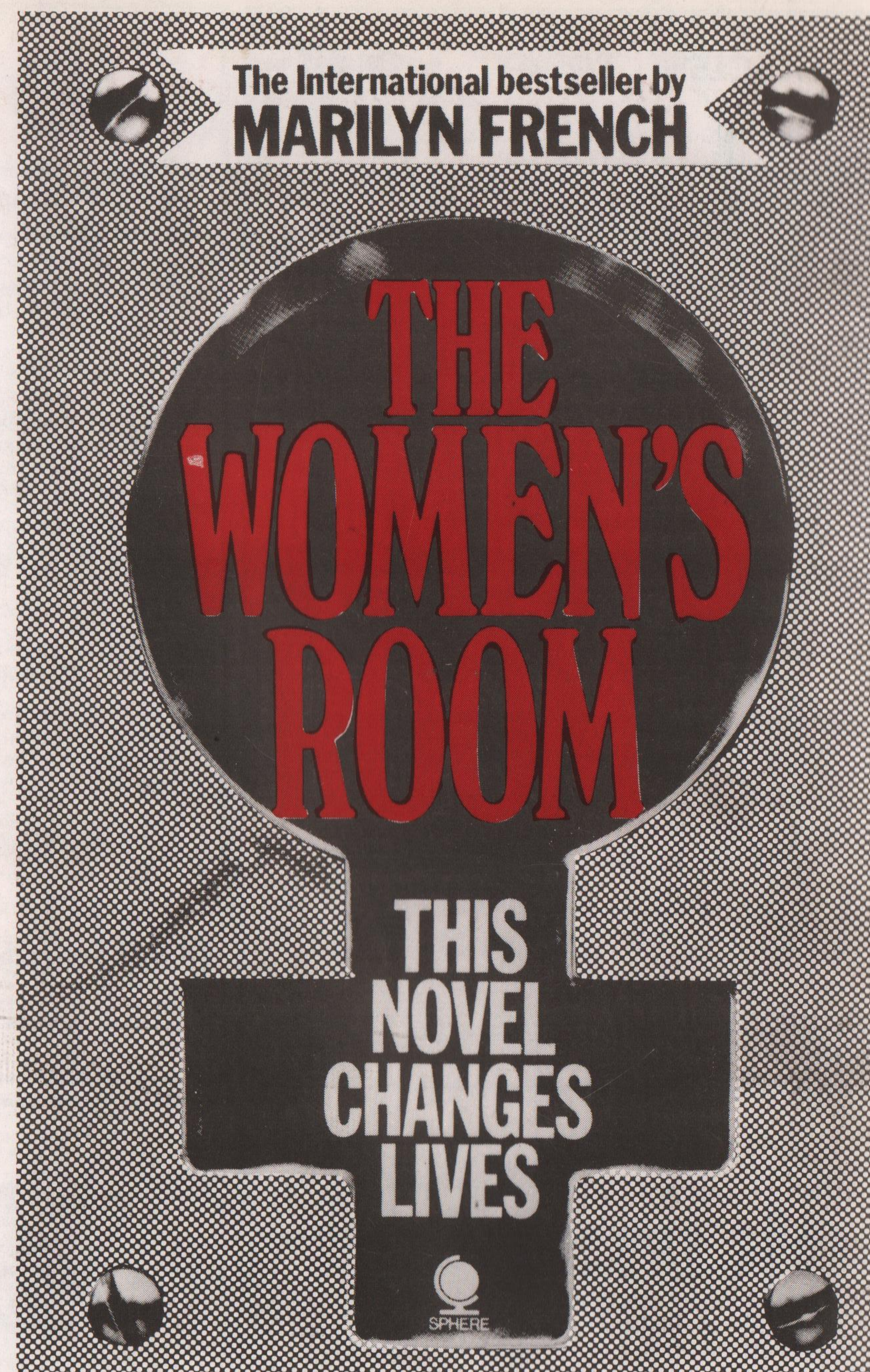


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**No 27
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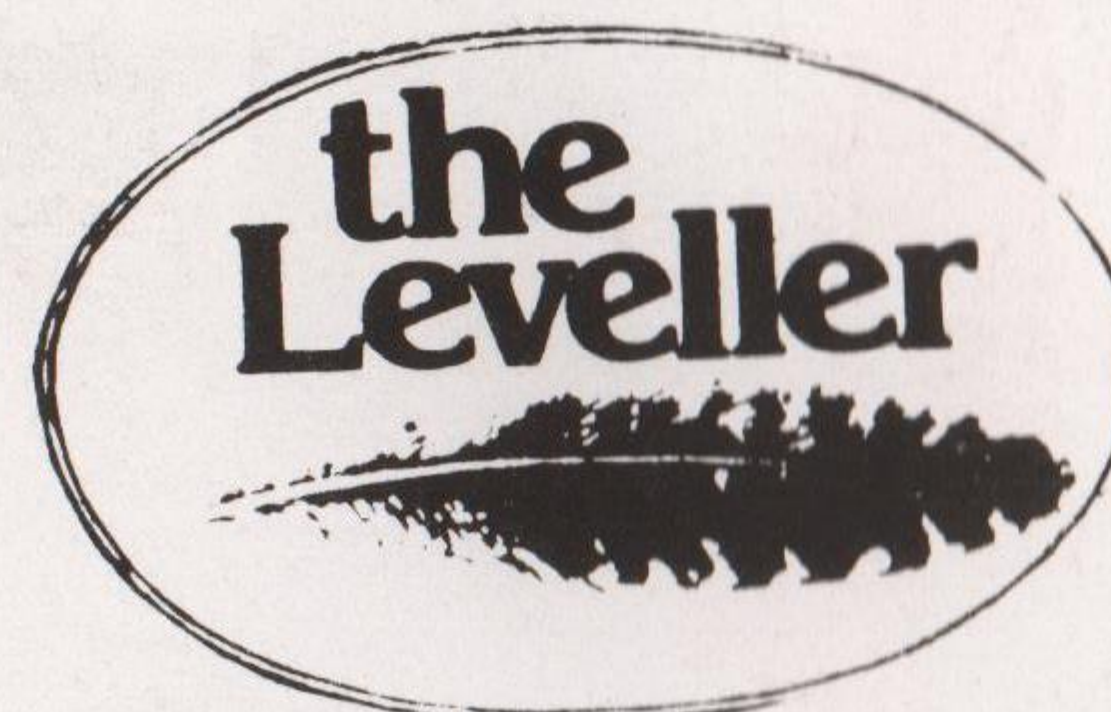
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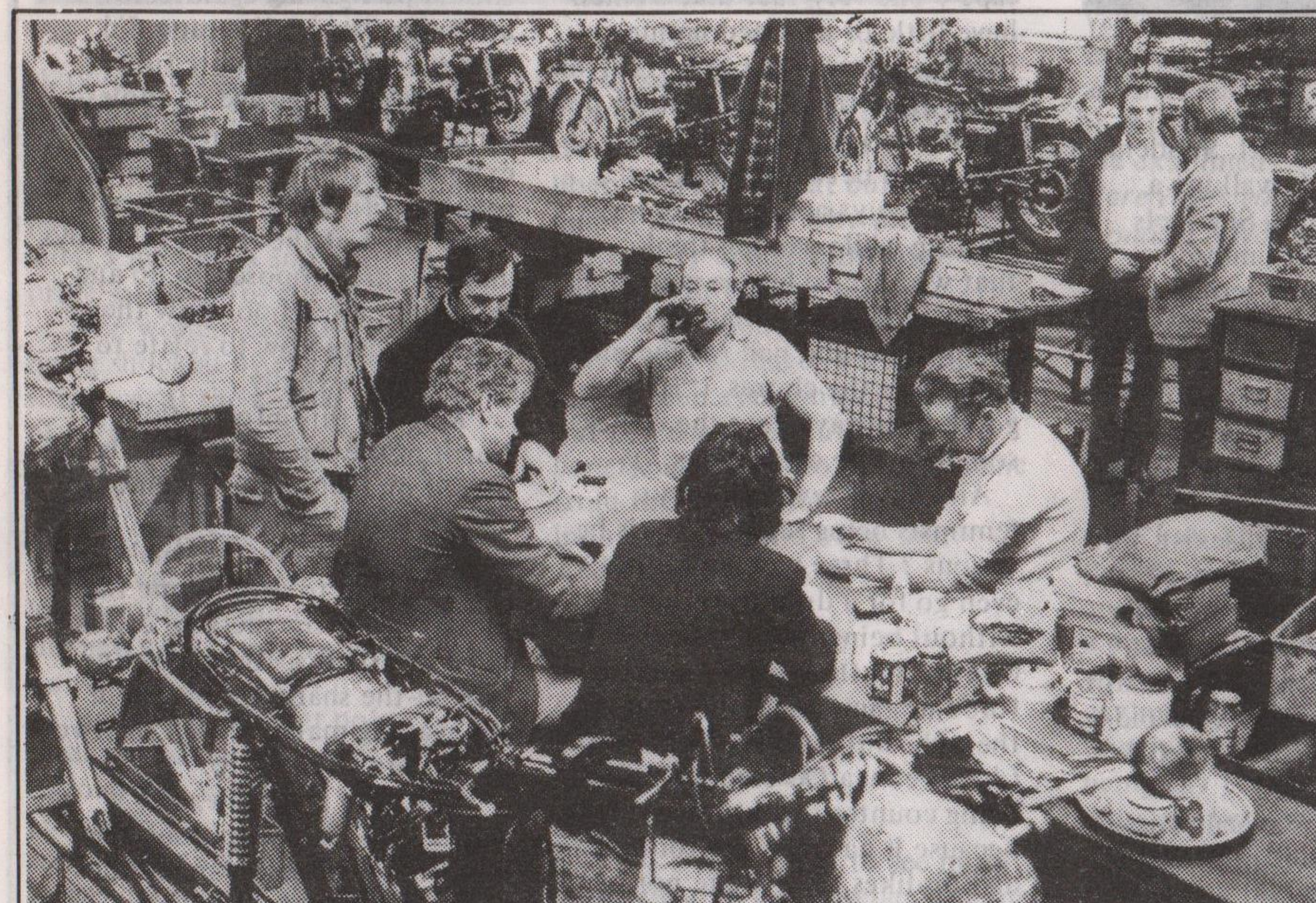


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JUNE 1979

INSIDE:



Workers' Control

Do it yourself socialism? Leveller writers report on the various attempts at self management and co-operative working, the ideas behind the movement, government 'aid', the problems and the promises. Also a short guide to further reading and organisations.



Southall

We look at the background to the events at Southall and consider some of the consequences.

We're sorry if you had difficulty finding a copy of the last issue. Our distributors, PDC, suffered a fire on their premises. We lost quite a lot of mags and the distribution run went out late. But it should be sorted out now, and since you're reading this, why worry?

Feel you can face another Leveller AGM? We've fixed it for Saturday, 7 July. All the cut and thrust of debate and the thrill of democracy. This meeting decides the mag's policy for the year and elects the working committee. Everyone's welcome, and supporting subscribers can vote. If you want to circulate papers or ideas for discussion please send them a month in advance. The great event will be in the same place as last year: the Fred Tallant Hall, Drummond Street, London NW1, next door to our old offices and close to Euston. Doors open 20.30am.

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Letters

All men are sexist

TO DAVE BRADNEY and others who think like him.

Line up all you men 'who ain't normal'. We'd be interested to meet you: We've been alive on this earth for a good fifty years between us, and we've never met a man, normal or abnormal (or non-normal or ...) who isn't sexist.

Let's get this straight, in a patriarchal capitalist society we fail to see how any man *could* be nonsexist, unless he spent his first fifteen years brought up in a rabbit warren!

The values of a sexist society are structured into us from the moment we are born and define how we see ourselves and each other. Perhaps it is because John Bradborok and Dave Bradney (*The Leveller* 26) are unable/unwilling to recognise this fact, that they have missed the point of Sheila Jeffrey's article.

What Sheila Jeffreys is arguing is that women are controlled and oppressed by the threat and the reality of male violence. And that men *benefit* from this fact because their supremacy is not challenged but actively perpetuated.

Although we would argue that in the long term the perpetuation of a patriarchal capitalist society is not in the benefits of any of us (but keeps us divided against each other), in the short term it obviously does benefit sectors of our society, ie men, the ruling class (both men and women).

It seems ridiculous to argue otherwise! Middle class people inevitably *benefit* from their class in that they have more access to education, wealth, power, self-esteem etc than the working class. And they have this precisely because the working class do not. Now they may not *wish* to have these advantages, they may struggle against them, but nonetheless they *have* got them, and continue to benefit from them because of the way in which society is structured.

In the same way it is vital to see that men *benefit* from having more power, self-esteem, economic independence and personal 'freedom' than women. So the less a woman has, the more any man benefits, whether he wants to or not.

Deciding to be anti-sexist, however much Dave Bradney might like it, is *not* in itself going to change these structures or make a man immune from these structures and the violence which enforces them:

A woman is walking down a dark street late at night. Suddenly she realises a man is walking a few years behind her. She feels frightened. It doesn't matter whether (in the short term) he's gay, anti-sexist, or an NF thug she is going to be frightened of him as if he was a potential rapist. She cannot afford to hesitate, to distinguish; she must be ready for the worst.

A man is being anti-sexist. But the 'respect' a woman shows him is not so much a response to his individual personality - or whatever - as the reaction she has learnt to give to men, in order to avoid male violence and abuse (verbal or physical).

Dave Bradney may call this 'a guilt-ridden, mechanical way of looking at the world'. But guilt is fucking irrelevant! What makes him feel guilty, oppresses us. It's not a question of blame or guilt, but of recognising the structures around us, and our part in their perpetuation.

If Dave started to face them and fight against them, instead of blaming us for making him feel guilty, we might all progress a little faster in the struggle against sexism.

Jenny Vaughan
Tessa Weare
London WC1

No place for nice guys

HOW VERY revealing it was to read the replies to Sheila Jeffreys' statement that "Every man benefits from the action of every rapist". What our two 'non-sexist brothers' clearly show is their reluctance to admit, and thereby take responsibility for, their own part in the systematic and ruthless exploitation of women - all women - which has existed throughout recorded history for the greater glory and benefit of man.

OK, so they didn't ask to be born male, I didn't ask to be born female either, but that hasn't prevented me from being treated as continuously sub-human since I first drew breath.

Dave Bradney, who feels 'oppressed' by the masculine stereotype, would do well to reflect on the quote from Robin Morgan in Andy Chevallier's article in the previous issue. The oppressor can always choose not to oppress. Women have no power, so how can we 'choose' anything? We can: not go out at all (we get bored and frustrated), go out with other women (we get constantly harassed by men), go out alone (how many of us dare that one?).

or go out with a man - our price for that one is that *he* can rape us whenever he feels like it, with total impunity.

Of course men benefit from rape! The very fact that women have little or no freedom means that men have more. And far from John Bradbrook's contention that rapists' action "poisons the relationship between the sexes", the nice guys actually gain most - because while women think that we have to have a man at all costs, then we will fight each other tooth and nail for the ones who share the chores. ("He's so good, he always does the dishes, sometimes he even cooks.")

And as for revolutionary feminists being separatists - is he serious? Three women cannot even go for a drink together without being thought of as three women 'on their own' - and therefore fair game to all the men in the pub. But if he sees separatism (does he mean lesbianism?) as being counter-revolutionary, it is because it has no place for him and his likes. Well we're not just going to sit back and believe every gold word dropping from your lips about how you're different. Many of us still remember being conned by the same line from the Hippies. Actions speak very much louder than words.

Carole Ruthchild
London

Fighting back together

THE ARTICLE on rape in *The Leveller* 25 by Sheila Jeffreys contains some excellent comments and some deeply mystifying ones. I think it is only honest to admit that "All men are potential rapists" as Sheila does. Rape is only the logical extension of the behaviour patterns which men are encouraged to adopt by the vast majority of both men and women in this society. Given enough pressure any man, myself included, could become a rapist. But this does not mean that men gain every time a man rapes a woman or behaves like a rapist.

According to Sheila, "Every man benefits from the actions of every rapist." I could not disagree more. Every time a rape takes place and the man comes back to the pub to boast to his mates men lose out. Every time a man says "Couldn't you just give *that* a length?" or "Look at the arse on her", men are driven further into their own sexual misery.

Such an outrageous claim clearly needs some explanation. Firstly, only an idiot would fail to admit that when a man rapes a woman then that woman (and indeed, as Sheila correctly stresses, every woman) suffers the most immense physical and emotional oppression. I do not want to deny

the depth of this oppression in any way.

My only claim is that the rape-like behaviour of men is not in my interests either and that men too should be fighting against the attitudes that lead to rape. I'd better explain this more fully.

Starting at the age of adolescence men and women become exposed to a new form of sex role identification. They already know most of the things that boys and girls are supposed to do and those that are taboo. Now they begin to learn how to relate to each other sexually.

Most of this information is learnt in the streets or schools and passed on from mouth to mouth as girls learn how to "look nice" and boys learn how to "make out." Adverts help to drive home the message. But the message can be most clearly discerned when you look at the sharp divergence in the reading matter which the two groups are exposed to.

For girls, magazines like *Jackie*, *"17"* etc emphasise the importance of make up, clothes and above all romantic love. The record industry and, more especially, the radio stations drive home the message with "chewed" music about "moons in June" and "true love". (Incidentally, in this respect records by groups like *The Three Degrees* are just as deeply sexist as the most macho posturings of Thin Lizzy etc.) Eventually the lesson is learnt so well that most women actually want and expect to be dominated and will not respect any man who does not act in an oppressive way.

For boys, magazines like *May-fair*, *Penthouse* etc exploit the sexual misery and isolation of most young people in the most heartless way. Reading the pages of these magazines as an adolescent I got the message quite clearly. The entire world was experiencing vastly enjoyable sexual adventures except for me.

There were the bodies, there was the task, every one of your friends claimed to have scored, only you were a failure. You simply had to get a woman before you could face any of your friends. In the meantime you lied, thus convincing your friends that they were the only ones who had yet to score and helping to make them too feel miserably inadequate.

For the years of adolescence, and often far beyond, the pressure is on for the girl to catch a husband without giving up her virginity and for the boy to "get his end away" without getting married.

Put the two together and what do you get? Rape - or the nearest thing to it.

In these terms I would be lying if I did not admit that every man is not just a potential but a real rapist (if only in thought) until he has been taught to relax about sex. The man cannot avoid, under the weight of all that pressure, attacking the woman like a

Letters

starving man going at food. The obvious result is premature ejaculation because he has been taught that the thing is to penetrate the woman to prove what a man he is and that's it pride satisfied for the moment.

The woman cannot avoid being shocked by the lack of romance, at the animal violence of it, at the fact that she too is left wondering "Is that it?" The obvious result is frigidity because she is left feeling guilty that she doesn't enjoy sex, because she's lost her vital virginity or because she never dares ask for what she wants to happen.

But the important point surely is that it is possible to go beyond this miserable stage and indeed to skip it altogether. As each person strips him or herself of the illusions of adolescence then it becomes possible to approach sexual relations without the violence and without the huge gulf between the sexes that is created from childhood.

It is in this sense that I feel able to say that every man suffers from every rape. Every comment, every action of a rape-like nature by a man weakens the chances of any man naturally experiencing sexual pleasure in an open and free way. Every attempt by any of us to encourage decent, feeling behaviour from men towards women helps both women and men.

It helps women because they are less likely to experience rape and more likely to strike up relations between equals should they wish to, and it helps men (both gay and straight) because they no longer feel inferior to "masculine" men and are opened up to the possibility of actually enjoying relating to women as independent people and not as objects to be consumed and despised.

In this respect Sheila's comment about all men benefitting from rape is not just annoying but is actively harmful to both women and men. It encourages the attitude that all men are the enemies of all women. The way I see it is that all rape and all rape-like actions are the enemies of every human being and can only be fought together.

In keeping with this attitude I should stress that I do not see the struggle for women's liberation as a threat but as a help. I cannot see why men who fight to try and free themselves from the garbage of sexual oppression should be lumped in as part of the garbage. We should not be seen as enemies of women but partners in a mutually beneficial struggle to free everyone from the imposition of rape-inducing ideas and behaviour.

Andy Brown
London W7

Masters of the endocrine system

I WOULD have liked to see more space given in the *Leveller's* theme on rape (issue 25) to the debates that Dorothy Jones and Rose Shapiro touched on (the creation of artificial 'appetites', confusion of desire, etc) and the continuing argument about when indifference ends and rape begins. The issues of ambivalence, uncertainty and ignorance were hardly given adequate coverage. I think it would have served to put things in a better perspective.

Dorothy's argument about society's influence was a good one, but one that was not nearly rigorous enough. For example, I don't think it's fair to leave the debate at the power stage; an important factor, left well out of print, is the way sexual desires and normative sexual values are shaped by society and the way we are shaped by them in return.

Men and women have to learn from each other that they have a responsibility to communicate and share; signals get crossed but we're not all slaves of our endocrines! Women are at fault for allowing men the power and the expectations to be "served" by unwilling partners. It really shouldn't be a them vs. us position which is what came across most strongly in the articles. We're shaped by our environment and some things just turn out badly.

The Leveller should be helping people to understand why, and to come to terms with the fact that not all of us are together beings,

sexually or emotionally, that we do use each other at times and that it is mostly wrong.

Violence, ignorance, selfishness, selflessness, ambivalence, indifference are all (to use a good value judgement) wrong. Most of us participate in it one way or another and feel guilty because of it, and that's the debate I'd like to see examined.

Karen Macleod
London NW3

Calling all gays

WE ARE TWO of the authors of the "Law and Sexuality" recently published by Grass Roots Books, and we have been approached by a major publishing company to write a book about lesbians and gay men. We feel that a general, positively written book about being gay is sorely needed on the mass market so we have agreed to write it. We aim to cover:

Realising that we are lesbian or gay,
Coming out
Lesbian/gay lifestyles
as well as looking into societies' attitudes to all women and men, particularly lesbians and gay men with a view to how we can and are changing things.

To do this we want to draw on as wide a variety of people's experience as possible, and we are

asking people interested in helping us, to answer a fairly comprehensive list of questions about themselves and their sexuality, their experiences and their views. Some of the replies along with some interviews will be used directly as quotes in the book, and all will be used to create a wider picture than our own experience could offer.

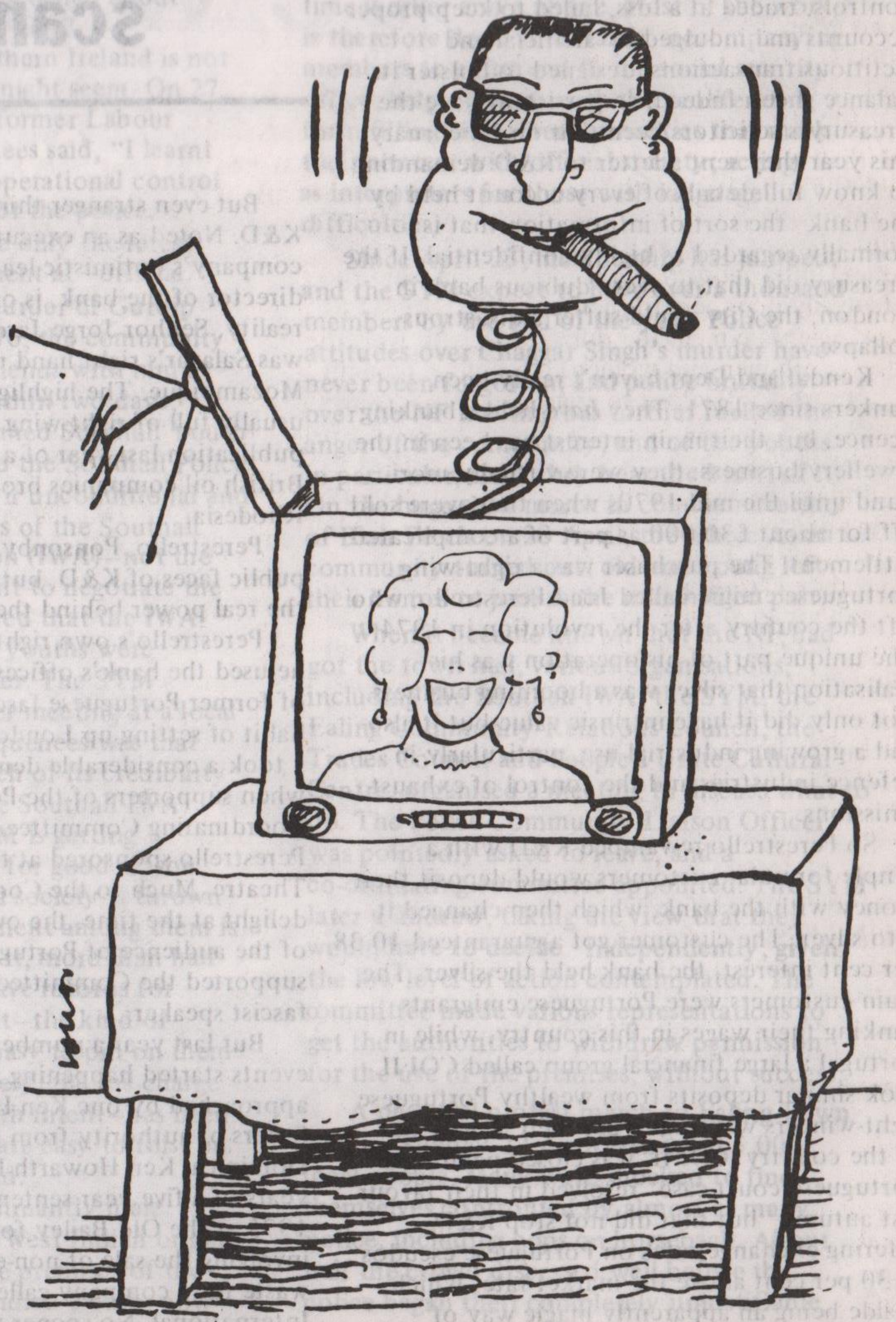
If you would like to help us in this way please write to at: 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7DU. All answers will be treated as confidential but we will credit you if you want us to.

Janet Slade
Stephanie Green
Manchester M1

Missing Marxist titles

THANKS FOR putting us in the Red Pages, but in compressing our entry you have elided two of our titles; our *Marxist Economic Theory* by Mandel (4th impression) and our *Marx's Theory of Alienation* by Meszaros (4th edition). There's a close-up of Marx's left eye on the cover of the latter so that's it's quite easy to tell them apart. Contracts with the two authors forbid us from harmonising the two books.

Fraternally,
Merlin Press



YOUR LETTERS TO THE LEVELLER

Send letters to *The Leveller*, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1. To give us more space for contributions, please keep them short. Letters intended for anonymous publication must nevertheless be accompanied by a name, address and, if possible, telephone number. All letters may be edited for length.

Banking

Kendal's Silver Lining Dented

Kendal and Dent was a most respectable bank. But under the guidance as chairperson of Lord Ponsonby, an obscure hereditary Fabian peer, it virtually became banker by appointment to an unsavoury gang of right-wing Portuguese emigres. Among the connections was Jorge Jardim, a former Salazar crony. The bank is now being dragged through the courts on charges of currency offences. *Dave Clark* delves behind the pinstripe facade.

WHY IS Lord Ponsonby, former Labour chairperson of the Greater London Council and moderate Fabian luminary, so embarrassed at an obscure fringe banking case currently dragging its way through the financial courts?

Answer: because if Kendal and Dent, the bank in question, is found guilty of half the things the Department of Trade and Industry say they are, the noble peer will end up with a lot of mucky capitalist egg over his cherubic social democratic face.

Kendal and Dent, 'Bankers in London since 1871', were closed down by the DTI on 15 December 1978. Inspectors had been in and out of the office for the past three years before suddenly jumping in with a form of closure that meant Kendal and Dent were unable to seek a stay of execution, most unusual in the discreet old boy world of fringe banking.

The DTI alleges that, among other things, K&D have persistently broken exchange control controls, traded at a loss, failed to keep proper accounts and indulged in 'artificial and fictitious transactions' designed to bolster its balance sheet. Indeed, so persistent have the Treasury's solicitors been that on 1 February this year they sent a letter to K&D demanding to know full details of every account held by the bank—the sort of information that is normally regarded as highly confidential. If the Treasury did that to every dubious bank in London, the City could suffer a disastrous collapse.

Kendal and Dent haven't really been bankers since 1871. They have held a banking licence, but their main interest has been in the jewellery business; they were virtually moribund until the mid-1970s when they were sold off for about £30,000 as part of a complicated settlement. The purchaser was a right-wing Portuguese emigre called Joad Perestrello, who left the country after the revolution in 1974. The unique part of his operation was his realisation that silver was a booming business. Not only did it have intrinsic value but it also had a growing industrial use, particularly in defence industries and the control of exhaust emissions.

So Perestrello re-vamped K&D with a simple formula: customers would deposit their money with the bank, which then changed it into silver. The customer got a guaranteed 10.38 per cent interest, the bank held the silver. The main customers were Portuguese emigrants banking their wages in this country, while in Portugal a large financial group called COFIL took similar deposits from wealthy Portuguese right-wingers wanting to get their money out of the country. COFIL was closed pending a Portuguese court case—resolved in their favour last autumn—but that did not stop K&D offering exchange rates on Portuguese escudos at 30 per cent above the market rate. Which, beside being an apparently magic way of

making money out of nothing, actually served as the mechanism for the wealthy to get their money out of Portugal.

Even Perestrello's exchange control adviser, Harmer Hudson of Robson Rhodes, chartered accountants, thought this was a bit much and resigned, apparently under pressure from the Bank of England. But it didn't bother Ponsonby, brought in by managing director Lewis Rowe because his name looked good on the letter head.

A life of right wing scandals

But even stranger things were happening at K&D. Noted as an executive officer on the company's optimistic leaflets, but not as a director of the bank, is one J. Jardim who is, in reality, Senhor Jorge Jardim. For years Jardim was Salazar's right hand man and governor of Mozambique. The highlight in a life more than usually full of right-wing scandals was Jardim's publication last year of a book detailing how British oil companies broke sanctions on Rhodesia.

Perestrello, Ponsonby and Rowe are the public faces of K&D, but it is Jardim who is the real power behind the throne.

Perestrello's own right-wing connections he used the bank's offices for regular meetings of former Portuguese fascists and was in the habit of setting up London meetings for them took a considerable dent 18 months ago when supporters of the Portuguese Workers' Coordinating Committee picketed a concert Perestrello sponsored at the New Victoria Theatre. Much to the Coordinating Committee's delight at the time, the overwhelming majority of the audience of Portuguese workers supported the Committee's objections to a fascist speaker.

But last year a number of other interesting events started happening at the bank. It was approached by one Ken Howarth, waving letters of authority from the Federal Bank of Dominica. Ken Howarth had just finished three years of a five year sentence he received in 1975 at the Old Bailey for a massive fraud involving the sale of non-existent platinum waste for a company called E J Austin International. No sooner was Howarth out of

jail than he was empowered by Leo Austin, the ambitious Attorney General of Dominica, to act from the unlikely base of a council house in Runcorn, as a European agent for the non-existent Federal Bank of Dominica. Howarth then offered K&D a massive deposit of \$50 million to be raised on the international money market. Rowe rubbed his hands with glee at the prospect and no sooner was that deal well under way than who should turn up and offer to act as an agent for the bank than Sidney Burnett-Alleyne, well known to readers of *The Leveller* 23 as the man who put together the attempted coup in Barbados. And that coup was originally planned on behalf of the Dominican government.

Jorge Jardim, of course, claims total innocence in all these strange events. He also says that he had nothing to do with one of Sidney's earlier plans, to finance an oil refinery in St. Kitts—despite the fact that Robert Southwell, the prime minister of St. Kitts, claims to have a telex from Jardim confirming his financial backing for the project.

It would be misleading to accuse Ponsonby of being tied up in these shady deals. By all accounts he had no idea of what was going on half the time in the bank of which he is the chairman, and he apparently finds no contradiction in being a Labour Party member and being so intimately involved with a bunch of Portuguese former fascists. Few of these facts are likely to emerge in court over the next weeks, but Kendal and Dent seems unlikely to be opening its front door for business for a long while yet.

READ ALL ABOUT IT...
... THEN PROTEST!



SOUTHALL



Southall is just the kind of place Margaret Thatcher was thinking of when she made her "swamped" speech. Half its people are black—mostly Asians—but the state resists their impressing their identity on their surroundings.

In the last week of April, the state went on the offensive. Ostensibly to protect a handful of fascists, thousands of police occupied the place and set about terrorising the inhabitants.

The protest against the NF meeting in the Town Hall was not the ANL excursion that the media and the politicians have tried to make it out to be: it was the Southall community trying to defend itself under attack.

At no other anti-NF demonstration have the authorities yet acted with such brutality. The overwhelming state reaction, including the huge number of arrests, because the NF's provocative racist attitudes are in some measure shared by Thatcher, Powell, police and Callaghan alike.

The real political questions of Southall won't even be asked, let alone answered, by any official enquiry, by the media, or by any white leaders.

These articles try to raise them: what is life like in Southall? Why were the Front permitted to assault the place? How are the people organising to defend themselves? What was the state doing on April 23? What really happened, then and afterwards?

Contributions are from H.O. Nazareth, Fay Rodrigues, Zareer Masani, Dave Ward, Vivien Goldman and Tim Gopsill.

Town Under Siege

The Southall shops have Asian names and facades. The cinemas show Asian films. Most people around are young blacks. The most obvious leftover of the events of 22-23 April are the pairs of cops on patrol. Within a minute we count several "copies" around the High Street area. Are they worried about Southall becoming a no-go area?

This hark-back to Northern Ireland is not really so far-fetched as it might seem. On 27 June 1977, at Grunwick, former Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees said, "I learnt in Northern Ireland that operational control must be left in the hands of the police."

The Southall events are only the latest source of growing resentment at "official" society. After the racist murder of Gurdip Chaggar Singh in June 1976, the community was outraged when two friends, with him at the time were arrested. Within two days, members of the newly-formed Southall Youth Movement (SYM) besieged the Southall Police Station and demanded their unconditional and immediate release. Leaders of the Southall Indian Workers Association (IWA)—not the IWA of Great Britain—went to negotiate the release. The SYM discovered that the IWA had made a deal. The two youths were released, to be charged later. The SYM immediately called another meeting at a local cinema. One of the consequences was that the Southall IWA lost much of its credibility with the youths. While the Southall IWA seeks compromise the SYM is getting increasingly militant—and for good reason. Most of the shit of official society is thrown at the youths. Unemployment among them is as high as 30%. To add to it, more than half of SYM's 600 members have records for obstruction, affray, assault—the kind of offences that police find easy to pin on them in magistrates' courts. Lately, the sus charge—suspicion of loitering with intent—has been used. Convictions for sus are easy to foist on people with a police record.

The SYM has a predominantly male membership of Asian and West Indian origin. They began meeting at the premises of the National Association of Indian Youth, now called National Association of Asian Youth

(NAAY). Within a year they moved to their present premises, which are squatted. They are financed by grants from the British Council of Churches, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Commission for Racial Equality—just enough to employ one full-time worker and a phone. Most of the work is therefore done voluntarily—accompanying members to court and to the social security office; helping them with the proliferating form-filling and other formalities that mark their contact with official society; acting as interpreters for those with language difficulties.

Since April 23, membership has jumped, and the SYM expect to have over a thousand members by the end of the year. Police attitudes over Chaggar Singh's murder have never been forgotten, and police brutality over the NF meeting has further fuelled the anger of the community, and of the youths in particular, since they bear the brunt of it. On the huge slow march in commemoration of Blair Peach on 28 April, the whole Asian community turned out; old and young left their homes to join as the march filed past.

When it became known that the NF had got the town hall, various organisations, including the Southall IWA, the SYM, the Ealing Community Relations Council, the Trades Council and People's Unite Cultural Centre, organised a meeting to discuss what to do. The Police Community Liaison Officer was pointedly asked to leave, and a co-ordinating committee appointed. The SYM later withdrew, taking the view that they would have to decide independently, given the low level of action contemplated. The committee made various representations to get the authorities to withdraw permission for the use of the premises, without success.

A peaceful protest march to Ealing Town Hall on Sunday 22 April, attracted 5,000 local people. Many were shocked to find themselves confronted by almost as many police, including cops on horseback. About half the crowd dispersed well before the police began their completely unjustifiable

continued over

attack. Nineteen people were arrested, 17 of them members of the SYM.

That night, when the local traders were advised to board up shop-windows, they refused point-blank. They were adamant that they were not going to allow the NF to hold an election meeting in the community. As for free speech, one person said to the police, "Your support for free speech is a threat to not only our free speech, but our lives."

Next day, workers in local factories and shops came out on strike to join the protests.



Roger Andersen

A massive police presence of 4-5,000 occupied the town centre and cordoned off streets as early as mid-day, preventing locals from doing their shopping. The police were going to show everyone who was running the show, and they certainly made most of the running. Police cameramen were busily photographing likely demonstrators. Helicopters buzzed overhead. By 2pm, 50 people had been arrested. SYM members, trying to avoid unnecessary trouble, actually went to the Southall Police Station and agreed various arrangements with the Police Community Liaison Officer. When they returned to the ranks of the counter-demonstrators and tried to explain to the cops, the retort was: "Fuck Inspector Goffe. We don't take orders from him." Arrangements agreed with the Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Helms of Scotland Yard, in charge of the police operation, were similarly given short shrift.

Demonstrators were split up and kept hundreds of yards from the hall. Reports of verbal abuse and harassment by police, before the violence, abound among the community. When the violence erupted police moved with military precision, breaking up crowds and closing in on isolated pockets of demonstrators. Even passive bystanders were insulted, chased and threatened with arrest.

Senior officers (they'd clearly done some home-work) pointed out SYM leaders for arrest or assault irrespective of their part in the proceedings. Other Asians, who had boarded a number 207 bus were followed aboard by the cops. In an attempt to get away, they smashed the windows on the top-deck and jumped out. An Asian youth travelling on the bus was arrested on a charge of criminal damage. All in all over 750 people were picked

up, apart from those simply beaten in the streets. 340 were charged, more than half were members of SYM and about 100 connected with the Peoples' Unite Centre, and only two from outside Southall. The rest were transported away and dumped on the A4 and elsewhere, some as far away as Rochester Row, 15 miles away, at 3am. They were told, "Now walk back you black bastards."

So much for the "official" line that the anti-racists came from outside—a line that was conveniently reinforced by the fact that the person murdered by the SPG was a well-known anti-racist from East London (where the SPG also operates). As Vishnu Sharma pointed out, the outsiders at Southall were the police and the Front. (The Nazis in the meeting were bussed in, and the candidate in Southall, John Fairhurst, lives at 35 Claxton Corner Cottages, Claxton, near Norwich.)

At the police stations where the arrested were taken (they used more than one to avoid a seige) charge sheets, already prepared, were handed out arbitrarily, and names written as the arrested were herded in.

The police functioned, in effect, as the enforcement wing of the NF. Any doubt about that is dispersed by the foul racist jibes they frothed at Asian demonstrators; and the fact that the SPG storm-troopers pride themselves on a coiled cobra (a poisonous Asian reptile) insignia, adds an ironic emphasis.

The Southall IWA has largely abandoned its illusions about the good intentions of the police, and the SYM is considering more effective ways to combat police racism. If the authorities think they can cower this long-established community with brutality, they couldn't be more wrong.

among the youth in the community; this could have something to do with the extra-violent handling he got at the hands of the SPG. When he was unloaded at the police station, one policeman was overheard to say, "And here's the black bastard that stabbed the copper", a fabrication that might have cost Clarence his speech.

After the Centre had been cleared, the SPG men indulged in an orgy of vandalism: the musicians' co-operative equipment—which is also Misty's equipment—was smashed piece by piece. The damage runs into thousands of pounds, including two complete drum kits, a £1,500 mixer, an amp, and various speakers. Albums and disco mixes (12-inch reggae singles) were smashed. Run through the lengthy, laborious surge of destruction and you may get some idea of the SPG venom. The Centre, which offers free tuition in a wide variety of arts and skills, is now boarded up with very long nails. But the Peoples Unite co-operative firmly intend to be back.



Roger Andersen

Southall people passing the spot where Blair Peach was murdered.

Arts Centre wrecked

Clarence Baker is a member of the Musicians' Cooperative based at 6 Parkview Road, Southall, which is the Peoples Unite Creative Arts & Education Centre. He is also manager of *Misty*, the reggae band best known for playing benefits, notably for Rock Against Racism.

During the demonstration the police cordoned off the three main roads leading to the Town Hall. This meant that none of the community workers—members of the Asian Southall Youth Movement and lawyers from Southall Rights, for example—had access to their offices. Police would let no-one in or out of Southall Rights. Thus the Peoples Unite Centre was used as a makeshift medical and law centre, with a red cross on the front door pointing out the fact.

At 6.15pm, someone threw a smoke flare. This was a signal for the mounted police to make a concerted charge into the crowd, forcing people back into Parkview Road. Many youths had sought refuge at the Centre during the course of the day's violence, and with the new additions, the SPG found a full house to clear when they broke into the Centre. Police lined the stairs and hall of the Georgian house, beating everyone who passed through as they flushed out the building to run the gauntlet of blows: it seems the head was their favourite target.

A doctor, Annie Nahmed, was clubbed while treating a patient, and had to have six head stitches. Beatings continued at Southall police station, where the arrested were initially taken.

Clarence, along with Geraldine Ragiste and four kids, was in the kitchen. Two policemen dragged him by his dreadlocks across the room to the door when he couldn't get up to walk:

he was taken to Kennington Police Station in a semi-conscious state, where he was strip-searched and kept from 8pm to 4am.

He was then taken to the Central Middlesex Hospital. After three days in the hospital, he was still having frequent bouts of unconsciousness. He hadn't eaten for two days before the demonstration, and wasn't eating when his brain was examined by a scanner, three days after he was admitted. It was then discovered that apart from a fractured skull, he was also suffering from a bloodclot on the medulla oblongata, the base of the brain, which might account for the fact that although Clarence has been improving very slowly, he's still suffering from a speech impediment he never had before the demonstration.

Clarence was known by the police as a leader

The Front sidles in

WHY WAS Ealing Council not consulted when its Town Clerk gave permission to an avowedly racist party to hold a meeting in a predominantly black community?

Why, despite protests from "respectable" local leaders such as Michael Elliot, leader of the Labour minority in the Council, Sydney Bidwell, sitting Labour MP, Vishnu Sharma, President of the Southall Indian Workers' Association, and Martyn Grubb, Community Relations Officer, did the Tory leader of the Council and the Home Secretary refuse to reconsider the decision?

Why were the police given *carte blanche* to turn Southall into a virtual police state that Monday, denying the legal right of local constituents to attend what claimed to be an open election meeting?

And finally, why has the Labour Party, and especially Bidwell, who prides himself on being a founder of the Anti-Nazi League, maintained such a conspiratorial silence on all these points?

According to Beatrice Howard, Tory leader of Ealing Council, the decision to grant the NF's request was "a routine administrative matter" for the returning officer under the Representation of the People Act. She saw no

reason to take legal advice about it or to call a special council meeting.

But the neighbouring, Labour-led Brent Council had refused permission for an NF election meeting on the ground that the NF would not allow "a genuine public meeting in terms of the (Representation of the People) Act."

This interpretation has since been upheld in the High Court, where the NF lost their appeal against the Brent decision.

Howard said later: "It was an open meeting because the press was there". But a *Daily Mirror* reporter had been ejected by the NF and an Asian councillor had been man-handled by police and denied entry. "That must have been for their own good", snapped Ms. Howard. "I wasn't there myself, but I feel very sorry for the police and the attacks they had to face."

And the official policy of the council is to ban use of its premises by the NF. The decision to grant facilities was therefore a change of policy which the Tory leader had no business to make without a council meeting. Michael Elliot says he was not officially notified of the decision till 18 April, five days before the meeting was scheduled, too late to requisition a special council session. Despite protests from Labour councillors, Howard, he said, refused to reconsider her decision. Martyn Grubb, the local Community Relations Officer, also confirmed that the Council ignored his appeals for cancellation and that Howard refused to receive a petition from local community organisations.

Grubb and Bidwell also took their case to Merlyn Rees; but he was scarcely more sympathetic than the Ealing Tories. Rees took a full week to reply to Bidwell's letter. His reply, dated the day of the NF meeting, endorsed the Ealing Tories' view of the NF's legal rights and ignored any possibility of banning the meeting.

Rees explicitly abdicated political responsibility for public order during the meeting. "I have taken steps", he wrote, "to ensure that the Commissioner is aware of your concern. The policing arrangements for this meeting will be an operational matter for the Commissioner and I have no power to intervene or give directions. I am in no doubt though that appropriate measures will be taken to preserve public order and prevent breaches of the peace."

Commenting on these "appropriate measures", Vishnu Sharma later said: "If anyone would have liked to see a police state in total operation, he should have been in Southall today."

Any doubts about whether the meeting was public were quickly dispelled by the police. The Town Clerk's order granting permission had stipulated that at least one-third of the hall (its capacity is 60) must be open to the public. But only five members of the public were allowed in by police, along with 59 NF members bussed in from outside Southall. Tariq Ali, the Socialist Unity parliamentary candidate, was denied his legal right of passage by police cordons and is now contemplating suing the police.

And any doubts about police attitudes to racism and anti-racism were dispelled on 29 April, when Metropolitan Police Commissioner David McNee, for the first time, used his powers under the Public Order Act (1936) to stop an anti-Nazi march in East London going past the NF's fortress headquarters, Excalibur House, in Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch.



Winston Carbon

Probes

What next? There may or may not be an official public enquiry. Merlyn Rees said there wouldn't; Jim Callaghan, who somehow had the nerve to speak in Ealing Town Hall on 1 May, said there would be "a full enquiry". But even if there is another Scarman job, it can't possibly address itself to the real issues.

A co-ordinating committee for a black and labour movement enquiry has already been set up. The IWA and SYM, with the Ealing Trades Council and Ealing Community Relations Council, are setting up a commission which will hold open hearings.

Meanwhile police are conducting enquiries. Commander John Cass, former head of A10, Scotland Yard's Internal Enquiries Department, but now past retiring age, is running them. But he totally failed to make clear at the adjourned inquest into Blair Peach's death whether he is running a normal murder enquiry, or the rigorous internal police enquiry promised by the Chief of Police, Sir David McNee, or both, or neither. He couldn't even confirm that all the evidence he collected would be presented at the inquest when it eventually takes place.

So far he has interviewed most of the witnesses to the murder, and in such a way as to indicate his purpose may not be to dig out the entire truth. Comrades who were with Blair Peach have had their stories rigorously tested in long interviews (up to eight hours), with suggestions of conspiracies, memories distorted by shock, and so on. Lawyers were permitted to attend those interviews.

What enquiries are going on within the force can only be guessed at, of course, but it is perfectly clear that the suspects could be narrowed down to the two SPG vanloads that launched the attack.

In the end, no doubt, a rotten apple or two will be picked out, and the men who gave the orders can carry on with their political mission.

Donations and other help for Southall organisations to: Blair Peach Memorial Fund, c/o Langdon Park School, Byron Street, London E14 0RY. SYM Defence Fund and Peoples Unite Defence Fund, 45 Lea Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Shorts

UNDERGROUND

Marx down the Tube

KARL MARX emerged from Bond Street tube station on 1 May to name London's new tube line the Fleet Line. He ceremoniously broke a bottle of stout over a toy train and was presented with a giant free travel pass by the Queen. Known for the first twenty years of its life on the drawing board as the Fleet Line, the Tory GLC decided, in a fit of royal arselicking, to rename it the Jubilee Line in 1977.

Marx was invited to come down from Highgate by Movement Against A Monarchy, whose Fleet Line campaign is gathering momentum with stickers and badges bearing the slogan "Don't Jubilee've It" going up all round London. In red, white and silvery-grey, the stickers are 150 for £1, and the badges, either 1¼" or 2¼", cost £1.70 for 10 or 20p (+7p post) each from MAAM, Box M, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

NEW RULERS

Co-ordinating bonehead

ANGUS MAUDE is Margaret Thatcher's revenge for the killing of Airey Neave. Maude's government appointment as Paymaster-General in charge of 'co-ordinating information policies' is the first time since George Wigg in Harold Wilson's 1964-70 administration that a Cabinet post is given to a politician with the direct brief to 'oversee' the security services.

In Wigg's case, he was meant to look internally, but now under Maude, the left in Britain can expect a rapid raising of the temperature.

Maude, a 66-year old bonehead whose unintelligent Monday Club-style scribbles appear regularly in the *Sunday Express*, will be aiming at 'the water in which the fish swim' the communities and the thought-processes of which those people who killed Neave were a part.

Expect a far greater use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and expect its use against lefties with no obvious Irish connections. Watch how individuals like Arthur Scargill will be relentlessly pursued by this new Whitehall 'Dirty Tricks' department. Angus Maude will be watching us all.

RADIO

Community radio licence

THE INDEPENDENT Broadcasting Authority has awarded the franchises for both the Cardiff and Coventry stations to community-based groups. Cardiff Broadcasting won the Cardiff franchise, while the Coventry franchise went to Midland Community Radio Ltd.

"We are very pleased that the IBA has recognised the genuine involvement of those connected with the application," commented Cardiff Broadcasting Chairman David Williams. The station's major shareholder is the Cardiff Broadcasting Trust, which represents local

people and organisations. Its slogan is "Have a hand in what you hear". The 12-person board is composed of 6 directors representing community interests and 6 representing the investors. According to David Williams, there haven't been any splits between the two groups.

The emphasis of programming policy is to be on speech, along with "music popular with our listeners." An action desk in the city centre will collect news from the public, as well as providing a community advice service. "If the community can come up with programmes we will be willing to put them on the air", said Mr Williams, although final decisions remain with the station's controllers.

Mr A.J. Gorard, formerly Chief Executive of Harlech Television, has been appointed Chief Executive; no other appointments have been made. The station hopes to be on the air in about a year.

Midland Community Radio formulated its application after people who had been approached by other groups competing for the franchise discovered that they had common ground.

They were awarded the franchise although the board included no-one with journalistic experience. It is thought that the IBA saw them as the only applicants to stress the idea of service to the Coventry area. The Board, which is chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Warwick University, JB Butterworth, includes Geoffrey Robinson, Labour MP for Coventry North-West, Mohanjit Hyare of the Community Relations Council, and the leader of the Labour group on Coventry Council, AJ Waugh.



NATIONAL THEATRE

Injunction threatens union

THE NATIONAL Theatre dispute (see *The Leveller* 26) is being used as a test case on 'secondary picketing'. The South Bank Theatre Board, which owns the theatre site, has taken out an injunction against NATTKE, the union, and six named individuals involved in the dispute, including branch secretary Richard Lewis and stage staff shop steward Alan Thomson.

The writ is intended to stop the strike interfering with the Board's construction work in the theatre, and it asks that lorries doing construction work should not be turned away, that the strikers should not trespass on the site, and that they should dismantle their strike huts. It also asks for damages for breach of contract and for 'unlawful interference with the Plaintiff's business' meaning the construction work.

The injunctions were granted at a private hearing on Thursday 3 May. But the judgement does not follow until after *The Leveller* went to press. If damages and costs are awarded against the strikers, they may have to be declared bankrupt.

The Theatre Board was awarded the injunction although it is closely associated with the National Theatre. Lord Rayne, who has said that a compromise in the dispute would 'undermine the entire fabric of our democratic society', is Chairperson of both. Under the Employment Protection Act, it is a valid defence against such injunctions to show that you acted in 'objective furtherance' of a trade dispute. But the judge seems to have followed the precedent set by Lord Denning in his United Biscuits judgement.

Permission to spend money on a legal case had to be obtained from the Department of Education and Science. Estimated costs so far are £1,500, but they will increase rapidly if the union takes the case to open court. The strikers claim that permission to go ahead came from Cabinet level - one of the last acts of the Labour government.

The theatre has been hit badly by the dispute. The strike has cost them £193,000 in lost revenue until the end of April, and 'A Fair Quarrel', which was supposed to run for six months, is to come off at the end of May because of poor attendances. Press officer John Goodwin pointed out, however, that attendances had not been good before the dispute began. The strikers say that management allegations of 'vicious harassment' by pickets, reported widely in the press, has kept audiences away from the theatre.

The theatre is trying to break the strike by offering individuals the opportunity to return to work. Although they have been sacked by the theatre, the DHSS is not paying benefit because they say they are still involved in a trade dispute.

NATTKE, which recognises the strike as an 'official lock-out', has taken no action over the three NATTKE members who have started working in the theatre since the dispute began, nor has it enforced instructions that it has made to members. If the strikers lose, the 25,000-strong union could fall apart. One National Executive member, in a television branch, has threatened to have his members 'out within three months' if the union does not win the dispute. The National strikers, along with members from the other three subsidised houses in theatres in London - Coliseum, Royal Opera House, and RSC Aldwych - would probably follow. "General Secretary John Wilson has created the perfect Tory union", Richard Lewis told *The Leveller*.

Although the National management have told suppliers not to recognise the picket lines, supply lorries continue to respect them. The National Theatre strike committee is discussing ways of intensifying the dispute with representatives of the other subsidised houses. Support has also come from the area's new Labour MP, Stuart Holland. In a statement, he said, "It is more clearly the management than the union who have been seeking confrontation. It must be open to question whether they have been trying to keep the theatre open or have been playing another game".

SECRETS

Silkin's secrets agent

AMONG THE Labour MPs who scraped back on May 3rd that no-one on the left would have minded losing, is the former Attorney-General, Sam Silkin, who held Dulwich by 122 votes.

The day before the election, his Tory opponent, former Mecca mandarin Eric Morley, sacked his press agent, Victoria Charlton. Why? Because Charlton, a member of the National Union of Journalists, who stands by that union's policy of protecting its members, had asked Silkin a number of pertinent questions at an election meeting, and, having elicited no coherent response, put out a press notice attacking him for his prosecutions of AB&C in the Official Secrets case, and *The Leveller*, *Peace News* and the *Journalist* in the Johnstone contempt case.

The notice was on Conservative Party headed notepaper. Too much, clearly for Morley. But it is Silkin who should really take note. When *Tories* attack you from the left, Sam, where the fuck do you think you are?

West Germany

DIRTY TRICKS

US Brits blow it

IT LOOKS like the British "Dirty Tricks" department working against Irish militants in the USA may soon have its fingers burnt. Fr. Sean MacManus heads the Irish National Caucus lobby in Washington DC. This body has often been a favourite British Embassy target for accusations of IRA links despite the fact the two Irish groups are at loggerheads and FBI investigations have unearthed no such link.

Fr MacManus found himself described in a US book called *The Power Peddlers* - about lobby groups - as having "homicidal tendencies". This unflattering reference was said in the book to appear on file cards in the Irish and British Washington Embassies.

Fr MacManus has now won a New York Federal court order to force the book's authors to disclose to him the confidential source of this information which he asserts is libellous.

The USA, Britain too, and Europe will soon be receiving extensive publicity tours from John Deery, the first Republican "on-the-blanket" prisoner to be released from the Long Kesh H Blocks. Deery served nearly three years, most of which time he was "on the blanket" and he will soon act as the spearhead of provisional Sinn Féin's international campaign to publicise their battle for political status in Long Kesh.

TROOPS OUT

Straight from Arrowsmith

PAT ARROWSMITH'S performance when Jim Callaghan was making his re-election speech in Cardiff was one of the TV highspots during election night. She may only have won 132 votes but she sure made herself awkward during the campaign on her Socialist Unity and Troops Out Movement tickets.

So awkward she was twice arrested while trying to make electioneering speeches in Cardiff. She was charged with obstruction and with insulting behaviour. Both times in the prison station cell she graphically displayed

her solidarity with those "on the blanket" in the Long Kesh H Blocks by peeing on the floor.

Pat comes up in Cardiff magistrates court on 21 May and her supporters would welcome assistance in staging a picket outside the building that day.

The other candidate pushing a direct Irish cause was Brendan Gallagher, whose son Willie is still in Long Kesh despite the injustice of his conviction as portrayed in the banned Caryl Churchill TV play. Brendan must be pleased that in Roy Mason's Barnsley constituency some 638 voters took exception to their sitting MP's dismal record in Northern Ireland.

PUBLISHING

Fat covers sexist

ALL TOO often in the publishing world to popularise is to stereotype. The new paperback edition of *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (published by Hamlyn Paperbacks) is sadly no exception. The text of Susie Orbach's book remains the same, but on the cover is a picture of a passive looking woman emerging sexily from layers of rejected fat.

Many women see this objectified image as in fundamental contradiction with the contents, and a group got together to produce a straightforward typographic counter-cover to be given away in bookshops: "If they can produce their own cover, so can we."

Hamlyn's PR didn't know the extent of the protest until *The Leveller* phoned her: "No way is it a sexist cover", she said. "We're sorry if it's been misunderstood." The design had been governed by considerations of the mass market, and was supposed to appeal to a wide variety of women. She seemed to think that it was only hardline feminists who objected, although the counter cover group say that complaints from 'straight' bookshops have been reported to them by a Hamlyn rep.

Even Hamlyn agreed that the woman on the cover did suffer from a certain 'lack of personality', and said that some changes were 'under discussion'. So it looks like this enterprising group of feminists might yet win the day - who knows, they might even use the counter-cover design on the reprint...

Workers write

MELVYN BRAGG once collected some characters together in a book called 'Speak for England'. On Sunday nights, with help from God creating Adam and sundry other idols, he speaks at England. Between times, as Chairman of the Arts Council Literature panel, he has been standing in the way of a lot of working people who seek to speak for themselves.

At issue is a grant application to the Arts Council from several hundred writers - mostly working class - in workshop groups across the country. Their linking organisation, the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, asked the Literature Committee for £7,000 - about 1% of the annual literature budget - to pay a co-ordinator and enable groups to meet up to develop their work. With the application the Federation submitted a representative sample of writing, including a recent national anthology published with grant aid from the same Arts Council source.

After months of inconclusive correspondence, the Literature Finance Committee, with Melvyn in the chair, met a couple of worker-writers' representatives. There was no discussion of the writing, but a lot of sharp questioning about the Federation's constitution, and the use of words like 'working class'. Then after a few days the verdict: 'The members were of one voice in judging the examples of literature submitted: they considered the whole corpus of little, if any, literary merit'. No grant, but a referral for further consideration to the Community Arts Committee (the bottom of the barrel, where therapeutic considerations replace artistic standards).

The Federation's first response to this impertinence was an open letter, published this week, in which a dozen known left writers, playwrights, directors and the odd MP, add their weight in protest. Meanwhile the Gulbenkian Foundation has come in with cash enough to tide the Federation over the current year.

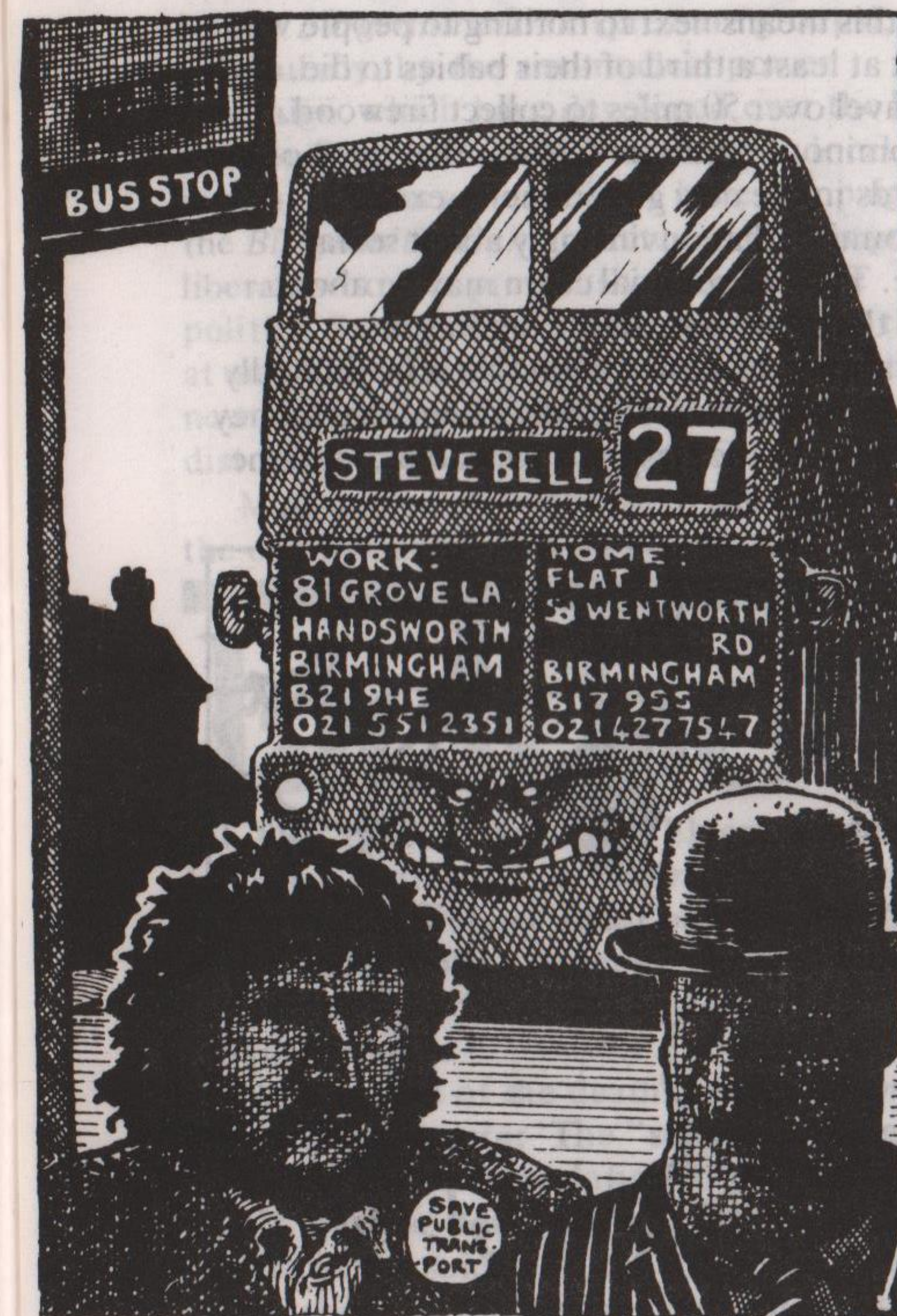
For now, it's worth restating the obvious: 'literary merit' cannot be divorced from the function and content of writing - who writes what, for whom, for what. And who judges? A literature that excludes the working majority, turns its back on the experience and expression of most people, can only be unimportant.

The worker-writers' movement reveals how many working men and women are writing against the odds: despite pressure of work and family life, and almost total lack of institutional encouragement or outlets. Writers' workshops and local publishing set-ups are moves to make good some of the gaps, while cutting out some of the nonsense inherent in the commercial-academic axis (so there's no teacher, little inherited idolatry, just writers and readers interchangeable in support and criticism, interested at once in the writing and in the life from which that writing stems).

Faced with this sort of development, institutions like the Arts Council have a clear choice: either they seek new crumbs of originality and accomplishment to add to the same old cultural cake, in which case they become minor accessories to universities, publishing houses etc, giving a little more to those who already have a lot, or they look to their real responsibilities, turning to the greater part of our people, our life and expression that the industries of Art and English Lit. mostly ignore.

The Literature Committee, with about one per cent of the Arts Council budget, could well afford just one per cent of that one per cent to help redress the balance, both in society and in literature. (What less could anyone ask?)

Greg Wilkinson



Cartoonist Steve Bell seeks work see above



A western eye on a grim desert war

Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet for years it has been gripped by a vicious civil war in which imperialism is the only beneficiary, while the people's suffering has just intensified. Ed Harriman was the only journalist from Britain to cover the latest phase in the struggle for oil and uranium. This article is the first report to be published in Britain.

In 1960 Charles de Gaulle gave Chad to southerners led by Nagarta Tombabaye. The only real export (80 per cent) was and still is cotton, most of which goes to France on jealously attractive terms. The French eloquently call the south *Chad utile* (useful), the rest *inutile* (worthless).

The next president, Felix Malloum, maintained Tombabaye's traditions so well that without the hasty intervention of the Foreign Legion commandos and a squadron of Jaguar jets (more than 2,000 troops in all) the whole country would have fallen to FROLINAT and its quartermaster, Colonel Qadafi, last year. The Saudis would not have liked that, nor the Nigerians, the Americans or the French.

So Hissene Habre, who had been kicked out of FROLINAT two years before, was discovered in Khartoum, and quickly given enough arms, uniforms, boots and money to equip 1,000 men. Under French pressure, he was made Prime Minister last August.

In January of this year, Goukouni Oueddei, the new chief of FROLINAT, suddenly left Libya and locked up the rebel movement's loyal Libyan fighters.

Early in February, N'Djamena's streets were adrift with anonymous tracts calling for Habre's death. On 12 February Habre attacked. The next day Malloum sent up his airforce—a squadron of ancient propeller Skyraiders flown by French mercenaries, whose rockets, nonetheless, could have changed the whole shape of the war. But the French garrison grounded the planes when they landed to re-arm—in the name of strict neutrality.

So did the broken and bleeding young men dragged in by their wild-eyed companions, machine guns under their arms, to lie, face down in crusted pools of their own blood on the floor. There was no plasma.

The logic is inexorable. A sweating and exhausted French surgeon explained that they had no penicillin, no anaesthetics and no surgical knives. Orderlies, their black rubber aprons slippery with blood, held down twisting bodies as the



GAMMA

young French intern patched them up with all that was left—surgical needles and thread.

A team of Russian doctors suddenly packed up and quit last year. Many of the wards have not been visited by doctors since. The patients (most of them have malaria) now lie all day on grey scraps of foam rubber on broken spring beds. To economise, they cook together and take the same pills. The drains have been blocked for months.

After the fighting, at a peace conference in Kano, Nigeria, Habre and Malloum agreed to a government of "national reconciliation" under Goukouni's presidency, which became official on 23 March. The Nigerians are to lead an all-African force to supervise the cease-fire, the first time they have done so overtly.

ACCORDING to the World Bank, Chad is the eighth poorest country in the world, a half a million square mile sprawl of Sahara sand and scrub savannah landlocked in the middle of Africa. The government depends on aid just to feed the four million people. Per capita income is \$73 a year and is going down. Average life expectancy is 36 years.

The government has been little more than an elephantine and corrupt employment exchange, spending 90 per cent of its income (including all the capital budget) on salaries, nearly three-quarters of which go to the army. Yet a third of the army, 1,100 men, was captured a year ago by FROLINAT, the guerilla movement.

It is the country where CARE (the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere) has 4,000 families planting trees for a daily wage of half a pound of millet—perhaps the lowest wage in the world.

Chad is the last bit of Africa the French managed to snatch during the great nineteenth century landgrab. The peasants in the south were treated like slaves, while the brightest sons went to mission schools to learn God's purest religion and tongue.

Rather longer was needed to "lift the veil", as the French delicately termed it, on the Moslem semi-nomadic tribes in the north. So during the late 1920s and early 1930s, while peasants were forced to grow cotton, the Foreign Legion and other troops were still shooting whole villages in the desert.

The French were not at Kano. President Giscard d'Estaing's half-hearted efforts to convene a similar conference had been turned down. His much vaunted, and much criticised, "big-stick" African policy is now in disarray. The key to unlocking finally what for a hundred years has been French Africa may finally have been turned, something the Algerian War only partially achieved, and the rotten regimes of Felix Houphouet-Boigny in Ivory Coast and Leopold Senghor in Senegal are feared soon to follow.

But Chad has oil. And as a Conoco executive who has been intimately involved in the exploration put it, "We have friends on all sides". The country also has uranium which the French minerals goliath, BRGM, has been assiduously prospecting, despite the war, on both sides of the government lines. So, French troops will, for the time being, stay in the south which is, after all, *utile*.

All this means next to nothing to people who expect at least a third of their babies to die, and will travel over 50 miles to collect firewood. The most ominous omen for Chad is that none of the warlords in the new government, except Goukouni, talks convincingly about social justice. The old colonial chain may be about rusted through, with all the organised deprivation and exploitation that it has nakedly entailed. But there is still only a hope that money now will go to the hospitals instead of, as in the past, to buy arms.



The left stirs after long winter of the State's discontent

Isolation and fragmentation has characterised the West German left more than in many other European countries, and certainly more than in Britain. But now new movements, based on local and single issues, among which the anti-nuclear campaign is the most important, are breaking down the sectarian barriers and attracting more widespread support. John Hamson, just back from West Germany, reports on the left in the front line.

West Germany's new left, although not numerically weak compared to some other European countries, has always been singularly isolated inside German society. Unlike Britain, political work in the trades union movement or joint activity with non-revolutionary organisations, for example, are almost unknown. The German Communist Party (DKP), faithfully and assertively reflecting and promoting the Moscow line has only served to further the isolation and estrangement of the new left. The East German writer Rudolf Bahro, for instance, who published a major critique of east European socialism (see *The Leveller* 13), has been denounced by the DKP as a CIA agent.

The two basic forms of the new left were both, albeit in different ways, ultra left. Those usually called 'anarchist' or 'terrorist' and most frequently associated with the RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) or the Baader-Meinhof group resorted to individual acts of political or politico-military expression, in the hope that one of these might eventually spark off mass revolutionary action.

The 'organised' left was by and large subservient to Peking, each group making a fetish of its own party structure, believing that it alone had a monopoly of correct theoretical analysis and strategy. Political practice thus perpetuated the very isolation which had originally determined it.

These cocoons were broken from outside by the *Bürgerinitiativen* (pressure groups), and, particularly, by the anti-nuclear power campaign, which have developed over the last four or five years. Mainly centred on local/regional affairs and on single issue campaigns, the *Bürgerinitiativen* attracted many progressive liberals who had previously been outside politics. Such people were more inclined than at any time since the late 1960s to assess the new left by its politics and not through the distorting medium of the West German press.

Mass anti-nuclear demonstrations, especially the one in Hanover on 31 March, suggested

popular discontent on a scale unprecedented in the country since the war. The rapport between farmers, residents of Hanover, and the revolutionary left on the demonstration augurs well—if only on this issue.

Now members of far-left groups have begun seriously to question their groups' authoritarianism and dogma, and even its relevance to West German society. Feminists have found increasing difficulty in reconciling party membership with feminism and have frequently opted for the latter.

Now a new movement is creating itself, and for many people radical politics at last has something to offer. Although it has no authoritative figureheads or even a semblance of



Jackboot goes in on press

AT THE END of April, Kai Ehlers, former editor of the West German left-wing fortnightly *Arbeiterkampf* (Workers' Struggle) went on trial in Hamburg, charged under paragraph 90a of the criminal code. The trial arises from the paper's coverage of the deaths in Stammheim and Stadelheim prisons of the leaders of the Red Army Fraction urban guerilla group.

At the time of the deaths, *Arbeiterkampf* headlined 'Stop these suicides' and wrote: 'The "suicide" of Ingrid Schubert represents a further dangerous escalation of the destruction of political prisoners... It must be clearly stated: there is no reason for a sound mind to believe in the suicide of the prisoners! Even if one was to give credence to the thesis of the government which asserts a "suicide strategy", it would be absurd that all the most prominent, the "public enemies

no.1" would commit or attempt suicide within barely a month of each other...'

Ehlers and *Arbeiterkampf* have been convicted on five previous occasions of similar offences under West Germany's 'muzzle laws'. Total fines have been 6,100 marks (£1,525), an extra tax on publishing a radical paper. But this time, the authorities are seeking to have Ehlers branded as a 'habitual criminal', and are seeking a five-year jail sentence.

Motions of solidarity from trade union and media organisations, particularly those pointing out that such a charge could not be brought in other countries claiming to be bourgeois democracies, should be sent to *Arbeiterkampf*, c/o Jürgen Reents Verlag, Lerchenstr. 75, 2000 Hamburg 50, West Germany.

Compromising positions for

Italy was astounded in April by a series of spectacular arrests of leading left-wing opponents of the Communist Party and its 'historic compromise' with the Italian state. It is now certain that the Party actively approved and participated in this attack by the state. *John Merrington* looks at this new turn in Italy's road to socialism.

For Italians, it is the story of the year, if not the decade. On 7 April the police announced that they had caught the organisers of the Red Brigades and of last year's kidnapping of former prime minister Aldo Moro. The accused turned out to be Professor Toni Negri, a brilliant academic and one of Italy's leading Marxist theoreticians, and virtually the whole Faculty of Political Science at Padua University – a move akin to arresting all the Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford, on charges of subversion. And not content with this masterstroke, the police also picked up the staff of three of the main radical magazines in Italy, the director of the free radio station *Radio Sherwood*, leaders of the 1968/9 Rome student movement, and former prominent members of the extra-parliamentary group *Potere Operaio*, which had been dissolved in 1973.

Altogether 23 arrests were made. The investigating magistrates claimed that this "blitz on the far left" took its victims by surprise, making impossible their "intended escape". A further 11 people are supposedly "in hiding", and have warrants out against them. Yet since the warrants were issued, most of those named have appeared in public, given press conferences, and in at least one case gone to his office every day until the end of April!

The coincidence of the approaching elections in which the fortunes of the historic compromise will be severely tested and of this brilliant discovery of the elusive Red Brigades is too good to be true. Even before the official charges were brought, the President of the Republic, Sandro Pertini, publicly praised this security operation "in defence of the democratic order." Oddly enough, a Communist Party (PCI) statement on the same day said the same thing. Not only was the sweep a well prepared political manoeuvre against the left, but it was carried out with the full support and active participation of the PCI.

Nine of the accused face charges of organising armed insurrection against the state, and of being the political leadership of the Brigades. All of them are accused of "subversive association" under articles in the Penal Code dating from the fascist era and aggravated by the new anti-terrorist laws of 1975.

The first charge is complete lunacy. The state prosecution has failed to produce any evidence to support this charge, or to prove any connection with the Brigades. The defendants, especially Negri, have consistently over a period of years condemned "elite, commando-style terrorist organisations and tactics" such as those of the Brigades. It is hardly likely that the "political brain" behind the Brigades would publish books, pamphlets and newspapers providing a theory for mass movement politics and condemning vanguard-type "exemplary actions": Negri calls Brigade actions "the mirror of state terrorism", in recent articles and published interviews. The accused are on trial only for *political opinions, publicly held and expressed*.

Why was this grotesque charge brought? If they had brought only the charge of "subversion", this would have led immediately to a political trial, with the entire mass movement of the independent left alongside the accused. By adding the terrorist smear, it is made to look

as though what is being tried is a criminal conspiracy. By mixing political charges with terrorist charges the State is trying to criminalise the entire left movement. The charges have the added advantage of allowing detention without trial for a period of years "pending investigations". In the Valpreda case the defendant was inside for four years on a bombing charge for which three fascists were eventually found guilty. Some of the accused have been imprisoned without their lawyers being told where they are; as in Germany, the authorities have been careful to isolate them and to make the construction of legal defence as difficult as possible.

This operation has been in preparation for two years, that is since the massive confrontations of 1977 in Bologna and other Italian cities between the Communist Party regional governments and the independent left – "the plague carriers", to quote Enrico Berlinguer, Secretary of the PCI. The investigating judges are Communist Party affiliated. The PCI has been especially zealous in labelling all its left opposition as "terrorists" – and hence "proto-fascists". At the same time the Party has faced increasing opposition to its involvement in

Government and support for austerity programmes, the 'historic compromise' has turned sour.

With its active participation in this political frame-up the Party is indicating its willingness to dirty its hands in the sordid state plots which have in recent years become a normal part of Italian political life. What used to be "fascist conspiracies" in the early 1970s have now been given "democratic" respectability. This is what makes the new escalation of repression of the left movement in Italy especially sinister and dangerous.

An international defence campaign for the accused has been set up, calling for statements of support and protest. This is especially important because the defendants have been subjected to a campaign of systematic character assassination in the Italian press – Negri is smeared as a cross between Dr No and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. We must make it clear that we are not fooled: statements of support, demanding release of those detained, and an end to preventive detention without trial, will be fully publicised in the Italian press.

In the UK the Italy '79 Committee is co-ordinating support on behalf of the Committee against Repression, Institute of Political Science, University of Padova, 26 Via del Santo, Padova 35100, Italy. A public meeting in London in late May will be announced in the left press. The UK committee can be contacted care of Rising Free Bookshop, (Box 135), 182 Upper Street, London N.1.

Granada TV



Future City hit

Rising political violence indicates that the 'historic compromise' is close to its day of reckoning. Left opponents of the PCI are especially vulnerable. Recently there has been a spate of attacks by fascists on radio stations. *Radio Citta Futura* was one of the victims.

In January this year, a group of fascists, masked and armed with machine guns and Molotov cocktails, broke into the studio of *Radio Citta Futura* (Future City), an independent radio station of the Italian revolutionary movement (The Movement) in Rome. Five middle-aged women in the studio were making a broadcast about abortion and contraception for the 'Housewives' Collective'. The fascists set fire to the studio and shot at the women as they escaped. Luckily, the women survived.

Sandro Silvestri of RCF was recently in London to assist in the production of *Chain Reaction*, a Granada TV film on the Italian left, to be shown on 29 May. He spoke to

An injured woman is interviewed after the attack on Radio Citta Futura.

The Party

Perhaps you thought it was impossible to be a Stalinist and a social democrat at the same time?

Ugo Pecchioli, Italian Communist Party Shadow Minister of the Interior, speaking recently on the anniversary of the liberation from Fascism, 25 April:

"Our objective today is to stimulate and encourage the widest possible democratic attack against the climate of tension provoked by the subversive terroristic onslaught. There is no difference – black terrorism and red terrorism are the same. We pay homage (especially in view of the judicial enquiries now being carried on) to those judges and the whole of the forces of state security who are acting with democratic coherence and civil courage in defence of our republican institutions. This is the new Resistance."

Earlier (1978) he had asked people to denounce "violent persons" or "potential" terrorists to the police:

"This is not betrayal. We are not asking anybody to betray anything, but to collaborate with the forces of order to neutralise the enemies of democracy. This is not to be a spy, but to do one's duty as a citizen."



No compromise by students in Padua.

Christopher Walker of Peoples News Service about the fascist attack and the role that RCF plays in the revolutionary movement in Rome.

"The Radio is not only for members of the revolutionary left in Rome, but also for other people. The Radio gives a voice to people who have never had the opportunity to speak. For instance, oppressed people like women, gays, students, unemployed and all people who want to speak out but are denied a voice by commercial radio.

"Anyone who disagrees with us can phone in and express their opinions on the air. In this way RCF can be used to give a very clear version of events. This is very important in Rome at the moment."

Sandro contrasted the role of the RCF with that of Italy's leading revolutionary left newspaper, *Lotta Continua*. "To read *Lotta Continua*, you must go out and buy it. In Rome there are only 5-6,000 people who buy it, perhaps 25,000 people read it. The people who buy *Lotta Continua* are only those who are politically involved. You read what is written but you can't participate – your reaction remains inside you.

"*Lotta Continua* was originally run by a political party and although the party has now dissolved, the newspaper is still run by a homogenous group. In RCF we are against homogeneity. We think that when you start to be homogenous you start to make propaganda."

RCF was set up by two small left-wing parties in 1976. But soon after the elections of that year it became independent. The identity of RCF is now closely connected with the identity of the Movement in Italy. The Housewives' Collective is an important example of this link.

"This collective is completely impossible

to imagine without a radio, because the Housewives have to stay at home. The Collective was launched following an appeal by some of the women of Radio Donna (a feminist radio operating independently within RCF). Step by step these women, most of whom are middle-aged, came out and now this is one of the strongest elements of the feminist movement in Italy."

After the attack, the listeners mobilised support for the station. "First, the people of San Lorenzo (the working class area where RCF is located) demonstrated in protest. Then hundreds and hundreds of people came to the station with money to keep RCF operating. In 15 days we collected £10,000 – a lot of money. In the early days, most support came from students. But now, after two years, things have changed. Now we are supported by workers and people from many different backgrounds. Construction workers came to help rebuild the station. Entire factory councils sent their support.

"The day after the attack, 40,000 women demonstrated in Rome. Then we decided RCF would hold its own demonstration. Our demonstration was very important. It was the third time in Rome in the last two years that a peaceful demonstration was held by the revolutionary left (the other two were also called by RCF). For two years every time there was a march a group called 'Autonomia Operaia' created trouble by breaking off from the march and attacking the police."

The demonstration was held the same day as one organised by Italian trade unions. While 15,000 trade unionists rallied at the Coliseum some 50,000 supporters of RCF marched through the streets of Rome.

The government recently closed down another left-wing radio station, *Radio*

Proletaria. Sandro commented: "The closure was really one of those things they do normally – the anti-terrorist machine working against the revolutionary left. In the case of *Radio Proletaria*, there was no proof that people were acting illegally. They were holding an open meeting advertised in the press, but the police planted guns in the building and arrested everyone under the Anti-Terrorist Laws. The next day, the front page of the newspapers said "27 Terrorists Captured". A week later at the bottom of page 12 the papers mentioned that they had been released for lack of evidence.

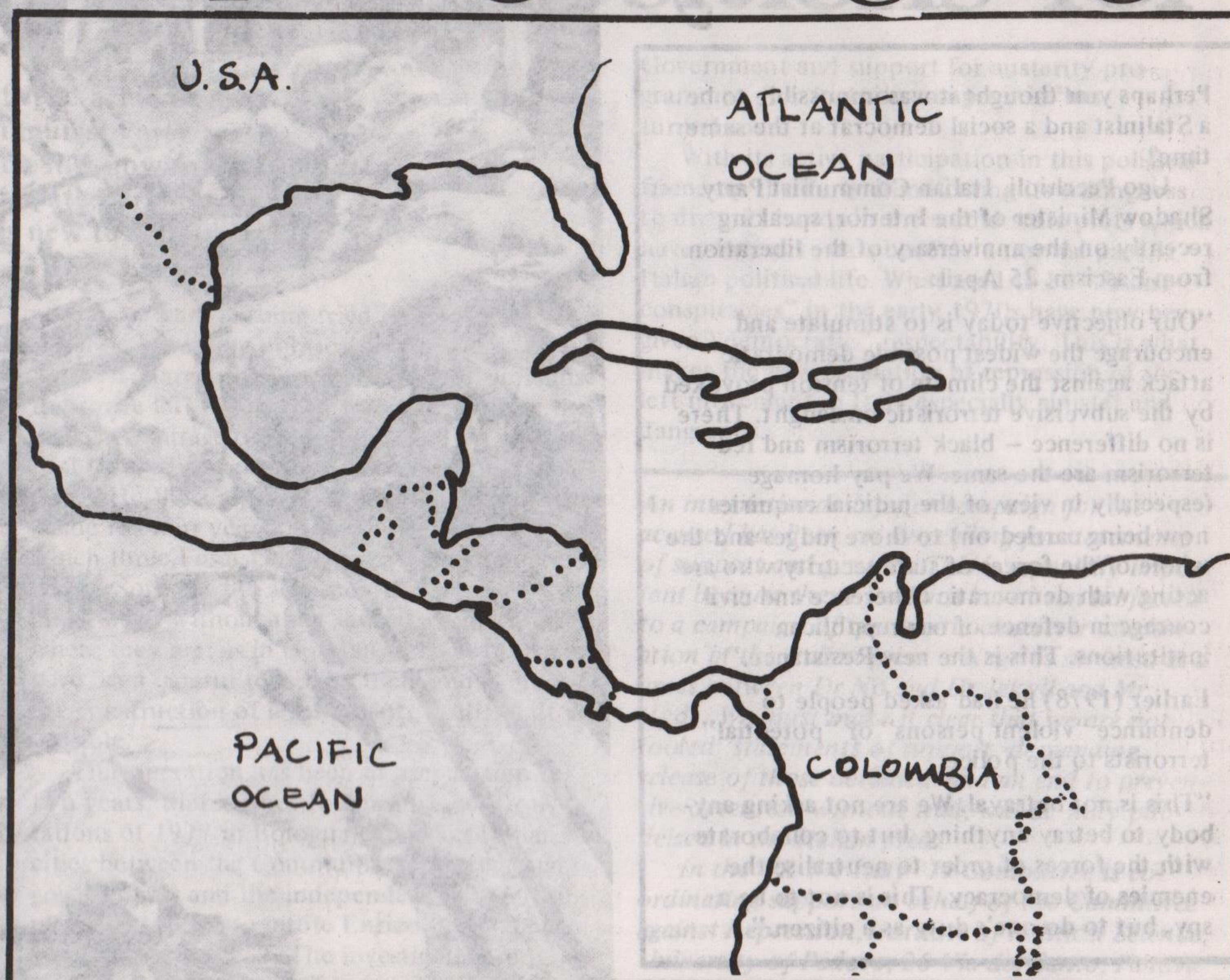
"We are really dangerous to the establishment, because although we are a small opposition movement, we are the only opposition in Italy at the moment.

"They don't want to go against the terrorist leaders at the moment. They are trying to do one thing – to take away the political freedom which people have. This has two results. On the one hand, people join the Red Brigades; on the other hand, people leave politics. All the State's actions encourage people to become terrorists. Why? The State wants a solution. They know they can't have one without arriving at a direct conflict with the Red Brigades. So they use the Anti-Terrorist Laws against people who aren't terrorists.

"If they got rid of the Red Brigades now, they would have no way of proving their credibility. The State needs an external enemy. For years the PCI has been that enemy. As that changed and the PCI became more acceptable, even to the media, the state lost that external enemy. Now they have regained it through the Red Brigades."

(Peoples News Service)

Dope: getting high



LET'S DO SOMETHING CONCRETE ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE COLOMBIAN PEASANTS



... TOMORROW!



Tom Jobson

We all enjoy a quiet smoke. But do we ever think about where and how the weed is grown? A huge, illegal, racket is forcing the peasants of northern Colombia to take great risks in growing the stuff as their main cash crop. But the racket is distorting the economy and causing a hard crackdown by the state. From Bogota, the country's capital, SALLY WILSON argues that it is time dope smokers in the West realised that their pleasure exploits workers in the Third World and encourages new capitalist enterprise.

Colombia's principal export is coffee but the revenue earned by the sale of that cash crop is exceeded by the dollars brought in illegally from the sale of another - marijuana. As the market for marijuana expands in the USA, just across the Gulf of Mexico from Colombia's north coast, cultivation and trafficking in the remote countryside of Colombia has been burgeoning virtually unhindered.

Only in recent months has the government of President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala (himself reputed to be involved in) the business begun to crack down on it to save face with the Americans. But the network and power of the 'Colombian Connection' mafia, aided by institutionalized corruption, is sufficiently widespread to overcome the recent campaign against drug trafficking and generally it is only the 'little fish' who are being caught and sent to prison.

The drug business is heavily weighted in favour of the bosses who, like their legal counterparts, take the fattest profits and are better immunised against the dangers and fluctuations of the market. Most of the marijuana is grown on a commercial scale as part of organised business. New estates are developing as small-scale landowners find themselves being bought out by outsiders - money from exporting marijuana is being invested in the land which will grow the future crops. Labour is easily found among the landless peasants and migrant labourers who go to the coast for the cotton harvest.

Off course, it is illegal to grow marijuana so it is prudent for the cultivators to

disguise the plant by sowing them amidst another crop which will be more conspicuous than the 'weed' when it matures. Such precautions protect the land-owners from air surveillance. Probably the most necessary safeguard, however, is to come to an understanding with the local police. This is easily managed since corruption permeates the bureaucracy from the bottom to the top.

Although most of the marijuana cultivation is controlled by the mafia, there are also campesinos (peasants) cultivating about ten per cent of the herb. It is easy to understand the motive of a campesino, growing just enough food for the family, who takes the opportunity to grow a crop of marijuana. It fetches about five times the price of other cash crops, such as coffee or cotton, that he might grow. And the seeds may be provided and the harvest collected by an agent.

But on their small pieces of land the marijuana displaces some of the basic food supplies grown previously, which means that the family has to spend more money on maize and beans. Since much of the countryside is hours or days walk from the nearest road, supplies have to be brought by mule, and the owners of these beasts exact prices that put the cost of living at double that of the towns. Consequently, the campesinos may earn a few more pesos than before, but they are certainly not getting much richer. They also take on the burden of illegal activities and the resultant insecurity.

This insecurity extends to the whole population now that the north of Colombia

can damage (other people's) lives

has been made into a militarised zone to combat prolific crime. Apart from the long-established contraband trade, there are all the spin-offs from drug-trafficking murders, blackmail and the land pirates who intercept the huge quantities of money and contraband goods in circulation on the roads. In this atmosphere of black market dealings it is hardly surprising that counterfeit dollar and peso notes have infiltrated the currency system too. As a result the insecurity of the region is so unsettling and threatening that, for the vulnerable campesinos, life there has become intolerable.

Moving the army in on such a large scale is part of the much-publicised campaign by the government to stem the tide of marijuana finding its way to the States. (This is good for the President's credibility). Almost every day the newspapers report that vast quantities of cocaine and marijuana have been seized. According to the police, during the months of January and February this year 42 operations were uncovered while 69 men and eight women were arrested for trafficking or cultivating or possessing marijuana and cocaine not to mention the number of perished bodies found in burned-out planes which, being so heavily-laden with drugs, failed to clear the tree-tops as they took off from secluded runways in the more remote parts of northern Colombia. But most of the individuals detained and sent to prison are the labourers from the estates. The land-owners and big dealers are better protected and can at least bribe their way out of prison.

And it's not just the people involved in the business who are suffering the consequences of providing self-interested Westerners with their means of getting high. The people of Colombia as a whole are subjected to stricter controls and higher inflation. The great influx of dollars into the pockets of a minority engaged in drug

trading has inflated prices in certain sectors and distorted the economy. A couple of years ago food, transport and the basic factors of the cost of living were cheaper than in any other Latin American country, but nowadays prices are reaching a level comparable with Britain while wages remain pitifully low. A semi-skilled male industrial worker in Bogota may earn about £50 a month and most workers have to make do with a good deal less. Unemployment and underemployment are so high that for many people the only way to exist is to engage in some form of criminal activity - be it petty thieving or dealing in marijuana.

The influence of overnight wealth is most evident in the property market, especially in Bogota. Speculation in land and housing has become rife as dealers search for a safe investment for their earnings and, since the illegally-imported dollars must circulate outside the banks, it has become customary to pay for property in hard cash. So much money is around that the prices have escalated to extract what the highest bidder can afford to pay. A medium-sized apartment in a low-tone, middle class area now fetches a rent of £100 per month or more, which is quite out of proportion to average wages. Even in the working class districts house prices are not low (there is no public housing) and the grip of poverty is tightening even faster as basic commodity prices rise beyond the reach of the majority.

Clearly the dope smokers of the USA and Europe are participating in and perpetuating a process which is exacerbating poverty and fostering great insecurity in countries which produce their means of a nice buzz.

The big problem is that legalising the use and production of marijuana is not a real solution. In Colombia the lobby to legalise it is gaining support from many sides as there is no shortage of commercially-interested parties. The bankers would love to see all that money going through their

hands (though probably the price would drop if it were legalized) and the government would be more than happy to have the revenue.

However, it is likely to be the multinational companies that make the biggest killing. The existing structure of landholdings is ready and ripe for the multinationals to move in and take over large-scale production

of this new cash crop. Is this what the tobacco companies are waiting for? The campaign to legalise cannabis is almost openly supported by them since it will be they who move in to process and market the stuff. And they are practiced in enticing new customers. The conditions are classically suitable for cash crop production.

cheap Third World labour; large areas of 'under-utilised' land; and an expanding market. In the same way as banana and sugar plantations were established earlier, campesinos' land could be bought up and those who retain their smallholdings will be squeezed out of the commercial marijuana market.

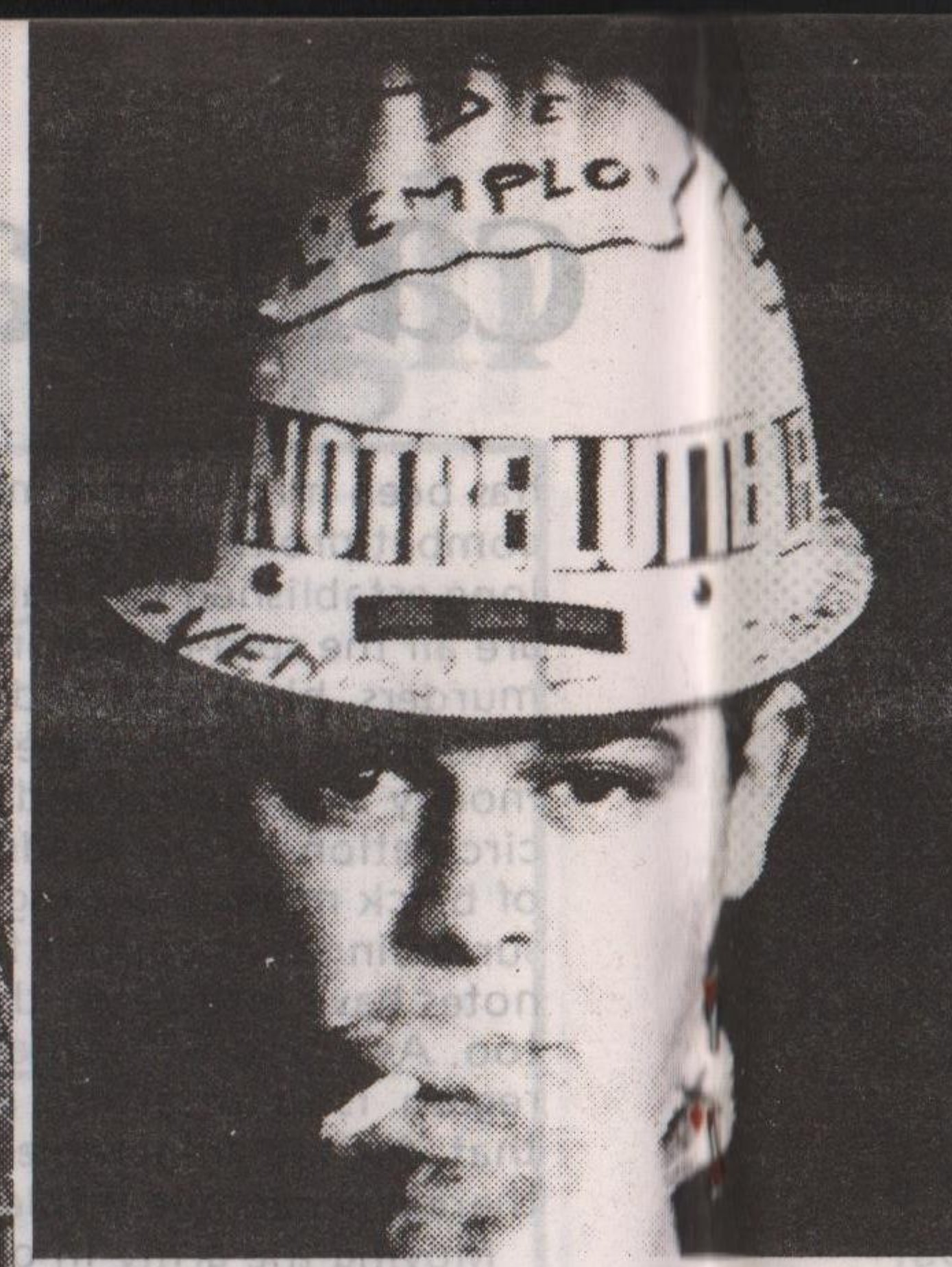
More land could be turned over to a nutritionally and socially useless crop while basic foods would have to be imported. Colombia has large areas of fertile agricultural land which could easily enable the country to become self-supporting in food. Instead it is used for the production of coffee, cotton, sugar and now dope, which subject the country to the fluctuations of an international market biased in favour of the West.

The development of the legalised marijuana industry in the Third World can only result in an increased dependency on foreign capital and imperialist powers. The control of the landlords will be strengthened and the workers will be exploited through yet another consumer industry. The consumers in Britain and the rest of the world should open their eyes, stop rolling their joints, and accept responsibility for their actions.



A March day in Paris

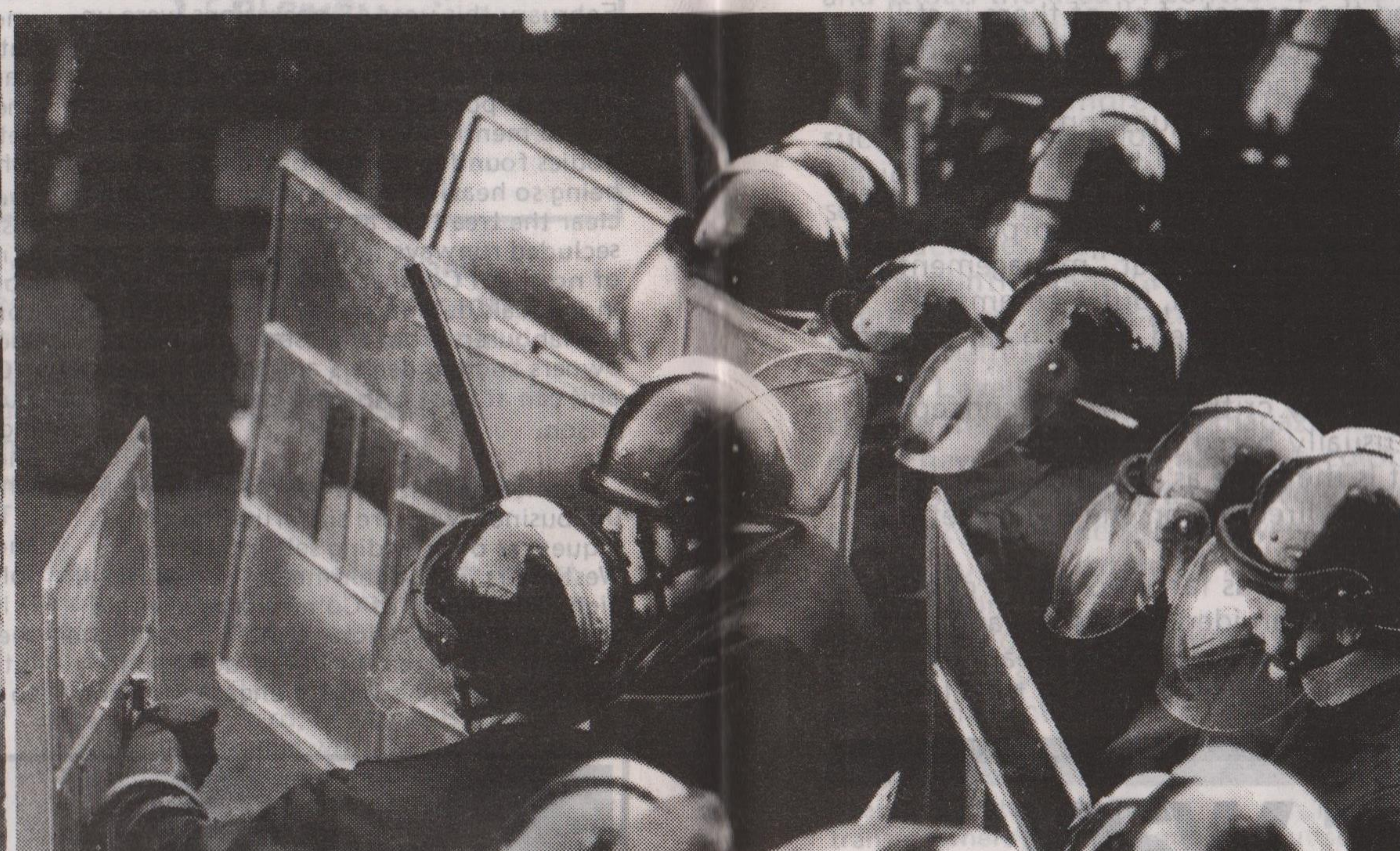
OVER 100,000 workers took to the streets in Paris at the end of March to protest against massive redundancies and closures threatening the French Steel industry. The Communist Party organised demonstration was one of the strongest shows of militancy for several years. In a rising tide of unemployment with 1.4 million already on the dole, the steel industry is due to lose 23,000 jobs by the end of 1980. Here we publish exclusive pictures of the demonstration by Peter Murphy.



The northern steel towns of Longwy (left) and Denain will be two of the worst hit by threatened redundancies. Workers in Denain fought with police for two days in a number of local battles which were a prelude to the nationally organised demo in Paris.



Tens of thousands of workers march into Paris on March 23rd, French riot police were there to greet them. Here a group guard one of the most fashionable boutiques in Paris later attacked by groups of demonstrators.



Communist Party stewards form themselves into a cordon between Autonomes and the main demonstration. Sections of the demonstration later broke away to join forces with the Autonomes in fighting in the areas around the Gare de l'Est.

The Autonomes, who describe themselves as 'young proletarians, workers, people doing courses, people on temporary work and the unemployed' were prominent in the battles that took place with the CRS. They see themselves as representatives of 'the Precarious' — the long term structurally unemployed which capitalism is creating as the base of its economy. Previously they have staged raids on supermarkets as part of an 'auto-reduction of prices' campaign. They have also been fighting for a minimum wage for the unemployed and workers.



A phalanx of CRS, the French riot police, from across the Place de l'Opera, scene of some of the fiercest battles. The level of militancy shown on the demonstration took the Communist Party by surprise with large numbers of workers taking on the police in a political battle that is only just beginning.



IN OUR working lives most of us feel an almost total lack of control. We sell our hours, clock in, clock out, do what we have to do. At the end of the week or the month we grab our money and run to the shops to spend it before it devalues. Most of the time we accept our pay and conditions while dreaming of something better. We grumble, go to union meetings, pass resolutions and hand over our responsibilities to shop stewards and other representatives. If we get really sick of the way that we are treated, we'll even go on strike. When finally our jobs are threatened, we might occupy our workplaces. But this is mainly defensive. If we want more control over our lives we have to do a lot more.

Co-operatives are mushrooming in the dark areas of the economy, where unemployment, poor services and shoddy goods have left large spaces. These usually small enterprises are run in a wide variety of ways and are financed from many different sources: inheritances, savings, loans and grants. Recently various state bodies appear to have been encouraging co-operatives, presumably because they can fulfill a function within the present system.

Clearly co-operatives, collectives and communes do not in themselves represent any immediate threat to the present order. But they should not be dismissed; they represent an attempt by groups of people to manage their own work in a direct way without hierarchies and differentials. When applied to the

whole of society, they have revolutionary consequences.

Larger scale co-operatives have also been set up in the last few years at Briants, Meriden, Fakenham, Scottish Daily News and Kirkby Mechanical Engineering. They have been analysed elsewhere, often very pessimistically, to show how co-operatives inevitably fail within the present capitalist society. However, Meriden is still functioning (even though rather shakily) and the impact of all of them is still finding echoes in new occupations and in plans drawn up by workers in other factories.

These have raised the whole question of workers' control and how people unskilled in "management" can learn to run their own factories. One of the Lucas stewards, who drew up the pioneering Corporate Plan, says they have discovered that "management is not a skill or craft, or profession, but a command relationship, a bad habit inherited from the army and the church."

There have been many criticisms of the concept of workers' control, usually based on the false assumption that it is the same as workers' participation—worker directors on the model set out in the Bullock Report.

Arthur Scargill has gone as far as to say "I consider that workers' control, as an ideology, is the apologist's alternative to socialism, the academic's dream of Utopia." He sees political development in the classic

trade union framework, "wrench from . . . a rotten, corrupt, capitalist system . . . in return for what we put into it, the maximum amount of wages and conditions." Later, when we have "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, then we can transform society and introduce workers' control." This sounds like the gospel according to Marx, the Mechanic: "Seek ye first the Revolution and then all things will be added unto you."

Marx can be read more dialectically. The general ideas of self-management go beyond those of workers' control and co-operation. They raise demands for more collective control of industry, agriculture, education and welfare in which people most directly affected by them take over the day-to-day running of factories, farms, and schools and services. They raise questions about direct democracy; how do we organise general assemblies where decisions are made after the issues are clear, and committees where recallable delegates supervise these decisions?

Self-management as an ideology leads to tactical demands which challenge the normal management and widen the area of control for the workers. These will include changes in conditions and wages because finally they are also control issues. Self-management can also lead to more long term strategic demands such as nationalisation under workers control. Nationalisation in itself is not enough; without self-management it leads to the development of bureaucracies that act in the name of people while taking control (and privileges) for themselves. Until there is mass participation and wide popular involvement socialism cannot succeed.

The Leveller Collective itself is an attempt to change the way in which magazines are produced. We don't have editors, we have two co-ordinators for each issue and they are changed every month. We try to break down the split between prima donnas and the chorus, and rotate all the work, though it doesn't always work.

We would like the issues of co-operatives, workers control and self-management to be discussed more widely and acted on.

operate a system of job transfer where members may apply to the general meeting to do a different task, giving three months notice.

That the co-operative is a common ownership company established for the purpose of advancing the cause of collective ownership of the means of production under workers control.

At present we are earning £65 for a 35 hour week or £78 for 42 hours, but are aiming for the average industrial wage to which we intend to link ourselves. All workers earn equal wages.

Some of our potential earnings (maybe £15 a week each) goes towards subsidies on jobs whose publishers have no printing budgets, eg community groups, campaigning organisations etc. Our intention is to equal the percentages between commercial work and the cheapest rate and live on something in between.

Two important aspects of our survival have been external and internal support. On the outside we have been helped enormously by a solid core of customers and friends who have appreciated what we are trying to do and prefer to give their material to a co-operative. (In return we operate three price scales depending on the type and the financial position of the customer.) Secondly, as a result of our initial fight at our previous firm there was a great feeling of solidarity amongst the members of the co-op, resulting in a strong determination to make a genuine co-operative succeed. We have progressed from being on the dole, through earning pitiful wages to a situation where we work normal hours for acceptable money, in the sort of workplace we can enjoy. There's no denying it was hard work on the way but well worth it.

John Berry

Callaghan's last quango

IT'S NOT easy to get in touch with the Co-operative Development Agency. It doesn't have a listed telephone number, and there is no sign on the old Westminster office block where it's based.

The CDA was the dying Callaghan government's last Quango, its meagre bequest to socialism. A mere gesture: it has no money, or power or facilities to obtain money, for co-operatives. Its director, Denis Lawrence, is from the Department of Industry's small firms division, three years off from retirement, put out to grass in a quiet field. Its board consists of right-wing appointees, mostly from the official Co-operative movement.

Its first priority is "to help the formation of viable industrial and service co-operatives." Set up on 1 September last year, the CDA has yet to assist at the birth of a single co-op.

This is not sloth on the Department of Industry's part. The CDA is only a physical manifestation of the fierce resistance to co-operatives among government, civil service, trade union leaderships, and, sadly, much of the labour and left movement generally.

Opposition to the idea of the shop steward/executive, the worker/manager, is the

biggest obstacle to acceptance of workers' control in the labour movement. The Lucas stewards' combine is quite adamant that it doesn't want to take over the Lucas Aerospace plants. The strategy is to use workers' strength to force the existing ownership to use its resources in a better way for workers and society.

Left parties, likewise, see the takeover of workplaces as a counter-redundancy measure, to put pressure on management. Demands extend to "nationalisation under workers' control without compensation", but there is no thought given to working relationships or structure, and no agitation for workers to start their own co-operatives.

So we are left with the extraordinary position, that the main pressure for the formation of co-operatives comes apparently from social-democrats and the liberal right: from the official Co-op movement, right-wing Labour MPs, the Liberal Party, Sir Arnold Weinstock (yes, Sir Keith Joseph (good grief!), the traditional Quaker common ownership freaks, and pressure groups like Job Ownership (J. Grimond, prop.).

Naturally, none of these people have the slightest interest in socialism. Their idea is that co-operatives will

continued over

CALVERT'S North Star Press Ltd has been trading as a common ownership co-operative since November 1977. Its birth in this form stemmed from a decision by a group of workers who were the printing division of a small theatrical publishing group, which in theory was a co-operative but whose legal and ownership structure was exposed by the owner of the £100 share company threatening half the workforce with the sack.

After four months of struggle with the owner of the company, trying to persuade him to turn it into a proper common ownership co-operative, seven print workers handed in 'constructive resignations' and started putting their efforts into forming a new co-operative press. We had learned our first lesson — don't rely on trust in your working situation, but make sure that your legal and ownership

Making our way

status is clear and unambiguous right from the start.

Initially, we applied for a Manpower Services Commission grant by producing a feasibility study with financial, technical, marketing, and organisational information. We were however refused for two reasons — one reasonable — that we were not intending to employ enough old or young people, and one ridiculous — that we were not going to provide a service that other printers within London were not providing already.

In retrospect, however, we were glad that we did not get a grant to pay our wages, because it meant we had to survive by our own efforts. We realised that we were a 'business' which had commitments to its employees in

terms of conditions and security of employment, wages etc, and also to its customers in terms of speed, quality etc. We managed though to get a loan of £6,000 through ICOF (Industrial Common Ownership Finance Ltd) which meant that we could invest in new plant allowing us to do better quality, better paid work. Our present turnover is around £6,000 a month with 8 workers.

Calvert's is registered under ICOM model rules, which allows for no outside share holders (and thus no outside control) and members (workers) share capital can only be a nominal £1. Capital can be raised by means of loans which get registered as debenture loan stock.

We have added to these ICOM rules various other regulations and principles that we feel are important to the running of a co-operative:

That a monthly meeting of all members shall act as the management of the co-operative and be responsible for making policy decisions, ratifying appointments, approving membership of the co-operative and determining the financial priorities.

That a weekly meeting makes production decisions — planning work for the coming week, employing people etc.

That we do not operate a system of job rotation like some co-operatives as we see this as incompatible with the necessity of developing skills (printing is a 5 year apprenticeship). However, we do



Workers' Control

continued from previous page

be the solution to capitalism's crisis. They are against state investment; when banks won't invest, workers themselves should.

At a time of growing unemployment, that means their redundancy money. It means workers who have been screwed by their bosses and the state proceeding to screw themselves. For with their capital at risk, working conditions go to the wall and productivity reigns.

The model these people look to is the Mondragon community in the Basque country of northern Spain. Over the last couple of years there's been a train of people trailing across to study Mondragon, where workers have to invest the equivalent of more than £1,000 to get a job. One report, by a right wing former leading member of the Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM), Robert Oakeshott, and Geraldine Norman, saleroom correspondent of *The Times* (!) has certainly borne fruit: Oakeshott is director of Job Ownership, and Norman is on the board of the CDA, representing no-one.

Chairman is Lord (former Co-op MP Albert) Oram, a veteran bureaucrat of the official Co-op movement. Other members include the chairman of the Co-op Bank and chief executive of the CWS, Sir Arthur Sugden; another right-wing ICOM defector, Roger Sawtell; and chairpersons of assorted established co-op bodies. There are no trade union or worker representatives.

The feeble line was set by government pressure on the working group appointed to study the CDA idea. Junior industry minister Alan Williams (one of the great unsung villains of the Labour government) barged into a working group meeting and told them that any proposal that meant government money being made available for co-ops would be unacceptable.

So four members produced a minority report, including ICOM representative, Manuela Sykes.

ICOM, which was started by the Scott Bader Commonwealth, a Northamptonshire chemicals factory whose Quaker proprietor introduced a participation scheme in the 1950s, has recently become the most active and radical co-op pressure group. It sponsored the Industrial Common Ownership Act, pushed through Parliament, with Liberal support, in

1976, by Labour backbencher David Watkins.

This established Industrial Common Finance Ltd, a rolling fund which can offer financial assistance. Chairman is Roger Sawtell. The ICOM fund is—wait for it—£250,000. A quarter of a million!

And that is just £50,000 less than the annual administrative budget of the CDA. The Act setting it up granted £900,000 for three years' administration, nothing for assisting co-ops.

There was provision under the Job Creation Programme for small co-ops to be funded by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). The conditions, like those imposed on the big Benn co-ops, had the effect of making them completely unworkable. In any case, the JCP is long finished, and though there are provisions under the successor scheme, the Special Temporary Employment Premium, for what are called "enterprise workshops", only nine tiny outfits have got going in its year's existence. Of the 20 co-op workshops funded by the JCP, nearly all collapsed shortly after their year's grant ran out.

The MSC, which runs these schemes, is extremely reluctant to fund long-term enterprises, of whatever kind. Its job is to keep unemployed people off the streets, no more, no less. MSC advisor Professor John Beishon of the Open University, who was involved in the JCP co-ops, says:

"While I think it's great that people should experiment with new forms of organisation, I don't think it should be done with what are quite large amounts of public money." The JCP spent just £1 million on co-ops.

The truth is, as far as governments are concerned, funding worker-owned and controlled operations is no-one's job.

So, as private banks won't fund them, and workers themselves don't have the bread, capital, through its state representatives, is actively preventing worker control.

Of course, there are hundreds of worker co-ops in Britain with half a dozen large ones dating back to the last century. The CDA files have about 250, of which 40 are production companies. ICOM has about 80 co-ops on its books. Most are very small, and have to scrape a living from wherever they can. For there are other sources of capital: the usual charitable trusts, and a few local authorities who have started to exercise their power under the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act.

Kirkby loses grip

THE COLLAPSE in April of Kirkby Mechanical Engineering, the second Big Benn co-op to bite the dust, brought the usual gleeful cries of 'no management experience' and 'workers can't run industry'.

No-one could run a company under the kind of pressure the KME co-operators faced. That it survived for four years, while senior civil servants, with government in their wake, conspired to prevent its success, and to hand it over to private hands, is astounding.

Eat your hearts out Sir Peter Carey (permanent head of the Department of Industry, assassin of a thousand jobs!); Professor Douglas Hague (industrial advisor to Margaret Thatcher and architect of the final defeat); Alan Williams, Eric Varley... and James Callaghan, who killed off the co-op in the Cabinet.

The fact that, like others, this co-op was set up to save jobs, has hidden the most important fact: that KME was a very successful production operation. Its principal (latterly, its sole) product, the domestic radiator, was selling faster than it could be made. Right up to the end, buyers were offering premiums to get guaranteed delivery.

It was this very success that killed it. Carey and his chickens in government were determined that such a lucrative market should be exploited by private capital.

The first attempt was in August last year. The co-op was short of cash, and its chairman, Jack Spriggs, had talks with Williams (junior industry minister) in London. He returned to tell a mass meeting that a rescue had been worked out. Before the meeting, a telex arrived from Williams informing KME that he had "received a firm offer from a major manufacturer to build a new factory at Kirkby which would guarantee jobs for 250 to 300 of the workforce" (which was then over 700, and had been over 1,000 at its peak).

The company was not named. The condition was that the co-op first went into liquidation. Then the mystery firm would step in, Williams would give them all his hand-outs available under the Industry Act, and some of the workers would get jobs — not, incidentally, Spriggs

himself, though he was not told this. Trust me, Williams was saying. The co-op didn't; once in liquidation, they would have had no control over their future at all.

The company was Stelrad, one of the five big radiator manufacturers, a subsidiary of Metal Box.

Williams had in fact promised to build them a new factory, for free. For it is true that the factory, and the workforce, was too big, for the work they could do. And they couldn't raise the money to invest in plant to make it more efficient. Last year in Cabinet, Callaghan personally opposed granting more aid to KME.

The old Fisher Bendix factory, as it's still known (you pass it on the East Lancs Road) had been used for a wide range of products, which the co-op couldn't sustain. It was built in 1960 by Fisher and Ludlow, steel-pressing division of BMC (now Leyland). Later they made those terrifying Bendix machines that shook 1960s laundrettes, and a wide range of domestic appliances. In 1968 it was bought up by Parkinson Cowan cookers, and in 1971 by Thorn

Reading

A Debate on Workers Control. Arthur Scargill, Audrey Wise (sadly ex-MP) and Mike Cooley (Lucas stewards' leader) thrash out the arguments pro and con. First-rate exposition of basic ideas. Published by IWC, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble St, Nottingham.

Self-Management in the Struggle for Socialism. Michel Raptis (alias Pablo). Solid guide to the ideas and applications of self-management, using pedigree Marxist terminology. Spokesman pamphlet from above address.

Workers Councils and the Economics of a Self-managed Society. Almost worth buying

Electrical. When they wanted to close it, there was the first sit-in, and Thorn sold out to International Property Developers.

IPD bought the Potterton name and made storage radiators, till they too decided to close in 1974. Then the second sit-in; Benn and Eric Heffer got interested, and the co-op was born.

For more than ten years the Kirkby workforce had fought a conspiracy of government and capitalists, anxious to cash in on what they see as the cheap Merseyside labour market, demoralised by rocketing unemployment — to move in with all the regional grants, make a quick killing, and pull out.

The second attempted sale was even more scandalous. The DI set up a three-man enquiry into KME's future, headed by Professor Douglas Hague of the Manchester Business School, with a representative from the Department and PA Management Consultants. This recommended a sale to Worcester Engineering Ltd, a small Midlands firm with no experience of radiator manufacture. It does, however, have connections with Peter Walker, Worcester MP and now Thatcher's agriculture minister. Only after the deal had fallen through, due to the company's evident inability to handle the operation, and the workforce's subsequent rejection of the deal, did it emerge that Hague had long been a private

advisor on industrial strategy to Thatcher herself.

The co-op did make mistakes. Like others whose main preoccupation has been job survival, it could not take the time to sort out its structure or plan a future. It was virtually run by Spriggs and a committee of shop stewards, without any initiative coming up from the shop floor workers, who just kept their heads down and worked.

It also failed to mobilise political support. While other local workforces campaigned vigorously against closures, it allowed itself to be demoralised into acceptance.

And the real point about the much-mentioned 'lack of management expertise' is this: it is an ideological con, designed to keep workers in their place. Private management doesn't have to be so expert when the DI is plying them with money, factories, an expendable labour force, bounteous advice on marketing and exporting and all the rest of it. The civil servants never gave KME advice or assistance of any kind.

Denis Skinner MP says: "There is no real free enterprise around. They are all maintained by the taxpayer. The government says, you can entrepreneur all you like, when you get into trouble we'll bail you out. They just play at risk-taking but there's not risk at all. They can't lose. People should know this — there lies the cause of all our problems."

The Midland Reds

THERE MUST be a good deal of muffled rage among top brass at the Department of Industry that Triumph Motorcycles (Meriden) is still going. They have strangled the other two Benn co-ops. But the Meriden workers have proved a doughty bunch.

The co-operators have had to make enormous compromises to survive. They started with a great dead weight of government restrictions round their necks (see *The Leveller* Pilot issue); they ran out of money after two years and got the regulation DoI refusal of more; they got bailed out by, of all people, Sir Arnold Weinstock of GEC, who fixed a quadripartite deal with the government and the former owners, Norton Villiers' Triumph; and they have had to whittle away their co-operative ideals, change their structure, bring in outside management... but, after three and a half years, they are still going.

At first sight, the internal changes bear an uncanny similarity to what happened at that most disastrous of the Benn co-ops, the *Scottish Daily News*. When that paper got into the spiral of declining circulation and rising cash-flow problems, the workers

endorsed their leaders' plans and allowed in the 'dynamic' right-wing Labour politician Robert Maxwell. The hero who had led the 14-month sit-in to win the paper, Allister Mackie, quit in disgust. Maxwell assumed a highly personal, autocratic management style. The unions in the place failed to stand up to the new regime. When Meriden ran into the red the co-op leaders called in the dynamic right-wing Labour politician, Geoffrey Robinson, and the workforce endorsed him. The hero who had led the sit-in that got the co-op off the ground, Denis Johnson, quit in disgust. Geoffrey Robinson has a highly personal, autocratic management style.

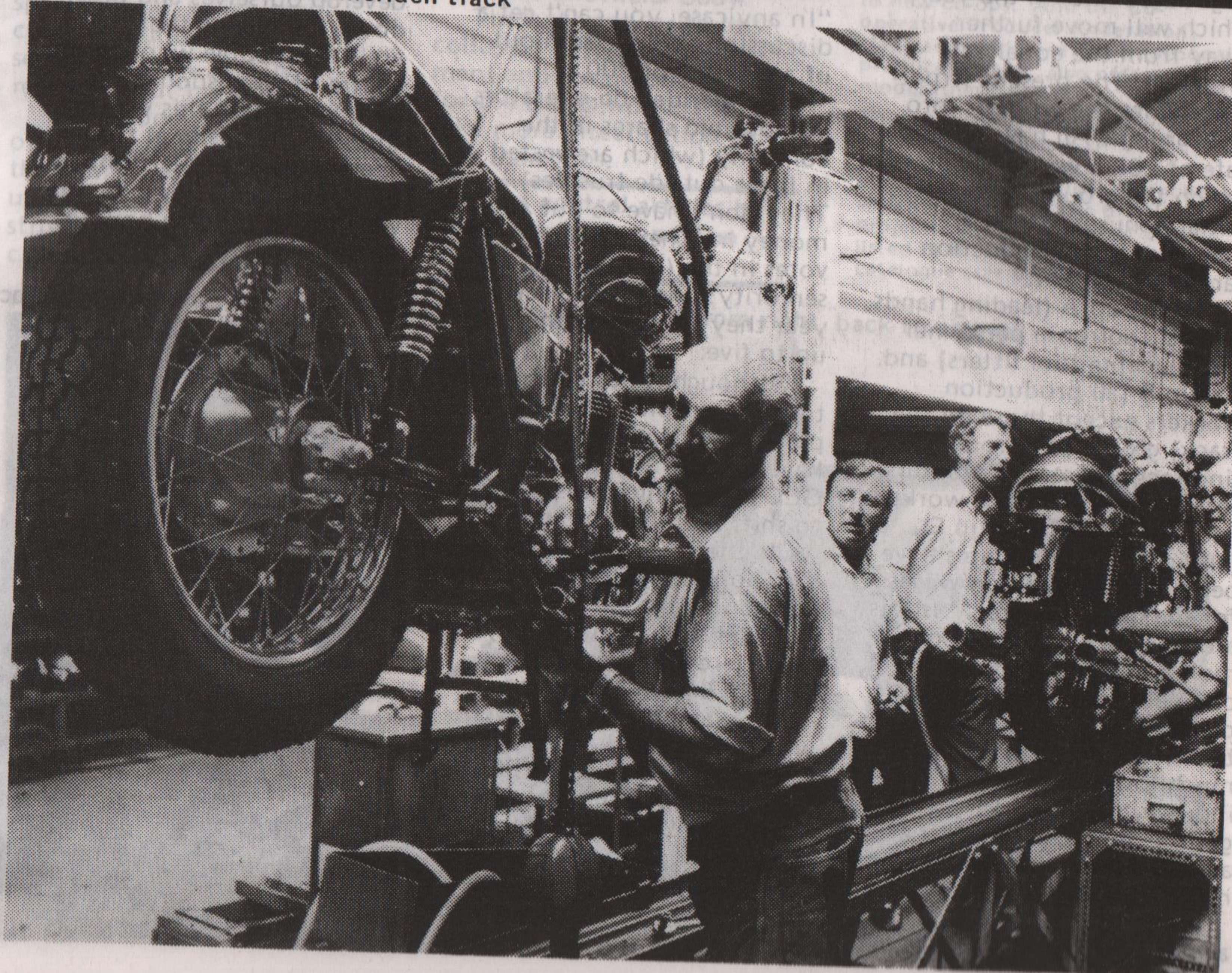
The unions play virtually no part in running the co-op or protecting their members.

They have brought in vaunted professional management, paid at professional rates. They have scrapped the equal pay scale in favour of differentials. They have reduced real workers' control to a formality.

But they are learning, and succeeding in working out, how to meet the biggest problem facing a big worker-owned concern: how to compete in

continued over

Assembling bikes on the Meriden track



a capitalist economy.

Inability to compete is "the complaint that killed KME", says chief engineering executive Brian Jones. "This place is just ill, but stands a good chance of recovery."

Jones is one of the management team of eight brought in during the post-Weinstock recovery programme. There are marketing, design, production, inspection, and even personnel executives. They are salaried, at between £5,000 and £8,000 a year, and they are not full members of the co-op.

The co-operative workforce is now 724, which makes Meriden the biggest producer co-op in the country. They started up in 1975 with 280, all paid £50 a week; decisions were made by a board, which consisted of one representative from each of the eight unions in the plant. Mass meetings were held every Saturday morning.

The board remains. It now meets monthly, and receives a report from Geoffrey Robinson, who is styled 'chief executive'. Mass meetings are held, according to chairman John Rosomond (who took over from Johnson) "whenever the board considers a decision needs endorsement by the whole workforce, about every two or three months". Day-to-day decisions are made by the management team.

The latest endorsement by a mass meeting was of a new wage structure, to be negotiated later in the year, which will move further away from the equal pay principle. The present structure divides the workers into four groups. All have a basic rate of £68 a week, on top of which the groups get differential bonuses, which are conditional on production targets being met.

So Group A (leading hands, setters, toolroom personnel and machine tool fitters) and Group B (all production workers except those on the track) gross £81; Group C (indirect and service workers, fork-lift drivers, track workers and stores) £76; Group D (clerical) £71. The rates have been loosely based on wages for the Coventry area. "Ideals are very nice", says Rosomond, "but we do have to compete for skilled labour on the market". In reality, the differentials are still much lower than in private industry, with the top grades getting appreciably less than average rates, and the bottom, more.

"But we have to work out a way of giving higher incentive

ives to workers with skill and responsibility, which are really the same thing", he says.

Rosomond is only 33, and had been with Triumph before the 1974 closure. He's a veteran of the occupation, one of around 100 still left, a leading hand welder and Meriden shop chairman of the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers. He talks with openness and enthusiasm about the co-op, and no-one would say, especially no-one who knew the struggles Meriden has been through, that he has any lack of commitment.

There's a very comradely atmosphere about the place. "There always has been", says Rosomond. "But we do have discipline problems, inevitably. If there is no control whatsoever people abuse the system and unfortunately that was happening."

So there is an elaborate disciplinary procedure: an appeals committee, consisting of five shop-floor representatives, to which workers in trouble can turn. (But hire and fire powers remain, officially, in the personnel manager's hands.) The committee has to be used quite often — once or twice a week, says Rosomond.

In effect, they have taken over the role of shop stewards, for whom there is no place at Meriden. Union meetings do take place, but only informally and from time to time, as for instance, when a proposal for a mass meeting is considered. "It's a sad fact, but people get tired of meetings", says Rosomond. "In any case, you can't get a discussion and decision out of a meeting of 700."

The Meriden co-operators do not hold shares in the company (which are vested in three outside trustees). They don't have to put any money in. They earn their votes in the (mass) AGM by seniority: one vote for every year they've worked there, up to five.

Although it has yet to turn in a surplus, Meriden is past its worst crises. They have paid off the £1 million GEC loan (which was granted to shift 2,000 unsold bikes, while the government bought out, nominally, the NVT hold on design and marketing) and have started repaying the interest on Benn's original £4.2 million loan.

Its market is holding well, with a now steady production of 300 Bonneville 750cc bikes a week selling in advance — 80 percent for export, and 75 percent of these going to the US. They are also developing the bike, which wasn't possible before.

Workers' Control



"We aren't machines"

WORKERS CONTROL is not just about who sits on the board; it is also about activating shop floor workers to challenge management decisions at every level.

The Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee has been mainly concerned with extending collective bargaining into production, planning, marketing and into other areas which are normally the managerial prerogative; they have been less concerned with the whole problem of the ownership of the Lucas Aerospace group.

Ernie Scarbrow, one of the stewards, explained some of the ideas behind it: "We must develop ourselves and break down the feeling that there are a few people who are the centre of all wisdom. The only way to do this was to throw ourselves in at the deep end and to learn things by doing them. For example we all have to learn how to speak at meetings and we

encourage newcomers to join in. Most people working become so disillusioned that they switch off when they clock in and some don't even switch on again when they leave.

"In Lucas we are doing highly skilled work but we are still treated almost like machines. Machines are very efficient at doing repetitive tasks and they don't get tired. Until recently humans were in charge of machines but now we get treated the same way. Human beings can sometimes be unreliable but they are intelligent and creative. We must be motivated and activated to use this intelligence, to use our knowledge in new ways."

Lucas Aerospace was set up in 1970 from the Aircraft Division of AEI/GEC, Lucas Gas Turbine, Rotax and a number of other small firms. They attempted to rationalise their organisation from the start, when they had a total

work force of 18,000. This has been reduced now to around 12,000 by 'natural' wastage; there have been no large scale redundancies so no major confrontation has taken place.

The shop stewards throughout the group felt that they had common problems and formed the combine committee drawing together members from 11 unions in all the 17 factories. At present about 90% of the work of Lucas is for the Ministry of Defence and therefore it is difficult to find out about the products. The workers were concerned about what they were making, and of course about the loss of jobs, so they decided to draw up an Alternative Corporate Plan.

Questionnaires were sent out asking all the workers to audit the available equipment and plant, and their skills, and then to make specific, technically backed proposals of alternative socially-useful products. The combine committee collected the proposals and came up with a

Workers' plans

FOLLOWING the Lucas lead, other groups of stewards have produced detailed plans for the conversion of their industries to worker-controlled socially useful work.

Widest in scope is the work of the stewards in the power engineering industry. Stewards from C A Parsons, Clarke Chapman, GEC and Babcock and Wilcox — the entire generating industry — got together to produce a pamphlet and commission the Conference of Socialist Economists for a report.

Vickers National Shop Stewards have produced two plans for the de-militarisation of the group's work, and is currently campaigning for the more acceptable use of the massive compensation paid to Vickers by the government when ship-building was nationalised.

In the motor industry, stewards from Chrysler (who produced a group plan when the US owners threatened to pull out in 1975 — see *The Leveller* Pilot Issue), Leyland, Ford, Vauxhall and Triumph (at Speke, when it was still going), combined with others from component firms to produce a report, again with the co-operation of the CSE.

In machine tools there have been numerous groupings. A report on the whole industry was commissioned by the Tube Investments Joint Shop Stewards Committee and produced by the North East Trade Union Studies Information Unit. There are also regional combines in the north-east and the Coventry area.

Stewards in ICI have set up a Research Co-op and produced two issues of *Chemco News*. It is hoped that this will help to establish an effective combine. As in nearly all cases, workers isolated in plants scattered all over the country are facing large-scale redundancies.

Drawing up plans for the better use of capital is becoming an effective and highly political means for resisting closures.

list of 150 products — many designed specifically for the third world, through aid programmes — covering transport and braking systems, alternative energy sources and medical equipment. The plan was published in January 1976 and was greeted quite enthusiastically by the press and the unions.

A Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems was set up at North East London Polytechnic with a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The aim of the centre was to publicise the work of the Combine committee and to help with research and development of some of the products.

This research has yielded fruitful results. It isn't just conducted in laboratories; there have been consultations with workers in related fields, for instance with health service workers over the Lucas kidney machine. It turned out that this machine had serious drawbacks: it requires mains pressure water supply, which means it can't be used in high rise dwellings and kidney patients have to go to hospital for dialysis. The water run-off goes back into the mains, with the danger of drift back into the plumbing. With 3,000 people at risk every year because they don't get dialysis, this kind of work is life-saving. But management had never bothered with it.

The plan was produced at a very high technical level (it runs into several volumes and thousands of pages). Management were shaken when they referred one complicated specification, which they could not understand, to a senior scientist, and he replied: "But I wrote it".

The Labour Party has officially given its backing to the plan (though engineering union leaders have continually striven to sabotage it) and called for the nationalisation

of Lucas. The combine committee have not been so concerned with the question of ownership; they felt that the company was being run almost entirely on public money anyway. The purchasing power of the government ought to be enough to force on them public accountability. But the Labour government did nothing to help the Lucas workers.

The Victor Plant in Liverpool has been threatened with closure, putting in danger 1,500 jobs. One of the company's excuses has been that there are faulty foundations, but according to the stewards the company already knew about these structural weaknesses when they bought the factory in 1975.

The government's response was to set up a tripartite working party with union, management and Department of Industry representatives. The stewards maintain that the foundations can be repaired and that with the development of new products the present work force could be retained. The working party is actually going to look at some alternative products — the nearest thing there's been to even *de facto* recognition of the plan.

The hostility of union leadership can be seen in the Lucas Aerospace Annual Personnel Report for 1977-78: "Nevertheless it is clear that national officers of the unions and the Department of Industry are aware of the company's policies and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is dealing effectively with this unofficial body."

The only answer to this collusion between management and the unions will be for the Lucas workers to take more direct action to save their jobs.

Workers control articles by Roger Andersen and Tim Gopsill

Co-op Campaigns

ORGANISATIONS promoting workers control and co-operatives (from a socialist standpoint) include:

Industrial Common Ownership Movement, 31, Hare St, London SE18; phone 01-855-4099. Long-standing paternalistic co-op pressure group, now changing with influx of lefty activists, and the departure of old reactionary leadership to join Quangos etc. ICOM's great service is that it helps co-ops form. It offers a set of model rules which meet all the ridiculous requirements of the 1965 Industrial and Provident Societies Act, necessary to become a registered friendly society (which gives limited liability). Using these rules, which are designed for worker rather than consumer co-ops, gets you half-price registration.

Institute for Workers Control, Bertrand Russell House, Gable St, Nottingham; phone 74504. Influential left labour movement talk-shop, organises conferences and produces excellent pamphlets on specific issues and industries. Associated with Russell Foundation and Spokesman publishers.

Socialist Environment and Resources Association, 9, Poland St, London W1; phone 01-437-3749. Active left Labour party group, promotes co-ops as part of socialist strategy for production. Covers range of alternatives: Production, energy, technology, planning. Has women's and local groups.

Brief mentions for two not-quite-so-goods: **The Co-operative Union**, Holyoake Ho, Hanover St, Manchester M60 0AS; phone 061-834-0975. Federation of the official co-op bodies: Co-operative Party, CWS, retail groups etc. The dead hands of bureaucracy and commercialism have not quite stifled all life, and it is now offering assistance to new co-ops. And the **Co-operative Producer Federation**, trade association of the traditional producer co-ops, also offers model rules.

These are all national bodies. There is any number of local groups (including local Co-operative Development Agencies, which have the CDA's blessing), projects and so on. Many are listed in *In The Making's* catalogue (see bibliography).

The Lucas combine stewards meet: Scarbrow is second from right, back to camera



THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE

Debates about education can arouse great passion and become the focus of political contention - in China some colleges are still closed a decade after the cultural revolution, in West Germany armed riot police storm nurseries and left-wing teachers are denied work. In Britain, despite Callaghan's efforts to stir up a "great debate", education seems a relatively quiet, not to say neglected, area. *Stephen Castles* and *Wiebke Wustenberg* have just written a book on education and socialism which should re-awaken our interest. *Terry Iltott* talked to them.

The first question, of course, is what exactly is wrong with the education we've got?

A basic principle of bourgeois education is to divide knowledge up into compartments so that somebody can become very highly qualified in one field of knowledge without really knowing anything else in other fields of society or other fields of technology. This is linked to the selection of people for different tasks. There used to be specific schools for these different roles - secondary modern, grammar and so on - but now there is the more efficient and just as selective method of the comprehensive.

Can education usefully be reformed within capitalist society?

Education can certainly change within capitalist society, there's no doubt about that. If you look back to the beginning of capitalist society, when there was a fairly small need for skilled workers, there wasn't really any necessity to have any form of mass education. As soon as you get more complex forms of work - in engineering or chemicals - then some form of elementary education becomes necessary and you can see the introduction of universal elementary education. So you can say that education is always changing.

Also, the aims of education change. Early mass education aimed to discipline workers for the labour process in a very crude way - through corporal punishment, religious and chauvinist indoctrination and so on. That worked all right until about the First World War. Later on, when there was a need for more qualified workers, education took on a whole new range of aims.

In the sixties one of the most important of these was what they called "transferable skills". As the nature of work changed so it became more and more important to train people with the skills appropriate to any form of labour - skills which were transferable. The most general transferable skill is submission to the discipline of the capitalist labour process itself.

Now, with every form of labour changing within a lifetime, so the worker will not only have to change his or her job, but also the nature of his or her employment perhaps several times - the new skills are mobility, flexibility and technical sensitivity (quick adaptation to new machinery).

And things are still changing. A recent report - the Holland Report - called for "general and life skills" in education. So you're not just turning out people for the production process any more, you're very explicitly trying to produce certain sorts of personal characteristics. These are connected with the fact that in future there's going to be permanent unemployment, youth unemployment especially, and de-skilling of labour. So you have to provide people, as schoolchildren, with the personal characteristics that will accept mobility, de-skilling and periods of unemployment.

These aims are put into effect by changes in assessment, changes in school management and upgrading of careers-teaching. The "life skills" are supposed to be brought about by such things as the raising of the school-leaving age, expansion of further education, Youth Opportunity Programmes and the Manpower Services Commission.



Anyone who wants to build a socialist revolution has to deal with a very big contradiction. Lenin said that it was only the utopians and the romantics who thought you could educate people for socialism first and then get your socialist society as a consequence - as Robert Owen thought, for example. Lenin said that we have to build socialism with the people we've got - who've been corrupted and oppressed by capitalist society. So that's the contradiction. You have to start developing socialist education within capitalist society, because that's an important part of any revolutionary strategy, but at the same time you're always under terrific restraints because no capitalist state is going to let you get very far.

The early organisations of the labour movement in this country did a lot for education - they set up their own 'halls of knowledge' - and the Chartists had their reading rooms. But at a certain stage the labour movement in this country stopped doing much about education and started demanding state education - and had a lot of success with these demands. But in doing so it lost control of the content of that education - perhaps even lost sight of the aims of education.

In your book you talk about "polytechnic education". What is meant by that term?

The expression was originally termed by Marx and taken up by Russian and German socialists. It means, firstly, that all learning should be combined with productive work - not just any work, but socially necessary productive labour. Through work, children understand the relevance of the things they learn at school. Marx also emphasised the combination of intellectual learning with physical development. So there are three elements: productive work, intellectual learning and physical development.

How does that work in practice?

The clearest answer is to look at the ideas and practice of Krupskaya. She said you should take what the children are doing anyway - say, a boy who feeds chickens - and make this the basis of learning about society. You study chickens, their nutritional needs, the food value of eggs, the organisation of agriculture and so on. And to do this you have to develop the child's cultural capabilities - writing, arithmetic and so on. This is called the "complex method" - which means you don't study subjects any more but problems. In studying problems you would always need to develop cultural skills, with the advantage that education is not divorced from social life.

This is, of course, very much against the notion of specialisation, which runs through every aspect of capitalist life. An example of this is that the only people considered fit to teach are professional teachers who are licensed to do so by the state. We believe that working class parents have a lot to teach. Also, we are convinced that children can educate each other - younger children from older children and vice versa. We want to get away from the single age groups that are the rule now so that children of different ages do mix. This is really a problem of developed societies, because in less-developed countries nearly every child is with others of different ages anyway.

Examinations "When I read the letter I nearly collapsed"

ADAM THOMPSON is a 19 year old A level student. In this article he writes about his feelings as one of the hundreds of thousands of students taking exams this summer.

This exam business all started when I first took my O levels at 16. I failed the lot except for English Language. So I went to the Technical College where I had planned to take my A levels, to take my O levels again. I took different O levels the second time so that I wouldn't get bored. I got most of them the second time - enough to go and take my A levels.

When I read the letter giving my O level results I nearly collapsed. I couldn't believe I had done so badly. Three Ds and three Es - both of which are fail grades. I got English by taking it on two different exam boards and in fact I failed one of them. Since then I've tried to explain to myself why I failed my O levels. I decided there were various factors. For a start I hated my boarding school so I felt generally pissed off and depressed. I went to the pub most nights to escape the oppressive atmosphere and I also had a lot too much bed and not enough sleep. The school was mixed. But, despite those things, I did work for my exams and I didn't do that badly in school work.

What I think was the main factor contributing to my failing was that for O level you have to memorise a load of facts and then when it comes to the exam you just regurgitate the information in the form of an essay and give it to the examiner. You are not expected in the essay to discuss or argue about this information, and if you do, tough, you've failed. Well I've never been much good at writing the right kind of essays - particularly in a short, stressful period of time - so it was bad luck for me. I first realised this when I took O levels for the second time. Before then, despite my hatred of the examination system, I still thought that it was me that was at fault for failing my O levels.

Having just got enough O levels, I changed college and went to do my A levels. I didn't realise at the time that as I didn't want to go to university I would probably have done better getting a job. But middle class indoctrination says you should go to university - even if you don't know what to do there. When I started my A levels I also started evening classes in welding two nights a week. So when I take my exams this summer I'm certainly going to know about it - three A levels and the welding course.

For me, A levels are much better than O levels because, although you still have to memorise facts and write them down in the exam, you can also argue and discuss the facts. But, of course, you also have to watch what you write about because if you are too overtly socialist you will probably fail. I also like to discuss things in class - which is partly why I'm taking three A levels in two years rather than two in one. But a lot of people taking A level with me still seem to have the O level mentality and are only interested in taking down word for word what the lecturer says. So while I talk with the lecturer the rest of the people in the class just sit and wait until we shut up. The education system does a good job in making sure people accept what they are told.

Passing exams is the main focus of an O level or an A level course. So, rather than being taught about the subject you are taking, you are taught how to pass exams. This is true with CSEs, O levels and A levels, but most true with CSEs and O levels - which, of course, is where most people finish their education. One of the exam system's saving graces is that you can generally mess around until you get to within a month of the exam - when you work bloody hard to pass. But that implies you are not really interested in the subjects you are taking.

I messed around last year. I was president of the students' union. I did my welding evening class and I also continued my political activities. But there was always the cloud of my A levels hanging over me which made me feel I should be doing my studies. This year I've tried rather unsuccessfully to cut down on my out-of-college activities. But now I must really get down to work.

THEN AGAIN, YOU COULD SAY THAT MY STEALING THE EXAM PAPER WAS JUST A FORM OF INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE!



So education just changes as a reflex to the needs of capital? Is there no hope for real reform?

Well, if you look at the basic principles of Marxist educational theory: firstly, that education should aim for the "totally developed individual" - someone who understands the structure of society and the basic laws of technology, and who is capable and experienced in both mental and manual work - obviously this sort of personal development is not possible in capitalist society.

Apart from it being one of the aims of socialism to provide an all-round education in the future, why is education so important for us now?

Where have Marxist educational ideas been put into practice, and with what success?

Well, in Russia you could say that Stalinism killed the attempts to set up polytechnic education. But our research suggests that this was already happening before Stalin came to power. The reasons are connected with the backwardness of Russian society. Immediately after the revolution the Bolsheviks said, 'we will now have a nine year school system incorporating the polytechnic principles'. But the fact of the matter was that weren't any schools at all for most children, and many teachers were unprepared for the new methods. Very quickly there was opposition to the new education from people within the party, who were saying 'we just can't afford it—it's a luxury for us—what we need is large numbers of economic experts and technicians to keep the revolution alive at all'. There was a gradual retreat from polytechnic education throughout the twenties, and when Stalin came to power it was abolished altogether.

In the East European countries today education is much more closely related to the production process than over here, but it is a long way removed from the notion of the "fully developed individual". There is a very rigid curriculum decided upon at the state level and so on. It's certainly not a liberating force.

China is more interesting, but very difficult to discuss because we have so little reliable information about it. One thing that is apparent is the enormous emphasis that Mao and the party put on education and the role of consciousness. In terms of quantitative development what they have done is incredible and must be admired, and they have widely practiced the principle of introducing real productive work into education.

What can be done here and now in the capitalist countries?

In France, there is the Freinet movement of perhaps 25,000 teachers working in state schools, who are trying to introduce manual work and make education less abstract. They don't do real work—work that is socially necessary—but they do manual work that relates to the needs of the children, like bicycle manufacture.

In Britain, the main movement has been what's called 'progressivism', which is much more concerned with creativity and a child's individuality—which is certainly important—than with learning about social and economic life.

And what about your own project in Bristol?

It is not impossible to work to change education within the school system, but it is very difficult. We believe that there is an enormous potential for developing children's consciousness of society at a fairly early age, certainly before school age, and that this is an area which is still relatively little controlled by the state. It's a good place for us to work.

Totterdown, the area of Bristol where we have started our project, is very much a working class community with old housing. It's a poor area with a lot of immigrants. Also it has been the victim of bad planning—the very centre of the community was torn down six years ago to make way for a new ring road which has never been built. People are very angry about this.

Our project is not really operational yet. What we want to do is basically four things: a group for very small children, from three months old; then a pre-school group; then a group for school children to come to after school, mainly for workshops; and finally an adventure playground on the wasteland outside.

We need funds for conversion work and so on. But the local people are very willing to help out. For the present we look after local kids for three mornings a week. The numbers are growing every day and it is especially good for single mothers who come along.

We hope our project will be successful at a local level, and that if it is it will have some effect elsewhere. To become a real challenge to the existing school system, of course, there would have to be some kind of movement with lots of people doing it.

If socialists in education become more conscious of the possibility of some form of counter socialisation, inside or outside the schools, then it is possible to do something to change education even under capitalism.

The Education of The Future, by Stephen Castles and Wiebke Wustenberg, published by Pluto Press, £3.95.

Diet

Flabby thinking, a weight on the mind

Even the most right-on-ideological-non-make-up-wearing feminist will hate the size of her thighs. To be thin is to be vibrant, sexual, a real person. To be overweight is to be fettered by monstrous mounds of excess material.

It is one o'clock and therefore lunchtime. I carefully prepare my low calorie meal. Coleslaw (with yoghurt, not mayonnaise) tomatoes (they're only made of water so I can have as many as I like of them) one solitary slice of wholemeal bread (the knife at an angle so that the slice lands up larger than it should be) and the sacred food of slimmers—cottage cheese.

The time spent on preparation is consoling as it is some sort of contact with the object of my obsession. The eating of it is unsatisfying, as the choice of what to eat is determined only by what I'm not allowed to have. I am committed to losing a stone over the next three weeks. This will mean that I will no longer be gormless, podgy, or out of control. At the end of the meal I knock back a few more safe tomatoes, and get my mind into gear for what I will eat for supper.

At some time in her life almost every woman in the west will believe herself to be overweight, and embark on some kind of conscious food regulation. You need only look at adverts, telly, and magazines to see what size we are meant to be. You won't find clothes to fit if you go over the desired limit, and to cross the dividing line means that you are likely to feel a self-hating social outcast.

There are special definitions of overweight that women reserve for themselves. A Scandinavian study showed that 50% of 18 year old girls thought that they were too fat, as opposed to only 7% of the boys. Most of these girls will invest food with immense and seductive powers, just waiting to lure them into the hell that is being a fatty.

They will go on to learn the full catechism of food denial. "No thanks, I really shouldn't... oh well, just a taste..." Some will develop amazing feats of mental arithmetic so as to calculate caloric intake. They will be able to estimate at a glance how fattening different foods are, but realistic estimates of their body size will have gone out of the window: "I may not look fat to you, but I've put on nearly a stone since Christmas."

If you believe you are too fat, and that you are eating too much, the obvious thing is to diet. At this time of year women's pages and magazines are full of hints to get you "in trim for summer", with detailed culinary assault courses to help you do it. All of them require an even greater preoccupation with food than you may have had before. It's possible to lose weight just by eating a smaller amount of what you eat already, but short term diets nearly always concentrate on large amounts of two or three specific foods. The egg and celery diet:

"Breakfast—one stick of celery heaped with chopped boiled egg. Lunch—Celery aux Oeufs: boiled grated celery drenched with scrambled egg" etc etc for a week. I once went on a diet of nothing but six bananas for five days. It was supposed to lose me about five pounds, but I felt faint and miserable by Wednesday, as well as continually dominated by the decision-making about when I was going to have the next banana. Once off it, I spent Saturday consoling myself with as much food as I could eat.

So if the crash diet doesn't work, what next? You could try reading one of the specialist dieting magazines which occupy over-increasing areas of newsagents' stands... *Slimming and Nutrition Slimming Naturally* or *Weight Watchers Magazine*. Most of these head their contents pages with what every dieter loves and fears the most: "Diets, Recipes, Food Information" or "FOOD—Maintenance: now you are at goal you may have a drink". Flipping through, all the magazines are full of recipes to occupy the slimmers equivalent of a De Militarized Zone: "Colourful Cabbage Salad, One-egg Puffy Omelette, Grilled Banana." One magazine had seven pages of pics of fried food, which were designed to "help you fry with slimming discrimination." Where else would you find so much attention paid to that which you should deny yourself? They even took the trouble to give the calorie counts of five different sizes of chips.

All the magazines, in common with the rest of the slimming industry, are fond of "before and after" pics and testimonies. These run a close second to the food features, and usually take the form of cloudy black and white holiday snaps of miserable looking fatties set against full colour jobs done in the studio. They are meant to set an example, and tell stories of women who were lonely, depressed and a figure of fun, who now goes dancing every night/rescued her broken marriage/is full of confident energy.

So what do you have to eat to achieve these heights? Most diets are based on 1,000 to 1,500 calories a day, with some foods prohibited altogether. Falling out of favour is John Yudkin's carbohydrate unit diet, on which you cut down on bread, potatoes etc, but can have as much fat as you like. As a result it's short on fibre and vitamins, and opens the door to massive over consumption of fat to make up for what's not being eaten elsewhere. But Yudkin remains a firm favourite with the dairy industry, who will quote him where they can. He has also spoken at quite a few of their press conferences, where he would turn the attention of the audience to the evils of sugar, rather than of fats.

There are myths about special kinds of body fat, one of the best known being "cellulite". This is characterised by a dimply orange peel type fat that settles around the hips and thighs, and it can't be removed by normal dieting. There are few things that can help—apparently grapefruit contains a property that breaks down the "cellulite" and dissolves it away. Supposedly even more effective is the electric pummelling which can be had for high prices in clinics throughout the western world. But there is no such thing as "cellulite"—fat is fat is fat. Its most real quality is the amount of money generated for those who perpetrate the idea.

If the cost of clinic treatment is prohibitive, there are always the slimming groups or clubs. Weight Watchers led the trend, and have groups throughout the country. You pay £1.50 registration, then another £1.50 per weekly session. Your "Goal Weight" will be worked out by the juggling of the ratio between your wrist measurement and height, and then you will be given a highly complicated colour-coded diet plan. They go on to use an approach which is a mixture of group therapy and shame. Every week you will be weighed in front of the rest of the class, and for those that can cope with the horror thus engendered, Weight Watchers seems



to work quite well. But the question of why you sought solace in eating in the first place is never investigated, and all too many of the women who are regimented into losing weight put it back on when they have to take responsibility for their eating habits once again.

But consciousness has begun to change. When Suzie Orbach wrote *Fat is a Feminist* Issue a year or so ago, it disappeared off bookshop and library shelves like hot cakes (sorry). Described as a 'no-diet guide to permanent weight loss' it was voraciously sought after by WLM overaters who thought all their Christmas dinners had come at once. At last the private horrors had been put into words, and it was suddenly clear that this shared obsession was as much part of women's oppression as unequal pay, the kitchen sink, and the fight for abortion rights. Women began to see that the problem might lie in something deeper than the search for the perfect diet, and started to recognise how much they'd been conned and how much they conned themselves.

Orbach suggests that the prohibitive attitude we take to food breeds the binges that follow, and that the best way to regain control over eating was to get back in contact with your appetite, and eat what you wanted, when you



wanted. She had shifted the emphasis from how to get slim to why and how you got to be a compulsive eater in the first place.

And although the book is largely impressionistic, it seems that some of what she says is now being confirmed in psychological research. In one experiment a group was split into two, the deciding factor being whether or not the participants were restraining their food intake. Each person was given a limited amount of food during the interview. Then, an hour or two later, both groups were given the opportunity to eat as much as they liked. The non-restrainers ate less than the restrainers—they weren't hungry, because they'd had something to eat only a short time before. And experiments on animals have shown that similar patterns of disordered eating can be created by tampering with parts of the brain. Could it be that food regulation is responsible for disordered appetite and therefore overweight? What is seen in some psychological circles as a great advance has been met with a shroud of silence, and given the size and momentum of the dieting industry this is hardly surprising.

Most women are casualties of the slim is beautiful ideology in some way or another. Some will die because of it. Anorexia nervosa is a complex condition, ranging from a complete inability to eat to a furious fight against binging. The sufferer may compulsively over-eat, and then induce vomiting. She is likely to see herself as fat, and despise overweight in other people. It takes more than a paragraph to outline all that is known about anorexia nervosa, but the most important aspect is that it is almost always girls and women who develop it. It is often an extension of the dieting/over-eating pattern that so many women set in their early teens, along with the belief in their own fatness and undesirability.

We are all caught in one of the most insidious traps that this sexist culture can produce. Alienated from our appetites, scared of what dirty tricks our bodies will play on us, with no way of deciding for ourselves what it is right to look like and to eat. An industry is making millions out of our oppression, and we see the need of it as a symptom of individual failure. The slimming industry should be attacked, picketed, and plastered with stickers with the same energy that the women's movement directs at the porn business. When it comes to the exploitation and repressive image of women that they represent there is little to choose between them.

Rose Shapiro

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RKP

Back Pages

When I stroke my eyebrow, it means I love you

Bent, by Martin Sherman, is a play about the gay love, pride and defiance of two men in a Nazi concentration camp. At one level, it tells us of the lives of gay men during the most recent attempt to exterminate us. At another it shows the dilemma created by trying to "do a deal" with our oppressors in an effort to survive. Inevitably, the first-night audience laughed in all the wrong places, but few people will walk away from *Bent* feeling quite the same again.

Max and Horst are lovers. They meet on the train to Dachau. Max had been arrested for having slept with a murdered SA general's boyfriend during the Night of the Long Knives. Horst was picked up for having signed a gay rights petition submitted to the Reichstag by Magnus Hirschfeld. On the train, Max does his first deals and, by raping a dead 13-year-old girl, he shows the SS he isn't gay and earns the yellow star of the Jew.

In Nazi ideology, and concentration camp hierarchy, a Jew is higher than a queer. With his yellow star, Max gets meat in his soup and a queer to help him move rocks. With his pink triangle, Horst is hated even by the Jews. To keep himself from

"going mad" Max arranges to have Horst work with him. And in the boiling heat of the summer and the winter's freezing cold, they carry rocks, talk and grow to love each other.

For two men to express their love is seldom very easy. In a concentration camp where talking, let alone touching, is forbidden and where every action is watched by the SS, it should really be impossible. But, though their living bodies never meet, Horst and Max make love, standing to attention, ten feet apart. Like the solitary prisoners in Jean Genet's movie who blow smoke down a straw from one cell to another Horst and Max come together.

For right-wing press critics, *Bent* is about the degradation and death of some half a million gay people who were rounded up by the Nazis. Indeed, it is this, but their lukewarm reviews betray a not surprising ignorance of the play's other political statement. For its great achievement is the stark contradiction it exposes in trying to carve out a little space of your own to survive, to seek freedom in oppression. With this, *Bent* speaks to all of us.

Horst knows survival in the camp is impossible. He fully understands the meaning of his



Ian McKellen as Max and Tom Bell as Horst in *Bent*

pink triangle and has no illusions about the future. At first he's wary of Max, but his spirit is never broken down and he falls in love with his honorary Jew. Yet even this love is a subversive, defiant act which he flaunts in the face of his captors. "When I stroke my eyebrow, like this," he tells Max, "it means I love you."

Max doesn't want his love. Survival means keeping fit, doing deals and caring for nobody. On his way to the camp, Max stood by while the SS beat his lover Rudy to death and, when ordered

to do so, struck the final killing blows. He doesn't need Horst's love, but takes and returns it nonetheless.

Bent is one of those rare and magnificent plays which, when they end, should be greeted not by applause but by silence. It has a power which makes it seem incredible that, when the full cast come out to take their bow, Max and Horst, Rudy, the closetted uncle, drag artist Greta, army guards and the SS captain, are standing side by side.

Brian Deer

For Her Own Good: Women and the 'experts'

"I the ceaselessly industrious, could do no work of any kind. I was so weak that the knife and fork sank from my hand - too tired to eat . . . I lay on the lounge and wept all day. The tears ran down into my ears from either side. I went to bed crying, woke in the night crying, sat on the edge of the bed in the morning and cried - from sheer continuous pain. Not physical, the doctor examined me and found nothing the matter."

For Her Own Good begins with this quote from a 19th century American feminist and lecturer, who was to be dogged by such feelings for the rest of her life. She was treated by a leading US nerve specialist, who told her to "live as domestic a life as possible. Have your child with you all the time . . . lie down an hour after each meal. Have but two hours intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush or pencil as long as you live."

This is just one of the many cases described in the book of the 'curious epidemic' which swept middle and upper class women in both England and

America in the 19th century.

The book is more than a chronicle of such experiences and the 'cures' promoted, though they are recorded in a wealth of detail.

It is an analysis of what was called 'the woman question' in 19th century America, why it happened, and how it related to the growth of the 'experts' - the physicians, gynaecologists, educators and psychoanalysts who have taken over women's lives in the past 150 years, destroying in the process the healing and midwifery skills of women which were such a strong tradition in colonial America.

Economic and political events, 'scientific methods' and technology, are here interconnected in a convincing and specific way. 19th century science for example, backed what the authors call the "romantic solution" to the woman question.

This saw sickness as a source of female beauty, and beauty as a source of sickness: "19th century romantic paintings feature the beautiful invalid sensuously drooping on her

cushions, eyes fixed tremulously at her husband or physician . . . the loveliest heroines were those who died young, like Beth in Little Women, too good and pure for the life of this world."

The new medical profession backed the 'romantic solution' with biology, making femininity into a disease and female functions inherently pathological. This led to all manner of complaints being dealt with by 'local' treatments, including the application of leeches and cauterisation.

The most interesting political argument of the book lies in its analysis of the present. The decay of the 'old' values, the rise of singles consumerism so eagerly latched onto by the market, the new mood for instant gratification have produced assertiveness training and self-help paperbacks like 'How to be Your Own Best Friend' or 'I Ain't Much Baby but I'm all I've got'.

Feminism, having seen through the romantic solution and the pseudo-science of the experts, is hesitant in the face of new market forces: "if the rules imposed by sexual romanticism had denied women any future

other than service to the family, the new psychology seemed to deny human bonds altogether, for women or for men . . ." While rightly condemning the new neo-romantic movement of 'Total Woman', it remains ambivalent to marketplace psychology.

Particularly interesting is the authors' definition of patriarchy and its destruction by the rise of industrialisation - to be replaced by a 'masculinist society' from which women's useful productive role has been completely excised.

There is one criticism: the book is mainly about middle class women. The condition under which poor and black women lived and the impact on them of science and the experts are often described, but sometimes as an ironic afterthought, and their position was often very different - poor women were forced into the market, not the home, by industrialisation.

Cherrill Hicks

For Her Own Good, by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English. Pluto Press. £3.60

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BOOKS

Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries. By Rosemary Sayigh. Zed Press. 57, Caledonian Road, London N1. £2.95 paperback. £8.95 hardback. 205pp.

Rosemary Sayigh's book is one of the best recent writings on Palestine and the Palestinians. Based on interviews with Palestinians now in Lebanon, the book represents only a partial look at the vast Palestinian diaspora. As the author says, there is a limit to what one researcher can do alone. But Ms Sayigh has skilfully and sympathetically brought together Palestinians' accounts of their life before the Zionist invasion with statistics on the Palestine economy under British colonial rule and an analysis of the complementary roles of Zionism and imperialism. The book is not about slogans but is a description of a society which was systematically destroyed. Palestinian villagers' accounts of the terror to which they were subjected by Zionist gangs nail forever the lie that they fled "under instructions from Arab leaders". Ms Sayigh's accounts of the inability of the Arab states and their regular armies to defend Palestine sets the scene for the description of the Palestinian re-awakening of the mid 1960s. This produced such a profound change in the Middle East, and in the Palestinians themselves, that they have considerable justification, she argues, in referring to it as a "revolution", though it has as yet overturned no state power. Read this book for an understanding of why another war in the Middle East is inevitable unless the Palestinians win their rights.

The World on our Backs. By Malcolm Pitt. Lawrence and Wishart £2.95. The story of the Kent miners in the 1972 strike: our normal image of coal miners is of the sturdy workers of Scotland or Yorkshire. Pitt examines the way the strike developed among the 3,500 men of the Kent coalfields who were responsible for picketing the whole of the south coast and sharing London with the Midlands miners. It recaptures vividly the excitement and the tribulations of that period, telling the story of a little-known but highly militant section of the NUM, and concludes with a brief look at the 1974 strike, ending with an examination of the limitations of militancy without a socialist perspective.

Scottish Women's Place by Evelyn Hunter (EUSPB £1.95) is a practical guide and critical comment on Women's rights in Scotland. An important book because as well as giving a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the law, attempts to examine the specific nature of women's oppression in Scotland. "Scotland likes to boast of her romantic reputation, a history of kilts, pipes and Red Clydesiders. The reality has been poverty and oppression, clan massacres, evictions for profit, religious bigotry, and an unromantic treatment of women."

Expanding its list from local history, the Aberdeen Peoples' Press has just published **Legality and Community**, a look at the politics of juvenile justice in Scotland. £1.75 from Aberdeen Peoples' Press, 163, King Street, Aberdeen.

The Guillotine at Work. By Gregory Petrovitch Maximoff. Volume One: The Leninist Counter-Revolution. Cienfuegos Press £4.95. A reprint of the first part of Petrovich's 1940 account of the post-revolutionary period in Russia from an anarchist viewpoint. Valuable today as a relatively contemporary account of much that has since become lost in myth and rhetoric. Examines in detail such embarrassing incidents as Kronstadt, Makhno's Army, the work of the Ukrainian Che-Kha and Lenin's blind eye to the use of torture.

PAMPHLETS

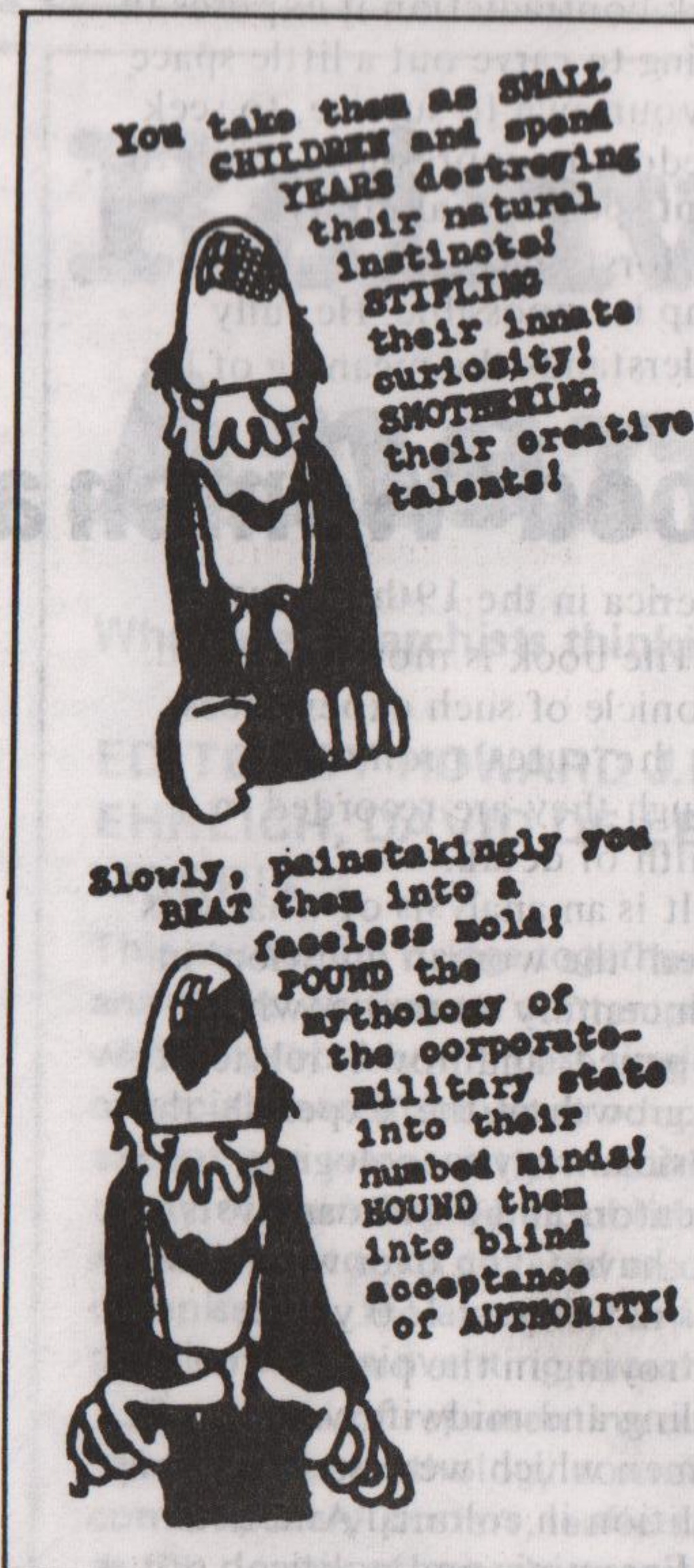
The British Media and Northern Ireland. Truth: the first casualty. 56 page pamphlet from the Campaign for Free Speech on Northern Ireland. Well-produced selection of writings about the way the British media cover Northern Ireland. A useful contribution in an under-discussed area which brings together some of the more important articles and essays of the last ten years. But its lack of a stated editorial perspective, coupled with a reluctance to grapple with critical material that doesn't fit into a straight 'we're being censored' approach is a limitation for any reader who seeks a full understanding. 50p from left bookshops or PDC at 27, Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Another more comprehensive and indeed more damning study of the British press's coverage of Northern Ireland is in **Belfast Bulletin** no 6. Two examples those of rumours about a big shake-up in the Provos in 1977,

and the "Bald Eagle" fiasco expose the shoddy reporting and virtual mendacity of reporters for major British newspapers. **The Bulletin** also looks at the structure of ownership and control of the British press, what is reported on TV, how the army influences reporting, the role of the squaddies' paper *Visor*, the local press in Northern Ireland, and the impact of direct censorship. Belfast Bulletin no 6, 45p (65p outside Ireland), from 52, Broadway, Belfast 11. Or from PDC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1

We all know that a Freedom of Information Act would be a Good Thing; it's almost a catechism as far as the left is concerned. **The Politics of Secrecy**, a new pamphlet from the NCCL, spells the case out in a concise 50 pages. £1.00 including p&p from NCCL, 186, Kings Cross Road, London WC1

MAGS & PAPERS



Cartoon: Blot

The third issue of the National Union of School Students paper **Blot** has just come out, in a new fold-out poster format instead of as a magazine. Designed in the style of a fanzine, issue 3 looks at girls' magazines, Soweto, sexuality and Southall, among other things. But it could be the last—the Calouste Gulbenkian grant that funded the first three issues has now run out. NUSS say that **Blot**

"is dynamite... With it we have gone further than ever before". So they're asking people who agree with what they're doing to help **Blot** by making out a bankers order: NUSS is at 302 Pentonville Road, London N1.

Hard on the heels of **The Gay Journal** comes another gay publication, **Glib**. Very much along the lines of the pro-feminist men's magazine, **Achilles Heel**, **Glib** offers a mix of personal experiences, features and political debate. Issue One 30p plus 10p p&p 137, Powke Lane, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands.

The Feminist Archive: A newly-established collection of women's work. Includes magazines, badges, posters, calendars, song sheets and much unpublished ephemera. Details on becoming a Subscriber or Friend: see to Orchardleigh House, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

THEATRE

Beryl and the Perils, whose last show, **Dennis the Menace**, was favourably reported in *Leveller* 22, have a new show on the road this month. Called **Nuts**, it "explores many kinds of licentious allsorts of male-defined madness and sorts out the smarties from the tootie fruities". The **Peryls** are an all-women collective of performers with very mixed backgrounds and a united commitment to producing shows for and about women. **Nuts** is playing at The Cinema, ICA, Nash House, London SW1. June 2nd. Arts Centre, Hemel Hempstead. June 1st, Bath Arts Workshop June 4-8th, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham and Leasowes Community College, Halesowen, June 13th, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, June 14th, Bath Place Community Centre, Leamington, June 15th, Worcester Sports Centre, June 17th, The Phoenix Centre, Dawley, Telford, June 18th, Plymouth Arts Centre, June 19th and 20th.

There's a **Foco Novo-Half Moon** co-production at the Half Moon, Alie Street, London E1, running until June 9th. Called **Landscape of Exile** and written by David Mairowitz, it describes the life of the European emigres in London during the 1880s after Marx's death. Detailing the interaction between the British Labour Movement and the European Marxists at a time of mounting industrial ferment, the play's leading characters are Engels and Eleanor Marx. For their summer season the **Half Moon** are performing the Irish plays or

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John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy. To be performed by an all-women cast the season will give us an opportunity to see something at least of the rarely performed **Non Stop Connolly Show**.

Covent Garden Community Theatre have a new entertainment, **Tricky City Song Show**, appearing in pubs and social centres in London until June 9th. The show features songs of city life, interspersed with gags, jokes and plenty of magic. Top favourites are **Milton Keynes, Land of Dreams and Let's Go Up To Town**. From the middle of June onwards the group will be at full stretch touring this show, their play **When My Chip Comes In**, and a children's show called **Thunder and Lightning**, again all around London. Ring Rosalind Dodd 01 836 0617 for details.

Fleet Community Theatre Group have a show touring London. **Sweetie Pie** is an entertaining look at woman's image as imposed on her by society. It is suitable for audiences aged 14 upwards. It's playing at Marchmont Community Centre, Central London Youth Project, Abbey Community Centre, Fleet Community Centre, and at Interaction, all of which are in the London Borough of Camden, from June 12th to 17th.

CONFERENCES

June

The National Abortion Campaign's National Conference is to discuss the directions that the campaign should take. Should it remain single issue? Papers for the conference, to be held in Manchester on **June 9-10**, should be sent to NAC, 374, Grays Inn Road, London WC1. (278 0153) by May 17. NAC ask for them to be written on A4 Gestetner stencil.

19 Rights of Women Day Conference on Illegitimacy. 10am-5pm at the Architectural Assoc., 34 Bedford Square, London WC1. Discussions on the present law, proposed reforms, possible strategies for feminists. Further details: see to ROW, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

23-24 Women in Manual Trades Conference. Leeds. Details: Tess McMahon, 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Leeds 7.

Rank and File Trade Union Conference. June 23, New Century Hall, Manchester. Sponsored by seven rank and file shop steward and strike committees for the defence of the right to strike; to

picket to organise; and to work. The Conference organisers "seek a commitment to a united lobby of the TUC in September. It would provide a useful forum for discussing how we start the fightback against anti-union guidelines (or legislation) and how we resist closures and redundancies." Delegates' credentials: Defend Our Unions Conference. 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

26 Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference. On 'Alternatives to the Concordat' and 'Workers Plans'. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Further details: SC, PO Box 50, London N1.

30 Health Not Cuts. All day conference organised by **Fightback**: "Lessons of the struggle against cuts; the attack on trade union rights; who suffers; the fight for a socialist health service." To be held at Conway Hall, London WC1. Details: **Fightback**, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

CAMPAIGNS

June

18-19 Meetings to discuss Rudolf Bahro campaign: at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Friday night: public meeting to discuss the relevance of Bahro to the British Left. Saturday morning: Discussion meeting for those involved in the campaign. Further information from G. Minnerup, 24a Bellevue Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

19. School Closures. Public meeting at the Tape and Drama Centre, off Red Lion Square, London WC1, organised by All London Campaign Against School Closures c/o 68 Charlton Street, London NW1. 01-388 0241.

COURSES

Workers Educational Association Summer School. "There are two study groups of particular interest to women" (*Women's Report*): The Victorian Family (tutor: Mary Kennedy) and What has happened to Women (tutor: Philippa Langton). Details: Margaret O'Dell, WEA, 32 Tavistock Square, London WC1. **July 21-August 4.**

Women's Research and Resources Centre Summer School. Bradford University. Estimated cost £7.50. Further information: Diana Leonard, 24 Myddleton Place, London EC1. September 6-10.

Communist University of London. Once described by Richard Gott as: "Part anti-university (concentrating on a critique of existing 'bourgeois' academic disciplines), and part forcing house for developing Marxist theory, the burgeoning of the CUL (more than a thousand students registered) is an interesting example both of the resurgence of Marxism among young intellectuals and the flowering diversity within the Communist Party itself." The tenth anniversary CUL will be held at University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1 £10 in advance, £12 on the door. Full details: CUL 16 King Street, WC2. July 7-15

EVENTS

June Festivals

1-6 Ruthin Free Festival. Cynwyd, North Wales. Further details: Third Stone, 39-41 Manestys Lane, Liverpool 1.

2-5 Lutte Ouvrier fete and conference, Paris. The big annual event organised by the French comrades. Always a good political and social scene. A coach will be going from London £30 return. Details: BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX. Tel: 274 3951.

17. People's Festival. The annual CP do at Alexandra Palace, North London. Debates on: economy, microprocessors, racism, children. Speakers include Gordon McLennan, CP Gen Sec. Music from the Immigrants and others to be announced. Plus stalls, theatre groups etc. Prices range from 50p for students and claimants to £2.00. 10am-11pm. Further details: 16 King Street, WC2. Tel: 836 2151.

15-25 Stonehenge midsummer free festival. "Sex, drugs, rock n' roll and free food" according to *IT* (263 5196)

19-21 Glastonbury paid festival. Semi-commercial effort organised by Arabella Churchill and aimed at reviving that old hippy thing. **20-22 Hud Faire**, near Dartington, South Devon. Further info, see to: Guy Holne, Cross Cottage, Ashburton, S. Devon. **27-5 July Avebury Freedom Festival.** Wiltshire. Again, according to *IT*, a "stoned walk is planned from Stonehenge to Avebury".

Cambridge's annual free fair, the Strawberry Fair, will be held on **June 9** this year. The fair, which features live bands, games, stalls, inflatables and theatre groups, takes place on Cambridge's Midsomer Common from 10am until late. A procession led by a jazz band will wind its way through the town at about lunchtime, ending up at the Common. The fair, which is non-profit making, has been held since 1974, and it's something else when the sun shines.

June 10 Friends of the Earth are to hold a **National Bicycle Rally** in Trafalgar Square. It's intended to convince local authorities that they ought to make provision for cyclists in their own areas: FoE hope that it will be the largest ever gathering of cyclists in the country. The rally is to start at 2.30pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Brick Lane 1978: A Community Under Attack. An exhibition in words and pictures of the events around Brick Lane last year. A Half Moon Photography Workshop touring exhibition. Available for hire from the Workshop. Opening for the month at Whitechapel Art Gallery, Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (01-377 0107).

CAMDEN TASK FORCE

needs fourth team member to work with pensioners' groups, neighbourhood groups, school groups, and individual pensioners.

Experience in community work and/or neighbourhood work essential. Political awareness, sense of humour, energy and ability to work on your own with team support are important qualities.

Salary: £3,732 per annum. Please write or phone for application form and job description to

Task Force, 6 Malden Road, London NW5. Telephone 01-267-3381.

Closing date May 30.

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