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the next step
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Thatcher and Reagan can't fight Botha

End Western backing for apartheid terror

Britain and the USA are the major sponsors of the regime in South Africa. The godfathers of apartheid will never act against it. Appeals for Thatcher and Reagan to impose sanctions against Botha's government are certain to fail. Real solidarity with the workers and youth of South Africa demands action against the Western powers at home. See pages 2, 3 and 8.

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They're all Conservatives now

'How would you like to be pedalling around the streets this summer shouting election slogans?' was how Tory chief whip John Wakeham had to threaten rebel Conservative MPs in order to squeeze the controversial top people's pay rises through parliament last week. The government had announced big increases for judges, generals and top civil servants while refusing to improve its miserable pay offer to teachers. The outraged reaction to this gaffe spread to the heart of the Tory constituencies. Backbenchers who responded to public pressure and refused to vote for the proposals expressed the growing disquiet about Thatcher's policies among traditional Tory supporters.

The Tories have an authority problem. Their inability to deal with the difficulties facing British capitalism has put sections of the establishment in a panic. Even coal board chief Ian MacGregor has taken to attacking the government's mismanagement. The Tories' declining popularity has excited the leaders of the Labour Party. Labour leader Neil Kinnock and his deputy Roy Hattersley now grab every chance to encourage the notion that Thatcher has gone over the top and to promote Labour as an alternative party of government.

This week Hattersley insisted that the Tories are 'demoralised and defeated' and their speedy replacement is a 'certainty'. Meanwhile Kinnock was looking for flattering photo opportunities, dropping food over Ethiopia with the RAF. Labour's latest televised broadcast went for the youth vote by parading Kinnockite pop musicians. But while the Labour Party gets excited about its electoral prospects, its plans for government contain little to excite working class people. The concentration of the Kinnock-Hattersley roadshow on presenting an alternative publicity image to the Tories is not surprising. In terms of political substance, there is now little to distinguish her majesty's government from her majesty's loyal opposition.

'The Thatcher style'

Over the last six years the Tories have redrawn the British political map. They have shifted the terms of every discussion to the right, and redefined what is and is not an acceptable view of the world. At her end of term pep talk, Thatcher told Tory MPs to be proud of the fact that, on both sides of the commons, 'we're all Conservatives now'. Thatcher's arrogance in the face of adversity reflects her success in forcing her opponents to debate on the Tories' terms. The Labour leadership now openly agrees with the government that unemployment cannot be beaten, that law and order must be strengthened, that Britain must be defended — in short, that the survival of British capitalism requires harsh measures at workers' expense.

Hattersley admits that Labour's central remaining difference with the Tories is one of 'style'. He criticised the Tories' uneven treatment of the teachers and the top people as typical of 'the Thatcher style' of 'conflict and confrontation'. In contrast Labour wanted to solve Britain's problems through 'compromise and consensus', by 'working together as one nation'.

Hattersley's vision offers no alternative to the Tories because the British people are not 'one nation'; they are two classes. The teachers are part of the working class movement, involved in an industrial struggle with the state. The judges and generals are pillars of the state machinery that guards the interests of the capitalist class. Thus Thatcher must repress the teachers and reward the top people.

The only way teachers, or any group of workers, could win big pay awards would be by taking on and defeating the bosses' government, not by appealing to its social conscience. Labour's attempt to restrain workers through 'compromise and consensus' indicates its subservience to the system. It means that whatever happens in the next two years, we have nothing to look forward to from a Labour government.

What worries the Tories' big business backers today is not the tame Labour Party with its deep respect for the capitalist state, but the growing disrespect for government institutions outside parliament. In a key speech last week, top Tory minister Norman Tebbit warned that British society faced a crisis because 'a small but significant minority in almost every sphere of life has no respect for laws or the rights of others'. Tebbit lumped together 'the political hoodlums' and 'extremist, one-issue groups' with 'the muggers, the armed robbers and sports-field hooligans'. This is a traditional Tory tactic to consolidate public support by branding the government's enemies as criminals. But the Tories' real concern is not with petty thieves or football fans. They fear the emergence of a 'small but significant minority' of working class activists who have lost their belief in the British system of government.

No compromise

As the pressures of recession force the establishment to withdraw concessions and to crack down on dissenters, thousands of people now have 'no respect for the laws' that they have seen wielded against striking miners, black youth who fight back against racists and anybody who stands up for their rights. This small but significant minority prepared to say 'no' to the authorities is the cause of the Tories' concern. It is also the hope for the future of the working class.

That's why, unlike the Labour Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party has no interest in the methods of compromise that could reconcile this minority with the system. We want to widen the gap between classes, to make the struggle for power more decisive.

We may not have an election to intervene in this summer. But we do have the Irish Freedom Movement march through London on 10 August(see page 12). When it comes to 'small but significant' minorities that have 'no respect for the laws', none is more important or powerful than the republican movement fighting to free Ireland from British domination — as the Tories discovered to their cost in Brighton last October. The 10 August march is a chance to popularise the Irish people's lack of respect for the British authorities among workers here, and to ensure that when the Tories are defeated, workers won't be supporting a Labour government that is just as subservient to the top people in the British establishment.

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The Johannesburg *Star*'s view of bishop Tutu's precarious position in the face of black revolt

The fight against apartheid

After Tutu, who?

Two weeks ago millions of television viewers witnessed the brutal killing of 24-year old Maki Shosana by black youths in the township of Duduza near Johannesburg. The young woman was hacked to death at the funeral of four student leaders.

Rumours that Maki was a police informer responsible for their deaths made her the target of a lynchmob. The South African government uses incidents like this for its own propaganda purposes. But even so, the fact that such arbitrary acts of terror occur at all is a symptom of the lack of coherent political leadership in the struggle against the apartheid regime.

Strikes, boycotts, riots and demonstrations have spread to virtually every part of black South Africa. But workers' struggles retain the character of isolated tests of strength between the black masses and the state's security forces. Although hundreds of thousands of people are fighting the regime, their energies are being consumed in disparate battles, instead of being fused in a coordinated struggle for the defeat of the apartheid system.

The consequences of the problem are obvious in the case of black youth in the townships who bear the brunt of violent confrontation with the state's security forces. Hundreds have been shot dead and many more maimed in street battles with the security forces. At recent demonstrations black youths raised placards demanding that the African National Congress give them rifles to defend their communities. But while arms would be a great advance on bricks and petrol bombs, arms alone are not enough to defeat the apartheid system.

The black masses need a political strategy that can lead the way to the overthrow of the South African state.

The lack of leadership means that the energies and the lives of young militants are being exhausted in riots and skirmishes instead of being harnessed in the struggle for power. The absence of a coherent opposition has allowed the government to weather the crisis with a blend of fierce repression, minor concessions and diplomatic manoeuvres.

The United Democratic Front is the umbrella organisation of more than 600 community and political groups which was formed to coordinate the campaign against Botha's constitutional reforms in 1983. It is widely regarded as the national leadership of the black resistance. The United Democratic Front is a loose association of diverse political trends in the anti-apartheid movement which are united in their support for the African National Congress' civil rights programme of the fifties, the *Freedom charter*. This programme artificially separates the struggle against apartheid from the struggle against South African capitalism and proposes getting rid of apartheid through mass pressure for reforms before taking on the capitalist system. The United Democratic Front has attempted to re-enact the mass campaigns for black rights which the African National Congress pioneered in the fifties.

The main effect of this broad movement has been to revive the notion that the USA and Britain are potential allies of the black people of South Africa. Opportunist South African politicians present token Western pressure on the apartheid state to introduce reforms in a positive light. The same faith in the possibility of winning black freedom within a capitalist South Africa through a combination of internal and Western pressure underpinned the African National Congress protest campaigns of 30 years ago. One of the UDF's few national initiatives was the Edward Kennedy speaking tour last February. The UDF presented this American career politician as a friend of the South African working class.

Militant supporters of the grassroots organisations that make up the UDF play a key role in the battles in townships and workplaces. Many undoubtedly reject the moderate and pro-Western outlook of the movement's patrons. But the absence of a revolutionary alternative has meant that clerical leaders like Desmond Tutu and Alan Boesak still dominate the politics of the black liberation movement.

During the past 18 months Tutu and Boesak have played a key role in bridging the gulf between the black masses and the apartheid regime. It is well known that Tutu and other UDF patrons are in regular contact with the government. Tutu's recent threat to pack up and leave South Africa unless blacks stopped using violence expresses a vague unease that he may yet face retribution for his treacherous role in the current crisis.

Attention now focuses on the banned African National Congress. Recognising that moderate politicians like Tutu have no real roots among militant blacks, Western leaders have urged Botha to release imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela as a first step towards legalising the movement. In a recent interview Joe Slovo, the exiled leader of the ANC's military wing, revealed that the US government has made overtures to the ANC to discuss its future role in South Africa.

Western leaders appreciate that the ANC continues to enjoy considerable authority among the black masses. The authorities' concern to establish links with 'terrorist' ANC leaders reveals just how desperate they have become.

Hours before Botha declared the emergency, ANC supporters openly displayed Congress banners and declared their own 'state of war' against apartheid. The ANC's identification with the armed struggle against the South African state has ensured its widespread popularity among the young militants in the townships. But although its militant appeal and its support for armed action contrast sharply with the role of Tutu and Boesak, in ideological and political terms they have much in common. Despite 25 years of illegality the ANC still stands by its belief — enshrined in the *Freedom charter* — that black equality can be achieved without the destruction of South African capitalism.

Never before have the conditions for revolution been so favourable. Yet the continued domination of the black movement by traditions of moderation and compromise presents an obstacle which must be overcome if the movement is to go forward.

Sabena Norton

SOUTH AFRICA

State of emergency

Botha declares war on blacks

South Africa's state of emergency is an aggressive attempt to restore the confidence of the regime's Western backers and its white supporters at home. But Botha's initiative has further exposed the profound crisis of the apartheid regime.

The televised scenes of police and army terror and mass funerals have embarrassed Thatcher and Reagan and led to renewed demands in Britain and the USA for sanctions against South Africa (see page 8). As more and more whites pack their bags and leave South Africa, others are adding to the mounting chaos by forming terrorist vigilante groups.

More than 1000 black leaders have already been interned and at least 20 people shot. Martial law has been imposed in 36 of the country's 332 regions. Black townships have been sealed off and occupied by the army. All political gatherings of black people have been banned. Black people who refuse to heed instructions given 'in a loud voice' are liable to be shot on sight. Dawn to dusk curfews, detention without trial and rigorous media censorship are being imposed in an attempt to quash the black resistance which has spread throughout the country during the past 18 months.

The introduction of the first state of emergency for 25 years is a sign of the desperation which prevails among South Africa's white rulers. Since last September more than 500 blacks have been killed, more than 2000 injured and more than 3000 arrested. Before the emergency came into force on 21 July most of the national leadership of the broad opposition movement, the United Democratic Front, and hundreds of trade union and community activists were already in prison or living under strict bail conditions. Yet despite the repression black resistance continued to gather force.

Apartheid terror has murdered local black leaders like the four students blown up by hand grenades in Duduza (above), and provoked blacks of every generation to stand in open defiance of the regime

Strategy shattered

Three days before the emergency was declared unrest spread to Soweto near Johannesburg. Soweto was the scene of the last major black uprising in 1976, but it remained relatively calm during the early stages of the current unrest. The trial of 100 black students charged with attending an illegal meeting sparked off mass demonstrations as the people of Soweto surrounded the courthouse. More than 300 students who hijacked buses to take them to the court were arrested. In the ensuing 'disturbances' the house of Soweto's black mayor, Edward Kunene, was burnt to the ground. Meanwhile thousands of black workers at Ford, Siemens and the British-owned BTR Samcol plants went on strike. The 150 000-strong National Union of Mineworkers is due to launch a national strike in the gold mines this week.

The events of the past few weeks have shown that the apartheid regime can survive only through increasing the scale and intensity of repression. The strategy of containment inaugurated by the country's rulers in the seventies has been blown apart by the sustained revolt of the black masses during the past 18 months.

Since the early seventies the South African establishment has accepted that changes are necessary to head off a revolution. After the Durban strikes in 1973 black workers were granted the legal right to strike. Petty apartheid regulations, such as segregation in parks and public places, were gradually scrapped.

In 1975 the government declared its intention to narrow the wage differential between blacks and whites and the colour bar in the building industry was scrapped. In a symbolic move celebrated by the world's press the Nico Malan theatre in Cape Town was opened to all races. In 1979 the government legalised black trade unions and granted a section of black skilled workers and professionals the right to settle permanently in designated urban areas.

The need for these reforms arose out of the changing nature of South African capitalism. In the sixties and seventies South African industry underwent a dramatic expansion which created the need for a more secure and skilled workforce. The reforms were designed to satisfy the need for a stable urban labour force and for normal methods of workplace negotiation and representation. At the same time the government intended to cultivate a section of privileged middle class blacks who would identify with the system and could be coopted into positions of control over the black masses.

In the early eighties the Botha government introduced major reforms in local government to coopt blacks into running the apartheid state at community level. The constitutional reforms introduced in 1983, under which coloured and Indian people were granted a role in non-white chambers of parliament, aimed to involve a section of the non-white population in the political process. More recent reforms, like the abolition of the notorious mixed marriages and immorality acts, were intended to integrate middle class blacks into the South African establishment.

The reform strategy of the South African ruling class has been rendered redundant by the upsurge of black militancy during the past two years. At least 120 black councillors have been attacked, five killed and 75 made homeless in a systematic campaign against collaborators in the local communities. The homes of 360 black policemen have been burnt to the ground. The government's attempt to contain black resistance with sham reforms backfired badly. It led to the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983. The UDF's successful campaign for a boycott of last year's elections to the stooge parliament provided the focus for the rising tide of political protest.

Black indignation over the state's cynical reform schemes has been underpinned by spiralling unemployment, rising prices and declining social services. The economic crisis in South Africa has led to unemployment and falling living standards even among whites. It has made conditions for blacks even worse than they were already. The black revolt has been fuelled by hostility to the denial of rights under the apartheid system and anger about deteriorating wages and working conditions.

The current strike by 950 black workers at BTR Sarmcol in Howick in Natal illustrates the scale of the problems facing the Botha regime. This subsidiary of British Dunlop sacked its entire workforce of 950 last month to end a long-running struggle for union recognition. The black workers of Howick responded by organising a boycott of all white shops and businesses in the town. When 20 BTR workers came up in court for attacking scabs the entire black township struck and marched to the court. The fact that such struggles are taking place even in a remote area like Howick indicates the politicisation that has occurred during the past 18 months of resistance.

The uprising in Soweto in 1976 was mainly student-based and attempts to involve workers were short-lived. Today all sections and generations of the black working class are involved in the struggle to defeat the apartheid system.

The government appreciates that black resistance cannot be contained by repression alone. It is pursuing a wide range of tactics to divide and grind down its opponents. Plainclothes commandos have been let loose in the townships both to terrorise blacks and to act as *agents provocateurs*. Government agencies are circulating propaganda material in the name of the ANC and UDF to defame the black leadership.

The main targets of the current crackdown in the Cape and the Rand regions are the grassroots community, political and trade union leaders who form the organised core of the black resistance. The majority of the people detained during the past week have been local leaders. By removing this layer of leaders — or driving them underground — the government hopes to 'behead' and wear down resistance in the black townships.

The other option which plays a key role in South African strategy is negotiating with moderate black leaders. Last weekend's reports suggesting the possibility of a meeting between Botha and UDF patron bishop Tutu indicate that moves in this direction are already under way. However, on both sides negotiations carry great risks. For the Botha regime entering negotiations under the direct pressure of mass revolt holds the threat of even greater disaffection among whites and even wider and more confident black resistance. Leaders like Tutu on the other hand can ill afford being seen to talk to the government unless real concessions are on offer.

For the time being there appears to be little scope for negotiation. South Africa's state of war is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Charles Longford

Russell Osborne (reflex)

Last Saturday Revolutionary Communist Party supporters held a mass protest against British backing for apartheid butchery outside the South African embassy in London

RCP

Last week's Preparing for Power conference was a great success. It was also organised at great expense. To make sure the party is financially equipped to go out and prepare for power we are appealing to our readers and supporters to donate generously to our special appeal fund.

Special thanks to Derek and Jeff in Canterbury and Raymond in Manchester. Please send contributions to Special Appeal, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Make cheques /POs payable to RCP Association.

EVENTS

British terror in Strabane

From internment to execution

On 10 August the Irish Freedom Movement is marching in London to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in Northern Ireland, when hundreds of Irish people were herded into British concentration camps. *Mick Hume* went to Strabane, County Tyrone, to see what internment and the British terror that followed it have meant for the people of one nationalist town on the Irish Border.

To meet some of the men who suffered the impact of internment in Strabane, we had to drive through the town, past the British Army checkpoint and over the bridge to Lifford in the Republic of Ireland. There, sheltering from the rain beneath the porch of a local primary school turned polling booth, were Sinn Fein councillor Liam McElhinney and his election team. 'These are all Strabane men', he said, 'but none of them have been home these last 14 years.'

McElhinney and his supporters are part of a republican expatriate community in Lifford. They moved over the Border to escape the British raiding parties that came to Strabane to round up known opponents of British rule on 9 August 1971. They can never return the half mile to their home town without risking arrest — or worse — at the hands of the occupying Crown forces.

Liam McElhinney made sure he wasn't home the day the British troops came to cart him off into custody in August 1971. He knew he was a prime target for the internment squads. 'I had joined the republican movement in 1966 when I was 15. In those days you were considered the village idiot for being a republican. But I can't remember a time when I didn't think Ireland should be free, and that people shouldn't do their bit to get the Brits out.' Strabane was a town that had suffered long and hard at the hands of the British authorities. 'When I lived there it had the highest unemployment in Western Europe. It was 85 per cent nationalist, so the attitude of the British and the Loyalists was always "starve 'em out of Northern Ireland". They succeeded for years.'

Imperial terror

'The troubles' had first hit Strabane in August 1969, when the Irish people of Derry's Bogside were besieged by Loyalists, led by the sectarian auxiliary police of the 'B' Specials. Irish people in towns like Strabane staged riots to stretch the forces of British law and order, and to take the pressure off the Bogside. 'We rioted in Strabane and they sealed off the town and brought in the 'B' Specials. People were fighting the police with bottles, stones, anything. There wasn't any shooting — we had nothing to shoot with then. But if we had, we would have used it.'

Within days of the riots British troops had invaded the streets of Northern Ireland to put down the rebellion. For the next two years they tried without success to keep the lid on the Irish people's revolt against the terms of British tyranny.

In August 1971 the British authorities went for the classic instrument of imperial terror — internment without trial. The rounding-up of hundreds of Irish people amounted to an open admission that Britain was fighting a colonial war in Ireland. While most of the raids and arrests were in Belfast and Derry, the British crackdown sparked fierce protests across Northern Ireland. Strabane exploded, and the war for Irish liberation was on.

'Things really took off with internment,' remembers McElhinney, 'there was a very emotional reaction to the arrests and the people rallied round the IRA. The local IRA unit started taking offensive action.'

The people of Strabane started rioting and building barricades out of scaffolding the day internment began. They stoned the town hall and attacked the Bowling Green police station. On the second day they trapped a British Army armoured car and jeep and stoned the troops.

On 18 August radical nationalist MP Bernadette Devlin came to the town to speak, at the end of a day of anti-internment protests during which local shops closed and women workers at the Adria knitting factory went on strike, along with postmen and council workers. After the meeting 200 Irish men and women clashed with British troops. Crown commandos shot dead 24-year old deaf mute Eamon McDevitt. The Army insisted he was 'seen to point a firearm at a group of soldiers'. Local people knew the speechless McDevitt had only been waving to friends in the crowd.

'That killing had a big effect on the people in the town, it was terrible,' says Liam McElhinney, 'but it didn't make us lay down. The local IRA unit just banged away back at the Brits.' The local IRA had already shot dead the first Ulster Defence Regiment member to die in the war, on the day internment began. The republican volunteers opened up on an Army checkpoint at Clady, machine-gunning private Winston Donnell from the back of a car.

Internment in Strabane had missed its targets, and active IRA units were able to operate across the Border with the open support of the local population. 'If a bomb went off people rushed out to find out where it was and cheer the IRA. If the boys were driving through the town after doing a job, people would line the roads to cheer.' When the IRA blew up the British customs post on the Strabane-Lifford Border in September 1971, hundreds of Irish people came out to celebrate the blow against the occupying power. When troops arrived to move them on, the revellers turned into rioters and drove the Army away.

The countryside around Strabane still bears the scars of the fighting that followed internment. The burnt out shell of the customs post rusts beside the road across the Border. The town itself is quieter today. But the Royal Ulster Constabulary men walking the streets still finger the barrels of their sub-machine guns nervously, and one stands on guard while the other dives into a sweet shop for a packet of crisps. Internment may have gone, but the war for Irish freedom continues. The British have given up interning suspected republicans — in favour of executing them.

Liam McElhinney hasn't been home since British internment squads raided his house in August 1971

Joe Breslin (left) stands at the spot where his brother was executed by the British SAS

Photographs by Jo Boatman (reflex)

At the 'head of the town' end of Strabane, a small nationalist estate sits between two hillsides. In the middle of the estate the Irish tricolour flies above a battered wooden community centre. Every telegraph pole is painted in the republican colours of green, white and orange. And in a corner of one of the sloping fields that edge the estate, there stands a little memorial holding three wreaths and fenced in to protect it from grazing cattle. It marks the spot where the last three republicans to die in the Irish War were shot dead by the British SAS, this February.

IRA volunteers Charles Breslin (20), Michael Devine (22) and his brother David (16) were executed as they crossed the field at five o'clock that February morning. 'The SAS shot them from the graveyard on top of that hill opposite,' Charles Breslin's brother Joe told us as we stood in the killing field. The Breslin's house overlooks the spot where they fell. 'We heard dozens of shots, then the boys were shouting "Don't shoot", then there was three more shots. They were all wounded and the SAS shot them through the head.'

Liberation war

The three republicans lay dead in the field for hours before the British let them be moved. 'See, these bushes weren't so green then,' explains Joe Breslin, 'so we could see them from our house. My mother had to look out at my brother's body here until 12 o'clock.' 'It's an old British tactic,' Liam McElhinney had told us, 'leave the highwayman hanging from the tree as a warning to those who might follow him.' The bodies were only removed after 200 Strabane people fought with police guarding the field, and local women threatened to go in whether the police used guns or not.

The police returned in force later that week to harass the huge march that followed Charles Breslin's coffin. 'There were 50 RUC men at our front door and hundreds more in the street,' Joe Breslin told us, 'they wouldn't let the funeral out until we took the IRA gloves and beret off the coffin. They were kicking mourners from behind. Then when the funeral march got started, the police were throwing stones at the people watching from their gardens.'

Charles Breslin was buried, along with his beret and gloves, in the graveyard from where the British assassins had first opened fire. The republicans of Strabane hope to hold an annual march in memory of him and the Devine brothers, and to build a permanent memorial. For now their murders are marked by the little wreaths and the hand-written message that stands in the grass where they died, 'in proud and loving memory':

'May they find the peace they fought to gain
Murdered at this spot on 23 February 1985
By faceless, cowardly strangers
An SAS terrorist squad'

The 14 years since internment was introduced have brought many forms of terror to the people of Strabane at the hands of 'faceless, cowardly strangers'. But the Irish people remain resolute in their opposition to British rule and their support for the IRA's liberation war.

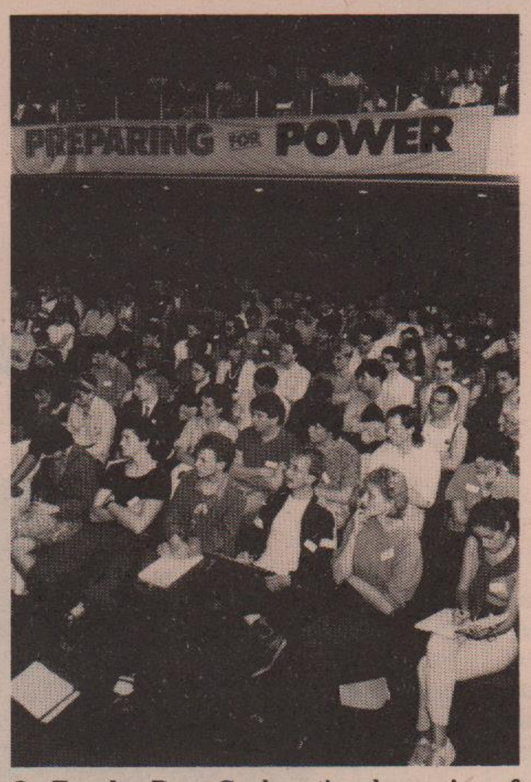
Two local Sinn Fein candidates topped polls in the May council elections. Liam McElhinney knows why they were elected. 'The elections proved the popular support for the IRA. Without the IRA, we would be finished. Without the men fighting on the front line, the republican movement wouldn't be worth *that,*' he concluded with a snap of the fingers.

The Irish Freedom Movement march on 10 August aims to demonstrate full support for the men and women on the front line of the Irish War. Join us (see page 12 for details).

PREPARING FOR POWER '85

Last week hundreds of people from all over Britain and from abroad came to London to prepare for power at the Revolutionary Communist Party's annual conference. This year's Preparing for Power was bigger and better than ever. A new audience for revolutionary communism packed into Manning Hall at the University of London Union on Saturday morning to hear the opening session on the class struggle worldwide. After the final plenary a week later many signed up as party supporters.

During the week we looked at the key questions of the moment in large plenary discussions, 13 specialist courses and hundreds of smaller, more informal workshops. The evenings were taken up with debates, music, films and two discos that packed the dancefloor. On Sunday night John Lloyd, industrial editor of the *Financial Times,* joined striking Yorkshire miner Keith Hammond and Mike Freeman, author of *Our day will come: the miners' battle for jobs,* in a round table discussion on the miners' strike.



On Tuesday Dave Cook, national organiser of the Communist Party, debated Kate Marshall of the RCP on the way forward for the left. A debate on animal rights featured the Animal Liberation Front.

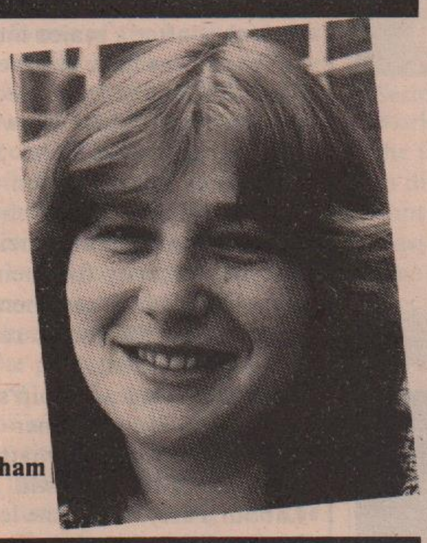
Preparing for Power was an opportunity to learn about Marxism and to find out more about the party. We talked to some people who seized the opportunity and want to carry on preparing for power with the RCP.

Shaun
Edinburgh

'I got the sack a few weeks before Preparing for Power. I started coming into conflict with my boss during the miners' strike. I tried to be a model worker but no matter what I did they wanted rid of me. It was a clear case of victimisation.

'I'd been reading *Socialist Worker* and *the next step* through the miners' strike. But it became apparent as the strike disintegrated that the Socialist Workers' Party was just as opportunist as everybody else. So I started to try to work out what made the RCP different. I read Lenin's *What is to be done?* and that helped.

'Finally I wrote off saying I wanted to get involved. The next thing I was selling the paper. The conference has been great. I went to the courses on Marxist economics and the Russian Revolution because I think they're the two most important things to start with if you want to argue with people and build the party. I took a lot of notes, learned a lot and talked to some interesting people. Now I don't want to stay static, I want to learn more.'



Kay
Birmingham

'My husband Hossein has been reading *tns* for a year and he persuaded me to come. I thought I wouldn't enjoy it at all — but every session I came out of I felt uplifted. Coming to this as a mother and knowing that my daughter Amina was in safe hands in the creche gave me a sense of real freedom. I'm a nursery nurse in the daytime and I'm housebound most evenings. I went to the course on women and the introduction to Marxism. I thought I would know everything there is to know about women, but you don't know it.

'I know that I can follow a logical argument through from start to finish now. Everything made so much sense. You're always taught to think about your own individual experience and not to question things that are unrelated to you. That's a real problem for a lot of people. Before I always found it hard to explain to people why they should care about Ireland when they seem so caught up with their own problems. But I think I could have a good try now. I've become a supporter and I'm really inspired to read and learn more.'

Naheeda
Manchester

'I went to the course on religion and the introduction to Marxism. My brother told me that I'd never get an arranged marriage if I got involved in politics. Now I've decided logically that I don't believe in Islam. I became a strong fundamentalist about two years ago. I was looking for something spiritual but I soon got disillusioned. I couldn't accept that people would have their lives run by this repressive thing. At university I became a vegetarian and an anarchist, but there was no strategy for changing the world. The introduction to Marxism sessions really sorted me out. Everything is much clearer now, not clouded in emotion. I thought the animal rights debate was great — I've never been so thoroughly convinced by a logical argument like that before. When you're at university you think you're the most intellectual person around but you learn nothing. It's really good to be in an environment where you're being challenged intellectually all the time.'

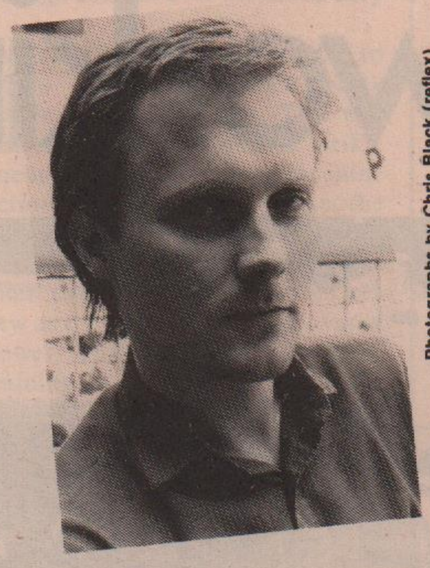
Stuart
Manchester

'I suppose I started getting more politicised during the miners' strike. I started working on a new building site 18 months ago. There was no union but I built one up. There was a 50/50 split in the workforce over the strike. The ones who didn't support it said "if they can't even get their own act together why should we support them?" I didn't have the arguments to win them over. I have now.

'I thought the introduction to Marxism would be really academic and theoretical. It was pitched at a high level, but it wasn't like that at all. The Irish course was really good. I didn't know anything about Ireland, now I feel like an expert. I had a few reservations before I came. But the whole atmosphere has given me a lot of enthusiasm, I really want to become a member.'

Hilary
Kent

'I knew nothing about the RCP before Preparing for Power, I hadn't even seen *tns.* My parents and friends said I'd be brainwashed, but I found myself sitting there and thinking it's all so reasonable, there's no magic, no mysticism, it all makes such good sense. There's been a hell of a lot to take in because really you're talking about a different way of thinking. I went to sessions on all sorts of subjects but the whole thing had a real coherence. Usually you see everything from the point of view of all different interest groups — that's the way capitalism works. But if you look at it on your own you'll never be able to see how the working class can seize power. The conference has convinced me that there is an alternative — it's the RCP.'



Jeff
Leeds

Photographs by Chris Black (reflex)

'I came to Preparing for Power four years ago and then drifted away from politics into the wilderness. In those four years *tns* kept me in touch. I think it's the only paper going that gives a thorough and clear presentation of revolutionary politics related to today's issues. It's refreshing and convincing. I came to the conference on spec after talking to an RCP supporter who encouraged me to come.

'Everything was presented in a very clear and precise fashion so even if some things went over your head a bit you always got something out of every session. I think that was the real strength of the conference and it's the real strength of the RCP. Initially I only intended to stay for the weekend but I kept finding myself scraping together enough money to stay another day until I stayed for the whole week. I'll become a supporter now and come out of the wilderness.'

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

Marxism and the IRA

Leon Brittan recently claimed that the IRA is out to set up 'some sort of Marxist state in Ireland'. Last week an editorial in *The Times* tried to establish a link between the IRA and the Revolutionary Communist Party as part of the British establishment's latest bogey — the network of 'international terrorism' and 'revolutionary Marxist violence'. The truth is much simpler, but from the point of view of the British ruling class, much more dangerous.

As the IRA has pointed out, it is not a Marxist organisation and it has no links with the governments of Nicaragua or Libya or any international communist or subversive movements. The Irish Republican Army is the military wing of a national liberation movement. Its objective is to create a united Ireland free from British rule. This is an aim for which it has won widespread popular approval in Ireland. Its base of support in the nationalist areas of the occupied Six Counties has enabled the republican movement to keep up its military resistance against one of the world's most sophisticated counter-insurgency forces for the past 16 years. The republican movement's popularity is also indicated by the recent electoral successes of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland.

The Revolutionary Communist Party's support for the republican movement has nothing to do with its politics. We support the republican movement because it is leading the fight against British rule in Ireland. Because British rule is the central barrier to social progress in Ireland, there can be no unity, no peace and no prosperity in any part of the country until British domination is brought to an end. We would support the republican movement if it was led by a collection of Catholic priests and nuns, so long as it was leading resistance against British domination.

The British establishment has periodically sought to label the IRA as Marxist as yet another attempt to alienate the movement from its supporters in Britain and abroad. Inventing links between the IRA and the Irish Freedom Movement and the RCP adds anti-communist to anti-Irish prejudice in the battery of establishment weapons against Irish solidarity activity in Britain. Yet this sort of scare journalism simply exposes the insecurity of the British ruling class and its inability to contain the Irish national struggle.

The truth of the matter is that the IRA does not need to be part of an international terrorist conspiracy. The experience of British terror in the occupied areas provides the IRA with a ready stream of young recruits. It ensures loyal community backing for all aspects of the republican struggle, from the armalite to the ballot box. This is why the IRA is, as Leon Brittan concedes, 'the predominant threat within the United Kingdom'. But Brittan and the editor of *The Times* prefer to pretend to the world that the IRA is a bunch of terrorist fanatics. This is easier than facing the fact that it is a flourishing national resistance movement that enjoys mass support for its project of breaking up the British state.

The RCP will continue to give unconditional support to the republican movement irrespective of its programme, its strategy or its tactics. As long as it remains the leading force in the struggle against British imperialism and the biggest threat to the stability of the United Kingdom, that's good enough for us.

As the left backpedals, we ask...

Which way forward for the working class?

The current debate on the British left ignores the key question of taking political power

The defeat of the miners' strike has led to much soul searching in the British labour movement. One symptom of the political crisis is a general reluctance to go beyond soul searching to formulate a coherent response to the issues of the day. This silence on key questions of policy reveals a widespread acceptance that there is no alternative to the strategy proposed by the Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock.

The left now restricts itself to quiet grumbling and muted criticism of Kinnock. Even those on the far left who are bitterly critical of Kinnock's approach have nothing of practical consequence to say. The outlook of the Socialist Workers' Party — 'I hate you but can't do anything about it' — is typical of the remnants of the so-called hard left. *Socialist Worker* recently summed up its objective of becoming the socialist conscience of the Labour Party:

'It's vital that the number of socialists resisting the drift towards the Labour right is as great as possible. For it would be disastrous if we did have a Kinnock government in two or three years time without there existing from the very beginning, a viable socialist opposition to it.'

The left's highest hope is for the return of a Labour government and its greatest ambition is to form a left-wing opposition to Kinnock.

The left's pessimistic perspective follows from its recognition that Kinnock retains the political initiative. It ignores the fact that Kinnock's ascendancy is to a considerable extent a result of lack of credibility of the various left alternatives. The collapse of the left is not merely a consequence of its political incoherence. The miners' strike exposed the bankruptcy of traditional left-wing policies, and now the whole working class is paying the price. The miners' defeat did not merely discredit Scargill-style Labour left politics. It discredited trade union militancy and left-wing ideas in general. This is the secret of Kinnock's current rise in prestige.

Kinnock has succeeded in using the miners' defeat to discredit militancy and to isolate the left. Over the past few months the Labour left has disintegrated and the hard left rump around Tony Benn serves only as a sorry reminder of past illusions. Building on fear borne of economic insecurity and the disappointment of defeat, the Labour Party leadership has come up with a set of policies which exude the spirit of capitalist moderation. It preaches resignation, acceptance of harsh realities and makes a virtue of pragmatism.

Retreat to realism

Kinnock's newfound confidence is not based on the strength of his policies. It is based on the view that after a major industrial setback such as the miners have suffered, the only hope left for workers is the election of a Labour government. This is why Kinnock could contemptuously dismiss Scargill's rhetoric at the recent miners' union conference. Nobody on the NUM executive could refute Kinnock's claim that miners and their families 'know that the only security for their industry will come from a Labour government elected through the ballot box'. Kinnock's realism now rules the labour movement.

The Labour leadership's offensive against the left is a certain winner. It is based on the calculation that no matter how deeply it is humiliated, the left will remain loyal to the Labour Party. Since the left is prepared to play its traditional role of the loyal socialist conscience, the Labour leadership knows that it has nothing to fear on its left flank. While Labour's hacks keep kicking Militant in the teeth, its leaders keep crawling back for more, pledging their undying loyalty to the Labour

Russell Osborne (reflex)

Winning a majority in Parliament (top) will not bring control over the state's repressive apparatus (below): for the working class political power means destroying the capitalist state machine

Party and its programme.

All this helps to explain why, despite much talk, the much-vaunted debate on the way forward for the working class has never really taken off. As long as the left remains wedded to the Labour Party it lacks the independence to develop a political alternative. When the left has already conceded to Kinnock the right to lead the labour movement for the indefinite future, further discussion becomes academic.

The discussion taking place on the left is not really about the way forward for the working class. It is about the way forward for the left inside the Labour Party. Most contributions to the debate confuse the question of what the working class needs to move forward with the left's problems of defending its own position inside the official labour movement. This approach reduces the question of strategy and tactics to the problem of what the left should do within the institutions of the labour bureaucracy.

The left's starting point is that any progress depends on its capacity to safeguard its position inside the Labour Party. This assumption has been clearly stated by John McDonnell, a co-editor of the hard left weekly *Labour Herald*. In a recent interview he argued that 'the terrain of struggle is to try and transform the party along the lines of those socialists who originally came into it to ensure that it becomes a revolutionary party'. McDonnell admirably spells out the central theme of the British left. He explains why most of the discussion is not about policies but about the tactical problems of the left inside the Labour Party. The current discussion concentrates on three issues.

The first problem that exercises the left is the question of how critical it should be of the Kinnock leadership. Everybody understands that Kinnock as prime minister would continue Labour's consistent record of betrayal. The argument has been whether the left should challenge Kinnock's leadership and how. There is now a growing consensus that a direct challenge to Kinnock is out of the question. Some argue for a confrontation with Kinnock over a specific issue while others prefer the *Socialist Worker* formula of a platonic opposition that piously points the finger every time Kinnock sells out. The justification for this approach is that at least such pressure would prevent the Labour leadership from going too far.

Strategy and tactics

The second issue that concerns the left is party reform. The left has always tried to improve its own position through reforming the party machinery. This creates an illusion of progress at a relatively small cost to the Labour leadership. It is now widely recognised that the highly celebrated reforms of the early eighties have not made the party more democratic. They certainly have not weakened the hold of the labour bureaucracy over the party machinery. The failure of past constitutional reforms has not stopped the left from trying again. The campaign to establish black sections is the latest organisational device to transform the Labour Party. When this campaign reaches the same dead end as all its predecessors the left will no doubt launch another crusade to reform yet another aspect of the party machine.

The left's third and most pressing preoccupation is the question of self-defence. The one thing that the left hates more than Kinnock is its own isolation within the labour movement. Living under the wing of the Labour Party allows the left to avoid coming to terms with its remoteness from the working class. The very existence of the left depends on its position inside the Labour Party. Without the Labour machine the left would be like fish out of water. This is why the failures of the left in reselection battles, the purge of left wingers from positions of influence and the witch-hunt against Militant are of such grave concern to left-wing activists. It is also why there is so much talk of 'fighting the witch-hunts' and 'stopping the purges'.

Fear of isolation is a strong motive not to rock the boat. Many hard left activists are keeping their heads down to avoid provoking attention. Militant supporters have even initiated disciplinary actions against those on their left, to demonstrate their loyalty to the Labour Party and to take the heat off their own faction.

The poverty of left-wing ideas is a direct reflection of the narrow scope of the left's preoccupations and activities. Since it makes no pretence of fighting for a political alternative the left is indifferent to wider questions of strategy. Discussion is restricted to tactical considerations. Its horizons are defined by the Labour Party machine.

The Labour Party now promotes itself as the only hope for positive change. The TUC is fully preoccupied trying to contain the tendencies towards the break-up of the trade union movement as right-wing unions such as the electricians and engineers go full steam ahead in making no-strike deals at the expense of other unions. It has given up any pretence of giving a lead to the labour movement. Meanwhile the Labour leadership has made it clear that its exclusive concern is to win the next general election. To achieve that end it has adopted policies which promise further setbacks to the working class. It is not surprising that Kinnock has won growing esteem within the establishment.

It is generally accepted among left-wing activists that a Kinnock government will not benefit the working class. The left's only justification for supporting Kinnock's party is that 'at least Labour would be better than the Tories'. This is the familiar method of choosing 'the lesser evil'. But replacing a gang of true blue Tories with a group of pale pink Tories is not going to advance the cause of the working class. Indeed a Kinnock government would probably have the same sort of demoralising effect as the Wilson/Callaghan governments of the seventies. It would undermine working class resistance and further discredit left-wing politics.

Any discussion of the way forward for the working class must begin with the lessons taught by workers' bitter experience of the Labour Party in power. The only qualification that is required is to point out that the next Labour government will be even worse than those of the past because the scale of the recession now means that there is even less scope for concessions to the working class.

Break with Labour

Serious discussion of the way forward for the working class cannot be restricted to debating the future of the Labour Party. The only point in discussing the Labour Party is because of its continuing political influence over the working class movement. Despite its appalling past record and its performance during recent events like the miners' strike, the Labour Party has not yet lost its influence. It is obvious that there can be no advance in the class struggle without breaking Labour's grip.

One reason why the Labour Party's influence has never been threatened is the left's reluctance to fight for a new movement with working class politics. At every critical moment it has found an excuse to explain why Labour is the only instrument for change. During the miners' strike all the left denounced Kinnock's ignominious role while praising the grass roots of the party for its fine work. For the left the action of political activists without any influence excused the sordid record of Labour. After the strike Scargill justified his inability to win anything for his members by arguing that a future Labour government would give an amnesty to the miners, protect jobs and give workers more control over their industry. Scargill knows that the next Labour government will do no such thing. But he also knows that he has to offer his members some hope for the future.

Instead of raising false hopes those who really want to defend the interests of working class people should point out the facts of life about Labour. This means exposing the thoroughly capitalist politics of the party in order to raise workers' expectations and create the conviction that there is a world to win. This is a matter of urgency because millions of workers have been forced to lower their expectations and accept unemployment as a way of life. The issue is not whether there is enough to go around — there is more than enough. The issue is who controls the resources of society. The widely discussed economic problems of British society — inflation, interest rates, the exchange rate of the pound — are the problems of the capitalist class. The problem for workers is how to get the political control we need to eliminate exploitation, the capitalist market and the drive for profit.

For the Labour Party and much of the left political control is a secondary matter. The Labour leaders assume that political control comes with running parliament and they reduce the struggle for power to the quest to win a majority in parliament. The left merely adds that a mass movement is needed to put pressure on parliament to keep it on the right course. This scenario ignores the crucial fact that the real power in our society is not exercised through parliament. Capitalist power is derived from the ownership of capital and this power is maintained through control over the machinery of the state.

The capitalist class has always been able to dominate society no matter which party dominates the House of Commons. This was clearly demonstrated during the miners' strike. While parliament debated, the state machine moved into action. The courts, the police, the media and even the department of health and social security instinctively followed the dictates of their capitalist paymasters. They made up the law as they went along, discovered new police powers and unleashed a reign of terror in the mining communities.

State power

The issue is not who runs parliament but who controls the state. Parliament is really only the public relations department of the state machine. It is concerned with winning popular consent for capitalist policies. Parliamentarians and ministers who have taken their roles too seriously and over-stepped the mark have always been forced to retreat under the pressure of the state machine.

Political control is the central problem facing any movement that aims to remove capitalist restrictions on the organisation and distribution of society's resources. Control cannot be won through parliament or even through capturing the state machine. The British state is an institution specially designed to protect capitalist power. It cannot be taken over and used for the defence of working class interests. Power cannot be taken away from the capitalist class without destroying the institutions that have been specially designed to maintain it.

The forces of state coercion cannot be re-directed by a working class government to protect ordinary people. The magistrates that have made a living out of victimising miners, black youth and other oppressed people cannot be expected to punish the exploiters who have trained them. Unless we eliminate the existing British state, working class power will have no real substance.

The left's current discussions ignore the question of political power. A few left-wing publications are occasionally prepared to go so far as to suggest that there is an alternative to the capitalist market. Recent issues of *Labour Herald* have carried a few articles criticising the Labour Party's capitalist economics. Others have demanded bolder economic policies. But the question of the political power necessary for implementing economic policies in the interests of the working class is studiously avoided.

The left's silence about the issue of power is not the result of some intellectual misunderstanding. It stems from a fear of confronting the problem of political control and the hope that a few problems can be solved this side of the revolution. This is what gives the discussion its unreal character. Any proposals of reforms or socialist economic policies which ignore the question of power are empty dreams. In fact they are deceptive because they suggest that there are some purely economic solutions to the problems facing the working class.

Kinnock offers nothing to workers but at least his policies are consistent with the realities of capitalist economics. Those on the left offer the rhetoric of socialist policies but refuse to tackle the political obstacles to achieving them. The left's alternative is rightly dismissed by right-wing politicians and millions of workers as pie in the sky.

The left's evasion of the necessity for political power leads workers to go along with its quest for solutions in the economic sphere. This is why even after 10 years of recession most workers still put their faith in a future capitalist economic recovery rather than in the pursuit of political change. This narrow economic approach has led workers to accept redundancies, declining living standards and declining social services in the hope of a better tomorrow. The left's reluctance to challenge the politics of economic reality has even disarmed those militants who wanted to fight back.

The seizure of power is the precondition for establishing a society where decisions about the allocation of resources are no longer determined by the dictates of profit. Any realistic working class strategy must confront the political power of the British establishment. It is political power that decides who rules and what interests prevail. The miners had an excellent cause but the capitalist class had the power. A Labour government, even under a left-wing leader like Tony Benn, could give no more to the miners than the capitalist class allows.

The next step

We do not reject capitalist economics in the view that workers can achieve nothing short of making a revolution. The working class can achieve results in the present if it organises itself into a force that threatens the system. What frightens the capitalist class is any threat to its political power. It will make concessions but only when it is faced with a real political challenge.

Any real alternative to Kinnock must be based on a political alternative to the system that he represents. A genuinely anti-capitalist alternative gives workers the freedom to decide what they need instead of choosing how much charity they can expect from their exploiters. Such an alternative is the only realistic defence of workers' interests. Many on the left are vaguely aware that this is the case but are reluctant to draw the practical conclusions. Fear of isolation and traditional loyalties towards Labour have prevented thousands from fighting for the only alternative that can really work. What better time than now to take the step towards building a revolutionary working class party?

Frank Richards

INTERNATIONAL

Imperialists can't fight apartheid

Western sanctions won't work

Today anti-apartheid campaigners in the USA, Britain and in Europe are demanding that the Western powers impose sanctions against South Africa to press premier Botha to relax state terror and adopt a more liberal approach. France has already imposed economic sanctions and the US congress is threatening to take action. But the lesson of history is that measures of this sort do not work.

American civil rights campaigner John Jacob has called upon the US government 'to move beyond pious words to immediate action to put the screws on the South African racists'. In Britain left-wing Labour MP Kevin Barron has declared that 'what is needed now is a quick United Nations decision to impose sanctions and to demand human rights in South Africa'. This call has been echoed by archbishop Trevor Huddleston, the president of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and by miners' union leader Peter Heathfield. The far left *Socialist Worker* last week criticised the Tory government for failing to go even as far as the USA in considering sanctions against South Africa. Let's look at some examples of the use of sanctions in the past.

● Abyssinia, 1935

One of the biggest campaigns for sanctions in modern history took place in response to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) in 1935. Mussolini's military adventure was one of the skirmishes that paved the way to the Second World War. As an overtly aggressive act by one of Europe's rising fascist states it alarmed the other Western powers and provoked a storm of anti-fascist outrage from liberals and left wingers in many countries. The result was that the League of Nations (forerunner of the United Nations) voted in favour of an embargo on the supply of all products that might be useful for military purposes to the Italian government.

The League of Nations sanctions had little effect. Although the allied powers were suspicious of Italian militarism they had more sympathy with fellow imperialists than they had with the people of Africa. Sir Samuel Hoare, then British foreign secretary,made clear that the British ruling class had no intention of undermining the Italian regime. 'Let the Italians dismiss from their minds', he reassured them, 'the suspicion that we wish to weaken Signor Mussolini's own position and to destroy the fascist regime'. The League's sanctions served to appease public opinion, but had no practical consequence. They were dropped altogether a year later.

● Rhodesia, 1965

A more recent example of the use of sanctions in Africa was the British government's action against Ian Smith's regime in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) which made an illegal declaration of independence from Britain in 1965. Smith's white supremacist regime was an embarrassment to Britain, given its considerable stake in black Africa. Radical opinion in Britain demanded government action to bring the racist regime back within the control of the British state. To put pressure on Smith, Harold Wilson's Labour government imposed tight restrictions on trade and investment with the Salisbury regime. These measures were fully endorsed on behalf of the other Western powers by the United Nations.

Ten years later the Smith government was embroiled in the civil war which finally led to the creation of an independent Zimbabwe in 1980. A series of press and television exposures revealed what had become common knowledge — the sanctions had become inoperative in practice. The British government's official Bingham report in the late seventies could not conceal the scale of the defiance of sanctions by British-based multinational companies.

Oil supplied by the British and French companies Total and Shell Mozambique increased from 165 000 tonnes in 1968 to 300 000 tonnes in 1974. All supplies were routed through South Africa and Mozambique, but 'since neither local management nor Shell Mozambique knew for sure that any particular consignment was destined for Rhodesia, there was no contravention of the 1965 sanctions order'. Engineering and military supplies passed along the same routes.

The final defeat of the white racist regime owed nothing to Western sanctions. Yet Britain's posturing against Smith allowed the British authorities to retain the influence with the liberation movements. This was crucial in enabling Britain to play a mediating role in the Lancaster House talks in London which finally established a sympathetic government in the new Zimbabwe.

Chris Black (reflex)

Telling British backers that Botha is a racist won't stop them supporting the regime as long as there are profits in apartheid

● South Africa, 1977

Last month five men were convicted in the Midlands for supplying arms to South Africa in contravention of the 1977 arms embargo. This restriction was introduced through the United Nations in response to the international outcry over the repression carried out by the South African state at Soweto and elsewhere in 1976. The five men were engaged in 'an extensive, profitable and well-organised operation' to supply high technology components for guided missiles, aircraft and weapon systems. None of these representatives of an international terrorist conspiracy will spend more than a few months in prison. The recent trial only exposed the extent to which the arms embargo is being defied.

The ban refers to 'arms and related materials of all types'. Yet the British government still grants export licences for equipment such as aircraft and radar systems which can be presented as having a 'dual purpose'. Illicit aircraft components which were exported as 'parts for the South African mining industry' were returned on the grounds that they 'were failing at 40 000 feet'. A radar system previously classified as having an exclusively military function was shipped to South Africa after the government suddenly discovered that it had a 'genuine civil application'.

The only effect of the Western arms embargo has been to encourage South Africa's domestic arms industry and to promote diverse channels for the illicit supply of essential components. The failure of Western sanctions against repressive regimes in Africa simply shows that, whatever their reservations, the Western powers have more to gain from propping up these regimes than they have from assisting resistance movements against them. This is confirmed if we look at one case in which Western sanctions were effective in bringing down a Third World government — Chile.

● Chile, 1973

The election of the radical leader Salvador Allende as head of state in Chile in 1970 in place of the pro-Western Eduardo Frei was popular in Chile but not in the USA. Allende's plan to make the Chilean economy more responsive to the needs of the people in defiance of the demands of foreign investors incensed the Washington government. It responded by imposing a block on credit and restrictions on investment and trade. The USA went to great lengths to disrupt Chile's commercial links with other countries. In this case the USA ensured that there was no evasion of the network of sanctions and they had a devastating effect. While the US economic blockade destabilised the Allende government the CIA pumped funds into right-wing opposition movements of all sorts. The final result was the coup that inaugurated the Pinochet dictatorship and a wave of mass repression in 1973.

The only time that Western sanctions work is when the Western powers want to use them to bring down a popular government which takes action against imperialist interests. The sanctions currently being imposed by the USA against Nicaragua are another example of the same approach. But the Western powers will never act to destabilise a pro-Western dictatorship no matter how reactionary its domestic regime.

John Pearson

REAGAN AND THATCHER

Botha's biggest supporters

Last week's announcement of sanctions against South Africa by French premier Laurent Fabius has won the praise of radical commentators around the world. But in reality this is a cheap gesture by the socialist government. Reagan and Thatcher cannot afford such gestures — they have too much at stake in apartheid.

Mitterrand's socialist administration in France has often tried to cut a radical figure on international issues. With elections due next year and the socialists trailing in the opinion polls he badly needs to boost his government's radical image. France has a relatively small economic or military stake in South Africa. Its major sphere of interest is in the 'franc zone' in north and west Africa. Hence anti-apartheid gestures cost the French government little and are mainly aimed at the electorate at home.

Britain and the USA are more reluctant to impose sanctions against South Africa because they are the major sponsors of the apartheid regime. South Africa was a proud outpost of the British empire and it remained in the commonwealth until 1961. Britain registered a trade surplus of £500m with South Africa last year and its investments there are currently increasing at the rate of £200m a year. The USA has taken a growing interest in South Africa over the post-war years in its capacity as global capitalist policeman.

Any sanctions that the Western powers may impose on South Africa will be as ineffective as those against repressive regimes in the past. The objective of Western pressure is to stabilise the apartheid system not to destroy it. Thatcher and Reagan may criticise the excesses of South African racism, but at the end of the day their interests lie in preserving it. They always counsel future reform, while endorsing repression in the present.

The campaign for sanctions is not merely a waste of energy. It has a more dangerous consequence. By appealing to the rulers of the Western nations to play a progressive role in South Africa the left legitimises their interference against the interests of the blacks. The international campaign for sanctions against South Africa and all the United Nations resolutions allow Western politicians associated with these demands to play a role as mediators between the imperialist authorities and the representatives of the black masses (see page 2). Such negotiations can only lead to compromises with imperialist domination to the disadvantage of the black people.

Campaigning for government sanctions can only divert activists from genuine solidarity work. The only force in Western society that has any interest in backing the struggle against apartheid is the working class.

Instead of appealing to the British government to fight apartheid our aim should be to mobilise working class opposition against a government that has long actively supported the apartheid regime and a British ruling class that has bathed in the blood of African people for more than 100 years.

REVIEWS

TORY STORIES

True Blue

Julian Critchley, *Westminster Blues,* Elm Tree Books £7.95
Robert Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher,* Fontana £3.95

Julian Critchley's light-hearted reminiscences are as revealing an insight into the Tory Party today as Robert Blake's ponderous history.

Critchley is a backbench Tory 'wet' and a persistent, if ineffectual, critic of Thatcher's government. He looks back nostalgically to the Tory Party of the fifties. He misses the patrician atmosphere generated by former leaders like Harold Macmillan (now Lord Stockton). He compares this favourably with the 'businessmen with flat, provincial accents' who now dominate the party. Critchley dislikes the flat-accented businessmen for their conversion of the Conservative Party to 'nineteenth century liberalism'. He laments the Thatcherites' 'thirst for conflict' which he fears may be 'politically unwise'.

Thatcher's defenders in the cabinet believe that the government's current unpopularity is due to poor presentation of its policies. Critchley, on the other hand, thinks the problem is that 'they have been only too successful in doing precisely that'. He believes that it is the policy and not the presentation that is ruining the Conservatives' chances of winning the next election.

Robert Blake takes a longer view. The latest edition of his well-established official history of the party includes the period since the end of Winston Churchill's leadership in April 1955. Blake is strong on the personalities of Tory leaders but weak on the wider political context. He does, however, explain how the Tories have succeeded as a party of government over the present century. Universal adult suffrage ought to have dealt a death blow to a party that was so closely identified with the ruling class. How did the Tories survive?

The secret of the Tories' success lay in their identity as the national interest party. Their patriotic appeal has enabled them to win the support of the bulk of the middle classes and a significant minority of workers. Blake also points out that the Tories were able to consolidate their chauvinist base because of the weak response of the opposition. Both the Liberal Party and the Labour Party have been critical of the excesses of British militarism abroad and jingoism at home. But from the Boer War to the Falklands War both parties have capitulated to the national interest of the British ruling class. Feeble resistance to chauvinist sentiments has helped to give the more consistent Tory patriotism widespread popularity.

Tory 'wets' like Julian Critchley are alarmed that the ruling class offensive against the welfare state, state education and local government will undermine Tory support among middle class people, and provoke a working class backlash against the system. Conservative governments can come and go. But however strained relations between the classes, the Tories' ruling class backers will remain in power as long as their opposition can be relied upon to rally round the flag.

Rob Knight

From patricians to pugilist: Tory leaders Churchill, Macmillan, Thatcher

HIROSHIMA 40 YEARS ON

Tears are not enough

Kenzaburo Oe (editor), *Fire from the ashes,* Readers International £3.50

Early on the morning of 6 August 1945 an American bomber dropped its lethal cargo on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. It was the first military use of atomic power. A few days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

The two bombs devastated the two cities. Thousands died. Many more died within weeks. Radiation sickness struck down more. People still die from wasting diseases caused by their exposure to radiation. Survivors have killed themselves rather than live with the memory of the USA's final solution to its war with Japan.

Fire from the ashes, first published in Japan in 1983, is a vivid testimony to the horror of modern warfare. This collection of nine short stories by or about those who experienced the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a reminder of the depths of brutality to which the Western powers will sink to defend their interests.

Kinuko is a little girl who carefully collected the ashes of her parents from the ruins of their home and carries them everywhere in a tin. Thirty years after the event she has to go into hospital for the removal of glass fragments embedded in her back as a result of the blast.

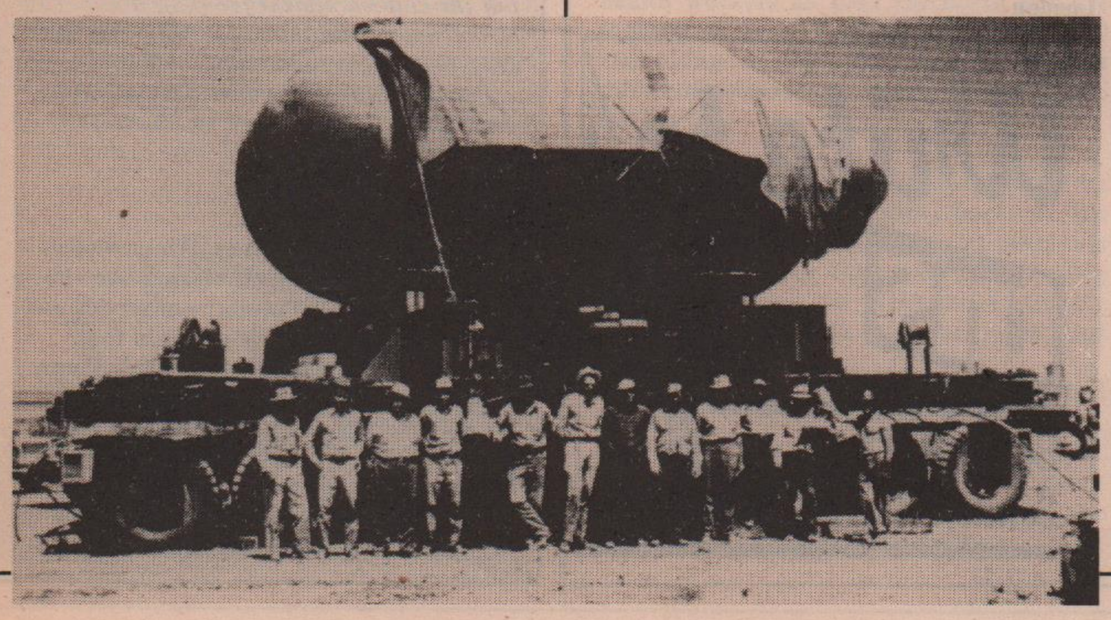
Most of these stories were originally published during the fifties and sixties. Why republish them in the eighties? The editor gives us a clue. The stories are not merely literary expressions of what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They are 'also highly significant vehicles for thinking about the contemporary world'.

The contemporary world is a world in which Japan is rearming to defend its interests in the Pacific basin. During the reconstruction of the fifties and sixties the Japanese ruling class accepted an 'anti-war' constitution and depended on the USA to defend it. Now that the Japanese can no longer rely on the USA to do all the work, the constitutional guarantees against militarism are being increasingly abandoned.

The rise of right-wing militarist sentiments has put the Japanese peace movement on the defensive. Supported by Japan's moderate socialist and communist parties, the peace movement has always put its anti-war policies in the context of its hostility to the USA and its loyalty to the Japanese nation. It was thus highly vulnerable to the more aggressive chauvinism of the right. From its peak of popular support in the early sixties it has steadily lost support. Once mass demonstrations have turned into tired ritual turnouts of the faithful. The movement now hopes to revive its fortunes by reminding a younger generation of the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The peace movement's weakness remains its narrow anti-Americanism and its Japanese nationalism. While it emphasises its hostility to nuclear weapons, especially to US ships carrying nuclear warheads, the movement has become increasingly reconciled to Japanese conventional rearmament. This book's emotional reminders of the horrors of past nuclear war disguise the Japanese peace movement's accommodation to Japanese militarism in the present.

Andrew Matthews



PUNK POLITICS

Shove off

Julie Burchill, *Love it or shove it,* Century Publishing £3.95

Julie Burchill is the precocious radical rock music journalist who became famous for her lively writings in the *New Musical Express* during the heyday of punk, and moved on to the well-dressed style politics of *The Face,* from which much of this collection is taken.

When she sticks to writing about what she knows about Burchill can be sharp and very witty. What she knows is the music business and popular culture. She is at her withering best lambasting the pretensions of show biz personalities. Her criticism of fashions in rock journalism is often devastating. Her celebration of working class women's devotion to high camp entertainment like the Collins sisters Joan and Jackie is accurate and amusing.

Don't expect political revelation through pop music, she warns. And don't try to impose political purity on pop music when it cannot take it. If you want sound politics, she advises, read the books — don't expect to get it on Radio One. Lennon and McCartney have their place, but Marx and Lenin have the politics.

Burchill should take her own advice a bit more to heart. When she steps out of the world of pop music to deliver her opinions on the state of the world, the glitter and venom of her writing help to dress up some fairly conventional views. Her May Day 1981 address to *The Face* readers on the subject of the Falklands War is a good example. She praises chief Labour windbag Michael Foot for 'speaking for the country', and denounces Thatcher for being caught off guard in the hour of the nation's peril.

Most of all Burchill hates America and things American. She quotes approvingly from a speech by Enoch Powell to confirm that the USA is a greater threat to British sovereignty than the USSR. Burchill is a sure shot with graphic and telling images and metaphors. All Americans are like Charles Manson and his satanic hippy colony. They spread herpes, pornography and eat too many sweets. For such a youthful anti-establishment rebel her sympathies with the Soviet Union are remarkably similar to those of the tired old men who sell *Soviet Weekly.*

Burchill likes to shock her readers. But her face-pulling at the establishment is no more shocking than that of a naughty adolescent. And she has already grown up into middle-aged respectability — last year she started writing for the *Sunday Times* review section.

John Johnson

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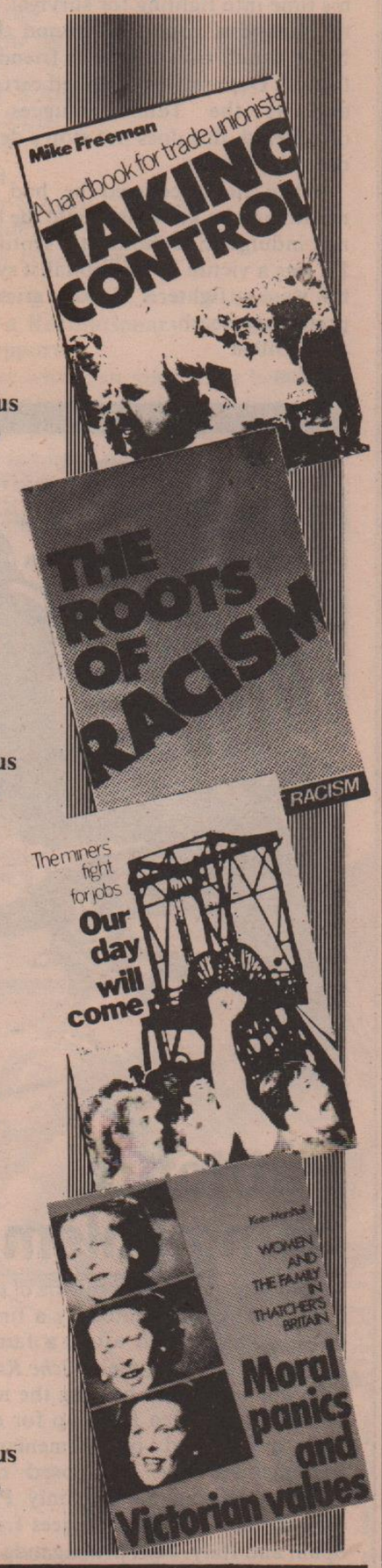

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LETTERS

Death of a revolutionary

Ed died of cancer in London three weeks ago. He was an Ethiopian revolutionary and a loyal supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Ed contacted the party from Reading in 1979. As a student in Addis Adaba Ed had been involved in building opposition to the Stalinist Mengistu regime. While working as a civil servant word reached him that he was about to be arrested.

Without even telling his fiancée he slipped away one weekend and joined Maoist groups operating clandestinely in rural areas. For two years he fought as a guerrilla, but he broke with Maoism over his support for oppressed nationalities like the Eritreans against Ethiopian chauvinism. As a consequence he found himself on the run once more and ended up in Sudan as a refugee, poverty stricken and hungry, always watching his back.

By constant perseverence and against all the odds Ed managed to get a grant to study in Britain (he was due to be awarded a doctorate this year). But the British government refused him refugee status. How do you prove with documents that your country of origin will murder you if you return? No amount of harrowing experiences moves the home office when your skin is black and you are at its mercy.

But Ed continued to sell *the next step* and argue for Irish self-determination and working class revolution. As his student days drew to an end he was forced to put all his time into fighting for survival. He wrote to numerous countries around the world. None would take him. His friends became frantic. Deportation equalled certain death, and as the Tamil refugees recently discovered, this does not stop a deportation order in Britain.

When he discovered he had cancer a month ago he knew he would die but he did not indulge in a moment's sentimentality. Ed was a victim of the capitalist system, but he was a fighter. We all grieve at his premature death.

John Dillon
London

Patriotic communism

In February 1944, 23 members of the French resistance were executed by a firing squad outside Paris. Soon after, a famous Nazi propaganda poster, the *Affiche Rouge* ('Red Poster'), was issued bearing the names and photos of the men lined up for execution. The group, led by Armenian Missak Manouchian, was composed of several different nationalities, mainly Polish and Hungarian Jews and refugees from fascist Spain and Italy. Nazi propaganda presented this as evidence that the resistance was a foreign, Jewish-controlled plot. The *Affiche Rouge* was practically the only reminder of the role played by immigrant workers in the defeat of Nazi Germany until a recent television documentary about the Manouchian group entitled *Les 'terroristes' a la retraite* ('Retired terrorists').

The documentary traces this forgotten struggle from the first days of the German occupation, although immigrant workers were organised effectively only in the FTP-MOI under the auspices of the French Communist Party (PCF) from early 1943. The documentary is built around interviews with veterans of the FTP-MOI. Forty years on these forgotten men are still ghettoised in the same exploitative jobs that they came to before the war. From behind their sewing machines and tailors' benches they paint a vivid picture of the popular anti-fascism of the time.

The problem for them, however, was that anti-fascism in France, as in Britain, was built upon the mobilisation of chauvinist sentiments against the German aggressor, not upon a defence of the independent interests of the working class. In line with the general Stalinist orientation of this period the PCF's 'more patriotic than thou' approach aimed at outflanking its rivals in the pursuit of post-war hegemony. As the hour of 'liberation' approached it became embarrassing to have a militant vanguard composed of names like Grzywacz, Wasjbrot, Fingerzweig and Manouchian. In the weeks leading up to the mass arrests of November 1943, the PCF cut off funds to the FTP-MOI in Paris. Feeling the net closing in, Manouchian appealed for permission to take his group into the countryside. The request was denied by his superiors.

By implying that the PCF may have deliberately betrayed the Manouchian group, the 'Retired terrorists' programme unleashed a storm of controversy. A PCF campaign managed to have the programme banned initially. When it was finally shown it was accompanied by a television debate in which four of the nine participants represented the party viewpoint. The debate was a damp squib: the communist senator who led the indignant attack on the film ended up almost purring as Gaullist resistance leader Chaban-Delmas assured him that in a war people always had to be sacrificed, and he could quite understand that the PCF may have sacrificed these men to the higher interests of 'La France'.

The bourgeoisie can afford to be 'understanding' when the PCF puts the national interest before the interest of workers, especially foreign workers. And while the Manouchian affair has presented an opportunity to score some points against the PCF, all but the crudest right-wing elements have stopped short of attacking its lifeline to the 'heroic age' of the resistance. In the final analysis the ruling class prefers a tame, patriotic PCF rump that established its 'national legitimacy' with the blood of people like Manouchian to the dangerous vacuum that is growing in proportion to the demise of traditional French Stalinism.

Louis Dufoix
Paris

Why stand alone?

Preparing for Power answered many questions that I had about the politics of the RCP, whose level of debate and analysis was generally of a high standard. However, there are for me a number of political differences that may prove irreconcilable.

Whilst I understand your desire to break with the traditional mould of British politics I feel that this has led to a self-imposed policy of grand isolationism and a desire for deliberate abstentionism. There has always been a problem for revolutionaries to reconcile theory with practice and I think the RCP has not yet come to terms with this problem.

One major problem is your refusal to call for a vote for Labour. While it is necessary to build an independent working class party, until such an organisation is in a position to challenge the dominance of Labour then the left must call for a vote for Labour. The left in this country is in a crisis, with the majority of revolutionaries involved in various forms of entry politics. We need to persuade these comrades that their strategy is incorrect and there is a need to build a party outside the Labour Party. However, the strategy that the RCP has undertaken will not have the mass appeal necessary to undertake such a project.

Marxism is a living ideology that inevitably leads to comrades reaching different conclusions. The task that faces the left is how to reconcile these differences so that a united revolutionary organisation can be built without resorting to either permanent factionalism or monotholism. The question that your party must face up to is whether you will take part in such a project or continue to remain aloof. The RCP is in a position to make a valuable contribution to the building of a revolutionary alternative. But it must first break with its doctrinaire attitude towards other socialists.

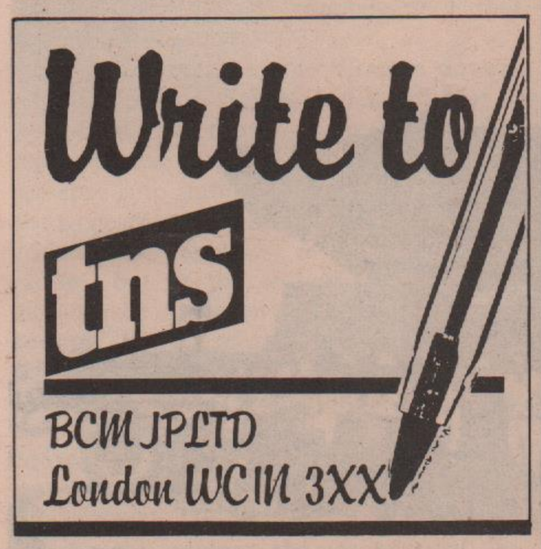
Howard Fuller
Brixton, London

Animal rights

Lynda Hargreaves' letter *(tns* 14) displays the irrational outlook that is characteristic of supporters of animal rights. She begins by saying that 'animals should have every right in this world as we do'. But animals are not like human beings. They have no capacity to transform themselves through transforming the natural world — this is the unique feature of human society. The whole of human civilisation results from man's capacity to cooperate with other human beings to free society from the tyranny of nature. The subordination of the earth, the seas, plant and animal life to mankind is central to the development of the productive forces that is the condition for the progress of human society.

The concept of rights is itself a product of the particular social development of the human species. It did not exist in primitive cultures, in societies based on slavery or even in feudal times. It only came into existence when the development of capitalism fostered the individualistic outlook that is characteristic of modern bourgeois society. In relation to animals the concept of rights is therefore meaningless. Worse, it degrades human beings and can only stand in the way of progress.

Ian Harlow
London



STEPPING OUT

Joining the British army on a Youth Training Scheme certainly gives you a taste of The Professionals' tactics. Several young recruits have quit the Aldershot barracks, claiming three corporals punched them in the testicles and made them eat donkey droppings. A major John Quin insists that the corporals are 'first-class soldiers'. Of course they are. They were only following the two golden rules for British terrorists on duty in Ireland: 'kick 'em in the balls, and when they ask you why, give 'em a mouthful of shit about democracy.'

What did the infamous Ronnie 'Rambo' Reagan do in hospital while doctors played with his polyps? Vice-president Bush took his briefcase with the bomb buttons, so he needed another toy to amuse him – perhaps something like the new nuclear war video games. First came 'Raid over Moscow', which plays the 'Star spangled banner'. Now there's the continental version, 'Theatre Europe'. This one won't be to Reagan's taste. When you request the nuclear strike code, you get a blast of John Lennon's 'Give peace a chance', the sound of a baby crying, and a whining woman's voice saying 'If this is what you really want, the code is...' The recuperating Ronnie has got a big enough pain in the behind without this sort of pinko propaganda.

Speaking of 'Raid over Moscow', the video wargame has recently upset the West Midlands TUC. The Birmingham bureaucrats have denounced it as 'anti-socialist' and are threatening to enter the software market themselves with alternative titles like 'CND blockade on Molesworth'. 'If we are to consider ourselves as leaders of progress', declares the local TUC, 'we must take full advantage of whatever means is necessary to propagate our ideas within (?) the people of this land.' The editor of a computer mag has reassured them that there is already a game which involves 'flinging nuclear waste at Mrs Thatcher in Downing Street'. He also warned the labour leaders that the once-booming software market is now very depressed with many firms going bust. As ever, the strategy of the TUC's 'leaders of progress' is at least two years behind what the capitalists are up to.

If you were thinking of sponsoring a candidate for enrolment into the City of Edinburgh Campsie Club Apprentice Boys of Derry, I have obtained a copy of the official guide. 'Candidates must be Protestants, not attached in any way to Roman Catholics', they must have 'no beliefs in extreme nationalist, republican or left-wing politics, and be at least 16', they must 'respect and honour Her Majesty the Queen and the royal family, support the Crown and its succession being Protestant', and they must 'support the Ulster Loyalist cause and seek to maintain Ulster as a part of the United Kingdom'. You'll have to shell out the club enrolment fee (£5), a 'Londonderry' initiation fee (£3), club dues (£1), benevolent fund (20p), cost of collarette (£18), and other 'demonstration dress' (£?). It doesn't say whether there's a waiting list.

Norman Tebbit's recent speech on violent minorities (see editorial) blamed 'the violent society' on 'the end of national service and the emergence of flower power in the sixties'. This explains why riot police were so keen to batter the Stonehenge hippies. He also insisted he would 'lump the City fraudsters...in with the muggers'. Could this be a cutting reference to well-known bootboy Nigel Lawson, about to become the first chancellor to be sued for libel?

REPORTS

Newcastle NHS battle

The Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle started as a showcase of how a large and militant workforce could take on the cuts. Last month the local health authority accepted the in-house bid for the domestic services contract. But the 300 domestics and thousands of workers facing attacks on jobs and conditions at hospitals all over Tyneside are not ready to give up the fight against every cut — private and in-house.

As the largest teaching hospital in the north east, the RVI was a prime target for privatisation. In March, union officials learned details of the health authority's alternative in-house tender. It threatened pay cuts of between 33 and 75 per cent, the abolition of a 20 per cent bonus, loss of enhanced payment for weekend working and reductions in working hours.

The domestics, already overworked as a result of non-replacement of cleaners lost through natural wastage, told their union officials that they would not accept the in-house contract. This immediately made the fight at RVI something special.

The health service unions have concentrated their efforts on keeping hospital services in-house by outbidding the private contractors. The threat of privatisation has usually been enough to persuade the unions to make concessions on jobs, hours, wages and conditions. When services are put out to contract union officials sit on tendering sub-committees with management to make sure the terms of the in-house deal are competitive.

The emphasis of union propaganda has been that privatisation leads to greater inefficiency, dirty wards and unsanitary conditions. The experience of privatisation at hospitals such as Addenbrooke's shows that this is true. But basing the unions' case on efficiency and high standards only makes workers vulnerable to management demands to raise productivity under in-house tenders.

'No to all cuts'

The decision to take a stand against *all* cuts, private or in-house, at the RVI provided a solid foundation for defending jobs and conditions and made the RVI the focus for a fightback around which all Tyneside health workers could unite. Many workers and some union officials recognised that arguments about 'caring' and 'efficiency' would get them nowhere. They argued for all-out regional action to stop the cuts. And health workers all over the north east responded to the struggle at the RVI with spirited solidarity and practical support. Indeed the Newcastle dispute is outstanding in the breadth of support which it generated.

The RVI campaign did not, however, mark a complete break with past anti-privatisation struggles. Union officials pledged to fight to the finish against all tenders. But from the start they argued that the in-house tender was the lesser evil because at least it would guarantee their right to negotiate with management over terms and conditions.

The logic of this approach led officials to hold back from taking all-out action for fear that the employers would bring in the privateers. Rather than build on the groundswell of support for the RVI domestics, the union leaders' cautious approach led to uncoordinated and selective action on a hospital-by-hospital basis.

The unions organised the first three-day strike on 1 April to coincide with the closing date for submission of tenders. The cleaners were backed by porters, laundry and catering workers and domestics at the adjacent dental hospital. Workers from 10 hospitals in the region joined the strikers on a mass picket. When the union officials held a rally in a park the crowd took over the town centre. The action stopped all non-emergency operations and disrupted supplies to the hospital.

Union officials began a series of rolling strikes. But they undermined effective action by refusing to call everybody out at once.

The union leaders argued that the rolling strike strategy was biting, but workers on the picket lines told *tns* that the work was still being done despite a ban on essential supplies by drivers and a picket of Killingworth central hospital stores. Nurses were cleaning the wards and management was stocking up with food supplies.

When laundry staff threatened to take action hospital administrator Barry Dowdeswell threatened to go private immediately. The union backed down. Olga, a domestic at RVI, said it was a big mistake. 'We should have come out together. We've all been fairly united in here — domestics, kitchen staff, porters and so on.' Rather than mobilise united action to stop all cuts, the unions restricted the action to keep the private contractors out.

The unions made no attempt to involve all workers in their campaign because they never intended to pull them all out together. Catering worker Maureen McQueen told *tns* that the working committee set up at the beginning of the dispute was 'just a farce'. 'There was only one meeting, we all sat at the end of the table, the officials at the other. They all just talked among themselves and we were totally baffled about what they were on about. That was it, they never got us back together again.' Union officials met in a working party, while workers received instructions without explanation or motivation.

Thousands of workers demonstrated at the meeting that accepted the in-house tender. When the decision was made they surged forward shouting 'no, we won't work this contract!' Many assumed that they would continue strike action against the in-house tender. But their union officials argued that this would only give the employers an excuse to change their minds and bring in outside contractors. The workers are now back at work and the unions are meeting management to negotiate better terms under the in-house tender which comes into operation in October.

The RVI domestics are prepared to come out now to defend their jobs. The catering workers are ready to back them up. And health workers all over the north east are looking to the RVI for a lead. There is still everything to fight for, but we need a different approach to make sure we come out on top:

- Fight all cuts: our emphasis must be 'public or private — our jobs come first'. We need to reject the notion that our livelihoods depend on making the health service more efficient. Making the NHS more efficient means taking cuts in our jobs, hours and wages.
- Fight together: sectional action has proved to be both ineffective and demoralising. Selective action hurts us more than the employers. We need all-out action at every hospital in the region to turn back the contractors — private and public.

Dave Clark

Deadline for news and reports: Monday 9am

Come along!

Fight for Irish freedom!

The Revolutionary Communist Party is commemorating the anniversary of internment this month by supporting the demonstration organised by the Irish Freedom Movement in London on Saturday 10 August (see back page).

In August 1971 the British Army raided nationalist ghettos in Belfast and Derry and locked up hundreds of Irish people without a trial and without charge. The British war machine has been shooting them down and locking them up ever since. To build support for the demonstration over the next week we are holding a series of street meetings, debates and public meetings. We hope that everybody who attended our Preparing for Power conference last week and those of you who couldn't make it will come to the meetings and out on the streets to put the case for Irish freedom and build a movement to crush British terror in Ireland.

Debate
The Irish Freedom Movement debates the Troops Out Movement on Irish solidarity work in Britain.
Brighton
Monday 5 August 7.30pm
Prince Albert Pub
Trafalgar Street

Video show
There's a war on your doorstep: Manchester RCP is showing the IFM video *The longest war* and discussing the issues it raises.
Manchester
Thursday 1 August 7pm
Longsight Library
Stockport Road

Meetings
RCP branches around the country are holding meetings in early August to discuss how we can end Britain's rule of terror in Ireland.
Bristol
Wednesday 31 July 7.30pm
Shepherds Hall
Old Market Street

London
Thursday 1 August 7.30pm
Large Hall
Conway Hall
Red Lion Square, WC1
(Holborn tube)
Coventry
Tuesday 6 August 7.30pm
Elastic Inn
Lower Ford Street
Bradford
Wednesday 7 August 7.30pm
Central Library
Newcastle
Wednesday 7 August 7.30pm
Tyne and Wear Resources Centre
2 Jesmond Road (Haymarket Metro)
Leeds
Thursday 8 August 7.30pm
Trades Club
Savile Row (off Chapeltown Road)
Sheffield
Thursday 8 August 7.30pm
Howard Hotel
Howard Street
Liverpool
Thursday 8 August 7.30pm
Haigh Building
Liverpool Polytechnic

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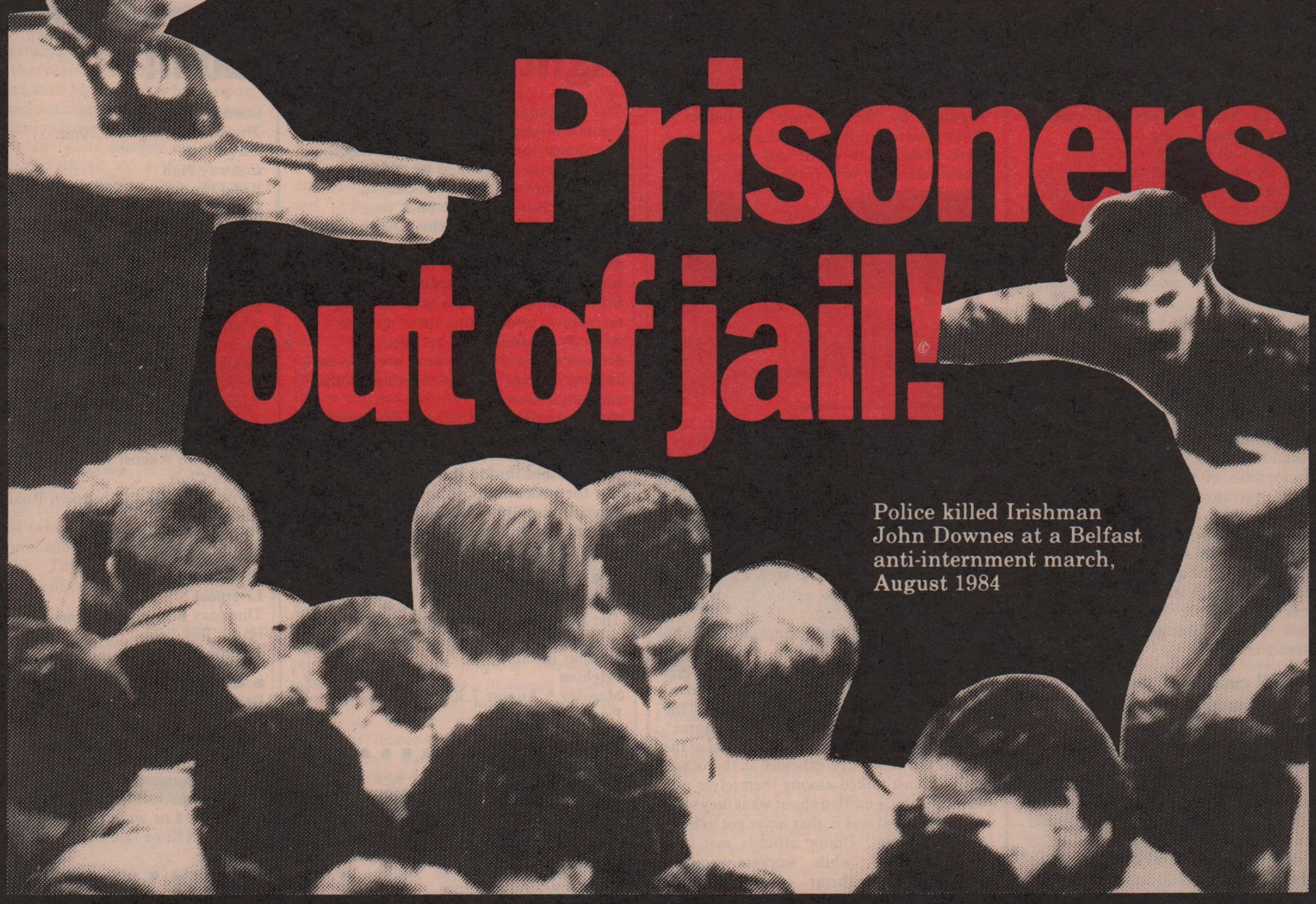

Police killed Irishman John Downes at a Belfast anti-internment march, August 1984

- In August 1969 British troops invaded Northern Ireland. Sixteen years later they are still there – and 2500 people are dead.
- In August 1971 British troops interned 300 Irishmen without charge or trial. Fourteen years later there are around 1000 Irish political prisoners in Ireland and 40 in Britain.

Demonstrate in London 10 August

- March from Jubilee Gardens to Brixton, followed by rally
- Assemble 1.00pm Saturday 10 August
BR/Tube: Waterloo

The march will be led by a republican flute band from Derry

Sponsors include

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Weymouth and Portland LPYS, Les Huckfield MEP, GLC Nupe

Councillors

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From Bradford: M Riaz, Alan Rye, Tony Miller, A Dewhurst, G Sutcliffe, Derek Smith, Geoff Ecclestone, David Bentley, BA Lynch, T Flanagan, M Walters, A Lambert, R Billheimer, T Rooney, R Goldberg, M Ajeeb (Lord Mayor)
From Hackney: Hilda Kean, John Bloom, Lester Lewis, Phil Stott, Patrick Kodikara, Anthony Kendall, Betty Shanks (Lord Mayor), Jim Holland, Shuja Shaikh Milton Babulall (Islington)
From Camden: John Wakeham, Tom Devine, Graham Shurety, Julie Fitzgerald, Kate Allen, Tony Dykes, Sandy Wynn, Mary Cane, Phil Turner, Barbara Hughes, Ron Heffernan, Graham Good, Jenny Willmot, Robert Latham, Anna Bowman

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