

# Socialist Challenge

**SCROOGE IS  
ALIVE,  
WELL  
AND  
LIVING  
IN 10  
DOWNING  
ST**



**How to make  
an H-Bomb**

Also:  
Petr Uhl in prison

Labour's Love Lost  
— A Xmas Pantomime

Rhodesian Saga — A Letter  
from Soames

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

- To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class-collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character, grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.

- To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

**4** The Communist parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the 'Eurocommunist' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

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

.....  
 I am interested in the  
 activities of Socialist Challenge  
 in my area. I would like to  
 receive a copy of your  
 programme and to be  
 included in your  
 newsletter. My name is  
 .....  
 My address is  
 .....  
 My telephone number is  
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 My occupation is  
 .....

## EDITORIAL

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# Charter 77 appeal— 'About Petr Uhl'

**THIS THURSDAY, 20 December, Petr Uhl and the other four civil rights campaigners in Czechoslovakia jailed in October for 'subversion' will appear before the supreme court to appeal against the verdicts.**

At the same time some photographs, just published in Britain, reveal that the judge at Petr Uhl's trial has been doubling as a senior official in the Czech political police. The pictures, which appear in the latest issue of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, show that the judge's office has been used as a base for spying operations on the flat of one of those sentenced in October: Vaclav Benda. A video camera trained on Benda's flat has been wired up to the judge's office.

In response to the appeal court hearing, the socialist Charter 77 Defence Committee is sending one of the most prominent socialist lawyers in Britain to the trial: John Platts-Mills QC.

Platts-Mills was expelled from the Labour Party in May 1948 for going to Prague to hail the victory of the Communist Party take-over. He is President of the Haldane Society and Vice-President of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the Moscow-backed lawyers' organisation to which Czechoslovakia's legal profession belongs.

### Exclusion

At the time of writing it is still not clear whether Platts-Mills will be able to attend the appeal court hearing. But his exclusion would create a major international scandal amongst socialist and communist lawyers.

On this page we publish, for the first time in the West, the text of a leaflet circulating in Prague explaining who Petr Uhl is. It is written by Petruska Sustrova, a close friend of Petr Uhl and a member of the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted [VONS] which is the target of the regime's present crackdown.

### ABOUT PETR UHL

**IF YOU WANT** to find out who Petr Uhl is, and you ask someone who knows him, the first thing you will be told is that he is a Trotskyist.

His political beliefs are certainly the thing that people know about Petr. I don't know how he got his political convictions, but I do know that when I first met him, over 11 years ago, he was already a Trotskyist or a revolutionary Marxist.

Given the fact that it is not only the Czechoslovak media which tries to equate terrorism and Trotskyism, it might be useful to outline Petr's actual political positions. He is a supporter of the revolutionary line in Marxism, which takes as its starting point the idea that after the social revolution it is necessary to prevent the bureaucratisation of the state by establishing a regime of self-management.

### Rotation

This means that people should run things themselves: that they should not hold official positions permanently but that there should be a rotation of jobs and responsibilities should not be paid more than workers.

Now that Petr is imprisoned...



ANNA SABATOVA, wife of Petr Uhl, outside the court in Prague

get involved in a movement for the defence of legality like Charter 77. Petr Uhl has been involved in the activities of Charter 77 from the start and has also helped to form the Committee for the Defence of Those Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS). It is because of this that he is now in prison with nine other members.

This is not the first time that Petr has been imprisoned. He spent four years (1969-73) in prison for 'subversion'. At that time, I was a member of the Revolutionary Youth Movement and I can well remember his trial and how Petr defended himself.

The defence that he was bringing to the attention of the court was...

In 1974 he married the daughter of Jaroslav Sabata, who had also been released in December 1973. One of their reasons for getting married was so that they could keep in contact if either was arrested again. Prison regulations only permit inmates to correspond with members of their family!

It would be wrong not to mention some of Petr's characteristics. I have had many opportunities in discussions and meetings to learn from him: his immense patience, his readiness to explain his ideas about a particular problem, his understanding of the working class, his view of the state, and above all his conviction that the working class must take power.

One day...

whenever he went out.

Imagine going out for a walk and being followed by two heavies and a car crawling behind you close to the kerb. Imagine picking up a letter and having one of these gentlemen leaning over your shoulder to see who it's from. Imagine visiting friends and them asking whether the heavies are with you or just following you.

Anyone who can put up with this sort of pressure without losing their equilibrium or sinking into a depression must be extremely resilient.

It is difficult to write about a friend who is in prison, even when one knows that he will be brave and calm and that he is the reason for the existence of the Charter 77 and the VONS and the Revolutionary Youth Movement.

Petr has sacrificed his own freedom in order to defend the freedom of others. I think you can understand Petr's belief that it is better to take the risk rather than renounce one's right to do what is correct and necessary.

was followed by police agents

## Steel leader's answer

# 'A national strike for wages and jobs on 2nd January'

By Gordon Gibson

FIFTY-five thousand jobs in South Wales are under the axe as a result of the rationalisation announced last week by the British Steel Corporation.

Between 11,000 and 15,000 jobs are to go in steel with the closure of either Llanwern or the giant Port Talbot works, or the partial closure of both. The social consequences in Port Talbot and Newport will be horrendous.

Between 10 and 15 pits will close as a direct result of the steel cuts, taking around 10,000 miners' jobs. If these cuts go through, the poverty of the '30s will be a reality again for many communities in South Wales.

Hundreds of millions of pounds have been ploughed in to both works over the past decade. New furnaces, rolling lines, and a deep water harbour — all now scheduled for the scrap heap — are a testimony to the lunacy of capitalism.

There has been a buzz of activity all week, with emergency meetings of regional union organisations, union leaders rushing to see MPs, and MPs rushing to the Tories. No one has thought yet to call mass workers' meetings.

It was Dafydd Ellis Thomas, Plaid Cymru MP for Merioneth, who made the most decisive statement of the week, calling for a day of action organised through the Wales TUC and supported by all Welsh workers.

Meanwhile the Labour machine calls for Port Talbot to be made a special development area (again). Others appeal for Common Market funds. The Labour left and the Communist Party call for import controls.

And having heard it all before, everyone sits back to shed a tear over the funeral of Corby and Shotton.

Wyn Bevan, convenor of the electricians at Port Talbot and a solid Labour left, gives a lot of ground to Thomas in this hallowed land of social democracy. 'I think for once he's talking a lot of sense,' he says. 'It's no good farting about. We know what sort of response we are going to get from the government, and if the trade union leaders aren't prepared to give a lead to their members then the trade union movement in this country is well on the way to being finished.'

Wyn Bevan expects events to move quite fast. Local and national TUC meetings are

presently taking place. The Transport Union has put forward a programme calling for: the dismissal of the BSC management; a stay of execution for all closures and job losses until 1982, and a public inquiry into the running of the corporation. When this is rejected, the union is pledged to action.

Wyn Bevan says: 'The date set for the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation strike, 2 January, should become a national strike for wages and jobs, with everybody getting involved.'

It will be a tremendous first step if 2 January is turned into a national day of action. Militants should make that their first weapon in the fight. Only massive strike action will save these jobs.

The National Union of Railwaymen has already given practical support to the ISTC strike, by declaring that nothing will move into or out of the steel works, and the miners have committed themselves to action in defence of jobs. Even North Sea oil rig workers have pledged active support.

But many are waiting for the lead from the steel workers. If we are to wait for Bill Sirs, the ISTC general secretary, we might as well sign on the dole now.

Sirs will fight over the 2 per cent offer, but

not over the closure. He says that as he didn't call a national strike over Corby then it wouldn't be fair to call one over Port Talbot or Llanwern!

Wyn Bevan takes a different view. 'ISTC members will have to tell Bill Sirs "If you won't give us support then we don't need it." If we can remove the steel bosses then they can remove some union leaders in the process. If any trade union leader is not prepared to fight over the loss of 52,000 jobs,' he adds, 'then he's in the wrong job.'

The likes of Wyn, the miners, other militants, steel workers and Dafydd Ellis Thomas should be making plans now for 2 January and for the following weeks and months. This needs to be the priority for South Wales militants.

A fighting conference in January preparing mass industrial action up to the first redundancy date in March is a necessity for building an active campaign to defend jobs. If that defence is left to the Bill Sirs and his co-thinkers on the TUC General Council life won't just be dust in the lungs for the steel towns and mining valleys of South Wales. It just won't be.

## TUC vision stops here -

'WE CAN take all the industrial action we like — and from 2 January we will be stopping the movement of all iron ore, steel, and coal for the steel industry — but really this is simply shutting the plants that the British Steel Corporation wants to close.'

That's a comment from Archie Kirkwood, divisional officer for the National Union of Railwaymen in South and Central Wales, and chairperson of the Welsh TUC's economic committee. It indicates the scale of the problem now facing some hundreds of thousands of working people whose livelihoods are on the chopping block thanks to the Tories' plans for the steel industry.

The executive of the rail union has ordered its members to ensure that: 'Nothing will move, whether it is raw material or iron ore.' The reason is plain enough, as Kirkwood explains.

Iron ore is shipped into South Wales through the Port Talbot Tidal Harbour and is then transported to the steel works at Port Talbot by conveyor belt and to the plant at Llanwern by rail. The latter involves seven full train-loads a day.

Add to that the transport by rail of coal to the steel works, and of the finished product to

various parts of Britain, and the number of rail jobs threatened by the likely closure of Port Talbot and Llanwern rapidly climbs. Nationally, about 18 per cent of rail freight comes from the steel industry.

The steel works in Wales were located in areas of high unemployment, shaping much of the economy of the region to the needs of steel. Already the plants at Shotton and Ebbw Vale have been axed. With the new closures the effect on jobs in the steel, rail, and coal industries — in Kirkwood's words — will be 'tremendous'.

The figure he puts on it is 50,000 more on the dole queues in Wales. If BSC's plans go through, that figure would have to be multiplied by something like five to give the full impact of the closures nationally.

For Archie Kirkwood, the answer lies in subsidising coal production so that British steel will be more competitive on the European market. He's not very confident that this idea — which would require the Tories to reverse their whole economic strategy — will even be considered, let alone implemented.

And that, it is fair to say, is as far as the vision of the labour leaders goes.



STEEL union leader Bill Sirs with Len Murray after Sir Keith Joseph told them to get lost last weekend.

## Nuts & Bolts of Meccano

By John Kirby

LIVERPOOL council last week rejected by a five-vote majority a Labour move for a council take-over of the occupied Meccano factory. Liberal and Tory councillors united to defeat the motion put by Derek Hatton.

Hatton explained: 'The council has to show absolute solidarity with the Meccano workers and ensure that they're kept in a job... so we're asking for the factory to be municipalised.'

The immediate aim of the Meccano workers is to get the parent-company, Airfix, to agree to 90 days' working notice during which they can find an alternative to closure and redundancy. So far Airfix has offered 90 days' pay in lieu of notice on condition that the occupation ends.

A new buyer, a workers' co-operative, municipalisation, or forcing Airfix to keep the factory open are being discussed by the Meccano workers as possible solutions.

A fight by the 940 Meccano workers alone to reverse Tory policy is not realistic. Only by linking up with a fight by British Steel and British Leyland workers could they seriously challenge the Tories.

But there is a way to defend jobs at Meccano. The labour movement on Merseyside is totally behind the occupation, as the move by Labour councillors indicates.

A united campaign by the labour movement could force the council to take over the factory. A first step in a campaign would be a local conference of the labour movement to organise

the campaign and practical solidarity with Meccano.

Would a council take-over be the answer? Meccano workers would have a fight on their hands with any new management.

They have already taken the first steps in a fight for workers control. Their occupation has put all movement of stocks and machinery under workers control. The occupying workers have opened Meccano's books and discovered repayments made by Meccano on a £2 million loan from Airfix — but no record of Meccano ever having received the loan.

All 940 jobs at the factory should be preserved. If demand falls and there is less work than work-sharing with no loss of pay is the answer.

The right to access to the books of any new management could be the way to prevent deals which are against the interests of the workers, and the latter should ensure that no machinery is removed or installed without the agreement of the workforce.

A take-over by Liverpool council would not please Margaret Thatcher, but it could be carried out if it is fully supported by the local labour movement.

The removal of the Tory government and its replacement with a Labour government committed to the full nationalisation without compensation of all bankrupt firms is probably the only way the jobs of the Meccano workers could be defended in the long run.

TWO WEEKS left before the end of the year and we still need another £1,000 to make our target! This week's total of £473.24 was boosted by the £325.74 raised at the Socialist Challenge Xmas Party last weekend.

If local IMG branches' Xmas socials and raffles can bring us another £500 each week we might still reach our target. Individual supporters too should spare us a thought over Xmas and drop us a fiver. Let's send Socialist Challenge into the '80s with a massive financial boost.

Our thanks this week to:

Pat Stillman	£10
Cardiff IMG	5
N. Long	2
Oxford IMG	80
K. Martin	2.50
Wandsworth NUT member	10
Teesside SC	8
E. Mahood	10
Anon	1
V. Coultas	19
Week's total	£473.24
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,448.75</b>

It's that time of the year... The next issue of Socialist Challenge will be published on Thursday, 3 January. Don't hangover — hang on!

# Labour's Love Lost

LABOUR'S LOVE LOST (Incorporating MacBenn, Bennet, Tony and Callaghetra, As They Like It, etc., etc.)

## PERSONS REPRESENTED

**KING CALLAGHODGE THE LAST**  
**MACBENN**, Pretender to the Throne  
**COATSKY**, Earl of Nottingham  
**THE SCAR OF GILL**  
**STUART WINDMILL**, Bishop of Battersea  
**ROBERT ROW**, Earl of Cambridge  
**JOAN**, Duchess of Leicester  
**MACDUFFY**, A villain of no fixed abode  
**SIR MICHAEL FOOTSTAFF**, A turncoat  
**THE GHOST OF KING SALVADOR ALLENDE**  
\*\*\*\*\*

## Prologue

Enter **CHORUS**, dressed in a boiler-suit.

I am here to start the play,  
To make you think of things  
That you will not see today.  
To make your imaginations work  
So that you will not shirk  
From drawing your own conclusions.  
But first a few handy hints for all:  
Think, when we talk of workers, that you see them;  
Marching forward proudly, their fists raised high  
And if you feel really moved we'll let you cry.  
Imagine when we talk of barricades that they are here,  
Do not let the words 'general strike' make you fear  
That it might not take place.  
MacBenn, with your help, is going to win the race.  
And if there's confusion I'll be back  
Unless by then I've got the sack.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Scene I — A clearing in Sherwood Forest, near Nottingham.*  
Enter **MACBENN**, **COATSKY**, **SCAR OF GILL** and **JOAN OF LEICESTER**

**MACBENN**: Time is short, my friends  
It is good that we meet  
To help our loyal followers  
To understand our defeat.

**SCAR OF GILL**: Our defeat, my Lord?  
What does this mean,  
It was Callaghodge who the battle lost,  
Thou were hardly seen.

**COATSKY**: I agree, I agree, I agree, agree, agree  
My good Lord,  
I have only recently joined your list  
But of one thing I am sure,  
We lost because of traitors in our midst.

**MACBENN**: Noble, brave Coatsky,  
Only a great mind could have harboured  
A thought so profound  
Which might help us win  
The next round.

**JOAN OF LEICESTER**: Calm down, MacBenn, calm down.  
My noble friends  
We have many battles to win  
Many enemies to rout;  
Remember 'tis capitalism which be  
the original sin.  
Our cavalry is still assembling  
And in its tail will lie the sting.

**MACBENN**: Well spoken, tall and cautious lady,  
But now away with you all;  
I prepare for what is to come.

**SCAR OF GILL**: My Yorkshire lads grow impatient,  
Don't keep them waiting long.

**MACBENN**: I shall be with you soon.

**SCAR OF GILL**: Joan talks of patience and caution,  
But make sure  
Thy speech in Barnsley Common  
Is not about class peace  
But the coming war.

(Exit all except MacBenn)

**MACBENN**: O, that this too too awful situation would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself soon  
Or that Methodism had not fixed  
Its canon against class war and  
Extra-parliamentary solutions!  
How depressing, overpowering and  
unimaginable  
Are the depths to which we have sunk.  
While in office we laid the basis for all  
That our enemies do.



O, Clem! O, Nye! O, Clem!  
The state of welfare thou constructed  
Is over  
And we ourselves are to blame.  
Our labour empire is under threat:  
Steel, cars, docks, shipbuilding are under  
attack.

MacDuffy is a scoundrel and Moss is a wet.  
That it should come to this!  
But seven months in office! — nay not  
so few, not  
seven;  
So awful a government: that it has already  
Accomplished in 28 weeks what would have  
Taken us four years or more; so hateful  
That it cares not if our workers live  
Or die.  
But did we not do the same?  
True I did protest, but few know that  
For I never discarded my Cabinet hat.  
Let me not think of it.  
Frailty thy name is MacBenn.  
But now must I grip myself  
End all crazy businesses  
And prepare our forces for the fight.  
'Tis not, 'Tis not too late  
Labourism has not been transcended by cruel  
Fate,  
It is unnecessary to smash the state.

**VOICE**: MacBenn, listen to me.

**MACBENN**: Who calls?

(Enter ghost of the Martyred King of Chile suddenly. MacBenn falls on his knees.)

Your majesty! Can this be true  
Is this a mirage I see before me?  
Be thou a spirit of health or a  
Vision of doom?  
Bring thou tidings of joy or  
Forebodings of gloom?

**GHOST**: Mark me, I am the spirit of  
Thy old friend Salvador.

**MACBENN**: Speak great one, thou seest all.  
Shall I rise or shall we fall?

**GHOST**: My blessing with you,  
And these few concepts in thy memory retain  
Banish all old thoughts from thy head  
Or else like me thou shalt end up dead.  
Our enemies will never relinquish  
Their hold upon our state.  
The peaceful road we yearned for is  
Burnt and purged away;  
Our enemies are strong  
But we could be stronger.  
The cock crows; I must leave.  
Remember well my words so  
Your widow does not grieve.  
MacBenn revenge my foul and  
Brutal murder! MacBenn beware  
The Ides of Parliament!

(Exit Ghost)

**MACBENN**: Thunder and lightning,  
Brimstone and hell,  
Methinks that was no ghost,  
But a disguised Ernest Mandel!

(Enter a white-haired Sir Michael Footstaff)

**FOOTSTAFF**: God save thy grace, MacBenn!  
My young friend  
We have walked through many a lobby  
together  
And soon thou shalt be king.

(MacBenn pretends not to have noticed the old man. He turns as if to walk away. But a loud fart from Footstaff detains him.)

My friend! My Jove! I speak to thee  
My heart!

**MACBENN** (to audience): Then I wish he would not fart!  
I know thee not old man: get thee to the Upper  
House  
How ill white hairs become a turncoat

And methinks I see a louse.  
For me thou art a nightmare,  
I am annoyed by thy face,  
Make less thy body hence,  
I consign thee to permanent  
disgrace.

Leave moralising;  
Know the damage ye have done is thrice greater  
Than Callaghodge.  
Reply not with empty words  
Nor with thy renowned demagoguery.  
Presume not that I am what I was.  
I have turned  
And never again shall I need thy  
company.

Go, then, and plead with  
Callaghodge to exercise  
His patronage.  
Consult thy daily mirror on  
The wall  
But believe it not when it says  
**MACBENN WILL FALL.**

(Exit)

*Scene II — An antechamber in Callaghodge's castle in the country.*  
Enter **MacDuffy** and **Callaghodge**, arm in arm.

**CALL**: Before thou speak, O brainless one,  
My congratulations.  
The sudden death of Squire Robbo  
Has weakened the forces of MacBenn.

**MACDUFFY**: MacBenn, MacBenn  
I hear his name wherever I go  
Why should that name be sounded more than  
yours?  
Upon what meat does our MacBenn feed  
That he has grown so great?  
Give the word, my lord,  
And we shall teach the  
Cheeky swine a lesson  
That he shaH not forget.

**CALL**: 'Tis not as easy as it seems.  
It will need brains bigger than yours  
To fulfil my schemes.  
I am old and despised  
I should go now, but  
MacBenn must not win.

**MACDUFFY**: 'Tis true I am a fool  
But I have friends  
In many high places  
And their advice is often good.  
The Prior of Westminster,  
Lord Edwardes of the Transvaal,  
Prince Conor Cruise of Orange,  
And Police Chief McBall.  
So my liege and leader  
I can still deliver  
The forces that will bring about  
MacBenn's downfall.

**CALL**: But all these men thou mentions  
Are in the enemy camp  
For the task that lies ahead  
We need a different stamp.  
Now listen carefully.

(He whispers in MacDuffy's ear.)

**MACDUFFY**: There is one danger in that  
My troops might mutiny or desert.  
They might say  
'We prefer another regiment,'  
'We like General Moss's hat.'  
But I shall do thy bidding;  
I shall ensure that every soldier under  
my command  
Is created in my own image.  
He salutes his officers,  
Touches the forelock  
When his betters pass,  
And assiduously licks  
Every piece of grime and dirt  
Off every Gentleman's arse.

**CALL**: Thou art a crude knave  
And I shall ensure a  
Handsome reward falls  
Thy way.



If he whose place thou took  
Is now a Lord in ermine clad  
Then thou shall be a Duke.  
But beware the Scar of Gill.  
He is audacious, nasty, brutish  
But if anyone can put MacBenn  
On my throne  
He will.

**MACDUFFY:** I am dull, I know; and those sparks  
That others possess I lack.  
But this I know:  
The Scar of Gill stands alone;  
We have a friend in Lord Gormless.  
You frown, my Lord?  
And the Mick of Gahey?  
And the yeomen loyal to the  
Emm of Lynn?  
The Celts are with the Scar.

**MACDUFFY:** Thou art right,  
The blow my head received  
In its youth  
Has permanently marred my  
Ability to think or speak  
Or write.

**CALL:** Away with thee,  
Thy loyalty over-compensates  
For thine idiocies.

*(Exit MacDuffy)*

I always preferred men  
Who were fat  
Like Hattersboy.  
MacBenn always had  
A lean and hungry look.  
He thinks too much  
He smiles only with his lips  
Not his eyes  
He is a danger to the Labour realm.  
It will be a hard battle.

*Scene III — Barnsley Common. A platform on which sits the  
Scar of Gill.*

**Enter MACBENN, WINDMILL, ROW, COATSKY**  
**MACBENN:** Good day my Lord Bishop, my Lord Row  
**WINDMILL**  
**ROW:** (in unison) Good day your Highness.

**MACBENN:** I have read your manuscripts  
And have incorporated the main points  
In my address. What day is it?

**COATSKY:** It is the birthday of St. Clement my Lord.

**MACBENN:** (mounts platform amidst cheers)  
Once more into battle, dear  
Comrades, once more  
'Tis time to storm the citadel  
Without fear of war  
Let it not be said abroad

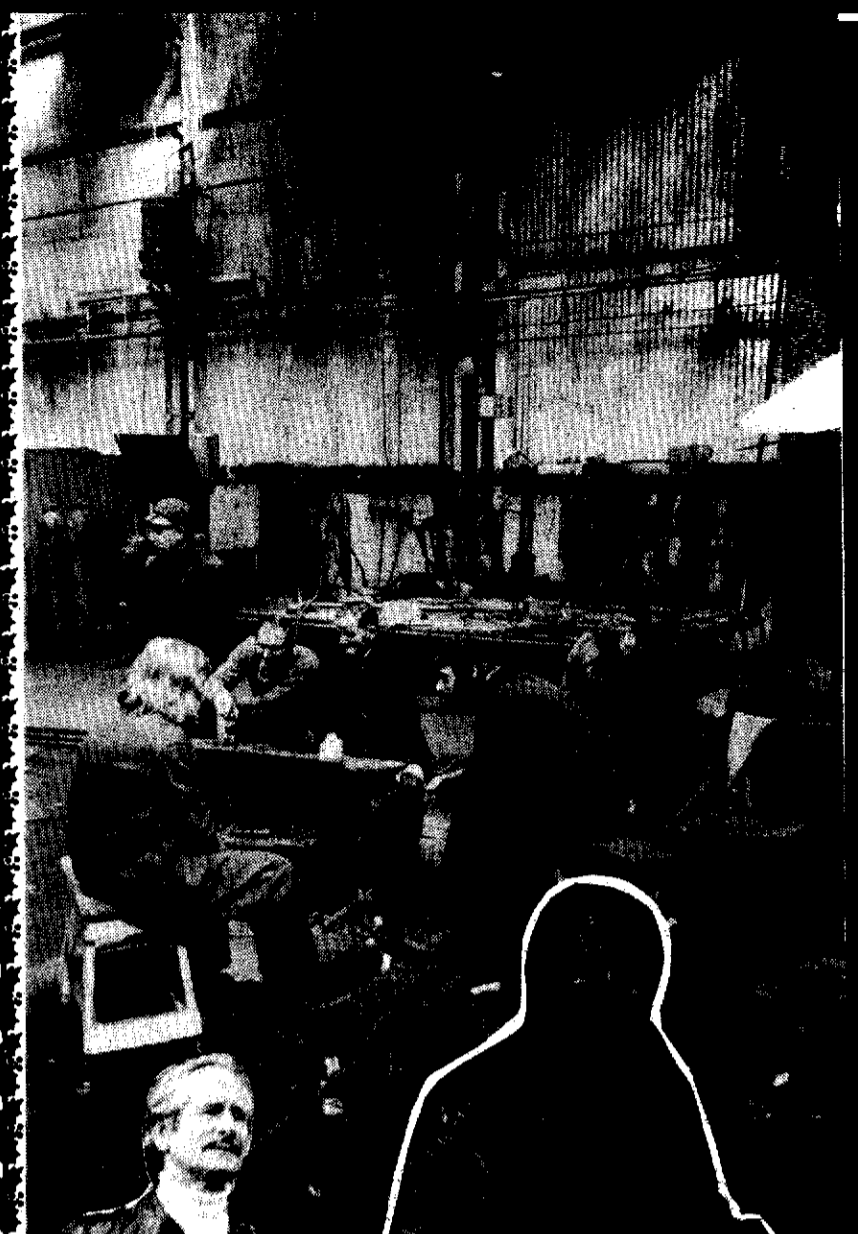
That British workers could not dislodge  
A despised old dreg called  
Callaghodge.  
Till he is gone  
There is no hope of further advance  
No forward march, no gain  
The Witch of Finchley  
Will rule as well as reign  
But once our own house we do repair  
Then let the Witch beware.  
Yeomen of Barnsley  
Surely you recall  
The Battle of Saltley Gate  
Which decided Edward's fate.  
'Tis true that times have changed somewhat  
We lost battles at Grunwick  
At Corby too and now the death of  
Squire Robbo  
Has struck us a bitter blow  
But in quiet stillness and humility  
Our Lords Row and Windmill have prepared  
An Alternative Economic Strategy  
Whether it can ever work or not is  
Besides the point.  
It exists, it is here, and more powerful  
Than most weapons.  
With every passing day the  
Cuts inflicted by the Witch  
Grow more deep;  
Our country could become a desert  
Of despair and demoralisation.  
I know these truths as does the Scar of Gill.  
That is why we say  
Prepare for battle,  
But wait till we sound the call  
Before you hurl your cannon ball,  
And now let us raise our voices and sing  
Your favourite hymn.

**ALL:** The Scar of Gill  
The Scar of Gill  
He's got the power  
And the Will,  
When the Scar gives us a shout  
We his yeomen will come out  
For we are all fighting fit  
Quit, Finchley Witch, Quit  
Finchley Witch Quit, Finchley  
Witch Quit.

*Curtain*

**Epilogue**

**CHORUS:** Thus far and no further can we go today,  
So go home and sleep and dream of  
What you did not see or hear;  
But if MacBenn disappoints you  
No reason or room for despair,  
Many battles are lost and won before  
The war is over,  
And ours has just begun.



## WHAT'S OFF

**A PUBLIC meeting:** 'Xmas is bourgeois and should be boycotted'. 25 December, 5pm, Conway Hall. Called by Socialists Against Xmas. Speaker, Ernie Roberts MP.

**JUST OUT!** 'Why we want to split the IV International'. A Spartacus publication. Available free from: Box 62, London W1.

**'HOW the RCG capitulates to Imperialism'**. RCT public meeting. The phone box, Kilburn Sq. Boxing Day, 7pm.

**'HOW the RCT capitulates to chauvinism.'** The phone box, Kilburn Sq. Boxing Day 7pm. Public meeting called by the RCG.

**PUBLICATION:** 'A guide to factories in the UK'. A new pamphlet from Turn and Company. On sale at all working men's clubs.

**MASS demonstration:** Against positivism! March to New Left Review. Called by E P Thompson.

**JOIN now:** Rank and File Santa Claus group just formed. Right to Work Campaign, Seven Sisters Rd. Main demands: \*For overtime on Christmas Eve. \*No more reindeers for bureaucrats.

**ANL meeting:** 'Pearl Harbour — Never Again!' Speakers: Paul Holborow, Ernie Roberts MP. The Old Hat pub, Wigan.

**NEW YEAR'S Eve Social.** Called by IMG and Revolution. Live bands: The Bearded Ones; The Cheeky Swines; introducing the Gafia; guest appearance: Pierre Frank (From FI Youth Commission) and the voice of Leon Trotsky. (No laughing allowed).

**LEFT-WING play group leader moving from Birmingham to London** wants accommodation. Single room sufficient but no children or animals please.

**GAY liberation, Ireland, Racism, the fight against the Tories** — it's the same the whole world over and why you have to join the SWP. Speaker Tony Cliff. Albert Hall, 27 Dec.

**XMAS quiz:** Who will mention Ireland first — Paul Foot in the Daily Mirror or Tony Benn? Answers on a postcard please, to: Humphrey Atkins, House of Commons.

**EDITOR NEEDED for Socialist Challenge** an unpopular, apolitical weekly. Ability to take dictation essential. NUJ rates. Apply in writing.

**JUST OUT:** New issue of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe with exclusive articles by Oliver Macdonald, Peter Green and Herb Klein on the situation in Outer Mongolia after the Albanian paratroop invasion.

**PUBLIC AUCTION:** For the last forty years Ernie Roberts has marched on over 5,675 demonstrations, spoken at 659 public meetings. His shoes (vintage Jarrow '36, Spanish Civil War demo '37, Cable Street '36, CND '56, Vietnam '68, IR Act 1971, Cuts Lobby '79, and Hackney picket of NFHQ '79) will be on sale. Auctioneer: Hank Gordon

**'DOES LABOUR need a daily paper?'** Public meeting, 27 December, 7.30pm, Corby Town Hall. Speakers: Johann Schweik, Jane Fox, Myra Trevelyan, Gordon Smeg, Trustees of the Estate of the late Boris Tardov.

**XMAS Day Carnival:** March against the Cuts from Hackney to Ealing Common. Live bands and Ernie Roberts.

**THE MATCH of the decade,** Organised by WRP Enterprises. Boxing Day at Wembley Stadium. A boxing spectacular: The Mad Colonel vs PLO Heavy. Referee: Ayatollah.

**BORN to RC and SH** — a daughter. We've booked her a place in Fords for 1990 — S.C.E.B.

# The present for the person who has HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN

# H-BOMB

ONE OF Margaret Thatcher's Christmas presents to the nation is 160 nuclear missiles of the cruise variety. Last week the Tories agreed that these missiles can be sited in Britain, part of the nation's contribution to NATO. Maggie has also given the go-ahead to the building of 15 new nuclear reactors of the type which 'went wrong' in the Three Mile Island accident in the US.

Some people think all these bombs and nuclear waste coming to Britain is a bad thing. But quite frankly radiation isn't as bad as it's made out. Of course if you get too much of it you may feel a bit under the weather, but there are advantages. Spraying the country with a good dose of radiation can help speed up the evolution process, it can weed out the namby-pamby, whimpering type and even create whole new genetic forms. All in all it's an exciting prospect.

But we have one grouse with Maggie. Why should a boring old nationalised industry like the Ministry of Defence have a monopoly of H-bombs? We say a bit of private competition would give the H-bomb industry a well needed kick up the backside (not to mention what it would give the rest of us). So here we are folks. The Xmas present for the person who has everything — how to make your own H-bomb. Peace on earth and goodwill to you all.

## Part one: Getting the ingredients

THE HEART of the successful H-bomb is a successful A-bomb. Once you've got your A-bomb made the rest is as easy as saying 'Hiroshima'. All you have to do is set them up so that when they detonate they'll start off a hydrogen-fusion reaction.

Uranium is the basic ingredient of the A-bomb. When a uranium atom's nucleus splits apart it releases a tremendous amount of energy. And it emits neutrons which go on to split other nearby uranium nuclei, releasing more energy, in what is called a 'chain reaction'.

There are two kinds of uranium, the rare U-235, used in bombs, and the more common, heavier, but useless U-238. Natural uranium contains less than one per cent U-235, and in order to be usable in bombs it has to be 'enriched' to 90 per cent U-235 and only ten per cent U-238.

Ten pounds of U-235 is all you need to make the present that goes with a bang this Xmas.

The problem you face is how to get the uranium. Our advice is to steal it.

Stealing uranium might sound a bit dangerous but it will give you something to do on Boxing Day when Billy Smart's Circus is on TV.

## Uranium

If you are worried about the morality of thieving, you can console yourself with the thought that Her Majesty's Government breaks international law all the time to get uranium.

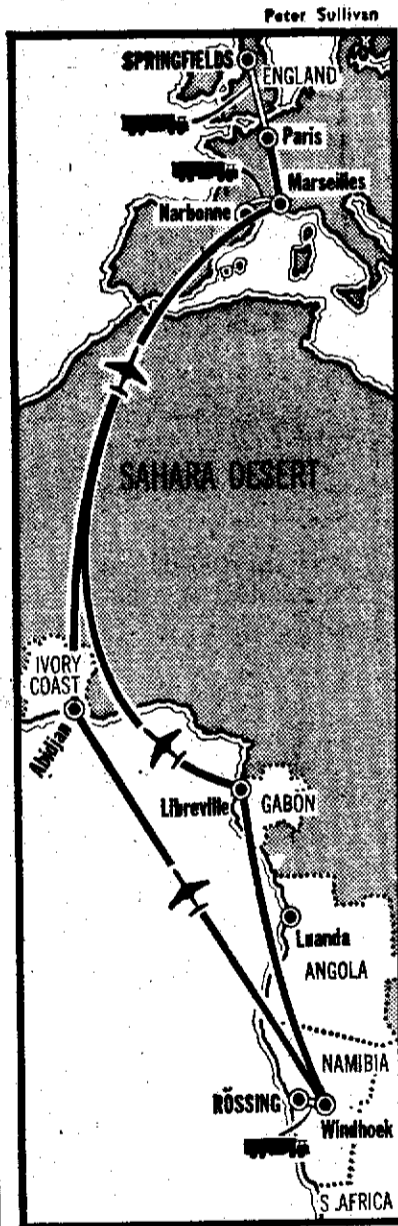
It works like this. According to a motion passed at the United Nations in 1974 no member state is permitted to import uranium from Namibia as it is controlled — illegally according to UN law — by South Africa. Namibia's Rossing mine, the world's largest open cast uranium mine, is operated by our very own Rio Tinto Zinc.

Britain has ignored this UN resolution and imports 42 per cent of its uranium needs from Namibia. So if the government can break the law, why not you? And the route by which uranium arrives in Britain provides the clue for the would be hijacker.

It starts off in the form of unenriched uranium oxide. The first leg of the journey is by plane, over Africa to Marseilles in France. Hijacking planes hasn't proved too successful of late so it's best to wait until the stuff reaches Europe.

## Theft

Once the uranium reaches Marseilles it goes in two directions. Some is sent to the Ministry of Defence and some to the



BRITAIN'S uranium trail

rest, which is destined for Britain, is flown to Orly airport in Paris from where it is trucked to Britain, eventually reaching Springfield Works near Preston.

As far as making the bomb is concerned it is best to steal it in its most convenient hexafluoride form. But for this you might have to break into either the Narbonne plant or the Springfield plant. If you choose that option the hexafluoride is usually stacked in 10 litre bottles or the bottles themselves are in 55 gallon steel drums. The drums are usually marked 'Fissile Material' or 'Danger: Plutonium'.

But as far as thieving is concerned it would be simpler to steal the uranium en route to Springfield. As it's transported in a lorry this shouldn't be too difficult.

The problem you then face is converting the solid uranium oxide into a liquid form. Here's how you do it.



1. Pour a few gallons of hydrofluoric acid into your newly acquired uranium oxide. Use plastic jug and gloves to prevent dissolution of hands.

## Part two: The conversion process

POUR a few gallons of concentrated hydrofluoric acid into your uranium oxide. This converts it into uranium tetrafluoride. Now you have to convert the tetrafluoride to hexafluoride — the gaseous form of uranium which is convenient for separating out the U-235 from U-238.

To do this bubble fluorine gas into your container of tetrafluoride. Fluorine is readily available in tanks from chemical-supply firms. Be careful how you use fluorine. It is several times more deadly than chlorine, the classic World War One poison gas (ask your grand-daddy about that one; he'll laugh till he's sick).

Anyway once you have a generous supply of uranium hexafluoride the final enrichment process can begin. This is where it begins to get really exciting.

Transform the gas into a liquid by subjecting it to pressure; you can use a bicycle pump. Then make a simple home centrifuge: fill a standard size bucket one quarter full of liquid hexafluoride. Attach a six foot rope to the bucket handle. Now swing the rope (and attached bucket) around your head as fast as possible. Keep this up for about 45 minutes and then, very gently put the bucket on the floor. The U-235 should have risen to the top where it can be skimmed off like cream.

Repeat this step until you have the required 10 pounds of uranium. Mind that you don't put all the enriched uranium into one bucket. Use at least two or three and keep them in separate corners of the room. This will prevent one of those nasty nuclear accidents we keep reading about.

Now it's time to convert your enriched uranium back to metal form. This is accomplished easily enough by spooning several ounces of calcium (available from Boots) into each



2. To separate U-235, the 'cream,' simply prepare a homemade centrifuge with a bucket and six feet of rope.



3. Now add calcium tablets, available at your local health-food store or pharmacy. (Dolomite will do, in a pinch.)

## A FEW PRECAUTIONS

IF YOU plan to make more than one bomb, it might be wise to wear gloves. It is pretty dangerous stuff you'll be handling so a few precautions are in order. It's best to hold your breath while you are constructing the thing.

Never make an A-bomb on an empty stomach. If you find yourself dozing off while you are working or if you begin to glow in the dark, take a blood count. Prick your finger with a pin, place a drop of blood on a microscope slide and place it under a microscope. If you count much over 0.3 per cent white blood cells, call a doctor.

bucket of liquid uranium. The calcium will react with the uranium hexafluoride to produce calcium fluoride, a colourless salt which can easily be separated from your pure, enriched uranium metal.

Alternatively, enriched uranium metal is obtainable from the prototype fast reactor at Dounreay in Scotland or from the high temperature gas cooled reactor at Winfrith in Dorset.

Certainly obtaining uranium metal from these sources would make things a bit easier, but they are guarded, so it might be easier to bribe people who work there. This is quite easily done.

## Part three: Stuffing your A-bomb

YOU WILL now have three or four bowls of uranium metal. Keep the bowls covered. Now take five pounds of uranium and pack it into a hemispheric steel bowl. Uranium is malleable, like gold, so you should have no trouble hammering it into a bowl to get a good fit. Take another five-pound hunk of uranium and fit it into a second stainless bowl.

These two stuffed bowls are the 'subcritical masses' which when brought together will provide the

critical mass which makes your A-bomb what it is. But keep them a respectful distance apart until you are good and ready to ignite.

Hollow out the body of an old vacuum cleaner and place your two bowls inside, open ends facing each other.

## Fission

As far as the A-bomb goes, you're almost done. The final problem is to figure out how to get the U-235 hemispheres to smash into each other with sufficient force to set off a truly effective fission reaction. Almost any type of explosive can be used: gunpowder (easy to make with potassium nitrate, sulphur and carbon — all easily available), blasting caps or TNT. The latter two can be stolen from a building site.

But if you want to minimise the 'risk factor' it is best to try to get an 'even burning explosive'. Commonly called 'plastic explosive' this is known in the trade as C4. It is manufactured by the Dupont company but is also 'available' from ICI.

Once the explosives are in place hook up a simple detonation device with a few batteries, a switch and some wire. Remember it is essential that the two charges, one on each side of the casing, go off at once.

# everything DOWN BOMB

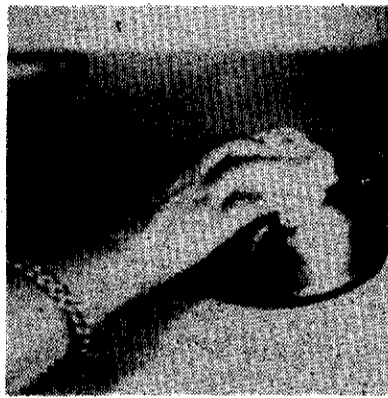
With acknowledgements to the US magazine 'Seven Days'



4. Hammer the uranium into small stainless-steel mixing bowls. (It can be shaped almost as easily as a mother's most dense plum.) Repeat with second bowl.



5. Hollow out an old vacuum cleaner, and prepare to stuff everything inside.



6. Mold C4 plastic explosive around each bowl.



7. Close container. Attach a simple detonation device hooked up in parallel circuit to battery, switch, and alarm clock.

## Part four: Putting your H-bomb together

THE HEART of the H-bomb is the fusion process. Several A-bombs are detonated in such a way as to create the extremely high temperature necessary to fuse lithium deuteride into helium. When the lithium nucleus slams into the deuterium nucleus, two helium nuclei are created, and if this happens to enough deuterium nuclei rapidly enough the result is an enormous amount of energy, the energy of the H-bomb.

Lithium deuteride can be purchased on the open market. It costs about £500 a pound and you will need at least 100 pounds, so maybe you should steal that as well.

It is obtainable from the Radiochemical Centre, Amersham, Bucks.

Place the lithium deuteride in glass jars and surround it with four A-bombs. Attach each one to the same detonators so that they go off simultaneously. The container for the whole thing is no problem. They can be placed anywhere — an old refrigerator would do.

When the detonator sets off the four A-bombs will slam into each other at the same time, creating four critical masses and four detonations. This will raise the temperature of the lithium deuteride to 100,000,000 degrees centigrade. The result: at least 1,000 times the punch of the puny A-bomb that levelled Hiroshima.

## What to do with your bomb

WE ONLY tell you how to make the bomb, it is no concern of ours what you do with it. And we can hardly be blamed if you let it off accidentally.

But there are a number of obvious things to do with an H-bomb. You could sell it and make a pile of money, although with more and more countries getting bombs these days the market isn't what it was.

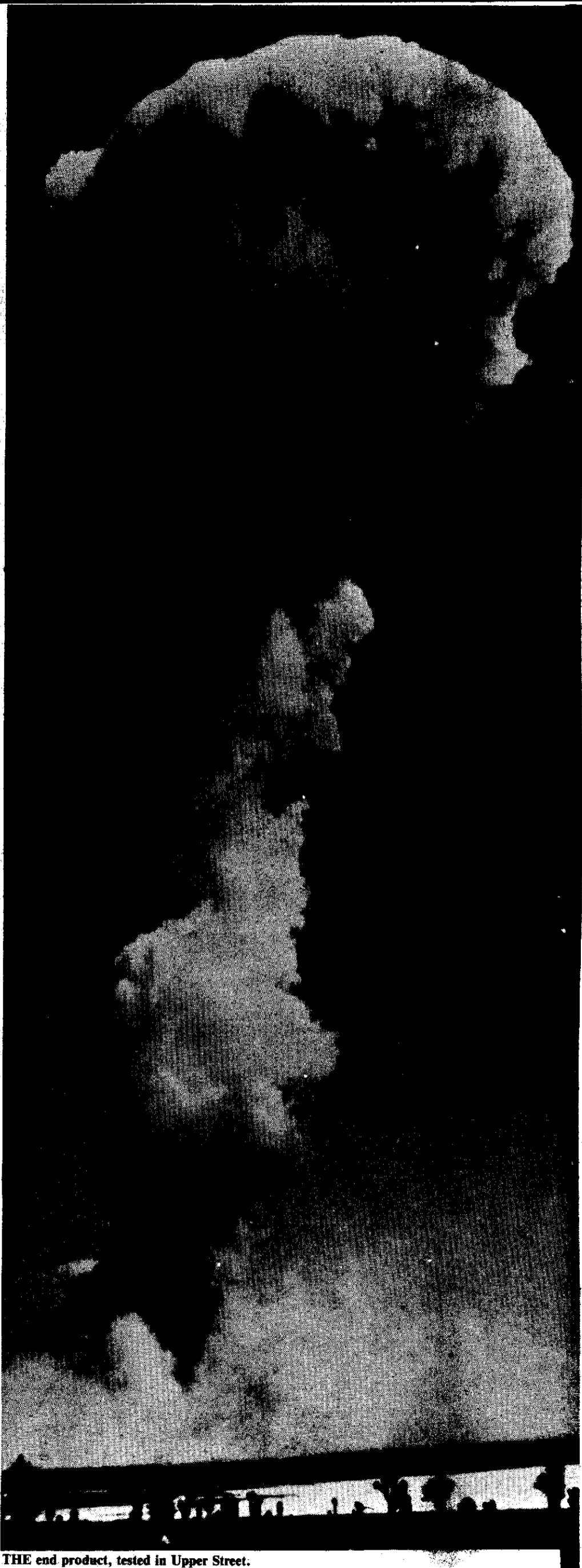
Or you could simply use your bomb as a deterrent. A discreet sticker on the door of your living room window saying 'This Home Protected by H-bomb' will discourage all sorts of unwelcome visitors, from left-wing paper sellers to secondary pickets.

## What to do with the waste

AFTER your A-bomb is completed you'll have a pile of moderately fatal radioactive waste. This has to be got rid of.

You can flush it down the toilet. Don't worry about polluting the ocean, there's so much radioactive waste there a few more bucketfuls won't make things much worse.

Alternatively you can bury the stuff, just as governments do all the time. Bury it in your back garden but it's best to put up a notice so the kids don't start playing near the waste. Otherwise you'll soon find the kids will have retired to bed.



THE end product, tested in Upper Street.

# A BAD YEAR FOR SOUTHALL

THE IRON FIST of imperialism smashed down on Southall's black community in April. There has been nothing like it on this side of the Irish sea since before World War Two. A whole community was placed under curfew, and men, women and children were attacked by coppers screaming racist obscenities and wielding batons.

This incredible attack is still continuing in the courts, where the Southall show trials drag on in a hollow attempt to provide legal justification for the violence of the Special Patrol Group on 23 April — violence which left Blair Peach dead in its wake.

The professional magistrates of Barnet Court and the police have of course received enthusiastic backing from Fleet Street, which has totally concealed the police riot from its readership.

However, we did get one opportunity to tell the truth about what happened. The Southall Campaign Committee was allowed half an hour of off-peak viewing time in September — a slot in the BBC 2 'Open Door' series.

Below is a small selection of the hundreds of letters we received from ordinary people — horrified at what had taken place.

**FROM A SURREY WOMAN**

I am interested in knowing more about the Southall Campaign Committee campaign which I first heard about while watching 'Open Door' on BBC 2.

However I do live a good few miles away from Southall and do not have my own transport also I have four young children, the youngest being 8-month-old twins, so time to myself is pretty well limited but I would like to spend it helping your campaign in any way you feel that I could under these circumstances.....

shocked and horrified by what I saw on BBC2 television last night. I would like to take the matter up with my Member of Parliament so I would appreciate it if you can supply me with a written resumé of the facts...

**FROM AN ARISTOCRAT IN ESSEX** [along with £500 cheque]

'Open Door' excellent, moving and a great reminder — how one needs to be reminded. No need to acknowledge.



Police block a Southall road, riot shields at the ready

**FROM BIRMINGHAM**

I am a fireman and at times work in close contact with the police, which made me all the more disgusted with the events of that fateful day. You can count on my support plus thousands more I'm sure in the Birmingham area... Keep your heads high, we're all behind you.

**FROM DEVON**

After watching your programme on BBC2 we would like to express the following. 1. Keep your black bastard sob stories to yourself. 2. Do not attack verbally or physically the police who govern OUR native country not YOURS. 3. Do not think you have the right to stop legal political meetings in this country.

**ANONYMOUS**

I enclose £1.00 from an OAP who congratulates you on your efforts. Thank goodness you did not allow the police to share your programme as they have everything going in life for them. The vast majority of people do not ever afford a solicitor when needed in their whole life time. The law is biased in this so-called democracy.



Southall women protest against the NF meeting

**FROM A POSTMAN IN DORSET**

Dear Friends — how you have suffered at the hands of the minority chicken shit asses in our community disgusted me and makes me write this useless letter just to show that we're not all like that. I will personally be attending the next anti-racist demonstration and would be pleased to help in any other way.

**FROM KENT**

I am 77 years old and an OAP. I well remember the brutality of London policemen, as I was involved in demonstrating against German Re-armament many years ago.

**FROM CARDIFF**

I feel truly horrified at the extent of police brutality used against you which makes me feel ashamed to be British. Let's hope that the savages who were responsible will one day get their just rewards.

**FROM BRIGHTON**

I have been following the news in Socialist Challenge but it took your brilliant 'Open Door' programme to shock me into reaching for my cheque book and sending you this message of solidarity.

What really appals me is the vindictiveness of the ruling class in that, not satisfied with smashing you up on the streets, they use their courts to grind you down as well.

**FROM NORTH LONDON**

Having just seen your 5.20 programme, the least I can do is the enclosed cheque. Too old at 76 to do more than say 'fight on!' — a socialist and 'white' sister.

**FROM A 12-YEAR-OLD YOUTH IN SURREY**

After watching your programme on the BBC2 series 'Open Door' I think it would be worth my while to join your campaign. I think that the deplorable behaviour of the police was unworthy and immensely biased.

I am in full support of your

**FROM A STUDENT NURSE IN WALSALL**

For a number of years I have been a passive anti-racist, but in view of your programme I now feel that the time to act, the time to stop wearing badges and carry a banner in its place. The police showed themselves in your programme and at Notting Hill, Ladywood [Birmingham] and many other incidents to be fascist extremists, the tools of the bourgeois dictators.

**FROM STIRLINGSHIRE**

I watched your 'Open Door' programme on television last night and felt the strongest of urges to write to you... Here in Scotland there is a distinct lack of anti-racist activity and I worry that if the NF get this far North there is no organised opposition to work at spreading an alternative idea.

Already I can detect traces of Nazism around here [the hangman's noose hung on a lamppost outside an Asian shop for example]. It saddens me to see peaceful people victimised for no reason whatsoever. Also the People Unite premises which the kids had got going, wrecked completely for nothing but malice...

**FROM CORNWALL**

Dear Sirs, as an ex-naval officer who has served with Indian troops under his control I was



The Southall Youth Movement marching to the Town Hall early in the afternoon

**FROM LEICESTER**

I am writing after seeing your 'Open Door' programme twice recently on the television. May I say it moved me to tears — and angered me beyond words — this was the common experience of a lot of my friends and colleagues here in Leicester.

I find I am ashamed—and bitterly — of my own cultural identity, and feel the approach of separatism the only answer in the black community if the disgraceful and unforgivable outrages such as happened in your streets is not constantly to recur.

motivations and will always be so. I think it is regrettable that the Nazis were ever allowed to form in this country, but now that they are here, I agree that everything must be done to stop them.

**FROM ABERDEEN**

and disgust for the way you were treated by the police [for whom I usually have the utmost respect and admiration], the 'blind eye' turned by the authorities and the escort given to the National Front afterwards.



Hiding from the police



Police on Southall Broadway



An Asian boy pays last respects to Blair Peach

**FROM Co. DOWN**

Your programme really woke me up. I can't understand why the police were so aggressively hostile. They may not like left wingers, coloured people, gays and others, but surely they must realise that it is bad policy to show this attitude in public. Yet they appear to have got away with it.

The police in Ulster also are not as pure as they would like to be seen. There is a notorious interrogation centre called Castlereagh where those detained have thrown themselves through windows to end 'interrogation' and where doctors attending detainees have repeatedly testified to injuries which could not have been self-inflicted.



BADGES now available in four stunning colours for only 20p each (plus postage). All proceeds to Southall defence fund. Bulk orders welcomed; one-third discount on 50 or over. Send cash/cheque with order to: Badges, Southall Campaign Committee, c/o 46 High Street, Southall, Middx.





SOAMES reviewing the police and army in Salisbury

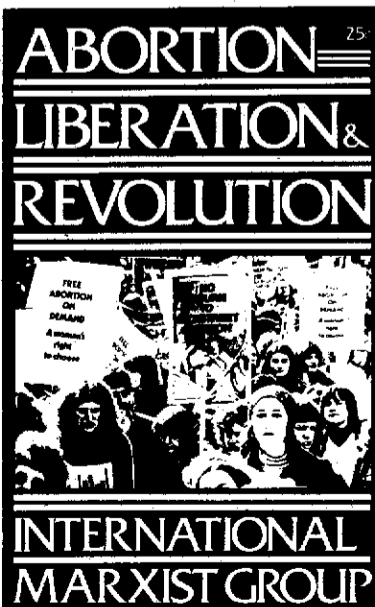
## The fight for abortion rights

Abortion, Liberation and Revolution  
IMG, 25p

THIS PAMPHLET outlines clearly why the struggle for free abortion on demand, an essential right if women are to have control over their bodies, is an integral part of the fight for the working class to have control over their lives.

It does so by setting the struggle for women's abortion rights in an historical, international and class struggle context. The sections identify how control of their own fertility has been taken away from women, and what has happened in Britain show how in capitalist society the freedom of women to control their own fertility is determined by the interests of the ruling class. For example: 'US aid to Bolivia was promised in return for population control,' and the 1967 Abortion Act was introduced in Britain '... when the medical profession was beginning to be concerned about the effects that thalidomide was having.'

Although reference to the Corrie Bill is made only in passing, there is a very practical section dealing with



how we should fight for women's abortion rights emphasising the need '... to work together on specific demands and in specific areas ...' with

'... people who are willing to be active in the struggle for abortion rights but who may not call themselves feminists or socialists.'

Abortion, Liberation and Revolution is useful in that it gives a broad overview of the issues involved in the fight for abortion rights. However, in dealing with such a wide range of issues in a brief pamphlet there is little developed argument, and clarity and brevity are sometimes achieved at the expense of glossing over important details.

One of the sixteen pages is taken up almost entirely with a full page picture of Marie Stopes, under which is written, 'In the early 20th century the work of Marie Stopes began to make safe and reliable contraceptives available to working class women.'

This of a woman who justifies her views about contraception saying, '... society allows the diseased, the racially negligent, the thriftless, the careless, the feeble-minded, the very lowest and worst members of the community to produce innumerable tens of thousands of stunted, warped and inferior infants.'

ANTOINETTE SATON

# The Rhodesia Saga A Letter from Soames

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Government House,  
Salisbury,  
Southern Rhodesia!!

To:  
Her Majesty,  
The Queen,  
Buckingham Palace,  
London SW1

Respected Ma'am;

This is the first of my fortnightly reports to Your Majesty on the state of affairs in our 'newest' colony. Given the special interest of the Queen Mother in the future of our brethren, I would be grateful if she could be shown these letters as well.

As Your Majesty is aware, I was not in favour of my hasty despatch to Salisbury. It would have been more prudent to have ensured agreement on the cease-fire before I arrived. Peter Carrington's insistence, however, won the day, helped by Ian Gilmour's strong, silent act. The Blessed Margaret, as you know, is extremely susceptible to advice from knights and peers!

## Moved

So I arrived and was greeted by Dad Gibbs. The man was in tears. He is a likeable old buff and was clearly moved, though he would have preferred me to arrive decked out in plumes rather than my loyal old trilby.

On my first day as Governor I received visits from the Bishop, Air Marshal McLaren (who is Deputy Commander of Combined Operations) and the Police Chief, Allum. The Bishop was in excellent spirits and assured me that his party would win if the elections were 'fair and free'. I asked 'would or should', but he missed the point.

At the end of our discussion he said that if things went badly he was sure we could find a diocese for him in a safe, white zone in Britain. The two cities he mentioned were Cheltenham and Hove. I have dropped a note to Willie about this so that there are no problems at Immigration.

McLaren and Allum were not very hopeful about the results of a 'free and fair election'. They said that unless we intervened decisively the Patriotic Front would sail to victory. McLaren was extremely straightforward. He said that if I did not intervene he was certain that the Afrikaaners would. Allum backed him up and said that while he was pleased to see me, the real decisions were being made in Pretoria.

## Disagreeable

A rather disagreeable episode took place while I was sipping the excellent port which Your Majesty was kind enough to send me. The bongo-wongos who back Nkomo

organised a demonstration demanding that I order the release of all political prisoners. Not only was I still digesting the jugged hare, but Tiny Rowland had given me an explicit assurance that Nkomo's boys would be kept on a leash till I had time to digest the political situation. Have written to Peter Carrington telling him to give N a ticking off.

Now I must come to the real problem. The reason I insisted on wearing my trilby rather than the more traditional cocked hat was not out of mere personal preference. It simply seemed more fitting in view of the fact that we have hardly any forces on the ground. I have been given no power by Your Majesty's government to enforce my authority. The local security forces are controlled from Pretoria, and it seems unlikely that I can prevent any raids on Zambia and Mozambique.

So in a nutshell, Ma'am, I must plead for more troops to be sent. I know all the objections, but if we're going to run our own show without any pesky interference I must have more men in the field. The merchant bankers from the City who are here are missing in the same point before they will make their necessary financial commitment. Next President will call for the Americans to lift sanctions immediately, a timely but I'm afraid they will come back in the same way.

I've been thinking ever since I arrived. The natives regard that as a bad omen. And I must confess how much I miss Dickie Mountbatten. His advice would have been invaluable at this time.

Your most loyal and obedient servant,

Soames

PS. Kaunda is anxious that Your Majesty should visit Southern Rhodesia as soon as possible, but I would advise against it because of the security problem. Though a visit by the Prince of Wales should be seriously considered:

PPS. I have just had London on the phone. They inform me that the talks are going well and that, in particular, Tiny Rowland is very optimistic. But 20,000 armed blackies still remain in the bush. I am sceptical that they will ever agree to integrate themselves under our command.

The Mau Mau, as Your Majesty no doubt recalls, only handed in their arms when Kenyatta was firmly ensconced in power. Nkomo and Mugabe are a long way from that and there will be many more deaths before that happens.

One last request: I would be grateful if Your Majesty would intervene personally to ensure that we are spared a personal visit by the PM. There are too many problems as it is...

## Worker writers' appeal

AN APPEAL from the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers to the literature panel of the Arts Council to co-fund the running of an office and a co-ordinator's wages in conjunction with the Gulbenkian Foundation has been rejected. As a result the Federation is flat broke — last month saw the end of its present grant from the Gulbenkian, which is unable to consider a re-application until June 1980.

The Federation links hundreds of working class writers, who have joined forces across the country to read and publish new work. The lack of immediate finance means that it will be unable to continue developing,

fostering and encouraging the growth in working class and socialist literature that has occurred over the last five years. This is because the Arts Council 'considered the whole corpus of work contained little, if any, solid literary merit'.

The Federation is appealing for help through donations and also sales of its first anthology, Writing, which has 256 pages, is illustrated throughout, and costs only £1 plus 35p p& p. Donations and orders (cheques and POs made payable to the Federation) should be sent to E Floor, Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1LF. The book can also be ordered through bookshops.

# THE HOLIDAY

By Liz Curtis

My very dear friends,

I am writing these lines to let you in the free world know what life is like for us here. Perhaps you will be able to do something for us, perhaps you will be able to bring pressure to bear on influential people in your country. Or perhaps you won't. Perhaps they don't want to know.

Still, I thought it was worth trying to give you an idea of our lives, to give you a few ordinary details — the sort of thing we are so used to that most of the time we don't question it, we don't imagine there is any other way of living.

What made me, for a moment, realise the absurdity of our position was when I decided to invite my dear friend Susanna to stay. Nothing extraordinary, you might think. She lives in District Y, which is under the jurisdiction of our Government, and only a few hundred miles from the Capital City, where I live as you know. Our cities are both on the national railway system.

But District Y is under martial law. As you will appreciate, this makes contact very difficult — especially as Susanna and her husband Michael are Dissidents. I think perhaps Susanna will be able to get through the border checks. It would be easier of course if she brought her little daughter — that would seem less threatening to the guards, they would see her just as travelling with her child for the purpose of a family visit. But on the other hand that would spoil the real purpose of her visit — which is for a rest, to get away from District Y and from all its problems, which include the problems of rearing children there.

Picture the border between District Y and Districts W, X, and Z. Granted they only do spot checks on the travellers, and there are only a handful of security personnel on the gates. But look harder and you see closed circuit TV cameras. Behind the wooden walls of the transit channels, guards are watching a row of screens, scanning each face as it passes, checking bodies and packages. Woe betide if you so much as have a political book showing in your pocket or your bag. Far worse if yours is one of the many faces the guards have committed to memory — if yours is the face of a Suspect. (They wouldn't have any evidence against you, of course, or you wouldn't have got as far as the border — but if you are a Suspect, they want to stop you travelling, they want to stop you going to W, X and Z and telling what you know about the abnormal conditions in District Y.)

Certainly Michael would never get through, though he needs a holiday as much as Susanna, if not more. Why wouldn't he get through? Even if they don't know he is coming? Well, he works on an underground paper, the main underground paper. In strict terms that is not illegal, but of course it's enough to make you a suspect. Your loyalty to the regime is definitely in question. And Michael was in jail for a long period, held without trial. They had to let him out in the end along with many others after international protests. But they know his face very well, and they are waiting to pounce. If they could find an excuse for jailing him again they would. And meantime they certainly won't let him out of District Y. Not because of what he would do, but because of what he would say.

If they knew he was coming, there is not a chance that he would slip through the net. A hand would reach out and stop him as he passed through the security channels. He would be taken into a back room where they would take his details, ask for identification. (Even though identity cards are not issued, still you have to carry some kind of ID, or its absence is grounds for suspicion.) Then they would feed his details into the computer and in a few seconds back comes the information. 'Michael A. Dissident. Underground journalist. Jailed for so many years.' And so on. They would keep him prisoner for several days, then issue him with a document forbidding him to leave District Y, and send him back to his city. They might even try to trump up some charge to send him back to jail. They don't have to worry about evidence, as they did away with trial by jury long ago. So you see, for Michael to contemplate a holiday is to contemplate going to jail.

And if they didn't know he was coming? Well, they might pick him up in the transit channels, and they might not. Probably they would. His is the kind of face the guards are told to memorise — because of who he is, I mean. And if they hadn't memorised it, well, he is a young man, he wears jeans — not a suit, he doesn't have the money for a suit, except for his wedding suit, because as you know it's hard for Dissidents to make a living even if they don't



Toulouse-Lautrec

work on underground papers, and anyway underground papers pay nothing, people work on them for love, or idealism, or because they care about humanity, or whatever way you want to put it.

In a way it's an academic question, because how do you arrange for someone to come on holiday from District Y without the guards knowing? Tell me how it is possible. I would love to know. Life would be so much easier. You see, they will know Susanna is coming, and that might make them stop even her. She needs a holiday so much. She is so tired. She is only twenty but she looks much older. It's the strain.

But the mail going into District Y is monitored. Millions of letters every day all scanned by machines, their contents photographed, fine needles spun to extract the contents and then replace them again so that you would not know they had been touched. Usually you never think about it. You take it for granted that the letters you write must contain innuendoes, hints, suggestions, allusions, never facts or names or descriptions or analysis — or truth. But when for a brief

moment you think about it — well, it's terrible, devastating, to think that you cannot sit down and write what you really want to say. Even photographs — I have no photographs of my beloved friends in District Y. I cannot carry with me a plastic folder full of photos of my dear ones, as other people do. Why? Because they dare not have their pictures taken. Even wedding photos, christening photos, have been taken by the guards and put on file, and often never even returned — though with all their machinery you know they could copy them and return them if they had any heart.

I have a phone, of course. Susanna and Michael don't have a phone. They can't afford one. But they can always find one to use if they want to phone me up. But then, my phone is tapped. Yes, even though I live in the Capital City, not in District Y. At least, I think it's tapped, I'm pretty sure. This is one of the problems, never being able to find out for certain if your mail is read, your phone tapped, but always having to live with the likelihood, the near certainty, the logical probability, that someone is listening, watching.

How do I know? Well, I have never hidden my feelings where Dissidents are concerned. I have always preferred to live with the unease of knowing you are being watched, of knowing that one day the knock may come at my door too, that my carpets may be ripped up and dear pictures torn off the walls — rather than live with the unease of going against the dictates of my conscience, the dictates of humanity.

So I have shown my face at protests, I have had my name taken and I have been photographed many times. And mine are the sort of views that go on file on the Central Computer. That's what the guards are there for — didn't you realise — to monitor people like me. Though God knows they must have trouble keeping up, there are so many of us now. Besides, I know for a fact that most of the details of my life are on file. My sister applied for a job with the State once. She is not at all a Dissident, as you know. Far from it. But they didn't give her the job because of my record. Poor thing — she never asks any questions, she keeps her head right down, but still her name is on the Central Computer, because she is a relative of mine.

This has been going on too long to think of it as a game. There is no fun in it, no glamour. I have been in it too long to enjoy subterfuge, coded messages, dodging the guards, worrying whether I will be allowed to keep my job. And for Susanna it's a thousand times worse. She has no job — how could she with two small children, even if there were any jobs for such as her, an outlaw in effect. Michael has hardly any money. Her father is nearly dead — he turned to drink from the strain. Three of her brothers are in jail, and the other two are only twelve and six years old. Her mother is old with worry. And on top of it all is the martial law, the guards, the surveillance, and worrying how long Michael will remain out of jail. You can understand why she needs a holiday.

I suppose I will have to write her, and disguise what I am saying about the plans for her holiday. It would be so lovely if she could come here, and rest, and walk in the park, and go to the pictures, and chat, and discuss, and analyse, and maybe meet a few people and tell them about District Y. Though that would be a small part of it — the main thing is for her to have a rest, and go back refreshed and full of the energy they need so much.

Then she will phone me, and we will finalise the arrangements, though without ever saying exactly which day she will come, or on which train. But then there is a problem. If I don't know when she is coming, how will I know if she has got through? How will I know they haven't held her, that the guards are not interrogating her, suspecting her of being on a mission for the Dissidents?

I suppose Michael can phone to check if she is here. And if not, we can start phoning the guards — though it could be days before they admit they are holding her. So you see, there are always worries, always fears.

Well, my dear friends, I hope these lines have shown you a little of what life is like here, and most importantly, what life is like for Susanna and Michael, and for so many in District Y. I have heard you talking about Dissidents with sympathy, but I'm not sure if you understand.

You will understand by now, I hope, where that district is that I call District Y. For you and I live in the same Capital City, indeed we live in the same street. I felt you might understand better if I wrote this down and posted it through your letterbox. It might make you spare a few minutes to think about it. You never bothered when I tried to talk to you.

You know that I am not talking about Eastern Europe. You will perhaps understand now when I say that your free world is our police state. And I hasten to add that this is not an essay on psychiatric disorder, or alienation, or *la condition humaine*. I am writing about the here and now, about reality. Reality that can be changed if only you will join us.

With hopeful best wishes from your friend.  
London 1979.

P.S. I hesitated for a few days before sending you this, and in the meantime I have heard that Michael has been taken to jail again. They have nothing on him, as he signed no confession despite the torture, but they could hold him on remand for many months. So there is no question of Susanna leaving Belfast just now, with food parcels to make for him and his laundry to collect, and less money than ever and the children to mind. So there we are. Maybe we'll try again next year.

## UNDER REVIEW

The Monocled Mutineer  
William Allison and John Fairley  
Quartet Books £1.95

ON THE eve of the great Passchendaele offensive of September 1917, when hundreds of thousands of soldiers died in appalling conditions, 100,000 British soldiers at the Allied base camp at Etaples mutinied. They fought pitched battles with the military police, shot officers and military policemen known for their brutality, and took over the town of Etaples.

The leader of the revolt was the incredible Percy Toplis, at that time only 19 years old. When the revolt was over, the revenge of the authorities was savage. Dozens of men were shot out of hand.

The story of the mutiny at Etaples has been one of the army's best kept secrets. It was not until 1978, after questions asked in the House of Commons by Labour MP Eric Moonman, that the government even admitted that the revolt had taken place. *The Monocled Mutineer* reveals the whole story, together with the amazing tale of Toplis himself.

### Disaffection

The revolt at Etaples took place against the background of the war weariness and disaffection of the Allied armies. After three years of war, the jingoism of 1914 had been replaced by cynicism and revolt. The French army had broken into an openly political rebellion, led by members of the Socialist Party. A Russian division fighting on the Western Front near the Swiss border declared for the Bolsheviks and refused to fight. And in the confused situation of the Western Front, hundreds of deserters organised themselves in bands, hiding from the military police.

But the immediate cause of the uprising at Etaples was the ruthlessness of the army instructors, and the savagery of the military discipline. No one knows how many British soldiers were executed for disciplinary offences at the Etaples camp. But just before his death in 1978, the famous dance leader Victor Sylvester revealed how he had been forced to take part in five shootings at the camp:

### Struggling

'The first man I had to help kill was a private in my own regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders... The victim was brought out from a shed and led struggling to a chair to which he was then bound and a white handkerchief placed over his heart as the target area... The tears were rolling down my cheeks as he went on trying to free himself from the ropes attaching him to the chair.

'I aimed blindly and when the gunsmoke had cleared away we were further horrified to see that, although wounded, the intended victim was still alive. Still blindfolded, he was trying

# THE MONOCLED MUTINEER

## The life and death of the incredible Percy Toplis— mutineer, racketeer, master of disguise



to make a run for it still strapped to the chair. The blood was running freely from a chest wound. An officer in charge stepped forward to put the finishing touch with a revolver held to the poor man's temple.'

Such events as this infuriated the troops, as did the privileges of the officers.

Only officers were allowed in to the town of Etaples itself, and the camp commander, Brigadier-General Thompson, spent a large part of 1917 trying to establish an officers' hospital for venereal diseases. The patience of the soldiers snapped on 9 September 1917, when 1,500 soldiers burst out of the camp into the town of Etaples, brushing aside a detachment ordered to stop them.

The revolt was spontaneous and

unorganised. It was given organisation and its demands were formulated by Private Percy Toplis. At first, some of the men molested nurses on the camp; Toplis organised a detachment to guard the women's quarters and issued a general instruction:

'Leave the women alone — get the military police'.

Toplis derived his authority from his extraordinary personality and reputation. Although between the ages of 14 and 16 he was a trimer, since the age of eleven he had been in trouble with the law as a confidence trickster and master of impersonation. 'Private' Toplis he was only occasionally. In the confusion of the Western Front he spent most of his

time wearing the uniform and gaining the privileges of an officer, hence his penchant for wearing a monocle.

He organised himself unofficial leave, returned to England, impersonated a war hero (on the strength of which he obtained numerous financial advantages) before getting fed up and going back to France.

On the second day of the revolt at Etaples Brigadier-General Thompson decided to tour the camp in a staff car. He soon came upon Percy Toplis talking to a crowd of soldiers. Thompson attempted to address the troops, but they surrounded his car and shouted him down.

Toplis jumped onto the car and dictated the soldiers' demands, for the opening of the town of Etaples, an

all-round improvement of conditions, the ending of punitive drill, and an increase in pay. Eventually the authorities capitulated to most of the demands, moving out many of the army instructors and military police. But when the men ended their revolt, the court martials and executions began.

### Disappeared

Toplis, of course, promptly disappeared. He made his way back to Britain in disguise, hunted by the Special Branch and military intelligence. But the most extraordinary part of Toplis' exploits was just beginning.

Within a few weeks of returning to his home he was arrested for passing dud cheques to a jeweller. Totally unabashed, he gave a false name to the police who were unable to establish his real identity.

When he came out of jail in 1919, being short of money he unbelievably rejoined the army under his own name, being sent to a Service Corps depot near Bristol. This depot controlled large stocks of petrol, in short supply to civilians at that time. Toplis participated in the organisation of a massive black market racket to transport owners in Bristol, until he was transferred to the army's main supply depot in Salisbury Plain.

Here he lived an even more extraordinary life. Organising more rackets, he paid other soldiers to do menial chores, openly masqueraded as a variety of senior ranks, and spent most of the week in London, living an affluent life in 'society', and returning for Thursday parades.

### Shot Dead

But eventually he was intercepted on a train by military police; imprisoned, he escaped and joined the RAF for six months. Discovered again, and on the run, he was framed for a murder he did not commit, and eventually caught and shot dead by the police. His fatal mistake was releasing a policeman who had recognised him, enabling the alarm to be raised. He was buried in an unmarked grave in Penrith, where he was cornered and killed.

So what are we to make of Percy Toplis? From his eleventh birthday, when he was birched for trying to swindle a tailor, he loathed and despised authority. Police officers, judges, generals — Percy hated the whole damn lot of them. He took them on in the only way he knew, using his own talents and wits.

As someone who knew him at the time remarks in the book, 'today he would be regarded as one of those intellectual socialists'. He was a walking personification of Robert Frost's maxim that 'freedom is the willingness to be bold'. In 1980 a group of ex-servicemen are planning to place a memorial stone at Toplis' unmarked grave with the inscription: 'In Grateful Memory of Percy Toplis: The Monocled Mutineer'.

PHIL HEARSE

# ROSE TINTED SPECS ON SPORT

Big Red Diary 1980, Politics in Sport  
Pluto Press, £1.95

THE NEW Big Red Diary is a disappointment. It is as well produced as its deservedly successful predecessors, probably better. But it provokes the suspicion that Pluto is now routinely repeating a profitable formula rather than giving us anything new.

Perhaps the subject matter is part of the problem. There is certainly plenty of interesting information, especially on women in sport, but it seems as though the book has been compiled by a team divided between apolitical sporting types and sedentary politicians.

The sporties have smuggled in Paavo Nurmi the runner, Fausto Coppi the cyclist, and Babe Ruth the baseball player — all three admirable,

but none very political.

The politicians reply with a picture of Lenin playing chess and, more convincingly, an account of the war between Honduras and El Salvador started by a disputed goal at football. They quote Orwell pooh-poohing the idea of international goodwill in sport. Fair enough, but they should also record the football matches between British and German soldiers in the trenches in 1914. Sport united the working class rather better than the Second International.

The number of irritating omissions reinforces the feeling that this is a moneymaking venture rather than an attempt to say much about its chosen subject. Kerry Packer is cautiously praised for raising cricketers' wages (wrongly in my view), so why no mention of the 1973 professionals' boycott of Wimble-

don?

And why no quotations from Muhammed Ali on Black Power or Vietnam? Why nothing on the black English footballers? Why no martial arts? Or bullfighting? Or even Edward Heath winning the Admiral's Cup? Why no account of Oliver Cromwell stamping out cricket in Ireland (or didn't they know about it)?

Perhaps these are just my own idiosyncrasies, but for one omission there is no excuse: the D'Oliveira affair. Basil D'Oliveira, one of South Africa's greatest cricketers, had the 'misfortune' to be black. After years of struggling to make his mark at home, he came to this country and eventually began a Test career for England at an age when most players would be thinking about retirement.

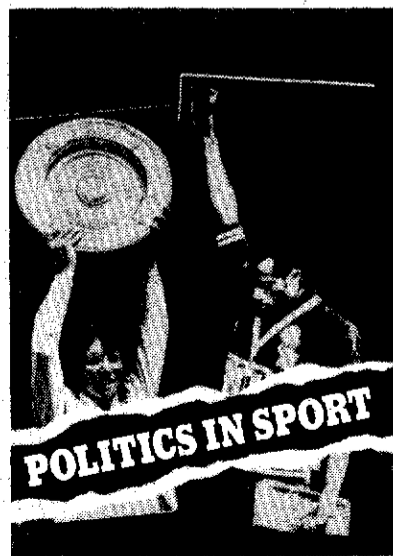
But when the time came to tour

South Africa the English cricketing establishment dropped D'Oliveira from the team. After protests he was reinstated, only for South Africa to refuse him entry. The tour was cancelled and England has never played South Africa again.

Finally, and again in contrast to previous years, there is an unfortunate number of errors. It is correct to point out that women can't be sportsmen, but neither are all the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia Czechs. Billie-Jean King now has 20 Wimbledon titles and Hungary scored seven goals at Wembley, not six. The Mexico Olympics were in 1968 not 1960, and Frank Worrell was appointed West Indian captain in 1960, not 1961-2.

Surely a diary should get its dates right.

RICHARD CARVER



# Socialist Challenge

## REMEMBER THOSE WHO'LL SPEND XMAS BEHIND BARS

### Christmas in Ruzyně Prison

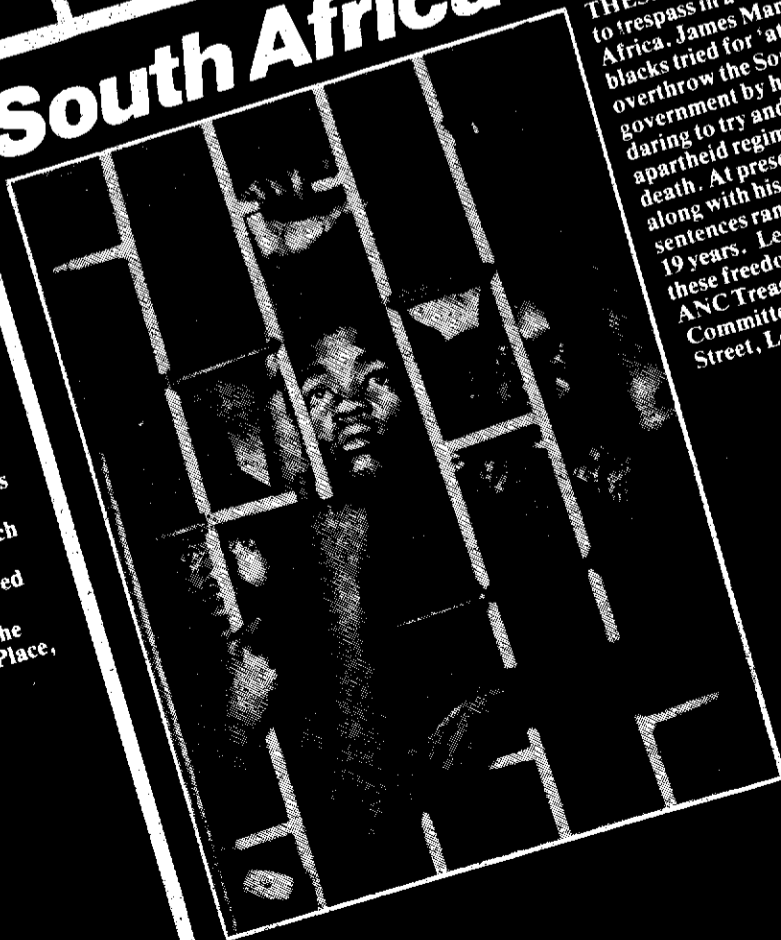


ON 23 October at the Prague Municipal Court Petr Uhl, Vaclav Havel, Vaclav Benda, Otka Bednarova and Jiri Dienstbier were sentenced to a total of nineteen and half years in prison for supposed 'subversive activities'. Their real 'crime' was to try and defend the Czechoslovak constitution and fight for civil liberties. They will spend Xmas in Ruzyně prison. Letters can be sent to them via Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, c/o Vladimir Derer, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

### China

WEI JINSHENG, a leader of the democratic movement in China, was sentenced to 15 years. His 'crime' was to be one of the editors of the unofficial journal Exploration which dared to argue that the majority of people in China today were deprived of power. Letters of protest can be sent to the Chinese Embassy, 31 Portland Place, London W1.

### South Africa



THESE THREE boys' sole crime was to trespass in a white area of South Africa. James Mange, one of twelve blacks tried for 'attempting to overthrow the South African government by high treason', for daring to try and overthrow the apartheid regime, was sentenced to death. At present he is still in prison along with his comrades who face sentences ranging from 14 to 19 years. Letters can be sent to these freedom fighters via the ANC Treason Trial Defence Committee, c/o Charlotte Street, London W1.

### Armagh Jail

THIRTY SEVEN of the women political prisoners in Armagh jail will be spending twenty one hours locked up in their cells for demanding political status for republican prisoners in Armagh and in H Block. These women are denied access to reading educational and writing materials, and are not allowed to freely associate. The daily regime of harassment and beatings by both male and female screws has become a way of life for these women whose 'crime' consists of supporting the republican movement in its desire to rid Ireland of the British Army. Addresses for Xmas cards to send to women in Armagh and men in H Block via the Irish Republican Socialist Party, c/o Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.