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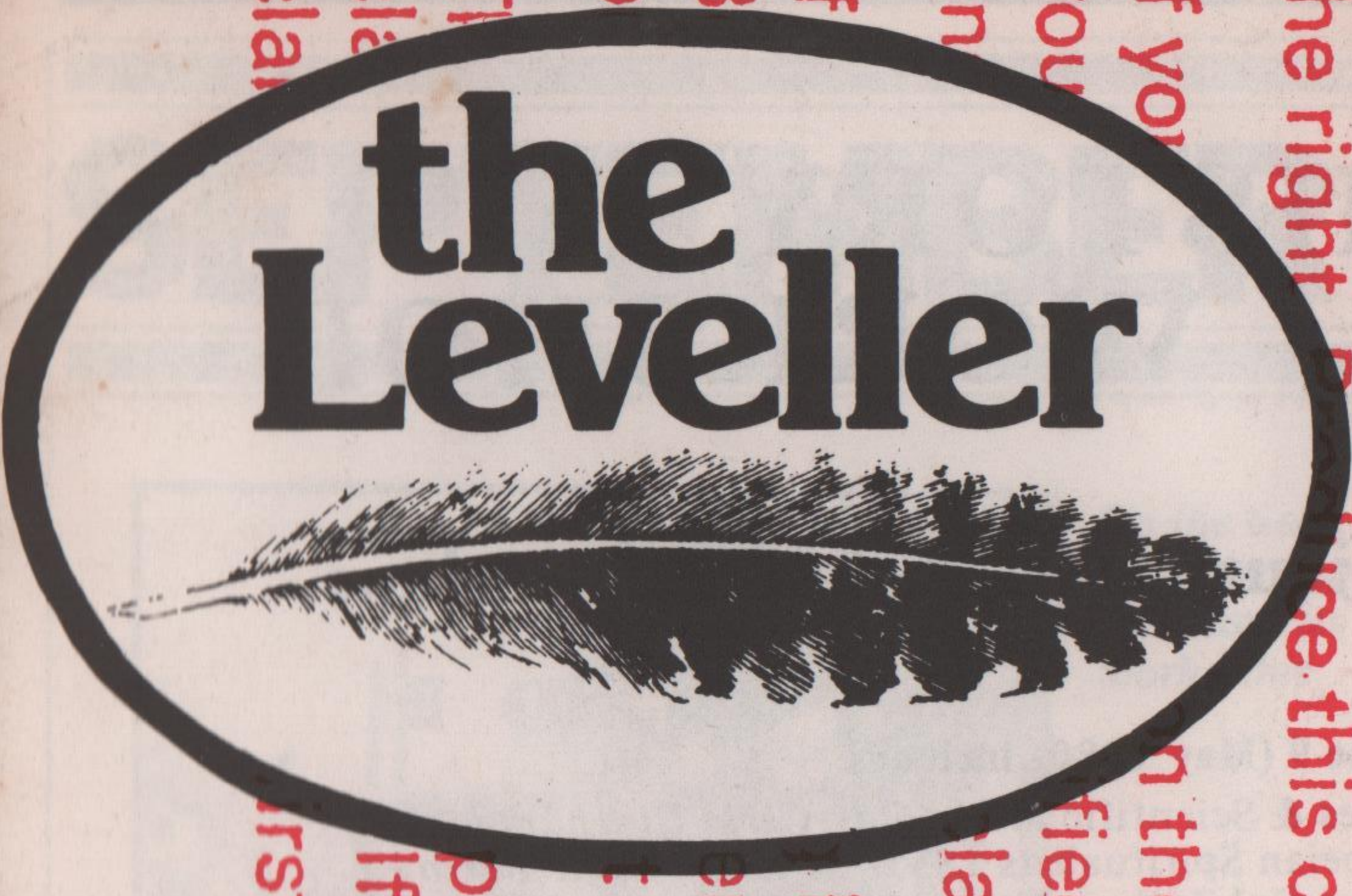
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No 45 Sept 1980

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9	AND THEN EVERY SECOND WEEK ON... MON DAY
9.00	

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"I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND the leaflet 'Responsibilities of Claimants' (UBL18).

I DECLARE that on the following dates **4TH AUGUST 1980**

to 14TH AUGUST 1980

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Signature **Queen Mum** date **4/8/80**

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SEPTEMBER 1980 INSIDE



On the dole: how to
 fight the capitalist
 crisis and its
 work ethic



Are women oppressed by
 women, too? — Centre pages



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 Republic might just get along
 without my services." Now 56,
 and after four attempts, George
 Bush has made the Republican
 vice-presidential candidacy.
 We take a penetrating look behind
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 Reagan's sidekick and find
 nothing reassuring in this
 real-life JR.

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LETTERS

The Leveller, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1

somehow discovered that a relationship was going on, and who felt that the child's consent to it was in some way invalid.

Tom O'Carroll
PIE Executive Committee

Freelancers: guilty man

IN YOUR rush to name the guilty men at the *Daily Mail* in the Workers Socialist League story (August *Leveller*), you have managed to perpetrate an unthinking slur on all those photographers, like myself, who earn their living as freelancers. By classing staffers as 'goodies' and the others as 'cowboys', your attitude is equally as sensationalist as the *Mail's* and unforgivable considering the number of freelance journalists involved in your collective. But the worst hypocrisy is that your publication is generally illustrated by the work of photographers who allow the Left to use their pictures for a pittance or, as in the case of *The Leveller*, for nothing—not even expenses to compensate for materials or time spent in the darkroom.

O'Carroll replies

ZOE FAIRBAIRNS (letters, *Leveller* 39) appears to think PIE's proposals would make it legal for adults to trick and frighten children into sex acts, albeit without overt threats or coercion, by accosting them in dark alleys.

Nothing could be further from the truth. PIE does not say, as Ms Fairbairns implies, that because a child is too startled, nonplussed and overwhelmed in such circumstances to refuse an adult's attentions, that such a failure to refuse in any way constitutes consent. Such an idea is completely repugnant, and I can well understand anyone feeling a sense of outrage if they believe that this is what PIE proposes.

Let us be quite clear what PIE would envisage in such circumstances. As I have written elsewhere, "in the event of a child being unwilling, even passively so, and without having tried to deter the adult, the criminal law should be available, just as in the case of overt intimidation or violence." In other words, just as at present, if the child were to complain to her parents, or to some other adult, that an unwanted act had taken place, the complaint would be sufficient grounds for a prosecution. What's more, the only evidence needed to secure a conviction would relate to whether the act took place, not to whether the child had consented.

Only if a child had no complaint to make would the possibility of PIE's proposed civil law procedure come into operation. Such cases would be initiated by adults, such as parents, who had

survive. My insurance failed to cover replacing the cameras and lenses I lost and the CRE, for whose journal I was, I am sad to say, working that day, refused to pay one penny towards my expenses.

Is this the way the new collective intends to continue? 'Professional' journalists are people who *earn their living* with pens and cameras—it's a *job* just like nursing the sick or working on the line at Leyland. I, for one, do not intend to supply you with any more photographs until you print this letter and an apology.

Val Wilmer

Lesbian replies

I WONDER what contribution *The Leveller* thought it was making to feminist political debate when it published the anonymous letter 'Lesbians: Blind Preference' in the August issue. Your correspondent appears to believe that all lesbians are bitter, disappointed, het-hating fascists. She supports her position with a series of paranoid exaggerations and inventions which are alienating to other women, giving them the idea that lesbian politics is all about genocide and the creation of 'sperm slaves'.

There is a legitimate debate within the women's movement around the issue of separatism, and as a lesbian socialist/feminist I oppose the revolutionary feminist position which defines oppression solely in terms of gender. But the letter doesn't come anywhere near to confronting these real political differences, and instead degenerates into a confused and vituperative attack on all lesbians.

I suppose you had no qualms in publishing the letter since it came from a woman. Was this just an example of tokenism or a welcomed opportunity to sneak a bit of homophobia into the pages of your magazine? But maybe I'm assuming too much in thinking you actually knew what you were printing. After all, no magazine which professes some commitment to the women's movement would be ignorant enough to allow revolutionary feminists to be described as 'lesbian "specialists"' instead of *separatists*. Can you really expect the women's movement to take you seriously.

Melissa Murray

Collective note: Everyone should realise that printing a letter doesn't signify editorial approval... especially in an open paper of the left

God: Being misrepresented

'YOUR cartoon 'Lord God Almighty' in the August issue has just lost you a launch subscription. Its inclusion in your magazine was not only in gross bad taste, but showed that your editorial committee is dismayingly lacking in discrimination and good sense. It is even worse than the liberal use of the word 'fuck' in a previous issue, which, as one of your correspondents says, is a manifestation of adolescence and also shows an inability to communicate important ideas in standard English.

Your magazine has many good, informative articles but if we are going to have to fight our way through to the good ideas through this kind of muck is it worth it?

I happen to revere Jesus, but I would feel exactly the same if you gave this treatment to any other form of religion. Grow up, for God's sake! There are important ideas to be got across about a socialist society, before it is too late. I thought you were doing this — buy now I'm not so sure.

Sherry Waldon
Swindon, Wilts

This month's star letter

I was delighted by recent changes in the *Leveller*—especially the arrival of fortnightly production.

I've recently become unemployed, so I can't give much to your Launch Subscription but here's a £5 anyway.

Good luck,

Phil Lee

THANX, PHIL, IN FACT, YOU ARE A FORTNIGHTLY SUBSCRIBER. IT'S HALF PRICE FOR STUDENTS, CLAIMANTS AND PENSIONERS.

Graphics: negative Sue Clarke of London SE 22 has written to say *The Leveller* should have more pictures in it. Wish granted Sue!



LETTERS

IRISH NEWSLETTER

VIEWERS were treated to a rare piece of coverage on Northern Ireland on the weekend of August 9. Both the BBC and ITN carried footage of a 5,000-strong Republican march through Belfast in solidarity with the prisoners in H Block, Armagh, Port Loeise (Irish Republic) and the gaols of mainland Britain.

Neither station mentioned that there was a strong British Troops Out delegation on the march, although they gave a brief glimpse of the banners without comment.

The delegation, more than 150 people, went to picket the British army forts in Catholic areas of Belfast. They arrived in a city already tense following the previous night's clashes in the Lower Falls Road between Catholic youths and the army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Three people had been killed, one by a rubber bullet, one by a conventional bullet (the army deny it was one of their's) and a soldier run over by one of the army's own massive Allis-Chalmers bulldozers as burning roadblocks were being removed.

The weekend was the ninth anniversary of the introduction of internment in the province, and though internment was discontinued in 1975, it still represents a symbolic focal point for the great majority of Catholics, whom it affects most of all.

In Catholic areas of Belfast like Anderstown or Turf Lodge, the army operate from desolate forts, caged in by mesh-netting and hidden behind scaffold or corrugated iron. It was these forts that the Troops Out delegation had gone to picket. From Dunville Park the small demonstration made its way along the Falls Road, first to the White Rock and then to the Anderstown fort.

Onlookers were at first curious and then supportive. Cars and 'people's taxis' hooted encouragement as the aim of the picket was explained — yes

there really are people on the mainland Britain who want British troops out and self-determination for the Irish people.

In full view of the vast television surveillance cameras, and snipers in their camouflaged pill-boxes high on stilts and an intelligence officer recording events on his own camera, the delegation shouted their message for the British squaddie.

At 'Jericho', near the Turf Lodge estate, the delegation's message was once more hammered home, with the help of the crowd and local kids who drummed on the corrugated iron and lobbed stones.

At the nearby social centre there was a lengthy question and answer session with a number of speeches from the Sinn Fein and *AnPhoblacht/Republican News*. Meanwhile an outdoor 'Rock Against the Block' concert was being held in Anderstown with three English bands.

On Sunday the main Republican procession supporting political status in Long Kesh and Armagh set off from the debris-strewn streets to the Lower Falls. With pipe bands and banners and banners the 5,000 strong march went up Falls Road, the route lined with supporters, past the Anderstown Fort, and up into the heart of the Anderstown itself to rally.

The appearance of two bala clava wearing and armed provos in the midst of the crowd showed that speeches stressing the strength of support for the Provisional IRA were not empty rhetoric. The RUC and army kept a very low profile. The warm applause at the rally for the Troops Out delegation, bringing home to Irish Catholics that there is a movement on the mainland in support of their demands, is an important step. The Catholics of Northern Ireland, the blanket men, and the Armagh women can fight on with mainland support, every move to help them contributes to their eventual victory.

Anarchist conference better than we said

AS YOU have no doubt discovered by now, your article in the last issue on the Oxford Anarchist Conference is likely to provoke a lot of criticism. For reasons of space, I shall try to keep my comments brief.

In general, yes the writer is correct, many of the participants including myself were not too happy with it. It is also true that plenaries tended to be dominated by the more macho.

However there was, in fact, a female chairperson, who did a very good job in trying circumstances. Dave Coult's name is in fact Dave Coull. The magazine you mentioned is, in fact, a discussion bulletin on anarchist organisation open to all relevant contributions and available for a S.A.E. from the address below. This was by no means (as suggested) the only arguably positive thing to come from the conference. To name but a few there was a very useful discussion on the resurgence of the missile issue and some positive steps were taken to improve the circulation of the libertarian press. A libertarian education conference is also being organised as the result of a useful discussion on that topic.

I resent the implication that all anarchists are all hopelessly dis-organised macho posers. The main problem was that there are too many different brands of anarchism with too many differences for us to expect much from such a broad gathering. The particular tendencies are showing a marked trend to more and better organisation.

Don't knock us too much; without the support you are getting from many assorted libertarians your readership and circulation would look very sad indeed.

John Roberts, for
Cardiff Branch DAM,

Join the party

THE FAILURE of the attempts by Labour governments to manage an economic system that doesn't want to be managed make a Labour government a not very interesting option at the moment for a lot of people on the Left. So why join the party?

The answer is that the Labour Party is ready now for radical change. It is now necessary to find a new socialist perspective to encompass an approach to the economy and the environment which discards the idea of permanent economic growth. It must include the conservation of resources and a policy for controlling the slowing down of the economy; it must see that full employment in the future must mean more than 40 hours a week watching the microchips do the work and switching off your mind.

It is a fact of life that only the Labour Party can bring about real radical change in Britain. The Tories can only be the happier at any increase in the extra-parliamentary left; it represents people who have cut themselves off from access either to government or to the mass media. We must work through the system, changing the system as we do so.

The struggle therefore is to build a mass membership for the Labour Party which can make it clear to the party in parliament what the Labour movement really wants; and which can provide people to be local councillors, members of parliament, and all the other jobs which are boring and irrelevant largely because they are now done by boring and irrelevant people. There is a need for a common programme on the Left; as I see it, there is also the need for this programme to be carried out through the only instrument capable of doing so — the Labour Party.

Simon Sweetman



A small stage sop to the struggle

IN JAPAN, many factories have straw-filled effigies of the management that frustrated workers can beat with sticks. At the *Beyond the Fragments* conference, there's going to be a "Bash Mrs. Thatcher Sponge Event" for the over-fives. In London . . . we've got *A Short Sharp Shock*.

Heralded by outrage in the bourgeois press, the play sounded promising. I mean, look at the thick black lines and bold type on the poster: that *proves* it's a proper socialist night out. Look at the articles in the programme: Tariq Ali, John Pilger, Tony Benn. Almost as many stars as at the Debacle of the Decade. Goody, goody, what a treat.

The only good thing about it the evening I went to see it was the fact that all the other people I knew there (about five) thought it was appalling too. A bad play in itself is nothing unusual — we get lotsa those. It was just that this play seemed to exhibit *par excellence* a lot of the faults of British Left politics in general and its theatre in particular. CAST, one of our oldest touring groups, were attacked recently in *The Leveller* for sexism and reactionary stereotyping of working-class people. *A Short Sharp Shock* is certainly guilty of this too. The original title of the play was *Ditch the Bitch* (until pressure from women caused it to be changed), which apart from being grossly sexist is also indicative of another problem . . .

It's perhaps surprising (or perhaps not) that a play about the Tories should have no analysis of Thatcherism, no analysis of why they were elected, no historical, political or economic background of any note and no information that would be news to anyone who'd glanced at a paper from time to time over the last year. What we got was a vaguely radicalized Oxford Revue, a series of jokes that would have been more at home between the pages of *Private Eye* than flaunted at an event seemingly sanctioned by the "official" Left.

That Benn & Co support a play like this is entirely consistent with their politics. *A Short Sharp Shock* attacks the Tories without offering anything to put in its place.

It's true of most Left parties, too, especially on the Trotskyist axis. "Bash Thatcher", "Kick out the Tories", "We ain't going to work on Maggie's Farm" etc. scream the headlines in the party papers. The Left being the unrealistic opposition that it is, joining in with the trade unions to "bash Thatcher" is only going to pave the way for another five years of Labour. Have we learnt nothing from what's happened since 1972?

The "government" in the play, like the "governed", are caricatures, not

characters. Keith Joseph is a lunatic. Thatcher is a commonsensical housewife. Most of the rest of the Cabinet are just nasty bullies (except for Prior, who's almost a sympathetic character). But these people are not lunatics or overgrown public schoolboys. They know what they're doing, and they act intelligently from the logic of their position.

This is a problem with most agitprop: a boss exploits workers because s/he is "greedy", a politician tortures someone because s/he is "nasty" and not because the relations of production compel them to do so. Our problem isn't one of individuals and it's misleading to suggest, as most Left theatre does, that it is.

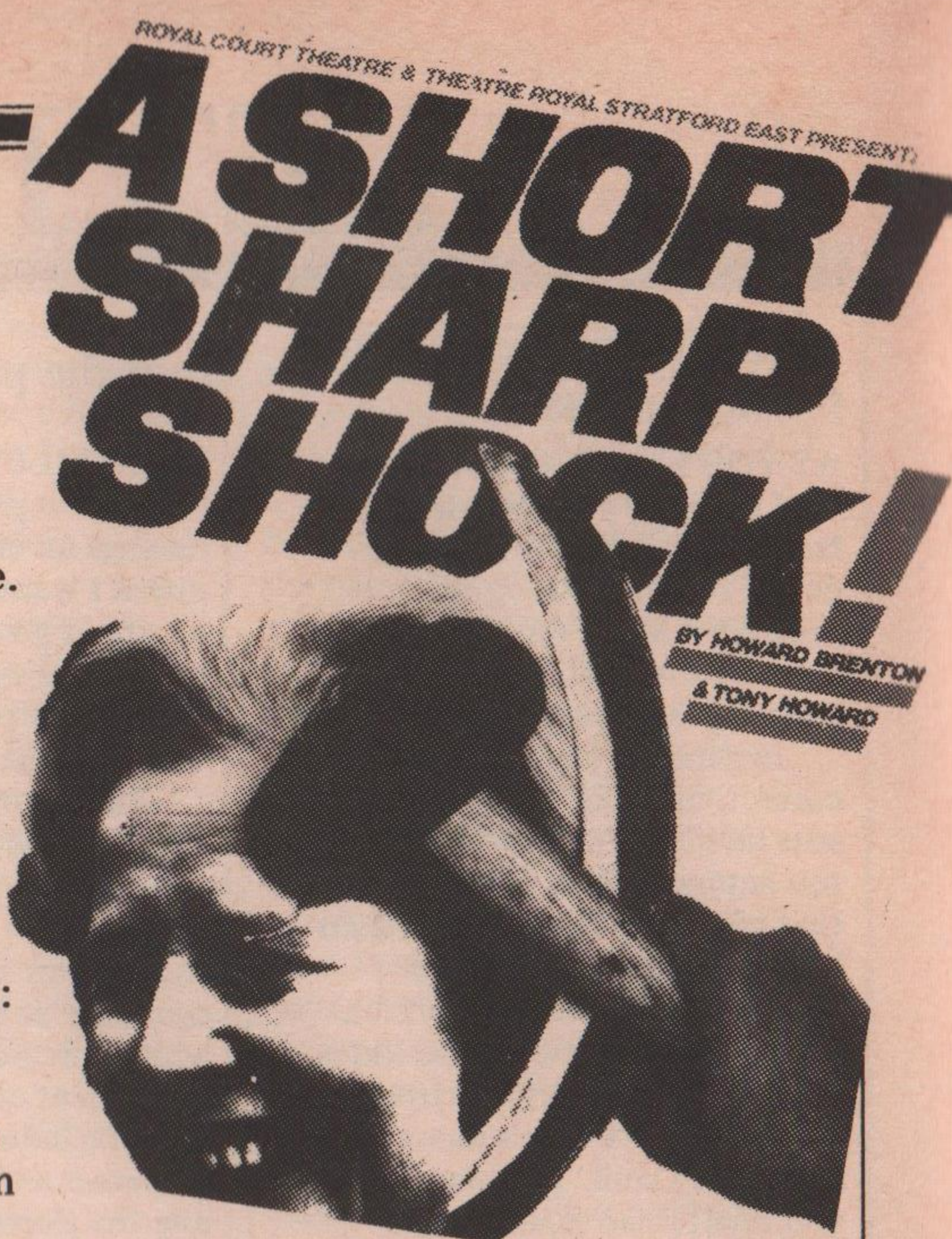
That *A Short Sharp Shock* has been successful — lots of us have been to see it — demonstrates that it fills a need. To present Thatcher & Co as it does renders them symbolically harmless for the duration of the play and provides a focus for the hate and anger of the audience. Emotions are purged, tensions relaxed, and everyone goes home feeling good as a result. It's satisfying in the short term. But as long as the Japanese worker attacks the dummy and not the boss, he will continue to be exploited.

The interests of the existing order are well served by having our anger expelled harmlessly, in a "neutral" space . . . be that theatre, concert hall, football stadium or room in a factory. This is a bourgeois function of culture. Milton Shulman meant more than he thought when he described it as "the kind of play that disarms criticism."

Of course, those responsible may claim that it's just "entertainment" and here lies another problem. It's not enough for our theatre to produce confirmatory fantasies that function like Left versions of *Coronation Street* or *Crossroads*, that entertain or amuse in a fashion that simply reflects our existing view of the world. Especially not when that theatre seems to echo uncritically the shortcomings of our fractional movement.

"Culture" is not just something to fill out the back pages of the party papers, something that belongs with "leisure" not "work" and thus is outside the business of "real" struggle. If Left theatre was just a "socialist night out", ideologically sound entertainment, then none of this would matter overmuch. But people live their lives in and through culture of one sort or another. The ruling class realize this only too well, and their machinery for dealing with people's desires is an integral part of their domination.

It's about time we woke up to this fact and started thinking about a culture of our own that would *satisfy* people's desires instead of co-opting them. A



realistic opposition should be in the form of a "counterculture", combative, a place for drawing strength, an area for strategic retreat, something that would make the idea of struggle attractive.

Left theatre is getting so complacent. At one extreme we've got *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* doing a storm in the West End. Tourists can buy "Disband the SPG" badges as show souvenirs while the cast rush through the reform/revolution argument at the end as though it embarrasses them (and maybe it does). At the other end of the spectrum the various small groups tread the same old agitprop ground, pocket their Arts Council grants, and preach mostly to the converted in a self-congratulatory atmosphere that defeats discussion.

An example? CAST can't believe "that *The Leveller* should join the ranks of the *Sun* and *Telegraph* and mount an attack on us from the right . . ." (letter *Leveller* 40). From the right? For being sexist and presenting workers as bourgeois stereotypes? Fair enough criticism of a "socialist" theatre group, I would have thought. But no, they cite their 15 years in showbiz and expect a pat on the head because they work hard and mean well.

Things move so quickly these days . . . the Tories pass measures in an afternoon that would have taken months of agonized debate under Labour. Meanwhile we all seem to dance to tunes played by the ruling-class. Our theatre attempts to radicalize bourgeois forms, while the party papers waste hundreds of column inches to denouncing the Red Army Faction, deploring the Russians in Afghanistan or taking on the fascists at their own statistical games. Things are stirring, debates are beginning, but the Right are moving quicker than we are. Good intentions are not enough. If they were, we might just as well employ our time at the *Beyond the Fragments* conference throwing wet sponges at an effigy of Thatcher as do anything else. We're all over five after all. See you there.

Dave Rimmer

SUPPORT THE CONSERVATIVES

MONETARISM IS SOLVING THE CRISIS



"Look! We're already drawing the benefit."

EVERYONE in work is so agains : unemplo ,ment it almost hurts. Government, employers, media people — particularly those half-crazed faceless people who write newspaper leading articles; they almost bleed. The Queen Mother is probably against it too, in her radiant way. (Actually it hurts the unemployed themselves even more.)

Most of the left and right agree: there should be more work. It's such a waste of labour to have people who aren't contributing to production. And men and women have a Right to Work. It is a crime against them to withdraw their chance to get exploited.

This is the line of most of the left. Our papers, like the commercial Press, are full of pictures and interviews with working class people in rundown industrial areas, fighting not just to survive but for their *dignity*. For it is on the level of a person's contribution to production that his/her position in society depends. It is the same in the Soviet Union. It would be the same in a socialist Britain ruled by our Leninist parties.

Being at work is integration with the community. Out of it is isolation. It is not just poverty that keeps jobless people sitting at home, listening to the clock ticking. Capital has organised society round the workplace. Camaraderie among fellow workers makes their exploitation bearable. Organisation among them is all that has improved their material conditions over the years. Deprived of these, people wither and die. This is no exaggeration.

The state can play on this in the interest of capital. People are thrown out of work when their labour is no longer productive, and the state puts the boot in with a vengeance. Harassment and humiliation are employed to drive them back to work of some kind. Lower pay, no union? Fine. The welfare state's rules and regulations make their living *precarious*. Insecurity makes people susceptible to control.

But to portray the unemployed purely as victims, to demand as the solution 'more jobs', just perpetuates the system. The arrival in a high-unemployment area, for instance, of some American or European multinational, pumped fat with state grants, to take on a few hundred cheap workers, till the money runs out, should not be a cause for celebration. "What is the alternative?" everyone cries. Well, there are several.

The first, already a left demand, and, officially at least, the policy of most unions, is work-sharing. To eke out such employment as declining capital has to offer among as many people in as fair a way as possible. More honoured in the breach...

The second is to fight for unemployed people, as such. At the material level, to fight politically for higher levels of benefit, paid out without hassle, and against social security cuts; and at the social level, to affirm that life does not depend on capital to bring the unemployed into the community.

Both these alternatives recognise that capital will never employ more people, however we rage. Whoever dreams otherwise should argue with a computer.

The third is to fight for more jobs now. To resist redundancies and the technological change that causes some of them, and to demand a tinkering with the capitalist economy to prevent the industrial collapse that causes others (import controls, more investment in nationalised industry, no spending cuts, state aid to private firms, and so on). These again are standard labour movement demands.

Fourthly, we can create our own work, by taking over factories, setting up co-operatives, or finding constructive things to do as individuals or groups.

The fifth alternative is socialist revolution. The big bang. For a lot of the left, it is fifth or nothing. The leadership of the Right to Work Campaign, for instance, is quite open about it. Most of the Claimants' Union, the Campaign Against Social Security Cuts, the Campaign Against Youth Unemployment, is purely palliative. As for the worker co-operatives, they are a diversion.

So they organise for the contradictory aims of fighting redundancies on one hand, and revolution on the other. Demanding that state or private capital employ more people, and telling the unemployed that nothing can be done until we've thrown over the whole stinking system. This is 'organising the unemployed' at the most cynical level.

So the next question is: what follows the revolution? How will production and social relations be organised? If people are only recognised as workers and consumers, and the party is going to ensure they do both to the limit of their ability... what kind of change is that? Alternatively, again, we could build autonomous groups in the community, the workplace, the political grouping; co-operatives, collectives, communes, existing outside the centralised structures of the state, involving whole communities, rejecting class divisions rooted in production; models of the kinds of society we'd like to see. It will be hellish difficult, but there's no other reason we can't do it now — and work on the other alternatives, too. On the following pages, *The Leveller* tries to look at work in this light.

A nation of moonlighters

THE CONVENTIONAL attitude to the hidden economy is like that to the clap: something nasty but endemic, but which has a vague air of illicit excitement behind it. Words like 'fiddling' and 'moonlighting' give their perpetrators a seedy glamour. Where's the political fault in swindling an employer or the state?

At the level of the worker, pressed to survive on a low wage, earning, stealing or fiddling a bit on the side, it's fair enough.

In fact the incentive for people to boost their income illicitly (most of the activity is not illegal) is not just economic, but social and ideological. Socially acceptable crime — like speeding or drunken driving; everyone does it. In many workplaces fiddling is the rule. The hidden economy — hidden for good reason — is just a giant loophole through legislative protection fought for by organised labour: the 'progressive' income tax system, laws against fraud and for the protection of employees. A side door at the bank where the bourgeoisie pull up their company cars.

The victims are working people whose incomes are proportionately lower and tax contributions higher; and the unemployed, whose potential work is taken away. For well-organised labour is often deeply into it. In an industry like the print, rigid closed shops restrict entry while grabbing huge amounts of moonlight work for those already inside.

Thatcherism is really an attempt to apply the morality of the hidden or 'black' economy on a macro scale. Free enterprise is not a theory, but the scrapping of barriers built to protect the victims, not of the market, as they like to pretend, but of a society where people with capital and power can do as they wish.

So far, the swag has been estimated, by the head of the Inland Revenue, at £9,000 million a year, as 7.5 percent of GNP. A recent report from the Outer Circle Policy Unit says you can't really tell — well naturally — but it's 'difficult to believe in a figure of less than five percent.'

As long as people are led by the 'example' of enterprise, they will swindle and fiddle and work overtime to their accountants' content, and the 'black economy' will survive all the righteous deprecation that social democrats can summon. It's not peculiar to Thatcherism because it's always been part of the capitalist system. It will stop when it's no longer in people's interest, when they won't have to steal from their employers because they don't have employers. It will be nice not to have to.

The Right to Slave?

THE STATE has always tried to reinforce feelings of worthlessness in the unemployed. Dole offices are designed to communicate to the claimant that what is received is a generous gift to those too idle or incompetent to help themselves. You wait in queues for hours, are given a cloakroom ticket with a number which won't come up for another two hours, and are finally called to a booth. The real business starts at the Social Security. The chairs are screwed to the floor, and you face your interviewer through a pane of glass. You are asked why you left your last job, who you share your flat with, and, if you're a woman, subject to humiliating interrogation about your relations with men.

Of course, when you're not working you're thought to have nothing better to do. You're certainly not supposed to have any pride left. Older working men, particularly, find themselves deprived not only of financial security but also of their standing in close-knit patriarchal communities, of the place they meet their mates, of company and self-esteem.

'What do you do for a living?' is often the first question we ask on being introduced. Our passports state our profession. But the idea that your job is a measure of what you are is not an immutable truth. It is deliberately propagated doctrine that coincides with the growth of capitalism.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the emerging bourgeoisie began to challenge the old feudal order. In an age when religion was still the major ideological force, the challenge took a religious guise.

Working through the Protestant reformation, it was a movement of asceticism, a belief that the individual was directly answerable to God, rather than part of a supportive social structure. The ideology of work, thrift and self-reliance was essential to the capitalist mode of production. It absolved the bourgeois of responsibility to help any but themselves.

Capitalism needed this ideological weapon to force people to acquiesce in a system which was even less in their interests than mediaeval feudalism. Within its rigid hierarchy, feudalism did at least provide a minimum security within the community. The growth of capitalism replaced this with naked insecurity. It legitimised survival by competition; for the weak and unfortunate there was starvation or the workhouse.

To enslave people totally to such a system meant referring to higher authority than materialist arguments could provide. Only the word of god had the charisma to devote whole societies to an ultimately purposeless ritual.

The resurgence of the work ethic and the doctrine of self help under the Thatcher government has gone hand in hand with a savage attack on the Welfare State. For the religion of gurus like Keith Joseph and Milton Friedman is essentially no different from that of the seventeenth century Puritan who wrote that 'As for idle beggars, happy for them if fewer people spent their foolish pity upon their bodies, and if more shewed some wise compassion upon their souls.'

The alternatives to work glorification have hardly been looked at by the trade unions and organised left in Britain. Mobilising under the 'Right to Work' banner, their necessary attentions to the economic and social hardships of those facing closure and redundancies, seem to have precluded any serious examination of the necessity or desirability of total full-time employment. It has become another of those questions like feminism, which have been conveniently shelved until 'after the revolution'.

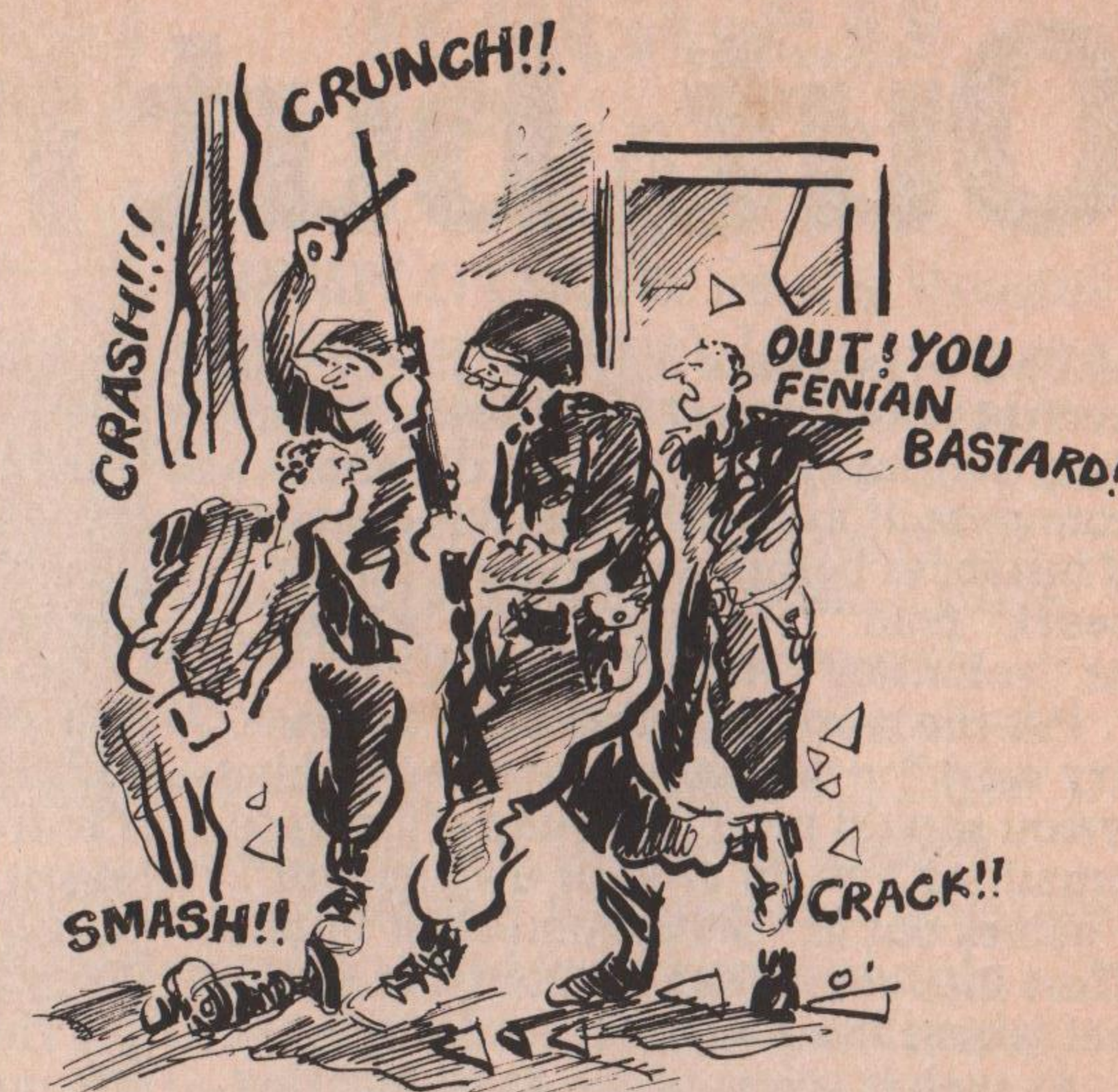
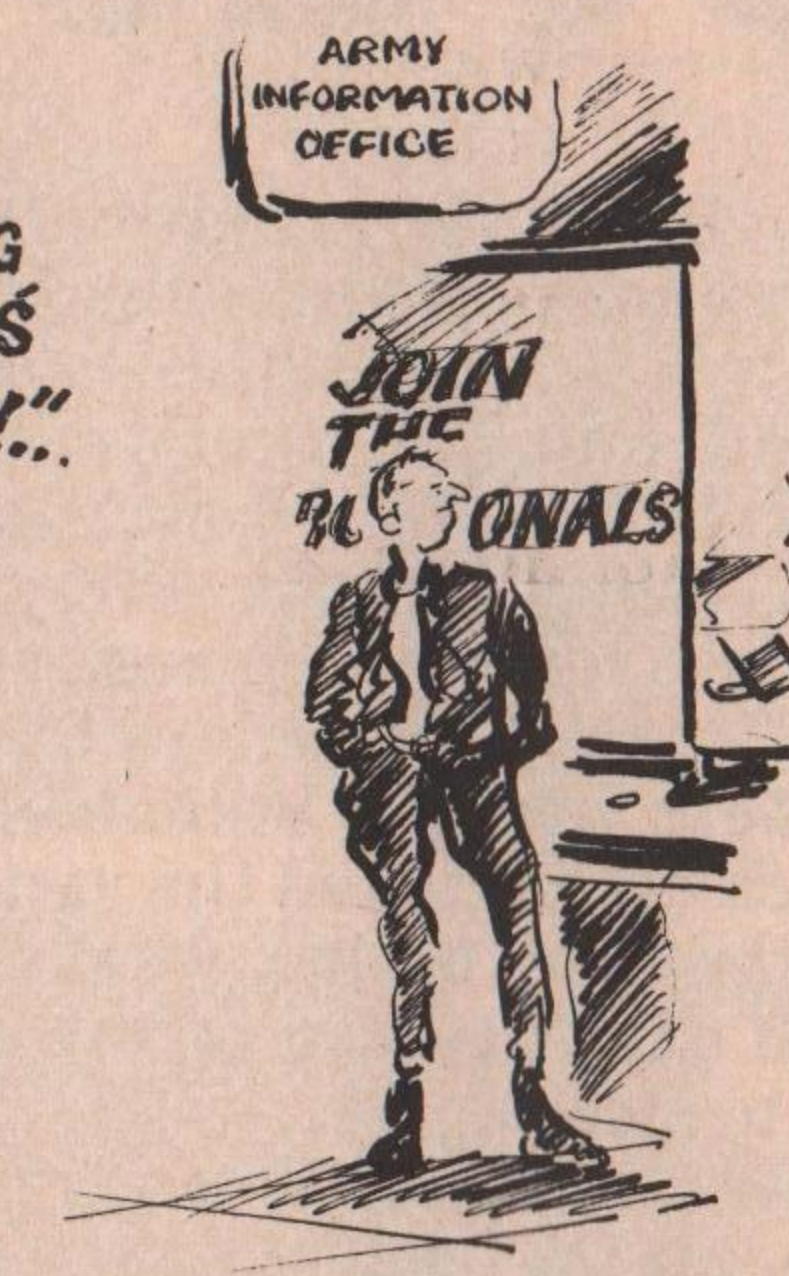
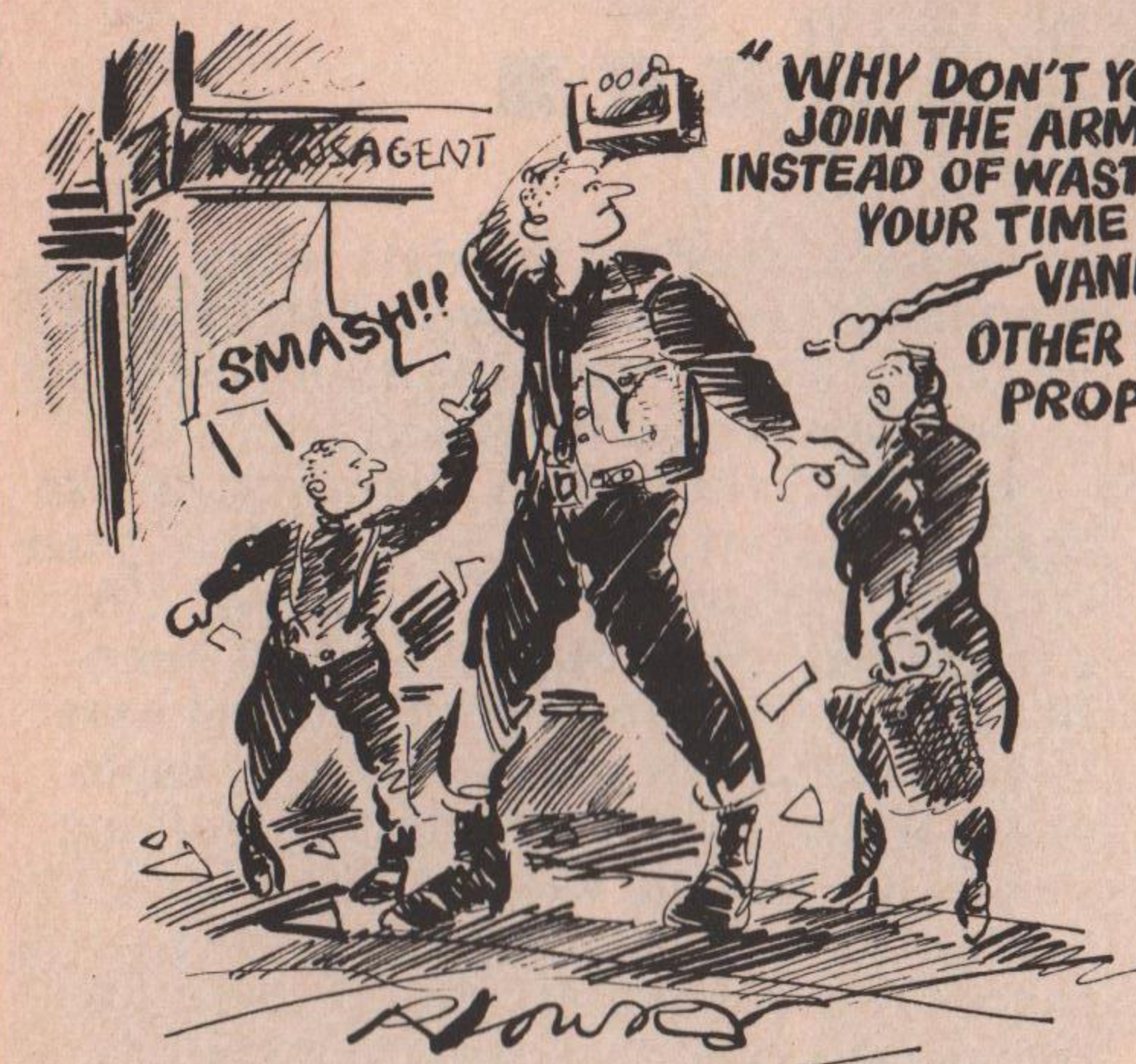
But the fact remains that modern industrialised societies, particularly since the arrival of microtechnology, do not need anything near total full-time employment to sustain their material well-being. Even by employing vast numbers of people in the unproductive jobs necessary to sustain the pointless and intricate acrobatics of finance, capitalism can no longer fulfil this promise.

If we look at a society like the Soviet Union, which maintains full employment by bureaucratic and legal constraints, we find the same to be true. Factories in the Ukraine are stockpiling hundreds of tractors that nobody needs; they are simply produced so that the workers can do something all day in a country where unemployment is punishable by imprisonment.

The work ethic is so deeply ingrained in our minds that many left organisations consciously or unconsciously subscribe to it.

While we need to campaign for the right to a decent living, and while, under capitalism, this regrettably means the right to be a wageslave, the left must see its way beyond the absurdity of eight hours a day of everybody's time — not because it's necessary but because it's good for their souls. We must fight for stronger claimants unions, for a better Welfare state, for men to take on housework, for shorter working hours and increased leisure facilities. We must learn from the women's movement and cherish the personal. Otherwise what alternative do we have to Margaret Thatcher's suggestion that we move to a strange town where we have no friends or relatives in return for the dubious privilege of a job.

Rob George and Chris Schüler



IN 1932 I became unemployed after two-and-a-half years as a ten-shillings-a-week office boy. My father had been a self-employed ships' scrap merchant. But after the 1926 strike less and less shipping came into Cardiff docks and so it was impossible for him to earn a living.

Not entitled to dole, he received a 15-shilling (75p) food voucher each week. A younger sister was earning 10 shillings a week in a laundry and I received 7s 6d (37½p) dole. There were three other children under 14, our mother having died in the aftermath of a seventh pregnancy in 1929.

Rent was 12s 6d a week. The food voucher could cover only bare essentials: bread, margarine, flour, sugar, tea, etc. Grocers were forbidden to exchange the voucher for luxuries. Some weeks the chain shop manager would relent and allow a packet of biscuits and a few sweets for the younger ones. We were friendly with one of the girl helpers in the local bakery and if she served us we were able to get more cakes than buns in a twopenny bag of stale pieces.

At one time, the only clothes I had were a pair of trousers given by a friend and a jacket given by an uncle, and a couple of 3s 6d Marks & Spencer shirts. The children were issued with boots, the leather uppers of which were punched with holes, as a sign to pawnbrokers not to accept them. We were no better or worse off than most of the neighbourhood.

Authority seemed to take pleasure in our degradation. You had to say 'no work' to a usually pompous clerk before being allowed to sign the claim form for the dole. A good deal of vicious cat-and-mouse play took place. Clerks could review the means test, virtually on the spot, frequently threatening the workhouse. Gradually some people learned to call their bluff and agree to submit their families to this degradation; then the clerks would give in and pass the claim. Of course this was not always the case. I remember vividly that a few doors away lived a man fallen on hard times, his wife dead and family grown up. One boy remained, a lad of about eleven. I was looking out of the bedroom window one day when I saw the man and lad were pushing a ladder truck with a wardrobe

7s6 a week in 1932 £15.40 a week in 1980

AS BRITAIN slides back to the bitter days of the 1930s, Bob Trott reminds us just how bad it was and wonders: do we have to experience such grim reality in every generation to keep our socialist principles in focus?

on it, the last saleable item of their home. I learned later that the lad was going to a married sister and the man into a workhouse.

One clerk at the Parish Office had previously been an insurance collector, who had been sacked for fiddling the books. It was galling for this man to hold sway over you. One morning a married man with four children, in front of me, went to draw his dole. For some reason the benefit had been stopped. The clerk said to him: "Nil desperandum". He asked what that meant and on being told something he went berserk and leapt the counter and beat up the clerk. The till went flying; the police were called and the man was led away and later sent to a mental hospital.

The large city still provided amusements that helped retain sanity. There would be crowds of 300 to 400 for each of the free Wednesday League football matches — with several games playing simultaneously. But there was a whole lore of survival tricks. Acid scorn was poured out by the Tory Press citing the

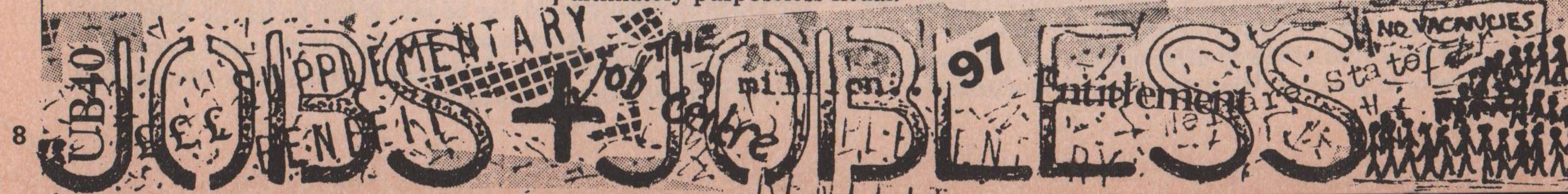
ability to smoke as a sign of scrounging on the state by the unemployed. In fact, one cigarette could give more relief to the nerves, and at 1d for two, was cheaper than a cooked meal, but you had to be deft to ration out a supply. Woodbines were sold in open-topped packets of five, so that by using two fingers carefully, one cigarette could be extracted from a packet without it becoming apparent to equally desperate friends what your store was.

The stock of the city library facilitated all my reading during these years. Another way of passing the time informatively was weekly attendances in the public gallery of the law courts, which were crowded out with debtors. There were innumerable cases of the Premier Cheque Company against Jones, Thomas, Evans. The double iniquity of this company was that it issued its loans through door-to-door brokers at the interest rate of 2s 6d in the £, but when using the cheques in shops another shilling in the £ had to be added for the proprietor, over and above the cost for those paying in cash.

Humour played its part in our survival. Men could still joke about their plight. If you asked, 'had they found work, they would answer: "No thanks". One man jokingly told me he had asked the foreman of a road gang if he could give him a start. The foreman looked him up and down and replied: "Yes, lad, I'll give you 10 in 100 and beat you any day."

The council found work for some men, who had been out of work the longest — three, four or five years; six months' work and then others were given the chance. In those days casual labourers were sent home if it rained heavily and of course you lost the pay in those hours. One man I knew on this scheme was working diverting a stream. This meant smashing up concrete beds with sledghammers and a pickaxe while standing in about two feet of water. This man told me what a good foreman he had. "He lets us go on working no matter how hard it rains."

Three million of us could have written books on the Thirties. Perhaps we still should; why has it become impossible to really impress the dangers of capitalism on this generation?



Out, but not down....

ABUSE of language may not be our rulers' greatest crime against the people, but since their use of words is so different from ours, it's as well to establish a couple of instances before we proceed. So for "work" read "be employed by capital"; for "voluntary", read "forced".

Put the words together and "voluntary work" — which to any free-thinking person should mean "putting effort into something you do of your own accord" — comes out as "being compelled to put effort into something without the reward that labour has fought to get for it".

As such it is one of the most exciting fantasies in the Tory wet dream, and Tory "wet" James Prior (perhaps that's where another abuse of the language comes from) was fantasising happily when he mused on his ideas to set the long-term unemployed "working voluntarily" to a Commons select committee in July.

In real language, the idea sounds so satisfying, putting sadly idle hands to a socially useful purpose and "solving" the unemployment problem all in one go, that the hostile reaction it got must have woken him with a start.

You'll recall it was his side-kick, Lord Gowrie, who actually gave the game away by admitting the element of compulsion that should be introduced. This had the result of preventing the announcement of definite plans, which the government had hoped to make before the end of the session on August 8. But the truth is that his widely publicised "gaffe" — there goes another one — didn't make any real difference at all.

For the aim isn't so much to make the idle productive as to get work done without pay. Even if the work isn't to be "compulsory", it is still work that the workers don't choose, and which others should be doing. Specifically, the plan is an adjunct to public spending cuts: to lay off public service workers and have their tasks performed by the unemployed for levels of benefit well below the union-negotiated pay rates. To cut employment, lower wage rates and weaken the unions.

And in case anyone thinks that's just a fantasy — it's already happening. Unnoticed by the national media, there has been a dispute going on at Torbay Hospital in Devon, where staff, members of the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE) have been refusing to sign NHS contracts compelling them to work with volunteers. The reason: these volunteers are performing the jobs of hospital ancillaries laid off because of the cuts. The contracts were part of a policy announced in a DHSS circular last November, that it would be a condition of employment in the NHS that staff agree to work with volunteers, whatever they are doing.

The use of volunteers — mostly the bored middle class rather than the long-term jobless, so far — is already a very touchy subject in the health service. It was

obviously so during the pay strikes of 1978/79 — we won't plunder the language further by abusing Shakespeare — when people like the Prime Minister's wife were rushing to scab in the hospitals, though not so enthusiastically in the graveyards or on the refuse rounds, one noticed — but even earlier the NHS unions had come to an agreement with the Volunteer Centre, which co-ordinated the various charities in the field, on just what volunteers can and can't do. This agreement Prior wants to smash.

There are reactionary elements in the voluntary sector that would co-operate. And it's not such a great extension of the much-vaunted "job creation" schemes run by Labour governments, either. Labour on the cheap, undercutting unions, getting young people to "earn" the £19 a week they would almost be entitled to as benefit, was supposed to be greatly progressive. They were volunteers! (What choice did they have? And they were being trained in skills! (To use precisely how?) (To provide a cheap source of skilled labour, that's how.)

At least the Tories' logic is better. They're not now pretending there are "jobs" to go to. They've always penalised the long-term "unemployed" for not taking jobs. Now it will be for not doing "voluntary work". That's what Gowrie actually said: "Cut their benefit".

Now, if the Tories meant what their words mean, that would be fine. If people who either rejected employment by capitalists, or were rejected by them, were

to be maintained by the state while carrying in real voluntary, socially useful work, for which capitalists are never going to pay, that would be grand.

However, the system doesn't work like that. For a start, if you leave a job of your own will you are "fined" six weeks' UB, and can have your Supplementary Benefit docked. Then, to receive UB you have to be available for employment by capitalists. Which means you must do *nothing*. People on the dole who are discovered doing full-time voluntary work, for a charity, for community groups, even for friends, can have their benefit stopped. Sometimes just for a day; but if you don't turn up to sign on, of course, to prove in person that you aren't doing anything, you lose a whole week's money.

Thousands of people, of course, get away with it. Not just those rejected by capital, but those who *choose* not to be employed. A most positive decision. People who are working in the community or for other claimants, or producing lefty magazines; all much more valuable ways of spending time for society than hiring themselves out to an employer to churn out useless products, joining the armed forces — or doing nothing.

"Work" is not just "productive" effort that brings a return on capital. "Voluntary" is not doing for free what someone else should be paid to do. Voluntary work, not for capital and not for the state, but against them, and for the people, is what more people should be doing. Is Mr Prior about to encourage this?

Ireland: All in the

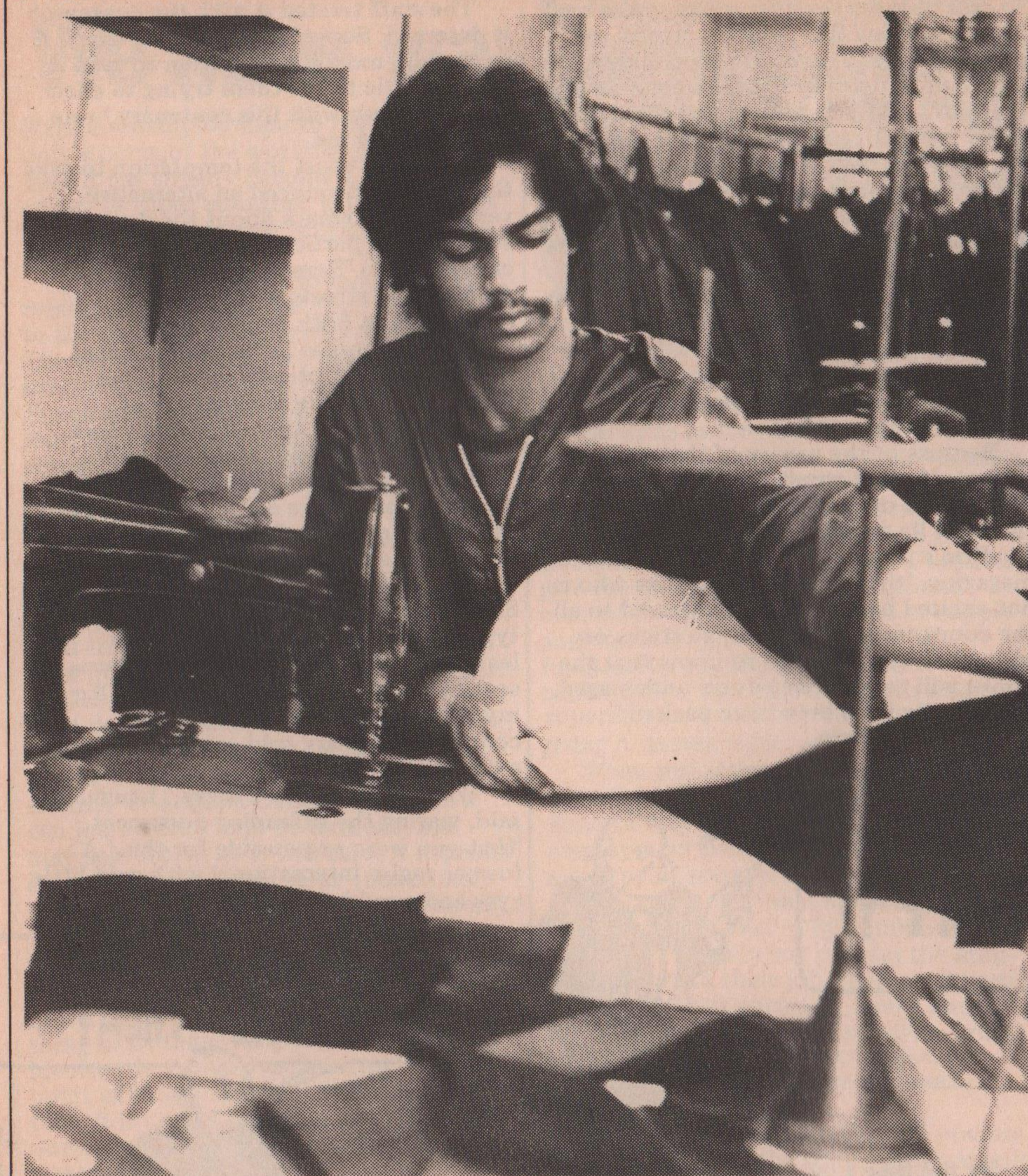
'WE KNOW they won't get a job when they leave. They know it and so does the Northern Ireland Office. We just keep them off the streets for a while.' The Belfast Technical College conveniently straddles the sectarian divide, half way between the start of the Falls and the Shankill. It used to turn out hundreds of Protestant apprentices for the shipyard, and dozens of Catholics for the textile industry. No more.

The shipyard, for a century the mainstay of the economy, now employs just over 7,000 people, compared with 25,000 20 years ago. It only employs anyone because of £105 million of investment poured in from Westminster. If the shipyard closed, unemployment, currently at 70,000, would go up by ten percent. The recent announcement of a tanker construction order acknowledges the threat of an unemployed Protestant working class rather than any need to add to an already glutted world tanker market. And textiles? Forget textiles. Production in the first four months of the

year fell by 12.1 percent, and employers, large and small, were laying off workers and shutting up shop despite the availability of the cheapest labour in the EEC. The Technical College will open again in the autumn, despite a rundown of teachers caused by spending cuts, but the only students likely to get jobs are the TV repair apprentices and the nurses.

Unemployment is nothing new, particularly for Catholics. Ten years ago, when it stood at just 3.5 percent in the UK, it was over 7 percent in Northern Ireland. And that overall figure obscured patches as high as 40 percent in parts of Derry. Today, with the UK figure at 6.6 percent, Northern Ireland's has gone over 12 percent. And in some parts, like Ballymurphy, the sprawling estate in north-west Belfast, it's over 50 per cent for adult males. Women's unemployment is harder to assess because of under-registration.

Life like that is very raw. Even an apprenticeship is something to dream about, let alone a job afterwards.



RAGGED TRADE

UNEMPLOYMENT among Bengali youths around Brick Lane runs at a staggering 50%. The collapse is in the clothes industry where they have traditionally found employment. The Bangla Deshi Workers Association blames the government's economic policy. Higher interest rates on loans and high VAT are squeezing out the small traders.

Vocational training and language centres could help these people find employment in other trades; but so far no adequate facilities have been provided. At the moment, the future of Bengali youths in the area looks grim.



'I used to employ 35 people, now I have work for only 16 people. That also is not on a regular basis. Next week you will find us closed. Chain shops like C&A have completely stopped doing business with us.'

Mr S Rahman of Roystar Fashions Ltd is typical of the small clothing manufacturers in the Brick Lane area of East London. Within the last year most of the small shops have gone out of business. The existing factories survive by cutting back drastically on workers. Overtime and part-time work is non-existent. Most shops have had to resort to price cuts. Mr Barrister Ali of Zahir Fashions sells his garments at 30% less than last year.

'The textile industry has been invaded by cheap foreign goods,' says Mr M. Naway of Wink Leather Ltd. 'The production costs of these goods are very little and we cannot compete with them.'

Rohan Jayawardene.

same boat

Just on the top of Ballymurphy there's a patch of green belt. A few years ago a group of community workers and priests, alarmed at the lack of work in the area, cajoled and bullied their way through the regulations to set up small factories. It wasn't much but it was a start. Mysteriously one of them burnt out, then another, and another. The local authority obstructed repairs and development, the electricity was turned off. Then overnight the Army moved in and turned the place into a fort. Now it houses the unemployed of Newcastle and Cardiff, training their guns on the unemployed of Ballymurphy.

A recent report by the management consultants, Cooper Lybrand, suggested that up to 100,000 people will be out of work by the end of this year. Others say it will be 80,000; the equivalent for the UK of 3 to 4 million. Unemployment, for so long a means of controlling the Catholic working class, is hitting the loyalists too. And it hurts them cruelly,

accustomed as they are to relative privilege. If the shipyard goes that will be the end.

Ireland's economy served the Empire well, its products fitting neatly into the grand design. The peasantry of the south grew the flax for the textile industry of the north, whose yards built the ships for the imperial trade routes (and the warships to defend them). Ireland's sons manned the outposts of Empire, in a thousand boiler rooms and gunrooms. Engineering and textiles flourished, and even after the uprising, Irish artisans turned to the new age of the aircraft. It was a sordid set-up, but at least it made a profit and rarely hit the headlines.

But times have changed, not simply because of the IRA's campaign, which has helped to stop virtually all serious investment since 1970, but because things no longer work that way. Northern

(Continued on page 13)



What price a job?

The office manager had come in quietly. 'Chris,' she said. 'Can you go downstairs to Iain Laughland's office? You know where it is, don't you?' Thirty minutes later, writes Chris Schüler, I'd been 'dismissed from the company's service.'

THIS IS A FAMILY FIRM. WE LIKE PEOPLE TO FEEL THEY BELONG.



BENN BROS LTD publish a number of trade *Trades Journal* and *Cabinet Maker* are amongst their titles — which chronicle the exploits of entrepreneurs and multinationals, commercial dinners, deaths and retirements. They exist purely for the sale of advertising.

The hundred year old family firm is a survival of the Victorian Nonconformist philanthropic tradition. Weighed down under a stifling paternalism, the firm today is one of the largest non-unionised trade publishing houses in the country, paying wages well below union houses like IPC. Many staff are expected to work unpaid overtime on a regular basis, and the firm do not consider themselves obliged to pay redundancy or relocation expenses when they transfer their operations from Fleet Street to Tonbridge next year. Holidays and sickness benefit are substandard, health and safety and fire precautions shoddy, staff facilities non-existent.

On top of all this, there was heavy pressure to subscribe to the company's ideology. It wasn't enough to do your job, collect your pay and piss off home. You had to eat, sleep, breathe and shit Benn Bros Ltd. I used to lay out the classified pages on Timber Trades and because this involved close working with the telesales staff, I could observe the pressure put on them to conform. The ones who kept their noses clean were made 'section leaders'. The position carries about as much responsibility as being school monitor, but the idea was to make people think they were on the first rung of management, turning them from workmates into rivals.

Weekly training sessions, at which senior management were often present, furthered the process of indoctrination.

At one of these sessions, a paper was read out identifying the 'Primary Needs' of human beings. This crude psychology, intended to develop the sales acumen of the staff, baldly displayed the elitist, sexist values of business practice. Under the headings 'Self Assertion and Ego Drive', 'Sex Drive' and so on, it listed attributes such as 'power', 'social status' and 'position', 'good looks' and 'the sense of being masculine or feminine'. This highly manipulative approach might seem odd with the old fashioned, 'fatherly' image the firm likes to project, but once one sees behind the philanthropic talk to the self interest it rationalises, the contradiction vanishes.

Because of the nature of their job, sales staff got it worst, but this pressure affected all of us. We had to believe in the firm and its products: 'I have yet to find,' the firm's president writes in the centenary magazine, 'the packer-up of books who is not excited by the labels, addressed to all the countries of the world, he sticks on his parcels and is proud to know that the books will reach their buyers undamaged, so skillfully have they been packed.'

WE DO ALL WE CAN TO KEEP STAFF HAPPY!



By the time I left, however, the staff's faith in the firm was crumbling. The management, worried by the worsening industrial situation — Benn's shares fell from 79p a year ago to 53p this June — shifted the pressure onto the staff. In the financial year 1977/78, 33p of every £ of sales revenue went on salaries; the following year the figure was down to 28p. There was general disappointment with the June pay rise. (Most people got less than 10%) Staff who left were not replaced, and those who took on their work were not compensated.

Staff morale became an urgent item on the management agenda. The pep talks, the hushed gatherings behind locked doors, became more frequent. A new assistant manager was brought into Central Classified to work alongside the staff, sound out their needs and cheer the place up a bit.

The Friday before I was sacked, a letter 'To All Staff From The Chairman' announced the start of the firm's centenary. Amidst the usual miasma of self-deception of the capitalist who thinks he's doing the world a favour, a note of anxiety had crept in:

'Let us enjoy our Centenary. Let us also draw inspiration from it to make it a year of renewed opportunity despite the dreary news about the state of business. Remember the country was in the throes of a much deeper recession when Benns celebrated its 50th anniversary!'

The staff treated it with the contempt it deserved. Some laughed, some threw it in the bin, most didn't bother to read it. 'It's pathetic to see them trying to cheer themselves up with this centenary,' one friend said to me.

I couldn't resist the temptation to take the piss, and produced an alternative version. The remark about the depression struck me as particularly offensive, and I changed it to 'Remember the poor were dying in the streets when Benns celebrated its 50th anniversary!'

I pinned copies to the notice board. People giggled furtively as they read them, enjoying the atmosphere of conspiracy. 'Ooh, there's going to be a witch-hunt over this,' someone said.

The management didn't see the joke. The chairman saw a copy, a few phone calls were made, and by Monday morning the predicted witch-hunt was on. Staff were asked if they knew whodunnit. Samples were taken from all the typewriters and compared with the leaflet. On Wednesday afternoon I was sent to see the director responsible for my department. As I entered, the company secretary told me that this was a disciplinary hearing.

'We have reason to believe,' Laughland said, waving the offending document, 'that you were responsible for this.' A former rugby international with cold little eyes and a red beefy neck, his soft-

IF THEY DON'T LIKE IT, WE FIRE THEM!



spoken manner carries a hint of restrained violence.

He talked at some length about being part of a serious enterprise, of discipline and morale. My joke was damaging to the firm because it might inspire disrespect in some members of staff.

'It's quite plain from certain passages what your attitude to the company is. Why,' he said, his impatience suddenly showing, 'if everyone behaved the way you do, this place would be chaos in a week. Under the circumstances, I... well, we're going to have to dismiss you, Mr Schüler.'

I was to leave that afternoon. Back in my office I was reluctantly drawn into a conversation with Val, the office manager. 'I'm sorry it had to end like this,' she said. 'You will go away with some good thoughts of us, won't you?' She'd always had a soft spot for office rebels... up to a point.

I cycled away down Holborn with no job and a feeling of exhilaration. It was a sunny afternoon and I was going home early.

apologies to Mitre Crook.

We have ways of making you work!

WHILE unemployment in the West is still only a curse of the working class, in the East it has already become a punishable crime. In those countries where the right to work has been won, work has become a duty for everyone.

To some, this might sound perfectly reasonable — almost the Final Solution to the problem of industrial relations. The catch, of course, is hidden in the word itself: "work". Work as defined by whom? In countries where capitalists have been replaced by the state and competition has ceased to operate normally, the state can easily afford to employ everybody, and it fully intends to do so.

Thus the state creates, allocates or destroys "work" as it pleases. It has retained the right to refuse work while appropriating an additional right: the right to enforce it. Workers, who have been liberated from degrading competitive hassles of the labour market, have in turn been doubly chained to the machine; they have become pawns for socialism's planners and in return they have got job security of a rather dubious kind. How can job security ever be dubious, one may ask. When, as in this case, it depends entirely on one single value (not exactly unknown in the West either): conformity.

Workers doubly alienated from their labour in this way find their own liberation elsewhere, however. The work ethic breaks down and the job itself becomes the last thing to be taken seriously. The ruling ideology is exposed as farce right at the point of production and falls flat on its face. It is one of the most glorious, most unrecognised and utterly unintended victories of Stalinism.

History has delivered to the Eastern Europeans the duty and the pleasure of work in two separate packages of half the critical mass, clearly marked: 'Highly explosive on joining'.

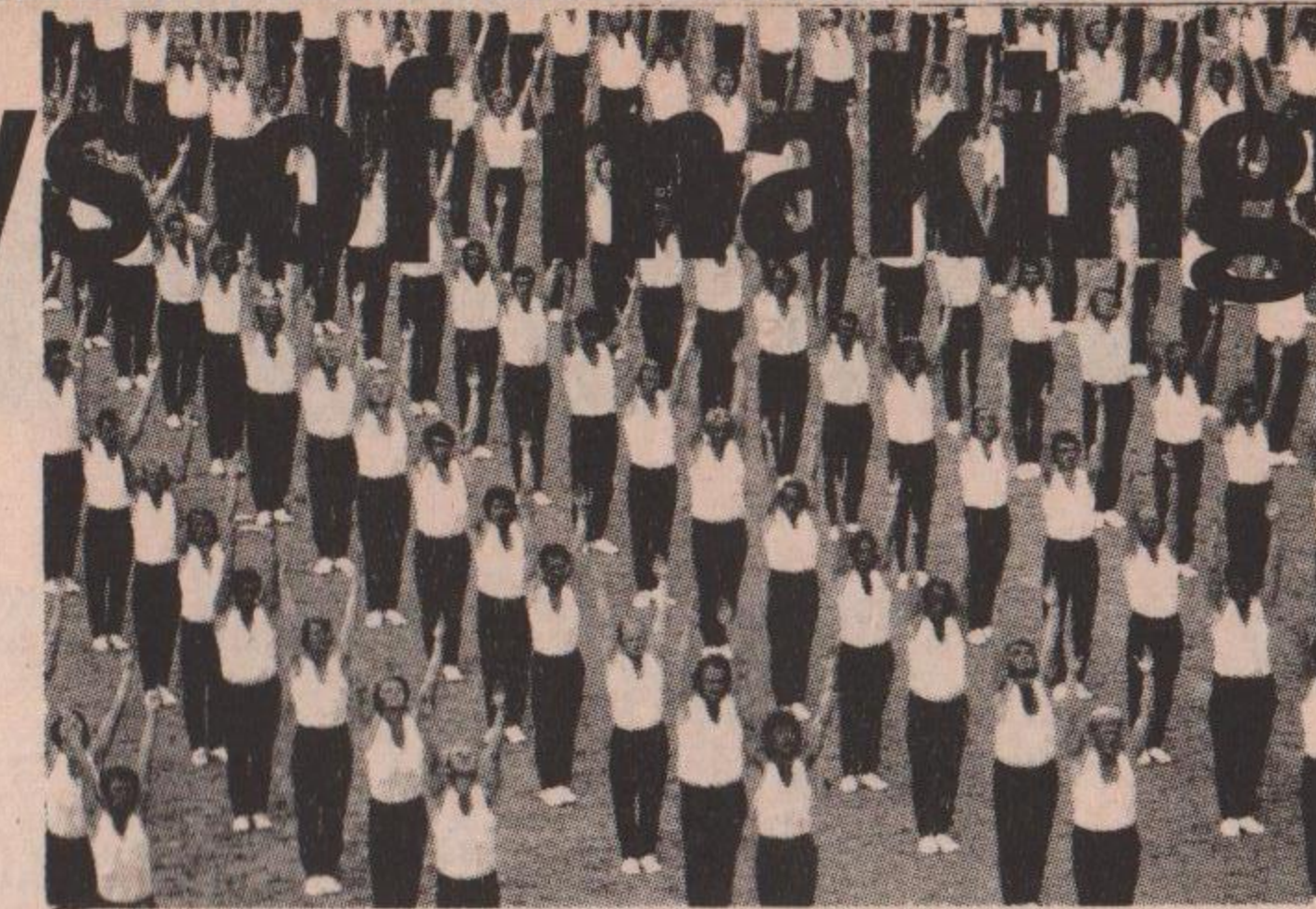
When a Westerner asks the inevitable boring question: "What do you do?" the Easterner becomes confused and has to answer with another question: "What do you mean? Do you ask what I do for living or what I do for liking? What I have to do, or what I actually do?"

(Continued from page 11)

Ireland is stuck at the edge of the EEC, a relic of a bygone age. Now funding from Britain, at a billion pounds a year — or £400 from every income tax payer (not a figure you hear from Tory platforms too often) — amounts to a third of the province's income. And one in nine of the employed population works in or for the security services.

Much of the investment that has been attracted — record decks and sports cars — is technologically intensive, low on labour and likely to peter out in 15 years.

On the Tories' balance sheet, a billion a year, or 2 percent of GNP, is just no longer worth the return; little more than an army trained for riots and street fighting. So Northern Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins' apparent 'soft line' —



Practically all East Europeans have (at least) two occupations. One is a profession, the other a vocation. They give as little as they can to their profession and as much as they can to their vocation. Professions allow the planned economy to operate and survive, they determine its ideological superstructure and give nominal value to the currency. Vocations give rise to the second (underground) economy, where ordinary laws of supply and demand operate. This system, functioning happily alongside the planned one, also has its own ideological superstructure and recycles the currency, giving it its real value.

When this seemingly schizoid behaviour of individuals is multiplied into its social dimensions, it produces a variant of unemployment peculiar to the East European type of society. It is a hidden (or virtual) unemployment stemming from the simple fact that — by common agreement — everyone devotes the minimum effort to their job, sparing all their energy for their vocation. Every known and unknown method of passive working class resistance is ceaselessly applied; together with absenteeism and massive pilfering.

The Czechs have a saying: "If you are not stealing from the state you are stealing from yourself."

If it were ever possible to quantify this type of unemployment, it would be measured not in figures of jobless people, but in numbers of stolen work-hours. The regime can do nothing about it, apart from never-ending and never-effective exhortations to workers to increase their productivity. The only thing that does succeed is "material incentives" (a *Newspeak* phrase for temporary, unguaranteed wage increases). About

his comparatively low level of rhetoric and his new 'political initiative' — makes sense. Protestant unemployment is now an unavoidable strategy if Britain is to stay. And the message is spreading fast up the Shankill, where people who've worked loyally all their lives are finding that their Orange Order membership no longer guarantees a job.

The Republic is now the north's most important trading partner. Trade was £212 million last year, and both sides identify cross-border trade as their most promising growth area. The economy of the South is now far more modern, and has more international capital — including British — tied up in it. The economy of the North is in terminal decline. If world trade picks up again, the South will grow, and the North won't.

three years ago the Czechoslovak regime set up a special industrial secret police to report on workers seen to be slacking. So far it has had little success in raising productivity.

Apart from the hidden unemployment, there is also a significant number of people who decide to cross the line of conformity completely, refusing the right of duty to work for the state and becoming unemployed more openly (see *Leveller No 9*).

In the absence of Social Security benefits, they tend to become more integrated in the underground economy. They have to play constant hide-and-seek with the police, who are entrusted by the state with the duty of work enforcement. It is of course doubly difficult for those who choose, in addition, to trespass on the state's sacred fields of ideology — the so-called dissidents.

Everybody in Eastern Europe must carry an identity certificate at all times. It is a booklet of about 15 to 20 pages, looking exactly like a passport, though serving effectively as a labour book. To be caught on the street without one can earn you a minimum of overnight detention.

The first thing the police check is the "visa" pages, which are dated and stamped by your employer. If you are caught without an employer you are liable to be charged with "parasitism" which can carry a heavy jail sentence, especially on a second offence. Naturally it is only the official employer recognised by the state that the police look for as your visa to a legal citizen's existence. A vocational occupation cuts no ice. You may be an artist working 18 hours a day, but if you don't happen to be recognised by the state as such, you remain an unemployed parasite, ripe to swell the ranks of a prison labour army.

It is only natural that people use all kinds of ruses, including forged employer's stamps and fictitious or nominal employments in order to escape the enforced net of alienated labour that the East European systems have spread over their populations.

Ivan Hartel

The Provos argue that although their supporters don't benefit materially from the industrial collapse, their organisation does. Unemployment ensures there is no shortage of volunteers. And more and more loyalists are being forced by the crisis to see themselves as part of an Irish economy, rather than an offshoot of the British.

North and South, the post-colonial bourgeoisie, who see Ireland as a useful toehold in the EEC, are in practice already operating an all-Ireland policy. The recession is hastening that process. And unemployment on such an enormous scale across the Province, which will be increased by continuing cuts in the public expenditure on which the Northern economy has become totally reliant, will force nationalist and loyalist working classes closer together.

Dave Clark



Sisters or Separatists ?

IT WAS advertised as a conference of London Women's liberation. I was prepared for a noisy tearful plenary, or report-back, but reasonably optimistic about the workshops where I assumed that most of the tendencies within the women's movement would be represented and most of the constructive work of the conference would take place. I was wrong on both counts.

There were sessions where you could have reasonably expected to find socialist feminists — 'Women and Nuclear Power', 'Working Class Women', Women and Nuclear Disarmament'. Women and Economic Class'. It's also true that I recognised at least ten socialist feminists amongst the 500 women at the conference. But the politics of revolutionary feminism dominated the conference.

Perhaps because I used to live in a house identified by a banner proclaiming *Sisterhood is Powerful* and also because I was surprised and upset by the barracking of sisters at the T.U.C. abortion demonstration in London, I went to the session on 'What Happened to Sisterhood?'

We had got to the point of agreeing that the euphoria of the early days of the movement had worn off when a woman, not from London, at her first conference, suggested that if sisterhood was so elusive, why didn't we just scrap it and stop trying to paper over the cracks. After an embarrassing silence we moved to the anecdotes that have always been the basis of consciousness-raising. But unlike any other c-r I have ever been involved in the oppressors were other women.

There is an inescapable logic in the revolutionary feminist view that women who bear and rear male children are simply entertaining the enemy. One woman described how she had given up on her two small sons because 'the culture was too much' and because she wanted to spend more of her energy on women. She said that she had had nothing but support from revolutionary feminists. But another spoke of the pain of being rejected by 'sisters' because she

cared for her son and at times needed to take him with her to women's events.

"They seem to say 'Not only have you produced this male rapist, but you're also imposing this male rapist (of three or four years old) on us'. I just tell them to Fuck Off."

Despite the sympathetic murmurs, there was a very strong feeling that the way this woman had been treated, as an individual case, was wrong and unsisterly but that the general analysis was correct. So much for the politics of experience. By this time I was feeling much more like an observer than a participant.

Determined to find something concrete where our differences could be submerged in action I sought out the 'Women in Armagh' session. Unfortunately 'Why We Are Revolutionary Feminists' had been moved to the same time slot and only about 20 women were in the room. An Irish woman told again of the conditions of the women in prison and why they were on protest (see *Leveller* 39). But soon anger at the lack of response to the calls for support and solidarity surfaced.

"They (British Women's movement) say that we're not feminists. They say we've been taken in by the Provos that it's a male struggle... they think that Irish women are just stupid"

"They say we aren't strong enough on abortion... But for us it's a war situation, if you're living in a ghetto waiting for the next raid, for your kids to be put into care, for you to be carted off... then it's a struggle for survival and you don't have time for Sunday afternoon abortion marches" (In fact there is an effective network for bringing women to Britain for abortion.) "Their attitude is just plain racist."

A proposal that we go en masse to the

HOW do you spell "women"? This was the sort of question that dominated the London Women's Liberation Movement conference last month. Reeling from a heavy dose of revolutionary feminism, *Liz Storey* was unimpressed by told-you-so responses from the Left.

other workshops and demand support for the prisoners was abandoned as likely to be counterproductive, but it was decided that a strong appeal be made to the report-back the next day.

The report-back consisted of three minute reports from the 43 workshops held. No resolutions were to be put and no votes were taken, an unnecessary precaution, taken in the interests of unity. Several workshops simply didn't happen, like 'Women and Economic Class', others simply reported that this was an important issue and should be discussed further, 'All Women Creches at Conferences', or that another conference would be held, 'Lesbian Feminists.'

The other reports reflected the self-obsession of the participants. Speaking for women from other countries in the movement in London, one woman referred to the way that women in imperialist countries were unaware of the benefits they gained from the oppression of the neo-colonies. "But didn't you talk about the personal experience of being in a strange country?" she was asked. Slightly embarrassed she took pains to reassure the worried sisters on this point, and we moved on to the next report. Another report on 'Women and Nuclear Power was queried because, despite the importance for the issue, it was potentially 'diversionary from the real feminist issues'. The working class women had apparently discussed how they felt put down in the movement.

The 'rapist's mother' tried to air her grievance but was cut off by the three minute rule, as was a discussion that was beginning to get heated on the revolution-

ary feminist session. Despite appearances women don't hate other women they just feel anger; hatred is reserved for men. The strong appeal for support for the women in Armagh was made; "those women are fighting the British state and the British army, which are male institutions" but the discussion was effectively stopped by the woman who had described the revolutionary feminist session as "Shocking", now very upset and stating baldly that there were other women who felt the same way she did but didn't have the courage to speak out and be treated as she had been. Time ran out and after one more brief report all that was left was to clean up the hall.

The significant aspect of the conference was really what wasn't said or discussed. It was the first general conference I've been to where there was no discussion or workshop on abortion, none on rape, none on the welfare state and no discussion of the demands of the women's movement. It seemed as though these issues had lost their relevance and since socialist feminists had abandoned the field there was nobody there to raise the issues. Perhaps living in the south and being predominantly middle class the women at the conference have been protected from the worst of the recession, but how they could be unaware of the situation of other women, or if aware not respond to it is horrifying.

The revolutionary feminist position is said to have developed to counter the liberal trend of the movement and because socialist feminists are seen, often correctly, as theoreticians. But there was no sense of urgency or of any need for

practical action. Often in the past initiatives have come from radical feminists, who have had an uncompromising and relatively uncomplicated analysis, but now, given an understandable reluctance to actually put the theory into practice and go out and kill men, it seems that much time and energy will be spent debating at what age male children should be handed over to the patriarchs.

Some of my friends, sisters, have tried to dissociate themselves from the separatists by identifying themselves as simply marxists or socialists, but this seems to be a disassociation from the women's movement itself and merely sidesteps the problem. While there is an argument that no marxist in the late twentieth century can ignore, or not be involved in, the struggle against patriarchy and be taken seriously as a socialist, this is an argument better used in debates with recalcitrant comrades than in debates with women for whom socialism could mean anything from the Labour Party to the conditions in the Soviet Union.

We shouldn't react to revolutionary feminism's withdrawal into doctrinaire separatism with a withdrawal into our own theoretical position. That's a reaction that gives credence to the claim that socialists have never taken the women's movement seriously. We didn't adopt feminism lightly, and now we must take up the question that was put at the conference of 'What happened to sisterhood?' We need to discuss why we have fought for an autonomous women's movement and what were the unspoken principles that enabled us to work together. Sisterhood was never just feeling good around women; there have always been differences in the analyses of women's oppression and these have always led to arguments. But whereas

in the past the politics emerged through discussion of concrete struggles for women in the world, and differences were submerged in action, now it seems that the energy has been turned inward and relationships within the movement have taken precedence over the objective of liberation of women.

Attending what was supposed to be a conference of London Women's Liberation and being confronted by an unyielding purism was distressing, but I was surprised and sickened to notice signs of complacent smugness amongst socialists I have talked to since. I've felt this with men and women but haven't been able to say at the time why I felt uncomfortable. The development of the revolutionary feminist position as the dominant one in the movement certainly isn't something to gloat about. And it's certainly not the proof of what some people have suspected all along — that feminism is diversionary from the main struggles and should be dismissed.

It is possible that the effect of a recession in which women are being hit hard and some of the most reactionary ideology about women's place being in the home is being thrown around, combined with the fear that the left's commitment to women's liberation has been self-interested and will diminish as 'the crisis deepens', has contributed to the emergence and appeal of the ultra-(revolutionary) position. If we seriously consider this then its obvious the left can't sign with relief that we no longer have to concern ourselves with the problem of an autonomous women's movement.

More than ever we need a strong autonomous women's movement. More than ever we need to recognise that autonomy means independence not only from crypto-stalinists trying to bring the women's movement under the hegemony of the revolutionary party of whatever tendency, but also from the oppressive domination of one section of the women's movement, especially one which seems to lead to an actual neglect of women's struggles in the interests of revolutionary purity.



SHORT NEWS

Fraud in high places

A BANK manager, a solicitor and a company director were recently convicted of fraud at St. Albans Crown Court. After sentencing them the judge commended Detective Constable Jack Beck for his work on the case — particularly as he was working alone.

As the case involved three pillars of the community, 29 charges and £800,000 it may be wondered why only one policeman should be dealing with it, and a lowly Detective Constable at that.

The answer is that there was a curious reluctance at the top of Bedfordshire Constabulary to proceed with the case at all.

Beck was asked to investigate the initial allegations and he plugged on, despite lack of enthusiasm from his superiors. The comment on the allegations and information that he turned up was "Let them [the complainants] take civil action."

It was only after a local paper, *Bedfordshire on Sunday*, took up the case that Beck was given more support, although still working on his own.

One of the nastiest charges concerned an old people's home owned by a company in which two of the defendants were directors. They neglected to pay the woman running it even the pittance they had promised. When she finally insisted they gave her a thousand pounds. Director Paul Beard then suggested he invest it for her and she never saw a penny of it again.

Despite the fact that the Midland Bank initially supported their manager, Ronald Starkey, with the services of the best (all right then, the most expensive) law firm that money could buy, Oswald Hickson, Collier, and despite the company's reluctance to help, Beck got sufficient information to sustain his case.

Why was no help given to Beck? The accused solicitor, Arthur Skinnard, was head of one of the biggest practices in the area and owned sea-going boats on which a number of local luminaries were known to take trips. Starkey, the bank manager, was a member of a local free-masonry lodge which included a JP and a retired police officer.

Beard alone had no friends in high places. He drew a five year sentence. Skinnard got 30 months, Starkey 18 months suspended.

Coming out - together

IT'S NOT often one goes to a conference that's about *real politics*. The stale nostrums of hardened politicians, polemical tone and structurally produced fear of participation usually soon see to that at the events I attend. Mostly they're frequented by those people who sell 'newspapers' that are devoid of any news (eg 'Albanian peasants gain 10% rise') and who shout, scream and march their way into the political ghetto inhabited by that wonderfully ambiguous and amorphous creature, the 'British Left.'

So the Gay Youth Movement's founding conference provided a refreshing change. Organised by people from Birmingham, Southampton and London, it was a weekend event attended by nearly 100 young gay men and lesbians. All were under 25, and most hadn't reached the magic age of 21 when gay males at last receive the keys to their own bedrooms. There were about 20 women, but unfortunately that wasn't enough to prevent the discussions from being male dominated.

Dastardly Dick of the Beeb

THE DETERMINATION of the BBC bosses to ingratiate themselves with the police has been demonstrated yet again. Presented with an exclusive interview with escaped gangster Charles Richardson — the story every paper was trying to get — their reaction was to refuse to use it, and shop the freelance journalist who'd got it, Tony Van Den Bergh, to the police.

It'll be no surprise to *Leveller* readers to learn that Dick 'Francis of the Yard' Francis, the Director of News and Current Affairs (DNCA) took the final decision; nor that he subsequently attempted to justify it in lying, mealy-mouthed terms to the weekly meeting of BBC news and current affairs executives.

The *Leveller* has covered so much paper with quotations from leaked minutes of these meetings in the past that it's with reluctance we present these extracts from those for the meeting of July 22:

DNCA referred to the circumstances during which an interview made by a non-assigned freelance, Tony Van Den Bergh, with the escaped prisoner Charles Richardson, had been referred to the police by the BBC. DG (Sir Ian Trethowan, newly-knighted Director General) said the BBC had been bound to act as it did, since the freelance reporter had falsely said that he was acting for the BBC...

Peter Woon (Editor of News and Current Affairs, Radio, and

However the ideas came from personal experience rather than the pages of *Socialist Worker* or the *Morning Star*. In the varied workshops and plenary sessions there was honesty and enthusiasm from those involved in projects relating to their everyday lives — none of the tired workerism of the guilty suburbanite here. Familial pressure, discrimination, harassment — all the oppressive trappings of a patriarchal society — will not helpfully disappear through sit-ins and demands for 'nationalisation of the top 200 companies'. Young gay politics is thus firmly anchored in *action now*, centering around providing social space and support for those beginning the initially painful but ultimately self-liberating process of coming out into a still largely hostile world.

The specific problems of lesbian and gay youth are reflected in the objectives GYM has adopted. Even within the gay community these are considerable. Drag and leather are part of a culture that can often be misogynist and clubs like *Heaven*

therefore head of the department that would have used the interview) was uncomfortable at the idea of giving the police the name of any journalist. Tony Bostock (the Solicitor) said there was no legal obligation, (which one would have thought a matter for the citizen concerned). DNCA said the BBC must not needlessly frighten away unsolicited sources of information, but those who made such unsolicited approaches with material that might be of interest to the police should be told that the BBC might subsequently be required to furnish evidence. Secondly there was always the need to refer upwards in this sort of case. John Wilson (Editor Radio News) said that it could hinder the BBC subsequently if it 'shopped' journalists to the police but DG remarked that it was important also to inhibit people from using the BBC's name without justification.

Thus the two top men, Trethowan and Francis, imposed on their reluctant executives their total subservience to the state. From neither was the imposition surprising. Trethowan was attending that meeting to interfere with the coverage of the Olympic Games, which he had tried to stop altogether; and Francis was fresh from giving evidence to the Parliamentary committee investigating the D Notice system of voluntary media censorship. He had spoken with conviction of the BBC's deep commitment to the system. Francis of the Yard is a member of the D Notice committee.

provide little for young gays, let alone lesbians. Frequently we're seen as 'chickens' who can pull in the older men who've plenty of money and thus profit for club owners.

The conference thus made combatting sexism a high priority — unlike, for example, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality who only want precisely what the name of the organisation implies. And their middle-aged 'tea party' image was felt to be hardly attractive for young gays. Hence the provision of alternative social events is vital — and London's *Icebreakers* disco was recognised as an excellent example.

At the moment only a few big cities have clubs like the London Gay Teenage Group and many young people are thus left isolated, unable to meet and gain strength through others' company and support. News of a new gay group in Glasgow was particularly welcome and the importance of Rock Against Sexism was stated repeatedly.

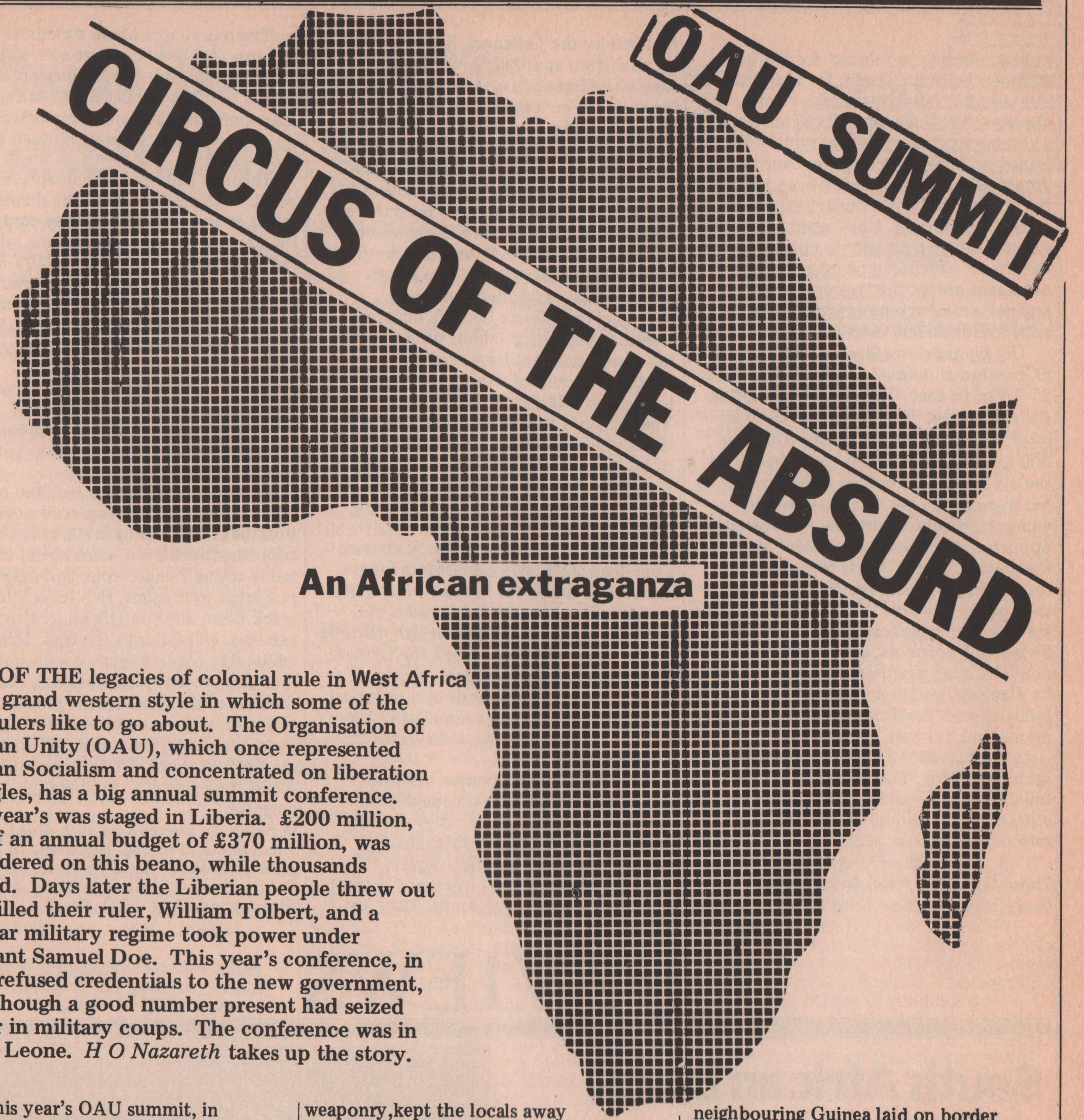
But delegates didn't want to opt out of other forms of politics either (unlike, for example, the tendency towards cultural whimpery of the straight 'Men Against Sexism' brigade). A conference for young lesbians is being planned to combat GYM's male domination. The aim is to re-establish the links between gay men and women that existed in the early days of Gay Liberation Front through a new tradition that fosters autonomy rather than separatism. Whether this can be done still remains to be seen — sadly many gay men are still too sexist for lesbians to feel able to work with them.

For there were problems at the conference and it will take a lot of time, energy and ideas to change GYM into anything more than a mere abstraction constructed by a meeting.

But despite the difficulties GYM faces, especially in the present climate I went away hopeful.

For it is possible that through a pluralist approach which utilises all the existing types of political activity — from pamphlets to pickets, gigs and conferences — GYM may be able to make an impact, helping to transform traditional styles of activism. For the gay movement is second only to the women's movement in beginning that already. And many young gays will not be content with the Left adding gay and youth liberation to the demands of their socialist shopping list. We'll want to participate in that process of redefining politics that *Beyond the Fragments* has catalysed on the Left.

John Munford



ONE OF THE legacies of colonial rule in West Africa is the grand western style in which some of the new rulers like to go about. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which once represented African Socialism and concentrated on liberation struggles, has a big annual summit conference. Last year's was staged in Liberia. £200 million, out of an annual budget of £370 million, was squandered on this beano, while thousands starved. Days later the Liberian people threw out and killed their ruler, William Tolbert, and a popular military regime took power under Sergeant Samuel Doe. This year's conference, in July, refused credentials to the new government, even though a good number present had seized power in military coups. The conference was in Sierra Leone. *H O Nazareth* takes up the story.

At this year's OAU summit, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in July, President Siaka Stevens repeated the folly of last year's prodigal spending. He had 60 new villas, and the lavish Mammy Yoko Hotel, built to house 21 OAU leaders and their hangers-on. The bulk of the building contracts, at a cost of over £40 million, went to the Lebanese magnate Tony Yazbeck. The running of the Mammy Yoko was contracted to the Union Touristique Hotelier of France. Other hotels were refurbished and new roads linking OAU venues laid at an unpublished cost. The delegates, for the most part abandoning national dress, sported mohair suits, or tuxedos, with their wives decked out in Parisian *haute couture*.

Women from all over Africa were enlisted to provide a sexual *frisson*, dressed in mock Yves St Laurent. The ubiquitous thugs of the State Security Detachment with their penile bristle of

weaponry, kept the locals away from the banquets and barbecues, from the bouquets and banks of flowers. Dancers, in a travesty of Sierra Leonian culture, and guards of honour in resplendent gear Sandhurst-style, lined a new apron at the airport to accommodate presidential jets. This imitation of colonial spectacles added its own bizarre twist to a tragic African farce.

The government-controlled press had crowded over finances raised through loans and gifts. The French provided digital telephones, electronic landing gear, and the engineers to set it up. The British gave assorted loans and radio and TV equipment. The Germans forked out soft loans and Mercedes-Benz buses. Japan made a 10 million dollar loan in the form of three new ferries, wharf rebuilding, cheap cars and rice. Algeria gave four million dollars plus 50 Mercedes-Benz cars. Even the supposedly Marxist-Leninist Sekou Toure of

neighbouring Guinea laid on border patrols to ensure a smooth passage of the summit. The Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, through its subsidiary, the Diamond Corporation of West Africa, made a donation of Leones 300,000 (£150,000 at the official exchange rate).

This circus of the absurd fixed its big top in the capital of one of Africa's most misruled and debt-ridden countries. But where was the bread for the people dying in the streets outside hospitals, for the children picking up garbage to eat? If the Freetown unemployed had a glint in their eye, it was quickly dimmed by rounding them up and shoving them into the infamous Pademba Road prison a week before the four-day summit.

At the summit itself no meaningful resolutions on South Africa or Namibia were reached, despite the invasion of Angola. There was a minute's silence for Tolbert, and then, to conciliate the

radical minority, a minute for Walter Rodney. Polisario's claim for recognition was shelved. The Mauritanian Prime Minister, Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, a trading partner of Botha, wanted the return of Diego Garcia, given over to the Americans as their Indian Ocean base by the British, and pathetically, this demand caused a major stir. Once again, the summit served primarily to consolidate the rip-off of African peoples by the dominant group, the Western-puppet regimes acting as commission agents for their multinational masters.

UN figures show Sierra Leone's 1976 external debt at 159 million dollars, 27.7% of its then GNP, plus four million dollars interest. This figure has risen by leaps and bounds since and is now over 600 million. But Stevens' press headlines the aid and loans that his government has managed to get from any source going, be it communist, fascist, or simply opportunist. It certainly doesn't reach the people. To the 'OAU for you, OAU for me' jingle broadcast over the radio, they put new words: 'OAU for you, IOU for me'. The beneficiaries are ministerial Swiss bank accounts, the Lebanese and South African magnates that control all its diamond wealth and most of its industry and 'development'. The political opposition has been suppressed by victimisation, deprivation of jobs and resources, arbitrary jailing. The *Tablet*, the only independent newspaper was forced to close after the annual licence fee was raised from Le5 to Le2,000.

In all, 90 per cent of Sierra Leone's internal retail and wholesale trade, including rice, the staple food, is

handled by the Lebanese. They operate an unwritten apartheid law: the only Sierra Leonians who get in their exclusive areas are government officials and house-servants.

Stevens has also colluded with the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa and the South African Government. Anglo-American have been there since 1955, and Stevens has expressed the hope that they will continue to give 'very generous assistance'. The South Africans have exploited (and even smuggled out) Sierra Leone's diamond wealth, using cheap labour under working conditions that have resulted in deaths, not only of workers, but of the local population affected by the industry. There is poor water supply and the river is polluted by mining. There is a paucity of health, communication and transport facilities. Food is highly priced, and has to be bought from profiteers. Housing conditions are abysmal.

It is not so much a one-party state, as a one-man state. When the whim takes Stevens his thugs will rename everything in sight after him. Already streets and institutions have had their British colonial names replaced by his. When the Chinese built a stadium in Freetown, as part of a 40 million dollar economic and technical aid programme, it was called the Chinese stadium. After they left, it became ... what else?

Under Stevens, Lebanese business magnates have become thoroughly entrenched in Sierra Leone. They control the fishing trade, having introduced mechanised trawlers which deprive the local fisherfolk of their catch and disrupt coastal fish-breeding grounds. They are

in effective charge of car distribution agencies (the Yazbecks are sole distributors of Mercedes-Benz vehicles). The tourist industry, ticketing agencies, spare-part distribution, construction, gaming and casinos are very much in their hands.

Through bribery and corruption, the South Africans have kept the diamond mines to themselves. De Beers control the Central Selling Organisation, which exported diamonds worth Le 101.3m in 1977/78. In 1979, Stevens lowered the export duty on gems over 14.8 carats from 7.5 to 2.5 per cent, in order, supposedly, to discourage diamond smuggling. Exports rose to Le 117m.

Israeli connections in Sierra Leone are routed through the American diamond mogul Maurice Templesman, who has cornered the market in cutting and polishing diamonds.

So Stevens has blown Le200m on an OAU summit in the misplaced expectation that bus-loads of bikini-clad day trippers, flipped-out astrologers, walkie-talkie-toting freaks, cloak-and-dagger spies, piss-artist journalists, rich folks after black flesh, and tourists hung with TV cameras, will fall into the trap. Meanwhile, like other African peoples, the Sierra Leoneans plan and hope that Stevens, and other western puppets wrapped in the continental quilts of Swiss numbered accounts, will travel the Tolbert route. Their bitter jokes might then give way to liberated laughter.

● Based on discussions with Mukhtar Mustapha and on his 'Big Game in Africa' available from Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham, B11 1RD, £1.50.

REVIEWS

South African books

Luckhardt and Wall: Organise or Starve. The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. £3.50 pbk, £7.95 hbk Lawrence & Wishart.

THIS IS an official history, published to mark the 25th anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. This may account for its less than critical view of SACTU and a possible bias against rivals like the Pan African Congress. But it is a stirring work noting the achievements and tribulations of some very courageous black and white union leaders and their members.

John Jackson: Justice in South Africa. Penguin £1.95 pbk, Secker & Warburg £7.95 hbk.

Jackson's book deals with his principled defence, as a lawyer, of black students arrested in Port Elizabeth. The police method was to shoot kids, and then make the

rounds of homes and hospitals arresting the wounded. So, children of 14 or even younger, were detained in solitary confinement, tortured, fitted up, forced to sign confessions, and finally jailed for 5 years or more (the minimum sentence under the Sabotage Act 1962).

In Britain today it is accepted that prison overcrowding is a scandal and the idea that too many people are being sentenced to imprisonment is becoming part of the conventional wisdom. But South Africa with half Britain's population has two and half times the number of people in prison. It also accounts for half the 'legal' executions in the world. And that doesn't take into account hundreds of black people shot dead in the streets and those who fall out of interrogation room windows.

Blacks convicted under the



'pass' laws are sold to farmers as slave labour for the duration of their sentences. They are given sackcloth to wear, forced to work very long hours and sometimes die under the terrible conditions, or from the beatings administered by the overseers. This is what SACTU is up against. Unlike Jackson, finally forced out of

South Africa most of its members cannot and will not leave the country. Perhaps it is we who have to take direct action against collaborators like BP, ICI, RTZ, with their headquarters in Britain, who profit from their support for the apartheid monster.

H.O. Nazareth

Whose 'backyard'? Guatemala organises

KIDNAPPING and murder of trade unionists has become commonplace in Guatemala. But widespread opposition to the American-backed dictatorship of General Lucas has unified recently under the banner of the Democratic Front Against the Repression. Meanwhile, the country's four guerilla groups have followed Salvador's example and achieved a degree of unity, writes Phil Gunson.

AT SEVEN in the evening on 21 June, as leaders of the National Workers Confederation (CNT) were preparing for a meeting, vehicles carrying around 60 heavily armed men drew up outside. After coolly parking their cars, one group set about stopping the traffic in the surrounding streets, while the rest broke into the building. After an operation lasting nearly an hour, in which they ransacked the offices, they left, taking with them 27 of Guatemala's leading trade unionists. No one seriously expects to see them alive again.

There is nothing unusual about the kidnap and murder of trade unionists, or indeed of anyone else whose activities are perceived by the government as a threat, in a country where at least 20,000 have died in this way since 1966. But on this occasion the government's attempt to cover up its leading role in the incident was even clumsier than usual. As well as being no more than a stone's throw from the National Palace, and thus from the barracks of the Presidential Guard, the CNT building is just round the corner from the headquarters of the 2nd Corps of the National Police. A similar distance separates it from that of the Judicial Police.

All these guardians of law and order were apparently either asleep or looking intently in the other direction when the kidnap occurred. Cynics have suggested that the presence of the head of the police narcotics squad among the villains might account for this.

The country's top detective, Colonel Manuel de Jesus Valiente has busied himself by suggesting that the kidnap never took place. Initial confusion on the part of the CNT as to exactly who had been kidnapped enabled Valiente to 'discover' some of those on the original list working normally. "I am firmly of the opinion," he said on July 4, "that the remainder of those who have disappeared will reappear in the same circumstances." Nothing of the sort has happened, of course.

Guatemala has been a military dictatorship since the reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz annoyed the United Fruit Company in the early 1950s and precipitated the US-backed coup of 1954. Military rule is periodically 'legitimised' by fraudulent elections, the last of which—in 1978—brought in General Romeo Lucas as president.

In the first six months of his rule, the daily corpse count was running around nine. By mid-1979 it was up to 15. The statistics which reveal the less spectacular but no less deadly violence of malnutrition

poverty and sickness are equally horrifying. Three-quarters of the Guatemalan people are dependent directly on the land. Yet a mere 2% of the population owns 72% of the productive land. Life expectancy is 45 and 81 out of every thousand infants die before their first birthday. Malnutrition affects four out of every five children under five years old.

The beneficiaries of this system are a motley crew: the agro-exporters, the armed forces who provide not only the president but many of the top functionaries in key areas and who have been able to amass large personal fortunes, the industrial bourgeoisie, *nouveau riche* entrepreneurs of middle class origin who flourish in an atmosphere fetid with corruption, and last, but not least, the United States which has huge investments in Guatemala.

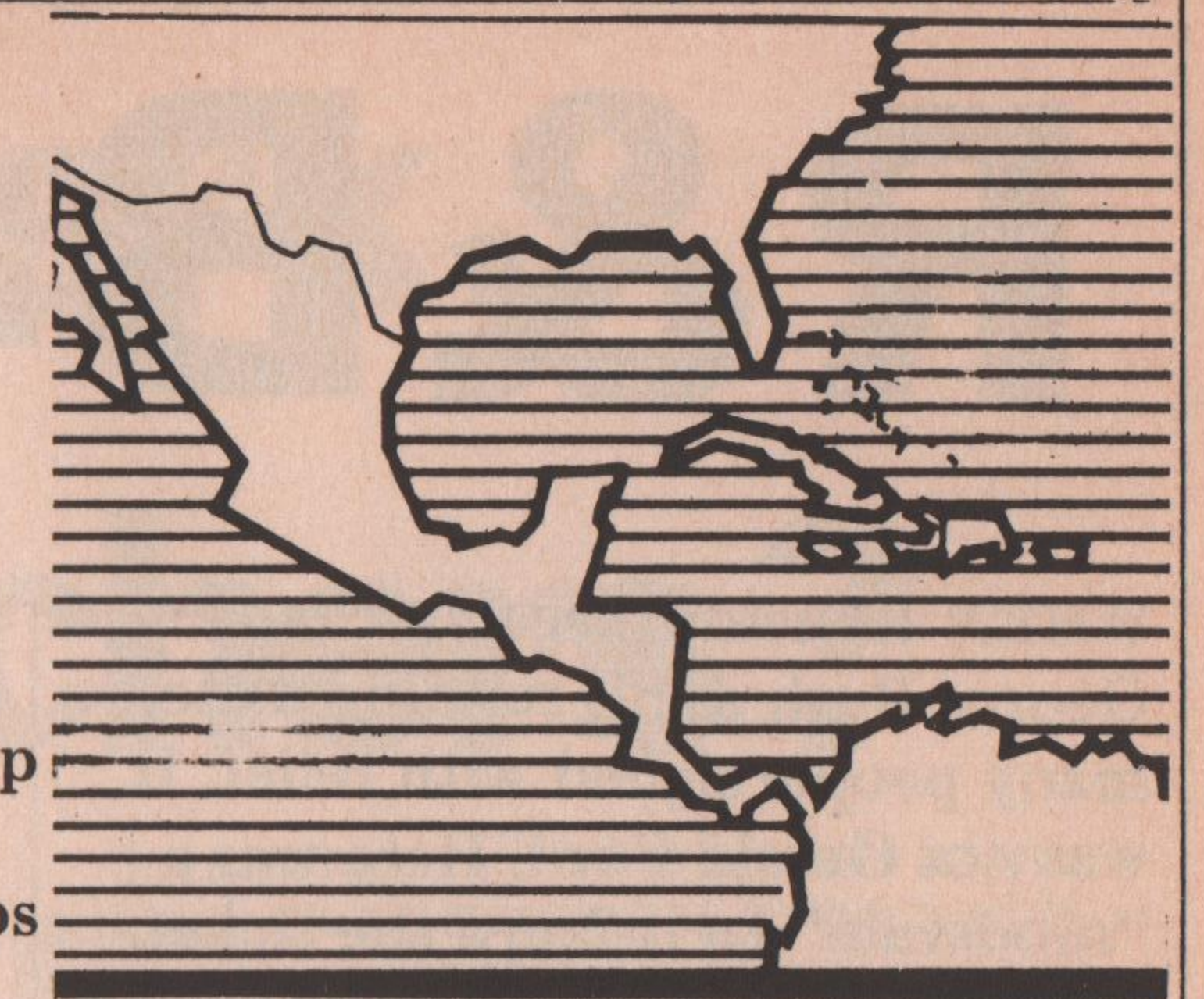
In the aftermath of the Sandinista victory over the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua last year, speculation was rife as to which would be the next 'domino' to 'fall'. As the class struggle hotted up in neighbouring El Salvador, the Lucas regime came under increasing pressure from the US State Department to improve its image. Superficial attempts were made. Newspapers and TV boast of 'majestic bridges' and 'enormous hospitals' supposedly springing up. But the reality is different. On January 31, the army responded to a peaceful occupation of the Spanish embassy by burning down the building, killing all but one of the occupants. After hearing their ambassador's account of the affair, the Spanish severed diplomatic relations.

Since February last year a democratic front has brought together the two social democratic parties, peasant groups, trade unions, student organisations, religious groups and shanty-town dwellers in opposition to Lucas. In recent months co-operation among the country's four guerilla groups suggests that a formal alliance between them and the civilian opposition cannot be far off.

Nicaragua has had a profound effect, both on the guerillas, who have seen how apparently conflicting strategies combined to defeat an entrenched dictatorship.

There have also been advances on the labour front. A two-week strike by 50,000 west coast plantation workers earlier this year forced the government to concede a wage rise of nearly 200%, not only to the striking sugar and cotton workers, but to a further 224,000 coffee workers.

The strike was a major victory for the country's central labour organisation, the



National Committee for Trade Union Unity (CNUS). From its beginnings only a few years ago, the CNUS has seen the importance of organising peasants and workers side by side. Political awareness in the countryside and amongst the indians has grown significantly in the past year, aided not only by the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC) and the guerillas but also by the government's blockbusting counter-insurgency drive.

The Sandinista government in Managua has not been greeted with quite the hysteria from the US which marked relations with the fledgling revolutionary regime in Havana. In the short term, it seems Carter is anxious just to keep the lid on regional turmoil, particularly in El Salvador, avoiding dramatic developments before the November presidential elections.

Most observers on the spot reckon Guatemala to be about two years behind neighbouring El Salvador in political terms. But whatever happens there, the fight for Guatemala will be long and bloody. If hard pressed, the US could perhaps abandon El Salvador (although Ronald Reagan is unlikely to see it that way); Guatemala is another story. It is not just a question of the oil and the nickel, in both of which the US has interests; nor of the vast profits being sucked out by American transnational companies. Strategically Guatemala is crucial. It straddles the isthmus, as does Nicaragua further south, and to accept a revolutionary regime there would virtually mean abandoning the US 'backyard' to the enemy. Perhaps even more significant is the border with Mexico, whose huge Chiapas oilfields lie not far to the north. No American president could let the 'red tide' creep that close.

The imminent replacement of the excessively pro-Lucas US ambassador has revived speculation about a possible Salvador-type coup. Lucas himself has helped to make such a coup less feasible by killing off the politicians most likely to figure in a post-coup government—in particular the two most prominent social democrats, Manuel Colom Argueta and Alberto Fuentes Mohr, both gunned down at the beginning of last year.

Perhaps Lucas believes that the whole of the Left can be beheaded in this simplistic fashion, thus enabling the 1982 presidential elections to be safely rigged. "What he doesn't realise," said a leading trade unionist, "is that as fast as he kills off the leaders of the popular organisations others arise to take their place. Under present conditions the repression, however severe, only increases our determination to overthrow the whole system."

R & B: new faces but same old tune

WHEN Ronald Reagan picked George Bush as his running mate, many people sighed with relief. It was not Gerald Ford. Here was a "moderate" to balance the ticket. Here, *The Leveller* strips the camouflage from this image of the man that powerful establishment interests in the US had, after all, originally wanted to be President — even though he has never won an election outside Texas.

BUSH had tried to get the vice-presidential slot three times before Reagan put him out of his misery. In 1968 Nixon picked Spiro Agnew instead; in 1974 Nixon picked Ford; and later that year Ford picked Nelson Rockefeller.

Bush is 56. He was born in Massachusetts, went to Yale, served in the navy in the South Pacific and was shot down by the Japanese. He then set out to make money. He still openly regards his business success (a millionaire by the age of 30) as among his most prized accomplishments.

He is reckoned to be worth about \$1.8million — including a \$400,000 home in Houston and a \$100,000 vacation house in Kennebunkport, Maine. Last year his income was \$271,000 as a consultant, director and lecturer, plus \$80,000 in dividends and capital gains. All the money comes from his business interests set up in Houston, Texas.

He likes to promote the Texan image of a charismatic, dynamic action-man.

But Bush has never won a political race outside Harris County, Texas. He owes everything to the conservatism of the Texan business community. In *Dallas* terms, he plays JR to Reagan's Jock Ewing — more determined and at least as dangerous.

In 1951 Bush helped to set up the Bush-Overby Oil Development Company, and in 1953 he set up two firms, the Zapata (!) Petroleum Company and the Zapata Offshore Company, which pioneered drilling in Mexican waters. In 1959 he moved to Houston proper and began his first fling in politics. By 1963 he had become chairman of the local Republican Party committee.

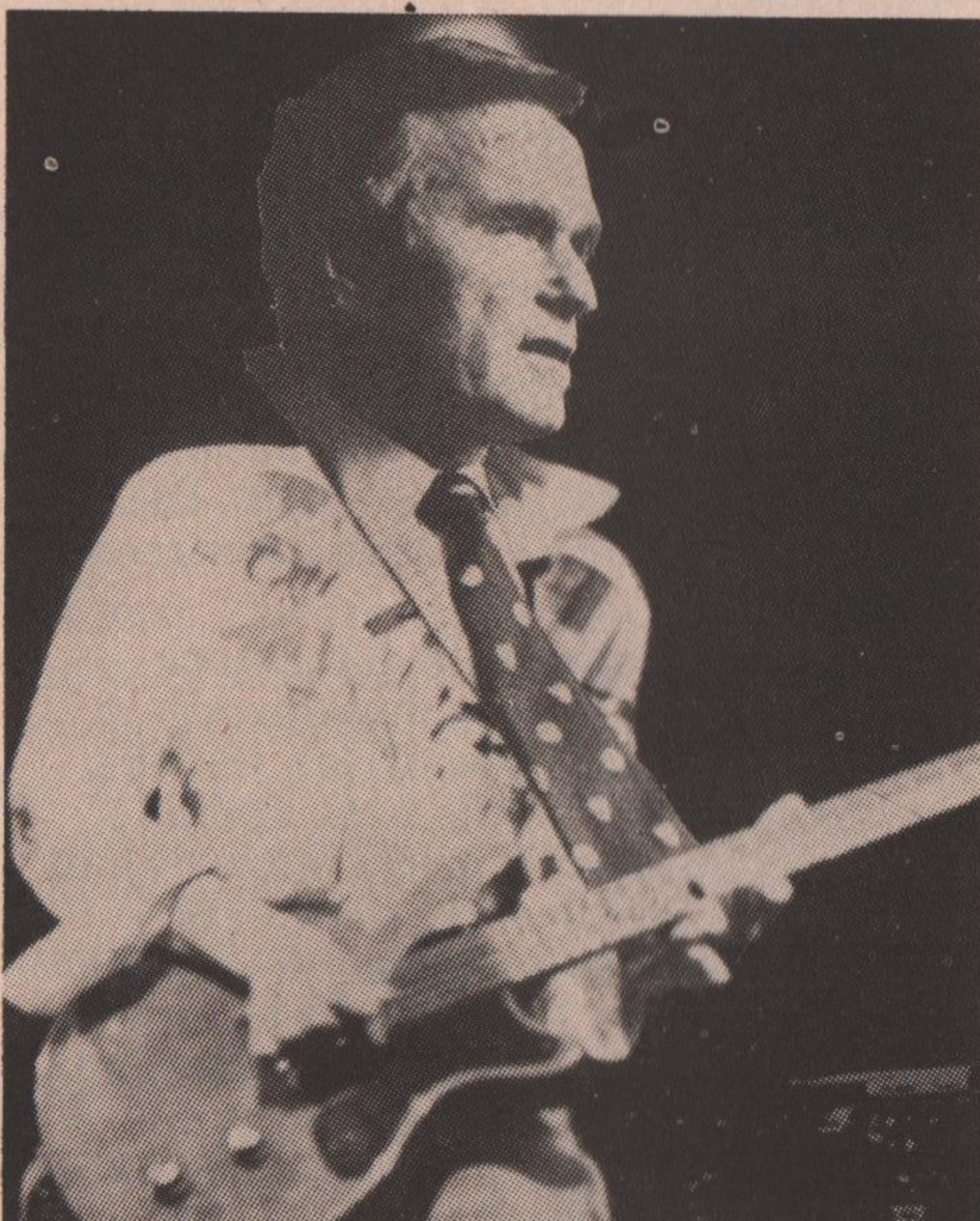
In 1964 he fought the Senate seat for Texas under the banner of Goldwater Republicanism, trying to save the state from "left wing radicalism". He denounced the 1964 Civil Rights Act as "unconstitutional" and attacked the whole Democrat liberal programme, including Medicare (designed to help the poor pay medical bills), the nuclear test ban treaty, and all Federal aid to school. He lost.

In 1966 he tried again and actually

won a seat in Congress, with the help of a skilful and expensive TV advertising campaign portraying him as Action Man. He was shown with his sleeves rolled up, tie askew, hair blowing in the wind, jacket slung over the shoulder... Nixon was later to use the same PR outfit.

Surprisingly, Bush was put on the influential Ways and Means committee where, as a former director of the American Association of Oil Well Drilling Contractors, and the Independent Petroleum Association of America, he made his name defending the oil industry.

In 1968 Bush and Nixon fought their association, and though he did not get the vice-presidency that year, both Nixon



and Agnew went on the stump in Texas to get Bush elected as a senator in 1970. He lost, so they made him UN ambassador.

At the UN he had to swallow his pride and campaign to allow China to hoin the UN — something he had vigorously opposed earlier. In 1973 he again followed Nixon's orders and became Republican party national chairman just as the Watergate scandal burst.

He travelled 190,000 miles in 45 states, appearing 20 times on prime-time TV to defend the party's image and the President.

Bush stood by the White House shoulder to shoulder. He was one of the last of the 'court' to come out against Nixon.

There was a mysterious \$40,000 donation to Bush's 1970 Senate campaign wired direct to Houston from Nixon's "Town House" political fund which was never declared. That may have been one reason why he was packed off as an envoy to China for a year to "cool off". He was summoned back to head the CIA and in his usual 'moderate' style he fought all attempts to find out the CIA's budget and agreed to notify Congress of covert actions only after they had happened.

What else does Bush stand for? Capital punishment: "I support it". Defence: "I don't have an exact figure for the increase...but I am impressed with a figure of 5%." Soviet troops in Cuba: "Their presence is an outrage and they must be removed." Support for Israel: "The security of our own country is linked with Israel's security as a bastion of democracy in a strategically vital area.

The list goes on. On draft registration: "I favour it. I am not convinced we need the draft, but if we do, it should be exemption proof." Weapons: "We ought to move ahead with several new systems delayed by Carter, including Cruise missiles the MX, and a greatly strengthened navy."

On social issues: Abortion is wrong and he is against legalising gay rights. He is against bussing and against health care plans being run through tax revenue.

Bush tried unsuccessfully to stay on at the CIA after Carter became President. He went back to Houston and began to nurse his ambition for the White House. He set up the Fund for Limited Government to back his campaign, headed by Texas millionaire James A Baker III. He got support from the new right, the old conservatives and the "moderate business" lobbies.

Reports from metal dealers in London and America also suggest that Bush is being backed by silver king Nelson Bunker Hunt, whose empire is based in Houston. Hunt's failure to hijack the whole silver market earlier in the year coincided with Bush's fading in the primaries.

Bush makes the ideal puppet for the Texas businessman — embracing a philosophy that includes tax cuts, no government intervention, metal deals, strong links with South Africa, arms deals, increased defence spending, and ultimately a belief in the Bomb.

He stands against the right to strike of all public employees, against any controls on multinational oil companies and wants the minimum wage kept down because it helps productivity. He has opposed a law to stop oil companies from making more than \$100m from non-oil deals. Even on Vietnam, Bush, the loyalist, says every year shows Nixon was right.

"It looks better and better from hindsight".

After coming back from China to head the CIA, Bush said: "I've crossed a kind of Rubicon. For 10 years it was inconceivable to me that the nation could survive without me in elective office some place. Now at the age of 49 I've discovered the republic might just get along without my services." There might be something in that.

Who marx the teachers?

THE COMMUNIST University of London — which has just held its twelfth annual event — likes to call itself the Open University of the Left. It has done much to promote open and informed debate inside and outside the Communist Party. Peter Johnson and Geoff Roberts, both previous CUL organisers, look back at its history and successes, and its relationship with the Party leader leadership.

ON OCTOBER 28, 1968, the day that 100,000 marched against American imperialism in Vietnam, the Communist Party's National Student Committee held a meeting. Impressed by the size of the demonstration, but concerned at its "ultra-left" leadership, the comrades felt that some Marxist-Leninist education was urgently needed.

They decided to organise a "Communist University" in London, where students could attend courses on the main academic disciplines, learn the tenets of "Marxist-Leninist" thought, and hear lectures by Communist Party leaders.

The idea was that the party's politics would be transmitted to a much wider audience and that students would be equipped to wage a struggle against "bourgeois ideology" in the classroom. A very neat formula, except that many of the potential participants doubted both the relevance of the politics and the critical capacity of the dogmatic Marxism frequently dished up as course critique.

In the world outside CUL's quiet cloisters things were changing rapidly. Within the CP the fight between Eurocommunists and the Old Guard leadership was beginning. A new generation of intellectuals was forcing a renewal of Marxism. New political forces such as the women's movement had redefined and expanded what is considered political.

Recognition of these changes and response to them was the basic ingredient of CUL's success in the later 1970s; this could be measured by the increased numbers at the event, its widely recognised contribution to the emergence of a British Marxist tradition, and the bastion it became for those seeking to create a new type of politics on the Left.

The political breadth of the CUL may seem surprising, given its original conception as a CP front. Behind the scenes, however, political battles were being fought about the nature and direction of the CUL, pivoting on the question of its degree of autonomy from the CP — the political width of the CUL has always had a direct relation to the amount of autonomy its organisers can win from the Party leadership.

Even so, the limits of this autonomy were publicly exposed in 1977 when Soviet Marxist dissident Zhores Medvedev was barred from speaking at CUL by the Party's Political Committee. Less obviously, CUL's "relative autonomy" has been shown by political self-censorship, "diplomatic" decisions about courses and speakers, and endless efforts to determine just how far the Organising Committee could go before the leadership intervened.

To some extent the assertion of autonomy was a cover for the Eurocommunists winning full control of a CUL that they saw increasingly as their event. But it also reflected a commitment to principles of intellectual autonomy, the value of political pluralism and the responsibilities of the Party to its allies.

There is more to the history of the CUL than faction fighting; just as important have been the debates about who CUL should attract, the kinds of subjects to cover and the types of teaching methods to use. Emerging from the "1968 Revolution", CUL initially sought to be a centre of counter-course activity among students. Then, as the Marxist intellectual milieu grew, emphasis changed to a concentration on Marxism's internal dialogues, attracting large numbers of postgraduates and academics. Under the impact of the growth of what the CP terms "new social forces and movements" in the communities, at work, amongst gays and women, CUL spread its net still wider.

Increasingly, CUL has become a heterogeneous event, attempting to run a wide range of courses that can appeal to activists in every area of political life in Britain.

Another way of viewing this process is in terms of a shift from abstract theory to concrete politics. In the mid-1970s CUL was dominated by discussion of Gramsci, Althusser and the Frankfurt school. Now the issues are Thatcherism, new technology, feminism and the EEC.

Along the way it has produced some notable spin-offs: local Communist University specialist groups and journals, a couple of books now on student reading lists throughout Britain, and most recently the collective around the publication *Politics and Power*.

It is clear that CUL has been affected by changes in the CP since its 35th Congress in 1977 when an alliance of progressives won a major revision of the CP programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, incorporating much of the new political thinking of the 1970s that had been articulated and spread by CUL.

Since 1977, however, any substantial change to the political practice and organisation of the CP has been blocked by the leadership, transforming Eurocommunist victory into retreat; the reverberations on CUL are still working themselves through; CUL continues to provide a framework for fruitful discussion; significantly, journals ranging from *Feminist Review* and *Gay Left* to *History Workshop Journal* and *State Research* organised courses at CUL this year. But it is no longer the significant mechanism of influence it once was.

The Communist University of London claims to be the 'Open University of the Left'. Like the Open University, there are forces at work beyond the power of those who pay their money and take their choice.

Science: acid test for women

SCIENCE IS often regarded as peculiarly masculine: the realm of pure, thrusting thought.

But masculinity is all things to all men: as I'm writing this, a Harrods ad. on the radio is pushing some men's cosmetics as 'The uniquely masculine range with the fragrance that lasts and lasts'. I think that advertising copywriters could sell even *crying as masculine* ('The limitation on this market currently is the belief that only women and poofthahs cry. It is imperative that we counteract this negative image').

What's more important is that feminists shouldn't reject science simply on its negative image as 'male science'. And Virago have

just published a book - *Alice through the microscope* - which makes this likely.

The editors of *Alice*, members of the Brighton Women & Science Group, spell out this message in the Introduction:

Science, it is true, does not belong to us, but that is no reason to ignore it. ... That the skills of the 'popular culture', including women's skills, have been systematically denigrated is bad enough. That feminism colludes in this by ignoring that from which we are excluded is worse still.

Alice provides sharp critical analyses of some of the bluff, masculine views on women -

particularly in the social sciences - whose craggy exterior conceals prejudices which range from a smug assumption of superiority to a dangerous hatred of women.

The book also provides information about women's education in science, about technological developments which specifically affect women (in connection with contraception, the possibilities of reproductive engineering, etc.) It has an appendix on 'Some biological information'.

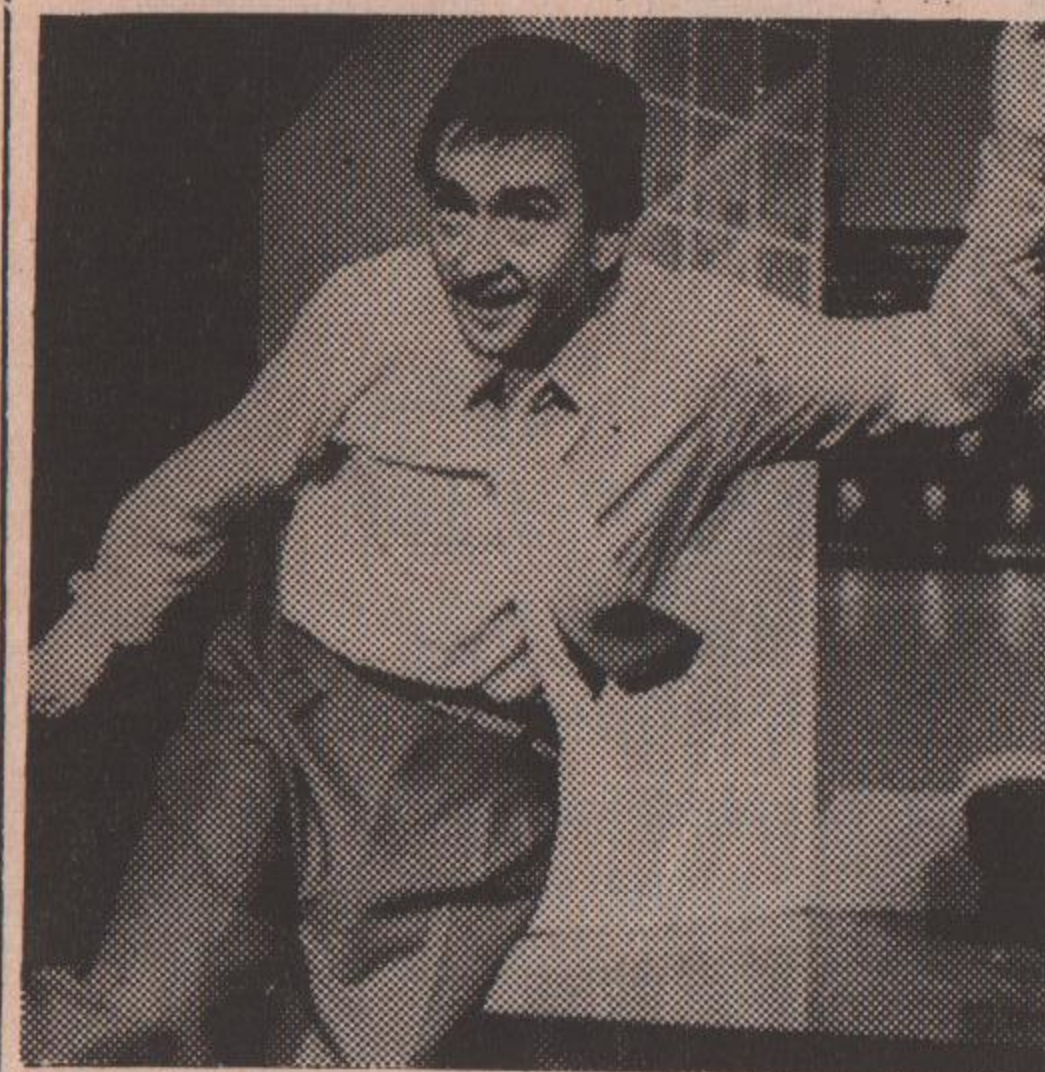
When it comes to analysing the worth of scientific 'rationality' and the possible benefits to women of scientific inventions, the essays in general, and with some except-

ions, are sensitive to the ambiguity of 'masculine' and 'feminine' values. They are looking for some more basic analytical perspective, in terms of the power of men over women.

The political implications in the various essays range from a call to the barricades in the final battle between men and women, to stressing the need for a change in consciousness. There is an essay which claims that women are uniquely linked to the phases of the moon, and an essay which hammers such views. The women's movement used also to have strong links with socialism: where did all the Commies go?

Janet Vaux

REVIEWS



Denis Lawson: man's best friend becomes woman's devious pal

IN AN EXPLOSION of noise and colour, the New Half Moon has opened on a more prominent site in the East End than the old Alie Street venue. Rodgers and Hart's 1940 musical *Pal Joey* marks this thrust towards popularity.

Given that one of the three main characters is a wealthy Chicago socialite, to say the show lacks political bite is inadequate. But inasmuch as the evening ends with two women finally asserting their independence from a particularly gross example of male chauvinism, the story is not totally devoid of a hard centre. Despite the unusual subject matter for a politically committed theatre, I left feeling there are several reasons why the entertainment works.

The setting of the first half in a Southside Chicago nightclub fits the identity of the 125-seat temporary auditorium perfectly. The sense is of being at an extended cabaret rather than at a play, so it's surprising to hear that the Half Moon has considered a transfer to one of Ian Albery's chain of West End theatres. Particularly since concessions have not been made in production terms toward making an obvious West End package. The skimpy libretto fits well on the Half Moon house style. The more intimate experience in a small venue leaves the audience greater scope to use its own imagination. The women in the chorus have breathed characterisation into the book's casual victims. In fact, they are able to convey a contempt for their exploitation both as nightclub performers and in Joey's arms. Adding particular depth to an amusingly ill-assorted dance line are Jane Gurnett as the determined Adele and Poppy Hands as the emerging villainess, Gladys.

The most theatrical event of the production is the arrival of Sian Phillips on the minute Half Moon stage, reinforcing the effect of Vera, descending into Mike's Night Club. Denis Lawson's cuddly persona has been adapted for a number of

purposes, (including a memorable role as an over-friendly shaggy dog, at the Soho Poly) so it's easy to see what the women characters fall for in his version of Joey. It is more difficult to be convinced that he possesses the calculating mind of a semi-professional gigolo.

Decidedly, the main substance of the entertainment could and should transfer to the West End. Congratulations to the Half Moon for seeking to secure their future, through a production tailor-made for the Mile End Road. We look forward to more entertainment, but less borrowings and more authentic East End material.

Lloyd Trott

First you put up your umbrella...

AND IT has taken the Drum Arts Centre two years to do it. Originally commissioned to produce four touring plays by the Ministry of Overseas Development, the Thatcher cuts prevented them from ever being done - until the scheme was taken up by the Riverside Studios, in Hammer-smith, West London. Their Plays Umbrella eventually included five new works - by one Asian writer, two blacks and three English - chosen, according to Peter Gill, Riverside supremo, with 'the common root of the meeting of Britain and the Third World.'

Whatever the worthy motive, and despite some of the most massive advance publicity on the London stage, the season has gone off at half-cock. The audiences were there - an average of around 60% capacity overall - even if the complex repertory system was a bit daunting. And it's a relief that this most prestigious of showcases for capitalism should have abandoned some of its more refined exhibits to attract hundreds of people who normally never go near the place: who knows, some of them may even have come from the Riverside's local 'community' - too long ignored!

Although all the directors, the designer and lighting technician were white, it was not so much this, as some of the writing, which left an odour of compromise hanging about the theatre: first you get your hungry audience, then you cheat on the cake.

Mustapha Matura, by far the best known of the five contributors, offered a soggy farce about a young Brit-educated Trinidadian who tries to con money from the social climbing snobs at his father's funeral. Apart from a few wise-cracks about doing

things 'de British way', the whole thing would have been just as unfunny if it had been set in Watford (no offence!). If some of the characterizations were accurate, it wasn't enough to correct the general effect of *A Dying Business* being one of wilful blindness to radical struggles.

The true implications of being a cockney kid who's neither black nor white are more carefully examined in Hanif Kureishi's *The Mother Country*. Imran was born in London and lives with his father Hussein - a Rachman-like landlord and shopkeeper with aspirations (eventually achieved) to own a chain of launderettes and to live with the bourgeois natives in Walton-on-Thames while squeezing the whites dry in his own effective retaliation against oppression... if that's really what it is. His sin is that he is an ambitious, acquisitive merchant first, and a bitter, resentful and committed Pakistani second. His anger is sublimated into humiliation of his son, who is 'rescued' by Joe - an ex-con into Buddhist mysticism, who is ashamed of the attitudes of his white brethren. But nothing Joe feels can help Imran, who turns from fashion modelling to Muslim Workers League to Maida Vale pop-star. *The Mother Country* is the first play to tackle head-on the many insecurities of a second-generation Pakistani, but like a firework gone out of control, you no sooner see a spark of an idea than it has gone out and been replaced. With too many fragmentary climaxes, Hanif Kureishi seems to have skirted round the problem of clearly defined motivation to concentrate on the surface relationships of the three very complex and well-drawn characters.

One Fine Day is Nicholas Wright's impression of a white lecturer from the North London Poly experiencing for the first time the awkwardness of cultural contacts in a 'developing' African nation, for 'developing' in this context means using tempting video equipment to blackmail the principal of a training college. Once the students discover the truth about sales of coffee beans from the college's plantations, they are unable to use the information to their advantage - the power structures are too rigid, and their lack of leadership serves to reinforce not only these, but also the all-pervading superstition that persists in the agricultural community.

But for me the only play to come to grips with the question of uprooting - and surely that should be the concern of any play for black audiences in Britain - was *Black Man's Burden*. The title is an irony in itself, since it was written by Michael O'Neill

and Jeremy Seabrook. Although the subject matter is somewhat exotic - fourteen-year-old Melvita gets pregnant and is visited by angels who tell her this is to be the new messiah, the Shining One - it is a story of the culture clash when Melvita leaves Jamaica to bring 'light' to the backward Brits by giving birth to her baby over here. Once in England she is reunited with her mother and stepfather and their two teenage children, who all become estranged through the tensions caused by Melvita's unusual rantings. It may be hard to judge whether this is intended as a lament for lost and betrayed ethnic origins or a criticism of out-dated superstitions, but it has the power to show how black can desperately shield the hope of becoming white. George, Phyllis and their two kids have renounced their origins and conformed to the expectations of their white friends and neighbours and work-mates. This is their self-induced burden, and eventually the pressure of opposition to Melvita's prophecies in the local supermarket becomes so intense that they seek psychiatric help for her. Obviously, the experts' answer is abortion and incarceration - a cruel solution which drives Phyllis away from her family. But this was a solution comparable to the 'whip her good' tactics of the Jamaican preacher - so who's right? The only conclusion worth making is that any hope of leaving home to find a new life of freedom in England or the USA is doomed to frustration - unless you want to sweep Victoria Station. It's a one-sided picture, but it embraces the disenchantment of youth and the disintegration of the family in two very different cultures by means of excellent economical writing.

So, the Riverside is at least to be praised for diverting some of its funds to a 'worthy' project, but nobody should be allowed to think that these are the only plays being performed by black companies. Somehow, my only hope is that the interest it generates might lead to more work being seen - not necessarily in large subsidized theatres or on TV, but in community theatres with new audiences for whom the material is specifically written. After all, there's nothing wrong with preaching to the converted: invariably that's where the seeds of unrest are most profitably sown.

David Roper

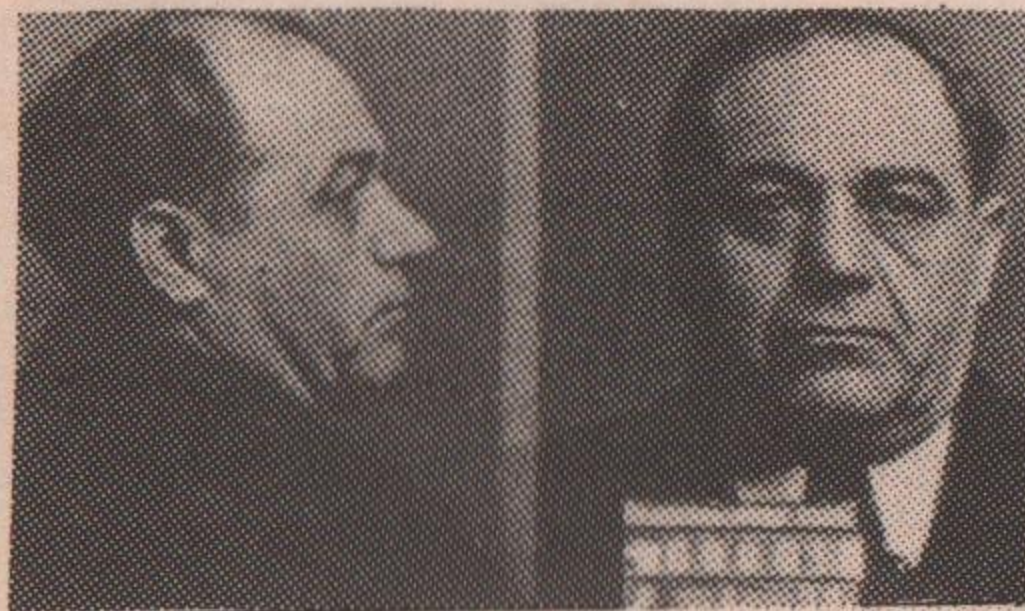


REVIEWS

New York's other bosses

THERE are so few good books about organised crime and its economic and political ramifications that even a relatively uninspiring study like Pluto's *Crimes of the Powerful* seems like a real find. *East Side-West Side* in its demolition of conspiracy theory, analysis of power relationships, and tracing of the fluctuations of illegal business and extortion in New York between 1930-50 ranks with Henner Hess's *Mafia And Mafiosi, The Structure Of Power* as one of the best 'crime' books of the decade.

The traditional British detective story often portrays a world disrupted by murder



Vito "Socko" Gurino

in which the status quo is restored by a representative of the dominant class whether it be a genteel, elderly lady or an idle, but brilliant, peer in the Wimsey or Pimpernel tradition. Conversely, in the States the down-at-heel, but honest, gumshoe finds himself up against a world of corruption in which the police, the judiciary, and big business, never mind the mob, are all on the take. Both genres reflect the cultures that produced them - the old boy network in Britain, whose class privileges have been largely intact for a thousand years, and in America the robber baron ethic where almost anything goes as long as it can be covered up.

Block starts by showing how the American love for conspiracy theory and disregard for historical method has produced a literature of crime that is still obsessed with monolithic alien conspiracies. Romance and demonology take precedence over any view of organised crime as a particular consequence of competitive capitalism and state formation. Conservative ideology is especially devoted to conspiracy theory because by concentrating on the secret machinations of a sinister, and probably alien, group of individuals, no conclusions need to be drawn about the kind of society in which such 'conspiracies' develop. Ethnic stereotyping is part and parcel of this approach.

The drive to explain the confusion of the postwar years in America revealed itself in McCarthy's search for alien, red conspirators and Senator Kefauver's discovery of a single organisation of alien, conspiratorial crime moguls. These conspiracies, it was alleged, struck at the very heart of American life and threatened to subvert all moral values. Such pressures may have discomforted such figures as Frank Costello, whose political connections ran very deep indeed, but did nothing to explain the mechanics (and mundanities) of criminal enterprise.

Block refuses to be blinded by a mythology that grew out of self-serving biographies, shock-horror press coverage, and a weird mirror process in which active professional criminals begin to believe and repeat the most unlikely fantasies about their own world promoted in the more sensational literature. He pulls no punches in his theory that organised crime is built on a drive for power, official complicity, and an extortionary politics of terror. He lays it firmly on the line in one of his few lapses into rhetoric: 'out of the maw of competitive capitalism and possessive individualism marched - the extortionists - the entrepreneurs of violence'.

The overall crime system, long built into the political structures of New York, maintains its continuity whereas individuals within it live in a whirl of shifting alliances and enterprises. According to Block's definition, organised crime cannot be truly said to exist unless reciprocal services are performed by criminals, their clients, and by politicians.

Enterprise syndicates, specialising in bootlegging, prostitution, gambling or drugs, as opposed to power syndicates specialising in extortion and intimidation, usually have to deal with the power brokers



Harry "Happy" Maione

of both the underworld and the upperworld in order to function. The pursuit of power is the common bond which binds the professionals of both

worlds together. These entrepreneurs frequently overlap and co-operate, as well as compete, in a relatively chaotic system far removed from the rigid concept of the crime family with its own highly specific territorial and business interests.

Power syndicates are particularly active in industry, the death rate in construction, catering, the garment business, the waterfront and trucking (because of its links with bootlegging) being particularly high in the thirties and forties. At various times organised crime seems to have penetrated everything from clothing and taxicabs to window cleaning and garbage collection. The violence of American labour history, where employers have attempted to prevent, contain or destroy unions, is well-known and violence is a syndicate speciality. As early as 1906 detective agencies were publicly advertising



Antonio Siciliano

themselves as strikebreakers. The scabs they employed were frequently local gangsters, whose political connections encouraged the police to side with the employers. Occasionally the syndicates worked for bosses and workers simultaneously. The consistent victims were the rank-and-file, controlled by violence or the threat of violence, whilst employers, gangsters, and corrupt union officials lined their own pockets as they effected strikebreaking, price-fixing, 'sweetheart contracts' and commodity monopolies.

There were sometimes victories as well as tragic defeats as the syndicates enforced their will by assault, bombing, acid throwing, arson and kidnapping. In 1933 'Lepke' Buchalter's group was forced out of the fur industry after a pitched battle with union militants. His men, armed with revolvers, knives and lead pipes, had staged an attack on the union HQ where a meeting was in progress. Contrary to expecta-

tions they were repulsed by the men in the building and as word spread, more workers streamed in to pulverize those hoodlums who had been unable to escape. At the end of the day, two men lay dead and many suffered severe injury.



Gesuele Capone

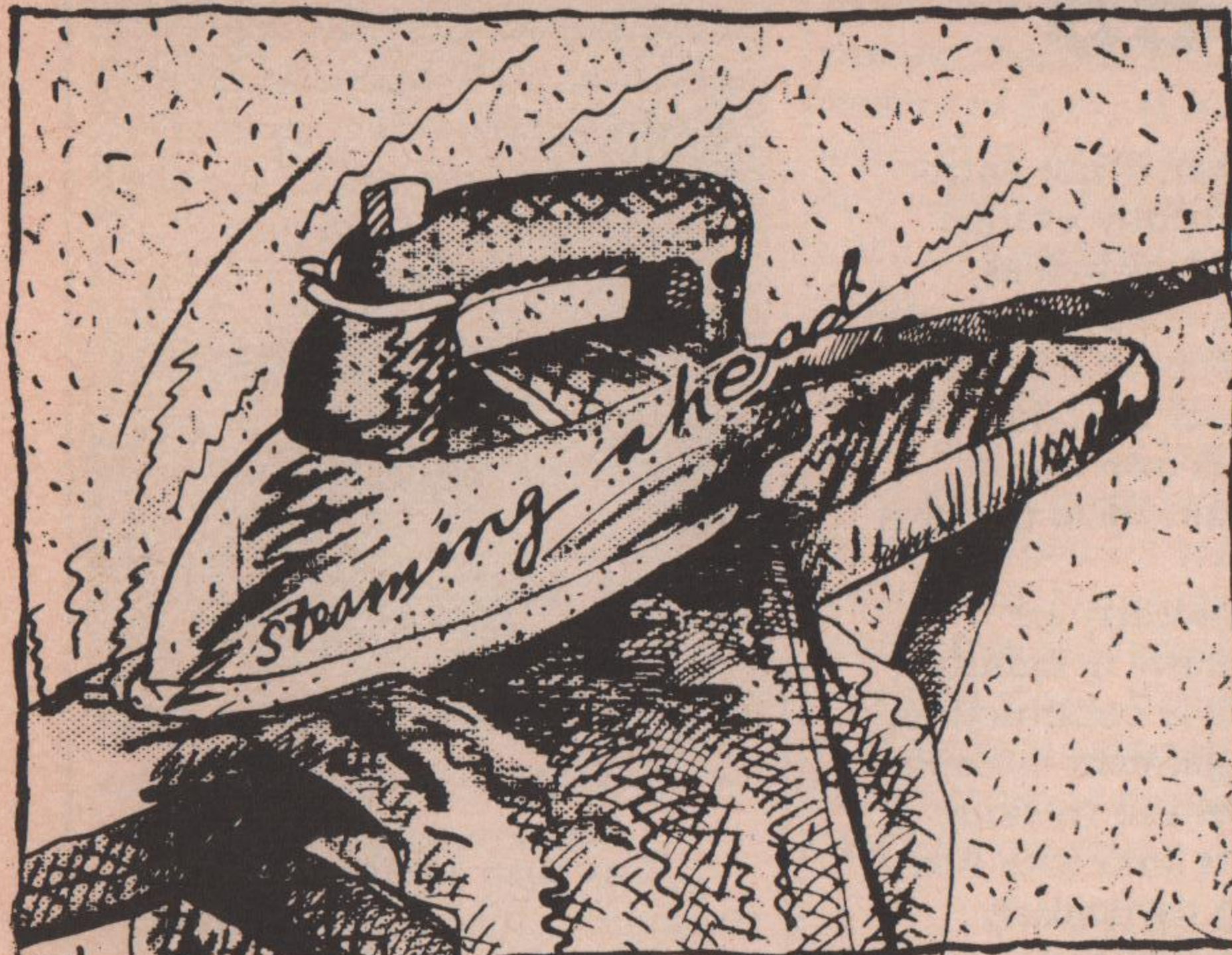
More than anything else organised crime is about power and the wielding of power; the gun being the final sanction to eliminate competition, discipline workers, and ensure that votes go in the right direction. In New York the structure of municipal politics was the key to its formation and continuity, although its operators lived and died in conditions of incessant turmoil. Elsewhere other institutions provide the bridging ground between crime, politics and the mediation of power. To succeed you need a lot of bottle, management skills, a good business head, a sense of innovation, first-rate political connections, and an ability to maim, kill and betray with little or no compunction. A trouble-free retirement is not guaranteed.

It is sometimes forgotten that professional criminals are real people, whose power bases usually originate in the bars, clubs and cafes of tangible neighbourhoods. On the other hand there is a tendency (by naive liberals or the more Nechayev-oriented libertarians) to sentimentalise the young mafioso or romanticize the rising hoodlum as an anarchic opponent of capitalist society. It is an indulgence that trivializes the everyday struggles of a labour movement whose militants have been blinded, maimed and murdered by thugs practising a politics of terror that is devoted to the maintenance of a corrupt and corrupting status quo. The sad history of the Teamsters and other contemporary American unions clearly show that not a great deal seems to have changed over the past thirty years.

Roger Lewis

Alan Block, *East Side-West Side, Organizing Crime In New York, 1930-1950* (University College Cardiff Press; Cardiff, 1980).

BOOKS



THE WOMEN'S PRESS began publishing in February 1978 with five first books. Now they have about 40 books on their lists, mainly large format paperbackbacks in the areas of history, health and politics, with an increasing emphasis on original material. Their new list includes:

August:
Cora Sandel: *Alberta & Jacob* £2.50
Alberta and Freedom £2.50
Alberta Alone £2.50
September:
ed. Stephanie Dowrick & Sybil Grundberg: *Why Children?* £2.75
October:
Nor Hall: *The Moon and the Virgin - Reflections on the Archetypal Feminine* £3.95
ed. Dale Spender & Elizabeth Sarah: *Learning*

to Lose - Sexism and Education £3.25

Despite publishing excellent books and having a tiny staff ration to published books, they are still fighting an almost impossible battle to get their books out at reasonable prices. Rather than accepting this as a fact of life, they are launching the Women's Press Bookclub. By buying in bulk and selling direct to the reader they can offer between 25 - 50% off the published price, concentrating on areas neglected by mainstream shops and bookclubs.

Membership costs £5 p.a., or £10 for life, to cover costs of catalogues and mailing. All enquiries for membership should be sent to: The Women's Press Bookclub, 124 Shore-ditch High Street, London E1 6JE.

YORK COMMUNITY BOOKSHOP has published a comprehensive list of gay books including many American titles. Apart from covering areas such as fiction, autobiography, rights, sexuality, poetry and drama, it features many badges, books and records. The list costs 30p to individuals (inc p&p) and 60p to institutions, shops and libraries, and is available from:
York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate, York YO1 2TZ.

readers can lend support by buying their stationery from them; Housman's also supply book displays for meetings and conferences.

They have recently published the following titles:

Ronald Sampson, *Society Without the State* 30p
Housmans World Peace Directory for 1980 75p
Gene Sharp, *Gandhi as a Political Strategist* £4.25
The Politics of Non-violent Action
Part I: Power & Struggle £1.75
Part II: Methods of Nonviolent Struggle £2.95
Part III: Dynamics of Nonviolent Action £3.25
Available (at usual discount to bookshops) from:
Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.

SOCIALISTS UNLIMITED the publications and agit-prop section of the SWP, have published their new booklist, which includes:

Alan Gibbons: *Russia, How the Revolution was Lost* 35p
Mike Simons: *Workers' Power, Not Nuclear Power* 50p
SWP Gay Group: *The Word is Gay* 20p
Phil Marfleet: *Palestine Lives!* 40p
Balazs Nagy: *Budapest 1956: The Central Workers' Council* 30p

These books, and the full list, are available from: Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE.

TWO NEW offerings from Bookmarx: Colin Spark's *Never Again! The Hows and Whys of Stopping Fascism* is a good basic historical summary. As might be expected, his analysis is primarily a political and economic one, and in playing down the mystical aspect of German fascism - particularly in relation to antisemitism - an important element of its appeal in times of crisis gets left out. But this must be come to terms with before it can be dealt with.

Rosa Luxemburg, by Tony Cliff, contains a brief biographical sketch, but concentrates on her writings, few of which have been translated into English. Cliff stresses her unique contribution to socialist ideas, her independence and humanism, qualities which caused Stalin to brand her posthumously as a Trotskyite.

One of Rosa Luxemburg's works has at last found its way into English, however. *Theory and Practice*, her attack on Kautsky and the German Social Democrats has been published by the Detroit paper *News and Letters* at 75p. (See Publications listings for their English address.)

Never Again! The Hows and Whys of Stopping Fascism, by Colin Sparks (£1.95) and Rosa Luxemburg, by Tony Cliff (£1.95) are published by: Bookmarx, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

PUBLICATIONS

ISSUE 10 of *Gay Left* is now available; at 48 pages for 70p it is a good read. Future plans of the Gay Left Collective are another Gay Socialist Conference planned for later this year, followed by the publication of Issue 11.

The Collective hopes the conference will provide a useful forum for exchanging experiences about the projects people are involved in and for discussing the

issues and campaigns that confront us. It is one of the few opportunities for lesbians and gay men to discuss the wider context of our activities outside of specific issues. It will be held on the weekend of November 22nd - 23rd 1980 at:
Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19. Look out for further details.



WELSH WOMEN'S AID have published a report entitled *Mrs Hobson's Choice*, which gives the results of a survey carried out to examine the employment position of 73 women who passed through their South Wales Refuges for battered women. The report concludes that 'A depressing picture emerges of women struggling to keep themselves and their families fed, clothed and cared for... Attitudes towards women's employment must be changed so that the right to a well-paid and satisfying job outside the home is accepted as a natural expectation.'

Available from:
Welsh Women's Aid, 2 Coburn Street, Cathays, Cardiff; price 40p (inc. p&p).

THE BRITISH Marxist-Humanist Group have published a British edition of *News and Letters*, the U.S. paper that regularly features the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya (author of

Marxism and Freedom) and Charles Denby (author of *Indignant Heart - A Black Auto-workers Testament*: just published by Pluto Press). Price is 20p, subs £2 p.a. for 4 British editions plus all the monthly U.S. editions.
Available from: 1, Westbeech Road, London N22.

No British Solution. 50p from Troops Out. Box U T, 2a, St. Paul's Road, London N1.
THIS PAMPHLET is one of the best publications to have come out of Britain's war in Ireland. A series of easily read essays sketches out the origins of the war, copiously illustrated and broken up with quotes from some of the leading protagonists - though not, strangely, from the Provisional IRA themselves.

The final essay, 'No British Solution', concerns itself with how Britain: has managed to keep the lid on the Irish question... why it has never been rocked by waves of massive anti-colonial protest.

In a convincing analysis of why Britain stays, despite the cost: 'paid for by the working class through taxation, while the profits from capital investment go back to the investor', the authors argue that withdrawal would be an: enormous loss of face and dent in the Government's authority.... a demonstration of weakness before the eyes of the British working class'.

They note that the Troops Out position has been adopted by student, women and black organisations, but has not made much headway in the trade union movement. Part of the purpose of the pamphlet is to present the argument in that forum. It deserves to do well.

THE HARDER THEY COME was a deservedly celebrated film. Unexpectedly, there is now a book of the film - well, a novel inspired by the film. And inspired it is. Based on the real life of a 1950's Jamaican country boy who gets wise quick in Kingston, and turns songwriter and gangster, it illuminates parts that the film could not.

In the book, country life and legends, Kingston's rip-off record trade and ganja running, are all noted, in a patois that both sounds and scans right. And Michael Thelwell's humour leaps among the words like a homing salmon. Whether or not you've seen the film, you'll almost certainly appreciate this grand, sad, and very political book.

The Harder They Come, by Michael Thelwell. Pluto Press, £2.95 pbk, £6.95 hbk.

THE FOURTH issue of *Achilles Heel*, the anti-sexist magazine is out now, and is given over to a discussion of Men and Work; Work as men's identity, masculinity and work, self-esteem, tory individualism and other problems of mens traditional role as breadwinner are examined.
Achilles Heel costs 60p and is available from:
7 St Marks Rise, London E8.

ANOTHER STANDARD is a broadsheet published this week by The Shelton Trust. It is an introduction to Community Arts. Community artists work with groups

of people, all over the country, to make art accessible and to break down barriers to creative expression. Another Standard gives the flavour of some of this work, with articles on projects in West, South and East London, in Manchester Hospitals, in Scotland and on tour, plus information on the community arts movement and on the current state of funding. While the broadsheet gives an indication of the range of media used, it has been almost impossible to indicate the full spread of locations and contexts, from the inner cities to new towns, from rural villages to prisons, hospitals and homes for the mentally handicapped. Another Standard is available at 10p per copy plus 10p postage and packing for each three issues ordered, from:
FreeForm, 38 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AZ.

THEATRE



A GOOD CHOICE of Fringe theatre this month. The Avon Touring Theatre Company are presenting two plays in their current season, Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, and Brittle Glory, by Vince Foxall. Loosely based on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Brittle Glory links the struggle for the crown with a saga of successive governments. Set at first in Elizabethan England it moves manically towards the present day... echoes of Churchill, Powell and Thatcher are mixed with images and language from Shakespeare.

Avon Touring performs in theatres, schools and clubs all over the British Isles. The only requirements are a space at least 6 metres x 7 1/2 metres and some electrical points. The fee is negotiable.
GOOD WOMAN, only Sept 16 Kingsfield School, Kingswood, Bristol
Sept 17 Gordan School, Portishead, Bristol
Sept 18 Pucklechurch Community Centre, nr Bristol

WOMAN/GLORY Sept 22 - Oct 4 touring in Lincolnshire and Humberside

For more details please write or phone to:
The Administrators, Avon Touring Company, McArthur Warehouse, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol 1. Tel: (0272) 20247/291 582.

THE OXFORD PLAYHOUSE COMPANY are staging the British premiere of Jean-Claude Grumberg's *The Workshop*. Set in post-war Paris in a small tailoring workshop, the play captures the joys and hardships of the women workers attempting to forget the Occupation. National touring dates are:
19 - 23 August: Playhouse, Oxford
25 - 30 August: Brewery Theatre, Taunton
1 - 6 Sept: Playhouse, Harlow
8 - 13 Sept: Hexagon Theatre, Reading
15 - 20 Sept: Playhouse Oxford

TWO TOURING Agitprop shows:

CUNNING STUNTS: Runts on the Stoad - an indoor show, cabaret-style featuring Cuning Stunts distinctive mix of vivid visual popular theatre and music.
23 - 25 August: Rougham Tree Fair
27 - 31 Penzance Festival

6 - 13 Sept: Aarhus Festival Denmark

COMMON STOCK THEATRE COMPANY: The Mild Bunch - devised and written by the Company - is an outdoor show for children aged 5 and 12. The Mild Bunch are a group of performers inspired by characters found in traditional folk tales. The following London dates are scheduled:

14 Aug: Maystar Youth Club Summer Project Open space off Star Road, W.14. 10.30 a.m. Cantelews Gardens, Camden Road, N.W.1. 3.00 p.m.
15 Aug: St. Paul's

Church, Wimbledon Park, Augustus Road, S.W. 19. 11.00 a.m. Corams Fields Playgroup, Guildford Street, W.C.2 3.00 p.m.
16 Aug: Action Space, Drill Hall, Chenes Street, W.C. 1. 3.00 p.m.

And two for the EDINBURGH FRINGE: Edinburgh University Theatre Co present *Progress*, by Simon Evans. The play looks at some of the problems of personal responsibility in the context of aggressive power structures, and whether violent opposition to a violent authority can guarantee a peaceful future. Aug 16 - 30 at 7.15pm in The Bedlam Theatre, Old Chapelainy Centre, Forrest Road, Edinburgh.

THE NOTTINGHAM THEATRE GROUP are mounting a revival of Montagu Slater's play *Stay Down Miner*. The play dates from 1936 and deals with the stay down strikes in the South Wales coalfield of 1935, using documentary material, verse commentary, agitational scenes and realistic dialogue.
14 - 30 August at 8.30 pm. Hill Place Centre, 21 Hill Place, off Nicholson Street, Edinburgh.

FILM

THE MANCHESTER WOMEN'S FILM GROUP is showing the following programme of films in their next season:
Sep 29: *Take it Like a Man, Ma'am & Size 10*
Oct 13: *Town Bloody Hell & Amy*
Oct 27: *Legacy & We Aim to Please*
Nov 10: *Blood of the Condor & The Patchworks*

of Santiago
Nov 24: *My Love Has Been Burning & All the Women You Are*
Dec 8: *Daughter Rite & Sigmund Freud's Dora: A Case of Mistaken Identity & Risky Business*

Films are shown at the Film and Video Workshop, Caley Street (behind Salisbury pub), Manchester 1. Admission is 90p for non-members, 70p for members; membership costs 75p. There's also a special discount of £4.50 for the whole season if paid in advance.

EVENTS



THE LONDON MUSICIANS' COLLECTIVE are organising the following gigs:

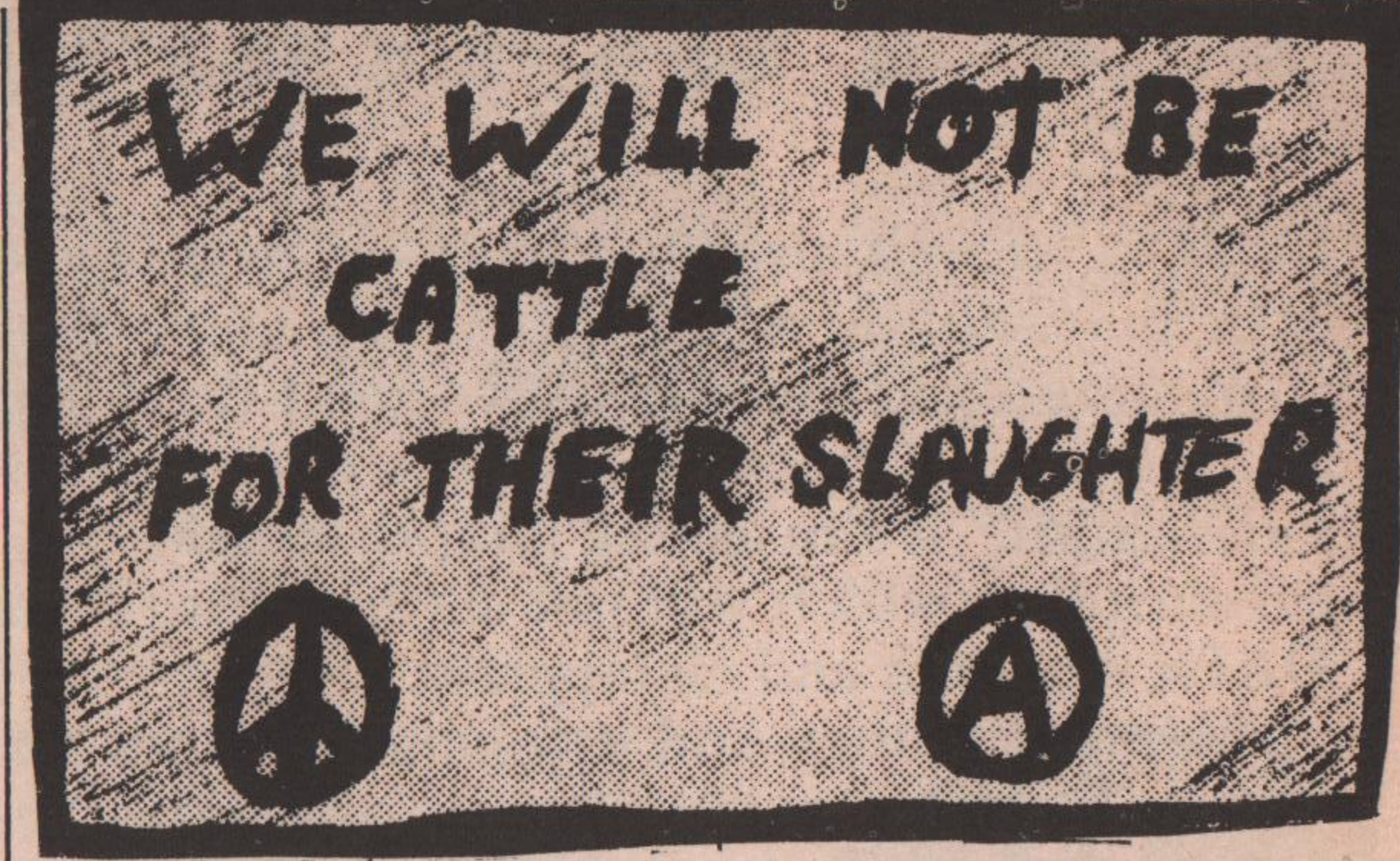
Aug 23 2pm Open Session
Aug 24 8pm Obstacles (violin) Peter Casack (guitar) DUO + Terry Day (percussion, cello, guitar) George Kahn (saxes) DUO + Lily Greenham (voice, sound, texts & short stories)
Aug 29 Kamikaze Trio
Aug 30 2pm Open Session
8pm Sinan

Savaskan and Society of New Music Players with Dancers.
Admission is £1.25, members £1, and the LMC is at:
42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1.

The following bulletin has reached *The Leveller* office. Make of it what you will.

Urgent...urgent...urgent... proposal...that an attempt is made to get 100's of people on to the streets of Yorkshire, (preferably dressed as soldiers) on one of the weekends of the Army's simulated exercises (11th till 25th Sept, when 10,000 troops will be taking over key installations (railway and bus stations, airport, TV studios, newspaper offices, Town Halls etc) in a nuclear alert/social unrest/civil disorder) scenario, with Yorkshire as the practice area.

People to be encouraged to come to Yorkshire armed with their own propaganda, toy weapons and pick suggested sites which could include the nuclear shelters, command posts, communications HQs as well as the civilian buildings. This could be a street theatre spectacular, allowing participants maximum initiative, which with imagination would involve minimum of organisation other than an effective publicity campaign. (The 'alternative' troops would not be marshalled and drilled.)



FRAYED EDGES Fanzine have produced an excellent anti-nuclear war poster, *Their Wars Our Lives*, punk-collage style. Carter, Brezhnev, and sinister armed figures stalk the streets beneath a mushroom cloud while people cower in fear. This is just a detail; the whole poster can be obtained from:
6, Onslow Road, Southampton, Hants, price 25p.

With a healthy anti-Metropolitan tendency, Leeds seems to be the place for lefty get togethers now. In November a National Conference of Socialist Photography is being held there. A group of left photographers, who feel the need for 'an organised dialogue and clarification of practices' is convening a two-day event at Beechwood College on November 1 - 2. Material covering a wide range of subject matter will be presented: sexual politics, education, history of left photography. They're asking for donations and support from all the left. Details from:
90 Lilford Rd, London SE 5.

Their new address is: Self Help Housing Resource Library, North London Polytechnic, 2-16 Eden Grove, London N17 8DB. Tel: 01-607-2789 x2065.

FINAL REMINDER: the great BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS DAY EVENT is being held at Leeds University on Saturday August 30. Workshops and debate; music; sideshows; children's events and creche. It costs £2 a head, and overnight accommodation is laid on. (Camping if you want to). People from all over the left will be there. Leveller is taking part in two workshops - and there are persistent rumours that some of the breakaway group will turn up too. Book your ringside seats now. Details from 39 Kelvin Grove, Liverpool 8; Tel. 051727 4608.

NORTH LONDON ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP have booked the Interaction show Powerplays including an exhibition by Friends of the Earth for Sunday October 5th at 7 p.m., at Action Space, 16, Chenes St., London WC1, Tel: 01 637 8270.

Admission costs £1.70 in advance and £ 1.90 at the door, and all profits will go to NLANG's campaign funds.

CAMPAIGNS

ON HIROSHIMA DAY, August 6th, Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat launched a petition of women opposing the nuclear threat and the growth of militarism. Petition forms are available from:
Box No IAP 400, IAP, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2.

ORGANISATIONS

THE SELF HELP HOUSING Resource Library has moved to new premises within the North London Polytechnic. The Library was set up in 1977 to assist the development of self-help approaches to housing, and now acts as a resource and information centre for groups working for the right to decent housing. With a large amount of material on housing issues and campaigns, it is used by a wide range of people, including research students, housing co-ops, action groups and homeless people.

Their new address is: Self Help Housing Resource Library, North London Polytechnic, 2-16 Eden Grove, London N17 8DB. Tel: 01-607-2789 x2065.

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As part of our plans for going fortnightly we're intending to build up the Back Pages into a comprehensive national survey of what's going on in and around the Left. And we're dependent for our information on your press releases. So please send details of events, plays, street theatre, agitprop, community papers, books, campaigns, summer schools, campaigns, film shows, pickets, demonstrations, petitions and all other acts of subversion throughout the country to:
Back Pages, The Leveller, 57, Caledonian Road, London N1.
COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 8th



Fortnightly, coming soon

IF YOU haven't already heard, we're going fortnightly in the autumn, with more news, more debate, more issues and more life. We can't do it without a lot of money, of course, and it's your money we're looking for. We're asking people to take out a £10 subscription which will last six months (£5 for OAPs, students and claimants).

We want money and involvement from readers. You are why we exist; it's not for profits from advertising or a wish to push a party line. You define what we are about. A supporting subscription does not only give you the ability to read the magazine; it makes it partly yours, it means that it is something living, part of people's lives.

So far we have raised £2,000. Subs are flowing in every day.

After money we need more members to join the collective and contributors of all kinds; local correspondents to form a network throughout the country and abroad; special correspondents who want to write on personal politics, finance and business, science and technology, the law, education, the welfare state, local government, music, film, TV, radio, work, sport, books... and everything else in the world.

Plus designers, cartoonists, photographers, artists, artistes, layout wizards, advertising, distribution, finance and administration people.

And we need more equipment, like typewriters, filing cabinets, tables and chairs, lights...

Send us anything useful — but particularly money. Fill in the form below and become part of *The Leveller*. To get directly involved, contact us by phone, letter, or by coming to the office during the day (not too early) or to collective meetings, which are open and happen every Tuesday, at 7.



Classifieds

RATES: 6p a word. Ads must be prepaid by cheque or PO made out to the *Leveller* (1979) Ltd. We reserve the right to refuse any ad.

PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY — T-shirt with four colour design on white. Available in S/M/L £3 inc. p&p. Send s.a.e. for full catalogue. All proceeds to support ecology centre. From EARTHWISE, 15 Goosegate, Nottingham.

COMMUNAL LIVING/WORKING COLLECTIVES. For details of some groups looking for new members send s.a.e. to 2 Mentor Street, Manchester 13.

Guy Debord's film, 'Society of the Spectacle' please send s.a.e. for details of private view, late September, to B.M. P. 45, London W.C. 1. 6XX.

BADGES. I'd rather be a Russian than radioactive/Cut the Tories (25p each plus s.a.e.). Who Needs Cruise Missiles? (We don't)/No cruise (20p each). Plus: no return to the '30s/Don't blame me I voted Labour (30p each plus s.a.e.) from Bitch Badges, 19 Hartley Avenue, Leeds 6. Postal orders only.

CYRENIANS — Help homeless single people by running project and campaigning on their behalf. 250 volunteers are needed this year to help run community-style houses throughout the UK board and pocket-money provided. If you want to do something about homelessness come and help us. Contact: Volunteers, The Cyrenians, 13 Wincheap Rd, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3TB. Telephone (0227) 51641.

TRAINEE MANAGEMENT/LEGAL EXECUTIVE position required by N.E.B.S.S. CERT. holder. South Midlands area preferred. Tel. 0602-282896.

MEN LIVING TOGETHER. Interested in a rural commune with gay men? Contact Will, Moor Farm, Stainbeck Lane, Leeds 7. For our ideas.

ECOLOGY PARTY summer gathering. Worthy Farm, Pilton, Glastonbury, Somerset. Thursday August 7-10. Well known speakers on eco-politics and alternatives, discussion workshops, theatre, stalls, children's play space. Adults: admission £4 inclusive of evening entertainment. Children: free. Bring your tent, be self sufficient. Food on sale. Enquiries: 0734-478297 (evenings).

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST TENDENCY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IMPERIALISM 5/6/7 September. How do the imperialist powers line up? What are the prospects for the anti-imperialist struggle? Debates: Imperialism, the current phase; Middle East; US and its rivals. Workshops: British imperialism; EEC; Immigration and racism; Southern Africa; Crisis and the USSR; Ireland, and others. Fee: £5.00 in advance, £6.50 door. Venue: University of London Union, Malet Street, WC 1. Contact Helen Swift, BM RCT, London Wc 1V 6XX.

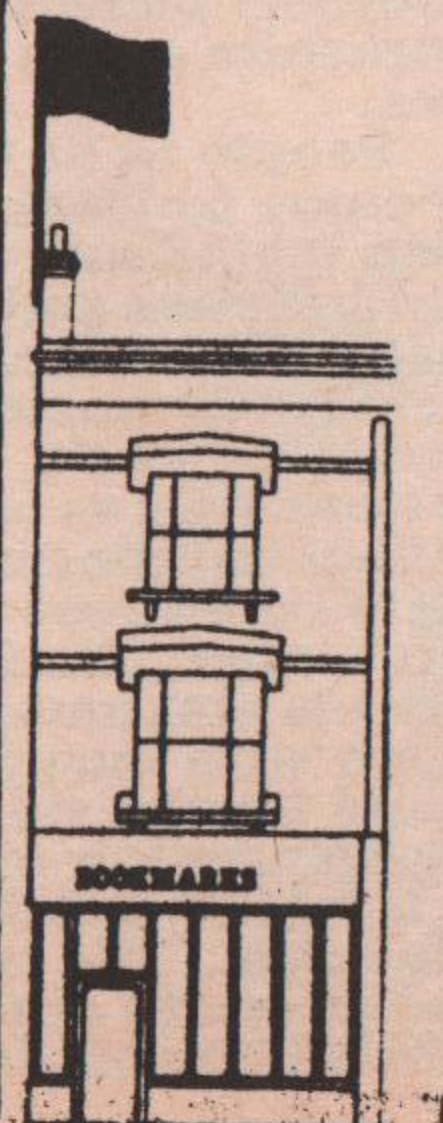
NEVER AGAIN! The Hows and Whys of stopping fascism, by Colin Sparks.

Fascism, born of the economic crisis of the 1930's, brought the barbarism and death camps of World War II. Now, as another crisis deepens, it raises its head again... This book looks at how and why fascism grows, how and why its opponents failed in the 1930s, and how and why it can be stopped today. Price £1.95.

ROSA LUXEMBURG, by Tony Cliff
How many people, when asked to list the great socialist thinkers, will come up with a line of men? Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky... Far too many of us forget that among the greatest contributors to socialist ideas stands Rosa Luxemburg. This book aims to redress the balance. Price £1.95.

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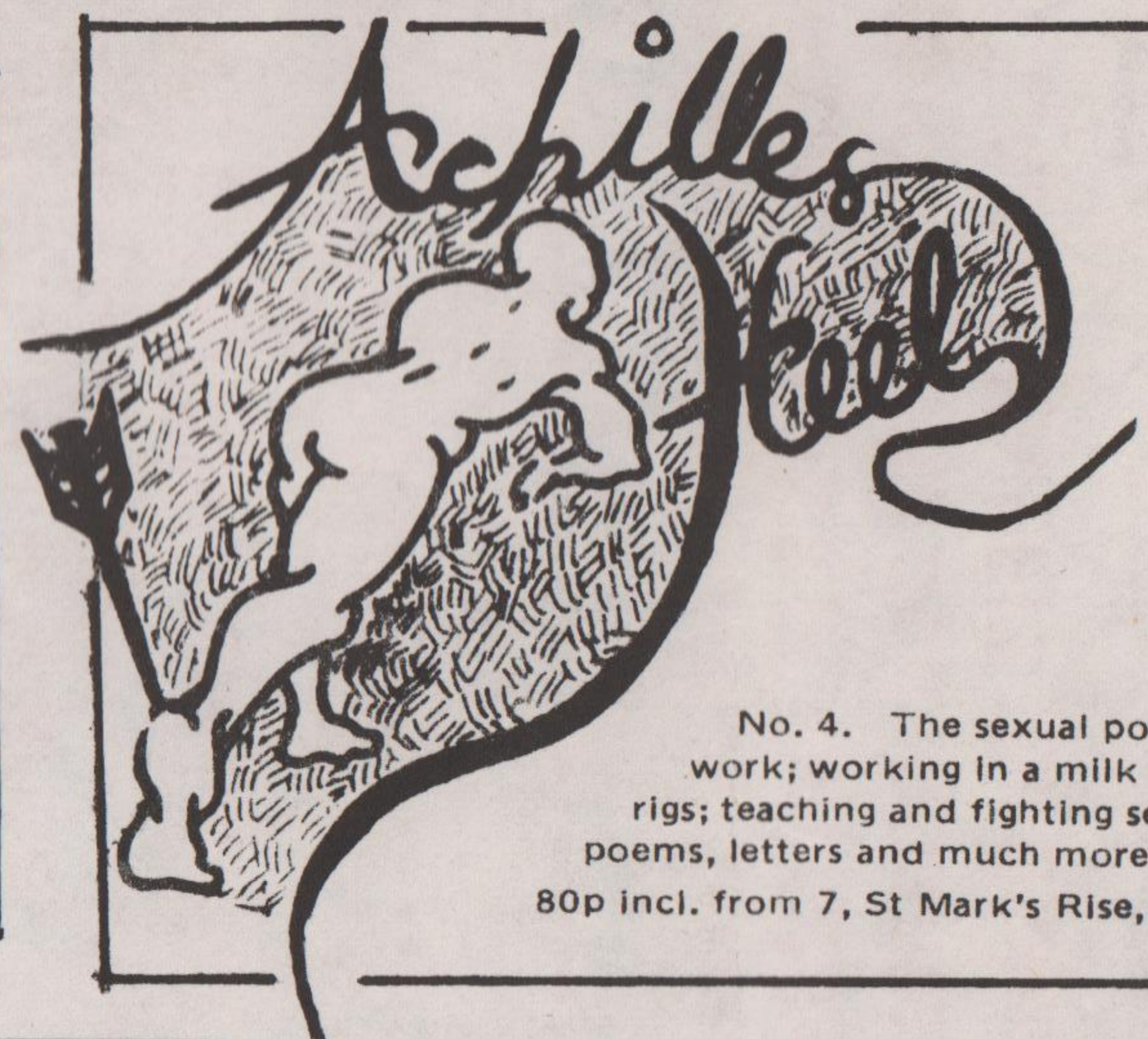
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