

Socialist Challenge

15-31st December 1977 No. 26 20p.

Just see
what's
inside



Photomontage: PETER KENNARD

JOHN FOWLES

SHEILA ROWBOTHAM

DAVID HOCKNEY

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PLUS

Peter Wollen on
Jesus Christ

Miles on Presley

Peter Rabbit and the
Grundrisse

plus

Left-Overs — the after-dinner
game for Socialists.

Season's Greetings
from the
Labour
Government

Editorial

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The smell they can't ignore any more

THE LABOUR Party's political broadcast last week was an effective piece of anti-fascist and anti-racist propaganda. For that very reason it was censored by BBC mandarins, fearful that 'party political broadcasts' might actually be used to politicise the masses. But despite the censorship (itself a grim warning for the future) left wing Labour MP Joe Ashton made an effective and telling critique of the National Front. His message was simple and to the point: the NF is a Nazi outfit.

It would be tempting simply to ignore or downplay the broadcast by arguing that what Ashton said is not new. The far left, after all, has been saying precisely that for the past five years, and the broadcast, (and the TUC decision to back it and multiply its anti-fascist propaganda), is a tremendous vindication of the political line of the far left. But the broadcast has importance because the decision of the official Labour movement to characterise the NF as Nazis could make a critically important contribution to the building of a mass movement against racism and fascism in this country.

A properly and democratically constituted Anti-Nazi League could use the Ashton broadcast and organise meetings around its central message. Ashton did not merely equate the NF with Hitler and Mussolini's thugs in the Thirties; he also pointed out that it was the social crisis upon which the Nazis fed and grew. He did not, of course, call for a revolutionary party to defeat capitalism because he is a left social democrat. It would be absurd to expect him to do so. But he did lay the basis for real and serious united front work against the fascists. Any sectarianism would be criminal.

The very effectiveness of the Labour broadcast determined the response to it by the bulk of the national press and media as well as by Tory politicians. The notable exception was the *Daily Mirror* which carried the startlingly clear headline 'Crush the Front!' The questions to fascist leaders Verrall and Webster were couched in a sympathetic fashion. The Tory press was actually squirming with embarrassment that Ashton had 'broken the rules'. The idea that the broadcast will give the NF more credibility, is, of course, ludicrous.

It was only appropriate that the Tory MP most outraged by the broadcast hadn't actually seen it. Nicholas Winterton, after all, is well-known for his interest in racism. He was one of those Tory MPs who recently visited Rhodesia, met Ian Smith, and spoke about the necessity of preserving a 'civilised government' in the country. Not a single newspaper mentioned Winterton's links with Smith's Rhodesia.

Labour's intervention on racism and fascism is a belated, but important first step forward. It must be repeated and acted upon in the localities. This means that labour movement leaders must wage a campaign. Meetings should be organised, propaganda should be distributed, and the fascists should be denied a platform to spread their racist and anti-semitic filth. Whether the far left is capable of responding in a united and coherent fashion remains to be seen.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

This will be our last issue in 1977. We will resume publication in the first week of January. With this issue we are distributing a four-page special on the FBU strike.

We send warm season's greetings to all the firefighters on the picket lines. We also wish our readers an enjoyable season and trust they will continue to respond favourably to the paper in the New Year.

Government offer to FBU

Pie in the sky when you die

by Geoff Bell

THE FIRST REACTION to the latest Government offer to the striking firefighters was one of decisive rejection. The offer reflected the Labour Government's determination to stick to the 10 per cent norm. It proposed a ten per cent increase now, another ten per cent in 1978 and the promise of parity with higher paid industrial workers in 1979.

A series of strings were attached. The previous promise of a reduction in hours — from 48 to 42 — in twelve months time, is now conditional on acceptance of 'more cost effective use of manpower' — in other words, a productivity deal. Even more brazen is that the offer represents direct interference in the affairs of the FBU by the employers. The FBU must 'undertake that there will be no recrimination and no discriminatory action against individuals or groups arising from the industrial action...'

This amounts to a scabs charter. If the FBU sign it, the few union members who have scabbed, or those who have left the union over the strike will get off scot-free.

Across the country FBU members reacted angrily to the offer: in Liverpool 6,000 demonstrated in support of the FBU claim on 9 December. Dockers, building workers, car workers and bus workers and others marched with Manchester and Liverpool branches of the FBU. When the firefighters were asked what they thought of the latest offer they replied with an ear-splitting shout of 'rubbish'.

The next day over 5,000 marched in Glasgow and there again speakers on the platform denounced the Government's offer. On the same day 1,000 took part in a demonstration in Newcastle at which Bill Giffin, Cleveland regional FBU organiser spoke. He attacked the local press for saying rank and file FBU members were in favour of the proposed



Photo by J. S. STURROCK

settlement. Another speaker, Jim Sillars, Scottish Labour Party MP, described the Government as 'the first Tory Labour Government'.

Also on Saturday at a 100 strong meeting in Merthyr, South Wales, the local secretary of the FBU, Bill Rees, made the telling point when he said, 'show me a shop where we can spend promises and we'll go back tomorrow'.

A number of national leaders of the FBU also stated their

opposition on the weekend of 10/11 December. Assistant general secretary Dick Foggie commented on Saturday: 'It's an insult to ask us to do more work when we are not going to get paid for it, while we have to wait two years to get our due'.

Other prominent members of the FBU are making the point that the best answer to the Government's offer is for the strikers to go on the offensive. As action union secretary for Merseyside, David Day said,

'the time has come to strengthen the strike'.

SOCIALIST UNITY
 National Steering Committee
 Sunday, 15 January, 12pm
 76b Digheth
 Birmingham

All areas please ensure delegates are elected to attend.

A Xmas offering for the Firemen

To be sung to the tune of 'She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain'

If you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 If you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 If you're for firemen and women
 And love to see them winning
 Then if you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 Then if you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]

If you'd like to wrap a hosepipe round Big Jim
 And take a hatchet to his stupid grin
 If you'd rather die than marry
 A man like Terry Perry
 You're on the side that's surely gonna win
 Then if you stand behind the firemen clap your hands [clap twice]
 [Repeat]

If you don't mind seeing the boss go up in smoke
 If you think the ten per cent's a lousy joke
 If you think the boys in khaki
 Are acting rather Nazi
 The FBU are just your kind of folk

Then if you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 [Repeat]

If you'd stick it out till Xmas '78
 If Merlyn is the man you love to hate
 If you think the human race
 Are all a social case
 The FBU will recognise a mate
 Then if you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 [Repeat]

If you think the strike should spread like forest fires
 If you want to build the bosses' funeral pyres
 If you'd like to see each tyrant
 Held underneath a hydrant
 Then you're the sort the FBU admire
 Then if you stand behind the firemen, clap your hands [clap twice]
 [Repeat]

Repeat first stanza
 TERRY EAGLETON

OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trades unions offer solutions that are in the interests, not of the workers, but of the capitalist class.

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are:

- To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.
- To begin to fight for the creation of a united and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

1 The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of the workers against the bosses with that of other oppressed layers of society — women, black people, gays — struggling for their liberation. This socialism can only be achieved by creating new organs of power and detaching with all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist modes of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Britain it implies demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and letting the Irish people determine their own future.

4 The Communist Parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the Euro-communist nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and ending internal dictatorships and as a first step, but as a vital necessity, this means the right to organise factories and tenders.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you agree with these principles and want to be involved in activities by Socialist Challenge supporters in your area, fill in the form below and send it to us:

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.
 I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.
 [Delete if not applicable]

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Dear Arthur Scargill,

The decision last week by our executive to go ahead with local productivity deals in the pits and to respect the 12-month rule is just the latest in a series of flagrant breaches of democracy by the right wing in the NUM. Gormley and Co. have shown that they are concerned neither with the interests of the membership nor with the decisions we have taken at annual conference.

The press has been quick to rejoice at the wonderful filip given to the Labour Government's wage cutting policies by our executive. But the press barons remain silent on the completely undemocratic character of the decision. Can you imagine their outcry if a left-wing union executive had overturned a conference decision in support of wage restraint? Or decided against productivity deals when a national ballot came out overwhelmingly in favour?

The right wing on the NUM executive, the Government, and all those who support them are hoping that the unity and militancy of the miners will suffer through their split tactics. They know that many miners in 'easy pits' will stand to get rises of £25 through local productivity schemes. They don't care that safety standards will decline. They want to buy off our militancy with blood money. And they know how difficult it will be to fight for the £135 claim in March. We can just hear them now: 'Whoever heard of a miners' strike in early summer?' they'll be jibing.

You have consistently fought the right wing on the executive. You have called for upholding the decisions of the membership. You have fought for the unity of the union in action for the claim and against the productivity dealing. Now you have the big responsibility of leading the fight to overturn the executive's decisions.

I would add that unity means a united struggle throughout the mining communities — not just the pits themselves. Women played a crucial role in the 1972 and '74 strikes, and your support of the page 3 pin-up in the *Yorkshire Miner* reveals a serious failing to appreciate that this kind of image of women is entirely counter to their need and ability to fight

their own oppression and to be a strong part of the struggle of the whole workers' movement.

Don't think that overturning the executive's decisions can be done through the courts. By the time they grind into 'action', militant areas like Yorkshire, Scotland, Kent and South Wales could be isolated. And it's by no means certain that the courts would rule in our favour. They have never been the friends of the working class. What's more by talking of going to the courts you've allowed Gormley to masquerade as some kind of upholder of union rights fighting to keep the law out of the affairs of the union.

The answer to the decisions of the executive is to organise the rank and file of the union against them. In 1969, faced by a right-wing executive, Yorkshire miners took the lead in organising unofficial strike action. That unofficial strike changed the face of the union, and paved the way for the national strikes. The conference decisions and the postal ballot show that you have the support of the membership. You must now act, and act quickly, to galvanise that support into action. The undemocratic practices of the right wing prevent you from doing it officially. So now you've got to turn to unofficial action.

You've already said that 'it would not surprise' you if the executive's decision did not lead to industrial action by your members. Now's the time to take the lead in preparing such action. Call a conference of delegates from pits all around the country. Get support for such a conference from all ten members of the executive who voted with you. Let the rank and file decide how to pursue the claim in the face of the executive's betrayals.

Action like this would make the right wing quake in their boots. It would be the best way to force them to change their decision. And if they didn't, then we'd be in a position to go ahead without them. Don't rely on the courts. You've got the support. Now use it.

Fraternally
ROGER STENSON

National Union of Mineworkers, Nottinghamshire

News from nowhere

Attention Newslines

THIS IS just to keep ex-Sunday Times journalist and hack Alex Mitchell on his toes. It appears that the Libyan mentors of the daily paper edited by Mitchell [we are still awaiting a statistical survey comparing its Tripoli circulation to its London sales], the *Newslines*, are beginning to ask questions in relation to the real standing and strength of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Is it the case that the WRP dominates the left in Britain? Does it hegemonise the British left intelligentsia? Is it the case that it has a massive circulation and an even greater influence in British political life? Answers on a postcard to: Information Attache, Libyan Embassy, 57 Prince's Gate, London SW7.

Incidentally, we are also awaiting with interest the beginning of a 46-part series by Jack Gale on the principled position of the WRP on the rights of the Kurdish people to self-determination. Or could it be that the recent visit to Baghdad by a WRP team has meant that this series has been indefinitely postponed? Out with it Mitchell!

You have been warned

PHIL AGEE, thrown out of Britain by Merlyn Rees and out of France by the unilateral action of the security service, now faces deportation from the Netherlands. It seems that the campaign against the former CIA agent is truly international.

Agee has already been questioned by Dutch police, mainly about two things: an article in the left-wing monthly *The Leveller*; and his work on creating a permanent record of all CIA agents since the agency was founded. But the *Leveller* article was a jokey piece about how great Amsterdam was after Merlyn's London, and the CIA file was not being compiled in Amsterdam anyway.

Yet the Dutch Justice Ministry told journalists that there had been 'foreign complaints' about Agee's behaviour in the Netherlands. Agee believes that the US authorities want to drive him back to the USA where he can be served with an injunction to stop his work.

There will be a lunchtime picket of the Dutch Embassy in London on 19 December, the day Agee's case is heard before a three person panel! The Embassy is at 57 Hyde Park Gate SW7, off Kensington Road opposite Kensington Gardens. The picket will be from 12.30 to 2pm.

Racist Electronics

WHAT NEWSPAPER described what company as 'the most important model of everything that could and should be right about British business'?

The company is Racal Electronics, described by a senior South African officer as having 'rendered invaluable service to the South African Defence Force.' Racal equipment was dis-

covered in a Rhodesian armoured car captured after a raid into Mozambique in which 88 refugees were killed.

This is the same Racal whose irregular financial dealings are currently being revealed at the Old Bailey. Two former executives of the company are on trial for bribing an Iranian business consultant to help Racal win a £4m deal to supply the Iranian armed forces with radio equipment in 1971. The man who allegedly received the bribes was Sir Shapoor Reporter, who also received £1m from the British Government for help in selling Chieftain tanks to the Shah's dictatorship.

Reporter allegedly received £250,000 from Racal, but what is most interesting is that £160,000 of that was in official payments admitted in open court. Company chieftain Ernest Harrison admitted an £80,000 secret payment and another £80,000 officially passed through the books of a Racal subsidiary.

Still, these somewhat shady dealings do not seem to have affected Racal's standing on the stock-market. With projected profits £13m up on last year, a 12p slip on the Stock Exchange the other day was quickly made good so that shares finished 4p higher than they had started - a clear indication of the level of morality among investors! Oh yes, and the paper which was so enthusiastic about Racal's business methods? *The Free Nation* paper of the National Association for 'Freedom'.

New Broom

IS THERE an agency on the lookout for union bureaucrats anxious to put on gamekeepers' clothes? The latest turncoat is one John Broom, until last week a full-time officer with the National Graphic Association and now personnel manager at Penguin Books.

True to form, Broom's first task in his new job was to offer a highly generous 6 per cent to editorial workers. When a NUJ representative mentioned that their claim — for 15 per cent plus £1 for each percentage increase in the cost of living — was designed to defend living standards, just as Broom has presumably been doing for NGA members, the ex-bureaucrat at least had the decency to turn crimson.

Penguin's personnel department has not been without its problems. Its sexism has been so rampant that the unions lodged a formal protest. One instance was when former personnel assistant John Liddell had written on a woman's application form: 'Quite pretty, but wears cheesecloth'. When this was spotted, Liddell came up with the spectacular excuse that the note was an aide memoire to help him remember the candidates who had been interviewed.

Penguin staff who have any difficulty remembering Broom should note his £9,500 salary, company car, and smart suits.

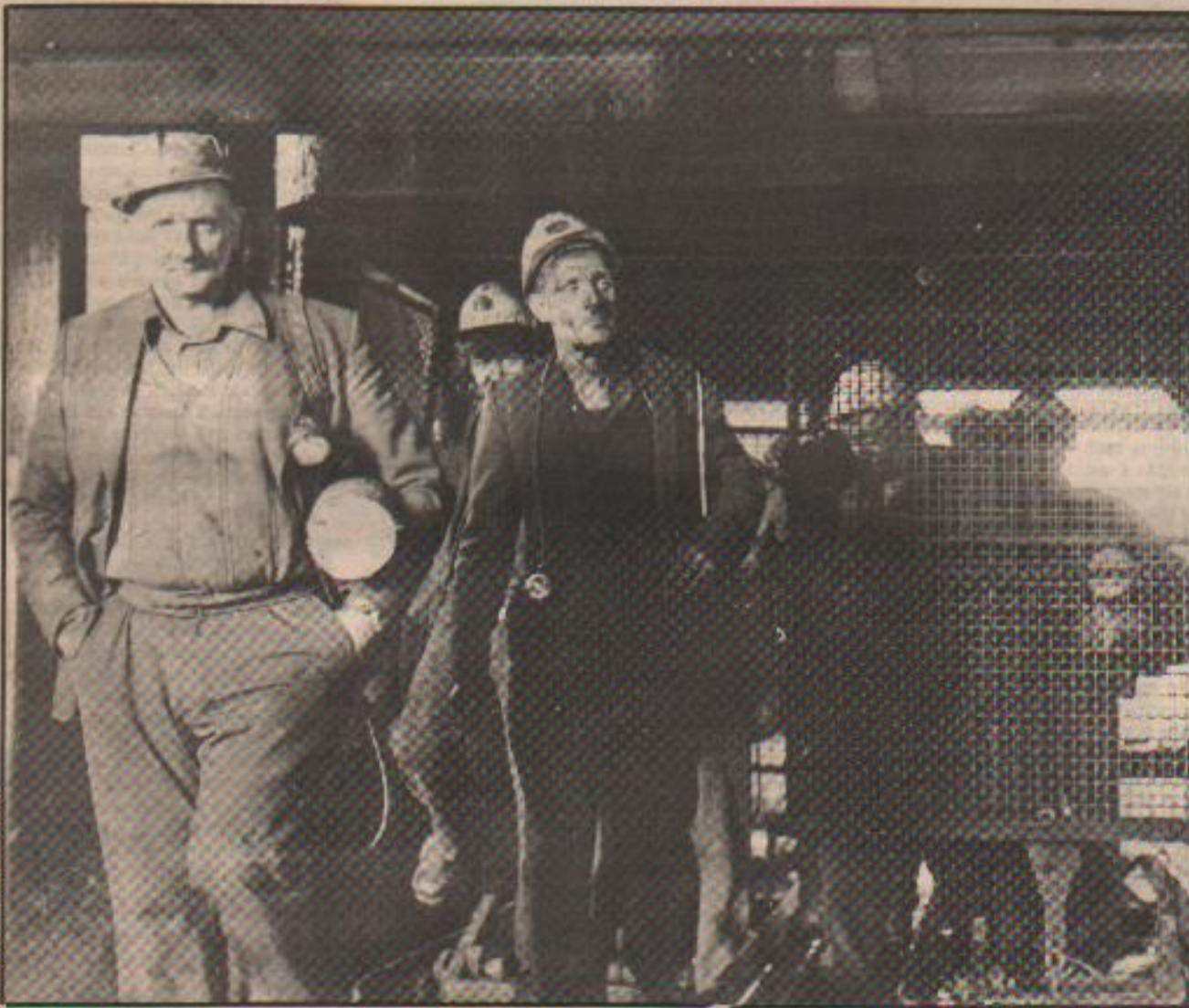


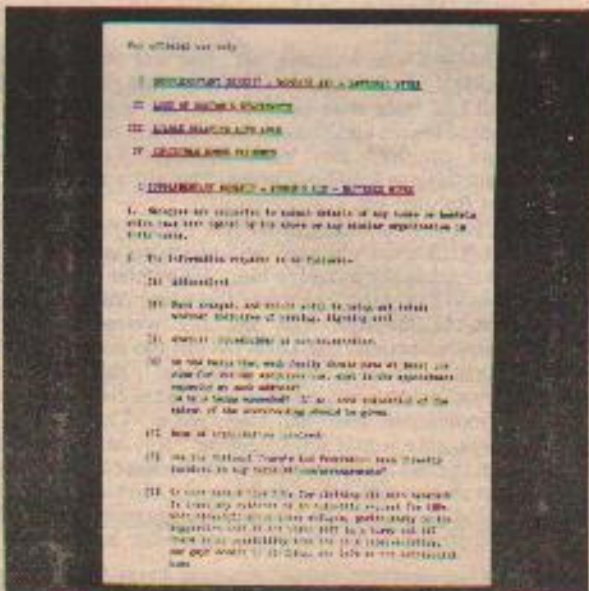
Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Snooper's circular

Socialist Challenge has received a number of letters in relation to Arthur Scargill's comments on 'pin-ups' and women, one of which is published on our letters page on page 20. It is obvious from the tenor of our paper that we do not agree with Arthur Scargill, and we will be joining our readers in contesting his views on this question in forthcoming issues of the paper.

A flippant and retrogressive attitude towards women is only too common within the trade union movement. The kind of image of women presented on page 3 of the *Yorkshire Miner* reveals a serious failing. It is counter to the need and ability of women to fight their own oppression and thus unite the entire working class.

Editorial Board



SOCIALIST CHALLENGE has just received this circular, sent from the North London regional social security office to all local departments. The Labour Government's snoopers are at it again, and this time they appear to be out to get information to reduce the amount of supplementary benefits received by battered women.

In question 7 of the snoopers' circular, social security bosses seem determined to 'prove' that refugees are advising women on how to claim Essential Needs Payments (ENP). The aim of the rest of this sinister circular can be nothing other than to prepare for further moves against the few organisations that have consistently campaigned to defend the rights of battered women.

REFUGEE

The winning entry in the short story competition

Jan van der Meer didn't seem uncomfortable. He should have been, squatting in that stale dusty shebeen, his stubby face on the body of a sweating bull-frog. He should have been uncomfortable with the nutmeg shebeen girl toying him on and Molotsi, the Pan African Congress refugee, pressing his thigh. Jan van der Meer was drunk and the shebeen flies were too, for they drank from the sticky beery river which ran from the black lake of his armpit and dropped, stoned, to the ground when he swept them with his Afrikaaner hand.

Molotsi was talking of Mandela and the great peace walk when the ANC and PAC had wrangled over the white liberals, and then of the banning order, the police swoops, and his flight over the border into Botswana.

'The English are just as bad as the Afrikaaners', Molotsi said. 'In fact, we respect them less. They have no claim as native sons of the soil. They have no pride in what they are. All they want is privilege. But, now, the Afrikaaner ...'

Jan van der Meer laid his hand on the dancing girl's bottom and drummed his thumb.

'...the Afrikaaner has some dignity. He has humour. But he is an ape. He cannot cope with feeling. It throws him off balance. He is the true hewer of wood and drawer of water. He is a clumsy ape who has made nothing except a clumsy ape language ...'

Jan van der Meer brushed the sweat from his armpit. The hairs on the back of his fingers were dampened. A swept fly fell and caught in the hairs of his leg.

'They are curious people, the whites of South Africa,' Molotsi continued. 'They are not complete men. They have come here in groups of those with brawn, those with brain, and those with passion. The Afrikaaner is not complete. He is not a sympathetic man.'

Jan van der Meer had his hand back in position. His thumb rapped to the beat of the gumba-gumba on the record player; the girl's back was working at the base of the spine. Jan could feel it.

'So you are going into the Republic?' said Jan van der Meer to the second white face there, an Englishman. 'It is a beautiful country. Yes it is. The scenery, the farms: beautiful! It's a wonderful place for a young man.' He paused and touched his face. 'I would love to hear what you have to say when you have been there just a day or two. Johannesburg ... it's the biggest city in Africa.'

'Cairo,' said Molotsi.

'Will you be going to Jo'burg? The kaffirs call it Gandeng, the Golden City ...'

'Why?'

'You could dig in the Witwatersrand for an age and still make your fortune. If I were a young man today ...'

'But the "kaffirs"?' said Molotsi, and laughed.

'Well, we live our different lives. It's not right what you people from England read. We get on right fine. Isn't that so, Molotsi? ...'

Molotsi laughed again. 'Yes. We get on fine because now you yourself are drunk.' And Molotsi gave Jan van der Meer an over-playful clout.

Jan turned and smiled. His short trousers and coarse desert shirt were 'unsympathetic' and his wry smile announced him as a strangely aged and grotesque child. He leaned forward from the girl's shadow and put his hand from her onto his own knee.

'So you are going into the Republic, mmm?'

'Johannesburg.'

'Johannesburg. Aaahhh! It's a different world!'

His face relaxed into his shirt and his glass hesitated at his mouth, muttering: 'It's a

different world!' Then he drank and his remembrances of the city were slurred. Someone had put the same record on again, but the batteries of the player were tiring and the beat had been brought to its knees. Mmadipalema, the shebeen girl, was tired of dancing and wanted custom before the beat died in her too. Now Jan van der Meer was an Afrikaaner and away from home. She knew them well and would chance a 'pink child' for the money he would pay. An Afrikaaner in the village, ooof, a rare chance. And besides, she didn't care for Molotsi and his friends, their mocking slapping hands and their intense talk. Tecch. Too heavy for the village, she thought, as her swaying slowed and she heard Molotsi again and his high school-master's voice.

'Ha! Look at her black Zambesi arse. You make me smile, Dutchman. Immorality laws, uh? You been to Swaziland?'

Jan nods slowly.

'Yes. Yes, of course, you've been. Ha! Every weekend, the herrenvolk. Tecch!' Molotsi shook his head and slapped Mmadipalema across the thigh. 'They flood the customs hut on the Mbabane road clutching their fishing rods. "Off for a spot of fishing, Sir?" Ya, ya, ya. Fishing. Ooof! And then, on Sunday night, it's "Good fishing, Sir? Bags under your eyes, eh? Good fishing, Sir? Catch anything?" Ha ha! Catch anything? Ay-ay-ay.'

And Molotsi gave Jan van der Meer another clout, spilling his shake-shake into the dust as his friends whinny and nod.

'Who's hitting me?'

'It is myself, I am the one,' answered Molotsi in his mocking Bantu English.

'For that you would die in the Republic. You would end up on the bonnet of a car.'

'Stop your talk of the Republic and car bonnets. We are in the free desert and I am slapping you because it is good for you. Now, get to her black arse and forget your fucking Republic. Look. It's twitching for you.'

And good Jan van der Meer guffawed hopefully and gave a knowing, broad, winking smile to his expectant audience. He leant forward and held his expression as if to shrug this thing off with a carelessness and took hold of Mmadipalema's thighs and held them for a moment, then shook them fiercely and urgently like a goat at a bush, drawing a long drunken breath through his teeth. Aaah! So this was it, he thought, Black Africa. Mmadipalema smiled. She didn't like Molotsi but she understood his humour and she smiled. The shebeen had quietened now, waiting for the play. The old woman looked up from her stirring and her jars. Her gums answered Mmadipalema's handsome even teeth, but she was more awkward than the young people. It was a dangerous game, but okay, let it be played. Men would be men.

THE sudden quiet of the dusty oily rondavel seemed to descend on the man's hands and his drunken veins had suddenly become self-conscious. Mmadipalema felt his thumb die on her. She tightened her muscles, first on the right and then on the left. Her thighs and buttocks tightened and loosened. Why doesn't she move away, thought Jan van der Meer. Why doesn't she move away? It was only in jest. It was a game, for God's sake. Only a game. Everybody knew it wasn't possible. Please God, let her move away and stop this thing. He wished he could put his hand down. He could feel the native beer draining from it into his shoulder and sticking there like a watery cramp.

'You like her, eh?' said Molotsi.

'Err, yes.' An awkward laugh. Poor awkward Jan van der Meer.

'Well?'

Well, it was impossible. Impossible. Not like with the white Golden City whores with their coarse Afrikaans and their soft pasty

unmoving bodies and their egg-white skins. She was moving, moving in his hands. And he was frightened of what he could feel. It was forbidden. He could hear drums and smell rain. She was turning. The gumba-gumba fought with batteries. The shake-shake rose in his throat. He was on his feet and in her arms and his fat bull-frog body was hoping to move like a body, like something with bare feet and thighs. Oh Christ.

Then the noise and the laughter of the shebeen broke through again, for the serious drinkers there knew the game was played and that drinking could recommence. The old woman took to her stirring and allowed herself a faint landlady's chuckle. Even the flies were on the move again. But Molotsi, the PAC refugee, was silent and watching. Let Jan van der Meer be his messenger. He had something to send back home. Jan's hands held her where the sweat and the dust met in the armpit of her dress and he was comforted by the laughter and the stirring and the drinking and the strong nutmeg arms around his neck. The smell of her filled him and swayed him and the matting of her tight hair on his cheek was close and private. And Jan van der Meer didn't think of the townships and the half-glimpsed forbidden Ambi-girls, nor did he remember his sneers at the kaffir women at home.

Jan van der Meer didn't seem uncomfortable any more. He should have been, swaying with this girl, African girl, in the stale dusty shebeen.

He was slowing now, so slow that the shebeen flies came back to settle at the black river. He could feel himself falling but also he knew he was being pulled — pulled by the arm towards the sacking over the dark doorway by the girl in his arms. And when she was beyond it, even though Molotsi's laughter angered her and Jan van der Meer's shorts tackled at his ankles, she had him and the six rand in his pocket and left him there to the flies and the matting.

Molotsi slapped her on the thigh and said 'You have removed my tooth' and laughed. She was moving slowly again. The record player's battery was giving the evening up and the music was fragmenting.

Molotsi was laughing softly now and the old woman allowed herself just one more chuckle. But Mmadipalema was swaying with six rand in her hand and a pleased, satisfied excitement settled in her limbs. She had taken the white man. The Afrikaaner. She did not like it, but she understood Molotsi's humour. Let him laugh. Let him laugh and let the white man sleep with his great stomach and his thick, hairy, clumsy arms. Let him sleep. She had six rand in her hand and she was no worse than some of the girls in any village. Even Afrikaaner girls. She had heard Molotsi talk before of the Johannesburg housewives and the 'favours' they asked of their 'boys'. So let him laugh. She had taken the white man. That could not be denied her.

Molotsi was watching her. She was not finished yet, he thought. He knew this girl and had been with her. He ran his hand behind his ear and thought he could feel the scar she had left him. Molotsi had something to send back home. This girl was not finished yet.

'He will have forgotten this tomorrow, the Afrikaaner,' he said, and he let her see his sneer as she turned to him. 'He will have forgotten it. He daren't do otherwise.' And then he laughed, and the old woman chuckled because she knew the girl too and could see Molotsi's meaning. But Mmadipalema was angry now. Damn this schoolmaster and his high voice. This Afrikaaner would not forget her. Not her. No, she had spared him too much because he was clumsy and drunk and because she had found no pleasure in him and his squatting bull-frog love. But he would remember her

and the schoolmaster could sneer at hell. So she passed through the sacking over the dark doorway again and stood at the frayed matting edge and looked down on Jan van der Meer. He was awake and moaning in his drunkenness. He looked up at her strong legs and her high breasts and saw her coming down to him again like a shadow at dusk. He would have moved away or turned if he could, but her knees were at his side and her hands at his shoulders and her face was coming towards him. Somewhere, deep in his unsympathetic sweating body, there lingered a small vanity. Jan van der Meer turned his mouth to hers and moved his tired hairy hand onto her back. The shebeen flies fell to the ground, without any attempt at flight, and the girl's mouth moved to the side. The light from the opening doorway fell in his left eye and he thought he saw Molotsi or someone standing there with a smile. He had expected the girl's mouth on his own, by now, but he felt it at his right ear, the tongue playing with the tough sprout of hair, and he turned his neck to Mmadipalema, the handsome shebeen girl. Her teeth buried, pinched, and sank into his bull-frog neck. He let out a whimper. Then a cry of pain. She was not toying. Her teeth were cutting and drawing blood. Jan van der Meer would have twisted away if he had been a lighter and more sober man, but her hands were at his shoulders and he could only shake his neck and cry while she hung to him like a terrier, her teeth seeming to sink, almost to meeting, in the heavy flesh of his white neck. Then she was leaning back on her knees and laughing, and Molotsi at the door was laughing. Then Jan van der Meer vomited his shock and shake-shake into the dust and slept till the dawn.

THE straight grey steers of the valley were moving down to the trough at the bore hole. Molotsi was seated outside the rondavel sipping 'milo'. It was too hot, so he skimmed the powdered milk from the surface with his thumb and put the cut at his side to cool. A long pink-legged spoonbill found its lost way slowly to the thorny ground, landing sprawl-footed, as if on water, and started to sort through the rubbish of the wood pile at Molotsi's side as it might have sifted through the small fry from the shallow cool-climate stream at home. Molotsi watched and remembered his stalking where the rivers ran all year. How had the white spoonbill strayed so far?

Jan van der Meer came to the door and shaded his eyes against the morning light. The spoonbill stuttered on its feet, then took off, with the cattle, towards the water at the bore hole.

'Have you slept well, Jan?' Molotsi's voice was friendly and he smiled up at his friend in the sun.

'Whooo. I was out last night. Right out.'

'And you're back to Johannesburg today?'

'Yes.' Jan van der Meer came into the sun, but kept his hand on the great crimson bite on his neck. 'Yes. I have to return today.'

'Good fishing, eh? Good fishing?' Jan smiled and stood uneasily at the schoolteacher's side.

'You wouldn't understand, Molotsi, but it'll be hard for me to return to the Republic with this.' He tapped his neck, and his forehead furrowed at the soreness where her teeth had been. 'They notice these things at the border and it could be difficult for me. Johannesburg, it's another world, you know. You wouldn't understand these things, not a black man,' but he spoke respectfully. 'I have a fondness for you, Jan,' said Molotsi, 'but the thing which could have come between us had to be removed. Look. You should have a black neck like mine and your "medal" wouldn't show.' He laughed. 'Still, go with it to the border. Maybe they will see it. It's an export from the free desert. A message from Molotsi.'

REFUGES

by JIM CRACE



Illustration: PAUL WILKES

What the judges had to say

The winning story in the **Socialist Challenge** short story competition was **Refugees** by Jim Crace. We will over the next year attempt to print all the stories mentioned in the paper. The comments of the three judges were as follows:

Terry Eagleton

I chose **Refugees** because I found it a powerful story, with a rather unexpected twist at the end. Its realism is unobtrusive. I was impressed with the elegant economy of his writing as well as its stylistic qualities. My second choice was Sue Aspinall's **The Same Problem From Different Angles**, which was slightly experimental but pleasing none the less. My third choice was Dave Passingham's **Out On The Rolling Sea**. This is uneven, but strong and would need some editing and rewriting before publication.

John Fowles

Three stories stood out for me among the eight finalists. Third place to Pat Kinmount's **Criminal and Liberal**, a recreation of a working class child's murder in Newcastle. Unfortunately the central part (the child's first-person account of her crippling background and the murder) was so good that it made the surrounding framework distinctly cumbersome. There could be a fine, if technically very difficult, novel told from this child's eye view of where the guilt really lies in such cases.

Second place to Stephen Chalke's **Pretty Bubbles in the Air**, a nicely shaded study of the multiple alienations, both personal and social, underlying the friendship between two young men, all done in the context of a West Ham home match. With one or two very small revisions, this would be well worth publishing.

I gave first place to Jim Crace's South African story, **Refugees**. A common failing among the other stories was that their confrontations were too black and white, but Jim Crace's quite literally black and white characters were much more skilfully interwoven, which makes the final moral all the more convincing. The creation of setting, atmosphere and character were also in a class on their own. I look forward to reading more of this obviously gifted writer.

Fay Weldon

1. **Pretty Bubbles in the Air** by Stephen Chalke.

A simple story, written out of a real and not a received experience, properly shaped, and (most difficult to achieve) moving without being sentimental. Stephen Chalke is the kind of a natural writer (and there are few enough of them about) who can find meaning in ordinary experience. He could afford to throw out a few adjectives and be more precise in his use of language, but never mind (what is a distracted look?).

2. **Criminal and Liberal** by Pat Kinmount

Smoothly written, with ease and confidence: an imaginative excursion into worlds of pain and deprivation. If I don't put it first because, for all its efficiency, it gives the feel of a writer standing on the brim of experience, staring into the maelstrom, rather than of one who's dragging himself out, and because it hammers a point or three too hard.

3. **The Same Problem From Different Angles** by Sue Aspinall

Third place in spite of reading more like a draft than a finished work: she didn't solve her own problem, which was how to dovetail general comment and particular people. But a real and generous offering from a good writer to the outside world: pain controlled, indignation restrained and therefore communicable.

We'll all go together when we go

IN APRIL last year over a thousand people gathered at three nuclear sites (Windscale, Cumbria; Sizewell, Suffolk; and Torness, East Lothian) in support of rallies organised by Friends of the Earth and the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (Scram). On a rainy Sunday afternoon in July, perhaps as many as 3,000 people attended a meeting on the shores of Loch Doon in Ayrshire, to express their opposition to the UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) plans to test the suitability of a nearby mountain for the disposal of long-lived radioactive waste.

Such events are in sad contrast to the tens of thousands of demonstrators who are protesting with increasing regularity at nuclear sites in Europe, such as Creys-Malville in France, Kalkar in Germany, and elsewhere. There are several reasons why the situation here is so different.

ENERGY SOURCES

Britain is much more comfortably off as regards energy supply. We have substantial coal reserves, enough for perhaps 200 years, as well as the much-heralded breathing-space offered by North Sea Oil. In addition, because we use energy much more wastefully than most, there is great scope in energy saving, by methods such as comprehensive building insulation. Thus the officially projected dependence on nuclear power can afford to be less ambitious — at least in the short term.

We are not threatened with a very large number of new nuclear stations in the immediate future. Hence, too, Tony Benn, the Secretary of State for Energy's, ongoing 'nuclear debate! There is no need to rush into nuclear expansion — in true British fashion, we have time to pause and think. We have had time for the recently completed 100-day Public Inquiry into British Nuclear Fuels' Windscale plans, and we will have time for the promised inquiry into the UKAEA's plans to build Britain's first commercial fast breeder reactor. Governments elsewhere, faced with the imminent decline in fossil fuels, and anxious to maintain and expand their economies in the traditional way, have no time for the niceties of public debate.

People on the continent also have other important political grievances which find a focus in opposition to nuclear power. To many, subjected to more obvious suppressive measures — such as the restriction of job opportunities — the increasingly desperate insistence of the nuclear establishment that they must build more nuclear power stations looks like just another dangerous aspect of an already socially-destructive political system. Many farmers and villagers too are faced with the immediate threat of a nuclear site. With a history of mass protest, these factors combine with sometimes violent results.

The fact that the control of energy supply rests more visibly in the hands of large private corporations, with no real interests other than their own, can only exacerbate the already widespread discontent over the balance of political power. Alternative energy strategies, based on the smallscale, decentralised use of the sun, wind and waves at least offer the possibility of a society where the control of energy supply and hence our way of life, can pass from

private companies to the people at a community level. That doesn't mean of course that the adoption of renewable energy sources is bound to lead to a better and more equal society — but it would make it easier.

SIR ARNOLD WEINSTOCK

With the noticeable bulk of the nuclear industry in this country (UKAEA, BNFL and the Electricity Boards) state-owned, the position seems superficially different. The commercial interest promoting nuclear power is obscured and not easy to specify — there is room for a good exposé on the subject. One instance provides an interesting indication.

In August 1972, the National Nuclear Corporation was created, during 'rationalisation', as the only British reactor-building company. Half the shares went to Sir Arnold Weinstock's General Electric Company (GEC) which also assumed managerial responsibility. The following year, Sir Arthur Hawkins, the then Chairperson of the Central Electricity Generating Board,

campaign against the mining and export of Australia's extensive uranium reserves. There are two things you can do with uranium — enrich it and put it in atomic bombs, or put it in nuclear power stations. Neither use, they argue, is compatible with a safe and peaceful world. Uranium shipments have been the target of trade union boycotts and increasingly angry protests. The Australian Labour Party, backed by the unions, is now committed to a referendum on uranium mining, the results of which, it has warned, could cause it not to honour contracts made by the Fraser Liberal Government.

In France, workers at the Cap-la-Hague Reprocessing Plant (the French Windscale) are very critical of the Commissariat De L'Energie Atomique and its safety standards. The CFDT union confederation has made a six month study of the plant and is calling for it to be shut down while necessary improvements are made. It has also come out against the reprocessing of foreign spent fuel — the central source of controversy at Windscale.

bine Shop Stewards Committee, realising the limited future of many of the high-technology, defence-connected projects on which they were working, and impelled by the fear of redundancy, in 1975 produced a 'Corporate Plan', which they presented to the management as their view of how Lucas Aerospace should diversify.

In the plan, out of a total of 150 proposals, they recommended further work on about 40, in the areas of oceanics, telechiric machines, transport systems, braking systems, alternative energy sources and medical equipment. Such technologies would, the combine believed, be compatible with their existing skills and plant, and be more socially useful. They have achieved some successes — the management at the Burnley plant have agreed to produce prototype heat-pumps — but there is still a long way to go. In some ways, it is a historic initiative. Workers are beginning to insist not just on the right to work, but for the right to work on socially useful products. In so doing they are explicitly

have tend to concentrate on economics and on the complex social argument against the 'plutonium economy' based on fast breeder reactors, to the detriment, perhaps, of the more readily understandable, but less easily scientifically quantifiable, risks of accidents and leakage of radioactive materials.

A contributory factor is the very poor access to information in Britain. We have an Official Secrets Act and no Freedom of Information Act. The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the 'independent' government regulatory body, have only just begun to let the public see the results of some of their safety studies. If American evidence is anything to go by, the more the public knows about safety, the more it worries.

But unquestioning confidence in the British Nuclear Industry is beginning to be eroded, especially in Scotland. The South of Scotland Electricity Board roused the ire of the Orkadians last year, when they persuaded some landowners to agree to uranium prospecting. What the landowners didn't realise is that the contracts they had signed also gave the SSEB an option to mine the uranium. Protest on the island rose to a crescendo with an unprecedented demonstration involving several hundred people outside the Council offices. As a result the Orkney Islands Council refused permission for the SSEB even to set foot on their land.

At the other end of Scotland, the UKAEA's plans to test-drill in the Galloway hills as part of a research programme to locate a site for the long term (i.e. half a million years or so) disposal of nuclear waste have met with widespread local and national opposition. Because of the industry's initial caginess over the plans and the deep and inevitable fear caused by the awesome nature of the waste problem, the attitude of objectors has hardened. The more people knew, the less they liked. It has now come to the point where the UKAEA and their representatives are simply not trusted and it is difficult to see how they are ever going to be allowed to proceed. Contingency plans in the event of the industry moving in are known to exist.

In the last resort public feeling about nuclear power will be the crucial factor. And the signs are that this feeling becomes not easily definable in conventional 'conservationist' terms. It runs much deeper. People do not want more high technology and the alienation which it implies, — they especially don't want a technology that is unavoidably wedded to humanity's most fearsome weapon. It is the signal for the movement towards a new and saner society. It is past time the movement gained mass support in this country.

By **ROB EDWARDS**, chairperson of SCRAM.

* *The strength of public opposition to nuclear power is going to be shown at two forthcoming events. Friends of the Earth are organising a mass rally in London on 19 March to oppose the Windscale expansion plans, and the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace is organising a mass demonstration on the site of Britain's proposed next nuclear power station at Torness Point, East Lothian, 30 miles east of Edinburgh, on the weekend of 6-7 May 1978. Both protests need support and help. Contact Friends of the Earth, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG, 01-434 1684; SCRAM, 2 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh 3, 031-225 7752.*

The fight against nuclear sites in Britain



following the 'advice' of GEC, announced that they planned to order some 32, 1,300 megawatt Westinghouse Pressurised Water Reactors within the next ten years.

Looking back, the CEGB's plans can be seen for what they really were — a blatant attempt to increase the profits of GEC (they would have built all the stations) without any true reference to social or energy needs. Fortunately an unlikely combination of pressure from the South of Scotland Electricity Board, some trade unions and Friends of the Earth forced the CEGB to abandon its grandiose plans. Its distinctly grudging attitude towards building the Drax B coal-fired station in Yorkshire earlier this year is in startling contrast to its previous nuclear enthusiasm.

TRADE UNIONS

There is an important difference of attitude towards nuclear power in the labour movement in various countries. For instance, the broadly-based alliance of Australian trade-unionists and environmentalists has led the

In Britain the majority of established trade unions has not yet seen through the industry's argument that nuclear power means more jobs. In fact, if one is looking to create job opportunities, nuclear power is perhaps the most stupid and expensive method of so doing. On average it costs about £450,000 to create one permanent job in the nuclear industry, compared with £100,000 in advanced petro-chemical industries, £20,000 in conventional mass production, and £4,000 in small-scale 'alternative technology'. Indeed, it has been strongly argued that to invest heavily in nuclear development, given its very high capital-intensity, would bleed other more socially desirable sectors, such as health and welfare, and thus actually cause unemployment.

LUCAS AEROSPACE

However, some initiatives associated with the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA, 9, Poland Street, London W1V 3DG), are breaking new ground. The now famous Lucas Aerospace Com-

aware of the implications.

'We believe that scientists, engineers and workers in those industries have a profound responsibility to challenge the underlying assumptions of large-scale industry; seek to assert their right to use their skill and ability in the interest of the community at large. In saying that, we recognise that this is a fundamental challenge to many of the economic and ideological assumptions of our society. ('Lucas, An Alternative Plan' IWC Pamphlet No 54)

Many of the union leaders involved in the Lucas Combine wanted to object at the Windscale Inquiry, but were unable to, as they had to toe the line of their national union.

After a while one gets the feeling there is something in about the nuclear debate in Britain that separates it from elsewhere — a feeling that 'we must be alright, because we're British — American reactors might be unsafe, but ours are British-designed and built, and our industry is fully controlled by democratic processes etc ...' Hence anti-nuclear arguments



Wolf Biermann

The old communist
Grandma Meume's Great Prayer
in Hamburg

1
GOD, dear God in Heaven, hear me praying
I call you now as when I was a kid
Why did my poor old father not destroy me
While in my mother's womb I still lay hid
Now that I'm old, a grey and deaf old woman
The whole of my short life was plagued with need
A lot of struggle, God, just for a little bread
I strained my voice for peace in two great wars
And what did I achieve? Soon I'll be dead
O GOD, can't YOU make communism triumph?!

2
God, believe me, man will never do it
I've bent my back to serve the party's good
Remember how I hid Karl Scholz at my place
His guns and all, and even cooked his food
I've grafted day by day for the oppressor
And then that Hitler, him I won't forget
How then our party broke down on its knees
The best all died in concentration camps
The others snuffed it in the war like fleas
O GOD, can't YOU make communism triumph?!

3
Christ, God, if we'd only been spared Stalin
To my mind there was one to assassinate
God, that bastard carried on - forgive me -
Almost like a fascist in a soviet state
And yet he was a communist himself
But still put tons of communists to death
And put the screws on people with his might
And lied, the sod, until the roof fell in
The pig, he really had us on all right
O GOD, can't YOU make communism triumph?!

4
FINAL PRAYER
God, please see my dearest Wolf don't end up
Like his father did behind barbed wire
See his wayward mind is quickly reconciled
To the party which went and kicked him out
And for my sake please make it over there
That peaceful state we want that's rich and free
So that no bugger hops the wall and then
They can pull it down and I'll die happy
To know I didn't trust in you in vain
Dear God, 'cos only then will communism triumph!

Wolf Biermann, *Poems and Ballads*, £1.50, Pluto Press.

Goodbye Richard Nixon

Your California bedroom was red white and blue
You won ten thousand dollars playing poker in the Navy
Your college football team was called The Poets
And you tucked the bottom of your tie into the top of your trousers -
Gave you a sort of safe feeling

You had a music box played Hail to the Chief
Your favourite building was the Lincoln Memorial
Your favourite food was cottage cheese with ketchup
Your favourite Xmas song was Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
And you never wiped your arse

Two Good Things

There's one good thing about a cow-pat:
If you leave it in the sun it dries.
And there's one good thing about capitalism -
it dies.

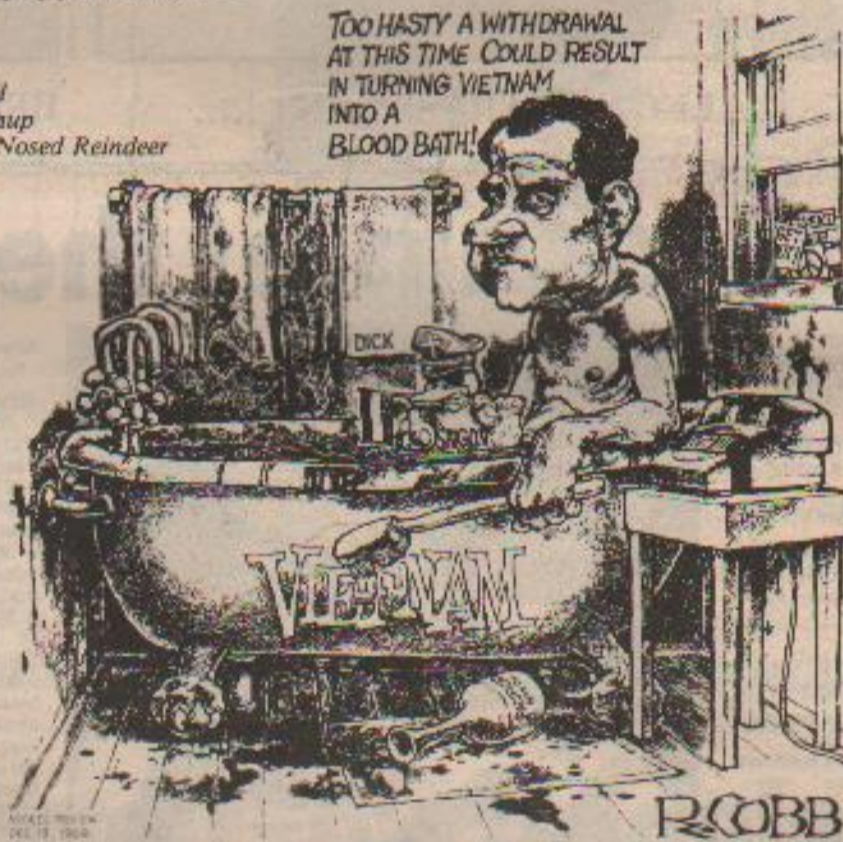
What it Means to be a Man in London

Down London canyons move the high tension
cowboys, gangsters, boxers and rockstars
iron mouths frozen eyes
tougher you look safer you are

saw a snowdrop in the park
kicked it to death
felt really ballsy

Adrian Mitchell

TOO HASTY A WITHDRAWAL
AT THIS TIME COULD RESULT
IN TURNING VIETNAM
INTO A
BLOOD BATH!



Quit Stalling, Call in Stalin

I've got a system
A system a system
I've got a system
And everyone's going to fit in

The white folk the black folk
The brown folk the yellow folk
The men folk the women folk
Yes everyone's going to fit in

And if you don't fit my system
My system my system
If you don't fit my system
There's something the matter with you

You'll be locked up in hospital
Hospital hospital
Locked up in a hospital
With thousands of others like you

Locked up with the misfits
Misfits misfits
Locked up with the misfits
You're going to be there till you die

But I'll be out in the system
The system the system
Working within the system
Having the time of my life

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Pathfinder

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To be black in Britain - 1977



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JFL)



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT LEGAL HARASSMENT BRUTALITY

The answers to all these questions appeared in either Socialist Challenge or its predecessor Red Weekly during 1977. How do you rate? Turn to page 20 for the answers.

Martin's Quiz of the Year

January

1. Riots in Paoing led to talk of 'civil war'. Where?
2. Why was Ramon Mercader in the news?
3. Who was alleged to be a 'security risk' at Transport House?
4. Which civil rights campaigners were officially warned: 'Those who lie on the rails to stop the train of history must expect to get their legs cut off'?
5. Who had to go before 'three wise men' without knowing why?
6. Why did tens of thousands of people take to the streets in Egypt?

February

7. Which magazine was banned by the Southern Irish Government for being 'indecent and obscene'?
8. Who won their equal pay demands by threatening national strike action?
9. Where did more than 40,000 workers go on strike for automatic compensation against inflation?

March

10. Why was a horse called 'Cannonball' in the news?
11. Which Labour MP was

- involved in a punch-up with pro-abortion constituents?
12. Why were the European indoor athletics championships halted?
13. Thirty thousand dockers took unofficial strike action on 21 March. Why?
14. Who were fighting in Shaba province?
15. Where did Tribunits MP Bob Cryer cross a picket line?
16. Why was 'Radio Alice' closed down?

April

17. Whose journey from Africa to America was watched on television by millions?
18. Where were six teachers sacked without notice?

May

19. Which nationalised industry was discovered to be collaborating with the right-wing Economic League?
20. What response to the police murder of five workers in the Basque country was described by CP leader Marcelino Camacho as 'creating a pretext for a Pinochet to intervene'?

June

21. Where were children rescued by poisoning them?
22. What were Lenin and Trotsky doing at the National

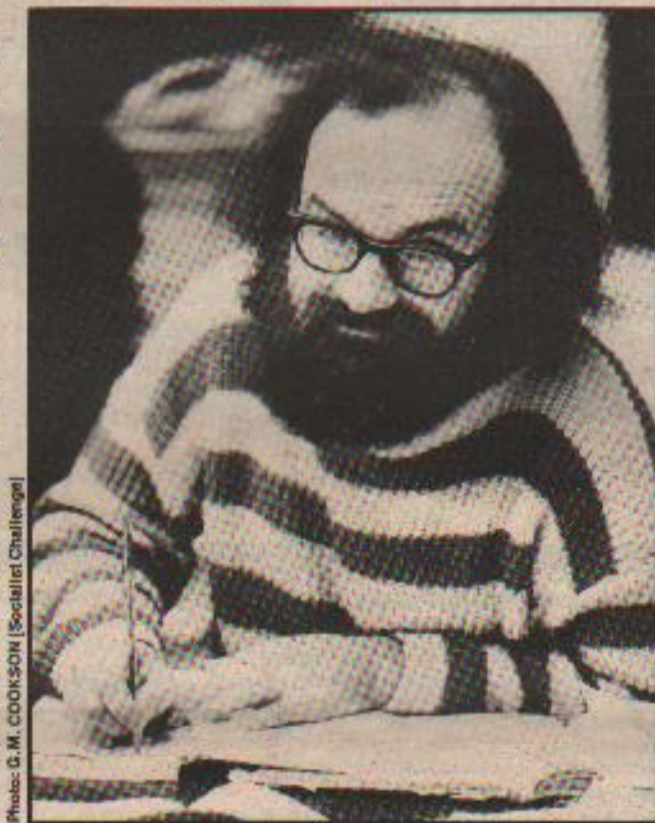


Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Theatre?

23. Who invited dissident Zhores Medvedev to speak and then cancelled the invitation?

24. What new position did Leonid Brezhnev assume?

25. Where did Scotland play a soccer international before

fewer than 18,000 people?

July

26. Where did a Socialist Party leader leave jail to become Industry Minister?
27. What was James Kirkup's connection with the Gay News conviction?
28. Who said: 'We haven't left a party, we have joined the main battle'?
29. Why did a vote by 51 to 48 change the course of the Grunwick dispute?
30. Who was (and still is) held in Northern Ireland on charges of 'possession of illegal documents sometime between January 1976 and March 1977'?
31. Who were fighting in Ogaden province?
32. One person died and a hundred were injured when police attacked a demonstration at Creys-Malville in France. What was it about?
33. Where did the Communist Party lose all its seats in a landslide victory by the 'Uncle-Nephew Party'?

August

34. Why did the Labour Party agent in Birmingham Ladywood quit in a hurry?
35. Who said of the Grunwick dispute: 'A draw is the best result'?

36. Who was arrested in the Ukraine on charges of 'participating in building an anti-Soviet organisation'?

September

37. Whose Nazi background was hushed up?
38. Which well-known Marxist-Leninist was the toast of Fleet Street?

October

39. Where did 'body-snatching' lead to an occupation?
40. We all remember Sir Richard Dobson, but can you name his successor at British Leyland?
41. In which international operation did soldiers of the Special Air Services take the lead?
42. Whose picket line was broken by the RAF?
43. Who signed the Moncloa Pact?
44. Which well-known politician was given the job of updating the European Convention of Human Rights?
45. Who denied trying to slit her throat with a bread knife?

November

46. Who launched a fund appeal for £100,000 to fight the National Front?
47. On what issue was the leadership defeated at the Communist Party Congress?
48. Where was a Minister called Lynch forced to resign in a corruption scandal?
49. Who was denounced by an American union leader at Yale for 'spitting in the face of the workers'?
50. What brought tears to the eyes of the Shah of Iran?

BOOKMARX CLUB

Book club for socialists
Selections for first quarter 1978
List A
Conquered City
Victor Serge
No Mean Fighter
Harry McShane
Ford Antisport
CIS
The Locked Room
Spivak & Vukob
Mulling
John Prebble
Unemployed Struggles
and Hamington
List B
Selected writings
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The Other Cinema

SHIRIN'S WEDDING

Helma Sanders, West Germany, 1976, 116 minutes
Shirin's Wedding is about a Turkish woman who flees her
village to avoid an arranged marriage and goes off to join
her lover, a migrant labourer working in West Germany.
Helma Sanders has taken a huge step in this film, in opening
up the 'new German cinema' as a woman for women.

Friday, 16 December to Friday 23 December 8.45pm
Tuesday, 27 December to Thursday 5 January 9pm

STAND TOGETHER

Newsreel Collective, Great Britain, 1977, 52 minutes
Three film crews cover all the events surrounding the
Grunwick mass picket on 11 July this year.
Friday, 9 December to Thursday 15 December 8.45pm

The last issue of INPRECOR

Major extracts from speeches by
Aitihasser, Bittelheim, Claudia
and Rosenda at a recent
symposium on 'Power and opposi-
tion in post-revolutionary
society' are printed in the latest
issue of Inprecor (No. 18, New
Series), together with a long
introduction by Ernest Mandel.
Price 30p. Inprecor is available
from The Other Bookshop, almost
all IMG branches, or by post from
Inprecor, PO Box 50, London N1
2XP, and make all cheques/PDs
payable to 'Intercontinental Press'.

The next issue, out at the end of
this month, will be devoted entirely
to the world economy and will be
the last in the present series of
Inprecor. As from the New Year,
Inprecor will be combined with
Intercontinental Press in a new
weekly reflecting the views of the
Fourth International. Subscription
rates for the new journal are: £9 for 6
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ductory offer of 10 issues. [Rates
for Continental Europe are £13.00
and £4 respectively.] All new
subscribers will also receive the
world economy issue free. Send
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2XP, and make all cheques/PDs
payable to 'Intercontinental Press'.

Feminism and motherhood

The idea of womankind redeemed from Eve's sin through procreation has been a persistent theme within Christianity since the days of Augustine and Aquinas; the symbol of Mary, the mother of God. Against this idea feminists have asserted a larger world for women. Women's whole existence should not be only — in the words of Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 — to 'procreate and rot', writes SHEILA ROWBOTHAM

But the dominant ideas of motherhood are not the same as the biological reality of pregnancy, childbirth and suckling and the social experience of child-raising. These different aspects of motherhood have caused considerable confusion among feminists.

One response has been to ignore the specific biological predicament; the other has been to accept the social features, child-raising, and with them the ideological characterisation of women as soft, caring, nurturing beings as biologically determined.

EQUAL RIGHTS

The middle class feminists who demanded equal rights in the nineteenth century tended to make demands for education, work and the vote. Even the vote was to be only for unmarried women at first. An obvious problem with equal rights is that they ignore class differences and do not cover women's oppression as mothers. By the late nineteenth century feminists were using other arguments borrowed from the romantic tradition which stressed the importance of the emotional, caring role of women as mothers. The social division of labour between men and women was accepted as natural.

These feminists sought to give value to motherhood by presenting social nurturing as a biological characteristic. They demanded reforms for women by using the cult of motherhood and turning it on its head: women's biological capacity for bearing children and the social relationship of women with children intertwined with a twist of the dominant ideas about motherhood to imply women's superiority. It was in this context that feminists began to assert women's right to decide when or even whether to have children.

The fear that women would refuse motherhood was making people talk of a birth strike in the



early twentieth century. Behind this fear was a racial and class terror that the white middle class would be overwhelmed by the colonised and the poor.

Although Marxists were clear about the inadequacy of both equal rights and the change of confusing the dominant ideas in society with the reality of people's lives there was no clear theoretical commitment to control over

biological reproduction. The domestic division of labour between the sexes was regarded as natural. Marxists thought that childcare would become part of the work done by society, not by individual women in the family. But they assumed that it would continue to be done by women.

From the period around the First World War, women in the socialist movement raised both sexuality and motherhood as important issues. They demanded better conditions for pregnant women. A minority argued for women's control over their bodies. But they also accepted that child care was women's work.

SOCIALIST MEN

There are hints that in a pragmatic day-to-day kind of way, socialist men were sometimes left with the baby when women were very active in the socialist movement. There was also in the working class movement a practical recognition of the needs of mothers and of children. There were socialist Sunday schools, children's camps and parties. The Women's Co-operative Guild discussed practical aspects of mothering. In the 1920s Lansbury's *Labour Weekly* car-

ried advice about babies and advertised baby clothes to be passed on.

These were part of a wider socialist culture which touches many areas of everyday life. The problem was that it was predominantly a defensive culture. It did not carry ways towards an alternative way of living. There was certainly no challenge to the dominant ideas of motherhood.

FEMINE MYSTIQUE

After the Second World War the feminine mystique and the cult of motherhood assumed a new hold. Psychological justifications replaced religious explanation. Ironically, more effective birth control, state population policies, the demand for women's labour outside the home, changes in the organisation and structure of production, and the growth of welfare were undermining ideas about procreation, pleasure, women's domestic role, equal pay and women's relationship to paid work and the family.

Initially the women's liberation movement attacked the myth of motherhood and demanded a change in the division of labour in practice by saying men should share domestic labour equally.

This was subsequently developed theoretically as a challenge to the sexual division of labour. Control over reproduction, sexuality and the circumstances of child bearing also have been important.

CAMPAIGNS

There have been campaigns which have demanded changes for women with children; family allowances, nurseries, legal and financial improvements for single parent families, including lesbian mothers. But there has been less discussion about how we as socialist feminists approach the social relationship of being mothers. The dilemma is how we attack what is oppressive about the idea and reality of motherhood now without denying the feelings and understandings which women have gained through being mothers and how we recognise this real experience without freezing it into the ideal of the earth mother. We need to tackle this dilemma in theory and in practice, because it is essential as part of how we can reimagine ourselves and also because it contains a new possibility for men.

It would be grotesque indeed to make a socialism in which men were excluded from nurturing. It is moreover a dilemma of great significance because it raises the fundamental problem of how we challenge the world as it is without dismissing the experience of people who are oppressed.



ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI Selected Writings

Translated by Alix Holt, this is the first collection of writings by one of the most remarkable figures of the Russian revolution. Kollontai, the only woman on the Bolshevik central committee, wrote copiously between the 1900s and her death in 1952, and this book shows how her ideas developed. There are pieces on women during and after the revolution, on social democracy, the workers' opposition, sexual politics and the family, as well as some fiction. Commentaries by Alix Holt set the writings in their historical and biographical context.

£2.95 Paperback / £7.95 Hardback

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The Werewolf—by Angela Carter



IT IS a northern country; they have cold weather. The cold gets into their bones, their brains, their hearts.

Cold; tempest; wild beasts in the forest. It is a hard life. Their

houses are built of logs, dark and smoky within; there will be a crude icon of the virgin behind a guttering candle, the leg of a pig hung up to cure, a string of drying mushrooms. A bed, a stool, a table. Nothing else.

The devil is a living presence to the upland woodsmen. He's often been sighted in the graveyards, those bleak and touching townships of the dead where the graves are marked with portraits of the deceased in the nail style and there are no flowers to place in front of them, no flowers grow there, so they put out little offerings, loaves, sometimes a cake that the bears come lumbering from the margins of the forest to snatch away.

Wreaths of garlic on the doors keep out the vampires. A blue-eyed child born feet first on the night of St. John's Eve will have second sight. When they discover a witch — some old woman whose cheeses ripen when her neighbours do not, another old woman whose black cat, on, sinister! follows her about, they strip the crope, search her for

marks, for the supernumerary nipple her familiar sucks. They soon find it. Then they stone her to death.

Winter the cold weather. Go and visit grandmother, who has been sick. Take her the oatcakes I've baked on the hearthstone for her, and a little pot of butter.

The good child does as her mother bids. Five miles trudge through the forest; do not leave the path because of the bears, the wild bear, the starving wolves. Here, take your father's hunting knife — you know how to use it.

The child had a coat of verminous sheepskin to keep out the cold. She knew the forest too well to fear it but she must always be on her guard. When she heard that freezing howl of a wolf, she grabbed hold of her knife, dropped her basket and turned on the beast.

It was huge, its eyes were red, its chops grizzled, any but a mountaineer's child would have fainted from sheer terror at the sight of it but she did not. It went for her throat immediately, as wolves do, but she made a great

swipe at it with her father's knife and slashed off its right forepaw.

THE WOLF emitted a gulping, almost sob when it saw what had happened to it; wolves are cowards at heart. Then it went lolloping off disconsolately between the trees as well as it could on three legs, leaving a trail of blood behind it. The child wiped the blade of her knife clean on her apron, wrapped up the wolf's paw in the cloth in which her mother had packed the oatcakes and went on towards her grandmother's house. It soon came on to snow so thickly the path and any footsteps, tracks or spoor that might have been upon it were obscured.

She found her grandmother so sick she had taken to her bed, the covers pulled up to her chin. The old woman had fallen into a fitful slumber, moaning and shaking so dreadfully the child guessed she had a fever. She felt her forehead, it burned. She shook out the cloth from her basket, to use it to make the old woman a cold compress, and the wolf's paw fell to the floor.

But it was no longer a wolf's paw. It was a hand, chopped off at the wrist, a hand gnarled with work and freckled with old age. There was a wedding ring on the third finger and a wart on the index finger. By the wart, she knew it for her grandmother's hand.

She pulled back the sheet but the old woman woke up, at that, and began to struggle, squawking and shrieking like a thing possessed. But the child was a strong child and held her down long enough to see the cause of her fever — there was a bloody stump where her right hand should have been, festering already, oozing pus.

The child crossed herself and cried out so loud the neighbours heard her and came rushing in. They knew the wart on her hand at once for a witch's nipple, they drove the old woman, all in her shift as she was, out into the snow with sticks, beating her old carcass as far as the edge of the forest, and pelted her with stones until she fell down dead. The child cleaned up the mess in her grandmother's cottage and lived there happily. Angela Carter 1977

Striking Children

by Martin Hoyle

When I was small, I went to school
 And I learnt what was mine and what was yours
 And when I'd learnt all they had to teach
 It didn't seem to be all to me.
 For I had no breakfast to eat
 But others, they had some;
 And so I learnt again, all
 About the nature of the class enemy,
 And I learnt the whys and wherefores
 Of the rift that runs through the world,
 Dividing us just as surely as the rain
 Falls down from above.

Bertolt Brecht



THE CHRISTMAS image of the babe in the manger is with us again. The babe grows into Charles Wesley's gentle Jesus meek and mild and school children all over the country are taught this model of behaviour (Religious education being the only compulsory school subject).

It represents our present myth of childhood in which the child is asexual, apolitical, wholly dependent on adults, never engaged in serious activities such as work or culture. Particularly at Christmas children are celebrated sentimentally as playthings — they are played with and all they can do is play, hence the vast sale of toys at this time of year.

Clearly this is a particular interpretation of the story of Jesus, as Blake points out:

Was Jesus Humble? or did he
 Give any proofs of Humility?
 When but a Child he ran away
 And left his Parents in dismay.

It is crucial to look at different interpretations historically to see that childhood is a social invention and not a natural state.

In the Middle Ages children were dressed exactly like adults, they played the same games as adults. Sexual matters were not hidden from them. Often at the age of seven they were apprenticed and left home. A twenty-four year old man could be found in the same class as an eleven year old child. In the sixteenth century Thomas Platter, aged ten, went around the schools of Europe for five years with a student five years older in charge of him. The youngest children from the age of five could wear a sword. Children of eleven years old joined the army and you could be a lieutenant by the age of fourteen. As late as 1724 Defoe argued that all children over the age of four or five could earn their own bread.

The invention of childhood as a separate state corresponds with the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The sons of the rising bourgeoisie were the first modern children as they had to be separated off from working activities and sent to school to undergo a long training in preparation for their adult working lives. The fact that they were male and middle class is significant. Girls could learn their future work in the home and so did not need schooling. Similarly it is clear from the way working class children had to work in the mines, potteries and mills that there was no childhood for them.

It is the opposition to this exploitation of child labour that has led socialists to take children out of the factories and off the land and put them into schools till fourteen, fifteen, and now sixteen years of age. It is understandable when you read what Engels reports on children working in the potteries:

The hard labour, the irregularity of the hours, the frequent nightwork, and especially the great heat of the working place (100 to 130 Fahrenheit), engender in children general debility and disease, stunted growth, and especially affections of the eye, bowel

complaints, and rheumatism and bronchial affections. Many of the children are pale, have red eyes, often blind for weeks at a time, suffer from violent nausea, vomiting, coughs, colds and rheumatism. When the glass is withdrawn from the fire, the children must often go into such heat that the boards on which they stand catch fire under their feet. The glass-blowers usually die young of debility and chest affections.

However Marx and Engels make it clear in *The Communist Manifesto* that it is not children's work as such that they wish to abolish. The tenth demand reads: 'Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.'

Similarly the Paris Commune's Education Commission claims 'the right to a complete education and training corresponding to the inclinations and abilities of each individual and enabling him actually to begin working in his chosen occupation'.

Marx often remarked what he liked best about Jesus was his love of children, but children can be loved without being separated off as if they were a different species. It is with particular regard to work, sex and politics that we deny children their humanity.

You only have to look at children's books to see the image of childhood that is presented by adults to children in this country — Janet and John, Peter and Jane. Compare a couple of books for a similar age group which have been published in China where very young children are engaged in real productive work in their schools. *Little Sisters of the Grassland* is the story of two Mongolian girls, aged eleven and nine, who battle through a blizzard for a whole day and night to protect their flock of sheep.

And in *Secret Bulletin* a boy and a girl before the revolution are involved in printing and distributing revolutionary bulletins. Significantly it is the girl who takes the initiative; she knows more about how to print the bulletins than the boy, she thinks quickly to save him getting caught, and she gets beaten in order to protect him.

Recently there has been a growing interest in the political side of childhood, largely as a result of the political actions of school children. These include large-scale truancy, disruption of lessons, demonstrations, leafletting, and strikes.

As a result it has been discovered that political action by school children is not new. Mutinies took place in French schools in the seventeenth century. They took the form of strikes, picketing, sometimes even armed riots. In the eighteenth century England the situation was the same. At Winchester the boys occupied the school for two days and hoisted the red flag. In 1818 two companies of troops with fixed bayonets had to be called in to suppress a rising of the pupils. At Rugby the pupils set fire to their books and desks and withdrew to an island which had to be taken by



Bedtime Stories



... and the next day.

assault by the army. More important, Dave Marson revealed in his History Workshop pamphlet 'Children's Strikes in 1911' that thousands of working class children up and down the country came out on strike that year. As the *Hull Daily News* wrote:

Hull escapes little in the way of trouble, and so it came to pass yesterday that hundreds of school-boys came out on strike. Hull has thus been involved in practically every phase of unrest which has troubled the country during the past few months. For weeks there has been a feeling of anxiety as to what might happen next. First the sailors and the dockers; then the millers, cement workers, timber workers, railway men, news boys, factory girls and now the school-boys.

Strike committees were formed, marches and flying pickets organised, statements made to the press. Their demands included shorter hours, no caning, no homework, payment for attendance, free pencils and rubbers, a weekly half-day holiday. There is even a report that strikers at Risinghill School in Islington included children as young as three.

SUPPORT

From the same period comes the story of the Burston School strike. In 1914 two teachers were dismissed from their jobs in a village school in Norfolk and the pupils came out on strike to support them, led by a thirteen year-old girl called Violet Potter. Another girl described what happened:

Violet Potter brought a paper to school with all our names on it, and all who were going on strike had to put a cross against their name. Out of seventy-two children sixty-six came out on strike. The first morning our mothers sent the infants because they thought they did not matter, but in the afternoon they too stopped and only six answered the bell.

Since 1968 when the French schools' action committees played an important part in the May events, school students in this country have begun to get organised, initially the Schools Action Union and Free Schools Campaign, and more recently the National Union of School Students, set up in 1972. Their main demands this year have been a full comprehensive education system, no corporal punishment or school uniforms, no sexism in schools, grants for school students, no education cuts, no secret files, democratic control of schools. The most depressing result has been the general lack of support and even hostility from the main teachers' union, the National Union of Teachers.

When the sixteen year old seamstress Emma Ries stood before the examining magistrate in Czernowitz She was asked to explain why She had distributed pamphlets which Called for revolution — a criminal offence. In reply she stood up and sang The Internationale. As the examining magistrate shook his head She shouted at him: 'Stand up! This is the Internationale!'

Bertolt Brecht

This is an extract from a book called *Changing Childhood*, edited by Martin Hoyle, to be

published next year by the Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative.

The science of food production Bread to burn!

While you're stuffing yourself silly this Christmas, just give a thought to the managers of the world's food industry and their problem. Their problem is not how to produce enough food to feed 500 million starving people. In fact it is the reverse: how not to produce too much food. CHARLIE CLUTTERBUCK reports.

Contrary to what agricultural scientists, environmentalists, you, and most of the Third World think, their problem is not whether there are too many people or whether the climate and resources can stand increased food production, but is normally quite simply one of the capitalist food industry 'suffers' from a chronic tendency to overproduce — for the market. Not enough food can be bought to feed the voracious appetite of capitalist accumulation. Only under capitalism could there be such a problem.

Take the continued overproduction of wheat in North America since the turn of the century. This became especially serious during the depression of 1929-30 when a massive surplus threatened 'wholesale bankruptcy and the welfare of the entire nation'. It was suggested that 12-15 million acres be removed from production. During the 1950s and 60s such 'land banks' became a regular feature of the US economy and by 1972 had reached 70 million acres — greater than the total land surface of the UK.

Not was this the only way the US got rid of its surplus. In the First World War wheat was supplied, via Belgium, to both sides. In the second World War the International Committee on Food for Small Democracies was founded. After the war, the Marshall Plan supplied enormous quantities to Europe. Since then, under Public Law 480, 25 billion dollars worth of wheat has been shipped across the world as food aid — which just happens to create dependency on the U.S. through the technology necessary to utilise its varieties of wheat, and through replacement of native staple foods such as rice, maize and yams. Needless to say, the Russian Grain Robbery furthered the ends of the U.S. at least as much as those of the countries for which the wheat was destined.

Yet what about the well-known shortages and recent food price rises? Look at coffee; the present shortage stems from the frost in Brazil in 1975, but the average amount of production in Brazil has been regulated by the Government since 1905 through control of the acreage planted. So overproduction is the norm. At the same time food has become yet another arena for the speculators, hence forcing prices up.

And it is concern about overproduction for the market that is the central motive, not only for trading agreements and marketing boards, but also for the Common Agricultural Policy of the EEC. This has the aim of setting up a free trade area within relatively tightly controlled tariff barriers (to challenge U.S. hegemony). There are now two centres of overproduction in the world — witness the butter mountains and wine lakes.

Overproduction can also be used to explain increased meat production. Where better to get rid of wheat than in meat for the 'up-market'. Likewise, for the EEC, where better to get rid of its surplus dried milk than by feeding it to cows? It is used for this purpose in Germany, although there have been complaints from British farmers, being more expensive than imported soya!

The need to control market forces has some peculiar effects. The size of potatoes, frozen peas, the shape of carrots, the protein and water content of wheat and food additives are all 'controlled' by 'standards' supposedly set scientifically, yet funny enough, these standards shift each year.

So it would seem that the standards (set by the EEC and marketing boards) are there to protect the market — not you. They enable the larger growers, with well sprayed and evenly constituted crops, to gain access to the markets at the expense of the smaller, more diverse cropping farmers. They are of particular benefit for the large food processors (Unilever in the guise of Bachelors or whatever) to control the market.

But surely this is not the only way 'science' is related to food production. Doesn't overproduction of food simply arise from improved techniques? Ironically it does not. The science and technology of food production under capitalism make it easier to organise production and distribution, but do not necessarily contribute to improving yields. In some areas of production, such as peas, growing is now totally determined by the agribusiness corporations, who decide not only the time of planting and harvesting, but also sprays and seed types, and they control credit.

PROFITABLE CROPS

In general, where 'capitalist rationalisation' has led to large-scale mechanisation, increased labour productivity and utilising the best land to grow the most profitable crops has been the incentive, rather than increasing yields over wide areas of land. What this does is concentrate production on some areas of land and marginalise production on others even more. Even in the 'green revolution' where 'miracle' strains of wheat and rice, together with irrigation, fertilisers, pesticides and machinery dramatically increased yields on small areas of land, overall food production did not rise.

Only the rich farmers could afford the more expensive seed and the necessary fertilisers, so along with the wealth of this few, there increased rural depopulation, unemployment and starvation. The potential capacity for food production is enormous but while it is under the control of capitalism it will always be geared to its needs and interests. Capitalism feeds profits, not people!



WINNER of the Socialist Challenge After Dinner Speaker award.

Charlie Clutterbuck is a member of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, which contributes a monthly column to Socialist Challenge.



Left-Overs, our Xmas game, aims to test the wit and skill of its players, while incorporating an element of chance. It is a simple game suitable for any number of players. Left-Overs involves players assessing others' performance. We would draw your attention to the fact that Socialist Challenge favours positive discrimination for oppressed sections of society.

To play Left-Overs you need the centre pages of the paper; 2 dice; a pack of playing cards; coins to mark players' positions on the board; pens and paper. The playing cards should be placed in 2 piles — red and black.

RULES

1. The game ends when one player arrives on the Left-Over plate.
2. Play begins with the smallest person throwing the dice. The player advances according to the number thrown. The player on the left follows suit.
3. The board is divided into 3 types of squares — blank, red and black.
4. Red Squares: These correspond to the red cards (hearts and diamonds) in the pack. A player landing on a red square takes the top card in the red pile, compares its value to the key on the board, and fulfills the instructions. Player on the left then throws the dice.
5. Black squares: As for red squares but with clubs and spades.
6. The used red and black cards are placed beside their respective piles and when all have been used are reshuffled.
7. Questions: Some of the cards ask players to answer questions. The player can justify one of the answers provided or think of their own answer. A player has a maximum of one minute to find an answer and a maximum of one minute to speak. This answer is assessed by the other players. They simultaneously mark the answer between 1 and 10, and then show the marks together. The score is averaged and rounded up or down. The player moves forward according to this figure.
8. A player who refuses to answer a question must go back 10 squares. Players who strongly disagree with an answer have the right to explain the score awarded.



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FINISH

The rules are on Page 11.
Please read them before
you read anything else on
this page

Designer: Sandra Shafee

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1977.



A♦
You go to see the convener. Speaking to a white man you ignore the black person by his side. She turns out to be the convener. Back 5 places.

2♦
Go babysitting. Can't change a nappie. Back 2.

3♦
Miss as many turns as it takes to make coffee for all in the room.

4♦
Russian Jew requests visa to Israel. Justify? 1 minute.

5♦
Ian Murray gets on your bus. Denounce him for 1 minute.

6♦
The Salvation Army asks you for money.

7♦
You have 1 minute to explain why their salvation lies with a red army.

7♦
Late for T.U. meeting. Stop the game and take a collection for Socialist Challenge.

8♦
Game needs evening up. Sing the first verse of a well known song.

9♦
You're trying to sneak into Transport House. Pretend you're a famous Labour traitor. 1 Minute.

10♦
Meet Scargill at Grunwick HQ. Denounce his saxiam. 1 minute.

J♦
Should dope be legalised? Pass the joint and explain for 1 minute.

8♦
Caught with a copy of Charter 77. Go to psychiatric hospital for one turn.

K♦
Sue Silman crosses staff picket line. Go back 2.

A♥
The SWP agrees to a joint election slate. Advance 2.

2♥
Accept a drink from your Union Gen. Sec. Move back 2.

3♥
Your sister wants to join the police. Miss a go to dissuade her.

4♥
A Poole win. Socialist Challenge finds out. Back one square.

5♥
Donate a filing cabinet to Socialist Challenge. Go forward 4.

6♥
A woman member of the FBU comes to speak. You fail to recognise her. Back 3.

7♥
A soldier bound for

8♥
Ireland thumbs a lift. Drive past 2 squares.

8♥
Collect money for Long Kesh prisoners at Rangers football match. Go forward 3 but spend a turn in hospital.

9♥
Accept a managerial post. Back 3.

10♥
Invited to the Reform Club, you take your tape recorder. Forward 2.

J♥
Secure Marilyn Rees' deportation under the official Secrets Act. Forward 4.

8♥
Stick in a lift with Mary Whitehouse during lift engineers strike. Miss a go to recover.

K♥
Get an NHS abortion in Birmingham. Forward 3 for this minor miracle.



A♣
You are Tom Robinson on the verge of success. You
a) Sign a 2 year contract with EMI
b) Deepen your commitment by playing in small clubs
c) Insert a veto on what is released

2♣
A wizard grants you one wish. You
a) Wish for the growth of your favourite organisation
b) Wish for the armed insurrection
c) Denounce the wizard for being an ideological apparition

3♣
You are Marx returned from the grave. You
a) Return to the British Museum to finish Capital
b) Engage in debates about the interpretation of your work
c) Help build the International

4♣
Of the following you would most like to have written
a) Lenin's imperialism
b) Hamlet
c) Einstein's Theory of Relativity

5♣
As a teacher you find the word 'lesbian' chalked up. You
a) Deny it and discuss it
b) Agree and discuss it
c) Rub it off and forget it

6♣
Your boss has a hernia. You
a) Send a get-well card
b) Call on NUPE not to treat him
c) Nail his slippers to the floor

7♣
A French footballer fouls Keegan. You shout
a) Send the 'frog' off
b) The ref's a scab
c) Workers stand together, mes freres

8♣
You hold an FBU meeting. You invite
a) Gordon Honeycombe
b) A Bryant & May shop steward
c) The local arsonist

9♣
An SS officer is on a phone-in. You
a) Turn it off
b) Hurl abuse at the radio
c) Organise a picket

10♣
You are called for jury service at a rape trial. You
a) Get a doctor's note and don't attend
b) Vote guilty
c) Vote innocent

J♣
Red Rum is running in the National. You
a) Back it because of the name
b) Treat it as a diversion from the class struggle
c) Demand it is nationalised

Q♣
A group of Mormons knock at the door. You
a) Call the police
b) Give them Gerry Healy's address
c) Chain them to the bed and...

K♣
Tony Benn sits next to you in the cinema. You
a) Ask for his autograph
b) Move to the seat on his left
c) Drop a choc-ice in his lap

A♣
Your firm wins a £50 million order from Chile. You
a) Demand a pay rise
b) Boycott the order
c) Quit

2♣
Your local greengrocer is a fascist. You
a) Shop elsewhere
b) Demand he stops stocking South African apples
c) Break his legs

3♣
A restaurant has no service charge. You
a) Tip
b) Explain the need for unions
c) Pretend not to notice

4♣
NAFF is leafletting your market. You
a) Refuse a leaflet politely

b) Organise a mass sale of Socialist Challenge
c) Buy rotten fruit to pelt them

5♣
The man on your shopfloor put up a pin-up. You
a) Get the shop steward to remove it
b) Remove it, demanding union support
c) Replace it with a male pin-up

6♣
You are on the selection panel for the new England soccer manager. You pick
a) Brian Clough
b) Germaine Greer
c) Dennis Howell

7♣
An old friend sends you a sub to Playboy/Playgirl. You
a) Keep them for the articles
b) Send them a sub to Sporn Rib
c) Lose a friend

8♣
Your pub refuses to serve pint glasses to women. You
a) Refer the pub to the EOC
b) Boycott it
c) Say it's for a man

9♣
You are on a Right To Work march. You are offered a job. You
a) Ask for time off with pay to finish the march
b) Accept it with relief, and give John Deason as a reference
c) Refuse it on principle

10♣
You are invited to a wedding — your own. You justify it by
a) Tax reasons
b) Placate the family
c) True love

J♣
Your 3-year-old child asks if Father Christmas exists. You
a) Say yes
b) Evade the question
c) Rationally deny it

Q♣
Your plane is hijacked. You
a) Discuss tactics with the hijackers
b) Shut your mouth and hope
c) Say George Habash is a friend and can they let you off at the next stop, please

K♣
Your street is having a Jubilee party. You
a) Go and get pissed
b) Say 'why wait 25 years to get together'
c) Denounce it as an NF plot



START



What was the political situation in Palestine when Christ was born?
 What were his own class origins and how did they affect his teachings?
 What are the unanswered questions about his role in the struggle against the Romans?
 At this time of feasting and goodwill it seems appropriate to ask

WAS JESUS A COLLABORATOR?

JESUS OF NAZARETH lived in a time of political turmoil. Between the lines of the Gospels, which are our main source of information, this comes through loud and clear. But it is never brought to the surface. The last thing that the writers of the Gospels wanted was to drag in politics. They wanted to extract Jesus from his real historical situation and put across a universal message, which could apply to anybody. Above all, they did not want to tie Jesus in with the fate of the Jewish people who, at the time of writing, had just been crushed by the Roman legions after a bitter resistance war.

However, the actual situation in which Jesus lived is plain enough. In 63BC Palestine was conquered by a Roman army, led by Pompey, and made part of the Roman province of Syria. Pompey, accompanied by his military staff, strode into the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple, which had been defended by its priests after the reigning king had opened the gates of the city to the invaders.

From that moment on, until the final showdown 133 years later in 70AD, the history of Palestine is mainly a story of Jewish resistance which took place during a time which was fundamentally one of Roman expansion. Jesus of Nazareth lived right in the middle of this period and, despite his well-known attachment to the other-worldly he could hardly have been blind to what was going on.

It is not certain exactly when Jesus was born. All we can say is that it was during the reign of the Emperor Augustus, who died in 14AD, and that during Jesus' adult life Augustus' successor Tiberius was on the throne. Jesus may have seen the end of Herod's reign, as an infant. Certainly the events which followed Herod's death must have impressed him, either as childhood memories or as stories which were told him as he grew up.

HEROD'S DEATH

HEROD'S DEATH produced a crisis. Herod had been servile to the Romans and cruel and extortionate to his own people. He was loathed and hated. Naturally, when he died there was general rejoicing and the national movement came to the surface again. There had already been rumblings shortly before the end of his reign.

A student demonstration, more or less led by two Pharisees, Judas and Matthias, had culminated in the tearing down of the Roman eagle which Herod had displayed

in the Temple to please his masters. The ringleaders were burned alive. When Herod finally died, there was an uprising in Jerusalem. The procurator, Sabinus, the top Roman official in Palestine, immediately moved troops into the capital to maintain law and order and also to seize Herod's treasury. During the festival of Pentecost, fighting broke out between pilgrims to the Temple and these Roman troops. Sabinus was pinned down in the garrison.

ARMED UPRISING

At the same time, there was another armed uprising in Galilee, led by a partisan leader called Judas, known as the Galilean, whose father had earlier been executed by Herod for insurgency. This was a large-scale uprising in which the partisans took Herod's palace in Sepphoris and seized the arms which were stored there. Sepphoris was only a few miles from Nazareth, where Jesus spent his childhood.

About an hour's walk away, in fact. The Romans had to send two legions, that is, twelve thousand troops, down from Syria to suppress these revolts and rescue Sabinus. During the fighting the Temple was badly damaged and Sepphoris was completely destroyed. When the Romans had restored order they crucified 2,000 rebels.

Palestine is a comparatively small country. Herod's kingdom of Judea was not much bigger than Wales, about twice the size of Northern Ireland. It did not extend so far south as Israel does today, but it covered a fringe of what is Syria and Jordan. The population — about five million probably — was not homogeneously Jewish. The Jews were concentrated in the Jerusalem area — Judea proper — and in Galilee, to the north, where they were fairly recent settlers.

In between was Samaria, where the Samaritans lived. The Samaritans had their own religion which was a variant of Judaism. For example, they did not recognise the Temple, but had their own holy place on a mountain in Samaria. In the towns there were a number of Greeks and Hellenized Syrians or Phoenicians, who had first come in the wake of Alexander's armies and now identified with the Romans. Herod had encouraged further immigration of Greeks and had built a number of new towns for them, including a new port and capital Caesarea, which nationalistic and pious Jews would not live in because it was dominated by

irreligious monuments such as a theatre and a racetrack.

This divided country, split by national and religious differences, had some of the features of Northern Ireland or Cyprus. The Jewish national movement took a religious form; it was religion which bound the nation together. The leaders of the Zealots, as the guerrilla partisans were known, were often ultra-religious, and religion was one of the main two issues around which opposition to the Roman occupation crystallised. There were uprisings in the late Thirties, only a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus, when the Emperor Caligula wanted to put up a statue of himself in the Temple. Ten years after that there was a big riot when a Roman soldier on guard on a roof overlooking the Temple made an obscene gesture to the pilgrims.

The second issue was economic: the Roman tax appropriations. Rome did not tax its own citizens but relied on wringing what it could out of subject peoples. The system was laid down officially and then the actual tax collection was left to private enterprise, on something like a tender basis. Roman troops backed up the tax collectors.

Naturally tax collectors were regarded as collaborators with the Romans and there were frequent attempts to sabotage the system and boycott it. Quirinius' census in 6AD was designed by the Romans to help implement tax collection and it provoked widespread resistance and armed struggle, which was not subdued for some time, right during the childhood of Jesus. Once again Galilee was the focus of the revolt, but this time there was heavy fighting in the south as well, led by a shepherd called Athronges. Thousands were killed by the Romans during this period.

DIRECT RULE STARTS

The census was particularly resented because it marked the beginning of direct rule by Rome. The puppet regime was abandoned by the Romans shortly after Herod's death. His son was exiled and the Procurator given full powers, in Judea at least.

In Galilee and in South-East Syria, the Golan Heights area, two other sons of Herod were allowed to stay on as autonomous rulers. Generally speaking, the Romans changed Procurators quite rapidly. Pontius Pilate, who lasted nine years, from 27 to 36 AD, was an exception to the rule. Pilate was intensely hated and this loathing shows through all the Jewish

source documents which remain. He was both harsh and corrupt. When he took money from the Temple treasury there were massive demonstrations against him.

He suppressed them by putting troops into the crowd in plain clothes, with concealed weapons, who suddenly leapt into action at a given signal. In the Gospels, there are references to the killing of Galileans, always trouble makers, and to riots in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death, while the word used to describe the two 'thieves' crucified with Jesus is the same generally used to describe guerrillas, rather like 'bandits'.

However, the real struggle built up from the forties onwards, culminating in a full-scale national uprising in the sixties. At the same time, the national struggle began to cross-cut with an increasingly overt class struggle. The traditional ruling class in Judaea consisted of an interlocking bloc formed by large landowners and the hereditary high-priestly families who controlled the Temple.

THEOLOGY GRADUATES

The Sadducees were members of this bloc. They were challenged as religious authorities by the Pharisees, who were rigourists, organised on a strict entry basis into cells, led by scribes, graduates in theology, but also including elements from peasant and even labouring backgrounds. It was the Pharisees who welded the Jewish nation together into a religious-political force. Many of the Zealot leaders were Pharisees who had decided to move into a phase of armed struggle.

The mass of Zealots however, came from the people, from small towns and villages. This period was one of an overall movement in the countryside towards large estates, throwing small peasants, many of them in debt, off the land. There were a large number of slaves in Judaea at the time and these made up part of the guerrilla armies. There were also an increasing number of hired hands, who are often mentioned in parables in the Gospel. The surplus of labour meant that they were usually employed on a casual basis. There was naturally a drift from the country into the towns and an increasing amount of employment in small craft industries.

Jesus and the apostles came from artisan families; Jesus was a carpenter, working with lumber imported from the Lebanon and

many of the apostles were fishermen, owning their own boats. We know from other sources that the fishing industry was thriving in Galilee at the time and there was investment in pickles for use in exporting fish.

Jesus did not come from the masses, who were either living off charity — there was an efficient dole system in operation — or else were day labourers or slaves. Neither, of course, did he come from the priestly caste or from a rich business or land-owning background. He was a petty bourgeois.

KIDNAPPINGS AND ASSASSINATION

The ruling class throughout this period became increasingly compromised with the Romans. It was the Roman Procurator who appointed the High Priest, usually a matter for bribery. In return, the High Priest acted as a Quisling, maintaining law and order in Jerusalem, a sensitive area for the Romans, with his own Temple police and handing over trouble-makers for trial.

Yet at the same time, the Temple and its High Priest were the main symbols of national consciousness. In the end, class feelings came out into the open. Zealots kidnapped a Temple official and, like Bauder-Meinhoff, held him ransom for the release of political prisoners. Assassination of collaborators was stepped up, until a High Priest was struck down too.

When, in the sixties, resistance gathered momentum, there were particularly troubled economic circumstances. For years extensions to the Temple had provided employment in Jerusalem and these suddenly halted. After riots, the programme was set in motion again in the form of paving the city streets. At the same time, there were complaints that the high-priestly families, who had equipped themselves with armed gangs, were marauding in the countryside extorting 'tithes' on which they had no claim.

Matters came to a head in 66AD when, after a huge tax boycott, the Roman Procurator looted the Temple treasury to make up the deficit. There was an immediate Zealot uprising. The Roman's main force withdrew and the remnant left behind was massacred. One of the first acts of the Zealot regime was to destroy the records of debts — freeing the masses from the grip of money-lenders and landlords. A new High



A detail from the facade of a medieval Romanian monastery.

Priest was elected by lot, which fell to a peasant, an impoverished member of the priestly caste, an act regarded as outrageous by ruling class opinion.

THE LEFT IS ISOLATED

During the four years between 66 and 70 AD there was all-out war. A whole Roman expeditionary force, comprising two legions and several thousand auxiliaries, was wiped out. The Romans lost over 5,000 infantry and 480 cavalry. This victory led to the setting up of a provisional Government, representing all aspects of religious opinion, both Sadducees and Pharisees, and even Essenes, the monastic group who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Zealots opposed this Government, which they regarded as class based and potentially collaborationist. They were quite right.

The Jewish commander in Galilee, Josephus, who was a Pharisee, spent more time harassing the Zealots than preparing defences against Rome. When the Romans arrived, under Vespasian, he capitulated on the spot and became an open collaborator. Later he wrote a history of the events to justify his completely treacherous role.

The backbone of resistance was led throughout by the Zealots who fought to the last in Jerusalem and then in the mountain fortress at Masada. When the Romans took Jerusalem in 70AD, under Titus, hundreds of thousands were butchered and the city levelled. Josephus recounts how at one point the Romans ran out of wood for crosses and, when they had enough, had to search for empty spaces to put more crosses up in. It is in this context that the crucifixion of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels must be seen.

ROMAN REPRISALS

Where did Jesus stand? It can hardly be believed that he was as oblivious to what was going on around him as the Gospel writers make out. Roman reprisals must have struck the families of Jesus known to him in the area. One of Jesus's own disciples, one of the Twelve, was Simon the Zealot who presumably participated in one of the uprisings. Reading the Gospels, the picture presented in the main is that of a passive collaborator. Although Jesus was condemned and

executed by Pontius Pilate, every effort is made to clear him of any real responsibility. Crucifixion was not a Jewish method of execution. It was the Roman punishment for political crimes. Spartacus was crucified, for instance.

Whereas the Jews had responsibility for ordinary crimes and religious offences, the political crimes went to Pilate. Yet the Gospels claim that Pilate washed his hands of the affair, protested Jesus's innocence, could see no wrong in him and was only pressured into crucifying him by the High Priest and his lobby.

Jesus himself is represented in a pro-Roman light. For example, he is described as friendly with tax-collectors and collaborationists. He heals the child of a Roman centurion. He advises, not simply going along with the authority of Rome under duress, but going twice as far as required.

And, of course, the most important incident recounted concerns the payment of tax. 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's'. In the Gospels, this is presented as a particularly cunning reply which outwitted the Pharisees who asked it. In fact, it is not at all equivocal. It plainly supports the payment of taxes to Rome. The whole question of taxation was the burning issue of the day. On this issue, Jesus took a pro-Roman stand and backed the claims of the Imperial power.

KEEPING JESUS CLEAR OF JUDAISM

The counterpart of this pro-Roman attitude of the Gospels is the persistent denigration of the Pharisees. The Zealots, as such, play no part in the Gospel story at all. They are simply suppressed verbally, as the Romans suppressed them militarily. But the Pharisees are very much in the forefront. They are used as strawmen who feed Jesus the straight lines which enable him to score off them. The purpose of this, as far as the Gospels are concerned, is clearly to distinguish Jesus and the Christian community from the Jews and the Jewish cause. In almost every case, it is a disagreement with Judaism which is stressed, so that Jesus can be distanced from his own people. Stories like that of the Good Samaritan are heavily promoted to the same end.

A number of scholars have tried to rescue Jesus from this pro-

Roman presentation, especially in recent years when, after Auschwitz and Belsen, commentators on the Gospel have at long last become sensitive to its anti-Jewish bias. In particular, the episode of Jesus's trial has been gone over in detail and it has been admitted that Rome and not the High Priest was responsible for his execution—as a political offender.

Pilate was not a weak administrator who was likely to allow the High Priest's lobby to pressure him against his better judgement.

PACIFIST SENTIMENT

This line of reasoning has led some writers to go as far as claiming that Jesus was actually pro-Zealot and sympathetic to armed struggle. This interpretation means discounting the great slabs of pacifist sentiment which fill the Gospels as nothing but post-fall of Jerusalem PR, put in by the fawning Evangelists, eager not to rub Rome up the wrong way.

In contrast, episodes like driving the money-changers out of the Temple are stressed and the fact that Jesus was arrested by an armed patrol and one of his disciples drew his sword and resisted arrest. Indeed, Luke describes how Jesus apparently instructed his disciples to buy swords just before the arrest, though he quickly added that two would be enough.

It is certainly true that there are patches of anti-Roman material in the Gospels which may get closer to the attitude of Jesus, or at least the early followers, than the Gospel writers do. For example, the story of the Gadarene swine seems to have an anti-imperialist gibe hidden away in it. Jesus exorcises an evil demon, who is called 'Legion', and the demon then enters a herd of pigs who plunge over a cliff. The Roman occupation troops were known as 'pigs' by the Jews, so the moral is pretty clear. But conversely, there is a definite strain of anti-Temple feeling in Jesus's preaching. He is critical of a number of Temple institutions, particularly the financial institutions, and more than once criticises the various ways the Temple made money: donations, taxes, commercial transactions and so forth.

Above all Jesus did not in any way advocate violent resistance to the Romans, but believed that it was necessary to undergo a spiritual change in readiness for

the coming of the Kingdom. He conceived of this change in a way which brought him up against the Pharisees, because he was an anti-traditionalist in his attitude to the Jewish religious Law.

Ethically, he was a purist, but not in any legalistic way. Judging from his numerous parables about vineyards, labourers and husbandmen, he was fully satisfied with the existing relations of production, including slavery, and the general economic set-up, though he was distrustful of the rich. He seems to have felt that the Temple should not be in any way a secular institution, either commercially or politically.

JESUS NOT SUBVERSIVE

In itself, there was little that was subversive in Jesus's preaching and, in this sense the Gospel writers were right to portray him as a passive collaborator. But his fate was sealed when he began to attract crowds, partly because of his feats of healing, partly because he was a compelling orator. The Gospels several times tell how he tried to get away from the crowds and give them the slip, anxious about the outcome, as well he might be.

Pontius Pilate's last official act for example, in 36 AD, only two or three years after Jesus's execution, was to massacre a crowd of Samaritans who expected a revelation on their Holy Mountain. Anybody who gathered large crowds was in danger of being halted in their tracks for political reasons. In Rome the careers of sports and theatre stars were abruptly stopped when they began to acquire supporters who were too vocal or demonstrative.

RELIGIONS OF THE OPPRESSED

It is quite usual for messianic and prophetic religious movements to spring up in times of political upheaval. Jesus can be compared with the new movements which sprang up as part of the response to the advance of European imperialism: Peyotism and Ghost-dancing among the American Indians, Ringa-tu among the Maoris, Hoa Hao in Vietnam. These movements attempt to break out of the confines of an apparently hopeless historical predicament by stressing the glorious other-worldly role for the followers of their prophet.

In a time of political turmoil, they appear anxious to suppress

anything which might develop into a threat, usually cynical and ignorant, and inclined to err on the side of ruthlessness rather than mercy. They are put down and, if the circumstances are right, a new cult based on the prestige of martyrdom springs up.

THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

The real strength of Jesus's preaching lay in his ability to respond to conflict without being sucked into it. He was the man in the middle. Not only was he in the middle of a class conflict but of a national liberation struggle. He was able to find something to say which made sense to all kinds of people without ever coming down on one side or the other. This still is his strength. The discontented, the disaffected, the wretched of the earth could respond to him. So could tax-collectors and Roman soldiers.

In part, this was because he chose out of preference to speak in riddles and parables, to tell stories rather than make statements. But partly too it was because he had a talent for the ring of truth, for words which sounded right, which pushed everyone a little bit further together. He walked a verbal tightrope which he wove as he went along. And he could back it up with a quotation every time. It is precisely because he had this ability to reconcile conflicting aspirations, that he sometimes seemed subversive. But in the long run anything that covers over contradictions by appealing to both sides always favours those in power. And Christianity still does.

by PETER WOLLEN



Bahro's Alternative

RUDOLF BAHRO is a Marxist thinker. For that very reason he is in prison in East Germany (official designation: German Democratic Republic — GDR). The Stalinist bureaucrats who run that country claim that Bahro is a West German spy. We say they are liars.

Bahro has been imprisoned because the bureaucrats are frightened of Marxist ideas which pose a threat to their monopoly of power. In the New Year *Socialist Challenge* will be waging a campaign to demand Bahro's release.

In this issue we print a few extracts from his book *The Alternative*, which has been published in West Germany.

Ernest Mandel has described the book as 'the most important theoretical work... since Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*'. The English language rights have been obtained by New Left Books (NLB), who will publish the book in Autumn 1978. We are grateful to them for permitting us to publish these brief extracts from a 500 page analysis. The translation is by *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*.

Photomontage: PETER KENNARD

1. The Party In Eastern Europe

THE GREAT vacuum created (in the cultural and ideological sphere in Eastern Europe) is being filled by Western ideological mass production wherever its communication techniques reach. And the contradictions of our own system have matured to such an extent that the bourgeois propaganda machine plays, at least to a certain degree, the role of a useful corrective: regions untouched by its influence, such as for the moment extensive areas of the Soviet Union, have an unfavourable politico-intellectual relationship with the politbureaucratic system in comparison with here in the peripheral countries of the bloc.

From where do the communists of Eastern Europe find out about the real life and the progressive movements in the world? How could they learn anything about the socialist experiences in Yugoslavia or China or about the 1968 Action Programme of the Czechoslovak party? Who quotes, however tendentially, the Italian Communists' weekly *Rinascita*? One could continue endlessly. The anti-Promethean character of the important 'fraternal parties', above all the Soviet and the German, is the devastating truth. Their inner constitution and their form as super-state apparatuses are the decisive obstacles to the further emancipation of mankind in our countries. The Party which was once Lenin's and the party founded by Liebknecht and Luxemburg are today working under reversed banners.

The communists in such parties are organised against themselves and against the people. By simple physical presence, without any particular perfidy, today's party machinery is the grave-digger of the party idea and the individual's party consciousness. It makes those people who are communists out of character and conviction superfluous as party members. And more: if they are not successfully converted into bureaucrats and integrated into the apparatus then they can only 'do damage'... so it is logical to put the apparatus on the alert against them. It is still one of the better aspects of the mechanistic logic dominating the whole edifice that the party's style provokes opposition even there where comrades of principles do not yet understand its nature. The original emotional basis of all articulated opposition has been the protest of thinking members against the stupid tutelage of a no longer serving, but ruling party apparatus.

2. Immediate Economic Action Programme

FIRSTLY, LIQUIDATION of bureaucratic corruption at the top. Whoever has political power automatically disposes of more or less large slices of the surplus product. Nothing more inevitably creates popular distrust, nothing more obviously confirms that 'as always, everything remains the same' than the misuse of power to preferentially satisfy the needs of political activists and their followers and to bribe a broader layer of lower personnel. The corrupt elements attracted by such practices soon make sure that the spirit of corruption becomes general and obligatory. Soon they create a climate in which the honourable functionary who consciously seeks to forego such advantages is suspected not only of being a simpleton but also of being hostile to the group and of aspiring to the positions already conquered by the jackals.

The bureaucratic corruption from above is immune to painless cure. One has to



fight its origins and cut out its roots. It is particularly inadmissible to liken such remuneration to the additional incomes which traditional social layers like artisans derive spontaneously from the economic process. The bureaucrat's chauffeur-driven journey along a route covered by tram lines is incomparably worse than the luxurious weekend chalet of the car mechanic selling his services on the black market. The same comparison can be made between the preferential study grants for specialists who are being systematically bred for the most repressive branches of the bureaucracy and the, at least superficially, immaterial advantages derived by the intelligentsia from its links with the representatives of higher education. If things have gone so far that the central party and state organs allow themselves residences, luxury limousines, holiday castles and special clinics, then the only cure is to remove altogether from power the whole coterie occupying these positions. The political revolution will have the unconditional support of the majority of the population if it immediately decrees and carries out the following:

— reduction of all salaries exceeding the top limit of the normal income scale. As all communists know, Lenin, and not only he, held the 'demoralising effect of high salaries on Soviet power... as well as on the working class' to be indisputable. The conditions that made him drop the principle of a skilled worker's rate for leading positions have long ceased to exist. What then prevents those permanently appealing to Lenin from practising this principle? The differential in mass income in the GDR at present ranges between 500 and 1,500 marks. Anything above that goes into the pockets of people with other means anyway, who are thus simply remunerated for their bureaucratic servitude or special services to the regime.

Salaries or incomes of above 3,000 marks and more can, given our average income, only derive from the exploitation of the labour of others [...].

— removal of all special material, social, medical, cultural and other institutions for apparatus functionaries, as far as they do not demonstrably serve public purposes or remain within the usual limits of factory provisions; reduction of resources spent on representative purposes in the broadest sense (buildings, cars, receptions, etc.); dissolution of government ghettos; reduction of the personal security personnel for representatives; elimination of the special bureaucratic influence on admissions to higher education which has, among others, the effect of subjecting access to certain branches of the apparatus like the interior and foreign departments to family traditions and other personal relations.

— an end to the petty bourgeois pomp of orders and other honours, especially abolition of all incomes relating to these immediately. The entire system of decorations and bonuses which is largely a permanent farce needs urgent review or at least a rigorous slimming down. Also necessary is the curtailment of pensions and other compensations for resistance fighters and victims of fascism. The 'recognition' of human heroics in the revolutionary past by material privileges of different kinds in the present and also for descendants can really only be an insult to all honest fighters for socialism: they are placed on a level with the rebels whose targets were the villas and riches of the old ruling classes. In any case the best of the old communists and socialists are thus compensated for what they must regard as the betrayal of the former ideals by the post-revolutionary society. 'What have we fought for?'

3. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL role played by the post-Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Eastern Europe consists today, as it has done in a historically notorious way since 21 August, in preventing the peoples of this region from striding ahead to a form of socialism appropriate to them and thus in driving them, in the final analysis, into the arms of the political restoration. In fact on both counts it is counter-revolutionary. The increasing nationalism — that is in concrete terms 'anti-Sovietism' — in the countries of Eastern Europe has a progressive function in so far as it is directed against the chains imposed on their inner social development by the hegemony of the Soviet apparatus. The essence of the problem of sovereignty, its crux as far as the people of Eastern Europe are concerned, centres on the necessity of determining its own progress to socialism as independently as possible from the internal social situation in the Soviet Union, which, as far as they are concerned, is changing too slowly. This is precisely what 1968 in Czechoslovakia was about. [...]

The opposition will learn to see the entire East European scene beyond their respective national conditions as its battleground and thus to keep itself free of all kinds of nationalist prejudices and stereotypes. Not least will it concentrate on active solidarity with the progressive forces in the Soviet Union, which receive encouragement or obstruction depending on the political development of Eastern Europe. The Soviet opposition needs its support through encouraging examples. The importance lies not in the national differences and animosities, but in the fundamental contradiction between the social interests of all the peoples of Eastern Europe and the interests of all their political bureaucrats. The peoples of the Soviet Union, just as much as the peoples of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, etc. need a new political order.

All in all the Czechoslovak experiences are hopeful especially if one transcends the national framework in their evaluation. They encourage the opposition to strive for political hegemony within the whole of the Soviet bloc. The genuinely great opportunity provided by our non-capitalist base can bear fruit much more effectively in this greater area.

At the very least, when the next national confrontation occurs there should be a frontier-transcending solidarity which would go beyond mere sentiment and actually limit the room for manoeuvre of the repressive forces. Since the First World War, the revolutionary movement has acquired repeated and bitter experience of the depth of capitalist defence lines. This has been seen most recently in France in 1968 and in Portugal. By contrast, as Czechoslovakia so clearly demonstrated, our politbureaucracy has only one line of defence. If it can be cut loose from the police and military instruments of power, and if these repressive forces can be neutralised, the road to socialist regeneration of the social system is open. There was indeed some substance in the 'Question to Radio Erevan' after 21 August: 'Where will the troops come from to march against a Soviet Dubcek?'

1. Anti-Promethean refers to Prometheus — a figure in Greek mythology who was able to unleash the creative powers of the people, teaching them how to use fire and how to develop the arts.

2. Radio Erevan refers to the radio station in the capital of Soviet Armenia. There is a whole tradition of political jokes in the Soviet Union which take the form of unintentional slips on the part of Radio Erevan, which by mistake reveal the truth about what is happening.



John Fowles

an exclusive interview

The works of John Fowles are probably more widely-known across the world than he is. Among his books can be found *The Collector* (1958), *The Magus* (1966) recently revised, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), *The Ebony Tower* (1975) and *Daniel Martin* (1977).

The left has, in general, been somewhat lax in assessing new developments in literature. While it is true that the future of the novel, the relationship of politics to literature, and similar questions will not be found at the head of every trade union agenda, it would be wrong to permit ruling-class ideologues a free hand on these matters.

Fowles' latest book, *Daniel Martin*, serves as a useful example of this point. Before the book publication, Fowles described it as a 'homage to Lukacs'. Much of the book is devoted to uncovering the myth of 'Englishness' through stripping off the social and psychological layers that have clothed the British Emperor of the twentieth century. Now revealed without his clothes, he has summoned his mandarins to launch a counter-attack. The 'literary establishment' and media have joined hands to ridicule and demean *Daniel Martin*. Socialists would do well to read the book and draw their own conclusions.

A general statement in novels seems to be that the central female characters are repositories of 'right feeling', emotion and self-awareness, whilst the central male characters are repositories of culture, imaginative artifice and self-indulgence. In an essay, 'Notes on an Unfinished Novel', you wrote:

'My female characters tend to dominate the male. I see man as a kind of artifice, and woman as a kind of reality. The one is cold idea, the other is warm fact.'

In bringing these two polarities together you show that the former, the female characters, can have a positive effect on the latter, the male characters, but you do not, despite the fact that you bring them to a point of mutual recognition, resolve the inevitable conflict and tension that exists between them. Do you believe that the two are irreconcilable and have you ever considered exploring beyond the impact of mutual recognition?

THE TWO perennial incompatibles in the human condition seem to me the desire for personal freedom and the desire for social equality. The battle between the two desires is less destructive when the female principle dominates or has at least some sort of parity, as during the escape from the Dark Ages, the Renaissance and our own time.

Male-principle societies are much more strait-jacketing. More conforming, besotted by law and order, suspicious of heresy — right-wing in short. Eve welcomes change, Adam — even Marxist Adam — fears it. Socialism has still to shake off the handicap of having been largely conceived and formulated by men and in a male-dominated age. Comte is a classic case of oneness, as the feminist J.S. Mill was quick to point out at the time.

One thing I don't like about certain aspects, or phrases, of socialism is the inflexible male-aggressor tone — the preserving of traditional structure and creed at all costs, and the low value put on the characteristic female gift for personal judgement and feeling and for the practical as against the ideal. For instance, certain familiar uses of parroted invective and esoteric jargon seem



to me a good deal less socialist than just primeval male.

On the other hand I am equally suspicious of extreme liberationist attempts to prove that the only difference between women and men is psychological. I believe that it is vital that women retain their ability to think, feel and act differently from men, however much they may share intellectually the same social beliefs. This is what has to be mutually recognised.

The 'tension and conflict' that must result is inherently fertile — not of course when it springs from the attempt to impose or cling to outmoded roles, but because the give-and-take democracy of the good male-female relationship is the basis for all other democracies. This is one reason why more women are urgently needed in government and parliament — not the sort who ape male attitudes, but the ones who can modify and see through their always incipient conservatism. I have absolutely no belief in a time when the two sexes will live in unending harmony.

What concerns me as a novelist is achieving the point of recognition both of the difference and of the mutual need. What happens beyond that point is not in my view a right subject for ordinary novels until this recognition is publicly established. Till then, alas, it stays in the domain of science fiction.

You have implied that you 'do not understand' the women you incorporate as central characters in your books. At the same time they are an essential device in your books, and act as the conveyors of 'radical' ideas. Why do you feel unable to analyse and express their development and their motivations?

WHAT I REALLY meant is that they are not to be understood by traditional male standards. Like most male artists, I have a strong female component in my character, just as most women artists have a strong male one.

This may help us in creating characters of the opposite sex, but of course we're always, finally, no more than sympathetic visitors in a foreign country... not natives. If my women characters seem short on motivation and analysis — I suppose most notoriously in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* — it is because I am writing from the standpoint of this male 'visitor'. The art of the novel is also very much bound up with the art of leaving the reader to fill the gaps.

I could have analysed Sarah Woodruff more than I did. But not to do so was a conscious decision.

One strong reason was that I think women are far less amenable to analysis than men — for a number of historical and biological reasons, but primarily because the ill wind of their past exploitation has brought one good: a kind of common exile that permits them to stand outside the ritual games and role-mania of the average male. Sarah Woodruff was deliberately created to suggest this 'beneficial' side of the historical exile — which is closely linked to the presently needed 'gifts' I mentioned just now.

Contrary to what many of the critics have said, we felt that the distinction in the novel between Daniel Martin and his 'ill-concealed ghost' was beautifully sustained.

There were only two places where the relationship between them seemed, stylistically, to break down; the first was the decision of the orchard and the second in the concluding paragraphs of the book. Why, at the two most crucial points of enlightened dilemma does the author need to stand between Daniel Martin and his [DM's] own intentions?

I can't really answer this. They are two points where author and character converge. I certainly didn't mean to stand 'between' Daniel and his future, but beside him or with him. Fraternally.

In a recent television interview, you described yourself as a socialist on several occasions, denied being a 'political being', and said that should the equivalent of the French 'Les Verts' party [a radical ecologist movement] exist in Britain you would feel closest to it. Could you clarify the relationship between these statements?

The nation of 'scientists and sociologists' being the only people able to take correct decisions in a complex industrial society is something else you mentioned. How does this idea square with the more serious question of which class controls the levers of society?

HAVE ALL my adult life been torn between a biological and political view of society. I am not a political being because I don't enter actively into politics. I would count myself a socialist, or a radical, because I would much rather see a government of the left in any country than one of the right.

But the other side of me cannot stomach the belief the left shares with the right: that ever-increasing industrialisation is the only

solution. However high the wages, however great the worker control, I can see along this road only enduring alienation. The worker can own the means of production. But he will never happily own the repetitive and life-stultifying daily boredom of much actual production.

This is certainly far worse in a capitalist society, but I don't think the removal of capitalism alone will marry man to his full humanity. The prime problem of our world is biological rather than political. The chase, East and West, after higher wages, mounting consumerism, is just opium to dull the basic horror of gross overpopulation and its concomitant gross under-education.

I loathe the Labour Government's current attempt to indoctrinate schoolchildren with the notion of production as the supreme good, i.e., to turn them into brainwashed work-donkeys who can be fed synthetic carrots. This fits in perfectly with their philistine contempt for the arts in general. They don't want ordinary people to live culturally richer and more thinking lives. The only viable supreme goods are the healthy form of those two basic incompatible desires in each of us: self-knowledge and concern for others.

Increased access to money will never break the hegemony. Any socialism that devotes almost all its time and energy to solely economic gain is cutting its own throat: feeding more of the same old poison. In every class, richer men seldom discover an increased desire for social equality. Far more frequently they turn embryo Tories — example: the Labour Party in South Wales.

A true socialism has to find new ends and ambitions for mankind; not the vicious spiral of ever-increasing manufacture and consumption, all pleasure in existence reduced to buying and spending. Only a massive disintoxication will get us through the straits ahead. I don't believe politicians alone will ever dare institute it, since they keep power by continuing the intoxication. Who should theoretically control society is less important to me than what actually controls it: money, greed.

That can be countered only by an intelligent socialism — but intelligent enough to take account of conditions its founders, from Rousseau on, could not have foreseen — principally that vile joker in the biological pack, overpopulation.

You have said before that you see yourself, in part, as a writer with a didactic role to play. Understandably, you are keen for your work to speak for itself.

However, it would be helpful if you could comment on your attitude to the relation between politics and literature — particularly in the light of the damage done to this question by the dogmatic Stalinist school of art.

I DOUBT profoundly whether novel is the place for political propaganda, except perhaps in its satirical-fable form, or for serious political analysis. Other modes and media are now far more apt for direct effect. I am intensely opposed to all externally imposed interference in the arts. This was the most damaging of all the doctrinal blunders of the Stalinists. All serious artists are born contrasuggestibles, odd persons out. But no society can stay healthy without their criticism.

Would it be fair to say that you are less critical of Samuel Beckett's vision and James Joyce's form than of those writers and critics who have sought to transform these into a rule of thumb for the modern writer?

YES. All three are great writers and all three have had a disastrous effects on countless lesser ones. I think there is a close parallel with the Romantic period, with Chateaubriand, Byron and their brood: there too we see the retreat of genius into convulsion, self and angst, followed by an endless swarm of inauthentic scribbles trading on a fad...and the first dose of modern fascism in the outside world.

Furthermore, would this explain your sympathy with George Lukacs, who cogently argued that the tragedy of modern art was its movement away from its real social basis?

YES, VERY MUCH so. The interesting question is to what extent 'real social basis' implies stylistic and thematic realism. I have very little time for the fashionable theory that you can't criticise a society unless you first smash the traditional art forms. Unfortunately that only too often also smashes the common sign-system between artist and general audience. Which leaves him preaching to a converted elite.

I believe that it is wrong to interpret the works of a major writer on the basis of their own theories. If these works are important it is almost always because they can achieve a form which can render the conflicts of their times at the fullest range within the given historical reality. Does Lukacs' comment concur with your own distaste for 'revealing' your own 'theories' to the media?

THE KEY WORD here is 'interpret'. In the strict context ('to interpret the works for their social value') then obviously Lukacs is right. On the other hand there is a place for examining how the artist thinks that he (sic) achieves his (sic) socially valid form. I know the engine for my own books is an unresolved psychological dilemma — almost a dialectic.

It has little influence on the general tenor where a book goes, but it can affect narrative shape and confrontations of character quite deeply. It is why the book goes, if it does. I don't see a conflict here. Lukacs was talking of external value. I speak of internal mechanism. The first is clearly more important than the second — the ship is its voyage, not its construction plan. But if the design 'works', there must be some value in knowing the designer's own view of its genesis — and by no means, in literature, just because it works as he intended.

It may be very useful to find out why it works as he didn't intend, as Lukacs himself showed in his examination of Walter Scott. I suspect a very interesting case for some future Lukacs is Evelyn Waugh, where overt beliefs and actual effects seem to me highly contradictory. I am not quite sure why the left's favourite literary devil is also very arguably the one who did the most damage to his own side.

Interviewers: Tony Graham, Hilary Arnold, Sappho Durrell, John Thackeray.

PRESELEY

IN DEATH as in life... Just two days after Elvis Presley's death — on the day of his funeral in fact — Vernon Presley, Presley's father and the executor of his estate, and Colonel Tom Parker, Presley's long-term manager and mentor, signed a marketing agreement with Factors Etc. Inc., probably the world's largest mass merchandisers of novelty items such as posters and printed T-shirts.

The licence granted Factors Etc. 'an exclusive licence to use and exploit throughout the world the commercial Elvis Presley rights' in return for five per cent of all net sales of Presley items. The crass commercialism which dogged Presley from the day he met Tom Parker continues unabated by the singer's death.

T-shirts designated 'memorial' were sold for five dollars to mourners at Presley's funeral and over 1,700 copies of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* were stolen from news stands and sold for five dollars each.

Book publishers Pocket Books had orders for 250,000 copies of *The Private Elvis* within 24 hours of his death, and Ballentine Books, publishers of *Elvis, What Happened?*, a tacky memoir by two of Presley's ex-bodyguards, rushed through a five million copy reprint, two million copies of which were ordered by one retail chain alone. This book — its title a grim coincidence since it was published before Presley's death — was bought outright from its two authors for £250,000 one year ago. Thus the ex-bodyguards receive no royalties on these massive sales nor on the film rights which are being negotiated right now.

RCA Records, who originally signed Presley for \$35,000, estimate that the total gross of Presley's 22-year career with them was \$43 billion. He has sold 600 million singles worldwide, of which 100 million were sold since 1975. 'Hound Dog'/'Don't Be Cruel' was his biggest single, with over 8 million copies sold. The soundtrack to the film *Blue Hawaii* was his biggest album with over 5 million sold. He had 35 million-selling singles and 24 gold albums. The 33 films he made grossed over \$150 million and when his career was in full flight he made three films a year with a million dollars advance on each one.

'Disk Sales in Phenom Spurt, Post Presley' ran the front page

headline in *Variety* for 9 November, describing how RCA pressing plants have been working flat out for 24 hours a day since Presley's death on 16 August. The Nashville plant alone estimated that its profits will be up 35 per cent this year because of the demand created by Presley's death.

Even in Britain the record industry was shaken. RCA Records found itself with a union dispute at its pressing plant in Washington, Co. Durham, and quickly went out of stock of all 25 albums it had on catalogue. Pressing requirements had been so low through the summer period that RCA had served redundancy notices on about 90 of its staff which they now had to cancel and to request its staff to work overtime.

The unions concerned accepted the cancellation of the redundancy notices but didn't want to work overtime. But an agreement was quickly made by the desperate record company and by 10 September there were 12 Presley albums in the Top 40 and several more on their way up.

WHEN ASKED for his reaction to Presley's death at a recent press conference in Japan, John Lennon replied, 'Elvis died when he entered the army'. It's a view shared by many people. Presley's lasting contribution to Rock 'n' Roll was made between July 1954 when he did his first session for Sun Records and June 1958 when he cut his last tracks for RCA Records before entering the US Army.

During that brief time Elvis changed the face of popular music...

For years Sam Phillips, owner of Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee, had been looking for a white singer who could fuse white country music with the black blues. Such a formula he regarded as a million selling idea. Presley was his man...

Together with Scotty Moore on guitar and Bill Black on bass (there

... died when he joined the army"



were no drums on Presley's early recordings) he created a totally new original sound: black songs in a white setting. Something that Presley was uniquely qualified to do, coming as he did from a poor white background in South Tupelo, Mississippi.

His childhood was spent attending the fundamentalist Church of Christ where he absorbed the sound of Southern black gospel music. His adolescence was spent hanging around on Beale Street, buying the outrageous pink jackets and black shirts of the black pimps — from these same street corners he found the outspoken sexuality and the swagger and sneer which was to make him a spokesman for the whole generation of alienated middle class American youth.

Prior to Presley there had been white 'pop' records and black 'race' records. With the advent of Rock 'n' Roll these two audiences were married. The black rock coming from Rhythm and Blues and Doo Wop. In fact the first

Rock 'n' Roll record as such is generally recognised to be 'Sh-Boom' by The Chords. On the white side, Rock came from the Rock-a-Billy tradition. At the same time as Presley, Sun Records also had on its roster Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins. In fact a tape exists from December 1956 of all four playing and singing together — the so-called 'Million Dollar Quartet'.

There was no way in which a small local label like Sun could break someone like Presley and it wasn't until RCA came in, waving unprecedented amounts of cash, that he was able to reach his audience. At his first RCA session he recorded 'Heartbreak Hotel' — it was to be his first US Number 1 record.

Unfortunately the same commercial factors which enabled Elvis to reach Number 1 were to be his undoing. Colonel Tom Parker once said: 'When I met Elvis Presley he had a million dollars worth of talent, now he has a million dollars'. Some people

would like to know what happened to the talent.

Seemingly uncomplainingly, Elvis made over thirty formula films, each more absurd and meaningless than the last and designed to produce a million-selling soundtrack album. It is a sad fact that Presley never made a decent album — his best albums are all compilations of singles — but again he never complained.

He took out his frustrations by shooting out television screens in his palatial Graceland mansion and, shortly before he died, he even totally destroyed the \$200,000 recording studio at Graceland by attacking it with a sub-machine gun because he was unable to get the sound he wanted there.

It is fairly safe to say that if Tom Parker had allowed his boy out into the big world, rather than surrounding him with a net of secrecy and silence, then Presley would probably have made far better records. Tom Parker was a southern buckster and good enough at his job to launch Elvis and maintain him on that most commercial show-business level. But if Elvis had been allowed to work with top line Rock 'n' Roll producers such as Phil Spector, who knows what he might have come up with.

The sad thing is that Presley was at last getting restless when he died. He was rumoured to be splitting from Tom Parker and also to be dissatisfied with the way his records were selling. He had sacked most of his 'Memphis Mafia' that usually surrounded him, and was apparently trying to recreate his early 'Memphis sound' over again. We'll never know if he could have shaken off 19 years of mediocrity but even if he had been unable to his contribution remains and it's by his early singles he is best remembered: 'Blue Moon of Kentucky', 'Blue Moon', 'That's All Right', 'Just Because', 'Good Rockin' Tonight', 'You're A Heartbreaker', 'Mystery Train', 'Tomorrow Night', 'Heartbreak Hotel', 'Blue Suede Shoes', 'Lawdy Miss Claudy', 'Shake Rattle and Roll', 'Hound Dog', 'Don't Be Cruel', 'Rip It Up', 'I beg of You', 'Teddy Bear', 'Party', 'Treat Me Nice', 'Jailhouse Rock', 'King Creole', 'Wear My Ring Around Your Neck', and, ironically, the last track he cut before entering the army, 'I Got Stung'.

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PETER RABBIT AND THE GRUNDRISSE

ROSA and CHARLIE PARKIN

THERE CAN be no such thing as an innocent reading of the *Tale of Peter Rabbit*. As that most perceptive analyst of the later manuscripts, Enid Blyton, puts it: 'We must pose this work the question of the specificity of its object, its relation to its object. The only reading of *Peter Rabbit* which speaks to us through the congealed layers of the past-becoming-present is a symptomatic reading — a reading in which we listen attentively to Beatrix Potter's silences.'¹

So much is of course clear to the average reader of this epochal work, this work which has not only transformed our collective perceptions of rabbitness (*Kaninchenlichkeit*) but which has contributed a new chapter to the political economy of the cabbage patch. It is our contention in this brief monograph that *Peter Rabbit* marks a watershed in Potter's philosophical development, a distinct epistemological rupture from the earlier problematic of the Herne Bay manuscripts (above all, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* and *Jemima Puddleduck*).

Nothing more tellingly illustrates the completeness of this scientific metamorphosis than the contrast between the rather schematic hermeneutics of the Nutkin-Puddleduck period and the sure grasp of the principles of comparative political economy manifested in *Peter Rabbit*. The dramatisation of the conflict between Peter and Mr. McGregor in the celebrated garden scene brilliantly pinpoints, in a so brief episode, those acute contradictions and levels of overdetermination characteristic of pre-capitalist cabbage production. The revelatory instance (Potter's favoured methodological device) is that 'moment' when Mr. McGregor, chasing Peter from the garden, seizes the rake and aims a blow at the fleeing creature. Through an inspired stroke of transformative symbolism, in which the essence of the rake changes from that of tool to that of weapon, Potter lays bare the irresolvable antagonisms of a sub-feudal order in which the role of producer and the role of warrior are indissolubly linked yet totally incompatible in their binary opposition.

It is quite clear from our reading of the unpublished drafts and revisions of the early manuscripts that Mr. McGregor is to be understood as an embodiment (*Träger*) of that class of small peasant proprietors from whom baronial landlords extracted in direct and unmediated forms surplus value in the dual forms of military service and *corvée* labour.² However, we must state quite emphatically that despite certain surface similarities the role of Mr. McGregor in the productive process is *not* to be



equated with that of the Seven Dwarfs, as so many theorists from Schumpeter onwards have argued.

The extraction of surplus from the productive labour of the Seven Dwarfs by the Royal Household (Snow White) was a mediated political form, though ultimately backed up by terror, which is a condition more akin to the Asiatic mode of production than to sub-Feudalism. Failure to appreciate this crucial distinction has led to quite understandable confusion among the readers of these works — though unfortunately we cannot go into the important question of whose self-interests are in fact being served by

these not accidental attempts at mystification and concealment.

The thesis we wish to advance is that the entire episode between Peter and Mr. McGregor, quite apart from the 'rake' scene is decisive in marking a conjuncture in the transformation of Peter Rabbit from an object of history to the real subject of history. It is precisely at that 'moment' when Peter is threatened by the 'rake' that he gets his blue jacket caught on the fence, and can only make good his escape by abandoning it. Again, in this capsule statement we have Potter's brilliant portrayal of the self-emancipatory act — the shedding of the 'jacket' conveys to

us of course the throwing off of servile, anthropomorphic status imposed by the structures-in-dominance of the ideological state apparatus.

It is during Peter's fearful monologue in the potting shed that the full significance of his act comes home to him: i.e. that he has finally and irrevocably entered the realm of history as a reflexive agent. From this moment on he will be marked out by his kinsmen, Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail (who chose to remain in the ever-pre-given-structure of the warren) as a figure of destiny; the singular and heroic figure for which all Potter's earlier works have in a sense prepared us.

None of the previous manuscripts matches the theoretic presence of *Peter Rabbit* — including the much overrated *Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle* which, notwithstanding Lukács' extravagant assertions to the contrary, still bears the unmistakable traces of the Herne Bay period.³ It is quite clear from a symptomatic reading of the Preface to the second edition of the Czech translation of *Tiggy Winkle*, published after the final (Putney) draft of *Peter Rabbit*, that Potter expresses serious reservations about the internal structure of the argument. There is a tacit recognition of the failure to give full weighting to those forces bearing upon Mrs. Tiggy Winkle's actions which can only be accounted for as a result of the over-determination of conjunctive instances within the given totality of the farmyard. What this does in effect is to present us with a completely de-historicised hedgehog subject.⁴ It is impossible to imagine Potter falling into the same trap in any of her later analyses of pre-capitalist economic formations.

Our attempt to produce a correct reading of *Peter Rabbit* deliberately poses the problem of what it is to read. Only in answering this question can we feel confident in our task of rescuing Potter's contribution to science from the hands of those who seek to reduce this work virtually to the level of a fairy tale.

footnotes

1. Enid Blyton, *Lire Je Peter Rabbit*. (Paris, Maspéro, 1966)
2. See Nicos Poulantzas, 'Hegemony, Surplus and Unproductive Labour in the Cabbage Patch', a reply to Milliband in *New Left Review* LXIV (1970)
3. G. Lukács, 'Weltgeist, Naturgeschichte und Symbolisbegriffe bei Frau Tiggy Winkle', in *Beatrix-Potter Studien*, VIII (1956)
4. Adorno's biting comment is here very much to the point: 'The thought to which a positive hypostasis of anything outside the immanence of the dialectic is forbidden, overshoots the subject with which it no longer simulates as being one.' T. Adorno, *Spasms* (Frankfurt 1972). This passage could have been written with Mrs. Tiggy Winkle in mind.

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Slipping, slipping, sunk

SUE SLIPMAN, the President of NUS and a member of the Communist Party, has been acclaimed by the media for her stand against the revolutionary left on free speech for fascists and her capitulation to the Zionist witch-hunt. She has been praised for her 'moderation' and her 'sensible policies'. She is, in short, the kind of Communist you could safely have to tea. And to do her justice, she has fully earned this reputation. Shielding the Zionist state

from criticism by presenting 'democratic rights' as the only issue, failing at every stage to place the plight of the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs and their struggle for their rights at the centre of the debate, Slipman reveals the real face of 'Eurocommunism'. Like Carrillo, infinitely obliging towards the monarchy but unwilling to respect workers' picket lines, she craves respectability in the eyes of liberal public opinion. We are very well acquainted



Angry, angry, angry!

FIRST I want to say that I wish I'd written to your paper before to say how much I welcomed your paper when it started, and how much I get out of reading it most of the time. But I've written today because I'm fucking angry about Arthur Scargill (President NUM Yorkshire) and his letter.

November getting my legs kicked and my body bruised because I recognise (to quote A. Scargill) 'that it is a matter of grave concern facing the working class movement'. Neither I nor any other feminist need patronising by someone who considers one of the ultimate symbols of our degradation, exploitation and oppression to be 'totally insignificant'!

Would you have printed his letter, without comment or refutation if the reference had been to 'niggers/wogs' instead of 'birds'? Are you going to emulate his attitude to the pin-ups in the Yorkshire Miner and defend vigorously your attitude to Page 14 of Socialist Challenge?

How about an apology and an explanation?

DIANNE GRIMSDITCH (Leeds)

At last, a defender

Why did you print it? Would you have printed it if he had been plain Arthur Scargill (unknown activist)? Why didn't you comment on it? You qualified Neil Duffield's article in 'Open Forum' as 'not necessarily reflecting the views of the editorial board'.

Why did you print on Page 1 'Arthur Scargill on Sexism'? What you printed on Page 14 was Arthur Scargill (President NUM Yorkshire) being sexist.

With many other feminists I was at Grunwicks on 7

with that democratism: 'It is a compliant, accommodating and conciliatory — towards the right. At the same time it is exigent, malevolent and tricky — towards the left', wrote Trotsky in Their Morals and Ours. These words apply perfectly to Ms. Slipman.

And yet, a doughty defender of democracy against 'extremists', her libertarian passion does not seem to extend, for example, to India, where Indira Gandhi's dictatorship received the full backing of Moscow and the Indian CP, or Iraq, where the Kremlin supplied the barbaric Ba'ath regime with arms for the suppression of the Kurdish people. At this very moment in Ethiopia, the Soviet bureaucracy is helping the ruling military junta to crush the Eritrean independence fighters. And its allies in this struggle for 'democracy' are none other than the Zionists.

If Slipman claims this has nothing to do with the British Communist Party, may one ask why the latest issue of Liberation, a group in which the CP has no small influence, carries a piece by the Ethiopian Ambassador? It is also interesting to note that among Liberation's affiliates are the 'socialist' Zionists of Mapan, who have established kibbutzim on Arab land [they even supported the 1956 Suez attack on Egypt!]. With liberators like these, who needs occupiers?

Finally, in this season of festive goodwill, the Soviet bureaucracy has decided to give Begin and Dayan a little Christmas present. The Kremlin's cynical use of anti-semitism in the Scharansky case [he is soon to be charged with 'high treason', having already been found guilty by Pravda] could not come at a better time for the hard-pressed Zionist movement which will seek to make the maximum capital out of this issue, as it has done in the past. Socialists must make it their business to oppose repression in the Soviet Union as well as the exploitation of that repression in the interests of Zionist colonialism.

In defending Jewish rights in the Soviet Union, exposing Zionist attempts to use Stalinist anti-semitism to cover up and intensify the oppression of Palestinians, and calling attention to the Soviet-Israeli alliance against the Eritrean masses, the 'extremists' of the left, the communists, will give their answer to Ms. Slipman and her fellow 'democrats'.

ALAN ADLER (London)

1. In our story on the NUS conference last week, a typographical error [believe it or not and we agree it sounds suspicious] reduced the number of NOISS delegates at the conference from 60 to 20. We apologise to the comrades concerned.

2. The review of Geoff Hodgson's book by Dave Bailey inadvertently forgot to mention the book's publisher and the price. Socialism and Parliamentary Democracy by Geoff Hodgson is published by Spokesman at £4.95 (cloth)



"we got him on the Criminal Trespass Act... but unfortunately, the reindeer got away."

QUIZ ANSWERS

- China.
- Trotsky's murderer was made a Hero of the Soviet Union, Gold Star.
- Andy Bevan, newly-appointed youth officer of the Labour Party.
- The Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia (by the newspaper Rude Pravo).
- Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball had to appeal to the Home Secretary's 'advisory panel' without knowing the reason for the deportation orders against them.
- To protest (successfully) against massive price increases introduced by the Sadat Government.
- Spare Rib.
- The Bakers Union.
- The Netherlands.
- It threw and killed former Northern Ireland premier Brian Faulkner.
- Michael O'Halloran, MP for Bellington North.
- The stadium in San Sebastian was occupied by 1,500 Basque nationalists.
- To protest against the threatened closure of Preston Docks.
- Katangan rebels against the Zaïre Government.
- At the Randolph Hotel in Oxford.
- For allegedly giving 'military' advice to left-wing demonstrators in the Italian city of Bologna.
- That of Kunta Kinte in Alex Haley's Roots.
- William Tyndale.
- The British Steel Corporation, as a result of documents found during an occupation of its plant in Greenwicks.
- A strike involving 600,000 workers.
- In the Netherlands during the South Moluccan siege.
- They were characters in Robert Bolt's State of Revolution.
- The CP-run Communist University of London.
- President of the Soviet Union, replacing the ousted Podgorny.
- Chile.
- India (George Fernandez).
- He wrote the offending poem, 'The Love That Dares to Speak its Name'.
- Sid French, who led the split from the Communist Party of Great Britain.
- The Crickwood sorters voted under pressure from their union leaders to drop the boycott of Grunwick's mail.
- The General Secretary of Peoples Democracy, John McNulty.
- Somalis struggling to secede from Ethiopia.
- A protest against a plutonium reactor project.
- Sri Lanka.
- Because the Socialist Unity campaign exposed him as a fascist infiltrator.
- APEX General Secretary Roy Grantham.
- London student teacher Andy Klymchuk.
- That of Hans Martin Schleyer, kidnapped by the Red Army Faction.
- AUEW executive member Reg Birch, who persuaded his locked out members at Beaverbrook to go back on management's terms.
- Hounslow Hospital, after patients were forcibly removed.
- Michael Edwardes.
- The storming of the hijacked airliner at Mogadishu.
- That of air traffic assistants at West Drayton.
- The Spanish Government and opposition parties.
- Ulster Unionist MP William Craig.
- Irmgard Moeller, the only survivor of the supposed 'suicide attempt' by Baader-Meinhof prisoners.
- The newly formed Anti-Nazi League.
- The demand for a wide-ranging review of the Morning Star.
- Australia.
- Spanish CP leader Santiago Carrillo, who crossed a picket line to speak at the University.
- Drifting tear gas fired at opponents of his visit to the USA.

HOW YOU RATE

More than 40: Either you work for Socialist Challenge or you should apply for a job with the paper immediately.
31-40: You read the paper regularly and carefully; keep it that way in 1978!
21-30: You're a supporter who doesn't always find it easy to get through the paper. Help us make it more accessible by writing us more critical letters and sending in a donation to the Fund Drive now.
20 or less: Your problem is that you just don't see the paper often enough. Make sure you score better next year by taking out a cheap-rate subscription immediately, before the rates go up on 1 January.

THE ANALYSIS of Socialist Challenge by the National Secretariat of Big Flame posed a number of interesting points primarily centring around the nature of a revolutionary socialist paper. I feel the path that they suggest is prone to many dangers.

Those comrades who, like myself, were either members of the International Socialists or around that organisation in the mid-Seventies will remember the all-too-brief discussion over the move to 'a workers' paper'. The position put forward by the IS leadership then was that Socialist Worker was a 'paper for workers' whereas the political climate required 'a paper written by workers for workers'.

Clearly this was seen at a time when Rank & File papers and conferences were being promoted. The statement by Big Flame in many ways

smacks of the same analysis.

Today Socialist Challenge, in my opinion, stands apart from Socialist Worker not on the basis of the 'brilliantly imaginative and direct treatment of issues' (sic) in Socialist Worker, but by the fact that Socialist Challenge has raised the level of theory and analysis that is rock bottom in most of the socialist press. The comment that Socialist Challenge owes much to New Left Review is a compliment that could be paid to very few publications on the left.

As an independent socialist I have been impressed by many of the articles in Socialist Challenge — the 'Battle of Ideas' (Communist Party special particularly). I may not totally agree with the political line of the IMG, but only by a serious attempt to discuss theory can a unified revolutionary socialist movement

come about.

On face value the suggestions of Big Flame lead the way to diluting of politics or a long list of strike reports. More importantly the major problem lies in the view of the working class present in such an assumption: the Big Flame article claims that Socialist Challenge is not a paper which could be handed around the canteen. This both underestimates and patronises working class militants.

A paper has to be fought for to win mass readership. It must have news, analysis, theory and humour, and in my opinion space should be found for special features on the history of the class. Finally, it would seem unlikely that any political paper worth fighting for would find its way onto the shelves of W.H. Smith (apologies to Time Out).

N. STONE (Ilford)

International Socialists and revolutionary unity

SEVERAL RECENT initiatives on the revolutionary left (in rank and file trade union activity, among socialist feminists and gay liberationists, and around Socialist Challenge and Socialist Unity) have brought together people of different political organisations and backgrounds. Some of us, former members of the International Socialists (SWP), have been involved in these moves, and we all feel that they could be important for the future of revolutionary socialism in this country.

There must be many people who like us still identify to some extent with the ideas and experiences of IS. Although we have gone in different directions, we may have some common contributions to make to the moves now going on.

We, the undersigned, there-

fore support the idea of a conference of International Socialists on revolutionary unity. It is proposed to hold this meeting in London on 11 February, and that the main sessions will be on (1) on the relevance of the IS tradition today, particularly in defining the relationship between revolutionary socialists and the working class; and (2) the current situation, the tasks of socialists, and the moves towards revolutionary unity.

Any of your readers who are interested in further details should write to M. Shaw, 67 Salisbury St, Hull, indicating, where relevant, their present fields of political activity.

BOB CANT, RAY CHALLINOR, CELIA DEACON, RICHARD KUPER, STEPHEN MARKS, GORDON PETERS, PETER SEDGWICK, MARTIN SHAW, HARRY WICKS, JOHN ANTHONY, SOONU ENGINEER, JAMES HINTON, RICHARD HYMAN, MARY PEARSON, MIKE SHERIDAN, JOHN WHITFIELD.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank: Photo Press for permitting us to publish the letter from Wolf Biermann's new book; Peter Wallen for allowing us to use a slightly edited version of his article, 'Was Christ a Collaborator?', published in Seven Days in 1971.

As Monthly, for permission to reprint an extract from a two-part interview with David Hockney, by Peter Fuller.

PETER FULLER talks to one of Britain's most famous living painters DAVID

HOCKNEY

Something which is still absent from your work is any reference to class. In your book, you say, 'I think you can ignore this conservatism in England if you want to. I just smile at it. I'm from an English working class background.' When you paint now do you ignore a large part of your background and experience? You haven't engaged, for example, with the working class reality of Bradford since your very early works.

In Bradford one painted what one saw: a city full of dark streets. There is a painting I did — it's never been reproduced anywhere — called *A View of Bradford from Earls Court*. It's abstraction, but it's got lots of frontals of little men on it and it has the Bradford motto, which is on every Bradford bus, *labor omnia vincit*: work conquers all. At least it was an attempt to make a link. The moment you put 'from Earls Court' you realise it can't be a visible view.

We've talked about art being shut in on itself. One way of working towards a solution might be to choose subjects that relate to the lives of a greater number of people.

I agree, of course. That's why I am always painting the figure. You can interest people who don't know much about painting; the figure is the most important thing in people's lives. They get interested in paintings of the figure.

Long before there was a problem of modernism, people painted the figure. But, as you have pointed out, English art remained conservative. Much of it related only to middle class experience. Now you recognise that, but you don't try and break it down. Painting the figure is not, in itself, enough?

Of course, there were exceptions in English art, like Hogarth. But, in the 1960s, I and a lot of other people believed that there had been a breakdown of class in England. Now I see it wasn't a breakdown at all. I've changed my view on this.

But from 1962 to 1965, this breakdown of class was talked about, wasn't it? Something changed; but it didn't change anything like as much as people thought. I remember being shocked as a boy in Bradford when I read Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier*. He says that the middle classes all thought that the working class smelled. I couldn't believe that when I read it. I thought, now why would they think that? Now, obviously, things have changed. But the divisions are still very much there.

That's why you have problems with the Arts Council. The official art world in England is run by middle class people who have a certain view of art. That's why they side with a certain view of modernism, because it covers things up. I now realise that, but I've only just begun to see it that way.

The very conventions which you call naturalism seem to me to have been class conventions: they were part and parcel of the middle classes' way of seeing the world. Perhaps. But one has to remember that the middle classes were the only people, in a sense, who did view the world. The peasant, after all, does not view the world at all; so you cannot just say that it's that. It's a bit more complicated. After all, there are some exceptions. Hogarth was a better artist than most.

He escaped from the aristocratic patrons by publishing engravings; this gave him a much wider audience and greater freedom. You have sought a bigger audience than that which painting alone offers, too, haven't you?

Now, you don't get the increased audience through engravings, but through reproduction. I'm aware that I reached a rather large audience through the book. Any artist wants an audience. But I have a conflict about this. I lock myself in here; I don't go out much; the silly art world I try and ignore. Hogarth had it easier. In his day the conventions were accepted. There was no tradition of a counter-conception that he had to deal with. It's more difficult now



David Hockney: Looking at pictures on a screen, 1977.

Photo: KASMIN Ltd.

because you have to deal with that as well.

Don't you think you could make a much wider breakthrough if instead of painting Californian swimming pools, art devices and your friends, you tried to deal with more ambitious subject matter?

I hope to one day. But there are vast problems to deal with. It's complex and difficult. Sometimes I feel like putting off dealing with a great big subject. But sometimes subjects are deceptive. You see a swimming pool in England is a complete luxury thing. In California it's not. If England had a hot climate things would be quite different. Its content is not quite what it appears in Bradford. A swimming pool in Bradford would be foolish.

I'm not criticising you because you paint swimming pools. When Courbet tried to find a way through to realism, in his day, he painted stone-breakers and peasants. You talk about how hard it is for working class people even to enter art schools...

Personally, I think that's criminal. Really criminal. I will take every opportunity...

You are in a position to bring the experience of these people to the centre of the concerns of art. But you don't.

I have spoken about that many times, though.

You've spoken about it. But I'm talking about what you paint.

On the canvas. The subject. The problems are always immense. One thing you have to guard against is that if you let the subject completely dominate everything, you might finish up with illustration, with something that had just a temporary meaning.

I'm not saying you should let the subject completely dominate.

I know what you are saying. I understand the issue completely. I do want to make a picture that has a lot of meaning for a lot of people. I think the idea of making pictures for 25 people in the art world is crazy and ridiculous. It should be stopped; in some way it should be pointed out that it can't go on. In this way old Fyfe Robertson was trying to say that. Unfortunately he just tried to articulate it from... a not quite right point of view.

Kitaj has said that he would like to be 'A Painter of the People'. He got the phrase from Courbet. Presumably you wouldn't want it that way?

I would, actually. But why have you said

that you are not interested in Kitaj's solutions?

One reason is that when all this has been said about how art should break out, acquire a new subject matter, and all the rest, what does he paint? Portraits of John Gauding, painter and art historian, and The Orientalist, a fantastic imaginary figure, super-imposed with literary and art references. He makes the same mistake as those he opposed himself to. You, in different way, suffer from this same closure. If something is to emerge from this Kitaj-Hockney alternative, you'll have to begin by breaking through that.

In know what you mean. But, for instance, Henry Geldzahler over there... [pointing to the picture...] Now I've painted him before; I'm painting him again. He's one of the few people I talk to a great deal about art, even though we don't agree about it. I've had some effect: he was once completely devoted to formalism. Personally, he's a friend, a rather amusing person, warm in his way, quite serious. A bit lazy. To paint him in his predicaments fits in with a few other things.

The painting shows a screen covered with reproductions of paintings and he's looking at them. He's a formalist art expert looking at images of images of other paintings. Formalist painting is painting about painting in one sense; this is painting about painting in another. I feel you are trapped. You want to get through to reality; what's behind the art screen, the real world but you can't, or you won't, go through. The painting is called Looking at pictures on a screen: this means that the spectator is having the same experience as the subject of the painting. [Walks up to canvas...] If you've got yourself to here, in front of the canvas, whoever you are, then he is looking at pictures on a screen, but so are you. You are even looking at them on your screen as well as his. It's true, it's meant to be enclosed, all closed in. I was going to put a camera here, behind the screen as a slight escape. But I haven't got round to it. Now that painting is not just about art. I know that it has hundreds of shortcomings, but I cannot make up my mind what they are. You're saying, probably it's the subject matter that really starts the problem. I'm not that sure. I think the subject matter can actually lead outwards.

You talked about your early painting, in your book, as being in part conscious

propaganda for acceptance of homosexuality. What seems to me fundamental about your work — and it is something the critics always avoid — is that it is painted from a specifically homosexual viewpoint. Well, I think I gave up homosexual propaganda a long time ago. I'm not sure about what you are saying. I really don't know. I am homosexual. I've never had an erotic thought, or an erotic experience, with a female. A lot of people like to make out that it dominates one's life. Sections of the media are always focusing on it; Jack Hassan, in his film, tried to make out it was a dominant thing.

Whereas I look at it in a quite different way. I don't think it's dominant at all. It's important, of course. Sex is an important motivation in everybody's life. Perhaps you are right. In the art world context, it's underplayed; in the media, they overdo it. Nobody seems to have got the true balance.

Berger's thesis seems right about how most European paintings of women, have been produced by men who desire women to be passive as a result, in many such paintings women have no personality or sexuality of their own. The woman is commonly represented as available and supine. Now this was a limitation introduced into vision and representation by a sexual mode. One of the things that makes your painting distinctive is that it indicates another way of seeing the figure and the world, because your sexuality is also distinct.

And that's where the art world does not deal with it. I agree with what you've just said. Yes. But, really, I've hardly done any male nudes. I do only very few. Somebody pointed out that the tradition of the male nude in art is of strength, a symbol of strength and power, and not one of sensuous eroticism. To make the male nude in that way was, of course, entirely against the tradition. I read that once about my painting somewhere. But the only thing is there's only two or three pictures on that; it's not a recurring theme.

Your many double portraits seem to amount to a fairly consistent exploration of the doubts and possibilities of two people trying to relate to each other. Is that fair? Well, about the portrait of my parents, my father said he thought that the portrait — in his words, 'It shows I concentrate'. Because he's reading the book. My mother, who is a little bit more aware, sensed it was about something else. He's in his own world. My mother is sat there, rather patiently, doing what I say. My father cannot do that. He finally picks up a book to look at the pictures. Now that's quite obvious; not a hidden thing. Many people would read it that way. The problem is that when you look at a picture of two people, you are going to read many, many things into it. You are forced to. Formalist criticism tries to avoid this; I think that's a real criticism of its criticisms.

I feel there are two opposing tendencies in your recent work. On the one hand, the breakthrough in the painting of your parents, and on the other works like the Louvre's windows. The former is becoming more concrete; you are looking for ways of grasping real people in an image. But in the later works, which seem to descend from A Bigger Splash, the figure has vanished altogether, or is at best an absent presence, and the visible world itself again seems threatened. On the one hand you have this reflective, narcissistic, art screen; on the other, a very definite attempt to break through. Do you feel that's true?

Yes. I think that when the work is misinterpreted, it is this which is misinterpreted. Collectively, people don't see the essential struggle. But I admit that at times perhaps it's not very clear. I still think that perhaps that's because of my own failings. I don't make it that clear. The lay audience is less interested on formal problems; but the non-lay audience is interested in them, and criticise them. So I'm wedged in between. I don't care really. One just goes on pursuing it, anyway. One can't really stop. Some things just have to be done.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES

OUR OWN PEOPLE

ABOUT NINE months ago 'Pirate Jenny Theatre' company started discussions with Dave Edgar on a format for a play on racism. It was to be a play which started from where *Destiny* left off. We were at the time an all-white company so we felt strongly that we wanted to deal with racism as 'our' problem, not simply put on a play with analysis. Also as a company with a feminist orientation, we saw the obvious parallels between sexism and racism and wanted to think of ways of linking them.

Would it, for example, be politically and dramatically more interesting to explore the racist attitude of a white working class woman towards her Asian sisters working and living alongside her? How could one take up the extraordinary fact that Asian women traditionally the most oppressed section of any ethnic

group living in this country, have been so often leading important industrial struggles — Imperial Typewriters and Grunwick to name but two.

In *Our Own People*, David Edgar manages to deal with these problems with a compassionate insight into humanity at its most corrupt and vulnerable. And yet he doesn't allow his audience to lose sight of a biting political analysis which allows neither them nor the characters off the hook.

The format of the play is an Industrial Enquiry into a strike by Asian workers at a Yorkshire mill — a strike in which the Asians are out, but the whites remained at work (whitelegs?). In the first half of the play Edgar makes no 'theatrical' concessions to his audience. We are in a courtroom. We must listen carefully to the case for the Asians, put over in the best radical lawyer tradition by Ms Watts, anxious, at all costs, not to soil her case with 'unnecessary' political references. The lawyers for the management and the

unions appear equally eager to ignore the growing racial cleavage in the factory itself. Within half an hour of listening to the case, the courtroom starts to erupt. The audience are plunged into a plot fraught with allegations of manipulation, racism and exploitation.

All socialists should try and see the play. More importantly they should attempt to persuade non-socialists to do so as well.

All too often political theatre groups get from their fellow radicals what amounts to the same treatment one is used to from bourgeois critics: a theatrical 'critique' of a play as an isolated 'thing', written, performed and over. There is rarely any real attempt to use the work done by these groups as a stepping stone to the daily work of socialists in the area.

We in Pirate Jenny have an excellent play on the most important problem facing all of us in Britain today: racism and the rise of fascism. Criticise us by all means, BUT USE US.

We are touring England and Scotland until March. Further information from Pirate Jenny: 01-969-2282.



HANSEN-PETER RABBIT LINK CONCLUSIVE

THE SO-CALLED Christmas issue of *Socialist Challenge*, paper of the revisionist 'International Marxist Group', represents the latest stage in the historic task of Pabloism: the liquidation of Trotskyism, the International Committee of the Fourth International, and Comrade G. Healy.

The Pabloite rag carries a whole page on Peter Rabbit. This is not surprising, considering that this is the same Peter Rabbit who is known to have corresponded with leading

members of the Fourth International in Mexico in 1940. *News Line* has authenticated copies of letters from Joseph Hansen of the so-called Socialist Workers Party to P. Rabbit addressed to 'Dear Peter Rabbit', overwhelming proof that J. Hansen was an agent of the GPU, FBI and CIA. Given Trotsky's known fondness for rabbits, the sinister overtones of the letter are obvious.

The omissions are just as striking. *Socialist Challenge*

can print a whole two pages on the situation in the Middle East in 33 AD without once mentioning the Janahiriyyah, the Great Libyan Arab Revolution of Muammar al-Gaddafi or the treacherous role of Stalinism in pre-Christian Palestine. (Readers are referred to the 47 part series by Jack Gale for the true picture). Doubtless revisionist playboy T. Ali's political mentors at the *Financial Times* will display their usual enthusiasm for this latest anti-Trotskyist political buffoonery.

Tomorrow — Sylvia Franklin and Winnie the Pooh: The Unanswered Questions.



THE FOLLOWING resolution was passed by the National

Committee of the International Marxist Group:

The IMG, British section of the Fourth International, takes critical note of the failure of the comrades of *Socialist Challenge* to produce an unreadable newspaper.

The expanding readership of what has mistakenly become a popular political newspaper is entirely out of step with the conjunctural need to build a cadre organisation of leftward moving elements who have broken with Labourism, rejected centrist illusions (see autumn perspectives document: 'Our Winter of Discontent'), and are fully conversant with new mass vanguard developments in the Iberian peninsula.

This is most clearly defined by the so-called Xmas special. Scarcely any of the contributions concern key political issues, and none has the merit of mobilising the base for the mass pickets that are now vital. For example, the sexist, racist, and anti-working class phenomenon Santa Claus/Claudia comes off virtually unscathed. 'It is therefore proposed that the excessive wages and coffee demands of the *Socialist Challenge* Editorial Board be dismissed, and the Org Bureau instructed to withhold all payments until the paper has recruited at least one new member.'

Passed: Six for, five against, three abstentions, one no vote, two asleep.

Socialist Worker

COR — WHAT A BLOODY CHEEK!

JOE SMITH (unemployed paper round boy and member of the rank and file group Paper Charter), writes: 'Workers and their wives are victims of a new con trick.'

Socialist Challenge, the paper associated with the International Marxist Group — in which only students are allowed — has got a bloody nerve. This week they upped their asking price by 5p. For 5p workers could buy an extra cigarette.

'But does *Socialist Challenge* care? Not on your nelly! (Do workers really talk like this? — P.Foot). They're quite happy as long as the circulation goes up. Everything goes up these days. Including the membership of the Socialist Workers Party, which is now 30,000 strong. Join the SWP.'

Next week: *How Tesco made a huge profit out of selling used tea bags to old-age pensioners.*

Our Xmas issue What the left press said

Morning Star

Socialist Challenge has just produced a 24 page Christmas issue — Press Association.



CANTEEN WORKERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

THE LACK of popular appeal of *Socialist Challenge* was never more obvious than in its Xmas issue. As a few copies found their way by accident into a number of factory canteens in Liverpool and London, angry workers embarked on a hunger strike. 'What a load of old coppers,' said Jim Jones, a shop steward of many years standing. Jim, who was educated at Canterbury University, told us that the Xmas issue had set the struggle back many years.

In housing estates and tenements the reaction was even stronger. 'It is no accident', said Molly, who has been involved in many tenants'

disputes over the past fifty years, 'that this lot have ignored us in this issue'.

At a protest meeting called by the tenants, Big Flame National Secretariat comrades explained that they sympathised with the tenants point of view. 'We're not involved in the paper' said one BF leader. This remark was greeted by loud cheers. After a three hour session it was decided not to burn all copies in the area. Half the meeting adjourned for midnight mass, while the rest retired to discuss how to take the campaign forward.

Next week: *Socialist Challenge* puts its case.

new left review

AN INNOVATIVE critique of this text is, to say the least, problematic.* The anguishing antinomy confronting much of the British left clearly manifests itself in the lacunae of this particular oeuvre: whether within a specific conjuncture it poses the problem of the transformation of the qualitative to quantitative within the framework of the contradiction between informative analysis and analytical information; whether such a contradiction is antagonistic or non-antagonistic; or whether it is simply a lapsus in the epistemological problematic or *Wellenschaung*. Or, as Timpanaro pertinently poses the problem in his devastatingly relevant critique of Freud's psychopathology: why *excoriare ex nostris ossibus ultor* rather than the original text? Why indeed? The answer certainly isn't in my Latin primer, but the parallels with this *opus* are striking. Or, as Poulantzas once put it, in a dazzling *troupe l'oeil*: 'La plume de ma tante est sur le

bureau de mon oncle'. (*Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, p. 2314). *Bon motif, Nicolas!* The phrase loses much in translation, but the underlying verisimilitude is incontrovertible. The ironically entitled 'game' on the centre spread epitomises the object of Poulantzas' critique: the quasi-Borges labyrinthine structure serves as a model of the vulgar materialism that pervades the British left. One might almost believe that the *auteurs* had never heard of the transformation problem or the tremendous amount of unproductive labour we are engaged in. As Marx originally wrote: 'The Marxists have changed the world; the point however is to interpret it'. This sharply poses the dichotomy between Hegel and Kant that Marx was wrestling with in 1843 when he...

[continued on page 25]

* *Sozialistische Herausforderung Weltachien Nummer* (London 1977).

(An English translation of this review will be published next year by New Left Books, price £54).

A Selection of Recent Titles Published by Methuen and Tavistock

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'Marxism and Literary Criticism' is amazingly comprehensive for its brief format. By presenting his subject through four themes, 'Literature and History', 'Form and Content', 'The Writer and Commitment', and 'The Author as Producer', Mr. Eagleton has been able to sum up the main areas of Marxist criticism in the West today. He provides excellent resumes of individual critics and positions, clear expositions of approaches and problems, while at the same time making explicit his preferences and, in 'The Author as Producer', concluding with pointers for the future.' *Times Literary Supplement*.

£2.50 Paperback £1.10

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THE PROPHET RETURNED

by David King



324 Leon Davidovich Trotsky, the last of the Bolsheviks' Heroes



322 Leon Davidovich Trotsky, the last of the Bolsheviks' Heroes

322 Leon Davidovich Trotsky, the last of the Bolsheviks' Heroes

Among the massive amount of publications currently on sale in Moscow to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution is a two-volume work entitled 'Lenin: Collection of Photographs and Film Stills'. Volume one—the photographs—contains over 650 pages of pictures of Lenin from childhood through revolution to death. There are many fine shots in the volume, but it is marred by the usual falsification of history—photos retouched and cropped to eliminate prominent Bolsheviks who were purged during the Stalin era.

However on Page 401, due to an extraordinary oversight by the publishers—'The Institute of Marxims-Leninism under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union'—there appears Leon Davidovich Trotsky (arrowed above), co-leader of the October Revolution, founder of the Red Army, later exiled and finally assassinated by Stalin. The photo was taken at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars in the Kremlin on 3 October, 1922. The photo-

graph below, not in the book, but taken within seconds of the one above, shows Trotsky clearly, as well as many other prominent Bolsheviks cropped out of the published picture, including Rykov and Kameney standing next to Lenin.

Trotsky's last appearance in an official Soviet volume was in 1935 as a one inch square drawing in a book on the Civil War. 42 years later, on the anniversary of the Revolution that he took such a part in creating, the 'Prophet Outcast' has made a fitting return.



What's Left

Rates: 3p per word, Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3.00pm Saturday before publication.

WEST London Anti-Apartheid Group Christmas Party, 42 St Lawrence Terrace, W10, 17 Dec at 8pm, £1

ALARM! SWP Great New Year's Eve Party. Proceeds to Lewisham Anti-Fascist fund, West Indian food, draught beer, punk-reggae. 9 till late. Entrance 50p. 36 St Alphonsus Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4. All socialists welcome.

MALE or female to share large flat with non-sectarian IMG comrades. Rent £24pm. Phone Dan, Dave or Rex on 801 0173 (Totterham).

CAMPAIGN Against Repression in Iran. London Sub-Cities meeting, 17 Dec, 11.00am Imperial College Students Union, Prince Consort Rd, London SW7.

'FIRST OF MAY', Edinburgh is a left meeting place and bookshop at 45 Niddry St, 031-657 1348. Open 12 noon to 7pm Mon-Sat (5pm Sat). We have an excellent range of books and periodicals. We welcome all visitors.

CRISIS of capitalism? Or crisis of Monopoly Capitalism? 'Economic Power' shows how the current crisis is a direct result of the faults and structure of the monopoly system. And it shows how small, liberal businesses can erode the power of the monopolies and create an egalitarian social democracy. Send £1.80 (payable to Gemini Books) to 5 Russel Rd, Northolt, Middlesex.

BEST RANGE of Marxism, Feminism, Anarchism and Political Analysis in the York area, plus wide selection of books not available elsewhere in the area on over a dozen subjects — York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate, York YO1 2TZ (0904 37355).

LIVERPOOL: Demonstration in protest against the collaboration of Radio Merseyside with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Sat 12 Dec, 12 noon. Assemble: Williamson Square.

JOINT benefit for Metropole and Rolls-Royce strikers 8pm, Sat 19 Dec, School of Intensive English Studies, 21 Star St, London W2. Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre present play 'Divide and Rule Britannia' followed by songs and discussion. Admission 50p.

WHAT'S ESPERANTO? Read for yourself explanatory booklet by Bernard Cavanagh MA (Oxon) DSc (Lond). 20p from Dave Wetzel, Trade Union and Co-op Esperanto Group, 28 Penderel Rd, Hounslow, Middlesex.

ALMOST FREE THEATRE 485 8224

A PINPRICK OF HISTORY by Margaret D'Arcy Mon-Sat 1.15pm until 23 Dec.

4 COMRADES (including 3 full-timers) looking for flat/house in London. By mid-January we will be sleeping on the street — neither comfortable nor good for our work! Please let us know if you hear/know of anything — write/ring to the Centre, PO Box 50, Islington, London N1 — Redmond, Sarah or Roger.

NATIONAL Socialist Feminist conference, 28-19 Jan, Manchester. For details of venue, papers, transport etc. London women please contact Karen Margolis, 85 Regent's Park Rd NW1, 722 9621.

Belt and Braces Roadshow Company send fraternal greetings to all readers and remind you that you can book our three shows:

A Day in the Life of The World
Not So Green As Its Cabbage
Do Not Go Gentle
phone 01-485 2872

Cornerhouse Bookshop
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For Radical Education Books



Vladimir, Karl & Fidel wish you a Happy Christmas

Lenin for Beginners, Marx for Beginners and Cuba for Beginners are available from local bookshops or directly from: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 9-19 Rupert Street, London W1V 7FS

WRITERS and READERS

Socialist Challenge



In conjunction with Peter Kennard, Socialist Challenge has produced a set of postcards featuring six of Kennard's photomontages. In black and white, the six cards relate to South Africa [see illustration], Ireland, Chile, Seveso, the 1974 miners' strike, and repression in the USSR. Each card is 7 by 3½ inches, and printed with all normal postcard requirements — in English, French and Ger-

man. The cards are a unique collection of modern political photomontage. They lend themselves to mounting and display. Order your set now! The cards are 15p each [very cheap!], plus 7p postage and packing. The complete set of six is yours for £1, incl. p&p, to: Photomontage Offer, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

SCABS IN UNIFORM!

'Mow them down,' shouted the police inspector. The scene was an FBU picket line at Epping in Essex last Monday, where the cops were leading scabs into the fire station.

Two of the pickets were mown down. Trevor Swain and Keith Woods ended up in hospital after they had been carried along for yards on the bonnet of a scab car.

It's the sort of scene that is becoming all too familiar in Labour's Britain. Just look what's happened over the past days and weeks.

* The Special Patrol Group attacks the Grunwick picket line on 7 November, arresting more than 100 and injuring more;

* Troops are called in to break the FBU strike, as well as being sent to Bermuda to back up the racist government;

* RAF drivers scab on the air traffic controllers' strike at West Drayton;

* Now it is revealed that the armed forces will be called in to break a possible lorry drivers' strike in the New Year;

* And fascist leader Martin Webster addresses a police conference in Durham!

But Britain's top cops have little to learn from the National Front when it comes to strike breaking. The Durham chief constable claims that Webster was invited because he had been involved in causing public disorder.

What a load of rubbish!

By that argument we can expect to see Richard Dobson

appointed to the Commission for Racial Equality.

But nothing would surprise us from this Government. Anything goes as long as it preserves their precious pay policy.

The lorry drivers' strike is a good example. The claim is likely to be 15 per cent — which would break the 10 per cent norm. So the Labour Government has scraped around every military unit in Western Europe to find drivers for heavy fuel tankers.

This only goes to show what we've said all along: the uniformed scabs in the Green Goddesses are not there to protect life and limb — they are there to protect the 10 per cent norm and the 12-month rule.

This use of troops in industrial disputes must be stopped, and with it the Labour Government's attacks on our living standards.

Merlyn Rees, the man who spent two years directing the troops in Ireland, has put his brutal experience to good use.

He must go, and so must Callaghan, Owen, and the other gunslingers in the Labour leadership.



RUSSIAN REVOLUTION SPECIAL Price 50p

Socialist Challenge offers you a 16 page colour special on the Russian Revolution. The design, by David King, complements a hitherto unpublished manuscript by Isaac Deutscher. This text contains contemporary accounts of Bolsheviks in 1917. The price for this splendid souvenir marking the 60th anniversary of the revolution is only 50p plus 10p p&p.



* Russian Revolution Special, 50p plus 10p p&p.
* 1978 May '68 Poster Calendar, £1 plus 30p p&p.
* Grunwick mass picket painting by Dan Jones, £2 plus 10p p&p.

* All three publications £3.30 post free, and no need to include p&p costs if you are ordering any two of the publications.

* DELETE ABOVE AS APPROPRIATE.

Send cheque/postal order to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N. 1.

Name of donor.....
Name of recipient.....
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LABOUR SAVING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

If you want to send any of these as a Christmas present use this form. Better still, use it to send yourself a present!

Only £123 to go

COMPLACENCY HAS not set in among our readers. This week £190.75 came in through the post, plus bankers orders to the tune of £138 which were transferred to our account. The £1,800 target is now within our grasp. We have only £123.73 to go before Lenin can sigh with relief. Please make sure this arrives before 31 December.

Of this week's fund drive, £52.80 originated from Healey's Christmas handouts. This present from Downing Street is no doubt welcome relief for all our readers, but Healey has not been so generous to Socialist Challenge. Our bills are always rising — every penny you can spare keeps us on the streets.

LAST CHANCE — CHEAP SUBS

From 1 January, the subscription rates for Socialist Challenge will be increased. Recently the price of the paper rose to 15p, while we held the subscription rates.

Thus until the end of the year a subscription to Socialist Challenge is still fantastic value. The new yearly rate in Britain will be £10 — at present it is just £7.50.

This is a give away price, so rush off the form now...and give yourself or a friend a superb present. Orders must reach us by last post on 31 December to

Other supporters have helped in kind. In the last month two typewriters have been donated to our under-equipped staff, from supporters in London and Colchester. Another reader wants to sell a record deck — not unusual you might think — except that the proceeds are to go to the fund drive.

Also, of course, we recently were given a new tape recorder by supporters in Japan. We are still short of filing cabinets, a television, a radio, more typewriters, stationery and anything you think would be useful. So keep them and the money rolling in.

obtain the present bargain rate.



A memento of the Grunwick picket line. A print of a painting by Dan Jones, Secretary of the Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council.

Proceeds from the full colour print will go to the strike committee. If you want one of these historic prints then send £2 plus 10p p&p while stocks last.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Domestic: 6 months, £3.75; 12 months £7.50
Abroad: Airmail, £12.50. Surface, £9 per annum.

Name _____

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I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of _____

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.

Complete and return to:

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