

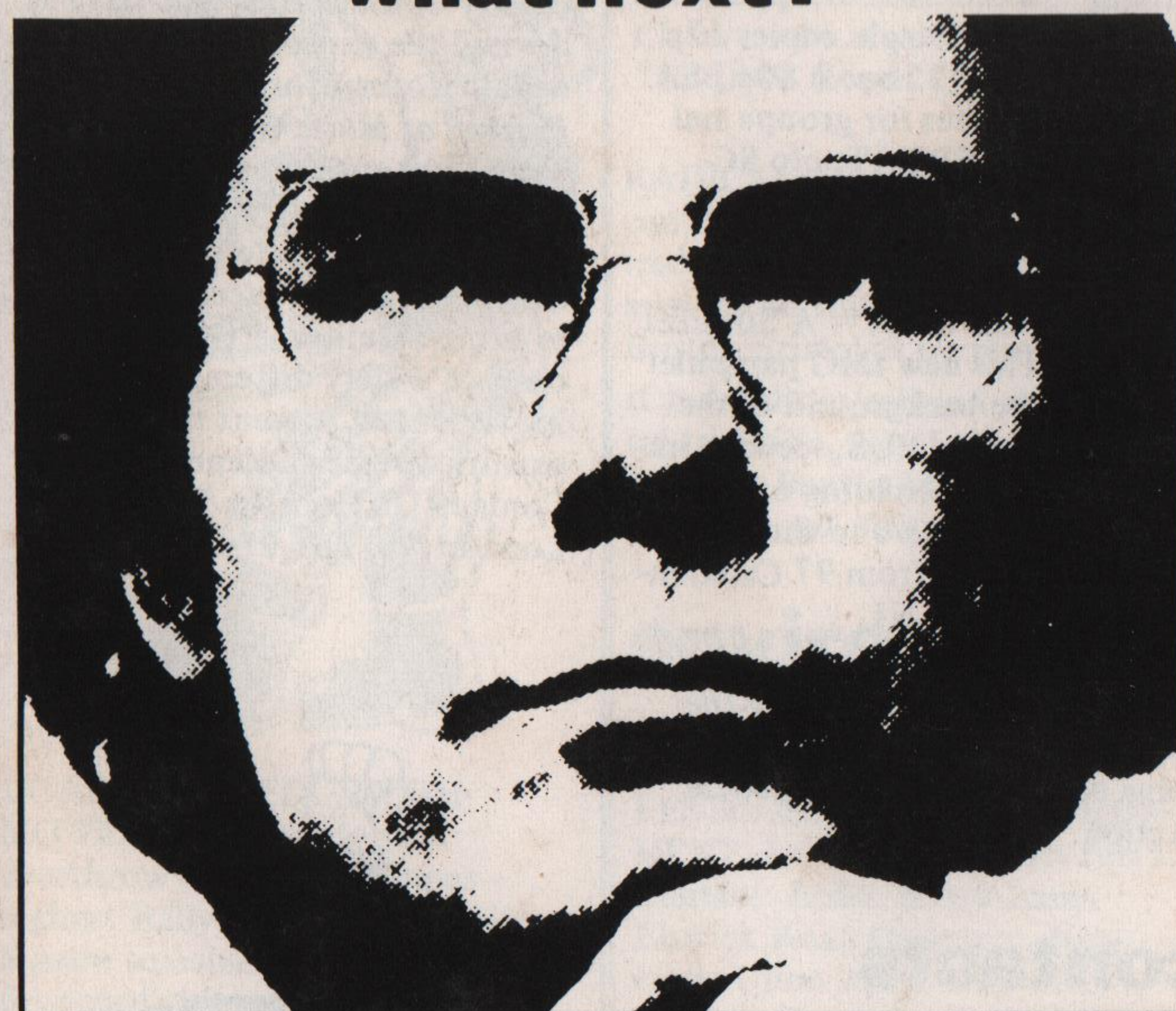
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by Co-operative Working Women
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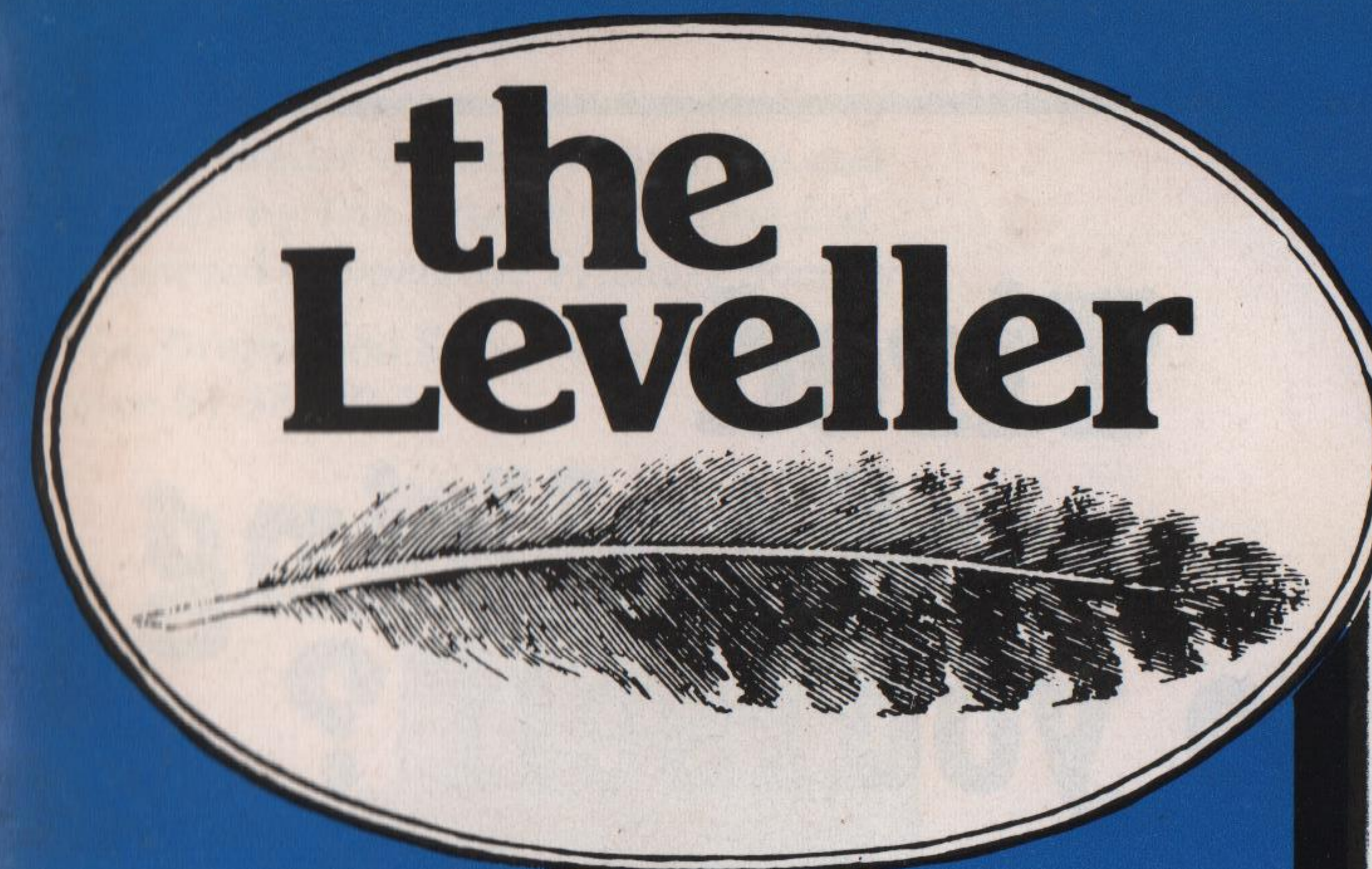
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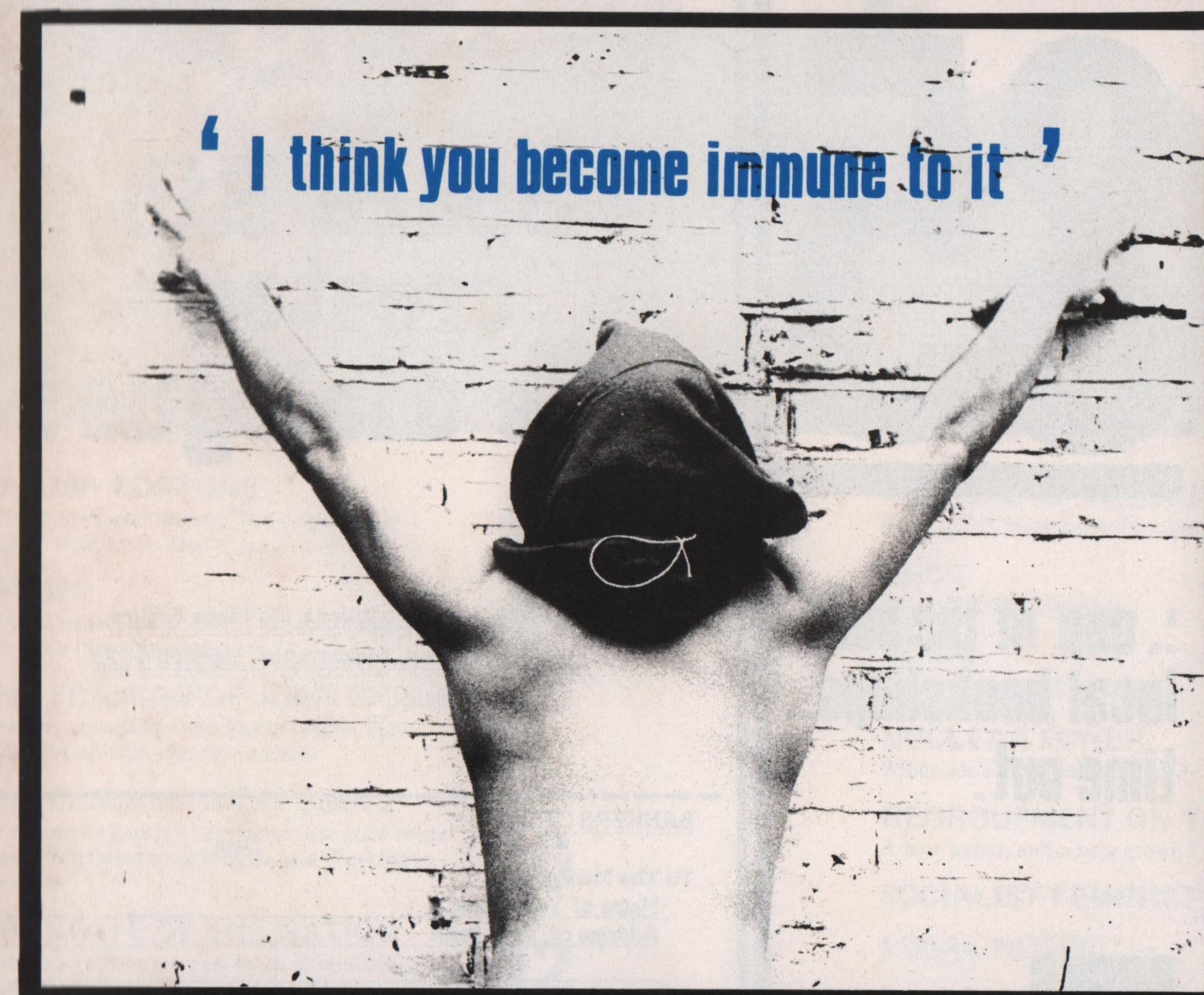
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graphs, cartoons and story ideas are also
welcome.

The Leveller

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As Britain waits for the European Court's verdict on the Irish torture charges, disturbing new evidence has come into *The Leveller's* possession of the way in which serving British soldiers are trained both to resist and administer 'interrogation-in-depth'.

The techniques involved include both mental and physical assault. They include and go beyond those for which Britain is in the dock at Strasbourg. They are carried out by Special Air Service regulars on volunteers applying to join the regiment and other service men sent to the Hereford barracks on combat survival courses.

Very few men pass the SAS selection course: on the latest intake, only five out of 90 volunteers were accepted. While some of these failed on the preliminary physical and military tests, most broke under the interrogation and were Returned to Unit.

The European Commission on Human Rights has already described five of the techniques employed as 'torture'. Amnesty International recently estimated that 250 servicemen a year were subjected to interrogation training of this nature, but Whitehall sources suggest that the figure is probably higher.

Our evidence comes from a soldier who has recently left the SAS. He not only went through the training himself, but also administered it. He told *The Leveller* that although it 'isn't pleasant' to torture someone, his SAS training had made him 'immune to it'.

In September, the Ministry of Defence acknowledged that: 'Practical training in resistance to interrogation is given to servicemen whose military employment in war render them particularly prone to be captured'. The Ministry absolutely denied that Britain is in any way 'training torturers'.

But our source says he 'would be quite happy about torturing somebody if they had something to give'. And although there must be limits to that torture, he didn't know where they were. Although his superiors set limits, he said it was quite possible to break even the hardest man: People were trained in the camp at Hereford first of all in the art of survival. They were taught how to live off the land, how to navigate, map reading and the art of astral navigation. They were then set loose in Wales with a fifty pound pack, a weapon and a long way to go. There's nowhere worse than Wales in the winter — it's hard and cold and wet.

'They were all destined to be caught anyway because the regiment was against them and we'd all done it so many times before that there was no chance that they would get through.

'When we had caught them, we took them to the interrogation centre in the foothills of the Brecon Beacons. As soon as a man was captured, he was brought in and his boots and everything was taken off him, even in winter. He was stripped right down to virtually nothing and put into a Nissen hut with a bare floor and this loud music playing day and night. That was for starters.

'All they had to do was to sign a piece of paper. Of course, they were briefed before they started to sign nothing, say nothing and write nothing. That was it.

'So anyway, they'd get the soft treatment when they arrived — to be asked, for example, 'Where were you going and who were you with?' But everything was taped — even the tent poles were bugged so we'd know what they'd said. We would say,

How the British Army



'the man that was with you, he said which way you were going and where you'd been. While you're here, sign for your equipment'. Well there was no equipment anyway, so those that signed were out. Those that didn't sign then went through the treatment.'

Many men, according to our source, broke at this stage and signed a confession. They were then returned to unit with no hard feelings. Other men were tougher nuts to crack. Throughout their interrogation they would be deprived of food, when they weren't being interrogated, they were left nearly naked in the Nissen hut with the lights on, the noise playing constantly and without liquid except cold water.

Some were made to lean against the wall for hours by their finger tips, with SAS regulars kicking them every time they moved. The men were instructed to shout at the new recruits, threaten them with an 'accident', tell them the regiment would cover up with their families and the MOD if they died.

This treatment would sometimes continue for days, with a number of added refinements: 'We had a coffin that had shit in. People were put in this and buried under the ground with air holes and left there for 24 hours. Another one we had was a hole dug in the course of a stream. There was a stake and the man would be chained to the stake. It was designed so that the

water would come just below his nose. He'd be left there overnight in a Welsh icy-cold stream, naked. Another one was on the branch of a tree, hung by his thumbs to a branch above.

'The Ministry of Defence didn't like some of these methods of interrogation so some were stopped. But we had plenty of others. I don't know what they're doing these days, it's a very security-conscious regiment. I know it's a bit of mental and a bit of physical, with probably more mental than physical'.

When Amnesty International raised the matter of interrogation training with the Government last year, Minister of State for Defence, William Rodgers, wrote to the organisation: 'The training is intended to give these servicemen a better chance of successfully withstanding interrogation which may use trickery, threats, insinuations, pretended kindness as well as other techniques'.

Soldiers who go on the combat survival course now are all listed as Special Category Personnel. Four young men recently lined up for the course told *The Leveller* that they were 'scared as hell' about it but hoped to get through by sending their own minds blank and constantly repeating their names and army numbers.

Each man had signed a declaration and had taken a medical. The declaration said: 'I declare that I am a volunteer for practical training in the interrogation phase of

trained me in torture techniques

exercise . . . and I realise that I shall receive a simulation of the type of treatment I might receive as a PoW in the hands of an unscrupulous enemy which may include blindfolding to simulate hooding (sic), wall-standing, the use of noise-making equipment, restricted diet and deprivation of sleep.

'I realise that the interrogation phase of the exercise is likely to involve considerable discomfort, but I know that:

- A) I may opt out through an umpire at any time
- B) I may request to see an umpire or a medical officer at any time,
- C) Umpires and medical officers wear distinguishing armbands, are never impersonated and therefore can be trusted.

'I further declare that I will not withhold from the medical officer, either in relation to paragraph 8 below, or during the search and examination procedure after capture, any information on the state of my mental and physical health.

'I promise not to feign illness to a medical officer at any time during this phase of the exercise.

'I promise not to pass any information on this exercise to anyone not authorised to receive it'.

Mr Rodgers continued in his letter to Amnesty that 'although the interrogation has continued for many years, we know of no single case where it has been shown to have permanent ill effects'. But a former SAS Officer interviewed by Connor O'Cleary in the *Irish Times* recently said:

'My interrogator turned very nasty, and I was told I could be disposed of if I didn't help him. The exercise ceased being a game. The interrogator would say that a soldier could be written off as 'victim of an accident'. Screams could be heard coming from the next room while this was happening. Many officers who failed were broken down for a long, long time'.

A survey conducted by an Army doctor and reported in the *Royal Army Medical Gazette* showed that the young men who got through all this were of an 'exceptionally high degree of physical fitness', but that personality assessments showed them to be 'notably more introverted' than other soldiers. They also showed signs of the following characteristics: 'expediency, shyness, suspiciousness, forthrightness, self-sufficiency and high anxiety' . . . as well they might.

Modern military strategy demands that the Special Air Service occupy a prime role both in the collection of information, and in the assistance and training of allied units. SAS has been engaging in torture training for at least 15 years and the results of its work are monitored at the Army Intelligence Centre in Ashford, Kent. It was from here that the team of intelligence officers went to Belfast

to train their opposite numbers in the RUC at a special seminar held just before internment (see *The Leveller* Issue 2).

Neither is the regiment particularly choosy about whom it co-operates with. The Shah of Iran has one of the world's worst reputations for the use of torture: estimates on the number of political prisoners vary from 25,000 to 100,000 and it is widely believed that most of them have been tortured. What is not so well known is that a small squad of Special Air Service men from Britain has been working closely with the Shah's own Special Forces for at least three years in a counter-insurgency campaign against the Kurds.

Interrogation: What it feels like

Told dispassionately the story of in-depth interrogation doesn't sound so frightening. When it was practised in Northern Ireland, Sir Edmund Compton thought of it only as 'ill treatment' rather than brutality. It is after all rather more refined than pulling out the fingernails.

So what does it feel like to be at the receiving end of what our informant calls 'The hard time . . . the full treatment?' Paddy Joe McClean, a remedial school teacher from County Tyrone, was one of those subjected to the in-depth interrogation. His statement to the Association for Legal Justice was reprinted in *The Guinea Pigs*, John McGuffin's Penguin Special on the torture carried out by British forces on internees in August 1971.

'A hood was pulled over my head and I was handcuffed and subjected to verbal and personal abuse . . . after about one hour in the helicopter, I was thrown from it and kicked and batoned into what I took to be a lorry. The lorry was driven only a couple of hundred yards to a building. On arrival there I was given a thorough examination by a doctor . . .

'I was then taken into what I can only guess was another room and was made to stand with my feet wide apart and my hands pressed against a wall. During all the time I could hear a low droning noise which sounded to me like an electric saw or something of that nature. This continued for what I can only describe as an indefinite period of time. I stood there, arms against the wall, feet wide apart. My arms, legs, back and head began to ache. I perspired freely, the noise and the heat were terrible. My brain seemed ready to burst. What was going to happen to me? Was I alone? Are they coming to kill me? I wished to God they would, to end it.

'My circulation had stopped. I flexed my arms to start the blood moving. They struck me several times on the hands, ribs, kidneys and my knee caps were kicked. My hood-covered head was banged against the wall . . .

Vladimir Herzog, a Brazilian journalist found dead a few hours after being detained in Sao Paulo, in Brazil said just before he died: 'If we lose our capacity to be outraged when we see others submitted to atrocities, then we lose our right to call ourselves civilised human beings.'

When *The Leveller* asked our SAS source what it feels like to torture someone else, he told us: 'I think you become immune to it. I don't say it's pleasant, it's just a thing to be done. I think that having gone through the selection to the regiment, the privation that you get, I think you become immune to it.

'The majority of the regiment have been through the interrogation and I would think that they are quite happy to dish it out too. If it was a real war, I think I would be quite happy to interrogate people like we did it in the regiment. If they have information to give, I think it should be got. If lives are at stake, our own lives . . . I think there must be limits but I don't know where they are. I've never really examined myself to ask how far I would go or wouldn't go. Today, I wouldn't go as far as we did then. But in a war situation, I just don't know'.

'During this time certain periods are blank — fatigue, mental and physical, overwhelmed me. I collapsed several times, only to be beaten and pulled to my feet again and once more pushed, spreadeagled against the wall. Food, water and the opportunity to relieve my bowels were denied me, I collapsed again . . .

'I came to in what I believed to be Crumlin Road jail, having been pushed into a chair. The hood was removed and I was handed what I was told was a detention form. I was told to read it. My eyes burnt and were filled with pain: they would not focus and I couldn't read the form. I was thanking God that my ordeal was over. No more pain, now I could sleep.

'But no! The hood was pulled over my bursting head. I was roughly pulled to my feet and half kicked, half pulled and beaten for about 400 yards. This was the worst and most sustained beating to date. Fists, boots and batons crashed into my numbed body, somebody else's not mine. Hands behind my back, handcuffs biting into my wrists, Pain! Someone pulling and jerking my arms . . .

'Conscious again. Hands manacled in front of me. Pushed against a wall, legs wide apart. I dug my fingernails into the wall. Pain all over me.

'Now that I can relax and think about it I can't find words to describe that pain. Without attempting to be melodramatic I think I can best describe it by saying I was enveloped in stretching, cramping pain.

'My mind began to drift. I tried to sing to myself. I was going mad. I must be already mad to stick this . . .

The beatings continued, together with the hood, the noise and the wall treatment. Eventually, the punishment eased and McClean was told he would be taken to Crumlin jail and interned.

'Hood still over my head, but treated better now. No questions, no beatings.

'Journey to Crumlin jail by lorry, helicopter and land rover. I was still sane, still alive — thank God!'

British tactics in defence of white Rhodesia

If you're a reactionary racist state fighting off a liberation army, you need the skills of psychological warfare, to undermine the strength of the enemy, to destroy their power base. The 'hearts and minds' of the oppressed people have to be somehow won over. The Rhodesian and South African military have learned this, and they are using the techniques developed by the British in 30 years of counter-insurgency around the world. They are also hiring British Army officers to do the job for them. DAVID CLARK and KAREN MARGOLIS trace these techniques and offer an insight into the hidden side of the White Man's fight to stay in Southern Africa.

The name of the game is Psychological Operations and it's as old as war itself. Psyops was around long before the Trumpets of Jericho of the Wooden Horse of Troy. But war has changed profoundly since Richard Crossman told a London lecture 25 years ago that: 'Soldiers, sailors and airmen usually resort to psychological warfare when they are in a fix and can think of nothing else to do.'

For modern war is only partially about territory, airfields and sea lanes. Fire power is important, but ideology even more so. Psyops differs from any other military tactic because it's also intended for use in peacetime. It is carefully defined as such by NATO, and lessons learned by the West in a quarter of a century of counter-insurgency have been absorbed and updated by the South Africans and the Rhodesians. The Rhodesians are undoubtedly masters at it: they have had good teachers in Britain and America.

NATO defines Psyops as:

'Planned psychological activities in peace and war directed towards enemy, friendly or neutral audiences in order to create attitudes and behaviour favourable to the achievement of political and military objectives'. The growing popularity of psyops and its ever-wider scope can be traced to the recognition that political and military objectives are often one and the same thing'.

When young British Army officers go for their basic training in psychological operations at Old Sarum barracks in Wiltshire, they are handed a precis of course notes which starts with a quote from the young Mao Tse Tung in 1929:—

'The Red Army fights not merely for the sake of fighting, but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organise them, arm them and help them to establish revolutionary political power. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence'. The officers learn early that communism is the real enemy. But today they are trying, like Mao, to swim in the sea of the people.

The confidential *British Army Land Operations Manual* outlines two aims for psyops:

a. Gaining the confidence and co-operation of the civil population so as to assist military operations by isolating the insurgents from civil support and ensuring a steady flow of information.

b. Lowering the morale of the insurgents and thereby encouraging surrender and defection.'

Clearly these aims cannot be achieved by the Army alone — they require the active support of governments, media and so on. The precis for officers recommends setting up a committee of both political and military members, including top diplomats, representatives from the Information Services, Special Branch, Intelligence staff officers and public relations staff.

Many of the most important early lessons were learned by the British in Malaya during the Emergency.

Between 1948 and 1950, the war went badly for the British, with significant gains for the Malayan Communist Party, Whitehall brought in Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs to present a combined civil and military plan that would eventually separate the mass of the Chinese from the cadres of the MCP.

The man brought in to head up the battle for the mind was Hugh Carleton Greene, later Director General of the BBC. Greene cast his professional eye over the activities of the Government's Emergency Information Service and presented a devastating report which was to lay down the future pattern of psychological operations. Seen from the perspective of the 1970s, it was crude enough, but we can glean from it the bones of much of the later activity. Greene laid down a set of tasks for the Emergency Information Services which included the following:—

'1) To raise the morale of the civil population and to encourage confidence in the Government and resistance to the communists with a view to increasing the flow of information reaching the police.

2) To attack morale of members of the MRLA, the Min Yuen and their supporters and to drive a wedge between the leaders and the rank and file with a view to encouraging defection and undermining the determination of the Communists to continue the struggle.

3) To create an awareness of the values of the democratic way of life which was threatened by international communism'.

Among the more important changes brought in by Greene were the doubling of the number of cinema projectors and speakers for showing Government propaganda, the installation of 500 radio sets in villages and the appointment of a Controller of Emergency Broadcasting who, together with the management of Radio Malaya, was able to increase the output of anti-communist radio programmes in line with the directions of

the Director of Operations.

To encourage the defector, rewards for surrendering were increased by 30%, plenty of money was made available to Special Branch to encourage informers and a new set of leaflets were issued in their millions. In 1954, the quarterly report on psychological warfare gave some examples of the new strategic leaflets:—

- 1) *Where does all the money go?* Exploiting the MCP's financial difficulties.
- 2) *Why work against the interest of the masses?* Emphasised that there is no longer any moral justification for staying in the jungle. The struggle is useless and lost.
- 3) *It is dangerous to carry a pistol or carbine.* By saying that the Security Forces are liable to shoot those so armed first it is hoped that the leaflet will cause panic among lower-ranking leaders.
- 4) *One of your comrades has been killed in this area.* A theme to exploit kills with the minimum of delay.
- 5) *Do you need medical assistance?* A theme to exploit the situation when it is definitely known CTs have been wounded.

But psychological operations at a Government level went along with a new set of military operations. Although the British still used regular regiments in set-piece confrontations, that is not the way to win a guerilla war. Equally important were new developments like the way of Malayan Scouts (Special Air Service) troops in long range search and destroy missions in the jungle, the development of protected villages, and the arming of militias whose task was to defend their villages against communist attack.

The lessons of Malaya were refined in Kenya, in particular the use of large rewards and propaganda, and the effectiveness of irregular units.

One tactic developed in Kenya was gangs and counter-gangs — later described in a book of that name by a young lieutenant who thought it up, Frank Kitson. Counter-gangs were a mixture of black guerillas who had surrendered to the security forces, and British regular and special forces.

One ex-member of the Special Air Services who was involved in this tactic has his doubts: 'I shot a lot of so-called terrorists in Kenya', he told one of the authors, 'But I don't think many of them were really members of Mau Mau. I think they were ordinary Africans who were too scared to do anything else'.

But it wasn't just the British who learned from Malaya. Two important strands are identifiable, one general and one very specific.

The Malayan Emergency was the first major counter-insurgency war of the modern age and it provided most of the first valuable lessons for the military. Its most influential political chronicler was Sir Robert Thompson, a former Chindit with experience of guerilla warfare who advised the British Army as a member of the Malayan Civil Service. Thompson distilled the lessons of Malaya into a key book, *Defeating Commun-*

ist Insurgency, which found its way into the libraries and syllabuses of every Defence College in the Western World. Thompson's expertise was loaned to the Americans during the Vietnamese war as head of the British Advisory Mission in Saigon.

Some of Thompson's advice was taken up by the Americans — particularly the switch to Strategic Hamlets, the emphasis on 'pacification' and 'Hearts and Minds' through community relations programmes — the overkill of earlier American strategy had already guaranteed its long-term failure.

The Americans had been into psychological operations since the Second World War. In a recent article in *New Society*, Adam Roberts comments: 'Plausible claims are made that the widespread American psychological operations in the Italian elections in 1948 helped reap the result the Americans wanted. And there is impressive evidence that American-financed propaganda beamed at North Vietnam in 1954-55 helped to swell the flood of refugees to the South'.

Elliot Harris wrote in a book published in America in 1967: 'To sum up, PsyWar experts in Saigon believe that the psychological struggle in Vietnam has reached a major turning point. In terms of defectors, perhaps the most tangible evidence of our PsyWar thrust, upwards of 50,000 'returnees' are entirely conceivable. To this end our command is dedicated to an action-propaganda policy that recognises no measure of persuasion or coercion as out of bounds or 'un-American'.

There are many military commentators who argue that Vietnam would still be in the capitalist world if Thompson had been more carefully listened to, instead of the optimistic rantings of Harris and the military hawks.

One of these would presumably be Colonel John Waddy, military attache at the British

Embassy in Saigon and in large part responsible for filtering members of the British Special Air Service regiment into the Australian and New Zealand SAS units working in Vietnam. Waddy, who collaborated closely with the Americans in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, went on from Saigon to the Doctrine Development School at Old Sarum in Wiltshire. The School is one of the main centres where British Army psychological operations have been developed.

Another group of men who learned a lot from Malaya are now the leading men in the military hierarchy in Rhodesia. Two of the most important are Lieutenant General Peter Walls, and Major Ron Reid Daly.

Lt. Gen. Walls was appointed Commander of Combined Operations by Ian Smith in March following a series of rows about military/political co-ordination. As Commander of Combined Operations he is directly responsible to Roger Hawkins, Minister of Combined Ops, and through him to Ian Smith. It is the same pattern of linking all arms of the civil, police and military offensive that was developed by the British.

Walls recently told the *Rhodesian Herald* 'As a trained military man with some experience of counter-insurgency, my role would be to put into effect the aims of the Government in maintaining law and order and using all the agencies of the Government to best effect this aim.'

Walls has more than 'some experience of counter-insurgency'. From 1953 to 56 he was in Malaya serving as a lieutenant in the Malayan Scouts (Special Air Services) Regiment and it was here that he learned much of his current technique. In a recent interview with a reporter from *Soldier of Fortune*, the American mercenary's magazine, he was asked what he had learned from Malaya that he had brought back to Rhodesia. He told them:

'We came back with the principles of counter-insurgency in our minds, and we tried to adopt those principles from the jungle type of country to Rhodesian bush warfare.'

'We haven't slavishly followed the Malayan way of doing things . . . We have studied methods from all over the world. Every now and then, just in case I am getting into a rut, I call for certain books and so on to be brought forward again. On my desk right now I've got *Quelling Insurgency*, which is a British Forces manual on this sort of thing. My previous Chief of Staff, General Rawlings (who now commands the Guard Force) produced a precis of Sir Robert Thompson's book, which I like to look through every now and then just to remind myself of principles.'

Another high-placed Rhodesian military man who learned his basic counter-insurgency in Malaya is Major Ron Reid-Daly. Daly is now the Commanding Officer of the Selous Scouts, the elite tracking and dirty tricks section of the Rhodesian Army which combines black and white soldiers trained to a very high level in all aspects of guerilla war and bush survival. Daly was also in the Special Air Service in Malaya: a British soldier who served with him remembers him well from that time and says: 'Ron's doing exactly the same thing with the Scouts as we were doing in the jungle of Malaya. He learned it all with us.'

Reid Daly told the *Rhodesian Herald* earlier this year: 'I got a good grounding in the sort of war we are fighting. Those years spent skulking around looking for Chinamen were years well spent.'

The Carleton Green report on Malayan propaganda suggested that there was 'too much dwelling on bandit acts of terror (which was only calculated to help



White Rhodesian soldiers winning the hearts and minds of the black people, with smiles.... and guns.

Psychological Warfare

the other side) and not enough on points where the enemy was weak.' But the Rhodesian Ministry of Information has always played up atrocity stories both at home and abroad. One example of this is the use by Psy Ops detachments with regular units who summon a whole village to witness a dead 'terrorist' as an example of what will happen to those who don't co-operate with the security forces. Others include the preparation of posters and leaflets with pictures of atrocities apparently committed by terrorists in order to emphasise what wicked people these are.

A regular series of pamphlets is also circulated at home and abroad through the Rhodesian Information Office in Washington DC. One, called *Harvest of Fear - a Diary of Terrorist Atrocities in Rhodesia*, says in its introduction: 'Horrific acts of murder, mutilation and even cannibalism have been committed by Communist-armed terrorists in Rhodesia. The vast majority of their victims were innocent tribespeople. They were dragged from their huts to be brutally maimed and beaten before being murdered. They included young children, pregnant women and the elderly.'

The Ministry of Information has recently been given a significant boost by the appointment of Major Richard Stannard as head of the Army Press Office. Stannard was until recently the head of the British Army's special press and propaganda battle: this was a crucial period in press relations during which the Army not only carried out a whole series of psychological operations recently detailed by the *Sunday Times*, but was also responsible for heading off press comment on a number of incidents involving the MRF (Military Reconnaissance Force) and thought by many to be an undercover British army assassination squad.

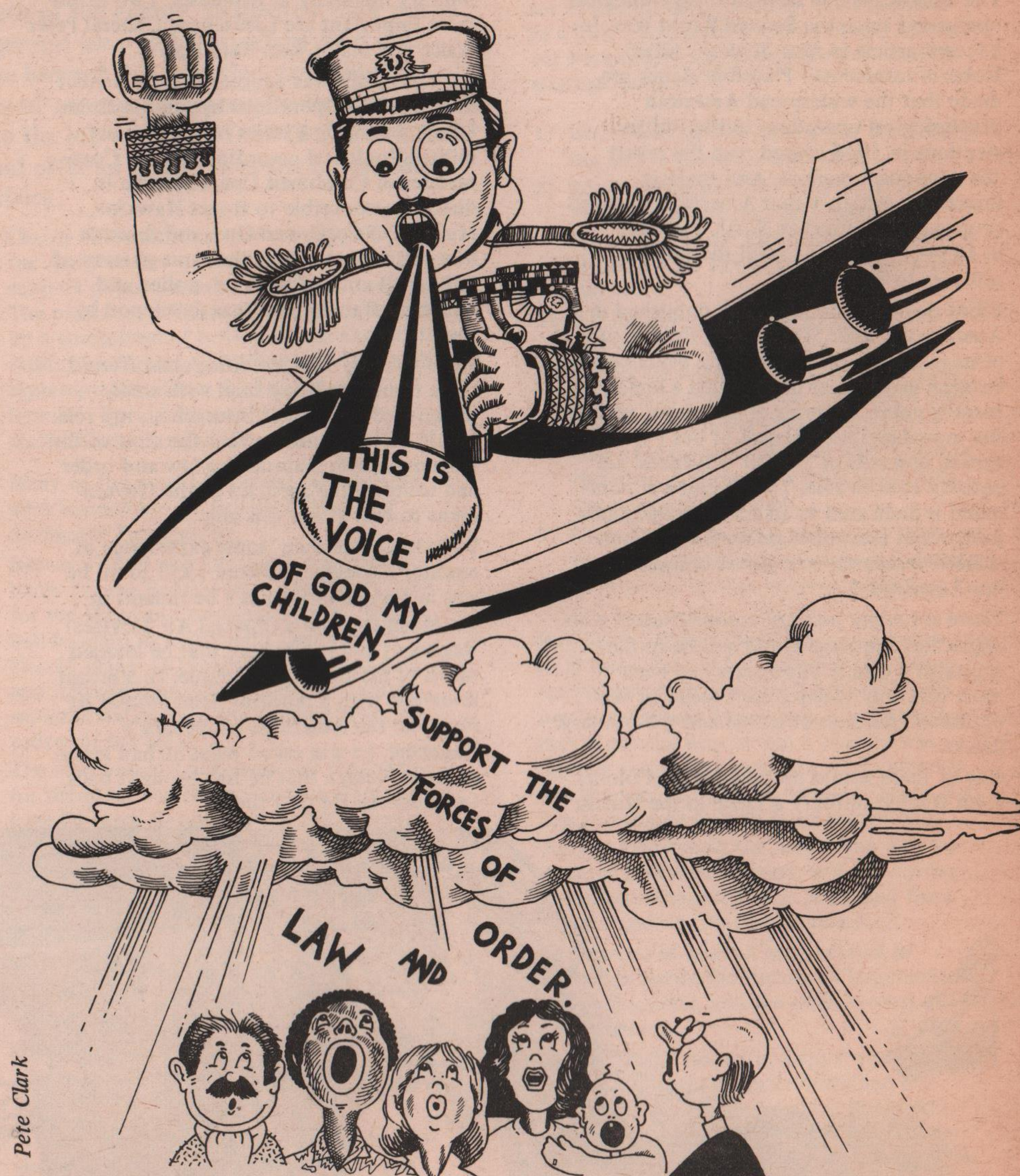
In fact the MRF was a combination of SAS soldiers, intelligence officers and local Ulster residents engaged in a series of incidents at least three of which led to the shooting of civilians by army men in plain clothes. The operation to confuse and mislead the press was headed up by Stannard, who is now playing a similar role in Rhodesia. One of his first efforts has been the production of a sophisticated booklet, issued in February 1977 and circulated by the Rhodesian Information Office, called *Background Briefing: Terrorists, Missionaries and the West*. The book appears to be an objective examination of the Lupane murders, Honde massacre, Manama abduction and Musami murders, and the attitudes towards them of western governments and churches. In conclusion, we are told:—

'In the horrified comments of the clergy on the murder of the missionaries it has been emphasised that the dead were devoted to the welfare of the blacks and that they were loved by the people; yet it is precisely for this reason that they were slaughtered.'

'Significantly enough, the black masses have not reacted to these crimes with angry calls for justice to be seen to be done: psychologically all four incidents analysed in this paper have been terrorist successes particularly those in which black 'freedom fighters' have gunned down whites. The apparent ease by which white people can be killed plus the attendant publicity extends the technique of fear.'

A recent convert to the psyops approach is the South African Army, which has updated its guidelines, formerly based largely on US material, 'to give it relevance and value in the African context.' *The Leveller* has obtained a copy of the SA Army *Guide to Psychological Action*, a document which bears strong resemblance to those sections of the British Army Land Operations covering psyops. Faced with the twin problems of courting world opinion and isolating the 'insurgents',

will eventually rub off on the older people.' This can be achieved by, among other things, 'the provision of sporting facilities for tribal schoolchildren at schools.' While the kiddies play ball, their parents can be won over by means of broadcasts, lectures, plays, mass rallies and martial music. Or 'the planned rumour', the origin of which may be doubtful, but which will 'spread rapidly if it has been well chosen and put out at the right time.' For the SA soldiers, there seems to be no contradiction between the



the SA Army has elevated psychological action to 'the main weapon, with physical weapons in support.'

South African style psyops contain some bizarre new twists on the old routines. One instance of this is the use of spirit mediums, who play a key role in African society because they represent the wishes of ancestral spirits. The guerillas frequently ask for blessing and protection from these spirit mediums. The SA Army *Guide* advises troops to claim spirit medium protection for themselves. Across the border, the Rhodesian government has been insisting that most spirit mediums are opposed to bloodshed, and therefore to guerilla activity. The key to this sort of operation is for whites 'to understand the black man's tribal customs, religious beliefs and family ties.'

Another interesting feature of South African psyops is its concentration on the younger members of the population: 'If the support/trust of the children can be initiated, this

dissemination of 'planned rumours' and the Guides exhortation to them: DO NOT LIE; DO NOT EXAGGERATE; and RESPECT POPULAR TRADITIONS.

In the final analysis, psychological operations won't win the war. But they do provide a powerful weapon in the state armoury. Where Chairman Mao argued that the Red Army should respect the people, work with them and be of them, he was arguing a basic proposition: if the people don't make the guerilla army themselves then they will never be free.

What psychological war does with its leaflets and propaganda, its medical teams and soldier-teachers is to impose upon the people a discipline and set of relationships from outside. It is not a weapon of defence thrown up by the mass of the people themselves but a soft and often liberal face of the armed power of the state. And that is its key contradiction.

The guns that never were

Last month John Higgins, the Provisional Sinn Fein organiser in Britain, was sentenced to ten years in jail after an Old Bailey trial lasting six and a half weeks. The curious thing about the sentence is that he was found guilty on conspiracy charges by a young, largely working class jury, of a crime without a victim.

Higgins, 34, was regarded by many Republicans as a serious political figure who would have done much to repair the battered ranks of the Provisional Sinn Fein in Britain. As it is the leadership has been hard hit by his imprisonment. And the movement, already seriously fragmented by internal political divisions and police harassment, is now a very minor political force.

THIS STATE of affairs has been brought about by a ruthlessly efficient police operation which used John Banks, mercenary recruiter and would-be playboy, as its main agent provocateur, and a host of smaller fish as two-bit character actors in an episode that would have done John Le Carre proud.

The court was informed that Higgins had arranged to meet Banks to discuss the sale of 1,000 carbines. The carbines, however, were never proven to exist — at least not in court — but there is strong circumstantial evidence to show that they never even left a warehouse in Norfolk Virginia. Republicans in Britain argue that Higgins should never have been speaking to Banks anyway. Not only was Banks well known to be untrustworthy, but Higgins' mandate from Dublin was to look after political and welfare questions. Any dealing about arms would be looked after much more efficiently from Dublin.

Copious enquiries both by reporters and defence solicitors failed to turn up the guns. The story Banks told was that a contact of his called Stanley Taylor, a colleague from the Angolan mercenary days, had asked him in April last year to help him get 1,000 firearms for businessmen in Jamaica, Trinidad and St Vincent. Taylor later told the court that he had rung Banks from the Caribbean and asked him to get 1,000 handguns, not rifles. This whole aspect of the affair is very curious since 1,000 handguns let alone rifles, would have been very obvious in three small Caribbean islands. Gun control in the Caribbean isn't very effective — but it isn't that bad.

Assuming for the moment that the guns did exist we have to turn to the evidence Banks gave the court. He said that he was offered 1,000 carbines by an arms dealer called Harry Maggs. Now Maggs is a very curious fellow to be in the arms trade — and he isn't known at all to the London end of the business. Maggs, 52, was an industrial chemist specialising in food flavouring before a divorce and mucky personal life threw him onto the mercy of such as Banks.

The divorce came eight years ago and Maggs, an amateur pilot, ladies' man and petty con artist described by acquaintances as a 'real Walter Mitty', headed off for a flat in London and the bright lights. Just one large international arms dealer remembers him enquiring some years ago about a whole range of military hardware up to and including tanks. But he didn't get his weapons since he couldn't provide an end-user certificate for his dubious customer. Banks told the court that Maggs had offered him the carbines for £60 each in bulk. Letters from Maggs to Banks confirm this

deal — they were to include two magazines and a cleaning kit. And Maggs was expecting to get the guns from a Belgian called Van Schyndel. Van Schyndel was dubious about the deal because of the understandable lack of an end-user certificate.

But what is also doubtful is whether Van Schyndel even had them anyway. Not only is £60 way above the market rate for MIs in bulk, but there is absolutely no evidence that the guns were ever in the Antwerp warehouse where they were supposed to be. Other enquiries suggest that if the guns ever did exist, they were part of a larger batch sitting in the warehouse of the same international arms company that Maggs had his first dealings with. And that warehouse is in Norfolk Virginia.

Challenged on all this by a newspaper reporter after the trial, Maggs said first that he had offered the 1,000 carbines to the RUC in Belfast. Diligent checking by them revealed that no such deal had even been contemplated and that Maggs' supposed contact didn't even work with the RUC. Any deal of that nature anyway would have been negotiated through the Police Authority, not the RUC.

Maggs also claimed that he had a further 9,000 MIs on offer, 26,000 Garrand automatic rifles and 16 million rounds of ammunition. On top of that, he had five Centurion Mark Fives, 36 Saladins, a weapon carrier and a rocket launcher. Since Maggs now commutes between his caravan site in the South

of France and his London flat, his James Bond fantasy world is almost complete.

But in court it wasn't presented as fantasy but as fact. Higgins was drawn into the deal, apparently reluctantly, after a friend Gerald Smiley told him about half a dozen radio transmitters for sale at £500 each. Smiley, and his friend Jimmy Davidson, were a couple of Glaswegians, small time business hustlers with no interest in IRA politics. But they thought a decent deal could be set up and brought Higgins in.

It's clear from Higgins' statement that although he didn't want anything to do with buying arms from Banks, he was curious enough to talk with him for some time about it. He has stuck consistently to his line that he did want the transmitters — with which to broadcast republican propaganda in Belfast should another 1969 Protestant attack ever materialise — but he wanted nothing to do with guns.

Banks claims that it was after this first meeting that he worried about the implications of what he was getting himself into: he then contacted friends in military intelligence and from then went to Special Branch who assisted him to set up Higgins. Some observers say that in exchange he was given *carte blanche* to recruit mercenaries for Angola and engage in a number of other dubious exploits, for none of which he has been tried. What was forgotten in court however was that Banks himself had originally been arrested with Higgins, Smiley and Davidson.

The defence strategy was to challenge the jury until they had a young and predominantly working class audience before whom to unravel the strands. Despite a very loaded summing up by the Common Sergeant, Mr Mervyn — 'Did you go to Eton?' — Griffith-Jones, the jury's 'guilty' verdict on all the defendants except Birmingham Sinn Feiner Eddie Caghey, came as a surprise. And on top of that the ten year sentence, which effectively takes Higgins out of politics for the duration, seems suspiciously harsh considering that there never was any proof that the guns did exist. Still, somewhere in a warehouse in Virginia sit 1,000 MI carbines looking for a buyer. One thing is for sure, if anything ever is in the gun world: by the time John Higgins comes out of prison, those carbines will be in someone else's hands and, doing their work to the ultimate profit of the shadowy characters who run the international arms trade.



Labouring towards Socialism

'Let Cowards Flinch and Traitors Sneer We'll Keep the Red Flag Flying Here'.

it said at the head of the newsletter of one of Bristol West's branches. Bristol West Constituency Labour Party enjoys proclaiming its leftness from the rooftops even though the Constituency will certainly return a Tory — a former Conservative Research Department whiz-kid — at the next election. The newly-elected Chairman of Bristol West, a building worker, began his year of office by asking GMC delegates to kindly refrain from lefter-than-thou posturing.

Despite the city's conservatism, Bristol has a strong radical tradition. Even now the Quaker inheritance is still apparent in Bristol West and it is difficult to read an 1892 account of socialists from Clifton (Bristol's Hampstead and an active Bristol West ward) rushing to the other side of the city to organise striking sweet factory girls, without a sigh of recognition. Members coming from the North of England have sometimes been taken by surprise by the phenomena of sweet old middle class ladies helping to win the day for the left at ward meetings and even to get rather fond of a previous Constituency secretary who occasionally took time off from CND activities to follow the local horse and hounds.

But the character of the Bristol West party has changed markedly over the last few years. As the Labour Government has got worse and worse, as the total Labour Party membership has got smaller and smaller, Bristol West's membership has grown and grown. It now has 480 members, more than double the figure in February 1974, and whilst the average attendance at most Bristol GMC's is 20 to 25, in Bristol it is more than 60. The youthfulness of the GMC is especially striking — over 50 of the 76 members are under 35.

Some of them are of course Transport House's dreaded entrists. The IMG has a vigorous presence in Bristol — providing an unofficial opposition to the CP-led Trades Council organising 'Socialist Challenge' forums which include non-IMG speakers and now actively involving itself in the local Labour Party.

There are still the pathetic personal squabbles that seem to characterise Labour parties throughout the country; the only difference in Bristol West is that they are not usually explicitly about who failed to make the tea at the jumble sale but are dressed up in a more respectable garb. The hours put into



election canvassing provides a rich source of moral bullying and a battle between the sole Labour councillor on the Bristol West GMC and its secretary is represented as an attack on the Fabians by the Left, even though the weapon is a spiteful anonymous leaflet about gerry mandering amongst the Fabians which makes no mention of political differences.

Of more substance is the councillor's high dudgeon about the election campaigning style of Ashley Ward, the leftest of Bristol West's six wards. Their leaflet on housing, which didn't even mention the name of their candidate for the May elections, says 'Don't expect the Labour Movement to be able to solve these problems for us... The basic machinery of the State is not able to manage its own affairs. The problem facing anyone trying to get things changed centrally is that governments of all shades keep capitalism going'. It concluded with a form for an application for a reduction in rates intended to clog up the local bureaucracy with applications. The indignant councillor instructed the bureaucrats to send the forms straight back to their senders.

It was Ashley Ward too who were the main movers behind the decision to hold a separate May Day march through St Pauls, the predominantly West Indian area of Bristol, before joining up with the start of the main May Day march. It was a gesture of defiance at the supineness of the local Labour Party establishment in the face of a growing National Front threat. After it had been agreed that the march should start in St Pauls and should be on the theme 'Against Unemployment and Against Racism', the organisers started it on an uninhabited square right in the edge of St Pauls and announced that the theme of the march would be 'Against Unemployment' and in some of the circulars letters there appeared in parenthesis 'with special reference to racism'.

There has at least been an attempt in Bristol to connect with the bursts of anger that have been emerging in other parts of the city, not only in St Pauls but also in Hartcliffe, an outlying council estate which was the starting point for a march to the city centre by over a 1000

Hartcliffe school children protesting against the education cuts. And there has been at least an attempt to work out an overall theoretical perspective. Half of the wards have bookstalls (Reg Underhill would be able to spot Trotsky's *Black Nationalism and Self Determination*, Lenin On the *Emancipation of Women* and Rosa Luxemburg's *Reform and Revolution*), there is a continuing series of non-sectarian discussion groups on socialism organised in conjunction with the local WEA (the last was on 'The Balkanisation of Utopia-contemporary Socialist Movements') and despite misgivings about the IMG's decision to put up a candidate in Stetchford, any attempt to stifle the emergence of the new ideas will be fiercely resisted. A motion from an EEP TU delegate expressing 'total opposition to the National Executive Committee's decision to set up an enquiry into so-called infiltration by Trotskyists into the Labour Party' went through on the nod.

There's no risk from Fabians, Manifesto enterists or witch hunters in Bristol West. The worry is that its attempt to concern itself with an overall strategy for the Labour Party is only possible because of the Party's electoral importance in the constituency, because the Tory domination means that it doesn't have to get bogged down in the zebra crossing and noisy pub issues that seem to concern so many constituencies with a majority of Labour councillors. And the fear is that many of the young active members will either give up politics altogether in despair, or get drawn into the door-to-door trudging, councillor canvassing, parish pump perspectives that seem to characterise Labour Party politics throughout Britain. In other words, it may not be the enterists who change the Labour Party but the Labour Party which changes them.

The constituency secretary wrote in his last annual report 'The cause is socialism, and it is important to remind comrades from time to time that the Labour Party is only the means. It is not the end'. Unless that is respected, the quote from the Red Flag on the ward newsletter could have about as much meaning as its rendition by Labour Cabinet members at the conclusion of Annual Conference.

Colin Thomas

— means and ends

To argue that the Labour Party is declining is completely wrong, according to Peter Smith and Julian Wells. To prove this, they examine some of the left-wing myths about the Labour Party — its membership, its past and its class composition — and say that the question ought not to be 'Should we work in the Labour Party?' but 'How?'

The Labour Party is in organisational disarray. Beset by intractable economic problems, the Labour Government has a programme which contains just two planks — to stay in office and to maintain the status quo. All the ingredients for the left's recipe of inheriting Labour's working class support have arrived. But the inevitable has not happened.

The explanation is that the left's conventional wisdom is wrong. In the 50s and 60s Labour's organisation declined but the left was mistaken in thinking that a mass Labour Party (in those areas where it ever existed) was the traditional face of Labour Party politics. In fact, the Labour Party's hold over the working class has only rarely been expressed organisationally.

Before the last war the Labour Party never had a large individual membership. In fact during most of the first two decades of its life it had no individual membership — or even a formal system of local committees — being an alliance of trade unions and socialist clubs rather than a party in its own right. In 1928 individual membership was just over 200,000. Four years later — the year which saw a local Labour Party in each constituency for the first time — it stood at getting on for 400,000 around which it fluctuated until the war.

During the post-war Labour Government membership rocketed through four, five, six, seven, eight and 900,000. After a dip in 1951, it touched 1,015,000 the following year.

This all-time peak was no less than two and a half times the best figure ever achieved before the war.

Though the post-1963 requirement of a minimum affiliation of 1,000 per constituency party obscures both upward and downward trends, estimates of between 300,000 and 400,000 members are probably broadly right.

Of course this is a dramatic fall from a million, even over a 20-year period; but

allowing for the increase in population, the figures are much the same as in the pre-war 'golden-age' of left-wing (and not-so left-wing) myth.

Similarly, the other arm of the left's explanation of Labour decline — the increasing middle-class influence in the party as simultaneous cause and result of working-class disillusion — can be shown up. Tom Forester's book 'The Labour Party and the Working Class' shows rather different picture from the traditional Labour Party dominated by sturdy proletarian tribesmen.

For example, he tells the story of Newcastle-under-Lyme's first Labour Councillor — a bricklayer elected in 1905. By the late 1920s this gentleman was a master builder and served the community as a Ratepayer's councillor.

In 1925, during the same period, the town's first Labour Mayor, a former railwayman, set himself up as a coal merchant. Not quite the glowing images presented by the myths.

As for the inactivity of local Parties, the complaint is made that the Party should 'treat elections not as voting fodder, to be shepherded to a polling station and then allowed to resume their slumbers, but as partners in a common enterprise, in which the Party indeed will play its part, but the issue of which depends ultimately on themselves' — as historian R.H. Tawney put it in 1921.

But the truth is that the job of looking after the affairs of the working class in this country has always been taken care of by means of a division of labour — the trade unions to settle immediate questions of pay and conditions; and the Labour Party to look after the trade union interest in Parliament and to press measures necessarily implemented by government — like pensions, the health service and nationalisation.

Many union branch discussions have petered out at the assertion that the top is 'political' and thus the province of the Party; and conversely, it has not been often that Party members have mobilised — as a Party — around trade union battles.

But if the Party has never gone far beyond vote-getting that is because all reformist parties resolve themselves into electoral machines — for that is what social-democracy and the parliamentary road are all about.

The group whose successful practice seemed to vindicate the analysis — the International Socialists — was so disorientated that it lost its pre-eminence on the far left and began to resort to 'party-building' stunts in an attempt to recoup itself.

All in all, the left's gains have been marginal, and all the groups put together — even if this could be anything more than a statistical expression — are still a small minority of a minority in the labour movement.

Even the Communist Party, which has picked up both drop-outs from the revolution and some teachers and students who can see no alternative to it, has been no focus for dissatisfaction with Labour.

If Labour's hold on the working class has never been that of a mass party then it must be true that its hold has been ideological. So it will be — and has been — useless for the left to rely on the decay of the Party organisation.

Declining Party membership hasn't stopped most workers from supporting the social contract; and it is plain that it is social-democratic ideas, not membership cards, that stand in the way of the left.

In the 1960s the assumption — particularly in the student movement and around the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign — was that a rising tide of working class struggle, alongside the development of movements among women and national minority groups would show up the assumptions of official Labour Party politics as irrelevant. The result, it was hoped, would be the drawing of radical or revolutionary conclusions.

All this implied that the left, natural inheritors of Labour's working class support, would grow in step with Labour's decline.

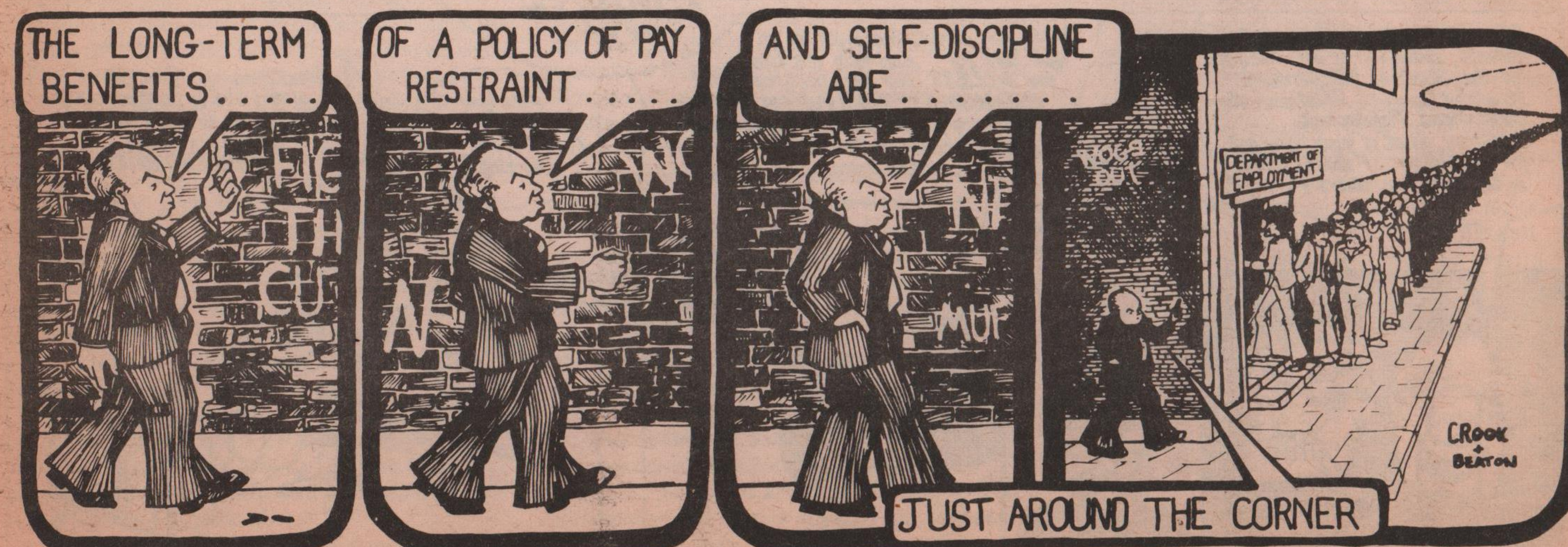
But although Labour duly declined — in votes and in active members — one can hardly help noticing that the left's gains have not been those expected.

Socialists need to confront the fact that August 1914 never happened in this country — that there has been no differentiation between reformist and revolutionary wings of the working class. But fortunately there is plenty of scope for Marxists to intervene through the medium of both trade unions and Labour Party.

At long last there seems to be a revival of interest in the Labour Party as a practical problem. And this time the question ought to be not 'Should we work in the Labour Party?' but 'How?'

Movement Against
Security Abuses

conway Hall
Red Lion Square
May 26th. 7.30 pm.
PHILIP AGEE SPEAKS



ZAIRE

When a country with a 40,000 strong national army is unable to counter an invasion from a force as small as 3,000, something is badly wrong. President Mobutu's regime may not have been toppled but it will only be a matter of time before a strong combination of economic troubles and popular discontent catch up with him.

Known for his vanity, he never really forgot his defeat when he backed the FNLA in the Angolan War. Despite having agreed to have diplomatic relations with Angola, he put together a series of plans – codenamed Operation Cobra – to cut off Angola's revenue from oil in the Cabinda enclave.

To put a stop to this continual plotting, President Neto of Angola finally gave the go-ahead to the former Katangese Gendarmerie to invade Shaba province, as Katanga is now called. These were not the same troops who fought for Tshombe in 1965. Many were from a new generation – educated in Moscow and Europe – who had come back as socialists not separatists, renamed themselves the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FNLC), and were resolved to liberate all of Zaire.

The strategic objective was to capture Kolwezi, 75 miles from the Angolan border; the mining town that provides 75 per cent of the world's cobalt. With surprise on their side and facing a disorganised Zairean army, the invading army was able to get within spitting distance of Kolwezi before Zaire's friends stepped in to save it.

Most important among those friends were the French, whose importance in Africa as an imperialist power is often missed. More subtle than the blundering CIA presence in Africa, its influence on events has proved decisive.

The French secret service, SDCECE had already intervened in the Angolan war through the France-Cabinda set up in 1974. According to the *Washington Post*, this organisation centralised in Gabon arms and funds earmarked for FLEC, the separatist group which unsuccessfully invaded Cabinda. Many French operatives were killed or captured in this debacle.

More interestingly the French were said to have had a hand in the assassination of left-leaning Congo president Marien Ngoubai; the culminating blow in a long series of acts of economic sabotage which included pulling out of a clutch of vital mineral extraction projects. But all this cloak-and-dagger work only begins to make sense if you go back to the unsuccessful invasion of Benin, by black and white mercenaries. According to the UN investigating team, these mercenaries had only been able to make this Entebbe-style invasion by using airport facilities in Morocco and the Ivory Coast.

A cache of French Arms discovered at Benin airport lends further substance to the finding of French involvement.

The Moroccans and the French secret services, are old friends. In the 1960's, working in collaboration with the Moroccan secret services headed by General Oufkir and Colonel Dlimi (who later turned up in charge of the occupation of Western Sahara), the French arranged to have Moroccan socialist leader Ben Barka arrested in Paris. He was subsequently eliminated in a way which is still clouded in mystery.

French step in to save Mobutu's copper



Afrique Asie

So it was only natural that when Zaire called for help the French were able to call on their friends, the Moroccans to send troops while they provided military advisers. Among Zaire's other curious collection of friends were North and South Korea, China, Sudan, Egypt, Uganda and South Africa.

But the invading army is not the only armed opposition to the Mobutu regime. In Kivu province, bordering on Tanzania, the Parti Revolutionnaire du Peuple (PRP) have made claims that they control large parts of the province. This little-known group is thought to consist of one-time followers of Pierre Mulele, a former aide of Patrice Lumumba, who was himself murdered by Mobutu. Since Zaire has few roads and communication is difficult, there are few ways of checking these claims.

The root causes of this opposition are corruption, nepotism and economic mismanagement on a scale that is almost unbelievable. Under normal circumstances, Zaire's copper-based economy should be very rich but the almost conscious incompetence has resulted in economic collapse. The potential is still there and the French are obviously interested in taking over where the Belgians left off. Blessed with a wealth of minerals-diamonds, radium, gold, oil and cobalt – copper became the most important providing 70 per cent of the country's export earnings in 1975. But with the slump in copper prices by about two-thirds in 1976, this bonanza which has kept the corrupt regime alive began to collapse.

But even before this date and the cutting off of the export routes through Angola by the war there, Zaire became the first African country to default on its loan repayments to the eurocurrency markets. Not surprisingly, they refused to give any more funds. At the last moment, the International Monetary Fund provided a capital injection to keep the economy alive, insisting on stringent controls to pull it out of debt. Shortly afterwards, after many meetings of international bankers, the eurocurrency markets loan was rescheduled.

The conditions imposed meant that the Zaireanised economy was taken out of the hands of the friends of Mobutu and handed back to foreign concerns. The fundamental

Some of Mobutu's best-trained units mutinied because they had not been paid

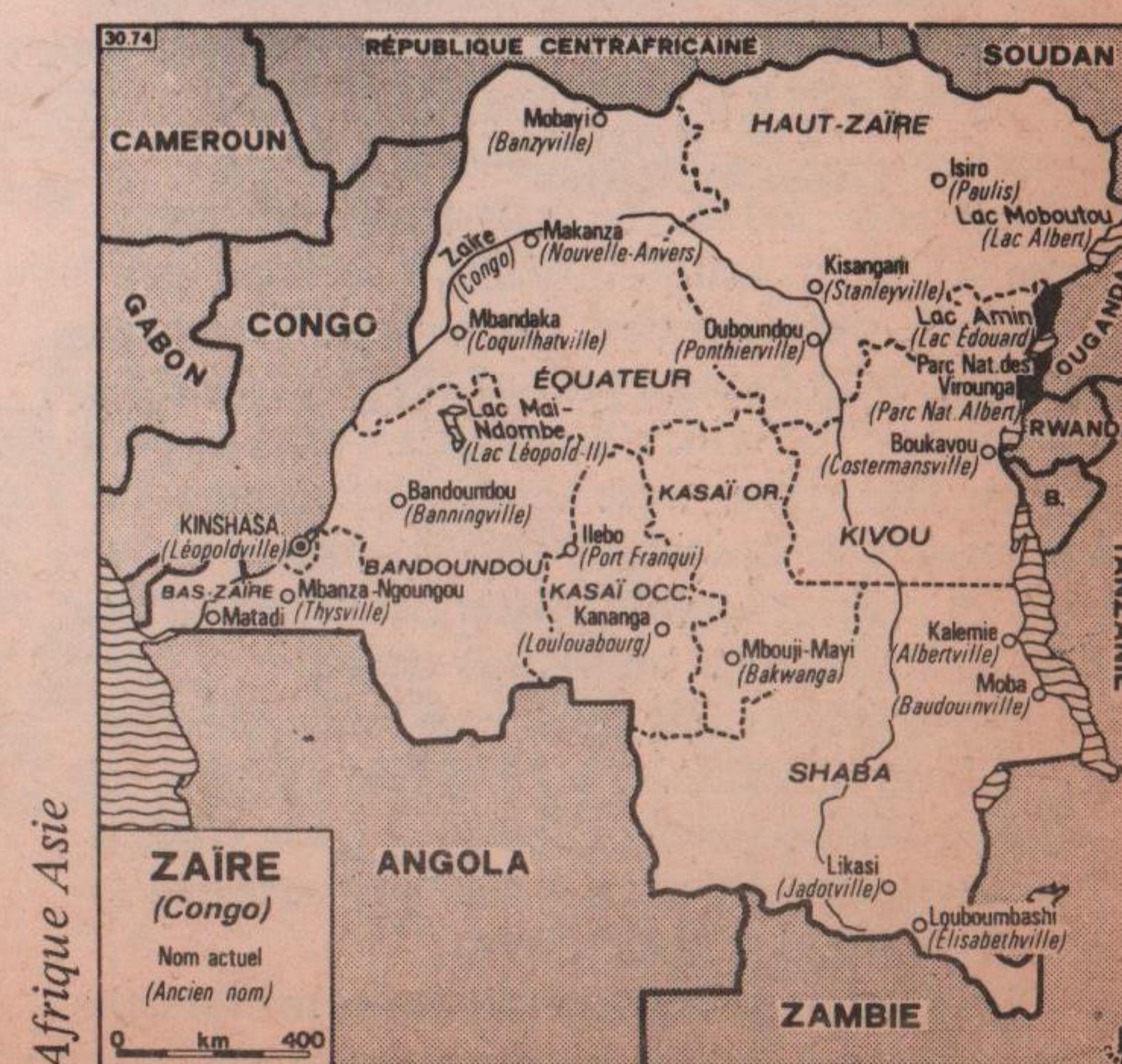
problems still remained. Production of coffee, tea, cocoa and coffee slumped. Thirty per cent of all basic foodstuffs were being imported. Rumours even reached Europe of trouble in the areas bordering Angola over high food prices and lack of food supplies.

The parlous state of the Zairean economy is best illustrated by the fact that at the beginning of the conflict, the loyalist troops in Shaba Province, which included the best-trained units, had mutinied because they had been paid and were not receiving any supplies. This is the reason why General Nathaniel M'Bumba and his Katangese gendarmes captured a lot of territory at the initial stages of the war without any serious opposition.

In the short run the combined forces of Moroccans and Zaireans have an immense advantage over the FLNC (Congolese National Liberation Front) in conventional warfare. But the outcome of a protracted guerrilla war is entirely another matter.

*Russell Southwood
Ono Osakwe*

Zaire - with the area on conflict, Shaba, in the south-eastern corner. Shaba almost fell before France and Morocco stepped in to save Mobutu.



Afrique Asie

WEST SAHARA

IN THE remote, desolate reaches of the western Sahara a bitter and obscure war is raging. 300,000 supporters of the Frente Popular para liberacion de Saguil el Hamra y Rio do Oro (Polisario) are struggling to assert their right to independence. It is as sordid an imperialist tale as you're ever likely to hear. Featured are the lusts of King Hassan of Morocco, the world price of phosphates, machinations for a pro-imperialist bloc in Africa, and the elementary right to national self-determination.

As the Franco regime entered its terminal phase in 1975 the Spanish government decided, partly under domestic pressure, to cut its losses and run after a century of misgovernment and depredation. The plot was to hand over to a pliable group of selected chiefs, even though Polisario's claim to be the sole legitimate representative of the Saharan people had already been recognised internationally.

Polisario's neighbours had other ideas, however. Morocco and Mauritania moved in to carve up the territory – about the size of Britain – regardless of the wishes of either the population or the retreating colonial power. For King Hassan, much the stronger of the aggressors, it was the chance of a lifetime. He could restore his sagging domestic position, divert attention from the failure of the economy, keep the army safely at war, and seize the phosphate mines of Bu Craa, in the north of the territory.

Phosphates are the key to the Moroccan economy, just as iron-ore is Mauritania's main source of revenue. The collapse of the world phosphate price in 1975 landed Hassan in deep trouble. But the price was bound to pick up again, and with control of Bu Craa Morocco would become one of the world's biggest producers. So in October 1975 Hassan launched the 'green march'. On a wave of manipulated chauvinism 350,000 unarmed Moroccans, many of them the urban unemployed lured out by the promise of free food, trundled slowly towards the frontier, daring the Spanish army to stop them. The Spanish nerve broke, and half of western Sahara fell into Hassan's grasp. Or so he thought.

Inside Morocco the trick seemed to work. The opposition parties, including the well-established socialists (USFP), backed the robbery of the Saharan people. The left carved in before the strident nationalism whipped up by the King. It was not the first time the Moroccan left had been bamboozled into propping up the King in exchange for a few crumbs of democracy and less repression. This time they were promised free general elections, and the Socialist leader Bouabid has, together with the important conservative party (Istiqlal) leader Boucetta, been offered a ministerial post in the government headed by Hassan's brother-in-law, Ahmed Giman. But the local elections last November were rigged and a majority of 'independents' (civil servants nominated by the palace) returned. If truly free elections were held the left would probably win.

But on the military front the cracks began to appear early on. The Moroccan army and its Mauritania allies are in a very difficult

Polisario in war of attrition



King Hassan meets Mobutu of Zaire.

position. In both cases the weaknesses of the army cannot fail to have serious domestic repercussions. Towns and settlements throughout the western Sahara are ceaselessly raided. Small groups of Polisario guerrillas sally out into the desert from their bases around Tindouf in Algeria and fall upon enemy outposts and convoys. Ships have been attacked and the Canary Islands fishermen are refusing to take their boats out. The Moroccan Army is handicapped by its inability to chase the guerillas into their Algerian sanctuaries.

The support given by Algeria to Polisario has brought the two countries to the brink of war. But nothing shows up the politics of the struggle more clearly than the sides taken by different countries. The constitution of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, proclaimed in February 1976, is socialist. Polisario is supported by the radical states of Africa, and by China and other communist countries. The ubiquitous Colonel Qaddafi is said to provide finance – though the picture is somewhat confused by his alleged support of Mauritania as well. Even the legendary General Gap is believed to have dropped in to give Polisario the benefit of his wisdom.

Morocco is backed by the reactionary states of Africa like Egypt and by conservative Arab countries. Saudi Arabia is widely thought to be financing Hassan. Behind these states stand the US and France. But the cost of the fighting still weighs heavily on Morocco. The Bu Craa mine has not worked for a year – the conveyor belt which carries the rock to the sea for export has been blown up by Polisario – and about 40 per cent of the budget is committed to 'defence'. One domestic consequence is soaring inflation, bringing with it political-unrest. Equally unpopular is the loss of men in the desert. Sources in Morocco put the casualties at a minimum of 50 a week, and they are rising. The regime is privately very worried about disaffection in the army, especially in the officer corps. All previous coups have emanated from the army and have helped

to earn Hassan the dubious soubriquet of the 'world's most shot-at monarch.'

But Mauritania is possibly the key to the war. Morale is very low, as most people simply want to get out of a conflict which has never done them any good. There are strong ties of family, tribe and language between the peoples of western Sahara and northern Mauritania. The army has been increased from 3,000 to 13,000, but most of the conscripts are blacks from the south who want nothing to do with the war. Senior officials, including the Director of the Bureau des Mines, an important post, have deserted to Polisario. As the guerilla attacks mount, the French technicians on whom the economy depends are demanding to be released from their contracts.

The recent capture of several French hostages in the mining town of Zouerate shows how long Polisario's arm is. If Mauritania can be knocked out of the war – now a distinct possibility – Polisario will have taken a major step towards isolating Hassan. Thus Hassan's intervention in Morocco – at first sight rather dotty – is explained by his desperate need to confirm his anti-socialist credentials in the eyes of his imperialist paymasters. It is no coincidence that the countries which support Mobutu also support Morocco's claim to the western Sahara. Hassan's declaration that peace in Africa is one and indivisible is in reality the ideological cover – borrowed even in its phraseology from the former colonial power, France – for welding a pro-imperialist bloc in Africa.

The toll Polisario is inflicting on Morocco and Mauritania therefore threatens the edifice of imperialist control in north and central Africa. A prolonged war could topple Hassan, who may be forced into more repression and more desperate diversions to keep his throne. But the odds against Polisario should not be underestimated; without international support the people of western Sahara could yet be overwhelmed by the forces of reaction in Africa.

Mike Prest

Letters

WRITE TO US : Send Letters to 155a, Drummond Street, London NW 1.

A Tribunite explains: No vanguard party here

The problem with Leninists is they judge others in their own image. They assume the Tribune group of MPs and *Tribune* newspaper are the same animal and expect the newspaper to reflect the political "line" of the MPs. If *Tribune* existed as a political party, which it doesn't, and was organised upon democratic centralist principles, it would reflect the MPs, but *Tribune* is an independent socialist newspaper, owned and controlled by its workers. Its function is to act as a forum of debate, its pages are open to all on the left and it is unashamedly radical, libertarian, opinionated, and often wrong but prepared to admit its faults.

The newspaper predates the Tribune group of MPs and links between the two are tenuous, to say the least. *Tribune* welcomes support from most quarters and is flattered sometimes if rank and file Labour Party members form local groups or MPs join their own Tribune group in the House of Commons. Labour MPs are welcome to contribute and regularly do so. They all think they can run the newspaper better than anyone else and they have a wide diversity of views and opinions, but in the final analysis they either take the paper or leave it.

There is paranoia among some Tribune MPs about the *Militant* "tendency" but the paper feels embarrassed rather than paranoid, especially when it acts in *Tribune's* name. The *Militant* "tendency" contains some good comrades but operates in a theoretical desert feeding upon a vulgarisation of the Trotsky-Lenin symbiosis. Their tactics, sometimes, are suspect and they don't seem to realise political necrophilia is no substitute for mass participation and mass action.

Most newspapers on the left are no more than an extension of THE party; printing "news" as the leadership of the party sees it and replacing one form of domination and control for another. The *Tribune* is one of a small group of papers on the left which prints articles from any source on the left. *Tribune's* attitude is not accidental but is part of an uncon-

scious and conscious critique of the Leninist concept of the role and organisation of the revolutionary party.

One of the central tenets of Marxism is the unity of theory and practice. Lenin's introduction of the concept of a revolutionary party organised upon democratic centralist principles breaks that unity as the vanguard party is a self-elected, self-perpetuating elite, created outside the working class seeking to "lead" the "revolution", thus transforming the proletariat from the subject to an object of the revolutionary process. The concept owes more to Blanqui than Marx. The Russian "Revolution" was opportunist; delay would have let the possibility of a coup slip like sand through Lenin's hands. Building Socialism in the Marxist sense of the word without a proletariat is problematic to say the least.

Leninism is more relevant to backward countries and successful revolutions have all been in the non-industrialised, non-capitalist part of the world - China, South East Asia, and Africa. In the Third World the vanguard party's role is to bring about the "bourgeois revolution" with some prior, vague, commitment to Socialism in the post-industrial future. Leninism has shown itself to be pertinent to the struggle in the Third World, and therefore it is irrelevant in advanced capitalist Britain.

A party organised upon democratic centralist principles in an advanced capitalist country creates numerous problems for itself; for example, the alienation of the working class from the party; in the Stechford election the SWP could only persuade 400 people to make the most minimal form of political commitment compared to over 2,000 votes for the fascists.

The arrogance of some members of these parties to working people is reflected in the attitudes of ideology for the masses and theory for the technocrats of philosophy. This doesn't help and sectarianism has made matters

worse. Which is the real revolutionary party and will the real British Lenin please stand up? The trend of power-worship and complete obedience of the rank and file to the leader of one particular Trotskyist party is frightening.

It is not surprising that the members of *Tribune* played a great part in the mechanics of the paper over its first 40 years, but now that Michael Foot has drifted away from the paper into his present role, *Tribune* has reached a crossroads of sorts. The present Editor, Dick Clements, elected by the workers on the paper, is likely to maintain and strengthen its better traditions. How far *Tribune* will change its identity remains to be resolved, but it will certainly reject any form of undemocratic Socialism.

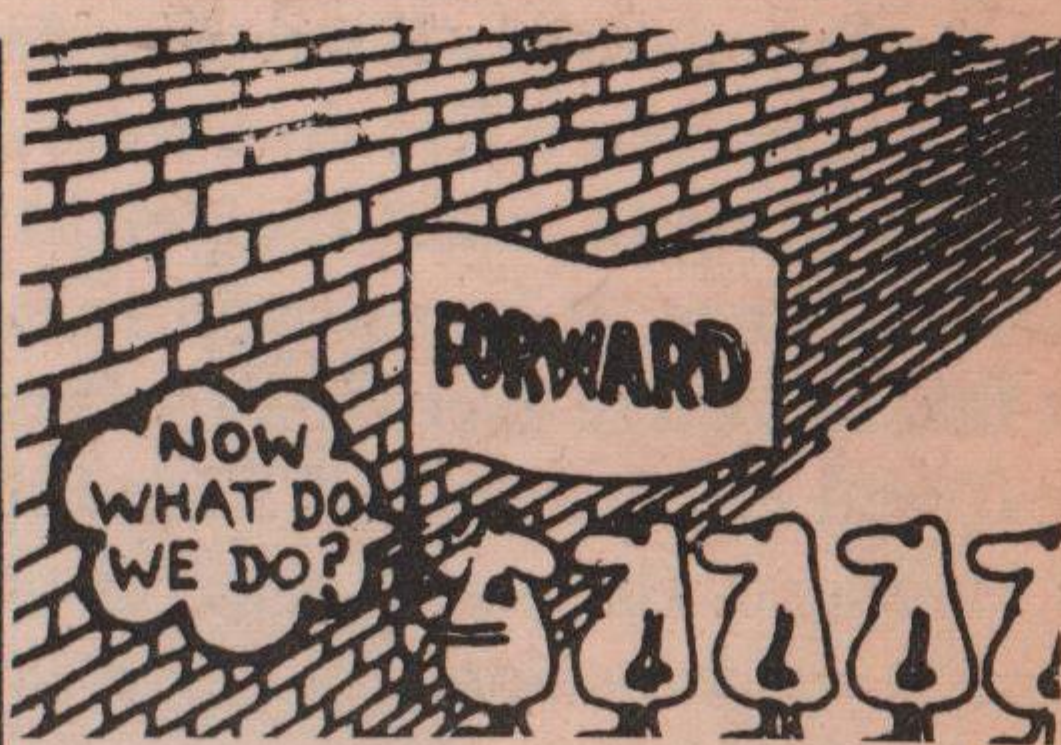
The most relevant form, perhaps, of organisation within an advanced capitalist society is for the two groups, of workers on the one hand, and students and intellectuals on the other, to operate from its own base and in terms of its own concerns, grievances and the goals. A development of consciousness from within the working class with intellectuals not leading the struggle but confining themselves to supplying workers with relevant agitational material.

Certainly some form of co-operation on the left is badly needed

and an opening up of the pages of the "left press" to comradesly debate would be a step in the left direction.

Trevor Jones
Tribune
London EC1.

*This letter has been cut.



Chairperson

Congratulations on Leveller Five. It looks better, and has more substance. Some niggling worries, though, catalysed by the way the piece on football finally appeared (one always reads one's own bits more closely than anyone else's).

These worries erupted over the use of the word 'chairperson'. I don't know whose idea this was, and I wasn't consulted about it. In common with everyone else involved with football, I use the word 'Chairman' and that was what I had written. I have no great objection to your word in principle. And my major objection is not that since football is an exclusively masculine world and since there are no female chairmen (or even directors) of football clubs, the word 'chairperson' looks, to say the least, extremely silly. What really worries me is that the people whom the Leveller was originally designed for - people who work in factories or in the army, who watch 'the Sweeney' and go to football matches, simply do not use the word 'chairperson'. They really don't. To the lads on the terraces, it is an entirely alien word, foreign to their vernacular, incomprehensible, ridiculous. If you want to talk to them, you soon learn not to use words that they don't use themselves. Otherwise you are wasting your time.

I hope that the Leveller is not wasting everything. But your word is a symptom that these days the Leveller seems to be more interested in communicating with a small number of readers who increasingly share the same assumptions and vocabulary, than in spreading the word. This is a regrettable trend, and I think it is a move in the wrong direction.

Alan Stewart

Well brothers...
and er... sister...



Miliband replies to SWP

I AM very glad that *The Leveller* has opened its pages to the discussion of the kind of organisation which socialists in Britain need, and to which my article 'Moving On' in the 1976 *Socialist Register* was intended to contribute.

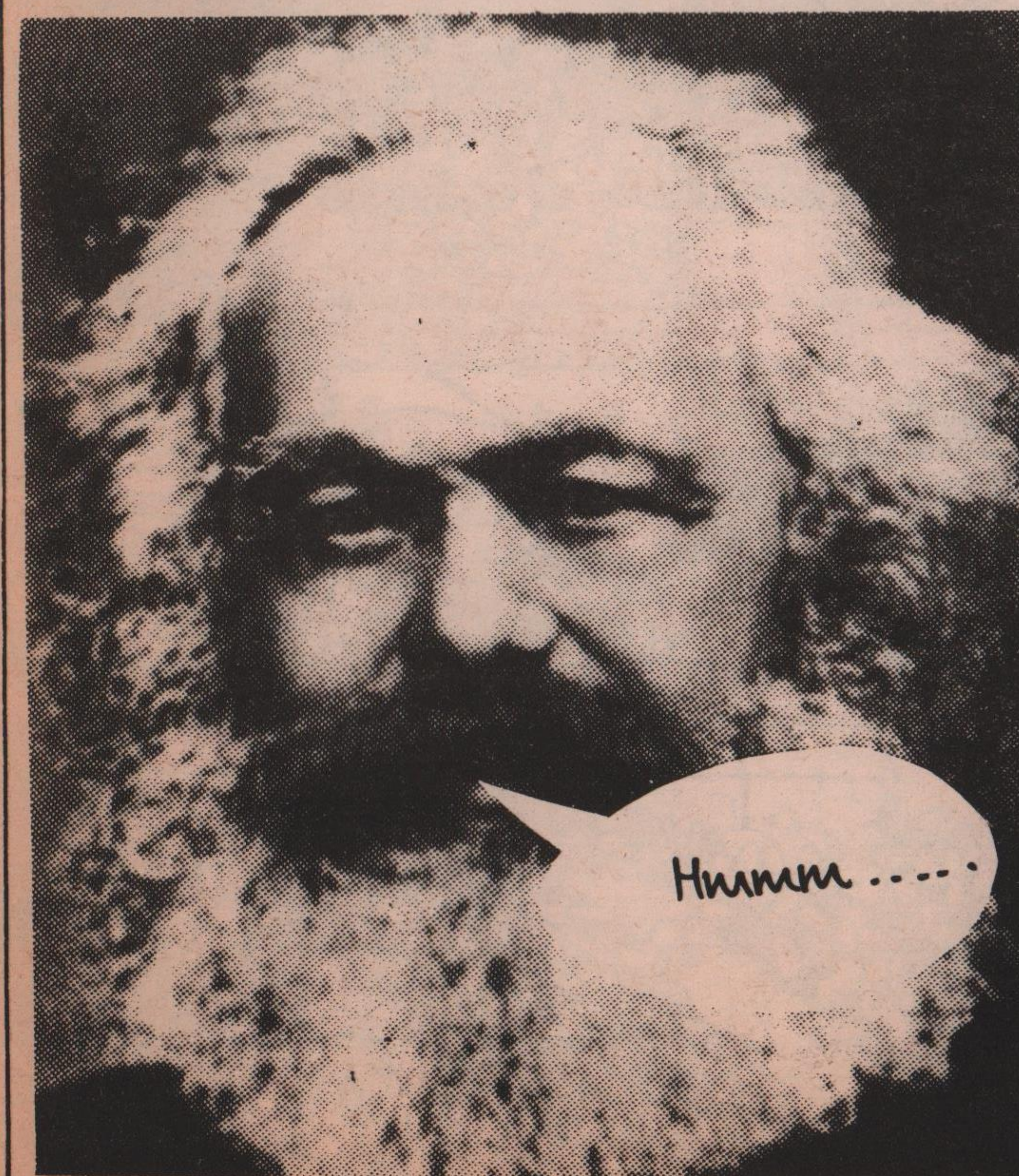
Your second correspondent, Martin Shaw, effectively answers the claim of your first, James Anderson, that the SWP is free from the undemocratic rigidities which, among other things, disqualify it to be the party which socialists need. Anderson appears to take it for granted that 'democratic centralism' must be the guiding organisational principle of such a party. I think on the contrary that 'democratic centralism' has served as a convenient device for top-down and authoritarian party structures which stifle the life, effectiveness and appeal of the organisations which adopt it.

Martin Shaw, for his part, sees the SWP's predecessor IS, as not being doctrinally sectarian. He seems to me to paint too rosy a picture, but however this may be, and having followed IS's pronouncements from the beginning, I have certainly found it doctrinally sterile, prone to empty phrase-mongering and entirely

incapable, as proven over the years, of activating the ideological and organisational discussion which is required on the left. Part of that incapacity, I believe, stems from its dogmatism and a typical sectarian tendency to resort to vicious abuse and personal denigration of those on the left who disagree with them.

Both Anderson and Shaw quite rightly query my meaning when I refer to the 'Bolshevik model' as inappropriate to our circumstances, and when I speak of the need for a socialist party to seek a measure of 'electoral legitimisation'. These formulas obviously do require much greater elaboration than that provided in my article.

For the present, I will only make the following points. First, by 'the Bolshevik model', I mean the belief in a vanguard party based on 'democratic centralism' and preparing for a not too remote seizure of power on the basis of a generalised popular insurrection. It would be stupid to suggest that this 'scenario' was inappropriate in the circumstances of Czarist Russia, or that it must always and everywhere be inappropriate. But it would seem obvious to me that working to that 'scenario' in present-day Britain is utterly self-defeating.



Secondly, I did not in my article counterpose 'electoral legitimisation' to such a 'scenario', and specifically said that 'electoral legitimisation' was not enough. But neither is it adequate for James Anderson to point to the fact that the SWP now engages in occasional electoral forays, and proposes to field at least 50 candidates at the next election.

This misses the point, which is that a socialist party must take the long view, seek implantation at the grass roots, make use of the available political process (as well as engage in other forms of activity), and seek election to local bodies as well as to Parliament (and it may well be that an effort in the local field is for the present at least as important as in the national one).

The fact is that socialists are, whether they like it or not, working in a given political environment and political culture, which is not Czarism in the first years of this century, or, say, Argentina today or for that matter the USSR. Strategies of advance cannot be uniform and frozen; and I am glad to see Martin Shaw agreeing with me that 'the revolutionary left in general has not really come to terms with the specific problems posed by advanced capitalist democracies.' This is the crucial starting point; and it is not helpful to have claims advanced on behalf of the SWP of the kind which Anderson makes; these claims rest on little more than personal faith and are not likely to carry conviction.

Finally, Anderson and Shaw also say that I am 'unhelpful' in my article about how the new party which is needed is to be formed. This is quite true, the reason for it being that I find it a very difficult question and one which will not be resolved by categorical prescriptions, or, for that matter, by any single individual.

I hope we are now entering a period of discussion, debate and analysis on this question and of a coming together of different groupings in activities and struggles for specific objectives and specific issues. It is in the course of this process that answers to the question will disclose themselves and that enough people will come to think that something more 'organic' is needed. This will take time; but I believe that the present crisis and the inability of the left to respond to it is driving in this direction.

Yours fraternally
Ralph Miliband
Leeds



A Woman's Place - Statement from the Collective.

During the early hours of Wednesday morning, April 6, A Woman's Place was broken into. The duplicator and all our files containing information about the Women's Liberation Movement were stolen. Several hundred personal addresses of women were also taken and the following note was left: 'This movement suffers from a disease of words. Whatever happened to action? Boadicea Rules OK.'

Women in the movement must realise that if the WLM is of any political significance there is always a danger of being raided by police or of indiscriminate attacks by other groups.

A Woman's Place is continuing the functions of the London Women's Information and Newsletter Service. The loss of information accumulated over the last seven years is a destruction of our communications network.

This action could weaken the WLM if we allow it to intimidate us from continuing to build our own resources as a revolutionary movement.

Mind and Body Festival— Astral left

Billed as the alternative to the Ideal Home Exhibition, the Festival for Mind and Body at Olympia could have been the biggest commercial flop since the Edsel. But as the queue began to lengthen on the first day it became obvious that there was no shortage of people wanting to see a tri-strut dome or listen to plants speak.

The Festival's exhibits — everything from windmills to pyramidology — appealed to a wide range of people; crossing several interest groups and drawing in the curious general public.

Although many of the exhibitors talked fulsomely about change, it was largely confined to being 'change' in the individual's head. But it was quite obvious from the well-heeled appearance of the religious groups that finding the truth was a profitable occupation.

The most revolutionary exhibits were what most people called 'the most practical things here' — the solar heating panels, tri-strut domes, recycling, windmills, organic farming and alternative medicines.

These were only challenging because the people who had been interested in them were disaffected from capital and saw them as a way to create a genuine alternative to capitalist structures. However naive that may seem, it has more to recommend it than the very vague vision of the future presented by most traditional left groups.

If you want to replace dependence on multinational drug companies, you don't do it by just nationalising the drug companies. China's interest in acupuncture is not some delightful eccentricity. On the same level, any 'folk' herb remedies that can be found to work must be better than swallowing the latest pill dreamed up by La Roche products. Also, mulching the soil with thistles to prevent slugs does less damage to our bodies than spraying on weed-killers.

But there are ambiguities. Mr Smith from Brighton was only interested in windmills to save on his heating bills. And the solar panels to heat house water — now yours for a little less than £500 — will soon become widely fitted to council houses after a series of experiments by local authorities. Faced with endorsement by President Carter, it will be interesting to see if the alternative technology movement will continue (say) effectively that there is no separation between technology and social relationships if a truly liberating technology is to emerge. Conserving fossil fuels is one thing but preserving fossilised human relationships is another.

One of my most interesting meetings at the Festival was with a woman from the Northern Wholefood Co-op; which supplies almost all wholefood shops in the north of England. With a constitution that makes it clear they will only deal with co-operatives, it has changed the rash of shops set up by apolitical hip entrepreneurs over to workers control. And this is no small development for the Northern Wholefood Co-op supplies over £1 million worth of food a year. Show me a left group that runs its printshop by workers control and I'll buy you a pint.

But even eating the right food has its contradictions. Few wholefood freaks (and many double up as the 'astral left') think through where the food came from. They are able to eat healthy food while African or Asian peasants struggle for a pittance, robbed by the developed capitalist economies and Third World interlopers. I don't say this to curdle people's Karmas with guilt but because this is a basic connection around which to politicise — in the broadest sense — people who eat muesli.

Not surprisingly food prices at the exhibition were high. According to one pre-exhibition report: 'Cranks has agreed to run what will be the largest wholefood restaurant in the world for five days at below their normal prices'. Coffee was a mere 25p a cup so I cannot imagine what kind of legalised robbery they normally conduct. The other food concession was run by Ceres/Harmony Foods, set up by the Sammes Brothers, the first of the great hip capitalist entrepreneurs. When one questioned these people about how expensive everything was, one might just have well asked Mrs Thatcher if she liked socialism. An old favourite exhibiting was airship promoter Max Rynish. He first came into my world when I worked as a trade journalist. I wrote a mildly critical piece on his plan to ship cabbages from somewhere in France to Taunton. He rang me up shortly afterwards

and introduced me to my first taste of conspiracy theory. I was plotting with the airlines to discredit him. Who had put me up to it? Did British Airways pay me to do it?

Having taken large sums of money from a number of people including the Daily Telegraph and shipping company, Manchester Liners, Rynish is no nearer bringing about the first commercial airship which he is always announcing to anyone who will listen. Fascinated by his machine-gun manner of speaking, I once interviewed him. After an hour of him waving a report at me telling how it proved the case for airships, I finally got my hands on the copy. Passages underlined threw grave doubts on airship possibilities.

Another interesting idea for the suggestible mind was biorhythms. The body is supposed to function in cycles and with careful study

these have been computed and now you can — with the aid of a £20 calculator — tell whether you are going to be in the right mood to do something. Best of all it can spot 'crisis' days and 'mini-crises'. One apocryphal anecdote concerned a guy who refused to move out of the house on a 'crisis' day. If that didn't satisfy, you could have your bodily aura photographed with the aid of a machine costing a mere £1200 and compare it with that of living geniuses.

Normally, I would have watched this circus on the television news and had a good cynical chuckle but I happened to be working for the Publications Distribution Co-operative. They had decided to take a stand to sell their publications (which includes this mag) there and it proved to be a useful political dipstick. The stand contained a fair sprinkling of

books and magazines obtained especially for the Festival to draw people in. I felt secretly that little of the material the Distribution Co-op normally carried would sell. Visitors' main interests were food, birth and babies, massage, herb remedies, drugs, sexism/racism and psychology.

What the stand did show was how well radical magazines and books were received by the nearest they ever came to the great unwashed public. Just for a laugh, we put out a copy of Paul Foot's 'Why you should be a socialist', thinking it would blow a few hippies' minds. It was gone within a couple of hours and there was no difficulty in selling several more copies. A bus driver even bought an alternative technology catalogue and free anti-monarchy stickers went without any trouble.

It was these kind of successes that made me feel that 'politics' should have been made some kind of intervention, posed some alter-

Collectivised Gardens: one of a set of seven posters by Cliff Harper, available for 60p, plus postage, from Compendium, Alternative Technology Dept., 281, Camden High Street, London NW1.



native to all the religious mutters. Somebody looked at the poster by anarchist Cliff Harper showing collectivised gardens and said: 'Wouldn't it be nice if that could happen'. We must provide not only the imagination but some of the means for people who are interested in making it happen.

Otherwise the field is open to head-trippers. Like the studied meditator on one stand, full of beatific relaxation, so quiet, so still and along comes another swami with a pepsi and quick as you can say 'Find the Truth' he's guzzling it for all it's worth. Pepsi cola and meditation with a tireless loop tape of an Indian voice: 'Soon you will be re-born, reborn into religion. Sex and drugs are only transitory'.

I'll stick with the slogan I saw on one school student's lapel: 'No God. No TV. Here's the future. ANARCHY'.



Hotel workers tackle the menu

What do you think should replace Phase Two?

Nothing — just free collective bargaining, no further Phases. I think it's essential — they might even implement Phase Three but I doubt very much if Phase Two is going to survive intact. We're not happy about Phase Two now in our own branch. We've got the £2.50 but we're still applying for overtime rates which we want this year. We're not prepared to hang on until next October when our next Wages Review comes in.

Is that the popular feeling amongst your colleagues and fellow shop stewards?

Yes, And not just shop stewards — members too. The ordinary working people, union members and non-union members, are all solidly agreed that the present wages restraint is ridiculous. And so incidentally are the management. The management themselves feel that the wages policy is too restrictive.

If you didn't have Phase Three, if you did have a return to free collective bargaining, could your workers force the wages up to a realistic level?

Possibly they could in the hotel in which I am working because we have a substantial body of union membership. And wages are something which will unite people. At the moment we can't campaign for recruitment on the issue of wages simply because the union itself isn't going to give any individual backing to wages demands. As soon as this present phase is expired then I should think we stand a lot more chance of increasing our membership and in getting action from the members.

Would you see that as you at the Cumberland negotiating with the Cumberland Hotel management to get your own wages put up, or would you see it as a series of demands to put forward at the Wages Council?

Oh no. The Wages Council is just a complete and utter waste of time. The whole thing is a sick joke. The £2.50 which was awarded to us under the Wages Council was given on the understanding that the employers would still be able to make deductions from even that paltry sum.

Hopefully we would negotiate as a branch with the company for all branch members and for all establishments where we have membership. I don't like to think of individual establishments negotiating their own rates. I would much rather it came from the branch. Also action taken by members from a branch as opposed to just an individual establishment is much more effective.

What was your attitude to Phase One, Phase Two and the whole Social Contract?

We thought it was extremely unjust to low paid workers. At first there was a substantial body of opinion that there should definitely be wages restraints with special allowances for low paid workers. I never subscribed to that view personally because I think wages restraints are self-defeating. But any support that there was for wage restraint has completely evaporated now. You've only got to look at the news today to see that Phase Two itself is coming under severe attack, let alone Phase Three. Our own union congress this year won't support any further wages restraints, judging by the volume of anti-Social Contract motions that have come in from the branches. There are something like 44. There are only about 2 or 3

The Hotel and Catering Industry is a major sector of the British economy. Approximately 1.3m people are employed in it, perhaps 7% of the total British labour force. These people are among the lowest paid in the country. A recent survey from the Low Pay Unit estimated that at least a quarter of a million of them are below the official poverty line.

It is an industry whose proprietors are enjoying a major boom, fuelled principally from the massive intake of tourists into Britain. The big companies like Grand Metropolitan and Trust Houses Forte have been reporting record levels of profit while bleating to the Government about their low levels of capitalisation and inability to pay a decent wage.

Basic wage levels are determined by the Wages Councils in which a ruthless and efficiently organised employers' side has been able to run rings around the docile and largely passive union side. The official London minimum rate is £30, but after stoppages for board and lodging, many workers still take home less than £20.

An insignificant number of workers in the industry are unionised. Estimates put the number at around 10,000 and although this is growing, since the main unions are the GMWU and the T & GWU, the employers have generally been given a free run for their money.

But there are now signs that a change is coming. This year a number of strikes notably in Sheffield, Birmingham and Oxford, have hit the industry and throughout the industry there are distinct rumbles of discontent. They are still very small rumbles in a very big industry but they are nevertheless extremely significant.

Stop stewards from four centres recently set up a Hotel and Catering National Action Committee. One member is Terry Mahoney, the GMWU shop steward at London's prestigious Cumberland Hotel where workers last month staged a one day stoppage in support of strikers in Oxford and Sheffield. Terry talked to *The Leveller* about the Committee, the industry and prospects for the future.

motions in favour of wage restraint and even they have provisos in them.

Mr Healey won't like that will he? He and Mr Basnett are presumably working out some sort of scheme to keep you guys in line aren't they?

Oh sure. But Healey and Basnett, if they've got any sense, will take into account the feelings of the members.

Tell us about organising workers in the industry.

Well, at the moment we're building up slowly. I believe we're the second largest branch in the GMWU. It's difficult because, to begin with, as a trade union branch, naturally we have to hold meetings regularly. We can't hold these on the premises of the hotel. We used to be able to under J. Lyons, but under Trust Houses Fortes', we're not able to do it anymore.

The reason they'll give is that you're interrupting the work and will have to see them after hours. Very often, of course, we go into a department and carry on without the management being there. It's a very hazardous business, starting up a union. What usually happens is because of the turnover, the kind of person that you get as a steward is bound to be a 'trouble maker' of one sort or another. By 'trouble maker' I mean someone who is prepared to stand up and fight, and the management don't take too kindly to that. So there's a high casualty rate among shop stewards. They'll be sacked for coming in 5 minutes late.

Are they people who've been involved in union activity before, or does it actually generate a new set of people?

It generates a new set of people. I hadn't been involved actively in any union before I came to the Cumberland. There's a national agreement which says that any

shop steward must be mutually agreed upon by the management and by the union. It's amazing. It's the union agreement signed in 1947 and it hasn't been substantially updated since then.

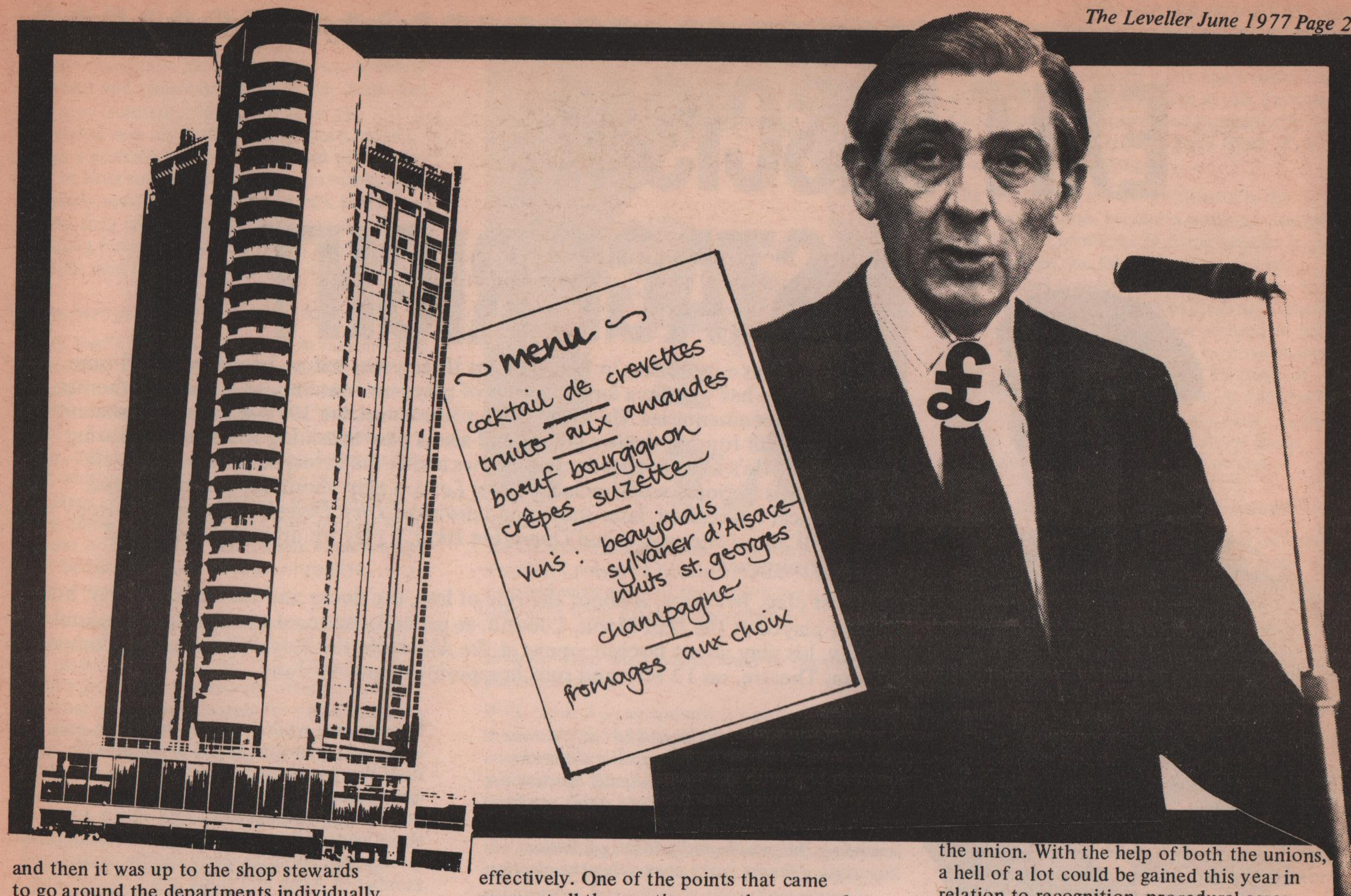
Most of my shop stewards are not recognised. I've got a whacking big problem — a whole pile of nonsensical correspondence between me and the regional official. I get people applying for recognition with the result that they can't do it because they haven't had 6 months service. This is a condition imposed by our own union. There was a case of a 17 year old who I'd applied for (I didn't in fact know he was 17). I was told he was too young and didn't have sufficient experience of life.

Is the union growing?

Well they say they are. Our branch is certainly growing but I think it's a false growth because the union isn't prepared to *actively* take on the management over recognition as such — and recognition of individual shop stewards. The same thing is going to happen as happened after the war. We're going to get a big increase in membership and it's going to all disappear overnight. All it takes is one attempted, concerted action by union members in some form of a strike, and a company could sack the lot. Then we're back to square one.

Can you tell us how you go about recruiting people into the union?

Generally it starts off with a recruitment meeting held by a recruitment officer from the regular office. It usually takes about 2 or 3 of these to get people to join. What we get is an initial core of membership and we hope they will continue to do the job. In our hotel this is what happened. We had two or three meetings and eventually 2 or 3 shop stewards evolved from these meetings,



and then it was up to the shop stewards to go around the departments individually and recruit the membership. We came up against a problem there because lots of the departmental managers are completely anti-union and they don't want any kind of union activity taking place on their premises.

Are the shop stewards in the industry now beginning to organise on a national basis?

Yes. There have been attempts at it before but it didn't seem to come off. But as we had a dispute with THF in four parts of the country — London, Oxford, Sheffield and Birmingham — we decided to get together with the strikers at the other branches and see if there was any way in which we could help them. Since then we've had regular meetings, we've lobbied Parliament and been to Transport House to get an interview with Jack Jones.

Two disputes started at the Linton Lodge and the Randolph Hotel in Oxford. They had been going on for five months. Shortly after that the Grosvenor House Hotel in Sheffield came out. What's happened in each case is that the shop stewards have been sacked. The members who've come out have all been fined. Again, shortly after that there was another dismissal of a shop steward at the Night Out in Birmingham. All those shop stewards got together with a few shop stewards from London and we decided to set up a Hotel and Catering Workers' National Action Committee.

We had our first meeting in Conway Hall. We discussed first of all what was happening about the so-called national blacking campaign against THF. This was supposed to be implemented by the TGWU. It was agreed by the National Executive at Transport House. Jack Jones nevertheless managed to persuade them that it just wasn't on. So in spite of the fact that the whole national executive was agreed upon it, Jack Jones persuaded them to vote the other way.

So there was no national blacking. Birmingham implemented regional blacking very

effectively. One of the points that came across at all the meetings was that none of the strikers would go back to work unless all went back, but, since then, Birmingham all went back after being bullied into it by their regional official. He told them that if they wanted any help at all from the union, they'd have to play it his way. They've since stopped coming to our meetings but, nevertheless, we still do have a National Action group comprising of shop stewards from London, Sheffield and elsewhere from both unions.

“The national blacking campaign was agreed by the National Executive at Transport House.....Jack Jones persuaded them to vote the other way.....”

What is the policy of the National Action Group? Does it have any other policy apart from bringing support to these disputes?

At the moment, actually, we haven't sorted out too carefully a list of objectives but a temporary one will be able to resolve the disputes carrying on at THF. That will be throughout the country. We have already agreed, at a meeting up in Oxford, to formalise a list of more permanent objectives at the next meeting. Generally, we'll be an action group involved in any dispute of hotel workers.

If there was any year in which workers in the industry should take on the management, it must be this year mustn't it? Is there that feeling in the industry? Particularly in London, quite a lot of damage could be done with a series of guerilla strikes if nothing else. Does the National Committee have the support to pull off that kind of thing?

We would hope to build up our strength sufficiently before the summer season really comes. We feel that the union itself must change. It all comes back to the attitude of

the union. With the help of both the unions, a hell of a lot could be gained this year in relation to recognition, procedural agreements, substantive agreements, but the unions themselves are not just bothered. All they are concerned about is collecting their dues and I understand that the G&MWU is now about to increase its contributions but I don't see why we should pay 30p a week for nothing.

What is the G&MWU's official reaction to the action group?

They haven't said anything so far. I think they're ignoring us. Certainly they've heard of us, but I've never heard about it, not even informally from any of the officials. I don't think it's popular because the G&MWU likes to have its disputes resolved on paper — by correspondence. They say they have a set-out procedure whereby you go to your head of department, then you go to the General Manager and then the trade union official becomes involved. That's not a procedure as far as we're concerned. Also, they like all their business conducted within their branches. They don't like branches mixing.

Have you ever thought of joining any other union?

Oh sure, I had thought for a long time of joining the T&GWU but its recent action put me right off. I think a thing of the future, but not at this moment, would be a hotel and catering worker's union. I think our shop steward's action committee has a role to play as a pressure group among the unions. What's been happening in the past, in both unions, is that there are disputes taking place over recognition. Members come out and then they're sacked. They're given absolutely no help by the union. We feel there should be concerted action and sympathy action taken by different hotels within the same company. If there's a dispute in Oxford or Sheffield, for instance, then the workers from London should come out which is what happened last time. Obviously, we had other reasons for coming out, but what prompted us was sympathy action with these two disputes.

EXIT FASCISM, STAGE RIGHT

David Edgar was a journalist in Bradford for three years before becoming a full-time playwright. He has written a large number of plays on contemporary political themes, a lot of them documentaries. He wrote three plays about the 1970-4 Tory Government for the General Will touring theatre group, and also a play attacking the Tories' Housing Finance Act. He's also written documentaries about the aerospace and motorcycle industries. His fictional work includes *Baby Love*, a play about babysnatching and psychological oppression, later shown on television; *Dick Deterred*, a musical parody of Richard III about Watergate; and *Operation Iskra*, a play on urban terrorism and counter-insurgency.

His latest play, *Wreckers*, is about the rule of law, the docks and the Labour Party, and has just played at the Half Moon, London, as part of a national tour by 7:84 England. *Destiny*, his play about fascism, opens at the Aldwych, the Royal Shakespeare Company's London Theatre, on 12 May and runs in repertoire until 15 June.

Destiny kicks off in India in 1947 at the time of the British withdrawal and then shifts the main characters to a West Midlands by-election in the seventies in a town where Asian workers are striking at the local factory. The play examines the people and politics of Nation Forward, a fascist party contesting the election.

What prompted you to write Destiny in the first place?

I think the play began as an idea in the wake of the Ugandan Asians crisis, when it seemed to me that the leadership of the anti-immigration movement was passing from people like Powell towards people who saw immigration as an issue to attract people to the extreme right. I was concerned about that and decided to express that concern in a play. At first, I doodled with the idea of a play set in the 1930s, or indeed in a future fascist or near-fascist Britain. But I soon realised that the only way to alert people properly was to do a play based on real fascist parties operating in Britain now.

Had it arisen out of your direct experience?

Well, I was living in Bradford at the time, and I'd been a journalist there for three years, so I had a lot of experience of the extreme right in that city, and indeed of struggles against racism both by the left and the Asian communities. But I think the important experience I brought to it was, in a sense, my own middle-class upbringing. I was determined from the start to show how the British middle class was just as susceptible to fascism, potentially, as the German middle class had been in the 1930s. And I drew a lot on my own background, and the fears and despairs of the British middle class. I felt that to create monsters was counter-productive; the Fascists in the play had to be real people that an audience could, in a sense, relate to. I don't take the view that there's a hidden Fascist in all of us — I think that's a kind of Reichian view which is rather apolitical. But I do think most people who don't come from a strong socialist and working-class background can understand the appeal.

How close was your own experience of the racist right?

Well, I'd come into a lot of contact with Jim Merrick's Yorkshire Campaign to Stop

Immigration while I was on the paper, and attended his meetings, and so on. But the play itself was based on detailed research into the extreme right. I'm now on to my seventh box-file of material, and I read about 30 books about contemporary and historical fascism, and interviewed about as many people, including a number of Asian and trade union leaders and other people involved in the struggle against fascism. Although the play is fiction — there are no real people in it, and the far-right groups are not real ones — every incident in it, with one exception, has happened, though not necessarily in that order.

To give an example of how the play works: There are Hitler birthday parties held regularly and, as coincidence may have it, Enoch Powell delivered his "rivers of blood" speech on Hitler's birthday. Now I don't know if there was a Hitler birthday party in 1968 which heard the news of that speech, but it's a fair bet and I've written a scene on that supposition. Another example: there is a strike by Asian workers at a foundry in the play. Now here the actual progress of the strike is based on what happened at Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters, while the atmosphere is based much more on the different conditions of the West Midlands foundry industry and the struggles they've had there.

There have been plays written before about racism, but the racists have tended to be presented in a very caricatural way. This isn't true of Destiny?

No, it isn't. As I said, I've tried to get inside the skin of the Fascists. Some of them, of course, are open and unpleasant demagogues. Some are just bewildered. Others are nice enough people who find themselves in a despairing situation and find that the extreme right offers them the only way out.

In meeting this problem head-on, are you worried that non-political audiences might pick up the Fascists' slogans, even agree with them?

Yes, there is that danger. In discussions I'm always asked that and it occupied a lot of time in rehearsals, worrying about it. But I think more and more that it's a risk worth taking, because if you present the fascists in a cartoon way, then when people are actually approached by the real thing — people who bear no relation

to my characters, people who are superficially pleasant and plausible — they'll just think that my play is untrue. I'm out to show the awesome ease with which people can move from a position that we might find distasteful but at least understandable (mild racism, say, or a mildly reactionary line on crime). How easily they can move, without even noticing it, to open fascism. And that won't work if the people aren't real and, in a way, sympathetic.

How have audiences reacted to the play?

Well, that's interesting because in fact most of them have fully understood what the play's trying to do. The people who did mistake it, oddly enough, were some critics. Well, not that oddly, I suppose; one or two of them took great delight in alleging that this leftie writer had written a Nazi play by some kind of accident. But this was a cheap point, and as silly, really, as claiming that Shakespeare is in favour of smothering infants and mass murder just because Richard III is an attractive character in some ways.

The audiences in discussion seem to be much clearer about it, and I'm glad to say that when we played it in Newcastle two girls who clearly didn't go to the theatre very often, and who I suppose were prime targets for misinterpreting it, were overheard calling it "commie rubbish". They knew what it was saying. One thing I should say, a lot of people thought I'd underwritten the left, and the play's lack of a real alternative made it very bleak and pessimistic. I think this is a problem: I do see *Scene from "Destiny", Edgar play now at the Aldwych, London.*



David Edgar

the situation as bleak, and I think plays shouldn't present a falsely optimistic glow. But I agreed with some of these criticisms, and I've rewritten it for London accordingly.

How do other playwrights react to the kind of plays you write?

Well, there is a movement, it's quite large now in the theatre, of people who write about contemporary issues from a socialist perspective. They include people like Trevor Griffiths, John McGrath, Howard Benton and Howard Barker. I think we're all trying to do the same thing: to find ways of making political statements in a way that isn't too simplistic and patronising, but which is clear. Sometimes I

think we — or perhaps I shouldn't speak for other people and say I — err in one direction or the other: too simplistic, or occasionally too complex and ambiguous. But I think it's a problem worth solving.

The great thing about the theatre is that it can, at the same time, present a political analysis and the real problems of living people; it can at once present the facts of a situation in an entertaining way and link those facts to the real aspirations and fears of flesh-and-blood characters. *Destiny* has been accused of being a tract, and I don't mind that, because at one level it is a tract; at another it's a piece of agit-prop; at another it's a tale; at another it's a play about psychology and emotion. At the end of the day, it's how well those levels interrelate that makes it work or not.

Do you feel that writing plays is enough?

No, absolutely not. There are some left-wing playwrights, rather strangely in my view, who advocate, say, the strengthening of trade unions on the stage or in television plays, but who don't get involved in their own unions. Indeed, there's one case of a very prominent left-wing writer getting slung out of his union for not paying his subs. I think that is a classic example of the dangers of not linking theory and practice. I'm involved in anti-fascist activity, I work in two unions (the ACTT and the Theatre Writers' Union) and I'm active in other ways. I'm not in a political party and I don't do nearly enough and there aren't any excuses for that. But to do nothing except preach from television or theatrical soapboxes is to undermine every word that's written.



Women look back - Life

THE TAMARISK TREE, MY QUEST FOR LIBERTY & LOVE by Dora Russell. (Virago £1.95).

LIFE AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT by Co-operative Working Women.

Introductory Letter by Virginia Woolf, Edited by Margaret Llewelyn Davies, New Introduction Anna Davin. (Virago £1.25).

IN WRITING a feminist version of history we look to our past in order to set our political and personal ideals in a socialist future. Virago, the feminist publishers, have answered a crying need for more feminist source-material, and have dusted and reprinted these two important books as low-priced and accessible paperbacks. They are both of compelling autobiographical interest, a valuable alternative to the sort of feminist history-writing which plunges wildly backwards into myths, magic and matriarchies.

In patiently piecing together the lost and rejected parts of our history, women need a lot of reassurance and justification for a project — the writing of history — which often seems so fraught with mystification as to actually contradict many of the progressive notions of women's liberation. They also need new sources. To share something of these women's lives in these two books is to glimpse a reflection of our own image in a deep well and then to listen to the resonance of our own shout.

As we peer into the pages of our past we constantly feel the need for more sources, so that feminist history-writing may eventually begin to intersect with so many personal and political projects that it becomes a spontaneous self-generating process. Only then can we struggle to throw off the powerful illusion of eternity which capitalism is able to impose on an idea. Only then can we begin to grasp how bourgeois society has so deformed the 'dead world of the past' that history is something we conjure up in times of crisis, wrapped up in nostalgia and antiquarianism and containing a language by which people floundering and falling over each other in the early stage of a social revolution can express something which has never before existed.

Dora Russell writes her own life-history with a ceaseless flow of energy and the sort of spiritual certainty that moves hearts and mountains. Her autobiography is subtitled *My Quest for Liberty & Love*. It is a quest which involves her in the 1920s with the World League for Sexual Reform, an organisation agitating for birth-control, sex-education and homosexual rights. It took her into grass-roots work with the Labour and Communist Parties and the Trade Union movement, doing propaganda work for the Workers' Birth Control Group. And it was a quest which she carried at all times into her relationship with Bertrand Russell, the care of her four children and the organisation of their progressive school.

Through all these activities we see Dora herself, torn apart by the attempt to integrate her political concerns with her domestic concerns and the devoted care she lavished on Russell and her children. For as one of the 'new feminists' who parted company with the suffragettes after the First World War gave them the vote, Dora yearned to experience the special qualities of 'femininity', qualities which she believed were still uniquely capable of pacifying the warmongers, cherishing the new generation of children — and somehow withstanding intact the obscenities of marauding capitalism.

Girton College Cambridge in 1912 was run rather like a girls' boarding school when Dora arrived as a student, one of a tiny member of highly privileged, intellectual and impressive women. It was the outbreak of the war which convinced her and many of her sisters that the new freedoms women were beginning to enjoy were being very fundamentally violated by the horrors of war. These 'new feminists' sought political solutions to the immediate problems facing them as they pondered on their sexuality, their biology and their capacity for motherhood.

Later on, as a socialist involved in working-class struggles for birth control in the early 20's, Dora could make common cause with her more politically conservative sisters on an issue which was indeed one of life and death to all women of her time. 'I don't think that anybody at that time accepted what we speak of today as a woman's right to decide whether she has a child or not', she recalled in a recent Spare Rib interview. 'Rejecting their husband's advances was the only means they had of protecting themselves'.

To Dora, as to large numbers of young intellectuals, Bertrand Russell's eloquent commitment to pacifism was an inspiration, a much needed hope for the ultimate victory of humanism over barbarism. Her deep and

growing love for him runs through the narrative of her own life — although it doesn't prevent her recounting with disarming honesty the many occasions on which she sacrificed her own principles to his demands, and to the expectations of his sex and aristocratic background. How, you may ask, could two such ardent defenders of 'free love' submit to the indignities of the bourgeois marriage ceremony? Why, to legitimate Bertie's heir, of course! And for all the joy and companionship she finds with Russell she still manages a well-timed raspberry for some of those tedious moments recalled waiting in side rooms or sitting silently at table while Bertie conferred with Wittgenstein or Moore.

Central to the whole of her life, however, her political purpose and the future of her relationship with Russell, was the extraordinarily intense visit she embarked on, alone and uncommitted, to Bolshevik Russia in 1920. Her impressions of the ravaged workers' state, the politicians, the women and workers she talked to there, were a lifelong and conflicting source of inspiration to her.

Indeed, in those days when there was as yet no Communist Party in England, when she was still childishly innocent of politics, and Marxism was to her no more than a name, she nevertheless 'felt sincerely that in the Soviet Union I had seen a vision — a vision I would have to accept to have been almost mystical — but in the political sense a vision of the making of a future civilisation'. Her intuitive misgivings about the future of Soviet education, a discussion with Alexandra Kollontai who confided her doubts about any easy solution to the problems of liberating Russia's women, her enthusiasm for Soviet sex-education methods and the easy availability of abortion — all these impressions are etched against the heartaching realities of the war-torn Soviet economy. Describing her visit to the Putilov works, the cradle of the revolution in Leningrad, she described the 'silent machinery, the workers drilling

as they knew it

themselves in industrial techniques, their pride in invention, all this, set against the background of battle and hunger, had a pathos which moved me to tears'.

Russell incorporated many of her disagreements with him on Soviet society into his book *Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*. Whereas at the time such disagreements within an open and loving relationship seemed to be fruitful, in retrospect many of them seemed to Dora to point to the later disharmony between them which eventually broke their marriage.

Some ten years after her visit to the Soviet Union, abandoned and betrayed by Bertie and mourning the death of a communist lover, she movingly describes her desolation as she stands helpless before the big guns of the Russells and the establishment. Yet despite the isolation common to any woman of her class and intellect, her loneliness speaks to the loneliness of all women.

It obviously has more to do with the loneliness experienced by Virginia Woolf, who wrote the original introduction to *Life As We Have Known It*, than to the women whose memories comprise this book. Nellie Scott, for example, probably never imagin-

ed that almost a century after the event, people would be reading of her efforts to organise the Felt Hatters' Trade Union — and of the victimisation which followed. Her memories, and those of a handful of other working-class women span the years from the middle of the last century until just after the General Strike in 1926. All of these women were members of the Women's Co-operative Guild, founded in 1883 in the belief that women's shopping baskets could provide the basis of a 'peaceful revolution from autocratic capitalism to democratic co-operation'. Since then of course, the peaceful road which Co-operation seemed to offer has been paved with trading-stamps, and it might appear all too easy to dismiss the ideas for which these women argued and organised. To do so would be to forget just what their lives were like. Most of them were lucky if their husbands were in regular work or could earn enough to provide for the family, and few assumed that after marriage they would give up outside employment. When times were hard a woman's wages might be all that were coming in, and in these circumstances the Co-operative movement offered very real benefits.

The Guild had a strong tradition of defending women's interests in the home, fighting for divorce, the vote, and against sexual discrimination. Nor was it silent on educational issues and the need for improved sanitation. Throughout the war, when the Guild took an uncompromisingly internationalist position, it campaigned for improved maternity conditions. Yet despite its concern for maternity care, not one of the women in the book mentions birth control or abortion (since it is known that speakers on birth control went to Guild branches this omission must be explained by conventional reticence).

What of the women who tell their stories in this book? These are women who organised their thoughts over the washtub or at the work bench, recorded their memories in moments snatched between household chores or after a long day in the trimming shop. The memoirs are those of leading activists rather than of typical Guild members, but their experience as children, workers and housewives was common enough.

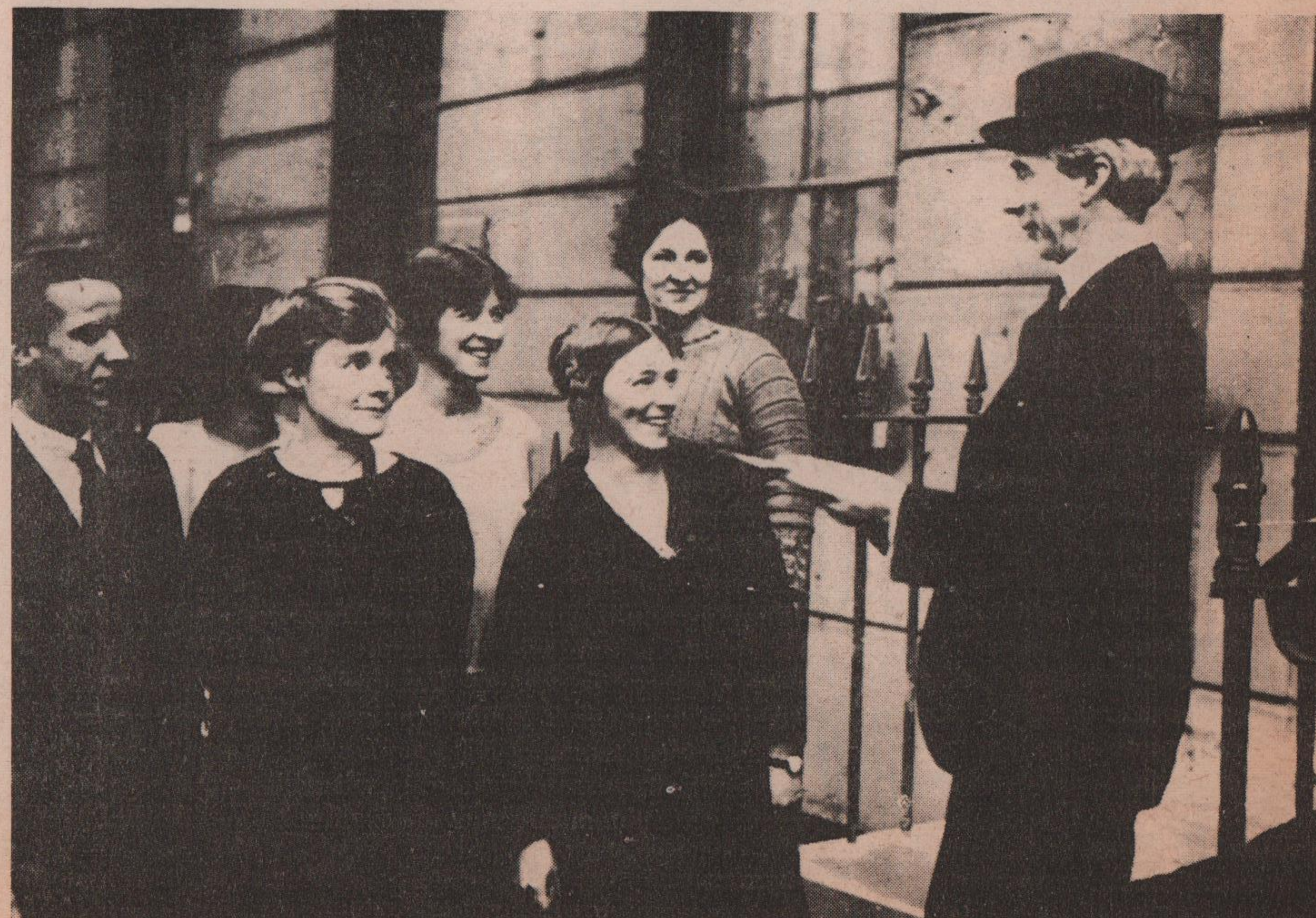
Mrs Burroughs paints a bleak picture of her childhood in the Fen District in the 1850s leaving school at the age of eight, to begin working a 14-hour day in the fields, along with 40 or 50 other children, 'of whom, even at that early age, I was the eldest'. These little ones, many of them as young as five, worked in all weathers and were kept at it by a gangmaster, 'an old man carrying a long whip in his hand which he did not neglect to use ...'

Other children went into domestic service. At the age of 10, Lizzie Layton was earning her own living, '1/6 and my tea', as a child-minder. Courting was furtive and restricted to Sundays, but marriage was generally the only way out of domestic service. Lizzie's sister, who worked in a factory, 'always seemed better dressed than I, and I suppose I envied her a little'. For factory work certainly offered more freedom and money, but most importantly, the comradeship of the work-bench and the possibility to organise.

Harriet Kidd started work as a Leek silk mill as a skeiner, when she was ten, and eight years later she knew all about exploitation. 'When I was a girl of 17', she writes, 'my then employer, a gentleman of good position and high standing in the town, sent me to his home one night, ostensibly to take a parcel of books, but really with a very different object. When I arrived at the house the family were away, and before he would allow me to leave he forced me to yield to him. At 18 I was a mother'.

The Women's Co-operative Guild had more than purely material benefits to offer its members. All the women here movingly describe how, encouraged by the Guild to struggle for political and intellectual self-development. It taught them 'what an immense power united action can be, and how the humblest may attain to it in its best form'. One woman said what many women might say about women's liberation today, 'It has brought us out'.

Cathy Porter
Peter Davidson



Bertrand Russell — candidate — and supporters, Sydney Street 1923



Dora Russell

"THE LIFE OF THE AUTOMOBILE"

By Ilya Ehrenburg. Translated by Joachim Neugroschel. Published by Pluto/Urizen. £2.70 paperback.

"A FOREIGNER ARRIVING in Paris at night, when both the Venus and the Professors of the Sorbonne are fast asleep, will see only one word : It blazes in giant letters on the Eiffel Tower. Monsieur Andre Citroen's calling card. The great name shines. All around it lightning crackles, and the tongues of mystical flame dart from earth to heaven. Those are 200,000 electric bulbs and 90 kilometres of wiring. It is also a new revelation, the tablets of Mount Zion : Come to your senses ! Join Us ! You must buy immediately - ten horsepower, a new model !"

The automobile lives ! Its message is emblazoned on the highest peaks of human construction. Its insatiable appetite is fed from the farthest corners of the globe. In Penang, Mr. Davis has a 2,500 acre plantation, with 350,000 trees. Mr. Davis has 1,000 coolies. One coolie per 350 acres. The trees must be carefully notched to obtain the rubber. Less care is taken with a coolie's back when he tried to run away. In his dreams, Mr Davis sees trees bleeding and bleeding white blood. The sacrifice is necessary. Cars must have tyres.

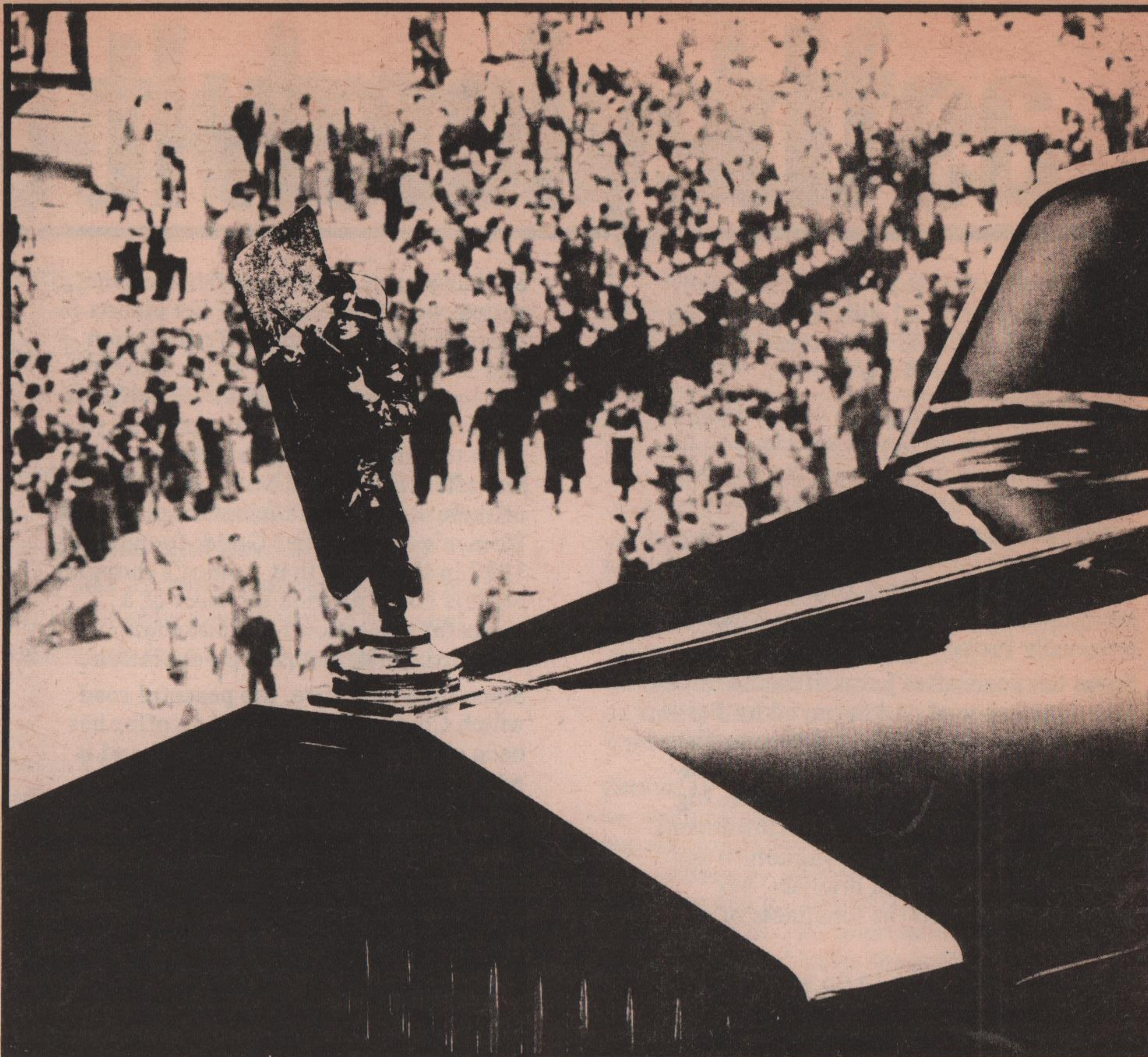
In 1799 Philippe Lebon registered a patent for a gas engine with internal combustion. He dreamt of a machine that would "overcome hostility, indolence, ignorance, langour", of the "common good" and a future where technology would liberate man from the drudgery of work.

In Detroit automobiles roll along a conveyor belt. "It's not a silk sash. It's an iron belt. It's not even a belt. It's a chain. It's a miracle of technology, a victory of human intelligence, a growth of dividends. And it's an ordinary iron chain. It chains together a gang of 25,000 convicts here."

The Life of the Automobile is not a novel. As Ehrenburg says in his own preface : "It is a chronicle of our time". The time when the book was written (1929) was that of the rationalisation of mass production and the growth of F.W.Taylor's "Scientific management". The worker was seen as a machine with certain physical potentialities that could be 'scientifically' measured and which he could best be induced to perform through economic incentive. It was also a time when classic imperialism was in its heyday. Ehrenburg gives us a real insight into the realities of assembly-line production and imperialist domination of the rubber-producing countries which a straight factual account would miss.

From the dreams of the early inventors to the dealings in oil shares on the stock exchange, he traces the automobile's progress and its domination of all those associated with its production. The automobile has a life of its own. It needs tyres, roads, gasoline, a stock market on which its shares can change hands and, of course, a driver. Ehrenburg's book raises this problem of the subordination of the individual to technology in the broadest way, a question that is often avoided by those who argue that ownership and control of technology is the only important issue.

The car has a psychic importance as well as an economic one : "An hour later, after polishing off a bottle of champagne, Herr



Photomontage from Camerawork

Automotive Alienation Worldwide Inc.

Stoss honked like a horn : Beep, beep ! The girl blanched devoutly. In his chest, Herr Stoss had a forty horsepower engine. His eyes were voracious and dreadful. Two headlights."

Ehrenburg constantly attributes human characteristics to the car. It controls the lives of those who produce it on the conveyor belt and it charts a course of destruction for those who sit at the wheel : "The crazy car raced towards a slope. It was dreadful and simple. It no longer had a thousand parts, it only had one cruel will. It was ancient and human now. With the lofty joy of self-oblivion it flew onward, into a pitiful dale filled with dry juniper."

Depersonalisation is the theme of the book. The life of the automobile, the death of the individual. At the beginning Ehrenburg poses a dichotomy between technological advance and individual moral development in the form of an argument between Lebon, the inventor, an "honest Jacobin" who believed truth to be the highest virtue. Ehrenburg's Jacobin says, "Machines will bring a new oppression to man. They will only stir up envy and competitiveness."

Characters come and go, making their appearances in cameos and scenarios that flit by as though seen through the window of a speeding car. It is a truly experimental piece of writing that strikes out against the crude limitations of style of much Soviet literature. It stands out also against Ehrenburg's later work, for example, *The Ninth Wave* (1953), which is overtly propagandist and portrays the Soviet Union as a world force for peace.

The style of the book can best be described as documentary fiction. This work was all-important in establishing the genre as a valid literary mode. But not only is it stylistically important: Ehrenburg manages to get behind the edifices edifices of capitalist technology and institutions

to show their real basis. He describes what lies behind the constant scurrying in the stock exchange, the quotations, the buying and selling: "In Capetown, blacks were hunting for diamonds.

Johannesburg - 295. In the port of Salonica they were loading leaves of tender tobacco : 1,117. In Indo China - phosphate : 310. Sentimental Anglo Saxons dashed off to Europe with their better halves - Sleeping Cars : 674. Doctors prescribed mineral waters for their liver patients - Vichy : 2,645. Liver patients guzzled liquor on the sly - Cusenier : 2,850. In Geneva they condemned gas warfare, but there were still fertilizers, there was still human nature - Nitrate : 323."

It is a never-ending flurry of production for production's sake from which the individual cannot escape. The all-pervading alienation of commodity production extends right into the heart of Penang and the rubber-plantations just as much as the assembly line which they feed. Ehrenburg says of the plantation manager : "He would die in Penang. He was held there by the branchy trees, which poured out dollars. He beat the boy with a switch and tenderly stroked the light grey bark. He kept buying more and more land. He rented more and more coolies. He was afraid to look in the mirror : The lord of thousands of acres was knowingly dead. He was as dead as his coolies. He was as dead as the trees that were thoroughly notched."

Unfortunately the only way out offered by Ehrenburg fails. A riot at a factory is ended by a single shot from a security guard, who is tried and freed on a verdict of self-defence. However, the book is a classic insight into the dehumanised side of production and the all-embracing domination of technology which raises problems that go beyond the question of the ownership of the means of production.

Dave Taylor

Seeger: Night Moves

THE STREET fighting men of yesteryear step out of personalised Rolls into those newspaper photographs which clutter our brains. Reminding us that those folk heroes are plastic inventions of the rock 'n roll salesmen. Tales of the noble star who refuses to turn Judas on his/her beliefs provoke a worldly shrug of the shoulders and downturned lips.

Bob Seeger is a case in point. Riding high in the American singles and album charts with *Night Moves* and playing to sell-out concerts throughout America, he has his roots in the oppositional movements of the 60s. After making his first record in 1964 he rapidly became a Detroit legend. Nationwide he meant nothing, but in Michigan he regularly sold 50,000 plus for singles like "Heavy Music" (a hymn to the power of music to move not anaesthetise), "2 + 2 = ?" (an anti-war song) and "Persecution Smith" (another protest song). Seeger then has a credible past, as a rocker who since 1964 has celebrated in live performance and on record the possibly simplistic, but nonetheless real, proposition that rock has the power to move.

It's this stance, that in the 60s seemed naive and in the early 70s seemed just plain wrong,



rather than bad management or bad record contracts, that explains Seeger's lack of success until recently. He was out of step with the times. By 1977, after a year's hard touring of a nation grown used to the inane pleasantries of Frampton's self glorification and the whine of self-pity of the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac and continually pulverised by Kiss and company, such a belief must have come as a cool wind of relief.

In 1977, Seeger filled a gap, that created by

As black America's answer to "Cross-roads", "Roots" has succeeded in repeating its success on this side of the Atlantic. MIKE PHILLIPS looks at why so many black people are glued to the screen.

'Roots' is based on an idea which is thoroughly familiar to Americans. Members of every immigrant group in the US have occupied themselves for years in tracing their personal ancestry back to their countries of origin. So by now everyone who's interested *must* know 'who they are'. Except the blacks: and it is this gap in the facade of the American dream which 'Roots' has emerged to fill.

But it's not just the funky sound of the word that makes African 'roots' different from European 'ancestry'. 'Ancestry' is a concept which has its base in feudalism. Lords, ladies, the whole bit, and the bottom line reads Lord Tankard. 'Roots' on the other hand is to do with security, self-defence, nourishment, survival. It's an idea rather than (like 'ancestry') to nurture self-confident elites; and its dynamic has been collective rather than individualistic.

So the history of African 'roots' has always been political. Check the collection of books on black American or Caribbean history and you'll find 'roots' under 'Back to Africa movements (Slave revolts: Marcus Garvey: religion — Rastafarianism; fundamentalist, black: Malcolm X: Muslims: black nationalism-Africanism). In its political aspect 'roots' was never about 'equality' or 'justice' — it simply defined the preoccupations of Europe and rejected them. So how come? I don't see 80 million Americans weeping over the teachings of Marcus Garvey, or the BBC freaking its audience with black nationalism four weeks in a row. The answer is, of course, that they imagine the story's been depoliticised. collective becomes a series of individuals, the fundamental rejection becomes a struggle to be integrated into white society. History as filtered through the upwardly

Springsteen's absence from the recording scene. The song "Night Moves", a heady vision of teenage activity recollected in the realisation of creeping middle age, is virtually a Springsteen song as sung by Van Morrison.

If one looks back to Seeger's previous album *Live Bullet*, one can see clearly how deliberate a move *Night Moves* was an album. *Live Bullet* is a rough gritty no nonsense live recording of a collection of regional hits that sold well on the back of Seeger's touring. *Night Moves*, half of which was recorded with session men and half with his regular band, is an album riddled with contradictions.

It's part nostalgia — Seeger, like his audience is over 30 — part powerhouse rock'n'roll and part (the significant part?) funky physical music with all the roughness ironed out in the mix. It's a good album and it's brought Seeger real success at last. It also suggests that Seeger may be on the verge of taking up permanent residence in Hip Easy Listening-Land, poised neatly as it is between a unifying of the power of rock'n'roll with the craftsmanship of the Seventies and a destruction of the past power of Seeger's music through production values and meaningless articulation.

What to do with success at a time when success has enfeebled most of its owners? Seeger's next album (due in September), the one that will consolidate or question the success of *Night Moves*, will also show us which path Seeger chooses. If, my guess, he opts for a Hip Easy Listening brand of heavy music, it doesn't mean that he's a lesser performer. It just means another angry person less.

Phil Hardy

Roots



mobile dreams of middle class black America.

What gives 'Roots' a peculiar resonance is that there is actually no way of telling the story without rendering its component elements more or less exactly. Black slaves did travel from Africa in inhuman circumstances, they did form part of America's capital, and the system in which we now live did have its own roots in that process. Even turned around, upside down, and rendered as a black version of American 'ancestry' worship, those elements remain precisely what they are, and they still retain their power to awaken a political response, particularly from black audiences.

Looking at it from the top, its hard to believe that. I nearly switched off when I saw the African village, and it's hard to believe that the people who made the films could be so incredibly naive. The decor throughout the series — slave shacks, cabins — everything looked like one of those sets the Texas State Opera turned out for a production of Scott Joplin's opera, or the (camp) background to Duke Ellington's Cotton performances. But that's another clue to the process of depoliticisation— people get this wrong — they're not saying that blacks were never so badly treated, what they're saying is that 'my ancestors were never THAT funky, man.' That's a different message and it's a demonstration of how far black America itself has forgotten the meaning of Kunte Kinte's message. Strange, It begins to appear that those real funky niggers down in there in ghettoland, don't have any ancestors, because the Haley family and friends were simply too *nice* to have spawned any bunch of Detroit junkies.

And of course, the truth is that Detroit junkies don't have any ancestors. But they are themselves part of the black roots. As an audience they confer on the films a dimension that comes straight from their own experience of white American society. A friend of mine just returned from New York reports seeing 'Roots' with a black family. At the point where one of the Haleys holds Doug McClure's head in a barrel of water, the entire family shouted, 'Kill him. Kill him.' So it is the factual background to the legend which disturbs. Because even if you're not entitled to a Kunte Kinte somewhere in the past, the story's yours. Not because you give a hang for ancestors, but because slavery, misery, exploitation and death is an integral and living part of our communal heritage. and the hegemonic structures under which we live have their roots in that same process. We can all be free again, and that's got to be the truth.

Mike Phillips

THE SPUD TRADE

FOOD PRICES soar and real wages fall. The price of potatoes has more than doubled in the last few years. As more and more basic elements of our diet become luxuries, food production becomes a more obviously political process.

The end of the cheap food policy for Britain, based on cheap labour at home and colonial growers abroad, coincided with the United Kingdom's entry into the EEC. It resolved an impasse, however, in food economics. To warrant the high capital expenditure on machinery and land — part of the 70's property boom — high food prices were required. Farmers were forced into a spiral of high interest rates and/or rents, and high prices for technological labour-saving farming 'aids'. These were manufactured and controlled by interests off the land. International Harvester, the giant multinational, exported Bradford and Doncaster made tractors last year worth £625 millions. Their UK head Jack Smith said recently: "I do not know anywhere in the world where we can invest a dollar and get a better return."

Potatoes are harvested by IH drawn machines, protected by ICI's chemical best-seller Gramoxone, fertilized by, among others, Fisons and grown on lowland increasingly owned by large institutions, notably inflation-hedging insurance companies. In short, control and profits are moving off the land — a trend we expect to continue.

The route from field to table is as long as ingenuity can devise. Seed is produced in a tiny number of laboratory farms "sanitised" by agro-chemical firms and quota-controlled by the Potato Marketing Board. This Foundation stock of varieties is either imported from abroad, or home-developed by state plant-breeding stations and private companies like Rothwell Plant Breeders and Nickerson of Grimsby. Foundation stock is then bred up with emphasis on yield and disease, never nutrition.

The potato's proneness to disease demands the intervention of agro-chemicals. We forget, however, that seed was somehow produced before ICI emerged in the first decade of this century and that other methods exist of imposing culture over nature than organo-phosphorous, most of them less hazardous to the agricultural worker and consumer.

Seed is bred up on about 48,000 acres in the UK and finally planted on about half a million acres to produce spuds for eating.

The PMB calculates that the cost of growing an acre of spuds has doubled from £380 in 1975 to £715 in 1977. By far the greatest proportion of this rise comes from seed costs — £260-£400 per acre this year. The proportion going on machinery and labour has dropped from 31% to 24% (labour accounting for only 10%) whilst seed accounts for 38% (at £300) or 45.5% (at £400). This makes complete nonsense of the commonly held view that price rises are due to the drought. Eighty percent of seed is grown in Scotland which was hardly touched by the drought and indeed some areas had bumper years!

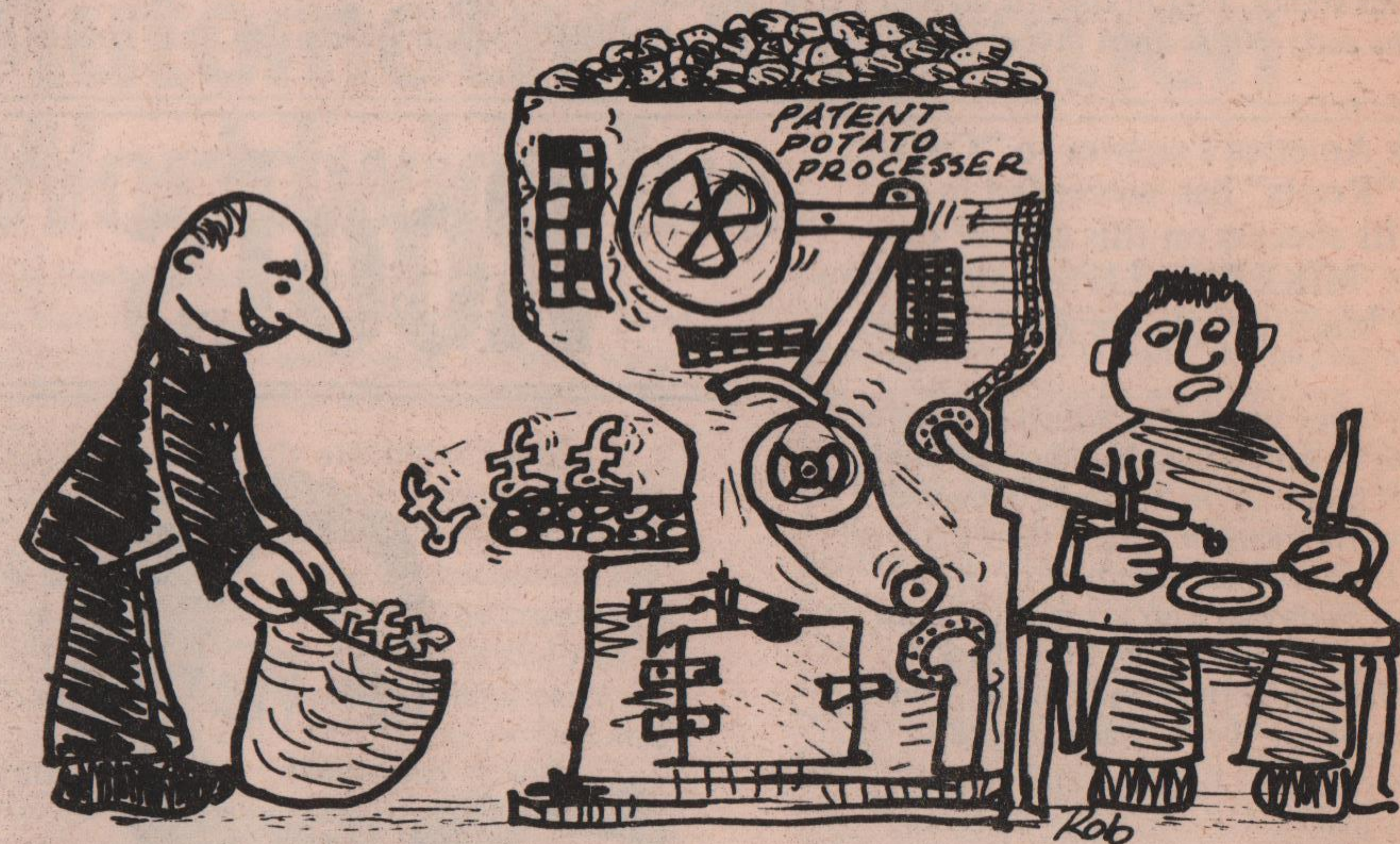
It is true that total production dropped in the last two years from 6½ million to 4½ million tons, undoubtedly in some part due to the droughts, but the 1976 figure was an increase on the 4.2 million in 75. When the style of agriculture on any farm was a mixture of crops

and animals a bad year could be carried by other sectors of farm produce. Today specialisation is forced upon farmers by huge capital costs and the industrial process euphemistically called rationalisation. Failure on a 90 acre crop therefore spells disaster. Thus "natural" events like the recent droughts are compounded by the agricultural structure.

Once farmed the potato is usually handled by two wholesalers each adding, according to *Farmers Weekly*, at least £30 per ton to the cost. In recent years another brilliantly useless process has been slotted in called washing and prepacking. Washing is supposed to make vegetables look purer and nicer, a cosmetic process which is aided by Shell, Boots, Ciba-Geigy whilst the potato is still in the soil.

Packaging is then required to retain the freshness and the potato's new good looks. It also facilitates the handling of large quantities

Scraping the dirt off the potato profiteers



by wholesalers who have sprung up, to service retail chains. The prepackaging process can double the price at this stage. It is important to realise that like all convenience foods, the ready-washed spud has a market due to women's resistance to the demands of doing two jobs: housewife and cheap worker. Like most advances under capitalism it's progress at a cost.

The convenience sector of the spud economy is not limited to splashing water on the potato. A small but significant sector is dedicated to taking water out. The dehydrated market has in recent years been dominated by two food giants, Cadbury-Schweppes with the brand name *Smash* and Dornay, owned by the Mars/Petfoods bloc, with *Yeoman* and *Wondermash*.

Until recently this market was comparatively small with annual sales of £6.5 million, yet Dornays laid out £700,000 one year on advertising in response to £500,000 on *Smash*. Small wonder that a recent EEC commission described the instant potato market as one of high capital investment and low profits — it can only be seen as a war for control.

Not so the frozen market. Potatoes shot from a mere 19% of the frozen vegetable market in

1968 to 44% in 1973 and have continued to increase since.

Here again the giant firms are in control. Even by 1969, Unilever (Birds Eye) and Nestles (Findus) had 70% of the total frozen sales market in Western Europe. Their use accounted for 4% of total UK potato production.

The canned sector too holds about 4%. But perhaps the clearest example of creating a process in order to profit from it is the crisp industry. In the 1940s there were around 800 small manufacturers using a mere 45,000 tons. By 1970 three companies dominated: Smiths, Imperial Tobacco's *Golden Wonder* and hidden in the wings United Biscuits Meredith and Drew specialising in their own label market. Together they now instant-fry around half a million tons.

A current crisp business negotiation illustrates how the individual farmer can be squeezed by mammoth interests. United Biscuits are talking with a large farmers co-op, West Cumberland Farmers, about a scheme to entice local farmers to grow seed potatoes for the crisp industry. The farmer will be contracted to grow seed for a predetermined price providing all sprays and

equipment are bought from West Cumberland Farmers and all seed sold to United Biscuits.

Contracting is one way in which farmers are controlled. Last year some grew potatoes for £40 per ton and then got low yields while others were getting £130 on the open market.

Increasingly hazardous cultivation methods. Increasing involvement of large firms off the land whose contribution is either to process in some form an already perfectly edible food or to speed up the machine-controlled work of the labourer or do away with him/her altogether. It all adds up to a tremendous waste.

In Pembroke and Cornwall farmers plant 1 ton to pick 3 to 5 tons of earlies, a yield which could have been much higher if they had been left in the soil for another two months. Hence the high price. That isn't the only form of waste. It takes 5lb of potatoes to produce 1lb of instant.

The final blow is that the PMB estimate that 20% of all potatoes grown are damaged... machines, rotting in store, blemishes. But we must have our pure white potatoes mustn't we?

Tim Lang

Nuclear danger ahead

A PUBLIC enquiry in Cumbria is trying to decide whether to spend £600m on the British Nuclear Fuels Ltd plant at Windscale. An unparalleled display of strength is being brought to bear by BNFL, its owners the UK Atomic Energy Authority, and the Department of Energy. The opposition, co-ordinated by Friends of the Earth, is taking the enquiry very seriously and includes labour movement organisations like the Socialist Environment and Resources Association.

Why all the fuss? Because the plant expansion would make Windscale one of the West's main centres for reprocessing spent nuclear fuel, including plutonium, which is one of the most incomprehensibly dangerous substances known. And because the Windscale expansion would be an essential step towards plutonium reactors as a major world energy source. This energy option would mean a highly centralised society, getting even more of its energy requirements from a few huge power plants than we already do. Such a society would also need to be a police state, with large amounts of weapons — grade fissile material on road and rail — the 1976 Atomic Energy Authority (Special Constables) Act, with draconian search and removal powers for the nuclear police, indicates that we're well on the way to such a state. And it would also be a very dangerous society for nuclear power workers, and the public, if the nuclear industry's record so far is anything to go by.

BNFL's image is of years of safe working. The myth has been built up by careful public relations as much as by dry careful handling of fissile material. Apart from the unpleasant fire of 1957, which came close to being a major disaster, BNFL assures us that Windscale is a safe place — a lot safer than, say, a coal mine. But BNFL's safety record is too alarmingly poor, upon close inspection, to let us trust them as major plutonium reprocessors.

BNFL says that it has had only two major accidents; the 1957 fire and a blow-back of radioactive material caused by a fire or an explosion, in 1973. Even these, says BNFL, caused no casualties. But there are many other unanswered questions about Windscale accidents which BNFL doesn't class as accidents for publicity purposes. These have included six leaks of radioactive waste between 1964 and 1976 including one caused by overfilling a tank — simple human error. Then there was a 'criticality accident', caused by a tank being overfilled, in 1970, a leak of gamma radiation caused by a fuel element left exposed in 1958 and, in 1974, a monitoring failure which let a worker leave the plant with radioactive material on his shoes. It isn't easy to discover how many incidents like the monitoring failure have taken place.

So Windscale is a very unsafe place. But it has only been going 20 years, and the plans for its future are that it should become a major reprocessing plant in perpetuity. 20 years is not a long time in statistics. For instance, BNFL says that there should be a major accident — a release of a million curies of radioactivity — only once in a million years on average. The 1957 fire released 80,000 curies. But even if Windscale were a thousand times more dangerous, and has a million curie accident every thousand years on average, the chance that one would have happened yet would be only 2 per cent. And if it were ten thousand times more dangerous — a million curie accident per century on average — the chance that one would have happened by now would only be 20 per cent — one in five.

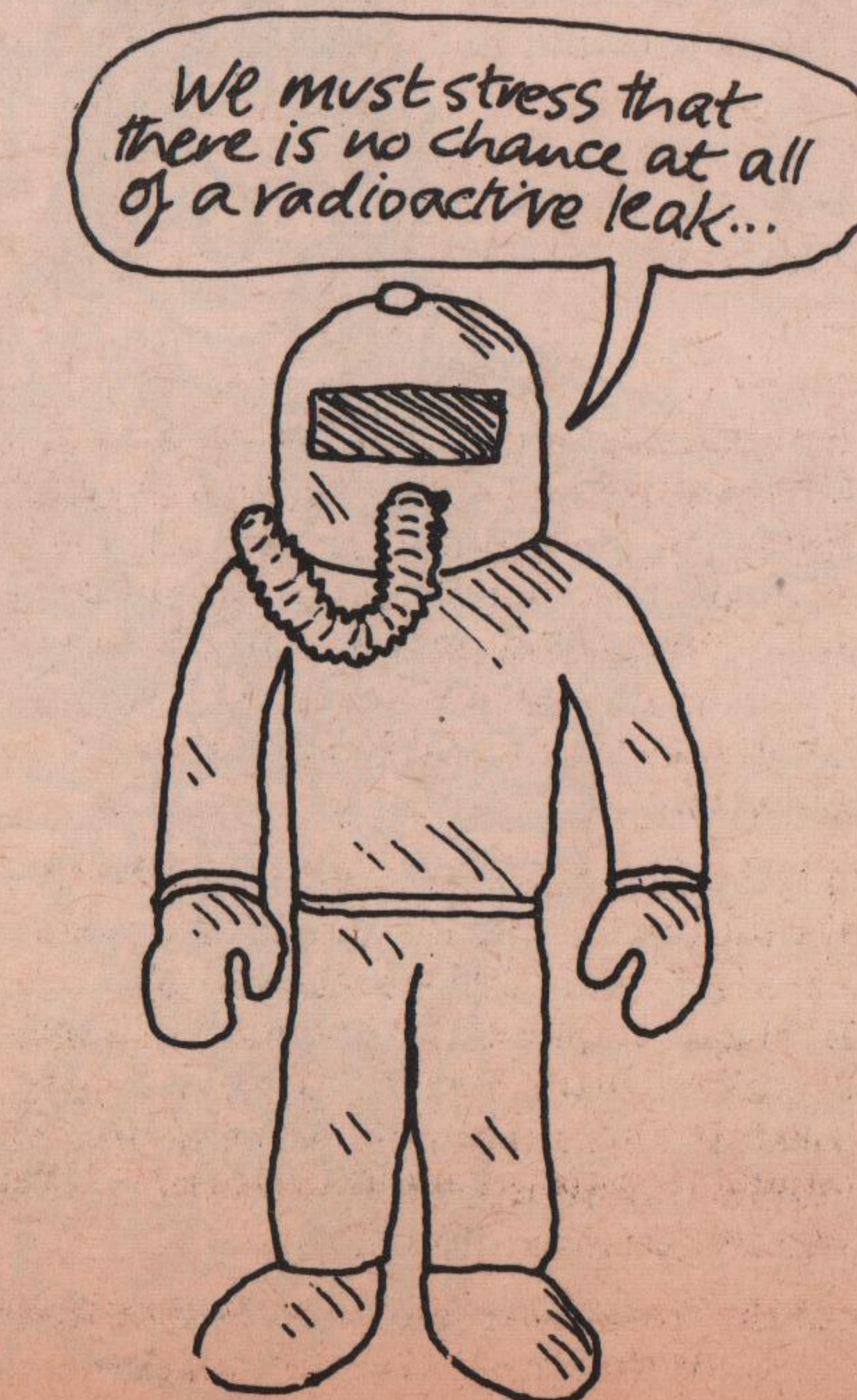
The same goes for the transport of radioactive material, which usually travels by rail from Barrow docks to Windscale. BNFL held a meeting in Barrow at the height of the controversy over the Japanese reprocessing contract to make the safe arrival at Windscale of the 60th shipment of fuel for reprocessing. If the chance of a rail accident were one in a thousand — far below

BR's record — the chance of one having happened after 60 shipments is six per cent, so BNFL wasn't entitled to look too pleased. And the next shipment was derailed.

So at present it's only possible to say from history that Windscale looks terribly unsafe. The reason for this is partly the accidents which have already occurred. The famous 1957 fire, for instance. (BNFL wishes it to be less famous; they called a while ago for a moratorium on talking about it, saying that the lessons from it had all been learnt.) All that prevented a major release, perhaps nearly as big as the once in a million years event that BNFL uses to reassure us, was a set of filters which Sir John Cockcroft had had fitted to the stacks despite universal opinion that they were a waste of money — they were universally called Cockcroft's Folly. Just as well he wasn't plain John, at the bottom of the heap; if he had been it would all have been a whole lot nastier.

Between 1958 and 1964 there were six criticality incidents in the USA, all of them giving off between 100 and 10,000 times as much radioactivity as the 1970 incident at Windscale. The 1970 incident was the smallest criticality incident known to this author — so far Windscale has got off lightly!

Accidents due to carelessness, in design or execution, are not amenable to cold statistics,



and it is very difficult to get such processes absolutely right, missing no detail. But failures in equipment or training doesn't help; for instance in the 1970 incident engineers started by looking for plutonium in the tanks, according to *Nuclear Engineering International*, showing that they hadn't got a neutron monitoring device on each tank which would have told them straight away where the residue was. That precaution had been recommended six years earlier. Likewise there were no liquid level gauges, standard for chemical plant, which would have revealed a level of liquid in the tank which any technician would know must carry the danger of criticality. Similarly, the gauge would have shown that the tank was taking a suspiciously long time to empty — not surprising as a plutonium residue was accumulating all the time. And BNFL had no excuse for not knowing about the risk — a similar incident at Los Alamos in 1958, the operator was less lucky and received ten lethal doses of radioactivity in a few millionths of a second. He staggered out into the snow saying 'I'm burning up, I'm burning up' and died 35 hours later.

The same goes for the 1957 and 1973 fires, in which BNFL failed to provide adequate safety procedure and instruments, even after the first accident. The main cause of the 1957 fire was that the temperature was measured by thermocouples which were not in the hottest part of the core of the reactor, so that fire started among the fuel rods with the operator unaware that anything was wrong. Only 43 hours later when radioactivity levels started to rise was the alarm given. The operator, who was a physicist not fully trained in the operation, had no manual or detailed instructions. And the sampling of local milk for radioactivity was forgotten about until too late, with radioactivity hazard for the children of NW England. In 1973, no complete evacuation plans existed for the plant, and even after the alarm was given no-one left. This was because the alarms had been malfunctioning and everyone had stopped taking any notice of them, and because they were waiting for word from their supervisors. The alarm system was also inadequate because loudspeakers hadn't been installed. This meant that people had to run up and down stairs giving the alarm, and even then four workers were left inside. And the causes of the accident were no less startling than in 1957; the reactions in the processing plant had not been checked although it was known that residues would result, the tank where the fire started hadn't been cleaned out, unlike all the others and the instruments were inadequate to measure the levels of radioactivity present. So BNFL cannot be trusted; neither their public face nor their private efficiency. Safety is not what BNFL is about; For instance, Windscale's Safety Assessment Manager, John Donoghue can't shut anything down without the agreement of the rest of the management.

So disaster has only been avoided at Windscale by luck, and lots of it. It is impossible to believe that this luck will hold, especially with an enlarged Windscale handling much of the world's nuclear fuel; BNFL's record shows that they are not capable of safe working, and that they don't learn the lessons of past accidents. And in an inherently tricky business, like radioactivity, that means that they are a menace to us all.

Charles Wakstein

Regroupment

A new paper is about to emerge on the left. In early June The International Marxist Group will launch *Socialist Challenge*. Just another change of name or a more fundamental move which could lead, as the IMG hope, to a long term regroupment of forces on the left?

FOR SOME time now the Fourth International have been attempting to involve groups which it characterises as Trotskyist. In practical terms this has so far produced the most important results in Spain and in France, where far left electoral unity has captured a large slice of the vote. In the recent French elections, the LCR (French section of the FI) stood on a united slate with Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs: it took an average of 6% of the votes where it had candidates standing.

Since Stechford the IMG have been pointing out to the Socialist Worker's Party what they see as the potentialities for such an alliance in Britain. Between them the IMG and SWP candidates polled 2.4% of the vote. Not a particularly impressive figure but one which could have been higher if both groups had not been competing against each other.

The desire for electoral unity and 'class struggle' candidates is part of a long term strategy by the IMG which seeks a 'regroupment' of forces as the basis for building a mass party within the next 5-10 years.

Central to this process is a new type of paper with a much wider range of coverage and open to all groups on the left. This would form the basis of what Brian Grogan, National Secretary of IMG, calls a 'class struggle alternative', whose long term aim would be 'to split the Labour Party and draw out the best militants'.

In the short term, however, the aims are more modest. Back in July 1976 the Fourth International took a position on all the left groups in Britain with regard to involving them in FI campaigns. The groups it saw as closest to itself were Workers' League, Chartists, and the League for Socialist Action, characterising them as revolutionary and holding a similar view themselves of the Fourth International.

In the immediate future it is the Workers' League which IMG are out to catch. They have however sent letters to all the groups on the left about involvement in electoral unity and in the new style *Socialist Challenge*.

As far as electoral unity is concerned it looks as though they may well make some significant progress as they are currently having discussions with Big Flame about 'class struggle' candidates who they will both support, and hoping for positive responses from other small groups. The Big Flame electoral programme is virtually the same as that of the IMG, says Brian Grogan, 'but the only way we would be interested in any form of regroupment with them is on the basis of winning over their militants as they are a 'centrist' organisation'. It appears that they are not interested in the WRP which they characterise as 'ultra-sectarian'.

In the coming election campaigns, the agreement the IMG are seeking with the SWP is to support candidates who take a 'class struggle' position. This includes candidates outside the left groups who may stand on an independent left platform as well as those within. If this agreement is not achieved they are hoping that there

will be at least an agreement not to stand candidates in the same constituencies.

They also want an agreement not to stand in marginal constituencies as the aim is not to defeat Labour but to get a Labour government returned and expose it in office once again. Big Flame have said they will stand in marginal seats, a tactic which Grogan says is misconceived because 'they can offer no alternative to a Labour government at present and don't have any mass basis for opposition'.

The message seems to be falling on deaf ears though down at Cottons Gardens. Chris Harman, acting editor of *Socialist Worker* while Paul Foot takes a temporary leave of absence, denies that they have even been approached by the IMG about the new paper or regroupment.

'We offered them the possibility of joining forces back in 1968 and they refused, why should we be interested now?' says Harman, 'All the IMG want to do is argue with the little groups. How can you be serious about a regroupment when the majority of your paper is directed towards attacking these other groups?'

It seems that the SWP are not interested in any agreement about standing candidates at the next election either. They do not intend to reply to Tariq Ali's open letter to Paul Foot in which he argued that the lessons of Stechford must be some agreement over electoral policy. 'The only way we would be interested in discussions with the IMG', says Harman, 'is if they were prepared to enter our organisation and discuss from within. They are only interested in talking to the left. We believe that the importance of elections is to increase our grass roots base. The IMG appear to be moving towards a

Parliamentary position. We don't believe that the number of votes is important. We are too concerned with talking about the National Front and the Labour Party to worry about the IMG'.

As Harman points out, the SWP are four or five times as big as the IMG, but is this view the most productive in building a revolutionary party? 'Any unity between the SWP and the IMG would be like a unity between an elephant and a mouse', claims Harman. So what are the realities of the proposed regroupment?

In the short term a Big Flame/IMG electoral alliance might tempt some of the smaller groups such as the Workers' Socialist League into some kind of regroupment. The response of the RCG and RCT respectively remains to be seen as does that of the League for Socialist Action. The SWP seems to want nothing to do with any regroupment or common electoral strategy, being more concerned to establish itself as the revolutionary party. In the long term, the aim of splitting the Labour Party and building a mass alternative must to a certain extent depend upon the attitude of the SWP, unless the IMG can pull out all the best militants from the other groups.

The basis for this proposed regroupment is the new paper *Socialist Challenge*. Harman says this development is as 'significant as the move from *Black Dwarf* to *Red Mole* and from *Red Mole* to *Red Weekly*.' But what is being proposed by the IMG is far more than a change of name.

'There will be open political debate about tactical problems and strategic questions, an extended letters section, more 'personal and political' and the recent 'battle of ideas' section will be extended', says Grogan. There is some discussion about whether or not to go tabloid, though a decision has been made to go to sixteen pages. Tariq Ali is to take on the new editorship - they reject the collective approach to editing, and there will be an increased cultural coverage.

Terry Eagleton will be writing on cultural matters and it is hoped to get a much wider input of material than at present with the pages being open to any of the

left groups but with the IMG still retaining control.

It is still conceived of as a political weapon but with an open line on cultural matters and more discussion of movements outside the mainstream of the struggle. Whether other groups will take up the invitation to join in its development remains to be seen but the building of such an alternative which moves away from the narrow 'workerism' of some of the groups must be taken very seriously if the hegemony of social democracy is to be broken.

Difficult problems are posed however by all this for the nature of any revolutionary party that might emerge in the long term but it could be the basis of bridging the gap between 'academic' and 'pragmatic' marxism which has been criticised by certain SWP comrades recently (see Martin Shaw's letter to *The Leveller*, no. 5 April/May 1977).

The SWP feel that *Socialist Worker* already contains enough cultural analysis and Harman says that *Socialist Challenge* 'will be nothing but a hotch-potch.' *Woman's Voice*, he claims, sells more than *Red Weekly* and the *International Socialism Journal* covers the wider areas that don't appear in *Socialist Worker*. But the IMG maintain that the women's movement must be an autonomous movement so they hope to involve it in the new paper but as a contributing movement with its own positions.

The short term realities seem fairly limited but any extension of a forum for fraternal debate between groups must be part of the long term strategy of building a mass party.

SOCIALISM ~ FEMINISM

JUST THREE weeks after the Women's Liberation conference 250 women gathered in London on Sunday 24 April for the second in a series of socialist feminist workshops. The theme of the conference was sexuality and the London workshops, organised on the basis of 'What is a Socialist-Feminist Practice', form part of a growing movement of socialist feminists throughout the country.

A socialist feminist national network has already been set up with Regional Coordinators and a national newsletter, *Scarlet Women*, which has appeared three times so far and acts as a forum for discussion, raises issues of concern to socialist feminists (without laying down the 'correct' line) and publicises activities. Conferences and meetings have been organised in East Anglia, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Belfast, Brighton and London.

It is in this context that the London workshops must be seen and what was encouraging was that more local groups were set up as a result of socialist feminists meeting together: one in South London and one in Hackney. Meetings on Fascism and, for non-aligned feminists, on NAC (National Abortion Campaign) were also arranged.

The London workshop on sexuality showed the expanse of theoretical work being produced by socialist feminists. There were papers on Kollantai, Engels, Women Capitalism and Sexuality, Women the Family and Feminist Therapy, NAC, Women's Aid, the Politics of Contraception, Psychoanalysis and Prostitution.

Workshop discussion centred on the papers prepared and also problems involved with specific campaigns. I went along to the workshop on NAC and the Politics of Contraception, where feminists talked of their experiences in the abortion campaign and the relationship of abortion to sexuality. The discussion and the paper on NAC was a continuation and expansion of ideas put forward in the last issue of *The Leveller*.

As socialist feminists we have many problems of theory and practice to solve in the abortion debate. How can we ensure that the links between abortion and sexuality are brought to the fore and get away from the concept of abortion as a purely economic necessity? How do we stress the ideas implicit in the slogans 'A Woman's Right to Choose' and 'Our Bodies, Ourselves - Our right to choose'? How can we put our case across in more imaginative ways? As the NAC paper said, 'We must sort ourselves out and provide positive alternatives and feminist practice instead of moaning about left group domination.'

Discussion on psychoanalysis, feminist therapy and consciousness raising were also prominent, with some differences emerging and charges being levelled that much of the discussion was too intellectual and dependent on the complexities of theoreticians which some found difficult to grasp. Workshops on 'Children's Sexuality' and 'Sexuality and You' seemed to be more down to the ground, with much emphasis on personal experiences and their implications. And if you were bored with the organised workshops, you could join the afternoon workshop fugitives who sat about in the canteen discussing different related ideas.

My overall impression was a sense of solidarity - 250 of us in London, eager to discuss and plan future actions. The theme of the conference, sexuality, was perhaps not analysed in any depth except in the conference papers. What did sexuality mean, should we discuss our sex lives, or is sexuality broader than just the considerations of what goes on in bed? These questions came up time and again.

And yet there we all were, drawing support from one another for our political practice. The definitive answer to sexuality was not reached, nor will the answer be reached in the next workshop on 'Women and Ireland'. But we were groping our way together to the theme of the final workshop - what is a socialist feminist practice?

Dorothy Jones

SPROAT

IAIN SPROAT, the dashing boy soldier MP for Aberdeen South whose company accounts are years out of date, has met his match. After we revealed the appalling state of affairs behind the man who makes those wild allegations about social security scroungers (*Leveller* 4), Dennis Skinner MP took it up in the House. And the Minister has intervened.

Waving his copy of *The Leveller* wildly about his head, Skinner demanded to know what was happening about Sproat's accounts. Tory MPs on both sides of the House were outraged that this working class lout with the funny accent should challenge a gentleman's private business affairs, especially when that fellow was a stout chap and doing so frightfully well with those awful scroungers.

But Skinner persisted and at the end of March, he got his answer. Stanley Clinton Davis, Secretary of State for Trade, confirmed in a written answer to Skinner on March 28, that Sproat's affairs were in a mess. The Syston Estate Company is now up to date. The accounts of seven companies are out of date.

The worst, Sproat Communications, which Sproat set up with Robert Moss and similarly tasteful characters to specialise in the security industry, has not even filed returns for 1974. The Registrar has written default letters to all these companies under the 1948 Companies Act to remind them of their obligations. And in an almost unprecedented move for a Government Minister dealing with an Opposition MP, Mr. Clinton Davis has written a letter to the Member for Aberdeen South concerning his companies. 'Appropriate actions will be taken if there is continued failure to file company returns', Clinton Davis threatens. Mr Sproat seems to be having trouble with answering telephone messages at the moment. We shall however be following the saga of his business enterprises with care and curiosity in future issues.

ECOLOGY

With the arrival of Ecology - a critical reading guide, the long-dormant counter-course movement is back in business. At last, here is a guide and critique to both popular eco-thought and academic ecology; now widely taught in universities. The pamphlet is a series of short, clearly-written and well-thought out articles introducing alternative readings on a particular subject. Subjects covered include Population and Resources, Pollution, Evolutionary basis for ecological theory and Jobs and the environment. A joint publication by SCANUS, the student community action offshoot of NUS and Brighton Science for People, it is only the second counter-course reading guide to be published. Another one on psychology disappeared without trace due to lack of enthusiasm. The other guide-Social Work and the Welfare State - still remains the best thing available despite being almost two years old.

Ecology - A critical reading costs 35p plus 6p postage from SCANUS, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1.



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Dave Taylor

The news that got away

You cannot make a transfer charge telephone call to a black Rhodesian. That is what a friend of ours was told by the exchange. They were referred to the Ministry of Overseas Development for further information and they said that a direct call could be connected for £24. Sanctions are strictly enforced when money would have to cross the border, but a representative of the Ministry suggested that "calls to loyal British subjects who had been out there all their lives would no doubt be allowed on humanitarian grounds."

from *Broadside* (Birmingham)

Kirkby man John Lannon who was severely assaulted by police when arrested at the Woodpecker pub in Northwood in August 1975 has died of a heart attack. He was 36. After the arrest *Liverpool Free Press* found over a dozen witnesses who saw him kicked and punched by three police officers. Lannon ended up having an emergency operation for a broken rib, facial injuries and severe bruising. To avoid allegations against the police the prosecution made a deal with defence lawyers. Lannon - a man with a long criminal record - was sentenced to 200 hours unpaid community work for pleading guilty to the charges. Now solicitors acting for Lannon's wife are checking whether there can be any connection between his death and the assault by the police. Court action against the police is still a possibility.

from *Liverpool Free Press*

Queen's University, Belfast, houses a DEUCE computer given them as a gift by the US Navy for work carried out there by them. Also a platoon of Royal Australian Military Police has come to Britain on a two-year posting to relieve "British colleagues for service in Northern Ireland".

from *Republican News* (Belfast)

Redundancy for 190 workers at Leeds engineering firm Monk Bridge has led to further speculation about the firm's future. Bought by Canadian multi-national INCO (International Nickel Corporation) at the knock-down price of £11 million in 1975, the firm specialises in precision blades for the aerospace industry. Rumours circulating at the firm seem to suggest that the firm - whose blades are used by Concorde - will close down in 18 months time and re-open after two years.

from *Leeds Other Paper*

The year's most exciting Queen's Jubilee offer must be the miniaturised commemorative truncheons offered by retired PC Roy Shepard of London. Six inches long, they are carved from Caribbean Bubinga wood and cost only £1, which includes a donation to a police charity.

from *Leeds Other Paper*

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST

Latest Issues

No5 November 1976

Women's Oppression Under Capitalism
South Africa: The Crisis in Britain and the Apartheid Economy
South Africa: International Solidarity and the British Working Class

No6 April 1977

The Communist Parties of Western Europe: The Origins of the National Roads to Socialism
The Investment Trap: Are Reforms Impossible? Review of 'Trotsky and Fata-listic Marxism' (Hodgson)
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LOOK BACK IN ANGER

The Cuban Embassy, the Home Defence College and the Foreign Office have all ordered back numbers of *The Leveller*. We are now offering back issues to our readers at the bargain price of 35p a copy. Buy now while stocks last and before the cultural scavengers - archivists/collectors/dilettantes - move in.

THE LEVELLER IS A MINE OF AMMUNITION.

NEWS/THEORY/DEBATE/INTERVIEWS/CULTURE/LETTERS/STRUGGLE/AGITPROP

PILOT ISSUE British Intelligence agents in Angola named by Mark Hosenball and Phil Kelly - the story that caught the eye of Merlyn Rees/ The Polit-cops - Insurgency and the State - by Tony Bunyan/ Comprehensive Guide to Agitprop Theatre/ The truth about the workers' co-ops/ Interview with Jackie McNamara, then the only Communist Party footballer in British professional football.

ISSUE NUMBER ONE British fascism - its origins, history and organisations/ The Wages for Housework Debate/ The Hull Prison rising/ Interview with Trevor Griffiths, author of the Bill Brand TV series, on socialist writing for the mass audience.

ISSUE NUMBER TWO The Torturers' Who's Who: the only article naming the men responsible for the torture in Northern Ireland now condemned by the European Court of Human Rights/ The Struggle for Southern Africa: the economic stake and the voice of Zimbabwe/ Home Defence: the Home Office prepares for Civil War/ The Derelicts: Rock 'n Roll and Politics.

ISSUE NUMBER THREE The politics of the Agee and Hosenball deportations: The CIA in Britain, the "Standardisation" of Mark Hosenball, the CIA in the Third World, and Britain's own agencies/ Fashion; ideology and exploitation/ Gays in the unions/ Latin American murder squads plot to assassinate Leftists.

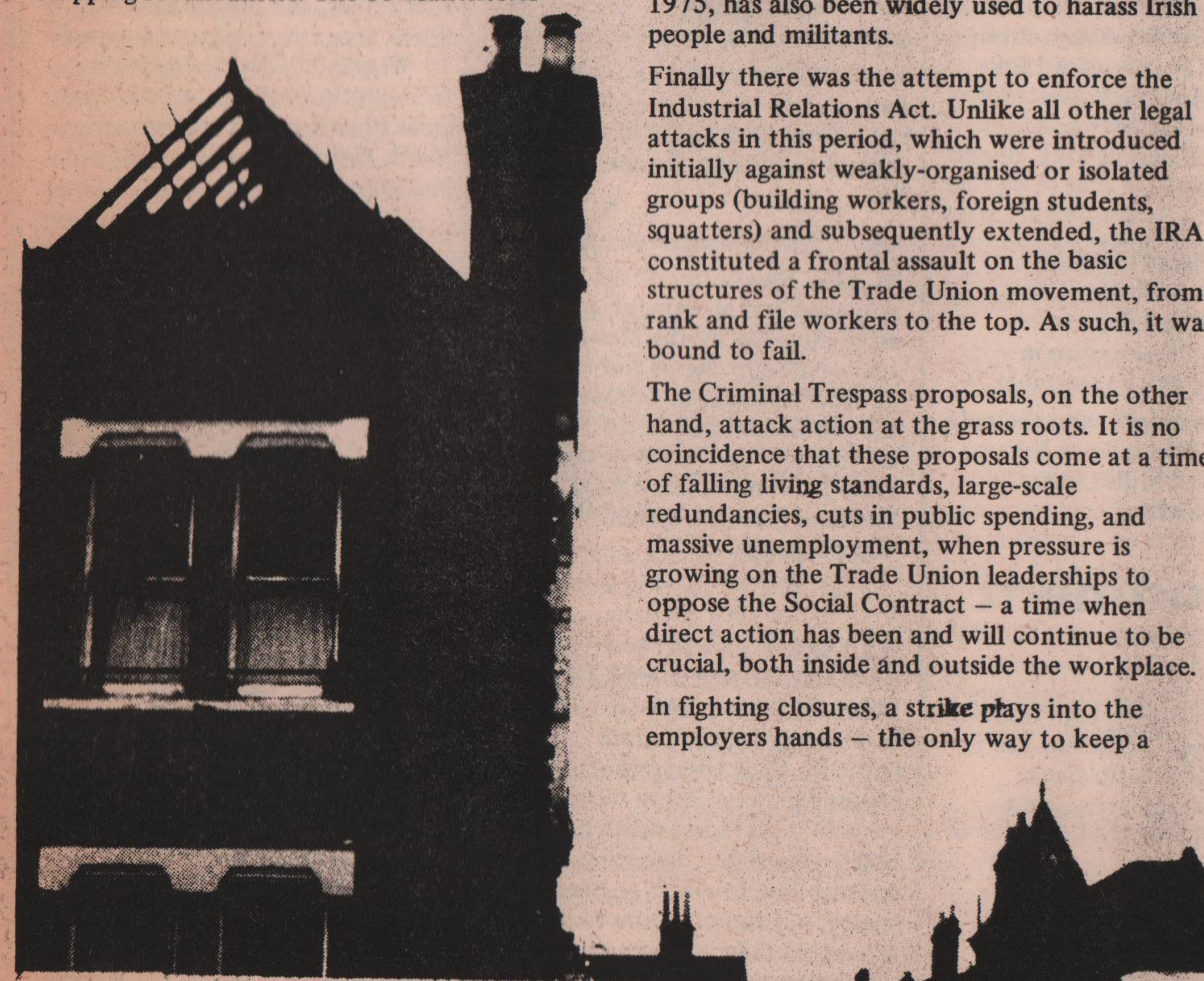
ISSUE NUMBER FOUR The bomb trial frame-ups/ The low-down on Iain Sproat/ The politics of Ralph Miliband/ Agee and Hosenball and the Official Secrets Act/ Bread and Politics/ Community publishing at Centerprise/ Gay Sweatshop in Dublin/ and the booming sex mags business.

ISSUE NUMBER FIVE. The deal behind the Dublin SAS trial/ The Labour Party in decay, part one/ National Abortion Campaign under the spotlight/ Industrial sabotage/ School Students in revolt/ TV Cops/ Football contract system/ Law and order books supplement/ Gramsci.

THE CRIMINAL Law Bill is now in Parliament. Part 2 of the Bill (on Criminal Trespass) proposes five new crimes involving trespass. It threatens anyone taking part in any occupation with up to two year's in jail, and would make it dangerously easy for property owners to evict with violence anyone whose right of occupation they disputed. If the Bill becomes law, the police would have the right of entry, search, and arrest - without a warrant - into any occupation at any time.

In any occupation, just outnumbering management or the security guards, would lay you open to arrest and jail. If someone claimed that you had used or were about to use something as an "offensive weapon" against them - a comb, coins, placards - the police could intervene immediately. Picketing in defence of an occupation about to be evicted under a court order - like the recent occupation at Massey Fergusons in Coventry - would become criminal, even if you just sat down in front of the bailiffs. And landlords would be allowed to use violence to evict squatters, "unlawful" sub-tenants, and people whose "licences" to live somewhere had been terminated.

These proposals, now backed by the Labour Government which introduced them into Parliament last December, were first put forward by the Tories in 1972. Their origins are significant. 1972 saw a massive upsurge of direct action which successfully turned the economic strategy of the Tory Government on its head. Following Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and Fisher-Bendix, a wave of occupations achieved considerable success in fighting and stopping redundancies. The 35 Manchester



Trespassers will be prosecuted

engineering sit-ins of Spring, 1972 marked a new, and to the employers, threatening development in the use of occupations as a tactic. Now it was no longer limited to redundancy struggles.

Meanwhile, the effective use of mass pickets in the miners' strike (notably at Sattley) and in the docks and building workers strikes later in the year led to Tory calls for tight legal limits on the number of pickets. The same period saw an explosive growth of militant squatting, especially in London and the growing use of occupations by students. This was the climate in which the proposals were born, and their history shows that they represent a conscious response by the State to the use of direct action. They are part of a succession of moves over the last ten years to increase the intervention of the criminal law - and therefore of the police - against political action of all kinds.

To this end, since 1970, an old law has been resurrected, and new crimes created, both by judges' rulings and by the introduction of new statute law. In 1972, conspiracy re-emerged as a directly political charge, and in 1973 conspiracy to trespass was resurrected. Judicial restrictions on industrial and non-industrial picketing mounted, and the speeded up eviction procedures (ostensibly for use only against squatters) have been used extensively against workers and students. The Prevention of Terrorism Act, rushed through Parliament in 1975, has also been widely used to harass Irish people and militants.

Finally there was the attempt to enforce the Industrial Relations Act. Unlike all other legal attacks in this period, which were introduced initially against weakly-organised or isolated groups (building workers, foreign students, squatters) and subsequently extended, the IRA constituted a frontal assault on the basic structures of the Trade Union movement, from rank and file workers to the top. As such, it was bound to fail.

The Criminal Trespass proposals, on the other hand, attack action at the grass roots. It is no coincidence that these proposals come at a time of falling living standards, large-scale redundancies, cuts in public spending, and massive unemployment, when pressure is growing on the Trade Union leaderships to oppose the Social Contract - a time when direct action has been and will continue to be crucial, both inside and outside the workplace.

In fighting closures, a strike plays into the employers hands - the only way to keep a

workplace open is to stop the plant being moved out. And the only way to do that is to occupy. At Hopkinsons' Engineering in Huddersfield, 250 white collar workers occupied to fight for the reinstatement of six shop stewards sacked during a wage dispute - the occupation ended in April with the stewards' reinstatement. At the Pontins building sites in Prestatyn, North Wales, 85 building workers occupied to stop lump labour being brought in by management - and won. At the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Women's Hospital in North London, 150 workers are still in occupation, working-in to keep open this vital women's health facility.

In the summer of 1976, thousands of students occupied their colleges against teacher unemployment and the public spending cuts. This year, over 50 occupations were mounted in protest against fee increases and the victimisation of foreign students. In the community, the tactic has been adopted - usually by women - in pressing demands for repairs on estates or community facilities, and in fighting rent increases. Around the country, an estimated 40,000 homeless people have housed themselves by squatting in empty property.

Since June 1974, the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) has been arguing that direct action is a crucial tactic, and showing how the proposals would not only threaten occupations, but would intimidate people from carrying out direct action. (It is significant, for instance, that since the Shrewsbury trial, building workers in particular have thought twice about taking militant action.)

With this in mind, beyond the obvious purpose of fighting to prevent the proposals becoming law, CACTL has developed longer-term aims. By contacting groups that have used or are using direct action, the Campaign has been building up a resource of information based on the experience of those actions, which is using not only to give support to new struggles as they develop but also to spread awareness of the methods and value of direct action among people who have never yet been forced to use it. One clear lesson coming out of these contacts has been the importance of organising widespread support for the tactic when it is used. The struggle at the EGA, for instance, has spread out beyond the workforce at the hospital to create a network of contacts to be mobilised when the need occurs.

CACTL's aim is to break down the divisions that exist between struggles at work and outside work - divisions that leave the door open to the divide-and-rule tactic of the state, setting man against woman, white against black, skilled against unskilled, employed against unemployed. Through the local CACTL groups, trade unionists, squatters, tenants and other activists are being brought together, to plan not only opposition to the criminal trespass proposals, but ways of supporting each other's struggles and mobilising to defend direct action wherever it is taken.

Clearly the task now facing the campaign - both in the coming weeks, and if the Bill becomes law - is not only to build increasing opposition, but also to make sure that support on paper is translated into action when the need arises.

Alex Fraser
Steve Barran

ALL NOTICES IN AGITPROP ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE – THE LEVELLER COLLECTIVE WELCOMES ANY INFORMATION FROM GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS SENT TO 155 DRUMMOND STREET, LONDON NW1 (by mid-June for next issue).

events

SOCIALIST FESTIVAL OF MUSIC – 28 May at Battersea Arts Centre, London. A new kind of event in British music, with about 100 socialist musicians taking part, including Carol Grimes, Henry Cow, London and Bristol Musicians' Collective, Frankie Armstrong, Leon Rosselson and Sandra Kerr. They aim to bring craft and politics closer together, by following each 'concert' with an open discussion on particular aspects of the relationship between socialism and music. There'll also be a section for children, practical workshops and an exhibition; books, records and refreshments on sale; creche. The festival will continue next day at the Oval House, Kennington, to include a meeting on the business and economics of music. Tickets £1.50 in advance. Postal orders to Battersea Arts Centre, sent to: May 28 Booking, Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London SW11. Organisers: Arts Centre and Music for Socialism.



UGANDA FREEDOM COMMITTEE campaigns for the overthrow of Amin's heinous regime. Rally 12th June, Trafalgar Square to coincide with Amin's proposed visit to London for Commonwealth Conference. For more information contact: Peter Hain, 90 Fawe Park Road, London SW15 2EA.

MARXISM 77: 7 days of revolutionary ideas and discussion at Polytechnic of North London. Courses, speakers, debates, film, music. July 1-8, organised by National Organisation of IS Societies (NOISS). Contact Marxism 77, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Agitprop

THE PEOPLES JUBILEE AT THE PALACE. Festival of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Political rally, music, films, theatre, fairs, stalls, exhibitions, children's festival and more. At Alexandra Palace, North London, 19 June 1977. Contact Nigel Tanburn, Festival Organiser, at 16 King Street, London WC2 for more information.

WILMETTE BROWN of Black Women for Wages for Housework in New York (formerly in the Black Panthers) will be speaking at two public meetings in mid-June. Dates and places to be announced. For exact details contact – Wages for Housework Committee, London 459 1150/452 1338 or Wages Due Lesbians 961 3709/450 8326

conferences

CONFERENCE. 'British Involvement in Ireland: Consequences of British Withdrawal' May 28/29, South Bank Polytechnic Students Union. Speakers include Joan Maynard MP, John Forester AUEW TASS, Syd Bidwell MP, John Whale (Sunday Times), Tim Shallice BSSRS, Bill Rouksley, President ASLEF, P. Berresford Ellis (Chairperson). Credentials from British Peace Committee, 84, Claverton St, London SW1, phone 722 2847. Fee £2.

RADICAL TRADITION. A conference on Bristol's radical tradition including discussion sessions on trade unionism in Bristol. Bristol as we remember it and Politics/religion and the radical tradition, details from John Sullivan, Baptist Mills Centre, Horley Road, Bristol.

environment

FESTIVAL OF THE ENVIRONMENT. Fri May 27 to Sun Jun 5. Contact: EGIS, North Lane, Elswick Road Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 8DL.

WHOLE EARTH MAGAZINE – published from co-operatively run wholefoods shop Simple Supplies, Brighton. Issue 9 discusses the creation of alternative work structures, has an interview with Tony Benn ('Everyone should work on the land for a period in the year'), other features, news and reviews. 20p from bookshops and wholefood shops; 25p (incl p&p) from Whole Earth, 11 George St, Brighton.

publications journals

WEDGE

June will see the publication of the first issue of *Wedge*, "a revolutionary journal of cultural practice and theory", which aims to make the revolutionary left more aware of the importance of culture. A quarterly mag, price 75p, its definition of culture includes adverts, fashion, architecture, alternative technology, etc. Issue 1 will include articles on grant aid and political theatre, Brecht's theatre poems, pop charts, role of film in workers' struggles in France, Italian alternative radio and a debate on the mass media led-off by Raymond Williams. Editorial correspondence to 30 Hornsey Road, London N8; subscription enquiries to 56A Shirland Road, London W9 (Issue 1, 90p inc. postage.)

THE BLACK WRITER. 'A reflection of the combined creative effort, published by members of the Black Writers Association'. Summer 1977 issue has articles on Black theatre, poems, short stories and illustrations. 40p.

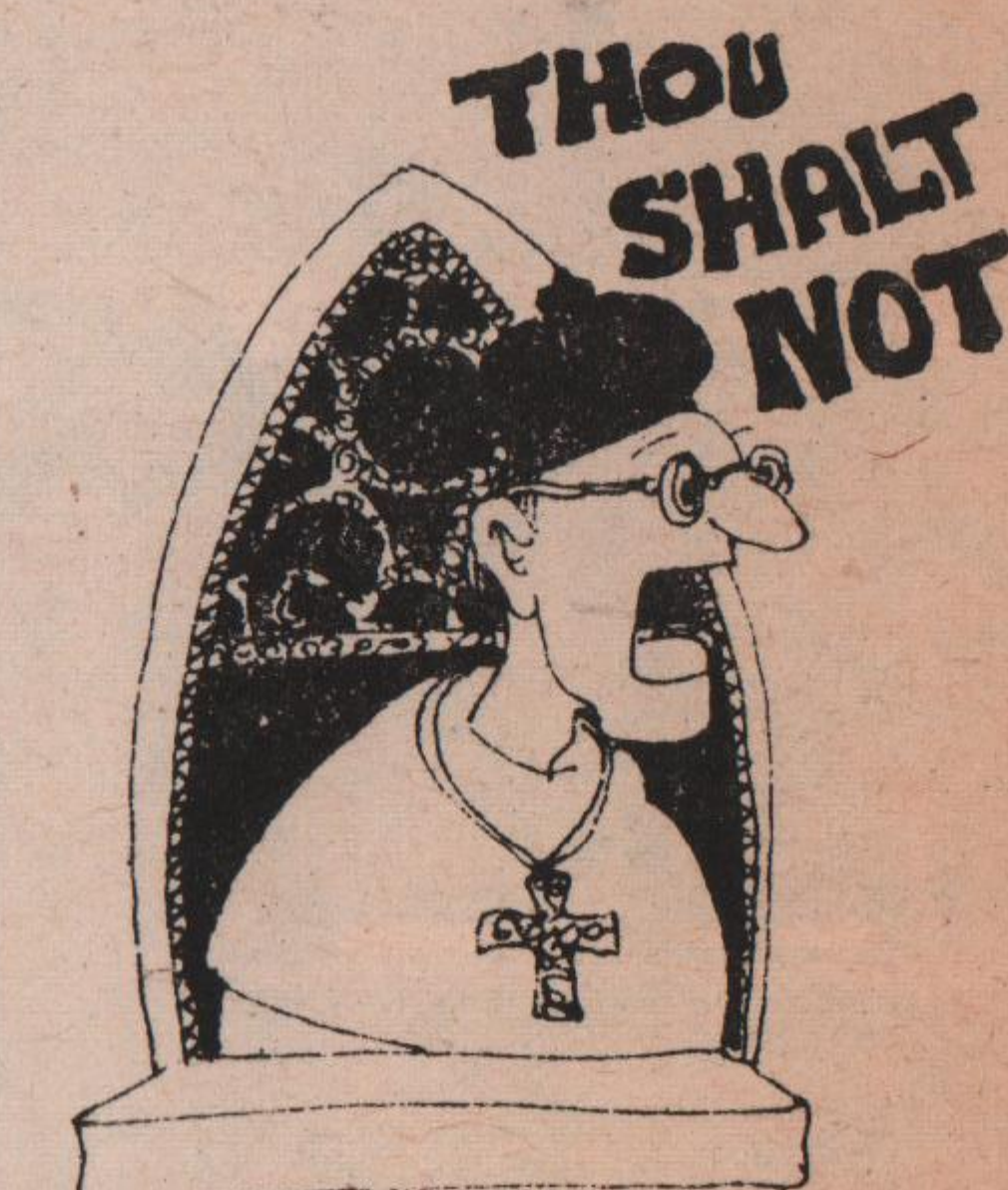
'VOICES' – latest edition in new printed format of this inspiring anthology of working-class prose and poetry. Includes short story of 'The Occupation', by Ken Fuller, and long poem 'A Silent Man Disguised as a Comrade' by Wendy Whitfield. Available from left bookshops or from Progress Bookshop, 28 Hathersage Road, Manchester M13, at 40p incl. p&p.



PEOPLE FOR A NON-NUCLEAR WORLD is an ad-hoc committee dedicated to world denuclearisation. For information and donations, contact 81 Onslow Square, London SW7.

SLATE. Newsletter of the New Architectural Movement, published bi-monthly by the Movement's Liaison Group. News and features of broad interest to workers in the profession, and in the building industry and wider public. Issue 1 out now, from NAM, 9 Poland Street, London W1. 40p plus p&p.

SOCIALIST ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ASSOCIATION (SERA). Policy statement: 'A Strategy for the Public Services'. This 18-page document argues for a concept of 'selective growth' – an industrial/economic policy selectively favouring industries which would, for instance, maximise employment, use technology which would not endanger health or environment, be on a smaller scale. It views recent developments such as the Lucas Aerospace alternative products plan and the Kirklees 'wastesaver' industrial project as 'steps in the right direction' Simply and interestingly written. Available from 312 Devonshire Rd, London SE13. Price 10p plus p&p.



IDEOLOGY & CONSCIOUSNESS. New thrice-yearly journal. First issue out now. Contents: Psychology, ideology and the human subject; Class, language and education; Feminism and the language of psychoanalysis; Volosinov on Marxism and linguistics. From left bookshops. Sub: £2.70 p.a. incl. p&p. Payable to: Ideology & Consciousness, 1 Woburn Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1.



HUMPTY DUMPTY. This issue deals with therapy, counselling and personal growth and asks questions about how these things relate to politics. 30p at bookstores plus 7p postage direct from 32 Parkholme Road, Dalston, London E8.

OPEN ROAD: Well-produced anarchist paper, with lots of international news, from Canada. Write for copies to Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver BC.

ANARCHIST REVIEW. No 2 contains articles on anarchist literature, reviews, police state, Spain, France and US. Cienfuegos Press. £1.

pamphlets

THE CASE AGAINST THE SOCIAL CONTRACT – the story of the worst bargain of all time. New pamphlet by a group of independent socialists, which discusses some of the facts and arguments about present wage controls, and concludes that present policies are a disaster for workers and their families. Written in question and answer form, with useful facts and figures. 10p plus p&p from 217 Waver-tree Rd, Liverpool 7 or at Rising Free.

THESES OF THE LEFT COMMUNISTS (1918). First full English translation of Manifesto of Left Communists, published in the Moscow journal *Kommunist* in 1918. A Critique pamphlet available from 31 Clevedon Rd, Glasgow G12. 30p plus p&p.

A GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME. Claimants Union Report to the TUC, attacking the principle and practice of the Supplementary Benefits Commission. Available from E. London Claimants Union, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Rd, London E1. 30p.

LAVENDER AND RED BOOK. A gay liberation/socialist anthology with articles on Chile, Cuba, China, Australia, gays in unions etc. £2. Also *Come Out Fighting*, Newspaper of the Lavender and Red Union (US). Both available at Rising Free.

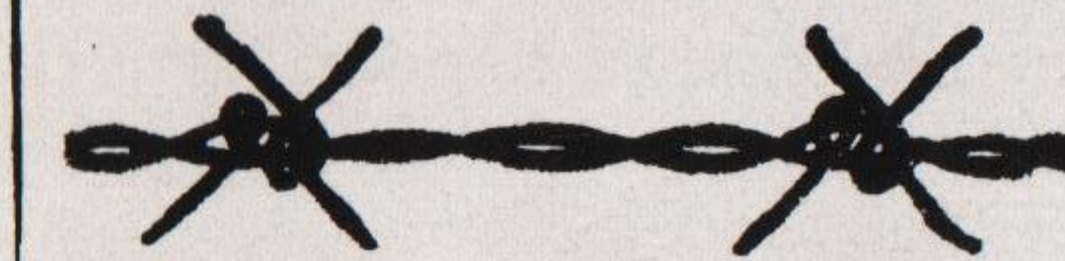
imperialism

SHELL AND BP IN SOUTH AFRICA. A 50-page illustrated report on the role of British oil companies in South Africa. Details of how Shell and BP help the apartheid regime evade the Arab boycott; the massive investment plans of the two firms, and revelations on sanctions-busting. Published jointly by the Haslemere Group and the Anti-Apartheid Movement. 35p from Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Rd, Birmingham.

TURNHALLE: South Africa's neo-colonial solution for Namibia. Namibia Support Committee pamphlet which gives background to the Turnhalle tribal talks through which South Africa aims to set up a tame interim government 10p plus p&p from 21-25 Tabernacle St, London EC2, or from left bookshops.

OPERATION COBRA 77 is a planned and co-ordinated attack by the imperialist powers being mounted in Zaire against the People's Republic of Angola with the assistance of USA, France, and Belgium. Details are contained in a speech by President Neto of Angola; copies available from Mozambique, Angola and Guine Information Centre, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

THAILAND: TOWARDS THE REVOLUTION. A new pamphlet by Malcolm Caldwell, published by Race and Class and Ad Hoc Group for democracy in Thailand. Available from left bookshops. 30p.



GUYANA. 'Rampersaud: Another revolutionary at death's door' is a new pamphlet from the People's Progressive Party (UK) Branch, about the frame-up and persecution of a Guyanan militant. 10p from left bookshops.

CARI – Committee Against Repression in Iran. Bulletin No 1 includes article on SAVAK in Britain. From: Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1. 5p plus p&p.

CARILA – Committee Against Repression in Latin America. No 4 has articles on Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. From: 85 Ashley Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6. 10p plus p&p.

FREE PALESTINE. The paper that campaigns for a homeland for Palestinians. Sample copy from PO Box 492, London SW19 4PJ.

SMALL ACCIDENTS, by Sabir Bandali. The moving autobiography of a Ugandan Asian, student at Tulse Hill School, London. Available from English Centre, Ebury Teachers Centre, Sutherland St, London SW1. 90p plus p&p.

education

SOCIALIST TEACHER. Journal of the Socialist Teachers Alliance. No 1 contains articles on NUT Conference, Teachers and the Economy, Language and Racism, and a debate on official-unofficial action. 30p from bookshops, or J Bangs, 25 Blisset Street, London SE10.



ISSUES in Race and Education. Monthly newspaper produced by a group of members of the London branch of the National Association for Multi-Racial Education. No 8 contains articles on racist propaganda in schools, and Select Committee Report on Race Relations and Immigration. From: 58 Collingbourne Road, London W12. 10p plus p&p.

ACTION FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ASWEAT) – Newsletter vol 3 no 1, produced by radical social work students, contains articles on welfare services in USSR, and new developments in social work training, on the basis of opposition to all cuts. Single copies 12p plus p&p; subs (3 issues) 80p plus p&p. Higher rates for groups and institutions. ASWEAT, c/o SC Cook, 28 Poynter Rd, Enfield, Middx EN1 1DL.

NUS Services Crash – A Socialist Answer. This new IMG pamphlet explains the background of the present crisis in NUS, viewing its solution in the building of a socialist alternative to the present leadership, 10p from 97 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

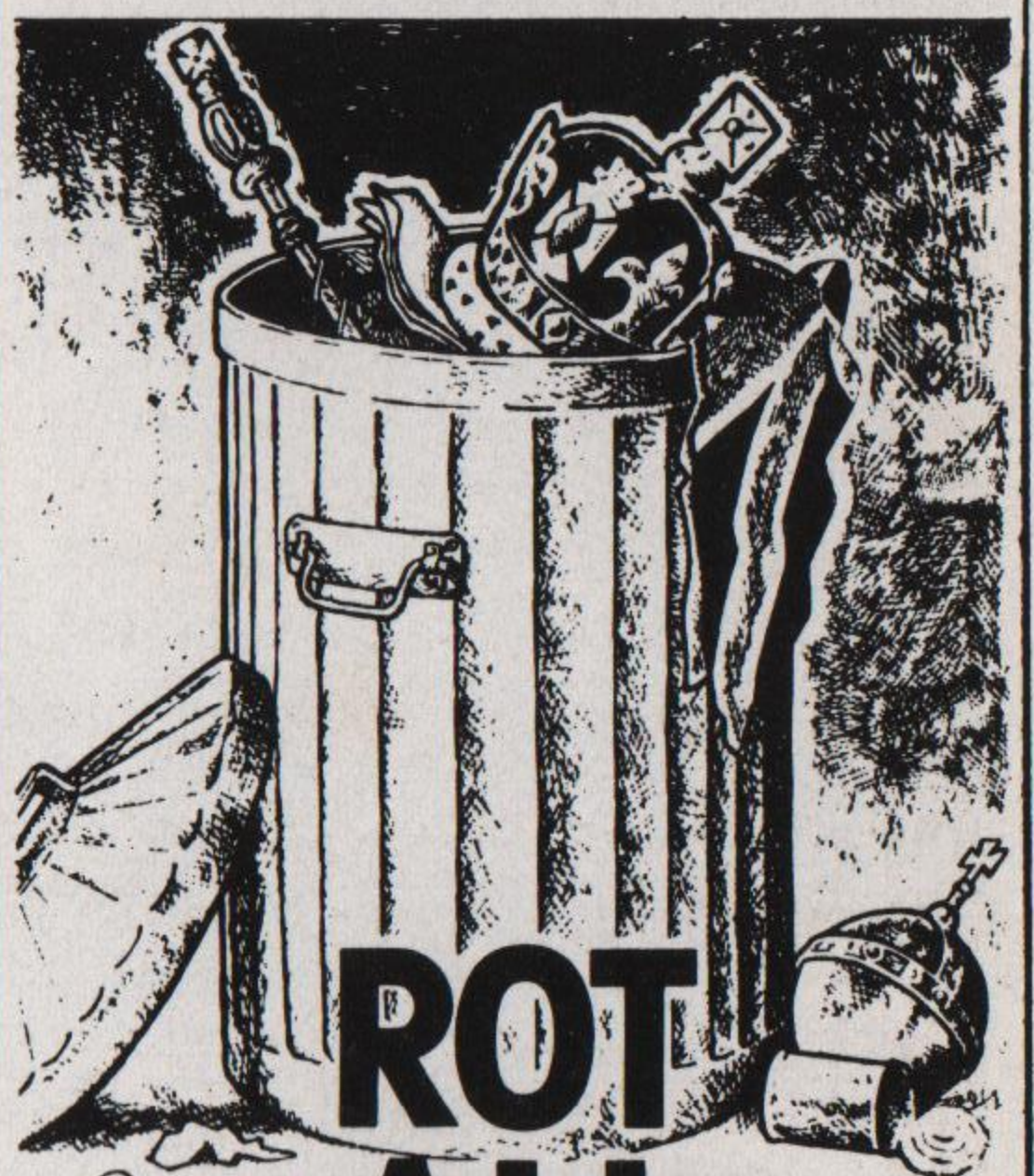
The cartoon accompanying the article on NUS in Issue 5 should have been credited to Teachers Action. Apologies.

contacts



Meeting for non-aligned feminists who are or want to be involved in NAC. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the politics and future perspectives of NAC from a feminist viewpoint. Monday May 30 at a Woman's Place, 42 Earham St, London WC2. 7.30pm.

MOVEMENT AGAINST A MONARCHY (MAAM) – announces the first three of a series of stickers to celebrate (?) Jubilee Year. Tastefully designed (red, white and blue in some cases) they are available for 1p. each. (inc p&p). Minimum order 25p total, mixed orders accepted. Anyone ordering stickers will be added to mailing list for future MAAM material. The stickers are very funny anti-monarchist propaganda, an ideal antidote to the Jubilee. 'We say: YES MAAM – NO MAAM!' Write to Box 'M', 5, Caledonian Rd, London, N1.



MUSIC FOR SOCIALISM A new organisation made up chiefly of musicians, who have devised the experimental 'concert-debate' format for the *Socialist Festival of Music* (see above). Their aims are: 'to open up debate on socialist theory and practice in music; to investigate the relationship between producer and public; to bring together left-wing musicians of widely different performing styles and present them to an equally diverse audience.' Contact: 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8. Tel: 01-888 1161.



Most of the pamphlets and journals listed are obtainable from Rising Free, now settled in at 182, Upper Street, London N1.