recall, have I even mentioned the name of John Birt in print in the last twelve months or longer, outside this particular article (co-written incidentally with Mandy Merck, who seems to escape criticism by Ms Mclymont - has she also got a secret motive for being nice to LWT? Perhaps Ms Mclymont can enlighten us.) I don't hold any 'great men' theories of history, either in the media or elsewhere.

As evidence of my assessment of John Birt and what he represents I would like to quote from a review of a book by Armand Mattelart which I have just written for *Issues*, the new left-wing international news-magazine:

'... Mattelart points out the way that one of the central concerns of radical media-theory - the concept of specific differentiated audiences in contrast to the idea of 'mass' - has already been

appropriated by international capital, under the guise of pluralistic liberalism, for more efficient ideological production and 'target' advertising. One should note in the British context that figures such as LWT's Current Affairs controller, John Birt, have made noises in that direction recently'.

Secondly, I can categorically state that I have no desire to work for LWT as a producer or any other permanent post. In fact given the political, ideologi-

cal and aesthetic constraints of the medium, the job of LWT current affairs producer comes close to my personal vision of living death. But given my politics I don't think the choice is something I am likely to have to confront - I doubt if LWT see me as likely recruitment material.

To substantiate this let's look at just one of the issues Ms Mclymont correctly identifies in her article - that of black under-representation amongst TV personnel. I happen to be a founder-member of the *Campaign Against Racism in the Media (CARM)*, which is the only organisation I know which consistently argues for 'affirmative action' on black jobs in TV and the press, through unions monitoring a compulsory quota-system for black journalists, technicians, producers, etc. Not a policy likely to be welcomed by the LWT hierarchy, surely?

I do happen to agree substantially with Ms Mclymont's criticisms of the LMU - but what she fails to acknowledge is that many of those same criticisms were in fact anticipated in the article in *Time Out* by Mandy Merck and myself. However I do think we were too kind to the series *Skin* and *Gay Life* in the context of some dire later offerings - and the recent revolt by the organised gay movement in London against *Gay Life* must confirm those reservations. But such a misassessment - giving them the benefit of the doubt in the absence of all the evidence - cannot be explained away by her vulgar 'careerist' interpretation.

What I do sense in her letter

which is perhaps most typical and most worrying is a distinct strain of total 'refusal' (i.e. fear) of engagement with the mass media *per se* - a response common on the left. But as Hans Magnus Enzensberger once admonished us - 'Sewer-workers cannot be afraid of handling shit'.

Carl Gardner
London NW6

I note that Carl Gardner agrees with my criticism of LMU and admits that his and Mandy Merck's article was too kind and a misassessment. And if he knew me he would realise that his parting shot - that I'm frightened of engaging with the mass media - is ludicrously wide of the mark.

J.A. Mclymont

and the support of our readership.

As for the 'wizad wheeze' of printing a picture of your favourite pussy cat, and the comment about being the 'animal's friend', that is patronising. As anyone who has read the magazine will know, our aim is to provide hard-hitting investigative journalism on not only the widespread abuse of animals but also to provide coverage of the anti-nuclear movement, ecopolitics and the genocide of the native nations.

The current issue features an extract from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* with a background to how the book was written, plus an eye-opening piece on uranium mining.

We respect the work that the *Leveller* is doing and ask that you give the *Beast* a little bit more credit in return.

Best wishes
John May
Editor
The Beast

Don't be Beastly

THANKS FOR the mention of the *Beast* in *Leveller 35*, but the piece did raise some misconceptions which I would like to clear up.

Firstly the magazine does not have Richard Adams behind it. He contributed one piece to our magazine and that is as far as his involvement goes. The *Beast* was started with no money and survives purely on the strength of its mail order, its subscriptions and its advertising.

The fact it has grown from 24 to 52 pages in nine months and now has more than 750 subscribers says something about the strength of the idea

Who are the suckers?

CHRIS STRETCH's article *Smoke-screen (Leveller 36)* was most welcome even though it does require a tortuous analysis to make the oppression of non-smokers a sexist issue when more women smoke than men.

Tobacco companies are large, capitalistic enterprises which make their profits by encouraging smokers to ruin their own health and foul the air of others. It is no defence of the nuclear power industry to point out that the

tobacco companies have, thus far, proved far more deadly but I would be obliged if someone would tell me why the left in general seems so unconcerned about this particularly savage and nasty form of exploitation.

Perhaps the answer lies in smokers' feelings of vulnerability which Chris Stretch discusses, but it would be particularly ironic if it were smokers themselves, the primary victims of the exploitation, who were responsible for the true social and economic exploitation by the tobacco companies being masked for so long. A smokescreen indeed.

A.J. Lowry
Streatham
London SW16

general, heartening to see that the more flexible elements of the left are beginning to consider the value and practicality of libertarian modes of organisation (although, as an anarchist, I do admit to having a rather self-righteous tendency to say: 'At last, after all these years, they're just beginning to wise up'; thank goodness for the Women's Movement!). Anyway, let's hope that the trend towards libertarianism (the nice person's word for anarchism) continues bearing in mind the obstacle of Leninism - Trotskyism - Maoism - Stalinism - etcism.

Rab McNeil
Paisley
Scotland

P.S. Sorry that I can't afford a donation right now, but I'm pretty skint!

About time too

WELL, I'VE FINALLY got round to taking out a subscription to *The Leveller*. Case history: the first ever copy of *The Leveller* that I bought was n.31 (Oct. 79). I'd heard that *The Leveller* was just another paper of the traditional left, so I hadn't been too interested before this. But, with the coverage of the Persons Unknown trial in no. 31, I thought I'd get a copy to see what *The Leveller* had to say, bearing in mind that the papers of the real traditional left, *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge*, had totally neglected this issue, on what could only have been sectarian grounds.

As it turned out I enjoyed the whole issue and have continued to enjoy the paper ever since. In the issue which I've just finished reading (no 35), I thought that Terry Illot's piece on *Beyond the Fragments* was particularly good and it is, in

Yours in love

I AM HURT by David Brazil's *The End of the Big Bang Era (Leveller Feb 80)*, not so much for his sarcastic review of Paul Hoch's book *White Hero, Black Beast*, as for his bitter attack on some men's attempts to understand and change their personal politics as represented by the anti-sexist men's movement.

From what I know of men involved in this, nearly all are committed socialists, not guilt-ridden psychoanalysts! Perhaps there are times when we have to face ourselves, and how we put women down (by not really listening to them or by poooh-pooing 'feminine' characteristics, like crying); but we have potential, and surely there are things we can learn from the women's movement - what's wrong with that? For me, my personal life is closely mixed in with wider

political activity, so I must look at myself, in my privileged position, and be willing to change, just as I want to fight oppression in society.

You can't ignore the connection David; and you can't behave in any way you like in your personal life if it oppresses others. And there's no horrible final holocaust awaiting each of us if we take a hard look at ourselves. If we rid ourselves of the artificial power we have as heads of families, decisive people, or big wage earners, in competition with each other, perhaps we will start getting more in touch with our feelings, trusting and communicating better with other men, women and kids, and so all growing in real strength.

Yours in love
Dick Page
London N6

Cartoonist speaks out

IN REPLY to Jan Brown's letter (*Leveller 36*) that referred to the cartoon that accompanied David Brazil's article on male sexuality as 'attacking both men's groups and gay men with no explanation' - as the author of the cartoon here's my explanation.

Firstly, it was not intended as a direct attack on men's groups as such. What it is attempting to illustrate is that basically a lot of men who support or appear to support feminism are insincere and that they go through the motions and the rhetoric and props like 'men's groups' to maintain some credibility in the political community particularly with feminists and that they are very often as, if not more, sexist than men who are not making a conscious effort to be non-sexist. As for

it being anti-gay, I can only suppose that Jan Brown is referring to the last frame where one man is seen embracing the other. This is in no way intended to be anti-gay, but rather attempts to show how 'hugging' and physical contact can sometimes also cover up basic insincerities.

Dave Lester
London S69

Yours in anger

YOUR TREATMENT of *Achilles Heel's* article on the National Men's Conference in your March issue was an unpleasant reminder of the continuing sexism of your editorial policy. You transformed our proposed headline 'Men's Movement Moving On' into 'Brought to Heel', inserted a sexist cartoon portraying conference participants as emotional sods without feelings and chopped our short concluding paragraph on the important experience of being in the conference creche. And despite clear promises to consult us prior to making any such 'improvements'.

Your obviously negative view of the men's movement and inability to allow men who went to the conference to speak for themselves echo the treatment the bourgeois press used to give the women's movement ten years ago when all feminists were characterised as bra-burning and sexually frustrated.

You would not dare to attack women or gay people in this way today - how long will it be before you learn that men are human too? In the meantime I recommend you *Gay News'* report of our conference with its headline 'Learning from harmony'.

Yours in anger
Steve Gould
(member of *Achilles Heel* group)

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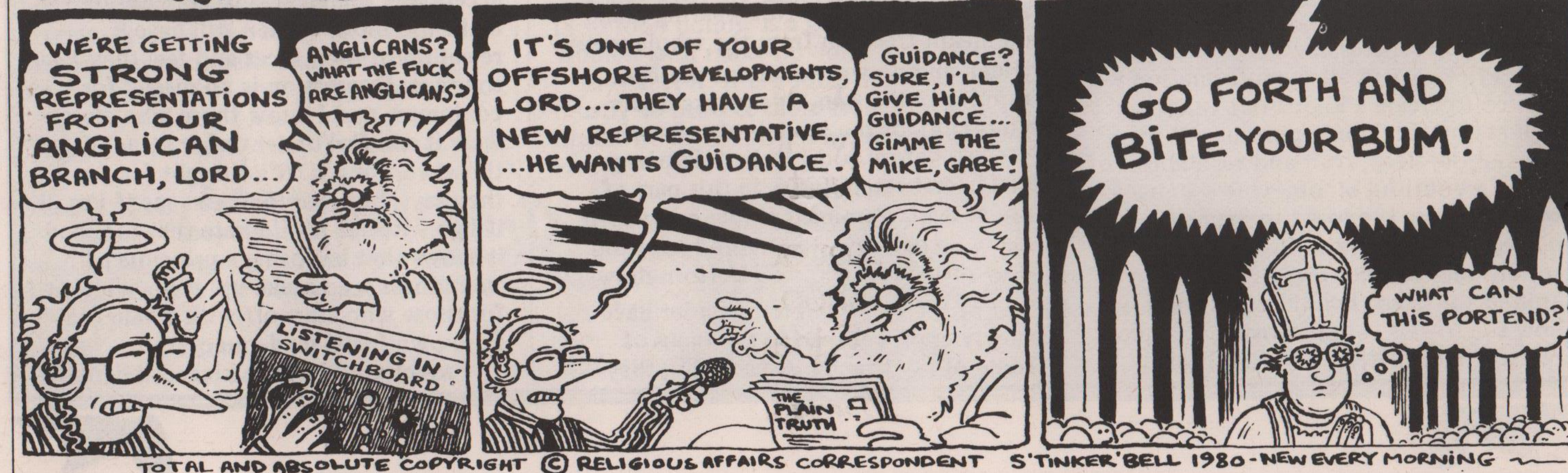
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LORD GOD ALMIGHTY



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• PRISONER • of • REVLON •

I REMEMBER a Christmas in my early teens when the loveliest present of all was a *Mary Quant* 'Paintbox' given to me by my aunt. I'd hankered for one for months, and here it was, a passport to glamorous maturity. It was set out like a palette, with four different kinds of eyeshadow, two pearlised lipsticks, powder and mascara. I never actually wore any of it outside, as it was all a bit too glossy, but I played with it for hours. It also had some false eyelashes and some little bits of cut-glass that you stuck on your face for parties. I knew these were out of the question for the kind of parties I went to, which mainly consisted of groups of pubescent girls dancing in formation to Beatle records. I couldn't get the eyelashes anywhere near the rim of my eye anyway. But despite these failings the box still reeked of real style, and just to own it was to partake in some way in the hip and glorious world of adult femininity.

In common with most teenage girls, I spent a good bit of my adolescence poring over magazine features which told me how I could make the best of my face, and minimise my 'bad' points. I found it difficult to work out what kind of face mine was in magazine terms — was it square, round, oval, or heart-shaped? There were special kinds of 'face-shaping' techniques to make the best of whatever you were landed with. These were usually done with 'blushers', and 'highlights'. Carefully scrutinising my face, I decided that my worst feature was my nose. I read that a white smear down the middle of it would make it look petite and acceptable, but I could only succeed in looking as if I had a white smear down the middle.

By the time I was 16 I was wearing make-up most days. 'Mushroom beige' eyeshadow, and black mascara. I could never stand foundation or powder, but I seriously considered buying some green face colour which a friend had told me would counteract blushing. The absurdity of that just about got through.

Make-up artistes like Barbara Daly and Joan Price gave us all the information we needed to create a knock-out visage, as well as stressing the importance of plenty of exercise, sleep, fruit and vegetables to create a youthful bloom. One evening a week we were supposed to 'pamper' ourselves. A hair-wash, then an oil or conditioner and hot towels wrapped around the head (I could never work out how the towels could be heated). Then a relaxing facial (with or without salad

materials on the eyelids) to unclog those grimy pores and restore the 'Ph balance' of an unpredictable skin. But none of this seemed to make much difference.

Into my twenties and I used black 'kohl' — a smear under my eyes, and a smudge over the top. Silver eyeshadow for dressing up, lipstick occasionally, and a pinkish 'blusher'. Without it my face looked blank, particularly round the eyes, which appeared to have no definition without the black lines. It was at this point that I began to recognise that I'd developed a psychological dependence on make-up, by wearing it every day. My eyes hadn't looked blank without it *before* it became a habit — so why should they now? I decided not to wear it regularly so that I could get used to my real face again. After a while I gradually stopped using it altogether. It was the relinquishing of a burden, knowing that my disinterest in doing all these things to my face had involved a basic self-acceptance. It must be four years since I've worn it, and now I wouldn't know how to use it if I wanted to.

What had made it easier, of course, was the feminist realisation of make-up as being part of the packaging of the sex-objects that we didn't want to be. No longer the living doll, but an understanding of the importance of accepting and even liking your own face. The use of cosmetics is supposed to mean feminine vanity, but in reality it means precisely the opposite — the belief that your face is unattractive and ugly, and money and time has to be spent in compensating for its inherent unpleasantness. Kept in thrall to that belief, women could never be liberated.

Gone were the days of not going out without your 'face on'. I laughed at a friend's story of her mother, who had once lost her make-up and had to ring a neighbour to bring round an emergency supply . . . just so she could go down the shops. Our mothers had been slaves to it, and we pitied them. Not wearing make-up meant freedom from the whole messy ritual, and no worries about mascara running in the rain, tide-marks under your chin, or the ten minute cleansing process before going to bed. Patriarchy had been beaten down, in this part of life at least. Feminists threw away their make-up bags by the hundred — or did they just stash them in a bottom drawer?

For the paint and the powder have slowly crept back on to the faces of some of my friends. Asked why, they

will honestly admit that they use it to give them confidence — because their eyes 'merge in' to their faces without a dark line underneath, because they are 'too' pale, because it makes them feel better. They say they are not dependent on it in the same way as they were in the past, as they don't feel they need to wear it every day. But they recognise that the use of it does amount to a basic dissatisfaction with their own faces. They agree that it is self-oppressive, but say that it helps them to cope in other ways.

And some now say that make-up can be a creative form of self-expression, exactly the same as the choice of clothes. There's now an alternative propaganda that says make-up is OK — using it is just as liberated as going without it. It's true that make-up styles have changed to a certain extent, and that it's more possible to express a facial and personal individualism with it. Punks are always given as an example of liberated use of make-up. They don't do it to look 'naturally beautiful', they do it to annoy, as a personal statement. But how many new wave-ettes would be seen with naked faces? The tyranny still exists, but with a wider and more subtle range of weapons.

Some men, gay and straight, wear make-up too. This is sold as the ultimate liberation, as if the male seal of approval is all that's needed to legitimise it for all us girls. Once men can powder their noses as well, it's no longer oppressive. But try shaking off a lifetime of female hatred for your own face, and you'll realise that the current male espousal of cosmetics is based on a fundamentally different view of their faces, personal presentation, and of themselves. As for the argument that using make-up is the same as following fashion in clothes, it's worth pointing out that however conformist or undesirable it is to wear tapered jeans, this doesn't involve a total dislike or rejection of the ankles underneath.

Whilst it is now socially more acceptable than it was to go without make-up, most women still have a rejection of their faces and feel they *have* to use it. Oppression is no reason for contempt, and I know those who always wear it can feel under unfair attack from those who don't. 'It's all right for *you*', they say, 'but everyone asks me if I'm ill if I go without it'. I'd hate that too, and it shows that imposing a principle of 'soundness = no make-up' is no solution for those who start off with a belief in their own facial inadequacy.

I'm relieved to have kicked the make-

up habit, but I still don't feel free from the dominance of the beauty salon ideology. I have the occasional crisis when I feel that I can't be making the best of myself, and fear that I must look shabby and unattractive to other people. But something will always happen to remind me why I'm glad I don't wear it any longer. Like a colleague, rushed into hospital, who needed us to run round buying cleanser, eye make-up remover, and cotton wool balls and buds before she could have her emergency operation.

And I still don't know what will happen when I'm older. Maybe when I'm grey-haired and paler I'll think that I need it, if only to fend off people who accuse me of looking tired or ill. I'll start with a little rouge, and then after a while I'll be back where I was when I was 20, a prisoner of REVLON.

But for the time being at least, I know of no face that is actually improved by

make-up. I've begun to feel liberated from it to the extent that sometimes find it difficult to discern the woman underneath — all I can see is the foundation, blusher or mascara. I get the impression that many women don't actually realise what their faces look like in anything but a mirror . . . a side view of those tan-coloured cheek-bone triangles worn by women to make their faces look hollow is a good example. Women with make-up don't *look* better — they feel it. It is a form of self-defence, mostly to protect them from their own dislike of themselves. Free of that, they can face the world.

Make-up was a big issue at the beginning of the women's movement, mostly been dropped since then, because of the trivial (in comparison to sexual and

great that their dominance is almost impossible to break. . . . make-up is one way to cope with that.

But putting make-up back on our political agenda needn't mean a crude rejection of it, nor a further undermining of those who feel they need it. The success of *THIS IS A FEMINIST ISSUE* — the book, the play, and the hundreds of compulsive mailing enquiries — shows that women's political consciousness, appearance, attractiveness, and self-respect, are still at the core of women's experience of their own oppression. Thousands of women can develop themselves a feminist consciousness by reading and discussing these issues. It's not just a matter of political action. It's not just a matter of political ideas about violence. It's not just a matter of got to change



•the•FRAGRANCE•DEFINES•her•

BEAUTY IS big business. Cosmetics are a major growth industry, perfumed oil on the troubled waters of a volatile economy, guaranteed to provide a sound financial investment for speculative shareholders.

An economic journal of summer '79 argued the case for *Mary Kay* cosmetics as follows:

'Industry sales should hold up well because cosmetics and toiletries are perceived as necessary. For a relatively small outlay, cosmetics lift a woman's morale by improving or changing her appearance. That makes it easier for her to forego a higher priced item such as clothes. The psychological benefits of a new shade may even boost sales in a difficult economic environment. . . . The growing number of women in the work force is one positive industrial development because working women tend to be heavy cosmetic users.'

That working women are 'heavy cosmetic users' is supported by a survey on teenage market expenditure discovered that, for example, 83% of working girls in the 16-18 year old age

group wore eye make-up more than two or three times a week. And 95% of all teenage girls in the survey wore eye make-up at some point each week.

Whilst individual product ranges and companies may flounder, the general demand for cosmetics appears to be insatiable, a trend which has encouraged manufacturers to plough increasing millions into advertising, product development and marketing techniques. It is an investment which is well worth the money, given that teenage girls alone are estimated to spend well over £12 million pounds a year on eye make-up.

But why should cosmetics be such an important part of a woman's identikit? And what part, if any, does advertising play in shaping the way we should see ourselves? There has been a tendency in feminist analysis to outlaw cosmetic culture as a kind of oppressive totemism: each lipstick, each tube of mascara yet another sticky nail in the coffin of women's subordination. Such an approach can rule out make-up as 'ideologically unsound', but fails to explain its role and value in the organisation of many women's lives. It denies women any integrity and purpose behind the little rituals of the mirror.

One way of unravelling the seemingly magical significance of cosmetics would be to look at their role in relation to appearance as an expression of 'femininity'. Whilst femininity may be on the one hand the corner-stone of women's oppression, on a day to day basis it serves as a way of perceiving and organising the experiences of everyday life.

Femininity is primarily a domestic ideology geared to the justification and legitimisation of women's psychological and material dependence; on the family, boyfriend, husband or children. So it demands certain qualities of personality, a certain way of valuing the self only in relation to others, which is ill suited to the demands of public life. For example, work may require qualities of individualism, ambition, drive and determination (which are read as 'male' traits) that may be experienced as a threat to the feminine identity.

Despite the flagrant incompatibility of these two aspects of life, the public and the private, most women do go out

to work. But femininity has a way of containing these contradictions. It works as a kind of sponge which can absorb these kinds of social and psychological conflicts by naturalising them, presenting them as the hallmark of the 'feminine enigma'. By embracing conflict and contradiction, the feminine identity can act as an effective internal measure of social constraint.

The material and psychological dependence of women is firmly anchored to their status as visual objects. Women identify their sense of with the way they appear, or rather imagine they appear to others. In this way appearance is a way of visually expressing women's sense of identity; a symbolism which may 'speak of' their dependence and subordination, as well as the defence mechanisms which femininity erects to deal with these experiences.

Cosmetics may be seen as a way of literally and symbolically structuring appearance. On the one hand a conventional way of expressing feminine attributes and, on the other, a form of defence, a mask which is protective in a world which may seem threatening.

All this may seem a bit terse and intense, but the important point to be made is that cosmetics offer a woman some kind of control over the way she appears. And in so far as women identify with the way they appear, this implies control over their social and personal life as well.

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* commented on this function of cosmetics:

'To take care of her beauty, to dress up, is a kind of work that enables her to take possession of her person, as she takes possession of her home through housework, her ego then seems chosen and recreated by herself. Social custom furthers the tendency to identify herself with her appearance.'

At home a woman can wear 'natural' make-up, a more perfect glossy self which makes her feel more 'worthwhile'. At work, or in public places, she may choose to wear more heavily stylised make-up which is in a way defensive, a protective layer. There is ample evidence to suggest that depressed or insecure women favour heavier make-up. Sheila Rowbotham in *Hidden from History* refers to the coincidence of this make-up style with women going out to work:

'Cosmetics were no longer applied secretly . . . they were meant to show. It was as if women were being forced

to make their own mask to face the strange new masculine world they were invading.'

It is in terms of control that adverts for beauty products begin to make sense. They offer far more than a bland reflection of socially stereotyped beauty. The implicit promise is that of transformation: an ability to direct and control life through control of appearance. For women to change their lives they don't need to do anything, they only need to look different.

This transformation offers a unity between your personal and social face, a coherence of the various aspects of your life. The split between self and appearance will disappear. For example, the *Revlon* Formula II advert claims: 'No one will know if it's you or our perfect make-up.'

The promise of unity, or peace of mind, is also metred by naturalising contradictions and conflicts as essential ingredients of femininity. The advert for *Cabriole* perfume, for example, says:

'There is this woman, watch her. She is a delicious tapestry of contradictions . . . there is this woman and here is the fragrance that defines her. We call it *Cabriole*.'

In this way beauty products promise to give you control over the state of your identity. They also work to help you discover your 'true' identity. Once again through transforming appearance.

'Discover yourself', says the *Max Factor* Maxi ad, 'There's no one that you would rather be'. Beauty adverts have also managed to incorporate a bastardised version of liberation. Through appearance, women can fulfil their potential as creative dynamic people. For example the *Tu* cosmetic ad copyline: 'For the girl with the colourless past, a colourful future'.

The adverts also suggest control over men. Usually this message is conveyed more by the attitude of the female model than by the accompanying text, but another *Tu* advert uses both. 'Those eyes so helpless and appealing one day will flash and send him crashing through the ceiling.' Thank heaven.

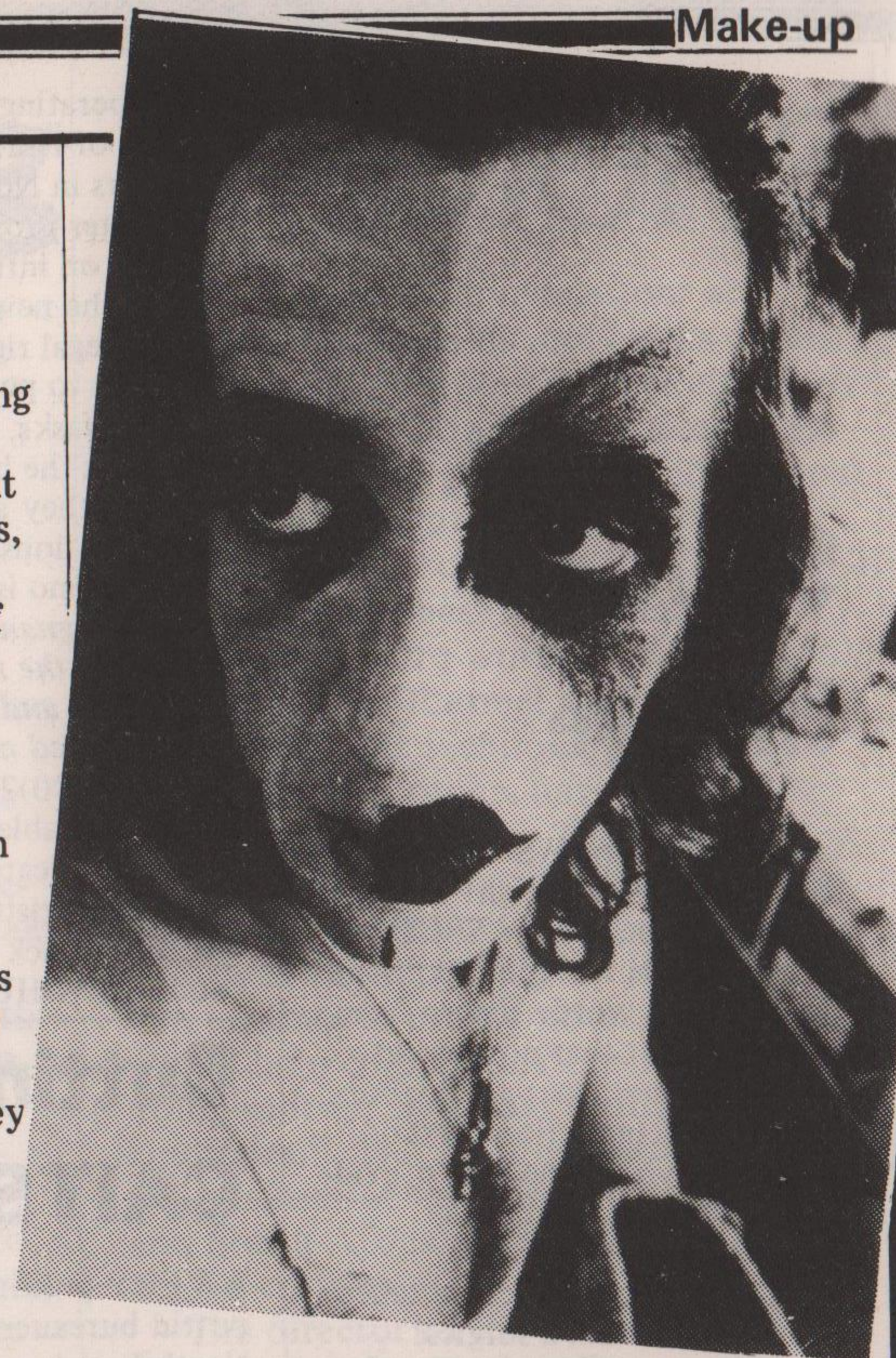
Control over men, though, is not an end in itself. Unlike aftershave adverts where an infatuated woman is poised over the product or the newly anointed male, women's cosmetic adverts rarely depict men. Instead the advert enters into a private contract with the reader; the product message is the creation and recreation of your personality and life.

All this leaves unanswered the questions of how adverts convey meaning and how this meaning is received. How do these ads relate to the actual editorial features of women's magazines, and what influence to these in turn have on conceptions of beauty and cosmetics?

Suffice it to say that cosmetics commercials are constant reminders of how we ought to appear. Seductive because their promise is more than skin-deep, adverts are props which legitimise insecurities and justify women identifying with their appearance. Cosmetics are a literal and symbolic tool in an attempt at self control. By attending to their bodies, women can feel independent and feminine at the same time. It is a way of resolving the contradictions of everyday life.

Cosmetics could be, and should be, fun. Instead, they are a part of a master strategy aimed at getting through life. In the short term they undoubtedly make women feel better, more able to cope. But their success is built out of women's fundamental feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability. In so far as cosmetics reaffirm women's status as 'objects', they must be seen as contributing to their oppression and continuing social subordination.

Kathy Myers



•RIGHT•ON•MURIEL•

THERE IS a new spectre haunting the land these days over the animal kingdom — that of human militancy. No longer is animal activity just suburban women fussing over stray cats; even the august RSPCA recently had an internal wrangle that students of the Fourth International would have felt at home in. Hunt saboteurs do just that, *GREENPEACE* courageously sets itself on the high seas between animal and hunter, while a new magazine called the *BEAST* is finding a ready market for its hard-nosed pro-animal and nature coverage.

This strident checklist will soon have to come round to cosmetics. Whole make-up ranges require animals either for adding ingredients or for testing purposes.

Spermaceti wax from the carcasses of great whales is a much-used lubricant for lipsticks, creams and soaps; crushed snails to give a moisturising sheen, and oil of mink, feature heavily in cosmetics manufacture. A major source of musk is a small rod in the abdomen of the male musk deer, allegedly a protected species; musk also comes from cruelly-caged civets in Africa; castorium from Canadian or Siberian beavers provides scent-makers with fixatives. Then of course there is the whole range of animal life bred in captivity solely to make fur coats, and wild creatures like elephants and snakes bagged for their skins, but even Brigitte Bardot doesn't approve much of that kind of thing.

The cosmetics kind of animal campaigning is still confined to the gracious world of outfits like *Beauty Without Cruelty*, of

Tunbridge Wells in Kent, founded by the Right Hon Muriel, Lady Dowding, who would never have expected a name-check in *The Leveller*. These folk produce much literature, and indeed original work, detailing all the normal cosmetics that have not involved the cruel use of animals, and themselves produce a whole range of "beauty" products, based on such ingredients as cucumbers.

No awareness pervades these lists that perhaps life could be lived without deodorants, depilatories, mascara, or even after-shave lotions. The consumer consciousness is preserved intact; just animals are eliminated. The products are (naturally) rather pricey, and continue to draw the big biz veil over realising such things as that shampoo is only washing-up liquid with a little added scent.

A wider, more rigorously thought out socialist attitude towards the animal kingdom is required, more than woolly sentiment, and more than just leaving things alone — certainly the idea that the whole natural world is there just to service humans must surely be junked.

For the while, though, bear in mind exactly what has gone into making cosmetics. If lipstick must still be worn, at least recall that pellets of the stuff are force-fed to laboratory animals to establish the lethal dosage — a dosage based on 50 percent animal mortality. When choosing your next shampoo, remember that the stuff is squirted at the testing stage into rabbits' eyes, which are sometimes forcibly kept open for days on end.

David Lizard



SHORT

SPUC in the eye

SOME GOOD NEWS for nurses backing a woman's right to choose and one in the eye for SPUC recently came from, of all people, the DHSS. A wordy memo from the latter says that nurses and midwives who take part in abortions by the induction method are acting within the law, provided the whole procedure is initiated by a doctor.

Abortion by induction takes much longer than a surgical abortion. Some of the procedures involved — such as exchanging bottles of infusion fluid or regulating extra infusions — can easily be carried out by nurses without the presence of a doctor.

But the legal position of nurses under the '67 Act has never been clear. SPUC and *Nurses for Life* have recently been issuing warnings (threats?) that nurses who participate in this way are committing a criminal offence, since they are carrying out procedures directly leading to abortion.

A lot of people have got worried a lot of restrictions have

been operating. The Royal College of Nursing warned its members in November not to administer prostaglandins nor 'top up' on infusions.

But the new guidelines spell out the legal right of nurses and midwives to perform these essential tasks, as long as a doctor begins the induction procedure and they are acting under his instructions. The Department's memo is called *Termination of pregnancy by medical induction: the role of the nurse or midwife and others who are not registered medical practitioners* (CMO (80)2 CNO (80) 2).

It's available from the DHSS Health Publications Unit, Archives Registry, Scholfield Hill, Brunswick Street, Nelson, Lancs BB9 0HU.

Cutting the CAITS

A VERY political cut from the putrid bureaucrats who run the North East London Polytechnic (NELP): the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) has got the axe. CAITS has pioneered work with shop stewards' combine committees such as those at Lucas Aerospace and Vickers. At the same time, the secret meeting of the NELP governors at the country motel decided to retain the Poly's Management Information Centre. Must mean something. And just to show they're not just reactionary, but vicious too, the governors decided to stop all spending on facilities for disabled students at the Poly.

Chicken Supremo

FOR THE PAST MONTH London's organised lesbian and gay community and London Week-End Television have been locked in conflict over LWT's ill-starred Minorities Unit. In the last issue of the *Leveller* a critical article by J.A. Mclymont analysed the unit's failure in covering the black community. But gays are just as unhappy. The situation came to a head when the Unit's editor Jane Hewland reneged on a tentative agreement to follow certain suggestions made by a collection of lesbian groups (i.e. editorial consultation, all women crews and a woman's voice-over). She was, apparently, forced to go back on her word by a directive from LWT's current affairs supremo John Birt. He insisted that there should be no giving

in to minority demands. Lesbian and gay groups responded with a total boycott of the unit. So on March 10 Barry Cox (Birt's number two) called a meeting attended by over sixty angry lesbians and gays which went on for three hours. The result has been a negotiated settlement which will give the lesbian groups much more involvement in the production process. The boycott has now been lifted but a lesbian spokesperson said today: 'We will have to wait and see'. What is certain is that the white male hierarchy at LWT has been severely shaken in its complacent belief that it knew best how minorities should be presented on the box and that the whole concept of the minorities unit has been called into question.

NAFF off, sweet FA

THE FREEDOM ASSOCIATION, NAFF to me and you, have denied any link with the recent wave of disaffiliations that popped out from nowhere to plague the National Union of Students.

'Of course we support voluntary membership of unions. And we were involved in an extensive campaign on this two years ago. But this year we were not involved', said a NAFF, sorry FA, spokesperson. 'Besides we print our name and address on any campaign literature we use'.

If not FA then certainly some sections of the Federation of Conservative Students were be-

hind the campaign skilfully coordinated so that NUS had to combat a rush of disaffiliation motions at once. Reading, UCL, and Dundee were lost early, then the tide turned and Reading even reaffiliated after a second debate on the matter.

Part of this debate was reflected in a scurrilous leaflet headed: 40 Reasons to leave NUS, accusing the union of supporting the IRA and other 'freedom fighters'. So what you may wonder, except it creates hassles in government circles — and they hold the purse strings. Besides it is not true.

The bourgeois consensus

IT'S NOT EASY for any individual section of the British Labour movement to hold a conference or take a stand on Ireland in a way that clashes with the CP-inspired TUC *Better Life for All Campaign* on Northern Ireland.

Tameside Trades Council in Greater Manchester tried earlier this month to break through the British bourgeois consensus on Ireland, and all hell broke loose. Now they're even threatened by a personal letter from no less than Len Murray, the TUC boss, warning that unless Tameside publicly disaffiliates itself from its radical stand on Ireland, the TUC General Council will be asked to disaffiliate Tameside itself.

They have no such intention, and presumably they will get the TUC chop. Tameside has taken a radical stand on Ireland since a delegate went on a Labour move-

ment visit to Northern Ireland some years ago. Tameside now officially calls for the withdrawal of British troops, self-determination for the Irish people, prisoner of war status for Irish political prisoners, and an end to the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Strong stuff indeed, and when the trades council felt a conference was called for, they invited a Liverpool member of the IRSP to talk about how the PTA had operated on Merseyside, a woman member of the Belfast Relatives Action Committee and a militant British Leyland shop steward who had experienced management pressure at Cowley following his attending a London anti-PTA march.

As the trades council secretary D. Hallsworth put it: 'We wanted to bring it to the attention of the English working class that

the fight over there in Northern Ireland would soon be happening here, and that the PTA will be used against trade unionists and not just the Irish'.

The National Front heard of this conference and threatened a counter-demonstration. Police put pressure on the community centre where it was due to be held and suddenly the booking was cancelled. The *Daily Mail* was alerted, allegedly by the NF, and stories of 'Terror Conferences' and 'Neave's killers to speak in Manchester' thrilled its readership.

The conference was postponed under all this pressure, but next thing two articles appeared in the *Morning Star* attacking Tameside and in came the TUC. The trades council will fight the issue, and are now appealing to other councils to co-sponsor the conference making it more difficult for the TUC blunderbuss — delegates from Bradford, Salford and Sheffield had turned up for the March 1st conference, it not being possible to tell them in time of the cancellation.

D. Hallsworth again: 'We feel there's a conspiracy of silence

over Ireland which the TUC and other parts of the Labour movement are going along with and not attacking. Our membership voted 28-3, with three abstentions, to hold our conference whatever the opposition, and we will not go along with the terms the TUC are setting, or the procedural red herrings they're trying to introduce. Trade unionists' phones are being tapped, the SPG and the Police Tactical Aid group up here are being used in industrial disputes. We must realise the PTA and its methods will go against us too.

Mr. Hallsworth and his beleaguered trades council could take some consolation from the annual conference of the largest of the Labour party's regional organisations — the Greater London area — earlier this month. A motion calling for the party to adopt a policy of withdrawal from Ireland was carried by a card vote of 1012 to 101. The cracks are showing in the *Bill of Rights* and *Better Life for All* nonsense that emulates from the lofty heights of the British Labour movement hierarchy.

H-Bombs breeding fast the world over

THE SPREAD of nuclear weapons technology and materials to Third World countries has been glossed over by a 'high-powered' international body set up to control it. *Tim Gopsill* wants to know why.

IN BRASILIA and Santiago, Tel Aviv and Jawahpindi (not to mention Paris, London, Rohnsburg and Bonn) the air is thick with heaves of relief following the conclusions of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE).

With a few tut-tuts and recommendations for new guidelines on security, this prestigious standing conference of government scientists has given a nod and a wink to all the generals and other dictators in third world countries who fancy adding nuclear weapons to their arsenals.

INFCE was supposed to solve the conflicts between states over the trade in nuclear fuel and technology. It's an awful fact that there are in the third world plenty of rulers who want nuclear power programmes and the capacity to blow their neighbours to bits, and their pressure on the industrialised countries with nuclear programmes had been forcing even the United States to hold back in supply.

Despite the "anti-proliferation" rhetoric of the advanced nuclear states, the restrictions reflect more their desire to maintain their monopoly of weapons grade material, which they generally enjoy through their more developed processing facilities.

The result has been that states like Pakistan and Israel have acquired their bombs "illegally", through the theft or hijacking of plans and material, while others such as Brazil and Chile have bought from those western powers like West Germany who aren't too finicky about proliferation.

So INFCE was set up in 1977 to provide the magical "technical fix" to the political problem. Sixty-six nations and five inter-governmental agencies took part. It laboured long and hard, with eight working groups linked by a technical co-ordinating committee, producing 20,000 pages of complicated conclusions, and its final plenary session ended in Vienna on February 29.

And it was the predictable whitewash. Even its apologists, such as the leader of the British delegation, Sir Hermann Bondi, Chief Scientist at the Department of Energy, says: "It was agreed there is no technical fix to the political problems of proliferation." In the same article in *Nature* magazine, just to emphasise the overall political irrelevance of the exercise, he added, as a throwaway: "Safety and environmental questions were not considered in any great detail."

The crucial question is how states acquire weapons-grade material (highly en-

riched uranium, or plutonium). Says Bondi: "The misuse of the civil fuel cycle (in power stations) is not the easiest or cheapest way to acquire them" (which is perfectly true). And yet, "the reports look only at the way in which a civil nuclear programme might help a country make a nuclear explosive."

On that limited subject, INFCE said the waste from thermal reactors could be disposed of without reprocessing (which includes the separation from it of plutonium). It's been general practice for waste to be separated, ostensibly for safety and environmental reasons — to prevent the storage of very highly toxic waste for a very long time. Such concern for the health of nations has been helped along by the usefulness of plutonium: it can, for instance, fuel fast breeder reactors.

Alternatively, you can make bombs from it, which for the major powers was the first purpose. Civil nuclear power was only a spin-off from a military process. And not many countries have fast breeders — only France and the Soviet Union are really pushing ahead with them.

On the alternative weapons fuel, enriched uranium, INFCE said sternly it shouldn't be used in research reactors. A "research reactor" is one of our age's great euphemisms. It is supposed to be a small-scale experimental plant built for countries who intend to develop civil programmes when they get round to it. That's what they say. In reality, as for instance in Chile and South Korea, both of

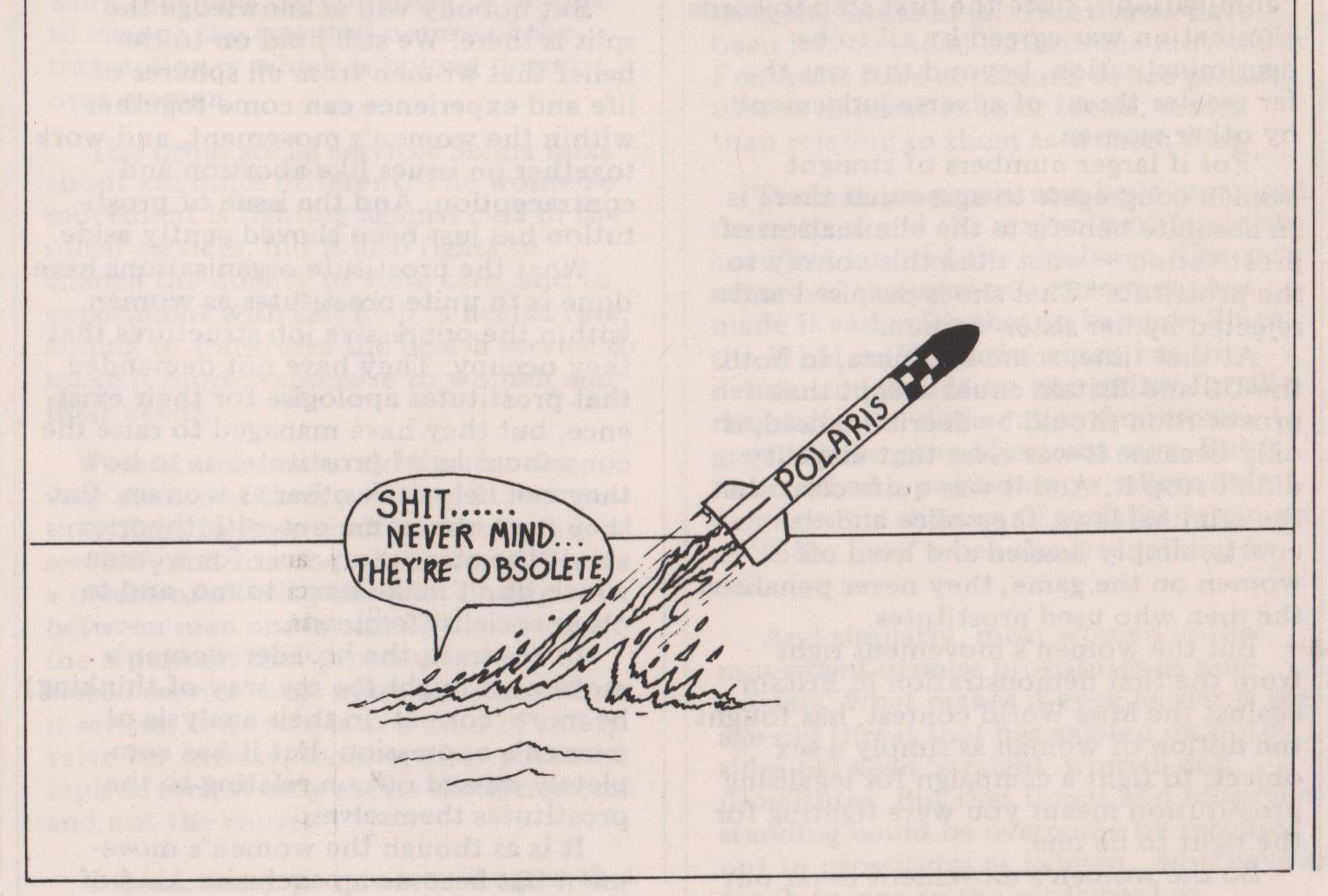
whose plants were developed with British assistance, the aim is to produce weapons fuel.

These two recommendations are generally agreed as the only ones of any significance. And they're outweighed by others. What the advanced nuclear establishments have got really excited about is the endorsement of fast breeder programmes in their countries; in fact INFCE said they're the best thing possible, in such states. Third world countries should concentrate on thermal reactors (the presently prevalent technology).

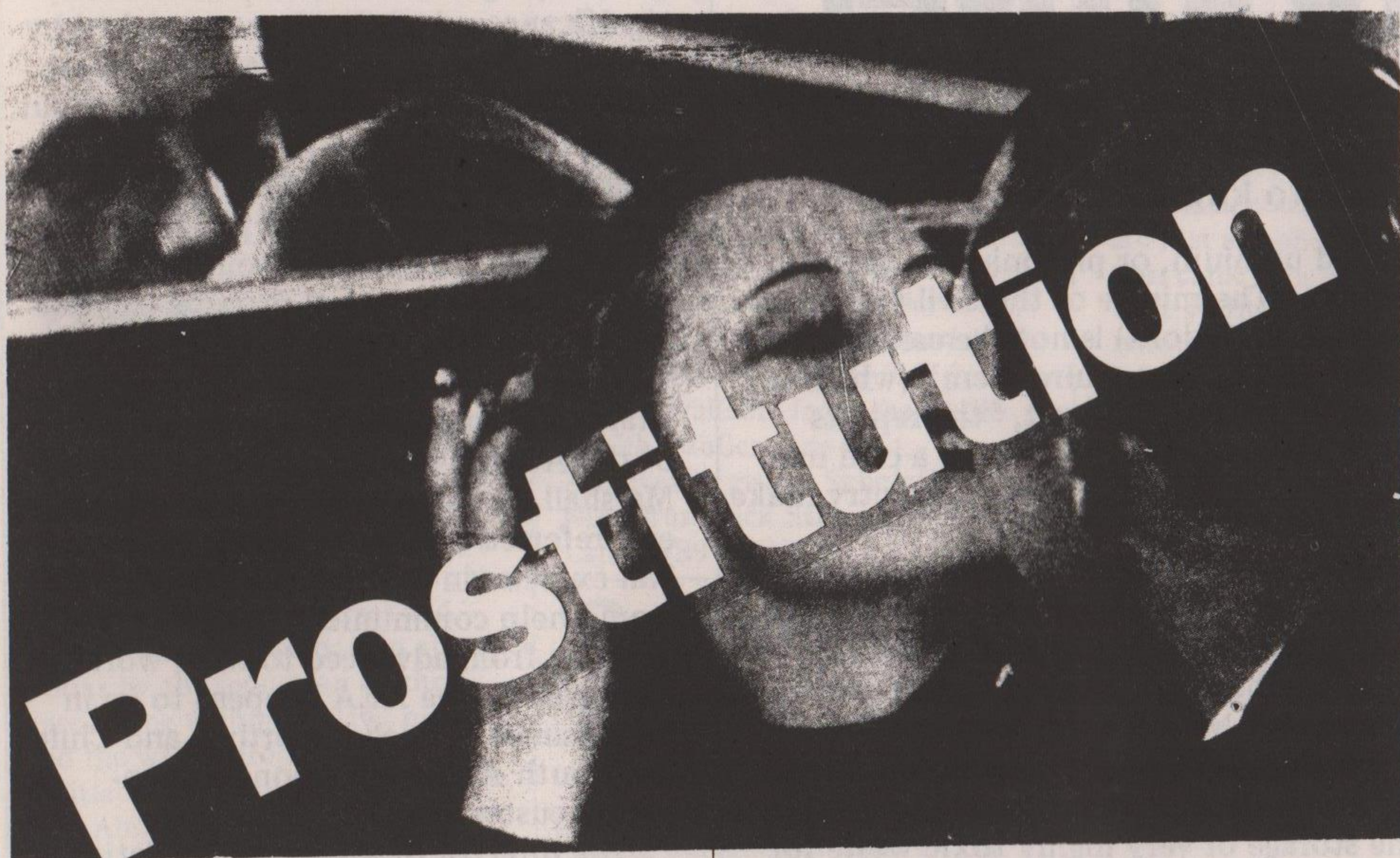
At any rate, others have reacted less guardedly than Bondi. The deputy chair of the Atomic Energy Authority, Walter Marshall, in a distinctly unguarded moment, referred ecstatically to INFCE as "an exercise in proliferation, because it would help communicate sensitive technologies from advanced to third world countries." The AEA happens to be in the business of such exporting, and Chile and South Africa are among its contented customers.

The director of the Brazilian National Commission for Nuclear Energy, Hervaldo de Carvalho, says: "The conclusions will have no moratorium effect on our nuclear programme and will not serve as a pretext for modifying existing treaties . . . No countries will be forced to take special measures as a result of the technical exercises carried out by INFCE."

This really is giving the game away: the carefully-constructed web of double-talk which pervades this whole business, the smokescreen of concern behind which governments and bureaucrat-scientists can get on with destroying the world in peace, is swept away. But their peoples are still fooled, particularly, tragically, the left. So boring, so totally-other-worldly, has INFCE been, that its disgraceful proceedings have been allowed to pass virtually without recognition, let alone comment, let alone protest.



HOW DO the organisations set up by prostitutes in recent years to protect and extend their rights fit in with the aspirations of the women's movement? *Tricia Dearden* finds that prostitute organisations and feminists are hopelessly polarised about the meaning of power for women and the ways it can be achieved.



THINGS HAVE changed since Kate Millett's *The Prostitution Papers* got a sympathetic feminist audience. This book was a living record of how prostitutes felt about their lives, how they defended their right to get their money that way, how parts of them hated the work they did while being aware of the plain advantages — like money, and no dependence on men.

December 1971 saw a conference in the USA at which Millett described the bitter confrontation between prostitutes and movement women over a paper called 'Towards the elimination of prostitution'. She wrote: 'Things rapidly degenerated into chaos. Prostitutes had gathered their still-nebulous rage against their own lives and summarily re-directed it towards movement women who appeared to be quite as summarily "eliminating" prostitution, the very means of their livelihood. Beyond the absurdly hypothetical threat posed by the term "elimination", since the first step towards elimination was agreed by all to be decriminalisation, beyond this was the far greater threat of adverse judgement by other women.'

'For if larger numbers of straight women congregate to agree that there is an absolute benefit in the elimination of prostitution — what does this convey to the prostitute? That she is despised and rejected by her sister women.'

At that time, some feminists, in both the US and Britain could accept that prostitution should be decriminalised, if only because it was clear that illegality didn't stop it. And it was quite clear that the criminal laws, the police and the courts, simply hassled and lived off women on the game; they never penalised the men who used prostitutes.

But the women's movement right from the first demonstration in Britain against the Miss World contest, has fought the notion of woman as simply a sex object; to fight a campaign for legalising prostitution meant you were fighting for the right to be one.

So the women's movement never put

itself on the line over prostitution. It was left to prostitutes themselves to fight the campaign, to unite prostitutes as women fighting on a 'women's issue'.

Only one group spoke out on prostitution — the Wages for Housework Campaign. It had already caused a furore in the women's movement by demanding payment from the state for housework. The response of most feminists was that we wanted to get out of housework, not fight for wages to do it.

Now it made a similar stand on prostitution. One of its leading spokeswomen, Selma James, helped to found the English Collective of Prostitutes. It argued that women without money are powerless. It is only by demanding money that women can shape their independence, and prostitution therefore becomes a means of getting power. This argument in turn alienated many feminists, and the split between prostitutes and the broader women's movement became wider.

But nobody will acknowledge the split is there. We still hold on to the belief that women from all spheres of life and experience can come together within the women's movement, and work together on issues like abortion and contraception. And the issue of prostitution has just been shoved gently aside.

What the prostitute organisations have done is to unite prostitutes as women, within the oppressive job structures that they occupy. They have not demanded that prostitutes apologise for their existence, but they have managed to raise the consciousness of prostitutes as to how they can help each other as women. But they have also come out with theories about the means to power for women which don't make sense to me, and to other socialist feminists.

In contrast, the broader women's movement might (to my way of thinking) be more 'correct' in their analysis of women's oppression, but it has completely missed out on relating to the prostitutes themselves.

It is as though the women's movement has become an exclusive kind of

club, with a moralistic emphasis on what women should be doing to get out of their situation. The club is open to "feminists", rather than "women" — sisters who have made the grade out of oppressive situations. It has not got room for women who may be stuck in oppressive situations, who may be forced to operate in a sexist way because society gives them no other option.

I think the women's movement always has had a "frightening" image for secretaries, prostitutes, housewives — because it threatens their very means of existence which depends on men. The movement has not been successful in dispelling that image, in getting across that it wants to attack the structures that imprison women in these situations, not the women themselves. And this is most obvious with prostitutes.

Socialist feminists get as far as recognising that it is the poverty of women in a capitalist society which drives women into prostitution, but they somehow demand that women have to make their own individual efforts to get out of prostitution before they can be accepted into the movement.

So while the prostitution laws are patently unfair to women, the women's movement has virtually ignored prostitution as a woman's issue. What is more, they have even stopped being interested in what Wages For Housework, or the English Collective of Prostitutes, have to say — because the debate happened a long time ago and the differences in outlook seemed so great.

The only avenue left into the movement for prostitutes is through the Collective, which gives them support as women but offers them an essentially short-sighted and pragmatic outlook on their own oppression.

So what is the ECP? How does it relate to the other prostitute organisations and what is its analysis of women's oppression?

The Collective represents a wide range of pros, from street walkers and hostesses to call-girls. One of its main spokeswomen is Selma James, who led the Wages for Housework Campaign. But she is careful not to make herself a spokeswoman for prostitutes, believing strongly that prostitutes should speak for themselves.

The ECP works closely with a group called Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense (PLAN). One of PLAN's founding members is Helen Buckingham, who has been seized on by the press as spokeswoman for the whole movement to decriminalise prostitution.

Helen works as a call-girl herself and is closely involved with the Collective. She is particularly bitter about the wider women's movement, which, she says, has rejected her and other prostitutes.

So she remains half-in and half-out of the feminist arena. She speaks powerfully on the false mystique of sex, the way the pornography business exploits secondary vicarious sex, and the way that sex and sexism is rammed down peoples' throats.

At the same time, she alienates feminists by insisting that prostitution provides a valid social service — she got a rough ride from *Spare Rib* for saying there were many ways of loving men, and hers was one of them.

PLAN and the Collective both campaign on prostitution as a women's issue — and have a different outlook from PROS, Programme for Reform of the Laws on Prostitution, founded in Birmingham. This is a straight reform body set up by pros, lawyers, probation officers and social workers. Its first target is the abolition of the Street Offences Act.

The Collective makes plain that it takes its standpoint from within the women's movement. All over the world, women are fighting to get some of the work off our shoulders and some cash in return for what we've always been doing.

'This is the women's movement and the prostitutes' movement is part of it. Prostitutes are women, we are not different; like other women we don't like housework and its lack of wages, we don't like the second job and its respectable low women's wages, and we hate being penniless, we always did.'

The Collective, like the Wages for Housework Campaign, stresses that women without money are powerless, and it is only by demanding money that women can shape their independence.



The muscle behind this appeal is that prostitutes do not have to 'reform' to fight the system, the fight starts from the positions they are already in.

This society has always rewarded prostitutes with ten times the money given to other women — but they have had to pay for it through isolation and social degradation. Now the campaign aims to bridge that gap. Helen Buckingham: "The prostitution laws divide pros from other women. An emancipated pro is bargaining power for other women who want more pay in the home and children's allowances. The fact that a prostitute can earn £1,000 a week shows how undervalued other women are.'

I can't quarrel with the comparison between prostitutes' earning power and that of other women — but I do question whether well-paid pros will raise the value of all women's time. When it comes down to it, the money argument means that some women will be better off — but how does that transform the essential position of women?

The Collective argues that the rest of the women's movement should be 'for prostitutes, against prostitution'. But it doesn't see a clear way forward as to how demanding legal recognition of prostitutes' services will lead to the elimination of prostitution.

Selma James: 'I certainly am for the end of prostitution. I believe we should have a society where nothing is bought or sold, and that means none of us will have to sell ourselves.'

Marx said that all wage labour is prostitution — prostitutes treat their work like any other women on the assembly line or in the office — they do some unpleasant work but they keep their minds on the money. The more power we have to get money, the more we can stop people pushing us around.' And the collective: 'as for prostitution being a social service, there is no doubt in our minds that it is: we would like it abolished.'

We would also like orphan asylums, old age homes and mental institutions to be abolished, but meanwhile — until we have abolished the society which has made these services necessary — we will demand services and we will demand to get paid for servicing others.'

But the work which prostitutes do isn't like the assembly line or the office — it involves subjecting your body to someone else's whims or demands. It usually means a complete absence of feeling and involvement on the woman's side, while she gets paid for doing what

the customer tells her.

You can fight to get legal recognition for that work, or more money for that work, but you are not going to be able to change the essential nature of the transaction — which is buying power over women.

The other social services Selma talks about are quite different. The women's movement is fighting against cuts in the social services, but it also fights to change the quality of state care, and to experiment with self help in health care, aiming to transform the health service to make it more responsive to women and their needs.

Prostitutes cannot do that by the very nature of their position. How can they fight to keep their particular 'social service', and somehow transform it into a means of altering the relationship between men and women? In any case, the argument that prostitution is a 'social service' begs more questions than it settles. If its role is as a kind of safety valve for society, looking after potential rapists, etc., it only meets the symptoms and not the causes.

I think many people would agree that prostitution is a symptom of sexuality in this society — and that while it is an

ever-present symptom, women are going to be drawn into it..So de-criminalisation would at least protect the women from harassment by pimps and police.

But I think I speak for other feminists as well as myself in saying I cannot accept that the Collective's campaign could lead on to changing the sexual oppression of women. And we become positively suspicious when the Collective argues that women have a right to sell their bodies:

'Not only must every woman have the right to choose to have or not to have children; she must have the right to agree or refuse to give her time and skills, and the right to agree or refuse to sell her time and skills.'

It seems to me that degrading an abstract right like that is completely divorced from the actual circumstances that capitalist society forces women into. There is a difference between recognising that poverty forces many women into prostitution and that their individual rights should be protected — and arguing that all women should be fighting for the right to be prostitutes.

But if the Collective is sometimes ambiguous about whether or not it is really against prostitution, the women's movement does not seem to have coped with the issues at all. Prostitutes have been left stranded outside the movement. Feminists have continued to see prostitutes as a threat to their ideals, rather than relating to them as women first.

These days, prostitutes have organised themselves and the majority of feminists have just ignored the challenge. The very nature of the women's movement has made it easier for that to happen. Since the WLM isn't a party which has to debate and decide on one policy for all members, the different autonomous groups have gone their own way. But it has reached a position now where Selma James could dismiss all socialist feminists as 'those men' when she was talking to me.

And similarly, most women in the movement dismiss prostitutes as non-starters. What makes it even harder is the age-old threat that has existed on both sides between 'straight' women and prostitutes. But that threat and misunderstanding could be overcome by reaching out to prostitutes as women, who have as much to give to the movement as anybody else.

BEN WAS being a right pain with his mashed potato and when he spat it out I was ready to hit him. Luckily the door bell rang so I picked him up and yelled 'Coming'. Outside was a salesman in his fawn mac ready to give me a flash of his wares. As he opened his suitcase full of brushes he asked, 'Could I speak to the lady of the household?' I snapped back: 'I am the lady of the household'. His mouth opened and looking at Ben and me he apologised before rushing down the alley way.

It was a beautiful sunny day in the patch of park near our flat. I warmed to the obvious enjoyment that Liza was getting from being pushed in the swing. Sometimes I found it a strain spending twenty minutes getting her dressed and ready to go. Then waiting for the lift, then trying to push her and the push-chair in amongst the mothers and their children with their push-chairs and their shopping. The slow walk to the park. Usually there was dog shit and broken glass all around so I could not relax even when I got there.

The women often knew each other and would sit and chat but I felt cut off.

That day, a girl of about two-and-a-half, just a little older than Liza, was by herself on the swing next to us. She fell off and I rushed to her. She was crying and I picked her up. 'Where's your mummy?' A woman rushed up and grabbed her from me. The way she looked at me you'd think that I had actually hurt her girl. At other times when I had been out with Liza or Ben and they had hurt themselves women often took over automatically.

In spite of the women's movement, the stereotypes of mothers and fathers are still strong. Because of the intertwining of ideology and economy, personal and social life, it is difficult to know where to start unravelling the strands which tie us down.

In 1951 John Bowlby wrote a report for the World Health Organisation called *MATERNAL CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH*, later republished as *CHILD CARE AND THE GROWTH OF LOVE* and sold by Penguin Books in thousands to teachers, social workers, administrators and, of course, potential and actual mothers. The book was produced in response to the upheavals caused by the war in Europe, which left thousands of children homeless or to be brought up by single parents (usually mothers). Basically what Bowlby said was 'Mother love in infancy and childhood is as important for mental health as vitamins and proteins for physical health'. The role of fathers was to provide for their wives materially and to support them emotionally.

Bowlby's ideas cropped up at the

right time. After a period of social and economic upheaval it was necessary to reassert the values of the past. With men coming back from the war it also happened to be necessary to weed women out of the overgrown labour market.

In the fifties and early sixties the economy in Britain expanded and women moved back into work. They gained new confidence and there was talk of a new society in the post-scarcity era. But that vision dissolved in the crisis-ridden seventies. As unemployment rose, the Tories swung back into power on the lianas of jungle law.

In the new climate there has been a revival of interest in the work of Konrad Lorenz, Robert Ardrey and Desmond Morris. By an unnatural selection of animals they have managed to resurrect the instincts of aggression, territoriality, sexual jealousy and, of course, mothering.



Children also have fathers

The sad fact is that even now, and even with their wives working, most men are not involved in the daily care of children. One American study in 1971 showed that fathers on average spent 38 seconds per day talking to their infant children. This leaves women with the task of

raising their children single handed. On the other hand, there are some interesting pointers to change. With the divorce rate rising — at present in Britain one marriage in four ends in divorce — there are a growing number of men who find themselves being Saturday or weekend parents. The father who wants to maintain close contact with his children has to learn how to do all of the things connected with looking after them.

If the daily care of children becomes a territorial question between men and women then everyone loses out. The point is that it is a demanding and isolating job if it is attempted by anyone on their own. There are people who are forced into this or even choose it but usually they can only survive without damage to themselves or their children by getting a lot of support either from friends or institutions such as nurseries.

Many changes need to be made before we can find better ways of bringing up our children.

Some of these changes are to do with attitudes about men and women, childcare and work outside the home, and choosing the balance for themselves; other wider changes are to do with patterns of work and leisure, differences in pay, the cost and ownership of housing, and finally with increasing the control we have over our lives. A book which has not been given enough attention, in this respect, is *OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN*, written by the same group who produced *OUR BODIES, OURSELVES*. It is open, and critical — mainly of institutions and oppressive ideologies, but not of people trying out different ways of living together.

The ideas of Bowlby and Pringle should by now be only of historical interest. There are others working in the same field who have more useful contributions to make, among them Michael Rutter. Rutter summarised his views as follows: 'The chief bond need not be with the biological parent, it need not be with the chief caretaker and it need not be with the femal... the father, the mother, brothers and sisters, friends, school-teachers and others all have an impact on development, but their influence and importance differs for different aspects of development. A less exclusive focus on the mother is required. Children also have fathers.'

Roger Andersen

THE METROPOLITAN CID like to be known as 'The Sweeney' (Sweeney Todd, flying squad, rhymes, see?), though others call them 'The Filth'. When the Operation Countryman investigation into their rampant 'corruption' (that is, organising armed robberies) really began to get up their noses, they dubbed it 'The Swedey', the investigating officers being from Dorset and lacking in Metropolitan sophistication (and we all know what, in the case of the police, that means). Now we have a new name for the police: 'The Sweetey'.

For the other side of police operations against youth — harassment and arrests on the streets — is the 'Softly, Softly' one: police forces are devoting more and more resources to winning children's minds in schools.

In at least two districts of the Metropolitan Police (covering Enfield and Waltham Forest) all fourth year junior children (aged 10-11) are now being issued with natty special agents' cards; these proclaim their membership of the non-existent '4D Club', named after the four 'Don'ts' children should remember.

The four Don'ts are: don't take sweets from strangers, don't ride in a stranger's car, don't play outside after dark and don't loiter on the way home from school. All apparently innocuous; indeed, a rather slick extension of the traditional role of police in schools, that of teaching safety.

But the back of the card reads: 'Report anything that you think looks suspicious, like someone trying door handles on parked cars. Tell a policeman (and show him this card) or dial 999 and ask to speak to the police. You don't have to put any money into the box.'

In case this is thought an innovation of Sir David MacNee, it isn't. The idea in fact came from the 'Socialist Republic' of South Yorkshire, where the cards were issued last year. They are in fact a manifestation of the 'community policing' approach of some elements in the force, an approach personified by John Alderson of Devon and Cornwall, and disturbingly seductive to some civil liberties people. Wake up, comrades, it ain't quite so.

At Scotland Yard, they say they know nothing about the cards. They're very happy to talk about their 'community liaison' work in schools, and send out glossy brochures about it. They even sent the *Leveller* copies on request of their guidance booklets for police teaching in schools. But no-one there had heard of the '4D Club'. When I told them about it they said the cards were only being issued in one district. It turned out they came from another district. What do these lies mean?

Clearly the possible recruitment of juvenile marks is likely to pay off, and the Met in particular is taking it seriously. Teachers report that police presence in schools is noticeably increasing; not just in addressing the students, but infiltrating the staffroom, helping in extra-curricular

activities, generally acting benevolent to everyone.

The biggest single exercise is the sponsorship of what's claimed is the largest five-a-side football competition ever organised. More than 28,000 London kids, in club and neighbourhood as well as school teams, are competing in a grand knock-out. The finals will be in Wembley Stadium.

One North London teacher — no teacher I've spoken to is willing to be named — says: 'With the cuts in spending we've had to cut back on the school football team. Games masters are having to go around scrimping and scratching to raise money to send the school team anywhere. And here come the police with money to spend, doing the job the LEA should be doing.'

'They come to the school to talk to the kids, handing out glossy new 100-page books, very well produced. There's no doubt their materials — films, slides as well as books — are of a very high standard, educationally. Meanwhile in their own classes the kids have battered dog-eared old books falling to bits. They must notice the difference.'

Even if they do notice, children do retain some scepticism, for all the PR guff. One teacher told of a demonstration of police equipment at her school: 'They were doing the usual thing, handcuffing children together, taking their fingerprints (which they let them keep — they didn't take them away). The PC also showed them his truncheon, and said: 'We aren't allowed to hit anyone above the shoulder.'

The Sweetey: a soft cop?

SOFTLY, SOFTLY... police are stepping up their presence in schools. It's all part of the resurgence of reactionary ideology, says Tim Gopsill.



'One boy piped up and said, what about that teacher who was killed in Southall? He was killed by being hit on the head.'

This is the friendly side. Many teachers are also worried that the operation has a high value to police as low-level intelligence gathering. 'When they come and chat in the staffroom,' said one, 'they overhear us talking about kids, of course, particularly the troublesome ones. When they come across them outside, they know who they are.'

'And of course children are much too talkative. I've been offered stolen goods by children, stuff their dads have got. The police know how useful good relations can be, and I'm very worried about it.'

It doesn't need adding that the teaching unions aren't exactly resisting police presence in schools. The NUT has put out a set of guidelines for head teachers, which emphasises, particularly, the penalties you can face for obstructing the police in their enquiries.

Many heads don't need such reminders. Another teacher: 'What really worried me is how the school is calling the police in more and more to deal with what should be internal disciplinary matters, like thefts. There are always thefts in schools. One time a boy was missing from class. I found his form master, who said, he's gone to the police station. He'd called the police over a theft. I caught two policemen taking the boy away across the playground, and they said, it's all right, we won't charge him, we're just going to teach him a lesson.'

Sea, sun and Socialism

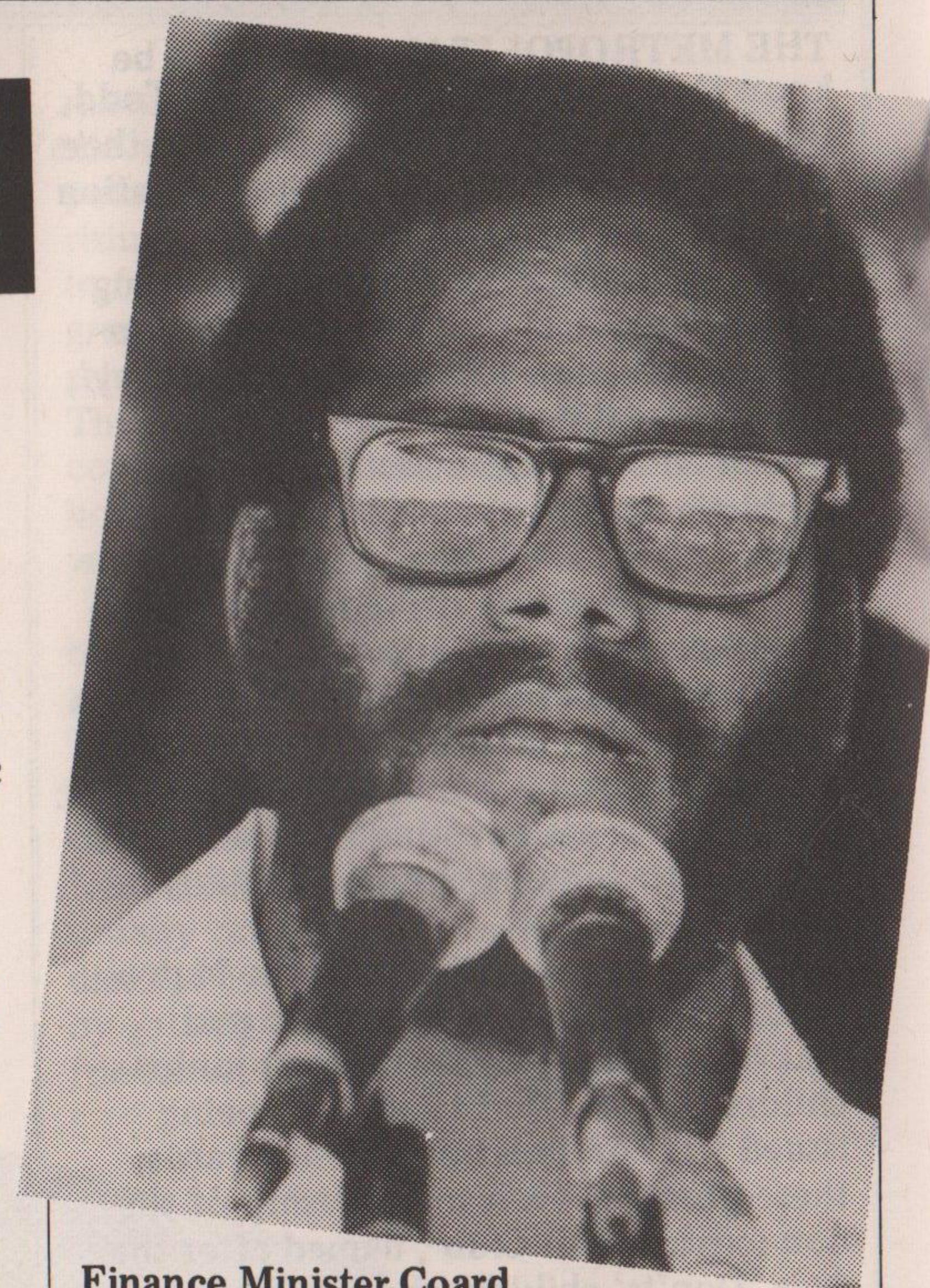
FOR TWO weeks in March, Grenada's 110,000 population was swollen by thousands of visitors from other Caribbean islands and beyond who had been attracted by the programme of rallies, sports, seminars, music and dancing to celebrate the anniversary of last year's March 13 revolution, which overthrew the dictatorship of Eric Gairy. As well as internationally-known figures like Prime Minister Michael Manley of Jamaica, who spoke at the final rally on March 13, a host of left-wing figures came from Cuba, Guyana, Nicaragua, Trinidad, St Lucia, Dominica, Haiti and many other countries. Top calypsonians from Trinidad also joined the festivities. Even the Grenada Lawn Tennis Association held a 'Festival of the Revolution Junior Open Tennis Championship'. Rod Prince was there too.

AFTER TWELVE months Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and the Provisional Revolutionary Government have a lot to celebrate. When they took over last year, "Hurricane Gairy" had devastated the island's economy as effectively as any natural disaster. They found a bankrupt treasury, stagnation in agriculture, 17,000 people out of work (50 percent of the workforce), parishes without a doctor or a dentist, neglected schools, roads which were a series of potholes separated by occasional stretches of tarmac, hospitals without sheets, bandages or medicines, a finance ministry without a trained economist or accountant. Public revenue had been siphoned off by Gairy and his henchmen for their own enrichment. Civil servants were notoriously idle and corrupt. Women would not get jobs in the public service unless they agreed to sleep with a government minister.

In 12 months the government has turned a current account budget deficit into a surplus by imposing strict daily accounting on each ministry, thus attacking waste and corruption. Over 1,500 jobs have been created. New health facilities have been set up, education fees cut and students enrolled at the University of the West Indies for the first time in years. School repairs, a housing programme, road repairs and reconstruction and new agriculture and fishery projects are under way. Sexual exploitation of women in employment has been outlawed. The crime rate has dropped by 75 percent. The police are being disarmed and are being retrained to regard themselves as, in the words of Attorney General Kenrick Radix, "brothers and sisters with the people."

The most dramatic project is the international airport, now being constructed with help from Cuba, Venezuela and Middle Eastern countries. When opened in 1983 the new airport near St George's

and the famous Grand Anse beach will end the present problems of tourists and other travellers, who now face a change of plane in Barbados or Trinidad and an hour's drive over the mountains from the tiny Pearls Airport in order to reach St George's or the beach hotels. Since the revolution, many visitors have complained that in Barbados or Trinidad attempts have been made to persuade them not to go to Grenada. The business community, which stands to gain from an increase in tourism, is enthusiastically supporting the airport scheme. Public sales of airport bonds have topped £100,000 and are still climbing. Business has been encouraged by the government's assurances that it has no intention of crushing the private sector. As Finance Minister Bernard Coard told me when I visited Grenada in February, the PRG believes there is plenty of room in the expanding economy for



Finance Minister Coard

both public and private enterprise.

International agencies have likewise been impressed by the government's capable housekeeping. The IMF has granted Grenada a £2 million facility, while a European Development Fund team which recently allocated £1.5 million for road building commented that Grenada's case was the best prepared and presented of any Caribbean government with which it had negotiated. "Coard had all the answers", a team member said.

In all it has done, the PRG has actively sought to involve the people. Between March 13 and the end of 1979, for instance, government ministers addressed 300 meetings, explaining what the government was doing and seeking the people's views on what needed to be done. Thousands of people have given up their Sundays to work on community projects, repairing and repainting schools, clearing



School-feeding programme, St. Davids

Grenada's finances (£million)

	1978	1979	1980 (planned)
Capital spending	1.36	2.73	5.23
Budget surplus or deficit (current a/c)	-0.67	0.43	1.60
Trade balance	-8.41	-9.05	n/a

drains and cutting back overhanging branches along the roads, repairing the road surfaces. The volunteers themselves decide the order of priority and method of organisation of the work. A minister from a neighbouring island commented that if his government made a similar appeal, it would be lucky to get half a dozen people turning out.

In the same spirit, the country's youth groups had the idea of celebrating Independence Day on February 7 by staging a 30-mile march from Leaper's Hill in the north (the spot where Carib resisters to French occupation in 1651 threw themselves into the sea rather than be captured) to Freedom Hill, near St George's, where the first assault of the revolutionary forces took place against an army barracks in the early hours of March 12 1979.

The test of stamina involved in an eight-hour trek in blazing sunshine punctuated by heavy showers, over a route of steep hills, was powerful evidence of the 2,000 marchers' commitment to the revolution. As Bernard Coard told the final rally: "For the first time in a Caricom country the people have a sense of destiny and purpose."

Opposition to the government certainly exists, since many former Gairy supporters are by no means reconciled to the changes, but during my stay in Grenada I was overwhelmed by the extent of popular support for the government. People I met, including traditionally conservative groups like taxi drivers and shopkeepers, urged me on my return home to counter the hostile propaganda abroad. When the People's Revolutionary Army marched down the street from the headquarters behind my hotel, passers-by waved greetings and children joined in behind the squad. In St George's, unlike certain other Caribbean capitals, I felt completely safe on the streets at night.

The government does however take the threat of an attempted Gairy comeback seriously, and its supporters are constantly urged to keep a vigilant watch for counter-revolutionary activities. At a mass meeting I attended in Sauteurs, near Leapers' Hill, Communications Minister Selwyn Strachan warned that counter-revolutionaries would be kept under "heavy, heavy manners". Thunderous applause greeted the remark.

The meeting, though, was not all fireworks. The first in a series to be held throughout the island leading up to the celebrations, it was addressed by several

ministers who described the government's record in detail, as well as by Prime Minister Bishop, whose speech ranged from foreign policy to the tasks and problems facing Grenadians, summed up in the government's slogan, "from backwardness and oppression to liberation, education and production."

At this meeting, like the February 7 Independence Day rally, the atmosphere was very relaxed and informal. Maurice Bishop and the other ministers who spoke used a refreshingly honest and straightforward style, giving information, making jokes and following through quite complex lines of argument, with the close attention and enthusiastic appreciation of the hundreds of people present, many of whom had walked miles from outlying villages to get there.

I noticed particularly that none of the speakers referred to marxism or socialism at either meeting. When I met Bernard Coard he confirmed that this was no accident. Saying "we're not hung up on labels," he added: "It's deliberate policy not to talk of socialism in airy-fairy terms, like dogma from Venus." The government, he said, talks in practical, concrete terms about what can be done at the present time; it does not make promises it cannot keep.

There certainly is a lot to be done. A poor island dependent on tourism and exports of nutmeg, cocoa and bananas, Grenada has to increase output and set up agro-industrial enterprises. 1980 has been declared the "year of education and production", and every penny saved on current spending is being put into capital spending. Exiles are returning to help rebuild the country, in contrast to the rest of the Caribbean, where there is a steady flow of emigrants out to the United States, Canada and Europe. Volunteers from other Caribbean nations are also working in Grenada.

What is happening in Grenada, in fact, is "a big revolution in a small country", to quote Kendrick Radix. The international impact of the revolution far outweighs Grenada's size or economic importance. What counts is the power of example. The enthusiasm of the Trinidadian calypsonians, who are traditionally by no means left-wing, is itself politically important. This year they have been singing very political songs. The Mighty Sparrow, Grenada-born and for years calypso king of Trinidad, has summed up the Caribbean-wide disillusionment with Britain in a song which proclaims:

"London Bridge is falling down". Another of his hits, which is being played all over the Eastern Caribbean, denounces Gairy, Patrick John of Dominica, Somoza, Idi Amin and the Shah of Iran as "wanted, dead or alive". Coming from Britain, it was instructive to hear the reaction of the crowd at Sauteurs when Agriculture Minister Unison Whiteman announced that Britain had even refused aid to Grenada to combat an outbreak of banana disease. The remarks people made showed a mixture of bitterness and derision which I thought entirely appropriate.

More and more people in the Caribbean are becoming aware of the Caricom region as a political whole, with common needs which cross the linguistic and cultural barriers set up by imperialism. In this climate it is not surprising that several governments are looking nervously over their shoulders at Grenada, wondering who will be next. They were hardly reassured by the fall of Surinam's Prime Minister, Henk Arron — least of all in neighbouring Guyana, where behind a smokescreen of "socialist" rhetoric Prime Minister Forbes Burnham and his People's National Congress have resorted to rigged elections, lies, brute force and murder to maintain themselves in power, with the Working People's Alliance taking the brunt of the repression. Despite its unpopularity, the Burnham regime has considerable military power at its disposal, and a peaceful solution to Guyana's problems looks unlikely.

Trouble could also come before long in Trinidad, where oil wealth has been squandered on the creation of a self-seeking consumer society, while elementary public services like housing, transport and telephones are a scandal. In Antigua, Prime Minister Vere Bird's South African connections, like Patrick John's, could prove his undoing. The French are getting nervous about the growing independence movement in their colonies Guadeloupe and Martinique. Likewise the United States in Puerto Rico, where US soldiers recently died in guerrilla attacks. In Haiti the people live in sub-human conditions while a minority live in ostentatious luxury, and opposition politicians and human rights activists forecast an explosion. Jamaica is being torn apart by a conflict between the governing People's National Party and opposition Jamaica Labour Party, neither of which is capable of lifting the country out of its economic problems.

Throughout the Caribbean, unemployment, poverty, ill-health and inadequate education are the result of a political and economic system imposed by present or past colonial powers and operating in their interests. The result is psychological as well as economic and political dependence on the overseas masters. The reactions vary from acceptance through apathy, cynicism, despair to resistance. Grenada's revolution is a rallying point for the resisters.

Thanks are due to the Free West Indian and the West Indian Digest for help in supplying illustrations.

A battery of hearing aids listening to the world



The Edzell US National Security Agency's monitoring station near Montrose, Scotland. The 'Steelhenge' aerial array can listen in to high frequency radio signals throughout Europe.

IT'S NOW nearly four years since *Time Out* magazine's 'Eavesdroppers' article revealed details of Britain's worldwide intelligence gathering network, run by Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ for short), based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Four years, and one unsuccessful Official Secrets trial later, it has become possible to update the picture of Britain's 'Big Ears' organisation.

ALONG WITH the giant American National Security Agency, which itself employs some 120,000 people, GCHQ is a world market leader in the sophistication and scope of its intelligence, monitoring, code-breaking and intercept equipment. Because of its highly secretive nature, the British public has never been told the full details of GCHQ and the role it plays. As with MI5 and MI6 — the Security Service and the Secret Intelligence Service — successive governments since the war have pretended it doesn't exist.

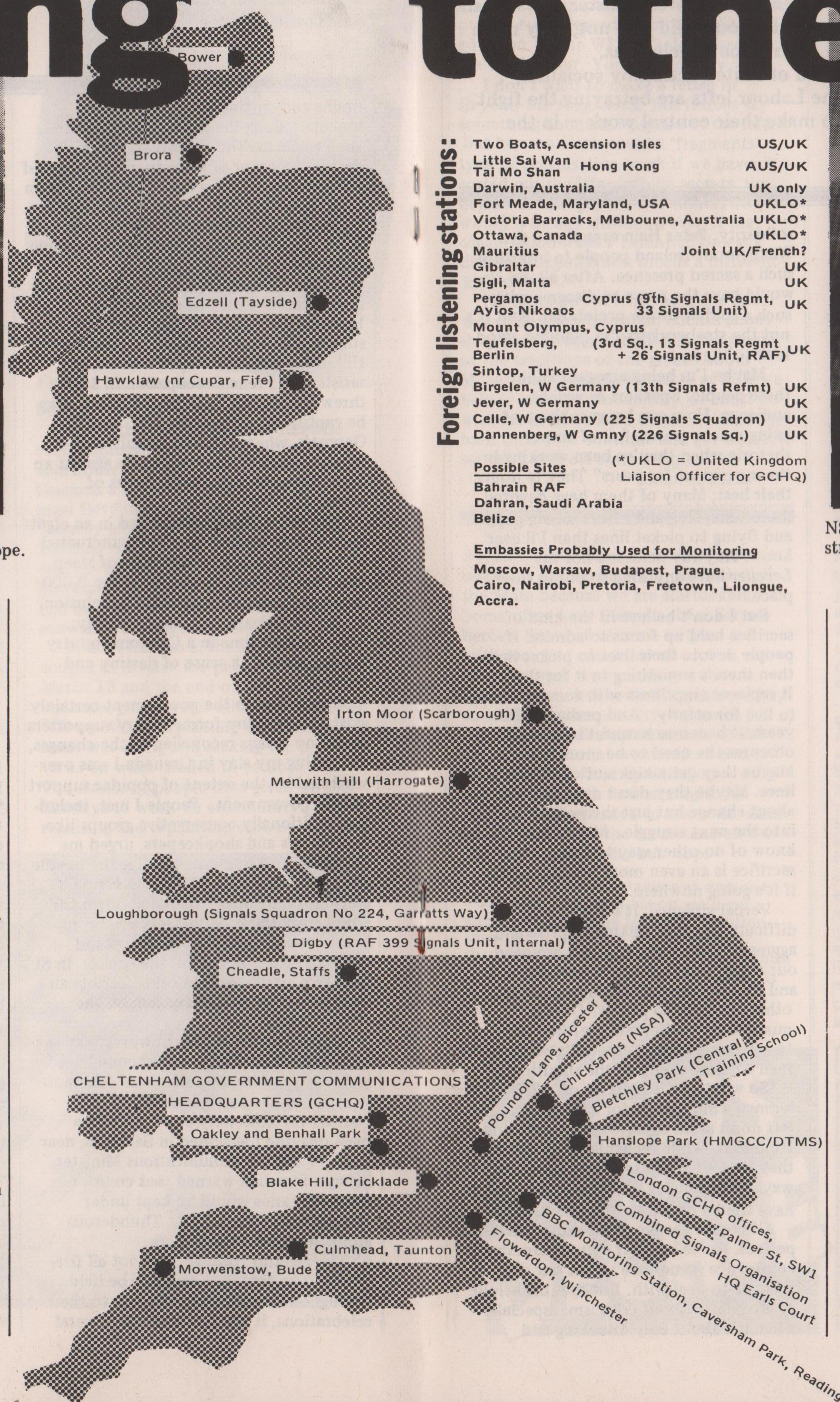
The map, centre, is the second in the *Leveller's* series of reference maps for the curious-minded. (The first, on Britain's Microwave Communications Network, was published in *Leveller 32*).

First, a brief word about GCHQ and the collecting of signals intelligence (known officially as SIGINT). GCHQ is run jointly by the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence. Its work dovetails into a global network of intelligence-gathering and -sharing under the secret UKUSA Pact of 1947, which effectively carved up the world between GCHQ and the NSA, with a little help and co-operation from allies and friends.

Between them, NSA and GCHQ run a

vast array of listening stations in this country and worldwide to pick up radio, telephone and telex traffic of every conceivable kind which might reveal important or routine information of a military, economic, diplomatic or straight political nature. GCHQ itself employs on the Foreign Office books a minimum of 1,800 civilian operatives, mainly on interception, monitoring and code-breaking work, or as radio technicians in the subsidiary Composite Signals Organisation network (CSOS). The armed forces have at least the equivalent number of personnel engaged in similar work through various Signals Units, making a total running perhaps as high as 20,000.

The work of GCHQ is also supplemented on an international basis by embassy listening posts, staffed by members of MI6. Intercepting and monitoring the communications traffic of enemies, known and potential, means straying onto the territory of friends and allies too, as well as a certain amount of internal monitoring in this country. It's no coincidence that the national telephone-tapping centre at 93 Ebury Bridge Road, Chelsea, London, was designed and equipped by GCHQ in



- Foreign listening stations:**
- Two Boats, Ascension Isles US/UK
 - Little Sai Wan Hong Kong AUS/UK
 - Tai Mo Shan Hong Kong AUS/UK
 - Darwin, Australia UK only
 - Fort Meade, Maryland, USA UKLO*
 - Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, Australia UKLO*
 - Ottawa, Canada UKLO*
 - Mauritius Joint UK/French?
 - Gibraltar UK
 - Sigli, Malta UK
 - Pergamos Cyprus (9th Signals Regmt, 33 Signals Unit) UK
 - Ayios Nikoaoos Cyprus (9th Signals Regmt, 33 Signals Unit) UK
 - Mount Olympus, Cyprus
 - Teufelsberg, Berlin (3rd Sq., 13 Signals Regmt + 26 Signals Unit, RAF) UK
 - Sintop, Turkey
 - Birgelen, W Germany (13th Signals Refmt) UK
 - Jever, W Germany UK
 - Celle, W Germany (225 Signals Squadron) UK
 - Dannenberg, W Gmny (226 Signals Sq.) UK

- Possible Sites** (*UKLO = United Kingdom Liaison Officer for GCHQ)
- Bahrain RAF
 - Dahran, Saudi Arabia
 - Belize

- Embassies Probably Used for Monitoring**
- Moscow, Warsaw, Budapest, Prague.
 - Cairo, Nairobi, Pretoria, Freetown, Lilongue, Accra.



NSA's Edzell base has link-up facilities, concealed within the familiar geodesic golf-ball structure, to the US's world-wide spy satellite network.

the early 1970s (see *Leveller 36*).

The map shows the position of known GCHQ and NSA sites in this country. The headquarters complex at Cheltenham has two stations, Oakley and Benhall Park. There are two London buildings, one in Palmer Street, just behind the Passport Office in Petty France, Westminster, and one for CSOS in the Empress Stott building, Earls Court.

The RAF and Army have a number of posts run by the various Signals Units and Regiments (RAF Digby in Leicestershire is one; Garratts Hay, Loughborough is another). The NSA has its UK Liaison Office at Benhall Park, Cheltenham, but runs a major listening array at Chicksands, Bedfordshire and at Edzell, near Montrose in Scotland — home of US Naval Security Group UK. The US Army Security Group presence at Menwith Hill, Harrogate, as well as linking to various intelligence satellites, is thought to tap all internal UK telephone calls and transatlantic cables as well.

The old wartime "Ultra-Codebreakers" site at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, now houses GCHQ's Central Training School (CTS), while Poundon Lane, Bicester, also has full Foreign Office training facilities for GCHQ staff. North of Bletchley at Hanslope Park is the centre for monitoring diplomatic communications, HM Government's Communications Centre/Diplomatic Traffic Monitoring Service (HMGCC/DTMS). The BBC chips in its broadcast monitoring service at Caversham

near Reading — who says the BBC aren't first with the news?

One notable exception to the GCHQ pattern of stations throughout the UK is their lack of a site in Northern Ireland — their two stations, Gilnahirk and Island Hill, Comber, having been closed down. There are probably a number of reasons for this — monitoring the Provisionals can be done safely, at a distance, from the mainland, or by highly secure military intelligence operatives in the field. Plain GCHQ stations on the ground in Northern Ireland would offer too tempting a target.

GCHQ's present director, Brian Tovey, is a Deputy Secretary at the Foreign Office and he has half a dozen Under Secretaries to help him out — a large slice of the Foreign Office establishment. There is an Intelligence Co-ordinator at Cabinet Office level to help distribute the daily mass of GCHQ information flowing into Whitehall. Official figures for the cost of the GCHQ network are, of course, impossible to obtain, but they are thought to be well in excess of the £5 million per annum mentioned a few years ago. More recent estimates have put the figure as high as £200 million. Not much chance of that budget getting cut back in the current climate. As always, the "national interest" must be defended, come what may, so any public accountability goes out of the window and GCHQ's ears, like Pinocchio's nose, get bigger with every lie that's told about it.

Nick Anning

Another Millstone

LAUNCHED in real showbiz razzamatazz style — who in the length and breadth of the country didn't know it was happening? — the self-styled *Debate of the Decade* had them packed into Central Hall, Westminster, last month. For the comrades who didn't make the debate and can't wait for the album or the book (kid you not, they're on their way) two *Leveller* collective members furnish eye-witness reports and offer some conclusions.

And, if you care to read on, we offer some news from a front much in need of united action by socialists, reformists and revolutionaries: local government. In South West London the Labour lefts are betraying the fight against Tory education cuts, and, in South Yorkshire, they are struggling to make their control work — in the face of formidable odds.

AS AN EXAMPLE of left demagogy, the debate of the decade surpassed all expectations. Or perhaps I'd just forgotten what it was like. Perhaps I shouldn't have expected much else, with a platform of star speakers, an audience of supporters getting on for 3,000 and a debate which by its very format polarised the problems and left the stars with little else to do other than quote clever and embarrassing things about the enemy and exhort the consumers to join the right side.

I remain more suspicious than ever of wonderful and witty oratory. You knew exactly where to cheer and clap — the manipulative pauses, the dramatic silences, the roars. A friend of mine thinks it's politically OK. After all, someone has to get people roused.

But it wasn't the right time or the right place. We needed dialogue, new ideas slowly taking shape, uncertainty, not cut and thrust swordplay. We needed humility, an acceptance of failure. And verbal flourishes, however pleasing to the ear, are no way to generate new thinking.

OK, yes, we need too our mass meetings, our rousing speeches, the gut emotions. But we have to try to separate this from emotional posing. And rousing speeches do more harm than good when they have so little to offer. They don't make people think, they lull us into the false security of pure struggle. As long as there's struggle involved, it must be the Way Forward. The left still needs its own spectacle of drama, its own reassuring playbacks like others need their hearts uplifting by the church or the national anthem, by TV ads.

It could have been a football match; the emotions were similar. It's only the buttons you press to turn on the masses that are different.

The audience was worse. They loved it, consumed it eagerly. They cheered in all the right places, laughed on cue. And when one poor Labour Party Young Socialist spouted aggression like an angry machine, we laughed at him. Not grasping that he was just a less skilled parody of all that had gone before. Given time, he'll improve. He'll

put in a bit of practice, venture down the well trodden paths of the Orators.

Then there were the What-About-Ireland constant interruptions. The trouble is with the What-About-Ireland people that they guilt trip everyone. Ireland is the crunch, the line dividing revolutionaries from imperialists, and everyone knows it. But how do they expect to build support on a guilt trip?

Peter Hain tried to control them, teacher-like, saying please sit down, yes it's an important issue, but really, please. But the point is, this was a gathering of the left, and the failure of socialism, of the left, includes the failure of a mass movement against the troops and the

H-Block. So why aren't they discussing with us their lack of support? Or are they under the illusion that they represent the grass roots?

Their sloganising and yelling were part and parcel of the same patterns of behaviour exhibited by 'official' speakers and others. The only difference was that they hadn't been invited. And the audience responded in true macho form. It looked like there was going to be a mass lefty punch up even without the police or the NF or whomever it's normally directed at. Everyone on their feet shouting OUTOUTOUTOUT. Smash them. Put one on them.

The *Beyond the Fragments* women were given a bit of token space and got some applause when they talked about the behaviour of the left. And said that lots of people didn't want to choose between the devil and the deep blue sea any longer. But they were nervous. They didn't fit into the set pattern or the format. And so they couldn't possibly fulfil audience expectations.

There were other women, there of course, but no identifiable feminist groups. Maybe there's not that interest in socialism as presently defined. Or maybe other feminists just don't like left behaviour and have seen it all before. The radical feminist intervention I was expecting didn't happen either.

A token steelworker from Sheffield brought greetings 'from the steelworkers, their wives and families of South Yorkshire'. Lots of cheering and easy

solidarity. Peter Hain even dared the What-About-Ireland people to interrupt such a sacred presence. After all, no-one would have the nerve to disagree with such a soldier of the proletariat. And it's not the steelworkers I'm blaming, good luck to them.

Maybe I'm being arrogant about these people. Speakers as well as audience. How can I accuse them of being macho posers full of empty rhetoric when they've been working in the movement for years? They're doing their best; Many of them have devoted more time, slog and effort selling papers and flying to picket lines than I'll ever know. Anyway neither I nor the *Leveller* have anything to put in their place.

But I don't believe in the kind of sacrifice held up for us to admire. If people devote their lives to picket lines, then there's something in it for them. It replaces emptiness with something to live for utterly. And perhaps, after years, it becomes harmful because it obscures the need to be more honest. Maybe they get a kick out of picket lines. Maybe they don't even think about change but just throw themselves into the next struggle. Maybe they know know of no other way to enjoy life. And sacrifice is an even more horrific vision if it's going nowhere.

Verbal violence. It's a grey and difficult area this, talking of drive and aggression. Because, as I said, we need our anger. But is revolutionary anger and rhetoric from the same source as other ego trips to power? Or is it qualitatively different? We/they have to ask this question especially when it's men who are doing all the shouting.

So what else is there to offer? Well, the women's movement for a start. But the left don't seem to have learnt anything from that. While recognising its power, they haven't taken seriously its different ways of organising. Otherwise they might have tried a new way of speaking to people.

Of course the women's movement isn't perfect. We've had our own destructive conference scenes, we've got our own rhetoric to deal with. But that behaviour rarely goes without criticism, especially when it's about easy knocking and

In Our History

emotional manipulation. In Central Hall, no-one even seemed aware of what was going on. In the WLM it's described as male behaviour. You can see why.

I don't want to make a fetish of *Beyond the Fragments*. But it does say something about the psyche of the left. But how on earth could a 'fragments' type of organisation work if we haven't sorted out the labyrinthine secrets, the depths of that psyche? Or rather, how would it be any different, even if the organisation wasn't Leninist? Unless a different organisation breeds a different kind of man.

No more power trips, no more cover ups of defeat with proud cliches about shopfloor struggles, rank and file power, or the traditions of the great Labour Movement. Looking honestly at how we behave is not a mere luxury we must do without in these hard times. Because the hard times will continue and get worse, if we can't pull off something better.

Cherrill Hicks

SOME OF US stood queuing in the rain outside a domed palace in the heart of the State because we are starfuckers. Some of us were there to cheer for our heroes. Some of us came to have our faith renewed and some of us, too, came because we were desperate. Desperate to hear something innovative, to witness some new development, to slough off the disappointments of the dreary decade that went before and to walk home all fired up with hope, with possibilities, with new strategies for liberation. We wanted to know the time of the last bus to the future and all we got was a fight at the bus stop.

The way the spectacle was organised, I suppose, made it odds-on we'd get a sterile replay of the reform-revolution showdown, a debate which winds through historical sores from the Spanish Civil War to Chile and Jim Callaghan. It is a debate which was occurring 14

decades ago. And the Great Debate that we hoped might transcend this 'Crisis on the Left' ended up merely representing that crisis. But it's easy to poke fun and hard to say something new. Please give me that something new.

Socialism itself is in crisis, of that there is no doubt. It is a crisis of ideas and of spirit, and that is one of the reasons Thatcherism is so effectively on the offensive. Somehow the vastness of the State, the disillusionment of lost struggles, made us all into determinists. It is no coincidence that the most influential Marxist for the defeated generation of the 70s was Louis Althusser, who preached determination 'in the last instance' (by economic forces), theoretical practice (which meant it was OK not to be politically active: theoretical work was a strategic intervention at the level of ideology) and the denial of truth. The theory takes you swiftly to the Central Committee, who will determine the social character of truth. This is one of the reasons why Althusserianism, and all its bastard sons and daughters who devoted their lives to sign language, is now dead. (Don't mourn. Organise!)

But how are we to organise and for what? Wage demands? It's possible to have all the objects you want — a job, a house, a car, a colour TV — and still be unfree. Rudolf Bahro, in the Isaac Deutscher memorial lecture, said that the GDR working class have doubled their wages since the war, 'And where is the liberation?'

I went up to the picket line at Chix chewing gum factory in Slough, where Asian women have been on strike for six months. Some steel pickets from Scunthorpe had come down in solidarity but when they got there some of them were pissed off. 'They're loading up at Hadfield's and we're stuck in a bleeding chewing gum factory with a load of fucking wogs.' What do you do when you hear that? Retreat into sociology, into trying to understand why some workers are like that?

Of course workers must still organise against capital, but class struggle, when it is defined as just getting more money... Organise at the point of production, but also ask, surely, what is the point of production? What is the

point organising around wage demands when we've no idea how it leads to emancipation? What is the relation of the western working classes to the third world working classes?

The only time the world impinged on the various grand schemes of things at the Great Debate was when Ali and Foot delivered the Chile warning. Bahro, on the other hand, is rather interested in the world. 'The three main contradictions,' he said, 'which overlay all nations' internal contradictions, are the East-West contradiction, the north-south (developed-developing) contradiction and the ecological crisis.'

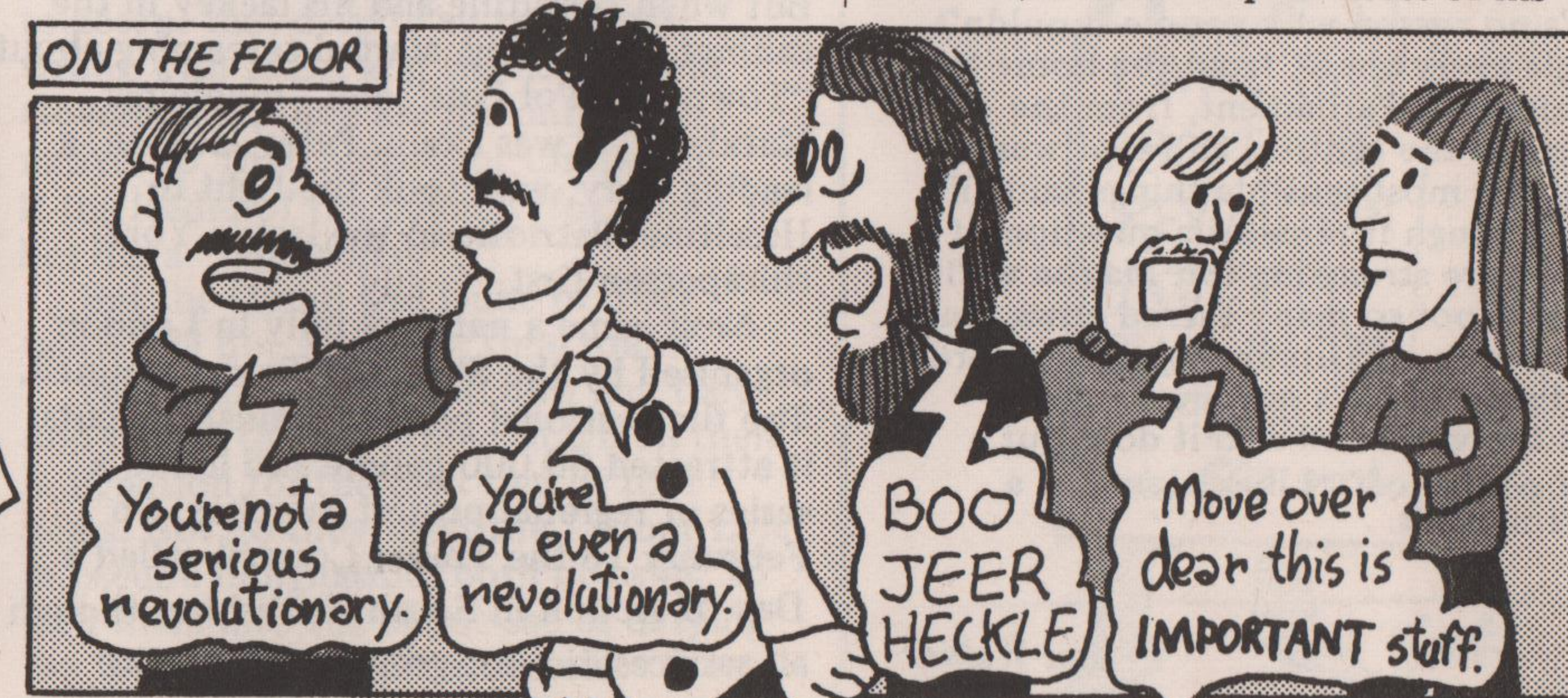
Do we have nothing to say about the cold war, about civil and military nuclear power, about the world's diminishing resources? If we do it was absent from the Great Debate, except in passing reference to 'ecological groups', which usually entered at some point between the women's movement and blacks and gays. It is dishonest still to claim that the proletariat has a world historical role. You are now entering the electronic zone.

Welcome to the wired-up society, silicon chip and ten-minute week. Things are changing fast and we must come to terms with them. Otherwise, we'll all be sitting in front of our videos watching the 80s marches that failed in colour more real than real life. Nothing to say about the electronic age and almost nothing going on, amongst the left, in modern cultural modes. Magazines and newspapers and theatre are all necessary, if they are any good, but so too are film, radio, TV and vinyl. This is the cultural crisis of the left. Ten million people watch Coronation Street every Monday and Wednesday. One day there will be a dissident TV station.

That's it then: campuses crawling with Marxists who aren't socialists, class struggle dissipated in wage demands and talk of percentages, activists living in the past and ignoring the present, let alone the future, and still producing propaganda the way they've always done it. I get sentimental about Roneos too.

It is a crisis of ideas, first. Events can be inspirational, but so too can ideas. It's OK to say theory must be forged in practice, but Marx spent most of his

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BY DAVE LESTER 1980

life in the institutional equivalent of a garret and if he hadn't we wouldn't have so much to argue about. The only ideas that developed into a movement in the 70s were feminist ideas and I suppose that is what the decade will be remembered for. But it is too a symptom of the present crisis of ideas that such a self-effacing (almost innocuous) work as *Beyond The Fragments* can be received with such rapture.

It is a crisis of spirit, second. If it sometimes seems we hardly believe our own propaganda it's because the propaganda isn't much good. Socialism is not soviet plus nuclear power stations. There's nothing so sacred about socialism... unless it embodies the values we used to criticise capitalism we'll all become dissidents again. The one thing Tony Benn said which stood out was that we must stress the moral superiority of socialism against 'the rottenness of capitalism'. Only when we can distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, truth and lies, all those old-fashioned things, only then will we start to capture people's imaginations. (Remember when 'humanist' was used pejoratively by Marxists?) People will give their lives for freedom, but not for 15%. We should all become voluntarists, place values in command, remember we have the power to change history. No one spoke of nuclear power at the Great Debate, even though the domes of the Windscale plant are now the most potent symbol of the final alienation of people from governments. Anti-nukes is a pacifist cause, a feminist cause, an anti-authoritarian cause, a humanist cause. If the left employed an ad agency anti-nukes should be the theme on the billboards. It will, I think, be a massive focus for protest in this decade.

So too will many of those groups the left loves to laugh at. Like the direct-action animal liberation groups which John May, editor of *Beast*, 'the magazine that bites back', says are the biggest direct-action groups in the country. The Moby Dick Group have been protesting against Japanese whaling by attacking Japanese cars (in dealers, on lorries, and to T and V registered private cars) with paint stripper. They have done £200,000 of damage and are being pursued by the police. Laugh at animal liberation while you can.

Laugh, too, at men-against-sexism groups while there's still time. *Achilles Heel* magazine sells 5,000 copies.

It doesn't really matter whether we take the motorway or the side-streets to liberation (personally I find the side-streets more interesting). Audrey Wise, who is on the motorway, said there's no reason why people shouldn't struggle everywhere, from the home to the Houses of Parliament, from the margins to the centres, and that was one of the most sensible things said all night. Though it remains a question of what we are struggling for. Maybe we'll have to shoot so many sacred cows that we'll have to end up dropping the word 'socialism'. There's nothing so great about the word and also it does put a lot of people off. 'Liberation' has a good ring to it.

Ian Walker

Labouring

SHEFFIELD STANDS in the front line against the Tory rampage through local government services Paul Flather watched the local party rearming to take on Heseltine and his cut-throat.

WOODHOUSE WENTWORTH is a stately home that stands on the road from Sheffield to Rotherham. For centuries it belonged to the Fitzwilliam family. But it was handed over to the Sheffield city council in place of death duties and taken over by the city polytechnic.

That was until last month when the poly decided to abandon the site as one part of its plans to cut about £1 million from its budget for 1979-80, forced on the poly by Thatcher *et al.* The story now circulating in South Yorkshire is that the police are poised to take over the manor as a new regional training centre. That is the measure of how much the priorities of government spending have been reversed — arse about face.

The message was never going to be lost in Sheffield or South Yorkshire. Last October word came out of the city Labour group's innermost caucus that there would be no cuts in the city's budget. "Heseltine can rant and rave all he cares", said Coun. George Wilson, council leader for gear on a decade. "The rates will have to go up — by 65 per cent if need be."

The battle-line was drawn out at a spectacular rally in Sheffield Town Hall later that month. Speaker after speaker stood up to pledge that Thatcherism would stop at the boundaries of South Yorkshire. Finally it was Arthur Scargill who threw down the tablets in the city that Labour has run almost without interruption since the General Strike of 1926: "Don't put up the rates at all", he said. "Send the bill to Heseltine. We will be with you all the way to jail", he advised the Council leaders. He was given a thunderous ovation.

On just such a day was the Independent Republic of South Yorkshire born, and time and time again the legend of Clay Cross was shouted out loud. And even the Tories inside the new Republic seemed to back the rebellion. Of course Tories being Tories they have to support the new theology of St Joseph and the Monetarists. But when Heseltine and his lackey in the cabinet, Tom King, started screaming about "Town Hall Pol Pots" and "municipal Marxism", it was Coun. Peter Jackson, a leading Tory, who took the fight to Heseltine. Patriotic to the last; a Yorkshireperson first.

Next came a national rally in London organised by the Sheffield Trades Council. The first national protest against the cuts, it attracted 60,000 people and led to a series of regional protest marches. On February 18 the Trades Council called a Day of Action in South Yorkshire: though all services did not grind to a halt, the

organisers said it was the largest demo in the country since the last war.

"We knew for sure that we were in the front line", said Coun. Peter Horton, the education committee's chairperson. And the pressure to "stage" a political confrontation with Heseltine was intense.

Last month the city council announced its new rate precept for 1980-81 — just under 41 per cent. That means a cut — yes cut — in the council's spending of almost three per cent, allowing for an overall inflation rate of about 25 per cent. (That is an increase in council spending from £130 million in 1979-80 to £175 m. in 1980-81). But in fact it is no retreat from the cries last year: that only Tories in Sheffield Hallam — the posh part of town — would lose their services because they alone had voted for cuts.

In fact for the last six months the Labour group has been wracked by debate and dissension. However the issue was never how much should be cut, but whether to make cuts at all. Whether Heseltine should be given "an excuse" to come into the Republic and make random cuts himself.

The Young Turks, headed by Coun. David Blunkett, chairperson of Social Services, who has increased money spent on welfare in Sheffield by almost 50 per cent in recent years, wanted a principled stand. No cuts. Lead Labour's stand against Thatcher. Into the front line and stand firm.

The Old Guard, the tamany hall politicians led by Coun. George Wilson, always looking to the next local elections, were anxious to keep hold of their territory like feudal barons. They wanted realism. Some cuts just to make sure of local support for Labour.

But into the midst of the debate dropped the steelworkers strike. Sheffield is a steel city. Already under siege from the steel recession, the strike rocked the local economy. Hadfields in Sheffield figured prominently in the national straight press. But it was the lack of thousands of wage packets — some permanently — that figured highly in local politics. "How could we ask the steelworkers to pay rate increases of about 70 per cent", said Coun. Bill Mickie, the Labour Chief Whip. And many other local workers had taken wage increases of just 10-15 per cent.

There was never any doubt that the Council backed the strike. They stood on picket lines. They gave cash. Last month they changed their own rules on rebates on council house rents so that anybody who is unemployed — or on strike — can now pay substantially reduced rents.

But the argument swung towards the Old Guard. Out went the loss-making laundries run by the council on certain housing estates. Out went the loss-making abattoir and butcheries traditionally run

under illusions?

by the council. Some deft pruning of inessential services — even now most people don't know what went — and the rates were down to a 41 per cent rise.

There is a story that the Council made a deal with Heseltine to fix on a reasonable rate — that avoids any penalty cuts imposed centrally by the Government when it hands out the Rate Support Grant to local authorities. The rate was 41 per cent, according to the story. The story would ring true because many people in the party are not ready to take on the Tories. The point is made by Scargill who reminds people that only a short time ago the Labour government was prepared to make the same cuts. Campaign for an early general election but also for the return of a truly socialist government, he says.

Coun. Mickie says the Sheffield debates have been marked by a new approach. There is more anarchy in the party, more real debate. There is even a group which argues it is good for Labour to lose power — it might even be good for Labour to lose power in Sheffield, it suggests.

Twenty years ago in the days of Roy Hattersley, they would have been drummed out of the party. Two facts explain the change. More and more young people going into the party and into the council, and regular meetings — a dialogue, says Mickie — with the trade unions and district Labour parties. That is the legacy of the 1979 "winter of discontent".

But there is all together a more serious aspect to the debates in Sheffield. The idea of the Republic — shown by the county's unique cheap fares transport policy, shown by the fact that 17 out of 18 MPs are Labour, shown by its unique policies on art and improving race relations and so on — is not just a cliché. There is a real fear that Heseltine is going berserk. That he will take all local government finance into his own hands when he brings in a new rate support system. The power of local government will be destroyed with one blow. The Labour group are girding their muscle for that battle. Time enough to recover from the steelworkers strike. Time to replace Callaghan. Time to pass mandatory reselection at the annual conference.

Meanwhile it is business as usual. South Yorkshire have announced a rate increase of 38 per cent, Barnsley of 25 per cent, Rotherham of 27 per cent. Sheffield has just nationalised swimming instruction in the city. Cries of "Bolshevism" from the Tories. "The city will be no different from Gorky or Kabul", they cry.

At the end of April the leader of the Labour group will be chosen. Last year Blunkett, the Young Turk, lost to Wilson, of the Old Guard by just seven votes. Many people feel that this could be Blunkett's year. At least Wilson will go and another prop of the old line will be out of the way.

THE LONDON Borough of Wandsworth, which fell to evil Tories in 1978, is trying to pull out of the Inner London Education Authority. The ILEA is a jumbo authority covering 12 central boroughs, and is always Labour-dominated. The Tory move has stirred the local Labour Party to resistance; a meeting was held in the Town Hall, and they flew in the Boy Wonder politician from the Valleys. *Chris Perry* puffed along too.

FEW OF those attending this revival seemed working class. There was just one black in the audience. But it gave the usual gaggle of Leftists the first big chance since Wandsworth went Tory and Putney lost Hugh Jenkins at the last General Election to indulge in a wallow of indignation.

There in living colour and full stereo Valleys voice was the man who believes he's donned the Mantle of Nye, Labour's education frontbencher, Neil Kinnock, formerly of Bedwelty, now resident in the Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames (where they still have grammar schools), and now the star of every instant comment TV show.

He had taken the night off from the television studio to be the Shadow Education Secretary he really is... all shadow and no substance.

Clearly enjoying himself, he turned on the *hwy!* and his audience began to respond as surely as if the volume had been turned up on the Electric Light Orchestra at Wembley.

Here was the delight in hearing his own voice and the delight in knowing his delight was shared by others. Here was the tread of phrases, the cadences, the effortless asides. Great style but empty of content.

So when a young woman rose from the floor to say she was in the NUT, she worked for ILEA, she had a child, she was in the Labour Party, she had been on marches, signed petitions but *what should she do now*, all Kinnock could say was "What do you do in your spare time, luv?" And all Councillor Tony Belton, leader of the Wandsworth Labour Party could do, was feebly remind his audience that in 1982 they could vote Labour in the local elections and in 1984 Labour at the next General Election.

Not a murmur from the "extra-Parliamentary left". Everyone seemed to accept that despite all the things wrong with ILEA and the last Labour Government, they are the only alternatives to Thatcherism, or Chopeism, if the leader of the council (for Chope is he) has a "philosophy".

But the Grand Old Duke of York tactic will not work this time round.

People are on the boil now and they don't want the gas turned down on their indignation for the next two or four years. Nor do they want the Labour Left in pseudo indignation, born of panic, to lead them into the cul-de-sac of defying the law which was promised after the Tories passed the Housing Finance Act

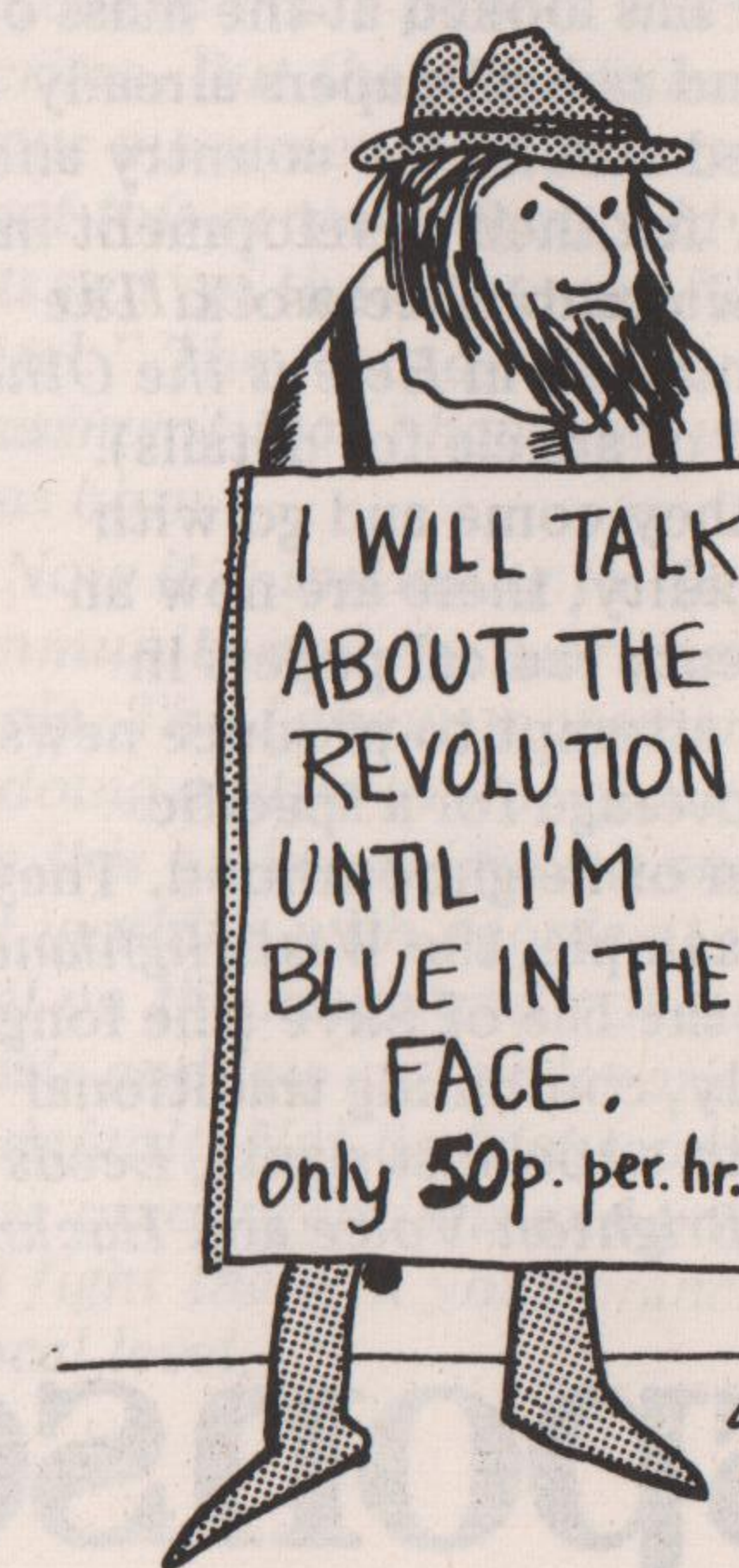
in 1972. That fizzled out with the working-class councillors of Clay Cross being declared bankrupt and council tenants paying higher rents.

And the Left should beware of defending indefensible bureaucracies. Cuts in spending would be welcome if it meant the Tory-minded slugs known as Town Clerks, Finance Directors, chiefs of this and that, who have grown apace under Labour rule, got the boot.

For while ILEA might be good as bureaucracies go, it is a bureaucracy; its massive spending programmes may be "cost effective", but just because "media resource centres" put money in the pockets of Philips flogging its video systems for questionable educational ends, how does that benefit the children? Councillor Chope has done the same thing for London education as Keith Joseph has done for national politics. He has broken the unholy consensus between so-called left and right.

Now it is up to the left to make a fresh response. If the badges say "No going back to the Thirties", those who wear them should remember that means no going back to losing, because the Left never got anywhere near winning in the thirties.

Meanwhile, at least when Aneurin Bevan spoke at Tredegar he saw human faces in front of him. Bevan said of Wilson "all brains and no bloody vision." He might have said of Kinnock "little brains and all bloody television." From Kinnock we don't want the defence of acronyms like ILEA, but a cogent attack on the realities of modern capitalism.



Let them flourish!

AT A CONFERENCE on 'Democratic Accountability in the Media' — by the Institute for Workers Control and addressed by Tony Benn — the rallying cry, with some dissent, was for a new national daily newspaper of the left. A month ago, at a public meeting promoted by the Campaign for Press Freedom — also addressed by Tony Benn — speaker after speaker from the main print unions said that a national left paper would have to wait for local initiatives to prove themselves. *Crispin Aubrey, Charles Landry and Dave Morley analyse the different approaches.*

ONE REASON for the shift is that those campaigning within the Labour Party and trade unions for some positive moves to counter the bias of the capitalist media have come to realise the massive problems, both financial and organisational, which a national daily entails. But while the issue continues to be a talking point on the left, at a local level the practicality of competing with the commercial press has actually been tried.

In the past year, we have seen the *Dundee Standard* launched (now selling 8,000 copies a week, mainly through trade union branches), *Hull News* appear and disappear in just two weeks and *Nottingham News* reach its first anniversary amid criticism of the paper's 'non-radical' coverage. These experiments are important, if not always what the left might have hoped for. Meanwhile, *East End News* in London is looking for £25,000 to start a weekly in Tower Hamlets and *Rochdale's Alternative Paper* wants a similar sum to turn a highly successful monthly into a competitor for the turgid *Rochdale Observer*. The Campaign for Press Freedom now supports both the Rochdale and East End schemes.

Against this background, the Minority Press Group* has looked at the mass of community and radical papers already being produced around the country and the possibility for their development into a flourishing alternative network. The results are contained in *Here is the Other News* (see end of article for details).

Although they come and go with depressing rapidity, there are now an estimated seventy radical papers in Britain which attempt to produce news and feature coverage for a specific borough, town or neighbourhood. They include, for example, the *West Highland Free Press* on the Isle of Skye (the longest-running weekly, combining traditional local news with a socialist slant), *Leeds Other Paper*, *Brighton Voice* and *Hackney*

People's Press. Most are monthly, sell between 500 and 8,000 copies, and depend on a variety of hidden subsidies, from an allied printing press to use of a community centre.

From its origins in the early 1970s, with the development of offset litho printing and libertarian politics, what is often called the 'community newspaper' has been a hybrid animal. But although the survival of the species has sometimes been endangered, there are some useful examples of mutation and transformation which have enabled members to survive.

'Community' is in fact a contradictory term, available for exploitation by both left and right. So while local struggles have often gone beyond what national left organizations do, by developing new areas of action, such as squatting, community can also have an inward, depoliticising focus, severed from the problems of the national and international arena. Cynthia Cockburn argued in *The Local State* (about the London Borough of Lambeth) that even to use the word 'community' is to 'occupy ideological terrain prepared by the state'. Local radical papers are therefore necessarily involved in a set of contradictions about the nature of their activity. But these are not just external problems: they are also manifested internally, and pose for any paper a set of problems which it has to negotiate. One of the clearest examples is the *Aberdeens People's Press*, which began publishing in 1973 and ran for three years.

The APP collective decided at the start that they wanted to produce a paper 'free of heavy political analysis' using 'hard information not available elsewhere in the press'. They aimed to avoid imposing their own solutions but to 'sow the seeds of discontent.' They also wanted to break down the division between producers and consumers of the paper, encouraging participation in the

Brighton Voice

production process and the sharing of skills. These aims, similar to those of many other local papers, turned out to be incompatible in practice.

One problem was that 'as an open group we were available to be used as a resource by all kinds of people' some of whose politics (including an Enoch Powell supporter) the collective found unpalatable. In the end they had to sacrifice the principle of 'openness'. APP tried to get away from the capitalist media's practice of focussing on an issue one day, only to forget it the next. The paper also aimed to provide detailed and regular coverage of local campaigns — but in so doing they found these reports were of little interest to those not directly involved.

The commitment to an open policy, encouraging people to get involved in running the paper, brought problems of how to cope with new, unskilled recruits to an established collective. It was a straight clash between the attempt to demystify the skills of production and journalism and the aims of producing a regular, readable and politically coherent paper.

The APP collective eventually decided to stop working as a newspaper, devoting themselves instead to producing well-researched occasional pamphlets and books on specific issues — such as one on the exploitation of North Sea oil. With their longer research and production schedules, these pamphlets better suited the collective's available skills and generated fewer time-consuming internal conflicts than producing a paper.

These contradictions are not, however, exclusive to the north-east of Scotland. In London, *Islington Gutter Press* started life in 1972 as a 'paper to which everyone can contribute and in which everyone who comes to meetings has an equal say in the content', aiming 'to echo the real feelings of our community'. But looking back on what one member of the collective describes as the 'romantic period', this 'openness' was always deceptive. The paper had claimed to be completely open whilst in fact pushing a consistent libertarian, socialist, direct action, self-organization line.

The realization of the need to take more direct responsibility for the paper's political perspective (the masthead now reads 'Islington's only socialist paper') led to the end of the open platform philosophy. Open meetings were cut from weekly to monthly then to occasional — and the paper is now run by a closed group which decides when and whether to

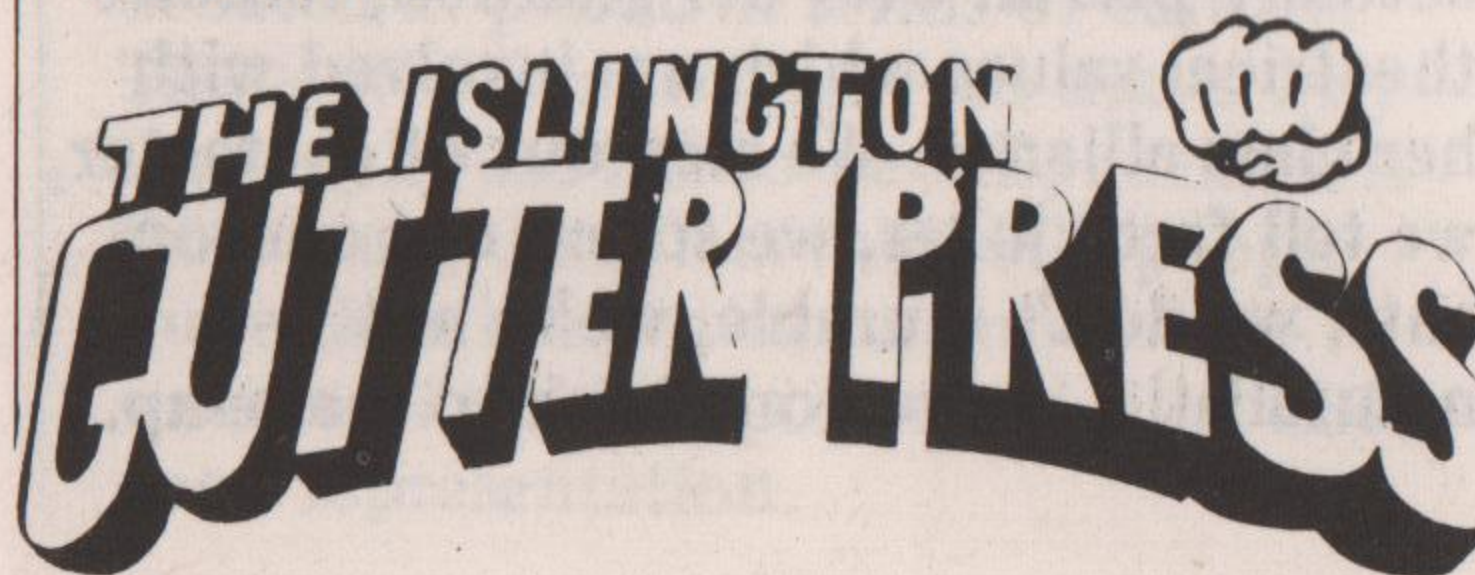
ALARM!

admit or look for new members. The perspective on the community has changed too — IGP now accepts that it is largely aimed at the local left — this readership has played a crucial role in organizing through the paper and the associated Socialist Centre — rather than at some ill-defined mass audience. Perhaps it is their willingness to adopt that definite role of organizing and informing the left within a community which accounts for IGP's success, as opposed to the difficulties of many of the papers still in search of a 'community'.

Islington Gutter Press does not present a model which all papers need to follow — the strategy they have adopted is only one of many, and papers following quite different strategies have experienced different forms of 'success'. Both *RAP* in Rochdale and *Alarm* in Swansea (now sadly defunct) — radical populist papers of scandal and expose with a much wider and less clearly defined audience and political stance than *IGP* — have gained circulations above 5,000 and a considerable degree of local impact. The point seems to be that different strategies are possible but that confusion over which one is being followed is fatal. From my experience, those papers which stand most chance of developing, or even surviving, are those which have made the clearest and most conscious choices about: firstly, their role — whether leading, informing, agitating or 'reflecting' community feelings; and secondly, their intended readership — whether tenants' groups, the local socialist section or the whole of a community.

We have concentrated here on just one of the fundamental conflicts we discovered when looking at radical local newspapers: how to relate to the community. Others include the problems of distribution (getting out of the left ghetto), finance and the definition of 'news' when you only appear monthly. But if the prospect can sometimes appear depressing it is also true that a growing number of trade unionists, left activists and local journalists want to see these papers flourish. That interest needs to be exploited.

* The Minority Press Group is funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation to investigate the radical and alternative press in Britain. Here is the *Other News* (£1.25 plus 20p p+p) is available from MPG at 9 Poland Street, London W1 (437 8954). Future booklets will be on radical printers and the women's publishing movement.



The kind of police force London needs — like a hole in the head

AT LAST there is a focus for a broad-based movement against the racism, violence and political unaccountability of Britain's biggest police force, the Metropolitan. A conference on *What Kind of Police Force Does London Need*, held on March 15, heard speakers from a wide range of civil libertarian, black and labour movement organisations.

Though there was no resolution, there was unanimous agreement that political control is needed. The deputy leader of the Greater London Council Labour group, Illyd Harrington, even pledged that on return to power in London Labour would set up a committee to oversee the Met.

Much of the conference, called by the National Council for Civil Liberties, the South East Region of the TUC, State Research and the London Co-op Political Committee, was concerned with this

structural question — the fact that the Met is the only force not even theoretically under a local government committee. And several speakers, including Labour MP Clive Soley and Martin Kettle from State Research, laboured greatly under the illusion that if all police chiefs were as 'liberal' as Devon and Cornwall's Alderson, everything would be all right.

But it wasn't all that bad. While the all-white, male platform speakers worked out their social democratic inhibitions, there were floor speakers, mostly black, who recognised the political nature of the fight and the need for grass roots action rather than bureaucratic solutions.

Among these was *Diane Abbott* who is on the steering committee of the Sus Campaign, and is a member of the Paddington, London, Labour Party, and of the Leveller Collective. Her speech is here printed in full:

The reality of policing is different from the theory. In Southwark the other week there were thousands of policemen stopping Londoners going on to the street to demonstrate their contempt for the National Front.

They cruise the streets like it's the last frontier. I live near Portobello Road, and when you go down the road there are always two policemen standing at the corner where the no-go area for black people starts. They are standing where the posh white houses start meaning, young black people can't pass, it's a no-go area for you.

One's friends and their children are always being picked up. That's what policing in London means.

The black community has always faced harassment. We hear a lot about Thatcher and Whitelaw. Let's hear more about Rees and Callaghan. This is not just a stick to beat the Tories with. We are talking about a continuing situation. Paddington Labour Party refused to allow the Sus Campaign to meet in its rooms. They said the room was far too busy. But the rooms are empty, when you go by, every night.

I went to a ward meeting in Paddington this week. There were only three or four people there. The main issue was mugging. As the only black person there I was left in no doubt as to who the muggers were.

Behind Diane the conference chairman cringed. This was Arthur Latham, former MP and chairman of the Paddington Labour Party. Shame on you, Arthur.

We have not worked out a coherent socialist policy on law and order. But you don't have to be ashamed to be liberal on policing. I've listened to Clive Soley apologising for being a liberal.

It's not true that violence is increasing. London has always been a turbulent, violent city. You don't apologise to the people who are raising the hysteria, you meet them with arguments.

There is no correlation between the number of black people and the amount of crime. But there is a failure of the labour movement at the grass roots level to get this across. We should argue on the facts not on the argument, "I am a soggy liberal." The facts don't support the harassment that I have put up with since I was born.

Now it is spreading to the Irish community and the working class as a whole. The Labour movement ought to be doing a little less of going to meetings like this on issues like sus and Southall, but working with people at grass roots level on the issues and not letting the racists and law and order arguments go by default. Not be frightened to take these preconceptions and prejudices up and fight them in your branches and at a local level.

response

ABERDEEN
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Accidental staging of an anarchist

BELT AND BRACES first performed Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* over a year ago. Since then they've toured it throughout the country and presented it for two runs at the Half Moon, a small left-wing theatre in London's East End. It was very successful and gained rave reviews. Recently it has been taken up by a commercial West End producer and is now running at Wyndham's Theatre. The play is a 'farce of counter-information' about the death during police interrogation of a suspected anarchist. It is both very funny and, by the end, very political. Not surprisingly, the presentation at Wyndham's precipitated some of the most vicious reviews ever from critics. More surprisingly, the critics — including those of the liberal and progressive press such as *The Observer* and *Time Out* — have also attacked the audience.

Sandy Craig went backstage to talk to two members of Belt and Braces: Gavin Richards, the show's lead actor and the director, and John Ellis, the company's administrator.

SC: The two things that interest me most about your move into the West End are, firstly, the audience, and secondly the reaction from the progressive critics. How have the audiences been?

GR: They're wonderful. It's quite extraordinary. I think what's happening is that we are becoming a sort of symbol. We are the left fringe company that has kept its integrity best over the last five years and has come through and gone into the West End. And people are very keen to come. They're coming a lot out of solidarity. Quite a few came in the first couple of weeks who'd seen it before because it is actually an event. I think in the early stages we were getting what I would call the libertarian well-educated left.

SC: How about the numbers?

JE: Increasing. This week is up 25% on last week. And last week was about 60%. Ticket prices are very low.

SC: What do you think is the main difference playing at Wyndham's?

GR: It's much more dangerous here.

JE: And the audience relate to that. One evening I sat at the back of the stalls and the nearer to the end the more electric it got. That really struck me. The audience were expecting the police to come in or the plugs to be pulled by the manager and they were really rooting for the play and enjoying it. Perhaps more than anything that's been picked up by the Press.

GR: I think the Press have picked up that feeling.

SC: And escalated it. But why do you think it's more dangerous?

GR: Because here we are exposed to the full glare of the industry. From the stage we can sense that the audiences are quite aware of the danger; On the first night we were aware on stage that there was a real edge of worry in the audience. I had a number of extra rude things which I was going to throw in, which I didn't in the end because I felt the audience were on the edge of their seats already with

worry about the political bits. Which was really feeble. It shouldn't matter two hoots that we're in here. We should actually take the whole lid off and blow the whole thing wide open. The whole thing's a big joke.

We're being asked to do the old job of bailing out the bourgeoisie when they're in crisis. So we're doing it for our own reasons. And the same old contradictions are coming home to roost here as came home in the early seventies with the Arts Council. The problem is how you negotiate yourself through all these contradictions.

The West End is a broken down machine, basically, like Leylands. Nothing works. From management down to workers the West End is in a state of crisis. There's been no investment for the past ten years. And apart from their economic base, their humanism is no longer relevant.

We're sitting here and proving what we've been saying since we first started — that you can get a new public into the theatre, that that new public wants to go into the theatre. But they will not go unless you approach them in the right way. I mean, we're using the bourgeois machine to bring in people, other people. And the problem we're running into is that our erstwhile comrades — the progressives — reject us because this show is a popular show. It's not art, it's a piece of popular theatre.

SC: What about the reviews and the reviewers then?

GR: The extraordinary thing is that they're so shocked that there is this different audience that wants to come to the theatre. They're so shocked that they turn and abuse the audience. Like Victoria Radin in *The Observer*. ('A mob of be-parka'd, dungaree'd supporters...'). Or like Michelene Wandor in *Time Out*...

SC: I agree. I was very disappointed in the reaction of Michelene Wandor who said — in *Time Out*, probably the most important review for you — that the politics were 'in', that the audience didn't understand them. I got no sense that the audience was lost at all. Or bored.

GR: She let the political question overshadow her enjoyment. I think a lot of the political questions here are to do with art, meaning politics in terms of class and class orientation. When she sees a popular piece of entertainment which has got politics in it, it's doubly offensive.

Firstly because she doesn't agree with the politics in the show. Secondly, and the thing that hurts most, because people actually piss all over her guarded, esoteric theatrical values which are involved with her class alliance. We step out of character, we tell farty jokes, we sound our consonants, we don't mumble, we're not naturalistic, we've gone back to make-up.

SC: I think the end of the play upsets more than a few people. (At the end, the four policemen are chained to the window bars of their office. Maria Feletti, a reporter with the Communist Party paper, has the choice of freeing the police, whom she knows to be guilty of murder, or of escaping and becoming the accomplice of the anarchist. She has thirty seconds to decide before the bomb he has primed explodes.)

JE: There is a polarisation at the end of the play. It calls people out. They have decided which side they're on. Are they on the side of the extremists or against? At the end there is a polarisation theatrically, a polarisation that's going to take place elsewhere.

GR: At the moment when it twists — when the policemen suddenly turn on Feletti and say, 'She knows everything' and drag her to the window — at that moment you get a 'Woomph!' from the audience, a 'Woomph!' of pleasure because they're thinking, 'Ah, it didn't happen. She didn't defend law and order and get away with it. Actually we were right — she should have let the policemen blow up. If you're down to a choice and you're down to thirty seconds, you let them blow up. That's the best thing to do.

But that 'Woomph!' frightens people in that audience, the individuals who are obviously not feeling sympathy with anybody but the policemen. Even Benedict Nightingale (the *NEW STATESMAN* critic), because actually he's more sympathetic to the policemen, has to remark in his review: 'I don't like being manipulated into feeling pleasure at blowing people up even though they are hell-bent on murdering me.' Well, I'm sorry, but there's something not human about that.

SC: It is true from a theatre seat.

GR: But it's not true as a person. And if you're going to comment on it, then you have to discuss that moment. You have to discuss that feeling which is: 'Have I been manipulated into feeling pleasure at the idea of gratuitous violence or have I been manipulated into feeling the pleasure of responding justifiably — when normally I feel inhibited from responding justifiably?'

In real life you can't respond, you have to keep your mouth shut. But on the stage we offer this little moment of fantasy... That's what the theatre is there to do. The real debate about society is actually taking place in that cultural forum. It's the public conscience being debated in public in terms of culture. That's what's exciting. And that's why the playhouse has to be full, because if there's anything less than 500 people there then it's just not a good cross-section of public opinion. It's just not a good representation.

Strange fruition

ROBERT WYATT was the drummer and vocalist first with Soft Machine, Canterbury's crucial contribution to the fusion of rock and jazz in the 60s, then with his own group, Matching Mole. He fell out of a window seven years ago, very drunk at a party, and woke up to find himself paralysed, confined to a wheelchair. Vivien Goldman reports.

'ON MY mother's side, I come from a long line of Kentish fascists, although she herself was an early feminist. And on my father's side I come from a long line of missionaries going out to various parts of the world to intimidate the locals into submission to make it easier for Western European colonial expansion. Although they'd deny it.

'That doesn't make me kind, or like people I wouldn't otherwise like. I just feel angry that I was born a receiver of stolen goods. My immediate parents were breakaways from family tradition... but no amount of masochistic search for my own evil cultural roots would make me actually want to have a relative like Woodrow Wyatt.'

Robert's now a CP member, joining about a year ago when he felt battered by anti-Labour movement media...

'When you've got Spike Milligan on telly doing picket line members' accents to the uproarious alcoholic mirth of Michael Parkinson audiences, the same as when he does Pakistani accents — I actually get in a panic. Everyone seems to think it's alright, and if it's alright, I'm mad. In which case that drives me back into myself which is a very lonely feeling. I feel I need to belong to something.'

There's equal fury about the US/Eurocentric attitude of the music business and press that sees music — 'real' music — as made in England, Europe, US, possibly Scandinavia (Abba), and anything beyond as mere animal gruntings not worth the expense account. His hobbies since his wheelchair confinement of seven years include lengthy correspondences with political prisoners in Africa and elsewhere, and an obsession with short wave radio, notably the Islamic Republic of Iran, Radio Moscow, and Radio Havana (41 metres short wave, from 10-11 in English).

His musical eclecticism has produced a set of five singles for the independent label *Rough Trade* — three already recorded at the time of writing. All of them cover versions indicating the

breadth of his concerns. There's the South American one (influenced by Radio Havana, probably), with *Quantan-amera* which we all know and hate as middle-of-the-road schlock restored to its original rebel music meaning.

Then there's the US single, with Billie Holiday's classic *Strange Fruit*, perhaps her most serious song, about seeing the body of a black man lynched by the

Ku Klux Klan swinging from a tree. That's backed with another, even more surprising selection — a song by Chic, their moody slowie — 'At last I'm free, I can hardly see in front of me...'

And the Stalin single; one side's a poem by former Rail Unionist and poet

Peter Blackman about the Battle of Stalingrad,

whom Robert first heard at an Artists

Against Racism and

Fascism meeting,

full of rolling, fiery

eloquence, and the other's Robert's

four part harmony

version of *Stalin Isn't*

Stalling, originally

sung in the 40s by the

Golden Gate

Jubilee Quartet.

'The turning point

was the Battle of

Stalingrad, and — this

is an embarrassing

fact for the West — it wasn't bombing the shit out of Hiroshima, it wasn't the English and the Americans charging round the desert, it was 20 million dead Russians. And of course dead Poles and dead Jews. It's a jolly little song to celebrate Joe Stalin who represented the power that changed the direction of the Second World War, so saving the rest of Europe from domination by Hitler. The underlying exercise in thoughts of Stalin in the West now is to replace the idea of the all time twentieth century monster of Hitler with the all-time twentieth century monster of Stalin...'

'I'm examining propaganda and art, and how they're used for different purposes at different times. It was useful for the West to encourage Stalin when it was in their interest, and belittle him when it wasn't. I'm not talking directly about Stalin, although Peter Blackman is. I'm trying to turn the onus of examination onto us, make us take the mote out of our own eye, instead of externalising it by saying it's "foreigners".'



Soap: all washed up?

THE BRITISH Film Institute last month held a two day working conference called *Looking at Television*. Intended to open up positive ideas about the radical potential of TV, as well as looking closely at the media's influence in everyday life, the event — a series of seminars, screenings and discussions — in fact achieved something rather different. Cathy Myers reports.

A collage of media professionals and experts were wheeled in. Trevor Griffiths, scriptor of *Bill Brand*, and Schumann, the creator of *Rock Follies*, talked about the problems of writing for TV. There was a seminar on the ideological weighting of *News at Ten* as well as TV coverage of trade union activity. John Willis, producer of *The Secret Hospital* (Rampton) talked about the ethical and technical problems. Dimbleby launched forth on documentary. The set-up was illustrated with film clips and premieres including *Creggan*, Mary Holland's programme on the troubled Roman Catholic estate in Derry.

The grande finale was to be Susan Harris, creator, scriptor and producer of *Soap*. All good stuff.

Throughout the two days, the conference hovered over a consensus of opinion which assumed that TV certainly had the capacity to engender new ways of seeing; and that this could be fitted into the wider jigsaw of a society on the road to social change — however woolly or fragmented that notion might be.

The pragmatics of the media as an instrument of social change were glossed over. Yet, with the exception of some newly spawned pressure groups in response to

the *Rampton* documentary, there seemed little evidence to suggest that 'social comment' TV had anything but transitory impact.

There was a general confusion about who the programmes were aimed at. Yet it became increasingly apparent that the needs, attitudes and social class of viewers would colour not only what they got out of a programme, but what should go into it in the first place. This confusion resulted in a recurring tendency to end on some vague notion of humanism, as if good intentions would result in the right political note being delivered.

Paradoxically, a conference geared to locating TV as a cultural product in society all but ignored its own social framework: For example the argy-bargy which ensued on the horrors of *Rampton* completely ignored why we have mental hospitals in the first place; who populates and polices them, what kind of social interest they serve, and how we come to define people as 'sick' to begin with.

The conference could have fizzled out on this liberal wishy-washy note if it had not been for the arrival of Susan Harris and film crew. Amidst a glitter of lights, Harris bounced onto the stage, replete with Fawcett Majors hairdo, jump suit and silver fox jacket. In the hands of Barry Took an experienced TV 'ex', she was wheeled Parkinson-style through reminiscences of her life, to the painful and seemingly accidental birth of *Soap*.

Harris' presence effectively reduced the atmosphere from one of deep social concern to that of a west coast chat show. In less than 15 minutes a third of the audience had left in disgust;

another third squirmed uneasily in their seats and the remainder fell in love with Susan Harris' disarming smile.

No, she didn't feel that *Soap* was subversive, satirical, a comment on USA soap opera or the American dream. She didn't feel it made any political comment. It was extremely unlikely to raise or change consciousness. It was good fun and lucrative; Burt and Jessica were her favourite characters; but it was all getting a little boring now.

Unable to stomach any more, I left too. I gather Harris was later awarded a detergent packet stuffed with champagne by the BFI. At the time I felt dismayed; but looking back on it, Harris threw a well deserved spanner into the greasy works of theoretical left wing politics. Her attitude towards her own product calls for a reappraisal of the ways we see TV messages. I find *Soap* very funny, but isn't calling it subversive simply a will to read in political overtones in the light of a stance already adopted? It is evident that a programme such as *Soap* can be read on many levels, but its political potential doesn't guarantee that it will politicise its audience.

If 'Looking at Television' is going to have any meaning, perhaps we should be looking outside the programmes, not just how they are made, but what the audience makes of them; what part the telly plays in everyday life and whether it engenders as much respect as the film buffs assume. Until that happens these BFI bumbles will have as much relevance to looking at television as an unplugged TV monitor.

Milt and Honey

FOR SIX Saturdays in February and March viewers bored with delapidated westerns and the interminable adventures of a Yorkshire vet had the opportunity of seeing the source of all Tory economic wisdom in action. Professor Milton Friedman was given the chance to make an extended 'personal statement' of his economic philosophy in *Free to Choose* screened on BBC-2.

Throughout the series the viewer would find Milt standing in the middle of some squalid sweatshop cheerfully telling them that the workers were happy being paid a pittance for working for hours in noisy and dangerous conditions. Proof? Well if they didn't like it they would leave wouldn't they? Yes they could leave and face the alternative to exploitation — destitution. You could almost hear the new George Wards of Thatcher's Britain applauding.

If you were still not convinced, Milt took us on a guided tour of East Asia. Look at Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, he beams, 'all countries with the fastest growing economies in the world, all countries whose economies place far greater reliance on market forces than on any government controls.'

For some reason Milt failed to point out that all these countries also place far greater reliance on repression than on political freedom.

For six weeks the good Professor harangued the viewing public with his remedy to help the nation beat inflation and every other economic ill come to that. The panacea is simply that 'better government is less government'. If only the free market was allowed to play its God-given role then everyone would be better off.

As the series progressed it became apparent that Milt lives in some strange time-warp from the nineteenth century. He was particularly fond of digging up dusty quotes from long dead alumni to support his case for a return to *laissez-faire*. For it was *laissez-faire*, he reminds us, which put the United States on the top of the economic heap. It escapes Milt's memory that the US achieved its dominant position from behind a formidable protectionist stockade. This is typical of

his fuzzy memory, but it also gives us an insight into the Disneyland economy he makes pronouncements about.

Friedman inhabits a world where individual producers and individual consumers, like all other things, are equal. And it is in the market that they 'are brought together by the magic of the price system.' In Milton's *laissez-faire* nirvana the market rules, competition is always perfect and the earth is flat. The truth is that in modern capitalism the name of the game is monopoly.

All of this was presented in an extremely slick Madison Avenue production. The ever-smiling Professor would pop up from time to time to bombard the viewer with a rapid succession of outrageous generalisations and downright lies. The discussions with critics tacked on to the films, to give the programmes 'balance', only demonstrated that Milt had the ability to dodge the issues just as fast when they were put to him by a team of 'experts' as he had when facing the camera.

So why is it that Milt's neolithic view of the world has become so popular recently? The answer lies in the failure of post-war demand-management government.

Demand-management failed because capitalism is not a system based on consumer sovereignty but on production. We, the consumer, don't decide what goes on the supermarket shelves. Those decisions are taken around the polished tables of boardrooms around the world. Only then are they transmitted to us by the deluge of advertising.

In a sense Friedman is right that government intervention does get in the way of the system. Despite all its failings state intervention does at least ameliorate some of the worst excesses of capitalism. But it was precisely the failure of Milt's magical price system that forced ordinary people on the receiving end of *laissez-faire* to struggle for state intervention. And it is the power — the "monopoly power" — to Friedman and Joseph — of organised labour that protects it from the full savagery of capitalism. Moreover the monopoly capitalism we know and love simply wouldn't work without state intervention to iron out the frictions inherent in the system. Milt's vision simply does not recognise the Rio Tinto Zincs of this world.

Milt himself provided a more fitting epitaph for his awful series when he said that television 'is not a medium of serious thought or reflection.'

Paul Gorman

Freedom, perhaps

THE OPENING scene is an aerial panorama drifting leisurely over the mountains and forests of Switzerland. Haunting music fills the cinema. The camera continues to glide. It picks out a road and follows its snaking path through the landscape. And then another and another. We are led along the paths of motorways across flyovers and vast multiple intersections, until, as the noise of traffic overtakes the music, we arrive in the midst of everyday, commonplace affluence-on-the-move: hostile, managed and masculine (though not without its own kind of beauty), a world dominated by things — above all, by the motor car.

Through this landscape two women, having met by chance and taken to each other's company, wander artlessly in search of something they cannot name. Freedom, perhaps, or some kind of meaning. The name doesn't matter.

And in their search for a reality, they are in flight from the reality: it never goes away. Every scene opens with noise. Dialogues are shouted across the din. Lorries and cars constantly pass by in the background. Aero-planes roar overhead. Not only can they not get away from the world, but, inevitably, in trying to do so they are only forcing its hand, calling its bluff — in a sense, penetrating closer to its core. What they eventually find is not something new but only an awful confirmation of the drab horror they first sought to escape.

They hitch-hike. Every passing car is a car that might give



Messidor, by Alain Tanner Academy, Oxford St, London.

them a lift. Every lift is a lift to escape. The cars are driven by men who, with few exceptions, prove to be mean, stupid and selfish. Cars and men, men and cars. What started as an adventure — full of the pleasures of not going to work, of sleeping out in the forest, of feeling more alive — unfolds into a nightmare.

Two men attempt rape. The women beat them off, but only after smashing in one of their skulls. They run. From now on they are always on the run.

Rather than give in to the power of the masculine world — demonstrated by the rape attempt, and observed in every male smile, snigger and casual glance — they devise a game. They will keep on travelling, without money or even a change of clothes, to nowhere in particular, until one or other of them cracks and wants to return to domestic comfort; and, by implication, to an acceptance of the world as it is.

'But do you know the risks?' asks Marie.

'I should do by now', replies Jeanne, the object of the rape attack. 'If you don't take risks you get nowhere.'

So it is agreed. They turn their backs on society.

But society will not turn its back on them. For there are no margins, no fringes in which one can take refuge and live in any kind of freedom. Capitalism does not allow exceptions. One is for or against the law, but never outside it. If you go for a walk for long enough a policeman will be sent to fetch you back. Without money, all acquisition, even of food and shelter, is theft.

So the flight becomes a

struggle. The women are a challenge to the power of established authority — to men, to property, to law, to the state. In this struggle the odds are slightly evened by their chance acquisition of a loaded pistol. One loaded pistol against all the loaded pistols of the well-fed couple at the roadside picnic who refuse to give them food, the restaurateurs who will not accept washing-up in exchange for a meal, the TV newscaster who presents them to the world as dangerous criminals, the farmer who will not let them sleep in the cowshed, the doubts in the heads of the women themselves.

Every incident in the film now becomes a collision between their desire for freedom and society's inability — and indignant refusal — to allow it. As the incidents multiply, so their alienation from an alienated world becomes irretrievable. The complacent TV viewers have accepted them as criminals: that is what they become. They are bound to lose, of course, and the pistol guarantees that the adventure ends in tragedy and death. It was an enemy all along.

Man against the world is the eternal theme of Hollywood heroism, from Bogart to Al Pacino. But these are women. And this is not a mythical world of gangsters or lonesome cowboys. It is the only too familiar real world of affluent Europe. The film can hardly avoid being profoundly political. And, for the most part, it is devastatingly pessimistic: a hopeless vision of the awfulness of the ordinary and the everyday, in which everyone is complicit in enforcing conformity — 'thus far shall you go and no further'. The audience leave the cinema quietly, in a state of shock.

But this film also achieves something else, something that had me entranced by the events on screen. The whole unwieldy apparatus of marxist theory could not pin down with such eloquence and exactness a quality that lies below the surface of our feelings and ideas: a quality that assembles those feelings and ideas into a general world view. And that is that within us there is not only a desire for freedom from exploitation, from inequality, from subjugation, but there is also a vision of freedom. A vision that inspires warmth, co-operation and love. The film captures that. The two leading characters, who are ordinary, funny and confused, express that life force.

It ends with streams of traffic — as it began. Amid much noise and great speed it is not the tragic heroines, but the traffic which is going nowhere. Terry Illott

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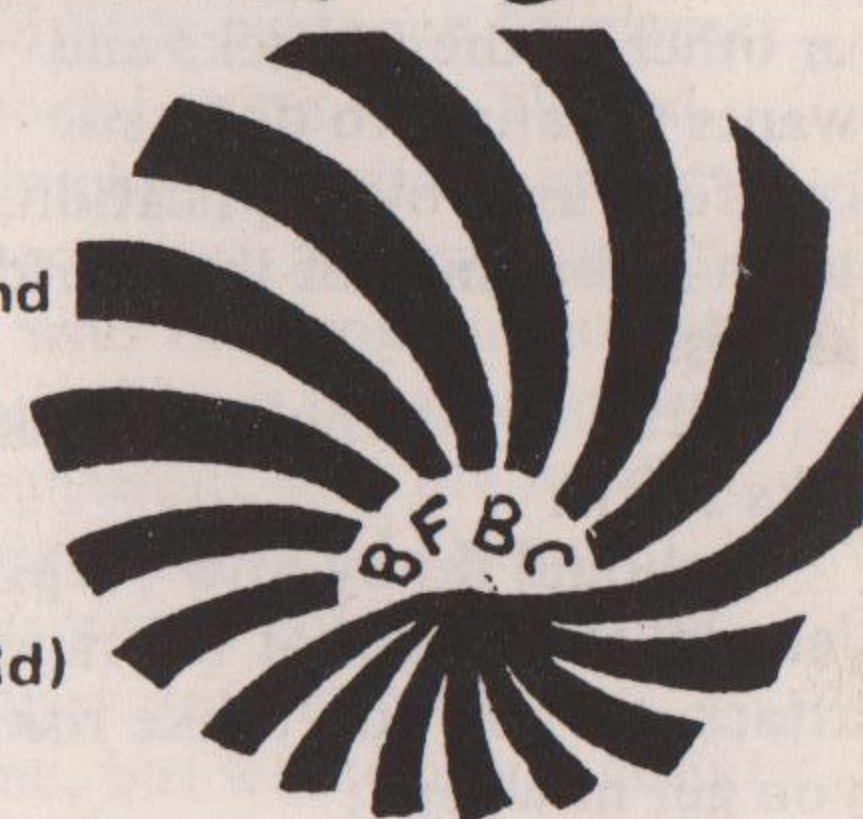
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BOOKS

THIS MONTH we turn that redoubtable promoter of socialist culture in Liverpool, *News From Nowhere*, for a run-down on the books and pamphlets selling well over the past few weeks.

Books:

Vida Marge Piercy Beyond the Fragments Struggle Over The State (CSE Books)
Six Of One Rita May Brown (US Import)
There's No Other Way (Toulouse Press) Frank Deegan, a local autobiography

Pamphlets:

The Wealthy (CIS)
Mixed Feelings. Ten women talk about abortion and pregnancy
Breeders for Race and Nation. Women and fascism in Britain today
Who Needs Nuclear Power?
Mrs Plug The Plumber - that's right, a non-sexist, non-etc kiddies' book.

Thanks Mandy and Bob for the list. *News From Nowhere*, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1 (051-708 7270).

OCTOBER BOOKS in Southampton is to launch at mail order service to supply non-sexist children's books at the end of April. The first catalogue has nearly one hundred and fifty

books in it, grouped by the age of the kids they're intended for, starting with 'under six' and going up to 'over thirteen'. The catalogue doubles as an order form, Ian Lamming, at October Books, recommends that it's used with one of the guides to non-sexist kids books that's been produced, for example by *Spare Rib*.

The idea for the scheme came from the Chichester Women's Group, who came to October Books to find out what was available after looking at the books their kids were reading at school. The shop's also had an enquiry from a Sussex primary school headmaster.

Ian asks anyone who wants a catalogue to send a stamped addressed foolscap envelope to him at October Books, 4 Onslow Road, Southampton.

FILM

ONE WAY or Another, billed as 'one of the most important films to come from contemporary Cuba', sets out to examine the different ways people's lives and relationships change in the context of social revolution - the film is set in the year 1962 during the early days of The World Turned Upside Down in the Caribbean.

It was directed by Sara Gomez who tragically died shortly before the completion of this, her first feature film, through a severe asthma attack. The film is being distributed by The Other Cinema and has a London run at the ICA in

The Mall from April 3 to April 16. It's available for hire from The Other Cinema in 16mm at a £35 rental - contact them at 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

Linking up with Concord Film Council and Socialist Film Services. The Other Cinema are also distributing *It Ain't Half Racist Mum*, and *Southall on Trial*, both of which were made for the BBC Open Door series, each a half hour in black and white.

RECORDS

WITH THE SUCCESS last year of their compilation *Vaultage '78* the Brighton label Attrix has now produced 'another two sides of Brighton' - *Vaultage '79*. The aim is the same as last year - to record the bands who are playing in the basement of Brighton's Community Resource Centre (Hence the name).

This year's model is a bit boppier than last year, and with the exception the Chef's song 'Food' there's nothing quite as quirky as the Dodgems or the Piranhas on last year's compilation. It's better produced, though and you can certainly lance to it.

Vaultage '79 sells at £3.50 from Virgin, or direct from Attrix at 3, Sydney Street Brighton. They've moved there from their old basement offices, and they hope the new premises will provide an outlet in Brighton for small labels, blue-beat, ska and reggae, as well as the local bands on Attrix.

PUBLICATIONS

STUDENT COMMUNITY Action Resources Programme have just published *Taking Action in the Community*, described as 'a manual packed with information, advice and ideas about how to organise and develop community action and community education work in colleges, student unions and in the community'. Although aimed primarily at students and student unions, it is an invaluable guide to anyone involved in community based work: schools, Youth action/volunteer groups, community workers, activists and community groups alike. Areas covered are: The College, The Community, the Students Union, Student Union Community Action Groups and the State; it also contains an extensive reference section and bibliography.

Copies can be ordered from Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2 (tel: 01-739 4568) or 1st Floor 59 Whitworth Street, Manchester 1 (tel: 061-236 4058) the cost is £1 50p per copy with 20% discount on bulk orders of ten copies or more, and cheques should be made payable to OSCA, which is SCARP's parent body.

SCARP are also currently revising the second edition of *Ways and Means* (pub. 1978), a guide to individuals and organisations seeking information on a wide range of issues. The directory covers sources of information, organisations, projects, groups, campaigns and publications that provide a focus for critical ideas, community action and social change and the new edition will be divided into eleven sections: Information Centres and Major Sources of Information, Publications, Education, Work, People's Rights, Housing, Health, Environment and Technology, Social and Community Action, Political Organisations and Regional Listings. In order for the 1980 edition of *Ways and Means* to be as effective as possible SCARP need information relevant to the above sections and in particular materials for the regional listings so if you think you can help get in contact with them at Oxford House, Derbyshire St, London E2.

LIFE WITHOUT WAGES is the title of a new report published jointly by the North East Trade Union Studies Information Unit, Search Project for the Elderly and Newcastle Centre for the Unemployed. The report sets out to describe just what the effect 'life without wages' has on a person. As it emphasises:

'It would be sufficient burden to be poor. But poverty is not the only effect of life without wages. At the most extreme, it can mean death - the suicide of a depressed and unemployed young man, or the death through hypothermia of an old woman too cold to live, too poor to pay for electricity bills.

'In extreme ways life without wages can mean illness, stress or marital breakdown. Or feelings of stigma and worthlessness. Or isolation and depression. We are a society geared to work, and the truth is that we pay scant attention and respect to those who do not work'.

Having described the problems, the report then puts the case for a new, concerted programme of action in the 1980s to replace these issues. Available from TUSIU 'Southend', Fernwood Rd, New-

castle-on-Tyne, price 50p (70p including postage)

THE BIRMINGHAM University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies are bringing out a newsletter for women interested in or working in the area of writing and criticism. It costs 75p for 3 issues. They are anxious that people should send things in - discussions of particular books, on courses they teach or take, issues with-in critical theory, events notice-board etc. For subscriptions contact Janet Batchelor or Rebecca O'Rourke at CCCS, University of Birmingham PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

A NEW MONTHLY newspaper for lesbians and gay men is to be launched in June. The paper, as yet untitled, aims to help meet the widespread dissatisfaction with the range of periodicals available in Britain to lesbians and gay men and copies of the pilot issue will be given away free with each copy of *The Body Politic* sold in the UK. The Editorial Collective is keen to get in touch with anyone interested and the contact person is Annie Worthington, 27 Villa Road London SW9 (tel: 01-274 9829).

Southall Rights have produced a carefully researched and drafted report of the events of April 23, 1979. Costing 80p, the report is a must for anyone interested in knowing more about what happened on this day when the police ran amok.

ORGANISATIONS

THE WORKER Writers and Community Publishers AGM is being held this year at Nottingham University on April 19-20. The meeting will be combined with workshops on various themes and a social with readings and music on Saturday night. This federation, which now has some 24 groups all round Britain, is expecting a turnout of between 70 and 90 writers and community publishers. Further info from Mike Kearney, E. Floor, Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.

THE ANL and the Friends of Blair Peach are organising a commemorative demonstration on Sunday April 27th, the day before the inquest into Blair Peach's death resumes. The march will assemble at 1 pm at Speakers Corner, before moving to the rally in Trafalgar Square via Scotland Yard and Downing Street

The Friends of Blair Peach

will be continuing their campaign to bring his killers to justice by approaching MP's asking them to raise the question of the cover-up again in the light of the revelations in the Sunday Times.

Socialist Worker took up the story the other week, proudly naming the guilty men under a banner headline, 'Wanted for Murder'. Readers of *The Leveller* will already be familiar with Inspector Murray - currently stationed at Chelsea nick. If you want to phone him for a chat, ask him about Chalky White and the rest of his merry men.

ON MAY 14th, eight people will appear in court at Haddington, East Lothian on breach of the peace charges following a non-violent direct action protest at the site of the Torness Power station in October last year.

Support outside the court will be much appreciated and the October Action Defence Fund is raising money for the case through selling agreeable badges at 25p each, and A3 posters in black and white at 15p each. All further info from the Fund at 18 Bishop Road, Bristol 7 8LT.

DUNGENESS ACTION

ALLIANCE (ANC), an affiliation of over thirty autonomous groups representing the South-East Anti-Nuclear Campaign, has called a national demonstration at Dungeness for May 24. The demonstration has three aims: to oppose the building of a Pressurised Water Reactor at Dungeness: to oppose the fuelling-up of Dungeness B Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor; and to make public the serious cracks in Dungeness A (1 & 2) which has led to them being shut down. The demonstration will assemble at Lydd (four miles from Dungeness) at 2 pm, where it will be met by a bicycle rally from London; attractions include speakers, music, food and a mass sponsored balloon release. For further details contact DAA, c/o 57 Upper Lewes Road, Brighton.

The Relationship Between Local and National Organising

THE SUBJECT of the next Big Flame public meeting to be held at the White Lion (Davenport's), Bristol Street, Birmingham (opposite 'Night Out') on Tuesday April 22, at 7.45 pm. The speakers will be Dave McKay (Lambeth Fightback and Big Flame) and Geoff Green (Sattley left). On Monday May 19th at 7.45 pm, Big Flame are holding a meeting on their new pamph-

let 'The Past against our future; Fighting Racism and Fascism', at the same address.

CONFERENCES

Why are science and technology important to the Women's Movement is the title of a one-day conference to be held in London on April 26 under the auspices of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science. The conference has been organised by feminists in the BSSRS and aims to examine the ways in which the development of science and technology reflect the power structures and values of institutional male supremacy. Proposed workshops include 'Working in Science and Technology', 'Communicating Scientific and Technical Information to Women', and 'Medicine and the Control of Women'; facilities include a creche and accommodation has also been organised. The conference is being held in the Students' Union of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and more information is available from the BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

CAMPAIGNS

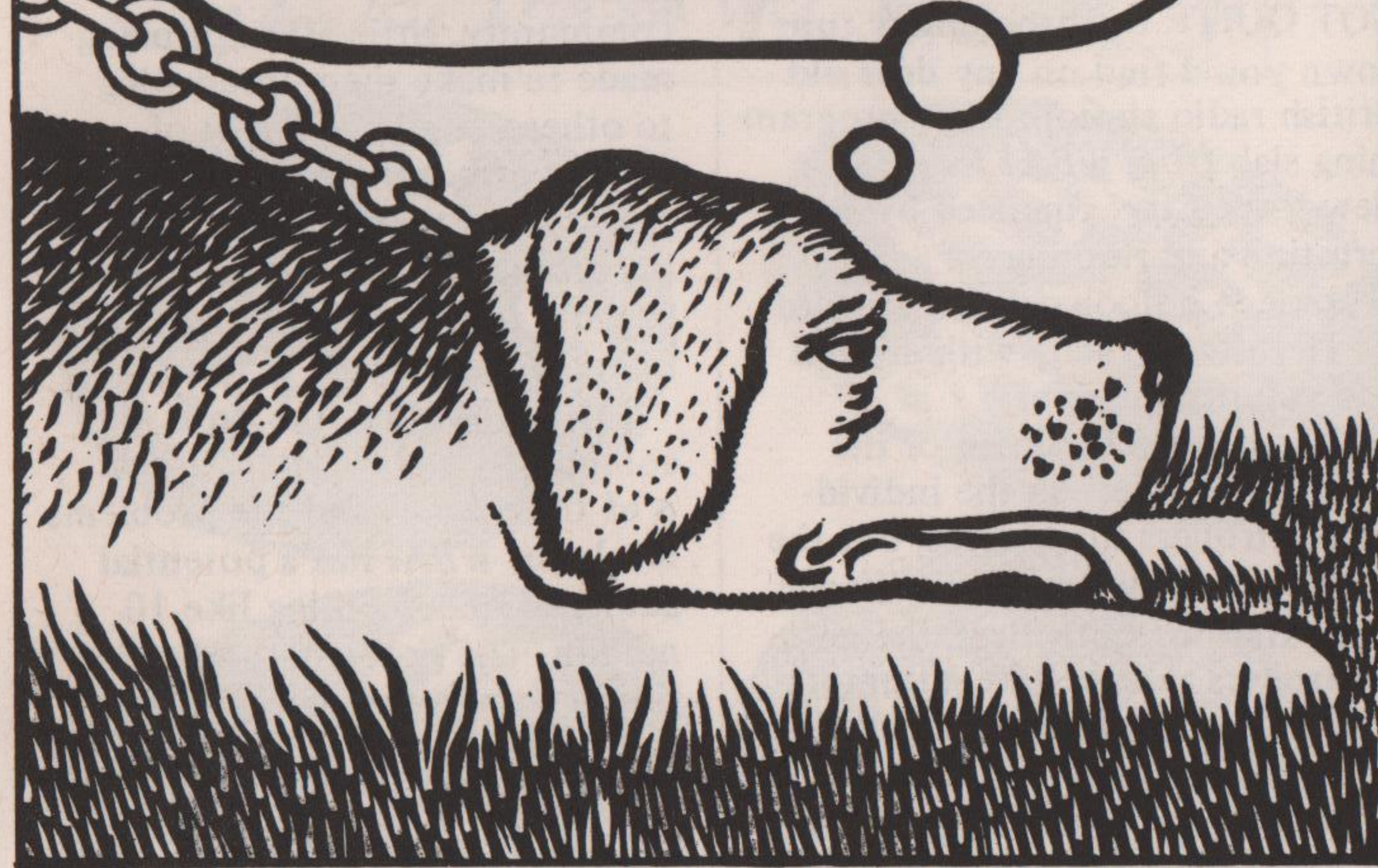
HONG KONG Students Free Campaign Committee is calling on the Hong Kong government to pressurise the UK government into stopping the overseas students fees increase. Since Hong Kong is a British colony, the tax surplus there is deposited

in the UK to support sterling and the Committee points out that this money could be used to set up more educational facilities in Hong Kong and to alleviate the financial difficulties of students already in this country. For further information contact Hong Kong Students Fees Campaign Committee, c/o Kilburn Polytechnic Students Union, Kilburn Polytechnic Chinese Society, 373 Edgware Road, Colindale, London NW9 6NA.

LEEDS UNIVERSITY have again shown that you cannot turn your back for one moment on the establishment, when they refused gay student Geoffrey Brighton a place on their teacher-training course. Brighton was refused on the grounds that he had not passed his medical test. He was declared to be 'unfit' after being referred to a psychiatrist because he was known to be gay. Brighton has been canvassing support for his cause up and down the country with considerable success and the University's own student/staff committee have called for him to be reinstated, and an inquiry into relations between academics and medical practitioners. They have asked the University to reaffirm that it does hold a 'non-discrimination' policy on gays.

Any-one wishing to donate towards the campaign, or help in any other way, should contact Leeds Campaign for the Defence of Gay Students, Leeds Alternative Publications Ltd, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9AD.

In the beginning
the possibilities
seemed
inexhaustible...



In the meanwhile
the situation has
become precarious.



