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socialist
REVIEW

This man is
Cecil
Rhodes.

That's
why we
call
it

ZIMBABWE.



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NEWS

analysis

Pay

Ford & the 5% fiasco

Breaking the pay limit and defying the government at Fords and British Oxygen does not spell the end for the 5 per cent policy. Whatever is finally won in the Ford strike and BOC's negotiating auction, Callaghan's 'flexible' policy is still there.

The outcome of the present attempt by the TUC's inner clique to cobble together a deal with the Cabinet may also turn out to be pretty irrelevant—unless it provides a way out of confrontation in the public services over the next six months.

For what is now happening in private industry suggests that there is not too much stomach for a fight over the 5 per cent—and the name of the game is of course productivity bargaining.

A lot of stewards and full-time officials have been waiting to see what happens at Fords all the same. Even compared to last year, when a lot of pay negotiations were held back in August, September and October, there were very few deals done up till the end of October. In engineering the total of settlements was under half that of August-September 1977, according to the employer.

Only about a quarter of the deals due in the Manchester area had gone through by the middle of October, there were ten engineering works delaying in Wolverhampton. Only two major companies had settled in Scotland—and one of those was delayed from 26 June.

So it is certainly true that no one's been particularly keen on accepting the 5 per cent, at least not as the only increase.

But the mood on the shop floor also suggests that people are looking for a way out. Instead forming a queue of

behind Fords to bust the limit for good, stewards are still going along to management expecting to work out fancy deals on attendance bonuses, time keeping, value-added, flexibility, demarcation etc etc.

Even in a really well-organised place like Chrysler Linwood, the stewards are looking towards an arbitration hearing to up the overtime premium rate. As the box shows, even quite early on it's easier to wriggle your way round the edge than tackle the policy head on.

There have been some deals above the straight 5 per cent as well, apart from BOC and Fords. Mather & Platt in Manchester have given more than 5 per cent, so have a number of smaller engineering firms in Yorkshire, so have the well-organised sections of print and publishing (who haven't paid too much attention to the past three years of wage limits anyway).

Accepted

But a much larger proportion of workers in private industry have accepted the 5 per cent or even less, where the increases have been offset against rises resulting from the national engineering agreement. They have accepted the 5 per cent on the basis of getting as much as twice the rise or more out of a productivity agreement.

This really is a new development. Before, you might get half as much again as your basic rise: say, an extra 5 per cent on your basic rise: say, an extra 5 per cent on your 20 per cent deal. The majority of the 1,500 or so productivity deals between August 1977 and July 1978 were at about his level.

But now manufacturing firms

are prepared to offer productivity increases which dwarf the basic rise. And it is not only the profitable, privately-owned, firms that are doing this. The state sector—Rolls-Royce, Leyland, shipbuilding are all prepared to make very sizeable offers as well.

If this in fact going to be the pattern for industry this time round (the position in the public service sector is very different of course) it raises some pretty awkward questions.

Most of the productivity deals may give little away in the short term but create the basis for a later management assault on jobs and conditions. Stewards are being drawn into a cosy relationship with management so as to be able to avoid pay controls.

And perhaps most important of all, a lot of workers are beginning to rely on their 'leaders' again: skilled negotiators who can get round the policy in the short term.

The 'leave it to us brigade' are certainly having a fine time of it at the moment. The Leyland Vehicles productivity deal, which introduces some major changes on flexibility and demarcations, was negotiated without any real reference to the full-time official, let alone the shop floor.

The whole complicated deal was put to the membership in one go, accompanied by statements from convenor David Hewitt that the company was in a 'serious position' and this was 'Leyland's last chance'.

A similar operation seems to be on the way at Rolls-Royce in Bristol, nominally a militant plant, with a record of supporting the Right to Work Campaigning, the Liaison Committee etc.. Management implemented

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the engineering national rates, then unilaterally imposed a 2½ per cent rise (the rest was offset against the national increase).

This is quite normal practice the Bristol stewards haven't actually signed an agreement for years. A mass meeting then rejected the 5 per cent policy and gave one month's strike notice. Leading stewards elsewhere in the group take this at face value but the 'top table' at Bristol privately reckons it will never come to a dispute.

The background to this sordid spectacle is of course a productivity offer. Rolls-Royce is offering an extra 10 per cent in return for significant changes in work practices (a new generation of jet engines is on the way).

So far this has only been accepted by the two least militant plants—Barnoldswick, near Burnley, and Ansty in Coventry. But this is steadily putting greater pressure on the other sites to accept, and avoid any sort of argument on the 5 per cent. And of course most of the workforce is in blissful ignorance of this manoeuvring.

Pressure

Really damaging productivity agreements are of course much more likely in the state-owned sector of industry like Leyland or Rolls than the private sector. The pressure is on to 'slim down' the workforce and make the state sector competitive internationally; and this is made infinitely easier by the con-trick being pulled that the state sector 'must succeed' and that nationalisation—or even the National Enterprise Board—suddenly gives workers a great stake in that success (see for example the arguments put forward by leading Longbridge stewards, Derek Robinson and Jack Adams, in our last issue).

But these arguments are very far from being accepted in the older nationalised industries

and even less so in the public services. And the scope for a productivity trap is generally much less, specially because the connection between productivity and loss of jobs can usually be much more clearly made.

Thus the argument for the railway workshop grades, who recently won a big re-incentive scheme is going to be how to confront management at depot level when it tries to push through understaffing, flexibility or a freeze on recruitment locally.

The hospital maintenance workers—and the supervisors, if they win their dispute!—will be faced with exactly the same issue. And the firemen may now be on the brink of local battles

to ensure that their cut in hours does not mean more flexibility rather than new recruits.

Offensive

The government is now trying to balance the advantages of taking on groups of workers in the public sector and trying to isolate them (the hospital maintenance staffs) or conceding productivity rises and moving onto the offensive at local level. It is very concerned about letting the odd group through, because in the public sector these things have a way of spreading.

So for example the Local Authorities Conditions of Service Advisory Board (the cen-

tral body that determines local council industrial relations policy) issued strict instructions to employers at the beginning of August for no local productivity bargaining and no local approaches for special arbitration awards before centrally-agreed moves.

The aftermath of the battle at Fords could thus be a very sharp swing to confrontation in the public sector, in particular over the two major claims due at the beginning of November and December the council and hospital workers. One thing may be worrying Callaghan, Healey and their cronies—when will the public sector unions turn to using their industrial strength. *Dave Field.*

Middle East

The phoney peace

It is almost a year since President Sadat of Egypt announced 'my great mission for peace' set off for Jerusalem, and fell, literally, into his embrace with Begin of Israel. Now the two have announced 'a full accord', and a treaty is to be signed which they claim will end thirty years of conflict in the Middle East.

The reality is that there is no 'peace' agreement. Camp David and the talks which have followed are a fraud, though for those involved they may well turn out to have been a clever one.

How will the new deal 'work'? In looking at the situation in the area it is worth reminding ourselves of what has shaped it.

Though Israel grabs the headlines today, it was the western nations who first took an interest in the Middle East. Britain in particular was worried about the safety of the route to the East, to India—the 'pearl of the Empire'. A century

ago British policy makers wanted the Middle East as a sedure staging post. Lord Cromer put it well in 1889, describing Egypt as 'a wayside inn'.

And later the British saw Palestine in much the same way. Talking of the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine Lord Melchett wrote: 'The advantages to the British Empire are obvious... The security of the imperial complex of interests can be better assured by a large European population than by the few battalions that can be spared' (1937).

Britain's power and interest in the area soon declined. But with the discovery of oil wealth and their understanding of the Middle East's 'strategic importance' (in relation to the 'Soviet threat'), the United States took over Britain's role. Their approach to the Zionist state was even more enthusiastic than that of the British, and they had the resources to back it to the hilt.

Having calculated the task that Israel could carry out for them, and supplied cash and weapons accordingly, the Americans were quite candid about their investment. As Nixon put it while president: 'It's simple—Israel costs the United States less than the Sixth Fleet' (the huge US Navy operating in the Mediterranean).

Whilst of course there have been many other factors entering the calculations of the

western imperial states—why they suppressed the Palestinian Arab movement, how they helped the Zionists establish an Israeli state—their attitude to the area has always been guided by the very same principle.

For over a hundred years the British and the French, then the



Carter & Begin

Americans, have said: 'this area must be policed, and we must find a base from which to control it, or a *gendarme* to perform the task for us'.

The second main factor which has shaped the politics of the region has been the success of the Zionist movement. And this has been premised on one idea the need to create an exclusively Jewish State in the whole of *eretz* Israel (the biblical 'land of Israel'), by excluding its Palestinian inhabitants.

The Zionist leaders have made this absolutely clear. In 1940 a Zionist administrator could write: 'We shall not achieve our goal of being an independent people with the

Room for manoeuvre

Settlements 'inside' the limit, but giving more than 5 per cent for productivity:

Leyland Vehicles, Lancs, 5 per cent + 12½ per cent productivity deal

Honeywell, Glasgow 5 per cent attendance bonus + productivity deal

Rolls-Royce, Crewe* 3.7 per cent + 10 per cent productivity deal

Rolls-Royce, Bristol* 2.5 per cent + 10 per cent productivity deal on offer

British Sugar 5 per cent + up to 13 per cent productivity deal

* deal below 5 per cent because of offset from national engineering agreement.

Arabs in this small country. The only solution is a Palestine, at least western Palestine, without Arabs...And there is no other way than to transfer all the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them: Not one village, not one tribe should be left . . .

And as recently as 1967 Moshe Dayan, now Israeli foreign minister, reminded the Zionist movement—'During the last 100 years, our people have been in the process of building up the nation, of expansion, of getting additional Jews and settlements in order to expand the borders. Let no Jew say the process has ended. Let no Jew say we are near the end of the road.' (All quotes from *The Other Israel* New York, 1972)

Many of these quotes are now famous. But they are worth repeating because they set all the talk of the Middle East 'peace' in context. The history of imperialism and of Zionism over one hundred years tells us that the Zionists will not abandon their idea of an expanded and exclusive state.

And today's leading western nations will not, in the foreseeable future, abandon their main ally and the present bastion of reaction in the region.

The Camp David agreement changes nothing. Neither part one, the deal over the Palestinians, nor part two, that between Israel and Egypt, does any more than root the conflict more deeply in the region's politics.

Ironic

The treaty which is now being agreed is part two of the Camp David agreement. This is not a deal between the 'contending parties'—Israel, the Palestinians, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, the Lebanese. It is an agreement between Israel and the United States' new agent in the area—Egypt. It is, ironically, a deal between Zionism and the most fawning of American allies in the region. It is in effect a deal between Israel and the best friend of Israel's main backer!

This part of the Camp David agreement will serve two main functions. First it will remove Egypt from the conflict. Beigin will be able to count his southern borders as 'safe';

He will have achieved recognition from the most powerful of the Arab states and will be in a far stronger position to defuse the token opposition

of King Hussein of Jordan, of Saudi Arabia, and of the Gulf states.

Second, in exchange, Israel will return the Sinai desert and abandon the settlements built there since the 1967 war. This will provide President Sadat with the face-saver he needs to help preserve control at home. He hopes to secure the breathing space to relieve the truly awesome disasters of the Egyptian economy, to cut military expenditure, and to procure more international grants—and loans for what will be a state no longer 'at war'.

Sadat wants to get on with the job of repressing the domestic opposition—principally making more remote the ever-present threat of an exploding workers' movement or a military coup.

Israel gains everything from this deal: concedes almost nothing. Whilst it is true that any territorial transfer does breach the most extreme of the Zionists' plans for expansion, Sinai was never part of the mainstream Zionist plan. Expansion and retention of the West Bank area was.

Referred to in public statements as the biblical 'Judaea' and 'Samaria', the West Bank (and Gaza) is much more integral to the Zionist idea. Beigin would it far more difficult to sell the idea of concessions here. But most Israelis have not expected to retain Sinai and see its return as an acceptable sop to the eager Sadat.

But Israel is to gain still more. The United States is to supply more of the most advanced weaponry, and is to finance two airfields to replace those lost when Sinai is returned.

The cost is estimated at over a

billion dollars. And Egypt is not merely formally to recognise Israel quite unthinkable until recent years—but is to open trading relations and to guarantee a regular supply of oil.

Feeble

From any Egyptian point of view it is a very unequal exchange. The feeble opposition Sadat (sometimes) allows to comment, has denounced the schemes as the sale of Egyptian pride for more areas of worthless desert sand. Sadat's Foreign Minister resigned. But Sadat himself is well pleased.

He knew he was arguing from a position of pathetic weakness, and the whole 'initiative'—the original declaration, the trip to Jerusalem, the Israeli visit, Camp David—has been a stunt to force Israel to accept his gifts. Sadat, whose armies will not be able to fight a war for many years, had little to sell. He gave even that away.

But what is much worse has been the sale of any Egyptian interest in the fate of the Palestinians. *Part one* of the Camp David deal was an agreement to abandon the Palestinians for good. A vague formula has been agreed by which the Palestinians may be imprisoned in a 'mini-state' established in the West Bank and Gaza areas. Over a five year period Israeli troops in these occupied territories will make the area 'safe', then move back to 'secure positions'. All being well, they will then be granted 'autonomy', but under strict Israeli policing.

Israel also hopes to bring in King Hussein of Jordan as auxiliary policeman, and perhaps the UN as an 'independ-

ent' force. Israel would want to install a tame and loyal Palestinian leadership which they hope to extract from the civic dignitaries and businessmen of the West Bank.

As a plan for Palestinian national rights the whole operations stinks. Not merely do the Israelis have an option on bottling up a small section of the Palestinian people on a mere fraction of their land, they have an agreement from Sadat that over an extended period they can do as they wish with the Palestinians, both inside and outside Israel.

Clearly Sadat has let it be known that during the five year 'interim' Israel is free to prepare for West Bank state by attempting to smash the Palestinian Resistance, by further harrassing, imprisoning and torturing Arabs in the occupied territories, and by carrying out whatever adventures in Lebanon or elsewhere that they consider necessary.

For Israel the whole agreement comes on a plate. For quite paltry concessions they have removed Egypt as a serious threat, and signed up Sadat as an open ally in the attempt to crush finally the Palestinian movement.

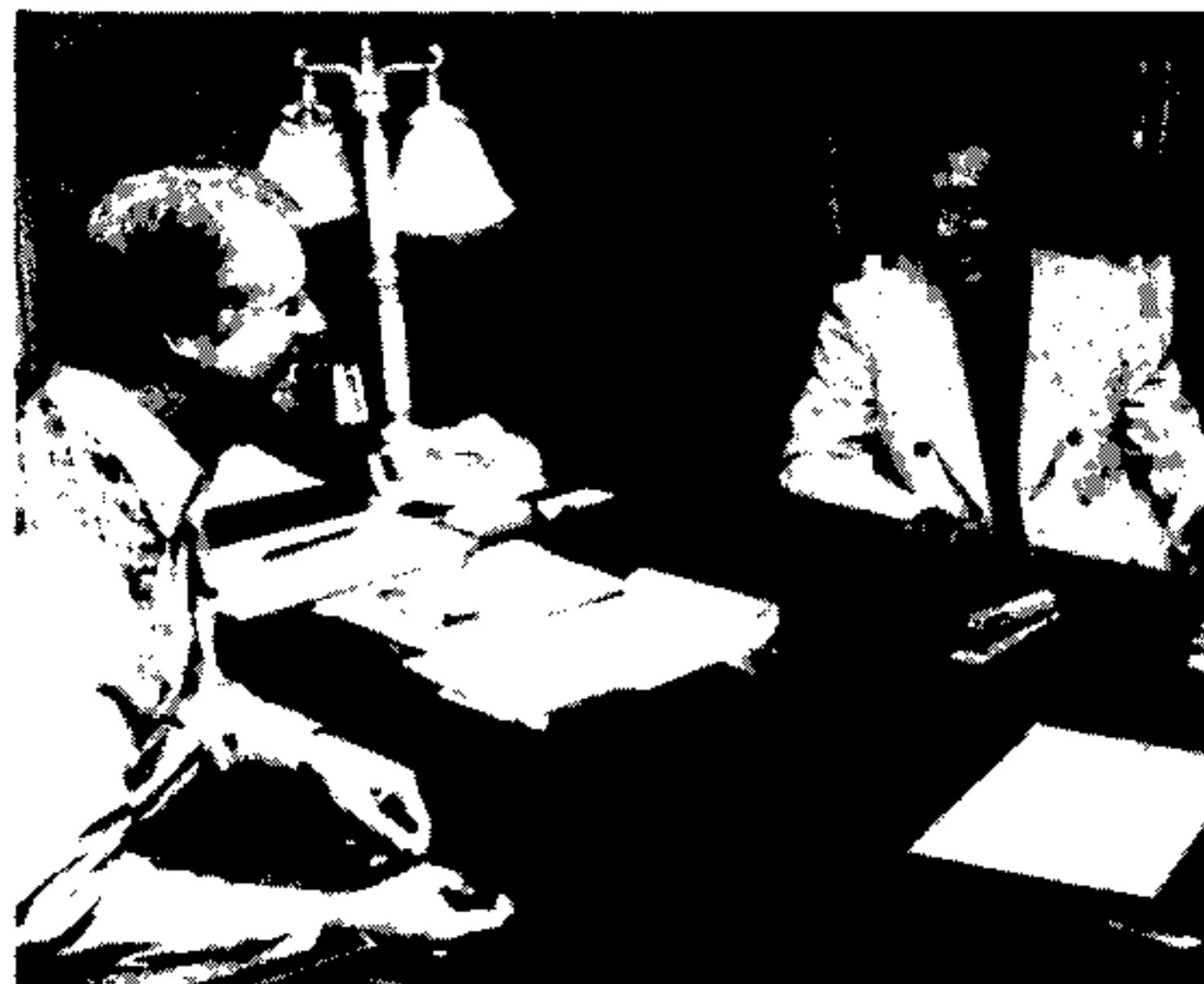
Ditched

But even this is not the whole story. Israel may simply opt never to use the mini-state agreement. They have five years, which they can drag out to 10 or 20 years, in which to lose the idea of Palestinian rights.

The whole scheme can simply be ditched. And who will be there to raise an objection? The record of treachery to the Palestinian cause runs deep amongst the Arab leaders. Sadat, Assad and the others have all put their stamp on it. The Palestinians will still left again to fight alone.

If necessary Israel *can* pull out its own version of the Camp David agreement on Palestine. Unless pressed it will not do so. Israel will not change the aims and principles of sixty years of 'successful' Zionist colonisation. And neither will Israel's backers want the Zionists to do so. Their doubts about Israel's continued usefulness as gendarme in the area, which arose after the 1973 war, with the oil boycott which followed, have now been dispelled.

Egypt has been dealt with the oil-rich states of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf have become more closely linked to the United States (largely through weapons supplies). The



Carter & Sadat

cobbled-together alliance of the Arab 'rejection' states is not a threat. Its leading representative, Syria, has its own interests, and an unparalleled record of brutality towards the Palestinians. Israel is well able to deal with the minor military threats.

One other factor has entered the situation. The instability and brittleness of the Shah's power in Iran has led American

policy-makers to again back Israel as the key secure base in the region.

Whilst the Israelis will not want to see the Shah brought down (and wave goodbye to their most important source of oil), any damage done to his credibility means another delivery of F16 fighters from the United States.

Nothing has changed. The 'peace' is a fraud because it

leaves the Palestinians still at the centre of the conflict. *And of course the Palestinians will not give up.* But for those won by the hysteria and manufactured 'joy' over the agreement it is worth remembering two things: 'Let no (Zionist) Jew say the process has ended'—Moshe Dayan. 'Israel costs the United States less than the Sixth Fleet'—Nixon.

Phil Marfleet

'sound finance'. There is now a remarkable convergence between Labour and Tory policy on this issue too.

True, Callaghan and Healey have not abandoned 'incomes policy'. Nor will they. It is, however, no longer the make or break issue at the heart of their policies. The wages question remains the central question of politics in Britain but deflationary policies are increasingly seen as the chosen weapon against organised workers.

Of course these are contradictions. The money supply is now probably rising quite fast. Although the official figure is only six per cent ('broad' definition M3) for the first five months of the 1978-79 financial year, notes and coins in circulation are up 20 per cent in the same period.

Inevitable

A squeeze is therefore indicated in the fairly near future. Otherwise, on monetarist assumptions, a marked rise in the inflation rate is inevitable from the middle of next year—and Healey now accepts the monetarist logic.

But a squeeze of any severity would put paid to whatever chances the Government may have of re-election. In the short run, therefore, threats like Callaghan's at the Labour Party conference ('drastic financial measures if the five per cent is widely breached') have a hollow ring.

In the longer term, come Callaghan, come Thatcher, the prospect is more deflation. And if, as now seems on the cards, the US economy (main source of growth in the 'West' for the last three years) is squeezed into stagnation or decline, the prospect is a serious recession later next year.

The effect on the working-class movement? On the one hand support for wage controls by the majority of union leaders has melted away. On the other hand the right wing is more influential than it has been for years. The old alignments, defined by attitude for or against 'incomes policy' are dissolving. The 'broad lefts' are in disarray.

At the same time the rank-and-file based left is still weak. A long, hard struggle fought under changing and perhaps, more complicated, conditions lies ahead. Certainly there will be no automatic gains for the left but the potential is there.

And the Labour Party? 'This week has seen the biggest shift

The Coventry toolroom farce

Those in the trade union movement who accuse toolmakers of being simply elitist and divisive in their demand would do well to look at what has happened in Coventry since the Coventry Toolroom Agreement (CTA) was smashed by the employers at the end of 1971.

The CTA was a 1941 agreement which meant that all Coventry toolmakers in firms within the Engineering Employers' Federation received the district average skilled piecework rate for production workers.

The purpose of the CTA, and the related National Toolroom Agreement (NTA) was to prevent craftsmen being poached by firms not engaged in war work. The

NTA which still exists, provides that the toolroom can receive the average skilled piecework rate withing the factory.

Since the Coventry engineering employers broke the single toolroom rate, massive differentials between toolmakers at different plants have been opened up, leading earlier this year to a demand from a mass meeting of Coventry toolroom stewards for the re-establishment of the CTA.

The most active supporters of the demand are the Chrysler and BL Cars stewards, for reasons which this table of current toolroom rates makes clear:

Coventry Toolrooms: Basic Pay, August 1978

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Coventry Motor Panels | £98.83* |
| Massey-Ferguson | £96.60* |
| Alvis (BL) | £95.84* |
| Coventry Limax (BL) | £95.23* |
| Rolls-Royce | £94.50* |
| David Stuart Engineering | £90.00 |
| Dunlop | £89.46* |
| W E Jones | £88.00 |
| Torrington Co | £86.81 |
| Herbert Machine Tools | £86.50 |
| Webster & Bennett | £85.75 |
| Triumph (BL Cars) | £82.78 |
| Stuart Davis Machines | £82.32 |
| Newage Engineers | £82.00** |
| GEC Telephones | £80.70** |
| Chrysler | £80.61 |
| Self-Changing Gears (BL) | £79.65** |
| Jaguar (BL Cars) | £76.11 |
| Dex Gears | £75.00 |
| | (+10%) |

*piecework-related

**plus productivity deal

Source: *Incomes Data Report*, No 287

Dave Field

Political comment

Clearer view of 1979

'Forget about Ford, it's the dustmen who matter' said the *Economist* on 14 October. In other words, in the view of this authoritative organ of ruling-class opinion, the five per cent across the board is a lost cause. What matters (to them) is that the Government keeps up a hard line against workers in the public sector. The private sector can be left to look after itself—and the spectacular boss class victory at Vauxhall's seems to justify this strategy. But Vauxhall, known as 'the cabbage patch' in the car industry, is not typical.

The real reason why the wight of right-wing opinion, most obviously represented by Madame Thatcher, is now in favour of 'free collective bargaining' is its well-founded

opinion that our 'Labour' Government is more firmly than ever committed to deflationary economic policies.

It is committed to 'cash limits' in the public sector, to a monetary squeeze (a little later on) in the private sector and has even been playing with the idea of entering a European Monetary System that would make Britain an economic satellite of West Germany and, more particularly, subject it to the consistently deflationary policies of the Bundesbank (see *Economic Briefing*).

Scheme

It is unlikely that even the Callaghan/Healey/Treasury gang will, in reality, go as far as accepting this scheme for the accelerated de-industrialisation

of Britain (for that would be its inevitable consequence) but the fact that it can be seriously discussed at all indicates how far down the monetarist road they have travelled.

'Mr Healey's most outspoken speech in favour of monetarism was delivered at the traditional banquet for bankers and merchants at the Mansion House in the City' noted the *Guardian*. 'The Chancellor described the present Government as perhaps the first in Britain in many years which has given monetary policy the importance it deserves'.

Let us be quite clear about what this means. It is a declaration of support for the most reactionary actions of big business and finance, a commitment to 'market discipline' and

to the left at Labour Party conference since 1973' proclaimed *Militant* ('Marxist paper for Labour and Youth') Well, yes. The 'revolutionary' left had a big success. The five per cent was thrown out. The entire Government economic strategy was thrown out.

The effect on the Government was effectively nil, of

course, but the mood of the Conference shows how the Labour Party will move if Callaghan loses the election. Much quicker than after 1970, 'socialist policies' will be the order of the day. A sharp struggle between left and right is likely in that case.

Incomparably more impor-

tant is the outcome at Fords and its effects—especially in the public sector. We are passing through something of a watershed and the outlook on the other side is beginning to be clearer. It is one of increasingly right-wing government (whether Labour or Tory) and sharper class conflict.

Duncan Hallas.

their money where their mouth is. The Nigerian regime from time to time threatens retaliation against Western companies with interests in South Africa: it has the economic clout to give some substance to these threats should it so choose.

But the west's commitment to overthrowing apartheid is superficial to say the least. There were six billion rand worth of direct foreign investment in South Africa at the end of 1975. Britain in particular is heavily committed to South African capitalism. And despite a massive outflow of short-term capital from South Africa since 1976 new investment continues to take place: West German companies have been particularly active. The western powers will support change in southern Africa for the extent that it is necessary to protect their investments there and no further.

Disasters

As for the South African regime itself, there has been a concentrated drive since the disasters of Angola and Soweto to prepare the country for siege conditions. Last November following the bannings, the regime activated the National Supplies Procurement Act, which gives them the power to assume direct control of the economy as a means of resisting sanctions.

The regime is also refusing to

Namibia

A prospect too ghastly?

The *Economist* called it 'the biggest diplomatic operation ever to be mounted in southern Africa'. The foreign ministers of the United States, West Germany, Britain, France and Canada flew to Pretoria in an effort to reach a compromise with the South African regime over Namibia.

The issue itself—the fate of the UN proposals for a settlement in Namibia—is an important one. Namibia (formerly South-West Africa) is a sparsely populated hunk of desert packed full of strategic minerals like uranium and illegally ruled by South Africa.

The South-West Africa People's Organisation, based in Angola and backed by the Russians and black-ruled Africa, has been fighting a long and bitter war to wrest control from the South Africans.

After protracted negotiations earlier this year, the five western 'contact powers' succeeded in imposing a deal on the South Africans and SWAPO. A ceasefire would be introduced and both sides would be cut down their forces in the field while UN-supervised elections were held.

Then, on 20 September, the South Africans reneged on the deal. Using the excuse that the UN's proposals for implementing the deal altered some of its terms, the South African cabinet announced that they were going ahead with their own elections in Namibia at the beginning of December.

Concession

The victor in these elections would be the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, a pro-Pretoria coalition headed by Dirk Mudge, a former member of the ruling Nationalist Party, and some tribal leaders, financed by South African big business.

The western foreign ministers

made little progress in their efforts to budge the South Africans. The only concession the new South African prime minister, Pieter Botha, would make was that the government elected in December would consider participating in UN-supervised elections. It is very unlikely that SWAPO would agree to participate in such an arrangement in which Pretoria and its clients would hold all the cards.

Solution

Namibia matters to the west: multinationals like Rio Tinto Zinc have large commitments to exploiting the country's vast mineral wealth. Clearly they would like a 'safe' solution to the present guerilla war: a pro-western government based on the 'moderate' elements inside SWAPO is much more likely to emerge from a peaceful settlement than from a bloody and protracted armed struggle.

The apartheid regime would also undoubtedly like to see a neo-colonial black government in Namibia. But it is terrified that it will end up with a hostile, Russia backed (and armed) regime on its borders. P.W. Botha was, as Minister of Defence, the most prominent opponent of any deal with SWAPO inside Vorster's cabinet.

But the row over Namibia reflects wider tensions between the apartheid regime and western capitalism. Particularly since Jimmy Carter was inaugurated in January 1977 the US has been putting pressure Pretoria to support majority rule in Rhodesia and Namibia, and to offer concessions to South African blacks.

Relations have become especially embittered since the murder of black consciousness leader Steve Biko by South African security police in September 1977 and the ban-

ning of 18 anti-apartheid organisations the following month.

The western governments are now in a quandary. Botha's refusal to compromise makes it very likely that the UN will impose some form of economic sanctions on South Africa. If Britain, France and the US veto a sanctions resolution at the UN Security Council then they will run into trouble with black Africa.

The black frontline states in southern Africa played an important role in engineering the Namibian settlement in the first place. Agostinho Neto's government in Angola was instrumental in persuading SWAPO to go along with the deal in the first place.

The black governments will be furious if the west don't put

£30 a week from the T&G

It is a travesty of trade unionism that a pamphlet produced for 220,000 public sector members of the 2 million strong TGWU has so many laudable aims but so few concrete suggestions for achieving them.

Our Policy For the Public Sector shows just what a mess public sector pay has got into, and it is disgraceful for a union to have to record that in a recent campaign 'we collected thousands of wage slips showing net earnings of between £30-£35'. Hardly a success story for the TGWU.

The solution? Pay policy is ritually opposed but in its place is put the re-establishment of the Pay Research Unit whose 'objective' findings on pay comparability effectively rule out real collective bargaining.

All this is in opposition to

the aims of the Union to 'develop bargaining at local levels' and decrease the role of national officials' and without a single indication of how these could be organised.

To counter the ravages of unemployment the union 'asks' for 'at least an extra 100,000 jobs a year in the public services each year for the next 5 years.' A few paragraphs earlier the union records the real situation.

In 1977, local authority employment fell by 30,000 and 'this process is to continue with a planned loss of jobs of 10,000 over the next few years.'

This pamphlet has little to tell Transport Union members about how to translate 'asking' into 'getting'.

Bill George

countenance any serious reforms. Connie Mulder, Minister of Plural Relations (ie, apartheid) and an unsuccessful candidate in the race to succeed Vorster as prime minister declared in February: 'If our policy is taken to its logical conclusion as far as the black people are concerned, there will be not one black man with South African citizenship'.

In other words, the regime intends to turn the black workers who produce the country's wealth into immigrant workers with no right to live in the cities where they work, liable to be deported to desolate tribal 'homelands' like the Transkei at a moment's notice.

The regime's decision to reject compromise in Namibia is, then, quite consistent with its general policies. Pieter Botha was the architect of South Africa's disastrous invasion of Angola in 1975 and seems firmly committed to establishing the country's military and economic self-sufficiency (a utopian goal given South Africa's dependence on foreign trade and investment). By



Mass grave at Kassinga containing over 400 bodies of Namibians massacred by South African troops last May

toughing it out over Namibia he hopes to call the west's bluff.

Risk

What Carter and the other western leaders must fear is that Botha will openly commit the regime to supporting the white settlers in Rhodesia, where Ian Smith is implementing an internal settlement very similar to that planned by Pretoria for Namibia. Given the type of

raids mounted by Smith on Zambia and Mozambique at the end of October, the risk of armed conflict between South Africa and the black states will be real one.

The stage would then be set for the confrontation between black and white in southern Africa which Vorster declared was 'a prospect too ghastly to contemplate' in 1974. *Alex Callinicos*

But for a strong economy like West Germany's floating exchange rates means the reverse side of the coin: the value of the currency rises and so exports become less competitive. The fall of the dollar has been, at least partly, engineered by the US government, in an effort to wrest a competitive advantage for the West Germans and the Japanese. For West German exporters the rise in the Deutschemerk has meant squeezed profits.

Schmidt is counterattacking through the EMS. This will make competitive depreciation against the mark impossible for EEC members. Moreover, by trying the Deutschemerk to less attractive currencies like the pound and the franc, Schmidt hopes to discourage speculators from buying marks and selling francs.

Economic Briefing

The ecu in their pockets

The dollar crisis, and international lack of confidence in the Carter administration have forced West Germany to move to the centre of the stage. With one of the most powerful economies in the world, whose success as an exporting nation reflected by the strength of the Deutschemerk on the international exchanges, the social-democratic government of Helmut Schmidt is well-placed to play the leading role in Europe.

The fall of the dollar has also breathed life into the moribund Common Market. The very different economic performances of the EEC's different members shattered its fragile unity after the oil crisis broke in 1973. But now Schmidt is attempting to use the EEC to counter-act the effects of the dollar crisis.

At the EEC summit in Bremen on 9 July, Schmidt unveiled a set of proposals drawn up in collusion with the French President, Giscard D'Estaing. Proposals set out to establish a new European Monetary System (EMS).

The present chaos of

'floating' currencies, bobbing up and down on the currents of speculators' whims, makes it difficult for governments and companies that trade internationally to plan ahead.

The proposals aim to end this. A new currency is to be created, called the 'ecu' (European currency unit) in terms of which the currencies of the countries participating in the scheme will be tightly defined. These currencies will not change in value relative to each other, except very marginally; changes in the value of the 'ecu' will occur if the currencies linked to it become generally cheaper or more expensive in relation to the currencies of non-members like the US dollar.

Such a scheme will mean very little to most of us. We won't see the ecus: they will only be used in payments between central banks. It might only make it slightly easier for those of us who can afford holidays abroad to plan our spending-money.

But Schmidt hopes that it will make a difference to our employers. Their international operations will be a lot less risky

if they can be confident that exchange-rates will not change.

The EMS has other attractions for Schmidt. In a system of floating currencies countries whose inflation rates are higher than the international average see their currencies' value fall as speculators move their capital to the stronger economies.

An example is the 1976 sterling crisis. But devaluation offers a competitive advantage the exports of the devaluing country become cheaper on the international markets. This may help explain the recovery of British exports in 1977.

Devaluation—or 'competitive depreciation'—can be an attractive strategy or a country whose economy is in trouble. It has been one of the main planks of Labour's economic policy for the last three or four years.

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It will also impose much stricter discipline on the weaker European economies. Because their currencies will be fixed against the mark countries like Britain and Italy will not be able to use devaluation to offset higher than average inflation rates. They will be forced to adopt rigorous deflationary policies of the sort favoured by the West Germans: cuts in public spending, restrictions on credit, bankruptcies, mass sackings—the sort of 'monetarist' policies favoured by the Tory party.

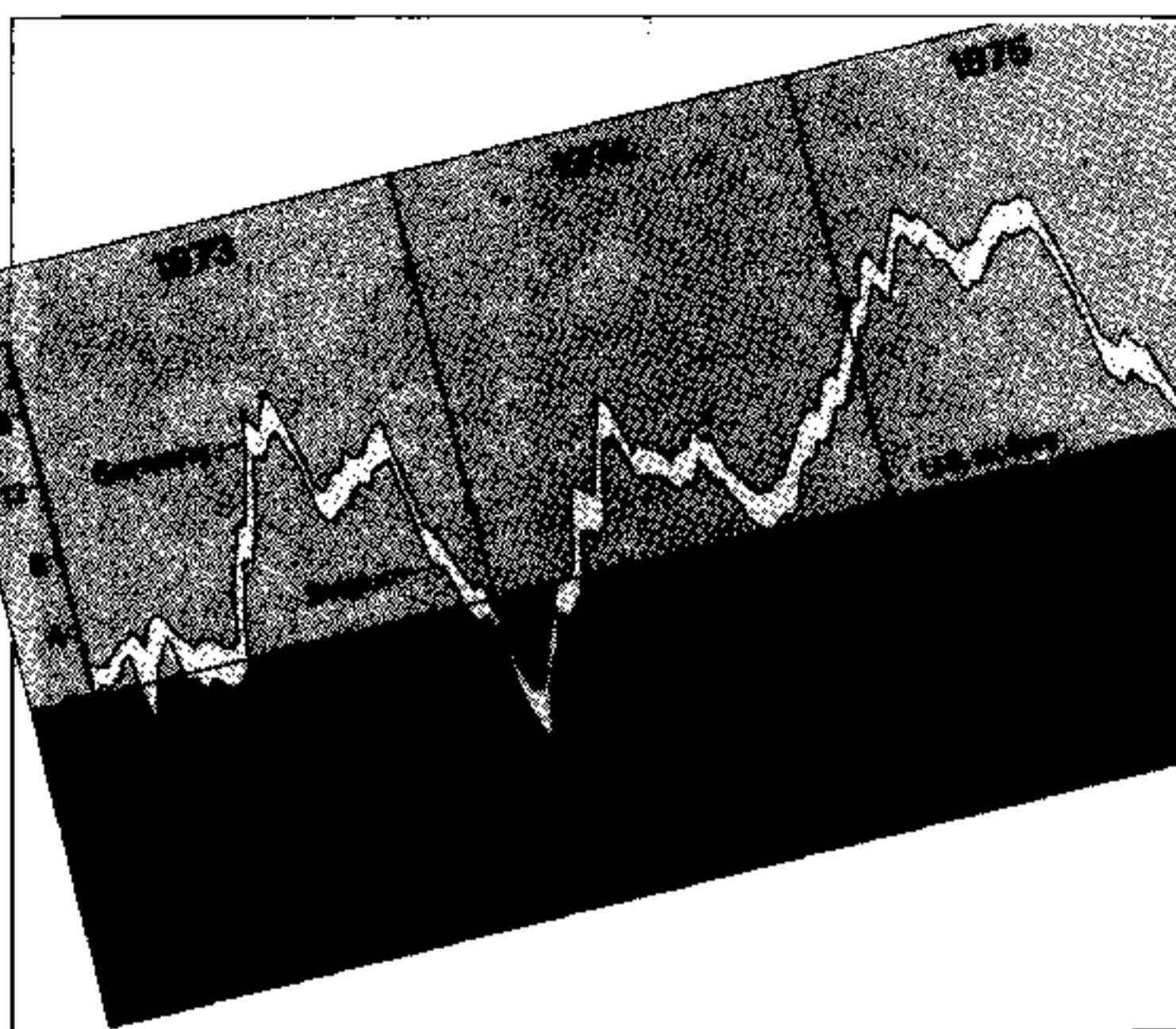
Stuart Holland recently predicted that 'EEC currency arrangements along Bremen lines will result in a European IMF and the dominance of an economic philosophy as outdated as the gold standards'.

Implementation of the EMS, due next January, would also underwrite the hegemony of West Germany within the Common Market. The EEC would become, effectively, 'a Deutschmark zone', in which the economic policies of individual member states would be determined ultimately in Bonn.

Key

Central to Schmidt's scheme is the idea that international monetary stability, particularly in the EEC, as the key to economic recovery. Is he right? Will the scheme succeed? Historically, the life-expectancy of attempts at European economic union has been low. The 'snake', a scheme largely similar to the present proposals, established in 1972, started to collapse within only seven weeks when the UK left because of balance-of-payments problems, followed in due course by Italy and France.

The Bremen proposals, however, do have some



How the snake operated

differences from the 'snake'. For one, a \$32 billion fund is to be set up, in order to support the weaker economies by buying their currencies and making loans to governments in balance-of-payments difficulties. Germany will provide much of the money.

For another, the Bremen proposals come with a definite element of coercion. If the system is set up, EEC countries will have a choice between joining in, and being relegated, perhaps permanently, to a second tier of the EEC with the poorer economies of Southern Europe.

Callaghan has suggested that Britain would not wish to join without 'transfer of resources' within the EEC—ie aid from Germany to Britain; Schmidt then indicated in an interview with the *Financial Times* that as aid might be conditional on joining the scheme, countries might not be able to afford to stay out.

The British government is doubtful because their economic strategy, so far as they have one, is one of competitive depreciation. Linking the pound to the Deutschmark is the very antithesis of this. Moreover, the Tribune group will squeal about anything which looks like a closer commitment to the EEC.

The scheme have some way of dealing with the forces that led to the collapse of the 'snake'.

should they re-emerge. Rather than cope with balance-of-payments problems through immediate savage deflation at home, which would involve big confrontations with the working class, and considerable difficulties for much of the ruling class most governments would first detach themselves from the mark and devalue.

Shore

These forces might destroy the scheme even before it gets off the ground, as each government will go into the negotiations with one eye on its own position if difficulties should arise. The only way to avoid them will be to shore up the weak economies with the

fund set up alongside the ecu.

Since this means in practice asking the West German Bundesbank to shovel funds into the pockets of German exporters and international currency speculators until a general world recovery comes along, it cannot be expected to last long. So the benefits of stability will not materialise either: for the businessman, stability is not stability if it is expected to break down within a year or two.

In the final analysis the scheme will fail because it is not international monetary instability that causes economic stagnation: given the imbalances in the Western economy as a result of the unevenness of the post-war boom, it is the other way round. Economic problems will continue—specifically, a recession in the USA is expected.

The UK, Italy and France will face renewed balance-of-payments problems, and will have to make the simple choice: whether to quit the scheme or, in the interests of the whole European bourgeoisie, increase the attack on their 'own' working class. Italy and Britain would clearly prefer the former to the risks entailed in the latter.

In France, however, things may be different. Giscard victorious in the recent election, aspiring Eurostatesman and one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Bremen proposals, might be keeping some very nasty cards up his sleeve. *Graham Chapman*

Nigeria

A chance for the 'new left'

At the end of September, General Obasanjo, the President of Nigeria, fired the starting pistol and the race for the 1979 Presidency battle had begun. Under pressure from civilian businessmen, civil servants and intellectuals the military regime has promised a return to civilian government.

This will mean no great loss to the military top brass. Some are transforming themselves into businessmen or politicians. Others will stay on and continue to syphon off whatever profits of office they can get away with.

Most of the likely contenders the presidency battle are old politicians from the First Republic, which lasted until the military coup of 1966. They include Chief Obafemi Awolowo (leader of the new United Party), Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim (leader of the new Peoples Party), various notables associated with the new National Party, Alhaji Aminu Kano, who has just fallen out with the rest of the National Party, and Nnamdi Azikiwe. Numerous parties have now declared themselves,

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but it is likely that amalgamations and alliances will be forged before the final election.

The programmes of the major parties are all very similar. They accept a democratic system based on a mixed economy, are in favour of more spending on education system based on a mixed economy, are in favour of more spending on education and health (without saying where it will come from) and against tribalism.

The Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly the architects of the constitution were solidly bourgeois. They were full of businessmen, traditional leaders, lawyers and senior academics. They approved a constitution which explicitly protected their class interests. Thus the constitution affirms:

'The state shall . . . control and operate the major sectors of the economy, while individual and group rights to operate the means of production, distribution and exchange shall be protected by law'.

Dominated

No Nigerian private firm is strong enough or wealthy enough to own, for example, the oil, air transport or (in future) steel industries. But these 'commanding heights' of the Nigerian economy will be operated in the interests of Nigerian businessmen and their 'multinational' allies.

During the twelve years of military rule, the Nigerian economy has been dominated by the oil industry (see table). Because of oil, federal revenue has increased from Naira 340 million in 1966/7 to an estimated Naira 7,650 million in 1977/78. In recent years Federal Government expenditure has accounted for nearly 40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. The state has acted as a conduit through which oil money is channelled. Money enters the private sector through salaries, contracts and loans. So, although the state has grown fantastically, it has not done so not at the expense of private businessmen, but so as to assist them.

The state has assisted Nigerian businessmen in other ways; most importantly through the two 'indigenisation' decrees. The second of these decrees reserved certain industries exclusively for Nigerians, others had to have 60 per cent Nigerian participation

and the remainder 40 per cent Nigerian participation. As is always the case in Nigeria these decrees have not been as effective as they might have been because of various forms of corruption.

Profitable

Nevertheless, there have been two important results. First, Nigerian businessmen have moved into the middle level of the Nigerian economy—including some manufacturing, construction, transportation and distribution—mainly at the expense of Lebanese and Indian businessmen. Secondly, Nigerians have begun to participate in the ownership of the highly profitable multinationals. This has not meant a loss of control for the parent companies. It has meant that a significant layer of Nigerians now have a strengthened vested interest in the continued presence of the oil companies and other multinationals.

This 'significant layer' is far broader than the business class. Major companies have Nigerianised by selling shares on the rapidly expanding Lagos stock exchange. Banks have assisted numerous civil servants, officers and professional people in buying these shares. In addition, the Nigerian bourgeoisie would appear to have become increasingly integrated in other ways. Traditional rulers become businessmen, officers obtain land, daughters of civil servants marry professionals etc. This 'integration' makes the transition to civilian rule easier.

However, because of the tremendous importance of the state in the development of private capitalism in Nigeria, competition for access to the state's finance and other assistance is almost certain to lead to increased corruption and uncontrollable factionalism. One commentator described politics in the First Republic as follows:

'The ethics of business penetrated politics; the ethics of politics penetrated business; the ethics of gangster penetrated both'.

A similar situation is likely to arise in the new civilian Republic. This 'factionalism' will operate through the new political parties. The successful factions will benefit, but to the detriment of businessmen as a class.

The constitution provides for an American-style system of Government. There will be 19

state Governors and a two Chamber Assembly in addition to the President and Vice-president. Once elected the President will have virtually dictatorial powers and will be almost impossible to impeach. This is seen as an attempt to centralise bourgeois rule in Nigeria and limit the endemic factionalism. But, this factionalism and the much bigger problem of the Nigerian bourgeoisie-control of the Nigerian working class—will be exacerbated by Nigeria's current economic problems.

In March this year oil production went down to 1.52 million barrels a day, 30 per cent less than the same month than in 1977 and is likely to remain so. The financial position is worsened by the decline in value of the dollar, which is the currency used for oil sales. Added to this is the increased cost of imports (including large amounts of luxury items for Nigeria's middle classes, food and machine goods), leading to a balance of payment deficit. Last year this amounted to about \$600 million; and it may be large this year.

The Nigerian economy grew rich on the back of the oil boom. But no independent industrial base has been created and agriculture has, if anything, declined, so that the economy is now on a downward path.

Government action has so far been twofold. First, they introduced a stiff budget this year, designed to cut imports. This has not been sufficiently effective, but even so it has fuelled inflation, currently in excess of 30 per cent. In particular food prices have been boosted, and the poorest, urban classes have suffered most.

Difficulties

Secondly, the Government is borrowing huge sums of money from Western commercial banks. Initially \$1 billion was borrowed; but when they tried to raise a further \$1 billion they ran into difficulties, particularly from some German banks, who felt over extended, and the loan was reduced to \$750 million. It has since been raised to \$1.15 billion, after the German banks changed their minds.

These loans clearly increase the dependence of the Nigerian bourgeoisie on their big brothers in Europe and North America. It makes it less likely, for instance, that the Nigerian Government will be able to adopt an independent position on Southern Africa in the

future.

The economic crisis has begun to bite—but not without reaction. Attempts to increase student fees earlier this year met with massive demonstrations and the agitation was only quelled after numerous students were shot dead by the military. There have been strikes and riots this year by major groups of workers—including carworkers in Kaduna (Peugeot) and Lagos (VW), dockers, and workers of UAC, the Unilever subsidiary.

In the past there has been opposition from peasants (eg the Agbekaya riots during the civil war in 1968/9) and petty traders. However the urban working class is almost certain to play the central role of spearheading the opposition of the oppressed to bourgeois rule—because of their central role in the Nigerian economy, their location, and their tradition, experience and organisation. In 1945 and 1964 there were general strikes in Nigeria which paralysed the economy. In 1971 and 1974 there were massive strike waves over wages.

The Government has spent the last two years 'reorganising' the trade union movement. Well over 1,000 trade unions (many based on single factory) and five trade union centres were merged into 70 unions (including 18 senior staff associations and 9 employers organisations) and one centre (the Nigerian Labour Congress). The Government is providing financial assistance, and there will be a check-off system for subs.

The effect is to create a huge bureaucratic edifice, whose democratic element is substantially less than in Britain. Sunmonu, the President of the Nigerian Labour Congress has already told workers that it would not be good for them to have a pay rise this year.

Even Chief Lawson, the head of the Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has done better than that. He recognises that the four year old wage-freeze has led to a loss of skilled labour and there is a need to increase wages. Most of the recent strikes have been denounced by the official trade union leaders—a pattern we can expect to see repeated in the future.

Frustration with wage freezes and price rises is clearly building up and is likely to explode in the not too distant future. For the Nigerian 'left' it

will be crucial to develop links with the rank and file of the trade union movement. Unfortunately the 'left' is small, fragmented and suffers from certain ideological confusions.

Two socialist parties have already declared themselves. The first is the Nigerian Workers and Peasants Vanguard Movement. Its programme includes immediate nationalisation of all commercial and industrial enterprises and the lifting of the wage freeze. The party is led by the veteran, radical populist Chief Michael Imoudu. Imoudu was a leader of both the 1945 and 1964 general strikes.

The second is the Socialist Party of Workers, Farmers and Youths. It is led by Ola Oni and others who held academic appointments until their victimisation two months ago. Ola Oni is a Marxist, sympathetic to the Soviet regime.

Assistance

Neither of these parties will receive much support in the forthcoming elections. For a start the electoral system ensures that only the wealthy can operate the big political party machines that will eventually control the state. Only they will receive state financial assistance, and no trade union is allowed to give support to any political party.

Probably more significant is the fact that it is not possible to break traditional loyalties, par-

Table one
Oil's Contribution to balance of payments

| | Oil's Contribution (Million Naira) | Percentage of total Foreign exchange |
|------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1966 | 86.8 | 15.7 |
| 1967 | 97.4 | 19.9 |
| 1968 | 57.6 | 10.1 |
| 1969 | 106.6 | 15.4 |
| 1970 | 253.2 | 27.5 |
| 1971 | 604.6 | 43.3 |
| 1972 | 808.1 | 65.7 |
| 1973 | 1403.3 | 72.7 |
| 1974 | 5192.9 | 80.3 |
| 1975 | 4190.4 | 83.3 |
| 1976 | 5224.2 | 84.6 |

Source: *Africa No 86, October 1978*

NB. Figures for oil's contribution to federal revenue are very similar.

Table Two

Some companies after tax profit on capital invested (percentage)

| Company | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Lever Brothers | 47.7 | 51.0 | 26.4 | 23.1 | 16.1 |
| Nigerian Breweries | 32.4 | 16.4 | 21.7 | 16.2 | 9.4 |
| John Holt | 13.1 | 14.4 | 66.3 | 49.8 | n.a. |
| UAC | 22.2 | 32.5 | 33.1 | 22.4 | n.a. |
| RT Briscoe | 75.1 | 76.5 | 66.1 | 59.8 | n.a. |

NB In some years some of these companies made pre-tax profits of more than 100 percent

Source: Article in *Burmese Times* (Lagos)

29 August 1978, based on audited accounts of individual companies

ticularly in the rural area, through elected politics. Also, since everyone assumes these parties will do badly, few people will bother wasting a vote—a self fulfilling prophecy!

In addition to these two parties there is a 'new left' which would probably have adopted a

pro-Chinese stance, but for the reactionary foreign policy, particularly in Africa, of that country. This 'new left' is loosely defined and has not yet clarified an attitude to parties and elections, the role of the working class and internationalism and has tended to

postpone consideration of Russia and China. It is a lively, although amorphous current, and clearly has some excellent elements within it. Unfortunately support is largely has some excellent elements within it. Unfortunately support is largely limited to the Universities.

In the early 1970s the businessmen and middle classes got rich on the oil boom and the sweat of Nigerian workers. Now the enormous gulf between the rich and the urban poor is clear for everyone to see. Attempts to deal with the current economic problems will be resisted by urban workers and others who have a tradition of struggle developed under the British and civilian and military Nigerian rule.

If Nigerian socialists can relate their politics to urban struggle and help develop it, then the future for revolutionary socialism in Nigeria is undoubtedly rosy. The current period of legal party organisation provides new opportunities for socialists in Nigeria, which must be grasped before reaction returns. If the potential can be realised it would have a profound effect not only on the African revolution, but would rock the capitalist class in this country.

Peter Alexander

★ Peter Alexander recently returned from a visit to Nigeria.

TU leaders

Double life at the top

A certain pattern is developing in the response of union leaderships to the five per cent. They have long ago given up arguing for a wage norm just because it has been suggested by their friends in the Labour government. They even seem to have given up automatically arguing against strike action: witness their endorsement of strike recommendations to mass meetings at Fords, Kodaks and Vauxhalls.

But they also seem make those recommendations often when (as at Kodak) they should have known in advance that a weekly organised workforce would not respond. It is as if they were consciously trying discredit any one who might criticise them from the left by being able to say: we went along with you in calling for strike action on a number of oc-

casions, but the membership would not respond.

Certainly, such thinking would fit the situation the union bureaucracy finds itself in. Take for instance, Moss Evans. It was only 18 months ago that, for the first time ever, the TGWU biennial conference rejected the advice of its general secretary and voted down that year's wage controls.

Since then Evans has taken over the union, but cannot yet be fully in control of various independently minded bureaucrats who work under him. And he knows that incomes policy is now in its most dangerous phase: no policy has ever lasted more than three years before without militancy exploding in the face of both the government and the union bureaucracies.

What could be easier than to

preempt such an explosion by a display of verbal militancy and calls for strike action where they are unlikely to materialise or to be very effective if they do happen?

All this makes the job of rank and file militants more complicated than many think. The ground work has to be done on the shop floor if the verbal militancy of the officials is not, on occasions, going to discredit those who would criticise them.

At the same time, however, the union bureaucracies are playing with a double edged weapon. They could, inadvertently, unleash a movement, particularly in the public sector where resentments a piling up, which could discover unexpected power to undermine the whole strategy of the government and the union leaders.

Chris Harman

Fleet Street

The Times is getting hard...

The biggest confrontation to hit Fleet Street for decades could begin at the end of this month. The *Times* management are insisting that they will lock out the whole workforce unless the unions accept completely management plans for slashing the workforce, introducing new technology, abandoning old skill demarcations, and destroying the power of the individual chapels to negotiate over pay and conditions.

The management ultimatum expires on 30 November. But it is not clear yet whether the lockout will begin then, or will wait until 18 December when the notices to the workforce will expire.

The *Times* ultimatum is the latest twist in a spiral which has seen newspaper managements taking ever tougher stances in the past two years.

Battles

Ever since the *Financial Times* failed to get the print union leaders to agree to incorporation through joint control of a labour pool, with management paying dues to all six unions, the various papers have been looking for battles they can win with individual chapels. This strategy had some success in terms of preventing individual sections winning victories. But it cost a lot in lost production.

The most recent dispute at the *Daily Telegraph* shut down production for eight days—during which time management then attempted to isolate the NGA. But the effort cost them more than their current cash reserves.

The *Times* cannot afford the same kind of expenditure on fighting its battles one by one. So it is opting for a different approach—that pioneered in America, as new technology has been introduced there.

This approach—neatly described for the employers in a Royal Commission on the Press Working Paper by Winberg—involved management wetting up machinery based upon new technology for key, labour-intensive points in the production process, training personnel

not belonging to the skilled unions to operate it, and then locking out union members who refused to cooperate in putting it into production.

The American employers were usually able to do this in one area of production—normally typesetting—while other area continued working, because of the divisions between different unions. The split between different groups of workers was accentuated by the fact that new technology is most applicable in typesetting, but is much more difficult to introduce in the print room for papers with a circulation of more than about a quarter of a million.

The *Times* management are copying the heavy handed approach of the Americans. But they have made amendments to take account of two peculiarities. The first is that the same union, the NGA, organises the typesetters and key groups of workers in the print rooms.

The second is that management regard overmanning—regardless of whether they introduce new technology—as being 'even worse' in the print room than in typesetting. So instead of locking out the

typesetters, continuing to produce the paper with new labour and waiting for the NGA to crack, they are threatening to lockout every department.

Typical of their approach, their demand to the Natsopa *Sunday Times* chapel that the Saturday night workforce be cut from 541 to 353. Senior management spokesmen are saying that if the unions will not concede demands like this, they will wait until the time would come when they could be restarted with new staff.

Of the unions only the NGA have so far taken a firm line against the ultimatum. They say they will call out all their members in Thomson publications if the lockout goes ahead. The other union leaders are continuing to negotiate with the *Times* management, even though its blackmailing tactics include a refusal to divulge yet what its final terms will be.

Firm Line

And there is a rumour that the SLADE chapel has gone as far as to vote to accept the management's terms presumably in the belief that SLADE members will pick up jobs from other unions if they do so.

The compliance of the union leaders is not surprising. After all, it was only a couple of years back that all of them (including the NGA) recommended their members to accept a 'Programme for Action on the new technology' that would have conceded, throughout Fleet Street, what is now being demanded at the *Times*. On that

occasion, however, their recommendation was voted out by the membership.

No doubt what the *Times* management believe this time is that over the lock-out is under way the membership will rapidly tire, until they are prepared to concede management demands. In line with this hope, they will do as little as possible to escalate the conflict or to spread beyond the *Times*. Typically, they are talking about finding work elsewhere for the locked-out *Times* workers which will, of course, reduce opposition to any eventual settlement that involves a reduction in the workforce.

Such an outcome will have ominous implications for the every other paper in Fleet Street. It will mean other management threatening a rerun of the *Times*' tactics in order to achieve their eventual aim—a reduction in the total workforce to about a third of its present level.

That is why rank and file militants in Fleet Street will have to be campaigning for a series of demand that include:

- 1) Occupation of the *Times*, to act as a centre for the struggle and to prevent management using contractors to install new technology while the workforce is locked out.
- 2) Strike action throughout the Thomson empire in support of the *Times* workers.
- 3) Industrial action throughout Fleet Street until the *Times* management rescind the lockout notices.
- 4) No negotiations that involve loss of jobs. *Chris Harman and Dave Field*.

Eurocommunism

In the swamps

Is there such a thing as Eurocommunism? The present floundering and vacillations of the main Western CPs make it more and more difficult to detect any coherent political direction. The French CP is still racked with divisions after its electoral defeat in the Spring.

One of the main critics of the leadership, Jean Elleinstein, has published further articles critical of the leadership. Faced with a refusal of open debate in the CP press, he chose to write not only in *Le Monde*, a well-respected and serious daily, but also in *Paris-Match*, a picture magazine noted for its trivialisation and right-wing politics.

Elleinstein recently used the columns of *Paris-Match* to denounce 'anti-semitism of a

facist type' being practised in Russia.

Elleinstein's politics are in



Which way? Carrillo gets a directive from Pastonaria

fact openly social-democratic, and he could find a home in the Socialist Party tomorrow if it suited his book. While praising the CP for having made some advances in its approach to Russia, he argues that it is still not sharp enough in its criticisms.

Traditional social-democracy and Stalinism, he argues, are both dead-ends; there is a need for a third way between the two. But this third way turns out to be suspiciously like the age-old reformist road; he stresses that in a developed country revolution must be 'democratic, peaceful, legal and gradual'. Not much there that Francois Mitterrand, the Socialist Party leader, could disagree with.

CP leader Marchais responded by accusing Elleinstein of 'untruths, falsifications and ignorance.' But in general Elleinstein has had a very easy ride compared with other critics in the CP.

At the Fete of *L'Humanite* he had a stand to sign copies of his books, and Marchais simply stated that if he did not share all Elleinstein's ideas, that was part of the 'democratic process'.

One reason for this shift may be the none-too-premature death early in September of Jean Kanapa, the most hackish sectarian in the Party leadership. But there is a deeper and more important reason. The CP cannot be too hard on Elleinstein because it is on a hiding to nothing.

The biggest threat to the CP is the continuing growth of the Socialist Party. Yet if Marchais gets too tough with Elleinstein, the latter can simply go over, with his friends and supporters, to the Socialist Party, thus intensifying the CP's problems.

Symptom

Indeed, the Elleinstein affair is only a symptom of the trap the Party is caught in. The closer it moves to the Socialist Party's politics, the more it strengthens Mitterrand's credibility; yet if it stresses its distinctive traditions it lays itself open to charges of Stalinism.

Another symptom is the recent publication of a book by five CP intellectuals, *The USSR and Us*, which has already sold over forty thousand copies. In the preface Francis Cohen (the same who in 1950 wrote that Stalin was 'the highest scientific authority in the world') not only criticises the PCF role in keeping quiet about the Khrushchev secret speech, but

goes so far as to regret that the CP totally rejected the ideas of Trotsky and Bukharin.

The crisis was highlighted in a different way by the results of five recent by-elections, in all of which the Socialist Party vote has risen sharply, while the CP vote has declined. In the context of such Socialist Party advances, the CP can hardly be comforted by a recent opinion poll, which shows that only 39 per cent of SP voters want to renew an alliance with the CP, and that as many as 30 per cent would welcome a deal between Mitterrand and Giscard.

Mockery

The crisis of Eurocommunism is not confined to France. One point with which Elleinstein has made great play is the fact that the French CP opposes Spanish entry into the Common Market while the Spanish CP supports it, while Santiago Carrillo thinks the EEC would assist the reformist road he proposes for Spain. Marchais is pandering to French fears of Spanish agricultural competition.

There is little to choose between reformist nationalism and protectionist nationalism, but together they make a mockery of 'Eurocommunism', as does the failure of the nine Common Market CPs to agree to a joint programme for the European elections.

Skies are no brighter in Italy. If the Italian CP is bigger than the French, and the Socialist Party considerably smaller, none the less the new SP leader, Craxi, has growing hopes of emulating Mitterrand. CP membership is declining and the SP is increasingly taking a confident and aggressive line towards it. Berlinguer's recent claim that the PCI is simultaneously 'conservative and revolutionary' should give the SP a bit more ammunition.

No wonder then, that with growing dissension in the PCI's ranks, some leaders are looking for fresh friends overseas. One PCI leader, Pajetta, has said that a resumption of relations between his party and the Chinese would be 'useful and normal'.

Santiago Carrillo and Longo of the Italiana CP were in Rumania at the time of Chairman Hua's visit, and Carrillo subsequently went to North Korea, now firmly in the Chinese camp. Whether the Spanish working class will feel much enthusiasm for a friend of a friend of the Shah of Iran remains to be seen. *Ian Birchall.*

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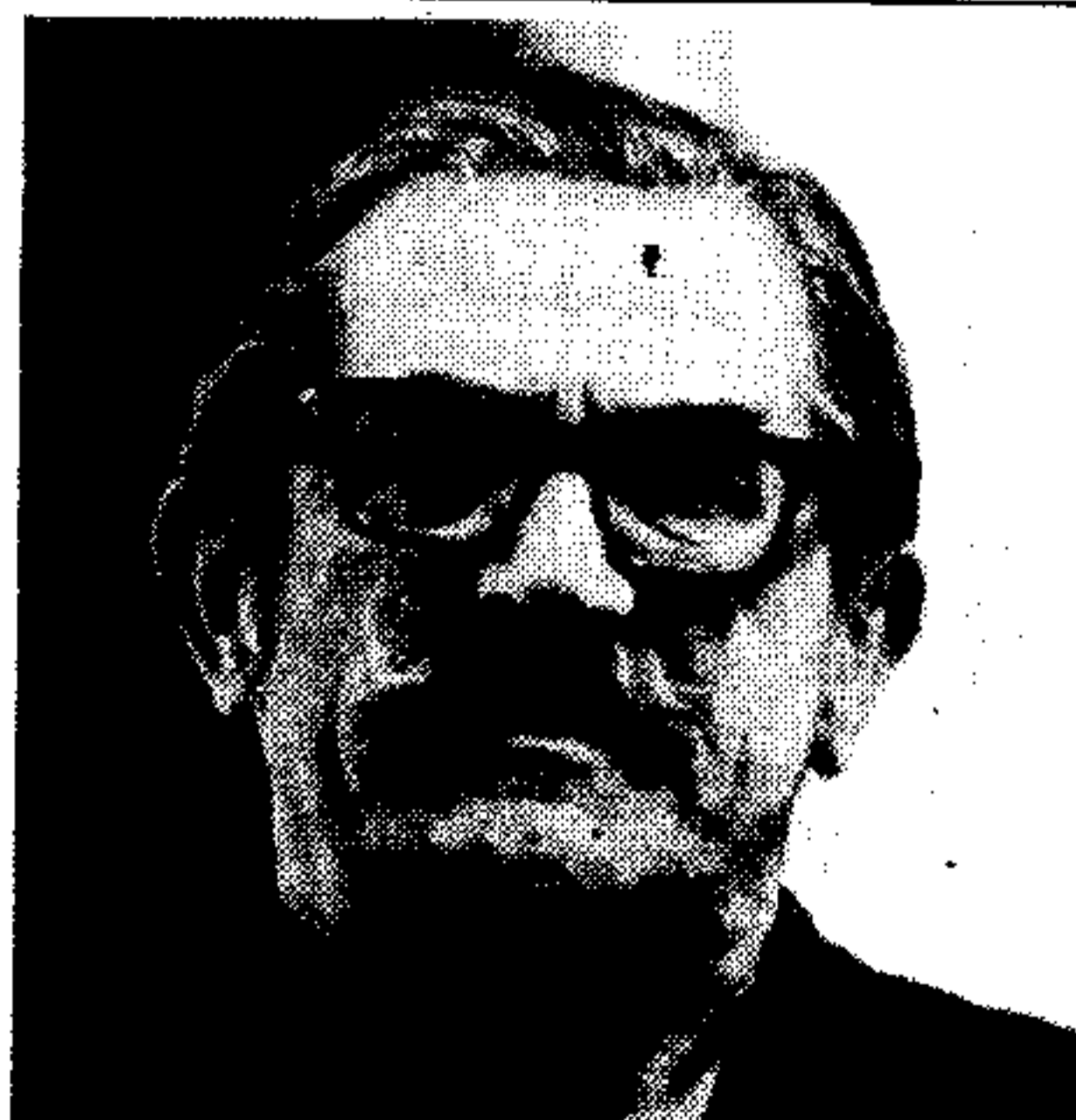
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OSSIE LEWIS died last month. Known to many socialists and trade unionists, Ossie will be sadly missed. But he was not a sentimental man. He was always part of the socialist movement.

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Despite the desperate efforts of Britain & the US, it seems that the white settler state of Rhodesia will soon be engulfed by the black freedom fighters of the Patriotic Front. In this special briefing prepared by Joanna Rollo, John Rogers & Alex Callinicos, Socialist Review gives the background to the crisis of white Rhodesia.



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

It is thirteen years this month since Ian Smith declared Rhodesia independent of Britain. Rhodesian flags are almost unobtainable in Salisbury—because they are believed to be worth £100 in London. A Churchill 1965—issued the year of UDI fetches around £2,500 at the Salisbury stamp auctions.

Street signs with names like Stanley, Baker and Rhodes are disappearing overnight. As one of the more obvious insignia of colonialism they are highly valued by souvenir hunters.

The *Rhodesia Herald* has prepared for the future by announcing that from now it will be simply known as 'The Herald'. And golfers will no longer be penalised if their ball lands in a mortar hole on the Umtali golf course.

But this pathetic mix of nostalgia and bravado scarcely disguises the disintegration of white society. The Reserve Bank of Rhodesia is processing 40,000 applications for foreign exchange from whites who want to leave before it is too late. Those applications probably represent as many as 100,000 whites—about 40 per cent of the settler community.

The economy is groaning under the strain of financing a war that now accounts for 35 per cent of the budget. This year's budget includes a forced loan of 12½ per cent on each citizen's tax bill, a desperate measure to raise cash for the white army. Since 1974 real income has fallen by 25 per cent per head.

An advertisement placed by white opponents of Smith in the *Salisbury Sunday Mail* of 3 August claimed in the five years since the settlement was signed.

The regime itself admits that of the total number of the white civilians killed in the entire war, which began in December 1972, half have died in the last nine months.

The collapse of white supremacy in Rhodesia is likely to cause an exodus of whites comparable to the flight of the *pieds noirs* from Algeria in 1963 or of the *retornados* from Mozambique and Angola after Portuguese colonialism was overthrown.

Most Rhodesian whites will probably seek sanctuary in South Africa, but many may end up in Britain where, amongst their 'kith and kin', they will no doubt help to swell the membership of the National Front.

Helping hands are already preparing for this influx; one such group, the Scorpion Society, admits to be processing 1,000 applications a month from potential immigrants.

White supremacy may be on its last legs, but it has still to be overthrown. The hub of settler society is the 6,000 white farmers who earn half of the country's foreign exchange and dominate the ruling Rhodesian Front party.

If the farmers were to stop sowing their crops and abandon the country then the Rhodesian economy would crumble. So far this has not happened, although Ian Smith has taken the precaution of moving his huge herds of cattle across the border to safety in South Africa.

ZIMBABWE RHODESIA

He opened the railway in the nick of time, 180,000 tons of fertilizer is now on its way to Zambia and will get there in time for the planting season in November.

It is absolutely essential to cultivate next year's maize crop and as maize is the staple diet the alternative was starvation for Zambia's five million people. Sixty percent of the maize crop is produced by small farmers most of them white and they are a strong source of opposition to Kaunda's government.

The opening of the border was undoubtedly a blow for Joshua Nkomo, whose ZIPRA guerillas operate from Zambia and weakens his position considerably. But his hands are tied. Any action against the railway would put his ability to use Zambia as a base camp in serious jeopardy, and his boast that 'Nothing will pass there that we do not want to pass' is a hollow bluff.

Needless to say, Smith was jubilant. As he left for the States he remarked 'I think this is going to do this country a lot of good.'

The opening of the border has widened the rift between Kaunda and Machel, arguably the most important of the Frontline presidents. Relations between them have been cooling fast since Kaunda secretly put his conference tables at the disposal of Ian Smith and Nkomo.

Mozambique is vital to the success of the liberation struggle. Without Machel's support the ZANU guerillas would be crippled and since they bear the enormous brunt of the fighting, his role is crucial.

Whatever his convictions Samora Machel is as much a victim of economic circumstances as Kaunda. In his own words the Mozambique economy is 'catastrophic'.

Along with independence in 1975 Frelimo inherited a \$640 million debt from the Portuguese. The massive exodus of colonial Portuguese left plantations and factories without management or skilled workers.

Now the factories are running at less than half of pre-independence levels and agricultural production has fallen by up to seventy per cent in some areas. The result is food shortages, empty shelves in the shops and long queues outside them; and an increase in imports has also increased the foreign debt.

The situation was made worse in 1976 when Mozambique closed its borders with Rhodesia. It has paid dearly for imposing sanctions—an estimated one hundred million dollars a year in lost transit duties and fees—and ended a tourist trade valued at \$20 million a year. Since the border closed Mozambique's export earnings have fallen by 25 per cent.

The country's largest source of foreign exchange used to come from the supply of Mozambiquan miners to the South African goldfields. Forty thousand a year are sent on contract, and the South African government pays in gold, but the official gold price since the gold is valued at the official prices, allowing Mozambique to resell the gold at the much higher market price is to be abolished and that will send the economy reeling.



The white farmers have suffered heavily at the hands of the freedom fighters. From the start ZANU made them the main targets of their strategy and it is reported that 70 per cent of the farms on the country's eastern border with Mozambique have been abandoned.

THE WAR

It is now six years since the war began in earnest, six years since guerillas of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) took to the offensive in northeastern Rhodesia.

The war has spread through Rhodesia. A couple of days after the internal settlement was signed on 3 March a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed on a 70 kilometre belt of mainly white farming land to the north and east of Salisbury. Smith hoped this would create a buffer zone between the capital and the Chinamore, Msana and Chikwakwa Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) which are hives of ZANLA activity.

The curfew zone lies at one point barely 20 kilometres from the city centre. And it has not stopped the war reaching Salisbury. There have been a number of shootings in the white suburb of Borrowdale, which is to Salisbury what South Kensington is to London.

In August and September a series of gunbattles guerillas of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA—the military wing of ZAPU) shot it out with security forces in Highfield, Mufakose and Glen Norah, three of Salisbury's African townships.

In the far South, where Rhodesia borders South Africa at Beitbridge 20,000 Venda tribespeople were taken from their homes last March and herded into a fence 'protected village'. They were 'subverted by terrorists' explained a security forces spokesman. Beitbridge is Rhodesia's only direct road and rail link to South Africa. At the beginning of April guerillas mortar-bombed the railway station there.

It is the African peasantry who bear the brunt of the fighting. In May a group of villages were listening to a guerilla speaker in the Gutu district of south-eastern Rhodesia. They were caught by security forces who opened fire on the meeting, killing 105.

Since they had broken the curfew regulations, stated the regime, they were liable to be shot. A month later 21 villagers and one guerilla were killed in a ground and air attack in the Chinamore TTL, 12 miles north of Salisbury.

The Catholic Church estimates that since the war began half a million black peasants have been removed from their homes and confined to 'protected villages' in an attempt to isolate them from the guerillas. Now Smith has announced that these camps are to be disbanded, claiming this is a move to better relations with the black population. The bare truth is that the hardpressed security forces can no longer spare troops to guard these camps.

By the beginning of August, more than 9,400 people had been killed in Rhodesia since the war began, in December 1972. Twenty nine per cent of these casualties have been inflicted since the beginning of 1978. And September was the bloodiest month of the war, with 700 deaths.

This war is no simple local conflict between the forces of black liberation and the forces of white reaction. At stake here are the interests of the world's most powerful nations, and fortunes will be made or lost on the outcome.

ZAMBIA

In the not so distant recesses of African history a man called Kenneth Kaunda stood out like a beacon in the gloom of a continent split between white and savage dictatorships, and black and equally savage puppet regimes. Kaunda, leader of the movement for Zambian independence, frequent prisoner of the British colonial authorities and avowed humanist, became President of Zambia in 1964.

He became the leading figure of the African left, a passionate supporter of the armed struggle elsewhere and committed to constructing a version of African Socialism specially suited to Zambia's needs.

Ten years later the Zambian version of socialism was as openly and transparently capitalist as any western state and Kaunda was publicly collaborating with Vorster, the lynchpin of white minority rule, the price of this being borne by the freedom fighters Kaunda had once so vehemently supported.

In pursuit of the Zambian South Africa policy for a settlement in Zimbabwe Kaunda jailed more than one thousand ZANU fighters and gave the go ahead for the South African army invasion of Angola in 1975.

For this treachery Kaunda hoped to gain economic collaboration with South Africa and thus a way out of a staggering crisis in Zambia.

His hopes were dashed when the MPLA seized power in Angola. It was a devastating defeat for 'detente' in Southern Africa and Kaunda was forced into an about turn. So Kaunda, who in 1974 had told the world that Vorster spoke with 'the voice of reason for which Africa has been waiting', was two years later making emotional speeches declaring that only a bloodbath would free Zimbabwe and 'Now we must fight'.

In reality Kaunda hasn't switched sides, the interests he pursues now are exactly those that forced him into Vorster's arms in 1974: economic survival. His country is mortgaged to the hilt, with the IMF the largest creditor and Kaunda is bound to follow the dictates of the Anglo American solution to the Southern Africa problem.

If anything the economy is even more of a disaster than it was in 1974. Copper makes up for more than 90 per cent of Zambia's export earnings and the four year slump in copper prices has had a devastating effect. Transport problems have been enormous.

The Benguela railway that once carried Zambian copper to the Angolan port of Lobito has been out of service since 1975, and until recently the only other route was

the Tan-Zam railway to Dar es Salaam, which carried virtually all Zambia's exports and imports. The shortage of trucks and engines plus congestion at the port, has resulted in a backlog of 140,000 tonnes of copper waiting for export in the warehouse.

The plummeting revenues from copper has left Zambia without the foreign currency to buy components and factories are closing as a result. There is a shortage of essential goods, and long queues outside supermarkets and shops are commonplace.

Reduced government subsidies, one of the conditions of the £197 million IMF loan, have pushed up the price of maize, beer and fertiliser. Inflation is rising at over 20 per cent and unemployment is growing. There have been lay-offs in the coppermines, borne by the 57,000 black miners and it's estimated that 150,000 new jobs are needed each year just to keep up with the school leavers.

This year has been particularly bad: fuel shortages were exacerbated by 53 leaks in the oil pipeline to the Indian ocean and exceptionally heavy rains have resulted in the loss of one million kilos of tobacco and therefore large amounts of foreign exchange, since tobacco is an important export.

Kaunda's problems do not stop here. He is under attack from the Zambian right for his handling of the economy, the most vocal being Simon Kapwepwe who calls for the denationalisation of state owned companies, for open trade with South Africa and Rhodesia and for the opening of the border with Rhodesia. Kapwepwe attempted to stand in the Presidential election scheduled for mid-December as the only candidate in opposition to Kaunda.

He was barred from doing so by a swift change in the rules, but resorting to such practices to outlaw the opposition will only store up trouble and Kapwepwe certainly has supporters amongst the candidates standing for mid-December.

Kaunda's policies of support for the freedom fighters, dubious though they are, have been seen as the cause of the trouble. The 'senior Government official' who told the *Financial Times* that 'Sanctions have become a weapon against Zambia so why should we starve ourselves any longer', echoes the view of the Zambian ruling class.

And last February Frederick Chibula, President of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions, called on the government to 'ensure that as many common borders are used as possible' and spoke of workers having to fight 'socialist ideologies which do not take account of the realities of life and the life blood of Zambian economic activity.'

The discovery that BP and Shell had been sanctions busting ever since UDI further damaged Kaunda's credibility. He was bailed out by Callaghan's special visit to placate him, and undoubtedly had his feathers smoothed by discussion of further loans from Britain.

It's equally certain that Callaghan joined the IMF in putting the pressure on Kaunda to open the Rhodesian border and ease the congestion in trade. This plus the internal situation left Kaunda with little choice.



From its foundation in 1890 white Rhodesia has been a creature of Western and South African capital. The British South Africa Company, founded by Cecil Rhodes, the South African mining magnate, as part of his dream of extending the British Empire from the Cape to Cairo, was responsible for the original colonisation of Zimbabwe and actually ran the country until 1922.

British capital played an especially important role in the period of rapid economic growth between 1953 and 1965, when foreign investment in Rhodesia grew from £200 million to £550 million.

After the settler's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in November 1965 all links were, theoretically, broken between Britain and Rhodesia and economic sanctions were imposed. In reality, the Rhodesian subsidiaries of British companies carried on business as usual.

Sanctions, to be effective, should have been applied to South Africa as well, since the apartheid regime threw all its weight behind the Rhodesian settlers after UDI. However, no British government, Labour or Tory, was prepared to risk British capital's massive and highly profitable investments in South Africa. The result was the farce revealed in the Bingham report: while the Royal Navy blockaded the Mozambican port of Beira, Shell and BP's South African subsidiaries continued cheerfully to supply oil to the Smith regime.

As a result, far from sanctions bringing the settlers to their knees 'in weeks rather than months' (in the words of Harold Wilson) the Rhodesian economy grew at an average rate of eight per cent per annum between 1965 and 1974. Only the international economic crisis and the intensification of the guerilla war brought an end to the Rhodesian boom.

Since UDI South African capital has tightened its hold on the Rhodesian economy. Already dominant in the

agricultural and mining sectors, South African investment doubled to £200 million in the ten years after 1964.— By 1970 five out of the ten largest Rhodesian industrial companies were wholly or partly South African controlled, while in 1971 four of the ten top manufacturing companies were South African controlled.

Foreign capital in Rhodesia is quite reconciled to the prospect of a black government in Rhodesia—providing that it respects their interests. Certainly, they have little fear from the parties supporting the internal settlement.

Foreign interests are buying up black politicians left, right and centre. Lonrho is the most notorious example—Tiny Rowlands has longstanding links with Joshua Nkomo, and was instrumental in arranging the meeting between Smith and Kaunda last December and between Smith, Kaunda and Nkomo in August.

The huge South African multinational Anglo-American is also generous with its hand-outs. And no doubt BOSS (the South African Bureau of State Security) has its friends in high places—some say that Ndabaningi Sithole is their man.

Interests from further a field are getting into the action—including, interestingly enough, various conservative Middle Eastern regimes.

Bishop Muzorewa visited Iran in September (where no doubt he found the King of Kings preoccupied with matters closer to home). Chief Chirau, on the other hand, is to be drawing a retainer from Saudi Arabia

(which would fit in with Riyadh's growing tendency to intervene in African politics).

Sithole and Muzorewa are also receiving help in the training of their own private armies—reportedly from Uganda and Gaddafi of Libya respectively!

The government calls for sanctions against South Africa, but only for those that can afford them. 'We have to be realistic and recognise that we cannot do it ourselves at the moment,' says Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's Foreign Minister.

FRELIMO have bettered the lives of many Mozambicans. The people are no more hungry than they were under the Portuguese, new housing programmes are under way as is a literacy campaign which has been called the most ambitious in Africa. FRELIMO has managed to wipe out cholera and radically reduce other endemic diseases with an inoculation programme which is described as 'an extraordinary achievement' by the United Nations.

But none of this alters the fact that Mozambique faces a grim economic future and that Machel may be forced to bargain his support for the ZANU fighters in exchange for help with the country's crisis.

He has certainly lost the initiative in the international toing and froing over Rhodesia's future to Kaunda.

A new partnership is emerging from the Frontline states. The secret talks with Smith and Nkomo were attended by Brigadier Garba, former Nigerian Foreign Minister and it seems that the Nigerian Government was influential in bringing about the talks. It was in Nigeria as well that Callaghan met Kaunda and after the meeting Kaunda went straight to Lagos to brief the President, General Obasanjo.

Nigeria certainly does not lack muscle. It is the second largest market for British goods outside of Europe. In the last five years the value of British exports has risen from £173 million to £1,069 billion. British assets in Nigeria stand at about £500 millions. Nigeria is well placed to bring pressure to bear.

The internal settlement, support for which unites the Tories with right wing senators in the US, was Smith's attempt to appear to be implementing majority rule and thereby find an alternative to the Anglo American proposals. So the transitional Executive Council was formed to govern Rhodesia until elections were held consisting of Smith and three black members: Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the Reverend Ndabangingi Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirau.

Every revolution has its traitors—these three on joining the transitional government swore an oath of allegiance to the regime's illegal and overtly racist 1969 constitution. The regime was overjoyed.

P K Van der Byl, Minister of Foreign Affairs, told a closed meeting of Rhodesian Front supporters: 'What we have achieved is a masterpiece as a politico-diplomatic exercise. No one ever believed that we could get the internal leaders to agree to so much.... Our advantage now is that whereas we (whites) were alone, we now have advantage of authentic black nationalists defending our political position'.

The 'politico-diplomatic' exercise effectively left everything the same as before: land ownership, control of industry and mining remained in white hands, the security forces stayed intact and to back it all up the whites held the veto over the nine blacks appointed to the Ministerial Council by these 'authentic leaders'.

One of them, Ernest Bulle a leading member of the United African National Council and joint Minister of Finance, told the Institute of Chartered Accountants: 'we want a free and open economy with limited state direction', and promised that there would be 'no takeover of productive white farms' (many of which are owned by South African companies).

Bulle also told a press conference in Cape Town that an economic break with South Africa would be disastrous for an independent Zimbabwe. In another speech he said that the wage-gap between black and white should not be narrowed at such a pace as to undermine the economy (by which he meant profits); 'redistribution of wealth' should not mean 'destroying existing wealth'.

From the start the internal settlement was an obvious and outright fraud and it is difficult to imagine that the black leaders associated with it can still command support inside Rhodesia. Sithole has almost certainly been dismissed as failed collaborator.

As a former leader of ZANU there was a remote possibility that he might be the instrument of a cease-fire. That is why Byl considered him an 'authentic' nationalist spokesman.

But the man who coined the guerillas' slogan 'We are our own liberators' has been destroyed by his support for every murderous twist and turn the whites have taken. And when he defended the security forces' raids on the guerilla bases in Mozambique two months ago, he finally committed political suicide.

Muzorewa's defence of the internal settlement has also to some remarkable sumersaults, but he still retains some role as a figurehead for black middleclass pressure on the regime to dismantle racial discrimination.

Hundreds of black political detainees were released with a great fanfare in April and Muzorewa claimed this plus a promise that there would be no more hanging as proof of his effectiveness. But by September there were almost twice as many political prisoners as in 1976.

After survivors of the Viscount plane crash were massacred all known ZAPU and ZANU supporters were rounded up. And 14 August saw the Rhodesian High Court sentence a guerilla to be hanged.

The only black minister to take a stand, was Byron Hove, appointed by Muzorewa as co-Minister of Justice. Hove warned that genuine majority rule would require a purge of the racist police and judiciary and was promptly dismissed. This took place exactly one month after the agreement was signed



and Muzorewa was utterly and obviously powerless to do anything about it.

Since then it has been downhill all the way. Muzorewa said nothing when the regime announced that blacks were to be conscripted into the army, in spite of the groundswell of opposition that greeted this measure.

33 black doctors publicly stated that they would refuse conscription. 70 black apprentices issued a statement saying they would rather lose their jobs and go to jail than accept call-up fight the guerillas.

On 30 July 200 youths tried to march on Salisbury from a school in an African reserve about 30 kilometres from the city, 80 kilometres to the east, in Marandellas another group demonstrated against conscription, and 100 black students succeeded in demonstrating in Salisbury itself.

Muzorewa's former supporters alarmed have toyed with the idea of finding an alternative leader, but at a special meeting of the Bishop's party the United African National Congress (UANC) no likely candidate was forthcoming. Muzorewa purged the UANC of the leading opponents of the internal settlement.

Youth protest at conscription was a serious enough challenge to Muzorewa's 'authenticity' as a black spokesman. But the youth protest followed months of unrest at two strategically crucial Rhodesian industrial centres: the Wankie colliery and the Shabani mining complex.

Two weeks after the youth demonstrations, 3,000 black miners gathered outside the Mangula copper mine's offices, 80 miles northwest of Salisbury. Armed with axes, iron bars and clubs they were determined to win their two day old strike for better wages. Four were shot dead.

On 23 August a black minister travelled to speak at a meeting organised for the Wankie miners. Only seven of the 13,000 miners in the region turned up to listen.

In early August Ndabaningi Sithole, travelled to the Mrewa TTL for a similar rally. No one turned up.

Eight months after the internal settlement the regime's hold on state powers remains intact, if shaken, and the black nationalist leaders are discredited.

Once it became clear that the internal settlement was a broken reed, Smith began to grope for some deal with the Patriotic Front, or rather, with the wing of the PF led by Joshua Nkomo. This led to the abortive talks between Smith, Nkomo and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia held in Lusaka on 14 August.

Any hope of continuing these talks was killed by the angry reaction of Robert

Mugabe of Zanu and President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who were infuriated at being excluded from any knowledge of what was going on.

And the white backlash which swept through Rhodesia after ZIPRA guerillas shot an Air Rhodesia Viscount in September made it for much more difficult for Smith to pursue further such ventures.

Nonetheless, Smith, a master of political ambiguity has refused completely to jettison the idea of a deal with the Patriotic Front. Broadcasting to the nation after the Viscount incident, he stated that further talks, however unpopular these might be, could not be ruled out. And there are reports that Smith and Nkomo remain in contact through intermediaries. (Chief Chirau perhaps? He is the member of the Transitional Government most closely aligned to Smith and an open advocate of a deal with the Patriotic Front).

Smith's problem may well be keeping the white backlash under control. His personal popularity and that of the Rhodesia Front has slumped since the internal settlement. Many whites felt his broadcast on 10 September was far too soft, and after that there were calls for his resignation. Some even went so far as to demonstrate against him, a thing unheard of in white Rhodesia.

In August 45,000 blacks attended the Chibuku Trophy soccer match at Rufaro Stadium near Salisbury. During breaks in the match Thomas Mapfumo, one of the most popular Black singers in the country, entertained the audience.

He sang about the plight of refugees from the war zones and the problems of Africans in the regime's 'protected villages'. The audience cheered when he sang praises to 'those who have died in the bush' fighting the white army. And his hit song 'Send Your Children to War' received thunderous applause.

10,000 guerillas are now thought to be operating in Rhodesia, 90 per cent of whom belong to ZANLA. Although the ZANU guerillas' main bases are in Mozambique, many operate permanently within Rhodesia. There are 2,000 'resident terrorists', according to the regime, in the country's Eastern Districts.

ZANLA's strategy appears to be based on the idea of a long-drawn-out war of attrition which will, in the process, revolutionise the African peasantry—'protracted guerilla warfare' on classical Maoist lines. This strategy, combined with mass disillusionment with the nationalists who support the internal settlement, seems to be paying off. According to Conor Cruise O'Brien, editor of the *Observer* and initially a fervent supporter of the internal settlement:

'A white political adviser to the Tran-

sitional Government (in practice, to Mr Smith) privately acknowledges that the support of the Shona people, all over the eastern part of the country, has been slipping away from Bishop Muzorewa to Mr Mugabe.'

Joshua Nkomo has still to commit the bulk of his forces to combat. His traditional political base is among the minority Ndebele tribe in the south-west of the country.

The ZIPRA guerillas, largely recruited from this area, are being trained along conventional military lines by Cuban instructors in Angola and Zambia. Those ZIPRA forces in the field tend to go in for spectacular actions like the shooting down of the Viscount and the dispatch of a team to the Salisbury townships.

ZANU (along with many other people) suspects Nkomo of keeping in ZIPRA in reserve until white power collapses and then using it to seize exclusive power for ZAPU. These suspicions have been strengthened since Nkomo and Smith met in August. Clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA have allegedly taken place in the past—for example in Maranda TTL above Beitbridge in August 1977.

The areas placed under martial law after the Viscount incident were largely those where ZANLA is most active. This may simply reflect the fact ZANLA is doing most of the fighting; it may also reflect the regime's desire not to press too hard on Nkomo. Still, it is odd, in the light of the fact that it was ZIPRA which shot down the Viscount.

But in late October the regime launched a series of massive raids in ZIPRA bases in Zambia, claiming to have killed, in one raid alone, 1,500 guerillas. The motive was no doubt, partly a desire to assuage white anger over the Viscount and partly the intention to hit ZIPRA before its forces are sent into the field.

The raids are, however, unlikely to prevent the guerillas from continuing their incursions. November is the beginning of the Rhodesian rainy season. The rains will cover much of Rhodesia with thick green foliage, which provides excellent cover for guerilla infiltrators. The regime is going to find itself hard-pressed.

It's possible that the last days of white Rhodesia will repeat those of French Algeria, with right-wing white terror gangs (like the Algerian OAS) assassinating blacks and white 'sell-outs' alike.

Many of the young white servicemen, who have spent their adult lives fighting a brutal war, may well feel betrayed by any 'surrender' to the freedom fighters. And no one really knows whether Smith controls the army chiefs. The transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe will be a bloody one.

Since the inauguration of Jimmy Carter as President of the United States in January 1977, the West has been pursuing a strategy designed, apparently, to lead to confrontation with the white regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa. Ian Smith in particular has been virulent in his opposition to the Anglo-American proposals for a settlement in Rhodesia.

But the premisses of Anglo-American strategy are far from revolutionary. As Andrew Young, US Ambassador to the United Nations, explained to a group of Johannesburg businessmen last year:

'My argument boils down to my conviction that the free market system can be the greatest force for constructive change now operating anywhere in the world. The most successful transformation of society can come, not from some fiery ideologue's doctrine, nor even by force of arms, but rather from advancing technology and organisation for the production of goods and services'.

In other words, to get rid of apartheid and racialism we must rely, not on revolutionary struggle, but on the forces of Western capitalism. Yet according to the US Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on Africa: 'The net effect of American investment (in South Africa) has been to strengthen the economic and military self-sufficiency of South Africa's apartheid regime'.

How little the West is seriously committed to the overthrow of apartheid is shown by the recent decision by ICL, a quarter owned by the British government through the National Enterprise Board, to sell a computers to the South African police.

In Zimbabwe, the US and Britain are committed to a deal between the regime and the Patriotic Front. This policy is based on the belief that the surest way to protect Western interests in an independent Zambia is to integrate the liberation movements into a conservative black regime.

The proposals involve the establishment \$1½ billion Zibabew Development Fund whose aim is the encouragement of a black

business class in Rhodesia. The main difference between the West and Smith not over their objectives—which are the same, but over whether it is essential to involve the Patriotic Front.

The Labour government has tended to encourage a bilateral deal between Smith and Joshua Nkomo. Like Smith, the British believe that Nkomo is the best candidate for the role of a Zimbabwean Kenyatta—a nationalist leader who will run the country in the interest of the multinationals.

Both Carter and Callaghan have been forced to pay attention to pro-Smith pressures from their right. The Tory party is now committed to supporting the internal settlement and opposing the Patriotic Front. Carter in October surrendered to pressure from a group of reactionary senators and allowed Smith and other members of the Transitional Government to tour the US in an effort to drum up support for the internal settlement—a major propaganda victory for the regime.

One of the lynchpins of settler power in Rhodesia is the distribution of the land between black and white.

5.6 million people, 83 per cent of the population, live in Rhodesia's rural areas. Ownership of the land is divided under the Land Tenure Act along racial lines. Of the country's farming land, 38.5 million acres (47 per cent) are reserved for whites and 43.6 (53 per cent) million for blacks. Yet blacks outnumber whites in Rhodesia by over 25 to one!

Most African peasants live on the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), patches of land reserved exclusively for the use of different tribes. The number of people working the land vastly exceeds what the land can bear: there are 675,000 cultivators in the TTLs, two and a half times the highest number which could work the land economically.

The result is of this pressure of the land is that many African peasants find it impossible to support themselves and their families from the soil. The TTLs have been devastated by social erosion caused by overgrazing. Between 1962 and 1977 the

maize grown per head in the TTLs fell from 352 lbs a year to 231 lbs, 40 per cent less than the amount required to meet subsistence needs. The real average income of rural households fell by 40 per cent between 1948 and 1970. It is estimated that half a million rural Africans living on the TTLs have no land at all.

This system of land ownership boosts the profits of white farmers and capitalists: many peasants who cannot support themselves and their families off the land go to work for white capitalists; they are, however, ready to accept very low wages because their dependents are living in the TTLs and are therefore partially supported by tribal agriculture.

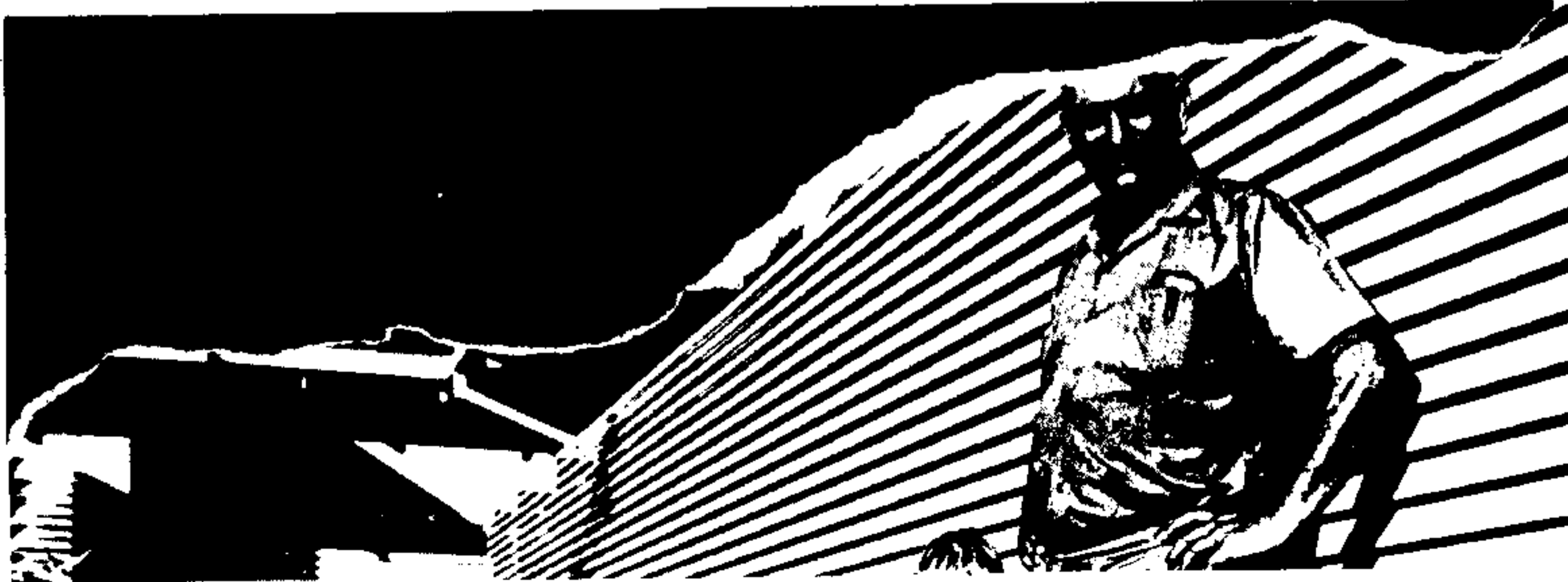
The white farmers especially benefit from this situation. African farmworkers' wages were in 1974 no higher in real terms than they were in 1948. Wages were as a proportion of profits fell from 12.6 per cent in 1965 to 7.8 per cent in 1974.

35 million acres, embracing the best farming land in the country is divided between 6,682 white farms, which between them produce 76 of all agricultural output and 90 per cent of marketed agricultural produce.

Even among the white farms there are considerable differences of size and profitability. 60 per cent pay no income tax at all and are heavily dependent on government subsidy. 78 companies and 193 individuals contributed 52 per cent of total taxable agricultural income in 1976. British and South African agribusiness grabs a large share of Rhodesian farming profits—notably Anglo American, Lonrho and Hulleys.

Under legislation passed last year, rural land is no longer classified on racial lines. The TTLs are still reserved for African tribesmen, but blacks may now buy land in formerly 'whites only' farming areas. But since very few blacks have the money to buy any land at all, this change is purely cosmetic.

Source: R Riddell *The Land Question in Rhodesia* Gwelo 1978



This year 300 freedom fighters have died of starvation in the camps in Zambia.

A huge gulf separates the 'respectable' and be-suited African leaders who parley on the conference tables of London and Geneva and those who are fighting and dying in the villages, towns and countryside of Zimbabwe. They brave the searing heat of the lowlands and the bitter cold on the mountain plains. They bridge gorges, ford rivers and cross rapids.

On the barren lands into which the African people have been herded, the fighters survive for months without returning to base. They face agonising death in the bush, hundreds of miles from medical supplies. If captured they face indescribable torture. Yet they fight on and hundreds are fleeing to join them.

The history of the black struggle, of the hardships, the sacrifices, the courage and determination of the freedom fighters both the living and the countless dead, may never be known.

The following account of the experience of one ZAPU platoon gives an insight into what it means to fight for freedom in Zimbabwe.

Crossing the Zambezi was nearly fatal for the entire platoon. The 10 men were all tied one to the other by rope. With rain pouring down heavily they propelled the canoe precariously to an island about two-thirds of the way across. There were now seventy yards of rapids separating them from the Rhodesian bank.

The Commander fired a specially treated bazooka shell across the water, tied to a long rope with a metal hook on the end. The first time they pulled the rope in the hook failed to attach itself to anything on the bank. The second time they succeeded. The roar of the river drowned all sound of the bazooka.

By the time all ten men were in the river the rope was stretched out taut like the string of a drawn bow. They hung on desperately, shifting their hands along the rope as though they were hanging from the branch of a tree.

Each man was loaded with a sub-machine gun, a carbine, seven hundred rounds of ammunition, two grenades, one land mine and a kitbag containing civilian clothes, some food and their boots.

After crossing the river they rested. At sunset they began a 250 mile journey to Matopos, the Tribal Trust Land near Bulawayo. They didn't take the shortest route, directly south, because they wanted to avoid going through the Wankie Game Reserve. The area was not adequately mapped and was totally uninhabited.

Water was a great problem and soldiers

could waste days wandering about and getting lost in search of water holes. The security forces had a habit of surrounding the good water holes and trapped the guerillas when they came out of hiding in their desperate search for drink.

So at first the Platoon travelled east away from Wankie. They travelled quickly. They took the precaution of brushing away the tracks of their boots with leafy branches as they went. They covered their clothes and skin with fresh dung. If they passed closely down wind of a herd of wild animals, it wouldn't be able to smell them, take fright, run off and alert an enemy patrol.

But the dung caused them endless agony from perstering flies, especially horse flies that drove them mad with their painful stings. With the flies, the heat and the forced marching, the youngest member of the group, who was only 16, collapsed exhausted on the second night.

One month after the Zambezi crossing the platoon arrived in the Matopos Hills, thirty miles from Bulawayo. They set up a base in a steep valley, hidden from above by thick scrub and rocky outcrops.

It was common knowledge among the people of this area, and a matter of great pride to them, that the Matopos Hills had been the stronghold of the Ndebele when they rebelled against the colonizers in 1896. From the caves and crevices where the platoon was now taking cover the Ndebele warriors had waged a sophisticated guerrilla war.

They had learnt their lesson from the Maxim gun, and consequently abandoned



their traditional pitched battle technique for a series of hit-and-run actions which claimed the lives of one hundred and thirty whites in seven days. Although the settlers received relief forces from South Africa, they were unable to dislodge the Ndebele from their well-entrenched positions in the Matopos.

Cecil Rhodes was reluctantly forced to seek a peace treaty with his enemy, which subsequent generations of colonials steadily tore to shreds.

For several days the platoon stayed in the hills, living off the berries, roots, and what remained of their supply of glucose tablets and vitamin pills. Then they decided to risk sending off a team of two men to seek supplies. The team was captured by the security forces. John Sibali was shot in the stomach and died soon afterwards. Edison Maleme was injured and tortured until he promised that he would lead the security men to his platoon's hideout.

As the column of Rhodesian soldiers advanced down the steep slopes of the hills a helicopter began patrolling the valley. But the platoon was too far into the depths of the valley to be seen from the air. The column came within two hundred yards of their hideout.

Because of his white civilian shirt, Edison stood clearly in front. He was marching the security forces straight past his own men to give them the opportunity for an ambush! The soldiers were passing by like sitting ducks!

The commander shouted the order to fire. The Rhodesian column was so exposed that most were killed in the first twenty seconds as seven AK 47s emptied their magazines at the rate of six hundred rounds a minute.

The helicopter swooped low and dropped several grenades onto the guerrillas' position. But their cover was so sound that none of the men were injured. By firing at the helicopter they forced it to move away until it was out of range.

The guerrillas withdrew quickly under the thick trees. They had not covered more than a few hundred yards when a Vampire jet swooped into the valley and bombed their original position.

The platoon finally reached Botswana three months after crossing the Zambezi. Their mission had been useless. They had entered Rhodesia at one end and come out the other, travelling 450 miles on foot.

Once over the border they changed into civilian clothes and buried their weapons. They caught a bus into Francistown. Here they surrendered to the authorities who threw them straight into prison. It took five months for the Botswana Government and the ZAPU leaders in Lusaka to arrange for their men's transfer.

Adapted from Black Fire! Accounts of the Guerrilla War in Rhodesia, by Michael Raeburn, Julian Friedmann, London 1978.

POBox82

Culture rules

It's good to see the left taking notice of popular culture at long last—but not if you are going to print condescending hatchet jobs like the review of *Saturday Night Fever—Thank God It's Friday* in your September issue.

Adam Kidron's piece affected a distaste of anything liked by 'the masses' combined with mindless insults and minimum political analysis.

John Travolta is called one of the 'least talented movers on two legs', and by implication the thousands of people who thought his dancing brilliant must be morons. Actually I found Travolta's dancing, and some of the music, entertaining. Am I a moron?

It is not that *Saturday Night Fever* hasn't got any faults. It has plenty, but they have been buried under Adam Kidron's mudslinging.

The film's appalling sexism doesn't even get a mention. OK, so there is a supposed moral, with Travolta eventually 'growing up' and distancing himself from the chauvinist antics of his mates.

But that is a pretty feeble excuse for a barrage of sexist jokes which run throughout the film. It is these the audience goes away remembering. You may argue that the film is merely a reflection of the chauvinism in ordinary American kids—but the guffaws the film provoked suggests it reinforced the sexist attitudes of its audience.

You may disagree with the above interpretation, but you can't deny that *Saturday Night Fever* is a film which thousands of youngsters have identified with.

It deserves better than your casual dismissal so far. After all, would you treat a film littered with racist jokes in the same way?

Lynden Barber

PS. I have not 'casually dismissed' *Thank God it's Friday*—I just haven't seen it.

POBox82

Relatively neutral

I would like the opportunity of clarifying a number of points arising from my article 'Even the Truth is Relative' (*Socialist Review* 4) in the light of Duncan Hallas' letter (*Socialist Review* 5). The reason I feel it necessary to

Socialist Review

POBox82 London E2

do this is because I believe Duncan Hallas by insinuation at a number of points unintentionally—misrepresents my position.

This may well be because my original article was not clear. In that case I would like to try to rectify the situation.

I did not suggest that science could be independent of nature, rather I suggested that its tenor is coloured to a greater or lesser extent by the social environment of its birth. For me science at any one time merely represents one face of a multifaceted reality.

Neither did I assert or imply that Newtonian mechanics was not science either prior to or post to its profound modification by the twentieth century 'revolution in physics'. The key question I tried to face was on a different level and was 'What are we saying when we call something Science?'

For Duncan Hallas we are identifying objective knowledge. It is with this I disagree. 'Objective' for *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* is 'setting forth what is external, actual, practical, uncoloured by one's own sensations or emotions' and I assume that it is with such a definition that Duncan Hallas is working.

Yet he himself at the same time seems to concede the argument. He admits that science and technology are produced in accordance with the requirements of the rulers of society. These requirements are multifold. They certainly include an operational control over nature which may lead to one kind of science or technology being pursued at the expense of another. Ideological support for their view of the world from what many falsely see as an independent network of authority, science. Such requirements are not conducive to the production of neutral science.

Duncan Hallas implies that despite being brought forth crippled by such requirements science grows up unblemished. What miracle is it that enables this cripple to discard its crutches? Unless Duncan Hallas can answer this his case

is lost.

In concluding I must comment on the penultimate paragraphs of his letter. In these he pleads that his viewpoint warrants support as it is in concord with the views of Marx. If it is, and of this I'm not convinced, this is surely a singularly unmarxist argument for a Marxist!

Marx was a profound thinker, but surely few would agree with Hallas that he had a 'godlike' ability to write the last word on every subject. Socialism will hold few attractions for anyone who thinks if such religious dogmatism holds away.

Glyn Ford

POBox82

Operational effectivity

Duncan Hallas (*Letters, Socialist Review* 5) has done me a favour by conceding that, for example, Newtonian mechanics 'is not unconnected with the class struggle' and by admitting that it 'does not represent absolute truth'. Indeed it doesn't, as its results have been found to conflict with perceived reality in this century.

Despite this Duncan Hallas insists that it is still 'objective operational knowledge', it is in some sense 'special scientific knowledge'. Peculiar this 'objective knowledge' which no longer needs to correspond to perceived reality!! (Like the SLL's 'Trotskyism' of the 1950s).

As Duncan himself asks, 'does it matter?' Like Duncan I think it does and for surprisingly similar reasons. I too want to defend Marxism as 'operational', as 'revolutionary'. Those who in practice oppose this view often agree that Marxism is scientific (the Althusserians) but because their view is that science is 'above' society and can be proved 'in its own terms' there is no need for the class struggle. They can happily 'prove' Marxism to be 'correct' in their university offices.

Marxism can only be 'proved', of course, by the establishment of a classless society, by the victory of socialism. There can be no other verification of

its 'truth' because of the way it is based on a unity of theory and practice.

To argue this does not mean that Marxism is not a science but that, like any other science, its 'problematic' has roots in society, which means at present in capitalist class society. With socialism, or more accurately communism, Marxism will have been proved correct, but will be outdated and irrelevant.

There will also be a new physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology and so on because the questions being asked will have changed as the society changed. Who will need a science whose basic question is: 'How does class society work and how can it be ended?'

A reader from Leeds

POBox82

Can fascism creep?

Peter Bradbury's letter in your October issue provides some interesting and worrying information about repression in Britain and Germany. However, he seems to believe that this increasing level of state repression amounts to a slow and gradual change in the sort of society we live in: he raises the spectre of 'creeping fascism'.

This sort of outlook seems to me theoretically mistaken and practically dangerous.

The question of whether a society is a bourgeois democracy or fascism is not decided by the level of violence used by the state against its opponents. There have, and indeed there still are, bourgeois democracies which have been prepared to use quite enormous levels of violence against the working class.

For example, in 1929 in Berlin, the Social Democrats ordered the police to open fire on a May Day demonstration. Many workers were killed and many more injured. This did not mean that the Social Democrats had become fascists or that Weimar Germany was fascist. From the point of view of the working class, it was clear that major bourgeois democratic rights, in particular the right to trade union organisations, continued up until the point that they were ended by the genuine fascists under Hitler.

There is a clear line between bourgeois democracy and fascism over which it is not possible to 'creep': either the

Reviews

Who is in control?

Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison

Michel Foucault
Allen Lane £7.50

The use of imprisonment as the general form of punishment is, Michel Foucault reminds us, a comparatively recent phenomenon, dating back to the early nineteenth century.

Previously punishment involved the use of exemplary violence against the offender—*Discipline and Punish* begins with a description of a particularly gruesome public execution in 1757 in which the living body of the victim was literally pulverised, torn to pieces and finally reduced to ashes (anyone who saw Ken Russell's film *The Devils* will have a pretty good picture of the barbaric tortures involved).

In the following two hundred years the nature of punishment has been transformed—executions, when they still happen, are not (usually) accompanied by torture and take place in private; criminals are sent to prison, with the avowed aim, not of making them suffer, but of improving them.

Liberal historians describe these changes as the product of an enlightened and rational society which has left medieval barbarism behind it. Foucault, one of the most outstanding figures on the contemporary French intellectual scene, sets out to refute these claims.

He argues that the shift from one form of punishment to another reflected the development of what he calls 'a new "political economy" of the power to punish', in other words, the introduction of a different method of controlling the population.

Public executions were intended, by the physical destruction of the victim, to demonstrate the 'super-power' of the feudal monarchy, its ability to exterminate anyone who broke its laws. But this form of intimidation involved dangers—it turned punishment into a public spectacle, in which the crowd of spectators might

easily side with the victim and, even, on occasion, free him.

Ten forty-three.

In exactly TWO MINUTES I'll ring the FIRST BELL and they'll all stand still!



The new capitalist class which was asserting its claims to dominance at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century needed a more efficient and less risky form of punishment to protect its property. Hence the movement of penal reform led by figures like Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham.

The product of the reform movements was the prison.

All, that is, except your potential DEVIATE! Your fledgling REBEL! Your incipient BOAT-ROCKER! THEY'LL try to move all right! THEY'LL have to learn the HARD way not to move!



Imprisonment, according to Foucault, has functioned as a form of what he calls the disciplines.

These are a set of techniques of physical control, whose aim is not so much, as in the case of public execution, to terrorise the mass of the population into subjection, as to channel their activities in a certain direction, supervising these activities so as to ensure that they are carried out at the pace and in the manner required.

Hence the spread of a range of institutions—prisons, schools, factories, hospitals, barracks—in which people's activities are subject to a set of rules prescribing what they should or should not do, and are constantly supervised.

This theory clearly has implications which extend far beyond the prison. Foucault

believes, for example, that the human sciences were produced as part of the same process as the 'technology of power' he calls the disciplines—that the human individual only became an object of scientific analysis once his or her body had become the point of application of the techniques of surveillance and control involved in disciplines.

Foucault, by concentrating on the 'microphysics of power' at work in the disciplines, consciously sidesteps the question of the broader social processes of which their introduction was part—above all the development of capitalism.

This, it emerges in his most recent book, *The Will to Knowledge* (as yet untranslated from the French), reflects a conscious break with orthodox Marxism—society is, he argues, to be seen a collection of diverse power relations, rather as a social whole shaped by the basic conflict between capital and labour.

Because when they've learned not to question the FIRST BELL, they'll learn not to question their TEXTS! Their TEACHERS!

The problem is that this approach means that Foucault is extremely vague when it comes to explaining how the 'disciplinary society' came into being; he describes the spread of the disciplines as a process of 'infiltration'. Surely this will not do, without some explanation of the way in which capitalist relations of production made the introduction of the disciplines both possible and necessary.

There is another, more basic fault. Foucault treats the different disciplinary institutions—prisons, barracks, schools, hospitals, factories—as if they were the same. However, the factory does not equal the

Books

capitalist class rules by means of deals with working-class organisations or it rules through deals with the mass fascist party which smashes the working-class organisations. On that basis, neither modern Britain nor modern Germany remotely resemble fascism. They are both bourgeois democracies.

The political consequences of this are clear. If we believe that the present British state is increasingly fascist, then it follows that the political leaders of that state are moving in that direction too. Therefore we should treat them in much the same way as treat other fascists.

Now, it does not seem to me very sensible to treat the Labour Party in the same way as the National Front; on the contrary, we want a united front with them against the National Front which threatens them every bit as much as it does us. We will not get it if we smash up Labour Party meetings howling that they are 'fascists'.

The other problem is that Comrade Bradbury could well believe that this process is not under the control of the political parties and is in fact the result of the autonomous actions of the state machine.

Quite apart from the evident fact that the events he refers to are political acts, the conclusions we would draw if we believed his argument would be simple: we would have to put all our resources into a fight to defend democratic rights against the state machine. To that end, we would need to shift attention away from the struggle to smash Phase Four and concentrate on the NCCL.

Now, I am not arguing that the fight to defend democratic rights is not important, as it obviously is. Rather, we need a sense of proportion. The conclusions which follow from the mistake about 'creeping fascism' are either the ultra-left impotence of 'social fascism' or the right-opportunist 'defence of democracy'.

In fact, the best weapon both against the political leaders of the Labour Party and the faceless technicians of state repression is the development of a strong and confident working class. That can only be achieved by fighting around the whole range of class issues from nurseries to imperialism. That fight needs the whole range of socialist politics. That is 'subversion of the state'.

Colin Sparks.

prison, Workers are indeed subjected to what Marx called 'the despotism of the factory'.

But there also develops within the factory the ability to organise and fight collectively on the part of the workers. No other institution in capitalist society has anywhere the same effect. That is why the struggle between worker and capitalist at the point of production is not just one of a multiplicity of relations of power—it is the fulcrum on which the struggle to overthrow capitalism must be based.

Rights at work

Rights at Work

Jeremy McMullen
Pluto Press £2.25

Jeremy McMullen is a barrister. But he's a very unusual barrister. His first words in Chapter 1 are 'Workers and their families have always distrusted the law, and rightly so. It is not an instrument geared to our needs, and the people who administer it are unrepresentative, out of touch and antagonistic to our demands. Nevertheless, through political and industrial action workers have secured a set of legal rights which can be exploited. Use the law only when industrial activity fails'.

That then, is the author's approach.

In their day to day experience, trade union activists are called on (and expected by their members) to answer a huge variety of questions and queries.

In the last few years governments in this country have introduced 'industrial' legislation covering equal pay, redundancy pay, union membership, disclosure of information, etc and 'social' legislation for the workplace on matters like maternity benefit, discrimination, social security, etc.

While working people have undoubtedly benefitted from some of these reforms, many of them are double edged or worse, like the Redundancy Payments Act for example, which has helped to lessen the resistance to job loss. Other legislation, as the author points out, was introduced by the government under the social contract in exchange for wage restraint.

Whether Labour or Tory, governments' aims have undoubtedly been bound up

They'll grow up to accept
**TAXES! HOUSING DEVELOP-
MENTS! INSURANCE! WAR!
MEN ON THE MOON! LIQUOR!
LAWS! POLITICAL SPEECHES!
PARKING METERS!
TELEVISION!
FUNERALS!**



Non-movement
after
the first
bell is
the
backbone
of Western
Civilization!

with trying to regulate shop-floor activity in order to channel conflict into laid down procedures and away from industrial action.

Perhaps the huge increase in legislation is also seen as a job creation scheme for new entrants into the legal profession. Maybe the aim is to create a situation in which no shop stewards meeting would be complete without its permanent legal adviser in attendance.

But the development of industrial legislation hasn't conformed to such neat notions. To quote the book 'Employment law is dynamic. It changes according to political, economic and industrial pressures, its fluctuations record events in labour history and bourgeois responses to them'.

While always bearing in mind the limitations of legal action, as the author constantly emphasises, working people should be aware of their rights.

It's a fallout

Windscale Fallout

Ian Breach
Penguin 90p

This book, 'a primer for the age of nuclear controversy' says the blurb, is limited to the debate over the siting of a plant for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from the UK overseas reactors at Windscale in Cumbria. Limited reprocessing facilities are already established there which British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL) want to expand, despite their very poor safety and efficiency record.

In 1977 a public enquiry under Lord Parker (who so

His approach leads Foucault to reduce the struggle of the exploited and oppressed to 'a multiplicity of points of resistance'. Resistance is inherent in every power relation: resistances are, as he puts it, 'the other term, in the relations of power'.

He seems to imply that both power, and resistance to it, are inevitable. The oppressed will resist power, but they cannot destroy it. Foucault's basic message is therefore a pessimistic one.

Alex Callinicos.

For the first time what we're entitled to has been set out in comprehensible language, although being entitled to something is a very different thing from actually getting it.

Issues (complete with case-histories and legal precedents) ranging from the rights of newly unionised or newly employed workers, to welfare entitlements, as well as how to use the law in a variety of dispute situations, are identified, quoted, summarised and indexed.

Like most trade unionists what little knowledge I have of the law has been picked up through having to go and find out when a specific question has arisen. This has entailed a bit of trailing around in search of the relevant information.

Now everything, or just about everything, that workers could ever want to know about industrial and welfare legislation can be found in this book, and it's presented from a healthy class-conscious position.

I heartily commend it.
Peter Bain

effectively covered up the murder of 28 Flixborough workers by Nypro Ltd) deliberated on this issue for 100

Books

days. BNFL took over a school for its legal and technical experts. Lord Parker and his advisers were chauffeur driven from a nearby country house each day, while some individual objectors to the BNFL plans kipped out in cars and caravans.

Parker's three basic questions were whether reprocessing should be carried out at all, whether it should be done at Windscale, and whether the plant should be of the size proposed by BNFL, i.e. about double needed to cope with UK demand, in order to reprocess (very lucratively) foreign spent fuel (contracts had already been signed with Japan).

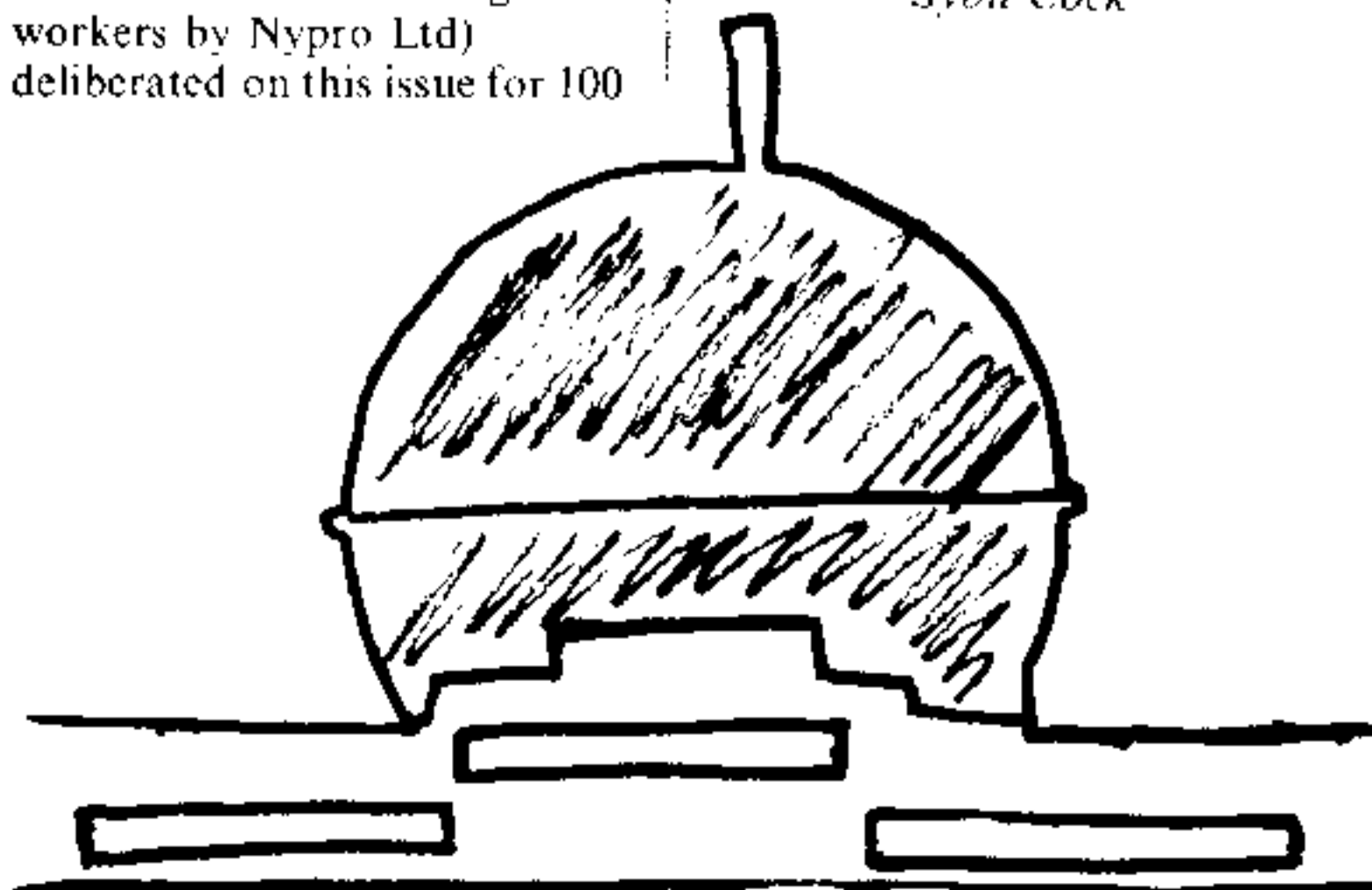
On these terms not even Friends of the Earth's most skillful lawyer could bring into question the need for and the risks involved in a nuclear programme at all. Indeed Parker specifically outlawed evidence 'contrary to the national interest or which would call into question the merits of any government policy' (p105).

Anyone who tried to do so was ridiculed. And many of the well meaning environmentalists ended up arguing for the storage of spent fuel, hardly an attractive alternative.

And the result was a whitewash, effectively failing to deal with the major issues of long term health and safety. Parliament has given this ludicrous project its official sanction and the path is clear for BNFL to go ahead.

The book is a fascinating chronology of events, containing a good critique of the project in terms of health and safety. The author is undoubtedly an honest but confused liberal who has produced the best book we are likely to see on this particular area of nuclear nasties.

Sybil Cock



**Antonio Gramsci—
Selections from Political
Writings—1921-6**

Lawrence and Wishart
£10.00

With the publication of this volume, a last act of historical justice is done to the memory of a great revolutionary.

Until recently, Gramsci's writings have appeared in English in such a way as to make it seem that he should be the reformists' favourite revolutionary. What have received widest circulation have been from the period when he was in one of Mussolini's prisons, cut off from living political life, and forced to write in an elliptical, obscure style designed to deceive his fascist guards.

Because he could not easily write under such conditions about insurrection, the smashing of the state, or even the working class, his writings became biblical texts to those who wanted to regard themselves as Marxists but to deny the need for insurrection, the smashing of the state, or the working class.

The writings for 1921-26 prove that there was not an 'old Gramsci' who broke with the revolutionism of the 'young Gramsci'. Quite the contrary. Already in 1921-1925 the major themes develop that find their expression in the *Prison Notebooks*: the problem of how the working class can free itself from the ideological inheritance of capitalism, the problem of how to build a revolutionary party that knows how to develop this ideological struggle through intervention in spontaneous upsurges of the class, the problem of how the working class in a semi-backward country such as Italy was in the 1920s can draw behind it the mass of peasantry, the problem of why the mass revolutionary movement of the years 1919-20 subsided and gave way to fascist counter-revolution.

Of course, Gramsci did not come upon ideas fully formed. In 1920 he still thought then that the left social-democrat Italian Socialist Party was a revolutionary party. In 1921 he reacted against his mistake by a long detour into real ultra-leftism, by going along with Bordiga, the founder of the Italian Communist Party, who insisted that only by keeping itself quite free from contact with even the most left-wing elements inside the Socialist Party could the new Communist Party avoid being

Ideas for here & now



infected with reformism.

This detour only came to an end in 1923 when the leaders of the Communist International persuaded Gramsci that you could keep yourself free of reformist tendencies and work alongside workers who were still within the reformist parties, so as to expose their leaders. Unfortunately, just as Gramsci was being won over by these arguments of the Comintern leadership, that leadership itself was changing. Lenin and Trotsky were being replaced by Zinoviev and Stalin.

The argument for the united front was soon accompanied by other arguments of a much more dubious sort—the argument for an authoritarian, monolithic party, the argument for the joint 'workers government' of social democrats and revolutionaries, the argument for the workers to form a 'bloc' with the peasants rather than to lead them, even in 1924, the first argument that social democracy was social fascism. What followed was a disastrous detour, not just for the Italian Communists, but for the whole of mankind.

Gramsci was not immune to these developments. Some of the new doctrines of the Stalinists find their way into his writings, both before his imprisonment and afterwards. After all, he was not Trotsky, with the self-confidence, even

the arrogance, which came from having led the class to take state power in 1917. And even Trotsky was baffled by what was happening now to the revolution.

But in 1925 and 1926 it was still possible for leaders of Communist Parties to **think** and Gramsci did think. He thought as a revolutionary who had no doubt that the key to the history of the twentieth century was working-class revolution. This comes out in utmost clarity in his outstanding piece of writing, the *Theses* he wrote for the Communist Party Congress in Lyons in 1926 January:

'There is no possibility of a revolution in Italy, he wrote, 'that is not a socialist revolution', even though 'industrialism, which is the essential part of capitalism, is very weak in Italy'. There followed a long analysis of the development of Italian society over the last 50 years, culminating in the victory of fascism.

Gramsci concluded from this that it was not only fascist repression that kept the working class in check, but 'a chain of reactionary forces' which stretched from the fascists, through the bourgeois anti-fascist group to the reformists. 'Each of these group strives to exert an influence on a section of the working population...to cause the

proletariat to lose its profile and autonomy as a revolutionary class'.

The revolutionary party had to be based in the workplace and be overwhelmingly working class in character. Although it needed to win the support of both peasants and intellectuals, 'it is necessary to reject vigorously, as counter-revolutionary, any conception which makes the party into a "synthesis" of heterogeneous elements -instead of maintaining that it is part of the proletariat, that the proletariat must mark its imprint on its own organisation and that the proletariat must be guaranteed a leading function within the party itself'.

Finally, the theses spell out the solution to the problem that has bemused many interpreters of his Gramsci's later prison writings—the relation between the long drawn out war of attrition to gain ideological hegemony and the insurrectionary battle for power.

'The tactic of the united front as political activity designed to unmask so-called proletarian and revolutionary parties and groups which have a mass base, is closely linked with the problem of how the Communist Party is to win a majority... It is applicable in all cases in which, because of the mass support of the groups against which we are fighting, frontal struggle against them is not sufficient to give rapid and far reaching results...'

But the party could not conceive of the realisation of the slogans advanced during this period of united struggle 'except as the beginning of direct revolutionary struggle, ie of civil war waged by the proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry, with the aim of winning power.'

The *Lyons Theses* were the high point of Gramsci's achievement. But throughout the period—even when most under the influence of ultra-left proto Stalinist conceptions—Gramsci had important and interesting things to say about problems that still concern us.

Get hold of the book (at £10 that probably means borrowing a copy, at least until Lawrence and Wishart can be persuaded to produce a paper back version) and read it, not as a set of unblemished texts, but as a brilliant record of one revolutionary successive attempts to come to terms with a bitter period of revolution and counter-revolution. *Chris Harman*

The AUEW

after Scanlon



Jack Robertson

The victory of the right wing in the AUEW has thrown the left in the union confusion. Recent interviews with Bob Wright (Marxism Today September 1978) and John Tocher (Socialist Review No 5, September 1978) showed a willingness by leading members of the AUEW Broad Left to criticise their own tactics. Jack Robertson also worked as an engineering worker in the Manchester area, where he was a shop steward at Massey Ferguson. He is editor of Engineer's Charter and a member of the Socialist Workers Party. In the following article he gives his views on the future of the AUEW.

THE KING IS IN THE ALTOGETHER

Once upon a time to have criticised Hugh Scanlon inside the Left in the AUEW was considered tantamount to sacrilege. Anyone who was prepared to accuse the new King of having no clothes was clearly either extremely naive or downright stupid.

As John Tocher said in a recent interview in *Socialist Review*: 'He personified the aspirations of many people—the aspirations for democracy in the union, for adherence to National Committee decisions. Fundamental, elementary things like that'.

But, as Alan Pike wrote in the *Financial Times* recently: 'Mr. Hugh Scanlon will set off to Broadstairs and retirement next month after 11 years as President of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers leaving behind him a union in disarray'.

Nowadays, criticism of Scanlon is more common—if veiled. Take for example the October issue of the *AUEW Journal*.

Referring to Scanlon's role in the fight against the Industrial Relations Act, John Boyd, the Union's right-wing General Secretary writes: '...as Scanlon fervently believed in the correctness of our policy on such matters all his intelligence, unbounded energy and enthusiasm were flung into the Union's successful campaign against this unacceptable legislation...which no doubt would have substantially limited the usefulness of Trade Unions'.

Praise indeed from the man who was beaten by Scanlon for President in 1967 and 1972 and who himself voted against fighting the Industrial Relations Act!

Boyd sums up: 'In saying "Goodbye" we all say to you, Hugh, and to Nora who has sustained and strengthened you in 35 years of married bliss, "Thanks"; may you now have time to improve (!) your golf, tend your garden and, who knows, Nora, even wash-up!!'.

For the Broad Left, the farewell is no less praiseworthy. Giving a TUC report in the same issue, Dougie Daniels, last year's Chairman of the Final Appeal Court and Secretary of the Broad Left in Manchester writes: 'His swan song was delivered with some emotion but, when he warmed to his theme, the message to work as never before to return a Labour Government, was rammed home to everybody in the hall.

'He was given a standing ovation and everybody in the conference, including the Prime Minister, stood and applauded—not just his speech, but all his service to The Trade Union Movement. On behalf of the

whole of the AUEW, may I wish Hughie and Nora a long and happy retirement'.

The right wing, of course, can afford to pat Hughie on the back as he goes. He may have left the union in 'disarray', but he has also left with the bureaucracy firmly in their hands at national and, to a lesser extent, local level.

For their part, the Broad Left are faced with the awkward truth that not only did Scanlon lead the Left in the Union up the garden path—but that they pushed him most of the way. With that history, to criticise too sharply would be a dangerous practice.

But not to do so creates its own dilemma. The motor of the Broad Left machine, the Communist Party, may have the will to carry on regardless. But many of the 'cogs' may not be willing to co-operate. One illustration is the experience of one well-known, longstanding Scanlon supporter from the North West.

Recently he was invited to a meeting in Manchester on the topic of Apprentice Training. This issue has generated some heated discussion in the union over recent months.

The Engineering Industry Training Board, with the backing of the AUEW Executive propose that Apprentice Training in Engineering be cut from the present four years (it was five) in the factory, down to two years or 18 months—and that the remainder become part of the normal school curriculum. In other words, working class kids will have less opportunity for a general education and, almost as soon as beginning a secondary education, will be 'bred' for factory work.

Addressing the meeting, one of more than

60 organised throughout the country, was Hugh Scanlon—in his capacity as President of the union and Chairman of the Engineering Industry Training Board (a joint management union body). It took place in the Manchester Airport Hotel, one of the plushiest in the city. Of the 200 'guests', over two thirds were local management representatives.

As each of them spoke, Scanlon would nod. But whenever a trade union speaker rose to say his piece, Scanlon would use the chair to interrupt, partly because their statements tended to be less articulate and partly because they spoke against the proposals more frequently.

For some of them, who had practised similar tactics on their own rank-and-file, it must have been a chastening experience.

But for a man who, almost 20 years ago as a shop steward, had sat in on negotiations with Scanlon when he was Divisional Organiser; who had marvelled at his courage in the face of the employer; and who had trusted him throughout—this experience was shattering. Around the country there are many more like him. They will not easily be led up the same path again.

Look at the King, look at the King . . .

DUFFY'S LAW

The arrival of Terry Duffy on the scene provides a convenient smokescreen for this embarrassing discussion. Although his victory is not exactly relished by the broad left, at least he provides a decoy target for attack.

And it is in the attitude to Duffy and the new Executive Council that the traditional friction in the union is spotlighted and the 'disarray' becomes clearer. Largely through the shrewd organisational and political ability of John Boyd, the right have gained a confidence not seen since the days of Carron's Law.

In 1975 Boyd took over the administration of the Union's Head Office in Peckham Road, after the death of his fellow right-winger, Jim Conway, in a plane crash. In the process he defeated Bob Wright—a result which confirmed a trend of defeats for the Broad Left which had shown in the months before.

Not only has Boyd continued Conway's mission to reform the Union's archaic administration. He has pulled together the disorganised right-wing influences inside (and outside) the union into a formidable force—a major contribution to their recent electoral victories.

But despite the new confidence of the right wing they also have their difficulties recently for example over the toolmakers' strike at SU Fuel Systems. When the EC announced their intention to expel the 32 strikers SU from the union, it was too much for many of their own supporters. And throughout the union there was an immediate reaction against the punishment, especially from the unofficial toolroom committee led by Roy Frazer.

THE SU CARBURETTOR STRIKE

According to the *Financial Times*: 'Some Executive members were clearly calculating—in the belief that Mr. Frazer would only get a limited response to his strike call—that they would be able to face out another toolroom strike.

'However, it became apparent that this

brave view was not shared with unanimous confidence when the return to work deadline passed and the executive gave the strikers one last chance of appearing before the district committee which they had previously refused to do'.

'When the strikers went to this meeting, the Committee decided honour was satisfied and lifted the expulsions—tactfully playing down the fact that the only reason they had been told to appear before the committee in the first place was because they were defying union instructions to return to work'.

The article goes on: 'The latest struggle with the toolmakers has not come at a good moment for Mr Duffy, who is now less than a month away from succeeding to the Presidency. As Midlands Executive member he identified himself very strongly with the District Committee's decision to expel the 32 strikers, insisting that it was necessary to protect thousands of jobs in British Leyland and supplier companies.

'He even went so far as to hint that further expulsions among the toolroom committee might be forthcoming'.

'If members now interpret the lifting of the expulsions as a climb-down or defeat for the Executive, the new President is bound to be personally identified with it'.

Unfortunately, the support which emerged for the 32 from other engineers was mainly in response to the disciplinary measures—it has not been matched by any meaningful solidarity with their claim. This can even be said of Roy Frazer's powerful toolroom committee. Frazer has just stood as a candidate in the Executive Council election in Division 7.

His committee has been joined by the Leyland Craft Committee, comprising skilled men from millwrights to electricians—but they appear to be adopting a policy of 'keeping their powder dry' rather than put their muscle behind the SU men. (Ironically, a similar logic was applied last year by the rest of the stewards in British Leyland when they refused to back Frazer's own strike. It diverted attention, they said from the main fight which should take place on 1 August when Phase 2 ended. The toolroom were forced back to work and the promised onslaught on Phase 3 never happened!)

This manoeuvre by Frazer has undoubtedly softened the blow which the executive took when its expulsion pleas were thwarted—and has allowed them to return to the attack. Again in the latest *Journal* Boyd writes: 'It is our Union's Democracy which is on trial—not of the District Committee or Executive Council's choosing—but by those who refuse to obey.

'They must be penalised—not only the 33 but the small nucleus of self-appointed bureaucrats who are publicly threatening, via all the self-sought news media, to call other members out on strike if the Executive Council operate, as it must, in conformity with our democratic structure and constitution. The TUC must insist that no other affiliated union takes into membership any of our members who deserve to be expelled'.

ALRIGHT FOR THE LEFT?

Clearly many skilled men who voted for Duffy on his promise to restore differentials (the main plank of his election address) must be wondering now if they picked the right

man! It is this point which is taken up in a recent article in the Communist Party fortnightly review, *Comment*.

The author is Ron Halverson, the man who led the AUEW Delegation's opposition to Scanlon at last year's TUC, a member of the National Committee of the AUEW and Executive Committee of the CP: 'If there was evidence of mass support for the right-wing policies, the future would be grim for engineers. But his is not the case. When these policies are related to the individuals own problems, the opposite becomes evident'.

This argument is echoed by John Tocher: 'I believe that a reaction will develop against the right. There'll be an economic reaction, especially with the new five per cent pay limit. We can't live with wage restraint much longer, and the people who advocate it are in for a rough time'.

Certainly there is some truth in this argument. It is confirmed by the Executive's unseemly haste to make the Ford strike official—for fear of losing credibility (and members) to the T&GWU. It makes nonsense of their claims that the Government must be supported at all costs and that the Bathgate and SU strikers must be disciplined.

However, whether the right-wing's ability to tie themselves up in ideological knots can be effectively countered by the 'left' is another question altogether.

In the last few weeks the Executive have circulated two very important letters round the country—one warning all districts to allow no platform for SU strikers and the other explaining that the Ford strike has only been made official because the company does not belong to the Engineering Employers' Federation!

All federated firms are informed that, as custodians of the National Agreement, the Executive Council will insist on the full procedure being exhausted before they even consider supporting any claims. The right see the potential in the situation too—but so far there has been no significant backlash against their bullying tactics.

Long before Duffy came to power the rank and file were showing their dissatisfaction with the people who advocate wage restraint. And their opponents were not always from the right as the attacks on the Leyland Toolmakers in the *Morning Star* and the Scab's Charter issued against the Heathrow engineers and signed by a number of leading 'left wing' stewards proves.

Even when struggles were not tainted with the label of 'divisive' or 'sectional', the ability to translate the frustration among the rank and file into an effective campaign against the Social Contract was patchy, to say the least.

For example the Conference called last year by the Leyland Combine Shop Stewards in response to a series of unexpected revolt revolts inside the company was very well attended. Delegate after delegate bragged about the size of their own claim would be and there was considerable enthusiasm for the call for a Day of Action on 20th April.

Delegates went home and fought for a one-day stoppage, despite the difficulties, for such a call is rarely popular (At Massey-Ferguson we had a majority of eight out of 1500 workers to come out). But, when the



day dawned, Leyland were still working. The backlash was considerable on those who gone for support.

And this has *directly* affected the response to the call this year, on 11 October by the Ford Stewards for a demonstration against the five per cent in London. Only 1,000 turned up of whom around 100 were Ford workers.

Workers around the country 'smelled a rat' when they heard a productivity deal being mentioned at an early stage, the Leyland experience was still fresh on their minds and the Ford Stewards policy of discouraging rank-and-file participation in the strike had borne fruit. (In some parts of the combine they have actually issued instructions forbidding non-stewards attending picket duties!).

In the case of both Leyland and Ford, the leading lights are members of the Broad Left. Derek Robinson was one of three choices for the Executive Council election in Division 4, along with John Tocher and Ken Brett. In London, Sid Harroway, was a candidate in the Assistant Divisional Organiser's election.

In other words: Yes, there is a reaction amongst rank and file workers to wage restraint; yes, the people who support the pay policy it *could* be in for a hard time. But *how* that reaction is to come about is both an organisational and a political question. Spontaneous uprisings of the class are a nice idea, but they don't happen all that often.

The last issue of the Engineering Gazette

(Described as a "New paper for rank and file Engineering Workers", is produced by the CP-backed Broad Left. Until recently they supported the *Engineering Voice*. But a dispute over political control and direction with a minority with him. The *Voice* has now gone defunct through lack of a base. Many of its supporters now take the *Charter*.)

admits that: 'During recent years the rank-and-file organisation has steadily dis-integrated. Too many relied on the national

THE CHARTER

PAPER FOR RANK AND FILE MOTOR AND ENGINEERING WORKERS

**Lickspittlin double
dealinstomach
turnindirtycheatin
backstabbinboot
lickinvote
reversin
ever
fiddlin...**



5pence

leadership when it was clear they were not carrying out the policies on which they were elected'.

They go even further: 'Hugh Scanlon, like many before him, came in as a determined radical only to be swallowed up by the establishment machine. Other Left members of the Executive decided not to rock the boat and pinned their hopes on Scanlon. Perhaps they now regret it'. (If Pontius Pilate was still around, he wouldn't have a look-in!)

And John Tocher says: 'There was a period when people thought: "well, we've elected people like Hugh Scanlon, they'll look after it all".'

The question is when that period began (to be covered in a future issue of SR. See also John Deason in *International Socialism* No 79), how much was done to fight it and whether the same mistake will be made in future.

In the *Charter*, under the heading 'Why Duffy Won', we wrote: 'When Lord Bill Carron was in power, the union organisation at shop-floor and district level was strong enough to put up with him. It should have grown even stronger when Scanlon got in. It got worse.

'The legacy he leaves us of a right-wing leadership and a badly weakened organisation at rank and file level is a dangerous one.'

'Only once in his ten years in office did Scanlon call the members out when Courts threatened to seize the Union's funds. In less than four hours the Government caved in. A magnificent victory. But the same thing was never done on wages or conditions, something the members would have supported even more eagerly. And victories on money and hours would have increased the confidence of the membership in their strength--and more support for the "left" in

elections.

'Instead this was stood on it's head. Scanlon's supporters put elections first and the shop-floor second.

'For years the 'left' in the AUEW have pretended they control the "Big Battalions"—just because they could put a resolution through the National Committee, the district committees or the big stewards committees. 'Very good.

'But unless the members support the resolution it means nothing....

'The danger now is that Duffy's victory could be the beginning of a *permanent* right-wing block control of the engineering unions. If the plans of the AUEW and EPTU executives to amalgamate the two unions are successful, it will become inevitable.

'These plans must be fought, and fought hard. Duffy's bad enough. Duffy and Chapple hardly bears thinking about.'

AMALGAMATION-THE DANGER

It is on this point that the real threat from the right comes. As long ago as 1972, in a perceptive article in the *Sunday Times*, Vincent Hanna wrote: 'British Industry faces the prospect of dealing with it's first Super-Union, a two million strong organisation formed by a merger between the Electricians and Engineers'.

'With the merger goes the biggest prize in the Labour scene, for the President of the new super-union would be Europe's top union official, the leader of the world's largest craft organisation. Not surprisingly, there is a powerful struggle going on'.

'In this case the issue comes down to two personalities, Scanlon and Frank Chapple.... (Chapple) now controls *easily* his 14-man executive and has managed to postpone for a year the election of a successor to the EPTU Presidency. Next month he stands for the job himself . . .

'There are no members of the engineering executive with quite the same combination of political flair and brute determination as Chapple. There is a possibility that Chapple could ultimately dominate the super executive with the help of the AUEW right-wing and, with the right publicity, win the presidency and with it the number one position in European Trade Unionism'.

Six years later this prophesy is beginning to look as if it could come true. Chapple, Boyd and Duffy are all keen on the idea. Boyd explains: 'Serious minded activists are now questioning whether our union structure which has served us so well for decades is really adequate to meet the needs and aspirations of our growing membership'.

'Full-time branch secretaries, reconstructed District Committees, more power to our Shop Stewards both locally and nationally, in negotiating the wages and conditions in their particular industry or company, a branches-based rank-and-file policy body, a new approach to union benefits—these all form part of the new challenge facing us, as does the need to clarify and give more impetus and direction to the amalgamation opportunities which are ours.'

The EC's of both unions are agreed to the merger—"in principle".

The industrial correspondent of the *Daily Mail* reported on 16 October: 'Leaders of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

have started voting reforms aimed at creating the largest anti-Communist group in the union movement....

'The reforms discussed by the engineers involve the voting for delegates to the national policy-making committee. At present each of the union's 26 divisions sends two delegates to the committee irrespective of the size of the divisions.

'Moderate leaders of the union would welcome a switch to proportional representation allowing larger divisions to have more delegates. It is admitted that this would place moderates in a far stronger position and smooth the path for a merger with Frank Chapple's fiercely anti-Communist electricians' union'.

The question now is how they are successfully going to carry it with the membership—for there is considerable disquiet even among the right wing in the rank and file about the plans. They would, after all, mean the abolition of the present branch structure, appointment of full-time officials, abolition of district committees in their present form, scrapping of the Final Appeals Court (which has the power to overrule the EC) and a 3 yearly conference instead of annually.

Chapple is aggravated at the AUEW's pussyfooting around and has urged them to 'grasp the nettle'. He carried very similar changes in the EETPU with a combination of ballots of the membership and Court cases. He sees no reason why the AUEW can't do the same. And, although it's true that they probably would win both, there still remains one major impediment—TASS.

It is here that the Communist Party still has a major hold on the union machine—one which they will not readily sacrifice. From the Union's General Secretary, right down to local level they have a network of full-time officials.

But there is one snag—they are all appointed. And through their insistent refusal to subject the present batch to election before the membership they are playing right into Chapple and Boyd's hands—even though the *Engineering Gazette* declares that 'We cannot afford to allow our Right-Wing Executive to sacrifice TASS to suit their own political needs'.

Boyd's reply is simple: 'It's really a pity that TASS are not now willing to agree that their existing full-time officials should be subject to a ballot vote of their own members. As one who has stood in more elections than any other full-time official in our union I can testify that nothing brings greater satisfaction, confidence, independence and inspiration than to know you have submitted your work to the tribunal of your own membership and have received their endorsement of your stewardship. This is real security.'

A rather embarrassing retort for those who claim, as Halverson does, that 'The keynote for progressives must be support for any amendments to rule which will encourage membership participation and the extension of democracy. Trade union democracy means accountability to the membership and a readiness to consult them when in doubt or difficulty.'

A great deal hinges on whether TASS, by maintaining their present position, can stay as part of the present amalgamation. If not,

they will undoubtedly be ditched—and the door will be open for the new plans to go ahead.

The effect of this would be shattering on two levels. Amongst the rank and file, the kind of treatment dished out to the SU Bathgate strikers would become commonplace.

At national level there would be a new concentration of right-wing power—one to rival the T&GWU, the 'whirlpool' which Chapple claims all are liable to be sucked in to. And one which could also fill the vacuum on the TUC General Council in the wake of Scanlon and Jones' departure. Moss Evans is aware of the threat, as his rapid support for the Ford Strike and Council Workers shows he has the membership but still needs to establish his own credibility.

Hopefully John Tocher's prediction will prove correct: 'The moment the right start altering the union rules to waken internal democracy, the rank and file will re-assert itself. Undemocratic changes will bring about a reaction.'

But that reaction, as with the wages struggle, must be harnessed. If as the *Gazette* claims: 'The Broad Left now need all the help it can get. We should be considering burying old hatchets' the amalgamation issue gives us the opportunity. A campaign has already been launched which has attracted good support from both EETPU and AUEW members at local meetings. Nationally, a policy statement has been signed by activists of all political persuasions and a National Co-ordinating team, open to all signatories, has been set up to take the arguments into the factories. If this can be developed it could lay the basis for further 'co-operation' on the left in the AUEW.

The Broad Left, the *Charter and anybody* else do not have a monopoly of support or ideas. In many parts of the country there are active and 'independent' groups of AUEW militants at district level organising strike support and other interventions.

Within industries like the railways and the steel there has been a mushrooming of rank and file organisation with little or no influence at all from the 'established' rank and file organisations. We must find ways of relating to them and bringing them together. We must find ways of relating to them and bringing them together.

In Bob Wright's own words: 'Now it seems to me that we must develop movements like the Anti-Nazi League—the tremendous upsurge and response that has come, as a result of the challenge there, from mainly young people.

'We're academic about how we approach the issues and we don't talk the language of ordinary working people. We've got to get out of the idea of talking down to them and we've got to talk with them. That's what I think's wrong with the left.'

On the day that the Dockers marched in London in support of Enoch Powell the *Morning Star* trumpeted: '1,000,000 engineers speak out against racism'. What they meant was that the AUEW had passed a resolution condemning his speech.

Unless we stop kidding ourselves and got down to the job of bringing as many around us as possible, shop stewards or not, and fighting on clear specific aims rather than vague 'progressive' policies, the future will indeed be grim for engineers.

Wilfred Owen

POETRY WAR & PITY

It's sixty years this month since the death of the poet Wilfred Owen, the close of the First World War, and the structuring of the world we still inhabit.

Owen was killed a week before the Armistice stopped the war. As the smoke drifted clear and the soldiers went home to the dole, a new, appalling but in some ways hopeful world emerged. Ten million dead, seven million missing and twenty-one million wounded marked the end of smug liberalism, of an unthinking faith in orderly progress. The smashed bodies scattered across Europe continue to haunt the memory.

They are still there, not just in the fact of the Somme veteran whose ulcerated leg wound my wife is bandaging as I type this article nor just in the sense that every year in Flanders even now farmers stumble across ten or a dozen of those missing seven million. They are still there not just in the way that the names of Mons, Ypres and Passchendaele remain full of echoes that disturb but in the sense that they same system that brought the First World War is still poised, now with more deadly weapons,

prepared to do it all again if its interests dictate.

And yet at the same time at the other end of Europe, in Russia in 1917, there appeared other possibilities, other alternatives, as the Bolsheviks swept to power.

Wilfred Owen's road to this shambles began at Oswestry, where he was born in 1893. His early politics seem to have come from his father, a railway clerk later promoted to the post of Assistant Superintendent at Shrewsbury Station. Hence one of Wilfred's schoolboy essays, 'The Imagined Effects on the Country of a Strike among Railway Workers', takes a dim view of union militancy.

From his pious mother, daughter of a wealthy former mayor of Oswestry, Owen derived his religiosity, so that one of his first jobs after leaving school was to work as lay assistant to the Vicar of Dunsden in Oxfordshire from 1911-13.

Here, away for the first time from the shelter of his home and in close contact with farm labourers and their families, Owen was forced to begin rebuilding his view of the world. By 1912 he was writing:

DISABLED

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey.
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasures after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lanterns budded in the light blue trees,
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim, —
In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands;
All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.
Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,
Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

One time he liked a blood-smeared down his leg,
After the matches, carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought he'd better join. — He wonders why.
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts,
That's why; and may be, too, to please his Meg;
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts
He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;

Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years,
Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt,
And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears
Of fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole.
To-night he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

'I am increasingly liberalizing and liberating my thought, spite of the Vicar's strong Conservatism... From what I hear straight from the tight-pursed lips of wolfish ploughmen in their cottages, I might say there is material for another revolution. Perhaps men will strike, not with absence from work; but with arms at work. Am I for or against upheaval? I know not.'

But the final rupture with the values of his childhood was yet to come. When war broke out in 1914, he was teaching English in Bordeaux and wrote home to his brother Colin with the thoughtless enthusiasm of so many young men that summer: 'I have almost a mania to be in the East, to see fighting, and to serve. For I like to think this is the last War of the World.'

One of his first poems after the war started is 'The Ballad of Purchase-Money', where the usual rhymes precisely match the dismal ideas:

'O meet it is and passing sweet
To live in peace with others,
But sweeter still and far more meet
To die in war for brothers'

So it was that two years later, Owen, a newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, completed his training back in England and set out for the Somme front with the Fifth Manchesters, his head full of the jingoism of the press and the soft, noble lies of poets like Alfred Austin, Henry Newbolt and Rupert Brooke. At first, he wrote home cheerily to his mother: 'There is a fine heroic feeling about being in France and I am in perfect spirits'.

But the Somme changed all that. The battle had started six months before Owen arrived and the first day, 1 July 1916, brought butchery unimaginable. Infantrymen were ordered to walk towards German trenches which contained about a thousand machine gun posts. By midnight, 21,392 lay dead and 35,493 were wounded—losses in less than fifteen hours that add up to more than all British casualties in the Crimean War, the Boer War and the Korean War put together.

On 12 January 1917, Owen led his platoon up to the Front for the first time at a place



SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

called Beaumont Hamel. Here they came under sustained fire. A sentry fell blinded at Owen's feet, 'eyeballs huge-bulged like squids'. All around him men 'bled and spewed and ... drowned' as the sentry chattered madly through broken teeth.

The scales didn't just fall from Owen's eyes, they were blasted away by that experience. Within a week he was writing home: 'The people of England needn't hope. They must agitate. But they are not yet agitated even'.

Within six months he was home himself, invalidated out with a mixture of shell-shock and trench fever. During the long process of recovery he struggled to come to terms with what he'd seen in a series of poems.

'Disabled', written in October 1917 at Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh, is one of the best of these.

In it he describes the thoughts of a young Scot, both legs and an arm blown off, waiting in a wheelchair for nurses to come and put him to bed. In feeling his way into the horror of this situation, Owen's homosexuality is both a help and a hindrance. A help in that it lets him identify with and re-create the crippled boy's sense of sexual rejection by 'normal', healthy society:

'Now he will never feel again how slim Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands;
All of them touch him like some queer disease'.

But Owen's homosexuality was of the kind that had him complacently writing to his mother: 'All women, without exception, annoy me', and that attitude comes through and hinders to poem. Those really responsible for the boy's position largely escape his rage, which falls in part on the women who encouraged him to enlist and in part on the nurses on whom he is now humiliatingly dependent but who turn from him with aversion:

'To-night he noticed how the women's eyes Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come And put him into bed? Why don't they come?'

By August 1918, Owen had recovered

SMILE, SMILE, SMILE

Head to limp head, the sunk-eyed wounded scanned
Yesterday's *Mail*; the casualties (typed small)
And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul.
Also, they read of Cheap Homes, not yet planned
For, said the paper, "When this war is done
The men's first instinct will be making homes.
Meanwhile their foremost need is aerodromes,
It being certain war has but begun.
Peace would do wrong to our undying dead, —
The sons we offered might regret they died
If we got nothing lasting in their stead.
We must be solidly indemnified.
Though all be worthy Victory which all bought,
We rulers sitting in this ancient spot
Would wrong our very selves if we forgot
The greatest glory will be theirs who fought,
Who kept this nation in integrity."
Nation?—The half-limbed readers did not chafe
But smiled at one another curiously
Like secret men who know their secret safe.
(This is the thing they know and never speak,
That England one by one had fled to France,
Not many elsewhere now save under France.)
Pictures of these broad smiles appear each week,
And people in whose voice real feeling rings
Say: How they smile! They're happy now, poor things.

23rd September 1918.

physically and was posted back to France. He remarked to his brother Harold: 'I know I shall be killed. But it is the only place that I can make my protest from'. In those last weeks before his death, Owen broke through to new dimensions of power and awareness in the handful of poems (such as 'Strange Meeting', 'The Sentry' and 'Spring Offensive') that he had time so write.

'Smile, Smile, Smile', dated September 23rd 1918, is one of these last poems and describes a group of wounded soldiers reading a piece of drivel from the *Daily Mail* with 'The casualties (typed small) And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul'.

The day before writing the poem, Owen had insisted in a letter to Siegfried Sassoon: 'I don't want to write anything to which a soldier would say *No Compris*'.

So it is that here Owen pushes the poem as close as possible to everyday language and experience: quotes from *Daily Mail* headlines, from Minister of Labour George Roberts and from popular songs. The title is lifted from 'Pack up your Troubles in your old Kit Bag.'

What is even more impressive is the way that the poem sees and makes links between the wounds of the soldiers and the lies of the *Daily Mail* and the politicians. Gone is the narrow if powerful self-pity of 'Disabled' and instead effortless political analysis lets all the poem's anger focus down on 'We rulers sitting in this ancient spot' droning on about 'this nation' — a term that simultaneously embraces the soldiers and tries to exploit them, as they spot at once.

Six weeks later Owen, still only 25, was killed by a sniper as he led a platoon across the Sambre and Oise Canal. Among his papers they found a hastily drafted Preface to the volume of poems he never published. It read in part:

'Above all I am not concerned with Poetry.
My subject is War, and the pity of War.
The Poetry is in the pity.
Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory.
They may be to the next. All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful.'

Paul O'Flinn



Over the past year newspaper bosses and trade union leaders alike have bemoaned the 'anarchy' of Fleet Street. To quote Owen O'Brien, general secretary of NAITSOA: 'One cause for grave anxiety is the mayhem in Fleet Street. Hardly a week goes by without some stoppage....' Is there anarchy and mayhem?

The short answer is no, there isn't. But there have been disputes. The extent of them has been grossly exaggerated, especially by the device of measuring disputes by the number of lost copies. In this way a couple of hours lost production becomes 'millions of copies lost' in the newspaper headlines. However this pinpoints an extremely important difference between Fleet Street and other areas of industry: the enormous power which workers have enjoyed in the print.

For papers like the *Sun* and the *Mirror*, a night's lost production is a very serious matter in the competition for circulation and thus advertising revenue. It is this power which has made Fleet Street printers highly paid and militant. And it is precisely this strength which the bosses are now out to destroy. That is the reality of the anarchy in Fleet Street. It is a massive employers' offensive against jobs, conditions and union organisation at the shop floor level.

The disputes which have occurred in the last year have, almost without exception, been defensive battles in response to provocation by the bosses. The month-long stoppage at the *Financial Times* in August 1977 began when the management broke an agreement on working practices which had been in operation for more than two years. They followed this up by demanding new procedures for setting disputes, and guarantees of continuous production, aimed at reducing the power of the chapels in favour of the full-time officials.

The dispute at the *Times* began over such a simple matter as a demand for more cleaning staff to clean the filthy machine rooms.

At the *Observer* the NGA were asking for a restoration of manning levels, which were cut when the paper was in financial difficulties. At that time a promise was given by the management that the losses would be replaced when the paper returned to profitability. An attempt to make good that promise this year resulted in an ultimatum that the *Observer* would be closed if normal working was not resumed and maintained. The national officials of the NGA went so far as to try to arrange scabbing on their own members.

In every case the bosses have pressed their advantage in getting all kinds of clauses in the agreements which bind the membership as much as possible in future and limited the possibilities of independent rank-and-file

Fleet Street & the new technology

action. The only exceptions have been the NUJ disputes at the *Sun* and *Mirror*. The management's attitude to the NUJ is different: for ideological reasons they are very anxious to keep the journalists on their side and have therefore been willing to buy them off.

In the employers' offensive the trade union leaders have been willing accomplices of the bosses. Nearly all the disputes have been unofficial. The leadership share the bosses' objective of removing as much power as possible from the chapels and vesting it in themselves. The ill-fated Programme for Action shows that very clearly in its proposal that disputes be settled by Joint House Committees which would include full-time officials. No dispute was to be left in the hands of the chapels.

The Programme for Action was a joint management-national unions' recommended set of proposals on the future of the print which was rejected to that rejection in an attempt to introduce those proposals piecemeal, chapel by chapel. (The bosses have also helped the union officials out by their representations of the outcome of disputes as 'reasonable settlements', rather than management victories, in the papers).

What has all this to do with the New Technology which is always being referred to? Why do the bosses want new technology?

Firstly, it is important to realise that the reason the bosses want new technology isn't very much to do with anything technical. They want it to make more profits. Those profits will not be made because there is anything inherently more efficient about new technology but because it can be used in such a way as to make people work harder. It can be introduced so as to destroy existing work practices and weaken fundamentally union organisation.

At the moment the bosses are in no particular hurry to introduce new machinery. At this stage old technology still produces a better quality newspaper faster. The only place where linotype machines have yet been replaced in Fleet Street is at *Reveille*, which is a weekly and therefore doesn't have to worry about deadlines as much and where Mirror Group Newspapers can give some experience in the problems of the technology without too much costly investment. Of course, sooner or later the technology will come as 30 per cent per year—two very good reasons to wait before bringing it in.

An example of how little hurry the management is in is shown by the fact that the *Express* have just completely re-equipped with new 'old' technology presses.

So the real issue isn't technology but breaking the power of the rank and file. The bosses' offensive is designed to create the conditions where the new machinery can be

What is 'new technology?'

Computer typesetting and editing. Eliminates the need for skilled compositors.

Information storage and retrieval systems. Once an item is typed, it need never be retyped.

Word processors. Eliminates secretarial jobs and deskills typing.

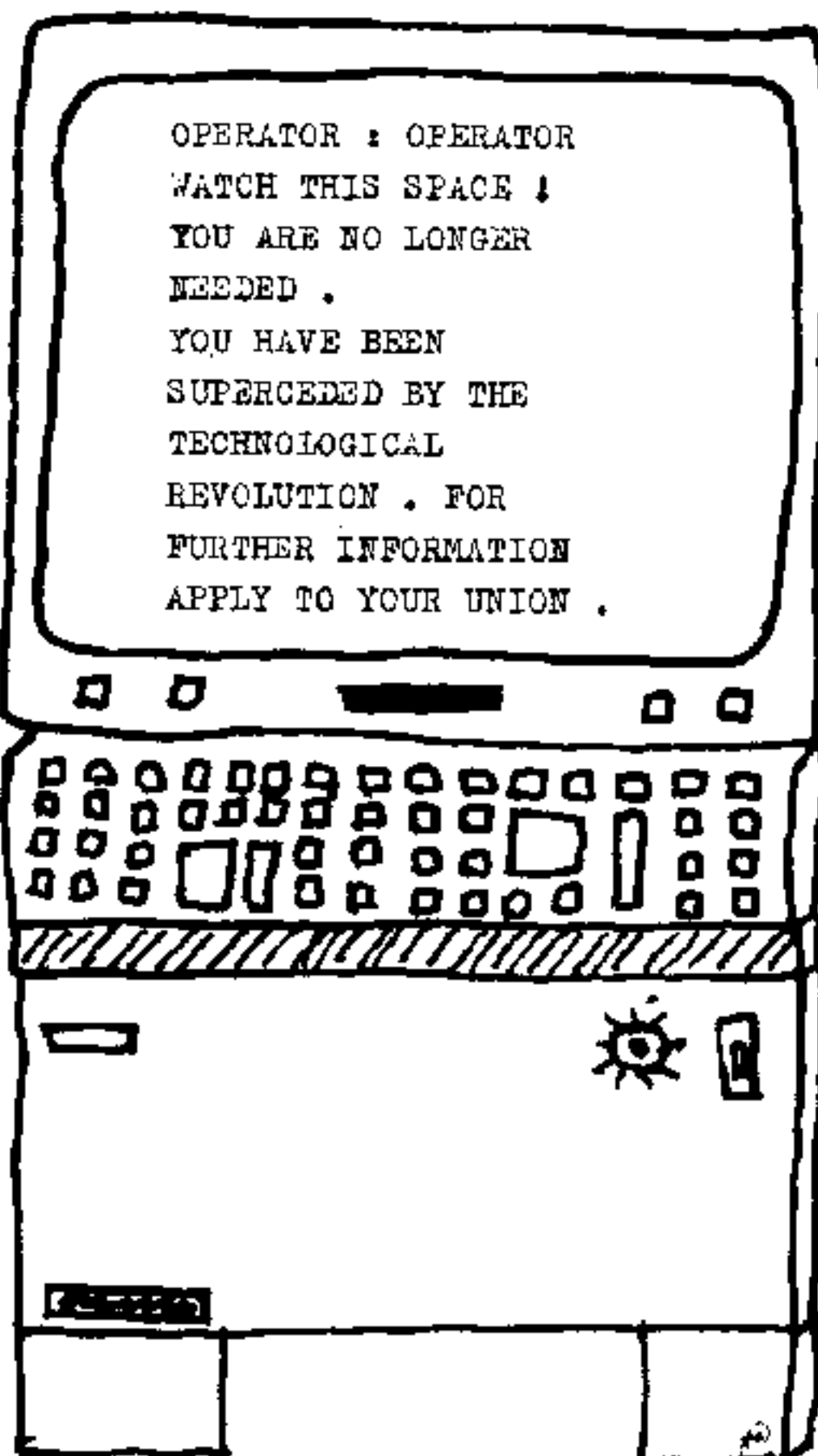
Computers not 'new' technology, but will be increasingly used especially in accounts and wages departments.

Databases will also affect libraries.

brought in in a way which will mean greater profits. Machines by themselves neither destroy jobs, nor make people work harder: not a single job need be lost in the print and new machinery could be used to take a lot of the drudgery out of the work.

It is worth pointing out amid all the talk of 'overmanning' and 'lazy printers' that the job is dirty and unpleasant, involves permanent night work and has a number of health hazards associated with it, including a lung disease caused by inhaling ink vapour. Needless to say, if the bosses introduce new technology their way it will result in a massive loss of jobs, a cheapening of labour, and health risks resulting from the intensification of work.

Technology will be used as the excuse for this. To see what a bogus argument it is it is



only necessary to refer to the Royal Commission on the Press which states that the majority of redundancies 'caused' by new technology will be in the machine rooms—the area which is completely unaffected technically by the new processes, but where the bosses want to cut jobs. But if it is all so bogus, how will they get away with it? Basically, because of the profitability argument 'our competitors will introduce it and we can't afford to be left behind.'

A second reason is the disunity of the unions in the print and the hostility between them which could allow the bosses to play one union off against another. For example NATSOPA will be wooed by the bosses into stealing NGA typesetting jobs on the new video typesetting machines for an increase in NATSOPA rates, but till a great cut on NGA rates.

Job losses will also be disguised in the following way: visual display units and word processors can make people work harder almost without them realising it: because they involve the performance of one task intensively, eliminating unnecessary movements such as taking pieces of paper from one place to another, correcting errors manually and so on. Natural breaks in work and therefore time to unwind, are cut out. Health is damaged as a result of intense concentration and a heavier work load absorbed by the same workforce. Particularly in jobs, but much more work being done by each person.

Looked at globally, this type of new machinery is intended to bring the production line into the office. As the proportion of labour employed in factory production falls, so the offensive is shifted to the white collar workforce, and possibly at a later stage to the one area of production—that of information selection and evaluation—which no-one can yet see how to automate.

How can we fight this offensive? Ultimately, we have to put the full socialist case: we don't care about the bosses' profits, we intend to fight to maintain all our jobs and our standard of living. That means demanding a shorter working week, more holidays, frequent breaks in the job to reduce strain, control by the rank and file over conditions and work practices.

To fight the employers' offensive requires an end to inter-union squabbling. We have to fight for one union in the print, but for unity to be built from below, not through horde-trading among the officials for the best full time jobs while they sell ours. We have to face up to the fact that our demands cannot be absorbed by the less profitable papers, and we must be prepared to say 'too bad' and then demand the nationalisation of those papers under workers' control. *Two Fleet Street print workers.*

1978 must be a very bleak year to be a Maoist. China is praised by Margaret Thatcher while being denounced by the Albanian Party of Labour, hitherto its most loyal admirer. Chairman Hua has not only visited the long-reviled revisionist Tito, but has shaken the blood-stained hands of the Shah of Iran. Meanwhile at home the last remnants of the Cultural Revolution are being mopped up; in an operation cynically

Things were not always so. Back in the late 1960s the Cultural Revolution was putting millions of people on to the streets (It wasn't always clear what they were on the streets for, but they were certainly there). In a Britain faced with the familiar combination of an impotent and rightward-moving Labour Government and a temporarily dormant working class, China looked like a beacon of revolutionary hope.

Slogans like 'Getting rid of the stale and taking in the fresh' were an inspiration to thousands of youth and students in Western Europe who occupied the Colleges and marched against the Vietnam war.

At the time the International Socialists (predecessors of the Socialist Workers Party) took quite a lot of criticism for their failure to share in the general euphoria about China. We were accused of 'economism' (only being interested in narrow trade-union issues) and of expecting the rest of the world to wait for the workers of Europe to wake up. (One critic went so far as to suggest we change our name to 'national socialists' because of our failure to recognise the Chinese achievement).

As it happened we were right, as ten years of fading illusions from Chinese support for American foreign policy to the gaoling of those who originally inspired the Cultural Revolution—have shown. In itself, this is nothing to crow about. If China had been the socialist paradise and the storm centre of world revolution, then we should all have been a lot better off than we are today. And being right wins no prizes for revolutionaries: there are so many sell-outs around that predicting them isn't exactly difficult.

There would be little credit, say, in having predicted Jack Jones' capitulation five years before everyone else—unless that prediction was linked to the building of independent organisation that could fight the sell-out.

What does matter is what went wrong and why. I have enormous sympathy with those who are bored to the teeth with the debate about whether Russia /China /Albania /Outer Mongolia is state capitalist or a degenerated workers' state. Few discussions have produced more metaphysical hair-splitting and historical trivia. But the debate cannot be evaded, for it concerns our very goal and purpose—socialism.

I recall a heated argument with an Egyptian comrade about whether or not socialism existed in his country. Finally he declared: 'It all depends on what you mean by socialism'. He was right, of course. When we ask 'Is China socialist?' the important question is

described by *Economist* (9 September) as 'Bullock-in-reverse' the revolutionary committees established in the heady days of 1968 are being dissolved into new management committees.



not about China, but about socialism. And if socialism is all about the self-emancipation of the working-class, and the democratic control of society by those who actually do the work, then China is not, and was never under Mao on the road to socialism.

The Chinese working class played little or no part in the Revolution of 1949. The Chinese Communist Party had a very small worker membership (less than 2 per cent) and the military defeat of the Kuomintang took place essentially in the countryside. As the People's Liberation Army approached the great Southern cities, a proclamation was issued stating 'it is hoped that workers and employees in all trades will continue to work and that business will operate as usual.'

In general the Chinese working class was very ill-organised at this time; the trade union movement hardly existed as a result of repression by the Kuomintang and the Japanese occupying forces. None the less many workers were encouraged by Mao's victory into taking strike action; the role of the Communist Party was to get them back to work as quickly as possible.

Why this obsession with the industrial working class? China, after all, is an

agricultural country and the vast mass of the population are peasants. True the Chinese working class was only a small part of the population, but this was true also of Russia in 1917, and there the working-class lead was decisive. Moreover, the Chinese working class had waged in the 1920s a series of epic struggles for their self-emancipation.

The Maoist strategy of peasant revolution was a response to the defeat of these struggles. Furthermore, the Chinese Communist Party was not based on the mass involvement of poor peasants; over the years it had changed its line on land reform, and zigzagged between rich and poor peasants.

Traditionally Marxists have argued that working class is the agent of socialism because in its experience of collective production it discovers the need for collective solutions to society's problems. Every battle by workers, from the smallest picket line to the greatest strike, can be fought and won collectively or not at all. Land can be divided into individual plots, but a factory can only be collectively appropriated.

So if the workers are not the subject of the revolution, whatever collectivisation (nationalisation, etc) takes place will be

faded dream

geared to the interests of the minority which ends up controlling the state rather than to the emancipation of those who actually work.

So if we look at what happened to Chinese workers after the Revolution of 1949 we shall not be surprised to find that it was productivity rather than workers' rights which dominated. The right to strike was replaced by compulsory arbitration, backed up by a labour code dealing with absenteeism, lateness, poor workmanship etc. Every worker had to carry a labour-book containing his previous record. Piecework—a traditional capitalist method of maximising exploitation—became widespread. Output norms were raised and emulation drives organised.

The Chinese Communist leaders explicitly denied that China was ruled by the dictatorship of the proletariat; the country was said to be in the power of a class alliance. Yet at the same time they denied the need for autonomous organisation by workers. The trade unions were defined as having the following purpose:

"To strengthen the unity of the working class, to consolidate the alliance of workers and peasants, to educate workers to observe consciously the laws and decrees of the State, and labour discipline, to strive for the development of production, for the constant increase in labour productivity, for the fulfilment and overfulfilment of the production plans of the State."

Behind the rhetoric China remains a deeply unequal society. The Cultural Revolution led to a shake-up among those in positions of authority—that was what it was all about. But it did not lead to any radical change in the relation between classes in Chinese society. Power remained in the hands of a small bureaucratic elite, and as a result the fundamental inequalities between town and city dwellers, between workers and managers, between skilled and unskilled workers—persisted.

A German journalist who visited a

Commune after the Cultural Revolution recounts:

"There are ten categories of payment. A strong man at the height of his power is in the first category, which means he gets ten points for every working day, no matter how much work he actually does. An unmarried woman gets seven; a married woman who has to care for her family gets six and a half."

When he questioned this he was told: "But a married woman devotes much of her working energy to her family.... Those are individual chores. Should the collective have to pay for work not done in the service of the collective?" (K. Mehnert, *China Today*, London 1972, pp 52-3)

The fact of big differentials between living standards in town and country accounts for the desire of many Chinese country-dwellers (despite the myths of the revolutionary peasantry and the Communes) to move into the towns. The regime cannot permit this, so 'socialist' China imposes its own immigration controls with strict police supervision to prevent unauthorised persons entering the cities.

A society based on inequality and population control cannot be a democratic one. There is not, and has never been, any Chinese equivalent to the soviets or workers' councils that flourished all too briefly in Russia after the Revolution. The facade of mass participation during the Cultural Revolution disguised the fact that there were no structures for taking effective concrete decisions about how production was organised. Indeed, in 1967 the All-China Trade Union Federation was simply dissolved—hardly an indication of the viability or autonomy of that body.

The Chinese workers and peasants have no say in the real decisions about the society they live in. Top party leaders are purged and disgraced; Lin Piao—named in the draft Party constitution as Mao's successor—was accused after his death of plotting against Mao. Similar accusations were heaped on the 'gang of four'.

Now in any workers' state there could be disputes among political leaders, and even the necessity to remove some leaders. But this would be done politically, with the differences argued openly and publicly, not with grotesque accusations that reveal the Party bosses' contempt for the masses. Likewise, the Chinese masses were never consulted as to whether they wanted to support the crushing of a left-wing rising in Ceylon, or to welcome Richard Nixon while the bombs were falling on Vietnam.

Many sympathisers with China will admit these points, and yet claim that the Chinese leaders are doing the best they can, given the backward state they started from. Certainly the Chinese economy faces terrible problems, and the responsibility lies fairly and squarely with the imperialist powers—including Britain—who plundered China in the past.

The Chinese Communist Party can take credit for an impressive effort in the direction of modernisation and industrialisation. But this effort can be compared to that of those capitalists who industrialised Europe in the nineteenth century—a historic achievement, but nothing to do with socialism.

As revolutionary socialists in Britain we do not hesitate to demand equal pay for women and an end to immigration controls. To accept that something less is good enough for our brothers and sisters in China is—however unconscious it may be—an acceptance of the logic of imperialism, a willingness to concede that the third-rate is good enough for The Third World. But there is no Third World—there is one world system, and it is rotten ripe for socialism. Together, we and the workers of China can achieve it; a precondition is to rid ourselves of illusions. *Ian Birchill*

Those interested in pursuing the arguments in this article further should read Nigel Harris's new book *The Mandate of Heaven Quartet* £3.00, a Bookmarx Club choice.



Continuing the series
of articles on the women's movement . . .
First Sheila Rowbotham, then Lindsey German,
and this time some women
from the Socialist Feminist current.

ILLUS

Lindsey German's article 'Women and Class' in *Socialist Review* No. 5 (September 1978), in replying to Sheila Rowbotham's interview in issue No.3 (June 1978), raises a number of important questions about the future organisation and practice of both left groups and the socialist feminist current in the womens movement.

They are interesting because they are perceived in such a way as to indicate the writer's total acceptance *not* of Leninism as a historical precedent for left-wing organisational forms today *but* Leninism as interpreted conveniently by most of the existing left groups to justify anything and everything they do or are said to be doing. Where Sheila's interview looked towards new concepts of organisation Lindsay German merely repeats old slogans incorrectly.

Sheila herself would be the first to admit that hers was a personal interview and that she is not spokeswoman for all socialist feminists, whereas Lindsey German sees every grouping in terms of leaders and the led, which leads her to attack all socialist feminists in attacking Sheila.

We think it is time 'Leninism' was historically replaced *not* contemporaneously hurled around arbitrarily as part of an argument. So in replying to Lindsay German's article first of all we would like to deal with her analysis of Leninism and 'centralism' and then go on to look at other inaccuracies she writes about in relation to the SWP and the socialist feminist current.

There are two things to be said about Lenin's notions of democratic centralism. When he referred to organisational forms in *What is to be Done* it was in 1901/2, at a time of extreme Tsarist repression, when revolutionaries were being arrested and rounded up. His consequent recommendations were that the revolutionary organisation, through necessity, required a strong centralised body in order to connect the wide-spread threatened groupings under attack:

'...even in the event of a very serious round

up, *two or three* energetic persons could in the course of a few weeks establish contact between the *common centre* and new youth circles, which as we know spring up very quickly. And when the common activity, hampered by the arrests, is apparent to all, new circles will be able to come into being and make connections with *the centre* even more rapidly'.

That was a particular historical period in which he was writing. When he wrote *State and Revolution*, in 1917/8 the times had changed, it was the eve of revolution and a period containing a greater degree of optimism. In describing the nature of democracy Lenin explicitly shows how it is the bourgeois concept of democracy which links it with bureaucracy. In arguing with Kautsky he says:

'...Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (not for the people) with bureaucracy (against the people), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to introduction of complete democracy for the people.'

When talking about Leninism it is absolutely necessary to be clear what epoch we're talking about and not merely justify present forms of party organisation by convenient labels such as 'democratic centralism'. Lenin was concerned with the complicated tension between genuine socialist notions of democracy and central control, and how this could be practicable within socialist organisations.

The point of quoting Lenin is not one-up-personship but to show how complicated political organisational forms are. Marx at

Liz Mackie

Feminism WITHOUT ORGANISATIONS

one point indicated that the early Workers Associations were attempting to organise new forms of social relations which transcended those of the utilitarian capitalist society outside their organisations. Lenin was similarly applying Marxism to the particular epoch in which he was politically active and the particular internal problems his Party was facing.

Lindsey German characterises Sheila Rowbotham as merely throwing utopian notions of spontaneism, whilst herself saying democratic centralism is the answer. To her democratic centralism merely means 'sticking to decisions made' through discussion.

This is politically and historically incorrect and the way she describes it throws no light on the problems Sheila was attempting to approach, and the new way Sheila was attempting to perceive social relations within organisational structures. Lindsey German accuses Sheila of not saying exactly what she means by 'Non-Leninist' forms of practice, when, as yet, there is no complete answer.

A great deal of us who consider ourselves part of the socialist feminist current have been grappling with questions relating to organisation, within or without the left groups. Many of us have been, at some time in our lives, in left groups for years and some of us were socialists before we were feminists!

We are now *feeling* towards a balance between the spontaneism of the womens movement (which arose again for particular historical and political reasons relating to the nature of the 1960's and the nature of womens oppression, and has no pretensions of being a revolutionary left organisation), and the old *bourgeois* centralist hierarchies we've experienced and have witnessed in left groups.

Lindsey German falls into her own trap when she says her own organisation (the SWP) has '*led* dozens of other issues and campaigns which aren't simply economic or based on the point of production: anti-racism, black community work, housing, abortion, students, agitprop, gay liberation'. The SWP was still arguing whether gays were oppressed in 1976 after many gay organisations had sprung up including Gay Left, the abortion campaign was started with no help from SWP, apart from their opportunistic year or two year stint trying to swing it their way, and in relation to the socialist feminist current WARF (Women against Racism and Fascism) was in existence nearly a year and a half before Women against the Nazis was even thought about.

She's right: the SWP have made head-way on issues wider than purely at the point of production, since 1972. But they certainly haven't *led* them.

There have been many good things the SWP, *Womens Voice* and the left groups in general have done. But this article stinks not only of arrogance but mis-informed arrogance at that.

Before going on to look at the positive aspects of socialist feminism, we must mention one further historical inaccuracy, Lindsey German, at the end of her article, refers to the Suffragettes and says: 'The Suffragette movement and its leaders moved away from any socialist ideas they may once have had. The greater the crisis in the outside world grew, with the strikes and lock-outs of 1911-13, the more the suffragettes retreated into individual acts of terrorism and a rejection of the mass struggle.'

'Symptomatic of this was the expulsion of Sylvia Pankhurst precisely for having an orientation on the East London working class. The logical conclusion was in 1914 when the suffragette movement gave full backing to the imperialist war'.

She thus denies the struggles of Sylvia Pankhurst, as a socialist feminist, whose organising along with other East End women formed the East London Federation in 1914 and continued through to 1918, when it became the Workers Suffrage Federation. Both organisations organised vast mass

meetings against the war and many of their members were arrested for their activities.

Many, many women were involved in this campaign, as a result of having first been suffragettes. Sylvia Pankhurst was involved in the negotiations leading to the formation of the Communist Party in 1920 and up to that point in time, she never lost either her basic feminist consciousness or her socialist principles.

It's all very well to just look at the right-wing developments of the Suffragettes to prove that the womens movement today will also be prey to reformist or right wing policies, but male historians and socialists have been for years denying any progressive or socialist history to women, in order to substantiate their own political superiority. Lindsey German denies women's history with that self-same male arrogance to score points on incorrect evidence.

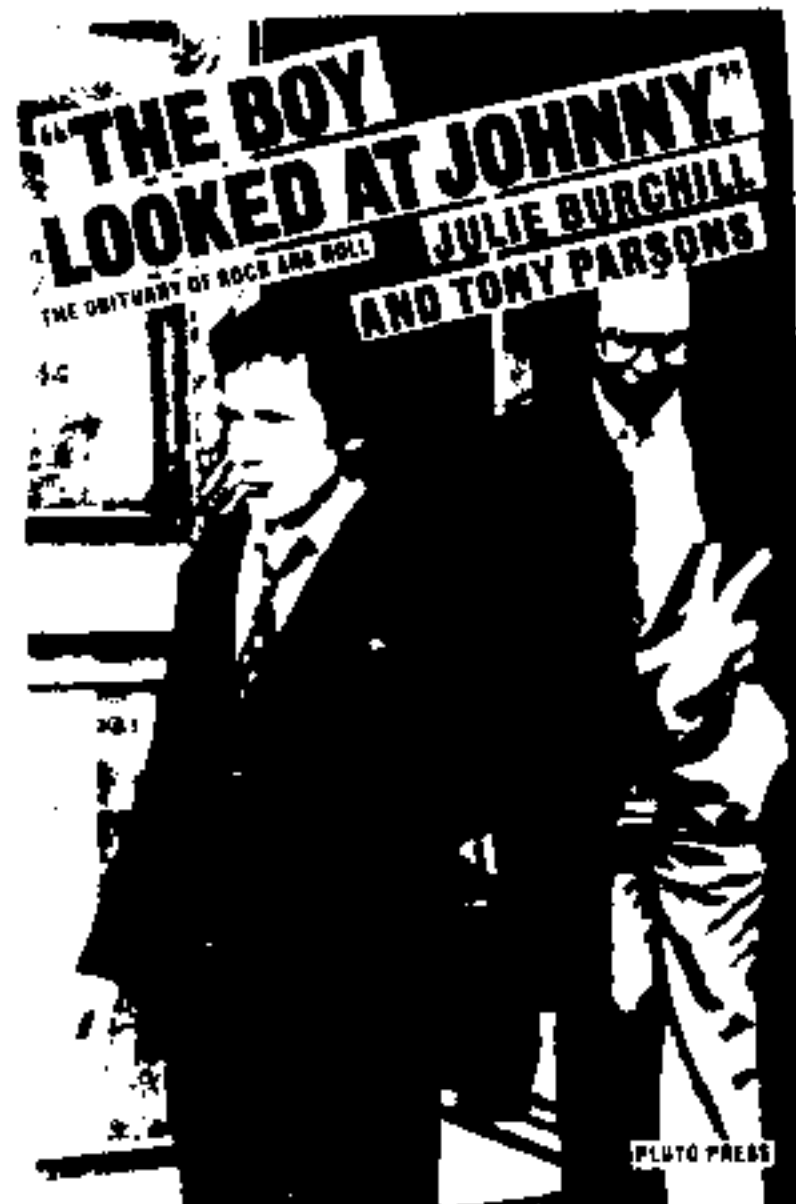
But apart from approaching her whole analysis from an incorrect perception of history, she characterises the womens movement incorrectly right from the first sentence where she mentions 'womens movements which have sprung up in the last ten years'. There is only *one* womens movement internationally, which combines both our unity and our great variety of ideas.

It is purely economic for her also to explain the rise of the womens movement in terms of 'the expansion of the work-force'. It was much more as a result of the students movement and the complicated ideological content of the 1960s in general that the womens movement arose, not purely 'the expansion of the work-force'.

Running through her whole article is an intimation that somehow revolutionary ideas, socialist ideas are merely fought for and won, people are 'recruited' to socialist ideas. Socialist feminists have been discussing their ideas within the womens movement and outside it for a long time, we aren't just passive feminists who sit back and accept 'reformist ideas' as Lindsey German seems to think, herself obviously having taken little or no part in the women's movement.

But we certainly don't see changing people's ideas as a battle but a slow process, one which is complicated and difficult because of the nature of the society we live in. Lindsey German's assumptions about socialist feminists are based on her misconception that ideology is perpetrated from the top, and that to 'win' people to socialism merely requires 'fighting' from the bottom against that ideology.

She has no way of conceiving of the complex inter-relationship between mode of



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Nigel Harris, now a teacher at the University of London, has spent nearly twelve years writing about and travelling in Asia. He is a speaker at many meetings organised by the Socialist Workers Party.

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production and ideology, and for her there is no such thing as patriarchy or womens oppression as a form of male control over reproduction (for her there is only capitalist control over women at the point of production). This is palpably obvious even when she talks about the 'working class' itself.

In wishing us to recognise that 'only the working class has the organisation, the traditions to change society permanently' she doesn't take into account the fundamental sexism, racism, chauvinism in (terms of Ireland) that is within the working class, which destroys the revolutionary power of that class.

She says the SWP has been actively involved in other issues than merely economic ones, such as housing and abortion, which is true, but nowhere in her article does she make it clear how an analysis of womens oppression is incorporated into her (or the SWP's) analysis, or the way in which they fight round these issues. What it boils down to is recruiting as many women and as fast as possible into *Women's Voice* groups.

This brings us to another fundamental point. Lindsey German refer to: 'The most serious criticism of the women's movement, including the socialist feminists. It is all very well to declare oneself a socialist...It is quite another to organise as a socialist. The failing of the whole of the socialist wing of the womens movement has been its inability to map out any way of seriously beginning to organise women...there is no concerted effort to reach women in the estates; there is no attempt to organise women in the unions at a rank-and-file level.'

Yet she admits that *Women's Voice* mostly consists of white-collar or student women. It is and always has been very difficult for women on estates, and in the unions to be involved in politics. This is a problem we should all agree on and not quibble about. There is a very real reason why this is the case and that lies in the whole way women's lives, and especially working-class women's lives, are dominated by reproduction, domesticity and all the other accompanying problems of the dual role.

It would be much better for socialist feminists and women in left groups who do see the necessity for going outwards towards women on the estates etc, to discuss new ways of relating to women and not merely score points as to how many have 'joined'.

The socialist feminist current has existed for at least five years and was destroyed by SWP and IMG women disrupting the Mile End Conference. It then re-emerged a few years ago for various reasons. Some women were fed up with left groups whilst recognising the autonomy of the womens movement.

Lindsey German misses the point in asserting that the crisis has forced feminists to look to a socialist solution in their struggles around nurseries, contraception, abortion etc.

More significantly the ruling class has turned to the sexist elements of bourgeois ideology (women's place in the home etc..) to justify the attacks on many reforms. To counter this ideological offensive many socialists who formerly fought these demands in an economic way have been forced to look to feminist ideas, which they previously treated as irrelevant.

Life has proved that those socialist feminists who argued years ago for a wider ideological fight were correct and the SWP leaders and many other leftists were wrong. It was in recognising this that many of us resigned from other left groups.

The socialist feminist current has existed for two or three years as a positive grouping of women, and its emergence was important not merely for the women involved in it but the women's movement to which it is related and the left groups where many women still feel the inadequacies of male-dominated political hierarchies, practice and theoretical superiority. Lindsey German is presumptuous in the extreme to say that we 'only admit the sexual division'.

Socialist feminists do accept the class division as fundamental to all we say and do. The socialist feminist current has the perspective of developing a thorough socialist analysis of women's oppression within capitalist society, and from this attempting to formulate new ways of organising.

Our practice as far as women traditionally outside both the women's movement and the left groups is concerned is tentative, but appears slowly out of the discussions and theoretical understanding of womens general experience in capitalist society. WARF was one of the activities (and still is) which attempts to involve Asian and other women threatened by racism (for example).

But in no way do we intend balancing up how many 'working-class' women *Womens Voice* and SWP have recruited in the last six months with how many socialist feminists have 'recruited', because our whole approach to women is based on the understanding of the complex nature of womens oppression, and the possible future ways in which women will genuinely be comfortable with socialist ideas, not alienated and excluded as in the SWP where hundreds (both white-collar and many working-class women) have left in the last eight years, more disillusioned with socialist organisations than they were before joining. *Juliet Ash, Celia Deacon, An Dekker, Ash Corea, Liz Heron, Michele Ryan*—(Hackney Socialist Feminists)



Poster from the Spanish Women's Liberation Movement

Books Dear, oh dear!

Several people have recently asked me, 'Why doesn't *Socialist Review* cover cheaper books? We can't afford the ones you review'. I've tried to answer the questions raised only to be told: 'Why don't you write that in *Socialist Review*?' So here goes:

Once upon a time, about ten years ago, very few socialist books, or books of interest to socialists ever got into print. These were the days before the rise of multinationals like Pluto Press, Virago, and Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative.

Then came the growth of the revolutionary left after 1968, which not only produced a crop of authors and editors but also a market place. Wise entrepreneurs like Penguins saw their chance. They successfully commissioned, published and sold some very good books; in fact at one time you could guarantee that at least one book every month would be a must.

In the meantime, would-be socialist publishing houses started up, often with very little capital, and with nothing of the secure computerised distribution network of the Penguin/Fontana/Sphere world. Pricing is largely influenced by the size of the print run the ability to sell thousands on publication rather than hundreds. So socialist houses like Lawrence and Wishart, Pluto and Merlin were faced with trying to maintain competitive prices with print runs

of around 3000 to 5000 while Penguin were printing 20,000 to 40,000 with all their big sellers helping to finance the occasional flop.

Then came the recession, high inflation, and comrades with less money to spend on literature. Publishers reacted differently. Penguin, part of the huge Pearson Longman organisation, were told that their profit margins were too low. They sacked many of their radical staff and leaned on any editors commissioning left wing books.

Almost at the same time Macmillan cottoned on to the large number of leftist academics who were around writing at worst Marxology and at best some radical critiques of bourgeois thought. They solved the problem of inflation by slapping £4.95 prices on 100 page paperbacks and printing two to three thousand copies, with the option of reprinting quickly if the text was adopted as a course book. And Macmillan might now be able to claim they have the largest output of leftist academic writings in Britain.

In the midst of all this the overtly committed socialist houses like Pluto, Merlin, Lawrence and Wishart, Journeymen, etc have had fight for an audience with pricing that has made them unpopular at times but has at least kept them in business. The most typical price of new books from them is currently around £2.95, and surprise, surprise this is now the market

rate for a number of new Penguins. If you don't believe me then go and buy the new Penguin translation of Marx's *Capital* Volume 2 which is £3.50.

That so many publishers of socialist books have survived the crisis and are expanding in all sorts of directions will be seen at the Socialist Bookfair in London on 10-11 November.

But a problem remains. Of so many books which ones should be reviewed in *Socialist Review*. Should price be the overriding factor, should they at least be paperbacks?

We have to face up to the fact that the era of the good One Pound Penguin appearing every month is over. The story behind that fact of life would actually make a good publishable thriller at one time the Penguin NUJ chapel popularised a badge with a penguin skewered by a dagger.

Price and availability will of course remain a factor in considering what to review but content and political importance may well override other considerations.

After all publishing a review is not necessarily a recommendation to buy a book. On the contrary given the number of interesting titles published these days, reviews help people to keep abreast of new ideas without necessarily buying every book, and they ought to make book buyers a lot more discriminating.

One last sanctimonious thought. If you want a very fine balance of price and content then join the Bookmarx Club. *Alastair Hackett*

Watchers (un)Limited

PRIVATE POLICE

Hilary Draper
Penguin 95p

What a fascinating subject to read about I thought, welcoming the arrival of this new Penguin book. I imagined it would tell me more about Robert Carr's directorship of Securicor before he became Home Secretary in the Heath Government. But it didn't.

Though I did learn that Night Watch Services (which became Securicor) was the first of the modern guard companies in England. It was formed by the Marquis of Willingdon and Henry Tiarks, a merchant banker, and began by employing fifteen uniformed guards to patrol Mayfair homes whose proprietors were away. These watchmen rode bicycles and carried truncheons and whistles to summon help if necessary.

I also learned that the greatest losses to industry are caused not by crime but by fire. 'In 1975 a loss of £212.7 million was attributed to fire damage and its consequences, and is responsible for most of the emergencies that are dealt with by security guards.' Tell that to the FBU.

As I read more of this book my expectation that the relation between capitalism and security would emerge more clearly was increasingly frustrated; except for odd paragraphs providing alternative conclusions. Take this gem for example:

"Another area in which the potential value of security officers is now being realised is that of industrial health and safety. Modern legislation imposes a high level of responsibility on employers to see not only that health and safety procedures are laid down but also that they are enforced. Security guards are thus being used to save companies from possible liability under civil law or statute by ensuring that regulations are observed."

In general however this is a rather pedestrian study, or rather, our brave author is more like the original Securicor 'watchperson' riding a bicycle into the nasty jungle of modern armour-plated private police forces, blowing her whistle and waving her truncheon when the rules are slightly bent.

The book we need that lays bare the relationships between the private police, capital, the state, and the civil police has yet to be written. How far Hilary

Draper fails to understand her subject and is even blind to her own evidence (slim though it is) can be shown by her concluding paragraph.

"Measures must be taken, and taken soon, to ensure a high standard among the firms that are now relieving in part the burden on an overworked and undermanned police force. This

must be done if we are to preserve, in this country, a tradition of good law enforcement, and if the high reputation of our police force is to be passed on to, and upheld by, the new generation of crime-prevention officers - the new 'private police'."

Alastair Hackett.

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It is human to err. We in Securicor repent our errors; but solemnly, painfully and possibly we are climbing to a peak of unimpeachable integrity where Securicor is an end not just a means. To those who object that these aims are too altruistic, we reply that they result in higher morale, more goodwill and abundant rewards to our mutual company partners. Business cannot be done from heaven, but should be nobly



You probably think parliament and the philanthropist William Wilberforce brought the abolition of slavery 175 years ago. That's what they'd like you to think... but the truth is they were pushed by the biggest and most successful slave rebellion ever. It was the people at the bottom who changed things—which is why the people at the top today would rather we forgot Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Black Jacobins.

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Zion meets Babylon

Conspiracy Of Silence The Attack On The U.S.S. Liberty
Anthony Pearson
Quartet £4.99

In the middle of the 1967 Six Day Arab-Israeli War a most extraordinary event occurred which with hindsight casts a harsh illumination over the politics of the Middle East. The Israelis launched a sudden, unexpected attack on an American spy ship, the *USS Liberty*, cruising off the coast of Gaza. The savage air and sea strike left 34 dead, and 171 injured.

Were it not for the persistence of journalist Anthony Pearson who had to fight his way through a blanket of silence surrounding the event, the official explanation accepted by the Americans—that the Israelis had mistaken the *Liberty* for an Egyptian craft—would have gone unchallenged, and we would be a little less wise about the subsequent course of history in the Middle East. This compelling book is an account of that incident and its wider implications.

The *Liberty* was carrying out monitoring of radio signals between all parties to the conflict, decoding them and relaying the results to Washington what is now known as Signals Intelligence, or SIGINT work. It was also shadow cover for an American submarine carrying Polaris missiles, the *USS Andrew Jackson*.

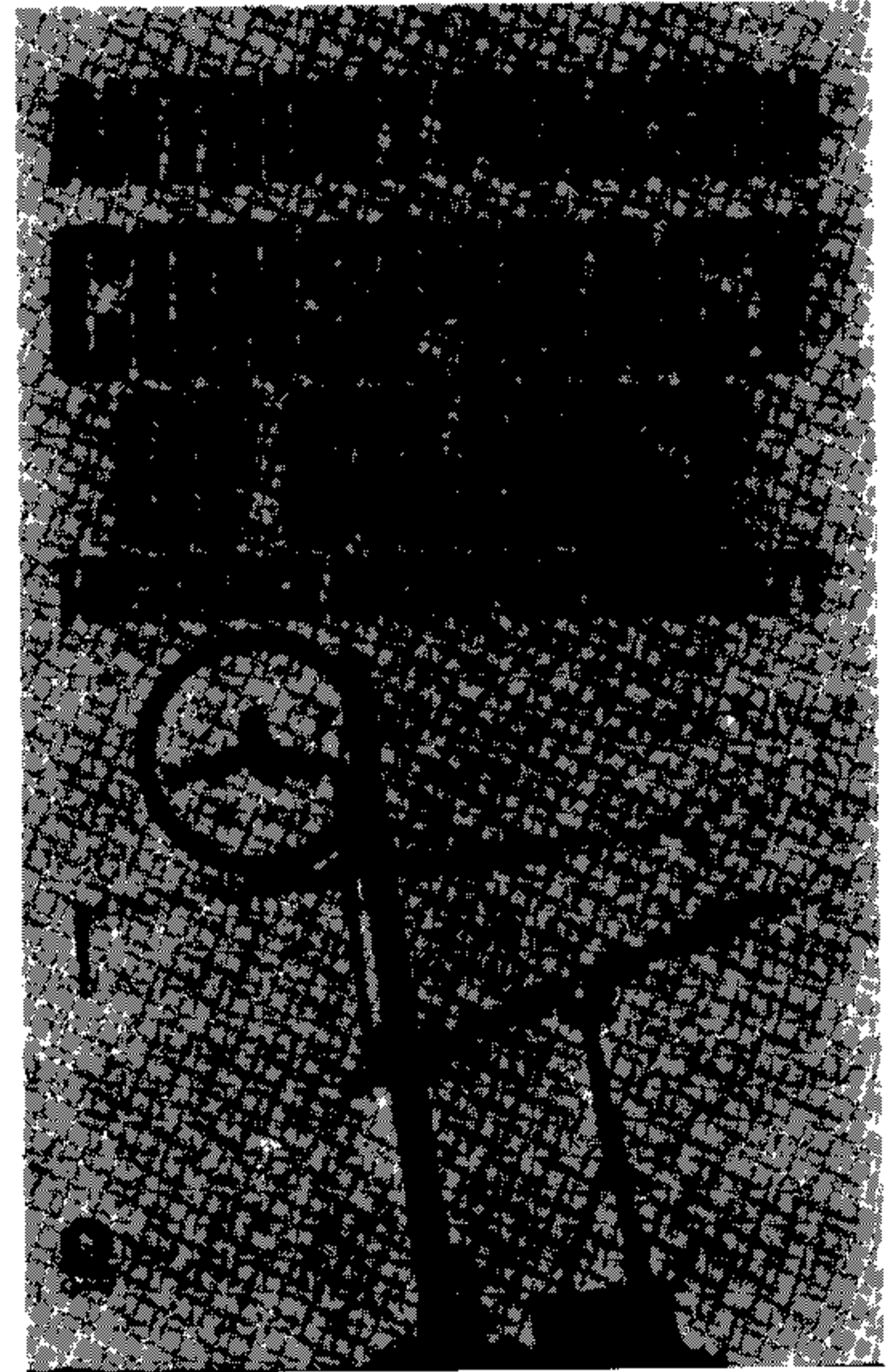
The reasons for the entirely unheralded attack by the Israelis are bound up with the politics of the whole region. The US was concerned about the growing Soviet presence in the area, and its alliance with Arab nationalism, inspired by the example and leadership of Egypt under President Nasser. The US believed that a

successful war against Egypt by Israel would lead to Nasser's downfall and his replacement by a government more sympathetic to US interests.

Unknown to America, Israel's aims went further to include major territorial gains, in particular the West Bank. The fly in the ointment here was that the US would not countenance any aggression

against King Hussein of Jordan, who was regarded as an important ally on the Arab side. Hence the presence of the *USS Andrew Jackson*.

The US had become reliant, as its interests in the Middle East expanded after the second world war, upon the Israeli secret service, Mossad, for its intelligence in the area. In return for these intelligence work the CIA under James Angleton had exchanged nuclear secrets with the Israelis, who had built their own missile bases in the Negev desert. The



Chartist history books

Bibliography of the Chartist movement, 1837-1976
J.F.C. Harrison and Dorothy Thompson
Harvester Press £12.50

There is at present no definitive history of the Chartist movement, which is surprising given that Chartism was the greatest movement of working class men and women for radical and social reform in Britain, before the rise of modern labour movement in the 1880s. This new bibliography documents all the

available contemporary sources of books, pamphlets, and leaflets written by the Chartists as well as all subsequently published work by historians.

I discovered that in 1848 the Stoke-on-Trent Chartists published a pamphlet entitled: 'The Charter; What it is, and Why we want it; A Dialogue between John Trueman, a Working Man, and Samuel Timorous, a Shopkeeper'.

All Archive Ferrets will want to see this book in their local library. *Alastair Hatchett*

Books

THE MERLIN PRESS LTD.
3 Manchester Road, London E.14.

The Poverty of Theory E.P. THOMPSON

E.P. Thompson's latest book is constructed around a devastating critique of Althusserian Marxism, in which he argues for a socialist theory and practice rooted in working class experience and history, rather than the arcane rationalism of theoretical practice. Also included are his earlier essays *Outside the Subject*, *The Peculiarities of the English*, and *An Open Letter to Kolakowski*.

£3.90

Andrew Jackson was there to knock out Israel's nuclear bases in the Negev, in the event of Israel preparing to use them, to prevent an escalation which would bring the US and the Soviet Union into the conflict directly.

The reason for America's ready acceptance of Israel's apology over the destruction of the *Liberty*, was that they could not publicly admit the spy ship's purpose in the Eastern Mediterranean without giving away the presence of the nuclear submarine *Andrew Jackson*. This in itself would have been grounds for an international incident, had the Russians known at the time.

However, the the Israeli military successes in conventional warfare on the ground were so swift and decisive that the nuclear threat was never realised. A major reason for the Israeli success was that with their American equipment they were intercepting coded radio messages between Egypt and Jordan, and rewording them to give each side a totally false picture of the military situation.

This audacious tactic could only work while America remained in ignorance of what the Israelis were up to. To ensure that Defence Minister Moshe Dayan had to knock out the American listening post in the Eastern Mediterranean - the

And...

The new Bookmarx Club offer for the last quarter of 1978 is advertised elsewhere in this issue. Don't hesitate to join as the new offer gives an excellent choice of books at a ridiculously low price. Most of these newly published books will be reviewed in *Socialist Review* in the next two issues.

New books to look out for include Joe Jacobs *Out of the Ghetto: My Youth in the East End, Communism and Fascism 1913-1939* at at £3.00. This is a useful contrast to Phil Piratin *Our Flag Stays Red* (Lawrence and Wishart, £1.50). Penguin have just released their edition of Marx; *Capital Vol 2* at the new-style Penguin price of £2.95.

Pluto are about to release the obituary of Rock and Roll. Written by Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons *The Boy Looked at Johnny* (1.25) is a good contender for the Most Extravagant, Rude and Fearlessly Biased Book of the Season Prize. Another contender for the prize may well be (and I hope is is) E.P.

USS Liberty, and count on the fact that the Americans would hesitate to go public over the incident. Which is just what happened.

Thus the international cover-up which took Pearson several years, and considerable personal courage to penetrate. This book which is an expansion of two articles which first appeared in *Penthouse* magazine, reads like a spy thriller, but it has the added advantage that it is true. Pearson belongs to a maverick breed of journalists whose temperament is akin to the veteran mercenary.

He ends the book a frightened man, because the cover-up, which extends to harrassment of the families of the victims of the incident, most of whom were too scared to talk to him, is still, in so far as possible going on; and because he has become caught up in events on a scale he cannot cope with.

The immediate effects of the incident are history: the territorial expansion of Israel which is still the chief cause of friction in the Middle East, and the prolonged period of mutual suspicion between Egypt and Jordan which followed the Six Day War but the full repercussions continue to work themselves out.

Mike Flood Page

Thompson's new book due out from Merlin Press which contains a 200 page sustained polemic against the mandarins of *New Left Review*.

It's diary season, and this year you have a choice of three. Not to be outdone by Pluto's Big Red, the Zed Press and Spare Rib have entered the market. *The Big Red* is on Nuclear Power subtitled 'Better active today than radioactive tomorrow'. Zed's is a *Pan-African Diary* from which I learned that one third of the world is socialist, and the *Spare Rib Diary* is on women's liberation. Each is priced at £1.50.

New Park Publications have just released *One Long Night* by Marie Joffe at £5.99. Marie Joffe provides an eye witness account, as a survivor now in exile, of Stalin's 1930's labour camps.

And for those few readers who are building a library of the collected works of Ernesto Che Mandel they can now rush out and invest £6.50 in his latest volume of autobiography, aptly names *The Second Slump* (NLB). Alastair Hatchett.

The big yawn

I was wearing my powder-blue suit with dark blue shirt, tie, display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks. I was neat, clean, shaved and sober. I was everything the well-dressed film-reviewer out to be. I was going to see *The Big Sleep*.

The film is a failure, although it adheres very closely to the plot of Chandler's novel and has Robert Mitchum playing Phillip Marlowe. In an earlier adaptation of *Farewell My Lovely*, Mitchum had perfected Marlowe's sardonic humour and style, but even he cannot save the film.

The director (Michael Winner) has lifted the plot out of 1930s Los Angeles and set it in the Home Counties, circa 1976. This is disastrous and renders the story ridiculous. I just don't believe that a pornographic book shop would go to the trouble of operating behind an elaborate front in London in the 1970s.

Also, the air of unreality which surrounds the California of the novels is completely missing. In Chandler's novels the Sternwoods own an expensive replica of an English country house set in the midst of oilwells and near-desert. The film simply shows them living in a real stately home, somewhere in Hertfordshire.

But the film parts company with the novel completely in the portrayal of Marlowe, who, as all readers of Chandler will know, is not at all rich. He drives an old car, lives in cheap apartments, runs his detection business from two tatty rooms and charges very little for his services. His poverty is a by-product of his sense of honour, since he is very selective about whose money he takes and how he earns it.

But Winner's Marlowe drives an enormous Mercedes, wear at least six different tailored suits and owns a Rolex watch which would have taken Chandler's Marlowe two years to buy. His apartment in Westminster and is big enough to play baseball in, without breaking any windows, while his offices are a room-designers' dream. Entire scenes are absurd; all the remarks about his cheapness seem totally pointless, because he is so obviously loaded (so he should be charging £50 a day plus expenses).

Winner seems to have pushed



all the characters up a few social classes. The cheap chisellers own riverside houses in Putney. Lieutenant Bernie Ohls becomes Inspector Carstairs (played with a stiff upper lip by John Mills!) and the night club owner Eddie Mars must run the Rank organisation in his spare time.

Setting the film in middle class England destroys the spirit of the novels. It lacks all the novels implicit criticisms of the very rich and the police. Instead, we get a routine thriller set in the never-never world of the colour supplements, where everyone is wealthy and goodlooking. The film is glib, shiny and as hollow as a *Daily Express* editorial. Don't waste your money on it.

Another film doing the rounds at the moment also owes a debt to Chandler. In fact *The Cheap Detective* is one long parody of the 1940s detective film. Scene after scene sends up Bogart's films; there is the murdered partner scene from *The Maltese Falcon*, the night club scene from *Casablanca*, the confrontation with General Sternwood from *The Big Sleep* etc.

If you think Peter Falk's Bogart impersonation (first seen in *Murder By Death*) is worth seeing again or that in-jokes about old films are the last word in humour, then this film is for you. If you think films like this are incestuous and tiresome, don't see this film, because it lacks anything else to keep your attention. I found that the joke wore thin after half an hour and the whole thing would be better as a 20 minute sketch on a TV programme.

Neither of these two films add anything to the Detective film, and the 1944 version of *The Big Sleep* captures the atmosphere of the novel in a way winner's film doesn't approach. His film really does deserve to sleep the big sleep, undisturbed.

Paul Cunningham.

THE SHAPE OF

Phil Evans was fifty-four. He gazed dully across the rolling green lawns of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve to where Warden Arkwright was explaining about the gestation period of tigers to a group of children. The tiger itself was busy finishing off a boxer dog which had been caught soiling the footpath and therefore had been consigned to the Reserve's feeding department. The tiger was dog-fixated, and took no notice of the humans. Arkwright grabbed it by the jaws and demonstrated the great canines, ideal for biting poodles in half and ripping great chunks out of corgies.

An interesting man, Arkwright. Before the Revolution he had worked at Fords as a grappling clamp tester. Fifty seven thousand clamps after he started work there Arkwright had led the attack on the Hilton and witnessed Henry Ford the Fourth's suicidal leap from the eighth floor with a naked woman on one arm and a suitcase containing two Vermeers in the other. As he cradled the mangled magnate in his arms and reflected sadly on how he had looked forward to strangling the bastard with a grappling clamp the great man's eyes opened and he spoke his last word. "Troublemakers!"

Arkwright went on to take a degree in Ecology at the Peoples University in Kampala, built on the ruins of Nakerere College where, in 1985, Idi Amin had spectacularly eliminated himself and his entourage with a small nuclear device supplied to him secretly by Israel for use against Marxist guerillas. Fords was turned over to the production of tractors and construction equipment for the development of the Indian sub-continent. The only Ford car Evans had seen was in the Old Bailey Transport Museum where people went to marvel at the dealy chromium 'bumpers' of the most efficient killing - machine known to man.

The bells of Christopher Wren's great church at Shoreditch came faintly across Hoxton Lake to where he sat on the

cushioned bench under the rose bower. The evening performance of Tom Robinson's Second Symphony in E flat minor, performed by the 'Night Cleaners' Union Symphony Orchestra was about to start. But Evans wasn't interested. He took a long pull from the bottle of Protzbru Real Ale he held in his grimy hand.

Who could have predicted that socialism would turn out to be like this? All those years in the Party, visiting contacts, giving out those anti-productivity deal leaflets, selling Ventriloquists Against the Nazis badges, and now it had come to this.

Evans patted the worn copies of *Darkness at Noon* and *1984* he always carried with him. They were something to cling onto, something from the past that gave the illusion of a different reality, reassurance.

Where had it all gone wrong? Where was the Siberian wilderness where Ivan Denisovich found half-cooked fishes eyes in his Stalinist gruel, made from boiled-up



At least they'd abolished the old archaic Sunday hours which guaranteed you felt well enough the next day to go to work. Trouble was, of course, they had also opened the places up to any old odd or sod. You couldn't move without tripping over a couple of toddlers playing chess or some idiot singing a folk song about the Second Battle of Cable Street.

THINGS TO COME

Central Committee directives and camp-guard boot insoles?

'Hey Mister, will you ref our game?' A little group of young footballers stood before him. He read on the girl's shirt 'Hackney TB's' - TB - Theresa Bennett, the legendary soccer star who scored eleven goals against Zimbabwe in the World Cup final of 90.

Evans waved them away and staggered off. 'Stupid old git' he heard them shouting after him. 'Bennite!' Evans would have turned back and given the girl a whack on the head for that, but she was at least eight and he knew she could make mincemeat of him with her Childfence training. The language they used these days. Where did they pick it up? From all those new plays and films the kids made these days, he supposed.

The other day he'd wandered into an open air theatre where some kids were performing 'The Life of Goethe', but he couldn't understand it. Nobody wanted television any more, but he could remember when everybody watched it all the time and never complained. He, he himself, he'd watched it every night for years.

They used to put great programmes on like . . .

He stopped walking. He couldn't remember any. Then 'The . . . Sale . . . Of . . . The . . . Century' he said aloud, slowly. For some reason a small wave of nausea passed over him.

He went on. You couldn't beat goold old-fashioned TV.

Evans headed towards the Gramsci Arms.

The old guilty kick had gone as well, when you sneaked off for a pint of Watney Coope, as your Lurolex shirt shrank in the Laundromat. Ah, Wat. Coope-no alcohol in it, but it gave you a bloody great headache. Not like this modern rubbish.

And he wasn't the only one who had complaints about the quality of life. Take the Laird of Strumtherftech. He was always in the Gramsci. After the Revolution they confiscated four hundred and twenty-seven square miles of beautiful Scottish Highlands from him, which his great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather had won off Butcher Cumberland at cards.

Now there were a lot of people living there and all the atmosphere of the place, with its deserted crofts (since the Clearances) had gone. 'Hordes of damn Liverpooldians breeding golden eagles' complained the Laird. 'Sticking up there ethnic cottages everywhere. Ugly. Common'.

Strumtherftech House with its gracious blend of mock Tudor and late Motorway Functionalism had been turned into a grey seal study centre. They'd let all the tame pheasants out of their cages and no-one shot at them any more. It was terrible. The Laird had tried to get a job with the Highland Resettlement Scheme but they wanted a Scotsperson for the job and he'd given up after that.

It was light and warm in the Gramsci Arms. The Laird was slumped over the bar in his usual seat and mumbled something about the need for Firm Government as Evans pulled himself a pint behind the bar. There was a darts match in progress, Bethnal Green Work Safety against the Brick Lane Vets. Work Safety were a player short. As he hefted the titanium darts in his hand, set down his pint and stepped up to throw Evans thought: It's hell - but it could have been worse.

