

the next step

review of the Revolutionary Communist Party

No 46 April 1984

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Miners
against
the state
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Wasted youth...

...need a fighting future

the next step

No 46 April 1984

monthly review of the Revolutionary Communist Party

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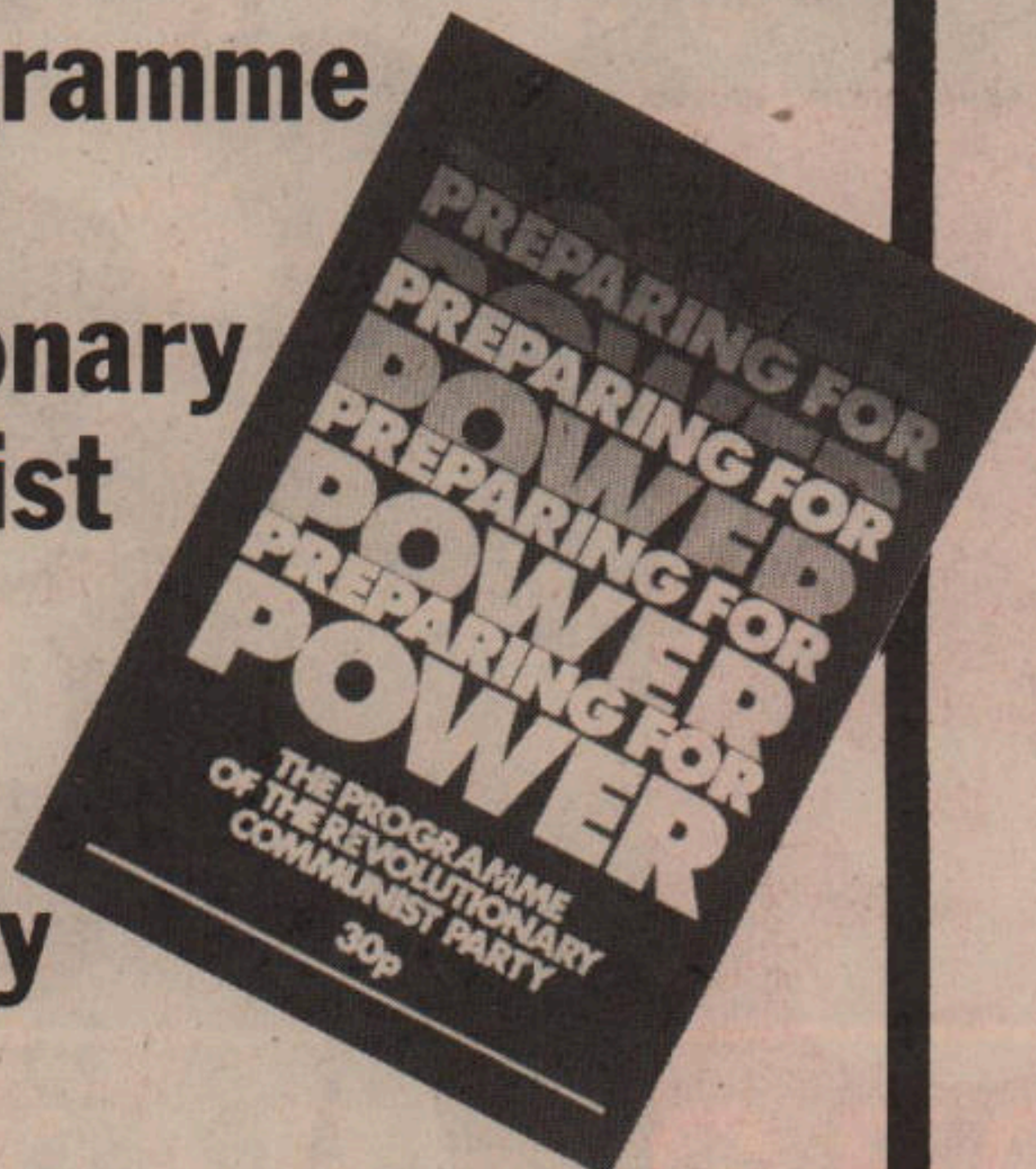
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Chris Black (reflex)

We stopped the city on 3 March: the Irish Freedom Movement's march against bans on Irish solidarity brought Sheffield shoppers out to hear the band — and the case for Irish freedom

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Taking sides on Ireland

The Irish Freedom Movement's 3 March 'Speak out for Irish freedom' demonstration was led by the republican Crossmaglen Patriots band from Glasgow, followed by the banner of Sinn Féin Britain's Birmingham Cumann. March sponsors included seven Labour MPs: Joan Maynard, Jeremy Corbyn, Clare Short, Allan Roberts, Bob Parry, Ron Brown and Harry Cohen. Both Plaid Cymru MPs, Daffyd Ellis and Daffyd Wigley, gave their backing to the march. Other Labour Party figures supporting included GLC leader Ken Livingstone, Peter Hain and 60 local councillors. American black activist Kwame Ture sponsored from across the Atlantic. Nearer home, Sheffield Asian Youth

Movement, Red Action, Workers Power, the Irish Solidarity Movement and Ireland's War support group were among organisations which backed our demonstration. Rank and file labour movement opposition to Sheffield council's ban on the Bloody Sunday march came in from bodies such as the Hemel Hempstead branch of ACTT, which passed a motion condemning the council's 'sordid attempt to suppress the right' of British workers 'to march, commemorate or publicly sympathise with' the 14 Irish civil rights marchers killed by British troops in January 1972. Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council passed a similar motion. The IFM march sparked

debate everywhere it was raised. In Bradford, an IFM protest brought a council meeting to a halt in uproar. Typical of the arguments raised was that in Oldham, where Labour Party bureaucrats manoeuvred to keep the issue of the march out of the labour movement while IFM supporters fought for a public debate with our opponents and won rank and file support. Everywhere, those who opposed our march can look forward to further pressure from the Irish Freedom Movement over the months ahead. And we look forward to calling on those who backed our demonstration to give practical support to the continuing struggle for Irish freedom.

Speaking out for Irish freedom

On Saturday 3 March the Irish Freedom Movement brought Sheffield city centre to a standstill, as our 1000 strong demonstration against bans on Irish solidarity marched behind the flutes and drums of the Crossmaglen Patriots Band from Glasgow. Back in January Sheffield city council had banned Sinn Fein's annual Bloody Sunday commemoration march. Last month the Irish Freedom Movement went back to Sheffield to make one point to the Labour council: you cannot ban the Irish War from British politics. The IFM march was a victory for all those who demand the right to stand up against British terror in Ireland.

For a month the people of Sheffield had heard the IFM march alternately attacked and applauded as debate about Ireland raged in the local media and labour movement. Now hundreds of Saturday shoppers packed the pavements to follow the marchers' progress through the Yorkshire city. Many jumped roadside railings to join the demonstration. They marched alongside republicans, Labour Party members, trade unionists, Irish solidarity groups and IFM contingents who had come from cities as far apart as Glasgow and Cardiff to support the march.

Taking sides

Others were less enthusiastic. Events in Ireland force people to choose sides. The struggle over the IFM demonstration caused controversy in Sheffield and everywhere it was raised. On one side stood the Irish Freedom Movement and anti-imperialists who support the Irish liberation struggle and backed the march. On the other side were those who support British rule in Ireland and did their best to undermine our protest. The strange bedfellows who opposed the march included (reading from right to left) the National Front, the police, Labour Party bureaucrats and the Communist Party of Great Britain. Of course these groups had their differences. But they shared a common hatred of those who challenge British oppression in Ireland.

The Irish Freedom Movement demonstration was first called at the end of January, the day after Sheffield council got the Home Office to ban the Bloody Sunday march. The first opponent to raise its ugly head was the National Front, which threatened a counter-demonstration on 3 March. In itself, the fascist march was irrelevant. Right-wing sects always promise to wreck Irish solidarity marches, but rarely manage more than a bit of pathetic Union Jack waving from behind a wall of police. The real importance of the fascist march over the month that followed was as an excuse, used by police and labour bureaucrats to attack the Irish Freedom Movement's demonstration.

Sheffield police chiefs claimed they were incapable of handling both demonstrations and a Third Division football match in the city on the same day. Only days before the march, the police announced that the route would have to be drastically shortened or there would be no IFM demonstration. On 3 March, IFM organisers tripped up this fancy footwork from South Yorkshire's constabulary strategists. We slowed the march down, then stopped it altogether at the busiest points along the

shortened route, where the band beat out republican rhythms while the marchers beat pots, pans and dustbin lids to draw the crowds around.

Familiar contempt

While police attempted to bully Irish solidarity protests off the streets of Sheffield, city council leader David Blunkett used more subtle tactics to undermine the IFM march. Having burnt his fingers badly over the original ban, Blunkett was wary of further public debate around his actions. Instead, he sent out personal letters to all the Labour Party MPs and councillors who had sponsored the 3 March demonstration.

Blunkett's letter claimed he had banned the Bloody Sunday commemoration because of the march organisers' attitude to the IRA bomb at Harrods before Christmas. Irish Freedom Movement and Sinn Fein supporters in Sheffield had insisted that bombings in Britain were a consequence of war in Ireland, and that the responsibility for all deaths lay with British imperialism. In Blunkett's words they had refused to change their position to 'the now familiar "understanding why such events take place"'. Under pressure from party executive member Blunkett, some Labour sponsors wilted and became 'unavailable' in the days leading up to the march. But Irish Freedom Movement supporters around Britain used Blunkett's statement to build support for the demonstration. Arguing that the fact that condemnations of anti-imperialist violence were 'now familiar' within the British labour movement was part of the problem rather than a positive solution, we won the support of rank and file Labour members for the march.

SCAR = SCAB

Once it became clear that Blunkett's manoeuvres had failed, the Communist Party of Great Britain stepped in to play its traditional role as the left-wing cover for the betrayals of the labour bureaucracy. Local CP hack Steve Howell is presently under threat of being purged from his party for his links with the ultra-Stalinist *Straight Left* faction. But he still gets full backing when it comes to purging

supporters of Irish freedom from the British labour movement. Howell is secretary of the Sheffield Campaign Against Racism, a paper body which does nothing to fight racism in the city. It exists solely to give the impression that local trade union bureaucrats are concerned about the problems of racism. In return for their annual subscription fees, SCAR is prepared to dig the leadership of the official labour movement out of embarrassing situations. The IFM march threatened to embarrass the Labour council and Stalinist bureaucrats who backed the ban. So, at the end of February, in a blatantly sectarian attempt to draw support away from the Irish Freedom Movement march, Howell announced a SCAR demonstration against the National Front. It was planned to start from the same place as the IFM march just 45 minutes before the IFM march was due to set off.

The leaflets and letters SCAR distributed about its march explicitly opposed the 'so called "Irish Freedom March"'. SCAR made it clear that militant anti-fascists and supporters of Irish freedom were not welcome on its march: 'THIS WILL BE A PEACEFUL PROTEST AND ONLY ANTI-RACIST SLOGANS WILL BE USED'. In an effort to disguise its sabotage of the IFM march, SCAR dressed up the fascists' anti-Irish binge as a demonstration in support of attacks on Asians! The National Front was 'trying to exploit people's feelings about the activities of the Provisional IRA in order to build support for their racist platform' and there had to be 'some form of protest' from 'those who believe in racial harmony and equality'. Despite SCAR's attempts to cloud the issue, fascists and anti-imperialists alike were clear that the issue in Sheffield



Joe Boatman (reflex)

Rallying round the banners of Irish freedom: end of the march in Sheffield

on 3 March was Ireland. The National Front announced its demonstration at Sheffield's *Morning Telegraph* as a 'Hang IRA murderers march' (27 February). And as the SCAR and IFM marches faced each other across Caborn Corner, the local Asian Youth Movement appealed to SCAR supporters to join the Irish Freedom Movement marchers. 'Don't scab on the Irish people' shouted our supporters as the SCAR march of less than 200 people moved off. But scab they did.

Numbers game

The Stalinists' lies and slanders continued long after the marches were over. The CP's *Morning Star* implied that more than a thousand people had marched with SCAR. It didn't mention the IFM march. A more objective report in the Workers Revolutionary Party's *The News Line* (which backed neither demonstration) estimated the SCAR march at a generous 400

and the Irish Freedom Movement demonstration at more than 1200 (5 March). The contrast between the size and colour of our march and the lifeless SCAR procession reflected the difference between a cynical manoeuvre cobbled together from the remnants of the labour bureaucracy in Sheffield, and a living campaign built by putting the case for Irish freedom to rank and file workers, unemployed youth, students, black and women's organisations. It was the strength of that real support which enabled us to overcome the opposition from the fascists, the state and the bureaucrats and hold a successful march. It turned our march into a victory parade for supporters of democratic rights.

Exercise your rights!

The 3 March demonstration was an important first step. But the campaign cannot stop there. At the post-march rally, Irish Freedom Movement speaker Phil Murphy put the point

clearly:

'Today you have successfully defended the right to speak out for Irish freedom. Now let's get out and exercise that right.'

In the coming months the Irish Freedom Movement will be exercising that right in support of the Irish liberation struggle. We are campaigning in defence of Irish prisoners of war, and against attacks such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Sheffield council's permanent ban on supporters of the Irish struggle using their premises. However much bureaucrats like David Blunkett and Steve Howell might wish it, the Irish War will not go away. We have to make sure that next time the establishment reaches for its dictionary of anti-Irish abuse and the official labour movement runs for cover, louder voices are heard among the British working class. Voices that are speaking out for Irish freedom.

Eddie Veale



'Look at what happened when Britain introduced things like internment in Ireland. They got away with it because people didn't protest over here. This march is really important. If they get away with banning Bloody Sunday this year, they'll do it again and again.' Jane Mulkeen, sixth form student Birmingham



'Sheffield council's ban was an act of treachery against British and Irish workers. We've got to stand up for the right to bring the debate to working people in this country, to challenge things like our unions' support for Loyalists in Ireland.' Alan Cunningham, CPSA Manchester



'There should have been one huge demonstration in Sheffield today. We're on this march because black people have been denied their rights and called criminals like the Irish.' Sheffield Asian Youth Movement



'Until the British state is defeated in Ireland we won't get far against bosses over here. But the labour movement treats Ireland as untouchable. For me, Blunkett's ban was the last straw. I'm a Labour Party member. But I won't be when my card runs out in May.' Colin Marsh, Astms Leeds

Keeping the pressure on

The assassination of Long Kesh concentration camp deputy governor William McConnell and the attempted murder of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams last month show that the British state is having great difficulty keeping the lid on the Irish War. As the republican movement steps up the liberation struggle, the British forces and their Loyalist allies are resorting to increasingly vicious measures to stay in control. The Irish Freedom Movement is agitating in solidarity with Irish prisoners currently on remand in Brixton prison on charges arising out of past IRA bombings in Britain. This is a key aspect of our broader campaign in solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people for freedom from British rule.

Since the beginning of the year the British authorities have sustained a series of serious blows in the occupied Six Counties of Ireland. By mid-March five members of the Ulster Defence Regiment, a Loyalist militia integrated into the British Army, had been executed by the IRA in the Border areas. Three officers of the paramilitary Royal Ulster Constabulary have also been killed by the IRA, two by a single landmine that blew up their vehicle on a country road in County Down. One member of the crack SAS regiment was shot dead by an IRA unit in Dunloy, County Antrim as the undercover British squad prepared an ambush.

The assassination of a senior Long Kesh prison officer struck at the heart of the repressive apparatus in the occupied territory. McConnell had been responsible for attempts to force political prisoners of war to perform menial prison tasks. He was also blamed for organising beatings of the handful of H-Block prisoners who were recaptured after the Great Escape of 38 men in September 1983. McConnell's incoherent last testament, read out at his funeral, implied that the Government might welcome his demise because he had publicly criticised the Hennessy report into the Great Escape which let the British authorities off the hook.

Ambush

The attack on Gerry Adams by a Loyalist murder gang was indicative of the 1984 style of the British forces in the Six Counties. The Ulster Freedom Fighters, a front for the Loyalist paramilitary Ulster Defence Association claimed responsibility for shooting and wounding Adams in central Belfast. The UDA has a long history of involvement in sectarian murders, overlapping membership with the UDR and RUC and close links with the British Army. The ambush took place as Adams left a court where he is being tried on public order charges. The time and place of the hearing was public knowledge and the area was saturated with police and soldiers in uniform and in plain clothes. Republicans in Belfast had good grounds for wondering whether the authorities had really wanted the paramilitaries to finish the job.

Assassination

Other members of the nationalist community were not as fortunate as Adams. The SAS unit surprised by the IRA at Dunloy shot two wounded republicans as

they lay on the ground. Henry Hogan aged 21 and Declan Martin aged 18 were the first volunteers to join the IRA's role of honour in 1984. Daniel McIntyre, a 28 year old unemployed building worker was the victim of the first sectarian murder in 1984 at the end of January. He was shot three times in the head as he walked home from a social club in his native Lurgan, County Armagh. The Protestant Action Force, another Loyalist front with well established links with the local UDR, claimed responsibility. Three days later the British Army shot dead Mark Marron, aged 23, for joy-riding in the back seat of a stolen car in West Belfast.

Stratagems

The British government has a number of stratagems for deflecting public attention from its murderous activities in Ireland. One is the political solutions industry. Ever since British troops invaded the Six Counties in 1969 politicians have been trying to disguise the brute force on which British rule depends through a long series of political initiatives. All the various attempted solutions, from the 'power-sharing' executive to Tory minister James Prior's Ulster Assembly, have aimed to impress public opinion at home and abroad that Britain is sincerely trying to bring peace and justice to the North of Ireland. All have merely provided a smokescreen behind which the house searches, the beatings, the mass imprisonment of republicans with scarcely even the pretence of justice, and the murder squads continue their day to day routine.

The Forum (see box) is the latest charade to be acted out by Irish politicians while the blood-bath deepens. Now that the war has torn the pipe-dream of his Ulster Assembly apart, Prior is looking more favourably on the Forum. Any gathering of Irish politicians which recognises Britain's right to impose solutions in Ireland and ignores the brutality of the military occupation is welcome to the British authorities.

Snatched

Another device for distracting attention from British terror in Ireland is the authorities' focus on the 'IRA terrorists' allegedly responsible for extending the war in Ireland on to the streets of London. As repression in the Six Counties intensified at the end of last year, a joint Scotland Yard/RUC operation snatched Tommy Quigley from a taxi in West Belfast and flew him straight to London's top terrorist interrogation centre at Paddington Green police station. The authorities surrounded the police station with armed policemen in full military gear to gain maximum media impact. Television cameras relayed the scene to the nation; 'Terror alert as man is questioned' proclaimed the tabloid headlines. In a fanfare of publicity Quigley was subsequently charged with involvement in the IRA's 1981 bombing campaign in London. Quigley has been brought back to court on several occasions and charged with specific responsibility for the Chelsea Barracks bombing, for the attack on army officer Sir Steuart Pringle and for the Oxford Street Wimpy bar blast.

Harrods

Ever since the car bomb explosion outside Harrods before Christmas Scotland Yard's anti-terror squad has been keeping the issue alive by periodic arrests of Irish people around the country. In the days immediately after the bombing the police took advantage of the climate of anti-Irish hysteria to round up and harass republicans and known sympathisers of the Irish liberation struggle. They have since thrown the net wider. In January detectives ransacked the house of an elderly Irish couple in North Wales looking for clues to the Harrods bombing. In February they detained seven Irishmen in Reading to help them with their inquiries. No charges resulted but the raids kept Harrods in the public eye and anti-Irish prejudice on the boil.

Solidarity

In mid-March yet another joint Scotland Yard/RUC snatch squad brought Paul Kavanagh from West Belfast to Paddington Green. After receiving a slightly muted version of the Quigley treatment he was brought to court and charged with possession of firearms and conspiracy to cause explosions over a period which included the Harrods bomb. Kavanagh was also charged jointly with Quigley for conspiring to cause explosions in 1981.

The British media's skilful exploitation of the issue of 'IRA bombers' makes it a central focus of Irish solidarity activity in Britain.



Petrol-bombing the Brits: nationalist youth fight in Derry, let's keep the state on the rack over here

The Irish Freedom Movement organised nightly pickets outside Paddington Green in solidarity with Quigley and Kavanagh while they were being held there under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We protested against the use of the law to try to turn a national liberation struggle into a criminal conspiracy. We campaigned for wide support for Quigley and Kavanagh to challenge the establishment's show trials and manipulation of the Irish War for its own propaganda advantage. The responsibility for civilian casualties resulting from IRA bombs in London lies squarely with the British state, which maintains a vast machine of terror in Ireland. If Britain was not occupying Ireland the IRA would have no occasion to bring the war to Britain.

The republican movement is putting intense pressure on the British state in Ireland. Britain's capacity to respond in the only way it can — with more coercion — could be gravely weakened if the Government came under more pressure at home. The object of the Irish Freedom Movement in taking up the cause of Irish prisoners of war — labelled as terrorists — is to undermine the popular approval on which Britain's repressive policies have for too long been able to rely.

Jackie Reynolds

Carry on at the Forum

The New Ireland Forum is a conspiracy by charlatans to try to fool people in Ireland (and elsewhere) that a war can be resolved by shuffling paper and letting off hot air. But whatever form of words the Forum finally serves up, it won't fool the major protagonists of the Irish War — the Irish people and the British state. They have seen it all before.

The Forum was launched by the Dublin Government and the northern Social Democratic and Labour Party in 1983. Its central purpose — and its merit in British eyes — is to revive the moderate Catholic SDLP in the face of Sinn Féin's electoral advance. It has spent the past year in prolonged deliberations over constitutional proposals to end the conflict in the Six Counties.

The Forum's first report has been postponed and postponed again because there is no constitutional formula that can resolve the conflict. There are three proposals on the table. Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey and SDLP radical Seamus Mallon, who are sensitive to widespread anti-British sentiment in Ireland, support the 'United

Ireland' option. Irish Taoiseach and Fine Gael leader Garret FitzGerald favours the 'joint sovereignty' option which proposes that the Six Counties are administered from London and Dublin together. Others have plumped for a 'federal' solution which would create a more autonomous 'Ulster' with looser ties to Britain.

All these schemes have one thing in common — they are all irrelevant to the war being fought out day to day in the Six Counties. James Prior indicated this when he made clear that the only option which he approved was 'joint sovereignty'. By 'joint sovereignty', Prior explained, he meant 'joint security arrangements'. The immediate extradition last month of INLA leader Dominic McGlinchey to the Six Counties after his capture in the West of Ireland indicates the sort of 'joint' cooperation Prior has in mind. While the war rages, there is little scope for the SDLP to reconcile the nationalist people to British rule. The Forum provides a slender life line for the SDLP and another cover-up for British terror.

Political status now

Victory to the Armagh women!

Republican women in Armagh jail face strip searches and screw brutality in their struggle for recognition as prisoners of war. Last month an Irish Freedom Movement delegation joined 400 women on the annual Armagh prison picket. *Cathy Barratt* reports on our trip in support of the women in the front line of the Irish War.

Armagh prison pickets are called to coincide with International Women's Day. From the moment we arrived in the Six Counties on Saturday 10 March, it was clear that the protest was not just about women: it was about *women at war*. In Derry, we found ourselves in the middle of fierce street fighting between nationalist youth armed with petrol bombs and Loyalist police toting plastic bullet guns. On the way to Armagh the next day, our bus was stopped and searched at an armed Royal Ulster Constabulary road block. When we reached the town and lined up for the short march to the jail, the RUC were everywhere. Uniformed thugs surrounded the roadside rally outside the prison, laughing and jeering when a republican woman speaker mentioned that an RUC man had recently been charged with rape.

Resistance

Inside the jail screws turned on sirens to stop the women prisoners hearing us chanting their names. But we could

still hear the women in the prison singing in response to our cheers. And the republican women speakers at the rally had a warning for the security forces keeping the picket under siege. 'You are on the outside with the guns today', said Maura McCrory of Sinn Féin's women's department, 'but your days are numbered'. The women of the nationalist community in the Six Counties are undaunted in their resistance to British oppression, after almost 15 years of struggle on the streets, in the prisons and in their homes.

The women we spoke to

at Armagh had all suffered British terror. Women involved in the republican struggle risk death or imprisonment daily. Women who are not directly involved live with the consequences of British rule. They face unemployment, are desperately short of nurseries and have no legal right to abortion. On top of these 'everyday' problems, they have to cope with British Army raiding parties which break up their homes and reduce children to nervous wrecks before they reach school age. Women send their children off to school not knowing if they'll get home without having their faces smashed by plastic bullets. And there is the constant fear that mothers, sisters, fathers, brothers, sons and daughters will be dragged off to jail without warning. Since the British started to use supergrasses and show-trials, people frequently find themselves thrown in jail just on the word of a paid perjurer.



Women behind the wire: roadside vigil for Armagh prisoners

Lifers

Almost every woman we met in Belfast and Derry has a relative in prison. The British jails and detention centres — Armagh, the H-Blocks, Castle-reagh Barracks — haunt every nationalist woman from her teens to her seventies.

Briege Ann McCaughley has been under British lock and key since 1977, when armed police dragged her from her bed. She was 17. Briege was charged with 16 offences. The RUC told her she would get between five and 10 years, depending on whether she accepted she was a criminal and agreed to abide by prison regulations, or joined the Armagh protest for political status. Briege refused to admit to any crime, and was sentenced to 10 years in Armagh. She has suffered vicious torture during her imprisonment. On one of the rare visits she was allowed, Briege's mother Nellie couldn't recognise her daughter after screws had ripped out her hair and beaten her head against walls and doors.

Brigitte Maguire from Ballymurphy died recently after a lifetime in which British jails were never far from her thoughts. Her husband Ned had been imprisoned in Crumlin Road jail. Her son Ned was sentenced to 30 years by a Diplock no-jury court. Her second son Michael was sent down for 14 years, and his brother Thomas interned without trial. The only members of Brigitte's family whom she did not have to visit in jail were her daughters, Dorothy and Maura. They were both shot dead by British troops in 1972, while blowing whistles to warn local nationalists of an Army raid. At the age of 70, Brigitte Maguire herself was arrested, held at Castlereagh interrogation centre and threatened with incarceration in Armagh jail. The RUC backtracked when she promised to start a protest in the jail.

Organised

Nationalist women are organised against British

legal terror. Inside Armagh, republican prisoners maintain strict discipline. Their officers shout orders through cell walls in Gaelic to confuse prying Loyalist screws. Such organisation has been used to mount heroic protests. In 1980, 30 Armagh women went on a dirty protest for 10 months. They lived in cells caked with their excrement and menstrual blood, to draw attention to their struggle for recognition as prisoners of war. Three of them started a hunger-strike. Outside Armagh, nationalist women are campaigning against prison strip searches and supergrasses. In Derry we joined 120 women to block the middle of the main road, in protest at the use of paid perjurers. Two British armoured cars crawled up and down the line of women,

to try to intimidate us off the streets. The British failed, as they have done for the past 15 years.

The Irish Freedom Movement gives full support to the women at war with British imperialism in the Six Counties. We demand that the British state recognise the Armagh women as prisoners of war. Our delegation organiser Ann Burton told the Armagh rally why we had come to support the prison picket.

'We're here to show solidarity with the women fighting British oppression. In Britain we have a special responsibility to support them — not just because we are women, but because we face a common enemy in the British state. Victory to the Armagh women! Troops out now!'

Free the Moores!

Anna Moore and her 19 year old daughter Jackie have been held in Castle-reagh Barracks and Armagh jail since they were arrested last November and charged with four murders in the Ballykelly bombing of December 1982. Jackie is pregnant. Both women have suffered physical and psychological torture at the hands of their Loyalist jailers. On our trip to Armagh, we spoke to Anna's sister Marnie McDaid.

'The RUC arrested Jackie and Anna up at their home in Bogside and took them to Castlereagh for questioning about Ballykelly. They'd been questioned about the same thing six months previous. They didn't know who did it, they were in no organisation and the police had no evidence. The RUC wanted names. Anna did not know any names so they knocked her about, knocked her to the ground, trailed her back by the hair, chopped her in the kidneys, slapped her head and face. They told Jackie it didn't matter that she was pregnant, she would get a hammering the same as her mother had got. They said not to worry if she had a miscarriage, they had a bucket handy and there wouldn't be any mess. Jackie was in an aw-



Marnie McDaid

ful state, crying for her mother. Then the police told Anna that Jackie had made a statement admitting offences, and said if she gave them names Jackie would get off. So Anna said 'I'll give you my own name then', and signed a statement thinking it would get Jackie out. But it didn't and they were both charged with four murders.

'They were taken to court at Limavady near Ballykelly. The RUC told the local Loyalists they were coming. There were hundreds of people outside. As Anna and Jackie came into the court they were shouting 'lynch them' and throwing bottles and stones. The judge said the

solicitor was talking rubbish when he complained that Anna and Jackie had been abused in jail. Anybody looking at them in court would have to be mad not to know they'd been abused.

'After the court hearing they were taken to Armagh. Jackie's baby is due in three or four months so that will be three generations in jail. The baby will stay with her for maybe nine months, then we'll have to look after it.'

The rest of the Moores' family have been abused and harassed by the RUC while Anna and Jackie are held. Jackie has been refused bail for a scan to check her baby is alright. The women fear what might happen outside the court in Limavady when they go back for their next hearing. Threats to unborn babies and RUC organised lynch mobs are what British justice means for nationalist women in the Six Counties. As Marnie McDaid put it,

'That's what we're up against. They can do exactly what they like and say "This is the law". Send messages of support to Anna and Jackie Moore c/o The Remand Wing, Armagh Prison, Armagh, County Armagh, Northern Ireland

Stop strip searches

There are 40 women prisoners in Armagh. Britain denies that they are political prisoners and labels them as ordinary criminals. Yet every aspect of the Armagh women's treatment shows they are special category prisoners. Armagh prisoners live with a daily round of cell searches, switches from one part of the prison to another, and harassment from screws. Any protest against their treatment risks solitary confinement and loss of letters and visits. But the issue which causes the most tension inside Armagh is the policy of strip searching every prisoner each time she enters or leaves the jail. It's the same routine even if women are only going to a magistrates court just 200 yards away for a five minute remand hearing.

Women prisoners are forced to strip in a cubicle, the top half of which is open to the view of eight or nine screws. Prisoners are provided with a sheet, which has to be opened to allow screws to 'inspect' them. Sanitary towels

have to be removed during the search. One woman who recently objected to this was told by the prison doctor to hold a towel between her legs while she was searched. Women who resist searches are forcibly stripped by brutal screws and face solitary confinement and loss of privileges.

Strip searches are used to degrade and humiliate republican women prisoners. They are special measures for special prisoners. In the first six months after their introduction in November 1982, 772 strip searches were carried out on the 40 women in Armagh. That compares with 1430 strip searches spread among 1400 women prisoners in England and Wales. Three Armagh defendants in the Christopher Black supergrass trial were strip searched 120 times each as they attended Belfast High Court.

The Armagh women prisoners have appealed for support from outside to stop the strip searches in 1984.

Racism in Bradford

A recipe for disaster

Racism is the issue in Bradford. Next month's council elections look set to become a platform for further attacks on Bradford blacks. Halal — ritually slaughtered meat — has been the unlikely subject of a raging debate in Bradford ever since the Tory council's decision to serve it in schools last July. The Halal debate has been a focus for racists of every hue, and has fuelled attacks on the Asian community. Eileen McEvoy, Revolutionary Communist Party candidate in the May elections, argues that the racists have been able to whip up anti-immigrant sentiments because for years they have faced no coherent opposition.

Winning the Asian vote is not a great concern for the Conservative Party nationally. But for Tory local councils in areas with a large immigrant population, the political allegiance of the Asian community is a more pressing concern. Over the past few years, mounting pressure from Bradford's 50 000 Asians has forced the city council to refurbish its image on the sensitive question of race relations. In late 1982 the council issued a 12 point plan to combat discrimination and got the backing of the Labour Party. Bradford's approach to race met with some initial public relations success. Representatives of the Inner London Education Authority recently spent a day in the city discussing the council's education policy. In Bradford, however, the council's paper anti-racist policies have provoked a different kind of racial awareness than was intended — a white backlash that threatens to get out of control.

'When in Rome...'

Since September, school lunches in Bradford have included meat from animals slaughtered according to the precepts of the Koran. Islamic law demands that animals should be killed without pre-stunning. The new catering arrangements became the pretext for a racist tirade against the Muslim community. The Halal debate attracted more letters to the *Telegraph* and *Argus* than any other subject in 1983. Bradford residents complained that immigrants 'who choose to live in our country must be prepared

to abide by our laws'. Lord Mayor and Labour councillor Norman Free argued that 'when in Rome, one should do as the Romans do — or pay the difference'. Free said that he could only support the provision of Halal meat if Asian parents paid an extra five pence for school meals. Animal rights campaigners joined the fray, claiming that Halal slaughter is barbaric and immoral.

Animal rights campaigners insisted that their protest had nothing to do with racism, and that their only objection was to the method of Halal slaughter. But their denials were irrelevant. For Bradford racists animal liberation became the excuse for racist attacks. When Kathryn Reynolds, the former coordinator of Bradford Animal Rights Group refused to pay her rates and barricaded herself in her house in protest she only added fuel to the anti-Asian campaign. The British National Party attacked Workers Against Racism supporters who defended the right of Asians to eat whatever meat they choose to and condemned the debate as a pretext for stirring up racism. The anti-Halal lobby reached such a pitch that

the council was forced to debate the issue again on 6 March. Workers Against Racism supporters joined 3000 local Muslims on a demonstration outside the meeting. After more than four hours of heated discussion, the council voted to continue its provision of Halal meat in schools. Two Labour councillors voted against.

The attack on the right of Asians to eat Halal meat has a deeper significance. It is part of a much broader ideological offensive against the black community — whether Asian, African or West Indian — and their religion and culture. The purpose of this assault on all things un-British is to whip up anti-immigrant prejudices and cohere a public consensus behind state attacks on blacks. Whether it is Margaret Thatcher complaining about the nation being 'swamped' or animal rights campaigners protesting about Halal meat, the working class must resist all attempts to drive a wedge between black and white workers. Workers must oppose any attack on the rights of black people to continue their cultural traditions as an act of class solidarity.

Schools for racists

The Halal debate brought to a head the explosive situation in Bradford's schools, where harassment and intimidation of Asian schoolchildren have become routine. At Eccleshill School Asian pupils claimed that throughout 1983 they suffered daily abuse from white youths coming in from outside. On 5 December Asian pupils fought with white youths distributing *British Nationalist* outside the school. The problem is

Anti-racist contender

Revolutionary Communist Party candidate Eileen McEvoy is the Bradford organiser of Workers Against Racism. She has been accused of being 'anti-British' and 'unpatriotic' for speaking out against the racists and defending the rights of the black community. Below she explains why she is standing in the May council elections and what she stands for.

'The Halal meat debate has unleashed something which everyone in Bradford has been aware of for a long time. The debate has merely given the racists the opportunity to step up their attack on the black community.'

'I think it's important to stand in the election because the real issues at stake in the debate have



Vote McEvoy in May

been lost. Nobody so far has been able to show why workers in Bradford should be defending the right of the Asian community to eat Halal meat. Attacks on the black community go back a long way in Brad-

ford. Black workers have fought back, but no organisation has ever tried to convince white workers that they have a lot to gain by fighting back with them. I'll be using the election as an opportunity to get that message across.'

A platform for anti-racist workers

- opposition to all racist legislation and immigration controls
- workers' defence against racist attacks, at work, at home, on the streets
- rank and file action for jobs and equality — not token 'positive discrimination' gestures
- trade union opposition to colour bars
- no race checks in the NHS or on the dole
- trade union action against police harassment

not confined to the fascists. Some 45 teachers are taking early retirement because of the council's race relations policies. In February more than 200 children walked out of Wyke Manor School protesting at staff discrimination and harassment. Wyke Manor was already under scrutiny after a supply teacher was suspended by the education authority for his allegations that staff members made racist remarks about the black headmaster Carlton Duncan. Since his retirement last year, the former headmaster of Delf Hill Middle School has been prominent in the British National Party. Roy Honeyford, headmaster of Drummond Middle School, which is 86 per cent black, wrote in the right-wing *Salisbury Review* that multi-ethnic education lowers standards for white children.

Throughout the long debate about Halal meat the Labour Party kept a low profile. Its inability to challenge the racists flowed from its acceptance that the

debate was a legitimate one, and its long history of tolerating racist practices. From 1945 to 1967 Labour controlled the council except for a short break of three years. Since 1967 the Tories have been in power almost continuously, but the all-party approach to race relations established under Labour has flourished.

When Asians first went to Bradford in any numbers in the mid-fifties they were employed mainly in the wool textile industry. Neither the machinery nor the dirty and dangerous conditions had changed much over the previous 100 years. The new arrivals found themselves working in the worst jobs. When the bosses brought in expensive new machinery to counter increased competition from Europe and Asia it was the Asians who were forced to work nights to keep the factories running. By 1964, eight out of every 10 night-shift workers were Asian, although they made up only a fifth of the total textile workforce in Bradford.

Whites only

Racism was never far from the surface during the sixties and early seventies, but the anti-immigrant lobby was not very vocal. It was only with the beginnings of the recession that the racists began to voice their views more openly. Meanwhile the Labour Party went along with the systematic discrimination against Asians in employment. In 1960, the council's transport department endorsed a union call to limit the number of black workers to 23 per cent. Later the quota was abandoned for the lack of white applicants for the jobs, but blacks were barred from being inspectors. Among a platform staff of more than 100, more than half were Asians, yet there were no Asian inspectors. Local TGWU organiser Joseph Brogden went on television in 1972 to explain that 'no Asian busman is now capable of doing the job of inspector'. Brogden was also president of Bradford

City Labour Party from 1964 to 1970 and a councillor for 15 years. Today, there are still only five black inspectors out of a total of 38, even though half the bus staff are black.

Passport to the dole

The jobs that Asian workers came to Bradford to do are disappearing fast. Although they are only 15 per cent of the population, Asians now account for more than a third of the local unemployed. The unemployment rate among black school-leavers is higher than that of virtually any other city. Within six months of leaving school last year, only 3.7 per cent of all black Bradford school-leavers had found jobs. Model race relations have done nothing for the black community's employment prospects. Council jobs are equally unobtainable for blacks. Last year a mere 534 of the council's 25 000 employees were black. The council's ethnic monitoring and positive discrimination policies amount to nothing when set beside its employment record and its racist housing policy which has meant that only five per cent of Asians live in council houses. About 90 per cent of the rest are forced to live in run-down properties built before 1919.

Blacks in Bradford are threatened from all sides. It is time anti-racists exposed the ethnic posturing of a council which thinks it a great gesture to grant Asians the right to eat the meat that their culture demands. And it is time to put the Labour Party on the spot for its failure to take a stand against racism in Bradford. As the Halal issue threatens to take over the May local council elections, the RCP will be taking a stand by fielding a candidate on an anti-racist working class platform. Local people who can see the dangers of racial divisions for the working class should join us in the fight to force the council to provide all workers with what they need.



Angry Asians protest: Bradford mosques demonstrate for their right to Halal meat

We're all special cases now

Now that deportations have become an everyday experience for black people in Britain exceptional measures are necessary to fight them. The Afia Begum Campaign Against Deportations is an exceptional campaign.

'AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN', 'A UNIQUE CASE'. These are the phrases widely used in the press and on television to describe Afia Begum and her year-long battle against deportation. Yet Afia Begum is a very ordinary woman. She has been pushed by the circumstances of being an Asian immigrant in Britain in the eighties into taking extraordinary steps to safeguard herself and her baby daughter.

After getting married in Bangladesh in 1979, Afia waited three years for an entry certificate to join her husband in Britain. In March 1982, only three months after she gained her entry clearance, Afia's husband died in a fire in a Brick Lane tenement. Her husband's death did more than leave Afia a teenage widow with a baby. It also meant that her entry certificate was cancelled. Afia became an 'illegal immigrant'. All her appeals to the Home Office were rejected and last year she was issued with a deportation order. She had no alternative but to go into hiding - a course of action in which she was fully supported by Workers Against Racism and later by the Afia Begum Campaign Against Deportations. Despite police raids on relatives in several cities Afia remains in Britain and she is determined to stay.

Marching orders

The plight of Afia Begum illustrates how the British state is clamping down on the rights of black people. Her case is far from unique. Last month immigration police deported Polat Hasbudak, a Turkish garment worker who had been resident in Britain since 1975. His children are 'British' and are allowed to stay. Even the respectable middle class Pereira family, who have mobilised a Hampshire village in their support, have been branded 'illegal'. All pleas to the Government for clemency have failed and they too await expulsion.

The Tory government is adopting a more and more aggressive anti-immigration policy. Last year the numbers of new entrants into Britain from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan fell by 10 per cent to reach the lowest level since Commonwealth immigration was first restricted in 1962. The Begums and the Pereiras were only two of more than 2000 families to receive their marching orders last year. Tory immigration minister David Waddington has scornfully dismissed all legal and humanitarian appeals, lobbying by MPs, delegations and demonstrations. The only concessions the Tories have made have been to hardline racist demands - by introducing measures to encourage the repatriation of black people from Britain.

No road back

The scale of the Tory attack is unprecedented. It means that the sort of approach that often succeeded in defending black people in the past is no longer effective today. Until recently successive British governments, while maintaining tight controls on immigration, were prepared to make exceptions. Individuals could plead that their circumstances were peculiar, that they faced particular difficulties, or that they made a distinctive contribution to British society. The Home Office was sometimes prepared to make concessions to special cases. This allowed the authorities to operate immigration regulations flexibly according to the requirements of the labour market. It also helped to sustain an image of British fair play and concern for racial harmony. But that was before the recession struck.

Now Britain needs no more foreign labour and the Government wants to take a tough line on issues of race and immigration. This helps to enforce the position of black people as second class citizens in Britain and deepens racial divisions in the working class. Hence in 1984 Waddington is impervious to pleas for compassion on the grounds that Afia Begum's husband was killed and her father is sick, or that the Pereiras are model British citizens. 'If they're black - send them back' is the slogan that unites the racists of the Monday Club with the racists of the Tory Cabinet.

Blow for blow

The Afia Begum Campaign Against Deportations has demonstrated a response to Waddington and the Tories that measures up to the offensive. We appeal for support for Afia not because she is special but because she is increasingly becoming typical. We appeal not for mercy from the state, but for solidarity from the working class. The Tories have made it clear that they are ready to use their laws to round up and kick out black people, to break up families and intimidate immigrants and members of all ethnic minorities. The Afia Begum campaign wants to make it clear that working class people are prepared to support Afia all the way in defying racist laws.

The state aims to isolate black people, label them as 'illegals' and 'overstayers' and turn them into out-

On tour with the Sari Squad

'Last week the Tory immigration minister had to go on television to explain why he is kicking Asian women out of Britain. Now they are on the defensive and we are going forward.'

Sharmila Kumari of the Sari Squad

Last summer a group of Asian women launched a series of protests which included chaining themselves outside the Home Secretary's house to draw attention to the plight of Afia Begum. Last month the Sari Squad toured the country to raise support for Afia's fight to stay in Britain.



Photographs: Chris Black (reflex)

In Birmingham the Sari Squad addressed the International Women's Day march and rally. They called on more women to get involved in the fight against racism. They later received an enthusiastic reception from the demonstration called by the Kashmiri Defence Committee against recent police harassment of their community. In Coventry the Sari Squad made a flying visit to Asian strikers at the Foleshill Plating Company who were recently sacked in a row over union recognition.



casts. Our aim is to make the fight against deportations and immigration controls a rallying cause for the labour movement. We want to unite working class people in face of state terror against Afia Begum and thousands of other black people. The Afia Begum campaign aims to turn the tables on the

Tories' attempts to stir up racial tensions, by mobilising workers in solidarity with the victims of racist laws. The Tories have raised the stakes with their latest round of ruthless deportations. It's up to us to show them that they have taken on more than they bargained for.

Nasreen Khan

In Manchester the women were joined on the platform by Anwar Ditta and a Labour councillor. Anwar, who herself fought a bitter six year struggle to bring her children to Britain, told the meeting that resolute defiance of the Home Office was the only way to win. The councillor Jo Holly called on the Manchester council to support the campaign. In Bradford, Wolverhampton, Cardiff, Bristol, Exeter and Brighton the Sari Squad attracted crowds of young people eager to get involved in the campaign.



The Sari Squad's next stop is Europe. More than 50 women will be crossing the Channel for demonstrations and rallies in Paris, Bonn, Brussels and Strasbourg. The trip will culminate in a rally on 23 May at the European Parliament.

New campaign HQ

On Thursday 8 March 200 people attended the opening of a new Afia Begum campaign centre, to celebrate International Women's Day. GLC women's committee representative Jenny Fletcher officially opened the campaign headquarters in Brick Lane, East London, not far from the burnt out house where Afia's husband was killed. Labour MP Harry Cohen, Grunwick strike leader Jayaben Desai and local community organisations addressed the packed meeting. Two 'community pol-

icemen' discovered that the reception did not extend to them as they were escorted to the door. Jayaben Desai reminded the audience that the women strikers at Grunwick had been let down badly by the Labour Party, and urged the Labour Party to give full support to Afia's fight. Pointing to the banners strung out across the street Hackney Asian Association spokesman Alok Biswas stressed the importance of involving local people in the campaign.



Fighting victimisations

Union busting has become an everyday activity for British employers. It is not confined to highly publicised cases like Eddie Shah's *Stockport Messenger* and GCHQ Cheltenham. In thousands of workplaces around the country employers are refusing to recognise unions and victimising union activists. But workers are fighting back. Revolutionary Communist Party supporters have been involved in two recent struggles against attacks on basic trade union rights in a Coventry metal works and a London hospital.

Many Asian workers suffer long hours, low pay and health hazards without union protection. Last month workers at the Foleshill Plating Company struck for union rights.

Martin Stone of Coventry RCP spoke to their TGWU steward:

'Conditions at work are terrible. One slip of the foot can put you in the chemical tank — a fatal accident. We work 12 hour shifts with no meal breaks. If we grab a sandwich or tea we eat at our machine or the boss starts shouting. Most weeks the boss makes us work 60 hours, it's either that or the dole.'

'The bosses were always dragging us about, treating us like slaves. We got fed up and decided to join the TGWU. The district official Ron Howell told us about the benefits and said he'd write to the company for recognition.'

Pickets

'When the bosses got the letter they went mad. They told us we would have to meet outside if we wanted to discuss what to do next. So we went out. Next day we got our dismissal notices in the post.'

'The union tried to talk to the bosses. When we asked what can we do they suggested a picket. We had never done this before. The night shift were with us. They stayed out picketing with us for two days. Then

the union said they should go back to work because they hadn't been dismissed.'

'We asked the union to get the night shift back out because every morning the boss drives a lorry full of what they produce past our picket, laughing his face off. The union said no, if we did it our way we would lose and they would drop the case. They said they had a good argument for the industrial tribunal: "If the bosses took the night shift back, why not you?"'

Bitter

The workers found out why not when the preliminary tribunal dismissed their case. The TGWU promised that 'the fight goes on' — at least until the final tribunal this month.

'We are very bitter about how we've been treated. We're running out of money for our picket. The union says we haven't paid enough dues for strike pay. The TGWU is supposed to be setting up a fund, but like everything else it is very slow. We know now the only way to communicate with the boss is to hit his production, hit him where it hurts — in his pocket.'

The Foleshill strike is still

on. RCP supporters have been down on the picket line arguing for bringing out the night shift as the only way to win. We argued that workers must reject the union's pipedream of an 'independent' tribunal, and rely on their own strength. While the TGWU dithers over strike funds, Foleshill workers need to set up their own independent fund and get support from the labour movement. If they begin to assert rank and file control now, they can make sure the union is worth joining.

Policing unions

Since the end of the 1982 pay dispute, NHS managers have victimised hundreds of union activists. In February, health workers at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington protested against the victimisation of three West Indian ward orderlies and management's use of the police to discipline militants.

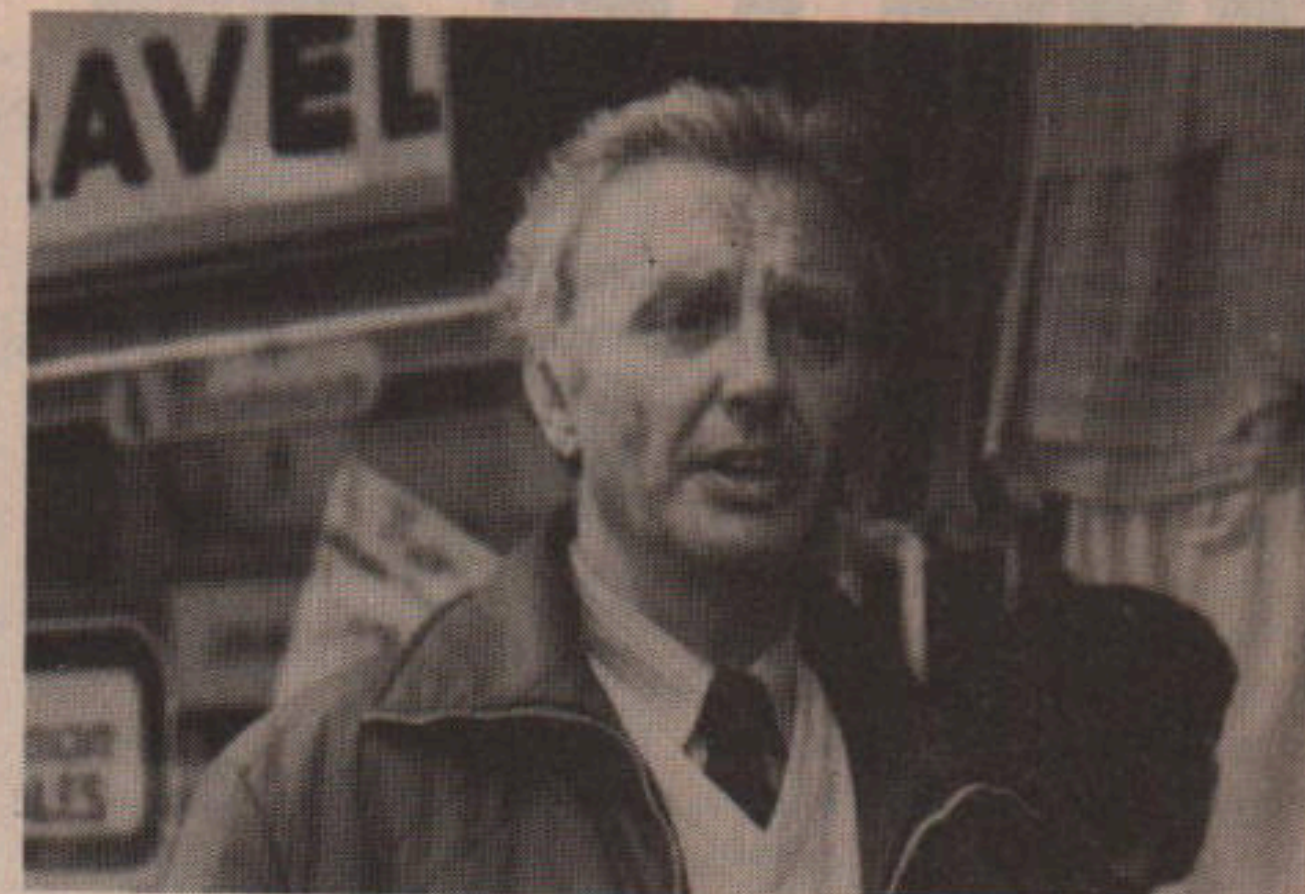
Rita Maxim, a TGWU steward, Ethel Samaroo and Monica Cato were sacked for refusing to sign a three month contract after almost 20 years work at the West London Hospital. Management called the police to kick Rita Maxim out. She was only allowed to change out of her work clothes under close police supervision, then thrown off the premises. That evening, shop stewards protesting against the victimisations were ejected from the local district health authority by more police.

Vote RCP in May

Dave Hallsworth stood as the Revolutionary Communist Party candidate in Ashton under Lyne at last June's General Election. Next month, Dave Hallsworth is back on the election trail in Ashton in the local council polls.

Dave Hallsworth is no stranger to victimisations. During nearly 40 years of working class struggle he has been imprisoned for organising a trade union in the navy, expelled from left-wing sects for opposing their opportunism, and victimised for uniting black and white textile workers in a militant strike over low pay and racism. As secretary of Tameside Trades Council, he is still fighting the bosses' victimisation of the working class:

'"Divide and rule" is a thing the bosses learn in their cradles. Racism, sexism, nationalism, unemployment: these are the tools they use to split us up, to pocket one group of workers off from another and smash us a few at a time. If we're going to win, we've got to bring back some of our movement's old slogans, like "an injury to one is an injury to all". Just voting for me won't change anything. But it will show them that we're will-



ing to drive out the divisive politics of the parties of the past and build for the future. We're campaigning on a platform of:

● *No cuts in council jobs or services:* workers in Ashton need every job and facility we've got left. And we can't afford any more rate rises to pay for them.

● *Open the unemployed workers' centre:* we've been campaigning for two years for an unemployed centre funded by the council and run by unemployed workers. The council has come up with a wreck of a building, but hasn't fixed it up or handed over control.

● *Fight racism:* black workers in Ashton suffer discrimination in jobs and housing. We're out to unite the working class in a

fight for the facilities we all need.

● *For a woman's right to work:* that means free 24 hour nurseries, free abortion on demand and an end to all discrimination.

'Only revolutionary communist councillors can fight for this. Our Labour council goes along with cuts and rate rises because it's more concerned to balance the account books than to defend the working class. We're not interested in what the bosses' system can afford: we start from what workers in Ashton need. It's time we had somebody in the Town Hall who's interested in meeting workers' demands for more jobs and better services, instead of giving in to the Tory government's demands for less spending.'

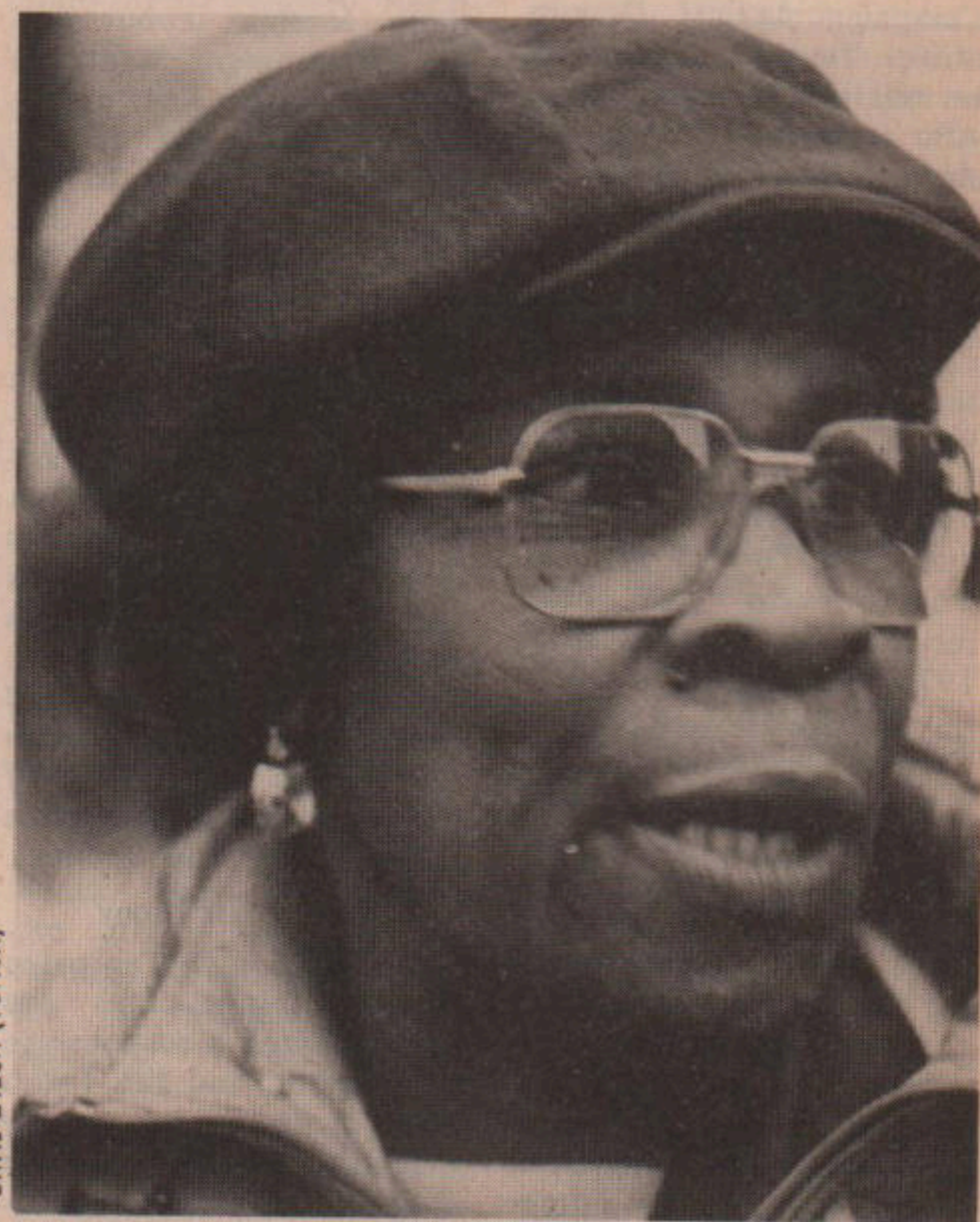
The three month contracts are part of management's plans to undermine the St Mary's workforce and soften resistance to its planned cuts and privatisation schemes. There has been a general clampdown on discipline and union activity at the hospital. Demarcation has been forcibly broken: the new contracts demand that ward orderlies clean floors on top of their normal duties. Workers who are five minutes late face disciplinary action leading to dismissal. Management has paid particular attention to intimidating workers out of attending union meetings.

Positive

In response to the February victimisations, the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has broken off all negotiations and consultations with management at St Mary's. This is a positive move which supporters of the RCP have advocated at hospitals around Britain. But the shop stewards' opposition to the sackings met with only limited success.

Blackmail

The shop stewards' committee called a day of action against the victimisations and police interference. It attracted support from hospital militants, but failed to bring out the majority of St Mary's workers. Health workers protested that management had threatened to dock the pay and end the contracts of anybody who joined the stewards' action. An additional reason for the poor response was workers' lack of confidence in their



Rita Maxim: thrown out of work by police

unions' willingness to confront management aggression. Victimised orderly Ethel Samaroo revealed how local union officials had refused to back their fight for jobs:

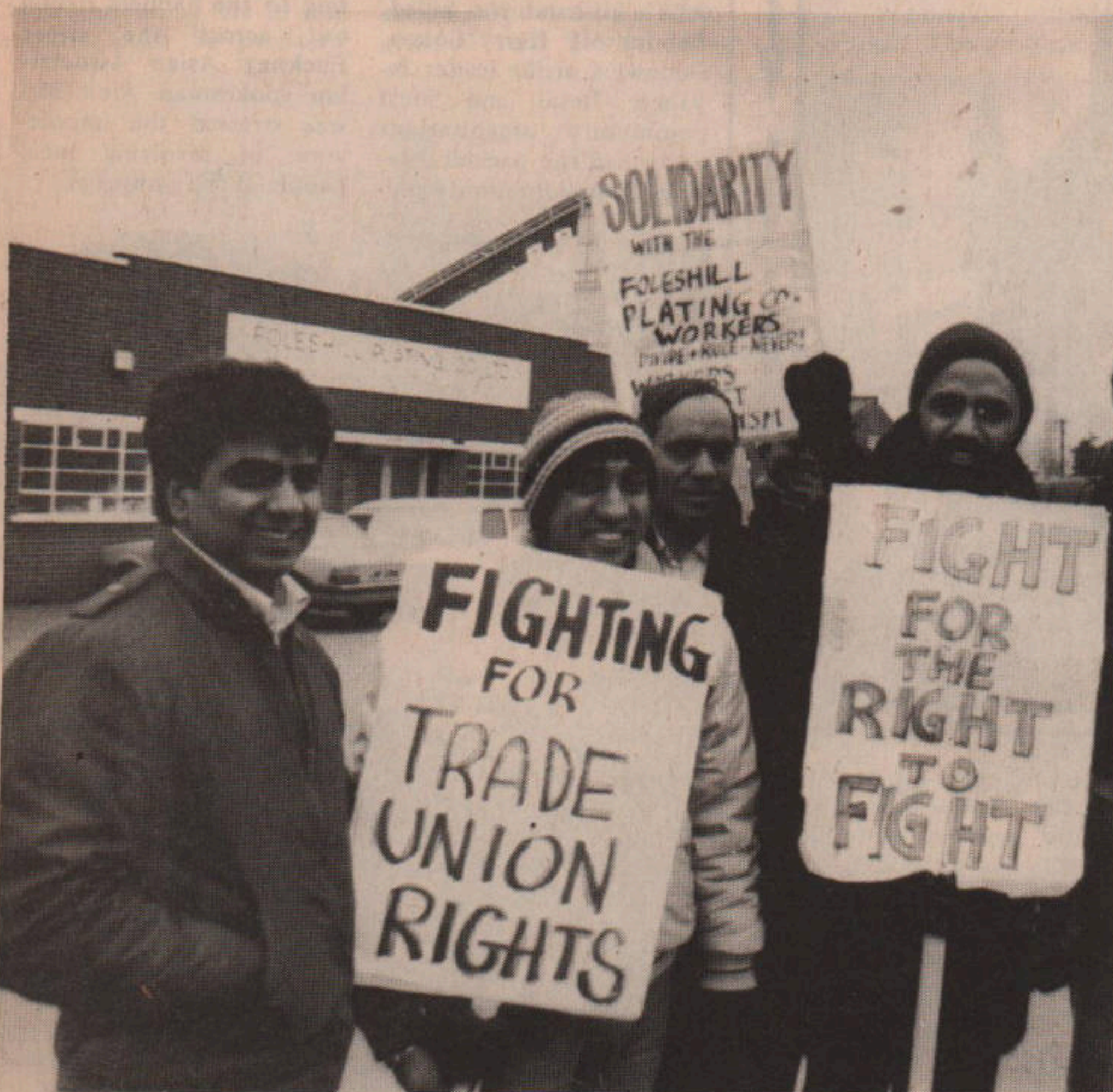
'Our local branch secretary and our union official told us to sign the new contracts. They wouldn't stand with us. The union helps management blackmail all the women. It doesn't represent us. "You are fools" they told us.'

The militant shop stewards who called the day of action have tried to distance themselves from the officials' approach. But even the stewards were compromised

in workers' eyes, by their failure to take direct action against previous victimisations of ancillary workers.

Combat

RCP supporters at St Mary's have argued that the unions must confront the bosses' scare tactics head-on, by uniting the workforce in action against the new contracts and any attempted victimisations. It is the militants' responsibility to build that unity. They have to prove that the unions can act as combat organisations for health workers, rather than additional policemen for health service management.



Our rights on the line: pickets at Foleshill Plating need solidarity to win

The barriers to victory

Fighting divisions

The miners have taken on the National Coal Board, the courts, the police and the Tory Government in a battle against pit closures. The miners are up against a more ruthless and determined assault than anything they have faced since nationalisation in 1947. To beat this onslaught requires a fundamental reorientation in the outlook and organisation of the miners' union (see following page).

The flying pickets that spread through the coalfields in response to the announcement of the latest wave of pit closures revealed the strength of the miners' organisation and their determination to win. Yet never have miners faced such difficulties in uniting behind a strike and making it effective.

The key to overcoming these problems is the recognition of how much times have changed since 1972 and 1974, and even 1981, when miners won limited success through traditional trade union tactics.

Drastic steps

The desperate plight of the British coal mining industry in 1984 is an extreme example of the broader impact of the world recession on the British economy. Like any other capitalist enterprise, the survival of coal mining depends on making it profitable. Making mining profitable under prevailing market conditions means a drastic rationalisation of the industry, closures and redundancies.

In 1972 and 1974 the oil crisis gave British coal mining a temporary reprieve. Under militant pressure the NCB could pay up higher wages while its markets stabilised — though it still had to shed thousands of jobs. Even in 1981 the Government could postpone a confrontation with the miners and buy time with higher subsidies.

The arrival of Ian MacGregor at the head of the NCB in September 1983 indicated that matters were reaching a head. Deepening recession meant a tightening squeeze on public expenditure subsidies for coal mining. Industrial stagnation meant declining demand for coal at home, while international competition intensified.

At the same time, the broader balance of class forces was shifting steadily to the advantage of the Tories. Every retreat by the trade union leaders made Government more confident and more aggressive. Having picked off the steel workers and the healthworkers, the NGA and the staff at GCHQ, the Tories have now moved in to crush the miners.

High stakes

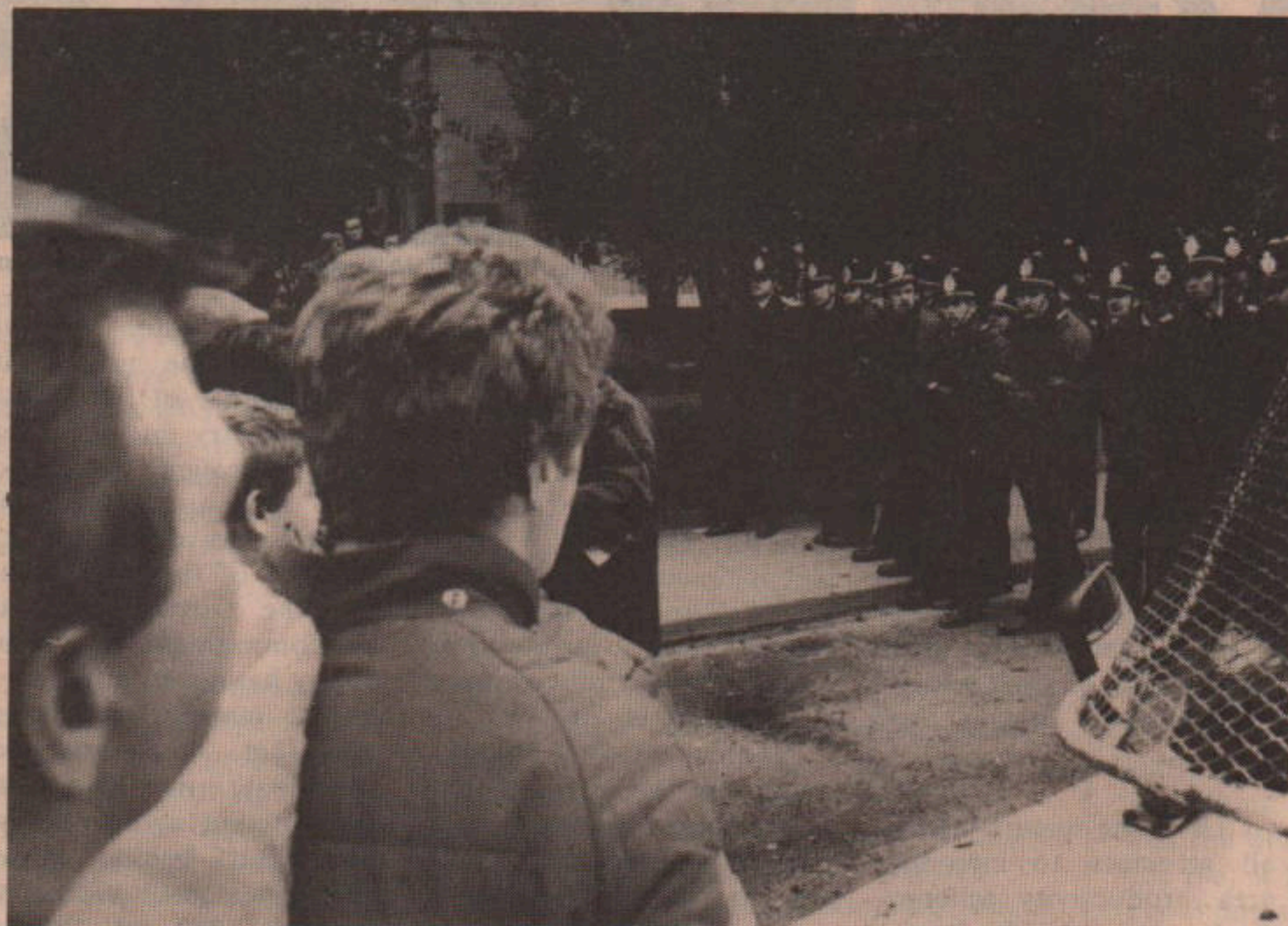
It is no exaggeration to state that not only are tens of thousands of miners' jobs at issue, but the very survival of the miners' union is at stake. In the first week of March, MacGregor announced a package of 20 closures and 20 000 redundancies over the coming year. But he has not bothered to refute Arthur Scargill's claim that his real intention is to reduce the number of pits from 175 to 100 and the

number of jobs from 184 000 to 100 000. More significantly for the NUM leadership, back in February MacGregor announced that he intended to proceed without winning union agreement. 'I can't wait for the union' he declared contemptuously.

The NCB and the Government have planned their tactics carefully. The NCB took advantage of the overtime ban launched by the NUM last November in protest over wages to intensify divisions among different areas and among face workers, surface workers and winders in the same pits. The employers have further tried to weaken the miners' resistance by offering substantial redundancy settlements to miners as young as 21. Meanwhile the Government and the police worked out their grand plan for a paramilitary occupation of the coalfields under computerised, central control. The NCB advised its customers to build up stocks, waited for winter to pass and then moved in for the kill.

Looking backwards

While the NCB prepares for a grim future, the NUM leadership is still living in the past. The NCB has responded to the crisis of the eighties with a dramatic change in strategy and tactics, with potentially catastrophic consequences for miners. Yet the NUM continues to spout the rhetoric of the seventies. Unlike the bosses the miners' leaders have made no urgent preparation



Two classes, two picket lines: miners confront the police state

for all-out war.

The current strike began with walkouts by rank and file miners in South Yorkshire over the acceleration of pit closures in the area. While the local and national leadership followed on behind, militants attempting to spread the action immediately ran into the problems caused by the NUM. In South Wales and Scotland many miners were bitter about the failure of the national union to back action against pit closures in their areas in recent months. Some were reluctant to follow Yorkshire's lead.

Divisions between miners threatened with immediate closure and those with guaranteed jobs have become particularly bitter between the Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire coalfields. Flying pickets have faced large scale strike-breaking, hostile local demonstrations and massive police repression. The result has been miner fighting miner, bitterness and disunity.

The NUM has failed to give a lead to unite the

miners. In the militant areas it has endorsed action already taken by the rank and file. In the moderate areas it has given maximum scope for the more conservative workers to undermine unity and block effective nationwide action. Above all, it has failed to provide a coherent strategy to pull the miners together and to use mass meetings to draw the majority of miners into action alongside the militants. In response to the courts and the police, miners' leaders have tried to limit the scale of picketing.

Diversions

The NUM has become too closely dependent on the NCB to go on an all-out offensive against it. Despite Scargill's denunciations of MacGregor, relations between union officials and NCB management remain close at national executive level. While most pits have been on strike since mid-March, the NUM is still represented on the National

Consultative Committee, the top level body on which it meets regularly with the employers to discuss closures, redundancies and similar matters.

Indeed one of the main aims behind the NUM leadership's backing for industrial action is to use the strike as a lever to force MacGregor to continue the collaborative approach that he has threatened to end. In early March Scargill threatened a national strike to force the NCB 'to return to the negotiating table'. The aim of the strike was not to defeat the employers but to make MacGregor 'see reason' regarding the NUM's constructive proposals for making British coal mining a viable industry.

The most radical action approved by the NUM leadership and its colleagues in other unions — combined trade union sanctions against foreign coal imports — is simply a militant extension of its traditional policy of collaboration with the NCB. Instead of uniting miners against the NCB and

its customers to make the strike really bite, the import controls strategy unites miners with the NCB against its overseas competitors.

The import controls campaign is a diversion from the sort of action required to stop the movement of coal in Britain and disrupt energy supplies to British industry.

Control

Thousands of rank and file miners have shown that they are ready to fight for jobs by any means necessary. To win they need a strategy that measures up to the scale of the combined employers' and state offensive, and an organisation that can put it into action. A strategy for victory must begin by fighting all redundancies, regardless of the state of MacGregor's account books. It must reject all restrictions on picketing and sympathy action, by the courts, the police — or by the union leadership.

The miners also need an organisation that fights for their jobs, not for the British coal industry. The first step is to force the NUM off all standing committees in which it collaborates with the employers and the Government. The miners need to take control of the dispute out of the hands of their area and national officials. They need to put an end to all the bureaucratic manipulations of local ballots, instructions and counter-instructions. Mass meetings at pit level are vital to involve the mass of the miners in a dispute that promises to be long and hard.

It is also essential to extend rank and file activity on to a national level. Delegations of activists should be sponsored to tour the coalfields arguing for all-out national action and wider sympathy strikes. 'Picketing but' is a militant response to the area divisions exacerbated by the NUM's policies. But it is not an effective means of ensuring united strike action. It cannot be a substitute for involving all miners in the strike and winning the arguments for all-out action. Sooner or later, a national ballot will be the only way to guarantee united action by the miners against the NCB and the Government. It must be up to the rank and file to decide when and how this should be conducted. The bureaucratic manoeuvres of the NUM leaders will lead inevitably to the isolation of the militants and growing disillusionment among the mass of miners. Rank and file control of the strike from pit to area to national level is the only guarantee of victory.

Mike Freeman

The RCP hits the pits

Since the miners' strike began RCP supporters have been distributing our 'miners' next step' leaflets, joining picket lines and collecting money for the miners. We have also held public meetings in Duns-croft near Doncaster, Brimington near Chesterfield and in Sheffield. Three issues came up time and time again at the meetings and on the picket lines.

Rank and file control: many miners are impatient at the lack of decisiveness shown by the area leadership and the lack of planning and co-

ordination at pit and area level. Most activists appreciate the importance of keeping financial control of the dispute at a local level. Most debate surrounds the link between the organisational problems of the strike and the political outlook of the NUM leadership.

National action: miners are aware of the need for a solid all-out strike — and of the barriers to achieving this given the splits in their ranks. The vast majority of militants are strongly against a national ballot because this has been pushed by the right

wingers in the coalfields and by the media.

The younger militants believe that 'picketing out' moderate pits can bring them into line for an all-out stoppage. More experienced activists are sceptical of the chances of such tactics succeeding. But they are more inclined to follow the fatalistic strategy of the NUM leadership which simply allows regional divisions to take their course.

RCP supporters are arguing for spreading the strike through rank and file participation, not by the bureaucratic manipu-

lation of ballots or by elevating 'picketing out' into a systematic strategy which could prove counterproductive.

Women: the familiar attempts by the media to promote women in an anti-strike role in Nottinghamshire — and the displays of chauvinism by many miners — have put the issue of women at the centre of the miners' strike. Our supporters in the coalfields have concentrated on involving women in the conduct of the dispute, organising funds, creches and pressing local shops to reduce prices.

The fatal embrace

The problems the miners face in uniting against the Coal Board have their origins in their leaders' long-standing collaboration with the bosses. From the national down to the pit level, miners' representatives are locked into a machinery of consultation and negotiation with the employers. And the National Union of Mineworkers is tied to the National Coal Board by a common commitment to defend British coal. The miners have traditionally been one of the most militant sections of the working class. But the union leaders have always sacrificed their members' militancy to the interests of the British coal industry.

The period from 1972 to 1974 is remembered as one of militant miners, flying pickets and violent confrontations with the police. In 1972 immense pressure from the rank and file forced the NUM executive to back industrial action for better pay and conditions in the first national strike since 1926. In 1974, the organised might of rank and file miners led to the downfall of Edward Heath's Tory government.

The miners emerged from the struggles of the early seventies with greater confidence and a decent wage for the first time in decades. The NUM bureaucrats emerged from the 1974 strike fighting for a greater stake in running the British mining industry. With the election of a Labour government in 1974 consultation and negotiation procedures proliferated.

Plan for disaster

Labour's Social Contract meant state funding for the coal industry in return for union cooperation. In 1974, the NUM, the NCB and the Government launched a joint, long-term strategy for the mining industry, *Plan for Coal*. The 1973 oil crisis and the shortage of energy sources meant that the ruling class was prepared to invest in mining. *Plan for Coal* established long-term production targets, agreed annual productivity increases and pledged to get rid of uneconomic pits.

Union agreement to closures and productivity increases was the price paid for large scale investment by the Labour government. *Plan for Coal* was a success story for the NUM bureaucrats and their approach to solving the problems of the industry jointly with management. But it was a disaster for rank and file miners.

From 1974 to Labour's election defeat in 1979, NUM bureaucrats sat on joint committees with management and presided over the destruction of thousands of jobs. Under the 1973 Colliery Review Procedure the NUM negotiated the closure of 40 pits in five years. Arthur Scargill's Yorkshire power base lost pit after pit and more jobs than any other area. The closures were concentrated in the oldest, most run-down and unproductive collieries.

Union agreement to productivity deals strengthened regional divisions between the richer and poorer coalfields and sectional divisions between different workers in the same pit. From 1974

to 1977 the miners resisted all attempts to introduce area productivity schemes. By November 1977 left-wing NUM leader Lawrence Daly and energy minister Tony Benn were exhorting the miners to prove that 'a nationalised industry can outperform all others'. But the miners were strongly opposed to productivity deals which they knew meant disunity and deteriorating conditions. A record turnout of 80 per cent of the workforce voted by 56 per cent to reject the productivity scheme.

However, the regional divisions fomented by the NUM were already apparent before the ballot. The more productive coalfields, which stood to gain from area incentive schemes, showed substantial support for the deal. The least productive areas, which stood to lose out, swung the vote against acceptance. The NCB was quick to exploit these divisions and a revolt against the ballot result in Nottinghamshire rapidly spread to Derbyshire, Leicestershire and other profitable coalfields. The NUM executive needed no encouragement to overturn the ballot and endorse area agreements.

Crumbled

The Yorkshire, South Wales and Kent leaders could only respond by seeking an injunction against the NUM for sanctioning unconstitutional conduct. But the courts were not likely to take a stand on something the left-wing leaders were not prepared to fight for themselves. When a High Court judge ruled against them, the militant areas had no power to resist.

The NCB reaped the benefits of the new incentive scheme in greatly increased output. For the miners, the NUM's acceptance of the scheme sowed the seeds of the divisions that plague the union today. The bonus scheme effectively superseded the 1966 National Power Loading Agreement which had unified pay negotiations and ended local bar-

gaining over piece rates. The 1978 incentive scheme not only divided miners in different regions, but also in different pits — and even on different shifts within the same pit. By late 1978 North Nottinghamshire miners were taking home a weekly average of nearly £33 in bonuses. South Wales miners were only getting £8.50.

The bosses' first attempt to exploit the divisions that had emerged among miners came in February 1981. The list of 24 pit closures presented to the miners was the Tory government's bid to begin a thorough rationalisation of the coal industry. Rank and file miners responded with a spate of unofficial strikes, leading to a call for a national strike. The 1981 strike is celebrated as a victory in the labour movement. In reality it was a victory for the bosses and the union bureaucrats.

The union bureaucrats lined up with the NCB and used the miners' militancy to strengthen their negotiations with the Tory government for more investment and subsidies. The Government backed down from an all-out confrontation and coughed up £231m in investments and subsidies.

The Tories' decision not to move in for the kill gave the Coal Board a breathing space and the miners a stay of execution.

The great pretender

Arthur Scargill was elected NUM president in 1982 with the biggest majority ever. Miners voted for Scargill because of his reputation for militancy and his advocacy of direct action in defence of jobs and wages.

But Arthur Scargill is not

just a trade union militant. He is also the most militant defender of the British coal industry and an inveterate campaigner against foreign coal and foreign oil. Scargill has continued his defiance of the Coal Board and the Government, but his commitment to the industry has never faltered.

The miners' leader pledged that he would not participate in talks with management about pit closures. But behind closed doors the consultation continued as the pit closures mounted. On the day that Ian McGregor announced his latest plans for 20 pit closures and 20 000 redundancies, the miners' leader still found time to reach agreement with the Board on an agenda of demands to take to the Government.

The irreconcilable

At the July 1983 miners' conference Scargill told his members that he was prepared 'to fight to the death if necessary to save the British coal mining industry'. Scargill says that he wants a viable coal industry and a future for British miners. This evades the fundamental contradiction between saving the coal industry and saving workers' jobs. The bosses recognise that a viable coal industry means productivity increases and large scale redundancies. When it comes to

the crunch, Scargill's subservience to defending the coal industry means reconciling militancy with capitalist rationality. In Scargill's first year as president seven collieries were closed and more than 10 000 jobs lost. From 1983 to 1984, 23 pits were closed, partially closed or merged and 20 000 miners lost their jobs.

When there has been a real chance to fight pit closures Scargill's militant rhetoric has proved to be so much hot air. In 1982, when miners at Kinneil in Scotland were battling against closure, Scargill's right hand man, NUM vice president Mick McGahey said closure was inevitable and called off strike action.

Class interests first

Scargill and the NUM leadership have schooled rank and file miners to identify their interests with the interests of the British coal industry. In the past, this outlook has led to divisions, defeats and demoralisation. Today, it means suicide for tens of thousands of miners. Only by rejecting the bureaucrats' collaborationist approach and pursuing their independent interests as workers will the miners overcome these divisions. The united strength of the miners in defence of their class interests is the only weapon which can defeat the bosses.

Joan Phillips

Meetings: Fighting Divisions

GLASGOW

Tuesday 10 April 7.30pm
Partick Burgh Hall Room 4
Burgh Hall Street
off Dunbarton Road
near Partick Underground

SHEFFIELD

Thursday 12 April 7.30pm
Victoria Hall
opposite Crucible Theatre



We're in the miners' camp: life on the Yorkshire picket line

Spot the difference

Arthur Scargill's firebrand oratory might seem a million miles removed from the moderate pronouncements of his predecessor Joe Gormley. But its political content is little different. Left and right in the NUM have always been united in their defence of the British coal industry. The left is distinguished by the way in which it combines its loyalty to British mining with a rhetorical commitment to the interests of the working class.

The triumvirate of Arthur Scargill, Mick McGahey and Peter Heathfield which controls the union today stands in a long tradition of left-wing influence in the NUM. The Broad Left alliance of Communist Party and left-wing Labour officials first came to prominence in the late sixties in Yorkshire, Scotland and South Wales.



The Young Arthur

The left criticised the old right-wing leadership which had ruled the NUM through the fifties and sixties for its pessimistic view of the prospects for the British coal industry. Scargill's most damning indictment of Joe Gormley and his predecessors was that they did not fight hard enough to defend the industry.

The Broad Left's strategy was based on a more optimistic assessment of the future of the coal industry. Unlike the right, the left envisaged a bright future for the miners as coal acquired a bigger role as a national energy resource.

The left-wing leadership won rank and file support because it presented its collaboration with the NCB in the language of militant trade unionism. Scargill and his colleagues called for strike action and import controls to win more government investment and subsidies. Whereas the right went along with the run-down of the industry, the left said it was fighting even harder than the bosses to save British mining. But the pits closed and miners went down the road just the same.

the next step

State power

The British state is a formidable machine. The thousands of police despatched across the country to block the miners' flying pickets moved swiftly and effectively. The careful supervision of the operation from the National Recording Centre at Scotland Yard showed the enormous resources that the security forces have available for dealing with trade union action. The scale of the operation was unprecedented in recent memory. Yet it only revealed what revolutionary communists have always argued about the coercive character of the state apparatus.

The March events are only the latest of a series of measures designed to tighten up social control and limit the effectiveness of trade unions. The combined court and police assault on the NGA printers at Warrington, the destruction of trade unionism at the GCHQ Cheltenham spy centre and the introduction of a comprehensive system of vetting at the Ministry of Defence are aspects of the employers' offensive organised through the state. The rapid advance of state repression fully justifies the RCP's unequivocal hostility towards the state and its institutions. The courts and police are not only biased against the working class. In every respect they exist to defend the rich and powerful and to discipline those who threaten the establishment.

The display of state violence in the coalfields shows the fundamental conflict of interest between us and them. The police are the agents of one class and one class alone. No matter which party is in government the security forces exist to defend privilege, property and capital. It is inconceivable that Scotland Yard's communication centre could be turned over to coordinating action against employers who are driving workers into the dole queues and denying people the means to earn their livelihood. For the police disobedience means the failure to fall in line with the dictates of the bosses. A threat to law and order means disregard for the rules that allow the employers to make and enjoy their profits.

The courts are the same. The law is not guided by fine principles of jurisprudence but by the account books of the employers' class. Thus it is a crime to pursue the RCP's demand for the Right to Fight. Court injunctions are instantly available to prevent workers from organising occupations, flying pickets or any effective action to further their objectives. On the other hand Kent miners were immediately denied an

injunction against being held up by the police and turned back more than 100 miles away from a picket line. Striking workers can be stopped on the road and protesters can be detained on suspicion. They can always find a law to suit the occasion. The law speaks the language of one class. Employers who have turned parts of Britain into an industrial wasteland have no fear of being charged with obstruction, or with conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Only those with a considerable capacity for self deception could now deny Marx's proposition that the state is nothing but the concentrated power of the capitalist class. The demonstration of state violence in recent months has created a widespread climate of fear and even of hopelessness. The sight of thousands of police moving into action with ruthless efficiency can lead to the conclusion that 'they have all the power and we have none'. But are the employers so powerful?

Recent events have shown that the state has superior organisation and more resources at its disposal. The authorities have worked to a strict timetable and a carefully worked out plan. In contrast, workers have reacted rather than planned their actions. Since the two main institutions of the labour movement – the Labour Party and the TUC – have stayed out of the fight – the only organisation available was makeshift and responsive. Even the well organised miners' union was caught off-guard by a well-planned assault and was unable to pull together a united response.

The difference in organisational capability is not attributable to technical and resource problems. The Conservative Party, the security forces, the courts and the employers are geared up ready to fight. The official labour movement is not. This is because the TUC and the Labour Party are not designed to be fighting organisations. More importantly the institutions of the labour bureaucracy cannot mobilise against the courts and the security forces for the simple reason that they themselves are attached to the state. They might not like a particular law or a particular government, but they are convinced that the state is the best instrument for pushing through the objectives of the labour movement. The organisational weakness of the workers' movement has its roots in political confusion and a paralysing loyalty to the bosses' state.

The problem is above all the political crisis of the working class. This is all too well illustrated in the bitter divisions that have wreaked havoc amongst the miners. A parochial trade unionism emphasised regional differences and helped to limit the effectiveness of miners even before the first coachload of police arrived at the pitheads.

The state's response indicated the bosses' recognition that they were fighting for their power. Workers have yet to achieve such clarity of purpose – at present workers are joining the battle merely as trade unionists. Hence the difference in determination, planning and ruthlessness. A society facing economic collapse has little room for trade unionism. The Conservative Party's Centre for Policy Studies is now seriously suggesting that strikes be banned altogether in the public sector. Elsewhere employers are introducing company unions and no-strike agreements. When so much is at stake every industrial dispute raises the broader question of which side will prevail. It is this broad question – the question of class power – that the workers' movement must address if it is to achieve the political and organisational unity necessary to survive the present crisis.

Many on the left find the perspective outlined in the RCP's programme *Preparing for Power* unrealistic, even incomprehensible. This attitude is understandable for a movement whose vision does not go beyond the aim of electing a Labour government in 1988. But it is a criminally short-sighted attitude marked by an incorrigible resistance to learning from experience. The issue of power is not one that we dreamed up on the editorial board of *the next step*. It is a central fact of life in present-day British society, forced upon everybody by the world wide crisis of capitalism. This issue will not be resolved through bargaining and negotiations but through confrontation and violence. We did not invent state repression and the employers' offensive – they are the appropriate measures for maintaining the power of the capitalist class.

But can we prepare for power now? History has always been unkind to the exploited and the oppressed. It does not deliver power ready-made in the form of weapons, wealth and other resources. Nor does it give special dispensations

to those who want to wait until the masses are ready and willing to move. Instead it imposes the penalty of a shameful defeat on those whose watchwords are 'delay' and 'postpone'.

Lack of preparation always proves disastrous. Against the plans and organisation of the British state it means defeat and retreat to an even greater defeat. Preparing for power does not simply mean planning to settle scores in the future, but fighting the threat to our survival today. We have no choice but to prepare for power now. Any other alternative merely represents an attempt to cheat history and to rely on the decency and generosity of the capitalist class. Preparation is above all a matter of politics. Our problem today is not that the workers' movement is powerless but that it lacks an effective strategy. The miners' flying pickets show the power of our class. One group of miners fighting another reveals the dead-end of traditional labour movement politics.

For workers there are only two strategies available. The prevailing strategy of Labourism avoids the question of power and dissipates energy in a vain battle to reform the system. The strategy of revolutionary communism addresses all workers in a common struggle to overthrow the power of the capitalist class. Labourism means disunity, passivity and defeat. Revolutionary communism represents its opposite – the struggle for unity through the fight for workers' power.

The British state is only powerful as long as workers continue to respect its Parliament, its courts and its police. Once workers refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the state all its arms and modern technology will not be sufficient to defeat a class fighting for its liberation. We should respect but not stand in awe of their hardware. For almost 15 years the Irish people have stood up to the elite of the British Army equipped with the most up to date technology and latest surveillance techniques. Even the mighty United States failed to crush the yearning for freedom and dignity in Vietnam and it has yet to prevail over the masses of the Middle East or Central America.

Their power depends on maintaining our class in a state of insecurity, confusion and demoralisation. But if we start to prepare now and plan out our strategy we can open millions of eyes to see the strength that we already possess. From Warrington through Cheltenham to Barnsley and Doncaster the inescapable message is that it is not too soon to embark on the road to power.

Banana skins

In recent months the myth of Thatcher's invincibility has been shattered. Divisions in the Tory ranks over issues as diverse as GCHQ and the wheeler-dealing of the Thatcher family show that the ruling class is far from confident. Unfortunately this reversal in the fortunes of the Conservatives is not the result of working class pressure over jobs, housing or health. The difficulties experienced by the Tories stem from the structural crisis of British capitalism.

While the Tories have contained the official labour movement, they have been less successful in reversing British capitalism's decline. Thatcher can only keep the system ticking over. This is the source of the tensions inside the Tory Party. This is why Thatcher is forced to make apparently incoherent policy decisions. In reality it is not the Government but the system that it tries to preserve that is unstable.

One of the most remarkable (and least

talked about) developments is the growth of political volatility. Supporters of *the next step* report that throughout the country more and more people are prepared to look for new alternatives. This response is welcome. But the erosion of old loyalties does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the solution to Britain's problems lies with the overthrow of capitalism.

Banana skins have never changed the course of history. The ruling class has

its problems, but unless it is forced to give up its power and wealth it can carry on indefinitely. Forget about banana skins and asking for reforms! Workers only gain what they take without asking. The May publication of the RCP's trade union handbook *Taking Control* is a major event. To the banana skin politics of the left it counterposes the perspective of taking back what is ours, and of ultimately expropriating the exploiter class. Take it!

Unemployment Benefit Attendance C

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Youth in crisis

On 8 February, the body of 16 year old Charles Tyrer was found lying face down in five inches of chemical slurry at the bottom of a tank in a Birmingham factory. Only a week earlier, 18 year old Sarah Canons was crushed to death by a tractor at a farm near Swindon. Charles and Sarah were trainees on state-sponsored training schemes. Both were victims of a barbaric system, which has consigned a whole generation of youth to a life of misery on the dole and degradation as cheap, casual labourers on state-run training programmes.

For the ruling class, mass youth unemployment is a weapon to use against the working class. It is also a social time bomb. Joan Phillips looks at the impact of youth unemployment on the working class, and examines the state's attempts to contain the threat to social stability which it poses — with the assistance of the official labour movement.

LABOUR CRITICS of the Tories are wrong to accuse the Government of being unconcerned about youth unemployment. With more than one and a quarter million people under the age of 25 let loose on the streets, the establishment cannot afford to be indifferent. The staggering growth of the Manpower Services Commission and its myriad schemes is testimony to the importance the Tories attach to containing the rising reserve army of unemployed youth. At the same time, under the guise of training, the Government is concerned to turn unemployed youth into a vast reservoir of cheap, casual and flexible labour-power.

Social Elastoplast

Only two years ago Government provision of work and training for unemployed youth went under the designation 'special programmes'. They are special no longer. The word has disappeared from the MSC's vocabulary and so has any pretence that the measures are temporary. The MSC was established in 1974 as the dole queues began to lengthen. A decade later, mass unemployment has made of the MSC a permanent administrative fact. Or, as *The Times* put it, the Commission has become 'a charlady mopping up the spillage of economic change, a social Elastoplast'. The 1981 riots were justification enough for the Tory government to extend the MSC's provisions. MSC director Geoffrey Holland commented in the aftermath of the summer disorders that the Commission was standing between a mass of adolescents and hopelessness:

'If it had not been for us we should have had even more than we had: a lot of alienated, under-developed young people lost in a modern world.'

While the rest of the welfare state is being cut back, the MSC is still growing as employment plummets. An MSC budget of more than £2 billion is planned for 1985.

The Youth Training Scheme is the latest in a long line of MSC schemes designed to exploit the unemployed and attack the employed by substituting jobs and driving down living standards. The MSC's earliest ventures were the Job Creation Programme and the Work Experience Programme. The former subsidised temporary jobs for both teenagers and adults. The latter provided spells in enterprises intended to give young people 'a better understanding of working life'. As the MSC itself admitted, both schemes led to extensive job substitution.

In 1978 the Labour government replaced the two schemes with the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) for people aged 16 to 18 and the Special Temporary Employment Programme (STEP) for unemployed adults aged 19 and over. The Youth Opportunities Programme aimed to cater

for 234 000 young people a year. By 1980, half the people finishing YOP courses were back on the dole. The chief executive of the CBI's special programme unit admitted that 40 to 50 per cent of YOP places were just cheap labour, used to replace the jobs of paid employees. The biggest response came from small companies with less than 20 employees, which used trainees as cheap, unskilled labour and provided little or no training. YOP trainees received £25 a week and no protection from dismissal or victimisation. Seventeen teenagers died and 700 were seriously injured during the three years of YOP's existence.

The Tories were eventually forced to abandon YOP. The scheme was inadequate to deal with the rising level of youth unemployment. The jobless figures had doubled under the Labour government, from one million in 1975 to two million by 1980. Half way through Thatcher's first term unemployment hit the three million mark. The Government recognised that drastic measures were required to keep the lid on a potentially volatile section of the unemployed.

Anti-riot device

The Tories' Youth Training Scheme was introduced in September 1983. Falling only a little way short of the conscription of an entire generation, the YTS marks a qualitative break with the 'special programmes' of the past and a bench mark in British social policy. But if the scale of YTS is something new, its purpose is familiar:

'The crude political impulse behind this major act of collective provision costing such a large sum of public money is maintaining social peace — YTS is an anti-riot device keeping 16 year olds off the unemployment record and off the streets.' (*The Times*, 2 September 1983)

The introduction of YTS has been described as comparable in its social impact to raising the school leaving age. A Government Think Tank paper, leaked during last year's General Election campaign, stated that 'the essence of the proposal is to reduce the size of the labour force by raising to 17 the age of entry to the normal labour market'. The YTS guarantees each 16 year old not in full-time work or education a place on a state-sponsored programme of training and work experience. Before its introduction, the MSC was aiming to fill 460 000 places by Christmas, involving at least 5000 employers and costing £1 billion a year.

YTS steps up the attack on unemployed youth in four ways. First, it enshrines the notion of youth as a permanent source of cheap labour power, whatever the level of youth unemployment. It has been accompanied by a drive to reduce youth wages, which have declined steadily since 1975,

destroy apprenticeships, and substitute youth for adult jobs. Second, YTS is all-embracing, covering not just unemployed 16 year olds, but also employed young workers, including apprentices. The comprehensiveness of YTS was underlined by the withdrawal of all other MSC grants for school-leavers, such as first year apprenticeship support and Unified Vocational Preparation. Third, the duration of exploitation has been extended from YOP's six months, to 12 months. Finally, YTS is a further refinement of the state's containment and policing of the unemployed. The scheme is virtually compulsory — refusers stand to lose 40 per cent of their miserly social security benefit for six weeks to teach them a lesson.

Training for exploitation

To disguise the scheme's coercive nature and to dispel memories of YOP, the MSC and the Government have devoted considerable resources to promoting the training aspect of YTS. The MSC has described the new initiative as part of a long-term process of equipping a new generation with the skills necessary to lead Britain back on the path to competitiveness. Employment minister Peter Morrison exposed the real purpose behind the scheme when he urged employers to take full advantage of the programme:

'Your return for becoming big sponsors in the £1 billion scheme will be a well-equipped and adaptable workforce which will be the foundation of your prosperity in the 1980s and 1990s.'

The YTS aims to provide the bosses with an inexpensive, inexperienced and 'adaptable' workforce. A recent internal MSC training division policy document explained the object of training:

'The emphasis should be on meeting the needs of the employers rather than the needs of individuals. Greater emphasis should be given to cutting back on occupational training where placing results are poor.'

This 'market-oriented' approach to training is what inspired the proposals in the Government's White Paper *Training for Jobs*, published in late January. The White Paper has provoked an outcry in the educational world. It plans to give the MSC control of a quarter of the places for job training in colleges of further education.

MSC infiltration into the field of education has been proceeding steadily over the last five years. *Training for Jobs* is, however, a significant further encroachment into the education sphere. Propounding his philosophy on education, MSC chairman David Young explained what it is all about:

'Training should not be confused with education. Training is about work related skills and is intimately concerned with employment. It is for this reason that training in this country must be employer-directed.'

The White Paper intends to do away with an expensive and inefficient system of vocational training which has failed to deliver the goods. The bosses have no use for a further education system which cannot turn out people fitted for the world of capitalist exploitation.

The purpose of *Training for Jobs* is to reinforce the subservience of the unemployed to the demands of capitalism in crisis.

The creation of a permanent pool of floating, flexible and cheap labour-power which can be drawn in and out of production as and when required has been described in two recent studies. Nicholas Bosanquet's *After the new right* and research conducted by John Atkinson at the Sussex Institute of Manpower Studies point to the emergence of two distinct strata of workers. The first is composed of professional and highly skilled workers such as those employed in new technology industries — electronics, computing, and robotics. The second consists of semi-skilled and unskilled workers who lead a transient existence between temporary jobs and the dole. These peripheral groups include part-time, job-sharing, short-term contract workers, sub-contractors and youth trainees. The

'YTS is an anti-16 year olds off record and off the (The Times)

function of YTS and *Training for Jobs* is to prepare young workers for an itinerant life between the dole and a temporary job.

YTS fall-out

YTS has suffered from low takeup and a high dropout rate. The scheme was expected to place 460 000 school-leavers by the end of 1983 — it has attracted only 313 000. The Government has responded by cutting back on the number of places in colleges and voluntary organisations and authorising the MSC to transfer £15 million from the YTS to its rapidly extending Community Programme. It has loosened the criteria for entry to YTS for all 17 year olds and disabled people up to the age of 21. The state has also penalised young people who refuse to accept a placement or leave before their time is up.

Thousands are leaving YTS schemes



Dole office juniors: a year on the YTS, then it's b

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despite the threat of losing 40 per cent of their dole money for six weeks. Nearly one in six of school-leavers who joined last year had left by the end of the year — a worrying figure for the Government. Employment secretary Peter Morrison admitted in February that about 48 000 people had left their schemes by the end of December. In Birmingham, less than 60 per cent of YTS places have been filled, and since the courses began in September 2000 have left the scheme. A recent report by Birmingham NATFHE, *The great training robbery*, explained why. The report showed an astonishing mushrooming of private training agencies, which now provide 42.5 per cent of the total approved YTS places and 56.5 per cent of places with private employers. One private agency, Datasolve Education hires out its YTS trainees at £10 per week — all proceeds to Datasolve. The aim is to make quick profits out of organising training and work placements, an approach which is entirely within the MSC rules. Many private training agencies have experienced difficulties in placing their trainees. One, ADM, has undertaken blanket canvassing for places — Pitmans have also run into trouble. In a desperate drive to recruit sponsors, most trainees have ended

Not device keeping the unemployment streets.'

up in shops, small workshops, or small offices, where problems of job substitution, little training and poor conditions are rife.

Job substitution is not confined to Birmingham. In Hampshire, one private training agency — Youth Training Resources — offered potential sponsors 'the use of a pair of hands free of staff costs'. Another managing agent — the National Institute of Hardware — offers sponsors 'extra workforce — but at no cost', 'the equivalent of a year long interview' with 'no long-term commitment'. In Coventry, more than 62 per cent of the 2208 YTS trainees work for private managing agencies. Many agencies sell their trainees to other organisations for £10 a week. Most are not overseen by manpower boards and monitoring of sponsors is minimal.

From the beginning, the Government has used intimidation and threats of benefit

loss to compel young people to enter YTS. On 23 September the Department of Employment and the MSC issued two documents. The first was a directive to job centres and careers officers, telling them to report people who refuse to go on a scheme to benefit managers. The second letter from the MSC warned school-leavers that they would face cuts in benefit if they refused to go on a scheme. Careers officers in Sheffield and elsewhere have refused to comply. Members of Sheffield Nalگو won't inform benefit offices when a young person refuses a 'suitable offer' of a place or leaves a scheme 'without good cause'. Despite the action of some trade unionists, however, the DHSS confirmed in February that it is already inflicting substantial penalties on school-leavers who reject YTS offers. Some 783 young people had their dole reduced in the month up to 20 December 1983 and 731 in the month up to January 1984. They lost 40 per cent of their benefit, cutting it from £16.50 a week to £9.90 for 16 to 17 year olds.

Not satisfied with the policing measures taken so far, social services secretary Norman Fowler and social security minister Rhodes Boyson have ordered two investigations covering 59 towns and cities to root out young offenders. These are additional to the Department of Employment's Regional Benefit Investigation Teams ('Rabbits') and the DHSS' specialist claims control units ('snooper squads') which are already hounding the unemployed in places like Scunthorpe where 7000 out of 12 000 claimants have been targeted as 'potential social security scroungers'.

The first investigation — 'Unemployment Review' — asks benefit officers to visit unemployed people aged between 18 and 25 in 40 towns and cities. They are to be asked why they left jobs, with particular attention being paid to people living in families who have few financial commitments. Government instructions tell officials to 'advise about job prospects, help improve morals, and inculcate good working habits' among the young people they visit. The second investigation, by the DHSS Social Security Policy Inspectorate, involves interviewing young people in 19 towns and cities covered by the YTS. Young people are to be sought out if they have not been placed on a scheme, refused to go on a scheme, or joined a scheme and left it.

Eager partners

For today's youth, unemployment is a personal calamity. For the working class it is a collective disaster. Unemployment debilitates the working class, undermines its capacity to defend jobs and living stand-

The youth of today

Young people are bearing the brunt of the recession. For every one per cent reduction in unemployment the level of youth unemployment has risen by nearly two per cent. The youth unemployment rate is higher than the adult rate and always has been. The ratio has fallen slightly in recent years as a result of the many schemes which have kept young people off the unemployment register.

Some 1.25 million youth (under 25) are officially registered as unemployed — 39.4 per cent of the jobless total. The overall percentage conceals pockets of soaring youth unemployment, particularly in the inner cities. Knowsley on Merseyside has the highest youth unemployment rate in Britain — 85 per cent of school-leavers are unemployed or on youth training schemes. Nationally, half of all those under 18 are either on the dole or YTS.

Young women suffer unemployment disproportionately to older women and to young men. Officially, women make up a little less than a third of the registered unemployed, but the rate at which women are losing their jobs is twice as fast as for men. And nearly half of all unemployed women are not registered. The official unemployed figure for women aged 20 to 24 is 24.3 per cent, compared to 19.1 per cent for men. Over 17 per cent of women aged 18 to 19 are jobless compared to 10 per cent of 18 to 19 year old men.

Blacks also suffer disproportionately high rates of unemployment, especially black youth. Unemployment is twice as high for blacks as whites. For blacks born in the UK, the figure is worse — almost three times as high as for whites. In June 1983, *Labour Research* estimated that black unemployment in Greater London had risen by 211 per cent since 1979. The scale of the problem is evident on the streets of Britain's black inner-city ghettos such as Brixton, Toxteth and Handsworth, where black youth unemployment can be as high as 95 per cent.

Young people constitute an increas-

ingly large percentage of the long-term unemployed, a trend confirmed in a recent report by the Policy Studies Institute, *Long-term unemployment and labour markets*. The customary definition of long-term unemployment is to be registered as unemployed for more than one year. In the past, up to ten years ago, unemployment was a short-lived experience through which workers passed between jobs. Today unemployment is an increasingly prolonged experience. Long-term unemployment began to rise steeply in 1975 and has grown steadily ever since. In February 1980 the level of long-term unemployment was a little more than a third of a million. Today it is well above one million, more than 37 per cent of the unemployed. Of these, about a quarter are under 25 and half are under 45.

The high concentration of youth among the long-term unemployed has been acknowledged as a problem by the establishment. One of the virtues of the myriad training schemes for the Government is that they have helped to keep young people's periods of unemployment relatively short — but not short enough. Last September, as the Youth Training Scheme got underway, *The Economist* warned that the temporary measures of the past were no longer good enough:

'Unless governments decide to make temporary job schemes for the young into semi-permanent affairs, more young people will be caught in the trap of long-term unemployment. If so, when unemployment begins to fall, they will be left behind: unemployed, unemployable and angry.'

The real function of youth training and other special measures, *The Economist* made clear, is not to train young people for skilled work in permanent jobs, but to keep them circulating above the hard core of the long-term unemployed, making them available for work as and when required.

Denise Taylor

ards, and increases divisions between black and white, men and women, old and young. Mass youth unemployment poses a grave danger to the working class. Unemployed youth do not make an impact on public consciousness because they are at home. Because their only experience of adult life is the dole or a state training scheme, and their only social intercourse with the television, they are isolated from the labour movement and prone to cynicism and demoralisation.

Attacks on the unemployed require a concerted labour movement counter-offensive. The response of the TUC and the official labour movement, however, has been to give full backing to the state's containment exercises. In the debate on youth unemployment in Parliament on 22 February Tory minister Tom King was the first to congratulate the union bureaucrats for their efforts:

'I pay tribute to the work and leadership of the trade union movement and the TUC in the development and encouragement of the Youth Training Scheme. It does them great credit.'

In late August the TUC launched a handbook on YTS, claiming that the scheme was 'an integral part of the (labour) movement's strategy for economic recovery and reconstruction'. TUC general secretary Len Murray called YTS a 'major step towards ensuring that all young people on leaving school have the opportunity to acquire a sound preparation for working life'.

The union bureaucrats were happy enough to be consulted by the Government over the introduction of YTS and to play a part in its implementation. Three leading members of the TUC sit on the MSC and five trade union bureaucrats sit on each of the 54 area manpower boards which oversee the operation of the government schemes. The TUC is anxious to be seen to be doing something for the unemployed, but its response reflects its own narrow self-interest. The TUC recognises as clearly as the Government the dangers inherent in mass youth unemployment. As long ago as 1980,

Len Murray posed the problem of how to keep unemployed youth on a tight rein:

'How can we ensure that unemployed young people do not become alienated from the trade union movement as well as from other institutions in our society and do not become easy recruits for extremist anti-democratic groups?'

To keep a grip on jobless youth the TUC has devoted considerable resources to extending its network of centres for the unemployed. It now runs more than 200 centres, many jointly funded by the MSC, and has initiated a TUC Action Programme to co-ordinate their work. The fact that so few people use them shows that most people on the dole regard them as irrelevant to their needs, and underlines the alienation of the unemployed from the official labour movement. While the bureaucrats at Congress House have been complicit in the state offensive against the unemployed, some rank and file trade unionists have fought to defend them. Workers at Massey Ferguson in Coventry have forced management to give YTS trainees £74.60 a week, full sickness and holiday benefits, and a permanent job at the end of the 12 month period.

What we need

The leaders of the labour movement have nothing to offer the unemployed except despair. The working class has everything to offer. It is up to the employed, organised sections of the labour movement to lead the struggle to defend the unemployed. This requires a break with the politics of the labour bureaucracy and a concerted fight against all redundancies, voluntary and compulsory, to defend existing jobs. It means rejecting outright all state-run schemes designed to harness the unemployed as cheap, casual labourers, and forcing the bosses to provide jobs at the wages we need. We want our own work schemes under our control, financed by the state at the wages we decide. If workers take control out of the hands of the bureaucrats they have the power to transform the forgotten youth of today into the class fighters of the future.



Chris Black (reflex)

Support your local world policeman



This November, Americans will elect a new President. The battle for the White House has already begun. The million dollar television campaigns and jet-setting candidates seem far removed from last year's British elections. But there are similarities. Like Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan's problems stem from the impact of the recession, and not from the ineffectual opposition. *Mick Hume* surveys the American political scene.

'AMERICA IS BACK' declared Ronald Reagan in the 'State of the Union' speech which marked the end of his third year in the White House. Reagan paraded impressive statistics to prove that the American economy was back on its feet, and an army sergeant wounded in October's invasion of Grenada to prove that America was back as the guardian of democracy around the world. Within days, rumours of a return to recession sent the money and stock markets into panic, while the eruption of fresh fighting in Lebanon forced Reagan to announce the withdrawal of US marines from Beirut. Despite the optimism of the President's election year rhetoric, American power has become increasingly fragile at home and abroad. Whether Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale or Gary Hart is elected in November, American imperialism has no way back to the unchallenged world dominance it enjoyed for 25 years from the end of the Second World War.

Domination and decline

Reagan came to office in January 1981 against a background of the long-term decline of American influence. From the moment American intervention ended the Second World War the USA became the guarantor of capitalist relations around the globe. After the war the crushed imperialist powers of Germany, Japan, Italy and France faced the threat of workers' revolt and social collapse. America's Marshall Plan pumped out dollars to stabilise the Western economies. American troops entrenched themselves in Europe and Japan to ensure political stability. Once the 'peace' was won, America redivided the world at will.

In the forties America dominated every aspect of imperialist politics. American diplomats wrote Japan's constitution. American economists set a meagre standard of living for the German working class. American trade union leaders founded puppet labour movement organisations to restrain the Western proletariat. The USA's monopoly on power allowed it to dictate international law through the United Nations, and Western security through Nato. America disseminated the ideology of the Cold War to put

the seal on its position as world policeman.

Through the fifties, US troops became the defenders of imperialist interests everywhere. They intervened to settle revolts in the Far East, the Middle East and Latin America. America brooked no rivals. When the ageing powers of Britain and France tried to capture the Suez Canal from Egypt, they were humiliated by US opposition.

America's political supremacy was built on the tremendous productivity and expansion of US capital. As the USA's competitors rebuilt their economies and American capital lost its dynamism in the sixties, the USA's grip on international affairs loosened. It was still the USA which had to intervene in Vietnam to contain the popular revolt against oppression. But this time the Americans got bogged down in a war they could not win. America still ruled the world, but its power was on the wane.

In the early seventies the US economy suffered setbacks at the hands of its Western rivals as EEC industrial output surpassed America's for the first time. America's political standing abroad was seriously undermined by its final defeat in Vietnam. Arab states were now prepared to cut US oil supplies after America backed Israel in the 1973 Middle East war. The Watergate scandal summed up the crisis of confidence in the American ruling class, exposing electoral 'dirty tricks' and bringing down Republican President Richard Nixon. Nixon's bumbling successor Gerald Ford did little to restore confidence in the Washington administration, either at home or abroad.

In 1976 Jimmy Carter of the Democratic Party came up to Washington from Georgia's peanut country as a new broom to sweep away the debris of the Nixon and Ford presidencies. When Carter was himself swept out of office four years later things were worse still for American imperialists. The dollar's decline to record low exchange levels in 1979 symbolised America's weakened economic position. The Iranian revolution of the same year underlined America's loss of control in the Third World. After America's client the Shah was overthrown, Muslim fundamentalists captured US

embassy staff in Tehran. Carter's rescue mission turned to farce when US army helicopters blew each other up in the Iranian desert. At the climax of the Iranian hostages crisis, Republican Ronald Reagan was elected President to turn back the clock and make America great again.

Enter Reagan

Reagan made three promises for his plan to restore the USA's economic and political prestige. He would cut taxes, balance the nation's budget, and strengthen US defences. Today only his pledge to rearm remains intact and his government seems beset by problems on all sides. Reagan's failures are not the result of policy decisions. They are expressions of his central dilemma in the face of world recession and the decline of American power. Like all Western leaders, Reagan has to protect his own national capital. But unlike anybody else, he also has to safeguard conditions for capitalist production world-wide.

Reagan needs to rearm and cut state expenditure simultaneously. He needs to force American industry into cut-throat competition with its Western rivals while maintaining stable power relations among the imperialists. He needs to intervene in the Third World to ensure stability, without souring US relations with important clients in volatile regions. Election debates about the economy and foreign policy reveal the tensions pulling US imperialism apart as a far more serious threat to Reagan's re-election than anything his opponents in the Democratic Party might do.

Upturn guy

From the end of 1982 to early 1984, Reagan gained ground over the Democrats by taking credit for the limited improvement in America's economy. Unemployment fell from a 40 year high of 10.8 per cent to eight per cent, as US industry's capacity utilisation soared from a record low of 68 per cent to almost 80 per cent. Inflation was cut from more than 12 per cent to less than four. The US upturn carried the President's fortunes with it. But much of the economic growth has remained superficial. Expansion has depended on artificial stimuli such as state spending and consumer credit for cars, houses and durable goods. Although real investment in industry has improved, too much of it is being spent on vehicles and light machinery rather than the heavy capital investments needed to reconstruct the economy. Because of this underlying weakness, the state spending which helped spark the upturn now threatens to strangle it.

This year, the state budget deficit will be more than \$180 billion. Reagan predicts that the deficit will stay around the \$200 billion mark for a few years but decline by the end of the eighties as prosperity returns for good. Opposition projections which reject Reagan's fantasies of permanent boom estimate the deficit at \$325 billion by 1989 if nothing is done to reverse it.

American capitalists have protested loudly against the growing deficits. High Government borrowing has kept real US interest rates up. This has limited industry's access to credit for investing in productivity-raising technology. It has also encouraged foreign investment in the dollar, inflating the US currency's

value to around 30 per cent above realistic levels. Low investment and expensive dollars have combined to make US industry uncompetitive against foreign imports. Last year America suffered a loss of \$30 billion on its current account.

Up to now, trade losses have been compensated for by foreign capital pouring into the dollar. But Japanese and European willingness to finance America's deficit cannot be taken for granted. Leading bankers on both sides of the Atlantic have noted the potential for a rapid collapse of the dollar if capital is pulled out of the USA as America overextends its borrowing. The demise of the dollar would bring a return to recession with soaring interest rates and inflation. The tensions created by the prospect of unlimited deficit growth have caused ructions inside the Reagan administration and nervousness among American investors. Yet Reagan's ability to tackle the deficit is severely limited.

The bottom line

Reagan has long declared himself an enemy of state spending and an advocate of 'getting government off the people's backs'. In February he berated Federal (national) government as 'an alimentary canal with an appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other'. This is part of Reagan's brutal offensive against the working class in the guise of protecting 'individual rights and freedoms'. In defence of 'individual rights and freedoms' Reagan has promoted union busting (the 'right to work') attacks on abortion facilities (the 'right to life') and savage attacks on social security ('freedom from government and taxation'). Despite his ideological emphasis on restraining the state, Reagan cannot cut further swathes through big spending government departments. Hammering social security further or raising taxes are ruled out (until next year) by electoral considerations. Cutting spiralling arms spending is made impossible by the broader problem, of maintaining American power.

Defence spending accounts for almost 30 per cent of Reagan's proposed 1985 budget. It has risen from \$135.8 billion to \$237.5 billion in 1984, and is planned to reach \$348.6 billion by 1987. On paper, cutting arms expenditure seems one way to avoid growing deficits and the subsequent collapse of the dollar. Yet in the real world, whether or not the dollar slumps is not a technical question of economics. It is dependent on the balance of power between the imperialists. In this sense the financial crisis makes Reagan's arms spending to strengthen the USA more necessary, and more difficult to peg back whoever is in the White House.

The dollar's status as an investment currency was one indication of America's dominance after the Second World War. The recently renewed strength of the dollar does not mean the USA is back to its post-war status. It indicates that, despite America's decline, no other imperialist country is yet in a position to challenge for world leadership. But as one leading American bank review observes, the dollar could fall very rapidly 'though a change in the perceived political risks in the world'. In other words further decline in America's international standing could result in investment shifts out of the dollar and into other safe imperialist havens. Rearmament is vital to maintain



Captain America: the Democrats can't cope with Reagan's rallying call to defend US power

confidence in the USA as world policeman and keep investment flowing in. The 400 000 strong Rapid Deployment Force stands ready to protect American interests in the Third World. The new generation of nuclear weapons has been used to keep the USA at the head of the Western Alliance. Far from solving economic problems, cutting defence spending would amount to America cutting its own throat.

Reagan is trapped in a spiral of increasing budget deficits. Yet all sides accept that there is little electoral mileage here for the Democratic candidates. Reagan has set the budget debate outside the realm of party politics. He has declared that the deficit is too important to become 'a political football'. Reagan's bipartisan approach denotes his policies as those of the American capitalist class. He attacks his critics as typifying the 'anti-business, anti-success attitudes which brought our country to the brink of disaster'. As loyal supporters of American business and success, the Democrats have no alternative to the Government's counter-crisis strategy. Despite early opposition from leading Democrats, Congress passed Reagan's previous budgets with the major proposals intact. Democratic attempts to make the deficit an election issue seem likely to fall equally flat.

Bloody bipartisanship

Unable to challenge Reagan's economic policies at home, the Democrats have turned their attention to the President's conduct of foreign affairs. They have had little more success than with the economy. America's long-term economic decline has forced Reagan to use marines and task forces to safeguard American interests abroad. American imperialists have traditionally used the myth of the Soviet threat to justify their armed foreign excursions. Reagan has adapted this theme to the crisis of the eighties, emphasising the need to 'roll back the tide of communism' in Central America and the

Middle East. It is a flimsy cover for imperialist aggression, but it is enough to disable his political opponents. The Democratic Party created the first Cold War to justify US dominance in the forties, and waved the Soviet bogey to excuse its government's wars in Korea in the fifties and Vietnam in the sixties. It cannot break its ties with US imperialism and oppose Reagan's interventions today.

From his election, Reagan highlighted the crisis in Central America as the key area of international conflict. The USA had to 'draw the line' against Soviet influence by backing the dictatorship in El Salvador and undermining the radical Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. The bloody consequences of American involvement in Central America have pricked the Democratic conscience over the past three years. Yet Reagan's appeal to the vital cause at stake has limited the opposition. Henry Kissinger's commission on Central America last year included leading Democrats. Its report made mild criticisms of the region's dictators for their poor human rights record. But it proposed a further \$8 billion in aid for the USA's murderous allies in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

Today Central America, tomorrow the world. As international tensions and America's problems have increased over the past year, Reagan's administration has had to generalise the approach of 'drawing the line'. Every contentious issue of foreign policy has now become a matter of life and death for US imperialism. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger's presentation of the latest arms budget proposals exemplified the administration's exhortation to its opponents:

'If we stop in mid-course we will only endanger the progress we have made in recent years and invite speculation by friends and adversaries alike that the United States can sustain neither its will nor its leadership.'

Appeals to protect America's international standing have pushed the unpopular MX missile proposals through Congress. In an

attempt to distance themselves from Reagan's militarism, most Democratic leaders now support the idea of a nuclear 'freeze'. But their backing for it has become increasingly conditional. All Democrats unreservedly support America's conventional forces.

Luck be a Democrat

Reagan has survived major setbacks thanks to the Democrats' weakness. Every Democratic candidate for President called for US marines to be withdrawn from Beirut. Yet when Reagan announced the pull-out in February, they failed to make any substantial political gains from the most serious reverse suffered by a President since the Iranian hostage crisis brought down Jimmy Carter. Democratic congressional leader Tip O'Neill summed up his party's problems in exploiting Reagan's difficulties:

'While I and others acquiesced in the decision (to send in the marines) it became clear some time ago that the President's policy was wrong from the beginning.'

If Reagan's policy was wrong from the beginning, O'Neill's acquiescence made him as guilty as the administration for the mistake of intervening. And if that mistake 'became clear some time ago', why had the Democrats made only general criticisms of the danger the marines faced and never set a date for withdrawal? The Democrats accepted Reagan's insistence that Lebanon was a vital area of US influence. Afraid of accusations of putting party advantage before national interests, O'Neill could only plead that the Democrats wanted 'to keep this as non-political as possible'. Days before announcing the marines' withdrawal, Reagan could assert that he was 'not going to pay any attention to' the equivocal opposition of the Democrats. The pull-out which followed was solely the result of America's inability to impose order on the masses of Lebanon. The Democrats claimed Reagan was 'lucky' because Yuri Andropov's death switched attention from the defeat in

Lebanon, just as he was 'lucky' last October when a coup in Grenada gave him an excuse to invade the Caribbean island and divert criticism over the death of more than 200 marines in a Beirut bombing. Reagan's real luck is having no opposition at home capable of exploiting his failures.

The tired policies and unattractive personalities of Walter Mondale, Gary Hart or any Democratic candidate cannot stop Reagan being re-elected in November. Yet a Reagan victory is far from certain. Political contests are not decided in televised debates or money-raising committees. The condition of American imperialism will finally decide whether Reagan gets back to the White House. His famed 'luck' may not hold until November.

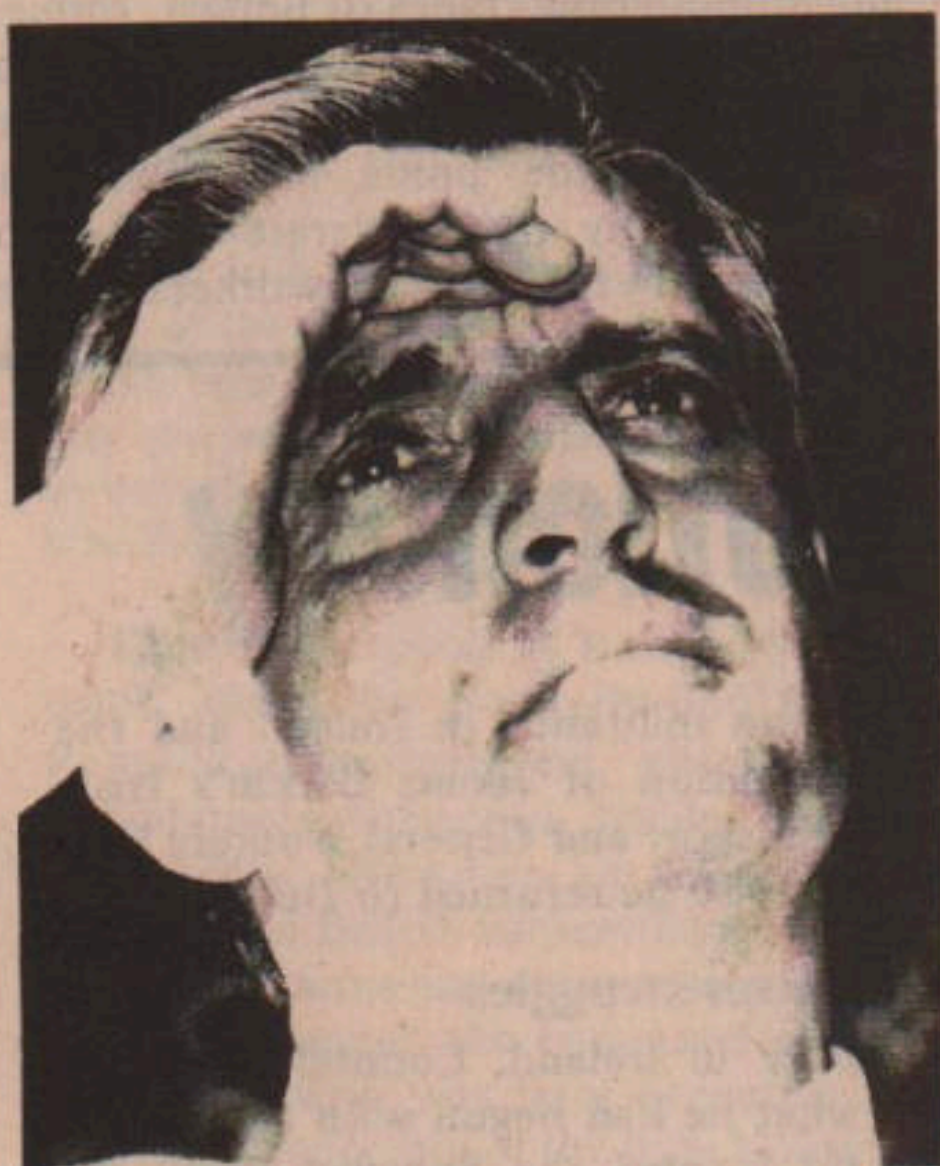
The tattered Stars and Stripes which Reagan waves vigorously to frighten his opponents has seen better days. Reagan has tried to galvanise support around the symbols of America's past glories. His aides are fond of stressing that Reagan started his fourth year in office as the most popular President since Eisenhower — the last President to serve two full terms, in the fifties. American business journals have dubbed new plans for a permanently manned space station as 'Reagan's Apollo'. But the crisis of US power in 1984 is far removed from the halcyon days when Eisenhower presided over the Pax Americana and President Kennedy launched the Apollo moonshot programme as the ultimate symbol of America's dominance on Earth. The collapse of the dollar or a new international crisis before the autumn could yet put paid to Reagan's ambitions. Even if a disaster for US imperialism forces Reagan out, these problems will remain. The dangers facing the USA today are beyond the control of any President. Any new man in the White House would have no choice but to follow Reagan's desperate efforts to shore up America's position, in a recession that is no respecter of past reputations for policing the world.

The backstabbing, fluctuating poll war between Democratic presidential hopefuls Walter Mondale and Gary Hart stands in stark contrast to Ronald Reagan's triumphal, unchallenged progress towards the Republican Party nomination. Democrats have been deeply divided by the undermining of their traditional social base in the recession.

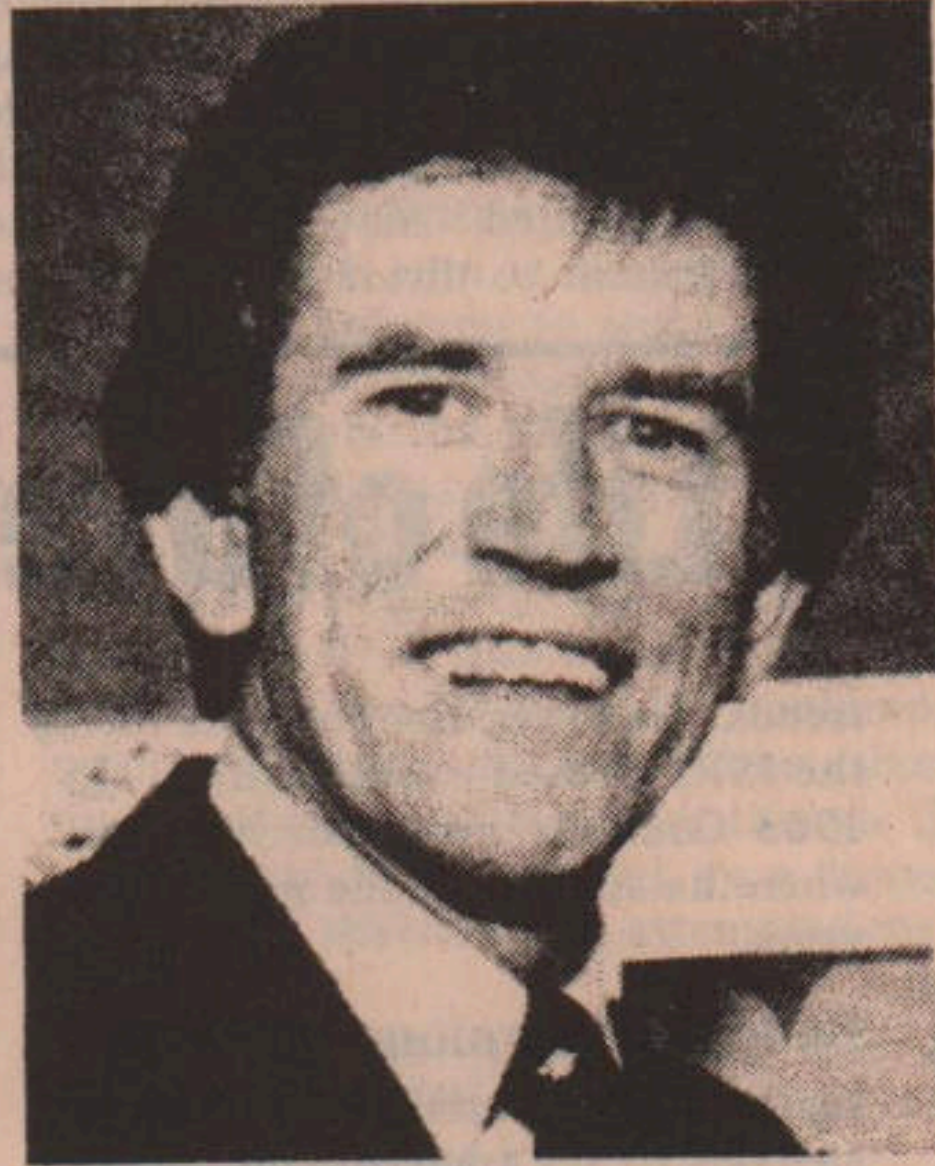
The Democratic Party is a loose amalgam of diverse interest groups. It encompasses everybody from sections of the American left and black workers in the cities of the North East, to racist 'Dixiecrats' in the former slave states of the deep South. For 50 years the Democratic Party's bedrock support has come from a coalition of trade unions, liberals and blacks, first pulled together around President Roosevelt's 'New Deal' in the Great Depression of the thirties. The coalition was reconstituted through John Kennedy's 'New Frontier' programme and Lyndon Johnson's 'Great Society' plans in the sixties. Behind the hype of their public promises on civil rights, jobs and welfare, the Democrats pursued the anti-working class policies American capitalism needed. Democratic power often rested on corrupt 'Boss' politicians whose party machines used bribery and brutality to turn out the ghetto votes.

Over the past 10 years, deepening recession has put paid to the Democrats' dream of boom and expanding state services. The interest groups within the party have been pushed into conflict with each other as each looks to its own sectional concerns. The Democratic coalition has fragmented. The party machine has increasingly been at odds with Democratic Party supporters, opposing the nominations of George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976. After Carter's disastrous performance in the White House, the Democratic Party all but collapsed. Unions which had traditionally backed the Democrats financed Ronald Reagan in the 1980

Democrats divided



Walter 'Fritz' Mondale



Gary 'Kennedy' Hart

election. Blacks suffering unemployment and repression refused to vote. Almost 30 per cent of registered Democrats voted Reagan and the Republicans won a landslide victory.

Since the defeat of 1980, Democrats have tried to pull what's left of their coalition together. The party machine's control of nominations has been tightened. Unions and other groups have taken a far closer interest in Democratic affairs as they suffer under Reagan. The Democrats' major problem is that the recession has hit their power base harder than the Republicans'. In reviving their traditional supporters, they are reconstituting an alliance of forces with little influence left in America today.

Former Vice-President Walter Mondale's roller-coaster fortunes in the primary elections to decide the party's candidate for November illustrate the Democratic Party's problems.

Mondale began as firm favourite for the Democratic nomination. Pundits pointed to the fact that organisations such as the AFL-CIO (the American TUC) and the 250 000 strong National Organisation of Women had backed Mondale at an early stage in the campaign. In fact, what was taken for Mondale's strength showed up the Democrats' weakness. The AFL-CIO backed Mondale in a desperate attempt to save the union leaders' necks. Their disastrous record and the bosses' union-busting tactics have

reduced union membership to less than 20 per cent of the American workforce. Last month, the Supreme Court ruled that any employer could simply declare himself bankrupt, tear up his union contract and cut wages to suit his pocket. Union leaders are searching for political friends to help them out of deepening trouble. The National Organisation of Women backed Mondale because its narrow legalistic approach to women's rights cannot cope with the reactionary prejudices stirred up by Reagan's campaigns against abortion and for school prayers. Now that the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution has failed, the women's movement has no alternative but to seek an ally in the White House.

Mondale could give the impression of strength by enthusing the declining organisations of the women's and official labour movements. But his brand of sixties liberalism seeking 'a fairer America' has little appeal to middle class voters driven rightwards under the impact of the recession, and no chance of inspiring workers under fierce attack. Mondale's primary defeats by Gary Hart were a consequence of the Democrats' isolation from the social forces that count in the eighties.

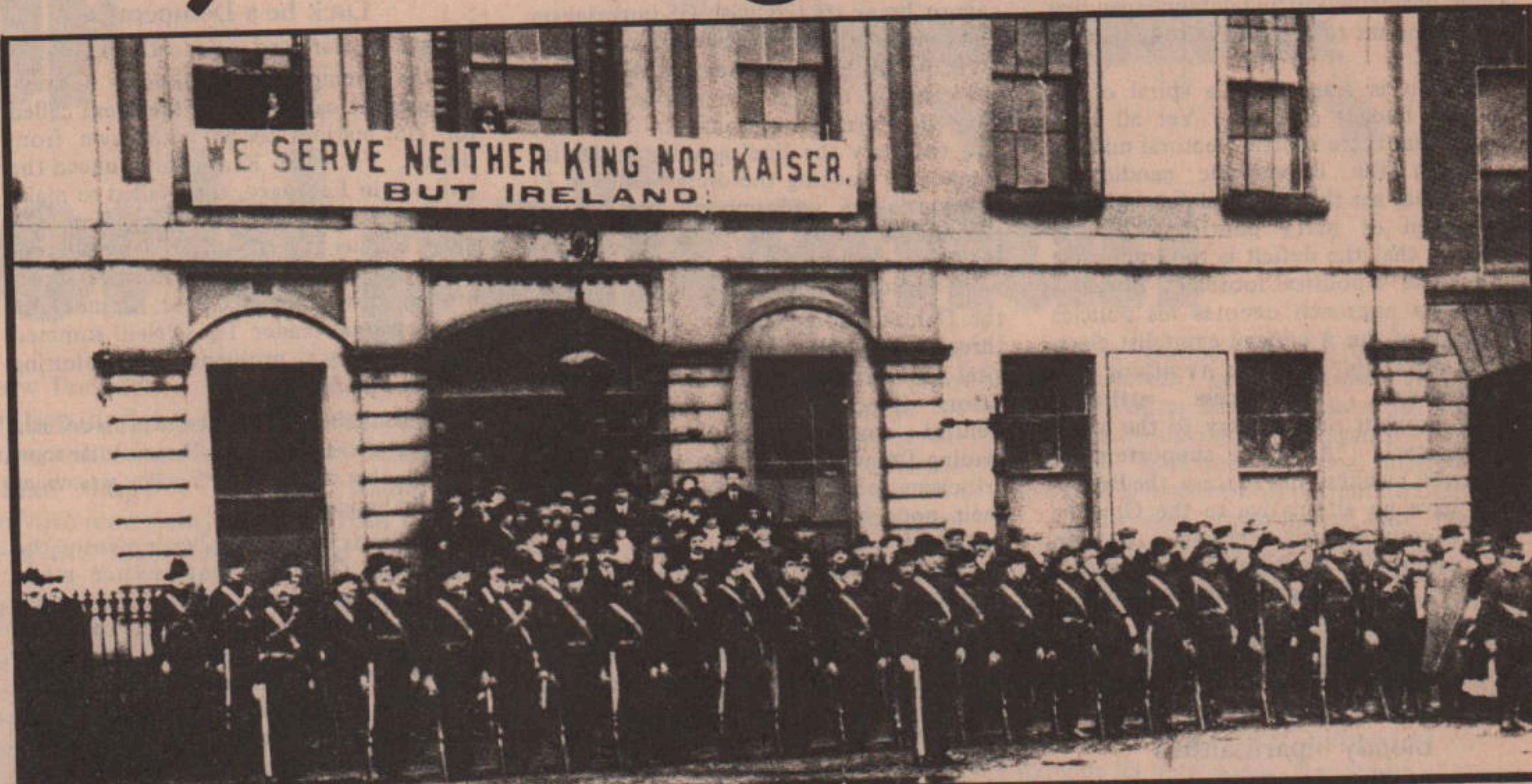
Gary Hart himself is a little more inviting prospect. He has posed as the new face of Democratic politics and tried to run a Kennedy-style campaign. In fact, Hart's politics are a watered-down version of Reagan's full-blooded support for 'free enterprise'. He will go some way in the nomination stakes, given the backing of television companies desperate for a contest to keep viewers tuned in and save the millions of dollars they have invested in covering the campaign. Yet even if Hart wins the nomination, he has little more than a 25 year age gap to hold up against Reagan. Despite his youthful packaging, Hart has to grapple with the Democrats' image as yesterday's men.

Irish rebel, working class hero

At Easter 1916 James Connolly led a Rising in Dublin. Mick Kennedy explains why

JAMES CONNOLLY was a working class revolutionary. From his early socialist campaigning in Scotland, through his establishment of the Irish Socialist Republican Party in Ireland and his trade union activities in America, to his leadership of the Easter Rising in 1916, a consistent proletarian internationalism ran through his life. The guiding theme of Connolly's activity as a revolutionary – and the key to his relevance today – was his conviction that the class struggle in Ireland took the form of the national struggle against British domination. The manifesto of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, published in 1896, summed up Connolly's lifelong position:

'The struggle for Irish freedom has two aspects: it is national and it is social. Its national ideal can never be realized until Ireland stands forth before the world as a nation free and independent. It is social and economic, because no matter what the form of government may be, so long as one class owns as private property the land and instruments of labour from which all mankind derive their substance, that class will always have the power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow-creatures.'



The world's first Red Army: Connolly's Citizens' Army could not prevent the betrayal of the Irish revolution

For Connolly the national question, the fight for Irish freedom against British domination, came first.

The national struggle came first because it was only through pursuing the struggle against imperialism that workers could take control of the movement for independence, and subsequently of an independent Ireland, out of the hands of the middle classes, and assert their distinct interest as a class. This did not mean that workers should postpone fighting for socialism until after national liberation. It meant that they fought for their class interests through their independent organisations in the course of the struggle against foreign domination. In particular it meant that the working class had to combat the tendency for middle class supporters of Irish independence to look after their own narrow concerns by compromising with Britain and selling out those who could not afford to stop short of the overthrow of imperialism.

Connolly lived and died in the struggle to make the working class the leading force in the fight for Irish freedom. He faced two major obstacles which ultimately frustrated his attempts and allowed Britain to divide and defeat the

nationalist movement and secure its grip over a partitioned Ireland after 1921. The first was the conservative outlook of the early labour movement in Ireland, which was strongly influenced by British Labourism. The second was the grip over the nationalist movement exercised by the representatives of the middle classes, who constantly vacillated over how far they were prepared to go in challenging British rule in Ireland. Connolly agitated and organised among Irish workers and peasants. He fought to free them from the fatal influence of reformism and petit-bourgeois nationalism as a vital step towards achieving national and social liberation.

The cause of labour

The Irish working class at the turn of the century was small and divided. British domination ensured that the Irish economy remained backward and impoverished. Industry was concentrated in the north-east, in the textiles, engineering and shipbuilding trades of Belfast, though there was some manufacturing and processing in Dublin and the south-east. The early trade union movement was dominated by the moderate craft associations of the skilled workers. The

expansion of transport and service industries, and growing industrial conflict, led to an influx of more militant tram and rail workers, dockers and carters into the unions from 1907 onwards.

The most serious division resulting from British rule was that between Protestant and Catholic workers. In the north-east, the unions had developed more as organisations to protect Protestant workers' access to jobs at the expense of Catholics than as organisations to defend workers against employers (see Andrew Clarkson and Phil Murphy, 'The Loyalist working class', *Revolutionary Communist Papers* No. 7). The trade unions in Belfast identified their interests with the Union with Britain. They strongly opposed the movement for Irish Home Rule from the 1880s onwards. The trade unions in Dublin tended to go along with the views of their employers, many of whom favoured a degree of devolved government for Ireland under the British Empire. In general the unions, north and south, attempted to cover up their political difference by emphasising their common views on narrow trade union matters.

However, no sooner did Catholic workers in Ireland begin to get organised

Life of a revolutionary

James Connolly was born in Edinburgh in 1868, of poor Irish immigrant parents. His life falls into four phases, divided by his moves from one country to another. Until the age of 28 he lived in Scotland, working as a labourer and a cobbler, and acquiring an education in Marxism in the socialist propaganda groups of the 1880s and 1890s. He stood, unsuccessfully, as a socialist candidate in local elections in 1894, and gained experience as a journalist, public speaker and political campaigner. In 1896 he was invited to become a full-time organiser for a socialist club in Dublin.

Challenging the Home Rulers

Shortly after his arrival in Ireland, Connolly attempted to regroup the small and isolated socialist factions in the Irish Socialist Republican Party. Connolly's party was outspokenly anti-capitalist, and it presented a vigorous proletarian challenge to the conservative, middle class leadership of the movement for Irish Home Rule. It participated in the affairs of the Socialist International, taking a consistent left position against opportunist

trends. However, the obstacles facing the ISRP proved overwhelming. In 1903 Connolly sailed for America, where he stayed for the next seven years.

Building the unions

In the USA Connolly devoted his energies to the trade unions and the socialist movement. He worked as an organiser for the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (the 'Wobblies') and was actively involved in the controversies surrounding the problem of integrating the numerous immigrant minorities in the USA into a unified revolutionary working class movement.

During this time, Connolly began to establish a reputation as a propagandist. His popular *Socialism made easy* was published in Chicago in 1908, and he began work on *Labour in Irish History*. He also wrote songs and plays and poems. Connolly continued to take an active interest in the European socialist movement, denouncing the strengthening reformist tendencies. He spoke German, French and Italian. He followed closely the rise of trade

union militancy in Ireland and the formation of James Larkin's Irish Transport and General Workers Union. In 1910 he returned to Dublin.

Power struggles

Back in Ireland, Connolly resumed what he had begun with the ISRP. He formed the Socialist Party of Ireland in 1910 and spent the next few years trying, ultimately unsuccessfully, to unite the forces of the working class around an anti-imperialist programme. He agitated among mill-girls and textile workers in Belfast, ironworkers in Wexford and transport workers in Dublin to build up the ITGWU. In 1912 he stood in elections in Belfast on a platform of socialism, national liberation and women's rights, but lost to the Unionist candidate. In 1913 he joined Larkin in leading the Dublin workers against the bosses' lockout and founded the Irish Citizens' Army. From 1914 onwards he campaigned against British militarism in Europe and conscription in Ireland.

Connolly took advantage of Britain's war difficulties to prepare an insurrection in Ireland. On Easter Monday

1916 he commanded the forces that seized the centre of Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic free from British rule. Betrayed by the vacillation of the middle class supporters of Irish independence, the Easter Rising was crushed within days. Connolly was wounded and captured by the British. Two weeks later, after a summary court martial, James Connolly was strapped to a chair and shot by a British firing squad.

Reading about Connolly:

C. Desmond Greaves, *The life and times of James Connolly*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1976 is a good general biography. *James Connolly: selected writings*, edited with an introduction by P. Beresford Ellis, Monthly Review, 1973 is a useful collection of his pamphlets, articles and poems. *The Connolly-Walker controversy on socialist unity in Ireland*, reprinted in full by the Cork Workers' Club in 1974, is recommended reading for all British socialists. All are available on Irish Freedom Movement bookstalls.

and to fight for their rights, than they came into conflict with the existing trade union machine. In 1907 James Larkin mobilised dockers and other workers in one of Belfast's biggest strikes. The moderate leadership of the dockers' union in Britain betrayed the strike. A disgusted Larkin set up the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in 1909 which soon became a mass union of the unskilled, predominantly nationalist workers. When Connolly arrived back in Ireland from America in 1910, he threw himself into building the union.

Loyalist trade unions

Within a few months of his return, Connolly launched the Socialist Party of Ireland in an attempt to unite the Irish working class behind a coherent anti-capitalist programme. This venture led him into a famous controversy with William Walker, a Belfast trade unionist, Independent Labour Party member and a Loyalist. When Connolly put a proposal to the Irish TUC in 1910 that it sponsor a united party of the Irish working class, Walker put an amendment pledging support for the British Labour Party. Walker's amendment was narrowly carried and Connolly's proposal fell. 'The unborn Labour Party of Ireland was strangled in the womb by the hands of the ILPers', declared Connolly. Walker declared himself a true internationalist because he denied the oppression of Ireland by Britain and therefore regarded the position of workers in Ireland as no different from that of workers in Britain. He repudiated 'certain Irish propagandists', meaning Connolly, 'because of their insistence in viewing the class war as a national question instead of, as it is, a world-wide question'. Dependent on Britain for their privileged access to jobs, Loyalist trade unionists substituted an abstract notion of the world-wide class war for the real form which the class struggle took in Ireland — the struggle against British domination. Walker wanted socialism without challenging the major barrier to social progress in Ireland — British imperialism. Connolly observed that this was 'a unique conception of internationalism, unique and peculiar to Belfast'. It was a notion of socialism that 'required for its spread the flash of the sword of militarism, and the roar of the British 80-ton gun'.

Unfortunately, Walker's attempt to disguise loyalty to British imperialism with socialist phrases was not unique to Belfast. It was firmly entrenched in the official labour movement in Britain, which although sympathetic to the cause of Irish Home Rule, was hostile to any threat to Britain's national interests.

The Dublin lockout of 1913 further exposed how the leadership of the British labour movement put its loyalty to Britain before the interests of the Irish working class. When the Dublin employers embarked on a concerted drive to smash the ITGWU, Irish workers appealed for solidarity from British trade unionists. Rank and file workers in Britain made a tremendous response, sending money, food and offering their homes to look after Dublin's children until the strike was over. Many were eager to take sympathetic industrial action to force the employers to give in and recognise the union. However the British TUC leaders were alarmed at the prospect of a workers' victory destabilising British rule in Ireland and encouraging more direct action in Britain. They headed off demands for sympathetic strike action.

The cause of Ireland

In the period leading up to the outbreak of the First World War there were three social forces behind the movement for Irish independence. The smallest faction, but the one most implacably opposed to British rule in Ireland, was the working class element represented by Connolly. Its forces were organised in the Irish Citizens' Army, a few hundred strong, formed to defend the Dublin workers in the course of the lockout. The dominant faction was made up of the growing class of Catholic manufacturers and businessmen in the south-east of Ireland who increasingly resented the

constraints Britain imposed on them.

The emerging national bourgeoisie was represented by John Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party. Redmond supported the formation of the 100 000-strong Irish Volunteers in response to the Ulster Loyalists' militias. Between Redmond and Connolly in the nationalist camp stood elements of the disaffected Catholic middle classes. These included teachers and journalists, small businessmen, shopkeepers and lower professionals, and a good supply of poets. After the Easter Rising these forces came to the fore in Sinn Féin, but before 1916 they had no definite allegiances. Sinn Féin, formed by Arthur Griffith in 1905, favoured a dual monarchy for Ireland along the lines of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It remained an eccentric and marginal force in the first decade of its existence. The Gaelic League commanded more support for its commitment to revive the Irish language and culture. A small number joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a conspiratorial clique committed to liberating Ireland by force.

The Dublin lockout sharply exposed the class differences among the nationalist forces. The lockout was instigated by Dublin employers' leader William Martin Murphy, the personification of the up and coming Irish bourgeoisie. Murphy favoured Home Rule and supported Redmond's party. But he feared Connolly and Larkin and the ITGWU more than he hated Britain. The middle classes wavered. Sinn Féin's Griffith stood for an independent Irish capitalism; he backed Murphy and the bosses and talked of 'having the strikers bayoneted'. The more radical middle class nationalists, such as Padraig Pearse, were more sympathetic towards Connolly and Larkin and the working class.

The outbreak of the First World War further divided the nationalist camp. Redmond declared his party's sympathy with Britain in its hour of need and put the Irish Volunteers, renamed the National Volunteers at the service of the British forces in Europe. The vast majority of Volunteers followed his subordination of the cause of Irish independence to the military demands of British imperialism. A minority under Eoin MacNeill refused to be conscripted to fight for Britain and retained the name Irish Volunteers.

Easter Rising

Nevertheless, MacNeill refused to take advantage of the war to fight for Irish freedom. The much smaller forces around Connolly's Irish Citizens' Army intransigently opposed British militarism.

'The Irish working class sees no abandonment of the principles of the labour movement in the fight against this war and all it implies; sees no weakening of international solidarity in their fierce resolve to do no fighting except it be in their own country.'

Plans for a revolt at Easter 1916 were made jointly by Connolly and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which had won considerable influence inside the Irish Volunteers. However, on the eve of the uprising the British authorities intercepted supplies of arms and ammunition en route to Ireland under the command of Roger Casement, who was later executed. The MacNeill leadership of the Irish Volunteers got wind of the plans for a rising and issued orders countermanding the call for an Easter mobilisation. The result was chaos; the rising was delayed and disorganised and virtually confined to Dublin. In Dublin the proletarian Citizens' Army and the more radical elements of the Irish Volunteers seized a number of strategic points and issued a proclamation of the provisional government of the Irish Republic from the steps of the General Post Office.

Connolly was doubtful that the rebellion would succeed. Yet he considered it vital to strike a blow against Britain when it was fully stretched in Europe. The longer the war continued and the more Irish workers were enticed to serve in the British forces the weaker he felt the working class would become. To the end he remained profoundly distrustful of his middle class allies in the anti-imperialist

Connolly lives!

Many of Connolly's views remain strikingly relevant to Irish politics today. He was sharply critical of those — such as the Independent Labour Party in his day and the Militant Tendency and Socialist Workers' Party today — who imagined that Catholic and Protestant workers in Ireland can be united on trade union issues, just as though they were workers living in Britain:

'The doctrine that, because the workers of Belfast live under the same industrial conditions as do those of Great Britain, they are therefore subject to the same passions and to be influenced by the same methods of propaganda, is a doctrine almost screamingly funny in its absurdity.'

For Connolly it was only through the struggle against British imperialism that the Irish working class could ultimately be united.

Connolly was scornful of British 'gas and water socialists' who came over to Ireland to urge workers to abandon their revolutionary aspirations and seek instead piecemeal 'bread and butter' reforms through constitutional channels. Then it was the Fabian socialist Bruce Glasier; today it is the municipal socialist Ken Livingstone:

'In order to prevent the Irish working class from breaking off entirely from bourgeois parties and from developing a revolu-

tionary tendency, the Fabians sent their lecturer to Ireland, to induce the Irish working class to confine themselves to the work of municipalising, and to fritter away their energies and break their hearts on the petty squabbles of local administration, to the entire neglect of the essential work of capturing the political power necessary for social reconstruction.'

The continuing vitality of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland indicates that Irish people have taken little heed of the advice of British reformers.

Connolly was impatient with Irish nationalists who invoked an unbroken tradition of centuries of struggle against British rule as a substitute for developing a programme appropriate to modern conditions:

'Traditions may, and frequently do, provide materials for a glorious martyrdom, but can never be strong enough to ride the storm of a successful revolution. If the national movement of our day is not merely to re-enact the old sad tragedies of our past history, it must show itself capable of rising to the exigencies of the moment. It must demonstrate to the people of Ireland that our nationalism is not merely a morbid idealizing of the past, but is also capable of formulating a distinct and definite answer to the problems of the present and a political and economic creed capable of adjustment to the wants of the future.'

struggle. In his address to the Citizens' Army the week before the Rising, Connolly warned his followers that it was up to the working class to make sure that the struggle did not stop at national independence, but was carried through to socialist revolution:

'In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty.'

In the event, after a week of street fighting and artillery bombardment which left more than 300 dead and whole blocks of central Dublin in ruins, the rebellion was crushed.

Redmond and MacNeill and the rest of the respectable Home Rule movement joined with the spokesmen of the British ruling class in condemning the Easter Rising. The official labour movement in Ireland and in Britain remained aloof. At the Irish TUC later in the year the president asked delegates to stand in acknowledgement of those killed in the war in Europe and in the Rising in Dublin. He warned them that 'this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the rights and wrongs, the wisdom or folly of the revolt'. The British TUC ignored the Rising altogether, and the Labour Party conference report referred in passing to 'the calamitous outbreak in Ireland' as though the country had been afflicted by a disease, rather than shaken by an attempted revolution.

From Europe, Lenin spoke out in defence of the Rising and condemned those who criticised it:

'Whoever calls such an uprising a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of picturing a social revolution as a living thing...Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution really is.'

Partition

Despite the defeat of the Rising, the nationalist movement revived. Stimulated by popular outrage at the savagery of the British suppression of the Rising, it came under the leadership of the middle classes. With Connolly dead, his socialist party stillborn and Larkin in exile in the USA, the working class became a marginal force in the subsequent evolution of the Irish national struggle. In 1921 the more moderate section of Sinn Féin around Griffith, Liam Cosgrave and

Michael Collins made its compromise with British imperialism and endorsed the Treaty that partitioned Ireland. As Connolly had predicted, this ushered in a 'carnival of reaction both north and south'. Over the next decade the bulk of the Sinn Féin opponents of the Treaty led by Eamonn de Valera came to terms with the political arrangements enforced on Ireland by Britain. The Catholic middle classes made their peace with British imperialism. Partition has kept the Twenty-six Counties under British domination ever since. Once formed, the Irish Labour Party soon degenerated into separate Northern and Southern fragments. The Northern party became a Loyalist rump before disappearing completely in the seventies; the Southern party became important only as the occasional coalition partner of the more reactionary of the two major middle class parties of Irish politics.

Only a small faction of intransigent republicans held out. They refused to acknowledge the political institutions Britain had created in Ireland by participating in the partitionist assemblies. In every subsequent generation they have reaffirmed their commitment to the use of force of arms to drive out the foreign occupier.

The decisive factor in the defeat of the Irish revolution was the lack of social weight of the Irish working class. The backwardness of the Irish economy meant that at the beginning of the twentieth century Ireland remained a predominantly agricultural country with a weak industrial proletariat. The character of British rule in Ireland ensured that the working class remained divided. Connolly's attempts to forge a working class party failed to overcome the resistance of an emerging labour bureaucracy and the influence of British Labourism. His feeble forces could not prevent the Irish middle classes from compromising one by one with British imperialism and betraying the Irish revolution.

Given the immaturity of the Irish working class during his lifetime, Connolly was in advance of his times. In a sense his outlook is more appropriate to modern Ireland than it was to Ireland 70 years ago. Today Ireland is a predominantly urban, industrial country with a large and potentially all-powerful proletariat. To realise its destiny in an independent Ireland, the Irish working class still needs the revolutionary working class party that James Connolly gave his life to build.

The Militant myth

Militant has won notoriety in the media and respect from many on the left for attacking the Tories. But does Militant's bite measure up to its bark. Mick Hume looks at its record in the Commons, the councils, and the class struggle. We invite replies.

THREE THEMES dominate every Militant speech, pamphlet and paper. Militant wants to:

Fight the Tories and end 'the ruthlessness of this Tory government and their masters in big business' (2 December 1983)

Transform the Labour Party into a socialist party. For Labour in the eighties, 'the only viable option is the socialist programme that has been mapped out by the Marxist wing of the Labour Party gathered around *Militant*' (16 March 1984)

Overthrow capitalism and embark on 'the only course of action that could begin to solve the horrendous social ills workers face — the socialist transformation of society' (16 December 1983).

Many people are attracted by Militant's outspoken commitment to socialism. Yet closer examination reveals a major credibility gap between Militant's promises and its deeds in Parliament, local councils and trade unions.

Honourable gentlemen

Last June, four Militant supporters stood as Labour candidates in the General Election. Two were elected to Parliament: Terry Fields won Liverpool Broadgreen and Dave Nellist became MP for Coventry South-East. Three days after his election Terry Fields spelt out what the Militant MPs would do at a *Militant* readers' group in Liverpool:

'Socialism will rule. But we have to struggle against the excesses of the capitalist system on the one hand and the inability of the Labour leadership on the other.' (*Militant*, 17 June 1983)

Over the past nine months in Parliament, Militant's MPs have been far from ready to 'struggle against the inability of the Labour leadership'. Labour leader Neil Kinnock's drive for party unity has subdued Fields and Nellist into loyal support for the front bench.

The Militant MPs have developed a cosy relationship with the parliamentary way of life. Unlike real left-wing MPs from the past like Victor Grayson, the Clydeside socialists or the young Nye Bevan, who used their position to expose the parliamentary leadership's betrayals of the workers' movement, Fields and Nellist have settled in comfortably. Even non-Militant MPs like Dennis Skinner and Tam Dalyell do more to expose the facade of Parliament than Fields and Nellist.

At the end of last year, Neil Kinnock roundly condemned the violence of 4000 workers who fought with riot police outside the *Stockport Messenger* printing works in Warrington. While Kinnock gave in to the Tories' anti-union laws, Militant's MPs gave in to Kinnock. Both Fields and Nellist sat silent in Parliament, refused to challenge the Labour leadership's betrayal of the National Graphical Association dispute, and missed a golden opportunity to expose the 'inability of the Labour leadership' to defend workers. The Militant MPs' adaptation to Kinnock made their promise to take on 'the excesses of the capitalist system' an empty threat. The NGA was quietly allowed to sink.

Militant's MPs have allowed Labour's heavyweights to monopolise the major political issues. Fields and Nellist have carved out their own area of interest around the Tories' Youth Training Scheme. The Youth Training Scheme is designed

to police unemployed youth and train them as a pool of cheap labour (see page 12). Militant denounces its appalling conditions, £25 'wage' and drudgery as a 'youth training swindle'. But the focus of Militant's parliamentary opposition to YTS has been narrowed by its fear of alienating the leadership of the official labour movement.

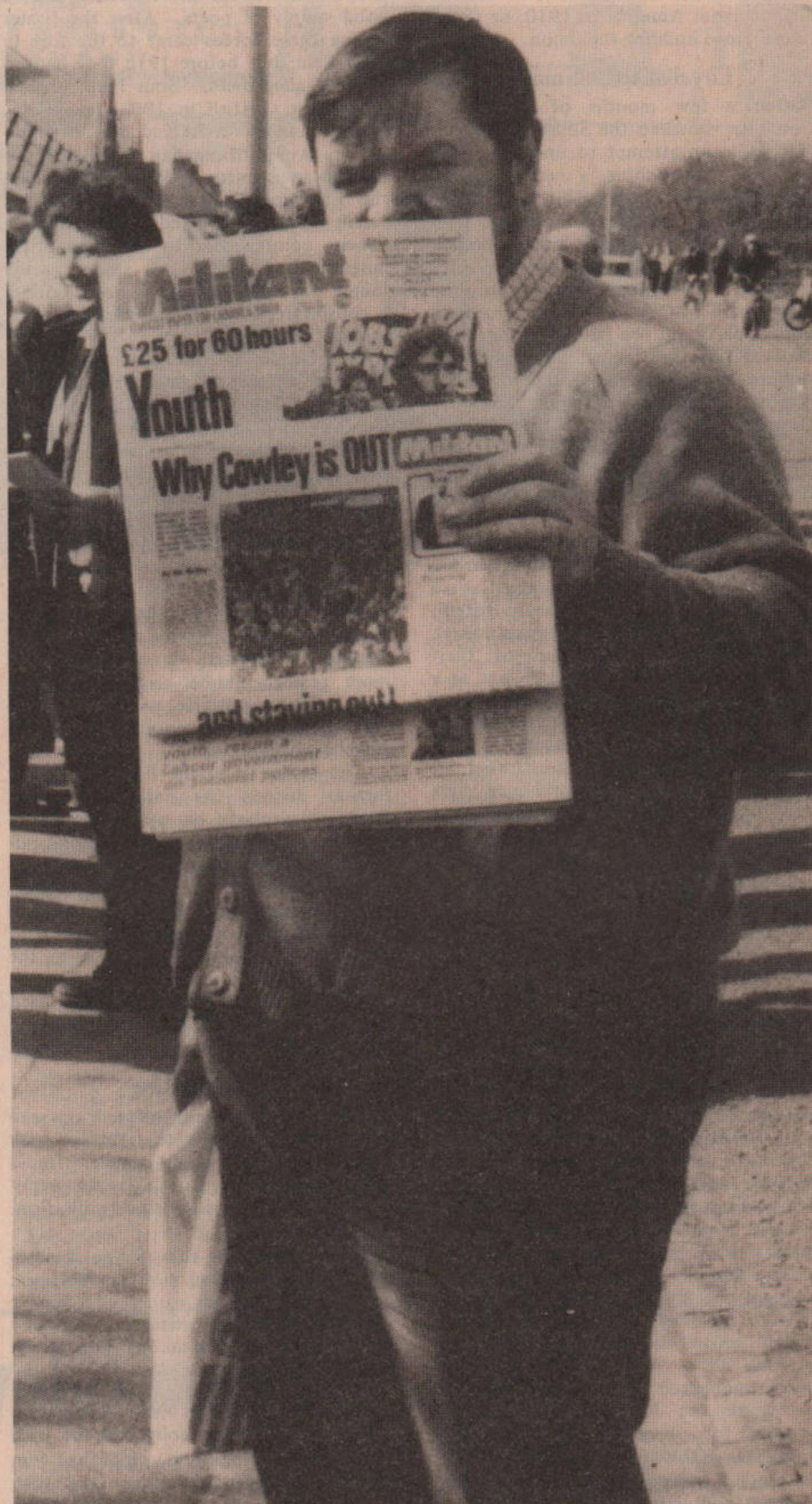
In February David Nellist introduced a Private Members Bill on YTS to Parliament. Nellist proposed that YTS trainees should be unionised and paid a minimum of £52 a week. Nellist turned a blind eye to the complicity of trade union leaders who sit on the Manpower Services Commission and other committees and administer the slave-labour schemes. His call for unionisation went down well with the TUC bureaucrats, but meant little protection for the youth who are in practice isolated from the labour movement. In reality Militant is prepared to accept even less than the £52 weekly allowance. Last year, its supporters in the CPSA negotiated a £37 deal for YTS trainees in the civil service.

Merseyside Militants

Militant controlled Liverpool City Council has emerged as the most vociferous local authority opposing the Tory attack on council spending. But Militant's record since it took control last May shows it has already forgotten its election promises, and pared down spending like other Labour authorities. And as we go to press, the council looks set to give up its fight with the Government at the first fence in deference to the Labour leaders.

In March, deputy council leader and Militant supporter Derek Hatton told Liverpool University's *Gazette* that the Government's assault on the city's spending powers had 'forced a realisation amongst many people that there is no way you can tinker about with the Tory system; it needs a fundamental change'. Labour came to power in Liverpool on a programme of no rate increases; 3000 council homes a year; £2 a week rent cut; no service cuts or privatisation; 1000 new jobs; the reorganisation of education. Little of this has been achieved. In practice, Militant councillors who promised 'radical change' have accepted the constraints of the system and merely 'tinkered about' with the authority's account books.

The council has stopped handling improvement grants for almost 25 000 private homes, built before 1919 and lacking basic amenities. The housing waiting list stretches past 20 000, but little progress has been made on the promised new houses. Around 60 000 council homes in Liverpool need repairs. The council did give tenants a £16 redecoration grant at Christmas. But that was *instead* of the £2 a week rent cut it was elected to implement. A one-off handout to buy a few tins of paint is a poor substitute for lowering the rents over 11 months of Labour rule, in a city with the most expensive council housing outside London. While unemployment in Liverpool's inner city reaches 40 per cent (80 per cent for youth) the council has only managed to create a handful of jobs with MSC help. At a London Broad Left meeting for Nalgo delegates on 19 March, Derek Hatton revealed how accepting the logic of capitalist administration had prevented Militant councillors carrying out their



Selling out: hiding behind socialist headlines won't defend workers

programme:

'You tell me how can we manage the books with all these things?'

In line with their narrow approach to council finances, Militant councillors have not asked for much in their campaign against the Tories' cuts. They have requested that the Government give back £30m of the £120m it has taken from Liverpool's grant since 1979. Even this made their proposed budget illegal, and caused enough right-wing defections to wipe out Labour's council majority. Faced with a Tory government determined to cut spending, the only way to avoid cuts in Liverpool would be to lead a campaign of working class action to *force* the Government to provide what the city needs. Militant organised labour movement rallies and demonstrations, and even called for a local general strike on the council's budget day. Yet the thrust of Militant's campaign has been to rely on the Labour Party leadership for support.

By counting on Neil Kinnock to back them Militant's councillors have left Liverpool at the Tories' mercy.

Unity in Action

Militant's Liverpool councillors called for the labour movement to unite behind them today, while Neil Kinnock called for Liverpool to unite with other Labour authorities for a joint campaign against rate-capping at some time in the distant future. The crucial difference was that whereas Kinnock felt no obligation to the people of Liverpool, Militant felt an irresistible obligation to the Labour leadership. Kinnock's call for unity proved the stronger. Unable to instigate action independent of the party bureaucracy, Militant was forced to plead for official support.

Instead of exposing the Labour leadership's complicity in isolating Liverpool's campaign, Militant fostered illusions in the leadership's willingness to fight. In early March, when Labour's front bench spokesmen made clear that they were

not prepared to back an illegal budget, Hatton could still tell the students' *Gazette* that the Parliamentary Labour Party 'haven't come out against us and I am confident by the time the 29th (budget day) comes they'll be very much in support'. Only a week before the council budget vote, Kinnock told Liverpool spokesmen he would not make 'an idle gesture' by supporting any spending plans which would be declared illegal. Even then, Militant councillors could only reiterate that they would 'continue to seek a declaration of support from the parliamentary leadership'. Militant's commitment to build a 'fighting alternative' to the betrayals of the past was quietly shelved. A compromise budget of moderate cuts and rate rises now seems certain. Hatton will doubtless blame the right-wing defectors. But Militant's commitment to the Labour Party is the factor really responsible for the council's failure to defend Liverpool's workers against the Tories.

Union Militants

Militant is the dominant influence in many trade union Broad Left groups. It has used this influence to promote the position of left-wing union bureaucrats within the Labour Party. This preoccupation has meant that the Broad Left has been anxious to avoid anything that might embarrass the left bureaucrats. Thus when potential embarrassments like rank and file struggles have erupted Militant union officials have done their best to contain them. The sordid record of Militant union officials is the flip side of the Fields-Nellist performance in Parliament.

In 1982 the Broad Left won control of the Civil and Public Services Association executive. Militant supporter Kevin Roddy was elected President. Within four months the new leadership faced strikes against staff cuts in DHSS offices in Birmingham and Oxford. The Militant-influenced executive forced the strikers back to work by threatening to stop pay if they didn't accept a compromise deal. Union leaders claimed they wanted to save their energies for a pay campaign. But CPSA members had no confidence in a leadership which had proved unwilling to fight once, and voted overwhelmingly to accept the Government's miserable four per cent pay offer. Having demoralised union activists and given scope for conservative views to flourish, Militant's Broad Left was crushed at the 1983 CPSA conference and left with only five out of 26 executive seats.

Last year, the Broad Left won a majority on the executive of the Post Office Engineering Union. The POEU was involved in a crucial struggle to prevent the privatisation of British Telecom, which would put up to 100 000 jobs at risk. The executive hesitantly arranged selective blacking. At the first threat of a court injunction being granted to Telecom management, the POEU called

Their Marxism and ours

Militant claims to be Marxist but its political tradition is in fact that of Labourism. Marxism expresses the interests of the working class in overthrowing the capitalist state. Labourism expresses the interests of the official labour movement in reconciling the working class to the continuing existence of the capitalist state.

The difference comes to the fore most clearly over issues of imperialist oppression and democratic rights. Marxists support countries and movements fighting for their national aspirations against imperialist domination. They support the struggles of women, blacks, gays against state repression. All such struggles challenge the capitalist state, and supporting them helps to unite and strengthen the working class. The RCP is the only Marxist party in Britain today.

Adherents of Labourism on the other hand, tend to deny or obscure imperialist oppression. They either equivocate or refuse to support national liberation movements and backward capitalist countries fighting against imperialist interference. They reduce the concerns of the working class to narrow trade union issues, dismissing struggles for wider democratic rights for oppressed sections of society as being of secondary importance. This approach protects the state from a broad anti-capitalist offensive from the labour movement and divides and weakens the working class. Militant is a consistent advocate of Labourism.

ON RACISM Militant denies the fact that black people experience particular forms of discrimination and

repression simply because they are black. For Militant, blacks are in the same position as whites, whether as workers or on the dole: 'they are all unemployed both black and white, and they all have to fight in a common way'. The way to fight — as Liverpool councillor Derek Hatton made clear after condemning rioters (black and white) who attacked police in the city in summer 1981 — was through 'proper trade union action'. Apart from the fact that most unemployed blacks are not union members, struggles for better wages and working conditions cannot combat job discrimination or police harassment. Militant's sectional trade union outlook fails to challenge the oppression of black people that undermines the unity of the working class.

ON WOMEN Militant also refuses to acknowledge the distinctive features of women's oppression. Militant reacts against the individualist preoccupations of the middle class women's movement by reducing all problems facing working class women to the level of trade union issues. But it requires more than trade unionism to fight for nurseries, abortion facilities and contraception rights. Militant views all efforts to fight for women's rights as 'divisive'. In reality Militant's refusal to take up women's struggles is the divisive factor. It leaves women isolated from the workers' movement and allows sexist prejudices to flourish among workers.

ON THE MALVINAS Militant's line on Britain's war against Argentina was to obscure the essential relationship between a major imperialist world

power and a country which, although industrialised, remained subordinate to the imperialist order. By labelling as 'fascist' the regime sponsored in Argentina by American and British interests, Militant made Britain's military aggression appear almost progressive. Militant tried to give its position a radical edge by proclaiming its commitment to the working class of Argentina. But *Militant* is not read in large numbers in Buenos Aires. In Britain where some workers do read it, the Militant message came over as a capitulation to the pressures of British chauvinism unleashed by the despatch of the naval task force.

ON IRELAND Militant's approach to the Irish War is consistent with its overall political outlook. Like the British state, it treats the Six Counties as just another part of Britain. Like the leaders of the Labour Party it pretends that the problems of the people of the Six Counties are those of unemployment, bad housing and poverty — not massive military terror and the denial of the right to self-determination. Militant is as vehement as the gutter press in condemning the anti-imperialist struggle of the republican movement. It tries to disguise its sell-out to British imperialism by emphasising its concern to promote unity between Protestant and Catholic workers around trade union issues. But workers will only be united in Ireland by combating the force that divides them — the British state. Militant's approach reinforces the British position and delays class unity in Ireland.

Keith Tompson

off the action. The High Court's decision in favour of the union was greeted as a victory by the POEU. But when the Appeal Court reversed the judgement, the executive voted to end the dispute and accept defeat.

Throughout the dispute, *Militant* and its supporters in the POEU leadership gave uncritical backing to the divisive strategy of selective action, which isolated the active sections of the union and allowed more than 1500 workers to be suspended. *Militant* encouraged illusions in the bureaucrats and called for '100 per cent trust and loyalty to the union's campaign and instructions from the POEU leadership' (28 October 1983). When the union's hopeless campaign reached its inevitable conclusion and the instructions were to return to work, *Militant* could only assert emptily that 'the fight goes on'. Militant supporters in the POEU leadership had already ensured the fight didn't go on, by refusing to challenge the union and call for effective

all-out strike action.

More recently, 400 workers struck in early January, first against job cuts and then against closure, at the Scott's bakery in Liverpool. The bakers' union, run by Militant supporter Joe Marino, failed to organise effective blacking. When court injunctions were issued against the strikers' occupation of the bakery the union told its members not to resist eviction. Six weeks into the strike, as rank and file anger threatened to get out of control, Marino called a national ballot on spreading the action. And even then, the strikers' plans to send delegations around the country to argue for support were stamped on when the union claimed it could not afford the trip. In the end, the arrival of ballot papers was the first many bakers outside Liverpool knew about the strike. Inevitably under these conditions, the ballot was lost, and 400 Scott's workers are now on the dole. Marino remains in control of the union, with Militant's full support.

A question of leadership

Despite the Militant inspired Broad Left Organising Committee's commitment to fight for 'a determined and bold lead from the leadership of the trade union movement', it has turned a blind eye to the betrayals of left-wing bureaucrats.

What matters to the Broad Lefts is that the unions should be run by officials committed to the Labour Party. In unions such as the CPSA and Nalgo, Militant's major activity is lobbying for affiliation to Labour. When members of these unions come into conflict with the Labour Party, Militant backs the Labour leadership. Thus last year, Militant supporters argued against all-out strike action by Nalgo residential workers in dispute with Labour councils over pay.

Militant's claim to be a 'Marxist' tendency has no foundation in reality. Its record shows that apart from its rhetorical excesses it remains very much in the traditional Labour left mould. Moreover, a balance sheet of its activity in Parliament, Liverpool and in the unions shows that it is no more effective than other sections of the left. Militant tries hard, and many of its supporters genuinely want to change society. But these aspirations are thwarted by Militant's dogmatic attachment to the Labour Party. Which comes first — the Labour Party or the working class? Neil Kinnock or the workers of Liverpool? Militant's dual loyalty is an evasion of the task of building a fight-back against the capitalist system. When the crunch comes Militant puts loyalty to the Labour Party before loyalty to our class.



Chris Black (reflex)

Biting the bullet: Derek Hatton will suffer cuts to preserve Labour's unity

MEETINGS

THE THATCHER THREAT AND THE MILITANT MYTH

COVENTRY

Tuesday 17 April 7.30pm
Hare and Squirrel Pub
New Union Street

NORTH LONDON

Tuesday 17 April 7.00pm
Hare and Hounds Pub, 181 Upper St, N1
(Highbury and Islington 6)

SOUTH LONDON

Wednesday 18 April 7.30pm
St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton Hill

BIRMINGHAM

Thursday 5 April 7.30pm
Digbeth Civic Hall

OLDHAM

Wednesday 11 April 7.30pm
Mare and Foal Pub, Ashton Road

SHEFFIELD

Wednesday 18 April 7.30pm
Victoria Hall, opposite Crucible Theatre

LEEDS

Thursday 3 May 7.30pm
Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mount, L7

India: the seeds of conflict



Anti-imperialist fighter: Subhas Chandra Bose

Paul Scott. *The Raj quartet / The Jewel in the Crown*, in four volumes, Granada 1983, pbk £2.50 each

Mihir Bose. *The lost hero: Subhas Chandra Bose*, Quartet Books 1982, pp318, hbk £15

INDIA LIES IN RUINS. The 'world's largest democracy' is being torn apart by feuding Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Dictatorship reigns in neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh. At least a quarter of a million people died in the struggle for independence in 1947. In different ways, both these books try to explain how the Indian people's fight for freedom from the British Empire was transformed into a nightmare of intercommunal strife that has continued until today.

Although the accompanying television series - *The Jewel in the Crown* - is insipid, *The Raj Quartet* is a fine book. It examines the conflicts among the British rulers of India - the Raj - over how to control their 700 million Indian subjects. With no settler population to rely on, the British used the Indian caste system to divide the population and maintain its rule. After the 1857 mutiny, the Indian princes - the Maharajahs - became Britain's principal agents. And there was always the baton and the bullet to fall back on. During the Second World War, however, the upsurge of nationalist sentiment could no longer be contained through repression alone. Sections of the Raj argued for an accommodation with the Indian bourgeoisie to preserve its rule.

The British solution

In *The Raj Quartet* the antagonism between Sarah Layton, a colonel's daughter, and the policeman Ronald Merrick reflects this ruling class debate. Layton and her friends defend the anglicised Indian Hari Kumar from Merrick. They see him as the representative of a section of Indian society which had to be cultivated to respect the British 'way of life'. Merrick, on the other hand, indiscriminately persecutes all Indians, whether they are bourgeois like Kumar or supporters of the anti-imperialist Indian National Army (INA). The novel gives a superb presentation of the turmoil of Indian politics through the eyes of the author, a true British liberal. The INA is the only section of Indian society that wins Paul Scott's complete contempt. Despite Merrick's brutality, the author portrays him as a hero. Scott recognizes that Merrick's methods were necessary to pave the way for Layton's solution. It was this dual strategy that characterised the last days of the British Raj. 'Progressive' British initiatives by Labour ministers Stafford Cripps and Clement Attlee and Viceroy of India Louis Mountbatten accompanied an orgy of religious strife between Hindus and Muslims, deliberately provoked by the British. Britain's encouragement of the partition of India laid the basis for the rise of the subordinate Hari Kumars who rule in the Indian subcontinent today.

The question remains, how did they get away with it? *The lost hero* is a brave attempt to explain why. By 1947, Britain had no anti-imperialist movement to contend with. Hindus and Muslims were cutting each other's throats, and Mountbatten was the most popular figure

reviews

in India. Mihir Bose gives a valuable account of how the anti-imperialist movement was defeated.

Subhas Chandra Bose was the son of a lawyer from Bengal. Although he had close links with the Indian Communist Party, he eventually became president of the nationalist Congress Party, working with Gandhi to secure Indian independence through negotiation. However, he viewed Gandhi's Satyagraha policy - non-violent direct action - only as a useful tactic. When war broke out, Bose understood that tactics should change to make the most of Britain's difficulties. Bose saw the war as the opportunity to overthrow British rule in India. Harassed by the British, he left for the Soviet Union in January 1941. Refused admittance, he ended up in Nazi Germany, where he received little support for his attempts to organise Indian POWs captured in North Africa into an Indian League to fight for independence.

The turning point came with the fall of Singapore in February 1942 when the British oppressor lay prostrate at the feet of an Asian army. The anti-imperialist aspirations of millions of Asians were stimulated by the Japanese victory. Anti-British feelings were heightened in India. By August 1942, the Congress Party was forced to adopt a 'Quit India' resolution. Gandhi assured the British that if they declared an intention to leave India, he would be willing to sign a defence pact with the Allies to safeguard India from Axis aggression. As usual, the British reacted by arresting the entire Congress leadership. Unusually, this provoked an upsurge of resistance that lasted a year. More than 60 000 people were arrested, 318 police stations burned down, 945 post offices were attacked and 59 trains derailed. The British wreaked death and destruction, when RAF planes bombed rebel-held territory.

By July 1943, Bose was in Singapore, organising the Indian National Army. Japanese imperialists attempted to manipulate Bose for their own ends. Although the Japanese published a declaration for Indian freedom, they refused Bose access to sufficient resources to achieve this end. Bose's army was restricted to a maximum of 30 000 soldiers. In spring 1944 an exhausted force of 8000 INA were defeated by more numerous British forces at Imphal in north-east India. Despite Bose's efforts, this was the INA's only action inside India. By June 1945, the British had released Congress leaders Nehru and Gandhi. On their release, the two leaders set out to vilify Bose, denouncing him as a 'Japanese puppet' and a 'fascist hyena'. Bose mysteriously disappeared after the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

Insurrection

The INA had been militarily defeated by the British at Imphal, but the termination of the war raised anti-British feeling in India to a fever-pitch. A five day general strike was declared in Calcutta and a hundred Indians of all religions died besieging Delhi's Red Fort after the British tried the INA leaders - the British were forced to commute their sentences. The trial of a Muslim INA officer in February 1946 provoked a joint Hindu-Muslim insurrection. The Royal Indian Navy mutinied, to be joined later by the Indian Air Force and sections of the army. In Bombay, 600 000 textile workers took to the streets and fought pitched battles with British troops for three days.

Shaken out of their squalid manoeuvres for position and power, the leaders of the predominantly Hindu Congress Party and the Muslim League joined forces to help the British put down the insurrection. A succession of British initiatives followed, each designed to create the maximum suspicion and envy between the Congress and Muslim leaders. On 20 February 1947, British Labour leader Clement Attlee announced that Britain would transfer power to the Indians, 'if necessary as two separate nations'. From then on, up to August 1947, rivers of Hindu and Muslim blood flowed as the British sought to arrange the establishment of their own creations - India and Pakistan.

Bose is remembered in India today as Netaji - leader - and millions await his return. Bose was a heroic anti-imperialist who fought to the end for Indian independence from Britain. Yet there were no fundamental political differences between Bose and Gandhi. After the military defeat of the INA, Gandhi's Congress could easily dominate the struggle for Indian freedom and finished by sabotaging it. *The lost hero* is an excellent account of the fortunes of the Indian anti-imperialist movement,

Andy Clarkson

Britain's rape of Greece

Procopis Papastratis, *British policy towards Greece during the Second World War 1941-1944*, Cambridge University Press 1984, pp274, hbk £25

PAPASTRATIS' BOOK presents a riveting account of British foreign policy towards Greece during the Nazi occupation from 1941 to late 1944. Using Cabinet, War and Foreign Office minutes, political correspondence and the memoirs of leading politicians and diplomats, the author unravels the course of events leading up to Britain's invasion of Greece in December 1944.

At the end of the First World War Britain assumed control over Greece as part of its sphere of influence in the East Mediterranean. It intervened incessantly in Greek affairs to back up the country's fragile and detested monarchy. The Metaxas dictatorship, which ruled Greece with an iron fist during the late thirties, was installed by Britain in an attempt to contain the growing struggle of the workers and peasants.



Youthful rebel: ELAS volunteer

The invasion of Greece by the Axis powers Germany and Italy in April 1941 brought about the collapse of the political order Britain had so carefully constructed. King George II, the army and the politicians surrendered and fled. Some leaders offered their services to the Nazis and helped form a puppet government. As a result, all the institutions of the old order were discredited. Within weeks of the invasion the Communist Party (KKE) initiated the formation of the National Liberation Front (EAM) and its guerrilla force ELAS, both of which rapidly gained a mass following. Throughout the period of fascist occupation the guerrillas controlled large parts of the country and mounted successful operations against the invaders.

From swastika to Union Jack

London was alarmed. Not only had the Axis powers occupied Greece but the invasion unleashed a social movement which presented a grave challenge to the capitalist order. From the start, Britain aimed to reconquer Greece and at the same time contain or crush the popular movement against the regime.

Destroying EAM was no easy task. Given that EAM/ELAS was involved in armed resistance against Britain's number one enemy, Germany, to go on the offensive against the liberation movement was out of the question. Throughout the period of Nazi occupation the British had to maintain at least token military and political support for EAM, if only for propaganda purposes. To do otherwise carried the risk of strengthening popular opposition to Britain and cohering the liberation movement. Britain solved this apparently intractable problem by simultaneously maintaining token support for EAM/ELAS and setting up royalist and fascist armies in preparation for the eventual crackdown.

Another problem was how to reconcile Britain's long-term strategic objectives in Greece with the short-term exigencies of the war effort against Nazi Germany. This proved a continuous source of tension between sections of the military and diplomatic leadership. While the Chiefs of Staff (COS) wanted an economic blockade of Greece, to cut supply lines to the Axis powers, the Foreign Office was worried about the political repercussions, within Greece and abroad, if Britain was seen to be starving

occupied Greece. The Foreign Office response to the blockade request illustrates the pragmatism with which the British ruling class managed such delicate problems:

'Is it important to have a healthy population of 7.5 million Anglophile Greeks to reinforce our position in the East Mediterranean after the war? Or can we view with equanimity the reduction of the Greek population by famine? The pros and cons must be very carefully weighed before we commit ourselves to starving Greece, and it must be borne in mind that the Greeks will not starve silently. The effects on public opinion in the United States of America will also have to be considered.'

Foreign Office reservations were overruled, and Greece suffered famine and disease for three years.

By 1944, despite Britain's efforts, the liberation movement had not suffered any serious setbacks. As soon as German forces withdrew it seemed inevitable that EAM/ELAS would take over the whole country. Britain's mission would have run into serious trouble had it not been for support from two unlikely allies - Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

To prevent an EAM victory, British military and secret services negotiated a takeover plan with the German High Command. Papastratis' account reveals the extent of British/German collaboration. In September 1944 the Foreign Office noted that it would be very 'awkward' if the German forces in Greece wished to surrender too soon, since 'we do not want them to collapse until we ourselves are ready to send in British troops'. Arrangements were made for a carefully timed German withdrawal. Arms and supplies were handed over to British forces to stop them falling into the hands of EAM/ELAS. The so-called liberation of Greece from the fascist invaders was in fact a simple handover from one imperialist occupier to the next.

The October 1944 Churchill/Stalin agreement sealed the fate of the liberation movement. The Soviet leader promised to leave Britain a free hand in Greece in exchange for guarantees of Soviet interests in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania. Britain was ready to move in for the kill.

Operation Manna

In November 1944 the War Cabinet launched *Operation Manna*. Some 60 000 British troops invaded Greece to take over from the retreating Nazi forces. Their brief was to 'clean up' the national resistance movement. In December the British bombed and butchered their way through Athens. The new invaders met with fierce resistance. The 'Battle of Athens' raged for over two months before ELAS was forced to sign a truce.

Back home, leading Labour politicians Aneurin Bevan and Arthur Greenwood protested loudly against the savagery inflicted on the Greek people, well aware of the breadth of working class support for the Greek anti-fascist resistance. But such protest was soon stifled. As early as January 1945, while British forces were murdering Greeks in the streets of Athens, the TUC sent a mission to Greece to investigate 'ELAS atrocities'. The mission was a major propaganda coup for the Government. The TUC's assistance in persuading public opinion that the Greek anti-fascist resistance was a gang of sadistic terrorists was greatly appreciated. Six months later, after Labour's election victory, the conduct of Britain's intervention in Greece passed into the hands of the new foreign secretary, trade union leader Ernest Bevin. In his first public address on taking office, Bevin stated that 'Greece is essential to British interests in the Middle East' and that the troops should remain.

The Labour government pursued the war against the Greek workers and peasants until 1947. Unable to finance the war any longer, Britain moved out and the USA moved in. In 1949 EAM/ELAS was finally defeated, and the ground cleared for the ruthless dictatorships which ruled Greece on behalf of imperialism in the post-war period. Neil Kinnock's promise to return the 'Elgin Marbles' and other assorted ancient treasures to Greece will hardly pass as compensation for the historic defeat of the Greek working class.

Sabena Norton

The spirit of resistance

Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, Zed Press 1983, pp256, pbk £3.95

Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, Cambridge University Press 1984, pp 305, hbk £22.50 pbk £6.95

Noam Chomsky, *Theateful triangle*, Pluto Press 1983, pp481, pbk £6.95

SINCE IT WAS established under the auspices of the imperialist powers in 1948, the state of Israel has survived only through massive inflows of dollars, francs, pounds and deutschmarks, and by the savage repression of the native

Palestinian population both within and outside its borders. More than one million Palestinians still live within lands occupied by Israel. Close to three million more live in refugee camps in the countries on Israel's borders. Since 1948 wave after wave of military reprisals has been directed at these camps and at Palestinians inside Israel. But Israeli violence has only stiffened the determination of the Palestinian people to resist imperialism in the Middle East.

It is this spirit which fires Abdallah Frangi's book, *The PLO and Palestine* is not an academic history of the movement. It is a rough and ready account of the struggles of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland. It reads more like an oral history. Like most oral histories it contains eccentricities such as the opening section's attempt at Biblical exegesis to prove the right of the Palestinian people to occupy the land of Palestine. Frangi is a leading member of Al-Fatah, the key section of the PLO, so his account of that organisation's history skirts some of the more urgent questions concerning the wheeling and dealing which punctuated the formation and development of the PLO.

Helena Cobban's history of the PLO is a more substantial point of reference for the inside history of the organisation. Cobban's is not a dry academic study. It is informed by her own spell as *The Sunday Times* correspondent in Beirut between 1976 and 1981. Here she met most of the major figures in the PLO and had an opportunity to see the workings of the organisation at first hand.

A history of retreats

Cobban charts the history of the PLO from the foundation of Al-Fatah in the late fifties in the aftermath of the British and French attempt to grab the Suez Canal from Egypt in 1956. She shows how Al-Fatah's pragmatic and opportunist leadership was never a match for the leaders of the Arab regimes. Although she gives no explicit thrust to her narrative, the history Cobban surveys suggests the driving force behind the PLO leadership. From the start, Al-Fatah was committed to non-interference in the internal politics of the Arab regimes. Since most Palestinian refugees were subject to one Arab ruler or another, this amounted to abandoning the refugees to the tender mercies of King Hussein of Jordan or President Nasser of Egypt. Financial support for Al-Fatah was sufficient to buy these regimes a free hand to deal with Palestinians within their own territories. Even when King Hussein of Jordan embarked on the wholesale slaughter of Palestinians in Black September 1971, PLO leader Yassir Arafat resisted appeals for assistance until further delay would have robbed him of any popular base. Even then he hastily cobbled together an agreement with Hussein which meant the withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from Jordan.



Training for war: Palestinian resistance lives on

Cobban reveals that the absorption in 1969 of Al-Fatah into the Palestine Liberation Organisation, founded by the Arab states in 1964, marked the consolidation of the relationship between the Arab states and Al-Fatah. In return for millions of dollars and recognition in the Arab world and beyond, Al-Fatah delivered up the Palestinian masses into the hands of Arab diplomacy. The history of the PLO during the seventies is a history of retreats. Under pressure from Israel and its imperialist backers, and from its wealthy Arab backers, the PLO has moderated its demands. From the destruction of the state of Israel, Arafat has reduced his sights to 'even only Jericho'.

Cobban's strength is her description of this willingness to compromise. She puts on display the inner workings of the PLO which Al-Fatah dominates. She shows how the PLO's structure can accommodate the various radical Palestinian groupings such as George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. She shows how even explicitly terrorist groupings such as Black September have been unable to challenge the legitimacy of the PLO. None has been prepared to break with its programme of negotiation. Most important of all, none has been able to win over the Palestinian masses.

Cobban reveals that the defeats suffered by the Palestinians in southern Lebanon in 1981 weakened the pressure on the leadership from the masses. She shows how the subsequent abortive Syrian-backed coup in the PLO led to the organisation becoming virtually the personal property of the chairman Yassir Arafat. Relieved of his obligations to the Palestinian masses, Arafat and his organisation have become little more than stooges of Egypt and Jordan, and agents in their attempts to arrange some compromise with Israel and the USA.

Nothing but despair

The fateful triangle is Noam Chomsky's contribution to the imperialist 'peace process'. Chomsky surveys the ruins left by American policy in the Middle East and wonders if there is not perhaps a better way of doing things. He urges the American anti-nuclear movement to consider the potential for superpower confrontation in the Middle East. He applauds the PLO's willingness to compromise. He deplores the rejectionist stance of every Israeli government since the foundation of the state. But Chomsky dismisses the notion that support for Israel in Washington is restricted to the most right-wing politicians. He demolishes the myth that the Zionist lobby in US politics generates policy on the Middle East. He concludes that the US is committed to Israel out of its own interests and that those interests are paramount. What is he left with? Pessimism. He thinks it unlikely that the US will change its Middle Eastern policy, although he tries his best to make the case that its interests can be safeguarded just as well through negotiation with the PLO as through support for Israel. Even if America were to withdraw its support Israel may have...the bomb! Chomsky can offer little more than despair.

The Palestinian people have a message for professor Chomsky and for Yassir Arafat, somewhere on his futile shuttle between Algiers and Amman. They know that the USA will not withdraw its support for Israel, for to do so would jeopardize American interests throughout the Middle East. But they have every faith that the Palestinian people will recover from their setbacks in Lebanon. In alliance with the masses of the Middle East, they will drive the imperialist powers and their local minions, Israeli and Arab, out of the region forever. The spirit of resistance may have been stilled by the massacre of 800 or more refugees in Sabra and Chatila in 1981, but it has not been crushed.

John Johnson

Voice in the wilderness

Paul Mattick, *Marxism, last refuge of the bourgeoisie*, Merlin Press 1983, pp 321, pbk £5.50

PAUL MATTICK was a stimulating and sometimes inspiring theoretician of Marxism. Published after his death in 1981, sections of Mattick's last work remain true to the high standards of his previous studies. But the book is also a tragic reminder of the consequences of isolating Marxism from the class struggle.

The early part of the book is a critical examination of issues raised by Marx's critique of political economy in relation to post-war capitalism. Mattick was always at his best confronting the anti-Marxist prejudices of bourgeois economists and the left. What these commentators present as novel criticisms of Marx, Mattick exposes as a regurgitation of objections already disposed of before the war. The best chapter in the book, 'Theory and reality', demonstrates the relevance of Marx's theory of capital accumulation for an understanding of today's recession.

Mattick had a long and distinguished record of defending Marxism against the prevailing revisionist trends. Even at the darkest hour, when the combined forces of fascism and Stalinism inflicted a grave defeat on the working class, Mattick stood out against the stream. In the thirties when Marxism appeared an irrelevant dogma - transformed into an apologia for the Stalinist bureaucracy - Mattick was one of the few voices shouting defiance. It is remarkable that despite the pressure of political isolation, Mattick's work attained the level of rigour that it did.

But political isolation did take its toll. Mattick's writings reflect an aloofness from the class struggle and a reluctance to theorise about practical politics. In particular, Mattick reacted against the revolutionary Bolshevik tradition. He ended up seeing all previous struggles against the capitalist system as bourgeois or reformist. The second part of *Marxism, last refuge of the bourgeoisie* shows how Mattick finally became a victim of political isolation.

Mattick criticised the Leninist conception of the party. But unlike liberal critics he was too intelligent to ignore the problem of what forces were going to make the revolution. Mattick at least understood that the whole working class does not make a revolution. Although he rejected the necessity for a vanguard party, he knew that it is the active militant section of the proletariat that makes and leads the revolution.



Theory and practice: Lenin agitates in 1917

But a dislike of organisation and leadership led Mattick to reject the need for a party to cohere this vanguard. Sensing the dead end he had reached, Mattick half-heartedly states that 'revolutions must take place with insufficient ideological preparation'. This is merely a recipe for abandoning the prospect of revolutionary victory altogether. As the history of this century has proved, it is precisely in a revolutionary period that ideological preparation becomes a matter of life or death.

In the end, Mattick drew out the pessimistic consequences of ignoring the problem of revolutionary leadership. Critics of the Leninist party always justify their stance by condemning the notion of a vanguard party as elitist. What they are rejecting in reality is the task of fighting to give a lead. A world without leaders under capitalism means a world full of passive observers, waiting for someone else to make a move. It is sad that somebody as courageous as Paul Mattick ended up as an observer, and a theorist of proletarian paralysis.

Frank Richards

When will the sun set?

Gregor Benton, *The Hongkong crisis*, Pluto Press 1983, pp114, pbk £3.50

FROM BRITAIN'S SEIZURE of Hongkong Island and South Kowloon 'in perpetuity' in 1842 and 1860, to its capture of the New Territories under a 99 year lease in 1898, through the Opium Wars and the Chinese revolution, Gregor Benton brings us up to date with the options now facing the British state and the Chinese bureaucracy. There are still 13 years to go to 1997 when the British lease on the New Territories runs out. Media coverage of the colony's 'worst civil disturbances in 16 years', as riots broke out in the Kowloon Peninsula in mid-January, seems to belie reports of rapid economic growth and a booming export trade. The value of Benton's book is in helping us to understand the real dimensions of the crisis in Hongkong, even if we do not follow his liberal strategy for resolving it.

Thirteen years is a short time in politics when the issues at stake concern the very foundations of the social system. Long-term capitalist investments, whether in industry or property assets, have a time horizon up to and beyond the turn of the century. A lack of confidence in the future will have a crucial impact on the present. The underlying cause of this lack of confidence has less to do with China's claims on Hongkong and more to do with the position of British imperialism. Lurking in the background too is a social force which both the British state and the Chinese bureaucracy will have to deal with - the Hongkong working class.

Time is running out

Hongkong is a testament to British fair play and democracy - there is none. British imperialism runs Hongkong politics, but has less and less influence over its economic structure. Hongkong is run by a British-appointed Governor. There are no legally recognised political parties. Colonial affairs are administered by an executive and a legislative council made up of appointed tycoons, mainly British expatriates. Most of the five million population is excluded from any semblance of democratic consultation.

Hongkong's economic success - a Gross Domestic Product growth rate averaging nine per cent per year between 1970 and 1982 - has had little to do with the British. Industry was built up by indigenous Chinese capitalists, including those who fled from mainland China. Britain only accounts for six per cent of foreign manufacturing investment, compared to a 30 per cent share for Japan and a 47 per cent share for the USA. America is Hongkong's largest overseas market for the crucial export sector of the economy. Only in banking do the British stand out. Until 1974, Hongkong's sterling

balances held in London accounted for up to a quarter of Britain's gold and foreign exchange reserves. Today Hongkong is a major offshore banking centre with deposits worth some \$54 billion. British interests are heavily committed throughout the financial system, from banking to insurance and property business.

Despite its weak economic base, Britain has the job of negotiating the colony's future with the Chinese government. Thatcher took up the challenge 18 months ago, and the ninth round of the Sino-British talks took place in February. The British were prepared to concede sovereignty over the whole colony in return for a guaranteed future for capitalism in general and British interests in particular. The British state wants to protect its existing lucrative business, but it is also concerned to be in on the action if the Chinese market opens up to imperialism. It is this factor which contains the potential for instability. When China does a deal with the imperialists it can afford to leave a second rate power like Britain on the sidelines. Some 7000 British and Gurkha troops are on hand to add weight to Britain's claims.

Capitalism rules OK

Hongkong means a lot to China. In 1980 the colony accounted for more than a third of China's foreign exchange revenues through its trading relations. The Chinese bureaucracy is concerned that these funds are not threatened by the replication of its own stagnant social system in Hongkong. It is therefore more than willing to accept a continuation of capitalist relations in the colony.

China has already experimented with 'Special Economic Zones' on the mainland, areas within which imperialist investment is encouraged. The Hongkong dollar circulates widely in neighbouring Guangdong province. Despite limited foreign investments so far, it is clear that market relations are beginning to impose themselves. The bureaucracy hopes to cream off the benefits of capitalist production to bolster its position within the crisis-torn Chinese economy. But such policies, particularly if applied to Hongkong itself, can only exacerbate the bureaucracy's lack of control over an economy it cannot plan.



Capitalism sets up shop: Guangdong, China

China would like to encourage American and Japanese investment, both in its existing Special Economic Zones and in the proposed Special Administrative Regions for Hongkong. The bureaucracy's concern is not to attract the technology necessary for economic and social development, but to save its own skin. The interests of Chinese workers, still less of the Hongkong Chinese, are of no consequence.

No alternative

Benton correctly shows the direct link between Hongkong's future and the future of China as a whole. He also draws out some important points about working class consciousness in Hongkong. Workers in the colony have no political commitment to the British regime. But the sight of bodies washed up on the shore after China's cultural revolution did not improve their conception of life under Stalinism either.

Hongkong workers are deprived of elementary democratic rights and have no organised means of expressing their political views. Gregor Benton uses this to support his call for a struggle for 'full democracy'. He hopes for a united struggle, combining the fight for democratic rights in Hong Kong with the movement of democratic dissent on the mainland. But it will take more than a struggle for basic democratic rights to combat imperialism in the colony and its designs for China. Likewise, the overthrow of the Chinese bureaucracy cannot be led by 'democratic dissidents', whose objection to Stalinism is their lack of political freedom, not the absence of workers' power.

Tony Allen

Letters



ANGOLA

ANIMAL RIGHTS



Bitter sectarians

Last December Troops Out Movement supporter Alan O'Dwyer was arrested in Birmingham and detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The Irish Freedom Movement, after consulting his friends, organised pickets and publicity in protest against another attack on the rights of Irish solidarity activists in Britain. O'Dwyer who was released without charge shortly afterwards, subsequently wrote to *An Phoblacht/Republican News* to complain that the IFM's actions had endangered his personal security. Reproduced below is the text of the Irish Freedom Movement's reply to O'Dwyer which has yet to be published in *AP/RN*.

Over the past five years the Irish Freedom Movement has organised support for more than 100 victims of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Alan O'Dwyer is the first to object. Indeed he is the first person not to have expressed appreciation for our work. Many PTA victims have indicated how they were encouraged by hearing chanting crowds outside their cells and how they welcomed getting early access to legal aid. Others have been pleased to see the police coming under pressure from local MPs and councillors and from the exposure of the operation of repressive legislation they often prefer to keep in the shadows. Before the Irish Freedom Movement began agitating against the PTA hundreds of Irish people simply disappeared in Britain as they were deported to Ireland without any public criticism or protest. Now arrests in every British city are followed

by demonstrations and publicity as the Irish Freedom Movement has made the PTA into a popular campaigning issue for the first time.

Yet O'Dwyer claims that the Irish Freedom Movement was 'irresponsible and opportunistic' in releasing his name to the press. Publicity in the media of the use of the PTA can be very effective in exposing how the Act is used and can help in mobilising opposition. It is impossible to publicise an unnamed person. In the cause of solidarity the IFM did release O'Dwyer's name to the press. For the same reason leading members of the Troops Out Movement revealed his name on radio and television. Yet O'Dwyer has chosen to denounce the IFM for organising solidarity on his behalf, in the pages of the republican press. O'Dwyer's letter exposes a peculiarly petty sectarianism.

Why is O'Dwyer so bitter about attempts to mobilise public protest against his harassment under the PTA? The answer lies in his affinities with the Troops Out Movement. Ten years ago TOM set out to build an Irish solidarity movement in Britain, but its opportunist strategy has reduced it to an ineffectual rump. Not only does TOM organise no action against the PTA; it no longer even turns up to IFM protests against PTA detentions. Its activities are now confined to visits to Ireland – and attempts to discredit the growing success of the IFM in building a campaigning solidarity movement in Britain.

Keith Tompson
National Organiser
Irish Freedom Movement

Council's shame

On 30 January Mr Rahaman, who suffers from paralysis, was dragged from his bed and thrown downstairs. He and the rest of his family were thrown onto the streets by the manager of the Maryland Hotel in Finsbury Park, North London, acting on instructions from Tower Hamlets council's Homeless Persons Unit.

The Homeless Persons Unit had decided that the family were 'intentionally homeless' because they had fled their Birmingham home seven months ago after repeated racial attacks. As a result the Rahamans spent two nights sleeping under bus shelters and when they finally found somewhere to stay their two children had to be taken into

hospital for intensive feeding. None of the family had eaten for four days because the DHSS has stopped their benefit.

When the incident came to light Tower Hamlets council tried to cover up its role in the affair by threatening the Maryland Hotel with legal action for assault. The manager replied by threatening to evict 106 families, more than 600 people, from council-sponsored residence in his bed and breakfast rooms. The council backed down and carried on with its seven-year arrangement for dumping homeless families in his lousy boarding rooms.

P Darr
Workers Against Racism

Has 'the next step' gone soft

One of the most potent reasons for *the next step* selling as well as it does, is that its politics show that Labourism is wholly reactionary, has had its day, and that what we stand for is an alternative that breaks with Labourism and consistently exposes its pernicious influence. It is on this basis that, it seems to me, we are attracting the growing audience for our ideas, that we are.

It was with some trepidation, then, that I viewed the front cover of the March issue which with its title 'Fight the Tories' conveyed none of that sense of the bold independence which usually distinguishes us from other left papers; it was a headline which one could have read on the cover of Socialist Worker/Organiser/Action and many others. As I say it is the politics of the RCP which sells *the next step* and rightly so. Call me superficial, short-sighted or what you will but selling politics on the

basis of crude anti-Toryism should remain the province of the reformist left.

I eagerly await your reply/explanation for what is to me, a confusing and lacklustre introduction to a paper which inside, loses none of its intelligent and informative thrust.

David Watson
Preston

the next step replies

The 'anti-Tory' thrust of the front page of the last issue of *the next step* does not mean that the RCP has abandoned the struggle against Labourism. For as long as significant sections of the working class are influenced by the politics of the official labour movement, the battle against reformism will be of decisive importance in building a revolutionary party.

However building a revolutionary party demands a recognition and a response to the shifting forms of the class

struggle. Two recent developments are important. First, the official labour movement has largely given up trying to fight the Tories. The TUC has formally sounded the retreat and the Labour Party's opposition is so ineffectual as to be scarcely visible. Second, the working class has lost confidence in the official labour movement to an extent unprecedented in half a century. The Chesterfield by-election and recent opinion polls suggest little real recovery in Labour's popularity since last year's General Election catastrophe.

In these circumstances it is up to the RCP to give a lead to the thousands of workers who hate the Tories but have no faith whatever in Labour's alternative. Hence the 'anti-Tory' tone of *the next step's* cover. But don't forget that the major feature introduced by the cover was a critique of the Labour Party's failure to fight the cuts in local government.

Animal rights

I have read your paper over the past few months, but I have searched in vain for your 'position', 'line' or whatever on the issue of animal liberation and animal rights. I can't see how you can ignore the most active, fastest-growing campaign in British politics. Surely socialists must be against all suffering and ill-treatment, whether of man or beast? Let's have your views on the matter.

Robin Nall
Manchester

the next step replies

We take our view of animal liberation not from any emotional objection to suffering, but from a materialist understanding of history. Historically, the progressive evolution from one mode of production to another,

higher form of society – eg. slavery to feudalism to capitalism – has depended on humanity's increasing ability to master the forces of nature. Communism will represent man's ultimate control over nature. Animal liberation seeks to free one part of nature from our control. It flows against the tide of history, and we oppose it as a reactionary sentiment. Our concern is the suffering and oppression of millions of people around the world. Technological methods such as vivisection which can help to alleviate their burden are welcome.

Animal liberation has attracted sympathy from many on the left. But it cannot be posed as a class question. As an issue of morality, it is backed by people from all sides of the

political spectrum. Socialists involved in this movement are rubbing shoulders with those who wholeheartedly support Britain's oppression of the Irish and blacks. In Bradford an animal rights campaign against Halal meat has won the backing of the fascist British National Party. In the Six Counties of Ireland, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party which calls for republicans to be shot on sight, has condemned hare coursing as 'civilised' barbarity. The fact that animal liberation is 'the most active, fastest-growing campaign in British politics' is notable only as an indictment of the left's inability to organise on the issues that count. Animal liberation is the last refuge of a left-wing scoundrel.

Drugs – not the real problem

In March the publication of Strathclyde Police Chief Sir Patrick Hanjill's annual report triggered a wave of hair raising headlines in the local press. Heroin addiction and glue sniffing in Glasgow were the hot topics. Everyone, local councillors, youth workers, trade union leaders and local left wingers pronounced themselves 'gravely disturbed' and 'worried' by the

evidence of a rapid increase in drug abuse among Scottish teenagers. It was reported that there were more than 400 heroin addicts on a single Edinburgh housing estate. Last year the Solvent Abuse Act (Scotland) stirred up the same kind of public hysteria.

The discussion about drug abuse is most intense in Scotland because Scotland is one of the British regions that has been hardest hit by the recession. The police chiefs, priests, trade unionists and liberals who lament the effects of heroin on Glasgow's and Edinburgh's young ignore the genuine corrupters, youth unemployment and

poverty. Their sympathy for the 'poor addict' and their contempt for the 'pusher' mask their unconcern at the real horrors of life in Scotland's cities. Kids forced to stay with their parents because they cannot afford to move out. Kids who end up on the streets where they get drawn into prostitution and crime, or end up in cold, dirty rooms.

The sudden concern with the 'opiates of the people' is nothing but a cynical distraction from the real culprits for the brutal conditions in which young people have to live.

Mike Wall
Glasgow

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BCM JP LTD, London WC1N 3XX

Glasgow University's thugs

For years Glasgow University Union has operated as a base for right wing activity on campus. It is a hotbed of rampant chauvinism and racism. Queer-bashing expeditions and attacks on women's rights protests have been organised by the Board in recent years.

On 1 March a group of women protested against the showings of pornographic films in the union at lunchtimes. The women were set upon by a horde of Tory thugs. Several people, including myself, were badly bruised. A black student was singled out for particularly

vicious physical and verbal abuse.

On 8 March the Revolutionary Communist Students at Glasgow University called a mass protest outside the GUU Buildings in response to this blatant provocation. More than 150 students came and the protest was a great success. With militant chants, burning of GUU membership cards and banging of pots and pans the students indicated that the chauvinist and racist filth at Glasgow University will no longer be tolerated. The protest was also attended by a contingent from the Glasgow College of Art led by its

Anti-Imperialist Society.

Unfortunately, neither the Glasgow University Labour Club nor the Socialist Worker society backed the protest. But many individual members of all left societies joined the protest. We will continue the fight for united action at Glasgow University so that we can drive chauvinism and racism off the campus for good.

Mary McFarlane

Revolutionary Communist
Students, Glasgow University

SWAPO fights on

Congratulations on Andy Clarkson's timely article on South African expansionism (*the next step*, March). The essential argument, i.e. that South Africa's expansionism has a 'broader purpose' in its attempt to 'resolve the problems of recession in South Africa by subordinating the whole region to its rule', must be grasped by all anti-imperialists.

There is, however, one inaccuracy which must be corrected because of its implications vis-a-vis the 16 February Lusaka 'disengagement' agreement between South Africa and Angola. This is the assertion that the South African incursion into Angola inflicted a setback for SWAPO forces. The facts are (a) that SWAPO has never had a military base at Cuvelai – the nearest SWAPO settlement, where it has its hospital, is at Lubango; (b) not one SWAPO combatant or member was killed or even injured during these attacks – SWAPO was not involved in the fighting at all. This point was made clear in the Angolan statement to the United Nations Security Council and in SWAPO statements. It is well known that Angola harbours SWAPO refugee settlements and offers other facilities to the liberation movement. But the reason why SWAPO's armed struggle has continued, is that SWAPO combatants are able to operate within Namibia, with the support of the local civilian population.

This point sheds further light on the limitations of the Angola/South Africa disengagement agreement:

(1) Two of the conditions on which Angola agreed to talk to Pretoria, namely South Africa's commitment to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (the Namibia independence plan) and to stop backing Unita, have not been fulfilled. The South African government stated immediately after the Lusaka talks that this could not happen this year, and that agreement on Resolution 435 was still a long way off;

(2) While SWAPO has stated that it will not jeopardize the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola, it has pledged itself to continue the struggle until Pretoria agrees to sign a ceasefire and implement the United Nations independence plan. South Africa has accused SWAPO of acting to undermine its 'peace moves' through recent attacks, including that at Rietfontein, on the Botswana border, hundreds of miles from Angola, and has hinted that this might furnish an excuse for yet another South African incursion into Angola.

These points bear out the arguments in Clarkson's concluding paragraphs, which indicate the need for anti-imperialists to support the continuation of SWAPO's struggle, to expose the realities of the situation in Southern Africa today and to campaign against Britain's bloody and plunderous role in the sub-continent.

In solidarity
Tessa Black
North London

* This letter has been shortened

Meetings



Activities

BRADFORD REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

POWER PREPARING FOR POWER

A series of discussions of current problems

Wednesday 4 April

Why can't Labour fight the Tories?

Wednesday 11 April

Why is racism a problem for the working class?

Wednesday 18 April

What is communism?

All at Central Library, Princes Way, 7.30 pm

Baby sitting available: contact RCP, c/o 6, Edmund St, Bradford 7

GLASGOW REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

Making sense of the Irish War



Tuesday 17 April

Withdrawal Problems – Britain and Ireland
Sabena Norton

Tuesday 1 May

Ireland's freedom fighters – from Wolfe Tone to Bobby Sands
Mike Wall

Tuesday 15 May

Orange sectarianism in Glasgow and Belfast
Mike Wall

Tuesday 29 May

The fight for solidarity in Britain
Alex Fraser

All at Committee Rooms
Queen Margaret Union

University Avenue
Glasgow 7 pm

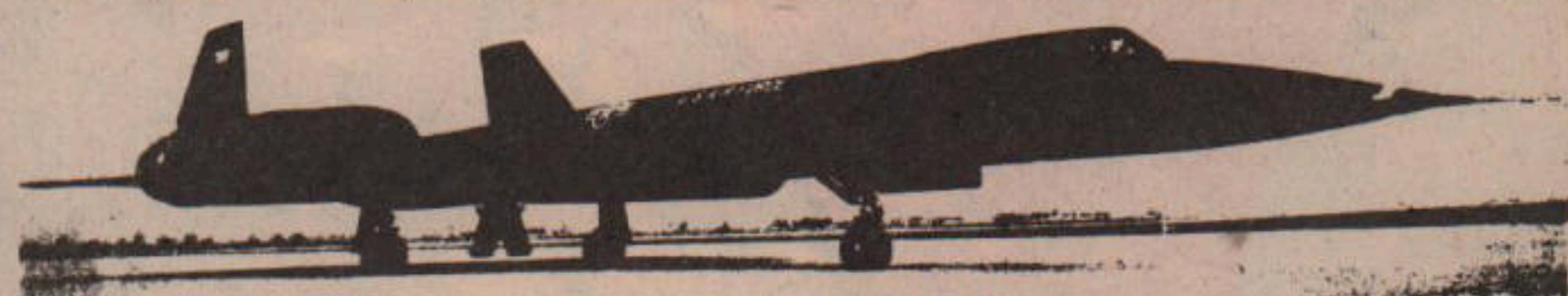
for Afia Begum

Dudu Pukwana

BENEFIT

Saturday 14 April 8pm till late
Caxton House, 129 St Johns St,
London N19
Archway 8

HANDS OFF!



The last two in a series of five forums to discuss what drives the Western aggressors and how Western aggression is driving the Third World towards destruction. Every Tuesday at 7.30 pm, Room 1F, Polytechnic of Central London, Bolsover Street, WC1 (Goudge Street tube)

3 April **The Allies fall out:** the Western Alliance breaks up

10 April **Who elected Ronald Reagan as world policeman?:** American imperialism and the Third World War

Women's liberation



LIVERPOOL

Thursday 19 April 1pm
Women and peace
Kate Marshall
Guildhall Room
Liverpool University

BIRMINGHAM

Thursday 26 April 7.30pm
Women and Health
Revolutionary doctor speaks
Digbeth Civic Hall,
Digbeth

NORTH LONDON

Wednesday 11 April 7.30pm
Prostitution in Camden:
kerb crawlers or

council cuts?

Carolyn Price
Prince Albert Pub,
Wharfedale Road N1

SOUTH LONDON

Wednesday 4 April 7.30 pm
Women and the miners' strike:
Miners' wives speak out
St Matthew's Meeting Place
Brixton Hill

SHEFFIELD

Wednesday 4 April 1pm
Lobby Sheffield City Council:
No to Labour's freeze on
nursery provision!

MAY DAY RALLY

Tuesday 1 May 6.10pm
Central Library, 2 Finsbury Crescent,
off Holloway Road, near
Highbury corner
Highbury or Holloway Road 8



Stalls – Food – Music – Militant Miners Speak
Celebrate Workers' Day with the Revolutionary Communist Party!

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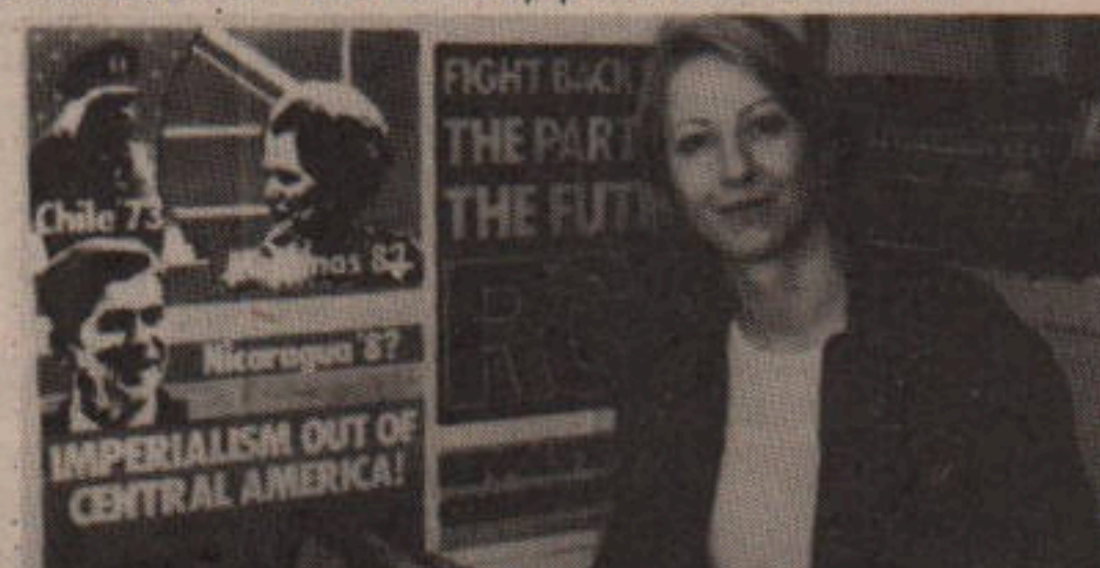
Send to Junius Publications, BCM JP Ltd, London WC1N 3XX

Join the RCP

If you would like to join the Revolutionary Communist Party or would like to know more about our activities, publications and politics please write to:

The General Secretary
BM RCP
London WC1N 3XX
or phone
01-274 3951

Kate Marshall will
answer all enquiries
by return of post



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PREPARING FOR POWER 1984

Preparing for Power is a week-long series of talks, discussions, debates, films and fun organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party. It will be held at the Polytechnic of Central London from Friday 13 July to Friday 20 July.

Preparing for Power kicks off at 7pm Friday 13 July with a choice of four sessions. Saturday brings a full agenda, with more than a dozen sessions looking at workers' struggles around the world. The weekend will conclude with a full session on the theme — is revolution possible in Britain? (Yes)

Education

The week continues with a dozen courses, each with its own convenor and a series of daily meetings. The idea is to build up a lively discussion and a well-rounded grasp of the subject within each group:

- Introduction to Marxism
 - Problems of everyday life
 - Making sense of the USSR
 - Fighting racism
 - Marxist economics
 - Sex and class: women's oppression
 - Problems of the British revolution
 - Ireland — myth and reality
 - Imperialism in the eighties
 - Inside America
 - The remaking of the British working class
 - Investigating the world economy
- Every afternoon we will be having sessions of general interest, such as
- Women and fascism
 - The General Strike
 - Confessions of a frustrated artist
 - The Chartists
 - Fighting unemployment
 - Gramsci and his followers
 - The Tory Party today
 - Marxism and religion

There will also be special evening sessions, history, art and literature, film shows and debates with political personalities.

Entertainment

- Dance to the music laid on by Ace Evans and his revolutionary sound system
- Is football counter-revolutionary?
- Communist critics assess George Orwell, William Morris, Alexandra Kollontai and Berthold Brecht.
- Communist cabaret, revolutionary 'Mastermind', and what their papers say
- The Great Debate: watch this space
- Final rally and a River Thames boat trip

We are also organising a football competition, video shows, swimming, a fully equipped crèche, hot meals at reasonable prices and free accommodation in London.

If you would like a copy of the brochure send 30p (refundable) to the address below, or send in now for your ticket. Make cheques payable to RCP Association, send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

	All week	Weekend
Employed/Student	12.00	5.00
UB40/Unwaged	8.00	3.00

For more details call Kate Marshall on 01-274 3951.

PREPARING FOR POWER 1984

FRIDAY 13 JULY — FRIDAY 20 JULY
POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL
LONDON, NEW CAVENDISH STREET,
LONDON W1