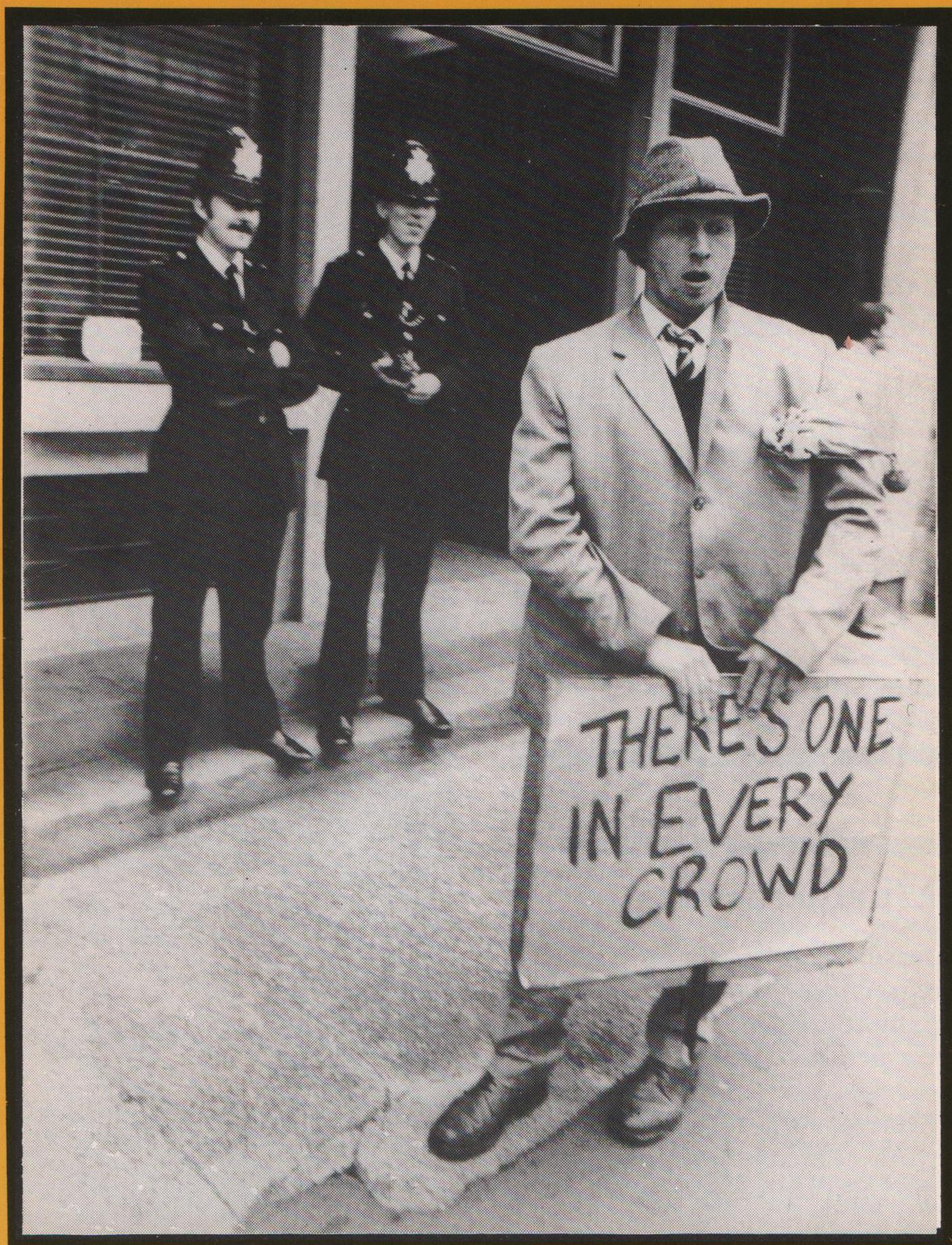


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Jeremy Nicholl



GANG OF FOUR wonder where the next question is coming from. Plus more Nazi-rock. See pages 26-27.

ANARCHO/COMIC Tony Allen: "Soho's done for making love what Russia's done for socialism." See page 14.

Cover picture: thanks to Mike Wigg. Back cover: detail from David Birrington's sketch on Oswald Mosley's 1936 Cable Street defeat, to be painted on a wall in Cable Street itself. Thanks David.

KILL THE BILL! Thousands of trade unionists joined the London march to protest at Tory MP John Corrie's Bill to limit abortions. Why did a group of women decide to lead the march in defiance of TUC wishes? See page 7.

THIS ISSUE is dedicated to William Stewart, a collective comrade who died on 19 October. Bill was 84, and had been a lifelong revolutionary. Right up to a month before his death he took part in all *Leveller* activities and contributed to all our debates. He was also a member of the Labour Party and Workers Revolutionary Party, though he maintained a total disillusionment with their failure to promote his ideas of revolution. Specifically, he was one of the few WRP members publicly to dispute the authority of its leader, Gerry Healy. Bill was in the Soviet Union in 1917-8, and fought in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. He worked in the civil service and stuck to a militant trade union position: he was absolutely delighted when his union, the CSU, took industrial action earlier this year.



David Montague

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The price of Lawrence & Wishart's *Culture and Crisis* (cover ad.) should be £7.50 not £9.50 — inflation is halted!

AN INDEPENDENT socialist magazine produced by the *Leveller Collective*. Published by *Leveller Magazine (1979) Ltd*, a company owned by the magazine's supporting subscribers.

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Letters

A REAL DRAG!

I WINCED when I first saw the front cover of your issue no. 30, referring to the article on transsexuals and transvestites, with the headline 'Men in Women's Clothes'. And the more I looked at it, the more angry I became. Cynically, we may have come to expect this kind of public image elsewhere, but I would have hoped the *Leveller* was above using cheap gimmicks as a sales ploy. Those montages were pathetic parodies more appropriate to Monty Python than any serious representation. Transsexuals like myself spend our whole lives trying to avoid being treated as a mere spectacle for ridicule. Please do not use any illustrations in future, if it is not possible to show transsexuals as real people.

Those crude and sinister illustrations tended to reinforce the popular stereotypes and counteracted the flashes of insight and sympathy in the article itself. On the whole, I was pleased to see the distinctions between transsexuals and transvestites clearly explained—as a transsexual I have long felt alienated from transvestites and seek to dissociate myself from them. But your article only scratched the surface—whilst discussing possible causes, the feelings we have towards our penises, and the varieties of sex, there was little or no discussion of the treatment which transsexuals undergo (the expense involved, for example, needs greater emphasis)

and the unique insights gained from a change of gender role.

In particular I consider it a fundamental error to suggest that anyone should act as a spokesperson for transvestites or transsexuals: none of us can be considered typical and there is always a danger that individuals may be motivated 'to tell it like it is' (like George Roberts in the recent TV documentary film on transsexuality??) by exhibitionism rather than a genuine desire to widen understanding.

For myself, I dream of being able to participate in the women's movement, (post-surgery that is), without having to cover up my past. Sadly it seems out of the question at the moment, such is the level of antagonism towards transsexuals shown by a vociferous minority. I can understand the cause of their feelings, if not the degree. Whilst I would be the first to admit I cannot call myself a woman in the fullest sense, I consider I still have the right to call myself a woman because I am *more* woman than man. Transsexuals do have a part to play in the women's movement. I feel much of the antagonism is due to ignorance—confusing transsexuals and transvestites and failing to understand (or even wishing to understand) the depth of the transsexual's commitment to feminism.

I fear the forthcoming workshop for the women's movement on transsexuals is destined to do nothing for our cause, simply on account of our vulnerability: I for one shall not attend because I don't wish to

become known as a transsexual and I foresee that the only transsexuals that may attend are the kind of exhibitionist transvestites, masquerading as transsexuals, that I, in common with other feminists, find most alien. It's all potentially a *real* drag!

Jill Brown
London

WE DIDN'T CHOSE TO BE TS

AS A trans-sexual woman, a feminist and a lesbian who has been involved in the women's movement for the last seven years, I would like a little space to reply to your articles about transsexuals in the September *Leveller*.

1. I object to the cover of the issue. It seems to me to trivialise and cheapen the issue in the worst tradition of gutter journalism. You wouldn't print a cover like that about lesbians—why should we, an even smaller minority, be visually persecuted in a so-called radical paper?

2. I object to the fact that you totally ignore the existence of trans-sexual men. I cannot speak for TSmen, but their existence is just as real as ours, and any attempt to "explain" us has to explain my TS brothers as well.

3. I object to the fact that most of the article presents the views of straight medical men. You wouldn't write an article about lesbian women presenting straight all the shit that various psychologists, psychoanalysts and assorted self-styled male "experts" have written about us. Why should TS women have to suffer it? Isn't it basic to writing about any oppressed group that their own views form the starting off point for discussion? Don't tell me that if he'd done a bit of work, the writer couldn't have found more TS people to talk to. Before I

dealt with my self-oppression I spent years reading hundreds of "academic" articles on transsexualism and transvestism, all of which contradicted each other. In all my extensive contacts with the medical profession I have met only one honest specialist dealing with TS people. He said, "We know nothing at all about why there are transsexuals". Stoller's explanations don't apply to me, nor to other TS people I've been in contact with. They do continue a long tradition of holding mothers responsible for any deviations from accepted normality in adults—just another example of our oppression as women. Only one thing all these "experts" are agreed on, transsexualism is "incurable", i.e. once TS people get through their self-oppression and confusion and discover they really are women or men, nothing on earth will stop us from becoming who we are. Like homosexuals, we have always been here, and we always will be. Anyone who wants to know where we come from couldn't do better than read Sue Cartledge and Susan Hemmings' article 'How Did We Get This Way?' in *Spare Rib* 86—exactly the same reasoning applies.

4. I can't agree with Ros St. John that the TS operation is not crucial. There was a short period before I had the operation that I thought that too. For TS women, the penis is not merely an unnecessary and objectionable excrescence on our bodies. Its removal is symbolic of the removal of the way back to the relative power and privilege all men experience in patriarchy. Its removal symbolises our unconditional understanding of who we are, and whose fate we share in this world.

5. Of course, most TS women, like most other women, are not yet feminists, and are uninterested in the women's movement. Most of us strive to become the women all women are encouraged to be in this society. We didn't choose to be TS, we had to be, but still I believe that our existence is a demonstration that human beings are not totally determined by biology, we are not totally determined by socialization, we have the ability and the right to create our own identity, provided that doesn't oppress or exploit other human beings. Isn't that, in fact, what we are all striving to do, and one of the things the women's movement is essentially about? If we are determined by our biology and upbringing, then perhaps all human endeavour for change is worthless. But it is possible to overcome biology and years of training, and TS sisters and brothers are witnesses to it. By the way, there aren't so many of us, but perhaps the woman or man next door is TS; you never can be sure. And what about the sister dancing next to you in your women's disco?

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Letters

6. The article about the so-called conference on trans-sexualism in the women's movement breaks me up. What self-respecting woman would attend a conference about her from whose organization she had been excluded and from some of whose sessions she was debarred? Imagine if heterosexual women in the movement organized a conference about lesbians on that basis. The fact that such an idea can even be discussed indicates that we're in a pretty appalling political mess, and that loss of the principles that are central to our movement are under challenge.

We have always been told by men how to experience the world, what we should think about things, that what various ideologies said mattered more than what our immediate experience told us. The women's movement has been in part a fight for our right to assert the validity of our own experience as women, come to our own conclusions about it. Now a tiny group of women are saying to me that I don't exist—I feel like I should go round with a yellow star, like the Jews in Nazi Germany, only saying trans-sexual instead of Jew. These women are putting down my lover, my friends and my many acquaintances in the women's movement who know me and accept me, all of them fine feminists, who don't need to be told by anybody how to experience the world. We don't need oppression and articles of faith about ideological purity in the women's movement. Ironically it's one of the most male-identified trips that's surfaced in the last few years. And how dare some women have the brutal arrogance to use their control of A Woman's Place to define me and my TS sisters out of it. I helped to sweep the building out when it was first acquired in Earlham St! It's only because of our tiny numbers and relative isolation that such behaviour, approaching sexual fascism, can pass without challenge. I tell you, it's not TS sisters, but the maleness in a lot of our women's movement heads that needs watching.

7. There's no doubt that there's much confusion around the subject of gender. For the vast majority of us it seems the most basic identity constant we have, and any thing or person who seems to challenge it arouses fear and unease. TS people also have a certainty of their gender, but it's not one that depends absolutely on biology, or the way we were brought up. I personally happen to think that woman-spirit exists, and that I was born with that, but others don't agree. So what? As soon as we start defining who can

or can't be a woman on biological or upbringing terms, we're in total trouble, because only some of us fit properly. If someone presents herself to us as a woman, behaves as a woman, we experience consistently her femaleness, then our judgement is surely the criterion to use in recognizing her.

For the last seven years I have shared energy with sisters in the women's movement in many aspects of our activities—women's aid, music, women's centres, conferences, therapy etc. Now all this apparently is to be defined as invalid by women who largely don't know me, a few of whom accepted me happily before they knew my past. I don't ask anyone to associate with me on a personal basis who doesn't want to, but I want my rights as a woman, and for my TS sisters.

Finally, I don't think the second article, about the "conference" should have appeared in the *Leveller*. It's our own shit, and we should be sorting it out in the movement, but since it has, and it raises wide issues, I've felt uneasily forced to reply.

End oppression against transsexuals!

TS women OK! TS lesbians OK!

Carol Riddell
Liverpool 17

GOD SEX AND MARX

While I realise the *Leveller* is not the place for theological hair-splitting, I must make some comment on Michele Roberts' references to Christianity and sexuality in the November issue. Jesus seems to have had a more enlightened attitude to women than most of those who preach using his authority. Women played a comparatively large role in his ministry, and several stories seem to indicate that he thought women should not be confined to the kitchen. Some sociologists have suggested that the apparent practice of sexual abstinence in the early church was a way of breaking down the standard gender roles, in that it freed women from the role of child-minder. It would seem that in a pre-contraceptive age gender roles could not be broken without sexual abstinence. As the primitive radical group become incorporated into the mainstream, dominant culture the threat it posed had to be defused, and so the repressive sexuality that characterised later Christianity came to the fore. It is dangerous to place all the blame on the doctrine of the Virgin Mary, as puritan groups tend to

justify their teaching by reference to the apostle Paul, rather than to the (Roman Catholic) doctrine of Mary's virginity, which has dubious scriptural foundations. Many Christian feminists are now starting to reclaim the Bible, arguing from Jesus' more enlightened attitude. Dorothee Solle has argued that the story of Mary and Martha shows that women had a right to education, not just service in the kitchen. This was quite an advance when most male Jews thanked God that they had not been born a woman.

Theology of liberation is a rediscovery of the Bible's teachings on social justice. The church is realising that it no longer has to be on the side of the establishment, or at any rate some church-members are discovering this. In South America the church is often one of the few voices raised in defence of freedom.

Marx argued that "religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature ... It is the opium of the people." The first phrase would seem to argue that religion is the pre-political stage of protest. Some Christians seem to be arriving at that stage, and we can only hope that they make it to the stage of action. That stage can only be realised if feminists, leftists etc. help Christians to self-understanding, rather than unsympathetically slandering them, and encouraging them in their prejudices. How about reviving the Christian-Marxist dialogue, but bringing in women, race and other issues as well. We can't let JP2 revive the Dark-Ages.

Declan Kennedy,
Teddington,
Middlesex.

FOR ANTI-SOCIALIST READ ANTI-SEXIST

Thanks for putting in our note about transsexuals in the Back Pages. Unfortunately there was a serious misprint, which is damaging both to the Men's Centre and to me personally. I wrote "Transsexuals who would like to meet anti-sexist men...". You printed "anti-socialist men" instead of "anti-sexist men". As you can see, this is likely to cause us a lot of trouble, particularly at the meeting.

Danny Cohen,
London N1

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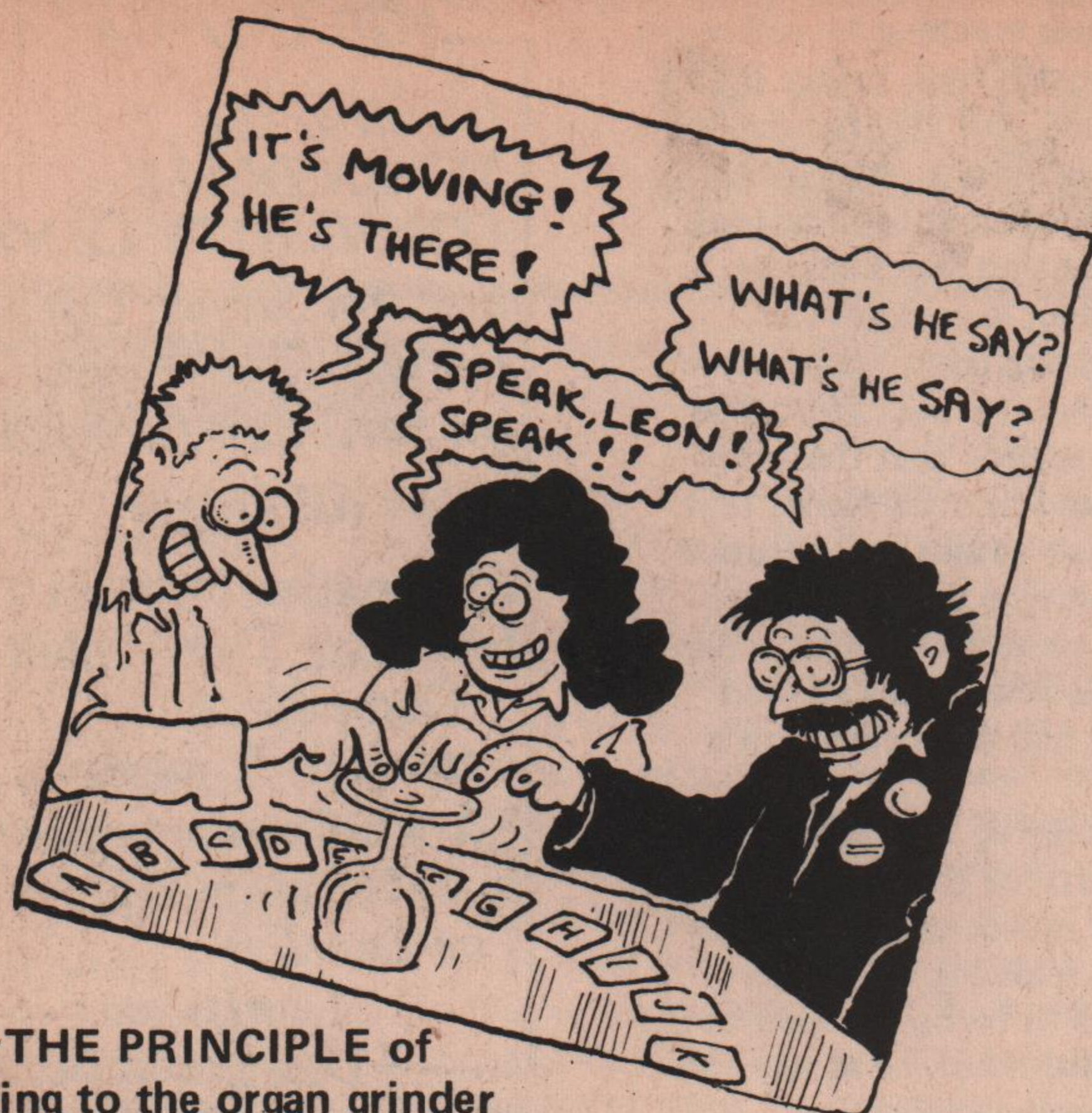
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ON THE PRINCIPLE of talking to the organ grinder rather than the monkey, the *Leveller* collective decided to celebrate the centenary of Leon Trotsky's birth by approaching the great revolutionary himself rather than one of his disciples.

This was effected with difficulty, through the intercession of a spiritualist medium. We tried several before we found Madame Sosistris; others knew too little about Trotsky to fake his responses, but from what we heard when five collective members went along for the seance at Madame Sosistris' Muswell Hill, North London, salon, we have no doubt that we established genuine contact. Nor do we doubt that readers, Trotskyist and non-Trotskyist alike, will respect the authority of the *dicta* we received.

Contact was established, on and off, for about a quarter of an hour. The responses were often faint, and at times Trotsky seemed reluctant to respond to certain questions. At other times he lapsed into Russian; at these points we have inserted rough translations.

When Trotsky came through, we first asked for his opinion of the class nature of the Soviet Union, to resolve once and for all the great controversy: state capitalist, or degenerated workers' state.

Well I don't really think it's a very relevant question. Next question.

We repeated the question. Didn't he know that his reply would affect the whole course of thousands of his followers' lives? Well, yes, but it's gone completely off the rails. All these people who tie themselves up in knots over it ... they don't actually analyse it properly at all. They haven't studied class relationships or calculated how much of its surplus value the working class retains, or even who the working class is. When I say it's not relevant, I mean... it's really very important, but I find it extremely irritating that the Fourth International

should have split over that kind of thing.

So was he totally disillusioned with the development of the Fourth International? Oh yes. All these jumped up psychopaths pretending to be me. It makes me weep sometimes. The capitalists are delighted, you know... (pause) and so's Stalin.

We all looked at each other. So he communicates with Stalin? Well not much, we don't move in the same circles at all. He hangs around with all these kings and dictators you know ... and with all those dreadful *apparatchiks* he purged and murdered, apologising to them drunkenly all the time. No I don't care for his friends and he doesn't care for mine.

It was difficult to follow that, so we asked him what he thought of the centenary cult, in particular about the Workers Revolutionary Party buying his death mask for £4,400 at a Paris auction. Trotsky chuckled and swore in Russian.

They were really had weren't they? My death mask.... (more chuckles)... *govno* (shit)... it isn't me at all. Still, if they've got nothing better to spend their money on... not that they're short of money of course. I wouldn't like to tell you where they get it from. But... let me just say, it's ironic the way Gerry Healy goes around accusing every-

one of working for the Soviet or American intelligence...

Persistent appeals for more details were met by silence, but after a while he came up again on the subject of the WRP. The trouble with Healy is he gives the game away. Building the party is the great task, but he's so authoritarian.... he makes everyone think that if people like him get to power the party will just crush all democracy and opposition... Well... it probably will, but you don't have to make it so obvious.

Naturally, the next question was about the post-revolutionary party in the Soviet Union. What about Trotsky's own role in the suppression of Makhno's Black Army, the Kronstadt sailors, the workers' councils...

The supremacy of the Party is the most important consideration, yes. You can't have these anarchists and social revolutionaries running riot with their wild ideas. It does amuse me sometimes to see the way my followers contort themselves in trying to justify it all to the libertarians when they should have the guts to just stand up and say, you must smash all left oppositionists. I mean, these stories about the Whites and west European capitalists being behind them. (chuckles)

Again we were rather shaken. He said all these things himself. Oh... that... well .. (long silence) Well of course I knew it was all nonsense. *Eto govno. Eto bylo sovershennaya khuinya* (that was just a big cock-up).

No regrets then, no mistakes
Khui Sosi (suck my cock)

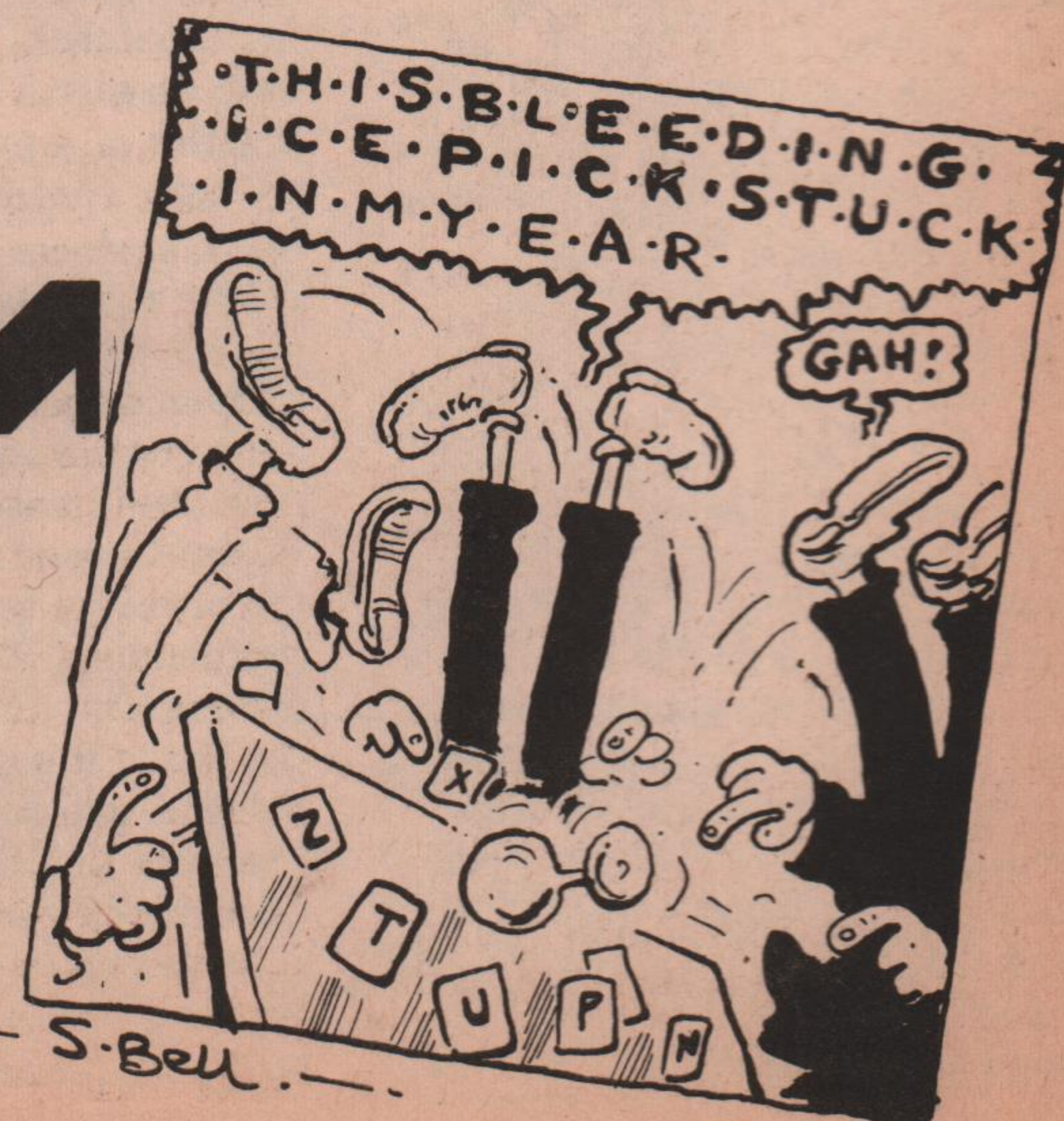
After that we couldn't get through again at all, try as Madame Sosistris did. So we had to leave it at that rather unsatisfactory point.

At any rate the seance was fairly successful, and the collective has decided to use the same medium again to make contact with other great revolutionaries of the past. If you have a question for a great revolutionary, if there are any thorny theoretical points you want cleared up, send them to us on a postcard.

EXCLUSIVE to
The Leveller -
A Rave
from the Grave



WE LIFT THE COFFIN LID ON TROTSKY



KEEP IT LEGAL!

Despite the fact that the TUC abortion demonstration on October 28th brought together the largest ever group of people in support of a woman's right to choose, the days that followed have been full of confusion and some recrimination. Around 50,000 women and men marched to Trafalgar Square after an agonisingly long wait at Hyde Park—a wait increased by the action of 150 or so women who took over the front of the demonstration in defiance of what they saw as its male organisation and leadership. Most of us on the march only saw what happened at the front when we got home for the TV news, or read the garbled reports in Monday's papers.

As one of the majority of people who'd spent hours shifting from foot to foot in Hyde Park, I too was pretty fed up with heavily male trade union atmosphere engendered mainly by the irritating and oppressive male voice (the kind that addresses a room full of women as 'brothers') barking messages over the PA. And once we'd got moving, it seemed like the TUC had made no effort to keep the march together—the police split it whenever they deemed that traffic deserved priority. The arrangements for children were left up to NAC, as the TUC hadn't organised anything, and although I spoke to some who said that it was the most uplifting abortion demo they'd been on, it was pretty disheartening to arrive in Trafalgar Square to see the rally had already ended. And yes, the march should have been led by women—the Women's Advisory Committee of the TUC, who had been instrumental in calling for the demonstration in the first place.

What the women who rushed to the front seem to have forgotten is that the feminists of the National Abortion Campaign have spent the last four years pressurising the TUC to take an active stand on abortion. In doing so, it is the first national TU movement in the world to put itself on the line in such a way on the issue. The TUC hasn't by any means understood the fundamentals of feminism, and it was depressing, although hardly surprising, that the organisation of the march reflected this so clearly.

But the women from the NAC campaign were angered more by seeing that few, if any, of the faces confronting Len Murray were recognisable from campaign planning meetings, or local groups. Moreover, this assertion of "womanpower"



Linda Westmoor

appeared to extend no sisterhood either to the women on the platform at Trafalgar Square, or more importantly, to the thousands of trades union women who had come out in force, perhaps for the first time, to demonstrate their opposition to the anti-abortionists.

Maybe in the weeks to come it will be possible to openly discuss on what basis feminists should be prepared to work with organisations other than their own. The TUC may not be too keen on further initiatives on abortion after what happened on that Sunday, so perhaps we will be able to avoid these compromising alliances altogether.

But I'd like to know how (or whether) the revolutionary feminists who headed the march plan to fight the anti-abortionists in the months ahead. It may have been tremendous for the left (just as it was for the Daily Star) to see the TUC leadership physically overtaken, but it's difficult to see what difference it will make to the prospects of the women of this country who will face all the horrors of illegal abortion if the Corrie Bill is passed.

Rose Shapiro

The Standing Committee is now meeting every Wednesday morning to deliberate over the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which will reach Report stage and Third Reading by 8th February. It is very unlikely that any positive amendments will be made, as the committee is heavily weighted in favour of the anti-abortionists — 12 hardline Corrie supporters, and only five against.

Pressure must be put on MPs to vote against the Bill at Third Readings, as there are many who have no real idea about the issues upon which they are voting, or the implications of the Bill, so write to your MP to express your support or disapproval of how s/he voted at Second Reading. If you're not sure of his/her voting record, phone Co-Ord at 01-580 9360. Get resolutions through any organisation of which you are a member, and propose that it affiliates and send money to the National Abortion Campaign.

EVENTS There are sure to be activities in your area, so phone NAC at 01-278 0153 for a local contact.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 13 December | Abortion — the feelings behind the slogans. A discussion forum with Eileen Fairweather of Spare Rib, at the Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1 at 7pm. Women only. |
| 5 February | Mass Lobby of Parliament, organised by NAC and the Campaign Against Corrie. It is hoped that the thousands who turned out in October will come to London to lobby their MPs. They'll be a mass meeting in Central Hall at the same time. More details from NAC/CAC. |
| 8 February | Third Reading of the Corrie Bill. Assembly of Women (in the great tradition of the Women's Suffrage Movement) from 2.00pm, where you'll get reports of the Third Reading debate that's happening simultaneously, as well as hearing plans for further action. |

A SPECIAL FAREWELL

Tony Jones

With Thatcher the Milk-Snatcher's Nationality & Immigration proposals doing its leprous round, *The Leveller* looks at the consequences of past immigration laws.

JIM CALLAGHAN, then Home Secretary, hustled the 1968 Immigration Act through Parliament in 8 days. As a result, many UK passport holders, notably Asians whose UK passports were issued in East Africa, were no longer entitled to enter the UK freely. It demonstrated how low the UK authorities were prepared to stoop to legalise racism.

The lives of thousands upon thousands of people are fucked over by these laws. A string of Immigration Acts, reinforcing a colonial history of racial prejudice, entrenches racism in British society. The result? Even laws supposedly enacted to protect racial groupings within the country are made a mockery of in practice — by the police, by the law courts, and by bureaucrats in trade unions, local and national government.

The 1971 Immigration Act went a few steps further than Callaghan's 1968 effort. It introduced the notion of patriality ('If one of your grandparents was born in the UK, you're all right Jackie') which clearly discriminated against black people, and it extended deportation policy. Since it came into effect on 1 January 1973, over 7,000 people have been imprisoned, most of them without charge, trial, sentence or conviction. Over a quarter of them have spent three to six months in a detention centre or prison.

Under most British law, the onus of proof lies on the prosecution. Not so in respect of those liable to 'removal' as alleged illegal entrants. Like people who are stopped and detained at the time of their entry into the UK (not included among the 7,000 above), those threatened with removal have to *prove* their right to stay. When successful, they are released without apology or compensation for

unjustified detention and disruption of their lives.

The Bail Act and *habeas corpus*, say the courts, don't generally apply to people detained pending deportation or removal. In addition, a deportation order, unlike most legal writs, does not have to be served in person. In most cases, no effort is made to do so. A person on whom a deportation order is made has two weeks from the date of 'service' to appeal, whether s/he knows of its issue or not. After that her/his appeal is held to be 'out of time' and is generally not considered. The Home Office has the discretion to release people during the process of their cases, but it is rarely used. If charged with a criminal offence they *would* be eligible for bail.

Detention, under the deportation policy, extends to 5 categories:

1. Persons awaiting deportation for breach of conditions: People who have entered the country lawfully and stayed beyond the period permitted by their entry visas; overseas students unable to meet escalating fees; and people who have taken up jobs prohibited by the conditions stamped in their passports. Those affected most are West Indian students, Asians here to join their families, or visitors from Asia, Africa and Latin America who do odd jobs in order to survive. Australians/Canadians/Southern African whites are only in isolated cases subject to deportation. The Home Office tends to ignore many cases of whites in breach of conditions.

2. Persons being deported on the grounds of it being conducive to the public good. This category has a long history. It has been used to deport Mafia gangsters, and spies. More recently the Home Office has used this category to deport political

activists, even those who, at some time, have been granted temporary political asylum. Radical journalists Phil Agee and Mark Hosenball were kicked out under these powers.

3. Illegal entrants. A notorious category, which conjures up the image of people caught entering the country in small boats on deserted beaches, or coming in on false passports. In fact these are a small percentage of people removed on these grounds. People who have lived in this country for many years, and even those who have entered as children, can be detained prior to removal if it is believed that deception was practised, or that there was a failure to disclose a material fact to an immigration officer. The point that no question was asked, or that there was no reason to dream that a fact was 'material', is irrelevant. In recent years, the pretext of false names has been used to deport Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and West Africans. It is common in these countries to adopt a name, for use in the village, different from the one registered in the passport. The Home Office has hundreds of cases in which a Moslem person's use of two different names is recognised as *bona fide*, but they continue to victimise people on the pretext that they are practising a deception. In 1978, 822 people were taken into custody when it was alleged that their original entry was illegal.

4. Recommended for deportation by the courts. Another notorious category. In 1978, 980 people were recommended for deportation by the courts as a result of a conviction. Offences as trivial as shoplifting and minor assaults are used to hold people in detention for months, with the added punishment of deportation.

5. Entering in breach of a deportation order. Once a deportation order is issued against a person, that person can never enter the UK again, unless by specific permission, or by revocation of the order. Where people ignorant of a deportation order have left the country, they may be liable to deportation, even if they re-entered the country legally. Many deportees who have appealed out of time (and not been considered for appeal) also become victims of this category.

In July 1979, Jo Richardson, Labour MP for Barking, put a series of questions to Home Office Minister Timothy Raison, concerning detention of people awaiting deportation. Few were answered. He declined to give details of average length of stay, or a breakdown of the five categories, on the grounds that it would cost too much. One answer he did give was that there were 178 people awaiting deportation detained: 106 in Pentonville 'R' wing, 10 in Holloway, the others all over the country.

Not all have been clearly informed as to why they are being detained, or why they will be deported, or when the deportation will take place. Some have bought their own tickets and are prepared to return voluntarily, but once they are caught up in the Home Office machinery they remain in prison whilst their cases are processed. They are not released to clear up their affairs. Prison visitors and lawyers have reported cases of mental breakdowns, self-inflicted injuries, weeping, almost catatonic passivity. The Home Office admits to two cases of attempted suicide among those detained for deportation this year. Families have been broken up, old people and children deported to countries where there is no-one to look after them.

Those released after giving proof of their *bona fides* go through a harrowing ordeal. But others, those who are deported, can find themselves in even worse situations. Here are a few examples:

Andrew Achebe, Nigerian (*pseudonym*): Arrived on seamen's documents in 1969. Enrolled as a student at a quack college (set up to side-step immigration rules at great profit). Worked in catering. Studied for a chef's diploma, and worked as one. He had NI cards, and had never been on the dole or in trouble with the police. In September, police looking for someone in the house where he had been living for 3 years asked for his passport. Took him in. Informed him that a deportation order had been issued against him in 1973. Has been six weeks in Pentonville, and will remain there till he is escorted to the airport, without any chance to wind up his affairs.

Seventeen Indian Seamen, from the *SS Calypso*: Locked up aboard ship on 5 August 1978, refused to leave the ship at Tilbury because their wages and documents were not settled. Immigration Officers, accompanied by *Securicor* and *Pentonville prison officers*, went aboard ship and forced them to leave (police declined to interfere), though the ship was outside jurisdiction. Refused permission to go ashore, but taken ashore, and taken in handcuffs to the airport without being individually interviewed as required by the rules. Four weeks in detention. Complaint about officials' behaviour went to the Ombudsman from the Indian Workers' Association (Southall), but not followed through. Inquiry urged on Brynmor John, the Labour Minister responsible. Upon change of government whole matter apparently dropped by new Home Secretary; no action taken against Immigration Officers. No action by trade unions against shipping line.

Mohammed Seisay, Sierra Leone. Came to Britain a political exile after being politically active against Siaka Stevens' regime. Politically active in London. Convicted of a cheque fraud, in 1976, 2 year sentence plus fine. Still maintains his innocence, and the Black Prisoners' Welfare Scheme (BPWS), who have been fighting his case since 1976, believe it was a frame-up. Served 22 months in all, because he refused to pay the fine. Has been in Pentonville since June, pending appeal against deportation to Sierra Leone where he faces serious danger, even death, for his

opposition to Stevens.

Barry Holmes, Jamaica: Deported to Jamaica a year ago with no money or job prospects. Wife and children still in Britain. The BPWS is fighting his case for the revocation of the deportation order, and right to return to Britain. BPWS is at 61, Golborne Road, London, W10.

Rufa Miah, Bangladeshi: Allowed to stay indefinitely in Britain when he came as a minor in 1973. Has left and returned before, without problems. Recently married in Bangladesh. Refused entry on return: the Home Office now dispute that he is his father's son.

Nasira Begum, Pakistani: Came to Britain in 1976, married a British citizen. Three months later deserted by her husband. Faced with deportation because her husband does not live with her. (Friends of Nasira Begum, 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 12, are fighting the case).

Said Bibi, Pakistani: 80 year old widow, almost blind, partially deaf, and totally dependent on relatives in Rochdale with whom she lives. Home Office want to deport her to Pakistan where she has nobody to help her. (Friends of Said Bibi, c/o CRE, Champness Hall, Drake Street, Rochdale.).

In all, 1,305 people were imprisoned in 1978, with a daily average of over 220 inside. The cost of pursuing these cases is over £1.2 million.

Minister Raison is trying to curtail MPs' rights to cut down the work of his department — work the department has made for itself, by giving immigration and police officers powers to make arbitrary and racist decisions and failing to provide an adequate appeals procedure.

What of the opposition to 'official society'? The Anti-Nazi League, once set upon clearing fascists off the streets, seems to be realising that state racism is the more dangerous phenomenon. The churches have attacked the Home Office because its immigration policy is breaking up 'the family', supposedly so dear to our rulers. Community groups have begun to campaign for particular individuals, are beginning to involve trade unions, and are attempting to widen the campaign against government immigration policies. A national campaign with strong grass roots support is beginning to get organised. But the fact remains that unless black people are organised in a powerful movement, state racism is going to get worse.

Persons Unknown

The German connection

AS THE Persons Unknown trial moves into its second month and the defence start to tell its side of the story, a clearer picture is beginning to emerge of why the state closed in on the defendants in the way that it did.

When Iris Mills and Ronan Bennett were first arrested, it was Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Bradbury of the Anti-Terrorist Branch who led the enquiries and who told the press the next day the exact nature of police suspicions — the armed robberies and the terrorist cell idea. It has since emerged that Bradbury was fronting for Roy Creamer, the Special Branch's 'anarchist expert', who played a crucial role in the Angry Brigade trial and has occasionally surfaced during subsequent anarchist enquiries.

Mills and Bennett were arrested on 24 May 1978, just 12 hours after Bennett bought the weedkiller. (As we went to press Bennett had not yet taken the stand: but it is apparent from Iris Mills' evidence that Bennett will be saying he bought the weedkiller to clear a friend's garden.)

Bennett must have been under close surveillance all the time. He was released on appeal in Belfast in 1976 having been sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a policeman. He moved to England to live with Iris and was picked up in Huddersfield in May 1977 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The person who rang the alarm bells and got the couple an NCCL solicitor was her former husband, Graham Rua, who is not in court on this occasion (he and his French companion are named on the charge sheet and are thought to be in Paris).

When Bennett successfully appealed against his PTA deportation he was interviewed by a man called Thompson who is thought to work for M15, or internal security. M15 never do their own arrests, calling on Special Branch to do it for them when necessary. Bennett and Mills sold up their house and property after the Huddersfield raid and went to France for a while.

Not long after their return to this country, Bennett was introduced to Dafydd Ladd by Graham Rua at a Campaign Against Repression in West Germany meeting. Ladd, who had himself been thrown out of Germany after playing an active role in Red Army Fraction defence meetings, was presumably high on the list of

internal security's 'targets'. Not long after Rua introduced them, Mills and Bennett were the subject of a police raid at their London home — but the police got the wrong address and missed them.

Mills and Bennett then moved in with Dafydd Ladd — by that time actively publicising the plight of German prisoners through Black Aid, an organisation he had set up with Stewart Carr. (Ladd had previously shared a prison cell with Carr. Carr is currently refusing to recognise the court but has pleaded guilty to the conspiracy to rob charge.)

It now seems likely that it was the German connection which put them all in the frame together — a supposition strengthened by the mysterious Sollinger who drifts into the evidence from time to time. Defendant Trevor Dawton, when asked to explain how it was that he had the key which fitted the lock of the holdall containing the guns and ammunition, said he had met Sollinger, a German, at Rising Free bookshop in London. Sollinger had asked him to look after the bag for a couple of days until a friend came to collect it.

Vince Stevenson, who works at Rising Free and was arrested on the way to a support committee meeting, has yet to take the stand. But very little of the evidence heard so far seems to touch him, except that he shared a flat with Dawton.

Iris has admitted using a false driving licence to hire cars — which the police say were used on the robberies — but she says she was only doing it to help Rua on some business deals. And she explains the mass of false documentation — birth certificates, passports, driving licences and building society accounts — by saying that she and Bennett wanted to build a fresh identity to escape police harassment.

The case probably has another month to run and is not helped by the fact that half the alleged conspirators are not in court. Rua and Michelle Poiree ran as soon as Mills and Bennett were arrested; Sollinger did not — he evidently asked Dawton to look after his bag some time after their arrest — but he has not been seen since. And Taff, of course, split when he realised they had lost the jury vetting battle. But once the other defendants have taken the stand — particularly Bennett — we will have a much clearer idea of what the whole defence case is.

Dave Clark

'VIRTUALLY EVERY ISSUE of the *Leveller* would be illegal under the new Bill,' Chris Price, Labour MP for Lewisham, warned a TUC conference in London this November. The Government's 'Protection of Official Information Bill', which had its second reading in the House of Lords as we went to press, does exactly what its title suggests. All information in specific categories is now protected unless a civil servant has taken a decision that it should be released. (In theory, the decision should be taken by a minister but in practice, of course)

The new Bill is aimed directly at the working methods many journalists and researchers have used to look at the areas which the Bill covers. It will no longer be possible, by informed reading of open sources, plus the occasional leak or rumour, to describe the hidden activities of the state. The Bill covers: defence and foreign affairs; 'security and intelligence'; police procedures; telephone tapping, mail opening and SIGINT; information from other governments and international organisations; and information held by government contractors and nationalised industries.

The new Bill goes further than the Franks Committee's Report into the Official Secrets Act. In 1969 Franks recommended that Section Two of the Act, dating from 1911 and so absurdly wide that it had become almost useless, should be replaced with a measure which would protect all classified information. But the new Bill introduces the concept of 'protected information'. It will be illegal, once the bill is passed, for anyone to disclose any information at all relative to the first four categories. A possible defence in the case of police matters is that the information had been made available or had become available on request to the public. But that is not so in the case of defence, foreign affairs, security, intelligence, surveillance and SIGINT.



This is, on the face of it, absurd. However unlikely it seems that it could ever be used to prevent the re-publication, for example, of material which had already appeared in technical journals or periodicals read mainly by the military, it would appear to do just that. This absurdity was important in getting the ABC case laughed almost out of court. But under the new Bill, it would be no defence to say for instance, that it was a well-known fact that Ayios Nikolaos in Cyprus is one of Britain's most important surveillance bases.



The concept of 'protected information' introduces into law for the first time a new category of information which is not thought important enough to be classified as secret, but is the sort of information which the civil servants and security services would not like the public to know about. It is perhaps the clearest indication of the authorship of the new Bill. Giving evidence (anonymously) to the Franks Committee, the then head of M15 — Britain's secret police — Sir Martin Furnival-Jones, made the classic anti-democratic remark; 'if it's in a Government file, it's secret.' The new Bill is designed to give legal effect to the sentiments of M15. As such, it is a worthy successor to the 1911 Official Secrets Act, which was written by M15's first head, Sir Vernon Kell.

The Bill's parentage is also indicated by the breadth of the prohibition of information relating to 'security and intelligence'. Information relating to defence and foreign affairs must be important enough to cause 'serious damage to the interests of the nation' — not something a court can decide on, but at least something which civil servants have to bear in mind. Information about police matters may be disclosable if it has already been available. But for security and intelligence, and surveillance, there are no restrictions. Any disclosure, anywhere, is to be made illegal. It is highly likely that in naming Colonel B, the mystery witness in the ABC trial, we might have faced not only proceedings for contempt of court, but under the new Bill, criminal proceedings too.

The category is defined to cover all activities of 'the security and intelligence organisation.' Up till now, the State has refused to acknowledge that such organisations exist. Ironically, the debate on the Bill may be the first and last opportunity that

MPs will ever have to bring the existence of M15 and M16 to public attention. Once it is law, the secret police will be locked away behind an iron curtain of their own making. 'Security and intelligence' also covers activities in support of the organisations. It will thus become illegal to enquire into the activities of the police Special Branch, which acts as M15's errand boys for making arrests and appearing in court. Since most of the attention of the Special Branch is directed towards left wingers in the trade unions and the Labour movement, this presents a clear threat to all legal political activity of which the State disapproves.

In addition, the Bill makes it possible for any civil servant to demand that a document which has been leaked should be handed back if the authorities so decide. Many journalists will face the alternative of handing back a document or having their entire files removed by the police.

When the Bill becomes law — and it is only a matter of time before it does given the present balance of Parliamentary forces — it may well be that the State will not use it — though it could well — to raid the offices of every single alternative paper. Acts of Parliament do not have their effect only through prosecutions, fines and imprisonment; the impact will be cumulative. Cautious journalists and editors will have one more reason for not investigating the sensitive activities of what E.P. Thompson has called 'the secret state'. And eventually, there will be a prosecution, when the Government of the day deems it politically useful. Hopefully, new censorship legislation will then be treated in the same way as the Heath Government's Industrial Relations Act: defied and broken in practice, repealed by a new Labour government immediately it comes into office.

That, of course, means a great deal of change. For the new Bill is entirely on the lines of the Labour Government's White Paper of two years ago. The Labour Front Bench, led in this matter by Merlyn Rees, is fully behind the Bill. The only reason why it did not become law is that enough Labour MPs made it clear they would not support it. Both from the point of view of those who may one day be the Bill's victims, and as part of the campaign to bring home the dangers which the activities of the security organisations present to the Labour movement, action now is vital, in the forms of motions of protest to Whitelaw and Rees and in support of the activities of Chris Price and other MPs who will be organising Parliamentary opposition to it, from trade union branches, and political and community organisations.



The *Leveller* is organising a public meeting on the issue before the Bill goes before the House of Commons, which will be about the end of December. Details will be available in the office about the end of November. Fuller briefings on the dangers of the Bill are available from the Outer Circle Policy Unit, 4 Cambridge Terrace, London SW1, and from State Research, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

Phil Kelly

KILL ANOTHER BILL ! FIGHT OFFICIAL SECRECY !

DO YOU want to kill the Bill ? Time is short, but we must create as big a stink as possible over this latest attempt to make
DO YOU want to kill this Bill? Time is short, but we must create as big a stink as possible over this latest attempt to make government even more secret. The Leveller is calling a meeting to discuss launching a campaign. Come to our office at 7.30 pm on Monday November 19, and we'll show the ruling class a thing or two.

Tommy Terror Gang Secret Cells Exposed

The document below is part of a Restricted Ministry of Defence guide to the administrative set-up of Britain's covert action specialists, the SAS.

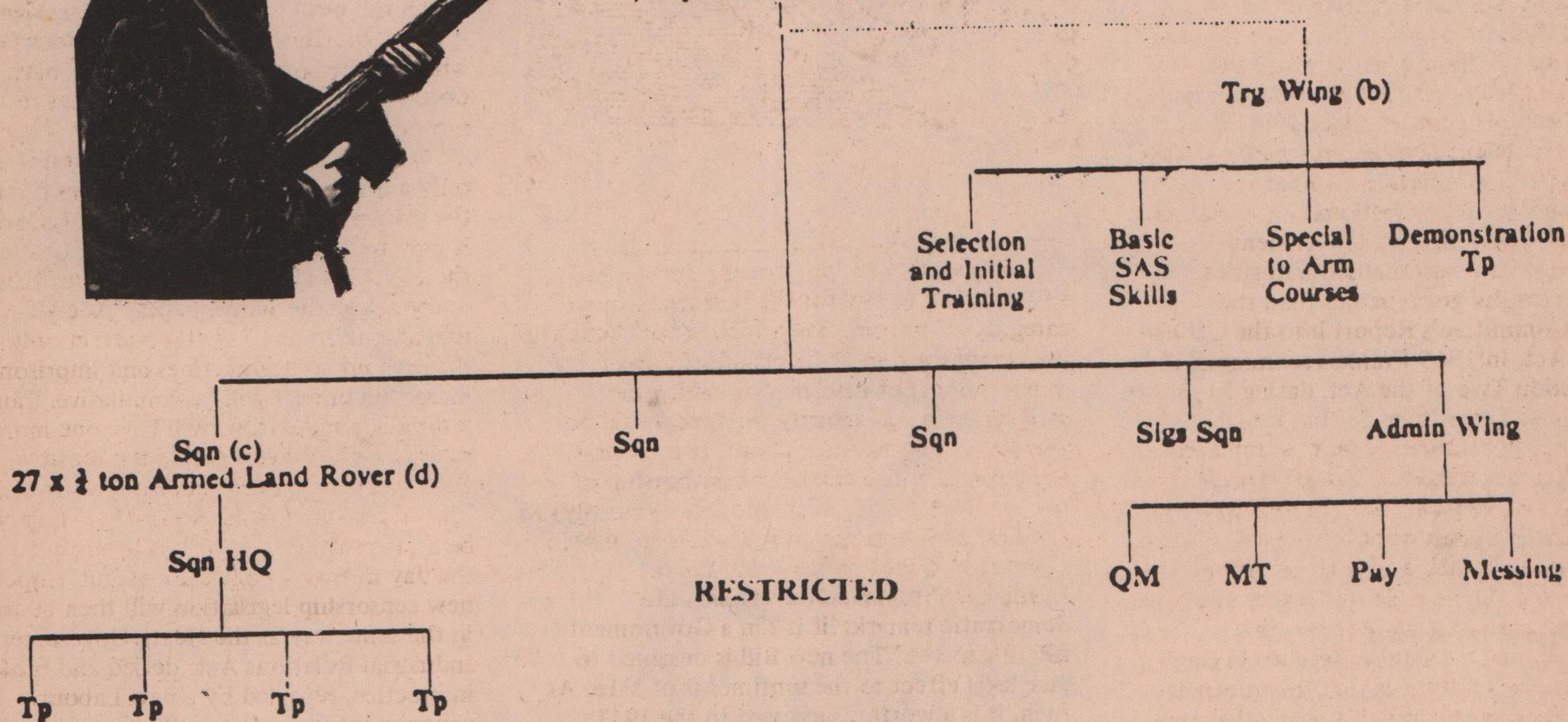


SAS



**SPECIAL AIR SERVICE
REGIMENT (a)
RHQ
Ops and Int Centre**

SECTION 13—SPECIAL FORCES



MAURICE OLDFIELD's appointment as 'security supremo' for Northern Ireland implies rather more than an urgent necessity for improving coordination between the military and the police in the province. It reflects the long-held Conservative belief in reliance on covert action and military solutions to political problems.

This was always Airey Neave's line and it has been inherited lock, stock and barrel by Northern Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins whose recent political 'initiative' in suggesting tentative round-table talks has been laughed out by Northern Ireland politicians. Atkins gave a hint of where his heart really lies in September, when, in one of his rare public speeches on military policy, he told the Newry and Mourne District Council that he would be 'encouraging and intensifying' covert operations.

The spearhead of the Atkins policy remains the Special Air Service regiment. SAS have had a presence in Northern Ireland since the beginning of the 'troubles' but it was not until

January 1976, when Harold Wilson drafted them officially into border areas, that their presence was publicly acknowledged. Since then more and more men have gone in, so that now Northern Ireland is by far their greatest commitment.

A new book, *The Soldiers*, by Henry Stanhope, *The Times*' Defence Correspondent, together with a document obtained exclusively by *The Leveller*, gives an insight into how the SAS have changed their internal organisation to deal with Northern Ireland.

At the top of the diagram is the Regimental Headquarters which is responsible through the Commanding Officer to the Director of SAS.

Below the HQ comes the Operations and Intelligence Centre, which is in turn responsible for the Squadrons and the Training Wing. It is here that the recent heavier commitment to Northern Ireland is most noticeable. Stanhope reports that in addition to the operational squadrons—which he specifies as containing

72 men and six officers—'there is a number of special sections including a research cell, an intelligence centre, a parachuting centre and a training wing. The training wing is in turn split into a counter-revolutionary warfare cell, an initial training cell and a Northern Ireland cell—the most recent addition to the regiment.'

The make-up of the squadrons is an administrative convenience rather than a rigid division and increasing numbers of men are currently being drafted back through Training Wing for Northern Ireland duties. It is this process which is being accelerated both for full-time members of the regiment and for officers—like Captain Robert Nairac who was kidnapped while working undercover in 1977—from other regiments who are going through the SAS programme before returning to their own duties.

While Atkins apparently bumbles about with political initiatives that are bound to fail, the really important development for the future of the Province is the decision to concentrate even more on specialised counter-insurgency forces.

British Rail's unsavoury tenants

ANTI-NUCLEAR campaigners and opponents of apartheid might do well to notice the occupants of British Rail's big new office development the next time they pass through Euston Station. It contains the palatial new offices of Fluor Corporation, the California-based world wide project management and process engineering contractor. Fluor have had a British office for some time, but their relocation in the new Euston complex represents

a marked expansion in its base here.

Among the better known aspects of Fluor's work have been a variety of jobs for the American nuclear industry, including the project management of the Farley nuclear site construction in Alabama. But undoubtedly the most prominent of the 'superscale' work (in the company terminology) at present underway is the engineering of South Africa's SASOL II, the world's largest process plant for the conversion of coal into oil and gas.

The process gasifies coal from the huge deposits next to the plant, on the high Transvaal, in what will be a key element in

securing South African independence from foreign oil supplies. The vast plant will cover no less than 3.7 square miles, consuming 12 million tons of coal a year, and at the moment over 20,000 construction workers are employed there.

Rumours abound about the conditions of near forced labour and effective militarisation of the site organisation. Fluor appear to have found these sort of conditions easy to live with. It is a depressing thought that one of the main reasons for the British expansion of the company is that it sees a role for itself in the development of the British nuclear industry.

Heli-teli is watching you



ONE FIFTH of the population of Britain is on police files. Recent disclosures on the vetting of the 'Persons Unknown' jury, and of files lost by a detective in Brixton which were handed to *Time Out* and the *New Statesman*, show that up to more than half of those 'of interest to the police' have never committed any crime. You can end up on police files simply because you are an 'associate' of someone else on the file.

Photographs and film form part of these records. They are of less use in local policing—where the 'villains' are probably known by sight to the police—than to those units, like the Special Branch and serious crime squads, which are concerned with developments nationwide.

In central London, 68 television cameras mounted at key points are employed for

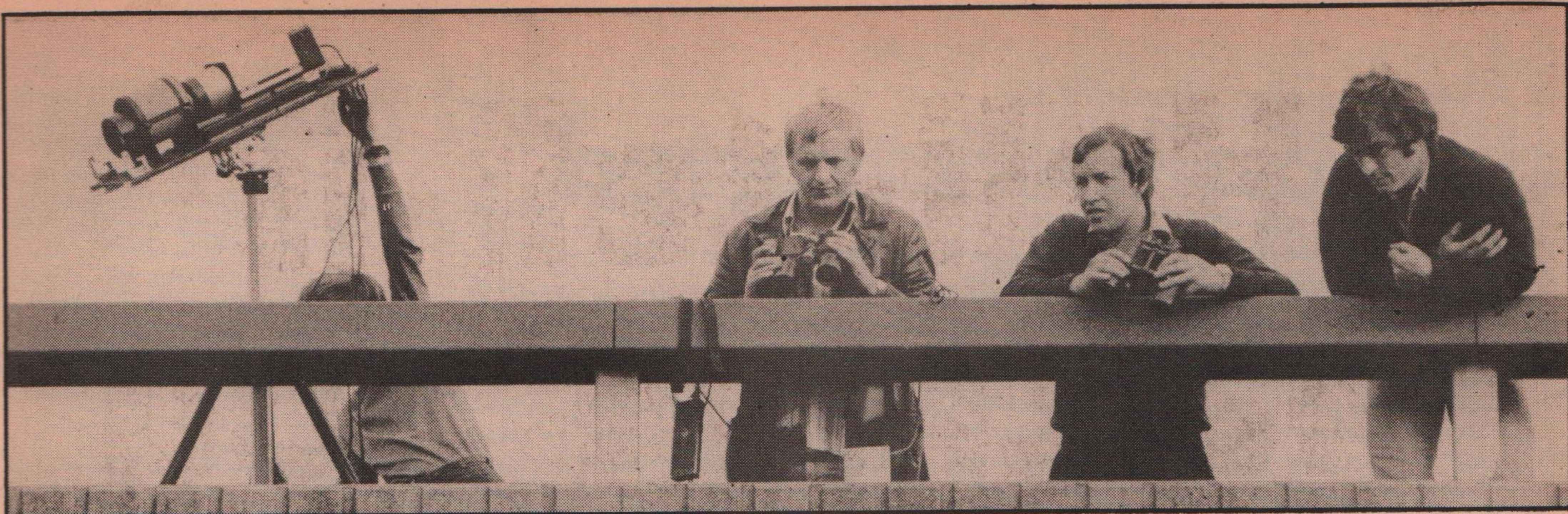
'operational purposes'—to enable police to be deployed to prevent a demonstration going where it should not, or to rush in reinforcements if things get out of hand. Some of these cameras are used for traffic control; others, Scotland Yard freely admits, are there for demo control only, including the ones in Trafalgar Square (on the National Gallery) and in Grosvenor Square, covering the US Embassy.

As well as the 68 fixed cameras, others can be added to the network from time to time. The TV camera mounted on Westway, photographed during the 1978 Notting Hill Carnival, is an example. This camera (Pic 2) is fitted with a light intensifier for use at night. Pictures from it, a police magazine commented, 'make midnight look like midday.' It, and the helicopter-mounted camera which looks like one of the props from *Star Wars* (Pic 1), feed their pic-

tures back to control rooms in Scotland Yard, and to local stations. The 'heli-tele' lens inside that sphere is powerful enough to focus on individual faces while flying overhead. This photo was taken during the 1979 Notting Hill Carnival, and the camera has since flown over large demonstrations.

It's also clear that the TV cameras are used for more than operational purposes. Modern video equipment is sophisticated enough to allow the cameras to read car number plates, so individuals would be easily recognised by police studying either the 'live' transmission or stills taken from videotapes.

'Police surveillance is a very emotive word. We wouldn't want to give them the impression that police are illegally photographing people on demonstrations and putting their pictures on file,' a Scotland Yard spokesperson told



The Leveller. But she admitted that all 'significant' and 'troublesome' demonstrations are filmed and covered by police photographers with ordinary 35mm cameras. These films and photographs, she insisted, are used 'for training purposes—or perhaps for internal inquiries'. But, the spokesperson added, she could not deny that photographs and film might end up on file.

How many 'training films' does Scotland Yard need? Every recent left demonstration has been attended by photographers—two of them are seen chatting on the fringes of an anti-racist march in the Brick Lane area last year (Pic 3). And there is usually a film crew, trying desperately to look just like the BBC. The crew on the right of Pic 4 also present in the Brick Lane area last year consists of sound man, cameraman and technician. The blond

man with the 35mm camera talking to them should be familiar to *Leveller* readers, for he too works for the Yard. We published two photographs of him in our May issue this year, one taken outside Grunwicks, in 1977, the other when he turned up with the Anti-Terrorist Squad when a bomb was found at the south London offices of NUPE last year.

Given what else is on police files in the way of gossip, hearsay and downright untruths, it would be surprising indeed if these pics didn't end up there too. Indeed, Scotland Yard's insistence that police are not 'illegally' taking people's pictures is meaningless. There is no law whatever which forbids the police to photograph whom they like, when they like, or prevents them from doing whatever they wish with the resulting pictures.

Phil Kelly (All photos: Andrew Wiard—Report)



How to talk dirty and get arrested

THIS PAKISTANI took my mother-in-law to an Irish restaurant and says to the West Indian waiter, 'There's a homosexual in my soup,' and the waiter says, 'What do you expect for 40p.... A Jewish squatter?' Now we've got all that out of the way, we can get on with it.....

Thus are the comedy pub routines of one Tony Allen prone to begin. He's one of an outfit called Alternative Cabaret — a group of ex-buskers, theatricals and un-nameables mainly based in Ladbroke Grove, that part of West London where the weed comes with the morning milk. A mix of stand-up comics, jugglers, and musicians, the Cabaret do their darndest to take stage entertainment as far out as poss from the cliché stranglehold.

To stick with Tony Allen though — it's tempting to use the Lenny Bruce analogy. Although Allen swears he only remembers Bruce as a guy who swore on stage and kept getting arrested, he himself has regular run-ins with the Old Bill at Hyde Park's Speaker's Corner — the so-called 'freedom of speech' patch in London.

Just last month, he was up for the third time at Bow Street Court. Police had crowded his act at the Corner, with his regulars urging 'Go on, say it' until he did. He said 'fuck' and the cops moved in, waving the Public Order Act — designed to stop Mosley's fascists in the 1930s — above their heads. Allen, y'see, talks about masturbation, sex, love, things like that. At Bow Street, the case was adjourned: Allen explained, 'One cop told me they couldn't do the case then because a policeman involved was sick. I told him, 'only one sick — I think you're all sick mate''.

A new charge was introduced. An 1836 law forbidding 'Upsetting the passengers in the Park' was dusted down to Allen's amazement and unveiled against him. The cops then opposed bail which would have meant him being inside till January, but even the magistrate thought this too much.

So why should our guardians in blue regard a comedian as such a menace to Civilisation As We Know It?

I came to Ladbroke Grove for Free Love and a squat, and settled for a life of sexual politics and a licence.

Some eight years back, Allen hit Ladbroke Grove and got involved with such street level theatre groups as West London Theatre Workshop, then Pirate Jenny, then Rough Theatre. The latter came closest to the anarcho-style he liked because they did not put politics forward so much as reflect the dope culture, the 'Do It' style. He

wrote a few BBC radio plays, mainly straight situation comedy.

His manner now is not so much jokes and gags, as having a slant on a view of the world. Sex life, relationships, the contradictions between the theory and practice of an anarchist/lefty. He's also funny: 'If there's not a laugh every 30-40 seconds while I'm on stage, then I'm failing. I want to rap about anarchy, love, passions, emotions, and where there're at as weapons against authority. Love's at the centre in the end — I love a lot of people and I've got a lot of close friends, which is the basis of my act. I can't get into Marxism — it's just another blueprint, another authority.

'Masturbation, censorship, adolescent sex I talk about, and if that goes well, then I'd talk about rape, which gets nearer people's tender spots. I'm in the libertarian ghetto. I'm obsessed with relationships, and a lot of my attitudes have come out of the Men's Group thing. Homosexuals are often as fucked up over relationships as hets. The important thing is to confront authority; there's no goals, but we must expand and grow; there's no direction but out.'

Soho's done for making love what Russia's done for socialism.

But the performing is the thing. Alternative Cabaret do an average four shows a week these days, with two residencies. They stick to sympathetic places mainly. Allen remembers a 'really heavy' pub in Latimer Road — 30 were listening while 200 were carrying on drinking and talking. He walked off the stage. He did a slot at Soho's renowned Comedy Store, but the club's double life as a strip-joint meant there were too many 'red-necks and heavies' in the crowd.

He walked off again, saying 'Soho's done for making love what Russia's done for socialism.' He did a show at a working men's club in Isleworth, West London, but he was tense and anxious — 'It was like talking to your mum and dad. I told them I was going to talk about sex so any children should be taken out. They were, and I went into my rap. The audience were totally silent — they weren't liking it but they wouldn't shout about it. They just kept quiet — and that's the worst thing of all about the English.

Isleworth heard Allen out, but

it was painful. A comic who came on after went into the whole mother-in-law, anti-Irish, etc. etc. routine, and the audience were happy again with something they understood. Allen had made no impression. He realises he should keep out of circuits like the London East End pubs, and the northern working men's clubs. The challenge is there but the battle's too enormous.

If God had meant us not to masturbate, she'd have given us shorter arms.

Allen's happy now Alternative Cabaret is functioning and just about making a living. It means he can both write and perform. He was very unhappy, y'see writing for other people in political fringe theatre: 'It was writing by committee on a decided topic, writing to order — like being told, write something involving two black women, an unmarried mother and saving the whale. I can only write about the way I feel and live, not about car workers.'



Allen's none too happy over Arts Council funding for political theatre groups. 'It falls into the same syndrome as writing to order. I believe the audience should pay and therefore you should go some way towards pleasing them: with Arts Council money, you don't have to think about that, and you needn't worry if what you're doing isn't sellable. The economics should decide your performances — your style then gets based on reality, not on how much money you've got to spend.'

Mind you, the night I saw Tony Allen performing, he was in bad form and only did a short act — the logic of his attitude to financing should mean he couldn't afford to do a bad act, but there you go.

He goes on: 'If the Arts Council didn't exist, there would have been a flourishing theatre

movement in pubs and a raunchy hard-sell entertainment — much more like what we call cabaret. The state is intervening through the Arts Council: if it wasn't there, OK there'd be fewer actors, but entertainment would be more intelligent than now. The Arts Council didn't allow a poverty-line style to evolve.'

Do that and you'll go blind — Can't I do it a little bit and wear glasses?

Allen acknowledges Lenny Bruce — 'For the sixties his lines on sexual politics were great.' He also likes Tony Hancock, Max Wall and Billy Connolly — 'but he's up a bit of a back-alley, billing himself as a working-class Scot while living in a mansion overlooking a lake.'

His friends and lovers in Notting Hill, though, he rates as the important influence. 'This area has always been a bit bohemian, pretty bizarre. I reproduce a lot of their lifestyle on stage, and I think that's political in itself.'

He comes back again and again to love: 'There's such a contradiction on the left, especially with men. They have all these Utopian ideas, but there's a poverty in their own lives. Men go along with feminism and sexual politics but they're living in couples or whatever, and they're often being hypocritical whether they know it or not.'

Allen's stage act encompasses these attitudes, and can lead to much excruciatingly embarrassed laughter when it hits people pretty close to the mark: uncomfortable but horribly accurate.

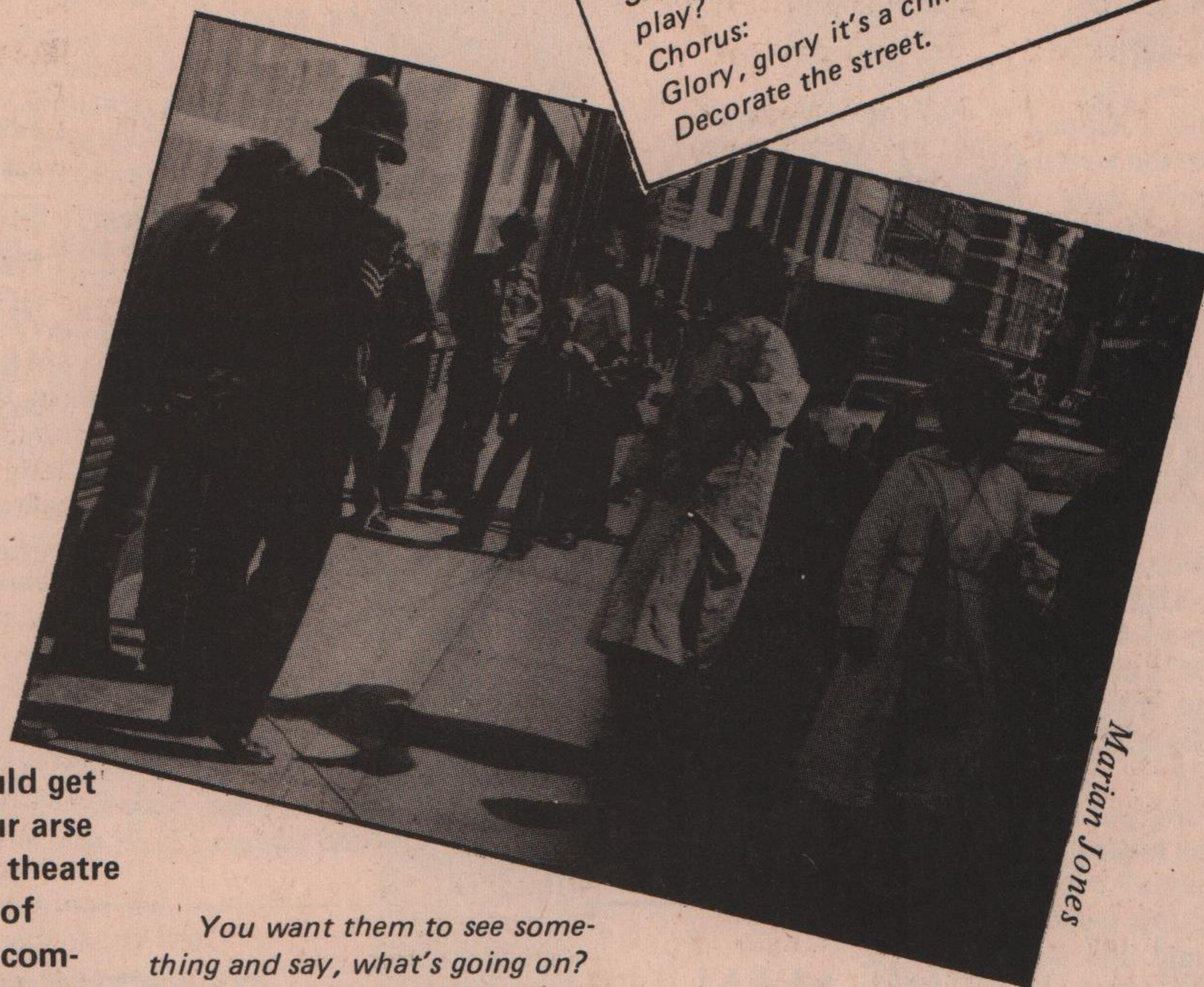
Allen and other Alternative Cabaret men and women comics are sharp too at spotting political sympathies in their audience. Recently they knew some Communist Party of GB (Marxist—Leninist) were present, and a string of Albania jokes followed — the comrades walked out in regimented protest. Another time, a CP audience were hugely amused by some well-tailored Trotsky cracks till the subject suddenly turned to Stalinism and suddenly it was not so funny.

Alternative Cabaret is about 'non-sexist, non-racist radical entertainment', but you'll get a lot of your own foibles thrown back at you. You have been warned.

David Brazil

Subvert! Subvert!

We don't wanna be arrested
We don't wanna go to court.
We'd rather mess around
On the underground
Even if we're gonna get caught
We don't wanna spot on television
We don't havta practice every day
We've gotta improvise
We wanna stay alive
So why won't the bastards let us
play?
Chorus:
Glory, glory it's a criminal offence
Decorate the street.



Marian Jones

SO you thought you could get away with sitting on your arse and reading about street theatre in the precious columns of *Time Out* huh? Not so, comrades. Demolition Decorators, the London trouble band, opine we should all be joining in to make demonstrations and pickets unboring, and they gave *Tim Gopsill* a few recipes for lephthy phun.

THE TOWN HALL is under picket. The council is meeting to decide on the cuts. Fifty solemn people are standing around; some of them respond half-heartedly to the man with the loud voice: Thatcher ... *OUT!* Socialism ... *IN!* The rest affect fierce expressions to mask their embarrassment. Passers-by pass by.

Suddenly ... a dozen lunatics arrive. All dressed in white coats, with goggles on. They have a leader, who has an old wireless on his head and declaims through a plastic megaphone a running commentary on what follows. As the councillors file in, these loonies cheer them. *For he's a jolly good fellow!* They sing to town hall workers leaning out of the window. People start to gather round. The whole thing has taken off, since the Demolition Decorators arrived.

Pickets and demonstrators are so *boring*, say the Decorators. Worse, they *alienate* most people, who are handed an alibi for not joining in, even if they support the protest. The Decorators give them an incentive to join. This is fun. Towards the end of this picket at Islington Town Hall in October, people were coming up and saying, aren't the cuts terrible. And the councillors voted against them.

You want them to see something and say, what's going on?

"People love seeing things in the street. You've got to involve them as much as possible. *We leave gaps for people to fill in, we use them.* We always get well applauded. And if the police move in, if there are arrests, people get angry, they get mad if they're moved on.

"But if you do it well, it's hard for the police to intervene, in fact they often enjoy it. You can make it difficult for them, make them look stupid. If you've got a dozen people ten yards apart, doing incongruous things, how can they break that up?

"The rule is: incongruity attracts attention."

But you want to give the impression it's natural. Be comfortable. Take an old armchair — that's another rule: never buy anything, you can find all the props you need, in skips and so on. You've got a right to be there. You can create the most blatant obstruction, and you don't get done, unless they panic. One of the Decorators' *causes celebres*, the Leicester Square Four case, was started when a policewoman panicked at a mass busk-in there.

But you *are* running a risk, and arrests can be useful. They give you the chance to mount performances outside the courts. Hand out balloons, whistles and so on to the magistrates. They really like that. In court, dress strangely and give incongruous answers to questions. It unsettles the magistrates to see people being affectionate. *Fondle each other.*

The Decorators have had 23 prosecutions in London in the last two years. There've been only two convictions. All the rest were acquittals or discharges.

It's most important to involve people in the street. Hand things out to them: party hats and whistles, paper bags. Get them all to put paper bags on their heads. How can the police break that up? Keep the props simple: it's amazing what you can do with a cardboard box: play football, wear it, cut it up. This also takes time, which is important.

It's a good trick to support what the protest is opposing — in an obviously ridiculous way. Like that Islington picket.

Try a mass sign-on at an army or police recruiting operation. A hundred people volunteer and get the forms. You set up a table outside, for people to fill in the forms. You hand them a megaphone and invite them to tell the people why they want to join the SPG/go to Northern Ireland. Or have a pro-military picket, with slogans like *"Step Up Arms Sales"*; *"Arm Traffic Wardens"*; *"Stamp out Pacifism"*; *"We Want a Police State"*; *"More Police Murders"* and so on. Silverstein was once arrested for shouting: *"Three cheers for the Metropolitan Police."*

You can be completely direct. Journalists in Sheffield a few years ago, on strike in protest at Radio Sheffield's persistent use of non-journalists supplying material, set up a stall outside the shop of a

greengrocer who was doing football reports, and sold fruit and veg at about half his prices. Friends of the Earth, at an open day at a nuclear station gave visitors bags of earth marked *"Nuclear Waste. Bury in a safe place for 25,000 years"*. Very scary. Education cuts: *tear up* books outside the education office and hand them out. Very disturbing.

The Decorators also mounted the celebrated Man in the Tube case. A protest against plans to stop buskers on the London underground. A man stood in a twelve-foot-high cardboard tube outside the London Transport HQ for five days.

There's a useful spin-off from this sort of thing. They make good pictures. You can use the press. Something bizarre will be used, while a serious demo may not. The most publicity the Decorators have had has been in the *Daily Express*, a paper that's big on pictures. Think visually. Create a strong image. The Decorators find it very amusing that the Central Office of Information came and made a film about them, for showing abroad. The government's propaganda agency.

More rules: *stay cool*. Don't get too excited. Be subtle; don't state the obvious. Let people make up their minds on the issue. Involve them in activity, voluntarily. Don't pressure them. Never ask them for money. Silverstein says: *The whole principle of street events is that average people can do things. That's what scares the shit out of government. And it's better for us. When we do a gig, it's the audience that entertains us. You should do as little as possible, and get them to do as much."*

The Decorators are against leaders and stars. What's the point in getting *Pete Townshend* or *Julie Christie* along? You're using them, and what do they do? Lefties say, get a celebrity and more people will come. That's wrong. It doesn't involve people.

A last warning: be prepared for hostility from staid lefty demonstrators; and from theatre groups. They can be very precious about street performances.

The Decorators are in danger of becoming celebrities themselves. Their idea, when they started, was to get 20 or 30 groups going, all performing in the streets. But no-one else has on a regular basis. Now everyone who wants a street event contacts them; they've been doing five or six a week. They're getting tired. There are plenty of (out of work) musicians and actors, and active lefties with ideas. Why don't they get on with it?

Shorts

RUMBLINGS IN HIGH PLACES

YOU READ IT first in *The Leveller*..... Among the revelations with which we've put the wealthy commercial press to shame just recently, two have led to direct action by workers in the fields concerned.

The BBC Current Affairs minutes we printed in July showed up the secret deal that the Director, News and Current Affairs (DNCA), Dick "Francis of the Yard" Francis had reached with the Metropolitan Police. This would have bound programme-makers to consult with police at every stage of features involving the Met. The day the *The Leveller* came out, BBC journalists circulated the article and called an emergency NUJ meeting, at which they unanimously condemned the agreement. Members of the ABS, the BBC's oft-derided "house union", followed suit, and this pressure forced their union leaders to take the matter up with Francis.

The DNCA hummed and hahed and put them off for months, but in September the meeting was held, and Francis agreed to "renegotiate" with the police. He hasn't yet completed this mysterious process, but both unions have said they won't comply with the agreement in the meanwhile, and they won't accept anything but the BBC's withdrawal from it in the long run. In other words, the agreement is dead. It's a significant gain in terms of editorial freedom for these workers, but there's been little heard on the matter from the self-appointed guardians of the "free press" who run the media.

The second notable case was our last issue's story on how the Labour Party pension fund invests in firms with business links with South Africa, or which donate to the Tory Party or other right-wing groups.

This created a great hoo-hah inside the party machine, and gave party workers the chance to fight the reactionary bureaucrats in charge. It turned out the administrators of the fund had been told to dispose of the investments several times but had failed to do so. Now they're under greater pressure, and as we went to press the party NEC was to debate a call to get rid of these holdings — a call that's likely to be carried.

Remember you read it first in *The Leveller*.

BRAINTREE CASE CONTINUES

EVEN THE whitewash Shackleton report on the workings of the Prevention of Terrorism Act recommended dropping its 'catch-all' withholding information section. The Home Office refused this, and no wonder. They're still going ahead with the prosecution of 11 Irish people from the Braintree area of Essex with this charge and others relating to motoring offences.

Twenty-three people were taken in early this year following the great Bomb Squad bungle bungle after Xmas-time IRA bombings (see *The Leveller* 24), but the state is still not letting go. The 11 were committed for trial last month, but they won't be at the Old Bailey till at least January. You'd think it was a crime to be Irish in Braintree.

Groups	Criteria	Steps to be taken
Homosexuals	Unsympathetic, unsuitable for certain positions, e.g. instructor, personnel manager.	Psychological tests, employ detective, reference
Women	Presumed unsuitability for executive positions, possible pregnancies, general prejudice	General observation
Foreigners	Presumed unreliability, customer prejudices	Curriculum vitae, interview
Members of left-wing organizations	Presumed causers of unrest, agitators.	Psychological tests, employment of detective
Bachelors	Presumption of irregular life	Analysis of curriculum vitae, interview
Divorced	Presumption of unreliability	Analysis of curriculum vitae

1. Management Selection Criteria in West Germany

The Shape of Things that are Already Here? The above chart, from Robert Jungk's Calder paperback The Nuclear State, illustrates management interview guidance for proposed workers in the nuclear industry of West Germany, the Euro-state most admired by our Mrs. T. What happens in the BRD happens here, so when you're called for an interview, lie!

THIS MAN MAY DIE

BRENDAN GALLAGHER has campaigned for over a year now on the rigged Diplock trial that sent his son Willy into Long Kesh. He stood against Roy Mason in his Barnsley constituency last general election, he's toured and spoken intensely, he's seen a play for TV about Willy chopped up by BBC bosses, he's tried every legitimate peaceful means of highlighting the injustice meted out to his son, and to hundreds of others in Northern Ireland.

It has not worked. Willy remains in jail. Brendan Gallagher has had enough. He is now on a hunger strike he intends carrying through to its fatal end. At press time, he had not eaten for 60 days, and was deciding whether to end his protest in Britain or go to the Vatican City.

The medically-accepted limit for such self-denial of food is 75-80 days. By the time this is read, Brendan Gallagher may well be close to death. He said: 'If it takes my death to prove there isn't a peaceful road to justice for Ireland, then there isn't one.'

Another pernicious piece of legislation Gallagher campaigned against was the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) which is close to its fifth anniversary — remember on introduction Roy Jenkins saying it was only a 'temporary' measure?

The latest figures (for Britain only) tell the grim tale. Up till this September, 4,350 have been detained under the PTA, of whom 46 were charged with 24 convictions. Quite a success rate huh? Next time the Home Office claims the PTA is not a 'fishing operation', remember those figures. 188 exclusion orders have been issued, and only 17 have been revoked after appeal.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency is organising a national demonstration against the PTA in London for 24 November, plus a series of public meetings on the issue. Assemble at 2pm that day at Kennington Park near the Oval tube and march to Brixton Prison.

SANCTIONING NEW AIR ROUTES

WHEN BRITISH AIRWAYS gives up 26 of its domestic routes next year — let the refreshing winds of free competition blow through state-owned industries, you know the kind of thing — one of the main contenders for a juicy slice of the action will be Air UK. Watch that name when the bids go up.

Air UK is the new name for the merged interests of three 'independent' airlines — Air Anglia, Air West and British Island Airways. Good stuff, Sir Freddie had better watch his back since gallant little Air UK will be after nine profitable internal UK routes.

But Air UK is, in fact, a wholly owned subsidiary of British and Commonwealth Shipping, one of our most notorious sanctions breakers. Formerly the Union Castle steamship line, BCS also owned a substantial minority of Freight Services, the South African company responsible for forwarding oil through Genta, the Rhodesia government purchasing agent.

And among BCS's other aviation interests is Rhodesian Airways, a crucial part of Smith's air defence system, and Airwork Services which used to service Rhodesian airforce planes direct but now does it through its Oman operation. BCS also owns two useful sources of helicopter pilots for Rhodesia, strike-breaking Bristow Helicopters and Servisair.

Air UK expects a turnover of £50 million in its first year of operation and hopes to carry 1.3 million passengers. BCS's chairman, Sir Nicholas Cayzer, one of the nastiest specimens to stalk the City, runs a strong right-wing line and his company is a major contributor to Conservative Party funds. Last year he told the BCS' AGM that a major political problem in the UK was the maintenance of law and order. Including, presumably, observing the Sanctions Regulations?

ANDERTON'S EMPIRE BUILDING

A COMPUTER system costing £3m will be built for the Greater Manchester Police, following a recent decision by the Greater Manchester council and the local police committee. Details of the proposed scheme are contained in a confidential report entitled *Computer-Aided Policing: Initial Design Study*.

The report is the work of IM Wylie and R Gemmill of PA Computers & Telecommunications Ltd (PACTEL). Wylie and Gemmill started on their report in November last year and it was completed this May. They worked in close collaboration with the Greater Manchester Computer Project Team, senior Manchester officers and the Home Office Scientific Development Branch.

PACTEL is a subsidiary of a bigger concern called PA International. Their parent company has carried out government work before and in 1968 they were responsible for a full-scale management study of the Metropolitan Police which led to a number of innovations. This particular piece of work netted them a £12,000 fee.

Computer-Aided Policing could be an important indicator of the way UK police forces intend to work in the foreseeable future. It probably represents the 'hard' school police thinking of people like James Anderton, Greater Manchester's present chief constable, or Kenneth Newman, retiring head of the RUC. Even the PR front of "liberal" chief constables like John Alderson (Devon & Cornwall), might slip if it was supported by the kind of computer facilities suggested for Greater Manchester.

Computer-Aided Policing means the use of electronic data-processing in routine general police work: event-logging, record-keeping, information retrieval, message handling and emergency routines. Computer *Command and Control* means the computerised evaluation of all electronic incoming data and the planning of police responses to a variety of situations. Crucial to these two

functions is the *information support* given by data banks on suspect persons, vehicles etc.

PACTEL sees GMC computer scheme gradually taking over the heart of police functions over a period of three years, beginning in mid-1981. First, computer-aided Command and Control will be introduced throughout the Greater Manchester area. Then the Manchester Criminal Records Office (MANCRO) will be transferred to computers and an operational system for individual officers to access and retrieve MANCRO information will be set up. While those steps are being taken a Management Information System will begin monitoring every aspect of the work of the computer.

Those goals in themselves seem questionable, but the report recommends that GMP should rethink and modify its policing to gain the best benefits ... are not to be secured by merely continuing with the same approach to policing as before'. Other ofrces have apparently 'missed opportunities by seeking to combine tomorrow's technology with yesterday's operational organisation.'

This whole package is sold to the decision-makers on the ground that it will make better use of low police manpower in a cost-effective manner and morale will improve if every officer sees the benefits computerisation will bring.

The CAP package, by the report's own admission, will be 'unusual in UK Police systems.' It will be housed in a hardened site at Manchester Police HQ, Chester House, with access restricted to positively vetted personnel and would be most required 'under conditions of severest threat.' The report also notes that 'the present political climate is not favourable' to the retention of computerised information from local Intelligence Collators, but it clearly implies that by 1985 this climate could have changed. As long as the public don't get the full details, that isn't out of the question.

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

'...houses are the socially acceptable side of making profits out of land appreciation.'

Investors Chronicle (1974)

Britain's housing problems are probably as numerous as the books, articles, topic papers, pamphlets, monographs, white and green papers that roll off the presses each year offering old and new solutions. Housing is an issue that haunts the left, for the very simple reason that most of the best plans to settle Britain's 'housing problem' have already been around for years. It's just that they never seem to get a chance to be put into practice. The problem, to state the obvious, is that capitalism refuses to go away. In the current political climate that sort of blanket statement won't make many friends, but it's still encouraging to see a couple of books on housing that have the effrontery to suggest that there can be a socialist view of housing.

Who Needs Housing? (Jane and Roy Drake, Papermac, £2.95) and **Socialism and Housing Action: The Red Paper on Housing** (Socialist Housing Activists Workshop, £1.00) are aimed at two different markets. **Who Needs Housing?** is more of a text book, which is hardly surprising, given that its authors are both university teachers. The **Red Paper** is meant primarily for activists in the 'decent housing for all' tradition and have a much more agitprop feel to it, graphics and all.

The Socialist Housing Activists Workshop is closely associated with the magazine

Community Action and so, inevitably, their answer to the housing problem is to inform local action and pressure groups better so that they can argue the case for socialist solutions at grass roots level. The 'socialist from below' argument. After a look at the myth that the housing crisis in Britain is over, the **Red Paper** goes on to look at the historical background, the capitalist system and the housing market at work.

This is followed by a look at the differences between tenants and house owners and the prevailing ideology centred on those differences, particularly in relation to the current drive to sell off publicly-owned housing. After a look at the family and private life -- areas where housing produces some of its most harmful and disastrous effects, the **Red Paper** puts forward a version of what housing could be like under a humane socialist system which saw housing not as an investment but a right, to be allocated on the basis of need. Finally, it stresses the need for strong 'community action,' though 'community' never gets a clear definition—a dangerous omission.

Who Needs Housing? covers a lot of the same ground, but obviously can afford to deal in greater depth with some of the **Red Paper's** topics. The Darke team pick out *allocation* as the major point of disfunction in Britain. They disagree with the pure Marxist dismissal of local collective action by groups and urge the homeless, squatters, battered wives or council tenants to make common cause against the enemy. Even trapped owner-occupiers in declining areas are offered the same advice, leaving the book with a distinctly liberal feel to it, despite its occasional Engels quotes.

As long as the problem of housing won't go away these two books could provide a useful starting point to anybody diving into the arena. They don't give every answer, but at least they try.



"I've just been handed a note saying that Russian troops are invading Western Europe. Tell me Melvyn, how will this news affect your dreary new television series and your excruciatingly boring new stage venture, Roderick?"

The Leveller station to hitherto uncharted

The government's microwave communications network explained plus a review of the new edition of a classic state-watchers' textbook

PANTHER BOOKS has just published a third, revised edition of Peter Laurie's classic *Beneath The City Streets*. Originally a Penguin, the book first came out in 1969 and quickly established itself as the plain paranoid's guide to the British state and its preparations to preserve itself in the event of nuclear holocaust, chemical-biological attack or even internal revolutionary insurrection.

Laurie's original detective work, though sometime a bit over-the-top in some of its deductions, was essentially an imaginative and painstaking follow-up of the dedicated 1963 Spies For Peace group involved with CND's Committee of One Hundred. They were the first to reveal the existence of a number of Regional Seats of Government (RSGs) — bunkers to enable the state's prime functionaries to go to ground sharpish as the megadeaths outside loomed. Later our masters would be able to keep all the lucky survivors supplied with government-issue brown paper bags to protect against nuclear fall-out (or to vomit tidily into

if radiation sickness had already struck...).

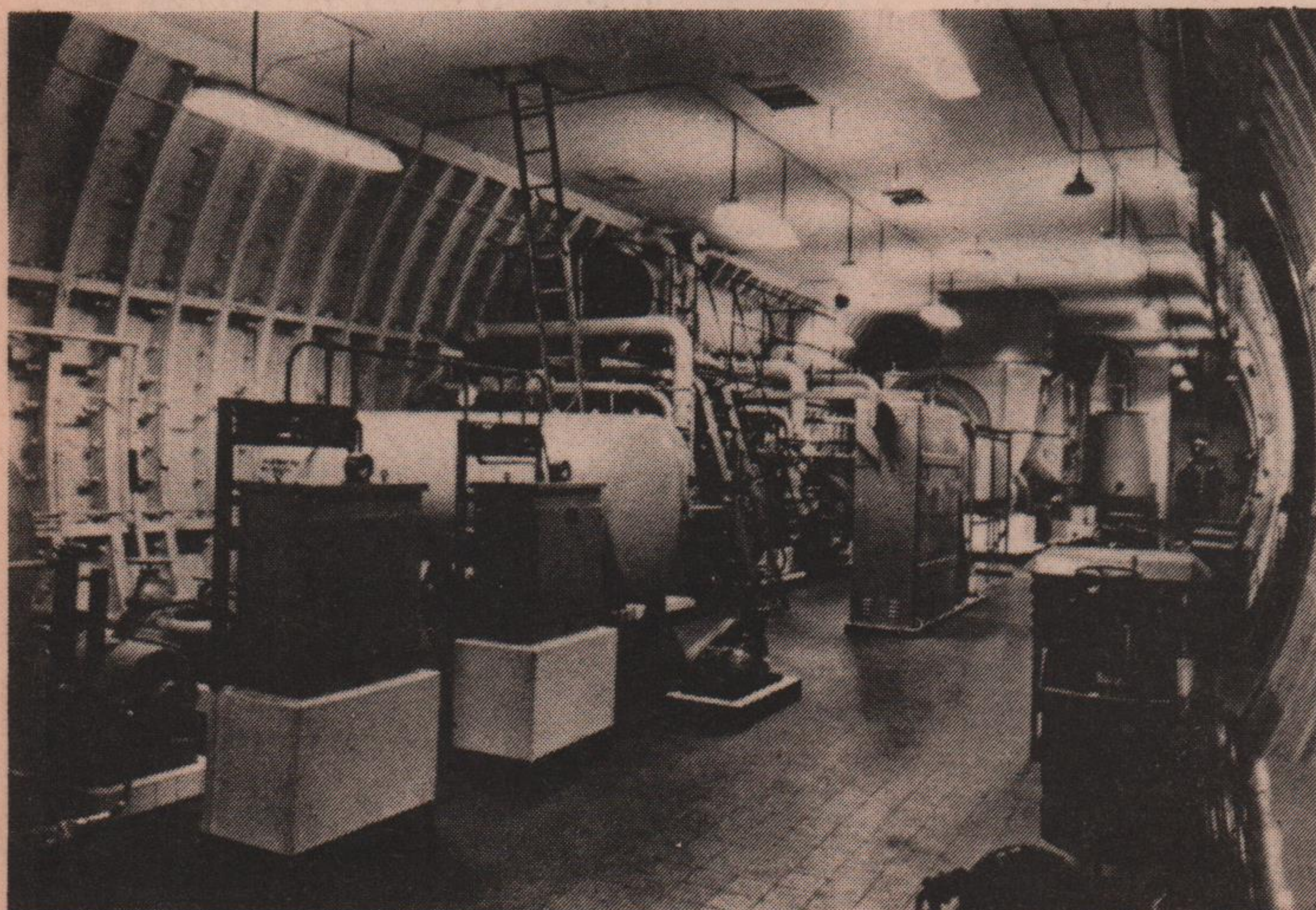
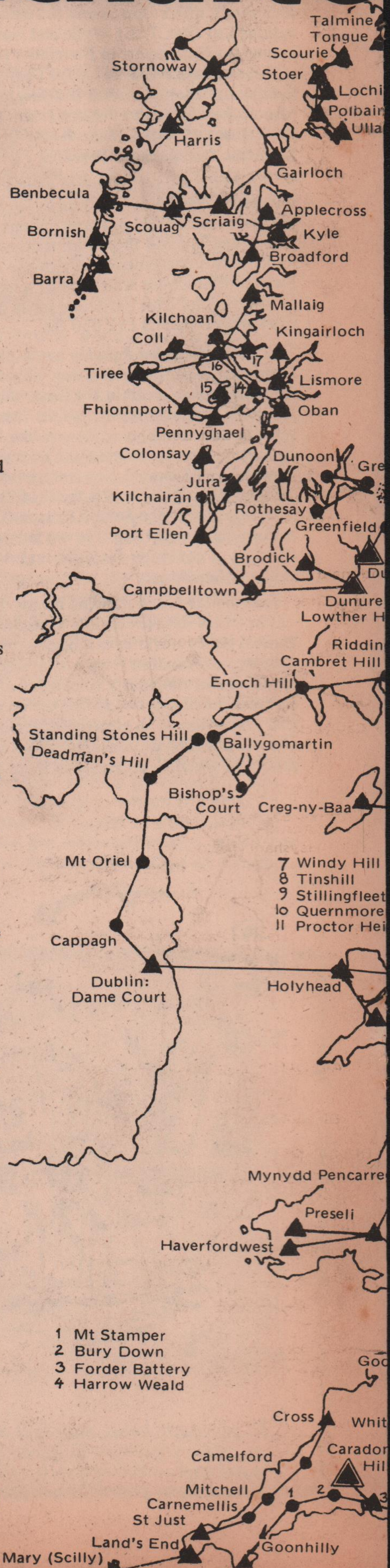
This new edition of *Beneath The City Streets* covers pretty much the same ground as the original — civil defence infrastructures, nuclear attack and World War III scenarios, recovery from Armageddon, getting down to the nitty-gritty of government citadels, tunnels and other secret sites. Laurie has amended and dropped much of his early material on the PO telephone system and added much up-to-date observation and back-up material. He has also modified his original analysis of revolutionary threats to his picture of the state's apparatus. Nobody would dispute that Britain's civil defence set-up could equally be used to counter any revolutionary events in this country, but where previously he seemed to be setting out to inform his readers in general, now he seems to be warning them what they may be up against.

His assumptions about the way in which class society functions and the possible ways of changing it tend to be at the very least uncritical and at worst liberal-elitist (eg his talk of 'the

conscious citizen', who seems, like Laurie's revolutionaries, to be exclusively male, with 'his' right 'to observe, think and deduce', troops *having* to be sent in against 'hog-wild mobs', and the idea that revolution could best be encouraged by the threat of nuclear attacks). He has also gone through considerable heart-searching on the question of the Official Secrets aspects of his work, particularly in the light of the ABC case. This has led to a general textual coyness about important evidence to back up his arguments and the omission of information about Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). To take another example, on page 229, Map 36 purports to show the 'GPO Microwave System'. In fact, the map is blank, though Map 40 (page 242) does give just the bare outlines of that very system, without a name or a label.

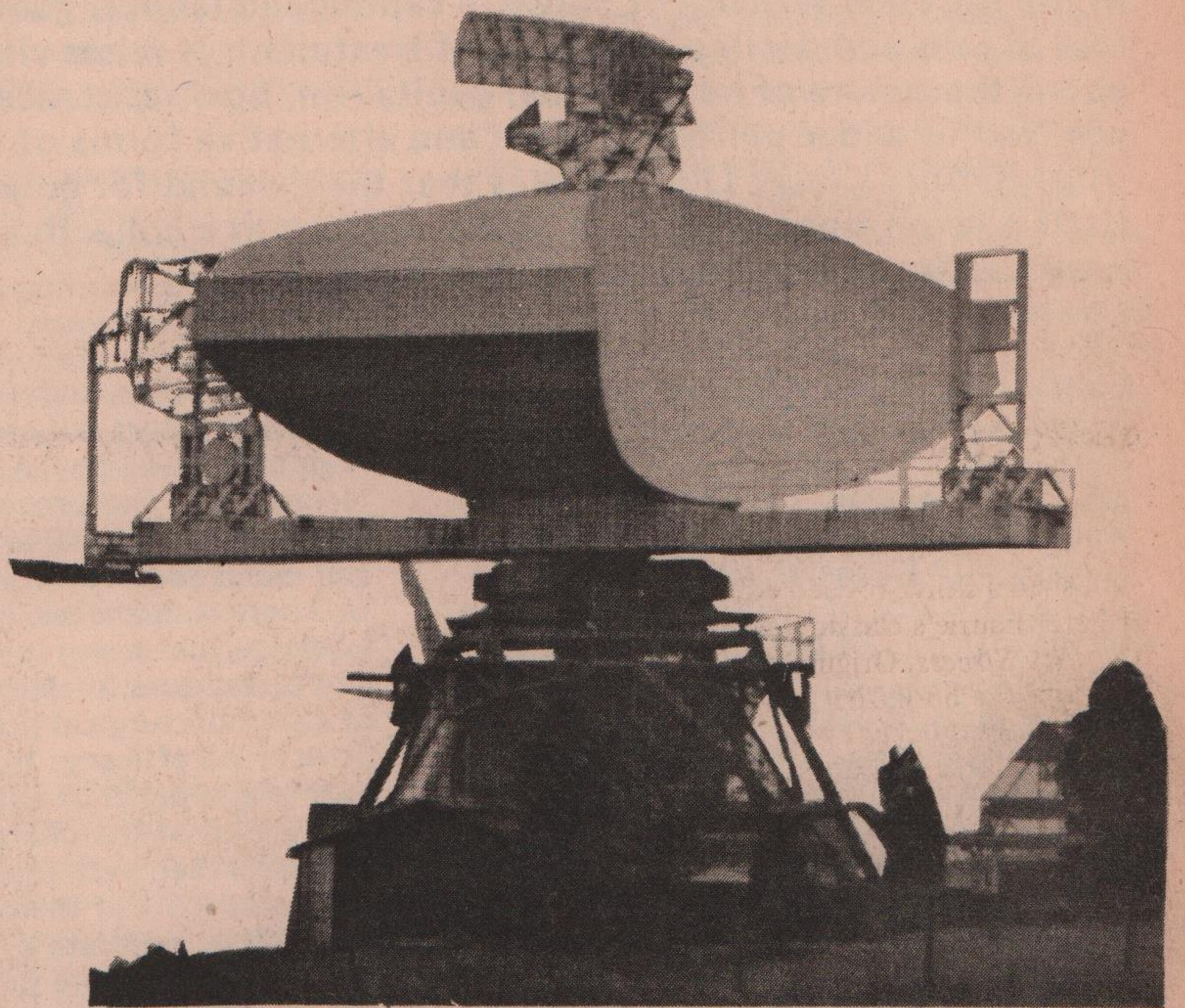
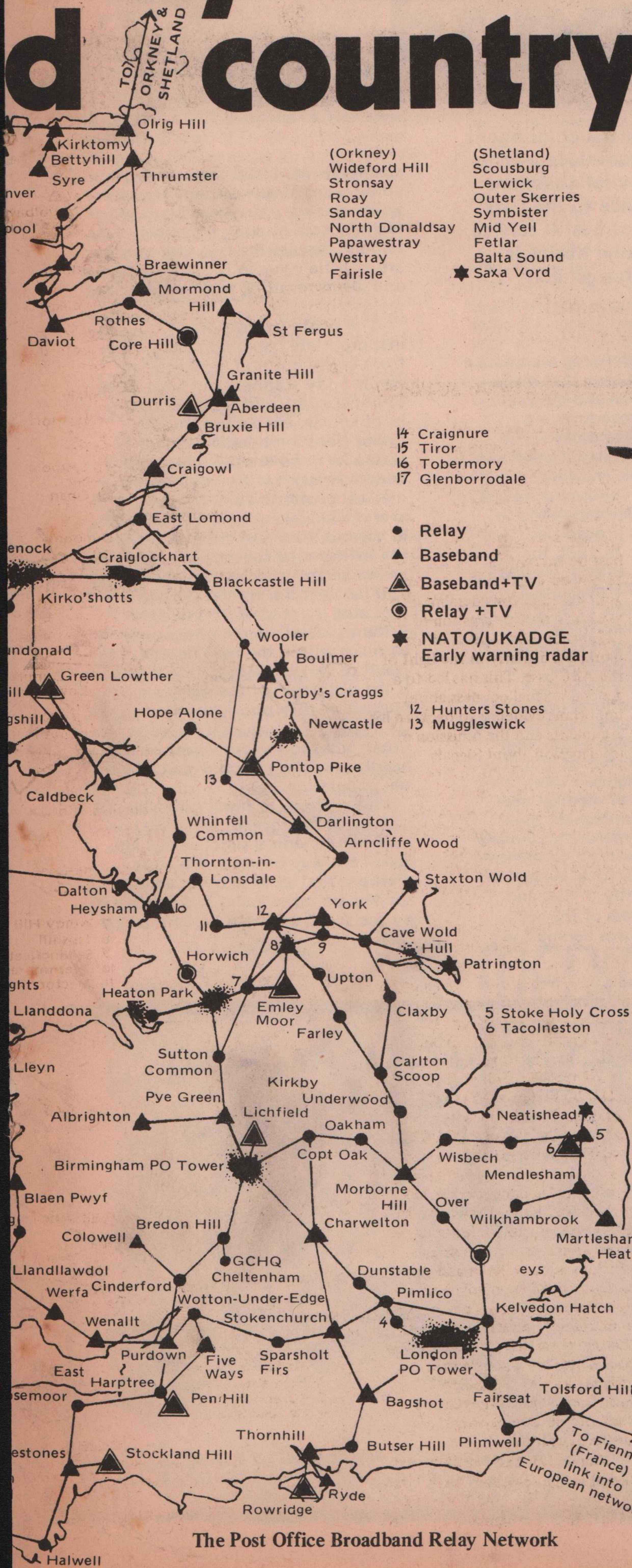
In the interests of science and technology the *Leveller* is happy to put this situation right. The map opposite shows details of the Post Office's microwave towers system — the Broadband Relay Network, to give it its official title — located at various sites round the UK, all linked to each other by line-of-sight (LOS) bearings. This is the system which carries, officially, the PO's TV and Telephone traffic as a back-up and extension to the underground cable network. But the Broadband Relay Network also has some less public functions. It supports military communications centres, radar and air-defence traffic control systems. It provides an emergency government communications network for use in warfare or insurrection and it also has a substantial excess capacity for SIGINT activities by providing tapping facilities on international long-distance circuits.

The Broadband Network was begun as the so-called 'Backbone' PO system in the mid-1950s to early 1960s. It originally operated



100 feet below Holborn, London: secret ventilation plant for government tunnel complex, built 1952

n-by-station guide d country by-ways



Air defence radar station NATO/UKADGE at Neatishead, Norfolk

in the 2 Gigahertz (GHz) frequency range, but has since moved into the 4 to 6 GHz spectrum. London's Post Office Tower, that well-known official secret, is the capital's terminal in this network, providing TV and telephone communication between all major cities in this country and eventually to Europe through France. The system is basically a grid with nodes at or near major cities. It also has spurs to radar stations along the UK east coast, forming part of NATO's early warning radar network, while inland it connects to hardened military communications centres.

The military advantages of such a network are that it cannot be cut, like cable, as long as the relay points are secure. Greater flexibility is possible in emergencies for rerouting signals. It also costs less than laying cable across awkward terrain. It can be jammed more easily than cable and it is more vulnerable to nuclear strike. The CIA has a set of secret satellites, code-named 'Rhyolite' for exactly this purpose, poised in stationary orbit drinking it all in. However, for internal security, it comes into its own. This is where the latter-day RSGs have a vital present-day function, as Laurie is at pains to point out.

Even if Laurie's theory that beams pass over RSGs may not be accurate, it still seems that stations on the network will at

some point be in line-of-sight with RSGs for a VHF or a UHF link. One leg of the network only goes 15km from London, to Harrow Weald, close to a major air defence HQ. At places like Five Ways (Bath) the beam is close to an RAF station. There are particular links to other RAF stations, to Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham and to the PO Research Centre, Martlesham Heath in Suffolk.

Though there may be traffic in some parts of the network associated with US satellite ground stations providing National Security Agency information, there are also four 'mystery' systems: Hunter Stones (Harrogate) to Quernmore (Lancs); York, Craigowl (Dundee) and Fairseat (Maidstone). All these bypass major urban centres. A back-up network of some kind? An experimental set-up to test equipment? Even the dedicated teams of snapping holidaymakers from the SBIS (Super Boffin Information Services) who helped us put together this map couldn't tell us the answer to that one. So try to help us keep our picture album up to date if you can add anything.

Meanwhile, there's no harm in spending £1.95 on *Beneath The City Streets*. If nothing else, it keeps the Centre Point controversy gently simmering away.

HEALTH is a

Revolutionary Demand

The significance of the Tory assault on the NHS, an essential component in the post-war settlement between capital and labour, goes deeper than loss of jobs and decline in quality of treatment. It raises vital questions about the nature of health under capitalism, how resistance to the cuts can lead to wider political action, and alternative forms of health service organisation. Lesley Doyal argues that the demand for good health is itself a revolutionary demand, while workers at a collective general practice describe their problems and how they work.

EVIDENCE of the effects of reductions in NHS expenditure on patients is not difficult to find — the closure of hospitals, cuts in services, the growing length of waiting lists for so-called 'non-essential' surgery, and a general deterioration in the standards of medical care available to the majority of NHS patients. At the same time, conditions have worsened for the mass of health workers, producing a growing militancy among health sector unions. So the NHS has become a political issue for the first time since it was created.

The existence of a right to effective medical care can no longer be taken for granted and the NHS has re-entered the political arena as defence committees and 'stop the cuts' campaigns mobilise against the rundown of services, and health sector unions demand the saving of jobs and higher wages. These struggles are extremely important and form a major part of the broader campaign against the Thatcherite dismantling of the welfare state. However, they also raise serious political questions about what we should be fighting for, both in the health sector itself and in the wider arena of the politics of welfare.

On the left, the NHS has traditionally been regarded as a 'ransom' extracted from capital by working class struggle and the fear of social and political upheaval. Indeed, it is often regarded with veneration as something approaching a socialist island in a capitalist sea. As a result, there has been an understandable tendency for political action around the cuts to be almost entirely defensive, with a concentration on regaining previous standards of service.

At one level, this is obviously a correct strategy. Insofar as access to medical care does help to maintain or improve health, then it is clearly preferable for it to be taken out of the market and provided free of charge at the time of use by a nationally organised service. Similarly, so far as health workers are concerned, the struggle to defend jobs is clearly a paramount one. Nevertheless, there are important reasons for looking more closely at the limitations of struggles which remain purely defensive.

Struggles of this kind — which merely demand 'more of the same' — tend to exclude debate about the quality (or otherwise) of western scientific medicine in its present form.

Thus there is an underlying acceptance of what doctors tell us — that medicine is an objective science and medical technologies and procedures are inevitably beneficial and devoid of any wider social or political significance.

There is, however, growing evidence that many medical products and techniques, including a variety of common surgical procedures, have little or no efficacy. In 1965 for example, a panel of experts evaluating over 2,000 of the pharmaceutical products then available in Britain estimated 35% of them to be ineffective, obsolete or irrational combinations. More seriously, it is becoming increasingly clear that certain medical procedures and drugs are not merely ineffective but positively harmful. Similarly, high technology obstetric techniques such as induction are increasingly being used when there is no real indication of medical need.

Under these circumstances then, it makes little sense merely to demand more medical care without recognising the need both for a critical evaluation of treatments currently in use, and for a greater awareness of the social and economic pressures behind their

development. These considerations apply dramatically in poor countries, where the use of western medical techniques is growing extremely rapidly, despite the fact that most are of little value in preventing illness and death resulting from poverty and malnutrition.

The continued export of inappropriate commodities ranging from entire hospital 'packages' to whole body scanners and large numbers of unnecessary and sophisticated drugs is, of course, encouraged by the ruling elites in underdeveloped countries (who are the immediate beneficiaries), by the international medical profession and by pharmaceutical and medical equipment manufacturers in the industrialised countries. Indeed the British medical supply industry increased the value of its exports by 300 per cent during 1974-7 and is expected by observers to become Britain's major source of overseas earnings within the next decade. The result of this profitable export trade is the distortion of the medical budgets of very poor countries and an emphasis on curative medicine in urban areas to the detriment of basic health provisions for the majority of the population.

But we have to think carefully not just about the formal treatments involved in modern medical practice but also about the way in which the class divisions that exist in other areas of society are reflected in and reinforced by the social organisation of medical care.



Lorraine Leeson/Peter Dunn

Changes such as these can occur only as part of a much broader transformation of social and economic life. It is important, however, that we have some vision of an alternative future and use this to inform our current campaigns. The idea of a 'community hospital' for instance, which emerged from the Hounslow Hospital campaign is one example of an attempt to combine a defence of what has been gained, with progress towards a new type of health care more appropriate to the needs of both patients and workers.

A recognition of the fact that much ill health is not accidental but can be traced to specific aspects of capitalist

These ideas are developed more fully in the Political Economy of Health by Lesley Doyal and Imogen Pennell, Pluto Press £4.95 p/b.



WE ARE AN NHS general practice run as a health collective, in an inner city part of South London. The workers (9 women and 4 men) include 3 doctors, an acupuncturist, a psychotherapist, and people with skills in massage and body-work, women's health, welfare rights, book keeping and librarianship. We have about 1,750 patients and, fortunately, two of the doctors are officially 'principals' in the NHS — our income, composed of a complex system of fees and allowances, should cover the salaries of both these doctors and of three full-time ancillaries (as well as practice expenses). We share this equally between the 13 part-time workers at a rate of £7 per half day. (The ideal would be somewhere near the national average wage.) Everyone who works at the practice has another part-time job or source of income.

When the practice started, nearly four years ago, the majority of the patients had chosen it because they shared some of our ideas. This is much less true now; our patients form more of a cross-section of the local population, although there is still a bias towards women and younger people.

Maggie, a doctor:

AS A doctor in the practice, I particularly enjoy working in the waiting room. Unlike the usual stereotype, it is a large friendly area with armchairs, floor cushions, posters, notices on the walls, a small library, toys, and kids crawling around on the floor. People can make cups of tea and coffee. I ask people if they would prefer to be seen there or in private, in the consulting room. Their choice depends, of course, on their feelings about privacy and confidentiality, and on why they've come to see the doctor, but also on the general atmosphere that day, the mix of people in the room, and on my mood and confidence.

On a good day, it can be very rewarding; sometimes several people share the same problem (e.g. cystitis or thrush in young women) and can gain much from each others' experience; I learn too. People can watch me examining a child and ask me what I'm doing, so it's not a secret ritual.

Many of the 'trivial' problems people bring have not been covered in medical school, e.g. the best practical ways to cope with a teething baby, a bout of flu or inflamed eyes from contact lenses. Other patients often have commonsense advice which is more useful than mine. And often other people have more specialist knowledge to offer than I have, for example on social security, housing, or legal problems.

Sometimes people realise that they didn't need to see a doctor at all, and occasionally even go away without waiting for me, having discussed the problem with the others; a small blow against the increasing 'medicalisation of everyday life'.

At first I found it threatening to feel my work so exposed to general scrutiny, but now I usually feel supported by the group atmosphere — I don't feel afraid to reveal my fallibility, limitations and ignorance, and don't have to imitate the role of a powerful knowledgeable father figure (I'm a 32-year old woman).

Conventional general practice teaching stresses that a 'trivial' complaint may

Theory into medical practice

Lewisham's Health Collective

mask a deeper psychological problem, and other doctors sometimes ask if waiting-room consultations often miss the 'real' problem. I don't think this happens — people trust us enough to ask to see us in private when they need to.

The practice is the most pleasant and interesting place I've ever worked in. We put a lot of time and energy into trying to change the relationships between doctors, other workers and patients, and to some extent we make progress, but some times I wonder if we are merely a small enclave of progressive health care, with no prospect of changing the situation outside our walls.

We may persuade our 1,750 patients to eat wholefoods, but the large bakeries have most of the rest of the population captive. We can't 'hand over' to people control of their own health, partly because no-one can give control to others — they have to take it for themselves; and partly because doctors are only one cog in the controlling machinery.

Beryl, a collective worker:

At a large general meeting of members of the practice held two years ago, which was attended by over 100 people, it was agreed that collective decision making would be embodied in a monthly meeting open to everybody working in and/or registered with the practice. These meetings have taken place regularly since then, but attendance has been very poor indeed, and the response to spasmodic efforts to encourage greater participation disappointing.

Two or three inter-related problems have contributed to this lack of success. It was a brave, some would say foolhardy, gesture for doctors to hand over control for which they still have a legal responsibility to nameless untested people. So there has been reluctance and hesitation in our efforts in this direction.

Second, patients feeling their own powerlessness come to depend on experts and demand that procedures conform to expert/client relationships. All are alienated to a greater or lesser extent from power, and are unwilling to accept responsibility when it is offered.

Jayne, an "ancillary":

PETE, Pauline, Jayne, Sergei, Sophie, Janine, and Jeanette — the 'ancillaries' — sounds terrible, doesn't it? That's the official title, of course, and we seldom use it, in fact we don't consistently call ourselves anything, and therein lies the root of the problem. What we are trying to do is unconventional, indeed unheard of, and straight medicine has no label for us.

The term 'receptionist' makes our hackles rise, but we do all the things the job implies — answer the phone, make appointments, register new patients, and ensure the smooth running of the surgery. We also want to share the health work at the practice, and contribute our individual non-professional skills. Our successes include learning to do routine tests such as blood pressure and pregnancy tests. One of us is doing simple acupuncture and another is involved in counselling. Between us we also look after much of the administration and finance.

Skill-sharing has proved difficult to practice — there are big problems of time, and the demands of being the receptionist. Most difficult has been to increase our confidence to the degree required to convince people that they don't necessarily have to see a doctor.

Richard, a doctor:

I DO ACUPUNCTURE. I have rejected materialistic, so-called scientific medicine in favour of a mystical system of healing which I feel to be more wholesome. It is impossible to describe the experience of "healing energies" in words, and I am aware of the risk of mystifying my patients and colleagues in order to consolidate my position.

I feel tension between myself and the doctors in the practice. As a former orthodox doctor, as a man, as an alternative to what they have to offer. Sometimes I project my bad feelings about medical orthodoxy at them. Part of the problem is that we have rejected different aspects of orthodoxy. We assume a common general position by our commitment to this collective practice, and have indulged in the good vibes, but our differences have not been analysed enough.

Sex is another subject we should be exploring. On sexism, the group has a broadly feminist position, but we have avoided facing our differences on it. Sexuality is another thing. The sexual dynamics within the group are mostly private, ignored, or gossiped about.

This is important to me because I am aware of a strong sexual polarity in my work. A majority of our patients are women, and I seem to work better with women patients.

Time is a big problem, of course. Even though we allow ourselves the luxury (in NHS terms) of 15-20 minute appointments, finding time to analyse our ideals and work seems more difficult.

I feel the practice is a place where we ought to be able to work out our contradictions. Can we be a socially motive force without losing the ability to feel and care? And how can we consistently provide support and yet be dispensable?

Treating the Third World as a Dumping Ground



The corporate crime of the century. That's the charge being laid against multi-nationals and government agencies in the US in a searing indictment of the 'dumping' business, just published by the American magazine, *Mother Jones*. Here *The Leveller* looks at an issue which is set to cause one of the biggest political stirs in the US and internationally for a long time.

DUMPING usually refers to the export of substandard, outdated or positively dangerous goods to Third World countries after they have been banned in the country of production. In the words of Mark Dowie, publisher of *Mother Jones*: 'It involves not only manufacturers and retailers, a vast array of export brokers, tramp steamers, black marketeers and go-betweens who traffic an estimated \$1.2 billion worth of unsafe goods overseas every year, but also the United States Export/Import Bank which finances large dumps, the Commerce, State, and Treasury Departments, and the President, who, in his quiet way, subverts the efforts of the few progressive members of Congress who seek to pass uniform anti-dumping legislation.'

The *Mother Jones* report, the result of six months' hard investigation, and just published in the November issue lists a tragic array of hard evidence of dumping:

- * 400 Iraqis died in 1972 and 5,000 were hospitalised after consuming by-products of 8,000 tons of wheat and barley coated with an organic mercury fungicide, whose use had already been banned in the US.
- * After the Dalkon Shield intrauterine device killed at least 17 women in the United States, the manufacturer withdrew it from the domestic market. It was sold overseas after the American

recall and is still in common use in some countries.

- * Lotomil, an effective anti-diarrhoea medicine sold only by prescription in the US because it is fatal in amounts slightly over the recommended dose, was sold over the counter in Sudan, in packages proclaiming it was 'Used by astronauts during Gemini and Apollo space flights', and recommended for use by children as young as 12 months.
- * Winstrol, a synthetic male hormone found to stunt growth in American children, is freely available in Brazil where it is recommended as an appetite stimulant for children.

There are many more incidents cited but dumping is not limited to chemicals and consumer products. 'When a firm's production facilities and industrial equipment are condemned by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the manufacturer often simply closes up shop and moves the factory to Mexico or Jamaica, where occupational health standards are virtually non-existent. Even entire technologies are dumped.'

The report lays the blame not only with multi-nationals but directly at the door of the government Agency for International Development, and Dr R.T. Ravenholt, head of its Office of Population. Depo-Provera, unsafe IUDs,

and high oestrogen birth control pills have all been bought up by AID for export to Third World countries. AID's most sensitive actions, like those of the CIA, cannot, according to Ravenholt, 'be spoken of publicly'. It is currently engaged in 'research' with Depo-Provera in Mexico, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, where it is being given to 250,000 women in a population control exercise. This is happening alongside a host of known side-effects, which can only be exacerbated by the poor health conditions in these countries.

One form of drug-dumping is no notification of harmful side-effects to the importing country.

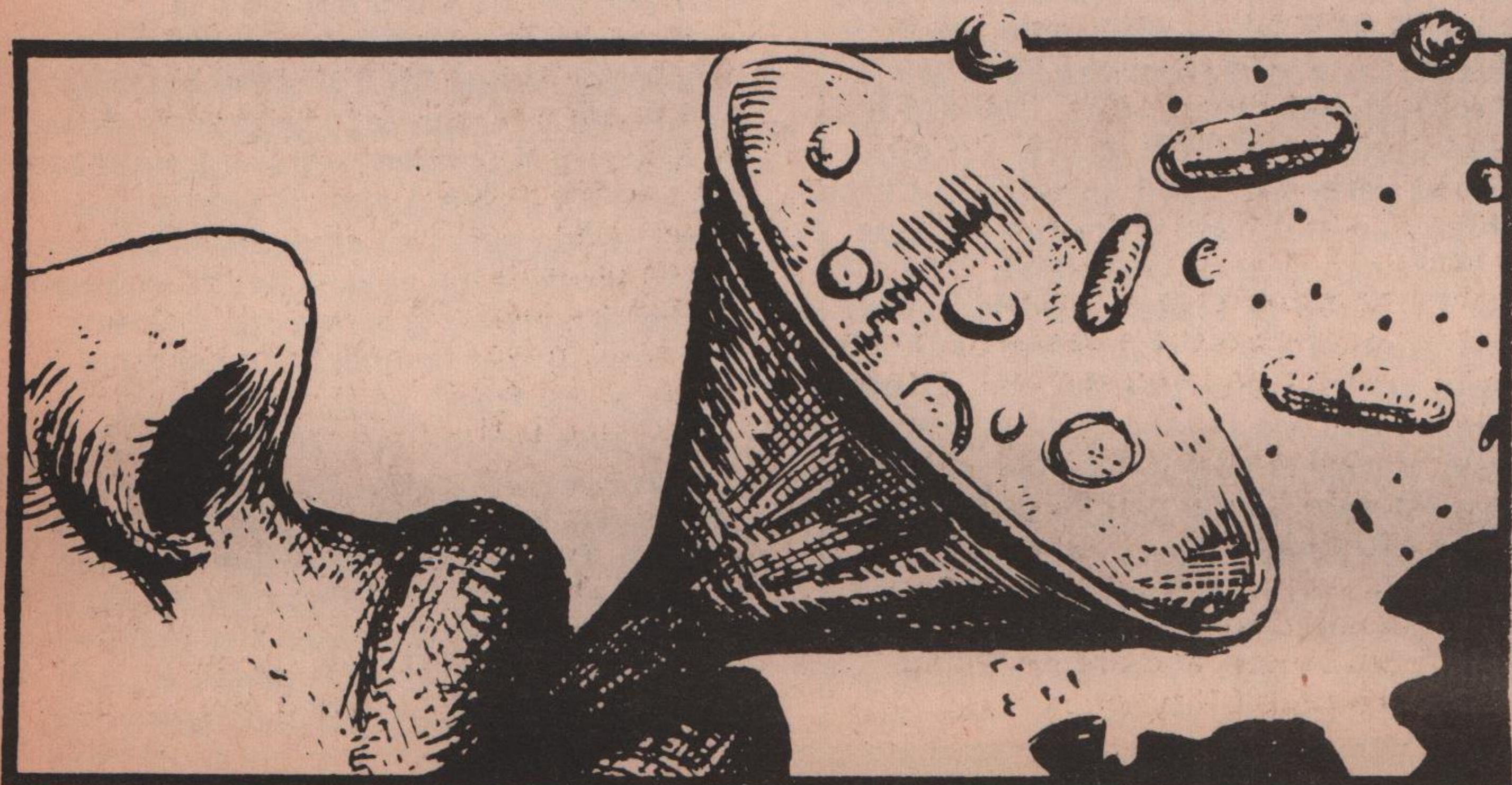
The campaign to stop dumping is just getting underway in the US and has so far been taken up mainly by the women's health movement. Deidre English of *Mother Jones* told *The Leveller* about the report. On publication (late October) copies were hand-delivered to every foreign embassy and a lobby of sympathetic Congressmen started. But the dumping issue is not by any means limited to the US.

'Germany dumps at least as many toxic pesticides as the US, and no nation on earth can match Switzerland for dumping baby-formula', the report states. In Britain the issue is complicated by the low status of internal control agencies to establish safety levels for different consumer goods making direct dumping more difficult to assess. But the attitude of British firms is no less cynical. A Boots spokesperson, when questioned about the introduction of a new range of cosmetics, told the *Daily Telegraph*: 'I don't know what happened to the old stuff, it was either thrown away or shipped to Africa'. Boots has continued to produce an aspirin compound called APC Compound banned in the UK in 1974, for over-the-counter sales in the Near and Far East.

Uncontrolled advertising is also a major element in the success of multi-national marketing of drugs and food. In Malaysia, Marmite was said to be recommended by doctors for: 'Building resistance against sickness, giving clear eyesight, making your skin glow with health and for building strong health teeth. More than this, Marmite helps you think clearly. Good for students, and it strengthens your blood and gives you new life.' (Charles Medawar: *Insult or Injury*).

Where regulations do exist, they tend to be easily by-passed, however. Campaigning on the issue, *Mother Jones* is demanding that dumping be defined by statute, and terms like 'Illegal for export' be stamped on dangerous products and that dumping be made a criminal offence. The campaign's success, though, depends very much on the issue being taken up by movements in Third World countries and 'dumping grounds' around the world.

"ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES are powerful and effective drugs which can cause side effects in some users and should not be used at all by some women. The most serious known side effect is blood clotting, which can be fatal" — from the label on packages sold in the US of Ovulen, a birth control pill made by G D Searle Co.



Teaching Velasco a striking lesson

On 30 September, Peru's longest strike, the state teachers' strike, ended after three long months of harassment, imprisonment and murder. What started as a simple strike quickly turned into a major popular challenge to the right-wing military government of Morales Bermudez. Marianava Nava and Ann White report.

THE STRIKE was started by SUTEP (the state teachers union) at the beginning of June to pressurise the government to fulfil the agreement reached at the end of the teachers' earlier strike in 1978. This agreement covered a wide range of issues, including recognition of SUTEP, salary increases and reinstatement of dismissed teachers.

The Government attempted to isolate the teachers by calling their strike an 'extremist provocation' and in an attempt to weaken their support, set up state-sponsored unions and parent associations. However, a month later, a combination of popular pressure and a new round of price rises led the CGTP (the Communist Party controlled labour confederation) to call a one day general strike at the end of July. The strikers demanded a price freeze on basic necessities, a call for recognition of certain unions (particularly SUTEP), and a resolution of several issues facing a wide range of unions. Although by the end of the strike, two people had been killed and over 2,000 arrested, it had mobilised enormous popular support against the government.

After the general strike was over, the military government offered what it called the 'integral solution' to the teachers' demands. This included a set of wage increases which SUTEP did not accept because, it claimed, they would institutionalise wage differentials and were therefore divisive. While some teachers out of economic necessity defected, the strike continued to be 50 per cent effective throughout the country.

Its strength lay in the wide base of its support. It was able to gain financial and political support from parents' associations, street sellers' federations and organisations of shanty-town dwellers. These organisations took the initiative in calling one-day lightning general strikes in a particular region. By getting the support of transport workers, they were able to paralyse whole areas, one after another.

These regional strikes, together with mass hunger strikes (including one of 32 left-wing leaders), radicalised the dispute at a time when the teachers' resolve was weakening. SUTEP's wage demands suddenly became the wage demands of all workers. It turned the demand for reinstatement of dismissed strikers into a call for popular control over labour mobility and the closure of work-places. It made the demand for the freedom of

detained prisoners into an angry cry for the release of all political prisoners.

The SUTEP strike jeopardised the economic policies of Morales Bermudez's military government. These policies, which include devaluation, price increases, cuts in state subsidies and the opening of Peruvian markets to foreign investment, were imposed by the International Monetary Fund. They are part of the reaction against the failure of the nationalist-military government of General Juan Velasco which was toppled by Bermudez in 1975.

Velasco's military government represented the actions and ideas of various nationalist sections of the middle class. It combined a vague humanitarianism with nationalism, anti-imperialism and support for Peru's Indians (90 per cent of the population). Its actual aims were national consolidation and growth through winning the support of the peasants, neutralising the working class and using the 'good side' of imperialism like the jobs it could provide. These things were going to be obtained through partial nationalisation, agrarian reform and the development of a corporate state above class interests and against class conflict.

The popular democratic and revolutionary forces in Peru are represented as follows: PCP (pro-Moscow Communist party); PSR (Social Democrat Party); UDP (Democratic Popular Union of Marxist-Leninist orientation comprising the MIR-PCP (M), a split from the PCR; PSR (ML), a split from the PSR; VR (Revolutionary Vanguard). Within this regroupment, the PCP del Peru (Communist Party Marxist-Leninist pro-China) which had abstained from the election in 1978, can now be identified. There is also FOECEP (a Trotskyist-orientated federation of workers, peasants and students, which comprises the PST (Hugo Blanco) and the independent group led by V. Ledesma which has now split. The left won a total of 34% of the votes in the 1978 election.

Eventually, it left nothing but empty rhetoric.

As a result of the Bermudez coup in 1975, the armed forces came to represent the interest of pro-imperialist bourgeoisie. So it was this new government which had to implement the first stage of the IMF measures for economic recovery. As part of this, the armed forces agreed to transfer power through elections to a civilian government. They hoped to provide continuity for their economic policies and avoid the mounting dissatisfaction with military rule. The transfer began in 1978 with the elections to the Constituent Assembly and should culminate with the general elections in May 1980. The SUTEP strike, in particular, endangered Bermudez' attempts to transfer power to the Partido Aprista Popular (better known as APRA).

The military were not just counting on APRA's electoral strength (33 per cent at the last elections), but on the nature of its support. APRA represents several sections of the middle class and can turn out considerable popular support. So the military believes it will be the best arbiter of political polarisation. Its historic anti-imperialism and populist origins no longer stand in the way of its leaders working with the IMF.

At a party conference in Lima last September APRA's newly-elected president, A. Villanueva, did not allow nationalist demagoguery to obstruct the opening of Peruvian markets to foreign investments and products.

APRA's nationalism and populism are masks for its lack of real concern, in a country where nearly 9 per cent of the population is unemployed, and a further 48.7 per cent is sub-employed (a euphemism for jobless people who survive by selling food or cleaning shoes). APRA did not support the general strike in July and it condemned and boycotted the SUTEP strike. Later, it conceded that the teachers had an economic case, but supported the government's repression of the strikers by ignoring the demand that imprisoned teachers and political prisoners be freed.

Because the military and APRA share similar political goals, the former has attempted to promote APRA's electoral victory. They have tried rather crudely to rig their winning with a new electoral law. This law has increased the number of seats in constituencies where APRA had a majority in the 1978 election and not in those where there was a left-wing



majority.

But the left has successfully taken the initiative away from the government and bourgeois parties. Although co-ordination among left groups in support of SUTEP was slow in coming and did not ensure the strike final success, it raised the content and shifted the emphasis away from the elections to a discussion of what type of democracy was wanted. This gave the left a new say in the transference of power and its direction.

A prominent part has been played in this development on the left by the monthly magazine *Marka*, which with its circulation of 35,000 shows that Peruvian intellectuals have an unusually active role in the political process. It has proved influential in stirring up discussion on unity on the left from a non-dogmatic Marxist-Leninist viewpoint. And quite often the points made by its biting analysis have had to be answered by the government, often by closing the magazine. It has stressed the left's inability to present alternatives and to exploit the contradictions between APRA and the Christian Democrat party, AP-PPC. The journalists have also taken part in mass hunger strikes during the SUTEP strike.

However, it will only be the achievement of a programmatic unity of the Left, in view of the coming elections, which will determine the extent of the threat faced by pro-imperialist forces and the chances of success of the popular democratic forces. Crucial to this is how the revolutionary bloc (UDP and FOCEP (PST)) will be able to cooperate in the long term, and not just for electoral purposes, with the revisionist bloc (PCP, PSR, FOCEP (I)). It is not just a matter of maintaining political integrity but of forcing changes on the revisionist leadership of the CGTP and PCP.

Indicative of this battle inside the left is the fact that the CGTP, amidst ambiguities and delaying tactics, could not ignore the call of the revolutionary left, FEDETRAL (newly formed trade union

federation affiliated to the CGTP), the miners union, and the CCP (Peasants Confederation) for a general strike in support of SUTEP at the end of September. The general strike did not materialise in the end, as the government, taking advantage of the CGTP's ambiguity, pre-empted direct confrontation by declaring a general salary increase of .12%. Partly as a result of this manoeuvre and of economic pressure on the teachers, who had been without any income for almost four months, the teachers' strike ended. This has not solved the confrontation itself as teachers and parents are still in prison and the government has increased once again prices of basic products. Whether the general strike would have defeated the government or would have amounted to adventurism,

is the question debated inside the left in Peru at present.

While the outcome of the political struggle in Peru is not yet defined, what is very clear is the nature of such a struggle, and the fact that it does not allow for a mediatory solution. Against bourgeois and pro-imperialist forces stand not only the popular democratic forces but also the reality of a national and worldwide capitalist crisis. According to the Peruvian writer, I de Gregori, "when all the classes have had their say and proved their impotence, the popular democratic forces, under the leadership of the proletariat, are the only alternative if we do not want this pre-history to continue with another chapter of a new variant of South American fascism."

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Programme Coordinator required by CIIR to administer its existing volunteer programme and evaluate small-scale community development projects. Previous middle eastern experience and/or experience in this field in third world or United Kingdom an advantage. Couples wishing to work on a job sharing basis welcome to apply.

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All posts are on volunteer terms. Accommodation, living and other allowances are provided. Intensive language training. Applications should be made in writing to: CIIR (Overseas Volunteers), 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1. Tel 01-487 4397.

FOUR The cowboy smiles, he is

GANG OF

May 1977, the notice board in Leeds Students Union: "Wanted – fast r&b bass player". Dave Allen, a lorry driver from Kendal, pursued the matter and met up with Jon King (vocals), Andy Gill (guitar) and Hugo Burnham (drums), three students all originally from the Kent area.

Over two years later, and the *Gang of Four* have rocked against racism and sexism, signed to EMI so that they can survive on £30 a week each, completed a small – by ELO standards – tour of America, – and been taken off Top of the Pops at the last minute for mentioning "rubbers" in their single *AT HOME HE'S A TOURIST*.

The themes of their recent album *ENTERTAINMENT!* centre round the way the media and mass culture serve the interests of capitalism from *within* – otherwise there'd be no such album.

The band's politics, locatable well outside and to the far left of the Labour Party, aren't presented as a cosy foregone conclusion. They come over as being worked out in the music itself and are part and parcel of the shock-effect of guitar feedback and vocals which run from punk whine to melancholia. The dominant technique on the album is a fast white fragmented version of dub: layers of sound are put together, stripped away, isolated, then put together again, while the instruments subvert each other's roles.

Although you aren't a big band financially, you have quite a reputation and following. How have the pressures of being a busy band affected you?

In America we were under more pressure than we've ever been, but we still got on very well together.

We're under pressure from EMI to a certain extent. When you put out an LP, you take a single off the LP because that promotes radio play which in turn promotes LP sales. EMI would like to do things that way. But we don't want to: we want to put out a new single.

When you're talking about bands under pressure, that seems like the record company demanding this and demanding that and the band not being able to cope with it and giving in eventually. But EMI can't force us to do anything. They have no right in law, contractually, to oblige us to do anything we do not agree to. All they can do is make certain suggestions. For instance, there's a clause saying they can't release a single without our consent. If they did they'd be in breach of contract and we'd take them to court.

Although your album has been generally well-received, there have been criticisms, like those of Garry Bushell in Sounds, that your politics are too cerebral and obscure.

His idea of what is political and ours are two totally different things. He talks about certain pubs, like the Green Man down the Old Kent Rd, as being 'good' pubs, and fetishises the trappings of working-classness. He has a very populist idea of political activity, that we ought to be singing about kids not getting jobs and about council houses and

gigs closing down – basically, that we should be like *Sham 69*. Jimmy Pursey's quite a well-meaning bloke and we applaud the sentiments of *If The Kids Are United*, where he was trying to put over a feeling he had – that if only people would stop fighting each other, it would be wonderful. But people have been saying that since the year dot. In a sense, unless you analyse problems which are quite complicated, you won't get a solution. Just to say: Why don't we stop all this and love each other – that's a hippy notion.

"Jimmy Pursey's quite a well-meaning bloke and we applaud the sentiments of *If The Kids Are United* – that if people would only stop fighting each other, it would be wonderful. But people have been saying that since the year dot... Why don't we stop all this and love each other – that's a hippy notion."

We aren't interested primarily in *propaganda*, because we wouldn't be doing things in this way if we were. We are, after all, a rock band. If propaganda was our main objective, we ought to be shop stewards or running a newspaper.

What you seem to be saying is that you refuse to deal in stereotyped images of the working-class.

Exactly – particularly as class categories are fudged. You haven't just got the working-class and the ruling class. There's a kind of technical class of teachers and technicians, a lot of whom originally come from the working-class. Then there's the middle class. Mind, we're not saying that wealth isn't concentrated in the

top sections; but, on the other hand, class issues can't be exclusively concerned with the manual labouring class: there's skilled and unskilled workers for a start.

We could easily start acting like Mensi from the Upstarts and going 'Oh, fucking hell' and all that stuff. The Upstarts have pro-

duced some great punk classics, which get called working-class anthems; but the values they represent aren't any different from exciting '60s rock songs like The Troggs *Wild Thing*.

But the values of your own songs



Virginia Turbett

– how free are they of the capitalist music industry of which you are a part?

At one time it seemed pointless to us to try and say anything through rock music. But the big record companies are all into competition with each other, and compare each other's profits and will stab each other in the back; and for financial reasons they will propagate things that aren't in their own interests – or ideologically in line with them. So even though EMI might disapprove of you totally, they'll go along with you – especially after the *Sex Pistols* thing.

You obviously want to get through to as many people as possible and so have signed to a

vast monopoly capitalist organisation like EMI. You've won a certain autonomy from them, which means they're powerful rather than monolithic. However, a lot of people on the left would say that you might have been better served with a smaller, if you like artisanal capitalist, organisation like Rough Trade.

We've said in the past that there's big capitalists and small capitalists and basically there's no difference between them, although it's obviously more complex than that. Anyway, *Rough Trade* are quite a big company now, it's not a typical small company anymore: its sales last year were bigger than Island's. But *Rough Trade* does work as a co-operative which wouldn't happen in EMI.

How do you respond to the view, quite common in the music press, that your music is good but that your ideas and politics get in the way?

That's their liberal view of mass culture: that it's fun and nothing else.

What do you think of Jimmy Pursey's proposal that a gig strike would be a way of combatting the violence there has been recently at venues – some of it instigated by the BM and NF?

It would be a triumph for the BM if no gigs were put on in London. The BM would think: Great. Like it was great to stop Jimmy Sham's last concert: that's their objective.

What about this sort of problem at your own gigs?

We've had minor problems, verbal stuff like chants of 'Fuck Off' and 'Red Scum'. We can take that. If there was a lot of violence in the audience then we'd stop playing.

Often it's not specifically the BM. Like the Mekons were in a bit of a dilemma once at the Nashville: there were about 15 really loony people with NF stickers, doing the old Nazi salute. If you stop playing they're going to rejoice. You can either play on and ignore them, which isn't a very good move. Or you can turn to them and say 'Fuck off', in which case you're going to give them the attention that they're craving for.

The only way to do it is to have them lobbed out, but how do you lob them out without fights?

It's all very well to say, 'Yeah, we hate them' from the back of the hall or somewhere, but when you're right next to them it's very intimidating.

It's an insoluble problem. You've just got to do it on the door. If you say on the door: No one allowed in with NF badges or union-jacks sewn on their clothes – these people are going to be fucked because they don't know who their friends are anymore. If they can't wear their gang uniforms, they won't be so tough and feel so confident about themselves. Of course you get the

situation where BM skins come in with RAR badges on!

Things may also get to the point where excluding them will antagonise them more and they'll pick on a place because they're not allowed in.

We shouldn't exaggerate the problem because in one way it's miniscule. Think of all the gigs that go off peacefully. The BM and NF only centre on certain gigs. They haven't picked on us because we're not like Sham or the UK Subs who have a very strong headbanging class audience. If we laid on the working-class trappings and were as Garry Bushell would like us to be and attracted the skins, then we'd get the BM problem.

At a gig of ours all they'd succeed in doing would be to stop us playing. But the next time we played people would be worried about coming along. The BM and skins don't go to gigs to win people over, they go to

frighten them off and let everyone know that they wield a bit of muscle. Even years ago skins would go along en masse to discos and clubs to disrupt the whole thing. They'd go up to people and say: We don't want this crap — play reggae. They had no politics to them; to an extent politics is an excuse.

If you give the NF attention, that helps them. However, you've got to let people know what's going on in a non-sensational way. When a gig is disrupted, it's given coverage: you get 1,000 people at that gig, and yet 250,000 are going to read about it . . .

You've been criticised for your conditional support of the IRA and for not taking account of the 'innocent' victims of the troubles in Ireland.

That's the sort of Daily Mirror point of view, where they'll put a mutilated baby on the front page and say: This is

Ireland. Well, it isn't. The historical facts are that Britain is in there trying to hold on to its last colony. A lot of the people that live there are trying to fight them off. But the British papers would love to believe, and the British people would love to pretend, that it's just mad Irishmen fighting it out.

Absence of press coverage is part and parcel of the Irish problem. Our song 'Ether' is about that. Free speech is a myth. The BBC only pretend to give things coverage.

Until you get things like Mountbatten nobody bothers over here: it all gets forgotten.

Before we went to America the agency organising the British tour promised us dates in Ireland — north and south. But they've pulled out of it, saying there were problems over insurance and security after the Mountbatten thing.

Abrupt end to the tape: the band have to get ready for a RAR gig. The smoothing-out process of the conventional printed interview format gives little indication of the way each individual member of the Gang of Four engages in debate with the interviewer — and each other.

Most bands, even those into some form of agit-punk, have very little specific to say off-stage. Of as Johnny Rotten once said, the Clash are committed ok — but to what exactly? In songs like 'Ether' the Gang of Four leave no doubt about their commitment.

They do take prisoners, though: whole audiences, going by the RAR gig I saw. It made the accusations of coldness that have been levelled against the band seem absurd. Starkness would be a better word — with passion. The Gang of Four love ideas — and rock music.

Paul Tickell

only rock 'n' roll?

Now surely you're not STILL thinking it's only rock 'n' roll? Here with some more voices from the battlefronts: a round-up of recent gig break-ups — of all people Poison Girls, who issued a statement two issues ago over crowd aggro, were swarmed on stage last month in east London, so they issued another statement, and a poem too. Suggsy sings with Madness — who pack in wall-to-wall skinheads at their gigs — and he used to be in the British Movement. He spells out what that was about, Suburban Fascists are a Manchester Nazi rock band, and their cri de coeur shows how effective a blacking can be.

Poison Girls found their benefit show for the Theatre Royal in Stratford, East London, broken up on Oct 28. A poem about Adam and Eve followed, but we'll leave that and look at their latest public statement.

'Of all the issues, sexist oppression is where Poison Girls are mostly involved, both in our music, and our lyrics and our everyday lives. Because all political organisations are male-dominated, we have become identified as a threat by both sides. The right identify us as anti-Nazi and therefore assume we are part of the male-dominated ANL/SWP and attack us for it.

'The left sees us as uncommitted to their male-dominated organisations, and therefore suspect us of courting the right if we don't accept a male-dominated left as our police.

'OK we are vulnerable to hooligans. OK we need support. Can the left offer us support which is an alternative to patriarchal authoritarian tactics?

Because unless they can, they are farting into the wind. If our brothers in the M.D.L. could dare to withdraw from the big Pa instead of trying to emulate him, we could yet be part of a true revolution. How about it brothers?'

Mmm. Their close partners Crass are at it again too. They sent an offensive letter on Polit-rock to RAR. Some of their comments; *'The Nazi-rock movement is about as dangerous a threat to rock 'n' roll as the british nazi movement is to society, ie nil . . . so Sham 69 are going to "lead a strike" against gig violence, locking the gate after the horse has bolted . . . the british fascist movement is laughable, old doddering fools who think the empire still exists and deluded nuts who like playing at being adolf . . .'* If Crass still don't believe the BM are violently gunning for bands much like their own, they should check a short chronology for last month.

The Angelic Upstarts got hit on 19 Oct at the Nashville Club in West London; the Specials got overwhelmed at Hatfield Poly on 27 Oct, with subsequent injuries, damage and arrests; two Gang of Four members got worked over outside a club in Leeds — but it seems there may have been no political connotations to this assault . . . Whatever, guitarist Andy Gill got a broken nose, and vocalist Jon King had his cheek bone broken in three places; their UK Entertainment tour has been held up for a week.

It just goes on and on . . .

Would you believe there was a rock band in Manchester called Suburban Fascists? The phone rang the other week in the Leveller office, and a northern

voice started talking about this band. It clicked after a bit he was in the band, and presumed the Nazi Rock cover (issue 31) meant something other than it was intended as.

In short, he was looking for help in getting gigs. The Manchester fanzine City Fun had astutely kept publicising the band and the nom de plumes they used so they couldn't get on anywhere.

The Suburban Fascist John claimed his band had a fifty-strong following who looked for trouble when they could, and he added what he really had against Rock Against Racism was that they *'kept bringing politics into music'*.

His own favourite bands were Joy Division and Skrewdriver, and his favourite song was Blockbuster by the Sweet. He said another similarly inclined band in Manchester was called Dynamite Detonators.

Manchester, keep these nurds out of your clubs!



Of the three Two-Tone groups now touring the land — The Specials, Selector, Madness — Madness has the most overt British Movement following. They're the only all-white outfit of the trio: the BM have already designated The Specials as 'Specials plus 2' (the two being the band's two black members), and similar mathematical feats on the Selector gets them the slug plus six.

Suggsy is the 18-year old lead singer with Madness; his links with the BM are more than fleeting . . . *'I used to go to school with a lot of them kids when I*

was younger, and they used to go Paki-bashing and all that kind of thing. When you're 12 or 13, you don't know what the fuck's going on, and all the kids from your estate are going and it's all a laugh.

'Then you get to 14, 15, 16 . . . 17, 18 you go round all these kids' houses and they've all got, like, Union Jack jackets and British Movement shirts, and it's all this game of going down Brick Lane every Sunday marching for the British Movement and it all gets a bit heavy.

'I know a lot of people in it now who I knew when I was younger and they all used to be — just sort of chaps. They've just got nothing else, they just live for the Third Reich. It obviously pisses me off, but I don't slag them off 'cos I know what it's like. That's all they live for is fuckin . . . RAAA RAAA GRRR, growling like that. It gives them something: "We ARE SOMETHING".'

So how come all these BM racist folk listen to reggae — black music? *'That's just the whole stupidity. That's why I don't see how you can give them a slugging. There's a lot of horrible perverts backing all these things, but the average punter doesn't know what the fuck's going on.*

He sees the Union Jack, hears the national anthem, remembers what his old man was saying about the war — they don't know what the fuck's going on. They really like reggae music, they dance to it, and the next day, it's "Oooh, fucking niggers, I hate 'em." It doesn't mean anything, the British Movement, it's just something to identify with . . .'

Vivien Goldman

The agony and ecstasy of the wo/man

IT WOULD be hard for anyone to deny that patterns of masculine and feminine behaviour occur among animals. These differences may be confined to their mating seasons and to the time necessary for the rearing of the young, but they do exist. We hear tom-cats yowling at night. If your dog is a bitch, maybe we have to keep her indoors when she's on heat.

We can observe differing patterns of courtship ritual. The sex-act itself consists of differing masculine and feminine patterns, as does the rearing of the young. Certainly there is a good deal of variability between species, but in all the more developed forms of animal life differing patterns of masculine and feminine behaviour can be seen to exist.

Despite the fact that all around us nature teems with male and female creatures acting out their ritualised masculine and feminine roles, it has become a cliché on the Left to say, where humans are concerned, all ideas of masculinity and femininity are socially created. The fact that there are two types of human anatomy, male and female, is considered beside the point. The assumption seems to be that we are born neuter. Any differences that may exist between males and females are taken to be a matter of social fabrication.

When the findings of modern biological science are applied to human behaviour, the consequences are always reactionary. When studies of animal behaviour are extended to human beings certain similarities and certain differences are obvious. Stable patterns of masculine and feminine behaviour are easy to compare. It is those of us humans who are sexually ambiguous who tend to lose out. We do not fit so easily into these biological perspectives.

Professor Dorner of East Berlin, works in a country where people are already persecuted for having views contrary to 'scientific' principles. He believes that so-called homosexuality (he considers only males) is caused by hormone imbalance. By the injection of corrective hormones into the womb he believes it may be possible to prevent the birth of homosexuals. He says whether this is desirable is a matter for society as a whole to decide. Yet implicit in his view is the notion that, from the scientific standpoint, the human race can survive quite as well without gays. Biologically speaking, he is saying we gays are useless. It is for 'society' to decide whether or not we are going to continue to exist.

Adolf Hitler also thought the human race was perfectable through biological means. He took to exterminating those he considered useless and second-rate.

The modern biologist has not spent much time thinking about those of us with ambiguous gender, but the very fact that he has presumed to leave us out of his modern scientific universe leaves us in a very precarious position. The desire to reject rigid gender roles is both valid and real. It stems from a personal inability to fit in with conventional patterns of masculine and feminine behaviour. Somehow we want to be both without really being either. This is not easy. There are social pressures which would make life easier if we were to opt unequivocally for either one of the other. This conflict inside us is not imaginary but real.

IT IS the gender ambiguous people in our society who are pushing evolution forward, claims *Bob Mellors*. Here he explains why he believes this is so.



Gee

The context where all this falls into place is evolution. This is where we can hope to pin down that elusive difference between animals and humans. 'NEOTENY' is the key concept. This is the principle that separates man from the animals; though this separation is only temporary. In time homo sapiens will find a stable way of life that will go on unchanging, just as it already does in innumerable animal species. Such stability will not come about before we have extruded from ourselves a new species that will carry on evolution at a higher level.

My dictionary defines neoteny as the 'retention of juvenile features in adult animals: sexual maturity in larval form.' It means that creatures can start mating before they've reached maturity. Chimpanzees, for example, complete their intellectual development in three years. In another three they are otherwise bodily fully grown, but it is still another year before they are able to mate.

Among humans, obviously, this sequence is much more confused: we are able to mate almost a decade before we are fully grown. Our intellectual development may never stop. The pattern itself is neither stable nor predictable.

Uncertainty about gender is a part of this. The human species has not yet sorted out stable and acceptable patterns of masculine and feminine behaviour. A certain amount of

quasi-normal masculine and feminine behaviour is necessary to ensure the perpetuation of the species.

These commonplace patterns come quite easily to some people. These are the ordinary mums-and-dads who keep things going while others are more involved in experiments and change.

But it would be wrong to think that ordinary people are always automatically opposed to change — they are only too pleased to take up new ideas, but only when it appears quite safe to do so.

It is the gender ambiguous people who lead more hectic and unusual lives. In an evolving species these are the people who push evolution forward. They feel a strong inner tension about their maleness and femaleness and are prepared to take risks. This androgynous uncertainty attempts to resolve itself in either of two ways: through increasing ambivalence, or by resorting to extremes.

A certain ambivalence about gender might be seen to be a prerogative of the Left while the escape into extremes is more a feature of the Right. Both can be equally narrow in asserting their own answer as the only morally correct one. There is also a good deal of mutual fascination and borrowing of each other's habits and postures.

The gay life, particularly as it is lived by gay males resounds to the opposing strains of femininity and masculinity. Heavy butch numbers have a contempt for limp-wristed queens. Limp wristed queens make a mockery of the vain posturings of the superficial superbitch. Drag queens vamp and camp in contemptuous parody of excessive femininity. There are, I am told, gay bars in California where only jackboots may be worn. Gays are oppressed, but that doesn't always stop us having fun. The Left has espoused the gay cause but has maintained a rosy-eyed, even sentimental view of what gays are all about.

For many of us, not just gays, our sex-lives are ambiguous and full of difficulties. Either we see this as something potentially illuminating and worth looking into, as something which ought to be given an authenticity and understood on its own terms, or we try and impose a new re-vamped morality and simply feel guilty about our own shortcomings. It is only in an evolving species such as our own that masculinity and femininity become such a problem. The contradiction of masculine and feminine impulses within ourselves is the very essence of the dialectic of evolutionary change. This conflict of forces must be acknowledged and explored, not just ruled out to order.

These ideas on evolution are spelt out more fully in Don Smith's *Why are there 'gays' at all? Why hasn't evolution eliminated 'gayness' millions of years ago?* Quantum Jump Publications, c/o 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1, 90p) and in my own pamphlet *Clint Eastwood loves Jeff Bridges. True!* (40p from Another Orbit at the same address.)

Weighting for slimness

In the past year, a number of compulsive eating groups have been starting up all over the country, largely as a result of Susie Orbach's book, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. The book stimulated a great deal of discussion about practical approaches to women's commonly experienced problem of dieting, frenetic overeating, and horror of being overweight. Orbach suggested that it was dieting itself as well as the overwhelming desire to be slim and acceptable, which produced consolatory compulsive eating. Spare Tyre Theatre Company was formed with the aim of bringing these ideas to a wider audience, and is currently performing its play *Baring the Weight*. Rose Shapiro talked to four members of the group.

SPARE TYRE delivers what seems to be a simple message with absolute commitment. For those who haven't been caught in the grip of compulsive eating and slimming it probably comes as a surprise that anyone should consider that they would need to spend the next 20/30/40 years calorie counting or psychically defending themselves against the siren-like temptations of the bread bin.

Baring the Weight — the play that it has been performing for the last six weeks (a fortnight at the Croydon Warehouse Theatre, and now touring London) — sets out the minutiae of the slimming/eating obsession, using a variety of characters to demonstrate that there are as many different reasons as there are people with the problem. On the way they lambast the slimming industry, with a memorable scene of a session at the SlimTrim Club (read *WeightWatchers*). The devout and glamorous club leader exhorts the audience to reject the culinary carnal sins of 'Fat City' and instead embark on the Long March of self-denial that will lead them to the personal nirvana of 'Slim Town.' Where, of course, everyone is happy, healthy, and THIN.

By the end of the play even Daphne, SlimTrimmer of the year, has recognised that a meaningful life is not dependent solely on the loss of X pounds, and that the solace she has sought in food might be found in changing her life in different ways — first by recognising that love and understanding from her husband will not be purchased by losing a pound of her flesh. The play ends with the suggestion that eating is what you do when you are hungry, and that we should reject the idea of it being a solution to anger, depression, loneliness, frustration, lack of confidence or self-hate.

Clair Chapman, who initiated the project with an ad in *Time Out* for people interested in making a play about the subject, feels closer to this play than she has to almost any other she has worked in. 'This problem has been deeply involved in my life since I was 12, and my mother has been on a diet for as long as I can remember.' Everyone in the group has been a victim of the dieting/food obsession, which is why the play succeeds where others often fall short.

Clair remembers the discussions after the Women's Theatre Group production *Out! On the Costa del Trico*, which was about the protracted strike for equal pay by women in a London windscreen wiper factory: 'We were always asked whether we'd shown the play to



the Trico women — a middle class audience asking a middle class theatre group what working class women thought of the play, as though they were a race apart.' As far as Spare Tyre is concerned, their play cuts across these barriers. As soon as a woman has the resources to buy food and to choose what she eats, she is a prospective victim for this aspect of women's oppression. 'Every woman in this society has thought about her weight. It obsesses us constantly, dominates us, and makes us unhappy.'

So at what point does class come into it, if at all? The group (and the book) aims to stimulate women into understanding what has made them suffer from the problem in the first place, and to try to take action on whatever they might see as the fundamental problem. But as Katina Noble, another member of the group, puts it: 'Working class women may become aware of how their situation causes this problem, but their economic position may make it impossible to change, because they're trapped.' Even so, the group believes that consciousness raised about an aspect of our

lives which is overwhelming can mean that for the first time a woman will make a feminist critique of her problem. And the personal becomes the political.

As a result, the scenes in the play are always re-affirmed by someone in the audience. One woman who had been a 'Slimmer of the Year' said that she had put all the weight back on again as soon as she deserted the slimming club regimen, just like Daphne in the play. The horrors of diet aids were confirmed too. The group quoted to me a couple of women who suddenly realised what an oppression the whole business was. 'We had Carnation Slender for lunch. It was disgusting, and we were ravenous by four o'clock.' So if you realise how crazy and miserable it is, next comes the obvious question — why are we doing it? 'They knew slimming was painful and hard work, but they'd believed in it . . . that a new life could be about to begin if they dieted. When they saw the show they realised that it wasn't, and that it was just admen's propaganda.'

The group is aware that it verges on the evangelical, both about Orbach's book, and compulsive eating groups. 'A friend told me that we seemed almost like a bunch of Moonies or Jesus freaks', said Nancy Roberts, 'but it's changed my life so radically on a day to day basis. We make it clear that we don't offer an instant cure, but we can say from our own experience that it gets better, and that the unhappiness gets less.'

Spare Tyre has tried to make sure that women who see that play have an opportunity to join a group so as to continue the discussion and start to take action on their problems. It has produced guidelines for starting a compulsive eating group, with themes for discussion. At the moment it is performing the show only in London, because funding has not been available to tour the country.

And there must be thousands of women whose lives could be revolutionised by what the group is suggesting. 'When I read the book, and realised that Susie Orbach was saying stop dieting, throw away your scales, this is a tyranny over you, I was stunned. I had never been anything but congratulated for being on a diet.'

Six months ago I wrote an article for The Leveller on slimming and compulsive eating. When I suggested it at a collective meeting I was asked 'where's the Politics in that?' ... maybe Spare Tyre's work will go some of the way to answering that question.

Where you can see them...

November

Covent Garden Community Centre, Shelton Street, London WC1 (Thurs 22nd, 8 pm); Carlton Centre, Granville Road, London NW6 (Friday 23rd, 8 pm); Teatro Technis, Crowndale Road, London NW1 (Monday 26th, 8 pm); Brycbox Arts Workshop, Cocks Crescent, New Malden, Surrey (Friday 30th, 7.30 pm).

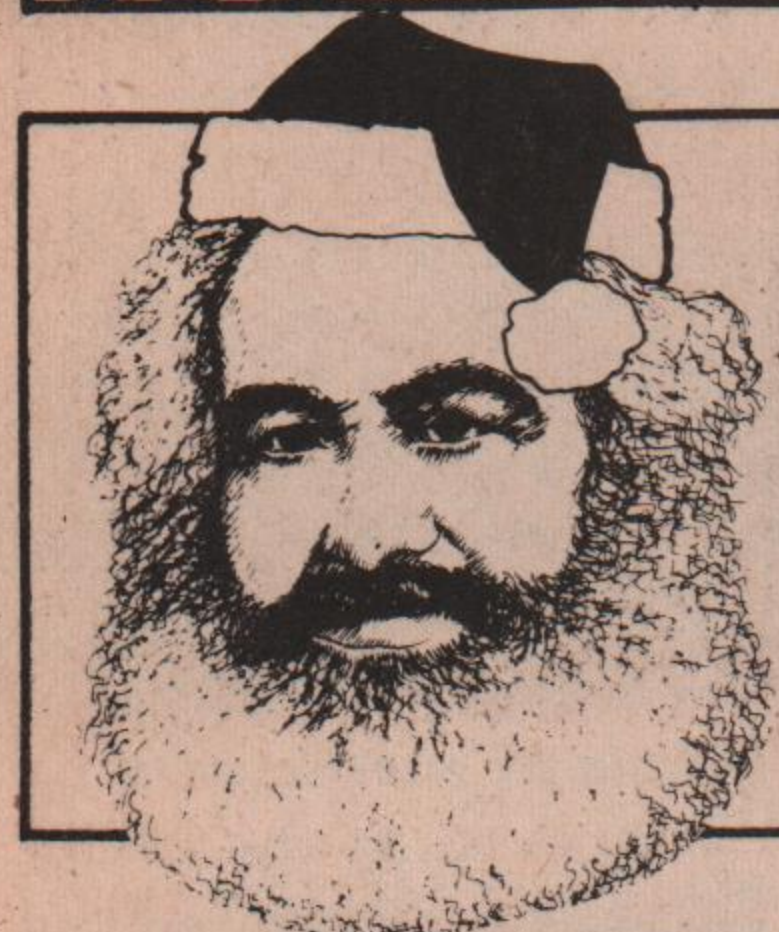
December

Brighton Women's Centre, Resource Centre, North Road, Brighton (Saturday 1st, 7.30 pm); Hoxton Hall, 128a Hoxton Street, London N1 (Friday 7th, 8 pm); Interaction, Wilkin Street, London NW5 (Wednesday 5th, 8 pm); Dame Colet House, Ben Johnson Road, London E1 (Thursday 6th, 7.30 pm); Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1 (Sunday 9th, 7.30 pm); Kentish Town Health Centre, Bartholomew Road, London NW1 (Wednesday 12th, 1 pm).

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Last year we produced our first *Spare Rib* Diary... we've asked women to tell us what they liked and disliked about it and for suggestions for the 1980 Diary. Out soon, using the original suffragette colours of green and violet, it contains many original drawings, cartoons and photographs by women, accompanied by relevant and witty feminist quotations from the last 200 years! It also includes a huge listing of feminist groups and useful contacts for easy reference.

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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Back Pages

MOVIES

JAN WORTH'S 60 minute documentary **Taking a Part** is important for what it doesn't say about prostitution and doesn't do with the camera. In no way does the film tote some straight feminist line. Rejecting the old notions of the prostitute as a certain type of woman, cunning and carnal, the film does not seek to fill the old dictates with new ones. Carefully avoiding the equation 'prostitutes are not like this, they are like this,' Worth forces the viewer to accept the two women in the film as ordinary people, with all their insecurities, illusions, housing problems. Their accounts of the club where they work reflect ambivalence between boredom and a certain amount of reward, like many jobs.

Invisible and artful camera techniques are carefully avoided, the crudeness of the filming being an integral part of destroying the stereotype of the smoothplaying prostitute who fits smoothly into her part. The camera stays still while Debbie and Lucy read dead pan, halting monotone from their notebooks the speeches that had been taped in earlier sessions. Keeping the camera focused for a couple of frames after their speeches finish, Worth allows the viewer to glimpse a genuine smile or annoyed twist of the nose, as their part in the film ends and they are unsure of which part to act next.

Speaking to Jan Worth in the pub, she explained how much commitment she felt to these women she had known personally and worked with two years making the documentary. What she dreaded

most was she thought that people might be titillated by the subject and enjoy it in that way. Worth definitely succeeds in banishing any voyeuristic curiosity, but in so doing, she does not allow the two women to reach out and charm the viewer in any way. The film does not satisfy one's need for a night out at the cinema. Inadvertently, Jan Worth raised one more issue about documentaries: where should they be shown? **Taking a Part** should be shown in an atmosphere which precipitates the audience's taking a part in learning from what the two women say about self-projection and their sense of self in a crowded money-oriented society.

19 November hears **Daddy** by Keith Dorland; 26 Nov **A Turn for the Worse** by Peter Tegel; and a double bill on 3 December with **Fladge and Vadge** by Brendan Gregory and **The Praise Kraal** by Jo Shallis. Each begins at 7.15 pm and the Open Space blower number is 387-6969.

Sergeant Ola and his Followers by David Lan at the Royal Court, London, directed by Max Stafford-Clarke, tackles that mind-bender, imperialism.

Sergeant Ola returns to his native Papua after the dubious education of fighting for Australia in World War 2. He becomes the charismatic leader of a cargo cult, but cannot make up his mind about its implications. Are his followers experiencing the first crude awakenings of political consciousness or merely using the cult as an escapist myth, the opiate of the colonised?

Finally, Ola has his mind made up for him — by imperialism. He's bought off with the taste of another sort of leadership, that of participant in neo-colonial 'democracy'.

The idea that imperialism can comfortably survive forms of nationalist struggle, is given a very repetitious, circular treatment in the play. One reason for this lies in Lan's characterisation of the Papuans, who spend a lot of their time spouting childlike nonsense or exotic poetry. At best they're Australasian Uncle Toms (yes, and jolly funny they are at times, too!) who are presented as being far too naive and static ever to be the agents of historical change. Lan joins the list of whites who've written very pessimistic memoirs of Third World underdevelopment.

THEATRE

Psst? Wanna buy a cheap socialist trouble-making Xmas Nativity Play? We have the very thing for you—a one-act effort written by James Waddington who calls it a play with 'libertarian troublemaking dissident pretensions.'

His own theatre group are putting it on up in Cumbria but James thinks it's ideal for village halls 'or their urban equivalents.' Should it be put on and become a major West End success, with people queuing around the block, he would like some payment, half of which would go to the Southall Defence Fund.

Contact him at Sea View, Gilcrux, Carlisle, or check out the play through *The Leveller* office.

Monstrous Regiment is proudly bringing to the stages of the UK 'one of the three greatest love stories of all time.' (OK then, what are the other two—Webster and Tyndall? James Anderton and himself? Arduilles and Spurs? I give up.)

The identified leg of this trio is **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes**. The Monstrous ones are clearly chuffed with themselves insisting it's a thrill a minute and a laugh a second—they quote its author Anita Loos as saying about them: 'The only ism this company believes in is plagiarism.'

Call their bluff by contacting Gus Garside at 190 Goswell Road, London EC1.

The Open Space Theatre at 303 Euston Road, London NW1 is putting on a series of rehearsed readings of new plays by The Playwrights Co-operative over the next few weeks at 65p a time with discussions to follow.

MUSIC

OK so it's not rock music but no other suitable sub-heads are on hand, and those big multi-national record companies are foolishly still not overwhelming the Lev's world HQ with review discs.

Anyway, if you can't wait until the Lev's wonderful Xmas party on 8 Dec to catch **Alternative Cabaret**, having read page 14 this issue, try these dates: alternate Thursday from 22 Nov at the Elgin pub in Ladbroke Grove, or at the Factory, Chippenham Mews, London W9 on 23 Nov, 7 and 14 Dec, all these dates beginning 9ish or whenever they can get it together.

BACK PAGES

Help us to compile Back Pages by sending news about forthcoming events, theatre, music and anything else that grabs your fancy.



I couldn't help thinking of a recently-received and unintentionally funny missive from the RCG complaining in stilted lefty jargon language about a bundle they had with their deadly rivals the RCT in Kilburn Square, London last month when Monty Python's **Life of Brian** movie was only a half-hour done.

There was John Cleese as Reg bossing the Popular Front of Judea and getting Fawltly-like when the comrades, asked who the enemy was, answered the Judean Popular Front, instead of saying the Romans. Reg led the gang to kidnap Pontius Pilate's wife only to run into the other lot on much the same mission. Yep, you've guessed it, they all had a bundle with fists flying under the bemused noses of two Roman centurians. Who passed that remark about art mirroring reality?

As you'll probably know by now, **Life of Brian** concerns Brian Who Calls Himself Brian, and who found himself born in the next stable to JC, and whose life is never quite the same after that start. His only real problem is that he's rather ordinary and that causes him problems, specially in that steamy Palestinian year of 33 AD.

Can't wait to see the reactions of the whole UK Moral Pollution Brigade as this latest Python effort sinks into the nation's consciousness. Blasphemy and all the Whitehouse thinkalikes will find themselves excellently ridiculed in an initial sequence, and all those to whom the Bible saga is taboo will have an increasingly uncomfortable 90 minutes, if they expected wally Kenny Everett-style harmless humour.

Exquisitely subversive, delightfully funny, not at all silly and worthy of the attention of lefties everywhere, **Life of Brian** gets *The Leveller's* joyful prize for rafia work this month.

Back Pages

Some plugs: Deviant Wreckords is a new label for feminist and gay songs. First single is *Stand Together* written by Bradford GLF b/w Dykes Gotta Do, lyrics by Jill Posener, music by Tom Robinson. More info from Jill at 50 Trafalgar Ave, London SE15.

There's a Women's Music Register at the Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, Albany Street, London NW1. Chilean folk singer Alvaro has an LP *Mothers Milk Not Powder* available through Recommended Records.

BOOKS

Welcome to a new publication—*The Radical Bookseller*. A pilot issue has appeared to get the general idea across and to explain that it's not cutting across *News From Neasden* or anything like that.

It says: 'We felt there was a need for a Bookseller that was concerned solely with radical and small publishers' work... There is no publication aimed solely at presenting a complete list of new and forthcoming radical titles from large publishers and small presses.'

The mag runs through news from lefty bookshops, has small book reviews, presents a catalogue of up-coming interesting tomes, and is generally a Good Thing. Four thousand have been printed, they need money like us all and it's published by the inevitable Ad Hoc committee, c/o Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks. Good luck, gang.

Diary time again. The *Pluto Big Red Diary* for 1980 is *The Politics of Sport*, a risky choice of subject perhaps, possibly limiting its appeal, but there again it will soon be Olympic year. It's a lot less cluttered this year—clearer layout—some nice graphics and info, if none too incisive, and it costs £1.95.

Spare Rib's 1980 effort has shrunk in size and it's now the same dimensions as Pluto's. With lovely lilac tints, its creators say they've taken into account the many suggestions they received from punters. Amongst its innovations is a useful menstrual chart, and it costs £2.

Two others: *The Peace Diary* for '80 is available through Houseman's, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1, and from Canada comes *Everywoman's Almanac 1980*—the chunkiest of the four available through PDC at 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

PAMPHLETS

An impressive examination of the Thatcher theory that small firms will Get Britain Moving comes from the *Islington Economy Group*. Their pamphlet looks at the small outfits in that borough of north London and suspects very strongly they are far from being the answer to unemployment.

It slams many Tory-style myths; that there is a massive shortage of skilled labour; that local authority housing schemes have been a major cause of job loss; and that local and central government planning policies have been a major deterrent to industrial location in the inner city.

Called *Small Firms: Magic or Myth?*, it costs £1 c/o Pete Brimson, 56 Cowley Road, London E11.



None too happy at all 'bout the cover of this *Anti-Fascist Handbook* published by the Gay Activist Alliance, specially recalling the flak we got for our Nazi Rock cover. Even if the title was just a bit bigger, that would have helped.

The Handbook itself though is highly impressive. It features three articles by Terry Deane on the background, origins and nature of racism and fascism. Other sections look in detail at the policy of the National Front towards gay people and women, how fascism can be opposed, and there's a personal view by Richard McCance.

David Landau argues that fascist ideology has to be seen in terms of a 'heirarchy of power' determined by imperialism and patriarchy, in which the powerless experience a sense of power by lording it over others.

The Handbook is available from London GAA, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 at 90p post paid, with 10 copies costing £5.50 plus postage.

The Revolutionary Press in Britain by the Communist Workers' Movement is impressive. It's a chunky pamphlet that delves deep into that area of increasing relevance to the general left in Britain — having their own newspapers and magazines.

The CWM pamphlet wisely does not shy away from facing the issues affecting papers published by political parties — it deals with the need to avoid 'party-line' language, examines style, news-gathering, layout and readership appeal.

There is the tendency throughout to infer anything Lenin said is OK by us, which sparks off a consistent tension between political fundamentalism and that great leap outwards to attract and bring in the non-committeds; this results at times in regrettable attitudes, such as dismissing all the layout innovations promoted by peers like *Socialist Worker*, and by the world of youth political mags and fanzines.

When the pamphlet is prepared to use phrases like 'monkey's fart', it seems a shame to rule out vivacities in all the other areas. Still, it's a good read, and rather important too for those into journalism on the British left — a lot of thought has gone into it even if it skirts around the obvious number one problem of cash.

I liked this comment too on writing style: 'Learn the language of working people. Write as you speak. Tell the plain truth. As for stereotyped language, it is an obstacle to revolution! So treat as you would treat Khrushchev or Brezhnev. Down with it! To hell with it!'

The pamphlet's available at 80p plus postage from CWM c/o Box 34, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Leeds Women Against Racism and Fascism have brought out a fine little comic called *ARC*, aimed primarily at tennagers in schools. It's supposed to stimulate discussion around the issues of racism and fascism, and we wish it well. It costs 15p plus postage from COMICS, 20 Westminster Buildings, 31 New York Street, Leeds 2, with bulk rates on request.

An anthology of children's writings from Phoenix School East London, where Blair Peach taught, has now been published by Worker Writers and Community Publishers, to commemorate the man the SPG murdered.

The publishers hope the small collection gives 'some idea of the encouragement he gave to people's writings, and of his sig-

nificant contribution to the growing movement of local community publishing'.

It can be ordered at 65p all-in from E Floor, Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.



CAMPAIGNS

The proposed question on race in the 1981 Census has come under strong fire from the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, who assert the question will be of no use to those for whom it is clearly meant.

BSSRS see the innovation — the question will ask 'What is your race or ethnic origin?' — as 'politically dangerous'. They say: 'The information from the question is a danger because it encourages people to play the "numbers game" which helps to define the problem of racism and racial discrimination as a problem of black people.'

One jury that the state failed to vet or rig has been commended by the Legalise Cannabis Campaign. A trial at Leicester Crown Court involving a small piece of the weed was stopped in September after a juror declared openly both the prosecution and the law on which it was based were absurd.

The judge praised this outburst and ordered a retrial following which the two defendants were acquitted.

The LCC has now issued an invitation to other jurors to strike a blow for common sense by saying cannabis smoking should not be treated as a criminal offence.

An important conference happens 8-9 December at Beechwood College, Elmate Lane, Leeds 8 on *Workers Co-ops — Reality and Myth*. Intended to be about working rather than just talking, the two days will question the practical issue of work democracy and equality, the techniques and procedures that assist or hinder co-operation.

Classifieds

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COLLECTIVE MEMBER is looking for a four/five bedroom house to rent in South London. All usual references etc. Ring Andy Curry 223-5635.

CAMPAIGN Against the Arms Trade: quarterly national meeting, Sat 1 Dec, 11.am—6 pm, London University Catholic Chaplaincy, 111 Gower Street, WC1. Details from CAAT, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. Tel: 01-278 1976.

DISTINCTIVE new greetings letter/card. Cover by William Morris of Design for Democratic Federation membership card (about 1895-1900). 10p each with envelope. Ten or more post free. Enclose stamp for smaller orders. Callers 12 for £1. Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1 0DU.

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