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The Lost History of the British Anarchists

JOHN QUAIL



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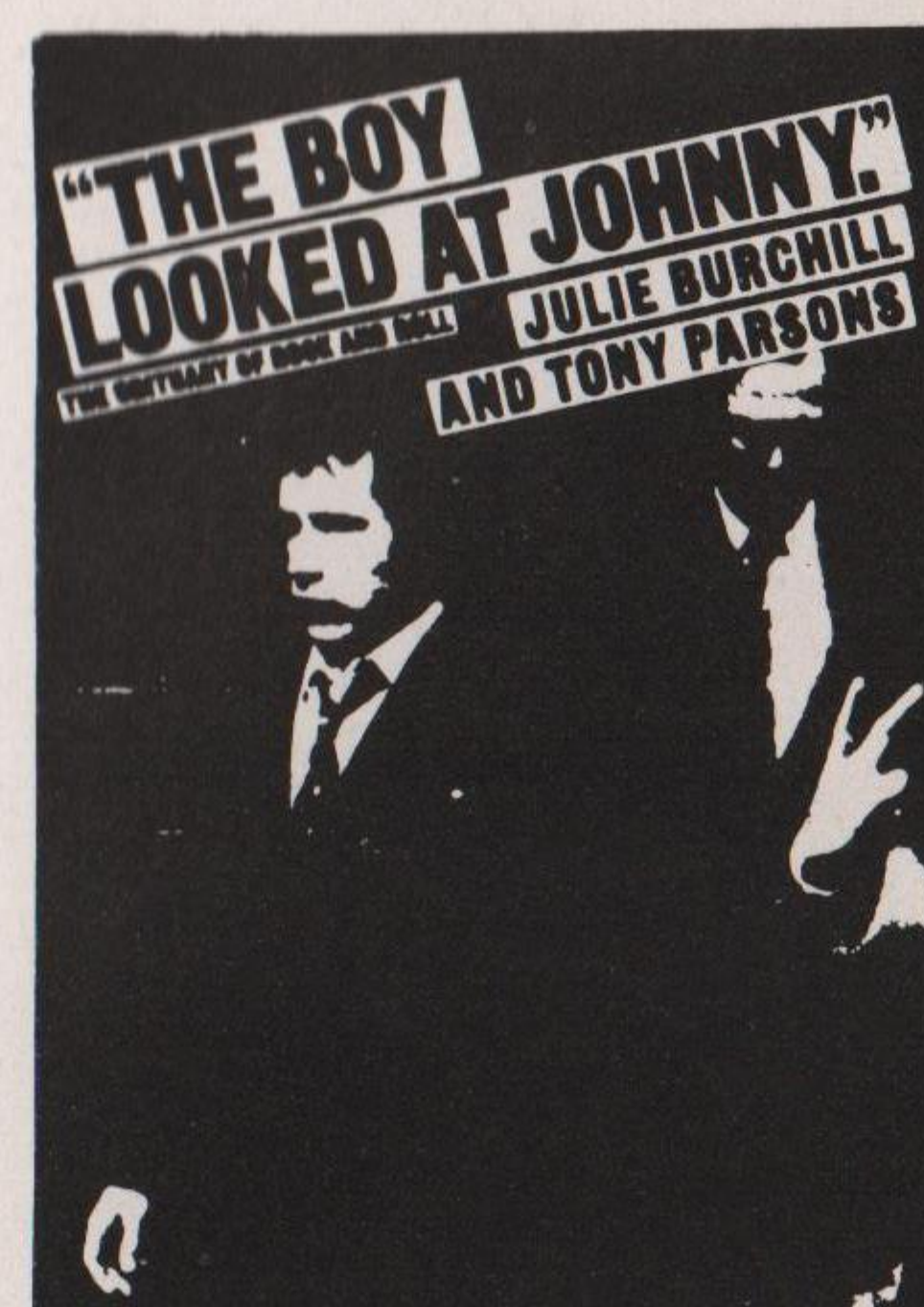
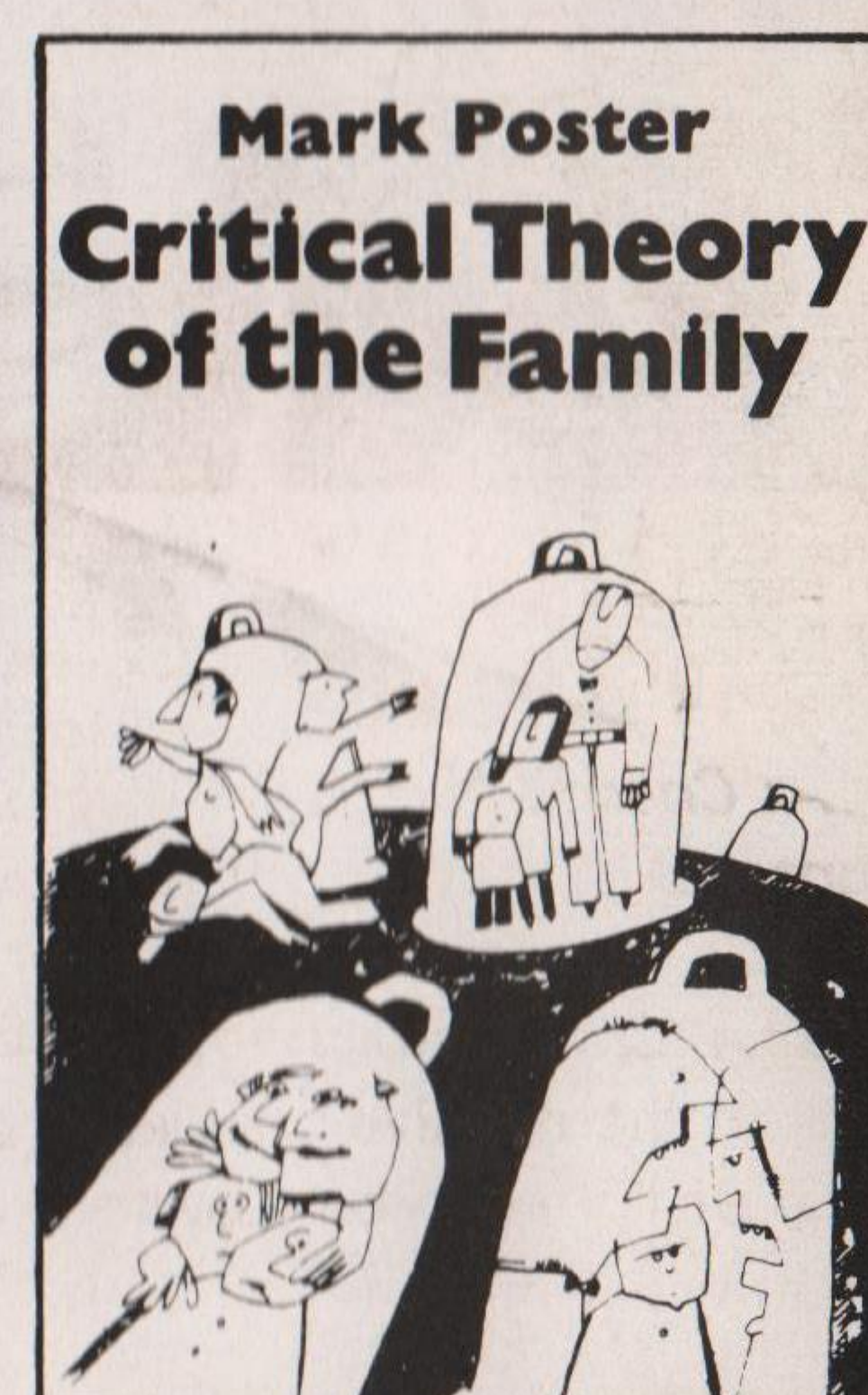
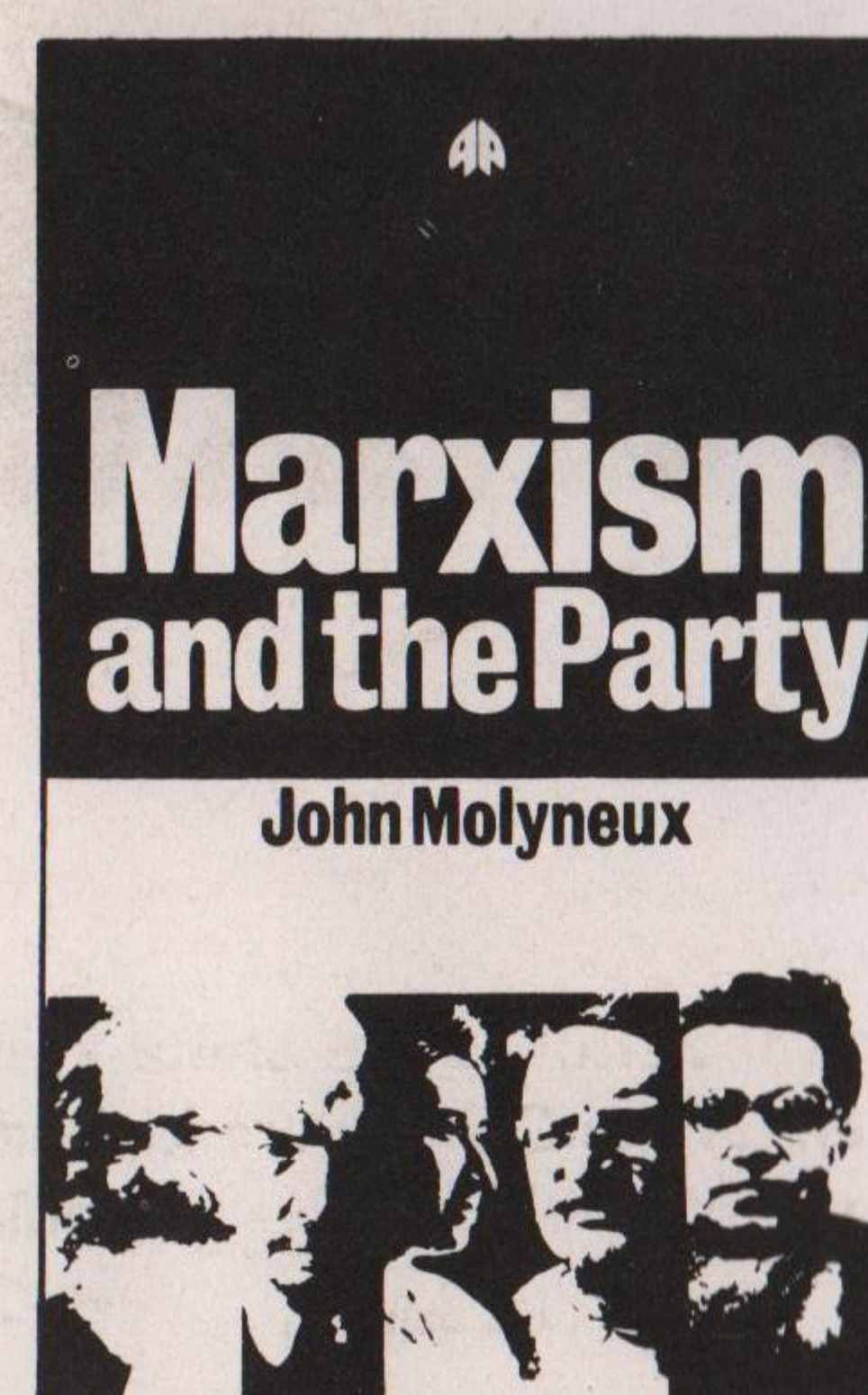
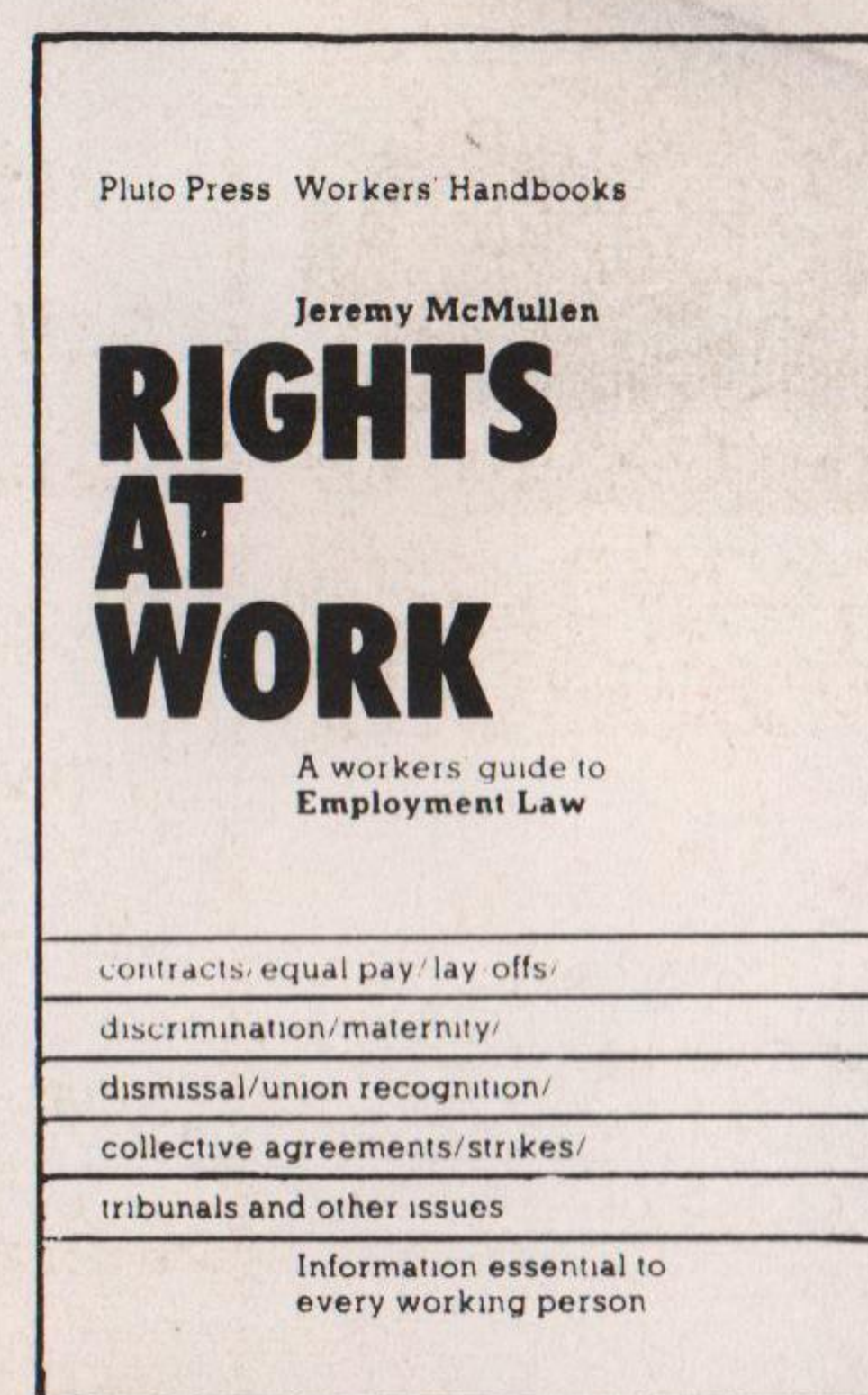
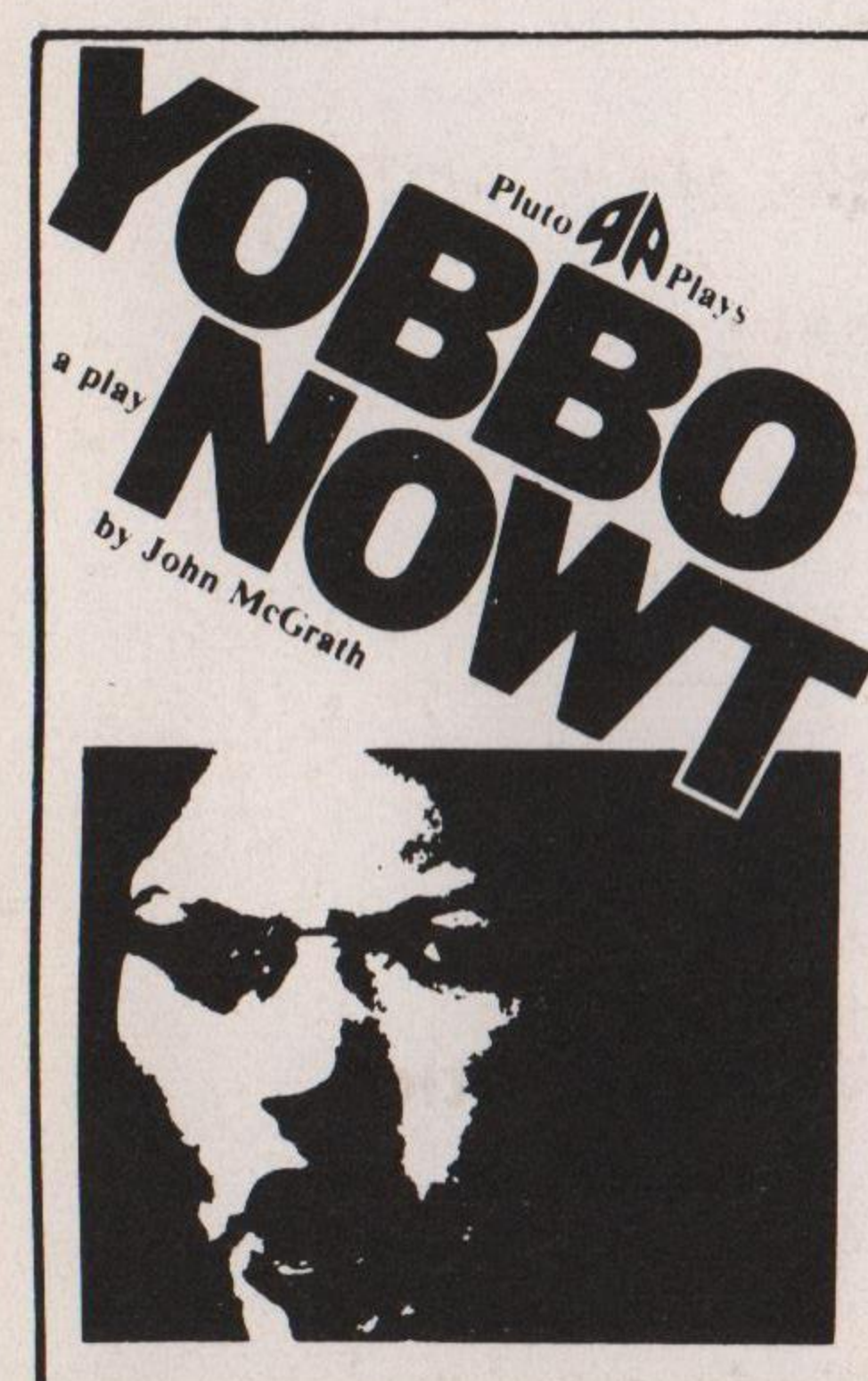
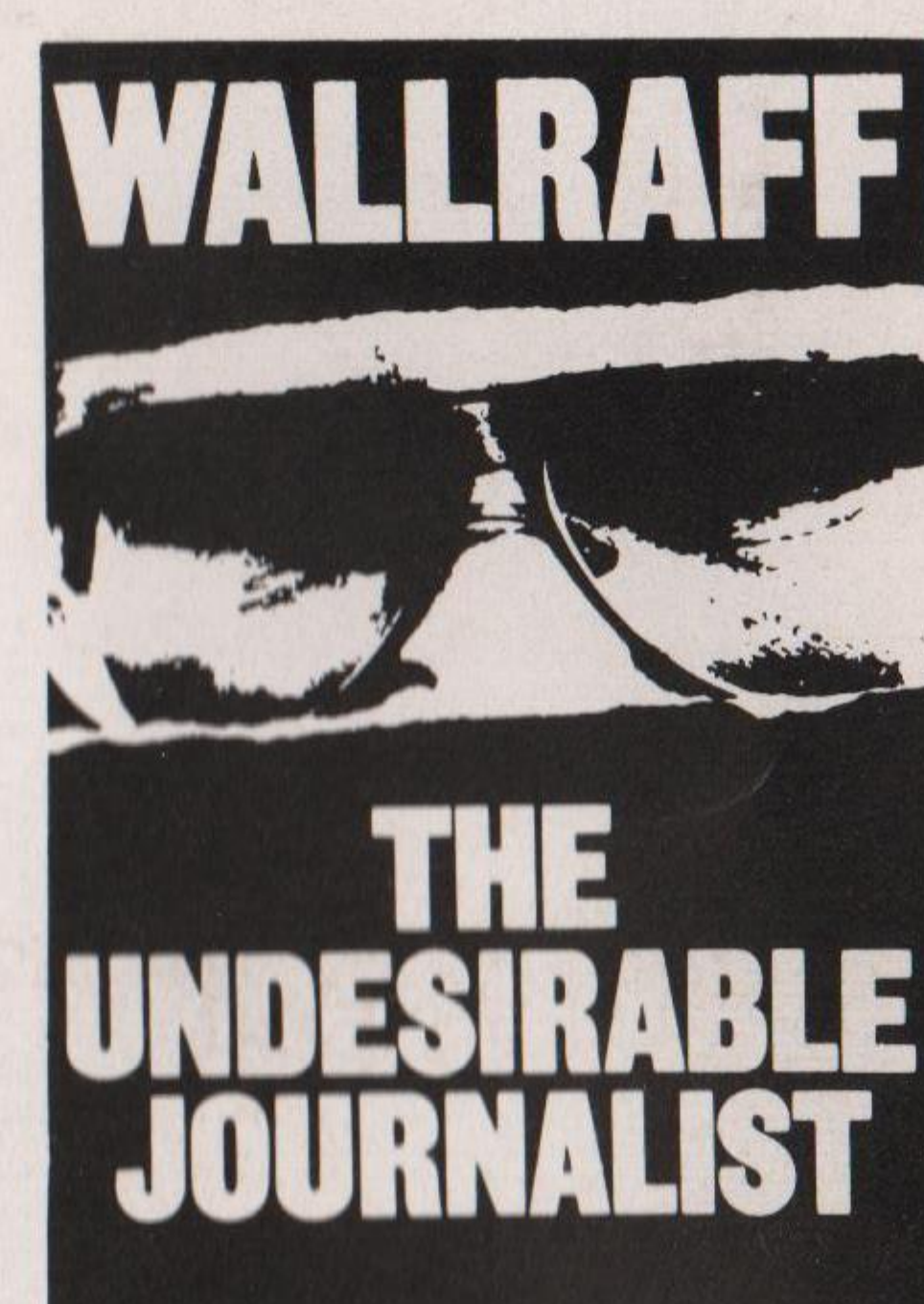
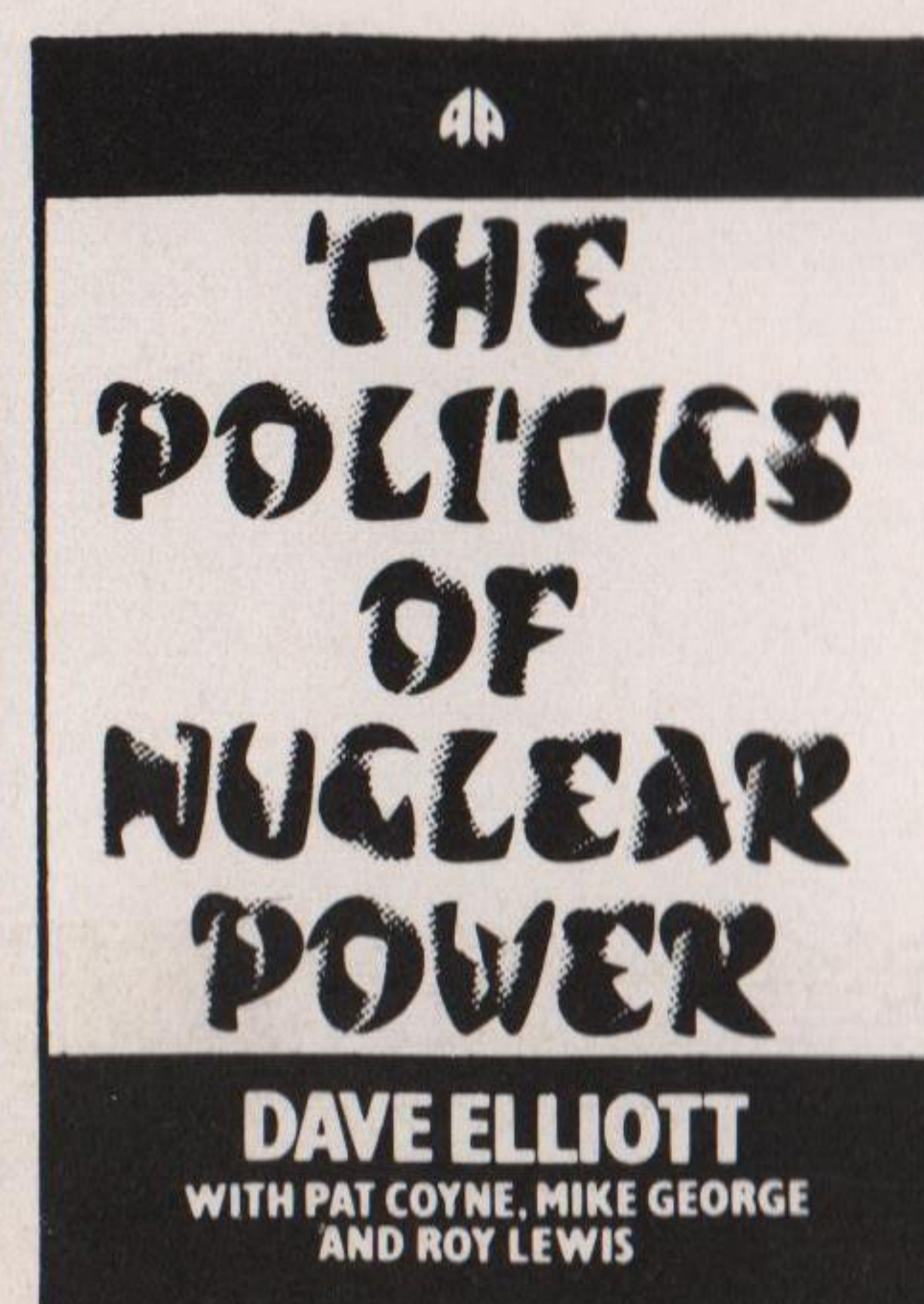
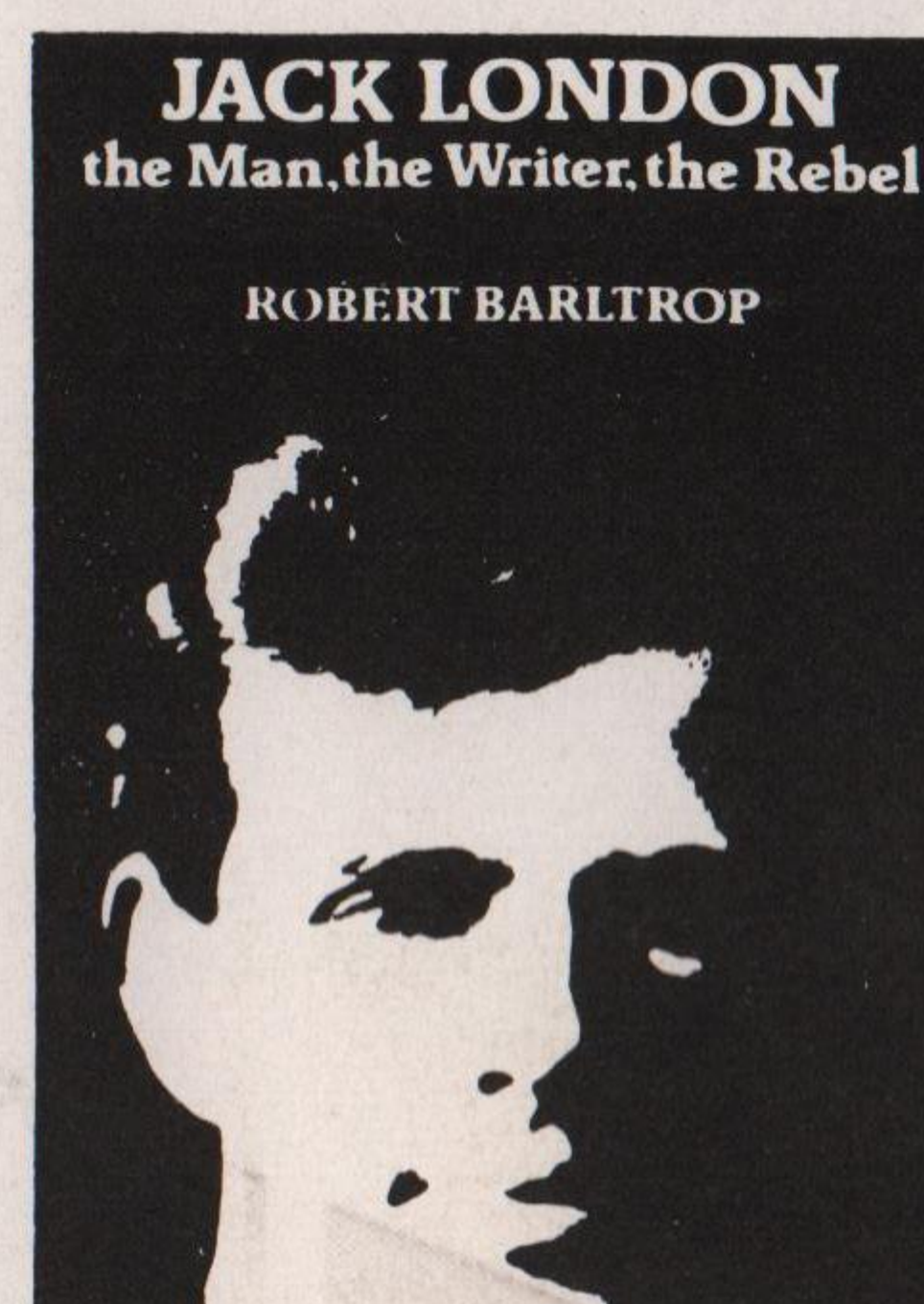
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ISSUE 20 NOVEMBER 1978



155a Drummond St,
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Tel: 01-387 0176
ISSN
0309-4073

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An independent monthly socialist magazine produced by the Leveller Collective. Owned by its Supporting Subscribers through the Leveller Magazine Ltd., a society whose AGM controls the magazine. Articles, photographs, cartoons and letters are all very welcome. Collective meetings are open and we invite our readers' interest and participation in the development of the magazine. The next introductory meeting will be held at our office at 7.30pm on Tuesday November 7.

Typeset by Bread 'n Roses (TU), 01-485 4432.

Printed by Feb-Edge Litho Ltd. (TU), 3-4 The Oval, London E2.

Trade distribution by Publications Distribution Co-operative, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Phone 01-251 4976.

US Distribution by Carrier Pigeon, Boston, Mass.

Process camerawork: FI Litho, 01-359 8288.

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CHINA: Cherrill Hicks who visited China in the summer provides a first-hand account of life there. John Gittings explains why the Chinese are friends with the Shah of Iran and the Americans. Malcolm Caldwell looks at the conflict between Cambodia, China and Vietnam. A recent visitor to the China-Vietnam border reports on the massive refugee problem as the Chinese are kicked out of Vietnam. The end of the lease on Kowloon peninsula will spell the beginning of the end for British-owned Hong Kong, according to Walter Easey and Dave Clark.

An all-action feature on film-making. An interview with black film-maker Horace Ove, director of 'Pressure' on the problems which face independent film-makers. How he got funded and the difficulties this created. Then Sue Clayton, a member of the Independent Film Makers Association, argues that independent cinema cannot be replaced by some left-wing Hollywood paradise.

Johnstone

This avuncular figure is Colonel Hugh Johnstone, formerly commanding officer of 9 Signals Regiment, one of the two Royal Corps of Signals regiments assigned to Signals Intelligence (SIGINT—see *The Leveller* issue 15). Any suggestions that this person, whose job, if not existence, was highly secret until he was promoted to Whitehall in 1974, must be discounted: this picture has been published before, in the Royal Signals Association journal, *Wire*.

See also ABC Secrets trial story, page 9



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Apologies to our readers for the absence of theatre listings in this issue. Due to staff shortages this service has been cancelled this month. Normal services will be resumed as soon as possible.

Secret selection

Thanks for another fine issue of the mag. Could you at some time run a feature on current methods of secret service recruiting, as rumours in Oxford suggest that the university is still a prime source for potential spies?

I write 'still' because the authorities panicked after the defections of Philby, Burgess and MacLean (all were at Cambridge) and let it be known that Oxford and Cambridge had been abandoned as recruiting grounds.

In Oxford, the process seems to be to use certain dons as 'talent-scouts' and something known as the Appointments Committee (a sort of Careers Advisory Service). It is not clear who takes the initiatives, the Dons or the Appointments Committee.

Last Easter I heard of two students who had been sent letters by the Appointments Committee asking them to come for interview. They said that at the interview it was made fairly clear what sort of work was on offer—described as government work of a 'sensitive nature'. Name and Address withheld.

Anybody else from Oxford and Cambridge had similar experiences or heard similar stories? Write and let us know.

UTOPIA — Waaugh!

So your anonymous contributor—or was it an advertisement?—on page 31 (*The Leveller*, July) reckons that improvised music is "the utopia beyond commodity exchange". Waaugh! So we leave our alienations, objectifications, possessiveness, patriarchal attitudes at the door?

Didn't the hippies say that about sex and rock music? Weren't they wrong? Ideology isn't a sea we can get out of when we reach nice desert islands like music. It's *inside* us. If we've accepted that politics are part of sexual and personal relations, why try to suggest improvised music is unaffected by all that?

S/he argues against packaging, and then puts a HUGE label on improvised music—UTOPIA. What crap. How the hell does it "break... with all of our present way of life"? I want my music to *relate* to my way of life, I want it to "uncover contradictions".

I'm sick of people putting improvised music in a heavenly ghetto and casting people like me as angelic robots. Utopia? Some of it is purgatory.

Steve Beresford
Musics
London NW1

Havanabeano

It was refreshing to read Mike Phillips' article about the Youth Festival in Havana this year. That,

letters

plus one or two articles which appeared elsewhere, were about the sum total of responsible media coverage given to this event.

The enormous amounts of money spent by the press ranging from *The Times* to the *Mirror*, seemed to me to be mostly turned into a drink known as a 'Cuba Libre' and drunk in that most esoteric of journalistic situations, around the bar of the Havana Libre Hotel swimming pool.

Articles which were telexed back by be-bronzed men padding through the carpeted corridors in their tropical gear, appeared to be for the most part learnt about from other suntanned reporters or from members of the British Delegation who dared to actually come seeking these people with access to the folks back home. Very little time, if any, was spent by these masters of the written word with the actual delegation about which they all wrote so convincingly. In fact, a Mr Andrew Steven from the *Telegraph* must have written his article before he left for Havana—it made such a mockery of the whole event. No one but the honoured leaders of the delegation met this person and it is hardly surprising, since most of his time was taken up in dealing with the effects of foreign food on his stomach and, it is rumoured, with trying to put together the radio he had dismantled, in the mistaken apprehension that it had been bugged.

Needless to say, most of the delegation returned somewhat more disillusioned, if that is possible, by the behaviour of the Great British Press, some of whom spent long evenings in conversation about the freedom of reporting in good old G.B. as opposed to the limiting and controlled media output in Cuba.

None of the journalists who were there are appearing at the Old Bailey this week.

Gill Brown

Heave two

I felt the cinema article (Saturday Night Heave, *The Leveller* 18) was a bit muddled. It didn't really make clear why filmmakers like Straub might be important, even if they play to empty houses, or only to the converted.

I was glad to see someone defending Lost Honour of Katharina Blum but wished the issue of the context in which films are seen had been raised. I also felt that the article, which should

have been organised around the notion of political effectivity of film, was really a little incoherent. I think the article should have been longer. But since it wasn't I hope you will return to the subject in a future issue.

D.A. Gillam
London W1.

*Try pages 31 to 36, this issue

Lingo halls

Some additions/corrections to your article about English language schools:

* It is a distortion only to say that courses can cost up to £750/week. Prices at most schools range from £15-30 for 15 hours/week of lessons. The vast majority of students do not pay more.

* The price of accommodation with 'families' costs as much if not more than the language courses. You could do well to expose this tax-fiddling aspect of tourism too—along with the racism that goes with it.

* Very few real tourists spend much time in EFL schools and no refugee needs to sign on at a school to stay in Britain. Most people who study English are pushed by economic necessity; they need English to find jobs in their own countries and go home again better able to compete for work. Many come from the higher classes of their countries and will return to work for international corporations, e.g. Middle Eastern and Iranian people. Many are preparing to work in the tourism industry which is being encouraged to expand in most countries. Others are educated but have little money, e.g. Southern Europeans. They may have to work here in order to live, but studying English is still their main purpose.

* The Association of Recognised English Language Schools (ARELS) cannot recognise a school—only the DES can. Once recognition has been obtained, membership of ARELS can be bought for a high price. The benefit is publicity, which is the main reason why ARELS exists. Most ARELS schools have very good teachers and yet they still suffer from long hours, bad conditions, lousy pay and the sack in low season. They are better off than teachers in non-ARELS schools, but not necessarily by very much. If ARELS existed to control standards, these things wouldn't be true. ARELS is an association of employers who have found

that by advertising together, they can corner a large part of the market.

* Most teachers I have met in non-unionised schools are not conned by the 'big family' line their employers dish out. Some of them are inhibited by the self-image of being a professional and middle class, perhaps. But many are even more inhibited by their own isolation within individual schools and the fact that they can be replaced at the drop of a hat if they make union noises. The queue of teachers trying to get into EFL is endless.

* Your indictment of International House was good. You could also have mentioned that a person with no EFL teaching experience who does one of their courses is not ready to teach afterwards, having done only 5-10 minutes of teacher practice for a few weeks. Farther, they have 'trained' so many people that their 'diploma' is worthless for getting a job outside their own schools except perhaps in summer when many schools will take on almost anyone.

* The most important quarrel I had with your article came at the end where you suggested that LEA's should go into language teaching more. First, LEA EFL teachers are not necessarily better qualified or experienced than those of us in the private sector. Qualifications are mostly an invention of the last five years anyway, due to job scarcity and competition.

Second, LEA's rent out their premises to a few summer schools, but language teaching for most schools goes on all year round. If you were to close private schools, what would you do with the students from September to June? With education facilities being cut back, would you propose expanding state facilities in this area as opposed to others?

Third, how would you reconcile charging foreigners high fees for language courses within a system based on free or low-priced education subsidised by taxes? You are suggesting that the State get into education for profit—the logical extension of this is monstrous and full of contradictions.

Fourth, the State is willing to provide education at a financial loss because it is a major instrument, after the family, for transmitting ideology. Foreigners have been allowed to study in Britain because they have taken Western technology, economics and culture home with them

afterwards. For an imperialist country, this has been very important. But, the government are slowly realising that the education they give foreign students at ratepayers' expense might just as easily be paid for privately and bring in more profit. Hence, one reason why facilities for them are being cut back and fees raised. Britain makes a lot of money from people living here to study English—that's why private schools are allowed to exist.

Fifth, State teachers have little control over what is taught in their schools or how they are organised. EFL teachers have often left or rejected the State system for this reason. That is why I think our union (ILTB) has opted for the demand for teachers' control of our schools rather than State control. In my opinion, a socialist system of education means schools run and controlled only by teachers, other workers and students. In this sense, I think co-operatives are the best solution. Under capitalism, they involve contradictions in that they must be financially self-supporting and must therefore be run as businesses. But they are the nearest one can get to workers' control under capitalism and they are run with the interests of teachers and students as the first priority, which makes a world of difference when you work or study in them.

Marge Berer
London W2.

On sectarianism

I don't want to get into a long correspondence with Boris Tardov (*Letters*, *Leveller* 19), but I do want a word about the straw person he has dreamt up, the "non-aligned sectarian".

Let's try and produce a sensible working definition of sectarianism. How about this? "A sectarian is someone who is so obsessed with his or her political differences with other people and groups that he or she overlooks or greatly under-emphasises large areas of political agreement, which represent opportunities for unity around issues."

Most people I know on the non-party left just don't fit this description. On the other hand, many people I have met who are in left groups *do*. Many people have left left (!) groups precisely because of the sectarianism, whereas sectarian splitters just grow their own (the Revolutionary Amoebic Tendency syndrome).

Nowadays sectarianism has become very uncool. We're all on the face of it against sectarianism, but the point to watch out for is that some of us are also against all criticism. Now that the groups find it too revealing to respond to criticism in a sectarian way, they have begun to label all criticism as sectarian. You can see it in the

letters

Anti-Nazi League phenomenon—its proponents seem to believe that the ANL is so non-sectarian as to be uncriticisable. Neat.

Sorry Boris, but nowadays no-one's tablets of stone are safe from being pissed on. Non-party socialists aren't going to go away, so you'll just have to adapt. Lenin would have.

Dave Bradney,
London N6.

Abortion to term

As members of the Steering Committee of the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) we were very disappointed with your article "Abortion—No Upper Limit?" (*Leveller* 19). We feel that a golden opportunity to explain, clearly and calmly, the issues involved in the debate on positive abortion legislation was lost. Instead we had an article which did exactly what all NAC's opponents have done—sensationalised and distorted NAC's position thus playing into the hands of the anti-abortionists.

Fair enough to explain the facts of the differences within the pro-choice abortion movement—but we would have thought that *The Leveller* would have seen its role as building the fight for "A Woman's Right To Choose" and helping to maintain the unity of the pro-choice movement rather than sensationally exposing differences.

Even the article's title, "No Upper Limit?", was liable to conjure up visions of NAC campaigning for 8 or 9 month abortions. No way is this what NAC is about. NAC is about choice for women.

NAC has always stood for no restrictions on women's right to

choose whether to continue a pregnancy or not. In effect all the last national conference did was to reaffirm this principle: 'No medical or legal restrictions on a woman's right to choose!' In our view this is a fundamental feminist principle.

In a paper presented to the 1977 conference sisters argued: "A Woman's Right To Choose means total control over our reproductive abilities. Abortion 'on condition' or 'until a certain time' is not A Woman's Right To Choose. . . . It is important that we separate out the fundamental principles of our campaign from the tactical considerations of when and how to adopt a particular form of advancing the struggle. We believe that a

Woman's Right To Choose must not be compromised by us. We must work towards the full right to choose in law. If we can not win it fully, then we must make it clear who bears the responsibility for limiting that right."

NAC did not "reject a positive bill"; it rejected taking the responsibility for introducing and campaigning for restrictions on women's choice. In fact it accepted an outline for a positive bill worked out by the Legal Workers for A Woman's Right to Choose group which would completely decriminalise abortion. It also agreed to initiate a campaign to amend the NHS Reorganisation Act 1973-4 to include mandating AHA's to provide abortion facilities in the same way they now have to provide contraception facilities.

NAC did not "make a sensational stand and then promise not to campaign on it". It did make a principled stand and a tactical decision. NAC decided not to compromise that principle for the sake of the possible support of some MPs. Recognising

that it is support outside parliament that counts—the active support of the women's, labour, and student movements—and *not* the conditional support of MPs, NAC decided that tactically it was not in a position at this time to launch a major campaign to force positive legislation through parliament—even for ALRA's proposed bill. It is necessary to continue to build up mass extra-parliamentary support in order to be in such a position.

In the above mentioned paper the sisters concluded by saying: "We will support anything which is an advance for women in our endeavours to win control of our lives, but as a campaign we should not give away what is not ours to concede." This is not a contradiction as the article alleges, nor is it a matter of 'principled purity' as others have alleged, but quite simply of refusing to take the responsibility for introducing restrictions on a basic feminist principle while at the same time supporting anything that is a step forward on the 1967 Abortion Act.

NAC sees its role as one of continuing to build mass support for A Woman's Right to Choose; thru the Trade Union Conference on abortion, thru campaigning for day-care outpatient abortion clinics, thru the international campaign for abortion rights. It does not, as it never has in the past, impose its position on positive legislation as a pre-condition for unity. All pro-choice people and groups are able to unite around the above activities and should work together so that we can lay a real basis for future positive legislation.

Finally, as members of the International Marxist Group (IMG) we would like to clarify some points in relation to the IMG's involvement in NAC. We are involved in NAC because we see abortion rights as a central area of attack on women's liberation. We are involved because as revolutionary socialists we believe the fight for women's liberation and that for socialism to be integrally related. We argued for the above position on positive legislation within NAC as part of a discussion and debate that began over a year ago. We hope it will continue. But if the 'no restrictions' decision was "largely the result of work done by the IMG" that does not invalidate it! If other women support positions of the IMG then maybe it's because these women actually believe in them themselves and maybe it's us who supports their positions! It seems very insulting to other women involved in NAC to insinuate that their ideas and thoughts are the result of a few manipulating revolutionaries.

Judy Watson,) IMG reps. on
Sarah Roelofs,) NAC steering committee.



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Labour Party Scanlon's final scandal

Despite big gains at this year's Labour Party conference, the left was defeated on the vital issue of Party democracy. Proposals that would have made every Labour MP subject to a mandatory reselection procedure were thrown out after Hugh Scanlon failed to cast the vote of the engineers' union. BRIAN DEER went behind the scenes and found out what really happened.

WHEN THE Labour Party conference opened in Blackpool on October 2nd, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy seemed certain of success. Meeting over the pre-conference weekend, most of the big trade union delegations had come out in favour of CLPD's amendment to the Party's rules. And with the vast majority of constituency delegates sure to support it, the most important change, for decades, in the Party's structure appeared to be in the bag.

For five years CLPD had campaigned in the Party to change the rules for constituencies and scrap the assumption that, if the electorate wills it, a Labour MP has a job for life. Under the old rules, constituency parties had to go through a long process of no-confidencing the MP before a new candidate could be chosen. It took, for example, three years to sack Labour cabinet minister Reg Prentice, now a Tory.

Crudely put, this change would simply mean the governing General Committee of each constituency party would advertise, short-list and select a Labour candidate to fight each general election. If the constituency was already represented in parliament by a Labour Party member, that person would be automatically short-listed, but would then have to compete with other aspirants for the Labour nomination.

Despite a pledge last year to support the change, the Party's National Executive Committee put before the conference a "compromise" between this and the old method preferred by the

right. This compromise would subject sitting MPs to a vote of confidence, but a selection procedure would not automatically be set in motion. As the debate got under way on Tuesday afternoon, however, the CLPD were confident of victory.

At the end of the short debate on the CLPD-backed amendment and the NEC compromise, a card vote was called and tellers moved about the hall with ballot boxes. Into the boxes went the million votes of the Transport and General Workers' Union, half a million from the National Union of Public Employees, 250,000 from the mineworkers, a thousand each from most of the constituency delegates and many more from smaller unions, in favour of the CLPD proposal.

Jock McPherson Quinn was collecting the votes in the central aisle on the conference floor. He offered the box to the engineers' president Hugh Scanlon, sitting at the end of the first of two rows of AUEW delegates. Scanlon took no notice and talked with General Secretary John Boyd and executive member Gavin Laird, leading right-wingers in the union.

But Quinn was himself an AUEW delegate and had taken part only hours before in a delegation meeting which reaffirmed the union's commitment to the CLPD amendment. Despite threats and protests from right-wing president-elect Terry Duffy, the delegation rejected Scanlon's plea to switch support to the NEC compromise. The vote was 26 to 19. So Quinn told Scanlon

to put his vote in the box.

Scanlon, Boyd and Laird, however, had tacitly arranged to break their mandate and abstain on the vote. Quinn was told to "get on with your job" as a teller and to go away from the AUEW delegates. The engineers' million votes stayed firmly in Scanlon's pocket and the CLPD amendment to the Party's rules was defeated by 2,672,000 to 3,066,000.

Being a clever enough man to have become president of the AUEW, Scanlon sat tight until the vote was announced before storming up to the rostrum with a complaint. His delegation had been out of the hall during the morning and was unsure about voting procedure, he said. It was a smart trick, taken up by most newspapers next day, to focus attention on Joan Lestor's chairing of the conference and to take the heat off himself.

On Tuesday night, the Mayoress of Blackpool's civic reception in the Winter Gardens was alive with speculation. Was Scanlon a crook? Or did he genuinely misunderstand what was going on? Hadn't he done something like this before? And, most importantly, would the vote be retaken tomorrow? Happy for the moment with a pork pie and a pint of bitter, delegates waited till morning.

The Wednesday morning session came and went without a mutter on the subject. The engineers' delegation spent much of it out of the hall and Hugh Scanlon was instructed by his delegation to ask the conference Standing Orders Committee to have the vote retaken. Not surprisingly, the right-wing controlled committee told Scanlon what he wanted to hear: no revote was possible.

It was on Wednesday afternoon that all hell let loose on the conference floor. Half a dozen constituency delegates went to the rostrum to demand a new vote. But Joan Lestor in the chair would have none of it: "If I took a revote every time someone took a wrong decision, we'd never get through the conference." Immediately delegates started shouting and stamping in protest, or applauding in support of Lestor's ruling.

For a few minutes nobody quite knew what to expect. The stamping and shouting

got louder and for the first time in years the chair threatened to adjourn the conference. "You lost yesterday and this is unfortunate," Lestor said, "but I'm not going to change my ruling." In the end, order was restored by the delegate from Brent East who hurried up to move a resolution on racialism.

For many, Lestor's refusal to take the vote again was seen as a mistake. But most of them did not know that the transport workers' delegation had, that lunchtime, agreed not to support any move to take the vote again. "If a union like that [the AUEW] doesn't know what it's doing, how can we support it?" one T&G delegate argued with his colleagues. Other unions felt the same and so, if Lestor had put the proposition to conference it would have fallen by a huge majority.

At the Tribune rally on Wednesday night, left-winger Dennis Skinner announced that at his first NEC meeting that afternoon he had got the Executive to order a revote. Skinner said the chair could do it, as Tony Benn had done in 1972 over a resolution on the Clay Cross Councillors. It would all happen on Thursday morning, Skinner said. But nothing did, except a weak protest, loudly heckled, from a solitary constituency delegate.

Where does the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy go now? Any organised response to its defeat will have to wait till the CLPD meets in December. But at the conference two plans were already being talked about. One was to seek a new vote at next year's conference. The other was to use the CLPD network to move no-confidence motions in as many MPs as possible.

But things don't look too good. Under the Labour Party's "three year rule" a decision of the Party conference this year cannot be reversed until 1981. And, while it might in theory be possible to break this rule if enough support was won from the unions, it is a rare thing for any of the Party's many traditions, customs and practices to be so forgotten.

Similarly, even if the CLPD had the political muscle to compel large numbers of MPs to go through the reselection



Debate Cartoon row

THE LEVELLER Collective received this cartoon for last month's issue. After a lot of argument we have decided to run it, because we felt that issues raised in our discussion have general implications that don't just relate to this cartoon.

It was Bella, the housewife, that sparked it off. Some of us felt she was all too familiar — the idiot working class woman so dominated by the trivia of domestic life she can't tell a political party from a soap powder; the housewife with hands as soft as her head. Steve Bell wants to satirise the attitudes of the admen, and sister in struggle Bella lands up as a one-dimensional means to that end. Bella is made as dumb as the Tory jerks think she is... see frame 6. The way Steve decided to present women (particularly working class) in this cartoon is no different from other stale old stereotypes.

Other people strongly disagreed. They felt the way Steve presented Bella shows up the Tory propaganda machine for what it is, and that by using such a brazen stereotype Steve revealed how redundant and oppressive these kinds of images really are. A few collective members suspected that the whole argument was just another opportunity for humourless politicians to sound off. And that, anyway, the cartoon is a good laugh.

The cartoon was given back to Steve with a request to change Bella's speech bubbles in a few frames, which he wasn't prepared to do, and it became clear that the problems were more complicated than a question of individual "sense of humour".

With an article, it's relatively easy to sidetrack this kind of difficulty by sub-editing, which is something The Leveller often does. But since artwork is seen as a complete unit, the question is only, to publish or not. It's difficult for people who aren't cartoonists or illustrators to suggest changes in someone else's "art", either to the verbal or visual content.

The initial problem remains: to find ways of using stereotypes without reinforcing them. We want political ideas to be expressed through a variety of media — music, visuals, poetry, humour and so on — but there is no reason for any of these to be exempt from the kind of criticism that can be made of a piece of writing.

All in all, we've had a fair old barney over this one. Readers, what do you think?

Secrets trial Getting the right jury

THE ABC official secrets trial has proved Marx wrong: it has repeated itself, first as farce, and second as more farcical still. As *The Leveller* went to press, the Crown case seemed on the verge of collapse, and the court was in camera, debating the issue: should the Signals Intelligence units referred to in the famous tape recording be identified in court? They've been referred to in print, elsewhere, but that's supposed to be beside the point. The real point is that if they can be openly identified, the case against Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, whose conversation is on the tape, just crumbles away.

At the start of the second trial, one of the charges against Duncan Campbell, was dropped. (That he had collected information, now admitted not to be secret, which might be useful to an enemy and so on.) By courtesy of Justice Mars-Jones we can tell you this: after application from Ken Dennis, the creepy Press Association hack at the Old Bailey, he lifted his otherwise total ban on reporting the first morning's proceedings, to let it be known.

Dennis did not ask for the rest of the restriction to be lifted. He wasn't bothered to report the arguments about the vetting of the jury — the issue on which the first trial had foundered — which ended with the jurors being asked by the judge: "Have you at any time in the last 15 years held a position in government service or the armed forces in which you handled information classified as secret?" (One juror had, and had to drop out).

It was an attempt — not just an attempt, but a success — at covering up the highly embarrassing business of jury vetting. In the first trial, prosecutor John Leonard QC admitted the jury had been vetted, for 'loyalty'. As it turned out, they were so 'loyal' it almost hurt. The foreman, Lesley Blackburn had been in the SAS regiment, and two others had signed the Official Secrets Act.

The SAS connection came out on London Weekend TV, broadcast to the world by journalist Christopher Hitchens, who has not yet been charged with contempt of court. And the DPP has already announced that it will not be prosecuting LWT. At any rate it was enough to stop the trial. The new judge doesn't want to risk this happening again.

Enough of this trial is going to be — has already been — in camera as it is. Even when it is open, there are whole areas of the evidence that are not spoken aloud. There is so much the state wants to hide. The judge is lending them a hand, to gag us with.

To keep this information from the jury is stupid. To keep from the people arguments about jury vetting, a subject which has heavy implications, and which has exercised the media, lawyers and pundits of all shades over the last month, is repressive.

Mars-Jones threatened that any medium defying this ban would face severe penalties. And he looked menacingly at the press box, which has more than once upset him by laughing out loud at the more ridiculous manifestations of secrecy that have come out.

A judge in this position has very great power. He is in charge of all the proceedings in his court. Anyone he judges to be in contempt he can deal with on the spot. No argu-

ment. No appeal.

In this case he is severely abusing it. The rationale behind his ban is that the jury was not present, and there is an argument that nothing that happens in the absence of the jury should be reported, else it might read about matters that have been specifically kept from it.

In this case the jury had not even been sworn, and the matters discussed could not prejudice the trial, for they did not directly concern the charges, or the evidence.

Mystery still shrouds Mr C, the new top-secret witness the crown is considering calling. Only one man fits the bill: John Somerville, deputy director at Government Communications Headquarters, where SIGINT is based.

Somerville is an under-secretary at the FO. He has experience of SIGINT, 1945-7. This gives him the 35 years' service he's said to have.

One problem: the state says Mr C's so secret his name can't even be revealed to the defendants. But Somerville is in "Who's Who".

He's not, however, in the Diplomatic Service List, where, in the alphabetical list of the 18 under-secretaries, there appears where his name would be: (Director of Communications)

If he is Somerville, it need not be that surprising. More public things have been claimed as secret in this case.

It could be Mr C is so secret his existence isn't recorded anywhere. Perhaps he doesn't exist.

Labour Party

continued from page 7

procedure, this too would not be in the labour movement spirit and would find little support beyond the hard-nosed activists of the left. Most Party members are likely to accept the NEC

compromise as a useful improvement.

Whether the new rules will take the steam out of the CLPD, in the way the right hopes, remains to be seen. But a lot will depend on the left's political response to what happened at the conference. It is an

inescapable conclusion that a handful of union bosses blatantly ignored the democracy of the movement. And it shouldn't be forgotten that right-wing hardliner Terry Duffy now takes over from Scanlon as AUEW president. Brothers, you ain't seen nothing yet, sisters too!

Left press Catch a falling Star

Not exactly time to start mourning for the *Star*, but Britain's oldest socialist daily is showing signs of political decay. At least, according to Rose Shapiro who — in line with the open-door policy which let in Roger Graef's cinema verite outfit for the Granada series — was allowed to hang around the offices for a day in the life of the newspaper.

The *Morning Star* was launched in 1966, as a successor to the *Daily Worker*, which began in 1930. Years of producing a national daily have enabled much of the staff to get the paper out standing on their heads, or as some have uncharitably put it, asleep. For the past few years the *Star* has been in deep financial trouble, and it can't avoid the dilemmas and imponderables faced by virtually every other left paper — who reads us now, and for what; who could read us in the future, what do they want and how do we get to them?

My day out started with the news conference. Schedules were handed out, the main task being to work out what might be the front page splash, and the lead story for each page. There seemed little contention about what would go where, until they got down to item 5 on the foreign list — the death of the Pope. Would it go on the front page, or page 3? Every other national would be featuring Papa's unexpected demise on page 1, and if it's not given priority it will look like the *Star* has no idea of what is news. But if readers know about it already, why give it prime space? The Pope landed up on page 3, and I went back to wondering why there was a framed colour picture of a VC10 on the wall.

A quick talk with Tony Chater, the editor, put me right on a few points. No, the overseas (ie Eastern European) order hadn't gone down after the CP Congress' acceptance of the "Eurocommunist" British Road to Socialism... it's remained at around 14,000. Neither had Sid French taken with him thousands of *Star* readers when he tanked off to form the New Communist Party.

The high point for circulation was in 1947, when the *Daily Worker* hit 123,000, but by '66, (the *Star*'s first year), 10

it had dropped to 58,000. Then followed another dip — 50,000 in '71. Now it's 35,000, with 21,000 Brit readers. Chater stressed that drop had been gradual, which is a pretty sanguine way of describing a loss of 88,000 in 30 years.

So off I went for a trip round William Rust House where everything from editorial offices to the printing press is housed, with a few rooms over for the CP's London District. Most of the editorial staff work relentlessly hard, in cramped and badly equipped offices. It is obvious that money is short, but whether the dearth of resources are as limiting to change as the CP leadership makes out is the subject of continual argument, both in and out of the paper.

So what is being produced at the moment? It's a six-page paper, price 12 pence, trying to give a very traditional sense of what should be in a newspaper, and in what order. "Hard" industrial stuff at the front, "social issues" like education and health put together with the cultural coverage near the back or on the weekly woman's page.

With an editorial staff of only 25, with only 3½ general reporters (I couldn't understand that either) there is a lot of reliance on agency tapes, the Press Association, Reuters and Tass with a few bits here and there from Cuban and Chinese news agencies, which get a bit of a re-write, and appear on the news pages along with bona fide *Star* stories as by "Our foreign desk" or a "Morning *Star* reporter". As a result, they are often little more than poor relations of bourgeois press material.

The style of news reporting is terse, concentrating almost completely on the bareboned telling of facts in a logical order. One gets the

impression that the *Star* sees the most reliable body of readers (and by implication the real muscle of the left) as white, male, shop stewards, and, if they've got enough time after feeding the kids and organising the bazaar, their wives. Most of the industrial coverage centres on 'the magic moment when all the lads walk out' as an ex-*Star* reporter put it. She felt that by concentrating so much on the point of confrontation the *Star* doesn't present an accurate picture of industrial life, and that it will have to meet the needs

produce 'more of the same' and exhorted CP members to sell more papers. It neatly shelved the question of future readership, as being: 'the components of the "broad democratic alliance" envisaged in the British Road'. For those who had pressed for a long hard look at the paper, the report was 'a bloody travesty' of their demands. The leadership had once again failed to make the connection between the product and the selling of it, resisting suggestions for change for fear of alienating a dwindling readership.



It's all go in the *Morning Star* newsroom

of a very different left community if it is to expand its readership. There are many in the CP who agree with her.

It was this kind of criticism, made at the '77 CP Congress, that defeated the Executive Committee for the first time in living memory and forced it to form a sub-committee to make 'a thorough review of the content, style, presentation and management of the paper'. But its report predictably maintained the leadership line that the paper should

The *Star* has to maintain readers' support, particularly financial, if it is to survive. "To help build a saner world send now!" says the Fighting Fund's daily column which must reach a monthly target of £9,000, and because advertising revenue is limited to little more than ruski radios and left books, the paper has to rely on its readers to bridge the gap.

It's now halfway through the afternoon, and down in the newsroom there's another leaving ceremony. Smiles all

round as Tony Chater unveils a Teasmade, remarking that it's really more of a present for TV critic Bert Baker's wife... a semi audible groan from a woman standing near me. The newsroom itself looks like it's reached the autumn of its career — dusty bakelite telephones from 1948, second-hand desks and museum piece typewriters. Then for those with the time it's upstairs to features for commemorative twiglets, wine, and cake, a procedure which (though denied by the Exec Committee report) has become increasingly familiar as the old guard retires and the young decide they've had enough.

It's quite a jolly occasion and all part of the communal spirit strongly encouraged in the CP. "It is important that Communists at the *Star* work as a collective... 'Them and Us' or 'Management versus the Workers' attitudes and methods of work have no place..." says a document for *Star* staff guidance. But it's not as simple as that. The paper is owned by the People's Press Printing Society, and anyone who likes can take out a share (limit £1000 worth). The *Star* Management Committee is elected annually by the shareholders and whilst theoretically it isn't a CP body, all its members are in the Party. The paper isn't intended to be the CP's 'direct organ', but Chater, who isn't a journalist, was appointed by the CP Political Committee. He and the deputy editor, Chris Myant, decide who will be employed (with some of the appointments put before the Management Committee) and at the moment there are only two non-party members on the editorial side.

Until a few years ago there were weekly meetings open to all journalists on the paper. Now these are fortnightly alternating with the Editorial Executive (heads of departments and a few others). Though both meetings have similar briefs — discussion of the last week's papers, and what will be in the next lot — the limiting of the open Tuesday meetings was seen by some as a way of containing what was turning into a very critical and demanding group.

So what do the workers not on any of the 'managerial bodies' do if they want to make changes? There is an

NUJ Chapel (branch) but Chater encourages the staff to go through the paper's Party Committee (a kind of powerless, internal CP branch), or to take personal advantage of his 'my door is always open' policy. One of the rank-and-file journalists' current demands is that more women should be employed. There are only five at the moment, and although every committee and head of department accepts the idea of positive discrimination, it's up to the editors to put this into practice. But the commitment of the editorial staff means that they're unwilling to force confrontations.

They're all paid a party wage of around £40 (the NUJ members giving a large proportion of their union rate back to the paper by covenant) a sum that they could double if they worked elsewhere.

The main business is to get the paper out. By early evening, a story planned for the front page hadn't materialised so the Pope had taken its place. By 9.30 the first edition is printed and in the despatch room. It looks very much like every other *Star* I've seen. "New allies back Ford strikers" splashed on the front, with the usual pic of workers holding acceptably sloganed placards. The non-party men bundling it up thought I was joking when I asked them if they read it. They're in it for the money, and along with the print-workers get the full union rate for the job. Even some ex-*Star* journalists still in the Party, told me they didn't read it, apart from the occasional scan over headlines to see what the *Star* had/had not seen fit to report.

So I'm on my bike, musing as usual on The Way Forward. In my bag was a paper that is committed to reaching an audience it doesn't dare represent and doesn't give readers what they deserve. Because the CP leadership fails to see journalism as a way of communicating and stimulating ideas, all it can do is look to the historical loyalty of its readers to boost *Star* sales. But there are *Star* journalists, and many people in the party, who believe change has to come, even though they accept that what the paper needs and what they can reasonably expect may be very different.

Anti Nazi League 12 months growth

The rapidly-growing Anti Nazi League is the third mass political movement to sweep the country since the War. After the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign — both of which reached millions of people and brought thousands into politics — comes the first to reach working class youth in large numbers.

The contrast with CND and VSC is immediate. CND left behind an army of disillusioned Labour activists, and its successor gathered thousands of revolutionaries round the slogan of "Victory to the NLF". But both were essentially middle class campaigns based in schools and universities rather than factories and homes.

ANL instead puts a mass of working class youth in touch with socialist ideas, probably for the first time, in a way that grows out of their own lives, just when the Labour Party is no longer a repository for those ideas.

The potential has already been recognised by the IMG, which took the opportunity of Carnival 2 to launch its new youth paper, *Revolution*. The Group has written to the SWP to invite them to join a united attempt to build a revolutionary youth movement. Tariq Ali says that the comrades around *Rebel*, the SWP's youth paper, are interested in the idea and adds that he sees "10-15,000" potential members of the new movement. The SWP has not yet formally responded to the IMG's initiative.

ANL was launched a year ago as a direct result of an initiative within the SWP. It built on the growing resistance to the National Front and the popular youth movement spawned by Rock Against Racism.

In that first twelve months its achievements have been unique: through a combination of the best agitprop techniques, the use of famous personalities like Brian Clough, the building of a dozen fronts — skate-boarders to council workers — it's managed to capture a large slice of the popular imagination, particularly amongst sections of working class youth who may otherwise have been fertile ground for the Front's recruiters.

This aspect of the Anti-Nazi League's success is what most frightens bourgeois politicians and commentators. That writers as diverse as Robert Moss, Bernard Levin and Hugo Young — none of whom, needless to say, is at the forefront of the fight against racism — are alarmed at the success of the socialist movement in mobilising such a massive protest against racism should be a cause for rejoicing. If Moss, Levin and Young don't like something we're doing, then we're probably doing the right thing. But there are arguments about what should happen next. One of the great political strengths of the ANL is the way that so much of it has happened spontaneously. Socialists in general, and the SWP in particular, have given it a lot of organisational and propaganda support, yet it is the campaign itself which has attracted people, not the socialists within it. It is that basic proposition which is at the heart of the current debate within the ANL. Dave Cook, the National National Organiser for the Communist Party, told *The Leveller*: "The spontaneity is in direct contrast to the National Front. There is a unity of campaigning form and content. And the lack of formality makes it easy for everyone to get involved. They don't take orders from an NEC."

The problem is how to keep the spontaneity, how to build the anti-fascist movement so that it reaches into as many areas of life as possible, yet to retain the conviction that the answer to fascism lies not in legislation but in revolution. The current organisational state of the ANL is not just spontaneous, it's chaotic. Local branches are multiplying in a remarkable fashion — so much so that there are some



areas which have several separate branches covering the same territory. Activity is spontaneous, unplanned, uncoordinated. It's a refreshing, healthy political phenomenon that is out of any single organisation's control, but which is also out of the ANL executive's control.

Whether this particularly matters is arguable—and it's something which is now the subject of intense discussion. Looking at the issue recently, a *Socialist Challenge* editorial noted:

"Which direction should the ANL now take? In our opinion, and we have stressed this before, the only way in which the ANL can take permanent roots is to extend the non-exclusive character of its Carnivals to the organisation at its base. To extend the campaigns and to build viable ANL branches throughout the country. These should be built to unite all anti-fascists by breaking down the ANL into tiny units. . . . A conference is needed to discuss all these matters."

The fact is of course that in some ways the ANL is remarkably undemocratic. The vision of spontaneity hides the blunt fact that the Steering Committee (which only meets monthly so that fast-moving events, particularly at the national level, are handled by the full-time staff and volunteers) is self-selected and constitutionally responsible to nobody. It may not matter very much because so much of the real power of the movement lies in those hundreds of rank and file branches starting their own activities.

But Ali says: "There's no doubt the Steering Committee should be accountable to its base. The problem is how to do it. We think that the active ANL branches in the localities should have their own elections so that it's not just the SWP or the IMG running the branches but so that there's a place for the independents too. There are real problems but they are healthy ones."

The IMG would also like to see a National Coordinating Committee elected which in turn elects a Steering Committee to make the day-to-day decisions. "It should be elected by a National Conference. That's what we've been arguing for all along."

Big Flame want a national conference, though many

members of the organisation have been alarmed by what they see as the ANL's inability to challenge racism as a political phenomenon. Thus they have split their work between the ANL and the local Committees Against Racism and Fascism. The local CARFs, which have been there for years and often built up solid support in local communities, have been rather swamped by the success of ANL, so the debate within Big Flame encompasses whether the work of CARF is the long run task.

Not all the left has moved in behind the ANL, though its support had been extensive. The Solidarity Group recently issued a powerful polemic against it and the Workers' Revolutionary Party has conducted a sustained and often vicious campaign against it from the beginning.

Moreover, the ANL has had little success in attracting black people to its ranks. It was noticeable that at Carnival 2, held in Brockwell Park in the middle of Brixton, there were rather fewer black people out in the park than there are on a normal Sunday afternoon. The views of black political activists include the feeling that organising against fascism is a task for the white left while black people have to organise themselves. For them fighting fascism is a daily occurrence.

The CP's Dave Cook is wary of any attempt to give the ANL a formal national structure. While he argues that it should be extended to encompass more of the labour movement, including representatives on the committee, he says there is a "need to resist any temptation to turn it into a democratic centralist organisation. That would be the death of the spontaneity."

Cook wants to see more emphasis on building the local ANL groups, an attempt to build the campaign into the football terraces, the involvement of more personalities on the Steering Committee, strong build up to the Trade Union Movement conference. He argues that the IMG's approach is wrong: "Their strategy is to add on to the basic campaign, to relate everything to a transitional programme. I've always found that their approach is to get organisations that are involved in a campaign to adopt a more advanced programme—for example immigration control

is brought into the question. As soon as they do that, it becomes the property of a relatively small group of people and the campaign becomes a battleground."

And he adds that the ANL is a "very frail unity. Any single force could move a motion or make a speech that made it impossible for the left MPs or the Labour Parties to be involved with it."

The ANL's National Secretary Paul Holborow, an SWP member and prime mover of the ANL, stresses that a national conference is on the agenda but he has no idea when. The 8 July delegate conference was a working conference and, says Holborow, "there was no opportunity to elect a Steering Committee at that stage because of the possibility of a General Election."

While the logic of this isn't quite clear, he stresses that the record of the Steering Committee—elected from the original sponsors—is open to all. And he adds that there's no pressure coming in from the 300 or so branches, no letters or resolutions to demand a conference.

"We don't really want to get involved in a structural wrangle," he argues. "The important thing is to capitalise on the success of Carnival, its fantastic involvement of people, and use that impetus to get in at the grass roots level. To take the question into the trades unions and workplaces is essential. There's still very little work done on the way that racist arguments take place on the shop floor. We want to develop in the unions, to build in Women Against the Nazis, to build on the housing estates."

The success of the ANL initiative puts Holborow and the SWP into a strategic position in radical politics, a factor which the bourgeois press has seized on with occasionally hysterical abandon. Holborow is careful in discussion the role of the SWP inside ANL.

"I'm being very guarded with you," he told *The Leveller*. "Obviously there is a problem with it. As a member of the SWP I hope that it grows and that it draws people towards socialist ideas and positions. But I also recognise that there are other socialist tendencies within the ANL. Of course it's conceivable that the SWP will grow in influence."

Holborow estimates that

there are over 25,000 paid up members of the League and that between 250,000 and 300,000 people have been involved in its activities this year. *Socialist Worker* has been a major organiser in mobilising these people and drawing them into the SWP's politics, devoting at least a page a week to ANL activities.

At the moment the SWP exercises considerable influence within the ANL, particularly because of the number of comrades they are able to direct into working in it, and because of the effectiveness of such of their members as Paul Holborow and Gerry Fitzpatrick in the national office. Holborow is guarded about this because he doesn't want ideas reported in *The Leveller* to be taken up and used against the SWP by right-

wing commentators. Yet the intentions of the SWP are not clearly spelled out in their own paper.

So far the IMG is the only group demanding that the ANL adopt a more formal structure. The rest of the organised left is content to leave it as it is, each of them organising within it as best they can. As a united campaign, the ANL is a remarkable success for the left. The question remains as to whether the thousands of new people who have been attracted to socialist politics through the ANL will remain within the movement, and whether arguing for a more formal structure will aid that process or will kill the spontaneity which has given the movement its impetus.

David Clark



Carnival 2 I don't wanna go to Belsen

Normaloid confusions between sex, anarchy, drugs, violence, rock 'n' roll and communism had some basis beyond ideology in last month's Carnival 2 Against The Nazis when skinheads, marxist intellectuals, trade unionists, punks, students and a few hippies marched in uneasy alliance from Hyde Park Corner to Brockwell Park.

If you couldn't recognise the different dissident elements inside UK '78 by dress then the noises they made gave the game away. Skinheads adapted football chants. The organised left went through its usual in-in-in/out-out-out rituals. Others sang new words to chart-toppers (Jordan is a moron or shimmied down the street alongside the music of their choice: punk, steel or reggae bands and blasts from past struggles like the girl-pipers marching under the Kent NUM banner.

All the human noise you might expect from the cultural hybrid which is the ANL. Some, for sure, were there to fight fascism, some to fight capitalism (of which racism and fascism are, for them, mere by-products), some to fight sexism ("the National Front is a sexist front" chanted womens' and gay groups), some to fight the petty rule-making of their parents and some to fight normality. And others came because Elvis Costello was playing for free.

At Brockwell Park itself, moving from the area in front of the stage right through to the slopes at the outer edges of the natural amphitheatre was like walking through a radical biography. Teenage rock fans going bananas down the front. Mid-20s politicians who buy records, in the area behind that, wanting to get involved but thinking maybe they're a bit too old to jump up and down against the nazis. Back from them the late 20s/early 30s Marxist hippies sitting down with their kids and brown rice. And away from the throng, the nuclear families — Mums and Dads supervising the offspring's sandwich munching.

So when Elvis Costello wrapped that lurching voice

(he kind of pukes the words out) around "Night Rally" to start his set, everyone down the front knew it was all about fascism because they had the LP, "This Year's Model", and knew the words by heart. Those at the back saw another flash pop star with a cockney accent, of the kind which leers at cameras every Thursday night on Top of The Pops (good show that he was playing in a good cause, mind you).

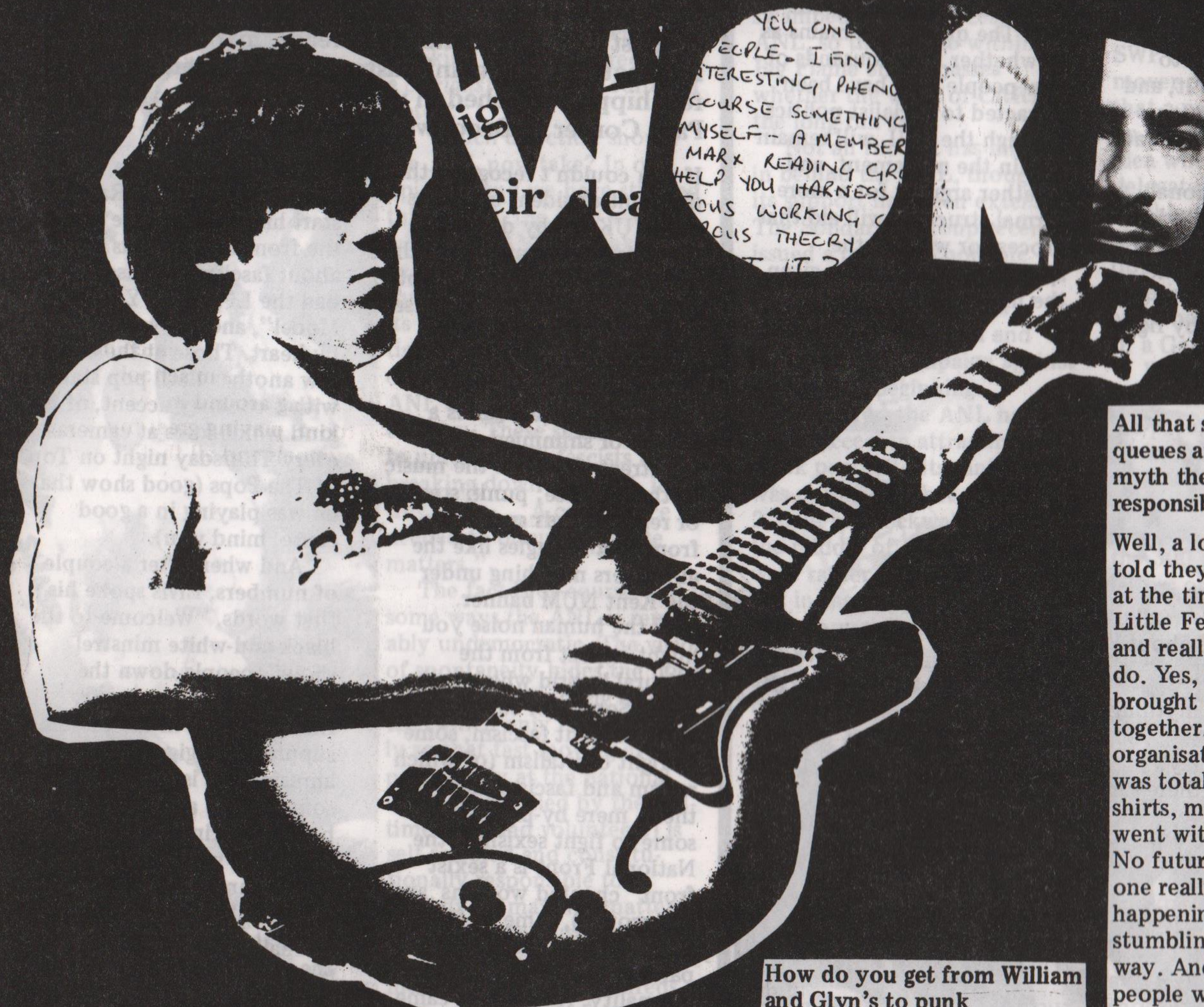
And when after a couple of numbers, Elvis spoke his first words, "Welcome to the black-and-white minstrel show", people down the front thought it was very funny, people in the middle suppressed a giggle (fucking amusing but isn't it racist or something?) and those at the back just grimaced.

People who've survived to march through both say the ANL is like CND, has the same atmosphere and appeal, the same moral imperative. Whaddy mean *don't* ban the bomb? *Don't* fight racism? (And the one was, the other is, fashionable. Opposing the ANL is almost as unhip as wearing flared trousers or long hair.)

Still morality's been getting such a bad name what with Mrs Whitehouse and hippies, that it's nice to see revolutionaries recovering the moral basis of their beliefs (remember the anger before you read the Communist Manifesto in the first place?) And Elvis Costello's last number had the kind of refrain you don't usually identify with either the "blank generation" or the modern marxists: "What's so funny about peace and love and understanding."

Ian Walker

MARK PERRY



In those faroff days of '77, when John Lydon was still calling himself Johnny Rotten, Mark Perry was Mark P, editor of *Sniffin' Glue* — the UK's first and most successful fanzine (now defunct). Mark is now lead singer/songwriter/guitarist with Alternative TV, one of the post new wave experimental bands that have waved farewell to three-chord specials and ramalamah-dole-queue. Before he discovered rock 'n' roll, Mark was a computer operator with William and Glyn's bank (he got two CSE Grade 1s from West Greenwich sec). He was a useful full-back too, but he never made out in his Milwall trial. *Ian Walker's* tape recorder wasn't working and he ain't got no shorthand, but this is the gist of what Mark said about the rise and fall of punk, why he'd never work for one of the "major" vinyl conglomerates and how he stays in control of the production process at Deptford Fun City — one of the small independent labels committed to producing cheap records (ATV's latest LP costs £1.75) for minority markets. And if you're puzzled by semiotics, bored with the Frankfurt school, left cold by Lukacs, then listen to what Mark has to say about knowledge and class.

How do you get from William and Glyn's to punk journalism?

I was well into rock 'n' roll anyway. It seemed exciting and I found something I could get involved in. A burst of excitement made me bring out the first *Sniffin' Glue* in July '76. It lasted a year — the circulation went from 200 to 15,000 in July '77 when it folded.

So when the fanzine started up the Sex Pistols had yet to happen?

Yeah at first *Sniffin' Glue* was about the New York scene, the Ramones and all that, then I met Malcolm McLaren [Sex Pistols manager] and thought, shit, it's going on here.

All that stuff about dole queues and high rise flats is myth then. McLaren was responsible for punk?

Well, a lot of people were told they were bored. I mean at the time I was going to see Little Feat and Neil Young and really liking them. I still do. Yes, Malcolm McLaren brought the whole thing together. He had an organisation, Glitterbest, that was totally flawless — T-shirts, music, a theory that went with it, the whole lot. No future — that was it. No one really cared what was happening. It was just like stumbling about, finding your way. And a lot of young people were getting involved in playing, writing, taking pix.

The anti-hippie thing was nothing personal. It was just that they were getting in the way, keeping the whole thing going by buying all those crap records.

Punk was a do-it-yourself culture. Play live with cheap equipment, produce your own mag, wear jumble sale stuff etc. But now most of the talent — writers and photographers as well as performers — has gone mainstream. Why have you stayed on the fringe with Deptford Fun City?

One thing that makes me really sick is the record biz. Music is still being run by CBS, Chrysalis and all them. I

don't like getting involved with those schmuks — it's like working for Marks and Spencer. That's why a lot of the bands are real crap now. It's so obvious — when the bands get their contracts they all preach, "Yeah, we get on well with the art department. We'll do our own designs," stuff like that. But then you get all that expert crap. "The only person who knows how it's done is the expert, the artist." I don't want to get into all that. A lot of bands go in there blindly and end up boring old rock stars.

Tom Robinson says he signed up with EMI because he wanted to reach the largest possible audience.

We get to 5000 people on Deptford Fun City. Directly to them — crash. The profits come right back to us and we put it into the next record. We don't own oil wells and all that. Tom Robinson sells 20-30,000, making profits for EMI, which I don't think is a good thing. The people who really wanted it would've bought it anyway. You don't know what fucking dastardly things people like EMI are into.

Why have you never done a Rock Against Racism gig?

There's a lot of bands doing it and I don't think it needs ATV. In the end it's down to if you enjoy a RAR gig and I never have. What we did enjoy was the SUS benefit in Deptford. SUS — the campaign against the vagrancy laws — was a little thing run by the blacks in the community. RAR's more of an organisation... I went on the march, but didn't fancy the gig [Carnival]. What they're doing's great. But RAR needs a wham-bam, Generation X type band. And we're not like that.

A band can't change the world. And I still think there'd have been a fair few there at the Carnival without any bands. No, playing for nothing and selling albums cheap are the positive productive things you can do for people.



And that's why you did the free tour with Here and Now, the squatter/hippie band from Ladbroke Grove?

Yeah, we went on the tour.

They did 30 dates, we did 15 of them. They did us a good turn by organising it and we did them one by making an album of it, "What You See Is What You Are", with them on one side and us on the other. It was funny like when we played at Stonehenge, quite a few punks came along and were really freaked standing next to all these long-haired hippies. Another free concert we did there were three bands — all playing for nothing — which isn't bad. This kid comes up to me: "What you playing with this bunch of hippies for? Why don't you play down the club?" I said, "Look, you've saved a quid ain't you? Have a couple more drinks."

Do you have any trouble with punk audiences now you don't do any footstomping stuff?

Yeah we cause emotions to stir sometimes. At the Roundhouse we were playing before the Buzzcocks and everyone was chanting "ATV off, off, off." They started throwing glasses of water. I stormed off, chucked the mike down. Let them pay £4.00 for their poxy United Artists albums.

But other people get it worse. When all the skinheads first started coming down the Roxy [punk club] Sham '69 were intrigued by it. Old Jimmy [Pursey] was going on, "All these skinheads coming down, it's great." And although they were always heavy, in the beginning when Jimmy said "Stop" they'd all go "OK Jimmy". But lately it's been getting so bad I think the band were on the point of quitting.

There's going to be a big split soon I think — that sort, the Sham and Clash, and your pretentious mob, like us. There's a lot more art in music now and a lot of bands are more interested in music than the fashion aspect. There's still a lot of good bands to see: Wire, Subway Sect, Pop Group, Adam and the Ants. And my favourite is Prague Vec (partly made up of ex-Derelicts people).

ACTION TIME VISION

You chose the name Alternative TV because that's what pisses you off more than anything, the brain-softening mass media?

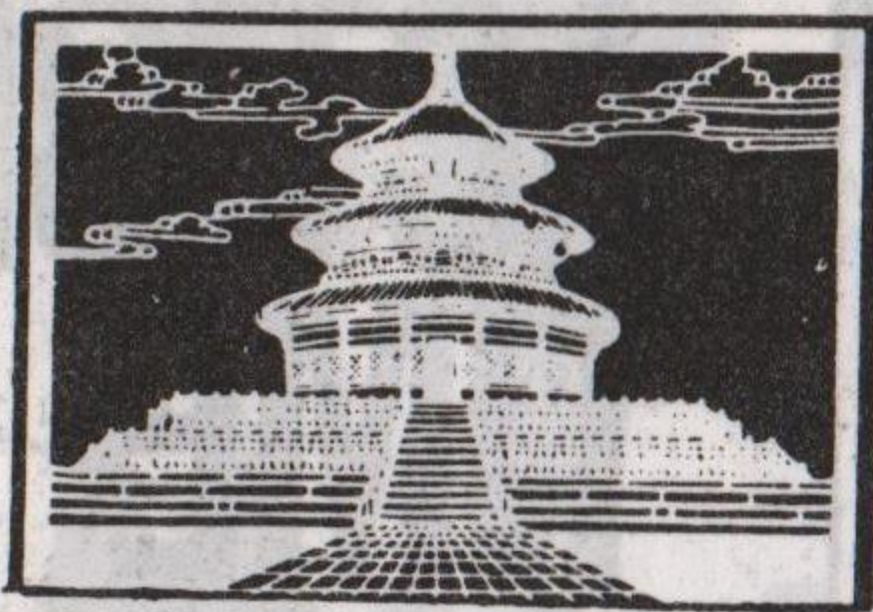
Power is in the hands of those rich enough to buy it, especially in culture. Because if everybody was involved we'd all do it so much better. Look at kids in school bashing around in the music room, playing great music on cymbals and all that. Then when they get out of school, with all the trash put out on the radio, they forget about the music room. I think it's a shame. I played xylophone, violin, trombone at school. I'm still like that now. So-called hip kids are all guitarists — that's all they do. They play All Right Now, play solo just the way it is on record.

No, most people with the arts thing in their bopce know nothing about life, use it to buy white powder. The people who need it can't get it. I really hate Harpers Queen — they went all through punk and decided it was finished. Five pages on my life and I hated those bastards. They don't know what it's all about. They're living in Chelsea with their rich Daddies. If they lived up the road from Mullins, a big factory in Deptford, with their Dad watching ITV, buying the *Mirror* and *Sun*... They don't know about

things like people having to find a flat, your Dad getting chucked out the docks 'cos the docks have closed.

Where do you live?

With my Mum and Dad in Deptford, where I was born.



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Prisons Convicts have no truck with the liquid cosh

THE OCCUPATION of the top-security Gartree prison on October 5 and 6 could turn out to be as important a watershed in prisoners' struggle as the Hull riot of just two years before (see *The Leveller* issue 1). It was the first time the mass of cons in a prison had rebelled against the 'liquid cosh' — the use of knock-out drugs to do what the leather one, the boot, and the fist, have done for centuries: to keep the stropky prisoner under control.

As *The Leveller* goes to press, the details of the Michael Blake case aren't known. Just what drove him to the suicide attempt alleged by the Home Office, just what happened to him afterwards, just what drug was used. All we know is that he ended up in a strip cell in Gartree's dread segregation unit.

It was in this cell that George Ince, over whose case the first widespread campaigning on the abuse of Largactyl took place, was pushed so near death last year. Ince was kept in solitary for four months and injected with largactyl (a brand name for chlorpromazine) four

times a day, till he lost all sense of time (24 hours a day of electric light didn't help), hallucinated, contracted pneumonia, and, after slashing his wrists, and after family protests, had to be moved to an outside hospital (just before ECT was administered, just before he would have died).

It must be hoped that the new-found solidarity of the Gartree prisoners will pre-empt any such concerted attempt to murder Michael Blake.

The Gartree occupation also brought out the long-standing demand of the Committee Against the Abuse of Prisoners by Drugs, that drugs should be administered to prisoners under proper medical conditions. There is no doubt that many prisoners need drugs of various kinds — either they have been on them before they went in, or they have real mental problems, or they get hooked on whatever the Home Office quacks feed them. It's perfectly understandable that people whose lives are unbearable should welcome something that makes them a little less so, and in every nick there are queues of cons anxious to swallow what's going.

The Home Office says that drugs are administered by doctors under the same criteria as in mental and other hospitals. It won't surprise anyone that this is a flat lie, but the truth is that the prison medical service is a Home Office, not a DHSS operation, and that such controls as exist in the health service do not apply to prisons.

Psychotropic drugs are commonly used in all seven top-security 'dispersal' prisons, like Gartree. They have great attractions to the authorities. They leave no marks; administration is simple and tidy, and doesn't hurt too much; they allow greater control of the victim than physical beatings, and they look better. They have all the advantages of the officially-ended control unit regimes, without the public relations disadvantage.

They are widely used on political detainees in the Soviet mental hospitals that British doctors love so much to condemn.

Largactyl is used for the smallest medical complaint. Mike Jenkins, of PROP, says he was given two large doses as 'treatment' for a stomach complaint. When he demanded why — since the stomach complaint persisted and he now suffered from lethargy and disorientation as well — the doctor said he had considered the pain 'psychosomatic'.

Larry Winters, the prisoner who succeeded in committing suicide in the much-vaunted special unit at Barlinnie, near Glasgow, earlier this year, had,

according to his medical record, been prescribed eight times the maximum clinical NHS dosage of seconal, sparine and mysoline.

In some prisons, such as Parkhurst, some 70 percent of the population are receiving psychotropic drugs. It is hardly credible that this many are suffering from mental disorders. The drugs induce disorientation, anxiety, fear, and, often, aggression, which can lead to prisoners being transferred to mental hospitals on completion of their sentences.

Until Gartree, none of this was widely aired. The response of Geoff Coggan, of PROP, which set up the committee, was: "It's a bloody tragedy that the prisoners should have had to resort to this, just to get it discussed, just to find out what was going on".

For they *didn't* know exactly what had happened to Blake. What they did know, according to reports from inside, was that every con who had come out of the segregation unit at Gartree for the last two years had come out a zombie — totally zonked, walking wrecks.

The tragedy, to Coggan, is not just that few people except the prisoners were prepared to raise the issues — it is also what will happen to them now. The Home Office won't be able to get away with quite what they did after Hull: mass beatings, dispersal and retribution, cynically administered by the travelling Board of Visitors that handed out up to 720 days' loss of remission. But there will be dispersal and retribution, on a smaller scale.

One slight extra strength the prisoners have comes from an unlikely source: a decision in the Court of Appeal on October 3. Just incidentally, this victory is much more likely to have been a factor

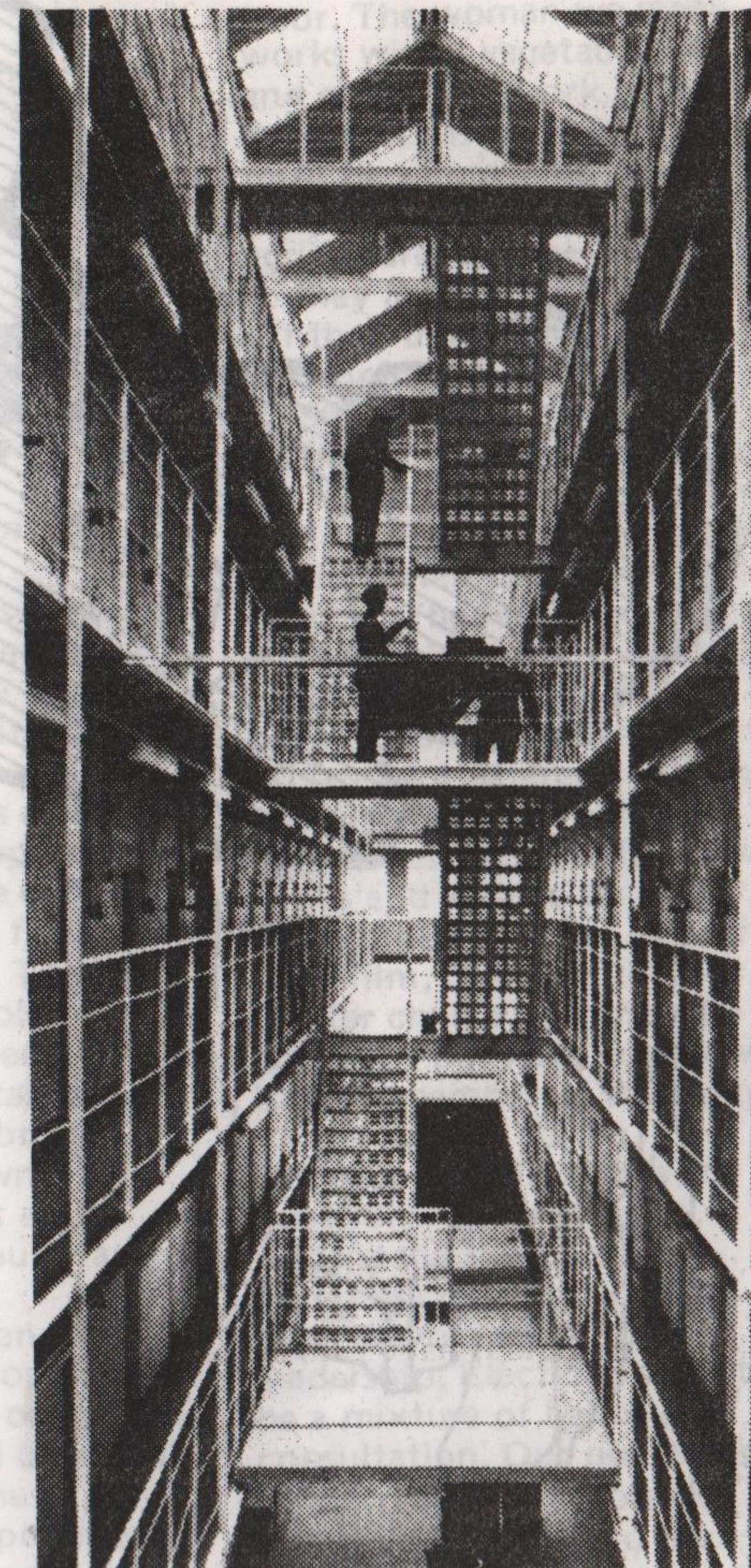
in the timing of the Gartree protest than the tenth anniversary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights march, through which the media tried to load the responsibility onto the Provisional IRA.

In this case, seven Hull prisoners won an action to overturn a decision of the High Court, that the courts could not review decisions of the Boards of Visitors, the dreaded BOVs.

There was added spice in this case, for the judgment overturned was from the now universally-despised Lord Chief Justice, Widgery. In characteristic style he had rejected the original applications on the grounds that success would "be detrimental to prison discipline". Three Court of Appeal judges, unanimously, found that prisoners did have some rights. Not as many as those of us lucky enough to be on this side of the wall, but more than the BOV procedure allows.

A prisoner facing a BOV cannot call witnesses, cross-examine his accusers, or speak at any length. He stands on a rubber mat, right across the room from the Board; just in front of him, inches away, breathing into his face, stand two screws, ostensibly to fend off violent assaults on the pristine Visitors, but serving another useful purpose, intimidation. The governor, on the other hand, sits at the table, with the BOV, and while they're making their decision, he stays inside, while the prisoner is sent outside. Strangely, BOVs seldom seem to come to decisions at variance with the governors' recommendations.

This is too much even for the Court of Appeal. Now, BOV decisions can be reviewed by the courts. Which doesn't mean that no-one will be punished by them, or even that the Hull prisoners will get their remission back, for the individual cases are still to be reviewed. But, as one



ex-con put it: Prisoners don't get that many victories, and when they do, it's something.

Tim Gopsill

IN THE NEXT issue of *The Leveller*, this theme will be explored further. We will be running a series of articles on prisons and prisoners — how they are done over, humiliated, intimidated. And how they can fight back.

The unknown conspiracy

The first real ray of hope as the Persons Unknown case drags into its fifth month is the release on bail of Trevor Dawton. Dawton, a 20 year old student, was the member of the Support Committee arrested on his way to a meeting. He was released on bail after nobody picked him out in a series of identification parades: two sureties have stood for £10,000 each, he has to report to the police twice daily, live with his parents and observe an evening curfew.

At least he's out of jail which is more than can be said for the other five people. Vince Stevenson, another member of the Support Committee, failed to get bail despite the fact that nobody picked him out on the identity parades either. Reports from inside jail tell a

sorry story of the state of the defendants. Iris Mills, at first the only woman in Brixton, has been joined by Astrid Proll and Khoulood Moghrabi — the woman charged following the death of the Iraqi ambassador in London. But her 'association' after three months of virtual solitary is limited, and she is only allowed two half hours of closely-monitored exercise. Her friends are now very worried about the state of her health and argue that there is a deliberate attempt to wear her down.

Ronan Bennett, originally arrested with Iris on May 24, has been put into solitary confinement for refusing to be moved away from the other four. He's lost 14 days of 'privileges' and on his last court appearance he looked

distinctly more haggard than usual.

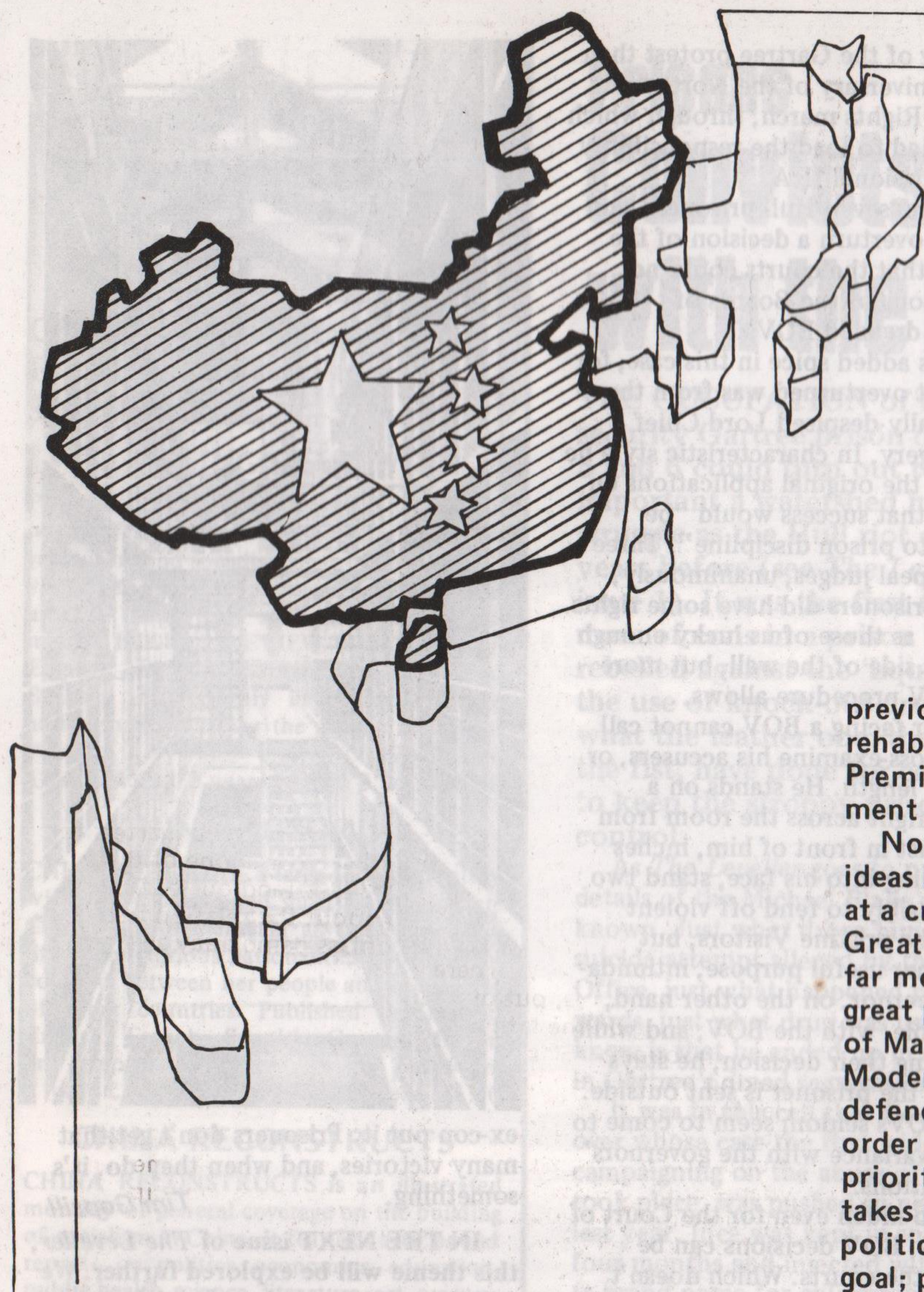
There's still no sign of a committal despite the length of the police investigation so far. The long series of identity parades have taken up most of the current investigation yet none of the defendants have been picked out on any of the criminal charges.

Detective Inspector McClelland has now been put in charge of the case, replacing Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Bradbury of the Anti Terrorist Squad, who has neatly gone on to higher things. McClelland has been involved with the investigation since the beginning and claimed in court that he had "1,000 pages" of evidence, though on the strength of what has appeared in

cross-examination so far, it's going to be McClelland who ends up with egg on his face.

The six are all charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and a variety of other offences relating to stolen fire-arms and armed robberies. The only explosion that's been mentioned so far is an alleged 'practice run' at some unspecified time and place in East London.

When Vince Stevenson's bail application was refused due to his "previous bad character" he shouted out a protest before being bundled out of the dock: "Rough fucking justice isn't it? If I was a member of the fucking Liberal Party I'd be out by now". The weekly remands continue under the highest possible security. Dawton's next appearance is scheduled for October 19 which may provide a hint of when the police think they'll be ready for committal.



CHINA: The new long march

In the two years since the death of Mao Tse-tung, Chinese politics have undergone a series of profound changes. It is far too early to report the complete rejection of the Maoist vision for Communist China, yet under the chairmanship of Hua Kuo-feng it is apparent that the new leadership is moving away from the continuing radical turbulence of the first 30 years towards a more middle of the road form of socialist development.

The signs have been clear for some time. Last year the Eleventh Party Congress dropped 114 members of the Central Committee, representing 44 per cent of the old regime, while Chairman Hua was able to declare that: "The Cultural Revolution is over after eleven years." And the public purging of the Gang of Four during the

previous twelve months, together with the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping as Deputy Premier, provided an effective public announcement of which way the wind is blowing.

Now a lively debate about the quality of Mao's ideas is conducted daily in the Chinese press — and at a critical level unthinkable during the life of the Great Helmsman. Policy at home seems to follow far more closely the dictates of Chou En-lai, the great pragmatist and political survivor, than those of Mao himself. Chou's programme of Four Modernisations in agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology is now the order of the day while the pressing economic priority of feeding and clothing the millions takes precedence over the pursuit of revolutionary politics. In Teng's words: "The economy is the goal; politics are only the way that leads to this goal."

The Leveller does not propose to discuss whether China's new direction and the purging of the radical elements represents a step along the capitalist road as some commentators fear. The debate continues hotly within China and, though the threat of Soviet imperialism remains a prime policy consideration, it will obviously be some time before the debate is resolved. The East is still undoubtedly red — but it may now be tinged with a delicate shade of pink.

In this special theme, a team of Leveller writers examine various aspects of China through the eyes of the outside world.

Cherrill Hicks, who was in China this summer, kicks the whole thing off by providing a first-hand account of life in China. John Gittings, a well-known British socialist commentator on Chinese affairs, examines some of the new developments in China's international policy. Malcolm Caldwell, an editor of the Journal of Contemporary Asia and a respected protagonist of the Chinese, Cambodian and Vietnamese Parties in the past, tries to make sense of the conflicts that have arisen in Indo China since Liberation.

A recent visitor to both Vietnam and China gives an eye-witness account of just what is happening on the Friendship Pass high on the border between China and Vietnam. Walter Easey, Secretary of the Hong Kong Research Project, and David Clark, who recently returned from a visit to the colony, looks at the uncertainty surrounding the Lease which ties it to Britain.

Traveller's diary— how the other half lives

Coming over the bridge that is the border between Hong Kong and China I see my first slogan, translated into English: Peoples of the world, unite!

China is much poorer than I expected. Coming into the hotel in Canton, I see an old woman emerge from the lift, poorly dressed, dragging a heavy barrow of wood behind her. She is the first of many and I am shocked by the burdens which people carry — huge bundles of hay and vegetables of the kind and size I expect to see carried by a donkey.

On the day trip to Peking — right across China — we have the first class compartment, which is mainly used by foreigners. Many of our group complain about being segregated in this way and always getting better treatment. One of our interpreters says that the standard of living is still much lower than ours, and that we would be uncomfortable to live like the Chinese. I believe him.

There is no conspiracy. We can wander around and talk to anyone we like. We need an interpreter of course, but they are always willing. The

Chinese are not resentful that we get the best treatment; they laugh, we are the foreign friends, the guests. The Chinese are ever over hospitable and organise everything.

The first Chinese woman I meet is the "captain" of the train. She breezes in, chatting nineteen to the dozen and laughing, without coyness or self consciousness. I am to meet many Chinese women with that kind of friendly assertiveness.

The women dress very simply; in comparison, the Europeans and Americans we see in Peking look fussy and, contrived.

North-East Prosperity Commune, Peking

On arrival at the commune we are immediately issued with those universal necessities, fans and widebrimmed hats (it is very hot) and taken to a cool room at the commune headquarters for that other universal necessity — tea. Here we are briefed by the Chairman of the revolutionary committee.

The 3,700 households on the commune are divided into

brigades and teams, managed by the revolutionary committee. As well as growing wheat, maize and rice, they have a tree nursery, a pigsty, a fish farm and two dairy farms. 70% of the work is mechanised, which is a very high proportion compared to other communes. The commune also produces paper, farm tools and medicines. They have their own schools, nurseries, kindergartens, health clinics, hospital, old peoples home and library. Each team has its own TV and each brigade has a film projector. It is obviously a successful place.

I talked to a woman worker in the repair workshop. There are 12 women here, out of 150, working on the lathes in the iron foundry. She is making tractor components. Her husband is an electric welder, who earns 60 yuan a month to her 50 yuan (1 yuan = 30p). Her two children are looked after by her mother, and she works from 7am to 2.30.

They share the housework at home; whoever gets home first does the cooking — but she is usually home before her husband, she says, laughing. However, they often buy prepared food so there's not much cooking.

We go to the health clinic — two modest rooms, quite bare and clean — and meet the barefoot doctor. She is treating a woman who has a headache. The doctor still uses a lot of traditional medicines — the patient is lying on a couch with acupuncture needles in her temples, and we see lots of dried herbs stacked away in drawers. She mainly does work in gynaecology, obstetrics and family planning. Abortions (available to all women who want them) are done at the commune hospital, and male sterilisation is increasing — her husband has been sterilised. Babies are usually born at home and most women breast feed. There are three midwives on this brigade. Contraception is for married people only.

Next we visit a home. It has two rooms, is new, simple and made of brick. Unlike many of the gloomy backstreets of Peking, this house is light and airy with simple furniture and a stone

floor. The woman we meet works with a vegetable team and earns nine work points a day, which is quite high — she must be very skilled. Her husband works at the agricultural college in Peking, so they are probably better off than the average family in the commune.

She works 8 hours a day, 26 days a month — two days off for menstruation, unpaid. She has two children, both in kindergarten paid for by the brigade. The family manage to save quite a bit — 100 yuan a year — and they have a bicycle, running water, and a private plot where they grow sweet potatoes to eat themselves. Yes, her husband cooks and washes. In their spare time they may go and see a film, of which there is a greater choice now that the Gang of Four have gone. She is not a member of the party.

We go back to the commune headquarters for questions, none of them understand our confusion about the relation between mass democracy and party leadership. Elections seem to be a mixture of ballot and consultation. Our questions reflect our own problems about democracy and the party; the Chinese, on the other hand, for all their talk about criticising the party, accept its leadership completely.

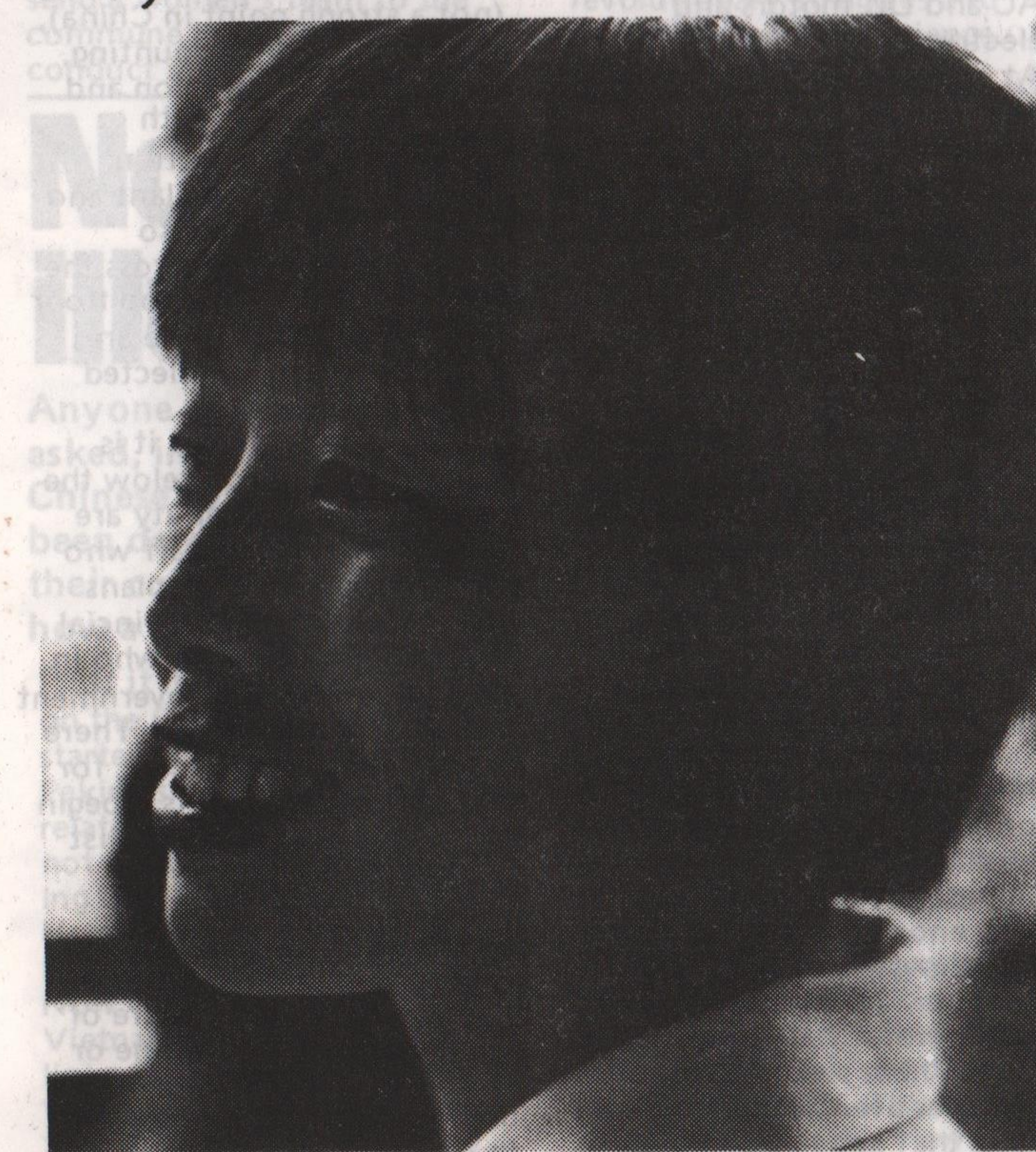
As everywhere, they are keen on productive labour for the cadres. Here the chairman does 100 days per annum. They are trying to socialise housework by providing canteens, sewing machine centres, washing facilities and the like. But it's a long process.

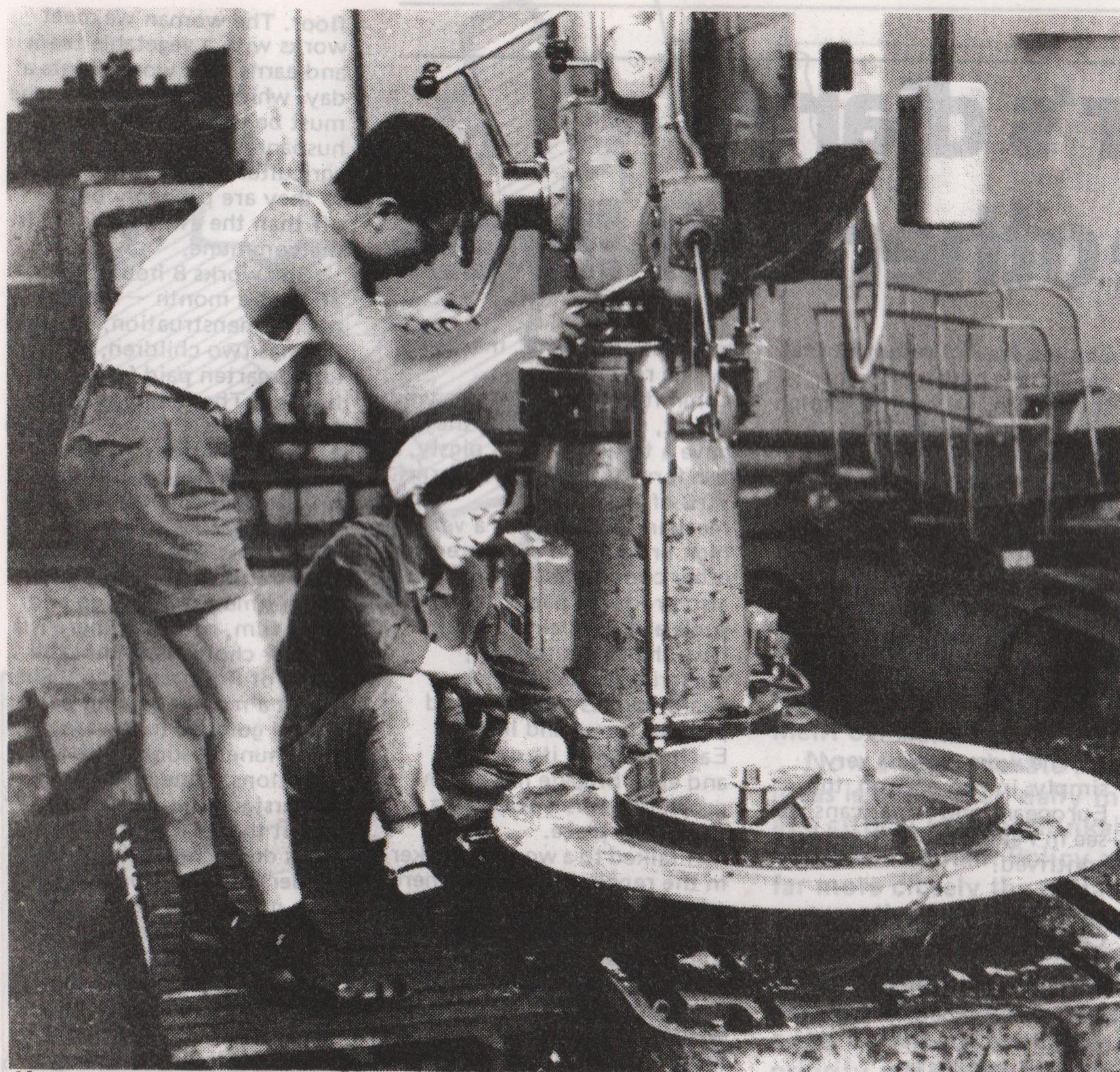
On the bus back I talk to Jiao, one of our interpreters, about contraception for married people only. He says that pre-marital sex is frowned upon but there are no double standards. Illegitimacy is rare. It doesn't seem to be a repressive society, and people everywhere are very relaxed with each other.

Conversation with Chin

Another of our interpreters is Chin, 28 years old and a party member. She has been studying at the Foreign Languages College in Shanghai when the Gang of Four were influential — I guess this would have been three or four years ago. She says that she hadn't been able to learn much English on her course. The Gang of Four had been in control and there had been political meetings all the time. In the morning they would study Chairman Mao, in the afternoon criticism sessions of those who followed the old ideas in education, and in

Chin, our interpreter





Heavy generator factory, Peking

the evening more political meetings. Her studies, and everyone else's, had been completely disrupted. They were forced to go on marches — one lasted 37 days.

When asked how the Gang of Four could exercise such control, she says that the workers' propaganda team from the factory had become very prominent in the college, eventually taking over the management altogether. They were good people but under the control of the Gang. The intellectuals were afraid to speak out and were easy targets for criticism (intellectuals were the "ninth stinking element" according to the Gang of Four; the other eight, classified by Mao, were landlords, agents and the like).

The workers propaganda team had no educational policy: only to criticise, criticise and criticise. Now they had been dispersed. Chin obviously resented the disruption in her studies and was always apologising for her poor English.

Tsinghua

We hear the same story everywhere, not only from academics but also from workers and peasants. At Tsinghua Scientific University we learn that the Gang of

Four's line was, "The most knowledgeable are the most reactionary". There was only one lesson to learn — to fight against the capitalist roaders. Teachers were persecuted, professors forced to retire, sophisticated equipment dismantled and computer training forbidden. For ten years progress in science and technology has been effectively sabotaged.

Now the academics have been given back some status and seem keen to get to work. They have restored entrance examinations, saying that the system of mass recommendation was often used to get children of cadres in by the backdoor. As one said, "You talk about intellectual elitism; in those days it was political elitism".

When people speak of the Gang of Four — and yes, it does seem like a joke after a while — they don't just mean the four individuals but rather the line which they stood for. It does not represent genuine radicalism or revolution, but "revolution for revolution's sake"; revolution divorced from production; continual criticism of everyone who has initiative or leadership, creating paralysis; labelling everyone who disagrees as bourgeois; unending political meetings, and so on. All this

in a country which must every day break its back just to meet the most simple material needs of its people.

Heavy Generator Factory, Peking

Here they produce steel turbines, electric generators, AC and DC motors and electric current generators. At our discussion, which is attended by shop floor workers but is mainly conducted by the deputy director, they give us a lot of production figures, saying they have fulfilled the tasks set by the state for the last several years. Everywhere we go people talk production figures. There is a blackboard in the factory with cartoons depicting future production targets and the good life, 1985-style.

The workers look very relaxed, lounging around and smiling at us as we trail through the factory.

We visit the nursery, where the children put on a show for us. It is very graceful. The nurseries are a feature of Chinese life whose impact has been enormous. The working mothers get two hours off every day for breast feeding and go home half an hour early. There seem to be nurseries everywhere, and one thing that appears completely

absent in China are screaming, neurotic or neglected children. The family is still a strong unit in China, but what an impact this must have on women's lives and on the children too. Less isolation; relationships in the family free of the tensions and expectations common in the west.

At this factory they talk of introducing piece rates but said that this would be difficult because of the nature of the work — building heavy machinery is slow and output is small. They are quite keen on bonuses though, saying that they help to mobilise the workers and are in line with the "distribution according to work" policy. This is especially a reaction to the Gang of Four period when, because discipline was lax, workers who did nothing got the same as those who tried to work.

They have three bonus grades here, with foundry workers getting more than shopfloor and shopfloor getting more than the office workers. These grades are discussed at monthly meetings.

Chungking, Szechwan province

In Chungking, a noisy and cosmopolitan industrial city, we visit the Iron and Steel complex — with 40,000 workers almost a small town in itself. We ask them what are the relations between workers and management now that the revolutionary committees of workers and cadres had disappeared. Their reply is impressive. In every plant workers elect team leaders who are responsible for areas like welfare, safety (not a strong point in China), quality control, accounting, attendance, production and so on. These liaise with planning and production departments at the plant and company level and also between themselves across the plant. It's a bit like shop floor workers control. These are not foremen, being elected and paid no extra.

At the higher level it is more complicated. Below the director and the deputy are the administrative staff who work out production plans and liaise with the provincial planning department, who in turn liaise with the government ministry of metallurgy. There is planning at every level, for all twenty seven plants. I begin to understand what socialist planning means.

Chengtu

We meet our fair share of bureaucrats and have one or two visits where I for one feel unimpressed and uninspired. In Chengtu, the vice chairman

of the planning commission for the province makes generalisations about the Gang of Four and gives us the figures for losses of production and recent gains — a stereotyped speech that we often hear, though usually the familiar tale is told with more enthusiasm and a sprinkling of real stories which make it credible. Much depends on the personality of the speaker and his/her ability to get us to use our imagination to identify and understand.

I don't sympathise with this man at all and at dinner I find out that he was removed from his position in the Cultural Revolution and only recently restored. I asked what he had been doing for the last ten years. He said he had been working as a clerk and done self criticism. He learnt about his lack of contact with the masses; but he seems to me to be smug in his restoration. He tells us little about how planning works and we get few answers to our questions.

The Women's Federation, Chengtu

We meet representatives from the Women's Federation in Chengtu. These women seem quite capable of leading the attack on patriarchal ideas in China. They tell stories of communes where women earn less work points than men for equal work. In one production brigade the women were actually doing more work on average than the men and getting paid less — a bad and rather rare case. Women's reps at the grass roots level will report cases like this to the higher organisation, who will then send a women's team to the commune in question, conduct investigations and

discussions — with men and women separately and then with the masses — and draw their conclusions. Some men cadres don't like these investigations but don't dare oppose them. Some men workers of course are very negative, saying that it is not possible to have equality until agriculture is mechanised. After the investigation the Women's Federation sends a report to the Municipal Party Committee, which is then approved and put into effect. The commune in question will be virtually shamed into changing its ways.

The Women's Federation is under the leadership of the party — strange to us here who have fought for the autonomy of the women's movement — and credit for smashing the domination of the husband and other measures of women's liberation goes to the party. The women talk about the problems of liberation with real determination and commitment, and especially of the plans to change the work points system. In the past this has always measured physical strength, which has favoured the men, and not the quality, skill and intensity of work, which might redress the balance in favour of women.

They talk about education with some pride — this is where women really do hold up half the sky. Of the 190 heads and deputies of the middle schools, 123 are women. They talk about women in industry, the party and the people's congresses. One problem is that there are still more male veterans than female from the old revolutionary struggles and they have more experience. Also, there is still a low

general cultural level, little technical know how and the usual housework problems. I get a very concrete picture of the struggle. The party talks about three differences in China — between town and country, mental and manual labour and between peasant and worker. The fourth difference still to be overcome is between men and women.

Going Home

This small sketch of my three weeks in China cannot convey the attachment, commitment and concern that I developed for China and its people. I get very drunk on the last night and am miserable to be leaving. The farewell is sad; I feel that I've really got to know the interpreters and that they are good friends. They are obviously sad too.

Over the border and into

Hong Kong. It looks dreadful, dirty and corrupt. The airport lounge is full of luxury consumer goods for the wealthy travellers — exquisite perfumes, clothes, women's bodies presented like lumps of meat; it all comes as a shock. Hong Kong seems to exist for the tourists alone, not for its own residents. It brings home what China and its people have managed to do, above all in terms of morality and social consciousness — of caring for others. "Serve the people" is an expression of something very concrete.

In the face of all we don't understand and don't agree with and in spite of our idealism (and its twin, cynicism) I personally make one resolve — to be a better person, less self centred, less selfish; it sounds almost Christian. China has that kind of effect. **Cherrill Hicks**



Nursery, Chungking

should not be attempted. If we accept — as the Chinese themselves now ask us to do — the imperfections of their socialist society internally, then there is no reason why we should expect anything like perfection in their foreign policy. Peking itself is inconsistent in admitting the one and not the other.

There has in my view been no sudden fall from socialist grace in China's conduct of her foreign affairs. Chairman Mao Tse-tung would have approved, at least in principle, of every act of Chinese diplomacy since his death. Most of these, such as the opening to the United States and the rapprochement with Yugoslavia, were begun while he was alive and (in the case of Nixon's visit) on his personal initiative. Many of these reflect long-standing features of Mao's

view of the outside world as it had developed over several decades.

In 1945, talking to US Foreign Service officers in the revolutionary heartland of North-west China, Mao Tse-tung pointed temptingly to China's potential as a market for American goods and even capital investment. "America is not only the most suitable country to assist this economic development of China: she is the only country fully able to participate."

Also in 1945, Mao and Chou En-lai offered to fly to Washington for talks with President Roosevelt. The offer was rejected and has now, rather late in the day, prompted a number of wistful "If only Mao had visited Washington...." articles in such journals of the American foreign policy establishment as *Foreign Affairs*.

No foreign illusions

Anyone with some knowledge of China today is asked, insistently, to explain what has happened to Chinese foreign policy. Many people on the left have been demoralised by a succession of hammer blows to their conception — whether it was true or false — of how a socialist country should behave.

If it is not Nixon on the Great Wall which started the agony, then it is Peking's entirely "correct" relations with Chile. If it is not Margaret Thatcher visiting China, then it is Chairman Hua Kuo-feng visiting his Excellency the Shah of Iran. Now comes the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict, linked triangularly to the Vietnamese-Cambodian war. This has been a real twist of

the screw for all those who were passionately and rightly active in solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle against US imperialism, yet at the same time saw China as a positive force for socialism.

In asking for an explanation, people always hope that one's answer will somehow assuage their fears and restore their confidence. This cannot be done and in my view

Scrapbook '78



Side street, Chengtu

None of this means that Mao was secretly soft on US imperialism, simply that at a particular conjunction of the international situation (when the Chinese Communists were facing a civil war with Chiang Kai-shek and there seemed to be some chance of winning US neutrality), Mao had no scruples about chatting up the US imperialists as nicely as he could. Nor did he mind offending the Russians, who were in any case only faint-hearted allies of the Chinese Communist cause, by doing so.

This tactical approach was rooted in China's whole experience of the outside world since the Opium War of 1840. Here foreign policy was conducted at the wrong end of the barrel of a gun. She was ravaged by rival imperialisms to the despair of many Chinese — including the nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen who would almost have preferred her to be the outright colony of one great power alone. Mao instead, early on and exceptionally, grasped the real significance of China's "semi-colonial" situation. For one imperialist power could be played off against another. The Chinese

revolution could "float like a boat" on the water of the inter-imperialist contradictions.

After the Liberation of 1949, Chinese foreign policy continued to be on the defensive, under pressure now from American isolation and encirclement, and forced to accept an unequal relationship (in the early 1950s) with the Soviet Union. By the 1960s China had broken free from Moscow but without yet managing to establish a countervailing balance with Washington. Consequently it was then that Chinese foreign policy appeared at its most "socialist". No heads of Christian Democratic parties from Western Europe would visit Peking then, only the leaders of National Liberation Fronts. (I am exaggerating deliberately here in order to underline the part played by opportunity in the development of Chinese foreign policy.) But in the 1970s it was again different. The United States, whipped in Vietnam — and here the Chinese owe an unacknowledged debt to the Vietnamese — and no longer vastly superior to the Soviet Union in global terms, at last



Tien An Men Square, Peking

saw the value of the "China Card". Dr. Kissinger came to Peking only in 1971 — but the Chinese had actually invited John Foster Dulles to meet Chou En-lai fifteen years previously.

It is necessary to stress this continuity in Chinese foreign policy, largely based on Mao's tactical views, but it would be unhistorical to suppose that there was never any debate or argument over alternatives. No state socialist power has progressed very far beyond the realm of cliché in trying to define what it means by a "socialist foreign policy" or by "proletarian internationalism". But at least for the purposes of their polemics with the Soviet Union, China did make some effort to do so in the early 1960s.

From one of the official anti-Soviet polemics, approved by Mao and dated December 1963, we read that:

In their foreign policy, therefore, socialist countries can in no circumstances confine themselves to handling relations with countries having different social systems (i.e. capitalist countries), but must also correctly handle the rela-

tions among themselves and their relations with the oppressed peoples and nations. They must make support of the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations their internationalist duty and an important component of their foreign policy.

An internal Party document of 1961 laid down clear priorities for dealing respectively with the West and with the anti-colonial struggles of the time:

There are two attitudes towards the national democratic revolutionary movement. The first is to maintain good relationships with the Western countries, giving little or no support to the national revolutionary movement. The second is to support the national revolutionary movement as a general principle, with the possibility of having some contacts with the Western countries but only for secondary reasons..... While we may have some contacts with the Western countries, we shall never let these contacts gain the upper hand.

But it is one thing to quote Lenin on how "the fundamental principle of foreign policy is proletarian

internationalism", and quite another to formulate its practice. One must admit that there is very little sign, even during the Cultural Revolution, that foreign policy goals were seriously discussed. (The "revolution" in the Chinese Foreign Ministry was concerned largely with attacking the alleged "bourgeois" style of work and standard of living of senior diplomats. The ultra-leftists who seized power alienated most of China's Third World allies by reducing foreign policy to the waving of little red books.)

We must also recognise another blank area of theory which is not confined to the Chinese. For various reasons it has always been impossible to discuss seriously what is meant by a "socialist country". The label has always followed diplomatic alignments. Thus the Chinese have been forced into the illogical and unhistorical position of arguing that in the Soviet Union a qualitative break with socialism only occurred after Stalin's death. Similarly, Vietnam has now been deleted from the socialist list (and Yugoslavia has been restored) without any

attempt to explain how changes in the internal relations of class forces in either country might justify this.

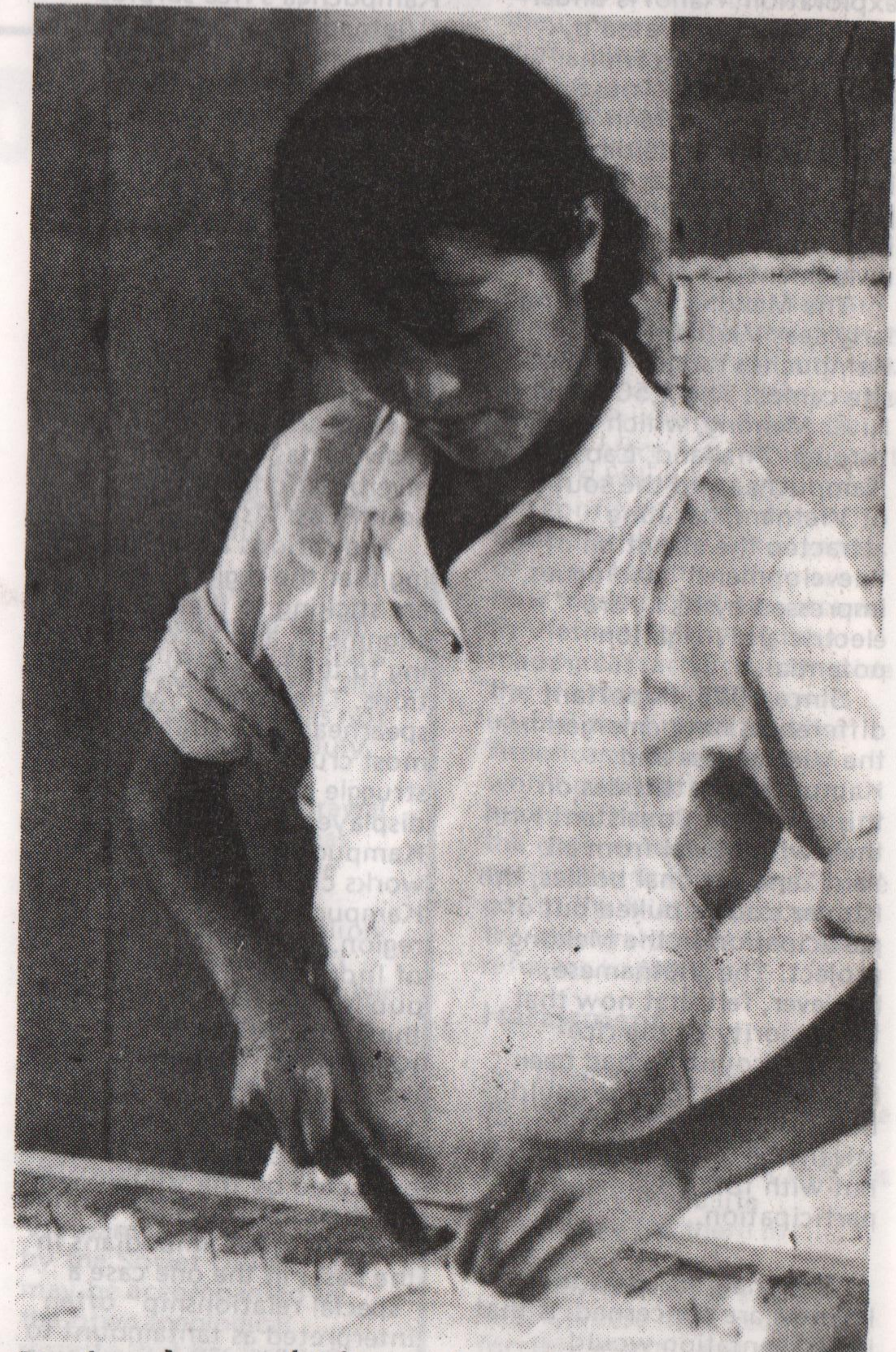
In his "unofficial" writings, Mao himself was more perceptive on the subject of Stalin — though he never showed too much interest in the internal workings of the other socialist countries. Mao's exceptionally fierce judgement of "Soviet social-imperialism" has now become an orthodoxy which his successors either do not wish or cannot afford to modify. Yet even in terms of tactical diplomacy, it might make better sense for China to seek some re-adjustment with Moscow so as not to rely solely on one side of the great-power triangle.

What then have we "explained" about Chinese foreign policy? That there should be no illusions, certainly, nor any particular surprise. Should there be hope as well, in spite of present appearances, that principles and priorities are being argued out even if they are absent from the pages of *Peking Review*? It is a hard world, and we shall have to wait and see.

John Gittings



Backstreet, Canton



Preparing rabbit skins, Sou Commune

Behind the Kampuchea-Vietnam border war

Socialists cannot simply turn a blind eye to the Kampuchea-Vietnam and Vietnam-China confrontations. Nor is it enough just to study the respective recriminations of the adversaries or the gloating Western media coverage.

Leaving aside the long-standing mutual antagonism of Khmer and Vietnamese, there are at least two real causes for conflict between them, important enough to each to "justify" rousing fierce patriotism in furtherance of a favourable outcome: off-shore oil and inland water.

Definition of the border separating the respective national waters will determine division of the highly regarded off-shore oil deposits. Vietnam is, of course, much keener to push ahead with exploitation, hand-in-hand with the experienced Western oil majors, than is Kampuchea; the oil companies, naturally, are keen to have certainty about the border before risking the huge capital outlays associated with off-shore oil exploration. Hanoi is understandably exasperated by Phnom Penh's "irrational" and "xenophobic" obstinacy. Equally, Phnom Penh is adamant in not yielding an inch, either territorially or in principle (namely in eschewing foreign aid and foreign investment).

The Mekong project similarly sees Vietnam and Kampuchea ranged in opposite camps. The 2,500-mile River Mekong, which flows through Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea and the south of Vietnam, has long attracted the attention of "development" ideologues, impressed by its hydro-electric and irrigation potential.

Since 1975, important differences have emerged in the Vietnamese and Kampuchean attitudes on this question. Consistent with their withdrawal from all "aid" and regional bodies, the Khmer leaders pulled out of participation in the Mekong project. The Vietnamese, however, felt that now that the majority of the rice-growing countries had been liberated, the scheme could be developed to mutual advantage under local control but with foreign aid and participation.

The snag, so far as the Khmers are concerned, is that implementation would inundate a huge area of cultivable land in Kampuchea,

displacing hundreds of thousands of Khmer peasants, while the main irrigation and power benefits would go to Thailand and Vietnam.

Moreover, Bangkok would obviously want some control over the major installations inside Kampuchea. Equally, Phnom Penh cannot but see this as another — and perhaps fatal — step in the carve-up of Kampuchea between its two bigger neighbours.

Disputes also continue over the 1967 agreement on treatment of Khmers and Vietnamese in each other's territory. Even now, gangs of former US mercenaries of both nationalities are roaming the border region. Given the tension, the slightest racial incident could lead to all-out war.

There is also friction over Kampuchea's rice surplus (Vietnam has a deficit) and, of course, the underlying ideological differences between the two countries.

Reactions:

Regional reaction is interesting and significant. There is a great deal of general sympathy with Kampuchea, partly because it is the David to Vietnam's Goliath, partly because Vietnam's military prowess has equivocal reverberations for many South East Asians.

Indications are accumulating that the regional guerrillas are sticking to their Peking alignment, and accommodating to the necessary implications. The Thai CP, which spearheads the strategically most crucial liberation struggle of all today, early displayed sympathy for the Kampuchean revolution, and works closely with the CP of Kampuchea in the border region. The Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) recently published a glowing tribute to the heroic people of Kampuchea. Apart from the common China link, leaders of local armed struggles may be influenced by the price extracted by the Vietnamese for their help to the Laotians and Cambodians in the past: in the one case a "special relationship" often interpreted as tantamount to Laotian subservience to Hanoi's designs, and in the

other, hostility attributable in part to resentment at Kampuchean "ingratitude".

If Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore openly chortles at the sight of Kampuchea-Vietnam hostilities and mutual vilification, and at the political mileage to be made from it, other local leaders are treading warily, bemused by the unusual and unexpected experience of being assiduously wooed by Peking, Hanoi and Phnom Penh simultaneously.

Most regional leaders, while recognising the Vietnamese struggle as one for national independence, are ambivalent about the outcome of the war, understanding that the victors would be a big power in South East Asian terms. For this reason, the successful resistance of the Kampuchians is quietly welcomed in many ruling class circles in South East Asia.

Then there is the question of China, destined by geography as well as history to have a special relationship with the entire region, as in the past.

Nobody is going to gratuitously alienate Peking for short-term advantage in Hanoi, whatever ambiguity may be felt with respect to proven Vietnamese determination, and presumed ability, to stabilise the important Vietnam-China and Laos-China borders.

The expressed views of North Korea, Yugoslavia, Romania and Kampuchea in their different ways and with their different emphases, all echo the conviction of smaller countries that they must be allowed to conduct

their revolutions and subsequent socialist construction absolutely free of outside interference or attempted interference. Rightly or wrongly, Vietnam's attitude to and actions with respect to Laos and Kampuchea have been widely seen as actual or potential violations of this primary socialist injunction (and Phnom Penh specifically has violently rejected the proffered Laos-style "special relation" with Hanoi). China has chosen to throw her weight behind this movement of "socialist non-alignment" just as she has behind the broader non-aligned movement in which it is embedded.

While the solidarity movement itself cannot mediate between Vietnam and Kampuchea and Vietnam and China, we should support initiatives to do so on the part of those who might, and our own embarrassment at the conflicts should be made clear. At the same time we have to be sensitive and responsive to the position of the guerrillas currently engaged in armed struggle, and this number one priority points more and more unmistakably to sympathy with Kampuchea (which we may note in passing has on innumerable occasions subtly signalled that, while grateful for the support of China, it is not a member of any "camp", far less a satellite, seeking independence not just from the two superpowers, but from all big powers). Building up and bringing to bear an international solidarity movement in support of the people of the ASEAN countries and more generally of the Third World as a whole, is a giant task, and an imperative one, which does not allow of the luxury of disillusion on the grounds of the China-Indochina imbroglio. *Malcolm Coulwell*



Exodus at Friendship Pass

Recent reports of the exodus of Chinese from Vietnam highlight the deteriorating relationship between the two countries. According to the Chinese government 160,000 of the estimated 1½ million Chinese in Vietnam have fled this year. A recent visitor to both countries explains the migration, describes conditions at one of the main frontier posts, the Friendship Pass near Ping Hsiang in China's Kwangsi province, and recounts the story told by the refugees.

Of those that have fled Vietnam, 95% are said to be from the north: mainly workers, peasants, government cadres and army personnel. Because of the antagonism between the two countries, the Vietnamese have evicted all the Chinese who were living within 20 km of the frontier. Those with Chinese nationality were told to go to China; these were the first refugees. Those with Vietnamese nationality were resettled in special centres. (China and Vietnam have a treaty dating back to 1955, whereby Chinese in Vietnam could opt for either nationality but would be

strongly encouraged by both sides to become Vietnamese. Many have done so, but there are still those who, even though they may never have seen China, retain Chinese citizenship.)

The 5% from the south are all Vietnamese nationals, having been forced to renounce Chinese citizenship by Diem. They are also mainly workers and peasants, though some are shopkeepers and traders. The big capitalists from the south have gone to Taiwan and Hong Kong. (Much to the displeasure of the Chinese government, there has been a Taiwanese mission in Vietnam aiding this emigration.)

A history of deteriorating relations

Relations between China and Vietnam began seriously to decline with Nixon's visit to Peking in 1971. Although the Chinese have always kept Vietnam separate from their overall foreign policy, and gave assurances that they would not discuss Vietnam with the Americans, the Vietnamese made no secret of their annoyance. Chinese schools in Vietnam were closed and the use of the Chinese language and Chinese language books were discouraged. Since that time many incidents have demonstrated the conflict between the two countries, including the dispute over the Paracel islands in the China Sea, the present exodus of Chinese from Vietnam and, of course, the Cambodia/Vietnam war.

The Vietnamese Workers Party has always been inclined to support the Soviet Union, but has muted its criticisms of the Communist Party of China because of the war of liberation. At the time of the Sino-Soviet dispute the Vietnamese made strenuous efforts to keep the two sides together. Nor

is it to be overlooked that the Vietnamese party was labelled revisionist by the Chinese in the Lin Piao era. It is certainly closer to the East European model, where many of its cadres are trained, than to the Chinese. The Vietnamese, for example, always disapproved of the cultural revolution and have never entertained the kind of mass campaigns that have been such a feature of Chinese political life. Now that the war is over, there are reports that the Vietnamese party is drifting into the kind of bureaucratic ossification that is so characteristic of Eastern Europe.

Ever aware of the danger of encirclement by the Soviet Union, the Chinese charge that Vietnam is becoming the Cuba of Asia — a puppet of Soviet policy. The recent entry of Vietnam into Comecon is cited as proof of this. Much more important, however, was the invasion of Cambodia.

The Chinese believe that Vietnam has ambitions to dominate an Indo-Chinese federation, which in turn would be amenable to Soviet influence. Naturally,

the Soviet Union is pressing hard for just this very thing. Therefore, the Chinese back Cambodian resistance. For its part, the Vietnamese party justifies its intervention in Cambodia with similar logic to that used by the Soviet Union when it invaded Czechoslovakia — an act which was strongly supported by the Vietnamese.

Although the Vietnamese hoped for an improvement of relations after the overthrow of the Gang of Four, this has not come about, and, in July of this year, China announced the withdrawal of all aid (aid which has been estimated to have totalled something between 10 and 18 billion US dollars over the past twenty years). It is possible that there will be border and sea clashes between the two countries in the future. The Hong Kong press reports that Teng Hsiao-ping is keen for a confrontation, and Vietnam is being egged on by the Soviet Union. This may be accompanied by the open ideological dispute that has been in the offing for a decade.

Camps

The Vietnamese frontier post is on the actual border, while the Chinese post is approx. 200 metres away inside Chinese territory. Between these two points are camped the refugees; bounded on either side by the steep hills of this region. The materials for their shelter were provided by the Chinese, who also supply two meals a day, fresh water, toilet facilities and a medical team. Conditions are best



Refugees at the border

described as primitive and overcrowded. Although they have left Vietnam, the refugees have not yet been accepted by China. Anxiety and uncertainty is understandably the mood of the camp.

Many of the refugees spoken to had never been to China and spoke poor Chinese with a heavy Vietnamese accent. Even those with Chinese citizenship did not always show great enthusiasm for China, they are leaving their homes after all. But, like Chinese all over the world, they share the residual feeling that China is the motherland of last resort (it is this that prompts the Russians to accuse them of being a fifth column in Vietnam).

The Vietnamese argument that these are capitalist elements who are running away from socialist Vietnam is not borne out when you are actually among them and talk to them. Anyway, if they were capitalists, China would be the last place they would want to go. Some are angry; most are confused. They do not understand why, after years of living together, they are now made to feel unwelcome in Vietnam. Many of them made great sacrifices alongside the Vietnamese in the wars against the French and the Americans. They say they won't go back to Vietnam because they no longer trust the government, and it was noticeable that the nearer one got to the Vietnamese post the more reluctant were the refugees to talk.

Harassment

Their stories, though not as lurid as those put out in the Chinese press, present a picture of harassment that has effectively made life impossible for them in Vietnam.

They claim, for example, that Chinese have been forcibly evicted and resettled in the new economic zones near the Cambodian border.

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Putting them in the front line of the war is said to be perverse revenge for China's refusal to support Vietnam in this dispute.
Southerners report that cadres from the north had an arrogant attitude towards them; reminiscent of colonial officials. They say that the Chinese are regarded as a source of personal enrichment — being easy prey to the "pay up or I will denounce you" form of extortion.

Cholon, the huge Chinese enclave of Ho Chi Minh City, whose inhabitants were famous for their support of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the National Liberation Front, has been emptied of Chinese. The expropriations and evictions led to shootings in which some were killed. They claim that many were press-ganged into the army to serve in the war against Cambodia.

Another grievance concerned the currency change-over. Until recently there were two currencies in Vietnam; one for the north and one for the south. This year both were withdrawn and replaced by a single currency for the whole country. The government gave assurances that all savings would be honoured in

the change over. This affected many Chinese in the south, who are notorious for their thrift. However, the assurance was broken and the government set limits on the amount that any family could exchange. This was backed up by a campaign to vilify those that had this amount (£500) as embezzlers and swindlers. Sensing danger, many Chinese declared much less than this — forgoing the rest.

Others complained of not being paid for their work, and all mentioned the fact that China and the Chinese are being made into scapegoats for domestic problems in Vietnam. Since it withdrew aid China has been blamed for every kind of material shortage. She is also blamed for the failure of the war against Cambodia (a war which is having a draining effect on the Vietnamese economy).

Much of this antagonism is fostered by the official propaganda, and runs counter to the popular feeling of friendship for China and the Chinese. Many Vietnamese are reported to be puzzled by the new attitude to the Chinese, who have a good reputation for their efforts in the war and in building socialism in the north. It is certainly true that the Chinese are more popular than the

Russians, who are treated with respect but without enthusiasm.

In China relations with Vietnam are taken very seriously, with even the early morning radio broadcasts announcing the latest developments. The official propaganda emphasises the traditional friendship between the two peoples and takes a pious regretful tone. This reflects the popular feelings in China of sorrow mixed with indignation. To the Chinese Vietnam seems to too easily forget the enormous contribution that China made to the war effort. They are angry also that China has been landed with a refugee problem.

Billeted

In Tunghsing, for example, a town of 10,000 people, there are now 20,000 refugees. Every household has to billet at least one family of refugees. Anyone familiar with the cramped conditions in which the Chinese live will appreciate the disruption this has caused. Transport and food arrangements in the border provinces of Kwansi and Yunnan are under strain.

And the refugees are more than just a logistical problem. On the road to Ping Hsiang one saw the extraordinary sight of three long haired

youths on a motor scooter careering through the fields. It is not easy for young Chinese from South Vietnam to adjust to the disciplined life of revolutionary China.

Vietnam is undergoing great changes, and it is true that many people, especially in the south, have been upset by this, including many Chinese. Also, the Vietnamese have some grounds for complaint, especially on the question of nationality. This, however, does not justify the overtly racist nature of the propaganda against the Chinese population as a whole, in both the north and the south. Pressure on them to leave Vietnam is likely to continue (and is succeeding where American bombs failed) and the present trickle of refugees will build up again into a steady flow.



Wuming State Farm
for refugees, S. China

Hong Kong so long

The writing is on the wall for the British-owned colony of Hong Kong. Its lifeline — the Kowloon Peninsula — will be cut when the lease on it runs out in 1997. Dave Clark and Walter Easey look at the beginning of the end.

Hong Kong's international airport Kai Tak is dangerously overcrowded. Yet no-one is prepared to take the plunge and invest in a much-needed second airport. A massive power station contract has had to be covered by the British Government's Export Credit Guarantee Department — a guarantee that would have been unthinkable five years ago. Local business investors are not worried about either projects' profitability but about the long-term future of the colony.

One of the biggest banks, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank has recently bought itself an American bank — The Marine Midland. And this is just the beginning of the long flight of capital from Hong Kong.

The other large companies which dominate the economy, and the committee of company directors which passes for a local government, have already started

"diversifying" into Africa, America and the Middle East.

The Kowloon peninsula was leased to Britain for 99 years by the dying Manchu dynasty in 1898. The lease was part of an agreement forced on the remnants of China's government by the combined forces of Western imperialism and international lawyers have come to recognise it as an "unequal treaty". Officially, the British have to pull out of the peninsula at midnight on June 30, 1997. Unofficially, the slide has already begun.

China has in the past been content to use Hong Kong as a window on the capitalist world. 40% of its foreign trade has passed through the colony while in the past few years it has built up its own investment in the banking and trading structure, kept a substantial grip on its own trades unions and trained up in the process a cadre of administrators capable of taking over the running of the

colony when the Peoples' Liberation Army phones to say it's on the way in. But as a top Chinese official recently pointed out in Hong Kong — as China's bi-lateral trade and its oil revenues expand — the importance of HK to China will diminish sharply.

The Chinese don't recognise any of the earlier treaties as being valid; indeed they can't, since to do so would also legitimise their current border with the Soviet Union. But they have been unwilling to spell out their intentions. Huang Hua told the United Nations in 1972 that the questions of Hong Kong and the Portuguese enclave of Macao "should be settled in an appropriate way when the conditions are ripe". Subsequent statements have all been equally uninformative.

The British Government, aware that Hong Kong brings at least £600 million into the country every year, and equally aware that any questioning of the validity of the original treaty calls into doubt the entire constitutional and legal position of Hong Kong business and its police and military backup, wants to keep the whole question off

the agenda. Foreign Office junior minister Evan Luard referred to Her Majesty's Government's "well known view of the status of Hong Kong". But that "well known view is a mystery as no explicit statement has ever been made.

And there is the trick question of what to do about two million Hong Kong Chinese eligible by birth to British passports. It's not something that any minister is prepared to speculate about, particularly in an election period.

In the meantime the people of Hong Kong — many of them right wing or nationalist refugees from the mainland and their descendants — are trapped in the colony as one of the hardest-working and most exploited labour forces in the world.

Unable to vote or to effectively organise — those who don't follow the communist trade unions' line of patriotic study rather than class struggle are watched over by a Special Branch pro rata ten times as large as in the United Kingdom — labouring for wages a quarter of what they are in the United Kingdom.

Iran The Shah: 40 million enemies

Iran is in widespread and spontaneous revolt. An ancient nation of 40 millions, with huge economic potential and occupying a strategic position, has risen against its despotic ruler. While his Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah cowers in his palace, protected from "his" people by a ring of imperialist steel, almost every social group declares its hatred for him and his upstart Pahlavi dynasty in the streets.

Nobody has been more surprised by the strength and depth of the opposition than the opposition itself. When the Campaign Against Repression in Iran organised a march some months ago through the West End of London they were amazed to have bourgeois Iranian tourists approaching them in the streets and wishing them well, despite all the risks of detection by Savak, the secret police.

Iran is a vast and rugged country, and information is of course tightly controlled. Only around the beginning of the year, three months after the first outbreaks, did the true extent of the hatred for the royal family and its hangers-on emerge. Reports filtered through from the countryside and provincial towns of riots against police stations, offices of the Rastakhiz (Resurgence Party), the Shah's very own front of sycophants, and property belonging to foreigners, mainly Americans.

Workers at the Abadan oil refinery, the elite of the small Iranian working class, struck in November, and according to some accounts have been out most of the time since. The petty bourgeoisie of the bazaar, who have been losing to the big capitalists around the Shah for 15 years, took to the streets against corruption and high prices. In the great religious centre of Qum, the focus of Iranian culture for a

millennium, and in mosques across the land the monarchy was denounced.

Not everyone in the West who has supported his Imperial Majesty as a bulwark against communism — a fear recently reinforced by the creeping grasp of Moscow over Afghanistan and Ethiopia — has done so uncritically. It is recognised that the White Revolution of land reform, industrialisation and social changes to the most backward aspects of Islam, has been at worst a sham and at best a failure.

The Iranian economy is in chaos: the planning mechanism, supposedly the instrument of Iran's bright new Westernised future, has seized up; agricultural output has actually fallen, forcing Iran to import between \$2,000 million and \$3,000 million worth of food a year, equivalent to about 15 per cent of current oil revenues; the Central Bank Of Iran has admitted that the overall economic growth rate in the Iranian year 1977/78 was 2.4 per cent, one of the lowest since the early 1960s; and the Industrial and Mining Development Bank of Iran has described industrial growth over the same period as "modest".

The people are fed up with intricate and open corruption, which allows the recipients, starting with the royal family, to salt away huge fortunes. They are fed up with inflation running at 30 per cent a year. They are fed up with being terrorised by Savak. They are fed up with a society which no longer functions — machines that break down and factories which never reach capacity, schemes like the three prestige agro-business projects in Khuzestan which have been abandoned, a capital city desperately swollen with people, traffic and garbage (a lot of it rich).

These resentments have centered on the monarchy, both the family and the institution. When the people of Tehran took to the streets on 8 September, and thou-

sands were mown down by the Shah's Western-equipped army in a scene reminiscent of the 1905 massacre, it was the resignation of the ruler and the abolition of the monarchy that was demanded.

Attempts by the Shah to head off the opposition by sacrificing his former prime minister, Tamshid Amouzegar, a technocrat much beloved of the Western powers as the man with the "intellect" to grapple with Iran's problems, and installing the supposedly more popular Shariff-Emami failed. It is unlikely that the prospect of "free" elections next year and the Shah's recent promises to punish those guilty of corruption will placate the masses either. When the 40 days' warning after the last slaughter comes up on 18 October the Shah will find out if his "reforms" have distracted attention.

For the opposition is not against the form of the Shah's rule but its fact. There is a long history of opposition to kings of any kind from Iran's Shia Moslems, who respect no authority save that of the Prophet. That alone means that the religious section of the opposition, and its leaders, the Ayatollahs Khomeini and Sharriat Madari, are not just furious reactionaries. Still, there are undoubtedly Moslems who resent the albeit small progress Iranian women have made in the last decade and want to eject foreigners because they are foreigners and not because they may be imperialist stooges, as are the estimated 30,000 Americans advising the armed forces.

The religious leaders, whose following is strong among the small capitalists of the bazaars, are supported by the National Liberation Movement which was formed in 1961 by Mos-

lem supporters of Dr Mossadeq, the nationalist leader ejected by the British and the CIA, and by its guerilla offshoot, the Mujahideen Islam. Secular supporters of Mossadeq's National Front formed the Union of National Front Forces after breaking with him over women's rights, nationalisation and co-operation with the Tudeh, the Iranian Communist Party. The Tudeh is a hunted organisation the extent of whose support among workers is hard to assess.

The differences between these forces — all weak after years of repression by Savak — are deep. Their common programme barely goes beyond the expulsion of royalty and of the 4,000 families who hide beneath its skirts, and the restoration of the 1906 republican constitution abrogated by the present Shah's father.

It is the absence of a leadership able to give direction to the revolt which may in the end be fatal. The bulk of the army and the police — including critically the officer corps — is loyal to its commander, and so long as they are backed by the West they are unlikely to switch allegiance. So the unfortunate fact is that the left inside and outside Iran has to support the opposition and hope for the best. The best that can be foreseen is whipping the throne from under the royal arse. The worst is that the opposition could reach a peak and fade, lending life to further brutal suppression. Equally, the Shah's fall could result in a military government. But these are not good reasons for failing to support the Iranian people, not least because the humbling of the King of Kings is the last thing wanted in Washington and London.

Moslem women protest



Humanite Dimanche

Ireland 'Blanket Men' into third year of hell

IT'S TWO YEARS since the beginning of the "Blanket" campaign in Northern Ireland's jails. On September 14 1976, Keiran Nugent, then 19, refused to wear a prison uniform as part of his demand to be given political status. His refusal was the start of the campaign, a start he recently reminded the readers of *Republican News* about with a smuggled letter:

"My legs were kicked apart by the screws and blows rained on me whilst all the time a tirade of abuse was directed at me. I was repeatedly ordered to put on prison uniform. I refused.

"Then two screws grabbed me by the hair and arms and dragged me thirty yards through a gauntlet of screws who kicked and punched me. I was flung into my cell. My arms were wrenched behind my back and I was forced to the floor. My clothes were then forcibly removed, leaving me lying naked in a bare cell. Later, a mattress, blanket and slop pot were thrown in. I draped the blanket around me and collapsed onto the mattress."

Nugent was just 11 when the British Army first arrived in Northern Ireland to "keep the peace". In the course of his life, his family was constantly raided, his father arrested on trumped-up charges, his friend murdered by an assassination squad, and he was himself twice held — for a total of 14 months — without being charged with anything. In 1976 he was sentenced to three years in prison. Merlyn Rees, then still Northern Ireland Secretary, had announced that political status would be phased out from March 1st 1976: when Nugent was imprisoned on September 14 he was the first man to seriously challenge the new order.

Now there are 338 Republican prisoners of war on the blanket and more are added each month. The conditions for many of them, huddled naked in cells which are alternately sweating hot and freezing cold, dirty — since

they have been operating a boycott of toilet and washing facilities to escalate their protest — and fed on slops, are alarming and inhuman. Yet their struggle is more solid than ever and his mass support within the community.

Nugent's letter spells out starkly how the authorities reacted to their demand: "After a few months' solitary confinement having failed to break us, it was coupled with further humiliation. Four times daily we had to walk naked to the canteen to collect our food. Each time we were taunted by the bigoted screws."

Yet to recognise the demand for political status meant that the Northern Ireland Office had to recognise that the armed struggle against the British was a political struggle and not merely 'terrorism' or 'gangsterism' which is how they prefer to describe it. Their response was to escalate the repression:

"The next and most trying phase was starvation tactics and stepped-up assaults. It was not so much the actual beatings as the constant fear of them. Even worse was the realisation that this was no three or seven day spell, this was for years!"

The public relations officer of H Blocks 3, 4 and 5 adds that the "indignities and torture practised upon us are sadistic, callous and all too numerous to mention. At present we are forcefully subjected to degrading and intimate body searches. Each POW is held down and forcibly bent over a table or chair by several bully-boy screws and his back-passage physically probed and examined. This degrading treatment does not only take place on going to or coming from our monthly visit, but takes place every day during harassing cell searches and cell moves, whose only purpose is to provide excuses for further torture."

Army try to stop Republican News

PRODUCTION of *Republican News*, the newspaper of the Provisional Sinn Feinn in Belfast, continues to be hampered by the harassment of the security forces. Each issue is produced in secret from different houses in the city to forestall further raids. It has to be printed in the Republic — at considerable extra cost — and the kids who street-sell it have to go in pairs so that one can watch out for the army while the other sells it.

The paper continues to sell about 16,000 copies a week despite all the difficulties. But the latest attacks include the arrest of the paper's editor Danny Morrison. 25 year old Morrison was arrested in Belfast on September 8 and held for a week under the Emergency Provisions Act and then charged with

membership of the IRA and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Morrison told the court that he'd been batoned and punched by British soldiers at Springfield Road RUC station and then taken to the interrogation centre at Castlereagh barracks. Here he was put through 29 sessions with the police — whose questioning centred entirely on the production and politics of *Republican News*.

The raids and harassment have all centered on the public, political face of Sinn Feinn and are clearly designed to try and cut some of the political links between the organisation and the community during the current lull in the military offensive. But despite the attacks on it, the paper describes itself as "resilient as ever."

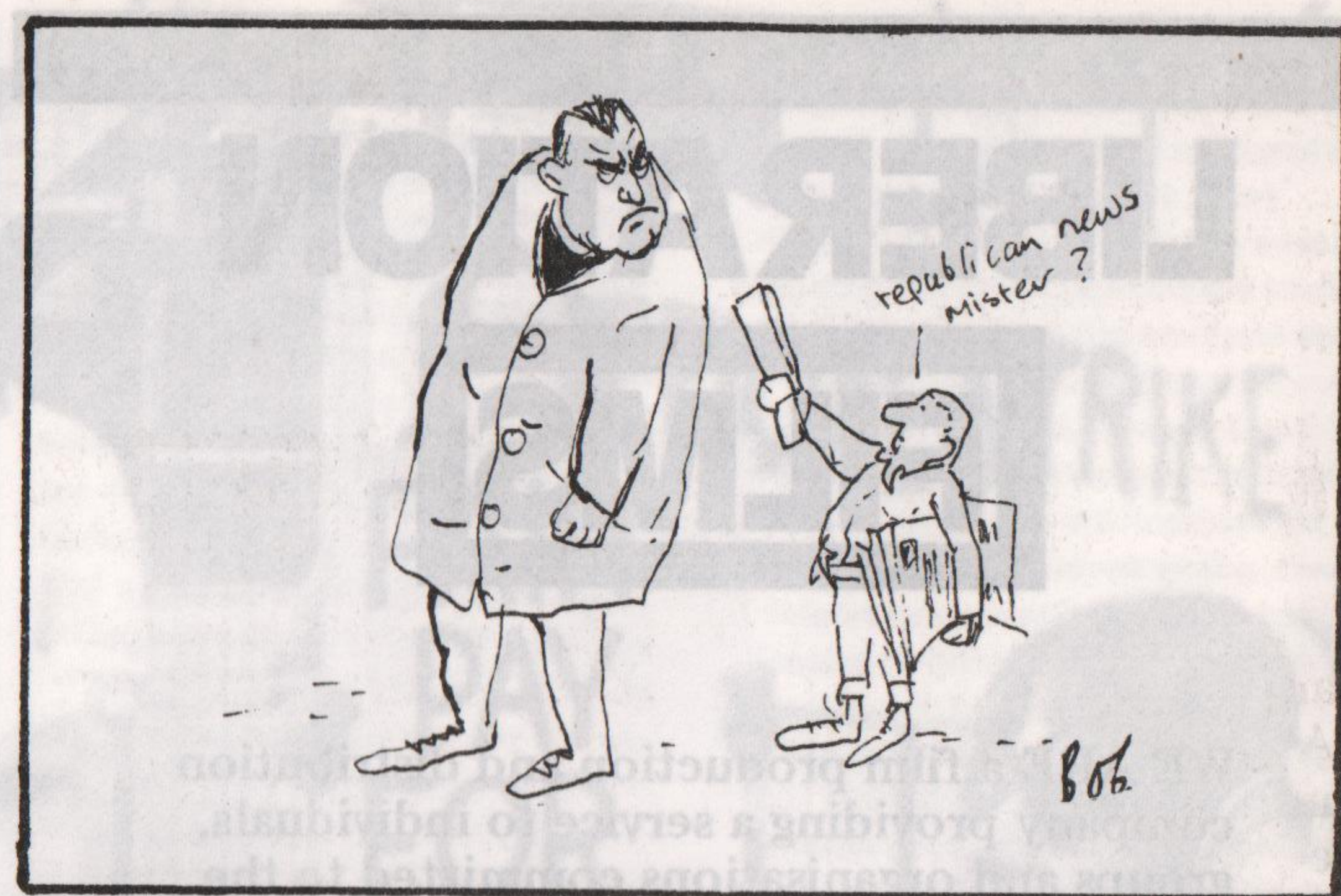
No fair trial for Astrid Proll

THE BRITISH press has largely accepted the official West German version of how Astrid Proll, currently facing extradition from this country, came to be on bail in the course of her trial. Medical evidence was produced which showed that she was unable to continue with her trial and might indeed have died if not released, because of the effects of solitary confinement and sensory deprivation to which she had been subjected. Such evidence was produced for many other accused urban guerillas, but they were not given bail.

One other factor was at work in Astrid's case. The most serious charges of attempted murder concerned

her alleged participation in a bank robbery in Frankfurt. But in the course of her trial, defence lawyers succeeded in destroying the credibility of the leading prosecution witness, a police commander, that it was widely predicted that she might even have been acquitted. Hence the willingness of the state to allow her bail.

In West Germany today she is presumed guilty and cannot expect a fair trial. The Hamburg *Morgenpost* headlined its story "Terrorist Proll arrested". The Springer-owned *Bild am Sonntag* claimed that "the arrested Astrid Proll was the girl friend of the super-terrorist Carlos".



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SCREEN, one of the journals of the Society for Education in Film and Television, carries regular articles on independent and avant-garde cinema. For example:

vol.19 no.1 on Oshima; vol.19 no.2 on two recent British films and the Documentary ideology; on the avant-garde and narrative; script of Straub/Huillet's film *Fortini/Canis*; vol.19 no.3—terms for a British Cinema; vol.19 no.4—histories of American independent cinema

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Society for Education in Film and Television

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Camera wrangles

After a period when it sang the TV blues, the film industry is now moving the units in a big way, following the two sci-fi operas and Mr Stigwood's marketing flair. But independent cinema, Needless to say, is beset with problems. Quite apart from fierce debates over what form the finished product should take (revolutionary in form or content? documentary-makers versus semioticians, etc.) independent cinema still has to bust a gut for every penny it gets behind a project. And that is the focus of this *Leveller* theme on film: to stimulate discussion on such questions as, how to create a mass participation socialist cinema? whether to accept the state's art handouts or whether to strive for (politically) independent funding?

First, an interview with Horace Ove, director of *Pressure* (the British Film Institute-financed film about a black boy growing up in Britain), which illustrates the problems faced by independent film-makers. And second, an analysis (and history) of the existing organisational structure within independent cinema. Take your seats for this action-packed feature.

Horace Ove

'How did you get into films?'

I'm from Trinidad, right? There was no TV, and if you were interested in the outside world, you either read books or went to the cinema. I used to go to the local flea-pit in Belmont.

He came to London to study art, didn't like it. Did photography, painted. Worked in Rome as a painter, and as a film-extra to survive. Wanted to study film there, but his Italian wasn't good enough. So he came back and joined the London Film School.

After I finished I eventually got the opportunity to make a film, *The Art of the Needle*, which was used to teach students acupuncture. People from film

school get a diploma. It doesn't say you're a film director or a film so-and-so. You still have to hustle, or try and get a film together, or you're lucky and get a job in TV or whatever.

'Did you try and get a job when you finished?'

Sure. I tried the BBC. At that time they'd never employed a black film director or producer. I was handed round from office to office, everybody saying, 'It's a good idea, but..... we have no vacancies. Maybe you should try another time.' All that shit. I never looked for no film job after that. I got the message quite early, you know. That's why I was always determined to direct and produce my own films.

'So the acupuncture thing was a breakthrough.'

Yeah. I had a film I could put under my arm and show people. But I had to starve for a while and fall back on still photography. And then James Baldwin and Dick Gregory had this meeting at the West Indian Students Centre. I wanted to film it — how they were going to relate to the black problem in the States and how the students were going to take it. I hustled up the money from friends, my wife, whoever.....

Ed Berman of Interaction helped me with some too. That's how the film was completed. It was shown on NET and on campuses in the States, and in the cinema here. I tried to sell it to TV here, but they wouldn't touch it. They were shocked because they'd never seen Baldwin so militant. They saw him as an honest roots-scene novelist. But he wasn't speaking on no BBC programme. He was doing some straight talking with West Indians.

Ove and an American cameraman put some money together to make a feature film about a West Indian writer who came here to better himself. The whole problem of trying to survive got too heavy for him. He didn't get published, started to flip.

We shot most of it but had

no money to complete it. The producers didn't want to know. It was a bit too way out for the early '60s — surrealism, fantasy, dream — the whole psychedelic trip came later here.... I still got that film. I think it's one of my best works, but I have moved on, so it's hard to finish.

The next film I made was *Reggae*. You had to go to a shebeen in those days to hear reggae, and they had to know you there before you could come in and relax. Some of it started to get on the radio — about one play a month — but with DJs making insulting remarks because they didn't know fuck all about it. The only people digging it then were blacks and skinheads. So when they organised a Reggae Festival, I persuaded the organisers to let me film it. And Junior Lincoln, one of the pioneers of reggae records, put up his life-savings to make it. It was a success even though reggae wasn't even popular. Got shown all over — Europe, even Australia.

'I think it set a trend, the rhythm with which you slipped in clips of King Kong, Enoch Powell, sending up white people's ideas of blacks.'

Yeah, the way it was structured. People were amazed that a black guy could get black finance and also create a new film style. But Trinidadians

started to put me down. 'What you know 'bout Jamaica? You should make a film about Carnival.' 'You know how Trinis love their Carnival.'

About that time I went back for the first time — for Carnival. Eeing away so long I could see the whole scene objectively — how Carnival was a conglomeration of cultures coming out of a bloody, dread past. Shango cult, Indian influence, Chinese, European. When I came back I sold the idea to the BBC. At that time *World About Us* had more money. They were involved in a co-production with Time-Life, and a tie-up with Geiman TV. That's why they bought the idea, and I went off and made *King Carnival*.

After directing a play by Lindsay Barrett, and setting up the music for another by Barry Rekord, Ove then made *Pressure*.

The BBC commissioned it. But after Sam Selvon and I finished the script they backed out. Too heavy for them. I peddled it around TV, only one company was interested, that too only as a documentary. I said, 'No way'.

Documentaries preach to a certain class, and I wanted to communicate on all levels. All those personal details could never come into straight docu-

mentary. How does a person suffer you kick a guy in the balls in the street and he goes back to his dirty little room.... what happens in that room.....

'I agree. With documentaries you get a message, but you can't identify with a whole progression of a person's life, or their situation.'

Right, right. A good feature film comes out and everybody, I mean everybody sees it and enjoys it and learns from it. Documentary is an academic trip, talking only on a certain level, a lot of crap. You should be able to break it down for everybody to understand. I am in a position to criticise, because I know how much dishonesty could go into it.

'Yeah. A left-wing group were making a documentary about racism for kids. I said, "Why don't you make it a story, with the kids?" And they said, "No, no. That's not on." I think there's some basis for documentary on TV, but much less on a cinema screen.'

When you reach the age of 30, 45, even 80, you always remember the stories you heard as a kid — Anancy stories we used to call them back home. Stories are important, people relate to them. How could you put a camera on a face, or a landscape, and talk about a culture?.... Unless you're Magritte.

Anyway, it was only as a last resort that I went to the BFI with *Pressure*. And they sent some guy who's now framing pictures in Camden Town to budget the film. For a two-hour feature, with 30 speaking parts, they gave me £10,000. They reduced me to a fucking amateur — I didn't get paid for my work and I know they wanted it to fail. They could win both ways, say 'We gave this black guy money and he made a mess.' But a lot of people helped me — professionals I'd worked with before who did it for expenses only — just food and taxi fare. They gave me five weeks of their time, and we shot the whole film in five weeks. That was in 1975, and we had to pressure the BFI to get some more money and they finally gave me £8,000 more.

There was a gentlemen's agreement, nothing on paper, that they would blow it up to 35mm for exhibition. That's why the whole film was shot with fixed lenses. But they refused to blow it up.

They sat on it for two years. A lot of critics supported us, trying to get the film released. When we went to have a showdown with them, they said the film rights of all BFI films were owned by an American company called Films Inc. They never mentioned that before. They said the Americans didn't want it shown. Rob Buckler and I finally decided to phone the company ourselves, and they agreed without any trouble. Some right-wingers in the

BFI didn't want it shown. It took three years to come out, and it got fantastic reviews. It was the BFI's first commercial success. But it still hasn't had proper exhibition. Like *The Harder They Come*. Up to now that film hasn't had a decent release.

Another thing. *Pressure* was released in Brixton and Notting Hill, for black people to go and see. But we made it also for white people — so that they could get an idea of what was happening. And we got criticised by a lot of blacks because they said it didn't give them a sense of strength. We didn't make it as a fantasy... It's a docudrama...

One of the guys, very African-looking, who rips off supermarkets in the film and lives in a derry, survived that way in real life too. Ove found out that he was really interested in film and helped him to get into a film school. Some months later he disappeared. They found him after a few weeks, dead in his room. He had some kind of heart trouble and he shouldn't have been living on his own. One of the few guys who got a break and he died. To resume.....

And then I was put in a bag, a big, black bag. When my agent suggested me to certain producers they said, 'He's a black militant film-maker. He wouldn't be interested in this. He wouldn't be able to do that.' It's dangerous for a black man, your thing is limited. Whereas a white film-maker can make any fucking film he wants to, a black guy has to stick to kind of ghetto ideas.

Anyway I went off and made a film about a Spanish aristocrat. A guru he met in the street freak him out in Inida. He went back to Spain and turn his back on all his money and went to live

in the mountains and start to paint. He was a Sunday painter before that. He's still trying to paint in the full Tantric style. I met him again when I went to Spain this year.

A couple of TV companies are showing an interest. He's waiting to hear. Then?

I made a film with Jimmy Cliff which he financed. It's not finished because he had this fantastic dream of taking this and lots of other films about himself, and one day putting it all together.



'One big ego trip.'

Yeah, like the Bob Dylan film at the moment. But this film was very interesting — the Nigerian reaction to Jimmy Cliff.

'Had they seen *The Harder They Come*?'

No, they never saw it. But he was always popular there. He was surprised. Everybody knew his songs word for word, and millions of people showed up. Very interesting, and chaotic too. Nigerian chaos.....

After that I hung around and scratched my balls for a bit.

Film fringe

Independent cinema is often slagged off for being elitist, obscurantist or just plain boring (see Kevin McDonnell's piece in *The Leveller* 18). But here Sue Clayton rejects the notion that what socialist film really needs is some left version of a Hollywood blockbuster. Any criticism, she argues, must proceed from an understanding of the different kinds of struggles that independent cinema has been involved in, the different organisational and aesthetic forms it has thrown up.

It's clear that money won't fall out of the sky, or out of the TUC in any great quantity. And in the short term, it's still an open question what form popular cinema might take. But it doesn't help to overlook independent filmmaking. Because independent films have come out of particular struggles of tendencies on the left, and within the funding bodies themselves, they've ended up questioning not only the values of the mass media but the

whole language in which these values are expressed.

Avant-garde films are one of the contentious areas of independent cinema. Obviously, they're not political in the sense of being handy for Trades Council meetings, but within film schools they've had their effect.

A climate of restricted finances has certainly affected film school authorities, making equipment less accessible to left documentary groups but their

That's what I'd like to say in my LBC interview...

Ove and Buckler sold the idea of a feature about the Rastas to John Goldstone (Monty Python films) and went to Jamaica to research it. Goldstone later decided it would be too expensive. Ove also wrote another script, *Sagababys*, for the BBC, about two West Indian hustlers in London who end up taking jobs on a supply boat in the North Sea for a living. He's waiting for a reaction on that too.

They take six months, a year, to decide. But I have to live in the meantime, pay rent, feed the family. Bank manager, tax man, all sitting on your head, and they take their own sweet time considering, and I don't get no money till they decide.

There's also a kind of deadness in the film business here. They're not adventurous. They're not leaving their rich homes or nice clubs to check out what's happening in the street.....

'The Americans are more adventurous that way. Which brings us in a way to *Skateboard Kings*. That's really different from most things you've done.'

One day my son Zach — he's 12 — he told me I was making the wrong kind of films. He's a skateboarder. He started giving me information about skateboarding in California — the radical ones. He researched it too. Out there I found that he really knew what he was talking about.

A boy skateboarding up the sides of a 21 foot pipe said 'Oh fuck' when he fell and sprained his ankle. The producers thought Ove should have cut it, since it was showing on a Sunday.

Why should I cut it? The guy fell and sprained his ankles. They

power doesn't extend in all directions. What they didn't resist was the development of a range of film practices which set out to question assumptions about the "real" world of film and the "truth" of the film image.

So independents don't need to be preoccupied with the bogey of the mass audience. There is no simple relationship between the number of people who see a film, and how effective it is. Showing a film to a smaller group, with discussion afterwards, is different altogether from its effect in a commercial cinema or on TV.

For instance, after the transmission of *Cathy Come Home* the BBC refused to distribute prints for meetings believing its effect would be far more devastating if it was used by groups for campaigning.

Some of the problems of independent production are a direct result of having inadequate finance. Bad sound quality, poor mix, absence of lab effects and sharp editing (video) are things most film makers would be happy to say goodbye to. But independent cinema, like fringe and community theatre, has

expect him to say 'Oh my'? I can't blame the producers completely. Some people don't want to see things as they are, they want selective documentary. Some good feature films are also more honest than a documentary where you ask people leading questions in front of a camera. They can't be natural — they get into an act, everybody gets into an act in front of a camera.

He's busy now on a script on the Spaghetti House affair.

What interests me most is what made two of the guys who had never been involved in crime — what made them decide to do it? And the sentences they got. Nobody got hurt even. But they gave those two youths heavy heavy sentences.....

We dwell on that. Then we talk about black people in the media.

Only now they are beginning to show real black things — since *The Harder They Come*, *Pressure*, *Black Joy*, *Roots*.

'Norman Beaton said when he was receiving some award for *Black Joy* that the black audience laughed all the way from the cinema, but the white producer laughed all the way to the bank.'

That's true. Even then they want to pace it to once in 5 years, and then they say, 'You have no good black writers in this country.' A lot of really good black writing is coming out of living in this great big ghetto land, but the writers don't get a break. They prefer to buy black things from the States. In fact black writers go from here to the States so they can get published. I think I'm going to go there too. It's much more exciting. When I was there making *Skateboards*, I met quite a few people who were interested, who were ready to take chances.

developed strategies for turning material problems to aesthetic and political effect. The texture and appearance of independent film can criticise the slick and sterile professionalism of the commercial film industry.

The Amazing Equal Pay Show, for instance, and the *James Whiter Than White Show* (on abortion) are both a kind of Vaudeville with simple props and costumes. Both films plonk down their actors wherever appropriate; and the traffic noises more than compensate for having the Houses of Parliament, or Harley Street, as a backdrop undermining the symbolic power these locations have in straight cinema.

Another example is *Railman* by Four Corner Films. It began as a simple project — 'to get as close as possible to the life and routine of an NUR railman.' But because of restrictions placed on shooting by British Rail (including a hefty fee per hour) the group radically changed its approach. It filmed an acted reconstruction of their interview with a menacing PR officer, made surreptitious videotapes and slides, and intercut



these with some official material. So the film shows at just what cost (politically as well as financially) verité documentary is achieved.

It's fashionable to say that collectives run at a cost to efficiency. But films by women, especially in the early seventies, wouldn't have been made at all if they hadn't organised collectives to teach skills and share out crewing functions. Despite these important breakthroughs, even film makers themselves find it difficult to compare big-budget studio films with low-budget collectively made ones in a way which doesn't denigrate the low-budget film. Which is the most important, a shoestring feature or documentary by a self-taught women's collective, which gets shown at women's events, or Claudia Well's relatively lush *Girl Friends*, a liberal women's film distributed by Warner Brothers? As the line

between 'independents' and large studio productions shows definite signs of wavering, what's needed is a more sensitive critical vocabulary.

Although a lot of independents see themselves as being on the Left, their work is hugely diverse. What they have in common is enforced separation from mainstream culture. It was on this basis that the Independent Film Makers Association was formed, when a group of people met in protest against a tedious and inaccurate Melvyn Bragg featurette on non-commercial cinema. Since then a national network of groups has been set up, and the IFA has been active in stirring up debate on who should support new film culture, on how film makers can work constructively without just servicing the Left, and so on. It's also tried, in very practical ways — screenings,

events, newsheets — to consolidate different practices within a general idea of how film can be radical.

With so many different kinds of film makers, competing for State funds, it's usually seemed appropriate that the IFA should be a loose federation of interests rather than a smaller group with a narrower function. Because many diverse types of film makers are involved in the IFA, it is in a strong position to put forward proposals to various State bodies, as it did with the BFI, over film makers' distribution rights.

And when the Wilson Interim Action Committee was set up, to make proposals about new film legislation, the IFA made recommendations committed to funding through regional workshops and production teams. It also asked that more money should be available for large scale features, but the main thrust was

to get proper financing for existing projects.

Anybody who still thinks blockbusting 'Left features' are what's needed must realise you'd need a lot of private sponsorship and foreign TV sales (although the new film about gays, *Nighthawks*, managed it).

Money filtered down from government funds clearly has strings attached, but so has practically any form of film financing. The way for us to get a reasonably autonomous grip on production and distribution funds is to claim that State bodies aren't in position to administer left culture to the left because it's a marginal group.

The issue of whether we should be looking to this kind of organisation or to possibly more autonomous forms of funding, which different IFA groups have already attempted to develop with some success, is something I hope will be taken up and discussed.

Eady levy, should be offered to the film industry — when Parliament found the time to draft the necessary legislation.

The problem of independents and the reorganisation of the whole system of production, distribution and exhibition was put off yet again. Without such reorganisation the virtual stranglehold on British films of private monopoly capital in cooperation with the US film industry can hardly be broken. As if to reinforce this, the BFI have just appointed a Yank as Director. They found the British candidate too 'left-wing'. And for all the international attention independent British films have received without government support, independent cinema will continue to struggle for its survival, trailing far behind its counterparts in France and Italy.

Independent cinema, it's clear, can't base itself on financial support from the state. (Last year, the BFI Production Board doled out a paltry £110,000 to make 8 films as a once-only payment.)

Private finance is also extremely difficult to find. But in spite of all its problems, independent cinema will survive because it must. The issue, however, is one of getting beyond a hand-to-mouth existence. How?

One lead is provided by the record industry (see *Leveller* 19). Small producers continue to innovate and flourish simply because the major recording companies can't entirely control what people want to hear. With films, of course, the problem is more complex, because film-making requires greater financial outlay and long-term organisation. There's the added problem of establishing exhibition venues and attracting an audience to them.

A second lead is provided by the two ANL/RAR carnivals so far, indicating a potential film audience as well. The last days of TOC bear this out. TOC put on films along with bands playing punk rock and reggae, and drew packed houses. Had the idea been tried earlier, it might have even saved TOC from collapse. But because of inexperience, previous financial short-sightedness, organisational inefficiencies, and too much dependence on



Film work group

state finance (see *Wedge* No.2), TOC's days were already numbered.

In the long run, the weakest sector in independent cinema, that of socialist film-making, has far better prospects of stabilising itself than any other. Of course, this would require a radical re-think on the part of socialist film-makers, and cooperation from the labour movement.

The left-wing film-making tradition is a documentary one. It is said of the founders, John Grierson and friends, that their main achievement was to put the working class on the screen in Orwellian fashion. During the War they came to be identified with the establishment, and most ended up making documentaries for British Transport Films, the Shell Film Unit, and the Coal Board. They did not need to attract an audience or entertain—merely to inform and persuade. Television plays this role far better than cinema. The BBC has become the biggest documentary producer, although Granada TV has shown itself to be more adventurous. Many left-wing documentary and docudrama film-makers like Tony Garnett, Ken Loach, Michael Grigsby, have chosen to work principally in that medium.

Independent socialist documentary film-makers, however, show their work at political meetings, factories, etc., providing information to, and sometimes trying to persuade, small audiences. In contrast, the strength of commercial film-makers lies in their ability, however limited by TV, to draw audiences to the cinema by offering features that attract people. If, as is often argued, people absorb 'bourgeois values' from these films, it can also be argued that people

would absorb socialist values from socialist *feature* films, provided they attract people by engaging their imagination and entertaining them. Walter Benjamin, that guru of many socialist film-makers, wrote in *Illuminations* "... it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation ..."

The Free Cinema movement of 1956 was a breakthrough of a kind. Anderson, Reisz and Richardson made films that lacked the revolutionary fervour of many contemporary socialist film-makers, but succeeded in pulling in audiences. (The movement collapsed when the sponsors—Ford Motors—withdraw support.)

Woodfall Films, set up by John Osborne and Tony Richardson, followed in Free Cinema footsteps. True, most of the directors, forced to find work in the US, went on to bigger and worse things, but working class features were given a boost. In this context Reisz is worth considering: "What is very difficult is to find work by young film-makers who are prepared to accept the responsibility that their work has to hold an audience, and as a result of that most of that work ends up either not being shown or at film societies. That basic step, that basic acceptance, that your film has to interest an audience, is a challenge which many young men [sic] who make their first films simply refuse."

This is not to suggest that documentaries should not be made. Nor is it intended to knock the informative role they play on the left. But, as Ralph Bond, himself a documentary film-maker, has said: "Documentaries do not make money". When he said it, at least documentaries got widely exhibited in cinemas.

That does not happen these days, but TV performs that function to an extent. Generally speaking, though, the left-wing documentary film-maker alternates between camera and begging bowl, always hustling to finance the next film. Other ways of attracting a paying audience need to be explored if socialist film-making is to establish itself.

There is so much to be filmed, that it is surprising the left-wing film groups do not confer to allocate areas of interest. There are at least two documentaries each on squatting, housing, Grunwick, abortion, the Portuguese revolution. Differences undoubtedly exist in political emphasis, style and contents and topicality plays an important part. But if, as a number of film groups argue, the films are made to stimulate discussion—and thereby 'raise political consciousness', and provide information—one film on a subject is quite sufficient to achieve this—especially since most groups believe that people attending are aware enough to raise all the relevant issues. The very tight resources available to the left, in any case, get dissipated by duplication of subject matter. When this is denied, it is, again, often due to the purist political missionary position taken by some left-wing film-makers.

There are also virtually no cartoon/animation films made by the left, though these can be relatively cheap to produce. Perhaps all this indicates a certain lack of resourcefulness/imagination on the part of the film-makers themselves.

Despite the criticism (constructive, I hope), the fact remains that documentaries are at present the only

continued over page

The Celluloid Jungle

Television has been the most important factor in the decline of British cinema. It has taken over as the principal, and cheap, mass audio-visual medium. As audiences fell sharply, cinemas closed and prices rose disproportionately to spending capacity. The closure of cinemas also limited the number and variety of feature films, which the circuit mentality of the major distributors/exhibitors further restricted. And people had to go further afield to see a film.

All this seems to indicate that cinema is in its death throes. Not quite. Preliminary figures for January-July 1978 show a significant rise in admissions. Greater variety of programmes, boredom with telly farce, housing and unemployment problems all played their part. The Hollywood blockbusters (*Star Wars*, *Close Encounters* and *Saturday Night Fever*) certainly boosted the figures. What is of the greatest interest however, is that independent cinema has a small but growing share of the audience.

The commercial film industry is controlled by the British Film Producers Association (BFPA), the Kinematograph Renters Society (KRS) dominated by Hollywood majors, and the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association (CEA). Dealing with production, distribution and exhibition respectively, these bodies co-operate closely with

the US film industry.

Rank Organisation and EMI, who between them handle just over half the cinema admissions in Britain, and are major distributors as well, wield considerable influence in the triumvirate. After the British government got itself embroiled in a fiasco over British Lion, intended as the third major producer/distributor, and lost over £2 million in the process, that company was taken over by EMI who already control the ABC circuit. Laurie Marsh (Classic), Star Cinemas and Granada have mopped up most of the remaining exhibition venues.

Film production is usually financed by distributors who can guarantee exhibition outlets. Rank and EMI in effect decide what films get a wide showing. Their production policies are governed by the need to distribute the films in the US. For that reason, very few British productions will take the risk of shooting a film without North American participation. (Many films also get made abroad, so that potential employees lose out. That means a lot when you consider that at any time 80% of ACTT film-production members are unemployed.) Besides, the lesson of 1947/48 casts a long shadow over all thinking in the film industry.

In 1947, Harold Wilson, President of the Board of

Trade, had to deal with the consequences of a 75% duty imposed on imported films — an attempt to reduce the drain on the economy. The Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA) immediately retaliated by banning the export of films to Britain. To fill the gap, and with an eye on the main chance, Rank set up a production programme for 60 features. But within 8 months, the Labour government was to acknowledge defeat and negotiate the Anglo-American Film Agreement with MPEA. The ban was lifted, and Rank lost over £3.5 million on its domestic production programme.

In 1950, a voluntary levy on box-office receipts was organised. Known as the Eady levy, it was given statutory force in 1957. But it has not worked as intended. The films that needed the aid were precisely the ones that did not get it. The cash went to successful features like the Bond films, and the terms encouraged US majors to make 'British' films. In 1966, *Variety* estimated, they collected 80% of the £4 million handed out.

In 1970, the Labour government allocated a revolving loan fund of £5 million to the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC). The Heath administration slashed it to £1 million, and even that gets

paid out only if private capital is also found. Apart from that the British Film Institute (BFI) gets over £3 million a year from the Department of Education and Science, only a small part goes to finance film production.

In 1976, (Wilson's) Prime Minister's Working Committee published the Terry Report. The most memorable comment: "British film has too long been an economic and cultural colony of Hollywood". It suggested setting up a British Film Authority (BFA). Little attention was paid to the problems of independent film-making. It mentioned neither The Other Cinema (TOC) nor the 1971 ACTT pamphlet which proposed that all production and exhibition facilities, as well as television, be nationalised without compensation, and that the industry be run on workers' control lines — not under direct state or bureaucratic control.

The bogey of 1948 kept Harold Wilson playing the rabbit to Hollywood's snake. The Interim Action Committee (IAC), headed by him, published the first recommendations in January this year, taking its cue from the Terry Report. The BFA should replace a multitude of government and semi-government bodies. Financial assistance, in addition to the

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Film

material available to organise
some sort of circuit. They
could be combined with
popular foreign left-wing
films, or with live music
programmes, in order to
fulfill their primary role—that
of being seen. If things
improve, we may even have
indigenous socialist feature
films available for exhibition
in the future. But none of
this can be achieved, if at all,
without the cooperation of
the labour movement as a
whole, and the trade unions
in particular.

Paul Rotha, a founder
member of the documentary
movement, blames "the
unimaginative, uncultured
Labour Party" who cringe at
the word 'art', for the failure
to foster working class
culture. Indeed, the TUC has
only recently woken up to the
idea of a cultural front, and
have set up an arts sub-
committee, under the
Education Committee. The
sub-committee has compiled
a list of films that would be
of interest to trade unions.
This is being sent out to
unions and trades councils,

and some efforts are also
being made to find facilities
for exhibition. A TUC annual
award may also be set up for
"the trade union film of the
year". And a TUC/BBC series
of films about unions is
available. A far cry from the
wider cultural interests of
working people, but it is a
start.

ACTT, the union most
involved in film-production,
has been involved with the
Terry Report, and IAC—not
much of a recommendation,
considering their primary
concern is employment. But
there is hope. The union had
set up in 1950 a company
called ACT Film with the idea
of giving young people
experience and providing
employment. It made 15
feature films and a couple of
documentaries (Ralph Bond's
for AEU and TGWU, in the
1950's and 60's, and fell
asleep. It has now roused
itself and raised enough
money for a (feature) script,
but has none as yet for
production.

Of all the unions
approached, ACTT was the
only union to offer money to
Newsreel Collective to help
make their colour document-
ary on racism. It should be

possible for them, together
with Equity and NATTKE
(as the unions most closely
concerned) to campaign
among unions to offer finance
for films of interest to their
members. The National Union
of Students Conference was
addressed by the Newsreel
Collective in an effort to get
individual student union
subscriptions to underwrite
their documentary, and also
guarantee exhibition, but
without much success. This
method has potential,
however. In India, Shyam
Benegal, a film-maker outside
the Indian film oligarchy,
collected contributions (15p
upwards) from milk cooper-
ative workers in Gujarat, to
finance a film. When it was
made, the workers flocked to
see it, thus securing national
release because of the initial
popular support. A similar
method was used to finance
La Marseillaise in France.

There's no doubt that
trade unions, especially the
bigger ones, must take some
responsibility for the lack of
exhibition venues and finance.
If trade union activists, trades
councils and local community
groups could be persuaded to
raise finance and organise
venues for film and music

programmes—provided, of
course, socialist film-makers
deliver the goods (musicians
have certainly their capability
to attract audiences), an
alternative circuit could
gradually be established—
running circles, we hope,
around the monopolies that
control our entertainment
and stuff us with 'bourgeois
values'.

Independent American
film-makers have made good
use of the US campus circuit,
and the same could be done
here. Schools and workers'
clubs also have facilities
which could be used. Local
venues, in any case, have the
considerable advantage of
saving the locals the time and
expense of travelling else-
where. It may also be useful
to remember that the vast
majority of socialist film-
makers, like their potential
audience, are between the
ages of 18 and 35.

Interesting socialist films
(both documentaries and
features), organisation of
exhibition facilities, financial
support, all go together. The
problems involved cannot be
underestimated. The fact
remains that they have to be
tackled.

Naz

Back Pages

Left groups A short guide to Maoists in Britain

An encounter with the Workers'
Institute of Marxism-Leninism-
Mao Tse Tung Thought ("we
have undertaken the unprece-
dented task of building the first
stable base area in the imperialist
heartlands, in and around
Brixton... this has driven the
British bourgeoisie up the wall"),
truly the most lunatic of the
lunatic fringe of left politics in
Britain, can be an unsettling
experience. Tiny in numbers and
fanatical in zeal, carrying
dogmatism, rhetoric and sectar-
ianism to ever greater extremes,
it is many people's idea of a
typical Maoist group.

Not so. Terry Hott and John
Dawes report that of the
numerous Maoist groups, there
are some which, though small
and theoretically weak (unlike
their counterparts elsewhere in
the world), we might take more
seriously than we do.

As well as the mandatory
suffix M-L, all Maoists share an
admiration for China's revolution
and for Stalin (for all his faults).
They despise the Soviet Union
(the "more dangerous" of the
superpowers) and the pro-soviet
communist parties. Most believe
that the national liberation move-
ments of the third world are the
main force in the struggle against
imperialism and that the "second

world" countries can and should
be marshalled into some kind of
opposition to the two super-
powers.

Perhaps most characteristically,
they have adopted many of the
ideological precepts found in
Mao's writings—which gives their
ideas and attitudes a particular
moral and intellectual flavour.

The genesis of Maoist groups
in Britain, as elsewhere, falls
naturally into two phases. In the
early sixties there were those
dissidents with the CPGB for
whom the Sino-Soviet dispute
provided the necessary political
stimulus for a complete break
with revisionism. Compared to
the other European parties, the
CPGB had always been fairly
weak, both organisationally and
theoretically, and, since the late
thirties, had steadily drifted into
the tame and sterile social-demo-
cratic mould which has dogged
the British left for a hundred
years. When the *British Road to
Socialism* was adopted, many
people dropped out of the party,
and left wing politics, altogether.

Within the party a group
formed around the leadership of
Michael McCreery. This small and
weak faction left the CPGB in
1963 to form the first Marxist-
Leninist organisation in Britain.
the Committee to Defeat

Revisionism and For Communist
Unity (CDRCU).

The CDRCU published
Vanguard, a paper in many ways
superior to anything since pub-
lished by M-L groups. It had
branches in various parts of the
country, some of which formed
the basis of new organisations
when the committee broke up
following McCreery's death in
1965. The Workers Party of
Scotland and the Working
Peoples' Party of England are two
such descendants of the CDRCU.

The second phase began with
the upsurge of interest in China
aroused by the cultural revolu-
tion. This coincided with the birth
of the "new left" in the west,
many of whose recruits saw in
China a model of socialist society.
All the Maoist groups that
emerged in Britain at this time
were characterised by
immaturity, extreme sectarianism
and isolation from the workers.
In these ways they were quite
different from McCreery's group.

(There is a third Maoist
element; the M-L's among the
immigrant, especially Indian,
workers. These are significant and
very influential, but we cannot
deal with them here.)

Today there are perhaps 400
Maoists, organised into as many
as twenty groups—each of which
has a complicated history of
splits and realignments. There
would be little purpose served in
trying to account for all of these
and developments in the last two
years have anyway shuffled most
of the M-L's into the four
largest groups. These are split
between the pro-Albania, pro-
Gang of Four groups and the pro-
China, anti-Gang of Four groups,
who are in turn divided into

those who believe Britain is in
the stage of socialist revolution
and those, like the WPS, who
believe the stage is one of fighting
for "national independence" in the
face of the Soviet menace.

First the worst:

The Communist Party of
England (Marxist-Leninist),
(CPE M-L); a strange and slightly
sinister crowd of students and
middle class weirdos, who are
well known for reciting the most
extraordinarily long and complex
slogans when on demos (though
latterly not much in evidence),
was founded in 1972 out of the
English Communist Movement.
This in turn was a development
of the Internationalists—a group
formed by Canadian Hardial
Bains.

Shunned by other M-L's, and
suspected by some of being agents-
provocateurs, they publish
Workers Weekly, well known for
such eye catching headlines as,
"British monopoly capitalist class
denies working class the right to
uphold political beliefs of their
choice" (I kid you not).

They have sided with Albania
and now attack China as unthink-
ingly as they once supported it.
They are declining in numbers
and energy—a trend which is
unlikely to be reversed.

The Communist Party of
Britain (Marxist-Leninist),
(CPB M-L), perhaps the largest
and best known M-L group, was
founded in 1968 by Reg Birch,
a leading AUEW member, who
only broke with the CPGB after
it had backed Hugh Scanlon
rather than himself for the AUEW
presidency. The party is ultra-
criticalist (allowing no internal
criticism whatsoever) and publishes
The Worker—a dreary rag that
gives space to Reggie's often
incomprehensible ramblings.

The CPB M-L's membership
and influence have declined as its
autocratic chairman has led it on
a more and more reactionary
course (extreme hostility to the
Provos, support for immigration
controls "to defend the skills of
the British working class" and an
emphasis of trade union struggles
to the exclusion of all else). They
have also taken Albania to their
hearts and vigorously denounce
the Chinese as revisionists.

On the more positive side, are
the Revolutionary Communist
League of Britain, (RCLB) which
was recently formed after the
amalgamation of the Communist
Federation of Britain (CFB) and
the much smaller Communist
Unity Association (CUA). It
contains many of the more
talented and experienced British
M-Ls but is still hidebound by
the humourless, unimaginative
dogmatism and pompous hector-
ing style so common in small left
groups.



Stephen Clancy

Back Pages

continued from previous page

The RCLB publishes a paper, *Class Struggle*, which contains worthy and rather bland political reports, and a theoretical journal, *Revolution*. They also have a bookshop, *New Era Books*, in London.

The RCLB is "struggling for unity" with the altogether more down to earth **Communist Workers Movement (CWM)**, which was formed 18 months ago by a disenchanted faction of the decaying CPB M-L. The CWM is something of a breath of fresh air in the Maoist camp, being fairly undogmatic and non sectarian. Their paper, *New Age*, is actually written in English, not Chinese, and makes an attempt at having a humorous and readable style.

They are more involved in trade union, anti fascist and anti racist work than the other M-L's. They have a bookshop in Liverpool, *October Books* (which stocks *The Leveller*), and have branches in various parts of the country. They are also responsible for the only serious attempt so far by an M-L group to take issue with the politics of the SWP in their book *Why Paul Foot Should be a Socialist*.

Both the RCLB and the CWM support the broad outlines of current Chinese policy and together represent the more serious side of Maoism in Britain. Should they unite, which is possible, then we would have a viable M-L outfit on the left which might begin to have some impact. In a way they are reminiscent of the original group led by McCreery, and are likely to remain when many of the "cultural revolution" groups have mercifully passed into oblivion.

German Papers...

The pilot issue of a projected daily left wing newspaper for West Germany appeared at the end of September. Called *Die Tageszeitung (The Daily Paper)* the title is a lowest common denominator—no-one came up with anything more challenging. Given the chronic sectarianism of the German left, it's a miracle that even the pilot issue appeared. As it is, *Die Tageszeitung* has appeared just after the first issue of *Die Neue (The New One)*, an equally inspired title for another, separate, attempt to launch a left daily.

The difference between the two, roughly, is that *Die Neue* has been produced by people who are looking for the creation of a

new Socialist Party, including former student leader Rudi Dutschke, and *Die Tageszeitung* by people whose political experience centres on 'libertarian' activities such as community groups and the movement against nuclear power. *Die Tageszeitung* has a long way to go before it matches the urgency and flair of France's *Liberation*, the closest model, but then, the pilot issue of *The Leveller* didn't look too brilliant either.

BLACK PHOENIX

Black Phoenix 60p. Just out. Continues the first issue's focus on various aspects of cultural imperialism: among other things, children's books, art and racism, and a highly indignant editorial attacking Thatcher's racism. . . . A promising mag on a somewhat neglected, but very important subject. Subscriptions: £3 (U.K.) for 4 issues, from: BCM, BLACK PHOENIX, London WC1V 6XX. Ukubamba Amadolo, Bettie du Toit, £1.60 pbk, £6 cloth. Surveys the struggles of South African textile workers, from the 1930's, before the draconian legal apparatus was fully set up, through to the present. Shows the roles white trade unions and British capital played in establishing apartheid, and continuing to sustain it. From Onyx Press, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1. A Zimbabwe Student Centre has opened in London. It has a library and 15 bedrooms for temporary accommodation. The organisers hope to make it a useful, non-partisan rallying point for Zimbabweans in this country. They would appreciate relevant mags and books for their library. Send to Mission House, Lodore Street, Poplar, London E14.

"OUR STRATEGY is to use the moderate elements, to work behind them for as long as necessary, but to effectively control them".

So wrote NF chairperson John Tyndall in the early 1960s in a private letter — part of his blueprint for power — to a group of dedicated nazis in America. But it is a quote both Tyndall and the Front are quick to deny, part of their new image as a "respectable political party".

Twice this summer that mask has slipped in Yorkshire to reveal the real NF identity. In July Granada's 'World In Action' programme featured an account from a special branch infiltrator of the Leeds NF branch. He recounted a devastating catalogue of violence and muggings carried out by NF members in the city, giving dates and places. Last month the Anti-Nazi League branch in Sheffield produced a pamphlet describing how the local NF were planning a series of "hits" on prominent socialists, trade unionists and anti-racists in the city.

The story came from Mark Bonham, an ANL member who spent four months inside the NF branch, gaining the confidence of several officers in the party.

He discovered: A "Hit List" of leading left wingers had been compiled, and the NF planned to attack and "paint" the houses of Labour MPs Martin Flannery and Joan Maynard, both outspoken anti-racists.

Discussions took place on arranging equipment to insert subliminal adverts in ordinary training films, repeating the words for example "nigger scum, nigger scum".

Some NF members were also TU officials, keeping their

membership secret, and the branch secretary, John Judge, who was subsequently forced to resign, kept close friends with many covert nazis, members of the paramilitary Column 88 group and the British National Party.

His most disturbing claim was to describe an incident when four Front members set out to try and cut the brake pipes of MP Flannery's car — albeit without success. He says there is no doubt that NF members were responsible for daubing slogans on the MP's house in July. Judge has filed a case with the local police saying four or five men broke into his house, shot him in the finger, and stole the documents which have subsequently come to light.

Tim Paul

DRUGS

It was richly ironic that the Customs should stage a much-publicised drug raid to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the outlawing of cannabis. You'll remember the story: brave officer throwing himself on the wing of a light aircraft to stop it taking off again; uncritical acceptance of police estimates at a £250,000 value for 200 kilos—a wholesale price of £500 a weight—dire warnings from the authorities that it could lead on to harder things.

An appropriate time indeed for the new Legalise Cannabis Campaign to issue their pamphlet, *The Cannabis Cover Up*. A good little handbook, it surveys the pervading ignorance of the original legislators—working to a brief from the Second Opium Conference of 1924 in which the

powerful Egyptian delegation assured the meeting that "the illicit use of hashish is the principle cause of most of the cases of insanity occurring in Egypt"—and a brief review of current research into the subject. It looks at the effects of control and ends by arguing the case against prohibition.

It's the first substantial publication since the Campaign was set up six months ago and it makes a good start to providing the information back-up necessary for a reform campaign. Reformist of course, but dear to all our hearts. I'll just roll another joint before I get on to the next item.

The Cannabis Cover Up. 65p from the Campaign at: 52 Old Bond St., London W1. Or from all PDC outlets.

Nice weekends in Laurieston Hall. A long weekend of Release Dance and Contact Improvisation (23-28 November). Cost: £23. Open to 15 people. Carrying on informally to 30th if people wish at £3.25 a day. Women's Body Sense Weekend (8-10 December). 12-15 women in two concurrent groups. For further information on these and future courses send sase to Winter Courses, Laurieston Hall, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire.

Artery, the cultural journal close to the CP, has taken the initiative in calling for Art Against the Nazis. They want to, with the help of the Anti-Nazi League, establish a national register of artists who would be willing to work nationally and locally with anti-nazi organisations. Anyone interested in joining should write to Jeff Sawtell, Anti-Nazi League, PO Box 151, London WC2.

Campaign Against the Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) are holding a conference on November 11. It will be at Conway Hall from 10-6 on Occupation, Criminal Trespass and the Use of the Law. Credentials from CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington Street, London WC2.

Worker Writers and Community Publishers have published an anthology of short stories, cartoons and poetry from local writers workshops. Really good value at £1. In your local left and alternative bookshops.

REVIEW

Book: *Pedagogy in Process*. The Letters To Guinea-Bissau by Paulo Freire. Writers and Readers Co-operative (Hardback) £5.95.

I put down this book in disappointment and frustration. I'd

Back Pages

begun it with the excitement of the days when Ivan Illich and Freire seemed set to revolutionise both educational practice and community action. Marxist analysis, libertarian militancy and Christian love meeting at the corner of the field where the peasant scratched newly gained letters in the dust: S-L-U-M, E-X-P-L-O-I-T-A-T-I-O-N. Janet and John dying of hunger; Jane being tortured to reveal the whereabouts of Dick.

But the earlier books are tough going. Jonathan Kozol's foreword to this new one promises a warmer, more revealing Freire. We have a discussion of the efforts towards adult literacy already made in Guinea-Bissau, before Freire and the World Council of Churches team were invited to help. Then the letters to the Guinean Commissioner of Education and to the project team — letters full of the rich themes and ideas Freire has put forward. There must be work with and not for the people. All ideas and models must be critically tested against the reality of the country. The learners are also co-teachers, and the teachers co-learners.

Yet this is an unsatisfactory glimpse of two years work. The letters are not a "dialogue". Only Freire's side of the correspondence is published. And he is often repetitive, longwinded and fairly pompous. Despite his requests for criticism, he seems in grave danger of doing what he detests: "banking" his concepts of education into the minds of his readers.

Writers and Readers Co-op have a fine record in publishing Freire. But putting these kinds of notes and letters into hardcovers is to turn him into the very "expert" and "authority" he deplores. Incidentally, this little book is probably more expensive for including some photos of Guinea-Bissau. I wish I could say they were revealing, striking, or even mildly informative.

Alan Stanton

Ireland

The International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland will hold its first hearing on November 8-11. For further details write to International Tribunal, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

The Midlands conference on Britain's involvement in Ireland, set for November 11th, will be an attempt to break the media silence on Ireland with panels of speakers on the history of Ireland from the partition to the present 'troubles', and on the current situation in the North. The

conference will be held at Friends Meeting House, Bull Street, Birmingham City Centre. Delegates fee and admission for non-delegates will be 50p (Minimum).

There will be a pre-conference fundraising social on Friday, October 27 at the Emerald Pub, Small Heath, Birmingham.

Recently, a proposal was made within the United Troops Out Movement that radical community and area based papers in Britain could play a greater part in telling people about events in Northern Ireland by 'twinning' their local regiment.

For instance, York Free Press could print the activities of the Yorkshire Regiments supplied by 'twinning' papers in the north. So far Brighton Voice and Leeds Other Paper have informally agreed to take part. Information already compiled on the activities of the British Army should be sent to People's News Service, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Finally there is a UTOM Midlands film tour of Home Soldier Home. Leicester Poly Students Union — 12.30, Leicester University — 7.30 (October 20); Aston University Students Union Council Chamber, Gosta Green, Birmingham — 7.30 (October 23), Redditch Labour Club, Redditch — 7.45 (October 24). Dates are being set for showings in Worcester, Wolverhampton, Bromsgrove and Kidderminster. Ring 021-643 9209 for details.



"... tulips . . . roses . . . buttercups . . . no I'm not going to say pansies, woops!" So Larry Grayson is back, polluting television with his very own 'Generation Game' (BBC1, Saturdays).

Grayson, who took over the show from the unbelievably successful Bruce Forsyth, says the new 'Generation Game' is supposed to be "much more relaxed, to suit my personality". In reality, he now fronts a succession of lifeless rituals, overlaid with his own vicious and inaccurate caricatures of gay men.

Larry, of course, would be horrified if he thought people really believed he was homosexual. After all, he wouldn't last long as a peak viewing time family entertainer. So why his pretence that he isn't homosexual should lead him to a career of pretence that he is must even baffle his psychiatrist.

But Grayson is not alone in his pretence. His millions of viewers are themselves pretending they are being entertained by their idea of a homosexual man. Doubtless if you asked them they would say the expression "shut that door" has some esoteric meaning that, well, just makes you want to laugh. Similarly, there must be some arcane humour in walking about a studio floor with your wrists at shoulder-height.

A good bit of "is he or isn't he?" is thought harmless enough. But the idea of squatting round the TV of a Saturday with a man who's into other men's pricks would be deeply offensive to the average viewer. So they pretend they are laughing at his 'act' and keep till another time their very special feelings for gay people.

If you would like to express your opinion of Larry Grayson's 'Generation Game' write to: Ian Trethowan, Director-General, BBC, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA.

The National Abortion Campaign has hit a heavy financial crisis—it's £2,000 in debt, and the full-time hasn't been paid since July. Whether the campaign can keep going past Christmas depends very much on the Parliamentary situation—if there is a restrictive Bill to act as a national focus NAC hopes it will be able to bounce back into the fight, but a broke campaign just isn't equipped to do all the organisation and publicity needed to counter the anti-abortionists, both in and out of Parliament.

The Trade Union Conference on Abortion, organised by NAC, is getting a lot of support and interest, despite the difficulties in funding it. If your TU, either at branch level or nationally, hasn't sponsored the conference, get a resolution through now. It's on November 25 at Caxton Hall.

NAC is desperate for donations, and needs them now. There are local groups, campaigning for out patient abortion facilities all over the country, but small groups can't finance national action out of their own pockets. The address for donations and information on the Trade Union Conference is 374 Grays Inn Rd, WC1. Tel: 01-278 0153.

And on Saturday 28th October there's a benefit in aid of NAC at Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Road (just near Waterloo Stn). It starts at 8.00 and it's women only. Live band and disco etc. *Leveller London* gig guide says it's the place to be for all right on sisters.

Rose Shapiro

THE LEFT's approach to nuclear energy is generally uncritical support for the anti-nuke movement, and for the exploitation of alternative energy sources, coupled sometimes with the labour movement's nostalgic adherence to the coal industry. JIM QUIGLEY rejects this. Here he attacks anti-nuclear and pro-alternative technology, pro-coal positions, on both political and environmental grounds. He starts by examining four arguments used by the anti-nuke movement: that nuclear power leads to nuclear proliferation, that it requires a police state, that it requires objectionably centralised control, and that the energy gap doesn't really exist.

TILTING AT WINDMILLS

Proliferation

Proliferation is the spread of nuclear weaponry rather than power stations. If developing nations think nuclear power can help them meet their very real needs, western capitalists can't stop them and shouldn't try. The development of nuclear power under international control is a better way of ensuring its peaceful use than is forcing countries to duplicate its expensive development.

New technology will make any blocking moves by the rich futile anyway. Laser separation, for instance, has many non-nuclear applications in metallurgy, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and so on, and will also enrich uranium at 1/100th the cost of the best modern systems.

Any attempt to restrict this to the rich would rightly be seen as seeking to maintain world dominance by hoarding technology.

Demand for energy is massive and will I hope increase as living standards rise. The more capacity falls behind justifiable expectation, the greater the danger of squabbles over depleted fossil fuel reserves. The Friends of the Earth view that nuclear energy increases the chances of global war is myopic—the lack of energy is much more of a threat to peace.

The Police State

Anti-nuke campaigners say the presence of fissile material necessitates a police state to ensure its security.

Before jumping on a bandwagon it's best to check who's driving. It's funny in a sick sort of way to hear the left mumble of the dangers of "terrorism". The real terrorists have bombs, tanks, planes and so on. The threat of "terrorists" (that's us) stealing the stuff, shielding and all, and taking it to our multi-million pound processing plant to make bombs, exaggerates our capabilities and insults our intelligence. The arsenic and mercury used in agricultural chemicals would make very effective terror weapons, but ICI don't get or want armed guards for fungicides. For the truly insane, breeding botulism in the garden is easier and more effective than DIY H-bombs.

Police violence in Germany and France is no worse against anti-nuclear protest than it is against any potentially effective movement. It is the spectre of a mass movement questioning the state that bothers them, not a demonic affection

for nuclear power. The police powers in the West have been tightening since the mid 60s, for reasons unrelated to nuclear development. Nuclear energy may be presented as an excuse, but it is not a reason.

Over-centralisation

The idea that because nuclear industry is large scale it is necessarily less democratic than the alternatives is drivel. Electricity is on a grid; power being shunted from where there is surplus to where there is need.

If anything the alternative grid—with windmills and solar collectors—is more authoritarian: as it struggles to meet needs with inadequate resources, it has less scope for real choices. Large institutions can be subject to democratic control, but they need the flexibility given by surplus to make this meaningful.

A democracy where every decision is forced by necessity is boring.

No energy gap

The idea that there's no energy gap is an obscenity in the world as it is. Most people don't have electricity at all, and most of the rest don't have enough.

I do not accept that socialism be based on frugality, unless it's unavoidable. If so, social change towards a real democracy is much more difficult, since the more labour intensive the economy and the more limited the social and economic choices, the less time people have to spare making decisions whose form is largely determined by necessity. Decisions restricting energy will limit the political options open to us.

The dangers

THE ENVIRONMENTAL dangers of nuclear power are mainly mythological. Nuclear energy has one of the safest records, coal one of the worst. Hydro has worst of all due to occasional dambursts.

In fact there are no safe options, the real problems being to meet out energy needs at minimum risk. Criticism of nukes centres on mining, processing, reactor safety and waste disposal.

Mining for uranium is mainly open cast and mechanised. Compared with coal the quantities mined are small. The removal of sources of atmospheric radon might be said to "clean up" the environment.

Processing is a new technology which has had few accidents, considering the high standards it sets itself. We can expect it in future to be safer, cheaper and allow easier separation of many useful isotopes. There has been no major accident yet, but it one did occur mopping up is not impossible.

Reactor design has become an exercise in fail safe engineering. The horrors of meltdowns and explosions are relatively easily avoided. Cracks, leaks and mistakes will happen but it's not the end of the world, just problems to be solved.



The problem of high level of radioactive waste disposal is not without precedent.

About 2 billion years ago a natural reactor occurred at Oklo, now in Gabon. When the uranium oxide formed the rock the fissile isotope U²³⁵ was above the level needed for a nuclear chain reaction to occur in the presence of water. (Enrichment returns uranium to this useful state.) In total this reactor produced 15,000 MW years, equivalent to ten years' operation of a large power station. French geologists looking at the materials left *in situ* found no significant movement of reaction products. If high level wastes don't move in those conditions, it's irrational to fear them escaping vitrification, steel cladding, and being carefully buried ½km deep.

The alternatives

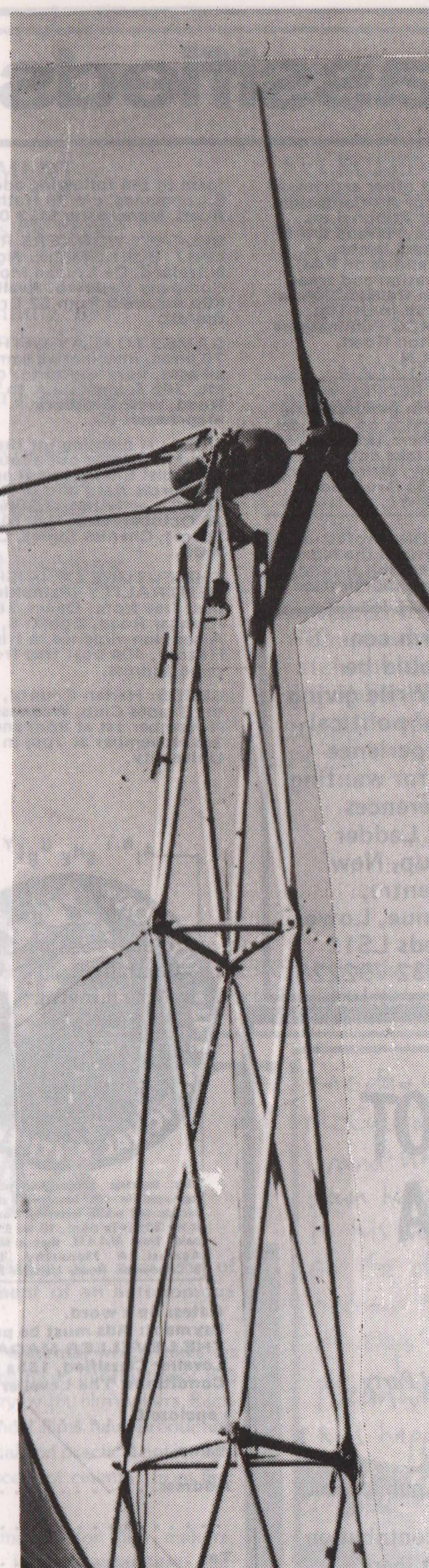
NON-NUCLEAR systems, like fossil fuels, solar, wind, wave, geothermal and satellite solar generators are no realistic alternative. FOSSIL FUELS will continue to play the major role in any feasible system well into the next century. But coal is one of the most dangerous fuels around. Not just in the way pits kill people, or the "environmental impact" of open cast and deep mining. More serious than disturbing fox hunters in the picturesque countryside like in the Vale of Belvoir, is the continual pollution of coal burning. The American Academy of Science estimates the yearly effects of sulphur dioxide alone from one large power station as 25 deaths, 60,000 respiratory disorders and about £8m in property damage. Since it produces as much nitrogen oxides and carcinogenic benzpyrenes as 200,000 cars, the case against coal doesn't depend on sci-fi imagination.

It is to be hoped fluidised bed combustion has solve or ameliorate these hazards, because we're stuck with coal for a long time. The CO₂ from coal is a long term problem too, so where possible it would be better to replace it with a safer fuel. Arthur Scargill shouldn't sweat about job prospects, since we can all use the coal available to form the base of a new chemicals industry. OIL is not so much running out as becoming harder to get. Before the end of the century it will not meet the increasing need for energy. This is what's meant by the energy crisis.

Nothing is irreplaceable but in many uses oil substitution will involve a lot of extra effort. Since less than a third of the oil in a rock is extracted by present means we can expect smaller but steady supply as we learn how to get at the rest.

Oil shales and tar deposits are becoming available too, so oil is not going to disappear, but it can no longer support our energy needs as it has for the last 50 years. As a useful raw material it has a necessary part to play for a long time. NATURAL GAS is cheap, easy to use and safe. When it runs out early in the next century coal and organically derived substitutes can use the same infrastructure.

No usable SOLAR ELECTRIC system



exists or is foreseeable at present. If one turns up, far out; we'll use it.

But to suggest basing the left's energy idea on such phantasms is worse than silly. As for its use in space and water heating — great if you can afford to install it. Insulation is a good idea though. WINDMILLS are cheap and unreliable. Building and maintaining pylons and towers is dangerous. The production of the metals to make them is expensive. In windy areas they can cover their costs, but they need back-up from fossil fueled or energy storage schemes.

Environmental objections to large herds of windmills stretching for miles along erstwhile unspoiled coast would

arise. Without nuclear energy we'd need every erg, but I can't imagine many Friends of the Earth people getting jobs fixing (and falling off) the death traps they're so keen to see erected. In short they don't make sense economically or in any other way.

WAVE POWER is another delusion. A scale model in a lab tank is a long way from the North Atlantic. The materials technology to withstand this environment doesn't yet exist. Ferro-concrete sea walls need regular maintenance and oil rigs designed to minimise wave action are swept off their anchors. If wave generators are deployed servicing them is as dangerous a job as I can imagine, comparable with divers in the North Sea today, but on a larger scale. Other problems, like the danger to shipping and oil rigs from drifting generators dislodged by storms or seaweed choked beaches are also problems not much talked about.

Wind, wave and tidal energies all need large scale storage schemes.

Superconducting Torus and large scale heat reservoir systems aren't yet practical. The only workable system now operating is pumping water uphill to store energy and letting it run down again to use it. On the east side of Loch Lomond just such a scheme has run into a local conservationist group, which says that working class people passing through will bring down property values. Other hydro schemes have run into similar "build it elsewhere" opposition.

GEOTHERMAL ENERGY is applicable to many heating jobs and already produces electricity in Italy and Iceland.

Research in the USA may soon produce usable technology of wider application, but it's not simple. Ground water is often highly corrosive; high pressure and temperature water coming up a 3 to 5 km pipe is not a cheap technology.

But where vulcanism and associated earthquakes make nuclear power more risky this idea may be applicable. THE GENERATION OF POWER IN SPACE and beaming it down to earth, is potentially the cheapest, easiest, cleanest, most reliable of all the systems suggested. As a by-product manufacturing could be shifted right out of the biosphere and virtually infinite resources made available to the human race. But until it happens we would be irresponsible to suggest reliance on such a scheme, whatever its benefits.

The distrust of technology implicit in the Friends of the Earth position and the idealisation of a grotty subsistence economy bears little relation to socialism of any flavour, or for that matter, reality.

The low technology, low energy environmental dream would in reality condemn the majority of folk on the planet to a continuing nightmare without any real hope of improvement. Technology is our human capacity to make reality meet our needs, to free ourselves from want, and to let us do as we wish, not just what we have to.

I would suggest that beyond the continuing and basic struggle for industrial safety, the anti-nuclear movement has no relevance to socialism.

Classifieds

DIRECTORY OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES lists many such groups, £1.50 each (cash with order, please) from The Teachers (MHI), 18 Garth Road, Bangor, N.Wales.

BADGE DISTRIBUTORS: political, feminist, gay, ecological, music. We also make badges for political/community groups. Write to: York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate, York.

COPS GAZETTE names MPs, police officers and lawyers who aid and abet crime. Please send s.a.e. and donation for your copy to its editor, J. Bardwal, 35 Ascot Road, Luton, Beds. (Committee for Prevention of Police State parliamentary candidate, Luton East).

HANDS OFF IRELAND: No. 5 out now. Articles include: '1968-78' A. Greene, 'Whose Tribunal?' Kevin Colfer, 'British Terror'

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TWO ENGLISH PEOPLE with child, renting farm in mountains of Catalonia working on political ecology, seek others, preferably with children to take equal part, living communally. Write to Box A, The Leveller, 155a Drummond Street, London NW1.

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but short term contracts would be considered. Write giving full details of political and work experience and reasons for wanting the job. References helpful. Red Ladder Theatre Group, New Blackpool Centre, Cobden Avenue, Lower Wortley, Leeds LS12 5PB. Tel: 0532 792228.

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SERA: A meeting for those interested in finding out about SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Ass.) and in reviewing SERA's activities: 7.30pm. Wed 25 October. Drill Hall (Action Space), Chenies Street, London WC1.

THE FUTURE OF IRISH NEUTRALITY (Pamphlet): 24p post free from: Dawn, 168 Rathgar Road, Dublin 6, Ireland. Also: Non-violence in Irish History, 40p post free from the same address.

LEEDS: Harlan County, USA at the Trades Club, Wednesday, November 1st at 8pm and Friday 3rd November at 7pm in the University.

THE COMMUNISTWORKERS MOVEMENT is a fairly new Marxist-Leninist organisation. For "New Age", its monthly paper (20p, p&p), "Why Paul Foot Should Be A Socialist" (book on the politics of the SWP, soon in its second edition — £1.45, p&p), and further information, write to: CWM, c/o October Books, 4b Temple Court (off Matthew St), Liverpool 2.

SUMA—A co-operative wholefood warehouse in Leeds is looking for new members. We rotate our jobs but are primarily looking for someone with book-keeping skills. For further details contact: Jim Eastwood, SUMA, 46 The Calls, Leeds 2. Phone: 0532 42560.



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From

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The magazine and the Directory within it will be appearing on a regular basis, approximately three times a year, so subscribers will be able to keep up to date on new production. Film makers should apply to the editors for Directory entry forms.

MAGAZINE

One day in 1976 a young sculptor, Jamie McCullough, was crossing a bridge over the Grand Union Canal in Farringdon. Looking down he saw a long, narrow strip of wasteland. In his mind's eye he began to reshape it... for the dream to come to life, it needed to become the local people's creation, to build, develop, maintain and manage.

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Copies are available at 75p including postage:- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 98 Portland Place, LONDON W1N 4ET. Tel: 01-636 5313. Trade distribution:- Publications Distribution Co-Operative, 27 Clerkenwell Close, LONDON EC1R 0AT. Tel: 01-251 4976.