

Workshop

SOCIALIST

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No. 4

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IRELAND'S BIGGEST
POLITICAL



25p

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BURNING ISSUES:

BONAPARTISM IS NOT A PERMANENT STATE OF AFFAIRS STANDING MID-WAY BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM. BONAPARTISM IS A REGIME OF CRISIS WHICH CAN IN NO WAY RESOLVE THE CRISIS OF PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS. IN BRITAIN, HOWEVER, THE STRUGGLE DEVELOPS UNINTERRUPTEDLY TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY CLIMAX WHICH WILL FORCE THE TORIES TO RESORT TO EXTREME MEASURES OF REPRESSION.

THIS PRESENT CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTS THE DEMISE OF POST-WAR CONSENSUS AS PRACTISED BY BOTH MAJOR PARTIES, TORY AND LABOUR. ADAPTING TO THE CHANGES IN WORLD CAPITALISM AND OUR HOME GROWN VARIETY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS EMBRACED AN IDEOLOGY CONSISTING OF BRUTAL MONETARISM COUPLED WITH A STRENGTHENING OF THE STATE APPARATUS. THIS ALLIED WITH A SERIES OF MORAL CAMPAIGNS ARE CYNICALLY DESIGNED TO CONFUSE AND DIVIDE THE GOVERNED. THIS COLD RUTHLESS APPLICATION OF IDEOLOGY IS MANIPULATED BY EMPLOYING ADVANCED MARKETING TECHNIQUES AIDED BY AN ENTHUSIASTIC MEDIA.

ANARCHISM IS BY DEFINITION ANTI-STATIST, NATIONALISM IS BY DEFINITION EITHER THE CREATION OF A STATE TO REPRESENT A NATION, OR THE GLORIFICATION OF AN EXISTING STATE. NATION STATES ARE ARTIFICIALLY CREATED OUT OF AN AMALGAM OF PEOPLES THAT MAKE UP A STATE AND CONSIDER THEMSELVES A NATION.

NATIONALISM, AS THE ADORATION OF A STATE, APPEALS TO THE BOURGEOISIE AND FORMS THE BACKBONE OF FASCISM BECAUSE IT IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CLASS STRUGGLE AND GLOSSES OVER DIFFERENCES OF CLASS INTEREST WITHIN A NATION.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WAS ESTABLISHED BY TROTSKY AND HIS SUPPORTERS BECAUSE THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL, THEN LED BY JOSEPH STALIN, HAD COMPLETELY BETRAYED ITS ORIGINAL TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM WORLDWIDE.

IT AROSE FROM THE HISTORICAL NECESSITY TO ESTABLISH THE CONTINUITY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR MARXIST LEADERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS FOLLOWING THE BETRAYALS OF STALINISM AND THE RESULTING DEFEATS INFLECTED BY FASCISM, PARTICULARLY IN GERMANY, ITALY AND SPAIN.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IS REPRESENTED IN BRITAIN TODAY BY THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND ITS YOUTH MOVEMENT, THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS.

IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT THE TRAINED TROTSKYIST FIGHTS TO BUILD UP THE SPIRIT AND MILITANCY OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST THE CAPITALIST STATE. HE OR SHE FIGHTS AGAINST ALL ATTEMPTS TO TURN UNIONS INTO CORPORATIST BODIES TIED TO THE STATE.

BUT TRADE UNIONS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF SETTING UP THE

PROLETARIAT (RULE OF THE WORKING CLASS) AND

WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. THEY ARE

MEMBERS

BANKS, AND TRADE

WO

A WOODEN LEG CALLED SMITH

Christmas Day celebrations; the best and most important thing about them was "Mary Poppins" on the box in the afternoon. This Christmas I had been feeling guiltier than ever; getting drunk and stuffing myself with grub whilst there is so much starvation and suffering going on in the world. I think this is the last Christmas my conscience will allow me to celebrate in these "traditional" ways. Only one good thing came from them and, as I said, that was Mary Poppins.

The film, as Auntie Beeb no doubt dictated, was happy and cheerful and no doubt supposed to take our minds off all the troubles that surround us. It certainly was positive but the powers that be made a slight miscalculation - the film was also POLITICALLY SUBVERSIVE.

The film is about two kids, Michael and Jenny, who are basically ignored and unloved by their parents - their mother too busy being overtly involved in political games (she sings a song called "Votes For Women" with the cook and maid - both women - before meekly submitting to her husband on his return from work). The father is too wound up in his own career in a City bank. Thus, the children are constantly cared for by nannies. Mary Poppins is the new nanny.

It soon transpires that Mary Poppins' friend Bert is a hunt saboteur, as he gallantly rescues a fox from the claws and teeth of hunting dogs. Together, Mary and Bert show the two children the optimistic, cheerful things about life, things that their father and mother have never allowed them to see.

Their father, Mr Banks, is not at all happy about all this

and describes Mary Poppins as arriving "with chaos in her wake"; we realise she is not concerned with Law and Order at all, but a natural order where there are no rules, but still proper ways to behave, and has an honest and pure concept of what is right and wrong. She skillfully persuades him to take his children on a visit to his bank.

In the following scene, grim-looking characters (Bankers) tell us that "when falls the Bank of England, England falls" (thus giving peace-lovers the first idea of Stop The City), and insists that little Michael buys some shares with his tuppence pocket money in order that he can have a part in such things as "railways through Africa" (obviously, the bank was Barclays) and other such forms of colonial exploitation and repression.

But Michael is not fooled by all this devious talk, and insists that he uses the tuppence to feed the birds on the steps of Saint Pauls Cathedral. The Bank Manager, in a display of excessive greed, snatches the tuppence off the child, who demands: "GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY!" He is overheard by two customers who overreact to this and, through greedy fear, demand their money back as well, causing hysteria; people panic and there is an immediate run on the bank, resulting in total disruption to the City, without a single smoke flare or smashed window.

THE CITY IS STOPPED THROUGH THE INNOCENCE OF A CHILD WHO MERELY WISHES TO USE HIS MONEY TO FEED BIRDS.

Mr. Banks is, of course, dismissed from the bank. But as soon as the burden of his job is lifted he is free from the burden of a lifetime. He dances about, sings "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" and declares:

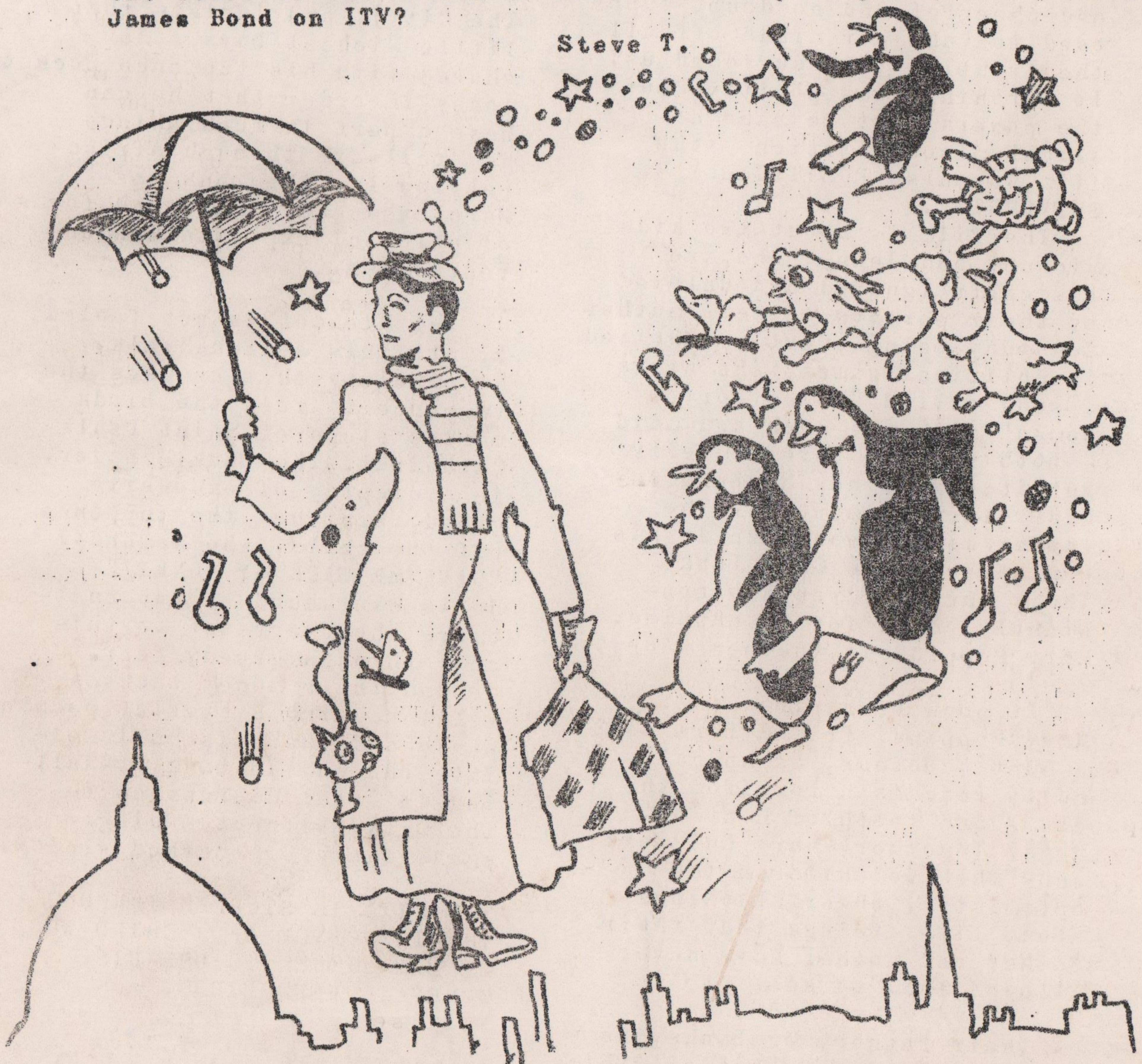
"The other day I met a man with a wooden leg named Smith.
Oh really? What was the other leg called?"

The bank manager dies laughing and another blow for freedom and liberty has been struck.

The two parents are reunited with their kids, begin to treat them as people, and the false cares of this greedy system are cast aside. The sun is shining and all the City bankers are out in the fields flying kites. This is all because of the determined and insistent positive attitude of Mary Poppins; she fought with love and never faltered. She had the strongest weapon and, as always, the enemy realised this, followed her good example and joined the battle: the good versus the bad. It is a battle where there can only be one set of winners, and nobody ever dies.

On Christmas afternoon, I saw the only true way to overcome the evils of the State. I wonder how many of you were watching James Bond on ITV?

Steve T.



READERS DIGEST

It's quite strange, don't you think, that just as people were beginning to question the existence of food mountains when people in other countries are starving, and other facets of our economic decadence, that Ethiopia suddenly appears in newspapers, radio and TV in a sudden deluge of babies dying and old people with flies crawling over their faces; horrific images, and true too, but why such a sudden interest from the media? After all, people have been starving in Ethiopia for ten years.

Some interesting 'facts' can be found if you look hard enough. An agency set up by the United Nations to give advance warning about famine has been predicting famine in Ethiopia for about three years and have been totally ignored. The USA and UK governments have refused aid to Ethiopia and Chad (another place where people die from hunger) yet have given aid to other African countries; Ethiopia and Chad are Marxist - most of the others are not.

The British government has been a loud voice clamouring denunciations of the Ethiopian government for allowing their people to starve while they ship in whiskey for themselves. How many banquets does the Prime Minister go to? How often does she eat out of silver spoons while hospitals and schools are closed, while prescription charges go up, while basic food items have VAT added, etc etc? Who suffers most from these decisions? Also while decrying Ethiopia, what about South Africa and the profit gained from being involved with apartheid?

Economics is a human invention, once again profit is more important than life, economic progress more important than suffering. There is enough food to feed everyone in the world now but it is just a few humans that stop millions of people eating. All governments, whether "left" or "right" do it.

So what had happened since we were first assaulted by Ethiopia in the media? Well, one of the richest men in the country, Robert Maxwell, used the Mirror paper to raise

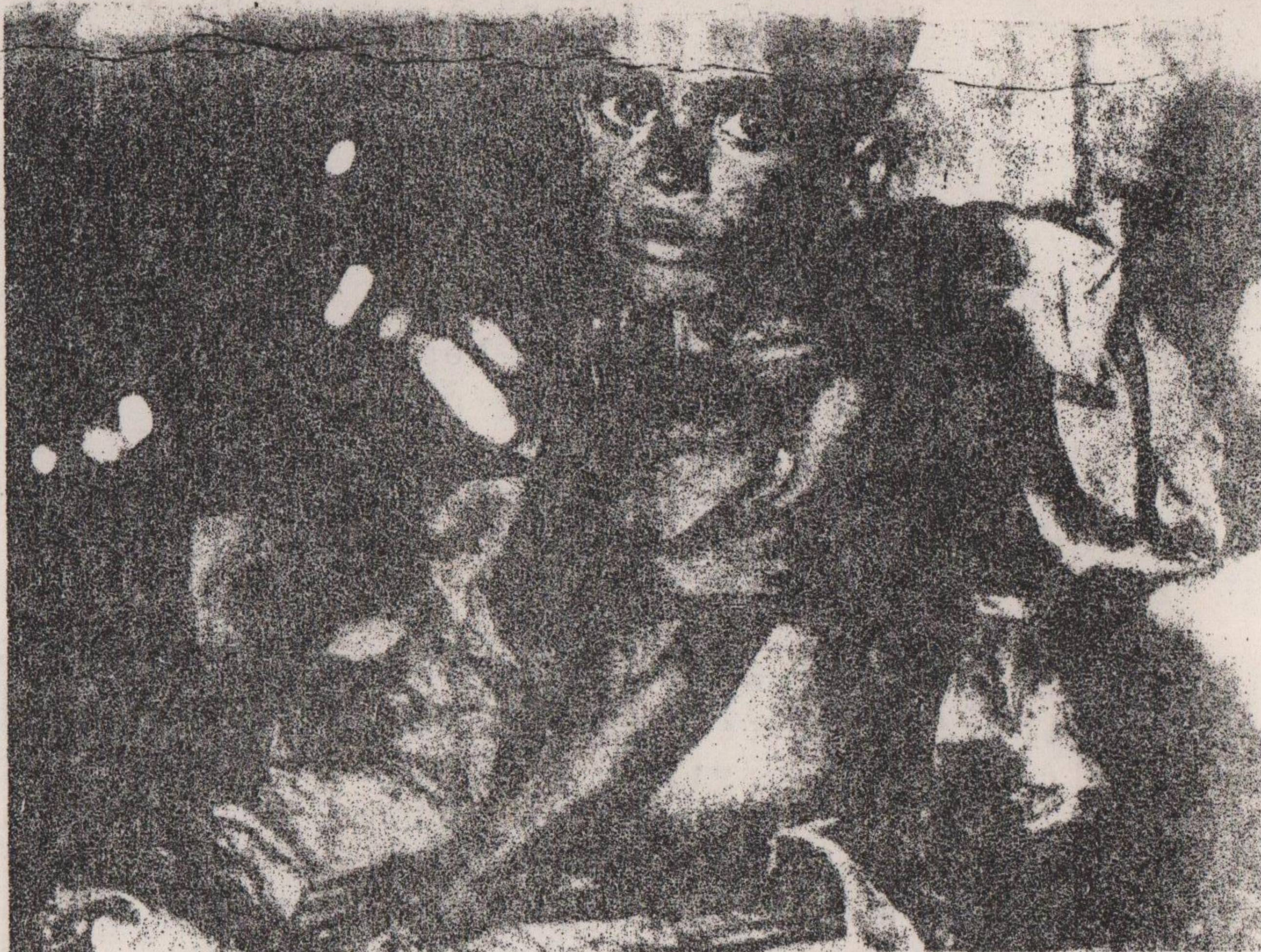
£350,000 from the readers to buy food for Ethiopia - he spent £100,000,000 on buying the paper. Princess Anne thanked the readers; look at her lifestyle (do i smell a hypocrite?). Government aid is likely to be cut. Millions of people are donating money to ease their consciences rather than acting to change the economic system that causes and perpetuates starvation. Fewer people are giving money to other "causes" - notably the miners. Everything is quietening down as people think to themselves "What right have I got to complain? At least I'm not starving."

The last three facts are the most important to puss-ridden sores like Maxwell, the Royalty and politicians. They gain out of people dying and suffering, out of passive acceptance and apathy - these things got them where they are and total control of the media will help keep them there. Real information about the situation is once again hidden, the truth is buried under an avalanche of myth, guilt and lies.

The media is big business and big business is only interested in self profit. The media is the voice of these parasites - every programme, every story, is shown for a reason that will benefit them in some way - if they don't think it will it won't be shown or reported. Sometime something sneaks through, like "The Animals Film", something which doesn't have the effect they expect (or does it? If more people start breaking the law for animal liberation, it is a good excuse to tighten the laws up). The media is lies, all lies, even the innocent-seeming programmes fill your mind full of false concepts and ideas like it's

P.T.O.

The alternative programmes are full of these lies too. TV and newspapers and radio encourage a passive acceptance of other people's ideas of reality. In a room full of people you will generally hear the loudest voice, these scum have massive voices, massive power to change and control the population's way of thinking. How often have you been misrepresented or so totally misrepresented that it can't have been an accident? It is (likely to be more) dangerous to pay attention to the media, for your head will be filled full of lies - they don't tell the truth.



photograph : OXFAM

A large portion of "alternative" facts about economics and starvation is in a penquin/pelican book called "How The Other Half Dies" by Susan George. It exposes many of the myths and lies about how the rich countries exploit suffering in poorer countries. It explains some of the truths - why it (as printed) I don't know. Think as you read it.

Did you know: the flow of money between rich country banks and Third World countries in 1983 in the form of loans from the banks was 21 billion dollars, from the Third World to the banks - work that one out!!!

D.D.T.

HARRINGTON - THE CONCLUSION?

ON 28th November last year a High Court judge sentenced myself and a fellow student to 10 days in jail for picketing against NF organiser, Patrick Harrington at the Polytechnic of North London. Being sent to jail was obviously a distressing experience but it was nonetheless a tremendous victory for the Harrington Out Campaign. First, it proved that we are not prepared to back down, no matter what; secondly, support for our struggle increased tremendously, and the increased pressure led to the resignation of Macdewall, the Polytechnic's director.

Here, this inherently fascist and profiteering system has worked against itself. Dr Beishon, from South Bank Polytechnic, was hired to solve the problem - the scandal is making the Polytechnic (a limited company) lose money. Beishon has taken on the job because he wants to forge his career and make more money for himself - to do this he has to find a quick solution, which means giving us what we want. By putting pressure on their bank accounts we have won. Harrington is now to be taught separately, away from the rest of the Polytechnic and other students. It looks as though this time he will not be back - will he?

One Half of The PNL Two.

OCCUPATION OF ST. ANDREWS ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY.

East London is being particularly hard hit by hospital closures and run downs. Latest victim is the accident and emergency department of St Andrews Hospital in Bromley by-Bow. The closure of the A&E department is the first stage in running down a hospital for eventual closure.

A campaign against the closure arose amongst the local community and workers; they held several meetings to discuss the situation and ideas for action. Unfortunately it was the usual story of windbags who had faith in the political process to ensure moral good and save the day, who still think of Authority as benevolent and acting for the public. It was the story of the impotence that people feel when they see how much control they have over their own lives; hospitals are places where you lose your identity surrendering yourself to the Doctor's and Nurses' whims and power. A&E departments rely upon doctors, so if they don't give a damn then it's your hard luck.

On the Friday before the closure date of the following Thursday morning, a picket was arranged for the pouring rain outside St Clements Hospital where the district administrator has his castle. When I got there, he had pre-empted everyone by inviting in a small delegation early and bolting the doors. They came out later with nothing except a bit more wind.

Later that afternoon there was to be a picket outside St. Andrews Hospital, arranged for the wet and cold darkness. A few of us went straight into the A&E instead to talk to the workers about the closure. The sister was sympathetic but the duty doctor we talked to thought it was a good idea and anyway he was working at Newham General. We walked out towards the gates only to see a procession of local women and children storming by, fed up being ignored in the rain at the gates; they were

determined to occupy the department. Enthusiastically, we joined them, without hindering the activities of the staff. We sat down together in the waiting-area. The doctors were furious, demanding to know what right these people had to be there, and refused to discuss the closure of the department with us; are all doctors such scumbags? They're certainly alright Jack. The nursing staff continued working; the sister said afterwards that we'd been no trouble for her. We were joined by others including women from the still occupied South London Women's Hospital.

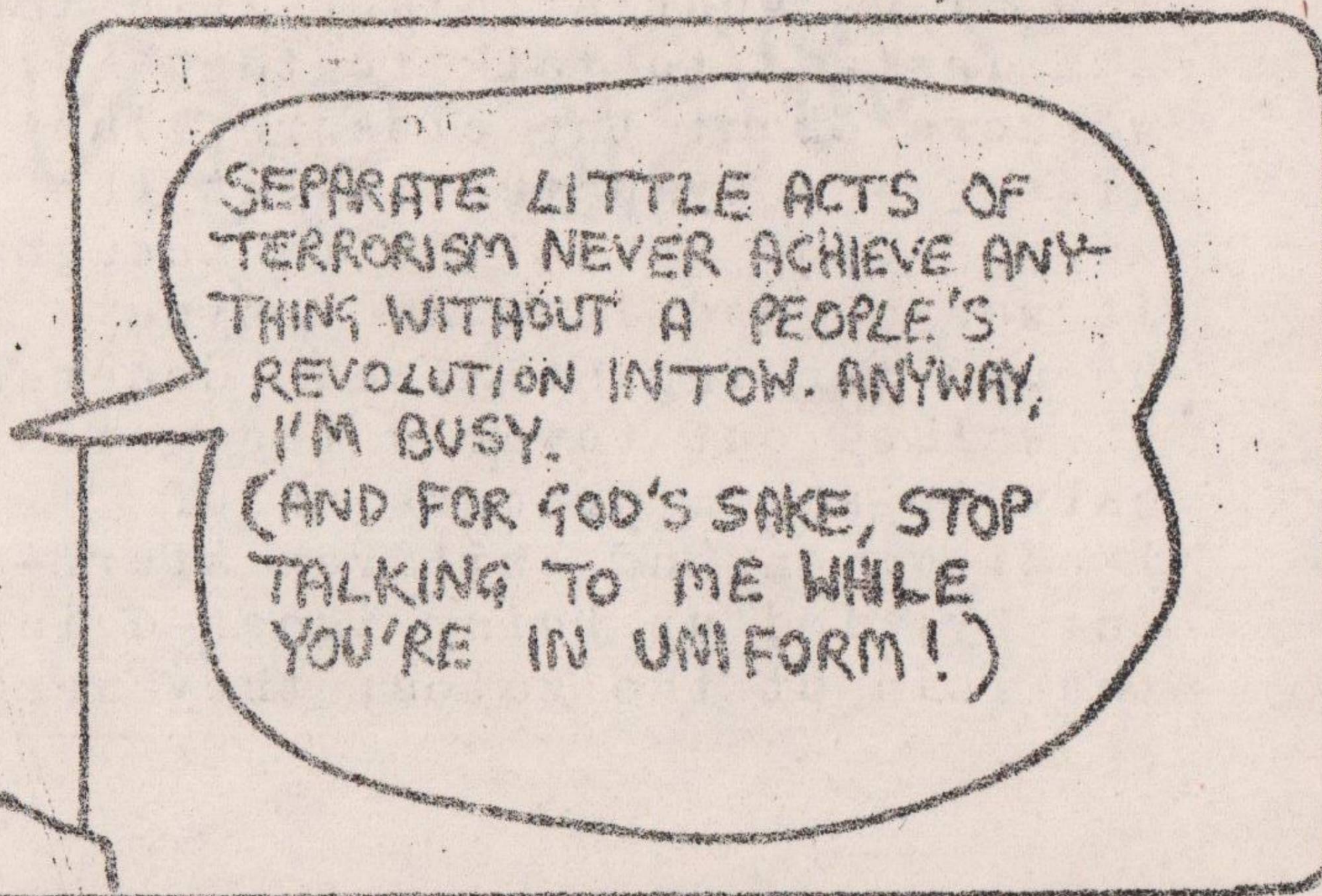
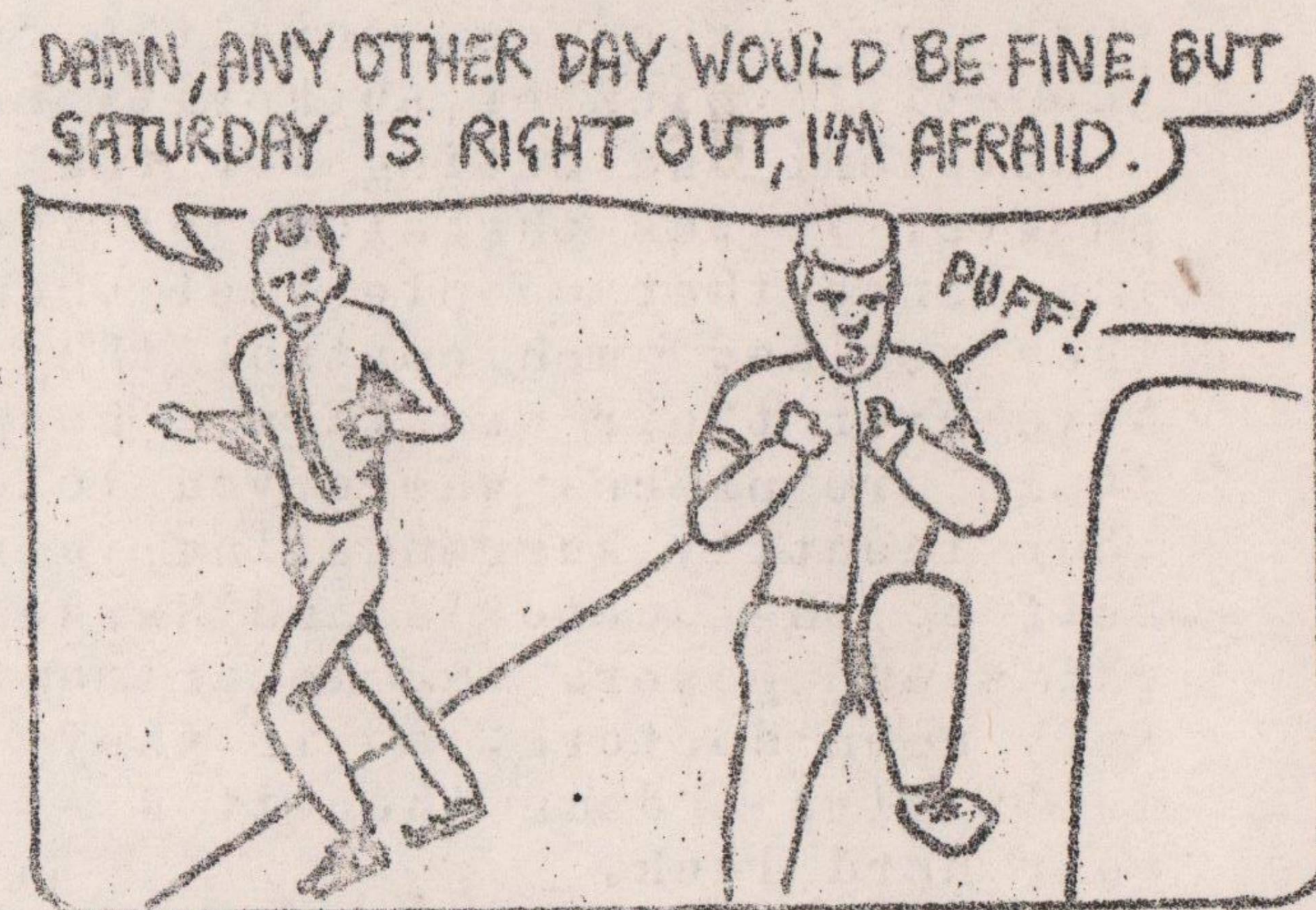
The Hospital Administrators, and then the police, arrived and couldn't shift us despite idle threats. The Administrators wouldn't discuss the closure but like all good bureaucrats went along with the decisions, acting on orders. They wanted to talk to our leaders, but we didn't have any. They eventually all retired to the office for hours and decided to let us sit it out, better than a fracas in the A&E. The police departed, leaving a solitary copper who was hounded by kids, pulling his tie and jacket, trying to get his helmet off! The Unions supplied us with pots of tea but no physical support.

We were worried about reports that the department was not accepting 'blue-light' emergency cases, the doctors for no real reason refusing to treat them. It was difficult to know whether it was bluff or not, so after speaking to a reporter from LBC, we made a decision to call off the sit-in from 9.00.

There was a union day of action the following Tuesday. On the evening of the closure the department was occupied again, but it wasn't so well supported and the people were forcibly ejected by the police the next day. The department is now closed.

Marco.

START TV!



SATURDAY...



A MATTER OF FAITH

Christmastime was special. It was a time of peace and goodwill to all people. In truth, it celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ, one of the few people ever - or the only person - by all documented accounts, to be free from the everyday sins of human-kind. Yet, also by all accounts, Christ was more than a man. And how many men or women have appeared after him and truly represented - in word and deed - an ideology of love and peace in all its strength? Ghandi? Florence Nightingale? Stephen Biko? And did these people really show absolute perfection in the methodology and mentality of their morals?

The Christ we read of was a single person, the like of which has never since been seen.

And thus we see the futile negativity of the cynical question: "Why can't the elements of Christmas be experienced every day?" which is an attempt to disregard Christmas altogether. Of course, the criticism, that Christmas is nothing more than cheap consumerism at its worst, goes without saying; the point certainly needs no discussion here. What is of more importance is the way in which the Karrods Bomb of Christmas '83 typifies the situation. What that "outrage" clarified was the incompleteness of all people's moral understanding. Thousands of turkeys in this country alone were still having their tortured lives ended by slaughter; the starving in Ethiopia were still starving. "Peace and goodwill to all men": the IRA did nothing more than thrust the hypocrisy of that slogan back in our faces. We were still too blind to see; obviously they will remain too blind to learn.

What Christ was supposed to be is within us all. It is the fact that we repress that Messianical element, or allow the system around us to repress it, and the fact that those who lived at the time of Christ repressed that element, that Christ was crucified. It is because of this, that "Christmas" comes but once a year, and when it does it is only there for those who strive to find it.

Not a single one of us can claim Messiahship; we are mere people, intact with all our sins - sins from which we can never escape; Christ was divine. For Christ to return, for every day to be Christmas Day, we need not even have to accept that he existed in the first place. We need only be aware of what he actually represents, not as a religious idol, but a concept - of the perfect ideal within Anarchist, Socialist,

Nazi, Liberal alike; a concept above and beyond doctrine and unhindered by imposed belief or theory; simply the yearning within each and every one of us for existence without pain or terror.

So, in order to find that Heaven on earth, that irreligious yet everlasting Christmas, what can and must be done?

Firstly, it is impossible to make ourselves faultless. Yet this does not mean we should not strive to make ourselves faultless. The greatest fault of all is that of not even attempting to be good. Problems and grief are necessary for the existence of an easy life and contentedness; and even if it were possible for "perfect" people to exist, it would not be possible for them to exist as a group, for such an existence would literally be perfect to a fault (tedious and boring), and therefore not bliss - proving that contentedness can only come from a group of imperfect yet truly goodhearted people.

Yet, whilst there are people who do not allow external awareness to develop inner peace and reasoned co-habitation, the horrors and injustices of this present world will continue. Only by searching for, and finding, that inner-peace can even half of this world's horrors cease. That inner peace can be obtained, quite simply, by THINKING OF WHAT HURTS ONESELF, AND ATTEMPTING TO ENSURE THAT ONE DOES NOT CAUSE OTHERS TO SUFFER THAT SELF-SAME PAIN. This goes well

Beyond one-to one contact, and only by THINKING, and simplifying one's lifestyle can a person come anywhere near to achieving such an aim - otherwise, this system defeats us. The system was created by people; people must also destroy it. It follows, through the natural order of things, that this destruction is inevitable. If it were not possible, the ability given to us by nature to create this system would be wasted; evolutionary process is such that people rise up above their original primitive and helpless state; that we were given this power in the first place indicates that we were destined to overcome and outlast the problems facing us. Therefore, if we are unable now to destroy this system (the fresh problem), there would be little point in nature giving us the means to create it. We now have those means, but to put them into effect, we must allow the Christ within us all to gain control; the pure person within each of us must overcome the bad side, which is created by the greed of this society. The reason people do not yet do this is that they suffer a lack of faith; they say: "What is the point? The odds are stacked against us. We may as well make the best of a bad lot." Obviously, logically, this argument must be rejected if there is to be any chance of success; yet to continue struggling, despite this argument, requires a great deal of faith. And there we have the solution: the point is coming of heaven or hell, life or death, an end or a fresh beginning. The signs point to the utter destruction of this planet (at the least total chaos) or else, dare it be said, a total turn-around and a heavenly state reached. We can hope for the heavenly state, but hoping is not enough. It will only be attained if we have the faith to see it come into being. I do not believe we are doomed to a life of pain. I have faith that something better can be achieved; and I know it will only be achieved because I have that faith and because I am prepared to make that faith a reality.

Yet, all this admitted, we can still be faced with a world full of natural disasters, creature killing creature, disease and agonising death. Some would argue, negatively, that since the "better" world can never be complete, this is a sign that we cannot even get halfway there, so need not bother trying. But nature is a law unto itself; it has never ceased, and probably never will cease to surprise people. When all is said and done, it is nature that makes the final decision; the elements that constitute a world are necessarily balanced with the actual characteristics of the people inhabiting such a world; an unbalanced split between our own nature and the nature of the world in which we exist is contradictory to all natural law; in effect, the injustices we presently see around us are a direct reflection of our own sins. Only when we have bettered ourselves will nature better the world around us.

Thus, we see that despite the apparent impossibility of reaching the halfway stage, it can and will be attained - if we have the faith. Having reached the halfway stage, nature will do the rest of the work for us.

But for it to happen, we have to accept that it can happen, and we have to work towards making it happen.

This means FAITH and HARD WORK.

The documented existence of Christ was a message to us. It is time we began to understand and make use of that message. The goodwill of Christmas does not just happen.

We have to work for it - NOW.

Steve T.

REAL POSITIVE STUFF

The usual sort of criticism we receive from people when we go on demonstrations, pickets, Stop The Cities and so on is that we offer no positive alternative. And people who make this criticism are, on the whole, quite justified in doing so. Well, positive alternatives are occasionally put forward, but usually only in theory, such as left-wing fantasies found in papers like the "Socialist Worker", or the dream-like ideology of "Peace News". It is fine writing about these things and it is certainly necessary to do so, but what is missing is the middle stage - the point of getting from here to there. To simply protest is not enough; neither is "direct action" - sitting in the road, or smashing windows or breaking into nuclear bunkers is fine to a point, but not to the point of a lot of people messing up their lives and ending up in jail. And it certainly isn't worth it for the sake of a few smashed windows or a five minute traffic jam. I'm seeing my friends suffer and it hurts.

This inward-looking "movement" must start to be outward-looking, and not from the inside of a police cell. It is too easy to sit back and wait for the next demonstration, to start slagging something off. We have to be working for things now.

There are so many other things to do. This magazine is a start for us. We started producing this magazine to try and shake supposed "revolutionaries" out of their lethargic state and to try and attract average people from the streets and dole queues, to open their eyes about what is going on in the world, and how we are resisting it. Socialist Opportunist is totally self-produced and a small number of people put in a lot of work to get it out. Clearly, however, it is

still not enough. Some of the people behind this magazine have jobs or are students and try and spread ideas and actions amongst people they meet. Others do a great deal of voluntary charity work - not sitting on their arses all day long wasting away. On top of this, we are still trying to expand more. A small group of us, in keeping with the idea of providing alternative independent ways of living, have started work on an allotment, to provide our own food. It is quite easy to do - all that is needed is to get in touch with the council, put a name on a list and wait 'til an allotment is free. Then it is yours for about £5 a year. It is an education; only a beginning, but it is going to spread. It is easy for YOU to do, so why don't you do it? Food produced could be used for food co-ops for the local people. Molly's Cafe in Upper Street, Islington, have set a fine example to follow: squatting an empty cafe and using it to provide a meeting place, a vegan cafe and an information centre. A shop has been squatted in Hornsey and, if the people are not evicted, a similar place will be set up there. It can happen everywhere, if only people are prepared to try.

About 6 months ago, Haringey Community Action was set up; it is a group made up of members of the community who have been setting up child care groups, local food co-ops, helping local people in trouble, trying to encourage the idea of a community, in the true sense of the word. Response to this, from non "revolutionaries" has been positive and enthusiastic.

It is quite clear that protesting is not enough. Real alternatives must be put into practice. The few mentioned here are nowhere near enough, and yet it is difficult to quote more examples. But change won't happen from the inside of a prison cell, and mere words won't lead to change either.

The message is really quite simple. It is a message to all of you out there who spend every day lazing around doing nothing but moaning, smashing things or getting drunk:

WORK FOR A CHANGE.

Rich B.

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND WRONGS

(Viewpoints on the emergence of "terror tactics" in the animal liberation movement)

An ideal and just society is one where pain and suffering is something that only happens naturally - it should never be a necessity for any person to harm another living being. But we presently see animals tortured in the name of sport, massacred for the sake of the meat industry and experimented on to feed the human greed for profit. None of this is necessary. But it all takes place around us every day: foxes and wild-life are horrifically tortured by hunters and their dogs; monkeys injected with pure sugar so the makers of Mars increase their profit; pigs electrified and shoved into acid baths in order not that people do not starve, but that the meat industry makes money. Meanwhile, our wildlife is destroyed, our teeth rot away and 40% of deaths are caused by cancer (the main causes of which are proven to be meat-eating, tobacco smoking and the stress of living in this greedy, money-based competitive society).

ANY JUST PERSON IS OPPOSED TO ANIMAL EXPLOITATION.

We wish to see an end to the suffering of all innocent creatures. It is for this reason that I personally am opposed to some of the methods now being used by the more militant animal activist groups. Direct action and publicity are both essential to the struggle against animal torture; but direct action and publicity are only of any use if their effect is a positive effect.

Publicity officers such as Ronnie Lee of the Animal Liberation Front claim that the sort of people who are prepared to inflict violence on animals deserve no sympathy when they face the same violence in return. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The most recent and well-known example of this is the Boxing Day desecration of the Duke of Beaufort's grave. The idea was to scatter the remains of the Duke around Worcester Lodge. For those of us who are aware of the cruelty of vile men such as the Duke, involved in barbaric blood sports and reknowned for whipping hunt saboteurs, the action clearly had a powerful and ironic point to make. It was, however, a point which failed to come across; instead, many people who, with the right publicity, might be sympathetic to the animal rights movement, were alienated by such tactics. On the other hand, Anti Nuclear Demonstrators have shown time and time again, with their pacifist stance, that good publicity can be achieved without desperate or low actions such as this. Just as violence is no answer to violence, a grotesque and sick crime does not cancel out a grotesque and sick crime - it only doubles it. The truth is that any violent action by animal liberationists will be used by our enemies as propaganda on the front pages of the gutter press - but the crimes of animal torturers hardly ever appear.

Similarly, the recent Mars Bar poison scare brought about by the ALF, whilst it did open a few people's eyes to the horrific things Mars are doing, caused more people to hate the ALF than hate Mars. People will never be sympathetic to a movement that threatens them, especially if that movement also does not even appear to be concerned with any human rights.

It is hard enough trying to convince people there is justification in smashing laboratories let alone smashing the occasional vivisectionist. Sadly, people still respect the law; surround them with legalised slaughter and murder of people and animals, they don't notice; if a "militant" group breaks the law there is outrage, or if a puppy is found in a dustbin there are calls to "hang" the culprits. It is a very mixed-up society we live in. Even if terror tactics were not morally unacceptable, animal activists will only ever be able to use them once society is demuddled; once society is demuddled there will be no need for these tactics. Catch 22 - either way terror tactics cannot succeed.

FOR THE ANIMALS' SAKES, AT LEAST, THEY MUST STOP.

MORE ON ANIMAL RIGHTS AND WRONGS:

There has been a lot of hysteria recently over the ALF "poisoning" mars bars and endangering childrens lives. only time will tell whether this action was a successful action, regardless of the morals involved. even people i regarded as sane and level-headed have become caught up in the media created hysteria, most likely because there are very few arguments, if any, that can justify the poisoning of children. personally i don't think it was a very clever action, even though it may end up as a successful one but it is very important that others in the animal liberation movement do not get hysterical. Denounce, if you feel you must, the action but not the ALF. As is all too often the case, the movement is more ready to jump down each others' throats because of differences than to build up on each others' similarities so that we have the strength as a movement to overcome stormy patches. as we become more effective the vested interests will start to pull all sorts of very dirty tricks on us and we will need each others' strength and support. Better we build through our own choice when we have the chance than to be forced to do it when we find our backs solidly against each other.

the society we live in is generally a very controlled one, its structure and concepts conditioned into us from the moment of our birth. very few people have overcome the conditioning enough to be able to stand and say 'NO' to anything. our way of looking at children is a product of our society and is also full of contradictions, myths and lies. precisely because of its messiness we find ourselves in an emotive, hysterical and very awkward situation.

realising this doesn't help much when you have a parent screaming at you about trying to kill their child, but in the same way as we are a 'nation of animal lovers' so we are a 'nation of children lovers'. how many of these screaming people are aware of how they, in their daily lives, poison the love of their lives, their sweet innocent child. how many of them are aware of the adverse effects of all drugs and many food additives? how many understand even slightly the complexities of nutrition or how our physical makeup is best suited for a vegan diet? how many are aware of the dangers of pesticides and fertilizers or of the hormones and drugs fed to animals that end up in the meat they feed their children or of the dangers of eating the meat itself? how many are aware or care what stimulants like sugar, coffee and tea do or how processed 'foods' like white bread and coca cola are harmful?

Donald Duck.



ANIMAL RIGHTS AND WRONGS - A REPLY

I was asked to reply to an article entitled "Animal Rights and Wrongs" - to cover everything would need a book, but here's a few thoughts -

Due to the ineffectiveness of campaigns by constitutional animal rights groups (ie. BUAV, NAVS, etc...) to stop the increase in the abuse and exploitation of animals for every imaginable purpose, more militant groups were formed to take direct action against animal exploiters.

Among the best known of these groups is the animal liberation front - formed in 1976 by a group of militants, including the present press officer, Ronnie Lee, it has carried out many different actions over the years with success, in moving towards its final goal - total animal liberation.

Actions carried out have included the liberation and usually the eventual homing of thousands of animals of every type and economic sabotage on all animal abuse establishments.

Most groups in the ALF are autonomous and the action they take are limited only by their imagination and the resources available to them - the ALF has a code of conduct which states that "it is against our policy to use or threaten serious violence to those involved in animal persecution - we do however believe that our members have a right to use the minimum necessary force to defend themselves from physical attack by animal exploiters".

With such a loosely structured organisation it is not difficult to see that opinions are likely to differ wildly and some people may choose to disregard the policy but use the same name. This leaves things a bit open to state terrorism if they choose to discredit a group - remember the mysterious animal rights militia who it was claimed sent letter bombs to prominent politicians? They've never been heard of since.

There has been criticism recently, fuelled by the media condemning the terrorist tactics used by the ALF, but the thing to remember is that since its formation the ALF has always used what could broadly be termed as terrorist tactics - after all, its very intimidating being woken up in the middle of the night by the sound of crashing glass or to turn up to work one day to find your place or work has been burnt down - these incidents are happening nationwide every day and gain the support of a large section of the animal rights movement who voice their approval privately, if not publically.

With reference to publicity - as far as direct action goes the media has proved unreliable - as in the case of the SEALL who passed on information to the daily mirror recently for a story, who promptly passed it on to the police!

The actions will carry on whether they receive good or bad publicity, if you really want the facts behind what is happening, subscribe to the societies and their publications.

All ALF actions are illegal and therefore newsworthy, the crimes of animal exploiters are not - they are legalised torture/cruelty and people usually get to know about them when they are exposed through direct action.

On the recent incidents by the ALF and the HRS, the more "serious" newspapers have taken a more responsible look at the issues involved and the reasons why all this is happening now - the gutter press belongs just there and have on occasions hardly treated the peace movement with much sympathy - stories of the Greenham women and the baby that was born there were blown out of all proportion - don't believe everything you read and get the facts from the organisations involved.

To people in the animal liberation movement the Boxing Day incident will not be a surprising tactic as it has happened before - in 1977 an ALF group desecrated the grave of the 18th century hunter, John Peel, who is seen as the father figure of hunting, by digging a hole over the grave and burying a stuffed fox head (a hunting

trophy) with an appropriate message attached.

Vivisectors' homes have been attacked. so has David Mellor's (the home office minister responsible for animal experiments). Homes, labs have been burnt down, offices wrecked, etc.... - so why suddenly the tirade of condemnation in the nations' press now? Perhaps it is because these tactics are having some effect and the police can do nothing to stop them - the state is getting worried.

The animal liberation movement by its very nature threatens people because it directly threatens those whose livelihoods are based on animal exploitation - it threatens the habits and customs of a lifetime and it threatens to undermine the whole basis of the society we live in - most exploitation of animals is done purely for profit - the arguments for direct action will not be lost on groups struggling against all forms of exploitation, that the basic structure of society must be changed, so that humans are not exploiting each other or animals and we are living in harmony with the planet-

Animal Liberation Front (ALF)
BCM Box 1160
London
WC1N 3XX

John.

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES LIST.

Compiled by Simon.

COMMUNES NETWORK: C/O Some people in Leicester, 89 Evington Rd, L'ister.
Send S.A.E. for information.

COMMUNES NETWORK MAGAZINE - £5 PER 10 issues, from above address.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNES NETWORK: Comunidad, Box 15128 10465 Stockholm,
Sweden Tel: 87109907.

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES MOVEMENT: 18 Garth Road, Bangor, North Wales.

ALTERNATIVE IRELAND DIRECTORY: Box A.I.D., 40 Lower Ormond Quay,
Dublin 1, Eire.

(Listings of co-ops, communes, communities and groups that are alive in Ireland today. £2 post paid from above address.)

JOURNAL OF CO-OPERATIVE LIVING: Twin Oaks, Rt 4, Louisa, VA 23093, USA.
(Price £ 2 dollars. Provides access to the American communes movement.)

LINK-UP: C/O 72 Hamilton Road, Greater Manchester M13 (Tel Man 224 3382)
Non-profit making. Information on groups, campaigns, work, communes, claimants, events, publications, etc. Price 6p plus postage.

THE SEED EXCHANGE: 44 Albion Road, Sutton, Surrey.

(A barter network in which you can exchange seeds you have for others you would like. Publishes extensive list of seeds available.)

FAIR GROUND CO-OPERATIVE: C/O Sarah, Laurieston Hall, Castle Douglas,
Kirkcubrightshire, Scotland.

(A financial institution, a housing co-operative which people can put their savings into knowing that they will be used to buy co-operatively owned and managed property.)

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Our world is heading for a catastrophic energy crisis and nobody is prepared for it. Before long - perhaps even within our lifetimes - our energy supplies will be completely exhausted.

A group of scientists, concerned about our future, recently estimated that fuel would finally run out in approximately 30 years. Even the Department of Energy - the government department which is engaged in publishing propaganda designed to give us confidence in the government's decisions - has published figures which make grim reading. According to D of E projections on primary energy fuels (i.e. coal, oil and gas), there will be a maximum of 362 m.t.c.e. (million tonnes of coal equivalent) available by the year 1990, and only 320 m,t,c.e. by the year 2000. These figures don't mean very much on their own, but when we consider that the total figure for primary energy fuels consumed in 1977 (most recent figures I have available) was 316 m.t.c.e. then we begin to see the problem. The margin between fuel available and fuel consumed is getting smaller and smaller.

We must also bear in mind that we are living in a society where economic growth is the key. Government and industry are constantly striving for increased economic growth - higher investment, higher production and higher consumption. This is how the success of western societies is gauged - not on the happiness of the people, but on how much they produce and buy. Now, in order to keep the machinery of industry churning over at an increasingly higher rate, we need to feed it with an increasingly higher amount of fuel, WHICH IS NOT GOING TO BE THERE MUCH LONGER!

Let us take a closer look at how energy affects our lives. We normally think of energy (if we bother to think about it at all) as the lights, the cooker and the fire. But, in fact only 30% of all the energy used in Britain is used in the home. We tend to forget things that don't relate directly to us. We fail to see how totally dependent we are upon a power supply. All forms of produced goods, transport, means of communication, our food supplies, what we wear - everything depends on energy.

For something which is so essential to our lives it is significant that we take it so much for granted. Perhaps we should think more carefully about what we are allowing our money to be spent on.

The current method of organising our energy supply is dangerous, wasteful, dirty and is very oppressive.

DIRTY

As we have already seen, by continuing to exploit fossil fuels as the only source of energy, the government is playing a kind of russian roulette with ALL OUR LIVES. It's a bit like being driven blindfold, off the edge of a cliff.

The government's "solution" to the problem of providing fuel for the future, after the coal runs out, is its massive investment in nuclear power. At the beginning of its current term of office, the government proposed to build ten new nuclear power stations, at a cost of £15000 each, using as their primary fuel uranium - which not only leaves plutonium as

waste, for which there are no acceptably safe methods of disposal, but also, uranium will run out at an even faster rate than coal!! A brief glimpse at the history of accidents at one of Britain's three nuclear plants will convince anyone that nuclear energy could never be a serious alternative fuel supply, because it is ridiculously dangerous:

In 1957 there was a fire at Windscale, resulting in 500 square kilometers of countryside being contaminated with radiation.

In 1973 a "blow-back" resulted in the contamination of thirty workers.

In 1979 a fire broke out, causing the contamination of eight workers. The area had to be completely closed for four months.

Again in 1979 another leak was discovered which had apparently gone undetected for four years.

For all this risk, it is estimated that, if they ever get off the ground, these ten new reactors will contribute a maximum of 7% of our total energy needs!

This all sounds like a sick joke, doesn't it? It is not. IT IS OUR LIVES THAT ARE AT STAKE.

WASTEFUL

Making electricity in large, centralised power stations is unbelievably wasteful, because of the large-scale losses that are incurred in the process. Also, vast amounts of electricity is lost as it passes from the central generating stations, over a grid to the local areas.

Also, in its rush to achieve higher and higher levels of consumption, our society wastes an unbelievably large amount of fuel (and is encouraged to do so by the government!) 60% of energy used in Britain is used to produce heat - all of which is finally lost, because heat will always disappear. But it is possible to save on energy used in heating by using proper insulation. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that in May 1979, when the present government first took office, it immediately cut the money available to private houses for grants for insulation by half and abandoned all funding for council home insulation, thus encouraging higher consumption and wastage of fuel.

DIRTY

Large scale energy production means large scale power plants which mean large scale pollution.

We've already seen how dirty and dangerous nuclear reactors are - conventional energy production is not much better. When coal or oil is burned, at petroleum and coal-fired power plants, sulphur dioxide is emitted into the atmosphere, causing the dreaded acid rain, renowned for its part in the devastation of natural life in our countryside, and its threat to human life.

Large-scale hydro-electric plants destroy plant and animal life, by dam building with its resultant land flooding.

In fact, all forms of large-scale energy production are polluters because they cannot fail to become eyesores and produce unacceptably noise pollution.

OPPRESSIVE

We have seen how dependent we are upon our fuel supply, and we have seen how energy production is becoming more and more centralised, which means we are totally dependent on the government and its national grid system.

We must take control of this vital part of our lives - and fortunately the means of doing so are within our grasp and are very simple. We can become energy self-sufficient by harnessing the local streams and by capturing the wind and the sun, and by sensibly conserving the energy we use.

1. WINDPOWER

The wind was first used as a source of energy in Babylon four thousand years ago, and has been used throughout history for grinding grain, pumping water and generating electricity. Wind generators can be built to suit the needs of the community they are providing power for, thus cutting down on waste; they have the advantage of producing more power when the weather is the coldest, and they provide power FOR FREE!

2. WATER POWER

Using water wheels is another excellent way of obtaining free energy that will not run out, and, at the same time, not causing any harm to the environment. Using a water wheel does not require a dam to be built, as the wheel works on accordance with the natural flow of the stream.

3. SUNPOWER

Harnessing the energy from the sun, promises to be the best energy source for the future. The rational designing of houses,

the use of solar panels and solar greenhouses, coupled with efficient use of insulation, all of which is very cheap to install, have proved that, with the sun's help, a house can keep itself, its occupants and their water supply, as warm as they want, and all for free!

All of these alternatives will never run out, are harmless to the environment and (very importantly) when they're installed on a community level, they'll mean an end to our dependence on centralised power control. So what are we waiting for?

Gray.

Thanks to London Greenpeace for some of the info.

Also - anyone interested in finding out more about rational energy supply may like to contact these addresses:

URBAN CENTRE FOR APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY C/O Hugh Barton, 3 Windsor Rd,
St Andrews, Bristol 6.

CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY: Llwyngwern Quarry, Machynlleth,
Powys, Wales.

NATURAL ENERGY AND LIVING (MAGAZINE): The Natural Energy Association,
35 Sydenham Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3RE

NETWORK FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (NEWS-
LETTER) C/O Alternative Technology Group, Faculty of Technology,
Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

A DEFENCE OF DRUGS (IN REPLY TO "HIGH AND MIGHTY?" IN ISSUE 2)

(This article represents the view of the author, and not necessarily other contributors to this magazine.)

WHY IS IT THAT MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE THIS STEREOTYPE OF A JUNKIE AS A SOCIAL DERELICT ON DRUGS BECAUSE OF SOME KIND OF SOCIAL DEPRIVATION? THE PUBLIC OPINION IS THAT DRUG TAKING IS A SOCIAL THREAT. ARTICLES ON DRUGS, THAT THE MEDIA SEEMS TO LOVE SO MUCH HAVE MAINLY BEEN BASED ON PEOPLE BEING TREATED FOR DRUG ADDICTION OR CONVICTED OF DRUG OFFENCES. HOWEVER, THIS ONLY APPLIES TO A TINY MINORITY OF PEOPLE USING DRUGS. THEY ARE SAID TO TAKE DRUGS TO ESCAPE FROM PROBLEMS AND THE "REAL WORLD", BUT I FIND THAT TO A LOT OF PEOPLE ILLEGAL DRUG TAKING, JUST LIKE ALCOHOL AND SEX IS SIMPLY PART OF THEIR GENERAL LEISURE BEHAVIOUR. TAKING DRUGS IN ITSELF IS NOT IMPORTANT, ANY DEPENDANCE IS MORE ON THE DRUG SCENE - A GROUP OF FRIENDS WITH SIMILAR ATTITUDES RATHER THAN ON ANY SINGLE DRUG. VERY FEW DRUG USERS IDENTIFY WITH TRADITIONAL POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS VIEWS AND ARE USUALLY IN SOME WAY CRITICAL OF SOCIETY. THE DRUG SIMPLY BRINGS THESE PEOPLE TOGETHER, AND SURELY BEING UNITED CAN'T BE A BAD THING. IT'S A MATTER OF USING DRUGS WITHOUT LETTING THEM USE YOU. STAGGERING ABOUT SMELLING LIKE A DOPE PLANTATION IS AN OPEN INVITATION TO POLICE HARRASSMENT. THOSE WHO TEND TO OVERDO IT BECOME SLAVES TO DRUGS. WHEN YOU'RE SO OUT OF YOUR HEAD ALL THE TIME YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, YOUR MATES FEEL OBLIGED TO LOOK AFTER YOU AND YOU BECOME A BURDEN. DRUGS ARE ENJOYABLE AS LONG AS YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER THEM!

MEL

All comments on or contributions to this magazine please send to:
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