

Chartist

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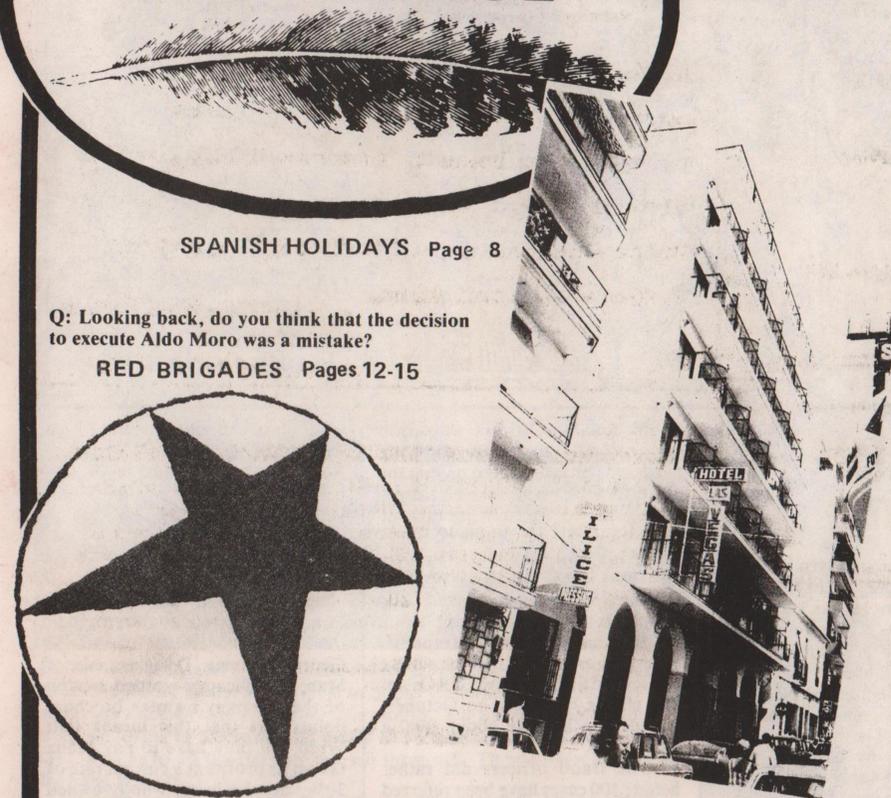
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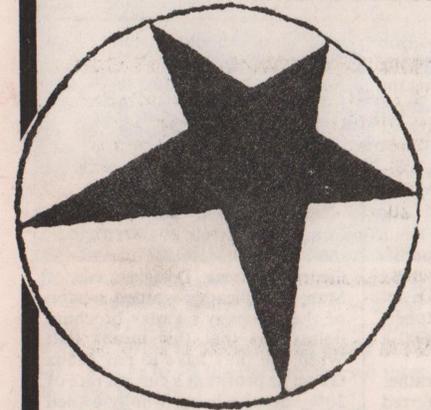
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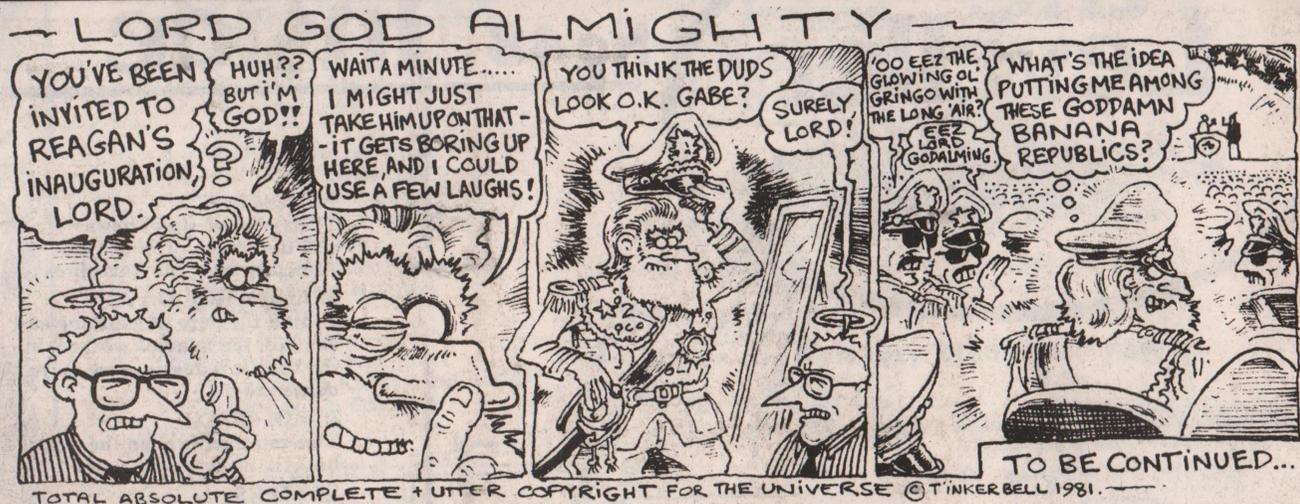
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Nationwide agitating

THE LEVELLER will be five years old next month ! Coincidentally , the issue that appears on February 18 is also Number 50 so we're having a Jubilee, and a special bumper issue. Issue 50 will have at least 40 pages with in addition to the normal fortnightly magazine, a supplement on important events and ideas of the last five years and what they mean now. Readers are invited to send in contributions - letters, stories, cartoons, photographs and so on - which they think appropriate to the occasion. There will also be special push for Red Box advertising : left and feminist groups, trade unions, campaigns and workers' coops are invited to send for details of that. If you don't have a subscription or a regular order for the Leveller already, take one out now. It would be a pity if you missed itThe Leveller Jubilee will also be celebrated with a big gig on Friday February 20, and a political day event on Saturday February 21. Details next issue.

Cover design by Laurie Evans

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UDA responsible for Bernadette shooting

AS THREE men are charged with the shooting of Bernadette MacAliskey last week, questions are being asked in Northern Ireland about the army's role in the event. Army press officers refuse to comment on what a unit of the Third Parachute Regiment was doing so near to the MacAliskey's isolated Coalisland farmhouse, nor would they say whether they were mounting a stake-out. But residents point out that the Third Para is based miles away in Armagh while the local regiment is currently the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

All three men arrested by the Paras were members of the Ulster Defence Association and are thought to be in the UDA's South Belfast Brigade. Their arrest came after a series of assassinations of leading H-Block campaigners, many of whom have been shot in republican heartlands. Miriam Daley was murdered half an hour after the removal of an army barrier near her house. Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle were shot in the middle of West Belfast after an army barrier was left open.

At the time there was a strong

suspicion of SAS involvement until it became whispered that the UDA had done it. Now H-Block activists point out that it would have been impossible for a unit on stake-out duty to believe that armed men going through the farmhouse door with sledge hammers were merely visiting friends. They want to know whether the Army had a tip-off that a murder was planned, but didn't intervene until they thought the deed had been done.

DHSS local savings fraud

THERE CAN'T have been a sacking of a government minister less lamented than Thatcher's axe falling on Reg Prentice; indeed for once most people must have hoped that the ostensible reason for resignation — 'hypertension', or a nervous breakdown — was true.

But although he's departed, his lies live on. One that has just come to light is that the great purge on alleged Supplementary Benefit fraud announced on February 13 last year (see *Levellers* 40 and 46) was not actually a new one at all. A steady build-up of attacks on claimants had begun in the summer of 1979, according to an internal document from the DHSS's local office in Hackney, East London.

The office manager, Mr B Sheen, has circularised staff with a written pep-talk about the great progress this is making, and he says that extra resources have been devoted to combating 'fraud and abuse' since 1979, with all the extra staff taken on by the beginning of 1980: this of course while cuts were taking place in other sections.

To back his case, Sheen gives the productivity figures for the extra staff, and it is no surprise that they don't add up to anything at all. Hackney took on two extra

liable Relative Officers, whose job is principally to harass deserting husbands or fathers into paying the state to keep their former dependants. In the first ten months of 1980 these officers produced weekly 'savings' for the state that add up to £982. How much is actually 'saved' depends how long the husbands or fathers pay up.

Hackney got an extra fraud officer and an extra Unemployment Review Officer. The two UROs got 197 claims lapsed up to October, 'saving' on average about £500 a week.

The fraud officers did rather better; 100 cases have been referred for Special Investigation, of which 46 led to benefit being partially or completely withdrawn, 'saving' £1,196.50 a week. Well done lads and lasses! It might not look much but with Trident to buy every penny counts.



RECESSION
OR
OPPORTUNITY?

Stockbrokers' mah-jong

HAS THE world recession bottomed out? Is this the beginning of an upturn in the trade cycle, as some economists believe? One company who plan to do well out of any upturn is Tillotson's Commodities,

who last month launched a misleadingly-named 'Chinese Fund' to take advantage of any upswing in prices in aluminium, copper and rubber.

Although Tillotson's is a London company and most of their dealings take place on the London commodities markets, the Chinese Fund is managed by Wren Commodity Management of 10 St George's Street, Douglas, Isle of Man. A delicately-worded section of the company's glossy brochure points out that this means that Wren will only have to pay Manx tax on its profits at a current rate of 20%, despite being wholly-owned by Tillotson's. This tax-dodge, which is perfectly legal and practiced by thousands of British companies, is unlikely to bother the scrounger bashers on the Tory back-benches.

The Chinese Fund takes its name from its corporate symbol, a Chinese character meaning opportunity. 'A recession', they say, 'is an opportunity to profit from the boom that will obviously follow'.

The Fund managers argue that aluminium, copper and rubber are currently low-priced on the international exchanges because of lack of demand during the recession. What that low price actually means is that there is mass unemployment, real poverty and near starvation in Third World producing areas like Malaysia, Zambia or Jamaica.

The purpose of the Fund is pure speculation on the exchanges where Fund officials gamble on the price that commodities will fetch in the future — 'the commodity markets are probably the most free and unfettered markets in the world' in the hope of taking a profit. But little real money is exchanged in this process, at most 10% of the value of the purchase, for the business is all about buying and selling the futures before the commodity ever gets to market.

The intention is spelt out in polite economy terms: 'During a recession a significant quantity of many commodities costs more to produce than the depressed market price. It is a simple rule of the



Jeremy Nichol

IT TOOK five hundred police armed with jemmies and sledgehammers to retake Kilner House at the Oval in South London — occupied by squatters since October — earlier this month. Up to 200 people had been squatting in the buildings, partly in protest at the Tory-controlled GLC's plans to do the flats up and sell them off. They'd been backed up by local tenants.

But when police, led by London's new under-sheriff, Alistair Black, broke in, doing damage estimated at more than £10,000 as they broke down doors and smashed windows, they found only 28 people still there, barricaded on the top floor. Some of the others had moved to another block in the area; some are to be rehoused by Lambeth Council.

Police were surprised to find journalists in the house waiting for them. One photographer was arrested as police tried to move them across the street, but was released after the others had threatened not to take pictures of the Met's finest hour.

Police had their own photographers there — the same team that's been seen at recent anti-NF and Irish demonstrations. But they didn't seem interested in snapping police breaking up the homes; instead they pursued supporters of the squatters down the street to collect mugshots for the files. Computer checks were run on the 28 inside the building.

The date for eviction had been set after police checked that gas board workers doing repairs in the street would be finished; police then took over a local school as an operational HQ. But they must be wondering how the squatters knew the raid was coming. Even the number of police involved had been predicted. The leak is thought to have come from a GLC worker opposed to the sale of the flats.

And if anybody still doubts that history repeats itself as farce, the eviction was replayed a week later in a new street theatre version, with Black played by diehard squatter Piers Corbyn.

market place that if the cost of production remains higher than the market price then production must eventually cease.... The Chinese Fund invests in three commodities, copper, rubber and aluminium, starting the cycle in a recession when their marginal costs of production are close to or exceed market prices.

Translated, this means that tens of thousands of Third World producers have been thrown out of work, mines and plantations closed down. When shortages develop, the speculators profit. This is what's known as a 'business opportunity'.

Pulling the plug on the poor

A LONDON borough council has provided further evidence that the London Electricity Board (LEB) has been flagrantly ignoring its own code of practice on cutting off electricity supplies to households.

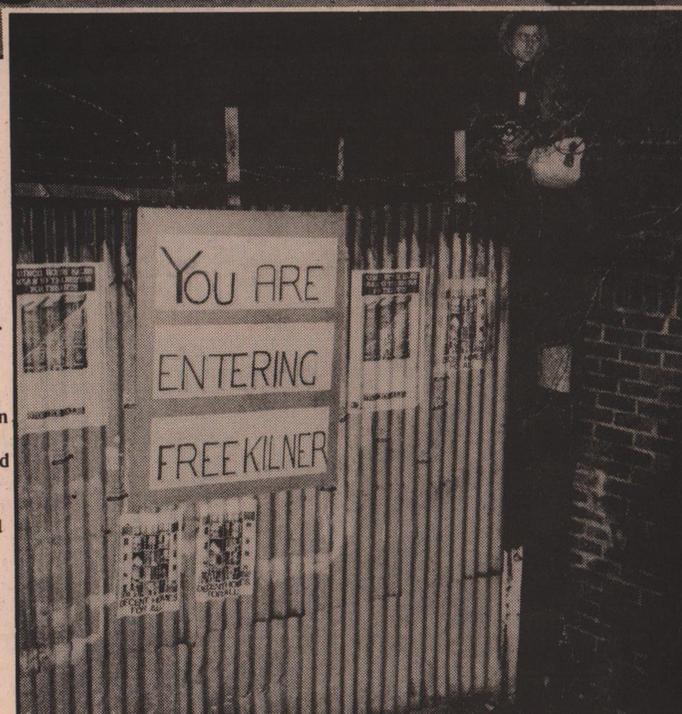
Southwark Council has challenged the board to explain why a woman of 84, who owed only £200, was cut off without warning. Another woman was cut off while out at work in error for her next door neighbour. There was no-one

present at the time, and the code states explicitly that an adult must be present whenever an electricity supply is cut off. John Lauder, Southwark's social services chairperson, described this as 'disgraceful', and said, 'The LEB makes cut-offs without any regard for the consequences'.

Shelley Joyce, a neighbourhood council co-ordinator in another London borough, Lambeth, was almost cut off herself. She had in fact paid her bill, and managed to avoid being cut off by showing the official her cheque book receipts. The LEB official involved had previously cut off a pensioner who

owed the Board just £15. He admitted his dislike of these harsh practices and said that he was thinking of resigning because of them. But most LEB staff take the attitude that 'we're only doing our job'.

LEB disconnections rose by 14% in 1980, and there is evidence from the Right to Fuel Campaign that regional electricity boards all over the country are following their hard line. Paul Lewis, for the campaign, said that the code of practice does not appear to be influential. 'As a document', he said, 'it is so weak that it does not really impose any duties on the Board at all.' In 1980 the number of disconnections



Jeremy Nichol

reached 125,000, a figure only exceeded in 1975.

The LEB has some small justifications where debts are unpaid. But what of the case where a diabetic pensioner — who needed a working fridge to store his supply of insulin — was cut off?

When faced with these facts, an LEB spokesperson said: 'I find this rather difficult to believe.' But even a well-briefed press officer agreed that better operating techniques were required, and that management needed to communicate the principles of the code to those staff who made the cut-offs.

While John Cartwright, Labour MP for Woolwich, plans to introduce a private member's bill which would recommend that an external body should be set up to review the LEB's policy on cut-offs, the bill is well down the list. Further action is needed to combat the LEB's present behaviour, which is in direct opposition to the principles which are supposed to guide the policies of nationalised industries.

Ruth Gledhill

Salvador — the final push

THE ALL-OUT offensive by revolutionary forces in El Salvador has already achieved its prime objective: incoming President Reagan is faced with a severe deterioration in the US-backed regime's ability to control its own territory. At the height of the first phase of the offensive the FMLN guerrillas (numbering about 12,000 and backed by around 100,000

members of the popular militias) controlled two departments (provinces) and four departmental capitals, as well as a key bridge over the Lempa River and a substantial part of the capital, San Salvador.

A number of important desertions from the armed forces have taken place, most notably in the second city, Santa Ana, and at the Ilopango air base; the FMLN claims that over 30 officers changed sides. They also say that tens of thousands of recruits joined the guerrillas. Most reports suggest that the tactical retreat which took place early this month leaves the FMLN forces virtually intact, and ready for a second push.

The expected intervention by ground forces from Guatemala and Honduras has not taken place on a large scale, although 500 former Nicaraguan National Guards are said to be operating as the 4th infantry battalion within El Salvador.

Although Reagan may encourage both Honduran and Guatemalan troops to intervene, the presence of large numbers of foreign ground troops might provoke an even more serious split in the Salvadorean army, and spark precisely the kind of massive uprising the junta wants to avoid.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), through the special commission it has set up in Mexico, has renewed its offer to talk directly to the United States, but in the dying days of the Carter administration the offer was not taken up. Instead, using the transparent excuse of 'Nicaraguan intervention', Carter renewed US military aid to the junta, removing

the previous restriction to 'non-lethal' equipment. The prospects for a negotiated solution must now be zero.

Reagan's position is quite clear: revolutions are the result of Soviet Cuban subversion and must be put down by force. He is unlikely to abandon this stance, especially in the immediate post-inauguration period, but the commitment of US troops would involve severe diplomatic problems. Nor would victory be easy. A people that has taken up arms cannot be 'defeated' in the conventional sense, only exterminated.

Reagan himself has said that for him the only lesson of Vietnam is that 'if we are forced to fight we must have the means and the determination to prevail or we will not have what it takes to secure the peace'. It may well fall to El Salvador to remind the United States of the real lessons of the Vietnam war: let's hope that this time they learn them for good.

Phil Gunson

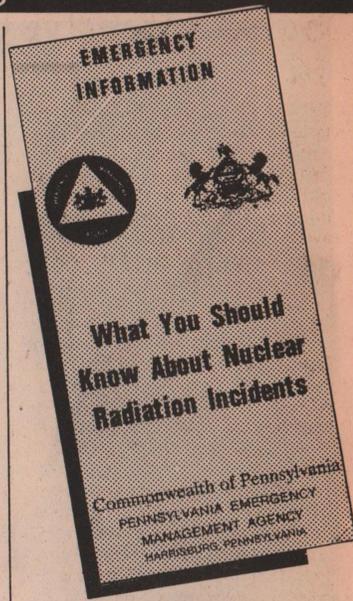
Exit in uproar, Stage Left

AFTER THE recent Arts Council funding cuts, 'do-it-yourself' may well have to become the motto of alternative theatre. About 100 people turned up in Leeds on January 9-11 for a weekend of skill-sharing workshops, discussions and performances to help theatre in promoting political campaigns. Members of Red Ladder, Interplay, Cunning Stunts, Spare Tyre and Banner Theatre all participated, but the majority were from the field of part-time or spare-time alternative entertainment.

Saturday night at Leeds Trade Hall was devoted to the 'spare-time' groups showing their work and it ended in uproar as the final show was halted in mid-performance. Two years ago the same thing happened when a performance by Monstrous Regiment was halted. Though the circumstances and material were widely different, on both occasions the reaction was similar: a number of women heckled loudly and persistently enough about the sexual stereotypes being presented to force the abandonment of the performances. At least on this occasion the debate could be taken up the following day.

Given the circumstances there was constructive discussion on what some people indignantly interpreted as the self-granted right of censorship. The disrupters stuck to their guns; most of the rest, while also deploring sexist stereotypes, felt that the disruption was wrong. Questions of class and race were brought up: the performance stopped was by a multiracial working-class community group giving their first-ever performance.

Towards the end of the discussion one woman firmly reminded everybody that even if some people



This neat little official pamphlet was published in the wake of the accident at Three Mile Island, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Among other pieces of information the pamphlet admits: 'the public is not as well-informed about nuclear power and the nature of radiation as it is about dangers like floods and tornadoes', and 'the public needs to know that there are protective measures available to protect your safety'. Basically the measures seem to be: stay in the house, wash your food and if the cat comes back, don't let it in.

It is all very reassuring. 'The chances of a serious nuclear incident' the pamphlet promises 'are remote compared with other accidental disasters'. Very handy to know. Presumably if you get flooded, hit by an earthquake or your house gets burnt down, or possibly all three, get out quick — the nuclear power station is about to blow.

The most basic precaution is printed in bold type. 'Efforts should be made to keep radioactive materials from getting inside your body.' So if you ever get offered some hot plutonium at a trendy party, y'all be sure not to eat it now, ya hear.

John Connor

present disagreed with the disruption, it was important not to treat patriarchy as a peripheral issue. Immediately a man objected: 'That's all very well, but why do women have to do things like organise separately and hold women-only events?' His question was ruled out of order.

Was disruption the right tactic? The weekend provided encouragement to the participants and there was talk of further events. It's unfortunate that yet again potential allies were fighting amongst themselves in the face of increasing attacks from outside.

Peter Thomson

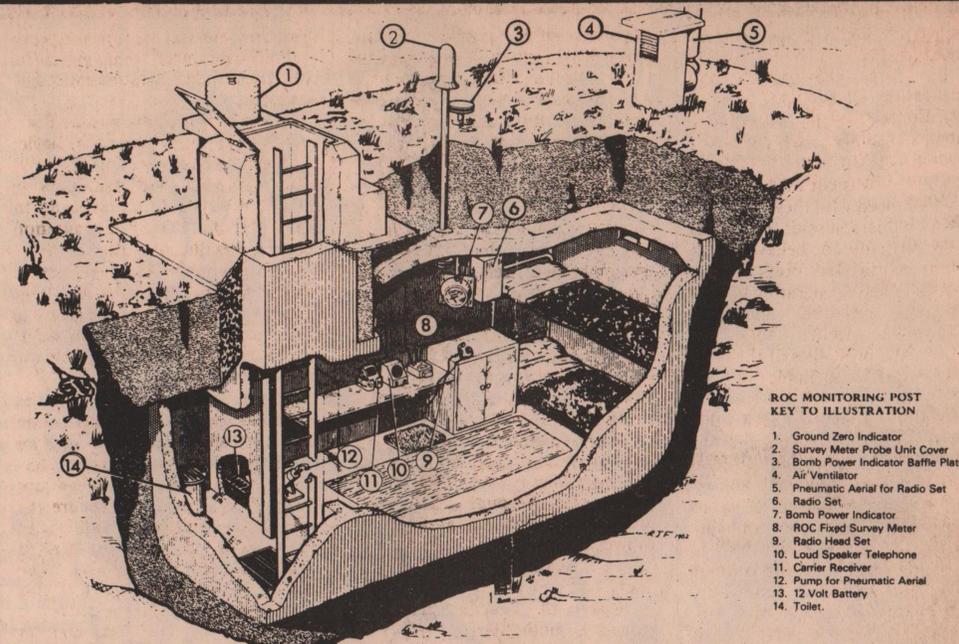
Squat offensive in Berlin

THREE DAYS of violent confrontation in Berlin before Christmas and police ended forty-eight hours later with a total of 80 arrests and an estimated 200 injured, many of whom stayed away from hospitals where police were checking participants' identities.

A police action on Friday December 12, preventing ten squatters entering flats in a rundown apartment in the Kreuzberg area and arresting seven of them, brought 150 people from neighbouring squats onto the street. This was the beginning of running street battles: 1,500 demonstrators the next day overran Berlin city centre. Using a tactic first devised in Berlin in 1968, they broke up into small groups of between ten and twenty people, who smashed shopfronts and offices, erected barricades with cars and portakabins. Over two days 2,000 police found that as they dismantled one barricade another was being built two streets away, and as they gained control of one street they were being chased out of another. Local residents reportedly assisted by opening their doors to fleeing demonstrators.

By the end of Sunday December 14 armoured police vehicles, water-cannon and teargas were being used, but it was not until midnight that the police finally regained control of Kreuzberg.

In the New Year the Berlin senate began to make overtures to the squatting community. A senate proposal to legalise all squats set up before December 1980 was rejected by the squatters, since any subsequent squats would still be illegal. Squatting was virtually unknown in Berlin before February 1979, but



What they'll be watching us from after the Bomb goes off: one of the 900 Royal Observation Corps monitoring posts in Britain, complete with telephones and radios — for talking to the other monitoring posts — and, no doubt, Thatcher style cupboards full of baked beans. The ROC claims that the purpose of the monitoring posts is to protect the public after a nuclear attack. But they probably wouldn't be very good at it. They admit that some of their equipment would be destroyed by certain types of nukes, and a recent civil defence exercise, where the ROC liaised with local authorities, is to be repeated in March, Codenamed Operation Warman, after communications were found to be rather inadequate.

since then about a hundred flats in twenty buildings have been taken over. The provision peculiar to Berlin under which landlords can be awarded municipal grants for the demolition, replacement and modernisation of buildings which have fallen below a certain standard has meant that property is intentionally left vacant and neglected. Of 27,000 flats at present empty in the city, 9,000 have been given these grants.

Housing policy in Berlin, limping from crisis to scandal over the

last twenty years, has in the last few days forced the resignation of the city's mayor, Dietrich Stobbe of the Social Democratic Party. The revelation of his administration's £27m speculation in a Saudi Arabian construction project will do the squatters' case nothing but good in a city where housing provision remains currently 7% short of demand.

PNS

Maxwell takes the driving seat

WHAT WAS the red Rolls Royce, registration number 1923 PP, doing outside Print House, headquarters of the ailing BPC printing and publishing group, all day on January 16? A check through the Leveley computer revealed the car to be owned by Robert Maxwell, former right-wing Labour MP, born June 10, 1923, head of Pergamon Press (PP). As stated in our last issue, Maxwell is poised to buy a majority share in the group, of which he already owns 29%. But he couldn't have been attending a board meeting last Friday, because BPC directors hate him so, they won't let him on, despite his holding. BPC's publishing division is still halted by the occupation of part of another of its office blocks by 65 members of the National Union of Journalists, fighting ten redundancies. They remain solid. (Donations to the NUJ Book Branch, 314 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1).

Maxwell's interest is in publishing, but he has a rival to buy

the division in the Straits Times Publishing Co of Malaysia. Either if them will have to move fast. BPC, formerly the British Printing Corporation, is on the skids. Losses of £12 million are expected for 1980, and the banks are foreclosing on loans.

The shares, which Maxwell bought for 25p last July, are now 16p. And the General Secretaries of the print unions have been told the group won't honour any agreements made last year.

It's a classic set-up for Maxwell to move in on, with sackings as asset-stripping on a massive scale. The further the shares come down, the easier for him to buy.

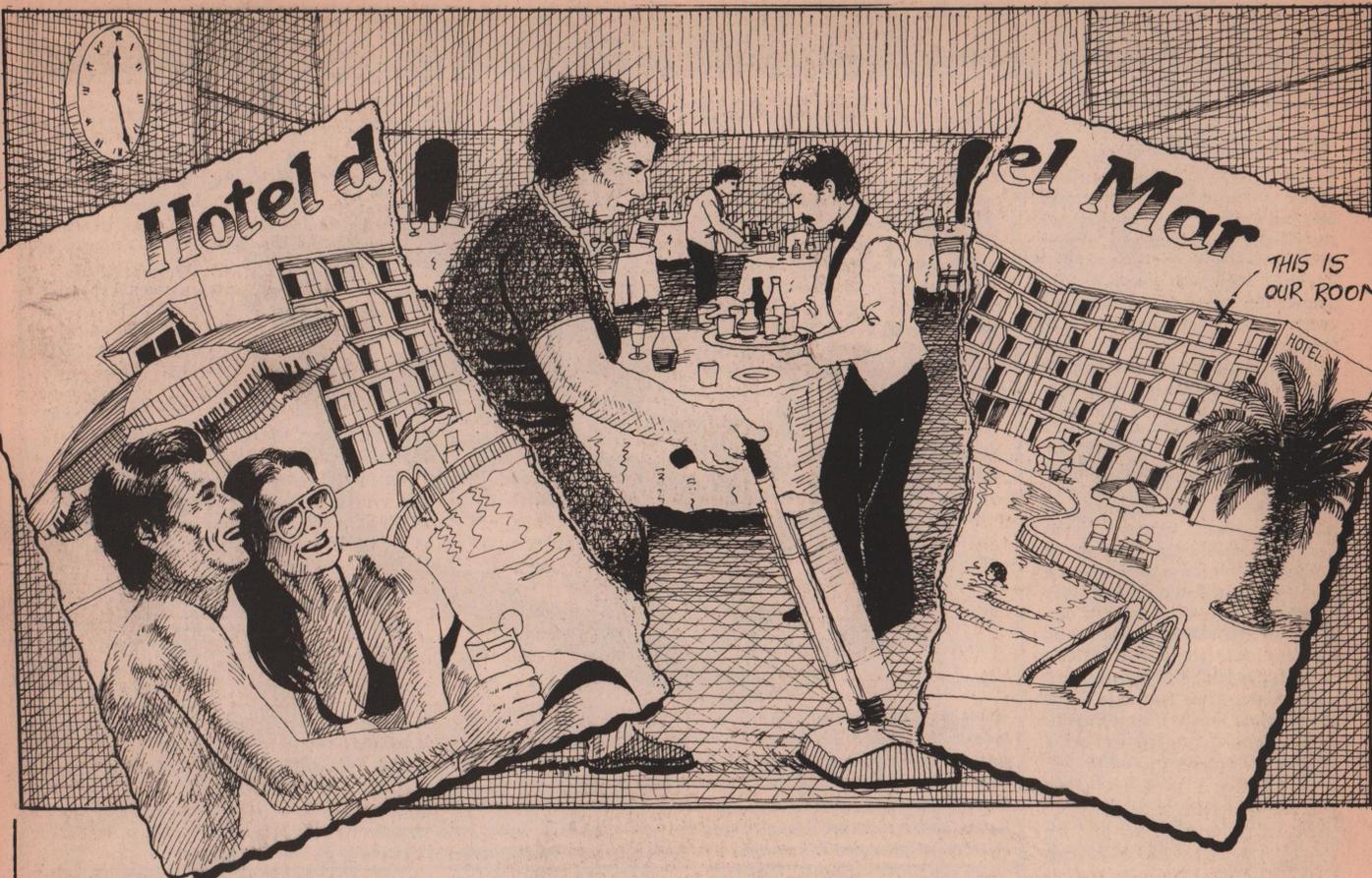
Even the head of Macdonald Phoebus, the biggest publishing subsidiary, Peter Morrison, a notorious hatchet man himself, has complained: 'I don't know what's going on. They aren't consulting me about what happens to my company.'

Got a red vest? If so how about running in London's first marathon on March 26 as a 'Red Runner'? The plan is to raise sponsor money for the Right to Work Campaign and, considering the present rate of unemployment, there should be plenty of candidates. A note of caution however. Anybody foolish enough to try and win will by the end be wrecked, knackered and decidedly broken-down. In fact a dead ringer for the British economy. Which only goes to prove that competition really is the root of all evil.



South African war resisters — including recent deserters — and their supporters picketed South African House in London last week as their government called up 15,000 young whites to join the 70,000-strong force currently maintaining the illegal presence in Namibia. Draft resisters face prison, and can be repeatedly drafted and jailed every two years until they are 65.

Nick Hanna



Nick Rider reporting from Tossa De Mar — a small town on the Costa Brava, north of Barcelona — counts the social cost of the North European's cheap Mediterranean holiday.

Vassals in Spain

THE REALITIES of the tourism industry, its organization, working conditions, relations with local politics and so on, are virtually unknown and ignored. The official view is that the only problem there can be with tourism is that of keeping the hotels filled within a general atmosphere of happy harmony. An example of this was the article on tourism in a recent *Times* special on Catalonia (May 22nd) and particularly the opinions expressed by Josep Ensesa, president of the Gerona Tourist Board, who 'welcomed' the agreement with the unions 'guaranteeing peace in the industry this season', and by Joan Vives, vice-president of the Sitges tourist committee, who said that 'in the past staffs were underpaid and had very poor conditions, so some of the past strikes were very understandable'. This says two things: (a) that the only problems there have been were back in the black, fascist past, and that (b) they have since been amicably resolved. This is very convenient, and fits in with the general image of 'the new Spain' that has leapt out of the dark days of fascism and into the light with one jump.

The tourist areas, and the people who work in them, being entirely dependent on the visitors, have no autonomy of action. Given their place in the system, it is very hard for them to do anything to

get out of it or to change it in any way. Above all, tourism is an extremely powerful agent of cultural imperialism, imposing new ways of living and presenting the tourist, even though at home he may be perfectly ordinary, as a superior being of great wealth and power. The waiter or chambermaid, though possibly resentful, accept their inferiority implicitly and are inspired to emulate the foreigner, something which for them is probably impossible. The tourist is given a false sense of his own national superiority. The host population have their own values, and thus again their own independence of action, undermined by a creeping sense of sheepish humiliation, half resented, before the evident superiority of the other, a state which often produces a kind of cultural impotence.

Officially unemployment in Spain is around 10%, having risen by 25% in the last year, but this overall figure does not give any indication of the acute and endemic under-employment in vast areas of the south where the majority can only ever hope to work for perhaps one or two months in the year, and then only if they're lucky. There are people who 'do the coast' from thirteen years old. Others go to Germany, France or wherever they can find anything to get by. Once on the

coast, the terms of work are those that can be expected in a situation where the work force has very few choices. The *Times*' friend Sr. Ensesa presumably welcomed the agreement with the unions because he knew it would remain a dead letter. In April 1979 the principal union centrals and the employers signed the first ever free 'convenio' (agreement) for the catering industry in Catalonia. Legally binding, this was an attempt to bring some sort of order and a recognition of basic labour rights into a chaotic situation. It instituted a standard wage scale, a 44-hour week with overtime paid at 75% extra, at least a day and a half off each week and full union recognition. However, as the unions have repeatedly denounced, this agreement has been generally ignored by the employers on the coast. They are confident that the migrants are ignorant of whatever rights they have, and so feel able to exploit them to the maximum.

Officially all workers in Spain should have a contract of employment registered with the employment office. In Tossa and the other towns on the coast new workers are normally obliged to sign a contract a blank sheet which is then filled in by the employer as he likes and sent along to the office. Each worker is contracted individually and his wages and hours are

determined solely by what the employer can get him to accept, so that you can get people being paid differently for the same job. Most people are prepared to accept anything they can get. In Tossa the average working day is 11 hours, and many work 15, with no overtime. Nobody I spoke to worked less than a 7-day week. Wages are low and have little relation to the official scale. The accommodation given to hotel workers generally consists of squalid back rooms or huts, with minimum ventilation or sanitation and in which, according to a recent accusation by Comisiones Obreras (Workers' Commissions), the communist central union, 'six or more people are put in space fit for two'.

All of these abuses are illegal and so should be dealt with by the Ministry of Labour. However, the resources of the local inspectorate, still organized as it was under the Franco regime, are totally inadequate for the enforcement of workers' rights. Even if they were, Spanish officialdom, being in close connection with the local centres of power, has little interest in such a thing.

In the absence of any official attempt to enforce the convenio the impulse would have to come from the workers themselves. Yet the office of the socialist union, the UGT, in Tossa did not receive one complaint last season. The reasons for the lack of resistance are simple. 'There's a lot of fear round here . . . nobody wants to be out on the street.'

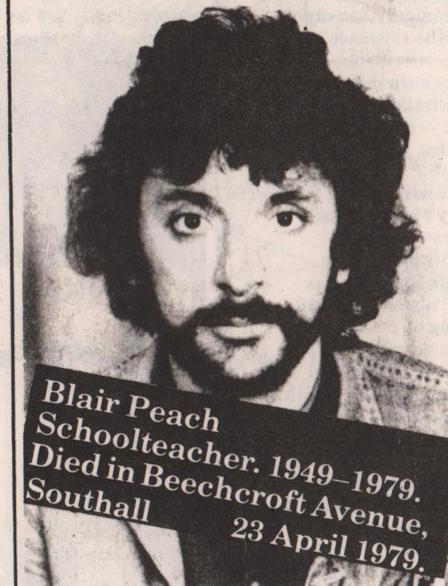
In Lloret, the biggest tourist centre on the Costa Brava, there were effective strikes in 1977 and 78 which, again according to Comisiones, have 'given people more confidence' and a base on which to build. However, in Lloret there are a number of very large hotels. 'In a big hotel you never see the boss . . . and they're organized . . . But here you've nearly got the boss in the soup and you can't talk to anybody without somebody hearing. You've no contact with the other workers.'

Nevertheless, direct repression is perhaps not as decisive as the apathy and lack of confidence of the workers themselves. 'In Tossa, nobody gets together, nobody rebels — you can't', two young guys from Caceres, looking for work, told me. They (the workers) are desperate and here they have work, a little money (if they can spend it) and get in touch with 'European Culture', discos and all that. That's very attractive for a lot of people, particularly young kids . . . They're so burnt out and bored at home that they accept anything.'

Whether or not the ETA carries out its bomb threats, this season is likely to be worst for many years for the Spanish tourist industry, with many hotels nearly empty. This of course enables them to impose even worse conditions. Yet people continued to pour out of the south. Places like Tossa are full of young migrants, hanging around in the bars and streets, waiting for whatever's going. Miguel said to me, 'There's all the people who've been coming here for years, plus the people who've just come here for the first time, plus the people who've been thrown out of industry . . . a load of people . . . It'll be nothing but a whole string of people hanging about from Gerona to Cadiz . . . who pretty soon will start to rob shops and things. They've no other way out.'

Still licenced to kill

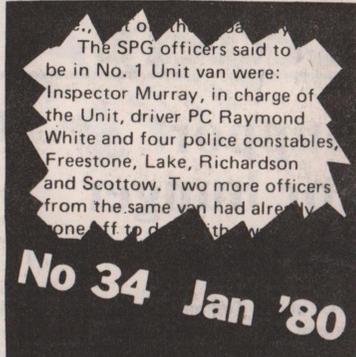
TWENTY-ONE months on, and no-one has been charged with the murder of Blair Peach. Two more reports have come out this month — the supplementary report from the National Council of Civil Liberties enquiry, and, from the Friends of Blair Peach, their account of April 23 1979, 'Licence to Kill' — but no-one really knows much more than they did then: that Blair was bashed on the head by a member of the Metropolitan Police Special Patrol Group.



Blair Peach
Schoolteacher. 1949-1979.
Died in Beechcroft Avenue,
Southall
23 April 1979.

The only report that probably contained a full account, ironically, was that of the police themselves, drawn up over several months by Commander John Cass. It was submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Home Office at least twice, and sent back for alterations. The most likely reason was that it named the six officers in the van from which the killer emerged, possibly also his own identity, and recommended a prosecution. The six names have leaked out — the first time in *The Leveller* 34, more than a year ago — and been repeated on posters and in the press, and no libel action has followed. The Police Federation have said privately that litigation would draw too much attention and, more importantly, would have meant that the full 3,000-page Cass report would have to come out in court.

But the report has remained under lock and key. There was correspondence between the Attorney-General's office, the



DPP, the Home Office and the Cabinet Office through 1979, which made it clear that word had gone out: no charges. This was even against the feelings of some officers in the Met who wanted the case over and the air cleared.

But top decision-makers at the Yard were bent on another strategy: a political offensive against the dead man and the people round him, using their SWP orientation to discredit the campaigns. There was a welter of statements from the Press Bureau: the 'outsiders' in Southall (not the Front — or the police, of course!); the bogus 'attack on injured police' in Ealing Hospital on the evening; the 'politically-motivated extremists' of the ANL, and even, in a briefing put out only a day after the murder, innuendoes about Blair's private life.

This showed police must have had information about him on file beforehand. Does it mean that police at Southall knew who he was? And why is it the anti-fascists who get this sort of treatment. What are police doing about the Nazis themselves?

The inquest went ahead without more than the Cass report. Tapes of radio traffic between all SPG vehicles were withheld, and so was any video tape from the 'heli-tele' that hovered over Southall most of the day and evening.

The six officers had of course been suspended, but one, Raymond White, the van driver, has now been reinstated in the SPG. The commander of his van, from No 1 unit, Inspector Alan Murray, resigned from the force, crying his 'disgust' at what the SPG were being dragged through. Was he given a guarantee of immunity from prosecution in return?

The police could be forgiven for thinking they'd got away with it. The SPG has been increased in size; the 'review' set up supposedly in response to criticisms, stepped it up from six to eight units, and there was no effective political opposition. The review tinkered with the structure and included a recommendation that officers may only take two years off from other duties to serve in the SPG. Yet White, newly rejoined, had already done 14 years in it.

Both the new reports throw much doubt on the entire process of the inquest. And they call for it to be reopened. As long as it isn't, and the report is suppressed, police and government will face the attack from the left they so loudly claim to resent. One almost gets the impression, in fact, that they enjoy it, for it gives the opportunity for some healthy left-bashing, with the media keen to help out. Is this what the investigation of a murder on the public highway has to come down to?

Support for hunger strikers

I AM angry. Tell me, between the date of your last issue before Christmas (12th December) and the one after (9th January), what major event occurred that your readers would appreciate the information and clarification so absent in the straight press.

You guessed it, the H Block/Armagh hunger strike ended. Yet the fact only gets a single mention in *The Leveller* - in the middle of a short piece on the Brixton escapes there's a throwaway half-sentence about 'the collapse of the hunger strike'.

What collapse? It didn't collapse, and you could have found out that by asking anyone involved in the campaign to support them. It became obvious within 24 hours of the hunger strike ending that a deal had been done between the prisoners and the government, that entailed giving in to the substance of their demands, and nodding and winking that a blind eye would be turned to prisoners rejecting certain bits they didn't like.

Since then the government has not implemented the deal, and it awaits to be seen at the time of writing whether they will continue to be intransigent, therefore forcing another hunger strike, or if they will implement the conditions outlined in December. Either way, the hunger strike cannot be said to have collapsed.

So please don't follow the line of the commercial press in future.

David Watts
London NW5

The Collective replies:

As you point out, the hunger strike ended shortly after issue 46 (12th Dec.) Along with everybody else we sought out the 32-point document lodged in the House of Commons Library and the covering letter from Aitken (which was only available in Northern Ireland) but by the time our next issue went to press (9th Jan) the substance of the document and information about the deal had been widely publicised in the national media and other left papers. In the absence of further information, which we did look for, we felt that we had nothing to say.

The reference to the 'collapse' of the hunger strike is indefensible and slipped past at the sub-editing stage. We blew it.

Rich lessons

YOUR COMMENTS on the serialization of Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* left a lot unsaid. It isn't simply a satire on sociology and the Left but above all on the marxist interpretation of history crudely caricatured by Bradbury.

Bradbury's paranoia about conspiratorial lefties derives from his experience of the 1971 sit-in at the University of East Anglia. The sit-in was in protest over the administration's expulsion of a student simply because he had been convicted of possession of cannabis in a local court. The principle of double punishment was opposed by the majority of students, who received the support of only seventeen lecturers. Bradbury was not one of them. Ironically the sit-in uncovered the existence of secret files, surveillance and contacts between members of the administration and the local police - a situation very similar to that previously exposed in E P Thompson's *Warwick University Ltd*. The *History Man* is actually a complete travesty of an actual historical situation.

For years Bradbury has posed as a "liberal". Actually he is nothing of the sort. He is known to vote Tory, is a keen Nixon supporter, and loathes everything to do with the left. His literary criticism is full of sniping at Marxist critics, and his prejudices can be seen in the way he ignores a writer like Doris Lessing in his surveys of modern British fiction.

Jeff Patrides
Wimbledon SW19

Red thread? Write on

HAVING READ the article by 'Red Rope' on the 'rescue' of the airman on the crags of Snowdonia, I am left wondering was the article a spoof. Did these events in fact take place? Here is a man engaged in obeying the orders of a superior command, in order to enable him to save life in the future, both military and non-military, irrespective of political persuasion.

Are we to conclude therefore that if the saving of human life is conditional upon whether a person is a Socialist or not, then it follows that anything is justified in the furtherance of the Socialist Revolution, including the elimination of elements

not favourable to Socialist theory. Would it not be better to accept first of all that human life is sacred, irrespective of political persuasion, and to rescue the airman out of humane considerations?

After rescuing the man then we may attack him on his place in capitalist society. But not before we have rescued him, because we have an advantage over him, in that our life is not threatened once we have rescued him, we may argue.

Once the treat to his life is removed he is our equal, and we

can engage in a dialectic. By publishing this report you put forward the idea that to be a serviceman is bad, which is contrary to the Leninist position, whereby he sought to unite the peasantry, the workers, and the soldier in united front against the bourgeoisie.

John Carlyle,
Glasgow.

Collective note: the article was not a spoof. It was in fact written by one of the intrepid mountaineers involved in the incident, who did after all rescue the stricken squaddie.

We need workers

WE LAUNCHED the Wages Fund in the last issue and your response has been terrific, with nearly £100 received in the first week. Thank you very much. At the moment we've got only one full-time worker and it's impossible to go on without more. At the end of this month we intend to go over to employing three or four people part-time. They'll have



specific responsibilities such as advertising, finance or sales and they'll be responsible to the whole collective. We think this system will be more democratic and efficient and to pay for it we've opened a Wages Fund. This money, donated by readers, is held in a separate account and will only be used for paying wages. Please help us to make the fortnightly grow by sending a contribution. Make cheques/POs out to Leveller Magazine (1979) Ltd. Fortnightly Fund and send them to us here at: 57, Caledonian Road, London N1. From time to time we will print a full statement of the financial affairs of the wages fund so that you can see what we've done with it.

WITH many on the left, in and out of parties, joining the Labour Party, images of building a mass movement abound. But if that's your aim you've first got to find your masses. Labourite politics have turned millions of people, who have no reason for loyalty to British capitalism, away from movements to challenge or even reform it. This is disturbing for everyone on the left, inside Labour or out, but for those in it, it means awkward moments on the doorstep. Marshall Colman records some.

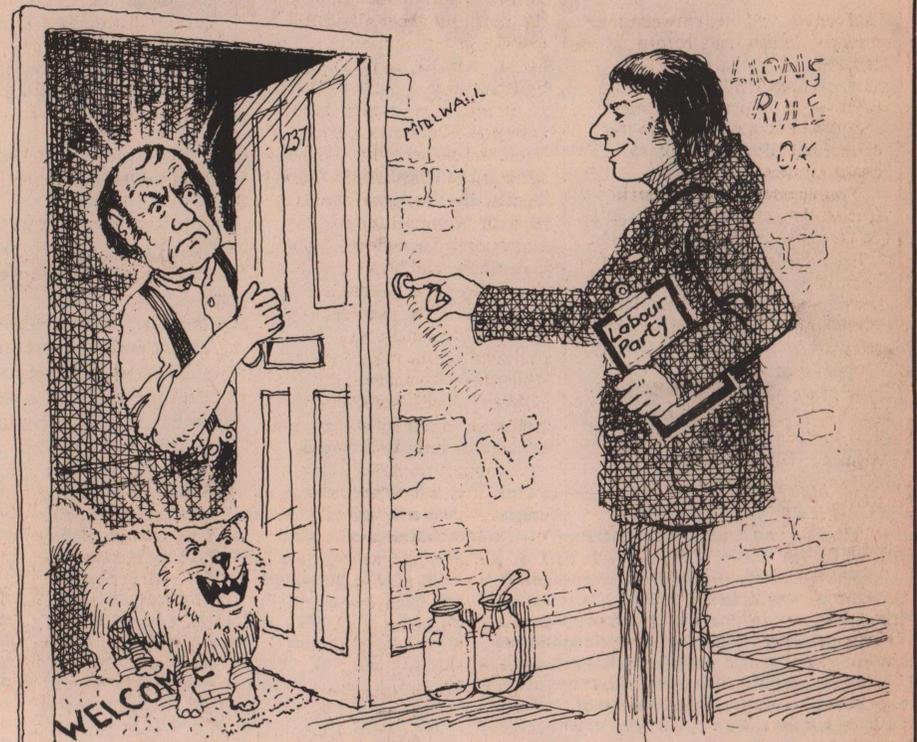
On the knocker

YOU CAN tell almost as soon as they answer the door whether they're Labour supporters or not. There's the indulgent smile that dries as you go through your routine: their minds are made up. There are the ones who say, 'Oh, yes,' when you tell them you're canvassing for the Labour candidate. There are the elderly and frail whom you regret ever dragging to the door and who tell you they are too old to care any more. There are the ones who want to close the door as soon as they see it's politics or insurance or brushes, and who call a plague on all our houses. They are the militant abstainers, they represent the average anarchist in the street. My experienced comrades tell me they can tell by the sound of the door-bell which way the vote will go. Ding-dongs are often Tories. Bells that play tunes are either Labour or National Front. 'I once got a doorbell that played *The Red Flag*,' says the campaign organiser. She's a seller of *Militant* and works harder than anyone in our branch.

I have always been mildly amused by politicians who state in confident voices what the views of the working class are. Most of the ones I have met are teachers who move only in revolutionary circles. Canvassing exposes you to a new type of political opinion and a whole new style of political argument.

I had a chat with a council tenant about the council's slowness to respond to requests for proper maintenance. I talked of the cuts, of the need to harass the housing department and lobby the councillors and form a tenants' association. Then, as I went across the landing she said, 'That's Mrs Jukes over there, she's an old lady, lives alone, nice person.' As I knocked I formed a picture of a frail person who might need a car to the polling station, or perhaps a postal vote. I was wrong. The door was opened by a very tough-looking woman wearing trousers and smoking a cigarette. I went into my routine. She held her cigarette in the corner of her mouth, wrinkling her eyes to keep the smoke out and sneering at me as she folded her arms over her chest. 'Why can't we get a new light bulb put in this landing?' she said. I took a deep breath.

I began to talk about how the maintenance of council property was going to get worse under the Tories. 'How long have the Tories been in?' she asked. 'Tell me when the cuts began.' She was right. Public expenditure was £72 billion in 1975 (at 1979 prices) and by 1977 Mr Healey had cut it to £66 billion. From 1975 to 1977 Labour cut public spending by 1.72 per cent. I suggested again that things were bound to get worse under the Tories, and that if we ever got a Tory council in Waltham Forest rents would rise and maintenance would decline. 'Nonsense,' said Mrs Jukes. 'The only



time we've ever had a decent council is when the Tories were in. Tory policies are necessary to good government. The trouble with this country is that there's been far too much borrowing. This government is simply trying to get borrowing down.' 'Well,' I smiled, 'your mind is obviously made up.'

I went up the next landing. Here the door was opened by a man whom a few beers had roused to eloquent fury. 'I'm a socialist who votes Tory,' he said. 'Look at the waste. There was scaffolding outside this building for ten weeks. Ten weeks! I'm in the building trade. I could have done the job in three. It's our money they're wasting. The library: they've got bloody carpets in there. They call me a communist at work, but I tell you, I'm going to get my branch to stop paying the political levy.' 'There's nothing wrong with a decent library service,' I said. 'Libraries, education, home helps, day nurseries - the Tories will cut all those.' 'Cut the lot, I say. Get rid of direct works. I'm a socialist,' he repeated, 'and I'm sick of Labour. I'm voting Tory now.' Mrs Jukes was still at the bottom of the stairs when I went down. 'Told you a few home truths, did he?' she asked.

I found myself at a loss with a voter who attacked Labour's cuts and votes for the Tories because they will control public spending. I found myself even

more at a loss with a voter who said he was a socialist who voted Tory. Both had been Labour supporters all their lives, and neither was sorry about what the Tories are doing. What role do they have in determining the policies of the Labour Party?

CIIR OVERSEAS VOLUNTEERS

ECUADOR COORDINATOR

needed to administer the existing development programme involving the placing of skilled personnel in small-scale community based projects and to investigate and evaluate further projects. Previous South American experience, community work experience in the U.K. and involvement in development work either in U.K. or in the Third World important. Applicants wishing to work on a job sharing basis are welcome to apply.

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We, the Red Brigades... Noi, brigatisti, raccontiamo che... The story the Italian state wants to silence

TWO Italian journalists, Mario Scialoja and Giampaolo Bultrini, of the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*, have been jailed for conducting an interview with the Red Brigades during the time when Judge Giovanni d'Urso was being held, and charged with 'complicity'. Their suspected intermediary, Professor of Criminology Giovanni Senzani, is on the wanted list.

Judge d'Urso had a top secret job in the Justice Ministry: the transfer of political prisoners from jail to jail, as well as the implementation of measures, which, according to the Red Brigades, were aimed at the physical and psychological destruction of prisoners. This was a response to the formation in prisons of committees of action which the state had to suppress to prevent the further politicisation of detainees. Revolts have erupted in a

number of prisons in recent months. The government's failure to find a political solution to the growing unrest has created an explosive situation.

The Red Brigades have claimed a victory following the kidnap; all their demands have been met: the closure of L'Asinara prison, the release of a 'suspected terrorist' suffering from cancer, the publication of statements written by prisoners in Palmi and Trani in a number of national papers.

This is only the second interview with the Red Brigades. The first, in 1974, also created an uproar. This is the first publication in Britain. The translation is by Jane Crichtley and Malcolm Imrie. We thank *L'Espresso* for permission to publish it.

Q: After Aldo Moro, judge d'Urso. Doesn't this represent a step backwards 'strategically'? How do you explain this difference?

RB: Why? The Moro operation was part of a campaign against the imperialist state which occurred in a very different period. It marked the highest point in the phase of armed propaganda. It was a matter of trying to instil a recognition of the necessity of armed struggle in the proletariat. The kidnapping of d'Urso, on the other hand, takes place in a more advanced stage of confrontation where the slogan of guerrillas must be: win over and organise the masses around armed struggle for communism.

Q: Why do you say that the present phase is more advanced?

RB: The depth of the imperialist crisis has revealed the alien nature of the needs of capital to the working class. The restructuring of capital in Italy — on all levels — drives whole social layers into revolutionary struggle. The only things this state can guarantee are super-exploitation, unemployment, misery and prison. The needs of the masses and the proletariat — not only strategic but immediate needs — are inexorably and violently denied by a type of power whose only concern is its own survival. Their struggle around their immediate needs transforms itself into a confrontation with power. And that changes everything.

Q: But the events at FIAT² apparently show the opposite...

RB: The struggle at FIAT expressed, spontaneously and on a huge scale, its concern with workers' power and autonomy, which in no way signifies the end of illusions, but, on the contrary, the beginning of a new cycle of struggles. These struggles have been building up for over 10 years, even though they have seemed to begin slowly and with difficulty. For the first time in the recent history of class struggle in Italy, working class antagonism is not expressed through demands that are merely greater than those put forward by the unions, but by a desire for power in opposition to the state's plans to destroy them; by a defence of those jobs which maintain class unity; by a class autonomy in confrontation with the unions and the revisionists, even when the latter try to control the struggles for their own ends.

Q: So, in short, in your opinion the masses are ready to make the revolution?

RB: We're not that naive. What we do say is that today the objective and subjective conditions ex-

ist which can bring about a decisive move towards civil war for communism. In other words, the conditions exist which can give birth to revolutionary mass organizations within the mass movement that is struggling against restructuring, and these, along with the Combative Communist Party (CCP),³ make up the essential element of armed communist power. That's what characterizes the change we've been talking about. Our own political line must thus develop in this direction and take charge of all the problems posed by the construction of armed proletarian power.

Q: Does that mean that you want to control spontaneous struggles for your own ends?

RB: No, it's exactly the opposite. We don't run around after every outburst of proletarian anger but we try to understand that it is the product of objective causes and of the fact that capitalism is historically outmoded. So we have to build the alternative today. And, starting from the tensions which run through the different layers of the working class, from the content of their struggles, we must prioritize the definition of 'immediate programmes' around which it is possible to extend the mobilization, to contribute to the affirmation and to the consolidation of the revolutionary groupings which are their basis.

Q: But isn't all this very similar to the theories of Workers' Autonomy⁴ — which until now you've rejected?

RB: Not at all. The CCP doesn't dissolve itself into spontaneism. On the contrary, it becomes more valuable by being a general reference point. It must be the carrier of a general programme of transition to communism, and it must understand how to make this programme dialectic in relation to particular aspects of the struggles of workers and proletarians.

Q: What's all this got to do with the kidnapping of d'Urso?

RB: The proletarians in prison could tell you that quite clearly. There is a reality that the state's propaganda mystifies or obscures. The present crisis has swelled the ranks of proletarians who are not part of the production process; who are on the margins of society; who earn no wages and can only survive outside legality. The break-up of the working class, brought about by the bourgeoisie at the expense of hundreds of thousands of proletarians, has its military base in the imperialist prison: the deadly attack launched by Agnelli and his 'associates' against the working class

necessitates the incarceration and destruction of the vanguard of workers and proletarians. The figures speak for themselves: there are 35,000 proletarians in prison, and more than 3,000 comrades held in concentration camps.⁵

Q: Does that mean that there's no longer any distinction between common law and politics?

RB: The only criminals we recognize in this society are the Christian Democrats and similar defenders of capitalism. The proletarians in prison are an integral part of the metropolitan proletariat and in the main they have identified their class interests with the struggle for communism. Which is why the prison politics of the state have completely failed. The imperialist prison is certainly an important element in the bourgeoisie's military organization, but it is also a place for the political recomposition of the proletariat, and this fact is of great importance to the relationship between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces.

Q: You still haven't explained the relationship of all this to d'Urso.

RB: At present the prison is the main instrument of counter revolution, and to attack the highest levels of the Ministry of Justice and the men who control this instrument means we are attacking 'the heart of the state'. Our success in kidnapping d'Urso is already a great political victory which damages the enemy's project. But that's not the main thing, what's important is that this guerrilla action is dialectically linked to the movement of proletarian prisoners and agrees with the objectives of the immediate programme of their struggle committees.

Q: What are the objectives of the d'Urso Operation?

RB: There are two. First, to strike a blow against the strategy which aims to annihilate the proletariat and deal with this bastard who's been handing out orders from the Ministry of Justice to his minions. Secondly, but of importance too, is the fact that it's a party initiative whose aim is to open up new political spaces to the movement of proletarians in prison, and to give this movement — whose legitimacy has been earned by thousands of initiatives — the means to express itself. Finally this action must contribute to the realization of the movement's objectives.

Q: Did you consider kidnapping other people instead of d'Urso?

RB: There are always lots of alternatives. As many as there are men and structures of this



Renato Curcio, above, with Nadia Mantovani, is one of the 'historic leaders' of the Red Brigades, one of a number of students in the Sociology Department of Trento University who played an important role during the student unrest of the 60s and later joined clandestine organisations.

regime. Sooner or later armed proletarian power will deal with all of them. At the moment we have to individualize, very precisely, the heart of the counter-revolutionary project, and to aim our attacks at it. So it was with Moro, and so it is with d'Urso.

Q: What are you searching to obtain in exchange for judge d'Urso?

RB: We are not asking for anything. We've nothing to ask for from this regime. Our strategic goals have been clear for a long time; to destroy every prison and to free every proletarian prisoner. Unlike the regime we know very well how to evaluate the relations of force. Moreover, it's one of the most obvious signs of the crisis faced by the bourgeoisie that they are unable to recognize that every war is made up of battles lost and battles won. And the bourgeoisie has already lost this one.

Q: What is d'Urso's attitude?

RB: It's excellent. He is collaborating with proletarian justice. He has told us about the plans to wipe out prisoners and he has revealed the names of his collaborators, be they close or distant.

Q: Is this operation going to last a long time?

RB: We oppose all prisons, even those in which we are forced to keep the enemies of the people. D'Urso will stay with us as long as is necessary, to try him, to establish his exact responsibilities and thus to give judgement on him according to the criteria of proletarian justice.

Q: You've kidnapped a man who didn't have an escort. Were you afraid of deaths? Or were you trying to avoid a 'military' confrontation?

RB: Neither the one nor the other. Guerrillas act according to political criteria. The level of military strength depended on this. And we believe we have shown that there is no objective, however well protected, that we cannot reach.

Q: Why have militants like Fioroni, Petci, Viscardi and, so it seems, several brigadists from Genoa given information after several years of being underground?

RB: We must be extremely careful in our choice of words because counter-guerrilla psychology has deliberately muddled everything. First of all, it has created a non-existent person: 'the repentant terrorist'. There really haven't been any. The

lived as parasites on the revolutionary movement have decided it is in their interests to join the Carabinieri. In this new role, their only merit in the eyes of their employers has been to help them kill numerous comrades and to arrest many others. These worms have done nothing but 'confess' whatever was useful to this regime in order to put hundreds of comrades in prison. Such people are nothing but tragic puppets to whom even proletarian justice couldn't give a minimum of human dignity. There aren't many of them, but the price paid by the revolutionary movement — because we didn't recognise them in time — is high. We have already made a critical

Talking with an imbecilic and reactionary judge doesn't exactly correspond to our political orientation

analysis of this problem and have taken the necessary steps and adapted our selection criteria for militants according to the new level of confrontation.

We must distinguish the so-called repentant terrorists from the case of certain comrades who, under torture, admitted their involvement in guerrilla action. This incorrect behaviour has implicated other comrades. Even in this case we can't speak of repentance, but rather of certain people's incapacity to understand the new condition of class confrontation and the forms of repression of the imperialist state. It is the task of the revolutionary movement to clarify these differences, distinguishing between the weaknesses that are a part of our growth and the action of our enemies.

Q: But surely we can no longer just talk of individual crises: in these conditions how can you rule out the possibility of the failure of a political line?

RB: Militarist and spontanist hypotheses have gone into a state of crisis and so have those people on the fringes who make reference to armed struggle but have been incapable of understanding the changes that have taken place in the confrontation with the bourgeoisie. In fact, those who had considered armed struggle as a form of struggle that was simply more radical than others, rather than a long term strategy, when they were

faced with the strength of the regime's counter-offensive, remained politically disarmed: in the end they confused their own failure with that of the revolutionary movement. This has happened at the very moment when the armed struggle has spread its own influence into large layers of the proletariat and has historically opened the possibility of making a great leap forward in the organization of proletarian power. Finally, it is useful and necessary for the guerrilla to come to terms with the problems created by the organization of the masses around armed struggle, it is by its capacity to face up to this task that the CCP will show that it is effectively communist and combative. And today, whoever is incapable of seeing this problem is driven into a profound crisis.

Q: So are you denying that there is a crisis in the Red Brigades?

RB: In the resolution of the Strategic Leadership in 1978 we had already defined the central features of the current phase, but we must admit to a certain delay in our criticisms and in our capacity to fully assume the new tasks that the class movement imposed on us. For example, we were lagging behind when just after the 'spring campaign' we understood what signified the end of the phase of armed propaganda in its simplest form, that is, the necessity to work in the different layers to give a concrete programme to the revolutionary upsurges already existing in their midst, and on this programme to determine the kind of leap forward which we had to make to organize the masses. The great debate which has developed in the last few months, inside and outside the organization, has now allowed us to reach a great clarity and to establish in the Strategic Leadership's Resolution of October 1980 the fundamental lines of current political evolution.

Q: How is it then, that the differences between the Strategic Leadership and the Walter Alasia Column (WAC) have been made public? Do these differences still exist? Did the Walter Alasia Column participate in the kidnapping of d'Urso?

RB: The political debate within the Red Brigades has never been secret. It has been public and it has involved not only the structures of our organization but the whole revolutionary movement. The worst enemy which we have had to face in this

period has been an opportunist tendency running through the whole movement of armed struggle which found a few partisans in our own ranks. To deal with this enemy was vital in order to reach a new unity, to give a new impetus to the whole of the movement.

The Walter Alasia Column in its history and its traditions of struggle is among the best of our organizations. Among its members, some comrades wanted to persist in a militarist practice and they had too a false conception of armed struggle. These comrades have therefore gone their own way, but they no longer have anything to do with our organization, nor with the WAC. Their confusion has led them to indulge in stupidly provocative acts. The WAC will also be able to throw light on this matter, admitting mistaken positions and with the greatest openness towards sincere revolutionaries.

Q: Looking back, do you think that the decision to execute Aldo Moro was a mistake?

RB: The very fact that you ask this question after 3 years is already part of the answer. If after so long the gaps in imperialist power opened up by this action are still not closed again, then that is the proof that this action has been crowned with success.

Q: Why did you say nothing when some militants, arrested during the raids of the 7 April,⁸ were accused of being members of the Red Brigade's Strategic Leadership?

RB: There were arrests on the 7 April, 8 April, 9 April... every day the cops and the Carabinieri arrest dozens of comrades. Because the essence of the imperialist state strategy is the annihilation of the revolutionary movement. It is this strategy that the Red Brigades are trying to smash in creating the alternative of armed proletarian power. Talking with an imbecilic and reactionary judge doesn't exactly correspond to our political orientation! In order to understand the relationship that we have with the magistracy you only have to remember the names of judges who we have punished.

Q: How do you assess the 'repentant terrorists' and why does this problem not seem to bother you?

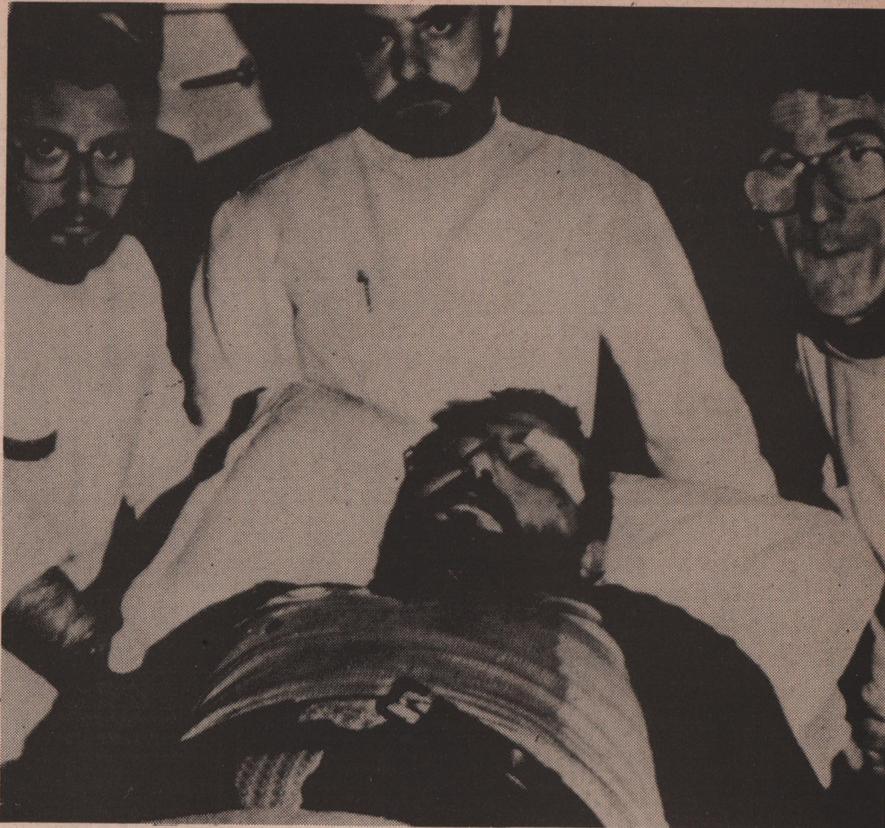
RB: It's not true that it doesn't bother us. We have already said that the 'repentant terrorist' doesn't exist. It's a pure invention of the regime. The attention that we give to spies and traitors is the same as you give in general to fleas; we crush them. Their fate has already been made crystal clear in the prisons at Nuoro, Nuove, etc.... Such people must live in fear of their own shadows: without doubt, they're reduced to the state of walking corpses.

Q: Is it true that the defeats suffered by Prima Linea and other small terrorist groups have led to a rush of militants into your own ranks?

RB: The experience of the revolutionary movement in recent years has developed into different organizational forms, each of which expressed — certainly in a partial manner — the hopes and the needs which came from the different components of the metropolitan proletariat. You only have to think of the experience of the NAP⁹ and what it represented for the proletariat in prison. Whoever works to build the party must know how to reassemble all these experiences in a great unitary project. That is what the Red Brigades have always done.

Q: What do you think about the calls to desert that have come from within the armed party?

RB: A few young rejects from the bourgeoisie thought they were able to play at class war during their holidays. Today, as the confrontation with the bourgeoisie becomes more and more acute — precisely because the conditions are ripe for a great advance in revolutionary movement — the bourgeoisie is telling its sons to come home. We'd certainly like to desert the production line, work which is dangerous, sometimes fatally so; to get rid of unemployment and the ghetto districts; to escape the violent alienation of this society. But that can't be done by 'whining to daddy'. To free ourselves from this misery, we must attack and liquidate this regime and build a communist society.



An injured prisoner after the assault on Trani prison. 85 detainees have now been charged with complicity in the kidnap of Judge d'Urso. This is because the Red Brigades commando who kidnaped the judge issued a statement saying that, following his questioning, the sentence was to be passed by the prisoners themselves. In their statement prisoners said Judge d'Urso was 'guilty' but was to be released if the media agreed to publish their statements.

ty. Desert? Don't joke. We're only just beginning.

Q: Some people have called for an amnesty. In our opinion, would an amnesty stop the escalation of violence and make the confrontation less 'barbarous'?

RB: Imperialism is counting on extermination and its concentration camps to give it any chance of survival. It is this regime that is violent and barbarous, it's the Christian Democrat gang and their lackeys who are bloodstained. It is impossible even to begin to imagine a peaceful society while people like that exist on the earth.

Q: How did you know Aldo Moro's itinerary when you kidnapped him? Some observers are convinced that you had an informer, voluntary or involuntary in his family or close friends.

RB: In the 10 years we've existed you've never understood that the knowledge of the proletariat and guerilla organization can solve all of these sorts of problems. It is both a question of political will and of a conception of organization adequate to the rhythms of proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centres. To prepare and carry out the Moro operation we only used — as always — these methods.

Q: Did you think that you might have been able to free Moro? On what conditions would you have freed him?

RB: You are so used to constructing the regime's truth that you are completely imprisoned by your own mystifications. Throughout the operation we published 9 perfectly clear communiqués raising the question of the communist prisoners and demanded the release of a certain number of them. If we had received a positive response we would certainly have freed our prisoner.

Q: In his letters Moro never mentioned the guards who were escorting him when he was kidnapped. Why was this?

RB: Because he didn't care about them.

Q: Is it true that the Brigade members who were holding Moro delayed his execution for 48 hours?
RB: It's not true.

Q: Did you tell Aldo Moro of your decision to execute him? How did he react?

RB: He was informed. You can look at his memoirs that we published to find out his reaction. Because he was a Christian Democrat he was well aware of the nature of his 'friends' in the party, and he had no illusions about their responsibility for the fact that we didn't suspend the sentence.

Q: Is it true that in order to suspend Moro's execution all that was needed was a declaration from Fanfani¹⁰ that it was possible to open negotiations?

RB: The problem we raised was that of prisoners. That is a political problem that the regime's leaders, utterly terrorised, didn't want to face. They thought they could get rid of the problem by denying its existence. If you bear in mind the fact that this question is central for the revolutionary forces — and the capture of d'Urso shows it clearly — you can see in what way the passivity, the non-line suggested by the American specialists to the Christian Democrats was able to hinder the search for different solutions to those we adopted.

Q: It's been suggested that at Moro's initiative one of his colleagues gave you documents from his archives. Is that true and what documents were they?

RB: We had nothing to do with anything like that. As regards documents, those that we obtained with the Moro were enough.

Q: Have you destroyed Aldo Moro's letters because people would disapprove of them?

RB: No. Everything he wrote was made public.

Q: How do you explain the discovery of the flat in Via Gradoli?

RB: It was a stupid accident: one of the drainpipes was rotten and there was a flood. Why look any further when you know what Roman property speculators are capable of!

Q: In some of your documents you denounce the fact that some militants have been tortured. Have you any proof?



The Italian equivalent of the SAS in training with an Augusta-Bell helicopter before their assault on Trani prison. 'Made in Germany' was the comment of the Italian press.

RB: It's a method currently used by the regime's minions. Almost every captured comrade is taken under cover to a secret place and undergoes brutal treatment. There's nothing surprising about it: Cossiga's special laws sanction all these practices — complete freedom for the carabinieri and the DIGOS¹² police to have revolutionary militants at their mercy for four days. That's what leads to torture. To take one example from many: comrade Maurizio Iannelli, straight after his capture, was hooded and taken to a flat where he was tortured for two days. Only his own behaviour allowed these facts — which the regime's press tried to hide — to come to light.

Q: Many political leaders from Zaccagnini to Berlinguer have said that the Red Brigades are controlled, or at least helped, by parts of the secret services. What's your response?

RB: These gentlemen should give us precise facts and proof of this so that we don't take these statements as the products of their feverish imagination. For us all the secret services are enemies of the proletariat. To deny a reality which stops them sleeping, these leaders have invented a fable of a foreign conspiracy. But they are the only ones, and they are certain others of their kind, who believe it. The proletarian war is developing and is not concerned with such inanity.

Q: Do the Palestinians of the PLO provide you with arms? If so, in exchange for what?

RB: We believe that in the time of anti-imperialist proletarian war a new proletarian internationalism must be reborn. Through concrete solidarity; through militant aid; through political support among the forces who fight for communism in the liberation struggle of people against imperialist oppression. The rhetoric of revisionism can only relate to the anti-imperialist movements as instruments to be used for its own ends. That is not our conception: our solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against Zionist imperialism is complete and unconditional. And it is not the lies of those who used this struggle for their own ends that will make us change our opinion.

Q: Have you any relationship with militants at the base of the PCI who do not share their party's line?

RB: Irresistibly the PCI is identifying with the interests of the bourgeoisie. The latter has given it the role of the State in the heart of the working class. The Berlinguerians (PCI) are perfectly happy with this role. And it is also true that this counter-revolutionary fusion doesn't take place without contradictions. But the false con-

The Red Brigades have never killed an innocent worker. Not even by accident

sciousness of the proletarians who still carry their party card can only change when they realise the need to get out. Our strategy is to win over every proletarian to the revolutionary line of armed struggle for communism and to organise them to make up the system of armed proletarian power. During this long process the most backward fringes of the working class movement will also, sooner or later, recognise their class interests.

Q: What is the social and political origin of new militants in the Red Brigades?

RB: The same as always. We have our roots in the metropolitan proletariat and our cadres come from its avant-garde. The problem of the centrality of the working class is not sociological but political. That is to say that it is around the interests of the working class that all the other layers of the proletariat must organize. It is not a metaphysical or idealist position. But it's true that the comrades of the Red Brigades are mainly workers.

Q: Do you have any contacts with Albania?
RB: No.

Q: What do you think of Soviet and Chinese communism? Do you have a model of communist society that already exists in mind and can you explain the kind of future society for which you are fighting?

RB: The problems of building a communist society are not laboratory experiments on which one can pontificate. They are movements which concern millions of individuals in the world. Our

reference points remain marxism-leninism and the Chinese cultural revolution. We do not consider communism as a model but as a long process on a world scale which requires historical answers and not pompous judgements. None of which stops us saying that those who practice a politics of expansionism and of oppression — whatever names they use — belong to the imperialist camp.

Q: Do you think you are able to unleash an insurrectionary movement in Italy?

RB: We don't think in terms of insurrection. We believe on the contrary in the historic possibility of building a system of armed proletarian power through a long term process. The accumulation of proletarian power through the politico-military organization of the CCP and the mass revolutionary organizations, will take up a whole period of history. Undoubtedly this won't happen in a linear way but by dialectical breaks. And finally the full use of revolutionary war will destroy the bourgeois State and construct the communist society. It's not a matter simply of a hope but of a certainty nourished by the desires of the proletariat.

Q: Riccardo Dura¹³, who led one of your columns, adopted, according to the 'repentant terrorists' of Genoa, particularly violent methods. He even practised blackmail. Is that true?

RB: It is the foulest invention of counter-guerilla psychology. He was a great leader of our organization, loved and esteemed. With his humanity, his capacity to live as a communist with others, his solidarity towards comrades in their most difficult moments, he gave us more than the lackeys of the regime could ever imagine. We are proud to have had him at our side for all these years.

Q: Doesn't the assassination of workers trouble your conscience?

RB: The Red Brigades have never killed innocent workers. This has never happened. Not even by accident. But if you are referring here to mercenaries in uniform who have sold their class identity to the bourgeoisie, thus betraying their own origins, and who are then transformed into the vicious murderers of workers, then we have no pity for them. And we would advise them to change their occupation. We must reiterate that.

Q: Does General Della Chiesa¹⁴ seem to you to be able and dangerous rival? In short, an enemy worthy of respect?

RB: No. He is simply a minion to whom the state has given a maximum amount of power.

1. Former Prime Minister and President, Christian Democrat Aldo Moro was captured in Rome by the Red Brigades on the 16 March 1978 and executed on the 9 May.
2. Last October thousands of workers at FIAT revolted against their own unions who had accepted the management's redundancy plans.
3. A general title for the Red Brigades and their supporters.
4. Particularly those of Toni Negri.
5. Italy has 35,000 common law prisoners and approximately 3,000 political prisoners from the revolutionary left.
6. Linked to the 'Strategic Resolution' (published Spring 78).
7. Walter Alasia, member of the Red Brigades, was killed by the carabinieri (para-military police) when he opened the door of his flat to them in Milan in 1978.
8. The 7 April 1979 marked the beginning of a number of police raids in autonomist circles and led to the arrest, among others, of Professor Toni Negri, accused at the time of being the 'brain' of the Red Brigades. This charge was abandoned several months ago although further charges have since been made.
9. Armed Proletarian Nuclei, set up in Naples in 1974 and particularly involved in the struggle against prisons. The NAP rejoined the Red Brigades at the beginning of 1978, after suffering numerous setbacks.
10. Fanfani is currently President of the Italian Senate and has many times been Prime Minister and Christian Democrat National Secretary.
11. In Rome, where an 'arms cache' was discovered, and where members of the Red Brigades who had participated in the kidnapping of Moro lived.
12. Political police.
13. Head of the Genoa Column of the Red Brigades.
14. Last year he was made head of carabinieri for the North of Italy and put in charge of all anti-terrorist operations.



Albums

ALVARO (The Chilean with the Singing Nose): The Working Class (Squeaky Shoes Records)
The working class only wants money/money, money, money/And how many people have died in the name of the working class I ask?/And how many people have been tortured in the name of the working class I ask again?/Working class... you are the dildo of the intellectuals

Alvaro's complaint about the parochialism of metropolitan class struggle is doubtless destined to be misunderstood in the same way that the rest of his work has been dismissed and neglected. . . . Victim of that same parochialism, his work isn't agitational enough for his fellow Chileans, isn't commercial enough for the musical establishment, isn't danceable enough (or his name not 'big' enough) for the various Rockers Against. Even Recommended Records, that bastion of unorthodoxy, refused until very recently to recommend him.

Nevertheless, *The Working Class* or the earlier, superior *Drinkin' My Own Sperm* deserve to be heard. For those strung out on cathartic-bop-with-lefty-lyrics, Alvaro's idiosyncratic and riotous blend of Spanish Latin American, Araucan Indian and European 'avant-garde' styles should prove the perfect cure.

Dave Rimmer

GRAVITY: Fred Frith (Ralph)
Gravity starts with a laugh and ends with a smile. It's probably the strangest record that you're going to be able to dance to all year.

This isn't your average pop LP. The music it draws on for its sources is European, not American. Fred Frith used to play guitar with Henry Cow, and *Gravity* continues Henry Cow's commitment, and that of the other bands in Rock In Opposition, to developing a European rock music. Their opposition is to a form of imperialism that was at once both cultural and economic; blue men don't have to sing the whites.

Since the second side was recorded in America with American musicians, it's appropriate that *Gravity* includes one concession to American culture; a version of the Martha and the Vandellas' song *Dancing In The Street*. Once you've heard it, that old silver covered Motown Chartbusters LP in the corner of your sitting room won't seem quite the same.

Mike Craig

PERE UBU: The Modern Dance (Rough Trade)
 I DON'T know if words like 'classic' and 'indispensable' have any validity, but if there's a time and a place for them, this is it. Pere Ubu's 1977 album *The Modern Dance* has been unobtainable for far too long. Now re-released on Rough Trade, it remains a crucial work of modern music.

Everything your eighties hard-times bands have made their own is here; the alienation, the bleak industrial landscapes, the white noise . . . but with a difference. Fused to a thoroughly danceable beat and eccentric but infectious melodies, they're shaped into music of resistance, not defeat.



Sam Thomas

Music

ZILA
We are here!

THE FINANCIAL REWARDS of music industry have proved to be very dangerous for musicians. The industry suffocates creativity and frequently kills the artists it depends on. Invariably the industry taints the musicians and the music. The problem is to find music that is accessible and original, and musicians with the strength of purpose to resist the corruption of the industry. Zila are such a group of individuals, writes Paul Chapman.

Their music and their strength comes from the traditions and culture of the South African Townships. Dudu Pukwana plays alto, soprano and piano. 'My father taught me piano. He was a gardener, a park attendant. He used to have a vocal group too, like the Deep River Boys.' Dudu played at rent parties and learnt the saxophone by borrowing Nick Moyake's tenor. For many years Dudu scraped a living playing Kwela pop music and jazz. Dudu evolved a style that combined the guts of Louis Jordan Jump Bands with the lyricism and edge of Ornette Coleman. In Cape Town Dudu joined Chris McGregor's Blue Notes. Chris was a white pianist and composer. They played in mixed clubs but when they were shut down they had nowhere to play. 'We have to leave because we couldn't play with Chris. Luckily we got a break, to go to France, the Juans-Les-Pins Festival. We had to pay \$100 for our passports, it was only the blacks who had to pay this. I tried to visit home recently but they refused me a visa. . . refused me. My base is England now, I am content to stay.'

It took them three years to get into England. They were forced to travel round Europe. It was a very difficult time for them. They were saved from disaster by Abdullah Ibrahim, the famous solo pianist then known as Dollar Brand. He invited them to Switzerland, where they played regularly at the Africa Centre in Zurich. The tenor player of the Blue Notes, Nick Moyake, became ill with cancer. He decided to return to Africa where he died.

The remaining Blue Notes came to London two years later, after Ronnie Scott had invited them to play at his club. They obtained Union cards and were able to stay in England. The tribulations of Ezile deeply affected Mongezi Feza, the trumpeter of the Blue Notes. He was regarded by many as the most exciting trumpet player in Europe. After he separated from his wife, he had a breakdown and went into hospital. Then Dudu said, 'He split, he escaped the hospital when it was snowing. He got lost. They found him man, Jesus, he was dying in the snow. His lungs were messed up and he only lasted one day after that. . . Double pneumonia. . .

we couldn't believe it.

British jazz or rock audiences have been reluctant to accept the Blue Notes African style. Chris McGregor moved to France, Johnny Dyani to Denmark. Louis Maholo remains in England, playing the occasional gig with his band Spirits Rejoice. Dudu Pukwana has persisted, doing odd jobs in hard times, and tried to keep his groups going. Zila is Dudu's latest group and in many ways it marks a return to his roots. Like many Kwela bands, Zila has a singer: Peggy Phango.

Peggy arrived in London in 1961 as leading lady of King Kong. 'I was a qualified nurse at Coronation hospital, Johannesburg, until one day I met my friend Ivy to go to the cinema, or so I thought. Instead she dragged me off to these auditions. I sang two songs and got hired to join the African Jazz Touring Company. Then came King Kong and the trip to London.' Peggy is now an established actress and singer, but she points out there is a shortage of work for black actors and actresses. 'I say that if they can paint Sir Laurence Olivier's face black for *Othello*, they can paint mine white to be Lady Macbeth!'

Churchill Jolobe, the drummer is another South African exile. He is a friend of Dudu's from Johannesburg days. He had to leave because of his political activities. Zila, says Churchill, do their type of music better than anyone else in England, but they don't get the opportunities. Roland Kirk once asked them to be his support band; his request was refused. 'Without a white face to front us we keep hitting the establishment barrier, and the doors just close on us.' It is a matter of pride that they are not a cheap band, they say; 'We may be black but we won't play for peanuts.' The result is few gigs and no record contract. Dudu is starting his own record label. Record companies don't find the musicians or the musicians of Zila an easy package to market.

Harry Becket plays trumpet and flugelhorn, with Dave Defreeze also on trumpet. Smiley de Jones, a Nigerian, is on congas, Mark Wood from Newcastle plays guitar and they have an American keyboard player Errol Clark.

There is always an air of anarchy about Zila concerts, it adds spontaneity and edge to their performances. Their concerts are like parties where the host plays also sax. Every time I have seen them the gig has ended in dancing, ovations and encores. Independent rhythm reactions spring up throughout the room as people play on empty bottles and tables.

As Peggy Phango says 'as far as African music is concerned they're the best. They do the real thing.'



Television

Troubles on Thames at last

At long last a British television company has got round to making a series of programmes about the political history of Ireland. David Clark has been watching *The Troubles*.

IT'S BEEN twelve years since the start of the current phase of the struggle in Ireland, a long time to wait for a TV series that gives us some sense of how we got here. The pity is that it didn't happen a decade ago, and that it only came about tucked away at 10.30, and then at the expense of Irish coverage in the more popular TV Eye, screened at 8.30 when the ratings are better.

The Troubles is essential viewing. It's technically strong, well-researched, honest, and as near to committed as the IBA's rules allow. Unusually, it's narrated by a woman. And just as usually, it presents Irish history in terms of British imperialism.

But all the same, it tends to see things purely in terms of nationalism and religion, and the class element is largely ignored. In the build-up to the 1916 uprising, for example, there is no sense of the dialogue between those who were for proletarian nationalism - James Connolly and the rump of the Irish Citizen's Army - and those, like Padraig Pearse and much of the leadership of the Volunteers, who took a more narrow nationalist view.

Nor is there any discussion of the contradictions between the emerging Irish national bourgeoisie and the largely absent English bourgeois, and the way those contradictions were resolved at the expense of the working class and peasantry, north and south. The civil war, too, a crucial part of the resolution, was glossed over in a two-line reference it borders on the crass for the narrator to say that the Irish don't like discussing the civil war, and simply move on to the next topic, when, after all, the war left De Valera firmly on the top of the heap and the working class movement split asunder.

The Troubles took two years to make, cost £300,000, had nine editorial staff, and is co-produced by two respected and committed television journalists. It's accompanied by a clearly written and well-illustrated account jointly published by Thames and Futura, which sells at £4.95, mostly because the companies decided to print only 10,000 copies.

But the series was only started after long internal wrangles at Thames. It followed a management shuffle which resulted in the end of Thames' long-running current affairs programme *This Week*, which had a reasonable reputation for its reporting on Ireland, under producer David Elstein, and its replacement by TV Eye, which has yet to produce a memorable programme about Ireland. Indeed the idea for the series on Ireland originally came from Elstein, but his proposal was turned down by the management.

The Troubles is good and valuable, even though the later films don't show any interviews with today's IRA and apparently emphasise the dealings of politicians rather than the activities of the British Army. Thames are also likely to recover much of their investment in

the series by selling it abroad. And although there have been discussions with the IBA, there haven't been any of the political rows that accompanied some of *This Week's* reports. From the management's point of view the series is a great success. From the viewer's - well, we should be grateful that what we've got is a good deal better than what might have been, but demand much more in future. ○

... and no trouble at t' Mill

Colin Shearman on a new series of plays from the BBC's Pebble Mill studios in Birmingham.

'THIS IS Britain 1980', the Panorama announcer happens to be saying - in Alan Bleasdale's recent play *The Muscle Market* - as hooded gunmen burst into the viewer's house to recover business debts. It's a bolder political image than most people would probably give the BBC credit for; and the play itself, set most specifically in the present recession, is a knockout look at jungle economics and the machismo stereotypes which capitalism encourages in men.

The Muscle Market is fairly typical of the plays which regularly emerge from the BBC's Pebble Mill studios. Their productions include *The History Man*, *Gangsters*, *Coming Out*, and probably, if you bothered to check, whatever your favourite TV play was last year. The department was set up ten years ago with the sole brief of fostering new writing talent, and on the whole (with the notable exception of Ian McEwan's play *Solid Geometry*, which was banned) claim to have been left alone to do just that. There hasn't, for instance, been any pressure on them to tailor their fairly parochial material to the more profitable overseas market.

Their forthcoming BBC2 Playhouse series, which starts next month, bears this out. Two plays are set in 1945: Jack Sheppard's *Clapperclaw*, which goes behind the newsreel to a Yorkshire pub where things are a little little more down to earth, while David Pinner's *The Potsdam Quartet* examines the imperialist division of Europe through the eyes of a string quartet marooned in Berlin.

There are also two adaptations. One, by Eva Figes from her novel *Days focusses* on a woman whose serious illness forces her to think hard about her life - it's by far the most inventive of the series and makes use of fantasy, flashback and colour degradation - and the other, by Janey Preger from her radio play *Bobby Wants To Meet Me*, is about a rock journalist who idolises Dylan.

It's deliberate Pebble Mill policy that many of the writers and directors involved in these new plays were recruited from outside television. New people are meant to bring new ideas and ward off complacency, and an unknown face stops previous roles getting in the

These are songs for your head and your heart, that make you glad to have ears and feet while never letting you forget what you're dancing through.

This is the Modern Dance. Accept no imitations.

Chris Schuler

Singles

VIC GODARD AND THE SUBWAY SECT: Stop That Girl/Instrumentally Scared, Vertical Integration (Oddball)

Vic Godard might have come a long way from the early Subway Sect days, but does he know where he's going? This one ambles along in a pleasant, '60s-ish sort of a way but breezy accordion and rich acoustic guitar chords aren't gonna change the world. Yeah, I stopped her . . . now what?

DELTA 5: Try/Colour (Rough Trade) A CERTAIN RATIO: Shack Up/And Then Again (Factory Belgian Import)

Two varieties of fractured funk. That Delta 5's concerns over their three singles haven't changed (personal autonomy in relationships) doesn't detract from the force of their statement, and the addition of a tasty trumpet riff on *Colour* makes the music hit even further below the belt. As for ACR.. *Wipe out the problems of our society - shack up*... Well, what the hell, you can dance to it. If you don't know these bands, then this is a good place to start.

FAMILY FODDER: Savoir Faire/Carnal Knowledge (Fresh)

Eminently 'sensible', *Savoir Faire* reworks that old fave now-that-we've-broken-up-why-can't-we-be-friends theme. If that leaves you cold, then check out the flip side . . . to say that it's an insistent beat with a variety of electronics and instrumentation in attendance doesn't help you at all I'm afraid. You'll just have to hear it.

DUMB BLONDES: Sorrow/Strange Love (Fresh) THE FILMCAST: What Becomes of the Broken Hearted/It May Have Been (True Friends Music) BIG HAIR: Puppet on a String/Lies (Fresh) THE VINCENT UNITS: Carnal Song/Everything is Going to be All Wrong (Y Records)

Cover versions of the Merseybeats, Jimmy Ruffin and Sandie Shaw respectively. Bowie's already done the *Dumb Blondes'* job for them; the Filmcasts' moody synth/sax aural wallpaper treatment works better on their own *It May Have Been*; and nothing *Big Hair* can do could make *Puppet on a String* any more laughable than it was already, so why bother? The Vincent Units sneak in here by virtue of a devilish B-side deconstruction of the Martini jingle, the best of this lot.

CUDDLY TOYS: Astral Joe/Slow Down (Fresh) THEY MUST BE RUSSIANS: Don't Try to Cure Yourself/The Truth about Kanga Pants, Air to Breathe (Fresh) VIRGIN PRUNES: Twenty Tens, Revenge/The Children are Crying, Greylight (Baby)

If you haven't already enough reasons to be despondent about the state of British rock music, then here are three more.

Dave Rimmer

Plays

COMING UP... by Kate Phelps
Belt and Braces, Essex University Theatre, Tuesday Jan. 13th
(See listings for future venues)

A VERY different Belt and Braces, this: no music, and the agit-prop hung on a believable and compelling story-line. Kevin Laird, played in a somewhat relaxed fashion by Drew Griffiths, is a successful gay actor from a Northern working class background, whose father dies after sampling the hospitality of his local police-force. Did he fall or...? But our attention is directed more towards Kevin's interior struggle, to reconcile his life in the permissive London theatre world, represented by his glad-to-be-gay but otherwise politically flatulent lover Philip, with the pressures suddenly imposed on him at home by his father's death.

From the first few minutes, by virtue of a neat Pirandellian twist that made my palms sweat, an easy and informal relationship was established with the audience. It has some good jokes, and makes its point fairly effortlessly. Nevertheless, I was left feeling slightly uneasy. Clearly, the political theatre movement in this country is in deep crisis; but can this really be the way forward - back to the drawing-room?

Paul Brightwell

Films

STUNTMAN directed by Richard Rush

STUNTMAN STARTS with a crazy Vietnam vet stumbling onto a film set and not realising it, accidentally killing a stuntman, taking his place and then becoming convinced his own death is about to become the ultimately realistic stunt. This *should* add up to a stunning film crammed with double-take jokes about real film and film-like reality. In fact it is by turns far to jokey (the film they are making is impossibly bad) and so significant it hurts. Most of this unsureness can be traced to the way the film got messed around for nine years before it was released - yet another, sad reminder of how the commercial film world is run by people of remarkably little imagination.

Jane Root

FREEDOM ROAD, directed by Jan Kadar

BASED ON Howard Fast's best selling novel *Freedom Road* aims at the kind of success enjoyed by previous historical soap operas like 'Roots' and 'Holocaust'. Billed as the 'other side of Gone With The Wind', 'Freedom Road' seeks to undermine the maudlin self pity for the lost world of the Southern plantation owners implicit in so many Civil War movies, with a story of the struggle for land by the newly emancipated black slaves in the aftermath of the civil war. Gideon Jackson (Mohammed Ali) and Abner Lait (Kris Kristofferson) lead a black slave-white trash alliance - cue for ultimate visual cliché shot of black white hand-clasp.

The problem with *Freedom*



Ingrid Gavshon

On the left is Trudie Styler as Desna, whose nesting instincts overcome, eventually, her infatuation for 'little bit of exotica', Nudy (Raad Rawi) pictured bereft of even a ruffle of his amazing self-designed wardrobe. The RSC dressing, staging and acting lift Jonathan Gems' *Naked Robots* (Warehouse, London) from a sketchbook of the vacuous and cruel fringes of rock and high fashion to a giddy entertainment. Suitably embellished by Nick Bicat's musical treats, the evening includes 5 hilarious minutes of macabre theatre, as failing rock manager Poppy is frogmarched back from an overdosed near suicide. Lloyd Trott.

ALMOST FREE THEATRE:
Power Plays - reviewed issue 47.
BIRMINGHAM: Mon 26 - Sat 31 Jan - Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park. 021-440 3838.

BELT AND BRACES: Coming Up.
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
Mon 26 Jan, Main Hall, Penrhyn Road. Tickets from Students Union. UXBRIDGE: Tues 27 Jan. Brunel University, Kingdom Road. Tickets free. Information from Students Union. WOOLWICH: Wed 28 Jan - Tramshed Tel 01-855 3371. Fri

30 Jan - Thames Polytechnic, Calderwood Road. SOUTH WOODFORD: Thurs 29 Jan - Redbridge Drama Centre, Churchfields. STOKE: Tues 3 Feb - Stoke and Newcastle Arts Centre. KIDDERMINSTER: Thurs 5 Feb - Kidderminster College (Other advance bookings: 01 267 6722).

JOINT STOCK: Say Your Prayers, by Nick Darke, takes a quizzical and comic look at how the Christian message has been bent, pulled and twisted into different shapes by missionaries and evangelists on the one hand, and by politicians who have through the ages seen it as a way to suppress and manipulate their subjects, on the other. Nick Darke, a practising atheist, puts his finger on where

Playlistings

the trouble started.
NEWCASTLE: Fri 23 and Sat 24 Jan - Gulbenkian Studio. NONNINGTON: Tues 27 - Thurs 29 Jan Nonnington College. BRIGHTON: Fri 30 and Sat 31 - Brighton Poly. LONDON: Tues 3 - Sat 28 Feb (Tuesdays to Sundays).

MAJOR ROAD: Hurling Days, by Graham Devlin. Commissioned to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Peasants Revolt - in some ways the beginning of the British labour movement, Hurling Days is not an historical pageant nor a blow by blow account of the revolutionary days when the common people of England captured London. Instead it follows the fortunes of a few individuals caught up in the events of the time.

WEST BROMWICH: Mon 26 Jan - George Salter High School. DROITWICH: Tues 27 Jan (mat) Droitwich High School. CREWE: Mon 2 and Tues 3 Feb - Crewe and Alsager College. WIGAN: Wed 4 Feb - Standish High School. BURY: Thurs 5 Feb - Metropolitan Arts Association. Performances in the evening unless otherwise stated.

PAINES PLOUGH: Beef, by David Pownall. In the 12th century a monk in the monastery of Clonmacnoise was given the job of writing down an epic poem that had survived only through the oral tradition. It was the Cattle Raid of Cooley, describing the life of the early Celts. The play is based on highlights from the poem.

COVENTRY: Wed 28 Jan to Sat 31 Jan - The Arts Centre, Univ. of Warwick (0203 51226) LONDON: Thurs 5 Feb to Sat 7 Feb - Theatre Royal, Stratford E15 (01-534 0310)

WOMEN'S THEATRE GROUP: Better A Live Pompey Than A Dead Cyril. A cabaret of Stevie Smiths poetry with music. A lively dramatisation of her work, the poems selected are prime examples of her singular, witty, and unconventional opinions on marriage, love, friendship and class values. Set against a suburban background of stained glass and 30s decor, the show creates an intimate atmosphere for an entertaining evening. MILTON KEYNES: Fri 23 and Sat 24 Jan, lunchtimes - Open University Lecture Theatre, Walton Hall: evenings, Woughton Centre Theatre, Chaffron Way, Coffee Hall

of two Indian families living in Birmingham. The play will be seen during the spring.

But because socially committed plays get through on artistic merit at the moment, it doesn't mean that they always will. It's tempting to suggest that their loose criteria put Pebble Mill in the same situation as Miss Callendar in their own production of *The History Man*: she's the English lecturer who has total openness to new ideas, but no ideological commitment to any of them - 'I just read books and discuss them with my friends' she says - and so can't defend herself against the history man's symbolic seduction.

The single play is the only area left in television where where new ideas can be discussed, and it's under constant threat from schedulers, company accountants and advertisers. Pebble Mill, under David Rose, has done a lot to keep it alive. But it will be interesting to see if it comes under attack when Rose leaves in April to join Channel Four. ●

Mainline Pictures



VOGUE review Oct. 1 1980:
'An ugly sexist film. There is no concern for men's physical needs.'

Cinema

It's no game

Marxian cinema lives! Terry O'Brien talks to Tony Garnett, director, about Kestrel Films' latest, 'Prostitute'. With comments from PROS co-ordinator Louise Webb.

Tony Garnett: 'We made the film as close to the prostitutes as Ken Loach, Barry Hines and myself did with the kids in *Kes*. We told the kids: you know about your world, help us make a film. That's what we said to the women.'

The word 'brothel' suggests purple velvet, soft lights and sensuality, an image that panders to male vanity. The reality is rather different. I recently occupied a former brothel on behalf of a Housing Co-op in Kings Cross. It had been run by a fat, middle-aged man, who had died through heart failure. The bathroom walls were spattered with blood, presumably from people shooting up. The toilet bowl was full of pills. The place stank; anything rubber, leather or plastic was sticky.

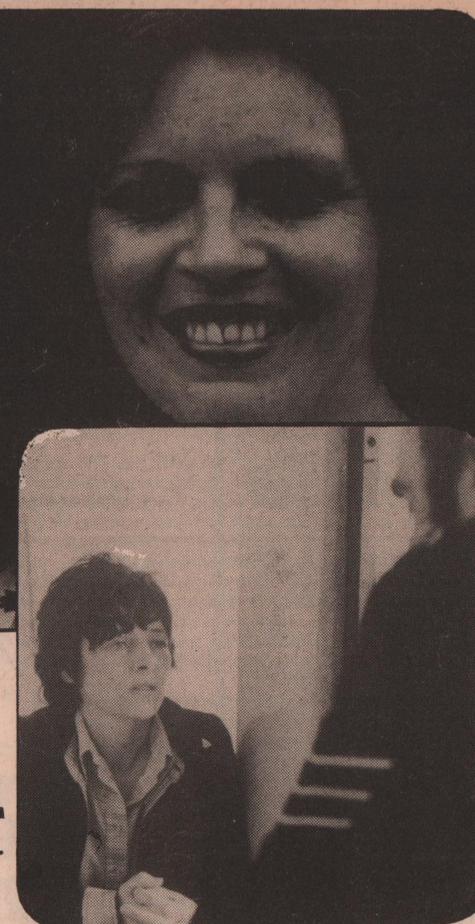
It had been used by 'Awayday girls', young northern women who come down to London for short spells, working the Argyle Square area opposite Kings Cross/St. Pancras. Clients ('punters') are told "a tenner for me, and a tenner for the room, Luv".

Women who don't want to spend a hard earned £10 on a hotel room use the brothels. Seedy as the one already described was, it doesn't touch the bottom end of the market, 'derries', with a mattress surrounded by rotting duxes.

'Prostitute' is an uncompromising study of street women's lives. Tony Garnett employs the same documentary realism that has made his outstanding TV dramas (*Law and Order*, *Days of Hope*, *Cathy Come Home*) among the best and most controversial.

Law and Order, a four part series, provoked a bitter denunciation from the Police Federation, who refused future cooperation with the BBC unless the Beeb promised never to show it again or sell it overseas. This backfired, as public response, immense and unanimous, led to a well-advertised repeat. It presented the detective branch as a bunch of corrupt thugs, indistinguishable from the 'villains' they were supposed to be trying to catch, and 'Operation Countryman' as a whitewash. Tony Garnett: "it is frightening the extent to which the police in this country are a law unto themselves. The detective branch is almost a state within a state".

It is hardly surprising then that *Prostitute* is not the sanitised male fantasy version of prostitution. It follows the progress of Sandra (an excellent performance by Eleanor Forsythe), an ambitious streetwalker who makes a bid for success in the higher end of the market, graduating from



Road is that it replaces kindly plantation owners, victimised by Federal freebooters, with the democracy of small property owners standing up to white klansmen, backed by the plantation owners. This kind of populist view of the American economic system as an association of small, fiercely independent producers masks the reality of domination by the industrial and financial monopolies. Kadar, a Czech emigre, has produced a populist celebration of the small producer - ideology at the heart of the American Dream.

Steve Marriott

MY BODYGUARD directed by Tony Bill

'MY BODYGUARD' is a likeable directorial debut. It's a formula picture: namely the 'growing-up-at-college' movie. It concerns the tribulations of middle-class 15 year old Clifford Peache, privately educated, now starting public high school on the rougher side of Chicago.

Where 'My Bodyguard' differs from many teen-pictures is that it takes the problems peculiar to adolescence seriously, portraying them in a more convincing light. It has a sharper edge than many of its forerunners. The bullies violence is brutal; it comes from the industrial wasteland that surrounds the school.

The film is funny, lightweight, more a fairytale of modern times than the parable that it tries to be. Characters are stereotypical, particularly the girls. But good, cute entertainment.

Terry O'Brien

SITTING DUCKS directed by Henry Jaglom

THIS FILM has made \$2m. in America, but despite PR hype and chic pretensions under a commercial veneer, it is sour. It relies on the interaction of two eccentric argumenative and balding boys of the Mafia - Zeke Norman and Michael Emil, hyped as the new Laurel and Hardy or Abbot and Costello. They aren't. They are very specific unpleasant characters - the only thing they care about more than sex, money and vitamins is themselves.

The film is designed to appeal to the Woody Allen market. But the characters lack Allen's saving grace - self mockery. This is deliberate. It compellingly exposes American manners for criticism.

I didn't find the film much of a comedy. All the same, it's worth seeing as a salutary reminder of the flaws in 'our defenders'.

Paul Chapman.

Books

WHO'S WATCHING YOU? by Crispin Aubrey. Pelican £1.10

AT LAST the 1978 show. In what must be the slowest instant paperback of all time, ABC secrets trial defendant Crispin Aubrey has put together a brief and straightforward account of the amazing events of 1976-78 around the deportations of American journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball, the ABC trial itself and *The Leveller's* famous Colonel B contempt case. Those were the days when investigative radical journalism was a great left cause, when not only did people demonstrate about such

things as freedom of information and 'Open Government' (whatever that might be) but the state bothered to suppress it. Crispin has added more of the investigative material on phone-tapping, mail opening and general surveillance of radical activity from such operators as fellow defendant Duncan Campbell. So there's nothing new for people who've been following these matters in the left press, but as a Pelican it will of course... The other side of this kind of popularisation, of course, is that it is presented without the excitement or commitment that was actually generated at the time. Crispin gives space to people like union leaders and MP's who were dragged into support, but writes off demos and events like the ultra-subversive 'picket-nic' outside the top secret Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham in one paragraph. Probably couldn't be helped but it does read rather like pop history (and who even thinks about SIGNIT in 1981?) rather than part of the struggle now.

Tim Gopsill

THE SECURITY SERVICES AND THE STATE 1980 compiled by State Research FOR THE last three years State Research have published a compilation of their bi-monthly bulletin. Added to the wealth of information contained therein is an introduction by a notable lefty, this year Tony Benn, and an index.

The subjects covered range from the use of Troops or Police in strikes, jury vetting, telephone tapping, the links between CIA backed organizations and the right wing of the British labour movement, to official British support for US cold war policies in Asia. If you find the £10 price tag prohibitive, and consider Tony Benn and an Index irrelevant, take heart, the bulletins can be purchased from State Research, 9 Poland Street, London WC1, price 60p.

Dan Re'em

CLASS STRUGGLES IN SOUTH LONDON 1850-1900. Dave Russell and Mike Tichlar. Southwark-Lambeth History Workshop, 58 Fearnley House, Vestry Rd, London SE5. £1.10. DRAWING LARGELY on nineteenth century newspaper accounts, the authors show the gulf between rich and poor in those days, graphically displayed in the living conditions of the polluted and cholera-ridden corner of Bermondsey known as Jacob's Island. But they also point out the gap between the 'aristocrats of labour' (skilled men with regular, well paid work) and the rest of the population.

We are shown the struggles of the really poor, such as the two Southwark shirtmakers who applied to a magistrate against a firm who demanded a deposit when giving out work paid only a penny a shirt, and refused to return the deposit alleging that some work was no good.

The flavour and detail of nineteenth century journalism gives extra realism; these glimpses of the past stir heart and indignation.

Anna Davin

Books

Resist, explain

Famous anarchist adventurer and favourite target for the state Stuart Christie is now settled quietly on a Scottish island as a publisher. He's just brought out an autobiography, 'The Christie Papers' (published by his Cienfuegos Press), and Tim Gopsill has actually read it.



Stuart Christie in Madrid, after his arrest

THE BLURB on the back of this book has *The Leveller* commending the author as 'Britain's best known anarchist'. As far as I know this is *The Leveller's* debut on a book cover, so we won't complain that we've been misquoted — on page 19 of issue 40 Christie was described as *probably* Britain's best-known anarchist — nor that neither version is among our most penetrating pronouncements. Christie had enough trouble getting the thing out at all, with the original commissioning publisher (Michael Joseph) suddenly cancelling it, and the accolade is a good start to consider his strange position in left politics.

He sits outside the state, on a small island remote even in Orkney, where there are no police, except for occasional visits that throw the community into chaos and disorder. There is no crime. The local media treat him fairly, reviewing his books and interviewing him without the hysteria that has always misinformed his treatment in the national press. Economically he and his family group are as independent as you can get, producing their own food and drink. How they were steadily forced into this semi-exile is clearly set out in this book, which is a simple narrative autobiography and it raises the question: is this the only way an anarchist can live in Britain, and if so, what about the rest of us? The harassment and vilification, frame-ups and imprisonment that Christie has faced would be unbelievable if they weren't chronicled in such an understated way, but more importantly, they bore no relation at all to what he or anyone else was actually doing. The state decides to get its opponents, and then looks round for likely candidates for its stupid and venal policemen to pursue. Well Stuart Christie did walk into it, but that just made it easier for them. And the other question that sometimes creeps into the mind — 'if he goes round announcing himself as an enemy of the state how can he really complain when it treats him as such?' — is easily answered, for he doesn't complain. He explains, and he resists.

And one reason why semi-exile is right is because that's the only way he can do his explaining. Anarchists who're active can't get their message through the media machine. When Christie was released from prison in Spain after his part in the abortive attempt on Franco's 'life', and all the press wanted to talk to him, he found they didn't at all want to hear what he had to say, but wanted to put *him* into the story they'd

young upper-class men. The simple fact is that working-class women are driven to prostitution for lack of anything better (or anything at all in the present job climate).

Furthermore a class analysis precisely locates the position of the liberalised social work community, i.e. soft-cops. Committed as people to easing the lot of their clients, they maintain the institutions, such as Christian marriage, which, arguably, enslave, and cause prostitution. Louise works within the system and is reprimanded as soon as the prostitutes' action group begins to make headway. The social services are presented as a buffer to absorb criticism, Parliament a bastion of male domination, only approachable by soft liberal means, like petitions.

PROS (Programme for the Reform of the Law on Soliciting) wants decriminalisation of prostitution, through the repeal of the 1959 Street Offences Act. This law, whereby proposing sex to a man is made criminal, is open to the same abuse as the SUS laws: a policeman's word secures conviction.

I asked the PROS national coordinator, Louise Webb, about the apparent authenticity of the film: "It captures the essence of what streetwalkers' lives are like, and that social mobility is as difficult as anywhere else... we hope that people will warm to

decided on anyway. So he resolved, effectively, to stop and start again at a level he could control, and if that's very small, that's not his fault; Christie is not an anarchist leader, because he wouldn't want to lead, and there wouldn't be many to follow if he did.

Of course the organised left, scathingly treated in *The Christie Papers*, will say he has no relationship with the working class or their struggle. Quite right — though they aren't so far ahead of him. The complete lack of a syndicalist element in British labour is probably — there's that *Leveller* word again — the most serious problem in British politics. It is serious because no-one bothers about it. And what is Stuart Christie supposed to do? 'Enter' the Labour Party? No thank you. He's been through all that, it's in his book.

In any case, his anarchism has always been internationalist, so it doesn't really matter where he is. And it's always been his international contacts, and the collaboration of European police forces against Christie and the Black Cross network, that have brought the heaviest shit from the state. It's all in the book, some almost amazing things about the links between the political police forces of fascist Spain and Scotland Yard, and these stories are loaded with extraordinary ironies: how it was Spain's need for good publicity to attract British tourists that got him released, how much more open and hospitable Franco's prisons were than Britain's are now, and how the first suggestion he should assassinate Franco came in a question from Malcolm Muggeridge on a BBC2 talk show.

Christie was one of the Angry Brigade defendants in 1971. Totally trumped up, it goes without saying. The book has by far the best account of that episode yet published. For while setting out the absolutely monstrous conduct of the police and the judges it is written without malice towards them or glorification of the accused. This could be what infuriates much of the left most about Christie: his refusal as 'Britain's best-known anarchist' to adopt a vanguardist or heroic role (also, he has a lot of fun). He has to, and we have to, resist a personality cult around him. He isn't a leader in exile on Sanday, awaiting his hour, because it won't come and no-one pretends it will. If the British working class and the left refuse to open their heads to libertarian ideas, it's they who'll suffer, and they can't complain if the state treats them like shit. But Christie's all right where he is. ○

the Sandra character which humanises us. When the film opens we hope people will go to see it."

So do I. Garnett's TV productions have shone next to most TV drama. Their implicit class analyses have largely banished them to obscure late night slots on BBC 2. *Prostitute* would not be shown on TV. I suspect that despite it being home product it will be virtually ignored by the national press, and receive only limited screening, on the grounds of non-commerciality. Censorship by omission.

Prostitute is ambitious, informed, and good cinema belying the notion that Brits can't make pictures, just that the worst are most heavily promoted.

T.G.: "We wanted to make it clear as film makers that we are aware of the ambiguities between media people and other workers investigated, used, shown in a film; that we are involved in these moral and political positions. The way workers are treated by film and TV is despicable, leaving them high and dry after media people have taken out what they want. They move into a strike, say, to get titbits to fit their preconceived notions."

RECOMMENDED. ○

(See *Leveller* No. 37 for Tricia Dearden's discussion of prostitution)

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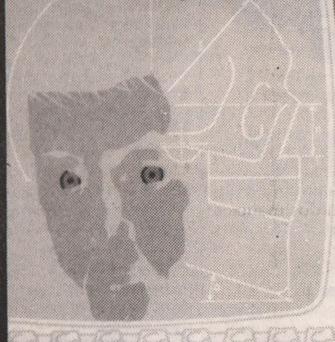
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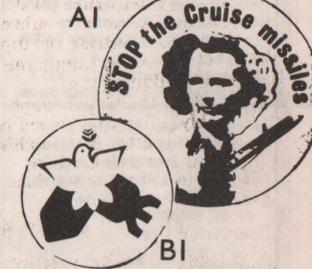
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