

tms
the next step

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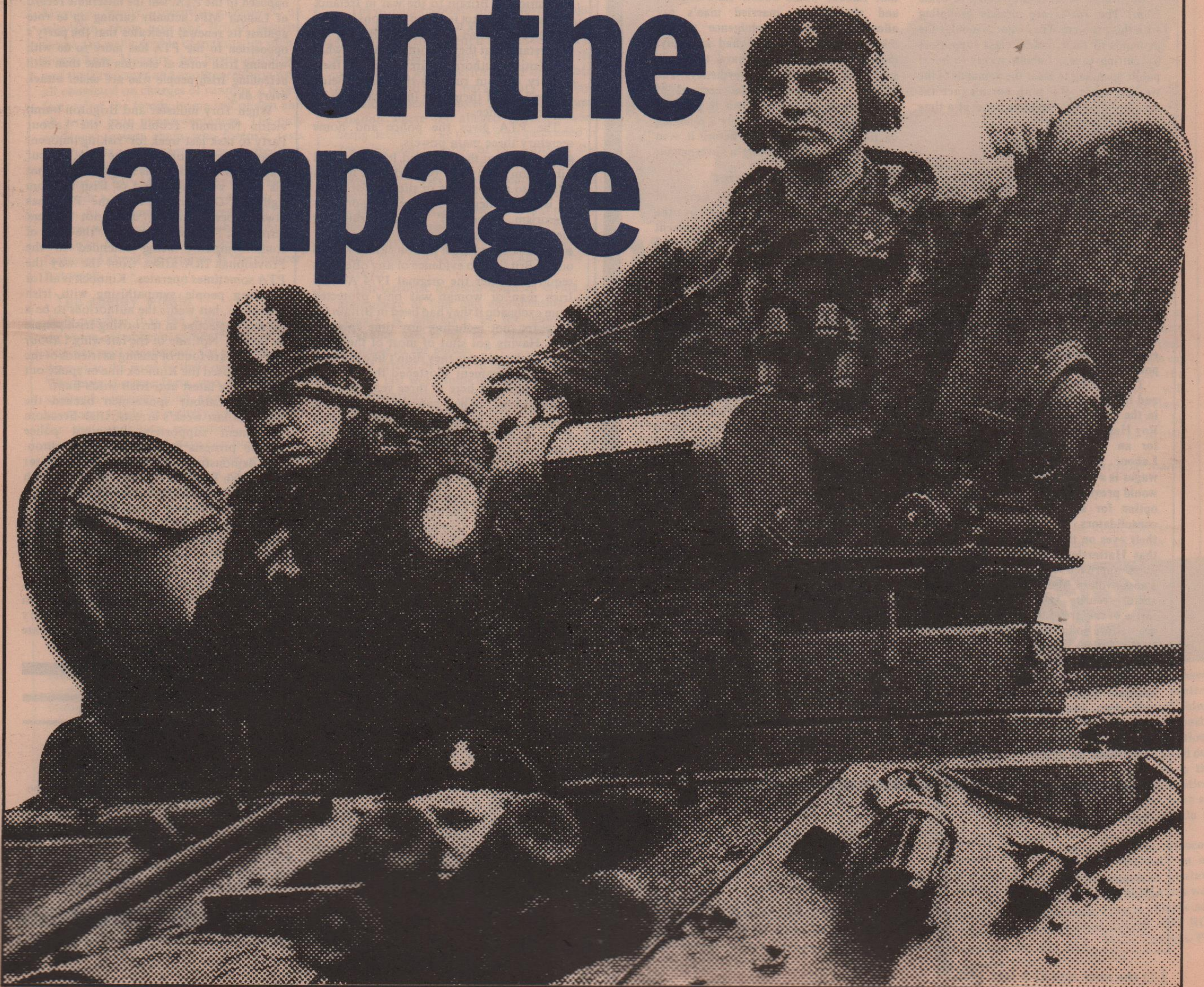
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A joint police-army operation at Heathrow airport followed a week of media panic about IRA bombers. The establishment is whipping up anti-terrorist hysteria to justify further police and military interference in British society.

British terrorists on the rampage



A new partnership

'A new partnership — a new Britain' is the title of the joint Labour Party-TUC policy statement published this week. It proposes a partnership between 'a Labour government and working people' with the aim of giving the country 'a new sense of common purpose'.

With up to two years to go before the next general election the particular policy proposals in Labour's latest programme are of little consequence. The general drift of the new document is to replace specific promises to the working class with bland generalities to reassure middle class public opinion. The core of the old alternative economic strategy has now been openly abandoned. Import controls, controls on the export of capital, large-scale reflation, planning agreements, and shopping lists for nationalisation are all out. Opposition to the EEC and the IMF is also toned down and there is no undertaking to repeal Tory anti-union laws. Labour's emphasis is on 'the widest possible cooperation at home and abroad'.

Yet the Labour Party still promises a radical change from the current direction of Tory government policy. It offers 'an immediate and substantial programme of public investment and repair'. The new document declares that the first priority for a Labour government would be to create jobs, 'boost production and create wealth'.

But where is the money going to come from? The Tories are already grappling with this problem. They want to indulge the demands of their middle class supporters by cutting taxes. Labour wants to boost public spending to meet the demands of the working class. But both parties face the problem of financing their plans at a time of deep recession.

Limited options

'In other words', concludes the influential London Business School's latest forecast, 'there is no scope for tax cuts unless much tighter control is maintained on public spending and wages, or the pace of privatisation is significantly increased.' The cabinet is divided over proposals for further austerity measures. 'Radicals', like Nigel Lawson and Nicholas Ridley, want cuts in taxes — and drastic cuts in jobs and services to pay for them. 'Consolidators' — the Tory wets — are fearful of the electoral consequences of such drastic policies (see page 5).

The Labour Party too has its radicals and its consolidators. Making the running in the radical camp is shadow chancellor Roy Hattersley with his often repeated call for an incomes policy under the next Labour government. Cutting workers' wages is a traditional Labour policy and it would provide the most likely fund-raising option for a Kinnock government. The consolidators, like the Tory wets, have their eyes on the opinion polls. They fear that Hattersley's explicitly anti-working class approach will alienate traditional Labour voters. Michael Meacher, Labour's social security spokesman, is representative of this trend. He offers compassionate welfare policies as Labour's alternative to the Tories.

But how does Meacher propose to finance Labour's caring policies? His usual response is to plead that all the answers are still deep inside the Walworth Road computer. When put under pressure he concedes that Labour's approach will be to redistribute the burden through the existing

social security and taxation system. But this leads Labour straight back to the problem summed up by the London Business School. There is no scope for spending more (either in tax concessions or welfare benefits) without cutting more. Meacher blunders on, but he is continually getting tied in knots as a result of this basic contradiction in Labour's policy.

Take the issue of housing. Meacher recently suggested that one way of raising revenues to provide extra benefits for the needy would be to abolish mortgage tax relief, which disproportionately favours middle class people. Yet even this modest suggestion for redistribution caused a storm of protest. It was immediately denounced by a Labour leadership desperate to win middle class votes. Meacher and the Labour leadership were then outflanked on the left by the report of a prestigious housing body made up of bishops, academics and bankers and headed by the Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke's committee called for mortgage relief to be abolished and the funds to be diverted into investment in new and improved housing. In its quest for respectability Labour has become more moderate than the royal family.

When Meacher criticised the Tories' announcement of cuts in child benefits last week, they had a ready reply. Whatever happened to Meacher's earlier proposals that Labour would double child benefits and abolish the married man's tax allowance, another indulgence to the middle classes? Meacher had no reply: these modest measures have too been sacrificed to electoral expediency. The Labour Party used to be accused of betraying its promises when it got into office. Kinnock's Labour Party is reneging on its promises two years before it even gets the chance of forming a government.

The capitalist barrier

The barrier that limits the scope of government policy is imposed by the capitalist system. No capitalist government can avoid the restrictions dictated by the crisis of capitalist profitability. Capital will be invested in British industry and jobs created only when profitability is restored. The only way profitability can be restored is by cutting back the burden of public spending on private profit, smashing effective trade unionism and holding down wages. As long as crisis-ridden British capitalism defines the horizons of the economic policy debate, the working class will have to pay the price. The whole debate from Tory right to Labour left is about sharing out money that can only be raised by brutalising the working class.

This is why Labour's partnership is out of the question for the working class. There can be no 'sense of common purpose' between workers and a system that can only survive by impoverishing and oppressing them. For the working class unity is only possible *against* the capitalist system, not with it.

This is the fundamental difference in approach between the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Labour Party. Our objective is to create a 'sense of common purpose' among workers about getting rid of the capitalist system. Beginning to forge this sense of common purpose is the central aim of our Preparing for Power conference which opens on 19 July (see page 12).



Smash the PTAI: Irish Freedom Movement protest at Paddington Green last week

Prevention of Terrorism Act A witch-hunter's charter

When Britain's political police swooped on Irish communities during last week's 'IRA bomb blitz' scare, they were following a well-established pattern of terrorising the Irish in Britain under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The 24 men and women arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act last week brought the total number of PTA detentions close to 6000 since the Act was introduced in November 1974. The vast majority have been Irish. Of those 6000, only around 170 (three per cent) have ever been charged with committing or conspiring to commit an offence under the PTA. The rest have just been held, interrogated and released.

The PTA has been used to silence opposition in Britain to the war in Ireland. The aim of the Act is not to get convictions, but to get Irish people in Britain to understand that they cannot talk about what the British authorities are doing to their country without running the risk of being dragged out of their beds in the early hours by armed police.

The PTA gives the police and home secretary three main powers.

- Proscription: the IRA and Irish National Liberation Army are banned, and it is an offence to raise money or support for them. It is also illegal to raise support for 'terrorism in general'. Usually, this just means being Irish.

- Exclusion: any Irish person can be kicked out of Britain. No evidence of any offence is required. Under the original 1974 Act, an Irish man or woman was only protected from exclusion if they had lived in Britain for 20 years (not including any time spent in jail). Having got shot of most of the long-term Irish residents they didn't like the look of, the government shortened the required period of living here to three years in 1984.

- Detention: police can detain 'terrorist suspects' for 48 hours without charging them or allowing them legal advice. The detention can be extended up to seven days on the nod from the home secretary. Irish detainees have been subjected to mental and physical torture. Some have been driven to suicide by the shattering experience of interrogation, as Irishman Leo O'Neill was in May 1984. PTA detainees have no right to remain silent: three people detained last week have been charged with 'withholding information about terrorist offences'.

The broader aim of the PTA is to convince British people that every Irish man or woman should be suspected of criminal activity. The authorities have tried to insulate British politics from the ideas of Irish freedom by portraying Irish people in Britain as a community of mad bombers.

Neighbours and workmates of Irish people raided by gun-toting police are left in no doubt that the victims are 'terrorists'. The circus of road blocks, SAS men on courthouse roofs and armed police convoys which accompanies PTA arrests gets the same message across.

The authorities back up the PTA with all manner of propaganda devices to popularise the suspicion that the Irish family down the road could well be murderous outlaws. Last week the gutter press claimed that police had discovered a list of 'IRA sleepers' who were 'living ordinary lives' around Britain. The mysterious 'chancer' behind the supposed

summer bombing campaign was said to be acquainted with Gerard Tuite, an IRA volunteer who escaped from Brixton jail in 1980. When Tuite was on the run, police warned the British public that he was 'a master of disguise' — in other words, he could be anybody you meet with an Irish accent.

The PTA has succeeded in making Irish republicanism illegal in Britain, and allowing the right wing to monopolise debate on the Irish War. One reason for this success has been the lack of any real opposition from the British labour movement.

A Labour government introduced the Act in 1974. Since 1983 Labour has been formally opposed to the PTA. But the miserable record of Labour MPs actually turning up to vote against its renewal indicates that the party's opposition to the PTA has more to do with winning Irish votes at election time than with defending Irish people who are under attack every day.

When Tory minister and Brighton bomb victim Norman Tebbit took the Labour Party to task last week for 'risking innocent people's lives' by opposing the PTA, Labour leader Neil Kinnock was quick to deny that his party was any friend of Irish freedom fighters. 'Our criticism of the PTA has always been that it does not prevent terrorism,' insisted Kinnock, 'the risk of some sympathy being extended to the Provisional IRA arises from the way the PTA sometimes operates.' Kinnock is all for stopping people sympathising with Irish liberation, but wants the authorities to be a bit more selective in terrorising Irish people in Britain. Not one of the left-wing Labour MPs who are fond of posing as friends of the Irish opposed the Kinnock line or spoke out against the latest anti-Irish witch-hunt.

While Labour spokesmen backed the police in last week's arrests, Irish Freedom Movement supporters organised police station protests in London and Brighton. The demonstrations aimed to make it clear that 'Irish freedom fighters are not British criminals', and to challenge the authorities' attempts to brand every Irish man and woman as a threat to the British public. We oppose Britain's anti-terrorist laws because we reject the idea that those who fight for Irish freedom are terrorists to be hunted. The aim of our demonstration in London on 10 August is to build a movement which can dismantle the PTA and the whole machinery of legal repression which the British state uses to keep the Irish down.

DEMONSTRATE

IN LONDON ON 10 AUGUST

- TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!
- PRISONERS OUT OF JAIL!

Assemble 1pm, march from Jubilee Gardens to Brixton, followed by rally BR/Tube: Waterloo
Organised by the IRISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT
Further details from BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX, or ring Carol Taggart on 01-729 0414

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ACTION

IRA 'seaside bombing campaign'

Why Britain needs a terrorist bomb plot

Not to be outdone by the USA's hostage crisis in Lebanon, Britain has launched its own campaign of anti-terrorist hysteria. The pretext is the round-up of an alleged IRA active service unit and the exposure of a supposed plot to bomb 12 seaside resorts over the summer holiday season. The object is to create wider public sympathy for measures of state repression in Britain and in Ireland.

We'll never know the truth of the allegations that followed the arrests of a number of Irish people in Glasgow on 22 June. According to the police this led to the discovery of a bomb in the Rubens Hotel in central London and a wave of arrests in Scotland, Blackpool and Brighton. The police claim to have prevented the seaside bombing plans and to have discovered an arms and explosives cache in Glasgow. For a week the press speculated that the police had smashed the IRA unit responsible for every bombing in Britain over the past five years, not to mention kidnappings and jailbreaks in Ireland. Last weekend the police finally charged Patrick Magee with responsibility for the Brighton bombing that killed five senior Tories during last October's party conference. Magee and five others were also charged with conspiring to cause explosions this year.

The whole story could easily be a fabrication. The details of the case of the Maguire family, recently publicised on television, show how the British security forces are well capable of making up such a story. Anne Maguire, her husband Patrick and their two sons and another relation were all convicted on charges of running 'a bomb factory' at the family home in London and all served long prison sentences. The only evidence against them was forensic tests which have subsequently been discredited. The family is still campaigning — with the support of Tory MPs, members of the House of Lords and the churches — to clear their name. At the time of their arrest in 1974 the papers were full of tales about 'Auntie Annie's bomb kitchen' just as they fantasised about the exploits of 'the chancer' last week.

The enemy within

It is possible that the police have picked up some republican sympathisers or even activists, and dreamed up the seaside plot to dramatise the issue to their own advantage. Whatever the true facts, two things can be said with certainty. First, a seaside bombing campaign would be entirely out of character for the republican movement. The only seaside town the IRA have ever bombed was Brighton and that attack was evidently directed at senior members of the Tory Party, not at holidaymakers on the resort's famous beaches. Republican bombing campaigns in Britain have been generally directed at political or military targets — army barracks, pubs used by soldiers, regimental displays in central London.

The second point is that while seaside bombs would be a bizarre move for the IRA, a terrorist scare campaign of the sort we have seen over the past week is entirely typical of the British establishment.

Christmas in London would not be the same without a major police exercise alerting all shoppers to the danger of IRA bombs, with identikit pictures of wanted terrorists and warnings about suspicious packages. And what do the same ordinary people who go shopping at Christmas do in the summer? They go on holiday — to places like Blackpool, Torquay, Bournemouth, Great Yarmouth, and all the other places on the IRA's supposed 'summer blitz' hit list. What better focus for a summer terrorist bomb scare?

The aim of the anti-terrorist hysteria is to turn every Briton into a policeman and every Irish person into a terrorist. The message of all the carefully staged police press conferences and briefings is to make



It's all done by mirrors: police theatricals keep up the anti-terrorist hysteria

everybody British feel that they must be on the look out for IRA bombs and IRA bombers. It is well known that sniffer dogs and listening devices are useless at finding concealed explosives in large buildings. Yet every news bulletin for days was padded out with theatrical displays of police searches and dogs sniffing around hotel rooms. 'Don't panic' senior police officers exhorted the public, just make sure there's no bomb under the bed in your holiday hotel.

The official response to the mortal danger of the Irish liberation struggle to the British state is to try to present it as a grave threat to every individual British citizen. This is the object of the whole performance of the hotel searches and the paramilitary displays around police stations in Glasgow and London where the alleged terrorists were being detained. The media even succeeded in dragging that symbol of the unity of the British people — the Queen — into the bomb scare. Her majesty made clear her courageous determination to go ahead with a visit to Great Yarmouth in several months time. The message was clear — the IRA was the enemy of all the British people against which they had to be vigilant and united in defiance.

Anti-terrorist hysteria helps to create an atmosphere of fear and apprehension. This climate is conducive to the government extending the range of repressive powers available to the police.

The arrival of police in tanks at Heathrow airport last week sums up the trend towards the militarisation of civilian life in modern Britain. The recent joint police/army operation against hippies at Stonehenge was another illustration of the repressive methods which anti-terrorist hysteria helps to make widely acceptable.

The object of the heightened public awareness of the dangers of terrorism is not merely the IRA, but every Irish person in Britain. The message of the media is that anybody with an Irish accent could be an IRA terrorist. Any Irish person who speaks out against the British occupation of Ireland must certainly be under suspicion of sheltering a bomb factory or at least of harbouring terrorists. Spreading the idea that the IRA is planning to blow up ordinary British people at random helps to justify whatever measures the British government wants to introduce to tighten its grip over its oldest colony.

It is not necessary to look far to explain why now is such a good time for an anti-IRA campaign in Britain. The republican movement has scored a number of successes since its spectacular attack on the Grand Hotel in Brighton last October. Sinn Féin won 59 seats in local councils in Northern Ireland in May and more in the South last week.

The IRA has renewed its military attacks on the armed forces in Northern Ireland with devastating effect in recent weeks. It has launched mortar and bomb attacks on police and army posts in Newry and South

Armagh killing a total of 19 RUC officers. A wave of anti-IRA hysteria in Britain will provide useful cover for the joint RUC/SAS

FOR IRISH FREEDOM



No to British terror!

THE BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT has closed ranks against the IRA. In the House of Commons last week Margaret Thatcher fulsomely congratulated the police. They had prevented 'a disaster which was calculated to maim and kill many innocent people at seaside resorts'. Neil Kinnock echoed the prime minister's praise for the police. He congratulated their 'remarkable detective work and the success they have achieved against the Provisional IRA'. He declared that 'the whole nation had cause to be thankful'.

The unity of the British establishment against the IRA shows how seriously the ruling class takes the threat from the Irish liberation movement. The British authorities recognise that the movement for Irish freedom threatens the break-up of the United Kingdom and is a grave threat to the integrity of the British state itself. This is why they are so concerned to unite the British people against the IRA and in support of any measures the British state may require to deal with it.

When the British establishment closes ranks against the Irish struggle it is a crucial moment for those in Britain whose interests run counter to the British state to stand up in solidarity with the Irish fight for freedom. We support the republican movement in its fight for a united and independent Ireland free from British occupation or interference. We support this struggle irrespective of the particular tactics that the movement follows, whether these are the methods of the ballot box or the armalite. We do not withdraw our support in response to the anti-Irish prejudices of the British media.

We unequivocally reject the chauvinist hysteria of the current anti-terrorist panic.

shoot-to-kill squads to go into operation against the nationalist communities which support the republican movement. They have killed almost 70 people in the past five years and may be expected to be in action again shortly.

Whether the British authorities have really captured an IRA active service unit and what its planned activities were remain a mystery. What is certain is that as long as the British occupation of Ireland continues, the republican movement will continue to fight back against the British state.

Given the intimate relationship of Northern Ireland to Britain within the so-called United Kingdom, it is inevitable that the IRA's military resistance will extend into Britain. It is regrettable that innocent people will die in this as in any form of war. But the responsibility for all the suffering of the Irish War lies squarely with the British terrorists who occupy Ireland and are increasingly displaying their techniques on the streets of Britain.

Mick Kennedy

The British authorities have put on a carefully staged performance to legitimise the build-up and deployment of their repressive apparatus. All the restrictions on democratic rights now justified by the urgency of 'beating the terrorists' will ultimately be used against the working class. The anti-Irish hysteria will inevitably be used to justify further measures of British terror in Ireland.

Our response to the 'IRA terrorists' panic is to demand

- Troops out of Ireland!
- Prisoners out of jail!

These two demands will be to the forefront of the national Irish demonstration on 10 August. Be there!

RCP

The Revolutionary Communist Party is hard up. Setting up a new national centre, launching our weekly paper and publishing more books and pamphlets have seriously stretched our resources. We have ambitious plans for the rest of the year — to extend our national network of branches, build up the circulation of our paper, launch a theoretical journal and publish more books. We have set up a special fund-raising appeal to help us realise our plans.

The RCP gets no money from Moscow, Washington or the GLC. We rely on our readers and supporters to send us whatever they can afford. Our special thanks this week goes to Geraldine from Preston. Please send contributions to Special Appeal, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Make cheques/POs payable to RCP Association.

EVENTS

Labour Party

Reselection: the left retreats

Last week Neil Kinnock denounced the 'sectarians and splitters' who are 'wrecking' the Labour Party. He declared 'there's no place for people like that in our movement'. If he meant that there was no place for socialists in today's Labour Party he was right.

Kinnock wants to clean up Labour's image in preparation for the next election. He has made it clear that the left must learn subservience to the leadership line or get out. Nowhere has this been demonstrated more forcibly than in the reselection process.

The business of reselecting Labour's parliamentary candidates for the next election has so far gone according to Kinnock's plan. More than half of all Labour MPs have been reselected without a hitch. Only one sitting MP — NUM-sponsored Michael McGuire in Makerfield — has been deselected. This was not because of any right-left conflict, but because he failed to support striking miners in the area. The Labour leaders have every reason to be confident that they have already got the left on the run.

Where the left has fielded candidates for selection they have been trounced by moderates. Former radicals who have proved their willingness to toe the Kinnock line, especially in the rate-capping disputes in local councils, have won endorsement as parliamentary candidates in winnable seats. Ken Livingstone has finally achieved his ambition to stand for parliament in Brent East and David Blunkett has been chosen as the candidate for Sheffield Brightside. Elsewhere the 'hard left' has withdrawn its threat to sitting MPs or allowed moderate candidates an easy passage.

The loyal left

The reselection contest has been a nightmare for Militant and a measure of its marginalisation within the party. Militant's James Cameron, widely tipped to win selection in Glasgow Provan, lost by a single vote to Strathclyde regional councillor James Wray. Militant received a second setback in Glasgow Pollock when another Strathclyde councillor James Dunnachie beat its candidate David Churchley. Militant also did badly in East Kilbride. In Brighton Kempton Rod Fitch, who fought and lost the last election as a Militant candidate, was himself deselected.

In Birkenhead right winger Frank Field easily won reselection, after threatening to precipitate a by-election if he lost. Recognising the inevitability of defeat, Militant's prominent Merseyside figures all backed out of the contest. Instead they drafted in Cathy Wilson, whose main distinction was to win the lowest ever vote for the Labour Party in a parliamentary election, as Militant candidate in the Isle of Wight in 1983.

After a spate of damaging attacks, Militant's reselection defeats seem to confirm Kinnock's boast that the Tendency has been 'licked'. Labour's national executive has launched investigations into all Militant's front organisations, from the youth trade union rights campaign to the South African Labour Education Project. The Welsh and Scottish Labour Parties have taken a hard line against Militant supporters.

The conference of the traditionally left-wing Nupe voted to support the witch-hunt against Militant and other unions have taken a similar stand. Last week's TGWU conference gave Kinnock a standing ovation for his virulent attack on Militant, though it stopped short of approving large-scale expulsions. Yet expulsions are already in full swing. Militant members have been kicked out in the Rhondda, Mansfield, Newcastle East, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Warley West.

The rout of the left goes further than Militant. Other left-wing challengers have fared just as badly in the reselection polls. Striking miner Graham Skinner was an early

casualty of Labour's quest for respectability. In March he was ousted from the reselection battle by working miners in Sherwood Labour Party. In another mining constituency, Barnsley Central, right winger Roy Mason easily defeated a left winger despite the challenger's vigorous denials that he had any association with Militant. Hard left candidate John Nicholson backed down from challenging Gerald Kaufman in Manchester Gorton in favour of local councillor Ken Strath. In Ashton-under-Lyne Bob Sheldon beat off a tough challenge from local left winger Paul Stonier.

The response of the left to the leadership offensive is to play safe, keep its head down and not rock the boat. Militant is so keen to prove its loyalty to Kinnock that it has joined Peter Shore and the national executive in a witch-hunt of left wingers in Bethnal Green and Stepney Labour Party.

Last month Ian Allett, an active Militant supporter and vice-chair of the constituency party, proposed a motion to suspend three leading left wingers from the general management committee and from their positions as officers in Holy Trinity ward. The eight Militant members on the committee and two supporters of the Socialist Organiser bulletin, including Tower Hamlets councillor Sue Carlyle, all

voted for the suspensions.

The official reason for the suspension of Michaels Chalkley, Phillip Cunningham and Geoff Cade is that they produced a ward newsletter depicting Kinnock, Shore and TUC chief Norman Willis stabbing a striking miner in the back. The leaflet accused the labour leaders of being traitors to the miners' cause. But Chalkley and the others are adamant that the real reason for their suspension is their consistent stand against racism in the party and their long-running campaign against Shore.

Militant pushed for the suspensions to win approval from Shore and stave off any threat to its own organisation. 'There was a motion calling for us to be expelled,' explains Chalkley, 'Militant couldn't be seen to favour expulsions, but they proposed the next best thing.' He says that Allett's speech 'brought together the left, the right and the racists and we were finished'. Cunningham agrees: 'Militant are scared stiff of being expelled themselves and therefore they are going to jump through every hoop for the leadership'. His view is that Militant is saying to Shore 'how about this, will this save us?' The consequence of Militant's manoeuvring in Tower Hamlets is to make the seat safe for Shore by undermining any challenge from the left.

The left's collapse in the reselection stakes is symptomatic of its broader retreat before the leadership offensive. Militant is prepared to take everything that Kinnock throws at it without a fight. Militant leaders still proclaim that they would keep faith with Labour even if it was purged from the party. Such humility is the defining characteristic of an organisation which, as Kinnock explained, is incapable of building its own party independent of Labour.

Militant is not completely isolated. The Socialist Workers' Party now devotes pages of its newspaper to sucking up to its old rival. *Socialist Worker* faithfully reproduces Militant's apologies for the anti-working class policies of Liverpool council. It urges Militant supporters to link up with the SWP to build a socialist alternative to Kinnock and the right.

Militant's subservience to the Labour machine renders it incapable of defending the working class. The SWP's defence of Militant exposes its inability to forge a real alternative to the Labour left. For the SWP the priority is to protect Militant's position in the Labour Party. But the real priority is to protect the working class against a party that is prepared to make any concession to the system to get back into office.

Joan Phillips

RATE-CAPPING

The game's up



While Ted Knight prays for a miracle, the RCP's Jean Smith (above) is fighting for a change in the GLC by-election in Vauxhall

THIS WEEK LAMBETH council leader Ted Knight faces the collapse of his campaign against rate-capping and the threat of surcharge and disqualification from public office for carrying on the campaign so far in defiance of the law.

Everybody knows that the Tories are determined to cut jobs and services in local government. But the real problem — and the

cause of Knight's predicament — is the politics of the Labour Party. 'We are confident that we can take the fight forward,' Knight told a 'who dares wins' conference against rate-capping 10 days ago. He then admitted that 'we have no majority in the council chamber to carry on the fight'. This sort of doublespeak has become the hallmark of Labour's rate-capping

campaign.

Labour left wingers have adopted defiant postures against the government. But the commitment of the Labour Party to the principles of capitalist administration in local government and to respect for the wider authority of the capitalist law has ensured that the defiant councils have given in to the government. In every rate-capped council right wingers, or left wingers moving to the right, have taken the responsibility for asserting capitalist principles and calling a halt to the left's anti-rate-capping postures. The fact that, at the end of the day (and even fairly early in the day in many cases), the left goes along with these principles doomed the rate-capping campaign from the start.

Knight is the most left-wing council leader in Britain. But as a Labour council leader he has administered the affairs of Lambeth council along capitalist lines. He insists that the Labour council is committed to maintaining jobs and services. Yet Lambeth council has cut jobs by maintaining hundreds of unfilled vacancies as a matter of policy and raised rates by nearly 300 per cent. 'Do you think you can opt out of the capitalist system?' Knight demanded of one critic of this policy. 'If you do you must be living in a fantasy world,' he fumed. The notion that you can fight the cuts without opting out of running the system prevails in the fantasy world inhabited by the Labour left.

Last November Knight outlined rate-capping tactics at a meeting of Labour councillors. He told them that they had to give Tory minister Patrick Jenkin the impression that they were prepared to go 'to the brink' even though everybody knew they were prepared to go no further. The idea was that this would force the Tories to make concessions. In the event Jenkin called their bluff and has been laughing all the way to the abolition of the GLC ever since. Knight's decision to go over the brink personally and face legal action is consistent with the gesture politics of the whole rate-capping campaign. It will be little use to council workers and tenants whose resistance to the cuts has been confused and demoralised by the antics of left Labour councils.

Knight tried to console his supporters last week that all they could do was 'pray for a miracle'. While Knight prays for divine intervention, Jean Smith and the RCP are fighting the cuts. Vote RCP in the Vauxhall GLC by-election on 11 July.

The Conservative dilemma



Can she save British capitalism and the Tory Party?

The Tories are having a hard time. The government has lost its sense of direction and all the opinion polls show Thatcher's growing unpopularity. The Tories' problem is that every measure they take to salvage the British economy makes them even more unpopular with voters.

After six years in government Thatcher has begun to lack conviction and credibility. The Tories' repeated claim that the government has halted Britain's economic decline and started to build the foundations for prosperity lacks plausibility. Falling living standards, cuts in services and restrictions on civil liberties have created a general sense of unease. Insecurity about the future is now widespread and even those with jobs fear the consequences of government policies.

Even traditional Tory voters are beginning to doubt the wisdom of the government's course of action. Small businessmen are angry about the burden of taxation, interest rates and rates levied by local councils. Teachers, doctors, university lecturers, top civil servants and scientists have all protested against government policy. Many Tory supporters feel that Thatcher is going too far.

History has been unkind to Margaret Thatcher. Her government faces electoral difficulties despite a fine record of achievement on behalf of the British ruling class.

By any standards the Tories have scored some notable victories over their opponents. Thatcher's biggest success has been in disciplining the trade union movement. The Tories have changed all the rules of industrial relations and pushed through harsh anti-union laws. They have even managed to get many union leaders to accept their 'new realism'.

Thatcher's second achievement has been in dominating public opinion. She has come out on top in every important debate. The Tories have always managed to retain the political initiative over the opposition parties. Leading SDP theoretician David Marquand recently conceded that the government still faces no political alternative. As he put it, 'Mrs Thatcher's opponents have not yet made a coherent intellectual appeal'.

The Tories' third achievement has been in

re-educating the other parties. The Labour Party in particular has been forced to make one concession after another to Tory pressure. New Labour Party policies on issues from the sale of council houses to defence all bear the Tory stamp of approval. Having set the terms of political debate, the Tories are now able to influence Labour Party policy. Labour's emphasis on moderation and its purge of Militant are direct responses to Tory criticism.

Unfortunately for the Tories, their considerable achievements cannot hide a fatal flaw. The success of government action against the trade unions and the opposition parties stands in sharp contrast to its failure to solve the problems of the British economy.

The government has not been able to resolve the crisis of British capitalism. Indeed since 1979 the decline of British capitalism has accelerated. The manufacturing base of the economy has continued to stagnate and Britain has become more reliant on its service sector. The government is now beginning to lose the battle against inflation, once its major claim to economic success.

Thatcher's economic policies have not failed because of any lack of effort on the part of government ministers. They have done everything that the capitalist class has demanded and their policies have been the only option from a capitalist point of view. The problem is that there are no policies that can solve the crisis of British capitalism. Britain's economic disintegration is simply out of the government's control.

Take the problem of the money supply. A key component of the Conservative government's monetarist philosophy was to curb the money supply. Yet the money supply has ignored the government's good intentions and continued to grow. Bank lending in particular has caused chaos for the treasury. Today the monetarist philosophy is all but forgotten and the attempt to control the money supply has been quietly abandoned.

The only area of the economy which the government can directly influence is state expenditure. Thatcher has been ruthless in cutting spending on public services. But despite the cuts, overall state spending has not been reduced. The government has been forced to sell valuable assets like British

Telecom just to balance the books.

The proposals in Norman Fowler's review of the social security system are certainly going to hit the working class. People relying on state benefits will suffer even greater hardships. Yet the savings made by Fowler's proposals will make little impression on the government's total welfare bill. Penny-pinching cuts will be outweighed by the billions required to maintain a whole generation on the dole.

The Tories know that they will have to go much further than Fowler if they are to reduce public spending substantially. They will have to cut benefits further, shake out tens of thousands of jobs in the public sector and reduce the real wages of the rest. But this strategy is bound to be unpopular with voters. The current cabinet revolt led by John Biffen and Peter Walker against treasury proposals to cut taxes is an attempt to limit the electoral damage resulting from ruling class economic policy.

Government ministers may argue over the details of particular policies, but they have no choice but to carry on with their crusade to save British capitalism.

Yet Thatcher can no longer avoid these policies becoming an electoral liability. As the recession demands more and more drastic measures even middle class people are now wondering whether they might be the next victims of Thatcher's axe.

Despite the appeals of the Tory wets to go easy the government has little room to manoeuvre. Thatcher's harsh economic policies are the only ones available to any government that wants to manage the capitalist system. The government is limited to making the occasional gesture to appease its critics. To win votes in Thursday's by-election at Brecon and Radnor the government agreed to drop its plans to close a local hospital and a military training camp and to pay up to rebuild a crumbling school. This sort of selective generosity might help the Tories in one by-election, but it only underlines the fact that the government lacks the policies to win a general election.

Thatcher's remaining hope of re-election is the weakness of the opposition. Her growing unpopularity has not been matched by any corresponding increase in public enthusiasm for Kinnock, Owen or Steel. Both Labour and the Alliance have gained in the polls because millions of people are fed up with the Tories. Their advance has little to do with the appeal of their alternative policies. The fact that the opposition parties lack realistic alternatives means that, despite their unpopularity, the Tories may still win the next election.

The Tories' difficulty is our opportunity. The disarray of the Tory cabinet is a reflection of the inability of the capitalist class to manage its system. Thatcher's personal unpopularity is in reality the unpopularity of capitalist solutions to the crisis. Instead of just pointing the finger at Thatcher, workers should direct their anger against the system she represents. The Tories sense that they have lost their grip. All that remains to be done is to take everything out of their hands.

Frank Richards



THE PROPAGANDA WAR

Neil & Tony

Leon Brittan was certain that the bill represented 'the morality of the terrorist and revolutionary'. David Steel agreed, adding that it was 'an indication of the other much grimmer face of the Labour Party'. Outraged parliamentary voices across party lines denounced the latest threat to the British way of life.

The bill in question was Tony Benn's Amnesty Bill proposing an official pardon for all miners convicted of offences arising from the 1984-85 strike. It certainly provoked a display of the anti-working class prejudices of our leading parliamentarians. The Tories and the Alliance made clear that they would never agree to a pardon for workers who fought for the right to work. The Labour left's reply was to cite the precedent of 1980 when Lord Soames granted an amnesty to the illegal white racist regime in Zimbabwe. Surely, if the British government could pardon racist murderers then it was not too much to ask forgiveness for striking miners?

It seems that Neil Kinnock was the only one to realise that Benn was joking. Kinnock could confidently reassure the public that 'this bill cannot be taken seriously by anyone'. In fact he could not 'even imagine that it had been drafted with any serious purpose'. Kinnock has seen the funny side of Benn's antics before. A couple of months ago Benn wrote of his 'abiding impression of the growing powerlessness of the House of Commons over key decisions'. That it took Benn 35 years to realise what is obvious to everybody else says a lot about his capacity for self-delusion. But these long years have not impaired his sense of humour. Benn could still keep a straight face as he called for a new Reform Bill to strengthen the authority of parliament.

As long as Benn keeps within the bounds of good taste, Kinnock will not protest too much. While Kinnock gets on with the job of trying to win the election, it is useful to have someone around to keep in touch with working class activists.

Kinnock knows that Benn's gestures count for a lot with those workers who have more or less given up expecting anything from the Labour leadership. Benn's capacity for self-delusion ensures that he can effectively combine his vision of social change with advocating loyalty to the Labour Party. Down at Walworth Road that is much appreciated. It's a harmless charade...unless of course you happen to be a victimised miner.

Kinnock is not the only one to profit from Benn. With Benn as the left's leading figure, the right can come out looking good. Leon Brittan and David Steel use Benn as their straight man. Having acquired a reputation for 'extremism', Benn can be used to make right-wing policies seem acceptable. If Benn's harmless Amnesty Bill can be labelled as 'the morality of the terrorist', then any practical measure that might really benefit the working class can be easily dismissed. That is why Brittan and Steel are always ready to make an issue out of Benn's latest ramblings.

As long as there is a Tony Benn with influence over militants, Brittan and the rest need not lose much sleep. The ruling class would rather have militant miners putting their faith in parliamentary bills than organising on their own. History has shown that fighting for workers' rights through parliament is the most effective way of dissipating class anger. That's why life for Neil Kinnock is unmanageable without Tony Benn.



Why Irish people back the IRA

'You don't have to be hard to hate the Brits'

When the 'IRA terror blitz' headlines hit the British press last weekend, a tns team was in Northern Ireland. Mick Hume reports on how the British occupation forces ordinary Irish men and women to take on the Crown.

Thursday

Passing through Belfast

'Welcome to the Ulster games,' declared the banners strung around Belfast's Aldergrove airport. The British authorities seemed well pleased with their success in persuading stars of track and field like Zola Budd to appear in the city's big athletics meeting. The games, like the

reopening of the Grand Opera House and the New Vic theatre ('we proudly present Frank Carson in "Cinderella"'), help Britain portray Belfast as just another provincial city in the UK. But they cannot disguise how the lives of Irish people are shaped by the real 'Ulster game': the war being fought between the British forces of occupation and the republican fighters for Irish freedom.

'It's been murder here these last few weeks,' Sinn Fein councillor Brendan Curran told us as he waited for somebody in the airport lobby. Before he was elected to Newry and Mourne district council in May, Curran was almost murdered by a British SAS assassination squad.

Since taking his seat he has had to put up with threats and abuse from Unionist councillors infuriated that Irish people should show their hatred for their London overlords by voting republican. Last week the word was that Curran and the other 58 new Sinn Fein councillors were considering wearing bullet-proof vests in the council chambers, to protect them from the Loyalist defenders of 'British democracy'.

These days the authorities pull all kinds of stunts to dress Belfast up as a civilised British city and to hide the reality of the war from prying eyes at home. But without much success. The men dressed in rabbit suits who gambolled about the city last week, handing out leaflets asking you to volunteer to clip the toe nails of the aged and infirm, could no doubt be seen in Birmingham or Glasgow. The troop convoys prowling the streets and the Army base built on top of the Divis flats in nationalist West Belfast could not. Watching an African drum and dance group in the heart of Belfast shopping centre might make you think you were in London's West End. But a walk around the corner, to where workmen were still clearing the debris from the 1000lb IRA bomb which had wrecked Chichester Street days earlier, would soon remind you that you were in occupied Irish territory, not Covent Garden.

You drive out of Belfast along the new 'Westway' motorway extension, which has been used as a convenient excuse for building a 15-foot security wall around staunchly republican areas of the city on the Catholic west side of the 'peace line'. In Belfast, even the roads are part of the British machinery of repression.

Friday

Dining in Derry

Eating dinner in an Irish home in the Bogside district of Derry gives you a crash course in living with British terror. An Army surveillance helicopter hovers directly above the estate. 'That boy's been up there all day,' says our host. 'something must be going off.' Right on cue, two blasts go off on the other side of the city. 'That'll keep the bastards busy,' says somebody. Another member of the family arrives: 'Nobby's been lifted. He's in the Crum.' The news that a young friend of the family has been arrested by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and shipped off to Crumlin Road jail is received with a lot of bitterness, but little surprise. If you live in the nationalist Bogside it's odds-on you'll see the inside of a British jail cell sometime.

Sean MacIlkenny, from another nationalist area of Derry, has seen more than enough of British jails and Loyalist jailers lately. In the last two months his home has been raided six times. Three of the raids have ended up with MacIlkenny detained for a week under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The first time in April, he told us, 'the police knocked my head off for two days. Then I decided to knock one of them back. An Inspector came in and broke up the fight. When I made an official complaint about the beating, two new boys came in and started on me again.'



Family on the front line: Sean MacIlkenny ho third

While Sean MacIlkenny was getting it inside, his pregnant wife Martina was on the receiving end on the outside. The RUC trapped Martina in her home. 'When I asked to go to the toilet they told me to use the fireplace. One of them shoved me hard against the wall. I was five months pregnant then. They put me in hospital for a week and I nearly lost my baby.'

MacIlkenny's biggest worry is the pressure the harassment puts on his family. Every time he's lifted he can't sign on, and their benefit drops £17 to just £27 for Martina and their two children. The British authorities have already torn apart Sean's side of the family. His father is in jail in Britain as one of the Irishmen framed for the Birmingham pub bombings. The last time MacIlkenny tried to visit him was when he was 17: 'They wouldn't let me in because I was a 'security risk'. I don't even bother writing now, the letters just get censored or "lost".'

Now the RUC have told MacIlkenny and two other Derry men that they're going to be shot. His house has already been raided by masked SAS men, but he was out. The Monday before we met them the McIlkennys had woken up to find police marksmen pointing rifles at their bedroom window. Sean MacIlkenny knows that the security forces are quite capable of carrying out their threat. In 1981 he was convicted of membership of the Irish National Liberation Army. In February 1983 his friend, INLA volunteer Neil McMonagle, was shot dead in cold blood by the SAS in the Shantallow district of Derry.

But MacIlkenny is not prepared to go along with police blackmail. 'Every time the RUC lift me they try to get me to sign incriminating statements. But I won't. You just get to hate them so much you'll never give in. It's not a question of being hard. I would never let on to be a hard man. But you don't have to be hard to hate the Brits.'

Irish people in Derry have been hating the Brits since August 1969, when the troops invaded to end the bloody 'Battle of the Bogside', fought between the nationalist community and Loyalist mobs led by armed RUC men. At first the Bogside welcomed the Army as a replacement for the bitterly sectarian police. They soon discovered that only the uniforms of the men raiding their homes and shooting at their children had changed. 'People were marching all over Derry the day the troops came in', one local told us, 'but Jesus they weren't marching the week after.' When they did march it was in protest against the occupation of their city. In 1972 British paratroops replied by gunning down 14 unarmed Irishmen on Derry's Bloody Sunday.

Today the British terror campaign and the Irish liberation war dictate every aspect of Bogside's lives. The struggle decides where you can shop: many boycott a store in 'the Bog' because it refused to close in the community strike that followed the death of republican hunger-striker Bobby Sands in May 1981. It decides where you can work: last week the IRA issued a death threat to contractors building a new RUC station behind security walls in the Loyalist Waterside district. The people of the Bogside thought that was fair enough. 'I'd rather stay on the buroo (dole) than build British jails,' said one. The war even decides which streets you can walk down: 16-year old Fergal McDaid still wears an eye patch where he was shot with a plastic bullet when he and his

girlfriend strolled too close to an RUC squad. Now he has been charged with riotous behaviour to cover up the police barbarity.

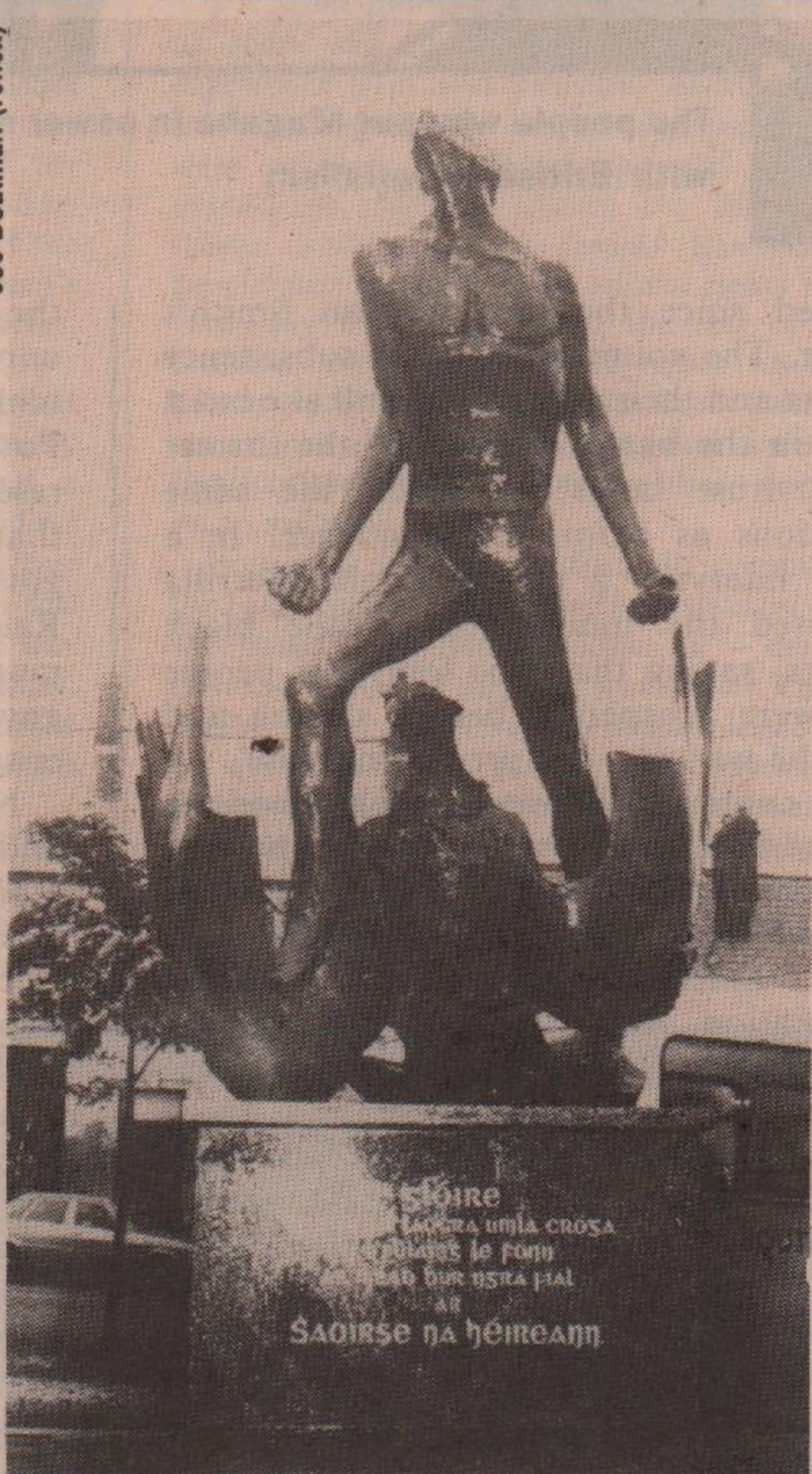
The night McDaid was shot, the Irish people of Derry elected five Sinn Fein councillors. 'We knew what we were voting for,' one told us, 'we were voting for the boys who put that bomb in the courthouse last night.'

Driving through the Border checkpoint on the road from Derry to Buncrana, a British military policeman sticks his head through the car window. 'You from London? This is a funny place to come for a holiday. Still, it's safer here than London. You don't get mugged here. You get hijacked but you don't get mugged. Oh yeah,' he added as an afterthought, 'and sometimes you get killed.' 'If he's worried about getting killed he should get himself back to London and stay there,' said our Irish passenger.

Saturday

South Armagh

British propagandists call the Border area of South Armagh 'bandit country' to conjure up images of bloodthirsty bands of marauding IRA men. But in this stronghold of support for the republican struggle it is the British security forces who have to sneak about like thieves in the night. Driving south towards the Border the roads suddenly become gashed and broken tracks. The British authorities don't bother



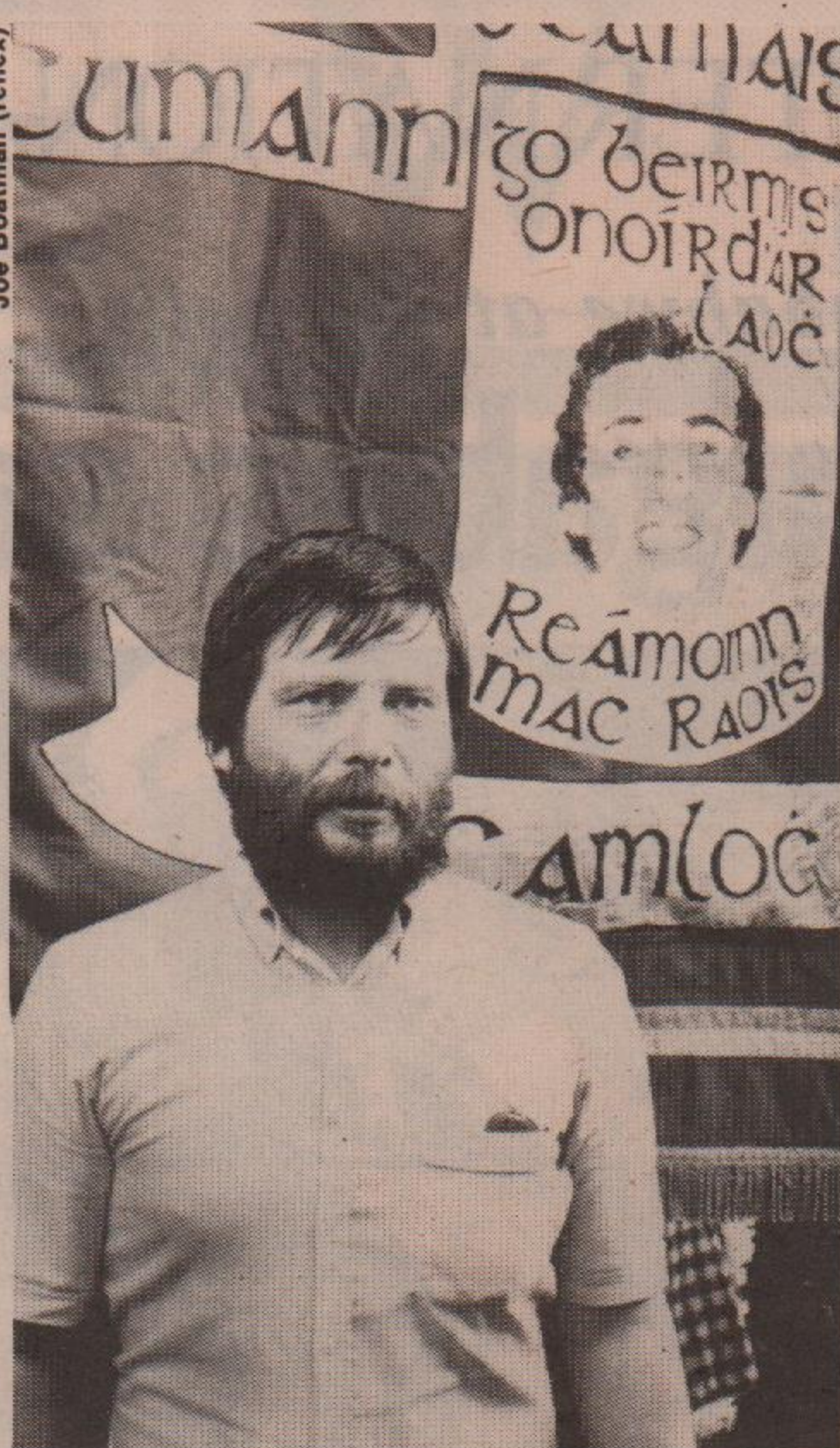
Irish martyrs' memorial, Crossmaglen

repairing them because the Army is too scared to use them. Here the British move everything by helicopter. The Army base at Bessbrook is one of the busiest airports in the world. Last week the Prince of Wales Own Regiment celebrated its 300th anniversary on duty in South Armagh. A 100lb cake had to be cut up and flown out to the troops cowering in bunkers across the region's mist-shrouded hills.

Yards from where South Armagh meets the Irish Republic lies the legendary village of Crossmaglen — 'Brits graveyard' as the local graffiti painters call it. On the day London police discovered the bomb in the Rubens Hotel, the IRA launched a mortar attack on the joint RUC/Army barracks in Crossmaglen, hitting a helicopter. Only weeks before the republican forces had hit another flying British gunship with an M-60 machine gun.

The pro-British press howled about the 'heartless violence' of the latest attack because it took place just around the corner from where crowds of people were enjoying a local festival. In fact the mortar-squad's timing only reflected the fact that taking on the resident British terrorists is central to any Crossmaglen event. The villagers accept the war as part of everyday life. A few months ago an IRA bomb sent rubble rattling against the local church during mass. The service just carried on as normal.

The little streets around Crossmaglen's town square have been the scene of plenty of IRA action over the years. By 1975, 30 British



Sinn Féin councillor Brendan Lewis

soldiers had been assassinated in Crossmaglen, 17 of them in the square itself. Local feeling about the 'IRA bandits' who operate in the town is summed up by the statue dedicated to those who have died in the struggle to liberate their country, which has pride of place in the square. 'Glory to you all praised and humble heroes who have willingly suffered for your unselfish and passionate love of Irish freedom,' reads the inscription.

The local security forces' base reflects the way the British terrorists fear the people of Crossmaglen. In the little Loyalist towns around the Border — 'Orange holes' the nationalists call them — the RUC station is often just a house surrounded by high wire and video cameras. In the tiny town of Crossmaglen the base is a massive expanse of steel and stone, housing a permanent garrison of 100 troops — one for every 15 people in the village.

The recruitment poster outside the fortress — 'The Royal Ulster Constabulary has a job to do' — is more of an ironic joke than a serious appeal. The armed police in Crossmaglen have to be shipped in from outside areas. The Irish population wants nothing to do with them. The Crown forces don't get served in local pubs and shops. Two Vietnamese refugees have opened a successful Chinese restaurant in the square by adopting the 'No Brits here' policy.

'Crossmaglen is a happy place,' runs an Army jingle, 'keep your head low and blacken your face.' One company of occupying troops in Crossmaglen used 2336 tubes of camouflage cream in a single month. When the British bandits have come out blacked up they have wreaked havoc in the town and the county. South Armagh was the first place where the

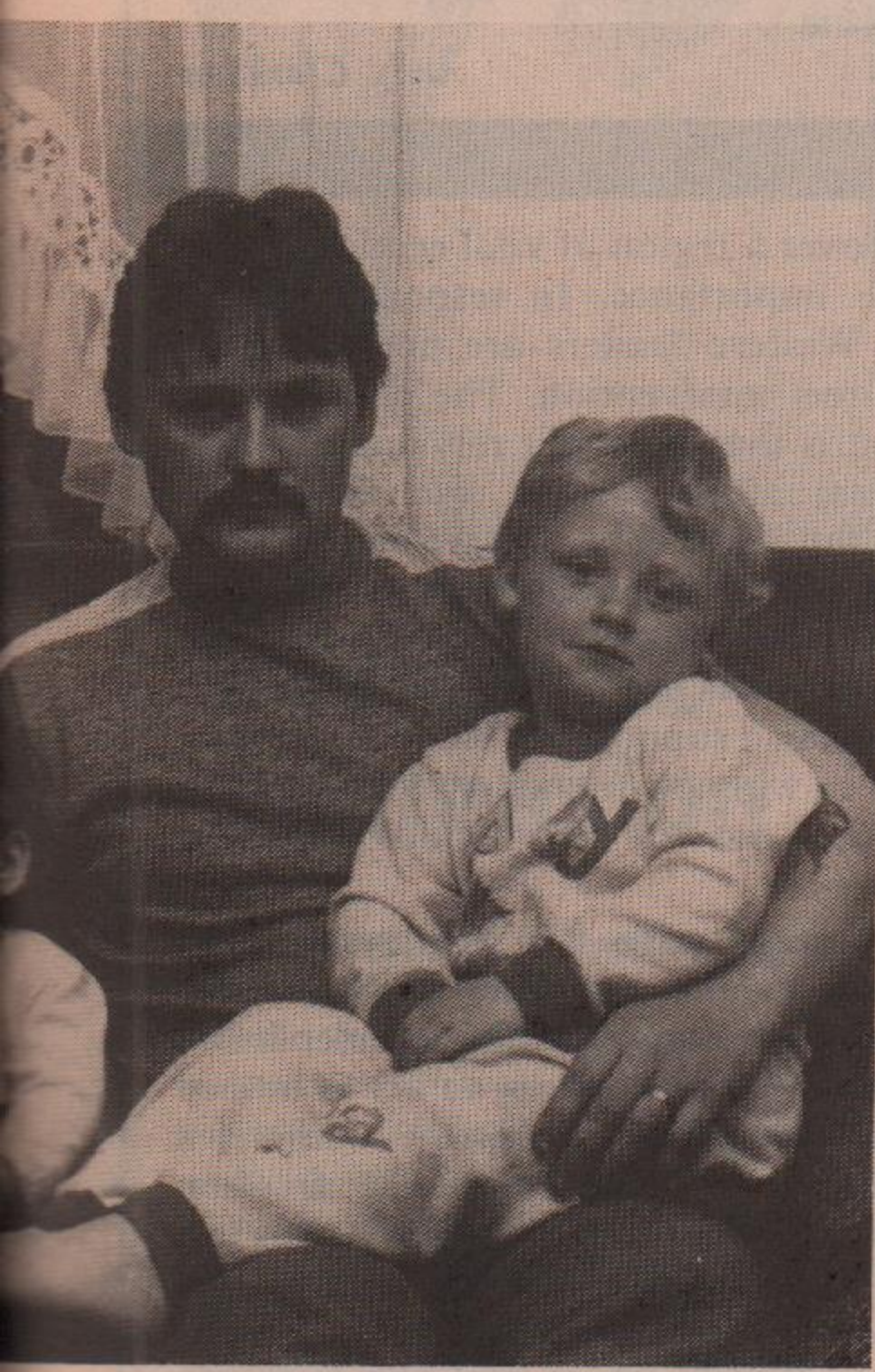
SAS was officially used in Northern Ireland, in 1976. In April that year they shot dead IRA staff captain Peter Cleary at his fiancée's home in Forkhill. In August 1976 the SAS machine-gunned 12-year old Majella O'Hare on her way to mass. That December Britain's top assassins killed Patrick McGeown when they opened fire on a South Armagh pub. Since the first year of SAS operations British terror has become less dramatic, but equally effective in turning ordinary Irish people into armed enemies of the Crown.

The British have come up with bizarre and racist explanations for the successes the republican fighters have achieved in Crossmaglen and South Armagh. One London 'scientist' claimed that the outstanding record of the IRA in the area was due to 'the insularity of the unit and the thick-headedness of the rest of the IRA'. The real reason why the IRA can strike across South Armagh is the depth of support the fight for Irish freedom has in a desolate region that has been economically wrecked and militarily raped by the British authorities.

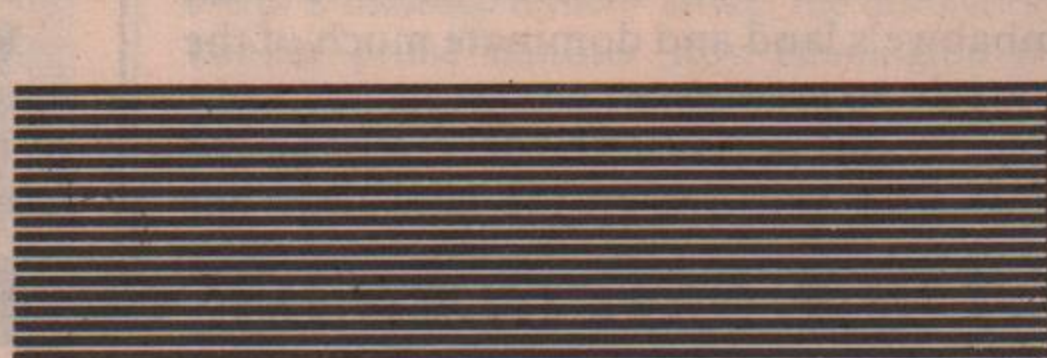
'Our people are fed up with it,' says Sinn Féin councillor Brendan Lewis, who topped the poll in the Fews constituency in May. 'They know that the old ways won't get them anywhere and they want to fight. I mean bread and butter issues in the election, in all honesty, didn't count for that much. The big issue here is the national thing.' National liberation is certainly the bread and butter issue in Brendan's home town of Camlough, close to Crossmaglen. The telegraph poles in the tiny village have been used to erect alternative nameplates in Gaelic. Posts, trees and even children's trikes in the area carry the republican Tricolour. Using the single red public telephone box is the closest the people of Camlough come to cooperating with the British authorities. In May 1981, as IRA hunger-striker Ray McCreesh died in the H-Block concentration camp, his comrades from Camlough blew five British soldiers out of Ireland for good. 'People voted for me because they support the freedom struggle that the IRA are carrying on,' says Brendan Lewis.

From Belfast to Derry to Crossmaglen, the everyday experience of life under the British heel has made Irish people determined to back the 'the freedom struggle that the IRA are carrying on'. They have no time for the liars of Fleet Street with their hysterical 'IRA terror blitz' headlines, or for the hypocrites of Westminster with their pompous talk of 'British democracy' and 'the rule of law'. They are not about to submit to British terror.

On our way back to Derry, we were pulled in at an RUC road-block. The police gunmen were trying to cope with a coachload of young Irish men and women from a local republican band, who were taunting the RUC squad that had thrown them off the bus while it was searched. 'The boys will keep that up all night until the police have had enough and let them go,' we were told. The Irish people will keep up the fight. But if the British working class threw its weight behind the Irish people, together we could end the long night of British state terror that they have lived through for 16 years.



his two children, Martina carries their



Conference 19-26 July, London

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Preparing for Power costs £15 if you're working and £12 if you're not. Phone Carol Taggart on 01-729 0414 for details or write to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

INTERNATIONAL

Zimbabwe at the polls

Mugabe's sell-out

'We will never go to war again. For what? To fight for whom? To fight for someone to enjoy while we suffer. All our grievances show how much we have been forgotten.' (Ex-Zanla guerrilla, *Moto*, March 1985)

This week the people of Zimbabwe go to the polls in the first general election since the country gained independence in April 1980. Last Friday 35 000 white voters elected their 20 MPs in a separate poll under the terms of the British imposed Lancaster House agreement which ended the war of independence. This segregated voting procedure highlights Britain's continuing influence over its former colony. It also reveals the survival of white privilege in the new Zimbabwe.

According to the *Daily Telegraph*, black majority rule under prime minister Mugabe, suits the white settlers 'very nicely'. The Zimbabwean people are less enthusiastic. Black government has brought the workers and peasants neither the political freedom nor the economic progress for which they fought in the war of liberation through the seventies.

Many white settlers who fled the country during the war are now returning to Zimbabwe. Compared to South Africa, where many took refuge, Zimbabwe has become a haven of capitalist stability. During the past three years the country was plagued by recession and drought. But now, after a record maize harvest, Zimbabwe looks set to benefit from a modest upturn.

Western investors and local white landowners have been most impressed by the Mugabe government's efficient management of the economy. Mugabe has cut the balance of payment deficit and honoured the country's debts to Western banks. A quarter of Zimbabwe's wealth now flows directly into banks in Europe and America. Western observers acknowledge that the old settler regime would never have been able to make the people accept such sacrifices without major upheaval.

Austerity

Since 1982 state wage controls have kept workers' already low incomes down while inflation has shot past 20 per cent. A shake-out of industry brought a steep rise in unemployment. Only 13 per cent of Zimbabwe's workers and peasants are regularly employed in the cash economy — less than before independence. In 1983 the Mugabe government succumbed to pressure from the Western financiers of the IMF and implemented a drastic austerity programme. This marked the end of the modest welfare reforms introduced after independence. It brought home forcefully the consequences of the country's continued domination by the West. Health services, food subsidies, housing programmes — and even drought relief — were slashed.

It is not surprising that Western leaders who used to regard Zimbabwe's 'Marxist-Leninist' prime minister with suspicion still rub their eyes in wonder at the Zimbabwean 'miracle'. The containment of the struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe is one of the greatest success stories of imperialism in Africa.

Stable capitalist rule could not have been restored in Zimbabwe without Britain's intervention in the final phase of the war. The middle class leaders of the nationalist movements Zanu and Zapu — Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo — wanted to overthrow white settler rule and establish an independent black state. The abolition of capitalist exploitation was not on their agenda. But the war itself unleashed a broader struggle against oppression and poverty. The peasants and workers of Zimbabwe fought the white settlers to gain real social change, not merely to acquire a new constitution and new rulers. More than 25 000 died in the fight for freedom. But Britain's intervention helped to ensure that the transition to black majority rule took



The people who put Mugabe in power are still paying the price for his deal with British Imperialism

place on the most favourable terms possible for the West.

The Lancaster House agreement was signed by Mugabe and Nkomo in London in November 1979 and its provisions remain in force. It laid down Britain's terms for the creation of the new state of Zimbabwe. These included a ban on the expropriation of capitalists and landowners, the continuation of the white-controlled civil service, reserved seats for whites in the new parliament and guidelines for the administration of the country's army and police force.

The Lancaster House deal was a betrayal of the demands and expectations of the people of Zimbabwe. The power of capital was strengthened, rather than weakened, and Britain's role as the arbiter of the fate of Zimbabwe was reaffirmed.

The key sell-out took place over the issue of land ownership. Five years after independence, only 33 000 black farmers have been allowed to settle on land they were forced to buy from rich white landowners at great expense. Britain was so determined to protect the wealth of the white landlords that it insisted that payment should be made in foreign currency. The result is that 6 500 white farmers still control around half Zimbabwe's land and dominate much of the country's economy.

For the 80 per cent of the Zimbabwean people who still live on the land little has

changed since the days of Ian Smith's regime. The country's 850 000 subsistence farmers and their dependants still eke out a living in the barren regions of the former 'tribal trust lands' in much the same conditions as before independence. In a recent interview a former Zanla guerrilla expressed the indignation of the black farmers, saying that it is 'only the people who were prospering before, during and after the war who are prospering now'.

The continuity between the old Rhodesia and the new Zimbabwe runs through every sphere of life. The repressive institutions left behind by British imperialism are still in use. Smith's Emergency Powers and Industrial Conciliation Acts are used to suppress strikes. The Central Intelligence Organisation, the vast security operation which used to keep tabs on Zanu and Zapu, now protects the new state against subversion. Even the new trade union federation ZCTU bears the stamp 'made in Britain'. The government engaged Jim Mortimer, until recently general secretary of the British Labour Party, to set up a servile trade union bureaucracy. Mugabe's repressive state is more a product of London than of Mugabe's supposed leanings towards Moscow.

But Mugabe's grip on Zimbabwe is becoming increasingly insecure. The climate of tension surrounding the elections reflects growing disaffection and instability. So far

the government's chief concern has been the unrest among the country's main ethnic minority, the Ndebele, in Matabeleland. Poverty and repression have provoked resentment among the Ndebele who suspect that the mainly Shona-supported Zanu government is discriminating against them. Raids by the notorious Fifth Brigade and the murder of more than 1000 civilians by government troops have intensified the crisis.

Nkomo, Mugabe's main political rival and a leader of the Ndebele, has played on ethnic conflicts to strengthen his own position. Mugabe has disrupted Nkomo's election campaign even though the prime minister's victory was secure without any such measures. Repression has become a feature of everyday life as Mugabe attempts to maintain control over the restive masses.

Five years of Zimbabwean independence have exposed the consequences of Mugabe's surrender to Britain. In 1979 the British left supported Britain's role because it felt anything which would end white settler rule must be good. That tragic misjudgement allowed the Tory government to impose its will on Zimbabwe without opposition at home. Only the defeat of British imperialism can bring Zimbabwean workers the freedom for which they fought for so long, but which still eludes them.

Andy Clarkson

BEIRUT HOSTAGE CRISIS

Assad's helping hand

THE KEY FIGURE in the final stages of the Beirut hostage negotiations has been Syria's president Assad. Since the Christian-controlled government of Lebanon disintegrated after the Israeli invasion in 1982, Syria has emerged as the new dominant power in the area. But the people of the Middle East will yet have to pay a heavy price for Assad's role as mediator with the mighty and vicious USA.

Syria used to be regarded as an irritant by Western leaders. Its close relationship with the Soviet Union in the fifties and sixties and its longstanding hostility to Israel and to pro-Western Arab leaders marked it out as a potential troublemaker. But Syria's more recent efforts to play a 'constructive' role in Lebanon have been greatly welcomed in the USA.

Syria and the USA share a strong interest in restoring political stability in Lebanon. Assad is concerned that the conflict could

spill over into Syria which also has an unstable balance of rival Muslim factions. Internal tensions have grown as a result of recession and austerity. The Syrian government is also keen to overcome its isolation in the Arab world, a result of its past anti-Western rhetoric and longstanding rivalries with the rulers of Iraq and Jordan. By assuming control over Lebanese affairs Syria hopes to strengthen its hand at home and abroad.

The USA's position in the Middle East has been so seriously weakened that it will gladly reach out for any helping hand. The record is a dismal trail of humiliation for the USA — the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, the withdrawal of US forces from Lebanon under the fire of Shiite artillery and bombs in 1983, the defeat of the Israeli invasion and the chaos it has unleashed.

The West now faces the prospect of losing

control over a region of vital economic and strategic importance. In response to this danger Western leaders are preparing for more direct intervention. The problem for the West is that it cannot rely on any of its traditional allies. Jordan and Egypt are willing, but weak. The pro-Western leaders of the Gulf all fear following the Shah of Iran to defeat at the hands of a popular rising. Israel has become more an expensive liability than a support for the USA. Reagan is eager to win new friends who can help to keep him out of the Middle Eastern quagmire.

The hostage crisis has been resolved by diplomatic means. But Arab resistance will continue. Both Assad and Shiite leader Nabih Berri showed their capacity to act as hitmen for Western imperialism when they authorised the butchery of 600 Palestinian freedom fighters and refugees in the Beirut camps last month. The masses of the Middle East will continue to pay the price in blood as long as they have leaders whose real aim is to win recognition from Western imperialism, not to fight it.

Sabena Norton

REVIEWS

ANIMAL RIGHTS



It's them or us

Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world: changing attitudes in England 1500 - 1800*, Penguin, £4.95
Peter Singer ed, *In defence of animals*, Basil Blackwell, £4.95

As a historian, Keith Thomas recognises that the ascendancy of man over the animal and vegetable world is a precondition of human history. In *Man and the natural world* he documents the changing attitude of man to his relationship with nature during the period from the middle ages to the industrial revolution. At the beginning of the period the views of biblical scripture, endorsed by mediaeval theology, prevailed. God created the world and the natural order under man's dominion. 'The brute creation are his property, subservient to his will, and for him made.'

By 1800 science had increasingly revealed that man was a part of the natural world, not a totally separate form of life. Thomas shows that a growing number of educated minds began to find the notion of man's absolute ascendancy over nature increasingly unacceptable. It did not correspond to their rational outlook and it was abhorrent to their moral and aesthetic sensibilities. They developed the concern with the treatment of animals and the wider natural environment which persists today.

Thomas provides a wide ranging and penetrating survey of the development of man's views on nature. Yet he tends to explain changing attitudes solely as the result of evolving ideas. He never

satisfactorily explains why these ideas emerged and how they changed. Thomas' book covers the period of the transition from feudal society to the era of modern capitalist industry. It was the era in which the manufacturers and merchants and financiers seized control of society. They challenged the old landowning ruling class under the banner of the democratic demands for liberty, equality and the rights of man. The individualistic outlook of the emerging bourgeoisie extended to its attitude to animals.

For some philosophers the notion of the rights of man was founded on man's capacity to experience pain and pleasure. As animals were evidently capable of similar responses, they too were entitled to recognition and respect as individuals. Thomas quotes the British philosopher and economist Jeremy Bentham, who proclaimed the defence of animal rights in 1789: 'The day may come when the rest of animal creation may acquire those rights which only human tyranny has withheld from them'. In a society characterised by tyranny and exploitation, Bentham projected his concern about oppression on to animals.

Bourgeois society was formally committed to the equal rights of man. But the system on which it was based — capitalist production — demanded the exploitation of one class by another. The rising capitalist did not allow moral scruples to inhibit his quest for profit. But his bad conscience was expressed in a new concern for the welfare of animals. As Marx observed, membership of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was compatible with ruthless exploitation of human beings. Capitalists could afford to indulge

in sentimental concern for animals' welfare since animals were less and less used in production. *In defence of animals* is a collection of essays by people concerned about animal rights today. Their case for animal rights is based on the same contention as the old bourgeois philosophers that men and animals have the same basic interests. Both want to avoid pain and live as long as they can. They too believe that animals should enjoy the same rights as men.

But are the interests of animals and man the same? Man is part of nature, but, unlike all animals, he is also capable of standing apart from nature to change the environment within which human society can develop. This is the basis of human civilisation that marks it off as a qualitative evolutionary advance on the natural world. Man can oppose his force to that of nature in order to master it. Marx wrote that men began 'to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence'. The capacity for the conscious application of labour to control nature and develop society distinguishes men from animals.

The concept of animal rights is an absurdity. The equation of human and animal rights implies a devaluation of the very concepts of humanity and human society. Supporters of animal rights seek to free a part of nature from man's control. They aim to prevent human society from taking full advantage of the natural world to enhance the potential of human society. Whether they aim to do this by parliamentary or direct action methods, the goal is antithetical to the objective of the working class — the maximum possible development of human society.

Liz Groves

POLITICAL FICTION

Powerless

Brian Sedgmore, *Power failure*, Quartet, £7.95

You would have to have a heart of stone not to laugh at the tragic finale of Brian Sedgmore's second novel. The resignation of a humiliated energy secretary Bob Misson (Tony Benn) on the eve of a national miners' strike; the desolation of Labour prime minister Roy Pennington (Neil Kinnock) facing the imminent collapse of his government; and the death of George Mortimer (Brian Sedgmore) in a car crash in Wales, all come as welcome moments of light relief at the conclusion of this turgid exploration of the gibbering paranoid hallucinations of the left wing of the Labour Party.

Sedgmore, currently Labour MP for Shore-ditch, aims to give the reader an insight into the reality of power. He fails. What he achieves is an exposure of the cynicism, hypocrisy, sentimentality and opportunism which Sedgmore takes as the defining virtues of himself and his colleagues.

Power failure rips along in the language of someone writing instructions for laying cement. The plot — terrorist Greens destabilising a future Labour government — is absurd. The characterisation is about as convincing as Neil Kinnock promising socialism. And the descriptive passages sparkle like a three-week old shopping list. Sedgmore's descriptions of sex between Mortimer and first his wife Margaret and then his girlfriend Glenys really stand out. He expresses the kind of passion most people reserve for choosing between tinned carrots and tinned peas at the supermarket.

If *Power failure* has a message it is that Sedgmore is still on the make. His description of the Labour leader Roy Pennington 'from the valleys' is a self-serving fantasy. Pennington can 'paralyse his opponents with fear' of his 'stinging invective', so that they 'would have preferred a physical beating to the verbal lashing which they got'. This should ingratiate Sedgmore with a Labour leader whose oratory is widely known to be as stimulating as an overdose of valium.

John Johnson

FILM



Tom Bell and Kika Markham in *The Innocent*

Romantic depression

John MacKenzie (director), *The innocent*

Set in the Yorkshire dales in the thirties, *The innocent* is *All creatures great and small* with a social conscience. It is a perfect film for romantic radicals, evoking rather than addressing problems of mass unemployment, the effects of the First World War, the perils of puberty, and mental illness.

In *The innocent*, everything is seen through the eyes of the central character Tim (Andrew Hawley). Tim is a withdrawn adolescent, perplexed by the relationship between his mother, father and a mysterious former officer. Because he is 'not all

there' he is isolated from other boys his age. His only comfort is watching a kingfisher fly upstream every day. Predictably the kingfisher dies, the victim of a malicious prank directed at Tim.

Mackenzie confronts Tim with secret affairs, wife-beating and adolescent sexual yearning. When things get too much for him he runs away, coughs, splutters and has a fit.

Like Tim, Mackenzie too finds the problems he raises too much to handle. He retreats into school history book images of the thirties. His vision is all flat caps, pints of bitter and idle youths lying on grassy slopes overlooking the industrial town or stripping down for a game of football. Social realities rarely intrude.

The innocent tries to capitalise on the 'thirties-eighties times are hard again' market. But the romanticised view of working class life retailed in *The innocent* bears no relation to the reality either of the thirties or today.

Ed Branigan

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LETTERS

STEPPING OUT



Chris Black (right)

Gay pride

Last Saturday's gay pride march was the biggest I can remember. We all had a good time. But it had nothing to do with fighting for gay rights.

If you looked up you could see a zeppelin balloon bearing the legend 'The Hippodrome is proud to announce that it is gay on Mondays'. The whole of the march, and the week of events leading up to it, was dominated by the commercial gay scene.

Gay pride week was an opportunity to highlight the attacks on gay rights that have happened over the past year — Aids hysteria, police raids on gay pubs, the trial of Gay's the Word bookshop staff and directors. But the organisers of the parade had to assure the proprietors of the gay scene that there would be no politics.

The organisers even dropped 'lesbian and gay' from the official march title and from publicity and badges. They abandoned the fight for gay rights in favour of a promotional party for the pink economy. **John Johnson**
North London

Don't trust tribunals!

Last week in Leeds an industrial tribunal decided that Alan Scott, a Nupe shop steward, deserved to be sacked as a caretaker with Calderdale council. His 'crime' was collecting for his brothers in the NUM in the run-up to last Christmas. Alan denied taking unauthorised time off his work and said the council's accusations, which he didn't accept, would only have meant he had been paid £4.41 in wages to which he was not entitled.

With treatment like this being doled out to sympathisers of the miners' strike what can sacked miners expect when they come before these tribunals? Yet NUM officials are still coming to branch meetings and telling us that sacked men will get a fair deal when they come before the tribunals. They should tell that to Alan Scott!

Terry Anderson
Yorkshire

Look back in anger

The miners have been back at work for three and a half months now. 'Was it worth it?', 'should we trust the unions again?' are the questions I've been asking myself.

The strike started by dividing us from day one. We forgot the first principle: united we stand, divided we fall. As long as the rank and file kept control up until the fifth week we had momentum and were always on the offensive.

When the area leaders took control that was the start of the rot. They sat on their backsides telling us how to picket. They took control to organise, but they failed to organise properly. The lights stayed on after the promises of power cuts. The union failed

to keep the loyalty of the members and distanced itself from comrades who took the fight as far as possible.

The men became disillusioned with the union and the drift back started. Scargill came on telly to tell us that nobody was going back. But we live in communities and we knew men were going back. So Scargill started to tell us lies and tried to make everyone a scapegoat.

The area and lodge leaders showed themselves up as cowards when it came to picketing. They never came to picket lines to give moral support. When they did come they spent more time shaking hands with the police and helping them organise to let coal or scabs go in. I witnessed the police beat up a miner while the chairman of our lodge kept shaking hands with the police.

At present we have man against man, pit against pit and area against area. The area leadership's bureaucratic approach is to leave well alone when they should be uniting the membership.

I believe the final analysis and responsibility for defending our lives, our freedom, our jobs, our communities and our hopes for a socialist world lie in our hands. Please send me five copies of *Our day will come*, see you at Preparing for Power.

Paul Williams
Disillusioned NUM member
South Wales



Badges against racism

If you were told that the French state was helping to finance a massive anti-racist rock concert in the heart of Paris — a sort of Woodstock-on-Seine — you would probably conclude either that Mitterrand and his cronies had taken leave of their senses or that there was something very phoney about SOS Racisme, the group which was organising the event.

SOS Racisme is a campaign whose distinguishing feature is the sale of a badge — an arresting hand with the inscription 'touche pas a mon pote' ('hands off my mate'). This badge does not represent an anti-racist campaign fought on concrete issues. Instead the badge is the campaign. If, for instance, a racist murder is committed in

some town, SOS Racisme descends en masse and sets about selling the badge to all and sundry, in the way one might distribute garlic if a vampire were loose.

This anti-racist shadow-boxing is well suited to the needs of the liberal bourgeois establishment and more particularly to the French Socialist Party. At a time when the socialist government is pursuing economic policies that represent the untrammelled demands of capital it is useful to have a bandwagon that can distinguish it from the right-wing parties without in any way compromising the authority of the French state. SOS Racisme obliges by focusing anti-racist sentiment on Jean-Marie Le Pen and his Front Nationale while the French state is left to get on quietly with the day-to-day coercion of immigrant workers.

SOS Racisme and similar organisations seek to ensure the political loyalty of the immigrant communities to the French state even at a time when they are being hit hard by the recession. A genuine anti-racist movement in the future will therefore have to take up the broader question of political loyalties if it is to be effective.

Louis Dufoux
Paris

Why stand for the GLC?

I have read *tns* for several weeks and I really like your approach to issues like racism and Ireland. But last week I discovered that you are standing a candidate in the Vauxhall by-election. After weeks of explaining why the state, run by either Tories or Labour, can't fight racism or get the troops out of Ireland, it seems a contradiction that you are prepared to participate in British state democracy. Could you explain what revolutionary communists are trying to achieve by standing in elections?

Caroline Russell
London N16

I can't square Jean Smith's statement (in *tns* 9) that the RCP opposes the abolition of the GLC, with comments in *tns* 11 and with my own understanding of the issue.

The Tories are abolishing one form of bourgeois local democracy and replacing it with another. No disenfranchisement of the working class is involved (although some Labour politicians' careers might be disrupted by the changeover).

The Labour Party is making an issue of the supposed attack on democracy because it won't stand up and resist real attacks on democratic rights, jobs, services etc. But why does the RCP go along with this 'Defend local democracy' bandwagon? If as you say 'people in Vauxhall know that local democracy is an even bigger sham than parliamentary democracy', then the Labour Party would not find it possible to raise the bogey of Tory attacks on democracy, to obscure Labour's cooperation in attacks on workers. Unfortunately, many active workers have succumbed to Labour Party propaganda on this question.

It is better in my view for revolutionaries to dissociate themselves from the Labour campaign against abolition — and expose it for the fig leaf it is. Best wishes in the election campaign.

Vaughan Leslie
Todmorden

Write to

tns

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If I didn't know that nice commander Crawshaw from the Special Branch better, I'd think the whole 'IRA seaside blitz' carry-on was dreamt up by some bright spark at the Yard. There have certainly been some fishy goings on in Great Yarmouth — 'home of the kipper' and 'merely a sprat in the shoal of Britain's holiday resorts' as Paul Callan, the Oscar Wilde of the *Mirror*, put it this week. Norfolk police have been stuffing local letter boxes with a leaflet which reminds people that 'A bomb does not look like a bomb'. So remember, don't touch anything at all in a Great Yarmouth hotel. Not that you'd want to without gloves on anyway. Dozens of tiepins and cuff-links have apparently turned up in the grubby corners of local bed and breakfast joints, cleaned this week for 'the first time in years'. The dirty war rages on.

Meanwhile the Palm Court Hotel in Torquay, home of Fawlty Towers, was evacuated after a receptionist claimed to have recognised a recent visitor among police 'IRA suspect' photos. Twenty-year old Rachel Walling said, 'I wasn't sure if she had been a resident, as I saw her in the ladies' toilet'. The evacuation which followed the terrorist in the toilet scandal clearly wrecked the lives of countless Palm Court residents. Hotel chef Roy Kennedy admitted under pressure from reporters that 'we served dinner a bit earlier than usual'. Will the terrorists stop at nothing?

The Palm Court saga, part two. The Army bomb disposal unit who took apart the room where the bomb was supposed to be certainly enjoyed themselves. The two tourists ousted from their holiday home explained that, 'Strips of wallpaper have been torn from the ceiling, the carpet pulled up, cupboards removed and a hole dug down in the floor of the wardrobe'. Everybody got very excited and said this was 'evidence' that there really was a bomb there. I can't think why. Any Irish family from West Belfast or Derry's Bogside will tell you that's how British soldiers always behave when they get into other people's bedrooms.

Final word on the 'terror blitz' goes to Don Haigh who, wearing his anorak and using his wife Doreen as a shield against the wind, spoke to the *Mirror's* Callan on the beach at Great Yarmouth. 'I'm more annoyed about the bad weather than the bloody IRA,' chirped Don. Never mind, Don. You could always join the pensioners up at the Shadingfield Hotel, who spent the night singing 'round after round' of 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag'. Only watch where you tap your feet. Remember, in 'the home of the kipper', 'a bomb does not look like a bomb'.

I'm sure former left-wing Labour MP and current anti-communist columnist Woodrow Wyatt speaks for us all when he says that 'the left-wing bias of the BBC is fast becoming a national disgrace'. But concerned readers will be relieved to hear that sanity prevails over at much-maligned Channel 4. Their Asian magazine, *Eastern Eye*, is mounting a concerted challenge to Shaw Taylor of ITV's *Police Five* for the mantle of TV's top crime fighter. This week's edition hunted down abortion clinics which arrange operations for Asian women without 'reasonable social justification'. Of course, TV programmes can only point the finger. It is up to the guardians of British justice and democracy to decide the consequences. *Eastern Eye* has thus decided to send all relevant details, including patients' names, to that well-known champion of Asian women's rights, health minister Kenneth 'Bongo-Bongo Land' Clarke. Any further information is welcomed by the Channel 4 champions of justice. So as slimy Shaw Taylor would say, 'Keep 'em peeled'.

REPORTS

Boycott Golden Wonder

Last Saturday RCP supporters in Coventry organised a blockade outside Tesco and other large supermarkets. We asked local shoppers not to buy Golden Wonder crisps, peanuts and other products in solidarity with a national strike by workers at Golden Wonder factories.

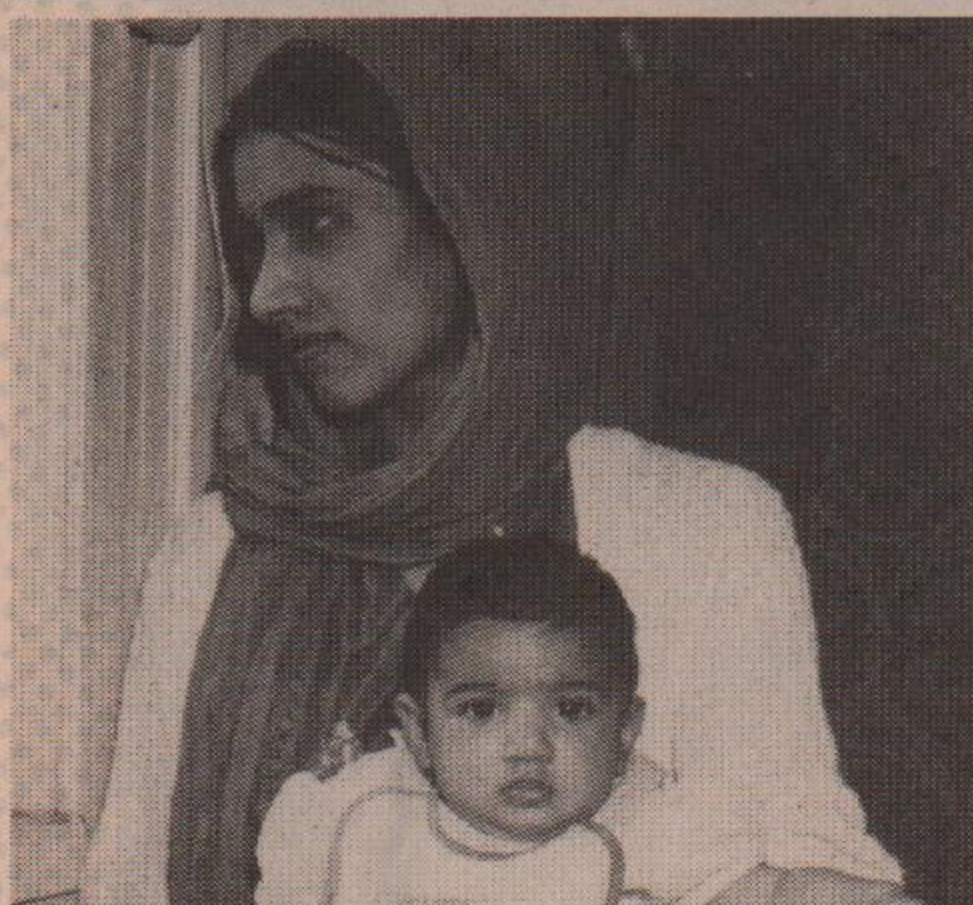
Workers at Widnes, Corby, Roxforth and Long Buckby have been out on strike in support of a 12.5 per cent wage rise since the end of May. Bill, who has worked at the Long Buckby factory for 10 years, told us that the strike was three years too late: 'We've had to put up with rubbish pay and working conditions for years now, but it's always been one factory played against another'. Now Bill has got a national strike he wants to make sure that the action is effective.

Management has already organised to get its products turned out at firms like Riley's in Lincoln. Bill's boss is paying scabs £6.50 an hour and putting them up in Coventry

hotels. In Corby the employers have been picking up the strikers in mini-coaches to coax them back to work. The strikers are not yet so well organised. Most are getting £35 fortnightly strike pay, though workers at Roxforth report that they have not yet had any. The main concern of most strikers, however, is that blacking action has not been organised on any systematic basis.

Bill says that there is too much at stake to hold back. In the past every wage rise has meant workers' making concessions on productivity and manning levels in return for a pittance. The women who make up most of the workforce have to work at top speed without a break for poor wages. Shop steward Dore Griffiths says that the women are determined to make sure that the first strike in Golden Wonder's 20-year history succeeds. Coventry RCP is organising secondary action to black Golden Wonder products to prove Dore right.

Jo Cartwright



Arshad Aslam and what remained of her home after racists called



Chris Black (tellex)

Racism: let's get organised

'This place is like a prison to me. I live in fear of my life and spend all day wondering when the next attack will come.' Arshad Aslam from Walthamstow, east London, had her house burnt down by racists. 'They took a dustbin, filled it with paper, put a match to it and set the house on fire.' Arshad, her husband Mohammed and their three-month old daughter were lucky to escape with their lives. But, like thousands of black families, the Aslams feel that there is no real escape in a society that makes racism respectable.

Today the Aslams live in Hollydown Way, an estate in Leytonstone notorious for racist attacks. The Hussein family, living a few yards away, also had their flat burnt by racists. The local council seems indifferent to the problems facing black people and the police just do not want to know. The biggest fear, explains Arshad, is knowing that you are completely alone: 'The council's not on our side, the police are not on our side. If we want something done we have to do it ourselves.'

East London Workers Against Racism

has long argued that the fight against racism is in the hands of ordinary people. There will not be any escape for families like the Aslams until workers take sides with black people against the establishment's attempts to divide us. The only answer to racist violence is organised defence by working class people. This Monday ELWAR is meeting in East Ham to discuss how best to organise against the racists. Be there!

Kenan Malik



Free abortion on demand!

Last week revolutionary communists brought a meeting of Huddersfield health authority to an abrupt conclusion when they protested at the low level of NHS abortions in the district. Protest organiser Fiona Ryan was frog-marched from the room by a hired bouncer when she demanded to know why the health authority had not discussed abortion facilities in the area for three years.

Huddersfield is a blackspot for women seeking free and safe abortions. A survey carried out by RCP supporters in the run-up to last week's meeting revealed that local women are angry that they have to suffer unwanted pregnancies thanks to the anti-abortion prejudices of Huddersfield's three consultant gynaecologists and local doctors. Out of 528 abortions carried out in Huddersfield in 1983 (the latest available figures) only 35 were performed on the health service. This eight per cent compares badly with other areas in England and Wales where the figure is nearly 50 per cent.

Our investigations proved that the only

explanation for the low level of free abortions in Huddersfield was the anti-abortion stance of the local medical profession. The three consultants based at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, Messrs Benster, Feeney and Jackson, are fervent anti-abortionists. Benster is known to have performed one NHS abortion three years ago, nobody can remember when Jackson's last performance was and Feeney is reported to sacrifice his Catholic principles when the financial reward makes it worthwhile. Women in Huddersfield are stuck with this team because the person largely responsible for appointing consultants in the area is Leeds University pro-life professor Scott.

RCP supporters and women's rights campaigners in Huddersfield have had enough of local bigots dictating how women should run their lives. We will carry on campaigning on the streets for women's rights and we will keep disrupting health authority meetings until we win the fight for free abortion on demand. Lesley Woods

Come along!



Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act!

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad has been busy this week trying to convince the British public that the IRA poses a mortal threat to the great British holiday. The establishment's seaside scare stories provided the pretext for raids on the Irish community from Glasgow to Brighton.

The Revolutionary Communist Party has also been busy this week organising police station pickets and street protests to counter the anti-Irish hysteria promoted by press and politicians. The Tories hope to use the current

anti-terrorist climate to their own propaganda advantage. But we can turn the situation to our advantage if we can cut through all the cant and put the case for Irish freedom.

Over the next month the RCP will be working all-out to build the Irish Freedom Movement demonstration against British terror in Ireland (see page 2). We will also be mobilising opposition to the harassment and intimidation of Irish people in Britain under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Come to the meetings and get out on the streets to build support for the demonstration!

Western terrorists out!

Who are the real international terrorists? Forum on the imperialists' bloodbaths in Ireland, Lebanon and Central America

Leeds
Saturday 6 July 1pm-6pm
Swarthmore Centre
Woodhouse Square

Irish blood on British hands

Meeting on British terror in Ireland
Sheffield
Friday 5 July 7.30pm
The Mailcoach
West Street

Other events

Racists off the streets!

East London Workers Against Racism meeting on fighting back against the racists and planning practical action against attacks
Monday 8 July 7.30pm
East Ham Town Hall
High Street E6 (East Ham tube)

Do animals have rights?

Brighton Animal Rights Group debates the RCP
Thursday 18 July 7.30pm
Springfield Pub
Springfield Road, Brighton

Moral panics and women's rights

Dayschool to discuss the new morality and what it means for women
Glasgow
Saturday 6 July 10am-5pm
Partick Burgh Hall

How to beat the Tories

Frank Richards outlines a strategy for the eighties
Manchester
Thursday 11 July 7.30pm
Black Lion
Chapel Street

Liverpool
Friday 12 July 7.30pm
AUEW Hall
Mount Pleasant



Who are the real terrorists?

Edinburgh
Wednesday 10 July 7.30pm
Trades Council
Picardy Place

Vote RCP in Vauxhall!

With less than a week to go before polling day RCP candidate Jean Smith is getting out and about in Vauxhall. Come to the meeting and come out canvassing.

Belfast to Beirut — stop the Tory terrorists!

Public rally with RCP candidate Jean Smith and Mick Hume, author of the Irish Freedom Movement handbook *The Irish War*
Thursday 4 July 7.30pm
Flaxman Sports Centre
Carew Street, London SE5

Mass street canvass

Come out and help us put the case for revolutionary communism
Saturday 6 July 11.30am
Stockwell tube

Become a Revolutionary Communist Party supporter

If you like what you've read in *tns* become an RCP supporter. We meet weekly to discuss the issues in the paper and to plan action in the local area. Phone Fenna on 01-729 0414 or write to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX, or talk to *tns* sellers in your area.

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tns

PREPARING FOR POWER

A week of meetings, discussions, debates and entertainment organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party

Friday 19 July – Friday 26 July, University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1

Power is the issue of the eighties. Power was at the centre of the battle between the coal board and the miners. Power inspires Shiite suicide raids and Reagan's death squads in El Salvador. The Revolutionary Communist Party's week-long summer school is about power and how we can win it for the working class.

Preparing for Power is for everybody who wants to know what it takes to make a revolution in Britain. We will be looking at the key questions of the moment in full-scale plenary discussions, 13 specialist courses, high-powered debates and hundreds of smaller, more informal workshops. In the evenings there will be lighter plenaries and entertainment — music, films, dance. Don't miss the most exciting event of the summer. Take a look at what's on offer and send off the registration form below.

Special courses

- Religion and the decline of capitalism
- Introduction to Marxism
- The rise and fall of Labourism
- The West and the South
- The Britishness of British politics
- Introduction to Marxist economics
- Leninism: the politics of liberation
- The Russian Revolution
- Marxism for non-beginners
- The roots of racism
- Women: their morals and ours
- An anti-imperialist's guide to the Irish War
- The West and the Eastern bloc

Debates and discussions

- Where is the British left going? Labour's John McDonnell, the Communist Party's Dave Cook and the RCP's Kate Marshall air their differences
- Do animals have rights? The Animal Liberation Front vs the RCP
- Moral panics under Thatcher: Kate Marshall and Mick Hume on Millwall fans and other deviants
- Any questions? Ask our panel anything you ever wanted to know about revolutionary communism

- Rupert Murdoch vs *Marxism Today*: tns writers look at the left press
- After the miners' strike: a round table discussion

Issues

- World Wars Two — and Three? Phil Murphy and James Wood draw the lessons of Belsen and Stalingrad for 1985
- Thatcher's targets: Ann Burton surveys Clive Ponting, picket-line militants, surrogate mothers and all the other people who get up Thatcher's nose
- The Arab revolution: Inez Landa and Daniel Nassim look at the spiral of conflict in the Middle East
- British working class culture: Frank Richards asks have we got one?
- The left in continental Europe: Sabena Norton surveys the left from Portugal to Papandreou
- Kinnoch and Hattersley, Skinner and Scargill, Healey and Benn: Cathy Barrett assesses the career prospects of today's Labour leaders
- The banana skin factor: Rob Knight looks at the splits in the ruling class and the debates in the Tory party

Entertainment

- Saturday night dancing: live band Easterhouse, late bar and disco
- Every night at the movies: films include *I married a communist*, Sam Fuller's *Pick-up on South Street*, Gillo Pontecorvo's *Queimada!*, Bruce Beresford's *Breaker Morant*, Fritz Lang's *M*, Alfred Hitchcock's *The thirty-nine steps*
- Evening cabaret and comedy with surprise guests
- Friday night boat trip down the Thames with food, drink and dancing



Conference organiser Ann Burton took five minutes off work to talk to tns about who's coming to Preparing for Power and what makes it so special.

'At the last count more than 650 people had registered for the conference and there's still more than two weeks to go. This will be my fourth Preparing for Power conference and it looks like it's going to be the biggest and best yet. My biggest headache at the moment is sorting out accommodation for everybody.

'I remember I was really impressed at the first conference I went to. I think it's the best way to find out what the RCP is all about. Preparing for Power is the opportunity to ask us whatever you want to know about any political question. Whatever topic you want to know about we'll have our experts there on the day.

'Preparing for Power is different! Most left-wing conferences tend to be pretty academic, dry and dull. Ours isn't like that at all. The whole event is geared to getting the party into shape to prepare for power so all the sessions have some practical conclusion even though they are pitched at quite a high intellectual level.

'This year there's been a real change in the sort of people who are coming along. In the past the conference has mainly attracted young radicals, trade union militants and students. This year there's a much wider cross-section of people. We've got miners and their families, trade unionists, intellectuals and lots of young

people. I think the conference will have a different feel to it.

'Preparing for Power is open to anybody interested in politics and how to build a revolution in Britain. We're not interested in academics who want to discuss the meaning of meaning. We want people who want to find out how the world works so that they can change it. Anybody reading the paper who hasn't made up their mind whether to come should act now and fill in the registration form. I guarantee that you'll learn a lot and enjoy yourself.'

Preparing for Power costs £15 if you're working and £12 if you're not. We will provide you with transport and accommodation, a creche, a swimming pool and a jacuzzi. Make cheques payable to RCP Association and send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Register now!

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