

THE MOLE

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TAKING BRIGHTON FOR A RIDE

Next time you have to wait ten minutes for a bus, don't complain to the conductor: it won't be his fault if the bus in front has been cancelled because of staff shortage or if he's been delayed by traffic jams or an accident. And next time the fares go up and the blame is put on increased wages, remember that the busman's pay has increased by only fifty per cent over the last twenty years, against an average rise in industry of 100 per cent. Remember also, if you've just staggered out of bed and are on your way to work, that the bus crew who take you there probably got up four hours earlier and may well be working without a break for another five hours or more, and are, just as much as the passenger, victims of the decline in public transport that has taken place since the war.

ONE OF THE BEST

In fact, Brighton has one of the best bus services in the country, through a peculiar set of circumstances. Southdown Motor Services, a private company until nationalisation in late 1968, is one of the oldest and most respected bus companies in Brighton. They have prospered because of the exceptionally good service they have been able to provide, which has enabled them to re-

sist more than most bus operators the drift to private transport. Brighton, Hove and District, state-owned since 1948, and Brighton Corporation have done well because their system of working makes for maximum productivity from their road staff. The healthy financial state of Brighton's buses has enabled good services to be run, keeping passengers who in most other parts of the country have long since despaired of public transport and would rather go to the expense of running a car and suffer parking problems than pay high prices for buses that very often just do not turn up.

STAFF WORKED TO LIMIT

Brighton, Hove and District, which runs most of the red buses in the town, is one of the richest undertakings in the country. They have reached this enviable position because their staff are worked to the limit, and often beyond it, to rake in money for the company. Crews on BH&D have a basic pay week of forty hours, but their duties are so arranged that they work an average of about 52 hours over a six-day week. Each weekday duty lasts nine hours or more, and they are worked "straight through", that is without a meal break. The law says that after/contd. on page 4

show trial

LAST THURSDAY BRIGHTON GOT ITS FIRST TASTE OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED PHENOMENA KNOWN AS LAW AND ORDER.

26 year old Dave Woodthorpe was jailed for 3 months for "using insulting words in a public place likely to cause a breach of the peace"...after much provocation he had called a policeman, one Inspector Roberts, a "little Hitler".

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

More important than the severity of the sentence was the alarming nature of the hearing. The Court seemed to be more concerned with Woodthorpe's political affiliations than his alleged crime. He had asked to affirm, to avoid the hypocrisy of taking the oath. So the magistrate demanded whether he was a Communist, & on his admission of such persuasions questioned him on his belief in "law and order".

Woodthorpe responded by asking for a definition of "law and order"; the prosecution retorted with "are you unintelligent as well as a Communist". He therefore had to agree that he did believe in law and order, despite the court's biased interpretation of justice and the law.

LAW AND ORDER

The bias is acknowledged by some sections of the Establishment sympathetic to the left. It is easily recognisable in recent police action, charges and sentences both locally and nationally. These are the warning shots of a puritanical drive against the political and moral "permissive society".



DID YOU CALL ME OFFICER?

This was shown up earlier this year, during a police investigation of harassment. The complainant was told by an 'independent' Enquiry Officer that as a communist he must expect this sort of thing.

The outcome of Woodthorpe's appeal must be awaited with interest, but the expectation of political justice is more of a memory than a tradition.

HEADMASTERS GO WILD

THE IDEA THAT SCHOOLKIDS MIGHT GAIN ANY CONTROL over their own lives makes their headmasters go wild. Take what has happened in Brighton recently.....

As reported in the last Mole, schools in the area were leafletted to advertise a meeting where Schools Action Union members would speak at the College of Education. The reaction of the various authorities was probably unsurpassed by that of the staff of one school: a secondary near the college.

MAOIST ROCK THROWERS

On the afternoon of the leafletting concern was expressed that people with such 'seditious' ideas should be joining the teaching profession. After a brief discussion the staff concluded almost unanimously that those involved were part of "an international Maoist" conspiracy. One of the older staff let her imagination run riot... muttering about "links with rock-throwing students in the Middle East." No-one disagreed. The head announced that he had written to the Principal of the College of Education warning him to keep a tighter control over his students: if such things happened in the future, the school would stop taking students from the College for their Teaching Practice.

LETTER

Meanwhile in the College of Ed. the students union executive seems determined to do the principals dirty work for him. After

buy now pay later

IT IS UNDERSTOOD that Horace Cutler's (Chairman of the GLC Housing Cttee.) new housing plan fell on sympathetic ears in Brighton Council.

The plan, which might at first appear to be rather benevolent, is in fact a financial life-saver as far as Cutler and his associates are concerned. They are typical of the breed of financial morons sitting on local councils who have accumulated, nationally, a debt of over £6,000 million.

COUNCIL MONEY LENDERS

The plan aims to give every newly wed married couple a £1,000 loan towards the cost of a house. The Council would then let the couple have a mortgage on a Council-owned house. But what about the £1000? It will be lent "invisibly" at a very high interest rate, leading to a complete reversal of the present system of indirect subsidy. The Council would become the moneylender, switching the debt to the mortgagees, who would have been able to rent a Council house anyway.

Most new accommodation would come under this scheme, and it is even

the front page article in the last MOLE they sent us a letter (too long for printing), copies of which they have pinned on the college noticeboards. It accuses MOLE of everything from "misrepresentation" to "near-libellous" remarks...

In fact there was one error in our article. The principal was, it appears, not there on the day in question. Instead, the dirty work was done by the Vice-Principal, a Mr. Ernest Ryman. The letter claims:

- 1) that the meeting was "at no time banned"...if you look at the Union minutes you will see that it was banned...though the ban was lifted after we went to press.
- 2) that the meeting was "in no way a recruiting drive" for the SAU. As we made clear it was not organized by the SAU. But the people who organized it, & they should know, said the purpose was to offer a platform to SAU speakers.
- 3) we stated that the Principal "has already boasted to some students that he has files on them containing details of their political and social activities, and kept separate from the main administration files". The letter says this is untrue. However - the executive members know people to whom the Principal has said this. They seem amazingly ignorant of what goes on in the College.

UNION LOYALTIES

One small factual error - accusing the Principal instead of the Vice-Principal - called forth a torrent of abuse: it seems that the Union Executive thinks its job is to police the students for the Principal. We'd like to remind them that their job is to stand up to him on behalf of the students who elect them...

possible to envisage a situation where the old council tenants would be forced out under the guise of the scheme just to take over the Council's debts.

Such a plan cannot fail to please members of the right who would dearly love to see the end of all publicly subsidised housing projects. A similar plan was outlined in a recent book by Enoch Powell!

RISING DEBTS

Members of Brighton Council are beginning to show alarm at the rising debts of the Housing Department (£1,294,880 for 1969). They have also made it quite clear that they do not intend to meet the paltry govt. requirements in their building programme. Too few houses are being built, and as many as possible are being sold off (2,000 in 1969).

If Cutler is allowed to float his scheme there is no doubt that Brighton, ever reluctant to lead in reformist measures, will be the first to initiate this reactionary plan.

CVA; ALL OUT!

THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE, as far as the Argus was concerned, came with a strike at number 2 factory (Hollingbury) a few weeks ago. The men staged a one day strike in support of a demand for a 2/- an hour increase WITH NO STRINGS. The management offered 6d now and a further 6d later in the year. As a fourpenny increase was already pending, the actual offer was, in fact, only 8d...and that to be granted on the condition that the men accept a productivity deal. (They had already threatened action if Time and Motion men were allowed onto the shop floor.) Unfortunately, the token strike failed to get the support of the other two factories in Brighton.

The men returned to work on the basis of a "work to rule" which resulted last week in the management laying off 17 foundry workers. A work to rule means that the men do no more hours, or work, than has been agreed formally upon by the unions and management; and yet Kearney & Trecker's bosses found (sic) such rules inadequate in keeping the place going. A fact that shows clearly the approach that management has to such agreements. The laying off precipitated another strike, and this time it had

the support of all three factories. At a mass meeting last Sunday the men decided BY BALLOT (we shall return to this) to return to work while negotiations were taking place. The vote was 69% in favour of a return to work and 31% for continuing the strike indefinitely.

NEGOTIATIONS

The foundry workers are going back to work on the same work to rule basis. So there is a very strong likelihood that the same will happen again. Also the role played by the two AEF local officials, Parkes and Prior, suggests that any negotiated settlement will not be to the liking of the men (it took brother Prior 18 months to gain an increase for the men last time). It is quite clear that they are attempting to cool the strikers out (Prior actually appealed to them to go back because they were working him too hard) and drag the issue out in order to get away with a comfortable settlement, from their own point of view - which means less than 2/- an hour for the men, and probably a productivity deal to boot.

The use of the ballot vote is what the Tories are always pushing for. And they are wise to

do so; for it means that the solidarity of a strike is shattered. A secret ballot isolates workers in their own deep felt sense of insecurity. It is what lazy right wing trade union officials like Prior and Parkes rely on (see previous issues for references to the latter's insidious role in local struggles).

EMPLOYERS OFFENSIVE

A productivity deal at Kearney will not only mean that more work will be screwed out of the men, but might lead to victimisation by the management. The Engineering Employers Federation has urged the management to be hard on the minority group of "anarchists and international socialists" (the 31% who voted to continue the strike are a pretty big minority). Such deals constitute an ideological offensive on the power of shop floor democracy. They seek to render shop stewards powerless by enforcing long term agreements on workers and establishing the principle that the management can shift men from one place to another...and then sack them with very little resistance. This has dangerous implications for the militants at K & T, for it seems almost certain that the bosses will try and split them up into different shops and then victimise them.

schools paper

"All Hell is going to break loose" ...that's the reaction the organizers of a new schools paper expect from Brighton "education" authorities.

The paper will come out in May, and the first few issues will be given away outside schools. There will be articles written by school kids and the paper will be edited at first by non-school students, although the intention is to make it a completely school-student run and controlled paper as soon as possible.

FREE THE SCHOOLS

The aim is to fight for liberalizing the schools, the setting up of school councils, and an all-out campaign against repressive discipline, especially corporal punishment. There will be material by "libertarian teachers" and hopefully from the French CALs (Comités d'Action Lycéens - the French school students' union).

VICTIMISATION

The organizers expect the school authorities to continue in the vein of their performance over the recent College of Education meeting. They will try to intimidate people giving out the paper with threats of legal action (which is a ludicrous idea) and doubtless launch a witch-hunt to try to find the school students who contribute. If these sorts of things do happen we must be ready to stop any victimisation that occurs.

NOTICE

MOLEMAN SENDS HIS APOLOGIES FOR NOT APPEARING THIS WEEK - HE IS STILL RECOVERING FROM HAVING READ A COPY OF 'RED MOLE'.

racist to be reported

Mrs. Mary Howarth, vice-chairman of the Immigration Control Association is to be reported to the Race Relations Board. This came after a meeting of the Sussex Forum recently, when she claimed that the Race Relations Act had given immigrants 'the priorities of conquerors for no other reason than that they are black' and other remarks which clearly qualify as incitement to racial hatred. Whether the Race Relations Board will do anything is of course another question, since it seems to have become noticeably moribund in this respect.

MANY PEOPLE

needed to help produce, lay-out and sell the Mole. Come along anytime, main meeting on Sunday pm. IBM machine available for hiring from the Mole office 5/- an hour, bring a tape.

PHILHARMONIC LEFT OUT

One notable absence from the concert programme of this year's Brighton Festival, is the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra. It could be just another chapter in the Ian Hunter show. The Orchestra has just concluded a successful 69/70 season, with 90% capacity audiences which would seem to indicate a wide popularity in Brighton. The way in which the Orchestra were left out this year is part of the exclusive way in which the Festival Committee go about creating their programme. The chairman of the Philharmonics said a week ago:

"I am a co-opted member of the committee but by the time I went to meetings the programme had been decided". Instead a newly formed band..the Brighton Victoria Orchestra are to play. Our attempts to discover their agency met with failure as Harold Holt Ltd. (chairman of which is artistic director of the festival..Ian Hunter) have suddenly gone ex-directory.

There has been very little attempt to involve artists/musicians/poets of Brighton at the level of programming, though entries for the fringe festival are still valid. The only concession to any alternative form of culture is the so called Pop Festival at the B.F.T. where the only worthwhile film will be Godard's 'One Plus One' with the Rolling Stones, despite the proliferation of short films in the last two years.

'and for all this, the busman gets a b

contd from front pge./5½ hours, a bus driver must take a half-hour rest, but there is a loophole; the minutes spent at each end of the route after each journey are counted towards that half hour. But five or six minutes every hour do not allow the driver to relax properly from the strain of driving, and on the busiest days, when the driver most needs a break, he is probably running several minutes late anyway, and so loses those vital minutes. The strain of heavy driving through overcrowded streets with constant stopping and starting and the ever-present danger of an accident for hours on end is hard for most car drivers to imagine. Every few seconds the driver must make what could be a vital decision - whether or not to pass this vehicle, where to pull in on a bus stop crowded with parked cars, whether to stop suddenly if a passenger rings the bell late for a request stop (the driver can't see the car right behind him). And on top of the mental strain, hard physical work is involved.

Despite advances in design, most buses still have manual gears and, unlike many cars, non-power-assisted steering, and poor maintenance makes the drivers' working conditions even worse. The conductor's job, too, can at times become almost unbearable. On a shopping day, or in the summer, after

eight hours of almost non-stop work on a swaying, noisy bus, faced with constant complaints and deliberately awkward customers, there comes a time when the conductor has to be almost superhuman to avoid reacting violently to the person who unloads a handful of pennies with a look of triumph or makes a scene over some imagined injustice (But I always pay 4d...").

NO DINNER

It's no wonder that it is unusual for a new recruit to stick the job for more than a few months, especially when he realises that shift work is a mixed blessing. Most bus firms have three types of shift: early, middle and late, but because of their "straight through" system, BH&D have only two, early and late. One week the busman has to arrange his life to get up at four or five every morning, and the next week he has to work until late every night. And he rarely makes it home for Sunday dinner, which is the biggest meal of the week for most working class families. Each week the busman's day off is advanced by one day, which means that he gets one Sunday off every seven weeks.

There are other, more subtle ways in which the govt. affects the working lives of bus drivers. This

business is...

"O.R. AND ETHICS ARE INCOMPATIBLE" So said Professor Patrick Rivett, boss of the University's controversial new Operational Research course. If you want to know how the universities are being taken over even more directly by big business, just watch the antics of our Patrick.

The course is part of "The Universities of Lancaster and Sussex Operational Research Institute". Half your time is spent doing research for private companies who pay the Institute. The average contract is for £4,500. On this the students are costed (not paid) at £5 a day, the faculty at £30 a day.

JUST PROFIT

The Institute is not a research institute, it is a company, founded to make money. Its ten directors include from each university: the Vice-Chancellor, a nominee of Senate, of Council, one professor and the course chairman.

Some results of the research are not publishable for anything up to five years. This, because some research would be valueless if it was published: for example one contract is for the Guthrie Corporation (owners of rubber and palm oil in Malaya) on the best time to release their products on the market. Obviously, if their competitors knew this, the information would be worthless. The money goes to faculty, students and the university, but mostly to the few key faculty members in on the deal.

Students are used as cheap labour. Two are being paid for out of the course, merely because they did not apply for their normal grants in time; the others only get an extra £50. At least one contract was actually sold to the firm as the cheapest possible way of getting them the information wanted.

So on the campus there is no pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, or for public benefit, but simply as a business operation. The setting up of the O.R. course has led to a whole series of deceptions. For example, Professor Rivett claimed at a student meeting: "No secrets are involved"...Yet Trevor Williams, the senior lecturer on the course, told students in a lecture that project work was confidential.

The authorities have also denied that contracts are involved. OK, there are no actual legal contracts, but the effect is the same: i.e. money is paid for specific results. In an explanatory memo to students Rivett described the Institute as undertaking "contractual research", which presumably means contractual research...

The decision to set up the company has never been approved by the Applied Science School. West, the dean, claimed he knows nothing about the secret research and nothing about a private company....so either he's lying or the normal channels have been avoided.

TEACHING SUFFERS

If you join O.R., then, either as a student or faculty- you're no longer at university- you're in business. Which means you keep your mouth shut and do what you are told. To quote Patrick again: "We're giving you an extra £50. This is not a free hand-out. ...we expect you to get your hair cut and look smart and tidy. In doing this course you've opted for Mammon."

When big business comes to campus teaching and research take second place to money-making. Rivett sent a memo to his staff saying he was disappointed that none of them had submitted research projects for

the Wolfson foundation to support...faculty were heard to mutter they didn't have time for research these days. Trevor Williams comes back from four weeks in S. Africa (doing consultancy work for Rand Mining Corporation no doubt) to cancel two lectures because of "a management committee meeting" of the Institute.

When students on the course started to get worried about what was going on the authorities panicked. One day after Briggs had been challenged on O.R., he phoned up Rivett to get the Course Administration Officer to make all faculty lock their doors, filing cabinets etc. The next Sunday, Rivett was seen secretly carting papers away from his office. On the Monday, March 9th there was an Emergency Union Meeting....a mere ten minutes after an O.R. student spoke, a proctor was trying to phone the course chairman to give him the story. In other words, they're frightened.

THE CHOICE

Why? The O.R. scandal makes a mockery of the professed "liberal" idea of a university. Once secret contractual research is allowed on campus the teaching staff involved immediately have to decide whether to be teachers or to be businessmen, the students whether to be genuine researchers or merely cheap labour.

The university is used by big business to get its research done cheap, and anyone who doesn't like this must shut up....so even the pseudo-democratic decision-making processes of the university are subverted, the students and junior faculty are manipulated.

Big business must not be allowed to dominate the university in so direct a way. We demand:
1. All research in the university to be immediately publishable.
2. No private companies to be allowed on campus.

Basic rate of less than £15 a week



The queues get longer.....

month, two new laws came into force. One requires for the first time that lorry drivers will have to take a special test - fee ten guineas - in order to obtain the new Heavy Goods driving licence. This will make it much more difficult to switch from bus to lorry driving, a practice which causes acute staff shortages whenever major construction work starts near a big town.

The second law will control drivers' working hours. When Barbara Castle announced the new act two yrs ago, she said that the government were "concerned" about the excessive hours worked by bus and lorry drivers, and the act would be designed to lessen the danger of accidents caused by fatigue. The law was to apply to both types of driver, and its main effects would be to limit driving to 60 hours a week (against 77 under existing law) and enforce drivers to take a day off every week, and to cut the daily limit.

FALSE CONCERN

Ever since the original announcement, bus company managements have waged a running battle to prevent their drivers' hours being reduced. Three weeks before the act came into force, the Ministry of Transport announced that certain sections would not apply to bus drivers. In fact, in most important respects, there will be practically no change in the maximum hours for bus drivers, although lorry drivers' hours have been cut drastically. So much for the government's "concern" over excessive work by drivers.

The combination of the two new laws will have a far-reaching effect on drivers. The reduction in lorry drivers' hours will cut their overtime earnings. But there will still be plenty of overtime on the buses, so lorry drivers can be expected to switch to bus work. The new 44-ton trucks that are to be allowed onto the road this year will increase the productivity of lorry drivers by over 100%, so fewer will be needed anyway. But even if there is a shortage of lorry drivers, it will be much more difficult for bus drivers to change over, because of the expensive test they will have to take in order to get a Heavy Goods licence, and the difficulty of borrowing a ten-tonner for three or four hours to take the test in.

And for all this, the busman gets a basic rate of less than £15 a week - before tax. It's this that makes overtime essential, and it's overtime more than anything else that makes the bus worker's life a hard one. On Southdown, the pace is a little easier. Southdown works on a three-shift system, and the crews work an actual, as opposed to an imaginary, forty hour week. The duties are an average 6½ hours long, and include a minimum half-hour break. But for the married man, working a flat week means taking home less than £13, and if the rent is to be paid and the kids fed, overtime is a must - if its available.

In the summer, when many jobs are available, there is a permanent staffing crisis on the buses, and most men work seven days a week, ten or twelve hrs a day. Overtime for drivers is limited by law, but conductors work as long as they like, provided they have the endurance. So in the summer, when most people are relaxing a little and enjoying good weather, the busman is working every hour that he can to put some money by for the winter, when overtime is often hard to come by.

The Brighton bus companies experience severe staffing difficulties only in the summer, but in most places, where jobs are not seasonal, finding people to do the job is an all-year-round problem. In the worst-affected areas, London and the provincial cities, this has meant at times that up to a third of scheduled journeys are not run because there is simply no driver or conductor to do the job.

FINAL BLOW

It was partly in an attempt to answer the problem that one-man buses have been widely introduced over the last few years, but if the managements thought they had found an easy solution, they have been quickly disillusioned. The one-man buses have had such a bad effect on services, especially in towns, that passengers have been driven away faster than ever before, and the extra work thrown on drivers has caused more to leave bus work and made recruitment more difficult. But despite the fact that the one-man buses may well prove to be the final blow to the bus industry, their spread has been actively encouraged by the government. In order to speed the process, the Ministry of Transport pays a grant of 25% of the cost of a new bus - provided it is suitable for one-man operation. As a result, all buses now built in Britain are of this type. Another direct inducement to "going one-man" is Selective Employment, which of course is halved when you make one man do the work of two.

With lorry drivers' overtime reduced, they will be more dependent on the basic wage, which is bound to go up. With busmen, as ever, relying on overtime to live, pressure to improve their pay will be reduced. So the busman will be beaten again.

WHO PAYS?

In terms of national resources, it is insane to allow public transport to run down almost to the point of no return. It costs the country many thousands of millions of pounds a year to build roads, make cars, sell petrol. A Ministry of Transport report in 1967 estimated the cost to the country of traffic congestion at over £1,000 millions annually. The importing of oil, most of which is used for private cars, affects the balance of payments to a phenomenal extent. The reconstruction of our towns and cities, many of which have been virtually destroyed by the volume of traffic which grows at a frightening rate each year, is paid for with the destruction of communities as well as countless amounts of money. Why then do we allow the process to continue? Because making cars makes money for the people who own BLMC and Ford and Rootes. Because selling petrol to the motorist makes men millionaires. Because building roads makes big profits. Because tearing down our town centres keeps the property companies and the financial leeches in caviare. AND WHO PAYS? WE DO.

It is ironic that the Americans seem at last to have learnt some of these truths. Throughout the US, city bosses are waking up to the fact that the private car is destroying urban life. In San Francisco they are building a new underground railway network. Los Angeles is investing in a new urban transit system. In Britain we still have time to rescue public transport from destruction, but the ultimate solution can come only in the context of a new society, a society in which greed and private profit is not the motive of production.

(Written by a Brighton Busman)

FANCY THAT OF LONDON

Churchill Sq. Brighton

FOR CHEAP POSTERS, RECORDS, GIFTS & GEAR

In the next issue MOLE examines how Brighton busmen are beginning to fight back.

WOMEN'S WEEKEND AT OXFORD



WOMEN DEBATING IN THE OXFORD UNION

Publicity for the Women's Weekend at Oxford (Feb. 27th, 28th & Mar. 1st) received an overwhelming response; it was intended originally to be a small discussion weekend on "Women's Liberation" for about 100 people at Ruskin College, Oxford. In fact, 500 women converged on the college with men and kids in tow, the kids spending a weekend in a creche run by the men.

EXISTING GROUPS

We began on Friday evening with a session closed to men - a strange atmosphere - at which existing women's groups gave short accounts of their activities. These included, amongst others, the Women's Liberation Workshops, discussion groups, mainly in London which meet regularly and take turns at producing a women's paper called "The Shrew"; Gingerbread, a new organisation formed to put single mothers in touch with each other; NJACWER (National Joint Action Campaign for Women's Equal Rights); a group of militant women in Nottingham who produce a paper called "Socialist Woman", and a group in Paris who run creches that actually encourage parent participation, much to the disgust of the French authorities. The composition of the meeting became clearer as each group gave its line - students, housewives, workers - with the new left well represented.

There was an abortive discussion on whether or not the Press should be excluded (Mary Holland of the "Observer" was present and wrote a condescending report in Sunday's paper which managed to miss the point of the conference entirely) and permission was given for Angry Arts to make a film of the weekend for women to use as they wanted.

On Saturday the meeting moved to the large, draughty and uncomfortable Oxford Union, "where Prime Ministers are born -----". Two sessions were held, entitled "The Social Role of Women" and "Women and the Economy", each based on 3 or 4 papers given by women who had done research into topics such as "Changing Patterns of Delinquency Amongst Women" and "Women's Role in Industrial Militancy and the

Trade Unions". Discussion followed each paper but tended to be divorced from the subject matter which, though interesting and generally well presented, may have been too detailed and academic for such a large meeting.

LEVEL OF DISCUSSION

The standard of individual contributions was high, and many women showed a real understanding of the issues involved without needing to resort to jargon or sweeping generalisations; this put paid to those revolutionary Socialists (mainly men) who were very sceptical about the level of discussion that could be reached amongst women, fearing that it would all be "apolitical gossip and bitching". But it was noticeable that most of the women who spoke were politically experienced, confident of their own positions and used to speaking with a microphone at meetings. Sadly, though inevitably, this must have had the effect of alienating individual women who had come to the conference alone and unsure of themselves, hoping to work things out over the weekend.

REFORM AND REVOLUTION

Sunday morning followed the same pattern with a session on "Women and Revolution" which included some excellent illustrations of the way in which women's movements have been written out of history by male historians! Then, in the afternoon, another closed session to discuss future strategy. Proposals to set up national and regional co-ordinating committees were accepted, with a view to holding regional conferences in three months and another national conference in six months.

The Women's Liberation movement has the potential to provide a huge impetus to the Socialist movement as a whole. That it is a movement rather than a national organisation must be stressed; it is now up to each group to work from within localised situations to change the position of women under capitalism, and ultimately to co-ordinate with other groups at a national level and to change society.

At the conference the sharp division between reformism and revolution was exposed: social work or politics? The expected role of women in this society, their enchainment to the family, their passivity created and perpetuated through upbringing and education, limits their vision and enhances their tendency, and need, to do something practical, to do something now. What they actually do remains to be seen, but nothing should be undertaken without a clear idea of where the action is leading and how it will further the revolutionary cause.

feature in next issue:- WOMEN, EQUAL PAY

record review

BACK IN THE MID SIXTIES BOB DYLAN SANG ON "VISIONS OF JOHANNA": "The country music station is playing soft/But there really isn't anything to turn off." This was in a way prophetic of the turn towards the country that Dylan and many other singers were to take a few years later, as the mists cleared from the psychedelic explosions of 1967.

Some of it was a return to rock as one of its main sources. Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Ronnie Hawkins all came out of country music into rock and went back when the boom was over. There's an openness of delivery in records like Jerry Lee's "Great Balls of Fire" that contrasts strongly with the heavy, brooding quality of Elvis's early songs, which owed more to black singing styles.

Creedence Clearwater Revival are unique among the groups involved in country-flavoured rock music, because (unlike the Byrds and all those other city musicians) they've always been in the South. Taking

in what filtered through from the East and West Coasts, but always integrating it into a style forged in the context of Southern small towns, like the ones Fonda and Hopper pass through in Easy Rider. Their playing and singing has a tightness and economy which I haven't heard anywhere since Buddy Holly or the first Beatles LP.

The city boys in the country, on the other hand, like the Band and the Byrds, get a tight sound through a perfect co-ordination of a whole complex of instruments and voices. They come on together like the mechanism of a really good pocket-watch.

Joe South is another singer formed by country music whose songs reach beyond it. He's got a new single, "Walk A Mile In My Shoes" just out, in which the tension between the restraint of the words and voice and the force of feeling is even more powerful than on "Games People Play". South's voice is somewhere between the cragginess of Johnny Cash and the blandness of Glen Campbell, but he has that straight-forward manner that seems to be common to all country singers. Try and hear his record sometime.

D.L.



This is the salvation which they bring 29.6.1938

ARTIST AGAINST FASCISM

JOHN
HEARTFIELD

JOHN HEARTFIELD (1891-1968) was born Helmut Herzfeld in Germany and changed his name in 1914 in protest against anti-English feeling in Germany. In 1915 he met George Grosz (the great satiriser of the pre-war German ruling class in the '20s & '30s). Considering him the only artist of worth Heartfield joined him in the early absurdist, anti-bourgeois (but negativist and nihilist) art movement, Dada. The two effectively discovered a new art form, photomontage (the re-arrangement and juxtaposition of photographs, words etc.) that Heartfield was to develop to the highest sophistication.

david mercer LINKS WITHOUT A CHAIN

OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS David Mercer, self-professed (confessed?) Trotskyist, has probably had more of his plays produced on television than any other modern dramatist. Undoubtedly one of the major factors contributing to that success is the playwright's own superb understanding of the media's dramatic potential. The Generations - first broadcast in 1963 - clearly established the break with the existing tradition of TV drama; that of simply placing a camera in the stalls and letting the actors get on with it.

His latest effort, THE CELLAR AND THE ALMOND TREE, like many of its predecessors (THE PARACHUTE: LETS MURDER VIVALDI: ON THE EVE OF THE CELEBRATION) contain complex time manoeuvres and acrobatic jumps in location. Its theme deals with the individual destinies of two people in an unnamed east European country shortly after the Red Army had "established" Socialism. The one, a party official, is sent to obtain the keys of a wine cellar from an old aristocratic woman. By the use of time switches to their respective "formative" pasts Mercer makes the final conclusions inevitable. The woman refuses to come to terms with the "revolution" and escapes into the past. She is thus made socially irrelevant and therefore tolerated. The party official - a dedicated communist (though it is never made clear whether he is a Trotskyist or just a man with a conscience) - ends up in the same cell as the one which the Nazis threw him into.

The message is true enough. The despair of the corrupted revolution is reflected in the dilemma of the sincere communists (Trotsky himself is an example of that despair). Unfortunately, and this applies to practically all of Mercer's plays, the tragedy remains simply a reflection.

BIRTH OF A PRIVATE MAN

Individual characters are caught within an inextricable logic of events like Stalinism, or, as in THE PARACHUTE, Nazism. Because such dilemmas are internalised that particular individual's solution is usually his own death. History never appears on the scene - opposition to the barbarity of Stalinism is limited to the personal crisis of conscience and

Heartfield was the first to realise the potential that photography has as an art of and for the people. He was aware, moreover, that a photograph, alone and untouched can only present a particular event or illustrate a well-worn idea. The wise practice of photomontage can reveal deeper insights, illustrate newer ideas and bring out connections between events previously unrecognised, whilst the photographic basis lends authority and provides an accessibility not available to paintings or other, older, visual art-forms.

Through the collapse of the Weimar republic and the rise of the Third Reich (the thousand year reich which Heartfield represents as a house of cards) Heartfield illustrated and thereby illuminated, the analysis of society which explained the inevitability of 'war and corpses (as) the last hope of the rich' (the caption of one of his photomontages). To have ignored the imminent catastrophe of World War would have been to abdicate the artist's responsibility to the real world as Dada did. Heartfield however was only too aware of his historical position and his debt to society.

It was Heartfield's achievement that he broke through the nihilism of Dada and saw the correct place of art in society and developed a form that best served that place. Until his death, Heartfield continued working towards making an art-form for the working class to use and appreciate, an art that would help to abolish war as it aided the coming of the working class revolution.

He himself comments 'To work for this greatest triumph (the abolition of war by the people) has been the aim of...my artistic work since earliest youth'.

It is a tragedy that one of the best revolutionary artists of all time should be so much ignored when his message and technique are still as relevant. Go and see the exhibition of his work at the Arts Centre at the university on until April 5th.

G.H.

not put in the context of say, the Hungarian Revolution. The same is true of Mercer's other plays - those dealing with the problems of revolutionaries in Britain, where the characters are trapped between a disillusionment with Russia and an apathetic - let us say unsympathetic working class at home.

The working class never enters onto the stage of either history or the individual psychodramas of the characters. It exists as an idea somewhere outside the actual struggle, the moment of conscience, as a helpless abstraction. But that abstraction, once concretised, and, if you will, dramatised in the shape of the Liverpool dockers on strike (remember the BIG FLAME) or workers at Fords, is persistently offering its potential in the combined attack on Capitalism and Stalinism.

What pervades the work of David Mercer is this feeling of Helplessness in the face of historical events, a sense of the inevitability of failure for the revolutionary movement. This is re-inforced, stylistically, by Mercer's constant change in the time sequence.

IN TWO MINDS

So in a play like THE CELLAR AND THE ALMOND TREE we see a series of flash-backs tracing Volupin's ideological heresy (in the terms of the party bureaucracy) to before the war. What this does is to make his final end unavoidable. The present is seen as a very rigidly defined conclusion to what are only glimpses of the man's past. The components of that conclusion appear to be solely concerned with the realities of a Stalinist Dictatorship and not in an analysis of why that dictatorship came about.....as far as Mercer is concerned it just happened and people, sincere communists, are left with a narrow choice of either accepting barbarism in the name of Socialist justice or death with integrity.

As a Marxist David Mercer must be aware of the alternative, and where it lies.....not in the strength of individuals to resist moral corruption, but in the solving of social antagonism by political action. Those antagonisms exist in every class society (including Russia) and must be articulated in class terms. That is what Mercer's characters fail to do, and within their dramatic scope are never allowed to.

M.C.

mole's diary

CINEMA

B.F.T. (29563)

Til Sat.21st: ISLAND OF LOVE.
Sat. Late night: NOW,WHAT ABOUT THESE WOMEN..(Bergmen)
Sunday(members only): DEAR JOHN.
Mon.23.to Sat.28.March: THE GREAT LOCOMOTIVE CHASE.
Sat.28.Late night: SAWDUST AND TINSEL (Bergmen).
Sun.29.March. to Tues. THE ROYAL BALLET.

A.B.C(27010)

From Thurs.19th.March: GOODBYE MR. CHIPS/EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE ONE.

CLASSIC (29414)

Until Sat March 21st: CARRY ON UP THE KYBER.
March 22-27: GENEVIEVE/RING OF BRIGHT WATER

CONTINENTALE(681348)

Til Sun.22 March: I,A VIRGIN/WALTZ OF SEX.
Sun.22(for 7 days).PERSONA/ THE BRIDE WORE BLACK.
Sun.March.29: WHERE THE ACTION IS/ THE VIRGINS.

DUKE OF YORKS(62503)

Til Sat.21st March. PLAY DIRTY/ SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHERRIF.
Sun.March.22(for 2 days) ALFIE/ THE AMOROUS ADVENTURES OF MOLL FLANDERS.
Wed.March.25(for 3 days) BRIDGE AT REMAGEN/YOUNG BILLY YOUNG.
Sun.March.29(for 5 days) CARRY ON CAMPING/BEAU JESTE.

EVENTS

Thurs March 19: AT 8pm.

"What has Womens' Liberation to do with Socialism?"
Flat 6a, Sussex Sq.

Sat March 21: AT 3pm.

SHARPEVILLE REENACTMENT+MARCH
Trafalgar Sq.

Sun March 22: AT 7.30pm

FREEDOM THEATRE..Directed by Midge Mackenzie...Lyceum Strand.

Til March 30: AGONY...play written by Obi Egbuna in Brixton goal...Unity Theatre, 1, Goldrington St NW1 387-8649

Sat April 11: AT 10.30pm

A POETRY READING is being held at the BFT in North St....Bill Butler, Jim Duke, Peter Riley, Tony Stevens etc. Any more musicians/poets interested write to Patrick Galvin, 30 Terminus Rd. Brighton. Proceeds to Shelter

GARDNER CENTRE FOR THE ARTS.

march 14-april 15.....
JOHN HEARTFIELD EXHIBITION.
march 19th..1pm.

EMBASSY(735124)

Thurs.19(for 3 days). IF..
Sun.22.(for 4 days) . FIRE-CREEK.
Thur.26.(for 3 days). CARRY ON CRUISING.

VOGUE(63314)

Now showing..THE PROFFESIONALS/ TO SIR WITH LOVE.
From Sun.March.22.WIZARD OF OZ/ TOM THUMB.

ASTORIA (for a season)

THE WILD BUNCH.

THEATRE

THEATRE ROYAL

Showing now..FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE a new comedy by Terence Kelly.
Next week..TEN LITTLE NIGGERS.. Star cast in Agatha Christie's thriller.

WORTHING CONNAUGHT THEATRE.

Until March 21st..RELATIVELY SPEAKING.

NEW VENTURE THEATRE:Bedford Place, Brighton.

Wed.March.18 (for 7 performances) The Btn. & Hove Repertory Company in THE PRIVATE EAR AND THE PUBLIC EAR.....by Peter Shaffer.
Every Wednesday at 8pm. Actor's Studio.. for details of activities and membership apply to membership secretary at theatre.

GARDNER CENTRE . U.of Sussex,Falmer.
THE NUNS with Patrick Wymark and Dudley Forster until March 28.

ADDRESSES

B.R.P. CONTACT SECRETARY.
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17,Ditchling Rise.
tel.61664.

I.S. 2, Montpelier Rd.
KEMPTOWN LABOUR PARTY.
176,Lewes Rd.

N.C.C.L.
37,Park Crescent.
Tel.65706

RENT TRIBUNAL.
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137,Preston Rd.

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50,Gloucester Rd.
WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP
35 Lower Market St

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S.P.G.B. 39 Queens Road
Meetings every Thursday 8.0pm

MUSIC

JIMMY'S:Steine St.

U.C.S. Blues Soc:
Thurs.April.22: TRAFFIC(tickets from Expantion)

KING & QUEEN FOLK CLUB: Malbrough Place.

Thur.March.19: ALAN "SPUD" TAYLOR.

IMPERIAL HOTEL Queen'sRd.

Fridays: BENNY SIMKINS SEXTET(main-stream) 8-10.45pm.
Saturdays: NEW EAGLE JAZZ BAND.
Sundays: U.M.A. HEAVY DISCO +light-show + Films..3/6

PIER HOTEL:10,Marine Parade.

Tuesdays: GEOFF SIMKINS TRIO.

FAIRFIELD HALL CROYDON:

April 5th: KEEF FARTLEY BIG BAND.
....at 7.30pm.

GRASSHOPPER: Tilgate,Crawley.

Mon.March.23: ALAN ELSDON JAZZ-BAND.

COMBINATION.

every friday..DISCO..food,coffee.

1970 JAZZ CLUB, Gay Highlander, Peacehaven

March 29: BOB WALLIS' STORYVILLE JAZZBAND.

FOX AND HOUNDS: Haywards Heath.

FOURTEEN FOOT BAND PLUS GUESTS.
.....Easter Sunday.

CO.OF.ED:Falmer.

March 19: CHRISTINE PERFECT.
8-1am. 9/-.

SPORT

FOOTBALL Goldstone Gd.Hove

March.21: Btn.& Hove Albion v Southport.

March.27: Btn.& Hove Albion v Reading.

GREYHOUND RACING

March 21,25,28,30 at:-
Nevill Rd. Hove.

RUGBY.

March.21: Btn.1st.XV. v Old Wimbledonians.

Hove 'A' XV.v Navant Dolphins.

March.28: Btn.1st.XV v Old Shooterhillians.

Hove 1st.XV v Nottingham Casuals.

March.30: Hove 1st.XV.v Camphill.

PLUMPTON RACES .

March 28th & 30th.

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