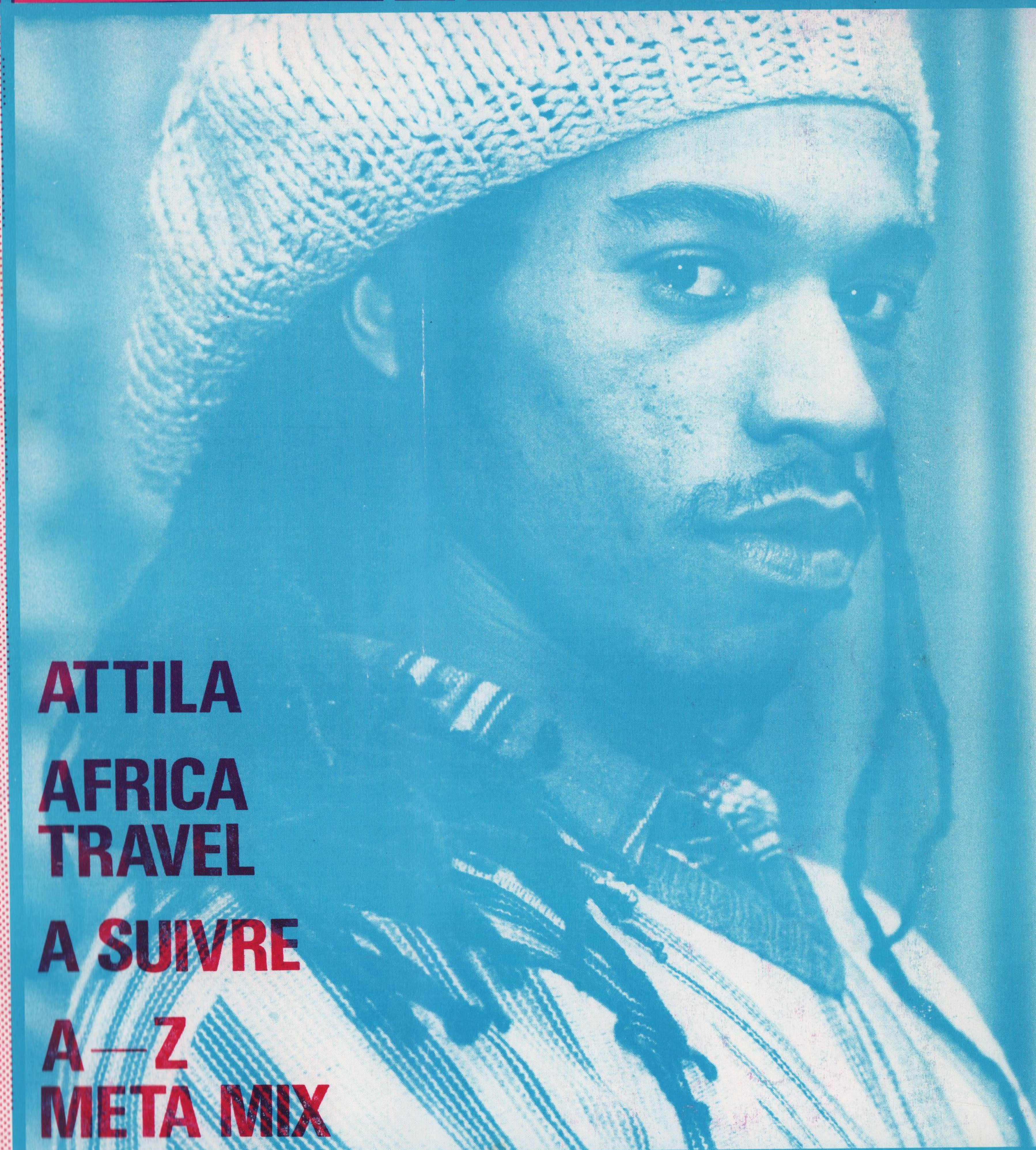


TRACES

LEAVING NATO
INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

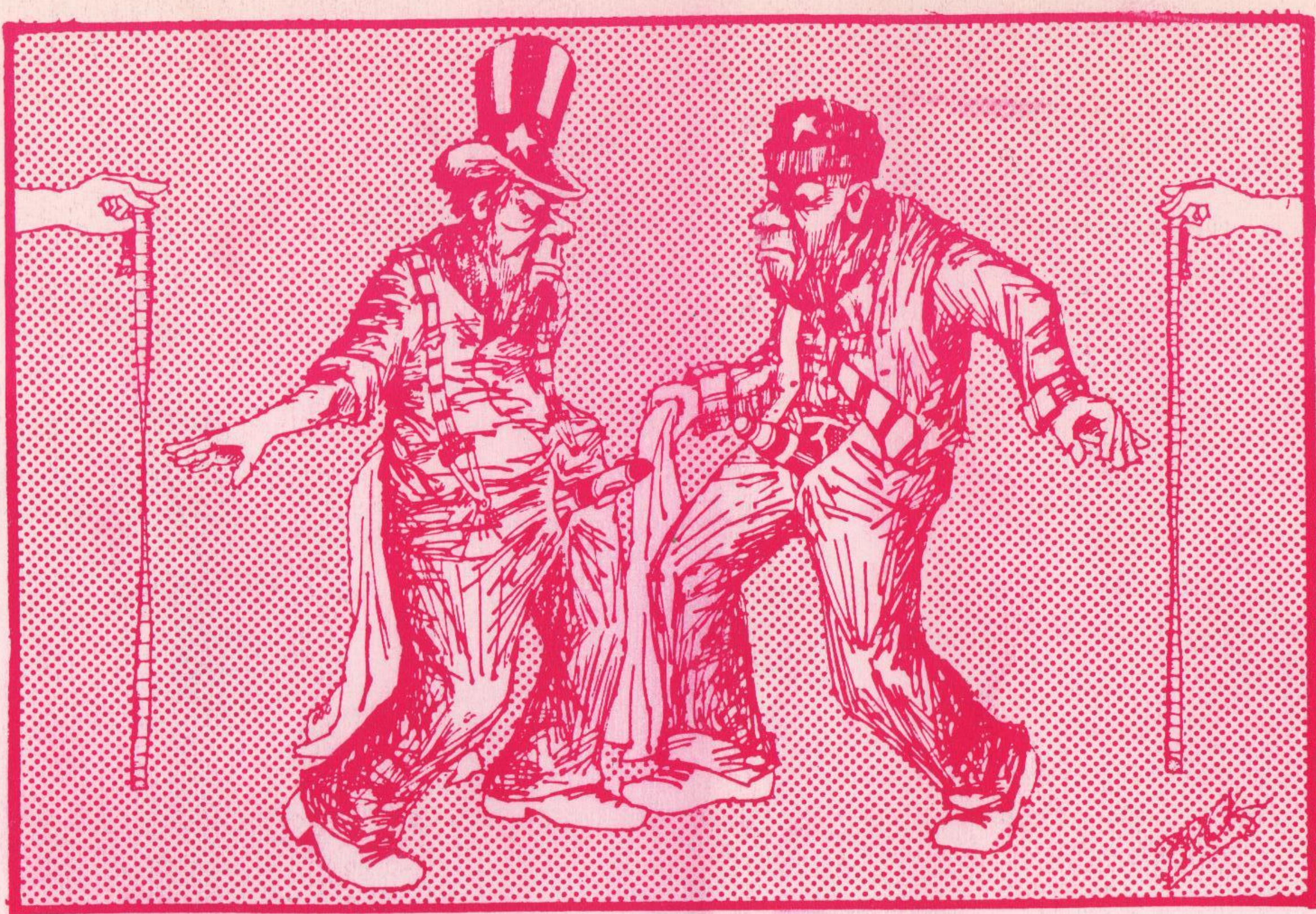


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TRACES is the pilot stage of a new general interest magazine.

Many people are bored with specialist magazines. They want to keep up with a range of things ... hence TRACES.

It's difficult to start a new mag without big business backing. So we depend on people who share our goals to join in the project. For the next few months while we build our readership, there's no chance of any pay!

So ... welcome to Traces 4.

AllBran-like, we're keeping regular - every two months. Central Books Distribution have the honour of supplying bookshops and magazine outlets throughout the UK and Ireland. So if you want to stay regular - order it - or if you're less strapped for cash - subscribe.

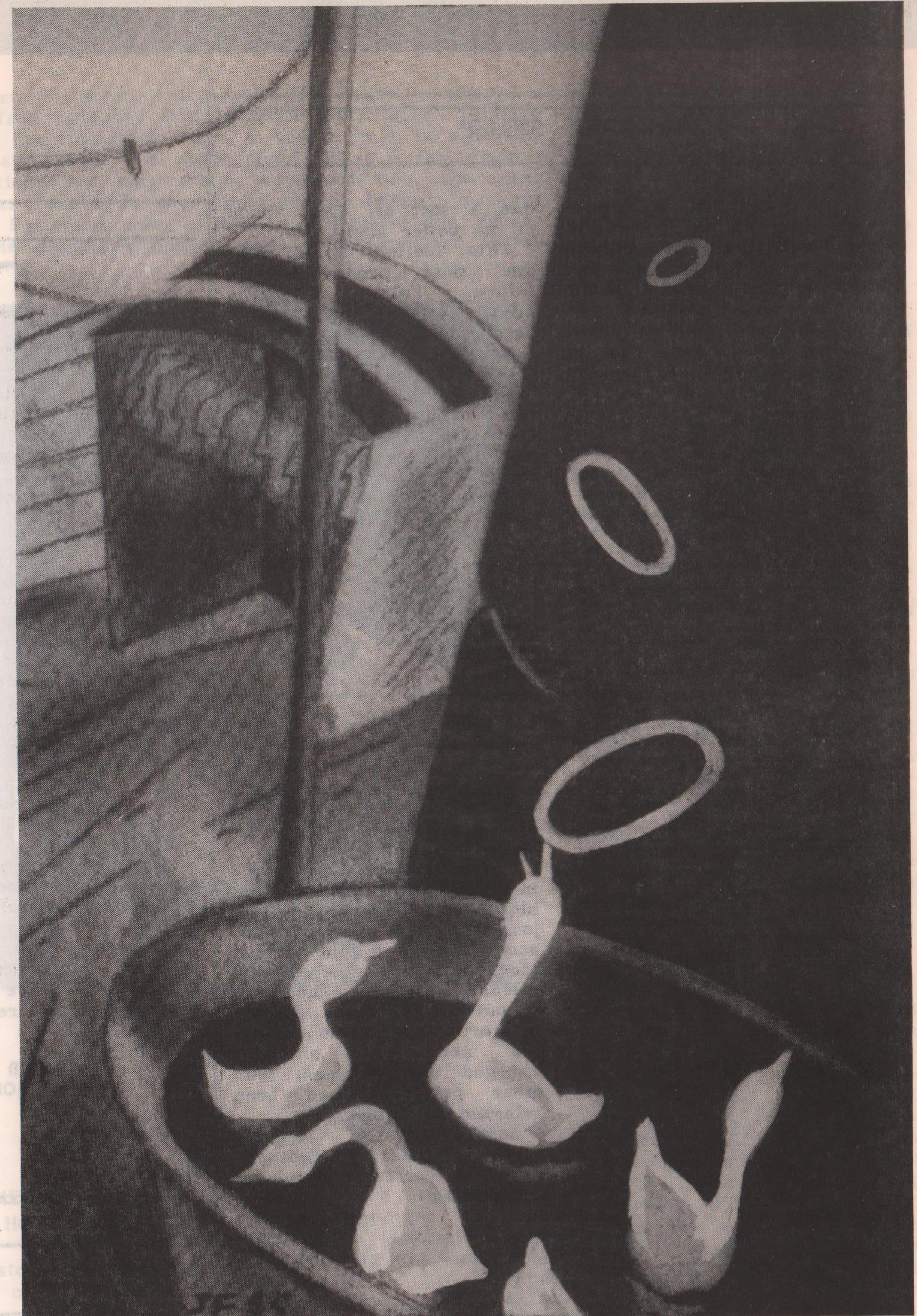
So generally interest yourself in Traces. Write or phone and get in contact. We'll always need practical support: writers and illustrators - typists - photographers - people to follow up news stories, review films and gigs (free tickets here.)

What we particularly need at the moment are: short accessible articles, zany and humorous pieces - and some more laughs. We'll help shape the work for you if it'll make it more readable.

And cartoons!

If you think Traces could do better, but you can't actively help - write and slag us off. At least we then know we're going to do something along the right lines.

TRACES is a non-sectarian, co-operative venture. The support we've had over the nine months we've been going has been amazing. But we're continually open to more amazement. If you have skills or would like to learn, just get in touch.



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TRACES 3

Apologies to BILL McCOID for leaving his byline off 'Tips to Tantalise', PEACE NEWS for failing to credit artwork on 'No Alcohol, No Asprin', to STEVE BELL and REAGAN FOR BEGINNERS for failing to credit their pics of Reagan.

Simon Dine you forgot to tell us your address.

Sorry there's no space for Ian Henshall's second part (The Empire Strikes Back). Maybe next issue.

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RUBBER STAMP

The hallmark of a democracy, as we all know, is the separation of powers between the state and the courts. So when every single court decision in the miners' strike goes against the miners, this is simply because they are very unlawful people, or they have not paid for good enough lawyers.

But have you ever had the feeling that your summons, which is supposed to come from the court

has a sort of, well, touch of the police about it?

This feeling could become more pronounced in future. Police scientific advisor Ann Middleton has been describing the new computerised system for issuing summonses at Orpington. 'Now the police type this information onto their VDU screens and send it electronically to the court computer which then produces the summonses'.

BLOOD RED

'The public do not want to be aware of the bloodier side of the meat trade', says the Meat Trades Journal. Animal AID quote the journal's article with glee as evidence that they are winning the battle against meat eating.

The Journal advises butchers to change to red overalls to avoid 'adverse reaction' to blood-spattered white coats, to change the name of slaughterhouses to meat factories - and to change butchers to victuallers.

ESCAPE

Scott Robinson's method of escape from prison was foolproof, but talking about it led to the discovery of his plan.

Robinson, a trusty working in the administration block of California's San Jose prison, learned the access codes to the prison computer and altered his release date. He hoped to be out for Christmas.

Guards heard him boasting about it, and it emerged that at least four other prisoners had been released prematurely.

Sentenced for stealing video games, Robinson hopes to become a computer programmer.

Change?

There is speculation that behind the battles of the miners strike, the party political landscape may at last be changing.

In the conservative party the forces of moderation are gathering strength. Worry about rising unemployment is spreading among some Thatcher supporters who believed the line that it had peaked already.

At the same time traditional conservatives are concerned that obvious signs of decay, such as cracked paving stones and broken sewers in the rich parts of London, are eroding the UK image abroad.

Most significantly, however, the election of 1983 brought a glut of tory MPs into the Commons who now see their main hope of keeping their seats in a government move towards the political centre.

DIVIDED OPPOSITION

Tory control of the state depends on boosting the

Alliance to maintain a divided opposition. But the Alliance has been doing very badly lately. It has spectacularly failed to capitalise on the unpopularity of the miners strike, and is still trailing Labour in the opinion polls. Recent court action by Owen to try and force the media barons to give them better coverage has failed for the time being at least.

SDP ROWS

The SDP itself has been racked by internal rows caused by the dictatorial behaviour of Owen. In Wales where the miners' strike is widely popular, his vociferous statements that the miners must be defeated caused SDP chairman Gwynor Jones to bemoan their image as 'a one man band bolstering up the Tories'.

Ordinary SDP rank and file members were shocked to find that the party constitution was completely undemocratic when Owen defied the Council of Social Democracy to support the use of plastic bullets in Northern Ireland.

Britain's KGB

SPECIAL BRANCH SECRETS OUT

Recent disclosures to the House of Commons have made it clear that the Special Branch is a section of the police force in name only. In practice it functions as one of the arms of the extensive political police system.

Unlike the USSR where political policing is organised by a named umbrella organisation, the KGB, in Britain it is carried out by a range of agencies and co-ordinated in secret in Whitehall.

OUT OF CONTROL

Besides the Special Branch, M15 (the 'Security Service'), the Anti-terrorist Squad, the Home Office Investigation Branch, the Regional crime squads, the Customs Investigation Branch and numerous investigative sections of organisations such as BT and the Post Office all function partly as branches of the secret state.

Fearing that it has lost all control of a major section of the state apparatus, the House of Commons has created a special committee to investigate the SB.

The state refuses to answer many questions put to it by its theoretical masters, but the little that has emerged is alarming enough.

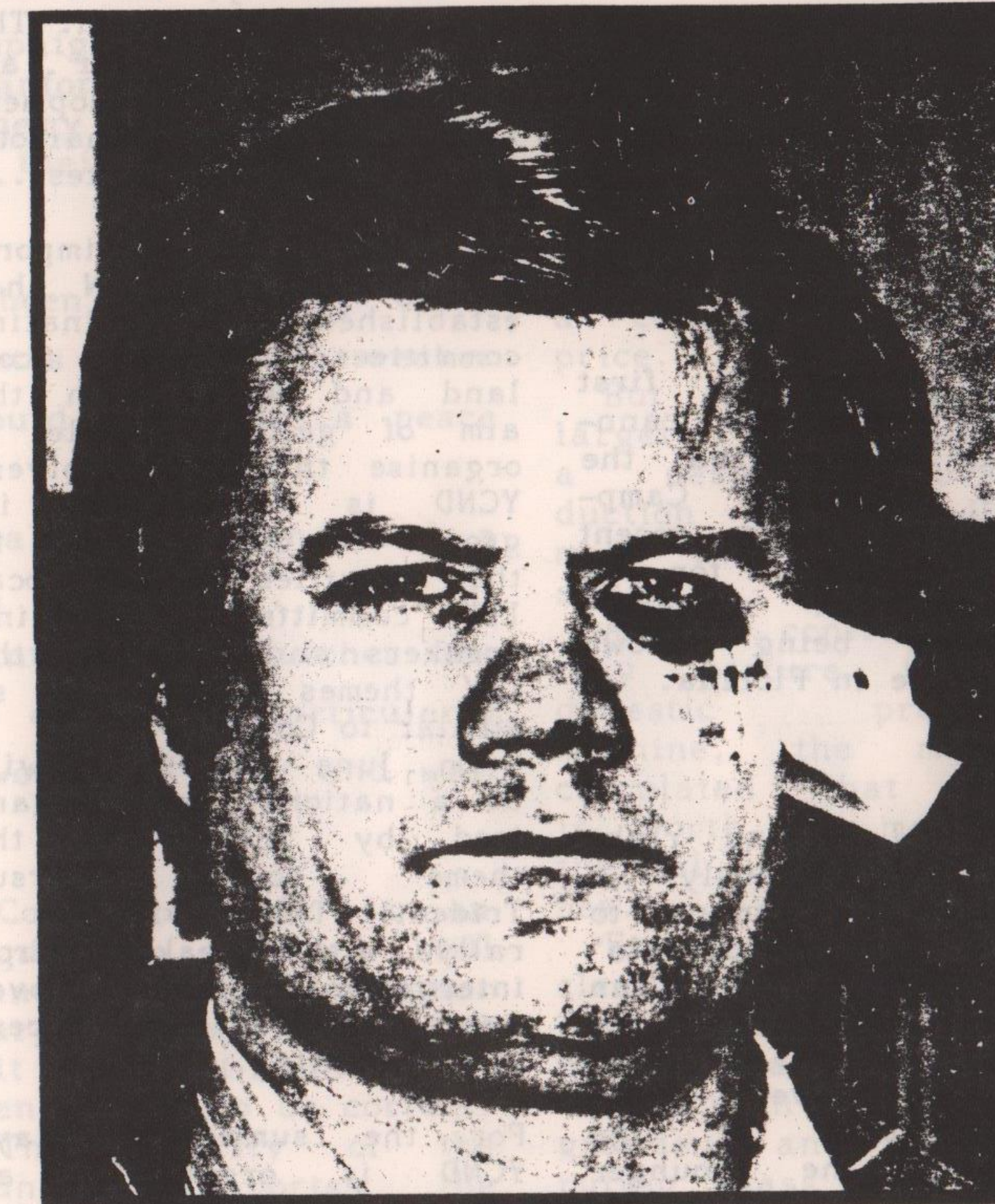
DAILY REPORTS TO HOME OFFICE

In contempt of the supposed rule of law, the definition of what constitutes subversion includes lawful political activity, and amounts to anything which threatens the interests of the state. The committee has heard allegations that the SB regularly attends meetings of Friends of the Earth and the National Council for Civil Liberties.

John Alderson, a retired Chief Constable, told the committee that much of the work of the SB in his area was for M15, and would bypass him.

Alderson also said that daily reports on industrial action were sent to the Home Office.

Mr Robert Patterson (pictured above shortly after his release from custody) told Leeds magistrates in January that he had failed to take a breath test because the police had beaten him unconscious. After a few minutes deliberation, the magistrates acquitted him, conceding there was 'doubt in the minds of the bench', perhaps because Patterson was himself a policeman for fifteen years. He describes himself as a 100% supporter of the police.



MERSEYSIDE HOT SPOT

An astonishing picture emerged of political surveillance on Merseyside, where the officially admitted total of SB personnel is 178, compared to 7 in Northamptonshire. Even those seven keep 400-500 active files.

If SB, anti-terrorist squad, M15, Regional Crime Squad officers, their respective clerical staff, and professional paid informers were all added up, the total would probably be well over 1,000 secret police in Merseyside, with files on perhaps 20,000 citizens.

HAILSHAM TO RETIRE

Rumours of a move from the televised House of

Lords. Lord Hailsham, the only supporter of Leon Brittan's fantastical idea of allowing the new public prosecutor to appeal against 'too lenient' sentences, is unwell and will retire. Howe will replace him, leaving Heseltine to become foreign secretary. Who's for the job of defending the Trident programme? Applications by April 1 to box 5000, Traces Magazine.

NEW TIMES

In its anniversary year The Times is changing its tune. A Traces reader who writes for them has had her copy returned. She was asked to simplify her language. 'Our readers won't understand it, we're aiming for the Daily Mail readership now', she was told.

URBAN GUERRILLAS

There has been an explosion of interest against NATO and the military industrial complex throughout Europe.

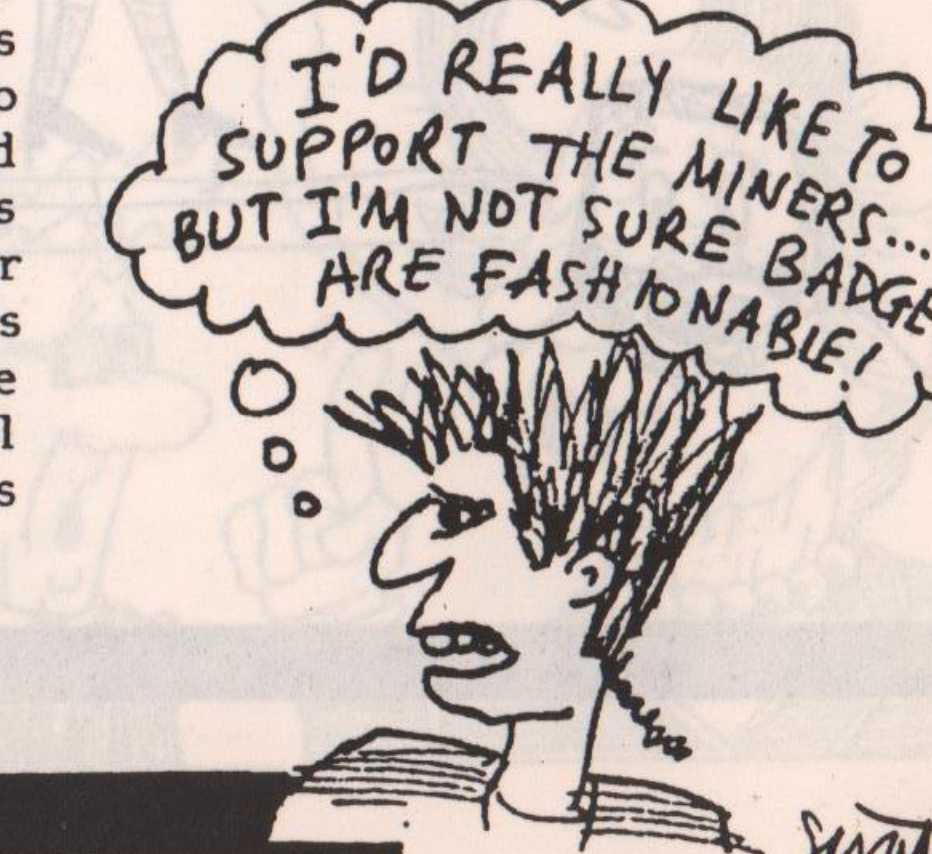
As the right tightens its grip on the political process in most European countries and moderates put their hope in arms talks, increasing numbers of people are taking up the guerilla option.

In Belgium guerrillas have discovered the plans of NATO's underground fuel pipelines. In December the Fighting Communist Cells organised six simultaneous attacks on them. Flames leapt 100 yards into the air at the scene of one explosion, according to eyewitnesses.

In France and West Germany, where Action Directe and the Red Army Faction ('Baader-Meinhof Gang') recently announced a merger, two key figures in the arms trade have been assassinated, a defence ministry general in France in charge of arms sales, and an arms manufacturer in West Germany.

In West Germany and Portugal there have been numerous arson and bomb attacks on NATO installations. A government spokesperson in West Germany was reported as stating there were over sixty attacks in West Germany in two months. This new wave of violence poses nightmare problems for the authorities. It raises the fear that the defeat of urban guerrillas in Italy and West Germany in the seventies was shallow and incomplete, allowing the remnants to spread wider into the general population.

It is easier to direct the power of the modern state against a small core of people, however well-organised, than the large number of more amateur guerrillas now operating in West Germany.



Drug Wars Peace Notes

Paraguay Row. There has been a public row between the US and Paraguay. Not because nazi mass murderer Dr Joseph Mengele is being harboured there, nor over human rights abuses.

The Reagan administration is incensed that Paraguay has flagrantly failed to destroy 49,000 gallons of seized chemicals which could only be used for the extraction of an estimated eight tons of cocaine. US officials told the press that 'high levels of the government in Paraguay' could be involved.

'Lives Destroyed' As the annual value of the coke flood into the US reaches \$50 billion, authorities in Europe are worried that it will be smuggled over on transatlantic flights. Propaganda has been boosted to absurd levels. '...at least 50% of users become addicts... more American careers and lives are being destroyed by coke than ever before' wrote The Observer.

Show Trial. On the word of a self-confessed schoolboy supplier, teacher Richard Catherwood was

sentenced to six years in a blaze of publicity for supposedly supplying acid to a schoolboy (not in fact a pupil of his).

The media held him responsible when the boy fell to his death from a block of flats in Dulwich, but how many publicans are blamed when drunks kill motorists?

Cannabis Death. The first recorded death from cannabis has now occurred, the Legalise Cannabis Campaign admits in a recent leaflet. Half a ton of grass fell on someone's head after being thrown from a plane in Florida.

'Loophole' Left and right united sanctimoniously in the House of Commons to close a 'glaring loophole' so that shopkeepers can now be imprisoned for selling solvents to glue sniffers. MP's were given lurid accounts of the follies of the younger generation. People empty fire extinguishers down their throats, they were told.

The UN has designated 1985 as International Youth Year. As one of the most active youth organisations in the country, Youth CND is planning to join in. The themes of the year are Participation, Development and Peace. Charlotte Wager, from YCND writes...

For YCND this is an important year. The UN has established co-ordinating committees in England Scotland and Wales with the aim of getting people to organise things themselves. YCND is encouraging its groups to get involved in the activities of the local IYY committees, providing speakers and films for the IYY themes which are so similar to CND's.

On June 1st there will be a national demo organised by YCND with the theme Youth versus Trident. There will be a rally with speakers from international peace movements and a big concert in the evening.

For the summer holidays YCND is organising an International Summer Peace Camp at one of the bases in England. There will be workshops during the day and trips to local towns for public meetings. There will also be opportunity for some direct action to round off the evenings.

The idea of an international conference is also popular. It would involve not only peace organisations but people involved in all sorts of campaigns. All these ideas are being discussed further at the YCND Campaigning Conference at Newcastle in February. Last year hundreds of activists from over 90 groups attended.

For more info contact YCND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

NO VOTE

13 Greenham women have lost their right to vote. Their residence outside the USAF base was ruled illegal after complaints by a local residents' group, and now their names have been struck off the register

TALKS

The US and the Soviet Union talked about arms control in Geneva and agreed to meet again. This was hailed with euphoria by the establishment in Europe, who see a real chance of rallying public opinion behind their american masters.

But US commentators were quick to pour cold water on the possibility of a real arms deal.

The USSR has said that the US Star Wars project must be included in any arms deal, while the US has refused this in advance.

Even more seriously, there have been persistent allegations from the US that the USSR doesn't keep to agreements anyway.

Even Max Kampelman, the new US chief negotiator stated in an article shortly after his appointment that the alleged lack of soviet compliance with existing treaties was 'sufficiently troubling to warrant scepticism' of any possibility of far-reaching agreement.

VASSALS

The Italian secret services are 'vassals' of NATO, admitted Italian Socialist Party official Rino Formica. He said the Americans wanted secret information from Italy but gave little back.

PRICE HIKE

The latest increase in the bill for the US Trident weapons system takes it over the £10 billion mark. The defence minister Michael Heseltine tried to disguise this by quoting a figure of £9.2b, but he was calculating the pound at \$1.38. Where has he been lately?

The new figure is twice the estimate made when the programme was announced in 1980.

NO DEAL

'...the current propaganda campaign against the NUM has all the hallmarks of a disinformation strategy ... repeat constantly that the enemy are losing while denying them information about their successes' - THE MINER, 17.1.85.

The NUM is right. It has been the target of a propaganda war. The government's position is weaker than it looks. The miners should not sign a peace deal on Thatcher's terms.

They have run down the coal stocks, and had a hand in three major runs on the pound. When it becomes clear that Thatcher intends to butcher the industry there will be a surge of anger, particularly in NACODS. The miners should work for unity and wait till then.

As we go to press, the long-mooted suggestion of marching back to work without negotiations with the NCB, seems a strong possibility.

With Thatcher forcing the coal board into a demand for Scargill's head on a plate - a letter that would deny the whole basis of the strike, and ridicule the immense hardships of the strikers - it makes powerful sense to keep your options open on future action.

The next decision must be that of uniting the NUM solidly against the intransigence of the government.

Coal Not Dole is an argument that still stands firm. Arthur Scargill's much-ridiculed 'hit list' of mines has been proved to be correct.

The majority of the country supportss the basic aims of the dispute. It's the tactics that must be developed.

Of course, what will happen to those who accepted the bribes back to work is yet to be seen. However, the tory MP who called the coal fields in his constituency "minefields" by mistake, may yet be proved to have had a point.

January's run on the pound showed how precarious the government's position is.

The panic was not caused by the strike directly, but by fears of a collapse in the oil price.

But the oil fears had largely been caused by a desperate overproduction by the UK to meet the bills of the strike.

And in contrast to the rosy picture from the domestic propaganda machine, the moneymen calculated that Britain is worth no more than the oil under the North Sea.

From abroad it is clear that Thatcher's Britain is in terminal decline, a post-imperial power with delusions of grandeur and a vicious ruling class with no-one left to attack but its own subjects.

Anthony Lewis, a mainstream US commentator wrote: 'when the pound sank to \$1.12 there was no great fuss. The reaction, or lack of it, was even more telling than the figures. The world has got used to the decline of Britain.'

Helped by an unpublicised cutback in industry's use of electricity, a ruinously expensive substitution of oil, and the use of dangerous lorry convoys which have led to at least two road deaths, the government calculated that it could win the strike.

But this calculation depended on no second front opening. The key to this dispute may turn out to be renewed 'guerilla action', with the support of NACODS, the pit deputies union.

It is clear that the government wish to close around a third of the NCB capacity, but they have promised NACODS that they will keep most pits open.

There is a serious possibility that, overcome with the euphoria of victory, the government will push NACODS behind the NUM, as they realise that their agreement is worthless.

The government could yet be tripped up.

Peter Moulson and Ian Henshall





BEYOND THE

'And what rough beast,
its hour come round at
last, slouches toward
Bethlehem to be born?' -
W B Yeats, The Second
Coming.

'Beyond the Blocs' is the title of a series of recent conferences organised by END. Fronted by historian and Peace Movement theoretician E P Thompson, the nation wide tour aims to extend the disarmament debate into the third world and accordingly includes representatives from such places as East Europe and Mauritius.

In a move away from the purely disarmament orientation of its parent body, CND, the campaign has taken on board the analyses of Bradford's Institute of Peace studies and the Alternative Defence Commission to put actual 'defence policy' under consideration. In essence, this would involve removing the tank armies and 'deep strike' components of NATO's war machine in favour of precision guided munitions designed to exact a high 'admission price' from any potential aggressor.

LABOUR'S MARKETING DILEMMA

Whatever the military merit of such a strategy, its very presence on the peace movement agenda is arguably a political gain, since 'defence' is a topic that - like foreign policy - the peace movement and the left in general has tended to let languish in the realm of 'people's militias' (if not outright pacifism) and the ritual denunciation of America at Labour Party conferences.

Indeed it is a good bet that the ramshackle nature of Labour's foreign and defence policies lost them the last election. Apart from anything else, the nature of the product must have presented an insuperable marketing dilemma as the policies on offer were almost entirely negative (..we will withdraw from the EEC, cancel Trident, boot out US bases etc), and reflected a ragbag collection of Labour Party obsessions rather than a convincing alternative to Thatcher's Babylon.

The latter at least has the advantage of actual, indeed palpable, existence and, as Hegel would say, 'what is real is rational'.

NON-ALIGNED

However END is at least widening the debate to bring out the links between defence and foreign policy. In a recent article (Defending Europe the Political Way - World Policy Journal, 1983) defence analyst Mary Kaldor argues that 'an alternative defence policy must be compatible with ... an alternative international order ... or non-aligned policy.'

The failure to make this connection may account for the labour Party's confusion on the subject; what, after all, is being defended? The British class system? The rights of multinational companies?

Mary Kaldor, as elsewhere E P Thompson, go on to sketch a putative European non-aligned movement - perhaps a unilateral western initiative having knock-on effects in Eastern Europe - aiming toward 'the finlandisation of the East and the swedenisation of the West'.

THE SAME WEB

This vision of stripped-pine harmony, while useful in drawing on the experience of existing European non-alignment, would seem founded on a rather sanguine assessment of the historical status of Europe in particular and non-alignment in general.

To date, existing 'non-aligned' nations in Western Europe remain fully integrated into the economic framework of imperialism and - although due must be paid to Austria's courageous support for the PLO - are in no sense actors on the world's stage. Indeed they are all, including Yugoslavia, de facto members of the NATO alliance.

The existing non-aligned movement in the third world remains hamstrung by its incorporation - albeit in a cruder fashion - in the same imperialist web. It is largely unable, as any Namibian could attest, to mount an effective military as well as economic defence of its own interests. Thus if our Euro non-aligned movement were to become a continent of Swiss-style rentiers, or the sort of neurotic social democracy characteristic of Sweden, then fundamental changes are required in the nature of Europe's engagement in the world political economy.

NEW WORLD ORDER

These changes, implying a break with the system of imperialist trade relations and capital export that is the very foundation of Europe's present wealth, would imply a change in the world order as, if not more, profound than the supplanting of European colonialism by the US in the 1940's.



END

THE LEFT, DISARMAMENT AND A NON-ALIGNED EUROPE

Further, to avoid raising the spectre of 'Euro-Gaulism', rightly condemned by Mary Kaldor (but also unfortunately lurking in the protectionist tendency of the Labour Party), our non-aligned Europe would have to positively embrace and extend the existing non-aligned movement's demands for the New International Economic Order.

However in terms of defence policy it does not necessarily follow that '...avoiding the development of a new Euro-Imperialism ... would mean downgrading, even to the point of elimination, the military element in European relations with the third world' (Kaldor). Rather, the result of such a radical strategy could well be an increase in Europe's military commitment to its non-aligned allies.

KEEPING GERMANY DIVIDED

This is since, despite END's insistence on 'avoiding new blocs', it is hard to see how any significant linkage between Europe and the third world, outside of the old ones, could avoid assuming some sort of collective characteristics.

Most likely our Euro/non-aligned grouping would face tremendous opposition not only from the United States - the Dow Jones index would melt down at the prospect - but also from hegemonically-inclined elements in the Soviet Union, whose own East European constituency would be put into question.

And here we arrive at perhaps the nub of any post-NATO configuration, the status of Germany. For it is arguable that the very

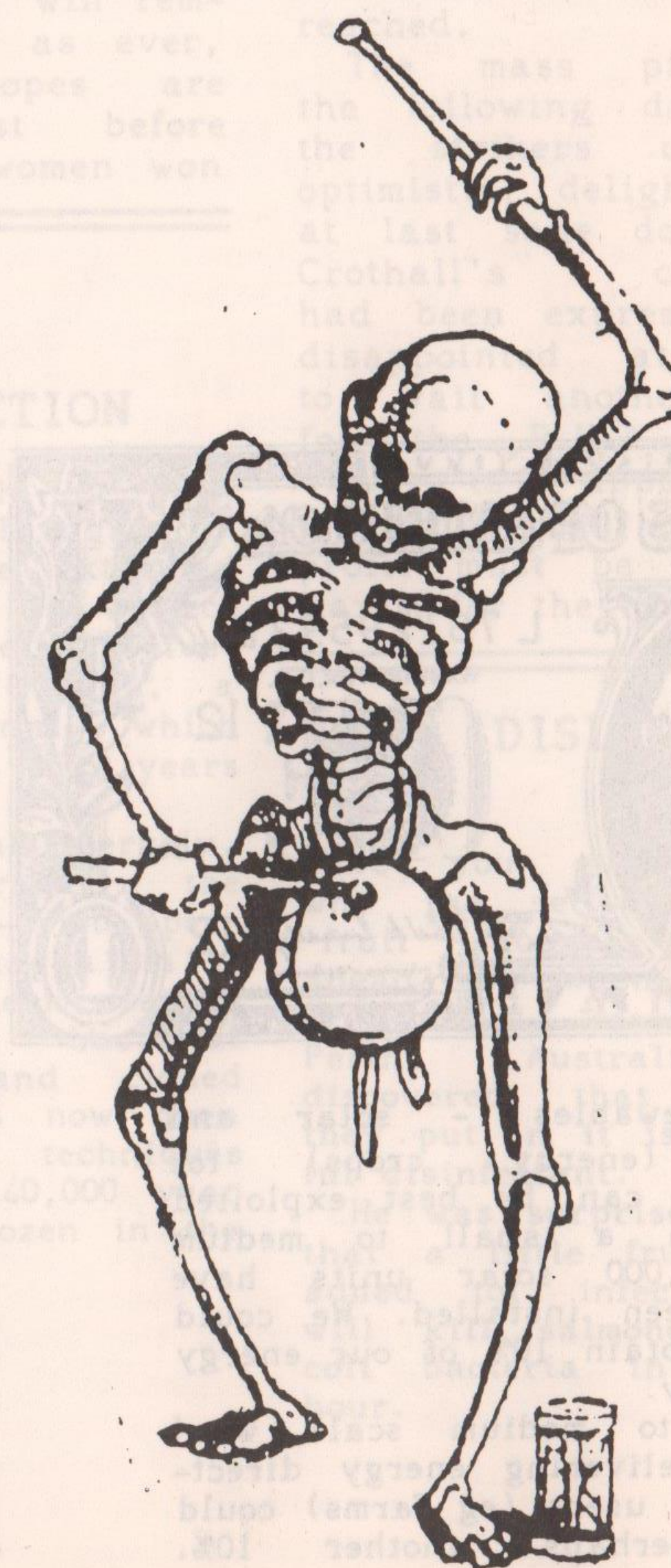
cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy since world war two (and indeed at a stage of removal those of Britain and France) has been that of finding an acceptable framework for the containment of Germany.

A divided Germany is more or less the raison d'être of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and a non-aligned, possibly green, West Germany (and stranger people have come to power in that country) would inevitably raise the whole question of german reunification and impose an impossible strain on the Warsaw Pact as a whole.

ROUGH BEAST

Thus the likely scenario facing a non-aligned Europe would be that of a superpower collusion to restore the status quo ante, involving US pressure in the third world and a Soviet clamp-down in East Europe tolerated if not encouraged by Washington.

The peace movement would have succeeded in restoring detente alright, as a non-aligned Europe is probably the only thing which would make Washington sit down seriously with the 'evil emperors' - although the progeny of such a union would be a 'rough beast' indeed...



POWER TO THE PEOPLE PART TWO

Similarly for small scale water power - micro hydro electric turbines in rivers and streams.

But even with serious attention to conservation, we will also need some larger scale units - eg arrays of large wind turbines, possibly offshore, feeding into the national grid. These could supply 50% of our electricity ultimately (on official estimates).

Large chains of floating wave energy converters could produce 25%.

A series of smaller tidal barrages on estuaries around the country could produce 15% as an alternative to the large one proposed by the multinationals for the Severn estuary.

WHO DECIDES?

Obviously we will need to discuss the details carefully, and the balance between small local and large central. But what is important is who decides which we have, and who controls them subsequently.

A rational energy programme would not be concerned either with rushing into renewables, possibly to discredit them (see last issue), or with bolstering the profits of big business.

It would be concerned with developing renewables in the most socially and environmentally appropriate way.

CONTROL

Nationalisation has not proved to be a very successful method of subjecting industries to social control in the public interest - or even in the interests of those who work in them. Can we do better when it comes to large scale renewables?

What about municipal control and local energy co-ops? Can we develop democratic decentral control over large systems? It's a major challenge, and one we have to face sooner or later.

Labour has certainly talked about decentralisation, as have the Liberals, and is committed to a major expansion of funding for renewables.

There is now talk in energy circles of a £100-200pa development and implementation programme, putting renewables on a par with nuclear power. But this is unlikely to be pursued by the Tories, for whom decentralisation means 'privatisation' and who in any case seem hell bent on ignoring the potential these new technologies represent.

THEY WON'T RUN OUT

The potential of renewables is enormous. Taken together, it has been estimated officially that they could ultimately provide about as much as we get at present from North Sea oil and gas - soon to run out. That's fourteen times more than we get currently from nuclear power.

Developing renewables could create jobs in just those industries and regions hardest hit by the recession - the shipyards (wavepower) and the construction industry (solar).

And of course shifting to conservation and renewables

means we are moving towards an energy supply and use system which is safer and which can be sustained indefinitely; the renewables won't run out.

All of which makes it vital that we develop them sensibly and don't just leave it up to the private monopolies.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

At the very least we need to push for the development of small to medium scale systems to complement the large-scale technologies being developed by the big companies. No doubt there will be some useful spin-off from their large-scale programmes. But there is the danger, even if government takes more of an interest, that 'giantism' will dominate: the small scale options will be ignored as trivial.

Fortunately there are several rays of hope. The UK solar industry is still made up of mostly small firms (it had a £25m annual turnover). There are a number of smaller firms and co-operatives active in the small to medium scale wind power field which has considerable domestic and export potential.

Several local authorities are exploring small to medium scale alternative energy options, despite the cuts imposed by central government. For example Milton Keynes development Corporation has built 177 energy saving passive solar council houses. There are more than 180 solar houses and flats in London, with a further 56 planned, and Southampton City Council has been experimenting with geothermal energy for its municipal centre.

The GLC, via its enterprise board GLEB (which has created or saved 2000 jobs in its first year of operation) has established an energy and employment network (LEEN) linking up with London's Polytechnics to stimulate job-creating alternative energy projects. And similar projects have been set up by other Labour controlled councils.

A LOT HAPPENING

Dozens of local community energy groups and insulation co-ops have sprung up around the country - linked organisations like Neighborhood Energy Action - with the emphasis on creating jobs and cutting fuel bills through insulation.

All in all, there's quite a lot happening at the grass roots, whether it's in the conservation/insulation field or the development of renewables.



Note. For further information, contact the Network for Alternative Technologies and Technology Assessment, based at the Alternative technology group, Open university, Milton Keynes, Bucks. Currently NATTA is campaigning for the R&D budget for renewables to be expanded to £150m pa.

Emergency Action

For the last eleven months the miners have been leading the fight against the Tories' policies. But there is another industrial dispute that has been running only two weeks behind the miner's strike.

At Barking Hospital 62 domestics have been on strike since March 19th-1984, in dispute over the drastic cut in their pay and conditions imposed by private contractors Crothalls. The new terms amounting to a 40% cut in cleaning hours, shifts as short as 2 hours, average pay of £20-40, were offered to full time employees whose average take home pay was £62.

DISBELIEF

Although union members, none of the women had been involved in industrial action before. But when on March 19th the women voted to take strike action, they weren't just considering themselves, they were expressing their disbelief that the hospital could be cleaned adequately on Crothall's terms.

INSULTS

That was eleven months ago. Crothalls wasted no time in recruiting scab labour. Enjoying the pre-tender conditions the strikers are fighting for, the scabs shout insults and wave pay packets at the strikers as they ferry past in their heavily protected coaches.

ATLANTIS

Soviet archeologists believe they may have found the site of the lost civilisation of Atlantis, which sank, according to legend, in prehistoric times.

It is the submerged Mount Amper, 300 miles off the Portuguese coast. Divers have established that the mountain was once above sea level. Underwater photographs seem to show buildings on the mountain top, but objects brought up have so far been disappointing.



Inevitably the strikers' anger at this treatment leads to scuffles and clashes with the police. Many of the women commented that they would have been disgusted by violence on miner's picket lines if they hadn't experienced this strike.

SYMPATHY

Husbands and families are 100% behind the women, patients and nurses have expressed their sympathy. Calls for mass pickets have brought hospital workers from all over London to

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

Britain's farmers are not the only people making a killing out of the EEC. Communist euro-MP Pancrazio de Pasquale told the EEC parliament in January that mafia penetration of the Italian government was leading to a massive diversion of funds.

He was supported by Tory Bob Battersby, who estimated the mafia was making at least £30m from production aid to Italy. He recalled that a top EEC official who went to Sicily to investigate had both his legs broken in a motorcycle accident in Palermo.

the gates of Barking Hospital.

Crothall's employees in New Zealand, suffering from similar cuts organised a one day sympathy strike and sent two workers across the globe to visit the Barking Strikers. But the women feel let down when porters, cooks and laundry staff, all fellow trade unionists, cross their picket lines every day.

Despite the length of the strike the women's determination to win remains as strong as ever, and their hopes are rising. Just before Christmas the women won

RESURRECTION

Will the mammoth, or even the dinosaur, walk again? Scientists have extracted fragments of the DNA molecule, the genetic blueprint, of the Quagga, a zebra-like mammal which became extinct 150 years ago.

Researchers at Berkely, California extracted the DNA from a salt-dried specimen of the Quagga in a West German museum, separated it from bacterial contaminants, and cloned it. The way is now open to use similar techniques on samples of 40,000 year old mammoths frozen in the arctic.

a case of unfair dismissal at an industrial tribunal.

COCKROACHES

The allegation of inadequate cleaning by scabs, backed up by photographic evidence of filth, even cockroaches, has embarrassed the local Tory council.

The chairman himself admitted he had never been satisfied with Crothalls. Despite this, on February 6 the Regional Health Authority voted by 5 to 2 to consider reviewing its contract with Crothalls.

JUDGES

But doubt is creeping in. Over the next month

the DHSS, as impartial judges, will be assessing Crothall's operation.

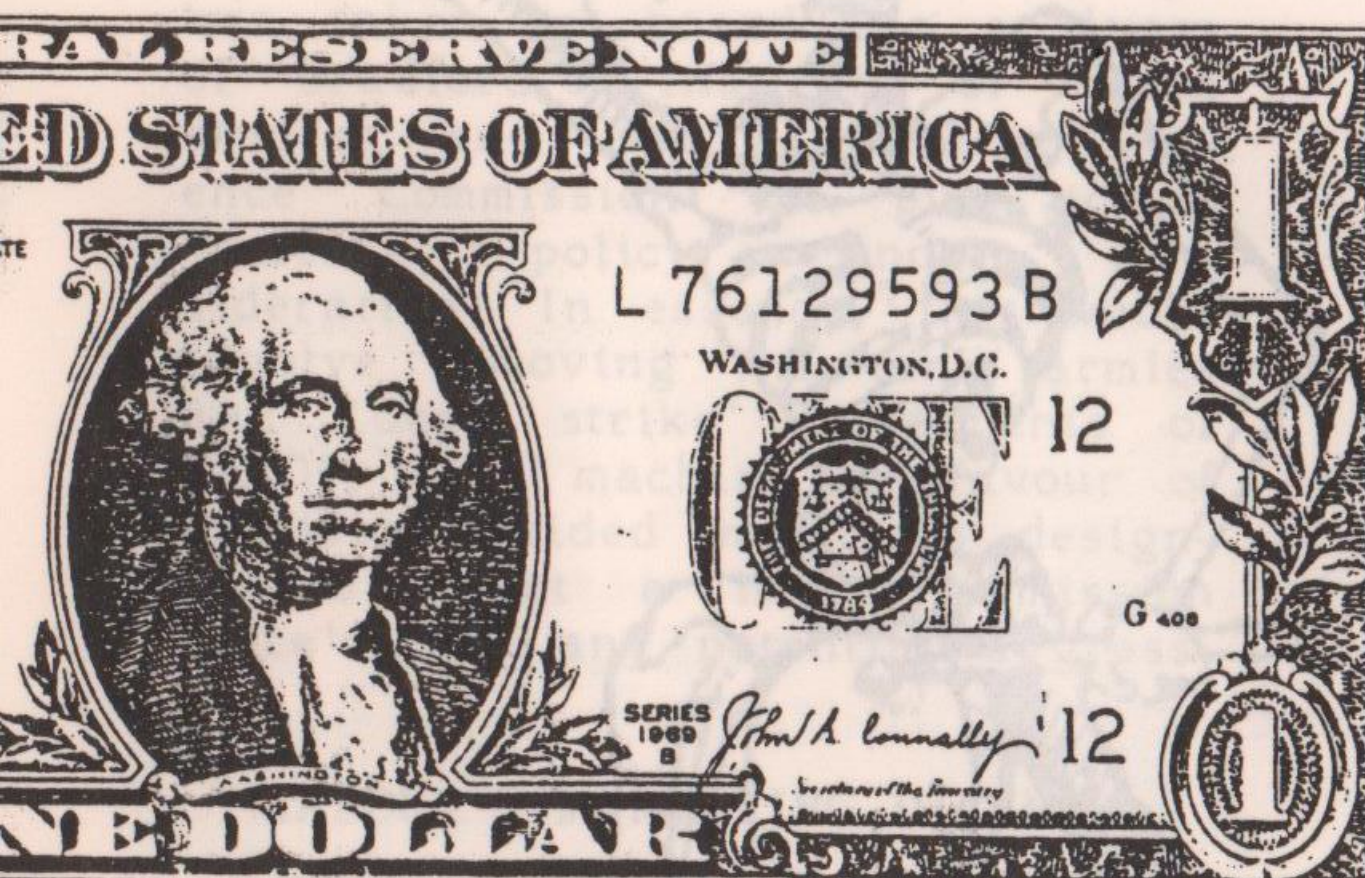
A spokeswoman at Barking said Crothall's performance and the possibility of returning to an in-house tender would be discussed early in March and a decision reached.

The mass picket on the following day found the strikers cautiously optimistic, delighted that at last some doubt over Crothall's credibility had been expressed, but disappointed at having to wait another month for the R.H.A. to see what is apparent to everyone else. Care, not profit must be the only maxim for the NHS.

NEW DISINFECTANT

Have you ever wondered why the sell-by date on 'fruit' squashes is so far ahead? Dr Michael Gracey, a medical researcher in Perth, Australia, has discovered that whatever they put in it is a powerful disinfectant.

He was surprised to find that a little fruit squash added to infected water will kill salmonella or e coli bacteria in half an hour.



Some renewables - solar and biomass (energy crops) for example - can be best exploited locally on a small to medium scale. 20,000 solar units have already been installed. We could possibly obtain 10% of our energy in this way.

Small to medium scale wind turbines delivering energy directly to local users (eg farms) could supply perhaps another 10%.

FUTURE ROCK

1985. Are we entering a post-science fiction future? At the beginning of the year there was much debate about how closely Orwell had predicted the infamous year. The consensus was on the whole blandly reassuring - things were not as bad as had been predicted. Of course that was before the miners' strike...

But what about other visions of the future? For example H G Wells' short story, **THE TIME TRAVELLER**, where people have evolved into two species, those living on the surface and those living permanently underground. Certainly the division of the world into 'haves' and 'have nots' is very apparent and even in a relatively prosperous country like the UK the trend is towards this division, not just in economic terms but also culturally.

Take the Independent Music Charts. Here is a part of the popular culture which exists unknown to those who hear only what is played on daytime radio or seen on tv. In this situation punk can be seen as a continuation of the sixties 'underground', having less and less contact with the visible world of the media as the visions become more extreme. And darker.

Here, we are far from the bright happy sound, the clean shiny appearance of the modern popsters. Just as the factories of the M4 corridor contrast with the dereliction of the redundant regions, so the musics clash. Names like Test Department, Cabaret Voltaire and Psychic TV are becoming more familiar, though they are just the tip of the heap. Gothic punk, hardcore, heavy metal, industrial music; 57 varieties on the same theme: No Future.

From skulls and crucifixes to machines and factories, the images derive from a 'Morlock' existence. It is hardly surprising to note that these various very different styles have all emerged since 1979. They function as the shadow side of the contemporary myths of magazines such as *The Face* and the 'young fogeys'.

The popular culture of an age reveals as much about that age as any erudite socio-economic analysis. Our schizoid culture reflects itself in the dressing room mirror, so many Dorian Greys veiling themselves in video illusions. Acceptable as 'art', but too often taken for 'truth'. For illustration, compare two recent pop videos, both by contemporary, clean, 'boy next door' groups - Wham! and Duran Duran.

First there is '**LAST CHRISTMAS**', a touching tale of a skiing holiday romance. Boy meets girl, girl goes off with boy, though with the slight tinge of melancholy - she goes off with the wrong boy - all strung together with lots of shots of snow, christmas trees, happy faces and sad faces. Glamorous, yet not too far from the lives of today's comfortable kids, the ones who have nice jobs or working parents, the kind of young people Wham! are themselves.

Cut to '**WILD BOYS**'. The very title hints at the work of William Burroughs, the video is a similar eruption of ... what? The darker aspects of pop, of the UK in 1984. The song is based on the title chanted over and over, the video (£250,000 for three minutes, the most expensive to date) a surreal mixture of both William and Edgar Rice Burroughs - fire breathing young men spinning through the air, a windmill/cross plunging a victim into a pool of water...the idea was to create a link with the trashy sf film *Barbarella* from which the group took their name, yet there is nothing of the humour left in this 80's rendition.

It is as if the mask has fallen from the pretty pop star image and something much less pleasant is revealed. Pop music/videos are inane and bland since, should the pop stars stray from the straight and narrow, the ugly truth of life in the 80's lunges out of the mirror like the creature in the movie '*Alien*'. And who wants to be reminded of the truth? Despite spending so much on the video, the 'Wild Boys' single was not particularly successful compared with other Duran Duran records.



FUTURE ROCK

There is a disturbing inversion here. The images of 'realism' are gradually exposed. Which is phantasy and which reality? The fantastic images of Wild Boys are more truthful than the idealised Xmas of Wham!. The work of author JG Ballard is classified as 'science fiction', yet his landscapes are those of the world the majority of people live in. In the 'third world' the apocalypse is not a future probability but an experience now. The summing up of 1984, whilst not expressed by a boot tramping on a face, certainly came close to a truncheon beating a head.

The connection between the easy lifestyle of the West and the poverty of the rest is revealed whenever the narrow boundaries of 'consensus' are breached. The politics of 'Thatcherism' are one expression of this. There are many people who are quite happy to let others suffer so they may enjoy the fruits of their 'labour'.

No doubt some will persist in their illusions till the final flicker of their tv screens indicates the end. If 1984 achieved anything, it was to reveal that 'liberal democracy' is but one of the illusions, to be discarded should it interfere with the interests of the state or 'market forces'.

Or is the future best illustrated by the adventures of Robin Pitt, former tory politician, now living on Garbhe Illeach? This is a tiny island on the west coast of Scotland where he lives in a turf, thatch and stone hut with no mod cons. It makes life in Hackney on £1,000 (see *Traces* 3) seem almost decadent.

Perhaps his lifestyle will catch on with other politicians, transforming the Western Isles into a balmy paradise with all their hard work and hot air. And the Palace of Westminster could be converted into a Disneyland...
Alaistair Livingstone

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

A fantastic interlude, by IVOR MORGAN

Shortly before his recent unexpected and tragic death, I carried out an interview with the eminent social theorist Max Moor, and asked him to clarify some of the major arguments in his renowned demolition of Marx, *The Domination of Capital under Post-Capitalism*.

Max, to be quite candid, could be at times a rather prickly personality. Simplistic popularisation of his ideas was anathema to him. Even the thought of being interviewed by someone without a doctorate in philosophy, who could not speak at least ten languages, made him initially suspicious and ill at ease. But I came well armed with his favourite French brandy and Dutch cigars, and after a hesitant beginning he was soon taking me on a leisurely conducted tour around the temple of his thought, illuminating obscure concepts with humorous asides and vivid personal anecdotes.

Readers of Max Moor's definitive works will recall that he was probably the first theorist to expose the fact that Marx's view of the revolutionary potential of the working class was grounded not in empirical investigation, but in philosophical speculation. It was in an article published in the pages of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in the autumn of 1842 that the founder of modern communism first spoke of 'a propertyless class' whose problems 'cry out to heaven in Manchester, Paris and Lyons.' Yet at this time Marx's actual understanding of the real conditions of working class life was effectively non-existent. His first meetings with authentic proletarians in Paris still lay in front of him, as did the information he would glean from Engels about the Manchester working class.

Max confessed some satisfaction in having recognised this soft under-belly which lay beneath the hard shell of Marx's political economy. Marx's concept of a revolutionary proletariat was in Max's celebrated phrase 'pock-marked with metaphysics.' But the workers of the real capitalist world were like pygmies in a promethean drama, never able to reach up to the epic

historical heights that the young Marx had scripted for them.

Twilight was now settling around the grounds of Max's charming manor house, set deep within the rolling Nottinghamshire countryside of the Dukeries. I glimpsed a pheasant scurrying across the lawns, a few birds bathed in the fountains. Congratulating me on my choice of brandy, Max's earlier remote and rather icy scholastic manner began to melt away, and a passionate earthiness began to take hold of him.

To my complete astonishment Max Moor then suddenly threw off his coat, unbuttoned his silk shirt, and revealed a vivid tattoo of a Welsh dragon on his chest. 'What really got under my skin about Marx and Engels,' he thundered with echoes of his old Pontypool accent giving a Burtonian resonance, 'was when they spoke of the Welsh and slavs as being "dwarfs of people."'

The interview was proving to be far more productive than I had anticipated. My heart sank, however, when noisy disturbances suddenly broke out in the grounds of the estate. The butler entered the room to inform us that ugly scenes had occurred in the neighboring pit village, with fighting between pickets and working miners. Assisted by the police, the working miners had got the upper hand, and had gone on to the offensive. The word had somehow got around that Max Moor was a marxist professor in the pay of the KGB, who had made rooms in his manor house available for striking miners and their families! Despite being repeatedly told that Max was very much an anti-marxist, and a regular contributor to the once CIA-funded *Encounter* journal (scornfully dismissed as a leftist erotic magazine by the militant anti-militants) threats continued to be made that Max's house would be burnt to the ground if he did not return to Moscow. What political irony!

All this tense excitement had interrupted the smooth flow of our brandy, and we resumed the interview in a

rather more sombre mood. The current industrial dispute in the mining industry was itself of some tangential relevance to Max's classic critique of the concept of class in Marx's writings, and I pressed him to outline his thoughts on this theme. He explained that the internal divisions among the miners were symptomatic of fundamental weaknesses in the marxist problematic. Fragmented along status, ethnic, sexual, and cultural lines, and exposed to ideological manipulation by an increasingly effective communications complex, the proletariat remains inherently incapable of sustaining an independent political hegemony.

Dusk had come and we adjourned to the candle-lit balcony for coffee and a few concluding words. The power cuts brought about by the forty week old miners strike were now very rigorously enforced, and the ink-black darkness around us conveyed a mysterious sense of foreboding and sinister intent.

I thought I would at last try to tackle Max on the question of false consciousness, but as I turned to engage him on this topical theme a brick was hurled from the grounds below. Shadowy figures ran off calling back: 'Communist egg-head, go and aid and abet strikers in Albania!' Max lay shaken and ashen white on the balcony floor, and as the world of letters now knows to its cost he died in hospital a week later.

Before he lost consciousness for the last time, Max beckoned me over to his bed-side. He spoke his last words about marx, the thinker with whom he had spent so much of his life in intellectual combat. Posterity demands that I now make them public. 'My theoretical demolition of the man was faultless', he whispered, 'but I always had a secret fear...' Lifting himself up, he held onto the lapel of my collar. 'I feared that some dark night Marx's ace card - the clash between capital and labour - would suddenly come hurtling toward me and my library, like a bolt from the blue.'



UNDEREXPOSED IN AFGHANISTAN

Photographer JAMES KENT was recently in Afghanistan where the muslim mujaheddin are at war with the Russian-backed government. In this exclusive article he gives a graphic account of why the war has not had more publicity.

IN LONDON a telephone call was in progress. Back in Afghanistan the Russians were busy bombing.

Within weeks an international photojournalist of little repute grabbed his battered Pentaxes, and flew baggage class to Pakistan. Avoiding the tedious two hour internal flight, I enjoyed forty-eight hours on a small wooden seat. When the train finally expired I was in Peshawar, on the North West frontier.

SOME DAYS LATER, with a rucksack full of film and a camera bag full of diarrhoea pills, my truck was winding its way through the Hindu Kush. My name was now Hassan Nuristani.

'Nice and Easy' hair (by clairol) straggled from beneath my turban, along with small streaks of black dye. Above my head was a ten day jail sentence. The borderlands are tribal territory, and 'foreni' are not allowed.

The last police check miraculously cleared, only four thousand feet separated me from Afghanistan.

AIMING FOR THE civilian angle, I had stressed priority for burnt out villages, refugees and general destruction. The small contributions that get into the UK media are generally of the 'Mujaheddin fight Russians with geriatric rifles' genre. Not only do they romanticise a grim and dirty war, they obscure a vital part of the destruction it causes to any form of life.

I WAS IN the company of nine mujaheddin (who preferred to be called 'mountain tigers') and an interpreter. Our lorry set off at a disturbing pace. Scattering stones, we stormed full speed ahead past fleeing refugees. Chickens, children and anything else possible was strapped on the backs of all-suffering Bactrian camels.

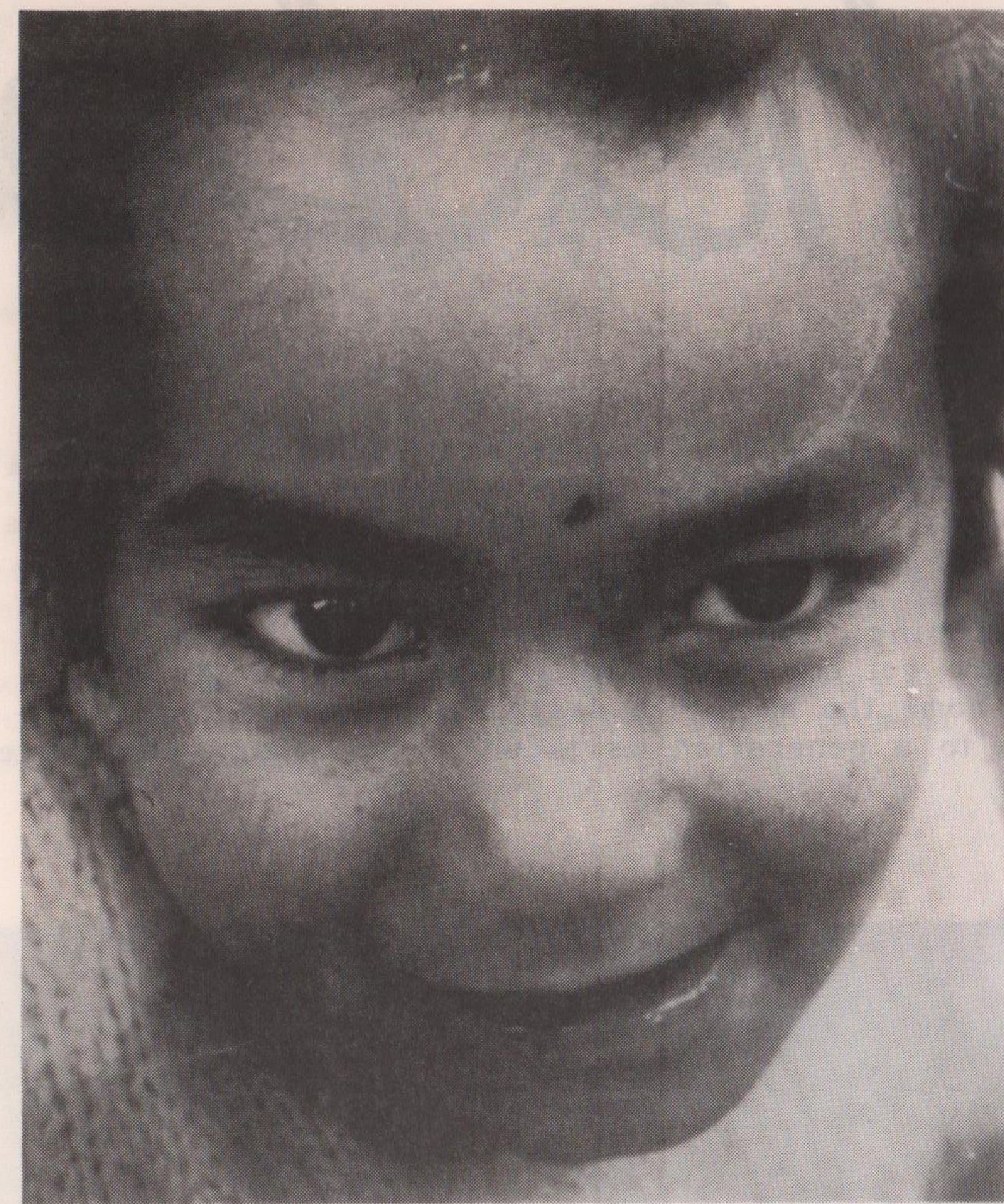
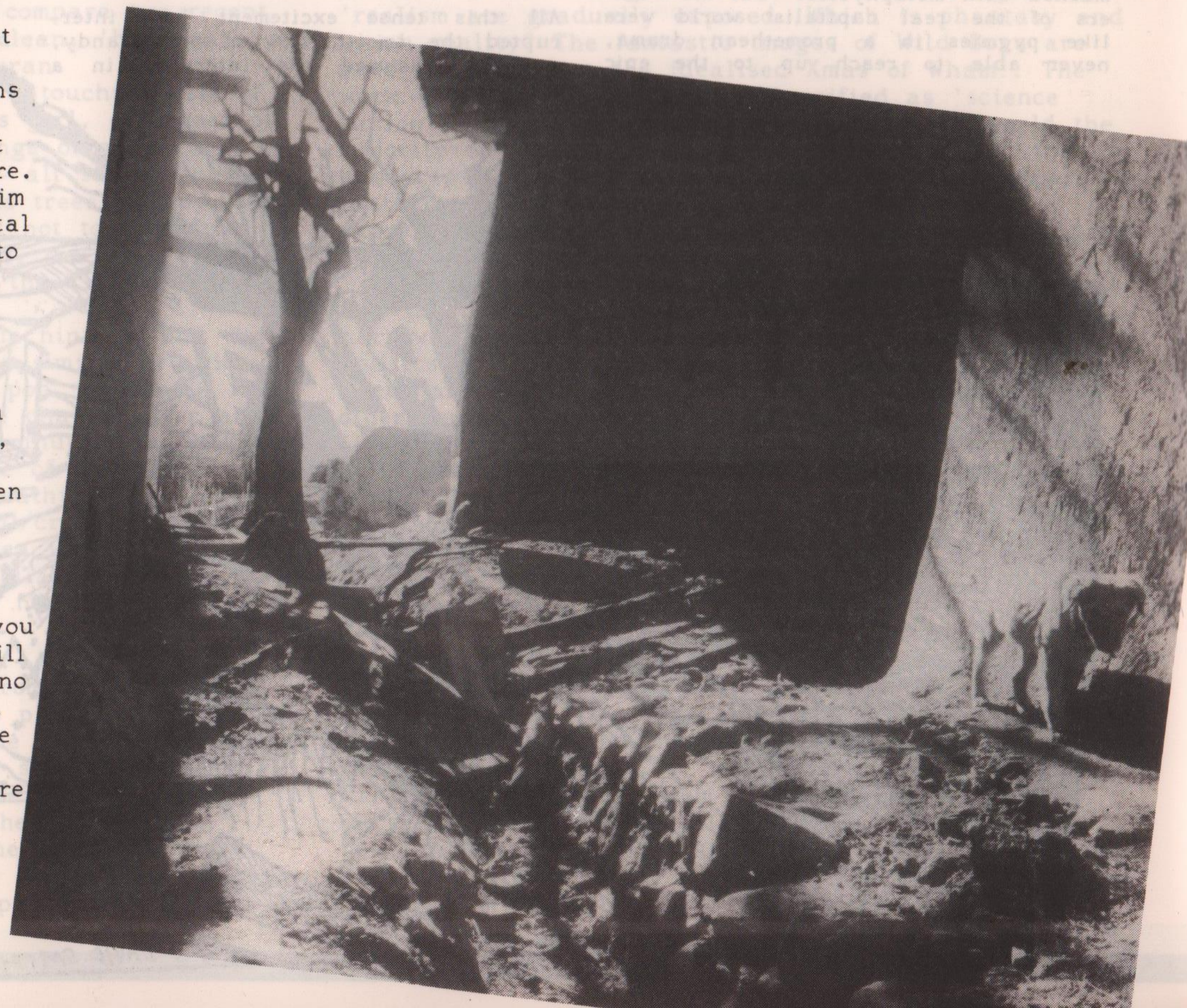
I started to take photographs. 'It's OK,' said my interpreter, 'you may stop the photograph, there will be more later...besides, there is no pictures of the ladies'. Of course. Tradition and religion prohibit the photographing of women in many countries. But this is war, is there no difference, I asked.

No. As refugees usually contain a large proportion of women and children, a major set of pictures stumbled past.

DOWN IN THE VALLEY two migs rocketed refugees and photographer alike. The only other English speaking mujaheddin was blown apart and his mate, holding my camera bag, lost his hand. I hugged closer to a tree, shrapnel was ripping it to pieces. In the interval we ran for better cover.

Children were pulled out from inadequate bushes, many were bleeding. I got a picture as we disappeared down a gully. It was ninety percent dust. The screech of another rocket leaving its tube caused photographer and camera to be one with the ground. An orange filter stayed behind in small pieces.

AS WE GOT FURTHER away the bombing stopped. I asked to go back, but of course this was not possible. I was beginning to get the hang of things now, and tried to keep off the irrelevant subject of my job.



...A SCRAWNY CAT LAY ASLEEP ON AN UNEXPLODED BOMB...

'There will be many martyred', explained my interpreter by way of explanation, 'and it is not safe to photograph the body'. How come, I ignorantly enquired. 'The mujaheddin may kill you'. With refugees and the dead out of bounds, what else had a war to offer? I argued my case until well into the night and my increasingly condescending interpreter promised that all would be well on the morrow.

THE NEXT DAY, unmolested by anything from the skies, we marched in and out of still-burning desolate villages. Eleven days of bombing had destroyed everything and added unexploded bombs to the winter wheat. Bloated animals lay around, and the makeshift graves of the martyred. None were worth photographing, I was told, reprimanded for stopping a blurred hundred and twenty-fifth of a second to get a bum picture.

Later we stopped in a particularly demolished village. I started to wander in search of pictures. There it was almost straight away. A scrawny cat lay asleep on an unexploded bomb. I slowly positioned myself and was squeezing the button when ...

'Hassan!... Hassan!' The cat bolted and I over exposed the sky. 'Come this way I have a good picture for you.' I looked around and found some mujaheddin gleefully climbing aboard a burnt-out tank.

Oh, you're too fucking kind, just what I need, the seventeenth mujaheddin on a tank shot. There I was wasting my time on a silly western arty shot, the editor is going to give me a spinning top for this picture. That's it, say cheese, I'll just get the sun behind me, good, good, click.

AFTER THIS INCIDENT, the day dragged on unpictorially. I shouted and cajoled and finally gave up. Things were getting strained, and they began telling me about journalists and infiltrators. Westerners who had gone to the Russians with photos of mujaheddin camps. Having had an offer before we left to go deep into Afghanistan with a doctor, I suggested we head out.

'Hassan... Hassan... Stop!' I continued walking, there was no tank in sight so why stop. A hand pulled me to a halt. Right, that's it, I thought. One flat nose, and perhaps one dead journalist. 'The wires...' The interpreter pointed urgently. After a few seconds of squinting, I saw them, two thin parallel wires. One in front of my eyes and one two inches from my toes. I felt soft and vulnerable. As we retreated I fixed a telephoto lens, and was ready for a close-up.

After a few shots the Kalashnikov rifle did its job. I was thrown to the ground and the Mujaheddin rolled over nearly shooting his mate's head off. It was time to change lenses. Rocks and earth started pelting us, filling the camera with dirt in the process. My next shot was twenty-eight millimetres of black smoke.

...THINGS WERE GETTING STRAINED, AND THEY BEGAN TELLING ME ABOUT JOURNALISTS AND INFILTRATORS...



MANY WALKING HOURS later, I was extremely happy to photograph the twenty-third mujaheddin in a bomb hole shot as Pakistan lay five feet behind them.

My fiasco differs only in its brevity to those repeated by other journalists and photographers. The failure of Afghans to appreciate that photographers need time, independence, and exposure to action, has led to a cliched coverage and a loss of interest in the west.

The suffering of refugees from disease, starvation and the loss of their homes, continues to lack the world attention it deserves. Attitudes and even traditions - such as the ban on photographing women - must change considerably if the media is to present Afghanistan as it really is.

Inside the body of a giant

El Jadida, 10.00pm. 'You want a hotel? Sorry all hotels are complet, but try the Merhaba' (arabic for welcome). 'It is the best hotel in El Jedida.'

'How much?'

'I don't know, 100 dirhams, 150 maybe.' 10 Dirhams is one pound.

We are with two Belgians who still have airport baggage labels on their rucksacks, looking like someone sent them in the post. Anyway they have a destination and it's the hotel Merhaba. We say our goodbyes and set off on the first of many circular tours, in towns late at night, looking for places to stay.

The promenade's packed with people, moving in both directions along the front. Drifting along with them for a while is a strange experience. There is a feeling of warmth, like being inside the body of a giant, and yet also one of anonymity, amongst thousands of corpuscles drifting to their appointed ends. The tour brings us to someone's spare room, a few yards from where we got off the bus, and it's only 30Dh including the walk. Tomorrow, says our host, we must get up at six so that we can get a seat on the bus.

Actually the bus doesn't go until 9 o'clock and they don't sell tickets until the office opens at 8. So we go off for coffee and croissants, and a look at the beach.

This morning there is no resemblance to the scene of the previous night; no crowds, no lights, just a few people on their way to work, and the unmistakable smell of shit coming from a toilet near the beach. Tonight the pageant will return.

I'd better explain about the buses in Morocco. A European traveller who doesn't speak French very well is easily seen to be in need of some help. And Moroccans can be very helpful people.

Someone will usually offer to get you a seat by pushing through the throng of people surrounding the ticket window, expecting a 5Dh tip when the fare might only be 15Dh to begin with. This would still be alright but the queue is not a queue at all. People just crowd around the window, until someone says the bus has arrived when they all rush across the square and begin fighting to get on. Meanwhile your would-be ticket tout is talking to a friend and you're feeling a bit stupid still holding the sunglasses he's pushed into your hands as a token of trust.

But this time we manage to buy tickets. 'Nine o'clock, ok?'

'No, get on, it's going now!'

FUNSPeak

Qualidia. This is a small place south of El Jedida. It's cafes are very informal, all the cooking is done out on the pavement, over charcoal fanned by a boy waving a piece of cardboard. At one end of town is the weekly market area, or souk. It sells fruit, vegetables, meat and fish, together with the sort of first generation western trash which is now familiar everywhere in the known world. But they don't have anything for Morocco's emerging bourgeois trendies, the water-ski-surfboard-walkman people, who get some of what they desire in the campsite at the other side of town, where the old and poor meets the new and rich.

Advertising was underestimated by Orwell; there is no need for Big Brother, a relentless propagation of Normalspeak and Funspeak emanates from the very acceptable mouth of capitalism, and is eagerly being learned all over the world by the millions anxious to erase their recent poverty. And underneath all the fizz a real indoctrination into the ways of the multi-nationals' empire is taking place quite smoothly.

On the surface it is harmless enough compared to the serious posing that goes on in the Europe of the Nouveau Right. The incongruity of the T-shirts catches this; Mr President, United States of America, Sounds of Summer 1979, Look Around the World. It all seems so charming, under an ever-present sun which somehow got out of the bottle and lives in the sky. Back home the media is desperately trying to sell youth to a generation as jaded as the admen themselves



On the way down to the camping is a decrepit travelling funfair, stranded well above the high water, doing its best to entice the small children. It has only a few sideshows and a genuine wall of death, a giant oil drum where you climb to the top and wait while the rider gets ready for the next of his short journeys on a little two-stroke bike. Best of all is the hoop-la; half a dozen ducks and geese in a tin bath of water. If you get a hoop over a head you can take it home, but more difficult than it looked because they imagine you are feeding them and try to catch the hoop.

Walking back from the beach against a tide of people going back to the camping. It's very dark and the cars drive slowly, which is fortunate since most of them don't have lights. In between the passing of a vehicle the only sound is people talking, hundreds of them as they walk along in small groups. An experience so rare to those who live in cities. Crowds without machinery would be a real shock in most countries nowadays.

BACK TO THE SIXTIES

Essaouira is larger and has miles of beautiful beaches, some very atmospheric pensions, and the best cake shop we found on the whole trip. It's one of the towns favored by hippies in the sixties and in the restaurants you can still hear old tapes by the Doors and JJ Cale.

Tarazoute. A few miles north of Agadir. Tiny, but has about five cafes where the atmosphere is even more laid back and herb scented than Essaouira. In August huge numbers of Moroccans descend, and there is no chance of finding a bed. We slept on a mat on someone's floor, sharing the windowless, earth-filled room with just one inquisitive cockroach. On the beach the lack of facilities means that people use the rocks to gut fish and to shit behind. The effect is a plague of flies which settles over anything edible, even while you are in the act of putting food in your mouth. It still has its charms, especially in the cafes at night, but its better not to sit on the rocks when you watch the sun go down.

MADAME GIPOLU

Taroudant. A fair-sized town, south of the Atlas mountains, inland from Agadir and off the tourist route. The black-covered figures of the women flit silently about in the souk with the atmosphere of the cathedral scenes in Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible. It is surrounded by desert on all sides.

From here there is a road over the mountains to Marakesh, and one place you must stop is the Hotel Alpina. The village is called Idni but its known to everybody on the buses as the Hotel, with its proprietor Madame Gipolou.

In years gone by it must have been a comparatively luxurious place to stay, now its charm is all ramshackle. The electric light fittings are still in place but no current flows in them now. The pipes too are empty and water is brought to your rooms in buckets by the waiter. One is for washing and one is to fill a jug when you go to the outside lavatory.

Madame stayed on after her husband died because she had got to love the place too much to leave. Modern France has no place for her, she says, appearing suddenly shy: 'look at my clothes, j'aime la vie paysan, avec les betes.' We are a long way from the EEC.

At the back of the hotel, she has a huge number of animals, turkeys, chickens, rabbits and a huge flock of about a hundred sheep which are taken out to graze on the hillsides. Although the hotel is at a height of about 10,000 ft the mountains reach up to 15,000 and there are some spectacular walks in the area. A track which starts across the road from the hotel winds for several miles uphill to a village lodged precariously on the banks of a stream. Incredibly even at this height there is a spring and the water is icy cold but sweet-tasting.

Marakesh. Our last stop. Any attempt at a description would be futile. In spite of all the dire warnings we heard about tourists set upon by organised groups of thieves, having rucksacks torn off their backs, etc, it was not such an unnerving experience.

I had the film in my camera taken by a policeman who I had accidentally included in a photograph, but this somehow didn't spoil the trip. I never discovered what his objection was, unless it was the slum area I was photographing. The only explanation I got was that it was 'pour le Dieu'.

More Wind than Cape Horn

RICHARD EDWARDS caught up with ATTILA THE STOCKBROKER at a gig in Ipswich

To describe Attila the Stockbroker as a very talented and extremely likeable bloke would not be doing him justice. Yet with so few talented and likeable people around I think that makes him something special.

His enthusiasm and incessant chatter are infectious and his sense of humour is consistently silly. He displays loyalty to his friends, courage to his enemies and a deep integrity to those who rely on him. The passion and faith of his politics are more than skin deep, they are rooted in his very blood.

If anybody had told me five years ago that I would be moved to tears by a twentieth century folk song backed by a seventeenth century tune I'm sure I would have laughed. Yet Attila's ballads of Thatcher's Britain have a way of stirring your heart until it wants to burst with indignation and revenge. Like I said, he is a talented and likeable bloke.

He is also a fat lump with a receding hairline and a poor taste in both clothes and football teams. His addiction to strong lager and Indian food leave him with more wind than Cape Horn and a gut that hangs just above his knees and could be put to good use in the demolition trade.

His mouth is rarely empty and rarely closed. When he gets excited his face resembles a Liverpool shirt and he totters from one foot to another like a sweaty overweight orang utan which has forgotten its way home. He is obsessed with flat fish, Albania, his own work, and Brighton football club. Given the slightest opportunity he will corner you with a rambling combination of all these subjects, delivered at top speed, with an eyefull of spit, and using constant changes in conversation to put you off your guard and prevent any interruption.

Ever since he and Seething Wells first gate-crashed their way into the 1981 poetry Olympics and the sheltered world of the poetry establishment, Attila has been touring the country, performing what has commonly become known as Ranting Verse to diverse audiences, accompanied by 'Red Ruth' and 'Lusty Lynne' who back him with flute and accordion.



His tale is a long and active one, but worth hearing in abbreviated form. After losing his father when he was ten years old, he went on to get four A levels, and left his native Brighton to pass degrees in French and politics at Kent University.

The arrival of punk awoke a new attitude in him which he put into practice in a band - Brighton Riot Squad - and two fanzines. In 1978 he left to spend a year in Belgium in another band, Contingent. A squatters' riot and police attention forced him to return to this country, and after a short spell in a Harlow gin factory he got a job as a translator in the Stock Exchange.

This he describes as 'the most revealing, depressing, and nauseating year of my life'. It was here that he picked up his name. After an unsuccessful spell in another band he decided to use his new nickname by performing his poems and songs solo on stage.

I followed him to Ipswich where I found him rather croaky, shortly before a Miners' benefit gig with the Newtown Neurotics and the Redskins.

Flounders as big as dustbin lids

...THAT IS WHAT I SEE MYSELF AS, A STROLLING PLAYER, A MODERN TROUBADOR...

Releasing Sawdust and Empire, with its roots firmly in seventeenth century folk music, was taking quite a risk. What has the response been like?

The people who wrote to me or come and talk to me at gigs have been very enthusiastic. Probably because I'd done something different instead of being stuck in a rut. I've always wanted to do a record that would show a completely different side of me, and I've always dreaded being typecast by the press and by the media.

Do you think it was wise to release your last two twelve inch singles, Livingstone Rap (a collaboration that was credited to the Lawlords International) and Radio Rap, so close together, and were you disappointed that they weren't more successful?

It was more of a coincidence that they were released so near each other. I thought Livingstone Rap could have been a cult smash. I was very disappointed with the lack of response it got on the radio, everyone who has heard it has liked it. Except the reviewers in the music press.

What is your relationship with the music press?

There is an element of feeling that it is un-hip to like Attila the Stockbroker, I'm sure half the people who think that have never seen me. But that doesn't worry me as I've always concentrated on building a reputation as a good live performer. I get a lot of coverage on local radio, local papers and fanzines.

For the uninitiated, how do you define Ranting Verse?

Ranting verse is ... if you must, have a label, which I'm opposed to, it's a convenient term for a form of performance poetry which is both accessible and entertaining. Poetry was an oral tradition for five hundred years or more before printing was invented. It was the tradition of the court jesters, the troubadours and minstrels of the middle ages. It was handed down by word of mouth as a form of entertainment, not an over-intellectual form of verbal masturbation. That is what I see myself as, a strolling player, a modern troubador.

Can you see the changes that you've helped to bring about in the last few years lasting?

Yes, definitely. I think we've made people realise that they can write poetry, even though they've never been expected to. What we've been doing has been going on for years really, Hilair Beloc, Jaberwocky, and the poetry traditions in places like Tyneside, Clydeside and Ireland. We've just brought it out into the open.

...THE PROBLEM WITH SOME OF THE LEFT, THEY ARE SO HUMORLESS AND GREY...

How do you react to people who take offence at your poems like Vomit on a Viking or Take a Leak on a Greek, which they might see as insulting or even nationalistic?

I'm not setting myself up as a spokesman, I basically enjoy performing and want to entertain and spread some ideas. I'm certainly not some ideological demagogue who tows the party line. I know that most of my audience are intelligent enough to know that poems like that are tongue in cheek, if people are stupid enough to take them seriously, that's their problem. They can't know anything about me as a person, or listen to anything else that I do, like Awayday or Russians. The problem with some of the left, and being active on the left for some years I know this, they are so humorless and grey. Socialism is about caring for your fellow human beings and creating a better society for everybody. I genuinely do care, love and respect the people around me, I don't feel the need to express that in a series of ideologically sound statements.

As a keen football supporter (Brighton and Hove Albion FC), how do you see the future of the national side, and the sport in general?

I think we've probably got the best team now that we've had since 1966. Hatley is a very good player. The most important thing is that there is a whole new enthusiasm, people seem to actually want to win now. I think football's best days are gone for ever. I can remember when I used to watch Brighton in the seventies at the top of the third division, we used to get 26,000. A couple of years ago we were only getting 19,000 playing the top teams in the first division. Apart from the fact that Thatcher has fucked up everybody's money supply so that people who enjoy football can't afford to go, tv and video mean you can watch it at home. I think the amenities on the grounds could be better as well.



What have you got planned for the future?

I'm organising the second ranters convention, which will be held at the Theatre Royal Stratford in East London. We are going to have about 18 poets performing for between 5-10 minutes each, this will include people like Seething Wells, Joolz, Benjamin Zephaniah, Brian Patten. The Newtown Neurotics will also play for half an hour. In the afternoon we have got a ranters football team playing Jamming magazine in Hyde Park.

Do you enjoy any other sports?

Playing rugby, watching cricket. Sea fishing is my most favourite pastime. It helps me unwind. I once caught a 7lb 4oz wrasse off Penzance which was just short of the British record...

Attila has been on the following records, mostly on Cherry Red: Cocktails, Ranting at the Nation, Sawdust and Empire, Livingstone Rap, Radio Rap. His fanzine Tirane Thrash, is available for 50p+sae from 161 Spencer's Croft, Harlow, Essex CM18 6JR.

I have poetic licence i Write thE way i waNt

...and everybody told me that I am equal and they care,
and then I learned the reason it was anti-racist year...

Let me introduce myself, Hail I Benjamin Zephaniah
i lack big words and fancy talk but
i have poetic licence
and i am willing to fight in the
right army.
(from 'Introducing High')

A WET Sunday afternoon in London
E6. I stand on the doorstep listen-
ing to reggae rhythms reverberating
from below, and hope to God
someone soon answers my hammering
on the door because it's cold out
here.

Just inside, with the bikes, is a
handwritten notice on the wall,
reading:
Please take off thy shoes
For the place where thou stand
is a dreadful ground
RASTAFARI

TAKING a break from rehearsing
with his band, Benjamin Zephaniah
pulls up a chair to chat about the
world and his place in it. 'The
Bard of Stratford', he's called, and
a late 82 NME article marking the
fact sits framed on a corner table
in the poet's front room. There's a
GLC sticker on the tv and Haile
Selassie resides over the fireplace.

The 'bard' smiles often as he
speaks, embarrassed almost that
anyone should wish to interview

him. 'When I first started to get
into the hands of the press', he
says, 'people used to think I was
some kind of mystic, you know.
Some kind of a great thinker!'

'Personally,' he continues, 'I'll
use anything I can to express
myself. That happens to be a bit
of writing, a bit of music and
poetry, a bit of poetry on its own.
Some work in the community as well.
That's one thing that I think I
have to do.'

The poems are bluntly under-
standable, overtly political,
'straight to the point' as he puts
it. But Benjamin is also proud that
people dance to its rhythmic reggae
beat, even without the band of
musicians behind it.

IT WAS as a 13-year old Handsworth
kid that he began toasting, rapping
and rhyming, off the top of his
head, 14 years ago. 'We used to
listen to a lot of Jamaican music
then,' he explains, and he used to
put 'an English slant' on it. 'There
was a power cut one day and I just
carried on without the music!' Later
he began ranting on demonstrations
and, in 1980, a pamphlet of 40
poems, 'Pen Rhythm', was
published. From there, 'everything
took off'.

Traditional poetry and prose that
he'd seen skirted around its subject
matter, beguiling readers.
Benjamin's hard-hitting political
content propelled him to the fore at
a time when Thatcher's popularity
was at its lowest - between the
riots of 81 and the Falklands war
of 82.

Chiefly the message is: take
control of your own life. Don't
leave it to the politicians. 'I smile
because this sounds like an
anarchist view,' he says a little
apologetically, 'but I tell people
should realise that they don't
necessarily have to vote. We always
seem to have a bit of faith in the
political parties. People should
make a protest.'

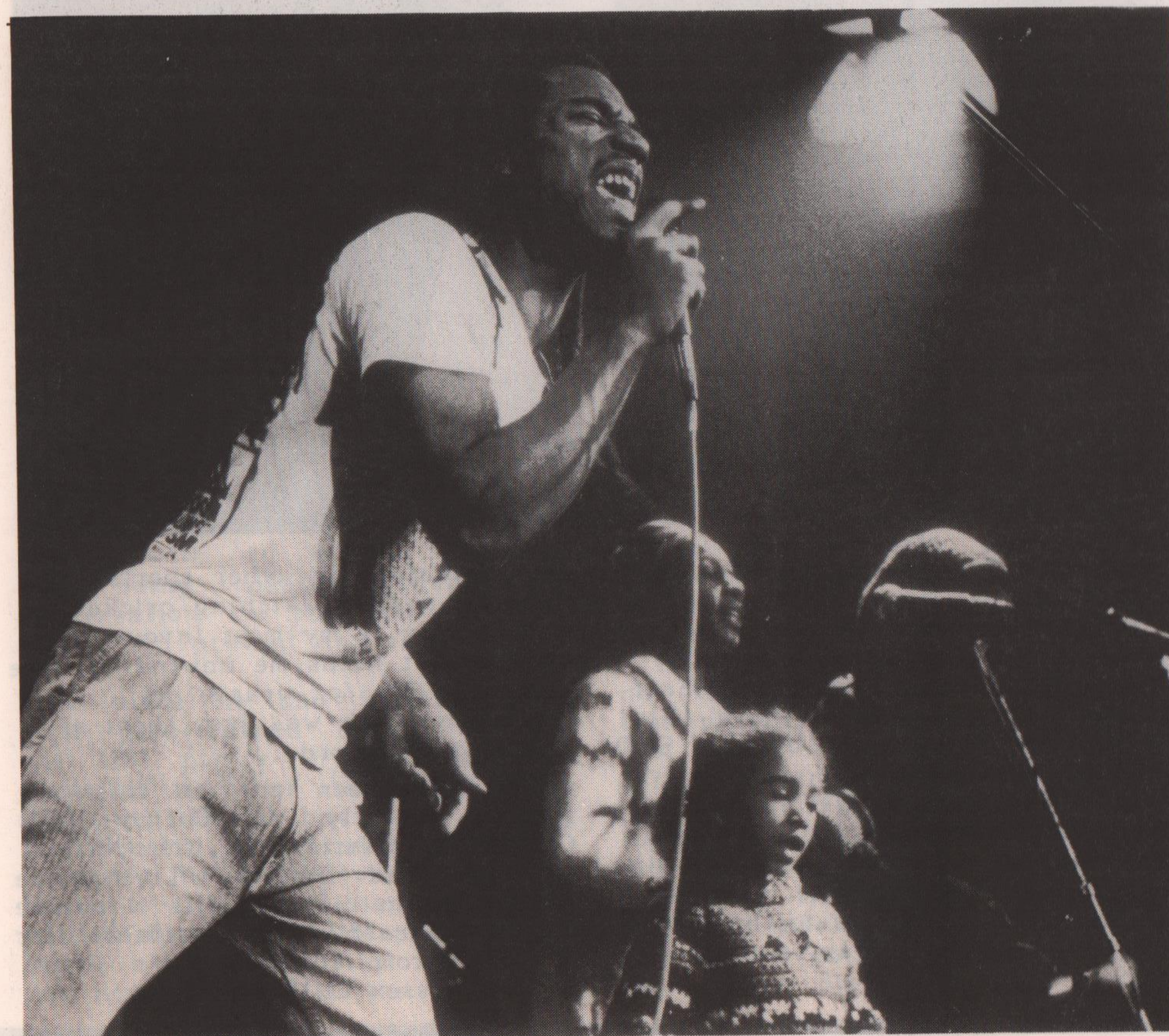
Peace, he believes, is every-
body's wish, and he supports CND.
Paul McCartney's video for Pipes of
Peace was 'great'. One ambition is
to appear, admittedly amongst what
he classes rubbish on Top of the
Pops singing Stop the War. 'Then',
he says with relish, 'I can turn
round to the government and say:
Look how many people are buying
that. Look how many people are
agreeing with what I am saying'.

His appearance on tv shows like
Riverside, Black on Black,
Razzmatazz, and a Channel 4
documentary, he says, hiding his
face, are those where he can
exercise complete control over his
work. As to where he appears, 'I'm
not choosy at all really. I exploit
showbusiness to say what I'm
saying. Anywhere I can go, I'll
just go in there.'

People want peace, 'governments
go to war,' he adds emphatically,
and launches into a poem:
Stop the war stop the war
Military powers we know who you
are
All your allies have guiltiness
and the people don't want no
nuclear mess.'

STRAINS OF the female vocal 'We
don't want no more war' waft up
from the basement under our feet.
More co-ops would be a way of
exercising more control, he
suggests. The house we're talking
in is shared with musicians in the
Benjamin Zephaniah band, and is
run co-operatively - from builders
to baby-sitters. 'In India where the
government's conservative, you still
get people at the grass roots with
a whole little economy of their
own.'

BENJAMIN



Dear Traces

London SW 12

Dear Traces,

Thanks for selling me a copy of
Traces at Glastonbury. I'm not sure
about the title, but the contents are
excellent.

I don't think Green CND will be the
one to inspire your 'Green Expl-
osion' as they are too undefined,
ie: they don't actually exist. They
are just any group of people who
are in CND who can see the sense of
maintaining a healthy environment.
Surely Greenpeace has got to be the
ringleader due to their wider app-
earance?

Something missing in the music
scene? The independent labels are
not the new movement, but only a
vehicle. Too much importance is
being placed on them.

I like your views.

Love,
Geoffrey Cox.

Dear Traces

Managua, Nicaragua.

Dear Traces

Well I'm here! How can I describe
the place? Can you imagine a city
like Bethnal Green and Stepney with
the odd nice house multiplied by a
factor of ten. As you can imagine,
after the 1972 earthquake, getting
around demands concentration and
perseverance. Directions like "across
the street, second left, walk 2 1/2
blocks to the remains of the medical
school, and then diagonally across
the open field to the Barber's shop,
past the bombed out church..." And
there don't seem to be any postmen!

There are a surprising number of
foreigners here, ie: those with non-
latin faces, usually combined with
a ketchup-red complexion. Over 2000
Americans, usually involved in
socio-economic/religious organis-
ations. They're all trying to do
their bit to help and counteract the
White House propaganda. There are
about 2500 Cubans - 1000 of them
teachers, over 100 doctors, and the
rest are technicians and agricul-
tural experts.

Dear Traces

The Green Collective,
Huntingdon

Dear Traces,

It looks like you have an ambitious
project and I wish you all the best
with it.

Among the projects we have planned
for 1985 is an International Green
gathering at Molesworth airbase,
beginning on August 9th and having
no finishing date; and a new group
called 'Greenbase' to act as a
computer resource centre for green
networking, word processing etc.

A Green Roadshow will travel round
the country visiting fairs, demon-
strations etc with a cafe, kids bus,
theatre, workshops, healing etc.
Please let readers know that they
can contact us though you.

Love and Peace, David Taylor.

Dear Traces

There are about 800 western euro-
peans, mainly Danes, Germans,
Swedes and Dutch. The English
number less than 50, 15 of whom
are journalists.

Despite what is written in the press
in Britain, here in Managua things
are calm, almost too relaxed.
There's a massive mobilization of
reservists, but the tension has
gone. Of course Managua is insu-
lated from the war, it's all happ-
ening on the atlantic coast.

Dear Traces

c/o 37 Blenheim Ct.
Marlborough Rd,
London NW9
4HR

In every town, district and village,
people are sacrificing time, money
and effort in safeguarding their
sovereignty. Civil defence shelters
and trenches have been dug or re-
dug. In the case of ones made
after the American invasion of
Grenada, concrete blocks, paving
stones, sheets of metal... anything
... have been stockpiled on every
street corner, should it be neces-
sary to make barricades.

All this mobilization has caused
considerable disruption - so the
already complex bureaucracy has
become more difficult, meaning that
a man who runs a vehicle break-
down service who needs new tyres
for his truck, has to go through a
lengthy and infuriating process
before he is allocated with new
tyres. "I know it's because of the
war ... I don't complain, I know
it's not the government's fault ...
but what can I do?"

By the way, they have wonderful
cigarettes here that at first glance
appear to be normal B&H or Malbo-
ro, but are stuffed with tobacco
from end to end. Some creative
copywriter has even got round this
by putting "without filtre, to give
greater flavour and satisfaction
than before."

However, it is noticeable that the
one the one thing Reagan's war-
mongering has succeeded in doing is
to reunite all the people of Nic-
aragua against a common enemy.

Bye.
Dominic Martin.

FURLOCK BONES

THE MASTER DETECTIVE

PART 3.

THE STORY SO FAR:
MR ELDERBERRY HAS
EXPLODED AND FLOATED OUT
OF THE WINDOW. BONES AND
WHATSIT ARE IN HOT PURSUIT.
NOW READ ON...

YOU GO AND ALERT
SCOTLAND YARD,
WHATSIT. I'LL
FOLLOW MR
ELDERBERRY!

HE'S MAKING
TOWARDS THE
DOCKS!

THERE HE
GOES! AFTER
HIM!!

HERE HE
COMES!

DEEP IN THE SHIPS HOLD, A
MYSTERIOUS FIGURE IS CACKLING
TO HIMSELF...

HEH! HEH! HEH!
EVERYTHING IS GOING EXACTLY
AS I PLANNED! SOON, FURLOCK
BONES, YOU WILL BE IN MY
POWER! HEH! HEH! HEH!

TO BE CONTINUED.



In 1923 Pravda published an article appealing to artists of all persuasions to join factory unions and help to revive textile designs. The female artists Popova and Stepanova transferred their cubist designs from the canvas to textiles in response to this and revolutionised soviet textile design. Their designs were characterised by boldness, innovation and bright colours. Both artists designed theatrical costumes, brilliantly marrying the design of the textile with the cut of the garment. Their black and white and red and white dresses in the exhibition have a very modern feel about them.

Many textile artists of the period did not use abstract constructivist designs, but replaced the traditional floral designs with figurative symbols which were more popular. There are many examples of these beautiful designs in the exhibition. Their imagery is subtle as it is small and repetitive, eg 'Tractor', illustrated here. The scale of the designs, the modest choice of colour and the freshness all give these materials an innovative quality which is extremely attractive. In fact they demand to be seen!

...WE WILL TURN THE WHOLE WORLD INTO A BLOOMING GARDEN...



...ARTISTS AIMED AT EMBODYING REVOLUTIONARY REBIRTH IN REAL TANGIBLE OBJECTS...



'ART INTO PRODUCTION' is a stunning exhibition of Soviet textiles, fashions and ceramics from the post-revolutionary period 1917-35. It will be at the Crafts Council Gallery, London, until 28th April.

I went to see it at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. The ceramics filled numerous glass cabinets in the large upstairs gallery there. Textiles lined the walls and hung from the sides of the display cases. The fashions were displayed in a separate gallery which also contained porcelain figurines.

THE IMPACT of the exhibition is vibrant and colourful. Some of the ceramics have a delightful floral folk-art quality, others have bare, bold constructivist designs.

As one passes slowly through the exhibits the excitement of unexpectedly discovering a small porcelain plate hand-painted by Kandinsky, a porcelain half cup designed by Malevitch or a flying suit created by Rodchenko, makes this show unique.

But why this quality of the unexpected? Why did so many painters, sculptors, urban planners and graphic artists take up projects in conjunction with industry? The answer lies in the nature of the revolution.

After the October Revolution in 1917, artists adopted Lenin's plan for mass propaganda. Some radically transformed existing techniques in their attempt to create revolutionary agitational art. Artists aimed at embodying political and social commitment and the emotional upheaval of revolutionary rebirth in real tangible objects. Agit-prop trains and steam ships, sculptural monuments, marches festivals, books, posters, textiles, fashions and ceramics all demonstrated the mass agitational tendency in art.

THE IMPERIAL porcelain factory in Petrograd became the state Porcelain Factory, and a new type of Soviet chinaware came into being. White porcelain was hand-painted with dazzling colours representing the revolutionary ways of life. Many of the exhibits bare revolutionary symbols and idealistic messages. The delightful brilliant blue plate with gold lettering by Kobyletskaya of 1920 states 'we will turn the whole world into a blooming garden'.

The slogan for the cultural revolution was 'Art for the Masses'. 'We demand that a plate should fulfil a social function. We demand that the role of everyday objects should not be forgotten by our young specialists and artists', exclaimed the Young Communist League's press in 1928.

IT IS rather a pointless exercise to describe an exhibition that is essentially such a visual delight. This is a unique opportunity to see these remarkable revolutionary exhibits, never before shown outside the Soviet union.

HELEN COXALL

In Benjamin's mind, there is a distinct contrast between the politicians and the police on the one hand, and the people on the other. Recognising a need for the former, he demands an assurance that they are 'Literally next door.' 'Don't remove them from the people.'

'There's one thing I love about China.' He grins. 'Everyone has turns at being the police. I think that's great.' He lays claim to having been a burglar at the age of ten, and was jailed for fighting a police officer at Birmingham's Bull Ring. 'I just did everything that everyone else did', he says casually. All that energy today is channelled into writing.

Sarcasm punctuates his estimate of the riots. 'No big thing'. He shrugs. 'The police and the government have ways of quelling it. They put a Marcus Garvey drive in Brixton and a nice little Wimpy house.' The grin broadens. At the moment, he claims, the police are using picket line duty to brush up their tactics. He supports the miners' strike - a working class struggle for survival. 'They can get back to us later!'

Semi-friendly digs at the GLC's Anti-racist Year go down well with audiences. 'Ken Livingstone and everybody else was on the platform,' he recalls the launch, 'and I said, This is a joke. I haven't sold out by coming here. I'm still going to do my thing and say how I feel. Unfortunately, this is the way people notice the thing.'

Rastafari has altered his attitude to life. 'It allows me to have a look at Buddhism, Christianity, Marxism, everything... One time, I really used to like sports cars, heavy sex, lots of money...'

A Garvey-ite (Marcus Garvey, black prophet, 1887-1940) and about '60% socialist', Benjamin believes people should be working towards creating an Africa which is free, independent and strong. Not a Great Power, however. Black should not be fighting white. 'Let's just be an example to them.'

Speaking of people starving in Ethiopia while others are 'fat from champagne in Nigeria just down the road', he dismisses the Band Aid single as a 'bit of corn and a bit of wheat,' and goes on to recite a different section of Stop the War: They tell I that they want to make the world free.

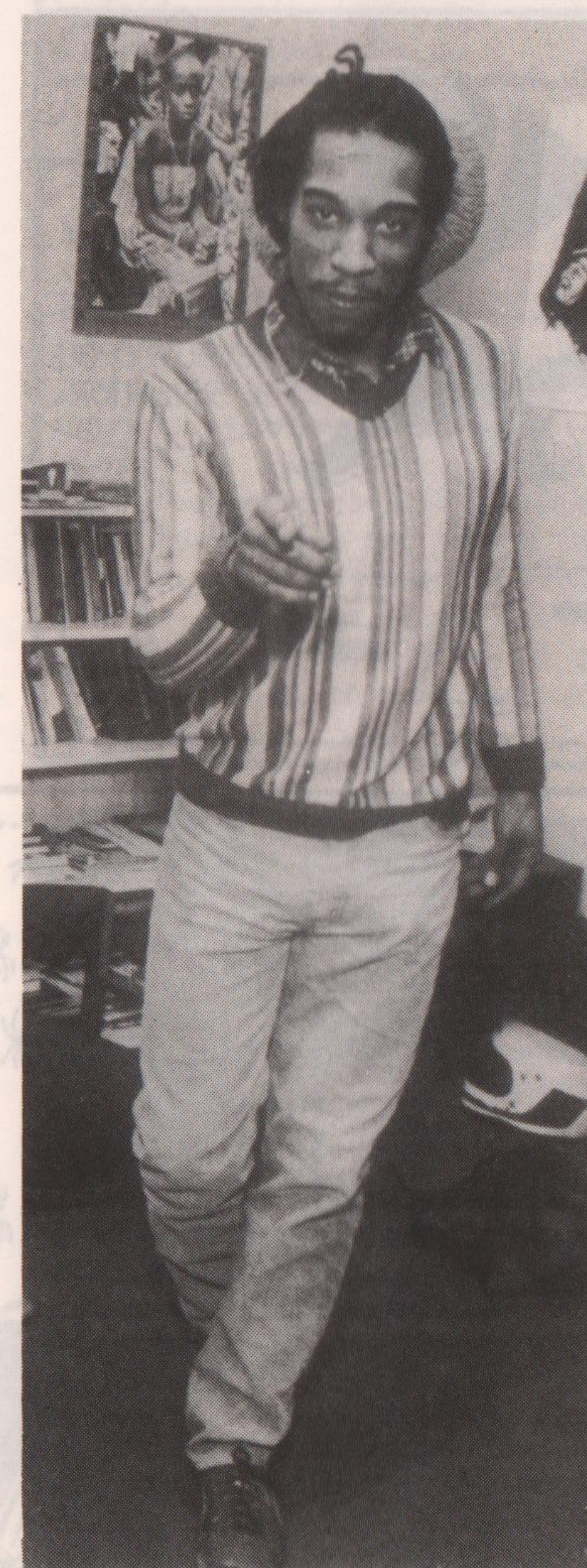
But yet they're just draining the economy, So when dem talk about their food for the famine i shall tell dem it was their war from the beginning and it would not be there if they were willing. No, not if governments were willing. 'Simple as that really.'

The band downstairs up the bass line on Free South Afrika and the City Limits readers' poet of 84 gets back to rehearsals for a forthcoming tour round Europe.

ZEPHANIAH

i Write thE way i waNt
I have poetic licence

...THERE WAS A POWER CUT ONE DAY AND I JUST CARRIED ON WITHOUT THE MUSIC...



There was a so-called drought before the summer was out and the butter mountain grew more, and all the papers said Win a Million in 1984. Another spy was found hanging around number 10 Downing Street and Zola Budd came to Britain with love, a loser on bare feet. Frankie went to Hollywood and told you to relax an American woman was not sure about her income tax Michael Jackson's hair got hot, he's lucky I suppose, I'm sure he had an operation to straighten out that nose. Everybody wore a tee-shirt saying Choose Life De Iraquis and Iranians had another year of strife Ronald Reagan made another comeback on de screen, and if you could not body pop you were not on the scene, Dat was 1984 now it's over what's in store, will the rich get richer and the poor just get poor Will the human being survive in 1985, I ask myself this time next year will we be alive?

Someone just lost a satellite in a outa space the Russians said Fuck de Olympics we don't want to race, People demonstrated to keep the landscape clean the West Indians just walk over the English cricket team, More documentaries were made about famines and wars and a token help was given to the symptom not the cause, and everybody told me that I am equal and they care and then I learned the reason it was anti-racist year, Ian McGregor said I am so clever I've come to keep you trim the miners said 'Cole not Dole' we're not giving in Channel 4 survive another year against de odds the police introduced us to national riot squads, Some man from South Africa came to see our leader everyone with real feeling went to get the bleeder More council flats were rendered uninhabitable and there was not much trouble at the Carnival, That was 1984 it was so sick there was no cure we payed more tax and still cannot see what we're paying for rich people say we made progress, poor people say it was a me: Nothing much was said throughout the year by the press.

The voters of America said, 'We don't want a change, we're getting used to this rubbish a change would be quite strange', Some politicians somewhere passed a brand new Police Bill means random searches any time against your will, Grenada is recovering the Falklands it is well guarded the soldiers said we had orders we had to do what we did, Nicaragua and Namibia are still truly ignored and walking the streets alone sister is a ting you can't afford. If there a 1986 how will the people get their kicks and if we need to build some more where will we get our bricks Last year came and then it ran, It must have been Duran Duran, Britain jumps for joy It's another boy from Charlie and Diana.

1984 by BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY CAROLINE REES

A SUIVRE

Are you a blinkered cultural snob? Do you dismiss the comic as an art form? If you don't, read on. MARTIN SKIDMORE looks at the French comic magazine A Suivre.

My last article, in Traces 3, mentioned in passing that comics are accepted as a perfectly valid art form in much of continental Europe. That seems something which needs explaining at greater length and I'd hope Traces would be a very good place to advocate comics in, say, French as the audience is likely to view a foreign language as less of a barrier than the average person in the street.

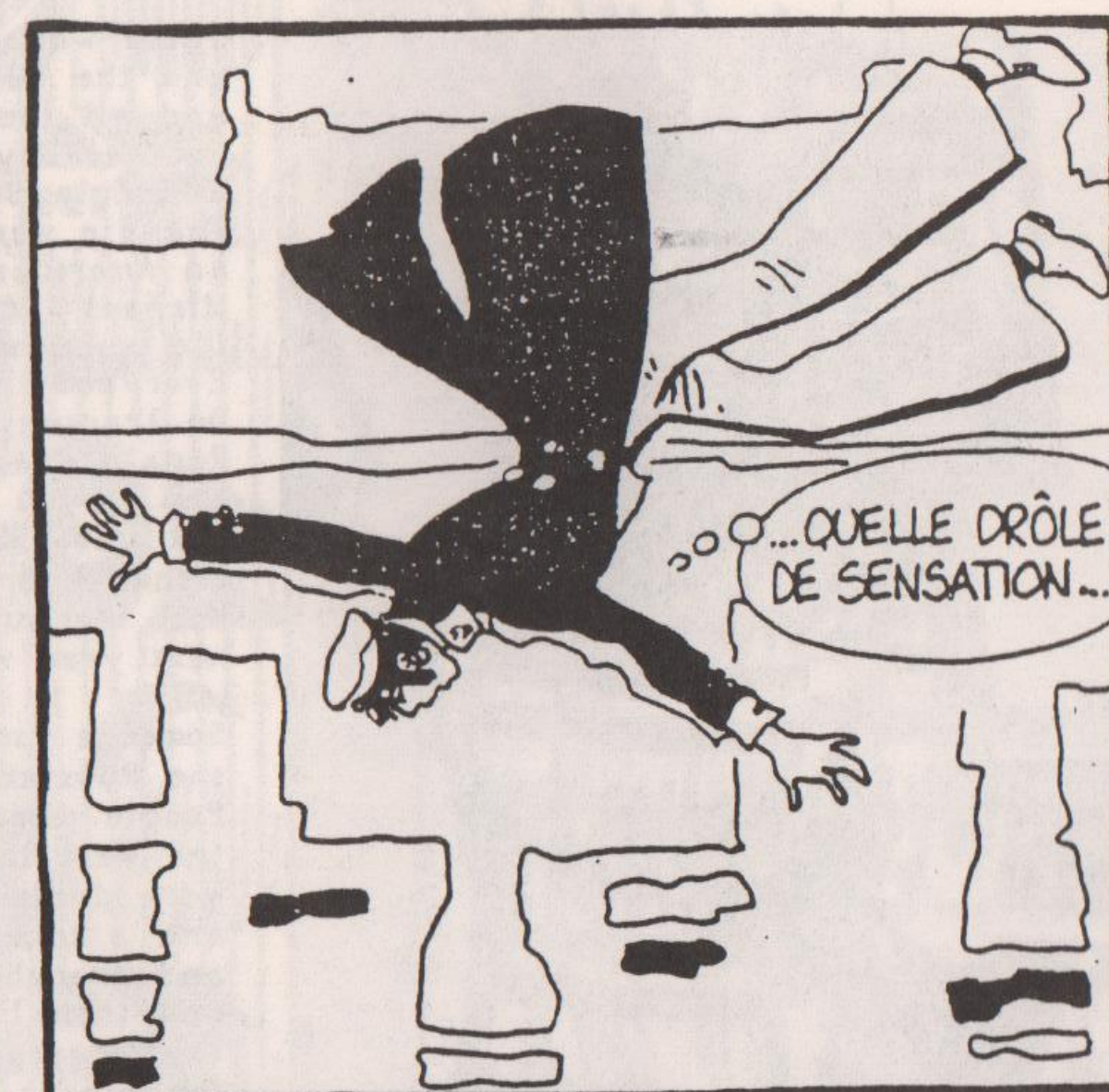
I hope you're not thinking, I've read those Europeans in Heavy Metal, a load of pompous nonsense. It's true I know, but there's a lot more to European comics than tits bums and flashy pseudo-sophisticated sci-fi.

For a start, Heavy Metal's euro equivalent, Metal Hurlant, is considerably better. Not only do the American editors have odd criteria for their choices - when they do select a good strip to reprint, they appear to assign the important role of translation to morons, perhaps to maintain HM's established standards.

The comics market is totally different in Europe. The general pattern is that weekly and monthly magazines run serials of which the more successful are then collected into an album. In the UK our comics are almost universally designed for children, including all the big sellers. In Europe, magazines like A Suivre have almost all their audience in their twenties or older. They sell by the tens of thousand, many over 100,000.

The range of material is truly colossal. Humour takes around half of the market, but unless you're very fluent you'll miss a lot. Imagine trying to catch all the puns in Asterix (with Tintin, the only series regularly translated). I'm afraid my French isn't quite so good as that, so I stick to the serious stuff. There's a wealth of it and a range to suit all tastes. I'd like to demonstrate the variety by mentioning just a few of the series and creators found in issues of the aforementioned A Suivre (To Be Continued), possibly France's most mature comic magazine and certainly my favourite.

The great Hugo Pratt has to be mentioned and Corto Maltese, his most enduring creation, a sailor who travels the world having all sorts of adventures. Pratt's strips are lively and clever, his art subtle and suggestive, his style learned from a long-respected American newspaper-strip artist. Milton Caniot.



My favorite European artist, another Italian, Guido Crepax, is a controversial figure after his adaptations of the famous 'Story of O' and 'Emmanuel' some years ago. Controversy, however, has obscured his finer points. He's a more than competent writer and his art is stunning. Quite simply, he composes a comic page as well as anybody, anywhere in the world.

I mentioned Munoz and Sampayo last time, as they're contributors to Raw, too. A Suivre has run several stories set in 'Le Bar a Joe' (yeah, Joe's Bar), in the seedier parts of New York, a city they've never visited, but depict as if they've spent a life in its streets and alleys. Scripts are gutsy and atmospheric, and art is disturbingly moody and suggestive.



Guido Crepax

The above pair are firmly within the continental new wave. In a much more traditional frame Victor de la Fuente proves that barbarian adventures don't have to consist solely of hacking, slaying, and women with huge breasts. His plots are diverse, featuring convincing social background, and he draws firmly in a realistic style.

Some of the most beautiful comic artwork I've ever seen comes from Servais and Dewamme, in their stories of 19th century French rural manners with modern political undertones, 'Tendre Violette'. The writing is elegant and subtle, and the art sublime, with some of the loveliest panels and most breathtaking sequences in any comics.

On the other end of the artistic spectrum is Didier Gomes, who draws in a rather cartoony style, with grotesque humans common, especially in his masterpiece 'Silence', about a mute simpleton, magic, and country ignorance and prejudice. Subtle plotting and mysterious dialogue mean that his writing probably surpasses his art, but not by much.

Perhaps the most technically skilled illustrator I've come across anywhere is Jean Claude Claeys. His art has the quality of a photograph. It's like looking at the stills of a film with an all-star cast. I've spotted Brando, Newman, Wayne, Reagan and Heston, among many, many others. He writes about tough detectives in '20's America - worth reading just for his depictions of cars and trains.

There is a lot more to A Suivre. These are simply my choice of the best serious material. It regularly features articles, reviews of books, films and comics, and several pages of short funnies.

Besides A Suivre, there's an enormous number of other fine artists. Look at recent Heavy Metals for an (admittedly poor) translation of the great Enki Bilal's 'The Hunting Party' - the said group being composed of Warsaw Pact politicians. Seek out any Lieutenant Blueberry album. Here are Jean Giraud's masterpieces, classic western stories with amazing scope and depth. Or his alter-ego, Moebius and his already-classic recent science fiction series, John Difool. Or anything by the great, kaleidoscopic, colorful and crazy artist Druillet. Or...

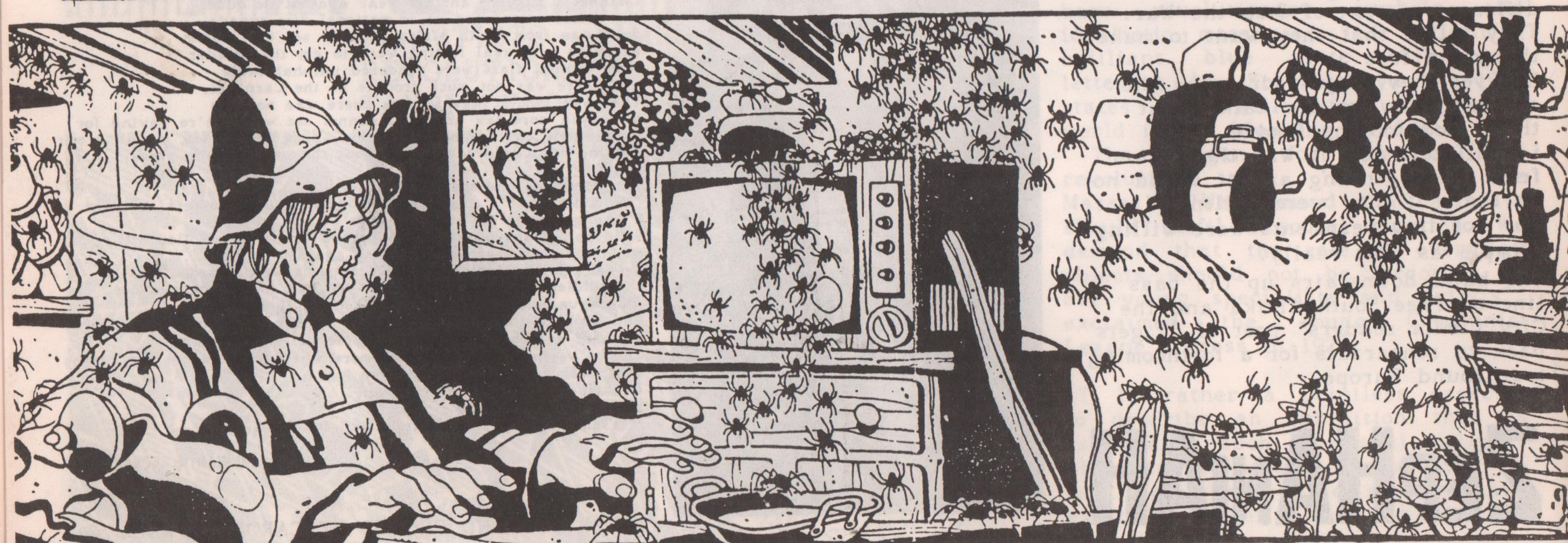
There are too many to deal with here. Forget any preconceptions you might have about comics from the largely puerile British Market or the American adolescent power-fantasy fetish. The European market is utterly different, filled almost to overflowing with hugely talented writers and artists.

Any of you for whom the language is not an insurmountable hurdle and who think of yourselves as not being a blinkered cultural snob, should investigate some of this area.



Tendre Violette by Servais and Dewamme

A SUIVRE



Didier Gomes

I've never completely freed myself from the suspicion that there are some extremely odd things about this mission - HAL.

Nearly two decades ago, director Stanley Kubrick began working with writer Arthur C Clarke to produce the most perfect science fiction movie of all time, 2001: A Space Odyssey. It had it's world premiere in New York on April 3 1968. Some critics hated it, while others simply loved every minute. Initially it was seen as something of a cinematic folly; today it is deservedly regarded as a classic masterpiece. Time, and hindsight, heals all wounds.

2001's main premise is that higher life forms visited our solar system many thousands of years ago. Finding no signs of intelligent life on earth (a situation not too different today!), these beings leave a kind of cosmic burglar alarm (as Clarke puts it) which will signal should intelligent life ever evolve. The alarm, however, is not left on earth but hidden on the moon. The alarm is physically manifested in the form of the now-famous black monolith.

The monolith appears at strategic points in human history and helps advance technology by emitting subconscious bursts of knowledge. A group of prehistoric ape-men are given the knowledge to make tools and weapons from bones. The bone is the earth's first murder weapon. The monolith has a lot to answer for. A large proportion of the film is set on board the space ship 'Discovery', on a mission to Jupiter to investigate the powerful radio signal which the monolith on the moon is beaming at the planet.

To us it is now 17 years since 2001, but in the Odyssey universe only nine years have passed. Premiering in March is 2010: ODYSSEY TWO, directed by Peter Hyams, who has previously directed 'Capricorn One' and 'Outland' and based on the novel written by Sri Lanka's most famous resident, Arthur C Clarke. The movie opens in the year 2010 with the empty spaceship 'Discovery' and another enigmatic monolith still floating a silent orbit around Jupiter.

Heading towards them from earth comes the Soviet-American spaceship Leonov on a mission of investigation and recovery. The crew (which includes Dr Heywood Floyd seen in 2001 and this time played by Roy Schneider, and Russian commander Tanya Kirbuck, played by Helen Mirren), hope to learn what went so wrong with the first Jupiter mission when HAL (the ship's computer) malfunctioned, murdering all of the Discovery's crew except for astronaut Dave Bowman.

The 'missing' Dave Bowman, played again by Keir Dullea, makes a dramatic reappearance. He issues a warning which plunges the crew of the Leonov into a race against time for their very lives and possibly much more...

Is it possible that this sequel can come close to the sheer brilliance of its illustrious predecessor? Time will tell, but then with the black monolith it always does. 'I've still got the greatest enthusiasm and confidence in the mission and I want to help you' - HAL, from 2001: A Space Odyssey. A

Andrew Donkin and Graham Brand



REPO MAN

Although billed as the directing debut of a young Brit (Alex Cox), 'REPO MAN' is a thoroughly American film with a vein of English satire running through it.

Harry Dean Stanton ("Paris, Texas") forsakes his taciturn persona of the latter film for that of a scrawny, poisonous workaholic who trawls the seamier side of Los Angeles identifying and repossessing the cars of those who have fallen behind in their payments.

He is joined in his work by a suitably vacant and morose 18 year old punk, played by Emilio Estevez, to whom in the course of their travels he communicates the violently reactionary ethic of the Repo Man.

The plot turns on the hunt for a '64 Chevrolet, driven by a deranged Government scientist, which carries in its boot a terrible secret. The

car and its cargo are pursued by the operatives of a sinister federal agency, a pair of chicano hustlers, a trio of popper sniffing punk psychos and a posse of repo men, whose paths cross in an increasingly bizarre series of incidents.

The whole story is unfolded with zest and imagination and the strands of the plot are woven together with commendable fluency for a first feature film. However, the licence which absurdist humour confers upon an author also demands a measure of discipline which is lacking here, and consequently absurdity often becomes mere silliness.

The movie is billed as featuring music by a number of stateside New Wave outfits and indeed the stylish credit sequences are set to a raunchy Iggy Pop thrash.

Thereafter though the music becomes merely aural wallpaper and the film settles down to become another admiring study of the tired theme of American auto-culture.

Cars are chased, stolen, crashed, and lust after. The package of Americana includes the obligatory appearance of guns and there are several shootings (with an attendant profusion of blood) which are presumably intended as zany punctuation of the narrative - but are in fact merely offensive, suggesting a lack of imaginative effort on the part of the author.

The film is a disappointment. Stanton's performance as the loathsome redneck is sometimes funny but the part is as thin as the man himself. Emilio Estevez is convincingly surly but shows little of the youthful presence of his Old Man.

Michael Clarkson

REGARDS

What does PAUL MCCARTNEY have to do to get slagged off? Just keep breathing? If he's not as good as the Beatles were, (who is?), then he's playing on the fact he's an ex-Beatle (which he happens to be).

While his current output is slagged off for paling in comparison to the sixties masterpieces, when he uses them he's attacked for invading the sanctuary of his (and our) precious past - he can't win. Now, actually having the nerve to write, star in and finance a full length feature film, he's given it to them on a plate. The critics have been predictable, bitchy and dismissive.

So what about the mere film itself? It is not brilliant. It is not 'A Hard Day's Night'. There's no pretence at being revolutionary or subversive. Yet in standing aside from the trad values of 'rock' movies and presenting himself as a cultural conservative, McCartney has taken a radical step.

'GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADSTREET' is a stimulating, entertaining film experience featuring some of the songs of our time. It's no dodo, it works on its own terms. It's for this reason that those who would love to dismiss it really hate it. It's okay - you're allowed to enjoy it.

VIDEO

Fritz the Cat, Educating Rita, Blade Runner, Fitzcarraldo, Tebbit's Law. What do all these films have in common, you're probably wondering.

They can all be obtained from the new EXCHANGE VALUE VIDEO CLUB (Nacton, Ipswich IP10 0JZ), perhaps the first video club to specialise in films worth watching.

The aims of the club as they put it are to extract 'the wheat from the chaff' of the video world. They calculate that only five percent of their titles would be available from the average video shop.

Recognising that cinema-going is in decline, the sponsors of the scheme are optimistic, hoping that the video boom can lead to increased social contact as people visit each others homes to watch and talk about movies.

The PSYCHIC ones played Heaven as an 'Anti Christmas' treat. The show lasted from 8 to 2am, and featured American writer Kathy Acker reading from her latest work, as well as fellow American Monte Cazazza.

By the times the Psychos took the stage, everyone was packed tight down the front to witness what was regrettably a very poor show. The last couple of singles (Roman P and Unclean) hinted at a powerful Velvet Underground sound, but they just couldn't (or wouldn't) pull it off. Instead there was an hour or so of turgid, directionless meanderings.

A shame, TV have so much potential, they could be powerful enough to rattle the skeletons in the rock n roll closet, but these days they are about as exciting as Doris Stokes on a slow night in Carlisle.

Alastair Livingstone

'TOUCH' are a series of high quality cassette magazines. They score over similar ventures by sticking to music and cutting the words. The result makes for a truly listenable alternative to any radio station available.

The musics are diverse: industrial rhythms to tribal chants, blasts of jazz and chunks of (almost) funk. Each tape comes with a large poster with information about the groups and performers featured, including contact addresses.

For £15 a year (UK), they send you 4 cassettes plus 'visual packages.' Touch, PO Box 139, London SW16 2ES.

Alastair Livingstone

THE JOEYS were probably a lot glossier at the Queen Elizabeth Hall than at the less prestigious places they must play, but they still managed to keep up a degree of rapport with the audience - who were just what you'd expect: people with jobs who read City

Instead they give us a set of well-written and thought-provoking songs which are also entertaining - when I saw them they were just another turgid rock band, but here they show they've grown out of punk, whilst avoiding becoming 'progressive' - 'I'm Not A Real Woman' actually bears a resemblance to fairground music, whilst 'Take The Toys From The Boys' is a voices-only folk chant with the classic lines - 'Oh no, not another bomb song, oh no not another peace march' at the end; Poison Girls even have a sense of humour!

And it comes complete with a cover photo of Vi Subversa in a can-can outfit.

My favourite sketches were the ones taking the piss out of right-on men (tai-chi and pony tails). My least favourite sketches were the ones taking the piss out of right-wing commie-bashers, which were a bit predictable, and too well tried and tested when you're preaching to the converted.

Paul Plattypus



BALAAM AND THE ANGEL "World of light" (Chapter 22 12") RED LORRY YELLOW LORRY "Hollow eyes" (Red Rhino 12")

Two records with a lot in common. Both are 12" singles, both on independent labels, both destined for big things in the independent charts. ("Hollow Eyes" is already there as 1 type) and on the John Peel radio programme.... but that's not all.

These two records and the bands that made them typify today's music scene. They've both been released with a definite audience in mind. Balaam's record aimed at fans of what is known as 'Gothic' rock - post-positive punk, the Cult etc. RLYL's aimed at what is a sort of indie label's 'rock' scene - the sort of people who used to buy Joy Division records. As such both records are guaranteed successes, they give the kids what they want as some might say.

Musicians today are spending much too much time trying to cater for an audience rather than just make their music and let the audience come of it's own accord. It's a shame really, because Balaam especially have a lot of promise when you rake away the 'gothic' dressing - they have much more in common with Echo and the Bunnymen than the Sex Gang Children. If they were brave enough to sack their management and forget about their image they could shape up really well.

Paul Plattypus

STOCKHOLM MONSTERS "Alma Mater" (Factory LP)

The Stockholm Monsters' record is on Factory, which you can tell as soon as you see the arty sleeve. I only know the album's title because the press release told me. The record is produced by Peter Hook from New Order, a band whose influence is easily recognisable. If I'd been told this record was by New Order I'd have believed it, although I expect New Order fans can tell the difference. But maybe that's just Factory's plan - you can tell the label but you can't tell which band it is.

And Stockholm Monsters might be totally anonymous, but unlike "Hello Europe", "Alma Mater" is a very good album within its label.

Paul Plattypus

POISON GIRLS "I'm Not a Real Woman" (Xcentrix 12")

This record came as quite a surprise to me as I find I like it, after hating the Poison Girls when I saw them a year and a half ago. This 12" EP consists of four quite rousing political songs dealing with sexism, schooling, the link between the arms trade and third world exploitation, and I suppose individual freedom. Unlike many of this type the songs AREN'T patronising, and the Poison Girls manage to avoid sloganising.

Paul Plattypus

Out On The Floor. #2,30p; 53 Dartmouth Rd., London NW2. What have Northern Soul, American Football, Notting Hill Carnival, Hip Hop, Worm Charming, 2 Northern skin-head bands, and Robbie guess-got in common? Yes, you've guessed it, the contents of Out On The Floor fanzine which comes from an area that is rapidly taking over from Middlesex as the Fleet Street of the fanzine world (Willessden and Heasden host no fewer than four fanzines). A slap on the wrist for some hurried and shoddy layout, but full marks for originality and their hilarious cartoon and worthy prizes. (probably a free copy of Traces-ed.)

Then-Now-Always. #2,40p; 23 Chestnut Av., Clacton, Essex. This mod fanzine is guilty of all the faults I mentioned before, and is therefore typical of today's mod zines. yet I've got a soft spot for mods, and Clacton, and is it deserves a mention, so I think offer you a chance to take a look into the modern world. Squire, The Scene, Secret Affair, The Direct Hits, Charts, Fashion Tips, etc etc.

Tirane Thrash. #2,50p; 161 Spencer's Croft, Harlow, Essex CM18 6JR. Another selection of poetic ranting verse, the Stock-broker. Well illustrated with cartoons by Porky, Alex Faulds, and Mark D Williams. Varied contents and professional presentation - an essential purchase and good value for money.

IS THE panic STARTING TO GRIP YOU?

Alphabet Soup. #4,10p; 46 Staver-ton Road, London NW2 5HL. In my opinion this is presently the best fanzine around. A comic blend of feminine satire, soft porn and a personal insight into the lives of the two writers. (How many people would have the nerve to describe the agonies of period pants?) Sharp send-ups of teen-mag quizzes, gothic punks and horoscopes. Their 31 page account of their advent-ures in Los Angeles beats any poetry, interviews, though for boring music lovers there is an interview with Rubella Ballet. The front cover alone is worth the price of 10p.

New Youth. #5,30p; 26 Ella St. Newlands, Hull HU5 3AY. 'This fan-zine is dedicated to the people New Youth is packed with militant party politics and angry cliches, yet it is all delivered with lots of energy, enthusiasm, and a posi-tive spirit. Interviews with the Red-Alexei Sayle, the Stockbroker, poetry, cartoons, and a lively letters page. Despite its faults New Youth still remains the brightest light at the end of the tunnel, showing a courageous belief in themselves and human nature.

The End. #15,30p; 16 Steerscroft, Cantrill Farm, Liverpool L28 8AG. The End has become something of a legend in and around Liverpool and something of a mystery in the rest of the country. Their usual scouse elitism is restricted in this issue to a chart and the letters page. The End is a brilliant example of working class sass and dry scouse humour. Their witty arti-cles on ticket touts, Liverpool cabbies, driving fanatics, the Garden Festival, and tv football commentators show the endless po-tential for fanzines. This issue also contains a lengthy chat with Pete Wylie of Wah.

Idiot Strength. #3,40p; 101 Victoria Av., Wembley, Middx HA9 6PN. Clum-bawamba, Joolz, New Model Army, by a picture of Ray Milland, of all people. Idiot Strength improves with each issue and it's all very thought-provoking stuff. Even the space fillers are all interesting reading.

Whip Crack Away. #1,50p; 13 Hemberton Road, London SW9 9LE. More of a comic than a fanzine really, and very arty with it. Worth buying for the Mark D Williams soul cult cartoons and sixties soul. dj Ian Clarke's feature on...sixties soul.



For the small business section, our series looking at how people try to make an independent living, JOANNE THOMPSON looks at two designers called Nwaa.



Sarah and Sally Nwaa are a pair of imaginative and ambitious designers who print and make clothes. Sarah went to Medway College of Design, and Middlesex Polytechnic to study fashion and textile design; Sally, on the other hand simply has a natural flair and ability to design clothes using Sarah's originally printed fabrics. The silk-screened fabric is built up using various small screens of

photos by Patrick Gilbert.

different design. The fabrics are mainly hand-dyed cottons, Sarah and Sally prefer using bright and sometimes exotic colours. When they are feeling extravagant they have even been known to use silk in rather dazzling shades. The actual designs Sarah prints are big, bold and usually black, influenced by 1950's Hollywood style and Africa.

Printed at Sarah's workshop in Brixton, the fabric is shipped out to Sally, in Poplar, London's East End. The result is a range of brightly bold, highly individual clothes. The garments are loose-fitting, comfortable to wear, and fit most sizes. And no two garments are alike - the colours, prints and styles gradually change, evolving with a constant flow of ideas from one design to the next.

Obviously it takes a lot of money to design, print and make up the clothes as well as running a workshop and various sewing machines. So to make ends meet Nwaa opted for the government's enterprise allowance scheme. In order to qualify for the £40pw allowance, they had to show they were running a genuine business and could lay their hands on £1,000.

Luckily though, as the scheme only runs for a year, Nwaa are finding more and more people from overseas are noticing them, and even buying up their whole stock. Nwaa have already sold wholesale in Italy and are in the process of setting up a connection in New York, where a great deal of enthusiastic interest has been shown. In the UK market, Sarah and Sally have stayed close to home for the time being, selling privately and at Camden market.

Outside interest in these two ingenious designers has been growing, and they are developing plans to sell through shops in London and Paris. Their aim at present is simply to get garments into the shops - unless their whole stock is brought up once more, the dream should soon be a reality.

For more information write to Nwaa, Unit 52, Coldharbour Works, 245A Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 tel 274 7766 x208.

